
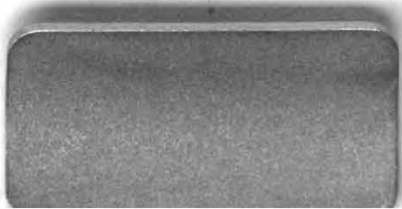


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WILD HONEY

WILD HONEY

FROM VARIOUS THYME

BY

Michael Field



LONDON

T. FISHER UNWIN

ADELPHI TERRACE

1908

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1908

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**WILD was the honey thou did'st eat ;
The rocks and the free bees
Entombed thy honeycomb.
Take thou our gifts, take these :
No more in thy retreat
Do we attend thine ears ; no more we roam
Or taste of desert food ;
We have beheld thy Vision on the road.**

July 14th, 1907.

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WILD HONEY

PAN ASLEEP

HE half unearthed the Titans with his voice ;
The stars are leaves before his windy riot ;
The spheres a little shake : but, see, of choice
How closely he wraps up in hazel quiet !
And while he sleeps the bees are numbering
The fox-glove flowers from base to sealèd tip,
Till fond they doze upon his slumbering,
And smear with honey his wide, smiling lip.
He shall not be disturbed : it is the hour
That to his deepest solitude belongs ;
The unfrighted reed opens to noontide flower,
And poets hear him sing their lyric songs,
While the Arcadian hunter, baffled, hot,
Scourges his statue in the ivy-grot.

I

CHARICLO

I

SHE cannot play the lyre,
This child of Apollo :
She is mute : she loves sweet-smelling things ;
She loves to break
The sweet-fern shoot, and the myrtle-root ;
And she will track
The centaurs at trot down the hollow.

II

She is safe on his breast,
This child of Apollo ;
She has no fear ; she loves divineness ;
Cheiron is shag ;
A front like a rock ; she loves the shock,
And twines her arms
Round his neck, in the rock-side hollow.

III

She is free at her heart,
This child of Apollo :
She lies down simple in her whiteness
As a waterfall
In its torrent-bed ; she feels his head
Bent over her
As a down-bent fir in the hollow.

IV

She is quick and meek of sense,
This child of Apollo :
She knows when breath has a cry, a pain ;
And when breath must die—
She loves to give ease ; she has watched the bees
Sing up the rocks,
And then fill with honey the hollow.

THE LAMENT FOR CHEIRON

THROUGH the deer's-milk and the sorrel,
 Where the beeches shréd,
 I lament for Cheiron !
 Where the hawk is over head
 And the wood-dove is in peril,
 I lament for Cheiron.

In the grove of the venoméd arrow,
 Where his blood was in a pool,
 Where I plucked the plantain
 With the leaves that heal and cool,
 With the vervain and the yarrow,
 I lament for Cheiron.

Where afar he reared up heroes
 'Mid the rocks of honeycomb,
 I lament for Cheiron ;
 Where the wild goat never clomb,
 In a gulley where no flower grows
 I lament for Cheiron.

THE LAMENT FOR CHEIRON

5

Where in the valley's cover
The sun shoots up and sings
In the soft of sundown ;
Where the black moths spread their wings,
And furl them again and hover
I lament for Cheiron.

In the heights above the coppice
Where the desert-land is high
I lament for Cheiron ;
Where the crag-tops are moist with sky,
In a crevice of wild poppies
I lament for Cheiron.

THE RETURN TO APOLLO

FATHER, I am thy child, the rivers quicken,
Music to comfort me comes rustling :
I stood aloof—Father, I saw him die.

It was not worth
Living forever when his friend had stricken—
My centaur lies dead on the earth !
Distant nor nigh, I shall not hear his hoof ;
But I rove the woods and sing,
And the stars are fresh in Heaven.

TO MY FOREST-GOD

**My Forest-God, thou hast no other name :
Thou art the sap, the strength, the forest-tree
With wings to sing around and cover me ;
Thou art my God : even the very same
That shook Dodona's oaks, that broke in flame
Athwart their boughs ; and, where most leafily
They clustered, to thyself in secrecy
Spake homeward as a dove. All Heaven's frame
Is thine, and the wide Earth's most varied room :
My own sole part in thee is where in plume
The brake-fern trembles, where the very mould
Is of the gathered leaves that I behold,
And the air spreads so stilly it doth keep
As in one sway my breathing and my sleep.**

A FLAW

To give me its bright plumes, they shot a jay :
On the fresh jewels, blood ! Oh, sharp remorse !
The glittering symbols of the little corse
I buried where the wood was noisome, blind,
Praying that I might nevermore betray
The universe, so whole within my mind

SILENUS SOBER

As a man looking down from a hill-brow
I look down on all creatures that begin,
On Night, on Saturn, on the heavy din
Round chaos when the Titans fight enow :
Sometimes a mortal, questioning me how
Life fareth smoothest some slight jest doth win,
Sometimes a-gape I watch the Fates that spin,
Or in my wood-lair track the snuffling sow.
Sometimes I watch the satyrs growing old
And call them the Sileni, but no fold
Is in my heart ; my wisdom is to ride,
Benignant to a fair god at my side—
To drink, to drink with him, to sway his mood,
Then home to fill myself with solitude.

FELLOWS

Not India, Eleutherios—I, wise to flee
Youth's genial temptations to be doing good,
Forget thee, listening to the old winds of the wood :
Thou drawest to my bosom, god, how wearily !

Call me my ass from heaven ; we will fare forth again
Fresh with our youth, our age, and loving lip to lip.
O dusty-footed and despised, no good can flow to men
Save as they catch the talk of gods in fellowship.

O reveller, but I have taught thee how to revel,
Too solemn child of Semele's audacious deed,
Bade thee take high-born maidens, let their locks dishevel,

Give them the tiger's cubs, the coiling snake, the reed.
Touching sometimes the roses of our cantharus,
Belovèd, let them dream that they have place with us.

MINTHA

Dusk Mintha, purple-eyed, I love thy story—
Where was the grove,
Beneath what alder-strand, or poplar hoary
Did silent Hades look to thee of love ?
Mute wert thou, ever mute, nor did'st thou start
Affrighted from thy doom, but in thy heart
Did'st bury deep thy god. Persephone
Passed thee by slowly on her way to hell ;
And seeing Death so sore beloved of thee
She sighed, and not in anger wrought the spell
Fixed thee a plant
Of low, close blossom, of supprest perfume,
And leaves that pant
Urgent as if from spices of a tomb.

I LOVE him . . . Fountains of sweet marge,
'Tis as when night-stocks blow !
Follow me not, ye stars, for I must go
As one that fares alone, and in the large
Soft darkness scent my woe.

PENETRATION

I LOVE thee ; never dream that I am dumb :
By day, by night, my tongue besiegeth thee,
As a bat's voice, set in too fine a key,
Too tender in its circumstance to come
To ears beset by havoc and harsh hum
Of the arraigning world ; yet secretly
I may attain : lo, even a dead bee
Dropt sudden from thy open hand by some
Too careless wind is laid among thy flowers,
Dear to thee as the bees that sing and roam :
Thou watchest when the angry moon drops foam ;
Thou answerest the faun's soft-footed stare ;
No influence, but thou feelest it is there,
And drawest it, profound, into thy hours.

ONYCHA

THERE is a silence of deep gathered eve,
There is a quiet of young things at rest ;
In summer, when the honeysuckles heave
Their censer boughs, the forest is exprest.
What singeth like an orchard cherry-tree
Of its blown blossom white from tip to root,
Or solemn ocean moving silently,
Or the great choir of stars for ever mute ?
So falleth on me a great solitude ;
With miser's clutch I gather in the spell
— Of loving thee, unwooing and unwooed ;
And, as the silence settles, by degrees
Fill with thy sweetness as a perfumed shell
Sunk inaccessible in Indian seas.

FROZEN RUSHES

WHO is this satyr that with shepherd crook
And fillet of dead pansies in his hand
Issues from forest cranny to this nook,
Where in a phalanx frozen rushes stand?
'Tis Pan among the thick-spiked icicles.
Oh see, through all this winter his device
To get down to the pith where music swells,
To clear the reed-bed from its ribs of ice!
"Nay, push not with thy finger 'mid the stones
At the pool's edges, where the water drips,
Nay, fret not for thy Syrinx—she is safe;
Thou can'st not draw her music to thy lips."
A withered god among the briars he moans,
And breathes upon the reeds as he would chafe.

VIOLETS

THESE offered violets are not for regret
That thou can'st never give my bosom ease ;
My fond, reservèd tears, if they should wet
Mine eyes, were of far blacker tinct than these.
Nor do I give them with the idle hope
Their stealthy drops thy senses should engage ;
The passion at my heart has larger scope,
A bird of sweeping pinion in a cage.
Yet shalt thou grasp the force of my intent,
Pity my doom nor do my pride despite,
Who am as one by a god's fury rent,
Cast to the dust, humbled from all men's sight :
Yea, learn how their nativity empowers—
Sprung from the blood of Ajax are these flowers.

NOT APHRODITE

I FOUND Love by a fountain and alone,
And had no fear and crept up to his face ;
“ And Love,” I said, “ art thou indeed alone ?
For I am fall’n into such deep disgrace
That, though I sought thy mother, I could ne’er,
Seeing she is but a woman, of my pride,
For very shame open my heart to her.
But tell me, while I sit down at thy side,
Rather of those first days when thou wert mated
With many a stubborn force, and fierce the strife,
How light was of thy loving power created :
And all thy labour not for death, but life.”
Oh, then I heard how the sweet stars were born,
And very softly put away my scorn.

ARMOUR

WHY lack I so in prowess to oppose?
What quality enfeebles my defence?
Spirit I have, courage that courts her foes,
And I am very proud and nice of sense.
Is it, of Love himself I am equipt
For contest, and with Love I must contend,—
In treachery has he some buckle slipt,
The breastplate not set even to defend?
Though to the rush of onset I am fleet,
And guard within my heart most bitter rage,
I know I am predestined to defeat,
My helm, my spears, a ghostly equipage:
All the fair panoply about me spread
Thin as the thin gold armour of the dead.

GREEN LIZARD SONNET

O LOVE, the transformations thou hast given !
Love, through all transformations I believe.
The Jove that I have seen casting his levin
I wear as a green lizard on my sleeve. . .
Love, Love ! Can'st thou take on such utter dearth,
Nor lovely as the moon in lapse of powers,
Nor burning frangipanni at the hearth,
Nor with soft incense incensing the hours ?
Wear any mask, so thine eyes pierce the shaft,
Or turn thee wailing to thy Genius :
Sighs are there that to me thou can'st not waft,
Imaginations, hopes that must divide—
Yet, as thou art a god, interpret wide !

SWEET-BASIL

BUT thou art grown a symbol unto me !
Thy speech no more hath passion to entice ;
As a sad, languorous wind thou art to me,
As a wind thwarted from the beds of spice.
To look upon thee in thy varying hour,
Thy moods, no more my spirit it contents ;
Rhythm I feel of a remoter power,
And sway and falling of the elements.
Thou art no more thyself ; I can no more
Reply to thee ; thou art a boundless shore
That I am mute beside. Away, begone !—
Some potent semblance creep into thy stead,
Like that Sweet-Basil of the buried head,
A thing that I might brood and dote upon !

APART

LOVE as a lyre is laid across the knees
Óf the mute gods ; they love with lips most still :
And if across their love come thought of ill
The issue is in strange calamities,
In token to the river and the trees
Of tempests stealthy and implacable,
Or subtle transformations such as thrill
The spirit, as with passage through cold seas.
If it be loving, ah, we love as they—
Would fix our closer silence to some spot,
Fountain, or ilex. Now our hate burns hot
With no injurious clamour we embroil :
One lives entified as in serpent coil,
And one abhorred, a raucous bird of prey.

I

THE woods are still that were so gay at primrose-springing,
Through the dry woods the brown field-fares are winging,
And I alone of love, of love am singing.

II

I sing of love to the haggard palmer-worm,
Of love 'mid the crumpled oak-leaves that once were firm,
Laughing, I sing of love at the summer's term.

III

—Of love, on a path where the snake's cast skin is lying,
Blue feathers on the floor, and no cuckoo flying ;
I sing to the echo of my own voice crying.

TO THE WINTER APHRODITE

O WINTER Aphrodite! (O acute,
Ice-eating pains, thine arrows!) shivering
By thy cold altar-stones, to thee I bring
Thy myrtle with its Erebus-black fruit,
Locked up, provocative, profoundly mute,
Muter than snow or any melting thing,
Muter than fall'n winds, or bird's dead wing,
Secret as music of a fresh-struck lute
Laid by a little while and yet for aye—
By all that jealously thou dost enwomb,
By Sappho's words hid of thee in a tomb,
Pondered of thee where no man passeth by,
Use thou my heart awhile for Love's own room,
O Winter Aphrodite, ere I die!

But if our love be dying let it die
As the rose shedding secretly,
Or as a noble music's pause :
Let it move rhythmic as the laws
Of the sea's ebb, or the sun's ritual
When sovereignly he dies :
Then let a mourner rise and three times call
Upon our love, and the long echoes fall.

AGE

You say that things most beautiful are old,
And challenge any to give truth the lie :
“For think a little undistractedly
Of the fabric of S. Mark’s deep-grainèd gold,
The perfumed dust of centuries its mould,
Oh, think ! And when in Beauty you would vie,
Beauty of youth with age’s subtlety,
Contrast the Langtry’s profile, dewy, bold,
With the majesty sustained in front of time :
The long, evasive queenship of the years,
Illusions, disillusion of her prime
Wrought into recollection that appears
In the rich profile that attests her now
Bronze in security of lip and brow.”

EMBALMMENT

**LET not a star suspect the mystery !
 A cave that haunts thee in the dreams of night
 Keep me as treasure hidden from thy sight,
 And only thine while thou dost covet me !
 As the Asmonæan queen perpetually
 Embalmed in honey, cold to thy delight,
 Cold to thy touch, a sleeping eremite,
 Beside thee never sleeping I would be.**

**Or thou might'st lay me in a sepulchre,
 And every line of life will keep its bloom,
 Long as thou seal'st me from the common air.
 Speak not, reveal not . . . There will be
 In the unchallenged dark a mystery,
 And golden hair sprung rapid in a tomb.**

WHAT IS THY BELOVÉD MORE THAN
ANOTHER BELOVÉD?

“BUT what is thy Belovéd to behold
More than another?”—He is pure
As substances that grain on grain endure,
As ambergris eternal in its gold.
More wonderful and in aloofness bold
His looking forth, more sensuously sure
Than Pan’s, when from great caverns that immure
He looks abroad with all his flocks to fold.

More than another he is beautiful,
Nor is there any balm that gathereth
His sweetness up, or flower that you can pull :
From his own ecstasy he incenses,
Even as a camel feeding on myrrh trees
Blows from his nostrils aromatic breath.

CHERRY SONG

I

It was but in my sleep—a dream did carry
Me from my bed,
Where I ate cherries with thee in a valley,
And the fruit was red.

II

Our love hath never made presumptuous sally,
It has still feet :
But I ate cherries with thee in a valley,
And the juice was sweet.

III

I know not if fair Love be come to tarry,
Love cruel, deep ;
For I ate cherries with thee in a valley,
Then fell asleep.

LOVE : A LOVER

**To Love I fled from love
That had so madly charmed me,
And in a summer grove
The god enchanting calmed me.
Warmed at his fragrant heart,
With him I dwelt apart
From chills of hate :
Beneath his plumes who rest
No passion doth molest,
Nor any fate.**

A VIOLET BANK

It was as if a violet bank
Were breathing forth its purple, so profound
And brimming was the beauty, and we drank
In the discourse no meaning, though the sound
Was musical ; for if a flower should speak
At its full height and richness of perfume
We could not listen, so on brow and cheek
We rested by the very senses' doom.
An instant, and the perilous charm was gone,
The charm that was even as a prophecy
Of the concentrated youth, the happy years,
With all the burthen of unladen tears,
That sometimes, unaware, we find upon
A face that very soon one feels must die.

REALITY

BE but thy absence present, vigorous,
Not spectral, nor of body to appal,
As in the night I watch the genius
Of the great barges flicker on the wall :
I waken to the sputter and the noise,
I feel the speed by the race-lightning dance :
So may thy brain, if it full sense employs,
Strike on me sharper than thy countenance.
Pass : I shall feel thy stroke upon the river ;
Not thou, thy voyaging is my delight,
Not thou—those gifts of thine, thou being the giver,
Not thou—the vision of thee after sight ;
Yet, by Apollo, blank were my despair
If losing I should fail to find thee elsewhere.

ENCHANTMENT

HE is pure symbol as the Sangraël ;
He lets no lure of sense the soul oppress
He gives the freedom of his loneliness
For a few footsteps, if we feel his spell.

With tufts of seedling beech leaves in his hand,
Arcadia rushes up in leafy streams :
All that Pan suffers, muffled in his dreams
'Mid wanton Naiades, we understand.

He leads us to the desert and its drought ;
And the white sapphire at his gift becomes
Strong fountain water stinging to the mouth.

And some have watched him when, a god, he plumbs
The void, and tranquilly from troubled eyes
As from sealed vials offers sacrifice.

O LYNX, O Wizard of the thousand senses,
We of gross being cannot yet employ,
Thou hast compassion, knowing how intense is
The rapture of the creatures thou dost joy,

And, in compassion, when for change inclined,
Thou leav'st no hound to hunger for thy look ;
Thou leav'st the ape to ponder his own mind,
Thou leav'st the gold-crest lizard in his nook ;

The goldfish staring from their crystal tank—
Thou know'st they never have descried thy shape—
Thou leav'st to drink continuous as they drank :

Then from thy house thou makest gay escape,
Dull through thy thousand senses to their plight
Who, unperceived, have made thee their delight.

AFTER SOUFRIÈRE

It is not grief or pain ;
But like the even dropping of the rain
That thou are gone.

It is not like a grave
To weep upon ;
But like the rise and falling of a wave
When the vessel's gone.

It is like the sudden void
When the city is destroyed,
Where the sun shone :
There is neither grief or pain,
But the wide waste come again.

FOREVER

“**THERE** is a change in love that is not ebb,
For love, as life, must Time’s behest obey ;
There is the wonder of the growing web,
And lilies spin their blooms beneath the clay.”
—This from my head to my sad breast I speed :
But Reason there a world of angry sighs
Encountereth—“The antique spell is dead,
And, if love’s favour altereth, love dies.”
The god to my extremity—“Dear Heart,
Mourn not defect and lovely hours undone,
For every mother from her child must part,
Yea, every mother that doth rear a son !”
And blushing at the keen rebuke I pass,
Smile at the scythe and smile at Time’s hour-glass.

OF A VIOLIN

. . . I AM tired
With the plenitude of things desired.
Ah, surely thou had'st wept in the night ;
Thine eyes were magical, grave and bright ;
Death's pinions had lightly brushed thy bed,
Death . . . Thou had'st heard of one just dead :
And Love . . . " Very quickly the dark will come."

I am as a violin, laid on the shelf,
After the day it has listened to itself :
I am full and lonely and dumb.

TO THE LORD LOVE

I AM thy fugitive, thy votary,
Nor even thy mother tempts me from thy shrine :
Mirror nor gold, nor ornament of mine
Appease her : thou art all my gods to me,
And I so breathless in my loyalty
Youth hath slipped by and left no footprint sign :
Yet there are footsteps nigh. My years decline.
Decline thy years ? Burns thy torch duskily ?
Lord Love, to thy great altar I retire ;
Time doth pursue me, age is on my brow,
And there are cries and shadows of the night.
Transform me, for I cannot quit thee now :
Love, thou hast weapons visionary, bright—
Keep me perpetual in grace and fire !

THE LONE SHEPHERD

I LOVE but Love, yet must I change my god.
I leave the nestling of the wings sun-laced,
And hie to chaos where on earth's first sod
Eros is lonely shepherd of the waste.
There will be naught between us—not a prayer ;
Nor has he any answer to my sighs ;
Yet as I watch a music fills the air,
And one by one the stars break from the skies.
Thus it must be—is it not ever thus ?
Where the Madonna spreads her shining Child
We are not blest, there is no joy to us :
But we are broken, but we are renewed
Where, lone as that first Shepherd of the Wild,
The God spreads out His arms on Holy Rood.

FROM BAUDELAIRE

THERE shall be beds full of light odours blent,
Divans, great couches, deep, profound as tombs,
And, grown for us, in light magnificent,
Over the flower-stand there shall droop strange blooms.

Careful of their last flame declining,
As two vast torches our two hearts shall flare,
And our two spirits in their double shining
Reflect the double lights enchanted there.

One night—a night of mystic blue, of rose,
A look will pass supreme from me, from you,
Like a long sob, laden with long adieux.

And, later on, an angel will unclose
The door, and, entering joyously, re-light
The tarnished mirrors and the flames blown to the night.

A TRAIN OF QUEENS

THRICE fifty queens who loved him, royal train,
From their far lands are gathered as a flock
For fair Cuchulain fallen in battle shock !
The winds are loosed :—a little wind, with rain,
Crept through the air and told them he was slain ;
And they, strong in their blood, of elvan stock,
Muster to meet him, beat their breasts, and rock
Their pain, and wring their hands, and sigh again
In concert, with one terrible, lone sigh.
Lo, in his spirit-chariot from the tomb
The Spirit Chief ! . . . A song is floating by,
A song of Christ and the wild day of Doom.
Alluring is the soothsay : the rich flame
Of jewelled eyes follows the Mystic Name.

FIFTY QUATRAINS

'Twas fifty quatrains : and from unknown strands
The Woman came who sang them on the floor.
I saw her, I was leaning by the door,
—Saw her strange raiment and her lovely hands ;
And saw . . . but that I think she sang—the bands
Of low-voiced women on a happy shore :
Incomparable was the haze, and bore
The many blossoms of soft orchard lands.
'Twas fifty quatrains, for I caught the measure ;
And all the royal house was full of kings,
Who listened and beheld her and were dumb ;
Nor dared to seize the marvellous rich pleasure,
Too fearful even to ask in whisperings,
The ramparts being closed, whence she had come.

CATHAL OF THE WOODS

'MID the forest and the forest rocks,
 'Mid the solitude where flowers are lonesome
 In their silent flocks,
 Cathal dwelt alone, yet in community :
 For such shapes as none may see
 Who has not from all mortal kindred gone,
 Fairy races of the leaf-green sap
 Caught him to their quietness and their smiles,
 Drew him to the whortle-covert's lap,
 Or led through hovering miles
 Of Maytime leafage, crooned upon
 By the dove and murmured through by heaven.

Round him hollies laughed, the peat and pine
 Royally smelt together in those lands ;
 There the moss had little, good, moist hands ;
 Aspen catkins bounced in dew and shine ;
 Sweet-fern heaved the soil
 Now with horn or fetlock, now with coil
 Of the snake or neck-bend of the swan :
 Open wind-flowers shone,
 All their bending flowers innumerably wide.

Low down many birds were singing clear,
High above was the wood's rushing voice :
Cathal lay, and tranquil to his bosom,
 Gliding with no fear,
Came the leaf-green Princess of his choice ;
Close they breathed and yet were wrapt away
In their magic from all human day.

 Fresh their kisses fell,
Cool with happiness, for happy things
Freshen for their bliss, and may not dwell
In the heat our carnal pleasure brings.

Solemn rolled the breezes overhead,
Dirge-like came the dove and nightingale
Through the never-ending solemn wail ;
Cathal could not hear the dole that spread
 Through the forest ways ;
 For like moss and briar
He had now no life of fret or fire,
 Silent with the silent Fays,
With the wind-flowers, with the sweet-fern shootlets,
With the leaf-green Presences of trees.

AMMON

WONDROUS, shifting deserts spread
 Thirst and iris phantoms wide—
 Seas of drouth and seas of vision,
 Framed of earth forever dead,
 Rippling with a fell derision
 Distantly, on every side.

'Mid the iris whorl of sand,
 'Mid Arabian stretches dry,
 Bacchus in his torment, dreaming
 Of his grapes where land is land,
 And the waters are no seeming,
 Cleaves the grey dome with a cry.

“Father, I am parched, who drank
 Life of thee ; I am as dust.
 Wilt thou burn me dead? To cheat me
 Every flood I came to sank
 As I dreamed its flow would greet me,
 Gushing to delight my lust.

As my mother must I sink,
Cheated in desire by flame?
Oh, forget not thou wert giver
Of the sap from which I came.
By my birthright, Zeus, deliver;
Let me of true fountains drink !”

Through the muteness of a space,
Where the iris to and fro
Lurks behind the limpid hazes,
Stately in his fleece of snow,
That with noon's pursuance blazes,
Steps a ram of ivory face.

With his foot he strikes the sod,
And a glorious water plays
Through the crystal desolation :
Then he lifts his horns that blaze
Sovereign while his sweet creation
Sings and bubbles where he trod.

Thus he stands, while Bacchus drinks
Draught on draught of his desire ;
Melting lips as harsh as cinders,

Quenching deep the mortal fire
From a fount no trammel hinders,
Till in sand its bounty sinks.

Sudden lifting his drenched brow,
Scattering rain upon the grit,
Bacchus fronts the noble creature,
And his eyes give thanks to it :
Splendour wakens every feature,
Knowledge springs he knows not how.

This is Zeus, in mercy veiled,
Come to Semele's own son,
From the scorching flames to save him,
From the death he might not shun ;
Zeus made secret thus to lave him
In a stream, where waters failed.

Passion of divinest core
Softens, warms the creature's gaze ;
Then again his horns he tosses,
Stately braves the desert's blaze,
Firm its cheating limit crosses,
Past its waves is seen no more.

THE GOD OF SILENCE

Who should be worshipped on these days
That idle February fulfil?
For Flora has no tassels yet,
No daisy roses; she is still
A weanling child that seldom plays:
Adonis, by his death the pet
Of Tyrus, now is fast asleep:
Proserpina doth quite forget
The fields that buried her so deep.

And yet there is a god about,
With spell upon him, young as Love,
Naked and pleasant, of a mien
To brightly whiten clouds above,
And through the gardens in and out
To flush the pulse and lentils green.
Oft in a rain shower, by the side
Of silvering streams, his form is seen
Past the sad fishermen to glide.

Who is the stripling—mitre-crowned
Of Egypt, and his mitre-points
As two rich buds of persea tree
The deep, concealing gum anoints ?
The horn he shoulders—why enwound
With persea, sacred persea tree—
A horn full-heaped with all he dreams
The earth will bring forth plenteously,
When leaves start out and April beams ?

His wings are Cupid's, but his hand
No torch nor arrow tempts to harm ;
His finger on his mouth is laid
As to the centre of his charm :
For 'tis his silence, young and bland,
We feel in every patient glade,
A silence, not the sleep of night,
But silence, store of bounty, planned
By Isis for the world's delight :

And he, her son, we must adore
Before the powers of spring are come—
Harpocrates, his mother's woe,
And ever from his cradle dumb ;

The wondrous, little god she bore
To dead Osiris, by the flow
Of wintry Nile—yet pledge to man
She might not, though in grief brought low,
On spring or harvest lay a ban.

He has no altar but our hearts,
As mute as the sown fields are mute ;
No greeting but free breath : our eyes
Behold him as a soundless lute,
That by its aphony imparts
Dear promise of gold harmonies.
We love him while Adonis sleeps,
While Flora for a daisy cries,
While Proserpine in darkness keeps.

REVEILLE

COME to us, O Dionysus,
From the Alcyonian water !
By the lake the spring-tide trumpets
With their cavernous entreaty,
With their tingling, sunstruck music,
Summon thee across the ripples,
Through the depths and lowest shadows,
Till they reach the gulf of Hades,
And thine ears with slumber soulless.
Let the trumpets roar their sunlight
To thy sleep and draw thee sternly
From the under hollows upward !

And in tribute to the warder
Of the dead this lamb, entwisted
With the stars and clumps of blossom
From the fields in earliest flowering,
By our hand is cast a victim,
To the lake, 'mid blast of trumpets.

None of all the lambs that speckle
With bare whiteness hill and valley
Do we offer, but a black one,
Black as if by smoke commended.
Dionysus, it is drowning :
We await thee by the water !

Argives, see, the waves unbroken,
And the reeds an army silent ;
Not a swan with breezy plumage
On the waves that drank their victim !
Sullen water, watery meadows
Wait for raciness of purpose ;
Every vale and bank deploring
That their hour is unaccomplished.
Dionysus, Dionysus !
Solidly the trumpets clamour,
With demand the gates of Pluto
Dare not frustrate in their hatred.

Fixedly the trumpets thunder
Deep-toned over the pale reaches ;
And we call with mourning passion,
As they call the dead that lose them :

“ Come to us, return, beloved !”
Argives, see, within the ripple
Rhythm of a light is playing ;
And the sky, behold, is lucid
As the light that chimes its current
With the current of the water,
So that never swan more bravely
Measured out her splendid waftage.

Argives, how the spangles brighten !
Flashing trumpets, draw the presence
In the water to our vineyards,
To our farmsteads and bleak meadows !
In that light upon the water
Is our springtide, our affiance,
Buoyancy of heart and herbage,
Touch and redolence of freedom.
Veil your eyes, for none may see him
Reach the Alcyonian pastures.
Dionysus, O Belovèd !—
Blind, bright trumpets, blow him welcome !

THE FEEDING OF APOLLO

“AMBROSIA, nectar for Apollo!” See,
One riseth from the purple, backward night
Behind the throne of Zeus—a woman white,
Not in her hair alone, but silverly

Her large eyes lighten and her lips are mild.
With frank strict hand she pours the young god wine,
And lays before him food, without a sign
Save that so white her countenance hath smiled.

Then Themis leaves him and he watches her
Back to her saint-like seat : but with a sigh
He hears sweet laughter round the cups and plates ;

Till enmities of youth his mettle stir
As unembarrassed Hebe passes by,
And, slender, on the old Tithonus waits.

THE FEEDING OF BACCHUS

MACRIS, the mountain nymph, lifts up a child,
 Brought under name of Bacchus to her knee
 By the four rapid wings of Mercury.

O solemn Babe, an orphan in the wild !



He lies upon the crystal of her breast ;
 The fulness of the air with sovereign tread
 Enters one doorway in the rock to spread
 Brimful throughout her grot ; then, toward the west,

Passes another doorway and so leaves
 That rustical alcove fresh as the sky :
 She, while it blows, with honey feeds the boy,

Anointing his round lips with balm that cleaves,
 Till mastery comes on him of a joy
 So stout it clamours through the gold—a cry !

THE DREAM

BOUND to his torment on the wheel that turns
Perpetual within the air of hell,
Ixion hangs and swirls in vain and burns,
Languid to death upon that axle fell ;
Lean as a tree bereft of leaves or vine
Whose age is leaf-forsaken in each twine.

Haggard and bitter is the truth of pain
In all that region where his life revolves,
Where crime and insolence sigh out their bane
As poisonous winds, and infamy dissolves
Into Æolian cries that wail and rove
To find a listener in that vacant grove.

All curse their clinging misery and know
Only their sins and chastisement and shame—
All, save Ixion : he illudes their woe ;
As if he slept his eyes are on the flame ;
From hell it seems he must have slipped away
Withdrawn, intent, through reeling night and day :

Void of its horrors, he has clasped a cloud ;
A Dream is with him, and its golden lips
Are his, its whiteness on his passion bowed
Draws all inhuman living to eclipse ;
Breath is imbowered for him of heavenly flowers,
And softly to become as Zeus empowers.

TEMPTATION

ZEUS in his sovereign heaven is wont to see
Clear cut for joy and mixed with deity
The naked limbs of goddesses—his Queen,
In the cerulean air of perfumed sheen,
Overt in glorious marble, 'mid the blaze
From sapphire peacock eyes of lidless gaze ;
Venus with disapparelled roses wide
A' tingle as her body to the light ;
Or Hebe with the long uplifted side
When she pours wine down from her veiless height.

Of these Zeus is not amorous,
They raise in him no flame :
But when he came
Where sate the daughter of Acrisius,
In her little house of stone,
Clad in linen, all alone,
Clad in linen finely wove,
Straight he stared and plotted love.

THE POET

WITHIN his eyes are hung lamps of the sanctuary :
A wind, from whence none knows, can set in sway
And spill their light by fits ; but yet their ray
Returns, deep-boled, to its obscurity.

The world as from a dullard turns annoyed
To stir the days with show or deeds or voices ;
But if one spies him justly one rejoices,
With silence that the careful lips avoid.

He is a plan, a work of some strange passion
Life has conceived apart from Time's harsh drill,
A thing it hides and cherishes to fashion

At odd bright moments to its secret will :
Holy and foolish, ever set apart,
He waits the leisure of his god's free heart.

DEMI-GOD

God of a yet chaotic hierarchy !
When the new realms are won, the sceptres crowned,
Mindful of Aphrodite, mild, profound,
With temples crystal as the crystal sea,

One will enthrone how gradual on the light,
Where air and light and thought have finer sense ;
Then . . . but till then the mystery how tense,
Strain of the veil, and thwarting of the sight !

We cannot serve him ; lone he perseveres.
Created ripe as Hermes, with a theme
That is himself, his faculties, his dream,

He strives for converse with us through the years :
And only as we break our jealous pains,
And listen with charmed spirit, he attains.

CLARIONS

O GLORIOUS Day, thy shining, how it shines !
Thy feet dew-washed 'mid film of turf dew-white ;
Thy head anointed with a regal light
That drips in oil and amber down the pines.

Behold, how great a force thou dost employ,
Scouring our very souls, as trumpeter
The inside of his trumpet, to confer
A brilliancy on our wide blasts of joy !

We ring with music ; and far over Death
Our notes are heard, as sliding thunder-rolls,
Through the gold mountains where Love's deathless souls

Listen and heave more roundly their hearts' breath.
O Day, and of thy infinite power the rush
Back of their breathing when our clarions hush !

ONE OF THE WISE

HE is black, intense in blackness, round his head
The light a nectarine dead-ripe emits.
His silence re-adjusts : his voice by fits
Rubs furrily the edges of things said.

His rampart vision nothing can perturb :
Flashes serene of scaring radiance come
From eyes most still : his carriage has the curb
Of a young morning thrush, alert and dumb.

Comfort in every lineament is traced ;
Too deeply spelled of life to be annoyed,
Swiftly his glance moves over us in haste

That our significance may be enjoyed.
Wise smile provocative, wise lips that quaff,
Olympian reticence, and rounded laugh !

NESTS IN ELMS

THE rooks are cawing up and down the trees !
Among their nests they caw. O sound I treasure,
Ripe as old music is, the summer's measure,
Sleep at her gossip, sylvan mysteries,
With prate and clamour to give zest of these—
In rune I trace the ancient law of pleasure,
Of love, of all the busy-ness of leisure,
With dream on dream of never-thwarted ease.
O homely birds, whose cry is harbinger
Of nothing sad, who know not anything
Of sea-birds' loneliness, of Procne's strife,
Rock round me when I die ! So sweet it were
To die by open doors, with you on wing
Humming the deep security of life.

WHITE MADNESS

WHITE flowers as robes for Solomon fine spun
There are ; and others that grow white themselves,
Distraught, made very bashful by the sun,
Turned to particular as gnomes and elves.
Thus a gold daffodil grows white and dumb,
Trembling a little ; even for this cause
'Mid lusty forest hyacinths a' hum,
One silver cluster into light withdraws ;
Untangled from their massy group one sees
Thus from dark bell-heads clear fritillaries :
And there beside are violets, so shy
They would not bear the name we love them by,
That in white madness, witless and undone,
Creep through unhaunted hedgrows to the sun.

A LIVING ALTAR

SILENCE behind the colonnade of pines
Is built a temple hidden by their boles :
Below the unlit, grassy hillside rolls
Its pathway space, and where its slope declines

Sits an old fox, as in Rome's Forum sat
The central wolf. Dim 'mid the solitude,
Its sombre, tutelary image rude,
He concentrates the forest round his plat.

But, as our presence reaches to him, lo,
He trots away with outstretched tail, with spring
Of his spare paws to bramble covering :

While we, blank, superstitious, see him go,
And, our eyes fixed upon the way he clove,
Watch a religion fall, a shrine remove.

SILENCE IN WOODS

**NOT false, significant of hooded speech,
Guilty for shade, as man interpreteth :
Crystal and naked, of most open breath,
She threads the little ways of oak and beech.**

**How confident this silence : at her ease
She pats her breast, a sailing feather skims ;
And on the whortles cushioning happy limbs
Shakes the small leaves at moments as a breeze.**

**When seeds drop round her, hollow, bursting knells
Rise as if bubbles split themselves and ceased ;
Sometimes a dove, or stoat, or youngling beast**

**She cuddles to her flesh in those close dells :
—Then lets it go so noiselessly we feel
Only her skin's warm heave from neck to heel.**

A TEMPLE

YEA, I had sought the temples ; yea, I went
To dress the altars ; yea, but I must wander
Where he has walked the bowering blossoms under,
Where he has met the spring, where the young nuts
Were budding as he passed, are budding still ;
Yea, I must feed upon the shade that cuts
The golden light out of the terraces,
Fringing the edges of the greensward hill ;
Yea, I must haunt the valley, catch the scent
Of the young vines that ravished him, the briars
That brought strange Muses to him, with the grace
Of many a fresh-beloved, forsaken face—
Of Leda, lonesome, mazed in her desires
Beside the lonely stream, and of the hand
Clutching the seaweeds on the beach he trod
Whose ship was far away . . . O restless seas !
O tumult, incommunicable pain !
Lo, on my arm the basket-flowers are faded !
It is the gods who give me to this god,
Enforce this worship ; nor of them upbraided
I rove, I leave behind the hot, white fane.

SO IT BEFELL

“WHAT can the burthen be?”

For a sorrow is rolled

From the land of gold . . .

Something infinite lost—

A peril is crost—

So it befell . . .

And the rest must be told

To the summer woods and me.

So it befell !

But the wind cannot tell,

And witlessly

He lashes the ferns to a tingling smell,

And tosses the oaks and the mounds of the sea.

TO THE TRINITY

THREE red roses for Thee—
I wander to and fro
Where the wild roses grow on the tombs,
Where the demons rave and mock their dooms ;
There I remember Thee
In places where no demons are,
Remote, infinite Star !

THE BELOVED

Love only comes to me when thou art gone :
Then he draws to me in his might,
Sundering with his infinite
Power, as a far, wide space,
Till I cannot see thy face ;
 And I wonder
If Love so great will not keep us forever asunder.

A FOREST NIGHT

It fell to a woman, wayfaring
In a lone forest, a lion came that way,
Laying his paw upon her heart.
Soft from that heart below
She sang to him night long :
He cannot do her wrong
Such sounds to his nostrils blow.

Forever, forever I must sing,
Forever and with mortality at bay,
Must not grow weary or start—
Things that I do not know
Driven to me in song,
Stories the graves among,
Strange words in a spell that flow.

**I LOVE you with my life—'tis so I love you ;
I give you as a ring
The cycle of my days till death :
I worship with the breath
That keeps me in the world with you and spring :
And God may dwell behind, but not above you.**

**Mine, in the dark, before the world's beginning :
The claim of every sense,
Secret and source of every need ;
The goal to which I speed,
And at my heart a vigour more immense
Than will itself to urge me to its winning.**

TOUCHING THE LAND

**His ship has touched the land : what curses
Rise in the heart to feel him there !
His ship is sailing on—to verses
Of lyric passion and of prayer.**

OVER all seas your voice ;
All summer blue, as I adore it, sinks
Down on my heart as colour from your eyes ;
The strength of hyacinth stems I snap in spring
Measures the force of each farewell
From thought of you, the freshness and the cry.
Earth is the telling of your life to mine ;
And you !—There must be more than earth to breathe
Of you yourself, the utterly beloved,
The one Desire, one Love.

CHALICES

TALL lilies ranged in quires around us in the room
 Where of Fate's careful hands at last we came to meet ;
 After long years we rose as spirits of fresh plume,
 And standing, side by side, smiled at our love's defeat :

Beside us, yet, it seemed, below us and removed,
 Freeing us as the slave that keeps his master free,
 Those twain, each dearer than our liberty,
 Of whom Love breaking on us found us fast beloved.

We were among our dreams ; and fearless, seal on seal,
 We opened them ; the lilies breathed about our heads ;
 More keen of sword those incorrupt and fresh-pierced beds
 Swung, tingling on our souls perfumes of strange appeal.

An instant left alone, I lit a little fire.—
 Thou with thy open hands ! I rose beside the flame :
 Murmur there was between us of "The same !"—"The
 same !"
 Then regally we turned back to that lilled quire.

THE CUCKOO

I HEAR the cuckoo that I have not seen,
I hear it through the green,
And through the air! Afar it stops . . .
 All things most dear
I follow on the footprints of, I hear,
Or breathe in spices furtive from the copse.
Therefore I love the wind,
The hillsides for the echoes that they bosom,
The blossom as it drops, the dropping blossom
For the long blossom-trail it leaves behind.

POPPY SONG

Do you see the poppies coming?
Do you see the poppies come?
Do you see the poppies coming,
Do you hear their seedy hum?
Large poppies of the night,
In their bands of blue and white,
Poppies fading from my sight
As they come!

DREAMS

**ON the grey dawn-track
Dreams are hastening back
To the years.
That is why the air is busy,
That is why the eye grows dizzy,
As the little ghosts from play
Speed away
To the mouldering years.**

RAIN-DROPS

DAYS the rain drips deep
Till it touches those that sleep
That they moan,
Sorrowing against their walls of stone !

Rain that drips down far,
To wend downward where they are—
Bell on bell
It droppeth downward to the funeral.

Rain-drops of the rain,
Where the beating winds, though they complain,
Cannot go,
Mourn to them that are belovèd so !

MORNING-RAINS

**I HEARD a morning thrush salute the rains
That beat in soft, prolific rush,
Armies of angry dewdrops on the panes,
In shower across the roofs : the thrush,
Through all this liquid measure,
Sang shrilly for his pleasure,
And, as the soft and shrill together mingled,
My ears voluptuously tingled.**

CAMELLIAS

AND one of them—how lovely in her mode!—
One of them had the magic power to die ;
Slid from the stem where she abode
With mournful violence : her petals lie,
Broke on the sudden from their mass, and all
The action stately as a funeral.

A VISION

TRAMPLINGS tumultuous and a charge of sound !

Horses that paw the ground,
Mingling in a rhythm musical ;
So that I hear—I hear all that I see :
And from the blast I flee,
Wondering what should be
The conflagration of such majesty.

And crouched down in the corner of a hall,
Where I have fled
As from the beating pressure of a wave,
It is spread out to me,
That vast conclave,
Those congregated stallions rushing wide
From north and south, outside,
And rushing up from fissures of the rocks
As to a day of doom :
I breathe low from my room,
And in tranquillity the vision knocks.

ON AN ASPIC FOUND GLIDING
TOWARD THE SEA

Who art thou, Aspic of the dazzled eyes,
And swaying as a drunkard from his drink?
Seaward thou glidest, in the sea to sink,
A sacred alien, a sacrifice.

Who hath devoted thee? What hast thou done?
That wound is as a jewel 'mid thy scales;
Thy forkèd tongue still tenderly assails.
As some amazing honour thou had'st won,

As thou wert stricken by too vast a doom,
And to the gods must recommend thy plight,
Thou foamest through the sand. Back to a tomb

I follow thy fresh steps. Ah, there in sight
The golden spindle that devised thy wound,
And Cleopatra marvellously swooned!

EGYPTIAN SONNETS

I

COME TO ME!

STRETCHING supreme to Chaos' utmost skirt,
Darkness and light and bitter marish blaze,
Tumû broke off a sheaf of his own rays,
And plunged them spluttering in dark ponds inert.
Then as one mutilate he felt the hurt
Of his own loneliness, and stood at gaze
Mute, glowing on the interminable haze
Long time with stubborn ardour. Still no spirt,
No ripple! "Come," he shouted—"Come to me,
Come to me, come!" There was a moving power
Upward; with pressure of a lotus-flower
The waters bickered; her pure leaves blew free,
Wide to his voice, and, over Nilus' streams
Stooping, he drank his spirit's sundered beams.

II

TAFNÛÎT

I AM the lion-goddess of the sky,
Tafnûit, created that my god might mate.
 "A creature scarcely full alive" men prate:
 Most living of all woman souls am I,
 Most man! Created new to every sigh
 And change of my lord's mood, I meet his great
 Passions at crisis, with their rage abate,
 Warm in their rich appeasement. Royally
 With him I rule; each morning from the East
 Receive with him the sun. Ah, do I so?
 Say rather, I receive the god's own glow
 Of joy in its appearing. Say, I feast
 On him and all my pleasure is—of me
 Without him there is nothing, fame or sanctuary.

III

INEVITABLE DEATH

“Osiris knoweth his day when he shall be no more.”

In Egypt by the river, we are told,
The gods creep slowly down Time's vale to die ;
And we may find their relics by and by
Mummied in cave and rock : their bones are rolled
To silver ore, their flesh becomes pure gold,
Their hair blue-tinctured lapis-lazuli.
The sun himself looks round upon the sky
And leaves it, as a man worn out and old
Fares from the city, carried to his tomb :
Therefore through all the circle of the year
He is beloved. To die, to reappear,
To leave the earth and visit it again,
Moved by the sweetness of its valley bloom,
Is to be ever welcomed among men.

IV

THE MUMMY INVOKES HIS SOUL

Down to me quickly, down ! I am such dust,
Baked, pressed together ; let my flesh be fanned
With thy fresh breath ; come from thy reedy land
Voiceful with birds ; divert me, for I lust
To break, to crumble—prick with pores this crust !—
And fall apart, delicious, loosening sand.
Oh, joy, I feel thy breath, I feel thy hand
That searches for my heart, and trembles just
Where once it beat. How light thy touch, thy frame !
Surely thou perchest on the summer trees . . .
And the garden that we loved ? Soul, take thine ease,
I am content, so thou enjoy the same
Sweet terraces and founts, content, for thee,
To burn in this immense torpidity.

V

THE BEAUTY OF GRATITUDE

“How shall my heart be lightened?” Menna, knowing,
Answers, “O king, thy sick heart to refresh,
To twenty maidens I will give a mesh
Of net for raiment, and will set them rowing
Adown the grassy waters of this cool,
Bird-fluttered inlet.” So it comes to pass,
As the king gazes idle from the grass
To the plashing oars and dazzle of the pool,
Voluptuous gladness fills him unawares.
Fair are the virgins: yet a fairer sight
Than those fair limbs, fair breasts, fair shading hair
Is Nebta’s face when her new malachite
Drops in the stream and at the king’s command
The chief magician lays it in her hand.

ARIADNE

THE Heavens are very wide :
There is no god beside me—
Stars on every side !
I am as a crown
Of stars, and I palpitate
In the peace of love and hate,
Looking down.

On Athens my light I sing ;
There Theseus is a king—there
Great order he doth bring :
The city is fair !—
How he loved my golden hair !
Now he loves Athens, and me,
And Antiope.

I am secret with the stars—
There is no limit bars me ;
And no jealousy mars.

I hear from my car
The spheres singing, and to me
Distinct comes from swish of the sea
Attica.

DOMINA

A DREAM of Hades! "Mother, it befell"—
I must not vex my mother, by my side:
Let her sleep on: the harvest spreadeth wide!
But I will hug my dreams; I love them well;
They come a gift from that great elm in hell
I know the shade of, with so much beside
Grown tender to me in my multiplied,
Exceeding sorrow, inconceivable.
Dear realm that is my home! Oh, to confer
Again with Cerberus, to see him stand,
Turn from his honey-cake, and lick my hand,
Pondering the fresher blood; for it was thus
That the god, passing languid, paused by us,
And on the instant called me *Domina*.

ALCITHÖE

HĒ cursed me on the instant as he stood
With wreath, with thyrsus, on his lips my name,
A god, a messenger of dew and flame,
With daze and dancing trouble from the wood.
Before I knew, before I understood,
Trembling for love of him, in very shame
To tremble so, I gripped my broidery-frame,
And there fell over me a filmy hood.
The stealthy darkness! I am free of wing
As any bird, and yet I see no light;
No song is in my throat: my doom fulfils
As, in the smothering shades of evening,
I brush against the Mænads flitting white,
And startle the wild orgies on the hills.

MOOD

As God creating did not yet create,
But, quickened in His spirit, moving stood,
And felt the light, and saw that it was good
Before the lesser lights, before the great
Were fashioned, not impatient to relate
The open, clear befalling of His mood,
So dwell I in the Muses' neighbourhood,
And in the infinite soft chaos wait.
More and yet more of sights, of scents that move,
More of that silent joy about the head,
The undisturbed beholding ere the hour,
More of that resting with the dawn outspread,
The assured, the tranquil vagueness of a flower
That Time has never seen the opening of !

LOOKING UP TO THE STARS

Not as the sun that presently must drop,
And in damp night no comfort for the eye ;
Not as the moon that climbeth by and by,
Too late for my sad eve : as the full crop
Of stars that, clear or trembling, without stop
Amass in myriad feature on the sky,
Is manifest the love that as I die
Fills all my heaven to the archèd top.
What feats of gods are there in permanence,
Conflicts and reconciliations there,
As in a crystal, moving to the sense !
Glad am I, through these draughts of quiet air,
To breathe such visitings, and, in pale stream,
The crossing and recrossing of a dream.

MIEL

Ort have I seen men musing on the shore
Of their sad fate, cut from Hesperides !
The face I watched to-day was not of these :
Marks of a sudden praise, undreamed before,
Even as stigmata awhile it bore,
Then fell away to musing of its ease,
As when the honey settles from the bees,
Mingling its furze, and thyme, and hellebore
To one bland recollection of the sun.
And I, beholding, felt even such a glow
Shines through these smaller gods that in a row
Are set as guardians of the household shrine—
Nameless and formless, yet as youth divine,
Of whom all life's accomplishing is done.

HYDRANGEAS

WHAT mean these old hydrangeas lingering,
For sake of their old blueness, though they droop?
—Breathing their element from crystal spring
A little shrine of shells? And, if one stoop,
One sees them as the garner of an elf.
Ice-plants fresh-nipt, of bloom too small for seeing!
What stealthy mines, what sporting with itself
Of some delicious and most vibrant being!
Who set, as a dear thief, this branching coral
Dipping its shade? Almost the touch we trace;
Yet with each lovely littering hint we quarrel,
Provoked more lonesome by its recent grace:
And the old blue hydrangeas, ball on ball,
Pattern their vacant flower-heads on the wall.

MANE ET VESPERE

VER

THE spring is riding through the sky :

[O Ver !]

Would I were fleet of wing

To ride with her.

She is strong ; she has breathed no sigh :

[O Ver !]

To think of the violets

Asleep with her !

Far from valley and primrose-croft,

[O Ver !]

In the wilderness, high,

She cradleth her.

She is mild, she is lulling soft :

[O Ver !]

The clouds so far below

And the joy of her !

ISRAEL'S WRESTLING

Lo, of a sudden spring is in our lands,
Troubling dim mortals ; happy those she lays
To rest back in their dreams again or gaze
And ponder on her and the wild commands
She issues hither, thither, as she stands
At vantage, and the universe obeys.
I rise reluctant and with wise delays. . . .
A knot of snowdrops wrestled from my hand,
And I am taught, as Israel of the angel
He braved, how it enfeebles to contend—
Drawn onward, threaded by the spring's own spell,
At once to life's immeasurable end :
While, unsuspected of my fall, again
I take my place, quiet 'mid pondering men.

VER

VER, sweetest Ver, that sets the birds to sing—
Not through the sky, not through the fields this year
Pierces her pang : all pain is to the ear.
What like the thrush's note the heart can wring,
Piping against the thunder of the spring,
And Nature hot and secret from her bier?
What is more sharp than in these tardy, drear,
And burthened dawns to catch the twittering
Of a robin on the thorn? Ver, lonely Ver!
Hers is a kingdom where Love draws tight breath ;
And incommensurate the things he saith
To the great things that he would say to her. . . .
She is so mortal, and the time so brief :
Quickly she passes on from leaf to busy leaf.

SULLENNESS

THE year is sullen, sullen is the day ;
Nor is the heaviness for summer gone :
It issues from a garden wrapt in clay,
And shooting boughs of pale mezereon.
The wind heaves slow, and yet no dirge is rung ;
There is no burthen from a distant shore ;
A strain, a cry is there for things so long,
So very far away, so long before.
Nor is there any pain regret can bring
Of so sharp pang as virgin appetite
That can but brood upon its famishing,
Till unwarmed suns shall furnish its delight.
So long the winter dures, breath is so brief!
—If one should fail before the flower has leaf?

JULY

THERE is a month between the swath and sheaf
 When grass is gone
 And corn still grassy ;
 When limes are massy
 With hanging leaf,
And pollen-coloured blooms whereon
Bees are voices we can hear,
 So hugely dumb
This silent month of the attaining year.
The white-faced roses slowly disappear
From field and hedgerow, and no more flowers come ;
 Earth lies in strain of powers
 Too terrible for flowers :
 And, would we know
 Her burthen, we must go
Forth from the vale, and, ere the sunstrokes slacken,
Stand at a moorland's edge and gaze
 Across the hush and blaze
Of the clear-burning, verdant summer bracken ;

For in that silver flame
Is writ July's own name—
The ineffectual, numbed sweet
Of passion at its heat.

THE FOREST YEAR

**FRAILNESS of Time ! O bitter moment drear !
Lo, the green summer learns that she must die !
Down the damp fungus-path the forest year
Comes weeping to the forest. Silently
The untarnished firs drop stubborn some few spines ;
A flicker trembles through the moist sweet-gale ;
The sunflower, high above the brake, declines
Her head untoward o'er the garden pale.
The winter woods no more will feel the clip
Of rose, of woodbine garland, glossy leaf
Of creeping briony. . . . Ah, but a brief
Spinning of dewy webs, a little while,
And the slack flowers in bunches will down-drop,
Tumble and waste into the holly pile !**

INEPT

WHAT is the burthen of this gold sunshine
That burns across the voidness of decay,
Or stamps its splendour on the forest pine,
Or lifts—a token torch—one sweet-fern spray?
Why would it brand so deep? The meadows spread
Untarnishable in their pomp of dew,
Or frost, or clear meridian : overhead
Droppeth the night ; but one must creep into
The brake to hide one from the harvest moon,
So wide she stares. Great stars that shed no boon
Flame through the orchard apples laid in heaps.
Why this profusion of September fire
Poured where the thistle in the tilth grows higher,
Laid over the broad fields where no man reaps?

NOT VINTAGE

τὸν χρυσομίτραν τε κικλήσκω

A GARDEN heavy with the harvest hops,
Creeping in garlands, glorious as they creep,
Up toward the sun, bearing their blossom-drops
Through coils of leafy light—gold blooms that steep
The air with thunder—fatal flowering round
Of some oppressive spirit, severed quite
From the quick feet of sylvan hunting-ground,
From the fountains of the hills, and from thy sight,
Iacchus, Reveller! Ah, would'st thou come,
Even from many toils and bitter chance,
From the Alcyonian Lake! 'Tis only those
Who have drunk fervently of mortal woes
Can strike the timbrel, can attune the dance.
We have no god, and all our lives are dumb.

SEPTEMBER

BUT why is Nature at such heavy pause,
And the earth slowly ceasing to revolve?
Only the lapping tides abide their laws,
And very softly on the sand dissolve.
The fruit is gathered—not an apple drops :
In little mists above the garden bed
The petals of the last gold dahlia shed ;
The spider central 'mid his wreathed dewdrops !
Oh still, oh quiet !—and no issue found ;
No laying up to rest of callow things,
Or scale, or sheaf, or tissue of armed wings :
Open the tilth, open the fallow ground !
The fragrance of the air that has no home
Spreads vague and dissolute, nor cares to roam.

OCTOBER

HONEY-BEES by little toneless grapes,
 Bees that starve and cling,
Flowers that are distorted in their shapes,
 Bees wayfaring
 To their bowers—
 Bees that do not come
 To the flowers a-hum,
That rove quiet, trailing up the napes
 Of the sunken flowers.

LEAVES

WHERE are they? I have never missed before
The whole wide kingdom of the cherishing leaves,
Or waft, or drifted into golden heaves
With all their scents, or dead upon the floor!
We left at sundown; but shall see no more
The air a film of multitudinous leaves;
For, lo, a sudden ravishing bereaves
The air that threaded them, the earth that bore!
And now of all their gorgeous, solemn realms
No sign: of unseen arrows came their fall;
They are not. Clematis and ivy curl
Their wavering tissues on the river wall—
Nothing afloat: the river a dark pearl;
The jagged acacia and the misted elms.

OXFORD

DEAR city, not for what thou wert of yore
I love thee—for the blotting shades of yew
On thy rare lawns, the rich sweep of the dew
Crystal between the mulberry-berried floor,
The fig-leaf-dropping path ; by one low door
The grape-vine with its clustering bunches blue,
And violet, dull leaves ; the one or two
Pears ripening round the gargoyles, or before
Thy blackened halls. Thy charm is in the air
And haunts it as a ghost : the balsam scent
And withering of thy flowers is as elsewhere
In autumn meadow-lands it cannot be :
So much fair hope, so many summers spent—
'Tis Nature with the ruth of history.

DEPRESSION

THE swans of Worcester with their lifted wings
In wreaths of white make the dull heaven more drear ;
The shining water-lily leaves lie clear
Open in sunlessness ; no wanderings
Of cloud are on the stream : each shadow clings
Firm to the under pool, the willows sheer,
Lucent as icicles. Then noon draws near
And fastens in the gloom. What is it brings
Such sorrow to the air,—a power, a cold
As from blown flame ? Is it from plague, from strife,
Blood crying from the ground ? Nay, the young life
Of centuries has hurtled overhead,
And lingers, vanquished, and not growing old,
Youth's stubborn, immature, unburied dead.

EBBTIDE AT SUNDOWN

How larger is remembrance than desire !
How deeper than all longing is regret !
The tide is gone, the sands are rippled yet ;
The sun is gone ; the hills are lifted higher,
Crested with rose. Ah, why should we require
Sight of the sea, the sun ? The sands are wet,
And in their glassy flaws huge record set
Of the ebb'd stream, the little ball of fire.
Gone, they are gone ! But, oh, so freshly gone,
So rich in vanishing we ask not where—
So close upon us is the bliss that shone,
And, oh, so thickly it impregns the air !
Closer in beating heart we could not be
To the sunk sun, the far, surrendered sea.

SIRENUSA

CAUGHT unawares the moments that enchant !
“ Civet or bergamot, or holy basil?—
But close your eyes !” . . . And while the nostrils pant,
With the kaleidoscopic sweets a-dazzle,
“ Oh stay, you strive ; draw in a deeper breath :
You cannot fail : do not too quick reply !”
And the great lids before me, not in death,
But vivid as one feels the sea, being by,
Are stretched unseparated. Lovely Gorgon mask,
Kind betwixt me and doom ! White siren coast,
And all the sirens whelmèd, in their host
Trembling unseen their perilous harps ! Secure,
I leave the chafing senses to their task,
And profit of those brows serene and pure.

MEETING AT BERGAMO

WE had parted at Ancona, for there was so much to
see—

The Love Temple built about Isotta's tomb at
Rimini,

With Correggio's dome of angels he had scarcely time
to show :

It was simpler to be candid . . . When we met at
Bergamo,

He was sure we had been happy?—" Oh, most happy !"

How it shined

On the solid chestnut-ramparts—[all was just as he
divined]

On the grass an emerald instant, on the wide plain at our
feet

That we gave our voices' jar to ! Suddenly I said, " Be
sweet,

Be yourself."—"I will." The willing cleared the temples
of their spite,
And his eyes were given to me rich in their caressing
light ;
Dropt the devil, dropt the malice, and I drank his beauty
in.
Oh, what seals there are to open—not to open them is
sin !

AVOWAL

As two men smoking, though one be a youth,
And one so great he meets him as a peer
Or cannot meet at all, speak open truth,
—The God with me vouchsafing to make cheer :
“ Eros, and now in disillusion, now
That thou hast purged me of thy thick blindfold,
Damon is false and Glaphyrus ! . . . Avow,
Are not these creatures, I have doted on,
Thine idols, and eternal sweet to thee ?
Dead loves I speak of, loves long dead and gone.” . . .
A noble silence settled on our glee ;
And the sweet mouth grew jocund as he took
The cup to pledge, and all his glorious pinions shook.

RENEWAL

As the young phoenix, duteous to his sire,
Lifts in his beak the creature he has been,
And, lifting o'er the corse broad vans for screen,
Bears it to solitudes, erects a pyre,
And, soon as it is wasted by the fire,
Grides with disdainful claw the ashes clean ;
Then spreading unencumbered wings serene
Mounts to the æther with renewed desire :
So joyously I lift myself above
The life I buried in hot flames to-day ;
The flames themselves are dead : and I can range
Alone through the untarnished sky I love,
And I trust myself, as from the grave I may,
To the enchanting miracles of change.

LIFE PLASTIC

O LIFE, who art thou that with scarcely scanned
Mysterious aspect breakest on my way,
And vanishest, leaving a lump of clay
As gift, as symbol, shapeless in my hand?
Kindling and mute, thou gavest no command ;
Yet am I left as prompted to obey,
With a great peril at my heart. Oh, say,
Am I a creature from achievement banned?
In my despair, my idle hands are cast,
Are plunged into the clay : they grip, they hold,
I feel them chafing on a moistened line ;
Unconsciously my warmth is in the cold.
O Life, I am the Potter, and at last
The secret of my loneliness is mine.

POWER

TO-DAY I am God's very name, *I am* :
 Open to me the tombs of prophets dead ;
 Open the unbuilt tombs ; apparent, red,
 The blood of every lie. I probe each sham ;
 I search each adoration ; as a lamb
 Isaac is bound for slaughter, but, instead,
 Abraham, his eyes in sacrifice, is led
 Greatly rejoicing to the briar-caught ram.
 His faith is with me ; even to this hour
 He lives, so simply he received my power :
 But ye that question me, that say ye know
 Your god, *whence am I*, ye shall taste of death.
 I am the blowing wind—whence do I blow ?
 I am the blowing wind that shattereth.

BEING FREE

BELOVED, I shall speak of thee no more :
It is thy freedom now that thou art dead.
By speech we are not bound as heretofore,
For thou dost come the way that God doth tread,
Through the great solitudes that lovers use :
With spring and star-break, where deep music is,
After long, lashing storms we interfuse,
And Life requires no more that Lachesis
Sing to her of the Past. Nay, we are free,
Profuse, delicious, giving each to each
Love that we dared not give to memory
To be the guardian of, or trust to speech,
The kindling certitude of lip or eye :
Love one can only taste, Death standing by.

RECOLLECTION

[1 Kings xiii.]

A LION charmèd on the desert rim ;
Recent from prey, the blood is on his jaws.
One lifts the mangled carcass and withdraws :
The lion watches in the clear light's swim,
And will not roar, or crouch with chafing limb
Recoiled for spring, but waits in burning pause
Till that relax that laid him 'neath its laws,
So that a noble mildness haunteth him,
A power to stay himself. . . . It doth relax,
And the hyena calls ; forth roareth he,
The darkness splits with his jaws' savagery.
Hereafter, in great moods, something he lacks,
Some majesty declined from him—and stands
A sentinel upon the trackless sands.

ROYAL SONNETS

I

A KISS

THE fury of a creature when it drips
Wet-fanged, and thirsty with the desert dust,
The clench in battle of a sword that must
Ravish the foe, the pang of finger-tips—
Joy of a captain in recovered ships,
Joy, verity of a long-buried lust
Delightsome to the flesh, is in the thrust
Toward Absalom of the king's tarried lips.
And, lo, beneath that awful benison,
A thief's face glittered, sniffing at the gems
Of the bent crown as they were cassia-stems ;
While the young ears heard but the rolling on
Of chariots, and a tumult, broke amain
By rumour of an agèd monarch slain.

II

IN THE GATE

THEY mark how with a wizard's roving eye
He overlooketh them and doth not stir—
Broods he upon his fair son's murderer?
Will he take thought of Joab till he die?
Phantom the king remains as they pass by,
His gaze fixed as, of old, on Bathsheba,
And the clear night-time striking down on her.
How sweet her bathing! And the oak hard by
Thick in its bushes, tangling bushy locks—
He stares as one dead from all comforting.
But the long years flew past, years that are gone,
Tender, more tender years, till he looks on
A shepherd boy at peace among his flocks:
And turneth to the people as their king.

III

LITTLE GIANTS

MANY are David's mighty men and tall,
And they go forth for him to victory
Against the six-toed giant race ; for he
Faints back in battle ; he is shrunk and small.
Sometimes it seems as he on God would call ;
Sometimes he laughs a little mockingly—
“Seven sons of Saul are hanging on one tree,
Seven goodly sons, and I have slain them all.”
Only at shout “A champion doth arise
From Bethlehem ; Goliath in his race
Is utterly cut off”—with curious face
He looks at those who boast, with eyes a-swim ;
And to the little maid that tendeth him
Babbles of angels and of prophecies.

IV

LISTENING

SHE counted the crown sapphires as she stood
Dreaming and flushing at King David's knee ;
Princes passed through the room, clad sumptuously ;
One filled her with dark sunbeams as a flood—
Chiefest he seemed, most noble. Hot of blood,
Hoar-snooded Bathsheba came suddenly
Before the king—"Hast thou no care of me ?
Lo, Adonijah reigneth ; is it good ?"
He said : "There is no king but Solomon,"
And, being left alone again, he sighed :
Abishag crouched at the throne's foot, so that
Her hair was curtain to her, as she spat
"Would God that I had died for thee, my son,
O Absalom, my son, would I had died !"

OLD AGE

AMONG the hills I trace the path that I must wend :
I watch, not bidding him farewell, the sun descend.
Sweet and of their nature vacant are the days I spend—
Quiet as a plough laid by at the furrow's end.

ASCENDING AND DESCENDING

AMONG the tide-pools, when the tender shine
Of sunset lit them, whilst a ruffling breeze
Freshened the currents from unrolling seas,
Till the clogged weeds that wave-forsaken pine
Were fanned to plummy forests, coralline
Spread its pink branches, and among the trees,
Clusters of daisy-flowered anemones
Were roused by plashing ripples to untwine
Their starry fingers. In a little space
Apart, a tiny sea-bloom I espied,
With tranquil tentacles that did not cease
To undulate: and I, meseemed, could trace
The way from that dim pleasure to the peace
Of Isaac musing in the eventide.

ON A PORTRAIT BY TINTORET IN
THE COLONNA GALLERY

AN old man sitting in the evening light,
Touching a spinet : there is stormy blow
In the red heavens ; but he does not know
How fast the clouds are faring to the night :
He *hears* the sunset as he thrums some slight
Soft tune that clears the track of long ago,
And as his musings wander to and fro
Where the years passed along, a sage delight
Is creeping in his eyes. His soul is old,
The sky is old, the sunset browns to grey ;
But he to some dear country of his youth
By those few notes of music borne away,
Is listening to a story that is told,
And listens, smiling at the story's truth.

THE LONGER ALLEGIANCE

*“ ἐπεὶ πλείων χρόνος
ὄν δεῖ μὲν ἀρέσκειν τοῖς κάτω τῶν ἐνθάδε.
ἐκεῖ γὰρ αἰεὶ κείσομαι ”*

THE TORRENT

AND here thy footsteps stopped? This writhing swell,
This surging, mad, voluminous, white stream,
Burst starving from the hills, knows what befell
That instant in the clear midsummer beam?
To me in the grey, azure iris-bed
Of the old garden, I was left to tend,
And tended, came the word that thou wert dead . . .
Is it on these round eddies I must spend
My passionate conjecture? Thou art gone;
And I am brought to these orchestral shores,
This clanging music, where I dare not moan,
Dare not lament! Fountain from fountain pours—
Yea, they have borne thee, yea, they bear thee on
To the smooth-rushing waters of the Rhone.

POSSESSION

THOU hast no grave. What is it that bereaves,
That has bereft us of thee? Thou art gone!
The forest with its infinite soft leaves
May have received thee, or thou wandered'st on,
The tender, wild, exhilarating flowers
Crowning thy broken pathway; or the white
Glare of the torrent smote thee; or the powers
Of the great sculptured country, from their height
Prompted thee upward. Thou hast made no plea
For rest or for possession; and thy hold
Is on the land forever: thine the gold
Brimming the crystal crests, the gold that fills
The vales, the valley's fountain purity,
And thine the inmost meadows of the hills.

FALLING LEAVES

To hush within my heart the beating cry
Up toward thy hills, I cross an English street,
On to a garden where great lindens meet :
The leaves are falling—ah, how free to die !
The leaves are falling, life is passing by,
The leaves are falling slowly at my feet,
And soon with the dead summer, soon—how sweet !—
They will be garnered safe from every eye.
Their honey-mingling life among the trees
Is as it had not been ; by twos and threes
Wide to the dimming earth they fall, they fall,
Yet, as I watch them dropping, something stills,
Heart of my heart, that over-bitter call,
As for one lost, to thee among thy hills.

THE FOREST

HE lay asleep, and the long season wore :
The forest shadows marked him limb by limb
As on a dial : when the light grew dim
A steady darkness on the spiny floor
He lay asleep. The Alpine roses bore
Their latest blooms and withered at the rim :
The harvest moon came down and covered him,
And passed, and it was stiller than before.
Then fell the autumn, little falling there
Save some quick-dropping fir-cone on the mould,
Save with the ebbing leaves his own white hair ;
And the great stars grew wintry : in the cold
Of a wide-spreading dusk, so woodmen say,
As one asleep on his right arm he lay.

BURIAL

THEY found thee—Nature burying her dead,
Covering thee o'er with her dead summer dross :
Shrunk spikes of blossom lightly did she toss,
And the brown needles of the fir-tree spread
Thick as a cloak about thee, on thy bed
Of withering leaves, dropt earth, long mountain moss,
With little branches bowed and laid across,
And lapping over. Uninhabited
Was the wild wood, savage with crag and fir,
And the wild goats leapt 'mid the crags, so deep
In winter was the silence : but we found
Nature alone that waited on thy sleep,
Suffering no other eye on that strewn ground,
None nearer than the stars to watch with her.

TURNING HOMEWARD

WE leave thy mountain vale, we, last of those
Most loath to turn away : we leave thee, but
For hoof-print up their steeps and icy rut,
To thy inviolate hills, the winter snows
Suspended on the sky and soon, one knows,
To cover up thy grave. Each signal hut
As we descend and wind about is shut ;
All closes as we saw thy coffin close :
And we are turning homeward, ah, how drear !
What is there now of memory that is warm,
Of life that is not memory? At our feet,
By the shrunk torrent, folded from the storm,
Two lusty lambs, pressing their mother's teat,
Drink and are glad : we feel another year.

EROS

O EROS of the mountains, of the earth,
One thing I know of thee that thou art old,
Far, sovereign, lonesome tyrant of the dearth
Of chaos, ruler of the primal cold !
None gave thee nurture : chaos' icy rings
Pressed on thy plenitude. O fostering power,
Thine the first voice, first warmth, first golden wings,
First blowing zephyr, earliest opened flower,
Thine the first smile of Time : thou hast no mate,
Thou art alone forever, giving all :
After thine image, Love, thou did'st create
Man to be poor, man to be prodigal ;
And thus, O awful god, he is endued
With the raw hungers of thy solitude.

THE WAY HE TOOK

THOU wert alone : we know not what befell ;
But God was there, and Nature, and with thee,
O thou most human, it was surely well,
Thy manhood lifted into trinity,
And all thy loneliness at once in face
Of its desire and finding of its mood,
And freedom of its passion in the grace
And wonder of the whitening solitude !
We think of those bare heights, that noon, thy strange
Remorseless wandering beyond mortal tread ;
Then of the rest we found thee in—the change
And murmur of the firs above thy head,
When Death at last brought the assuaging sense
At foot of that fierce crag of providence.

INVOCATION

AH me, but what a trysting place is here
Upon the trail of thy mortality !
Still am I found beside thy forest bier ;
O lingering ghost, still keep thy tryst with me !
Thou art, I know, long since a soul in bliss,
There should I look for thee—yet stay awhile !
I would remember me how thou did'st kiss,
And part upon the pressure of thy smile.
I love, ah, not thy shadowy Paradise,
I love the very ground where thou hast lain,
This herbage that took record of thine eyes ;
And where they faded there would I remain.
Love, leave thine azure heaven, the woods are brown,
Wizard, tempestuous, sheltering, full of night—come
down !

ABSENCE

SHOULD my beloved be absent from my sight,
All work is left unfinished if begun,
Even as jealous Nature, should the sun
Withdraw himself, leaves the young shoots the height
That he had reared them to, nor takes delight
In waxy droppings of her buds undone,
Nor passion of her tendril vines to run
From pole to pole in garlands through the light.
But should the dead desert me for an hour . . .
Ah me, the living may come in and out,
And the heart break not of its varying pain ;
But if the dead be found wandering without,
Wandering as ghosts, scarcely the heart has power
To draw them down into its depths again !

WHITE WIND

O soft, fleet-faring wind, there is a shore,
Some pure, strong beach where thou dost find thy bed,
Far from this forest murmur round thy head,
From these bright-tinted plumes of hellebore :
The anemone flowers drop on thy head no more,
Nor autumn follows thee with clinging shred.
Thou art alone and the wide air is spread
Across thee as a coverlet : before
Thy couch and on beyond thee is the white
Of infinite farness, softer than a cloud . . .
And is it there that wingèd spirits shroud,
Hidden from thee, thou hunter of the light ?
Ah, track them in their lair as in a gem ;
Give me the clue ; I needs must be with them !

THE HEAVENLY LOVE

Thy love, O God . . . nay, Thou art not the end.
Thy love, but not that I may love Thee back ;
Something in mine own loving that I lack
I ask Thee for : in love Thou dost transcend.
Yea, I have tasted how Thou lovest : lend
Thine incantations, for the stream flows black
Between me and my dead ! Thou art not slack
To close the iron gulf that sin doth rend,
Severing Thee from the soul that Thou dost crave.
O Love, Thine arts, Thy simpleness, Thy free,
Thy fierce ways of forgetting, so the grave
And memory shall not drag on my desire !
Teach me to love Thy instant way, and then
Look not that I should turn to Thee again !

COVENANT

WHAT is there now betwixt my God and me?
Where is the bond? I do not reach the rim
Of the dark light beyond the seraphim,
Though I have breathed there in simplicity,
Breathing and taking breath of love as free
As the clean flames He feeds that leap to Him :
I am afar, far off; the earth is grim,
Graves in the grass and winter on the tree.
Yet there is this—He has the dead in sight,
Bosoms their sorrows; He is where their eyes
Open and smile and weep; He knows their plight
Mortal and lonely, dimples their new skies,
Makes soft their spring; then turns on me to shed
The glory, the refreshing of my Dead.

THE LOVE OF GOD

NOTHING there is on earth we may not lose,
Nothing quite firm : we lose the spring each year,
The sun each day, the flowers as they appear ;
But when that sure, sad voice its plaint renews,
“ Yea, it is possible that we may lose
Even our God ”—O infinitely near,
Far Spirit, I am struck with sudden fear !
A fading falls across my thoughts. I choose
All to forego, all to obliterate
Sooner than miss remembered joy of Thee,
Who art alone most worth remembering.
Break every hope, save of Thyself, in me,
So that Thou fail me not, O Fount, O Spring
Given in the desert to my bitter state !

GOOD FRIDAY

THIS fall as of a cloud that leaves the height
And hangs moist darkness on the meadows fair,
This perfume that is trackless on the air,
Are not of spring : the dead who mourn their plight
Speak through this muffled pressure on the light ;
The dead athirst for their old tears are there,
The dead who would return to us, and bear
Old age and grief, the pleasant fields in sight.
O infinite sorrow ! With desire they call
For their mortality ; and haunt and pace
About the nestless trees : but one hath grace,
Being Prince of Life, to travel home to die :
Mortal, He bleeds, His loved ones standing by,
And blesses us with lips that taste the gall.

APRIL

APRIL is come to us, the air half-haze,
The dimpling clouds, the light that flows about
Like a soft streamlet, bubbling in and out,
That never further than the hazel strays :
April is come, and ever balmier days
Press round to honour her, the lovely rout
And choruses of wild-flowers, cuckoo-shout,
The blossoms rustling through the forest maze ;
But yet my heart beats for another spring,
Even for the land from which fair April broke.
At rear of her sweet face a light is shed ;
And rising, light of soul, and following
Into the far, far onward, I invoke
And fall on the profoundness of the dead.

TO GOD

O THOU who see'st, but lift me to Thy ken,
Let me but look an instant with Thy sight
O'er Thy marred world, the drift and din of men,
And all Thy glory troubled in its light !
Let me but look, as Thou, with Love's own hate,
Let me but feel Thy pain ; let me but know
How, at Thy will, Thou can'st in me create
A world as fair as Eden in its blow,
As summer to Thy gaze. . . . Oh, to redeem
Thy vision from its sorrow, give Thee space,
As where unfolded roses breathe and fill
Full of an eager quietness ; a place
Where Thou may'st watch the working of Thy dream,
And every change a motion of Thy will !

THE MOUNTAIN POOL

WE break through thy dark forest-land, among
The rocks thy hands have touched, the blossoming
Of Alpine roses : to the scaurs we cling,
By the bowed, rimming grass. But, see ! along
This ledge a hollow, torrent winds have flung
Their hail across : no low song of a spring,
From shadow where the ferns creep shadowing,
No passion at the fount ! Ice-stubborn, strong,
The storm-pool water offered to thy thirst,
Its bitterness a hurricane, the snow
Dun at its depths. O fated from the first
To desolation, draw'st thou near this brink ?
From such thou hast drank a lifetime ; even so,
Warm, sweet warm lips, stoop to your fate and drink !

A BACCHIC THEATRE

THERE is a spot given of a god to be
A tiny, silvan theatre—a seat ;
Most common flowers are growing at our feet,
Wild thyme and little tufts of barberry,
With shoots of willow herb : in tragedy
We flung them earthy on the stream to meet,
To hallow our lost dead : but now we greet
A tomb, fair as the tomb of Semele
Drest fragrant with the vine, to life we spring ;
We grow, increase in happiness ; the air
Is twinkling of itself : we have in sight
The solemn fir-trees thickening up the height ;
We have the exultation, the despair,
And all the lonesomeness of love to sing.

HIGH FOREST FLOWERS

WHAT is the spell on these high forest flowers ?
What are they, but the flowers that we have known,
That, fresh in dart and glitter, here have blown
Through the sweetness of the solitary hours ?
Harebells of every droop through grassy showers,
Wide pansies, violets of profounder tone,
A plot of daisies, crystal and alone,
Draining through every stalk the charmèd powers
Of air and earth and never-tainted dew :
Great comfort is it that they are not new,
But veritable, dear of face, with all
The sweets that in our memory we store.
Belovèd, when I look on thee once more,
So be it, so, my heart, may it befall !

MOULDERING LEAVES

O LEAVES that are not simple leaves that shed,
To us, that cannot be ! To other men
They are the years that will not come again,
The years that fade ; they are our fading dead :
For he, our lonesome One, was forest-led ;
He drew not to Avernus' loathesome den ;
But roamed and wearied in the woods, and then
Laid down to die, the forest overhead.
He gave himself to earth, even as the leaves,
In waste, in humbleness, by day, by night,
Before the sun, patient to disappear,
Patient to stay ; therefore to us the leaves,
Even the mouldered leaves of every year,
Repeat the form of that slow, funeral rite.

LEVIN

ALL common joys of common days we miss,
As those banned Afric rocks where travellers trace
Continuously the tortured lightning's race,
That feel but storm and wind—nor any kiss
Of dew at secret in their crevices,
With leaf or shooting fibre or the grace
And tinct of verdure creeping o'er the place ;
But keep their station where the lightning is,
Exposed and evermore to be assailed.
Thus, O my God, the life about the head
I love—my life ! Thy levin hath not failed
To sear, and then hot-breathed to sear again.
So of a face most gentle it is said
That all its record is the brand of pain.

PARTING

Lo, even memory must give up its dead !
Where he has walked we must not walk again,
Nor pause by garden borders where he led,
Nor seek his flowers ; we must unknot the pain.
For, if we look not on our memory's corse,
Sweet sculpture of our memory will abide ;
The eyes, the lips will take their human force,
Life's lovely images keep by our side.
Anew in the young sunshine we shall meet,
By paths, belovèd, where thou hast not been ;
Thou, being by, shalt make the strangeness sweet
Of the long, silver river and the green ;
And all our passion grow a child to cling
About the freshness of thy welcoming.

LOW SUNDAY

HONOURING this lesser feast my shrines I spread
With the unfragrant violet, and rehearse,
Plucking the small grape-hyacinth for thyrse,
My exultation that, tho' earth's low bed
Hath never been of flesh untenanted,
Forever taking leave, bowed by Time's curse,
Bowing to doom, for better and for worse,
Deep married to their breath men have the dead.
Without them were no god, no crownèd king,
No feast, no fair procession ; they abide.
Bosomed by them the petals disappear
Frail on the wind ; they are with every spring :
Though something keep us from them, though they hide,
May be forever hidden, they are near.

THE HALCYON

O LOVE, o bitter, mortal journeying
By ways that are not told !
I would not sing, no song is sweet to me
Now thou art gone :
But would, ah, would I were the halcyon,
That sky-blue bird of spring,
So should I bring
Fair sister companies of fleetest wing
To bear thee on,
Thou being old,
With an untroubled heart to carry thee
Safe o'er the ridges of the wearying sea.

THE OLD HUNDRED YEARS

God, Thou art gathering in Thy bosom's fold
The hundred years where all I love drew breath,
And sought and found their little age of gold,
And fell on dreams awhile, then fell on death.
Oh, sweet the summers that have known their praise,
The English hedgerows where the catkins blew
When they were passing by or breathed the time
Of the roses red and white and all their dew !
Oh, blest to them the earth, to them the sky !
But now, of human kind, one only hears
How ran their accents when great news befell :
Gone are those days of simple miracle :
Thou coverest their voices with the years.

ENNA'S CAVE

FULL in my dreams a bride that I have seen,
Time's child, enchanted apparition fair ;
For she was dressed in dress of orchard green,
And heaped in mounds her shadowing grey hair ;
And on the lids small, rigid lines of care,
As in the darksome kingdom she had been ;
But now had risen to the skyey air,
And in the taintless sunshine breathed serene.
Whence she has come I know—ah, Enna's cave,
Sharp crevice in the mountain !—but her face
Carries long-prisoned memories to the dew.
Time, since you had no happiness to grave
On those dark lids, power may be given you
Your long, slow-biting labour to erase !

**WHAT of this love? Where doth it dwell?
Concentrate and yet harbouring,
Precious against a precious thing—
A Pearl within her shell.**

OLD IVORIES

A WINDOW full of ancient things, and while,
Lured by their solemn tints, I crossed the street,
A face was there that in its tranquil style,
Almost obscure, at once remote and sweet,
Moved me by pleasure of similitude—
For, flanked by golden ivories, that face,
Her face, looked forth in even and subdued
Deep power, while all the shining, all the grace
Came from the passing of Time over her,
Sorrow with Time ; there was no age, no spring :
On those smooth brows no promise was astir,
No hope outlived : herself a perfect thing,
She stood by that time-burnished reliquary
Simple as Aphrodite by the sea.

UNITY

THEY twain by Ostia's gardens, being spent
With a long journey, feeling need to win
New strength for a new voyage, far from din
Of the world's turmoil, in a window leant
Together and alone ; and, with the scent
And flower of many roses flowing in,
Perceived the rule of the great peace begin
That has its towers beyond the firmament.
Love, were it possible that thou and I,
Being one day together soul to soul,
At shore of some wide waters, in the flush
Of roses tinging them, might so draw nigh
That we might feel of our accord the hush,
Binding all creatures, of God's pure control !

VALE !

THERE are, so strange it seems, there are who say
That distance gives intensesness to farewell.
Ah, no ! If she should leave me for a day,
A year, without her life has lost its spell.
The withering senses shudder as they lose
Their warm possession ; and it is all one
If for far voyage or a simple cruise,
Just where the stream is ocean, she is gone ;
And if, but from my side, she disappears,
There follows her a piercing *vale* shout
From lips, from eyes, ah, most of all from ears
That starve and hope : nor time, nor narrow space
Can give ease to the senses left without
The appeal, the dear temptations of her face.

ELSEWHERE

BEAUTEOUS thou art, the spirit knows not how ;
'Tis not the serpent-way thine iris slips,
Nor confluence of the temples and the brow,
Nor marge nor parting of the trembled lips :

Beauteous thou art ; but never with thy face
Dwelleth thy beauty : all its riches are
Freighting for thee in distant argosies,
While thou art poor, save for a tranquil grace.

Beauty forever with the god doth keep
Backward, a few steps off, beside the shrine :
It is thy dreaming when thou art asleep ;

Waking thou dost not wear it as a sign ;
Yet wheresoe'er thou goest it limns thee, sweet,
As finest air a-quiver with the heat.

BALSAM

THE Past was with us and no morning rose
But we remembered something that had been,
Or thought with trembling of the summer's close,
Or clung too fast to April's tender green.
Ah, what we missed through those dull years of wrong,
Of tears, of praise, of precious laughter, how
The voice enchanting in caress and song
I heard as Orpheus' prisoned wife ! But now,
O Loved, are we not happy ? Nothing stems
The current of our freedom : all the day
We of ourselves sweet memories can make ;
Nor other boon we crave than thus to stay
Watching the mists together at sunbreak,
Or gathering yellow balsams by the Thames.

NIGHTFALL

SHE sits beside : through four low panes of glass
The sun, a misty meadow, and the stream ;
Falling through rounded elms the last sunbeam.
Through night's thick fibre sudden barges pass
With great forelights of gold, with trailing mass
Of timber : rearward of their transient gleam
The shadows settle, and profounder dream
Enters, fulfils the shadows. Vale and grass
Are now no more ; a last leaf strays about,
Then every wandering ceases ; we remain.
Clear dusk, the face of wind is on the sky :
The eyes I love lift to the upper pane—
Their voice gives note of welcome quietly
“I love the air in which the stars come out.”

HER HAIR

NAY, but a wind, a god from secret cave—
Nay, 'tis of him I speak ;
For he hath touched thy cheek,
And with his hands
Smoothing hath brushed aside thy wayward hair ;
Even as the tide
Leaves in soft mound the silver-golden sands.
Fair god, didst thou not find her temples fair ?
Yea, 'tis to thee I speak !
Art thou not he
From the Æoliæ,
Fresh from the stars, the rain ?
Did'st thou not find her brows most free from stain ?
And shall I find
The fragrance of a kiss on her lulled eyes, O wind !

CONSTANCY

I LOVE her with the seasons, with the winds,
As the stars worship, as anemones
Shudder in secret for the sun, as bees
Buzz round an open flower : in all kinds
My love is perfect, and in each she finds
Herself the goal : then why, intent to teaze
And rob her delicate spirit of its ease,
Hastes she to range me with inconstant minds ?
If she should die, if I were left at large
On earth without her—I, on earth, the same
Quick mortal with a thousand cries, her spell
She fears would break. And I confront the charge
As sorrowing, and as careless of my fame
As Christ intact before the infidel.

SWEET-BRIAR IN ROSE

**So sweet, all sweet—the body as the shyer
Sweet senses, and the Spirit sweet as those :
For me the fragrance of a whole sweet-briar
Beside the rose !**

DYING

**There was a dawn when it befell
My loved one drooped to die ;
Parting was by—O strange to tell !—
Parting was close, and there was no farewell.**

**But the grey face forlorn
Slowly took on the sober shades of dawn,
 And the slow breath
Heaved solitary from the airless coasts of Death.**

FESTA

A FEAST that has no wine! O joy intense,
Clear ecstasy in one white river-room!
To-night my Love is with me in the bloom
Of roses—laughing at their redolence:
“A cedar-coffer, a miasma dense
With suck of honey.” . . . Dote on their perfume,
Find tropes! I, shuddering at thy rescued doom,
Sigh for some wider token to my sense
Of the wonder that I have of thee, my bride,
My feast. . . . The candles burn: they are too few.
But, hist! the river-night hath heard my sigh:
The candles reappear and multiply.
Procession-wise in filmy lights outside;
And the oar plashes as from singing dew.

BACKGROUND

AFTER long sickness she is growing well :
 We drive together through an open space
 Of plain, of forest ; and I see her face
 Peer from its muffling cloak, as the pure bell
 From the bog-turf of tender pimpernel.
 So frail, so coarsely wrapped, save for some trace
 Of azure round the hat, no summer grace.
 The terror of a love immeasurable !
 Should tempest overtake her !—Even now
 It overtakes. Beneath the azure knot,
 Piercing the veil, to see, set in the rear
 Of that great storm, her wonderful, most clear,
 Clear eyes, athwart their blue a single spot ;
 And the air lighted from her cheek, her brow.

HER PROFILE

NOUGHT from the changing seasons can we win :
I have desired that men should learn her spell
As it abides, profound, perpetual,
In contour from the forehead to the chin :
But there is such a tremor in the line,
Such quick beneath the chiselling—what art
The shore of her breath's egress can define ?
What lips in all the world part as hers part ?
Lo, of a chance, one night, she in her chair
A little from the hearth, a radiance swims
From candles lit beyond that face of hers,
So holden of a dream it never stirs,
While all its tender marge in shadow rims,
Even as a dusky pearl caresses air.

ALL SOULS' DAY

WALK through the garden of the falling leaves,
Walk with me, O my God!—yet should'st thou speak
Of love, I fear me that my heart would break :
With other love remorsefully it heaves,
And for the perished roses sobs and grieves.
And yet one test I do not flinch from—take
The creature fairest that Thy Hands did make,
From whom my soul morning and eve receives
Her dew, and all the confines of her light,
And let her mingle with the mists and fall
Sooner than Thou . . . Thou dost accept the cry,
Thrust forth the sacrifice ; and, standing by
With her, my sovereign and my sole delight,
We worship Thee in faith perpetual.

A PALIMPSEST

. . . THE rest
Of our life must be a palimpsest—
The old writing written there the best.

In the parchment hoary
Lies a golden story,
As 'mid secret feather of a dove,
As 'mid moonbeams shifted through a cloud :

Let us write it over,
O my lover,
For the far Time to discover,
As 'mid secret feathers of a dove,
As 'mid moonbeams shifted through a cloud !

MEDES AND PARTHIANS

WE have been severed but that we might stand,
And of our Mother's love, on either hand,
Who have been as a thurible
With incense throbbing from one cell.

We have a little while been twain.
Now set us of one piece again,
O Holy Ghost, so that we hear each tongue
As if committed to one song ;
Nor ever single, save to kneel,
And rose by rose thy dewing feel ;
And rose by rose breathe forth to thee
In impulse of pure liberty,
And yet our praise commingled such
Thou dost snuff in the odour of one bush !

IN LEASH TO THE STRANGER

I HAVE confided him to other hands,
The lithe, strong lion-creature I adore ;
Have left him all amort,
Left him, and closed between the river door.

The river floods !—If he should break his bands !—
The house is echoless as one were dead . . .
A ruffle in the hall, the snort
Of the deploying majesty, the tread !

BROWN WILLY

**SEEING I have wronged thee and no speech relieves,
Brown Willy, very stubborn is thy heart,
And, in its shorter loneliness, conceives
Strange terrors with insufferable art ;—
Desertion, trackless, huge forgetfulness
Pass thee by hollowly as Banquo's kings ;
And when my hand draws nigh with its caress
Thou canst not speak how bitterly it clings.
So thou dost brood upon each slight neglect,
So inward on each fondled tone debate,
Fierce sorrows that thou canst not recollect
Are heaped upon thy undefended state :—
Brown Willy, but my heart so long has bled
For thee—I pray in thy own kind be comforted.**

OUT OF THE EAST

JASPER and jacinth, amber and fine gold,
The topaz, ruby, the fire opal, grey
And lucent agate covered thee with glory,
O Eastern Prince, from fuming China hoary,
That on thy orient rug celestial lay,
Thy coat a web of treasure manifold !

And from thy glinted eye what lust of eye,
What joy in having joy to thy desire,
What potency out of thy gold to fashion
Thy slaves to aptness for each regal passion,
What ambush and what ease of rampant fire !
What somnolence of ancient cruelty !

And mysteries, old mysteries like stars
Rose in thy spread gaze, and thy thought was filled
With worship, with perpetual adoration ;
The very breath of being an oblation ;
Infinitude a faith life never stilled,
The lustier for its chains, its wrongs and jars.

Thou wouldst not break thy trance save at the hour
Of welcome : then the glories of thy race,
Then dance and sovereign courtesy, elation
As thou wouldst heap the substance of a nation
At feet that had the ritual of thy face,
And all thy gems in flash, thy gold in shower.

ABSENCE

Yes, but a dog's love is a true, true thing !
For, if you turn back on your doorstep, hot
In temper for a name, a word forgot,
Is there not languor in your welcoming?
"So soon come back again and why?"—Thy spring
Whym Chow, thy raptured hurrying to the spot—
Thy face tense in the joy that thou hast got
This second, sweet return—the chance to cling
And snuff, and brood about me! Oh, renewed
As God's thy region of solicitude !
Nor could a moment of the past be dear
As this that drew me out of absence near.
Absence! And all thy glory to remit
Seven's seventy times the mortal sin of it.

THE moonlight lies a pavement on the grass,
The forest is dark air against the sky—
I leave my chow-dog by the fire, and pass
The window-pane on to the void. A cry
Behind me, on my track, sharp as the sight
Of injured ghost, intrepid in its pain,
And whimsical as effort of a sprite
To do an errand on the earth again !
A cry—my knowledge of the heart it wrings
Has held me many years from liberty,
From Anet, and from Blois ; and, as I live,
The motion of that tender vocative
Shall stay my foot from all those dreamèd things,
And all the diverse kingdoms over sea.

HALLS OF SUFFERING

I CALL along the Halls of Suffering !
 Hark ! down each aisle reverberated cries
 Out of deep wounds, out of each fiery spring
 Of nerve, or piteous anguish of surprise.

And I must traverse these grand vaults to hear
 The patter of thy feet, my little Chow,
 Driven soft of frenzy on and on—the drear
 And winter bee-note at thy stricken brow.

Loud Halls, O Hades of the living ! On ! . . .
 What, are the swarming little cries not heard !
 What, are the lit, bright feet forever gone,
 Or yet to swifter orbit they were stirred ?

If I should wander on till time had close
 Thee with thy shuffled paws I should not find :
 No chasm, nor any heinous shadow knows
 Thy haunt, nor may I fear thee left behind.

**Forth, Forth! Away! He is not of these Halls—
No motion of him there, Whym Chow, no sound :
His ruby head shall never strike their walls,
And nowhere by a cry shall he be found.**

TO SPRING

A GREATER stranger even that Death is Spring
Thou art a greater stranger even than Death !
So alien I taste the April breath,
So mad the hustle of the rook's dark wing !
And what of this acute, blithe colouring ?
As by a sharp-cut monument that saith
Nothing to me, that but bewildereth,
The record of some life-forgotten thing,
I stand before the verdure of thy fields.
Nor is this life the wattle-sheepfold yields :
No eddyng leaves did ever course a spell
So aimless as this flickering hazel-dell :
The roosted little cries and jerks, if blithe,
Flash single, as the whetting of Time's scythe.

WHYM CHOW

NAV, thou art my eternal attribute :
Not as Saint Agnes in loose arms her lamb,—
The very essence of the thing I am :
And, as the lion, at Saint Jerome's suit,
Stood ever at his right hand, scanning mute
The hollows of the fountainous earth, whence swam,
Emergent from the welter, sire and dam :
While Jerome with no knowledge of the brute
Beside him, wrote of later times, of curse,
Bloodshed, and bitter exile, verse on verse
Murmuring above the manuscript [in awe
The lion watched his lord, the Vulgate grew],
So it was wont to be betwixt us two—
How still thou lay'st deep-nosing on thy paw !

A MINUTE-HAND

NAY, my Beloved, thou canst not keep my pace ;
But, as a tiny minute-hand within
A clock's wide frame doth stand
And with the ticking of the tiny paces
 True to Time's race is,
So do thou mark my minutes—be
 My little Now perpetually—
Sense of thy sweet
Tick-tack and beat
Buzzing about the essence of the hour !
So I renounce thy pattering feet—
So, so—the heavenly din,
The rich effulgence of thy coming in,
So thou wilt mark the pressure at its source
 Of my blood's course ;
And with the tiny trespass of thy being,
 In every part
Dint all my senses' seeing :
Notching—O silver chime !—
The solitariness of incurious Time.

AGE OF GOLD

EVEN as Nelson is the very spring
 Of joy to England, so that her allies,
 Passing the column of his victories
 Salute it, bowing low as to a king—
 So his blue eyes burn to this sea-faring
 And island people, as the very eyes
 They stare with at the unmirrored distances—
 My spirit, clear before me, triumphing,
 Thou art. Oh, had I but thy courage fine !
 Thou making of thyself one ardour bright,
 Profuse and constant, of no fear gav'st sign,
 Assuming thy Belovèd must requite
 Thy mystical, great heart. And, thy days told
 Are, as my years should count, one age of gold.

GOOD FRIDAY

THERE is wild shower and winter on the main.
Foreign and hostile, as the flood of Styx,
The rumbling water : and the clouds that mix
And drop across the land, and drive again
Whelm as they pass. And yet the bitter rain,
The fierce exclusion hurt me not ; I fix
My thought on the deep-blooded crucifix
My lips adore, and there is no more pain.
A Power is with me that can love, can die,
That loves, and is deserted, and abides ;
A loneliness that craves me and enthrals :
And I am one with that extremity,
One with that strength. I hear the alien tides
No more, no more the universe appals.

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