

WAITING.

The years have gone by that were squandered and lost,
And with pale shaking lips I have counted the cost
Of the love I have wasted, and shipwrecked, for just
A poor "handful" of wind-scattered ashes and dust.

I sit by a hearthstone whose embers are dead,
And stretch out my hands for a warmth that has fled ;
I watch for a shadow to darken the wall,
And listen, and wait, for a longed-for footfall.

I start at the rustle of leaves, or the sigh
Of the wind in the elms, as it hurrieth by ;
While the darkness comes down like a funeral-pall,
As I wearily wait for that cherished footfall.

O, form that has vanished, O love that has flown—
That has crossed my life's threshold, and left me alone !
'Tis in vain that I wait in the darkness, and call ;
You *may* not return !—O, beloved footfall !

O, open the shroud that enfoldeth your breast,
And let me share with you its quiet and rest.
What is '*living*' without you? what is death, after all,
But the coming at last, of a longed-for footfall ?