

SONGS OF THE SPIRIT

A New Impression

SONGS OF THE SPIRIT

BY

ALEISTER CROWLEY

"Sublimi feriam sidera vertice"

HOR.

SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF
RELIGIOUS TRUTH

BOLESKINE, FOYERS, INVERNESS.

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“A fool also is full of words.”

Ecclesiastes.

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DEDICATION *TO J. L. B.*

THE vault of purple that I strove
To pierce, and find unchanging love,
Or some vast countenance above
 All glory of the soul of man,
Baffled my blind aspiring gaze
With sunlight's melancholy rays,
And closed with iron hand the ways
That sunder space, divide the days with fiery fan.

Thine was the forehead mild and grave
That shone throughout the azure nave
Where Monte Rosa's silence gave
 The starry organ's measured sound.
Where for an altar stood the bare
Mass of Mont Cervin, towering there
And angels dwelt upon the stair,
And all the mountains were aware that stood
 around.

Thine was the passionless divine
High hope, and the pure purpose thine,
Higher and purer than stars shine,
 And thine the unexpressed delight
To hold high commune with the wind
That sings, in midnight black and blind,
Strange chants, the murmurs of the mind,
To grasp the hands of heaven and find the lords of
 light.

Mine was the holy fire that drew
Its perfect passion from the dew,
And all the flowers that blushed and blew
 On sunny slopes by little brooks.
Mine the desire that brushed aside
The thorns, and would not be denied,
And sought, more eager than a bride,
The cold grey secrets wan and wide of sacred books.

Thine was the hand that guided me
By moor and mountain, vale and lea,
And led me to the sudden sea
 That lies superb, remote, and deep,

Showed me things wonderful, unbound
The fetters that beset me round,
Opened my waking ear to sound
That may not by a man be found, except in sleep.

Thy presence was as subtle flame
Burning in dawning groves ; thy name
Like dew upon the hills became,
 And all thy mind a star most bright ;
And, following with wakeful eyes,
My feet tread under stars and skies ;
My spirit soars and seeks and flies, a child of light.

Thus eager, may my purpose stand
Firm as the faith of honest hand,
Nor change like castles built of sand
 Until the sweet unchanging end.
Happy not only that my eye
Single and strong may win the sky,
But that one day the birds that fly
Heard your fair friendship call me by the name of
 friend.

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SONGS OF THE SPIRIT

IN MEMORIAM A. J. B.

THE life by angels' touch divinely lifted
From our dim space-bounds to a vaster sphere,
The spirit, through the vision of clouds rifted,
Soars quick and clear.

We know the dance that hails the golden pinions
The sun waves over an awakening earth ;
We know the joy that floods the heart's dominions
At true love's birth.

Even so, the mists that roll o'er earth are riven,
The spirit flashes forth from mortal sight,
And, flaming through the viewless space, is given
A robe of light.

As when the conqueror Christ burst forth of prison,
And triumph woke the thunder of the spheres,

So brake the soul, as newly re-arisen
Beyond the years.

Far above Space and Time, that earth environ
With bands and bars we strive against in vain,
Far o'er the world, and all its triple iron
And brazen chain,

Far from the change that men call life fled higher
Into the world immutable of sleep,
We see our loved one, and vain eyes desire
In vain to weep.

Woeful our gaze, if on lone Earth descendent,
To view the absence of yon flame afar—
Yet in the Heavens, anew, divine, resplendent,
Behold a star !

One light the less, that steady flamed and even
Amid the dusk of Earth's uncertain shore ;
One light the less, but in Jehovah's Heaven
One star the more !

Amsterdam, December 23rd, 1897.

LET me pass out beyond the city gate.

All day I loitered in the little streets
Of black worn houses tottering, like the fate

That hangs above my head even now, and meets
Prayer and defiance as not hearing it.

They lean, these old black streets, a little sky
Peeps through the gap, the rough stone path is lit

Just for a little by the sun, and I
Watched his red face pass over, fade away

To other streets, and other passengers,
Saw him take pleasure where the heathen pray,

Saw him relieve the hunter of his furs,
All the wide world awaiting him, all folk

Glad at his coming, only I must weep :
Rise he or sink, my weary eyes invoke

Only the respite of a little sleep ;
Sleep, just a little space of sleep, to rest
The fevered head and cool the aching eyes ;
Sleep for a space, to fall upon the breast
Of the dear God, that He may sympathize.
Long has the day drawn out ; a bitter frost
Sparkles along the streets ; the shipping heaves
With the slow murmur of the sea, half lost
In the last rustle of forgotten leaves.
Over the bridges pass the throngs ; the sound,
Deep and insistent, penetrates the mist—
I hear it not, I contemplate the wound
Stabbed in the flanks of my dear silver Christ.
He hangs in anguish there ; the crown of thorns
Pierces that palest brow ; the nails drip blood ;
There is the wound ; no Mary by Him mourns,
There is no John beside the cruel wood ;
I am alone to kiss the silver lips ;
I rend my clothing for the temple veil ;
My heart's black night must act the sun's eclipse ;
My groans must play the earthquake, till I quail
At my own dark imagining ; and now
The wind is bitterer ; the air breeds snow ;

I put my Christ away ; and turn my brow
Towards the south stedfastly ; my feet must go
Some journey of despair, I dare not turn
To meet the sun ; I will not follow him :
Better to pass where sand and sulphur burn,
And days are hazed with heat, and nights are
dim
With some malarial poison. Better lie
Far and forgotten on some desert isle,
Where I may watch the silent ships go by,
And let them share my burden for awhile.
Let me pass out beyond the city gate
Where I may wander by the water still,
And see the faint few stars immaculate
Watch their own beauty in its depth, and chill
Their own desire within its icy stream.
Let me move on with vacant eyes, as one
Lost in the labyrinth of some ill dream,
Move and move on, and never see the sun
Lap all the mist with orange and red gold,
Throw some lank windmill into iron shade,
And stir the chill canal with manifold
Rays of clear morning ; never grow afraid

When he dips down beyond the far flat land,
Know never more the day and night apart,
Know not where frost has laid his iron hand,
Save only that it fastens on my heart ;
Save only that it grips with icy fire
These veins no fire of hell could satiate ;
Save only that it quenches this desire.
Let me pass out beyond the city gate.

THE QUEST.

APART, immutable, unseen,
Being, before itself had been,
Became. Like dew a triple queen
Shone as the void uncovered :
The silence of deep height was drawn
A veil across the silver dawn
On holy wings that hovered.

The music of three thoughts became
The beauty, that is one white flame,
The justice that surpasses shame,
The victory, the splendour,
The sacred fountain that is whirled
From depths beyond that older world
A new world to engender.

The kingdom is extended. Night
Dwells, and I contemplate the sight

That is not seeing, but the light
That secretly is kindled,
Though oft time its most holy fire
Lacks oil, whene'er my own Desire
Before desire has dwindled.

I see the thin web binding me
With thirteen cords of unity
Toward the calm centre of the sea.
(O thou supernal mother !)
The triple light my path divides
To twain and fifty sudden sides
Each perfect as each other.

Now backwards, inwards still my mind
Must track the intangible and blind,
And seeking, shall securely find
Hidden in secret places
Fresh feasts for every soul that strives,
New life for many mystic lives,
And strange new forms and faces.

My mind still searches, and attains
By many days and many pains

To That which Is and Was and reigns
Shadowed in four and ten,
And loses self in sacred lands,
And cries and quickens, and understands
Beyond the first Amen.

THE ALCHEMIST.

THIS POEM WAS INTENDED AS THE PROLOGUE TO
A PLAY—AT PRESENT UNFINISHED.

*An old tower, very lofty, on a small and rocky islet.
In the highest chamber a man of some forty
years, but silver-haired, looks out of the window.
Clear starry night, no moon. Chamber furnished
with books, alchemic instruments, etc. He gazes
some minutes, sighs deeply, but at last speaks.*

Ph. The world moves not. I gaze upon the
abyss,
Look down into the black unfathomed vault
Of starland and behold—myself.

The sea
To give a sense of motion or of sound
Washes the walls of this grey tower in vain ;

I contemplate myself in that dim sphere
Whose hollow centre I am standing at
With burning eyes intent to penetrate
The black circumference and find out God—
And only see myself. The walls of Space
Mock me with silence. What is Life? The stars
Are silent. O ye matchless ministers
That daily pass in your appointed ways
To reach—we know not what ! How meaningless
Your bright assemblage and your steady task
Of doubtful motion. And the soul of man
Grapples in death-pangs with your mystery,
And fails to wrestle down the hard embrace
That grips the thighs of thought. And so he dies
To pass beyond ye—whither? To find God?
All my life long I have gazed, and dreamed, and
thought,
Unless my thought itself were but a dream,
A little, troubled dream, a dream of death
Whence I may wake—ah, where? In some new
world
Where Consciousness doth touch the Infinite,
And all the strivings of the soul be found

Sufficient to beat back the waves of doubt,
And pierce the void, and grasp the glorious,
To find out Truth. Would God it might be so,
Since here is nothing for the soul to love
Or cling to beyond self. My chamberlain
Once showed me a pet slave, dwarf, savage, black,
A vile, lewd creature, who would cast a staff
Far wheeling through the air, and suddenly
Break its swift course, and curving rapidly
Come hard upon himself who threw. Even so
These vile deformities—our souls—cast forth
Missiles of thought, and seek to reach some end
With swift imagining—and end in self.
What sage called God the image of man's self
He sees cast dimly on a bank of cloud,
Thrice his own size? And I whose life has been

[*Cry without.*]

One bitter fight with nature and myself
To find Him out, turn, terrible, to-night

[*Cry without.*]

To see myself—myself—myself. [*Cry without.*]

Hush! Hark!

Methought I heard a cry. The seamew wails

Less humanly than that—I will go down
And seek the stranger. [*Making as to leave room.*]
E'en this rocky isle
Shall prove a friend——

A Voice. Stand still.

Ph. Again ! Is this
The warning of a mind o'er-strained ?

[*Moving towards door.*]

Voice. Stand still

And see salvation in Jehovah's hands.

Ph. Is this the end of life ?

Voice. Thy Life begins.

Ph. Strange Voice, I hear thee, and obey.

Perchance

I have not lived so far. Perchance to-day,
Like a spring-flower that slowly opens out
Its willing petals to the tender dawn,
My soul may open to the knowledge of
A dawn of new thought that may lead——

Voice. To God.

Ph. Hope hardly dared to name it !

Enter Messenger.

Mess. My lord, the king's command !

Ph. I heed it not.

See thou disturb not my high meditation.

Away !

Voice. With meditations centred in thyself.

Mess. Who spoke ?

Ph. Speak thou. I obey the king.

Mess. My lord,

He bids thee to his court, to hold the reins

Tight on the fretful horses of the state

Whose weary burden makes them slip—nay, fall

On the stern hill of war. Thou art appointed

Being the wisest man in all the realm,

(So spake the king) the second to himself——

Ph. Thy vessel waits ?

Mess. For dawn.

Ph. Then hasten thee

To tell them I am ready. The meanwhile

I will devote to prayer.

Mess. At dawn, my lord.

[*Exit Messenger.*]

Ph. [*Turns to window.*] O Maker and O Ruler
of all worlds,
Illimitable power, immortal God,
Vague, vast, unknown, dim-looking, scarcely spied
Through doubtful crannies of the Universe,
Unseen, intangible, eluding sense
And poor conception, halting for a phrase
Of weak mind-language, O Eternity,
Hear thou the feeble word, the lame desire,
The dubious crying of the pinioned dove,
The wordless eloquent emotion
That speaks within a man, despite his mind !
Hear, who can pray for naught, unknowing aught
Whereof, for what to pray. But hear me, thou !
Hear me, thou God, who fettered the bleak winds
Of North and East, and held in silken rein
The golden steeds of West and South, who bade
The tireless sea respect its narrow bounds,
And fixed the mountains, that eternal ice
Might be thy chiefest witness, and who wove
The myriad atoms of Infinitude
Into the solid tapestry of night,
And gave the sun his heat, and bade him kiss

The lips of Death upon the moon's dark face,
So that her silver lustre might rejoice
The fiery lover, the sharp nightingale,
And those pale mortals whom the day beholds
Asleep, because the many bid them slave
From dusk to dawn, being poor ; and braided up
The loose hair of all trees and flowers, and made
Their one white light divide to red and green
And violet and the hues innumerable
Lesser than these, and gave man hope at last
With the invariable law of death
Abundant in new life, and having filled
The world with music, dost demand of us
“ Is my work meaningless ? ” O thou, supreme,
Thou, First and Last, most inconceivable
All-radiating Unity, thou sphere
All-comprehensive, all-mysterious,
Spirit of Life and Death, bow down and hear !

*[Bends deeper and prays silently. The
flame grows duller, and finally
leaves the room in absolute darkness.
Curtain.]*

SONNETS TO NIGHT.

O NIGHT ! the very mother of us all,
For from thy hollow womb we children came,
A little space to flicker as a flame,
And then within thy tender arms to fall
Tired, fain of nothing but to lie at last
Upon thy bosom, and gaze in thine eyes
Clear, calm, dispassionate, supremely wise,
And pass with thee the gates that must be passed.

O Night, on thee is set our only hope,
Because our eyes, too tender for the day,
Are dazed with sunlight, and poor fingers grope
For those far truths that mock our vague endeavour,
Whilst we may find in thee the secrets grey
Of all things God would fain have hid for ever.

ALL things grow still before thine awful face.
Now fails the lover's sigh ; Sleep's angel clings
About the children with her dreamy wings,
And all the world is silent for a space.
The waving of thy dusky plumes in heaven
Alone breathes gentle music to mine ears
So that despair is fain to flee, and fear
Cowers far away amid the shades of even.

“ Hope,” is thy whisper, “ hope, and trust in
Night ;
My realm is the eternal, and my power
The absolute. My child, gird on thy strength ;
Clothe limbs with lustiness, and mind with might,
That, communing with me, though for an hour,
Thou mayest conquer when day comes at length.”

THE PHILOSOPHER'S PROGRESS.

*That which is above is like that which is below ;
and that which is below, is like that which is above.*

HERMES TRISMEGISTUS.

THAT which is highest as the deep
Is fixed, the depth as that above :
Death's face is as the face of Sleep ;
And Lust is likest Love.

So stand the angels one by one
Higher and higher with lamps of gold :
So stand the shining devils ; none
Their brightness may behold.

I took my life, as one who takes
Young gold to ruin and to spend ;
I sought their gulfs and fiery lakes,
And sought no happy end.

I said : the height is as the deep,
Twin breasts of one white dove ;
Death's face is as the face of Sleep,
And Lust is likest Love.

And with my blood I forced the door
That guards the palaces of sin ;
I reached the lake's cinereous shore ;
I passed those groves within.

My blood was wasted in her veins,
To freshen them, who stood like death,
Our Lady of ten thousand Pains
With heavy kissing breath.

I said : Our Lady is as God,
Her hell of pain as heaven above ;
Death's feet, like Sleep's, with fire are shod,
And Lust is likest Love.

Our Lady crushed me in her bed,
Between her breasts my life was wet ;
My lips from that sweet death were fed ;
I died, and would forget.

But so God would not have me die ;
Her deadly lips relax and fade,
Her body slackens with a sigh
Reluctant, like a maid.

I said : O vampire Lover, weep,
Who cannot follow me above,
Though Death may masquerade as Sleep,
And Lust laugh out like Love.

But God's strong arms set under me
Lifted my spirit through the air
Beyond the wide supernal sea,
Beyond the veil of vair.

God said : My ways are sweet and deep ;
The sceptres and the swords thereof
Change : for Death's face is fair as Sleep ;
And Lust is clean as Love.

I slept upon His breast ; and Death
Came like Sleep's angel, and I died,
And tasted the Lethean breath.
There was a voice that cried :

Behold, I stand above His head
With feet made white with whitest fire,
Above His forehead, that is red
As blood with His Desire.

I knew that Voice was more than God,
And echo trembled for its trust :
Sleep's feet, like Death's, with fire are shod,
And Love is likest Lust.

So I returned and sought her breast,
Our Lady of ten thousand Pains ;
I drank her kisses, and possessed
Her pale maternal veins.

I said : Drain hard my sudden breath,
Be cruel for the vampire thrust !
Let Sleep's desire be sweet as Death,
And Love be clean as Lust !

I died amid her kisses : so
This last time I would not forget—
So I attained The Life ; and know
Her lips and God's have met.

For in Those Hands above His head
The Depth is one with That Above,
And Sleep and Death and Life are dead,
And Lust is One with Love.

SONNET.

THE woods are very quiet, and the stream
Hardly awakes the stilled ear with its word ;
The voice of wind above like dawn is heard,
And all the air moves up, a sultry steam,
Here in the flower-land, where I lie and dream
And understand the silence of the bird ;
My sorrow and my weakness are interred
In the deep water where the pebbles gleam.

I rouse the force persistent of my will
To compel matter to the soul's desire,
To make Heaven aid the mind that would aspire
To touch its borders, and to drink their fill
At those far fountains whence one drop of dew
Descends upon my head from yonder blue.

AN ILL DREAM.

IN the grim woods when all the bare black
branches

Creak out their curses like a gallows-tree,
When the miasmal pestilence-light dances,
A spectre-flame, through midnight's infamy,
My blood grows chill and stagnant with my shame,
O Love, to speak thy name !

O life ! O Heaven ! O dreams long dead ! Ye
Spirits

Rising unbidden from Hope's cobwebbed door,
Ye quick desires that every soul inherits,
Leave me to weep, and torture me no more !
My face grows grey with sheer despair ; I shrink
From dreams ; I dare not think.

I had a poet's dreams. My soul was yearning
To grasp the firmament and hold it fast,

To reach toward God, and, from His shrine
returning,
To sing in magic melodies the vast
Desires of God towards man—O dreams ! O years
Drowned in these bitter tears !

I felt the springs of youth within me leaping,
Let loose my pleasure, never guessed that pain
Was worth the holding—now, my life is weeping
Itself away, those agonies to gain
Which are my one last hope, that by some cross
Eld may avenge youth's loss !

Yet still youth burns ! The hours its pleasure
wasted
Compel their bitter memories to grow sweet ;
Like some warm-perfumed poison if I tasted,
Felt its fierce savour pulse, and burn, and beat,
Yet in my veins a sleepy fire might bring
Strange dreams of some sweet thing.

Half a regret and half a shuddering terror
The past lies desolate and yet is here,

Half guide, half tempter toward the stream of error,
On whose fresh bosom many a mariner
Puts out with silken sail—to find his grave
In its voluptuous wave.

Here are few rocks whereon a ship hath peril ;
No storms may ruffle its insidious stream ;
Only, no fish invade its waters sterile,
No white-winged birds above it glance and gleam,
Only, it hath no shore, no wave, but gloom
Wraps it within her womb.

No sun is mirrored in its treacherous water,
Only the false moon flickers and flits by
Like to the bloodless phantom shape of slaughter
Laughing a lipless laugh—a mockery,
A ghastly memory to wake and weep
—Should Sorrow let me sleep.

No current draws a man, to his fair seeming,
Yet all the while he whirls a stealthy sweep
Narrower, nearer, where the wave is steaming
With the slight spray tossed from that funnel deep

Which dips, one wide black shaft, most horrible,
Down to the nether Hell.

Yet there seems time. God's grief has not
forgotten

His mighty arm, and with His pitying breath
A strong wind woke me ere my boat grew rotten
With venom of the stream, that quivereth
Now as He blew upon it—fish and bird
Live at that silent word !

And I arose to seek the oars of Lying
Wherewith I had embarked—the wind had torn
Their wood to splinters—“Jesus ! I am dying !
Send me Thy cross to fashion some unborn
Oarage of Truth to quit this stream of Death !”
O vain, O wasted breath !

I have no strength. Upright I kneel, lamenting
The days when Love seemed fair, the bitter years
When pain might have found truth, ere unrelenting
I shipwrecked Life ! O agony of tears !
Vain tears ! In silence, with abated breath
I drift, drift on to Death !

THE STUDENT.

THERE is a gate of brass, within whose clang
Gold and fair stones abide. But I essayed
The path. I thundered with assaulting blade
On that grim fortress, whose hard iron rang
At my strong summons. As their fury sprang
Open at last I crossed their threshold, prayed
Reward for courage. To my soul dismayed
These voices their loud chant of terror sang :

“Thou hast not kept thy trust. To storm the
gates

Were to have found out God and all delight,
Conquered for all thy fellow-men the fates,
And found out Paradise in Hell's despite.”

I heard them laugh, the Harpies and the Hates . . .
Then fell, like death, the intolerable night.

THE PRIEST SPEAKS.

(Boccaccio. Day IV. Tale VIII.)

LAY them together for the sake of Love
Within a little plot of piteous earth,
When life's last flower is faded in the sun.
Lay them together in the tender ground
That summer showers may shed a trembling tear,
And summer breezes whisper melodies
Of pity. Lay them there, and when the sky
Opens a lingering eyelash of deep cloud,
And the sea sparkles out from under it
To kiss the earth into awakening
From the dream-slumbers that its fancies weave—
Fancies of starlight on the lucent sea
Gleaming from wide horizon to the feet
Of Cynthia's bow, all silver-shot with fire,
That virgin flame that lingers evermore

In the sweet phantasies of subtle sleep—
Fancies of lonely shadows darkly strewn
About the leaves of autumn in the woods,
Where the small floweret, hidden by the maze
O' th' dying children o' the copper-beech,
Lifts a blue forehead to the sun to kiss—
Fancies of old romance too pitiful
For any delicate quill to light upon—
Yes, when the sky from stainless ebony
Merges in azure, like as if the light
Of stars had melted into all the black
To gladden it, O then the solemn hush
Of morning shall behold the silent grave,
And wait a moment in rich worshipping
Of Love, creator of the world's delight,
Till the full chorus of the spirits of fire,
Whose mighty shoulders and wide-flashing wings
Bear the proud sun from his luxurious bed
Of rosy fleeces in the West low lying
Into the staircase of the jealous day,
Burst on the silence of the world beyond
And bid the listening poet catch the strain
Of their half-echoed hymn. But come, my friends,

Lay them together, breast to maiden breast,
Limb linked with limb, and lips to pallid lips,
So beautiful in death—the moth o' th' mind
Tells the grief-numbèd senses 'tis but sleep—
See ! the pale glimmer of a ghostly arm
Flashes a spot of light—Ah ! weary day !
'Tis but the flickering of the candle-light
And the unmanning sorrow of the heart
That lends the reins to fancy's charioteer.
Lay them together, let us leave them there !
There comes a vision to my mortal eyes
Of things immortal. Hark ! the growing swell
Of some wild clarion through the dazzling night,
Whose fairy æther suddenly illumines
With silver meteors innumerable
And golden showers of stars—lost worlds of
thought
And poets' dreams, and jewels of virgin sighs.
Hark ! the broad rings of sound go wavering on
Eddying and rippling through the desert sky
That now is peopled with the diamond wings
That float through all the palaces of God.
O now to join them rise the armies vast

Of the lone spirits of the empty tomb,
And there I see the lovers piteous
Splendidly flash within the silver sphere
Of light, and there I lose them at the last
Most wonderfully passed within the veil
Of Time ; caught up into the Infinite.
Lay them together. And the hollow hill
Shall echo me "together," and the sky,
And the wide sea, and all the fragrant air,
Shall linger in the tumult of the dawn.
Lay them together. And the still small voice
Shall whisper "Peace," and in the evening
"Peace."

PASSOVER.

BLOOD on the lintel ! On the outer side
Death stood with wing implacable, with sword
Steeped in the furnace cruel and abhorred
Of Hell, in Styx well tempered. Far and wide
Its adamant smote out, a full fierce tide
Of vengeance and destruction from the Lord,
While past yon door with blood well overscored
Safety and Peace and Passover abide.

Blood on the lintel ! But within our gates
Spilt our own blood lies curdling on the ground,
Crying to God from each envenomed wound
While the fierce combat yet no whit abates,
And though protected, confident, unspent,
Sighs for relief with battle-cries are blent.

THE VIOLET'S LOVE-STORY.

AMONG the lilies of the sacred stream
There grew a violet, like a maiden's dream,
And when the wind passed over them, it stirred
Their white soft petals with its quiet word.

The sun looked on them and their leaves were
glad ;
Only the purple blossom there, that had
No kindred by the stream, let fall a tear,
Half wishing for the autumn of the year.

But when the summer came, the violet guessed,
By some slow dream that thrilled her gentle breast,
That some sweet thing might come to her ; she
thought
Through the long days of how her dream was
wrought :

She guessed it woven of the spider's thread,
And coloured like the river's changing bed
Where polished pebbles shine ; she guessed it frail
And perfect, with pure wings, like silver pale.

So there, behind the leaves and stems, her lids
Grew deep with veins of love, and Bassarids
Racing the dim woods through, beheld her face,
Whispered together, and desired the place.

The gray was blushing in the Eastern sky
When there drew near a child of poesy
With full lips very tender, and grave eyes
Where deep thoughts dwelt in some delicious wise.

He looked upon the lilies, and a tear
Dropped on their blossom ; but a little fear
Came to the bosom of the violet
Lest he see not, or see her, and forget.

But he did see her, and drew close, and said :
“ O perfect passion of my soul, O dead
Living desire, O sweet unspoken sin,
Leave thou the lilies ; they are not thy kin.

“ Within my heart one slow sweet whisper stole
Consuming and destroying all my soul
Lest, if the pure cold mind should conquer it,
I might not know, although it still were sweet.

“ My pure desires arose and cast out love
That flew away, most like a wounded dove,
Only the drops were mine its bosom bled,
Now the last time it hovers by my head :

“ Now the last time I turn and go to her.”
The violet smiled at him ; his fingers fair
Plucked the sweet blossom to his breast, his eyes
Mused like delight, and like desire were wise.

There was a maiden like the sun, to whom
His footsteps turned amid the myriad bloom
Of flowers and leafy pathways of the wood,
Where, in a dell of roses white, she stood.

He came to her and looked so dear and deep
Into her eyes, the wells and woods of sleep,
And took the violet from his breast, and stood
A glad young god within the golden wood.

He kissed the blossom, and bent very low,
And put it to her lips—and even so
His lips were set on them ; the flower sighed
For deep delight, and in the long kiss died.

Years fled and faded, yet a flower was seen
Gracious and comely in its nest of green,
And tender hands would water it and say
“O happy sister, she that went away !

“For she brought back my lover to my heart,
And knew her work was perfect, and her part
Most perfect when she died between the breath,
And in the bridal kisses kissed to death.”

So grew the newer blossom and was glad :
Sweet little hopes her faint fair forehead had
That one day such a death might crown her days.
And so God too was glad, the Story says.

THE FAREWELL OF PARACELSUS
TO APRILE.

THOU Sun, whose swift desire to-day is dull,
And all ye hosts of heaven, whose lips are mute,
And trees and flowers and oceans beautiful
Among whose murmurs I have struck this lute
With joy supreme or agony acute,
And love transcending everything alway,
Pity me, pity, since the poisonous root
Of parting strikes the beauty of the day ;
We meet for the last time beside the ocean gray.

Soul of my soul, we never can forget—
But, is our parting burnt across the skies ?
Is the last word said ? Must our lips be set
Not to new song, but to the bitter sighs
As of a child whose flower-garden dies,
Who knows no hope of some enduring spring ?

Is the last song made, whose faint melodies
Brushed the pale air with an archangel's wing?
Is Hope divorced, our queen? Is Love discrowned,
our King?

Far o'er the Ocean sets a fiery star
And meteors cross the angry horizon,
A comet blazes, reddening the bar
Of silver water where the moonlight shone,
And, as I stand upon the cliff like one
Amazed, a shape seems always at my back
To whisper wickedness, o'erheard of none,
And stealthily to follow on my track,
And cloke my lifted eyes with suffocating black.

Vainly I turn and seek him, for my eyes
Are dimmed with saltness never born of brine;
Vainly I fight the air, he sneers, and lies,
And laughs at all this agony of mine,
And chills my heart, and desecrates the shrine
Where Love his holy incense used to burn,
And mocks those thoughts and songs and looks
divine

While his lewd visage no man may discern,
And baffling darkness hides his terror if I turn.

Fighting and failing ever, weariest
Even of beating off the tempter's blows,
Struggling in vain to what one hopes the best,
A distant river over many snows,
On whose green bank the purple iris glows,
And the anemone in some wild cleft,
And the white violet, and the briar rose,
And the blue gentian from the heavens reft—
Lo ! 'Twas that golden bank but yester morn I left.

O river where we dwelt ! Your summer sward
Whereon we lay, two kings of earth and air ;
For whom ten thousand angels had drawn sword
At our light bidding. Surely, surely, there
We might float ever to the sea, and spare
The dainty plumage of that perfect place.
O God ! O Life ! O Death, thou would'st not
wear
Such evil mask upon thy golden face—
O Mary, pity me of thine abounding grace.

Those days are dead, and hope no newer birth.

I left thy shores, blue stream, at His command
Who reared the mountains from the shaken earth ;
Who holds the lightning in His holy hand,
And binds the stars in adamantine band,
And yearns towards the children of His mind.

I left their summer and their dewy strand
To pass a life of work, alone, unkind,
To fight a way toward heaven, mute, desolate and
blind.

The dusty desert glimmers in the night,
A solitary palm-tree shades the well ;
I am alone, a weary eremite
Striving the secrets of the stars to tell,
And every blade of grass that makes the dell
Is counted and divined by me, who stare
With eyes half blinded by the fires of Hell
That my wild brain imagines everywhere,
Roaring and raging round with red infernal glare.

The yellow sand toward the deep sky extends :
A dusky mirage would confuse my view,

Far, far away, where desolation ends,
 There is a water of serenest blue ;
 And by it stands, as patient and as true
As in the past, his form to whom I turn,
 And break my bondage and would touch anew
His holy lips ; my body and spirit yearn ;
He fades away, and fires of Hell within me burn.

Still, as I journey through the waste, I see
 A silver figure more divine arise ;
The Christ usurps the horizon for me,
 And He requickens the forgotten skies ;
 His golden locks are burning on my eyes,
And He with rosy finger points the way,
 The blood-wrought mystic path of Paradise
That leads at last through yonder icy spray
Of Death to the blue vaults of the undying day.

But oh ! this desert is a weary land,
 Poisons alone their prickly heads lift high ;
The sun, a globe of fury, still doth stand
 In the dark basin of the burning sky.
 There is no water, no, nor herb, and I

Faint at his anger who compels the herd
To fall upon the waste, so fierce and dry
That none may pass it, not the very bird.
Throughout the vast expanse no single sound is
heard.

Only the moaning of the dying ox,
And my parched cry for water from cracked lips ;
In vain the stern impenetrable rocks
Mock my complaint : the empty pitcher dips
Into the empty well ; the water drips,
Oozing in tiny drops caught up again
By the sun's heat, that brooks not his eclipse
And dissipates the welcome clouds of rain.
God ! have Thou pity soon on this amazing pain.

If but a lion stirred with distant roar
The silence of the world, perchance at last
I might find honey in his mouth, and store
His tawny flanks until the sand were past.
Nay, but these wastes intolerably vast,
Like glowing copper raging for the heat,
Stretch and stretch on and leave me all aghast

Straining my eyes in horror and defeat
Toward the long vista seen where rescue seems to
greet.

The vessel fills with brackish foam. I drink,
Drink to the end, and stagger on alone
Without a staff to hold me if I sink
In the hot quagmires of untrusty stone.
Foodless and beastless, so despairing grown,
I know not, care not, only trust that soon
The sun's dominion may be overthrown,
And o'er the wilderness appear the moon
With cold lips to bestow th' inestimable boon.

Still I have never prayed for death, but rather
Would be found fighting toward the goal I seek,
Stretching both hands toward a loving father,
And struggling toward some barren voiceless
peak
With feet made steadfast, if God made them
weak ;
So, on the journey, in the hottest fight
I would be found by Death, whose palace bleak

Should be a resting-place until the night
Broke, and I met my God, and stood within His
sight.

Only my brain grows feebler with the toil,
And clearer runs the river I forsook ;
Now in clear pools its myriad fountains boil,
Now there runs singing to its breast a brook ;
Now it flows gently to a little nook
Where I once rested—Ah ! I clench my hand
And turn away with yet undaunted look,
Setting my face toward the distant land
That must lie somewhere far beyond this world of
sand.

About me are the bones of many men
Who turned to God their rapt adoring eyes,
And cast away the love within their ken
For this vague treasure-house beyond the
skies—
Whither I turn, like a dumb beast that dies,
A wistful look, and breathe a dumb complaint.
Lo ! they have cast away the mask of lies

And not found Truth. So he would be a saint
Whose skeleton lies here because his soul did faint !

I will not turn toward Sodom any more,
Lest its ripe glades of fruit waft up their scent,
And draw me to them, what time heavens pour
Brimstone and fire from out the firmament,
And all my substance in its fall be spent ;
And I lie there beneath a barren sea
Forgotten of high God, until there went
The final trumpet of the dead, who flee
Vainly that fearful blast of judgment. Woe is me !

My feet, in spite of me, in circles bend ;
I meet my own tracks often, all in vain
I seek some tower or cliff to make an end,
I find no object on the distant plain ;
Misty distortions crowd upon my brain,
And spectre fountains gurgle on the ground ;
I drop to drink, and hear the horrid strain
Of chuckling devils, that grimace around,
And think I catch the note of Hell's three-headed
Hound.

Up still and staggering to the doubtful goal,
Feet dragging horribly behind, I move
Deathlike for dearth and for despair of soul ;
At last I drop. From Heaven there comes a
Dove
Bearing the semblance of the Man I love,
And fountains and fresh grass by magic spell
Are suddenly around me. And above
I hear the voice my visions know so well :
“ Well striven all this day against the power of
Hell ! ”

I know these mercies still diviner grow
Each day I strive, but should I sit and rest
One hour of dawn, and cry, “ I will not go
Another step without more sleep,” that blest
Dove flies away, the fountains are repressed,
The grass is withered, and the angry sky
Rages more fierce that day, and from the crest
Of black foul mountains comes a bitter cry :
“ He that returneth now shall in destruction die.”

So I press on, fresh strength from day to day
Girds up my loins and beckons me on high,

So I depart upon the desert way,
So I strive ever toward the copper sky,
With lips burnt black and blind in either eye.
I move for ever to my mystic goal
Where I may drain a fountain never dry,
And of Life's guerdon gather in the whole,
And on celestial manna satisfy my soul.

Each night new failure and each day fresh strength,
A sense of something nearer day by day ;
Though the ill road's intolerable length,
League upon league, fling back the torrid ray
Of the fierce sunlight night can scarce allay
With the incessant beating of cool wings,
And men's bleached skeletons infest the way,
Yet Hope her passion like a flower brings,
And Courage ranks me with unconquerable kings.

So, in the power of these who guard my path,
I hope one day to earn a loftier crown
Than that pale garland fresh from summer scath
That I called Love, and lie delighted down
Beside the fountains, fled the roaring town,

Where we were happy all the summer through,
And merry when the autumn tinged with brown
The glades, and in the winter thought we knew
Behind the cloudy weather some far sky was blue.

That crown I hope for shall be garlanded
Of deathless flowers of equal bloom. And thou,
O thou true lover, thou beloved head
And marble pallor of a prince's brow,
At the cliff's edge we stand together now ;
The parting of our ways has come at last,
Mine is the bitterest journey, as I trow,
A man may take, so solitary, so vast,
It binds the future now, and stultifies the past.

Only the hope that God may reunite
Our ways diverging, and make one again
The deathless love that burns a beacon bright
On the black deeps, the irremeable main,
That men must launch on, the exalted plain
Of Life. We sever, and our tears are few,
Knowing perchance beyond the moment's pain

We shall regather where the skies are blue
And live and love for aye, pure, passionate, and true.

Also before my eyes there gleams from Heaven
The likeness of a Man in glory set ;
The sun is blotted, and the skies are riven—
A God flames forth my spirit to beget ;
And where my body and his love are met
A new desire possesses altogether
My whole new self as in a golden net
Of transcendental love one fiery tether,
Dissolving all my woe into one sea of weather.

So I am ready to assume the Cross,
Start on my journey with the last word said ;
Turn my back resolute on dung and dross,
And face the future with no twitch of dread,
But dare to converse with the holy dead,
And taste the earnest of the church's bliss.
Love, God be with you ! He is overhead
And watches us, that nothing be amiss—
Love ! our hearts bleed as one in the last lingering
kiss.

Good-bye, good-bye, good-bye ! the echo rings
A harsh, jarred sound in my self-tortured ears,
And agony, a fount of blood, upsprings
And tears our bosoms with dividing fears.
The cruel sea its final billow rears
And I must pass to seek an unknown sky ;
We dare not see each other's face for tears,
And the last kisses—Did we only die !
Love ! Ah ! One kiss ! One kiss ! One kiss !
Good-bye, Good-bye !

A SPRING SNOWSTORM IN
WASTDALE.

ON rocky mountain bare
Of grass, and meadows fair,
Angels their trumpets blow upon the night,
While o'er the shrinking dale
The insatiable gale
Roars with unconquered and impassive might.
Their robes of snow they rend,
And their deep voices blend
With tempest, like that angry Amphitrite,
His hair blown wild and loose
On windy Syracuse,
Lashing the waves with words of wrath, a terror
of bright light.

Here the thick snowflakes fall,
Till mountain in their pall,

And stream beneath their curtain are embraced ;
They drive and beat and hiss,
Till their cold maiden kiss
Touches the lake's intolerable waste,
And from the wave is born
A maiden like the morn,
In sudden foam, an Aphrodite chaste,
Clean as the cold wind blown
From each abyss of stone,
Where the north whirlpool rushes down with
wreckage interlaced.

Where on the bank I stand
In this gray barren land
Of winter, and the doubtful glint of spring,
If on the hills there glow
Through the thick mist of snow
Sunshine from westward in the evening ;
While in a dell appear
Violets and snowdrops clear,
Buds of the larch, and swallows on the wing,
Till once again the storm

Lofty and multiform
Close the bright glimpse of summer and the hope
of everything.

Silence her throne assumes,
Stars mount the sky, and looms
The misty monarch of the dale on high :
About the silver feet
I worship, as is meet,
The warrior God that fixed the curv'd sky,
Rent the cavernous earth,
Moulded in awful birth
The terror of the cloudy canopy,
And tore from underground
The lake's immense profound,
And clad the mountains now with this faint snow
embroidery.

Now the white flakes decrease,
Wastwater lies in peace,
Kissed by the breezes where the wind once bit ;
Gable alone doth stand,
A Pyramid more grand

Than Pharaoh's pride exalted, or the wit
Of magian shepherds built
Who sought his land and spilt
Blood of ten million slaves to conquer it.
Clad in sparse robes of white
The mountain beckons Night
Her tracery of azure with the cold moon-rays to
knit.

Armoured with secret might
I stand on earth upright,
Strong in the power of Him who welded earth,
Barred in the sky with steel,
And breathed upon the wheel
Of this vast scheme of stars, and made Him mirth
In the poor dreams of us
Who strive mysterious
To pierce the bands of sense, and break the girth
Of our own minds' desire,
Till He relume the fire
Lost at our fall, not kindled fresh till that diviner
birth.

IN NEVILLE'S COURT,
TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

I THINK the souls of many men are here
Among these cloisters, underneath the spire
That the moon silvers with magnetic fire ;
But not a moon-ray is it, that so clear
Shines on the pavement, for a voice of fear
It hath, unless it be the breeze that mocks
My ear, and waves his old majestic locks
About his head. There fell upon my ear :

“ O soul contemplative of distant things,
Who hast a poet's heart, even if thy pen
Be dry and barren, who dost hold Love dear,
Speed forth this message on the fiery wings
Of stinging song to all the race of men :
That they have hope ; for we are happy here.”

SUCCUBUS.

WHO is Love, that he should find me as I strive,
Pale and weary, dumb and blind, where curses
thrive,

Fold my sleep within his wings, and lead my
dreams

Through a land of pleasant things, of woods and
streams,

Bind my slumber with a chain of pure delight,
Though the canker of it stain at death of night,
Fill with passion and distaste and wakened pleasure
All the moments run to waste that else were
treasure?

Who is Love? a fury red with all men's blood
On his cruel altars shed, a deadly flood?
Or a veiled vision black with shame and fear,
Whose most loathliest attack at night is near,

When the gates of spirit tense with angel's tread
Close, and all the gates of sense swing wide instead,
When the will of men is sleeping, and when the
mind

Hears no sobs of spirits weeping above the wind,
All the subtle paths are clear for wicked breath,
And no angel warns the ear that this is death?
Is this fiend the Love that came when youth rose
up

Purple with its holy flame, and flower-fair cup,
Gave me of his burning wine to fire my heart,
Filled me with desires divine toward my art?
Is he then the Love who robs me of my aim,
Doubts me if my heart still throbs with that cold
flame,

Calm and eager purpose yet to reach the goal
That high hopes have sternly set before my soul,
To know, will, dare for man's sake if man may,
Grasp the secret of the plans that rule the way
Of stars and suns, that shape the tiniest blade
Of grass whose frailties 'scape the passing maid,
Whose light foot brushes fern and moss? But Love
Comes a thief to men who turn toward things above

To set snares, by night, and makes afraid
The spirits' holy might with one slight maid
Visioned and unsubstisting save in foreign thought,
To its own strength a slave by witchcraft brought !
This is not Love but Lust, not Life but Death is
found,
All the halls of spirit with strife cry and resound.
The Brain awakes in wrath ; behold ! the foemen
flee,
All the earth is clad with gold and all the sea ;
Driven back the demons yield, falter and cease ;
For a little while the shield of sleep is peace.
Clear and bright the lamp burns ; clean and sharp
the sword,
While I watch their paths between before the
Lord.

A RONDEL.

REST, like a star at sea
Thrice loved, thrice blest,
Burns. Will there come to me
Rest?

By these suppressed
Desires my soul must flee,
By heaven's crest,

I pray that secretly
Toward God's breast
I draw, to find, maybe,
Rest !

NIGHTFALL.

THE seas that lap the sand
Where lilies fill the land
Are silent, while the moon ascends to span the
curv'd leaves.

The lordly stars arise
With pity in their eyes
So large and clear and wise,
And angels yearn toward the world that wonders,
wakes, and grieves.

Sleep holds the hand of life,
And, as a loving wife
Moves not for fear the sufferer should wake before
his hour,
So sleep is deadly calm,
And fills with perfect balm

The night's unquiet psalm
That wanders all too trembling up, and quivers a
a flower.

The wise man opens wide
His casement, as a bride
Flings her bright arms to meet her spouse home-
ward who hasteneth ;
He trims his lamp, and brings
The books of many kings
To spread their holy wings
About his head, and sing to him the secret ways
of death.

His eyes are fixed, he sees
Men dimly, like to trees
Walking, and guesses they must be the angels of
the Lord ;
His hand is strong to hold
The talent of fine gold,
The wand so clean and cold ;
His altar has a lamp divine, his girdle has a
sword.

He knows, and doth not fear ;
His will is keen and clear ;
His lips are silent to protect the secret mysteries.
No tempter spreads his net
So that his thoughts forget
The glory they have set
Before their face, nor loose their hold upon the
perfect prize.

My hands no longer write :
Communion with the night
Is built, a bridge of fiery truth across the subtle
mind.
God's angels, and His fire,
Consume the soul's desire,
And strike a lighter lyre.
I seek, the angels lead me on, all light and truth
to find.

THE INITIATION.

THERE is a bare bleak headland which the sea
Incessantly devours,
A rock impregnable, where herb and tree
Are not. A vision of it came to me
In night's most ghastly hours.

I who desire, beyond all named desire,
To pass the envious bounds of air and fire,
And penetrate the bosom of the night,
Saw in a vision such a neophyte
Stand on the forehead of the rock ; I saw
The armies of unalterable law
Shudder within their spheres, as to him came
His master's spirit, like a tongue of flame,
To touch his lips and ears and eyes and hands
With that pale amber that divides the lands
Of sense and spirit, and beheld him quail

As fell from all his shaken soul the veil.
Then on the night began the awful gale
That did assume a voice
Whereat the air was peopled with such forms
As ride abroad upon the path of storms,
And in the awe rejoice.
They gather, chanting, round that noble head.
The master of the prisons of the dead
Loosens the bonds and bids the furies spring
For their last struggle ere they own a king.
This pæan of the sky they sing.

CHANT OF DEMONS.

*We ride upon the fury of the blast,
Fast, fast.
We race upon the horses of the wind,
The tameless thunder follows hard behind,
Fast, and too fast.
The lightning heralds us, the iron blast
Lends us its splendour for a steed fire-shod,
The steed of God!*

From all the caverns of the hollow sea,
And all the fortresses that guard the air,
And all the fearful palaces of fire,
And all the earth's dwarf-ridden secrecy,
They come, they gather, and they ride, to bear
Destruction and disorder and desire ;
They cling to him who braves the gale of night
And mock his might ;
They rush upon him like a wave, and break
In fiery foam against him, and they shake
Life in its citadel,
And open Hell
To let the Furies and the Fates spring forth
On their wild chargers of the icy North
To quench the holy lamp.
His spirit and his life within him quail,
And all the armaments of sin assail
With deadly tramp,
And swordless fury that devours and bites
And tears and clutches him, whom heavenly lights
Shield and lead on afar,
Where beyond storm and passion is the sky,
And where the sacred hand of the Most High

Holds out a star.
He stands amid the storm, a mighty rock,
His long hair blows about, the demons mock
His entry to their kingdom, and despair.
Groans in the blackness, infamous and bare,
And hateful shapes and eyes surround his head—
O for the magic of those mightier dead
To scatter them, and utterly destroy
Their likeness, and to penetrate the joy
Of yonder places past the realm of fear !
O that some mighty seer
Came to avenge, that might deliver him
From this grim fight, whose horrid ranks are dim
With mist of spumed blood, whose long chill hour
Beats out each second with the ghastly power,
Reluctant till the morning. Shall they cease,
These black battalions, and the dawn bring peace
To a head holier ? Or shall he succumb,
Fight through long agonies and perish dumb,
Sword gripped hard to the last ? or shall he fall
Recreant, coward, and no more at all
Reach the dim martyr-hall of heroes. Yet
The surging shapes gape hideous, to beget

Fresh armed foemen to destroy the king.
And first, on black imperishable wing,
That Nameless Thing.

Darkness, a dragon, now devours
The vision of those deadly powers,
The legions of the lords of sin
It is an hour till dawn begin.

ISAIAH.

A SONNET.

THE world is dusk, expectant of its doom ;
Foulness is rampant, purity is dumb ;
Despair stalks terrible. But I am come,
God-nurtured, in the void abyss of gloom ;
The Spirit of my God is set on me ;
He hath anointed me to preach glad news
Unto the meek ; the broken heart to loose,
To utter to the captive liberty,
The prison's opening to all the bound,
And unto all men to proclaim aloud
The year acceptable before the Lord.
Therefore He fills my voice with silvery sound,
And by His spirit, a pillar of fire and cloud,
My eyes are lightning, and my tongue a sword.

THE STORM.

IN the storm that divides the wild night from the
passionate kiss of the morning
Stands there a tower by the sea unshaken by
wave and by wind,
Lightning assails, and the sea breaks vain on the
battlements scorning
Even to fling back the foam shattered before
and behind,
Save for one window its height rears up unbroken
and blind.
Here may a man gaze out to the night by the stars
of it stricken,
Out to the blind black air that the lightning
divides and is dumb ;
Here, and look back in the tower where pallid
shades murmur and quicken,
Low laughs leap in the silence, sink to a sigh ere
there come,

Far from the feet of the storm, a pulse like the
beat of a drum.
Throbs the wild sound through the storm, and the
wings of it waken and quiver,
Only the watcher, unmoved, looks on the face of
the night ;
Sees the strong hosts that unite, a fervent implac-
able river
Foaming from heaven and hell, two armies of
crimson and white ;
Flecked is the sky with their blood shed as by
sabres of light.
Now they are clutching his arms, the phantoms
that throng there behind him,
Foul and distorted, whose sight may not on men
ever dawn ;
Now they entice and entreat, now strive with fresh
fury to bind him,
Cords that are cut by an angel whose sword is
unceasingly drawn,
Glitters, and bids them fall back as if struck by
the eye of the morn.
Would he but turn he should see a woman laid
naked before him,

Stretching her arms to his breast, reaching her
lips to his face,
Lips that should grant but one kiss ere the
demons descended and tore him
Limb from wet limb, and devoured, and bore his
stained soul into space
Far from the regions of hope and the lands that
are holy with grace.
Alway the battle proceeds and alway the tempest
re-quickens',
Pregnant with thunder, delivered when the swift
knife is let flash ;
Alway the wind has its will and the slaughter-steam
rises and thickens,
Alway the sea is a lion, enraged by the wind and
its lash,
Alway the heavens resound with the thunder's
unchangeable crash.
Heaven has conquered, behold ! and the hosts of
the demons are fleeing,
Dawn drives before her fair feet the feather-light
wings of the gale,
Silent the tower rears aloft its front into beauty
and seeing,

Only the window is dark ; only there hangs like
a veil
Sleep on the chamber and clings. Heard I a
woman-fiend wail?
Heard I the sound of a kiss? Has man been
destroyed in the daylight,
Man whom the night could not quell? What
angel fled weeping away?
There in the East there extends a white light
devouring the grey light,
There the sun rises and brings hope with the
dawn of the day,
Silence hides certainty—surely voices of angels
that pray,
Surely the sound of delight, and of praise, and
unspeakable glory
Rings in the wind like a bell, and wakes the
white air of the lea,
All the bright sea is aflame, and the caps of it,
golden or hoary,
Leap in the light of the sun, in the light of the
eyes of the sea.
Triumph is born like a flower, and the soul of
the adept is free.

WHEAT AND WINE.

CLEAR, deep, and blue, the sky
Is silvered by the morn,
And where the dewdrop's eye
Catches its brilliancy
Strange lights and hues are born :
I have seen twelve colours hover on a single spray
of thorn.

There is a great grey tower
Cut clear against the deep ;
In the sun's wakening hour
I think it has the power
To touch the soul of sleep
With its tender thought, and bid me to awake for
joy—and weep.

This night I am earlier,
No drowsy thoughts drew nigh

At eve to make demur
That I be minister
To Cynthia maidenly :
All night I have watched her sail through a black
and silver sky.

Within my soul there fight
Two full and urgent streams,
Work's woe and dream's delight :
Like snow and sun they smite,
Days battle hard with dreams :
On a world of misty beauty the Aurora clearly
beams.

So labour fought with pride,
And love with idleness,
My soul was torn and tried
With the impassioned tide
Of storm and deathly stress—
I had never dreamed a lily should arise amid the
press.

Yet such a flower sprang here
Within this soul of mine,

When foemen bade good cheer
To foemen, grew one clear
Concept, ideal, divine,
Of a god of light and laughter, of a god of wheat
and wine.

Work on, strong mind, devise
The outer life aright ;
Dream, subtle soul, and arise
To noblest litanies
That pierce the mask of night—
In a man work lifts his eyelids, but his dreams
lend eyes their light.

So dreams and days are wed,
And soul and body lie
Ambrosial in Love's bed.
See, heaven with stars is spread—
So glad of life am I
If an angel came to call me I am sure I would not
die.

A RONDEL.

THE wail of the wind in the desolate land
Lifts voice where the heaven lies pallid and
blind ;
Sweeps over the hills from the sea and the sand
The wail of the wind.

The earth gives a bleak echo back, and behind
Lurk sorrows and sins in the grasp of a hand,
And love and despair are the lords of mankind.

The mountains are steadfast ; immutably grand,
Bid me to their bosom the chain to unbind :
At peace and at pity I now understand
The wail of the wind.

THE VISIONS OF THE ORDEAL

THE mind with visions clouded,
 (Asleep? Awake?)
By bloodless shades enshrouded,
 (By whom, and for whose sake?)
With visions dimly lighted,
By its own shade affrighted,
In its own light benighted,
 The doors of hell may shake.

Unbidden spring the spectres
 (Whence come, where bound?)
To baffle those protectors
 Whose wings are broad around.
Uprise they and upbraid,
Till life shrinks back afraid,
And death itself dismayed
 Sinks back to the profound.

Unholy phantom faces
 (Of self, of sin ?)
Grin wild in all the places
 Where blood is trodden in :
The ground of night enchanted
With deadly blooms is planted,
Where evil beasts have panted
 And snakes have shed their skin.

With poison steams the air,
 And evil scent
Is potent everywhere ;
 Creation waits th' event :
In silence, without sighing,
The living and the dying,
Oppressed and putrefying,
 Curse earth and firmament.

What dreams disturb my slumber
 Or what sights seen ?
Foul orgies without number
 In dens and caves obscene,

Accurst, detestable,
In which I laugh with hell,
And furies chant the knell
Of all things clean.

Ah God ! the shapes that throng !
Ah God ! what eyes !
The souls grown sharp and strong
That my lips made their prize,
The ruined souls, the wrecks
Of bodies fair of flecks
Long since, ere God did vex
My soul with sacrifice.

Pale youth and bloodless maiden
Whose breasts have bled,
With wrath or mercy laden,
By love or terror led,
Reproachful or reviling,
Some pure and some defiling,
Some fearful and some smiling,
Some living and some dead.

These press upon my lips
What lips of flame
To burn me, unless slips
Some cooler kiss, from shame
Washed clean by God's desire,
To save me from their fire—
Those kiss me and respire
The perfume of the Name.

Remorse and terror banished
By pitying lovers,
Who from my eyes have vanished,
(The Lidless Eye discovers),
Repenting souls that turn,
Whose hearts with pity burn
For me, who now discern
Their love around me hovers.

Their love wards from my head
The furious hate
Of those loves doubly dead
That may not pass the gate :

By their entreating prayer
The angels fill the air
To guard my steps, to bare
The veil inviolate.

The visions leave me now ;
I sink to sleep ;
Calm and content my brow,
My eyes are large and deep.
The morning shall behold
On feet and plumes of gold
My spirit soon enfold
The flocks on heaven's steep.

Refreshed, encouraged, lightened,
Sent on the Way
Whose Sun and Star have brightened
From dawning into day,
I set my face, a flint,
Toward where the holy glint
Of lamps affords the hint
That leads me—where it may.

POWER.

THE mighty sound of forests murmuring
In answer to the dread command ;
The stars that shudder when their king
Extends his hand,

His awful hand to bless, to curse, or moves
Toward the dimmest den
In the thick leaves, not known of loves
Or nymphs or men ;

(Only the sylph's frail gossamer may wave
Their quiet frondage yet,
Only her dewy tears may lave
The violet ;)

The mighty answer of the shaken sky
To his supreme behest ; the call

Of ibex that behold on high
Night's funeral,

And see the pale moon quiver and depart
Far beyond space, the sun ascend
And draw earth's globe unto his heart
To make an end ;

The shriek of startled birds ; the sobs that tear
With sudden terror the sharp sea
That slept, and wove its golden hair
Most mournfully ;

The rending of the earth at his command
Who wields the wrath of heaven, and is dumb ;
Hell starts up—and before his hand
Is overcome.

I heard these voices, and beheld afar
These dread works wrought at his behest :
And on his forehead, lo ! a star,
And on his breast.

And on his feet I knew the sandals were
More beautiful than flame, and white,
And on the glory of his hair
The crown of night.

And I beheld his robe, and on its hem
Were writ unlawful words to say,
Brodered like lilies, with a gem
More clear than day.

And round him shone so wonderful a light
As when on Galilee
Jesus once walked, and clove the night
And calmed the sea.

I scarce could see his features for the fire
That dwelt about his brow,
Yet, for the whiteness of my own desire,
I see him now ;

Because my footsteps follow his, and tread
The awful bounds of heaven, and make

The very graves yield up their dead,
And high thrones shake ;

Because my eyes still steadily behold,
And dazzle not, nor shun the night,
The foam-born lamp of beaten gold
And secret might ;

Because my forehead bears the sacred name,
And my lips bear the brand
Of Him whose heaven is one flame,
Whose holy hand

Gathers this earth, who built the vaults of space,
Moulded the stars, and fixed the iron sea,
Because His love lights through my face
And all of me.

Because my hand may fasten on the sword
If my heart falter not, and smite
Those lampless limits most abhorred
Of iron night,

And pass beyond their horror to attack
Fresh foemen, light and truth to bring
Through their untrodden fields of black,
A victor king.

I know all must be well, all must be free,
I know God as I know a friend ;
I conquer, and most silently
Await the end.

VESPERS.

THE incense steams before the Christ,
It wraps His feet with grey,
A perfumed melancholy mist,
Tears sacred from the day ;
An awe, a holiness, I wist,
More sweet than man may say.

I bend my head to kiss the brow,
Scarred and serene and wide,
The bosom and the loin-cloth now
And where the blood has dried,
The blood whose purple tide doth flow
From out the smitten side.

The fragrance of his skin begets
Desire of holy things ;

Through the dim air a spirit frets
His closely-woven wings ;
Like love, upon my brow he sets
The crowns of many kings.

(The trembling demons of the sea
Before the poet bend ;
He greets the angels quietly
As one who greets a friend ;
He waiteth, passionless, to be
A witness of the end.)

I chant in low sweet verses still
A mystic song of dread,
As one imposing all his will
Upon the expectant dead ;
And lights dip down, and shadows fill
The dreams that haunt my head.

I sing strange stories of that world
No man may ever see ;
My lips with strong delight are curled
To kiss the sacred knee,

And all my soul is dewed and pearled
With tears of poetry.

The strong mysterious spell is cast
To bind and to release ;
To give the devils hope at last,
To the unburied peace ;
To gladden the reluctant past
With silent harmonies.

The song grows wilder now and strives
All heaven to enchain,
As who should grasp a thousand lives,
And draw their breath again
Into some cavern where he dives,
A hell of grisly pain.

And now behold ! the barren Cross
Bursts out in vernal flowers ;
The music weeps, as on the moss
The summer's kissing showers,
And there sweep, as sweeps an albatross,
The happy-hearted hours.

My rapt eyes grow more eager now,
God smites within the host,
White fires illuminate my brow
Lit of the Holy Ghost ;
I see the angel figures bow
On Heaven's silent coast.

Eternity, a wheel of light,
And Time, a fleece of snow,
I saw, and deep beyond the night,
The steady mystic glow
Of that lamp's flame unearthly bright
That watches Earth below.

Long avenues of sleepy trees
And bowers arched with love,
And kisses woven for a breeze,
And lips that scarcely move,
Save as long ripples on the seas,
That murmur like a dove.

I saw the burning lips of God
Set fast on Mary's face,

I saw the Christ, with fire shod,
Walk through the holy place,
And the lilies rosier where he trod,
Blushed for a little space.

I saw myself, and still I sang
With lips in clearer tune,
Like to the nightingale's that rang
Through all those nights of June ;
Such nights when stars in slumber hang
Beneath the quiet moon.

Still, in those avenues of light,
No maid, with golden zone,
And lily garment that from sight
Half hides the ivory throne,
Lay in my arms the livelong night
To call my soul her own.

The Christ's cold lips my lips did taste
On Time's disastrous tide,
His bruised arms my soul embraced,
My soul twice crucified ;

And always then the thin blood raced
From out the stricken side.

The incense fumes, the chant is low,
Perfume around is shed ;
I am as one of Them who know
The secrets of the dead :
The sorrows that walk to and fro,
The love that hides his head.

O Living Head ! whose thorns are keen
To bruise and pierce and slay ;
O Christ ! whose eyes have alway been
Fixed fast upon the way,
Where dim Jerusalem was seen
A city cold and grey !

The flowers of fire that grow beneath,
And blossom on the Tree
Are fed from his despair and death
Who sings of land and sea,
And all those mountains where thy breath,
Jehovah, still must be.

The censer swings to slower time,
The darkness falleth deep :
My eyes, so solemn and sublime,
Relent, and close, and weep :
And on the silence, like a chime,
I heard the wings of Sleep.

BY THE CAM.

TWILIGHT is over, and the noon of night
 Draws to its zenith, and beyond the stream
 Dance the wild witches that dispel my dream
Of gardens naked in Diana's sight.
Foul censers, altars desecrated, blight
 The corpse-lit river, whose dank vapours teem
 Heavy and horrible, a deadly steam
Of murder's black intolerable might.

The stagnant pools rejoice ; the human feast
 Revels at height ; the sacrament is come ;
God wakes no lightning in the broken East ;
 His awful thunders listen and are dumb ;
Earth gapes not for that sin ; the skies renew
At break of day their vestiture of blue.

ASTROLOGY.

A LONELY spirit seeks the midnight hour,
When souls have power
To cast away one moment bonds of clay,
And touch the day
With pallid wistful lips beyond the earth,
And bring to birth
New thoughts with which life long has travailed ;
As if one dead
Should rise and utter secrets of the tomb,
And from hell's womb
Or heaven's breast bring all the load of fears,
Toils of long years,
Sorrows of life and agonies of death,
Hard caught-up breath,
The labouring hands of love, the cheeks of
shame,
The gloomy flame

Of lust, the cruel torment of desire
More than hell fire,
And bide them fade, as if the bryony
Let her flower die,
And banished them through space, as if a star
Dropped through the far
Vault of the sky, and, as a lamp extinct
With blood-red tinct,
Went out. So lonely in mysterious night
A wild, strange light
Flickers around the sacred head of man,
And bids him scan
The scroll of heaven, and see if there be not,
Black with no blot
Of cloud, but golden lettered on the blue
That mothers dew,
This message of good hope, good trust, good
fate
And good estate :
Work on, hope ever, let your faith be built
Of gold ungilt ;
Your love exceed the starry vault for height,
The heaven for might ;

Your faith wax firmer than a ship at sleep
On the grey deep,
Anchored in some most certain anchorage
From ocean's rage ;
Your patience stand when mountains shake and
quail
Before the gale
Of God's great tribulation. Make thee sure
Thou canst endure.
And work, work ever, sleep not, gird thy head
With garlands red
Of blood from swollen veins forced in bitter toil
To win some spoil
Of knowledge from the caverns of the deep.
So shall the steep
Pathways of heaven gleam with loftier fires
Than earth's desires.
So shalt thou conquer Space, and lastly climb
The walls of Time,
And by the golden path the great have trod
Reach up to God !”

DÆDALUS.

THE scorpion kisses and the stings of sin
Cling hard within
The heart whose fibres, like a slender vine,
Earth's hopes entwine,
And all the furies of the air caress
The sorceress
Whose bosom beats in unison with shame,
A flower of flame
Whose root most secretly made fast in hell
Is watered by the seraphim that fell.

The heart wherein is lit the sacred fire
Of high desire,
Burnt clean from all untruth and sacrilege,
Her wings may fledge,
And fly a little in the broad sweet air,
Till unaware

The Spirit of Jehovah, like a dove
On wings of love,
Breathe the sweet kiss, a sacrament untold,
And clothe the heart's desire with flames of gold.

No rash Icarian wing this passion plies,
But sanctifies,
As if a censer (that a cherub swings)
Blossomed with wings
And floated up, an incense-breathing bird,
With songs half heard
Before the throne of God. Even so this life
Of sordid strife
Is made most holy, beautiful, and pure,
By this desire, if this desire endure.

So to the altar of the Highest aspire
Those souls whose fire
Has on it cast one grain of pure incense,
(Who guesses—whence?)
Those souls that cast their trammels off, and spring
On eager wing,

Immaculate, new-born, toward the sky,
And shall not die
Until they cleave at last the lampless dome,
And lose their tent because they find their home.

EPILOGUE.

LIKE snows on the mountain, unlifted
By weather or wind as it blows,
In hollows the heaps of it drifted,
The splendour of fathomless snows ;
So measure and meaning are shifted to fashion a
rose.

The garland I made in my sorrow
Was woven of infinite peace ;
The joy that was white on the morrow
Made music of viols at ease ;
The thoughts of the Highest would borrow the
roar of the seas.

This pastime of hope and of labour
Fled singing through bountiful hours,
With sleep for a bride, for a neighbour

With Death in the blossoming bowers
That slays with his merciless sabre the passion of
flowers.

This pastime had hope for its metre,
And trust in high God for the tune,
And passion of sorrow made sweeter
Than loves of the leafiest June,
When Artemis' arrows are fleetier than rays of the
moon.

My hope in the ocean was founded,
Nor changed for the wind and the tide ;
My love by the heaven was bounded,
And knew not a barrier beside ;
My faith beyond heaven was grounded, as God to
abide.

Though death be the stain on our roses,
The roses of heaven are white ;
Though day on the world of us closes,
The stars only dream of the night
As of music that roars and reposes and dies in
delight.

Dead stars in the season of sighing.
Lost worlds of unspeakable pain,
White winds in the winter-tide dying,
Or pestilence risen from rain ;
So thoughts are that perish for lying and rise not
again.

Blue waves in the summer uncrested,
New homes for the fair and the free,
Bright breezes in forest-leaves nested,
Sweet birds in the flowering tree ;
So thoughts that by truth have been tested sing
down to the sea.

But weak as the flowers of summer
Are the flowers that float on my stream ;
My song-birds to others are dumber
Than voices half heard in a dream ;
My muse, louder gods overcome her, the eyes of
them gleam.

The sorrow that woke me to singing
Is deeper than songs that I sing ;
The birds that fresh music are bringing

No chords for my memory bring ;
Those lips like a soul that are clinging most
silently cling.

Take thought for these verses, though time be
So sure and so swift for thy feet,
Though far from this England thy clime be
In years that sway slow as the wheat,
Take thought, for an hour let my rhyme be not
wholly unsweet.

For truth and desire and devotion
May lend through the verses a voice,
They tremble with violent motion,
They yearn to be fair for thy choice
As billows and winds of the ocean that roar and
rejoice.

For winds that are shaken and riven
I bound by my power unto me ;
For these have I battled and striven
With winds that are rapid and free ;
With weapons of words I have driven the pulse of
the sea.

There steals through my coldness a fire,
Between my slow words is a sword,
One lit by the heart of desire,
One sharp in the hand of the Lord ;
To these that sink, sleep, and expire, your welcome
accord.

With winds and white seas for your raiment
Your stature immutably stands ;
My love, with no claim, as a claimant
Came seeking out truth in the sands,
Found truth, and must place in poor payment this
book in your hands.



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