

ON THE STREET.

STRANGE things there are upon Life's hidden ways,
But mystery on the threshold most abides,
Where Old Age, towering, totters to the fall,
And Infancy first smiles upon the world.
Old Age, most like to some tall forest tree,
Whose cleaving roots sustain the branching pride,
But now the soil the stress of warring winters
Fissures, the fierce sun withers, and at length
Prostrate the forest's pride forsakes the sky,
And younger trees rise up to Heaven's blue.
And thus our ties and tendrils of affection
Are marred and wasted by encroaching Death ;
But Infancy--a wafted gossamer
That floats unwitting through the thorny world--
An exhalation of the filmy air--
Or like the tendrils of a feeble vine
That faintly clasps a more secure support,
To feel the sun a little while and live.
For thus the children of this aging world
Entwine themselves about our stubborn hearts,
Until, their infant-sweet unconsciousness
Vanished, the selfish impulse of the mind
Seeks out a vantage-ground to front the world.

I met one day an old man and a child.
The child from out its carriage viewed the maze