

With food and tidings for the dying man
 Who lay within the porch, unconscious all
 Of help, or her who brought it. A tall man :
 Not young indeed, sun-browned and scarred with wounds,
 Received in battle fighting for his King.
 His features, worn and haggard, were refined
 By intellect and noble purposes
 Which beautify the looks as naught else can,
 And give the impress of a gentleman.
 A face it was of truth and courage, one
 To trust your life to in your hour of need :
 But twitching now in pain, with eyes that looked
 Enlarged by hunger, as of one who sought
 For bread he could not find : and so gave up
 To plead with God for life, and waited death.

He lay, and in his eyes a far-off gaze
 Saw things invisible to other's ken.
 Delirious words dropped from his fevered lips
 As in a dream of bygone happiness,
 That went and came like ripples on a pool,
 Where eddying winds blow fitful to and fro—
 A hunger feast of fantasy and love
 That haunts the starving with illusive joys.
 And one dear name repeated as in prayer,
 Clung to his lips and would not leave them : nay,
 Unspoken, one might see it syllabled
 In sign and proof of his undying love.

Beside his couch, in passionate despair,
 A woman knelt, clasping his hands in hers,
 With kisses and endearing words, who bade
 Him rouse to hope of life, for she had brought
 The food for lack of which he dying lay.
 Tall, lithe, and blooming ere the hungry year
 Had wasted her to shadow of herself,
 She still was beautiful. A lady born
 And nurtured in the old colonial days :
 Of graceful mien, gentle in word and deed,
 As well became a daughter of the time
 When honour was no byword, and the men
 Were outdone by the women of their kin—
 Who spurned the name of rebel as a stain :
 And kissed their sons and sent them to the war
 To serve the King with honour, or to die.

Her long black hair, shook loose upon her neck,
 Was turning grey with sorrow at the pang
 Of those she loved and could not help. Her eyes