

The sexton's spade spells out in rune  
 Its story drear of tombs and graves,  
 Among the tombs and graves —

Its irksome tale of tombs and graves.  
 The idle lock is green  
 With li hen, moss; the bent rush leaves  
 Its broad leaves in the water's sheen —  
 In broken shade and sheen —

Its leaves in broken shade and sheen;  
 The weir is white with foam;  
 The kingfisher's among the green;  
 The stately lady sits at home,  
 The lady sits at home.

The stately lady sits at home,  
 The moments slowly pass;  
 She sits as pond'ring o'er a tome;  
 Her thoughts are far away, alas!  
 Are far away, alas!

Her thoughts are far away, alas!  
 (Her lord rides o'er the wold)  
 It cometh then and there to pass  
 She shivereth, as if a-cold —  
 Affrighted and a-cold.

A something turns her heart a-cold,  
 And chills her soul to fear;  
 As to herself she hath foretold:  
 Before her stands a shape severe,  
 A youth of mien severe.

There standeth one of mien severe,  
 And moved by wrath and hate:  
 "An hireling's tale hath brought me here;  
 Long years you left me to my fate,  
 My dark and dreary fate.

"Long years you left me to my fate,  
 (For shame is worse than crime.)  
 The secret hidd'n in wedded state  
 Bethought thee till the end of time,  
 Until the end of time,

"Bethought thee till the end of time  
 I ne'er might vex thy troth,  
 And all thy life a pleasing rhyme —  
 Nor did thy conscience rise in wrath,  
 In bitterness and wrath?

"Nor did thy conscience rise in wrath,  
 Nor felt thy soul its flame?  
 With wealth and pow'r, in fashion's froth,  
 To me thou gav'st not e'en a name —  
 I bear an alien name.