

LEGENDS AND LYRICS--FIRST SERIES

by Adelaide Ann Proctor

DEDICATION

TO MATILDA M. HAYS.

"Our tokens of love are for the most part barbarous. Cold and lifeless, because they do not represent our life. The only gift is a portion of thyself. Therefore let the farmer give his corn; the miner, a gem; the sailor, coral and shells; the painter, his picture; and the poet, his poem."--
Emerson's Essays.

A. A. P.

May, 1858

AN INTRODUCTION BY CHARLES DICKENS

In the spring of the year 1853, I observed, as conductor of the weekly journal *Household Words*, a short poem among the proffered contributions, very different, as I thought, from the shoal of verses perpetually setting through the office of such a periodical, and possessing much more merit. Its authoress was quite unknown to me. She was one Miss Mary Berwick, whom I had never heard of; and she was to be addressed by letter, if addressed at all, at a circulating library in the western district of London. Through this channel, Miss Berwick was informed that her poem was accepted, and was invited to send another. She complied, and became a regular and frequent contributor. Many letters passed between the journal and Miss Berwick, but Miss Berwick herself was never seen.

How we came gradually to establish, at the office of *Household Words*, that we knew all about Miss Berwick, I have never discovered. But we settled somehow, to our complete satisfaction, that she was governess in a family; that she went to Italy in that capacity, and returned; and that she had long been in the same family. We really knew nothing whatever of her, except that she was remarkably business-like, punctual, self-reliant, and reliable: so I suppose we insensibly invented the rest. For myself, my mother was not a more real personage to me, than Miss Berwick the governess became.

This went on until December, 1854, when the Christmas number, entitled *The Seven Poor Travellers*, was sent to press. Happening to be going to dine that day with an old and dear friend, distinguished in literature as Barry Cornwall, I took with me an early proof of that number, and remarked, as I laid it on the drawing-room table, that it contained a very pretty poem, written by a certain Miss Berwick. Next day brought me the disclosure that I had so spoken of the poem to the mother of its writer, in its writer's presence; that I had no such correspondent in existence as Miss Berwick; and that the name had been assumed by Barry

Cornwall's eldest daughter, Miss Adelaide Anne Procter.

The anecdote I have here noted down, besides serving to explain why the parents of the late Miss Procter have looked to me for these poor words of remembrance of their lamented child, strikingly illustrates the honesty, independence, and quiet dignity, of the lady's character. I had known her when she was very young; I had been honoured with her father's friendship when I was myself a young aspirant; and she had said at home, "If I send him, in my own name, verses that he does not honestly like, either it will be very painful to him to return them, or he will print them for papa's sake, and not for their own. So I have made up my mind to take my chance fairly with the unknown volunteers."

Perhaps it requires an editor's experience of the profoundly unreasonable grounds on which he is often urged to accept unsuitable articles--such as having been to school with the writer's husband's brother-in-law, or having lent an alpenstock in Switzerland to the writer's wife's nephew, when that interesting stranger had broken his own--fully to appreciate the delicacy and the self-respect of this resolution.

Some verses by Miss Procter had been published in the Book of Beauty, ten years before she became Miss Berwick. With the exception of two poems in the Cornhill Magazine, two in Good Words, and others in a little book called A Chaplet of Verses (issued in 1862 for the benefit of a Night Refuge), her published writings first appeared in Household Words, or All the Year Round. The present edition contains the whole of her Legends and Lyrics, and originates in the great favour with which they have been received by the public.

Miss Procter was born in Bedford Square, London, on the 30th of October, 1825. Her love of poetry was conspicuous at so early an age, that I have before me a tiny album made of small note-paper, into which her favourite passages were copied for her by her mother's hand before she herself could write. It looks as if she had carried it about, as another little girl might have carried a doll. She soon displayed a remarkable memory, and great quickness of apprehension. When she was quite a young child, she learned with facility several of the problems of Euclid. As she grew older, she acquired the French, Italian, and German languages; became a

clever pianoforte player; and showed a true taste and sentiment in drawing. But, as soon as she had completely vanquished the difficulties of any one branch of study, it was her way to lose interest in it, and pass to another. While her mental resources were being trained, it was not at all suspected in her family that she had any gift of authorship, or any ambition to become a writer. Her father had no idea of her having ever attempted to turn a rhyme, until her first little poem saw the light in print.

When she attained to womanhood, she had read an extraordinary number of books, and throughout her life she was always largely adding to the number. In 1853 she went to Turin and its neighbourhood, on a visit to her aunt, a Roman Catholic lady. As Miss Procter had herself professed the Roman Catholic Faith two years before, she entered with the greater ardour on the study of the Piedmontese dialect, and the observation of the habits and manners of the peasantry. In the former, she soon became a proficient. On the latter head, I extract from her familiar letters written home to England at the time, two pleasant pieces of description.

A BETROTHAL

"We have been to a ball, of which I must give you a description. Last Tuesday we had just done dinner at about seven, and stepped out into the balcony to look at the remains of the sunset behind the mountains, when we heard very distinctly a band of music, which rather excited my astonishment, as a solitary organ is the utmost that toils up here. I went out of the room for a few minutes, and, on my returning, Emily said, 'Oh! That band is playing at the farmer's near here. The daughter is fiancee to-day, and they have a ball.' I said, 'I wish I was going!' 'Well,' replied she, 'the farmer's wife did call to invite us.' 'Then I shall certainly go,' I exclaimed. I applied to Madame B., who said she would like it very much, and we had better go, children and all. Some of the servants were already gone. We rushed away to put on some shawls, and put off any shred of black we might have about us (as the people would have been quite annoyed if we had appeared on such an occasion with any black), and we started. When we reached the farmer's, which is a stone's throw above our house, we were received with great enthusiasm; the only drawback being, that no one spoke French, and we did not yet speak Piedmontese. We were placed on a bench against the wall, and the people went on dancing. The room was a large whitewashed kitchen (I suppose), with several large pictures in black frames, and very smoky. I distinguished the Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, and the others appeared equally lively and appropriate subjects. Whether they were Old Masters or not, and if so, by whom, I could not ascertain. The band were seated opposite us. Five men, with wind instruments, part of the band of the National Guard, to which the farmer's sons belong. They played really admirably, and I began to be afraid that some idea of our dignity would prevent me getting a partner; so, by Madame B.'s advice, I went up to the bride, and offered to dance with her. Such a handsome young woman! Like one of Uwins's pictures. Very dark, with a quantity of black hair, and on an immense scale. The children were already dancing, as well as the maids. After we came to an end of our dance, which was what they called a Polka-Mazourka, I saw the bride trying to screw up the courage of

her fiance to ask me to dance, which after a little hesitation he did. And admirably he danced, as indeed they all did--in excellent time, and with a little more spirit than one sees in a ball-room. In fact, they were very like one's ordinary partners, except that they wore earrings and were in their shirt-sleeves, and truth compels me to state that they decidedly smelt of garlic. Some of them had been smoking, but threw away their cigars when we came in. The only thing that did not look cheerful was, that the room was only lighted by two or three oil-lamps, and that there seemed to be no preparation for refreshments. Madame B., seeing this, whispered to her maid, who disengaged herself from her partner, and ran off to the house; she and the kitchenmaid presently returning with a large tray covered with all kinds of cakes (of which we are great consumers and always have a stock), and a large hamper full of bottles of wine, with coffee and sugar. This seemed all very acceptable. The fiancee was requested to distribute the eatables, and a bucket of water being produced to wash the glasses in, the wine disappeared very quickly--as fast as they could open the bottles. But, elated, I suppose, by this, the floor was sprinkled with water, and the musicians played a Monferrino, which is a Piedmontese dance. Madame B. danced with the farmer's son, and Emily with another distinguished member of the company. It was very fatiguing--something like a Scotch reel. My partner was a little man, like Perrot, and very proud of his dancing. He cut in the air and twisted about, until I was out of breath, though my attempts to imitate him were feeble in the extreme. At last, after seven or eight dances, I was obliged to sit down. We stayed till nine, and I was so dead beat with the heat that I could hardly crawl about the house, and in an agony with the cramp, it is so long since I have danced."

A MARRIAGE

The wedding of the farmer's daughter has taken place. We had hoped it would have been in the little chapel of our house, but it seems some special permission was necessary, and they applied for it too late. They all said, "This is the Constitution. There would have been no difficulty before!" the lower classes making the poor Constitution the scapegoat for everything they don't like. So as it was impossible for us to climb up to the church where the wedding was to be, we contented ourselves with seeing the procession pass. It was not a very large one, for, it requiring some activity to go up, all the old people remained at home. It is not etiquette for the bride's mother to go, and no unmarried woman can go to a wedding--I suppose for fear of its making her discontented with her own position. The procession stopped at our door, for the bride to receive our congratulations. She was dressed in a shot silk, with a yellow handkerchief, and rows of a large gold chain. In the afternoon they sent to request us to go there. On our arrival we found them dancing out of doors, and a most melancholy affair it was. All the bride's sisters were not to be recognised, they had cried so. The mother sat in the house, and could not appear. And the bride was sobbing so, she could hardly stand! The most melancholy spectacle of all to my mind was, that the bridegroom was decidedly tipsy. He seemed rather affronted at all the distress. We danced a Monferrino; I with the bridegroom; and the bride crying the whole time. The company did their utmost to enliven her by firing pistols, but without success, and at last they began a series of yells, which reminded me of a set of savages. But even this delicate method of consolation failed, and the wishing good-bye began. It was altogether so melancholy an affair that Madame B. dropped a few tears, and I was very near it, particularly when the poor mother came out to see the last of her daughter, who was finally dragged off between her brother and uncle, with a last explosion of pistols. As she lives quite near, makes an excellent match, and is one of nine children, it really was a most desirable marriage, in spite of all the show of distress. Albert was so discomfited by it, that he forgot to kiss the bride as he had

intended to do, and therefore went to call upon her yesterday, and found her very smiling in her new house, and supplied the omission. The cook came home from the wedding, declaring she was cured of any wish to marry--but I would not recommend any man to act upon that threat and make her an offer. In a couple of days we had some rolls of the bride's first baking, which they call Madonnas. The musicians, it seems, were in the same state as the bridegroom, for, in escorting her home, they all fell down in the mud. My wrath against the bridegroom is somewhat calmed by finding that it is considered bad luck if he does not get tipsy at his wedding."

Those readers of Miss Procter's poems who should suppose from their tone that her mind was of a gloomy or despondent cast, would be curiously mistaken. She was exceedingly humorous, and had a great delight in humour. Cheerfulness was habitual with her, she was very ready at a sally or a reply, and in her laugh (as I remember well) there was an unusual vivacity, enjoyment, and sense of drollery. She was perfectly unconstrained and unaffected: as modestly silent about her productions, as she was generous with their pecuniary results. She was a friend who inspired the strongest attachments; she was a finely sympathetic woman, with a great accordant heart and a sterling noble nature. No claim can be set up for her, thank God, to the possession of any of the conventional poetical qualities. She never by any means held the opinion that she was among the greatest of human beings; she never suspected the existence of a conspiracy on the part of mankind against her; she never recognised in her best friends, her worst enemies; she never cultivated the luxury of being misunderstood and unappreciated; she would far rather have died without seeing a line of her composition in print, than that I should have maundered about her, here, as "the Poet", or "the Poetess".

With the recollection of Miss Procter as a mere child and as a woman, fresh upon me, it is natural that I should linger on my way to the close of this brief record, avoiding its end. But, even as the close came upon her, so must it come here.

Always impelled by an intense conviction that her life must not be dreamed away, and that her indulgence in her favourite pursuits must be

balanced by action in the real world around her, she was indefatigable in her endeavours to do some good. Naturally enthusiastic, and conscientiously impressed with a deep sense of her Christian duty to her neighbour, she devoted herself to a variety of benevolent objects. Now, it was the visitation of the sick, that had possession of her; now, it was the sheltering of the houseless; now, it was the elementary teaching of the densely ignorant; now, it was the raising up of those who had wandered and got trodden under foot; now, it was the wider employment of her own sex in the general business of life; now, it was all these things at once. Perfectly unselfish, swift to sympathise and eager to relieve, she wrought at such designs with a flushed earnestness that disregarded season, weather, time of day or night, food, rest. Under such a hurry of the spirits, and such incessant occupation, the strongest constitution will commonly go down. Hers, neither of the strongest nor the weakest, yielded to the burden, and began to sink.

To have saved her life, then, by taking action on the warning that shone in her eyes and sounded in her voice, would have been impossible, without changing her nature. As long as the power of moving about in the old way was left to her, she must exercise it, or be killed by the restraint. And so the time came when she could move about no longer, and took to her bed.

All the restlessness gone then, and all the sweet patience of her natural disposition purified by the resignation of her soul, she lay upon her bed through the whole round of changes of the seasons. She lay upon her bed through fifteen months. In all that time, her old cheerfulness never quitted her. In all that time, not an impatient or a querulous minute can be remembered.

At length, at midnight on the second of February, 1864, she turned down a leaf of a little book she was reading, and shut it up.

The ministering hand that had copied the verses into the tiny album was soon around her neck, and she quietly asked, as the clock was on the stroke of one:

"Do you think I am dying, mamma?"

"I think you are very, very ill to-night, my dear!"

"Send for my sister. My feet are so cold. Lift me up?"

Her sister entering as they raised her, she said: "It has come at last!"
And with a bright and happy smile, looked upward, and departed.

Well had she written:

Why shouldst thou fear the beautiful angel, Death, Who waits thee at
the portals of the skies, Ready to kiss away thy struggling breath, Ready
with gentle hand to close thine eyes?

Oh what were life, if life were all? Thine eyes Are blinded by their
tears, or thou wouldst see Thy treasures wait thee in the far-off skies, And
Death, thy friend, will give them all to thee.

VERSE: THE ANGEL'S STORY

Through the blue and frosty heavens Christmas stars were shining bright; Glistening lamps throughout the City Almost matched their gleaming light; While the winter snow was lying, And the winter winds were sighing, Long ago, one Christmas night.

While, from every tower and steeple, Pealing bells were sounding clear, (Never with such tones of gladness, Save when Christmas time is near,) Many a one that night was merry Who had toiled through all the year. That night saw old wrongs forgiven, Friends, long parted, reconciled; Voices all unused to laughter, Mournful eyes that rarely smiled, Trembling hearts that feared the morrow, From their anxious thoughts beguiled.

Rich and poor felt love and blessing From the gracious season fall; Joy and plenty in the cottage, Peace and feasting in the hall; And the voices of the children Ringing clear above it all!

Yet one house was dim and darkened; Gloom, and sickness, and despair, Dwelling in the gilded chambers. Creeping up the marble stair, Even stilled the voice of mourning - For a child lay dying there.

Silken curtains fell around him, Velvet carpets hushed the tread. Many costly toys were lying, All unheeded, by his bed; And his tangled golden ringlets Were on downy pillows spread.

The skill of all that mighty City To save one little life was vain; One little thread from being broken, One fatal word from being spoken; Nay, his very mother's pain, And the mighty love within her, Could not give him health again.

So she knelt there still beside him, She alone with strength to smile, Promising that he should suffer No more in a little while, Murmuring tender song and story Weary hours to beguile.

Suddenly an unseen Presence Checked those constant moaning cries, Stilled the little heart's quick fluttering, Raised those blue and wondering eyes, Fixed on some mysterious vision, With a startled sweet surprise.

For a radiant angel hovered, Smiling, o'er the little bed; White his

raiment, from his shoulders Snowy dove-like pinions spread, And a starlike light was shining In a Glory round his head.

While, with tender love, the angel, Leaning o'er the little nest, In his arms the sick child folding, Laid him gently on his breast, Sobs and wailings told the mother That her darling was at rest.

So the angel, slowing rising, Spread his wings; and, through the air, Bore the child, and while he held him To his heart with loving care, Placed a branch of crimson roses Tenderly beside him there.

While the child, thus clinging, floated Towards the mansions of the Blest, Gazing from his shining guardian To the flowers upon his breast, Thus the angel spake, still smiling On the little heavenly guest:

"Know, dear little one, that Heaven Does no earthly thing disdain, Man's poor joys find there an echo Just as surely as his pain; Love, on earth so feebly striving, Lives divine in Heaven again!

"Once in that great town below us, In a poor and narrow street, Dwelt a little sickly orphan; Gentle aid, or pity sweet, Never in life's rugged pathway Guided his poor tottering feet.

"All the striving anxious forethought That should only come with age, Weighed upon his baby spirit, Showed him soon life's sternest page; Grim Want was his nurse, and Sorrow Was his only heritage.

"All too weak for childish pastimes, Drearily the hours sped; On his hands so small and trembling Leaning his poor aching head, Or, through dark and painful hours, Lying sleepless on his bed.

"Dreaming strange and longing fancies Of cool forests far away; And of rosy, happy children, Laughing merrily at play, Coming home through green lanes, bearing Trailing boughs of blooming May.

"Scarce a glimpse of azure heaven Gleamed above that narrow street, And the sultry air of Summer (That you call so warm and sweet) Fevered the poor Orphan, dwelling In the crowded alley's heat.

"One bright day, with feeble footsteps Slowly forth he tried to crawl, Through the crowded city's pathways, Till he reached a garden-wall; Where 'mid princely halls and mansions Stood the lordliest of all.

"There were trees with giant branches, Velvet glades where shadows hide; There were sparkling fountains glancing, Flowers, which in luxuriant

pride Even wafted breaths of perfume To the child who stood outside.

"He against the gate of iron Pressed his wan and wistful face, Gazing with an awe-struck pleasure At the glories of the place; Never had his brightest day-dream Shone with half such wondrous grace.

"You were playing in that garden, Throwing blossoms in the air, Laughing when the petals floated Downwards on your golden hair; And the fond eyes watching o'er you, And the splendour spread before you, Told a House's Hope was there.

"When your servants, tired of seeing Such a face of want and woe, Turning to the ragged Orphan, Gave him coin, and bade him go, Down his cheeks so thin and wasted, Bitter tears began to flow.

"But that look of childish sorrow On your tender child-heart fell, And you plucked the reddest roses From the tree you loved so well, Passed them through the stern cold grating, Gently bidding him 'Farewell!'

"Dazzled by the fragrant treasure And the gentle voice he heard, In the poor forlorn boy's spirit, Joy, the sleeping Seraph, stirred; In his hand he took the flowers, In his heart the loving word.

"So he crept to his poor garret; Poor no more, but rich and bright, For the holy dreams of childhood - Love, and Rest, and Hope, and Light - Floated round the Orphan's pillow Through the starry summer night.

"Day dawned, yet the visions lasted; All too weak to rise he lay; Did he dream that none spake harshly - All were strangely kind that day? Surely then his treasured roses Must have charmed all ills away.

"And he smiled, though they were fading; One by one their leaves were shed; 'Such bright things could never perish, They would bloom again,' he said. When the next day's sun had risen Child and flowers both were dead.

"Know, dear little one! our Father Will no gentle deed disdain; Love on the cold earth beginning Lives divine in Heaven again, While the angel hearts that beat there Still all tender thoughts retain."

So the angel ceased, and gently O'er his little burthen leant; While the child gazed from the shining, Loving eyes that o'er him bent, To the blooming roses by him, Wondering what that mystery meant.

Thus the radiant angel answered, And with tender meaning smiled:

"Ere your childlike, loving spirit, Sin and the hard world defiled, God has given me leave to seek you - I was once that little child!"

* * *

In the churchyard of that city Rose a tomb of marble rare, Decked, as soon as Spring awakened, With her buds and blossoms fair - And a humble grave beside it - No one knew who rested there.

VERSE: ECHOES

Still the angel stars are shining, Still the rippling waters flow, But the
angel-voice is silent That I heard so long ago. Hark! the echoes murmur
low, Long ago!

Still the wood is dim and lonely, Still the plashing fountains play, But
the past and all its beauty, Whither has it fled away? Hark! the mournful
echoes say, Fled away!

Still the bird of night complaineth, (Now, indeed, her song is pain,)
Visions of my happy hours, Do I call and call in vain? Hark! the echoes
cry again, All in vain!

Cease, oh echoes, mournful echoes! Once I loved your voices well;
Now my heart is sick and weary - Days of old, a long farewell! Hark! the
echoes sad and dreary Cry farewell, farewell!

VERSE: A FALSE GENIUS

I see a Spirit by thy side, Purple-winged and eagle-eyed, Looking like
a Heavenly guide.

Though he seem so bright and fair, Ere thou trust his proffered care,
Pause a little, and beware!

If he bid thee dwell apart, Tending some ideal smart In a sick and
coward heart;

In self-worship wrapped alone, Dreaming thy poor griefs are grown
More than other men have known;

Dwelling in some cloudy sphere, Though God's work is waiting here,
And God deigneth to be near;

If his torch's crimson glare Show thee evil everywhere, Tainting all the
wholesome air;

While with strange distorted choice, Still disdainng to rejoice, Thou
WILT hear a wailing voice;

If a simple, humble heart, Seem to thee a meaner part, Than thy
noblest aim and art;

If he bid thee bow before Crowned Mind and nothing more, The great
idol men adore;

And with starry veil enfold Sin, the trailing serpent old, Till his scales
shine out like gold;

Though his words seem true and wise, Soul, I say to thee--Arise. He is
a Demon in disguise!

VERSE: MY PICTURE

Stand this way--more near the window - By my desk--you see the light
Falling on my picture better - Thus I see it while I write!

Who the head may be I know not, But it has a student air; With a look
half sad, half stately, Grave sweet eyes and flowing hair.

Little care I who the painter, How obscure a name he bore; Nor, when
some have named Velasquez, Did I value it the more.

As it is, I would not give it For the rarest piece of art; It has dwelt with
me, and listened To the secrets of my heart.

Many a time, when to my garret, Weary, I returned at night, It has
seemed to look a welcome That has made my poor room bright.

Many a time, when ill and sleepless, I have watched the quivering
gleam Of my lamp upon that picture, Till it faded in my dream.

When dark days have come, and friendship Worthless seemed, and life
in vain, That bright friendly smile has sent me Boldly to my task again.

Sometimes when hard need has pressed me To bow down where I
despise, I have read stern words of counsel In those sad reproachful eyes.

Nothing that my brain imagined, Or my weary hand has wrought, But
it watched the dim Idea Spring forth into armed Thought.

It has smiled on my successes, Raised me when my hopes were low,
And by turns has looked upon me With all the loving eyes I know.

Do you wonder that my picture Has become so like a friend? - It has
seen my life's beginnings, It shall stay and cheer the end!

VERSE: JUDGE NOT

Judge not; the workings of his brain
And of his heart thou canst not see;
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scar, brought from some well-won field,
Where thou wouldst only faint and
yield.

The look, the air, that frets thy sight,
May be a token, that below
The soul has closed in deadly fight
With some infernal fiery foe,
Whose glance would scorch thy smiling grace,
And cast thee shuddering on thy face!

The fall thou darest to despise -
May be the angel's slackened hand
Has suffered it, that he may rise
And take a firmer, surer stand;
Or, trusting less to earthly things,
May henceforth learn to use his wings.

And judge none lost; but wait, and see,
With hopeful pity, not disdain;
The depth of the abyss may be
The measure of the height of pain
And love and glory that may raise
This soul to God in after days!

VERSE: FRIEND SORROW

Do not cheat thy Heart and tell her, "Grief will pass away, Hope for fairer times in future, And forget to-day." - Tell her, if you will, that sorrow Need not come in vain; Tell her that the lesson taught her Far outweighs the pain.

Cheat her not with the old comfort, "Soon she will forget" - Bitter truth, alas--but matter Rather for regret; Bid her not "Seek other pleasures, Turn to other things:" - Rather nurse her caged sorrow "Till the captive sings.

Rather bid her go forth bravely. And the stranger greet; Not as foe, with spear and buckler, But as dear friends meet; Bid her with a strong clasp hold her, By her dusky wings - Listening for the murmured blessing Sorrow always brings.

VERSE: ONE BY ONE

One by one the sands are flowing, One by one the moments fall; Some are coming, some are going; Do not strive to grasp them all.

One by one thy duties wait thee, Let thy whole strength go to each, Let no future dreams elate thee, Learn thou first what these can teach.

One by one (bright gifts from Heaven) Joys are sent thee here below; Take them readily when given, Ready too to let them go.

One by one thy griefs shall meet thee, Do not fear an armed band; One will fade as others greet thee; Shadows passing through the land.

Do not look at life's long sorrow; See how small each moment's pain; God will help thee for to-morrow, So each day begin again.

Every hour that fleets so slowly Has its task to do or bear; Luminous the crown, and holy, When each gem is set with care.

Do not linger with regretting, Or for passing hours despond; Nor, the daily toil forgetting, Look too eagerly beyond.

Hours are golden links, God's token, Reaching Heaven; but one by one Take them, lest the chain be broken Ere the pilgrimage be done.

VERSE: TRUE HONOURS

Is my darling tired already, Tired of her day of play? Draw your little stool beside me, Smooth this tangled hair away. Can she put the logs together, Till they make a cheerful blaze? Shall her blind old Uncle tell her Something of his youthful days?

Hark! The wind among the cedars Waves their white arms to and fro; I remember how I watched them Sixty Christmas Days ago: Then I dreamt a glorious vision Of great deeds to crown each year - Sixty Christmas Days have found me Useless, helpless, blind--and here!

Yes, I feel my darling stealing Warm soft fingers into mine - Shall I tell her what I fancied In that strange old dream of mine? I was kneeling by the window, Reading how a noble band, With the red cross on their breast-plates, Went to gain the Holy Land.

While with eager eyes of wonder Over the dark page I bent, Slowly twilight shadows gathered Till the letters came and went; Slowly, till the night was round me; Then my heart beat loud and fast, For I felt before I saw it That a spirit near me passed.

Then I raised my eyes, and shining Where the moon's first ray was bright Stood a winged Angel-warrior Clothed and panoplied in light: So, with Heaven's love upon him, Stern in calm and resolute will, Looked St. Michael--does the picture Hang in the old cloister still?

Threefold were the dreams of honour That absorbed my heart and brain; Threefold crowns the Angel promised, Each one to be bought by pain: While he spoke, a threefold blessing Fell upon my soul like rain. HELPER OF THE POOR AND SUFFERING; VICTOR IN A GLORIOUS STRIFE; SINGER OF A NOBLE POEM: Such the honours of my life.

Ah, that dream! Long years that gave me Joy and grief as real things Never touched the tender memory Sweet and solemn that it brings - Never quite effaced the feeling Of those white and shadowing wings.

Do those blue eyes open wider? Does my faith too foolish seem? Yes, my darling, years have taught me It was nothing but a dream. Soon, too

soon, the bitter knowledge Of a fearful trial rose, Rose to crush my heart,
and sternly Bade my young ambition close.

More and more my eyes were clouded, Till at last God's glorious light
Passed away from me for ever, And I lived and live in night. Dear, I will
not dim your pleasure, Christmas should be only gay - In my night the
stars have risen, And I wait the dawn of day.

Spite of all I could be happy; For my brothers' tender care In their
boyish pastimes ever Made me take, or feel a share. Philip, even then so
thoughtful, Max so noble, brave and tall, And your father, little Godfrey,
The most loving of them all.

Philip reasoned down my sorrow, Max would laugh my gloom away,
Godfrey's little arms put round me, Helped me through my dreariest day;
While the promise of my Angel, Like a star, now bright, now pale, Hung
in blackest night above me, And I felt it could not fail.

Years passed on, my brothers left me, Each went out to take his share
In the struggle of life; my portion Was a humble one--to bear. Here I dwelt,
and learnt to wander Through the woods and fields alone, Every cottage in
the village Had a corner called my own.

Old and young, all brought their troubles, Great or small, for me to
hear; I have often blessed my sorrow That drew others' grief so near. Ah,
the people needed helping - Needed love--(for Love and Heaven Are the
only gifts not bartered, They alone are freely given) -

And I gave it. Philip's bounty, (We were orphans, dear,) made toil
Prosper, and want never fastened On the tenants of the soil. Philip's name
(Oh, how I gloried, He so young, to see it rise!) Soon grew noted among
statesmen As a patriot true and wise.

And his people all felt honoured To be ruled by such a name; I was
proud too that they loved me; Through their pride in him it came. He had
gained what I had longed for, I meanwhile grew glad and gay, 'Mid his
people, to be serving Him and them, in some poor way.

How his noble earnest speeches, With untiring fervour came; HELPER
OF THE POOR AND SUFFERING; Truly he deserved the name! Had my
Angel's promise failed me? Had that word of hope grown dim? Why, my
Philip had fulfilled it, And I loved it best in him!

Max meanwhile--ah, you, my darling, Can his loving words recall -
'Mid the bravest and the noblest, Braver, nobler, than them all. How I
loved him! how my heart thrilled When his sword clanked by his side.
When I touched his gold embroidery, Almost SAW him in his pride!

So we parted; he all eager To uphold the name he bore, Leaving in my
charge--he loved me - Some one whom he loved still more: I must tend
this gentle flower, I must speak to her of him, For he feared--Love still is
fearful - That his memory might grow dim.

I must guard her from all sorrow, I must play a brother's part, Shield
all grief and trial from her, If it need be, with my heart. Years passed, and
his name grew famous; We were proud, both she and I; And we lived upon
his letters, While the slow days fled by.

Then at last--you know the story, How a fearful rumour spread, Till all
hope had slowly faded, And we heard that he was dead. Dead! Oh, those
were bitter hours; Yet within my soul there dwelt A warning, and while
others mourned him, Something like a hope I felt.

His was no weak life as mine was, But a life, so full and strong - No, I
could not think he perished Nameless, 'mid a conquered throng. How she
drooped! Years passed; no tidings Came, and yet that little flame Of
strange hope within my spirit Still burnt on, and lived the same.

Ah! my child, our hearts will fail us, When to us they strongest seem; I
can look back on those hours As a fearful, evil dream. She had long
despaired; what wonder That her heart had turned to mine? Earthly loves
are deep and tender, Not eternal and divine!

Can I say how bright a future Rose before my soul that day? Oh, so
strange, so sweet, so tender - And I had to turn away. Hard and terrible the
struggle, For the pain not mine alone; I called back my Brother's spirit,
And I bade him claim his own.

Told her--now I dared to do it - That I felt the day would rise When he
would return to gladden My weak heart and her bright eyes. And I
pleaded--pleaded sternly - In his name, and for his sake: Now, I can speak
calmly of it, Then, I thought my heart would break.

Soon--ah, Love had not deceived me, (Love's true instincts never err,)
Wounded, weak, escaped from prison, He returned to me; to her. I could

thank God that bright morning, When I felt my Brother's gaze, That my heart was true and loyal, As in our old boyish days.

Bought by wounds and deeds of daring, Honours he had brought away; Glory crowned his name--my Brother's; Mine too!--we were one that day. Since the crown on him had fallen, "VICTOR IN A NOBLE STRIFE," I could live and die contented With my poor ignoble life.

Well, my darling, almost weary Of my story? Wait awhile; For the rest is only joyful; I can tell it with a smile. One bright promise still was left me, Wound so close about my soul, That, as one by one had failed me, This dream now absorbed the whole.

"SINGER OF A NOBLE POEM," - Ah, my darling, few and rare Burn the glorious names of Poets, Like stars in the purple air. That too, and I glory in it, That great gift my Godfrey won; I have my dear share of honour, Gained by that beloved one.

One day shall my darling read it; Now she cannot understand All the noble thoughts, that lighten Through the genius of the land. I am proud to be his brother, Proud to think that hope was true; Though I longed and strove so vainly, What I failed in, he could do.

I was long before I knew it, Longer ere I felt it so; Then I strung my rhymes together Only for the poor and low. And, it pleases me to know it, (For I love them well indeed,) They care for my humble verses, Fitted for their humble need.

And, it cheers my heart to bear it, Where the far-off settlers roam, My poor words are sung and cherished, Just because they speak of Home. And the little children sing them, (That, I think, has pleased me best,) Often, too, the dying love them, For they tell of Heaven and rest.

So my last vain dream has faded; (Such as I to think of fame!) Yet I will not say it failed me, For it crowned my Godfrey's name. No; my Angel did not cheat me, For my long life HAS been blest; He did give me Love and Sorrow, He will bring me Light and Rest.

VERSE: A WOMAN'S QUESTION

Before I trust my Fate to thee, Or place my hand in thine, Before I let
thy Future give Colour and form to mine, Before I peril all for thee,
question thy soul to-night for me.

I break all slighter bonds, nor feel A shadow of regret: Is there one link
within the Past, That holds thy spirit yet? Or is thy Faith as clear and free
as that which I can pledge to thee?

Does there within thy dimmest dreams A possible future shine,
Wherein thy life could henceforth breathe, Untouched, unshared by mine?
If so, at any pain or cost, oh, tell me before all is lost.

Look deeper still. If thou canst feel Within thy inmost soul, That
thou hast kept a portion back, While I have staked the whole; Let no false
pity spare the blow, but in true mercy tell me so.

Is there within thy heart a need That mine cannot fulfil? One chord
that any other hand Could better wake or still? Speak now--lest at some
future day my whole life wither and decay.

Lives there within thy nature bid The demon-spirit Change, Shedding
a passing glory still On all things new and strange? - It may not be thy
fault alone--but shield my heart against thy own.

Couldst thou withdraw thy hand one day And answer to my claim,
That Fate, and that to-day's mistake, Not thou--had been to blame? Some
soothe their conscience thus: but thou, wilt surely warn and save me
now.

Nay, answer NOT--I dare not hear, The words would come too late;
Yet I would spare thee all remorse, So, comfort thee, my Fate - Whatever
on my heart may fall--remember I WOULD risk it all!

VERSE: THE THREE RULERS

I saw a Ruler take his stand And trample on a mighty land; The People crouched before his beck, His iron heel was on their neck, His name shone bright through blood and pain, His sword flashed back their praise again.

I saw another Ruler rise - His words were noble, good, and wise; With the calm sceptre of his pen He ruled the minds and thoughts of men; Some scoffed, some praised--while many heard, Only a few obeyed his word.

Another Ruler then I saw - Love and sweet Pity were his law: The greatest and the least had part (Yet most the unhappy) in his heart - The People, in a mighty band, Rose up, and drove him from the land!

VERSE: A DEAD PAST

Spare her at least: look, you have taken from me The Present, and I murmur not, nor moan; The Future too, with all her glorious promise; But do not leave me utterly alone.

Spare me the Past--for, see, she cannot harm you, She lies so white and cold, wrapped in her shroud; All, all my own! and, trust me, I will hide her Within my soul, nor speak to her aloud.

I folded her soft hands upon her bosom, And strewed my flowers upon her--THEY still live - Sometimes I like to kiss her closed white eye-lids, And think of all the joy she used to give.

Cruel indeed it were to take her from me; She sleeps, she will not wake--no fear--again: And so I laid her, such a gentle burthen, Quietly on my heart to still its pain.

I do not think that any smiling Present, Any vague Future, spite of all her charms, Could ever rival her. You know you laid her, Long years ago, then living, in my arms.

Leave her at least--while my tears fall upon her, I dream she smiles, just as she did of yore; As dear as ever to me--nay, it may be, Even dearer still--since I have nothing more.

VERSE: A DOUBTING HEART

Where are the swallows fled? Frozen and dead, Perchance upon some
bleak and stormy shore. Oh doubting heart! Far over purple seas, They
wait, in sunny ease, The balmy southern breeze, To bring them to their
northern homes once more.

Why must the flowers die? Prisoned they lie In the cold tomb, heedless
of tears or rain. Oh doubting heart! They only sleep below The soft white
ermine snow, While winter winds shall blow, To breathe and smile upon
you soon again.

The sun has hid its rays These many days; Will dreary hours never
leave the earth? Oh doubting heart! The stormy clouds on high Veil the
same sunny sky, That soon (for spring is nigh) Shall wake the summer into
golden mirth.

Fair hope is dead, and light Is quenched in night. What sound can
break the silence of despair? Oh doubting heart! Thy sky is overcast, Yet
stars shall rise at last, Brighter for darkness past, And angels' silver voices
stir the air.

VERSE: A STUDENT

Over an ancient scroll I bent, Steeping my soul in wise content, Nor
paused a moment, save to chide A low voice whispering at my side.

I wove beneath the stars' pale shine A dream, half human, half divine;
And shook off (not to break the charm) A little hand laid on my arm.

I read; until my heart would glow With the great deeds of long ago;
Nor heard, while with those mighty dead, Pass to and fro a faltering tread.

On the old theme I pondered long - The struggle between right and
wrong; I could not check such visions high, To soothe a little quivering
sigh.

I tried to solve the problem--Life; Dreaming of that mysterious strife,
How could I leave such reasonings wise, To answer two blue pleading
eyes?

I strove how best to give, and when, My blood to save my fellow-men
- How could I turn aside, to look At snowdrops laid upon my book?

Now Time has fled--the world is strange, Something there is of pain
and change; My books lie closed upon the shelf; I miss the old heart in
myself.

I miss the sunbeams in my room - It was not always wrapped in gloom:
I miss my dreams--they fade so fast, Or flit into some trivial past.

The great stream of the world goes by; None care, or heed, or question,
why I, the lone student, cannot raise My voice or hand as in old days.

No echo seems to wake again My heart to anything but pain, Save
when a dream of twilight brings The fluttering of an angel's wings!

VERSE: A KNIGHT ERRANT

Though he lived and died among us, Yet his name may be enrolled
With the knights whose deeds of daring Ancient chronicles have told.

Still a stripling, he encountered Poverty, and struggled long, Gathering
force from every effort, Till he knew his arm was strong.

Then his heart and life he offered To his radiant mistress--Truth; Never
thought, or dream, or faltering, Marred the promise of his youth.

So he rode forth to defend her, And her peerless worth proclaim;
Challenging each recreant doubter Who aspersed her spotless name.

First upon his path stood Ignorance, Hideous in his brutal might; Hard
the blows and long the battle Ere the monster took to flight.

Then, with light and fearless spirit, Prejudice he dared to brave;
Hunting back the lying craven To her black sulphureous cave.

Followed by his servile minions, Custom, the old Giant, rose; Yet he,
too, at last was conquered By the good Knight's weighty blows.

Then he turned, and, flushed with victory Struck upon the brazen
shield Of the world's great king, Opinion And defied him to the field.

Once again he rose a conqueror, And, though wounded in the fight,
With a dying smile of triumph Saw that Truth had gained her right.

On his failing ear re-echoing Came the shouting round her throne;
Little cared he that no future With her name would link his own.

Spent with many a hard-fought battle, Slowly ebb'd his life away, And
the crowd that flocked to greet her Trampled on him where he lay.

Gathering all his strength, he saw her Crowned and reigning in her
pride! Looked his last upon her beauty, Raised his eyes to God, and died.

VERSE: LINGER, OH, GENTLE TIME

Linger, oh, gentle Time, Linger, oh, radiant grace of bright To-day! Let not the hours' chime Call thee away, But linger near me still with fond delay.

Linger, for thou art mine! What dearer treasures can the future hold? What sweeter flowers than thine Can she unfold? What secrets tell my heart thou hast not told?

Oh, linger in thy flight! For shadows gather round, and should we part, A dreary starless night May fill my heart, - Then pause and linger yet ere thou depart.

Linger, I ask no more, - Thou art enough for ever--thou alone; What future can restore, When thou art flown, All that I hold from thee and call my own?

VERSE: **HOMeward BOUND**

I have seen a fiercer tempest, Known a louder whirlwind blow; I was wrecked off red Algiers, Six-and-thirty years ago. Young I was, and yet old seamen Were not strong or calm as I; While life held such treasures for me, I felt sure I could not die.

Life I struggled for--and saved it; Life alone--and nothing more; Bruised, half dead, alone and helpless, I was cast upon the shore. I feared the pitiless rocks of Ocean; So the great sea rose--and then Cast me from her friendly bosom, On the pitiless hearts of men.

Gaunt and dreary ran the mountains, With black gorges, up the land; Up to where the lonely Desert Spreads her burning, dreary sand: In the gorges of the mountains, On the plain beside the sea, Dwelt my stern and cruel masters, The black Moors of Barbary.

Ten long years I toiled among them, Hopeless--as I used to say; Now I know Hope burnt within me Fiercer, stronger, day by day: Those dim years of toil and sorrow Like one long dark dream appear; One long day of weary waiting - Then each day was like a year.

How I cursed the land--my prison; How I cursed the serpent sea - And the Demon Fate that showered All her curses upon me; I was mad, I think--God pardon Words so terrible and wild - This voyage would have been my last one, For I left a wife and child.

Never did one tender vision Fade away before my sight, Never once through all my slavery, Burning day or dreary night; In my soul it lived, and kept me, Now I feel, from black despair, And my heart was not quite broken, While they lived and blest me there.

When at night my task was over, I would hasten to the shore; (All was strange and foreign inland, Nothing I had known before;) Strange looked the bleak mountain passes, Strange the red glare and black shade, And the Oleanders, waving To the sound the fountains made.

Then I gazed at the great Ocean, Till she grew a friend again; And because she knew old England, I forgave her all my pain: So the blue still sky above me, With its white clouds' fleecy fold, And the glimmering stars,

(though brighter,) Looked like home and days of old.

And a calm would fall upon me, Worn perhaps with work and pain,
The wild hungry longing left me, And I was myself again: Looking at the
silver waters, Looking up at the far sky, Dreams of home and all I left
there Floated sorrowfully by.

A fair face, but pale with sorrow, With blue eyes, brimful of tears, And
the little red mouth, quivering With a smile, to hide its fears; Holding out
her baby towards me, From the sky she looked on me; So it was that last I
saw her, As the ship put out to sea.

Sometimes, (and a pang would seize me That the years were floating
on,) I would strive to paint her, altered, And the little baby gone: She no
longer young and girlish, The child, standing by her knee, And her face,
more pale and saddened With the weariness for me.

Then I saw, as night grew darker. How she taught my child to pray,
Holding its small hands together, For its father, far away; And I felt her
sorrow, weighing Heavier on me than my own; Pitying her blighted
spring-time, And her joy so early flown.

Till upon my hands (now hardened With the rough, harsh toil of years)
Bitter drops of anguish falling, Woke me from my dream, to tears; Woke
me as a slave, an outcast. Leagues from home, across the deep; So--though
you may call it childish - So I sobbed myself to sleep.

Well, the years sped on--my Sorrow, Calmer, and yet stronger grown,
Was my shield against all suffering, Poorer, meaner, than her own. Thus
my cruel master's harshness Fell upon me all in vain, Yet the tale of what
we suffered Echoed back from main to main.

You have heard in a far country Of a self-devoted band, Vowed to
rescue Christian captives Pining in a foreign land. And these gentle-
hearted strangers Year by year go forth from Rome, In their hands the
hard-earned ransom, To restore some exiles home.

I was freed: they broke the tidings Gently to me: but indeed Hour
by hour sped on, I knew not What the words meant--I was freed! Better so,
perhaps; while sorrow (More akin to earthly things) Only strains the sad
heart's fibres - Joy, bright stranger, breaks the strings.

Yet at last it rushed upon me, And my heart beat full and fast; What

were now my years of waiting, What was all the dreary past? Nothing--to the impatient throbbing I must bear across the sea: Nothing--to the eternal hours Still between my home and me!

How the voyage passed, I know not; Strange it was once more to stand With my countrymen around me, And to clasp an English hand. But, through all, my heart was dreaming Of the first words I should hear, In the gentle voice that echoed, Fresh as ever, on my ear.

Should I see her start of wonder, And the sudden truth arise, Flushing all her face and lightening The dimmed splendour of her eyes? Oh! to watch the fear and doubting Stir the silent depths of pain, And the rush of joy--then melting Into perfect peace again.

And the child!--but why remember Foolish fancies that I thought? Every tree and every hedge-row From the well-known past I brought: I would picture my dear cottage, See the crackling wood-fire burn, And the two beside it seated, Watching, waiting, my return.

So, at last we reached the harbour. I remember nothing more Till I stood, my sick heart throbbing, With my hand upon the door. There I paused--I heard her speaking; Low, soft, murmuring words she said; Then I first knew the dumb terror I had had, lest she were dead.

It was evening in late autumn, And the gusty wind blew chill; Autumn leaves were falling round me, And the red sun lit the hill. Six-and-twenty years are vanished Since then--I am old and grey, But I never told to mortal What I saw, until this day.

She was seated by the fire, In her arms she held a child, Whispering baby-words caressing, And then, looking up, she smiled: Smiled on him who stood beside her - Oh! the bitter truth was told, In her look of trusting fondness - I had seen the look of old!

But she rose and turned towards me (Cold and dumb I waited there) With a shriek of fear and terror, And a white face of despair. He had been an ancient comrade - Not a single word we said, While we gazed upon each other, He the living: I the dead!

I drew nearer, nearer to her, And I took her trembling hand, Looking on her white face, looking That her heart might understand All the love and all the pity That my lips refused to say - I thank God no thought save

sorrow Rose in our crushed hearts that day.

Bitter tears that desolate moment, Bitter, bitter tears we wept, We three broken hearts together, While the baby smiled and slept. Tears alone--no words were spoken, Till he--till her husband said That my boy, (I had forgotten The poor child,) that he was dead.

Then at last I rose, and, turning, Wrung his hand, but made no sign; And I stooped and kissed her forehead Once more, as if she were mine. Nothing of farewell I uttered, Save in broken words to pray That God would ever guard and bless her - Then in silence passed away.

Over the great restless ocean Six-and-twenty years I roam; All my comrades, old and weary, Have gone back to die at home. - Home! yes, I shall reach a haven, I, too, shall reach home and rest; I shall find her waiting for me With our baby on her breast.

VERSE: LIFE AND DEATH

"What is Life, Father?" "A Battle, my child, Where the strongest lance may fail, Where the wariest eyes may be beguiled, And the stoutest heart may quail. Where the foes are gathered on every hand, And rest not day or night, And the feeble little ones must stand In the thickest of the fight."

"What is Death, Father?" "The rest, my child, When the strife and the toil are o'er; The Angel of God, who, calm and mild, Says we need fight no more; Who, driving away the demon band, Bids the din of the battle cease; Takes banner and spear from our failing hand, And proclaims an eternal Peace."

"Let me die, Father! I tremble and fear To yield in that terrible strife!"

"The crown must be won for Heaven, dear, In the battle-field of life: My child, though thy foes are strong and tried, He loveth the weak and small; The Angels of Heaven are on thy side, And God is over all!"

VERSE: NOW

Rise! for the day is passing, And you lie dreaming on; The others have buckled their armour, And forth to the fight are gone: A place in the ranks awaits you, Each man has some part to play; The Past and the Future are nothing, In the face of the stern To-day.

Rise from your dreams of the Future - Of gaining some hard-fought field; Of storming some airy fortress, Or bidding some giant yield; Your Future has deeds of glory, Of honour (God grant it may!) But your arm will never be stronger, Or the need so great as To-day.

Rise! if the Past detains you, Her sunshine and storms forget; No chains so unworthy to hold you As those of a vain regret: Sad or bright, she is lifeless ever, Cast her phantom arms away, Nor look back, save to learn the lesson Of a nobler strife To-day.

Rise! for the day is passing: The sound that you scarcely hear Is the enemy marching to battle - Arise! for the foe is here! Stay not to sharpen your weapons, Or the hour will strike at last, When, from dreams of a coming battle, You may wake to find it past!

VERSE: CLEANSING FIRES

Let thy gold be cast in the furnace, Thy red gold, precious and bright,
Do not fear the hungry fire, With its caverns of burning light: And thy gold
shall return more precious, Free from every spot and stain; For gold must
be tried by fire, As a heart must be tried by pain!

In the cruel fire of Sorrow Cast thy heart, do not faint or wail; Let thy
hand be firm and steady, Do not let thy spirit quail: But wait till the trial is
over, And take thy heart again; For as gold is tried by fire, So a heart must
be tried by pain!

I shall know by the gleam and glitter Of the golden chain you wear, By
your heart's calm strength in loving, Of the fire they have had to bear. Beat
on, true heart, for ever; Shine bright, strong golden chain; And bless the
cleansing fire, And the furnace of living pain!

VERSE: THE VOICE OF THE WIND

Let us throw more logs on the fire! We have need of a cheerful light,
And close round the hearth to gather, For the wind has risen to-night. With
the mournful sound of its wailing It has checked the children's glee, And it
calls with a louder clamour Than the clamour of the sea. Hark to the voice
of the wind!

Let us listen to what it is saying, Let us hearken to where it has been;
For it tells, in its terrible crying, The fearful sights it has seen. It clatters
loud at the casements, Round the house it hurries on, And shrieks with
redoubled fury, When we say "The blast is gone!" Hark to the voice of the
wind!

It has been on the field of battle, Where the dying and wounded lie;
And it brings the last groan they uttered, And the ravenous vulture's cry. It
has been where the icebergs were meeting, And closed with a fearful crash;
On shores where no foot has wandered, It has heard the waters dash. Hark
to the voice of the wind!

It has been on the desolate ocean, When the lightning struck the mast;
It has heard the cry of the drowning, Who sank as it hurried past; The
words of despair and anguish, That were heard by no living ear; The gun
that no signal answered: It brings them all to us here. Hark to the voice of
the wind!

It has been on the lonely moorland, Where the treacherous snow-drift
lies, Where the traveller, spent and weary, Gasp'd fainter and fainter cries;
It has heard the bay of the bloodhounds, On the track of the hunted slave,
The lash and the curse of the master, And the groan that the captive gave.
Hark to the voice of the wind!

It has swept through the gloomy forest, Where the sledge was urged to
its speed, Where the howling wolves were rushing On the track of the
panting steed. Where the pool was black and lonely, It caught up a splash
and a cry - Only the bleak sky heard it, And the wind as it hurried by. Hark

to the voice of the wind!

Then throw more logs on the fire, Since the air is bleak and cold, And the children are drawing nigher, For the tales that the wind has told. So closer and closer gather Round the red and crackling light; And rejoice (while the wind is blowing) We are safe and warm to-night. Hark to the voice of the wind!

VERSE: TREASURES

Let me count my treasures, All my soul holds dear, Given me by dark spirits Whom I used to fear.

Through long days of anguish, And sad nights, did Pain Forge my shield, Endurance, Bright and free from stain!

Doubt, in misty caverns, 'Mid dark horrors sought, Till my peerless jewel, Faith to me she brought.

Sorrow, that I wearied Should remain so long, Wreathed my starry glory, The bright Crown of Song.

Strife, that racked my spirit, Without hope or rest, Left the blooming flower, Patience, on my breast.

Suffering, that I dreaded, Ignorant of her charms, Laid the fair child, Pity, Smiling, in my arms.

So I count my treasures, Stored in days long past - And I thank the givers, Whom I know at last!

VERSE: SHINING STARS

Shine, ye stars of heaven, On a world of pain! See old Time destroying
All our hoarded gain; All our sweetest flowers, Every stately shrine, All
our hard-earned glory, Every dream divine!

Shine, ye stars of heaven, On the rolling years! See how Time,
consoling, Dries the saddest tears, Bids the darkest storm-clouds Pass in
gentle rain; While upspring in glory, Flowers and dreams again!

Shine, ye stars of heaven, On a world of fear! See how Time, avenging,
Bringeth judgment here; Weaving ill-won honours To a fiery crown;
Bidding hard hearts perish; Casting proud hearts down.

Shine, ye stars of heaven, On the hours' slow flight! See how Time,
rewarding, Gilds good deeds with light; Pays with kingly measure; Brings
earth's dearest prize; Or, crowned with rays diviner, Bids the end arise!

VERSE: WAITING

"Wherefore dwell so sad and lonely, By the desolate sea-shore, With the melancholy surges Beating at your cottage door?

"You shall dwell beside the castle Shadowed by our ancient trees; And your life shall pass on gently, Cared for, and in rest and ease."

"Lady, one who loved me dearly Sailed for distant lands away; And I wait here his returning Hopefully from day to day.

"To my door I bring my spinning, Watching every ship I see; Waiting, hoping, till the sunset Fades into the western sea.

"After sunset, at my casement, Still I place a signal light; He will see its well-known shining Should his ship return at night.

"Lady, see your infant smiling, With its flaxen curling hair - I remember when your mother Was a baby just as fair.

"I was watching then, and hoping: Years have brought great change to all; To my neighbours in their cottage, To you nobles at the hall.

"Not to me--for I am waiting, And the years have fled so fast, I must look at you to tell me That a weary time has past!

"When I hear a footstep coming On the shingle--years have fled - Yet amid a thousand others, I shall know his quick, light tread.

"When I hear (to-night it may be) Some one pausing at my door, I shall know the gay soft accents, Heard and welcomed oft before!

"So each day I am more hopeful, He may come before the night: Every sunset I feel surer He must come ere morning light.

"Then I thank you, noble lady, But I cannot do your will: Where he left me, he must find me. Waiting, watching, hoping, still!"

VERSE: THE CRADLE SONG OF THE POOR

Hush! I cannot bear to see thee Stretch thy tiny hands in vain; Dear, I have no bread to give thee, Nothing, child, to ease thy pain! When God sent thee first to bless me, Proud, and thankful too, was I; Now, my darling I, thy mother, Almost long to see thee die. Sleep, my darling, thou art weary; God is good, but life is dreary.

I have watched thy beauty fading, And thy strength sink day by day; Soon, I know, will Want and Fever Take thy little life away. Famine makes thy father reckless, Hope has left both him and me; We could suffer all, my baby, Had we but a crust for thee. Sleep, my darling, thou art weary; God is good, but life is dreary.

Better thou shouldst perish early, Starve so soon, my darling one, Than in helpless sin and sorrow Vainly live, as I have done. Better that thy angel spirit With my joy, my peace, were flown, Than thy heart grew cold and careless, Reckless, hopeless, like my own. Sleep, my darling, thou art weary; God is good, but life is dreary.

I am wasted, dear, with hunger, And my brain is all opprest, I have scarcely strength to press thee, Wan and feeble, to my breast. Patience, baby, God will help us, Death will come to thee and me, He will take us to his Heaven, Where no want or pain can be. Sleep, my darling, thou art weary; God is good, but life is dreary.

Such the plaint that, late and early, Did we listen, we might hear Close beside us,--but the thunder Of a city dulls our ear. Every heart, as God's bright Angel, Can bid one such sorrow cease; God has glory when his children Bring his poor ones joy and peace! Listen, nearer while she sings Sounds the fluttering of wings!

VERSE: BE STRONG

Be strong to HOPE, oh Heart! Though day is bright, The stars can only shine In the dark night. Be strong, oh Heart of mine, Look towards the light!

Be strong to BEAR, oh Heart! Nothing is vain: Strive not, for life is care, And God sends pain, Heaven is above, and there Rest will remain!

Be strong to LOVE, oh Heart! Love knows not wrong, Didst thou love--creatures even, Life were not long; Didst thou love God in Heaven, Thou wouldst be strong!

VERSE: GOD'S GIFTS

God gave a gift to Earth:- a child, Weak, innocent, and undefiled,
Opened its ignorant eyes and smiled.

It lay so helpless, so forlorn, Earth took it coldly and in scorn, Cursing
the day when it was born.

She gave it first a tarnished name, For heritage, a tainted fame, Then
cradled it in want and shame.

All influence of Good or Right, All ray of God's most holy light, She
curtained closely from its sight.

Then turned her heart, her eyes away, Ready to look again, the day Its
little feet began to stray.

In dens of guilt the baby played, Where sin, and sin alone, was made
The law that all around obeyed.

With ready and obedient care, He learnt the tasks they taught him there;
Black sin for lesson--oaths for prayer.

Then Earth arose, and, in her might, To vindicate her injured right,
Thrust him in deeper depths of night.

Branding him with a deeper brand Of shame, he could not understand,
The felon outcast of the land.

* * *

God gave a gift to Earth:- a child, Weak, innocent, and undefiled,
Opened its ignorant eyes and smiled.

And Earth received the gift, and cried Her joy and triumph far and
wide, Till echo answered to her pride.

She blest the hour when first he came To take the crown of pride and
fame, Wreathed through long ages for his name.

Then bent her utmost art and skill To train the supple mind and will,
And guard it from a breath of ill.

She strewed his morning path with flowers, And Love, in tender
dropping showers, Nourished the blue and dawning hours.

She shed, in rainbow hues of light, A halo round the Good and Right,
To tempt and charm the baby's sight.

And every step, of work or play. Was lit by some such dazzling ray,
Till morning brightened into day.

And then the World arose, and said - Let added honours now be shed
On such a noble heart and head!

O World, both gifts were pure and bright, Holy and sacred in God's
sight:- God will judge them and thee aright!

VERSE: A TOMB IN GHENT

A smiling look she had, a figure slight, With cheerful air, and step both quick and light; A strange and foreign look the maiden bore, That suited the quaint Belgian dress she wore Yet the blue fearless eyes in her fair face, And her soft voice told her of English race; And ever, as she flitted to and fro, She sang, (or murmured, rather,) soft and low, Snatches of song, as if she did not know That she was singing, but the happy load Of dream and thought thus from her heart o'erflowed: And while on household cares she passed along, The air would bear me fragments of her song; Not such as village maidens sing, and few The framers of her changing music knew; Chants such as heaven and earth first heard of when The master Palestrina held the pen. But I with awe had often turned the page, Yellow with time, and half defaced by age, And listened, with an ear not quite unskilled, While heart and soul to the grand echo thrilled; And much I marvelled, as her cadence fell From the Laudate, that I knew so well, Into Scarlatti's minor fugue, how she Had learned such deep and solemn harmony. But what she told I set in rhyme, as meet To chronicle the influence, dim and sweet, 'Neath which her young and innocent life had grown: Would that my words were simple as her own.

Many years since, an English workman went Over the seas, to seek a home in Ghent, Where English skill was prized; nor toiled in vain; Small, yet enough, his hard-earned daily gain. He dwelt alone--in sorrow, or in pride. He mixed not with the workers by his side; He seemed to care but for one present joy - To tend, to watch, to teach his sickly boy. Severe to all beside, yet for the child He softened his rough speech to soothings mild; For him he smiled, with him each day he walked Through the dark gloomy streets; to him he talked Of home, of England, and strange stories told Of English heroes in the days of old; And, (when the sunset gilded roof and spire,) The marvellous tale which never seemed to tire: How the gilt dragon, glaring fiercely down From the great belfry, watching all the town, Was brought, a trophy of the wars divine, By a Crusader from far Palestine, And given to Bruges; and how Ghent arose, And how they struggled long

as deadly foes, Till Ghent, one night, by a brave soldier's skill, Stole the great dragon; and she keeps it still. One day the dragon--so 'tis said--will rise, Spread his bright wings, and glitter in the skies. And over desert lands and azure seas, Will seek his home 'mid palm and cedar trees. So, as he passed the belfry every day, The boy would look if it were flown away; Each day surprised to find it watching there, Above him, as he crossed the ancient square, To seek the great cathedral, that had grown A home for him--mysterious and his own.

Dim with dark shadows of the ages past, St. Bavon stands, solemn and rich and vast; The slender pillars, in long vistas spread, Like forest arches meet and close o'erhead; So high that, like a weak and doubting prayer, Ere it can float to the carved angels there, The silver clouded incense faints in air: Only the organ's voice, with peal on peal, Can mount to where those far-off angels kneel. Here the pale boy, beneath a low side-arch, Would listen to its solemn chant or march; Folding his little hands, his simple prayer Melted in childish dreams, and both in air: While the great organ over all would roll, Speaking strange secrets to his innocent soul, Bearing on eagle-wings the great desire Of all the kneeling throng, and piercing higher Than aught but love and prayer can reach, until Only the silence seemed to listen still; Or gathering like a sea still more and more, Break in melodious waves at heaven's door, And then fall, slow and soft, in tender rain, Upon the pleading longing hearts again.

Then he would watch the rosy sunlight glow, That crept along the marble floor below, Passing, as life does, with the passing hours, Now by a shrine all rich with gems and flowers, Now on the brazen letters of a tomb, Then, leaving it again to shade and gloom, And creeping on, to show, distinct and quaint, The kneeling figure of some marble saint: Or lighting up the carvings strange and rare, That told of patient toil, and reverent care; Ivy that trembled on the spray, and ears, Of heavy corn, and slender bulrush spears, And all the thousand tangled weeds that grow In summer, where the silver rivers flow; And demon-heads grotesque, that seemed to glare In impotent wrath on all the beauty there: Then the gold rays up pillared shaft would climb, And so be drawn to heaven, at evening time. And deeper silence, darker shadows flowed On all around, only the

windows glowed With blazoned glory, like the shields of light Archangels bear, who, armed with love and might, Watch upon heaven's battlements at night. Then all was shade; the silver lamps that gleamed, Lost in the daylight, in the darkness seemed Like sparks of fire in the dim aisles to shine, Or trembling stars before each separate shrine. Grown half afraid, the child would leave them there, And come out, blinded by the noisy glare That burst upon him from the busy square.

The church was thus his home for rest or play, And as he came and went again each day, The pictured faces that he knew so well, Seemed to smile on him welcome and farewell. But holier, and dearer far than all, One sacred spot his own he loved to call; Save at mid-day, half-hidden by the gloom; The people call it The White Maiden's Tomb: For there she stands; her folded hands are pressed Together, and laid softly on her breast, As if she waited but a word to rise From the dull earth, and pass to the blue skies; Her lips expectant part, she holds her breath, As listening for the angel voice of death. None know how many years have seen her so, Or what the name of her who sleeps below. And here the child would come, and strive to trace, Through the dim twilight, the pure gentle face He loved so well, and here he oft would bring Some violet blossom of the early spring; And climbing softly by the fretted stand, Not to disturb her, lay it in her hand; Or, whispering a soft loving message sweet, Would stoop and kiss the little marble feet. So, when the organ's pealing music rang, He thought amid the gloom the Maiden sang; With reverent simple faith by her he knelt, And fancied what she thought, and what she felt. "Glory to God," re-echoed from her voice, And then his little spirit would rejoice; Or when the Requiem sobbed upon the air, His baby tears dropped with her mournful prayer.

So years fled on, while childish fancies past, The childish love and simple faith could last. The artist-soul awoke in him, the flame Of genius, like the light of Heaven, came Upon his brain, and (as it will, if true) It touched his heart and lit his spirit, too His father saw, and with a proud content Let him forsake the toil where he had spent His youth's first years, and on one happy day Of pride, before the old man passed away, He stood with quivering lips, and the big tears Upon his cheek, and heard the dream

of years Living and speaking to his very heart - The low hushed murmur at the wondrous art Of him, who with young trembling fingers made The great church-organ answer as he played; And, as the uncertain sound grew full and strong, Rush with harmonious spirit-wings along, And thrill with master-power the breathless throng.

The old man died, and years passed on, and still The young musician bent his heart and will To his dear toil. St. Bavon now had grown More dear to him, and even more his own; And as he left it every night he prayed A moment by the archway in the shade, Kneeling once more within the sacred gloom Where the White Maiden watched upon her tomb. His hopes of travel and a world-wide fame, Cold Time had sobered, and his fragile frame; Content at last only in dreams to roam, Away from the tranquillity of home; Content that the poor dwellers by his side Saw in him but the gentle friend and guide, The patient counsellor in the poor strife And petty details of their common life, Who comforted where woe and grief might fall, Nor slighted any pain or want as small, But whose great heart took in and felt for all.

Still he grew famous--many came to be His pupils in the art of harmony. One day a voice floated so pure and free Above his music, that he turned to see What angel sang, and saw before his eyes, What made his heart leap with a strange surprise, His own White Maiden, calm, and pure, and mild, As in his childish dreams she sang and smiled; Her eyes raised up to Heaven, her lips apart, And music overflowing from her heart. But the faint blush that tinged her cheek betrayed No marble statue, but a living maid; Perplexed and startled at his wondering look, Her rustling score of Mozart's Sanctus shook; The uncertain notes, like birds within a snare, Fluttered and died upon the trembling air.

Days passed; each morning saw the maiden stand, Her eyes cast down, her lesson in her hand, Eager to study, never weary, while Repaid by the approving word or smile Of her kind master; days and months fled on; One day the pupil from the choir was gone; Gone to take light, and joy, and youth once more, Within the poor musician's humble door; And to repay, with gentle happy art, The debt so many owed his generous heart. And now, indeed, was one who knew and felt That a great gift of God

within him dwelt; One who could listen, who could understand, Whose idle work dropped from her slackened hand, While with wet eyes entranced she stood, nor knew How the melodious winged hours flew; Who loved his art as none had loved before, Yet prized the noble tender spirit more. While the great organ brought from far and near Lovers of harmony to praise and hear, Unmarked by aught save what filled every day, Duty, and toil, and rest, years passed away: And now by the low archway in the shade Beside her mother knelt a little maid, Who, through the great cathedral learned to roam, Climb to the choir, and bring her father home; And stand, demure and solemn by his side, Patient till the last echo softly died; Then place her little hand in his, and go Down the dark winding stair to where below The mother knelt, within the gathering gloom Waiting and praying by the Maiden's Tomb.

So their life went, until, one winter's day, Father and child came there alone to pray - The mother, gentle soul, had fled away! Their life was altered now, and yet the child Forgot her passionate grief in time, and smiled, Half wondering why, when spring's fresh breezes came, To see her father was no more the same. Half guessing at the shadow of his pain, And then contented if he smiled again, A sad cold smile, that passed in tears away, As re-assured she ran once more to play. And now each year that added grace to grace, Fresh bloom and sunshine to the young girl's face, Brought a strange light in the musician's eyes, As if he saw some starry hope arise, Breaking upon the midnight of sad skies. It might be so: more feeble year by year, The wanderer to his resting-place drew near. One day the Gloria he could play no more, Echoed its grand rejoicing as of yore; His hands were clasped, his weary head was laid, Upon the tomb where the White Maiden prayed: Where the child's love first dawned, his soul first spoke, The old man's heart there throbbed its last and broke. The grave cathedral that had nursed his youth, Had helped his dreaming, and had taught him truth, Had seen his boyish grief and baby tears, And watched the sorrows and the joys of years, Had lit his fame and hope with sacred rays, And consecrated sad and happy days - Had blessed his happiness, and soothed his pain, Now took her faithful servant home again.

He rests in peace: some travellers mention yet An organist whose name they all forget. He has a holier and a nobler fame By poor men's hearths, who love and bless the name Of a kind friend; and in low tones to-day, Speak tenderly of him who passed away. Too poor to help the daughter of their friend, They grieved to see the little pittance end; To see her toil and strive with cheerful heart, To bear the lonely orphan's struggling part; They grieved to see her go at last alone To English kinsmen she had never known: And here she came; the foreign girl soon found Welcome, and love, and plenty all around, And here she pays it back with earnest will, By well-taught housewife watchfulness and skill; Deep in her heart she holds her father's name, And tenderly and proudly keeps his fame; And while she works with thrifty Belgian care, Past dreams of childhood float upon the air; Some strange old chant, or solemn Latin hymn, That echoed through the old cathedral dim, When as a little child each day she went To kneel and pray by an old tomb in Ghent.

VERSE: THE ANGEL OF DEATH

Why shouldst thou fear the beautiful angel, Death, Who waits thee at the portals of the skies, Ready to kiss away thy struggling breath, Ready with gentle hand to close thine eyes?

How many a tranquil soul has passed away, Fled gladly from fierce pain and pleasures dim, To the eternal splendour of the day; And many a troubled heart still calls for him.

Spirits too tender for the battle here Have turned from life, its hopes, its fears, its charms; And children, shuddering at a world so drear, Have smiling passed away into his arms.

He whom thou fearest will, to ease its pain, Lay his cold hand upon thy aching heart: Will soothe the terrors of thy troubled brain, And bid the shadow of earth's grief depart.

He will give back what neither time, nor might, Nor passionate prayer, nor longing hope restore. (Dear as to long blind eyes recovered sight,) He will give back those who are gone before.

Oh, what were life, if life were all? Thine eyes Are blinded by their tears, or thou wouldst see Thy treasures wait thee in the far-off skies, And Death, thy friend, will give them all to thee.

VERSE: A DREAM

All yesterday I was spinning, Sitting alone in the sun; And the dream
that I spun was so lengthy, It lasted till day was done.

I heeded not cloud or shadow That flitted over the hill, Or the
humming-bees, or the swallows, Or the trickling of the rill.

I took the threads for my spinning, All of blue summer air, And a
flickering ray of sunlight Was woven in here and there.

The shadows grew longer and longer, The evening wind passed by,
And the purple splendour of sunset Was flooding the western sky.

But I could not leave my spinning, For so fair my dream had grown. I
heeded not, hour by hour, How the silent day had flown.

At last the grey shadows fell round me, And the night came dark and
chill, And I rose and ran down the valley, And left it all on the hill.

I went up the hill this morning To the place where my spinning lay -
There was nothing but glistening dewdrops Remained of my dream to-day.

VERSE: THE PRESENT

Do not crouch to-day, and worship The old Past, whose life is fled,
Hush your voice to tender reverence; Crowned he lies, but cold and dead:
For the Present reigns our monarch, With an added weight of hours;
Honour her, for she is mighty! Honour her, for she is ours!

See the shadows of his heroes Girt around her cloudy throne; Every
day the ranks are strengthened By great hearts to him unknown; Noble
things the great Past promised, Holy dreams, both strange and new; But
the Present shall fulfil them, What he promised, she shall do.

She inherits all his treasures, She is heir to all his fame, And the light
that lightens round her Is the lustre of his name; She is wise with all his
wisdom, Living on his grave she stands, On her brow she bears his laurels,
And his harvest in her hands.

Coward, can she reign and conquer If we thus her glory dim? Let us
fight for her as nobly As our fathers fought for him. God, who crowns the
dying ages, Bids her rule, and us obey - Bids us cast our lives before her,
Bids us serve the great To-day.

VERSE: CHANGES

Mourn, O rejoicing heart! The hours are flying; Each one some treasure takes, Each one some blossom breaks, And leaves it dying; The chill dark night draws near, Thy sun will soon depart, And leave thee sighing; Then mourn, rejoicing heart, The hours are flying!

Rejoice, O grieving heart! The hours fly fast; With each some sorrow dies, With each some shadow flies, Until at last The red dawn in the east Bids weary night depart, And pain is past. Rejoice then, grieving heart, The hours fly fast!

VERSE: STRIVE, WAIT, AND PRAY

Strive; yet I do not promise The prize you dream of to-day Will not fade when you think to grasp it, And melt in your hand away; But another and holier treasure, You would now perchance disdain, Will come when your toil is over, And pay you for all your pain.

Wait; yet I do not tell you The hour you long for now, Will not come with its radiance vanished, And a shadow upon its brow; Yet far through the misty future, With a crown of starry light, An hour of joy you know not Is winging her silent flight.

Pray; though the gift you ask for May never comfort your fears, May never repay your pleading, Yet pray, and with hopeful tears; An answer, not that you long for, But diviner, will come one day, Your eyes are too dim to see it, Yet strive, and wait, and pray.

VERSE: A LAMENT FOR THE SUMMER

Moan, oh ye Autumn Winds! Summer has fled, The flowers have
closed their tender leaves and die; The Lily's gracious head All low must
lie, Because the gentle Summer now is dead.

Grieve, oh ye Autumn Winds! Summer lies low; The rose's trembling
leaves will soon be shed, For she that loved her so, Alas, is dead! And one
by one her loving children go.

Wail, oh ye Autumn Winds! She lives no more, The gentle Summer,
with her balmy breath, Still sweeter than before When nearer death, And
brighter every day the smile she wore!

Mourn, mourn, oh Autumn Winds, Lament and mourn; How many
half-blown buds must close and die; Hopes with the Summer born All
faded lie, And leave us desolate and Earth forlorn!

VERSE: THE UNKNOWN GRAVE

No name to bid us know Who rests below, No word of death or birth,
Only the grass's wave, Over a mound of earth, Over a nameless grave.

Did this poor wandering heart In pain depart? Longing, but all too late,
For the calm home again, Where patient watchers wait, And still will wait
in vain.

Did mourners come in scorn, And thus forlorn, Leave him, with grief
and shame. To silence and decay, And hide the tarnished name Of the
unconscious clay?

It may be from his side His loved ones died, And last of some bright
band, (Together now once more,) He sought his home, the land Where
they had gone before.

No matter--limes have made As cool a shade, And lingering breezes
pass As tenderly and slow, As if beneath the grass A monarch slept below.

No grief, though loud and deep, Could stir that sleep; And earth and
heaven tell Of rest that shall not cease, Where the cold world's farewell
Fades into endless peace.

VERSE: GIVE ME THY HEART

With echoing steps the worshippers Departed one by one; The organ's pealing voice was stilled, The vesper hymn was done; The shadows fell from roof and arch, Dim was the incensed air, One lamp alone with trembling ray, Told of the Presence there!

In the dark church she knelt alone; Her tears were falling fast; "Help, Lord," she cried, "the shades of death Upon my soul are cast! Have I not shunned the path of sin, And chosen the better part?" What voice came through the sacred air? - "My child, give me thy Heart!"

"Have I not laid before Thy shrine My wealth, oh Lord?" she cried; "Have I kept aught of gems or gold, To minister to pride? Have I not bade youth's joys retire, And vain delights depart?" - But sad and tender was the voice - "My child, give me thy Heart!"

"Have I not, Lord, gone day by day Where Thy poor children dwell; And carried help, and gold, and food? Oh Lord, Thou knowest it well! From many a house, from many a soul, My hand bids care depart:" - More sad, more tender, was the voice - "My child, give me thy Heart!"

"Have I not worn my strength away With fast and penance sore? Have I not watched and wept?" she cried; "Did Thy dear Saints do more? Have I not gained Thy grace, oh Lord, And won in Heaven my part?" - It echoed louder in her soul - "My child, give me thy Heart!"

"For I have loved thee with a love No mortal heart can show; A love so deep, my Saints in heaven Its depths can never know: When pierced and wounded on the Cross, Man's sin and doom were mine, I loved thee with undying love, Immortal and divine!

"I love thee ere the skies were spread; My soul bears all thy pains; To gain thy love my sacred Heart In earthly shrines remains: Vain are thy offerings, vain thy sighs, Without one gift divine, Give it, my child, thy Heart to me, And it shall rest in mine!"

In awe she listened, and the shade Passed from her soul away; In low and trembling voice she cried - "Lord, help me to obey! Break Thou the chains of earth, oh Lord, That bind and hold my heart; Let it be Thine, and

Thine alone, Let none with Thee have part.

"Send down, oh Lord, Thy sacred fire! Consume and cleanse the sin
That lingers still within its depths: Let heavenly love begin. That sacred
flame Thy Saints have known, Kindle, oh Lord, in me, Thou above all the
rest for ever, And all the rest in Thee."

The blessing fell upon her soul; Her angel by her side Knew that the
hour of peace was come; Her soul was purified: The shadows fell from
roof and arch, Dim was the incensed air - But Peace went with her as she
left The sacred Presence there!

VERSE: THE WAYSIDE INN

A little past the village The Inn stood, low and white; Green shady trees behind it, And an orchard on the right; Where over the green paling The red-cheeked apples hung, As if to watch how wearily The sign-board creaked and swung.

The heavy-laden branches, Over the road hung low, Reflected fruit or blossom From the wayside well below; Where children, drawing water, Looked up and paused to see, Amid the apple-branches, A purple Judas Tree.

The road stretched winding onward For many a weary mile - So dusty foot-sore wanderers Would pause and rest awhile; And panting horses halted, And travellers loved to tell The quiet of the wayside inn, The orchard, and the well.

Here Maurice dwelt; and often The sunburnt boy would stand Gazing upon the distance, And shading with his hand His eyes, while watching vainly For travellers, who might need His aid to loose the bridle, And tend the weary steed.

And once (the boy remembered That morning, many a day - The dew lay on the hawthorn, The bird sang on the spray) A train of horsemen, nobler Than he had seen before, Up from the distance galloped, And halted at the door.

Upon a milk-white pony, Fit for a faery queen, Was the loveliest little damsel His eyes had ever seen: A serving-man was holding The leading rein, to guide The pony and its mistress, Who cantered by his side.

Her sunny ringlets round her A golden cloud had made, While her large hat was keeping Her calm blue eyes in shade; One hand held fast the silken reins To keep her steed in check, The other pulled his tangled mane, Or stroked his glossy neck.

And as the boy brought water, And loosed the rein, he heard The sweetest voice that thanked him In one low gentle word; She turned her blue eyes from him, Looked up, and smiled to see The hanging purple blossoms Upon the Judas Tree;

And showed it with a gesture, Half pleading, half command, Till he broke the fairest blossom, And laid it in her hand; And she tied it to her saddle With a ribbon from her hair, While her happy laugh rang gaily, Like silver on the air.

But the champing steeds were rested - The horsemen now spurred on, And down the dusty highway They vanished and were gone. Years passed, and many a traveller Paused at the old inn-door, But the little milk-white pony And the child returned no more.

Years passed, the apple-branches A deeper shadow shed; And many a time the Judas Tree, Blossom and leaf, lay dead; When on the loitering western breeze Came the bells' merry sound, And flowery arches rose, and flags And banners waved around.

Maurice stood there expectant: The bridal train would stay Some moments at the inn-door, The eager watchers say; They come--the cloud of dust draws near - 'Mid all the state and pride, He only sees the golden hair And blue eyes of the bride.

The same, yet, ah, still fairer; He knew the face once more That bent above the pony's neck Years past at that inn-door: Her shy and smiling eyes looked round, Unconscious of the place, Unconscious of the eager gaze He fixed upon her face.

He plucked a blossom from the tree - The Judas Tree--and cast Its purple fragrance towards the Bride, A message from the Past. The signal came, the horses plunged - Once more she smiled around: The purple blossom in the dust Lay trampled on the ground.

Again the slow years fled, Their passage only known By the height the Passion-flower Around the porch had grown; And many a passing traveller Paused at the old inn-door, But the bride, so fair and blooming, The bride returned no more.

One winter morning, Maurice, Watching the branches bare, Rustling and waving dimly In the grey and misty air, Saw blazoned on a carriage Once more the well-known shield, The stars and azure fleurs-de-lis Upon a silver field.

He looked--was that pale woman, So grave, so worn, so sad, The child, once young and smiling, The bride, once fair and glad? What grief had

dimmed that glory, And brought that dark eclipse Upon her blue eyes'
radiance, And paled those trembling lips?

What memory of past sorrow, What stab of present pain, Brought that
deep look of anguish, That watched the dismal rain, That watched (with
the absent spirit That looks, yet does not see) The dead and leafless
branches Upon the Judas Tree.

The slow dark months crept onward Upon their icy way, 'Till April
broke in showers And Spring smiled forth in May; Upon the apple-
blossoms The sun shone bright again, When slowly up the highway Came
a long funeral train.

The bells toiled slowly, sadly, For a noble spirit fled; Slowly, in pomp
and honour, They bore the quiet dead. Upon a black-plumed charger One
rode, who held a shield, Where stars and azure fleurs-de-lis Shone on a
silver field.

'Mid all that homage given To a fluttering heart at rest, Perhaps an
honest sorrow Dwelt only in one breast. One by the inn-door standing
Watched with fast-dropping tears The long procession passing, And
thought of bygone years,

The boyish, silent homage To child and bride unknown, The pitying
tender sorrow Kept in his heart alone, Now laid upon the coffin With a
purple flower, might be Told to the cold dead sleeper; The rest could only
see A fragrant purple blossom, Plucked from a Judas Tree.

VERSE: VOICES OF THE PAST

You wonder that my tears should flow In listening to that simple strain;
That those unskilful sounds should fill My soul with joy and pain - How
can you tell what thoughts it stirs Within my heart again?

You wonder why that common phrase, So all unmeaning to your ear,
Should stay me in my merriest mood, And thrill my soul to hear - How can
you tell what ancient charm Has made me hold it dear?

You marvel that I turn away From all those flowers so fair and bright,
And gaze at this poor herb, till tears Arise and dim my sight - You cannot
tell how every leaf Breathes of a past delight.

You smile to see me turn and speak With one whose converse you
despise; You do not see the dreams of old That with his voice arise - How
can you tell what links have made Him sacred in my eyes?

Oh, these are Voices of the Past, Links of a broken chain, Wings that
can bear me back to Times Which cannot come again - Yet God forbid that
I should lose The echoes that remain!

VERSE: THE DARK SIDE

Thou hast done well, perhaps, To lift the bright disguise, And lay the bitter truth Before our shrinking eyes; When evil crawls below What seems so pure and fair, Thine eyes are keen and true To find the serpent there: And yet--I turn away; Thy task is not divine - The evil angels look On earth with eyes like thine.

Thou hast done well, perhaps, To show how closely wound Dark threads of sin and self With our best deeds are found. How great and noble hearts, Striving for lofty aims, Have still some earthly cord A meaner spirit claims; And yet--although thy task Is well and fairly done, Methinks for such as thou There is a holier one.

Shadows there are, who dwell Among us, yet apart, Deaf to the claim of God, Or kindly human heart; Voices of earth and heaven Call, but they turn away, And Love, through such black night, Can see no hope of day; And yet--our eyes are dim, And thine are keener far - Then gaze till thou canst see The glimmer of some star.

The black stream flows along, Whose waters we despise - Show us reflected there Some fragment of the skies; 'Neath tangled thorns and briars, (The task is fit for thee,) Seek for the hidden flowers, We are too blind to see; Then will I thy great gift A crown and blessing call; Angels look thus on men, And God sees good in all!

VERSE: A FIRST SORROW

Arise! this day shall shine, For evermore, To thee a star divine, On
Time's dark shore.

Till now thy soul has been All glad and gay: Bid it awake, and look At
grief to-day!

No shade has come between Thee and the sun; Like some long
childish dream Thy life has run:

But now the stream has reached A dark, deep sea, And Sorrow, dim
and crowned, Is waiting thee.

Each of God's soldiers bears A sword divine: Stretch out thy trembling
hands To-day for thine!

To each anointed Priest God's summons came: Oh, Soul, he speaks to-
day And calls thy name.

Then, with slow reverent step, And beating heart, From out thy joyous
days, Thou must depart.

And, leaving all behind, Come forth, alone, To join the chosen band
Around the throne.

Raise up thine eyes--be strong, Nor cast away The crown, that God has
given Thy soul to-day!

VERSE: MURMURS

Why wilt thou make bright music Give forth a sound of pain? Why wilt thou weave fair flowers Into a weary chain?

Why turn each cool grey shadow Into a world of fears? Why say the winds are wailing? Why call the dewdrops tears?

The voices of happy nature, And the Heaven's sunny gleam, Reprove thy sick heart's fancies, Upbraid thy foolish dream.

Listen, and I will tell thee The song Creation sings, From the humming of bees in the heather, To the flutter of angels' wings.

An echo rings for ever, The sound can never cease; It speaks to God of glory, It speaks to Earth of peace.

Not alone did angels sing it To the poor shepherds' ear; But the sphered Heavens chant it, While listening ages hear.

Above thy peevish wailing Rises that holy song; Above Earth's foolish clamour, Above the voice of wrong.

No creature of God's too lowly To murmur peace and praise: When the starry nights grow silent, Then speak the sunny days.

So leave thy sick heart's fancies, And lend thy little voice To the silver song of glory That bids the world rejoice.

VERSE: GIVE

See the rivers flowing Downwards to the sea, Pouring all their
treasures Bountiful and free - Yet to help their giving Hidden springs arise;
Or, if need be, showers Feed them from the skies!

Watch the princely flowers Their rich fragrance spread, Load the air
with perfumes, From their beauty shed - Yet their lavish spending Leaves
them not in dearth, With fresh life replenished By their mother earth!

Give thy heart's best treasures - From fair Nature learn; Give thy love--
and ask not, Wait not a return! And the more thou spendest From thy little
store, With a double bounty, God will give thee more.

VERSE: MY JOURNAL

It is a dreary evening; The shadows rise and fall: With strange and ghostly changes, They flicker on the wall.

Make the charred logs burn brighter; I will show you, by their blaze, The half-forgotten record Of bygone things and days.

Bring here the ancient volume; The clasp is old and worn, The gold is dim and tarnished, And the faded leaves are torn.

The dust has gathered on it - There are so few who care To read what Time has written Of joy and sorrow there.

Look at the first fair pages; Yes--I remember all: The joys now seem so trivial, The griefs so poor and small.

Let us read the dreams of glory That childish fancy made; Turn to the next few pages, And see how soon they fade.

Here, where still waiting, dreaming, For some ideal Life, The young heart all unconscious Had entered on the strife.

See how this page is blotted: What--could those tears be mine? How coolly I can read you, Each blurred and trembling line.

Now I can reason calmly, And, looking back again, Can see divinest meaning Threading each separate pain.

Here strong resolve--how broken; Rash hope, and foolish fear, And prayers, which God in pity Refused to grant or hear.

Nay--I will turn the pages To where the tale is told Of how a dawn diviner Flushed the dark clouds with gold.

And see, that light has gilded The story--nor shall set; And, though in mist and shadow, You know I see it yet.

Here--well, it does not matter, I promised to read all; I know not why I falter, Or why my tears should fall;

You see each grief is noted; Yet it was better so - I can rejoice to-day-- the pain Was over, long ago.

I read--my voice is failing, But you can understand How the heart beat that guided This weak and trembling hand.

Pass over that long struggle, Read where the comfort came, Where the

first time is written Within the book your name.

Again it comes, and oftener, Linked, as it now must be, With all the joy or sorrow That Life may bring to me.

So all the rest--you know it: Now shut the clasp again, And put aside the record Of bygone hours of pain.

The dust shall gather on it, I will not read it more: Give me your hand--what was it We were talking of before?

I know not why--but tell me Of something gay and bright. It is strange--my heart is heavy, And my eyes are dim to-night.

VERSE: A CHAIN

The bond that links our souls together; Will it last through stormy weather? Will it moulder and decay As the long hours pass away? Will it stretch if Fate divide us, When dark and weary hours have tried us? Oh, if it look too poor and slight Let us break the links to-night!

It was not forged by mortal hands, Or clasped with golden bars and bands; Save thine and mine, no other eyes The slender link can recognise: In the bright light it seems to fade - And it is hidden in the shade; While Heaven nor Earth have never heard, Or solemn vow, or plighted word.

Yet what no mortal hand could make, No mortal power can ever break: What words or vows could never do, No words or vows can make untrue; And if to other hearts unknown The dearer and the more our own, Because too sacred and divine For other eyes, save thine and mine.

And see, though slender, it is made Of Love and Trust, and can they fade? While, if too slight it seem, to bear The breathings of the summer air, We know that it could bear the weight Of a most heavy heart of late, And as each day and hour flew The stronger for its burthen grew.

And, too, we know and feel again It has been sanctified by pain, For what God deigns to try with sorrow He means not to decay to-morrow; But through that fiery trial last When earthly ties and bonds are past; What slighter things dare not endure Will make our Love more safe and pure.

Love shall be purified by Pain, And Pain be soothed by Love again: So let us now take heart and go Cheerfully on, through joy and woe; No change the summer sun can bring, Or the inconstant skies of spring, Or the bleak winter's stormy weather, For we shall meet them, Love, together!

VERSE: THE PILGRIMS

The way is long and dreary, The path is bleak and bare; Our feet are worn and weary, But we will not despair. More heavy was Thy burthen, More desolate Thy way; - Oh Lamb of God who takest The sin of the world away, Have mercy on us.

The snows lie thick around us In the dark and gloomy night; And the tempest wails above us, And the stars have hid their light; But blacker was the darkness Round Calvary's Cross that day; - Oh Lamb of God who takest The sin of the world away, Have mercy on us.

Our hearts are faint with sorrow, Heavy and hard to bear; For we dread the bitter morrow, But we will not despair: Thou knowest all our anguish, And Thou wilt bid it cease, - Oh Lamb of God who takest The sin of the world away, Give us Thy Peace!

VERSE: INCOMPLETENESS

Nothing resting in its own completeness Can have worth or beauty:
but alone Because it leads and tends to farther sweetness, Fuller, higher,
deeper than its own.

Spring's real glory dwells not in the meaning, Gracious though it be, of
her blue hours; But is hidden in her tender leaning To the Summer's richer
wealth of flowers.

Dawn is fair, because the mists fade slowly Into Day, which floods the
world with light; Twilight's mystery is so sweet and holy Just because it
ends in starry Night.

Childhood's smiles unconscious graces borrow From Strife, that in a
far-off future lies; And angel glances (veiled now by Life's sorrow) Draw
our hearts to some beloved eyes.

Life is only bright when it proceedeth Towards a truer, deeper Life
above; Human Love is sweetest when it leadeth To a more divine and
perfect Love.

Learn the mystery of Progression duly: Do not call each glorious
change, Decay; But know we only hold our treasures truly, When it seems
as if they passed away.

Nor dare to blame God's gifts for incompleteness; In that want their
beauty lies: they roll Towards some infinite depth of love and sweetness,
Bearing onward man's reluctant soul.

VERSE: A LEGEND OF BREGENZ

Girt round with rugged mountains The fair Lake Constance lies; In her blue heart reflected Shine back the starry skies; And, watching each white cloudlet Float silently and slow, You think a piece of Heaven Lies on our earth below!

Midnight is there: and Silence, Enthroned in Heaven, looks down Upon her own calm mirror, Upon a sleeping town: For Bregenz, that quaint city Upon the Tyrol shore, Has stood above Lake Constance, A thousand years and more.

Her battlements and towers, From off their rocky steep, Have cast their trembling shadow For ages on the deep: Mountain, and lake, and valley, A sacred legend know, Of how the town was saved, one night, Three hundred years ago.

Far from her home and kindred, A Tyrol maid had fled, To serve in the Swiss valleys, And toil for daily bread; And every year that fledged So silently and fast, Seemed to bear farther from her The memory of the Past.

She served kind, gentle masters, Nor asked for rest or change; Her friends seemed no more new ones, Their speech seemed no more strange; And when she led her cattle To pasture every day, She ceased to look and wonder On which side Bregenz lay.

She spoke no more of Bregenz, With longing and with tears: Her Tyrol home seemed faded In a deep mist of years; She heeded not the rumours Of Austrian war and strife; Each day she rose contented, To the calm toils of life.

Yet, when her master's children Would clustering round her stand, She sang them ancient ballads Of her own native land; And when at morn and evening She knelt before God's throne, The accents of her childhood Rose to her lips alone.

And so she dwelt: the valley More peaceful year by year; When suddenly strange portents, Of some great deed seemed near. The golden

corn was bending Upon its fragile stalk, While farmers, heedless of their fields, Paced up and down in talk.

The men seemed stern and altered, With looks cast on the ground; With anxious faces, one by one, The women gathered round; All talk of flax, or spinning, Or work, was put away; The very children seemed afraid To go alone to play.

One day, out in the meadow With strangers from the town, Some secret plan discussing, The men walked up and down. Yet, now and then seemed watching, A strange uncertain gleam, That looked like lances 'mid the trees, That stood below the stream.

At eve they all assembled, Then care and doubt were fled; With jovial laugh they feasted; The board was nobly spread. The elder of the village Rose up, his glass in hand, And cried, "We drink the downfall "Of an accursed land!

"The night is growing darker, "Ere one more day is flown, "Bregenz, our foemen's stronghold, "Bregenz shall be our own!" The women shrank in terror, (Yet Pride, too, had her part,) But one poor Tyrol maiden Felt death within her heart.

Before her, stood fair Bregenz; Once more her towers arose; What were the friends beside her? Only her country's foes! The faces of her kinsfolk, The days of childhood flown, The echoes of her mountains, Reclaimed her as their own!

Nothing she heard around her, (Though shouts rang forth again,) Gone were the green Swiss valleys, The pasture, and the plain; Before her eyes one vision, And in her heart one cry, That said, "Go forth, save Bregenz, And then, if need be, die!"

With trembling haste and breathless, With noiseless step she sped; Horses and weary cattle Were standing in the shed; She loosed the strong white charger, That fed from out her hand, She mounted, and she turned his head Towards her native land.

Out--out into the darkness - Faster, and still more fast; The smooth grass flies behind her, The chestnut wood is past; She looks up; clouds are heavy: Why is her steed so slow? - Scarcely the wind beside them, Can pass them as they go.

"Faster!" she cries, "Oh faster!" Eleven the church-bells chime: "Oh God," she cries, "help Bregenz, And bring me there in time!" But louder than bells' ringing, Or lowing of the kine, Grows nearer in the midnight The rushing of the Rhine.

Shall not the roaring waters Their headlong gallop check? The steed draws back in terror, She leans upon his neck To watch the flowing darkness; The bank is high and steep; One pause--he staggers forward, And plunges in the deep.

She strives to pierce the blackness, And looser throws the rein; Her steed must breast the waters That dash above his mane. How gallantly, how nobly, He struggles through the foam, And see--in the far distance, Shine out the lights of home!

Up the steep banks he bears her, And now, they rush again Towards the heights of Bregenz, That tower above the plain. They reach the gate of Bregenz, Just as the midnight rings, And out come serf and soldier To meet the news she brings.

Bregenz is saved! Ere daylight Her battlements are manned; Defiance greets the army That marches on the land. And if to deeds heroic Should endless fame be paid, Bregenz does well to honour The noble Tyrol maid.

Three hundred years are vanished, And yet upon the hill An old stone gateway rises, To do her honour still. And there, when Bregenz women Sit spinning in the shade, They see in quaint old carving The Charger and the Maid.

And when, to guard old Bregenz, By gateway, street, and tower, The warder paces all night long, And calls each passing hour; "Nine," "ten," "eleven," he cries aloud, And then (Oh crown of Fame!) When midnight pauses in the skies, He calls the maiden's name!

VERSE: A FAREWELL

Farewell, oh dream of mine! I dare not stay; The hour is come, and time Will not delay: Pleasant and dear to me Wilt thou remain; No future hour Brings thee again.

She stands, the Future dim, And draws me on, And shows me dearer joys - But thou art gone! Treasures and Hopes more fair, Bears she for me, And yet I linger, Oh dream, with thee!

Other and brighter days, Perhaps she brings; Deeper and holier songs, Perchance she sings; But thou and I, fair time, We too must sever - Oh dream of mine, Farewell for ever!

VERSE: SOWING AND REAPING

Sow with a generous hand; Pause not for toil or pain; Weary not through the heat of summer, Weary not through the cold spring rain; But wait till the autumn comes For the sheaves of golden grain.

Scatter the seed, and fear not, A table will be spread; What matter if you are too weary To eat your hard-earned bread: Sow, while the earth is broken, For the hungry must be fed.

Sow;--while the seeds are lying In the warm earth's bosom deep, And your warm tears fall upon it - They will stir in their quiet sleep; And the green blades rise the quicker, Perchance, for the tears you weep.

Then sow;--for the hours are fleeting, And the seed must fall to-day; And care not what hands shall reap it, Or if you shall have passed away Before the waving corn-fields Shall gladden the sunny day.

Sow; and look onward, upward, Where the starry light appears - Where, in spite of the coward's doubting, Or your own heart's trembling fears, You shall reap in joy the harvest You have sown to-day in tears.

VERSE: THE STORM

The tempest rages wild and high, The waves lift up their voice and cry
Fierce answers to the angry sky, - Miserere Domine.

Through the black night and driving rain, A ship is struggling, all in
vain To live upon the stormy main; - Miserere Domine.

The thunders roar, the lightnings glare, Vain is it now to strive or dare;
A cry goes up of great despair, - Miserere Domine.

The stormy voices of the main, The moaning wind, and pelting rain
Beat on the nursery window pane:- Miserere Domine.

Warm curtained was the little bed, Soft pillowed was the little head;
"The storm will wake the child," they said:- Miserere Domine.

Cowering among his pillows white He prays, his blue eyes dim with
fright, "Father, save those at sea to-night!" Miserere Domine.

The morning shone all clear and gay, On a ship at anchor in the bay,
And on a little child at play, - Gloria tibi Domine!

VERSE: WORDS

Words are lighter than the cloud-foam Of the restless ocean spray;
Vainer than the trembling shadow That the next hour steals away. By the
fall of summer raindrops Is the air as deeply stirred; And the rose-leaf that
we tread on Will outlive a word.

Yet, on the dull silence breaking With a lightning flash, a Word,
Bearing endless desolation On its blighting wings, I heard: Earth can forge
no keener weapon, Dealing surer death and pain, And the cruel echo
answered Through long years again.

I have known one word hang starlike O'er a dreary waste of years, And
it only shone the brighter Looked at through a mist of tears; While a weary
wanderer gathered Hope and heart on Life's dark way, By its faithful
promise, shining Clearer day by day.

I have known a spirit, calmer Than the calmest lake, and clear As the
heavens that gazed upon it, With no wave of hope or fear; But a storm had
swept across it, And its deepest depths were stirred, (Never, never more to
slumber,) Only by a word.

I have known a word more gentle Than the breath of summer air; In a
listening heart it nestled, And it lived for ever there. Not the beating of its
prison Stirred it ever, night or day; Only with the heart's last throbbing
Could it fade away.

Words are mighty, words are living: Serpents with their venomous
stings, Or bright angels, crowding round us, With heaven's light upon their
wings: Every word has its own spirit, True or false, that never dies; Every
word man's lips have uttered Echoes in God's skies.

VERSE: A LOVE TOKEN

Do you grieve no costly offering To the Lady you can make? One there is, and gifts less worthy Queens have stooped to take.

Take a Heart of virgin silver, Fashion it with heavy blows, Cast it into Love's hot furnace When it fiercest glows.

With Pain's sharpest point transfix it, And then carve in letters fair, Tender dreams and quaint devices, Fancies sweet and rare.

Set within it Hope's blue sapphire, Many-changing opal fears, Blood-red ruby-stones of daring, Mixed with pearly tears.

And when you have wrought and laboured Till the gift is all complete, You may humbly lay your offering At the Lady's feet.

Should her mood perchance be gracious - With disdainful smiling pride, She will place it with the trinkets Glittering at her side.

VERSE: A TRYST WITH DEATH

I am footsore and very weary, But I travel to meet a Friend: The way is long and dreary, But I know that it soon must end.

He is travelling fast like the whirlwind, And though I creep slowly on, We are drawing nearer, nearer, And the journey is almost done.

Through the heat of many summers, Through many a springtime rain, Through long autumns and weary winters, I have hoped to meet him, in vain.

I know that he will not fail me, So I count every hour chime, Every throb of my own heart's beating, That tells of the flight of Time.

On the day of my birth he plighted His kingly word to me:- I have seen him in dreams so often, That I know what his smile must be.

I have toiled through the sunny woodland, Through fields that basked in the light; And through the lone paths in the forest I crept in the dead of night.

I will not fear at his coming, Although I must meet him alone; He will look in my eyes so gently, And take my hand in his own.

Like a dream all my toil will vanish, When I lay my head on his breast - But the journey is very weary, And he only can give me rest!

VERSE: FIDELIS

You have taken back the promise That you spoke so long ago; Taken back the heart you gave me - I must even let it go. Where Love once has breathed, Pride dieth: So I struggled, but in vain, First to keep the links together, Then to piece the broken chain.

But it might not be--so freely All your friendship I restore, And the heart that I had taken As my own for evermore. No shade of reproach shall touch you, Dread no more a claim from me - But I will not have you fancy That I count myself as free.

I am bound by the old promise; What can break that golden chain? Not even the words that you have spoken, Or the sharpness of my pain: Do you think, because you fail me And draw back your hand to-day, That from out the heart I gave you My strong love can fade away?

It will live. No eyes may see it; In my soul it will lie deep, Hidden from all; but I shall feel it Often stirring in its sleep. So remember, that the friendship Which you now think poor and vain, Will endure in hope and patience, Till you ask for it again.

Perhaps in some long twilight hour, Like those we have known of old, When past shadows gather round you, And your present friends grow cold, You may stretch your hands out towards me, - Ah! you will--I know not when - I shall nurse my love and keep it Faithfully, for you, till then.

VERSE: A SHADOW

What lack the valleys and mountains That once were green and gay?
What lack the babbling fountains? Their voice is sad to-day. Only the
sound of a voice, Tender and sweet and low, That made the earth rejoice,
A year ago!

What lack the tender flowers? A shadow is on the sun: What lack the
merry hours, That I long that they were done? Only two smiling eyes, That
told of joy and mirth: They are shining in the skies, I mourn on earth!

What lacks my heart, that makes it So weary and full of pain, That
trembling Hope forsakes it, Never to come again? Only another heart,
Tender and all mine own, In the still grave it lies; I weep alone!

VERSE: THE SAILOR BOY

My Life you ask of? why, you know Full soon my little Life is told; It has had no great joy or woe, For I am only twelve years old. Ere long I hope I shall have been On my first voyage, and wonders seen. Some princess I may help to free From pirates, on a far-off sea; Or, on some desert isle be left, Of friends and shipmates all bereft.

For the first time I venture forth, From our blue mountains of the north. My kinsman kept the lodge that stood Guarding the entrance near the wood, By the stone gateway grey and old, With quaint devices carved about, And broken shields; while dragons bold Glared on the common world without; And the long trembling ivy spray Half hid the centuries' decay. In solitude and silence grand The castle towered above the land: The castle of the Earl, whose name (Wrapped in old bloody legends) came Down through the times when Truth and Right Bent down to armed Pride and Might. He owned the country far and near; And, for some weeks in every year, (When the brown leaves were falling fast And the long, lingering autumn passed,) He would come down to hunt the deer, With hound and horse in splendid pride. The story lasts the live-long year, The peasant's winter evening fills, When he is gone and they abide In the lone quiet of their hills.

I longed, too, for the happy night, When, all with torches flaring bright, The crowding villagers would stand, A patient, eager, waiting band, Until the signal ran like flame - "They come!" and, slackening speed, they came. Outriders first, in pomp and state, Pranced on their horses through the gate; Then the four steeds as black as night, All decked with trappings blue and white, Drew through the crowd that opened wide, The Earl and Countess side by side. The stern grave Earl, with formal smile And glistening eyes and stately pride, Could ne'er my childish gaze beguile From the fair presence by his side. The lady's soft sad glance, her eyes, (Like stars that shone in summer skies,) Her pure white face so calmly bent, With gentle greetings round her sent Her look, that always seemed to gaze Where the blue past had closed again Over some happy shipwrecked days, With all

their freight of love and pain: She did not even seem to see
The little lord upon her knee. And yet he was like angel fair,
With rosy cheeks and golden hair, That fell on shoulders white as snow:
But the blue eyes that shone below His clustering rings of auburn curls,
Were not his mother's, but the Earl's.

I feared the Earl, so cold and grim, I never dared be seen by him.
When through our gate he used to ride, My kinsman Walter bade me hide;
He said he was so stern. So, when the hunt came past our way, I always
hastened to obey, Until I heard the bugles play The notes of their return.
But she--my very heart-strings stir Whene'er I speak or think of her -
The whole wide world could never see A noble lady such as she,
So full of angel charity.

Strange things of her our neighbours told In the long winter evenings
cold, Around the fire. They would draw near And speak half-whispering,
as in fear; As if they thought the Earl could hear Their treason 'gainst his
name. They thought the story that his pride Had stooped to wed a low-
born bride, A stain upon his fame. Some said 'twas false; there could not
be Such blot on his nobility: But others vowed that they had heard
The actual story word for word, From one who well my lady knew,
And had declared the story true.

In a far village, little known, She dwelt--so ran the tale--alone. A
widowed bride, yet, oh! so bright, Shone through the mist of grief, her
charms; They said it was the loveliest sight - She with her baby in her
arms. The Earl, one summer morning, rode By the sea-shore where she
abode; Again he came--that vision sweet Drew him reluctant to her feet.
Fierce must the struggle in his heart Have been, between his love and
pride, Until he chose that wondrous part, To ask her to become his bride.
Yet, ere his noble name she bore, He made her vow that nevermore
She would behold her child again, But hide his name and hers from men.
The trembling promise duly spoken, All links of the low past were broken;
And she arose to take her stand Amid the nobles of the land. Then all
would wonder--could it be That one so lowly born as she, Raised to such
height of bliss, should seem Still living in some weary dream? 'Tis true
she bore with calmest grace The honours of her lofty place, Yet never
smiled, in

peace or joy, Not even to greet her princely boy. She heard, with face of white despair, The cannon thunder through the air, That she had given the Earl an heir. Nay, even more, (they whispered low, As if they scarce durst fancy so,) That, through her lofty wedded life, No word, no tone, betrayed the wife. Her look seemed ever in the past; Never to him it grew more sweet; The self-same weary glance she cast Upon the grey-hound at her feet, As upon him, who bade her claim The crowning honour of his name.

This gossip, if old Walter heard, He checked it with a scornful word: I never durst such tales repeat; He was too serious and discreet To speak of what his lord might do; Besides, he loved my lady too. And many a time, I recollect, They were together in the wood; He, with an air of grave respect, And earnest look, uncovered stood. And though their speech I never heard, (Save now and then a louder word,) I saw he spake as none but one She loved and trusted, durst have done; For oft I watched them in the shade That the close forest branches made, Till slanting golden sunbeams came And smote the fir-trees into flame, A radiant glory round her lit, Then down her white robes seemed to flit, Gilding the brown leaves on the ground, And all the waving ferns around. While by some gloomy pine she leant And he in earnest talk would stand, I saw the tear-drops, as she bent, Fall on the flowers in her hand. - Strange as it seemed and seems to be, That one so sad, so cold as she, Could love a little child like me - Yet so it was. I never heard Such tender words as she would say, And murmurs, sweeter than a word, Would breathe upon me as I lay. While I, in smiling joy, would rest, For hours, my head upon her breast. Our neighbours said that none could see In me the common childish charms, (So grave and still I used to be,) And yet she held me in her arms, In a fond clasp, so close, so tight - I often dream of it at night. She bade me tell her all--no other My childish thoughts e'er cared to know: For I--I never knew my mother; I was an orphan long ago. And I could all my fancies pour, That gentle loving face before. She liked to hear me tell her all; How that day I had climbed the tree, To make the largest fir-cones fall; And how one day I hoped to be A sailor on the deep blue sea - She loved to hear it all!

Then wondrous things she used to tell, Of the strange dreams that she had known. I used to love to hear them well, If only for her sweet low tone,

Sometimes so sad, although I knew That such things never could be true.
One day she told me such a tale It made me grow all cold and pale, The
fearful thing she told! Of a poor woman mad and wild Who coined the
life-blood of her child, And tempted by a fiend, had sold The heart out of
her breast for gold. But, when she saw me frightened seem, She smiled,
and said it was a dream. When I look back and think of her, My very
heart-strings seem to stir; How kind, how fair she was, how good I cannot
tell you. If I could You, too, would love her. The mere thought Of her
great love for me has brought Tears in my eyes: though far away, It
seems as it were yesterday. And just as when I look on high Through the
blue silence of the sky, Fresh stars shine out, and more and more, Where I
could see so few before; So, the more steadily I gaze Upon those far-off
misty days, Fresh words, fresh tones, fresh memories start Before my eyes
and in my heart. I can remember how one day (Talking in silly childish
way) I said how happy I should be If I were like her son--as fair, With just
such bright blue eyes as he, And such long locks of golden hair. A strange
smile on her pale face broke, And in strange solemn words she spoke: "My
own, my darling one--no, no! I love you, far, far better so. I would not
change the look you bear, Or one wave of your dark brown hair. The mere
glance of your sunny eyes, Deep in my deepest soul I prize Above that
baby fair! Not one of all the Earl's proud line In beauty ever matched with
thine; And, 'tis by thy dark locks thou art Bound even faster round my
heart, And made more wholly mine!" And then she paused, and weeping
said, "You are like one who now is dead - Who sleeps in a far-distant
grave. Oh may God grant that you may be As noble and as good as he, As
gentle and as brave!" Then in my childish way I cried, "The one you tell
me of who died, Was he as noble as the Earl?" I see her red lips scornful
curl, I feel her hold my hand again So tightly, that I shrink in pain - I seem
to hear her say, "He whom I tell you of, who died, He was so noble and so
gay, So generous and so brave, That the proud Earl by his dear side Would
look a craven slave." She paused; then, with a quivering sigh, She laid her
hand upon my brow: "Live like him, darling, and so die. Remember that
he tells you now, True peace, real honour, and content, In cheerful pious
toil abide; That gold and splendour are but sent To curse our vanity and

pride." One day some childish fever pain
Burnt in my veins and fired my
brain. Moaning, I turned from side to side;
And, sobbing in my bed, I cried,
Till night in calm and darkness crept
Around me, and at last I slept. When
suddenly I woke to see The Lady bending
over me. The drops of cold
November rain Were falling from her long,
damp hair; Her anxious eyes
were dim with pain; Yet she looked
wondrous fair. Arrayed for some great
feast she came, With stones that shone
and burnt like flame; Wound round
her neck, like some bright snake,
And set like stars within her hair,
They sparkled so, they seemed to make
A glory everywhere. I felt her tears upon
my face, Her kisses on my eyes;
And a strange thought I could not trace
I felt within my heart arise; And, half
in feverish pain, I said: "Oh if my
mother were not dead!" And Walter bade
me sleep; but she Said, "Is it not
the same to thee That I watch by thy
bed?" I answered her, "I love you,
too; But it can never be the same;
She was no Countess like to you,
Nor wore such sparkling stones of flame."
Oh the wild look of fear and dread!
The cry she gave of bitter woe!
I often wonder what I said
To make her moan and shudder so.
Through the long night she tended me
With such sweet care and charity.
But should weary you to tell
All that I know and love so well:
Yet one night more stands out alone
With a sad sweetness all
its own.

The wind blew loud that dreary night:
Its wailing voice I well remember:
The stars shone out so large and bright
Upon the frosty fir-boughs white,
That dreary night of cold December.
I saw old Walter silent stand,
Watching the soft white flakes of snow
With looks I could not understand,
Of strange perplexity and woe.
At last he turned and took my hand,
And said the Countess just had sent
To bid us come; for she would fain
See me once more, before she went
Away--never to come again.
We came in silence through the wood
(Our footfall was the only sound)
To where the great white castle stood,
With darkness shadowing it around.
Breathless, we trod with cautious care
Up the great echoing marble stair;
Trembling, by Walter's hand I held,
Scared by the splendours I beheld:
Now thinking, "Should the Earl appear!"
Now looking up with giddy fear
To the dim vaulted roof, that spread
Its gloomy arches overhead.
Long corridors we softly past,
(My heart was beating loud and fast)
And reached

the Lady's room at last: A strange faint odour seemed to weigh Upon the dim and darkened air; One shaded lamp, with softened ray, Scarce showed the gloomy splendour there. The dull red brands were burning low, And yet a fitful gleam of light, Would now and then, with sudden glow, Start forth, then sink again in night. I gazed around, yet half in fear, Till Walter told me to draw near: And in the strange and flickering light, Towards the Lady's bed I crept; All folded round with snowy white, She lay; (one would have said she slept;) So still the look of that white face, It seemed as it were carved in stone, I paused before I dared to place Within her cold white hand my own. But, with a smile of sweet surprise, She turned to me her dreamy eyes; And slowly, as if life were pain, She drew me in her arms to lie: She strove to speak, and strove in vain; Each breath was like a long-drawn sigh. The throbs that seemed to shake her breast, The trembling clasp, so loose and weak, At last grew calmer, and at rest; And then she strove once more to speak: "My God, I thank thee, that my pain Of day by day and year by year, Has not been suffered all in vain, And I may die while he is near. I will not fear but that Thy grace Has swept away my sin and woe, And sent this little angel face, In my last hour to tell me so." (And here her voice grew faint and low,) "My child, where'er thy life may go, To know that thou art brave and true, Will pierce the highest heavens through, And even there my soul shall be More joyful for this thought of thee." She folded her white hands, and stayed; All cold and silently she lay: I knelt beside the bed, and prayed The prayer she used to make me say. I said it many times, and then She did not move, but seemed to be In a deep sleep, nor stirred again. No sound woke in the silent room, Or broke the dim and solemn gloom, Save when the brands that burnt so low, With noisy fitful gleam of light, Would spread around a sudden glow, Then sink in silence and in night. How long I stood I do not know: At last poor Walter came, and said (So sadly) that we now must go, And whispered, she we loved was dead. He bade me kiss her face once more, Then led me sobbing to the door. I scarcely knew what dying meant, Yet a strange grief, before unknown, Weighed on my spirit as we went And left her lying all alone.

We went to the far North once more, To seek the well-remembered

home, Where my poor kinsman dwelt before, Whence now he was too old
to roam; And there six happy years we past, Happy and peaceful till the
last; When poor old Walter died, and he Blessed me and said I now might
be A sailor on the deep blue sea. And so I go; and yet in spite Of all the
joys I long to know, Though I look onward with delight, With something
of regret I go; And young or old, on land or sea, One guiding memory I
shall take - Of what She prayed that I might be, And what I will be for her
sake!

VERSE: A CROWN OF SORROW

A Sorrow, wet with early tears Yet bitter, had been long with me; I
weariest of this weight of years, And would be free.

I tore my Sorrow from my heart, I cast it far away in scorn; Right
joyful that we two could part - Yet most forlorn.

I sought, (to take my Sorrow's place,) Over the world for flower or
gem - But she had had an ancient grace Unknown to them.

I took once more with strange delight My slighted Sorrow; proudly
now, I wear it, set with stars of light, Upon my brow.

VERSE: THE LESSON OF THE WAR (1855)

The feast is spread through England For rich and poor to-day;
Greetings and laughter may be there, But thoughts are far away;
Over the stormy ocean, Over the dreary track, Where some are gone, whom
England Will never welcome back.

Breathless she waits, and listens For every eastern breeze That bears
upon its bloody wings News from beyond the seas. The leafless branches
stirring Make many a watcher start; The distant tramp of steed may send A
throb from heart to heart.

The rulers of the nation, The poor ones at their gate, With the same
eager wonder The same great news await. The poor man's stay and
comfort, The rich man's joy and pride, Upon the bleak Crimean shore
Are fighting side by side.

The bullet comes--and either A desolate hearth may see; And God
alone to-night knows where The vacant place may be! The dread that stirs
the peasant Thrills nobles' hearts with fear - Yet above selfish sorrow Both
hold their country dear.

The rich man who reposes In his ancestral shade, The peasant at his
ploughshare, The worker at his trade, Each one his all his perilled, Each
has the same great stake, Each soul can but have patience, Each heart can
only break!

Hushed is all party clamour; One thought in every heart, One dread in
every household, Has bid such strife depart. England has called her
children; Long silent--the word came That lit the smouldering ashes
Through all the land to flame.

Oh you who toil and suffer, You gladly heard the call; But those you
sometimes envy Have they not given their all? Oh you who rule the nation,
Take now the toil-worn hand - Brothers you are in sorrow, In duty to your
land. Learn but this noble lesson Ere Peace returns again, And the life-
blood of Old England Will not be shed in vain.

VERSE: THE TWO SPIRITS (1855)

Last night, when weary silence fell on all, And starless skies arose so dim and vast, I heard the Spirit of the Present call Upon the sleeping Spirit of the Past. Far off and near, I saw their radiance shine, And listened while they spoke of deeds divine.

The Spirit of the Past.

My deeds are writ in iron; My glory stands alone; A veil of shadowy honour Upon my tombs is thrown; The great names of my heroes Like gems in history lie; To live they deemed ignoble, Had they the chance to die!

The Spirit of the Present.

My children, too, are honoured; Dear shall their memory be To the proud lands that own them; Dearer than thine to thee; For, though they hold that sacred Is God's great gift of life, At the first call of duty They rush into the strife!

The Spirit of the Past.

Then, with all valiant precepts Woman's soft heart was fraught; "Death, not dishonour," echoed The war-cry she had taught. Fearless and glad, those mothers, At bloody deaths elate, Cried out they bore their children Only for such a fate!

The Spirit of the Present.

Though such stern laws of honour Are faded now away, Yet many a mourning mother, With nobler grief than they, Bows down in sad submission: The heroes of the fight Learnt at her knee the lesson, "For God and for the Right!"

The Spirit of the Past.

No voice there spake of sorrow: They saw the noblest fall With no repining murmur; Stern Fate was lord of all. And when the loved ones perished, One cry alone arose, Waking the startled echoes, "Vengeance upon our foes!"

The Spirit of the Present.

Grief dwells in France and England For many a noble son; Yet louder than the sorrow, "Thy will, Oh God, be done!" From desolate homes is rising One prayer, "Let carnage cease! On friends and foes have mercy, Oh Lord, and give us peace!"

The Spirit of the Past.

Then, every hearth was honoured That sent its children forth, To spread their country's glory, And gain her south or north. Then, little recked they numbers, No band would ever fly, But stern and resolute they stood To conquer or to die.

The Spirit of the Present.

And now from France and England Their dearest and their best Go forth to succour freedom, To help the much oppressed; Now, let the far-off Future And Past bow down to-day, Before the few young hearts that hold Whole armaments at bay.

The Spirit of the Past.

Then, each one strove for honour, Each for a deathless name; Love, home, rest, joy, were offered As sacrifice to Fame. They longed that in far ages Their deeds might still be told, And distant times and nations Their names in honour hold.

The Spirit of the Present.

Though nursed by such old legends, Our heroes of to-day Go cheerfully to battle As children go to play; They gaze with awe and wonder On your great names of pride, Unconscious that their own will shine In glory side by side!

Day dawned; and as the Spirits passed away, Methought I saw, in the dim morning grey, The Past's bright diadem had paled before The starry crown the glorious Present wore.

VERSE: A LITTLE LONGER

A little longer yet--a little longer, Shall violets bloom for thee, and
sweet birds sing; And the lime branches where soft winds are blowing,
Shall murmur the sweet promise of the Spring!

A little longer yet--a little longer, Thou shalt behold the quiet of the
morn; While tender grasses and awakening flowers Send up a golden mist
to greet the dawn!

A little longer yet--a little longer, The tenderness of twilight shall be
thine, The rosy clouds that float o'er dying daylight, Nor fade till trembling
stars begin to shine.

A little longer yet--a little longer, Shall starry night be beautiful for
thee; And the cold moon shall look through the blue silence, Flooding her
silver path upon the sea.

A little longer yet--a little longer, Life shall be thine; life with its
power to will; Life with its strength to bear, to love, to conquer, Bringing
its thousand joys thy heart to fill.

A little longer yet--a little longer, The voices thou hast loved shall
charm thine ear; And thy true heart, that now beats quick to hear them, A
little longer yet shall hold them dear.

A little longer yet--joy while thou mayest; Love and rejoice! for time
has nought in store; And soon the darkness of the grave shall bid thee
Love and rejoice and feel and know no more.

* * *

A little longer still--Patience, Beloved: A little longer still, ere Heaven
unroll The Glory, and the Brightness, and the Wonder, Eternal, and divine,
that waits thy Soul!

A little longer ere Life true, immortal, (Not this our shadowy Life,)
will be thine own; And thou shalt stand where winged Archangels worship,
And trembling bow before the Great White Throne.

A little longer still, and Heaven awaits thee, And fills thy spirit with a
great delight; Then our pale joys will seem a dream forgotten, Our Sun a
darkness, and our Day a Night.

A little longer, and thy Heart, Beloved, Shall beat for ever with a Love divine; And joy so pure, so mighty, so eternal, No creature knows and lives, will then be thine.

A little longer yet--and angel voices Shall ring in heavenly chant upon thine ear; Angels and Saints await thee, and God needs thee: Beloved, can we bid thee linger here!

VERSE: GRIEF

An ancient enemy have I, And either he or I must die; For he never leaveth me, Never gives my soul relief, Never lets my sorrow cease, Never gives my spirit peace - For mine enemy is Grief!

Pale he is, and sad and stern; And whene'er he cometh nigh, Blue and dim the torches burn, Pale and shrunk the roses turn; While my heart that he has pierced Many a time with fiery lance, Beats and trembles at his glance: Clad in burning steel is he, All my strength he can defy; For he never leaveth me - And one of us must die!

I have said, "Let ancient sages Charm me from my thoughts of pain!" So I read their deepest pages, And I strove to think--in vain! Wisdom's cold calm words I tried, But he was seated by my side:- Learning I have won in vain; She cannot rid me of my pain.

When at last soft sleep comes o'er me, A cold hand is on my heart; Stern sad eyes are there before me; Not in dreams will he depart: And when the same dreary vision From my weary brain has fled, Daylight brings the living phantom, He is seated by my bed, Bending o'er me all the while, With his cruel, bitter smile, Ever with me, ever nigh; - And either he or I must die!

Then I said, long time ago, "I will flee to other climes, I will leave mine ancient foe!" Though I wandered far and wide - Still he followed at my side.

And I fled where the blue waters Bathe the sunny isles of Greece; Where Thessalian mountains rise Up against the purple skies; Where a haunting memory liveth In each wood and cave and rill; But no dream of gods could help me - He went with me still!

I have been where Nile's broad river Flows upon the burning sand; Where the desert monster broodeth, Where the Eastern palm-trees stand; I have been where pathless forests Spread a black eternal shade; Where the lurking panther hiding Glares from every tangled glade; But in vain I wandered wide, He was always by my side! Then I fled where snows eternal Cold and dreary ever lie; Where the rosy lightnings gleam,

Flashing through the northern sky; Where the red sun turns again Back upon his path of pain; - But a shadowy form was with me - I had fled in vain!

I have thought, "If I can gaze Sternly on him he will fade, For I know that he is nothing But a dim ideal shade." As I gazed at him the more, He grew stronger than before!

Then I said, "Mine arm is strong, I will make him turn and flee:" I have struggled with him long - But that could never be!

Once I battled with him so That I thought I laid him low; Then in trembling joy I fled, While again and still again Murmuring to myself I said, "Mine old enemy is dead!" And I stood beneath the stars, When a chill came on my frame, And a fear I could not name, And a sense of quick despair, And, lo! mine enemy was there!

Listen, for my soul is weary, Weary of its endless woe; I have called on one to aid me Mightier even than my foe. Strength and hope fail day by day; I shall cheat him of his prey; Some day soon, I know not when, He will stab me through and through; He has wounded me before, But my heart can bear no more; Pray that hour may come to me, Only then shall I be free; Death alone has strength to take me Where my foe can never be; Death, and Death alone, has power To conquer mine old enemy!

VERSE: THE TRIUMPH OF TIME

The tender delicate Flowers, I saw them fanned by a warm western wind, Fed by soft summer showers, Shielded by care, and yet, (oh Fate unkind!) Fade in a few short hours.

The gentle and the gay, Rich in a glorious Future of bright deeds, Rejoicing in the day, Are met by Death, who sternly, sadly leads Them far away.

And Hopes, perfumed and bright, So lately shining, wet with dew and tears, Trembling in morning light; I saw them change to dark and anxious fears Before the night!

I wept that all must die - "Yet Love," I cried, "doth live, and conquer death--" And Time passed by, And breathed on Love, and killed it with his breath Ere Death was nigh.

More bitter far than all It was to know that Love could change and die - Hush! for the ages call "The Love of God lives through eternity, And conquers all!"

VERSE: A PARTING

Without one bitter feeling let us part - And for the years in which your love has shed A radiance like a glory round my head, I thank you, yes, I thank you from my heart.

I thank you for the cherished hope of years, A starry future, dim and yet divine, Winging its way from Heaven to be mine, Laden with joy, and ignorant of tears.

I thank you, yes, I thank you even more That my heart learnt not without love to live, But gave and gave, and still had more to give, From an abundant and exhaustless store.

I thank you, and no grief is in these tears; I thank you, not in bitterness but truth, For the fair vision that adorned my youth And glorified so many happy years.

Yet how much more I thank you that you tore At length the veil your hand had woven away, Which hid my idol was a thing of clay, And false the altar I had knelt before.

I thank you that you taught me the stern truth, (None other could have told and I believed,) That vain had been my life, and I deceived, And wasted all the purpose of my youth.

I thank you that your hand dashed down the shrine, Wherein my idol worship I had paid; Else had I never known a soul was made To serve and worship only the Divine.

I thank you that the heart I cast away On such as you, though broken, bruised and crushed, Now that its fiery throbbing is all hushed, Upon a worthier altar I can lay.

I thank you for the lesson that such love Is a perverting of God's royal right, That it is made but for the Infinite, And all too great to live except above.

I thank you for a terrible awaking, And if reproach seemed hidden in my pain, And sorrow seemed to cry on your disdain, Know that my blessing lay in your forsaking.

Farewell for ever now:- in peace we part; And should an idle vision of

my tears Arise before your soul in after years - Remember that I thank you
from my heart!

VERSE: THE GOLDEN GATE

Dim shadows gather thickly round, and up the misty stair they climb,
The cloudy stair that upward leads to where the closed portals shine,
Round which the kneeling spirits wait the opening of the Golden Gate.

And some with eager longing go, still pressing forward, hand in hand,
And some with weary step and slow, look back where their Beloved stand
- Yet up the misty stair they climb, led onward by the Angel Time.

As unseen hands roll back the doors, the light that floods the very air
Is but the shadow from within, of the great glory hidden there - And morn
and eve, and soon and late, the shadows pass within the gate.

As one by one they enter in, and the stern portals close once more, The
halo seems to linger round those kneeling closest to the door: The joy that
lightened from that place shines still upon the watcher's face.

The faint low echo that we hear of far-off music seems to fill The
silent air with love and fear, and the world's clamours all grow still, Until
the portals close again, and leave us toiling on in pain.

Complain not that the way is long--what road is weary that leads there?
But let the Angel take thy hand, and lead thee up the misty stair, And then
with beating heart await, the opening of the Golden Gate.

VERSE: PHANTOMS

Back, ye Phantoms of the Past; In your dreary caves remain: What have I to do with memories Of a long-forgotten pain?

For my Present is all peaceful, And my Future nobly planned: Long ago Time's mighty billows Swept your footsteps from the sand.

Back into your caves; nor haunt me With your voices full of woe; I have buried grief and sorrow In the depths of Long-ago.

See the glorious clouds of morning Roll away, and clear and bright Shine the rays of cloudless daylight - Wherefore will ye moan of night?

Never shall my heart be burthened With its ancient woe and fears; I can drive them from my presence, I can check these foolish tears.

Back, ye Phantoms; leave, oh leave me To a new and happy lot; Speak no more of things departed; Leave me--for I know ye not.

Can it be that 'mid my gladness I must ever hear you wail, Of the grief that wrung my spirit, And that made my cheek so pale?

Joy is mine; but your sad voices Murmur ever in mine ear: Vain is all the Future's promise, While the dreary Past is here.

Vain, oh worse than vain, the Visions That my heart, my life would fill, If the Past's relentless phantoms Call upon me still!

VERSE: THANKFULNESS

My God, I thank Thee who hast made The Earth so bright; So full of splendour and of joy, Beauty and light; So many glorious things are here, Noble and right!

I thank Thee, too, that Thou hast made Joy to abound; So many gentle thoughts and deeds Circling us round, That in the darkest spot of Earth Some love is found.

I thank Thee MORE that all our joy Is touched with pain; That shadows fall on brightest hours; That thorns remain; So that Earth's bliss may be our guide, And not our chain.

For Thou who knowest, Lord, how soon Our weak heart clings, Hast given us joys, tender and true, Yet all with wings, So that we see, gleaming on high, Diviner things!

I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast kept The best in store; We have enough, yet not too much To long for more: A yearning for a deeper peace, Not known before.

I thank Thee, Lord, that here our souls, Though amply blest, Can never find, although they seek, A perfect rest - Nor ever shall, until they lean On Jesus' breast!

VERSE: HOME-SICKNESS

Where I am, the halls are gilded, Stored with pictures bright and rare;
Strains of deep melodious music Float upon the perfumed air:- Nothing
stirs the dreary silence Save the melancholy sea, Near the poor and
humble cottage, Where I fain would be!

Where I am, the sun is shining, And the purple windows glow, Till
their rich armorial shadows Stain the marble floor below:- Faded Autumn
leaves are trembling, On the withered jasmine tree, Creeping round the
little casement, Where I fain would be!

Where I am, the days are passing O'er a pathway strewn with flowers;
Song and joy and starry pleasures Crown the happy smiling hours:-
Slowly, heavily, and sadly, Time with weary wings must flee, Marked by
pain, and toil, and sorrow, Where I fain would be!

Where I am, the great and noble Tell me of renown and fame, And the
red wine sparkles highest, To do honour to my name:- Far away a place is
vacant, By a humble hearth, for me, Dying embers dimly show it, Where I
fain would be!

Where I am, are glorious dreaminess, Science, genius, art divine; And
the great minds whom all honour Interchange their thoughts with mine:- A
few simple hearts are waiting, Longing, wearying, for me, Far away where
tears are falling, Where I fain would be!

Where I am, all think me happy, For so well I play my part, None can
guess, who smile around me, How far distant is my heart - Far away, in a
poor cottage, Listening to the dreary sea, Where the treasures of my life
are, Where I fain would be!

VERSE: WISHES

All the fluttering wishes Caged within thy heart Beat their wings against it, Longing to depart, Till they shake their prison With their wounded cry; Open wide thy heart to-day, And let the captives fly.

Let them first fly upward Through the starry air, Till you almost lose them, For their home is there; Then, with outspread pinions, Circling round and round, Wing their way, wherever Want and woe are found.

Where the weary stitcher Toils for daily bread; Where the lonely watcher Watches by her dead; Where with thin weak fingers, Toiling at the loom, Stand the little children, Blighted ere they bloom.

Where, by darkness blinded, Groping for the light, With distorted conscience Men do wrong for right; Where, in the cold shadow, By smooth pleasure thrown, Human hearts by hundreds Harden into stone.

Where on dusty highways, With faint heart and slow, Cursing the glad sunlight, Hungry outcasts go: Where all mirth is silenced, And the hearth is chill, For one place is empty, And one voice is still.

Some hearts will be lighter While your captives roam For their tender singing, Then recal them home; When the sunny hours Into night depart, Softly they will nestle In a quiet heart.

VERSE: THE PEACE OF GOD

We ask for Peace, oh Lord! Thy children ask Thy Peace; Not what the world calls rest, That toil and care should cease, That through bright sunny hours Calm Life should fleet away, And tranquil night should fade In smiling day; - It is not for such Peace that we would pray.

We ask for Peace, oh Lord! Yet not to stand secure, Girt round with iron Pride, Contented to endure: Crushing the gentle strings That human hearts should know, Untouched by others' joy Or others' woe; - Thou, oh dear Lord, wilt never teach us so.

We ask Thy Peace, oh Lord! Through storm, and fear, and strife, To light and guide us on, Through a long struggling life: While no success or gain Shall cheer the desperate fight, Or nerve, what the world calls, Our wasted might:- Yet pressing through the darkness to the light.

It is Thine own, oh Lord, Who toil while others sleep; Who sow with loving care What other hands shall reap: They lean on Thee entranced, In calm and perfect rest: Give us that Peace, oh Lord, Divine and blest, Thou keepest for those hearts who love Thee best.

VERSE: LIFE IN DEATH AND DEATH IN LIFE

I.

If the dread day that calls thee hence, Through a red mist of fear
should loom, (Closing in deadliest night and gloom Long hours of aching
dumb suspense,) And leave me to my lonely doom.

I think, beloved, I could see In thy dear eyes the loving light Glaze
into vacancy and night, And still say, "God is good to me, And all that He
decrees is right."

That, watching thy slow struggling breath, And answering each
imperfect sign, I still could pray thy prayer and mine, And tell thee, dear,
though this was death, That God was love, and love divine.

Could hold thee in my arms, and lay Upon my heart thy weary head,
And meet thy last smile ere it fled; Then hear, as in a dream, one say,
"Now all is over,--she is dead."

Could smooth thy garments with fond care, And cross thy hands upon
thy breast, And kiss thine eyelids down to rest, And yet say no word of
despair, But, through my sobbing, "It is best."

Could stifle down the gnawing pain, And say, "We still divide our life,
She has the rest, and I the strife, And mine the loss, and hers the gain: My
ill with bliss for her is rife."

Then turn, and the old duties take - Alone now--yet with earnest will
Gathering sweet sacred traces still To help me on, and, for thy sake, My
heart and life and soul to fill.

I think I could check vain weak tears, And toil,--although the world's
great space Held nothing but one vacant place, And see the dark and weary
years Lit only by a vanished grace.

And sometimes, when the day was o'er, Call up the tender past again:
Its painful joy, its happy pain, And live it over yet once more, And say,

"But few more years remain."

And then, when I had striven my best, And all around would smiling say, "See how Time makes all grief decay," Would lie down thankfully to rest, And seek thee in eternal day.

II.

But if the day should ever rise - It could not and it cannot be - Yet, if the sun should ever see, Looking upon us from his skies, A day that took thy heart from me;

If loving thee still more and more, And still so willing to be blind, I should the bitter knowledge find, That Time had eaten out the core Of love, and left the empty rind;

If the poor lifeless words, at last, (The soul gone, that was once so sweet,) Should cease my eager heart to cheat, And crumble back into the past, And show the whole a vain deceit;

If I should see thee turn away, And know that prayer, and time, and pain, Could no more thy lost love regain, Than bid the hours of dying day Gleam in their mid-day noon again;

If I should loose thy hand, and know That henceforth we must dwell apart, Since I had seen thy love depart, And only count the hours flow By the dull throbbing of my heart;

If I should gaze and gaze in vain Into thine eyes so deep and clear, And read the truth of all my fear Half mixed with pity for my pain, And sorrow for the vanished year;

If not to grieve thee overmuch, I strove to counterfeit disdain, And weave me a new life again, Which thy life could not mar, or touch, And so smile down my bitter pain;

The ghost of my dead Past would rise And mock me, and I could not dare Look to a future of despair, Or even to the eternal skies, For I should still be lonely there.

All Truth, all Honour, then would seem Vain clouds, which the first wind blew by; All Trust, a folly doomed to die; All Life, a useless empty dream; All Love--since thine had failed--a lie.

But see, thy tender smile has cast My fear away: this thought of mine

Is treason to my Love and thine; For Love is Life, and Death at last
Crowns it eternal and divine!

VERSE: RECOLLECTIONS

As strangers, you and I are here; We both as aliens stand, Where once,
in years gone by, I dwelt No stranger in the land. Then while you gaze on
park and stream, Let me remain apart, And listen to the awakened sound
Of voices in my heart.

Here, where upon the velvet lawn The cedar spreads its shade, And by
the flower-beds all around, Bright roses bloom and fade; Shrill merry
childish laughter rings, And baby voices sweet, And by me, on the path, I
hear The tread of little feet.

Down the dark avenue of limes, Whose perfume loads the air, Whose
boughs are rustling overhead, (For the west wind is there,) I hear the
sound of earnest talk, Warnings and counsels wise, And the quick
questioning that brought Such gentle calm replies.

Still the light bridge hangs o'er the lake, Where broad-leaved lilies lie,
And the cool water shows again The cloud that moves on high; - And one
voice speaks, in tones I thought The past for ever kept; But now I know,
deep in my heart Its echoes only slept.

I hear, within the shady porch, Once more, the measured sound Of the
old ballads that were read, While we sat listening round; The starry
passion-flower still Up the green trellice climbs; The tendrils waving seem
to keep The cadence of the rhymes.

I might have striven, and striven in vain, Such visions to recall, Well
known and yet forgotten; now I see, I hear, them all! The Present pales
before the Past, Who comes with angel wings; As in a dream I stand,
amidst Strange yet familiar things!

Enough; so let us go, mine eyes Are blinded by their tears; A voice
speaks to my soul to-day Of long forgotten years. And yet the vision in my
heart, In a few hours more, Will fade into the silent past, Silently as
before.

VERSE: ILLUSION

Where the golden corn is bending, And the singing reapers pass,
Where the chestnut woods are sending Leafy showers upon the grass,

The blue river onward flowing Mingles with its noisy strife, The
murmur of the flowers growing, And the hum of insect life.

I, from that rich plain was gazing Towards the snowy mountains high,
Who their gleaming peaks were raising Up against the purple sky.

And the glory of their shining, Bathed in clouds of rosy light, Set my
weary spirit pining For a home so pure and bright!

So I left the plain, and weary, Fainting, yet with hope sustained, Toiled
through pathways long and dreary Till the mountain top was gained.

Lo! the height that I had taken, As so shining from below, Was a
desolate, forsaken Region of perpetual snow.

I am faint, my feet are bleeding, All my feeble strength is worn, In the
plain no soul is heeding, I am here alone, forlorn.

Lights are shining, bells are tolling, In the busy vale below; Near me
night's black clouds are rolling, Gathering o'er a waste of snow.

So I watch the river winding Through the misty fading plain, Bitter are
the tear-drops blinding, Bitter useless toil and pain - Bitterest of all the
finding That my dream was false and vain!

VERSE: A VISION

Gloomy and black are the cypress trees, Drearly waileth the chill night breeze. The long grass waveth, the tombs are white, And the black clouds flit o'er the chill moonlight. Silent is all save the dropping rain, When slowly there cometh a mourning train, The lone churchyard is dark and dim, And the mourners raise a funeral hymn:

"Open, dark grave, and take her; Though we have loved her so, Yet we must now forsake her, Love will no more awake her: (Oh, bitter woe!) Open thine arms and take her To rest below!

"Vain is our mournful weeping, Her gentle life is o'er; Only the worm is creeping, Where she will soon be sleeping, For evermore - Nor joy nor love is keeping For her in store!"

Gloomy and black are the cypress trees, And drearily wave in the chill night breeze. The dark clouds part and the heavens are blue, Where the trembling stars are shining through. Slowly across the gleaming sky, A crowd of white angels are passing by. Like a fleet of swans they float along, Or the silver notes of a dying song. Like a cloud of incense their pinions rise, Fading away up the purple skies. But hush! for the silent glory is stirred, By a strain such as earth has never heard:

"Open, oh Heaven! we bear her, This gentle maiden mild, Earth's griefs we gladly spare her, From earthly joys we tear her, Still undefiled; And to thine arms we bear her, Thine own, thy child.

"Open, oh Heaven! no morrow Will see this joy o'er cast, No pain, no tears, no sorrow, Her gentle heart will borrow; Sad life is past; Shielded and safe from sorrow, At home at last."

But the vision faded and all was still, On the purple valley and distant hill. No sound was there save the wailing breeze, The rain, and the rustling cypress trees.

VERSE: PICTURES IN THE FIRE

What is it you ask me, darling? All my stories, child, you know; I have
no strange dreams to tell you, Pictures I have none to show.

Tell you glorious scenes of travel? Nay, my child, that cannot be, I
have seen no foreign countries, Marvels none on land or sea.

Yet strange sights in truth I witness, And I gaze until I tire, Wondrous
pictures, changing ever, As I look into the fire.

There, last night, I saw a cavern, Black as pitch; within it lay Coiled in
many folds a dragon, Glaring as if turned at bay.

And a knight in dismal armour On a winged eagle came, To do battle
with this dragon; And his crest was all of flame.

As I gazed the dragon faded, And, instead, sate Pluto crowned, By a
lake of burning fire; Spirits dark were crouching round.

That was gone, and lo! before me, A cathedral vast and grim; I could
almost hear the organ Peal alone the arches dim.

As I watched the wreathed pillars, Groves of stately palms arose, And
a group of swarthy Indians Stealing on some sleeping foes.

Stay; a cataract glancing brightly, Dashed and sparkled; and beside
Lay a broken marble monster, Mouth and eyes were staring wide.

Then I saw a maiden wreathing Starry flowers in garlands sweet; Did
she see the fiery serpent That was wrapped about her feet?

That fell crashing all and vanished; And I saw two armies close - I
could almost hear the clarions, And the shouting of the foes.

They were gone; and lo! bright angels, On a barren mountain wild,
Raised appealing arms to Heaven, Bearing up a little child.

And I gazed, and gazed, and slowly Gathered in my eyes sad tears,
And the fiery pictures bore me Back through distant dreams of years.

Once again I tasted sorrow, With past joy was once more gay, Till the
shade had gathered round me - And the fire had died away.

VERSE: THE SETTLERS

Two stranger youths in the Far West, Beneath the ancient forest trees,
Pausing, amid their toil to rest, Spake of their home beyond the seas;
Spake of the hearts that beat so warmly, Of the hearts they loved so well.
In their chilly northern country. "Would," they cried, "some voice could
tell Where they are, our own beloved ones!" They looked up to the
evening sky Half hidden by the giant branches, But heard no angel-voice
reply. All silent was the quiet evening; Silent were the ancient trees; They
only heard the murmuring song Of the summer breeze, That gently played
among The acacia trees. And did no warning spirit answer, Amid the
silence all around; "Before the lowly village altar She thou lovest may be
found, Thou, who trustest still so blindly, Know she stands a smiling bride!
Forgetting thee, she turneth kindly To the stranger at her side. Yes, this day
thou art forgotten, Forgotten, too, thy last farewell, All the vows that she
has spoken, And thy heart has kept so well. Dream no more of a starry
future, In thy home beyond the seas!" But he only heard the gentle sigh Of
the summer breeze, So softly passing by The acacia trees.

And vainly, too, the other, looking Smiling up through hopeful tears,
Asked in his heart of hearts, "Where is she, She I love these many years?"
He heard no echo calling faintly: "Lo, she lieth cold and pale, And her
smile so calm and saintly Heeds not grieving sob or wail - Heeds not the
lilies strewn upon her, Pure as she is, and as white, Or the solemn chanting
voices, Or the taper's ghastly light." But silent still was the ancient forest,
Silent were the gloomy trees, He only heard the wailing sound Of the
summer breeze, That sadly played around The acacia trees

VERSE: HUSH

"I can scarcely hear," she murmured, "For my heart beats loud and fast,
But surely, in the far, far distance, I can hear a sound at last." "It is only
the reapers singing, As they carry home their sheaves, And the evening
breeze has risen, And rustles the dying leaves."

"Listen! there are voices talking." Calmly still she strove to speak, Yet
her voice grew faint and trembling, And the red flushed in her cheek. "It is
only the children playing Below, now their work is done, And they laugh
that their eyes are dazzled By the rays of the setting sun."

Fainter grew her voice, and weaker As with anxious eyes she cried,
"Down the avenue of chestnuts, I can hear a horseman ride." "It was only
the deer that were feeding In a herd on the clover grass, They were startled,
and fled to the thicket, As they saw the reapers pass."

Now the night arose in silence, Birds lay in their leafy nest, And the
deer couched in the forest, And the children were at rest: There was only a
sound of weeping From watchers around a bed, But Rest to the weary
spirit, Peace to the quiet Dead!

VERSE: HOURS

When the bright stars came out last night, And the dew lay on the flowers, I had a vision of delight - A dream of by-gone hours.

Those hours that came and fled so fast, Of pleasure or of pain, As phantoms rose from out the past Before my eyes again.

With beating heart did I behold A train of joyous hours, Lit with the radiant light of old, And, smiling, crowned with flowers. And some were hours of childish sorrow, A mimicry of pain, That through their tears looked for a morrow They knew must smile again.

Those hours of hope that longed for life, And wished their part begun, And ere the summons to the strife, Dreamed that the field was won.

I knew the echo of their voice, The starry crowns they wore; The vision made my soul rejoice With the old thrill of yore.

I knew the perfume of their flowers; The glorious shining rays Around these happy smiling hours Were lit in by-gone days.

Oh stay, I cried--bright visions, stay, And leave me not forlorn! But, smiling still, they passed away, Like shadows of the morn.

One spirit still remained, and cried, "Thy soul shall ne'er forget!" He standeth ever by my side - The phantom called Regret!

But still the spirits rose, and there Were weary hours of pain, And anxious hours of fear and care Bound by an iron chain.

Dim shadows came of lonely hours, That shunned the light of day, And in the opening smile of flowers Saw only quick decay.

Calm hours that sought the starry skies For heavenly lore were there; With folded hands and earnest eyes, I knew the hours of prayer.

Stern hours that darkened the sun's light, Heralds of coming woes, With trailing wings, before my sight From the dim past arose.

As each dark vision passed and spoke I prayed it to depart: At each some buried sorrow woke And stirred within my heart.

Until these hours of pain and care Lifted their tearful eyes, Spread their dark pinions in the air And passed into the skies.

VERSE: THE TWO INTERPRETERS

"The clouds are fleeting by, father, Look in the shining west, The great white clouds sail onward Upon the sky's blue breast. Look at a snowy eagle, His wings are tinged with red, And a giant dolphin follows him, With a crown upon his head!"

The father spake no word, but watched The drifting clouds roll by; He traced a misty vision too Upon the shining sky: A shadowy form, with well-known grace Of weary love and care, Above the smiling child she held, Shook down her floating hair.

"The clouds are changing now, father, Mountains rise higher and higher! And see where red and purple ships Sail in a sea of fire!" The father pressed the little hand More closely in his own, And watched a cloud-dream in the sky That he could see alone: Bright angels carrying far away A white form, cold and dead, Two held the feet, and two bore up The flower-crowned, drooping head.

"See, father, see! a glory floods The sky, and all is bright, And clouds of every hue and shade Burn in the golden light. And now, above an azure lake, Rise battlements and towers, Where knights and ladies climb the heights, All bearing purple flowers."

The father looked, and, with a pang Of love and strange alarm, Drew close the little eager child Within his sheltering arm; From out the clouds the mother looks With wistful glance below, She seems to seek the treasure left On earth so long ago; She holds her arms out to her child, His cradle-song she sings: The last rays of the sunset gleam Upon her outspread wings.

Calm twilight veils the summer sky, The shining clouds are gone; In vain the merry laughing child Still gaily prattles on; In vain the bright stars, one by one, On the blue silence start, A dreary shadow rests to-night Upon the father's heart

VERSE: COMFORT

Hast thou o'er the clear heaven of thy soul Seen tempests roll? Hast thou watched all the hopes thou wouldst have won Fade, one by one? Wait till the clouds are past, then raise thine eyes To bitter skies.

Hast thou gone sadly through a dreary night, And found no light, No guide, no star, to cheer thee through the plain - No friend, save pain? Wait, and thy soul shall see, when most forlorn, Rise a new morn.

Hast thou beneath another's stern control Bent thy sad soul, And wasted sacred hopes and precious tears? Yet calm thy fears, For thou canst gain, even from the bitterest part, A stronger heart.

Has Fate overwhelmed thee with some sudden blow? Let thy tears flow; But know when storms are past, the heavens appear More pure, more clear; And hope, when farthest from their shining rays, For brighter days.

Hast thou found life a cheat, and worn in vain Its iron chain? Has thy soul bent beneath earth's heavy bond? Look thou beyond; If life is bitter-- THERE for ever shine Hopes more divine.

Art thou alone, and does thy soul complain It lives in vain? Not vainly does he live who can endure Oh be thou sure, That he who hopes and suffers here, can earn A sure return.

Hast thou found nought within thy troubled life Save inward strife? Hast thou found all she promised thee, Deceit, And Hope a cheat? Endure, and there shall dawn within thy breast Eternal rest!

VERSE: HOME AT LAST

Child, do not fear; We shall reach our home to-night, For the sky is clear,
And the waters bright; And the breezes have scarcely strength To unfold that little cloud,
That like a shroud Spreads out its fleecy length
Then have no fear, As we cleave our silver way Through the waters clear.

Fear not, my child! Though the waves are white and high, And the storm blows wild
Through the gloomy sky; On the edge of the western sea,
See that line of golden light, Is the haven bright Where home is awaiting thee;
Where, this peril past, We shall rest from our stormy voyage In peace at last.

Be not afraid; But give me thy hand, and see How the waves have made
A cradle for thee. Night is come, dear, and we shall rest; So turn from the angry skies,
And close thine eyes, And lay thy head on my breast:
Child, do not weep; In the calm, cold, purple depths There we shall sleep.

VERSE: UNEXPRESSED

Dwells within the soul of every Artist More than all his effort can express; And he knows the best remains unuttered; Sighing at what WE call his success.

Vainly he may strive; he dare not tell us All the sacred mysteries of the skies: Vainly he may strive; the deepest beauty Cannot be unveiled to mortal eyes.

And the more devoutly that he listens, And the holier message that is sent, Still the more his soul must struggle vainly, Bowed beneath a noble discontent.

No great Thinker ever lived and taught you All the wonder that his soul received; No true Painter ever set on canvas All the glorious vision he conceived.

No Musician ever held your spirit Charmed and bound in his melodious chains, But be sure he heard, and strove to render, Feeble echoes of celestial strains.

No real Poet ever wove in numbers All his dream; but the diviner part, Hidden from all the world, spake to him only In the voiceless silence of his heart.

So with Love: for Love and Art united Are twin mysteries; different, yet the same: Poor indeed would be the love of any Who could find its full and perfect name.

Love may strive, but vain is the endeavour All its boundless riches to enfold; Still its tenderest, truest secret lingers Ever in its deepest depths untold.

Things of Time have voices: speak and perish. Art and Love speak-- but their words must be Like sighings of illimitable forests, And waves of an unfathomable sea.

VERSE: BECAUSE

It is not because your heart is mine--mine only - Mine alone; It is not because you chose me, weak and lonely, For your own; Not because the earth is fairer, and the skies Spread above you Are more radiant for the shining of your eyes - That I love you!

It is not because the world's perplexed meaning Grows more clear; And the Parapets of Heaven, with angels leaning, Seem more near; And Nature sings of praise with all her voices Since yours spoke, Since within my silent heart, that now rejoices, Love awoke!

Nay, not even because your hand holds heart and life; At your will Soothing, hushing all its discord, making strife Calm and still; Teaching Trust to fold her wings, nor ever roam From her nest; Teaching Love that her securest, safest home Must be Rest.

But because this human Love, though true and sweet - Yours and mine - Has been sent by Love more tender, more complete, More divine; That it leads our hearts to rest at last in Heaven, Far above you; Do I take you as a gift that God has given - - And I love you!

VERSE: REST AT EVENING

When the weariness of Life is ended, And the task of our long day is done, And the props, on which our hearts depended, All have failed or broken, one by one; Evening and our Sorrow's shadow blended Telling us that peace is now begun.

How far back will seem the sun's first dawning, And those early mists so cold and grey! Half forgotten even the toil of morning, And the heat and burthen of the day: Flowers that we were tending, and weeds scorning, All alike withered and cast away.

Vain will seem the impatient heart, which waited Toils that gathered but too quickly round; And the childish joy, so soon elated At the path we thought none else had found; And the foolish ardour, soon abated By the storm which cast us to the ground.

Vain those pauses on the road, each seeming As our final home and resting-place; And the leaving them, while tears were streaming Of eternal sorrow down our face; And the hands we held, fond folly dreaming That no future could their touch efface.

All will then be faded:- night will borrow Stars of light to crown our perfect rest; And the dim vague memory of faint sorrow Just remain to show us all was best, Then melt into a divine to-morrow:- Oh, how poor a day to be so blest!

VERSE: A RETROSPECT

From this fair point of present bliss, Where we together stand, Let me
look back once more, and trace That long and desert land, Wherein till
now was cast my lot, and I could live, and thou wert not.

Strange that my heart could beat, and know Alternate joy and pain,
That suns could roll from east to west, And clouds could pass in rain, And
the slow hours without thee fleet, nor stay their noiseless silver feet.

What had I then? a hope, that grew Each hour more bright and dear,
The flush upon the eastern skies That showed the sun was near:- Now
night has faded far away, my sun has risen, and it is day.

A dim Ideal of tender grace In my soul reigned supreme; Too noble
and too sweet I thought To live, save in a dream - Within thy heart to-day
it lies, and looks on me from thy dear eyes.

Some gentle spirit--Love I thought - Built many a shrine of pain;
Though each false Idol fell to dust, The worship was not vain, But a faint
radiant shadow cast back from our Love upon the Past.

And Grief, too, held her vigil there; With unrelenting sway Breaking
my cloudy visions down, Throwing my flowers away:- I owe to her fond
care alone that I may now be all thine own.

Fair Joy was there--her fluttering wings At times she strove to raise;
Watching through long and patient nights, Listening long eager days: I
know now that her heart and mine were waiting, Love, to welcome thine.

Thus I can read thy name throughout, And, now her task is done, Can
see that even that faded Past Was thine, beloved one, And so rejoice my
Life may be all consecrated, dear, to thee.

VERSE: TRUE OR FALSE

So you think you love me, do you? Well, it may be so; But there are many ways of loving I have learnt to know. Many ways, and but one true way, Which is very rare; And the counterfeits look brightest, Though they will not wear.

Yet they ring, almost, quite truly, Last (with care) for long; But in time must break, may shiver At a touch of wrong: Having seen what looked most real Crumble into dust; Now I chose that test and trial Should precede my trust.

I have seen a love demanding Time and hope and tears, Chaining all the past, exacting Bonds from future years; Mind and heart, and joy and sorrow, Claiming as its fee: That was Love of Self, and never, Never Love of me!

I have seen a love forgetting All above, beyond, Linking every dream and fancy In a sweeter bond; Counting every hour worthless, Which was cold or free:- That, perhaps, was--Love of Pleasure, But not Love of me!

I have seen a love whose patience Never turned aside, Full of tender, fond devices; Constant, even when tried; Smallest boons were held as victories, Drops that swelled the sea: That I think was--Love of Power, But not Love of me!

I have seen a love disdaining Ease and pride and fame, Burning even its own white pinions Just to feed its flame; Reigning thus, supreme, triumphant, By the soul's decree; That was--Love of Love, I fancy, But not Love of me!

I have heard--or dreamt, it may be - What Love is when true; How to test and how to try it, Is the gift of few: These few say (or did I dream it?) That true Love abides In these very things, but always Has a soul besides.

Lives among the false loves, knowing Just their peace and strife: Bears the self-same look, but always Has an inner life. Only a true heart can find it, True as it is true, Only eyes as clear and tender Look it through and through.

If it dies, it will not perish By Time's slow decay, True Love only

grows (they tell me) Stronger, day by day: Pain--has been its friend and comrade; Fate--it can defy; Only by its own sword, sometimes Love can choose to die.

And its grave shall be more noble And more sacred still, Than a throne, where one less worthy Reigns and rules at will. Tell me then, do you dare offer This true Love to me? . . . Neither you nor I can answer; We will--wait and see!

VERSE: GOLDEN WORDS

Some words are played on golden strings, Which I so highly rate, I cannot bear for meaner things Their sound to desecrate.

For every day they are not meet, Or for a careless tone; They are for rarest, and most sweet, And noblest use alone.

One word is POET: which is flung So carelessly away, When such as you and I have sung, We hear it, day by day.

Men pay it for a tender phrase Set in a cadenced rhyme: I keep it as a crown of praise To crown the kings of time.

And LOVE: the slightest feelings, stirred By trivial fancy, seek Expression in that golden word They tarnish while they speak.

Nay, let the heart's slow, rare decree, That word in reverence keep Silence herself should only be More sacred and more deep.

FOR EVER: men have grown at length To use that word, to raise Some feeble protest into strength, Or turn some tender phrase.

It should be said in awe and fear By true heart and strong will, And burn more brightly year by year, A starry witness still.

HONOUR: all trifling hearts are fond Of that divine appeal, And men, upon the slightest bond, Set it as slighter seal.

That word should meet a noble foe Upon a noble field, And echo--like a deadly blow Turned by a silver shield.

Trust me, the worth of words is such They guard all noble things, And that this rash irreverent touch Has jarred some golden strings.

For what the lips have lightly said The heart will lightly hold, And things on which we daily tread Are lightly bought and sold.

The sun of every day will bleach The costliest purple hue. And so our common daily speech Discolours what was true.

But as you keep some thoughts apart In sacred honoured care, If in the silence of your heart, Their utterance too be rare;

Then, while a thousand words repeat Unmeaning clamours all, Melodious golden echoes sweet Shall answer when you call.

