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BY

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BOSTON

ROBERTS BROTHERS

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**SONGS OF THE SIERRAS.**

*Because the skies were blue, because  
The sun in fringes of the sea  
Was tangled, and delightfully  
Kept dancing on as in a waltz,  
And tropic trees bow'd to the seas,  
And bloom'd and bore, years through and through,  
And birds in blended gold and blue  
Were thick and sweet as swarming bees,  
And sang as if in paradise,  
And all that paradise was spring —  
Did I too sing with lifted eyes,  
Because I could not choose but sing.*

*With garments full of sea-winds blown  
From isles beyond of spice and balm,  
Beside the sea, beneath her palm,  
She waits as true as chisell'd stone.  
My childhood's child! my June in May!  
So wiser than thy father is,  
These lines, these leaves, and all of this  
Are thine, — a loose, uncouth bouquet.  
So wait and watch for sail and sign;  
A ship shall mount the hollow seas,  
Blown to thy place of blossom'd trees,  
And birds, and song, and summer-shine.*

*I throw a kiss across the sea,  
I drink the winds as drinking wine,  
And dream they all are blown from thee:  
I catch the whisper'd kiss of thine.  
Shall I return with lifted face,  
Or head held down as in disgrace,  
To hold thy two brown hands in mine?*

## SONGS OF THE SIERRAS.

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### ARIZONIAN.

“**A**ND I have said, and I say it ever,  
As the years go on and the world goes over,  
’Twere better to be content and clever  
In tending of cattle and tossing of clover,  
In the grazing of cattle and the growing of gran,  
Than a strong man striving for fame or gain;  
Be even as kine in the red-tipp’d clover;  
For they lie down and their rests are rests,  
And the days are theirs, come sun come rain,  
To lie, rise up, and repose again;  
While we wish, yearn, and do pray in vain,  
And hope to ride on the billows of bosoms,  
And hope to rest in the haven of breasts,  
Till the heart is sicken’d and the fair hope dead;  
Be even as clover with its crown of blossoms,  
Even as blossoms ere the bloom is shed,

Kiss'd by kine and the brown sweet bee —  
For these have the sun, and moon, and air,  
And never a bit of the burthen of care;  
And with all of our caring what more have we?  
I would court content like a lover lonely,  
I would woo her, win her, and wear her only,  
And never go over this white sea wall  
For gold or glory or for aught at all."

He said these things as he stood with the Squire  
By the river's rim in the fields of clover,  
While the stream flow'd under and the clouds flew over  
With the sun tangled in and the fringes afire.  
So the Squire lean'd with a kind desire  
To humor his guest, and to hear his story;  
For his guest had gold, and he yet was clever,  
And mild of manner; and, what was more, he,  
In the morning's ramble, had praised the kine,  
The clover's reach and the meadows fine,  
And so made the Squire his friend for ever.

His brow was brown'd by the sun and weather,  
And touch'd by the terrible hand of time;  
His rich black beard had a fringe of rime,

As silk and silver inwove together.  
There were hoops of gold all over his hands,  
And across his breast, in chains and bands,  
Broad and massive as belts of leather.  
And the belts of gold were bright in the sun,  
But brighter than gold his black eyes shone  
From their sad face-setting so swarth and dun,  
Brighter than beautiful Santan stone,  
Brighter even than balls of fire,  
As he said, hot-faced, in the face of the Squire:--

“The pines bow'd over, the stream bent under  
The cabin cover'd with thatches of palm,  
Down in a cañon so deep, the wonder  
Was what it could know in its clime but calm.  
Down in a cañon so cleft asunder  
By sabre-stroke in the young world's prime,  
It look'd as broken by bolts of thunder,  
And bursted asunder and rent and riven  
By earthquakes, driven, the turbulent time  
A red cross lifted red hands to heaven.  
And this in the land where the sun goes down,  
And gold is gather'd by tide and by stream,  
And maidens are brown as the cocoa brown,

And a life is a love and a love is a dream ;  
Where the winds come in from the far Cathay  
With odor of spices and balm and bay,  
And summer abideth for aye and aye,  
Nor comes in a tour with the stately June,  
And comes too late and returns too soon  
To the land of the sun and of summer's noon.

“She stood in the shadows as the sun went down,  
Fretting her curls with her fingers brown,  
As tall as the silk-tipp'd tassel'd corn —  
Stood strangely watching as I weigh'd the gold  
We had wash'd that day where the river roll'd ;  
And her proud lip curl'd with a sun-clime scorn,  
As she ask'd, ‘Is she better or fairer than I? —  
She, that blonde in the land beyond,  
Where the sun is hid and the seas are high —  
That you gather in gold as the years go on,  
And hoard and hide it away for her  
As a squirrel burrows the black pine-burr?’

“Now the gold weigh'd well, but was lighter of weight  
Than we two had taken for days of late,  
So I was fretted, and, brow a-frown,

I said, 'She is fairer, and I loved her first,  
And shall love her last come the worst to worst.'  
Now her eyes were black and her skin was brown,  
But her lips grew livid and her eyes afire  
As I said this thing: and higher and higher  
The hot words ran, when the booming thunder  
Peal'd in the crags and the pine-tops under,  
While up by the cliff in the murky skies  
It look'd as the clouds had caught the fire —  
The flash and fire of her wonderful eyes.

“She turn'd from the door and down to the river,  
And mirror'd her face in the whimsical tide;  
Then threw back her hair, as if throwing a quiver,  
As an Indian throws it back far from his side  
And free from his hands, swinging fast to the shoulder  
When rushing to battle; and, rising, she sigh'd  
And shook, and shiver'd as aspens shiver.  
Then a great green snake slid into the river,  
Glistening, green, and with eyes of fire;  
Quick, double-handed she seized a boulder,  
And cast it with all the fury of passion,  
As with lifted head it went curving across,  
Swift darting its tongue like a fierce desire,

Curving and curving, lifting higher and higher,  
Bent and beautiful as a river moss ;  
Then, smitten, it turn'd, bent, broken and doubled,  
And lick'd, red-tongued, like a forkèd fire,  
And sank, and the troubled waters bubbled,  
And then swept on in their old swift fashion.

“I lay in my hammock: the air was heavy  
And hot and threat'ning; the very heaven  
Was holding its breath; and bees in a bevy  
Hid under my thatch; and birds were driven  
In clouds to the rocks in a hurried whirr  
As I peer'd down by the path for her.  
She stood like a bronze bent over the river,  
The proud eyes fix'd, the passion unspoken —  
When the heavens broke like a great dyke broken.  
Then, ere I fairly had time to give her  
A shout of warning, a rushing of wind  
And the rolling of clouds and a deafening din  
And a darkness that had been black to the blind  
Came down, as I shouted, ‘Come in! come in!  
Come under the roof, come up from the river,  
As up from a grave — come now, or come never!’  
The tassel'd tops of the pines were as weeds,



The red-woods rock'd like to lake-side reeds,  
And the world seem'd darken'd and drown'd for ever.

“One time in the night as the black wind shifted,  
And a flash of lightning stretch'd over the stream,  
I seem'd to see her with her brown hands lifted —  
Only seem'd to see, as one sees in a dream —  
With her eyes wide wild and her pale lips press'd,  
And the blood from her brow and the flood to her  
breast;

When the flood caught her hair as the flax in a wheel,  
And wheeling and whirling her round like a reel,  
Laugh'd loud her despair, then leapt long like a steed,  
Holding tight to her hair, folding fast to her heel,  
Laughing fierce, leaping far as if spurr'd to its speed . .  
Now mind, I tell you all this did but seem —  
Was seen as you see fearful scenes in a dream;  
For what the devil could the lightning show  
In a night like that, I should like to know!

“And then I slept, and sleeping I dream'd  
Of great green serpents with tongues of fire,  
And of death by drowning, and of after death —  
Of the day of judgment, wherein it seem'd

That she, the heathen, was bidden higher,  
Higher than I; that I clung to her side,  
And clinging struggled, and struggling cried,  
And crying, waken'd, all weak of my breath.

“Long leaves of the sun lay over the floor,  
And a chipmonk chirp'd in the open door,  
But above on his crag the eagle scream'd,  
Scream'd as he never had scream'd before.  
I rush'd to the river: the flood had gone  
Like a thief, with only his tracks upon  
The weeds and grasses and warm wet sand;  
And I ran after with reaching hand,  
And call'd as I reach'd and reach'd as I ran,  
And ran till I came to the cañon's van,  
Where the waters lay in a bent lagoon,  
Hook'd and crook'd like the hornèd moon.

“Here in the surge where the waters met,  
And the warm wave lifted, and the winds did fret  
The wave till it foam'd with rage on the land,  
She lay with the wave on the warm white sand;  
Her rich hair trail'd with the trailing weeds,  
And her small brown hands lay prone or lifted

As the wave sang strophes in the broken reeds,  
Or paused in pity, and in silence sifted  
Sands of gold, as upon her grave.  
And as sure as you see yon browsing kine,  
And breathe the breath of your meadows fine,  
When I went to my waist in the warm white wave  
And stood all pale in the wave to my breast,  
And reach'd for her in her rest and unrest,  
Her hands were lifted and reach'd to mine.

“Now mind, I tell you I cried, ‘Come in!  
Come in to the house, come out from the hollow,  
Come out of the storm, come up from the river!’  
I cried, and call'd, in that desolate din,  
Though I did not rush out, and in plain words give her  
A wordy warning of the flood to follow,  
Word by word, and letter by letter :  
But she knew it as well as I, and better ;  
For once in the desert of New Mexico  
When I sought frantically far and wide  
For the famous spot where Apaches shot  
With bullets of gold their buffalo,  
And she followed faithfully at my side,  
Threw me down in the hard hot sand

Utterly famish'd, and ready to die,  
And a speck arose in the red-hot sky —  
A speck no larger than a lady's hand —  
While she at my side bent tenderly over,  
Shielding my face from the sun as a cover,  
And wetting my face, as she watch'd by my side,  
From a skin she had borne till the high noon-tide,  
(I had emptied mine in the heat of the morning)  
When the thunder mutter'd far over the plain  
Like a monster bound or a beast in pain,  
She sprang the instant, and gave the warning,  
With her brown hand pointed to the burning skies.  
I was too weak unto death to arise,  
And I pray'd for death in my deep despair,  
And did curse and clutch in the sand in my rage,  
And bite in the bitter white ashen sage,  
That covers the desert like a coat of hair;  
But she knew the peril, and her iron will,  
With heart as true as the great North Star,  
Did bear me up to the palm-tipp'd hill,  
Where the fiercest beasts in a brotherhood,  
Beasts that had fled from the plain and far,  
In perfectest peace expectant stood,  
With their heads held high, and their limbs a-quiver

And ere she barely had time to breathe  
The boiling waters began to seethe  
From hill to hill in a booming river,  
Beating and breaking from hill to hill —  
Even while yet the sun shot fire,  
Without the shield of a cloud above —  
Filling the cañon as you would fill  
A wine-cup, drinking in swift desire,  
With the brim new-kiss'd by the lips you love.

“So you see she knew — knew perfectly well,  
As well as I could shout and tell,  
The mountains would send a flood to the plain,  
Sweeping the gorge like a hurricane,  
When the fire flash'd, and the thunder fell.  
Therefore it is wrong, and I say therefore  
Unfair, that a mystical brown wing'd moth  
Or midnight bat should for evermore  
Fan my face with its wings of air,  
And follow me up, down, everywhere,  
Flit past, pursue me, or fly before,  
Dimly limning in each fair place  
The full fix'd eyes and the sad brown face,  
So forty times worse than if it were wroth.

“I gather’d the gold I had hid in the earth,  
Hid over the door and hid under the hearth :  
Hoarded and hid, as the world went over,  
For the love of a blonde by a sun-brown’d lover ;  
And I said to myself, as I set my face  
To the East and afar from the desolate place,  
‘She has braided her tresses, and through her tears  
Look’d away to the West, for years, the years  
That I have wrought where the sun tans brown ;  
She has waked by night, she has watch’d by day,  
She has wept and wonder’d at my delay,  
Alone and in tears, with her head held down,  
Where the ships sail out and the seas swirl in,  
Forgetting to knit and refusing to spin.  
She shall lift her head, she shall see her lover,  
She shall hear his voice like a sea that rushes,  
She shall hold his gold in her hands of snow,  
And down on his breast she shall hide her blushes,  
And never a care shall her true heart know,  
While the clods are below, or the clouds are above her.

“On the fringe of the night she stood with her  
pitcher  
At the old town-pump : and oh ! passing fair

'I am riper now,' I said, 'but am richer,'  
And I lifted my hand to my beard and hair;  
'I am burnt by the sun, I am brown'd by the sea,  
I am white of my beard, and am bald, may be;  
Yet for all such things what can her heart care?'  
Then she moved; and I said, 'How marvellous fair!  
She look'd to the West, with her arm arch'd over;  
'Looking for me, her sun-brown'd lover,'  
I said to myself, with a hot heart-thump,  
And stepp'd me nearer to the storm-stain'd pump,  
As approaching a friend; for 'twas here of old  
Our troths were plighted and the tale was told.

"How young she was and how fair she was!  
How tall as a palm, and how pearly fair,  
As the night came down on her glorious hair!  
Then the night grew deep and the eye grew dim,  
And a sad-faced figure began to swim  
And float in my face, flit past, then pause,  
With her hands held up and her head held down,  
Yet face to face; and her face was brown.  
Now why did she come and confront me there,  
With the mould on her face and the moist in her hair,  
And a mystical stare in her marvellous eyes?"

I had call'd to her twice, 'Come in! come in!  
Come out of the storm to the calm within!'  
Now, that is the reason that I make complain  
That for ever and ever her face should arise,  
Facing face to face with her great sad eyes.  
I said then to myself, and I say it again,  
Gainsay it you, gainsay it who will,  
I shall say it over and over still,  
And will say it ever, for I know it true,  
That I did all that a man could do  
(Some good men's doings are done in vain)  
To save that passionate child of the sun,  
With her love as deep as the doubled main,  
And as strong and fierce as a troubled sea —  
That beautiful bronze with its soul of fire,  
Its tropical love and its kingly ire —  
That child as fix'd as a pyramid,  
As tall as a tula and as pure as a nun —  
And all there is of it the all I did,  
As often happens, was done in vain.  
So there is no bit of her blood on me.

“‘She is marvellous young and is wonderful fair,  
I said again, and my heart grew bold,



And beat and beat a charge for my feet.  
'Time that defaces us, places, and replaces us,  
And trenches the faces as in furrows for tears,  
Has traced here nothing in all these years.  
'Tis the hair of gold that I vex'd of old,  
The marvellous flowing flower of hair,  
And the peaceful eyes in their sweet surprise  
That I have kiss'd till the head swam round,  
And the delicate curve of the dimpled chin,  
And the pouting lips and the pearls within  
Are the same, the same, but so young, so fair!'  
My heart leapt out and back at a bound,  
As a child that starts, then stops, then lingers.  
'How wonderful young!' I lifted my fingers  
And fell to counting the round years over  
That I had dwelt where the sun goes down.  
Four full hands, and a finger over!  
'She does not know me, her truant lover,'  
I said to myself, for her brow was a-frown  
As I stepp'd still nearer, with my head held down,  
All abash'd and in blushes my brown face over;  
'She does not know me, her long-lost lover,  
For my beard's so long and my skin's so brown,  
That I well might pass myself for another.'

So I lifted my voice and I spoke aloud :  
‘Annette, my darling! Annette Macleod!’  
She started, she stopp’d, she turn’d, amazed,  
She stood all wonder with her eyes wild-wide,  
Then turn’d in terror down the dusk wayside,  
And cried as she fled, ‘The man is crazed,  
And calls the maiden name of my mother!’

“From a scene that saddens, from a ghost that wearies  
From a white isle set in a wall of seas,  
From the kine and clover and all of these  
I shall set my face for the fierce Sierras.  
I shall make me mates on the stormy border,  
I shall beard the grizzly, shall battle again,  
And from mad disorder shall mould me order  
And a wild repose for a weary brain.

“Let the world turn over, and over, and over,  
And toss and tumble like a beast in pain,  
Crack, quake, and tremble, and turn full over  
And die, and never rise up again ;  
Let her dash her peaks through the purple cover,  
Let her splash her seas in the face of the sun —  
I have no one to love me now, not one,

In a world as full as a world can hold ;  
So I will get gold as I erst have done,  
I will gather a coffin top-full of gold,  
To take to the door of Death, to buy  
Content, when I double my hands and die.  
There is nothing that is, be it beast or human,  
Love of maiden or the lust of man,  
Curse of man or the kiss of woman,  
For which I care or for which I can  
Give a love for a love or a hate for a hate,  
A curse for a curse or a kiss for a kiss,  
Since life has neither a bane nor a bliss,  
To one that is cheek by jowl with fate ;  
For I have lifted and reach'd far over  
To the tree of promise, and have pluck'd of all  
And ate — ate ashes, and myrrh, and gall.  
Go down, go down to the fields of clover,  
Down with the kine in the pastures fine,  
And give no thought, or care, or labor  
For maid or man, good name or neighbor ;  
For I have given, and what have I? —  
Given all my youth, my years, and labor,  
And a love as warm as the world is cold,  
For a beautiful, bright, and delusive lie.

Gave youth, gave years, gave love for gold,  
Giving and getting, yet what have I  
But an empty palm and a face forgotten,  
And a hope that's dead, and a heart that's rotten?  
Red gold on the waters is no part bread,  
But sinks dull-sodden like a lump of lead,  
And returns no more in the face of Heaven.  
So the dark day thickens at the hope deferr'd,  
And the strong heart sickens and the soul is stirr'd  
Like a weary sea when his hands are lifted,  
Imploring peace, with his raiment drifted  
And driven afar and rent and riven.

“The red ripe stars hang low overhead,  
Let the good and the light of soul reach up,  
Pluck gold as plucking a butter-cup:  
But I am as lead and my hands are red;  
There is nothing that is that can wake one passion  
In soul or body, or one sense of pleasure,  
No fame or fortune in the world's wide measure,  
Or love full-bosomed or in any fashion.

“The doubled sea, and the troubled heaven,  
Starr'd and barr'd by the bolts of fire,

In storms where stars are riven, and driven  
As clouds through heaven, as a dust blown higher ;  
The angels hurl'd to the realms infernal,  
Down from the walls in unholy wars  
That man misnameth the falling stars ;  
The purple robe of the proud Eternal,  
The Tyrian blue with its fringe of gold,  
Shrouding His countenance, fold on fold —  
All are dull and tame as a tale that is told.  
For the loves that hasten and the hates that linger,  
The nights that darken and the days that glisten,  
And men that lie and maidens that listen,  
I care not even the snap of my finger.

“So the sun climbs up, and on, and over,  
And the days go out and the tides come in,  
And the pale moon rubs on the purple cover  
Till worn as thin and as bright as tin ;  
But the ways are dark and the days are dreary,  
And the dreams of youth are but dust in age,  
And the heart gets harden'd, and the hands grow weary  
Holding them up for their heritage.

“And the strain'd heart-strings wear bare and brittle,

And the fond hope dies when so long deferr'd ;  
Then the fair hope lies in the heart interr'd,  
So stiff and cold in its coffin of lead.  
For you promise so great and you gain so little ;  
For you promise so great of glory and gold,  
And gain so little that the hands grow cold ;  
And for gold and glory you gain instead  
A fond heart sicken'd and a fair hope dead.

“So I have said, and I say it over,  
And can prove it over and over again,  
That the four-footed beasts on the red-crown'd clover,  
The pied and hornèd beasts on the plain  
That lie down, rise up, and repose again,  
And do never take care or toil or spin,  
Nor buy, nor build, nor gather in gold,  
Though the days go out and the tides come in,  
Are better than we by a thousand fold ;  
For what is it all, in the words of fire,  
But a vexing of soul and a vain desire ?”

WITH WALKER IN NICARAGUA.

*Come to my sun land! Come with me  
To the land I love; where the sun and sea  
Are wed forever: where palm and pine  
Are filled with singers; where tree and vine  
Are voiced with prophets! O come, and you  
Shall sing a song with the seas that swirl  
And kiss their hands to the cold white girl,  
To the maiden moon in her mantle of blue.*



WITH WALKER IN NICARAGUA.

I.

**H**E was a brick: let this be said  
Above my brave dishonored dead.  
I ask no more, this is not much,  
Yet I disdain a colder touch  
To memory as dear as his;  
For he was true as any star,  
And brave as Yuba's grizzlies are,  
Yet gentle as a panther is,  
Mouthing her young in her first fierce kiss;  
Tall, courtly, grand as any king,  
Yet simple as a child at play,  
In camp and court the same always,  
And never moved at any thing;  
A dash of sadness in his air,  
Born, may be, of his over care,  
And, may be, born of a despair  
In early love — I never knew;

I question'd not, as many do,  
 Of things as sacred as this is ;  
 I only knew that he to me  
 Was all a father, friend, could be ;  
 I sought to know no more than this  
 Of history of him or his.

A piercing eye, a princely air,  
 A presence like a chevalier,  
 Half angel and half Lucifer ;  
 Fair fingers, jewel'd manifold  
 With great gems set in hoops of gold ;  
 Sombréro black, with plume of snow  
 That swept his long silk locks below ;  
 A red serape with bars of gold,  
 Heedless falling, fold on fold ;  
 A sash of silk, where flashing swung  
 A sword as swift as serpent's tongue,  
 In sheath of silver chased in gold ;  
 A face of blended pride and pain,  
 Of mingled pleading and disdain,  
 With shades of glory and of grief ;  
 And Spanish spurs with bells of steel  
 That dash'd and dangl'd at the heel —

The famous filibuster chief  
Stood by his tent 'mid tall brown trees  
That top the fierce Cordilleras,  
With brawn arm arch'd above his brow ;—  
Stood still — he stands, a picture, now —  
Long gazing down the sunset seas.

## II.

WHAT strange strong bearded men were these  
He led toward the tropic seas!  
Men sometime of uncommon birth,  
Men rich in histories untold,  
Who boasted not, though more than bold,  
Blown from the four parts of the earth.  
Men mighty-thew'd as Samson was,  
That had been kings in any cause,  
A remnant of the races past ;  
Dark-brow'd as if in iron cast,  
Broad-breasted as twin gates of brass, —  
Men strangely brave and fiercely true,  
Who dared the West when giants were,  
Who err'd, yet bravely dared to err ;  
A remnant of that early few  
Who held no crime or curse or vice

As dark as that of cowardice ;  
With blendings of the worst and best  
Of faults and virtues that have blest  
Or cursed or thrill'd the human breast.

They rode, a troop of bearded men,  
Rode two and two out from the town,  
And some were blonde and some were brown  
And all as brave as Sioux ; but when  
From San Bennetto south the line  
That bound them in the laws of men  
Was passed, and peace stood mute behind  
And streamed a banner to the wind  
The world knew not, there was a sign  
Of awe, of silence, rear and van.  
Men thought who never thought before ;  
I heard the clang and clash of steel  
From sword at hand or spur at heel  
And iron feet, but nothing more.  
Some thought of Texas, some of Maine,  
But more of rugged Tennessee, —  
Of scenes in Southern vales of wine,  
And scenes in Northern hills of pine  
As scenes they might not meet again ;

And one of Avon thought, and one  
Thought of an isle beneath the sun,  
And one of Rowley, one the Rhine,  
And one turned sadly to the Spree.

Defeat meant something more than death.  
The world was ready, keen to smite,  
As stern and still beneath its ban  
With iron will and bated breath,  
Their hands against their fellow-man,  
They rode — each man an Ishmaelite.  
But when we struck the hills of pine,  
These men dismounted, doffed their cares,  
Talked loud and laughed old love affairs,  
And on the grass took meat and wine,  
And never gave a thought again  
To land or life that lay behind,  
Or love, or care of any kind  
Beyond the present cross or pain.

And I, a waif of stormy seas,  
A child among such men as these,  
Was blown along this savage surf  
And rested with them on the turf,

And took delight below the trees.  
I did not question, did not care  
To know the right or wrong. I saw  
'That savage freedom had a spell,  
And loved it more than I can tell,  
And snapped my fingers at the law.  
I bear my burden of the shame, —  
I shun it not, and naught forget,  
However much I may regret:  
I claim some candor to my name,  
And courage cannot change or die. —  
Did they deserve to die? they died.  
Let justice then be satisfied,  
And as for me, why what am I?

The standing side by side till death,  
The dying for some wounded friend,  
The faith that failed not to the end,  
The strong endurance till the breath  
And body took their ways apart,  
I only know. I keep my trust.  
Their vices! earth has them by heart.  
Their virtues! they are with their dust.

How wound we through the solid wood,  
With all its broad boughs hung in green,  
With lichen-mosses trail'd between!  
How waked the spotted beasts of prey,  
Deep sleeping from the face of day,  
And dash'd them like a troubled flood  
Down some defile and denser wood!

And snakes, long, lithe and beautiful  
As green and graceful-bough'd bamboo,  
Did twist and twine them through and through  
The boughs that hung red-fruited full.  
One, monster-sized, above me hung,  
Close eyed me with his bright pink eyes,  
Then raised his folds, and sway'd and swung,  
And lick'd like lightning his red tongue,  
Then oped his wide mouth with surprise;  
He writhed and curved, and raised and lower'd  
His folds like liftings of the tide,  
And sank so low I touched his side,  
As I rode by, with my broad sword.

The trees shook hands high overhead,  
And bow'd and intertwined across

The narrow way, while leaves and moss  
And luscious fruit, gold-hued and red,  
Through all the canopy of green,  
Let not one sunshaft shoot between.

Birds hung and swung, green-robed and red,  
Or droop'd in curved lines dreamily,  
Rainbows reversed, from tree to tree,  
Or sang low-hanging overhead —  
Sang low, as if they sang and slept,  
Sang faint, like some far waterfall,  
And took no note of us at all,  
Though nuts that in the way were spread  
Did crush and crackle as we stept.

Wild lilies, tall as maidens are,  
As sweet of breath, as pearly fair,  
As fair as faith, as pure as truth,  
Fell thick before our every tread,  
As in a sacrifice to ruth,  
And all the air with perfume fill'd  
More sweet than ever man distill'd.  
The ripen'd fruit a fragrance shed  
And hung in hand-reach overhead,



In nest of blossoms on the shoot,  
The bending shoot that bore the fruit.

How ran the monkeys through the leaves!  
How rush'd they through, brown clad and blue,  
Like shuttles hurried through and through  
The threads a hasty weaver weaves!

How quick they cast us fruits of gold,  
Then loosen'd hand and all foothold,  
And hung limp, limber, as if dead,  
Hung low and listless overhead;  
And all the time, with half-oped eyes  
Bent full on us in mute surprise —  
Look'd wisely too, as wise hens do  
That watch you with the head askew.

The long days through from blossom'd trees  
There came the sweet song of sweet bees,  
With chorus-tones of cockatoo  
That slid his beak along the bough,  
And walk'd and talk'd and hung and swung,  
In crown of gold and coat of blue,  
The wisest fool that ever sung,  
Or had a crown, or held a tongue.

Oh when we broke the sombre wood  
And pierced at last the sunny plain,  
How wild and still with wonder stood  
The proud mustangs with banner'd mane,  
And necks that never knew a rein,  
And nostrils lifted high, and blown,  
Fierce breathing as a hurricane :  
Yet by their leader held the while  
In solid column, square, and file,  
And ranks more martial than our own !

Some one above the common kind,  
Some one to look to, lean upon,  
I think is much a woman's mind ;  
But it was mine, and I had drawn  
A rein beside the chief while we  
Rode through the forest leisurely ;  
When he grew kind and questioned me  
Of kindred, home, and home affair,  
Of how I came to wander there,  
And had my father herds and land  
And men in hundreds at command ?  
At which I silent shook my head,  
Then, timid, met his eyes and said,

“Not so. Where sunny-foot hills run  
Down to the North Pacific sea,  
And Willamette meets the sun  
In many angles, patiently  
My father tends his flocks of snow,  
And turns alone the mellow sod  
And sows some fields not over broad,  
And mourns my long delay in vain,  
Nor bids one serve-man come or go;  
While mother from her wheel or churn,  
And may be from the milking shed,  
There lifts an humble weary head  
To watch and wish for my return  
Across the camas’ blossom’d plain.”

He held his bent head very low,  
A sudden sadness in his air;  
Then turned and touched my yellow hair  
And took the long locks in his hand,  
Toyed with them, smiled, and let them go,  
Then thrummed about his saddle bow  
As thought ran swift across his face;  
Then turning sudden from his place,  
He gave some short and quick command.

They brought the best steed of the band,  
They swung a bright sword at my side,  
He bade me mount and by him ride,  
And from that hour to the end  
I never felt the need of friend.

Far in the wildest quinine wood  
We found a city old — so old,  
Its very walls were turn'd to mould,  
And stately trees upon them stood.  
No history has mention'd it,  
No map has given it a place ;  
The last dim trace of tribe and race —  
The world's forgetfulness is fit.

It held one structure grand and moss'd,  
Mighty as any castle sung,  
And old when oldest Ind was young,  
With threshold Christian never cross'd ;  
A temple builded to the sun,  
Along whose sombre altar-stone  
Brown bleeding virgins had been strown  
Like leaves, when leaves are crisp and dun,

In ages ere the Sphinx was born,  
Or Babylon had birth or morn.

My chief led up the marble step —  
He ever led, broad blade in hand —  
When down the stones, with double hand  
Clutch'd to his blade, a savage leapt,  
Hot bent to barter life for life.  
The chieftain drove his bowie knife  
Full through his thick and broad breast-bone,  
And broke the point against the stone,  
The dark stone of the temple wall.  
I saw him loose his hold and fall  
Full length with head hung down the step;  
I saw run down a ruddy flood  
Of rushing pulsing human blood.  
Then from the crowd a woman crept  
And kiss'd the gory hands and face,  
And smote herself. Then one by one  
The dark crowd crept and did the same,  
Then bore the dead man from the place.  
Down darken'd aisles the brown priests came,  
So picture-like, with sandal'd feet  
And long gray dismal grass-wove gowns,

So like the pictures of old time,  
And stood all still and dark of frowns,  
At blood upon the stone and street.  
So we laid ready hand to sword  
And boldly spoke some bitter word;  
But they were stubborn still, and stood  
Dark frowning as a winter wood,  
And mutt'ring something of the crime  
Of blood upon the temple stone,  
As if the first that it had known.

We turned toward the massive door  
With clash of steel at heel, and with  
Some swords all red and ready drawn.  
I traced the sharp edge of my sword  
Along the marble wall and floor  
For crack or crevice; there was none.  
From one vast mount of marble stone  
The mighty temple had been cored  
By nut-brown children of the sun,  
When stars were newly bright and blithe  
Of song along the rim of dawn,  
A mighty marble monolith!

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## III.

\* \* \* \* \*

THROUGH marches through the mazy wood,  
 And may be through too much of blood,  
 At last we came down to the seas.  
 A city stood, white-wall'd, and brown  
 With age, in nest of orange trees;  
 And this we won, and many a town  
 And rancho reaching up and down,  
 Then rested in the red-hot days  
 Beneath the blossom'd orange trees,  
 Made drowsy with the drum of bees,  
 And drank in peace the south-sea breeze,  
 Made sweet with sweeping boughs of bays.

Well! there were maidens, shy at first,  
 And then, ere long, not over shy,  
 Yet pure of soul and proudly chare.  
 No love on earth has such an eye!  
 No land there is is bless'd or curs'd  
 With such a limb or grace of face,  
 Or gracious form, or genial air!  
 In all the bleak North-land not one  
 Hath been so warm of soul to me

As coldest soul by that warm sea,  
Beneath the bright hot centred sun.

No lands where any ices are  
Approach, or ever dare compare  
With warm loves born beneath the sun.  
The one the cold white steady star,  
The lifted shifting sun the one.  
I grant you fond, I grant you fair,  
I grant you honor, trust and truth,  
And years as beautiful as youth,  
And many years beyond the sun,  
And faith as fix'd as any star ;  
But all the North-land hath not one  
So warm of soul as sun-maids are.

I was but in my boyhood then,  
I count my fingers over, so,  
And find it years and years ago,  
And I am scarcely yet of men.  
But I was tall and lithe and fair,  
With rippled tide of yellow hair,  
And prone to mellowness of heart ;  
While she was tawny-red like wine,



With black hair boundless as the night.  
As for the rest I knew my part,  
At least was apt, and willing quite  
To learn, to listen, and incline  
To teacher warm and wise as mine.

O bright, bronzed maidens of the sun!  
So fairer far to look upon  
Than curtains of the Solomon,  
Or Kedar's tents, or any one,  
Or any thing beneath the sun!  
What follow'd then? What has been done,  
And said, and writ, and read, and sung?  
What will be writ and read again,  
While love is life, and life remain? —  
While maids will heed, and men have tongue?

What follow'd then? But let that pass.  
I hold one picture in my heart,  
Hung curtain'd, and not any part  
Of all its dark tint ever has  
Been look'd upon by any one.  
But if, may be, one brave and strong  
As liftings of the bristled sea

Steps forth from out the days to be  
And knocks heart-wise, and enters bold  
A rugged heart inured to wrong —  
As one would storm a strong stronghold —  
Strong-footed, and most passing fair  
Of truth, and thought beyond her years,  
We two will lift the crape in tears,  
Will turn the canvas to the sun,  
Will trace the features one by one  
Of my dear dead, in still despair.

Love well who will, love wise who can,  
But love, be loved, for God is love ;  
Love pure, like cherubim above ;  
Love maids, and hate not any man.  
Sit as sat we by orange tree,  
Beneath the broad bough and grape-vine  
Top-tangled in the tropic shine,  
Close face to face, close to the sea,  
And full of the red-centred sun,  
With grand sea-songs upon the soul,  
Roll'd melody on melody,  
Like echoes of deep organ's roll,  
And love, nor question any one.

If God is love, is love not God ?  
As high priests say, let prophets sing,  
Without reproach or reckoning ;  
This much I say, knees knit to sod,  
And low voice lifted, questioning.

Let eyes be not dark eyes, but dreams,  
Or drifting clouds with flashing fires,  
Or far delights, or fierce desires,  
Yet not be more than well beseems ;  
Let hearts be pure and strong and true,  
Let lips be luscious and blood-red,  
Let earth in gold be garmented  
And tented in her tent of blue,  
Let goodly rivers glide between  
Their leaning willow walls of green,  
Let all things be fill'd of the sun,  
And full of warm winds of the sea,  
And I beneath my vine and tree  
Take rest, nor war with any one ;  
Then I will thank God with full cause,  
Say this is well, is as it was.

Let lips be red, for God has said

Love is like one gold-garmented,  
And made them so for such a time.  
Therefore let lips be red, therefore  
Let love be ripe in ruddy prime,  
Let hope beat high, let hearts be true,  
And you be wise thereat, and you  
Drink deep, and ask not any more.

Let red lips lift, proud curl'd, to kiss,  
And round limbs lean and raise and reach  
In love too passionate for speech,  
Too full of blessedness and bliss  
For any thing but this and this ;  
Let luscious lips lean hot to kiss  
And swoon in love, while all the air  
Is redolent with balm of trees,  
And mellow with the song of bees,  
While birds sit singing everywhere —  
And you will have not any more  
Than I in boyhood, by that shore  
Of olives, had in years of yore.

Let the unclean think things unclean ;  
I swear tip-toed, with lifted hands,

That we were pure as sea-washed sands,  
That not one coarse thought came between ;  
Believe or disbelieve who will,  
Unto the pure all things are pure ;  
As for the rest, I can endure  
Alike their good will or their ill.

She boasted Montezuma's blood,  
Was pure of soul as Tahoe's flood,  
And strangely fair and princely soul'd,  
And she was rich in blood and gold —  
More rich in love grown over-bold  
From its own consciousness of strength.  
How warm ! Oh, not for any cause  
Could I declare how warm she was,  
In her brown beauty and hair's length.  
We loved in the sufficient sun,  
We lived in elements of fire,  
For love is fire and fierce desire ;  
Yet lived as pure as priest and nun.

We lay slow rocking in the bay  
In birch canoe beneath the crags  
Thick, topp'd with palm, like sweeping flags

Between us and the burning day.  
The red-eyed crocodile lay low  
Or lifted from his rich rank fern,  
And watch'd us and the tide by turn,  
And we slow cradled to and fro.

And slow we cradled on till night,  
And told the old tale, overtold,  
As misers in recounting gold  
Each time do take a new delight.  
With her pure passion-given grace  
She drew her warm self close to me;  
And, her two brown hands on my knee,  
And her two black eyes in my face,  
She then grew sad and guess'd at ill,  
And in the future seem'd to see  
With woman's ken of prophecy;  
Yet proffer'd her devotion still.  
And plaintive so, she gave a sign,  
A token cut of virgin gold,  
That all her tribe should ever hold  
Its wearer as some one divine,  
Nor touch him with a hostile hand.  
And I in turn gave her a blade,

A dagger, worn as well by maid  
As man, in that half-lawless land ;  
It had a massive silver hilt,  
Had a most keen and cunning blade,  
A gift by chief and comrades made  
For reckless blood at Rivas spilt.  
"Show this," said I, "too well 'tis known,  
And worth an hundred lifted spears,  
Should ill beset your sunny years ;  
There is not one in Walker's band,  
But at the sight of this alone,  
Will reach a brave and ready hand,  
And make your right or wrong his own."

## IV.

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Love while 'tis day ; night cometh soon,  
Wherein no man or maiden may ;  
Love in the strong young prime of day ;  
Drink drunk with love in ripe red noon,  
Red noon of love and life and sun ;  
Walk in love's light as in sunshine,  
Drink in that sun as drinking wine,

Drink swift, nor question any one ;  
For loves change sure as man or moon,  
And wane like warm full days of June.

O Love, so fair of promises,  
Bend here thy brow, blow here thy kiss,  
Bend here thy bow above the storm  
But once, if only this once more.  
Comes there no patient Christ to save,  
Touch and re-animate thy form  
Long three days dead and in the grave?  
Spread here thy silken net of jet ;  
Since man is false, since maids forget,  
Since man must fall for his sharp sin,  
Be thou the pit that I fall in ;  
I seek no safer fall than this.  
Since man must die for some dark sin,  
Blind leading blind, let come to this,  
And my death-crime be one deep kiss.  
Lo! I have found another land,  
May I not find another love,  
True, trusting as a bosom'd dove,  
To lay its whole heart in my hand?  
But lips that leap and cling and crush,



And limbs that twist and intertwine  
 With passion as a passion-vine,  
 And veins that throb and swell and rush —  
 Be ye forbidden fruit and wine.  
 Such passion is not fair or fit  
 Or fashion'd tall — touch none of it.

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Ill comes disguised in many forms :  
 Fair winds are but a prophecy  
 Of foulest winds full soon to be —  
 The brighter these, the blacker they ;  
 The clearest night has darkest day,  
 And brightest days bring blackest storms.  
 There came reverses to our arms ;  
 I saw the signal-light's alarms  
 At night red-crescenting the bay.  
 The foe pour'd down a flood next day  
 As strong as tides when tides are high,  
 And drove us bleeding in the sea,  
 In such wild haste of flight that we  
 Had hardly time to arm and fly.

Blown from the shore, borne far a-sea,

I lifted my two hands on high  
With wild soul plashing to the sky,  
And cried, "O more than crowns to me  
Farewell at last to love and thee!"  
I walk'd the deck, I kiss'd my hand  
Back to the far and fading shore,  
And bent a knee as to implore,  
Until the last dark head of land  
Slid down behind the dimpled sea.  
At last I sank in troubled sleep,  
A very child, rock'd by the deep,  
Sad questioning the fate of her  
Before the savage conqueror.

The loss of comrades, power, place,  
A city wall'd, cool shaded ways,  
Cost me no care at all; somehow  
I only saw her sad brown face,  
And — I was younger then than now.

Red flash'd the sun across the deck,  
Slow flapp'd the idle sails, and slow  
The black ship cradled to and fro.  
Afar my city lay, a speck

Of white against a line of blue ;  
Around, half lounging on the deck,  
Some comrades chatted two by two.  
I held a new-fill'd glass of wine,  
And with the mate talk'd as in play  
Of fierce events of yesterday,  
To coax his light life into mine.

He jerk'd the wheel, as slow he said,  
Low laughing with averted head,  
And so, half sad : " You bet they 'll fight ;  
They follow'd in canim, canoe,  
A perfect fleet, that on the blue  
Lay dancing till the mid of night.  
Would you believe ! one little cuss —  
(He turn'd his stout head slow sidewise,  
And 'neath his hat-rim took the skies) —  
" In petticoats did follow us  
The livelong night, and at the dawn  
Her boat lay rocking in the lee,  
Scarce one short pistol-shot from me."  
This said the mate, half mournfully,  
Then peck'd at us ; for he had drawn,  
By bright light heart and homely wit,

A knot of us around the wheel,  
Which he stood whirling like a reel,  
For the still ship reck'd not of it.

“ And where's she now ? ” one careless said,  
With eyes slow lifting to the brine,  
Swift swept the instant far by mine ;  
The bronzed mate listed, shook his head,  
Spirited a stream of amber wide  
Across and over the ship side,  
Jerk'd at the wheel, and slow replied :

“ She had a dagger in her hand,  
She rose, she raised it, tried to stand,  
But fell, and so upset herself ;  
Yet still the poor brown savage elf,  
Each time the long light wave would toss  
And lift her form from out the sea,  
Would shake a strange bright blade at me  
With rich hilt chased a cunning cross.  
At last she sank, but still the same  
She shook her dagger in the air,  
As if to still defy and dare,  
And sinking seem'd to call your name.”

I dash'd my wine against the wall,  
I rush'd across the deck, and all  
The sea I swept and swept again,  
With lifted hand, with eye and glass,  
But all was idle and in vain.  
I saw a red-bill'd sea-gull pass,  
A petrel sweeping round and round,  
I heard the far white sea-surf sound,  
But no sign could I hear or see  
Of one so more than seas to me.

I cursed the ship, the shore, the sea,  
The brave brown mate, the bearded men ;  
I had a fever then, and then  
Ship, shore and sea were one to me ;  
And weeks we on the dead waves lay,  
And I more truly dead than they.  
At last some rested on an isle ;  
The few strong-breasted with a smile  
Returning to the sunny shore,  
Scarce counting of the pain or cost,  
Scarce recking if they won or lost ;  
They sought but action, ask'd no more ;  
They counted life but as a game,

With full per cent against them, and  
Staked all upon a single hand,  
And lost or won, content the same.

I never saw my chief again,  
I never sought again the shore,  
Or saw my white-wall'd city more.  
I could not bear the more than pain  
At sight of blossom'd orange trees  
Or blended song of birds and bees,  
The sweeping shadows of the palm  
Or spicy breath of bay and balm.  
And, striving to forget the while,  
I wander'd through the dreary isle,  
Here black with juniper, and there  
Made white with goats in summer coats,  
The only things that anywhere  
We found with life in all the land,  
Save birds that ran long-bill'd and brown,  
Long-legg'd and still as shadows are,  
Like dancing shadows, up and down  
The sea-rim on the swelt'ring sand.

The warm sea laid his dimpled face,

With every white hair smoothed in place,  
 As if asleep against the land ;  
 Great turtles slept upon his breast,  
 As thick as eggs in any nest ;  
 I could have touched them with my hand.

\* \* \* \* \*

I would some things were dead and hid,  
 Well dead and buried deep as hell,  
 With recollection dead as well,  
 And resurrection God-forbid.  
 They irk me with their weary spell  
 Of fascination, eye to eye,  
 And hot mesmeric serpent hiss,  
 Through all the dull eternal days.  
 Let them turn by, go on their ways,  
 Let them depart or let me die ;  
 For life is but a beggar's lie,  
 And as for death, I grin at it ;  
 I do not care one whiff or whit  
 Whether it be or that or this.

I give my hand ; the world is wide ;  
 Then farewell memories of yore,

Between us let strife be no more ;  
 Turn as you choose to either side ;  
 Say, Fare-you-well, shake hands and say —  
 Speak loud, and say with stately grace,  
 Hand clutching hand, face bent to face —  
 Farewell for ever and a day.

O passion-toss'd and bleeding past,  
 Part now, part well, part wide apart,  
 As ever ships on ocean slid  
 Down, down the sea, hull, sail, and mast ;  
 And in the album of my heart  
 Let hide the pictures of your face,  
 With other pictures in their place,  
 Slid over like a coffin's lid.

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The days and grass grow long together ;  
 They now fell short and crisp again,  
 And all the fair face of the main  
 Grew dark and wrinkled at the weather.  
 Through all the summer sun's decline  
 Fell news of triumphs and defeats,



Of hard advances, hot retreats —  
Then days and days and not a line.

At last one night they came. I knew  
Ere yet the boat had touch'd the land  
That all was lost: they were so few  
I near could count them on one hand;  
But he the leader led no more.  
The proud chief still disdain'd to fly,  
But, like one wreck'd, clung to the shore,  
And struggled on, and struggling fell  
From power to a prison-cell,  
And only left that cell to die.

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My recollection, like a ghost,  
Goes from this sea to that sea-side,  
Goes and returns as turns the tide,  
Then turns again unto the coast.  
I know not which I mourn the most,  
My brother or my virgin bride,  
My chief or my unwedded wife.  
The one was as the lordly sun,  
To joy in, bask in, and admire;

The peaceful moon was as the one,  
To love, to look to, and desire ;  
And both a part of my young life.

\* \* \* \* \*

Years after, shelter'd from the sun  
Beneath a Sacramento bay,  
A black Muchacho by me lay  
Along the long grass crisp and dun,  
His brown mule browsing by his side,  
And told with all a Peon's pride  
How he once fought, how long and well,  
Broad breast to breast, red hand to hand,  
Against a foe for his fair land,  
And how the fierce invader fell ;  
And artless told me how he died.

To die with hand and brow unbound  
He gave his gems and jewell'd sword ;  
Thus at the last the warrior found  
Some freedom for his steel's reward.  
He walk'd out from the prison-wall  
Dress'd like a prince for a parade,  
And made no note of man or maid,

But gazed out calmly over all ;  
Then look'd afar, half paused, and then  
Above the mottled sea of men  
He kiss'd his thin hand to the sun ;  
Then smiled so proudly none had known  
But he was stepping to a throne,  
Yet took no note of any one.  
A nude brown beggar Peon child,  
Encouraged as the captive smiled,  
Look'd up, half scared, half pitying ;  
He stoop'd, he caught it from the sands,  
Put bright coins in its two brown hands,  
Then strode on like another king.

Two deep, a musket's length, they stood,  
A-front, in sandals, nude, and dun  
As death and darkness wove in one,  
Their thick lips thirsting for his blood.  
He took their black hands one by one,  
And, smiling with a patient grace,  
Forgave them all and took his place.  
He bared his broad brow to the sun,  
Gave one long last look to the sky,  
The white-wing'd clouds that hurried by,

The olive hills in orange hue ;  
A last list to the cockatoo  
That hung by beak from cocoa-bough  
Hard by, and hung and sung as though  
He never was to sing again,  
Hung all red-crown'd and robed in green,  
With belts of gold and blue between. —

A bow, a touch of heart, a pall  
Of purple smoke, a crash, a thud,  
A warrior's raiment rent, and blood,  
A face in dust and — that was all.

Success had made him more than king ;  
Defeat made him the vilest thing  
In name, contempt or hate can bring :  
So much the leaded dice of war  
Do make or mar of character.

Speak ill who will of him, he died  
In all disgrace ; say of the dead  
His heart was black, his hands were red —  
Say this much, and be satisfied ;  
Gloat over it all undenied.

I only say that he to me,  
Whatever he to others was,  
Was truer far than any one  
That I have known beneath the sun,  
Sinner, saint, or Pharisee,  
As boy or man, for any cause;  
I simply say he was my friend  
When strong of hand and fair of fame:  
Dead and disgraced, I stand the same  
To him, and so shall to the end.

I lay this crude wreath on his dust,  
Inweve with sad, sweet memories  
Recall'd here by these colder seas.  
I leave the wild bird with his trust,  
To sing and say him nothing wrong;  
I wake no rivalry of song.

He lies low in the levell'd sand,  
Unshelter'd from the tropic sun,  
And now of all he knew not one  
Will speak him fair in that far land.  
Perhaps 'twas this that made me seek,  
Disguised, his grave one winter-tide;

A weakness for the weaker side,  
A siding with the helpless weak.

A palm not far held out a hand,  
Hard by a long green bamboo swung,  
And bent like some great bow unstrung,  
And quiver'd like a willow wand ;  
Beneath a broad banana's leaf,  
Perch'd on its fruits that crooked hang,  
A bird in rainbow splendor sang  
A low sad song of temper'd grief.

No sod, no sign, no cross nor stone,  
But at his side a cactus green  
Upheld its lances long and keen ;  
It stood in hot red sands alone,  
Flat-palm'd and fierce with lifted spears ;  
One bloom of crimson crown'd its head,  
A drop of blood, so bright, so red,  
Yet redolent as roses' tears.  
In my left hand I held a shell,  
All rosy lipp'd and pearly red ;  
I laid it by his lowly bed,  
For he did love so passing well

The grand songs of the solemn sea.  
O shell! sing well, wild, with a will,  
When storms blow loud and birds be still,  
The wildest sea-song known to thee!

I said some things, with folded hands,  
Soft whisper'd in the dim sea-sound,  
And eyes held humbly to the ground,  
And frail knees sunken in the sands.  
He had done more than this for me,  
And yet I could not well do more:  
I turned me down the olive shore,  
And set a sad face to the sea.





**CALIFORNIAN.**

*Glintings of day in the darkness,  
Flashings of flint and of steel,  
Blended in gossamer texture  
The ideal and the real,  
Linn'd like the phantom-ship shadow,  
Crowding up under the keel.*

## CALIFORNIAN.

### I.

I STAND beside the mobile sea ;  
And sails are spread, and sails are furl'd  
From farthest corners of the world,  
And fold like white wings wearily.  
Steamships go up, and some go down  
In haste, like traders in a town,  
And seem to see and beckon all.  
Afar at sea some white shapes flee,  
With arms stretch'd like a ghost's to me,  
And cloud-like sails far blown and curl'd,  
Then glide down to the under-world.  
As if blown bare in winter blasts  
Of leaf and limb, tall naked masts  
Are rising from the restless sea,  
So still and desolate and tall,  
I seem to see them gleam and shine  
With clinging drops of dripping brine.

Broad still brown wings flit here and there,  
Thin sea-blue wings wheel everywhere,  
And white wings whistle through the air  
I hear a thousand sea-gulls call.

Behold the ocean on the beach  
Kneel lowly down as it in prayer.  
I hear a moan as of despair,  
While far at sea do toss and reach  
Some things so like white pleading hands.  
The ocean's thin and hoary hair  
Is trail'd along the silver'd sands,  
At every sigh and sounding moan  
'Tis not a place for mirthfulness,  
But meditation deep, and prayer,  
And kneelings on the salted sod,  
Where man must own his littleness  
And know the mightiness of God.  
The very birds shriek in distress  
And sound the ocean's monotone.

Dared I but say a prophecy,  
As sang the holy men of old,  
Of rock-built cities yet to be

Along these shining shores of gold,  
Crowding athirst into the sea,  
What wondrous marvels might be told!  
Enough, to know that empire here  
Shall burn her loftiest, brightest star;  
Here art and eloquence shall reign,  
As o'er the wolf-rear'd realm of old;  
Here learn'd and famous from afar,  
To pay their noble court, shall come,  
And shall not seek or see in vain,  
But look on all with wonder dumb.

Afar the bright Sierras lie  
A swaying line of snowy white,  
A fringe of heaven hung in sight  
Against the blue base of the sky.

I look along each gaping gorge,  
I hear a thousand sounding strokes  
Like giants rending giant oaks,  
Or brawny Vulcan at his forge;  
I see pick-axes flash and shine  
And great wheels whirling in a mine.  
Here winds a thick and yellow thread,

A moss'd and silver stream instead ;  
And trout that leap'd its rippled tide  
Have turn'd upon their sides and died.

Lo! when the last pick in the mine  
Is rusting red with idleness,  
And rot yon cabins in the mould,  
And wheels no more croak in distress,  
And tall pines reassert command,  
Sweet bards along this sunset shore  
Their mellow melodies will pour ;  
Will charm as charmers very wise,  
Will strike the harp with master hand,  
Will sound unto the vaulted skies  
The valor of these men of old —  
The mighty men of 'Forty-nine ;  
Will sweetly sing and proudly say,  
Long, long ago there was a day  
When there were giants in the land.

## II.

CURAMBO! what a cloud of dust  
Comes dashing down like driven gust!

And who rides rushing on the sight  
Adown yon rocky long defile,  
Swift as an eagle in his flight,  
Fierce as a winter's storm at night  
Blown from the bleak Sierra's height,  
Careering down some yawning gorge?  
His face is flush'd, his eye is wild,  
And 'neath his courser's sounding feet  
(A glance could barely be more fleet)  
The rocks are flashing like a forge.  
Such reckless rider! — I do ween  
No mortal man his like has seen.  
And yet, but for his long serape  
All flowing loose, and black as crape,  
And long silk locks of blackest hair  
All streaming wildly in the breeze,  
You might believe him in a chair,  
Or chatting at some country fair  
With friend or señorita rare,  
He rides so grandly at his ease.

But now he grasps a tighter rein,  
A red rein wrought in golden chain,  
And in his tapidaros stands,

Half turns and shakes two bloody hands,  
And shouts defiance at his foe ;  
Now lifts his broad hat from his brow  
As if to challenge fate, and now  
His hand drops to his saddle-bow  
And clutches something gleaming there  
As if to something more than dare,  
While halts the foe that follow'd fast  
As rushing wave or raving blast,  
More sudden-swift than though were prest  
All bridle-bands at one behest.

The stray winds lift the raven curls,  
Soft as a fair Castilian girl's,  
And press a brow so full and high  
Its every feature does belie  
The thought he is compell'd to fly ;  
A brow as open as the sky  
On which you gaze and gaze again  
As on a picture you have seen  
And often sought to see in vain,  
That seems to hold a tale of woe  
Or wonder, that you fain would know ;  
A brow cut deep as with a knife,



With many a dubious deed in life ;  
A brow of blended pride and pain,  
And yearnings for what should have **been**.

He grasps his gilded gory rein,  
And wheeling like a hurricane,  
Defying wood, or stone, or flood,  
Is dashing down the gorge again.  
Oh never yet has prouder steed  
Borne master nobler in his need !  
There is a glory in his eye  
That seems to dare and to defy  
Pursuit, or time, or space, or race.  
His body is the type of speed,  
While from his nostril to his heel  
Are muscles as if made of steel.  
He is not black, nor gray, nor white,  
But 'neath that broad serape of night  
And locks of darkness streaming o'er,  
His sleek sides seem a fiery red —  
They may be red with gushing gore.

What crimes have made that red hand red ?  
What wrongs have written that young face

With lines of thought so out of place?  
Where flies he? And from whence has fled?  
And what his lineage and race?  
What glitters in his heavy belt,  
And from his furr'd catenas gleam?  
What on his bosom that doth seem  
A diamond bright or dagger's hilt?  
The iron hoofs that still resound  
Like thunder from the yielding ground  
Alone reply; and now the plain,  
Quick as you breathe and gaze again,  
Is won, and all pursuit is vain.

## III.

I STAND upon a stony rim,  
Stone-paved and pattern'd as a street;  
A rock-lipp'd cañon plunging south,  
As if it were earth's open'd mouth,  
Yawns deep and darkling at my feet;  
So deep, so distant, and so dim  
Its waters wind, a yellow thread,  
And call so faintly and so far,  
I turn aside my swooning head.

I feel a fierce impulse to leap  
Adown the beetling precipice,  
Like some lone, lost, uncertain star ;  
To plunge into a place unknown,  
And win a world all, all my own ;  
Or if I might not meet that bliss,  
At least escape the curse of this.

I gaze again. A gleaming star  
Shines back as from some mossy well  
Reflected from blue fields afar.  
Brown hawks are wheeling here and there,  
And up and down the broken wall  
Cling clumps of dark green chaparral,  
While from the rent rocks, gray and bare,  
Blue junipers hang in the air.

Here, cedars sweep the stream, and here,  
Among the boulders moss'd and brown  
That time and storms have toppled down  
From towers undefiled by man,  
Low cabins nestle as in fear,  
And look no taller than a span.  
From low and shapeless chimneys rise

Some tall straight columns of blue smoke,  
And weld them to the bluer skies ;  
While sounding down the sombre gorge  
I hear the steady pick-axe stroke,  
As if upon a flashing forge.

Another scene, another sound!—  
Sharp shots are fretting through the air,  
Red knives are flashing everywhere,  
And here and there the yellow flood  
Is purpled with warm smoking blood.  
'The brown hawk swoops low to the ground,  
And nimble chip-monks, small and still,  
Dart striped lines across the sill  
That lordly feet shall press no more.  
'The flume lies warping in the sun,  
The pan sits empty by the door,  
The pick-axe on its bed-rock floor  
Lies rusting in the silent mine.  
There comes no single sound nor sign  
Of life, beside yon monks in brown  
That dart their dim shapes up and down  
The rocks that swelter in the sun ;  
But dashing round yon rocky spur

Where scarce a hawk would dare to whirr,  
Fly horsemen reckless in their flight.  
One wears a flowing black capote,  
While down the cape doth flow and float  
Long locks of hair as dark as night,  
And hands are red that erst were white.

All up and down the land to-day  
Black desolation and despair  
It seems have sat and settled there,  
With none to frighten them away.  
Like sentries watching by the way  
Black chimneys topple in the air,  
And seem to say, Go back, beware!  
While up around the mountain's rim  
Are clouds of smoke, so still and grim  
They look as they are fasten'd there.

A lonely stillness, so like death,  
So touches, terrifies all things,  
That even rooks that fly o'erhead  
Are hush'd, and seem to hold their breath,  
To fly with muffled wings,  
And heavy as if made of lead.

Some skulls that crumble to the touch,  
Some joints of thin and chalk-like bone,  
A tall black chimney, all alone,  
That leans as if upon a crutch,  
Alone are left to mark or tell,  
Instead of cross or cryptic stone,  
Where fair maids loved or brave men fell.

\* \* \* \* \*

I look along the valley's edge,  
Where swings the white road like a swell  
Of surf, along a sea of hedge  
And black and brittle chaparral,  
And enters like an iron wedge  
Drove in the mountain dun and brown,  
As if to split the hills in twain.  
Two clouds of dust roll o'er the plain,  
And men ride up and men ride down,  
And hot men halt, and curse and shout,  
And coming coursers plunge and neigh.  
The clouds of dust are roll'd in one —  
And horses, horsemen, where are they?  
Lo! through a rift of dust and dun,  
Of desolation and of rout,

I see some long white daggers flash,  
I hear the sharp hot pistols crash,  
And curses loud in mad despair  
Are blended with a plaintive prayer  
That struggles through the dust and air

The cloud is lifting like a veil :  
The frantic curse, the plaintive wail  
Have died away ; nor sound nor word  
Along the dusty plain is heard  
Save sounding of yon courser's feet,  
Who flies so fearfully and fleet,  
With gory girth and broken rein,  
Across the hot and trackless plain.  
Behold him, as he trembling flies,  
Look back with red and bursting eyes  
To where his gory master lies.  
The cloud is lifting like a veil,  
But underneath its drifting sail  
I see a loose and black capote  
In careless heed far fly and float,  
So vulture-like above a steed  
Of perfect mould and passing speed.

Here lies a man of giant mould,  
His mighty right arm, perfect bare  
Save but its sable coat of hair,  
Is clutching in its iron clasp  
A clump of sage, as if to hold  
The earth from slipping from his grasp ;  
While, stealing from his brow, a stain  
Of purple blood and gory brain  
Yields to the parch'd lips of the plain,  
Swift to resolve to dust again.

Lo! friend and foe blend here and there  
With dusty lips and trailing hair :  
Some with a cold and sullen stare,  
Some with their red hands clasp'd in prayer

Here lies a youth, whose fair face is  
Still holy from a mother's kiss,  
With brow as white as alabaster,  
Save a tell-tale powder-stain  
Of a deed and a disaster  
That will never come again,  
With their perils and their pain.

The tinkle of bells on the bended hills,



The hum of bees in the orange trees,  
And the lowly call of the beaded rills  
Are heard in the land as I look again  
Over the peaceful battle-plain.  
Murderous man from the field has fled,  
Fled in fear from the face of his dead.  
He battled, he bled, he ruled a day —  
And peaceful Nature resumes her sway.  
And the sward where yonder corpses lie,  
When the verdant season shall come again,  
Shall greener grow than it grew before ;  
Shall again in sun-clime glory vie  
With the gayest green in the tropic scene,  
Taking its freshness back once more  
From them that despoil'd it yesterday.

## IV.

The sun is red and flush'd and dry,  
And fretted from his weary beat  
Across the hot and desert sky,  
And swollen as from overheat,  
And failing too ; for see, he sinks  
Swift as a ball of burnish'd ore :

It may be fancy, but methinks  
He never fell so fast before.

I hear the neighing of hot steeds,  
I see the marshalling of men  
That silent move among the trees  
As busily as swarming bees  
With step and stealthiness profound,  
On carpetings of spindled weeds,  
Without a syllable or sound  
Save clashing of their burnish'd arms,  
Clinking dull death-like alarms —  
Grim bearded men and brawny men  
That grope among the ghostly trees.  
Were ever silent men as these?  
Was ever sombre forest deep  
And dark as this? Here one might sleep  
While all the weary years went round,  
Nor wake nor weep for sun or sound.

A stone's-throw to the right, a rock  
Has rear'd his head among the stars —  
An island in the upper deep —  
And on his front a thousand scars

Of thunder's crash and earthquake's shock  
Are seam'd as if by sabre's sweep  
Of gods, enraged that he should rear  
His front amid their realms of air.

What moves along his beetling brow,  
So small, so indistinct and far,  
This side yon blazing evening star,  
Seen through that redwood's shifting bough ?  
A lookout on the world below ?  
A watcher for the friend — or foe ?  
This still troop's sentry it must be,  
Yet seems no taller than my knee.

But for the grandeur of this gloom,  
And for the chafing steeds' alarms,  
And brown men's sullen clash of arms,  
This were but as a living tomb.  
These weeds are spindled, pale and white,  
As if nor sunshine, life nor light  
Had ever reach'd this forest's heart.  
Above, the redwood boughs entwine  
As dense as copse of tangled vine —  
Above, so fearfully afar,

It seems as 'twere a lesser sky,  
A sky without a moon or star,  
The moss'd boughs are so thick and high.  
At every lisp of leaf I start!  
Would I could hear a cricket trill,  
Or that yon sentry from his hill  
Might shout or show some sign of life,  
The place does seem so deathly still.  
"Mount ye, and forward for the strife!"  
Who by yon dark trunk sullen stands,  
With black serape and bloody hands,  
And coldly gives his brief commands?

They mount — away! Quick on his heel  
He turns, and grasps his gleaming steel —  
Then sadly smiles, and stoops to kiss  
An upturn'd face so sweetly fair,  
So sadly, saintly, purely fair,  
So rich of blessedness and bliss!  
I know she is not flesh and blood,  
But some sweet spirit of this wood;  
I know it by her wealth of hair,  
And step on the unyielding air;  
Her seamless robe of shining white,

Her soul-deep eyes of darkest night :  
But over all and more than all  
That could be said or can befall,  
That tongue can tell or pen can trace,  
That wondrous witchery of face.

Between the trees I see him stride  
To where a red steed fretting stands  
Impatient for his lord's commands :  
And she glides noiseless at his side.

Lo! not a bud, or leaf, or stem,  
Beneath her feet is bowed or bent ;  
They only nod, as if in sleep,  
And all their grace and freshness keep ;  
And now will in their beauty bloom,  
In pink and pearl habiliment,  
As though fresh risen from a tomb,  
For fairest sun has shone on them.

“The world is mantling black again!  
Beneath us, o'er the sleeping plain,  
Dull steel-gray clouds slide up and down  
As if the still earth wore a frown.  
The west is red with sunlight slain!”

(One hand toys with her waving hair,  
Soft lifting from her shoulders bare ;  
The other holds the loosen'd rein,  
And rests upon the swelling mane  
That curls the curved neck o'er and o'er,  
Like waves that swirl along the shore.  
He hears the last retreating sound  
Of iron on volcanic stone,  
That echoes far from peak to plain,  
And 'neath the dense wood's sable zone  
He peers the dark Sierras down.)  
“ But darker yet shall be the frown,  
And redder yet shall be the flame.  
And yet I would that this were not —  
That all, forgiven or forgot  
Of curses deep and awful crimes,  
Of blood and terror, could but seem  
Some troubled and unholy dream ;  
That even now I could awake,  
And waking find me once again  
With hand and heart without a stain,  
Swift gliding o'er that sunny lake,  
Begirt with town and castle-wall,  
Where first I saw the silver light —

Begirt with blossoms, and the bloom  
Of orange, sweet with the perfume  
Of cactus, pomegranate, and all  
The thousand sweets of tropic climes ;  
And, waking, see the mellow moon  
Pour'd out in gorgeous plenilune  
On silver ripples of that tide ;  
And, waking, hear soft music pour  
Along that flora-formèd shore ;  
And, waking, find you at my side,  
My father's moss'd and massive halls,  
My brothers in their strength and pride.'

(His hand forsakes her raven hair,  
His eyes have an unearthly glare :  
She shrinks and shudders at his side,  
Then lifts to his her moisten'd eye,  
And only looks her sad reply.  
A sullenness his soul enthrals,  
A silence born of hate and pride ;  
His fierce volcanic heart so deep  
Is stir'd, his teeth, despite his will,  
Do chatter as if in a chill ;

His very dagger at his side  
Does shake and rattle in its sheath,  
As blades of brown grass in a gale  
Do rustle on the frosted heath :  
And yet he does not bend or weep.)

“I did not vow a girlish vow,  
Nor idle imprecation now  
Will I bestow by boasting word —  
Feats of the tongue become the knave.  
A wailing in the land is heard  
For those that will not come again ;  
And weeping for the rashly brave,  
Who sleep in many a gulch and glen,  
Has wet a hundred hearths with tears,  
And darken'd them for years and years.  
Would I could turn their tears to gore,  
Make every hearth as cold as one  
Is now upon that sweet lake shore,  
Where my dear kindred dwelt of yore ;  
Where now is but an ashen heap,  
And mass of mossy earth and stone ;  
Where round an altar black wolves keep  
Their carnival and doleful moan ;



Where hornèd lizards dart and climb,  
And mollusks slide and leave their slime.

“But tremble not. This night, my own,  
Shall see my fierce foe overthrown;  
And ere the day-star gleams again  
My horse’s hoofs shall spurn the dead —  
The still warm reeking dead of those  
Who brought us all our bitter woes;  
While all my glad returning way  
Shall be as light as living day,  
From ranchos, campos, burning red.  
And then! And then, my peri pearl” —  
(As if to charm her from her fears  
And drive away the starting tears,  
Again his small hand seeks a curl,  
And voice forgets its sullen ire,  
And eye forsakes its flashing fire) —  
“Away to where the orange tree  
Is white through all the cycled years,  
And love lives an eternity;  
Where birds are never out of tune  
And life knows no decline of noon;  
Where winds are sweet as woman’s breath,

And purpled, dreamy, mellow skies  
Are lovely as a woman's eyes, —  
There, we in calm and perfect bliss  
Of boundless faith and sweet delight  
Shall realize the world above,  
Forgetting all the wrongs of this,  
Forgetting all of blood and death,  
And all your terrors of to-night,  
In pure devotion and deep love.”

As gently as a mother bows  
Her first-born sleeping babe above,  
The cherish'd cherub lips to kiss  
In her full blessedness and bliss,  
He bends to her with stately air,  
His proud head in its cloud of hair.  
I do not heed the hallow'd kiss;  
I do not hear the hurried vows  
Of passion, faith, unfailing love;  
I do not mark the prison'd sigh,  
I do not meet the moisten'd eye:  
A low sweet melody is heard  
Like cooing of some Balize bird,  
So fine it does not touch the air,

So faint it stirs not anywhere ;  
Faint as the falling of the dew,  
Low as a pure unutter'd prayer,  
The meeting, mingling, as it were,  
Of souls in paradisaal bliss.

Erect, again he grasps the rein  
So tight, as to the seat he springs,  
I see his red steed plunge and poise  
And beat the air with iron feet,  
And curve his noble glossy neck,  
And toss on high his swelling mane,  
And leap — away ! he spurns the rein,  
And flies so fearfully and fleet,  
But for the hot hoofs' ringing noise  
'Twould seem as if he were on wings.

And she is gone ! Gone like a breath  
Gone like a white sail seen at night  
A moment, and then lost to sight ;  
Gone like a star you look upon,  
That glimmers to a bead, a speck,  
Then softly melts into the dawn,  
And all is still and dark as death.

## V.

\* \* \* \* \*

I LOOK far down a dewy vale,  
 Where cool palms lean along a brook  
 As crooked as a shepherd's crook.  
 Red parrots call from orange trees,  
 Where white lips kiss the idle breeze,  
 And murmur with the hum of bees :  
 The gray dove coos his low love-tale.

With cross outstretch'd like pleading hands  
 That mutely plead the faith of Christ,  
 Amid the palms a low church stands :  
 I would that man might learn from these  
 The priceless victories of Peace,  
 And woo her 'mid these olive trees,  
 And win an earthly paradise.

I see black clouds of troops afar  
 Sweep like a surge that sweeps the shore,  
 And check'ring all the green hills o'er  
 Are battlements and signs of war.

I hear the hoarse-voiced cannon roar :  
The red-mouth'd orators of war  
Plead as they never plead before ;  
While outdone thunder stops his car  
And leans in wonderment afar.

A fragment from the struggle rent  
Forsakes the rugged battlement,  
And winds it painfully and slow  
Across the rent and riven lands  
To where a gray church open stands,  
As if it bore a load of woe.

Curambo! 'tis a chief they bear!  
And by his black and flowing hair  
Methinks I have seen him before.  
A gray priest guides them through the door  
They lay him bleeding on the floor.

He moves, he lifts his feeble hand,  
And points with tried and trenched brand,  
And bids them to the battle-plain.  
They turn — they pause: he bids again ;  
They turn a last time to their chief,

And gaze in silence and deep pain,  
For silence speaks the deepest grief.  
They clutch their blades; they turn — are gone:  
And priest and chief are left alone.

“So here my last day has its close,  
And here it ends. Here all is not.  
I am content. 'Tis what I sought —  
Revenge — and then my last repose.  
Oh for the rest — for the rest eternal!  
Oh for the deep and the dreamless sleep!  
Where never a hope lures to deceive;  
Where never a heart beats but to grieve;  
Nor thoughts of heaven or hells infernal  
Shall ever wake or dare to break  
The rest of an everlasting sleep!

“Is there truth in the life eternal?  
Will our memories never die?  
Shall we relive in realms supernal  
Life's resplendent and glorious lie?  
Death has not one shape so frightful  
But defiantly I would brave it;  
Earth has nothing so delightful

But my soul would scorn to crave it,  
Could I know for sure, for certain.  
That the falling of the curtain  
And the folding of the hands  
Is the full and the final casting  
Of accounts for the everlasting!  
Everlasting, and everlasting!

“ Well, I have known, I know not why,  
Through all my dubious days of strife,  
That when we live our deeds we die ;  
That man may in one hour live  
All that his life can bear or give.  
This I have done, and do not grieve,  
For I am older by a score  
Than many born long, long before,  
If sorrows be the sum of life.

“ Ay, I am old — old as the years  
Could brand me with their blood and tears;  
For with my fingers I can trace  
Grief’s trenches on my hollow face,  
And through my thin frame I can feel  
The pulses of my frozen heart

Beat with a dull uncertain start :  
And, mirror'd in my sword, to-day,  
Before its edge of gleaming steel  
Had lost its lustre in the fray,  
I saw around my temples stray  
Thin straggling locks of steely gray.

“Fly, fly you, to yon snowy height,  
And tell to her I fail, I die !  
Fly swiftly, priest, I bid you ! — fly  
Before the falling of the night !  
What ! know her not ? O priest, beware !  
I warn you answer thus no more,  
But bend your dull ear to the floor,  
And hear you who she is, and where.

“She is the last, last of a line,  
With blood as rich and warm as wine,  
And blended blood of god and king ;  
Last of the Montezumas' line  
Who dwelt up in the yellow sun,  
And, sorrowing for man's despair,  
Slid by his trailing yellow hair  
To earth, to rule with love and bring



The blessedness of peace to us,  
She is the last, last earthly one  
Of all the children of the sun;  
A sweet perfume still lingering  
In essence pure, and living thus  
In blessedness about the spot,  
When rose, and bush, and bloom are **not**.

“Beside Tezcuco’s flowery shore,  
Where waves were washing evermore  
The massive columns of its wall,  
Stood Montezuma’s mighty hall.  
And here the Montezumas reign’d  
In perfect peace and love unfeign’d,  
Until, from underneath the sea  
Where all sin is, or ought to be,  
Came men of death and strange device,  
Who taught a mad and mystic faith  
Of crucifixion and of Christ,  
More hated than the plague or death.

“Nay, do not swing your cross o’er me;  
You cross’d you once, but do not twice,  
Nor dare repeat the name of Christ;

Nor start, nor think to fly, nor frown,  
While you the stole and surplice wear;  
For I do clutch your sable gown,  
And you shall hear my curse, or prayer,  
And be my priest in my despair;  
Since neither priest, nor sign, nor shrine  
Is left in all the land, of mine.

“Enough! We know, alas! too well,  
How red Christ ruled — Tonatiu fell.  
The black wolf in our ancient halls  
Unfrighten'd sleeps the live-long day.  
The stout roots burst the mossy walls,  
And in the moonlight wild dogs play  
Around the plazas overgrown,  
Where rude boars hold their carnivals.  
The moss is on our altar-stone,  
The mould on Montezuma's throne,  
And symbols in the desert strown.

“And when your persecutions ceased  
From troop, and king, and cowlèd priest,  
That we had felt for centuries —  
(Ah! know you, priest, that cross of thine

Is but death's symbol, and the sign  
Of blood and butchery and tears ?) —  
And when return'd the faithful few,  
Beside Tezcucó's sacred shore,  
To build their broken shrines anew,  
They number'd scarce a broken score.  
Here dwelt my father — here *she* dwelt  
Here kept one altar burning bright,  
Last of the thousands that had shone  
Along the mountain's brows of stone,  
Last of a thousand stars of night.  
To Tonatiú Ytzaqual we bow'd —  
Nay, do not start, nor shape the sign  
Of horror at this creed of mine,  
Nor call again the name of Christ :  
You cross you once, you cross you twice —  
I warn you do not cross you thrice ;  
Nor will I brook a sign or look  
Of anger at her faith avow'd.  
I am no creedist. Faith to me  
Is but a name for mystery.  
I only know this faith is her's :  
I care to know no more, to be  
The truest of its worshippers.

“The Cold-men came across the plain  
With gory blade and brand of flame :  
I know not that they knew or cared  
What was our race, or creed, or name ;  
I only know the Northmen dared  
Assault and sack, for sake of gain  
Of sacred vessels wrought in gold,  
The temple where gods dwelt of old ;  
And that my father, brothers, dared  
Defend their shrines — and all were slain.

“ ‘ Fly with the maid,’ my father cried,  
When first the fierce assault was made —  
‘ A boat chafes at the causeway side,’  
And in the instant was obey’d.  
We gain’d the boat, sprang in, away  
We dash’d along the dimpled tide.

“ It must have been they thought we bore  
The treasure in our flight and haste,  
For in an instant from the shore  
An hundred crafts were making chase,  
And as their sharp prows drew apace

I caught a carbine to my face.  
She, rising, dash'd it quick aside ;  
And, when their hands were stretch'd to clasp  
The boat's prow in their eager grasp,  
She turn'd to me and sudden cried,  
'Come, come!' and plunged into the tide.  
I plunged into the dimpled wave :  
I had no thought but 'twas my grave ;  
But faith had never follower  
More true than I to follow her.

“On, on through purple wave she cleaves,  
As shoots a sunbeam through the leaves.  
At last — what miracle was there! —  
Again we breathed the welcome air ;  
And, resting by the rising tide,  
The secret outlet of the lake,  
Safe hid by trackless fern and brake,  
With yellow lilies at her side,  
She told me how in ages gone  
Her Fathers built with sacred stone  
This secret way beneath the tide,  
That now was known to her alone

"When night came on and all was still,  
 And stole the white moon down the hill  
 As soft, as if she too fear'd ill,  
 Again I sought the sacred halls  
 And on the curving causeway stood.  
 I look'd — naught but the blacken'd walls  
 And charr'd bones of my kindred blood  
 Was left beside the dimpled flood.

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"Enough! Mine was no temper'd steel  
 To-day upon the stormy field,  
 As many trench'd heads yonder feel,  
 And many felt, that feel no more,  
 That fought beneath your cross and shield,  
 And, falling, called in vain to Christ.  
 You curs'd monk! dare you cross you thrice,  
 When I have warn'd you twice before?  
 To you and your damn'd faith I owe  
 My heritage of crime and woe;  
 You shall not live to mock me more  
 If there be temper in this brand,  
 Or nerve left in this bloody hand.

I start, I leave the stony ground,  
Despite of blood or mortal wound,  
Or darkness that has dimm'd the eye,  
Or senses that do dance and reel —  
I clutch a throat — I clench a steel —  
I thrust — I fail — I fall — I die . . .”

## VI.

SHE stands upon the wild watch-tower  
And with her own hand feeds the flame —  
The beacon-light to guide again  
His coming from the battle-plain.  
'Tis wearing past the midnight hour,  
The latest that he ever came,  
Yet silence reigns around the tower.

'Tis hours past the midnight hour:  
She calls, she looks, she lists in vain  
For sight or sound from peak or plain.  
She moves along the beetling tower,  
She leans, she lists forlorn and lone,  
She stoops her ear low to the ground,

In hope to catch the welcome sound  
Of iron on the rugged stone.

In vain she peers down in the night  
But for one feeble flash of light  
From flinty stone and feet of steel.  
She stands upon the fearful rim,  
Where even coolest head would reel,  
And fearless leans her form far o'er  
Its edge, and lifts her hands to him,  
And calls in words as sweetly wild  
As bleeding saint or sorrowing child.  
She looks, she lists, she leans in vain,  
In vain his dalliance does deplore ;  
She turns her to the light again,  
And bids the watchman to the plain,  
Defying night or dubious way,  
To guide the flight or join the fray.

The day-star dances on the snow  
That gleams along Sierra's crown  
In gorgeous everlasting glow  
And frozen glory and renown.  
Yet still she feeds the beacon flame,  
And lists, and looks, and leans in vain.



The day has dawn'd. She still is there!  
Yet in her sad and silent air  
I read the stillness of despair.  
Why burns the red light on the tower  
So brightly at this useless hour?  
But see! The day-king hurls a dart  
At darkness, and his cold black heart  
Is pierced; and now, compell'd to flee,  
Flies bleeding to the farther sea.  
And now, behold, she radiant stands,  
And lifts her thin white jewell'd hands  
Unto the broad, unfolding sun,  
And hails him Tonatiu and King  
With hallow'd mien and holy prayer.  
Her fingers o'er some symbols run,  
Her knees are bow'd in worshipping  
Her God, beheld when thine is not,  
In form of faith long, long forgot.

Again she lifts her brown arms bare,  
Far flashing in their bands of gold  
And precious stones, rare, rich, and old.  
Was ever mortal half so fair?  
Was ever such a wealth of hair?

Was ever such a plaintive air ?

Was ever such a sweet despair ?

— Still humbler now her form she bends ;

Still higher now the flame ascends :

She bares her bosom to the sun.

Again her jewell'd fingers run

In signs and sacred form and prayer.

She bows with awe and holy air

In lowly worship to the sun ;

Then rising calls her lover's name,

And leaps into the leaping flame.

I do not hear the faintest moan,

Or sound, or syllable, or tone.

The red flames stoop a moment down,

As if to raise her from the ground ;

They whirl, they swirl, they sweep around

With light'ning feet and fiery crown :

Then stand up, tall, tip-toed, as one

Would hand a soul up to the sun.

**THE LAST TASCHASTAS**

*The hills were brown, the heavens were blue,  
A woodpecker pounded a pine-top shell,  
While a partridge whistled the whole day through  
For a rabbit to dance in the chapparal,  
And a gray grouse drumm'd, "All's well, all's well."*

## THE LAST TASCHASTAS.

### PART FIRST.

**W**RINKLED and brown as a bag of leather,  
A squaw sits moaning long and low.  
Yesterday she was a wife and mother,  
To-day she is rocking her to and fro,  
A childless widow, in weeds and woe.

An Indian sits in a rocky cavern  
Whetting a flint in an arrow head ;  
His children are moving as still as shadows,  
His squaw is moulding some balls of lead,  
With her round face painted the battle-red.

An Indian sits in a black-jack jungle,  
Where a grizzly bear has rear'd her young,  
Whetting a flint on a granite boulder,  
And his quiver is over his brown back hung,  
And his face is streak'd and his bow is strung.

An Indian hangs from a cliff of granite,  
Like an eagle's nest built in the air,  
Looking away to the east, and watching  
The smoke of the cabins curling there,  
And eagles' feathers are in his hair.

In belt of wampum, in battle fashion,  
An Indian watches with wild desire.  
He is red with paint, he is black with passion,  
And grand as a god in his savage ire,  
As he leans and listens till stars are a-fire.

Sombre and sullen and sad, the chieftain  
Looks from the mountain far into the sea.  
Just before him beat in the white billows,  
Just behind him the toppled tall tree  
And chopping of woodmen, knee buckl'd to knee.

Long he looks, and he leans and listens —  
Waves before him, behind him white waves  
Beating and breaking on the last Taschestas ;  
Waves that have toppled across red braves,  
Levell'd, and left not a sign of their graves.

“Awake and arise! O, remnant Taschastas!  
Awake to the life that is death in the land,  
And this shall be doubled in dust contented” —  
He lifts to heaven his doubled right hand,  
Flashing afar with a great gold band.

## PART SECOND.

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ALL together, all in council,  
In a cañon wall'd so high  
That no thing could ever reach them  
Save some stars dropp'd from the sky,  
And the brown bats sweeping by:

Some were gray and thin and wiry,  
Wise as brief, and brief as bold;  
Some were young and fierce and fiery,  
Some were stately tall, and told  
Counsellings like kings of old.

Flamed the council-fire brighter,  
Flash'd black eyes like diamond beads,  
When a woman told her sorrows,  
While a warrior told his deeds,  
And a widow tore her weeds.

Then was lit the pipe of council  
That their fathers smoked of old,  
With its stem of manzinetta,  
And its bowl of quartz and gold,  
And traditions manifold.

Lo! from lip to lip in silence  
Burn'd it round the circle red,  
Like an evil star slow passing  
(Sign of battles and blood shed)  
Round the heavens overhead.

Then the silence deep was broken  
By the thunder rolling far,  
As gods muttering in anger,  
Or the bloody battle-car  
Of a Christian king at war.

“’Tis the spirits of my Fathers  
Mutt’ring vengeance in the skies;  
And the flashing of the lightning  
Is the anger of their eyes,  
Bidding us in battle rise.”



Cried the war-chief, now uprising,  
Naked all above the waist,  
While a belt of shells and silver  
Held his tamooos to its place,  
And the war-paint streak'd his face.

Women melted from the council,  
Boys crept backward out of sight,  
Till alone a wall of warriors  
In their paint and battle-plight  
Sat reflecting back the light.

“O my Fathers in the storm-cloud!” —  
(Red arms tossing to the skies,  
While the massive walls of granite  
Seem'd to shrink to half their size,  
And to mutter strange replies) —

“Soon we come, O angry Fathers,  
Down the darkness you have cross'd :  
Speak for hunting-grounds there for us ;  
Those you left us we have lost —  
Gone like blossoms in a frost

“Warriors!” (and his arms fell folded  
On his tawny swelling breast,  
While his voice, now low and plaintive  
As the waves in their unrest,  
Touching tenderness confess’d,)

“Where is Wrotto, wise of counsel,  
Yesterday here in his place?  
A brave lies dead down in the valley,  
Last brave of his line and race,  
And a Ghost sits on his face.

“Where the boy the tender-hearted,  
With his mother yestermorn?  
Lo! a wigwam-door is darken’d,  
And a mother mourns forlorn,  
With her long locks toss’d and torn.

“Once like pines around a mountain  
Did my braves in council stand;  
Now I call you loud like thunder,  
And you come at my command  
Faint and few, with feeble hand.

“Lo! our daughters have been gather’d  
From among us by the foe,  
Like the lilies they once gather’d  
In the spring-time all aglow  
From the banks of living snow.

“Through the land where we for ages  
Laid the bravest, dearest dead,  
Grinds the savage white-man’s ploughshare,  
Grinding sires’ bones for bread —  
We shall give them blood instead.

“I saw white skulls in a furrow,  
And around the cursèd share  
Clung the flesh of my own children;  
And my mother’s tangled hair  
Trail’d along the furrow there.

“O my mother up in cloud-land!”  
(Long arms lifting like the spray)  
“Whet the flint heads in my arrows,  
Make my heart as hard as they,  
Nerve me like a bear at bay!

“ Warriors! braves! I cry for vengeance!  
And the dim ghosts of the dead  
Unavenged do wail and shiver  
In the storm-cloud overhead,  
And shoot arrows battle-red.”

Then he ceased, and sat among them,  
With his long locks backward strown;  
They as mute as men of marble,  
He a king upon a throne,  
And as still as polish'd stone.

Hard by stood the war-chief's daughter,  
Taller than the tassel'd corn,  
Sweeter than the kiss of morning,  
Sad as some sweet star of morn,  
Half defiant, half forlorn.

Robed in skins of striped panther  
Lifting loosely to the air,  
With a face a shade of sorrow,  
And black eyes that said, Beware!  
Nestled in a storm of hair;

With her striped robes around her,  
Fasten'd by an eagle's beak,  
Stood she by the stately chieftain,  
Proud and pure as Shasta's peak,  
As she ventured thus to speak :

“ Must the tomahawk of battle  
Be unburied where it lies,  
O, last war-chief of Taschastas ?  
Must the smoke of battle rise  
Like a storm-cloud in the skies ?

“ True, some wretch has laid a brother  
With his swift feet to the sun,  
But because one bough is broken,  
Must the broad oak be undone ?  
All the red-wood fell'd as one ?

“ True, the braves have faded, wasted  
Like ripe blossoms in the rain,  
But when we have spent the arrows,  
Do we twang the string in vain,  
And then snap the bow in twain ?”

Like a vessel in a tempest  
Shook the warrior, wild and grim,  
As he gazed out in the midnight,  
As to things that beckon'd him,  
And his eyes were moist and dim.

Then he turned, and to his bosom  
Battle scarred, and strong as brass,  
Tenderly the warrior press'd her  
As if she were made of glass,  
Murmuring, "Alas! alas!"

"Loua Ellah! Spotted Lily!  
Streaks of blood shall be the sign,  
On their curs'd and mystic pages,  
Representing me and mine!  
By Tonatiu's fiery shrine!"

"When the grass shall grow untrodden  
In my war-path, and the plough  
Shall be grinding through this cañon  
Where my braves are gather'd now,  
Still shall they record this vow.

“War and vengeance! rise, my warriors,  
Rise and shout the battle-sign,  
Ye who love revenge and glory!  
Ye for peace, in silence, pine,  
And no more be braves of mine.”

Then the war-yell roll'd and echo'd  
As they started from the ground,  
Till an eagle from his cedar  
Starting answered back the sound,  
And flew circling round and round.

“Enough, enough, my kingly father  
And the glory of her eyes  
Flash'd the valor and the passion  
That may sleep but never dies,  
As she proudly thus replies :

“Shall the red-wood be a willow,  
Pliant and as little worth?  
It shall stand the king of forests,  
Or its fall shall shake the earth,  
Desolating heart and hearth!”

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## PART THIRD.

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FROM cold east shore to warm west sea  
The red men follow'd the red sun,  
And, faint and failing fast as he,  
Felt, sure as his, their race was run.  
This ancient tribe, press'd to the wave,  
There fain had slept a patient slave,  
And died out as red embers die  
From flames that once leapt hot and high;  
But, roused to anger, half arose  
Around that chief, a sudden flood,  
At hot and hungry cry for blood;  
Half drowsy shook a feeble hand,  
Then sank back in a tame repose,  
And left him to his fate and foes,  
A stately wreck upon the strand.

His was no common mould of mind,  
But made for action, ill or good.  
Cast in another land and scene,  
His restless, reckless will had been  
A curse or blessing to his kind.



His eye was like the lightning's wing,  
His voice was like a rushing flood;  
He boasted Montezuma's blood,  
And when a captive bound he stood  
His presence look'd the perfect king.

'Twas held at first that he should die :  
I never knew the reason why  
A milder counsel did prevail,  
Save that we shrank from blood, and save  
That brave men do respect the brave.  
Down sea sometimes there was a sail,  
And far at sea, they said, an isle,  
And he was sentenced to exile,  
In open boat upon the sea  
To go the instant on the main,  
And never under penalty  
Of death, to touch the shore again.  
A troop of bearded buckskinn'd men  
Bore him hard-hurried to the wave,  
Placed him swift in the boat ; and when  
Swift pushing to the bristled sea,  
His daughter rush'd down suddenly,  
Threw him his bow, leapt from the shore

Into the boat beside the brave,  
And sat her down and seized the oar,  
And never question'd, made replies,  
Or moved her lips, or raised her eyes.

His breast was like a gate of brass,  
His brow was like a gather'd storm;  
There is no chisell'd stone that has  
So stately and complete a form,  
In sinew, arm, and every part,  
In all the galleries of art.

Gray, bronzed, and naked to the waist,  
He stood half halting in the prow,  
With quiver bare and idle bow.  
His daughter sat with her sad face  
Bent on the wave, with her two hands  
Held tightly to the dripping oar;  
And as she sat her dimpled knee  
Bent lithe as wand of willow tree,  
So round and full, so rich and free,  
That no one would have ever known  
That it had either joint or bone.

The warm sea fondled with the shore,  
And laid his white face on the sands.

Her eyes were black, her face was brown,  
Her breasts were bare, and there fell down  
Such wealth of hair, it almost hid  
The two, in its rich jetty fold—  
Which I had sometime fain forbid,  
They were so richer, fuller far  
Than any polish'd bronzes are,  
And richer hued than any gold.  
On her brown arms and her brown hands  
Were hoops of gold and golden bands,  
Rough hammer'd from the virgin ore,  
So heavy, they could hold no more.

I wonder now, I wonder'd then,  
That men who fear'd not gods nor men  
Laid no rude hand at all on her.  
I think she had a dagger slid  
Down in her silver'd wampum belt;  
It might have been, instead of hilt,  
A flashing diamond hurry-hid  
That I beheld — I could not know

For certain, we did hasten so ;  
And I know now less sure than then.  
Deeds strangle memories of deeds,  
Red blossoms wither, choked with weeds,  
And floods drown memories of men.  
Some things have happen'd since — and then  
This happen'd years and years ago.

“Go, go!” the captain cried, and smote  
With sword and boot the swaying boat,  
Until it quiver'd as at sea  
And brought the old chief to his knee.  
He turn'd his face, and turning rose  
With hand raised fiercely to his foes :  
“Yes, we will go, last of my race,  
Push'd by the robbers ruthlessly  
Into the hollows of the sea,  
From this the last, last resting-place.  
Traditions of my Fathers say  
A feeble few reach'd for the land,  
And we reach'd them a welcome hand,  
Of old, upon another shore ;  
Now they are strong, we weak as they,  
And they have driven us before

Their faces, from that sea to this :  
Then marvel not if we have sped  
Sometime an arrow as we fled,  
So keener than a serpent's kiss."

He turn'd a time unto the sun  
That lay half hidden in the sea,  
As in his hollows rock'd asleep,  
All trembled and breathed heavily ;  
Then arch'd his arm, as you have done,  
For sharp masts piercing through the deep.  
No shore or tall ship met the eye,  
Or isle, or sail, or any thing,  
Save white sea-gulls on dripping wing,  
And mobile sea and molten sky.

"Farewell! — push seaward, child!" he cried,  
And quick the paddle-strokes replied.  
Like lightning from the panther-skin  
That bound his loins round about  
He snatch'd a poison'd arrow out,  
That like a snake lay hid within,  
And twanged his bow. The captain fell  
Prone on his face, and such a yell

Of triumph from that savage rose  
As man may never hear again.  
He stood as standing on the main,  
The topmost main, in proud repose,  
And shook his clenched fist at his foes,  
And called, and cursed them every one  
He heeded not the shouts and shot  
That follow'd him, but grand and grim  
Stood up against the level sun;  
And, standing so, seem'd in his ire  
So grander than a leaping fire.

And when the sun had left the sea,  
That laves Abrep, and Blanco laves,  
And left the land to death and me,  
The only thing that I could see  
Was, ever as the light boat lay  
High lifted on the white-back'd waves,  
A head as gray and tossed as they.

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We raised the dead, and from his hands  
Pick'd out the shells clutch'd as he lay,

And two by two bore him away,  
And wiped his lips of blood and sands.  
We bent and scoop'd a shallow home,  
And laid him warm-wet in his blood,  
Just as the lifted tide a-flood  
Came charging in with mouth a-foam :  
And as we turn'd, the sensate thing  
Reach'd up, lick'd out its foamy tongue,  
Lick'd out its tongue and tasted blood ;  
The white lips to the red earth clung  
An instant, and then loosening  
All hold just like a living thing,  
Drew back sad-voiced and shuddering,  
All stain'd with blood, a stripèd flood.





IN A.

*Sad song of the wind in the mountains,  
And the sea-wave of grass on the plain,  
That breaks in bloom-foam by the fountains,  
And forests that breaketh again  
On the mountains, as breaketh a main.*

*Bold thoughts that were strong as the grizzlies,  
But now weak in their prison of words;  
Bright fancies that flash'd like the glaciers,  
Now dimm'd like the lustre of birds,  
And butterflies huddled as herds.*

*Sad symphony, wild, and unmeasured,  
Weed warp, and woof woven in strouds,  
Strange truths that a stray soul has treasured,  
Truths seen as through folding of shrouds,  
Or as stars through the rolling of clouds*

INA.

SCENE I.

*Hacienda near Tezcuco, Mexico. Young DON CARLOS  
alone, looking out on the moonlit mountains.*

DON CARLOS.

POPOCATAPETL looms lone like an island  
Above the white cloud-waves that break up  
against him ;  
Around him white buttes in the moonlight are flashing  
Like silver tents pitch'd in the fields of heaven ;  
While standing in line, in their snows everlasting,  
Flash peaks, as my eyes into heaven are lifted,  
Like milestones that lead to the city eternal.

Ofttime when the sun and the sea lay together,  
Red-welded as one, in their red bed of lovers,  
Embracing and blushing like loves newly wedded,  
I have trod on the trailing crape fringes of twilight,  
And stood there and listen'd, and lean'd with lips  
parted,

Till lordly peaks wrapp'd them, as chill night blew  
 over,

In great cloaks of sable, like proud sombre Spaniards,  
 And stalk'd from my sight down the dark corridors,  
 And in the deep stillness — so still, so profoundly —  
 I surely have heard their strong footfalls retreating.

When the red-curtain'd West has bent red as with  
 weeping

Low over the couch where the prone day lay dying,  
 I have stood with brow lifted, confronting the moun-  
 tains

That held their white faces of snow in the heavens,  
 And said, "It is theirs to array them so purely,  
 Because of their nearness to the temple eternal;"  
 And child-like have said, "They are fair resting-places  
 For the dear weary dead on their way up to heaven."

But my soul is not with you to-night, mighty moun-  
 tains:

It is held to the levels of earth by an angel  
 Far more than a star, earth-fallen or unfallen,  
 Yet fierce in her follies and head-strong and stronger  
 Than streams of the sea running in with the billows.

Very well. Let him woo, let him thrust his white  
 whiskers  
 And lips pale and purple with death in between us ;  
 Let her wed, as she wills, for the gold of the gray-  
 beard,  
 And to give in my hand his league-lands and doub-  
 loons :  
 I will set my face for you, O mountains, my brothers,  
 For I yet have my honor, my conscience and freedom,  
 My fleet-footed mustang and pistols rich-silver'd ;  
 I will turn as the earth turns her back on the sun,  
 But return to the light of her eyes never more,  
 While red noons have a night and white seas have a  
 shore.

*INA, approaching, offers him her hand.*

INA.

I have come, dear Don Carlos, to say you farewell  
 I shall wed with Don Castro at dawn of to-morrow,  
 And be all his own — firm, honest, and faithful.  
 I have promised this thing ; that I will keep my  
 promise  
 You who do know me care never to question.  
 I have master'd myself to say this thing to you

As a hunter would master an hungerèd grizzly.  
 Hear me : be strong, then, and say me farewell.  
 The world is his own who will brave its bleak hours.  
 Dare, then, to confront the cold days in their column ;  
 As they march down upon you, stand, hew them to  
     pieces,  
 One after one, as you would a fierce foeman,  
 Till not one abideth between two true bosoms.

Here, standing here, in the vines by the twilight,  
 While the fair moon was resting her face pure and  
     pallid  
 On the broad breast of heaven as one that is weary,  
 And her yellow hair trail'd bridal veils down upon us,  
 And the merry stars play'd hide-and-seek in the  
     heaven,  
 And danced there and dangled like to golden threads  
     tangled,  
 He said to me this : " I am old and am heirless,  
 And should I die so, by Mejico's statutes  
 My gold and my broad reach of lands do go forfeit  
 To the State, in despite of my will or my wishes ;  
 But you, my true wife, would be left my fair widow,  
 A queen in your wealth to enrich a young lover."

Then I told to him all — all my love and my struggles ;  
 And he called me most brave, and most true, and most  
     noble,

And said that he knew all my yearnings already,  
 And only sought thus with his wealth to endow me.

So then I promised, and shall keep my promise  
 True as the sun keeps his course in the heaven,  
 As stainless and pure, yet as warm as the summer

Let us part as true friends, with a hope all unutter'd ;  
 Without strife or a word, or an ill will between us.

Turn you to the right or the left like to Abram :  
 The world is before us, come cloud, or come sky ;  
 Give your hand here in mine and say bravely, Good-by.

[DON CARLOS *with a laugh of scorn flies from the verandah,  
 mounts his steed, and disappears.*

INA (*looking out into the night, after a long silence*).

How doleful the night-hawk screams high in the  
     heavens,

How dismally gibbers the gray coyoté !  
 Afar to the south now the red-tongued thunder,  
 Mine equal brother, my soul's own companion,  
 Talks low in his sleep, like a giant deep-troubled ;

Talks fierce in accord with my own stormy spirit.  
 But beyond him the supple California lion  
 Has aroused him up in a dangerous rivalry —  
 The beast, I could beard him alone in his lair,  
 And toy with his mane, though it toss'd like a fire.

## SCENE II.

*A spur of Mount Hood overlooking the Willamette river.*  
 LAMONTE, a mountaineer, pitches his solitary camp for the  
 night, and contemplates the scene.

LAMONTE.

**A** FLUSHED and weary messenger a-west  
 Is standing at the half-closed door of day,  
 As he would say, Good-night; and now his bright  
 Red cap he tips to me and turns his face.  
 Were it an unholy thing to say, An angel  
 Beside the door stood with uplifted seal?  
 Behold the door seal'd with that blood-red seal  
 Now burning, spreading o'er the mighty West.  
 Never again shall the dead day arise  
 Therefrom, but must be born and come anew.

The tawny, solemn Night, child of the East,  
 Her mournful robes trails on the distant woods,



And comes this way with firm and stately step.  
Afront, and very high, she wears her shining  
Breastplate of silver, and on her dark brow  
The radiant Venus burns like flashing wit.  
Behold! how in her gorgeous flow of hair  
Glitter a million mellow yellow gems,  
Spilling their molten gold on the dewy grass.  
Throned on the boundless plain, and gazing down  
Calmly upon the red-seal'd tomb of day,  
Resting her form against the Rocky Mountains,  
She rules with silent power a peaceful world.

'Tis midnight now. The bent and broken moon,  
Batter'd and black, as from a thousand battles,  
Hangs silent on the purple walls of heaven.  
The angel warrior, guard of the gates eternal,  
In battle-harness girt, sleeps on the field;  
But when to-morrow comes, when wicked men  
That fret the patient earth are all astir,  
He will resume his shield, and, facing earthward,  
The gates of heaven guard from sins of earth.

'Tis morn. Behold the kingly Day now leaps  
The eastern wall of earth with sword in hand.

Clad in a flowing robe of mellow light,  
Like to a king that has regain'd his throne,  
He warms his drooping subjects into joy,  
That rise rejoiced to do him fealty,  
And rules with pomp the universal world.

Far, far down in yon narrow spruce-lined cañon  
Is the storm-hid abysm of ghostly darkness.  
I see him now, as down and down I peer,  
Crouch down, and shrink, and creep still up the gorge,  
Like some great beast that would conceal its form  
In nervous terror from the gaze of man.  
The Willamette flashes back afar,  
And down his path of palms goes ever on,  
An endless caravan to some fair Mecca.  
On either side he spreads his yellow vales  
With strips of foamy streams and fringe of green,  
As a merchant of the storied East unfolds  
His gorgeous wealth of green and yellow silks.

'Tis harvest time, and valiant Nature bears  
Upon earth's broad and never-failing bosom  
A yellow shield of bright and gleaming gold,

Wrought out by patient husbandman to guard  
His sturdy race against the hosts of famine.

Lifting the purple curtains of the gods  
With flashing helmets that defy the clouds,  
And make fierce fellowship with undimm'd stars, —  
Mount Hood! and fair Saint Helens! snows eternal  
As the sun, — from this my mossy mountain throne,  
With lifted and uncover'd head, I greet ye!

Soft snowy breasts on Nature's swelling bosom —  
Nature benign and bounteous — let me draw  
Pure inspiration from ye, as a child  
Draws nurture from a loving mother's breast,  
And be your child, your yearning, wayward child,  
And, sitting here as on a parent's knee,  
Gaze wonder-full into the face of Nature.

DON CARLOS *ascends the mountain gesticulating and talking to  
himself.*

DON CARLOS.

Oh for a name that black-eyed maids would sigh  
And lean with parted lips at mention of,  
That I should seem so tall in the minds of men

That I might walk beneath the arch of Heaven,  
And pluck the ripe red stars as I pass'd on,  
As favour'd guests do pluck the purple grapes  
That hang above the humble entrance-way  
Of a palm-thatch'd mountain-inn of Mexico.  
Oh, I would give the green leaves of my life  
For something grand and real — undream'd deeds!  
To wear a mantle, broad and richly jewell'd  
As purple heaven fringed with gold at sunset;  
To wear a crown as dazzling as the sun,  
And, holding up a sceptre lightning-charged,  
Stride out among the stars as I have strode  
A barefoot boy among the buttercups.  
Alas! I am so restless. There is that  
Within me doth rebel and rise against  
The all I am and half I see in others;  
And were't not for contempt of coward act  
Of flying all defeated from the world,  
As if I feared and dared not face its ills,  
I should ere this have known, known more or less  
Than any flesh that frets this sullen earth.  
I know not where such thoughts will lead me to:  
I have had a fear that they would drive me mad,  
And then have flatter'd my weak self, and said

The soul's outgrown the body — yea, the soul  
Aspires to the stars, and in its struggles  
Does make the dull flesh quiver like an aspen.

LAMONTE.

What waif is this cast here upon my shore,  
From seas of subtle and uncertain men?

DON CARLOS.

Subtle and selfish men! — ah, that's the term!  
And if you be but earnest in your spleen,  
And the other sex across man's shoulders curse,  
I'll stand beside you on this crag and curse  
And hurl my clench'd fists down upon their heads,  
Till I am hoarse as yonder cataract.

LAMONTE.

Why, no, my friend, I'll not consent to that.  
No true man yet has ever cursed a woman;  
And I — I do not hate my fellow man.  
For man by nature bears within himself  
Nobility that makes him half a god;  
But as in somewise he hath made himself,

His universal thirst for gold and pomp,  
 And purchased fleeting fame and bubble honors,  
 Forgetting good, neglecting helpless age,  
 And rushing rough-shod over lowly merit,  
 I hold him but a sorry worm indeed ;  
 And so have turn'd me quietly aside  
 To know the majesty of peaceful woods.  
 There is a freshness there, a perfect fairness,  
 A candor and unlanguage'd harmony  
 That wins you, and you worship unawares.

DON CARLOS (*as if alone*).

The fabled fount of youth led many fools,  
 Zealous in its pursuit, to hapless death ;  
 And yet this thirst for fame, this hot ambition,  
 This soft-toned syren-tongue, enchanting Fame,  
 Doth lead me headlong on to equal folly,  
 Like to a wild bird charm'd by shining coils  
 And swift mesmerie glare of deadly snake :  
 I would not break the charm, but win a world  
 Or die with curses blistering my lips.

LAMONTE.

You startle me ! I am unused to hear

Men talk these fierce and bitter thoughts; and yet  
 In closed recesses of my soul was once  
 A dark and gloomy chamber where they dwelt.  
 Give up ambition — yea, crush out such thoughts  
 As you would crush from hearth a scorpion-brood :  
 For, mark me well, they 'll get the mastery,  
 And drive you on to death — or worse, across  
 A thousand ruin'd homes and broken hearts.

DON CARLOS.

Give up ambition ! Oh, rather than die,  
 And glide a lonely, nameless, shivering ghost  
 Down the dark tide of utter nothingness,  
 I'd write a name in blood and orphans' tears.  
 The temple-burner wiser was than kings.  
 Yet violence is not my inner nature :  
 I would embalm my name in noblest good,  
 Would die a death of lofty self-denial,  
 If but the world beheld the sacrifice  
 And men took note and told my fame to her,  
 That she might weep for spite and envy me  
 My sweet applause and dignity of death.  
 I'd write a song eternal as the sun,

As chaste and beautiful as is the moon,  
 That men might read even as they read the stars  
 In their enamell'd setting in the ring  
 Above, the crescent blue, in deep delight ;  
 Denied the art and opportunity,  
 I'd leap strong arm'd upon the centre stage  
 Of this uncertain, accidental life,  
 Snatch up the slacken'd reins, and ruthless guide  
 The idle energies of the monster mob,  
 Reckless of every cost or pain to man,  
 To my grand honor, glory and renown,  
 While he should wonder, worship, call me wise.

LAMONTE.

But would you dare the curse of man and —

DON CARLOS.

Dare!

I'd dare the curses of the sceptred kings!  
 I'd build a pyramid of the whitest skulls,  
 And step therefrom unto the spotted moon,  
 And thence to stars, thence to the central suns ;  
 Then with one grand and mighty leap would land



Unhinder'd on the shores of the gods of old,  
 And, sword in hand, unbared and unabash'd,  
 Would stand forth in the presence of the God  
 Of gods; there, on the jewell'd inner-side  
 The walls of heaven, carve with a Damascus  
 Steel, highest up, a grand and titled name  
 That time nor tide could touch or tarnish ever,  
 Yea, any thing on earth, in hell or heaven,  
 Rather than lie a nameless clod forgot,  
 Letting stern Time in triumph forward tramp  
 Above my tombless and neglected dust.

## LAMONTE.

Seek not to crop above the heads of men  
 'To be a better mark for envy's shafts.  
 Come to my peaceful home, and leave behind  
 These stormy thoughts and daring aspirations.  
 It is revenge that shows the savage heart,  
 And earthly power's a thing comparative.  
 Is not a petty chief of some lone isle,  
 With half-a-dozen nude and starving subjects,  
 As much a king as he the Czar of Rusk?  
 In yonder sweet retreat and balmy place

I'll abdicate, and you be chief indeed.  
 There you will reign and tell me of the world,  
 Its life and lights, its sins and sickly shadows.  
 The pheasant will reveillé beat at morn,  
 And rouse us to the battle of the day.  
 My swarthy subjects will in circle sit,  
 And, gazing on your kingly presence, deem  
 You great indeed, and call you chief of chiefs;  
 And, knowing no one greater than yourself  
 In all the leafy borders of your realm,  
 'Gainst what can pride or poor ambition chafe?

'Twill be a kingdom without king, save you,  
 Broader than that the cruel Cortes won,  
 With subjects truer than he ever knew,  
 That know no law but only Nature's law,  
 And no religion know but that of love.  
 There truth and beauty are, for there is Nature,  
 Serene and simple. She will be our priestess,  
 And in her calm and uncomplaining face  
 We will read well her rubric and be wise.

A glass-like lake lies on this mountain-top :  
 You bend you o'er, and, resting on your palms,

Gaze down and down full fifty fathoms deep,  
And see the speckled mountain-trout that sport,  
All gold and silver-sheathed and scaled, above  
Rich palaces, brown, marble-built and massive,  
Hewn out and built or ever man had named  
The stars — when mighty Nimrod kept the chase.

Black, quillless pines, perfect as those ashore —  
Proportion'd mighty, perfectly erect —  
Stand dark and sullen in the silent courts.  
You cast a pebble in, a nut in size,  
And watch it wind and wind a weary time,  
Then see it plain as if 'twas in your hand.  
Could you believe a flood could be so pure,  
So mirror-like, so strangely beautiful?  
Some tall pines press up to the water's edge  
And droop adown their plumed and sable heads,  
And weep above their buried comrades still  
All night the dewy tears of Nature.

A league across, the pines have broken rank  
And stand in small platoons, or stand alone;  
While far across the rolling sea-like meads  
Do dash and wheel the spotted Indian steeds.

The warriors shout and gallop up and down,  
And lovely maids in beaded moccasins,  
Furs thick with red and yellow feathers fringed,  
As tall and straight as water tulés are,  
Go forth in dusky beauty in their walk  
Beneath the circling shadows of the pines,  
Or bathe and dream along the borders of the lake.

And far beyond, where pines crowd thick and tall,  
And waters dwindle to a narrow wedge,  
The glad lake opes her pretty gushing mouth,  
And down a foaming cataract of silver  
Pours all her ceaseless song and melody —  
The far source of the lovely Willamette.

At night, o'erspread by the rich, purple robe,  
The deep imperial Tyrian hue that folds  
The invisible form of the Eternal God,  
You will see the sentry stars come marching forth  
And take their posts upon the field above,  
Around the great white tent where sleeps their chief;  
You will hear the kakea singing in a dream  
The wildest, sweetest song a soul can drink.  
And when the tent is folded up, and all

The golden-fringed red sentries faced about  
 To let the pompous day-king pass along,  
 We two will stand upon a sloping hill,  
 Where white-lipped springs come leaping, laughing up,  
 With water spouting forth in merry song  
 Like bridled mirth from out a school-girl's throat.  
 And look far down the bending Willamette,  
 And in his thousand graceful curves and strokes  
 And strange meanderings, men misunderstand,  
 Read the unutterable name of GOD.

## DON CARLOS.

Why, truly now, this fierce and broken land,  
 Seen through your eyes, assumes a fairer shape  
 Lead up, for you are nearer God than I.

## SCENE III.

INA, *in black, alone by the sea. Midnight.*

## INA.

WEEP? Me to weep? How I laugh to think  
 of it!

I lift my dark brow to the breath of the ocean,  
 Soft kissing me now like the lips of my mother,

And laugh low and long as I crush the brown grasses,  
 To think I should weep! Why, I never wept — never,  
 Not even in punishments dealt me in childhood!  
 Yea, all of my wrongs and my bitterness buried  
 In my brave baby heart, all alone and unfriended.  
 And I pitied, with proud and disdainfulest pity,  
 The weak who would weep, and I laugh'd at the folly  
 Of those who could laugh and make merry with play-  
     things:  
 Then I tuck'd down my chin and went under the  
     lindens,  
 And made me companions of grave hornéd cattle.

No! I will not weep now over that I desired.  
 Desired? Yes: I to myself dare confess it,  
 Ah, too, to the world should it question too closely,  
 And bathe me and sport in a deep sea of candor.  
 Bah! Cowards deceive, and I know not what fear is.  
 Men lie, who lack courage to tell truth — the cowards!

Like Lucifer dower'd with pride and wild beauty,  
 With poverty cursed and the fiercest ambition,  
 I stood all alone by my sweet child-mother;

When the kind dotard came and did bend him forward,  
Fast thrusting his beard by my boy Don Carlos.  
And so I did wed him. Would you know now the  
reason?  
I endured the cold frost for the springtime to follow,  
Did wed to the one for the love of the other,  
And to get for him gold, gave my whole fair body.

Oh, alone and unlike to all other things earthly  
Was my brave boy-lover; as an isle 'mid the oceans  
Of men, so alike as are drops of water.  
He did win my heart by his great defiance  
Of men and manners, and his thoughts unbridled.  
But now made a queen, after all my struggles,  
I shall seek him out and surprise and enrich him;  
And seek him with songs as a sweet boy-poet.  
I did bear my burden long, loyal and faithful,  
Even down to the end, and did make no murmur:  
But now he is dead and I dare joy at it.  
And am I then the first that has joy'd thus fiercely,  
And held Death's mantle while he did his office?

What now if the odds were but this wild courage,  
That does dare shape thought into plainest language

Let the world be deceived: it insists upon it;  
Let it bundle me round in its black woe-garments;  
But I, self with self— my free soul fearless—  
Am as frank as the sun, nor the toss of a copper  
Care I if the world call it good or evil.  
I am glad to-night, and in new-born freedom  
Forget all earth with my old companions, —  
The moon and the stars and the moon-clad ocean.  
I am face to face with the stars that know me,  
And gaze as I gazed in the eyes of my mother,  
Forgetting the city and the coarse things in it;  
For there's naught but God in the shape of mortal  
Save one — my wandering, wild boy-lover —  
That I do esteem worth a stale banana.

The air hangs heavy and is warm on my shoulder  
And is thick with odors of balm and blossom;  
The great bay sleeps with the ships on her bosom.  
Through the Golden Gate, to the left-hand yonder,



Newer, and purer from the hand of God,  
Did find a traitor in His chosen twelve.

## LAMONTE.

There's that in you that draws my soul to yours,  
Your head, I fear, but not your heart, is wrong.  
I will not answer now, but summon you  
To yon grand courts to give in evidence,  
Where sleep the monarchs of a thousand storms,  
For ever still in shrouds of color'd moss,  
While green vines twine a pretty wreath above,  
As crowning graves of dear and gallant dead;  
The Yew, in cloak of everlasting green,  
Does sweep her pretty palms in winning eloquence,  
While scarlet berries bead her lisp'ing boughs  
Like threaded drops of rainbow-painted dew,  
Or pearls upon an Indian maiden's limbs.  
Reposing there on couch of mossy carpet,  
Where darkest green is wove with yellow moss,  
And yellow wove with green, all undisturb'd  
By sight or sound save birds of sweetest song,  
While mighty trees above receive the red  
And hot darts of the sun on bearded helmets,

Will come to you the higher evidence,  
Stronger a thousandfold and more convincing  
Than if produced by oath of all mankind.  
With me in my untraversed wilds and caves,  
My kingdom unexplored, you will read the book  
Of Nature that unclasp'd lies, while the winds  
Mesmeric as the fingers of your love  
Will turn the living leaves as you read on —  
Will paint in lambent amber hues and Tyrian,  
And strike in plaintive mellow tone a harp  
That hangs upon the lightning-shiver'd pine ;  
And, reading, we shall happier grow and better.  
Nature will mightier seem yet milder there,  
Because we shall be nearer to her face.

## DON CARLOS.

And if I should, what then ? What though I met  
My Maker face to face, as in the Mount ?  
Left mountain-bound in islands of the clouds,  
What fame or fortune could betide me there ?  
I had as well know secrets of deep death,  
Or hold in hand the keys of Cæsar's coffers,  
And be for evermore forbid their use.

## LUCUS.

What, he, the poor blasphemous and crazy beggar!  
So must you speak, or else the world will hiss you,  
Of these brave spirits God tries in His fire,  
Then takes unto Himself, as guards in heaven —  
Loves them and takes them as his own companions  
In their strong youth, as the old Greeks have said,  
Leaving their dust in tracts most desolate.  
A bear, as in old time, came from the woods  
And tore him there upon that storm-swept cliff —  
A grim and grizzled bear, like unto hunger.  
A tall ship sail'd adown the sea next morn,  
And, standing with his glass upon the prow,  
The captain saw a vulture on a cliff,  
Gorging, and pecking, stretching his long neck,  
Bracing his raven plumes against the wind,  
Fretting the tempest with his sable feathers.

## DON CARLOS.

'Twas wrong, he should have lived and fought it out.  
This nursing a gushing heart of sentiment  
Does bring contempt on half the schemes of life.  
Tears are a woman's weapons, sorry things

Even in her, but in man despicable.  
 What! lie down and be rode upon rough-shod?  
 No, face and fight, and be at least respected  
 The lion is not a comely beast, but brave,  
 And is therefore revered above all beasts,  
 And, bravest of the brave, is chosen king.  
 God and his angels fought for heaven; Christ  
 Did beat with thongs the craven money-changers;  
 The chosen Peter wore a willing sword.  
 The stormy elements war through all the year;  
 Spring and bluff Winter strive for mastery;  
 Autumn and Winter struggle on the heath,  
 And I have seen them wrestle in the woods  
 Until the yellow leaves were all awirl,  
 And sighs and groans went up and down the hills.

He sought the impossible — asked good unmix'd,  
 Asked peace on earth where there is no peace.  
 Here do the kernel and the chaff all blend,  
 And good and evil intwine. Hereafter,  
 After the harvest, the segregation.  
 Even the Christ, two thousand years ago,  
 In the far dawn while yet the world was young,

Content! Oh, she has crack'd the ribs of earth  
And made her shake poor trembling man from off  
Her back, even as a grizzly shakes the hounds  
She has upheaved her rocky spine against  
The flowing robes of the Eternal God.  
Nature is not content. Ha! I have heard her  
Rushing at night swift down the streaming plain,  
And, when the storm was thick and deep at night,  
Have seen her press her face in blacken'd mask  
Against my window-pane, and sob, and weep,  
And wail, until the great round tears ran down;  
And then, as if in savage desperation,  
Seize violent hold and shake the sash and frame  
Until they quailed and quaked like aspen-leaf.  
I did unbar the window for her once,  
This wild-lamenting, fretful, childish Nature:  
She, like a wood-rear'd girl, rush'd reckless in  
And hid her trembling in a darken'd corner.  
Peer down there, half a league by cliff and bough,  
Into the river's white complaining face,  
And see his gray hair trail'd in shifting sands:  
There comes a wail of terror and despair  
Up from his white and trembling lips a-foam.  
While he uplifts his thin white palms to pines

That bend dark-brow'd and sad as o'er a tomb.  
 No! 'tis a pretty thought and pretty theme  
 That Nature reigns in majesty serene:  
 But lift the skirts of Isis, and be wise.

LUCUS.

Heartless ambition and unholy pride!  
 Hatred of man and strange contempt of woman!  
 At war with all, and your own enemy!  
 While man is man, do not attempt to shine  
 Too bright: consult your peace, beware of pride;  
 For malice shoots alone at shining marks.  
 Beware of pride. I once did hear a learn'd  
 Man say, "By pride the angels fell from heaven."

DON CARLOS.

By pride they reach'd a place from which to fall.

LUCUS.

And were they better, happier, having thus  
 Ascended, then prostrate to fall so far?

DON CARLOS.

Yes! Let me only win the love I woo,

Enjoy her but one brief hour, then lose all,  
I will be winner that one gracious hour ;  
And in my memory then will I possess  
A wall'd spring hung about with cooling palms,  
Where weary recollection traversing  
The barren desert of my life, might pause  
And bathe herself, and, resting, rise refresh'd.  
There be some men with hope so full and strong,  
Their souls feed on the future — a green field —  
But mine will not go on, but backward turns  
As if for something lost or left behind :  
Goes back against my will, an endless lane,  
A stray sheep from the flock that ever keeps  
The dusty centre of the unwater'd way,  
And looks up weary at the fasten'd gates  
That lead to cooling springs and verdant banks,  
But closed against me when at first I pass'd.

## LUCUS.

There was one once of nature like to this :  
He stood a barehead boy upon a cliff  
Pine-crown'd, that hung high o'er a bleak north sea  
His long hair stream'd and flash'd like yellow silk,  
His sea-blue eyes lay deep and still as lakes

O'erhung by mountains arched in virgin snow;  
And far astray, and friendless and alone,  
A tropic bird blown through the north frost-wind,  
He stood above the sea in the cold white moon,  
His thin face lifted to the flashing stars,  
And talk'd familiarly full face to face  
With the Eternal God, in solemn night,  
Confronting Him with free and flippant air  
As one confronts a merchant o'er his counter,  
And in his vehement blasphemy did say:  
"God, put aside this world — show me another!  
God, this world is a cheat — hand down another!  
I will not buy — not have it as a gift.  
Put it aside and hand me down another —  
Another, and another, still another,  
Till I have tried the fairest world that hangs  
Upon the walls and broad dome of your shop,  
The finest one that has come from your hand;  
For I am proud of soul and regal born,  
And will not have a cheap and cheating world."

DON CARLOS.

The noble youth! So God gave him another?



Strike like a serpent in the grass conceal'd?  
 What, steal into their homes, and, when athirst  
 And unsuspecting, they come down in couples  
 And dip their muzzles in the mossy brink,  
 Then shoot them down without a chance to fly —  
 The only means that God has given them,  
 Poor, unarm'd mutes, to baffle cruel man!  
 Ah, now I see you had not thought of this!  
 The hare is fleet, and quick at sight and sound,  
 His coat is changed with color of the fields;  
 Yon deer turn brown when forest-leaves are brown.  
 The dog has teeth, the cat has teeth and claws,  
 And man has craft and art and sinewy arms:  
 All things that live have some means of defence . . .

LUCUS.

Ay, all — save only lovely, helpless woman.

DON CARLOS.

Nay, woman has her tongue — arm'd to the teeth.

LUCUS.

Thou Timon, what can 'scape your bitterness?  
 But for this sweet repose and peace of Nature

Upon whose breast we here recline and dream,  
 Why, you might lift your voice and rail at her!

DON CARLOS.

Oh, I am out of patience with your faith!  
 What! Nature quiet, peaceful, uncomplaining?  
 I've seen her fretted like a lion caged,  
 Chafe like a peevish woman cross'd and churl'd,  
 Tramping and foaming like a whelpless bear;  
 Have seen her weep till earth was wet with tears,  
 Then turn all smiles — a jade that won her point;  
 Have seen her tear the hoary hair of Ocean,  
 While he, himself full half a world, would moan  
 And roll and toss his clumsy hands all day  
 To earth like some great helpless babe, that lay  
 Rude-rock'd and cradled by an unseen nurse,  
 Then stain her snowy hem with salt-sea tears;  
 And when the peaceful, mellow moon came forth,  
 To walk and meditate among the yellow  
 Blooms that make blest the upper purple fields,  
 This wroth dyspeptic sea ran after her  
 With all his soul, as if to pour himself,  
 All sick and helpless, in her snowy lap.

The white sea lies in a deep sleep, snoring,  
The father of melody, the mother of measure,  
Lifting his breast to the moon, deep breathing. —  
Let me sing by the sea a song as he slumbers,  
A song to the air of the sweetest of singers.

[*Sings.*

O tempest-toss'd sea of white bosoms,  
O breasts with demands and desires,  
O hearts fill'd of fevers, of fires,  
Reaching forth from the tangible blossoms,  
Reaching far for impossible things!  
Beat not, O break not your warm wings  
On the cruel cold bars any more.  
Lo! the sea, the great sea has his shore,  
And lies in his limit; the moon  
Has her night, and the sun has his noon.

What a wonderful world truly this is!  
How barren of wisdom and worth!  
How populous full is the earth  
Of the fools that taste not of its blisses!  
Then despise not the glories before you.

With your feet on the things that are real:  
 Take the tangible loves that adore you,  
 Touch the forms that are flesh and can feel.

Leaves fade, and the frosts are before us;  
 Leaves fall, and the winter winds are;  
 Loves fail! Let us cross and deplore us;  
 Loves die! Lift your hands as at war.  
 Lift your hands to the world and deny it;  
 Lift your voice, cry aloud and deny;  
 Cry aloud, "'Tis a lie!" and belie it  
 With lives made a beautiful lie.

#### SCENE IV.

*A Wood by a rivulet on a spur of Mount Hood, overlooking the Columbia. LAMONTE and DON CARLOS, on their way to the camp, have met with other hunters, and are reposing under the shadow of the forest. Some deer are observed descending to the brook, and one of the party seizes his rifle.*

DON CARLOS.

NAY, then, my friend, don't strike them from your  
 covert.

## LAMONTE.

Why, no! You'd gather up pure gems of thought,  
Or catch bright fancies one by one that flit  
You by like beauteous Orient birds, and cage  
Them up between a precious volume's lids ;  
Or like one gathering gold from out the sand,  
A little here, a little there, then all  
Mould in one bright and shining shield, and so  
Bearing it up, descend upon the world  
Like some proud conqueror of olden time ;  
Or shine forth in the newness of your thought  
Like some bright lovely star that hastens forth  
Before its mates, chasing the sullen sun,  
And so be seen and known of all the world.

## DON CARLOS.

What is there new atop of this old world?  
Should e'er I come to write your books, why I  
Would search among the quaint and dusty tomes  
While the selfish world sought pleasure and repose,  
And Shoddy did up the European tour  
Much as a blockhead schoolboy does a task,  
While men well skill'd in sales of soap and lard,

And learn'd in all the art of packing pork,  
Would coarsely tramp the sacred dust that deeds,  
When earth was blithe and young, have made in-  
mortal

(Where I would softly tread unshod and bared).

I'd pick up here and there from dusty masters  
The ancient coins of loftiest, noblest thought,  
And cast them in one shining shield of bronze,  
And bearing it aloft high-heralded,  
Well flank'd with sheets of broad advertisements,  
Be call'd a bard of new-inspired song.

I'd throttle modest mien and word in this  
Swift age, as base traducers of my fame;

I'd cast meek modesty into the sea,  
The Jonah that had brought me all my trouble.

I'd plant a preface full afront my book  
As you would plant a battery in war,  
And, bearing down all things that dared oppose,  
With shout and flourish take the world by storm.

Or at the least I'd hold a touching tale  
Before my book as you would hold a shield,  
And with it catch or turn aside the darts  
And poison'd shafts of killing criticism.

But mind you, fame is not now won with ink,

The author's pen's a lever, lifting others ;  
The stain of blood is readier seen from far,  
And gold like some bright star's at once beheld  
By all the world throughout the darkest day,  
And instant wins the worship of the mob.

The world has turn'd shopkeeper — go, sell, sell ;  
Put on yourself a costly price, to sell :  
Real cash-customers buy no cheap goods.  
The mob has now got hold the money-bags,  
And skilful judges of corn, pork, and cabbage  
Do judge men by their arrogance and name.  
Assume a lofty air and sounding title —  
The barefaced fools outnumber and outshout  
The men of sense and solid worth and thought.  
The gilded chisell'd vessels that encase  
Most stupid, sour, and unwholesome wines  
At once are pluck'd at by the money-mob,  
The while the plain but precious bottled liquor  
Accumulates the dust of generations.

Go, buy and sell. Get gold. A golden lever  
Moves more than e'er the Syracusan might.  
Deceit brings wealth, wealth buys the bubble fame.

Fame lulls the fever of the soul, and makes  
Us feel that we have grasp'd an immortality.

Oh, I have mock'd at man and shook with mirth.  
Yet is in all a sort of savage justice.  
Have you no time observed with what an odd  
Yet an impartial hand are things divided?  
The fool has fortunes thrust upon him, while  
The man of brains is pinch'd with penury.  
The dolt who feels as much of sentiment  
As a milch-cow, fed in her field of clover,  
Goes on serene through sweetest-smelling meads,  
With maidens fainting for a breath of love,  
And heiresses cast at his empty head  
By fond mammas, whene'er he please to show it.  
While he of finest sense is blown by fate,  
Like some sea-waif, upon the frontier wild.  
The prettiest maiden is a screeching parrot,  
While she of wit is shorn of all of beauty;  
The gifted man is stoop'd and sallow-pale,  
The ass stands six feet up of lovely flesh;  
Wisdom means age and gout and ugliness,  
While the crude boy has health and ruddy beauty,  
And wisdom's sov'reign head is bow'd and bald,  
And the rich man envies the beggar's stomach.



## LAMONTE.

Give me your hand, your right in this my left —  
 Its blood comes nearer from the heart ; and then,  
 My right is dead, deader than this your love ;  
 For love, like Lazarus, can only sleep,  
 But, breathed upon by love and hope, will rise —  
 Rise up a loftier and a holier love.  
 I know you now ; I am an elder brother,  
 For sorrow and deceit have made us kin.  
 From want and disappointment, bitter breasts,  
 We two have drawn our stormy natures.

*A Young HUNTER ascends the mountain and approaches.*

## DON CARLOS.

Ho ! whom, now, have we here ? Talk of the devil,  
 And he is at hand. Say, who are you, and whence ?

## HUNTER.

I am a poet, and dwell down by the sea.

## DON CARLOS.

A poet ! a poet, forsooth ! Fool ! hungry fool !  
 Would you know what it means to be a poet ?

It is to want a friend, to want a home,  
 A country, money, — ay, to want a meal.  
 It is not wise to be a poet now,  
 For the world has so fine and modest grown  
 It will not praise a poet to his face,  
 But waits till he is dead some hundred years,  
 Then uprears marbles cold and stupid as itself.

But rest you here, and while the red-hot sun  
 Wheels on, and sleep my friends beneath the boughs,  
 Do, pray, beguile the hour with a song.

HUNTER (*sings*).

I am as one unlearned, uncouth,  
 From country come to join the youth  
 Of some sweet town in quest of truth;  
     A Nazarene of wood and plain  
 A-west, from whence no good may come.  
 I stand apart as one that's dumb.  
 I hope — I fear — I hasten home.  
     I plunge into my wilds again.

I catch some dulcet symphonies,  
 I drink the low sweet melodies

That stream through dense dark feathered trees  
Like echoes from some far church bell,  
Or music on the water spilled  
Beneath the still moon's holy spell,  
And life is sweeter — all is well —  
The soul is fed. The heart is filled.

I move among my frowning firs,  
Black bats wheel by in rippled whirs,  
While naught else living breathes or stirs.

I peep — I lift the boughs apart —  
I tiptoe up — I try to rise —  
I strive to gaze into the eyes  
Of charmers charming very wise —  
I coin their faces on my heart.

I hear them on the Northern hills  
Discoursing with the beaded rills,  
While over all the full moon spills  
Her flood in gorgeous plenilune.  
White skilful hands sweep o'er the strings,  
I heed as when a seraph sings,  
I lean to catch the whisperings,  
I list into the night's sweet noon.

I see them by the Eastern strand,  
 A singing sea-shell in each hand,  
 And silk locks tossing as they stand,  
     And tangled in the toying breeze.  
 And lo! the sea with salty tears,  
 While white hands toss, then disappear,  
 Doth plead that they for years and years  
     Will stay and sing unto the seas.

## DON CARLOS.

Hold! hold your tongue, and hold my aching head!  
 'Tis well for you the Roman mob is dead.  
 This stuff of yours is full of pompous I's  
 As a candidate for Congress is of lies.  
 Why talk so loudly of yourself at large?  
 Your neighbors do that for you, free of charge!  
 This poetry's not of the heart, but stomach;  
 Not inspiration, but 'tis indigestion  
 Disturbs the balance-wheel that rules your brain.  
 Love food the less — respect your stomach more,  
 For more have groan'd and died from over-use  
 Of knives and forks, than ever fell in war  
 By bloody sword and bayonet and ball.

*† The HUNTER rises and moves away.*

DON CARLOS

Why, what's the haste? You'll reach there soon  
enough.

HUNTER.

Reach where?

DON CARLOS.

The Inn to which all earthly roads do tend:  
The "neat apartments furnish'd — see within;"  
The "furnish'd rooms for quiet, single gentlemen."  
The narrow six-by-two where you will lie  
With cold blue nose pointing up to the grass,  
Labell'd and box'd, and ready all for shipment.  
'Twas said of old that all roads led to Rome,  
But all roads now do lead to this small Inn.  
'Tis just so many leagues ahead of you,  
Why, then, make haste to cross the space between?

## SCENE V.

LAMONTE'S *Camp-fire in the Mountains.*

DON CARLOS, LAMONTE, the HUNTER, and others, seated around, smoking and telling tales of home and how they came to take to the Mountains.

OLD LAMONTE, the mountaineer, lounging at one side, talking with the Young Hunter, and pointing out to him his new companions:—

I GREET you welcome to these wild mountains,  
 As will these my comrades at their good leisure.  
 And now, meantime, that you'll know them better,  
 Yon fair-hair'd man, all in beaded buckskin  
 And belt of wampum, now peering skyward,  
 Is noble young Lucus, a heart-sick lover  
 That has fled a coward from the shafts of Cupid,  
 Fearing far less the red Indians' arrows.  
 The man beyond him, thick-lipp'd and surly,  
 'Tis said, is a patriot from merry old England  
 Who took to these mountains for the good of his  
 country.  
 To the left, by the pine, is a dollarless marquis  
 At talk with a scholar high-bred, of Oxford,  
 Self-exiled, say, for some gay peccadillo.

Beyond, in the shade, is a Southern gentleman  
 Talking with one of his ten brown women.  
 That black Kanuk, with his hair on his shoulders,  
 Has herds and leagues on the North Red River,  
 And wigwams alive with olive-hued children.  
 Over here, with his pipe, is a thoughtfulest German,  
 Profound, it is said, in his lore and letters,  
 And silent in all of the tongues of Europe.  
 Yon fast young man, with a rose in his bosom,  
 Is a Spaniard waiting for a dear relation  
 To die, to come to his hard-earn'd fortune.  
 And last I name is a long-nosed Yankee,  
 Shrewdly watching to improve his chances,  
 Ready to trade, trap, preach, or peddle.  
 Such are the men of the rough Rocky Mountains,  
 Not hairy monsters as some do pronounce us,  
 But men blown up from the world's four quarters,  
 Gentle or vicious, serene or savage,  
 Common alone in undoubted courage.  
 Hlist ! list and learn, as they tell their adventures.

*A gray FRENCHMAN ends a tale thus :—*

Alas, the sight I saw that night !  
 Alas, that I should tremble here !

I know 'tis not a coward fear,  
And yet I shiver as in fright.

The blue fields blossom'd yellow bloom  
Of brilliants set in purple gloom,  
A silver shield slid on and on  
Between me and the better land,  
And I was glad. I kiss'd my hand  
To melting stars and mellow moon —  
I left the full feast oversoon,  
And sought the peerless paragon.  
Gay jesting at her clever art  
In hiding in some spot unknown,  
I sought her, thought her mine, my own —  
I had despised a baser thought.  
I sought her as I would be sought  
With boundless faith and beating heart,  
Fill'd full of sweet uncertainties,  
Among the moonlit, fruited trees.

Alas, the sight I saw that night  
Through stripèd bars of streaming light,  
And boughs that whisper'd plaintively  
In solemn sympathy with me!



A red dead leaf was in her hair,  
Full half a swelling breast was bare,  
And mad disorder everywhere.  
And, gliding through a thorny brake  
And sliding like a slimy snake,  
I saw him stooping steal away  
Like serpent caught in Paradise,  
That hid it from the face of day  
With guilty and unholy eyes.

I saw a sight that night, that night,  
Because I could not help but see —  
Because the moon was bleached so white —  
Because the stars were yellow light —  
Because they blossom'd in a tree  
And dropp'd their blossoms on the grass —  
And saw because, alas, alas!  
An evil spirit guided me.

He was my friend. He ate my bread.  
He counsell'd very wise and well ;  
“ I love you more than words can tell,”  
He many and many a time had said.  
He suck'd the juices from my fruit

And left for me the bitter rind.  
I am not crazed — it was unkind  
'To suck the sweetness from my fruit  
And give me back the bitter rind.

And did I curse or crush or kill?  
Go down to yonder wooded gate,  
Go down, go down, it groweth late;  
You hesitate and hesitate —  
I tremble as if in a chill.

It open'd very wide that night,  
For two went through — but one return'd:  
And when its rusty hinges turn'd,  
'They creak'd as if in pain or fright.

Three finger-prints are on the bar —  
Three finger-prints of purple gore.  
You scan my hand — here, scan it more,  
And count my fingers o'er and o'er,  
You cannot see a sign of gore.  
I lost one finger in the war,  
And is it not an honor'd scar?

## DON CARLOS.

Woman! and still the sad burden is woman!

O most valiant, most gallant gentleman,

Frighten'd from home by the flirt of a petticoat!

Well, sigh to the moon and delight in delusions,

And dream that she too turns a pale face to heaven.

Bah! barely your shadow goes out from her threshold

Before she is turning all smiles on another.

But you, yon gray trapper there, storm-stained and  
grizzled,

And gazing still dreamily into the fire,

Sure you have a tale without burden of woman.

Come, call your far thoughts from the mountain or  
plain,

In the wars with the savage, and fight them again.

## THE TRAPPER

*(Still gazing into the fire, and speaking in a low tone as if to himself).*

Back, backward to-night is memory traversing,

Over the desert my weary feet travell'd,

Thick with the wreck of my dear heart-idols

And toppled columns of my ambition,

Red with the best of my hot heart's purple.

This then is all of the sweet life she promised ;  
This then is all of the fair life I painted !  
Dead, ashen apples of the Dead-Sea border !  
Ah yes, and worse by a thousand numbers,  
Since that can be lifted away as we will it,  
While desolate life with its dead hope buried  
Clings on to the clay, though the soul despise it.

Down under the hill and there under the fir-tree  
By the spring, and looking far out in the valley,  
She stands as she stood in the glorious Olden,  
Swinging her hat in her right hand dimpled,  
The other hand toys with a honey-suckle  
That has tiptoed up and is trying to kiss her.  
Her dark hair is twining her neck and her temples  
As tendrils some beautiful Balize marble.

“O eyes of lustre and love and passion !  
O radiant face like the sea-shell tinted !  
White cloud with the sunbeams tangled in it !”  
I cried, as I stood in the dust beneath her,  
And gazed on the goddess my boy-heart worshipped  
With a love and a passion, a part of madness.

“Dreamer,” she said, and a tinge of displeasure  
Swept over her face that I should disturb her,  
“All of the fair world is spread out before you;  
Go down and possess it with love and devotion,  
And heart ever tender and touching as woman’s,  
And life shall be fair as the first kiss of morning.”  
I turn’d down the pathway, was blinded no longer:  
Another was coming, tall, manly, and bearded.

I built me a shrine in the innermost temple —  
In the innermost rim of the heart’s red centre —  
And placed her therein, sole possessor and priestess,  
And carved all her words on the walls of my temple.  
They say that he woo’d her there under the fir-tree,  
That he won her one eve, when the katydids mock’d  
her.

He may have a maiden and call her Merinda;  
But mine is the one that stands there for ever  
Leisurely swinging her hat by the ribbons.

They say she is wedded. No, not my Merinda,  
For mine stands for ever there under the fir-tree  
Gazing and swinging her hat by the ribbons.  
They tell me her children reach up to my shoulder

'Tis false. I did see her down under the fir-tree  
 When the stars were all busy a-weaving thin laces  
 Made red with their gold and the moon's yellow tresses,  
 Swinging her hat as in days of the Olden.

True, that I spoke not nor ventured to touch her —  
 Touch her! I sooner would pluck the sweet Mary,  
 The mother of Jesus, from arms of the priesthood,  
 As they kneel at the altar in holy devotion!

\* \* \* \* \*

And was it for this that my heart was kept tender,  
 Fashion'd from thine, O sacristan maiden? —  
 That coarse men could pierce my warm heart to the  
 purple?  
 That vandals could enter and burn out its freshness?  
 That rude men could trample it into the ashes? —  
 Oh was it for this that my heart was kept open?  
 I look'd in a glass, not the heart of my fellow,  
 Whose was the white soul I saw there reflected?  
 But trample the grape that the wine may flow freely!

Beautiful priestess, be with me for ever!  
 You still are secure. They know not your temple,  
 They never can find it, nor pierce it, nor touch it,

Because in their hearts they know no such temple.  
 I turned my back on them, a Seminole banished,  
 Much indeed leaving in dark desolation,  
 But bearing one treasure alone that is dearer  
 Than all they possess or have fiercely torn from me :  
 A maiden that stands looking far down the valley  
 Swinging her hat by its long, purple ribbons.

## DON CARLOS.

Worse and worse, and the burden still woman!  
 The crucifixion of rhyme and of reason,  
 With the sweet Christ-truth bleeding dead between  
 them !  
 Here you, young rover, or hunter, or poet,  
 If you have wit, here 's a chance to show it ;  
 Give us at least some rhymes that jingle,  
 Nor jar the soul till the senses tingle.

HUNTER (*sings*).

Alone on this desolate border,  
 On this ruggedest rimm'd frontier,  
 Where the hills huddle up in disorder  
 Like a fold in mortal fear,  
 Where the mountains are out at the elbow

In their yellow coats seedy and sere,  
Where the river runs sullen and yellow,  
This dimmallest day of the year.

I go up and down on the granite,  
Like an unholy ghost under bans.  
O Christ! for the eloquent quiet!  
For the final folding of hands!  
What am I? Where am I going,  
With these turbulent winds that are blowing?  
What sowing of wind in the lands,  
And what shall I reap from such sowing?  
I look at the lizard that glides  
Up over the mossy boulders,  
With green epaulets on his shoulders,  
And regiment-stripes on his sides.

My feet are in dust to the ankles;  
My heart, it is dustier still;  
Will never the dust be levell'd  
Till the heart is laid under the hill?  
I look at the sun sliding over,  
A cloud is swinging on hinges  
And is trying his glory to cover.



But see! his beams in the fringes  
Are tangled and fastened in falling,  
And a sailor above us is calling  
"Untangle the ravel and fringes."

In grim battle-lines up o'er us  
Gray, shapely ships are wheeling,  
Hulk, sail, and shroud revealing.  
A flash, a crash appalling,  
A hurling of red-hot spears,  
Hark! terrible thunder calling  
In fierce infernal chorus!  
Now silver sails are falling  
Like silver sheens before us.

What Nelson to fame aspires  
In the chartless bluer deep  
Where white ships toss and tack?  
And what armed host appears?  
Lo! I have seen their fires  
In blue fields where they sleep  
At night, in the bivouac;  
And they battle, bleed, and weep,  
For this rain is warm as tears.

Oh! why was I ever a dreamer?  
Better a brute on the plain,  
Or one who believes his redeemer  
Is greed, and gold, and gain;  
Or one who can riot and revel,  
Than be pierced by unbearable pain,  
With poesy darling, in travail,  
That will not be born from the brain.

O bride by the breathing ocean,  
With lustrous and brimming eye,  
Pour out the Lethean potion  
Till a lustrum rolleth by,  
Lulling a soul's commotion,  
Plashing against the sky —  
Calming a living spectre  
With its two hands toss'd on high.

Come to me, darling, adorning  
Like Aurora the desolate region;  
Come with step stately as morning,  
Or come like the march of a legion,  
Or come without caution or warning,  
Or come like the lordly tycoon,

Or in majesty like to the moon,  
But come, and come soon, over-soon.

Are the sea-winds mild and mellow  
Where my sun-brown'd babies are,  
A-weaving the silken and yellow  
Seam'd sunbeams over their hair?  
Go on and go on in disorder,  
O cloud with the silver-red rim,  
While tangled up in your bright border,  
The glinting silk sunbeams swim.

DON CARLOS (*yawning*).

Oh! why indulge in such gipsy-jargon,  
Since maids must mock, and men slay to protect them  
A song like to this with a savagest silence?  
I fear, young man, you mistake your calling;  
Why not fall the forests, plant red potatoes?  
Or what of the art of raising green pumpkins,  
And tall-topp'd corn with its silks of silver?  
Or may be some sheep could endure your measures  
On the Yamhill hills, if you must aspire,  
As you swing a crook, and so sweep your lyre.

## HUNTER.

The bird sings in the busy spring,  
The sea sings in his booming swells,  
And all his pink and pearly shells  
Sing of the sea, and ever sing.  
You break the shell or bear it far  
From ocean as the morning star,  
Yet still it sings, fast bound or free,  
In mellow measures, of the sea.  
And I shall sing and sing and sing,  
Sing ill or well, though men do chide,  
Until a hand in mine is laid  
To lead unto the other side.  
Afar a ploughboy's song is heard,  
In chorus with the building bird,  
My song is his — his my reward.

I heard a redbreast on the wall,  
And then I heard the truants' call,  
And cast a storm of earth and stone.  
He flew, and perch'd him far and lone,  
Above a rushing cataract,  
Where never living thing had track'd —

Where mate nor man nor living thing  
Could ever heed or hear him sing ;  
And there he sang his song of spring,  
As if a world were listening.  
He sang because he could but sing,  
Sweet bird, for he was born to sing.

A million hearts have felt as much  
As ever prince of poets told,  
With souls that scorn'd a colder touch  
Than love refined to finest gold,  
Yet drove the team and turn'd the mould,  
And whistled songs and tragedies  
That would have thrill'd to rage or tears ;  
The beam and moon their lance and shield,  
A moat, the furrow deep and broad ;  
And lived content through all their years  
In one long paradise of peace,  
Unheard beyond their broken sod.  
And shall I then be less than these ?

They kept their fields', their flocks' increase,  
And walk'd their ideal world in peace,  
They would not drag it down to fit

The mass of men with golden god —  
 They could not drag man up to it,  
 So lived and died without complain.  
 All tuneless in their full refrain,  
 They break in billows through the sod.

A million poets God hath wrought;  
 But very few have made pretence,  
 And fewer still found utterance;  
 For words are shackles unto thought,  
 And fancies fetter'd down by words  
 Droop dull and tame as prison'd birds,  
 Lose all the bright hues of the sky,  
 As does the claspèd butterfly.

[As the YOUNG HUNTER concludes, DON CARLOS apart, and  
 looking down the mountain to the declining moon, con-  
 tinues:—]

Well, he would make you a good maid-servant;  
 I could say, "She can come to you well recommended;"  
 For behold he has sung till they sleep most soundly.  
 The thin, sullen moon, pale-faced, and crooked  
 As a half-starved kine, a most vicious heifer,  
 Is sliding down in all haste from heaven,

To gore in the flank of yon sleeping mountain.  
 My comrades sleep, and does sleep all Nature;  
 The world has a rest and a truce till to-morrow;  
 There is peace, and surcease of sin and of sorrow;  
 All things take rest but I —

HUNTER.

And I only,  
 Your minstrel and whilom your roving young hunter.  
 [*Loosening his hair from his shoulders.*]  
 Ah me! My Don Carlos, look kindly upon me!  
 With my hand on your arm and my dark brow lifted  
 Up level to yours, do you not now know me?  
 'Tis your own, own INA, you loved by the ocean,  
 In the warm-spiced winds from the far Cathay.  
 O welcome me now after all my struggles,  
 And years of waiting and my weary journeys.

DON CARLOS (*bitterly*).

“And he received her with his arms extended,  
 And they were wedded, and lived long and happily” —  
 At least so runneth the oft-told story.  
 But life is prosy, and my soul uprises  
 Against you, madam, as you stand before me

With the smell of the deadman still upon you,  
 And your dark hair wet from his death-damp forehead  
 You are not my Ina, for she is a memory,  
 A marble chisell'd, in my heart's dark chamber  
 Set up for ever, and nought can change her;  
 And you are a stranger, and the gulf between us  
 Is wide as the Plains, and as deep as Pacific.  
 No! lips blood-stain'd and your limbs polluted  
 Shall tempt me not from my lordly mountains.

But now, good-by. In your serape folded,  
 Hard by in the heat of the pine-knot fire,  
 Sleep you as sound as you will be secure;  
 And on the morrow — now mark me, madam —  
 When to-morrow comes, why, you will turn you  
 To the right or left as did Father Abram.  
 Good-night, for ever and for aye, good-by;  
 My bitter is sweet and your truth is a lie.

INA (*letting go his arm and stepping back*).

Well then! 'tis over, and 'tis well thus ended;  
 I am well escaped from my life's devotion.  
 The waters of bliss are a waste of bitterness;  
 The day of joy I did join hands over,



As a bow of promise when my years were weary,  
And set high up as a brazen serpent  
To look upon when I else had fainted  
In burning deserts, while you sipp'd ices  
And snowy sherbets, and roam'd unfetter'd,  
Is a deadly asp in the fruit and flowers  
That you in your bitterness now bring to me ;  
But its fangs unfasten and it glides down from me,  
From a Cleopatra of cold white marble.

I have but done what I would do over,  
Did I find one worthy of so much devotion ;  
And, standing here with my clean hands folded  
Above a bosom whose crime is courage,  
The only regret that my heart discovers  
Is that I should do and have dared so greatly  
For the love of one who deserved so little.  
And as for my lips' and my limbs' pollution,  
They are purer than any strong man's new-wedded,  
Stain'd without purpose in his coarse brute-passion.

Nay, say no more, nor attempt to approach me ;  
This ten-foot line lying now between us  
Shall never be less while the land has measure.

See! night is forgetting the east in the heavens;  
The birds pipe shrill and the beasts howl answer  
The red sun reaches his arms from the ocean,  
And the dusk and the dawn kiss hands good-by,  
But not for ever, as do you and I.

THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE.

*Shadows that shroud the to-morrow,  
Glist from the life that's within,  
Traces of pain and of sorrow,  
And maybe a trace of sin,  
Reachings for God in the darkness.  
And for — what should have been.*

*Stains from the gall and the wormwood,  
Memories bitter like myrrh,  
A sad, brown face in a fir-wood,  
Blotches of heart's blood here,  
But never the sound of a wailing,  
Never the sign of a tear.*

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE.

Thou Italy of the Occident!  
Land of flowers and summer climes,  
Of holy priests and horrid crimes;  
Land of the cactus and sweet cocoa;  
Richer than all the Orient  
In gold and glory, in want and woe,  
In self-denial, in days misspent,  
In truth and treason, in good and guilt,  
In ivied ruins and altars low,  
In batter'd walls and blood misspilt;  
Glorious, gory Mexico!

**W**HERE mountains repose in their blueness,  
Where the sun first lands in his newness,  
And marshals his beams and his lances,  
Ere down to the vale he advances  
With visor erect, and rides swiftly  
On the terrible night in his way,  
And slays him, and, daring and deftly,  
Hews from him the beautiful day  
With his flashing sword of silver, —  
Lay nestled the town of Renalda,  
Far known for its famous Alcalde,  
The judge of the mountain mine,  
With a heart like the heart of woman,

And humanity more than human ;  
And famed for its maids and silver,  
Rich mines and its mountain wine.

And the royalest feast of the year was given,  
The yearly feast in commemoration  
Of the Holy Mary's Annunciation ;  
And the ears of night were rent and riven  
By turbulent men made stormy with wine —  
Wine by virgins press'd from the vine,  
Wine like gold from the San Diego,  
Wine blood-red from the Saint Bennetto,  
White and yellow and ruddy-red wine.  
And the feast was full, and the guests afire,  
For the shaven priest and the portly squire,  
The solemn judge and the smiling dandy,  
The duke and the don and the commandanté,  
All sat, and shouted or sang divine,  
Sailing in one great sea of wine ;  
And, roused, red-crested knight Chanticleer  
Answer'd and echo'd their song and cheer.

They boasted of broil, encounter, and battle,  
They boasted of maidens most cleverly won,

Boasted of duels most valiantly done,  
Of leagues of land and of herds of cattle,  
These men at the feast up in fair Renalda.  
All boasted but one, the calm Alcalde,  
Who sat stone-still in the wild wassail,  
Though hard they press'd from first of the feast,  
Press'd commandanté, press'd poet and priest,  
To tell, as the others, his own life's tale;  
And steadily still the attorney press'd,  
With lifted glass and his face aglow,  
Heedless of host and careless of guest —  
“A tale! the tale of your life, so ho!  
For not one man in all Mexico  
Can trace your history a half decade.”  
A hand on the rude one's lips was laid:  
“Sacred, my son,” a priest went on,  
“Sacred the secrets of every one,  
Inviolate as an altar-stone.  
But what in the life of one who must  
Have been so pure to be so just,  
Have lived a life that is half divine —  
What can there be, O advocate,  
In the life of one so desolate  
Of luck with matron, or love with maid,

Midnight revel or escapade,  
To stir the wonder of men at wine?  
But should the Alcalde choose, you know," —  
(And here his voice fell soft and low  
As he set his wine-horn in its place,  
And look'd in the judge's care-worn face) —  
"To weave us a tale that points a moral,  
Out of his vivid imagination,  
Of lass or of love, or lovers' quarrel,  
Naught of his fame or name or station  
Shall lose in lustre by its relation."

Softly the judge set down his horn,  
Kindly look'd on the priests all shorn,  
And gazed in the eyes of the advocate  
With a touch of pity, but none of hate;  
Then look'd down into the brimming horn,  
Half defiant and half forlorn.

Was it a tear? Was it a sigh?  
Was it a glance of the priest's black eye?  
Or was it the drunken revel-cry  
That smote the rock of his frozen heart  
And forced his pallid lips apart?



Or was it the weakness like to woman  
 Yearning for sympathy  
 Through the dark years,  
 Spurning the secrecy,  
 Burning for tears,  
 Proving him human, —  
 As he said to the men of the silver mine,  
 With their eyes held up as to one divine,  
 With his eyes held down to his untouch'd wine

“It might have been where moonbeams kneel  
 At night beside some rugged steep;  
 It might have been where breakers reel,  
 Or mild waves cradle men to sleep;  
 It might have been in peaceful life,  
 Or mad tumult and storm and strife,  
 I drew my breath; it matters not.  
 A silver'd head, a sweetest cot,  
 A sea of tamarack and pine,  
 A peaceful stream, a balmy clime,  
 A cloudless sky, a sister's smile,  
 A mother's love, that sturdy time  
 Has strengthened as he strengthens wine,  
 Are mine, are with me all the while,

Are hung in memory's sounding halls,  
Are graven on her glowing walls.  
But rage, nor rack, nor wrath of man,  
Nor prayer of priest, nor price, nor ban  
Can wring from me their place or name,  
Or why, or when, or whence I came ;  
Or why I left that childhood home,  
A child of form yet old of soul,  
And sought the wilds where tempests roll  
Round mountains white as driven foam.

“ Mistaken and misunderstood,  
My hot magnetic heart sought round  
And craved of all the souls I knew  
But one responsive throb or touch,  
Or thrill that flashes through and through —  
Deem you that I demanded much? —  
Not one congenial soul was found.  
I sought a deeper wild and wood,  
A girlish form and a childish face,  
A wild waif drifting from place to place.

“ Oh for the skies of rolling blue,  
The balmy hours when lovers woo,

When the moon is doubled as in desire,  
The dreamy call of the cockatoo  
From the orange snow in his crest of fire,  
Like vespers calling the soul to bliss  
In the blessed love of the life above,  
Ere it has taken the stains of this!

“The world afar, yet at my feet,  
Went steadily and sternly on;  
I almost fancied I could meet  
The crush and bustle of the street,  
When from the mountain I look'd down.  
And deep down in the cañon's mouth  
The long-tom ran and pick-axe rang,  
And pack-trains coming from the south  
Were stringing round the mountain high  
In long gray lines, as wild geese fly,  
While mul'teers shouted hoarse and high,  
And dusty, dusky mul'teers sang —  
'Señora with the liquid eye!  
No floods can ever quench the flame,  
Or frozen snows my passion tame,  
Jouaña with the coal-black eye!  
O señorita, bide a bye!'”

“ Environ’d by a mountain wall,  
So fierce, so terrible and tall,  
It never yet had been defiled  
By track or trail, save by the wild  
Free children of the wildest wood —  
A wood that roll’d a sullen flood,  
A sea that broke in snowy foam  
Where everlasting glaciers rest,  
Where stars and tempests have a home,  
And clouds are curl’d in mad unrest  
And whirl’d and swirl’d by crag and crest, —  
An unkiss’d virgin at my feet,  
Lay my pure, hallow’d, dreamy vale,  
Where breathed the essence of my tale —  
Lone dimple in the mountain’s face,  
Lone Eden in a boundless waste —  
It lay so beautiful ! so sweet !

“ There in the sun’s decline I stood  
By God’s form wrought in pink and pearl,  
My peerless, dark-eyed Indian girl ;  
And gazed out from a fringe of wood,  
With full-fed soul and feasting eyes,  
Upon an earthly paradise.

Inclining to the south it lay,  
And long leagues southward roll'd away,  
Until the sable-feather'd pines  
And tangled boughs and amorous vines  
Closed like besiegers on the scene,  
The while the stream that intertwined  
Had barely room to flow between.  
It was unlike all other streams,  
Save those seen in sweet summer dreams;  
For sleeping in its bed of snow  
Nor rock nor stone was ever known,  
But only shining, shifting sands,  
For ever sifted by unseen hands.  
It curved, it bent like Indian bow,  
And like an arrow darted through,  
Yet utter'd not a sound nor breath,  
Nor broke a ripple from the start;  
It was as swift, as still as death,  
Yet was so clear, so pure, so sweet,  
It wound its way into your heart  
As through the grasses at your feet.

“Once, through the tall untangled grass,  
I saw two black bears careless pass,  
And in the twilight turn to play;

I caught my rifle to my face,  
She chid me with a quiet grace  
And said, 'Not so, for us the day,  
The night belongs to such as they.'

“ And then from out the shadow'd wood  
The antler'd deer came stalking down  
In half a shot of where I stood ;  
Then stopp'd and stamp'd impatiently,  
Then shook his head and antlers high,  
And then his keen horns backward threw  
Upon his shoulders broad and brown,  
And thrust his muzzle in the air,  
Snuff'd proudly ; then a blast he blew  
As if to say, No danger here.  
And then from out the sable wood  
His mate and two sweet dappled fawns  
Stole forth, and by the monarch stood,  
She timid, while the little ones  
Would start like aspens in a gale.  
Then he, as if to reassure  
The timid, trembling, and demure,  
Again his antlers backward threw,  
Again a blast defiant blew,  
Then led them proudly down the vale.

“I watch’d the forms of darkness come  
Slow stealing from their sylvan home,  
And pierce the sunlight drooping low  
And weary, as if loath to go.  
He stain’d the lances as he bled,  
And, bleeding and pursued, he fled  
Across the vale into the wood.  
I saw the tall grass bend its head  
Beneath the stately martial tread  
Of the pursuer and pursued.

“ ‘Behold the clouds,’ Winnema said,  
‘All purple with the blood of day ;  
The night has conquer’d in the fray,  
The shadows live, and light is dead.’

“She turn’d to Shasta gracefully,  
Around whose hoar and mighty head  
Still roll’d a sunset sea of red,  
While troops of clouds a space below  
Were drifting wearily and slow,  
As seeking shelter for the night,  
Like weary sea-birds in their flight ;  
Then curved her right arm gracefully  
Above her brow, and bow’d her knee

And chanted in an unknown tongue  
Words sweeter than were ever sung.

“‘And what means this?’ I gently said.  
‘I spoke to God, the Yopitone,  
Who dwells on yonder snowy throne,  
She softly said, with drooping head;  
‘I bow’d to God. He heard my prayer,  
I felt his warm breath in my hair,  
He heard me my desires tell,  
And he is good, and all is well.’

“The dappled and the dimpled skies,  
The timid stars, the tinted moon,  
All smiled as sweet as sun at noon.  
Her eyes were like the rabbit’s eyes,  
Her mien, her manner, just as mild,  
And, though a savage war-chief’s child,  
She would not harm the lowliest worm.  
And though her beaded foot was firm,  
And though her airy step was true,  
She would not crush a drop of dew.

“Her love was deeper than the sea,  
And stronger than the tidal rise,



And clung in all its strength to me.  
A face like hers is never seen  
This side the gates of paradise,  
Save in some Indian-Summer scene,  
And then none ever sees it twice —  
Is seen but once, and seen no more,  
Seen but to tempt the sceptic soul,  
And show a sample of the whole  
That Heaven has in store.

“You might have pluck'd beams from the  
moon,

Or torn the shadow from the pine  
When on its dial track at noon,  
But not have parted us an hour,  
She was so wholly, truly mine.  
And life was one unbroken dream  
Of purest bliss and calm delight,  
A flow'ry-shored untroubled stream  
Of sun and song, of shade and bower,  
A full-moon'd serenading night.

“Sweet melodies were in the air,  
And tame birds caroll'd everywhere.

I listen'd to the lisp'ing grove  
 And cooing pink-eyed turtle-dove,  
 And, loving with the holiest love,  
 Believing, with a grand belief,  
 That every thing beneath the skies  
 Was beautiful and born to love,  
 That man had but to love; believe,  
 And earth would be a paradise  
 As beautiful as that above,  
 My goddess, Beauty, I adored,  
 Devoutly, fervid, her alone ;  
 My Priestess, Love, unceasing pour'd  
 Pure incense on her altar-stone.

"I carved my name in coarse design  
 Once on a birch down by the way,  
 At which she gazed, as she would say,  
 'What does this say? What is this sign?  
 And when I gayly said, 'Some day  
 Some one will come and read my name,  
 And I will live in song and fame,  
 As he who first found this sweet vale,  
 Entwined with many a mountain tale,  
 And they will give the place my name,'

She was most sad, and troubled much,  
And look'd in silence far away;  
Then started trembling from my touch,  
And when she turn'd her face again,  
I read unutterable pain.

“ At last she answer'd through her tears,  
' Ah! yes; this, too, fulfils my fears.  
Yes, they will come — my race must go  
As fades a vernal fall of snow;  
And you be known, and I forgot  
Like these brown leaves that rust and rot  
Beneath my feet; and it is well:  
I do not seek to thrust my name  
On those who here, hereafter, dwell,  
Because I have before them dwelt;  
They too will have their tales to tell,  
They too will ask their time and fame.

“ ‘ Yes, they will come, come even now:  
The dim ghosts on yon mountain's brow,  
Gray Fathers of my tribe and race,  
Do beckon to us from their place,  
And hurl red arrows through the air  
At night, to bid our braves beware.

A foot-print by the clear McCloud,  
 Unlike aught ever seen before,  
 Is seen. The crash of rifles loud  
 Is heard along its farther shore?

\* \* \* \* \*

“What tall and tawny men were these,  
 As sombre, silent, as the trees  
 They moved among! and sad some way  
 With tempered sadness, ever they, —  
 Yet not with sorrow born of fear.  
 The shadow of their destinies  
 They saw approaching year by year,  
 And murmured not. They saw the sun  
 Go down; they saw the peaceful moon  
 Move on in silence to her rest,  
 And white streams winding to the west:  
 And thus they knew that oversoon,  
 Somehow, somewhere, for every one  
 Was rest beyond the setting sun.  
 They knew not, never dreamed, a doubt,  
 But turned to death as to a sleep,  
 And died with eager hands held out  
 To reaching hands beyond the deep, —

And died with choicest bow at hand,  
And quiver full, and arrow drawn  
For use, when sweet to-morrow's dawn  
Should wake them in the Spirit Land.

“What wonder that I lingered there  
With Nature's children! Could I part  
With those that met me heart to heart,  
And made me welcome, spoke me fair,  
Were first of all that understood  
My waywardness from others' ways,  
My worship of the true and good,  
And earnest love of Nature's God,  
Now that their dark days gathered near,  
And came calamity and fear?  
O idle men of empty days,  
Go court the mountains in the clouds,  
And clashing thunder, and the shrouds  
Of tempests, and eternal shocks,  
And fast and pray as one of old  
In earnestness, and ye shall hold  
The mysteries; shall hold the rod  
That passes seas, that smites the focks  
Where streams of melody and song

Shall run as white streams rush and flow  
Down from the mountains' crests of snow,  
Forever, to a thirsting throng.

“Between the white man and the red  
There lies no neutral, half-way ground.  
I heard afar the thunder sound  
That soon should burst above my head,  
And made my choice; I laid my plan,  
And child-like chose the weaker side;  
And ever have, and ever will,  
While might is wrong and wrongs remain,  
As careless of the world as I  
Am careless of a cloudless sky.  
With wayward and romantic joy  
I gave my pledge like any boy,  
But kept my promise like a man,  
And lost; yet with the lesson still  
Would gladly do the same again.

““They come! they come! the pale-face come!  
The chieftain shouted where he stood  
Sharp watching at the margin wood,  
And gave the war-whoop's treble yell,

That like a knell on fair hearts fell  
Far watching from their rocky home.

“ No nodding plumes or banners fair  
Unfurld or fretted through the air ;  
No screaming fife or rolling drum  
Did challenge brave of soul to come :  
But, silent, sinew-bows were strung,  
And, sudden, heavy quivers hung,  
And, swiftly, to the battle sprung  
Tall painted braves with tufted hair,  
Like death-black banners in the air.

“ And long they fought, and firm and well  
And silent fought, and silent fell,  
Save when they gave the fearful yell  
Of death, defiance, or of hate.  
But what were feather'd flints to fate ?  
And what were yells to seething lead ?  
And what the few and feeble feet  
To troops that came with martial tread,  
And stood by wood and hill and stream  
As thick as people in a street,  
As strange as spirits in a dream ?

“From pine and poplar, here and there,  
A cloud, a flash, a crash, a thud,  
A warrior’s garments roll’d in blood,  
A yell that rent the mountain air  
Of fierce defiance and despair,  
Did tell who fell, and when and where.  
Then tighter drew the coils around,  
And closer grew the battle-ground,  
And fewer feather’d arrows fell,  
And fainter grew the battle yell,  
Until upon the hill was heard  
The short, sharp whistle of the bird.

“The calm, that cometh after all,  
Look’d sweetly down at shut of day,  
Where friend and foe commingled lay  
Like leaves of forest as they fall.  
Afar the sombre mountains frown’d,  
Here tall pines wheel’d their shadows round  
Like long, slim fingers of a hand  
That sadly pointed out the dead.  
Like some broad shield high overhead  
The great white moon led on and on,  
As leading to the better land.



You might have heard the cricket's trill,  
Or night-birds calling from the hill,  
The place was so profoundly still.

“ The mighty chief at last was down,  
The broken breast of brass and pride!  
The hair all dust, the brow a-frown,  
And proud mute lips compress'd in hate  
To foes, yet all content with fate ;  
While, circled round him thick, the foe  
Had folded hands in dust, and died.  
His tomahawk lay at his side,  
All blood, beside his broken bow.  
One arm stretch'd out as over-bold,  
One hand half doubled hid in dust,  
And clutch'd the earth, as if to hold  
His hunting-grounds still in his trust.

“ Here tall grass bow'd its tassel'd head  
In dewy tears above the dead,  
And there they lay in crooked fern,  
That waved and wept above by turn ;  
And further on, by sombre trees,  
They lay, wild heroes of wildest deeds,

In shrouds alone of weeping weeds,  
Bound in a never-to-be-broken peace.

“Not one had falter’d, not one brave  
Survived the fearful struggle, save  
One — save I the renegade,  
The red man’s friend, and — they held me so  
For this alone — the white man’s foe.  
And I sat bound, a stone on stone,  
And waked and watched alone; alone  
I looked on all, asleep or dead:  
Watched dead and living undismay’d  
Through gory hair with lifted head.

“ They bore me bound for many a day  
Through fen and wild, by foamy flood,  
From my dear mountains far away,  
Where an adobé prison stood  
Beside a sultry, sullen town,  
With iron eyes and stony frown;  
And in a dark and narrow cell,  
So hot it almost took my breath,  
And seem’d but an outpost of hell,  
They thrust me — as if I had been

A monster, in a monster's den.  
I cried aloud, I courted death,  
I call'd unto a strip of sky,  
The only thing beyond my cell  
That I could see; but no reply  
Came but the echo of my breath.  
I paced — how long I cannot tell —  
My reason fail'd, I knew no more,  
And swooning fell upon the floor.  
Then months went on, till deep one night,  
When long thin bars of lunar light  
Lay shimmering along the floor,  
My senses came to me once more.

“My eyes look'd full into her eyes —  
Into her soul so true and tried.  
I thought myself in paradise,  
And wonder'd when she too had died.  
And then I saw the stripèd light  
That struggled past the prison bar,  
And in an instant, at the sight,  
My sinking soul fell just as far  
As could a star loosed by a jar  
From out the setting in the ring,

The purpled, semi-circled ring  
That seems to circle us at night.

“She saw my senses had return’d,  
Then swift to press my pallid face —  
Then, as if spurn’d, she sudden turn’d  
Her sweet face to the prison wall;  
Her bosom rose, her hot tears fell  
Fast, as drip moss-stones in a well,  
And then, as if subduing all  
In one strong struggle of the soul,  
Be what they were of vows or fears,  
With kisses and hot scalding tears,  
There in that deadly, loathsome place,  
She bathed my bleach’d and bloodless face.

“I was so weak I could not speak  
Or press my pale lips to her cheek;  
I only look’d my wish to share  
The secret of her presence there.  
Then looking through her falling hair,  
Still sadder — so that face appears,  
Seen through the tears and blood of years —  
Than Pocahontas bathed in tears,

She press'd her finger to her lips,  
 More sweet than sweets the brown bee sips.  
 More sad than any grief untold,  
 More silent than the milk-white moon,  
 She turn'd away. I heard unfold  
 An iron door, and she was gone.

"At last, one midnight, I was free;  
 Again I felt the liquid air  
 Around my hot brow like a sea,  
 Sweet as my dear Madonna's prayer,  
 Or benedictions on the soul;  
 Pure air, which God gives free to all,  
 Again I breathed without control —  
 Pure air, that man would fain enthral;  
 God's air, which man hath seized and sold  
 Unto his fellow-man for gold.

"I bow'd down to the bended sky,  
 I toss'd my two thin hands on high,  
 I call'd unto the crooked moon,  
 I shouted to the shining stars,  
 With breath and rapture uncontroll'd,  
 Like some wild school-boy loosed at noon,

Or comrade coming from the wars,  
Hailing his companeers of old.

“Short time for shouting or delay, —  
The cock is shrill, the east is gray,  
Pursuit is made, I must away.  
They cast me on a sinewy steed,  
And bid me look to girth and guide —  
A caution of but little need,  
For I on Sacramento’s plain,  
When mounted warriors thunder’d by  
And train’d their barbs to face or fly,  
Once sprang upon the stoutest steed  
That swept unmaster’d through the band,  
Fierce and unbridled, wild and bare  
As fabled wing’d steed of the air,  
And, clutching to his tossing mane,  
Swept onward like a hurricane,  
And, guiding him with heel and hand,  
Lay like a shadow to his side,  
And hurl’d the lance at topmost speed  
Beneath the arch’d neck of my steed,  
And pierced the cactus targe that stood  
An imaged foe against the wood,

And heard the shouts of savage pride  
I dash the iron in his side,  
Swift as the shooting stars I ride;  
I turn, I see, to my dismay,  
A silent rider red as they;  
I glance again — it is my bride,  
My love, my life, rides at my side.

“By gulch and gorge and brake and all,  
Swift as the shining meteors fall,  
We fly, and never sound nor word  
But ringing mustang-hoofs is heard,  
And limbs of steel and lungs of steam  
Could not be stronger than theirs seem.  
Grandly as some joyous dream,  
League on league, and hour on hour,  
Far from keen pursuit, or power  
Of sheriff or bailiff, high or low,  
Into the bristling hills we go.

“Into the snowy-hair'd McCloud,  
White as the foldings of a shroud;  
We dash into the dashing stream,  
We breast the tide, we drop the rein,

We clutch the streaming, tangled mane —  
And yet the rider at my side  
Has never look nor word replied.

“ Out in its foam, its rush, its roar,  
Breasting away to the farther shore;  
Steadily, bravely, gain'd at last,  
Gain'd, where never a dastard foe  
Has dared to come, or friend to go  
Pursuit is baffled and danger pass'd.

“ Under an oak whose wide arms were  
Lifting aloft, as if in prayer,  
Under an oak, where the shining moon  
Like feather'd snow in a winter noon  
Quiver'd, sifted, and drifted down  
In spars and bars on her shoulders brown.  
And yet she was as silent still  
As black stones toppled from the hill —  
Great basalt blocks that near us lay,  
Deep nestled in the grass untrod  
By aught save wild beasts of the wood —  
Great, massive, squared, and chisell'd stone,  
Like columns that had toppled down



From temple dome or tower crown,  
Along some drifted, silent way  
Of desolate and desert town  
Built by the children of the sun.  
And I in silence sat on one,  
And she stood gazing far away  
To where her childhood forests lay,  
Still as the stone I sat upon.  
And through the leaves the silver moon  
Fell sifting down in silver bars  
And play'd upon her raven hair,  
And darted through like dimpled stars  
That dance through all the night's sweet noon  
To echoes of an unseen choir.

“I sought to catch her to my breast  
And charm her from her silent mood;  
She shrank as if a beam, a breath,  
Then silently before me stood,  
Still, coldly, as the kiss of death.  
Her face was darker than a pall,  
Her presence was so proudly tall,  
I would have started from the stone  
Where I sat gazing up at her,

As from a form to earth unknown,  
Had I possess'd the power to stir.

“ ‘O touch me not, no more, no more;  
'Tis past, and my sweet dream is o'er.  
Impure! Impure! Impure!’ she cried,  
In words as sweetly, weirdly wild  
As mingling of a rippled tide,  
And music on the waters spill'd.  
‘Pollution foul is on my limbs,  
And poison lingers on my lips;  
My red heart sickens, hot head swims,  
I burn unto my finger-tips.  
But you are free. Fly! Fly alone.  
Yes, you will win another bride  
In some far clime where naught is known  
Of all that you have won or lost,  
Or what your life this night has cost;  
Will win you name, and place, and power,  
And ne'er recall this face, this hour,  
Save in some secret, deep regret,  
Which I forgive and you 'll forget.  
Your destiny will lead you on  
Where, open'd wide to welcome you,

Rich, gushing hearts and bosoms are,  
And snowy arms, more purely fair,  
And breasts — who dare say breasts more true  
When all this dear night's deeds are done?

“They said you had deserted me,  
Had rued you of your wood and wild.  
I knew, I knew it could not be,  
I trusted as a trusting child.  
I cross'd the bristled mountain high  
That curves its rough back to the sky,  
I rode the white-maned mountain flood,  
And track'd for weeks the trackless wood.  
The good God led me, as before,  
And brought me to your prison-door.

“That madden'd call! that fever'd moan!  
I heard you in the midnight call  
My own name through the massive wall,  
In my sweet mountain-tongue and tone —  
And yet you call'd so feebly wild,  
I near mistook you for a child.  
The keeper with his clinking keys  
I sought, implored upon my knees

That I might see you, feel your breath,  
 Your brow, or breathe you low replies  
 Of comfort in your lonely death.  
 His red face shone, his redder eyes  
 Were like the fire of the skies,  
 And all his face was as a fire,  
 As he said, "Yield to my desire."  
 Again I heard your feeble moan,  
 I cried, "And must he die alone?"  
 I cried unto a heart of stone.  
 Ah! why the hateful horrors tell?  
 Enough! I crept into your cell  
 Polluted, loathed, a wretched thing,  
 An ashen fruit, a poison'd spring.

"I nursed you, lured you back to life,  
 And when you woke and call'd me wife  
 And love, with pale lips rife  
 With love and feeble loveliness,  
 I turn'd away, I hid my face,  
 In mad reproach and deep distress,  
 In dust down in that loathsome place.

"And then I vow'd a solemn vow  
 That you should live, live and be free.

And you have lived — are free ; and now  
Too slow yon red sun comes to see  
My life or death, or me again.  
Oh the peril and the pain  
I have endured ! the dark stain  
That I did take on my fair soul,  
All, all to save you, make you free,  
Are more than mortal can endure :  
But fire makes the foulest pure.

“ Behold this finish'd funeral pyre,  
All ready for the form and fire,  
Which these, my own hands, did prepare  
For this last night ; then lay me there.  
I would not hide me from my God  
Beneath the cold and sullen sod,  
And ever from the circled sun,  
As if in shame for evil done,  
But, wrapped in fiery, shining shroud,  
Ascend to Him, a wreathing cloud.’

“ She paused, she turn'd, she lean'd apace  
Her glance and half-regretting face,  
As if to yield herself to me ;

And then she cried, 'It cannot be,  
For I have vow'd a solemn vow,  
And God help me to keep it now !'

"I sprang with arms extended wide  
To catch her to my burning breast;  
She caught a dagger from her side  
And plunged it to its silver hilt  
Into her hot and bursting heart,  
And fell into my arms and died —  
Died as my soul to hers was press'd,  
Died as I held her to my breast,  
Died without one word or moan,  
And left me with my dead — alone.

"But why the dreary tale prolong?  
And deem you I confess'd me wrong  
That I did bend a patient knee  
To all the deep wrongs done to me  
That I, because the prison-mould  
Was on my brow, and all its chill  
Was in my heart as chill as night,  
Till soul and body both were cold,  
Did curb my free-born mountain will  
And sacrifice my sense of right?"

“No! no! and had they come that day  
While I with hands and garments red  
Stood by her pleading, gory clay,  
The one lone watcher by my dead,  
With cross-hilt dagger in my hand,  
The every white lord of the land  
Who wore a badge or claim'd command,  
And offer'd me my life and all  
Of titles, power, or of place,  
I should have spat them in the face,  
And spurn'd them every one.  
I live as God gave me to live,  
I see as God gave me to see.  
'Tis not my nature to forgive,  
Or cringe and plead, and bend the knee  
To God or man in woe or weal,  
In penitence I cannot feel.

“I do not question school nor creed  
Of Christian, Protestant, or Priest;  
I only know that creeds to me  
Are but new names for mystery,  
That God is good from east to east,  
And more I do not know nor need

To know, to love my neighbor well.  
I take their dogmas, as they tell,  
Their pictures of their Godly good,  
In garments thick with heathen blood  
Their heaven with its harps of gold,  
Their horrid pictures of their hell,  
Take hell and heaven undenied.  
Yet were the two placed side by side,  
Placed full before me for my choice,  
As they are pictured, best and worst,  
As they are peopled, tame and bold,  
The canonized, and the accursed  
Who dared to think, and thinking speak,  
And speaking act, bold cheek to cheek.  
I would in transports choose the first,  
And enter hell with lifted voice.

“I laid my dead upon the pile,  
And underneath the lispings oak  
I watch'd the columns of dark smoke  
Embrace her red lips, with a smile  
Of frenzied fierceness. Then there came  
A gleaming column of red flame,  
That grew a grander monument



Above her nameless noble mould,  
Than ever bronze or marble lent  
To king or conqueror of old.

“It seized her in its hot embrace,  
And leapt as if to reach the stars.  
Then looking up I saw a face  
So saintly and so sweetly fair,  
So sad, so pitying, and so pure,  
I nigh forgot the prison bars,  
And for one instant, one alone,  
I felt I could forgive, endure.

“I laid a circlet of white stone,  
And left her ashes there alone.  
But after many a white moon-wane  
I sought that sacred ground again,  
And saw the circle of white stone  
With tall wild grasses overgrown.  
I did expect, I know not why,  
From out her sacred dust to find  
Wild pinks and daisies blooming fair;  
And when I did not find them there  
I almost deem'd her God unkind,  
Less careful of her dust than I.

“Then when the red shafts of the sun  
Came tipping down to where I stood,  
I hail'd them with a redder one,  
A lifted dagger red with blood,  
And vow'd to dedicate my breath  
To vengeance, for disgrace and death.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Go read the annals of the North,  
And records there of many a wail,  
Of marshalling and going forth  
For missing sheriffs, and for men  
Who fell, and none knew where nor when, —  
Who disappear'd on mountain trail,  
Or in some dense and narrow vale.  
Go, traverse Trinity and Scott,  
That curve their dark backs to the sun:  
Go, court them all. Lo! have they not  
The chronicles of my wild life?  
My secrets on their lips of stone,  
My archives built of human bone?  
Go, cross their wilds as I have done,  
From snowy crest to sleeping vales,

**And** you will find on every one  
**Enough** to swell a thousand tales.

\* \* \* \* \*

“The soul cannot survive alone,  
 And hate will die, like other things;  
 I felt an ebbing in my rage,  
 I hunger’d for the sound of one,  
 Just one familiar word, —  
 Yearn’d but to hear my fellow speak,  
 Or sound of woman’s mellow tone,  
 As beats the wild, imprison’d bird,  
 That long nor kind nor mate has heard,  
 With bleeding wings  
 And panting beak  
 Against its iron cage.

“I saw a low-roof’d rancho lie,  
 Far, far below, at set of sun,  
 Along the foot-hills crisp and dun —  
 A lone sweet star in lower sky;  
 Saw children sporting to and fro,  
 The busy housewife come and go,  
 And white cows come at her command,  
 And none look’d larger than my hand.

Then worn and torn, and tann'd and brown,  
And heedless all, I hasten'd down ;  
A wanderer wandering long and late,  
I stood before the rustic gate.

“Two little girls, with brown feet bare,  
And tangled, tossing, yellow hair,  
Play'd on the green, fantastic dress'd,  
Around a great Newfoundland brute  
That lay half-resting on his breast,  
And with his red mouth open'd wide  
Would make believe that he would bite,  
As they assail'd him left and right,  
And then sprang to the other side,  
And fill'd with shouts the willing air.  
Oh sweeter far than lyre or lute  
To my then hot and thirsty heart,  
And better self so wholly mute,  
Were those sweet voices calling there.

“Though some sweet scenes my eyes have seen,  
Some melody my soul has heard,  
No song of any maid, or bird,  
Or splendid wealth of tropic scene,

Or scene or song of anywhere,  
Has my impulsive soul so stirr'd,  
Or touch'd and thrill'd my every part,  
Or fill'd me with such sweet delight,  
As those young angels sporting there.

“The dog at sight of me arose,  
And nobly stood, with lifted nose,  
Afront the children, now so still,  
And staring at me with a will.  
‘Come in, come in,’ the rancher cried,  
As here and there the housewife hied;  
‘Sit down, sit down, you travel late.  
What news of politics or war?  
And are you tired? Go you far?  
And where you from? Be quick, my Kate,  
This boy is sure in need of food.’  
The little children close by stood,  
And watch'd and gazed inquiringly,  
Then came and climb'd upon my knee.

“‘That there's my ma,’ the eldest said,  
And laugh'd and toss'd her pretty head;  
And then, half bating of her joy,

‘Have you a ma, you stranger boy? —  
 And there hangs Carlo on the wall  
 As large as life; that mother drew  
 With berry stains upon a shred  
 Of tattered tent; but hardly you  
 Would know the picture his at all,  
 For Carlo’s black, and this is red.’  
 Again she laughed, and shook her head,  
 And showered curls all out of place;  
 Then sudden sad, she raised her face  
 To mine, and tenderly she said,  
 ‘Have you, like us, a pretty home?  
 Have you, like me, a dog and toy?  
 Where do you live, and whither roam?  
 And where’s your pa, poor stranger boy?’

“It seem’d so sweetly out of place  
 Again to meet my fellow-man,  
 I gazed and gazed upon his face  
 As something I had never seen.  
 The melody of woman’s voice  
 Fell on my ear as falls the rain  
 Upon the weary, waiting plain.  
 I heard, and drank and drank again,

As earth with crack'd lips drinks the rain,  
In green to revel and rejoice.  
I ate with thanks my frugal food,  
The first return'd for many a day.  
I had met kindness by the way!  
I had at last encounter'd good!

“I sought my couch, but not to sleep;  
New thoughts were coursing strong and deep  
My wild impulsive passion-heart;  
I could not rest, my heart was moved,  
My iron will forgot its part,  
And I wept like a child reproved.  
Never was Christian more devout,  
Never was lowlier heart than mine,  
Never has pious Moslem yet,  
When bearded Muezzin's holy shout  
Has echoed afar from minaret,  
Knelt lowlier down to saint or shrine,  
Than knelt that penitent soul of mine.

“I lay and pictured me a life  
Afar from cold reproach or stain,  
Or annals dark of blood and strife,

From deadly perils or heart-pain ;  
And at the breaking of the morn  
I swung my arms from off the horn,  
And turned to other scenes and lands  
With lighten'd heart and whiten'd hands.

“ Where orange-blossoms never die,  
Where red fruits ripen all the year  
Beneath a sweet and balmy sky,  
Far from my language or my land,  
Reproach, regret, or shame or fear,  
I came in hope, I wander'd here —  
Yes, here ; and this red, bony hand  
That holds this glass of ruddy cheer — ”

“ 'Tis he ! ” hissed the crafty advocate.  
He sprang to his feet, and hot with hate  
He reached his hands, and he called aloud,  
“ 'Tis the renegade of the red McCloud ! ”

Then slow the Alcalde rose and spoke,  
And the lightning flash'd from a cloud of hair,  
“ Hand me, touch me, him who dare ! ”  
And his heavy glass on the board of oak



He smote with such savage and mighty stroke,  
It ground to dust in his bony hand,  
And heavy bottles did clink and tip  
As if an earthquake were in the land.  
He tower'd up, and in his ire  
Seem'd taller than any church's spire.  
He gazed a moment — and then, the while  
An icy cold and defiant smile  
Did curve his thin and his livid lip,  
He turn'd on his heel, he strode through the hall  
Grand as a god, so grandly tall,  
And white and cold as a chisell'd stone.  
He pass'd him out the adobé door  
Into the night, and he pass'd alone,  
And never was known nor heard of more.



**KIT CARSON'S RIDE.**

*Room! Room to turn round in, to breathe and be free,  
And to grow to be giant, to sail as at sea  
With the speed of the wind on a steed with his mane  
To the wind, without pathway or route or a rein.  
Room! Room to be free where the white-bordered sea  
Blows a kiss to a brother as boundless as he;  
And to east and to west, to the north and the sun,  
Blue skies and brown grasses are welded as one,  
And the buffalo come like a cloud on the plain,  
Pouring on like the tide of a storm-driven main,  
And the lodge of the hunter to friend or to foe  
Offers rest; and unquestioned you come or you go.  
My plains of America! Seas of wild lands!  
From a land in the seas in a raiment of foam,  
That has reached to a stranger the welcome of home,  
I turn to you, lean to you, lift you my hands.*

LONDON. 1871.

## KIT CARSON'S RIDE.

“**R**UN? Now you bet you; I rather guess so!  
But he's blind as a badger. Whoa, Paché, boy,  
whoa.

No, you wouldn't believe it to look at his eyes,  
But he is, badger blind, and it happened this wise.

“ We lay in the grasses and the sun-burnt clover  
That spread on the ground like a great brown cover  
Northward and southward, and west and away  
To the Brazos, to where our lodges lay,  
One broad and unbroken sea of brown,  
Awaiting the curtains of night to come down  
To cover us over and conceal our flight  
With my brown bride, won from an Indian town  
That lay in the rear the full ride of a night.

“ We lounged in the grasses—her eyes were in mine,  
And her hands on my knee, and her hair was as wine

In its wealth and its flood, pouring on and all over  
Her bosom wine-red, and pressed never by one ;  
And her touch was as warm as the tinge of the clover  
Burnt brown as it reached to the kiss of the sun,  
And her words were as low as the lute-throated dove,  
And as laden with love as the heart when it beats  
In its hot eager answer to earliest love,  
Or the bee hurried home by its burthen of sweets.

“ We lay low in the grass on the broad plain levels,  
Old Revels and I, and my stolen brown bride ;  
And the heavens of blue and the harvest of brown  
And beautiful clover were welded as one,  
To the right and the left, in the light of the sun.  
‘ Forty full miles if a foot to ride,  
Forty full miles if a foot, and the devils  
Of red Camanches are hot on the track  
When once they strike it. Let the sun go down  
Soon, very soon,’ muttered bearded old Revels  
As he peered at the sun, lying low on his back,  
Holding fast to his lasso. Then he jerked at his steed  
And he sprang to his feet, and glanced swiftly around,  
And then dropped, as if shot, with his ear to the  
ground ;

Then again to his feet, and to me, to my bride,  
 While his eyes were like fire, his face like a shroud,  
 His form like a king, and his beard like a cloud,  
 And his voice loud and shrill, as if blown from a reed, —  
 ‘Pull, pull in your lassos, and bridle to steed,  
 And speed you if ever for life you would speed,  
 And ride for your lives, for your lives you must ride!  
 For the plain is aflame, the prairie on fire,  
 And feet of wild horses hard flying before  
 I hear like a sea breaking high on the shore,  
 While the buffalo come like a surge of the sea,  
 Driven far by the flame, driving fast on us three  
 As a hurricane comes, crushing palms in his ire.’

“We drew in the lassos, seized saddle and rein,  
 Threw them on, sinched them on, sinched them over  
 again,  
 And again drew the girth, cast aside the macheers,  
 Cut away tapidaros, loosed the sash from its fold,  
 Cast aside the catenas red-spangled with gold,  
 And gold-mounted Colt's, the companions of years,  
 Cast the silken serapes to the wind in a breath,  
 And so bared to the skin sprang all haste to  
 horse —

As bare as when born, as when new from the hand  
Of God — without word, or one word of command.  
Turned head to the Brazos in a red race with death,  
Turned head to the Brazos with a breath in the hair  
Blowing hot from a king leaving death in his course ;  
Turned head to the Brazos with a sound in the air  
Like the rush of an army, and a flash in the eye  
Of a red wall of fire reaching up to the sky,  
Stretching fierce in pursuit of a black rolling sea  
Rushing fast upon us, as the wind sweeping free  
And afar from the desert blew hollow and hoarse.

“Not a word, not a wail from a lip was let fall,  
Not a kiss from my bride, not a look nor low call  
Of love-note or courage ; but on o'er the plain  
So steady and still, leaning low to the mane,  
With the heel to the flank and the hand to the rein,  
Rode we on, rode we three, rode we nose and gray  
nose,  
Reaching long, breathing loud, as a creviced wind  
blows :  
Yet we broke not a whisper, we breathed not a prayer,  
There was work to be done, there was death in the air,  
And the chance was as one to a thousand for all



“Gray nose to gray nose, and each steady mustang  
Stretched neck and stretched nerve till the arid earth  
rang,

And the foam from the flank and the croup and the  
neck

Flew around like the spray on a storm-driven deck.

Twenty miles! . . . thirty miles! . . . a dim distant  
speck . . .

Then a long reaching line, and the Brazos in sight,

And I rose in my seat with a shout of delight.

I stood in my stirrup and looked to my right —

But Revels was gone; I glanced by my shoulder

And saw his horse stagger; I saw his head drooping

Hard down on his breast, and his naked breast stoop-  
ing

Low down to the mane, as so swifter and bolder

Ran reaching out for us the red-footed fire.

To right and to left the black buffalo came,

A terrible surf on a red sea of flame

Rushing on in the rear, reaching high, reaching higher.

And he rodè neck to neck to a buffalo bull,

The monarch of millions, with shaggy mane full

Of smoke and of dust, and it shook with desire

Of battle, with rage and with bellowings loud

And unearthly, and up through its lowering cloud  
Came the flash of his eyes like a half-hidden fire,  
While his keen crooked horns, through the storm of his  
    mane,  
Like black lances lifted and lifted again ;  
And I looked but this once, for the fire licked through,  
And he fell and was lost, as we rode two and two.

“I looked to my left then — and nose, neck, and  
    shoulder

Sank slowly, sank surely, till back to my thighs ;  
And up through the black blowing veil of her hair  
Did beam full in mine her two marvellous eyes,  
With a longing and love, yet a look of despair  
And of pity for me, as she felt the smoke fold her,  
And flames reaching far for her glorious hair.  
Her sinking steed faltered, his eager ears fell  
To and fro and unsteady, and all the neck's swell  
Did subside and recede, and the nerves fall as dead.  
Then she saw sturdy Paché still lorded his head,  
With a look of delight ; for nor courage nor bribe,  
Nor naught but my bride, could have brought him  
    to me.

For he was her father's, and at South Santafee

Had once won a whole herd, sweeping every thing  
Down

In a race where the world came to run for the crown  
And so when I won the true heart of my bride —  
My neighbor's and deadliest enemy's child,  
And child of the kingly war-chief of his tribe —  
She brought me this steed to the border the night  
She met Revels and me in her perilous flight  
From the lodge of the chief to the North Brazos side;  
And said, so half guessing of ill as she smiled,  
As if jesting, that I, and I only, should ride  
The fleet-footed Paché, so if kin should pursue  
I should surely escape without other ado  
Than to ride, without blood, to the North Brazos side,  
And await her — and wait till the next hollow moon  
Hung her horn in the palms, when surely and soon  
And swift she would join me, and all would be well  
Without bloodshed or word. And now as she fell  
From the front, and went down in the ocean of fire,  
The last that I saw was a look of delight  
That I should escape — a love — a desire —  
Yet never a word, not one look of appeal,  
Lest I should reach hand, should stay hand or stay heel  
One instant for her in my terrible flight.

“Then the rushing of fire around me and under,  
 And the howling of beasts and a sound as of thunder—  
 Beasts burning and blind and forced onward and over,  
 As the passionate flame reached around them, and wove  
 her

Red hands in their hair, and kissed hot till they died—  
 Till they died with a wild and a desolate moan,  
 As a sea heart-broken on the hard brown stone . . .

And into the Brazos . . . I rode all alone—  
 All alone, save only a horse long-limbed,  
 And blind and bare and burnt to the skin.

Then just as the terrible sea came in  
 And tumbled its thousands hot into the tide,  
 Till the tide blocked up and the swift stream brimmed  
 In eddies, we struck on the opposite side.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Sell Paché—blind Paché? Now, mister, look here,  
 You have slept in my tent and partook of my cheer  
 Many days, many days, on this rugged frontier,  
 For the ways they were rough and Camanches were  
 near;

But you'd better pack up, sir! That tent is too small  
 For us two after this! Has an old mountaineer,  
 Do you book-men believe, got no tum-tum at all?

Sell Paché! You buy him! A bag full of gold!  
You show him! Tell of him the tale I have told!  
Why, he bore me through fire, and is blind, and is old!  
. . . Now pack up your papers, and get up and spin  
To them cities you tell of . . . Blast you and your tin!"



**BURNS AND BYRON.**

*Eld Druid oaks of Ayr !  
Precepts ! Poems ! Pages !  
Lessons ! Leaves, and Volumes  
Arches ! Pillars ! Columns  
In corridors of ages !  
Grand patriarchal sages  
Lifting palms in prayer !*

*The Druid beards are drifting  
And shifting to and fro,  
In gentle breezes lifting,  
That bat-like come and go,  
The while the moon is sifting  
A sheen of shining snow  
On all these blossoms lifting  
Their blue eyes from below.*

*No, 'tis not phantoms walking  
That you hear rustling there,  
But bearded Druids talking,  
And turning leaves in prayer.  
No, not a night-bird singing,  
Nor breeze the broad bough swinging,  
But that bough holds a censer,  
And swings it to and fro.  
'Tis Sunday eve remember,  
That's why they chant so low.*

AYR, 1870.



## BURNS AND BYRON.

### NOTE.

THE day before my departure for Europe last summer, a small party sailed out to the beautiful sea-front of Saucélito, lying in the great Bay of San Francisco, forever green in its crown of California laurel; and there the fairest hands of the youngest and fairest city of the New World wove a wreath of bay for the tomb of Byron. I brought it over the Rocky Mountains, and the seas, and placed it above the dust of the soldier-poet, as desired. The wreath hangs now on the dark and dusty wall of the church at Hucknall Tokard above the tattered coat-of-arms of the Byrons, and the small stained tablet placed there by the Poet's sister.

Having come directly from Dumfries, I am bound to say that the contrast between the tombs of the two immortal poets was at least remarkable.

But in my pilgrimage to places sacred to the memory of Burns, I found none equal in interest to Ayr, the Doon, and their environs; perhaps it was because these places witnessed his birth, and his hard life's battles.

I LINGER in the autumn noon,  
I listen to the partridge call,  
I watch the yellow leaflets fall  
And drift adown the dimpled Doon.  
I lean me o'er the ivy-grown  
Old brig, where Vandal tourists' tools

Have ribb'd out names that would be known,  
Are known — known as a herd of fools.

Down Ailsa Craig the sun declines,  
With lances level'd here and there —  
The tinted thorns! the trailing vines!  
O braes of Doon! so fond, so fair!  
So passing fair, so more than fond!  
The Poet's place of birth beyond,  
Beyond the mellow bells of Ayr!

I hear the milk-maid's twilight song  
Come bravely through the storm-bent oaks;  
Beyond, the white surf's sullen strokes  
Beat in a chorus deep and strong;  
I hear the sounding forge afar,  
And rush and rumble of the car,  
The steady tinkle of the bell  
Of lazy, laden, home-bound cows  
That stop to bellow and to browse;  
I breathe the soft sea-wind as well,  
And now would fain arouse, arise;  
I count the red lights in the skies;  
I yield as to a fairy spell.

Heard ye the feet of flying horse?  
Heard ye the bogles in the air  
That clutch at Tam O'Shanter's mare,  
That flies this mossy brig across?

O Burns! where bid? where bide you now?  
Where are you in this night's full noon,  
Great master of the pen and plough?  
Might you not on yon slanting beam  
Of moonlight, kneeling to the Doon,  
Descend once to this hallow'd stream?  
Sure yon stars yield enough of light  
For heaven to spare your face one night.

O Burns! another name for song,  
Another name for passion — pride;  
For love and poesy allied;  
For strangely blended right and wrong.

I picture you as one who kneel'd  
A stranger at his own hearthstone;  
One knowing all, yet all unknown,

One seeing all, yet all conceal'd ;  
The fitful years you linger'd here,  
A lease of peril and of pain ;  
And I am thankful yet again  
The gods did love you, ploughman ! peer !

In all your own and other lands,  
I hear your touching songs of cheer ;  
The peasant and the lordly peer  
Above your honor'd dust strike hands.

A touch of tenderness is shown  
In this unselfish love of Ayr,  
And it is well, you earn'd it fair ;  
For all unhelmeted, alone,  
You proved a ploughman's honest claim  
To battle in the lists of fame ;  
You earn'd it as a warrior earns  
His laurels fighting for his land,  
And died — it was your right to go.  
O eloquence of silent woe !  
The Master leaning reach'd a hand,  
And whisper'd, "It is finish'd, Burns !"

O sad, sweet singer of a Spring!  
Yours was a chill uncheerful May,  
And you knew no full days of June;  
You ran too swiftly up the way,  
And wearied soon, so over-soon!  
You sang in weariness and woe;  
You falter'd, and God heard you sing,  
Then touch'd your hand and led you so,  
You found life's hill-top low, so low,  
You cross'd its summit long ere noon.  
Thus sooner than one would suppose  
Some weary feet will find repose.

---

O cold and cruel Nottingham!  
In disappointment and in tears,  
Sad, lost, and lonely, here I am  
To question, "Is this Nottingham,  
Of which I dream'd for years and years?  
I seek in vain for name or sign  
Of him who made this mould a shrine,  
A Mecca to the fair and fond  
Beyond the seas, and still beyond.

Where white clouds crush their drooping wings  
Against the snow-crown'd battlements,  
And peaks that flash like silver tents ;  
Where Sacramento's fountain springs,  
And proud Columbia frets his shore  
Of sombre, boundless wood and wold,  
And lifts his yellow sands of gold  
In plaintive murmurs evermore ;  
Where snowy dimpled Tahoe smiles,  
And where white breakers from the sea,  
In solid phalanx knee to knee,  
Surround the calm Pacific Isles,  
Then run and reach unto the land  
And spread their thin palms on the sand, —  
Is he supreme — there understood :  
The free can understand the free,  
The brave and good the brave and good.

Yea, he did sin ; who hath reveal'd  
That he was more than man, or less ?  
Yet sinn'd no more, but less conceal'd  
Than they who cloak'd their follies o'er,  
And then cast stones in his distress.  
He scorn'd to make the good seem more,

Or make the bitter sin seem less.  
And so his very manliness  
The seeds of persecution bore.

When all his fervid wayward love  
Brought back no olive-branch or dove,  
Or love or trust from any one,  
Proud, all unpitied and alone  
He lived to make himself unknown,  
Disdaining love and yielding none.  
Like some high-lifted sea-girt stone  
That could not stoop, but all the days,  
With proud brow turning to the breeze,  
Felt seas blown from the south, and seas  
Blown from the north, and many ways,  
He stood — a solitary light  
In stormy seas and settled night —  
Then fell, but stirr'd the seas as far  
As winds and waves and waters are.

The meek-eyed stars are cold and white  
And steady, fix'd for all the years ;  
The comet burns the wings of night,  
And dazzles elements and spheres.

Then dies in beauty and a blaze  
Of light, blown far through other days.

The poet's passion, sense of pride,  
His sentiment, the wooing throng  
Of sweet temptations that betide  
The wild and wayward child of song,  
The world knows not: I lift a hand  
To ye who know, who understand.

In men whom men condemn as ill  
I find so much of goodness still,  
In men whom men pronounce divine  
I find so much of sin and blot,  
I hesitate to draw a line  
Between the two, where God has not.

\* \* \* \* \*

In sad but beautiful decay  
Gray Hucknall kneels into the dust,  
And, cherishing her sacred trust,  
Does blend her clay with lordly clay.

The ancient Abbey's breast is broad,  
And stout her massive walls of stone;



But let him lie, repose alone  
Ungather'd with the great of God,  
In dust, by his fierce fellow-man.  
Some one, some day, loud-voiced will speak  
And say the broad breast was not broad,  
The walls of stone were all too weak  
To hold the proud dust, in their plan ;  
The hollow of God's great right hand  
Receives it ; let it rest with God.

No sign or cryptic stone or cross  
Unto the passing world has said,  
"He died, and we deplore his loss."  
No sound of sandall'd pilgrim's tread  
Disturbs the pilgrim's peaceful rest,  
Or frets the proud impatient breast.  
The bat flits through the broken pane,  
The black swift swallow gathers moss,  
And builds in peace above his head,  
Then goes, then comes, and builds again.  
And it is well ; not otherwise  
Would he, the grand sad singer, will.  
The serene peace of paradise  
He sought — 'tis his — the storm is still.

Secure in his eternal fame,  
And blended pity and respect,  
He does not feel the cold neglect,  
And England does not fear the shame.

NOTTINGHAM, 1870

MYRRH.

*Life knows no dead so beautiful  
As is the white cold coffin'd past ;  
This I may love nor be betray'd :  
The dead are faithful to the last.  
I am not spouseless — I have wed  
A memory — a life that's dead.*

MYRRH.

FAREWELL! for here the ways at last  
Divide — diverge, like delta'd Nile,  
Which after desert dangers pass'd  
Of many and many a thousand mile,  
As constant as a column stone,  
Seeks out the sea, divorced — alone.

And you and I have buried Love,  
A red seal on the coffin's lid;  
The clerk below, the Court above,  
Pronounced it dead: the corpse is hid.  
And I who never crossed your will  
Consent . . . that you may have it still.

Farewell! a sad word easy said  
And easy sung, I think, by some . . .  
. . . I clutched my hands, I turned my head  
In my endeavor, and was dumb;

And when I should have said, Farewell,  
I only murmur'd, "This is hell."

What recks it now whose was the blame?  
But call it mine; for better used  
Am I to wrong and cold disdain,  
Can better bear to be accused  
Of all that wears the shape of shame,  
Than have you bear one touch of blame.

I know yours was the lighter heart,  
And yours the hope of grander meed;  
Yet did I falter in my part?  
But there is weakness in defeat,  
And I had felt its iron stride  
While your young feet were yet untried.

I set my face for power and place,  
My soul is toned to sullenness,  
My heart holds not one sign nor trace  
Of love, or trust, or tenderness.  
But you — your years of happiness  
God knows I would not make them less.

And yet it were a bootless strife ;  
Too soon and sudden up the way  
I hurried in the spring of life,  
And wearied ere the noon of day.  
I did not reach — was it a crime  
That my life knew no summer-time ?

And you will come some summer eve,  
When wheels the white moon on her track,  
And hear the plaintive night-bird grieve,  
And heed the crickets clad in black ;  
Alone — not far — a little spell,  
And say, “ Well, yes, he loved me well ; ”

And sigh, “ Well, yes, I mind me now  
None were so bravely true as he ;  
And yet his love was tame somehow,  
It was so truly true to me ;  
I wished his patient love had less  
Of worship and of tenderness :

“ I wish it still, for thus alone  
There comes a keen reproach or pain  
A feeling I dislike to own ;

Half yearnings for his voice again,  
 Half longings for his earnest gaze,  
 To know him mine always — always.”

\* \* \* \* \*

I make no murmur: steady, calm,  
 Sphinx-like I gaze on days ahead.  
 No wooing word, no pressing palm,  
 No sealing love with lips seal-red,  
 No waiting for some dusk or dawn,  
 Or sacred hour . . . all are gone.

I go alone: no little hands  
 To lead me from forbidden ways,  
 No little voice in other lands  
 Shall cheer through all the weary days;  
 Yet these are yours, and that to me  
 Is much indeed . . . So let it be . . .

. . . A last look from my mountain wall . . .  
 I watch the red sun wed the sea  
 Beside your home . . . the tides will fall  
 And rise, but nevermore shall we  
 Stand hand in hand and watch them flow,  
 As we once stood . . . Christ! this is so!



But, when the stately sea comes in  
 With measured tread and mouth afoam,  
 My darlings cry above the din,  
 And ask, "Has father yet come home?"  
 Then look into the peaceful sky,  
 And answer, gently, "By and by."

\* \* \* \* \*

One deep spring in a desert sand,  
 One mossed and mystic pyramid,  
 A lonely palm on either hand,  
 A fountain in a forest hid,  
 Are all my life has realized  
 Of all I cherish'd, all I prized :

Of all I dream'd in early youth  
 Of love by streams and love-lit ways,  
 While my heart held its type of truth  
 Through all the tropic golden days,  
 And I the oak, and you the vine,  
 Clung palm in palm through cloud or shine.

Some time when clouds hang overhead,  
 (What weary skies without one cloud !)  
 You may muse on this love that 's dead,

Muse calm when not so young or proud,  
And say, "At last it comes to me,  
That none was ever true as he."

My sin was that I loved so much —  
But I enlisted for the war,  
Till we the deep-sea shore should touch,  
Beyond Atlanta — near or far —  
And truer soldier never yet  
Bore shining sword or bayonet.

I did not blame you — do not blame.  
The stormy elements of soul  
That I did scorn to tone or tame,  
Or bind down unto dull control  
In full fierce youth, they all are yours,  
With all their folly and their force.

God keep you pure, oh, very pure,  
God give you grace to dare and do ;  
God give you courage to endure  
The all He may demand of you,  
Keep time-frosts from your raven hair,  
And your young heart without a care.

I make no murmur nor complain ;  
Above me are the stars and blue  
Alluring far to grand refrain ;  
Before, the beautiful and true,  
To love or hate, to win or lose ;  
Lo ! I will now arise, and choose.

But should you sometime read a sign,  
A name among the princely few,  
In isles of song beyond the brine,  
Then you will think a time, and you  
Will turn and say, " He once was mine,  
Was all my own ; his smiles, his tears  
Were mine — were mine for years and years."

*Blue Mountains, Oregon, 1870.*



**EVEN SO.**

*Sierras, and eternal tents  
Of snow that flash o'er battlements  
Of mountains! My land of the sun,  
Am I not true? have I not done  
All things for thine, for thee alone,  
O sun-land, sea-land, thou mine own?  
From other loves and other lands,  
As true, perhaps, as strong of hands,  
Have I not turned to thee and thine,  
O sun-land of the palm and pine,  
And sung thy scenes, surpassing skies,  
Till Europe lifted up her face  
And marvelled at thy matchless grace,  
With eager and inquiring eyes?  
Be my reward some little place  
To pitch my tent, some tree and vine  
Where I may sit above the sea,  
And drink the sun as drinking wine,  
And dream, or sing some songs of thee;  
Or days to climb to Shasta's dome  
Again, and be with gods at home,  
Salute my mountains, — clouded Hood,  
Saint Helens in its sea of wood, —  
Where sweeps the Oregon, and where  
White storms are in the feathered fir.*

ATHENS, 1870.

EVEN SO.

SHE was not full tall, was not fairer than others,  
But there was in her eyes, so proud and glorious,  
A dream, a wonder, a dangerous witchery ;  
And when into yours they did look steadfastly  
With a longing and trust as if asking sympathy,  
As in talk, low-voiced, with your soul in confidence,  
While her rich full lips, red-pouting and luscious,  
Kept forth sweet-blended their mirth and sentiment,  
A battery shelter'd by a brown flood of tresses,  
That lay or lifted in the warm winds fretted  
About a brow of most marvellous beauty —  
You were less of a man than I should desire  
To know much of, to have been unmoved.

Where pine-tops toss curly clouds to heaven  
And shake them far like to downs of thistle,  
In a rift of cañon cleft so asunder  
That it seem'd as 'twere earth's lips half open'd  
Where men wrought gold from the rock-ribb'd moun-  
tain,

She patient abode with her faithful mother,  
 And brawny giants, men brown'd and bearded,  
 Did bless the brown earth as she walk'd upon it,  
 And call her more pure than their yellow gold treasures.

By the trails sometimes that wound round the mountain

Above brave men toiling long at the sluices,  
 The cheery girl passing would kind and playful  
 Call to them all kind words of encouragement,  
 Then awake the echoes of the frowning mountains  
 With gushing laugh at their honest answers,  
 And pass then on in a blaze of glory.  
 They, blessing her heart, would then put from them  
 Their coarser thoughts, and, bent to the boulders,  
 Would recall fair faces far over the water,  
 And be, for her, the happier and better  
 For many and many a day thereafter.

In the shadows a-west of the sunset mountains,  
 Where old-time giants had dwelt and peopled,  
 And built up cities and castled battlements,  
 And rear'd up pillars that pierced the heavens,  
 A poet dwelt, of the book of Nature —



An ardent lover of the pure and beautiful,  
 Devoutest lover of the true and beautiful,  
 Profoundest lover of the grand and beautiful —  
 With a heart all impulse, intensest passion,  
 Who believed in love as in God Eternal —  
 A dream while the waken'd world went over,  
 An Indian summer of the sullen seasons;  
 And he sang wild songs like the wind in cedars,  
 Was tempest-toss'd as the pines, yet ever  
 As fix'd in truth as they in the mountains.

He had heard her name as one hears of a princess,  
 Her glory had come unto him in stories;  
 From afar he had look'd as entranced upon her;  
 He gave her name to the wind in measures,  
 And he heard her name in the deep-voiced cedars,  
 And afar in the winds rolling on like the billows.  
 Her name in the name of another for ever  
 Gave all his numbers their grandest strophes;  
 He enshrined her image in his heart's high temple,  
 And saint-like held her, too sacred for mortal.

\* \* \* \* \*

He came to fall like a king of the forest  
 Caught in the strong stormy arms of the wrestler;

Forgetting his songs, his crags and his mountains,  
 And nearly his God, in his wild deep passion ;  
 And when he had won her and turn'd him homeward,  
 With the holiest pledges love gives its lover,  
 The mountain route was as strewn with roses.  
 Can a high love then be a thing unholy,  
 To make us better and bless'd supremely ?  
 The day was fix'd for the feast and nuptials ,  
 He crazed with impatience at the tardy hours ;  
 He flew in the face of old Time as a tyrant :  
 He had fought the days that stood still between them,  
 One by one, as you fight with a foeman,  
 Had they been animate and sensate beings.

At last then the hour came coldly forward.  
 When Mars was trailing his lance on the mountains  
 He rein'd his steed and look'd down in the cañon  
 To where she dwelt, with a heart of fire ;  
 He kiss'd his hand to the smoke slow curling,  
 Then bow'd his head in devoutest blessing.  
 His spotted courser did plunge and fret him  
 Beneath his gay and silk-fringed caroña,  
 And toss his neck in a black mane banner'd ;

Then all afoam, plunging iron-footed,  
Dash'd him adown with a wild impatience.

A coldness met him, like the breath of a cavern,  
As he joyously hasten'd across the threshold.  
She came, and coldly she spoke and scornful,  
In answer to warm and impulsive passion.  
All things did array them in shapes most hateful,  
And life did seem but a jest intolerable.  
He dared to question her why this estrangement :  
She spoke with a strange and stiff indifference,  
And bade him go on all alone life's journey.

Stern then and tall he did stand up before her,  
And gaze dark-brow'd through the low narrow casement  
For a time, as if warring in thought with a passion ;  
Then, crushing hard down the hot welling bitterness,  
He folded his form in a sullen silentness  
And turn'd for ever away from her presence :  
Bearing his sorrow like some great burden,  
Like a black night-mare in his hot heart muffled ;  
With his faith in the truth of woman all shatter'd  
Like the shell of the cocoa dash'd to pieces  
On the stones below from its stately bower.

He heard a laughter as if in mockery,  
 And, vaulting his saddle, he did take his journey  
 Through the densest wood by the darkest windings,  
 As the things best fitting his fate and humor,  
 And hurl'd a curse back over his shoulder.  
 Another had woo'd her, one gay, of earth earthy,  
 Another had won her, a gay dashing soldier —  
 With gold epaulets and a uniform polish'd,  
 With sword and red sash, and a tongue swift and ready  
 With loud talk of battles, of fine deeds of daring,  
 That wins so most willing the ear of all women,  
 He did win this jewel from the lordly mountain,  
 Of its wealth never counting, its worth never dreaming.  
 In truth not possessing one sense so accomplished  
 He could know its value had it all been told him.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

'Mid Theban pillars, where sang the Pindar,  
 Breathing the breath of the Grecian islands,  
 Breathing in spices and olive and myrtle,  
 Counting the caravans, curl'd and snowy,  
 Slow journeying over his head to Mecca  
 Or the high Christ-land of most holy memory,  
 Counting the clouds through the boughs above him,

That brush'd white marbles that time had chisell'd  
And reared as tombs on the great dead city,  
Letter'd with solemn but unread moral —  
A poet rested in the red-hot summer.  
He took no note of the things about him,  
But dream'd and counted the clouds above him ;  
His soul was troubled, and his sad heart's Mecca  
Was a miner's home far over the ocean,  
Banner'd by pines that did brush the heavens.

When the sun went down on the bronzed Morea,  
He read to himself from the lines of sorrow  
That came as a wail from the one he worshipp'd,  
Sent over the seas by an old companion :  
They spoke no word of him, or remembrance.  
And he was sad, for he felt forgotten,  
And said : “ In the leaves of her fair heart's album  
She has cover'd my face with the face of another.  
Let the great sea lift like a wall between us,  
High-back'd, with his mane of white storms for ever —  
I shall learn to love, I shall wed my sorrow,  
I shall take as a spouse the days that are perish'd ;  
I shall dwell in a land where the march of genius  
Made tracks in marble in the days of giants ;

I shall sit in the ruins where sat the Marius,  
Gray with the ghosts of the great departed."  
And then he said in the solemn twilight . . .

“Strangely wooing are the worlds above us,  
Strangely beautiful is the Faith of Islam,  
Strangely sweet are the songs of Solomon,  
Strangely tender are the teachings of Jesus,  
Strangely cold is the sun on the mountains,  
Strangely mellow is the moon in old ruins,  
Strangely pleasant are the stolen waters,  
Strangely simple and unwooing is virtue,  
Strangely lighted is the North night-region,  
Strangely strong are the streams in the ocean,  
Strangely true are the tales of the Orient,  
Strangely winning is a dark-eyed widow,  
Strangely wayward are the ways of lovers,  
But stranger than all are the ways of women.”

His head on his hands and his hands on the marble,  
Alone in the moonlight he slept in the ruins;  
And a form was before him white-mantled in moonlight,  
And bitter he said to the one he had worshipped:—

“Your hands in mine, your face, your eyes  
Look level into mine, and mine  
Are not abashed in anywise,  
As eyes were in an elder syne.  
Perhaps the pulse is colder now,  
And blood comes tamer to the brow  
Because of hot blood long ago . . .  
Withdraw your hand? . . . Well, be it so,  
And turn your bent head slow sidewise,  
For recollections are as seas  
That come and go in tides, and these  
Are flood-tides filling to the eyes.

“How strange that you above the vale  
And I below the mountain wall  
Should walk and meet! . . . Why, you are pale! . . .  
Strange meeting on the mountain fringe! . . .  
. . . More strange we ever met at all! . . .  
Tides come and go, we know their time;  
The moon, we know her wane or prime:  
But who knows how the fates may hinge?

“You stand before me here to-night,

But not beside me, not beside —  
Are beautiful, but not a bride.  
Some things I recollect aright,  
Though full a dozen years are done  
Since we two met one winter night —  
Since I was crush'd as by a fall;  
For I have watched and pray'd through **all**  
The shining circles of the sun.

“I saw you where sad cedars wave;  
I sought you in a dewy eve  
When shining crickets trill and grieve:  
You smiled, and I became a slave.  
A slave! I worshipped you at night,  
When all the blue field blossom'd red  
With dewy roses overhead  
In sweet and delicate delight.  
I was devout. I knelt at night,  
I knelt at noon, and tried to pray  
To Him who doeth all things well.  
I tried in vain to break the spell;  
My prison'd soul refused to rise  
And image saints in Paradise,



While one was here before my eyes.  
You came between alway, alway.

“Some things are sooner marred than made  
The moon was white, the stars a-chill —  
A frost fell on a soul that night,  
And lips were whiter, colder still.  
A soul was black that erst was white.  
And you forget the place — the night!  
Forget that aught was done or said —  
Say this has pass'd a long decade —  
Say not a single tear was shed —  
Say you forget these little things!  
Is not your recollection loath?  
Well, little bees have bitter stings,  
And I remember for us both.

“No, not a tear. Do men complain?  
The outer wound will show a stain,  
And we may shriek at idle pain;  
But pierce the heart, and not a word,  
Or wail, or sign, is seen or heard.

“ I did not blame — I do not blame.  
My wild heart turns to you the same,  
Such as it is ; but oh, its meed  
Of faithfulness and trust and truth,  
And gushing confidence of youth,  
I caution you, is small indeed.

“ I follow'd you, I worshipp'd you,  
And I would follow, worship still ;  
But if I felt the blight and chill  
Of frosts in my uncheerful spring,  
And show it now in riper years  
In answer to this love you bring —  
In answer to this second love,  
This wail of an unmated dove,  
In cautious answer to your tears —  
You, you know who taught me disdain.  
But deem you I would deal you pain ?  
I joy to know your heart is light,  
I journey glad to know it thus,  
And could I dare to make it less ?  
Yours — you are day, but I am night.

“ God knows I would descend to-day

Devoutly on my knees, and pray  
 Your way might be one path of peace  
 Through bending boughs and blossom'd trees,  
 And perfect bliss through roses fair;  
 But know you, back — one long decade —  
 How fervently, how fond I pray'd? —  
 What was the answer to that prayer?

“The tale is old, and often told  
 And lived by more than you suppose —  
 The fragrance of a summer rose  
 Press'd down beneath the stubborn lid,  
 When sun and song are hush'd and hid,  
 And summer days are gray and old.

“We parted so. Amid the bays  
 And peaceful palms and song and shade  
 Your cheerful feet in pleasure stray'd  
 Through all the swift and shining days.

“You made my way another way,  
 You bade it should not be with thine —  
 A fierce and cheerless route was mine:  
 But we have met, at last, to-day.

"You talk of tears — of bitter tears —  
 And tell of tyranny and wrong,  
 And I re-live some stinging jeers,  
 Back, far back, in the leaden years.  
 A lane without a turn is long,  
 I muse, and whistle a reply —  
 Then bite my lips to crush a sigh.

"You sympathize that I am sad,  
 I sigh for you that you complain,  
 I shake my yellow hair in vain,  
 I laugh with lips, but am not glad.

\*       \*       \*       \*

. . . "His was a hot love of the hours,  
 And love and lover both are flown,  
 And you walk, like a ghost, alone.  
 He sipp'd your sunny lips, and he  
 Took all their honey: now the bee  
 Bends down the heads of other flowers,  
 And other lips lift up to kiss . . .  
 . . . I am not cruel, yet I find  
 A savage solace for the mind  
 And sweet delight in saying this . . .

Now you are silent, white, and you  
 Lift up your hands as making sign,  
 And your rich lips lie thin and blue  
 And ashen . . . and you writhe, and you  
 Breathe quick and tremble . . . is it true  
 The soul takes wounds, gives blood like wine?

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . "No, not so lonely now — I love  
 A forest maiden: she is mine;  
 And on Sierras' slopes of pine,  
 The vines below, the snows above,  
 A solitary lodge is set  
 Within a fringe of watered firs;  
 And there my wigwam fires burn,  
 Fed by a round brown patient hand,  
 That small brown faithful hand of hers  
 That never rests till my return.  
 The yellow smoke is rising yet;  
 Tiptoe, and see it where you stand  
 Lift like a column from the land.

"There are no sea-gems in her hair,  
 No jewels fret her dimpled hands,  
 And half her bronzen limbs are bare

But round brown arms have golden bands,  
Broad, rich, and by her cunning hands  
Cut from the yellow virgin ore,  
And she does not desire more.  
I wear the beaded wampum belt  
That she has wove — the sable pelt  
That she has fringed red threads around ;  
And in the morn, when men are not,  
I wake the valley with the shot  
That brings the brown deer to the ground.  
And she beside the lodge at noon  
Sings with the wind, while baby swings  
In sea-shell cradle by the bough —  
Sings low, so like the clover sings  
With swarm of bees ; I hear her now,  
I see her sad face through the moon . . .  
Such songs ! — would earth had more of such !  
She has not much to say, and she  
Lifts never voice to question me  
In aught I do . . . and that is much.  
I love her for her patient trust,  
And my love's fortyfold return —  
A value I have not to learn  
As you . . . at least, as many must . . .

. . . "She is not over tall or fair;  
 Her breasts are curtained by her hair,  
 And sometimes, through the silken fringe,  
 I see her bosom's wealth, like wine,  
 Burst through in luscious ruddy tinge —  
 And all its wealth and worth are mine.  
 I know not that one drop of blood  
 Of prince or chief is in her veins:  
 I simply say that she is good,  
 And loves me with pure womanhood.  
 . . . When that is said, why, what remains?

. . . "You seem so most uncommon tall  
 Against the lonely ghostly moon,  
 That hurries homeward oversoon,  
 And hides behind you and the pines;  
 And your two hands hang cold and small,  
 And your two thin arms lie like vines,  
 Or winter moonbeams on a wall.  
 . . . What if you be a weary ghost,  
 And I but dream, and dream I wake?  
 Then wake me not, and my mistake  
 Is not so bad: let's make the most  
 Of all we get, asleep, awake —

Take all we get with greedy cheek,  
And waste not one sweet thing at all;  
God knows that, at the best, life brings  
The soul's share so exceeding small  
That many mighty souls grow weak  
And weary for some better things,  
And hungered even unto death.  
Laugh loud, be glad with ready breath,  
For after all are joy and grief  
Not merely matters of belief?  
And what is certain, after all,  
But death, delightful, patient death?  
O cool and perfect peaceful sleep,  
Without one tossing hand, or deep  
Sad sigh and catching in of breath!

“Be satisfied. The price of breath  
Is paid in toil. But knowledge is  
Bought only with a weary care,  
And wisdom means a world of pain . . .  
Well, we have suffered, will again,  
And we can work and wait and bear,  
Strong in the certainty of bliss.  
Death is delightful: after death



Breaks in the dawn of perfect day.  
Let question he who will: the may  
Throws fragrance far beyond the wall.  
I pass no word with such: 'tis fit  
To pity such: therefore I say  
Be wise and make the best of it;  
Content and strong against the fall.

“Death is delightful. Death is dawn,  
The waking from a weary night  
Of fevers unto truth and light.  
Fame is not much, love is not much,  
Yet what else is there worth the touch  
Of lifted hands with dagger drawn?  
So surely life is little worth:  
Therefore I say, Look up; therefore  
I say, One little star has more  
Bright gold than all the earth of earth.

“Yet we must labor, plant to reap —  
Life knows no folding up of hands —  
Must plough the soul, as ploughing lands,  
In furrows fashioned strong and deep.  
Life has its lesson. Let us learn

The hard long lesson from the birth,  
 And be content; stand breast to breast,  
 And bear and battle till the rest.  
 Yet I look to yon stars, and say,  
 Thank Christ, ye are so far away  
 That when I win you I can turn  
 And look, and see no sign of earth.

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . "You stand up so uncommon tall,  
 Your back against the falling moon,  
 And all your limbs are still, and all  
 Your raiment is as snow and stone.  
 What if I called you mine, my own?  
 What if I kissed you, mouth to mouth,  
 In all the passion of my South,  
 And should possess you oversoon?" . . .

He reached . . . he touched the marble stone:  
 He started up, he stood alone,  
 And up against the Grecian sky  
 White-marbled desolation stood.  
 The gaunt wolf hurried to the wood,  
 Within the wall, the owlet's cry

Was only heard; the silent blonde,  
The brown wife with her babe at noon  
That blessed him in the land beyond,  
The mountain scene, the cedar trees,  
The stormy and uncertain seas,  
And all that he did see or seem  
To see, had faded as a dream,  
**And fallen with the marble moon.**



SONGS OF THE SUN-LANDS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

PART I.

*Primeval forests ! virgin sod !  
That Saxon hath not ravish'd yet !  
Lo ! peak on peak in column set,  
In stepping stairs that reach to God !*

*Here we are free as sea or wind,  
For here are set the snowy tents  
In everlasting battlements,  
Against the march of Saxon mind.*



# SONGS OF THE SUN-LANDS.

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## ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

### PRELUDE

**W**ELL! who shall lay hand on my harp but me,  
Or shall chide my song from the sounding trees?  
The passionate sun and the resolute sea,  
These were my masters, and only these.

These were my masters, and only these,  
And these from the first I obey'd, and they  
Shall command me now, and I shall obey  
As a dutiful child that is proud to please.

There never were measures as true as the sun,  
The sea hath a song that is passingly sweet,  
And yet they repeat, and repeat, and repeat,  
The same old runes though the new years run.

By unnamed rivers of the Oregon north,  
That roll dark-heaved into turbulent hills,  
I have made my home. . . . The wild heart thrills  
With memories fierce, and a world storms forth.

On eminent peaks that are dark with pine,  
And mantled in shadows and voiced in storms,  
I have made my camps: majestic gray forms  
Of the thunder-clouds, they were companions of mine;

And face set to face, like to lords austere,  
Have we talk'd, red-tongued, of the mysteries  
Of the circling sun, of the oracled seas,  
While ye who judged me had mantled in fear.

Some fragment of thought in the unfinish'd words;  
A cry of fierce freedom, and I claim no more.  
What more would you have from the tender of herds  
And of horse on an ultimate Oregon shore?

From men unto God go forth, as alone,  
Where the dark pines talk in their tones of the sea  
To the unseen God in a harmony  
Of the under seas, and know the unknown.

'Mid white Sierras, that slope to the sea,  
Lie turbulent lands. Go dwell in the skies,  
And the thundering tongues of Yosemite  
Shall persuade you to silence, and you shall be wise.

Yea, men may deride, and the thing it is well;  
Turn well and aside from the one wild note  
To the song of the bird with the tame, sweet throat  
But the sea sings on in his cave and shell.

Let the white moons ride, let the red stars fall,  
O great, sweet sea! O fearful and sweet!  
Thy songs they repeat, and repeat, and repeat:  
And these, I say, shall survive us all.

I but sing for the love of song and the few  
Who loved me first and shall love me last;  
And the storm shall pass as the storms have pass'd,  
For never were clouds but the sun came through.

## PART I.

### I.

FAR up in the hush of the Amazon River,  
And mantled and hung in the tropical trees,  
There are isles as grand as the isles of the seas;  
And the waves strike strophes, and keen reeds quiver,  
As the sudden canoe shoots apast them and over  
The strong, still tide to the opposite shore,  
Where the blue-eyed men by the sycamore  
Sit mending their nets 'neath the vine-twined cover;

### II.

Sit weaving their threads of bark and of grasses,  
They wind and they spin, on the clumsy wheel,  
Into hammocks red-hued with the cochineal,  
To trade with the single black ship that passes,  
With foreign old freightage of curious old store,  
And as still and as slow as if half asleep, —  
A cunning old trader that loves to creep  
Above and adown in the shade of the shore.

## III.

And the blue-eyed men that are mild as the dawns —  
Oh, delicate dawns of the grand Andes! —  
Lift up soft eyes that are deep like seas,  
And mild yet wild as the red-white fawns' ;

## IV.

And they gaze into yours, then weave, then listen,  
Then look in wonder, then again weave on,  
Then again look wonder that you are not gone,  
While the keen reeds quiver and the bent waves glisten ;

## V.

But they say no words while they weave and wonder,  
Though they sometimes sing, voiced low like the dove,  
And as deep and as rich as their tropical love,  
A-weaving their net threads through and under.

## VI.

Yea, a pure, true people you may trust are these,  
That weave their threads where the quick leaves  
quiver ;  
And this is their tale of the Isles of the river,  
And the why that their eyes are so blue like seas,

And the why that the men draw water and bear  
The wine or the water in the wild boar skin,  
And do live in the woods, and do weave and spin,  
And so bear with the women full burthen and share.

## VII.

A curious old tale of a curious old time,  
That is told you betimes by a quaint old crone,  
Who sits on the rim of an island alone,  
As ever was told you in story or rhyme.

## VIII.

Her brown, bare feet dip down to the river,  
And dabble and splash to her comical tone;  
And she holds in her hands a strange green stone,  
As she talks to the boat where the bent reeds quiver.

## IX.

And the quaint old crone has a singular way  
Of holding her head to the side and askew,  
And smoothing the stone in her palms all day,  
As saying, "I've nothing at all for you,"  
Until you have anointed her palm, and you  
Have touch'd on the delicate spring of a door  
That silver has open'd perhaps before;  
For woman is woman the wide world through.

## X.

The old near truth on the far new shore!  
I bought and I paid for it; so did you:  
The tale may be false or the tale may be true;  
I give as I got it, and who can more?  
And if I have purchased a beautiful lie,  
And liked it well, and believed it true,  
I have done it before; and so have you,  
And have been contented, and so have I.

## XI.

If I have made journeys to difficult shores,  
And woven delusions in innocent verse,  
If none be the wiser, why, who is the worse?  
The field it was mine, and the fruit it is yours.

## XII.

A sudden told tale. You may read as you run.  
A part of it hers, some part is my own,  
Crude, and too carelessly woven and sown,  
As I sail'd on the Mexican seas in the sun.

## XIII.

She tells in her tale of a brave young knight,  
A singer and knight of most knightly birth,  
Aback in the darlingest days of the earth;  
Oh, dear old days that are lost to sight!

## XIV.

Oh, dear old days, when the hot rhymes rang  
 Like steel upon steel when toss'd to the sky;  
 When lovers could love, when maidens could die  
 But never deceive, and the song-men sang  
 In passion as pure as the blush of the grape,  
 To clashing of swords, for a maiden's sweet sigh,  
 Nor measured for gold as men measuring tape,  
 Who turn from the counter to turning of lays  
 On degenerate deeds in degenerate days.

## XV.

O carpet-knight singer! shrewd merchant of song!  
 Get gold and be glad, buy, sell, and be strong!  
 Sweet Cyprian, I kiss you, I pay you, we part:  
 Go! you have my gold, but who has my heart?  
 Go, splendid made singer, so finish'd, so fair,  
 Go sing you of heaven, with never a prayer,  
 Of hearts that are aching, with never a heart,  
 Of Nature, all girded and bridled by art;  
 Go sing you of battles, with never a scar,  
 Of sunlight, with never a soul for the noon;  
 Move cold and alone like a broken, bright moon,  
 And shimmer and shine like a far, cold star.



## XVI.

"Twas nations ago, when the Amazons were,  
That a fair young knight — says the quaint old crone,  
Wit' her head sidewise, as she smoothes at the stone —  
Came over the seas, with his golden hair,  
And a great black steed, and glittering spurs,  
And a sword that had come from crusaders down,  
And a womanly face in a manly frown,  
And a heart as tender and as true as hers.

## XVII.

And fairest, and foremost in love as in war  
Was the brave young knight of the brave old days.  
Of all of the knights, with their knightly ways,  
That had journey'd away to the world afar  
In the name of Spain; of the splendid few  
Who bore her banner in the new-born world,  
From the sea-rim, up where the clouds are curl'd,  
And the condors beat their wings in the blue.

## XVIII.

He was born, says the crone, where the brave are fair,  
And blown from the banks of the Guadalquiver,

And yet blue-eyed, with the Celt's soft hair,  
 With never a drop of the dark, deep river  
 Of Moorish blood that had swept through Spain,  
 And plash'd the world with its tawny stain.

## XIX.

He sat on his steed, and his sword was bloody  
 With heathen blood; the battle was done;  
 And crown'd in fire, wreathed and ruddy  
 With antique temples built up to the sun,  
 Below on the plain lay the beautiful city  
 At the conquerors' feet; the red street strown  
 With dead, with gold, and with gods overthrown.  
 His heart rebell'd and arose with pity,  
 He raised his head with a proud disdain,  
 And rein'd his steed on the reeking plain,  
 As the heathen pour'd, in a helpless flood,  
 With never a wail and with never a blow,  
 At last, to even provoke a foe,  
 Through gateways, wet with the pagan's blood.

## XX.

"Ho, forward! smite!" but the minstrel linger'd,  
 He reach'd his hand and he touch'd the rein,  
 He humm'd an air, and he toy'd and finger'd  
 The arching neck and the glossy mane

## XXI.

He rested the heel, he rested the hand,  
Though the thing was death to the man to dare  
To doubt, to question, to falter there,  
Nor heeded at all to the hot command.

## XXII.

He wiped his steel on his black steed's mane,  
He sheathed it deep, then look'd at the sun,  
Then counted his comrades, one by one,  
With booty return'd from the plunder'd plain.

## XXIII.

He lifted his face to the flashing snow,  
He lifted his shield of steel as he sang,  
And he flung it away till it clang'd and rang  
On the granite rocks in the plain below,  
Then cross'd his bosom. Made overbold,  
He lifted his voice and sang, quite low  
At first, then loud in the long-ago,  
When a love endured though the days grew old.

## XXIV.

They heard his song, the chief on the plain  
Stood up in his stirrups, and, sword in hand,

He cursed and he call'd with a loud command  
 To the blue-eyed boy to return again ;  
 To lift his shield again to the sky,  
 And come and surrender his sword or die.

## XXV.

He wove his hand in the stormy mane,  
 He lean'd him forward, he lifted the rein,  
 He struck the flank, he wheel'd and sprang,  
 And gayly rode in the face of the sun,  
 And bared his sword and he bravely sang,  
 "Ho! come and take it!" but there came not one.

## XXVI.

And so he sang, with his face to the south :  
 "I shall go ; I shall search for the Amazon shore,  
 Where the curses of man they are heard no more,  
 And kisses alone shall embrace the mouth.

## XXVII.

"I shall journey in search of the Incan Isles,  
 Go far and away to traditional land,  
 Where Love is a queen in a crown of smiles,  
 And battle has never imbrued a hand ;

XXVIII.

“Where man has never despoiled or trod ;  
Where woman’s hand with a woman’s heart  
Has fashion’d an Eden from man apart,  
And she walks in her garden alone with God.

XXIX.

“I shall seek that Eden, and all my years  
Shall sit and repose, shall sing in the sun ;  
And the tides may rest or the tides may run,  
And men may water the world with tears ;

XXX.

“And the years may come and the years may go,  
And men make war, may slay and be slain,  
But I not care, for I never shall know  
Of man, or of aught that is man’s again.

XXXI.

“The waves may battle, the winds may blow,  
The mellow rich moons may ripen and fall,  
The seasons of gold they may gather or go,  
The monkey may chatter, the paroquet call,

## XXXII.

“And who shall take heed, take note, or shall know  
 If the Fates befriend, or if ill befall,  
 Of worlds without, or of worlds at all,  
 Of heaven above, or of hell below.”

## XXXIII.

'Twas the song of a dream and the dream of a singer,  
 Drawn fine as the delicate fibres of gold,  
 And broken in two by the touch of a finger,  
 And blown as the winds blow, rent and roll'd  
 In dust, and spent as a tale that is told.

## XXXIV.

Alas! for his dreams and the songs he sung:  
 The beasts beset him; the serpents they hung,  
 Red-tongued and terrible, over his head.  
 He clove and he thrust with his keen, quick steel,  
 He coax'd with his hand and urged with his heel,  
 Till his steel was broken, and his steed lay dead.

## XXXV.

He toil'd to the river, he lean'd intent  
 To the wave, and away through the fringe of boughs,  
 From beasts that pursued; and breathed his vows,  
 For soul and body were well-nigh spent.

## XXXVI.

His arm arch'd over, as do arms on seas,  
For sign, or for sound; the thin lips press'd,  
And the two hands cross'd on the helpless breast,  
For there came no sound through the sweep of the trees

## XXXVII.

'Twas the king of rivers, and the Isles were near;  
Yet it moved so strange, so still, so strong,  
And gave no sound, not even the song  
Of a sea-bird screaming defiance or fear.

## XXXVIII.

It was dark and dreadful! Wide like an ocean,  
Much like a river but more like a sea,  
Save that there was naught of the turbulent motion  
Of tides, or of winds blown back, or a-lee.

## XXXIX.

Yea, strangely strong was the wave and slow,  
And half-way hid in the dark deep tide,  
Great turtles they paddled them to and fro,  
And away to the Isles and the opposite side.

## XL.

'The nude black boar through abundant grass  
Stole down to the water and buried his nose,  
And crush'd white teeth till the bubbles rose  
As white and as bright as the globes of glass.

## XLI.

Yea, steadily moved it, mile upon mile,  
Above and below and as still as the air;  
The bank made slippery here and there  
By the slushing slide of the crocodile.

## XLII.

The great trees bent to the tide like slaves;  
They dipp'd their boughs as the stream swept on,  
And then drew back, then dipp'd and were gone,  
Away to the seas with the resolute waves.

## XLIII.

The land was the tide's; the shore was undone;  
It look'd as the lawless, unsatisfied seas  
Had thrust up an arm through the tangle of trees,  
And clutch'd at the citrons that grew in the sun;



And clutch'd at the diamonds that hid in the sand,  
And laid heavy hand on the gold, and a hand  
On the redolent fruits, on the rubies-like wine,  
And the stones like the stars when the stars are divine;

## XLIV.

Had thrust through the rocks of the ribb'd Andes;  
Had wrested and fled; and had left a waste  
And a wide way strewn in precipitate haste,  
As he bore them away to the buccaneer seas.

## XLV.

O, heavens, the eloquent song of the silence!  
Asleep lay the sun in the vines, on the sod,  
And asleep in the sun lay the green-girdled islands,  
As rock'd to their rest in the cradle of God.

## XLVI.

God's poet is silence! His song is unspoken,  
And yet so profound, so loud, and so far,  
It fills you, it thrills you with measures unbroken,  
And as soft, and as fair, and as far as a star.

## XLVII.

The shallow seas moan. From the first they have  
mutter'd

And mourn'd, as a child, and have wept at their  
will. . . .

The poems of God are too grand to be utter'd :

The dreadful deep seas they are loudest when still.

## XLVIII.

“I shall die,” he said, “by the solemn deep river,

By the king of the rivers, and the mother of seas,

So far, and so far from my Guadalquiver,

Near, and so near to the dreaded Andes.

## XLIX.

“Let me sing one song by the grand old river,

And die ;” and he reach'd and he brake him a reed

From the rim of the river, where they lift and quiver,

And he trimm'd it and notch'd it with all his speed

With his treacherous blade, in the sweep of the trees,

As he stood with his head bent low on his breast,

And the vines in his hair and the wave to his knees,

And bow'd like to one who would die to rest.

## L.

“I shall fold my hands, for this is the river  
Of death,” he said, “and the sea-green isle  
Is an Eden set by the gracious Giver  
Wherein to rest.” He listened the while,  
Then lifted his head, then lifted a hand  
Arch’d over his brow, and he lean’d and listen’d, —  
’Twas only a bird on a border of sand, —  
The dark stream eddy’d and gleam’d and glisten’d  
Stately and still as the march of a moon,  
And the martial notes from the isle were gone, —  
Gone as a dream dies out with the dawn,  
And gone as far as the night from the noon.

## LI.

’Twas only a bird on a border of sand,  
Slow piping, and diving it here and there,  
Slim, gray, and shadowy, light as the air,  
That dipp’d below from a point of the land.

## LII.

“Unto God a prayer and to love a tear,  
And I die,” he said, “in a desert here,  
So deep that never a note is heard  
But the listless song of that soulless bird.”

## LIII.

He moved to a burthen of blossoms rare,  
 And stood in the red-white sweets to his knees, —  
 The pink and the purple that filled the air  
 With fragrance sweet as a breeze of bees.

## LIV.

He crush'd the blooms to the sod untrod,  
 The mateless man, in an Eden, fair  
 As the one of old, in his fierce despair,  
 So hidden from man by the hand of God;

## LV.

Ay, hidden above by the vines and mosses,  
 And zoned about by the tide like seas,  
 And curtain'd above by the linden-trees,  
 Well wove and inwove in intricate crosses;

## LVI.

The trees that lean'd in their love unto trees,  
 That lock'd in their loves, and were so made strong,  
 Stronger than armies; ay, stronger than seas  
 That rush from their caves in a storm of song.

## LVII.

“A miser of old his last, great treasure  
 Flung far in the sea, and he fell and he died;  
 And so shall I give, O terrible tide,  
 To you my song and my last sad measure.”

## LVIII.

He blew on his reed by the still, strong river,  
 Blew low at first, like a dream, then long,  
 Then loud, then loud as the keys that quiver,  
 And fret, and toss with their freight of song.

## LIX.

He sang and he sang with a resolute will,  
 Till the moon rested above on his haunches,  
 And held his head to the side and was still, -  
 Till a bird blew out of the night of branches  
 Alit on a reed, and with delicate skill  
 Sang sadder than love, so sweeter than sad,  
 Till the boughs did burthen and the reeds did fill  
 With beautiful birds, and the boy was glad.

## LX.

Our loves they are told by the myriad-eyed stars  
 Yet love it is well in a reasonable way,  
 And fame it is fair in its way for a day,  
 Borne dusty from books and bloody from wars ;  
 And death, I say, is an absolute need,  
 And a calm delight, and an ultimate good ;

But a song that is blown from a watery reed  
 By a soundless deep from a boundless wood,  
 With never a hearer to heed or to prize  
 But God and the birds and the hairy wild beasts,  
 Is sweeter than love, than fame, or than feasts,  
 Or any thing else that is under the skies.

## LXI.

The quick leaves quiver'd, and the sunlight danced ;  
 As the boy sang sweet, and the birds said, " Sweet ;"  
 And the tiger crept close, and lay low at his feet,  
 And he sheath'd his claws in the sun, entranced.

## LXII.

The serpent that hung from the sycamore bough,  
 And sway'd his head in a crescent above,  
 Had folded his neck to the white limb now,  
 And fondled it close like a great black love.

## LXIII.

But the hands grew weary, the heart wax'd faint,  
 The loud notes fell to a far-off plaint,  
 The sweet birds echo'd no more, " Oh, sweet,"  
 The tiger arose and unsheath'd his claws,  
 The serpent extended his iron jaws,  
 And the frail reed shiver'd and fell at his feet.

## LXIV.

A sound on the tide, and he turned and cried,  
“ Oh, give God thanks, for they come, they come ! ”  
He look'd out afar on the opaline tide,  
Then clasp'd his hands, and his lips were dumb.

## LXV.

A sweeping swift crescent of sudden canoes !  
As light as the sun of the south and as soon,  
And true and as still as a sweet half-moon  
That leans from the heavens, and loves and woos !

## LXVI.

The Amazons came in their martial pride,  
As full on the stream as a studding of stars,  
All girded in armor as girded in wars,  
In foamy white furrows dividing the tide.

## LXVII.

With a face as brown as the boatmen's are,  
Or the brave, brown hand of a harvester ;  
And girdled in gold, and crown'd in hair  
In a storm of night, all studded with rare

Rich stones, that fretted the full of a noon,  
 The Queen on a prow stood splendid and tall,  
 As petulant waters would lift, and fall,  
 And beat, and bubble a watery rune :

## LXVIII.

Stood forth for the song, half lean'd in surprise,  
 Stood fair to behold, and yet grand to behold,  
 And austere in her face, and saturnine-soul'd,  
 And sad and subdued, in her eloquent eyes.

## LXIX.

And sad were they all ; yet tall and serene  
 Of presence, but silent, and brow'd severe  
 As for some things lost, or for some fair, green,  
 And beautiful place, to the memory dear.

## LXX.

“ O Mother of God ! Thrice merciful saint !  
 I am saved ! ” he said, and he wept outright ;  
 Ay, wept as even a woman might,  
 For the soul was full and the heart was faint.



## LXXI.

“Stay! stay!” cried the Queen, and she leapt to the  
land,

And she lifted her hand, and she lower’d their spears,  
A woman! a woman! ho! help! give a hand!

“A woman! a woman! we know by the tears.”

## LXXII.

Then gently as touch of the truest of woman,  
They lifted him up from the earth as he fell,  
And into the boat, with a half-hidden swell  
Of the heart that was holy and tenderly human.

## LXXIII.

They spoke low-voiced as a vesper prayer;  
They pillowed his head as only the hand  
Of woman can pillow, and push’d from the land,  
And the Queen she sat threading the gold of his hair.

## LXXIV.

Then away with the wave, and away to the Isles,  
In a song of the oars of the crescented fleet  
That timed together in musical wiles  
In bubbles of melodies swift and sweet.

Received of the Treasurer of the State of New York  
the sum of Five Hundred Dollars for the year 1840

in full for the year 1840 of the sum of Five Hundred Dollars  
for the purchase of land for the State of New York

Witness my hand and seal of office at Albany this 1st day of January 1840

John C. Spencer  
Treasurer of the State of New York

ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

PART II.

*Forsake the city. Follow me  
To where the white caps of a sea  
Of mountains break and break again,  
As blown in foam against a star —  
As breaks the fury of a main —  
And there remains, as fix'd, as far.*

*Forsake the people. What are they  
That laugh, that live, that love, by rule?  
Forsake the Saxon. What are these  
That shun the shadows of the trees:  
The Druid-forests? . . . Go thy way,  
We are not one. I will not please  
You: — fare you well, O wiser fool!*

*But you who love me; — Ye who love  
The shaggy forests, fierce delights  
Of sounding waterfalls, of heights  
That hang like broken moons above,  
With brows of pine that brush the sun,  
Believe and follow. We are one;  
The wild man shall to us be tame;  
The woods shall yield their mysteries  
The stars shall answer to a name,  
And be as birds above the trees.*

## ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

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### P R E L U D E.

**I**N the days when my mother, the Earth, was young,  
And you all were not, nor the likeness of you,  
She walk'd in her maidenly prime among  
The moonlit stars in the boundless blue.

Then the great sun lifted his shining shield,  
And he flash'd his sword as the soldiers do,  
And he moved like a king full over the field,  
And he look'd, and he loved her brave and true.

And looking afar from the ultimate rim,  
As he lay at rest in a reach of light,  
He beheld her walking alone at night,  
Where the buttercup stars in their beauty swim.

So he rose up flush'd in his love, and he ran,  
And he reach'd his arms, and around her waist  
He wound them strong like a love-struck man,  
And he kiss'd and embraced her, brave and chaste.

So he nursed his love like a babe at its birth,  
And he warm'd in his love as the long years ran,  
Then embraced her again, and sweet mother Earth  
Was a mother indeed, and her child was man.

The sun is the sire, the mother is earth!  
What more do you know? what more do I need?  
The one he begot, and the one gave birth,  
And I love them both, and let laugh at your creed.

And who shall pronounce that the child of the sun,  
With his rich sun-worship, was utterly wrong  
In the far, new years when the stars kept song?  
But judge, and be judged;—condemn, and have done.

And who shall proclaim they were all unwise  
In their great, warm faith? Time answers us not:  
The quick fool questions; but who replies?  
The wise man hesitates, hush'd in thought.

## PART II.

### I.

THEY swept to the Isles through the furrows of foam,  
They alit on the land as love hastening home,  
And below the banana, with leaf like a tent,  
They tenderly laid him, they bade him take rest;  
They brought him strange fishes and fruits of the best,  
And he ate and took rest with a patient content.

### II.

They watch'd with him well, and he rose up strong;  
He stood in their midst, and they said, "How fair!"  
And they said, "How tall!" And they toy'd with  
his hair,  
And they touch'd his limbs, and they said, "How long!  
And how strong they are; and how brave she is,  
That she made her way through the wiles of man,  
That she braved his wrath, that she broke the ban  
Of his desolate life for the loves of this!"

## III.

They wove for him garments with womanly pride,  
But he held his head with a sense of shame  
In his strange deceit and his sex denied,  
Then pursed his brow with a touch of blame.

## IV.

They wrought for him armor of cunning attire,  
They brought him a sword and a great shell shield,  
And implored him to shiver the lance on the field,  
And to follow their beautiful Queen in her ire.

## V.

But he took him apart; then the Amazons came  
And entreated of him with their eloquent eyes  
And their earnest and passionate souls of flame,  
And the soft, sweet words that are broken of sighs,  
To be one of their own, but he still denied,  
And he warr'd with himself, and his chivalrous heart  
Arose and rebell'd at the treacherous part  
He play'd for his life; and he grew to despise  
The thought of himself with a shudder of shame,  
And bow'd and abash'd he stole farther aside.



## VI.

He stood by the palms and he lean'd in unrest,  
And standing alone, look'd out and afar,  
For his own fair land where the castles are,  
With irresolute arms on a restless breast.

## VII.

He reliv'd his loves, and recall'd his wars,  
He gazed and he gazed with a soul distress'd,  
Like a far sweet star that is lost in the west,  
Till the day was broken to a dust of stars.

## VIII.

They sigh'd, and they left him alone in the care  
Of faithfullest matron; they moved to the field  
With the lifted sword and the sounding shield  
High fretting magnificent storms of hair.

## IX.

And, true as the moon in her march of stars,  
The Queen stood forth in her fierce attire  
Worn as they train'd, or worn in the wars,  
As bright and as chaste as a flash of fire.

## X.

With girdles of gold and of silver cross'd,  
And plaited, and chased, and bound together  
Broader and stronger than belts of leather,  
Cunningly fashion'd and blazon'd and boss'd —  
With diamonds circling her, stone upon stone,  
Above the breast where the borders fail,  
Below the breast where the fringes zone,  
She moved in a glittering garment of mail.

## XI.

The form made hardy and the waist made spare  
From athlete sports and adventures bold,  
The breastplate, fasten'd with clasps of gold,  
Was clasp'd, as close as the breasts could bear. —  
And bound and drawn to a delicate span,  
It flash'd in the red front ranks of the field —  
Was fashion'd full trim in its intricate plan  
And gleam'd as a sign, as well as a shield,  
That the virgin Queen was unyielding still,  
And pure as the tides that around her ran;  
True to her trust, and strong in her will  
Of war. and hatred to the touch of man.

## XII.

The field it was theirs in storm or in shine,  
So fairly they stood that the foe came not  
To the battle again, and the fair forgot  
The rage of battle; and they trimm'd the vine,  
They tended the fields of the tall green corn,  
They crush'd the grape, and they drew the wine  
In great round gourds or the bended horn,  
And seem'd as souls that are half divine.

## XIII.

They bathed in the wave in the amber morn,  
They took repose in the peaceful shade  
Of eternal palms, and were never afraid;  
Yet still did they sigh, and look far and forlorn.

## XIV.

Then down where waves by the white sands ran  
And left them laved with kisses, and these  
They journey'd away with the caravan  
Of the grand old tide to the grander seas.—  
Where the rim of the wave was weaving a spell,  
And the grass grew soft where it hid from the sun,  
Would the Amazons gather them every one  
At the call of the Queen or the sound of her shell:

## XV.

Would come in strides through the kingly trees,  
 And train and marshal them brave and well  
 In the golden noon, in the hush of peace  
 Where the shifting shades of the fan-palms fell;  
 Would lean on their long quick quivering swords;  
 Would rest on their shields in a line at the side;  
 Would lift their brows to the front and tow'rds  
 Their Queen as she moved in her matchless pride.

## XVI.

Would train till flush'd and as warm as wine,  
 Would reach with their limbs, would thrust with the  
     lance,  
 Attack, retire, retreat and advance,  
 Then wheel in column, then fall in line;  
 Stand thigh and thigh with the limbs made hard  
 And rich and round as the swift-limb'd pard,  
 Or a racer train'd, or a white bull caught  
 In the lasso's toils, where the tame are not.

## XVII.

Would curve as the waves curve, swerve in line;  
 Would dash through the trees, would train with the  
     bow.

Then back to the lines, now sudden, then slow,  
'Then flash their swords in the sun at a sign ;  
Would settle the foot right firm afront,  
Then sound the shield till the sound was heard  
Afar, as the horn in the black boar hunt ;  
Yet, stranger than all, say never a word.

## XVIII.

When shadows fell far from the westward, and when  
The sun had kiss'd hands and made sail for the east,  
They would kindle the fires and gather them then,  
Well-worn and most merry with song, to the feast.

## XIX.

There feasting in circles, they sang of the sun,  
Their prowess or valor, in peril or pain ;  
Till the Isles were awake and the birds were outdone ;  
And long ere the dawn were up singing again.

## XX.

They sang of all things, but the one, sacred one,  
That could make them most glad, as they lifted the  
gourd  
And pass'd it around, with its rich purple hoard,  
From the Island that lay with its front to the sun.

## XXI.

Though lips were made luscious, and eyes as divine  
 As the eyes of the skies that bend down from above.  
 Though hearts were made glad and most mellow  
 with love,  
 As dripping gourds drain'd of their burthens of wine;  
 Though brimming, and dripping, and bent of their  
 shape  
 Were the generous gourds from the juice of the grape,  
 They could sing not of love, they could breathe not a  
 thought  
 Of the savor of life; love sought, or unsought.

## XXII.

Their loves they were not; they had banish'd the name  
 Of man, and the uttermost mention of love, —  
 The moonbeams about them, the quick stars above,  
 The mellow-voiced waves, they were ever the same,  
 In sign, and in saying, of the old true lies;  
 But they took no heed; no answering sign,  
 Save glances averted and half-hush'd sighs,  
 Went back from the breasts with their loves divine.

## XXIII.

They sang of their freedom with a will, and well, —  
 They paid for it well when the price was blood,

They beat on the shield, and they blew on the shell,  
When their wars were not, for they held it good  
To be glad and to sing till the flush of the day,  
In an annual feast, when the broad leaves fell;  
Yet some sang not, and some sigh'd, "Ah, well!" —  
For there's far less left you to sing or to say,  
When mettlesome love is banish'd, I ween, —  
To hint at as hidden, or to half disclose  
In the swift sword-cuts of the tongue, made keen  
With wine at a feast, — than one would suppose.

## XXIV.

So the days wore by, but they brought no rest  
To the minstrel knight, though the sun was as gold,  
And the Isles were green, and the Amazons blest  
In the splendor of arms, and as pure as bold.

## XXV.

He now would resolve to reveal to her all,  
His sex and his race in a well-timed song;  
And his love of peace, his hatred of wrong,  
And his own deceit, though the sun should fall.

## XXVI.

Then again he would linger, and knew not how  
He could best proceed, and deferr'd him now  
Till a favorite day, then the fair day came,  
And still he delayed, and reproach'd him the same.

## XXVII.

Then again he did vow to reveal full soon,  
Then deeply he blush'd, then upbraided sore  
The winds that had blown from the Castile shore,  
And walk'd by the waves in the great white moon.

## XXVIII.

He still said nought, but, subduing his head,  
He wander'd by day in a dubious spell  
Of unutterable thought of the truth unsaid,  
To the indolent shore; and he gather'd a shell,  
And he shaped its point to his passionate mouth,  
And he turn'd to a bank and began to blow,  
While the Amazons train'd in a troop below,  
And as soft and as sweet as a kiss of the South.

## XXIX.

It stirr'd their souls, and they ceased to train  
In troop by the shore, as the tremulous strain



Fell down from the hill through the tasselling trees;  
And a murmur of song, like the sound of bees  
In the clover crown of a queenly spring,  
Came back unto him, and he laid the shell  
Aside on the bank, and began to sing  
Of eloquent love; and the ancient spell  
Of passionate song was his, and the Isle,  
As waked to delight from its slumber long,  
Came back in echoes; yet all this while  
He knew not at all the sin of his song.

## XXX.

Then the Amazons lifted with glad surprise,  
Stood splendid at first and look'd far and fair  
Set forward a foot, and shook back their hair  
Like clouds push'd back from the sun-lit skies.



ISLES OF THE AMAZONS

PART III.

*I know upon this earth a spot  
Where clinking coins, that clink as chains  
Upon the souls of men, are not ;  
Nor man is measured for his gains  
Of gold that stream with crimson stains.*

*The rivers run unmaster'd yet,  
Unmeasured sweep their sable brede :  
The pampas unpossess'd is set  
With stormy banners of her steeds,  
That rival man in martial deeds.*

*The snow-topp'd towers crush the clouds  
And break the still abode of stars,  
Like sudden ghosts in snowy shrouds,  
New broken through their earthly bars  
And condors whet with crooked beaks  
The lofty limits of the peaks.*

*O men that fret as frets the main !  
You irk one with your eager gaze  
Down in the earth for fat increase —  
Eternal talks of gold and gain,  
Your shallow wit, your shallow ways . . .  
And breaks my soul across the shoal  
As breakers break on shallow seas.*

## ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

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### P R E L U D E.

**L**O, Isles of the Incas! Amazon Isles,  
The sun hath loved you, clothed and crown'd,  
And touch'd you tenderly, girt you round  
With a sunset wave in a wealth of smiles.

O Isles of a wave in an ocean of wood!  
O white waves lost in the wilds I love!  
Let the red stars rest on your breast from above,  
And sing to the sun, for his love it is good.

He has made you his heirs, he has given you gold,  
And wrought for you garments of limitless green,  
With beautiful bars of the scarlet between,  
And of silver seams fretting you fold on fold.

He has kiss'd and caress'd you, loved you true,  
Yea, loved as a God loves, loved as I  
Shall learn to love when the stars shall lie  
Like blooms at my feet in a field of blue.

## PART III.

### I.

THEY bared their brows to the palms above,  
But some look'd level into comrade's eyes,  
And they then remember'd that the thought of love  
Was the thing forbidden, and they sank in sighs.

### II.

They turn'd from the training, to heed in throng  
To the old, old tale; and they train'd no more,  
As he sang of love; and some on the shore,  
And full in the sound of the eloquent song,  
With a womanly air and irresolute will  
Went listlessly onward as gathering shells;  
Then gazed in the waters, as women in spells;  
Then turned to the song and sigh'd, and were still.

### III.

And they said no word. Some tapp'd on the sand  
With the sandall'd foot, keeping time to the sound,  
In a sort of dream; some timed with the hand,  
And one held eyes full of tears to the ground.

## IV.

She thought of the days when their wars were not,  
As she lean'd and listen'd to the old, old song,  
When they sang of their loves, and she well forgot  
The hard oppressions and a world of wrong.  
Like a pure true woman, with her trust in tears  
And the things that are true, she relived them in  
thought,  
Though hush'd and crush'd in the fall of the years.  
She lived but the fair, and the false she forgot  
As a tale long told, or as things that are dreams;  
And the quivering curve of the lip confest  
The silent regrets, and a soul that teems  
With a world of love in a brave true breast.

## V.

Then this one younger, who had known no love,  
Nor look'd upon man but in blood on the field,  
She bow'd her head, and she lean'd on her shield,  
And her heart beat quick as the wings of a dove  
That is blown from the sea, where the rests are not  
In the time of storms; and by instinct taught  
Grew pensive, and sigh'd; and she thought and she  
thought  
Of some wonderful things, and — she knew not of what.

## VI.

Then this one thought of a love forsaken,  
She thought of a brown sweet babe, and she thought  
Of the bread-fruits gather'd, of the swift fish taken  
In intricate nets, like a love well sought.

## VII.

She thought of the moons of her maiden dawn,  
Mellow'd and fair with the forms of man;  
So dearer indeed to dwell upon  
Than the beautiful waves that around her ran;

## VIII.

So fairer indeed than the fringes of light  
That lie at rest on the west of the sea  
In furrows of foam on the borders of night,  
And dearer indeed than the songs to be —  
Than calling of dreams from the opposite land,  
To the land of life, and of journeys dreary  
When the soul goes over from the form grown weary,  
And walks in the cool of the trees on the strand.

## IX.

But the Queen was enraged and would smite him at first  
With the sword unto death, yet it seem'd that she durst



Not touch him at all; and she moved as to chide,  
And she lifted her face, and she frown'd at his side,  
Then touch'd on his arm; then she look'd in his eyes  
And right full in his soul, but she saw no fear  
In the pale fair face, and with frown severe  
She press'd her lips as suppressing her sighs.

## x.

She banish'd her wrath, she unbended her face,  
She lifted her hand and put back his hair  
From his fair sad brow, with a penitent air,  
And forgave him all with an unutter'd grace;  
For she said no word. Yet no more was severe;  
She stood as subdued by the side of him still,  
Then averted her face with a resolute will,  
As to hush a regret, or to hide back a tear.

## xi.

She sigh'd to herself: "A stranger is this,  
And ill and alone, that knows not at all  
That a throne shall totter and the strong shall fall,  
At the mention of love and its banefullest bliss.  
O life that is lost in bewildering love —  
But a stranger is sacred!" She lifted a hand

And she laid it as soft as the breast of a dove  
On the minstrel's mouth. It was more than the wand  
Of the tamer of serpents; for she did no more  
Than to bid with her eyes and to beck with her hand,  
And the song drew away to the waves of the shore;  
Took wings, as it were, to the verge of the land.

## XII.

But her heart was oppress'd. With penitent head  
She turn'd to her troop, and, retiring, she said:  
"Alas! and alas! shall it come to pass  
That the panther shall die from a blade of grass?  
That the tiger shall yield at the bent-horn blast?  
That we, who have conquered a world and all  
Of men and of beasts in the world, must fall  
Ourselves, at the mention of love, at last?"

## XIII.

The singer was fretted, and farther apart  
He wander'd, perplex'd; and he felt his heart  
Beat quick and troubled, and all untamed,  
As he saw her move with marvellous grace  
To her troop below; he turn'd from his place,

Oppress'd and humbled, and sore ashamed  
That he lived in the land in the shield of a lie;  
That he dared not stand forth face to face  
To the truth, and die as a knight should die.

## XIV.

The tall brown Queen, when turn'd to her troop,  
Led minstrel and all to the innermost part  
Of the palm-crown'd Isle, where great trees group  
In armies, to battle when black storms start,  
And made her retreat from the sun by the trees  
That are topped like tents, where the fire-flies  
Are a light to the feet, and a fair lake lies  
As cool as the coral-set centres of seas.

## XV.

And here the carpets of Nature were spread,  
Made pink with blossoms and fragrant bloom;  
Her soft couch, canopied overhead,  
Allured to sleep with the deep perfume.

## XVI.

The sarsaparilla had woven its thread  
So through and through, like the threads of gold;  
'Twas stronger than thongs in its thousandfold,  
And on every hand and up overhead

Ran thick as threads on the rim of a reel,  
 Through red leaf and dead leaf, bough and vine,  
 The green and the gray leaf, coarse and fine,  
 And the cactus tinted with cochineal.

## XVII.

And every color that the Master Sun  
 Has painted and hung in the halls of God,  
 Blush'd in the boughs or spread on the sod,  
 Pictured and woven and wound as one.

## XVIII.

The tamarind and the cocoa-tree,  
 The quick cinchona, the red sangre,  
 The keen caressa, the sycamore,  
 Were woof and warp as wide as the shore.

## XIX.

The palm-trees lorded the copse like kings,  
 Their tall tops tossing the indolent clouds  
 That folded the Isle in the dawn, like shrouds,  
 Then fled from the sun like to living things.  
 The cockatoo swung in the vines below,  
 And muttering hung on a golden thread,  
 Or moved on the moss'd bough to and fro,  
 In plumes of gold and array'd in red.

## XX.

The lake lay hidden away from the light,  
As asleep in the Isle from the tropical noon,  
And narrow and bent like a new-born moon,  
And fair as a moon in the noon of the night.

## XXI.

'Twas shadow'd by forests, and fringed by ferns,  
And fretted anon by the fishes that leapt  
At indolent flies that slept or kept  
Their drowsy tones on the tide by turns.

## XXII.

And here in the dawn when the day was strong  
And newly aroused from leafy repose,  
With dews on his feet and tints of the rose  
In his great flush'd face, was a sense and song  
That the tame old world has nor known nor heard  
The soul was fill'd with the soft perfumes,  
The eloquent wings of the humming bird  
Beguiled the heart, they purpled the air  
And allured the eye, as so everywhere  
On the rim of the wave, or across it in swings,  
They swept or they sank in a sea of blooms,  
And wove and wound in a song of wings.

## XXIII.

The senses drank of the fragrance deep,  
The glad soul question'd it whether or no  
It had risen above or yet dwelt below,  
Or whether to laugh for love or to weep.

## XXIV.

A bird in scarlet and gold, made mad  
With sweet delights, through the branches slid  
And kiss'd the lake on a drowsy lid  
Till the ripples ran and the face was glad.

## XXV.

Was glad and lovely as lights that sweep  
The face of heaven when stars are forth  
In autumn time through the awful north,  
Or the face of a child when it smiles in sleep.

## XXVI.

And here was the Queen, in the tropical noon,  
When the wave and the world and all were asleep,  
And nothing look'd forth to betray or to peep  
Through glories of jungle in garments of June,

To bathe with her court in the waters that bent  
In the beautiful lake through tasselling trees,  
And the tangle of blooms in a burden of bees,  
As bold and as sharp as a bow unspent.

## XXVII.

And strangely still, and more strangely sweet,  
Was the lake that lay in its cradle of fern,  
As still as a moon with her horns that turn  
In the night, like lamps to some delicate feet.

## XXVIII.

They came and they stood by the brink of the tide,  
They hung their shields on the boughs of the trees,  
They lean'd their lances against the side,  
Unloosed their sandals, and busy as bees  
That ply with industrious wing perfumes,  
Ungather'd their robes in the rustle of leaves  
And nodding of reeds and the beautiful blooms  
That wound them as close as the wine-vine weaves.

## XXIX.

The minstrel had falter'd, and further aside  
Than ever before he averted his head ;  
He pick'd up a pebble and fretted the tide,  
Then turn'd with a countenance flush'd and red,

## XXX.

He feign'd him ill, he wandered away,  
He sat him down by the waters alone,  
And prayed for pardon, as a knight should pray,  
And rued an error not all his own.

## XXXI.

The Amazons press'd to the girdle of reeds,  
Two and by two they advanced to the wave,  
They challenged each other, and bade be brave,  
And banter'd, and vaunted of valorous deeds.

## XXXII.

They push'd and they parted the curtains of green,  
All timid at first; then look'd at the wave  
And laugh'd; retreated, then came up brave  
To the brink of the water, led on by their Queen.

## XXXIII.

Again they retreated, again advanced,  
And parted the boughs in a proud disdain,  
Then bent their heads to the waters, and glanced  
Below, then blush'd, and then laugh'd again;



## XXXIV.

A bird awaken'd, then all dismay'd  
With a womanly sense of a beautiful shame  
That strife and changes had left the same,  
They shrank to the leaves and the sombre shade.

## XXXV.

At last, press'd forward a beautiful pair  
And bent to the wave, and bending they blush'd  
As rich as the wines, when the waters rush'd  
To the dimpled limbs, and laugh'd in their hair.

## XXXVI.

The fair troop follow'd with shouts and cheers,  
They cleft the wave, and the friendly ferns  
Came down in curtains and curves and turns,  
And a brave palm lifted a thousand spears.

## XXXVII.

From under the ferns and away from the land,  
And out in the wave until lost below,  
There lay, as white as a bank of snow,  
A long and a beautiful border of sand.

## XXXVIII.

Here clothed alone in their clouds of hair  
 And curtain'd about by the palm and fern,  
 And made as their Maker had made them, fair,  
 And splendid of natural grace and turn ;

## XXXIX.

Untrammell'd by art and untroubled by man  
 They tested their strength, or tried their speed,  
 And here they wrestled, and there they ran,  
 As supple and lithe as the watery reed.

## XL.

The great trees shadow'd the bow-tipp'd tide,  
 And nodded their plumes from the opposite side,  
 As if to whisper, Take care ! take care !  
 But the meddlesome sunshine here and there,  
 Kept pointing a finger right under the trees, —  
 Kept shifting the branches and wagging a hand  
 At the round brown limbs on the border of sand,  
 And seem'd to whisper, Ho ! what are these ?

## XLI.

The gold-barr'd butterflies to and fro  
 And over the waterside wander'd and wove  
 As heedless and idle as clouds that rove  
 And drift by the peaks of perpetual snow.

## XLII.

A monkey swung out from a bough in the skies,  
White-whisker'd and ancient, and wisest of all  
Of his populous race, and he heard them call  
And he watch'd them long, with his head sidewise,  
From under his brows of amber and brown,  
All patient and silent and never once stirr'd ;  
Then he shook his head and he hasten'd him down  
To his army below and said never a word.



ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

PART IV.

*There is many a love in the land, my love,  
But never a love like this is ;  
Then kill me dead with your love, my love,  
And cover me up with kisses*

*So kill me dead and cover me deep  
Where never a soul discovers ;  
Deep in your heart to sleep, to sleep  
In the darlingest tomb of lovers.*

## ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

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### P R E L U D E.

**I**T seems to me that Mother Earth  
Is weary from eternal toil  
And bringing forth by fretted soil  
In all the agonies of birth.  
Sit down! sit down! Lo, it were best  
That we should rest, that she should rest

Let buffalo possess the land,  
Let foxes populate the towns,  
And wild deer wander through the downs.  
Here we will laugh, nor lift a hand;  
And laugh that man should ever care  
For flock or field or mansion fair!

No ship shall founder in the seas,  
Nor soldier fall in martial line,  
Nor miner perish in the mine.  
Here we shall tent beneath the trees,

Where wife nor maid shall wait or weep,  
For Earth shall sleep, and all shall sleep.

I think we then shall all be glad,  
At least I know we are not now ;  
Not one. And even Earth somehow  
Seems growing old and over sad.  
Then fold your hands, for it were best  
That we should rest, that she should rest



## PART IV.

### I.

THE wanderer took him apart from the place;  
He look'd up in the boughs at the gold birds  
there,  
He counted the humming-birds fretting the air,  
And brush'd at the butterflies fanning his face.

### II.

He sat him down in a crook of the wave  
And away from the Amazons, under the skies  
Where great trees curved to a leaf-lined cave,  
And lifted his hands and shaded his eyes ;

### III.

And he held his head to the north when they came  
To run on the reaches of sand from the south,  
And he pull'd at his chin, and he pursed his mouth,  
And he shut his eyes with a shudder of shame.

He reach'd from the bank and he brake him a reed —  
A bamboo reed — from the brink below ;  
And he notched it and trimm'd it with all his speed,  
And lifted it up and began to blow  
As if to himself; as the sea sometimes  
Does soothe and soothe in a low, sweet song,  
When his rage is spent, and the beach swells strong  
With sweet repetitions of alliterate rhymes.

## IV.

The echoes blew back from the indolent land ;  
Silent and still sat the tropical bird,  
And only the sound of the reed was heard,  
As the Amazons ceased from their sports on the sand.

## V.

They rose from the wave, and inclining the head,  
They listen'd intent, with the delicate tip  
Of the finger touch'd to the pouting lip,  
Till the brown Queen turn'd in the tide, and led  
Through the opaline lake, and under the shade,  
And along the shore, and below the ferns  
Where the bent boughs reach'd and return'd by turns,  
To the shore where the chivalrous singer played.

## VI.

He bended his head and he shaded his eyes  
As well as he might with his lifted fingers,  
And ceased to sing. But in mute surprise,  
He saw them linger as a child that lingers  
Allured by a song thrown down to the street,  
And looks bewilder'd about from its play,  
For the last loved notes that fall at its feet;  
And he heard them whisper, he saw them sway  
Aside and before and silent and sweet.

## VII.

The soft notes swell'd, and the air swept loud,  
They drew to the sound as if borne in a dream;  
As blown in the purple and gold of a cloud,  
Or borne on the breast of a crystalline stream.

## VIII.

But the singer was vexed; he averted his head;  
He lifted his eyes to the mosses aside  
For a brief, little time, but they turn'd to the tide  
In spite of his will, or of prayers well said.

## IX.

He press'd four fingers against each lid,  
Till the light was gone; yet for all that he did  
It seem'd that the lithe forms lay and beat  
Afloat in his face and full under his feet.

## X.

He seem'd to behold the billowy breasts,  
And the rounded limbs in their pure unrests —  
To see them swim as the mermaid swims,  
With the drifting dimpled, delicate limbs,  
Folded and hidden in robes of hair;  
While fishes of gold shot here and there  
Below their breasts and above their feet,  
Like birds in a beautiful garden of sweet.

## XI.

It seems to me there is more that sees  
Than the eyes in man; you may close your eyes,  
You may turn your back, and may still be wise  
In sacred and marvellous mysteries.

## XII.

He saw as one sees the sun of a noon  
In the sun-kiss'd south, when the eyes are closed —

He saw as one sees the bars of a moon  
That fall through the boughs of the tropical trees,  
When he lies at length, and is all composed,  
And asleep in his hammock by the sundown seas.

## XIII.

He heard the waters beat, bubble and fret ;  
He lifted his eyes, yet forever they lay  
Afloat in the tide ; and he turn'd him away  
And resolved to fly and for aye to forget.

## XIV.

He rose up strong, and he cross'd him twice,  
He nerved his heart and he lifted his head,  
He crush'd the treacherous reed in a trice,  
With an angry foot, and he turn'd and fled ;

## XV.

And flying, confused like a pitiful slave,  
He question'd himself most sore as he fled,  
If he most was a knight, or most was a knave, —  
And flying he hurriedly turn'd his head  
Back over his shoulder, and sudden aside,  
With an eager glance, with meddlesome eyes,  
As a woman will turn : and he saw arise  
The beautiful Queen from the silvery tide.

## XVI.

She toss'd her hair, and she turn'd her eyes  
With all of their splendor to his as he fled,  
And all their glory, and a strange surprise,  
And a sad reproach and a world unsaid.

## XVII.

He beat on their shields, they rose in array,  
As aroused from a trance, and hurriedly came  
From out of the wave and he wander'd away,  
Wild-fretting his sensitive soul with blame,  
Until all array'd; then ill and opprest,  
And bitterly cursing the treacherous reed,  
Return'd with his hand on his turbulent breast,  
And struck to the heart, and most ill indeed.

## XVIII.

Alone he would sit in the shadows at noon,  
Alone he would sit by the waters at night;  
Would sing sad-voiced, as a woman might,  
With pale, kind face to the cold, pale moon.

## XIX.

He would here advance, and would there retreat,  
As a petulant child that has lost its way  
In the redolent walks of a sultry day,  
And wanders around with irresolute feet.

## XX.

He would press his hand in pain to his heart,  
He would fold his hands, he would toss his hair  
From his brow, then turn to the palms, and apart  
From eyes that pursued, with a pitiful air.

## XXI.

He made him a harp of mahogany wood,  
He strung it well with the sounding strings  
Of the ostrich thews, from the ostrich wings,  
And play'd and sang in a sad sweet rune.  
He hang'd his harp in the vines, and stood  
By the tide at night, in the palms at noon,  
And lone as a ghost in the shadowy wood.

## XXII.

Then two grew sad, and alone sat she  
By the great, strong stream, and she bow'd her head,  
Then lifted her face to the tide and said,  
"O, pure as a tear and as strong as a sea,  
Yet tender to me as the touch of a dove,  
I had rather sit sad and alone by thee,  
Than to go and be glad, with a legion in love."

## XXIII.

She sat sometime at the wanderer's side  
As the kingly water went wandering by ;  
And the two once look'd, and they knew not why,  
Full sad in each other's eyes, and they sigh'd.

## XXIV.

She courted the solitude under the rim  
Of the trees that reach'd to the resolute stream,  
And gazed in the waters as one in a dream,  
Till her soul grew heavy and her eyes grew dim  
To the fair delights of her own fair Isles.  
She turn'd her face to the stranger again,  
He cheer'd with song and allured with smiles,  
But cheer'd, and allured, and soothed in vain.

## XXV.

She bow'd her head with a beautiful grief  
That grew from her pity ; she forgot her arms,  
And she made neglect of the battle alarms  
That threaten'd the land ; the banana's leaf  
Made shelter ; he lifted his harp again,  
She sat, she listen'd intent and long,  
Forgetting her care and forgetting her pain —  
Made sad for the singer, made glad from his song.



## XXVI.

But the braves waxed cold ; the white moons waned,  
And the brown Queen marshal'd them never once  
more,  
With sword and with shield, in the palms by the  
shore ;  
But they sat them down to repose, or remained  
Apart and scatter'd in the tropic-leaf'd trees,  
As sadden'd by song, or for loves delay'd,  
Or away in the Isle in couples they stray'd,  
Not at all content in their Isles of peace.

## XXVII.

They wander'd away to the lakes once more,  
Or walk'd in the moon, or they sigh'd, or slept,  
Or they sat in pairs by the shadowy shore,  
And silent song with the waters kept.

## XXVIII.

There was one who stood by the waters one eve,  
With the stars on her hair, and the bars of the moon  
Broken up at her feet by the bountiful boon  
Of extending old trees, who did questioning grieve :

“The birds they go over us two and by two;  
The mono is mated; his bride in the boughs  
Sits nursing his babe, and his passionate vows  
Of love, you may hear them the whole day through.

“The lizard, the cayman, the white-toothed boar,  
The serpents that glide in the sword-leaf'd grass,  
The beasts that abide or the birds that pass,  
They are glad in their loves as the green-leaf'd shore.

“There is nothing that is that can yield one bliss  
Like an innocent love; the leaves have tongue  
And the tides talk low in the reeds, and the young  
And the quick buds open their lips but for this.

“In the steep and the starry silences,  
On the stormy levels of the limitless seas,  
Or here in the deeps of the dark-brow'd trees,  
There is nothing so much as a brave man's kiss.

“There is nothing so strong, in the stream, on the land,  
In the valley of palms, on the pinnacled snow,  
In the clouds of the gods, on the grasses below,  
As the silk-soft touch of a baby's brown hand.

“It were better to sit and to spin on a stone  
The whole year through with a babe at the knee,  
With its brown hands reaching caressingly,  
Than to sit in a girdle of gold and alone.

‘O barren dull days, where never the brown  
Sweet hand of a babe hides back in the hair  
When a mother comes home with her burthen of care,  
And over the life of her life bends down.

“It were better perhaps to be mothers of men,  
And to murmur not much; there are clouds in the  
sun. . . .  
Can a woman undo what the gods have done?  
Nay, the things must be as the things have been.”

## XXIX.

They wander'd well forth, some here and some there,  
Unsatisfied some and irresolute all.

The sun was the same, the moonlight did fall  
Rich-barr'd and refulgent; the stars were as fair  
As ever were stars; the fruitful clouds cross'd  
And the harvest fail'd not; yet the fair Isle grew  
As a prison to all, and they search'd on through  
The magnificent shades as for things that were lost.

## XXX.

The minstrel, more pensive, went deep in the wood,  
And oft-time delay'd him the whole day through,  
As charm'd by the deeps, or the sad heart drew  
Some solaces sweet from the solitude.

## XXXI.

The singer forsook them at last, and the Queen  
Came seldom then forth from the fierce deep wood,  
And her warriors, dark-brow'd and bewildering stood  
In bands by the wave in the complicate screen  
Of overbent boughs. They would lean on their spears  
And would talk sometimes low-voiced and by twos,  
As allured by longings they could not refuse,  
And would sidewise look, as beset by their fears.

## XXXII.

They wander'd and watched as the days waxed full,  
All listless and slow, and spurning the shells  
With brown sandall'd feet, to the whimsical sweli  
Of the wine-dark wave with its foam like wool.

## XXXIII.

Once, wearied and sad, by the shadowy trees  
In the flush of the sun they sank to their rests,  
The dark hair veiling the beautiful breasts  
That arose in billows, as mists veil seas.

## XXXIV.

Then away to the dream-world one and by one ;  
The great red sun in his purple was roll'd,  
And red-wing'd birds and the birds of gold  
Were above in the trees like the beams of the sun.

## XXXV.

Then the sun came down, with his ladders of gold  
Built up of his beams, and the souls arose  
And ascended on these, and the fair repose  
Of the negligent forms was a feast to behold.

## XXXVI.

The round brown limbs they were reached or drawn,  
The grass made dark with the fervor of hair ;  
And here were the rose-red lips, and there  
A flushed breast rose like a sun at a dawn.

## XXXVII.

The copper-bound shields lay silent beside,  
Their lances were lean'd to the leaning old trees,  
While away in the sun an irresolute breeze  
With a rippled quick step stole over the tide.

## XXXVIII.

Then black-wing'd birds blew over in pair,  
 Listless and slow, as they call'd of the seas,  
 And sounds came down through the tangle of trees  
 As lost, and nestled and hid in their hair.

## XXXIX.

They started disturbed, they sprang as at war  
 To lance and to shield; but the dolorous sound  
 Was gone from the wood; they gazed around  
 And saw but the birds, black-winged and afar.

## XL.

They gazed at each other, then turn'd them unheard,  
 Slow trailing their lances in long single line;  
 They moved through the forest, all dark as the sign  
 Of death that fell down from the ominous bird.

## XLI.

Then the great sun died, and a rose-red bloom  
 Grew over his grave in a border of gold,  
 And a cloud with a silver-white rim was roll'd  
 Like a cold gray stone at the door of a tomb.

## XLII.

Then away on the wave the invisible night,  
With her eyes of stars and her storms of hair  
Sail'd on in her wonderful ships of air,  
And the Isle lay dimpled in calm delight.

. . . . .

## XLIII.

Strange voices were heard, sad visions were seen,  
By sentries, betimes, on the opposite shore,  
Where broad boughs bended their curtains of green  
Far over the wave with their tropical store.

## XLIV.

A sentry bent low on her palms and she peer'd  
Suspiciously through; and, heavens! a man,  
Low-brow'd and wicked, look'd backward, and jeer'd  
And taunted right full in her face as he ran:

## XLV.

A low crooked man, with eyes like a bird, —  
As round and as cunning, — who came from the land  
Of lakes, where the clouds lie low and at hand,  
And the songs of the bent black swans are heard;

## XLVI.

Where men are most cunning and cruel withal,  
And are famous as spies, and are supple and fleet,  
And are webb'd like the water-fowl under the feet,  
And they swim like the swans, and like pelicans call.

## XLVII.

And again, on a night when the moon she was not,  
A sentry saw stealing, as still as a dream,  
A sudden canoe down the mid of the stream,  
Like gleamings of light, and as swift as a thought.

## XLVIII.

And lo! as it pass'd, from the prow there arose  
A dreadful and gibbering, hairy old man,  
Loud laughing, as only a maniac can,  
And shaking a lance at the land of his foes;

## XLIX.

Then sudden it vanish'd, as swift as it came,  
Far down through the walls of the shadowy wood,  
And the great moon rose like a forest aflame,  
All threat'ning, sullen, and red like blood.



ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

PART V.

*Well, we have threaded through and through  
The gloaming forests. Fairy Isles,  
Afloat in sun and summer smiles,  
As fallen stars in fields of blue ;  
Some futile wars with subtile love`  
That mortal never vanquish'd yet,  
Some symphonies by angels set  
In wave below, in bough above,  
Were yours and mine ; but here adieu.*

*And if it come to pass some days  
That you grow weary, sad, and you  
Lift up deep eyes from dusty ways  
Of mart and moneys, to the blue  
And pure cool waters, isle and vine,  
And bathe you there, and then arise  
Refresh'd by one fresh thought of mine,  
I rest content ; I kiss your eyes,  
I kiss your hair, in my delight :  
I kiss my hand, and say, " Good-night."*

*May love be thine by sun or moon,  
May peace be thine by peaceful way  
Through all the darling days of May,  
Through all the genial days of June,  
To golden days that die in smiles  
Of sunset on the blessed Isles.*

## ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

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### PRELUDE.

WHEN spires shall shine on the Amazon's shore,  
From temples of God, and time shall have roll'd  
Like a scroll from the border the limitless wold ;  
When the tiger is tamed, and the mono no more

Swings over the waters to chatter and call  
To the crocodile sleeping in rushes and fern ;  
When cities shall gleam, and their battlements burn  
In the sunsets of gold, where the cocoa-nuts fall ;

'Twill be something to lean from the stars and to know  
That the engine, red-mouthing with turbulent tongue,  
The white ships that come, and the cargoes that go,  
We invoked them of old when the nations were  
young :

'Twill be something to know that we named them of  
old, —

That we said to the nations, Lo ! here is the fleece  
That allures to the rest, and the perfectest peace,  
With its foldings of sunlight shed mellow like gold :

That we were the Carsons in kingdoms untrod,  
And follow'd the trail through the rustle of leaves,  
And stood by the wave where solitude weaves  
Her garments of mosses, and lonely as God :

That we did make venture when singers were young,  
Inviting from Europe, from long-trodden lands  
That are easy of journeys, and holy from hands  
Laid upon by the Masters when giants had tongue :

The prophet should lead us, — and lifting a hand  
To the world on the way, like a white guiding star,  
Point out and allure to the fair and unknown,  
And the far, and the hidden delights of a land.

Behold my Sierras ! there singers shall throng ;  
The Andes shall break through the wings of the  
night  
As the fierce condor breaks through the clouds in his  
flight ;  
And I here plant the cross and possess them with song.

## PART V.

### I.

**I** TELL you that love is the bitterest sweet  
That ever laid hold on the heart of a man ;  
A chain to the soul, and to cheer as a ban,  
And a bane to the brain, and a snare to the feet.

### II.

Ay! who shall ascend on the hollow white wings  
Of love but to fall ; to fall and to learn,  
Like a moth, and a man, that the lights lure to burn,  
That the roses have thorns, and the honey-bee stings ?

### III.

I say to you surely that grief shall befall ;  
I lift you my finger, I caution you true,  
And yet you go forward, laugh gayly, and you  
Must learn for yourself, then mourn for us all.

## IV.

You had better be drown'd than to love and to dream,  
It were better to sit on a moss-grown stone,  
And away from the sun, and forever alone,  
Slow pitching white pebbles at trout in the stream.

## V.

Alas for a heart that is left forlorn!  
If you live you must love; if you love, regret, —  
It were better, perhaps, we had never been born,  
Or better, at least, we could well forget.

## VI.

The clouds are above us, and snowy and cold,  
And what is beyond but the steel-gray sky,  
And the still far stars that twinkle and lie  
Like the eyes of a love or delusions of gold!

## VII.

Ah! who would ascend? The clouds are above.  
Ay! all things perish; to rise is to fall.  
And alack for lovers, and alas for love,  
And alas that we ever were born at all.

## VIII.

The minstrel now stood by the horder of wood,  
But not as alone ; with a resolute heart ;  
He reach'd his hand, like to one made strong,  
Forgot his silence and resumed his song,  
And aroused his soul, and assumed his part  
With a passionate will, in the palms where he stood.

## IX.

“ She is sweet as the breath of the Castile rose,  
She is warm to the heart as a world of wine,  
And as rich to behold as the rose that grows  
With its red heart bent to the tide of the Rhine.

“ O hot blood born of the heavens above !  
I shall drain her soul, I shall drink her up ;  
I shall love with a searching and merciless love,  
I shall sip her lips as the brown bees sup,

“ From the great gold heart of the buttercup !  
I shall live and love ! I shall have my day,  
Let the suns fall down or the moons rise up,  
And die in my time, and who shall gainsay ?

‘ What boots me the battles that I have fought  
 With self for honor? My brave resolves;  
 And who takes note? The soul dissolves  
 In a sea of love, and the land is forgot.

“ The march of men, and the drift of ships,  
 The dreams of fame, and desires for gold,  
 Shall go for aye, as a tale that is told,  
 Nor divide for a day my lips from her lips.

‘ And a knight shall rest, and none shall say nay,  
 In a green Isle wash’d by an arm of the seas,  
 And wall’d from the world by the white Andes,  
 For the years are of age and can go their way.”

. . . . .

X.

The sentinel stood on the farthermost land,  
 And shouted aloud to the shadowy forms :  
 “ He comes, he comes, in the strength of storms,”  
 And struck her shield, and, her sword in hand,

XI.

She cried, “ He comes with his silver spears,  
 With flint-tipp’d arrows and bended bows,  
 To take our blood, though we give him tears,  
 And to flood our Isle in a world of woes.”



## XII.

“ He comes, O Queen of the sun-kiss’d Isle,  
 He comes as a wind comes, blown from the seas,  
 In a cloud of canoes, on the curling breeze,  
 With his shields of tortoise and of crocodile.”

## XIII.

She dared them come like a storm of seas,  
 To come as the winds come, fierce and frantic ;  
 As sounding down to the far Atlantic,  
 And sounding away to the deep Andes.

## XIV.

She rush’d her down where the white tide ran,  
 She breasted away where the breakers reel’d,  
 She shook her sword in the foeman’s van,  
 And beat, as the waves beat, sword on shield.

. . . . .

## XV.

Sweeter than swans are a maiden’s graces !  
 Sweeter than fruits are the kisses of morn !  
 Sweeter than babes is a love new-born,  
 But sweeter than all are a love’s embraces.

## XVI.

She slept at peace, and the sentries' warning  
    Could hardly awaken the splendid Queen ;  
She slept in peace in the opaline  
Hush and blush of the tropic morning ;

## XVII.

And bound about by the twining glory,  
    Vine and trellis in the vernal morn,  
    As still and sweet as a babe new-born,  
The brown Queen dream'd of the old new story

## XVIII.

But hark ! her sentry's passionate words,  
The sound of shields, and the clash of swords !  
And slow she comes, her head on her breast,  
And her two hands held as to plead for rest.

## XIX.

Where, O where, are the Juno graces ?  
    Where, O where, is the glance of Jove,  
When the Queen comes forth from the sacred places,  
    Hidden away in the heart of the grove ?

## XX.

Too deep, too deep, of the waters of love,  
The beautiful woman had drunk in the wood :  
The dangerous, wonderful waters that fill  
The soul with wine that subdues the will.  
She doubled her hands and she helpless stood,  
With her head held down and her hands above.

## XXI.

They rallied around as of old, — they besought her,  
With swords to the sun and the sounding shield,  
To lead them again to the glorious field,  
So sacred to Freedom; and, breathless, they brought  
her  
Her buckler and sword, and her armor all bright  
With a thousand gems enjewell'd in gold.  
She lifted her head with the look of old,  
An instant only; with all of her might  
She sought to be strong and majestic again :  
She bared them her arms and her ample brown  
breast ;  
They lifted her armor, they strove to invest  
Her form in armor, but they strove in vain ;

## XXII.

It closed no more, but clanged on the ground,  
Like the fall of a knight, with an ominous sound,  
And she shook her hair and she cried, "Alas!  
That love should come and that life should pass;"  
And she cried, "Alas! to be cursed . . . and bless'd,  
For the nights of love and the noons of rest."

## XXIII.

Her warriors wonder'd; they wandered apart,  
And trail'd their swords, and subdued their eyes  
To earth in sorrow and in hush'd surprise,  
And forgot themselves in their pity of heart.

## XXIV.

"O Isles of the sun," cried the blue-eyed youth,  
"O Edens new-made and let down from above!  
Be sacred to peace and to passionate love,  
Made happy in peace and made holy with truth.

## XXV.

"O gardens of God, new-planted below!  
Shall rivers be red? Shall day be night?"  
He stood in the wood with his face to the foe,  
Apart with his buckler and sword for the fight.

## XXVI.

But the fair Isle fill'd with the fierce invader ;  
They form'd on the strand, they lifted their spears,  
Where never was man for years and for years,  
And moved on the Queen. She lifted and laid her  
Finger-tip to her lips. For O sweet  
Was the song of love, and the song new-born,  
That the minstrel blew in the virgin morn,  
Away where the trees and the soft sands meet.

## XXVII.

The strong men lean'd and their shields let fall,  
And slowly they moved with their trailing spears,  
And heads bow'd down as if bent with years,  
And an air of gentleness over them all.

## XXVIII.

The men grew glad as the song ascended,  
They lean'd their lances against the palms,  
They reach'd their arms as to reach for alms,  
And the Amazons came — and their reign was ended.

## XXIX.

They reach'd their arms to the arms extended,  
Put by their swords, and no more seem'd sad,  
But moved as the men moved, tall and splendid, —  
Mingled together, and were all made glad.

## XXX.

Then the Queen stood tall, as of old she had stood,  
With her face to the sun and her breast to the foe ;  
Then moved like a king, unheeding and slow,  
And aside to the singer in the fringe of the wood.

## XXXI.

She led him forth, and she bade him sing :  
Then bade him cease ; and the gold of his hair  
She touch'd with her hands ; she embraced him  
there,  
Then lifted her voice and proclaim'd him King.

## XXXII.

And the men made fair in their new-found loves,  
They all cried, " King ! " and again and again,  
Cried, " Long may they live, and long may they  
reign,  
As true in their loves as the red-bill'd doves :

## XXXIII.

" Ay, long may they live, and long may they love,  
And their blue-eyed babes with the years increase,  
And we all have love, and we all have peace,  
While the seas are below or the sun is above.

## XXXIV.

“Let the winds blow fair and the fruits be gold,  
And the gods be gracious to King and to Queen,  
While the tides are gray or the Isles are green,  
Or the moons wax new, or the moons wane old!”

## XXXV.

The tawny old crone here lays her stone  
On the leaning grass and reaches a hand ;  
The day like a beautiful dream has flown,  
The curtains of night come down on the land,  
And I dip to the oars ; but ere I go,  
I tip her an extra bright pesos or so,  
And I smile my thanks, for I think them due •  
But, fairest of readers, now what think you ?

CHAPTER I

The first part of the history of the United States is the history of the colonies. The colonies were first settled by Englishmen in 1607. They were at first dependent on England for their supplies and protection. But as the colonies grew in number and in size, they began to assert their independence. They demanded that they should be able to govern themselves as they saw fit. This led to the American Revolution in 1776.

CHAPTER II

The second part of the history of the United States is the history of the early years of the new nation. The Constitution was adopted in 1787. The first Congress met in 1789. The first President, George Washington, was inaugurated in 1789. The early years of the new nation were marked by a period of peace and prosperity. The United States emerged as a major power in the world.

CHAPTER III

The third part of the history of the United States is the history of the middle years of the new nation. The United States was involved in the War of 1812 against Great Britain. The war ended in 1815 with a peace treaty. The United States emerged from the war as a more independent nation. The middle years of the new nation were marked by a period of growth and expansion.

CHAPTER IV

The fourth part of the history of the United States is the history of the late years of the new nation. The United States was involved in the Civil War in 1861. The war ended in 1865 with the Union's victory. The late years of the new nation were marked by a period of reconstruction and reform.

CHAPTER V

The fifth part of the history of the United States is the history of the modern years of the new nation. The United States has emerged as a superpower in the world. The modern years of the new nation are marked by a period of global leadership.



**FROM SEA TO SEA.**

*We glide through golden seas of grain,  
We shoot, a shining comet, through  
The mountain range against the blue  
And then below the walls of snow,  
We blow the desert dust amain;  
We brush the gay madrona tree,  
We greet the orange groves below, —  
We rest beneath the oaks; and we  
Have cleft a continent in twain.*

## FROM SEA TO SEA.

---

### I.

SHAKE hands! kiss hands in haste to the sea,  
Where the sun comes in, and mount with me  
The matchless steed of the strong New World,  
That champs and chafes with a strength untold,—  
And away to the West, where the waves are curl'd,  
As they kiss white palms to the capes of gold!  
A girth of brass and a breast of steel,  
A breath of fire and a flaming mane,  
An iron hoof and a steel-clad heel,  
A Mexican bit and a massive chain  
Well tried and wrought in an iron rein;  
And away! away! with a shout and yell  
That had stricken a legion of old with fear,  
That had started the dead from their graves whilere,  
And startled the damn'd in hell as well.

Stand up! stand out! where the wind comes in,  
And the wealth of the seas pours over you,  
As its health floods up to the face like wine,  
And a breath blows up from the Delaware

And the Susquehanna. We feel the might  
Of armies in us ; the blood leaps through  
The frame with a fresh and a keen delight  
As the Alleghanies have kiss'd the hair,  
With a kiss blown far through the rush and din,  
By the chestnut burs and through boughs of pine.

## II.

O seas in a land ! O lakes of mine !  
By the love I bear and the songs I bring  
Be glad with me ! lift your waves and sing  
A song in the reeds that surround your isles ! —  
A song of joy for this sun that smiles,  
For this land I love and this age and sign ;  
For the peace that is and the perils pass'd ;  
For the hope that is and the rest at last !

## III.

O heart of the world's heart ! West ! my West !  
Look up ! look out ! There are fields of kine,  
There are clover-fields that are red as wine ;  
And a world of kine in the fields take rest,  
And ruminant in the shade of trees  
That are white with blossoms or brown with bees.

There are emerald seas of corn and cane ;  
There are cotton-fields like a foamy main,  
To the far-off South where the sun was born,  
Where the fair have birth and the loves knew morn.  
There are isles of oak and a harvest plain,  
Where brown men bend to the bending grain ;  
There are temples of God and towns new-born,  
And beautiful homes of beautiful brides ;  
And the hearts of oak and the hands of horn  
Have fashion'd them all and a world besides. . . .  
. . . A yell like the yell of the Iroquois,  
And out of Eden, — and Illinois !

## IV.

A rush of rivers and a brush of trees,  
A breath blown far from the Mexican seas,  
And over the great heart-vein of earth !  
. . . By the South-Sun-land of the Cherokee,  
By the scalp-lock-lodge of the tall Pawnee,  
And up the La Platte. What a weary dearth  
Of the homes of men ! What a wild delight  
Of space ! of room ! What a sense of seas,  
Where the seas are not ! What a salt-like breeze !  
What dust and taste of quick alkali !

. . . Then hills! green, brown, then black like night,  
All fierce and defiant against the sky!

By night and by day! The deeps of the night  
Are rolling upon us, yet fiercer the flight.  
Lo! darkness bends down like a mother of grief  
On the limitless plain, and the fall of her hair  
It has mantled a world. The stars are in sheaf,  
Yet onward we plunge like a beast in despair  
Through the thick of the night; and the thundering  
cars!  
They have crush'd and have broken the beautiful day;  
Have crumbled it, scatter'd it far away,  
And blown it above to a dust of stars.

## v.

At last! at last! O steed new-born,  
Born strong of the will of the strong New World,  
We shoot to the summit, with the shafts of morn,  
Of the mount of Thunder, where clouds are curl'd,  
Below in a splendor of the sun-clad seas.  
A kiss of welcome on the warm west breeze

Blows up with a smell of the fragrant pine,  
And a faint, sweet fragrance from the far-off seas  
Comes in through the gates of the great South Pass  
And thrills the soul like a flow of wine.  
The hare leaps low in the storm-bent grass,  
The mountain ram from his cliff' looks back,  
The brown deer hies to the tamarack ;  
And afar to the South with a sound of the man,  
Roll buffalo herds to the limitless plain. . . .

On, on, o'er the summit ; and onward again,  
And down like the sea-dove the billow enshrouds,  
And down like the swallow that dips to the sea,  
We dart and we dash and we quiver and we  
Are blowing to heaven white billows of clouds.

## VI.

Thou " City of Saints ! " O antique men,  
And men of the Desert as the men of old !  
Stand up ! be glad ! When the truths are told,  
When Time has utter'd his truths and when  
His hand has lifted the things to fame  
From the mass of things to be known no more ;  
When creeds have perish'd and have pass'd away

Opinions that lorded their little day, —  
 A monument set in the desert sand,  
 A pyramid rear'd on an inland shore,  
 And their architects, shall have place and name.

O sea, land-lost! O desolate land,  
 Made brown with grain, and made green with bay;  
 Let mock who will, gainsay it who may,  
 No little thing has it been to rear  
 A resting-place in the desert here,  
 For Fathers bound to a farther land;  
 No little thing with a foe at hand  
 That has known no peace, save with these strong men,  
 And the peace unbroken with the blameless Penn.

## VII.

The Humboldt desert and the alkaline land,  
 And the seas of sage and of arid sand,  
 That stretch away till the strain'd eye carries  
 The soul where the infinite spaces fill,  
 Are far in the rear, and the fair Sierras  
 Are under our feet, and the heart beats high,  
 And the blood comes quick; but the lips are still  
 With awe and wonder, and all the will  
 Is bow'd with a grandeur that frets the sky.



A flash of lakes through the fragrant trees,  
A song of birds and a sound of bees  
Above in the boughs of the sugar-pine.  
The pick-axe stroke in the placer mine,  
The boom of blasts in the gold-ribb'd hills,  
The grizzly's growl in the gorge below  
Are dying away, and the sound of rills  
From the far-off shimmering crest of snow,  
The laurel green and the ivied oak,  
A yellow stream and a cabin's smoke,  
The brown bent hills and the shepherd's call,  
The hills of vine and of fruits, and all  
The sweets of Eden are here, and we  
Look out and afar to a limitless sea.

We have lived in age in a half-moon-wane !  
We have seen a world ! We have chased the sun  
From sea to sea ; but the task is done.  
We here descend to the great white main, —  
To the King of Seas, with the temples bare  
And a tropic breath on the brow and hair.

We are hush'd with wonder, and all apart  
We stand in silence till the heaving heart

Fills full of heaven, and then the knees  
Go down in worship, on the golden sands.  
With faces seaward, and with folded hands  
We gaze on the beautiful Balboa seas.

BY THE SUN-DOWN SEAS.

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CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLATE 100

BY THE SUN-DOWN SEAS.

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PART I.

I.

LIKE fragments of an uncompleted world,  
From bleak Alaska, bound in ice and spray,  
To where the peaks of Darien lie curl'd  
In clouds, the broken lands loom bold and gray.  
The seamen nearing San Francisco Bay  
Forget the compass here; with sturdy hand  
They seize the wheel, look up, then bravely lay  
The ship to shore by rugged peaks that stand  
The stern and proud patrician fathers of the land.

II.

They stand white stairs of heaven, — stand a line  
Of lifting, endless, and eternal white.  
They look upon the far and flashing brine,  
Upon the boundless plains, the broken height  
Of Kamiakin's battlements. The flight  
Of time is underneath their untopp'd towers.  
They seem to push aside the moon at night,  
To jostle and to loose the stars. The flowers  
Of heaven fall about their brows in shining showers.

## III.

They stand a line of lifted snowy isles  
 High held above a toss'd and tumbled sea, —  
 A sea of wood in wild unmeasured miles:  
 White pyramids of Faith where man is free;  
 White monuments of Hope that yet shall be  
 The mounts of matchless and immortal song. . . .  
 I look far down the hollow days; I see  
 The bearded prophets, simple-soul'd and strong,  
 That strike the sounding harp and thrill the heeding  
 throng.

## IV.

Serene and satisfied! supreme! as lone  
 As God, they loom like God's archangels churl'd:  
 They look as cold as kings upon a throne:  
 The mantling wings of night are crush'd and curl'd  
 As feathers curl. The elements are hurl'd  
 From off their bosoms, and are bidden go,  
 Like evil spirits, to an under-world.  
 They stretch from Cariboo to Mexico,  
 A line of battle-tents in everlasting snow.

. . . . .

## v.

See once Columbia's scenes, then roam no more ;  
No more remains on earth to cultured eyes ;  
The cataract comes down, a broken roar,  
The palisades defy approach, and rise  
Green moss'd and dripping to the clouded skies.  
The cañon thunders with its full of foam,  
And calls loud-mouth'd, and all the land defies ;  
The mounts make fellowship and dwell at home  
In snowy brotherhood beneath their purpled dome.

## vi.

The rainbows swim in circles round, and rise  
Against the hanging granite walls till lost  
In drifting dreamy clouds and dappled skies,  
A grand mosaic intertwined and toss'd  
Along the mighty cañon, bound and cross'd  
By storms of screaming birds of sea and land ;  
The salmon rush below, bright red and boss'd  
In silver. Tawny, tall, on either hand  
You see the savage spearman nude and silent stand.

## vii.

Here sweep the wide wild waters cold and white  
And blue in their far depths ; divided now

By sudden swift canoe as still and light  
As feathers nodding from the painted brow  
That lifts and looks from out the imaged prow.  
Ashore you hear the papoose shout at play;  
The curl'd smoke comes from underneath the bough  
Of leaning fir: the wife looks far away  
And sees a swift sweet bark divide the dashing spray.

## VIII.

Slow drift adown the river's levell'd deep,  
And look above; lo, columns! woods! the snow!  
The rivers rush upon the brink and leap  
From out the clouds three thousand feet below,  
And land afoam in tops of firs that grow  
Against your river's rim: they splash, they play,  
In clouds, now loud and now subdued and slow,  
A thousand thunder tones; they swing and sway  
In idle winds, long leaning shafts of shining spray.

## IX.

An Indian summer-time it was, long past,  
We lay on this Columbia, far below  
The stormy water-falls, and God had cast  
Us heaven's stillness. Dreamily and slow  
We drifted as the light bark chose to go.



An Indian girl with ornaments of shell  
 Began to sing. . . . The stars may hold such flow  
 Of hair, such eyes, but rarely earth. There fell  
 A sweet enchantment that possess'd me as a spell :

## X.

We saw the elk forsake the sable wood,  
 Step quick across the rim of shining sand,  
 Breast out in troop against the flashing flood,  
 Then brisket deep with lifted antlers stand,  
 And ears alert, look sharp on either hand,  
 Then whistle shrill to dam and doubting fawn  
 To follow, lead with black nose to the land.  
 They cross'd, they climb'd the heaving hills, were gone,  
 A sturdy charging line with crooked sabres drawn :

## XI.

Then black swans cross'd us slowly low and still ;  
 Then other swans, wide-wing'd and white as snow,  
 Flew overhead and topp'd the timber'd hill,  
 And call'd and sang afar coarse-voiced and slow,  
 Till sounds roam'd lost in sombre firs below. . . .  
 Then clouds blew in, and all the sky was cast  
 With tumbled and tumultuous clouds that grow

Red thunderbolts. . . . A flash! A thunder-blast!  
 The clouds were rent, and lo! Mount Hood hung white  
 and vast.

. . . . .

XII.

Once, morn by morn, when snowy mountains flamed  
 With sudden shafts of light that shot a flood  
 Into the vale like fiery arrows aim'd  
 At night from mighty battlements, there stood  
 Upon a cliff high-linn'd against Mount Hood,  
 A matchless bull fresh forth from sable wold,  
 And standing so seem'd grander 'gainst the wood  
 Than wingèd bull that stood with tips of gold  
 Beside the brazen gates of Nineveh of old.

XIII.

A time he toss'd the dewy turf, and then  
 Stretch'd forth his wrinkled neck, and long and loud  
 He call'd above the far abodes of men  
 Until his breath became a curling cloud  
 And wreathed about his neck a misty shroud.

He then as sudden as he came pass'd on  
 With lifted head, majestic and most proud,  
 And lone as night in deepest wood withdrawn  
 He roam'd in silent rage until another dawn.

## XIV.

What drove the hermit from the valley herd,  
 What cross of love, what cold neglect of kind,  
 Or scorn of unpretending worth had stirr'd  
 The stubborn blood and drove him forth to find  
 A fellowship in mountain cloud and wind,  
 I ofttime wonder'd much; and ofttime thought  
 The beast betray'd a royal monarch's mind,  
 To lift above the low herd's common lot,  
 And make them hear him still when they had fain  
 forgot.

. . . . .

## XV.

His broad-brimm'd hat push'd back with careless air,  
 The proud vaquero sits his steed as free  
 As winds that toss his black abundant hair.  
 No rover ever swept a lawless sea  
 With such a haught and heedless air as he

Who scorns the path, and bounds with swift disdain  
Away: a peon born, yet born to be  
A splendid king; behold him ride, and reign,  
The only perfect monarch of the mottled plain.

## XVI.

How brave he takes his herds in branding days,  
On timber'd hills that belt about the plain;  
He climbs, he wheels, he shouts through winding ways  
Of hiding ferns and hanging fir; the rein  
Is loose, the rattling spur drives swift; the mane  
Blows free; the bullocks rush in storms before;  
They turn with lifted heads, they rush again,  
Then sudden plunge from out the wood, and pour  
A cloud upon the plain with one terrific roar.

## XVII.

Now sweeps the tawny man on stormy steed,  
His gaudy trappings toss'd about and blown  
Above the limbs as lithe as any reed;  
The swift long lasso twirl'd above is thrown  
From flying hand; the fall, the fearful groan  
Of bullock toil'd and tumbled in the dust —  
The black herds onward sweep, and all disown

The fallen struggling monarch that has thrust  
His tongue in rage and roll'd his red eyes in disgust.

. . . . .

## XVIII.

A morn in Oregon! The kindled camp  
Upon the mountain brow that broke below  
In steep and grassy stairway to the damp  
And dewy valley, snapp'd and flamed aglow  
With knots of pine. Above, the peaks of snow,  
With under-belts of sable forests, rose  
And flash'd in sudden sunlight. To and fro  
And far below, in lines and winding rows,  
The herders drove their bands, and broke the deep  
repose.

## XIX.

I heard their shouts like sounding hunter's horn,  
The lowing herds made echoes far away;  
When lo! the clouds came driving in with morn  
Toward the sea, as fleeing from the day.  
The valleys fill'd with curly clouds. They lay  
Below, a levell'd sea that reach'd and roll'd  
And broke like breakers of a stormy bay  
Against the grassy shingle fold on fold,  
So like a splendid ocean, snowy white and cold.

## XX.

The peopled valley lay a hidden world,  
 The shouts were shouts of drowning men that died,  
 The broken clouds along the border curl'd,  
 And bent the grass with weighty freight of tide.  
 A savage stood in silence at my side,  
 Then sudden threw aback his beaded strouds  
 And stretch'd his hand above the scene, and cried,  
 As all the land lay dead in snowy shrouds :  
 "Behold ! the sun upon a silver sea of clouds."

## XXI.

Here lifts the land of clouds ! The mantled forms,  
 Made white with everlasting snow, look down  
 Through mists of many cañons, and the storms  
 That stretch from Autumn time until they drown  
 The yellow hem of Spring. The cedars frown,  
 Dark-brow'd, through banner'd clouds that stretch  
     and stream  
 Above the sea from snowy mountain crown.  
 The heavens roll, and all things drift or seem  
**To** drift about and drive like some majestic dream.

## XXII.

In waning Autumn time, when purpled skies  
Begin to haze in indolence below  
The snowy peaks, you see black forms arise  
In rolling thunder banks above, and throw  
Quick barricades about the gleaming snow.  
The strife begins! The battling seasons stand  
Broad breast to breast. A flash! Contentions grow  
Terrific. Thunders crash, and lightnings brand  
The battlements. The clouds possess the stormy land.

## XXIII.

Then clouds blow by, the swans take loftier flight,  
The yellow blooms burst out upon the hill,  
The purple camas comes as in a night,  
Tall spiked and dripping of the dews that fill  
The misty valley. . . . Sunbeams break and spill  
Their glory till the vale is full of noon.  
The roses belt the streams, no bird is still. . . .  
The stars, as large as lilies, meet the moon  
And sing of summer, born thus sudden full and soon.

BY THE SUN-DOWN SEAS.

---

PART II.

I.

A TALE half told and hardly understood ;  
The talk of bearded men that chanced to meet,  
That lean'd on long quaint rifles in the wood,  
That look'd in fellow faces, spoke discreet  
And low, as half in doubt and in defeat  
Of hope ; a tale it was of lands of gold  
That lay toward the sun. Wild wing'd and fleet  
It spread among the swift Missouri's bold  
Unbridled men, and reach'd to where Ohio roll'd.

II.

The long chain'd lines of yoked and patient steers ;  
The long white trains that pointed to the west,  
Beyond the savage west ; the hopes and fears  
Of blunt untutor'd men, who hardly guess'd



Their course; the brave and silent women, dress'd  
In homely spun attire, the boys in bands,  
The cheery babes that laugh'd at all, and bless'd  
The doubting hearts with laughing lifted hands,  
Proclaim'd an exodus for far untraversed lands.

## III.

The Plains! The shouting drivers at the wheel;  
The crash of leather whips; the crush and roll  
Of wheels; the groan of yokes and grinding steel  
And iron chain, and lo! at last the whole  
Vast line, that reach'd as if to touch the goal,  
Began to stretch and stream away and wind  
Toward the west, as if with one control;  
Then hope loom'd fair, and home lay far behind;  
Before, the boundless plain, and fiercest of their kind.

## IV.

The way lay wide and green and fresh as seas  
And far away as any reach of wave;  
The sunny streams went by in belt of trees;  
And here and there the tassell'd, tawny brave  
Swept by on horse, look'd back, stretch'd forth and  
gave

A yell of hell, and then did wheel and rein  
 Awhile, and point away, dark-brow'd and grave,  
 Into the far and dim and distant plain  
 With signs and prophecies, and then plunged on again.

## v.

Some hills at last began to lift and break ;  
 Some streams began to fail of wood and tide,  
 The sombre plain began betime to take  
 A hue of weary brown, and wild and wide  
 It stretch'd its naked breast on every side. . . .  
 A babe was heard at last to cry for bread  
 Amid the deserts ; cattle low'd and died,  
 And dying men went by with broken tread,  
 And left a long black serpent line of wreck and dead.

## vi.

Strange hunger'd birds, black-wing'd and still as  
 death,  
 And crown'd of red with hooked beaks, blew low  
 And close about, till we could touch their breath—  
 Strange unnamed birds, that seem'd to come and go  
 In circles now, and now direct and slow,

Continual, yet never touch the earth;  
Slim foxes shied and shuttled to and fro  
At times across the dusty weary dearth  
Of life, look'd back, then sank like crickets in a hearth.

## VII.

The dust arose, a long dim line like smoke  
From out a riven earth. The wheels went by,  
The thousand feet in harness and in yoke,  
They tore the ways of ashen alkali,  
And desert winds blew sudden, swift and dry.  
The dust! it sat upon and fill'd the train!  
It seem'd to fret and fill the very sky.  
Lo! dust upon the beasts, the tent, the plain,  
And dust, alas! on breasts that rose not up again.

## VIII.

They sat in desolation and in dust  
By dried-up desert streams; the mother's hands  
Hid all her bended face; the cattle thrust  
Their tongues and faintly call'd across the lands.  
The babes, that knew not what the way through sands  
Could mean, would ask if it would end to-day. . . .  
The panting wolves slid by, red-eyed, in bands  
To streams beyond. The men look'd far away,  
And silent saw that all a boundless desert lay.

## IX.

They rose by night; they struggled on and on  
As thin and still as ghosts; then here and there  
Beside the dusty way before the dawn,  
Men silent laid them down in their despair,  
And died. But woman! Woman, frail as fair!  
May man have strength to give to you your due;  
You falter'd not, nor murmur'd anywhere,  
You held your babes, held to your course, and you  
Bore on through burning hell your double burthens  
through.

## X.

They stood at last, the decimated few,  
Above a land of running streams, and they . . . ?  
They push'd aside the boughs, and peering through  
Beheld afar the cool, refreshing bay;  
Then some did curse, and some bend hands to pray;  
But some look'd back upon the desert, wide  
And desolate with death, then all the day  
They wept. But one, with nothing left beside  
His dog to love, crept down among the ferns and died.

. . . . .

## XI.

I stand upon the green Sierra's wall ;  
Toward the east, beyond the yellow grass,  
I see the broken hill-tops lift and fall,  
Then sands that shimmer like a sea of glass,  
In all the shining summer days that pass.  
There lies the nation's great high road of dead.  
Forgotten aye, unnumber'd, and, alas !  
Unchronicled in deed or death ; instead,  
The stiff aristocrat lifts high a lordly head.

## XII.

My brave and unremember'd heroes, rest ;  
You fell in silence, silent lie and sleep.  
Sleep on unsung, for this, I say, were best ;  
The world to-day has hardly time to weep ;  
The world to-day will hardly care to keep  
In heart her plain and unpretending brave.  
The desert winds, they whistle by and sweep  
About you ; brown'd and russet grasses wave  
Along a thousand leagues that lie one common grave.

## XIII.

The proud and careless pass in palace car  
Along the line you blazon'd white with bones ;

Pass swift to people, and possess and mar  
Your lands with monuments and letter'd stones  
Unto themselves. Thank God! this waste disowns  
Their touch. His everlasting hand has drawn  
A shining line around you. Wealth bemoans  
The waste your splendid grave employs. Sleep on,  
No hand shall touch your dust this side of God and  
dawn.

## XIV.

There came another, far less noble race ;  
They shot across the iron grooves, a host  
Of school'd and cunning men ; they push'd from place  
The simple pioneer, and mock'd, and most  
Of all set strife along the peaceful coast.  
The rude unletter'd settler, bound and coil'd  
In controversy, then before the boast  
Of bold contentious men, confused and foiled,  
Turn'd mute to wilder lands, and left his home despoil'd.

## XV.

I let them stride across with grasping hands  
And strive for brief possession ; mark and line  
With lifted walls the new divided lands,  
And gather growing herds of lowing kine.

I could not covet these, could not confine  
 My heart to one; all seem'd to me the same,  
 And all below my mountain home, divine  
 And beautiful held in another's name,  
 As if the herds and lands were mine, subdued and tame.

. . . . .

## XVI.

I have not been, shall not be, understood;  
 I have not wit, nor will, to well explain,  
 But that which men call good I find not good.  
 The lands the savage held, shall hold again,  
 The gold the savage spurn'd in proud disdain  
 For centuries; go, take them all; build high  
 Your gilded temples; strive and strike and strain  
 And crowd and controvert and curse and lie  
 In church and state, in town and citadel, and — die

## XVII.

And who shall grow the nobler from it all?  
 The mute and unsung savage loved as true, —  
 He felt, as grateful felt, God's blessings fall  
 About his lodge and tawny babes as you  
 In temples, — Moslem, Christian monk, or Jew

. . . The sea, the great white, braided, bounding sea,  
 Is laughing in your face; the arching blue  
 Remains to God; the mountains still are free,  
 A refuge for the few remaining tribes and me.

## XVIII.

Your cities! from the first the hand of God  
 Has been against them; sword and flood and flame,  
 The earthquake's march, and pestilence, have trod  
 To undiscerning dust the very name  
 Of antique capitals; and still the same  
 Sad destiny besets the battlefields  
 Of Mammon and the harlot's house of shame.  
 Lo! man with monuments and lifted shields  
 Against his city's fate. A flame! his city yields.

. . . . .

## XIX.

Whose ill had I devised, what evil done,  
 That I was bidden to arise and go? . . .  
 I hear the clear Columbian waters run,  
 I see the white Pacific flash and flow  
 Below the swaying cedar-trees that grow



On peaks pre-eminent; but never mine  
 Again the wooded way on steed of snow,  
 The freeman's mountain camp in cloud or shine,  
 Or pure companionship of meek-eyed mottled kine.

## XX.

What wonder that I swore a prophet's oath  
 Of after days. . . . I push'd the boughs apart,  
 I stood, look'd forth, and then look'd back, all loath  
 To leave my shadow'd wood. I gather'd heart  
 From very fearfulness; with sudden start  
 I plunged in the arena; stood a wild  
 Uncertain thing, and artless all in art. . . .  
 The brave approved, the fair lean'd fair and smiled,—  
 The lions touch with velvet-touch a timid child.

## XXI.

But now enough of men. Enough, brief day  
 Of tamer life. The court, the castle gate  
 That open'd wide along a pleasant way,  
 The gracious converse of the kingly great  
 Had made another glad and well elate  
 With hope. A world of thanks; but I am grown  
 Aweary. . . . I am not of this estate;  
 The poor, the plain brave border-men alone  
 Were my first love, and these I will not now disown.

## XXII.

Who loves the least may oft lament most loud :  
I stand mute-mouth'd upon a far gray shore ;  
The soul lifts up, a lone and white-wing'd cloud,  
And like some sea-bird back and then before  
The storm of seas, it seeks my land once more ;  
And here about the peaceful peaks, as white  
As steps of God, until the fates restore  
My feet, shall it abide : the sea at night  
Has flash'd reflections back from foamy fields of light.

## XXIII.

I know a grassy slope above the sea,  
The utmost limit of the westmost land.  
In savage, gnarl'd, and antique majesty  
The great trees belt about the place, and stand  
In guard, with mailèd limb and lifted head  
Against the cold approaching civic pride.  
The foamy brooklets seaward leap ; the bland  
Still air is fresh with touch of wood and tide,  
And peace, eternal peace, possesses wild and wide.

## XXIV.

Here I return, here I abide and rest ;  
Some flocks and herds shall feed along the stream ;

Some corn and climbing vines shall make us blest  
With bread and luscious fruit. . . . The sunny dream  
Of savage men in moccasins that seem  
To come and go in silence, girt in shell,  
Before a sun-clad cabin-door, I deem  
The harbinger of peace. Hope weaves her spell  
Again about the wearied heart, and all is well.

## xxv.

Here I shall sit in sunlit life's decline  
Beneath my vine and sombre verdant tree.  
Some tawny maids in other tongues than mine  
Shall minister. Some memories shall be  
Before me. I shall sit and I shall see,  
That last vast day that dawn shall re-inspire,  
The sun fall down upon the farther sea,  
Fall wearied down to rest, and so retire,  
A splendid sinking isle of far-off fading fire.

BY THE SUN-DOWN SEAS

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PART III.

I.

THE stormy Isles of story and of song,  
Lo! yonder lie, white lifting from the sea,  
The head is bow'd a time, then loud and long  
The shouts go up; men lean tiptoed, to be  
One instant nearer; turn, catch high and free  
Their little babes above the leaning band,  
And lift and point and bid them look and see  
And laugh with them and shout with lifted hand  
To see at last the land; their sires' sires' darling land.

II.

Thou, mother of brave men, of nations! Thou,  
The white-brow'd Queen of bold white-bearded Sea!  
Thou wert of old even the same as now,  
So strong, so tame yet fierce, so bound yet free,  
A contradiction and a mystery;  
Serene, yet passionate, in ways thine own.

Thy white ships wind and weave all time for thee  
The zones of earth, aye thou hast set and sown  
The seas in bed of blossom'd sail, white-spread and  
blown.

## III.

Above yon inland populace the skies  
Are pink and mellow'd soft in rosy light.  
The crown of earth! A halo seems to rise  
And hang perpetual above by night,  
And dash by day the heavens, till the sight  
Betrays the city's presence to the wave. . . .  
You hear a hollow sound as of the might  
Of seas; you see the march of fair and brave  
In millions; moving, moving, moving toward—a grave

## IV.

I see above a crowded world a cross  
Of gold. It grows like some great cedar-tree  
Upon a peak in shroud of cloud and moss,  
Made bare and bronzed in far antiquity.  
Stupendous pile! The grim Yosemite  
Has rent apart his granite wall, and thrown  
Its rugged front before us. . . . Here I see  
The strides of giant men in cryptic stone,  
And turn, and slow descend where sleep the great alone.

## V.

The mighty captains have come home to rest ;  
 The brave return'd to sleep amid the brave.  
 The sentinel that stood with steely breast  
 Before the fiery hosts of France, and gave  
 The battle-cry that roll'd, receding wave  
 On wave, the foeman flying back and far,  
 Is here. How still! Yet louder now the grave  
 Than ever-crushing Belgian battle-ear  
 Or blue and battle-shaken seas of Trafalgar.

## VI.

The verger stalks in stiff importanee o'er  
 The hollow, deep, and strange responding stones ;  
 He stands with lifted staff unchid before  
 The forms that once had crush'd or fashion'd thrones,  
 And coldly points you out the coffin'd bones :  
 He stands composed where armies could not stand  
 A little time before. . . . The hand disowns  
 The idle sword, and now instead the grand  
 And golden cross makes sign and takes austere com-  
 mand.

## VII.

The Abbey broods beside the turbid Thames ;  
 Her mother heart is fill'd with memories ;  
 Her every niche is stored with storied names ;  
 They move before me like a mist of seas.  
 I am confused, am made abash'd by these  
 Most kingly souls, grand, silent, and severe.  
 I am not equal, I should sore displease  
 The living . . . dead. I dare not enter ; drear  
 And stain'd in storms of grander days all things appear

## VIII.

I go ! but shall I not return again  
 When Art has taught me gentler, kindlier skill,  
 And time has given force and strength of strain ?  
 I go ! O ye that dignify and fill  
 The chronicles of earth ! I would instil  
 Into my soul somehow the atmosphere  
 Of sanctity that here usurps the will ;  
 But go ; I seek the tomb of one — a peer  
 Of peers — whose dust a fool refused to cherish here.

. . . . .

## IX.

O master, here I bow before a shrine ;  
 Before the lordliest dust that ever yet

Moved animate in human form divine.  
Lo! dust indeed to dust. The mould is set  
Above thee and the ancient walls are wet,  
And drip all day in dank and silent gloom,  
As if the cold gray stones could not forget  
Thy great estate shrunk to this sombre room,  
But learn to weep perpetual tears above thy tomb.

## x.

Through broken panes I hear the schoolboys shout,  
I see the black-wing'd engines sweep and pass,  
And from the peopled narrow plot without,  
Well grown with brier, moss, and heaving grass,  
I see the Abbey loom an ivied mass,  
Made eloquent of faiths, of fates to be,  
Of creeds, and perish'd kings; and still, alas,  
O soldier-child! most eloquent of thee,  
Of thy sad life, and all the unseal'd mystery.

## xi.

Before me lie the oak-crown'd Annesley hills,  
Before me lifts the ancient Annesley Hall  
Above the mossy oaks. . . . A picture fills  
With forms of other days. A maiden tall



And fair; a fiery restless boy, with all  
The force of man; a steed that frets without;  
A long thin sword that rusts upon the wall. . . .  
The generations pass. . . . Behold! about  
The ivied hall the fair-hair'd children sport and shout.

## XII.

A line of elms along the hill-top run;  
The diadem of oaks is torn away;  
Discrown'd the promontory meets the sun,  
And here is set the record of a day,  
Of meaning full and memories; and gray  
With annals dear to Annesley Hall, it stands,  
A stone, with but this single word to say —  
But "Inkerman!" and lifts its unseen hands,  
And beckons far to battle-fields of other lands.

## XIII.

I look into the dread, forbidding tomb;  
Lo! darkness — death. The soul on shifting sand  
That belts Eternity gropes in the gloom. . . .  
The black-wing'd bird goes forth in search of land,  
But turns no more to reach my reaching hand. . . .

O land beyond the land! I lean me o'er  
 Thy dust in prayer devout. . . . I rise, I stand  
 Erect; the stormy seas are thine no more;  
 A weary white-wing'd dove has touch'd the olive shore.

## XIV.

A bay wreath woven by the sun-down west  
 Hangs damp and stain'd upon the dank gray wall,  
 Above thy time-soil'd tomb and tatter'd crest;  
 A bay-wreath gather'd by the seas that call  
 To orient Cathay, that break and fall  
 On shell-lined shores before Tahiti's breeze. . . .  
 A slab, a crest, a wreath, and these are all  
 Neglected, tatter'd, torn; yet only these  
 The world bestows for song that rivall'd singing seas.

## XV.

A bay-wreath wound by one more truly brave  
 Than Shastan; fair as thy eternal fame,  
 She sat and wove above the sunset wave,  
 And wound and sang thy measures and thy name.  
 'Twas wound by one, yet sent with one acclaim  
 By many, fair and warm as flowing wine,  
 And purely true, and tall as growing flame,  
 That list and lean in moonlight's mellow shine  
 To tropic tales of love in other tongues than thine.

## XVI.

I bring this idle reflex of thy task,  
And my few loves, to thy forgotten tomb :  
I leave them here ; and here all pardon ask  
Of thee, and patience ask of singers whom  
Thy majesty hath silenced. I resume  
My staff, and now my face is to the West ;  
My feet are worn ; the sun is gone, a gloom  
Has mantled Hucknall, and the minstrel's zest  
For fame is broken here, and here he pleads for **rest.**

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IN THE INDIAN SUMMER.

*Sing songs, and give love in oblations,  
Be glad, and forget in a rhyme  
Mutations of time, and mutations  
Of thought, that is fiercer than time.*

IN THE INDIAN SUMMER.

---

THE sunlight lay in gathered sheaves  
Along the ground, the golden leaves  
Possessed the land and lay in bars  
Above the lifted lawn of green  
Beneath the feet, or fell, as stars  
Fall, slantwise, shimmering and still  
Upon the plain, upon the hill,  
And heaving hill and plain between.

Some steeds in panoply were seen,  
Strong, martial trained, with manes in air,  
And tasselled reins and mountings rare ;  
Some silent people here and there,  
That gathered leaves with listless will,  
Or moved adown the dappled green,  
Or looked away with idle gaze  
Against the gold and purple haze.  
You might have heard red apples fall,

The pheasant on the farther hill,  
A single, lonely, locust trill,  
Or sliding sable cricket call  
From out the grass, but that was all.

A wanderer of many lands  
Was I, a weary Ishmaelite  
That knew the sign of lifted hands;  
Had seen the Crescent-mosques, had seen  
The Druid oaks of Aberdeen;  
Then crossed the hilly seas, and saw  
The sable pines of Mackinaw,  
And lakes that lifted cold and white.

I saw the sweet Miami, saw  
The swift Ohio bent and rolled  
Between his gleaming walls of gold,  
The Wabash banks of gray papaw,  
The Mississippi's ash; at morn  
Of autumn, when the oak is red,  
Saw slanting pyramids of corn,  
The level fields of spotted swine,  
The crooked lanes of lowing kine,  
And in the burning bushes saw  
The face of God, with bended head.



But when I saw her face, I said,  
"Earth has no fruits so fairly red  
As these that swing above my head;  
No purpled leaf, no popped land,  
Like this that lies in reach of hand."

Some maple leaves hung overhead,  
In scarlet hues and many kind;  
Some danced about upon the sand,  
As dancers dancing hand in hand,  
Begirt in gold, arrayed in red,  
To soft songs whistled in the wind.

Her image seemed a spirit's then;  
She filled the lawn whereon she stood,  
And, soft, unto myself I said:  
"O soul, inured to rue and rime,  
To barren toil and bitter bread,  
To biting rime, to bitter rue,  
Earth is not Nazareth; be good.  
O sacred Indian-summer time  
Of scarlet fruits, of fragrant wood,  
Of purpled clouds, of curling haze —  
O days of golden dreams and days  
Of banished, vanished tawny men,

Of martial songs and manly deeds —  
Be fair to-day, and bear me true.”  
We mounted, turned the sudden steeds  
Toward the yellow hills, and flew.

My faith! but she rode fair, and she  
Had scarlet berries in her hair,  
And on her hands white starry stones.  
The satellites of many thrones  
Fall down before her gracious air  
In that full season. Fair to see  
Are pearly shells, red virgin gold,  
And yellow fruits, and sun-down seas,  
And babes sun-brown; but all of these,  
And all fair things of sea besides,  
Before the matchless, manifold  
Accomplishments of her who rides  
With autumn summer in her hair,  
And knows her steed and holds her fair  
And stately in her stormy seat,  
They lie like playthings at her feet.

By heaven! she was more than fair,  
And more than good, and matchless wise,  
With all the lovelight in her eyes,  
And all the midnight in her hair.

The blowing hair! the bannered manes!  
The rustling leaves in whispers blown!  
The sounding feet made melody,  
And earth was filled and I was glad  
With sweet delight; ay, even sad  
From pure excess of joy, that fills  
The soul sometimes too eager grown. . . .

Through leafy avenues and lanes,  
And lo! we climbed the yellow hills,  
With russet leaves about the brows  
That reached from over-reaching trees.  
With purpled briars to the knees  
Of steeds that fretted foamy thews,  
We turned to look a time below  
Beneath the ancient arch of boughs,  
That bent above us as a bow  
Of promise, bound in many hues.

I reached my hand. I could refuse  
All fruits but this, the touch of her  
At such a time. But lo! she leaned  
With lifted face and soul, and leant  
As leans devoutest worshipper,  
Beyond the branches scarlet screened

And looked above me and beyond,  
So fixed and silent, still and fond,  
She seemed the while she looked to lose  
Her very soul in such intent.  
She looked on other things, but I,  
I saw nor scarlet leaf nor sky ;  
I looked on her, and only her.

Afar the city lay in smokes  
Of battle, and the martial strokes  
Of Progress thundered through the land  
And struck against the yellow trees,  
And rolled in hollow echoes on  
Like sounding limits of the seas  
That smite the shelly shores at dawn.

Beyond, below, on either hand  
There reached a lake in belt of pine,  
A very dream ; a distant dawn  
Asleep in all the autumn shine,  
Some like one of another land  
That I once laid a hand upon,  
And loved too well, and named as mine.

She sometimes touched with dimpled hand  
The drifting mane with dreamy air,

She sometimes pushed aback her hair;  
But still she leaned and looked afar,  
As silent as the statues stand, —  
For what? For falling leaf? For star,  
That runs before the bride of death? . . .  
The elements were still; a breath  
Stirred not, the level western sun  
Poured in his arrows every one;  
Spilled all his wealth of purpled red  
On velvet poplar leaf below,  
On arching chestnut overhead  
In all the hues of heaven's bow.

She sat the upper hill, and high.  
I spurred my black steed to her side;  
“The bow of promise, lo!” I cried,  
And lifted up my eyes to hers  
With all the fervid love that stirs  
The blood of men beneath the sun,  
And reached my hand, as one undone,  
In suppliance to hers above:  
“The bow of promise! give me love!  
I reach a hand, I rise or fall,  
Henceforth from this: put forth a hand  
From your high place and let me stand —

Stand soul and body, white and tall!  
Why, I would live for you, would die  
To-morrow, but to live to-day.  
Give me but love, and let me live  
To die before you. I can pray  
To only you, because I know,  
If you but give what I bestow,  
That God has nothing left to give."

Christ! still her stately head was raised,  
And still she silent sat and gazed  
Beyond the trees, beyond the town,  
To where the dimpled waters slept,  
Nor splendid eyes once bended down  
To eyes that lifted up and wept.

She spake not, nor subdued her head  
To note a hand or heed a word;  
And then I questioned if she heard  
My life-tale on that leafy hill,  
Or any fervid word I said,  
And spoke with bold, vehement will.

She moved, and from her bridled hand  
She sudden drew the dainty glove,

Then gazed again upon the land.  
The dimpled hand, a snowy dove,  
Alit, and moved along the mane  
Of glossy skeins; then, overbold,  
It fell across the mane, and lay  
Before my eyes a sweet bouquet  
Of clustered kisses, white as snow.  
I should have seized it reaching so,  
But something bade me back, — a ban;  
Around the third fair finger ran  
A shining, hateful hoop of gold.

Ay, then I turned, I looked away,  
I sudden felt forlorn and chill;  
I whistled, like, for want to say,  
And then I said, with bended head,  
“Another’s ship from other shores,  
With richer freight, with fairer stores,  
Shall come to her some day instead;”  
Then turned about, — and all was still.

Yea, you had chafed at this, and cried,  
And laughed with bloodless lips, and said  
Some bitter things to sate your pride,  
And tossed aloft a lordly head,

And acted well some wilful lie,  
And, most like, cursed yourself — but I . . .  
Well, you be crucified, and you  
Be broken up with lances through  
The soul, then you may turn to find  
Some ladder-rounds in keenest rods,  
Some solace in the bitter rind,  
Some favor with the gods irate —  
The everlasting angered gods —  
And ask not overmuch of fate.

I was not born, was never blessed,  
With cunning ways, nor wit, nor skill  
In woman's ways, nor words of love,  
Nor fashioned suppliance of will.  
A very clown, I think, had guessed  
How out of place and plain I seemed;  
I, I, the idol-worshipper,  
Who saw nor maple-leaves nor sky  
But took some touch and hue of her.  
Then, after all, what right had I  
To lift my eyes to eyes that beamed  
So far beyond, so far above?



I am a pagan, heathen, lo!  
A savage man, of savage lands;  
Too quick to love, too slow to know  
The sign that tame love understands,  
Or cold approaches pride demands.

. . . . .

Some heedless hoofs went sounding down  
The broken way. The woods were brown,  
And homely now; some idle talk  
Of folk and town; a broken walk;  
But sounding feet made song no more  
For me along that leafy shore.

The sun caught up his gathered sheaves;  
A squirrel caught a nut, and ran;  
A rabbit rustled in the leaves;  
A whirling bat, black-winged and tan,  
Blew swift between us; sullen night  
Fell down upon us; mottled kine,  
With lifted heads, went lowing down  
The rocky ridge toward the town,  
And all the woods grew dark as wine.

The first of these is the  
 fact that the British  
 government had been  
 in a state of  
 internal division  
 since the death of  
 George III. The  
 result of this was  
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 action against  
 the French.

**OLIVE LEAVES.**

*O boy at peace upon the Delaware !  
O brother mine, that fell in battle front  
Of life, so braver, nobler far than I,  
The wanderer who vexed all gentleness,  
Receive this song ; I have but this to give.  
I may not rear the rich man's ghostly stone  
But you, through all my follies loving still  
And trusting me . . . nay, I shall not forge*

*A failing hand in mine, and fading eyes  
That look'd in mine as from another lane,  
You said : " Some gentler things ; a song for **Peace.**  
'Mid all your songs for men one song for God."  
And then the dark-brow'd mother, Death, bent down  
Her face to yours, and you were born to **Him.***

## OLIVE LEAVES.

---

### A T B E T H L E H E M.

“ In the desert a fountain is springing,  
In the wild waste there still is a tree.”

“ Though the many lights dwindle to one light,  
There is help if the heavens have one.”

“ Change lays not her hand upon truth.”

WITH incense and myrrh and sweet spices,  
Frankincense and sacredest oil  
In ivory, chased with devices  
Cut quaint and in serpentine coil;  
Heads bared, and held down to the bosom;  
Brows massive with wisdom and bronzed;  
Beards white as the white may in blossom,  
And borne to the breast and beyond, —  
Came the Wise of the East, bending lowly  
On staffs, with their garments girt round  
With girdles of hair, to the Holy  
Child Christ, in their sandals. The sound

Of song and thanksgiving ascended --  
 Deep night! Yet some shepherds afar  
 Heard a wail with the worshipping blended,  
 And they then knew the sign of the star.

IN PALESTINE.

---

O JEBUS! thou mother of prophets,  
Of soldiers and heroes of song;  
Let the crescent oppress thee and scoff its  
Blind will, let the days do thee wrong;

But to me thou art sacred and splendid,  
And to me thou art matchless and fair,  
As the tawny sweet twilight, with blended  
Sunlight and red stars in her hair.

Thy fair ships once came from sweet Cyprus,  
And fair ships drew in from Cyrene,  
With fruits and rich robes and sweet spices  
For thee and thine eminent queen;

And camels came in with the traces  
Of white desert dust in their hair  
As they kneel'd in the loud market-places,  
And Arabs with lances were there.

'Tis past, and the Bedouin pillows  
His head where thy battlements fall,  
And thy temples flash gold to the billows,  
Never more over turreted wall.

'Tis past, and the green velvet mosses  
Have grown by the sea, and now sore  
Does the far billow mourn for his losses  
Of lifted white ships to the shore.

Let the crescent uprise, let it flash on  
Thy dust in the garden of death,  
Thy chasten'd and passionless passion  
Sunk down to the sound of a breath;

You lived like a king on a throne and  
You died like a queen of the south;  
For you lifted the cup with your own hand  
To your proud and your passionate mouth;

Like a splendid swift serpent surrounded  
With fire and sword, in your side  
You struck your hot fangs and confounded  
Your foes; you struck deep, and so — died.



## BEYOND JORDAN.

---

AND they came to him, mothers of Judah,  
Dark-eyed and in splendor of hair,  
Bearing down over shoulders of beauty,  
And bosoms half hidden, half bare ;

And they brought him their babes and besought  
him  
Half kneeling, with suppliant air,  
To bless the brown cherubs they brought him,  
With holy hands laid in their hair.

Then reaching his hands he said, lowly,  
“Of such is My Kingdom ;” and then  
Took the brown little babes in the holy  
White hands of the Saviour of men ;

Held them close to his heart and caress'd them,  
Put his face down to theirs as in prayer,  
Put their hands to his neck, and so bless'd them  
With baby hands hid in his hair.

## F A I T H.

---

**T**HERE were whimsical turns of the waters,  
There were rhythmical talks of the sea, —  
There were gather'd the darkest-eyed daughters  
Of men, by the dark Galilee.

A blowing full sail, and a parting  
From multitudes, living in him,  
A trembling of lips, and tears starting  
From eyes that look'd downward and dim.

A mantle of night and a marching  
Of storms, and a sounding of seas,  
Of furrows of foam and of arching  
Black billows; a bending of knees;  
The rising of Christ — an entreating —  
Hands reach'd to the seas as he saith,  
“Have Faith!” And lo! still are repeating  
All seas, “Have Faith! Have Faith! Have  
Faith!”

## H O P E.

---

WHAT song is well sung not of sorrow ?  
What triumph well won without pain ?  
What virtue shall be, and not borrow  
Bright lustre from many a stain ?

What birth has there been without travail ?  
What battle well won without blood ?  
What good shall earth see without evil  
Ingarner'd as chaff with the good ?

Lo! the Cross set in rocks by the Roman,  
And nourish'd by blood of the Lamb,  
And water'd by tears of the woman,  
Has flourish'd, has spread like a palm ;

Has spread in the frosts, and far regions  
Of snows in the North, and South sands,  
Where never the tramp of his legions  
Was heard, or has reach'd forth his red hands.

Be thankful: the price and the payment,  
The birth, the privations and scorn,  
The cross, and the parting of raiment,  
Are finish'd. The star brought us morn :

Look starward; stand far and unearthy,  
Free-soul'd as a banner unful'd.  
Be worthy, O brother, be worthy!  
For a God was the price of the world.

## CHARITY.

---

**H**ER hands were clasped downward and doubled,  
Her head was held down and depress'd,  
Her bosom, like white billows troubled,  
Fell fitful and rose in unrest;

Her robes were all dust, and disorder'd  
Her glory of hair, and her brow,  
Her face, that had lifted and lorded,  
Fell pallid and passionless now.

She heard not accusers that brought her  
In mockery hurried to Him,  
Nor heeded, nor said, nor besought her  
With eyes lifted doubtful and dim.

All crush'd and stone-cast in behavior,  
She stood as a marble would stand,  
Then the Saviour bent down, and the Saviour  
In silence wrote on in the sand.

What wrote He? How fondly one lingers  
And questions, what holy command  
Fell down from the beautiful fingers  
Of Jesus, like gems in the sand.

O better the Scian uncherish'd  
Had died ere a note or device  
Of battle was fashion'd, than perish'd  
This only line written by Christ.

He arose and he look'd on the daughter  
Of Eve, like a delicate flower,  
And he heard the revilers that brought her —  
Men stormy, and strong as a tower;

And he said, "She has sinn'd; let the blameless  
Come forward and cast the first stone!"  
But they, they fled shamed and yet shameless,  
And she, she stood white and alone.

Who now shall accuse and arraign us?  
What man shall condemn and disown?  
Since Christ has said only the stainless  
Shall cast at his fellows a stone.

For what man can bare us his bosom,  
And touch with his forefinger there,  
And say, 'Tis as snow, as a blossom?  
Beware of the stainless, beware!

O woman, born first to believe us;  
Yea, also born first to forget;  
Born first to betray and deceive us,  
Yet first to repent and regret!

O first then in all that is human,  
Lo! first where the Nazarene trod,  
O woman! O beautiful woman!  
Be then first in the kingdom of God!

## THE LAST SUPPER.

---

“And when they had sung a hymn they went out  
into the Mount of Olives.”

WHAT song sang the twelve with the Saviour  
When finish'd the sacrament wine?  
Were they bow'd and subdued in behavior,  
Or bold as made bold with a sign?

Were the hairy breasts strong and defiant?  
Were the naked arms brawny and strong?  
Were the bearded lips lifted reliant,  
Thrust forth and full sturdy with song!

What sang they? What sweet song of Zion  
With Christ in their midst like a crown?  
While here sat Saint Peter, the lion;  
And there like a lamb, with head down,



Sat Saint John, with his silken and raven  
Rich hair on his shoulders, and eyes  
Lifting up to the faces unshaven  
Like a sensitive child's in surprise.

Was the song as strong fishermen swinging  
Their nets full of hope to the sea?  
Or low, like the ripple-wave, singing  
Sea-songs on their loved Galilee?

Were they sad with foreshadow of sorrows,  
Like the birds that sing low when the breeze  
Is tip-toe with a tale of to-morrows, —  
Of earthquakes and sinking of seas?

Ah! soft was their song as the waves are  
That fall in low musical moans;  
And sad I should say as the winds are  
That blow by the white gravestones.

A SONG FOR PEACE.

---

I.

AS a tale that is told, as a vision,  
Forgive and forget; for I say  
That the true shall endure the derision  
Of the false till the full of the day;

II.

Ay, forgive as you would be forgiven;  
Ay, forget, lest the ill you have done  
Be remember'd against you in heaven  
And all the days under the sun.

III.

For who shall have bread without labor?  
And who shall have rest without price?  
And who shall hold war with his neighbor  
With promise of peace with the Christ?

## IV.

The years may lay hand on fair heaven ;  
    May place and displace the red stars ;  
May stain them, as blood-stains are driven  
    At sunset in beautiful bars ;

## V.

May shroud them in black till they fret us  
    As clouds with their showers of tears ;  
May grind us to dust and forget us,  
    May the years, O, the pitiless years !

## VI.

The precepts of Christ are beyond them ;  
    The truths by the Nazarene taught,  
With the tramp of the ages upon them,  
    They endure as though ages were nought ;

## VII.

The deserts may drink up the fountains,  
    The forests give place to the plain,  
The main may give place to the mountains,  
    The mountains return to the main ;

## VIII.

Mutations of worlds and mutations  
Of suns may take place, but the reign  
Of Time, and the toils and vexations  
Bequeath them, no, never a stain.

## IX.

Go forth to the fields as one sowing,  
Sing songs and be glad as you go,  
There are seeds that take root without showing,  
And bear some fruit whether or no.

## X.

And the sun shall shine sooner or later,  
Though the midnight breaks ground on the morn,  
Then appeal you to Christ, the Creator,  
And to gray-bearded Time, His first-born.

**FALLEN LEAVES.**

*Some fugitive lines that allure us no more,  
Some fragments that fell to the sea out of time ;  
Unfinish'd and guiltless of thought as of rhyme,  
Thrown now on the world like waifs on the shore*

## FALLEN LEAVES.

---

### PALM LEAVES.

**T**HATCH of palm and a patch of clover,  
Breath of balm in a field of brown,  
The clouds blew up and the birds flew over,  
And I look'd upward: but who look'd down?

Who was true in the test that tried us?  
Who was it mock'd? Who now may mourn  
The loss of a love that a cross denied us,  
With folded hands and a heart forlorn?

God forgive when the fair forget us.  
The worth of a smile, the weight of a tear,  
Why, who can measure? The fates beset us.  
We laugh a moment; we mourn a year.

THOMAS OF TIGRE.

---

**K**ING of Tigre, comrade true!  
Where in all thine isles art thou?

Sailing on Fonseca blue?

Nearing Amapala now?

King of Tigre, where art thou?

Battling for Antilles' queen?

Sabre hilt, or olive bough?

Crown of dust, or laurel green?

Roving love, or marriage vow?

King and comrade, where art thou?

Sailing on Pacific seas?

Pitching tent in Pimo now?

Underneath magnolia trees?

Thatch of palm, or cedar bough?

Soldier-singer, where art thou?



Coasting on the Oregon?  
Saddle, bow, or birchen prow?  
Round the Isles of Amazon?  
Pampas, plain, or mountain brow?  
Prince of rovers, where art thou?

Answer me from out the West.  
I am weary, stricken now;  
Thou art strong and I would rest:  
Reach a hand with lifted brow, —  
King of Tigre, where art thou?

IN YOSEMITE VALLEY.

---

**S**OUND! sound! sound!  
O colossal walls, as crown'd  
In one eternal thunder!  
Sound! sound! sound!  
O ye oceans overhead,  
While we walk, subdued in wonder,  
In the ferns and grasses, under  
And beside the swift Merced!

Fret! fret! fret!  
Streaming, sounding banners, set  
On the giant granite castles  
In the clouds and in the snow!  
But the foe he comes not yet, —  
We are loyal, valiant vassals,  
And we touch the trailing tassels,  
Of the banners far below.

Surge! surge! surge!  
From the white Sierra's verge,

To the very valley blossom.

Surge! surge! surge!

Yet the song-bird builds a home,  
And the mossy branches cross them,  
And the tasselled tree-tops toss them,  
In the clouds of falling foam.

Sweep! sweep! sweep!

O ye heaven-born and deep,  
In one dread, unbroken chorus!  
We may wonder or may weep, —  
We may wait on God before us;  
We may shout or lift a hand, —  
We may bow down and deplore us,  
But may never understand.

Beat! beat! beat!

We advance, but would retreat  
From this restless, broken breast  
Of the earth in a convulsion.  
We would rest, but dare not rest,  
For the angel of expulsion  
From this Paradise below  
Waves us onward and . . . we go.

DEAD IN THE SIERRAS.

---

**H**IS footprints have failed us,  
Where berries are red,  
And madroños are rankest.  
The hunter is dead!

The grizzly may pass  
By his half-open door;  
May pass and repass  
On his path, as of yore;

The panther may crouch  
In the leaves on his limb;  
May scream and may scream, —  
It is nothing to him.

Prone, bearded, and breasted  
Like columns of stone;  
And tall as a pine —  
As a pine overthrown!

His camp-fires gone,  
What else can be done  
Than let him sleep on  
Till the light of the sun?

Ay, tombless! what of it?  
Marble is dust,  
Cold and repellent;  
And iron is rust.

IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

---

WHERE the cocoa and cactus are neighbors,  
Where the fig and the fir-tree are one;  
Where the brave corn is lifting bent sabres  
And flashing them far in the sun;

Where the maidens blush red in their tresses  
Of night, and retreat to advance,  
And the dark, sweeping eyelash expresses  
Deep passion, half hush'd in a trance;

Where the fig is in leaf, where the blossom  
Of orange is fragrant as fair, —  
Santa Barbara's balm in the bosom,  
Her sunny, soft winds in the hair;

Where the grape is most luscious, where laden  
Long branches bend double with gold;  
Los Angelos leans like a maiden,  
Red, blushing, half shy, and half bold.

Where passion was born, and where poets  
Are deeper in silence than song,  
A love knows a love, and may know its  
Reward, yet may never know wrong.

Where passion was born and where blushes  
Gave birth to my songs of the South,  
And a song is a love-tale, and rushes,  
Unchid, through the red of the mouth ;

Where an Adam in Eden reposes,  
I repose, I am glad, and take wine  
In the clambering, redolent roses,  
And under my fig and my vine.

WHO SHALL SAY ?

---

**A** SINKING sun, a sky of red,  
In bars and banners overhead,  
And blown apart like curtains drawn ;  
Afar a-sea a blowing sail  
That shall go down before the dawn ;  
And they are passion-toss'd and pale  
The two that stand and look alone  
And silent, as two shafts of stone  
Set head and foot above the dead.

They watch the ship, the weary sun,  
The banner'd streamers every one,  
Till darkness hides them in her hair.  
The winds come in as cold as death,  
And not a palm above the pair  
To lift a lance or break a breath.



The hollow of the ocean fills  
Like sounding hollow halls of stone,  
And not a banner streams above ;  
The sea is set in snowy hills.  
The ship is lost. The winds are blown  
Unheeded now ; yet who shall say :  
“ We had been wiser so than they  
Who wept and watch'd the parting sail  
In silence ; mute with sorrow, pale  
With weeping for departed love” ?

## A LOVE-SONG.

---

**I**F earth is an oyster, love is the pearl,  
As pure as pure caresses ;  
Then loosen the gold of your hair, my girl,  
And hide my pearl in your tresses.

So, coral to coral and pearl to pearl,  
And a cloud of curls above me,  
O bury me deep, my beautiful girl,  
And then confess you love me.

The world goes over my beautiful girl  
In glitter and gold and odor of roses,  
In eddies of splendor, in oceans of pearl,  
But here the heaven reposes. . . .

The world it is wide ; men go their ways,  
But love it is wise, and of all the hours,  
And of all the beautiful sun-born days,  
It sips their sweets as the bees sip flowers.

## DOWN INTO THE DUST.

---

IS it worth while that we jostle a brother  
    Bearing his load on the rough road of life?  
Is it worth while that we jeer at each other  
    In blackness of heart? — that we war to the knife?  
God pity us all in our pitiful strife.

God pity us all as we jostle each other;  
    God pardon us all for the triumphs we feel  
When a fellow goes down 'neath his load on the heather,  
    Pierced to the heart: words are keener than steel,  
    And mightier far for woe or for weal.

Were it not well, in this brief little journey  
    On over the isthmus, down into the tide,  
We give him a fish instead of a serpent,  
    Ere folding the hands to be and abide  
    Forever and aye in dust at his side?

Look at the roses saluting each other ;  
Look at the herds all at peace on the plain —  
Man, and man only, makes war on his brother,  
And laughs in his heart at his peril and pain ;  
Shamed by the beasts that go down on the plain.

Is it worth while that we battle to humble  
Some poor fellow-soldier down into the dust ?  
God pity us all ! Time eftsoon will tumble  
All of us together like leaves in a gust,  
Humbled indeed down into the dust.

IN SAN FRANCISCO.

---

**L**O! here sit we mid the sun-down seas  
And the white sierras. The swift, sweet breeze  
Is about us here; and a sky so fair  
Is bending above in its azaline hue,  
That you gaze and you gaze in delight, and **you**  
See God and the portals of heaven there.

Yea, here sit we where the white ships ride  
In the morn, made glad and forgetful of night,  
The white and the brown men side by side  
In search of the truth, and betrothed to the right;  
For these are the idols, and only these,  
Of men that abide by the sun-down seas.

The brown brave hand of the harvester,  
The delicate hand of the prince untried,  
The rough hard hand of the carpenter,  
They are all upheld with an equal pride;  
And the prize it is his to be crown'd or blest,  
Prince or peon, who bears him best.

Yea, here sit we by the golden gate,  
Nor demanding much, but inviting you all,  
Nor publishing loud, but daring to wait,  
And great in much that the days deem small ;  
And the gate it is God's, to Cathay, Japan, —  
And who shall shut it in the face of man ?

## SHADOWS OF SHASTA.

---

**I**N the place where the grizzly reposes,  
Under peaks where a right is a wrong,  
I have memories richer than roses,  
Sweet echoes more sweet than a song ;

Sounds sweet as the voice of a singer  
Made sacred with sorrows unsaid,  
And a love that implores me to linger  
For the love of dead days and their dead.

But I turn, throwing kisses, returning  
To strife and to turbulent men,  
As to learn to be wise, as unlearning  
All things that were manliest then.

A T   S E A.

---

WE part as ships on a pathless main,  
Gayly enough, for the sense of pain  
Is asleep at first: but ghosts will arise  
When we would repose, and the forms will come  
And walk when we walk, and will not be dumb,  
Nor yet forget with their wakeful eyes.

When we most need rest, and the perfect sleep,  
Some hand will reach from the dark, and keep  
The curtains drawn and the pillows toss'd  
Like a tide of foam; and one will say  
At night, — O Heaven, that it were day!  
And one by night through the misty tears  
Will say, — O Heaven, the days are years,  
And I would to Heaven that the waves were cross'd.



A MEMORY OF SANTA BARBARA.

---

**Y**EA, Santa Barbara is fair ;  
A sunny clime and sweet to **touch**,  
For tamer men of gentler mien,  
But as for me — another scene.  
A land below the Alps I know,  
Set well with grapes and girt with **much**  
Of woodland beauty ; I shall share  
My rides by night below the light  
Of Manua Loa, ride below  
The steep and starry Hebron **height** ;  
Shall lift my hands in many lands,  
See South Sea palm, see Northland **fir**,  
See white-wing'd swans, see red-bill'd doves ;  
See many lands and many loves,  
But never more the face of her.

And what her name or where the place  
Of her who makes my Mecca's prayer,  
Concerns you not ; not any trace

Of entrance to my temple's shrine  
Remains. The memory is mine,  
And none shall pass the portals there.

The present! take it, hold it thine,  
But that one hour out from all  
The years that are, or yet shall fall,  
I pluck it out, I name it mine,  
And whistle by the rest, and laugh  
To see it blown about as chaff;  
That hour bound in sunny sheaves,  
With tassell'd shocks of golden shine,  
That hour, wound in scarlet leaves,  
Is mine. I stretch a hand and swear  
An oath that breaks into a prayer;  
By heaven, it is wholly mine!

I see the gold and purple gleam  
Of autumn leaves, a reach of seas,  
A silent rider like a dream  
Moves by, a mist of mysteries,  
And these are mine, and only these,  
Yet they be more in my esteem,  
Than silver'd sails on coral'd seas.

Let red-leaf'd boughs sweet fruits bestow,  
Let fame of foreign lands be mine,  
Let blame of faithless men befall ;  
It matters nothing ; over all,  
One hour arches like a bow  
Of promise blent in many hues,  
That tide nor time shall bid decline ;  
Or storms of all the years refuse.

SUMMER FROSTS.

---

FROSTS of an hour! Fruits of a season!  
Who foresees them? Slain in a day,  
The loves of a lustrum. Who shall say  
The heart has sense or the soul has reason?

. . . One not knowing and one not caring.  
. . . Leaves in their pathway. Let them part;  
She with the gifts of a gracious bearing,  
He with the pangs of a passionate heart.

SLEEP THAT WAS NOT SLEEP.

---

. . . . .  
**B**ACK there, madam! Mark you, there!

I lie crouch'd against the wall,  
And I dare not lift a finger,  
Dare not lift my eyes or call,  
While you hesitate and linger,  
Leering through your tangled hair;  
Drop the curtains! Back, I say!  
Lift aside your tangled hair  
Overhanging coffin'd clay,  
Resurrected for a day,  
Cold and wet as cast-away.

. . . . .  
. . . It was hard, but what was better  
For a man so strangely born  
Underneath the stars or sun,  
Than the savage race I run  
Through the midnight to the morn,  
Spite of fate or prison fetter?

Through the darkness to the dawn,  
 What beneath the sun was better?  
 Then I turn'd, and . . . you were gone.  
 . . . Glory had a price; I paid her!  
 Truth was doubtful; I betray'd her!  
 You obey'd her to the letter.  
 And what profits? nothing, save  
 That I have slain the days full well, —  
 That you . . . are dead and in your grave;  
 That I . . . am living and in hell.

. . . . .  
 Yea! before-time you beset me,  
 Laugh'd and vow'd to not forget me,  
 Leer'd and mock'd with all your might  
 When the fever held its riot  
 And the doctors bade be quiet.  
 Christ! you came to my bedside  
 In the middle of the night,  
 With your two hands on your heart, —  
 And you press'd on my bedside,  
 And so press'd upon your heart  
 That the blood, all thick and blacken'd,  
 When your bony fingers slacken'd,  
 Oozed between them to the floor, —  
 Oh, that ghostly, gory floor!

And your mantle it was moulded,  
 And streak'd yellow where it folded,  
 Then your heavy, slimy hair,  
 On your bosom blue and bare,  
 Which you did not try to hide!  
 That you know was nothing fair,  
 As you press'd on my bedside!  
 Then your eyes had such a glare,  
 And the smell of death was there,  
 And the spirits that were with you  
 Whistled through the mossy door,  
 And they danced upon my bosom,  
 And they tangled up my hair,  
 And made crosses on the floor.

. . . . .

It was not my fault, remember,  
     All this life of black disasters,  
 All this life of dark December,  
     All this heart-sickness and sadness.  
 Though we both did have our masters,  
     Yours was Love and mine Ambition,  
 Mine is driving me to madness,  
     Yours, it drove you to perdition.

. . . . .

Yes, some time, if you will have it,  
When this hot brain is less rabid,  
When our masters both are sleeping,  
When the storm the stars is keeping,  
Leave that yellow moulded mantle,  
That dull, sullen, frozen stare,  
And the cold death in your hair,  
And I will no more upbraid you ;  
Leave the darkness where they laid you,  
Leave the dampness you inhabit.

I will meet you just one minute  
By the oak-tree, you remember,  
With the grape-vine tangled in it ;  
I will tell you one sweet story,  
With sweet balm and healing in it '  
You will sigh *Memento mori*, —  
But remember, now remember,  
I remain there but one minute

• . . .



“SIERRAS ADIOS.”

---

WITH the buckler and sword into battle  
I moved, I was matchless and strong;  
I stood in the rush and the rattle  
Of shot, and the spirit of song  
Was upon me; and youthful and splendid  
My armor flashed far in the sun  
As I sang of my land. It is ended,  
And all has been done, and undone.

I descend with my dead in the trenches,  
To-night I bend down on the plain  
In the dark, and a memory wrenches  
The soul; I turn up to the rain  
The cold and the beautiful faces,  
Ay, faces forbidden for years,  
Turn'd up to my face with the traces  
Of blood to the white rain of tears.

Count backward the years on your fingers,  
While forward rides yonder white moon,  
Till the soul turns aside, and it lingers  
By a grave that was born of a June;  
By the grave of a soul, where the grasses  
Are tangled as witch-woven hair;  
Where footprints are not, and where passes  
Not any thing known anywhere;

By a grave without tombstone or token,  
At a tomb where not fern leaf or fir,  
Root or branch, was once bended or broken,  
To bestow there the body of her;  
For it lives, and the soul perish'd only,  
And alone in that land, with these hands,  
Did I lay the dead soul, and all lonely  
Does it lie to this day in the sands.

Lo! a wild little maiden with tresses  
Of gold on the wind of the hills:  
Ay, a wise little maiden that guesses  
Some good in the cruelest ills;  
And a babe with its baby-fists doubled,  
And thrust to my beard, and within,

As he laughs like a fountain half-troubled,  
When my finger chucks under his chin.

Should the dead not decay, when the culture  
Of fields be resumed in the May?

Lo! the days are dark-wing'd as the vulture!

Let them swoop, then, and bear them away:  
By the walks let me cherish red flowers,  
By the wall teach one tendril to run;  
Lest I wake, and I watch all the hours  
I shall ever see under the sun.

It is well, may be so, to bear losses,  
And to bend and bow down to the rod;  
If the scarlet red bars and the crosses  
Be but rounds up the ladder to God.  
But this mocking of men! Ah, that enters  
The marrow! the murmurs that swell  
To reproach for my song-love, that centres,  
Vast land, upon thee, are not well.

And I go, thanking God in my going,  
That an ocean flows stormy and deep,  
And yet gentler to me is its flowing  
Than the storm that forbids me to sleep.

And I go, thanking God, with hands lifted  
That a land lies beyond where the free  
And the gentle of heart and the gifted  
Of soul have a home in the sea.

THE SHIP IN THE DESERT

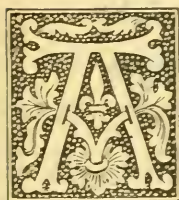
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## THE SHIP IN THE DESERT.

### I.



MAN in middle Aridzone  
Stood by the desert's edge alone,  
And long he look'd, and lean'd.

He peer'd,

Above his twirl'd and twisted beard,  
Beneath his black and slouchy hat . . .

Nay, nay, the tale is not of that.

A skin-clad trapper, toe-a-tip,  
Stood on a mountain top, and he  
Look'd long and still and eagerly.

“It looks so like some lonesome ship

That sails this ghostly lonely sea, —  
This-dried-up desert sea," said he,  
"These tawny sands of Arazit" . . .  
Avaunt! the tale is not of it.

A chief from out the desert's rim  
Rode swift as twilight swallows swim,  
Or eagle blown from eyrie nest.  
His trim-limb'd steed was black as night,  
His long black hair had blossom'd white,  
With feathers from the koko's crest ;  
His iron face was flush'd and red,  
His eyes flash'd fire as he fled,  
For he had seen unsightly things ;  
Had felt the flapping of their wings.

A wild and wiry man was he,  
This tawny chief of Shoshonee ;  
And O his supple steed was fleet !  
About his breast flapp'd panther skins,



About his eager flying feet  
Flapp'd beaded, braided moccasins :  
He rode as rides the hurricane ;  
He seem'd to swallow up the plain ;  
He rode as never man did ride,  
He rode, for ghosts rode at his side,  
And on his right a grizzled grim —  
No, no, this tale is not of him.

An Indian warrior lost his way  
While prowling on this desert's edge  
In fragrant sage and prickly hedge,  
When suddenly he saw a sight,  
And turn'd his steed in eager flight.  
He rode right through the edge of day,  
He rode into the rolling night.

He lean'd, he reach'd an eager face,  
His black wolf skin flapp'd out and in,  
And tiger claws on tiger skin

Held seat and saddle to its place ;  
But that gray ghost that clutch'd thereat . . .  
Arrêtè! the tale is not of that.

A chieftain touch'd the desert's rim  
One autumn eve : he rode alone  
And still as moon-made shadows swim.  
He stopp'd, he stood as still as stone,  
He lean'd, he look'd, there glisten'd bright  
From out the yellow yielding sand  
A golden cup with jewell'd rim.  
He lean'd him low, he reach'd a hand,  
He caught it up, he gallop'd on,  
He turn'd his head, he saw a sight . . .  
His panther skins flew to the wind,  
The dark, the desert lay behind ;  
The tawny Ishmaelite was gone ;  
But something sombre as death is . . .  
Tut, tut! the tale is not of this.

A mountaineer, storm-stained and brown,  
From farthest desert touched the town,  
And, striding through the crowd, held up  
Above his head a jewell'd cup.  
He put two fingers to his lip,  
He whisper'd wild, he stood a-tip,  
And lean'd the while with lifted hand,  
And said, "A ship lies yonder dead,"  
And said, "Doubloons lie sown in sand  
In yon far desert dead and brown,  
Beyond where wave-wash'd walls look down,  
As thick as stars set overhead.  
That three shipmasts uplift like trees" . . .  
Away! the tale is not of these.

An Indian hunter held a plate  
Of gold above his lifted head,  
Around which kings had sat in state . . .  
" 'Tis from that desert ship," they said,  
" That sails with neither sail nor breeze,

Or galleon, that sank below  
Of old, in olden dried-up seas,  
Ere yet the red men drew the bow.”

But wrinkled women wagg'd the head,  
And walls of warriors sat that night  
In black, nor streak of battle red,  
Around against the red camp light,  
And told such wondrous tales as these  
Of wealth within their dried-up seas.

And one, girt well in tiger's skin,  
Who stood, like Saul, above the rest,  
With dangling claws about his breast,  
A belt without, a blade within,  
A warrior with a painted face,  
And lines that shadow'd stern and grim,  
Stood pointing east from his high place,  
And hurling thought like cannon shot,  
Stood high with visage flush'd and hot . . .  
But, stay! this tale is not of him.

## II.

BY Arizona's sea of sand  
Some bearded miners, gray and old,  
And resolute in search of gold,  
Sat down to tap the savage land.

They tented in a cañon's mouth  
That gaped against the warm wide south,  
And underneath a wave-wash'd wall,  
Where now nor rains nor winds may fall,  
They delved the level salt-white sands  
For gold, with bold and hornéd hands.

A miner stood beside his mine,  
He pull'd his beard, then look'd away  
Across the level sea of sand,  
Beneath his broad and hairy hand,  
A hand as hard as knots of pine.

“It looks so like a sea,” said he.  
He pull’d his beard, and he did say,  
“It looks just like a dried-up sea.”  
Again he pull’d that beard of his,  
But said no other thing than this.

A stalwart miner dealt a stroke,  
And struck a buried beam of oak.  
An old ship’s beam the shaft appear’d,  
With storm-worn faded figure-head.  
The miner twisted, twirled his beard,  
Lean’d on his pick-axe as he spoke:  
“’Tis from some long-lost ship,” he said,  
“Some laden ship of Solomon  
That sail’d these lonesome seas upon  
In search of Ophir’s mine, ah me!  
That sail’d this dried-up desert sea.” . . .  
Nay, nay, ’tis not a tale of gold,  
But ghostly land storm-slain and old.

## III.

BUT this the tale. Along a wide  
And sounding stream some silent braves,  
That stole along the farther side  
Through sweeping wood that swept the waves  
Like long arms reach'd across the tide,  
Kept watch and ward and still defied. . . .

A low black boat that hugg'd the shores,  
An ugly boat, an ugly crew,  
Thick-lipp'd and woolly-headed slaves,  
That bow'd, that bent the white-ash oars,  
That cleft the murky waters through,  
That climb'd the swift Missouri's waves, —  
The surly, woolly-headed slaves.

A grand old Neptune in the prow,  
Gray-hair'd, and white with touch of time,

Yet strong as in his middle prime ;  
A grizzled king, I see him now,  
With beard as blown by wind of seas,  
And wild and white as white sea-storm  
Stand up, turn suddenly, look back  
Along the low boat's wrinkled track,  
Then fold his mantle round a form  
Broad-built as any Hercules,  
And so sit silently.

Beside

The grim old sea-king sits his bride,  
A sun-land blossom, rudely torn  
From tropic forests to be worn  
Above as stern a breast as e'er  
Stood king at sea or anywhere. . . .

Another boat with other crew  
Came swift and silent in her track,  
And now shot shoreward, now shot back,  
And now sat rocking fro and to,



But never once lost sight of her.  
Tall, sunburnt, southern men were these  
From isles of blue Caribbean seas,  
And one, that woman's worshipper,  
Who looked on her, and loved but her.

And one, that one, was wild as seas  
That wash the far dark Oregon,  
And ever leaning, urging on,  
And standing up in restless ease,  
He seem'd as lithe and free and tall  
And restless as the boughs that stir  
Perpetual topt poplar trees.

And one, that one, had eyes to teach  
The art of love, and tongue to preach  
Life's hard and sober homilies ;  
And yet his eager hands, his speech,  
All spoke the bold adventurer ;  
While zoned about the belt of each  
There swung a girt of steel, till all  
Did seem a walking arsenal.

## IV.

PURSUER and pursued. And who  
Are these that make the sable crew ;  
These mighty Titans, black and nude,  
And hairy-breasted, bronzed and broad  
Of chest as any demi-god,  
That dare this peopled solitude ?

And who is he that leads them here,  
And breaks the hush of wave and wood ?  
Comes he for evil or for good ?  
Brave Jesuit or bold buccaneer ?

Nay, these be idle themes. Let pass.  
These be but men. We may forget  
The wild sea-king, the tawny brave,  
The frowning wold, the woody shore,  
The tall-built, sunburnt men of Mars. . . .

But what and who was she, the fair?  
The fairest face that ever yet  
Look'd in a wave as in a glass;  
That look'd as look the still, far stars,  
So woman-like, into the wave  
To contemplate their beauty there,  
Yet look as looking anywhere?

And who of all the world was she?  
A bride, or not a bride? A thing  
To love? A prison'd bird to sing?  
You shall not know. That shall not be  
Brought from the future's great profound  
This side the happy hunting-ground.

I only saw her, heard the sound  
Of murky waters gurgling round  
In counter-currents from the shore,  
But heard the long, strong stroke of oar  
Against the waters gray and vast.  
I only saw her as she pass'd —

A great, sad beauty, in whose eyes  
Lay all the loves of Paradise. . . .

You shall not know her — she who sat  
Unconscious in my heart all time  
I dream'd and wove this wayward rhyme,  
And loved and did not blush thereat.

The sunlight of a sunlit land,  
A land of fruit, of flowers, and  
A land of love and calm delight ;  
A land where night is not like night,  
And noon is but a name for rest,  
And love for love is reckoned best.

Where conversations of the eyes  
Are all enough ; where beauty thrills  
The heart like hues of harvest-home ;  
Where rage lies down, where passion dies,  
Where peace hath her abiding place. . . .

A face that lifted up ; sweet face  
That was so like a life begun,  
That rose for me a rising sun  
Above the bended seven hills  
Of dead and risen old new Rome.

Not that I deem'd she loved me. Nay  
I dared not even dream of that.  
I only say I knew her ; say  
She ever sat before me, sat  
All still and voiceless as love is,  
And ever look'd so fair, divine,  
Her hush'd, vehement soul fill'd mine,  
And overflowed with Runic bliss,  
And made itself a part of this.

O you had loved her sitting there,  
Half hidden in her loosen'd hair :  
Why, you had loved her for her eyes,  
Their large and melancholy look

Of tenderness, and well mistook  
Their love for light of Paradise.

Yea, loved her for her large dark eyes ,  
Yea, loved her for her brow's soft brown ,  
Her hand as light as heaven's bars ;  
Yea, loved her for her mouth. Her mouth  
Was roses gather'd from the south,  
The warm south side of Paradise,  
And breathed upon and handed down,  
By angels on a stair of stars.

Her mouth ! 'twas Egypt's mouth of old,  
Push'd out and pouting full and bold  
With simple beauty where she sat.  
Why, you had said, on seeing her,  
This creature comes from out the dim  
Far centuries, beyond the rim  
Of time's remotest reach or stir.  
And he who wrought Semiramis

And shaped the Sibyls, seeing this,  
Had bow'd and made a shrine thereat,  
And all his life had worshipp'd her,  
Devout as north-Nile worshipper.

I dared not dream she loved me. Nay,  
Her love was proud ; and pride is loth  
To look with favor, own it fond  
Of one the world loves not to-day. . . .  
No matter if she loved or no,  
God knows I loved enough for both,  
And knew her as you shall not know  
Till you have known sweet death, and you  
Have cross'd the dark ; gone over to  
The great majority beyond.

## V.

THE black men bow'd, the long oars bent,  
They struck as if for sweet life's sake,  
And one look'd back, but no man spake,  
And all wills bent to one intent.

On through the golden fringe of day  
Into the deep, dark night, away  
And up the wave 'mid walls of wood  
They cleft, they climb'd, they bowed, they  
bent,  
But one stood tall, and restless stood,  
And one sat still all night, all day,  
And gazed in helpless wonderment.

Her hair pour'd down like darkling wine,  
The black men lean'd, a sullen line,



The bent oars kept a steady song,  
And all the beams of bright sunshine  
That touch'd the waters wild and strong,  
Fell drifting down and out of sight  
Like fallen leaves, and it was night.

And night and day, and many days  
They climb'd the sudden, dark gray tide,  
And she sat silent at his side,  
And he sat turning many ways :

Sat watching for his wily foe ;  
At last he baffled him. And yet  
His brow gloom'd dark, his lips were set ;  
He lean'd, he peer'd through boughs, as though  
From heart of forests deep and dim  
Grim shapes could come confronting him.

A grand, uncommon man was he,  
Broad-shoulder'd, and of Gothic form,

Strong-built, and hoary like a sea ;  
A high sea broken up by storm.

His face was brown and overwrought  
By seams and shadows born of thought,  
Not over gentle. And his eyes,  
Bold, restless, resolute, and deep,  
Too deep to flow like shallow fount  
Of common men where waters mount  
And men bend down their heads and weep —  
Fierce, lumin'd eyes, where flames might rise  
Instead of flood, and flash and sweep —  
Strange eyes, that look'd unsatisfied  
With all things fair or otherwise ;  
As if his inmost soul had cried  
All time for something yet unseen,  
Some long-desired thing denied.

A man whose soul was mightier far  
Than his great self, and surged and fell

About himself as heaving seas  
Lift up and lash, and boom, and swell  
Above some solitary bar:  
That bursts through blown Samoa's sea,  
And wreck and toss eternally.

## VI.

BELOW the overhanging boughs  
The oars laid idle at the last.  
Yet long he look'd for hostile prows  
From out the wood and down the stream.  
They came not, and he came to dream  
Pursuit abandon'd, danger past.

He fell'd the oak, he built a home  
Of new-hewn wood with busy hand,  
And said, "My wanderings are told."  
And said, "No more by sea, by land,  
Shall I break rest, or drift, or roam,  
For I am worn, and I grow old."

And there, beside that surging tide,  
Where gray waves meet, and wheel, and strike,  
The man sat down as satisfied

To sit and rest unto the end ;  
As if the strong man here had found  
A sort of brother in this sea, —  
This surging, sounding majesty  
Of troubled water, so profound,  
So sullen, strong, and lion-like,  
So sinuous and foamy bound.

Hast seen Missouri cleave the wood  
In sounding whirlpools to the sea ?  
What soul hath known such majesty ?  
What man stood by and understood ?

By pleasant Omaha I stood,  
Beneath a fringe of mailéd wood,  
And watch'd the mighty waters heave,  
And surge, and strike, and wind, and weave,  
And make strange sounds and mutterings,  
As if of dark unutter'd things.

By pleasant high-built Omaha  
I stand. The waves beneath me run  
All stain'd and yellow, dark and dun,  
And deep as death's sweet mystery, —  
A thousand Tibers roll'd in one.  
I count on other years. I draw  
The curtain from the scenes to be.  
I see another Rome. I see  
A Cæsar tower in the land,  
And take her in his iron hand.  
I see a throne, a king, a crown,  
A high-built capital thrown down.

I see my river rise . . .

Away!

The world's cold commerce of to-day  
Demands some idle flippant theme ;  
And I, your minstrel, must sit by,  
And harp along the edge of morn,  
And sing and celebrate to please

The multitude, the mob, and these  
They know not pearls from yellow corn.  
Yea, idly sing or silent dream ;  
My harp, my hand is yours, but I —  
My soul moves down that sounding stream.

Adieu, dun, mighty stream, adieu !  
Adown thine wooded walls, inwrought  
With rose of Cherokee and vine,  
Was never heard a minstrel's note,  
And none would heed a song of mine.  
I find expression for my thought  
In other themes. . . . List ! I have seen  
A grizzly sporting on the green  
Of west sierras with a goat,  
And finding pastime all day through. . . .

O sounding, swift Missouri, born  
Of Rocky Mountains, and begot  
On bed of snow at birth of morn,

Of thunder-storms and elements  
That reign where puny man comes not,  
With fountain-head in fields of gold,  
And wide arms twining wood and wold,  
And everlasting snowy tents, —  
I hail you from the Orient.

Shall I return to you once more?  
Shall take occasion by the throat  
And thrill with wild Æolian note?  
Shall sit and sing by your deep shore?  
Shall shape a reed and pipe of yore  
And wake old melodies made new,  
And thrill thine leaf-land through and through?



## VII.

THEN long the long oars idle lay.  
The cabin's smoke came forth and curl'd  
Right lazily from river brake,  
And Time went by the other way.  
And who was she, the strong man's pride?  
This one fair woman of the world.  
A captive? Bride, or not a bride?  
Her eyes, men say, grew sad and dim  
With watching from the river's rim,  
As waiting for some face denied.  
And yet she never wept or spake,  
Or breath'd his name for her love's sake.

Yea, who was she? — none ever knew.  
The great strong river swept around,  
The cabins nestled in its bend,  
But kept its secrets. Wild birds flew

In bevvies by. The black men found  
Diversion in the chase: and wide  
Old Morgan ranged the wood, nor friend,  
Nor foeman ever at his side  
Or shared his forests deep and dim,  
Or cross'd his path or question'd him.

He stood as one who found and named  
The middle world. What visions flamed  
Athwart the west! What prophecies  
Were his, the gray old man, that day  
Who stood alone and look'd away, —  
Awest from out the waving trees,  
Against the utter sundown seas.

Alone oft-time beside the stream  
He stood and gazed as in a dream,  
As if he knew a life unknown  
To those who knew him thus alone.

His eyes were gray and overborne

By shaggy brows, his strength was shorn,  
Yet still he ever gazed awest,  
As one who would not, could not rest.

And whence came he? and when, and why?  
Men question'd men, but nought was known  
Save that he roam'd the woods alone,  
And lived alone beneath the stir  
Of leaves, and letting life go by,  
Did look on her and only her.

And had he fled with bloody hand?  
Or had he loved some Helen fair,  
And battling lost both land and town?  
Say, did he see his walls go down,  
Then choose from all his treasures there  
This love, and seek some other land?

And yet the current of his life  
Mostlike had flow'd like oil; had been

A monk's, for aught that all men knew.  
Mostlike the sad man's only sin,  
A cruel one, for thought is strife,  
Had been the curse of thought all through.

Mayhap his splendid soul had spurn'd  
Insipid, sweet society,  
That stinks in nostrils of all men  
High-born and fearless-souled and free; —  
That tasting to satiety  
Her hollow sweets he proudly turn'd,  
And did rebel and curse her then;  
And then did stoop and from the sod  
Pluck this one flower for his breast,  
Then turn to solitude for rest,  
And turn from man in search of God.

And as to that, I reckon it  
But right, but Christian-like and just,  
And closer after Christ's own plan,

To take men as you find your man,  
To take a soul from God on trust,  
A fit man, or yourself unfit :

To take man free from the control  
Of man's opinion : take a soul  
In its own troubled world, all fair  
As you behold it then and there,  
Set naked in your sight, alone,  
Unnamed, unheralded, unknown :

Yea, take him bravely from the hand  
That reach'd him forth from nothingness,  
That took his tired soul to keep  
All night, then reach'd him out from sleep  
And sat him equal in the land ;  
Sent out from where the angels are,  
A soul new-born, without one whit  
Of bought or borrow'd character.

Ah, bless us ! if we only could

As ready spin and willing weave  
Sweet tales of charity and good ;  
Could we as willing clip the wings  
Of cruel tales as pleasant things,  
How sweet 'twould then be to believe,  
How good 'twould then be to be good.

## VIII.

THE squirrels chatter'd in the leaves,  
The turkeys call'd from pawpaw wood,  
The deer with lifted nostrils stood,  
And humming-birds did wind and weave,  
Swim round about, dart in and out,  
Through fragrant forest edge made red,  
Made many-colour'd overhead  
By climbing blossoms sweet with bee  
And yellow rose of Cherokee.

Then frosts came by and touch'd the leaves,  
Then time hung ices on the eaves,  
Then cushion snows possess'd the ground,  
And so the seasons kept their round ;  
Yet still old Morgan went and came  
From cabin door to forest dim,  
Through wold of snows, through wood of flame,

Through golden Indian-summer days,  
Hung round in soft September haze,  
And no man cross'd or question'd him.

Nay, there was that in his stern air  
That held e'en these rude men aloof:  
None came to share the broad-built roof  
That rose so fortress-like beside  
The angry, rushing, sullen tide,  
And only black men gather'd there,  
The old man's slaves, in dull content,  
Black, silent, and obedient.

Then men push'd westward through his wood,  
His wild beasts fled, and now he stood  
Confronting men. He had endear'd  
No man, but still he went and came  
Apart, and shook his beard and strode  
His ways alone, and bore his load,  
If load it were, apart, alone.



Then men grew busy with a name  
That no man loved, that many fear'd,  
And cowards stoop'd, and cast a stone,  
As at some statue overthrown.

Some said a pirate blown by night  
From isles of calm Caribbean land,  
Who left his comrades ; that he fled  
With many prices on his head,  
And that he bore in his hot flight  
The gather'd treasure of his band,  
In bloody and unholy hand.

Then some did say a privateer,  
Then others, that he fled from fear,  
And climb'd the mad Missouri far,  
To where the friendly forests are ;  
And that his illy-gotten gold  
Lay sunken in his black boat's hold.  
Then others, watching his fair bride,  
Said, " There is something more beside."

Some said, a stolen bride was she,  
And that his strong arm in the strife  
Was red with her own brother's life,  
And that her lover from the sea  
Lay waiting for his chosen wife,  
And that a day of reckoning  
Lay waiting for this grizzled king.

O sweet child-face, that ever gazed  
From out the wood and down the wave!  
O eyes, that never once were raised!  
O mouth, that never murmur gave!

**IX.**

O DARK-EYED Ina ! All the years  
Brought her but solitude and tears.  
Lo ! ever looking out she stood  
Adown the wave, adown the wood,  
Adown the strong stream to the south,  
Sad-faced, and sorrowful. Her mouth  
Push'd out so pitiful. Her eyes  
Fill'd full of sorrow and surprise.

Men say that looking from her place  
A love would sometimes light her face,  
As if sweet recollections stirr'd  
Her heart and broke its loneliness,  
Like far sweet songs that come to us,  
So soft, so sweet, they are not heard,

So far, so faint, they fill the air,  
A fragrance filling anywhere.

And wasting all her summer years  
That utter'd only through her tears,  
The seasons went, and still she stood  
For ever watching down the wood.

Yet in her heart there held a strife  
With all this wasting of sweet life  
That none who have not lived and died,  
Held up the two hands crucified  
Between the ways on either hand,  
Can look upon or understand.

The blackest rain-clouds muffle fire :  
Between a duty and desire  
There lies no middle way or land :  
Take thou the right or the left hand,  
And so pursue, nor hesitate  
To boldly give your hand to fate.

In helpless indecisions lie  
The rocks on which we strike and die.  
'Twere better far to choose the worst  
Of all life's ways than to be cursed  
With indecision. Turn and choose  
Your way, then all the world refuse.

And men who saw her still do say  
That never once her lips were heard,  
By gloaming dusk or shining day,  
To utter or pronounce one word.  
Men went and came, and still she stood  
In silence watching down the wood.

Yea, still she stood and look'd away,  
By tawny night, by fair-fac'd day,  
Adown the wood beyond the land,  
Her hollow face upon her hand,  
Her black, abundant hair all down  
About her loose, ungather'd gown.

And what her thought? her life unsaid?  
Was it of love? of hate? of him,  
The tall, dark Southerner?

Her head  
Bow'd down. The day fell dim  
Upon her eyes. She bow'd, she slept.  
She waken'd then, and waking wept.

She dream'd, perchance, of island home,  
A land of palms ring'd round with foam,  
Where summer on her shelly shore  
Sits down and rests for evermore.

And one who watch'd her wasted youth  
Did guess, mayhap with much of truth,  
Her heart was with that band that came  
Against her isle with sword and flame:  
And this the tale he told of her  
And her fierce, silent follower:

A Spaniard and adventurer,  
A man who saw her, loved, and fell  
Upon his knees and worshipp'd her ;  
And with that fervor and mad zeal  
That only sunborn bosoms feel,  
Did vow to love, to follow her  
Unto the altar . . . or to hell :

That then her gray-hair'd father bore  
The beauteous maiden hurriedly  
From out her fair isle of the sea  
To sombre wold and woody shore  
And far away, and kept her well,  
As from a habitant of hell,  
And vow'd she should not meet him more :  
That fearing still the buccaneer,  
He silent kept his forests here.  
The while men came, and still she stood  
For ever watching from the wood.

## X.

THE black-eyed bushy squirrels ran  
Like shadows shatter'd through the boughs ;  
The gallant robin chirp'd his vows,  
The far-off pheasant thrumm'd his fan,  
A thousand blackbirds were a-wing  
In walnut-top, and it was spring.

Old Morgan left his cabin door,  
And one sat watching as of yore ;  
But why turned Morgan's face as white  
As his white beard ?

A bird aflight,  
A squirrel peering through the trees,  
Saw some one silent steal away  
Like darkness from the face of day,  
Saw two black eyes look back, and these  
Saw her hand beckon through the trees.



He knew him, though he had not seen  
That form or face for a decade,  
Though time had shorn his locks, had made  
His form another's, flow'd between  
Their lives like some uncompass'd sea,  
Yet still he knew him as before.  
He pursed his lips, and silently  
He turn'd and sought his cabin's door.

Ay! they have come, the sun-brown'd men,  
To beard old Morgan in his den.  
It matters little who they are,  
These silent men from isles afar,  
And truly no one cares or knows  
What be their merit or demand ;  
It is enough for this rude land —  
At least, it is enough for those,  
The loud of tongue and rude of hand —  
To know that they are Morgan's foes.

Proud Morgan ! More than tongue can tell  
He loved that woman watching there,  
That stood in her dark stream of hair,  
That stood and dream'd as in a spell,  
And look'd so fix'd and far away.  
And who, that loveth woman well,  
Is wholly bad ? be who he may.

Ay ! we have seen these Southern men,  
These sun-brown'd men from island shore  
In this same land, and long before.  
They do not seem so lithe as then,  
They do not look so tall, and they  
Seem not so many as of old.  
But that same resolute and bold  
Expression of unbridled will,  
That even Time must half obey,  
Is with them and is of them still.

They do not counsel the decree  
Of court or council, where they drew

Their breath, nor law nor order knew,  
Save but the strong hand of the strong ;  
Where each stood up, avenged his wrong,  
Or sought his death all silently.

They watch along the wave and wood,  
They heed, but haste not. Their estate,  
Whate'er it be, can bide and wait,  
Be it open ill or hidden good.

No law for them ! For they have stood  
With steel, and writ their rights in blood ;  
And now, whatever 'tis they seek,  
Whatever be their dark demand,  
Why, they will make it, hand to hand,  
Take time and patience : Greek to Greek.

## XI.

LIKE blown and snowy wintry pine,  
Old Morgan stoop'd his head and pass'd  
Within his cabin door. He cast  
A great arm out to men, made sign,  
Then turned to Ina ; stood beside  
A time, then turn'd and strode the floor,  
Stopp'd short, breathed sharp, threw wide the  
door,  
Then gazed beyond the murky tide,  
Toward where the forky peaks divide.

He took his beard in his hard hand,  
Then slowly shook his grizzled head  
And trembled, but no word he said.  
His thought was something more than pain ;  
Upon the seas, upon the land  
He knew he should not rest again.

He turn'd to her ; but then once more  
Quick turn'd, and through the oaken door  
He sudden pointed to the west.  
His eye resumed its old command,  
The conversation of his hand,  
It was enough : she knew the rest.

He turn'd, he stoop'd, and smoothed her  
hair,

As if to smooth away the care  
From his great heart, with his left hand.  
His right hand hitch'd the pistol round  
That dangled at his belt . . .

The sound

Of steel to him was melody  
More sweet than any song of sea.

He touch'd his pistol, press'd his lips,  
Then tapp'd it with his finger-tips,  
And toy'd with it as harper's hand

Seeks out the chords when he is sad  
And purposeless.

At last he had  
Resolved. In haste he touch'd her hair,  
Made sign she should arise — prepare  
For some long journey, then again  
He look'd awest toward the plain :

Toward the land of dreams and space,  
The land of Silences, the land  
Of shoreless deserts sown with sand,  
Where desolation's dwelling is :  
The land where, wondering, you say,  
What dried-up shoreless sea is this ?  
Where, wandering, from day to day  
You say, To-morrow sure we come  
To rest in some cool resting-place,  
And yet you journey on through space  
While seasons pass, and are struck dumb  
With marvel at the distances.

Yea, he would go. Go utterly  
Away, and from all living kind,  
Pierce through the distances, and find  
New lands. He had outlived his race.  
He stood like some eternal tree  
That tops remote Yosemite,  
And cannot fall. He turn'd his face  
Again and contemplated space.

And then he raised his hand to vex  
His beard, stood still, and there fell down  
Great drops from some unfrequent spring,  
And streak'd his channell'd cheeks sun-  
brown,  
And ran uncheck'd, as one who recks  
Nor joy, nor tears, nor any thing.

And then, his broad breast heaving deep,  
Like some dark sea in troubled sleep,  
Blown round with groaning ships and wrecks,

He sudden roused himself, and stood  
With all the strength of his stern mood,  
Then call'd his men, and bade them go  
And bring black steeds with banner'd necks,  
And strong like burly buffalo.



## XII.

THE sassafras took leaf, and men  
Push'd west in hosts. The black men drew  
Their black-maned horses silent through  
The solemn woods.

One midnight when  
The curl'd moon tipp'd her horn, and threw  
A black oak's shadow slant across  
A low mound hid in leaves and moss,  
Old Morgan cautious came and drew  
From out the ground, as from a grave,  
A great box, iron-bound and old,  
And fill'd, men say, with pirates' gold,  
And then they, silent as a dream,  
In long black shadows cross'd the stream.

Lo ! here the smoke of cabins curl'd,  
The borders of the middle world ;

And mighty, hairy, half-wild men  
Sat down in silence, held at bay  
By mailèd forests. Far away  
The red men's boundless borders lay,  
And lodges stood in legions then,  
Strip'd pyramids of painted men

What strong uncommon men were these,  
These settlers hewing to the seas !  
Great horny-handed men and tan ;  
Men blown from any border land ;  
Men desperate and red of hand,  
And men in love and men in debt,  
And men who lived but to forget,  
And men whose very hearts had died  
Who only sought these woods to hide  
Their wretchedness, held in the van ;  
Yet every man among them stood  
Alone, along that sounding wood,  
And every man somehow a man.

A race of unnamed giants these,  
That moved like gods among the trees,  
So stern, so stubborn-brow'd and slow,  
With strength of black-maned buffalo,  
And each man notable and tall,  
A kingly and unconscious Saul,  
A sort of sullen Hercules.

A star stood large and white awest,  
Then Time uprose and testified ;  
They push'd the mailèd wood aside,  
They toss'd the forest like a toy,  
That great forgotten race of men,  
The boldest band that yet has been  
Together since the siege of Troy,  
And followed it . . . . and found their rest.

What strength ! what strife ! what rude  
unrest !

What shocks ! what half-shaped armies met !

A mighty nation moving west,  
 With all its steely sinews set  
 Against the living forests. Hear  
 The shouts, the shots of pioneer !  
 The rended forests, rolling wheels,  
 As if some half-check'd army reels,  
 Recoils, redoubles, comes again,  
 Loud sounding like a hurricane.

O bearded, stalwart, westmost men,  
 So tower-like, so Gothic-built !  
 A kingdom won without the guilt  
 Of studied battle ; that hath been  
 Your blood's inheritance . . . .

Your heirs

Know not your tombs. The great ploughshares  
 Cleave softly through the mellow loam  
 Where you have made eternal home  
 And set no sign.

Your epitaphs

Are writ in furrows. Beauty laughs  
While through the green ways wandering  
Beside her love, slow gathering  
White starry-hearted May-time blooms  
Above your lowly levell'd tombs ;  
And then below the spotted sky  
She stops, she leans, she wonders why  
The ground is heaved and broken so,  
And why the grasses darker grow  
And droop and trail like wounded wing.

Yea, Time, the grand old harvester,  
Has gather'd you from wood and plain.  
We call to you again, again ;  
The rush and rumble of the car  
Comes back in answer. Deep and wide  
The wheels of progress have pass'd on ;  
The silent pioneer is gone.  
His ghost is moving down the trees,  
And now we push the memories

Of bluff, bold men who dared and died  
In foremost battle, quite aside.

O perfect Eden of the earth,  
In poppies sown, in harvest set!  
O sires, mothers of my West!  
How shall we count your proud bequest?  
But yesterday ye gave us birth;  
We eat your hard-earn'd bread to-day,  
Nor toil nor spin nor make regret,  
But praise our petty selves and say  
How great we are, and all forget  
The still endurance of the rude  
Unpolish'd sons of solitude.

**XIII.**

AND one was glad at morn, but one,  
The tall old sea-king, grim and gray,  
Look'd back to where his cabins lay  
And seem'd to hesitate.

He rose

At last, as from his dream's repose,  
From rest that counterfeited rest,  
And set his blown beard to the west,  
And drove against the setting sun,  
Along the levels vast and dun.

His steeds were steady, strong, and fleet,  
The best in all the wide west land,  
Their manes were in the air, their feet  
Seem'd scarce to touch the flying sand ;  
The reins were in the reaching hand.

They rode like men gone mad, they fled,  
All day and many days they ran,  
And in the rear a gray old man  
Kept watch, and ever turn'd his head,  
Half eager and half angry, back  
Along their dusty desert track.

And one look'd back, but no man spoke,  
They rode, they swallow'd up the plain ;  
The sun sank low, he look'd again,  
With lifted hand and shaded eyes.  
Then far arear he saw arise,  
As if from giant's stride or stroke,  
Dun dust-like puffs of battle-smoke.

He turn'd, his left hand clutch'd the rein,  
He struck awest his high right hand,  
His arms were like the limbs of oak,  
They knew too well the man's command,  
They mounted, plunged ahead again,



And one look'd back, but no man spoke,  
Of all that sullen iron band,  
That reached along that barren land.

O weary days of weary blue,  
Without one changing breath, without  
One single cloud-ship sailing through  
The blue seas bending round about  
In one unbroken blotless hue.  
Yet on they fled, and one look'd back  
For ever down their distant track.

The tent is pitch'd, the blanket spread,  
The earth receives the weary head,  
The night rolls west, the east is gray,  
The tent is struck, they mount, away ;  
They ride for life the livelong day,  
They sweep the long grass in their track,  
And one leads on, and one looks back.

What scenes they pass'd, what camps at  
morn,  
What weary columns kept the road ;  
What herds of troubled cattle low'd,  
And trumpeted like lifted horn ;  
And everywhere, or road or rest,  
All things were pointing to the west ;  
A weary, long, and lonesome track,  
And all led on, but one look'd back.

They climb'd the rock-built breasts of earth,  
The Titan-fronted, blowy steeps  
That cradled Time . . . Where Freedom keeps  
Her flag of white blown stars unfurl'd,  
They turn'd about, they saw the birth  
Of sudden dawn upon the world ;  
Again they gazed ; they saw the face  
Of God, and named it boundless space.

And they descended and did roam

Through levell'd distances set round  
By room. They saw the Silences  
Move by and beckon : saw the forms,  
The very beards, of burly storms,  
And heard them talk like sounding seas.  
On unnamed heights bleak-blown and brown,  
And torn like battlements of Mars,  
They saw the darkneses come down,  
Like curtains loosen'd from the dome  
Of God's cathedral, built of stars.

They pitch'd the tent, where rivers run  
As if to drown the falling sun.  
They saw the snowy mountains roll'd,  
And heaved along the nameless lands  
Like mighty billows ; saw the gold  
Of awful sunsets ; saw the blush  
Of sudden dawn, and felt the hush  
Of heaven when the day sat down,  
And hid his face in dusky hands.

The long and lonesome nights ! the tent  
That nestled soft in sweep of grass,  
The hills against the firmament  
Where scarce the moving moon could pass ;  
The cautious camp, the smother'd light,  
The silent sentinel at night !

The wild beasts howling from the hill ;  
The troubled cattle bellowing ;  
The savage prowling by the spring,  
Then sudden passing swift and still,  
And bended as a bow is bent.  
The arrow sent ; the arrow spent  
And buried in its bloody place,  
The dead man lying on his face !

The clouds of dust, their cloud by day ;  
Their pillar of unfailing fire  
The far North star. And high, and  
higher . . .

They climb'd so high it seem'd eftsoon  
That they must face the falling moon,  
That like some flame-lit ruin lay  
Thrown down before their weary way.

They learn'd to read the sign of storms,  
The moon's wide circles, sunset bars,  
And storm-provoking blood and flame ;  
And, like the Chaldean shepherds, came  
At night to name the moving stars.  
In heaven's face they pictured forms  
Of beasts, of fishes of the sea.  
They mark'd the Great Bear wearily  
Rise up and drag his clinking chain  
Of stars around the starry main.

What lines of yoked and patient steers !  
What weary thousands pushing west !  
What restless pilgrims seeking rest,  
As if from out the edge of years !

What great yoked brutes with briskets low,  
With wrinkled necks like buffalo,  
With round, brown, liquid, pleading eyes,  
That turn'd so slow and sad to you,  
That shone like love's eyes soft with tears,  
That seem'd to plead, and make replies  
The while they bow'd their necks and drew  
The creaking load ; and look'd at you.  
Their sable briskets swept the ground,  
Their cloven feet kept solemn sound.

Two sullen bullocks led the line,  
Their great eyes shining bright like wine  
Two sullen captive kings were they,  
That had in time held herds at bay,  
And even now they crush'd the sod  
With stolid sense of majesty,  
And stately stepp'd and stately trod,  
As if 'twas something still to be  
Kings even in captivity.

## XIV.

AND why did these same sunburnt men  
Let Morgan gain the plain, and then  
Pursue him to the utter sea?  
You ask me here impatiently.  
And I as pertly must reply,  
My task is but to tell a tale,  
To give a wide sail to the gale,  
To paint the boundless plain, the sky;  
To rhyme, nor give a reason why.

Mostlike they sought his gold alone,  
And fear'd to make their quarrel known  
Lest it should keep its secret bed;  
Mostlike they thought to best prevail  
And conquer with united hands  
Alone upon the lonesome sands;  
Mostlike they had as much to dread  
Mostlike — but I must tell my tale.

And Morgan, ever looking back,  
Push'd on, push'd up his mountain track,  
Past camp, past train, past caravan,  
Past flying beast, past failing man,  
Past brave men battling with a foe  
That circled them with lance and bow  
And feather'd arrows all a-wing ;  
Till months unmeasured came and ran  
The calendar with him, as though  
Old Time had lost all reckoning ;  
Then passed for aye the creaking trains,  
And pioneers that named the plains.

Those brave old bricks of Forty-nine !  
What lives they lived ! what deaths they  
died !  
A thousand cañons, darkling wide  
Below Sierra's slopes of pine,  
Receive them now.

And they who died



Along the far, dim, desert route.

Their ghosts are many.

Let them keep

Their vast possessions.

The Piute,

The tawny warrior, will dispute

No boundary with these. And I,

Who saw them live, who felt them die,

Say, let their unploughed ashes sleep,

Untouched by man, by plain or steep.

The bearded, sunbrown'd men who bore  
The burthen of that frightful year,  
Who toil'd, but did not gather store,  
They shall not be forgotten.

Drear

And white, the plains of Shoshonee

Shall point us to that farther shore,

And long white shining lines of bones,

Make needless sign or white mile-stones.

The wild man's yell, the groaning wheel ;  
The train that moved like drifting barge ;  
The dust that rose up like a cloud,  
Like smoke of distant battle ! Loud  
The great whips rang like shot, and steel  
Of antique fashion, crude and large,  
Flash'd back as in some battle charge.

They sought, yea, they did find their rest  
Along that long and lonesome way,  
These brave men buffeting the West  
With lifted faces.

Full were they  
Of great endeavor. Brave and true  
As stern Crusader clad in steel,  
They died a-field as it was fit.  
Made strong with hope, they dared to do  
Achievement that a host to-day  
Would stagger at, stand back and reel,  
Defeated at the thought of it.

What brave endeavor to endure !  
What patient hope, when hope was past !  
What still surrender at the last,  
A thousand leagues from hope ! how pure  
They lived, how proud they died !  
How generous with life !

The wide

And gloried age of chivalry  
Hath not one page like this to me.

Let all these golden days go by,  
In sunny summer weather. I  
But think upon my buried brave,  
And breathe beneath another sky.  
Let beauty glide in gilded car,  
And find my sundown seas afar,  
Forgetful that 'tis but one grave  
From eastmost to the westmost wave.

Yea, I remember ! The still tears

That o'er uncoffin'd faces fell!  
The final, silent, sad farewell!  
God! these are with me all the years!  
They shall be with me ever. I  
Shall not forget. I hold a trust.  
They are a part of my existence.

When

A down the shining iron track  
You sweep, and fields of corn flash back,  
And herds of lowing steers move by,  
And men laugh loud, in mute distrust,  
I turn to other days, to men  
Who made a pathway with their dust.

## XV.

AT last he pass'd all men or sign  
Of man. Yet still his long black line  
Was push'd and pointed for the west ;  
The sea, the utmost sea, and rest.

He climbed, descended, climbed again,  
Until he stood at last as lone,  
As solitary and unknown,  
As some lost ship upon the main.

O there was grandeur in his air,  
An old-time splendor in his eye,  
When he had climb'd the bleak, the high,  
The rock-built bastions of the plain,  
And thrown a-back his blown white hair,  
And halting turn'd to look again.

And long, from out his lofty place,  
He look'd far down the fading plain  
For his pursuers, but in vain.  
Yea, he was glad. Across his face  
A careless smile was seen to play,  
The first for many a stormy day.

He turn'd to Ina, dark and fair  
As some sad twilight; touch'd her hair,  
Stoop'd low, and kiss'd her silently,  
Then silent held her to his breast.  
Then waved command to his black men,  
Look'd east, then mounted slow, and then  
Led leisurely against the west.

And why should he, who dared to die,  
Who more than once with hissing breath  
Had set his teeth and pray'd for death,  
Have fled these men, or wherefore fly  
Before them now? why not defy?

His midnight men were strong and true,  
And not unused to strife, and knew  
The masonry of steel right well,  
And all its signs that lead to hell.

It might have been his youth had wrought  
Some wrong his years would now repair  
That made him fly and still forbear ;  
It might have been he only sought  
To lead them to some fatal snare  
And let them die by piece-meal there.

It might have been that his own blood,  
A brother, son, pursued with curse.  
It might have been this woman fair  
Was this man's child, an only thing  
To love in all the universe,  
And that the old man's iron will  
Kept pirate's child from pirate still.  
These rovers had a world their own,  
Had laws, lived lives, went ways unknown.

I trow it was not shame or fear  
Of any man or any thing  
That death in any shape might bring.  
It might have been some lofty sense  
Of his own truth and innocence,  
And virtues lofty and severe —  
Nay, nay! what need of reasons here?

They touch'd a fringe of tossing trees  
That bound a mountain's brow like bay,  
And through the fragrant boughs a breeze  
Blew salt-flood freshness.

Far away,  
From mountain brow to desert base  
Lay chaos, space, unbounded space,  
In one vast belt of purple bound.  
The black men cried, "The sea!" They  
bow'd  
Their black heads in their hard black hands.  
They wept for joy.



They laugh'd, and broke  
The silence of an age, and spoke  
Of rest at last ; and, group'd in bands,  
They threw their long black arms about  
Each other's necks, and laugh'd aloud,  
Then wept again with laugh and shout.

Yet Morgan spake no word, but led  
His band with oft-averted head  
Right through the cooling trees, till he  
Stood out upon the lofty brow  
And mighty mountain wall.

And now  
The men who shouted, "Lo, the sea!"  
Rode in the sun ; but silently :  
Stood in the sun, then look'd below.  
They look'd but once, then look'd away,  
Then look'd each other in the face.  
They could not lift their brows, nor say,  
But held their heads, nor spake, for lo !

Nor sea, nor voice of sea, nor breath  
Of sea, but only sand and death,  
And one eternity of space  
Confronted them with fiery face.

'Twas vastness even as a sea,  
So still it sang in symphonies ;  
But yet without the sense of seas,  
Save depth, and space, and distances.  
'Twas all so shoreless, so profound,  
It seem'd it were earth's utter bound  
'Twas like the dim edge of death is  
'Twas hades, hell, eternity !

**XVI.**

THEN Morgan hesitating stood,  
Look'd down the deep and steep descent  
With wilder'd brow and wonderment,  
Then gazed against the cooling wood.

And she beside him gazed at this,  
Then turn'd her great, sad eyes to his ;  
He shook his head and look'd away,  
Then sadly smiled, and still did say,  
" To-morrow, child, another day."

O thou to-morrow ! Mystery !  
O day that ever runs before !  
What has thine hidden hand in store  
For mine, to-morrow, and for me ?  
O thou to-morrow ! what hast thou  
In store to make me bear the now ?

O day in which we shall forget  
The tangled troubles of to-day !  
O day that laughs at duns, at debt !  
O day of promises to pay !  
O shelter from all present storm !  
O day in which we shall reform !

O day of all days for reform !  
Convenient day of promises !  
Hold back the shadow of the storm.  
O bless'd to-morrow ! Chiefest friend,  
Let not thy mystery be less,  
But lead us blindfold to the end.

## XVII.

OLD Morgan eyed his men, look'd back  
Against the groves of tamarack,  
Then tapp'd his stirrup-foot, and stray'd  
His hard left hand along the mane  
Of his strong steed, and careless play'd  
His fingers through the silken skein,  
And seem'd a time to touch the rein.

And then he spurr'd him to her side,  
And reach'd his hand and, leaning wide,  
He smiling push'd her falling hair  
Back from her brow, and kiss'd her there.

Yea, touch'd her softly, as if she  
Had been some priceless, tender flower,

Yet touch'd her as one taking leave  
Of his one love in lofty tower  
Before descending to the sea  
Of battle on his battle eve.

## XVIII.

A DISTANT shout ! quick oaths ! alarms !

The black men start up suddenly,  
Stand in the stirrup, clutch their arms,  
And bare bright arms all instantly.

But he, he slowly turns, and he  
Looks all his full soul in her face.  
He does not shout, he does not say,  
But sits serenely in his place  
A time, then slowly turns, looks back  
Between the trim-bough'd tamarack,  
And up the winding mountain way,  
To where the long strong grasses lay.

He raised his glass in his two hands,  
Then in his left hand let it fall,

Then seem'd to count his fingers o'er,  
Then reach'd his glass, waved cold commands,  
Then tapp'd his stirrup as before,  
Stood in the stirrup stern and tall,  
Then ran his hand along the mane  
Half nervous-like, and that was all.

His head half settled on his breast,  
His face a-beard like bird a-nest,  
And then he roused himself, he spoke,  
He reach'd an arm like arm of oak,  
He struck a-west his great broad hand,  
And seem'd to hurl his hot command.

He clutch'd his rein, struck sharp his heel,  
Look'd at his men, and smiled half sad,  
Half desperate, then hitch'd his steel,  
And all his stormy presence had,  
As if he kept once more his keel  
On listless seas where breakers reel.



He toss'd again his iron hand  
Above the deep, steep desert space,  
Above the burning seas of sand,  
And look'd his black men in the face.

They spake not, nor look'd back again,  
They struck the heel, they clutch'd the rein,  
And down the darkling plunging steep  
They dropped toward the dried-up deep.

Below ! It seem'd a league below,  
The black men rode, and she rode well,  
Against the gleaming sheening haze  
That shone like some vast sea ablaze,  
That seem'd to gleam, to glint, to glow  
As if it mark'd the shores of hell.

Then Morgan stood alone, look'd back  
From off the fierce wall where he stood,  
And watch'd his dusk approaching foe.

He saw him creep along his track,  
Saw him descending from the wood,  
And smiled to see how worn and slow.

Then when his foemen hounding came  
In pistol-shot of where he stood,  
He wound his hand in his steed's mane,  
And plunging to the desert plain,  
Threw back his white beard like a cloud,  
And looking back did shout aloud  
Defiance like a stormy flood,  
And shouted, "Vasques!" called his name,  
And dared him to the desert flame.

**XIX.**

A CLOUD of dust adown the steep,  
Where scarce a whirling hawk would sweep,  
The cloud his foes had follow'd fast,  
And Morgan like a cloud had pass'd,  
Yet passed like some proud king of old ;  
And now mad Vasques could not hold  
Control of his one wild desire  
To meet old Morgan, in his ire.

He cursed aloud, he shook his rein  
Above the desert darkling deep,  
And urged his steed toward the steep,  
But urged his weary steed in vain.

Old Morgan heard his oath and shout,  
And Morgan turn'd his head once more,

And wheel'd his stout steed short about,  
Then seem'd to count their numbers o'er.

And then his right hand touch'd his  
steel,

And then he tapp'd his iron heel  
And seem'd to fight with thought.

At last,

As if the final die was cast,  
And cast as carelessly as one  
Would toss a white coin in the sun,  
He touch'd his rein once more, and then  
His pistol laid with idle heed  
Prone down the toss'd mane of his steed,  
And he rode down the rugged way  
Tow'rd where the wide, white desert lay,  
By broken gorge and cavern'd den,  
And join'd his band of midnight men.

Some say the gray old man had crazed

From mountain fruits that he had pluck'd  
While winding through the wooded ways  
Above the steep.

But others say  
That he had turn'd aside and suck'd  
Sweet poison from the honey dews  
That lie like manna all the day  
On dewy leaves so crystal fair  
And temptingly that none refuse ;  
That thus made mad the man did dare  
Confront the desert and despair.

Then other mountain men explain,  
That when one looks upon this sea  
Of glowing sand, he looks again,  
Again, through gossamers that run  
In scintillations of the sun  
Along this white eternity,  
And looks until the brain is dazed,  
Bewilder'd, and the man is crazed.

Then one, a grizzled mountaineer,  
A thin and sinewy old man,  
With face all wrinkle-wrought, and tan,  
And presence silent and austere,  
Does tell a tale, with reaching face  
And bated breath, of this weird place,  
Of many a stalwart mountaineer  
And Piute tall who perish'd here.

He tells a tale with whisper'd breath  
Of skin-clad men who track'd this shore,  
Once populous with sea-set town,  
And saw a woman wondrous fair,  
And, wooing, follow'd her far down  
Through burning sands to certain death ;  
And then he catches short his breath.

He tells : Nay, this is all too long ;  
Enough. The old man shakes his hair  
When he is done, and shuts his eyes,

So satisfied and so self-wise,  
As if to say, "'Tis nothing rare,  
This following the luring fair  
To death, and bound in thorny thong ;  
'Twas ever thus ; the old, old song."

## XX.

Go ye and look upon that land,  
That far vast land that few behold,  
And none beholding understand, —  
That old, old land which men call new,  
That land as old as time is old ; —  
Go journey with the seasons through  
Its wastes, and learn how limitless,  
How shoreless lie the distances,  
Before you come to question this  
Or dare to dream what grandeur is

The solemn silence of that plain,  
Where unmanned tempests ride and reign,  
It awes and it possesses you.  
'Tis, oh ! so eloquent.

The blue



And bended skies seem built for it,  
With rounded roof all fashioned fit,  
And frescoed clouds, quaint-wrought and true :  
While all else seems so far, so vain,  
An idle tale but illy told,  
Before this land so lone and old.

Its story is of God alone,  
For man has lived and gone away,  
And left but little heaps of stone,  
And all seems some long yesterday.

Lo ! here you learn how more than fit  
And dignified is silence, when  
You hear the petty jeers of men  
Who point, and show their pointless wit.

The vastness of that voiceless plain,  
Its awful solitudes remain  
Thenceforth for aye a part of you,

And you are of the favored few,  
For you have learn'd your littleness,  
And heed not names that name you less.

Some silent red men cross your track ;  
Some sun-tann'd trappers come and go ;  
Some rolling seas of buffalo  
Break thunder-like and far away  
Against the foot-hills, breaking back  
Like breakers of some troubled bay ;  
But not a voice the long, lone day.

Some white-tail'd antelope blow by  
So airy-like ; some foxes shy  
And shadow-like shoot to and fro  
Like weavers' shuttles, as you pass ;  
And now and then from out the grass  
You hear some lone bird cluck, and call  
A sharp keen call for her lost brood,  
That only makes the solitude,

That mantles like some sombre pall,  
Seem deeper still, and that is all.

A wide domain of mysteries  
And signs that men misunderstand !  
A land of space and dreams ; a land  
Of sea-salt lakes and dried-up seas !

A land of caves and caravans,  
And lonely wells and pools ;

A land

That hath its purposes and plans,  
That seems so like dead Palestine,  
Save that its wastes have no confine  
Till push'd against the levell'd skies ;  
A land from out whose depths shall rise  
The new-time prophets.

Yea, the land

From out whose awful depths shall come,  
All clad in skins, with dusty feet,

A man fresh from his Maker's hand,  
A singer singing oversweet,  
A charmer charming very wise ;  
And then all men shall not be dumb.

Nay, not be dumb, for he shall say,  
"Take heed, for I prepare the way  
For weary feet."

Lo ! from this land  
Of Jordan streams and sea-wash'd sand,  
The Christ shall come when next the race  
Of man shall look upon his face.

**XXI.**

PURSUER and pursued ! who knows  
The why he left the breezy pine,  
The fragrant tamarack and vine,  
Red rose and precious yellow rose !

Nay, Vasques held the vantage ground  
Above him by the wooded steep,  
And right nor left no passage lay,  
And there was left him but that way, —  
The way through blood, or to the deep  
And lonesome deserts far profound,  
That know not sight of man, or sound.

Hot Vasques stood upon the rim,  
High, bold, and fierce with crag and spire.  
He saw a far gray eagle swim,

He saw a black hawk wheel, retire,  
And shun that desert wide a-wing,  
But saw no other living thing.

High in the full sun's gold and flame  
He halting and half waiting came  
And stood below the belt of wood,  
Then moved along the broken hill  
And looked below.

And long he stood  
With lips set firm and brow a-frown,  
And warring with his iron will.  
He mark'd the black line winding down  
As if into the doors of death.  
And as he gazed a breath arose  
As from his far-retreating foes,  
So hot it almost took his breath.

His black eye flashed an angry fire,  
He stood upon the mountain brow,

With lifted arm like oaken bough ;  
The hot pursuer halting stood  
Irresolute, in nettled ire ;  
Then look'd against the cooling wood,  
Then strode he sullen to and fro,  
Then turned and long he gazed below.

The sands flash'd back like fields of snow,  
Like far blown seas that flood and flow.  
The while the rounded sky rose higher,  
And cleaving through the upper space,  
The flush'd sun settled to his place,  
Like some far hemisphere of fire.

And yet again he gazed. And now,  
Far off and faint, he saw or guess'd  
He saw, beyond the sands a-west,  
A dim and distant lifting beach  
That daring men might dare and reach :  
Dim shapes of toppled peaks with pine,

And water'd foot-hills dark like wine,  
And fruits on many a bended bough.

The leader turn'd and shook his head.  
"And shall we turn aside," he said,  
"Or dare this hell?" The men stood still  
As leaning on his sterner will.

And then he stopp'd and turn'd again,  
And held his broad hand to his brow,  
And looked intent and eagerly.  
The far white levels of the plain  
Flash'd back like billows.

Even now  
He saw rise up remote, 'mid sea,  
'Mid space, 'mid wastes, 'mid nothingness,  
A ship becalm'd as in distress.

The dim sign pass'd as suddenly,  
A gossamer of golden tress,



Thrown over some still middle sea,  
And then his eager eyes grew dazed, —  
He brought his two hands to his face.  
Again he raised his head, and gazed  
With flashing eyes and visage fierce  
Far out, and resolute to pierce  
The far, far, faint receding reach  
Of space and touch its farther beach.  
He saw but space, unbounded space ;  
Eternal space and nothingness.

Then all wax'd anger'd as they gazed  
Far out upon the shoreless land,  
And clench'd their doubled hands and raised  
Their long bare arms, but utter'd not.  
At last one started from the band,  
His bosom heaved as billows heave,  
Great heaving bosom, broad and brown :  
He raised his arm, push'd up his sleeve,  
Push'd bare his arm, strode up and down,

With hat pushed back, and flushed and  
hot,  
And shot sharp oaths like cannon shot.

Again the man stood still, again  
He strode the height like hoary storm,  
Then shook his fists, and then his form  
Did writhe as if it writhed with pain.

And yet again his face was raised,  
And yet again he gazed and gazed,  
Above his fading, failing foe,  
With gather'd brow and visage fierce,  
As if his soul would part or pierce  
The awful depths that lay below.

He had as well look'd on that sea  
That keeps Samoa's coral isles  
Amid ten thousand watery miles,  
Bound round by one eternity ;

Bound round by realms of nothingness,  
In love with their own loneliness.  
He saw but space, unbounded space,  
And brought his brown hands to his face.

There roll'd away to left, to right,  
Unbroken walls as black as night,  
And back of these there distant rose  
Steep cones of everlasting snows.

At last he was resolved, his form  
Seem'd like a pine blown rampt with storm.  
He mounted, clutch'd his reins, and then  
Turn'd sharp and savage to his men ;  
And silent then led down the way  
To night that knows not night nor day.

## XXII.

LIKE some great serpent black and still,  
Old Morgan's men stole down the hill.  
Far down the steep they wound and wound  
Until the black line touched that land  
Of gleaming white and silver sand  
That knows not human sight or sound.

How broken plunged the steep descent ;  
How barren ! Desolate, and rent  
By earthquake's shock, the land lay dead,  
With dust and ashes on its head.

'Twas as some old world overthrown,  
Where Theseus fought and Sappho dreamed  
In eons ere they touched this land,  
And found their proud souls foot and hand  
Bound to the flesh and stung with pain.

An ugly skeleton it seem'd  
Of its own self. The fiery rain  
Of red volcanoes here had sown  
The death of cities of the plain.

The very devastation gleamed.  
All burnt and black, and rent and seam'd,  
Ay, vanquished quite and overthrown,  
And torn with thunder-stroke, and strown  
With cinders, lo! the dead earth lay  
As waiting for the judgment day.

Why, tamer men had turn'd and said,  
On seeing this, with start and dread,  
And whisper'd each with gather'd breath,  
"We come on the confines of death."

They wound below a savage bluff  
That lifted, from its sea-mark'd base,  
Great walls with characters cut rough

And deep by some long-perish'd race ;  
And lo ! strange beasts unnamed, unknown,  
Stood hewn and limn'd upon the stone.

The iron hoofs sank here and there,  
Plough'd deep in ashes, broke anew  
Old broken idols, and laid bare  
Old bits of vessels that had grown,  
As countless ages cycled through,  
Imbedded with the common stone.

A mournful land as land can be  
Beneath their feet in ashes lay,  
Beside that dread and dried-up sea ;  
A city older than that gray  
And grass-grown tower builded when  
Confusion cursed the tongues of men.

Beneath, before, a city lay  
That in her majesty had shamed

The wolf-nursed conqueror of old ;  
Below, before, and far away  
There reach'd the white arm of a bay,  
A broad bay shrunk to sand and stone,  
Where ships had rode and breakers roll'd  
When Babylon was yet unnamed,  
And Nimrod's hunting-fields unknown.

Some serpents slid from out the grass  
That grew in tufts by shatter'd stone,  
Then hid beneath some broken mass  
That Time had eaten as a bone  
Is eaten by some savage beast ;  
An everlasting palace feast.

A dull-eyed rattlesnake that lay  
All loathsome, yellow-skinn'd, and slept,  
Coil'd tight as pine-knot, in the sun,  
With flat head through the centre run,  
Struck blindly back, then rattling crept

Flat-bellied down the dusty way . . .

'Twas all the dead land had to say.

Two pink-eyed hawks, wide-wing'd and gray,  
Scream'd savagely, and, circling high,  
And screaming still in mad dismay,  
Grew dim and died against the sky . . .

'Twas all the heavens had to say.

The grasses fail'd, and then a mass  
Of brown, burnt cactus ruled the land,  
And topt the hillocks of hot sand,  
Where scarce the hornèd toad could pass.  
Then stunted sage on either hand,  
All loud with odors, spread the land.

The sun rose right above, and fell  
As falling molten as they pass'd.  
Some low-built junipers at last,  
The last that o'er the desert look'd,



Thick-bough'd, and black as shapes of hell  
Where dumb owls sat with bent bills hook'd  
Beneath their wings awaiting night,  
Rose up, then faded from the sight :  
Then not another living thing  
Crept on the sand or kept the wing.

White Azteckee! Dead Azteckee!  
Vast sepulchre of buried sea!  
What dim ghosts hover on thy rim,  
What stately-manner'd shadows swim  
Along thy gleaming waste of sands  
And shoreless limits of dead lands?

Dread Azteckee! Dead Azteckee!  
White place of ghosts, give up thy dead :  
Give back to Time thy buried hosts!  
The new world's tawny Ishmaelite,  
The roving tent-born Shoshonee,  
Who shuns thy shores as death, at night,

Because thou art so white, so dread,  
Because thou art so ghostly white,  
Because thou hast thy buried hosts,  
Has named thy shores "the place of ghosts."

Thy white uncertain sands are white  
With bones of thy unburied dead  
That will not perish from the sight.  
They drown but perish not, — ah me!  
What dread unsightly sights are spread  
Along this lonesome dried-up sea.

White Azteckee, give up to me  
Of all thy prison'd dead but one,  
That now lies bleaching in the sun,  
To tell what strange allurements lie  
Within this dried-up oldest sea,  
To tempt men to its heart and die.

Old, hoar, and dried-up sea! so old!  
So strewn with wealth, so sown with gold!

Yea, thou art old and hoary white  
With time, and ruin of all things ;  
And on thy lonesome borders night  
Sits brooding as with wounded wings.

The winds that toss'd thy waves and blew  
Across thy breast the blowing sail,  
And cheer'd the hearts of cheering crew  
From farther seas, no more prevail.

Thy white-wall'd cities all lie prone,  
With but a pyramid, a stone,  
Set head and foot in sands to tell  
The tired stranger where they fell.

The patient ox that bended low  
His neck, and drew slow up and down  
Thy thousand freights through rock-built town  
Is now the free-born buffalo.

No longer of the timid fold,

The mountain sheep leaps free and bold  
His high-built summit and looks down  
From battlements of buried town.

Thine ancient steeds know not the rein ;  
They lord the land ; they come, they go  
At will ; they laugh at man ; they blow  
A cloud of black steeds o'er the plain.

Thy monuments lie buried now,  
The ashes whiten on thy brow,  
The winds, the waves, have drawn away  
The very wild man dreads to stay.

O ! thou art very old. I lay,  
Made dumb with awe and wonderment,  
Beneath a palm before my tent,  
With idle and discouraged hands,  
Not many days ago, on sands  
Of awful, silent Africa.

Long gazing on her mighty shades,  
I did recall a semblance there  
Of thee. I mused where story fades  
From her dark brow and found her fair.

A slave, and old, within her veins  
There runs that warm, forbidden blood  
That no man dares to dignify  
In elevated song.

The chains  
That held her race but yesterday  
Hold still the hands of men. Forbid  
Is Ethiop.

The turbid flood  
Of prejudice lies stagnant still,  
And all the world is tainted. Will  
And wit lie broken as a lance  
Against the brazen mailed face  
Of old opinion.

None advance  
Steel-clad and glad to the attack,  
With trumpet and with song. Look back!  
Beneath yon pyramids lie hid  
The histories of her great race.  
Old Nilus rolls right sullen by,  
With all his secrets.

Who shall say:

My father rear'd a pyramid ;  
My brother clipp'd the dragon's wings ;  
My mother was Semiramis ?  
Yea, harps strike idly out of place ;  
Men sing of savage Saxon kings  
New-born and known but yesterday,  
And Norman blood presumes to say. . . .

Nay, ye who boast ancestral name  
And vaunt deeds dignified by time  
Must not despise her.

Who hath worn

Since time began a face that is  
So all-enduring, old like this —  
A face like Africa's?

Behold!

The Sphinx is Africa. The bond  
Of silence is upon her.

Old

And white with tombs, and rent and  
shorn;

With raiment wet with tears, and torn,  
And trampled on, yet all untamed;  
All naked now, yet not ashamed, —  
The mistress of the young world's prime,  
Whose obelisks still laugh at Time,  
And lift to heaven her fair name,  
Sleeps satisfied upon her fame.

Beyond the Sphinx, and still beyond,  
Beyond the tawny desert-tomb

Of Time ; beyond tradition, loom  
And lift ghostlike from out the gloom  
Her thousand cities, battle-torn  
And gray with story and with time.  
Her very ruins are sublime,  
Her thrones with mosses overborne  
Make velvets for the feet of Time.

She points a hand and cries : “ Go read  
The letter’d obelisks that lord  
Old Rome, and know my name and deed.  
My archives these, and plunder’d when  
I had grown weary of all men.”  
We turn to these ; we cry : “ Abhorr’d  
Old Sphinx, behold, we cannot read ! ”

And yet my dried-up desert sea  
Was populous with blowing sail,  
And set with city, white-wall’d town,  
All mann’d with armies bright with mail,



Ere yet that awful Sphinx sat down  
To gaze into eternity,  
Or Egypt knew her natal hour,  
Or Africa had name or power.

## XXIII.

AWAY upon the sandy seas,  
The gleaming, burning, boundless plain.  
How solemn-like, how still, as when  
The mighty-minded Genoese  
Drew three tall ships and led his men  
From land they might not meet again.

The black men rode in front by two,  
The fair one follow'd close, and kept  
Her face held down as if she wept ;  
But Morgan kept the rear, and threw  
His flowing, swaying beard aback  
Anon along their lonesome track.

They rode against the level sun,  
And spake not he or any one.

The weary day fell down to rest,  
A star upon his mantled breast,  
Ere scarce the sun fell out of space,  
And Venus glimmer'd in his place.

. . . . .

Yea, all the stars shone just as fair,  
And constellations kept their round,  
And look'd from out the great profound,  
And marched, and countermarch'd, and shone  
Upon that desolation there,  
Why just the same as if proud man  
Strode up and down array'd in gold  
And purple as in days of old,  
And reckon'd all of his own plan,  
Or made at least for man alone  
And man's dominion from a throne.

Yet on push'd Morgan silently,  
And straight as strong ship on a sea ;  
And ever as he rode there lay

To right, to left, and in his way,  
Strange objects looming in the dark,  
Some like a mast, or ark, or bark.

And things half hidden in the sand  
Lay down before them where they pass'd, —  
A broken beam, half-buried mast,  
A spar or bar, such as might be  
Blown crosswise, tumbled on the strand  
Of some sail-crowded stormy sea.

XXIV.

ALL night by moon, by morning star,  
The still, black men still kept their way ;  
All night till morn, till burning day,  
Hot Vasques follow'd fast and far.

The sun shot arrows instantly ;  
And men turn'd east against the sun,  
And men did look and cry, " The sea !"  
And Morgan look'd, nay, every one  
Did look, and lift his hand, and shade  
His brow and look, and look dismay'd.

Lo ! looming up before the sun,  
Before their eyes, yet far away,  
A ship with many a tall mast lay, —  
Lay resting, as if she had run

Some splendid race through seas, and won  
The right to rest in salt flood bay, —  
And lay until the level sun  
Uprose, and then she fell away,  
As mists melt in the full of day.

Old Morgan lifts his bony hand,  
He does not speak or make command, —  
Short time for wonder, doubt, delay ;  
Dark objects sudden heave in sight  
As if blown out or born of night.  
It is enough, they turn ; away !

The sun is high, the sands are hot  
To touch, and all the tawny plain,  
That glistens white with salt sea sand,  
Sinks white and open as they tread  
And trudge, with half-averted head,  
As if to swallow them amain.  
They look, as men look back to land

When standing out to stormy sea,  
But still keep face and murmur not ;  
Keep stern and still as destiny,  
Or iron king of Germany.

It was a sight! A slim dog slid  
White-mouth'd and still along the sand,  
The pleading picture of distress.  
He stopp'd, leap'd up to lick a hand,  
A hard black hand that sudden chid  
Him back and check'd his tenderness ;  
But when the black man turn'd his head  
His poor mute friend had fallen dead.

The very air hung white with heat,  
And white, and fair, and far away  
A lifted, shining snow-shaft lay  
As if to mock their mad retreat.

The white, salt sands beneath their feet

Did make the black men loom as grand,  
From out the lifting, heaving heat,  
As they rode sternly on and on,  
As any bronze men in the land  
That sit their statue steeds upon.

The men were silent as men dead.  
The sun hung centred overhead,  
Nor seem'd to move. It molten hung  
Like some great central burner swung  
From lofty beams with golden bars  
In sacristy set round with stars.



XXV.

WHY, flame could hardly be more hot ;  
Yet on the mad pursuer came,  
Across the gleaming yielding ground,  
Right on, as if he fed on flame,  
Right on until the mid-day found  
The man within a pistol-shot.

He hail'd, but Morgan answer'd not,  
He hail'd, then came a feeble shot,  
And strangely, in that vastness there,  
It seem'd to scarcely fret the air,  
But fell down harmless anywhere.

He fiercely hail'd ; and then there fell  
A horse. And then a man fell down,  
And in the sea-sand seem'd to drown.

Then Vasques cursed, but scarce could tell  
The sound of his own voice, and all  
In mad confusion seem'd to fall.

Yet on push'd Morgan, silent on,  
And as he rode he lean'd and drew,  
From his catenas, gold, and threw  
The bright coins in the glaring sun.  
But Vasques did not heed a whit,  
He scarcely deign'd to scowl at it.

Again lean'd Morgan! He uprose,  
And held a high hand to his foes,  
And held two goblets up, and one  
Did shine as if itself a sun.

Then leaning backward from his place,  
He hurl'd them in his foemen's face,  
Then drew again, and so kept on,  
Till goblets, gold, and all were gone.

Yea, strew'd them out upon the sands  
As men upon a frosty morn,  
In Mississippi's fertile lands,  
Hurl out great, yellow ears of corn  
To hungry swine with hurried hands,

## XXVI.

Lo! still hot Vasques urges on,  
With flashing eye and flushing cheek.  
What would he have? what does he seek?  
He does not heed the gold a whit,  
He does not deign to look at it;  
But now his gleaming steel is drawn,  
And now he leans, would hail again, —  
He opes his swollen lips in vain.

But look you! See! A lifted hand,  
And Vasques beckons his command.  
He cannot speak, he leans, and he  
Bends low upon his saddle-bow.  
And now his blade drops to his knee,  
And now he falters, now comes on,

And now his head is bended low ;  
And now his rein, his steel, is gone ;  
Now faint as any child is he,  
And now his steed sinks to the knee.

## XXVII.

THE sun hung molten in mid space,  
Like some great star fix'd in its place.  
From out the gleaming spaces rose  
A sheen of gossamer and danced,  
As Morgan slow and still advanced  
Before his far-receding foes.

Right on and on the still black line  
Drove straight through gleaming sand and  
shine,  
By spar and beam and mast and stray,  
And waif of sea and cast-away.

The far peaks faded from their sight,  
The mountain walls fell down like night,  
And nothing now was to be seen

Save but the dim sun hung in sheen  
Of fairy garments all blood-red, —  
The hell beneath, the hell o'erhead.

A black man tumbled from his steed.  
He clutch'd in death the moving sands.  
He caught the round earth in his hands,  
He gripp'd it, held it hard and grim. . . .  
The great sad mother did not heed  
His hold, but pass'd right on from him,  
And ere he died grew far and dim.

## XXVIII.

THE sun seem'd broken loose at last,  
And settled slowly to the west,  
Half hidden as he fell a-rest,  
Yet, like the flying Parthian, cast  
His keenest arrows as he pass'd.

On, on, the black men slowly drew  
Their length, like some great serpent through  
The sands, and left a hollow'd groove :  
They march'd, they scarcely seem'd to move.  
How patient in their muffled tread !  
How like the dead march of the dead !

At last the slow black line was check'd,  
An instant only ; now again  
It moved, it falter'd now, and now



It settled in its sandy bed,  
And steeds stood rooted to the plain.  
Then all stood still, and men somehow  
Look'd down and with averted head ;  
Look'd down, nor dared look up, nor reck'd  
Of any thing, of ill or good,  
But bowed and stricken still they stood.

Like some brave band that dared the fierce  
And bristled steel of gather'd host,  
These daring men had dared to pierce  
This awful vastness, dead and gray.  
And now at last brought well at bay  
They stood, — but each stood to his post ;  
Each man an unencompassed host.

Then one dismounted, waved a hand,  
'Twas Morgan's stern and still command.  
There fell a clash, like loosen'd chain,  
And men dismounting loosed the rein.

Then every steed stood loosed and free ;  
And some stepp'd slow and mute aside,  
And some sank to the sands and died,  
And some stood still as shadows be,  
And men stood gazing silently.

**XXIX.**

OLD Morgan turn'd and raised his hand,  
And laid it level with his eyes,  
And look'd far back along the land.  
He saw a dark dust still uprise,  
Still surely tend to where he lay.  
He did not curse, he did not say,  
He did not even look surprise,  
But silent turned to her his eyes.

Nay, he was over-gentle now,  
He wiped a time his Titan brow,  
Then sought dark Ina in her place,  
Put out his arms, put down his face  
And look'd in hers.

She reach'd her hands,  
She lean'd, she fell upon his breast ;

He reach'd his arms around ; she lay  
As lies a bird in leafy nest.  
And he look'd out across the sands,  
And then his face fell down, he smiled,  
And softly said, " My child, my child !"  
Then bent his head and strode away.

And as he strode he turn'd his head  
He sidewise cast his brief commands ;  
He led right on across the sands.  
They rose and follow'd where he led

XXX.

'TWAS so like night, the sun was dim,  
Some black men settled down to rest,  
But none made murmur or request.  
The dead were dead, and that were best ;  
The living leaning follow'd him,  
In huddled heaps, half nude, and grim.

The day through high mid-heaven rode  
Across the sky, the dim red day ;  
A west the warlike day-god strode  
With shoulder'd shield away, away.

The savage, warlike day bent low,  
As reapers bend in gathering grain,  
As archer bending bends yew bow,  
And flush'd and fretted as in pain.

Then down his shoulder slid his shield,  
So huge, so awful, so blood-red  
And batter'd as from battle-field :  
It settled, sunk to his left hand,  
Sunk down and down, it touch'd the sand,  
Then day along the land lay dead,  
Without one candle at his head.

XXXI.

AND now the moon wheel'd white and vast,  
A round, unbroken, marbled moon,  
And touch'd the far bright buttes of snow,  
Then climb'd their shoulders over soon ;  
And there she seem'd to sit at last,  
To hang, to hover there, to grow,  
Grow vaster than vast peaks of snow.

Grow whiter than the snow's own breast,  
Grow softer than September's noon,  
Until the snow-peaks seem'd at best  
But one wide, shining, shatter'd moon.

She sat the battlements of time ;  
She shone in mail of frost and rime,

A time, and then rose up and stood  
In heaven in sad widowhood.

. . . . .  
The faded moon fell wearily,  
And then the sun right suddenly  
Rose up full arm'd, and rushing came  
Across the land like flood of flame.



## XXXII.

THE sun roll'd on. Lo! hills uprose  
As push'd against the arching skies, —  
As if to meet the timid sun —  
Rose sharp from out the sultry dun,  
Set well with wood, and brier, and rose,  
And seem'd to hold the free repose  
Of lands where rocky summits rise,  
Or unfenced fields of Paradise.

The black men look'd up from the sands  
Against the dim, uncertain skies,  
As men that disbelieved their eyes,  
And would have laugh'd; they wept in-  
stead,  
With shoulders heaved, with bowing head  
Hid down between their two black hands.

They stood and gazed. Lo! like the call  
Of spring-time promises, the trees  
Lean'd from their lifted mountain wall,  
And stood clear cut against the skies  
As if they grew in pistol-shot.  
Yet all the mountains answer'd not,  
And yet there came no cooling breeze,  
Nor soothing sense of windy trees.

At last old Morgan, looking through  
His shaded fingers, let them go,  
And let his load fall down as dead.  
He groan'd, he clutch'd his beard of snow  
As was his wont, then bowing low,  
Took up his life, and moaning said,  
"Lord Christ! 'tis the mirage, and we  
Stand blinded in a burning sea."

O sweet deceit when minds despair!  
O mad deceit of man betray'd!

O mother Nature, thou art fair,  
But thou art false as man or maid.

Yea, many lessons, mother Earth,  
Have we thy children learn'd of thee  
In sweet deceit. . . . The sudden birth  
Of hope that dies mocks destiny.

O mother Earth, thy promises  
Are fallen leaves; they lie forgot!  
Such lessons! How could we learn less?  
We are but children, blame us not.

## XXXIII.

AGAIN they move, but where or how  
It recks them little, nothing now.  
Yet Morgan leads them as before,  
But totters now ; he bends, and he  
Is like a broken ship a-sea, —  
A ship that knows not any shore,  
And knows it shall not anchor more.

Some leaning shadows crooning crept  
Through desolation, crown'd in dust.  
And had the mad pursuer kept  
His path, and cherished his pursuit ?  
There lay no choice. Advance he must :  
Advance, and eat his ashen fruit.

Yet on and on old Morgan led.

His black men totter'd to and fro,  
A leaning, huddled heap of woe ;  
Then one fell down, then two fell dead ;  
Yet not one moaning word was said.

They made no sign, they said no word,  
Nor lifted once black, helpless hands ;  
And all the time no sound was heard  
Save but the dull, dead, muffled tread  
Of shuffled feet in shining sands.

Again the still moon rose and stood  
Above the dim, dark belt of wood,  
Above the buttes, above the snow,  
And bent a sad, sweet face below.

She reach'd along the level plain  
Her long, white fingers. Then again  
She reach'd, she touch'd the snowy sands,  
Then reach'd far out until she touch'd

A heap that lay with doubled hands,  
Reach'd from its sable self, and clutch'd  
With death.

O tenderly  
That black, that dead and hollow face  
Was kiss'd at midnight. . . .

What if I say  
The long, white moonbeams reaching there,  
Caressing idle hands of clay,  
And resting on the wrinkled hair  
And great lips push'd in sullen pout,  
Were God's own fingers reaching out  
From heaven to that lonesome place?

XXXIV.

BY waif and stray and cast-away,  
Such as are seen in seas withdrawn,  
Old Morgan led in silence on,  
And sometime lifting up his head  
To guide his footsteps as he led,  
He deem'd he saw a great ship lay  
Her keel along the sea-wash'd sand,  
As with her captain's old command.

. . . . .

The stars were seal'd ; and then a haze  
Of gossamer fill'd all the west,  
So like in Indian summer days,  
And veil'd all things.

And then the moon  
Grew pale, and faint, and far. She died,

And now nor star nor any sign  
Fell out of heaven.

Oversoon

Some black men fell. Then at their side  
Some one sat down to watch, to rest . . .  
To rest, to watch, or what you will,  
The man sits resting, watching still.



XXXV.

THE day glared through the eastern rim  
Of rocky peaks, as prison bars ;  
With light as dim as distant stars  
The sultry sunbeams filter'd down  
Through misty phantoms weird and dim,  
Through shifting shapes bat-wing'd and  
brown.

Like some vast ruin wrapp'd in flame  
The sun fell down before them now.  
Behind them wheel'd white peaks of snow,  
As they proceeded.

Gray and grim  
And awful objects went and came  
Before them then. They pierced at last

The desert's middle depths, and lo!  
There loom'd from out the desert vast  
A lonely ship, well-built and trim,  
And perfect all in hull and mast.

No storm had stain'd it any whit,  
No seasons set their teeth in it.  
Her masts were white as ghosts, and tall;  
Her decks were as of yesterday.  
The rains, the elements, and all  
The moving things that bring decay  
By fair green lands or fairer seas,  
Had touch'd not here for centuries.

Lo! date had lost all reckoning,  
And Time had long forgotten all  
In this lost land, and no new thing  
Or old could anywise befall,  
Or morrows, or a yesterday,  
For Time went by the other way.

The ages have not any course  
Across this untrack'd waste.

The sky

Wears here one blue, unbending hue,  
The heavens one unchanging mood.  
The far still stars they filter through  
The heavens, falling bright and bold  
Against the sands as beams of gold.  
The wide, white moon forgets her force ;  
The very sun rides round and high,  
As if to shun this solitude.

What dreams of gold or conquest drew  
The oak-built sea-king to these seas,  
Ere Earth, old Earth, unsatisfied,  
Rose up and shook man in disgust  
From off her wearied breast, and threw  
And smote his cities down, and dried  
'These measured, town-set seas to dust?  
Who trod these decks ?



And every sea-breath drawn away. . . .

Sit down, sit down!

What is the good

That we go on still fashioning

Great iron ships or walls of wood,

High masts of oak, or any thing?

Lo! all things moving must go by.

The sea lies dead. Behold, this land

Sits desolate in dust beside

His snow-white, seamless shroud of sand;

The very clouds have wept and died,

And only God is in the sky.

## XXXVI.

THE sands lay heaved, as heaved by waves,  
As fashion'd in a thousand graves :  
And wrecks of storm blown here and there,  
And dead men scatter'd everywhere ;  
And strangely clad they seem'd to be  
Just as they sank in that old sea.

The mermaid with her splendid hair  
Had clung about a wreck's beam there ;  
And sung her song of sweet despair,  
The time she saw the seas withdrawn  
And all her home and glory gone :

Had sung her melancholy dirge,  
Above the last receding surge,  
And, looking down the rippled tide,  
Had sung, and with her song had died.

The monsters of the sea lay bound  
In strange contortions. Coil'd around  
A mast half heaved above the sand,  
The great sea-serpent's folds were found,  
As solid as ship's iron band.  
And basking in the burning sun  
There rose the great whale's skeleton.

A thousand sea things stretch'd across  
Their weary and bewilder'd way :  
Great unnamed monsters wrinkled lay  
With sunken eyes and shrunken form.  
The strong sea-horse that rode the storm  
With mane as light and white as floss,  
Lay tangled in his mane of moss.

And anchor, hull, and cast-away,  
And all things that the miser deep  
Doth in his darkling locker keep,  
To right and left around them lay.

Yea, coins lay there on either hand,  
Lay shining in the silver sand ;  
As plenty in the wide sands lay  
As stars along the Milky Way.

And golden coin, and golden cup,  
And golden cruse, and golden plate,  
And all that great seas swallow up,  
Right in their dreadful pathway lay. . . .  
The hungry and insatiate  
Old sea, made hoary white with time,  
And wrinkled cross with many a crime,  
With all his treasured thefts was there,  
His sins, his very soul laid bare,  
As if it were the Judgment Day.



XXXVII.

AND now the tawny night fell soon,  
And there was neither star nor moon ;  
And yet it seem'd it was not night.  
There fell a phosphorescent light,  
There rose from white sands and dead  
men

A soft light, white and fair as when  
The Spirit of Jehovah moved  
Upon the water's conscious face,  
And made it His abiding-place.

O mighty waters unreprieved !  
Thou deep ! where the Jehovah moved  
Ere soul of man was called to be !

O seas ! that were created not  
As man, as earth, as light, as aught  
That is. O sea ! thou art to me  
A terror, death, eternity.

XXXVIII.

I DO recall some sad days spent,  
By borders of the Orient,  
Days sweet as sad to memory . . .  
'Twould make a tale. It matters not . . .  
I sought the loneliest seas ; I sought  
The solitude of ruins, and forgot  
Mine own lone life and littleness  
Before this fair land's mute distress,  
That sat within this changeful sea.

Slow sailing through the reedy isles,  
By unknown banks, through unknown  
    bays,  
Some sunny, summer yesterdays,

Where Nature's beauty still beguiles,  
I saw the storied yellow sail  
And lifted prow of steely mail.  
'Tis all that's left Torcello now, —  
A pirate's yellow sail, a prow.

Below the far, faint peaks of snow,  
And grass-grown causeways well below,  
I touched Torcello.

Once a-land,  
I took a sea-shell in my hand,  
And blew like any trumpeter.  
I felt the fig-leaves lift and stir  
On trees that reached from ruined wall  
Above my head, but that was all.  
Back from the farther island shore  
Came echoes trooping ; nothing more.

Lo ! here stood Adria once, and here  
Attila came with sword and flame,

And set his throne of hollowed stone  
In her high mart.

And it remains  
Still lord o'er all. Where once the tears  
Of mute petition fell, the rains  
Of heaven fall. Lo! all alone  
There lifts this massive empty throne!  
The sea has changed his meed, his mood,  
And made this sedgy solitude.

By cattle paths grass-grown and worn,  
Through marbled streets all stain'd and  
torn

By time and battle, there I walked.  
A bent old beggar, white as one  
For better fruitage blossoming,  
Came on. And as he came he talked  
Unto himself; for there are none  
In all his island, old and dim,  
To answer back or question him.

I turned, retraced my steps once more.  
The hot miasma steamed and rose  
In deadly vapor from the reeds  
That grew from out the shallow shore,  
Where peasants say the sea-horse feeds,  
And Neptune shapes his horn and blows.

I climb'd and sat that throne of stone  
To contemplate, to dream, to reign ;  
Ay, reign above myself ; to call  
The people of the past again  
Before me as I sat alone  
In all my kingdom.

There were kine  
That browsed along the reedy brine,  
And now and then a tusky boar  
Would shake the high reeds of the shore,  
A bird blow by, — but that was all.

I watched the lonesome sea-gull pass.

I did remember and forget ;  
The past rolled by ; I stood alone.  
I sat the shapely chiselled stone  
That stands in tall sweet grasses set ;  
Ay, girdle deep in long strong grass,  
And green Alfalfa.

Very fair

The heavens were, and still and blue,  
For Nature knows no changes there.  
The Alps of Venice, far away  
Like some half-risen half moon lay.

How sweet the grasses at my feet !  
The smell of clover over sweet.  
I heard the hum of bees. The bloom  
Of clover-tops and cherry-trees  
Were being rifled by the bees,  
And these were building in a tomb.

The fair Alfalfa ; such as has

Usurped the Occident, and grows  
With all the sweetness of the rose  
On Sacramento's sundown hills,  
Is there, and that mid island fills  
With fragrance. Yet the smell of death  
Comes riding in on every breath.

Lo ! death that is not death, but rest :  
To step aside, to watch and wait  
Beside the wave, outside the gate,  
With all life's pulses in your breast :  
To absolutely rest, to pray  
In some lone mountain while you may.

That sad sweet fragrance. It had sense,  
And sound, and voice. It was a part  
Of that which had possessed my heart,  
And would not of my will go hence.  
'Twas Autumn's breath ; 'twas dear as kiss  
Of any worshipped woman is.



Some snails have climb'd the throne and writ  
Their silver monograms on it  
In unknown tongues.

I sat thereon,  
I dreamed until the day was gone ;  
I blew again my pearly shell, —  
Blew long and strong, and loud and well  
I puffed my cheeks, I blew, as when  
Horn'd satyrs danced the delight of men.

Some mouse-brown cows that fed within  
Looked up. A cowherd rose hard by,  
My single subject, clad in skin,  
Nor yet half clad. I caught his eye,  
He stared at me, then turned and fled.  
He frightened fled, and as he ran,  
Like wild beast from the face of man,  
Across his shoulder threw his head.  
He gathered up his skin of goat  
About his breast and hairy throat.

He stopped, and then this subject true,  
Mine only one in lands like these  
Made desolate by changeful seas,  
Came back and asked me for a *sou*.

## XXXIX.

AND yet again through the watery miles  
Of reeds I rowed till the desolate isles  
Of the black bead-makers of Venice are not.  
I touched where a single sharp tower is shot  
To heaven, and torn by thunder and rent  
As if it had been Time's battlement.  
A city lies dead, and this great gravestone  
Stands at its head like a ghost alone.

Some cherry-trees grow here, and here  
An old church, simple and severe  
In ancient aspect, stands alone  
Amid the ruin and decay, all grown  
In moss and grasses.

Old and quaint,  
With antique cuts of martyr'd saint,

The gray church stands with stooping knees,  
Defying the decay of seas.

Her pictured Hell, with flames blown high,  
In bright mosaics wrought and set  
When man first knew the Nubian art,  
Her bearded saints, as black as jet ;  
Her quaint Madonna, dim with rain  
And touch of pious lips of pain,  
So touched my lonesome soul, that I  
Gazed long, then came and gazed again,  
And loved, and took her to my heart.

Nor monk in black, nor Capuchin,  
Nor priest of any creed was seen.  
A sun-browned woman, old and tall,  
And still as any shadow is,  
Stole forth from out the mossy wall  
With massive keys to show me this :  
Came slowly forth, and following,  
Three birds — and all with drooping wing.

Three mute brown babes of hers ; and they —  
O, they were beautiful as sleep,  
Or death, below the troubled deep.  
And on the pouting lips of these  
Red corals of the silent seas,  
Sweet birds, the everlasting seal  
Of silence that the God has set  
On this dead island, sits for aye.

I would forget, yet not forget  
Their helpless eloquence. They creep  
Somehow into my heart, and keep  
One bleak, cold corner, jewel set.  
They steal my better self away  
To them, as little birds that day  
Stole fruits from out the cherry-trees.

So helpless and so wholly still,  
So sad, so wrapt in mute surprise,  
That I did love, despite my will.

One little maid of ten, — such eyes,  
So large and lonely, so divine, —  
Such pouting lips, such peachy cheek, —  
Did lift her perfect eyes to mine,  
Until our souls did touch and speak ;  
Stood by me all that perfect day,  
Yet not one sweet word could she say.

She turned her melancholy eyes  
So constant to my own, that I  
Forgot the going clouds, the sky,  
Found fellowship, took bread and wine,  
And so her little soul and mine  
Stood very near together there.  
And O, I found her very fair.  
Yet not one soft word could she say :  
What did she think of all that day ?

The sometime song of gondolier  
Is heard afar. The fishermen

Betimes draw net by ruined shore,  
In full spring time when east winds fall;  
Then traders row with muffled oar,  
Tedesca or the turban'd Turk,  
The pirate, at some midnight work  
By watery wall, — but that is all.

## XI.

REMOTE, around the lonesome ship,  
Old Morgan moved, but knew it not,  
For neither star nor moon fell down . . .  
I trow that was a lonesome spot  
He found, where boat and ship did dip  
In sands like some half-sunken town,  
And all things rose bat-winged and brown.

At last before the leader lay  
A form that in the night did seem  
A slain Goliath.

As in a dream,  
He drew aside in his slow pace,  
And look'd. He saw a sable face,  
A friend that fell that very day,  
Thrown straight across his wearied way.



He falter'd now. His iron heart,  
That never yet refused its part,  
Began to fail him ; and his strength  
Shook at his knees, as shakes the wind  
A shatter'd ship.

His scatter'd mind  
Ranged up and down the land. At length  
He turn'd, as ships turn, tempest toss'd,  
For now he knew that he was lost,  
And sought in vain the moon, the stars,  
In vain the battle-star of Mars.

Again he moved. And now again  
He paused, he peer'd along the plain,  
Another form before him lay.  
He stood, and statue-white he stood,  
He trembled like a stormy wood, —  
It was a foeman brown and gray.

He lifted up his head again,

Again he search'd the great profound  
For moon, for star, but sought in vain.  
He kept his circle round and round ;  
The great ship lifting from the sand  
And pointing heavenward like a hand.

**XLI.**

AND still he crept along the plain,  
Yet where his foeman dead again  
Lay in his way he moved around,  
And soft as if on sacred ground,  
And did not touch him anywhere.  
It might have been he had a dread,  
In his half-crazed and fever'd brain,  
His mortal foe might wake again  
If he should dare to touch him there.

He circled round the lonesome ship  
Like some wild beast within a wall,  
That keeps his paces round and round.  
The very stillness had a sound ;  
He saw strange somethings rise and dip ;



Yet on wound Morgan, leaning low,  
With head upon his breast, and slow  
As hand upon a dial plate.  
He did not turn his course or quail,  
He did not falter, did not fail,  
Turn right or left or hesitate.

Some far-off sounds had lost their way,  
And seem'd to call to him and pray  
For help, as if they were affright.  
It was not day, it seem'd not night,  
But that dim land that lies between  
The mournful, faithful face of night  
And loud and gold-bedazzled day ;  
A night that was not felt but seen.

There seem'd not then the ghost of sound.  
He stepp'd as soft as step the dead ;  
Yet on he led in solemn tread,  
Bewilder'd, blinded, round and round,

About the great black ship that rose  
Tall-masted as that ship that blows  
Her ghost below lost Panama, —  
The tallest mast man ever saw.

Two leaning shadows follow'd him,  
Their eyes were red, their teeth shone white,  
Their limbs did lift as shadows swim.  
Then one went left and one went right,  
And in the night pass'd out of night;  
Pass'd through the portals black, unknown,  
And Morgan totter'd on alone.

## XLII.

AND why he still survived the rest,  
Why still he had the strength to stir,  
Why still he stood like gnarléd oak  
That buffets storm and tempest stroke,  
One cannot say, save but for her,  
That helpless being on his breast ;  
At rest ; that would not let him rest.

She did not speak, she did not stir ;  
In rippled currents over her  
Her black, abundant hair pour'd down  
Like mantle or some sable gown.

That sad, sweet dreamer ; she who knew  
Not any thing of earth at all,  
Nor cared to know its bane or bliss ;

That dove that did not touch the land,  
That knew, yet did not understand.  
And this may be because she drew  
Her all of life right from the hand  
Of God, and did not choose to learn  
The things that make up earth's concern.

Ah! there be souls none understand;  
Like clouds, they cannot touch the land,  
Drive as they may by field or town.  
Then we look wise at this and frown,  
And we cry, "Fool," and cry, "Take hold  
Of earth, and fashion gods of gold."

. . . Unanchor'd ships, they blow and blow,  
Sail to and fro, and then go down  
In unknown seas that none shall know,  
Without one ripple of renown.  
Poor drifting dreamers sailing by,  
They seem to only live to die.



Call these not fools ; the test of worth  
Is not the hold you have of earth.  
Lo ! there be gentlest souls sea-blown  
That know not any harbor known.  
Now it may be the reason is  
They touch on fairer shores than **this.**

## XLIII.

AND dark-eyed Ina? Nestled there,  
Half-hidden in her glorious hair,  
The while its midnight folds fell down  
From out his great arms nude and brown,  
She lay against his hairy breast,  
All motionless as death, below  
His great white beard like shroud, or snow,  
As if in everlasting rest.

He totter'd side to side to keep  
Erect and keep his steady tread ;  
He lean'd, he bent to her his head . . .  
"She sleeps uncommon sound," he said,  
"As if in that eternal sleep,  
Where cool and watered willows sweep."

At last he touch'd a fallen group,  
Dead fellows tumbled in the sands,  
Dead foemen, gather'd to the dead.  
And eager now the man did stoop,  
Lay down his load and reach his hands,  
And stretch his form and look steadfast  
And frightful, and as one aghast  
And ghostly from his hollow eyes.  
He lean'd and then he raised his head,  
And look'd for Vasques, but in vain ;  
He laid his two great arms crosswise,  
Took breath a time with trembling main,  
Then peered again along the plain.

Lo ! from the sands another face,  
The last that follow'd through the deep,  
Comes on from out the lonesome place.  
And Vasques, too, survives !

But where ?

His last bold follower lies there,

Thrown straight across old Morgan's track,  
As if to check him, bid him back.  
He stands, he does not dare to stir,  
He watches by his child asleep,  
He fears, for her: but only her.  
The man who ever mock'd at death,  
He hardly dares to draw his breath.

Beyond, and still as black despair,  
A man rose up, stood dark and tall,  
Stretch'd out his neck, reach'd forth, let fall  
Dark oaths, and Death stood waiting there.

He drew his blade, came straight as death  
Right up before the follower,  
The last of Morgan's sable men,  
While Morgan watched aside by her,  
And saw his foeman wag his beard  
And fiercest visage ever seen.  
The while that dead man lay between.

I think no man there drew a breath,  
I know that no man quail'd or fear'd.

The tawny dead man stretch'd between,  
And Vasques set his foot thereon.  
The stars were seal'd, the moon was gone,  
The very darkness cast a shade.  
The scene was rather heard than seen,  
The rattle of a single blade. . . .

A right foot rested on the dead,  
A black hand reach'd and clutch'd a beard,  
Then neither prayed, nor dreamed of hope . . .  
A fierce face reach'd, a fierce face peer'd . . .  
No bat went whirling overhead,  
No star fell out of Ethiope. . . .

The dead man lay between them there,  
The two men glared as tigers glare,  
The black man held him by the beard.

He wound his hand, he held him fast,  
And tighter held, as if he fear'd  
The man might 'scape him at the last.  
Whiles Morgan did not speak or stir,  
But stood in silent watch by her.

Not long. . . . A light blade lifted, thrust,  
A blade that leapt and swept about,  
So wizard-like, like wand in spell,  
So like a serpent's tongue thrust out . . .  
Thrust twice, thrust thrice, thrust as he fell,  
Thrust through until it touch'd the dust.

Yet ever as he thrust and smote,  
The black hand like an iron band  
Did tighten to the gasping throat.  
He fell, but did not loose his hand;  
The two fell dead upon the sand.

**Lo!** up and from the fallen forms

Two ghosts came forth like cloud of storms.  
Two tall ghosts stood, and looking back,  
With hands all bloody, and hands clutch'd,  
Strode on together, till they touch'd,  
Along the lonesome, chartless track,  
Where dim Plutonian darkness fell,  
Then touch'd the outer rim of hell,  
And looking back their great despair  
Sat sadly down as resting there.

## XLIV.

PERCHANCE there was a strength in death ;  
The scene it seem'd to nerve the man  
To superhuman strength. He rose,  
Held up his head, began to scan  
The heavens and to take his breath  
Right strong and lustily. He now  
Resumed his load, and with his eye  
Fixed on a star that filtered through  
The farther west, pushed bare his brow,  
And kept his course with head held high,  
As if he strode his deck and drew  
His keel below some lifted light  
That watched the rocky reef at night.

How lone he was, how patient she,  
Upon that lonesome sandy sea !



It were a sad, unpleasant sight  
To follow them through all the night,  
Until the time they lifted hand,  
And touched at last a watered land.

The turkeys walked the tangled grass,  
And scarcely turned to let them pass.  
There was no sign of man, or sign  
Of savage beast. 'Twas so divine.  
It seem'd as if the bended skies  
Were rounded for this Paradise.

The large-eyed antelope came down  
From off their windy hills, and blew  
Their whistles as they wandered through  
The open groves of watered wood ;  
Then came as light as if a-wing,  
And reached their noses wet and brown,  
And stamped their little feet, and stood  
Close up before them wondering.

What if this were the Eden true,  
They found in far heart of the new  
And unnamed westmost world I sing,  
Where date and history had birth,  
And man first 'gan his wandering  
To go the girdles of the earth!

It lies a little isle mid land,  
An island in a sea of sand ;  
With reedy waters and the balm  
Of an eternal summer air.  
Some blowy pines toss tall and fair ;  
And there are grasses long and strong,  
And tropic fruits that never fail :  
The Manzinetta pulp, the palm,  
The prickly pear, with all the song  
Of summer birds.

And there the quail  
Makes nest, and you may hear her call  
All day from out the chaparral.

A land where white man never trod,  
And Morgan seems some demi-god,  
That haunts the red man's spirit land.  
A land where never red man's hand  
Is lifted up in strife at all.  
He holds it sacred unto those  
Who bravely fell before their foes,  
And rarely dares its desert wall.

Here breaks nor sound of strife or sign ;  
Rare times a red man comes this way,  
Alone, and battle-scarred and gray,  
And then he bends devout before  
The maid who keeps the cabin door,  
And deems her sacred and divine.

Within the island's heart, 'tis said,  
Tall trees are bending down with bread,  
And that a fountain pure as truth,  
And deep and mossy bound and fair,  
Is bubbling from the forest there, —  
Perchance the fabled fount of youth !

An isle where never cares betide ;  
Where solitude comes not, and where  
The soul is ever satisfied.  
An isle where skies are ever fair,  
Where men keep never date nor day,  
Where Time has thrown his glass away

This isle is all their own. No more  
The flight by day, the watch by night.  
Dark Ina twines about the door  
The scarlet blooms, the blossoms white,  
And winds red berries in her hair,  
And never knows the name of care.

She has a thousand birds ; they blow  
In rainbow clouds, in clouds of snow ;  
The birds take berries from her hand ;  
They come and go at her command.

She has a thousand pretty birds,

That sing her summer songs all day ;  
Small black-hoofed antelope in herds,  
And squirrels bushy-tail'd and gray,  
With round and sparkling eyes of pink,  
And cunning-faced as you can think.

She has a thousand busy birds ;  
And is she happy in her isle,  
With all her feathered friends and herds ?  
For when has Morgan seen her smile ?

She has a thousand cunning birds,  
They would build nestings in her hair ;  
She has brown antelope in herds ;  
She never knows the name of care ;  
Why then is she not happy there ?

All patiently she bears her part ;  
She has a thousand birdlings there,  
These birds they would build in her hair ;  
But not one bird builds in her heart.

She has a thousand birds ; yet she  
Would give ten thousand cheerfully,  
All bright of plume and loud of tongue,  
And sweet as ever trilled or sung,  
For one small fluttered bird to come  
And sit within her heart, though dumb.

She has a thousand birds ; yet one  
Is lost, and, lo ! she is undone.  
She sighs sometimes. She looks away,  
And yet she does not weep or say.

She has a thousand birds. The skies  
Are fashioned for her paradise ;  
A very queen of fairy land,  
With all earth's fruitage at command,  
And yet she does not lift her eyes.  
She sits upon the water's brink  
As mournful soul'd as you can think.

She has a thousand birds ; and yet  
She will look downward, nor forget  
The fluttered white-winged turtle dove,  
The changeful-throated birdling, love,  
That came, that sang through tropic trees,  
Then flew for aye across the seas.

The waters kiss her feet ; above  
Her head the trees are blossoming,  
And fragrant with eternal spring.  
Her birds, her antelope are there,  
Her birds they would build in her hair ;  
She only waits her birdling, love.  
She turns, she looks along the plain,  
Imploring love to come again.

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SONGS OF ITALY

1875



## SONGS OF ITALY.



### ROME.

#### I.



OME levelled hills, a wall, a dome  
That lords its gilded arch and  
lies,  
While at its base a beggar cries  
For bread, and dies, — and that is  
Rome.

#### II.

Yet Rome is Rome ; and Rome she must  
And shall remain beside her gates,  
And tribute take of kings and States,  
Until the stars have fallen to dust.

## III.

Yea, Time on yon campagnian plain  
Has pitched in siege his battle tents ;  
And round about her battlements  
Has marched and trumpeted in vain.

## IV.

These skies are Rome ! The very loam  
Lifts up and speaks in Roman pride ;  
And Time, outfaced and still defied,  
Sits by and wags his beard at Rome,

ROME, 1873.

A DOVE OF SAINT MARK.

I.

THE high-born beautiful snow came down,  
Silent and soft as the terrible feet  
Of Time on the mosses of ruins. Sweet  
Was the Christmas time in the watery town.  
'Twas a kind of carnival swelled the sea  
Of Venice that night, and canal and quay  
Were alive with humanity. Man and maid,  
Glad in their revel and masquerade,  
Moved through the feathery snow in the night,  
And shook black locks as they laughed out-  
right.

## II.

From Santa Maggiore, and to and fro,  
And ugly and black as if devils cast out,  
Black streaks through the night in the soft, white  
snow,

The steel-prowed gondolas paddled about :  
There was only the sound of the long oars' dip,  
As the low moon sailed up the sea like a ship  
In a misty morn. Then the low moon rose,  
Veiled and vast, through the feathery snows —  
And a poet sat pensive and still in his boat,  
His mantle held tight in his hand to his throat.

## III.

The dreamer arose as he drew to the land,  
Threw back his cloak, stood tall and grand,  
Then snapped his fingers right sharp as he leapt  
To the shore and turned from the quay, and kept  
His white brow wrinkled. He talked aloud  
To himself as he melted away with the crowd,  
And the feathery snows blew out of the town.  
Like a signal light through the night let down  
A far star fell through the dim profound,  
As a jewel that slipped God's hand to the ground.

## IV.

“On the gray, smooth base of your columned  
stone,  
Grim old lion of grand St. Mark,  
I shall sit me down in your salt-flood town,  
While you sit lorded on your granite throne:  
Down under your wings on the edge of the sea  
In the dim of the lamps, on the rim of the dark,  
Alone and in crowds I shall sit me down.  
O King on your column, so sullenly,  
Wrinkle your brows and tumble your mane!  
But the bride comes not to her spouse again.

## V.

“Heavens! how beautiful! Up and down,  
Alone and in couples, they glide and they pass,  
Silent and dreamy, as if seen in a glass,  
And masked to the eyes, in their Adrian town.  
Such women! It breaks one's heart to think.  
Water! and never a drop to drink!  
What types of Titian! What glory of hair!  
How tall as the sisters of Saul! How fair!  
Sweet flowers of flesh all blossoming,  
As if 'twere Eden and Eden's spring.

## VI.

“They are talking aloud with all their eyes,  
Yet passing me by with never one word.  
O pouting sweet lips, do you know there are lies  
That are told with the eyes, and never once  
    heard  
Above a heart’s beat when the soul is stirred?  
It is time to fly home, O doves of St. Mark!  
Take boughs of the olive; bear these to your ark,  
And rest and be glad, for the seas and the skies  
Of Venice are fair. . . . What! never a home?  
What! stained and despised as the soiled sea-  
    foam?

## VII.

“And who then are you? You look so fair!  
Your sweet child-face, as a rose half-blown,  
From under your black and abundant hair? . . .  
A child of the street, and unloved and alone!  
Unloved and alone? . . . There is something then  
Between us two that is not unlike! . . .  
The strength and the purposes of men  
Fall broken idols. We aim and strike  
With high-born zeal and with proud intent,  
Yet all things turn on an accident.



## VIII.

“Nay, I’ll not preach. Time’s lessons pass  
Like twilight’s swallows. They chirp in their  
flight,  
And who takes heed of the wasting glass?  
Night follows day, and day follows night,  
And no thing rises on earth but to fall  
Like leaves, with their lessons most sad and fit.  
They are spread like a volume each year to all:  
Yet men nor women learn aught of it,  
Or after it all, but a weariness  
Of soul and body, and untold distress.

## IX.

“Yea, sit, sweet child, by my side, and we —  
We will talk of the world. Nay, let my hand  
Run round your waist, and, so, let your face  
Fall down on my shoulder, and you shall be  
My dream of sweet Italy. Here in this place,  
Alone in the crowds of this old careless land,  
I will mantle your form till the morn, and  
then —  
Why, I shall return to the world and to men,  
And no whit stained for the one kind word  
Which only you and the night may have heard.

## X.

"Fear nothing for me, for I shall not fear.  
 The day, my darling, comes after the night.  
 The nights they were made to show the light  
 Of the stars in heaven, tho' storms are near. . . . .  
 Do you see that figure of Fortune up there,  
 That tops the Dogana with toe a-tip  
 Of the great gold ball? Her scroll is a-trip  
 To the turning winds. She is light as the air.  
 Well, trust to Fortune. Bread on the wave  
 Turns ever ashore to the hand that gave.

## XI.

"What am I? who am I? and what would  
     I choose?  
 Why, I am a poet — a lover of all  
 That is lovely to see. . . . Nay, naught shall befall,  
 For I would not choose what you should refuse.  
 Yes, I am a failure. I plot and plan,  
 Give splendid advice to my fellow-man,  
 Yet ever fall short of achievement. . . . Ah me!  
 In my life's early, sad afternoon,  
 Say, what have I left but a love, or a rune,  
 A hand reached out to a soul at sea,  
 Or fair, forbidden, sweet fruit to choose,  
 That 'twere sin to touch, and — sin to refuse?

XII.

“What! I to go home with you, girl, to-night?  
To nestle you down and to call you love?  
Well, that were a fancy! To feed a dove,  
A poor, soiled dove of this dear Saint Mark,  
Too frightened for rest and too weary for flight.  
Nay, nay, my sister; in spite of you,  
Sister and tempter, I will be true.  
Lo! here by the lion, alone in the dark,  
Side by side we two will sit here,  
Breathing the beauty as an atmosphere.

XIII.

“We will talk of your poets, of their tales of  
love.  
What! cannot read? Why you never heard then  
Of your Desdemona, nor the daring men  
Who died for passion? My poor white dove!  
There’s a story of Shylock that would drive you  
wild. —  
You never have heard of your poets, my child?  
Of Tasso, of Petrarch? Not the Bridge of Sighs?  
Nor the tale of Ferrara? Nor the thousand whys  
That your Venice was ever adored above  
All other fair lands for her songs of love?

## XIV.

“What then about Shylock? ’Twas gold —  
yes — dead.

The lady? ’Twas love. Why, yes; she too  
Is dead. And Byron? ’Twas fame — ah, true.  
Tasso and Petrarch? They perished the same.  
Yes, so endeth all, as you well have said.

And you, poor child, are too wise, and you,  
Too sudden, sad child, in your hard ugly youth,  
Have stumbled face fronting an obstinate truth.  
For whether for love, for gold, or for fame,  
They but lived their day, and they died the  
same.

## XV.

“But talk not of death: of death, or the life  
That comes after death. ’Tis beyond your reach,  
And this too much thought has a sense of  
strife . . .

Ay, true; I promised you not to preach . . .

My maid of Venice, or maid unmade,  
Lie still on my bosom. Be not afraid.

What! Say you are hungry? Well, let us dine  
Till the near morn comes on the silver shine  
Of the lamp-lit sea. At dawn of day,  
Child of the street, you can go your way.

## XVI.

Your mother's palace? I know your town;  
Know every nook of it, left and right,  
As well as yourself. For up and down  
Your salt-flood streets, for many a night,  
I have rowed and roved with a lady fair  
As the face of heaven. Nay, I know there  
Is no such a palace. What! you dare  
To look in my face, to lie outright,  
To bend your brows, and to frown me down?  
There is no such a place in that part of the town!

## XVII.

“What! woo me away to your rickety boat,  
To pick my pockets, to cut my throat,  
With help of your pirates? Then throw me out,  
Loaded with stones to sink me down,  
Down into the filth and dregs of the town?  
Why, that is your damnable aim, no doubt!  
And, beautiful child, you seem too fair,  
Too young, for even a thought like that;  
Too young for even the soul to dare —  
Ay, even the serpent to whisper at.

## XVIII.

“ Now, there is such a thing as being true  
 Even in villany. Listen to me :  
 Black-skinned women and low-browed men,  
 And desperate robbers and thieves ; and then,  
 Why, there are the pirates ! Ay, pirates re-  
     formed,  
 Pirates reformed and unreformed :  
 Pirates for me, friends for you. —  
 And these are your neighbors. And so you see  
 That I know your town, your neighbors : and I —  
 Well, pardon me, girl, — but I know you lie.

## XIX.

“ Tut, tut, my beauty ! What trickery now ?  
 Why, tears through your hair on my hand like  
     rain !  
 Come ! look in my face : laugh, lie again  
 With your wonderful eyes. Lift up your brow.  
 Come ! shake your fist at the world, and defy  
 The world. Now, this lying is no new thing —  
 The wearers of laces know well how to lie ;  
 As well, ay, better, than you or I . . .  
 They lie for fortune, for fame : instead,  
 You, child of the street, only lie for your bread.

## XX.

“ Some sounds blow in from the distant land ;  
The bells strike sharp, and as out of tune,  
Some sudden, short notes. To the east and afar,  
And up from the sea, is lifting a star  
As large, my beautiful child, and as white  
And as lovely to see as your little white hand.  
The people have melted away with the night,  
And not one gondola frets the lagoon.  
See! Away to the east — ’tis the face of morn.  
Hear! Away to the west — ’tis the fisherman’s  
horn.

## XXI.

“ ’Tis morn in Venice ! My child, adieu !  
Arise, poor beauty, and go your way ;  
And as for myself, why, much like you,  
I must sell this story to who may pay  
And dares to reckon it brave and meet.  
Yea, each of us traders, poor child of pain ;  
For each must barter for bread to eat  
In a world of trade and an age of gain ;  
With just this difference, child of the street :  
You sell your body, I sell my brain.

## XXII.

“ Why, child, what a wreck ! Lo, here you reel,  
Poor, wrecked little vessel, with never a keel ;  
With never a soul to advise or to care :  
You lie like a sea-weed, well astrand,  
Blown like the sea-foam hard on the sand,  
A poor, white body, with never a hand  
Reached out from the land, though you sink and  
die, —

All covered with sin to the brows and hair,  
Left all alone to starve or to lie,  
Or to sell your body to who may buy.

## XXIII.

“ Child of the street, I will kiss you ! Yea,  
I will fold you and hold you close to my breast.  
And as you lie resting in your first rest,  
And as night is pushed back from the face of day,  
I will push your tumbled and long, strong hair  
Well back from your face, and kiss you where  
Your ruffian, bearded, black men of crime  
Have stung you and stained you a thousand  
time ;  
And call you my sister, sweet child, as you sleep,  
And waken you not, lest you wake but to weep.



## XXIV.

“Yea, tenderly kiss you. And I shall not be  
Ashamed, nor stained in the least, sweet dove, —  
Tenderly kiss, with the kiss of Love,  
And of Faith and of Hope and of Charity.  
Nay, I shall be purer and better then ;  
For, child of the street, you, living or dead,  
Stained to the brows, are purer to me  
Ten thousand times than the world of men,  
Who but reach you a hand to lead you astray. —  
But the dawn is upon us ! Rise, go your way.

## XXV.

“Here ! take this money. Take it, and say,  
When you have awakened and I am away,  
Roving the world and forgetting of you ;  
When you have aroused from your brief little rest,  
And find these francs nestled down in your  
breast,  
And rough men question you, — why, then say  
That Madonna sent them. Then kneel and pray,  
And pray for me, the worst of the two :  
Then God will bless you, sweet child, and you  
Shall be mine angel my whole life through.

## XXVI.

“ Take this money and buy you bread,  
And eat and rest while a year wears through.  
Then, rising refreshed, try virtue instead ;  
Be stronger and better, poor, pitiful dear,  
So prompt with a falsehood, prompt with a tear,  
For the hand grows stronger as the heart grows  
true.

Take courage, my child, for I promise you  
We are judged by our chances of life and lot,  
And your poor little soul may yet pass through  
The eye of the needle, where laces shall not.

## XXVII.

“ Poor dove of the dust, with tear-wet wings,  
Homeless and lone as the dove from its ark, —  
Do you reckon yon angel that tops St. Mark,  
That tops the tower, that tops the town,  
If he knew us two, if he knew all things,  
Would say, poor child, you are worse than I?  
Do you reckon yon angel, looking down  
And down like a star, he hangs so high,  
Could tell which one were the worst of us two?  
Child of the street — it is not you !

## XXVIII.

“ If we two were dead, and laid side by side  
Right here on the pavement, this very day,  
Here under the lion and over the sea,  
Where the morn flows in like a rosy tide,  
And the sweet Madonna that stands in the moon,  
With her crown of stars, just across the lagoon,  
Should come and should look upon you and me, —  
Do you reckon, my child, that she would decide,  
As men do decide and as women do say,  
That you are so dreadful, and turn away ?

## XXIX.

“ If the angel were sent to choose to-day  
Between us two as we lay here,  
Dead and alone in this desolate place, —  
You, white with a hunger and stained with a tear,  
Or I, the rover the whole world through,  
Restless and stormy as any sea, —  
If the angel were sent to choose, I say,  
This very moment the best of the two,  
Looking us two right straight in the face,  
Child of the street, he would not choose me.

## XXX.

“ The fresh sun is falling on turret and tower,  
The far sun is flashing on spire and dome,  
The marbles of Venice are bursting to flower,  
The marbles of Venice are flower and foam :  
Child of the street, oh, waken you now !  
There ! bear my kiss on your brave white brow,  
Through earth to heaven : and when we meet  
Beyond the waters, poor waif of the street,  
Why, then I shall know you, my sad, sweet dove,  
And claim you and kiss you with the kiss of love.

VENICE, 1873.

## SUNRISE IN VENICE.

## I.

NIGHT seems troubled and scarce asleep ;  
Her brows are gathered in broken rest.  
A star in the east starts up from the deep !  
Sullen old lion of loved Saint Mark,  
Lord of the deep, high-throned in the dark !  
'Tis morn, new-born, with a star on her breast,  
White as my lilies that grow in the West !

Hist ! men are passing me hurriedly.  
I see the yellow wide wings of a bark !  
Sail silently over my morning-star,  
And on and in to an amber sea.  
I see men move in the moving dark,  
Tall and silent as columns are,  
Girded and patient as Destiny ;  
Great, sinewy men that are good to see,  
With hair pushed back, and with open breasts ;  
Barefooted fishermen, seeking their boats,  
Brown as walnuts and hairy as goats, —  
Brave old water-dogs, wed to the sea,  
First to their labors and last to their rests.

## II.

Ships are moving ! I hear a horn —  
A silver trumpet it sounds to me,  
Deep-voiced and musical, far at sea . . .  
Answers back, and again it calls.  
'Tis the sentinel boats that watch the town  
All night, as mounting her watery walls.  
And watching for pirate or smuggler. Down  
Over the sea, and reaching away,  
And against the east, a soft light falls  
Silvery soft as the mist of morn,  
And I catch a breath like the breath of day.

## III.

The east is blossoming ! Yea, a rose,  
Vast as the heavens, soft as a kiss,  
Sweet as the presence of woman is,  
Rises and reaches, and widens and grows  
Large and luminous up from the sea,  
And out of the sea, as a blossoming tree.

Richer and richer, so higher and higher,  
Deeper and deeper it takes its hue ;

Brighter and brighter it reaches through  
The space of heaven and the place of stars,  
Till all is as rich as a rose can be,  
And my rose-leaves fall into billows of fire.  
Then beams reach upward as arms from a sea ;  
Then lances and arrows are aimed at me.  
Then lances and spangles and spars and bars  
Are broken and shivered and strown on the sea ;  
And around and about me tower and spire  
Start from the billows like tongues of fire.

VENICE, 1874.

## PALATINE HILL.

## I.

A WOLF-LIKE stream without a sound  
Steals by and hides beneath the shore,  
Its awful secrets evermore  
Within its sullen bosom bound.

## II.

And this was Rome, that shrieked for room  
To stretch her limbs ! A hill of caves  
For half-wild beasts and hairy slaves ;  
And gypsies tent within her tomb !

## III.

Two lone palms on the Palatine,  
Two rows of cypress black and tall,  
With white roots set in Cæsar's Hall, —  
A garden, convent, and sweet shrine.



IV.

Tall cedars on a broken wall,  
That look away toward Lebanon,  
And seem to mourn for grandeur gone:  
A wolf, an owl, — and that is all.

ROME, September, 1873.

## IN A GONDOLA.

## I.

'TWAS night in Venice. Then down to the  
tide,

Where a tall and a shadowy gondolier  
Leaned on his oar, like a lifted spear : —  
'Twas night in Venice ; then side by side  
We sat in his boat. Then oar a-trip  
On the black boat's keel, then dip and dip ; —  
These boatmen should build their boats more  
wide,

For we were together, and side by side.

## II.

The sea it was level as seas of light,  
As still as the light ere a hand was laid  
To the making of lands, or the seas were made.  
'Twas fond as a bride on her bridal night  
When a great love swells in her soul like a sea,  
And makes her but less than divinity.  
'Twas night, — The soul of the day, I wis :  
A woman's face hiding from her first kiss.

## III.

'Twas night in Venice. On o'er the tide —  
These boats they are narrow as they can be,  
These crafts they are narrow enough, and we,  
To balance the boat, sat side by side —  
Out under the arch of the Bridge of Sighs,  
On under the arch of the star-sown skies :  
We two were together on the Adrian Sea, —  
The one fair woman of the world to me.

## IV.

These narrow-built boats, they rock when at sea,  
And they make one afraid. So she leaned to me ;  
And that is the reason alone there fell  
Such golden folds of abundant hair  
Down over my shoulder, as we sat there.  
These boatmen should build their boats more  
wide,  
Wider for lovers ; as wide — Ah, well !  
But who is the rascal to kiss, and tell ?

## COMO.

THE red-clad fishers row and creep  
Below the crags, as half asleep,  
Nor ever make a single sound.  
The walls are steep,  
The waves are deep;  
And if a dead man should be found  
By these same fishers in their round,  
Why, who shall say but he was drowned?

## I.

The lakes lay bright as bits of broken moon  
Just newly set within the cloven earth;  
The ripened fields drew round a golden girth  
Far up the steeps, and glittered in the noon;  
And, when the sun fell down, from leafy shore  
Fond lovers stole in pairs to ply the oar.  
The stars, as large as lilies, flecked the blue;  
From out the Alps the moon came wheeling  
through  
The rocky pass the great Napoleon knew.

## II.

A gala night it was, — the season's prime.  
We rode from castled lake to festal town,  
To fair Milan — my friend and I; rode down  
By night, where grasses waved in rippled  
rhyme :

And so, what theme but love at such a time?  
His proud lip curled the while with silent scorn  
At thought of love; and then, as one forlorn,  
He sighed; then bared his temples, dashed with  
gray;  
Then mocked, as one outworn and well *blasé*.

## III.

A gorgeous tiger lily, flaming red, —  
So full of battle, of the trumpet's blare,  
Of old-time passion, — upreared its head.  
I galloped past. I leaned, I clutched it there  
From out the long, strong grass. I held it high,  
And cried: "Lo! this to-night shall deck her hair  
Through all the dance. And mark! the man  
shall die  
Who dares assault, for good or ill design,  
The citadel where I shall set this sign."

## IV.

He spake no spare word all the after while.  
That scornful, cold, contemptuous smile of his !  
And in the hall the same old, hateful smile !  
Why, better men have died for less insult than  
this.

Then marvel not that when she graced the floor,  
With all the beauties gathered from the four  
Far quarters of the world, and she, my fair,  
The fairest, wore within her midnight hair  
My tiger lily, — marvel not, I say,  
That he glared like some wild beast well at bay.

## V.

Oh, she shone fairer than the summer star,  
Or curled, sweet moon in middle destiny ;  
More fair than sunrise climbing up the sea,  
Where all the loves of Adriana are.  
Who loves, who truly loves, will stand aloof :  
The noisy tongue makes most unholy proof  
Of shallow passion. . . . All the while afar  
From out the dance I stood and watched my  
star,  
My tiger lily borne an oriflamme of war.

## VI.

Italia's beauties blushed at love's advance.  
Like bright white mice in moonlight at their  
play,  
Or sunfish shooting in some shining bay,  
The swift feet shot and glittered in the dance.  
Oh, have you loved and truly loved, and seen  
Aught else the while than your own stately  
queen?  
Her presence it was majesty — so tall;  
Her proud development encompassed all.  
She filled all space. I sought, I saw but her:  
I followed as some fervid worshipper.

## VII.

Adown the dance she moved with matchless  
grace.  
The world — my world — moved with her.  
Suddenly  
I questioned whom her cavalier might be?  
'Twas he! His face was leaning to her face!  
I clutched my blade; I sprang; I caught my  
breath, —  
And so, stood leaning cold and still as death.

And they stood still. She blushed, then reached  
 and tore  
 The lily as she passed, and down the floor  
 She strewed its heart like bits of gushing  
 gore. . . .

## VIII.

'Twas *he* said heads, not hearts, were made to  
 break :

*He* taught me this that night in splendid scorn.  
 I learned too well. . . . The dance was done. Ere  
 morn

We mounted — he and I — but no more  
 spake. . . .

And this for woman's love! My lily worn  
 In her dark hair in pride, to then be torn  
 And trampled on, for this bold stranger's  
 sake! . . .

Two men rode silent back toward the lake ;  
 Two men rode silent down — but only one  
 Rode up at morn to meet the rising sun.

The walls are steep ;  
 The crags shall keep



Their everlasting watch profound.

The walls are steep,

The waves are deep ;

And if a dead man should be found

By red-clad fishers in their round,

Why, who shall say but he was drowned ?

LAKE COMO, 1874.

## A GARIBALDIAN'S STORY.

## I.

“A Y, signor! that’s Nervi, just under the  
     lights  
 That look down from the forts on the Genoese  
     heights ;  
 And that stone set in stone in the rim of the sea,  
 Like a tall figure rising and reaching a hand,  
 Marks the spot where the chief and his red-  
     shirted band  
 Hoisted sail. . . . Have a light? Ah, yes : as  
     for me  
 I have lights, and a leg — short a leg, as you see ;  
 And have three fingers hewn from this strong  
     sabre-hand.

## II.

“See that cursèd cowlèd monk, black-mantled,  
     and black  
 In his heart as the plague, or the stole at his  
     back,

Stealing by like a spy down that sweet wooded  
way?

Well, these were the fellows we grappled. Why  
they —

They were thick in the land as the locusts.

The land

Was eaten alive by their indolence. Yea,

They did toil not nor spin, and yet their array

Was as purple and gold; and they laid heavy  
hand

On the first of the fruits, of the flocks; and the  
gown

Soiled the first fairest maidens of country and  
town.

### III.

“Look you there! Do you see where the blue  
bended floors

Of the heavens are frescoed with stars? See  
the heights,

Then the bent hills beneath, where the grape-  
growers' doors

Open out and look down in a crescent of lights?

Well, there I was born; grew tall. Then the  
call

For bold men for Sicily.  
I rose from the vines,  
Shook back my long hair, looked forth, then let  
fall  
My dull pruning-hook, and stood full in the  
lines.  
Then my young promised bride held her head  
to her breast  
As a sword trailed the stones, and I strode with  
a zest.  
But a sable-cowled monk girt his gown, and  
looked down  
With a leer in her face, as I turned from the  
town.

## IV.

“Then from yonder green hills bending down to  
the seas,  
Grouping here, grouping there, in the gray olive  
trees,  
We watched the slow sun ; slow saw him retire  
At last in the sea, like a vast isle of fire.  
Then the chief drew his sword :  
There was that in his air,  
As the care on his face came and went and still  
came,

As he gazed out at sea, and yet gazed anywhere,  
That meant more, signor, more than a peasant  
can say.

Then at last, when the stars in the soft-tempered  
breeze

Glowed red and grew large, as if fanned to a  
flame,

Lo! something shot up from a black-muffled ship  
Deep asleep in the bay, like a star gone astray:

Then down, double quick, with the sword-hilt  
a-trip,

Came the troop with a zest, and — that stone  
tells the rest.

v.

“ Hot times at Marsala! and then under Rome  
It was hell sure enough, and a whole column fell  
Like new vines in a frost.

Then year followed year,  
Until, stricken and sere, at last I came home —  
As the strife lulled a spell, came limping back  
here —

Stealing back to my home, limping up out of hell.  
But we won, did we not? Won, I scarcely know  
what —

Yet the whole land is free from the Alps to the  
sea.

Ah! my young promised bride? Christ, that  
cuts! Why, I thought  
That her face had gone by, like a dream that was  
not.

## VI.

“What a presence was hers! What a throat,  
what a mouth!

Why, a mouth that Rossetti, the painter, had  
smiled

But to see; had caught it on canvas, had set his  
craft wild

With talk of his picture from Northland to  
South! —

A mouth that half opened as hungered for love,  
That trusted all things; a mouth that went out  
With daring and valor, that never knew doubt,  
Yet was proud and as pure as that bent moon  
above. . . .

## VII.

. . . “Yes, peaches must ripen and show the sun’s  
red

In their time, I suppose, like the full of a rose;

And some one must pluck them, 'tis very well  
said,

As they swell and grow rich and look luscious to  
touch :

Yet I fancy some men, some fiends, must have  
much

To repent of: This reaching up rudely of hand  
For the early sweet-fruits of a warm, careless  
land ;

This plucking and biting of every sweet peach  
Ere yet it is ripe and come well to its worth,  
Then casting it down, and quite spoiled, to the  
reach

Of the swine and the things that creep close to  
the earth. . . .

#### VIII.

“But he died ! Look you here. Stand aside.

Yes, he died

Like a dog in a ditch. In that low battle-moat  
He was found on a morn. The red line on his  
throat

They said was a rope. ‘Bah ! the one-fingered  
man

Might have done it,’ said one.

Then I laughed till I cried  
 When the guard led me forth, and the judge sat  
 to scan

My hands and my strength, and to question me  
 sore :

‘ Why, what has the match-man to do with all  
 this, —

The one-fingered man, with his life gone amiss?’  
 I cried as I laughed, and they vexed me no more.

Some men must fill trenches. Ten thousand go  
 down

As unnamed and unknown as the stones in a wall,  
 For the few to pass over and on to renown :  
 And I am of these.

The old king has his crown,  
 And my country is free ; and what more, after all,  
 Did I ask from the first ?

Don’t you think that you lights  
 Through the black olive trees look divine on the  
 seas ?

Then look you above, where the Apennines bend :  
 Why, you scarcely can tell, as you peer through  
 the trees,

Where the great stars begin or the cottage-lights  
 end !



IX.

“ Yes, a little bit lonely, that can't be denied :  
But as good place to wait for a sign as may be.  
I shall watch on the shore, looking out as before ;  
And the chief on his isle in the calm middle sea,  
With his sword gathered up, stands waiting with  
me  
For the great silent ship.

We shall cross to the shore  
Where a white city lies like yon Alps in the skies,  
And look down on this sea ; and right well  
satisfied.

X.

“ Ay ! The whole country round vaunts our deed,  
and the town  
Raised that shaft on the spot, — for the whole  
land is free ;  
And some won renown, and one won a crown,  
And one won a right to sell lights by the sea.  
Have a light, sir, to-night ? Ah, thanks, signor,  
thanks !  
Bon voyage, bon voyage ! Bless you and your  
francs.”

GENOA, October, 1873.

## THE IDEAL AND THE REAL.

## PART I.

“ And full these truths eternal  
 O'er the yearning spirit steal,  
 That the real is the ideal,  
 And the ideal is the real.”

## I.

SHE was damned with the dower of beauty. She  
 Had gold in shower about her brow.  
 Her feet! — why, her two blessed feet were so  
 small  
 They could nest in this hand. When she stood  
 up so tall,  
 So gracious, so grand, she was all to me, —  
 My present, my past, my eternity! . . .  
 She lives in my dreams. I behold her now  
 On that shoreless white river that flowed like a sea  
 At her feet where I sat. . . . How her lips pushed  
 out  
 In their brave, warm welcome of dimple and pout!

## II.

'Twas eons ago. By a river that ran  
Fathomless, echoless, limitless, on,  
And shoreless, and peopled with never a man, —  
We met, soul to soul. . . . No land ; yet I think  
There were willows and lilies that leaned to drink.  
The stars were all sealed and the moons were gone.  
The wide shining circles that girdled that world,  
They were distant and dim. An incense curled  
In vapory folds from that river that ran  
All shoreless, with never the presence of man.

## III.

How sensuous the night! how soft was the sound  
Of her voice on the night! How warm was her  
breath  
In that world that had never yet tasted of death  
Or forbidden sweet fruit! . . . In that far pro-  
found  
We were camped on the edges of god-land. We  
Were the people of Saturn. The watery fields,  
The wide-winged, dolorous birds of the sea, —  
They acknowledged but us. Our battle-shields  
Were my naked white palms ; our food it was love.  
Our roof was the fresco of stars above.

## IV.

How tender she was, and how timid she was!  
How turned she to me where that wide river ran,  
With its lilies and willows and watery reeds,  
And heeded as only your true love heeds! . . .  
But a black-hoofed beast, with the head of a man,  
Stole down where she sat at my side, and began  
To puff his cheeks, then to play, then to pause,  
With his double-reed pipe; then to play and to play  
As never played man since the world began,  
And never shall play till the judgment day.

## V.

How he puffed! how he played! Then adown  
the dim shore,  
This half-devil man, all hairy and black,  
Did dance with his hoofs in the sand, looking back  
As his song died away. . . . She turned never more  
Unto me after that. She arose, and she pass'd  
Right on from my sight. Then I followed as fast  
As a love could follow. But ever before  
Like a spirit she fled. How vain and how far  
Did I follow my beauty from star to white star!  
From foamy white sea, and from stormy black  
shore.

## VI.

But I here shall abide. I shall pipe on a reed.  
 I shall sit by the waters my whole life through.  
 I shall sing wild songs. I shall take no heed  
 Of the things forbidden, or of bitter-sweet fruit.  
 I shall feast with the gods. I shall sing for the few.  
 I shall pipe not for love. I shall reach my hand,  
 And pluck fair lilies from the bank by the root.  
 I shall laugh like a satyr. I shall dance on the sand,  
 I shall rove o'er the sea, I shall rest by the shore;  
 But never seek love upon earth any more.

## VII.

Never more upon earth! Yet the heaven-bound  
 span  
 Of life upon earth, — lo, it is but to-day!  
 Last night was the land that remembers no man,  
 To-morrow the skies! . . . Then who shall  
 gainsay  
 The valor of patience? Lo! there I shall woo  
 In the gardens of God, on the centremost star  
 Of all whirling stars. Face front I shall view  
 This one splendid face I have followed so far.  
 There love shall heal love of her hard battle-scars,  
 Begun on the outermost edge of the stars.

## VIII.

How long I had sought her! My soul of fire  
It had fed on itself. I fasted, I cried;  
Was tempted by many. Yet still I denied  
The touch of all things, and kept my desire. . . .  
I stood by the lion of St. Mark in that hour  
Of Venice, when gold of the sunset is rolled  
From cloud to cathedral, to turret and tower,  
In matchless, magnificent garment of gold.  
Then I knew she was near; yet I had not known  
Her form or her face since the stars were sown.

## IX.

We two had been parted — God pity us! — when  
The stars were unnamed and all heaven was  
dim;  
We two had been parted far back on the rim  
And the outermost border of heaven's red bars;  
We two had been parted ere the meeting of men,  
Or God had set compass on spaces as yet;  
We two had been parted ere God had set  
His finger to spinning the purple with stars, —  
And now, at the last in the gold and set  
Of the sun of Venice, we two had met.



## XII.

How long I had sought her! I had hungered,  
 nor ate  
 Of any sweet fruits. I had tasted not one  
 Of all the fair glories grown under the sun.  
 I had sought only her. Yea, I knew that she  
 Had come upon earth, and stood waiting for me  
 Somewhere by my way. But the pathways of fate  
 They had led otherwhere; the round world round,  
 The far North seas and the near profound  
 Had failed me for aye. Now I stood by that sea  
 Where ships drave by, and all dreamily.

## XIII.

I had turned from the lion a time, and when  
 I looked tow'rd the tide and out on the lea  
 Of the town where the warm sea tumbled and  
 teemed  
 With beauty, I saw her! I knew her then,  
 The tallest, the fairest fair daughter of men.  
 Oh, Venice stood full in her glory. She gleamed  
 In the splendor of sunset and sensuous sea;  
 Yet I saw but my bride, my all to me,  
 While the doves hurried home to the dome of  
 Saint Mark, [in the dark.  
 And the brass horses plunged their high manes



XIV.

I spake not, but caught at my breath ; I did raise  
My face to fair heaven, to give God praise  
That at last, ere the ending of time, we two  
Had touched upon earth at the same sweet  
place. . . .

Yea, we never had met upon earth at all ;  
Never, since ages ere Adam's fall,  
Had we two met in the fulness of soul,  
Where two are as one, but had wandered on  
through  
The spheres, divided, where planets roll  
Unnam'd and in darkness through limitless space.

XV.

Was it well with my love? Was she true?  
Was she brave  
With virtue's own valor? Was she waiting for  
me?  
Oh, how fared my love? Had she home? Had  
she bread?  
Had she known but the touch of the warm-  
tempered wave?  
Was she born upon earth with a crown on her  
head,

Or born, like myself, but a dreamer instead?  
So long it had been! So long! Why the sea —  
That wrinkled and surly, old, time-tempered  
    slave —  
Had been born, had his revels, grown wrinkled  
    and hoar  
Since I last saw my love on that uttermost shore.

## XVI.

Oh, how fared my love? Once I lifted my face,  
And I shook back my hair and looked out on the  
    sea;  
I pressed my hot palms as I stood in my place,  
And cried: "Oh, I come like a king to your side  
Though all hell intervene!" . . . "Hist! she  
    may be a bride,  
A mother at peace, with sweet babes on her  
    knee!  
A babe at her breast and a spouse at her side! —  
Have I wandered too long, and has Destiny  
Set mortal between us?" I buried my face  
In my hands, and I moaned as I stood in my  
    place.

## XVII.

'Twas her year to be young. She was tall, she  
was fair —

Was she pure as the snow on the Alps over there?

'Twas her year to be young. She was fair, she  
was tall ;

And I felt she was true, as I lifted my face

And saw her press down her rich robe to its place,  
With a hand white and small as a babe's with a  
doll.

And her feet! — why, her feet in the white shin-  
ing sand

Were so small, 'twas a wonder the maiden could  
stand.

Then she pushed back her hair with a round  
hand that shone

And flashed in the light with a white starry stone.

## XVIII.

Then, my love she is rich! My love she is fair!

Is she pure as the snow on the Alps over there?

She is gorgeous with wealth! "Thank God, she  
has bread,"

I said to myself. Then I humbled my head

In gratitude. Then I questioned me where  
Was her palace, her parents? What name did  
she bear?

What mortal on earth came nearest her heart?  
Who touched the small hand till it thrilled to a  
smart?

'Twas her year to be young. She was proud,  
she was fair —

Was she pure as the snow on the Alps over there?

## XIX.

Beneath her blue robe her round bosom rose  
In sensuous beauty! She was white as the  
snows

Of the Tyrolese Alps. Oh, the slope of her arm!  
Oh, the rounded limbs' length! The breasts  
heaving warm

As welcomes of love! The lips pushing out!  
The proud mouth gathered in dimple and pout!  
Then the dusky depressions, suggestions of night,  
They did make her pure whiteness but appear  
the more white:

Whiter indeed than the white soul of man,  
Or the whitest marbles of the Vatican.

## XX.

She loosened her robe that was blue like the sea,  
And silken and soft as a babe's new born.  
And my heart it leapt light as the sunlight at  
    morn  
At the sight of my love in her purity,  
As she rose like a Naiad half-robed from the sea.  
As careless, as calm as a queen can be,  
She loosed and let fall all the raiment of blue,  
As she drew a white robe in a melody  
Of her moving white limbs ; and between the  
    two,  
Like a rift in a cloud, shone her fair form thro'.

## XXI.

Now she turned, reached a hand ; then a tall  
    gondolier  
Who had leaned on his oar, like a long lifted spear,  
Shot sudden and swift and all silently,  
And drew to her side as she turned from the  
    tide . . .  
It was odd, such a thing, and I counted it queer  
That a princess like this, whether virgin or bride,

Should abide thus apart, and should bathe in that  
    sea ;  
And I shook back my hair, and so unsatisfied !  
Then I fluttered the doves that were perched  
    close about,  
As I strode up and down in dismay and in doubt.

## XXII.

Then she stood in the boat on the borders of  
    night  
As a goddess might stand on that far wonder-land  
Of eternal sweet life, which men have named  
    Death.  
I turned to the sea, and I caught at my breath  
As she crouched in the boat, and her white  
    baby hand  
Held her vestment of purple imperial and white.  
Then the gondola shot, — swift, sharp from the  
    shore :  
There was never the sound of a song or of oar,  
But the doves hurried home in white clouds to  
    Saint Mark,  
Where the lion looms high o'er the sea in the  
    dark.

## XXIII.

Then I cried: "Quick! Follow her! Follow  
her! Fast!

Come, thrice double fare if you follow her true  
To her own palace door!" There was plashing  
of oar

And rattle of rowlock. . . . I sat leaning low,  
Looking far in the dark, looking out as we sped  
With my soul all alert, bending down, leaning low.  
But only the oaths of the men as we pass'd,  
When we jostled them sharp as we sudden shot  
thro'

The watery town. Then a deep, distant roar —  
The rattle of rowlock, the rush of the oar.

## XXIV.

We rock'd and we rode: then the oars keeping pace  
Gave stroke for short stroke in the swift stormy  
chase.

I lifted my face, and lo! fitfully  
The heavens breathed lightning: it did lift and fall  
As if angels were parting God's curtains. Then  
deep

And indolent-like and as if half-asleep,

As if half made angry to move at all,  
 The thunder moved. It confronted me.  
 It stood like an avalanche poised on a hill :  
 I saw its black brows. I heard it stand still.

## XXV.

Then we flew by a great house hurriedly,  
 With its four walls washed by the foamy sea ;  
 'Twas the place where Shelley was wont to be.  
 I heard in the heavens the howlings of men ;  
 High up in the dark I did hear men shout ;  
 And I lifted my eyes as the lightnings fell,  
 And I saw hands thrust through the bars ; and then  
 I knew 'twas the madhouse howling at me :  
 So doleful, so lone ! Like a land cast out,  
 And awful as Lucifer throned in hell.

## XXVI.

Then an oath. Then a prayer. Then a gust  
 that made rents  
 Thro' the yellow-sailed fishers. Then suddenly  
 Came sharp-forked fire ! Then far thunder fell  
 Like the great first gun ! Ah, then there was rout  
 Of ships like the breaking of regiments,  
 And shouts as if hurled from an upper hell.



Then tempest! It lifted, it spun us about,  
Then shot us ahead through the hills of the sea  
As if a great arrow shot shoreward in wars —  
Then heaven split open till we saw the blown  
stars.

## XXVII.

On! On! through the foam, through the storm,  
through the town.  
She was gone! She was lost in the wilderness  
Of palaces lifting their marbles of snow.  
I stood in my gondola. Up and all down  
I pushed through the surge of the salt-flood street  
Above me, below. . . . 'Twas only the beat  
Of the sea's sad heart. . . . Then I heard below  
The water-rat building, and nothing but that;  
Not even the sea-bird screaming distress,  
As she lost her way in that wilderness.

## XXVIII.

I listened all night. I caught at each sound;  
I clutched and I caught as a man that drown'd —  
Only the sullen, low growl of the sea  
Far out the flood-street at the edge of the ships.  
Only the billow slow licking his lips,

Like a dog that lay crouching there watching for  
 me,  
 Growling and showing white teeth all the night,  
 Reaching his neck and as ready to bite.  
 Only the waves with their salt-flood tears  
 Fawning white stones of a thousand years.

## XXIX.

Only the birds in the loftiness  
 Of column and dome and of glittering spire  
 That thrust to heaven and held the fire  
 Of the thunder still ; the bird's distress  
 As he struck his wings in that wilderness,  
 On marbles that speak and thrill and inspire. —  
 The night below and the night above ;  
 The water-rat building, the startled white dove ;  
 The wide-winged, dolorous sea-bird's call,  
 The water-rat building, — but that was all.

## XXX.

Silent and slowly, and up and down,  
 I rowed and I rowed me for many an hour,  
 By beetling palace and toppling tower,  
 In the dark and the deep of the watery town.

Only the water-rat building by stealth,  
Only the sea-bird astray in his flight  
As he struck his wings in the clouds of night,  
On spires that sprang from old Adria's wealth,  
On marbles that move with their eloquence,  
On statues so sweeter than utterance.

## XXXI.

Lo! pushing the darkness from pillar to post,  
The morning came silent and gray like a ghost  
Slow up the canal. I leaned from the prow  
And listened. Not even the bird in distress  
Screaming above through the wilderness;  
Not even the stealthy old water-rat now.  
Only the bell in the fisherman's tower,  
Slow tolling at sea and telling the hour  
To kneel to their sweet Santa Barbara  
For tawny fishers at sea and pray.

## THE IDEAL AND THE REAL.

## PART II.

## I.

HIGH over my head, carved cornice, quaint  
spire ;

And ancient-built palaces knocked their gray  
brows

Together and frowned. The slow-creeping scows  
Scraped the wall on each side. High over, the  
fire

Of sudden-born morning came flaming in bars :  
While up through my chasm I could count the  
stars. [death

My God ! Such damp ruin ! The dank smell of  
Came up the canal : I could scarce take my breath !  
'Twas the fit place for pirates, for women who keep  
Contagion of body and soul where they sleep.

II.

Great heaven ! A white hand did beckon to me  
From an old mouldy door, and almost in my reach.  
I sprang to the sill as one wrecked to a beach ;  
I sprang with wide arms : it was she ! it was  
she ! . . .

In such a damn'd place ! And what was her trade ?  
To think I had followed, so faithful, so far,  
From eternity's brink, from star to white star,  
To find her, to find her, nor wife nor sweet maid !  
To find her a shameless poor creature of shame,  
A nameless lost body, men hardly dare name.

III.

All alone in her pride, on that damp dismal floor  
She stood to entice me. I bowed me before  
All-conquering beauty. I called her my queen.  
I told her my love as I would have told  
My love had I found her as pure as gold.  
I reached her my hand, as fearless a man  
As man fronting cannon. I cried : " Come forth  
To the sun ! There are lands to the south, to  
the north,  
Anywhere where you will. Dash the shame  
from your brow ;  
Come with me, for ever ; and come with me now ! "

## IV.

Why, I had turned pirate for her ! I had seen  
Tall ships burned from seas, like to stubble from  
field. [yield,

I would not now forsake her. Why should I now  
When she needed me most ? Had I found her a  
queen,

And beloved by the world, — why, what had I  
done ?

I had wooed her, and wooed her, and wooed till I  
won !

Then, if I had loved her with gold and fair fame,  
Would not I now love her, and love her the same ?  
My soul hath a pride. I would tear out my heart  
And feed it to dogs, could it play such a part.

## V.

I told her all things. Her brow took a frown ;  
Her grand Titan beauty, so tall, so serene,  
The one perfect woman, mine own idol queen !  
Her proud swelling bosom it broke up and down :  
Then she spake, and she shook in her soul as she  
said,

With her small hands upheld to her bent, aching  
head :

“Go back to the world! go back and alone,  
Thou strange, stormy soul, intense as mine  
own!”

I said: “I will wait! I will wait in the pass  
Of death, until Time he shall break his glass!

VI.

“Don't you know me, my bride of the white  
worlds before?

Why, don't you remember the white milky-way  
Of stars, that we traversed a life-time through?  
We were counting the colors, we were naming  
the seas

Of the vaster ones. You remember the trees  
That swayed in the cloudy white heavens, and  
bore

Bright crystals of sweets, and the sweet manna-  
dew?

Why, you smile as you weep, and you lift up  
your brow,

And your bright eyes speak, and you know me  
now!

You know me as if 'twere but yesterday!

## VII.

“Now here in the lands where the gods did love,  
 Where the white Europa was won, — she rode  
 Her milk-white bull through these same warm  
       seas, —

Yea, here in the lands where the Hercules,  
 With the lion’s heart and the heart of the dove,  
 Did walk in his naked great strength, and strode  
 In the sensuous air with his lion’s skin  
 Flapping and fretting his knotted thews ;  
 Where Theseus did wander, and Jason cruise, —  
 Lo ! here let the life of all lives begin.

## VIII.

“ Lo ! here where the Orient balms blow in,  
 Where heaven is kindest, where all God’s blue  
 Seems a great gate opened to welcome you, —  
 Come, rise and go forth, and forget your sin ! ”  
 Then rose her great heart, so grander far  
 Than I had believed on that outermost star ;  
 And she put by her tears, and calmly she said  
 With hands held low and with bended head :  
 “ Go thou through the doors of death, and wait  
 For me on the innermost side of the gate.



IX.

“It is breaking my heart ; but, ’tis best,” she said.  
“Thank God that this life is but a day’s span,  
But a wayside inn for weary, worn man —  
A night and a day ; and, to-morrow, the spell  
Of darkness is broken. Now, darling, farewell !  
Nay, touch not the hem of my robe ! — it is red  
With sins that your own sex heaped on my head !  
But go, love, go ! Yet remember this plan,  
That whoever dies first is to sit down and wait  
Inside death’s door, and watch at the gate.”

X.

Then I grew noble. Yea, I grew so tall  
I could almost reach to the golden hair  
Of that poor, pitiful Cyprian there.  
I did let my mantle of self-love fall,  
And I stood all naked, so weak, so small,  
I wondered that I could ever now dare  
Lift up my prayer to Heaven at all. . . .  
And I accepted her lesson. I said,  
With hands clasped down and declining head,  
“I will go, I will wait by the gates of the dead.

## XI.

“ And you, O woman ! go patient on through  
The course that man hath compelled you to.  
Then back to your mother, the earth, my love ;  
Go, press to her bosom your beautiful brow,  
Till it blends with your clay, and so purifies  
Your flesh of the stains that so sully it now :  
Lie down in the loam, the populous loam,  
Yea, sleep for the eons with death ; then rise  
As white, as light as the wings of a dove, —  
And so made holy, oh love, come home !

## XII.

“ Farewell for all time ! And now,” I said,  
“ What thing upon earth have I left to do ?  
Why, I shall go down through the gates of the  
    dead,  
And wait for your coming your long life thro’ —  
As you have commanded, lo ! I shall obey.  
I shall sit, I shall wait for you, love, alway ;  
Shall wait by the side of the gate for you,  
Waiting, and counting the days as I wait ;  
Shall wait as that beggar that sat by the gate  
Of Jerusalem, waiting the Judgment Day.”

*IL CAPUCIN.*

## I.

ONLY a basket for fruits or bread  
And the bits you divide with your dog,  
which you  
Had left from your dinner. The round year  
through  
He never once smiles. Hé bends his head  
To the scorn of men. He gives the road  
To the grave ass groaning beneath his load.  
He is ever alone. Lo! never a hand  
Is laid in his hand through the whole wide land,  
Save when a man dies, and he shrives him home.  
And that is the Capucin monk of Rome.

## II.

He coughs, he is humped, and he hobbles about  
In sandals of wood. Then a hempen cord  
Girdles his loathsome gown. Abhorred!  
Ay! lonely, indeed, as a leper cast out.  
One gown in three years! and — bah! how he  
smells!

He slept last night in his coffin of stone,  
This monk that coughs, this skin and bone,  
This living corpse from the damp cold cells.  
Yet, up in the morn, come storm or shine,  
And forth at four to wail at the shrine.

## III.

Go ye where the Pincian, half-levelled down,  
The sixth of the seven rent hills of Rome,  
Slopes slow to the south. These men in brown  
Have a monkery there, quaint, builded of stone ;  
And, living or dead, 'tis the brown men's home,  
'These dead brown monks that are living in Rome !

## IV.

You will hear wood sandals on the sounding floor,  
A cough, then the lift of a latch, then the door  
Groans open, and horror ! Four walls of stone  
Are gorgeous with flowers and frescos of bone !  
There are bones in the corners and bones on the  
wall ;  
And he barks like a dog that watches his bone,  
This monk in brown from his bed of stone —  
Yea, barks, and he coughs, and that is all.

## V.

At last he will cough as if up from his cell ;  
 Will strut with considerable pride about,  
 Will lead through his flowers of bone, and smell  
 Their odors ; then talk, as he points them out,  
 Of the virtues and deeds of the gents who wore  
 The respective bones but the year before.

Then he thaws at last, ere the bones are through,  
 And talks and talks as he turns them about  
 And stirs up a most uncomfortable smell ;  
 Yea, talks of his brown dead brothers, till you  
 Wish them, as they are no doubt, in — well,  
 A very deep well. . . . And that may be why,  
 As he shows you the door and bows good-by,  
 That he bows so low for a franc or two,  
 To shrive their souls and to get them out —  
 These bony brown men who have their home,  
 Dead or alive, in their cells in Rome.

## VI.

What good does he do in the world? Ah! well,  
 Now that is a puzzler. . . . But, listen! He  
 prays.

His life is the fast of the forty days.

And then, when the thief and the beggar fell  
And had died in the way; when the plague  
          came down, —

Christ! who was it cried to these men in brown  
When other men fled? And what man was  
          seen

Stand firm to the death but the Capucin?

ROME, 1873.

## FAITH.

## I.

FORTY days and forty nights,  
Blown about the broken waters,  
Noah, and his sons and daughters ;  
Forty days they beat and blow —  
Forty days of faith, and lo !  
The olive leaf, the lifted heights,  
The rest at last, the calm delights.

## II.

Forty years of sun and sand,  
Serpents, beasts, and wilderness,  
Desolation and distress,  
War and famine, wail and woe —  
Forty years of faith, and lo !  
The mighty Moses lifts a hand  
And shows at last the Promised Land.

## III.

Forty days to fast and pray,  
The patient Christ outworn defied  
The angry tempter at his side.  
Forty days or forty years  
Of patient sacrifice and tears —  
Lo ! what are all of these the day  
That Time has nothing more to say ?

## IV.

Lift your horns, exult and blow,  
Believe and labor. Tree and vine  
Must flourish, ere the fruit and wine  
Reward your planting. Round and round  
The rocky walls, with faith profound.  
The trumpets blew ; blew loud, and lo !  
The tumbled walls of Jericho.

MILAN, 1873.



TO FLORENCE.

I.

**I**F all God's world a garden were,  
And women were but flowers ;  
If men were bees that busied there  
Through all the summer hours, —  
Oh ! I would hum God's garden through,  
For honey, till I came to you.

II.

Then I should hive within your hair,  
Its sun and gold together ;  
And I should bide in glory there,  
Through all the changeful weather.  
Oh ! I should sip but one, this one  
Sweet flower underneath the sun.

## III.

Oh! I would be a king, and coin  
Your golden hair for money ;  
And I would only have to seek  
Your lips for hoards of honey.  
Oh! I would be the richest king  
That ever wore a signet-ring.

FLORENCE, 1874.

FOR PAULINE.

I.

**L**OVE me, love, but breathe it low,  
Soft as summer weather ;  
If you love me, tell me so,  
As we sit together,  
Sweet and still as roses blow :  
Love me, love, but breathe it low.

II.

Tell me only with your eyes,  
Words are cheap as water,  
If you love me, looks and sighs  
Tell my mother's daughter  
More than all the world may know :  
Love me, love, but breathe it low.

## III.

Words for others, storm and snow,  
 Wind and changeful weather —  
 Let the shallow waters flow  
 Foaming on together ;  
 But love is still and deep, and oh !  
 Love me, love, but breathe it low.

PIEVE DI CADORA, 1873.

## TO CARRIE A. S.

## I.

THE sea-dove some twin shadow has,  
The lark has loves in seas of grass,  
The wild beast trumpets back his vow,  
The squirrel laughs along his bough ;  
But I, I am as lone, alas !  
As yon white moon when white clouds pass !  
As lonely and unloved, alas !  
As clouds that weep and droop and pass.

## II.

Oh, maiden ! singing over sweet  
At cottage door, in field of corn,  
Where woodbines twine for thy retreat —  
Sing sweet through all thy summer morn.  
For love is landing at thy feet,  
On isle of vine, in seas of corn.  
But I, I am unloved and lorn,  
As winter winds of winter morn.

## III.

The ships, black-bellied, climb the sea,  
The seamen seek their loves on land,  
And love and lover, hand in hand,  
Go singing, glad as glad can be.  
But never more shall love seek me  
By breezy sea or broken land.

By broken wild or willow tree,  
Nay, never more shall love seek me.

NAPLES, 1872

THE UNKNOWN TONGUE.

I.

THAT baby, I knew her in days of old.  
You doubt that I lived in a land made fair  
With many soft moons, and was mated there?  
Now mark you! I saw but to-day on the street  
A sweet girl-baby, whose delicate feet  
As yet upon earth took but uncertain hold;  
Yet she carried a doll, and she toddled alone,  
And she talked to that doll in a tongue her own.  
The sweet little stranger! why, her face still bore  
The look of the people from her far star-shore.

II.

Ah! you doubt me still? Then listen: While  
you  
Have looked to the earth for gold, why I—  
I have looked to the steeps of the starry sky.  
And which, indeed, had the fairer view

Of the infinite things, the dreamer or you? . . .  
How blind be men when they will not see!  
If men must look in the dust, or look,  
At best, with the eyes bound down to a book,  
Why, who shall deny that it comes to me  
To sail white ship through the ether sea?

## III.

Yea, I am a dreamer. Yet while you dream,  
Then I am awake. When a child, back through  
The gates of the past I peered, and I knew  
The land I had lived in. I saw a broad stream;  
Saw rainbows that compassed a world in their  
reach;  
I saw my belovèd go down on the beach;  
Saw her lean to this earth, saw her looking for me  
As shipmen look from their ships at sea. . . .  
The sweet girl-baby! Why, that unknown  
tongue  
Is the tongue she has talked since the stars were  
young.

NAPLES, 1873.



## UNICA-ÆTERNA.

## I.

I DREAMED, O Queen, of thee last night ;  
I can but dream of thee to-day.  
But dream? Oh! I could kneel and pray  
To one, who, like a tender light,  
Leads ever on my lonesome way,  
And will not pass — yet will not stay.

## II.

I dreamed, O Princess, regal Queen,  
That I had followed thee afar,  
And faithful, as my polar star ;  
But then, as now, I had not seen  
The day I dared draw near to thee,  
But followed, worshipped, silently.

## III.

I dreamed we roamed in elden land ;  
I saw you walk in splendid state,  
With lifted head and heart elate,  
And lilies in your white right hand,

Beneath the proud Saint Peter's dome  
That, silent, lords almighty Rome.

## v.

A diamond star was in your hair,  
Your garments were of gold and snow ;  
And men did turn and marvel so,  
And men did say, How matchless fair !  
And all men followed as you pass'd ;  
But I came silent, lone, and last.

## v.

And holy men in sable gown,  
And girt with cord, and sandal shod,  
Did look to thee, and then to God. [down ;  
They crossed themselves, with heads held  
They chid themselves, in fear that they  
Should, seeing thee, forget to pray.

## vi.

Men pass'd, men spake in wooing word ;  
Men pass'd, ten thousand in a line.  
You stood before the sacred shrine,  
You stood as if you had not heard.  
And then you turned in calm command,  
And laid two lilies in my hand.

## VII.

O Lady, if by sea or land  
You yet might weary of all men,  
And turn unto your singer then,  
And lay one lily in his hand, —  
Lo! I would follow true and far  
As seamen track the polar star.

## VIII.

My soul is young, my heart is strong;  
O Lady, reach a hand to-day,  
And thou shalt walk the milky-way,  
For I will give thy name to song.  
Lo! I am of the kings of thought,  
And thou shalt live when kings are not.

## IX.

Oh, reach a hand, your hand in mine!  
Why, I could sing as never man  
Has sung since prophecy began!  
And thou should'st be both song and shrine. . . .  
And yet I falter in thy sight,  
And dare not breathe the thought I write.

## SIROCCO.

## I.

THERE were black clouds crossing the Alps,  
and they  
Rolled straight upon Venice. Then far away,  
As if catching new breath and gathering strength  
In the Ægean hills, on the pall of the day,  
Stood the terrible Thunder. Then hip and thigh  
He smote all heaven, and the lightning leapt  
Like red swords thrust through the night full  
length —  
Swords thrust through the black heart of night  
as he slept!  
Then ribbon and skein kept threading the sky;  
Then, ere you scarcely had time to think,  
The sea lay darkling and black as ink.

## II.

Then many a sail, tri-colored, and cross'd  
By the lone sad cross of Calvary,  
Drove by us and dwindled to blinding specks ;  
Drove straight in the grinning white teeth of the  
    sea,

Like lonesome spirits, forlorn and lost.

Then a ship with my stars of the West ! and then  
There were golden crescents, tall turbaned men  
All silent and devil-like keeping the decks ;  
Then hearse-like gondolas hurried about,  
As if sniffing the storm with their lifted snout.

VENICE, 1874.

## PACE IMPLORA.

## I.

BETTER it were to abide by the sea,  
Loving somebody, and satisfied ;  
Better it were to grow babes on the knee,  
To anchor you down for all your days,  
Than to wander and wander in all these ways,  
Land-forgotten and love-denied.  
Yea, better to live as the mountaineers live,  
Than entreat of the gods what they will not give.

## II.

Better sit still where born, I say,  
Wed one sweet woman and love her well,  
Love and be loved in the old East way,  
Drink sweet waters, and dream in a spell,  
Than to wander in search of the Blessed Isles,  
And to sail the thousands of watery miles  
In the search of love, and find you at last  
On the edge of the world, and a curs'd outcast.

## III.

Yea, laugh with your neighbors, live in their way  
Be it never so humble. The humbler the home,  
The braver, indeed, to brunt the fray.  
Share their delights and divide your tears,  
Love and be loved for the full round years,  
As men once loved in the young world's pride,  
Ere men knew madness and came to roam, —  
When they lived where their fathers had lived  
and died,  
Lived and so loved for a thousand years.

## IV.

Better it were for the world, I say,  
Better indeed for a man's own good,  
That he should sit still where he was born,  
Be it land of sand, or of oil and corn,  
White sea-border or great black wood,  
Bleak white winter or bland sweet May, —  
Than to wander the world, as I have done,  
For the one dear woman that is under the sun.

## V.

Better abide, though the skies be dun,  
And the rivers espoused of the ice and snow ;  
Better abide, though the thistles grow,  
And the city of smoke be obscured of the sun,  
Than to seek red poppies and the sweet dream-  
land —  
Than to wander the world as I to-day,  
Breaking the heart into bits like clay,  
And leaving it scattered upon every hand.

VENICE, 1874.



## ALONE.

## I.

I AM as lone as lost winds on the height ;  
As lone as yonder leaning moon at night,  
That climbs, like some sad noiseless-footed nun,  
Far up against the steep and starry height,  
As if on holy mission. Yea, as one  
That knows no ark, or isle, or resting-place,  
Or chronicle of time, or wheeling sun,  
I drive for ever on through endless space.  
Like some lone bird in everlasting flight,  
My lonesome soul sails on through lonesome seas  
of night.

## II.

Alone in sounding hollows of the sea ;  
Alone on lifted, heaving hills of foam :  
To never rest ; to ever rise and roam  
Where never kind or kindred soul may be ;

To roam where ships of commerce never ride,  
Sail on, and so forget the rest of shore ;  
To hear the waves complain, as if they died ;  
To see the vast waves heave for evermore ;  
To know that no ships cross or measure these,  
My shoreless, chartless, strange, and most un-  
common seas.

CADORA, 1873.

IMPLORA.

I.

**O**H! who art thou, veiled shape? My soul  
cries out

Through mist and storm. Lean thou to me!  
Come nearer, thou, that I may feel and see  
Thy wounded side, and so forget all doubt!  
How terrible the night! I kneel to thee;  
I clasp thy knees; would clamber to thy hair.  
As one shipwrecked on some broad, broken sea,  
Through intermingled oaths and awful shout,  
Uplifts white hands and prays in his despair, —  
So now my curses break into a prayer.

BELLAGIO, 1874.

## THE QUEST OF LOVE.

## I.

**B**EHOLD! my quest has brought but rue  
and rime!

I loved the blushing, bounding, singing Spring:  
She scarce would pause a day to hear me sing.

I loved her sister, gorgeous, golden Summer-  
time:

She gathered close her robes and rustled past,  
Through yellow fields of corn. She scorned to  
cast

One tender look of love or hope behind;  
But, sighing, died upon the Autumn wind.

Oh, then I loved the vast, the lonesome Night:  
She, too, passed on in scorn, and perished from  
my sight.

## II.

Oh! lives there nought on all the girdled world,  
That may survive one day its sorry birth?  
The very Moon grows thin and hunger-curved;  
The ardent Sun forgets his love of Earth,

And turns, dark-browed, and draws his reached  
arms back,

The while she, mourning, moves on, clad in  
black.

But list! I once did hear the good priest tell  
That hell is everlasting. Oh, my friend,  
To know that there is aught that may not end!  
Now let us kneel and give God thanks that hell  
is hell.

LAKE COMO, August, 1873.

## O LOVE!

## I.

THE long days through I sit and sigh, alas!  
For love! Lone, beggar-like, beside the  
way

I sit forlorn in lanes where Day must pass.  
I stretch imploring palms toward the Day,  
And cry, "O Day! but give me love! I die  
For love! I let all other gifts go by.  
Yea, bring me but one love that runs to waste,  
One love that men pass by in heedless haste,  
And I will kiss thy feet and ask no more  
From all To-morrow's rich, mysterious store."

## II.

The drear days mock me in my mute request;  
The dark years roll like breakers on the shore,  
And die in futile thunder. As in jest,  
They bring bright, empty shells, — bring nothing  
more.

Oh, say! is sweet Love dead and hid from all  
Who would disdain a colder touch than his?  
Then show me where Love lies. Put back the  
pall.

Lo! I will fall upon his face and kiss  
Sweet Love to life again; or I will lie,  
Lamenting, prone beside his dust, and die.

ANCONA, 1874.

L.  
re.  
ta

## AFTER THE BOAR HUNT.

## I.

'**T**WERE better blow trumpets 'gainst love,  
keep away

That traitorous urchin with fire or shower,  
Or fair or foul means you may have in your  
power,

Than have him come near you for one little  
hour.

Take physic, consult with your doctor, as you  
Would fight a contagion; carry all through  
The populous day some drug that smells loud,  
As you pass on your way, or make way through  
the crowd.

Talk war, or carouse: only keep off the day  
Of his coming, with every true means in your  
way.



## II.

Blow smoke in the eyes of the world, and laugh  
With the broad-chested men, as you loaf at your  
inn,  
As you crowd to your inn from your saddles,  
and quaff  
The red wine from a horn; while your dogs at  
your feet,  
Your slim spotted dogs, like the fawn, and as  
fleet,  
Crouch patiently by and look up at your face,  
As they wait for the call of the horn to the  
chase:  
For you shall not suffer, and you shall not sin,  
Until peace goes out and till love comes in.

## III.

Love horses and hounds, meet many good men —  
Yea, men are most proper, and keep you from  
care.  
There is strength in a horse. There is pride in  
his will:  
It is sweet to look back as you climb the steep hill.

There is room. You have movement of limb ;  
you have air,  
Have the smell of the wood, of the grasses : and  
then  
What comfort to rest, as you lie thrown at  
length  
All night and alone, with your fists full of  
strength !

TURIN, 1874.

*DOLCE FAR NIENTE.*

I.

AH, how one wanders! Yet after it all,  
When you really have nought of account  
to say,

It is better, perhaps, to pull leaves by the way;  
See the wide moons ride, or the small stars fall,  
Nor keep down to the earth with the dust on  
the feet,

Upon time-worn levels that do tire one  
With very perfection of rest and retreat,  
That the great world walks all the days of the sun.

II.

And then, too, in Venice! dear moth-eaten town;  
One palace of pictures; great frescos spilled down  
Outside of the walls from the fulness thereof:  
How can one go on? Let laugh and let scoff;  
Sit down by my side and let all time pass.

By the tranquil bride of the tranquil seas,  
By the white bride born of steel and of storm,  
And of iron-footed old tyrannies,  
We two will sit; and her beautiful form  
Shall shine in the sea as her bridal glass.

VENICE, 1873.

TO THE LION OF SAINT MARK.

I.

I KNOW you, lion of gray Saint Mark ;  
You fluttered the seas beneath your wing,  
Were king of the seas with never a king.  
Now over the deep and up in the dark,  
High over the girdles of bright gas-light,  
With wings in the air as if for flight,  
And crouching as if about to spring  
From top of your granite of Africa, —  
Say, what shall be said of you some day ?

II.

What shall be said, O grim Saint Mark,  
Savage old beast so crossed and churled,  
By the after men from the under-world ?  
What shall be said as they search along  
And sail these seas for some sign or spark  
Of the old dead fires of the dear old days,  
When men and story have gone their ways,  
Or even your city and name from song ?

## III.

Why, sullen old monarch of stilled Saint Mark,  
Strange men of the West, wise-mouthed and  
strong,

Will come some day and, gazing long  
And mute with wonder, will say of thee :  
“ This is the Saint ! High over the dark,  
Foot on the bible and great teeth bare,  
Tail whipped back and teeth in the air —  
Lo ! this is the Saint, and none but he ! ”

VENICE, 1873.

TO THE LION OF ST. MARK AGAIN.

I.

S PHINX-LIKE lion, art prophet, or what?  
Nay, Noah or prophet art thou of St. Mark.  
But, king of the desert or slave of the sea,  
What thou hast been or what shalt be,  
What thou art now or what art not,  
In city at sea or darkling ark, —  
Lead us and land us on some sweet shore,  
Some new-washed summit where olives are green,  
And never the visage of sorrow is seen  
For ever and ever and evermore:

II.

To the Isles of the Blest by the Isles of Greece,  
And on and beyond, where the great moon's face  
Bends low and large to the golden grain  
The whole year through; where death nor pain,  
Nor any loud thought has name or place, —  
To the land of olives, to the land of peace.  
Lead us and land us, oh that were best,  
To the land of love and the land of rest.

## III.

Is there rest upon earth? Ah, brazen king,  
Set a-top of the town with glittering wing,  
Say! King of Assyria, set king of the sea,  
Now what do you read from the prophecy?  
And what says thy book? And what were best?  
Oh say, from thy pulpit set high in the air,  
When is the harvest of love and where?  
And where is the land, and when is the rest?

## IV.

Floating in flood of salt sea-foam,  
And seeking for what? For the golden fleece?  
For the land of giants? For the sea-lost moon?  
For the land of eternal afternoon?  
Or the gates of Hell or of Hercules?  
Oh! wrinkled old lion that tops Saint Mark,  
A home on the seas were never a home.  
Lo! here are the doves, let this be the ark:  
Now where is the olive, and when is the peace?

VENICE, 1874.



UNDER THE LION OF SAINT MARK  
AT NIGHT.

I.

O TERRIBLE lion of tamed Saint Mark!  
Tamed old lion with the tumbled mane  
Toss'd to the clouds and lost in the dark,  
With high-held wings and tail whipped back,  
Foot on the bible as if thy track  
Led thee the lord of the seas again, —  
Say, what of thy watch o'er the watery town?  
Say, what of the worlds walking up and down?

II.

O silent old monarch that tops Saint Mark,  
That sat thy throne for a thousand years,  
That lorded the deep, that defied all men, —  
Lo! I see visions at sea in the dark;

And I see something that shines like tears,  
And I hear something that sounds like sighs,  
And I hear something that sounds as when  
A great soul suffers and sinks and dies.

VENICE, 1873.

TO SANTA BARBARA OF VENICE.

I.

WHERE is my beauty? Oh where is my  
bride

Of the old dim days ere the gleaming snows  
Sat tent on the Alps? The poppies red  
In the golden days were my bridal bed.  
Oh, bring me my bride where the white sea flows,  
And the yellow sail blows to the Lido's side.  
I lift you my hands and I pray to you ;  
I name you my saint for this whole year through.  
Oh, bring me my bride, for that were best ;  
This were my heaven, and that were my rest.

II.

Saint Joseph! My horse! To my forests of fir!  
My senses run mad at the mention of her. . . .  
You had better be careless. What comes of it

That you do take care? . . . Nay, call for your  
steed,  
Heigh boot and heigh horse, and away with a  
will ;  
Clutch the rein, seize your horse in his hair and  
speed  
Where the hounds call bugle calls over the hill ,  
And behold ! I will follow, for it is not fit  
That a man sit singing sad rhymes all day  
As a love-sick swain or a maiden may.

A STORM IN VENICE.

I.

THE pent sea throbb'd as if wracked with  
pain.

Some black clouds rose and suddenly rode  
Right into the town. The thunder strode  
As a giant striding from star to star,  
Then turned upon earth and frantically came,  
Shaking the hollow heaven. And far  
And near red lightning in ribbon and skein  
Did write upon heaven Jehovah's name.

II.

Then lightnings went weaving like shuttle-cocks,  
Weaving black raiment of clouds for death ;  
The mute doves flew to Saint Mark in flocks,  
And men stood leaning with gathered breath.  
Black gondolas flew as never before,  
And drew like crocodiles up on the shore ;

And vessels at sea stood further at sea,  
And seamen hauled with a bended knee.  
Then canvas came down to left and to right;  
And ships stood stripped as if stripped for fight!

A HAIL STORM IN VENICE.

I.

THE hail like cannon-shot struck the sea  
And churned it white as a creamy foam ;  
Then hail like battle-shot struck where we  
Stood looking a-sea from a sea-girt home —  
Came shooting askance as if shot at the head ;  
Then glass flew shivered and men fell down  
And prayed where they fell, and half the town  
Lay riddled and helpless as if shot dead.

II.

Then lightning right full in the eyes ! and then  
Fair women fell down right flat on the face,  
And prayed their pitiful Mother with tears,  
And prayed black death as a hiding-place ;

And good priests prayed for the sea-bound men  
As never good priests had prayed for years. . . .  
Then God spake thunder! And then the rain!  
The great, white, beautiful, high-born rain!



FAREWELL TO THE LION OF SAINT  
MARK.

I.

THERE are sobs of the sea, there is blown  
black rain.

Lo! under the lion and alone in the dark,  
Shall I stand as I stand by this sea again?  
Yet trait'rous old lion that lords Saint Mark,  
I curse you and hate you as ever I can ;  
I curse you and hate you my whole heart thro',  
Your bible, your book with its Rights of Man :  
For I named you my saint, and I prayed to you,  
And where is my love, and who has been true ?

II.

O vain old lion of lonesome Saint Mark,  
With cornice in fashion of blown sea-foam,  
High-lifted and light as white clouds in the  
dark, —

When is the rest, and oh where is my home ?

Thy brass steeds plunge through the dark in stur  
There are seas to the left and seas to the right,  
Front and aback there is nothing but flood,  
Nothing but billows and nothing but night.

## III.

City at sea, thou art surely an ark,  
Sea-blown and a-wreck in the rain and dark.  
Lo! white sea-caps that are toss'd and curled.  
Thy sins they were many — and behold the  
flood!

And here and about us are the beasts in stud,  
Creatures and beasts that creep and go,  
Enough, ay, and wicked enough I know,  
To populate or devour a world.

## IV.

O wrinkled old lion, looking down  
With brazen frown upon mine and me,  
From tower a-top of your watery town,  
Old king of the desert, made king of the sea:  
Lo! here is a lesson for thee to-day,  
Proud and immovable monarch, I say,  
Lo! here is a lesson to-day for thee  
Of the things that were and the things to be.

V.

Dank palaces held by the populous sea  
For the good dead men, all covered with shell, —  
We will pay them a visit some day ; and we,  
We may come to love their old palaces well.  
Balk : toppled old columns that tumble across,  
Toss'd in the waters that lift and fall,  
Waving in waves long masses of moss,  
Topped old columns, — and that will be all.

VI.

Yea, surly old beast with a wrinkled brow,  
Sullen old sea-king courting the tide,  
Proud old monarch set high in the sea, --  
This is the lesson it leaves for thee :  
Nothing has been that abideth now,  
Nothing is now but will not be,  
Nothing shall be that shall abide.

VENICE, 1874.

## AFTER ALL.

## I.

**B**Y the populous land, on the lonesome sea,  
Lo! these were the gifts of the gods to  
men, —  
Three miserable gifts, and only three :  
To love, to forget, to die — and then?

## II.

To love in peril and in bitter-sweet pain,  
And then, forgotten, lie down and die :  
One moment of sun, whole seasons of rain,  
Then night is rolled to the door of the sky.

## III.

To love? To sit at her feet and to weep ;  
To climb to her face, hide your face in her hair ;  
To nestle you there like a babe in its sleep,  
And, too, like a babe, to believe — it stings  
there !

## . IV.

To love ? 'Tis to suffer. " Lie close to my breast,  
Like a fair ship in haven, O darling," I cried.  
" Your round arms outreaching to heaven for rest  
Make signal to death." . . . Death came, and  
love died.

## V.

To forget? To forget, mount horse and clutch  
sword,  
Take ship and make sail to the ice-prison'd seas.  
Write books and preach lies ; range lands ; or  
go hoard  
A grave full of gold, and buy wines — and  
drink lees :

## VI.

Then die ; and die cursing, and call it a prayer !  
Is earth but a top — a boy-god's delight,  
To be spun for his pleasure, while man's despair  
Breaks out like a wail of the damned through  
the night ?

## VII.

Sit down in the darkness and weep with me  
On the edge of the world. Lo, love lies dead!  
And the earth and the sky, and the sky and the  
sea,  
Seem shutting together as a book that is read.

## VIII.

Yet what have we learned? We laughed with  
delight  
In the morning at school, and kept toying with  
all  
Time's silly playthings. Now, wearied ere night,  
We must cry for dark-mother, her cradle the  
pall.

ROME, 1874.

*MAIME MIA.*

**T**HE quest of love? 'Tis the quest of  
troubles;

'Tis the wind through the woods of the Oregon.

Sit down, sit down, for the world goes on

Precisely the same; and the rainbow bubbles

Of love, they gather, or break, or blow,

Whether you bother your brain or no;

And for all your troubles, and all your tears,

'Twere just the same in a hundred years.

ROME, 1874.

## THE WINGED LION ONCE MORE.

THE Venetians will tell you that this wonderful work of art was fashioned in Babylon by the sons of Nimrod. Also, that before it was taken from Venice by Napoleon the Great its eyes were made of diamonds, so large and luminous that they lighted up all that part of the city.

Mr. Ruskin says there is no authority for giving this wonderful creation such great antiquity. He is inclined to call it the work of the thirteenth century; but equally without authority, as he admits. To me it is the most simple and sublime thing in the world. Seen in the night, high over the sea and the circle of gaslights, the broken clouds blowing over the large low moon—it is worth a journey round the world to behold it!

I must admit that, in the many verses to my grand old idol, I have been careless of facts. In truth, I know little about the history of the Lion of St. Mark save what the Venetians told me. I never owned a guide-book; and I never in all my travels read a book on Art. In fact, I met so many fools who had read books on Art, that I was afraid to try the experiment.

Napoleon had the lion taken down from the column where it had stood for nearly five hundred years; and in the open book, on which the foot is planted, he caused to be written "The Rights of Man."

When the lion was restored, the Venetians said, "It is indeed our dear old lion, only he has turned over a new leaf!"



I.

WINGED old beast of the burning sands,  
Captive and rover of north-south lands:  
Say, what saw you in the land of the Gaul?  
In the days when they clutched at thy mane,  
and when  
They wrote in thy bible the Rights of Men?  
Wrote them and read them,—and that was all.

II.

What saw you in that land, I say,  
That land of change, and of gifted mad men?  
Silent old lion, say, what have you seen?  
Nothing but gleaming of steel, I ween,  
Nothing but marching of men, as when  
Men shall march in the Judgment Day.

III.

This is the story the whole world through.  
Austrian or Frank, or king or queen,  
In the name of freedom to plunder you:  
Nay, nothing but this has any man seen  
In your watery world where might has been  
right,  
Since God first reached from the dark the light.

## IV.

Rumbling of cannon and neighing of steed —  
The worship of strength. Lo! Tuscan and Gaul,  
They were gods in their turn. Glory and greed  
Did set and unsettle thy whole world's creed;  
And thy Christ, O lion, did rise and fall  
By the feats of strength. Take heed, take heed,  
Lest thy God shall depend on a cannon ball!

VENICE, 1874.

## CAVALIER vs. CAVALIER.

## I.

NO, no whit jealous of him was I:  
I had sat at his table, tasted his wine,  
Broken his bread, as he had mine —  
And I would to heaven I had broken his head!  
I had shot at him once, and let him try  
His hand meantime ten paces at me.  
He missed his mark, while I you see,  
At the last year's carnival down at Rome,  
Troubled his seconds to carry him home.

## II.

Well, it fell out thus in a revelry:  
We had sat at his table the whole night through,  
There were vessels of gold, great cups, mark you,  
That were sacred indeed unto better things  
Than midnight orgies and revellings;  
Then at morn he said, as he toss'd his wine,

Tauntingly, too, of this love of mine,  
"A woman to win! the way is free!  
I have my gold, you have your wit —  
Time will tell us what comes of it!"

**A PRINCE OF ROME.**

## I.

**A**Y, dashing is he indeed, and bold  
As any young Cæsar, and handsome too.  
And when he enters the proudest hall,  
He doffs his hat, for he stands so tall. . . .  
But where do you reckon he got his gold?  
Now it might have been from that galleon  
That sank, as we know, an age ago  
Off the gray coast of Mexico.

## II.

But listen to me. One morn last year,  
When he did not limp for that taunt and sneer  
At my one fair love, — we were strangers then,  
And I knew him only as a prince of men, —  
Why, we two rode the Campagna plain  
That stretches away to the west of Rome,  
When sudden he turned to St. Peter's dome,  
And, stretching his hand toward the Vatican,  
He laughed like a giant, he cursed like a man:  
Cried, "Gold!" then sank to his saddle again.

## III.

A curious old Spanish proverb says  
That many and various are the bits of leather  
Saint Crispin uses to make one boot ;  
And that never was boot without its foot,  
To fit it as neat as a glove, and suit  
The one to the other in all the ways.  
Well, then, put this and put that together,  
Fragments of fact like fragments of leather,  
And know in the end what you may know  
Of that same prince Pimos from Mexico.

## IV.

Well, this is the story that a brown monk tells,  
A gray-bearded Capucin monk of Rome,  
Who hobbles about in the bleak bone cells,  
In that strange old nest of the Capucin ;  
For much he has journey'd and much he has seen :  
One time, on the borders of Mexico,  
A grizzled old seaman came bent and slow,  
And leading a boy, and imploring a home,  
Outholding two handsfull of gold for it ;  
Two great hands shaking like an ague fit.

## V.

They smiled at his gold, as the good monks do,  
But gave him a home, with all their heart ;  
And no one questioned and no one cared  
What his history, place, or part —  
Only to know that the wayfarer shared  
Their home content. The bright boy grew  
Into man's estate, but wild as the wind ;  
And, leaving the convent walls behind,  
Oft he would wander the whole year through :  
But why he wandered away, or where,  
There was none to question, and but one to care.

## VI.

Well, there be men who are ready to swear  
That they saw this same prince years ago,  
With his princely air and his princely ease,  
Astride of his mule, with his saddle-bow  
Swung with pistols, as he rode on down  
The mountain trail to the mountain town :  
His long hair blown in the mountain breeze,  
And a brigand's badge of command high blown  
From his feathered hat as he rode alone.

## VII.

Then long he ranged in his journeys and far  
Over mountains that climbed to the morning  
star.

And the old man died ; but the boy was away, —  
Robbing? — or trading? It is much the same :  
The same result with a different name.  
The shopman he robs you from day to day,  
Little by little, that you may not reckon ;  
Robs you by lies, risks body and soul :  
The dashing bold robber he takes the whole,  
Tells you the truth, and but risks his neck.

## VIII.

. . . And mark ! as he rode with the king last year  
Through a marsh of the Tiber, a buffalo,  
Humped-backed and horrible, plunged at his  
steed,  
When the king struck spurs, and fled in fear.  
But he, whipping his lasso as quick as thought,  
Threw it, and throttled the beast on the spot.  
And who, my prince, I should like to know,  
But a vulgar vaquero could do such a deed ?



## IX.

But, where did he get his gold? this prince, —  
The bright gold eagle and the old doubloon,  
The old gold plate, and the great gold spoon,  
And the tall gold goblet, and the quaint gold cup  
That star his table when he comes to sup?  
The gold alone is the question, since  
Here, in Italy, princes are — well,  
Princes are thicker than fiddlers in hell.

ROME, 1873.

## GAMBLER OR PRINCE?

## I.

NOW some have said, and so may you,  
It was nobody's business, while the man  
could hold

His head like a prince and bear him true,  
Where the gambler picked up his gold,  
Or whether the prince was a prince or not.  
And then, when it cost you a pistol shot  
To ask the question, 'twas overbold  
To question at all. But then my friend  
Would know who he was ; and he fought to this  
end.

## II.

One night, as he sat with his goblets of gold,  
He mentioned the name of my brave friend's sire ;  
And very complacently sat and told  
That he himself was this great man's son.  
Vengeance and fury ! My friend was on fire !  
The man sprang up as if shot from a gun,

And he thrust the lie in his teeth ; and then  
Asked where was his family founded, and when ?  
He then sat down, and a pistol shot  
Was all the answer that any one got.  
They fought at dawn : shot square thro' the head,  
The gypsy-stol'n brother and prince lay dead.

NAPLES, 1874.

## A PEASANT'S PLEA.

## I.

**H**AD he made her his spouse like a man, why  
then,  
Still might he doff his tall plume to men ;  
Had he loved like a prince, had she loved him  
true,  
Why, I could have waited her life-time through ;  
Could have crossed and have waited on the other  
side,  
With my two hands held to my coming bride :  
For the days of the earth they be but a day  
That lie like a shadow across life's way,  
And a brief night-land that divides the sea  
Of the years that were from the years to be.

## II.

But to know that she lay in his arms in sin,  
That the great strong beast arose from the feast  
And went to my bride he had bought with his  
gold! . . .

Ha! the night after that — why, they called in a  
priest

To pray for a prince who was found all cold

In a narrow canal, with his head crushed in —

Perhaps by a tile! . . . Oh, the blessed sweet  
pain

Of revenge, as I fled to my mountains again!

MILAN, 1873.

## A DREAM OF VENICE.

## I.

THERE are doves overhead, going in, blowing out ;

They are wooing and cooing and talking of love,  
The white and the gray and the purple-robed  
dove.

They are billing and cooing and flying about  
By the high chiselled capital, cornice, and that :  
And I envy them, hate them, I curse thereat,  
And I call " Oh, my love ! " Cold echoes come  
back

As if hurled from the walls and sent hounding  
my track.

## II.

Now let us turn back from the watery town ;  
Let the water-rat build ; let the cornice above  
Change color from clouds of the purple-necked  
dove ;

Let the yellow-sailed sea-craft ride pleasantly  
down.

Let the soft morning sun lie in long broken  
bars

'Gainst the tall palace walls. Let us go from  
the land

Of the bride of my soul with the small dimpled  
hand,

That I led through the outermost reach of red  
stars.

## FOR THE NILE.

## I.

WHAT! turn me from Venice? To leave  
her at last!

This city I loved in my search through the vast  
And the unnamed seas of the universe?

To turn me for aye from this face of hers?

St. Joseph! To dream it could come to this!

You never have known, then, what love is!

## II.

I am lone as Marius 'mid ruins could be.

Yea, a sea of fair people that walk by the sea

In the cool of the morn by St. Mark; and they  
talk

Of the things that are nearest the heart as they  
walk,

And all are made glad. But, Christ! as for me!



## III.

Lo! I shall depart and I know not where ;  
Let the men be brave, let the maids be fair,  
Let the wrinkled old lion that tops the town  
Now ruffle his mane, St. Theodore frown, —  
It is nothing to me. I shall love but the one,  
This one fair city that is under the sun.

## IV.

I shall bear her afar and anywhere ;  
I have hid my heart in the gold of her hair. . . .  
Her fair holy face, her great soft eyes,  
Liquid with love. Her soul's surprise,  
Then the calm delight that the world is aware  
When she rests in ruins, like the curtains of  
skies.

VENICE, 1874.

## VESPERS IN SAN MARCO.

THE four brazen horses! unbridled as when  
This Venice was Venice, and the wise  
led the brave  
Through the gates of the Turk, through the  
turbulent main,  
And led the steeds home from the Hellespont, —  
They plunge in the gaslight as bridled again.  
The vast ducal palace frowns dark in the wave,  
The white Bridge of Sighs — a brief, narrow  
span —  
Draws back in a chasm. The grand gilded  
dome,  
Where the doves of St. Mark all the year have  
their home,  
Sounds hollow and deep like a far plashing  
font.

## RECOLLECTION.

## I.

WE dwelt in the woods of the Tippecanoe,  
In a lone lost cabin with never the view  
Of the full day's sun for the whole year thro' . . .  
With strange half-hints through the russet corn  
We children were hurried one night. Next  
morn  
There was frost in the trees, and a sprinkle of  
snow,  
And tracks on the ground. Three boys below  
The low eaves listened. We opened the door,  
And a girl baby cried, — and then we were four.

## II.

We were not sturdy, and we were not wise  
In the things of the world or the ways of men.  
A pale-browed mother with a prophet's eyes,  
A father that dreamed and looked anywhere.

Three brothers, — wild blossoms, tall-fashioned  
and fair ;  
And we mingled with none, but we lived as  
when  
The pair first lived ere they knew the fall ;  
And, loving all things, we believed in all.

## III.

Ah ! girding yourself and throwing your strength  
On the front of a forest that stands in mail  
Sounds gallant, indeed, in a pioneer's tale.  
But, God in heaven ! the weariness  
Of a sweet soul banished to a life like this !  
This reaching of weary-worn arms full length ;  
This stooping all day to the stubborn cold soil —  
This holding the heart ! it is more than toil !  
What liveness of heart ! What wishings to die  
In that soul in the earth, that was born for the  
sky !

## IV.

We parted wood-curtains, pushed westward, and  
we,  
Why, we wandered and wandered a half year  
through ;

We tented with herds as the Arabs do,  
And at last sat down by the sundown sea.  
Then there in that sun did my soul take fire!  
It burned in its fervor, thou Venice, for thee!  
My glad heart glowed with the one desire  
To stride to the front, to live, to be!  
To strow great thoughts through the world as  
    I went,  
As God sows stars through the firmament.

VENICE, 1874.

## TORCELLO.

THE sometime song of gondolier  
Is heard afar. The fishermen  
Betimes draw net by ruined shore,  
In full spring-time when east winds fall;  
Then traders row with muffled oar,  
Then long-leg birds stretch neck, and then —  
Tedesca or the turban'd Turk,  
The pirate, at some midnight work  
By watery wall, — but that is all.

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NOTE. — The author begs to apologize for reprinting from an earlier volume this and the two following pieces, which appropriately belong to "Songs of Italy."

## ATTILA'S THRONE: TORCELLO.

## I.

I DO recall some sad days spent  
By borders of the Orient,  
Days sweet as sad to memory . . .  
'Twould make a tale. It matters not . . .  
I sought the loneliest seas ; I sought  
The solitude of ruins, and forgot  
Mine own lone life and littleness  
Before this fair land's mute distress,  
That sat within this changeful sea.

## II.

Slow sailing through the reedy isles,  
By unknown banks, through unknown bays,  
Some sunny, summer yesterdays,  
Where Nature's beauty still beguiles,  
I watched the storied yellow sail  
And lifted prow of steely mail.  
'Tis all that's left Torcello now, —  
A pirate's yellow sail, a prow.

## III.

Below the far, faint peaks of snow,  
And grass-grown causeways well below,  
I touched Torcello.

Once on land,  
I took a sea-shell in my hand,  
And blew like any trumpeter.  
I felt the fig-leaves lift and stir  
On trees that reach from ruined wall  
Above my head, — but that was all.  
Back from the farther island shore  
Came echoes trooping — nothing more.

## IV.

Yet here stood Adria once, and here  
Came Attila with sword and flame,  
And set his throne of hollowed stone  
In her high mart.

And it remains  
Still lord o'er all. Where once the tears  
Of mute petition fell, the rains  
Of heaven fall. Lo! all alone  
There lifts this massive empty throne!  
The sea has changed his meed, his mood,  
And made this sedgy solitude.



## V.

By cattle paths grass-grown and worn,  
Through marbled streets all stain'd and torn  
By time and battle, lone I walked.  
A bent old beggar, white as one  
For better fruitage blossoming,  
Came on. And as he came he talked  
Unto himself; for there are none  
In all his island, old and dim,  
To answer back or question him.

## VI.

I turned, retraced my steps once more.  
The hot miasma steamed and rose  
In deadly vapor from the reeds  
That grew from out the shallow shore,  
Where peasants say the sea-horse feeds,  
And Neptune shapes his horn and blows

## VII.

I climb'd and sat that throne of stone  
To contemplate, to dream, to reign —  
Ay, reign above myself; to call  
The people of the past again

Before me as I sat alone  
 In all my kingdom.

  There were kine  
 That browsed along the reedy brine,  
 And now and then a tusky boar  
 Would shake the high reeds of the shore,  
 A bird blow by, — but that was all.

## VIII.

I watched the lonesome sea-gull pass.  
 I did remember and forget, —  
 The past rolled by; I stood alone.  
 I sat the shapely chiselled stone  
 That stands in tall sweet grasses set;  
 Ay, girdle deep in long strong grass,  
 And green alfalfa.

  Very fair  
 The heavens were, and still and blue,  
 For Nature knows no changes there.  
 The Alps of Venice, far away,  
 Like some half-risen large moon lay.

## IX.

How sweet the grasses at my feet!  
The smell of clover over sweet.  
I heard the hum of bees. The bloom  
Of clover-tops and cherry-trees  
Were being rifled by the bees,  
And these were building in a tomb.

## X.

The fair alfalfa — such as has  
Usurped the Occident, and grows  
With all the sweetness of the rose  
On Sacramento's sundown hills —  
Is there, and that dead island fills  
With fragrance. Yet the smell of death  
Comes riding in on every breath.

## XI.

Lo! death that is not death, but rest:  
To step aside, to watch and wait  
Beside the wave, outside the gate,  
With all life's pulses in your breast:  
To absolutely rest, to pray  
In some lone mountain while you may.

## XII.

That sad sweet fragrance. It had sense,  
 And sound, and voice. It was a part  
 Of that which had possessed my heart,  
 And would not of my will go hence.  
 'Twas Autumn's breath ; 'twas dear as kiss  
 Of any worshipped woman is.

## XIII.

Some snails had climb'd the throne and writ  
 Their silver monograms on it  
 In unknown tongues.

I sat thereon,  
 I dreamed until the day was gone ;  
 I blew again my pearly shell, —  
 Blew long and strong, and loud and well ;  
 I puffed my cheeks, I blew, as when  
 Horn'd satyrs danced the delight of men.

## XIV.

Some mouse-brown cows that fed within  
 Looked up. A cowherd rose hard by,  
 My single subject, clad in skin,  
 Nor yet half-clad.

I caught his eye, —  
He stared at me, then turned and fled.  
He frightened fled, and as he ran,  
Like wild beast from the face of man,  
Across his shoulder threw his head.

## XV.

He gathered up his skin of goat  
About his breast and hairy throat;  
He stopped, and then this subject true,  
Mine only one in all the isle,  
Turned round, and, with a fawning smile,  
Came back and asked me for a *sou*!

## SANTA MARIA: TORCELLO.

## I.

AND yet again through the watery miles  
Of reeds I rowed, till the desolate isles  
Of the black bead-makers of Venice were not.  
I touched where a single sharp tower is shot  
To heaven, and torn by thunder and rent  
As if it had been Time's battlement.  
A city lies dead, and this great gravestone  
Stands on its grave like a ghost alone.

## II.

Some cherry-trees grow here, and here  
An old church, simple and severe  
In ancient aspect, stands alone  
Amid the ruin and decay, all grown  
In moss and grasses.

Old and quaint,  
With antique cuts of martyr'd saint,  
The gray church stands with stooping knees,  
Defying the decay of seas.

## III.

Her pictured Hell, with flames blown high,  
In bright mosaics wrought and set  
When man first knew the Nubian art,  
Her bearded saints as black as jet,  
Her quaint Madonna, dim with rain  
And touch of pious lips of pain,  
So touched my lonesome soul, that I  
Gazed long, then came and gazed again,  
And loved, and took her to my heart.

## IV.

Nor monk in black, nor Capucin,  
Nor priest of any creed was seen.  
A sun-browned woman, old and tall,  
And still as any shadow is,  
Stole forth from out the mossy wall  
With massive keys to show me this:  
Came slowly forth, and, following,  
Three birds — and all with drooping wing.

## V.

Three mute brown babes of hers ; and they —  
Oh, they were beautiful as sleep,

Or death, below the troubled deep!  
And on the pouting lips of these,  
Red corals of the silent seas,  
Sweet birds, the everlasting sea  
Of silence that the God has set  
On this dead island sits for aye.

## VI.

I would forget, yet not forget  
Their helpless eloquence. They creep  
Somehow into my heart, and keep  
One bleak, cold corner, jewel set.  
They steal my better self away  
To them, as little birds that day  
Stole fruits from out the cherry-trees.

## VII.

So helpless and so wholly still,  
So sad, so wrapt in mute surprise,  
That I did love, despite my will.  
One little maid of ten — such eyes,  
So large and lonely, so divine!  
Such pouting lips, such pearly cheek! —



Did lift her perfect eyes to mine,  
Until our souls did touch and speak —  
Stood by me all that perfect day,  
Yet not one sweet word could she say

## VIII.

She turned her melancholy eyes  
So constant to my own, that I  
Forgot the going clouds, the sky ;  
Found fellowship, took bread and wine .  
And so her little soul and mine  
Stood very near together there.  
And oh, I found her very fair !  
Yet not one soft word could she say :  
What did she think of all that day ?

## LILIAN.

## I.

SHE is dark as Israel. She is proud and still  
As Lebanon pine on the Palatine Hill.  
Her name it is Lilla; a plain, pretty name  
That syllables by quite simple and tame,  
Until you have looked on her presence; and  
then! —

Oh, it then means to you, as to me it has meant,  
The fairest thing under the firmament.

## II.

Her name is as language; and, when I know  
Nor name nor type to give utterance to  
My grandest conception of woman, she  
Stands up in my soul, calm, silently,  
And fills the blank with her own sweet name.  
Ay, even at mention of her I grow —  
Grow grand and splendid as is growing flame.

## III.

Thou dark silent pine of the Palatine Hill!  
Thou princess and empress, I look to thee still,  
Disdain as you will; for my gods they must be.  
Yea, regal my soul, and, having known thee,  
How can I to others bow knee or bend will? . . .  
Now, come what comes, my whole life through  
I shall be the nobler for this love of you.

## LIFE.

LIFE? 'Tis the story of love and of troubles,  
Of troubles and love, that travel together  
The round world through. Behold the bubbles  
Of love! Then troubles and turbulent weather.  
Why, man had all Eden! Then love, then Cain!  
Go away, go away with your bitter-sweet pain  
Of love, and leave us! Come! care not a pin,  
Until peace goes out, and till love comes in.

NAPLES, 1874.

## IN PÈRE LA CHAISE.

## I.

**A**N avenue of tombs! I stand before  
The tomb of Abelard and Eloise.  
A long, a dark bent line of cypress trees  
Leads past and on to other shrines; but o'er  
This tomb the boughs hang darkest and most  
dense,  
Like leaning mourners clad in black. The sense  
Of awe oppresses you. This solitude  
Means more than common sorrow. Down the  
wood  
Still lovers pass, then pause, then turn again,  
And weep like silent, unobtrusive rain.

## II.

'Tis but a simple, antique tomb that kneels  
As one that weeps above the broken clay.  
'Tis stained with storms, 'tis eaten well away,  
Nor half the old-new story now reveals

Of heart that held beyond the tomb to heart.  
 But oh, it tells of love! And that true page  
 Is more in this cold, hard, commercial age,  
 When love is calmly counted some lost art,  
 Than all man's mighty monuments of war  
 Or archives vast of art and science are.

## III.

Here poets pause and dream a listless hour ;  
 Here silly pilgrims stoop and kiss the clay ;  
 Here sweetest maidens leave a cross or flower,  
 While vandals bear the tomb in bits away.  
 The ancient stone is scarred with name and  
     scrawl  
 Of many tender fools. But over all,  
 And high above all other scrawls, is writ  
 One simple thing, most touching and most fit.  
 Some pitying soul has tiptoed high above,  
 And with a nail has scrawled but this: "O  
     Love!"

## IV.

O Love! . . . I turn ; I climb the hill of tombs,  
 Where sleeps the "bravest of the brave," below,  
 His bed of scarlet blooms in zone of snow —  
 No cross nor sign, save this red bed of blooms.

I see grand tombs to France's lesser dead, —  
Colossal steeds, white pyramids, still red  
At base with blood, still torn with shot and shell,  
To testify that here the Commune fell :  
And yet I turn once more from all of these,  
And stand before the tomb of Eloise.

PARIS, 1872

## LONGING FOR HOME.

## I.

COULD I but return to my woods once more,  
And dwell in their depths as I have dwelt,  
Kneel in their mosses as I have knelt,  
Sit where the cool white rivers run,  
Away from the world and half hid from the sun,  
Hear wind in the woods of my storm-torn shore,  
Glad to the heart with listening, —  
It seems to me that I then could sing,  
And sing as I never have sung before.

## II.

I miss, how wholly I miss my wood,  
My matchless, magnificent dark-leaved firs  
That climb up the terrible heights of Hood,  
Where only the breath of white heaven stirs!  
These Alps they are barren; wrapped in storms,  
Formless masses of Titan forms,  
They loom like ruins of a grandeur gone,  
And lonesome as death to look upon.



## III.

O God! once more in my life to hear  
The voice of a wood that is loud and alive,  
That stirs with its being like a vast bee-hive!  
And oh, once more in my life to see  
The great bright eyes of the antlered deer;  
To sing with the birds that sing for me,  
To tread where only the red man trod,  
To say no word, but listen to God!

VERONA, 1873.

## PESTAM.

THIS land it is desolate, dead as death !  
Never the sound of a beast or a bird,  
Nor voices of Nature above a breath ;  
Never the wild deer's quick retreat,  
Never the pheasant's far drum-beat :  
Only the hideous marsh buffalo,  
With a half-choked moan or a lazy low ;  
Only the dull cloven tramp of the herd ;  
Only the tiresome gray outlook ;  
Only the tourist tight holding a book,  
A red-bound book as a lamp for his feet !

PESTAM, 1873.

## TITIAN'S LAND.

## I.

I JOURNEYED to Titian's torn land last year,  
To make me companions of peaks as of old:  
The gray peaks lifted their granite brows  
As barren and cold as a virgin's vows.  
I saw and was silent. Unutterable thought  
Was mine, and a boyhood's memory rolled  
On past; and I gave to the past a tear.  
I lived dead days that were best forgot.

## II.

I listened for bird, for beast. Lo! a gloom  
Had mantled the land like a mournful cloud,  
And lay like the solitude guarding a tomb.  
I spake and made sign — but they answered me  
not.  
I lifted my hands and I called aloud —  
Then echoes went rolling from cliff to cloud,  
And peasants came cautious, strange-clad and  
tall:  
Echoes and peasants, — and that was all:

## III.

Wild peasants that cling to the cliffs, and reap,  
With short broad scythes, the adventurous grain ;  
Then peasants that dwell by the timbered steep,  
In mossy caverns or in leafy low tents,  
And fall the tall forest and plant again  
The orderly woods like to regiments ;  
And fashion the beam and hew the wood,  
And guide the raft through the foamy flood.

Como, 1874.

## IN INNSBRUCK.

DAY by day by the high-born rills  
That plunge into Innsbruck born of the  
snow,

I list for the voices of long ago.  
I stood over Ischl hid under the hills ;  
I stood where the white clouds curled and broke  
In the morn, like puffs of battle-white smoke :  
I listened all day, but listened in vain,  
For the voice of my mountain comes never again.

INNSBRUCK.

## FOR PRINCESS MAUD.

## I.

**S**TORM in the east and storm in the west,  
And the wild sea over my head ;  
But oh, the storm that is in my breast  
For my brave love three days dead !  
Storm and tempest, and peril and pain,  
Nothing but tempest and wild white rain.

## II.

Dead is my heart in the dust to-day,  
And the wheels go over my head.  
Will never the stone be rolled away  
From the grave of my beautiful dead ?  
Storm in my heart, on the hill, on the plain ;  
Tempest and tears, and the wild white rain.

III.

Under the storm and the cloud to-day,  
And to-day the hard peril and pain —  
To-morrow the stone shall be rolled away,  
For the sunshine shall follow the rain.  
Merciful Father, I will not complain,  
I know that the sunshine shall follow the rain.

## I SHALL REMEMBER.

## I.

**D**ID I court fame by the favor of man?  
Make war upon creed, or strike hand with  
clan?

I sang my songs of the sounding trees,  
As careless of name or of fame as the sea;  
And these I sang for the love of these,  
And the sad sweet solace they brought to me.  
I but sang for myself, touched here, touched there,  
Like a strong-winged bird that flies anywhere.

## II.

Did I the religions assail? Gainsay  
One creed that is taught, or lift hard hand,  
Or teach aught else than as Christ taught? Nay,  
There is little enough of love in the land,  
There is little enough of Faith for me,  
There is little enough of Charity,



Little enough of Hope, I guess, —  
And I am the last to make these less.  
And yet did ye stone your prophets; and yet —  
Well, I shall remember, though ye may forget.

VENICE, 1873.

## VALE.

## I.

LET us say farewell. A far dim spark  
Illumes my path. The light of my day  
Hath fled, and yet I am far away.  
The small curled moon has dipped her horn  
In the dark'ning sea. High up in the dark  
The wrinkled old lion, he looks away  
To the east, and impatient as if for morn. . . .  
I have gone the girdle of earth, and say,  
What have I gained but a temple gray,  
Two crow's-feet, and a heart forlorn.

## II.

A star starts yonder like a soul afraid !  
It falls like a thought thro' the great profound.  
Fearfully swift and with never a sound,  
It fades into nothing, as all things fade.

Yea, what is the world? And where is the leaven  
In the pride of name or a proud man's nod?  
Oh tiresome, tiresome stairs to heaven!  
Weary, oh wearisome ways to God!  
'Twere better to sit with the chin on the palm,  
Slow tapping the sand, come storm, come calm.

## III.

I have lived from within and not from without;  
I have drunk from a fount, have fed from a hand  
That no man knows who lives upon land;  
I care not a pin for the praise of men:  
And yet my soul it is crying out  
In hunger for love. I starve, I die,  
Each day of my life. Ye pass me by  
Each day, and laugh as ye pass; and when  
Ye come, I start in my place as ye come,  
And lean, and would speak, — but my lips are  
dumb.

## IV.

Those sliding stars and the changeful moon!  
Let me rest on the plains of Lombardy for aye,  
Or sit down by the Adrian Sea and die.  
The days that do seem as an afternoon,

They all are here. I am strong and true  
To myself; can pluck and can plant anew  
My heart, and grow tall; could come to be  
Another being; lift bolder hand  
And conquer. Yet ever will come to me  
The thought that Italia is not my land.

## V.

A time you may sit and be satisfied;  
You may toy with new things like a child at play,  
But you rise at last and you thrust them away:  
And then there rises a Saxon's pride,  
And the heart fills full, and it throbs to burst,  
With a sense of wrong, and a savage sense  
Of right; and you rise and you look afar,  
And over the seas where the spaces are,  
And you feel that there the God at the first  
Did set you down with inheritance.

## VI.

Here too are the mountains. But a day from  
this town  
Of marble, that sits to its waist in the sea,  
A moon-white mountain of snow looks down  
On a thousand glories of old Italy.

And the seas are here, and the sunlit skies  
Look soft as a love in a lover's eyes, —  
Yet all this beauty and love by the sea  
But seems to mock me, and but seems to say,  
“ Stranger, lorn stranger, rise ! go your way ! ”

## VII.

I shall find diversion with another kind,  
There are roads on the land and roads on the sea,  
Take ship and sail, and sail till I find  
The love that I sought from eternity.  
Run away from oneself, take ship and sail  
The middle white seas, see turbaned men, —  
Throw thought to the dogs for aye. And when  
All seas are travelled and all scenes shall fail,  
Why, then this doubtful, sad gift of verse  
Will save me from death — or something worse.

## VIII.

Then deep-tangled woodland and wild waterfall,  
Oh farewell for aye, till the judgment day !  
I shall see you no more, O land of mine,  
O half-aware land like a child at play !  
O voiceless and vast as the pushed-backed skies !

No more, blue seas in the blest sunshine,  
No more, black woods where the white peaks rise,  
No more, bleak plains where the high winds fall,  
Or the red man cries or the shrill birds call!

## IX.

My hand it is weary, and my harp unstrung,  
And where is the good that I pipe or sing,  
Fashion new notes, or shape any thing?  
The songs of my rivers remain unsung  
Henceforward for me. . . . But a man shall rise  
From the great vast valleys of the Occident,  
With hand on his harp of gold, and with eyes  
That lift with glory and a proud intent;  
Yet so gentle indeed, that his sad heart-strings  
Shall thrill to your heart of hearts as he sings.

## X.

Let the wind sing songs in the lakeside reeds,  
Lo, I shall be less than the indolent wind!  
Why should I sow, when I reap and bind  
And gather in nothing but the pasture weeds?  
It is best I abide let what will befall,

To rest if I can, let time roll by ;  
Let others endeavor to learn, while I,  
With nought to conceal, with much to regret,  
Shall sit and endeavor, alone, to forget.

## XI.

Shall I shape pipes from these seaside reeds,  
And play for the children, and shout and call?  
Lo ! men they have mocked me the whole year  
through !

Nay, let us not laugh. I find in old creeds,  
And in quaint old tongues, a world that is new :  
And these, I will gather the sweets of them all.  
And the old-time doctrines and the old-time signs,  
I will taste of them all, as tasting old wines.

## XII.

I will find new thought, as a new-found vein  
Of rock-locked gold in my far, fair West.  
I will rest and forget, will entreat to be blest ;  
Take up new thought and again grow young ;  
Yea, take a new world as one born again,  
And never hear more mine own mother tongue ;  
Nor miss it. Why should I ? I never once heard,  
In my land's language, love's one sweet word.

## XIII.

. . . How I do wander! And yet why not?  
 I once had a song, told a tale in rhyme;  
 Wrote books indeed in my proud young prime:  
 I aimed at the heart like a musket ball,  
 I struck curs'd folly like a cannon shot, —  
 And where is the glory or good of it all?  
 Yet these did I write for my love, but this  
 I write for myself, — and it is as it is.

## XIV.

Yea, storms have blown counter and shaken me.  
 And yet was I fashioned for strife, and strong  
 And daring of heart, and born to endure:  
 My soul sprang upward, my feet felt sure;  
 My faith was as wide as a wide-boughed tree.  
 But there be limits; and a sense of wrong  
 For ever before you will make you less  
 A man, than a man at the first would guess.

## XV.

Good men can forgive — and, they say, forget. . . .  
 Far less of the angel than Indian is set  
 In my stern soul. And I look away  
 To a land that is dearer than this, and say,



“I shall remember, though you may forget.  
Yea, I shall remember for aye and a day  
The keen taunts thrown in a boy face, when  
He cried unto God for the love of men.”

## XVI.

Enough, ay and more than enough, of this !  
I know that the sunshine must follow the rain ;  
And if this be the winter, why, spring again  
Will come in its season, full blossomed in bliss.  
I will lean to the storm, though the winds blow  
    strong ;  
Yea, the winds they have blown and have shaken  
    me —  
As the winds blow songs through a shattered  
    tree,  
They have blown this broken and careless-set  
    song.

## XVII.

They have sung this song, be it never so bad ;  
Have blown upon me and played upon me,  
Have broken the notes, — blown sad, blown glad  
Just as the winds blow fierce and free

A barren, a blighted, and a curs'd fig tree.  
And if I grow careless and heed no whit  
Whether it please or what comes of it,  
Why, talk to the winds then, and not to me!

VENICE, 1875.

SONGS OF THE MEXICAN SEAS





## SONGS OF THE MEXICAN SEAS.

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### THE SEA OF FIRE.

*IN that far land, farther than Yucatan,  
Hondurian height, or Mahogany steep,  
Where the great sea, hollowed by the hand of man  
Hears deep come calling across to deep ;  
Where the great seas follow in the grooves of men  
Down under the bastions of Darien :*

*In that land so far that you wonder whether  
If God would know it should you fall down dead ;  
In that land so far through the wilds and weather  
That the lost sun sinks like a warrior sped, —  
Where the sea and the sky seem closing together,  
Seem closing together as a book that is read :*

*In that nude warm world, where the unnamed  
rivers*

*Roll restless in cradles of bright buried gold ;  
Where white flashing mountains flow rivers of silver  
As a rock of the desert flowed fountains of old ;  
By a dark wooded river that calls to the dawn,  
And calls all day with his dolorous swan :*

*In that land of the wonderful sun and weather,  
With green under foot and with gold over head,  
Where the spent sun flames, and you wonder  
whether*

*'Tis an isle of fire in his foamy bed :  
Where the oceans of earth shall be welded together  
By the great French master in his forge flame  
red, —*

*Lo ! the half-finished world ! Yon footfall re-  
treating, —*

*It might be the Maker disturbed at his task.  
But the footfall of God, or the far pheasant beating,  
It is one and the same, whatever the mask  
It may wear unto man. The woods keep repeating  
The old sacred sermons, whatever you ask.*

*The brown-muzzled cattle come stealthy to drink,  
The wild forest cattle, with high horns as trim  
As the elk at their side : their sleek necks are slim  
And alert like the deer. They come, then they shrink  
As afraid of their fellows, of shadow-beasts seen  
In the deeps of the dark-wooded waters of green.*

*It is man in his garden, scarce wakened as yet  
From the sleep that fell on him when woman was  
made.*

*The new-finished garden is plastic and wet  
From the hand that has fashioned its unpeopled  
shade ;  
And the wonder still looks from the fair woman's eyes  
As she shines through the wood like the light from  
the skies.*

*And a ship now and then from some far Ophir's  
shore  
Draws in from the sea. It lies close to the bank ;  
Then a dull, muffled sound of the slow-shuffled plank  
As they load the black ship ; but you hear nothing  
more,  
And the dark dewy vines, and the tall sombre wood  
Like twilight droop over the deep sweeping flood.*

*The black masts are tangled with branches that cross,  
The rich, fragrant gums fall from branches to  
deck,*

*The thin ropes are swinging with streamers of moss  
That mantle all things like the shreds of a wreck ;  
The long mosses swing, there is never a breath :  
The river rolls still as the river of death.*



## I.

**I**N the beginning, — ay, before  
The six-days' labors were well o'er;  
Yea, while the world lay incomplete,  
Ere God had opened quite the door  
Of this strange land for strong men's feet, —  
There lay against that westmost sea  
One weird-wild land of mystery.

A far white wall, like fallen moon,  
Girt out the world. The forest lay  
So deep you scarcely saw the day,  
Save in the high-held middle noon:  
It lay a land of sleep and dreams,  
And clouds drew through like shoreless streams  
That stretch to where no man may say.

Men reached it only from the sea,  
By black-built ships, that seemed to creep  
Along the shore suspiciously,  
Like unnamed monsters of the deep.

It was the weirdest land, I ween,  
That mortal eye has ever seen :

A dim, dark land of bird and beast,  
Black shaggy beasts with cloven claw, —  
A land that scarce knew prayer or priest,  
Or law of man, or Nature's law ;  
Where no fixed line drew sharp dispute  
'Twixt savage man and silent brute.

II.

It hath a history most fit  
For cunning hand to fashion on ;  
No chronicler hath mentioned it ;  
No buccaneer set foot upon.  
'T is of an outlawed Spanish Don, —  
A cruel man, with pirate's gold  
That loaded down his deep ship's hold.

A deep ship's hold of plundered gold !  
The golden cruise, the golden cross,  
From many a church of Mexico,  
From Panama's mad overthrow,

From many a ransomed city's loss,  
From many a follower stanch and bold,  
And many a foeman stark and cold.

He found this wild, lost land. He drew  
His ship to shore. His ruthless crew,  
Like Romulus, laid lawless hand  
On meek brown maidens of the land,  
And in their bloody forays bore  
Red firebrands along the shore.

## III.

The red men rose at night. They came,  
A firm, unflinching wall of flame ;  
They swept, as sweeps some fateful sea  
O'er land of sand and level shore  
That howls in far, fierce agony.  
The red men swept that deep, dark shore  
As threshers sweep a threshing-floor.

And yet beside the slain Don's door  
They left his daughter, as they fled :

They spared her life, because she bore  
Their Chieftain's blood and name. The red  
And blood-stained hidden hoards of gold  
They hollowed from the stout ship's hold,  
And bore in many a slim canoe —  
To where? The good priest only knew.

## IV.

The course of life is like the sea :  
Men come and go ; tides rise and fall ;  
And that is all of history.  
The tide flows in, flows out to-day, —  
And that is all that man may say ;  
Man is, man was, — and that is all.

Revenge at last came like a tide, —  
'T was sweeping, deep, and terrible ;  
The Christian found the land, and came  
To take possession in Christ's name.  
For every white man that had died  
I think a thousand red men fell, —  
A Christian custom ; and the land  
Lay lifeless as some burned-out brand.

## V.

Ere while the slain Don's daughter grew  
A glorious thing, a flower of spring,  
A lithe slim reed, a sun-loved weed,  
A something more than mortal knew ;  
A mystery of grace and face, —  
A silent mystery that stood  
An empress in that sea-set wood,  
Supreme, imperial in her place.

It might have been men's lust for gold, —  
For all men knew that lawless crew  
Left hoards of gold in that ship's hold,  
That drew ships hence, and silent drew  
Strange Jasons to that steep wood shore,  
As if to seek that hidden store, —  
I never either cared or knew.

I say it might have been this gold  
That ever drew and strangely drew  
Strong men of land, strange men of sea,  
To seek this shore of mystery  
With all its wondrous tales untold :

The gold or her, which of the two?  
It matters not; I never knew.

But this I know, that as for me,  
Between that face and the hard fate  
That kept me ever from my own,  
As some wronged monarch from his throne,  
God's heaped-up gold of land or sea  
Had never weighed one feather's weight.

Her home was on the wooded height, —  
A woody home, a priest at prayer,  
A perfume in the fervid air,  
And angels watching her at night.  
I can but think upon the skies  
That bound that other Paradise.

## VI.

Below a star-built arch, as grand  
As ever bended heaven spanned;  
Tall trees like mighty columns grew —  
They loomed as if to pierce the blue,  
They reached as reaching heaven through.

The shadowed stream rolled far below,  
Where men moved noiseless to and fro  
As in some vast cathedral, when  
The calm of prayer comes to men,  
With benedictions, bending low.

Lo! wooded sea-banks, wild and steep!  
A trackless wood; a snowy cone  
That lifted from this wood alone!  
This wild wide river, dark and deep!  
A ship against the shore asleep!

## VII.

An Indian woman crept, a crone,  
Hard by about the land alone,  
The relic of her perished race.  
She wore rich, rudely-fashioned bands  
Of gold above her bony hands:  
She hissed hot curses on the place!

## VIII.

Go seek the red man's last retreat!  
A lonesome land, the haunted lands!

Red mouths of beasts, red men's red hands :  
Red prophet-priest, in mute defeat !

His boundaries in blood are writ !  
His land is ghostland ! That is his,  
Whatever man may claim of this ;  
Beware how you shall enter it !  
He stands God's guardian of ghostlands ;  
Ay, this same wrapped half-prophet stands  
All nude and voiceless, nearer to  
The awful God than I or you.

## IX.

This bronzed child, by that river's brink,  
Stood fair to see as you can think,  
As tall as tall reeds at her feet,  
As fresh as flowers in her hair ;  
As sweet as flowers over-sweet,  
As fair as vision more than fair !

How beautiful she was ! How wild !  
How pure as water-plant, this child, —





In early morn. Her certain feet  
Embarked on no uncertain way.

Come, think how perfect before men,  
How sweet as sweet magnolia bloom  
Embalmed in dews of morning, when  
Rich sunlight leaps from midnight gloom  
Resolved to kiss, and swift to kiss  
Ere yet morn wakens man to bliss.

## X.

The days swept on. Her perfect year  
Was with her now. The sweet perfume  
Of womanhood in holy bloom,  
As when red harvest blooms appear,  
Possessed her now. The priest did pray  
That saints alone should pass that way.

A red bird built beneath her roof,  
Brown squirrels crossed her cabin sill,  
And welcome came or went at will.  
A hermit spider wove his web,  
And up against the roof would spin  
His net to catch mosquitoes in.

The silly elk, the spotted fawn,  
And all dumb beasts that came to drink,  
That stealthy stole upon the brink  
In that dim while that lies between  
The coming night and going dawn,  
On seeing her familiar face  
Would fearless stop and stand in place.

She was so kind, the beasts of night  
Gave her the road as if her right ;  
The panther crouching overhead  
In sheen of moss would hear her tread  
And bend his eyes, but never stir  
Lest he by chance might frighten her.

Yet in her splendid strength, her eyes,  
There lay the lightning of the skies ;  
The love-hate of the lioness,  
To kill the instant, or caress :  
A pent-up soul that sometimes grew  
Impatient ; why, she hardly knew.

At last she sighed, uprose, and threw  
Her strong arms out as if to hand

Her love, sun-born and all complete  
At birth, to some brave lover's feet  
On some far, fair, and unseen land,  
As knowing now not what to do!

## XI.

How beautiful she was! Why, she  
Was inspiration! She was born  
To walk God's summer hills at morn,  
Nor waste her by this wood-dark sea.  
What wonder, then, her soul's white wings  
Beat at its bars, like living things!

Once more she sighed! She wandered through  
The sea-bound wood, then stopped and drew  
Her hand above her face, and swept  
The lonesome sea, and all day kept  
Her face to sea, as if she knew  
Some day, some near or distant day,  
Her destiny should come that way.

## XII.

How proud she was! How darkly fair!  
How full of faith, of love, of strength!

Her calm, proud eyes ! Her great hair's  
length, —  
Her long, strong, tumbled, careless hair,  
Half curled and knotted anywhere,  
From brow to breast, from cheek to chin,  
For love to trip and tangle in !

## XIII.

At last a tall strange sail was seen :  
It came so slow, so wearily,  
Came creeping cautious up the sea,  
As if it crept from out between  
The half-closed sea and sky that lay  
Tight wedged together, far away.

She watched it, wooed it. She did pray  
It might not pass her by, but bring  
Some love, some hate, some anything,  
To break the awful loneliness  
That like a nightly nightmare lay  
Upon her proud and pent-up soul  
Until it barely brooked control.



How still this fair girl stood, how fair !  
How proud her presence as she stood  
Between that vast sea and west wood !  
How large and liberal her soul,  
How confident, how purely chare,  
How trusting ; how untried the whole  
Great heart, grand faith, that blossomed there !

## XVI.

Ay, she was as Madonna to  
The tawny, lawless, faithful few  
Who touched her hand and knew her soul :  
She drew them, drew them as the pole  
Points all things to itself.

She drew

Men upward as a moon of spring,  
High wheeling, vast and bosom-full,  
Half clad in clouds and white as wool,  
Draws all the strong seas following.

Yet still she moved as sad, as lone  
As that same moon that leans above,  
And seems to search high heaven through

For some strong, all-sufficient love,  
For one brave love to be her own,  
To lean upon, to love, to woo,  
To lord her high white world, to yield  
His clashing sword against her shield.

Oh, I once knew a sad, white dove  
That died for such sufficient love,  
Such high-born soul with wings to soar :  
That stood up equal in its place,  
That looked love level in the face,  
Nor wearied love with leaning o'er  
To lift love level where she trod  
In sad delight the hills of God.

## XVII.

How slow before the sleeping breeze,  
That stranger ship from under seas !  
How like to Dido by her sea,  
When reaching arms imploringly, —  
Her large, round, rich, impassioned arms,  
Tossed forth from all her storied charms, —  
This one lone maiden leaning stood  
Above that sea, beside the wood !



The ship crept strangely up the seas ;  
Her shrouds seemed shreds, her masts seemed  
trees, —

Strange tattered trees of toughest bough  
That knew no cease of storm till now.  
The maiden pitied her ; she prayed  
Her crew might come, nor feel afraid ;  
She prayed the winds might come, — they came,  
As birds that answer to a name.

The maiden held her blowing hair  
That bound her beauteous self about ;  
The sea-winds housed within her hair :  
She let it go, it blew in rout  
About her bosom full and bare.  
Her round, full arms were free as air,  
Her high hands clasped, as clasped in prayer.

## XVIII.

The breeze grew bold, the battered ship  
Began to flap her weary wings ;  
The tall, torn masts began to dip  
And walk the wave like living things.  
She rounded in, she struck the stream,  
She moved like some majestic dream.

The captain kept her deck. He stood  
A Hercules among his men ;  
And now he watched the sea, and then  
He peered as if to pierce the wood.  
He now looked back, as if pursued,  
Now swept the sea with glass, as though  
He fled or feared some hidden foe.

Swift sailing up the river's mouth,  
Swift tacking north, swift tacking south,  
He touched the overhanging wood ;  
He tacked his ship ; his tall black mast  
Touched tree-top mosses as he passed ;  
He touched the steep shore where she stood.

## XIX.

Her hands still clasped as if in prayer,  
Sweet prayer set to silentness ;  
Her sun-browned throat uplifted, bare  
And beautiful.

Her eager face  
Illumed with love and tenderness,  
And all her presence gave such grace,

Dark shadowed in her cloud of hair,  
That she seemed more than mortal fair.

## XX.

He saw. He could not speak. No more  
With lifted glass he sought the sea ;  
No more he watched the wild new shore.  
Now foes might come, now friends might flee ;  
He could not speak, he would not stir, —  
He saw but her, he feared but her.

The black ship ground against the shore,  
She ground against the bank as one  
With long and weary journeys done,  
That would not rise to journey more.

Yet still this Jason silent stood  
And gazed against that sun-lit wood,  
As one whose soul is anywhere.

All seemed so fair, so wondrous fair !  
At last aroused, he stepped to land  
Like some Columbus. They laid hand  
On lands and fruits, and rested there.

## XXI.

He found all fairer than fair morn  
In sylvan land, where waters run  
With downward leap against the sun,  
And full-grown sudden May is born.  
He found her taller than tall corn  
Tiptoe in tassel; found her sweet  
As vale where bees of Hybla meet.

An unblown rose, an unread book;  
A wonder in her wondrous eyes;  
A large, religious, steadfast look  
Of faith, of trust, — the look of one  
New welcomed in her Paradise.

He read this book, — read on and on  
From titlepage to colophon:  
As in cool woods, some summer day,  
You find delight in some sweet lay,  
And so entranced read on and on  
From titlepage to colophon.

## XXII.

And who was he that rested there, —  
This Hercules, so huge, so rare,

This giant of a grander day,  
 This Theseus of a nobler Greece,  
 This Jason of the golden fleece?  
 And who was he? And who were they  
 That came to seek the hidden gold  
 Long hallowed from the pirate's hold?  
 I do not know. You need not care.

. . . . .  
 They loved, this maiden and this man,  
 And that is all I surely know, —  
 The rest is as the winds that blow.  
 He bowed as brave men bow to fate,  
 Yet proud and resolute and bold;  
 She, coy at first, and mute and cold,  
 Held back and seemed to hesitate, —  
 Half frightened at this love that ran  
 Hard gallop till her hot heart beat  
 Like sounding of swift courser's feet.

## XXIII.

Two strong streams of a land must run  
 Together surely as the sun  
 Succeeds the moon. Who shall gainsay

The fates that reign, that wisely reign ?  
Love is, love was, shall be again.  
Like death, inevitable it is ;  
Perchance, like death, the dawn of bliss.  
Let us, then, love the perfect day,  
The twelve o'clock of life, and stop  
The two hands pointing to the top,  
And hold them tightly while we may.

## XXIV.

How piteous strange is' love ! The walks  
By wooded ways ; the silent talks  
Beneath the broad and fragrant bough.  
The dark deep wood, the dense black dell,  
Where scarce a single gold beam fell  
From out the sun.

They rested now  
On mossy trunk. They wandered then  
Where never fell the feet of men.

Then longer walks, then deeper woods,  
Then sweeter talks, sufficient sweet,  
In denser, deeper solitudes, —

Dear careless ways for careless feet ;  
Sweet talks of paradise for two,  
And only two, to watch or woo.

She rarely spake. All seemed a dream  
She would not waken from. She lay  
All night but waiting for the day,  
When she might see his face, and deem  
This man, with all his perils passed,  
Had found the Lotus-land at last.

## XXV.

The year waxed fervid, and the sun  
Fell central down. The forest lay  
A-quiver in the heat. The sea  
Below the steep bank seemed to run  
A molten sea of gold.

Away  
Against the gray and rock-built isles  
That broke the molten watery miles  
Where lonesome sea-cows called all day,  
The sudden sun smote angrily.

Therefore the need of deeper deeps,  
Of denser shade for man and maid,  
Of higher heights, of cooler steeps,  
Where all day long the sea-wind stayed.

They sought the rock-reared steep. The breeze  
Swept twenty thousand miles of seas ;  
Had twenty thousand things to say  
Of love, of lovers of Cathay,  
To lovers 'mid these high-held trees.

## XXVI.

To left, to right, below the height,  
Below the wood by wave and stream,  
Plumed pampas grasses grew to glean  
And bend their lordly plumes, and run  
And shake, as if in very fright  
Before sharp lances of the sun.

They saw the tide-bound battered ship  
Creep close below against the bank ;  
They saw it cringe and shrink ; it shrank  
As shrinks some huge black beast with fear  
When some uncommon dread is near.



They heard the melting resin drip,  
As drip the last brave blood-drops when  
Life's battle waxes hot with men.

## XXVII.

Yet what to her were burning seas,  
Or what to him was forest flame ?  
They loved ; they loved the glorious trees,  
The gleaming tides, or rise or fall ;  
They loved the lispings winds that came  
From sea-lost spice-set isles unknown,  
With breath not warmer than their own :  
They loved, they loved, — and that was all.

## XXVIII.

Full noon ! Below the ancient moss  
With mighty boughs high clanged across,  
The man with sweet words, over-sweet,  
Fell pleading, plaintive, at her feet.

He spake of love, of boundless love, —  
Of love that knew no other land,

Or face, or place, or anything ;  
Of love that like the wearied dove  
Could light nowhere, but kept the wing  
Till she alone put forth her hand,  
And so received it in her ark  
From seas that shake against the dark !

He clasped her hands, climbed past her knees,  
Forgot her hands and kissed her hair, —  
The while her two hands clasped in prayer,  
And fair face lifted to the trees.

Her proud breast heaved, her pure proud breast  
Rose like the waves in their unrest  
When counter storms possess the seas.  
Her mouth, her arched, uplifted mouth,  
Her ardent mouth that thirsted so, —  
No glowing love-song of the South  
Can say ; no man can say or know  
The glory there, and so live on  
Content without that glory gone !

Her face still lifted up.    And she  
Disdained the cup of passion he  
Hard pressed her panting lips to touch.

She dashed it by despised, and she  
Caught fast her breath. She trembled much,  
And sudden rose full height, and stood  
An empress in high womanhood :  
She stood a tower, tall as when  
Proud Roman mothers suckled men  
Of old-time truth and taught them such.

## .XXIX.

Her soul surged vast as space is. She  
Was trembling as a courser when  
His thin flank quivers, and his feet  
Touch velvet on the turf, and he  
Is all afoam, alert, and fleet  
As sunlight glancing on the sea,  
And full of triumph before men.

At last she bended some her face,  
Half leaned, then put him back a pace,  
And met his eyes.

Calm, silently  
Her eyes looked deep into his eyes, —  
As maidens down some mossy well

Do peer in hope by chance to tell  
By image there what future lies  
Before them, and what face shall be  
The pole-star of their destiny.

Pure Nature's lover! Loving him  
With love that made all pathways dim  
And difficult where he was not, —  
Then marvel not at form forgot.  
And who shall chide? Doth priest know aught  
Of sign, or holy unction brought  
From over seas, that ever can  
Make man love maid or maid love man  
One whit the more, one bit the less,  
For all his mummeries to bless?  
Yea, all his blessing or his ban?

The winds breathed warm as Araby:  
She leaned upon his breast, she lay  
A wide-winged swan with folded wing.  
He drowned his hot face in her hair,  
He heard her great heart rise and sing;  
He felt her bosom swell.

The air  
Swooned sweet with perfume of her form.



'T was from a dash of Titian  
That flooded all her storm of hair  
In gold and glory. But they knew,  
Yea, all men know there ever grew  
A halo round about her head  
Like sunlight scarcely vanished.

## XXXII.

How still she was! She only knew  
His love. She saw no life beyond.  
She loved with love that only lives  
Outside itself and selfishness, —  
A love that glows in its excess ;  
A love that melts pure gold, and gives  
Thenceforth to all who come to woo  
No coins but this face stamped thereon, —  
Ay, this one image stamped upon  
Its face, with some dim date long gone.

## XXXIII.

They kept the headland high ; the ship  
Below began to chafe her chain,

To groan as some great beast in pain ;  
While white fear leapt from lip to lip :  
“ The woods are fire ! the woods are flame !  
Come down and save us, in God’s name ! ”

He heard ! he did not speak or stir, —  
He thought of her, of only her.  
While flames behind, before them lay  
To hold the stoutest heart at bay !

Strange sounds were heard far up the flood, —  
Strange, savage sounds that chilled the blood !  
Then sudden from the dense dark wood  
Above, about them where they stood  
A thousand beasts came peering out ;  
And now was thrust a long black snout,  
And now a tusky mouth. It was  
A sight to make the stoutest pause.

“ Cut loose the ship ! ” the black mate cried ;  
“ Cut loose the ship ! ” the crew replied.  
They drove into the sea. It lay  
As light as ever middle day.

The while their half-blind bitch, that sat  
All slobber-mouthed, and monkish cowed  
With great, broad, floppy, leathern ears,  
Amid the men, rose up and howled,  
And doleful howled her plaintive fears,  
While all looked mute aghast thereat.  
It was the grimmest eve, I think,  
That ever hung on Hades' brink.

Great broad-winged bats possessed the air,  
Bats whirling blindly everywhere ;  
It was such troubled twilight eve  
As never mortal would believe.

## XXXIV.

Some say the crazed hag lit the wood  
In circle where the lovers stood ;  
Some say the gray priest feared the crew  
Might find at last the hoard of gold  
Long hidden from the black ship's hold, —  
I doubt me if men ever knew.  
But such mad, howling, flame-lit shore  
No mortal ever saw before.



Huge beasts above that shining sea,  
Wild, hideous beasts with shaggy hair,  
With red mouths lifting in the air,  
They piteous howled, and plaintively, —  
The wildest sounds, the weirdest sight  
That ever shook the walls of night.

How lorn they howled, with lifted head,  
To dim and distant isles that lay  
Wedged tight along a line of red,  
Caught in the closing gates of day  
'Twixt sky and sea and far away, —  
It was the saddest sound to hear  
That ever struck on human ear.

They doleful called ; and answered they  
The plaintive sea-cows far away, —  
The great sea-cows that called from isles,  
Away across wide watery miles,  
With dripping mouths and lolling tongue,  
As if they called for captured young, —

The huge sea-cows that called the whites  
Their great wide mouths were mouthing moss ;  
And still they doleful called across

From isles beyond the watery miles.  
No sound can half so doleful be  
As sea-cows calling from the sea.

## XXXV.

The drowned sun sank and died. He lay  
In seas of blood. He sinking drew  
The gates of sunset sudden to,  
Where shattered day in fragments lay,  
And night came, moving in mad flame :  
The night came, lighted as he came,  
As lighted by high summer sun  
Descending through the burning blue.  
It was a gold and amber hue,  
And all hues blended into one.  
The night spilled splendor where she came,  
And filled the yellow world with flame.

The moon came on, came leaning low  
Along the far sea-isles aglow ;  
She fell along that amber flood  
A silver flame in seas of blood.

It was the strangest moon, ah me !  
That ever settled on God's sea.

## XXXVI.

Slim snakes slid down from fern and grass,  
From wood, from fen, from anywhere ;  
You could not step, you would not pass,  
And you would hesitate to stir,  
Lest in some sudden, hurried tread  
Your foot struck some unbruised head :

They slid in streams into the stream, —  
It seemed like some infernal dream ;  
They curved, and graceful curved across,  
Like graceful, waving sea-green moss, —  
There is no art of man can make  
A ripple like a rippling snake !

## XXXVII.

Abandoned, lorn, the lovers stood,  
Abandoned there, death in the air !  
That beetling steep, that blazing wood, —  
Red flame ! and red flame everywhere !

Yet was he born to strive, to bear  
The front of battle. He would die  
In noble effort, and defy  
The grizzled visage of despair.

He threw his two strong arms full length  
As if to surely test their strength ;  
Then tore his vestments, textile things  
That could but tempt the demon wings  
Of flame that girt them round about,  
Then threw his garments to the air  
As one that laughed at death, at doubt,  
And like a god stood grand and bare.

She did not hesitate ; she knew  
The need of action ; swift she threw  
Her burning vestments by, and bound  
Her wondrous wealth of hair that fell  
An all-concealing cloud around  
Her glorious presence, as he came  
To seize and bear her through the flame, —  
An Orpheus out of burning hell !

He leaned above her, wound his arm  
About her splendor, while the noon

Of flood-tide, manhood, flushed his face,  
And high flames leapt the high headland! —  
They stood as twin-hewn statues stand,  
High lifted in some storied place.

He clasped her close, he spoke of death, —  
Of death and love in the same breath.  
He clasped her close; her bosom lay  
Like ship safe anchored in some bay.

## XXXVIII.

The flames! They could not stand or stay;  
Before the beetling steep, the sea!  
But at his feet a narrow way,  
A short steep path, pitched suddenly  
Safe open to the river's beach,  
Where lay a small white isle in reach, —  
A small, white, rippled isle of sand  
Where yet the two might safely land.

And there, through smoke and flame, behold  
The priest stood safe, yet all appalled!  
He reached the cross; he cried, he called;  
He waved his high-held cross of gold.

He called and called, he bade them fly  
Through flames to him, nor bide and die!

Her lover saw; he saw, and knew  
His giant strength would bear her through.  
And yet he would not start or stir.  
He clasped her close as death can hold,  
Or dying miser clasp his gold, —  
His hold became a part of her.

He would not give her up! He would  
Not bear her waveward though he could!  
That height was heaven; the wave was hell.  
He clasped her close, — what else had done  
The manliest man beneath the sun?  
Was it not well? was it not well?

O man, be glad! be grandly glad,  
And kinglike walk thy ways of death!  
For more than years of bliss you had  
That one brief time you breathed her breath.  
Yea, more than years upon a throne  
That one brief time you held her fast,  
Soul surged to soul, vehement, vast, —  
True breast to breast, and all your own.

Live me one day, one narrow night,  
One second of supreme delight  
Like that, and I will blow like chaff  
The hollow years aside, and laugh  
A loud triumphant laugh, and I,  
King-like and crowned, will gladly die.

Oh, but to wrap my love with flame!  
With flame within, with flame without!  
Oh, but to die like this, nor doubt —  
To die and know her still the same!  
To know that down the ghostly shore  
Snow-white she waits me evermore!

## XXXIX.

He poised her, held her high in air, —  
His great strong limbs, his great arm's length! —  
Then turned his knotted shoulders bare  
As birth-time in his splendid strength,  
And strode, strode with a lordly stride  
To where the high and wood-hung edge  
Looked down, far down upon the molten tide.  
The flames leapt with him to the ledge,  
The flames leapt leering at his side.

## XL.

He leaned above the ledge. Below  
He saw the black ship idly cruise,—  
A midge below, a mile below.  
His limbs were knotted as the thews  
Of Hercules in his death-throe.

The flame! the flame! the envious flame!  
She wound her arms, she wound her hair  
About his tall form, grand and bare,  
To stay the fierce flame where it came.

The black ship, like some moonlit wreck,  
Below along the burning sea  
Crept on and on all silently,  
With silent pygmies on her deck.

That midge-like ship far, far below;  
That mirage lifting from the hill!  
His flame-lit form began to grow,—  
To grow and grow more grandly still.  
The ship so small, that form so tall,  
It grew to tower over all.

A tall Colossus, bronze and gold,  
As if that flame-lit form were he



Who once bestrode the Rhodian sea,  
And ruled the watery world of old:  
As if the lost Colossus stood  
Above that burning sea of wood.

And she, that shapely form upheld,  
Held high, as if to touch the sky,  
What airy shape, how shapely high, —  
A goddess of the seas of eld!

Her hand upheld, her high right hand,  
As if she would forget the land;  
As if to gather stars, and heap  
The stars like torches there to light  
Her Hero's path across the deep  
To some far isle that fearful night.

It was as if Colossus came,  
Came proudly reaching from the flame  
Above the sea in sheen of gold,  
His sea-bride leaping from his hold;  
The lost Colossus, and his bride  
In bronze perfection at his side:  
As if the lost Colossus came

Companioned from the past, his bride  
 With torch all faithful at his side :

With star-tipped torch that reached and rolled  
 Through cloud-built corridors of gold :  
 His bride, austere and stern and grand, —  
 Bartholdi's goddess by the sea,  
 Far lifting, lighting Liberty  
 From prison seas to Freedom's land.

## XLI.

The flame ! the envious flame, it leapt  
 Enraged to see such majesty,  
 Such scorn of death ; such kingly scorn.  
 Then like some lightning-riven tree  
 They sank down in that flame — and slept  
 And all was hushed above that steep  
 So still, that they might sleep and sleep ;  
 As still as when a day is born.

At last ! from out the embers leapt  
 Two shafts of light above the night, —  
 Two wings of flame that lifting swept  
 In steady, calm, and upward flight ;

Two wings of flame against the white  
Far-lifting, tranquil, snowy cone ;  
Two wings of love, two wings of light,  
Far, far above that troubled night,  
As mounting, mounting to God's throne.

## XLII.

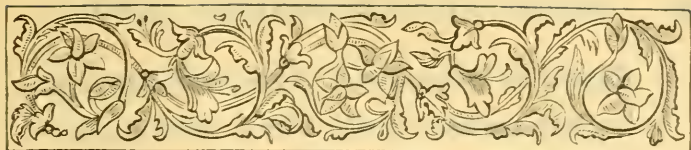
And all night long that upward light  
Lit up the sea-cow's bed below :  
The far sea-cows still calling so  
It seemed as they must call all night.  
All night ! there was no night. Nay, nay,  
There was no night. The night that lay  
Between that awful eve and day, —  
That nameless night was burned away.



THE RHYME OF THE GREAT RIVER.

PART I.





## THE RHYME OF THE GREAT RIVER.

### PART I.

*RHYME on, rhyme on in reedy flow,  
O river, rhymers ever sweet !  
The story of thy land is meet,  
The stars stand listening to know.*

*Rhyme on, O river of the earth !  
Gray father of the dreadful seas,  
Rhyme on ! the world upon its knees  
Shall yet invoke thy wealth and worth.*

*Rhyme on, the reed is at thy mouth,  
O kingly minstrel, mighty stream !  
Thy Crescent City, like a dream,  
Hangs in the heaven of my South.*

*Rhyme on, rhyme on ! these broken strings  
Sing sweetest in this warm south wind ;  
I sit thy willow banks and bind  
A broken harp that fitful sings.*



I.

AND where is my city, sweet blossom-sown  
town?

And what is her glory, and what has she done?  
By the Mexican seas in the path of the sun  
Sit you down : in the crescent of seas sit you down.

Ay, glory enough by my Mexican seas!

Ay, story enough in that battle-torn town,  
Hidden down in the crescent of seas, hidden  
down  
'Mid mantle and sheen of magnolia-strown trees.

But mine is the story of souls ; of a soul

That bartered God's limitless kingdom for  
gold, —  
Sold stars and all space for a thing he could  
hold  
In his palm for a day, ere he hid with the  
mole.

O father of waters! O river so vast!

So deep, so strong, and so wondrous wild,—  
He embraces the land as he rushes past,  
Like a savage father embracing his child.

His sea-land is true and so valiantly true,  
His leaf-land is fair and so marvellous fair,  
His palm-land is filled with a perfumed air  
Of magnolia blooms to its dome of blue.

His rose-land has arbors of moss-swept oak,—  
Gray, Druid old oaks; and the moss that sways  
And swings in the wind is the battle-smoke  
Of duellists, dead in her storied days.

His love-land has churches and bells and chimes;  
His love-land has altars and orange flowers;  
And that is the reason for all these rhymes,—  
These bells, they are ringing through all the  
hours!

His sun-land has churches, and priests at prayer,  
White nuns, as white as the far north snow;  
They go where danger may bid them go,—  
They dare when the angel of death is there.

His love-land has ladies so fair, so fair,  
In the Creole quarter, with great black eyes, —  
So fair that the Mayor must keep them there  
Lest troubles, like troubles of Troy, arise.

His love-land has ladies, with eyes held down, —  
Held down, because if they lifted them,  
Why, you would be lost in that old French town,  
Though you held even to God's garment hem.

His love-land has ladies so fair, so fair,  
That they bend their eyes to the holy book  
Lest you should forget yourself, your prayer,  
And never more cease to look and to look.

And these are the ladies that no men see,  
And this is the reason men see them not.  
Better their modest sweet mystery, —  
Better by far than the battle-shot.

And so, in this curious old town of tiles,  
The proud French quarter of days long gone,  
In castles of Spain and tumble-down piles  
These wonderful ladies live on and on.

I sit in the church where they come and go;  
I dream of glory that has long since gone,  
Of the low raised high, of the high brought low,  
As in battle-torn days of Napoleon.

These piteous places, so rich, so poor!  
One quaint old church at the edge of the town  
Has white tombs laid to the very church door,—  
White leaves in the story of life turned down.

White leaves in the story of life are these,  
The low white slabs in the long strong grass,  
Where Glory has emptied her hour-glass  
And dreams with the dreamers beneath the trees.

I dream with the dreamers beneath the sod,  
Where souls pass by to the great white throne;  
I count each tomb as a mute milestone  
For weary, sweet souls on their way to God.

I sit all day by the vast, strong stream,  
'Mid low white slabs in the long strong grass  
Where Time has forgotten for aye to pass,  
To dream, and ever to dream and to dream.

This quaint old church with its dead to the door,  
By the cypress swamp at the edge of the town,  
So restful seems that you want to sit down  
And rest you, and rest you for evermore.

And one white tomb is a lowliest tomb,  
That has crept up close to the crumbling door,—  
Some penitent soul, as imploring room  
Close under the cross that is leaning o'er.

'T is a low white slab, and 't is nameless, too —  
Her untold story, why, who should know?  
Yet God, I reckon, can read right through  
That nameless stone to the bosom below.

And the roses know, and they pity her, too ;  
They bend their heads in the sun or rain,  
And they read, and they read, and then read  
again,  
As children reading strange pictures through.

Why, surely her sleep it should be profound ;  
For oh the apples of gold above !  
And oh the blossoms of bridal love !  
And oh the roses that gather around !

The sleep of a night, or a thousand morns ?  
Why what is the difference here, to-day ?  
Sleeping and sleeping the years away  
With all earth's roses, and none of its thorns.

Magnolias white and the roses red —  
The palm-tree here and the cypress there :  
Sit down by the palm at the feet of the dead,  
And hear a penitent's midnight prayer.

## II.

The old churchyard is still as death,  
A stranger passes to and fro  
As if to church — he does not go —  
The dead night does not draw a breath.

A lone sweet lady prays within.  
The stranger passes by the door —  
Will he not pray? Is he so poor  
He has no prayer for his sin ?

Is he so poor ! His two strong hands  
Are full and heavy, as with gold ;  
They clasp, as clasp two iron bands  
About two bags with eager hold.

Will he not pause and enter in,  
Put down his heavy load and rest,  
Put off his garmenting of sin,  
As some black burden from his breast ?

Ah, me ! the brave alone can pray.  
The church-door is as cannon's mouth  
To sinner North, or sinner South,  
More dreaded than dread battle day.

Now two men pace. They pace apart,  
And one with youth and truth is fair ;  
The fervid sun is in his heart,  
The tawny South is in his hair.

Ay, two men pace, pace left and right —  
The lone, sweet lady prays within —  
Ay, two men pace : the silent night  
Kneels down in prayer for some sin.

Lo! two men pace ; and one is gray,  
A blue-eyed man from snow-clad land,  
With something heavy in each hand, —  
With heavy feet, as feet of clay.

Ay, two men pace ; and one is light  
Of step, but still his brow is dark  
His eyes are as a kindled spark  
That burns beneath the brow of night !

And still they pace. The stars are red,  
The tombs are white as frosted snow ;  
The silence is as if the dead  
Did pace in couples, to and fro.

## III.

The azure curtain of God's house  
Draws back, and hangs star-pinned to  
space ;

I hear the low, large moon arouse,  
I see her lift her languid face.

I see her shoulder up the east,  
Low-necked, and large as womanhood, —



Low-necked, as for some ample feast  
Of gods, within yon orange-wood.

She spreads white palms, she whispers peace, —  
Sweet peace on earth for evermore ;  
Sweet peace for two beneath the trees,  
Sweet peace for one within the door.

The bent stream, like a scimitar  
Flashed in the sun, sweeps on and on,  
Till sheathed like some great sword new-drawn  
In seas beneath the Carib's star.

The high moon climbs the sapphire hill,  
The lone sweet lady prays within ;  
The crickets keep a clang and din —  
They are so loud, earth is so still !

And two men glare in silence there !  
The bitter, jealous hate of each  
Has grown too deep for deed or speech —  
The lone, sweet lady keeps her prayer.

The vast moon high through heaven's field  
In circling chariot is rolled ;

The golden stars are spun and reeled,  
And woven into cloth of gold.

The white magnolia fills the night  
With perfume, as the proud moon fills  
The glad earth with her ample light  
From out her awful sapphire hills.

White orange blossoms fill the boughs  
Above, about the old church door, —  
They wait the bride, the bridal vows, —  
They never hung so fair before.

The two men glare as dark as sin!  
And yet all seems so fair, so white,  
You would not reckon it was night, —  
The while the lady prays within.

## IV.

She prays so very long and late, —  
The two men, weary, waiting there, —  
The great magnolia at the gate  
Bends drowsily above her prayer.

The cypress in his cloak of moss,  
That watches on in silent gloom,  
Has leaned and shaped a shadow-cross  
Above the nameless, lowly tomb.

What can she pray for? What her sin?  
What folly of a maid so fair?  
What shadows bind the wondrous hair  
Of one who prays so long within?

The palm-trees guard in regiment,  
Stand right and left without the gate;  
The myrtle-moss trees wait and wait;  
The tall magnolia leans intent.

The cypress trees, on gnarled old knees,  
Far out the dank and marshy deep  
Where slimy monsters groan and creep,  
Kneel with her in their marshy seas.

What can her sin be? Who shall know?  
The night flies by, — a bird on wing;  
The men no longer to and fro  
Stride up and down, or anything.

For one so weary and so old  
Has hardly strength to stride or stir;  
He can but hold his bags of gold, —  
But hug his gold and wait for her.

The two stand still, — stand face to face.  
The moon slides on; the midnight air  
Is perfumed as a house of prayer —  
The maiden keeps her holy place.

Two men! And one is gray, but one  
Scarce lifts a full-grown face as yet:  
With light foot on life's threshold set, —  
Is he the other's sun-born son?

And one is of the land of snow,  
And one is of the land of sun;  
A black-eyed burning youth is one,  
But one has pulses cold and slow:

Ay, cold and slow from clime of snow  
Where Nature's bosom, icy bound,  
Holds all her forces, hard, profound, —  
Holds close where all the South lets go.

Blame not the sun, blame not the snows ;  
God's great schoolhouse for all is clime,  
The great school-teacher, Father Time ;  
And each has borne as best he knows.

At last the elder speaks, — he cries, —  
He speaks as if his heart would break ;  
He speaks out as a man that dies, —  
As dying for some lost love's sake :

“ Come, take this bag of gold, and go !  
Come, take one bag ! See, I have two !  
Oh, why stand silent, staring so,  
When I would share my gold with you ?

“ Come, take this gold ! See how I pray !  
See how I bribe, and beg, and buy, —  
Ay, buy ! buy love, as you, too, may  
Some day before you come to die.

“ God ! take this gold, I beg, I pray !  
I beg as one who thirsting cries  
For but one drop of drink, and dies  
In some lone, loveless desert way.

“ You hesitate ? Still hesitate ?  
Stand silent still and mock my pain ?  
Still mock to see me wait and wait,  
And wait her love, as earth waits rain ? ”

## V.

O broken ship ! O starless shore !  
O black and everlasting night,  
Where love comes never any more  
To light man's way with heaven's light.

A godless man with bags of gold  
I think a most unholy sight ;  
Ah, who so desolate at night  
Amid death's sleepers still and cold ?

A godless man on holy ground  
I think a most unholy sight.  
I hear death trailing like a hound  
Hard after him, and swift to bite.

VI.

The vast moon settles to the west :

Two men beside a nameless tomb,  
And one would sit thereon to rest, —  
Ay, rest below, if there were room.

What is this rest of death, sweet friend ?

What is the rising up, — and where ?  
I say, death is a lengthened prayer,  
A longer night, a larger end.

Hear you the lesson I once learned :

I died ; I sailed a million miles  
Through dreamful, flowery, restful isles, —  
She was not there, and I returned.

I say the shores of death and sleep

Are one ; that when we, wearied, come  
To Lethe's waters, and lie dumb,  
'T is death, not sleep, holds us to keep.

Yea, we lie dead for need of rest

And so the soul drifts out and o'er  
The vast still waters to the shore  
Beyond, in pleasant, tranquil quest :

It sails straight on, forgetting pain,  
Past isles of peace, to perfect rest, —  
Now were it best abide, or best  
Return and take up life again ?

And that is all of death there is,  
Believe me. If you find your love  
In that far land, then like the dove  
Abide, and turn not back to this.

But if you find your love not there ;  
Or if your feet feel sure, and you  
Have still allotted work to do, —  
Why, then return to toil and care.

Death is no mystery. 'T is plain  
If death be mystery, then sleep  
Is mystery thrice strangely deep, —  
For oh this coming back again !

Austerest ferryman of souls !  
I see the gleam of solid shores,  
I hear thy steady stroke of oars  
Above the wildest wave that rolls.



O Charon, keep thy sombre ships!  
We come, with neither myrrh nor balm,  
Nor silver piece in open palm,  
But lone white silence on our lips.

VII.

She prays so long! she prays so late!  
What sin in all this flower-land  
Against her supplicating hand  
Could have in heaven any weight?

Prays she for her sweet self alone?  
Prays she for some one far away,  
Or some one near and dear to-day,  
Or some poor, lorn, lost soul unknown?

It seems to me a selfish thing  
To pray forever for one's self;  
It seems to me like heaping pelf  
In heaven by hard reckoning.

Why, I would rather stoop, and bear  
My load of sin, and bear it well  
And bravely down to burning hell,  
Than ever pray one selfish prayer!

## VIII.

The swift chameleon in the gloom —  
    This silence it is so profound! —  
    Forsakes its bough, glides to the ground,  
Then up, and lies across the tomb.

It erst was green as olive-leaf,  
    It then grew gray as myrtle moss  
    The time it slid the moss across;  
But now 't is marble-white with grief.

The little creature's hues are gone;  
    Here in the pale and ghostly light  
    It lies so pale, so panting white, —  
White as the tomb it lies upon.

The two men by that nameless tomb,  
    And both so still! You might have said  
    These two men, they are also dead,  
And only waiting here for room.

How still beneath the orange-bough!  
    How tall was one, how bowed was one!  
    The one was as a journey done,  
The other as beginning now.

And one was young, — young with that youth  
Eternal that belongs to truth ;  
And one was old, — old with the years  
That follow fast on doubts and fears.

And yet the habit of command  
Was his, in every stubborn part ;  
No common knave was he at heart,  
Nor his the common coward's hand.

He looked the young man in the face,  
So full of hate, so frank of hate ;  
The other, standing in his place,  
Stared back as straight and hard as fate.

And now he sudden turned away,  
And now he paced the path, and now  
Came back, beneath the orange-bough  
Pale-browed, with lips as cold as clay.

As mute as shadows on a wall,  
As silent still, as dark as they,  
Before that stranger, bent and gray,  
The youth stood scornful, proud, and tall.

He stood, a tall palmetto-tree  
With Spanish daggers guarding it ;  
Nor deed, nor word, to him seemed fit  
While she prayed on so silently.

He slew his rival with his eyes ;  
His eyes were daggers piercing deep, —  
So deep that blood began to creep  
From their deep wounds and drop wordwise :

His eyes so black, so bright that they  
Might raise the dead, the living slay,  
If but the dead, the living, bore  
Such hearts as heroes had of yore :

Two deadly arrows barbed in black,  
And feathered, too, with raven's wing ;  
Two arrows that could silent sting,  
And with a death-wound answer back.

How fierce he was ! how deadly still  
In that mesmeric, hateful stare  
Turned on the pleading stranger there  
That drew to him, despite his will :

So like a bird down-fluttering,  
Down, down, beneath a snake's bright eyes,  
He stood, a fascinated thing,  
That hopeless, unresisting, dies.

He raised a hard hand as before,  
Reached out the gold, and offered it  
With hand that shook as ague-fit, —  
The while the youth but scorned the more.

' You will not touch it ? In God's name  
Who are you, and what are you, then ?  
Come, take this gold, and be of men, —  
A human form with human aim.

" Yea, take this gold, — she must be mine  
She shall be mine ! I do not fear  
Your scowl, your scorn, your soul austere,  
The living, dead, or your dark sign.

" I saw her as she entered there ;  
I saw her, and uncovered stood :  
The perfume of her womanhood  
Was holy incense on the air.

“ She left behind sweet sanctity,  
Religion lay the way she went ;  
I cried I would repent, repent !  
She passed on, all unheeding me.

“ Her soul is young, her eyes are bright  
And gladsome, as mine own are dim ;  
But, oh, I felt my senses swim  
The time she passed me by to-night ! —

“ The time she passed, nor raised her eyes  
To hear me cry I would repent,  
Nor turned her head to hear my cries,  
But swifter went the way she went, —

“ Went swift as youth, for all these years !  
And this the strangest thing appears,  
That lady there seems just the same, —  
Sweet Gladys — Ah ! you know her name ?

“ You hear her name and start that I  
Should name her dear name trembling so ?  
Why, boy, when I shall come to die  
That name shall be the last I know.

“ That name shall be the last sweet name  
My lips shall utter in this life !  
That name is brighter than bright flame, —  
That lady is my wedded wife !

“ Ah, start and catch your burning breath !  
Ah, start and clutch your deadly knife !  
If this be death, then be it death, —  
But that loved lady is my wife !

“ Yea, you are stunned ! your face is white,  
That I should come confronting you,  
As comes a lorn ghost of the night  
From out the past, and to pursue.

“ You thought me dead ? You shake your head,  
You start back horrified to know  
That she is loved, that she is wed,  
That you have sinned in loving so.

“ Yet what seems strange, that lady there,  
Housed in the holy house of prayer,  
Seems just the same for all her tears, —  
For all my absent twenty years.

“ Yea, twenty years to-night, to-night,  
Just twenty years this day, this hour,  
Since first I plucked that perfect flower,  
And not one witness of the rite.

“ Nay, do not doubt, — I tell you true !  
Her prayers, her tears, her constancy  
Are all for me, are all for me, —  
And not one single thought for you !

“ I knew, I knew she would be here  
This night of nights to pray for me !  
And how could I for twenty year  
Know this same night so certainly ?

“ Ah me ! some thoughts that we would drown  
Stick closer than a brother to  
The conscience, and pursue, pursue  
Like baying hound to hunt us down.

“ And then, that date is history ;  
For on that night this shore was shelled,  
And many a noble mansion felled,  
With many a noble family.



“ I wore the blue ; I watched the flight  
Of shells like stars tossed through the air  
To blow your hearth-stones — anywhere,  
That wild, illuminated night.

“ Nay, rage befits you not so well :  
Why, you were but a babe at best,  
Your cradle some sharp bursted shell  
That tore, maybe, your mother’s breast !

“ Hear me ! We came in honored war.  
The risen world was on your track !  
The whole North-land was at our back,  
From Hudson’s bank to the North star !

“ And from the North to palm-set sea  
The splendid fiery cyclone swept.  
Your fathers fell, your mothers wept,  
Their nude babes clinging to the knee.

“ A wide and desolated track :  
Behind, a path of ruin lay ;  
Before, some women by the way  
Stood mutely gazing, clad in black.

“ From silent women waiting there  
     Some tears came down like still small rain ;  
     Their own sons on the battle plain  
 Were now but viewless ghosts of air.

“ Their own dear daring boys in gray, —  
     They should not see them any more ;  
     Our cruel drums kept telling o'er  
 The time their own sons went away.

“ Through burning town, by bursting shell —  
     Yea, I remember well that night ;  
     I led through orange-lanes of light,  
 As through some hot outpost of hell !

That night of rainbow-shot and shell  
     Sent from your surging river's breast  
     To waken me, no more to rest, —  
 That night I should remember well !

That night amid the maimed and dead, —  
     A night in history set down  
     By light of many a burning town,  
 And written all across in red, —

“ Her father dead, her brothers dead,  
Her home in flames, — what else could she  
But fly all helpless here to me,  
A fluttered dove, that night of dread ?

“ Short time, hot time had I to woo  
Amid the red shells’ battle-chime ;  
But women rarely reckon time,  
And perils speed their love when true.

“ And then I wore a captain’s sword ;  
And, too, had oftentime before  
Doffed cap at her dead father’s door,  
And passed a soldier’s pleasant word.

“ And then — ah, I was comely then !  
I bore no load upon my back,  
I heard no hounds upon my track,  
But stood the tallest of tall men.

“ Her father’s and her mother’s shrine,  
This church amid the orange wood,  
So near and so secure it stood,  
It seemed to beckon as a sign.

“ Its white cross seemed to beckon me :  
    My heart was strong, and it was mine  
To throw myself upon my knee,  
    To beg to lead her to this shrine.

“ She did consent. Through lanes of light  
I led through that church-door that night —  
Let fall your hand ! Take back your face  
And stand, — stand patient in your place !

“ She loved me ; and she loves me still.  
    Yea, she clung close to me that hour  
    As honey-bee to honey-flower, —  
And still is mine, through good or ill.

“ The priest stood there. He spake the prayer ;  
    He made the holy, mystic sign.  
    And she was mine, was wholly mine, —  
Is mine this moment I will swear !

“ Then days, then nights, of vast delight, —  
    Then came a doubtful, later day ;  
    The faithful priest, now far away,  
Watched with the dying in the fight :

“ The priest amid the dying, dead,  
Kept duty on the battle-field, —  
That midnight marriage unrevealed  
Kept strange thoughts running through my head.

“ At last a stray ball struck the priest :  
This vestibule his chancel was.  
And now none lived to speak her cause,  
Record, or champion her the least.

“ Hear me ! I had been bred to hate  
All priests, their mummeries and all.  
Ah, it was fate, — ah, it was fate  
That all things tempted me to fall !

“ And then the rattling songs we sang  
Those nights when rudely revelling, —  
The songs that only soldiers sing, —  
Until the very tent-poles rang !

“ What is the rhyme that rhymers say  
Of maidens born to be betrayed  
By epaulettes and shining blade,  
While soldiers love and ride away ?

“ And then my comrades spake her name  
Half taunting, with a touch of shame ;  
Taught me to hold that lily-flower  
As some light pastime of the hour.

“ And then the ruin in the land,  
The death, dismay, the lawlessness !  
Men gathered gold on every hand, —  
Heaped gold : and why should I do less ?

“ The cry for gold was in the air,  
For Creole gold, for precious things ;  
The sword kept prodding here and there  
Through bolts and sacred fastenings.

“ ‘ Get gold ! get gold ! ’ This was the cry.  
And I loved gold. What else could I  
Or you, or any earnest one  
Born in this getting age have done ?

“ With this one lesson taught from youth,  
And ever taught us, to get gold, —  
To get and hold, and ever hold, —  
What else could I have done, forsooth ?

“ She, seeing how I sought for gold, —  
This girl, my wife, one late night told  
Of treasures hidden close at hand,  
In her dead father’s mellow land :

“ Of gold she helped her brothers hide  
Beneath a broad banana tree,  
The day the two in battle died, —  
The night she dying fled to me.

“ It seemed too good ; I laughed to scorn  
Her trustful tale. She answered not ;  
But meekly on the morrow morn  
Two massive bags of bright gold brought.

“ And when she brought this gold to me,  
Red Creole gold, rich, rare, and old, —  
When I at last had gold, sweet gold,  
I cried in very ecstasy !

“ Red gold ! rich gold ! two bags of gold !  
The two stout bags of gold she brought  
And gave with scarce a second thought, —  
Why, her two hands could hardly hold !

“ Now I had gold ! two bags of gold !  
Two wings of gold to fly, and fly  
The wide world’s girth ; red gold to hold  
Against my heart for aye and aye !

“ My country’s lesson : ‘ Gold ! get gold ! ’  
I learned it well in land of snow ;  
And what can glow, so brightly glow,  
Long winter nights of Northern cold ?

“ Ay, now at last, at last I had  
The one thing, all fair things above  
My land had taught me most to love !  
A miser now ! and I grew mad.

“ With those two bags of gold my own,  
I then began to plan that night  
For flight, for far and sudden flight, —  
For flight ; and, too, for flight alone.

“ I feared ! I feared ! My heart grew cold, —  
Some one might claim this gold of me !  
I feared her, — feared her purity,  
Feared all things but my bags of gold.



“ I grew to hate her face, her creed, —  
That face the fairest ever yet  
That bowed o’er holy cross or bead,  
Or yet was in God’s image set.

“ I fled, — nay, not so knavish low  
As you have fancied, did I fly ;  
I sought her at that shrine, and I  
Told her full frankly I should go.

“ I stood a giant in my power, —  
And did she question or dispute ?  
I stood a savage, selfish brute, —  
She bowed her head, a lily-flower.

“ And when I sudden turned to go,  
And told her I should come no more,  
She bowed her head so low, so low,  
Her vast black hair fell pouring o’er.

“ And that was all ; her splendid face  
Was mantled from me, and her night  
Of hair half hid her from my sight  
As she fell moaning in her place.

“ And there, 'mid her dark night of hair,  
    She sobbed, low moaning through her tears,  
    That she would wait, wait all the years, —  
Would wait and pray in her despair.

“ Nay, did not murmur, not deny, —  
    She did not cross me one sweet word !  
    I turned and fled : I thought I heard  
A night-bird's piercing low death-cry !”



## THE RHYME OF THE GREAT RIVER.

### PART II.

*HOW* soft this moonlight of the South !  
How sweet my South in soft moonlight !  
I want to kiss her warm sweet mouth  
As she lies sleeping here to-night.

*How still ! I do not hear a mouse.*  
I see some bursting buds appear ;  
I hear God in His garden, — hear  
Him trim some flowers for His house.

*I hear some singing stars ; the mouth*  
*Of my vast river sings and sings,*  
*And pipes on reeds of pleasant things, —*  
*Of splendid promise for my South :*

*My great South-woman, soon to rise  
And tiptoe up and loose her hair ;  
Tiptoe, and take from all the skies  
God's stars and glorious moon to wear !*

I.

THE poet shall create or kill,  
    Bid heroes live, bid braggarts die.  
I look against a lurid sky, —  
    My silent South lies proudly still.

The lurid light of burning lands  
    Still climbs to God's house overhead ;  
Mute women wring white withered hands ;  
    Their eyes are red, their skies are red.

Poor man ! still boast your bitter wars !  
    Still burn and burn, and burning die.  
But God's white finger spins the stars  
    In calm dominion of the sky.

And not one ray of light the less  
    Comes down to bid the grasses spring ;  
    No drop of dew nor anything  
Shall fail for all your bitterness.

The land that nursed a nation's youth,  
Ye burned it, sacked it, sapped it dry.  
Ye gave it falsehoods for its truth,  
And fame was fashioned from a lie.

If man grows large, is God the less?  
The moon shall rise and set the same,  
The great sun spill his splendid flame  
And clothe the world in queenliness.

And from that very soil ye trod  
Some large-souled seeing youth shall come  
Some day, and he shall not be dumb  
Before the awful court of God.

## II.

The weary moon had turned away,  
The far North-Star was turning pale  
To hear the stranger's boastful tale  
Of blood and flame that battle day.

And yet again the two men glared,  
Close face to face above that tomb;  
Each seemed as jealous of the room  
The other eager waiting shared.

Again the man began to say, —  
As taking up some broken thread,  
As talking to the patient dead, —  
The Creole was as still as they :

“ That night we burned yon grass-grown town, —  
The grasses, vines are reaching up ;  
The ruins they are reaching down,  
As sun-browned soldiers when they sup.

“ I knew her, — knew her constancy.  
She said, this night of every year  
She here would come, and kneeling here,  
Would pray the live-long night for me.

“ This praying seems a splendid thing !  
It drives old Time the other way ;  
It makes him lose all reckoning  
Of years that pagans have to pay.

“ This praying seems a splendid thing !  
It makes me stronger as she prays —  
But oh the bitter, bitter days  
When I became a banished thing !

“ I fled, took ship, — I fled as far  
As far ships drive tow’rd the North-Star ;  
For I did hate the South, the sun  
That made me think what I had done.

“ I could not see a fair palm-tree  
In foreign land, in pleasant place,  
But it would whisper of her face  
And shake its keen sharp blades at me.

“ Each black-eyed woman would recall  
A lone church-door, a face, a name,  
A coward’s flight, a soldier’s shame :  
I fled from woman’s face, from all.

“ I hugged my gold, my precious gold,  
Within my strong, stout, buckskin vest.  
I wore my bags against my breast  
So close I felt my heart grow cold.

“ I did not like to see it now ;  
I did not spend one single piece.  
I travelled, travelled without cease  
As far as Russian ship could plow.



“And when my own scant hoard was gone,  
And I had reached the far North-land,  
I took my two stout bags in hand  
As one pursued, and journeyed on.

“Ah, I was weary ! I grew gray ;  
I felt the fast years slip and reel  
As slip black beads when maidens kneel  
At altars when out-door is gay.

“At last I fell prone in the road, —  
Fell fainting with my cursèd load.  
A skin-clad cossack helped me bear  
My bags, nor would one shilling share.

“He looked at me with proud disdain, —  
He looked at me as if he knew ;  
His black eyes burned me thro’ and thro’ ;  
His scorn pierced like a deadly pain.

“He frightened me with honesty ;  
He made me feel so small, so base,  
I fled, as if the fiend kept chase, —  
The fiend that claims my company !

“I bore my load alone ; I crept  
 Far up the steep and icy way ;  
 And there, before a cross there lay  
 A barefoot priest, who bowed and wept.

“I threw my gold right down and sped  
 Straight on. And oh my heart was light !  
 A spring-time bird in spring-time flight  
 Flies not so happy as I fled.

“I felt somehow this monk would take  
 My gold, my load from off my back ;  
 Would turn the fiend from off my track,  
 Would take my gold for sweet Christ’s sake !

“I fled ; I did not look behind ;  
 I fled, fled with the mountain wind.  
 At last, far down the mountain’s base  
 I found a pleasant resting-place.

“I rested there so long, so well,  
 More grateful than all tongues can tell.  
 It was such pleasant thing to hear  
 That valley’s voices calm and clear :

“That valley veiled in mountain air,  
    With white goats on the hills at morn ;  
    That valley green with seas of corn,  
With cottage islands here and there.

“I watched the mountain girls. The hay  
They mowed was not more sweet than they ;  
They laid brown hands in my white hair ;  
They marvelled at my face of care.

“I tried to laugh ; I could but weep.  
    I made these peasants one request, —  
    That I with them might toil or rest,  
And with them sleep the long, last sleep.

“I begged that I might battle there,  
    For that fair valley-land, for those  
    Who gave me cheer when girt with foes,  
And have a country, loved and fair.

“Where is that spot that poets name  
    Our country ? name the hallowed land ?  
    Where is that spot where man must stand  
Or fall when girt with sword and flame ?

“Where is that one permitted spot?  
     Where is the one place man must fight?  
     Where rests the one God-given right  
 To fight, as ever patriots fought?

“I say ’t is in that holy house  
     Where God first set us down on earth:  
     Where mother welcomed us at birth,  
 And bared her breasts, a happy spouse.

“But when some wrong, some deed of shame,  
     Shall make that land no more our own —  
     Ah! hunger for that holy name  
 My country, I have truly known!

“The simple plough-boy from his field  
     Looks forth. He sees God’s purple wall  
     Encircling him. High over all  
 The vast sun wheels his shining shield.

“This King, who makes earth what it is, —  
     King David bending to his toil!  
     O lord and master of the soil,  
 How envied in thy loyal bliss!

“ Long live the land we loved in youth, —  
That world with blue skies bent about,  
Where never entered ugly doubt!  
Long live the simple, homely truth!

“ Can true hearts love some far snow-land,  
Some bleak Alaska bought with gold?  
God’s laws are old as love is old;  
And Home is something near at hand.

“ Yea, change yon river’s course; estrange  
The seven sweet stars; make hate divide  
The full moon from the flowing tide, —  
But this old truth ye cannot change.

“ I begged a land as begging bread;  
I begged of these brave mountaineers  
To share their sorrows, share their tears  
To weep as they wept, with their dead.

“ They did consent. The mountain town  
Was mine to love, and valley lands.  
That night the barefoot monk came down  
And laid my two bags in my hands!

“On! On! And oh the load I bore!  
Why, once I dreamed my soul was lead;  
Dreamed once it was a body dead!  
It made my cold, hard bosom sore.

“I dragged that body forth and back —  
O conscience, what a baying hound!  
Nor frozen seas nor frosted ground  
Can throw this bloodhound from his track.

“In farthest Russia I lay down  
A dying man, at last to rest;  
I felt such load upon my breast  
As seamen feel, who sinking drown.

“That night, all chill and desperate,  
I sprang up, for I could not rest;  
I tore the two bags from my breast,  
And dashed them in the burning grate.

“I then crept back into my bed;  
I tried, I begged, I prayed to sleep;  
But those red, restless coins would keep  
Slow dropping, dropping, and blood red.

“ I heard them clink and clink and clink, —  
They turned, they talked within that grate.  
They talked of her; they made me think  
Of one who still must pray and wait.

“ And when the bags burned crisp and black,  
Two coins did start, roll to the floor, —  
Roll out, roll on, and then roll back,  
As if they needs must journey more.

“ Ah, then I knew nor change nor space,  
Nor all the drowning years that rolled  
Could hide from me her haunting face,  
Nor still that red-tongued talking gold.

“ Again I sprang forth from my bed!  
I shook as in an ague fit;  
I clutched that red gold, burning red,  
I clutched, as if to strangle it.

“ I clutched it up — you hear me, boy? —  
I clutched it up with joyful tears!  
I clutched it close, with such wild joy  
I had not felt for years and years!

“Such joy! for I should now retrace  
My steps, should see my land, her face;  
Bring back her gold this battle day,  
And see her, see her, hear her pray!

“I brought it back — you hear me, boy? —  
I clutch it, hold it, hold it now:  
Red gold, bright gold that giveth joy  
To all, and anywhere or how;

“That giveth joy to all but me, —  
To all but me, yet soon to all.  
It burns my hands, it burns! but she  
Shall ope my hands and let it fall.

“For oh I have a willing hand  
To give these bags of gold; to see  
Her smile as once she smiled on me  
Here in this pleasant; warm palm-land!”

He ceased, he thrust each hard-clenched fist,  
He threw his gold hard forth again,  
As one impelled by some mad pain  
He would not or could not resist.



The creole, scorning, turned away,  
As if he turned from that lost thief, —  
The one that died without belief  
That awful crucifixion day.

III.

Believe in man, nor turn away.  
Lo! man advances year by year;  
Time bears him upward, and his sphere  
Of life must broaden day by day.

Believe in man with large belief;  
The garnered grain each harvest-time  
Hath promise, roundness, and full prime  
For all the empty chaff and sheaf.

Believe in man with proud belief:  
Truth keeps the bottom of her well,  
And when the thief peeps down, the thief  
Peeps back at him, perpetual.

Faint not that this or that man fell;  
For one that falls a thousand rise  
To lift white Progress to the skies:  
Truth keeps the bottom of her well.

Fear not for man, nor cease to delve  
For cool sweet truth, with large belief.  
Lo! Christ himself chose only twelve,  
Yet one of these turned out a thief.

## IV.

Down through the dark magnolia leaves  
Where climbs the rose of Cherokee  
Against the orange-blossomed tree,  
A loom of moonlight weaves and weaves, —

A loom of moonlight, weaving clothes  
From snow-white rose of Cherokee,  
And bridal blooms of orange-tree,  
For fairy folk in fragrant rose.

Down through the mournful myrtle crape,  
Through moving moss, through ghostly gloom,  
A long white moonbeam takes a shape  
Above a nameless, lowly tomb;

A long white finger through the gloom  
Of grasses gathered round about, —  
As God's white finger pointing out  
A name upon that nameless tomb.

V.

Her white face bowed in her black hair,  
The maiden prays so still within  
That you might hear a falling pin, —  
Ay, hear her white unuttered prayer.

The moon has grown disconsolate,  
Has turned her down her walk of stars:  
Why, she is shutting up her bars,  
As maidens shut a lover's gate.

The moon has grown disconsolate;  
She will no longer watch and wait.

But two men wait; and two men will  
Wait on till morning, mute and still:

Still wait and walk among the trees,  
Quite careless if the moon may keep  
Her walk along her starry steep  
Above the Southern pearl-sown seas.

They know no moon, or set or rise  
Of stars, or anything to light  
The earth or skies, save her dark eyes,  
This praying, waking, watching night.

They move among the tombs apart,  
Their eyes turn ever to that door;  
They know the worn walks there by heart —  
They turn and walk them o'er and o'er.

They are not wide, these little walks  
For dead folk by this crescent town.  
They lie right close when they lie down,  
As if they kept up quiet talks.

VI.

The two men keep their paths apart ;  
    But more and more begins to stoop  
    The man with gold, as droop and droop  
Tall plants with something at their heart.

Now once again with eager zest  
    He offers gold with silent speech ;  
    The other will not walk in reach,  
But walks around, as round a pest.

His dark eyes sweep the scene around,  
    His young face drinks the fragrant air,  
    His dark eyes journey everywhere, —  
The other's cleave unto the ground.

It is a weary walk for him,  
    For oh he bears a weary load !  
    He does not like that narrow road  
Between the dead — it is so dim :

It is so dark, that narrow place,  
    Where graves lie thick, like yellow leaves :

Give us the light of Christ and grace,  
Give light to garner in the sheaves.

Give light of love; for gold is cold,  
And gold is cruel as a crime;  
It gives no light at such sad time  
As when man's feet wax weak and old.

Ay, gold is heavy, hard, and cold!  
And have I said this thing before?  
Well, I will tell it o'er and o'er,  
'T were need be told ten thousand fold.

"Give us this day our daily bread," —  
Get this of God, then all the rest  
Is housed in thine own honest breast,  
If you but lift a lordly head.

## VII.

Oh, I have seen men, tall and fair,  
Stoop down their manhood with disgust,  
Stoop down God's image to the dust,  
To get a load of gold to bear;

Have seen men selling day by day  
The glance of manhood that God gave :  
To sell God's image as a slave  
Might sell some little pot of clay !

Behold ! here in this green graveyard  
A man with gold enough to fill  
A coffin, as a miller's till ;  
And yet his path is hard, so hard !

His feet keep sinking in the sand,  
And now so near an opened grave !  
He seems to hear the solemn wave  
Of dread oblivion at hand.

The sands, they grumble so, it seems  
As if he walks some shelving brink.  
He tries to stop, he tries to think,  
He tries to make believe he dreams :

Why, he is free to leave the land,  
The silver moon is white as dawn ;  
Why, he has gold in either hand,  
Has silver ways to walk upon.

And who should chide, or bid him stay ?  
     Or taunt, or threat, or bid him fly ?  
 The world 's for sale, I hear men say,  
     And yet this man has gold to buy.

Buy what ?    Buy rest ?    He could not rest !  
     Buy gentle sleep ?    He could not sleep,  
     Though all these graves were wide and deep  
 As their wide mouths with the request.

Buy Love, buy faith, buy snow-white truth ?  
     Buy moonlight, sunlight, present, past ?  
 Buy but one brimful cup of youth  
     That calm souls drink of to the last ?

O God ! 't is pitiful to see  
     This miser so forlorn and old !  
 O God ! how poor a man may be  
     With nothing in this world but gold !

## VIII.

The broad magnolia's blooms are white ;  
     Her blooms are large, as if the moon  
 Had lost her way some lazy night,  
     And lodged here till the afternoon.



Oh, vast white blossoms breathing love!  
White bosom of my lady dead,  
In your white heaven overhead  
I look, and learn to look above.

IX.

All night the tall magnolia kept  
Kind watch above the nameless tomb:  
Two shapes kept waiting in the gloom  
And gray of morn, where roses wept.

The dew-wet roses wept; their eyes  
All dew, their breath as sweet as prayer.  
And as they wept, the dead down there  
Did feel their tears and hear their sighs.

The grass uprose as if afraid  
Some stranger foot might press too near;  
Its every blade was like a spear,  
Its every spear a living blade.

The grass above that nameless tomb  
Stood all arrayed, as if afraid  
Some weary pilgrim seeking room  
And rest, might lay where she was laid.

## X.

'T was morn, and yet it was not morn ;  
'T was morn in heaven, not on earth, —  
A star was singing of a birth,  
Just saying that a day was born.

The marsh hard by that bound the lake, —  
The great low sea-lake, Ponchartrain,  
Shut off from sultry Cuban main, —  
Drew up its legs, as half awake :

Drew long stork legs, long legs that steep  
In slime where alligators creep, —  
Drew long green legs that stir the grass,  
As when the late lorn night-winds pass.

Then from the marsh came croakings low,  
Then louder croaked some sea-marsh beast ;  
Then, far away against the east,  
God's rose of morn began to grow.

From out the marsh, against that east,  
A ghostly moss-swept cypress stood ;  
With ragged arms above the wood  
It rose, a God-forsaken beast.

It seemed so frightened where it rose !  
The moss-hung thing it seemed to wave  
The worn-out garments of the grave, —  
To wave and wave its old grave-clothes.

Close by, a cow rose up and lowed  
From out a palm-thatched milking-shed.  
A black boy on the river road  
Fled sudden, as the night had fled :

A nude black boy, a bit of night  
That had been broken off and lost  
From flying night, the time it crossed  
The surging river in its flight :

A bit of darkness, following  
The sable night on sable wing, —  
A bit of darkness stilled with fear,  
Because that nameless tomb was near.

Then holy bells came pealing out ;  
    Then steamboats blew, then horses neighed ;  
Then smoke from hamlets round about  
    Crept out, as if no more afraid.

Then shrill cocks here, and shrill cocks there,  
Stretched glossy necks and filled the air.  
How many cocks it takes to make  
A country morning well awake !

Then many boughs, with many birds, —  
    Young boughs in green, old boughs in gray, —  
    These birds had very much to say  
In their soft, sweet, familiar words.

And all seemed sudden glad ; the gloom  
Forgot the church, forgot the tomb ;  
And yet like monks with cross and bead  
The myrtles leaned to read and read.

And oh the fragrance of the sod !  
    And oh the perfume of the air !  
    The sweetness, sweetness everywhere,  
That rose like incense up to God !

I like a cow's breath in sweet spring,  
I like the breath of babes new-born ;  
A maid's breath is a pleasant thing, —  
But oh the breath of sudden morn !

Of sudden morn, when every pore  
Of mother earth is pulsing fast  
With life, and life seems spilling o'er  
With love, with love too sweet to last :

Of sudden morn beneath the sun,  
By God's great river wrapped in gray,  
That for a space forgets to run,  
And hides his face as if to pray.

XI.

The black-eyed Creole kept his eyes  
Turned to the door, as eyes might turn  
To see the holy embers burn  
Some sin away at sacrifice.

Full dawn ! but yet he knew no dawn,  
 Nor song of bird, nor bird on wing,  
 Nor breath of rose, nor anything  
 Her fair face lifted not upon.

And yet he taller stood with morn ;  
 His bright eyes, brighter than before,  
 Burned fast against that fastened door,  
 His proud lips lifting up with scorn, —

With lofty, silent scorn for one  
 Who all night long had plead and plead,  
 With none to witness but the dead  
 How he for gold must be undone.

Oh, ye who feed a greed for gold,  
 And barter truth, and trade sweet youth  
 For cold hard gold, behold, behold !  
 Behold this man ! behold this truth !

Why, what is there in all God's plan  
 Of vast creation, high or low,  
 By sea or land, by sun or snow,  
 So mean, so miserly as man ?

Lo, earth and heaven all let go  
Their garnered riches, year by year!  
The treasures of the trackless snow,  
Ah, hast thou seen how very dear?

The wide earth gives, gives golden grain,  
Gives fruits of gold, gives all, gives all!  
Hold forth your hand, and these shall fall  
In your full palm as free as rain.

Yea, earth is generous. The trees  
Strip nude as birth-time without fear,  
And their reward is year by year  
To feel their fulness but increase.

The law of Nature is to give,  
To give, to give! and to rejoice  
In giving with a generous voice,  
And so trust God and truly live.

But see this miser at the last, —  
This man who loves, grasps hold of gold,  
Who grasps it with such eager hold,  
To hold forever hard and fast:

As if to hold what God lets go ;  
 As if to hold, while all around  
 Lets go, and drops upon the ground  
 All things as generous as snow.

Let go your greedy hold, I say !  
 Let go your hold ! Do not refuse  
 'Till death comes by and shakes you loose,  
 And sends you shamed upon your way.

What if the sun should keep his gold ?  
 The rich moon lock her silver up ?  
 What if the gold-clad buttercup  
 Became a miser, mean and old ?

Ah, me ! the coffins are so true  
 In all accounts, the shrouds so thin,  
 That down there you might sew and sew,  
 Nor ever sew one pocket in.

And all that you can hold of lands  
 Down there, below the grass, down there,  
 Will only be that little share  
 You hold in your two dust-full hands.



XII.

She comes! she comes! The stony floor  
Speaks out! And now the rusty door  
At last has just one word this day,  
With mute religious lips, to say.

She comes! she comes! And lo, her face  
Is upward, radiant, fair as prayer!  
So pure here in this holy place,  
Where holy peace is everywhere.

Her upraised face, her face of light  
And loveliness, from duty done,  
Is like a rising orient sun  
That pushes back the brow of night.

How brave, how beautiful is truth!  
Good deeds untold are like to this.  
But fairest of all fair things is  
A pious maiden in her youth:

A pious maiden as she stands  
Just on the threshold of the years  
That throb and pulse with hopes and fears,  
And reaches God her helpless hands.

How fair is she ! How fond is she !  
 Her foot upon the threshold there.  
 Her breath is as a blossomed tree, —  
 This maiden mantled in her hair !

Her hair, her black, abundant hair,  
 Where night, inhabited all night  
 And all this day, will not take flight,  
 But finds content and houses there.

Her hands are clasped, her two small hands ;  
 They hold the holy book of prayer  
 Just as she steps the threshold there,  
 Clasped downward where she silent stands.

## XIII.

Once more she lifts her lowly face,  
 And slowly lifts her large, dark eyes  
 Of wonder ; and in still surprise  
 She looks full forward in her place.

She looks full forward on the air  
 Above the tomb, and yet below  
 The fruits of gold, the blooms of snow,  
 As looking — looking anywhere.

She feels — she knows not what she feels ;  
It is not terror, is not fear,  
But there is something that reveals  
A presence that is near and dear.

She does not let her eyes fall down,  
They lift against the far profound :  
Against the blue above the town  
Two wide-winged vultures circle round.

Two brown birds swim above the sea, —  
Her large eyes swim as dreamily  
And follow far, and follow high,  
Two circling black specks in the sky.

One forward step, — the closing door  
Creaks out, as frightened or in pain ;  
Her eyes are on the ground again —  
Two men are standing close before.

“ My love,” sighs one, “ my life, my all ! ”  
Her lifted foot across the sill  
Sinks down, — and all things are so still  
You hear the orange blossoms fall.

But fear comes not where duty is,  
 And purity is peace and rest ;  
 Her cross is close upon her breast,  
 Her two hands clasp hard hold of this.

Her two hands clasp cross, book, and she  
 Is strong in tranquil purity, —  
 Ay, strong as Samson when he laid  
 His two hands forth, and bowed and prayed.

One at her left, one at her right,  
 And she between, the steps upon, —  
 I can but see that Syrian night,  
 The women there at early dawn

'T is strange, I know, and may be wrong,  
 But ever pictured in my song ;  
 And rhyming on, I see the day  
 They came to roll the stone away.

## XIV.

The sky is like an opal sea,  
 The air is like the breath of kine,  
 But oh her face is white, and she  
 Leans faint to see a lifted sign, —

To see two hands lift up and wave  
To see a face so white with woe,  
So ghastly, hollow, white as though  
It had that moment left the grave.

Her sweet face at that ghostly sign,  
Her fair face in her weight of hair,  
Is like a white dove drowning there, —  
A white dove drowned in Tuscan wine.

He tries to stand, to stand erect.  
'T is gold, 't is gold that holds him down !  
And soul and body both must drown, —  
Two millstones tied about his neck.

Now once again his piteous face  
Is raised to her face reaching there.  
He prays such piteous, silent prayer  
As prays a dying man for grace.

It is not good to see him strain  
To lift his hands, to gasp, to try  
To speak. His parched lips are so dry  
Their sight is as a living pain.

I think that rich man down in hell  
 Some like this old man with his gold, —  
 To gasp and gasp perpetual  
 Like to this minute I have told.

## XV.

At last the miser cries his pain, —  
 A shrill, wild cry, as if a grave  
 Just ope'd its stony lips and gave  
 One sentence forth, then closed again.

“’T was twenty years last night, last night!”  
 His lips still moved, but not to speak;  
 His outstretched hands so trembling weak  
 Were beggar’s hands in sorry plight.

His face upturned to hers, his lips  
 Kept talking on, but gave no sound;  
 His feet were cloven to the ground;  
 Like iron hooks his finger-tips.

“Ay, twenty years,” she sadly sighed:  
 “I promised mother every year  
 That I would pray for father here,  
 As she had prayed, the night she died:

“To pray as she prayed, fervidly ;  
As she had promised she would pray  
The sad night of her marriage day,  
For him, wherever he might be.”

Then she was still ; then sudden she  
Let fall her eyes, and so outspake  
As if her very heart would break,  
Her proud lips trembling piteously :

“And whether he come soon or late  
To kneel beside this nameless grave,  
May God forgive my father’s hate  
As I forgive, as she forgave !”

He saw the stone ; he understood  
With that quick knowledge that will come  
Most quick when men are made most dumb  
With terror that stops still the blood.

And then a blindness slowly fell  
On soul and body ; but his hands  
Held tight his bags, two iron bands,  
As if to bear them into hell.

He sank upon the nameless stone  
With oh such sad, such piteous moan  
As never man might seek to know  
From man's most unforgiving foe.

He sighed at last, so long, so deep,  
As one heart breaking in one's sleep, —  
One long, last, weary, willing sigh,  
As if it were a grace to die.

And then his hands, like loosened bands,  
Hung down, hung down on either side ;  
His hands hung down and opened wide :  
He rested in the orange lands.



# SONGS OF THE SIERRAS.

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## THE ENGLISH PRESS.

### *The Spectator.*

IT has for some time been a matter of speculation to Englishmen whether the new life of the English race in the Far West would produce a new growth of poetry. Bret Harte and the author of these *Songs of the Sierras* have now removed the question from the region of speculation to the region of fact. There are, indeed, other American poets of older standing, whose claims we are far from depreciating; Mr. Lowell, for instance, is, in our judgment, entitled to stand in the very first rank of living writers of English. But he and his colleagues of the Eastern States must be regarded by us, and we trust they do not refuse to regard themselves, as continuing and developing the already mature literature of the mother country rather than as the founders of a new culture. The poetry of Lowell or Wendell Holmes is distinguished, indeed, from that of their English contemporaries by a character and local color and humor which are national as well as individual; yet we feel that its groundwork is, in substance, the same. The same complex and advanced civilization rules men's thoughts in Boston and in London. It is far otherwise in the remoter districts, where there exists not a transplanted, fairly homogeneous society, but a society which has formed, or is still forming, itself on the spot from the concourse of all kinds of elements; and we might well be anxious that the comparatively primitive life of the West should find a poetical exponent before its first freshness is crystallized into the forms of older communities. Certain English critics are disposed to accept Walt Whitman as such; but whatever may be his individual merits—and our own estimate of them would be very different from what his admirers claim for him—he is so isolated and erratic that he cannot be taken as representing anything beyond the promptings of his own fancy; whether his peculiarities are due to excess of eccentricity or to want of education, they, at all events, make him too singular to be a type. Now Mr. Miller's work has a real significance beyond what appears on the face of it. It brings the first-fruits, and the promise of a new soil. It shows a true revival of primitive life in its vigor, simplicity, and occasional rudeness. Its merits and defects are those of confident and over-lusty youth, and the defects, with one exception, which will presently be mentioned, are venial.

It is not pretended that Mr. Miller's poetry, or even his language, is faultless. There are obvious inequalities, blemishes, and slips of language; much work roughly, some incorrectly done; but in spite of all drawbacks, the fact remains that

when one has taken up the volume it is very difficult to put it down; and such a fact in the case of a writer who has ample time before him to perfect his style outweighs a multitude of shortcomings in detail. The nature of these minor defects will sufficiently appear in the course of the extracts to be given, and for the reason just mentioned they do not affect our general estimate; it is therefore needless to dwell on them. The constant use of the periphrastic conjugation with the auxiliary verb *do* in places where the principal verb does not require any emphasis, is the only fault of style that has struck us distinctly and obtrusively.

That which is first to fix the attention as a prominent quality in Mr. Miller's poems is the faculty of transmitting direct and vivid impressions of outward nature. In the older countries, the value of an artist's observations is in danger of decreasing at the same time that the perfection of the instruments for recording them is being increased. It is difficult for any one within the immediate influence of a European culture, if he does not possess original power of a very rare quality, not to mix up his actual experience with preconceived ideas of what his experience ought to be; and therefore in the world of art, not less than in any other world, great is the multitude of those who seek their life and lose it. On the other hand, the best part of Mr. Miller's work belongs to a stage of thought at which seeking has hardly begun; he can lose his life in nature, and has the reward of finding it. This description of a storm breaking, which occurs very early in the volume, is enough to show the presence of no common power:—

“ I lay in my hammock: the air was heavy  
 And hot, and threatening; the very heaven  
 Was holding its breath; and bees in a bevy  
 Hid under my thatch; and birds were driven  
 In clouds to the rocks in a hurried whirr  
 As I peer'd down by the path for her;  
 She stood like a bronze bent over the river,  
 The proud eyes fix'd, the passion unspoken,  
 When the heavens broke like a great dyke broken.  
 Then, ere I fairly had time to give her  
 A shout of warning, a rushing of wind  
 And the rolling of clouds and a deafening din,  
*And a darkness that had been black to the blind*  
 Came down, as I shouted, ‘Come in! come in!  
 Come under the roof, come up from the river,  
 As up from a grave,—come now, or come never!’  
 The tassell'd tops of the pines were as weeds,  
 The red-woods rock'd like to lake-side reeds,  
 And the world seem'd darken'd and drown'd forever.”

The horror of sudden darkness could not be more forcibly brought out than in the line we have italicized, and, so far as we know, the expression is quite new; at any rate, the whole scene was fresh in the writer's mind. If it be asked who she was that bent over the river, the answer is not altogether satisfactory. She is the same person who appears throughout the book in slightly varying apparel; a Byronic lay-figure transported to the mountains and prairies, and looking amongst them even more tawdry and artificial than at home. This is the one serious fault which is apparent in Mr. Joaquin Miller's poems. An excessive admiration for Byron has led him into a following of Byron's least admirable manner, by which he often does himself grave injustice. Instead of being strong and natural, as he can be when he is content to be himself, he every now and then tries to be a shadow of Byron, ar

so becomes artificial and turgid. The poem entitled "Californian" is all but spoilt by this unfortunate propensity. And the same cause makes it quite impossible to say at present what may be his real power of insight into character. There are some signs indeed that Mr. Miller has observed men; but until the Byronic glamour is removed from his eyes, he has no chance of really seeing a woman. Time and wider experience may be trusted, we hope, to give him courage to look at humanity, as he has looked at the forests and the sierras, with the untrammelled strength of his own eyes. As it is, Mr. Miller is often happy in dealing with single phases of emotion. There is true and spontaneous poetry in this painting (from *With Walker in Nicaragua*):—

"O passion-tossed and bleeding past,  
Part now, part well, part wide apart,  
As ever ships on ocean slid  
Down, down the sea, hull, sail, and mast;  
And in the album of my heart  
Let hide the pictures of your face,  
With other pictures in their place,  
Slid over like a coffin's lid."

But to return to the power of sympathy with nature, by which the new poet most chiefly makes good his claim; the same freshness of vision, which gives such force and truth to his direct descriptions, works in his mind a revival of the old myth-forming energy. His soul goes forth to the sun, or the ocean, or the mountain snows, as did the soul of ancient men in days long past. In short, he makes myths over again, quite unaffected by their having been made and fixed in mythology once or many times before. Thus he looks at the mountains after sunset:—

"When the red-curtain'd west has bent red as with weeping,  
Low over the couch where the prone day lay dying,  
I have stood with brow lifted, confronting the mountains  
That held their white faces of snow in the heavens,  
And said, 'It is theirs to array them so purely,  
Because of their nearness to the temple eternal;'  
And childlike have said, 'They are fair resting-places  
For the dear, weary dead on their way up to heaven.'"

The peculiar unrhymed metre of this extract will be noticed. Mr. Miller employs it in long passages, and with considerable effect. We find, again, a very old piece of sun-mythology revived in all the vigor of youth, and joyfully ignoring the fate of its eastern kindred, how they have died and been embalmed, and are now in process of dissection by comparative philology:—

"Where mountains repose in their blueness,  
Where the sun first lands in his newness,  
And marshals his beams and his lances,  
Ere down to the vale he advances  
With visor raised, and rides swiftly  
On the terrible night in his way,  
And slays him, and with his sword deftly  
Hews from him the beautiful day,  
Lay nestled the town of Renalda."

We must go a long way back to parallel this thorough and unartificial transfusion of nature with human life. The sea, too, is alive as the moderns can seldom make him:—

"The warm sea fondled with the shore,  
And laid his white face on the sands."

\* \* \* \* \*

We give one more example from Mr. Miller, the more interesting in that myth, metaphor, and description are to be seen all blending into one another. A mountaineer is speaking with a stranger, who is wandering in disgust with the world:—

"At night, o'erspread by the rich purple robe,  
The deep, imperial, Tyrian hue that folds  
The invisible form of the eternal God,  
You will see the sentry stars come marching forth  
And take their posts upon the field above,  
Around the great white tent where sleeps their chief;  
You will hear the kakea singing in a dream  
The wildest, sweetest song a soul can drink;  
And when the tent is folded up, and all  
The golden-fringed sentries faced about  
To let the pompous day-king pass along,  
We two will stand upon a sloping hill,  
Where white-lipped springs come leaping, laughing up,  
With water spouting forth in merry song,  
Like bridled mirth from out a school-girl's throat,  
And look far down the bending Willamette,  
And in his thousand graceful curves and strokes,  
And strange meanderings, men misunderstand,  
Read the unutterable name of God.

DON CARLOS.

"Why, truly now, this fierce and broken land,  
Seen through your eyes, assumes a fairer shape.  
Lead up, for you are nearer God than I."

The poem called "Ina," from which this is taken, is in form dramatic. It hardly pretends to any unity of construction, but there is often great merit in the dialogue, and Mr. Miller has grappled with the difficulties of dramatic blank verse far more successfully than most of those who attempt the metre which is apparently the easiest, and really the most difficult, that a writer of English verse can choose. Indeed Mr. Miller's is almost always melodious, though in some places attention is required to seize the rhythm. Once or twice there is a startling resemblance to Mr. Swinburne's metrical effects, as in these stanzas of Ina's song:—

"O hearts fill'd of fevers, of fires,  
Reaching forth from the tangible blossoms,  
Reaching far for impossible things;  
Beat not nor break your warm wings  
On the cruel, cold bars any more.

\* \* \* \* \*

Leaves fade, and the frosts are before us;  
Leaves fall, and the winter winds are;  
Loves fail! Let us cross and deplore us;  
Loves die! Lift your hands as at war;  
Lift your hands to the world and deny it,  
Lift your voice, cry aloud, and deny;  
Cry aloud "'Tis a lie!" and belie it,  
With lives made a beautiful lie."

However, we do not believe the resemblance was intended. Rather the coincidence shows that Mr. Swinburne's manner is not so artificial or unnatural as is commonly supposed.

There is yet to be noticed another piece of evidence, valuable because quite undesigned, of the primitive atmosphere of thought in which these poems were written. Thrice the speaker is represented counting on his fingers, not as civilized man may do, using them only as an aid or check, but as the savage does, to whom they are the sole instrument and symbol of numeration:—

“ I lifted my fingers  
And fell to counting the round years over,  
That I had dwelt where the sun goes down.  
Four full hands, and a finger over ! ”

“ They were so few,  
I near could count them on one hand. ”

“ I count my fingers over, so,  
And find it years and years ago. ”

The significance of this will readily be seen by readers who have Mr. Tylor's chapter on finger-counting fresh in their memories. It has been made to appear, we trust, that the virtues of Mr. Miller's poetry are of a kind likely to be further developed, and the faults of a kind likely to be outgrown. If he escapes the dangers of premature success (and he has the strength to escape them), he may well achieve far greater things in the future.

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### *The Athenæum.*

THERE is a current notion that American poetry should be different in kind from ours—should, in the slang of criticism, “be racy of the soil from which it springs.” Rivers of prodigious length, vast prairies and forests, and huge mountain-ranges, must, it is believed, reflect themselves in the productions of the native poet. We hesitate to share this belief. The bold pioneers who first penetrate the wilderness are too deeply engrossed in material concerns to occupy themselves with the divine art; and, when the wilderness becomes the seat of a dense population, its inhabitants live under conditions such as we.

As far, at least, as literature is concerned, the Americans are not, as Mr. Lowell contends, of yesterday. The man of the New World, inheriting our language, inherits also our history, traditions, religion, modes of thought; and these no physical peculiarities of country are influential enough to countervail. He is heir to Shakespeare equally with the man of Middlesex or of Warwick. Of this the volume under notice is corroboration. Mr. Miller has spent his whole life in the wild woods and mountains of Western America, and yet is not an American of the type anticipated. “Polished bronzes,” “chiselled marble,” “Italian skies,” “Grecian forms,” have meaning to him; and he has had dreams of dead and living poets the memory of which remains.

First in place, and, we may add, in excellence, is “Arizonian,” so named from that western territory within which the scene is laid.

\*             \*             \*             \*             \*

There is much beauty in the idea which forms the basis of the poem; but the treatment is frequently crude and unsatisfactory. Mr. Miller has himself described his work as rough quartz; and he is not inaccurate. We find the gold to be of finest quality; but the proportion it bears to the baser material is small. As will be

seen from the quotations we have made, the poems show traces of the influence of our best modern poets. Mr. Miller, however, is no copyist. If he has made other men his models, his life, experience, and nature have the effect of giving to his production a freshness and an originality obviously due to his own individuality. He resembles Mr. Browning in novel and apt metaphors taken from objects high or low, common or uncommon, but always new and forcible, and often quaint—making one smile at the sudden turn. So also he is like Mr. Browning in his homely strokes of humor.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Miller is best in his lyrical compositions. He has a keen, and close, and attentive perception of nature, personal and external, and he is a clear, and accurate, and picturesque painter of its moods. His blank and unrhymed verse is bad: it is spasmodic and bombastic.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the lyrical poems we light upon incidents represented with great beauty and dramatic force; but here, when we most expect evidence of dramatic power, we are disappointed. The author is clearly unable to develop a character dramatically. His descriptions are all objective. Even subjective feelings are made objective, and treated objectively.

The other poems in the volume are inferior to "Arizonian." "With Walker in Nicaragua" is occasionally tame, but there are parts of it extremely grand. The end of "Californian," a long poem relating to life in the gold regions, is as fine as anything in the book, but the piece itself is not well sustained. "The Last Taschastas" is a graphic poem, in which the author revels in descriptions of chiefs, and the brown and red beauties of the Indian tribes, and shows his deep sympathy with those who are driven back by the white man and civilization. Although we cannot give Mr. Miller a front place in the hierarchy of modern poets, we are glad to welcome him as a true and original singer. "Songs of the Sierras" is a volume which must be read by all lovers of real poetry.

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### *The Saturday Review.*

WHATEVER the faults of style which disfigure Mr. Miller's poems—and they are many and flagrant—there can be no doubt that he possesses the genuine poetic faculty. He writes because he cannot help it—the best reason of all—perhaps the only justifiable reason for composing poetry. The snowy Sierra and the tropical cañon, the roving, adventurous borderer's life, the stirring tales of hunt and foray, all these supplied materials pregnant with romance and poetry, and only required to be transmuted into words. This task Mr. Miller has attempted, and the fact that his lines glow with tropical passion, and that his descriptions transport us in imagination to the scenes among which they were composed, compels us to forgive him for the lawlessness with which he tramples on the conventional limitations of art.

The poems are but seven in number, and amongst them the first two are, to our mind, considerably the best. The first is entitled "Arizonian."

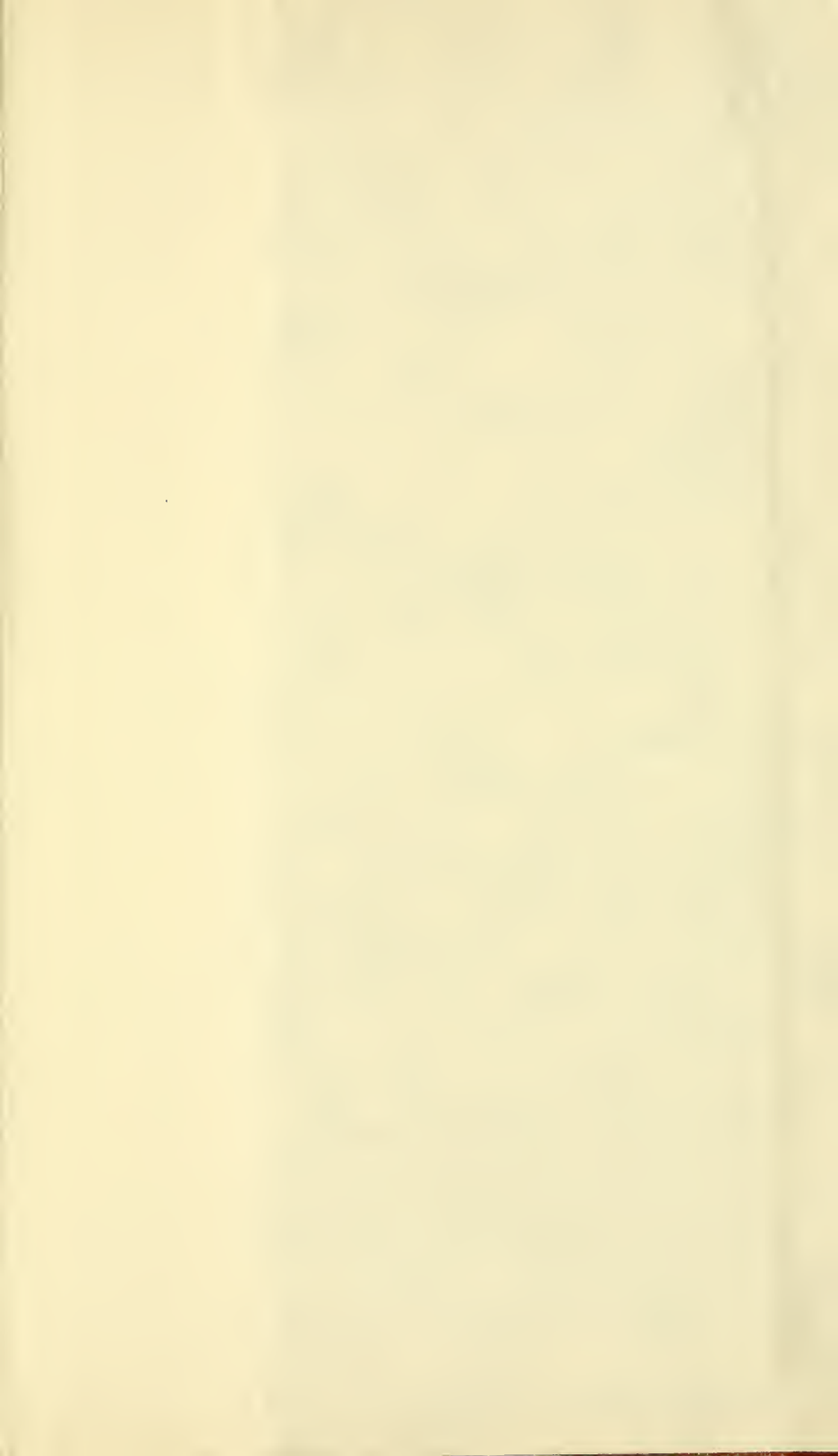












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