

TO V. A. H.

Oh! thou art beautiful!
 Thou with thy sunny hair!
 And in thine eyes, so spiritfui,
 Hope hath a lovely lair;
 Making a covenant with our hearts,
 That each day strengthens as it parts.

Into the void of Time,
 The voiceless Future's waste,
 How like, (as o'er a drowned world's slime
 The dove went forth,) we haste
 Too, the eager heart hath pressed,
 Nought, nought, whereon in truth to rest.

It is a vain essay,
 And love alone may tell,
 As it knits, from day to day,
 Its strong bonds fast and well—
 The fate that shall be in its plies,
 The secret of the future lies.

Shall there be broken hearts?
 Look to the days of youth,
 Deep, ere the plastic hour departs,
 Grave the strong lines of Truth;
 Then it may be the soul shall bear
 Thy tracery, despite life's wear.

Like fresco paintings, ere
 The hand may add a tone,
 The heart turns cold and sore,
 And on, not in, the stone
 We add the rest, and but in vain,
 The first storm leaves it blank again.

Oh! beautiful indeed
 Are the pictures Hope portrays
 Of the smiling ones that plead
 For peace amid our ways;
 But, of those sunny scenes, how few
 Will last life's blighting changes through?

The rust eats through the steel,
 And the worm the iron wood,—
 Poor frailer things, we feel
 That they had well withstood,—
 We feel who yet hath closed his eyes;
 Undimmed by tears o'er broken ties.

Then rather let us pray
 That we may seek no more
 Of hearts that are but clay,
 Than clay hath held before;
 So shall we love and pity when
 A loftier measure would condemn.

Oh! beautiful thou art,
 And loving too, yet still
 Thou wilt play out thy part,
 Be it in good or ill;
 And we must mourn or smile, as that may be,
 But still cling on undoubtingly to thee.