

# **Father Ryan's Poems**

**By Abram J. Ryan**

**Poems: Patriotic, Religious, Miscellaneous.**

## Song of the Mystic

I walk down the Valley of Silence -- Down the dim, voiceless valley  
-- alone! And I hear not the fall of a footstep Around me, save God's and  
my own; And the hush of my heart is as holy As hovers where angels  
have flown!

Long ago was I weary of voices Whose music my heart could not  
win; Long ago was I weary of noises That fretted my soul with their din;  
Long ago was I weary of places Where I met but the human -- and sin.

I walked in the world with the worldly; I craved what the world  
never gave; And I said: "In the world each Ideal, That shines like a star  
on life's wave, Is wrecked on the shores of the Real, And sleeps like a  
dream in a grave."

And still did I pine for the Perfect, And still found the False with the  
True; I sought 'mid the Human for Heaven, But caught a mere glimpse  
of its Blue: And I wept when the clouds of the Mortal Veiled even that  
glimpse from my view.

And I toiled on, heart-tired, of the Human, And I moaned 'mid the  
mazes of men, Till I knelt, long ago, at an altar And I heard a voice call  
me. Since then I walk down the Valley of Silence That lies far beyond  
mortal ken.

Do you ask what I found in the Valley? 'Tis my Trysting Place with  
the Divine. And I fell at the feet of the Holy, And above me a voice said:  
"Be mine." And there arose from the depths of my spirit An echo -- "My  
heart shall be Thine."

Do you ask how I live in the Valley? I weep -- and I dream -- and I  
pray. But my tears are as sweet as the dewdrops That fall on the roses in  
May; And my prayer, like a perfume from censers, Ascendeth to God  
night and day.

In the hush of the Valley of Silence I dream all the songs that I sing;  
And the music floats down the dim Valley, Till each finds a word for a  
wing, That to hearts, like the Dove of the Deluge, A message of Peace  
they may bring.

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But far on the deep there are billows That never shall break on the beach; And I have heard songs in the Silence That never shall float into speech; And I have had dreams in the Valley Too lofty for language to reach.

And I have seen Thoughts in the Valley -- Ah! me, how my spirit was stirred! And they wear holy veils on their faces, Their footsteps can scarcely be heard; They pass through the Valley like virgins, Too pure for the touch of a word!

Do you ask me the place of the Valley, Ye hearts that are harrowed by Care? It lieth afar between mountains, And God and His angels are there: And one is the dark mount of Sorrow, And one the bright mountain of Prayer.

## Reverie ["Only a few more years!"]

Only a few more years!            Weary years!            Only a few  
more tears!            Bitter tears! And then -- and then -- like other men, I  
cease to wander, cease to weep,    Dim shadows o'er my way shall creep;  
And out of the day and into the night, Into the dark and out of the bright  
I go, and Death shall veil my face,    The feet of the years shall fast efface  
My very name, and every trace I leave on earth; for the stern years tread --  
Tread out the names of the gone and dead! And then, ah! then, like other  
men, I close my eyes and go to sleep,    Only a few, one hour, shall weep:  
Ah! me, the grave is dark and deep!

Alas! Alas!            How soon we pass!            And ah! we go  
So far away; When go we must, From the light of Life, and the heat of  
strife, To the peace of Death, and the cold, still dust,    We go -- we go --  
we may not stay,    We travel the lone, dark, dreary way; Out of the day  
and into the night, Into the darkness, out of the bright. And then, ah! then,  
like other men,    We close our eyes and go to sleep; We hush our hearts  
and go to sleep; Only a few, one hour, shall weep: Ah! me, the grave is  
lone and deep!

I saw a flower, at morn, so fair; I passed at eve, it was not there. I  
saw a sunbeam, golden bright, I saw a cloud the sunbeam's shroud,  
And I saw night    Digging the grave of day; And day took off her golden  
crown, And flung it sorrowfully down. Ah! day, the Sun's fair bride! At  
twilight moaned and died. And so, alas! like day we pass:    At morn we  
smile,    At eve we weep,    At morn we wake,    In night we sleep.  
We close our eyes and go to sleep: Ah! me, the grave is still and deep!

But God is sweet.            My mother told me so,            When I  
knelt at her feet            Long -- so long -- ago; She clasped my hands in  
hers. Ah! me, that memory stirs    My soul's profoundest deep -- No  
wonder that I weep. She clasped my hands and smiled, Ah! then I was a  
child --    I knew not harm --    My mother's arm Was flung around  
me; and I felt That when I knelt    To listen to my mother's prayer,    God  
was with my mother there.

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Yea! "God is sweet!"      She told me so;    She never told me wrong;  
And through my years of woe Her whispers soft, and sad, and low,    And  
sweet as Angel's song, Have floated like a dream.

And, ah! to-night I seem    A very child in my old, old place,    Beneath  
my mother's blessed face, And through each sweet remembered word, This  
sweetest undertone is heard:    "My child! my child! our God is sweet,    In  
Life -- in Death -- kneel at his feet -- Sweet in gladness, sweet in gloom,  
Sweeter still beside the tomb."    Why should I wail?    Why ought I weep?  
The grave -- it is not dark and deep; Why should I sigh?    Why ought I  
moan? The grave -- it is not still and lone;    Our God is sweet, our grave is  
sweet,    We lie there sleeping at His feet, Where the wicked shall from  
troubling cease, And weary hearts shall rest in peace!

## Lines -- 1875

Go down where the wavelets are kissing the shore, And ask of them why do they sigh? The poets have asked them a thousand times o'er, But they're kissing the shore as they kissed it before, And they're sighing to-day, and they'll sigh evermore. Ask them what ails them: they will not reply; But they'll sigh on forever and never tell why! Why does your poetry sound like a sigh? The waves will not answer you; neither shall I.

Go stand on the beach of the blue boundless deep, When the night stars are gleaming on high, And hear how the billows are moaning in sleep, On the low lying strand by the surge-beaten steep. They're moaning forever wherever they sweep. Ask them what ails them: they never reply; They moan, and so sadly, but will not tell why Why does your poetry sound like a sigh? The waves will not answer you; neither shall I.

Go list to the breeze at the waning of day, When it passes and murmurs "Good-bye." The dear little breeze -- how it wishes to stay Where the flowers are in bloom, where the singing birds play; How it sighs when it flies on its wearisome way. Ask it what ails it: it will not reply; Its voice is a sad one, it never told why. Why does your poetry sound like a sigh? The breeze will not answer you; neither shall I.

Go watch the wild blasts as they spring from their lair, When the shout of the storm rends the sky; They rush o'er the earth and they ride thro' the air And they blight with their breath all the lovely and fair, And they groan like the ghosts in the "land of despair". Ask them what ails them: they never reply; Their voices are mournful, they will not tell why. Why does your poetry sound like a sigh? The blasts will not answer you; neither shall I.

Go stand on the rivulet's lily-fringed side, Or list where the rivers rush by; The streamlets which forest trees shadow and hide, And the rivers that roll in their oceanward tide, Are moaning forever wherever they glide; Ask them what ails them: they will not reply. On -- sad voiced -- they flow, but they never tell why. Why does your poetry sound like a sigh? Earth's streams will not answer you; neither shall I.

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Go list to the voices of air, earth and sea, And the voices that sound in the sky; Their songs may be joyful to some, but to me There's a sigh in each chord and a sigh in each key, And thousands of sighs swell their grand melody. Ask them what ails them: they will not reply. They sigh -- sigh forever -- but never tell why. Why does your poetry sound like a sigh? Their lips will not answer you; neither shall I.

## A Memory

One bright memory shines like a star In the sky of my spirit forever;  
And over my pathway it flashes afar A radiance that perishes never.

One bright memory -- only one; And I walk by the light of its  
gleaming; It brightens my days, and when days are done It shines in the  
night o'er my dreaming.

One bright memory, whose golden rays Illumine the gloom of my  
sorrows, And I know that its lustre will gladden my gaze In the shadows  
of all my to-morrows.

One bright memory; when I am sad I lift up my eyes to its shining,  
And the clouds pass away, and my spirit grows glad, And my heart  
hushes all its repining.

One bright memory; others have passed Back into the shadows  
forever; But it, far and fair, bright and true to the last, Sheds a light that  
will pass away never.

Shine on, shine always, thou star of my days! And when Death's  
starless night gathers o'er me, Beam brighter than ever adown on my gaze,  
And light the dark valley before me.



## Rhyme

One idle day -- A mile or so of sunlit waves off shore -- In a  
breezeless bay, We listless lay -- Our boat a "dream of rest" on the  
still sea -- And -- we were four.

The wind had died That all day long sang songs unto the deep;  
It was eventide, And far and wide Sweet silence crept thro' the rifts  
of sound With spells of sleep.

Our gray sail cast The only cloud that flecked the foamless sea;  
And weary at last Beside the mast One fell to slumber with a dreamy  
face, And -- we were three.

No ebb! no flow! No sound! no stir in the wide, wondrous calm;  
In the sunset's glow The shore shelved low And snow-white, from  
far ridges screened with shade Of drooping palm.

Our hearts were hushed; All light seemed melting into boundless  
blue; But the west was flushed Where sunset blushed, Thro'  
clouds of roses, when another slept And -- we were two.

How still the air! Not e'en a sea-bird o'er us waveward flew;  
Peace rested there! Light everywhere! Nay! Light! some shadows  
fell on that fair scene, And -- we are two.

Some shadows! Where? No matter where! all shadows are not  
seen; For clouds of care To skies all fair Will sudden rise as  
tears to shining eyes, And dim their sheen.

We spake no word, Tho' each I ween did hear the other's soul.  
Not a wavelet stirred, And yet we heard The loneliest music of the  
weariest waves That ever roll.

Yea! Peace, you swayed Your sceptre jeweled with the evening  
light; And then you said: "Here falls no shade, Here floats no  
sound, and all the seas and skies Sleep calm and bright."

Nay! Peace, not so! The wildest waves may feel thy sceptre's  
spell And fear to flow, But to and fro -- Beyond their reach lone  
waves on troubled seas Will sink and swell.

No word e'en yet; Were our eyes speaking while they watched the

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sky?        And in the sunset        Infinite regret Swept sighing from the  
skies into our souls --        I wonder why?

A half hour passed -- 'Twas more than half an age; 'tis ever thus.  
Words came at last,        Fluttering and fast As shadows veiling sunsets in  
the souls        Of each of us.

The noiseless night Sped flitting like a ghost where waves of blue  
Lost all their light,        As lips once bright Whence smiles have fled; we  
or the wavelets sighed,        And -- we were two.

The day had gone: And on the dim, high altar of the dark,  
Stars, one by one,        Far, faintly shone; The moonlight trembled, like a  
mother's smile,        Upon our bark.

We softly spoke: The waves seemed listening on the lonely sea,  
The winds awoke;        Our whispers broke The spell of silence; and two  
eyes unclosed,        And -- we were three.

"The breeze blows fair," He said; "the waking waves set towards  
the shore."        The long brown hair        Of the other there, Who  
slumbered near the mast with dreamy face        Stirred -- we were four.

That starry night, A mile or so of shadows from the shore,  
Two faces bright        With laughter light Shone on two souls like stars  
that shine on shrines;        And -- we were four.

Over the reach Of dazzling waves our boat like wild bird flew;  
We reached the beach,        Nor song, nor speech Shall ever tell our  
sacramental thought        When -- we were two.

Nocturne ["I sit to-night by the firelight,"]

I sit to-night by the firelight,    And I look at the glowing flame, And I  
see in the bright red flashes    A Heart, a Face, and a Name.

How often have I seen pictures    Framed in the firelight's blaze, Of  
hearts, of names, and of faces,    And scenes of remembered days!

How often have I found poems    In the crimson of the coals, And the  
swaying flames of the firelight    Unrolled such golden scrolls.

And my eyes, they were proud to read them,    In letters of living  
flame, But to-night, in the fire, I see only    One Heart, one Face, and one

Name.

But where are the olden pictures? And where are the olden dreams?  
Has a change come over my vision? Or over the fire's bright gleams?

Not over my vision, surely; My eyes -- they are still the same, That  
used to find in the firelight So many a face and name.

Not over the firelight, either, No change in the coals or blaze That  
flicker and flash, as ruddy To-night as in other days.

But there must be a change -- I feel it. To-night not an old picture  
came; The fire's bright flames only painted One Heart, one Face, and  
one Name.

Three pictures? No! only one picture; The Face belongs to the  
Name, And the Name names the Heart that is throbbing Just back of the  
beautiful flame.

Who said it, I wonder: "All faces Must fade in the light of but one;  
The soul, like the earth, may have many Horizons, but only one sun?"

Who dreamt it? Did I? If I dreamt it 'Tis true -- every name  
passes by Save one; the sun wears many cloudlets Of gold, but has only  
one sky.

And out of the flames have they faded, The hearts and the faces of  
yore? Have they sunk 'neath the gray of the ashes To rise to my vision no  
more?

Yes, surely, or else I would see them To-night, just as bright as of old,  
In the white of the coal's silver flashes, In the red of the restless flames'  
gold.

Do you say I am fickle and faithless? Else why are the old pictures  
gone? And why should the visions of many Melt into the vision of one?

Nay! list to the voice of the Heavens, "One Eternal alone reigns  
above." Is it true? and all else are but idols, So the heart can have only  
one love?

Only one, all the rest are but idols, That fall from their shrines soon  
or late, When the Love that is Lord of the temple, Comes with sceptre  
and crown to the gate.

To be faithless oft means to be faithful, To be false often means to be  
true; The vale that loves clouds that are golden Forgets them for skies

that are blue.

To forget often means to remember    What we had forgotten too long;  
The fragrance is not the bright flower,    The echo is not the sweet song.

Am I dreaming?    No, there is the firelight,    Gaze I ever so long, all  
the same I only can see in its glowing    A Heart, a Face, and a Name.

Farewell! all ye hearts, names, and faces!    Only ashes now under the  
blaze, Ye never again will smile on me,    For I'm touching the end of my  
days.

And the beautiful fading firelight    Paints, now, with a pencil of flame,  
Three pictures -- yet only one picture --    A Heart, a Face, and a Name.

## The Old Year and the New

How swift they go,            Life's many years,            With their  
winds of woe            And their storms of tears, And their darkest of nights  
whose shadowy slopes Are lit with the flashes of starriest hopes, And their  
sunshiny days in whose calm heavens loom The clouds of the tempest --  
the shadows of the gloom!

And ah! we pray            With a grief so drear,            That the years  
may stay            When their graves are near; Tho' the brows of To-  
morrow's be radiant and bright, With love and with beauty, with life and  
with light, The dead hearts of Yesterdays, cold on the bier, To the hearts  
that survive them, are evermore dear.

For the hearts so true            To each Old Year cleaves;            Tho'  
the hand of the New            Flowery garlands weaves. But the flowers of  
the future, tho' fragrant and fair, With the past's withered leaflets may  
never compare; For dear is each dead leaf -- and dearer each thorn -- In the  
wreaths which the brows of our past years have worn.

Yea! men will cling            With a love to the last,            And  
wildly fling            Their arms round their past! As the vine that clings to  
the oak that falls; As the ivy twines round the crumbled walls; For the dust  
of the past some hearts higher prize Than the stars that flash out from the  
future's bright skies.

And why not so?            The old, Old Years,            They knew and  
they know            All our hopes and fears; We walked by their side, and we  
told them each grief, And they kissed off our tears while they whispered  
relief; And the stories of hearts that may not be revealed In the hearts of  
the dead years are buried and sealed.

Let the New Year sing            At the Old Year's grave:            Will  
the New Year bring            What the Old Year gave? Ah! the Stranger-Year  
trips over the snows, And his brow is wreathed with many a rose: But how  
many thorns do the roses conceal Which the roses, when withered, shall so  
soon reveal?

Let the New Year smile            When the Old Year dies;            In

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how short a while            Shall the smiles be sighs? Yea! Stranger-Year,  
thou hast many a charm, And thy face is fair and thy greeting warm, But,  
dearer than thou -- in his shroud of snows -- Is the furrowed face of the  
Year that goes.

Yea! bright New Year,            O'er all the earth,            With song  
and cheer,            They will hail thy birth; They will trust thy words in a  
single hour, They will love thy face, they will laud thy power; For the  
~New~ has charms which the ~Old~ has not, And the Stranger's face  
makes the Friend's forgot.

## Erin's Flag

Unroll Erin's flag! fling its folds to the breeze! Let it float o'er the land,  
let it flash o'er the seas! Lift it out of the dust -- let it wave as of yore,  
When its chiefs with their clans stood around it and swore That never! no,  
never! while God gave them life, And they had an arm and a sword for the  
strife, That never! no, never! that banner should yield As long as the heart  
of a Celt was its shield: While the hand of a Celt had a weapon to wield  
And his last drop of blood was unshed on the field.

Lift it up! wave it high! 'tis as bright as of old! Not a stain on its green,  
not a blot on its gold, Tho' the woes and the wrongs of three hundred long  
years Have drenched Erin's sunburst with blood and with tears! Though  
the clouds of oppression enshroud it in gloom, And around it the thunders  
of Tyranny boom. Look aloft! look aloft! lo! the clouds drifting by, There's  
a gleam through the gloom, there's a light in the sky, 'Tis the sunburst  
resplendent -- far, flashing on high! Erin's dark night is waning, her day-  
dawn is nigh!

Lift it up! lift it up! the old Banner of Green! The blood of its sons has  
but brightened its sheen; What though the tyrant has trampled it down, Are  
its folds not emblazoned with deeds of renown? What though for ages it  
droops in the dust, Shall it droop thus forever? No, no! God is just!  
Take it up! take it up! from the tyrant's foul tread, Let him tear the Green  
Flag -- we will snatch its last shred, And beneath it we'll bleed as our  
forefathers bled, And we'll vow by the dust in the graves of our dead, And  
we'll swear by the blood which the Briton has shed, And we'll vow by the  
wrecks which through Erin he spread, And we'll swear by the thousands  
who, famished, unfed, Died down in the ditches, wild-howling for bread;  
And we'll vow by our heroes, whose spirits have fled, And we'll swear by  
the bones in each coffinless bed, That we'll battle the Briton through  
danger and dread; That we'll cling to the cause which we glory to wed, 'Til  
the gleam of our steel and the shock of our lead Shall prove to our foe that  
we meant what we said -- That we'll lift up the green, and we'll tear down  
the red!

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Lift up the Green Flag! oh! it wants to go home, Full long has its lot been to wander and roam, It has followed the fate of its sons o'er the world, But its folds, like their hopes, are not faded nor furled; Like a weary-winged bird, to the East and the West, It has flitted and fled -- but it never shall rest, 'Til, pluming its pinions, it sweeps o'er the main, And speeds to the shores of its old home again, Where its fetterless folds o'er each mountain and plain Shall wave with a glory that never shall wane.

Take it up! take it up! bear it back from afar! That banner must blaze 'mid the lightnings of war; Lay your hands on its folds, lift your gaze to the sky, And swear that you'll bear it triumphant or die, And shout to the clans scattered far o'er the earth To join in the march to the land of their birth; And wherever the Exiles, 'neath heaven's broad dome, Have been fated to suffer, to sorrow and roam, They'll bound on the sea, and away o'er the foam, They'll sail to the music of "Home, Sweet Home!"



## The Sword of Robert Lee

Forth from its scabbard, pure and bright,      Flashed the sword of Lee!  
Far in the front of the deadly fight, High o'er the brave in the cause of  
Right, Its stainless sheen, like a beacon light,      Led us to Victory!

Out of its scabbard, where, full long,      It slumbered peacefully,  
Roused from its rest by the battle's song, Shielding the feeble, smiting the  
strong, Guarding the right, avenging the wrong,      Gleamed the sword of  
Lee!

Forth from its scabbard, high in air      Beneath Virginia's sky -- And  
they who saw it gleaming there, And knew who bore it, knelt to swear  
That where that sword led they would dare      To follow -- and to die!

Out of its scabbard! Never hand      Waved sword from stain as free,  
Nor purer sword led braver band, Nor braver bled for a brighter land, Nor  
brighter land had a cause so grand,      Nor cause a chief like Lee!

Forth from its scabbard! How we prayed      That sword might  
victor be; And when our triumph was delayed, And many a heart grew  
sore afraid, We still hoped on while gleamed the blade      Of noble  
Robert Lee!

Forth from its scabbard all in vain      Bright flashed the sword of Lee;  
'Tis shrouded now in its sheath again, It sleeps the sleep of our noble slain,  
Defeated, yet without a stain,      Proudly and peacefully!

## Life

A baby played with the surplice sleeve Of a gentle priest; while in accents low, The sponsors murmured the grand "I believe," And the priest bade the mystic waters to flow In the name of the Father, and the Son, And Holy Spirit -- Three in One.

Spotless as a lily's leaf, Whiter than the Christmas snow; Not a sign of sin or grief, And the babe laughed, sweet and low.

A smile flitted over the baby's face: Or was it the gleam of its angel's wing Just passing then, and leaving a trace Of its presence as it soared to sing? A hymn when words and waters win To grace and life a child of sin.

Not an outward sign or token, That a child was saved from woe; But the bonds of sin were broken, And the babe laughed, sweet and low.

A cloud rose up to the mother's eyes, And out of the cloud grief's rain fell fast; Came the baby's smiles, and the mother's sighs, Out of the future, or the past? Ah! gleam and gloom must ever meet, And gall must mingle with the sweet.

Yea, upon the baby's laughter Trickled tears: 'tis ever so -- Mothers dread the dark hereafter; But the babe laughed sweet and low.

And the years like waves broke on the shore Of the mother's heart, and her baby's life; But her lone heart drifted away before Her little boy knew an hour of strife; Drifted away on a Summer's eve, Ere the orphaned child knew how to grieve

Her humble grave was gently made Where roses bloomed in Summer's glow; The wild birds sang where her heart was laid, And her boy laughed sweet and low.

He drifted away from his mother's grave, Like a fragile flower on a great stream's tide, Till he heard the moan of the mighty wave, That welcomed the stream to the ocean wide. Out from the shore and over the deep, He sailed away and learned to weep.

Furrowed grew the face once fair, Under storms of human woe; Silvered grew the dark brown hair, And he wailed so sad and low.

The years swept on as erst they swept, Bright wavelets once, dark

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billows now; Wherever he sailed he ever wept, A cloud hung over the  
darkened brow -- Over the deep and into the dark, But no one knew where  
sank his bark.

Wild roses watched his mother's tomb, The world still laughed, 'tis  
ever so -- God only knows the baby's doom, That laughed so sweet and  
low.

## A Laugh -- and A Moan

The brook that down the valley So musically drips, Flowed never  
half so brightly As the light laugh from her lips.

Her face was like the lily, Her heart was like the rose, Her eyes were  
like a heaven Where the sunlight always glows.

She trod the earth so lightly Her feet touched not a thorn; Her words  
wore all the brightness Of a young life's happy morn.

Along her laughter rippled The melody of joy; She drank from every  
chalice, And tasted no alloy.

Her life was all a laughter, Her days were all a smile, Her heart was  
pure and happy, She knew not gloom nor guile.

She rested on the bosom Of her mother, like a flower That blooms  
far in a valley Where no storm-clouds ever lower.

And -- "Merry, merry, merry!" Rang the bells of every hour, And --  
"Happy, happy, happy!" In her valley laughed the flower.

There was not a sign of shadow, There was not a tear nor thorn, And  
the sweet voice of her laughter Filled with melody the morn.

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Years passed -- 'twas long, long after, And I saw a face at prayer;  
There was not a sign of laughter, There was every sign of care.

For the sunshine all had faded From the valley and the flower, And  
the once fair face was shaded In life's lonely evening hour.

And the lips that smiled with laughter In the valley of the morn, In  
the valley of the evening They were pale and sorrow-worn.

And I read the old, old lesson In her face and in her tears, While she  
sighed amid the shadows Of the sunset of her years.

All the rippling streams of laughter From our hearts and lips that  
flow, Shall be frozen, cold years after, Into icicles of woe.

## In Memory of My Brother

Young as the youngest who donned the Gray, True as the truest  
that wore it, Brave as the bravest he marched away, (Hot tears on the  
cheeks of his mother lay) Triumphant waved our flag one day -- He  
fell in the front before it.

Firm as the firmest, where duty led, He hurried without a falter;  
Bold as the boldest he fought and bled, And the day was won -- but the  
field was red -- And the blood of his fresh young heart was shed On  
his country's hallowed altar. On the trampled breast of the battle plain  
Where the foremost ranks had wrestled, On his pale, pure face not a mark  
of pain, (His mother dreams they will meet again) The fairest form amid  
all the slain, Like a child asleep he nestled.

In the solemn shades of the wood that swept The field where his  
comrades found him, They buried him there -- and the big tears crept Into  
strong men's eyes that had seldom wept. (His mother -- God pity her --  
smiled and slept, Dreaming her arms were around him.)

A grave in the woods with the grass o'ergrown, A grave in the  
heart of his mother -- His clay in the one lies lifeless and lone; There is not  
a name, there is not a stone, And only the voice of the winds maketh moan  
O'er the grave where never a flower is strewn But -- his memory lives  
in the other.

## "Out of the Depths"

Lost! Lost! Lost! The cry went up from a sea -- The waves were wild with an awful wrath, Not a light shone down on the lone ship's path;                      The clouds hung low:                      Lost! Lost! Lost! Rose wild from the hearts of the tempest-tossed.

Lost! Lost! Lost! The cry floated over the waves -- Far over the pitiless waves; It smote on the dark and it rended the clouds; The billows below them were weaving white shrouds                      Out of the foam of the surge,                      And the wind-voices chanted a dirge:                      Lost! Lost! Lost! Wailed wilder the lips of the tempest-tossed.

Lost! Lost! Lost! Not the sign of a hope was nigh, In the sea, in the air, or the sky; And the lifted faces were wan and white, There was nothing without them but storm and night                      And nothing within but fear.                      But far to a Father's ear:                      Lost! Lost! Lost! Floated the wail of the tempest-tossed.

Lost! Lost! Lost! Out of the depths of the sea -- Out of the night and the sea; And the waves and the winds of the storm were hushed, And the sky with the gleams of the stars was flushed. Saved! Saved! Saved!                      And a calm and a joyous cry                      Floated up through the starry sky, In the dark -- in the storm -- "Our Father" is nigh.

### A Thought

The summer rose the sun has flushed    With crimson glory may be sweet; 'Tis sweeter when its leaves are crushed    Beneath the wind's and tempest's feet.

The rose that waves upon its tree,    In life sheds perfume all around; More sweet the perfume floats to me    Of roses trampled on the ground.

The waving rose with every breath    Scents carelessly the summer air; The wounded rose bleeds forth in death    A sweetness far more rich and rare.

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It is a truth beyond our ken -- And yet a truth that all may read -- It is  
with roses as with men, The sweetest hearts are those that bleed.

The flower which Bethlehem saw bloom Out of a heart all full of  
grace, Gave never forth its full perfume Until the cross became its vase.

## March of the Deathless Dead

Gather the sacred dust      Of the warriors tried and true, Who bore  
the flag of a Nation's trust And fell in a cause, though lost, still just,  
And died for me and you.

Gather them one and all,      From the private to the chief; Come they  
from hovel or princely hall, They fell for us, and for them should fall  
The tears of a Nation's grief.

Gather the corpses strewn      O'er many a battle plain; From many a  
grave that lies so lone, Without a name and without a stone,      Gather  
the Southern slain.

We care not whence they came,      Dear in their lifeless clay!  
Whether unknown, or known to fame, Their cause and country still the  
same;      They died -- and wore the Gray.

Wherever the brave have died,      They should not rest apart; Living,  
they struggled side by side, Why should the hand of Death divide      A  
single heart from heart?

Gather their scattered clay,      Wherever it may rest; Just as they  
marched to the bloody fray, Just as they fell on the battle day,      Bury  
them, breast to breast.

The foeman need not dread      This gathering of the brave; Without  
sword or flag, and with soundless tread, We muster once more our  
deathless dead,      Out of each lonely grave.

The foeman need not frown,      They all are powerless now; We  
gather them here and we lay them down, And tears and prayers are the  
only crown      We bring to wreath each brow.

And the dead thus meet the dead,      While the living o'er them weep;  
And the men by Lee and Stonewall led, And the hearts that once together  
bled,      Together still shall sleep.



## Reunited

[Written after the yellow fever epidemic of 1878.]

Purer than thy own white snow, Nobler than thy mountains' height;  
Deeper than the ocean's flow, Stronger than thy own proud might; O  
Northland! to thy sister land, Was late thy mercy's generous deed and  
grand.

Nigh twice ten years the sword was sheathed: Its mist of green o'er  
battle plain For nigh two decades Spring had breathed; And yet the  
crimson life-blood stain From passive swards had never paled, Nor fields,  
where all were brave and some had failed.

Between the Northland, bride of snow, And Southland, brightest  
sun's fair bride, Swept, deepening ever in its flow, The stormy wake, in  
war's dark tide: No hand might clasp across the tears And blood and  
anguish of four deathless years.

When Summer, like a rose in bloom, Had blossomed from the bud of  
Spring, Oh! who could deem the dews of doom Upon the blushing lips  
could cling? And who could believe its fragrant light Would e'er be  
freighted with the breath of blight?

Yet o'er the Southland crept the spell, That e'en from out its  
brightness spread, And prostrate, powerless, she fell, Rachel-like, amid  
her dead. Her bravest, fairest, purest, best, The waiting grave would  
welcome as its guest.

The Northland, strong in love, and great, Forgot the stormy days of  
strife; Forgot that souls with dreams of hate Or unforgiveness e'er were  
rife. Forgotten was each thought and hushed; Save -- she was generous  
and her foe was crushed.

No hand might clasp, from land to land; Yea! there was one to bridge  
the tide! For at the touch of Mercy's hand The North and South stood  
side by side: The Bride of Snow, the Bride of Sun, In Charity's espousals  
are made one.

"Thou givest back my sons again," The Southland to the Northland  
cries; "For all my dead, on battle plain, Thou biddest my dying now

uprise: I still my sobs, I cease my tears, And thou hast recompensed my anguished years.

"Blessings on thine every wave, Blessings on thine every shore, Blessings that from sorrow save, Blessings giving more and more, For all thou gavest thy sister land, O Northland, in thy generous deed and grand."

## A Memory

Adown the valley dripped a stream,    White lilies drooped on either  
side; Our hearts, in spite of us, will dream    In such a place at eventide.

Bright wavelets wove the scarf of blue    That well became the valley  
fair, And grassy fringe of greenest hue    Hung round its borders  
everywhere.

And where the stream, in wayward whirls,    Went winding in and  
winding out, Lay shells, that wore the look of pearls    Without their pride,  
all strewn about.

And here and there along the strand,    Where some ambitious wave  
had strayed, Rose little monuments of sand    As frail as those by mortals  
made.

And many a flower was blooming there    In beauty, yet without a  
name, Like humble hearts that often bear    The gifts, but not the palm of  
fame.

The rainbow's tints could never vie    With all the colors that they wore;  
While bluer than the bluest sky    The stream flowed on 'tween shore and  
shore.

And on the height, and down the side    Of either hill that hid the place,  
Rose elms in all the stately pride    Of youthful strength and ancient race.

While here and there the trees between --    Bearing the scars of battle-  
shocks, And frowning wrathful -- might be seen    The moss-veiled faces  
of the rocks.

And round the rocks crept flowered vines,    And clomb the trees that  
towered high -- The type of a lofty thought that twines    Around a truth --  
to touch the sky.

And to that vale, from first of May    Until the last of August went,  
Beauty, the exile, came each day    In all her charms, to cast her tent.

'Twas there, one long-gone August day,    I wandered down the valley  
fair: The spell has never passed away    That fell upon my spirit there.

The summer sunset glorified    The clouded face of dying day, Which  
flung a smile upon the tide    And lilies, ere he passed away.

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And o'er the valley's grassy slopes    There fell an evanescent sheen,  
That flashed and faded, like the hopes    That haunt us of what might have  
been.

And rock and tree flung back the light    Of all the sunset's golden  
gems, As if it were beneath their right    To wear such borrowed diadems.

Low in the west gleam after gleam    Glowed faint and fainter, till the  
last Made the dying day a living dream,    To last as long as life shall last.

And in the arches of the trees    The wild birds slept with folded wing;  
And e'en the lips of the summer breeze    That sang all day, had ceased to  
sing.

And all was silent, save the rill    That rippled round the lilies' feet,  
And sang, while stillness grew more still    To listen to the murmur sweet.

And now and then it surely seemed    The little stream was laughing  
low, As if its sleepy wavelets dreamed    Such dreams as only children  
know.

So still that not the faintest breath    Did stir the shadows in the air; It  
would have seemed the home of Death,    Had I not felt Life sleeping  
there.

And slow and soft, and soft and slow,    From darkling earth and  
darkened sky Wide wings of gloom waved to and fro,    And spectral  
shadows flitted by.

And then, methought, upon the sward    I saw -- or was it starlight's ray?  
Or angels come to watch and guard    The valley till the dawn of day?

Is every lower life the ward    Of spirits more divinely wrought? 'Tis  
sweet to believe 'tis God's, and hard    To think 'tis but a poet's thought.

But God's or poet's thought, I ween,    My senses did not fail me when  
I saw veiled angels watch that scene    And guard its sleep, as they guard  
men.

Sweet sang the stream as on it pressed,    As sorrow sings a heart to  
sleep; As a mother sings one child to rest,    And for the dead one still will  
weep.

I walked adown the singing stream,    The lilies slept on either side;  
My heart -- it could not help but dream    At eve, and after eventide.

Ah! dreams of such a lofty reach    With more than earthly fancies

fraught, That not the strongest wings of speech    Could ever touch their  
lowest thought.

Dreams of the Bright, the Fair, the Far --    Heart-fancies flashing  
Heaven's hue -- That swept around, as sweeps a star    The boundless orbit  
of the True.

Yea! dreams all free from earthly taint,    Where human passion played  
no part, As pure as thoughts that thrill a saint,    Or hunt an archangelic  
heart.

Ah! dreams that did not rise from sense,    And rose too high to stoop  
to it, And framed aloft like frankincense    In censers round the infinite.

Yea! dreams that vied with angels' flight!    And, soaring, bore my  
heart away Beyond the far star-bounds of night,    Unto the everlasting  
day.

How long I strolled beside the stream    I do not know, nor may I say;  
But when the poet ceased to dream    The priest went on his knees to pray.

I felt as sure a seraph feels    When in some golden hour of grace God  
smiles, and suddenly reveals    A new, strange glory in His face.

Ah! starlit valley!    Lilies white!    The poet dreamed -- ye slumbered  
deep! But when the priest knelt down that night    And prayed, why woke  
ye from your sleep?

\*    \*    \*    \*    \*

The stream sang down the valley fair,    I saw the wakened lilies nod, I  
knew they heard me whisper there,    "How beautiful art Thou, my God!"

## At Last

Into a temple vast and dim, Solemn and vast and dim, Just when the  
last sweet Vesper Hymn Was floating far away, With eyes that  
tabernacled tears -- Her heart the home of tears -- And cheeks wan with  
the woes of years, A woman went one day.

And, one by one, adown the aisles, Adown the long, lone aisles, Their  
faces bright with holy smiles That follow after prayer, The worshipers  
in silence passed, In silence slowly passed away; The woman knelt until  
the last Had left her lonely there.

A holy hush came o'er the place, O'er the holy place, The shadows  
kissed her woe-worn face, Her forehead touched the floor; The wreck  
that drifted thro' the years -- Sin-driven thro' the years -- Was floating o'er  
the tide of tears, To Mercy's golden shore.

Her lips were sealed, they could not pray, They sighed, but could not  
pray, All words of prayer had died away From them long years ago;  
But ah! from out her eyes there rose -- Sad from her eyes there rose -- The  
prayer of tears, which swiftest goes To Heaven -- winged with woe.

With weary tears, her weary eyes, Her joyless, weary eyes, Wailed  
forth a rosary; and her sighs And sobs strung all the beads; The while  
before her spirit's gaze -- Her contrite spirit's gaze -- Moved all the  
mysteries of her days, And histories of her deeds.

Still as a shadow, while she wept, So desolately wept, Up thro' the  
long, lone aisle she crept Unto an altar fair; "Mother!" -- her pale lips  
said no more -- Could say no more -- The wreck, at last, reached Mercy's  
shore, For Mary's shrine was there.

## A Land without Ruins

"A land without ruins is a land without memories -- a land without memories is a land without history. A land that wears a laurel crown may be fair to see; but twine a few sad cypress leaves around the brow of any land, and be that land barren, beautiless and bleak, it becomes lovely in its consecrated coronet of sorrow, and it wins the sympathy of the heart and of history. Crowns of roses fade -- crowns of thorns endure. Calvaries and crucifixions take deepest hold of humanity -- the triumphs of might are transient -- they pass and are forgotten -- the sufferings of right are graven deepest on the chronicle of nations."

Yes give me the land where the ruins are spread, And the living tread light on the hearts of the dead; Yes, give me a land that is blest by the dust, And bright with the deeds of the down-trodden just. Yes, give me the land where the battle's red blast Has flashed to the future the fame of the past; Yes, give me the land that hath legends and lays That tell of the memories of long vanished days; Yes, give me a land that hath story and song! Enshrine the strife of the right with the wrong! Yes, give me a land with a grave in each spot, And names in the graves that shall not be forgot; Yes, give me the land of the wreck and the tomb; There is grandeur in graves -- there is glory in gloom; For out of the gloom future brightness is born, As after the night comes the sunrise of morn; And the graves of the dead with the grass overgrown May yet form the footstool of liberty's throne, And each single wreck in the war path of might Shall yet be a rock in the temple of right.

## Memories

They come, as the breeze comes over the foam, Waking the waves  
that are sinking to sleep -- The fairest of memories from far-away home,  
The dim dreams of faces beyond the dark deep.

They come as the stars come out in the sky, That shimmer wherever  
the shadows may sweep, And their steps are as soft as the sound of a sigh  
And I welcome them all while I wearily weep.

They come as a song comes out of the past A loved mother  
murmured in days that are dead, Whose tones spirit-thrilling live on to the  
last, When the gloom of the heart wraps its gray o'er the head.

They come like the ghosts from the grass shrouded graves, And they  
follow our footsteps on life's winding way; And they murmur around us as  
murmur the waves That sigh on the shore at the dying of day.

They come, sad as tears to the eyes that are bright; They come, sweet  
as smiles to the lips that are pale; They come, dim as dreams in the depths  
of the night; They come, fair as flowers to the summerless vale.

There is not a heart that is not haunted so, Though far we may stray  
from the scenes of the past, Its memories will follow wherever we go,  
And the days that were first sway the days that are last.



## The Prayer of the South

My brow is bent beneath a heavy rod! My face is wan and white  
with many woes! But I will lift my poor chained hands to God, And for  
my children pray, and for my foes. Beside the graves where thousands  
lowly lie I kneel, and weeping for each slaughtered son, I turn my gaze  
to my own sunny sky, And pray, O Father, let Thy will be done!

My heart is filled with anguish, deep and vast! My hopes are buried  
with my children's dust! My joys have fled, my tears are flowing fast! In  
whom, save Thee, our Father, shall I trust? Ah! I forgot Thee, Father, long  
and oft, When I was happy, rich, and proud, and free; But conquered  
now, and crushed, I look aloft, And sorrow leads me, Father, back to  
Thee.

Amid the wrecks that mark the foeman's path I kneel, and wailing  
o'er my glories gone, I still each thought of hate, each throb of wrath,  
And whisper, Father, let Thy will be done! Pity me, Father of the desolate!  
Alas! my burdens are so hard to bear; Look down in mercy on my  
wretched fate, And keep me, guard me, with Thy loving care.

Pity me, Father, for His holy sake, Whose broken heart bled at the  
feet of grief, That hearts of earth, whenever they shall break, Might go to  
His and find a sure relief. Ah, me, how dark! Is this a brief eclipse? Or  
is it night with no to-morrow's sun? O Father! Father! with my pale, sad  
lips, And sadder heart, I pray Thy will be done.

My homes are joyless, and a million mourn Where many met in joys  
forever flown; Whose hearts were light, are burdened now and torn,  
Where many smiled, but one is left to moan. And ah! the widow's wails,  
the orphan's cries, Are morning hymn and vesper chant to me; And  
groans of men and sounds of women's sighs Commingle, Father, with  
my prayer to Thee.

Beneath my feet ten thousand children dead -- Oh! how I loved each  
known and nameless one! Above their dust I bow my crownless head  
And murmur: Father, still Thy will be done. Ah! Father, Thou didst deck  
my own loved land With all bright charms, and beautiful and fair; But

foeman came, and with a ruthless hand, Spread ruin, wreck, and desolation there.

Girdled with gloom, of all my brightness shorn, And garmented with grief, I kiss Thy rod, And turn my face, with tears all wet and worn, To catch one smile of pity from my God. Around me blight, where all before was bloom, And so much lost, alas! and nothing won Save this -- that I can lean on wreck and tomb And weep, and weeping, pray Thy will be done.

And oh! 'tis hard to say, but said, 'tis sweet; The words are bitter, but they hold a balm -- A balm that heals the wounds of my defeat, And lulls my sorrow into holy calm. It is the prayer of prayers, and how it brings, When heard in heaven, peace and hope to me! When Jesus prayed it did not angels' wings Gleam 'mid the darkness of Gethsemane?

My children, Father, Thy forgiveness need; Alas! their hearts have only place for tears! Forgive them, Father, ev'ry wrongful deed, And every sin of those four bloody years; And give them strength to bear their boundless loss, And from their hearts take every thought of hate; And while they climb their Calvary with their cross, Oh! help them, Father, to endure its weight.

And for my dead, my Father, may I pray? Ah! sighs may soothe, but prayer shall soothe me more! I keep eternal watch above their clay; Oh! rest their souls, my Father, I implore; Forgive my foes -- they know not what they do -- Forgive them all the tears they made me shed; Forgive them, though my noblest sons they slew, And bless them, though they curse my poor, dear dead.

Oh! may my woes be each a carrier dove, With swift, white wings, that, bathing in my tears, Will bear Thee, Father, all my prayers of love, And bring me peace in all my doubts and fears. Father, I kneel, 'mid ruin, wreck, and grave -- A desert waste, where all was erst so fair -- And for my children and my foes I crave Pity and pardon. Father, hear my prayer!

## Feast of the Assumption

"A Night Prayer"

Dark! Dark! Dark! The sun is set; the day is dead: Thy  
Feast has fled; My eyes are wet with tears unshed; I bow my head;  
Where the star-fringed shadows softly sway I bend my knee, And,  
like a homesick child, I pray, Mary, to thee.

Dark! Dark! Dark! And, all the day -- since white-robed priest  
In farthest East, In dawn's first ray -- began the Feast, I -- I the least -  
- Thy least, and last, and lowest child, I called on thee! Virgin! didst  
hear? my words were wild; Didst think of me?

Dark! Dark! Dark! Alas! and no! The angels bright,  
With wings as white As a dream of snow in love and light, Flashed  
on thy sight; They shone like stars around thee, Queen! I knelt afar --  
A shadow only dims the scene Where shines a star!

Dark! Dark! Dark! And all day long, beyond the sky,  
Sweet, pure, and high, The angel's song swept sounding by  
Triumphantly; And when such music filled thy ear, Rose round thy  
throne, How could I hope that thou wouldst hear My far, faint moan?

Dark! Dark! Dark! And all day long, where altars stand,  
Or poor or grand, A countless throng from every land, With lifted  
hand, Winged hymns to thee from sorrow's vale In glad acclaim;  
How couldst thou hear my lone lips wail Thy sweet, pure name?

Dark! Dark! Dark! Alas! and no! Thou didst not hear  
Nor bend thy ear, To prayer of woe as mine so drear; For hearts more  
dear Hid me from hearing and from sight This bright Feast-day; Wilt  
hear me, Mother, if in its night I kneel and pray?

Dark! Dark! Dark! The sun is set, the day is dead; Thy  
Feast hath fled; My eyes are wet with the tears I shed; I bow my  
head; Angels and altars hailed thee, Queen, All day; ah! be To-night  
what thou hast ever been -- A mother to me!

Dark! Dark! Dark! Thy queenly crown in angels' sight Is  
fair and bright; Ah! lay it down; for, oh! to-night Its jeweled light

Shines not as the tender love-light shines,      O Mary! mild, In the  
mother's eyes, whose pure heart pines      For poor, lost child!

Dark! Dark! Dark! Sceptre in hand, thou dost hold sway  
Fore'er and aye In angel-land; but, fair Queen! pray      Lay it away. Let  
thy sceptre wave in the realms above      Where angels are; But, Mother!  
fold in thine arms of love      Thy child afar!

Dark! Dark! Dark! Mary, I call! Wilt hear the prayer  
My poor lips dare? Yea! be to all a Queen most fair,      Crown, sceptre,  
bear! But look on me with a mother's eyes      From heaven's bliss; And  
waft to me from the starry skies      A mother's kiss!

Dark! Dark! Dark! The sun is set; the day is dead;      Her  
Feast has fled; Can she forget the sweet blood shed,      The last words  
said That evening -- "Woman! behold thy Son!      Oh! priceless right,  
Of all His children! The last, least one,      Is heard to-night.

## Sursum Corda

Weary hearts! weary hearts! by the cares of life oppressed, Ye are wand'ring in the shadows -- ye are sighing for a rest: There is darkness in the heavens, and the earth is bleak below, And the joys we taste to-day may to-morrow turn to woe. Weary hearts! God is Rest.

Lonely hearts! lonely hearts! this is but a land of grief; Ye are pining for repose -- ye are longing for relief: What the world hath never given, kneel and ask of God above, And your grief shall turn to gladness, if you lean upon His love. Lonely hearts! God is Love.

Restless hearts! restless hearts! ye are toiling night and day, And the flowers of life, all withered, leave but thorns along your way: Ye are waiting, ye are waiting, till your toilings all shall cease, And your ev'ry restless beating is a sad, sad prayer for peace. Restless hearts! God is Peace.

Breaking hearts! broken hearts! ye are desolate and lone, And low voices from the past o'er your present ruins moan! In the sweetest of your pleasures there was bitterest alloy, And a starless night hath followed on the sunset of your joy. Broken hearts! God is Joy.

Homeless hearts! homeless hearts! through the dreary, dreary years, Ye are lonely, lonely wand'ers, and your way is wet with tears; In bright or blighted places, wheresoever ye may roam, Ye look away from earth-land, and ye murmur, "Where is home?" Homeless hearts! God is Home.

## A Child's Wish

Before an Altar

I wish I were the little key That locks Love's Captive in, And lets  
Him out to go and free A sinful heart from sin.

I wish I were the little bell That tinkles for the Host, When God  
comes down each day to dwell With hearts He loves the most.

I wish I were the chalice fair, That holds the Blood of Love, When  
every flash lights holy prayer Upon its way above.

I wish I were the little flower So near the Host's sweet face, Or like  
the light that half an hour Burns on the shrine of grace.

I wish I were the altar where, As on His mother's breast, Christ  
nestles, like a child, fore'er In Eucharistic rest.

But, oh! my God, I wish the most That my poor heart may be A  
home all holy for each Host That comes in love to me.

## **HAPTER** Presentiment

"My Sister"

Cometh a voice from a far-land! Beautiful, sad, and low; Shineth a light from the star-land! Down on the night of my woe; And a white hand, with a garland, Biddeth my spirit to go.

Away and afar from the night-land, Where sorrow o'ershadows my way, To the splendors and skies of the light-land, Where reigneth eternity's day; To the cloudless and shadowless bright-land, Whose sun never passeth away.

And I knew the voice; not a sweeter On earth or in Heaven can be; And never did shadow pass fleeter Than it and its strange melody; And I know I must hasten to meet her, "Yea, ~Sister!~ thou callest to me!"

And I saw the light; 'twas not seeming, It flashed from the crown that she wore, And the brow, that with jewels was gleaming, My lips had kissed often of yore! And the eyes, that with rapture were beaming, Had smiled on me sweetly before.

And I saw the hand with the garland, Ethel's hand -- holy and fair; Who went long ago to the far-land To weave me the wreath I shall wear; And to-night I look up to the star-land, And pray that I soon may be there.

## Last of May

To the Children of Mary of the Cathedral of Mobile

In the mystical dim of the temple, In the dream-haunted dim of the day,  
The sunlight spoke soft to the shadows, And said: "With my gold and your gray,  
Let us meet at the shrine of the Virgin, And ere her fair feast pass away,  
Let us weave there a mantle of glory, To deck the last evening of May."

The tapers were lit on the altar, With garlands of lilies between; And  
the steps leading up to the statue Flashed bright with the roses' red sheen;  
The sun-gleams came down from the heavens Like angels, to hallow the scene,  
And they seemed to kneel down with the shadows That crept to the shrine of the Queen.

The singers, their hearts in their voices, Had chanted the anthems of old,  
And the last trembling wave of the Vespers On the far shores of silence had rolled.  
And there -- at the Queen-Virgin's altar -- The sun wove the mantle of gold  
While the hands of the twilight were weaving A fringe for the flash of each fold.

And wavelessly, in the deep silence, Three banners hung peaceful and low --  
They bore the bright blue of the heavens, They wore the pure white of the snow  
And beneath them fair children were kneeling, Whose faces, with graces aglow,  
Seemed sinless, in land that is sinful, And woeless, in life full of woe.

Their heads wore the veil of the lily, Their brows wore the wreath of the rose,  
And their hearts like their flutterless banners, Were stilled in a holy repose.  
Their shadowless eyes were uplifted, Whose glad gaze would never disclose  
That from eyes that are most like the heavens The dark rain of tears soonest flows.

The banners were borne to the railing, Beneath them, a group from each band;  
And they bent their bright folds for the blessing That fell from the priest's lifted hand.  
And he signed the three fair, silken standards, With a sign never foe could withstand.  
What stirred them? The breeze of the evening? Or a breath from the far angel-land?



Then came, two by two, to the altar,    The young, and the pure, and  
the fair, Their faces the mirror of Heaven,    Their hands folded meekly in  
prayer; They came for a simple blue ribbon,    For love of Christ's Mother  
to wear; And I believe, with the Children of Mary,    The Angels of Mary  
were there.

Ah, faith! simple faith of the children!    You still shame the faith of  
the old! Ah, love! simple love of the little,    You still warm the love of the  
cold! And the beautiful God who is wandering    Far out in the world's  
dreary wold, Finds a home in the hearts of the children    And a rest with  
the lambs of the fold.

Swept a voice:    was it wafted from Heaven?    Heard you ever the sea  
when it sings Where it sleeps on the shore in the night time?    Heard you  
ever the hymns the breeze brings From the hearts of a thousand bright  
summers?    Heard you ever the bird, when she springs To the clouds, till  
she seems to be only    A song of a shadow on wings?

Came a voice:    and an "Ave Maria"    Rose out of a heart rapture-  
thrilled; And in the embrace of its music    The souls of a thousand lay  
stilled. A voice with the tones of an angel,    Never flower such a  
sweetness distilled; It faded away -- but the temple    With its perfume of  
worship was filled.

Then back to the Queen-Virgin's altar    The white veils swept on, two  
by two; And the holiest halo of heaven    Flashed out from the ribbons of  
blue; And they laid down the wreaths of the roses    Whose hearts were as  
pure as their hue; Ah! they to the Christ are the truest,    Whose loves to  
the Mother are true!

And thus, in the dim of the temple,    In the dream-haunted dim of the  
day, The Angels and Children of Mary    Met ere their Queen's Feast  
passed away, Where the sun-gleams knelt down with the shadows    And  
wove with their gold and their gray A mantle of grace and of glory    For  
the last lovely evening of May.

## S. M. A.

Gone! and there's not a gleam of you, Faces that float into far away;  
Gone! and we can only dream of you Each as you fade like a star away.  
Fade as a star in the sky from us, Vainly we look for your light again;  
Hear ye the sound of a sigh from us? "Come!" and our hearts will be  
bright again.

Come! and gaze on our face once more, Bring us the smiles of the  
olden days; Come! and shine in your place once more, And change the  
dark into golden days. Gone! gone! gone! Joy is fled for us; Gone into  
the night of the nevermore, And darkness rests where you shed for us A  
light we will miss ~forevermore~.

Faces! ye come in the night to us; Shadows! ye float in the sky of  
sleep; Shadows! ye bring nothing bright to us; Faces! ye are but the sigh  
of sleep. Gone! and there's not a gleam of you, Faces that float into the  
far away; Gone! and we only can dream of you Till we sink like you and  
the stars away.

## Feast of the Sacred Heart

Two lights on a lowly altar; Two snowy cloths for a Feast; Two vases  
of dying roses; The morning comes from the east, With a gleam for the  
folds of the vestments And a grace for the face of the priest.

The sound of a low, sweet whisper Floats over a little bread, And  
trembles around a chalice, And the priest bows down his head! O'er a  
sign of white on the altar -- In the cup -- o'er a sign of red.

As red as the red of roses, As white as the white of snows! But the  
red is a red of a surface Beneath which a God's blood flows; And the  
white is the white of a sunlight Within which a God's flesh glows.

Ah! words of the olden Thursday! Ye come from the far-away! Ye  
bring us the Friday's victim In His own love's olden way; In the hand of  
the priest at the altar His Heart finds a home each day.

The sight of a Host uplifted! The silver-sound of a bell! The gleam  
of a golden chalice. Be glad, sad heart! 'tis well; He made, and He keeps  
love's promise, With thee all days to dwell.

From his hand to his lips that tremble, From his lips to his heart a-  
thrill, Goes the little Host on its love-path, Still doing the Father's will;  
And over the rim of the chalice The blood flows forth to fill

The heart of the man anointed With the waves of a wondrous grace;  
A silence falls on the altar -- An awe on each bended face -- For the  
Heart that bled on Calvary Still beats in the holy place.

The priest comes down to the railing Where brows are bowed in  
prayer; In the tender clasp of his fingers A Host lies pure and fair, And  
the hearts of Christ and the Christian Meet there -- and only there!

Oh! love that is deep and deathless! Oh! faith that is strong and  
grand! Oh! hope that will shine forever, O'er the wastes of a weary land!  
Christ's Heart finds an earthly heaven In the palm of the priest's pure  
hand.

## n Memory of Very Rev. J. B. Etienne

Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Sisters of Charity.

A shadow slept folded in vestments, The dream of a smile on its face,  
Dim, soft as the gleam after sunset That hangs like a halo of grace  
Where the daylight hath died in the valley, And the twilight hath taken  
its place. A shadow! but still on the mortal There rested the tremulous  
trace Of the joy of a spirit immortal, Passed up to its God in His grace.

A shadow! hast seen in the summer A cloud wear the smile of the  
sun? On the shadow of death there is flashing The glory of noble deeds  
done; On the face of the dead there is glowing The light of a holy race  
run; And the smile of the face is reflecting The gleam of the crown he  
has won. Still, shadow! sleep on in the vestments Unstained by the priest  
who has gone.

And thro' all the nations the children Of Vincent de Paul wail his loss;  
But the glory that crowns him in heaven Illumines the gloom of their  
cross. They send to the shadow the tribute Of tears, from the fountains of  
love, And they send from their altars sweet prayers To the throne of their  
Father above.

Yea! sorrow weeps over the shadow, But faith looks aloft to the skies;  
And hope, like a rainbow, is flashing O'er the tears that rain down from  
their eyes. They murmur on earth "De Profundis", The low chant is  
mingled with sighs; "Laudate" rings out through the heavens -- The dead  
priest hath won his faith's prize.

His children in sorrow will honor His grave; every tear is a gem, And  
their prayers round his brow in the heavens Will brighten his fair diadem.  
I kneel at his grave and remember, In love, I am ~still~ one of them.

## Tears

The tears that trickled down our eyes, They do not touch the earth to-day; But soar like angels to the skies, And, like the angels, may not die; For ah! our immortality Flows thro' each tear -- sounds in each sigh.

What waves of tears surge o'er the deep Of sorrow in our restless souls! And they are strong, not weak, who weep Those drops from out the sea that rolls Within their hearts forevermore, Without a depth -- without a shore.

But ah! the tears that are not wept, The tears that never outward fall; The tears that grief for years has kept Within us -- they are best of all; The tears our eyes shall never know, Are dearer than the tears that flow.

Each night upon earth's flowers below, The dew comes down from darkest skies, And every night our tears of woe Go up like dews to Paradise, To keep in bloom, and make more fair, The flowers of crowns we yet shall wear.

For ah! the surest way to God Is up the lonely streams of tears, That flow when bending 'neath His rod, And fill the tide of earthly years. On laughter's billows hearts are tossed, On waves of tears no heart is lost.

Flow on, ye tears! and bear me home; Flow not! ye tears of deeper woe; Flow on, ye tears! that are but foam Of deeper waves that will not flow. A little while -- I reach the shore Where tears flow not forevermore!

## Lines (Two Loves)

Two loves came up a long, wide aisle, And knelt at a low, white gate;  
One -- tender and true, with the shyest smile, One -- strong, true, and  
elate.

Two lips spoke in a firm, true way, And two lips answered soft and  
low; In one true hand such a little hand lay Fluttering, frail as a flake of  
snow.

One stately head bent humbly there, Stilled were the throbbings of  
human love; One head drooped down like a lily fair, Two prayers went,  
wing to wing, above.

God blest them both in the holy place, A long, brief moment the rite  
was done; On the human love fell the heavenly grace, Making two hearts  
forever one.

Between two lengthening rows of smiles, One sweetly shy, one  
proud, elate, Two loves passed down the long, wide aisles, Will they  
ever forget the low, white gate?

## The Land We Love

Land of the gentle and brave! Our love is as wide as thy woe; It deepens beside every grave Where the heart of a hero lies low.

Land of the sunniest skies! Our love glows the more for thy gloom; Our hearts, by the saddest of ties, Cling closest to thee in thy doom.

Land where the desolate weep In a sorrow no voice may console! Our tears are but streams, making deep The ocean of love in our soul.

Land where the victor's flag waves, Where only the dead are free! Each link of the chain that enslaves But binds us to them and to thee.

Land where the Sign of the Cross Its shadow hath everywhere shed! We measure our love by thy loss, Thy loss by the graves of our dead!

## In Memoriam

Go! heart of mine! the way is long -- The night is dark -- the place is far;  
Go! kneel and pray, or chant a song, Beside two graves where  
Mary's star Shines o'er two children's hearts at rest, With Mary's  
medals on their breast.

Go! heart! those children loved you so, Their little lips prayed oft for  
you! But ah! those necks are lying low Round which you twined the  
badge of blue. Go to their graves, this Virgin's feast, With poet's  
song and prayer of priest.

Go! like a pilgrim to a shrine, For that is holy ground where sleep  
Children of Mary and of thine; Go! kneel, and pray and sing and weep;  
Last summer how their faces smiled When each was blessed as Mary's  
child.

\* \* \* \* \*

My heart is gone! I cannot sing! Beside those children's grave, song  
dies; Hush! Poet! -- Priest! Prayer hath a wing To pass the stars and  
reach the skies; Sweet children! from the land of light Look down  
and bless my heart to-night.



## Reverie ["We laugh when our souls are the saddest,"]

We laugh when our souls are the saddest, We shroud all our griefs in  
a smile; Our voices may warble their gladdest, And our souls mourn in  
anguish the while.

And our eyes wear a summer's bright glory, When winter is wailing  
beneath; And we tell not the world the sad story Of the thorn hidden  
back of the wreath.

Ah! fast flow the moments of laughter, And bright as the brook to  
the sea But ah! the dark hours that come after Of moaning for you and  
for me.

Yea, swift as the sunshine, and fleeting As birds, fly the moments of  
glee! And we smile, and mayhap grief is sleeting Its ice upon you and on  
me.

And the clouds of the tempest are shifting O'er the heart, tho' the  
face may be bright; And the snows of woe's winter are drifting Our souls;  
and each day hides a night.

For ah! when our souls are enjoying The mirth which our faces  
reveal, There is something -- a something -- alloying The sweetness of  
joy that we feel.

Life's loveliest sky hides the thunder Whose bolt in a moment may  
fall; And our path may be flowery, but under The flowers there are  
thorns for us all.

Ah! 'tis hard when our beautiful dreamings That flash down the  
valley of night, Wave their wing when the gloom hides their gleaming,  
And leave us, like eagles in flight;

And fly far away unreturning, And leave us in terror and tears, While  
vain is the spirit's wild yearning That they may come back in the years.

Come back! did I say it? but never Do eagles come back to the cage:  
They have gone -- they have gone -- and forever -- Does youth come  
back ever to age?

No! a joy that has left us in sorrow    Smiles never again on our way,  
But we meet in the farthest to-morrow    The face of the grief of to-day.

The brightness whose tremulous glimmer    Has faded we cannot recall;  
And the light that grows dimmer and dimmer --    When gone -- 'tis  
forever and all.

Not a ray of it anywhere lingers,    Not a gleam of it gilds the vast  
gloom; Youth's roses perfume not the fingers    Of age groping nigh to the  
tomb.

For "the memory of joy is a sadness" --    The dim twilight after the  
day; And the grave where we bury a gladness    Sends a grief like a ghost,  
on our way.

No day shall return that has faded,    The dead come not back from the  
tomb; The vale of each life must be shaded,    That we may see best from  
the gloom.

The height of the homes of our glory,    All radiant with splendors of  
light; That we may read clearly life's story --    "The dark is the dawn of  
the bright."

## I Often Wonder Why 'Tis So

Some find work where some find rest, And so the weary world goes on: I sometimes wonder which is best; The answer comes when life is gone.

Some eyes sleep when some eyes wake, And so the dreary night-hours go; Some hearts beat where some hearts break; I often wonder why 'tis so.

Some wills faint where some wills fight, Some love the tent, and some the field; I often wonder who are right -- The ones who strive, or those who yield?

Some hands fold where other hands Are lifted bravely in the strife; And so thro' ages and thro' lands Move on the two extremes of life.

Some feet halt where some feet tread, In tireless march, a thorny way; Some struggle on where some have fled; Some seek when others shun the fray.

Some swords rust where others clash, Some fall back where some move on; Some flags furl where others flash Until the battle has been won.

Some sleep on while others keep The vigils of the true and brave: They will not rest till roses creep Around their name above a grave.

## A Blessing

Be you near, or be you far, Let my blessing, like a star, Shine upon you everywhere! And in each lone evening hour, When the twilight folds the flower, I will fold thy name in prayer.

In the dark and in the day, To my heart you know the way, Sorrow's pale hand keeps the key; In your sorrow or your sin You may always enter in; I will keep a place for thee.

If God's blessing pass away From your spirit; if you stray From his presence, do not wait. Come to my heart, for I keep For the hearts that wail and weep, Ever opened wide -- a gate. In your joys to others go, When your feet walk ways of woe Only then come back to me; I will give you tear for tear, And our tears shall more endear Thee to me and me to thee.

For I make my heart the home Of all hearts in grief that come Seeking refuge and a rest. Do not fear me, for you know, Be your footsteps e'er so low, I know yours, of all, the best.

Once you came; and you brought sin; Did not my hand lead you in -- Into God's heart, thro' my own? Did not my voice speak a word You, for years, had never heard -- Mystic word in Mercy's tone?

And a grace fell on your brow, And I heard your murmured vow, When I whispered: "Go in peace." "Go in peace, and sin no more," Did you not touch Mercy's shore, Did not sin's wild tempest cease?

Go! then: thou art good and pure! If thou e'er shouldst fall, be sure, Back to me thy footsteps trace! In my heart for year and year, Be thou far away or near, I shall keep for thee a place.

Yes! I bless you -- near or far -- And my blessing, like a star, Shall shine on you everywhere; And in many a holy hour, As the sunshine folds the flower, I will fold thy heart in prayer.

July 9th, 1872

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Between two pillared clouds of gold The beautiful gates of evening

swung -- And far and wide from flashing fold    The half-furled banners of  
light, that hung    O'er green of wood and gray of wold    And over the  
blue where the river rolled,    The fading gleams of their glory flung.

The sky wore not a frown all day    To mar the smile of the morning  
tide; The soft-voiced winds sang joyous lay --    You never would think  
they had ever sighed;    The stream went on its sunlit way    In ripples of  
laughter; happy they    As the hearts that met at Riverside.

No cloudlet in the sky serene!    Not a silver speck in the golden hue!  
But where the woods waved low and green,    And seldom would let the  
sunlight through,    Sweet shadows fell, and in their screen,    The faces  
of children might be seen,    And the flash of ribbons of blue.

It was a children's simple feast,    Yet many were there whose faces  
told How far they are from childhood's East    Who have reached the  
evening of the old!    And father -- mother -- sister -- priest --    They  
seemed all day like the very least    Of the little children of the fold.

The old forgot they were not young,    The young forgot they would  
e'er be old, And all day long the trees among,    Where'er their footsteps  
stayed or strolled,    Came wittiest word from tireless tongue,    And the  
merriest peals of laughter rung    Where the woods drooped low and the  
river rolled.

No cloud upon the faces there,    Not a sorrow came from its hiding  
place To cast the shadow of a care    On the fair, sweet brows in that fairest  
place    For in the sky and in the air,    And in their spirits, and  
everywhere,    Joy reigned in the fullness of her grace.

The day was long, but ah! too brief!    Swift to the West bright-winged  
she fled; Too soon on ev'ry look and leaf    The last rays flushed which her  
plumage shed    From an evening cloud -- was it a sign of grief?    And  
the bright day passed -- is there much relief    That its dream dies not when  
its gleam is dead?

Great sky, thou art a prophet still!    And by thy shadows and by thy  
rays We read the future if we will,    And all the fates of our future ways;  
To-morrows meet us in vale and hill,    And under the trees, and by the  
rill,    Thou givest the sign of our coming days.

That evening cloud was a sign, I ween --    For the sister of that

summer day Shall come next year to the selfsame scene; The winds will  
sing the selfsame lay; The selfsame woods will wave as green, And  
Riverside, thy skies serene Shall robe thee again in a golden sheen; Yet  
though thy shadows may weave a screen Where the children's faces may  
be seen, Thou ne'er shall be as thou hast been, For a face they loved has  
passed away.

## Wake Me a Song

Out of the silences wake me a song, Beautiful, sad, and soft, and low;  
Let the loveliest music sound along, And wing each note with a wail of  
woe: Dim and drear As hope's last tear; Out of the silences  
wake me a hymn, Whose sounds are like shadows soft and dim.

Out of the stillness in your heart -- A thousand songs are sleeping  
there -- Wake me a song, thou child of art! The song of a hope in a last  
despair: Dark and low, A chant of woe; Out of the stillness,  
tone by tone, Cold as a snowflake, low as a moan.

Out of the darkness flash me a song, Brightly dark and darkly bright;  
Let it sweep as a lone star sweeps along The mystical shadows of the  
night: Sing it sweet; Where nothing is drear, or dark, or dim, And  
earth-song soars into heavenly hymn.

## In Memoriam (David J. Ryan, C.S.A.)

Thou art sleeping, brother, sleeping      In thy lonely battle grave;  
Shadows o'er the past are creeping, Death, the reaper, still is reaping, Years  
have swept, and years are sweeping Many a memory from my keeping,  
But I'm waiting still, and weeping      For my beautiful and brave.

When the battle songs were chanted,      And war's stirring tocsin  
pealed, By those songs thy heart was haunted, And thy spirit, proud,  
undaunted, Clamored wildly -- wildly panted: "Mother! let my wish be  
granted; I will ne'er be mocked and taunted That I fear to meet our vaunted  
Foemen on the bloody field.

"They are thronging, mother! thronging,      To a thousand fields of  
fame; Let me go -- 'tis wrong, and wronging God and thee to crush this  
longing; On the muster-roll of glory, In my country's future story, On the  
field of battle gory      I must consecrate my name.

"Mother! gird my sword around me,      Kiss thy soldier-boy `good-  
bye.'" In her arms she wildly wound thee, To thy birth-land's cause she  
bound thee, With fond prayers and blessings crowned thee, And she  
sobbed: "When foes surround thee, If you fall, I'll know they found thee  
Where the bravest love to die."

At the altar of their nation,      Stood that mother and her son, He, the  
victim of oblation, Panting for his immolation; She, in priestess' holy  
station, Weeping words of consecration, While God smiled his  
approbation, Blessed the boy's self-abnegation, Cheered the mother's  
desolation,      When the sacrifice was done.

Forth, like many a noble other,      Went he, whispering soft and low:  
"Good-bye -- pray for me, my mother; Sister! kiss me -- farewell,  
brother;" And he strove his grief to smother. Forth, with footsteps firm and  
fearless, And his parting gaze was tearless Though his heart was lone and  
cheerless,      Thus from all he loved to go.

Lo! yon flag of freedom flashing      In the sunny Southern sky: On,



to death and glory dashing, On, where swords are clanging, clashing, On,  
where balls are crushing, crashing, On, 'mid perils dread, appalling, On,  
they're falling, falling, falling. On, they're growing fewer, fewer, On, their  
hearts beat all the truer, On, on, on, no fear, no falter, On, though  
round the battle-altar There were wounded victims moaning, There were  
dying soldiers groaning; On, right on, death's danger braving, Warring  
where their flag was waving, While Baptismal blood was laving All  
that field of death and slaughter; On, still on; that bloody lava Made them  
braver and made them braver, On, with never a halt or waver, On in battle  
-- bleeding -- bounding, While the glorious shout swept sounding,  
"We will win the day or die!"

And they won it; routed -- riven -- Reeled the foemen's proud  
array: They had struggled hard, and striven, Blood in torrents they had  
given, But their ranks, dispersed and driven, Fled, in sullenness, away.

Many a heart was lonely lying That would never throb again;  
Some were dead, and some were dying; Those were silent, these were  
sighing; Thus to die alone, unattended, Unbewept and unbefriended,  
On that bloody battle-plain.

When the twilight sadly, slowly Wrapped its mantle o'er them all,  
Thousands, thousands lying lowly, Hushed in silence deep and holy, There  
was one, his blood was flowing And his last of life was going,

And his pulse faint, fainter beating Told his hours were few and  
fleeting; And his brow grew white and whiter, While his eyes grew  
strangely brighter; There he lay -- like infant dreaming, With his sword  
beside him gleaming, For the hand in life that grasped it, True in death still  
fondly clasped it; There his comrades found him lying 'Mid the heaps of  
dead and dying, And the sternest bent down weeping O'er the lonely  
sleeper sleeping: 'Twas the midnight; stars shone round him, And they told  
us how they found him Where the bravest love to fall.

Where the woods, like banners bending, Drooped in starlight and  
in gloom, There, when that sad night was ending, And the faint, far dawn  
was blending With the stars now fast descending; There they mute and  
mournful bore him, With the stars and shadows o'er him, And they laid  
him down -- so tender -- And the next day's sun, in splendor, Flashed

above my brother's tomb.

## What? (To Ethel)

At the golden gates of the visions I knelt me adown one day; But sudden my prayer was a silence, For I heard from the "Far away" The murmur of many voices And a silvery censer's sway.

I bowed in awe, and I listened -- The deeps of my soul were stirred, But deepest of all was the meaning Of the far-off music I heard, And yet it was stiller than silence, Its notes were the "Dream of a Word".

A word that is whispered in heaven, But cannot be heard below; It lives on the lips of the angels Where'er their pure wings glow; Yet only the "Dream of its Echo" Ever reaches this valley of woe.

But I know the word and its meaning; I reached to its height that day, When prayer sank into a silence And my heart was so far away; But I may not murmur the music, Nor the word may my lips yet say.

But some day far in the future, And up from the dust of the dead, And out of my lips when speechless The mystical word shall be said, 'Twill come to thee, still as a spirit, When the soul of the bard has fled.

## The Master's Voice

The waves were weary, and they went to sleep;      The winds were hushed;      The starlight flushed The furrowed face of all the mighty deep.

The billows yester eve so dark and wild,      Wore strangely now A calm upon their brow, Like that which rests upon a cradled child.

The sky was bright, and every single star,      With gleaming face, Was in its place, And looked upon the sea -- so fair and far.

And all was still -- still as a temple dim,      When low and faint, As murmurs plaint, Dies the last note of the Vesper hymn.

A bark slept on the sea, and in the bark      Slept Mary's Son -- The only One Whose face is light! where all, all else, is dark.

His brow was heavenward turned, His face was fair      He dreamed of me      On that still sea -- The stars He made were gleaming through His hair.

And lo! a moan moved o'er the mighty deep;      The sky grew dark: The little bark Felt all the waves awaking from their sleep.

The winds wailed wild, and wilder billows beat;      The bark was tossed:      Shall all be lost? But Mary's Son slept on, serene and sweet.

The tempest raged in all its mighty wrath,      The winds howled on, All hope seemed gone, And darker waves surged round the bark's lone path.

The sleeper woke! He gazed upon the deep;      He whispered: "Peace!      Winds -- wild waves, cease! Be still!"      The tempest fled -- the ocean fell asleep.

And ah! when human hearts by storms are tossed,      When life's lone bark      Drifts through the dark And 'mid the wildest waves where all seems lost,

He now, as then, with words of power and peace,      Murmurs: "Stormy deep,      Be still -- still -- and sleep!" And lo! a great calm comes -- the tempest's perils cease.

## A "Thought-Flower"

Silently -- shadowly -- some lives go, And the sound of their voices  
is all unheard; Or, if heard at all, 'tis as faint as the flow Of beautiful  
waves which no storm hath stirred. Deep lives these As the  
pearl-strewn seas.

Softly and noiselessly some feet tread Lone ways on earth, without  
leaving a mark; They move 'mid the living, they pass to the dead, As still  
as the gleam of a star thro' the dark. Sweet lives those In their  
strange repose.

Calmly and lowly some hearts beat, And none may know that they  
beat at all; They muffle their music whenever they meet A few in a hut  
or a crowd in a hall. Great hearts those -- God only knows!

Soundlessly -- shadowly -- such move on, Dim as the dream of a  
child asleep; And no one knoweth 'till they are gone How lofty their  
souls -- their hearts how deep. Bright souls these -- God only  
sees.

Lonely and hiddenly in the world -- Tho' in the world 'tis their lot to  
stay -- The tremulous wings of their hearts are furled Until they fly from  
the world away, And find their rest On "Our Father's" breast,  
Where earth's unknown shall be known the best, And the hidden hearts  
shall be brightest blest.

## A Death

Crushed with a burden of woe, Wrecked in the tempest of sin: Death came, and two lips murmured low, "Ah! once I was white as the snow, In the happy and pure long ago; But they say God is sweet -- is it so? Will He let a poor wayward one in -- In where the innocent are? Ah! justice stands guard at the gate; Does it mock at a poor sinner's fate? Alas! I have fallen so far! Oh, God! Oh, my God! 'tis too late! I have fallen as falls a lost star:

"The sky does not miss the gone gleam, But my heart, like the lost star, can dream Of the sky it has fall'n from. Nay! I have wandered too far -- far away. Oh! would that my mother were here; Is God like a mother? Has He Any love for a sinner like me?"

Her face wore the wildness of woe -- Her words, the wild tones of despair; Ah! how can a heart sink so low? How a face that was once bright and so fair, Can be furrowed and darkened with care? Wild rushed the hot tears from her eyes, From her lips rushed the wildest of sighs, Her poor heart was broken; but then Her God was far gentler than men.

A voice whispered low at her side, "Child! God is more gentle than men, He watches by passion's dark tide, He sees a wreck drifting -- and then He beckons with hand and with voice, And he sees the poor wreck floating in To the haven on Mercy's bright shore; And He whispers the whisper of yore: `The angels of heaven rejoice O'er the sinner repenting of sin.'"

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And a silence came down for a while, And her lips they were moving in prayer, And her face it wore just such a smile As, perhaps, it was oft wont to wear, Ere the heart of the girl knew a guile, Ere the soul of the girl knew the wile, That had led her to passion's despair.

Death's shadows crept over her face, And softened the hard marks of care; Repentance had won a last grace, And the Angel of Mercy stood there.

## The Rosary of My Tears

Some reckon their age by years, Some measure their life by art; But  
some tell their days by the flow of their tears, And their lives by the  
moans of their heart.

The dials of earth may show The length, not the depth, of years, Few  
or many they come, few or many they go, But time is best measured by  
tears.

Ah! not by the silver gray That creeps thro' the sunny hair, And not  
by the scenes that we pass on our way, And not by the furrows the  
fingers of care

On forehead and face have made. Not so do we count our years; Not  
by the sun of the earth, but the shade Of our souls, and the fall of our  
tears.

For the young are oftentimes old, Though their brows be bright and fair;  
While their blood beats warm, their hearts are cold -- O'er them the  
spring -- but winter is there.

And the old are oftentimes young, When their hair is thin and white;  
And they sing in age, as in youth they sung, And they laugh, for their  
cross was light.

But bead, by bead, I tell The rosary of my years; From a cross to a  
cross they lead; 'tis well, And they're blest with a blessing of tears.

Better a day of strife Than a century of sleep; Give me instead of a  
long stream of life The tempests and tears of the deep.

A thousand joys may foam On the billows of all the years; But never  
the foam brings the lone back home -- It reaches the haven through tears.

## Death

Out of the shadows of sadness, Into the sunshine of gladness, Into the light of the blest; Out of a land very dreary, Out of a world very weary, Into the rapture of rest.

Out of to-day's sin and sorrow, Into a blissful to-morrow, Into a day without gloom; Out of a land filled with sighing, Land of the dead and the dying, Into a land without tomb.

Out of a life of commotion, Tempest-swept oft as the ocean, Dark with the wrecks drifting o'er; Into a land calm and quiet, Never a storm cometh nigh it, Never a wreck on its shore.

Out of a land in whose bowers Perish and fade all the flowers: Out of the land of decay, Into the Eden where fairest Of flowerets, and sweetest and rarest, Never shall wither away.

Out of the world of the wailing Thronged with the anguished and ailing; Out of the world of the sad, Into the world that rejoices -- World of bright visions and voices -- Into the world of the glad.

Out of a life ever mournful, Out of a land very lornful, Where in bleak exile we roam, Into a joy-land above us, Where there's a Father to love us -- Into our home -- "Sweet Home".



## What Ails the World?

"What ails the world?" the poet cried;      "And why does death walk everywhere?      And why do tears fall anywhere?      And skies have clouds, and souls have care?" Thus the poet sang, and sighed.

For he would fain have all things glad,      All lives happy, all hearts bright;      Not a day would end in night,      Not a wrong would vex a right -- And so he sang -- and he was sad.

Thro' his very grandest rhymes      Moved a mournful monotone -- Like a shadow eastward thrown      From a sunset -- like a moan Tangled in a joy-bell's chimes.

"What ails the world?" he sang and asked --      And asked and sang -- but all in vain;      No answer came to any strain,      And no reply to his refrain -- The mystery moved 'round him masked.

"What ails the world?"      An echo came --      "Ails the world?"      The minstrel bands,      With famous or forgotten hands,      Lift up their lyres in all the lands, And chant alike, and ask the same

From him whose soul first soared in song,      A thousand, thousand years away,      To him who sang but yesterday,      In dying or in deathless lay -- "What ails the world?" comes from the throng.

They fain would sing the world to rest;      And so they chant in countless keys,      As many as the waves of seas,      And as the breathings of the breeze, Yet even when they sing their best --

When o'er the list'ning world there floats      Such melody as 'raptures men --      When all look up entranced -- and when      The song of fame floats forth, e'en then A discord creepeth through the notes --

Their sweetest harps have broken strings,      Their grandest accords have their jars,      Like shadows on the light of stars,      And somehow, something ever mars The songs the greatest minstrel sings.

And so each song is incomplete,      And not a rhyme can ever round Into the chords of perfect sound      The tones of thought that e'er surround The ways walked by the poet's feet.

"What ails the world?" he sings and sighs;      No answer cometh to

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his cry.      He asks the earth and asks the sky --      The echoes of his  
song pass by Unanswered -- and the poet dies.

## A Thought

There never was a valley without a faded flower, There never was a heaven without some little cloud; The face of day may flash with light in any morning hour, But evening soon shall come with her shadow-woven shroud.

There never was a river without its mists of gray, There never was a forest without its fallen leaf; And joy may walk beside us down the windings of our way, When, lo! there sounds a footstep, and we meet the face of grief.

There never was a seashore without its drifting wreck, There never was an ocean without its moaning wave; And the golden gleams of glory the summer sky that fleck, Shine where dead stars are sleeping in their azure-mantled grave.

There never was a streamlet, however crystal clear, Without a shadow resting in the ripples of its tide; Hope's brightest robes are 'broidered with the sable fringe of fear, And she lures us, but abysses girt her path on either side.

The shadow of the mountain falls athwart the lowly plain, And the shadow of the cloudlet hangs above the mountain's head, And the highest hearts and lowest wear the shadow of some pain, And the smile has scarcely flitted ere the anguish'd tear is shed.

For no eyes have there been ever without a weary tear, And those lips cannot be human which have never heaved a sigh; For without the dreary winter there has never been a year, And the tempests hide their terrors in the calmest summer sky.

The cradle means the coffin, and the coffin means the grave; The mother's song scarce hides the ~De Profundis~ of the priest; You may cull the fairest roses any May-day ever gave, But they wither while you wear them ere the ending of your feast.

So this dreary life is passing -- and we move amid its maze, And we grope along together, half in darkness, half in light; And our hearts are often burdened by the mysteries of our ways, Which are never all in

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shadow and are never wholly bright.

And our dim eyes ask a beacon, and our weary feet a guide, And our hearts of all life's mysteries seek the meaning and the key; And a cross gleams o'er our pathway -- on it hangs the Crucified, And He answers all our yearnings by the whisper, "Follow Me." Life is a burden; bear it; Life is a duty; dare it; Life is a thorn-crown; wear it, Though it break your heart in twain; Though the burden crush you down; Close your lips, and hide your pain, First the Cross, and then, the Crown.

### In Rome

At last the dream of youth Stands fair and bright before me, The sunshine of the home of truth Falls tremulously o'er me.

And tower, and spire, and lofty dome In brightest skies are gleaming; Walk I, to-day, the ways of Rome, Or am I only dreaming?

No, 'tis no dream; my very eyes Gaze on the hill-tops seven; Where crosses rise and kiss the skies, And grandly point to Heaven.

Gray ruins loom on ev'ry side, Each stone an age's story; They seem the very ghosts of pride That watch the grave of glory.

There senates sat, whose sceptre sought An empire without limit; There grandeur dreamed its dream and thought That death would never dim it.

There rulers reigned; yon heap of stones Was once their gorgeous palace; Beside them now, on altar-thrones, The priests lift up the chalice.

There legions marched with bucklers bright, And lances lifted o'er them; While flags, like eagles plumed for flight, Unfurled their wings before them.

There poets sang, whose deathless name Is linked to deathless verses; There heroes hushed with shouts of fame Their trampled victim's curses.

There marched the warriors back to home, Beneath yon crumbling portal, And placed upon the brow of Rome The proud crown of immortal.

There soldiers stood with armor on, In steel-clad ranks and serried,

The while their red swords flashed upon    The slaves whose rights they  
buried.

Here pagan pride, with sceptre, stood,    And fame would not forsake it,  
Until a simple cross of wood    Came from the East to break it.

That Rome is dead -- here is the grave --    Dead glory rises never; And  
countless crosses o'er it wave,    And will wave on forever.

Beyond the Tiber gleams a dome    Above the hill-tops seven; It arches  
o'er the world from Rome,    And leads the world to Heaven.

\_\_\_\_ December 6, 1872.

## After Sickness

I nearly died, I almost touched the door That swings between forever and no more; I think I heard the awful hinges grate, Hour after hour, while I did weary wait Death's coming; but alas! 'twas all in vain: The door half-opened and then closed again.

What were my thoughts? I had but one regret -- That I was doomed to live and linger yet In this dark valley where the stream of tears Flows, and, in flowing, deepens thro' the years. My lips spake not -- my eyes were dull and dim, But thro' my heart there moved a soundless hymn -- A triumph song of many chords and keys, Transcending language -- as the summer breeze, Which, through the forest mystically floats, Transcends the reach of mortal music's notes. A song of victory -- a chant of bliss: Wedded to words, it might have been like this:

"Come, death! but I am fearless, I shrink not from your frown;  
The eyes you close are tearless; Haste! strike this frail form down.  
Come! there is no dissembling In this last, solemn hour, But  
you'll find my heart untrembling Before your awful power. My  
lips grow pale and paler, My eyes are strangely dim, I wail not  
as a wailer, I sing a victor's hymn. My limbs grow cold and  
colder, My room is all in gloom; Bold death! -- but I am bolder -  
- Come! lead me to my tomb! 'Tis cold, and damp, and dreary,  
'Tis still, and lone, and deep; Haste, death! my eyes are weary, I  
want to fall asleep.

`Strike quick! Why dost thou tarry? Of time why such a  
loss? Dost fear the sign I carry? 'Tis but a simple cross.  
Thou wilt not strike? Then hear me: Come! strike in any hour,  
My heart shall never fear thee Nor flinch before thy power. I'll  
meet thee -- time's dread lictor -- And my wasted lips shall sing:  
'Dread death! I am the victor! Strong death! where is thy sting?'"

\_\_\_\_ Milan, January, 1873.

## Old Trees

Old trees, old trees! in your mystic gloom    There's many a warrior  
laid, And many a nameless and lonely tomb    Is sheltered beneath your  
shade. Old trees, old trees! without pomp or prayer    We buried the brave  
and the true, We fired a volley and left them there    To rest, old trees, with  
you.

Old trees, old trees! keep watch and ward    Over each grass-grown  
bed; 'Tis a glory, old trees, to stand as guard    Over the Southern dead;  
Old trees, old trees! we shall pass away    Like the leaves you yearly shed,  
But ye, lone sentinels, still must stay,    Old trees, to guard "our dead".

## After Seeing Pius IX

I saw his face to-day; he looks a chief Who fears not human rage,  
nor human guile; Upon his cheeks the twilight of a grief, But in that  
grief the starlight of a smile. Deep, gentle eyes, with drooping lids that tell  
They are the homes where tears of sorrow dwell; A low voice -- strangely  
sweet -- whose very tone Tells how these lips speak oft with God alone. I  
kissed his hand, I fain would kiss his feet; "No, no," he said; and then, in  
accents sweet, His blessing fell upon my bended head. He bade me rise; a  
few more words he said, Then took me by the hand -- the while he smiled  
-- And, going, whispered: "Pray for me, my child."



## Sentinel Songs

When falls the soldier brave, Dead at the feet of wrong, The poet  
sings and guards his grave With sentinels of song.

Songs, march! he gives command, Keep faithful watch and true; The  
living and dead of the conquered land Have now no guards save you.

Gray ballads! mark ye well! Thrice holy is your trust! Go! halt by the  
fields where warriors fell; Rest arms! and guard their dust.

List, songs! your watch is long, The soldiers' guard was brief; Whilst  
right is right, and wrong is wrong, Ye may not seek relief.

Go! wearing the gray of grief! Go! watch o'er the dead in gray! Go!  
guard the private and guard the chief, And sentinel their clay!

And the songs, in stately rhyme And with softly sounding tread, Go  
forth, to watch for a time -- a time -- Where sleep the Deathless Dead.

And the songs, like funeral dirge, In music soft and low, Sing round  
the graves, whilst hot tears surge From hearts that are homes of woe.

What tho' no sculptured shaft Immortalize each brave? What tho' no  
monument epitaphed Be built above each grave?

When marble wears away And monuments are dust, The songs that  
guard our soldiers' clay Will still fulfil their trust.

With lifted head and stately tread, Like stars that guard the skies, Go  
watch each bed where rest the dead, Brave songs, with sleepless eyes.

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When falls the cause of Right, The poet grasps his pen, And in  
gleaming letters of living light Transmits the truth to men.

Go, songs! he says who sings; Go! tell the world this tale; Bear it  
afar on your tireless wings: The Right will yet prevail.

Songs! sound like the thunder's breath! Boom o'er the world and say:  
Brave men may die -- Right has no death! Truth never shall pass away!

Go! sing thro' a nation's sighs! Go! sob thro' a people's tears! Sweep  
the horizons of all the skies, And throb through a thousand years!

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And the songs, with brave, sad face, Go proudly down their way,

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Wailing the loss of a conquered race And waiting an Easter-day.

Away! away! like the birds, They soar in their flight sublime; And the waving wings of the poet's words Flash down to the end of time.

When the flag of justice fails, Ere its folds have yet been furled, The poet waves its folds in wails That flutter o'er the world.

Songs, march! and in rank by rank The low, wild verses go, To watch the graves where the grass is dank, And the martyrs sleep below.

Songs! halt where there is no name! Songs! stay where there is no stone! And wait till you hear the feet of Fame Coming to where ye moan.

And the songs, with lips that mourn, And with hearts that break in twain At the beck of the bard -- a hope forlorn -- Watch the plain where sleep the slain.

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When the warrior's sword is lowered Ere its stainless sheen grows dim, The bard flings forth its dying gleam On the wings of a deathless hymn.

Songs, fly far o'er the world And adown to the end of time: Let the sword still flash, tho' its flag be furled, Thro' the sheen of the poet's rhyme.

Songs! fly as the eagles fly! The bard unbars the cage; Go, soar away, and afar and high Wave your wings o'er every age.

Shriek shrilly o'er each day, As futureward ye fly, That the men were right who wore the gray, And Right can never die.

And the songs, with waving wing, Fly far, float far away From the ages' crest; o'er the world they fling The shade of the stainless gray.

Might! sing your triumph-songs! Each song but sounds a shame; Go down the world, in loud-voiced throngs, To win, from the future, fame.

Our ballads, born of tears, Will track you on your way, And win the hearts of the future years For the men who wore the gray.

And so -- say what you will -- In the heart of God's own laws I have a faith, and my heart believes still In the triumph of our cause.

Such hope may all be vain, And futile be such trust; But the weary eyes that weep the slain, And watch above such dust,

They cannot help but lift Their visions to the skies; They watch the clouds, but wait the rift Through which their hope shall rise.

The victor wields the sword: Its blade may broken be By a thought that sleeps in a deathless word, To wake in the years to be.

We wait a grand-voiced bard, Who, when he sings, will send Immortal songs' "Imperial Guard" The Lost Cause to defend.

He has not come; he will. But when he chants, his song Will stir the world to its depths and thrill The earth with its tale of wrong.

The fallen cause still waits -- Its bard has not come yet. His sun through one of to-morrow's gates Shall shine, but never set.

But when he comes he'll sweep A harp with tears all stringed, And the very notes he strikes will weep As they come from his hand woe-winged.

Ah! grand shall be his strain, And his songs shall fill all climes, And the rebels shall rise and march again Down the lines of his glorious rhymes.

And through his verse shall gleam The swords that flashed in vain, And the men who wore the gray shall seem To be marshaling again.

But hush! between his words Peer faces sad and pale, And you hear the sound of broken chords Beat through the poet's wail.

Through his verse the orphans cry -- The terrible undertone -- And the father's curse and the mother's sigh, And the desolate young wife's moan.

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But harps are in every land That await a voice that sings, And a master-hand -- but the humblest hand May gently touch its strings.

I sing with a voice too low To be heard beyond to-day, In minor keys of my people's woe, But my songs pass away.

To-morrow hears them not -- To-morrow belongs to Fame -- My songs, like the birds', will be forgot, And forgotten shall be my name.

And yet who knows? Betimes The grandest songs depart, While the gentle, humble, and low-toned rhymes Will echo from heart to heart.

But, oh! if in song or speech, In major or minor key, My voice could over the ages reach, I would whisper the name of Lee.

In the night of our defeat Star after star had gone, But the way was  
bright to our soldiers' feet Where the star of Lee led on.

But sudden there came a cloud, Out rung a nation's knell; Our cause  
was wrapped in its winding shroud, All fell when the great Lee fell.

From his men, with scarce a word, Silence when great hearts part!  
But we know he sheathed his stainless sword In the wound of a broken  
heart.

He fled from Fame; but Fame Sought him in his retreat, Demanding  
for the world one name Made deathless by defeat.

Nay, Fame! success is best! All lost! and nothing won: North, keep  
the clouds that flush the West, We have the sinking sun.

All lost! but by the graves Where martyred heroes rest, He wins the  
most who honor saves -- Success is not the test.

All lost! a nation weeps; By all the tears that fall, He loses naught  
who conscience keeps, Lee's honor saves us all.

All lost! but e'en defeat Hath triumphs of her own, Wrong's paean  
hath no note so sweet As trampled Right's proud moan.

The world shall yet decide, In truth's clear, far-off light, That the  
soldiers who wore the gray, and died With Lee, were in the right.

And men, by time made wise, Shall in the future see No name hath  
risen, or ever shall rise, Like the name of Robert Lee.

Ah, me! my words are weak, This task surpasses me; Dead soldiers!  
rise from your graves and speak, And tell how you loved Lee.

The banner you bore is furled, And the gray is faded, too! But in all  
the colors that deck the world Your gray blends not with blue.

The colors are far apart, Graves sever them in twain; The Northern  
heart and the Southern heart May beat in peace again;

But still till time's last day, Whatever lips may plight, The blue is  
blue, but the gray is gray, Wrong never accords with Right.

Go, Glory! and forever guard Our chieftain's hallowed dust; And  
Honor! keep eternal ward! And Fame! be this thy trust!

Go! with your bright emblazoned scroll And tell the years to be, The  
first of names that flash your roll Is ours -- great Robert Lee.

Lee wore the gray! since then 'Tis Right's and Honor's hue! He

honored it, that man of men, And wrapped it round the true.

Dead! but his spirit breathes! Dead! but his heart is ours! Dead! but  
his sunny and sad land wreathes His crown with tears for flowers.

A statue for his tomb! Mould it of marble white! For Wrong, a  
spectre of death and doom; An angel of hope for Right.

But Lee has a thousand graves In a thousand hearts, I ween; And  
teardrops fall from our eyes in waves That will keep his memory green.

Ah! Muse, you dare not claim A nobler man than he, Nor nobler man  
hath less of blame, Nor blameless man hath purer name, Nor purer name  
hath grander fame, Nor fame -- another Lee.

## A Mystery

His face was sad; some shadow must have hung Above his soul; its folds, now falling dark, Now almost bright; but dark or not so dark, Like cloud upon a mount, 'twas always there -- A shadow; and his face was always sad.

His eyes were changeful; for the gloom of gray Within them met and blended with the blue, And when they gazed they seemed almost to dream They looked beyond you into far-away, And often drooped; his face was always sad.

His eyes were deep; I often saw them dim, As if the edges of a cloud of tears Had gathered there, and only left a mist That made them moist and kept them ever moist. He never wept; his face was always sad.

I mean, not many saw him ever weep, And yet he seemed as one who often wept, Or always, tears that were too proud to flow In outer streams, but shrunk within and froze -- Froze down into himself; his face was sad.

And yet sometimes he smiled -- a sudden smile, As if some far-gone joy came back again, Surprised his heart, and flashed across his face A moment like a light through rifts in clouds, Which falls upon an unforgotten grave; He rarely laughed; his face was ever sad.

And when he spoke his words were sad as wails, And strange as stories of an unknown land, And full of meanings as the sea of moans. At times he was so still that silence seemed To sentinel his lips; and not a word Would leave his heart; his face was strangely sad.

But then at times his speech flowed like a stream -- A deep and dreamy stream through lonely dells Of lofty mountain-thoughts, and o'er its waves Hung mysteries of gloom; and in its flow It rippled on lone shores fair-fringed with flowers, And deepened as it flowed; his face was sad.

He had his moods of silence and of speech. I asked him once the reason, and he said: "When I speak much, my words are only words, When I speak least, my words are more than words, When I speak not, I then reveal myself!" It was his way of saying things -- he spoke In quaintest riddles; and his face was sad.

And, when he wished, he wove around his words A nameless spell that

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marvelously thrilled The dullest ear. 'Twas strange that he so cold Could warm the coldest heart; that he so hard Could soften hardest soul; that he so still Could rouse the stillest mind: his face was sad.

He spoke of death as if it were a toy For thought to play with; and of life he spoke As of a toy not worth the play of thought; And of this world he spoke as captives speak Of prisons where they pine; he spoke of men As one who found pure gold in each of them. He spoke of women just as if he dreamed About his mother; and he spoke of God As if he walked with Him and knew His heart -- But he was weary, and his face was sad.

He had a weary way in all he did, As if he dragged a chain, or bore a cross; And yet the weary went to him for rest. His heart seemed scarce to know an earthly joy, And yet the joyless were rejoiced by him. He seemed to have two selves -- his outer self Was free to any passer-by, and kind to all, And gentle as a child's; that outer self Kept open all its gates, that who so wished Might enter them and find therein a place; And many entered; but his face was sad.

The inner self he guarded from approach, He kept it sealed and sacred as a shrine; He guarded it with silence and reserve; Its gates were locked and watched, and none might pass Beyond the portals; and his face was sad. But whoso entered there -- and few were they -- So very few -- so very, very few, They never did forget; they said: "How strange!" They murmured still: "How strange! how strangely strange!" They went their ways, but wore a lifted look, And higher meanings came to common words, And lowly thoughts took on the grandest tones; And, near or far, they never did forget The "Shadow and the Shrine"; his face was sad.

He was not young nor old -- yet he was both; Nor both by turns, but always both at once; For youth and age commingled in his ways, His words, his feelings, and his thoughts and acts. At times the "old man" tottered in his thoughts, The child played thro' his words; his face was sad.

I one day asked his age; he smiled and said: "The rose that sleeps upon yon valley's breast, Just born to-day, is not as young as I; The moss-robed oak of twice a thousand storms -- An acorn cradled ages long ago -- Is old, in sooth, but not as old as I." It was his way -- he always answered thus, But when he did his face was very sad.

**Father Ryan's Poems**

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## Spirit Song

Thou wert once the purest wave Where the tempests roar; Thou art  
now a golden wave On the golden shore -- Ever -- ever -- evermore!

Thou wert once the bluest wave Shadows e'er hung o'er; Thou art  
now the brightest wave On the brightest shore -- Ever -- ever --  
evermore!

Thou wert once the gentlest wave Ocean ever bore; Thou art now the  
fairest wave On the fairest shore -- Ever -- ever -- evermore!

Whiter foam than thine, O wave, Wavelet never wore, Stainless  
wave; and now you lave The far and stormless shore -- Ever -- ever --  
evermore!

Who bade thee go, O bluest wave, Beyond the tempest's roar? Who  
bade thee flow, O fairest wave, Unto the golden shore, Ever -- ever --  
evermore?

Who waved a hand, O purest wave? A hand that blessings bore, And  
wafted thee, O whitest wave, Unto the fairest shore, Ever -- ever --  
evermore?

Who winged thy way, O holy wave, In days and days of yore? And  
wept the words: "O winsome wave, This earth is not thy shore!"  
Ever -- ever -- evermore?

Who gave thee strength, O snowy wave -- The strength a great soul  
wore -- And said: "Float up to God! my wave, His heart shall be thy  
shore!" Ever -- ever -- evermore?

Who said to thee, O poor, weak wave: "Thy wail shall soon be o'er,  
Float on to God, and leave me, wave, Upon this rugged shore!" Ever  
-- ever -- evermore?

And thou hast reached His feet! Glad wave, Dost dream of days of  
yore? Dost yearn that we shall meet, pure wave, Upon the golden shore,  
Ever -- ever -- evermore?

Thou sleepest in the calm, calm wave, Beyond the wild storm's roar!  
I watch amid the storm, bright wave, Like rock upon the shore; Ever -  
- ever -- evermore!

Sing at the feet of God, white wave, Song sweet as one of yore! I

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would not bring thee back, heart wave, To break upon this shore,  
Ever -- ever -- evermore!

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"No, no," he gently spoke: "You know me not; My mind is like a temple, dim, vast, lone; Just like a temple when the priest has gone, And all the hymns that rolled along the vaults Are buried deep in silence; when the lights That flashed on altars died away in dark, And when the flowers, with all their perfumed breath And beauteous bloom, lie withered on the shrine. My mind is like a temple, solemn, still, Untenanted save by the ghosts of gloom Which seem to linger in the holy place -- The shadows of the sinners who passed there, And wept, and spirit-shriven left upon The marble floor memorials of their tears."

And while he spake, his words sank low and low, Until they hid themselves in some still depth He would not open; and his face was sad.

When he spoke thus, his very gentleness Passed slowly from him, and his look, so mild, Grew marble cold; a pallor as of death Whitened his lips, and clouds rose to his eyes, Dry, rainless clouds, where lightnings seemed to sleep. His words, as tender as a rose's smile, Slow-hardened into thorns, but seemed to sting Himself the most; his brow, at such times, bent Most lowly down, and wore such look of pain As though it bore an unseen crown of thorns. Who knows? perhaps it did!

But he would pass His hand upon his brow, or touch his eyes, And then the olden gentleness, like light Which seems transfigured by the touch of dark, Would tremble on his face, and he would look More gentle then than ever, and his tone Would sweeten, like the winds when storms have passed.

I saw him, one day, thus most deeply moved And darkened; ah! his face was like a tomb That hid the dust of dead and buried smiles, But, suddenly, his face flashed like a throne, And all the smiles arose as from the dead, And wore the glory of an Easter morn; And passed beneath the sceptre of a hope Which came from some far region of his heart, Came up into his eyes, and reigned a queen. I marveled much; he answered to my look With all his own, and wafted me these words:

"There are transitions in the lives of all. There are transcendent

moments when we stand In Thabor's glory with the chosen three, And weak with very strength of human love We fain would build our tabernacles there; And, Peter-like, for very human joy We cry aloud: `Tis good that we are here;' Swift are these moments, like the smile of God, Which glorifies a shadow and is gone.

"And then we stand upon another mount -- Dark, rugged Calvary; and God keeps us there For awful hours, to make us there His own In Crucifixion's tortures; 'tis His way. We wish to cling to Thabor; He says: `No.' And what He says is best because most true. We fain would fly from Calvary; He says: `No.' And it is true because it is the best. And yet, my friend, these two mounts are the same.

"They lie apart, distinct and separate, And yet -- strange mystery! -- they are the same. For Calvary is a Thabor in the dark, And Thabor is a Calvary in the light. It is the mystery of Holy Christ! It is the mystery of you and me! Earth's shadows move, as moves far-heaven's sun, And, like the shadows of a dial, we Tell, darkly, in the vale the very hours The sun tells brightly in the sinless skies. Dost understand?" I did not understand -- Or only half; his face was very sad. "Dost thou not understand me? Then your life Is shallow as a brook that brawls along Between two narrow shores; you never wept -- You never wore great clouds upon your brow As mountains wear them; and you never wore Strange glories in your eyes, as sunset skies Oft wear them; and your lips -- they never sighed Grand sighs which bear the weight of all the soul; You never reached your arms a-broad -- a-high -- To grasp far-worlds, or to enclasp the sky. Life, only life, can understand a life; Depth, only depth, can understand the deep. The dewdrop glist'ning on the lily's face Can never learn the story of the sea."

\* \* \* \* \*

One day we strolled together to the sea. Gray evening and the night had almost met, We walked between them, silent, to the shore. The feet of weird faced waves ran up the beach Like children in mad play, then back again As if the spirit of the land pursued; Then up again -- and farther -- and they flung White, foamy arms around each other's neck; Then back again with sudden rush and shout, As if the sea, their mother, called them

home; Then leaned upon her breast, as if so tired, But swiftly tore themselves away and rushed Away, and farther up the beach, and fell For utter weariness; and loudly sobbed For strength to rise and flow back to the deep. But all in vain, for other waves swept on And trampled them; the sea cried out in grief, The gray beach laughed and clasped them to the sands. It was the flood-tide and the even-tide -- Between the evening and the night we walked -- We walked between the billows and the beach, We walked between the future and the past, Down to the sea we twain had strolled -- to part.

The shore was low, with just the faintest rise Of many-colored sands and shreds of shells, Until about a stone's far throw they met A fringe of faded grass, with here and there A pale-green shrub; and farther into land -- Another stone's throw farther -- there were trees -- Tall, dark, wild trees, with intertwining arms, Each almost touching each, as if they feared To stand alone and look upon the sea. The night was in the trees -- the evening on the shore. We walked between the evening and the night -- Between the trees and tide we silent strolled. There lies between man's silence and his speech A shadowy valley, where thro' those who pass Are never silent, tho' they may not speak; And yet they more than breathe. It is the vale Of wordless sighs, half uttered and half-heard. It is the vale of the unutterable. We walked between our silence and our speech, And sighed between the sunset and the stars, One hour beside the sea.

There was a cloud Far o'er the reach of waters, hanging low 'Tween sea and sky -- the banner of the storm, Its edges faintly bright, as if the rays That fled far down the West had rested there And slumbered, and had left a dream of light. Its inner folds were dark -- its central, more. It did not flutter; there it hung, as calm As banner in a temple o'er a shrine. Its shadow only fell upon the sea, Above the shore the heavens bended blue. We walked between the cloudless and the cloud, That hour, beside the sea.

But, quick as thought, There gleamed a sword of wild, terrific light -- Its hilt in heaven, its point hissed in the sea, Its scabbard in the darkness -- and it tore The bannered cloud into a thousand shreds, Then quivered far away, and bent and broke In

flashing fragments;

And there came a peal That shook the mighty sea from shore to shore, But did not stir a sand-grain on the beach; Then silence fell, and where the low cloud hung Clouds darker gathered -- and they proudly waved Like flags before a battle.

We twain walked -- We walked between the lightning's parted gleams, We walked between the thunders of the skies, We walked between the wavings of the clouds, We walked between the tremblings of the sea, We walked between the stillnesses and roars Of frightened billows; and we walked between The coming tempest and the dying calm -- Between the tranquil and the terrible -- That hour beside the sea.

There was a rock Far up the winding beach that jutted in The sea, and broke the heart of every wave That struck its breast; not steep enough nor high To be a cliff, nor yet sufficient rough To be a crag; a simple, low, lone rock; Yet not so low as that its brow was laved By highest tide, yet not sufficient high To rise beyond the reach of silver spray That rained up from the waves -- their tears that fell Upon its face, when they died at its feet. Around its sides damp seaweed hung in long, Sad tresses, dripping down into the sea. A tuft or two of grass did green the rock, A patch or so of moss; the rest was bare.

A down the shore we walked 'tween eve and night; But when we reached the rock the eve and night Had met; light died; we sat down in the dark Upon the rock.

Meantime a thousand clouds Careered and clashed in air -- a thousand waves Whirled wildly on in wrath -- a thousand winds Howled hoarsely on the main, and down the skies Into the hollow seas the fierce rain rushed, As if its ev'ry drop were hot with wrath; And, like a thousand serpents intercoiled, The lightnings glared and hissed, and hissed and glared, And all the horror shrank in horror back Before the maddest peals that ever leaped Out from the thunder's throat.

Within the dark We silent sat. No rain fell on the rock, Nor in on land, nor shore; only on sea The upper and the lower waters met In wild delirium, like a thousand hearts Far

parted -- parted long -- which meet to break, Which rush into each other's  
arms and break In terror and in tempests wild of tears. No rain fell on the  
rock; but flakes of foam Swept cold against our faces, where we sat  
Between the hush and howling of the winds, Between the swells and  
sinking of the waves, Between the stormy sea and stilly shore, Between  
the rushings of the maddened rains, Between the dark beneath and dark  
above.

We sat within the dread heart of the night: One, pale with terror; one,  
as calm and still And stern and moveless as the lone, low rock.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Lake Como

Winter on the mountains Summer on the shore, The robes of sun-  
gleams woven, The lake's blue wavelets wore.

Cold, white, against the heavens, Flashed winter's crown of snow,  
And the blossoms of the spring-tide Waved brightly far below.

The mountain's head was dreary, The cold and cloud were there, But  
the mountain's feet were sandaled With flowers of beauty rare.

And winding thro' the mountains The lake's calm wavelets rolled,  
And a cloudless sun was gilding Their ripples with its gold.

Adown the lake we glided Thro' all the sunlit day; The cold snows  
gleamed above us, But fair flowers fringed our way

The snows crept down the mountain, The flowers crept up the slope,  
Till they seemed to meet and mingle, Like human fear and hope.

But the same rich, golden sunlight Fell on the flowers and snow,  
Like the smile of God that flashes On hearts in joy or woe.

And on the lake's low margin The trees wore stoles of green, While  
here and there, amid them, A convent cross was seen.

Anon a ruined castle, Moss-mantled, loomed in view, And cast its  
solemn shadow Across the water's blue.

And chapel, cot, and villa, Met here and there our gaze, And many a  
crumbling tower That told of other days.

And scattered o'er the waters The fishing boats lay still, And sound  
of song so softly Came echoed from the hill.

At times the mountain's shadow Fell dark across the scene, And  
veiled with veil of purple The wavelets' silver sheen.

But for a moment only The lake would wind, and lo! The waves  
would near the glory Of the sunlight's brightest glow.

At times there fell a silence Unbroken by a tone, As if no sound of  
voices Had ever there been known.

Through strange and lonely places We glided thus for hours; We saw  
no other faces But the faces of the flowers.

The shores were sad and lonely As hearts without a love, While

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darker and more dreary The mountains rose above.

But sudden round a headland The lake would sweep again, And  
voices from a village Would meet us with their strain.

Thus all the day we glided, Until the Vesper bell Gave to the day, at  
sunset, Its sweet and soft farewell.

Then back again we glided Upon our homeward way, When twilight  
wrapped the waters And the mountains with its gray.

But brief the reign of twilight, The night came quickly on; The dark  
brow o'er the mountains, Star-wreathed, brightly shone.

And down thro' all the shadows The star-gleams softly crept, And  
kissed, with lips all shining, The wavelets ere they slept.

The lake lay in a slumber, The shadows for its screen, While silence  
waved her sceptre Above the sleeping scene.

The spirit of the darkness Moved, ghost-like, everywhere; Wherever  
starlight glimmered, Its shadow, sure, fell there.

The lone place grew more lonely, And all along our way The  
mysteries of the night-time Held undisputed sway.

Thro' silence and thro' darkness We glided down the tide That wound  
around the mountains That rose on either side.

No eyes would close in slumber Within our little bark; What  
charmed us so in daylight So awed us in the dark.

Upon the deck we lingered, A whisper scarce was heard; When  
hearts are stirred profoundest, Lips are without a word.

"Let's say the Chaplet," softly A voice beside me spake. "Christ  
walked once in the darkness Across an Eastern lake,

"And to-night we know the secret That will charm Him to our side:  
If we call upon His Mother, He will meet us on the tide."

So we said the beads together, Up and down the little bark; And I  
believe that Jesus met us, With His Mother, in the dark.

And our prayers were scarcely ended When, on mountain-top afar,  
We beheld the morning meeting With the night's last fading star.

And I left the lake; but never Shall the years to come efface From  
my heart the dream and vision Of that strange and lonely place.

\_\_\_\_ February 1, 1873.





## "Peace! Be Still"

Sometimes the Saviour sleeps, and it is dark; For, oh! His eyes are  
this world's only light, And when they close wild waves rush on His bark,  
And toss it through the dead hours of the night.

So He slept once upon an eastern lake, In Peter's bark, while wild  
waves raved at will; A cry smote on Him, and when He did wake, He  
softly whispered, and the sea grew still.

It is a mystery: but He seems to sleep As erst he slept in Peter's  
waved-rocked bark; A storm is sweeping all across the deep, While Pius  
prays, like Peter, in the dark.

The sky is darkened, and the shore is far, The tempest's strength  
grows fiercer every hour: Upon the howling deep there shines no star --  
Why sleeps He still? Why does He hide His power?

Fear not! a holy hand is on the helm That guides the bark thro' all the  
tempest's wrath; Quail not! the wildest waves can never whelm The ship  
of faith upon its homeward path.

The Master sleeps -- His pilot guards the bark; He soon will wake,  
and at His mighty will The light will shine where all before was dark --  
The wild waves still remember: "Peace! be still."

\_\_\_\_ Rome, 1873.

## Good Friday

O Heart of Three-in-the evening, You nestled the thorn-crowned head; He leaned on you in His sorrow, And rested on you when dead.

Ah! Holy Three-in-the evening He gave you His richest dower; He met you afar on Calvary, And made you "His own last hour".

O Brow of Three-in-the evening, Thou wearest a crimson crown; Thou art Priest of the hours forever, And thy voice, as thou goest down  
The cycles of time, still murmurs The story of love each day: "I held in death the Eternal, In the long and the far-away."

O Heart of Three-in-the evening, Mine beats with thine to-day; Thou tellest the olden story, I kneel -- and I weep and pray.

\_\_\_\_ Boulogne, sur mer.

## My Beads

Sweet, blessed beads! I would not part    With one of you for richest  
gem    That gleams in kingly diadem; Ye know the history of my heart.

For I have told you every grief    In all the days of twenty years,    And  
I have moistened you with tears,    And in your decades found relief.

Ah! time has fled, and friends have failed    And joys have died; but in  
my needs    Ye were my friends, my blessed beads! And ye consoled me  
when I wailed.

For many and many a time, in grief,    My weary fingers wandered  
round    Thy circled chain, and always found    In some Hail Mary sweet  
relief.

How many a story you might tell    Of inner life, to all unknown;    I  
trusted you and you alone,    But ah! ye keep my secrets well.

Ye are the only chain I wear --    A sign that I am but the slave,    In life,  
in death, beyond the grave,    Of Jesus and His Mother fair.

## At Night

Dreary! weary!      Weary! dreary! Sighs my soul this lonely night.  
Farewell gladness!      Welcome sadness! Vanished are my visions bright.

Stars are shining!      Winds are pining! In the sky and o'er the sea;  
Shine forever      Stars! but never Can the starlight gladden me.

Stars! you nightly      Sparkle brightly, Scattered o'er your azure  
dome;      While earth's turning,      There you're burning, Beacons of a  
better home.

Stars! you brighten      And you lighten Many a heart-grief here  
below;      But your gleaming      And your beaming Cannot chase away  
my woe.

Stars! you're shining,      I am pining -- I am dark, but you are  
bright;      Hanging o'er me      And before me Is a night you cannot  
light.

Night of sorrow,      Whose to-morrow I may never, never see,  
Till upon me      And around me Dawns a bright eternity.

Winds! you're sighing,      And you're crying, Like a mourner o'er  
a tomb;      Whither go ye,      Whither blow ye, Wailing through the  
midnight gloom?

Chanting lowly,      Softly, lowly, Like the voice of one in woe;  
Winds so lonely,      Why thus moan ye? Say, what makes you sorrow so?

Are you grieving      For your leaving Scenes where all is fair and  
gay?      For the flowers      In their bowers, You have met with on your  
way?

For fond faces,      For dear places, That you've seen as on you  
swept?      Are you sighing,      Are you crying, O'er the memories they  
have left?

Earth is sleeping      While you're sweeping Through night's  
solemn silence by;      On forever,      Pausing never -- How I love to  
hear you sigh!

Men are dreaming,      Stars are gleaming In the far-off heaven's  
blue;      Bosom aching,      Musing, waking, Midnight winds, I sigh

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with you!

## Nocturne ["Betimes, I seem to see in dreams"]

Betimes, I seem to see in dreams    What when awake I may not see;  
Can night be God's more than the day?    Do stars, not suns, best light his  
way? Who knoweth?    Blended lights and shades    Arch aisles down  
which He walks to me.

I hear him coming in the night    Afar, and yet I know not how;    His  
steps make music low and sweet;    Sometimes the nails are in his feet;  
Does darkness give God better light    Than day, to find a weary brow?

Does darkness give man brighter rays    To find the God, in sunshine  
lost?    Must shadows wrap the trysting-place    Where God meets hearts  
with gentlest grace? Who knoweth it?    God hath His ways    For every  
soul here sorrow-tossed.

The hours of day are like the waves    That fret against the shores of  
sin:    They touch the human everywhere,    The Bright-Divine fades in  
their glare; And God's sweet voice the spirit craves    Is heard too faintly in  
the din.

When all the senses are awake,    The mortal presses overmuch  
Upon the great immortal part --    And God seems further from the heart.  
Must souls, like skies, when day-dawns break,    Lose star by star at  
sunlight's touch?

But when the sun kneels in the west,    And grandly sinks as great  
hearts sink;    And in his sinking flings adown    Bright blessings from  
his fading crown, The stars begin their song of rest,    And shadows make  
the thoughtless think.

The human seems to fade away;    And down the starred and shadowed  
skies    The heavenly comes -- as memories come    Of home to hearts  
afar from home; And thro' the darkness after day    Many a winged angel  
flies.

And somehow, tho' the eyes see less,    Our spirits seem to see the  
more;    When we look thro' night's shadow-bars    The soul sees more

than shining stars, Yea -- sees the very loveliness That rests upon the  
"Golden Shore".

Strange reveries steal o'er us then, Like keyless chords of  
instruments, With music's soul without the notes; And subtle, sad,  
and sweet there floats A melody not made by men, Nor ever heard by  
outer sense.

And "what has been", and "what will be", And "what is not", but  
"might have been", The dim "to be", the "mournful gone", The little  
things life rested on In "Long-ago's", give tone, not key, To reveries  
beyond our ken.



## Sunless Days

They come to ev'ry life -- sad, sunless days, With not a light all o'er  
their clouded skies; And thro' the dark we grope along our ways With  
hearts fear-filled, and lips low-breathing sighs.

What is the dark? Why cometh it? and whence? Why does it  
banish all the bright away? How does it weave a spell o'er soul and sense?  
Why falls the shadow where'er gleams the ray?

Hast felt it? I have felt it, and I know How oft and suddenly the  
shadows roll From out the depths of some dim realm of woe, To wrap  
their darkness round the human soul.

Those days are darker than the very night; For nights have stars, and  
sleep, and happy dreams; But these days bring unto the spirit-sight The  
mysteries of gloom, until it seems

The light is gone forever, and the dark Hangs like a pall of death  
above the soul, Which rocks amid the gloom like storm-swept bark, And  
sinks beneath a sea where tempests roll.

\_\_\_\_\_ Winter on the Atlantic.

## A Reverie ["Did I dream of a song? or sing in a dream?"]

Did I dream of a song? or sing in a dream? Why ask when the night only knoweth? The night -- and the angel of sleep! But ever since then a music deep, Like a stream thro' a shadow-land, floweth Under each thought of my spirit that groweth Into the blossom and bloom of speech -- Under each fancy that cometh and goeth -- Wayward, as waves when evening breeze bloweth Out of the sunset and into the beach. And is it a wonder I wept to-day? For I mused and thought, but I cannot say If I dreamed of a song, or sang in a dream. In the silence of sleep, and the noon of night; And now -- even now -- 'neath the words I write, The flush of the dream or the flow of the song -- I cannot tell which -- moves strangely along. But why write more? I am puzzled sore: Did I dream of a song? or sing in a dream? Ah! hush, heart! hush! 'tis of no avail; The words of earth are a darksome veil, The poet weaves it with artful grace; Lifts it off from his thoughts at times, Lets it rustle along his rhymes, But gathers it close, covering the face Of ev'ry thought that must not part From out the keeping of his heart.

### St. Mary's

Back to where the roses rest Round a shrine of holy name, (Yes --  
they knew me when I came) More of peace and less of fame Suit my  
restless heart the best.

Back to where long quiet brood, Where the calm is never stirred By  
the harshness of a word, But instead the singing bird Sweetens all my  
solitude.

With the birds and with the flowers Songs and silences unite, From  
the morning unto night; And somehow a clearer light Shines along the  
quiet hours.

God comes closer to me here -- Back of ev'ry rose leaf there He is  
hiding -- and the air Thrills with calls to holy prayer; Earth grows far,  
and heaven near.

Every single flower is fraught With the very sweetest dreams, Under  
clouds or under gleams Changeful ever -- yet meseems On each leaf I  
read God's thought.

Still, at times, as place of death, Not a sound to vex the ear, Yet  
withal it is not drear; Better for the heart to hear, Far from men -- God's  
gentle breath.

Where men clash, God always clings: When the human passes by,  
Like a cloud from summer sky, God so gently draweth nigh, And the  
brightest blessings brings.

List! e'en now a wild bird sings, And the roses seem to hear Every  
note that thrills my ear, Rising to the heavens clear, And my soul soars  
on its wings

Up into the silent skies Where the sunbeams veil the star, Up --  
beyond the clouds afar, Where no discords ever mar, Where rests peace  
that never dies.

So I live within the calm, And the birds and roses know That the days  
that come and go Are as peaceful as the flow Of a prayer beneath a  
psalm.

## De Profundis

Ah! days so dark with death's eclipse!      Woe are we! woe are we!  
And the nights are ages long! From breaking hearts, thro' pallid lips      O  
my God! woe are we!      Trembleth the mourner's song;      A blight is  
falling on the fair,      And hope is dying in despair,      And terror  
walketh everywhere.

All the hours are full of tears --      O my God! woe are we!      Grief  
keeps watch in brightest eyes -- Every heart is strung with fears,      Woe  
are we! woe are we!      All the light hath left the skies,      And the living  
awe struck crowds      See above them only clouds,      And around them  
only shrouds.

Ah! the terrible farewells!      Woe are they! woe are they!      When  
last words sink into moans, While life's trembling vesper bells --      O  
my God! woe are we!      Ring the awful undertones!      Not a sun in any  
day!      In the night-time not a ray,      And the dying pass away!

Dark! so dark! above -- below --      O my God! woe are we!  
Cowereth every human life. Wild the wailing; to and fro!      Woe are all!  
woe are we!      Death is victor in the strife:      In the hut and in the hall  
He is writing on the wall      Dooms for many -- fears for all.

Thro' the cities burns a breath,      Woe are they! woe are we!      Hot  
with dread and deadly wrath; Life and love lock arms in death,      Woe  
are they! woe are all!      Victims strew the spectre's path;      Shy-eyed  
children softly creep      Where their mothers wail and weep --      In the  
grave their fathers sleep.

Mothers waft their prayers on high,      O my God! woe are we!  
With their dead child on their breast. And the altars ask the sky --      O  
my Christ! woe are we!      "Give the dead, O Father, rest!      Spare thy  
people! mercy! spare!"      Answer will not come to prayer --      Horror  
moveth everywhere.

And the temples miss the priest --      O my God! woe are we!      And  
the cradle mourns the child. Husband at your bridal feast --      Woe are  
you! woe are you!      Think how those poor dead eyes smiled;      They

will never smile again -- Every tie is cut in twain, All the strength  
of love is vain.

Weep? but tears are weak as foam -- Woe are ye! woe are we!  
They but break upon the shore Winding between here and home --  
Woe are ye! woe are we! Wailing never! nevermore! Ah! the dead!  
they are so lone, Just a grave, and just a stone, And the memory  
of a moan.

Pray! yes, pray! for God is sweet -- O my God! woe are we!  
Tears will trickle into prayers When we kneel down at His feet -- Woe  
are we! woe are we! With our crosses and our cares. He will calm  
the tortured breast, He will give the troubled rest -- And the dead  
He watcheth best.

When? (Death)

Some day in Spring, When earth is fair and glad, And sweet birds  
sing, And fewest hearts are sad -- Shall I die then? Ah! me,  
no matter when; I know it will be sweet To leave the homes of men  
And rest beneath the sod, To kneel and kiss Thy feet In Thy home, O my  
God!

Some Summer morn Of splendors and of songs, When roses hide the  
thorn And smile -- the spirit's wrongs -- Shall I die then? Ah!  
me, no matter when; I know I will rejoice To leave the haunts of men  
And lie beneath the sod, To hear Thy tender voice In Thy home, O my  
God!

Some Autumn eve, When chill clouds drape the sky, When bright  
things grieve Because all fair things die -- Shall I die then?  
Ah! me, no matter when, I know I shall be glad, Away from the  
homes of men, Adown beneath the sod, My heart will not be sad In  
Thy home, O my God!

Some Wintry day, When all skies wear a gloom, And beautiful May  
Sleeps in December's tomb, Shall I die then? Ah! me, no matter  
when; My soul shall throb with joy To leave the haunts of men And  
sleep beneath the sod. Ah! there is no alloy In Thy joys, O my God!

Haste, death! be fleet; I know it will be sweet To rest beneath the sod,  
To kneel and kiss Thy feet In heaven, O my God!

## The Conquered Banner

Furl that Banner, for 'tis weary; Round its staff 'tis drooping dreary;  
Furl it, fold it, it is best; For there's not a man to wave it, And there's not a  
sword to save it, And there's not one left to lave it In the blood which  
heroes gave it; And its foes now scorn and brave it; Furl it, hide it --  
let it rest!

Take that Banner down! 'tis tattered; Broken is its staff and shattered;  
And the valiant hosts are scattered Over whom it floated high. Oh! 'tis  
hard for us to fold it; Hard to think there's none to hold it; Hard that those  
who once unrolled it Now must furl it with a sigh.

Furl that Banner! furl it sadly! Once ten thousands hailed it gladly,  
And ten thousands wildly, madly, Swore it should forever wave;  
Swore that foeman's sword should never Hearts like theirs entwined  
dissever, Till that flag should float forever O'er their freedom or their  
grave!

Furl it! for the hands that grasped it, And the hearts that fondly clasped  
it, Cold and dead are lying low; And that Banner -- it is trailing! While  
around it sounds the wailing Of its people in their woe.

For, though conquered, they adore it! Love the cold, dead hands that  
bore it! Weep for those who fell before it! Pardon those who trailed and  
tore it! But, oh! wildly they deplore it, Now who furl and fold it so.

Furl that Banner! True, 'tis gory, Yet 'tis wreathed around with glory,  
And 'twill live in song and story, Though its folds are in the dust: For  
its fame on brightest pages, Penned by poets and by sages, Shall go  
sounding down the ages -- Furl its folds though now we must.

Furl that Banner, softly, slowly! Treat it gently -- it is holy -- For it  
droops above the dead. Touch it not -- unfold it never, Let it droop there,  
furl'd forever, For its people's hopes are dead!

## A Christmas Chant

They ask me to sing them a Christmas song That with musical mirth shall ring; How know I that the world's great throng Will care for the words I sing?

Let the young and the gay chant the Christmas lay, Their voices and hearts are glad; But I -- I am old, and my locks are gray, And they tell me my voice is sad.

Ah! once I could sing, when my heart beat warm With hopes, bright as life's first spring; But the spring hath fled, and the golden charm Hath gone from the songs I sing.

I have lost the spell that my verse could weave O'er the souls of the old and young, And never again -- how it makes me grieve -- Shall I sing as once I sung.

Why ask a song? ah! perchance you believe, Since my days are so nearly past, That the song you'll hear on this Christmas eve Is the old man's best and last.

Do you want the jingle of rhythm and rhyme? Art's sweet but meaningless notes? Or the music of thought, that, like the chime Of a grand cathedral, floats

Out of each word, and along each line, Into the spirit's ear, Lifting it up and making it pine For a something far from here;

Bearing the wings of the soul aloft From earth and its shadows dim; Soothing the breast with a sound as soft As a dream, or a seraph's hymn;

Evoking the solemnest hopes and fears From our being's higher part; Dimming the eyes with radiant tears That flow from a spell bound heart?

Do they want a song that is only a song, With no mystical meanings rife? Or a music that solemnly moves along -- The undertone of a life!

Well, then, I'll sing, though I know no art, Nor the poet's rhymes nor rules -- A melody moves through my aged heart Not learned from the books or schools:

A music I learned in the days long gone -- I cannot tell where or how -- But no matter where, it still sounds on Back of this wrinkled brow.

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And down in my heart I hear it still, Like the echoes of far-off bells;  
Like the dreamy sound of a summer rill Flowing through fairy dells.

But what shall I sing for the world's gay throng, And what the words  
of the old man's song?

The world they tell me, is so giddy grown That thought is rare; And  
thoughtless minds and shallow hearts alone Hold empire there;

That fools have prestige, place and power and fame; Can it be true  
That wisdom is a scorn, a hissing shame, And wise are few?

They tell me, too, that all is venal, vain, With high and low; That  
truth and honor are the slaves of gain; Can it be so?

That lofty principle hath long been dead And in a shroud; That virtue  
walks ashamed, with downcast head, Amid the crowd.

They tell me, too, that few they are who own God's law and love;  
That thousands, living for this earth alone, Look not above;

That daily, hourly, from the bad to worse, Men tread the path,  
Blaspheming God, and careless of the curse Of his dead wrath.

And must I sing for slaves of sordid gain, Or to the few Shall I not  
dedicate this Christmas strain Who still are true?

No; not for the false shall I strike the strings Of the lyre that was  
mute so long; If I sing at all, the gray bard sings For the few and the true  
his song.

And ah! there is many a changeful mood That over my spirit steals;  
Beneath their spell, and in verses rude, Whatever he dreams or feels.

Whatever the fancies this Christmas eve Are haunting the lonely man,  
Whether they gladden, or whether they grieve, He'll sing them as best he  
can.

Though some of the strings of his lyre are broke This holiest night of  
the year, Who knows how its melody may wake A Christmas smile or a  
tear?

So on with the mystic song, With its meaning manifold --  
Two tones in every word, Two thoughts in every tone; In the  
measured words that move along One meaning shall be heard,  
One thought to all be told; But under it all, to be alone -- And under it  
all, to all unknown -- As safe as under a coffin-lid, Deep

meanings shall be hid. Find them out who can! The thoughts  
concealed and unrevealed In the song of the lonely man.

\* \* \* \* \*

I'm sitting alone in my silent room This long December night,  
Watching the fire-flame fill the gloom With many a picture bright. Ah!  
how the fire can paint! Its magic skill, how strange! How every  
spark On the canvas dark Draws figures and forms so quaint!  
And how the pictures change! One moment how they smile!  
And in less than a little while, In the twinkling of an eye, Like the  
gleam of a summer sky, The beaming smiles all die.

From gay to grave -- from grave to gay -- The faces change in the  
shadows gray; And just as I wonder who they are, Over them all,  
Like a funeral pall, The folds of the shadows droop and fall, And the  
charm is gone, And every one Of the pictures fade away.

Ah! the fire within my grate Hath more than Raphael's power,  
Is more than Raphael's peer; It paints for me in a little hour  
More than he in a year; And the pictures hanging 'round me here This  
holy Christmas eve No artist's pencil could create -- No painter's art  
conceive;

Ah! those cheerful faces, Wearing youthful graces! I gaze on  
them until I seem Half awake and half in dream. There are brows  
without a mark, Features bright without a shade; There are eyes  
without a tear; There are lips unused to sigh. Ah! never mind -- you  
soon shall die! All those faces soon shall fade, Fade into the  
dreary dark Like their pictures hanging here. -- Lo! those  
tearful faces, Bearing age's traces!

I gaze on them, and they on me, Until I feel a sorrow steal  
Through my heart so drearily; There are faces furrowed deep;  
There are eyes that used to weep; There are brows beneath a cloud;  
There are hearts that want to sleep; Never mind! the shadows creep  
From the death-land; and a shroud, Tenderly as mother's arm,  
Soon shall shield the old from harm, Soon shall wrap its robe of  
rest Round each sorrow-haunted breast Ah! that face of mother's,  
Sister's, too, and brother's -- And so many others, Dear is every

name -- And Ethel! Thou art there, With thy child-face sweet and fair,  
And thy heart so bright In its shroud so white; Just as I saw  
you last In the golden, happy past; And you seem to wear Upon  
your hair -- Your waving, golden hair -- The smile of the setting sun.  
Ah! me, how years will run! But all the years cannot efface  
Your purest name, your sweetest grace, From the heart that still is  
true Of all the world to you; The other faces shine, But  
none so fair as thine; And wherever they are to-night, I know They  
look the very same As in their pictures hanging here This night,  
to memory dear, And painted by the flames, With tombstones in the  
background, And shadows for their frames.

And thus with my pictures only, And the fancies they  
unweave, Alone, and yet not lonely, I keep my Christmas eve.  
I'm sitting alone in my pictured room -- But, no! they have vanished  
all -- I'm watching the fire-glow fade into gloom, I'm watching the  
ashes fall. And far away back of the cheerful blaze The beautiful visions of  
by-gone days Are rising before my raptured gaze. Ah! Christmas fire,  
so bright and warm, Hast thou a wizard's magic charm To bring those  
far-off scenes so near And make my past days meet me here?

Tell me -- tell me -- how is it? The past is past, and here I sit,  
And there, lo! there before me rise, Beyond yon glowing flame, The  
summer suns of childhood's skies, Yes -- yes -- the very same! I saw  
them rise long, long ago; I played beneath their golden glow; And I  
remember yet, I often cried with strange regret When in the west I saw  
them set And there they are again; The suns, the skies, the very  
days Of childhood, just beyond that blaze! But, ah! such  
visions almost craze The old man's puzzled brain! I thought  
the past was past! But, no! it cannot be; 'Tis here to-night  
with me!

How is it, then? the past of men Is part of one eternity -- The  
days of yore we so deplore, They are not dead -- they are not fled,  
They live and live for evermore. And thus my past comes back to me  
With all its visions fair.

O past! could I go back to thee, And live forever there!

But, no! there's frost upon my hair;      My feet have trod a path of care;  
And worn and wearied here I sit      I am too tired to go to it.

          And thus with visions only,      And the fancies they unweave,  
Alone, and yet not lonely,      I keep my Christmas eve.

I am sitting alone in my fire-lit room;      But, no! the fire is dying,  
And the weary-voiced winds, in the outer gloom,      Are sad, and I hear  
them sighing.      The wind hath a voice to pine --      Plaintive, and  
pensive and low;      Hath it a heart like mine or thine?      Knoweth  
it weal or woe?      How it wails in a ghost-like strain,      Just against  
that window pane! As if it were tired of its long, cold flight, And wanted to  
rest with me to-night.      Cease! night-winds, cease!      Why should  
you be sad?      This is a night of joy and peace,      And heaven and  
earth are glad!      But still the wind's voice grieves!      Perchance  
o'er the fallen leaves,      Which, in their summer bloom, Danced to the  
music of bird and breeze, But, torn from the arms of their parent trees,  
Lie now in their wintry tomb --      Mute types of man's own doom.

          And thus with the night winds only,      And the fancies they unweave,  
Alone, and yet not lonely,      I keep my Christmas eve.

How long have I been dreaming here?      Or have I dreamed at all?  
My fire is dead -- my pictures fled -- There's nothing left but shadows  
drear --      Shadows on the wall:

          Shifting, flitting,      Round me sitting      In my old arm chair  
--      Rising, sinking      Round me, thinking, Till, in the maze of  
many a dream, I'm not myself; and I almost seem      Like one of the  
shadows there.      Well, let the shadows stay!      I wonder who are  
they? I cannot say; but I almost believe They know to-night is Christmas  
eve,      And to-morrow Christmas day.

Ah! there's nothing like a Christmas eve      To change life's bitter gall to  
sweet, And change the sweet to gall again;      To take the thorns from out  
our feet --      The thorns and all their dreary pain,      Only to put  
them back again.

To take old stings from out our heart -- Old stings that made them  
bleed and smart -- Only to sharpen them the more, And press them back to  
the heart's own core.

Ah! no eve is like the Christmas eve! Fears and hopes, and hopes and fears, Tears and smiles, and smiles and tears, Cheers and sighs, and sighs and cheers, Sweet and bitter, bitter, sweet, Bright and dark, and dark and bright. All these mingle, all these meet, In this great and solemn night.

Ah! there's nothing like a Christmas eve To melt, with kindly glowing heat, From off our souls the snow and sleet, The dreary drift of wintry years, Only to make the cold winds blow, Only to make a colder snow; And make it drift, and drift, and drift, In flakes so icy-cold and swift, Until the heart that lies below Is cold and colder than the snow.

And thus with the shadows only, And the dreamings they unweave, Alone, and yet not lonely, I keep my Christmas eve.

'Tis passing fast! My fireless, lampless room Is a mass of moveless gloom; And without -- a darkness vast, Solemn -- starless -- still! Heaven and earth doth fill.

But list! there soundeth a bell, With a mystical ding, dong, dell! Is it, say, is it a funeral knell? Solemn and slow, Now loud -- now low; Pealing the notes of human woe Over the graves lying under the snow! Ah! that pitiless ding, dong, dell! Trembling along the gale, Under the stars and over the snow. Why is it? whence is it sounding so? Is it a toll of a burial bell?

Or is it a spirit's wail? Solemnly, mournfully, Sad -- and how lornfully! Ding, dong, dell! Whence is it? who can tell? And the marvelous notes they sink and swell, Sadder, and sadder, and sadder still! How the sounds tremble! how they thrill! Every tone So like a moan; As if the strange bell's stranger clang Throbbled with a terrible human pang.

Ding, dong, dell! Dismally, drearily, Ever so wearily. Far off and faint as a requiem plaint Floats the deep-toned voice of the mystic bell Piercingly -- thrillingly, Icily -- chillingly, Near -- and more near, Drearer -- and more drear, Soundeth the wild, weird, ding, dong, dell!

Now sinking lower, It tolleth slower! I list, and I hear its sound no more. And now, methinks, I know that bell, Know it well -- know its knell -- For I often heard it sound before.

It is a bell -- yet not a bell Whose sound may reach the ear! It tolls a knell -- yet not a knell Which earthly sense may hear. In every soul a bell of dole Hangs ready to be tolled; And from that bell a funeral knell Is often outward rolled; And memory is the sexton gray Who tolls the dreary knell; And nights like this he loves to sway And swing his mystic bell. 'Twas that I heard and nothing more, This lonely Christmas eve; Then, for the dead I'll meet no more, At Christmas let me grieve.

Night, be a priest! put your star-stole on And murmur a holy prayer Over each grave, and for every one Lying down lifeless there!

And over the dead stands the high priest, Night, Robed in his shadowy stole; And beside him I kneel as his acolyte, To respond to his prayer of dole.

And list! he begins That psalm for sins, The first of the mournful seven; Plaintive and soft It rises aloft, Begging the mercy of Heaven To pity and forgive, For the sake of those who live, The dead who have died unshriven. Miserere! Miserere! Still your heart and hush your breath! The voices of despair and death Are shuddering through the psalm! Miserere! Miserere! Lift your hearts! the terror dies! Up in yonder sinless skies The psalms sound sweet and calm! Miserere! Miserere! Very low, in tender tones, The music pleads, the music moans, "I forgive and have forgiven, The dead whose hearts were shriven." De profundis! De profundis! Psalm of the dead and disconsolate! Thou hast sounded through a thousand years, And pealed above ten thousand biers; And still, sad psalm, you mourn the fate Of sinners and of just, When their souls are going up to God, Their bodies down to dust. Dread hymn! you wring the saddest tears From mortal eyes that fall, And your notes evoke the darkest fears That human hearts appall! You sound o'er the good, you sound o'er the bad, And ever your music is sad, so sad, We seem to hear murmured in every tone, For the saintly a blessing; for sinners a curse. Psalm, sad psalm! you must pray and grieve Over our dead on this Christmas eve. De profundis! De profundis! And the night chants the psalm o'er the mortal clay, And the spirits immortal from far away, To the music of hope sing this sweet-toned lay.

You think of the dead on Christmas eve,    Wherever the dead are  
sleeping, And we from a land where we may not grieve    Look tenderly  
down on your weeping. You think us far, we are very near,    From you and  
the earth, though parted; We sing to-night to console and cheer    The  
hearts of the broken-hearted. The earth watches over the lifeless clay    Of  
each of its countless sleepers, And the sleepless spirits that passed away  
Watch over all earth's weepers. We shall meet again in a brighter land,  
Where farewell is never spoken; We shall clasp each other in hand,    And  
the clasp shall not be broken; We shall meet again, in a bright, calm clime,  
Where we'll never know a sadness, And our lives shall be filled, like a  
Christmas chime,    With rapture and with gladness. The snows shall pass  
from our graves away,    And you from the earth, remember; And the  
flowers of a bright, eternal May,    Shall follow earth's December. When  
you think of us think not of the tomb    Where you laid us down in sorrow;  
But look aloft, and beyond earth's gloom,    And wait for the great to-  
morrow. And the pontiff, Night, with his star-stole on,    Whispereth soft  
and low:        Requiescat! Requiescat!

Peace! Peace! to every one For whom we grieve this Christmas  
eve,    In their graves beneath the snow.

The stars in the far-off heaven Have long since struck eleven! And  
hark! from temple and from tower, Soundeth time's grandest midnight  
hour, Blessed by the Saviour's birth, And night putteth off the sable stole,  
Symbol of sorrow and sign of dole, For one with many a starry gem, To  
honor the Babe of Bethlehem, Who comes to men the King of them, Yet  
comes without robe or diadem, And all turn towards the holy east, To hear  
the song of the Christmas feast.

Four thousand years earth waited,    Four thousand years men prayed,  
Four thousand years the nations sighed,    That their King so long delayed.

The prophets told His coming,    The saintly for Him sighed, And the  
star of the Babe of Bethlehem    Shone o'er them when they died.

Their faces towards the future,    They longed to hail the light That in  
the after centuries    Would rise on Christmas night.

But still the Saviour tarried,    Within His father's home And the  
nations wept and wondered why    The promised had not come.

At last earth's hope was granted, And God was a child of earth; And  
a thousand angels chanted The lowly midnight birth.

Ah! Bethlehem was grander That hour than Paradise; And the light  
of earth that night eclipsed The splendors of the skies.

Then let us sing the anthem The angels once did sing; Until the  
music of love and praise, O'er whole wide world will ring.

Gloria in excelsis! Sound the thrilling song; In excelsis  
Deo! Roll the hymn along. Gloria in excelsis! Let the  
heavens ring; In excelsis Deo! Welcome, new-born King  
Gloria in excelsis! Over the sea and land, In excelsis Deo!  
Chant the anthem grand. Gloria in excelsis! Let us all rejoice;  
In excelsis Deo! Lift each heart and voice. Gloria in excelsis!  
Swell the hymn on high; In excelsis Deo! Sound it to the sky.  
Gloria in excelsis! Sing it, sinful earth, In excelsis Deo!  
For the Saviour's birth.

Thus joyfully and victoriously, Glad and ever so gloriously, High as  
the heavens, wide as the earth, Swelleth the hymn of the Saviour's birth.

Lo! the day is waking In the east afar; Dawn is faintly  
breaking, Sunk in every star.

Christmas eve has vanished With its shadows gray; All  
its griefs are banished By bright Christmas day.

Joyful chimes are ringing O'er the land and seas, And  
there comes glad singing, Borne on every breeze.

Little ones so merry Bed-clothes coyly lift, And, in such  
a hurry, Prattle "Christmas gift!"

Little heads so curly, Knowing Christmas laws, Peep out  
very early For old "Santa Claus".

Little eyes are laughing O'er their Christmas toys, Older  
ones are quaffing Cups of Christmas joys.

Hearts are joyous, cheerful, Faces all are gay; None are  
sad and tearful On bright Christmas day.

Hearts are light and bounding, All from care are free;  
Homes are all resounding With the sounds of glee.

Feet with feet are meeting, Bent on pleasure's way; Souls



to souls give greeting      Warm on Christmas day.  
    Gifts are kept a-going      Fast from hand to hand;      Blessings  
are a-flowing      Over every land.  
    One vast wave of gladness      Sweeps its world-wide way,  
Drowning every sadness      On this Christmas day.  
    Merry, merry Christmas,      Haste around the earth;      Merry,  
merry Christmas,      Scatter smiles and mirth.  
    Merry, merry Christmas,      Be to one and all!      Merry, merry  
Christmas,      Enter hut and hall.  
    Merry, merry Christmas,      Be to rich and poor!      Merry,  
merry Christmas      Stop at every door.  
    Merry, merry Christmas,      Fill each heart with joy!      Merry,  
merry Christmas      To each girl and boy.  
    Merry, merry Christmas,      Better gifts than gold;      Merry,  
merry Christmas      To the young and old.  
    Merry, merry Christmas,      May the coming year      Bring as  
merry a Christmas      And as bright a cheer.

## "Far Away"

"Far Away!" what does it mean? A change of heart with a change of place? When footsteps pass from scene to scene, Fades soul from soul with face from face? Are hearts the slaves or lords of space?

"Far Away!" what does it mean? Does distance sever there from here? Can leagues of land part hearts? -- I ween They cannot; for the trickling tear Says "Far Away" means "Far More Near".

"Far Away!" -- the mournful miles Are but the mystery of space That blends our sighs, but parts our smiles, For love will find a meeting place When face is farthest off from face.

"Far Away!" we meet in dreams, As 'round the altar of the night Far-parted stars send down their gleams To meet in one embrace of light And make the brow of darkness bright.

"Far Away!" we meet in tears, That tell the path of weary feet; And all the good-byes of the years But make the wanderer's welcome sweet, The rains of parted clouds thus meet.

"Far Away!" we meet in prayer, You know the temple and the shrine; Before it bows the brow of care, Upon it tapers dimly shine; 'Tis mercy's home, and yours and mine.

"Far Away!" it falls between What is to-day and what has been; But ah! what is meet, what is not, In every hour and every spot, Where lips breathe on "I have forgot."

"Far Away!" there is no far! Nor days nor distance e'er can bar My spirit from your spirits -- nay, Farewell may waft a face away, But still with you my heart will stay.

"Far Away!" I sing its song, But while the music moves along, From out each word an echo clear Falls trembling on my spirit's ear, "Far Away" means "Far More Near".

**Listen**

We borrow,            In our sorrow, From the sun of some to-morrow  
Half the light that gilds to-day;            And the splendor            Flashes tender  
O'er hope's footsteps to defend her            From the fears that haunt the way.

We never            Here can sever Any now from the forever  
Interclasping near and far!            For each minute            Holds within it All  
the hours of the infinite,            As one sky holds every star.

## Wrecked

The winds are singing a death-knell Out on the main to-night; The sky droops low -- and many a bark That sailed from harbors bright, Like many an one before, Shall enter port no more: And a wreck shall drift to some unknown shore Before to-morrow's light.

The clouds are hanging a death-pall Over the sea to-night; The stars are veiled -- and the hearts that sailed Away from harbors bright, Shall sob their last for their quiet home -- And, sobbing, sink 'neath the whirling foam Before the morning's light.

The waves are weaving a death-shroud Out on the main to-night; Alas! the last prayer whispered there By lips with terror white! Over the ridge of gloom, Not a star will loom! God help the souls that will meet their doom Before the dawn of light!

\* \* \* \* \*

The breeze is singing a joy song Over the sea to-day; The storm is dead and the waves are red With the flush of the morning's ray; And the sleepers sleep, but beyond the deep The eyes that watch for the ships shall weep For the hearts they bore away.

## Dreaming

The moan of a wintry soul Melted into a summer song, And the words, like the wavelet's roll, Moved murmuringly along.

And the song flowed far and away, Like the voice of a half-sleeping rill -- Each wave of it lit by a ray -- But the sound was so soft and so still,

And the tone was so gentle and low, None heard the song till it had passed; Till the echo that followed its flow Came dreamingly back from the past.

'Twas too late! -- a song never returns That passes our pathway unheard; As dust lying dreaming in urns Is the song lying dead in a word.

For the birds of the skies have a nest, And the winds have a home where they sleep, And songs, like our souls, need a rest, Where they murmur the while we may weep.

\* \* \* \* \*

But songs -- like the birds o'er the foam, Where the storm wind is beating their breast, Fly shoreward -- and oft find a home In the shelter of words where they rest.

### A Thought

Hearts that are great beat never loud, They muffle their music when they come; They hurry away from the thronging crowd With bended brows and lips half dumb, And the world looks on and mutters -- "Proud." But when great hearts have passed away Men gather in awe and kiss their shroud, And in love they kneel around their clay.

Hearts that are great are always lone, They never will manifest their best; Their greatest greatness is unknown -- Earth knows a little -- God, the rest.

## "Yesterdays"

Gone! and they return no more, But they leave a light in the heart;  
The murmur of waves that kiss a shore Will never, I know, depart.

Gone! yet with us still they stay, And their memories throb through  
life; The music that hushes or stirs to-day, Is toned by their calm or  
strife.

Gone! and yet they never go! We kneel at the shrine of time: 'Tis a  
mystery no man may know, Nor tell in a poet's rhyme.

## "To-Days"

Brief while they last, Long when they are gone; They catch from the past  
A light to still live on.

Brief! yet I ween A day may be an age, The poet's pen may screen  
Heart-stories on one page.

Brief! but in them, From eve back to morn, Some find the gem,  
Many find the thorn.

Brief! minutes pass Soft as flakes of snow, Shadows o'er the grass  
Could not swifter go.

Brief! but along All the after-years To-day will be a song Of smiles  
or of tears.



## "To-Morrows"

God knows all things -- but we In darkness walk our ways; We wonder what will be, We ask the nights and days.

Their lips are sealed; at times The bards, like prophets, see, And rays rush o'er their rhymes From suns of "days to be".

They see To-morrow's heart, They read To-morrow's face, They grasp -- is it by art -- The far To-morrow's trace?

They see what is unseen, And hear what is unheard, And To-morrow's shade or sheen Rests on the poet's word.

As seers see a star Beyond the brow of night, So poets scan the far Prophetic when they write.

They read a human face, As readers read their page, The while their thought will trace A life from youth to age.

They have a mournful gift, Their verses oft are tears; And sleepless eyes they lift To look adown the years.

To-morrows are to-days! Is it not more than art? When all life's winding ways Meet in the poet's heart?

The present meets the past, The future, too, is there; The first enclasps the last And never folds fore'er.

It is not all a dream; A poet's thought is truth; The things that are -- and seem From age far back to youth --

He holds the tangled threads, His hands unravel them; He knows the hearts and heads For thorns, or diadem.

Ask him, and he will see What your To-morrows are; He'll sing "What is to be" Beneath each sun and star.

To-morrows! Dread unknown! What fates may they not bring? What is the chord? the tone? The key in which they sing?

I see a thousand throngs, To-morrows for them wait; I hear a thousand songs Intoning each one's fate.

And yours? What will it be? Hush! song, and let me pray! God sees it all -- I see A long, lone, winding way;

And more! no matter what! Crosses and crowns you wear: My song

---

may be forgot, But Thou shalt not, in prayer.

## Inevitable

What has been will be, 'Tis the under law of life; 'Tis the song of sky  
and sea, To the key of calm and strife.

For guard we as we may, What is to be will be, The dark must fold  
each day -- The shore must gird each sea.

All things are ruled by law; 'Tis only in man's will You meet a feeble  
flaw; But fate is weaving still

The web and woof of life, With hands that have no hearts, Thro'  
calmness and thro' strife, Despite all human arts.

For fate is master here, He laughs at human wiles; He sceptres every  
tear, And fetters any smiles.

What is to be will be, We cannot help ourselves; The waves ask not  
the sea Where lies the shore that shelves.

The law is coldest steel, We live beneath its sway, It cares not what  
we feel, And so pass night and day.

And sometimes we may think This cannot -- will not -- be: Some  
waves must rise -- some sink, Out on the midnight sea.

And we are weak as waves That sink upon the shore; We go down  
into graves -- Fate chants the nevermore;

Cometh a voice! Kneel down! 'Tis God's -- there is no fate -- He  
giveth the Cross and Crown, He opens the jeweled gate.

He watcheth with such eyes As only mothers own -- "Sweet Father  
in the skies! Ye call us to a throne."

There is no fate -- God's love Is law beneath each law, And law all  
laws above Fore'er, without a flaw.

## Sorrow and the Flowers

A Memorial Wreath to C. F.

Sorrow:

A garland for a grave! Fair flowers that bloom, And only bloom to  
fade as fast away, We twine your leaflets 'round our Claudia's tomb, And  
with your dying beauty crown her clay.

Ye are the tender types of life's decay; Your beauty, and your love-  
enfranced breath, From out the hand of June, or heart of May, Fair  
flowers! tell less of life and more of death.

My name is Sorrow. I have knelt at graves, All o'er the weary  
world for weary years; I kneel there still, and still my anguish laves The  
sleeping dust with moaning streams of tears.

And yet, the while I garland graves as now, I bring fair wreaths to  
deck the place of woe; Whilst joy is crowning many a living brow, I  
crown the poor, frail dust that sleeps below.

She was a flower -- fresh, fair and pure, and frail; A lily in life's  
morning. God is sweet; He reached His hand, there rose a mother's wail;  
Her lily drooped: 'tis blooming at His feet.

Where are the flowers to crown the faded flower? I want a garland  
for another grave; And who will bring them from the dell and bower, To  
crown what God hath taken, with what heaven gave?

As though ye heard my voice, ye heed my will; Ye come with fairest  
flowers: give them to me, To crown our Claudia. Love leads memory  
still, To prove at graves love's immortality.

White Rose:

Her grave is not a grave; it is a shrine, Where innocence reposes,  
Bright over which God's stars must love to shine, And where, when  
Winter closes, Fair Spring shall come, and in her garland twine, Just like  
this hand of mine, The whitest of white roses.

Laurel:

I found it on a mountain slope, The sunlight on its face; It caught  
from clouds a smile of hope That brightened all the place.

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They wreath with it the warrior's brow, And crown the chieftain's  
head; But the laurel's leaves love best to grace The garland of the dead.

Wild Flower:

I would not live in a garden, But far from the haunts of men; Nature  
herself was my warden, I lived in a lone little glen. A wild flower out of  
the wildwood, Too wild for even a name; As strange and as simple as  
childhood, And wayward, yet sweet all the same.

Willow Branch:

To sorrow's own sweet crown, With simple grace, The weeping-  
willow bends her branches down Just like a mother's arm, To  
shield from harm, The dead within their resting place.

Lily:

The angel flower of all the flowers: Its sister flowers, In all  
the bowers Worship the lily, for it brings, Wherever it blooms, On  
shrines or tombs, A dream surpassing earthly sense Of heaven's own  
stainless innocence.

Violet Leaves:

It is too late for violets, I only bring their leaves, I looked  
in vain for mignonettes To grace the crown grief weaves; For  
queenly May, upon her way, Robs half the bowers Of all  
their flowers, And leaves but leaves to June. Ah! beauty fades  
so soon; And the valley grows lonely in spite of the sun, For flowerets are  
fading fast, one by one. Leaves for a grave, leaves for a garland,  
Leaves for a little flower, gone to the far-land.

Forget-Me-Not:

"Forget-me-not!" The sad words strangely quiver On lips, like  
shadows falling on a river, Flowing away, By night, by  
day, Flowing away forever. The mountain whence the river springs  
Murmurs to it, "forget me not;" The little stream runs on and sings On to  
the sea, and every spot It passes by Breathes forth a sigh,  
"Forget me not!" "forget me not!"

A Garland:

I bring this for her mother; ah, who knows The lonely deeps within a  
mother's heart? Beneath the wildest wave of woe that flows Above,

around her, when her children part, There is a sorrow, silent, dark, and lone; It sheds no tears, it never maketh moan. Whene'er a child dies from a mother's arms, A grave is dug within the mother's heart: She watches it alone; no words of art Can tell the story of her vigils there. This garland fading even while 'tis fair, It is a mother's memory of a grave, When God hath taken her whom heaven gave.

Sorrow:

Farewell! I go to crown the dead; Yet ye have crowned yourselves to-day, For they whose hearts so faithful love The lonely grave -- the very clay; They crown themselves with richer gems Than flash in royal diadems.

## Hope

Thine eyes are dim: A mist hath gathered there; Around their rim  
Float many clouds of care, And there is sorrow every -- everywhere.

But there is God, Every -- everywhere; Beneath His rod Kneel  
thou adown in prayer.

For grief is God's own kiss Upon a soul. Look up! the sun of bliss  
Will shine where storm-clouds roll.

Yes, weeper, weep! 'Twill not be evermore; I know the darkest deep  
Hath e'en the brightest shore.

So tired! so tired! A cry of half despair; Look! at your side -- And  
see Who standeth there!

Your Father! Hush! A heart beats in His breast; Now rise and rush  
Into His arms -- and rest.

## Farewells

They are so sad to say: no poem tells The agony of hearts that dwells  
In lone and last farewells.

They are like deaths: they bring a wintry chill To summer's roses,  
and to summer's rill; And yet we breathe them still.

For pure as altar-lights hearts pass away; Hearts! we said to them,  
"Stay with us! stay!" And they said, sighing as they said it, "Nay."

The sunniest days are shortest; darkness tells The starless story of the  
night that dwells In lone and last farewells.

Two faces meet here, there, or anywhere: Each wears the thoughts the  
other face may wear; Their hearts may break, breathing, "Farewell fore'er."



## Song of the River

A river went singing adown to the sea,      A-singing -- low --  
singing --      And the dim rippling river said softly to me,      "I'm  
bringing, a-bringing --      While floating along --      A  
beautiful song To the shores that are white where the waves are so weary,  
To the beach that is burdened with wrecks that are dreary.      A song  
sweet and calm      As the peacefulest psalm;      And the shore  
that was sad      Will be grateful and glad, And the weariest wave  
from its dreariest dream Will wake to the sound of the song of the stream;  
And the tempests shall cease      And there shall be peace."  
From the fairest of fountains,      And farthest of mountains,  
From the stillness of snow      Came the stream in its flow.

Down the slopes where the rocks are gray,      Thro' the vales where the  
flowers are fair -- Where the sunlight flashed -- where the shadows lay  
Like stories that cloud a face of care,      The river ran on -- and on -- and  
on --      Day and night, and night and day;      Going and going, and  
never gone,      Longing to flow to the "far away",      Staying and staying,  
and never still;      Going and staying, as if one will      Said, "Beautiful  
river, go to the sea;"      And another will whispered, "Stay with me:"  
And the river made answer, soft and low --      "I go and stay" -- "I stay  
and go."

But what is the song, I said, at last?      To the passing river that  
never passed;      And a white, white wave whispered, "List to me,      I'm a  
note in the song for the beautiful sea, -- A song whose grand accents no  
earth-din may sever, And the river flows on in the same mystic key That  
blends in one chord the `forever and never'."

\_\_\_\_\_ December 15, 1878.

## Dreamland

Over the silent sea of sleep,      Far away! far away!      Over a  
strange and starlit deep      Where the beautiful shadows sway;      Dim  
in the dark,      Glideth a bark, Where never the waves of a tempest roll -  
- Bearing the very "soul of a soul",      Alone, all alone --      Far away --  
far away      To shores all unknown      In the wakings of the day; To the  
lovely land of dreams, Where what is meets with what seems Brightly dim,  
dimly bright; Where the suns meet stars at night, Where the darkness  
meets the light      Heart to heart, face to face,      In an infinite embrace.

\*      \*      \*      \*      \*

Mornings break,      And we wake,      And we wonder where we  
went      In the bark      Thro' the dark,      But our wonder is misspent;  
For no day can cast a light On the dreamings of the night.

## Lines ["Sometimes, from the far- away,"]

Sometimes, from the far-away, Wing a little thought to me; In the  
night or in the day, It will give a rest to me.

I have praise of many here, And the world gives me renown; Let it  
go -- give me one tear, 'Twill be a jewel in my crown.

What care I for earthly fame? How I shrink from all its glare! I  
would rather that my name Would be shrined in some one's prayer.

Many hearts are all too much, Or too little in their praise; I would  
rather feel the touch Of one prayer that thrills all days.

## A Song

Written in an Album.

Pure faced page! waiting so long To welcome my muse and me; Fold  
to thy breast, like a mother, the song That floats from my spirit to thee.

And song! sound soft as the streamlet sings, And sweet as the  
Summer's birds, And pure and bright and white be the wings That will  
waft thee into words.

Yea! fly as the sea-birds fly over the sea To rest on the far-off beach,  
And breathe forth the message I trust to thee, Tear toned on the shores of  
speech.

But ere you go, dip your snowy wing In a wave of my spirit's deep --  
In a wave that is purest -- then haste and bring A song to the hearts that  
weep.

Oh! bring it, and sing it -- its notes are tears; Its octaves, the octaves  
of grief; Who knows but its tones in the far-off years May bring to the  
lone heart relief?

Yea! bring it, and sing it -- a worded moan That sweeps thro' the  
minors of woe, With mystical meanings in every tone, And sounds like  
the sea's lone flow.

\* \* \* \* \*

And the thoughts take the wings of words, and float Out of my spirit  
to thee; But the song dies away into only one note, And sounds but in  
only one key.

And the note! 'tis the wail of the weariest wave That sobs on the  
loneliest shore; And the key! never mind, it comes out of a grave; And  
the chord! -- 'tis a sad "nevermore".

And just like the wavelet that moans on the beach, And, sighing,  
sinks back to the sea, So my song -- it just touches the rude shores of  
speech, And its music melts back into me.

Yea, song! shrink back to my spirit's lone deep, Let others hear only  
thy moan -- But I -- I forever shall hear the grand sweep Of thy mighty  
and tear-burdened tone.

Sweep on, mighty song! -- sound down in my heart As a storm  
sounding under a sea; Not a sound of thy music shall pass into art, Nor a  
note of it float out from me.

## Parting

Farewell! that word has broken hearts And blinded eyes with tears;  
Farewell! one stays, and one departs; Between them roll the years.

No wonder why who say it think -- Farewell! he may fare ill No  
wonder that their spirits sink And all their hopes grow chill.

Good-bye! that word makes faces pale And fills the soul with fears;  
Good-bye! two words that wing a wail Which flutters down the years.

No wonder they who say it feel Such pangs for those who go; Good-  
bye they wish the parted weal, But ah! they may meet woe.

Adieu! such is the word for us, 'Tis more than word -- 'tis prayer;  
They do not part, who do part thus, For God is everywhere.

## St. Stephen

First champion of the Crucified! Who, when the fight began  
Between the Church and worldly pride So nobly fought, so nobly died,  
The foremost in the van; While rallied to your valiant side The red-robed  
martyr-band; To-night with glad and high acclaim We venerate thy saintly  
name; Accept, Saint Stephen, to thy praise And glory, these our lowly lays.

The chosen twelve with chrismed hand And burning zeal within, Led  
forth their small yet fearless band On Pentecost, and took their stand  
Against the world and sin -- While rang aloud the battle-cry: "The hated  
Christians all must die! As died the Nazarene before, The God they  
believe in and adore." Yet Stephen's heart quailed not with fear At  
persecution's cry; But loving, as he did, the cause Of Jesus and His faith  
and laws, Prepared himself to die.

He faced his foes with burning zeal, Such zeal as only saints can feel;  
He told them how the Lord had stood Within their midst, so great and  
good, How he had through Judea trod, How wonders marked his way --  
the God, How he had cured the blind, the lame, The deaf, the palsied, and  
the maimed, And how, with awful, wondrous might, He raised the dead to  
life and light; And how his people knew Him not -- Had eyes and still had  
seen Him not, Had ears and still had heard Him not, Had hearts and  
comprehended not. Then said he, pointing to the right, Where darkly rose  
Golgotha's height: "There have ye slain the Holy One, Your Saviour and  
God's only Son."

They gnashed their teeth in raging ire, Those dark and cruel men;  
They vowed a vengeance deep and dire Against Saint Stephen then. Yet  
he was calm; a radiant light Around his forehead gleamed; He raised his  
eyes, a wondrous sight He saw, so grand it was and bright, His soul was  
filled with such delight That he an angel seemed. Then spoke the Saint:  
"A vision grand Bursts on me from above: The doors of heaven open  
stand, And at the Father's own right hand I see the Lord I love."

"Away with him," the rabble cry, With swelling rage and hate, But  
Stephen still gazed on the sky, His heart was with his Lord on high, He

heeded not his fate.

The gathering crowd in fury wild    Rush on the 'raptured Saint, And  
seize their victim, mute and mild, Who, like his master, though reviled,  
Still uttered no complaint.

With angry shouts they rend the air;    They drag him to the city gate;  
They bind his hands and feet and there, While whispered he for them a  
prayer,    The martyr meets his fate.

First fearless witness to his belief    In Jesus Crucified, The red-robed  
martyrs' noble chief,    Thus for his Master died. And to the end of time his  
name Our Holy Church shall e'er proclaim, And with a mother's pride shall  
tell How her great proto-martyr fell.



## A Flower's Song

Star! Star, why dost thou shine Each night upon my brow? Why  
dost thou make me dream the dreams That I am dreaming now?

Star! Star, thy home is high -- I am of humble birth; Thy feet walk  
shining o'er the sky, Mine, only on the earth.

Star! Star, why make me dream? My dreams are all untrue; And  
why is sorrow dark for me And heaven bright for you?

Star! Star, oh, hide thy ray, And take it off my face; Within my  
lowly home I stay, Thou, in thy lofty place.

Star! Star, and still I dream, Along thy light afar I seem to soar  
until I seem To be, like you, a star.

## The Star's Song

Flower! Flower, why repine? God knows each creature's place; He  
hides within me when I shine, And your leaves hide His face.

And you are near as I to Him, And you reveal as much Of that  
eternal soundless hymn Man's words may never touch.

God sings to man through all my rays That wreathe the brow of night,  
And walks with me thro' all my ways -- The everlasting light.

Flower! Flower, why repine? He chose on lowly earth, And not in  
heaven where I shine, His Bethlehem and birth.

Flower! Flower, I see Him pass Each hour of night and day, Down  
to an altar and a Mass Go thou! and fade away.

Fade away upon His shrine! Thy light is brighter far Than all the  
light wherewith I shine In heaven, as a star.

## Death of the Flower

I love my mother, the wildwood, I sleep upon her breast; A day or two of childhood, And then I sink to rest.

I had once a lovely sister -- She was cradled by my side; But one Summer day I missed her -- She had gone to deck a bride.

And I had another sister, With cheeks all bright with bloom; And another morn I missed her -- She had gone to wreath a tomb.

And they told me they had withered, On the bride's brow and the grave; Half an hour, and all their fragrance Died away, which heaven gave.

Two sweet-faced girls came walking Thro' my lonely home one day, And I overheard them talking Of an altar on their way.

They were culling flowers around me, And I said a little prayer To go with them -- and they found me -- And upon an altar fair,

Where the Eucharist was lying On its mystical death-bed, I felt myself a-dying, While the Mass was being said.

But I lived a little longer, And I prayed there all the day, Till the evening Benediction, When my poor life passed away.

## Singing-Bird

In the valley of my life Sings a "Singing-Bird", And its voice thro'  
calm and strife Is sweetly heard.

In the day and thro' the night Sound the notes, And its song thro' dark  
and bright Ever floats.

Other warblers cease to sing, And their voices rest, And they fold  
their weary wing In their quiet nest.

But my Singing-Bird still sings Without a cease; And each song it  
murmurs brings My spirit peace.

"Singing-Bird!" O "Singing-Bird!" No one knows, When your holy  
songs are heard, What repose

Fills my life and soothes my heart; But I fear The day -- thy songs, if  
we must part, I'll never hear.

But "Singing-Bird!" ah! "Singing-Bird!" Should this e'er be, The  
dreams of all thy songs I heard Shall sing for me.

## Now

Sometimes a single hour Rings thro' a long life-time, As from a temple tower There often falls a chime From blessed bells, that seems To fold in Heaven's dreams Our spirits round a shrine; Hath such an hour been thine?

Sometimes -- who knoweth why? One minute holds a power That shadows every hour, Dialed in life's sky. A cloud that is a speck When seen from far away May be a storm, and wreck The joys of every day.

Sometimes -- it seems not much, 'Tis scarcely felt at all -- Grace gives a gentle touch To hearts for once and all, Which in the spirit's strife May all unnoticed be. And yet it rules a life; Hath this e'er come to thee?

Sometimes one little word, Whispered sweet and fleet, That scarcely can be heard, Our ears will sudden meet. And all life's hours along That whisper may vibrate, And, like a wizard's song, Decide our ev'ry fate.

Sometimes a sudden look, That falleth from some face, Will steal into each nook Of life, and leave its trace; To haunt us to the last, And sway our ev'ry will Thro' all the days to be, For goodness or for ill; Hath this e'er come to thee?

Sometimes one minute folds The hearts of all the years, Just like the heart that holds The Infinite in tears; There be such thing as this -- Who knoweth why, or how? A life of woe or bliss Hangs on some little Now.

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When I am dead, and all will soon forget My words, and face, and  
ways -- I, somehow, think I'll walk beside thee yet A down thy after days.

I die first, and you will see my grave; But child! you must not cry;  
For my dead hand will brightest blessings wave O'er you from yonder  
sky.

You must not weep; I believe I'd hear your tears Tho' sleeping in a  
tomb: My rest would not be rest, if in your years There floated clouds of  
gloom.

For -- from the first -- your soul was dear to mine, And dearer it  
became, Until my soul, in every prayer, would twine Thy name -- my  
child! thy name.

You came to me in girlhood pure and fair, And in your soul -- and  
face -- I saw a likeness to another there In every trace and grace.

You came to me in girlhood -- and you brought An image back to me;  
No matter what -- or whose -- I often sought Another's soul in thee.

Didst ever mark how, sometimes, I became -- Gentle though I be --  
Gentler than ever when I called thy name, Gentlest to thee?

You came to me in girlhood; as your guide I watched your spirit's  
ways; We walked God's holy valleys side by side, And so went on the  
days.

And so went on the years -- 'tis five and more; Your soul is fairer  
now; A light as of a sunset on a shore Is falling on my brow --

Is falling, soon to fade; when I am dead Think this, my child, of me:  
I never said -- I never could have said -- Ungentle words to thee.

I treated you as I would treat a flower, I watched you with such care;  
And from my lips God heard in many an hour Your name in many a  
prayer.

I watched the flower's growth; so fair it grew, On not a leaf a stain;  
Your soul to purest thoughts so sweetly true; I did not watch in vain.

I guide you still -- in my steps you tread still; Towards God these  
ways are set; 'Twill soon be over: child! when I am dead I'll watch and

guide you yet.

'Tis better far that I should go before, And you awhile should stay;  
But I will wait upon the golden shore To meet my child some day.

When I am dead; in some lone after time, If crosses come to thee,  
You'll think -- remembering this simple rhyme -- "He holds a crown for  
me."

I guide you here -- I go before you there; But here or there -- I know  
-- Whether the roses, or the thorny crown you wear I'll watch where'er  
you go,

And wait until you come; when I am dead Think, sometimes, child,  
of this: You must not weep -- follow where I led, I wait for you in bliss.

## God in the Night

Deep in the dark I hear the feet of God: He walks the world; He puts His holy hand On every sleeper -- only puts His hand -- Within it benedictions for each one -- Then passes on; but ah! whene'er He meets A watcher waiting for Him, He is glad. (Does God, like man, feel lonely in the dark?) He rests His hand upon the watcher's brow -- But more than that, He leaves His very breath Upon the watcher's soul; and more than this, He stays for holy hours where watchers pray; And more than that, He oftentimes lifts the veils That hide the visions of the world unseen. The brightest sanctities of highest souls Have blossomed into beauty in the dark. How extremes meet! the very darkest crimes That blight the souls of men are strangely born Beneath the shadows of the holy night.

Deep in the dark I hear his holy feet -- Around Him rustle archangelic wings; He lingers by the temple where His Christ Is watching in His Eucharistic sleep; And where poor hearts in sorrow cannot rest, He lingers there to soothe their weariness. Where mothers weep above the dying child, He stays to bless the mother's bitter tears, And consecrates the cradle of her child, Which is to her her spirit's awful cross. He shudders past the haunts of sin -- yet leaves E'er there a mercy for the wayward hearts. Still as a shadow through the night He moves, With hands all full of blessings, and with heart All full of everlasting love; ah, me! How God does love this poor and sinful world!

The stars behold Him as He passes on, And arch His path of mercy with their rays; The stars are grateful -- He gave them their light, And now they give Him back the light He gave. The shadows tremble in adoring awe; They feel His presence, and they know His face. The shadows, too, are grateful -- could they pray, How they would flower all His way with prayers! The sleeping trees wake up from all their dreams -- Were their leaves lips, ah, me! how they would sing A grand Magnificat, as His Mary sang. The lowly grasses and the fair-faced flowers Watch their Creator as He passes on, And mourn they have no hearts to love their God, And sigh they have no souls to be beloved. Man -- only man -- the image of his God

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-- Lets God pass by when He walks forth at night.

## Poets

Poets are strange -- not always understood By many is their gift,  
Which is for evil or for mighty good -- To lower or to lift.

Upon their spirits there hath come a breath; Who reads their verse  
Will rise to higher life, or taste of death In blessing or in curse.

The Poet is great Nature's own high priest, Ordained from very birth  
To keep for hearts an everlasting feast -- To bless or curse the earth.

They cannot help but sing; they know not why Their thoughts rush  
into song, And float above the world, beneath the sky, For right or for  
the wrong.

They are like angels -- but some angels fell, While some did keep  
their place; Their poems are the gates of heav'n or hell, And God's or  
Satan's face

Looks thro' their ev'ry word into your face, In blessing or in blight,  
And leaves upon your soul a grace or trace Of sunlight or of night.

They move along life's uttermost extremes, Unlike all other men;  
And in their spirit's depths sleep strangest dreams, Like shadows in a  
glen.

They all are dreamers; in the day and night Ever across their souls  
The wondrous mystery of the dark or bright In mystic rhythm rolls.

They live within themselves -- they may not tell What lieth deepest  
there; Within their breast a heaven or a hell, Joy or tormenting care.

They are the loneliest men that walk men's ways, No matter what  
they seem; The stars and sunlight of their nights and days Move over  
them in dream.

They breathe it forth -- their very spirit's breath -- To bless the world  
or blight; To bring to men a higher life or death; To give them light or  
night.

The words of some command the world's acclaim, And never pass  
away, While others' words receive no palm from fame, And live but for a  
day.

But, live or die, their words leave their impress Fore'er or for an hour,

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And mark men's souls -- some more and some the less -- With good's or  
evil's power.

## A Legend

He walked alone beside the lonely sea, The slanting sunbeams fell upon his face, His shadow fluttered on the pure white sands Like the weary wing of a soundless prayer. And He was, oh! so beautiful and fair! Brown sandals on His feet -- His face downcast, As if He loved the earth more than the heav'ns. His face looked like His Mother's -- only hers Had not those strange serenities and stirs That paled or flushed His olive cheeks and brow. He wore the seamless robe His Mother made -- And as He gathered it about His breast, The wavelets heard a sweet and gentle voice Murmur, "Oh! My Mother" -- the white sands felt The touch of tender tears He wept the while. He walked beside the sea; He took His sandals off To bathe His weary feet in the pure cool wave -- For He had walked across the desert sands All day long -- and as He bathed His feet He murmured to Himself, "Three years! three years! And then, poor feet, the cruel nails will come And make you bleed; but, ah! that blood shall lave All weary feet on all their thorny ways." "Three years! three years!" He murmured still again, "Ah! would it were to-morrow, but a will -- My Father's will -- biddeth Me bide that time." A little fisher-boy came up the shore And saw Him -- and, nor bold, nor shy, Approached, but when he saw the weary face, Said mournfully to Him: "You look a-tired." He placed His hand upon the boy's brown brow Caressingly and blessingly -- and said: "I am so tired to wait." The boy spake not. Sudden, a sea-bird, driven by a storm That had been sweeping on the farther shore, Came fluttering towards Him, and, panting, fell At His feet and died; and then the boy said: "Poor little bird," in such a piteous tone; He took the bird and laid it in His hand, And breathed on it -- when to his amaze The little fisher-boy beheld the bird Flutter a moment and then fly aloft -- Its little life returned; and then he gazed With look intensest on the wondrous face (Ah! it was beautiful and fair) -- and said: "Thou art so sweet I wish Thou wert my God." He leaned down towards the boy and softly said: "I am thy Christ." The day they followed Him, With cross upon His shoulders, to His death, Within the shadow of a shelt'ring rock That little boy knelt

down, and there adored, While others cursed, the thorn-crowned  
Crucified.

## Thoughts

By sound of name, and touch of hand, Thro' ears that hear, and eyes  
that see, We know each other in this land, How little must that  
knowledge be?

How souls are all the time alone, No spirit can another reach; They  
hide away in realms unknown, Like waves that never touch a beach.

We never know each other here, No soul can here another see -- To  
know, we need a light as clear As that which fills eternity.

For here we walk by human light, But there the light of God is ours,  
Each day, on earth, is but a night; Heaven alone hath clear-faced hours.

I call you thus -- you call me thus -- Our mortal is the very bar That  
parts forever each of us, As skies, on high, part star from star.

A name is nothing but a name For that which, else, would nameless  
be; Until our souls, in rapture, claim Full knowledge in eternity.

## Lines ["The world is sweet, and fair, and bright,"]

The world is sweet, and fair, and bright, And joy aboundeth everywhere,  
The glorious stars crown every night, And thro' the dark of ev'ry care  
Above us shineth heaven's light.

If from the cradle to the grave We reckon all our days and hours  
We sure will find they give and gave Much less of thorns and more of  
flowers; And tho' some tears must ever lave

The path we tread, upon them all The light of smiles forever lies, As  
o'er the rains, from clouds that fall, The sun shines sweeter in the skies.  
Life holdeth more of sweet than gall

For ev'ry one: no matter who -- Or what their lot -- or high or low;  
All hearts have clouds -- but heaven's blue Wraps robes of bright around  
each woe; And this is truest of the true:

That joy is stronger here than grief, Fills more of life, far more of  
years, And makes the reign of sorrow brief; Gives more of smiles for  
less of tears. Joy is life's tree -- grief but its leaf.

C.S.A.

Do we weep for the heroes who died for us, Who living were true and  
tried for us, And dying sleep side by side for us;     The Martyr-band  
That hallowed our land With the blood they shed in a tide for us?

Ah! fearless on many a day for us They stood in front of the fray for us,  
And held the foeman at bay for us;     And tears should fall     Fore'er  
o'er all Who fell while wearing the gray for us.

How many a glorious name for us, How many a story of fame for us  
They left:     Would it not be a blame for us     If their memories part  
From our land and heart, And a wrong to them, and shame for us?

No, no, no, they were brave for us, And bright were the lives they gave  
for us; The land they struggled to save for us     Will not forget     Its  
warriors yet Who sleep in so many a grave for us.

On many and many a plain for us Their blood poured down all in vain  
for us, Red, rich, and pure, like a rain for us;     They bleed -- we weep,  
We live -- they sleep, "All lost," the only refrain for us.

But their memories e'er shall remain for us, And their names, bright  
names, without stain for us: The glory they won shall not wane for us,  
In legend and lay     Our heroes in Gray Shall forever live over again for  
us.

The Seen and The Unseen

Nature is but the outward vestibule Which God has placed before an  
unseen shrine, The Visible is but a fair, bright vale That winds around the  
great Invisible; The Finite -- it is nothing but a smile That flashes from the  
face of Infinite; A smile with shadows on it -- and 'tis sad Men bask  
beneath the smile, but oft forget The loving Face that very smile conceals.  
The Changeable is but the brodered robe Enwrapped about the great  
Unchangeable; The Audible is but an echo, faint, Low whispered from the  
far Inaudible; This earth is but an humble acolyte A-kneeling on the lowest  
altar-step Of this creation's temple, at the Mass Of Supernature, just to ring

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the bell At Sanctus! Sanctus! Sanctus! while the world Prepares its heart for consecration's hour. Nature is but the ever-rustling veil Which God is wearing, like the Carmelite Who hides her face behind her virgin veil To keep it all unseen from mortal eyes, Yet by her vigils and her holy prayers, And ceaseless sacrifices night and day, Shields souls from sin -- and many hearts from harm.

God hides in nature as a thought doth hide In humbly-sounding words; and as the thought Beats through the lowly word like pulse of heart That giveth life and keepeth life alive, So God, thro' nature, works on ev'ry soul; For nature is His word so strangely writ In heav'n, in all the letters of the stars, Beneath the stars in alphabets of clouds, And on the seas in syllables of waves, And in the earth, on all the leaves of flowers, And on the grasses and the stately trees, And on the rivers and the mournful rocks The word is clearly written; blest are they Who read the word aright -- and understand.

For God is everywhere -- and He doth find In every atom which His hand hath made A shrine to hide His presence, and reveal His name, love, power, to those who kneel In holy faith upon this bright below And lift their eyes, thro' all this mystery, To catch the vision of the great beyond.

Yea! nature is His shadow, and how bright Must that face be which such a shadow casts? We walk within it, for "we live and move And have our being" in His ev'rywhere. Why is God shy? Why doth He hide Himself? The tiniest grain of sand on ocean's shore Entemples Him; the fragrance of the rose Folds Him around as blessed incense folds The altars of His Christ: yet some will walk Along the temple's wondrous vestibule And look on and admire -- yet enter not To find within the Presence, and the Light Which sheds its rays on all that is without. And nature is His voice; who list may hear His name low-murmured every -- everywhere. In songs of birds, in rustle of the flowers, In swaying of the trees, and on the seas The blue lips of the wavelets tell the ships That come and go, His holy, holy name. The winds, or still or stormy, breathe the same; And some have ears and yet they will not hear The soundless voice re-echoed everywhere; And some have hearts that never are enthralled By all the grand Hosannahs nature sings. List! Sanctus! Sanctus! Sanctus! without pause Sounds sweetly out of all creation's heart, That hearts with power to

love may echo back Their Sanctus! Sanctus! Sanctus! to the hymn.

## Passing Away

Life's Vesper-bells are ringing In the temple of my heart, And yon sunset, sure, is singing "Nunc dimittis -- Now depart!" Ah! the eve is golden-clouded, But to-morrow's sun shall shine On this weary body shrouded; But my soul doth not repine.

"Let me see the sun descending, I will see his light no more, For my life, this eve, is ending; And to-morrow on the shore That is fair, and white, and golden, I will meet my God; and ye Will forget not all the olden, Happy hours ye spent with me.

"I am glad that I am going; What a strange and sweet delight Is thro' all my being flowing When I know that, sure, to-night I will pass from earth and meet Him Whom I loved thro' all the years, Who will crown me when I greet Him, And will kiss away my tears.

"My last sun! haste! hurry westward! In the dark of this to-night My poor soul that hastens rest-ward `With the Lamb' will find the light; Death is coming -- and I hear him, Soft and stealthy cometh he; But I do not believe I fear him, God is now so close to me."

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Fell the daylight's fading glimmer On a face so wan and white; Brighter was his soul, while dimmer Grew the shadows of the night; And he died -- and God was near him; I knelt by him to forgive; And I sometimes seem to hear him Whisper -- "Live as I did live."

## The Pilgrim (A Christmas Legend for Children)

The shades of night were brooding O'er the sea, the earth, the sky;  
The passing winds were wailing In a low, unearthly sigh; The darkness  
gathered deeper, For no starry light was shed, And silence reigned  
unbroken, As the silence of the dead.

The wintry clouds were hanging From the starless sky so low, While  
'neath them earth lay folded In a winding shroud of snow. 'Twas cold,  
'twas dark, 'twas dreary, And the blast that swept along The mountains  
hoarsely murmured A fierce, discordant song.

And mortal men were resting From the turmoil of the day, And  
broken hearts were dreaming Of the friends long passed away; And  
saintly men were keeping Their vigils through the night, While angel  
spirits hovered near Around their lonely light.

And wicked men were sinning In the midnight banquet halls,  
Forgetful of that sentence traced On proud Belshazzar's walls. On that  
night, so dark and dismal, Unillumed by faintest ray, Might be seen the  
lonely pilgrim Wending on his darksome way.

Slow his steps, for he was weary, And betimes he paused to rest;  
Then he rose, and, pressing onward, Murmured lowly: "I must haste."  
In his hand he held a chaplet, And his lips were moved in prayer, For the  
darkness and the silence Seemed to whisper God was there.

On the lonely pilgrim journeyed, Nought disturbed him on his way,  
And his prayers he softly murmured As the midnight stole away. Hark!  
amid the stillness rises On his ears a distant strain Softly sounding --  
now it ceases -- Sweetly now it comes again.

In his path he paused to wonder While he listened to the sound: On it  
came, so sweet, so pensive, 'Mid the blast that howled around; And the  
restless winds seemed soothed By that music, gentle, mild, And they  
slept, as when a mother Rocks to rest her cradled child.

Strange and sweet the calm that followed, Stealing through the

midnight air; Strange and sweet the sounds that floated Like an angel  
breathing there. From the sky the clouds were drifting Swiftly one by  
one away, And the sinless stars were shedding Here and there a silver  
ray.

"Why this change?" the pilgrim whispered -- "Whence that music?  
whence its power? Earthly sounds are not so lovely! Angels love the  
midnight hour!" Bending o'er his staff, he wondered, Loath to leave that  
sacred place: "I must hasten," said he, sadly -- On he pressed with  
quicken'd pace.

Just before him rose a mountain, Dark its outline, steep its side --  
Down its slopes that midnight music Seemed so soothingly to glide. "I  
will find it," said the pilgrim, "Though this mountain I must scale" --  
Scarcely said, when on his vision Shone a distant light, and pale.

Glad he was; and now he hastened -- Brighter, brighter grew the ray  
-- Stronger, stronger swelled the music As he struggled on his way. Soon  
he gained the mountain summit, Lo! a church bursts on his view: From  
the church that light was flowing, And that gentle music, too.

Near he came -- its door stood open -- Still he stood in awe and fear;  
"Shall I enter spot so holy? Am I unforbidden here? I will enter --  
something bids me -- Saintry men are praying here; Vigils sacred they  
are keeping, 'Tis their Matin song I hear."

Softly, noiselessly, he glided Through the portal; on his sight Shone a  
vision, bright, strange, thrilling; Down he knelt -- 'twas Christmas night -  
- Down, in deepest adoration, Knelt the lonely pilgrim there; Joy  
unearthly, rapture holy, Blended with his whispered prayer.

Wrapped his senses were in wonder, On his soul an awe profound,  
As the vision burst upon him, 'Mid sweet light and sweeter sound. "Is it  
real? is it earthly? Is it all a fleeting dream? Hark! those choral voices  
ringing, Lo! those forms like angels seem."

On his view there rose an altar, Glittering 'mid a thousand beams,  
Flowing from the burning tapers In bright, sparkling, silver streams.  
From unnumbered crystal vases, Rose and bloomed the fairest flowers,  
Shedding 'round their balmy fragrance 'Mid the lights in sweetest  
showers.

Rich and gorgeous was the altar, Decked it was in purest white.  
Mortal hands had not arrayed it Thus, upon that Christmas night. Amid  
its lights and lovely flowers, The little tabernacle stood; Around it all  
was rich and golden, It alone was poor and rude.

Hark! Venite Adoremus! Round the golden altar sounds -- See that  
band of angels kneeling Prostrate, with their sparkling crowns! And the  
pilgrim looked and listened, And he saw the angels there, And their  
snow-white wings were folded, As they bent in silent prayer.

Twelve they were; bright rays of glory Round their brows effulgent  
shone; But a wreath of nobler beauty Seemed to grace and circle one;  
And he, beauteous, rose and opened Wide the tabernacle door: Hark!  
Venite Adoremus Rises -- bending, they adore.

Lo! a sound of censers swinging! Clouds of incense weave around  
The altar rich a silver mantle, As the angels' hymns resound. List! Venite  
Adoremus Swells aloud in stronger strain, And the angels swing the  
censers, And they prostrate bend again.

Rising now, with voice of rapture, Bursts aloud, in thrilling tone,  
"Gloria in Excelsis Deo" Round the sacramental throne. Oh! 'twas sweet,  
'twas sweet and charming As the notes triumphant flowed! Oh! 'twas  
sweet, while wreathes of incense Curled, and countless tapers glowed.

Oh! 'twas grand! that hymn of glory Earthly sounds cannot compare;  
Oh! 'twas grand! it breath'd of heaven, As the angels sung it there.  
Ravished by the strains ecstatic, Raptured by the vision grand, Gazed the  
pilgrim on the altar, Gazed upon the angel band.

All was hushed! the floating echoes Of the hymn had died away;  
Vanished were the clouds of incense, And the censers ceased to sway. Lo!  
their wings are gently waving, And the angels softly rise, Bending  
towards the tabernacle, Worship beaming from their eyes.

One last, lowly genuflection! From their brows love burning shone --  
Ah! they're going, they've departed, All but one, the brightest one. "Why  
remains he?" thought the pilgrim, Ah! he rises beauteously -- "Listen!"  
and the angel murmured Sweetly: "Pilgrim, hail to thee!"

"Come unto the golden altar, I'm an angel -- banish fear -- Come,  
unite in adoration With me, for our God is here. Come thy Jesus here

reposes, Come! He'll bless thy mortal sight -- Come! adore the Infant Saviour With me -- for 'tis Christmas night."

Now approached the pilgrim, trembling, Now beside the angel bent, And the deepest, blissful gladness, With his fervent worship blent. "Pilgrim," said the spirit, softly, "Thou hast seen bright angels here, And hast heard our sacred anthems, Filled with rapture, filled with fear.

"We are twelve -- 'twas we who chanted First the Saviour's lowly birth, We who brought the joyful tidings Of His coming, to the earth; We who sung unto the shepherds, Watching on the mountain height, That the Word was made Incarnate For them on that blessed night.

"And since then we love to linger On that festal night on earth; And we leave our thrones of glory Here to keep the Saviour's birth. Happy mortals! happy mortals! To-night the angels would be men; And they leave their thrones in heaven, For the Crib of Bethlehem."

And the angel led the pilgrim To the tabernacle door; Lo! an Infant there was sleeping, And the angel said: "Adore! He is sleeping, yet he watches, See that beam of love divine; Pilgrim! pay your worship holy To your Infant God and mine."

And the spirit slowly, slowly, Closed the tabernacle door, While the pilgrim lowly, lowly, Bent in rapture to adore. "Pilgrim," spoke the angel sweetly, "I must bid thee my adieu; Love! oh! love the Infant Jesus! --" And he vanished from his view.

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All was silent -- silent -- silent -- Faded was the vision bright -- But the pilgrim long remembered In his heart that Christmas night.

## Reverie ["Those hearts of ours -- how strange! how strange!"]

Those hearts of ours -- how strange! how strange! How they yearn to  
ramble and love to range Down through the vales of the years long gone,  
Up through the future that fast rolls on.

To-days are dull -- so they wend their ways Back to their beautiful  
yesterdays; The present is blank -- so they wing their flight To future to-  
morrow where all seems bright.

Build them a bright and beautiful home, They'll soon grow weary and  
want to roam; Find them a spot without sorrow or pain, They may stay a  
day, but they're off again.

Those hearts of ours -- how wild! how wild! They're as hard to tame as  
an Indian child; They're as restless as waves on the sounding sea, Like the  
breeze and the bird are they fickle and free.

Those hearts of ours -- how lone! how lone! Ever, forever, they mourn  
and moan; Let them revel in joy, let them riot in cheer; The revelry o'er,  
they're all the more drear.

Those hearts of ours -- how warm! how warm! Like the sun's bright  
rays, like the Summer's charm; How they beam and burn! how they gleam  
and glow Their flash and flame hide but ashes below.

Those hearts of ours -- how cold! how cold! Like December's snow on  
the waste or wold; And though our Decembers melt soon into May, Hearts  
know Decembers that pass not away.

Those hearts of ours -- how deep! how deep! You may sound the sea  
where the corals sleep, Where never a billow hath rumbled or rolled --  
Depths still the deeper our hearts hide and hold.

Where the wild storm's tramp hath ne'er been known The wrecks of  
the sea lie low and lone; Thus the heart's surface may sparkle and glow,  
There are wrecks far down -- there are graves below.

Those hearts of ours -- but, after all, How shallow and narrow, how  
tiny and small; Like scantiest streamlet or Summer's least rill, They're as



easy to empty -- as easy to fill.

One hour of storm and how the streams pour! One hour of sun and the streams are no more; One little grief -- how the tears gush and glide! One smile -- flow they ever so fast, they are dried.

Those hearts of ours -- how wise! how wise! They can lift their thoughts till they touch the skies; They can sink their shafts, like a miner bold, Where wisdom's mines hide their pearls and gold.

Aloft they soar with undazzled gaze, Where the halls of the Day-King burn and blaze; Or they fly with a wing that will never fail, O'er the sky's dark sea where the star-ships sail.

Those hearts of ours -- what fools! what fools! How they laugh at wisdom, her cant and rules! How they waste their powers, and, when wasted, grieve For what they have squandered, but cannot retrieve.

Those hearts of ours -- how strong! how strong! Let a thousand sorrows around them throng, They can bear them all, and a thousand more, And they're stronger then than they were before.

Those hearts of ours -- how weak! how weak! But a single word of unkindness speak, Like a poisoned shaft, like a viper's fang, That one slight word leaves a life-long pang.

Those hearts of ours -- but I've said enough, As I find that my rhyme grows rude and rough; I'll rest me now, but I'll come again Some other day, to resume my strain.

---- Their Story Runneth Thus

Two little children played among the flowers, Their mothers were of kin, tho' far apart; The children's ages were the very same E'en to an hour - - and Ethel was her name, A fair, sweet girl, with great, brown, wond'ring eyes That seemed to listen just as if they held The gift of hearing with the power of sight. Six summers slept upon her low white brow, And dreamed amid the roses of her cheeks. Her voice was sweetly low; and when she spoke Her words were music; and her laughter rang So like an altar-bell that, had you heard Its silvery sound a-ringing, you would think Of kneeling down and worshiping the pure.

They played among the roses -- it was May -- And "hide and seek",  
and "seek and hide", all eve They played together till the sun went down.  
Earth held no happier hearts than theirs that day: And tired at last she  
plucked a crimson rose And gave to him, her playmate, cousin-kin; And he  
went thro' the garden till he found The whitest rose of all the roses there,  
And placed it in her long, brown, waving hair. "I give you red -- and you --  
you give me white: What is the meaning?" said she, while a smile, As  
radiant as the light of angels' wings, Swept bright across her face; the  
while her eyes Seemed infinite purities half asleep In sweetest pearls; and  
he did make reply: "Sweet Ethel! white dies first; you know, the snow,  
(And it is not as white as thy pure face) Melts soon away; but roses red as  
mine Will bloom when all the snow hath passed away."

She sighed a little sigh, then laughed again, And hand in hand they  
walked the winding ways Of that fair garden till they reached her home. A  
good-bye and a kiss -- and he was gone.

She leaned her head upon her mother's breast, And ere she fell asleep  
she, sighing, called: "Does white die first? my mother! and does red Live  
longer?" And her mother wondered much At such strange speech. She  
fell asleep With murmurs on her lips of red and white.

Those children loved as only children can -- With nothing in their love  
save their whole selves. When in their cradles they had been betroth'd;  
They knew it in a manner vague and dim -- Unconscious yet of what  
betrothal meant.

The boy -- she called him Merlin -- a love name -- (And he -- he called  
her always Ullainee, No matter why); the boy was full of moods. Upon his  
soul and face the dark and bright Were strangely intermingled. Hours  
would pass Rippling with his bright prattle; and then, hours Would come  
and go, and never hear a word Fall from his lips, and never see a smile  
Upon his face. He was so like a cloud With ever-changeable hues, as she  
was like A golden sunbeam shining on its face.

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Ten years passed on. They parted and they met Not often in each  
year; yet as they grew In years, a consciousness unto them came Of human  
love. But it was sweet and pure. There was no passion in it.

Reverence, Like Guardian-Angel, watched o'er Innocence.

One night in mid of May their faces met As pure as all the stars that gazed on them. They met to part from themselves and the world; Their hearts just touched to separate and bleed; Their eyes were linked in look, while saddest tears Fell down, like rain, upon the cheeks of each: They were to meet no more.

Their hands were clasped To tear the clasp in twain; and all the stars Looked proudly down on them, while shadows knelt, Or seemed to kneel, around them with the awe Evoked from any heart by sacrifice. And in the heart of that last parting hour Eternity was beating. And he said: "We part to go to Calvary and to God -- This is our garden of Gethsemane; And here we bow our heads and breathe His prayer Whose heart was bleeding, while the angels heard: Not my will, Father! but Thine own be done." Raptures meet agonies in such heart-hours; Gladness doth often fling her bright, warm arms Around the cold, white neck of grief -- and thus The while they parted -- sorrow swept their hearts Like a great, dark stormy sea -- but sudden A joy, like sunshine -- did it come from God? --

Flung over every wave that swept o'er them A more than golden glory. Merlin said: "Our loves must soar aloft to spheres divine; The human satisfies nor you nor me, (No human love shall ever satisfy -- Or ever did - - the hearts that lean on it); You sigh for something higher as do I, So let our spirits be espoused in God, And let our wedlock be as soul to soul; And prayer shall be the golden marriage ring, And God will bless us both." She sweetly said: "Your words are echoes of my own soul's thoughts; Let God's own heart be our own holy home And let us live as only angels live; And let us love as our own angels love. 'Tis hard to part -- but it is better so -- God's will is ours, and -- Merlin! let us go."

And then she sobbed as if her heart would break -- Perhaps it did; an awful minute passed, Long as an age and briefer than a flash Of lightning in the skies. No word was said -- Only a look which never was forgot. Between them fell the shadows of the night. Their faces went away into the dark, And never met again; and yet their souls Were twined together in the heart of Christ.

And Ethel went from earthland long ago; But Merlin stays still

hanging on his cross. He would not move a nail that nails him there, He would not pluck a thorn that crowns him there. He hung himself upon the blessed cross With Ethel; she has gone to wear the crown That wreathes the brows of virgins who have kept Their bodies with their souls from earthly taint.

And years and years, and weary years, passed on Into the past. One Autumn afternoon, When flowers were in their agony of death, And winds sang "De Profundis" over them, And skies were sad with shadows, he did walk Where, in a resting place as calm as sweet, The dead were lying down; the Autumn sun Was half way down the west; the hour was three -- The holiest hour of all the twenty-four, For Jesus leaned His head on it, and died. He walked alone amid the virgin's graves Where virgins slept; a convent stood near by, And from the solitary cells of nuns Unto the cells of death the way was short. Low, simple stones and white watched o'er each grave, While in the hollows 'tween them sweet flowers grew, Entwining grave and grave. He read the names Engraven on the stones, and "Rest in peace" Was written 'neath them all, and o'er each name A cross was graven on the lowly stone. He passed each grave with reverential awe, As if he passed an altar, where the Host Had left a memory of its sacrifice. And o'er the buried virgins' virgin dust He walked as prayerfully as tho' he trod The holy floor of fair Loretta's shrine. He passed from grave to grave, and read the names Of those whose own pure lips had changed the names By which this world had known them into names Of sacrifice known only to their God; Veiling their faces they had veiled their names; The very ones who played with them as girls, Had they passed there, would know no more than he Or any stranger where their playmates slept; And then he wondered all about their lives, their hearts, Their thoughts, their feelings, and their dreams, Their joys and sorrows, and their smiles and tears. He wondered at the stories that were hid Forever down within those simple graves. In a lone corner of that resting-place Uprose a low white slab that marked a grave Apart from all the others; long, sad grass Drooped o'er the little mound, and mantled it With veil of purest green; around the slab The whitest of white roses 'twined their arms -- Roses cold as the snows and pure as songs Of angels -- and

the pale leaflets and thorns Hid e'en the very name of her who slept  
Beneath. He walked on to the grave, but when He reached its side a spell  
fell on his heart So suddenly -- he knew not why -- and tears Went up into  
his eyes and trickled down Upon the grass; he was so strangely moved As  
if he met a long-gone face he loved. I believe he prayed. He lifted then  
the leaves That hid the name; but as he did, the thorns Did pierce his hand,  
and lo! amazed, he read The very word -- the very, very name He gave the  
girl in golden days before --

## ULLAINEE".

He sat beside that lonely grave for long, He took its grasses in his trembling hand, He toyed with them and wet them with his tears, He read the name again, and still again, He thought a thousand thoughts, and then he thought It all might be a dream -- then rubbed his eyes And read the name again to be more sure; Then wondered and then wept -- then asked himself: "What means it all? Can this be Ethel's grave? I dreamed her soul had fled. Was she the white dove that I saw in dream Fly o'er the sleeping sea so long ago?"

The convent bell Rang sweet upon the breeze, and answered him His question. And he rose and went his way Unto the convent gate; long shadows marked One hour before the sunset, and the birds Were singing Vespers in the convent trees. As silent as a star-gleam came a nun In answer to his summons at the gate; Her face was like the picture of a saint, Or like an angel's smile; her downcast eyes Were like a half-closed tabernacle, where God's presence glowed; her lips were pale and worn By ceaseless prayer; and when she sweetly spoke, And bade him enter, 'twas in such a tone As only voices own which day and night Sing hymns to God.

She locked the massive gate. He followed her along a flower-fringed walk That, gently rising, led up to the home Of virgin hearts. The very flowers that bloomed Within the place, in beds of sacred shapes, (For they had fashioned them with holy care, Into all holy forms -- a chalice, a cross, And sacred hearts -- and many saintly names, That, when their eyes would fall upon the flowers, Their souls might feast upon some mystic sign), Were fairer far within the convent walls, And purer in their fragrance and their bloom Than all their sisters in the outer world.

He went into a wide and humble room -- The floor was painted, and upon the walls, In humble frames, most holy paintings hung; Jesus and Mary and many an olden saint Were there. And she, the veil-clad Sister, spoke: "I'll call the mother," and she bowed and went.

He waited in the wide and humble room, The only room in that

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unworldly place This world could enter; and the pictures looked Upon his  
face and down into his soul, And strangely stirred him. On the mantle  
stood A crucifix, the figured Christ of which Did seem to suffer; and he  
rose to look More nearly on to it; but he shrank in awe When he beheld a  
something in its face Like his own face. But more amazed he grew, when,  
at the foot Of that strange crucifix he read the name --

## "ULLAINEE".

A whirl of thought swept o'er his startled soul -- When to the door he heard a footstep come, And then a voice -- the Mother of the nuns Had entered -- and in calmest tone began: "Forgive, kind sir, my stay; our Matin song Had not yet ended when you came; our rule Forbids our leaving choir; this my excuse." She bent her head -- the rustle of her veil Was like the trembling of an angel's wing, Her voice's tone as sweet. She turned to him And seemed to ask him with her still, calm look What brought him there, and waited his reply. "I am a stranger, Sister, hither come," He said, "upon an errand still more strange; But thou wilt pardon me and bid me go If what I crave you cannot rightly grant; I would not dare intrude, nor claim your time, Save that a friendship, deep as death, and strong As life, has brought me to this holy place."

He paused. She looked at him an instant, bent Her lustrous eyes upon the floor, but gave Him no reply, save that her very look Encouraged him to speak, and he went on:

He told her Ethel's story from the first, He told her of the day amid the flowers, When they were only six sweet summers old; He told her of the night when all the flowers, A-list'ning, heard the words of sacrifice -- He told her all; then said: "I saw a stone In yonder graveyard where your Sisters sleep, And writ on it, all hid by roses white, I saw a name I never ought forget."

She wore a startled look, but soon repressed The wonder that had come into her face. "Whose name?" she calmly spoke. But when he said



## ULLAINEE",

She forward bent her face and pierced his own With look intensest;  
and he thought he heard The trembling of her veil, as if the brow It  
mantled throbbed with many thrilling thoughts But quickly rose she, and,  
in hurried tone, Spoke thus: "'Tis hour of sunset, 'tis our rule To close the  
gates to all till to-morrow's morn. Return to-morrow; then, if so God wills,  
I'll see you."

He gave many thanks, passed out From that unworldly  
place into the world. Straight to the lonely graveyard went his steps --  
Swift to the "White-Rose-Grave", his heart: he knelt Upon its grass and  
prayed that God might will The mystery's solution; then he took, Where it  
was drooping on the slab, a rose, The whiteness of whose leaves was like  
the foam Of summer waves upon a summer sea.

Then thro' the night he went And reached his room,  
where, weary of his thoughts, Sleep came, and coming found the dew of  
tears Undried within his eyes, and flung her veil Around him. Then he  
dreamt a strange, weird dream. A rock, dark waves, white roses and a  
grave, And cloistered flowers, and cloistered nuns, and tears That shone  
like jewels on a diadem, And two great angels with such shining wings --  
All these and more were in most curious way Blended in one dream or  
many dreams. Then He woke wearier in his mind. Then slept Again  
and had another dream. His dream ran thus -- (He told me all of it many  
years ago, But I forgot the most. I remember this): A dove, whiter than  
whiteness' very self, Fluttered thro' his sleep in vision or dream, Bearing in  
its flight a spotless rose. It Flew away across great, long distances, Thro'  
forests where the trees were all in dream, And over wastes where silences  
held reign, And down pure valleys, till it reached a shore By which  
blushed a sea in the ev'ning sun; The dove rested there awhile, rose again  
And flew across the sea into the sun; And then from near or far (he could  
not say) Came sound as faint as echo's own echo -- A low sweet hymn it  
seemed -- and now And then he heard, or else he thought he heard, As if it  
were the hymn's refrain, the words: "White dies first!" "White dies first."

The sun had passed his noon and westward sloped; He hurried to the

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cloister and was told The Mother waited him. He entered in, Into the wide and pictured room, and there The Mother sat and gave him welcome twice. "I prayed last night," she spoke, "to know God's will; I prayed to Holy Mary and the saints That they might pray for me, and I might know My conduct in the matter. Now, kind sir, What wouldst thou? Tell thy errand." He replied: "It was not idle curiosity That brought me hither or that prompts my lips To ask the story of the `White-Rose-Grave', To seek the story of the sleeper there Whose name I knew so long and far away. Who was she, pray? Dost deem it right to tell?" There was a pause before the answer came, As if there was a comfort in her heart, There was a tremor in her voice when she Unclosed two palest lips, and spoke in tone Of whisper more than word:

"She was a child Of lofty gift and grace who fills that grave, And who has filled it long -- and yet it seems To me but one short hour ago we laid Her body there. Her mem'ry clings around Our hearts, our cloisters, fresh, and fair, and sweet. We often look for her in places where Her face was wont to be: among the flowers, In chapel, underneath those trees. Long years Have passed and mouldered her pure face, and yet It seems to hover here and haunt us all. I cannot tell you all. It is enough To see one ray of light for us to judge The glory of the sun; it is enough To catch one glimpse of heaven's blue For us to know the beauty of the sky. It is enough to tell a little part Of her most holy life, that you may know The hidden grace and splendor of the whole."

"Nay, nay," he interrupted her; "all! all! Thou'lt tell me all, kind Mother."

She went on, Unheeding his abruptness: "One sweet day -- A feast of Holy Virgin, in the month Of May, at early morn, ere yet the dew Had passed from off the flowers and grass -- ere yet Our nuns had come from holy Mass -- there came, With summons quick, unto our convent gate A fair young girl. Her feet were wet with dew -- Another dew was moist within her eyes -- Her large, brown, wond'ring eyes. She asked for me And as I went she rushed into my arms -- Like weary bird into the leaf-roofed branch That sheltered it from storm. She sobbed and sobbed Until I thought her very soul would rush From her frail

body, in a sob, to God. I let her sob her sorrow all away. My words were waiting for a calm. Her sobs Sank into sighs -- and they too sank and died In faintest breath. I bore her to a seat In this same room -- and gently spoke to her, And held her hand in mine -- and soothed her With words of sympathy, until she seemed As tranquil as myself.

"And then I asked: `What brought thee hither, child? and what wilt thou?' `Mother!' she said, `wilt let me wear the veil? Wilt let me serve my God as e'en you serve Him in this cloistered place? I pray to be -- Unworthy tho' I be -- to be His spouse. Nay, Mother -- say not nay -- 'twill break a heart Already broken;' and she looked on me With those brown, wond'ring eyes, which pleaded more, More strongly and more sadly than her lips That I might grant her sudden, strange request. `Hast thou a mother?' questioned I. `I had,' She said, `but heaven has her now; and thou Wilt be my mother -- and the orphan girl Will make her life her thanks.'

`Thy father, child?' `Ere I was cradled he was in his grave.' `And hast nor sister nor brother?' `No,' she said, `God gave my mother only me; one year This very day He parted us.' `Poor child,' I murmured. `Nay, kind Sister,' she replied, `I have much wealth -- they left me ample means -- I have true friends who love me and protect. I was a minor until yesterday; But yesterday all guardianship did cease, And I am mistress of myself and all My worldly means -- and, Sister, they are thine If thou but take myself -- nay -- don't refuse.' `Nay -- nay -- my child!' I said; `the only wealth We wish for is the wealth of soul -- of grace. Not all your gold could unlock yonder gate, Or buy a single thread of Virgin's veil. Not all the coins in coffers of a king Could bribe an entrance here for any one. God's voice alone can claim a cell -- a veil, For any one He sends.

Who sent you here, My child? Thyself? Or did some holy one Direct thy steps? Or else some sudden grief? Or, mayhap, disappointment? Or, perhaps, A sickly weariness of that bright world Hath cloyed thy spirit? Tell me, which is it.' `Neither,' she quickly, almost proudly spoke. `Who sent you, then?' `A youthful Christ,' she said, `Who, had he lived in those far days of Christ, Would have been His belov'd Disciple, sure -- Would have been His own gentle John; and would Have leaned on Thursday night upon His breast, And

stood on Friday eve beneath His cross To take His Mother from Him when He died. He sent me here -- he said the word last night In my own garden; this the word he said -- Oh! had you heard him whisper: "Ethel, dear! Your heart was born with veil of virgin on; I hear it rustle every time we meet, In all your words and smiles; and when you weep I hear it rustle more. Go -- wear your veil -- And outward be what inwardly thou art, And hast been from the first. And, Ethel, list: My heart was born with priestly vestments on, And at Dream-Altars I have oftentimes stood, And said such sweet Dream-Masses in my sleep -- And when I lifted up a white Dream-Host, A silver Dream-Bell rang -- and angels knelt, Or seemed to kneel, in worship. Ethel say -- Thou wouldst not take the vestments from my heart Nor more than I would tear the veil from thine. My vested and thy veiled heart part to-night To climb our Calvary and to meet in God; And this, fair Ethel, is Gethsemane -- And He is here, who, in that other, bled; And they are here who came to comfort Him -- His angels and our own; and His great prayer, Ethel, is ours to-night -- let's say it, then: Father! Thy will be done! Go find your veil And I my vestments." He did send me here.'

"She paused -- a few stray tears had dropped upon Her closing words and softened them to sighs. I listened, inward moved, but outward calm and cold To the girl's strange story. Then, smiling, said: 'I see it is a love-tale after all, With much of folly and some of fact in it; It is a heart affair, and in such things There's little logic, and there's less of sense. You brought your heart, dear child, but left your head Outside the gates; nay, go, and find the head You lost last night -- and then, I am quite sure, You'll not be anxious to confine your heart Within this cloistered place.' She seemed to wince Beneath my words one moment -- then replied: 'If e'en a wounded heart did bring me here, Dost thou do well, Sister, to wound it more? If merely warmth of feelings urged me here, Dost thou do well to chill them into ice? And were I disappointed in yon world, Should that debar me from a purer place? You say it is a love-tale -- so it is; The vase was human -- but the flower divine; And if I break the vase with my own hands, Will you forbid that I should humbly ask The heart of God to be my lily's vase? I'd trust my lily to no heart on earth Save his who

yesternight did send me here To dip it in the very blood of Christ, And plant it here.'

And then she sobbed outright A long, deep sob.

I gently said to her: `Nay, child, I spoke to test thee -- do not weep. If thou art called of God, thou yet shalt come And find e'en here a home. But God is slow In all His works and ways, and slower still When He would deck a bride to grace His court. Go, now, and in one year -- if thou dost come Thy veil and cell shall be prepared for thee; Nay -- urge me not -- it is our holy rule -- A year of trial! I must to choir, and thou Into the world to watch and wait and pray Until the Bridegroom comes.'

She rose and went Without a word.

"And twelvemonth after came, True to the very day and hour, and said: `Wilt keep thy promise made one year ago? Where is my cell -- and where my virgin's veil? Wilt try me more? Wilt send me back again? I came once with my wealth and was refused: And now I come as poor as Holy Christ Who had no place to rest His weary head -- My wealth is gone; I offered it to him Who sent me here; he sent me speedy word "Give all unto the poor in quiet way -- And hide the giving -- ere you give yourself To God!" `Wilt take me now for my own sake? I bring my soul -- 'tis little worth I ween, And yet it cost sweet Christ a priceless price.'

"`My child,' I said, `thrice welcome -- enter here; A few short days of silence and of prayer, And thou shalt be the Holy Bridegroom's bride.'

"Her novice days went on; much sickness fell Upon her. Oft she lay for weary weeks In awful agonies, and no one heard A murmur from her lips. She oft would smile A sunny, playful smile, that she might hide Her sufferings from us all. When she was well She was the first to meet the hour of prayer -- The last to leave it -- and they named her well: The `Angel of the Cloister'. Once I heard The Father of our souls say when she passed `Beneath that veil of sacrificial black She wears the white robe of her innocence.' And we -- we believed it. There are sisters here Of three-score years of service who would say: `Within our memory never moved a veil That hid so saintly and so pure a heart.' And we -- we felt it, and we loved her so, We treated her as angel and as child. I never heard her speak about the past, I never heard her mention e'en a name Of any in

the world. She little spake; She seemed to have rapt moments -- then she grew Absent-minded, and would come and ask me To walk alone and say her Rosary Beneath the trees. She had a voice divine; And when she sang for us, in truth it seemed The very heart of song was breaking on her lips. The dower of her mind as of her heart, Was of the richest, and she mastered art By instinct more than study. Her weak hands Moved ceaselessly amid the beautiful. There is a picture hanging in our choir She painted. I remember well the morn She came to me and told me she had dreamt A dream; then asked me would I let her paint Her dream. I gave permission. Weeks and weeks Went by, and ev'ry spare hour of the day She kept her cell all busy with her work. At last 'twas finished, and she brought it forth -- A picture my poor words may not portray. But you must gaze on it with your own eyes, And drink its magic and its meanings in; I'll show it thee, kind sir, before you go.

"In every May for two whole days she kept Her cell. We humored her in that; but when The days had passed, and she came forth again, Her face was tender as a lily's leaf, With God's smile on it; and for days and days Thereafter, she would scarcely ope her lips Save when in prayer, and then her every look Was rapt, as if her soul did hold with God Strange converse. And, who knows? mayhap she did.

"I half forgot -- on yonder mantlepiece You see that wondrous crucifix; one year She spent on it, and begged to put beneath That most mysterious word -- 'Ullainee'.

"At last the cloister's angel disappeared; Her face was missed at choir, her voice was missed -- Her words were missed where every day we met In recreation's hour. And those who passed The angel's cell would lightly tread, and breathe A prayer that death might pass the angel by And let her longer stay, for she lay ill -- Her frail, pure life was ebbing fast away. Ah! many were the orisons that rose From all our hearts that God might spare her still; At Benediction and at holy Mass Our hands were lifted, and strong pleadings went To heaven for her; we did love her so -- Perhaps too much we loved her, and perhaps Our love was far too human. Slow and slow She faded like a flower. And slow and slow Her pale cheeks whitened more. And slow and slow Her large, brown, wondering eyes

sank deep and dim. Hope died on all our faces; but on her's Another and a different hope did shine, And from her wasted lips sweet prayers arose That made her watchers weep. Fast came the end. Never such silence o'er the cloister hung -- We walked more softly, and, whene'er we spoke, Our voices fell to whispers, lest a sound Might jar upon her ear. The sisters watched In turns beside her couch; to each she gave A gentle word, a smile, a thankful look. At times her mind did wander; no wild words Escaped her lips -- she seemed to float away To far-gone days, and live again in scenes Whose hours were bright and happy. In her sleep She ofttimes spoke low, gentle, holy words About her mother; and sometimes she sang The fragments of sweet olden songs -- and when She woke again, she timidly would ask If she had spoken in her sleep, and what She said, as if, indeed, her heart did fear That sleep might open there some long-closed gate She would keep locked. And softly as a cloud, A golden cloud upon a summer's day, Floats from the heart of land out o'er the sea, So her sweet life was passing. One bright eve, The fourteenth day of August, when the sun Was wrapping, like a king, a purple cloud Around him on descending day's bright throne, She sent for me and bade me come in haste. I went into her cell. There was a light Upon her face, unearthly; and it shone Like gleam of star upon a dying rose. I sat beside her couch, and took her hand In mine -- a fair, frail hand that scarcely seem'd Of flesh -- so wasted, white and wan it was. Her great, brown, wond'ring eyes had sunk away Deep in their sockets -- and their light shone dim As tapers dying on an altar. Soft As a dream of beauty on me fell low, Last words. `Mother, the tide is ebbing fast; But ere it leaves this shore to cross the deep And seek another, calmer, I would say A few last words -- and, Mother, I would ask One favor more, which thou wilt not refuse. Thou wert a mother to the orphan girl, Thou gav'st her heart a home, her love a vase, Her weariness a rest, her sacrifice a shrine -- And thou didst love me, Mother, as she loved Whom I shall meet to-morrow, far away -- But no, it is not far -- that other heaven Touches this, Mother; I have felt its touch, And now I feel its clasp upon my soul. I'm going from this heaven into that, To-morrow, Mother. Yes, I dreamt it all. It was the sunset of Our Lady's feast. My soul passed upwards thro' the golden clouds To sing the

second Vespers of the day With all the angels. Mother, ere I go, Thou'lt listen, Mother sweet, to my last words, Which, like all last words, tell whate'er was first In life or tenderest in heart. I came Unto my convent cell and virgin veil, Sent by a spirit that had touched my own As wings of angels touch -- to fly apart Upon their missions -- till they meet again In heaven, heart to heart, wing to wing. The "Angel of the Cloister" you called me -- Unworthy sure of such a beauteous name -- My mission's over -- and your angel goes To-morrow home. This earthly part which stays You'll lay away within a simple grave -- But, Mother, on its slab thou'lt grave this name, "Ullainee!" (she spelt the letters out), Nor ask me why -- tho' if thou wilt I'll tell; It is my soul name, given long ago By one who found it in some Eastern book, Or dreamt it in a dream, and gave it me -- Nor ever told the meaning of the name; And, Mother, should he ever come and read That name upon my grave, and come to thee And ask the tidings of "Ullainee", Thou'lt tell him all -- and watch him if he weeps, Show him the crucifix my poor hands carved -- Show him the picture in the chapel choir -- And watch him if he weeps; and then There are three humble scrolls in yonder drawer;' (She pointed to the table in her room); `Some words of mine and words of his are there. And keep these simple scrolls until he comes, And put them in his hands; and, Mother, watch -- Watch him if he weeps; and tell him this: I tasted all the sweets of sacrifice, I kissed my cross a thousand times a day, I hung and bled upon it in my dreams, I lived on it -- I loved it to the last.' And then A low, soft sigh crept thro' the virgin's cell; I looked upon her face, and death was there." There was a pause -- and in the pause one wave Of shining tears swept thro' the Mother's eyes. "And thus," she said, "our angel passed away. We buried her, and at her last request We wrote upon the slab, `Ullainee'. And I -- (for she asked me one day thus, The day she hung her picture in the choir) -- I planted o'er her grave a white rose tree. The roses crept around the slab and hid The graven name -- and still we sometimes cull Her sweet, white roses, and we place them on Our Chapel-Altar." Then the Mother rose, Without another word, and led him thro' A long, vast hall, then up a flight of stairs Unto an oaken door, which turned upon its hinge Noiselessly -- then into a Chapel dim, On gospel side of which



there was a gate From ceiling down to floor, and back of that A long and narrow choir, with many stalls, Brown-oaken; all along the walls were hung Saint-pictures, whose sweet faces looked upon The faces of the Sisters in their prayers. Beside a "Mater Dolorosa" hung The picture of the "Angel of the Choir". He sees it now thro' vista of the years, Which stretch between him and that long-gone day, It hangs within his memory as fresh In tint and touch and look as long ago. There was a power in it, as if the soul Of her who painted it had shrined in it Its very self; there was a spell in it That fell upon his spirit thro' his eyes, And made him dream of God's own holy heart. The shadow of the picture, in weak words, Was this, or something very like to this:                   ---- A wild, weird wold, Just like the desolation of a heart, Stretched far away into infinity; Above it low, gray skies drooped sadly down, As if they fain would weep, and all was bare As bleakness' own bleak self; a mountain stood All mantled with the glory of a light That flashed from out the heavens, and a cross With such a pale Christ hanging in its arms Did crown the mount; and either side the cross There were two crosses lying on the rocks -- One of the whitest roses -- ULLAINEE Was woven into it with buds of Red; And one of reddest roses -- Merlin's name Was woven into it with buds of white. Below the cross and crosses and the mount The earth-place lay so dark and bleak and drear; Above, a golden glory seemed to hang Like God's own benediction o'er the names. I saw the picture once; it moved me so I ne'er forgot its beauty or its truth; But words as weak as mine can never paint That Crucifixion's picture.                   Merlin said to me: "Some day -- some far-off day -- when I am dead, You have the simple rhymings of two hearts, And if you think it best, the world may know A love-tale crowned by purest SACRIFICE."

#### Night After the Picnic

And "Happy! Happy! Happy!" Rang the bells of all the hours;  
"Shyly! Shyly! Shyly!" Looked and listened all the flowers;  
They were wakened from their slumbers, By the footsteps of the fair;  
And they smiled in their awaking On the faces gathered there.

"Brightly! Brightly! Brightly!" Looked the overhanging trees, For  
beneath their bending branches Floated tresses in the breeze. And they  
wondered who had wandered With such voices and so gay; And their  
leaflets seemed to whisper To each other: "Who are they?"

They were just like little children, Not a sorrow's shade was there;  
And "Merry! Merry! Merry!" Rang their laughter thro' the air. There was  
not a brow grief-darkened, Was there there a heart in pain? But "Happy!  
Happy! Happy!" Came the happy bells' refrain.

When the stately trees were bending O'er a simple, quiet home, That  
looked humble as an altar, Nestling 'neath a lofty dome; Thither went  
they gaily! gaily! Where their coming was a joy, Just to pass away  
together One long day without alloy.

"Slowly! Slowly! Slowly!" Melted morning's mist away, Till the sun,  
in all its splendor, Lit the borders of the bay. "Gladly! Gladly! Gladly!"  
Glanced the waters that were gray, While the wavelets whispered  
"Welcome!" To us all that happy day.

And "Happy! Happy! Happy!" Rang the bell in every heart, And it  
chimed, "All day let no one Think that ye shall ever part. Go and sip  
from every moment Sweets to perfume many years; Keep your feast,  
and be too happy To have thought of any tears."

There was song with one's soul in it, And the happy hearts grew still  
While they leaned upon the music Like fair lilies o'er the rill; Till the  
notes had softly floated Into silent seas away O'er the wavelets, where  
they listened While they rocked upon the bay.

And ---- "Dreamy! Dreamy! Dreamy!" When the song's sweet life  
was o'er, Drooped the eyes that will remember All its echoes evermore.  
And "Stilly! Stilly! Stilly!" Beat the hearts of some, I ween, That can see  
the unseen mystery Which a song may strive to screen.

Then "Gaily! Gaily! Gaily!" Rang the laughter everywhere, From the  
lips that seemed too lightsome For the sigh of any care. And the dance  
went "Merry! Merry!" Whilst the feet that tripped along, Bore the hearts  
that were as happy As a wild bird's happy song.

And sweet words with smiles upon them, Joy-winged, flitted to and  
fro, Flushing every face they met with With the glory of their glow. Not

a brow with cloud upon it -- Not an eye that seemed to know What a tear  
is; not a bosom That had ever nursed a woe.

And how "Swiftly! Swiftly! Swiftly!" Like the ripples of a stream,  
Did the bright hours chase each other, Till it all seemed like a dream; Till  
it seemed as if no ~Never~ Ever in this world had been, To o'ercloud the  
~brief Forever~, Shining o'er the happy scene.

Dimly! dimly fell the shadows Of the tranquil eventide; But the  
sound of dance and laughter Would not die, and had not died; And still  
"Happy! Happy! Happy!" Rang the voiceless vesper bells O'er the hearts  
that were too happy To remember earth's farewells.

Came the night hours -- faster! faster! Rose the laughter and the  
dance, And the eyes that should look weary Shone the brighter in their  
glance: And they stole from every minute What no other day could lend  
-- They were happy! happy! happy! But the feast must have an end.

"Children, come!" the words were cruel -- 'Twas the death sigh of the  
feast; And they came, still merry! merry! At the bidding of the priest,  
Who had heard the joy-bells ringing Round him all the summer day.  
"Happy! Happy! Happy! Happy!" Did he hear an angel say?

"Happy! happy! still more happy! Yea, the happiest are they. I was  
moving 'mid the children By the borders of the bay, And I bring to God  
no record Of a single sin this day.

"Happy! Happy! Happy!" When your life seems lone and long, You  
will hear that feast's bells ringing Far and faintly thro' my song.

## Lines ["The death of men is not the death"]

The death of men is not the death Of rights that urged them to the fray;  
For men may yield On battle-field A noble life with stainless shield,  
And swords may rust Above their dust, But still, and still The  
touch and thrill Of freedom's vivifying breath Will nerve a heart and  
rouse a will In some hour, in the days to be, To win back triumphs  
from defeat; And those who blame us then will greet Right's glorious  
eternity.

For right lives in a thousand things; Its cradle is its martyr's grave,  
Wherein it rests awhile until The life that heroisms gave Will rise  
again, at God's own will, And right the wrong, Which long and  
long Did reign above the true and just; And thro' the songs the poet sings,  
Right's vivifying spirit rings; Each simple rhyme Keeps step and  
time With those who marched away and fell, And all his lines Are  
humble shrines Where love of right will love to dwell.

## Death of the Prince Imperial

Waileth a woman, "O my God!" A breaking heart in a broken breath, A  
hopeless cry o'er her heart-hope's death! Can words catch the chords of the  
winds that wail, When love's last lily lies dead in the vale!                    Let her  
alone,                    Under the rod                    With the infinite moan                    Of  
her soul for God. Ah! song! you may echo the sound of pain,                    But  
you never may shrine,                    In verse or line, The pang of the heart that  
breaks in twain.

Waileth a woman, "O my God!" Wind-driven waves with no hearts  
that ache, Why do your passionate pulses throb? No lips that speak -- have  
ye souls that sob? We carry the cross -- ye wear the crest,    We have our  
God -- and ye, your shore, Whither ye rush in the storm to rest; We have  
the havens of holy prayer -- And we have a hope -- have ye despair?    For  
storm-rocked waves ye break evermore, Adown the shores and along the  
years, In the whitest foam of the saddest tears, And we, as ye, O waves,  
gray waves! Drift over a sea more deep and wide, For we have sorrow and  
we have death; And ye have only the tempest's breath; But we have God  
when heart-oppressed, As a calm and beautiful shore of rest.

O waves! sad waves! how you flowed between The crownless Prince  
and the exiled Queen!

Waileth a woman, "O my God!" Her hopes are withered, her heart is  
crushed, For the love of her love is cold and dead, The joy of her joy hath  
forever fled;    A starless and pitiless night hath rushed On the light of her  
life -- and far away In Afric wild lies her poor dead child, Lies the heart of  
her heart -- let her alone                    Under the rod                    With her infinite  
moan,                    O my God! He was beautiful, pure, and brave,                    The  
brightest grace                    Of a royal race; Only his throne is but a grave;  
Is there fate in fame?                    Is there doom in names? Ah! what did the  
cruel Zulu spears Care for the prince or his mother's tears? What did the  
Zulu's ruthless lance Care for the hope of the future France?

Crieth the Empress, "O my son!" He was her own and her only one,  
She had nothing to give him but her love. 'Twas kingdom enough on earth

-- above She gave him an infinite faith in God; Let her cry her cry Over her own and only one, All the glory is gone -- is gone, Into her broken-hearted sigh.

Moaneth a mother, "O my child!" And who can sound that depth of woe? Homeless, throneless, crownless -- now She bows her sorrow-wreathed brow -- (So fame and all its grandeurs go) Let her alone Beneath the rod With her infinite moan, "O my God!"

In Memoriam (Father Keeler)

Father Keeler died February 28, 1880, in Mobile, Ala. Inscribed to his sister.

"Sweet Christ! let him live, ah! we need his life, And woe to us if he goes! Oh! his life is beautiful, sweet, and fair, Like a holy hymn, and the stillest prayer; Let him linger to help us in the strife On earth, with our sins and woes."

'Twas the cry of thousands who loved him so, The Angel of Death said: "No! oh! no!" He was passing away -- and none might save The virgin priest from a spotless grave.

"O God! spare his life, we plead and pray, He taught us to love You so -- So, so much -- his life is so sweet and fair -- A still, still song -- and a holy prayer; He is our Father; oh! let him stay -- He gone, to whom shall we go?"

'Twas the wail of thousands who loved him so, But the Angel of Death murmured low: "No, no;" And the voice of his angel from far away, Sang to Christ in heav'n: "He must not stay."

"O Mary! kneel at the great white throne, And pray with your children there -- Our hearts need his heart -- 'tis sweet and fair, Like the sound of hymns and the breath of prayer, Goeth he now -- we are lone -- so lone, And who is there left to care?"

'Twas the cry of the souls who loved him so -- But the Angel of Death sang: "Children, no!" And a voice like Christ's from the far away, Sounded sweet and low: "He may not stay."

From his sister's heart swept the wildest moan: "O God let my brother stay -- I need him the most -- oh! me! how lone, If he passes from earth away -- O beautiful Christ, for my poor sake Let him live for me, else my heart will break."

But the Angel of Death wept: "Poor child! no," And Christ sang: "Child, I will soothe thy woe."

"O Christ! let his sister's prayer be heard, Let her look on his face once more! Ah! that prayer was a wail -- without a word -- She will look on him nevermore!"

The long gray distances unmoved swept 'Tween the dying eyes and the eyes that wept.

He was dying fast, and the hours went by, Ah! desolate hours were they! His mind had hidden away somewhere Back of a fretted and wearied brow, Ere he passed from life away. And one who loved him (at dead of night), Crept up to an altar, where the light That guards Christ's Eucharistic sleep, Shone strangely down on his vow: "Spare him! O God! -- O God! for me, Take me, beautiful Christ, instead; Let me taste of death and come to Thee, I will sleep for him with the dead." The Angel of Death said: "No! Priest! No! You must suffer and live, but he must go." And a voice like Christ's sang far away: "He will come to me, but you must stay."

We leaned on hope that was all in vain, 'Till the terrible word at last Told our stricken hearts he was out of pain, And his beautiful life had passed.

Oh! take him away from where he died; Put him not with the common dead (For he was so pure and fair); And the city was stirred, and thousands cried Whose tears were a very prayer.

No, no, no, take him home again, For his bishop's heart beats there; Cast him not with the common dead, Let him go home and rest his head, Ah! his weary and grief-worn head, On the heart of his father - - he is mild For he loved him as his own child.

And they brought him home to the home he blest, With his life so sweet and fair, He blessed it more in his deathly rest -- His face was a chiseled prayer, White as the snow, pure as the foam Of a weary wave

on the sea, He drifted back -- and they placed him where He would love  
at last to be.

His Father in God thought over the years Of the beautiful happy past;  
Ah! me! we were happy then; but now, The sorrow has come, and  
saddest tears Kiss the dead priest's virgin brow.

Who will watch o'er the dead young priest, People and priests and all?  
No, no, no, 'tis his spirit's feast; When the evening shadows fall, Let him  
rest alone -- unwatched, alone, Just beneath the altar's light, The holy  
hosts on their humble throne Will watch him all thro' the night.

The doors were closed -- he was still and fair, What sound moved up  
the aisles? The dead priests come with soundless prayer, Their faces  
wearing smiles. And this was the soundless hymn they sung: "We watch  
o'er you to-night, Your life was beautiful, fair, and young, Not a cloud  
upon its light. To-morrow -- to-morrow you will rest With the virgin  
priests whom Christ has blest."

Kyrie Eleison! the stricken crowd Bowed down their heads in tears  
O'er the sweet young priest in his vestment shroud (Ah! the happy,  
happy years!) They are dead and gone, and the Requiem Mass  
Went slowly, mournfully on, The Pontiff's singing was all a wail, The  
altars cried, and the people wept, The fairest flower in the church's vale  
(Ah! me! how soon we pass!) In the vase of his coffin slept.

We bore him out to his resting place, Children, priests, and all; There  
was sorrow on almost ev'ry face -- And ah! what tears did fall! Tears  
from hearts, for a heart asleep, Tears from sorrow's deepest deep.

"Dust to dust," he was lowered down; Children! kneel and pray --  
"Give the white rose priest a flower and crown, For the white rose  
passed away."

And we wept our tears and left him there. And brought his memory  
home -- Ah! he was beautiful, sweet, and fair, A heavenly hymn -- a  
sweet, still prayer, Pure as the snow, white as the foam,

That seeks a lone, far shore. Dead Priest! bless from amid the blest,  
The hearts that will guard thy place of rest, Forever, forever, forever  
more.



## Mobile Mystic Societies

The olden golden stories of the world,      That stirred the past,    And  
now are dim as dreams,    The lays and legends which the bards unfurled  
In lines that last,    All -- rhymed with glooms and gleams.    Fragments and  
fancies writ on many a page      By deathless pen,    And names, and deeds  
that all along each age,      Thrill hearts of men.    And pictures erstwhile  
framed in sun or shade      Of many climes,    And life's great poems that  
can never fade      Nor lose their chimes;    And acts and facts that must  
forever ring      Like temple bells,    That sound or seem to sound where  
angels sing      Vesper farewells;    And scenes where smiles are strangely  
touching tears,      'Tis ever thus,    Strange Mystics! in the meeting of the  
years      Ye bring to us    All these, and more;    ye make us smile and sigh,  
Strange power ye hold!    When New Year kneels low in the star-aisled sky  
And asks the Old    To bless us all with love, and life, and light,      And  
when they fold    Each other in their arms,    ye stir the sight,      We look,  
and lo!    The past is passing, and the present seems      To wish to go.    Ye  
pass between them on your mystic way      Thro' scene and scene,    The  
Old Year marches through your ranks, away      To what has been,    The  
while the pageant moves, it scarcely seems      Apart of earth;    The Old  
Year dies -- and heaven crowns with gleams      The New Year's birth.  
And you -- you crown yourselves with heaven's grace      To enter here;    A  
prayer -- ascending from an orphan face,      Or just one tear    May meet  
you in the years that are to be      A blessing rare.    Ye pass beneath the  
arch of charity,      Who passeth there    Is blest in heaven, and is blest on  
earth,      And God will care,    Beyond the Old Year's death and New Year's  
birth,      For each of you,    ye Mystics! everywhere.

Rest

My feet are wearied, and my hands are tired,      My soul oppressed --  
And I desire, what I have long desired --      Rest -- only rest.  
'Tis hard to toil -- when toil is almost vain,      In barren ways; 'Tis

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hard to sow -- and never garner grain,      In harvest days.  
The burden of my days is hard to bear,      But God knows best; And I  
have prayed -- but vain has been my prayer      For rest -- sweet rest.  
'Tis hard to plant in Spring and never reap      The Autumn yield; 'Tis  
hard to till, and 'tis tilled to weep      O'er fruitless field.  
And so I cry a weak and human cry,      So heart oppressed; And so I  
sigh a weak and human sigh,      For rest -- for rest.  
My way has wound across the desert years,      And cares infest My  
path, and through the flowing of hot tears,      I pine -- for rest.  
'Twas always so; when but a child I laid      On mother's breast My  
wearied little head; e'en then I prayed      As now -- for rest.  
And I am restless still; 'twill soon be o'er;      For down the West  
Life's sun is setting, and I see the shore      Where I shall rest.

## Follow Me

The Master's voice was sweet: "I gave My life for thee; Bear thou this cross thro' pain and loss, Arise and follow Me." I clasped it in my hand -- O Thou! who diedst for me, The day is bright, my step is light, 'Tis sweet to follow Thee!

Through the long Summer days I followed lovingly; 'Twas bliss to hear His voice so near, His glorious face to see. Down where the lilies pale Fringed the bright river's brim, In pastures green His steps were seen -- 'Twas sweet to follow Him!

Oh, sweet to follow Him! Lord, let me here abide. The flowers were fair; I lingered there; I laid His cross aside -- I saw His face no more By the bright river's brim; Before me lay the desert way -- 'Twas hard to follow Him!

Yes! hard to follow Him Into that dreary land! I was alone; His cross had grown Too heavy for my hand. I heard His voice afar Sound thro' the night air chill; My weary feet refused to meet His coming o'er the hill.

The Master's voice was sad: "I gave My life for thee; I bore the cross thro' pain and loss, Thou hast not followed Me." So fair the lilies' banks, So bleak the desert way: The night was dark, I could not mark Where His blessed footsteps lay.

Fairer the liliated banks Softer the grassy lea; "The endless bliss of those who best Have learned to follow Me! Canst thou not follow Me? Hath patient love a power no more To move thy faithless heart? Wilt thou not follow Me? These weary feet of Mine Have stained, and red the pathway dread In search of thee and thine."

O Lord! O Love divine! Once more I follow Thee! Let me abide so near Thy side That I Thy face may see. I clasp Thy pierced hand, O Thou who diedst for me! I'll bear Thy cross thro' pain and loss, So let me cling to Thee.

## The Poet's Child

Lines addressed to the daughter of Richard Dalton Williams.

Child of the heart of a child of sweetest song! The poet's blood flows  
through thy fresh pure veins; Dost ever hear faint echoes float along Thy  
days and dreams of thy dead father's strains? Dost ever hear,  
In mournful times, With inner ear, The strange sweet cadences  
of thy father's rhymes?

Child of a child of art, which Heaven doth give To few, to very few  
as unto him! His songs are wandering o'er the world, but live In his  
child's heart, in some place lone and dim; And nights and days  
With vestal's eyes And soundless sighs Thou keepest watch  
above thy father's lays.

Child of a dreamer of dreams all unfulfilled -- (And thou art, child, a  
living dream of him) -- Dost ever feel thy spirit all enthralled With his  
lost dreams when summer days wane dim? When suns go down,  
Thou, song of the dead singer, Dost sigh at eve and grieve O'er  
the brow that paled before it won the crown?

Child of the patriot! Oh, how he loved his land! And how he  
moaned o'er Erin's ev'ry wrong! Child of the singer! he swept with purest  
hand The octaves of all agonies, until his song Sobbed o'er the  
sea; And now through thee It cometh to me, Like a  
shadow song from some Gethsemane.

Child of the wanderer! and his heart the shrine Where three loves  
blended into only one -- His God's, thy mother's, and his country's; and 'tis  
thine To be the living ray of such a glorious sun. His genius  
gleams, My child, within thee, And dim thy dreams As  
stars on the midnight sea.

Child of thy father, I have read his songs -- Thou art the sweetest  
song he ever sung -- Peaceful as Psalms, but when his country's wrongs  
Swept o'er his heart he stormed. And he was young; He died too  
soon -- So men will say -- Before he reached Fame's  
noon; His songs are letters in a book -- thou art their ray.

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## Mother's Way

Oft within our little cottage, As the shadows gently fall, While the  
sunlight touches softly One sweet face upon the wall, Do we gather  
close together, And in hushed and tender tone Ask each other's full  
forgiveness For the wrong that each has done. Should you wonder why  
this custom At the ending of the day, Eye and voice would quickly  
answer: "It was once our mother's way."

If our home be bright and cheery, If it holds a welcome true,  
Opening wide its door of greeting To the many -- not the few; If we  
share our father's bounty With the needy day by day, 'Tis because our  
hearts remember This was ever mother's way.

Sometimes when our hands grow weary, Or our tasks seem very long;  
When our burdens look too heavy, And we deem the right all wrong;  
Then we gain a new, fresh courage, And we rise to proudly say: "Let us  
do our duty bravely -- This was our dear mother's way."

Then we keep her memory precious, While we never cease to pray  
That at last, when lengthening shadows Mark the evening of our day,  
They may find us waiting calmly To go home our mother's way.

## Feast of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple

The priests stood waiting in the holy place,            Impatient of delay  
(Isaiah had been read), When sudden up the aisle there came a face  
Like a lost sun's ray;            And the child was led By Joachim and Anna.  
Rays of grace    Shone all about the child; Simeon looked on, and bowed  
his aged head --    Looked on the child, and smiled.

Low were the words of Joachim.    He spake            In a tremulous  
way,            As if he were afraid, Or as if his heart were just about to  
break,            And knew not what to say;            And low he bowed his  
head -- While Anna wept the while -- he, sobbing, said: "Priests of the  
holy temple, will you take Into your care our child?" And Simeon,  
listening, prayed, and strangely smiled.

A silence for a moment fell on all;            They gazed in mute surprise,  
Not knowing what to say, Till Simeon spake: "Child, hast thou heaven's  
call?"            And the child's wondrous eyes            (Each look a lost sun's  
ray) Turned toward the far mysterious wall.    (Did the veil of the temple  
sway?) They looked from the curtain to the little child -- Simeon seemed  
to pray, and strangely smiled.

"Yes; heaven sent me here.    Priests, let me in!"            (And the voice  
was sweet and low.)            "Was it a dream by night? A voice did call me  
from this world of sin --            A spirit-voice I know,            An angel  
pure and bright. 'Leave father, mother,' said the voice, 'and win';            (I  
see my angel now)            'The crown of a virgin's vow.' I am three  
summers old -- a little child." And Simeon seemed to pray the while he  
smiled.

"Yes, holy priests, our father's God is great,            And all His mercies  
sweet!            His angel bade me come -- Come thro' the temple's  
beautiful gate;            He led my heart and feet            To this, my holy  
home. He said to me: 'Three years your God will wait            Your heart  
to greet and meet.'            I am three summers old --            I see my

angel now --           Brighter his wings than gold --           He knoweth of  
my vow." The priests, in awe, came closer to the child -- She wore an  
angel's look -- and Simeon smiled.

As if she were the very holy ark,           Simeon placed his hand  
On the fair, pure head. The sun had set, and it was growing dark;  
The robed priests did stand           Around the child. He said: "Unto me,  
priests, and all ye Levites, hark!           This child is God's own gift --  
Let us our voices lift In holy praise." They gazed upon the child In  
wonderment -- and Simeon prayed and smiled.

And Joachim and Anna went their way --           The little child, she  
shed           The tenderest human tears. The priests and Levites lingered  
still to pray;           And Simeon said:           "We teach the latter years  
The night is passing 'fore the coming day           (Isaiah had been read) Of  
our redemption" -- and some way the child Won all their hearts. Simeon  
prayed and smiled.

That night the temple's child knelt down to pray           In the shadows  
of the aisle --           She prayed for you and me. Why did the temple's  
mystic curtain sway?           Why did the shadows smile?           The  
child of Love's decree Had come at last; and 'neath the night-stars' gleam  
The aged Simeon did see in dream The mystery of the child, And in his  
sleep he murmured prayer -- and smiled.

And twelve years after, up the very aisle           Where Simeon had  
smiled           Upon her fair, pure face, She came again, with a mother's  
smile,           And in her arms a Child,           The very God of grace. And  
Simeon took the Infant from her breast,           And, in glad tones and  
strong,           He sang his glorious song Of faith, and hope, and  
everlasting rest.



## St. Bridget

Sweet heaven's smile Gleamed o'er the isle, That gems the dreamy sea. One far gone day, And flash'd its ray, More than a thousand years away, Pure Bridget, over thee.

White as the snow, That falls below To earth on Christmas night, Thy pure face shone On every one; For Christ's sweet grace thy heart had won To make thy birth-land bright.

A cloud hangs o'er Thy Erin's shore -- Ah! God, 'twas always so. Ah! virgin fair Thy heaven pray'r Will help thy people in their care, And save them from their woe.

Thou art in light -- They are in light; Thou hast a crown -- they a chain. The very sod, Made theirs by God, Is still by tyrants' footsteps trod; They pray -- but all in vain.

Thou! near Christ's throne, Dost hear the moan Of all their hearts that grieve; Ah! virgin sweet, Kneel at His feet, Where angels' hymns thy prayer shall greet, And pray for them this eve.

## New Year

Each year cometh with all his days, Some are shadowed and some are bright; He beckons us on until he stays Kneeling with us 'neath Christmas night.

Kneeling under the stars that gem The holy sky, o'er the humble place, When the world's sweet Child of Bethlehem Rested on Mary, full of grace.

Not only the Bethlehem in the East, But altar Bethlehem everywhere, When the ~Gloria~ of the first great feast Rings forth its gladness on the air.

Each year seemeth loath to go, And leave the joys of Christmas day; In lands of sun and in lands of snow, The year still longs awhile to stay.

A little while, 'tis hard to part From this Christ blessed here below, Old year! and in thy aged heart I hear thee sing so sweet and low.

A song like this, but sweeter far, And yet as if with a human tone, Under the blessed Christmas star, And thou descendest from thy throne.

"A few more days and I am gone, The hours move swift and sure along; Yet still I fain would linger on In hearing of the Christmas song.

"I bow to Him who rules all years; Thrice blessed is His high behest; Nor will He blame me if, with tears, I pass to my eternal rest.

"Ah, me! to altars every day I brought the sun and the holy Mass; The people came by my light to pray, While countless priests did onward pass.

"The words of the Holy Thursday night To one another from east to west; And the holy Host on the altar white Would take its little half-hour's rest.

"And every minute of every hour The Mass bell rang with its sound so sweet, While from shrine to shrine, with tireless power, And heaven's love, walked the nailed feet.

"I brought the hours for ~Angelus~ bells, And from a thousand temple towers They wound their sweet and blessed spell Around the hearts of all the hours.

"Every day has a day of grace For those who fain would make them  
so; I saw o'er the world in every place The wings of guardian angels  
glow.

"Men! could you hear the song I sing -- But no, alas! it cannot be so!  
My heir that comes would only bring Blessings to bless you here  
below."

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Seven days passed; the gray, old year Calls to his throne the coming  
heir; Falls from his eyes the last, sad tear, And lo! there is gladness  
everywhere.

Singing, I hear the whole world sing, Afar, anear, aloud, alow: "What  
to us will the New Year bring!" Ah! would that each of us might know!

Is it not truth? as old as true? List ye, singers, the while ye sing!  
Each year bringeth to each of you What each of you will have him bring.

The year that cometh is a king, With better gifts than the old year  
gave; If you place on his fingers the holy ring Of prayer, the king  
becomes your slave.

## Zeila (A Story from a Star)

From the mystic sidereal spaces, In the noon of a night 'mid of May,  
Came a spirit that murmured to me -- Or was it the dream of a dream? No!  
no! from the purest of places, Where liveth the highest of races, In an  
unfallen sphere far away (And it wore Immortality's gleam) Came a Being.  
Hath seen on the sea The sheen of some silver star shimmer 'Thwart  
shadows that fall dim and dimmer O'er a wave half in dream on the deep?  
It shone on me thus in my sleep.

Was I sleeping? Is sleep but the closing, In the night, of our eyes  
from the light? Doth the spirit of man e'en then rest? Or doth it not toil all  
the more? When the earth-wearied frame is reposing, Is the vision then  
veiled the less bright? When the earth from our sight hath been taken, The  
fetters of senses off shaken, The soul, doth it not then awaken To the light  
on Infinity's shore? And is not its vision then best, And truest, and farthest,  
and clearest? In night, is not heaven the nearest? Ah, me! let the day have  
his schemers, Let them work on their ways as they will, And their  
workings, I trow, have their worth. But the unsleeping spirits of dreamers,  
In hours when the world-voice is still, Are building, with faith without  
falser, Bright steps up to heaven's high altar, Where lead all the aisles of  
the earth.

Was I sleeping? I know not -- or waking? The body was resting, I  
ween; Meseems it was o'ermuch tired With the toils of the day that had  
gone; When sudden there came the bright breaking Of light thro' a  
shadowy screen; And with the brightness there blended The voice of the  
Being descended From a star ever pure of all sin, In music too sweet to be  
lyred By the lips of the sinful and mortal. And, oh! how the pure  
brightness shone! As shines thro' the summer morn's portal Rays golden  
and white as the snow, As white as the flakes -- ah, no! whiter; Only  
angelic wings may be brighter When they flash o'er the brow of some woe  
That walketh this shadowed below.

The soul loseth never its seeing, In the goings of night and of day It  
graspeth the Infinite Far. No wonder there may come some Being, As if it

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had wandered astray At times down the wonder-filled way -- As to me in the midnight of May -- From its home in some glory-crowned star, Where evil hath never left traces; Where dwelleth the highest of races, Save the angels that circle the throne, In a grace far beyond all our graces, Whose Christ is the same as our own.

Yea! I ween the star spaces are teeming With the gladness of life and of love. No! no! I am not at all dreaming -- The Below's hands enclasp the Above. 'Tis a truth that is more than a seeming -- Creation is many, tho' one, And we are the last of its creatures. This earth bears the sign of our sin (From the highest the evil came in); Yet ours are the same human features That veiled long ago the Divine. How comes it, O holy Creator! That we, not the first, but the latter Of varied and numberless beings Springing forth in Thy loving decreeings, That we are, of all, the most Thine?

Yea! we are the least and the lowly, The half of our history gone, We look up the Infinite slope In faith, and we walk on in hope; But think ye from here to the "Holy Of Holies" beyond yon still sky, O'er the stars that forever move on, I' the heavens beyond the bright Third, In glory's ineffable light; Where the Father, and Spirit, and Word Reign circled by angels all bright -- Ah! think you 'tween Here and that Yonder There is naught but the silence of death? There's naught of love's wish or life's wonder, And naught but an infinite night? No! no! the great Father is fonder Of breathing His life-giving breath Into beings of numberless races. And from here on and up to His throne The Trinity's beautiful faces, In countlessly various traces, Are seen in more stars than our own. This earth telleth not half the story Of the infinite heart of our God -- The heavens proclaim of His glory The least little part, and His power Broke not its sceptre when earth Was beckoned by Him into birth. Is He resting, I wonder, to-night? Can He rest when His love sways His will? Will He rest ere His glory shall fill All spaces below and above With beings to know and to love?

Creation -- when was it begun? Who knows its first day? Nay, none. And then, what ken among men Can tell when the last work is done? Is He resting, I wonder, to-night? Doth He ever grow weary of giving To

Darknesses rays of His light? Doth He ever grow weary of giving To  
Nothings the rapture of living And waiting awhile for His sight? If His  
will rules His glorious power, And if love sways His beautiful will, Is He  
not, e'en in this very hour, Going on with love's wonder-work still?

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Let me pray just awhile, for betimes My spirit is clouded; and then  
Strange darknesses creep o'er my rhymes, Till prayer lendeth light to my  
pen. And then shall I better unfold The story to me that was told, Of the  
unfallen star far away, In the noon of the night 'mid of May, By the  
beautiful Being who came, With the pure and the beautiful name. "Call me  
Zeila," the bright spirit said, And passed from my vision afar. With rapture  
I bowed down my head, And dreamed of that unfallen star.

## Better than Gold

Better than grandeur, better than gold, Than rank and titles a thousand fold, Is a healthy body and a mind at ease, And simple pleasures that always please A heart that can feel for another's woe, With sympathies large enough to enfold All men as brothers, is better than gold.

Better than gold is a conscience clear, Though toiling for bread in an humble sphere, Doubly blessed with content and health, Untried by the lusts and cares of wealth, Lowly living and lofty thought Adorn and ennoble a poor man's cot; For mind and morals in nature's plan Are the genuine tests of a gentleman.

Better than gold is the sweet repose Of the sons of toil when the labors close; Better than gold is the poor man's sleep, And the balm that drops on his slumbers deep. Bring sleeping draughts on the downy bed, Where luxury pillows its aching head, The toiler simple opiate deems A shorter route to the land of dreams.

Better than gold is a thinking mind, That in the realm of books can find A treasure surpassing Australian ore, And live with the great and good of yore. The sage's lore and the poet's lay, The glories of empires passed away; The world's great dream will thus unfold And yield a pleasure better than gold.

Better than gold is a peaceful home Where all the fireside characters come, The shrine of love, the heaven of life, Hallowed by mother, or sister, or wife. However humble the home may be, Or tried with sorrow by heaven's decree, The blessings that never were bought or sold, And centre there, are better than gold.

## Sea Dreamings

To-day a bird on wings as white as foam      That crests the blue-gray  
wave, With the vesper light upon its breast, flew home      Seaward.  
The God who gave To the birds the virgin-wings of snow Somehow telleth  
them the ways they go.

Unto the Evening went the white-winged bird --      Gray clouds hung  
round the West -- And far away the tempest's tramp was heard.      The  
bird flew for a rest Away from the grove, out to the sea -- Is it only a bird's  
mystery?

Nay! nay! lone bird! I watched thy wings of white      That cleft thy  
waveward way -- Past the evening and swift into the night,      Out of the  
calm, bright day -- And thou didst teach me, bird of the sea, More than one  
human heart's history.

Only men's hearts -- tho' God shows each its way      That leadeth  
hence to home -- Unlike the wild sea-birds, somehow go astray,  
Seeking in the far foam Of this strange world's tempest-trampled main A  
resting place -- but they seek in vain.

Only the bird can rest upon the deep,      And sleep upon the wave,  
And dream its peaceful dreams where wild winds sweep.      And sweet  
the God who gave The birds a rest place on the restless sea -- But this, my  
heart, is not His way with thee.

Over the world, ah! passion's tempests roll,      And every fleck of  
foam Whitens the place where sank some sin-wrecked soul      That never  
shall reach home. Ah! the tranquil shore of God's sweet, calm grace, My  
heart, is thy only resting place.



## Sea Rest

Far from "where the roses rest", Round the altar and the aisle, Which I loved, of all, the best -- I have come to rest awhile By the ever-restless sea -- Will its waves give rest to me?

But it is so hard to part With my roses. Do they know (Who knows but each has a heart?) How it grieves my heart to go? Roses! will the restless sea Bring, as ye, a rest for me?

Ye were sweet and still and calm, Roses red and roses white; And ye sang a soundless psalm For me in the day and night. Roses! will the restless sea Sing as sweet as ye for me?

Just a hundred feet away, Seaward, flows and ebbs the tide; And the wavelets, blue and gray, Moan, and white sails windward glide O'er the ever restless sea From me, far and peacefully.

And as many feet away, Landward, rise the moss-veiled trees; And they wail, the while they sway In the sad November breeze, Echoes in the sighing sea To me, near and mournfully.

And beside me sleep the dead, In the consecrated ground; Blessed crosses o'er each head. O'er them all the Requiem sound, Chanted by the moaning sea, Echoed by each moss-veiled tree.

Roses! will you miss my face? Do you know that I have gone From your fair and restful place, Far away where moveth on Night and day the restless sea? But I saw eternity

In your faces. Roses sweet! Ye were but the virgin veils, Hiding Him whose holy feet Walked the waves, whose very wails Bring to me from Galilee Rest across the restless sea.

And who knows? mayhap some wave, From His footstep long ago, With the blessing which He gave After ages ebb and flow, Cometh in from yonder sea, With a blessing sweet for me.

Just last night I watched the deep, And it shone as shines a shrine, (Vigils such I often keep) And the stars did sweetly shine O'er the altar of the sea; So they shone in Galilee.

Roses! round the shrine and aisle! Which of all I loved the best, I

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have gone to rest awhile    Where the wavelets never rest -- Ye are dearer  
far to me Than the ever restless sea.

I will come to you in dreams,    In the day and in the night, When the  
sun's or starlight's gleams    Robe you in your red or white; Roses! will  
you dream of me By the ever restless sea?

\_\_\_\_ Biloxi, Miss.

## Sea Reverie

Strange Sea! why is it that you never rest? And tell me why you never go to sleep? Thou art like one so sad and sin-oppressed -- (And the waves are the tears you weep) -- And thou didst never sin -- what ails the sinless deep?

To-night I hear you crying on the beach, Like a weary child on its mother's breast -- A cry with an infinite and lonesome reach Of unutterably deep unrest; And thou didst never sin -- why art thou so distressed?

But, ah, sad Sea! the mother's breast is warm, Where crieth the lone and the wearied child; And soft the arms that shield her own from harm; And her look is unutterably mild -- But to-night, O Sea! thy cry is wild, so wild!

What ails thee, Sea? The midnight stars are bright -- How safe they lean on heaven's sinless breast! O Sea! is the beach too hard, tho' e'er so white, To give thy utter weariness a rest? (And to-night the winds are a-coming from the West).

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Where the shadows moan o'er the day's life done, And the darkness is waiting for the light, Ah, me! how the shadows ever seek and shun The sacred, radiant faces of the bright -- (And the stars are the vestal virgins of the night);

Or am I dreaming? Do I see and hear Without me what I feel within? Is there an inner eye and an inner ear Thro' which the sounds and silences float in In reflex of the spirit's calm or troublous din?

I know not. After all, what do I know? Save only this -- and that is mystery -- Like the sea, my spirit hath its ebb and flow In unison, and the tides of the sea Ever reflect the ceaseless tides of thoughts in me.

Waves, are ye priests in surplices of gray, Fringed by the fingers of the breeze with white? Is the beach your altar where ye come to pray, With the sea's ritual, every day and night? And the suns and stars your only altar light?

Great Sea! the very rhythm of my song (And the winds are a-coming from the West), Like thy waves, moveth uncertainly along; And my thoughts, like thy tide with a snow-white crest, Flow and ebb, ebb and flow with thy own unrest.

\_\_\_\_ Biloxi, Miss.

## The Immaculate Conception

Fell the snow on the festival's vigil    And surpliced the city in white; I  
wonder who wove the pure flakelets?    Ask the Virgin, or God, or the  
night.

It fitted the Feast: 'twas a symbol,    And earth wore the surplice at  
morn, As pure as the vale's stainless lily    For Mary, the sinlessly born;

For Mary, conceived in all sinlessness;    And the sun, thro' the clouds  
of the East, With the brightest and fairest of flashes,    Fringed the surplice  
of white for the Feast.

And round the horizon hung cloudlets,    Pure stoles to be worn by the  
Feast; While the earth and the heavens were waiting    For the beautiful  
Mass of the priest.

I opened my window, half dreaming;    My soul went away from my  
eyes, And my heart began saying "Hail Marys"    Somewhere up in the  
beautiful skies,

Where the shadows of sin never rested;    And the angels were waiting  
to hear The prayer that ascends with "Our Father",    And keeps hearts and  
the heavens so near.

And all the day long -- can you blame me?    "Hail Mary", "Our  
Father", I said; And I think that the Christ and His Mother    Were glad of  
the way that I prayed.

And I think that the great, bright Archangel    Was listening all the day  
long For the echo of every "Hail Mary"    That soared thro' the skies like a  
song,

From the hearts of the true and the faithful,    In accents of joy or of  
woe, Who kissed in their faith and their fervor    The Festival's surplice of  
snow.

I listened, and each passing minute,    I heard in the lands far away  
"Hail Mary", "Our Father", and near me    I heard all who knelt down to  
pray.

Pray the same as I prayed, and the angel,    And the same as the Christ  
of our love -- "Our Father", "Hail Mary", "Our Father" --    Winging just

the same sweet flight above.

Passed the morning, the noon: came the even -- The temple of Christ was aflame With the halo of lights on three altars, And one wore His own Mother's name.

Her statue stood there, and around it Shone the symbolic stars. Was their gleam, And the flowerets that fragranc'd her altar, Were they only the dream of a dream?

Or were they sweet signs to my vision Of a truth far beyond mortal ken, That the Mother had rights in the temple Of Him she had given to men?

Was it wronging her Christ-Son, I wonder, For the Christian to honor her so? Ought her statue pass out of His temple? Ask the Feast in its surplice of snow.

Ah, me! had the pure flakelets voices, I know what their white lips would say; And I know that the lights on her altar Would pray with me if they could pray.

Methinks that the flowers that were fading -- Sweet virgins that die with the Feast, Like martyrs, upon her fair altar -- If they could, they would pray with the priest;

And would murmur "Our Father", "Hail Mary", Till they drooped on the altar in death, And be glad in their dying for giving To Mary their last sweetest breath.

Passed the day as a poem that passes Through the poet's heart's sweetest of strings; Moved the minutes from Masses to Masses -- Did I hear a faint sound as of wings

Rustling over the aisles and the altars? Did they go to her altar and pray? Or was my heart only a-dreaming At the close of the Festival day?

Quiet throngs came into the temple, As still as the flowers at her feet, And wherever they knelt, they were gazing Where the statue looked smiling and sweet.

"Our Fathers", "Hail Marys" were blended In a pure and a perfect accord, And passed by the beautiful Mother To fall at the feet of our Lord.

Low toned from the hearts of a thousand "Our Fathers", "Hail

Marys" swept on To the star-wreathed statue. I wonder Did they wrong the great name of her Son.

Her Son and our Saviour -- I wonder How He heard our "Hail Marys" that night? Were the words to Him sweet as the music They once were, and did we pray right?

Or was it all wrong? Will he punish Our lips if we make them the home Of the words of the great, high Archangel That won Him to sinners to come.

Ah, me! does He blame my own mother, Who taught me, a child, at her knee, To say, with "Our Father", "Hail Mary"? If 'tis wrong, my Christ! punish but me.

Let my mother, O Jesus! be blameless; Let me suffer for her if You blame. Her pure mother's heart knew no better When she taught me to love the pure name.

O Christ! of Thy beautiful Mother Must I hide her name down in my heart? But, ah! even there you will see it -- With Thy Mother's name how can I part?

On Thy name all divine have I rested In the days when my heart-trials came; Sweet Christ, like to Thee I am human, And I need Mary's pure human name.

Did I hear a voice? or was I dreaming? I heard -- or I sure seemed to hear -- "Who blames you for loving My Mother Is wronging my heart -- do not fear.

"I am human, e'en here in My heavens, What I was I am still all the same; And I still love My beautiful Mother -- And thou, priest of Mine, do the same."

I was happy -- because I am human -- And Christ in the silences heard "Our Father", "Hail Mary", "Our Father", Murmured faithfully word after word.

\* \* \* \* \*

Swept the beautiful ~O Salutaris~ Down the aisles -- did the starred statue stir? Or was my heart only a-dreaming When it turned from her statue and her?

The door of a white tabernacle Felt the touch of the hand of the

priest -- Did he waken the Host from its slumbers To come forth and crown the high Feast?

To come forth so strangely and silent, And just for a sweet little while, And then to go back to its prison. Thro' the stars -- did the sweet statue smile?

I knew not; but Mary, the Mother, I think, almost envied the priest -- He was taking her place at the altar -- Did she dream of the days in the East?

When her hands, and hers only, held Him, Her Child, in His waking and rest, Who had strayed in a love that seemed wayward This eve to shrine in the West.

Did she dream of the straw of the manger When she gazed on the altar's pure white? Did she fear for her Son any danger In the little Host, helpless, that night?

No! no! she is trustful as He is -- What a terrible trust in our race! The Divine has still faith in the human -- What a story of infinite grace!

~Tantum Ergo~, high hymn of the altar That came from the heart of a saint, Swept triumph-toned all through the temple -- Did my ears hear the sound of a plaint?

'Neath the glorious roll of the singing To the temple had sorrow crept in? Or was it the moan of a sinner? O beautiful Host! wilt Thou win

In the little half-hour's Benediction The heart of a sinner again? And, merciful Christ, Thou wilt comfort The sorrow that brings Thee its pain.

Came a hush, and the Host was uplifted, And It made just the sign of the cross O'er the low-bended brows of the people. O Host of the Holy! Thy loss

To the altar, and temple, and people Would make this world darkest of night; And our hearts would grope blindly on through it, For our love would have lost all its light.

~Laudate~, what thrilling of triumph! Our souls soared to God on each tone; And the Host went again to Its prison, For our Christ fears to leave us alone.

Blessed priest! strange thou art His jailor! Thy hand holds the beautiful key That locks in His prison love's Captive, And keeps Him in



fetters for me.

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'Twas over -- I gazed on the statue -- "Our Father", "Hail Mary" still  
came; And to-night faith and love cannot help it, I must still pray the  
same -- still the same.

\_\_\_\_ Written at Loyola College, Baltimore, on the Night of December  
8, 1880.

## Fifty Years at the Altar

"To Rev. Father E. Sourin, S.J., from A. J. Ryan; first, in memory of some happy hours passed in his company at Loyola College, Baltimore; next, in appreciation of a character of strange beautifulness, known of God, but hidden from men; and last, but by no means least, to test and tempt his humility in the (to him) proud hour of the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination."

To-day -- fifty years at the altar -- Thou art, as of old, at thy post!  
Tell us, O chasubled soldier! Art weary of watching the Host? Fifty  
years -- Christ's sacred sentry, To-day thy feet faithful are found  
When the cross on the altar is blessing Thy heart in its sentinel-round.

The beautiful story of Thabor Fifty years ago thrilled thy young  
heart, When wearing white vestments of glory, And up the "high  
mountain apart". In the fresh, glowing grace of thy priesthood, Thou  
didst climb to the summit alone, While the Feast of Christ's  
Transfiguration Was a sweet outward sign of thy own.

Old priest! on the slope of the summit Did float down and fall on  
thine ear The strong words of weak-hearted Peter. "O Lord, it is good to  
be here!" Thy heart was stronger than Peter's, And sweeter the tone of  
thy prayer; 'Twas Calvary thy young feet were climbing, And old -- thou  
art still standing there.

For you, as for him, on bright Thabor, Forever to stay were not hard;  
But when Calvary girdles the altar, And garments the Eucharist's guard  
With sacrifice and with its shadows -- To keep there forever a feast Is the  
glory and grace of the human -- The altar, the cross, and the priest.

The crucifix's wardens and watchers, Like Him, must be heart  
sacrificed -- The Christ on the crucifix lifeless For guard needs a brave  
human Christ. To guard Him three hours -- what a glory! With sacrifice  
splendors aflame! Three hours -- and He died on His Calvary -- How  
long hast thou lived for His name?

"Half a century," cries out thy crucifix, Binding together thy beads;  
His look, like thy life, lingers in it, A light for men's souls in their needs.

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Old priest! is thy life not a rosary? Five decades and more have been said,  
In thy heart the warm splendors of Thabor Beneath the white snows  
of thy head!

Fifty years lifting the chalice -- Ah, 'tis Life in this death-darkened  
land! Thy clasp may be weak, but the chrism, Old priest! that anointed  
thy hand Is as fresh and as strong in its virtue As in the five decades  
agone Thy young hands were touched with its unction, And thy  
vestments of white were put on.

Fifty years! Every day passes A part of one great, endless feast,  
That moves round its orbit of Masses, And hath nor a West nor an East;  
But everywhere hath its pure altars, At each of its altars a priest To lift  
up a Host with a chalice Till the story of grace shall have ceased.

Fifty years in the feast's orbit, Nearly two thousand of days; Fifty  
years priest in the priesthood, Fifty years lit with its rays -- Lit them but  
to reflect them When the adorers' throngs pass Out of thy life and its  
glory Shining each day from thy Mass.

Half of a century's service! Wearing thy cassock of black O'er thy  
camps, and thy battles, and triumphs! Old soldier of Jesus! look back To  
the day when thou kissed thy first altar In love with youth's fervor athrill.  
From the day when we meet and we greet thee, So true to the old altar  
still.

Fifty long years! what if trials Did oftentimes darken thy way --  
They marked, like the shadows on dials, Thy soul's brightest hour every  
day. The sun in the height of his splendor, By the mystical law of his  
light, O'er his glories flings vestments of shadows, And, sinking, leaves  
stars to the night.

Old priest! with the heart of a poet Thou hast written sweet stanzas  
for men; Thy life, many versed, is a poem That puzzles the art of the pen;  
The crucifix wrote it and writes it -- A scripture too deep for my ken; A  
record of deeds more than sayings -- Only God reads it rightly; and then

My stanzas are just like the shadows That follow the sun and his  
sheen, To tell to the eye that will read them Where the purest of sunshine  
has been. Thy life moves in mystical eclipse, All hidden from men and  
their sight; We look, but we see but its surface, But God sees the depth

of its light.

Twenty-five years! highest honors    Were thine -- high deserved in the world: Dawned a day with a grace in its flashing    O'er thy heart from a standard unfurled, Whose folds bore the mystical motto:    "To the greater glory of God!" And somehow there opened before thee    A way thou hadst never yet trod.

Twenty-five years -- still a private    In files where the humblest and last Stands higher in rank than the highest    Of those who are passing or passed; Twenty-five years in the vanguard,    Whose name is a spell of their strength, The light of the folds of whose standard    Lengthens along all the length

Of the march of the Crucified Jesus.    Loyola was wiser than most In claiming for him and his soldiers    The name of the Chief of the host; His name, and his motto, and colors    That never shall know a defeat, Whose banner, when others are folded,    Shall never float over retreat.

To-day when the wind wafts the wavelets    To the gray altar steps of yon shore, Each wearing an alb foam-embroidered,    And kneeling, like priests, to adore The God of the land -- I will mingle    My prayers, aged priest! with the sea, While God, for thy fifty years' priesthood,    Will hear thy prayers whispered for me.

## Song of the Deathless Voice

'Twas the dusky Hallowe'en -- Hour of fairy and of wraith, When in many a dim-lit green, 'Neath the stars' prophetic sheen, As the olden legend saith, All the future may be seen, And when -- an older story hath -- Whate'er in life hath ever been Loveful, hopeful, or of wrath, Cometh back upon our path. I was dreaming in my room, 'Mid the shadows, still as they; Night, in veil of woven gloom, Wept and trailed her tresses gray O'er her fair, dead sister -- Day. To me from some far-away Crept a voice -- or seemed to creep -- As a wave-child of the deep, Frightened by the wild storm's roar Creeps low-sighing to the shore Very low and very lone Came the voice with song of moan, This, weak-sung in weaker word, Is the song that night I heard:

How long! Alas, how long! How long shall the Celt chant the sad song of hope, That a sunrise may break on the long starless night of our past? How long shall we wander and wait on the desolate slope Of Thabors that promise our Transfiguration at last? How long, O Lord! How long!

How long, O Fate! How long! How long shall our sunburst reflect but the sunset of Right, When gloaming still lights the dim immemorial years? How long shall our harp's strings, like winds that are wearied of night, Sound sadder than moanings in tones all a-trembling with tears? How long, O Lord! How long!

How long, O Right! How long! How long shall our banner, the brightest that ever did flame In battle with wrong, droop furled like a flag o'er a grave? How long shall we be but a nation with only a name, Whose history clanks with the sounds of the chains that enslave? How long, O Lord! How long!

How long! Alas, how long! How long shall our isle be a Golgotha, out in the sea, With a cross in the dark? Oh, when shall our Good Friday close? How long shall thy sea that beats round thee bring only to thee The wailings, O Erin! that float down the waves of thy woes? How long, O Lord! How long!

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How long! Alas, how long! How long shall the cry of the wronged, O Freedom! for thee Ascend all in vain from the valleys of sorrow below? How long ere the dawn of the day in the ages to be, When the Celt will forgive, or else tread on the heart of his foe? How long, O Lord! How long!

Whence came the voice? Around me gray silence fall; And without in the gloom not a sound is astir 'neath the sky; And who is the singer? Or hear I a singer at all? Or, hush! Is't my heart athrill with some deathless old cry?

Ah! blood forgets not in its flowing its forefathers' wrongs -- They are the heart's trust, from which we may ne'er be released; Blood keeps in its throbs the echoes of all the old songs And sings them the best when it flows thro' the heart of a priest.

Am I not in my blood as old as the race whence I sprung? In the cells of my heart feel I not all its ebb and its flow? And old as our race is, is it not still forever as young, As the youngest of Celts in whose breast Erin's love is aglow?

The blood of a race that is wronged beats the longest of all, For long as the wrong lasts, each drop of it quivers with wrath; And sure as the race lives, no matter what fates may befall, There's a Voice with a Song that forever is haunting its path.

Aye, this very hand that trembles thro' this very line, Lay hid, ages gone, in the hand of some forefather Celt, With a sword in its grasp, if stronger, not truer than mine, And I feel, with my pen, what the old hero's sworded hand felt --

The heat of the hate that flashed into flames against wrong, The thrill of the hope that rushed like a storm on the foe; And the sheen of that sword is hid in the sheath of the song As sure as I feel thro' my veins the pure Celtic blood flow.

The ties of our blood have been strained o'er thousands of years, And still are not severed, how mighty soever the strain; The chalice of time o'erflows with the streams of our tears, Yet just as the shamrocks, to bloom, need the clouds and their rain,

The Faith of our fathers, our hopes, and the love of our isle Need the

rain of our hearts that falls from our grief-clouded eyes, To keep them in bloom, while for ages we wait for the smile Of Freedom, that some day -  
- ah! some day! shall light Erin's skies.

Our dead are not dead who have gone, long ago, to their rest; They are living in us whose glorious race will not die -- Their brave buried hearts are still beating on in each breast Of the child of each Celt in each clime 'neath the infinite sky.

Many days yet to come may be dark as the days that are past, Many voices may hush while the great years sweep patiently by; But the voice of our race shall live sounding down to the last, And our blood is the bard of the song that never shall die.

## To Mr. and Mrs. A. M. T.

Just when the gentle hand of spring Came fringing the trees with bud  
and leaf, And when the blades the warm suns bring Were given glad  
promise of golden sheaf; Just when the birds began to sing Joy hymns  
after their winter's grief, I wandered weary to a place; Tired of toil, I  
sought for rest, Where Nature wore her mildest grace -- I went where I  
was more than guest. Strange, tall trees rose as if they fain Would wear  
as crowns the clouds of skies; The sad winds swept with low refrain  
Through branches breathing softest sighs; And o'er the field and down the  
lane Sweet flowers, the dreams of Paradise, Bloomed up into this world  
of pain, Where all that's fairest soonest dies; And 'neath the trees a little  
stream Went winding slowly round and round, Just like a poet's mystic  
dream, With here a silence, there a sound. The lowly ground, beneath the  
sheen Of March day suns, now dim, now bright, Now emeralds of  
golden green In flashing or in fading light; And here and there  
throughout the scene The timid wild flowers met the sight, While over  
all the sun and shade Swept like a strangely woven veil, Folding the  
flowers that else might fade, Guarding young rosebuds from the gale.  
And blossoms of most varied hue Bedecked the forest everywhere,  
While valleys wore the robes of blue, Bright woven by the violets fair;  
And there was gladness all around; It was a place so fair to see, And yet  
so simple -- there I found How sweet a quiet home may be. Four  
children -- and thro' all the day They flung their laughter o'er the place;  
Bright as the flowers in happy May, The children shed a sweet pure  
grace Around this quiet home, and they To father and to mother brought  
The smiles of purest love unsought; It was a happy, happy spot, Too dear  
to be fore'er forgot. Farewell, sweet place! I came as guest; From toil,  
in thee I found relief, I found in thee a home and rest -- But, ah! the days  
are far too brief. Farewell! I go, but with me come Sweet memories  
that long will last; I'll think of thee as of a home That stands forever in  
my past.



## To Virginia (on Her Birthday)

Your past is past and never to return, The long bright yesterday of life's first years, Its days are dead -- cold ashes in an urn. Some held for you a chalice for your tears, And other days strewed flowers upon your way. They all are gone beyond your reach, And thus they are beyond my speech. I know them not, so that your first gone times To me unknown, lie far beyond my rhymes. But I can bless your soul and aims to-day, And I can ask your future to be sweet, And I can pray that you may never meet With any cross, you are too weak to bear. Virginia, Virgin name, and may you wear Its virtues and its beauties, fore'er and fore'er. I breathe this blessing, and I pray this prayer.

## Epilogue

Go, words of mine! and if you live    Only for one brief, little day; If  
peace, or joy, or calm you give    To any soul; or if you bring A something  
higher to some heart,    I may come back again and sing Songs free from  
all the arts of Art.

-- Abram J. Ryan.

# Posthumous Poems

## In Remembrance

In the eclipses of your soul, and when you cry "O God! give more of rest and less of night," My words may rest you; and mayhap a light Shall flash from them bright o'er thy spirit's sky; Then think of me as one who passes by. A few brief hours -- a golden August day, We met, we spake -- I pass fore'er away. Let ev'ry word of mine be golden ray To brighten thy eclipses; and then wilt pray That he who passes thee shall meet thee yet In the "Beyond" where souls may ne'er forget.

## A Reverie ["O Songs!" I said:]

"O Songs!" I said: "Stop sounding in my soul Just for a little while and let me sleep, Resting my head on the breast Of Silence;" but the rhythmic roll Of a thousand songs swept on and on, And a far Voice said: "When thou art dead Thy restless heart shall rest."

And the songs will never let me sleep. I plead with them; but o'er the deep They still will roll On, and on, and on, Their music never gone. Ah! world-tired soul! Just for a little while, Just like a poor, tired child Beneath its Mother's smile -- Only to fall asleep! Silence! be mother to me! But -- No! No! No! The waves will ebb and flow. I wonder is it best To never, never rest Down on the shores of this strange Below?

## Only a Dream

Only a Dream!        It floated thro'    The sky of a lonely sleep As  
floats a gleam        Athwart the Blue    Of a golden clouded Deep.

Only a Dream!        I calmly slept. Meseems I called a name;    I woke;  
and, waking, I think I wept And called -- and called the same.

Only a Dream!        Graves have no ears; They give not back the dead;  
They will not listen to the saddest tears That ever may be shed.

Only a Dream!        Graves keep their own; They have no hearts to  
hear;    But the loved will come    From their Heaven-Home To smile on  
the sleeper's tear.

## The Poet

The Poet is the loneliest man that lives; Ah me! God makes him so --  
The sea hath its ebb and flow, He sings his songs -- but yet he only gives  
In the waves of the words of his art Only the ~foam~ of his heart.

Its sea rolls on forever, evermore, Beautiful, vast, and deep; Only his  
~shallowest~ thoughts touch the shore Of Speech; his ~deepest~ sleep.

The foam that crests the wave is pure and white; The ~foam~ is not  
the ~wave~; The wave is not the sea -- ~it rolls~ forever on; The  
winding shores will crave A kiss from ev'ry wavelet on the deep; ~Some  
come~; some always ~sleep~.

## The Child of the Poet

The sunshine of thy Father's fame    Sleeps in the shadows of thy eyes,  
And flashes sometimes when his name    Like a lost star seeks its skies.

In the horizons of thy heart    His memory shines for aye, A light that  
never shall depart    Nor lose a single ray.

Thou passest thro' the crowds unknown,    So gentle, so sweet, and so  
shy; Thy heart throbs fast and sometimes may grow low;  
Then alone    Art the star in thy Father's sky.

'Tis fame enough for thee to bear his name --    Thou couldst not ask  
for more; Thou art the jewel of thy Father's fame,    He waiteth on the  
bright and golden shore; He prayeth in the great Eternity Beside God's  
throne for thee.



## The Poet Priest

~Not~ as of one whom multitudes ~admire~, I believe they call him great; They throng to hear him with a strange desire; They, silent, come and wait, And wonder when he opens wide the gate Of some strange, inner temple, where the fire Is lit on many altars of many dreams -- They wait to catch the gleams -- And then they say, In praiseful words: "'Tis beautiful and grand." And so his way Is strewn with many flowers, sweet and fair; And people say: "How happy he must be to win and wear Praise ev'ry day!" And all the while he stands far out the crowd, Strangely ~alone~. Is it a Stole he wears? -- or mayhap a shroud -- No matter which, his spirit maketh moan; And all the while a lonely, lonesome sense Creeps thro' his days -- all fame's incense Hath not the fragrance of his altar; and He seemeth rather to kneel in lowly prayer Than lift his head aloft amid the Grand: If all the world would kneel down at his feet And give acclaim -- He fain would say: "Oh! No! No! No! The breath of fame is sweet -- but far more sweet Is the breath of Him who lives within my heart; God's breath, which e'en, despite of me, will creep Along the words of merely human art; It cometh from some far-off hidden Deep, Far-off and from so far away -- It filleth night and day." ~Not~ as of one who ever, ever cares For earthly praises, not as of such think thou of me, And in the nights and days -- I'll meet with thee In Prayers -- and thou shalt meet with me.

Wilt Pray for Me?

Wilt pray for me? They tell me I have Fame; I plead with thee, Sometimes just fold my name In beautiful "Hail Marys"! And you give me more Than all the world besides. It praises Poets for the well-sung lay; But ah! it hath forgotten how to pray. It brings to brows of Poets crowns of Pride; Some win such crowns and wear; Give me, instead, a simple little Prayer.

