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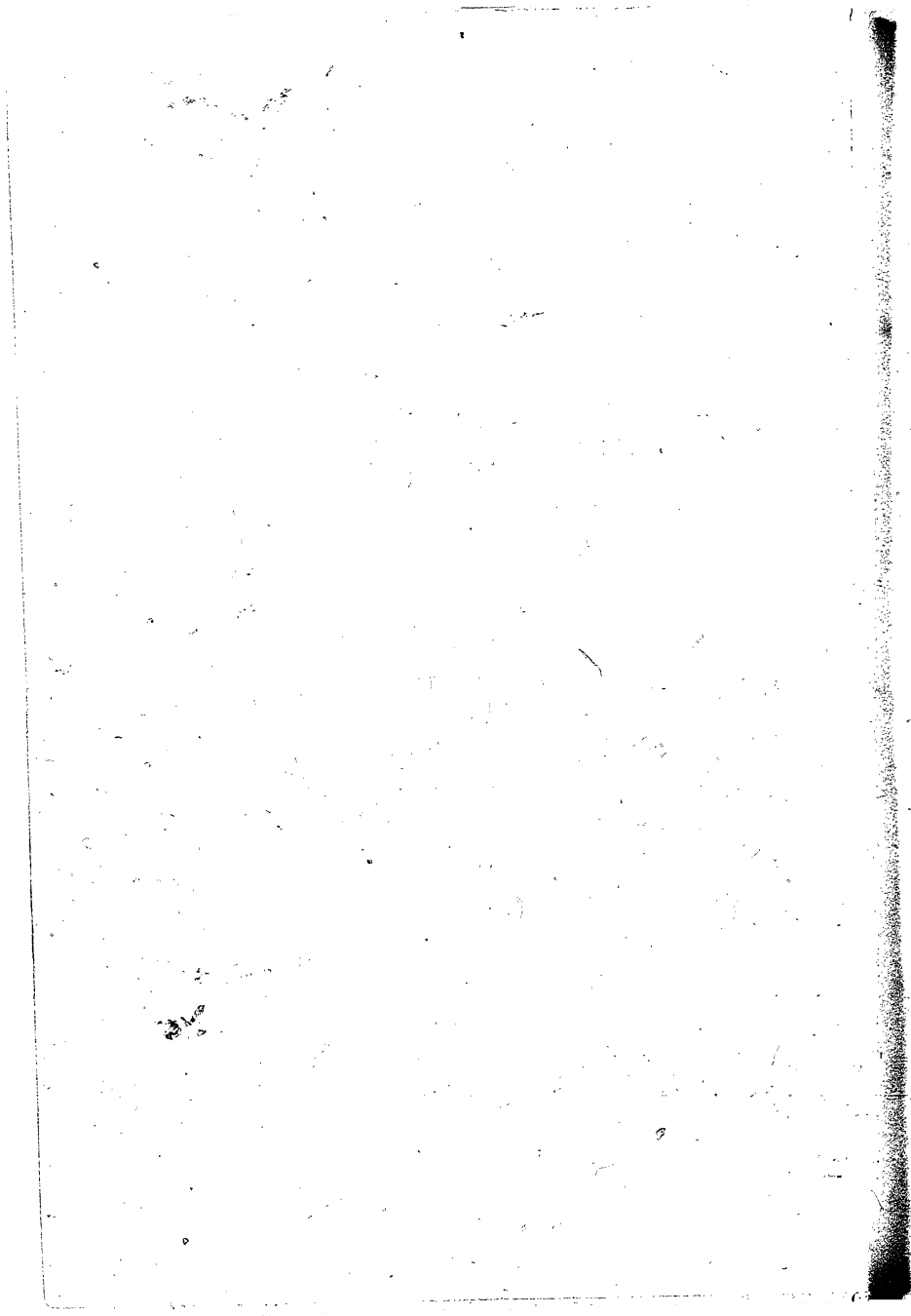
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THE SOUL'S QUEST

AND OTHER POEMS

This is a list of all the books

by (Comm. Archdeacon) Scott

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1887 - 1888

23rd Dec 4th Sem 1914
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THE SOUL'S QUEST

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

FREDERICK GEORGE SCOTT

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1888



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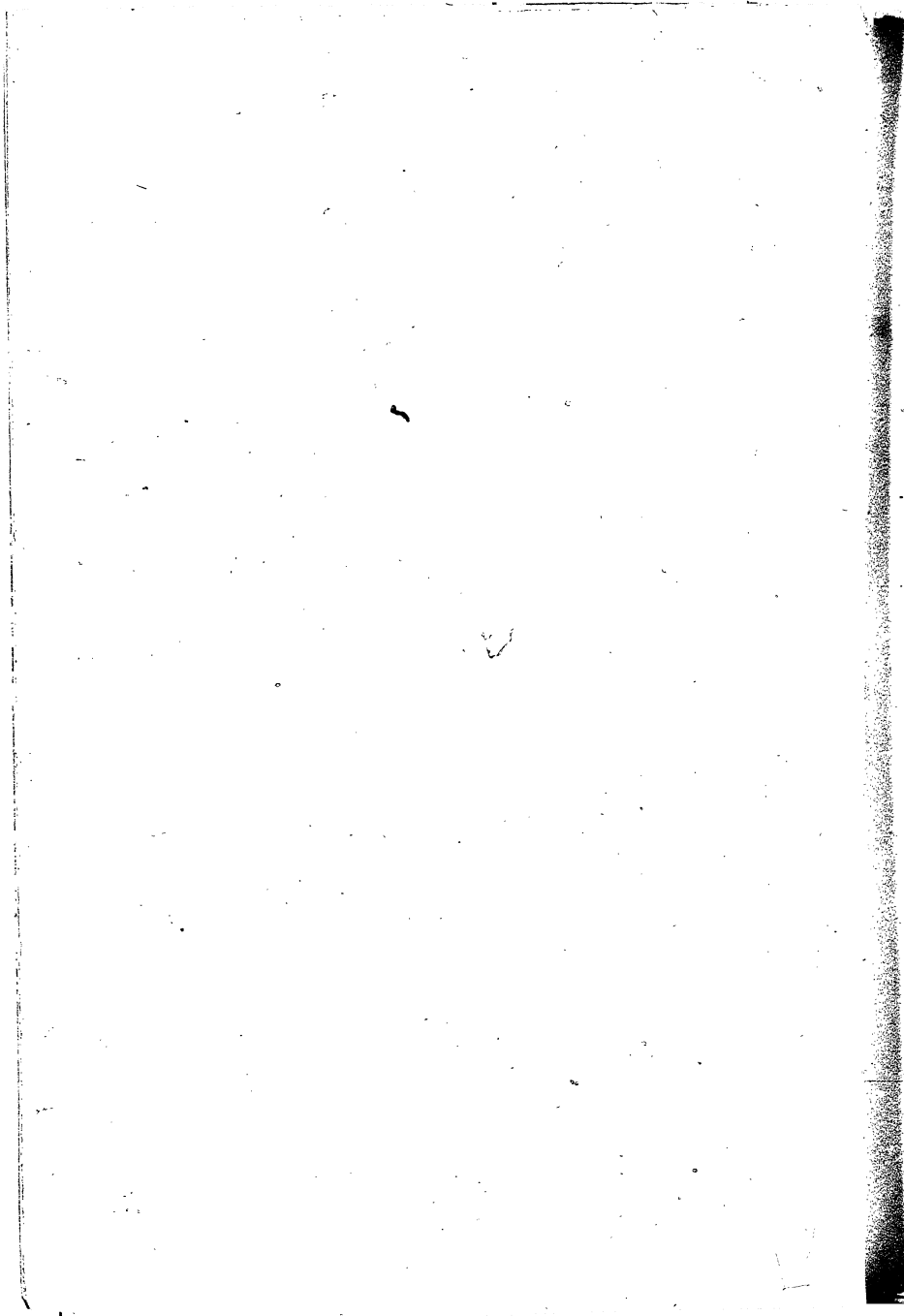
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INSCRIPTION.

DAY after day,
As I have wandered thro' the fields of life—
Gay, happy fields, bright with the sun and sky—
Flower after flower
Has bloomed beside my path ;
And I have gathered them, a long-loved handful,
Which I offer now
To the unpitying, cruel-laughing world.
And some are gay,
Sparkling with joy and the bright sun of hope ;
And some are sad,
Dipped in the crimson of the setting sun,
Or blasted by the cold of winter winds ;
But all the roots
Are down, far down, within the spirit's depths,
Amid the voiceless shadows of the soul,
And each has sprung
From the warm life-blood throbbing in my heart.



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THE SOUL'S QUEST.

PART I.

IN the land that is neither night nor day,
Where the mists sleep over the forests grey,
A sad, sad spirit wandered away.

The woods are still—no brooks, no wind,
No fair green meadows can she find ;
But a low red light in the sky behind.

Far over the plain, to the spirit's sight,
The city's towers are black as night,
Against the edge of the low red light.

This side the city in darkness lies,
But westward, at the glowing skies,
It glares with a thousand fiery eyes.

The road is long, the hedgerows bare,
There's the chill of death in the silent air,
And a glimmer of darkness everywhere.

"O sad, sad spirit, what thy quest,
With those flowing locks and that shadowy vest?"
The spirit answers, "I seek for rest."

"Where seekest rest, when the air is cold
On the long, dim road, and the clock hath tolled
The muffled hours from the belfry old?"

"Where seekest rest through the twilight grey
Of the mists that sleep on the woods away?"—
"I seek to-morrow or yesterday!"

Her face is pale, her feet are bare,
Her sad dark eyes, wide open, stare
At the glimmering darkness everywhere.

To those cheeks no rose hath summer brought,
But on their pallor time hath wrought
The troubled lines of an after-thought.

Her arms are crossed upon her breast,
Her round limbs shape the shadowy vest,
And thus, all silent, seeks she rest.

Her tread is light on the cold, hard road ;
For the tread may be light, yet heavy the load
Of grief at the heart and thoughts that goad.

She plucks a leaf from the roadway side,
And under its shade two violets hide—
As if from her cold touch, they hide.

She twines the violets in her hair ;
They have no scent—she does not care,
For the glimmer of darkness is everywhere.

And on through the dim of the twilight grey,
While the pale sky gloweth far away,
She seeks to-morrow or yesterday.

PART II.

“O Abbess, Abbess, the air is chill !
I heard the chaunting over the hill,
Like an angel's voice when the soul is still.

“O, Abbess, open wide thy gate!
Out on the cold, dim road I wait,
A spirit lone and desolate.

“Take thou these hands and these weary feet,
Cold as a corpse in its winding-sheet,
For the song of the nuns was so strange and sweet.

“Here with the sisters let me dwell,
Under these walls, in the loneliest cell,
Waiting the sound of the matin bell.

“Cut off these locks of flowing hair,
Cover with weeds this bosom bare,
For the glimmer of darkness is everywhere.

“Ask not my name, nor whence my way,
For the mist sleeps over the wood alway,
And I seek to-morrow or yesterday.”

She's passed beneath the chapel door;
The nuns are kneeling on the floor,
But a low wind moaneth evermore.

Sweeter and sweeter the sisters sing,
Till high in the roof the echoes ring,
For they know that God is listening.

“ *Ave Maria*, hear our cry,
As the shadows roll across the sky,
For those that live and those that die !

“ *Ave Maria*, Virgin blest,
Help the sin-stained and distressed,
Give the weary-hearted rest !

“ *Ave Maria*, who didst bear
Jesus in this world of care,
Grant us all thy bliss to share !”

Sweeter and sweeter the sisters sing,
From arch to arch the echoes ring,
For they know that God is listening.

Out of the north the oceans roll,
Washing the lands from pole to pole :
No rest—no rest for the old world's soul.

The after-glow of suns that set
O'er fields with morning dew once wet,
Where all life's flowering roadways met,

Long shadows of our joys has sent,
Sloping adown the way we went
Towards darkness where our feet are bent.

Is it the moan of the evening wind ?
Or the voice of the ocean in the mind,
While the pale red light looms up behind ?

Is it moan of wind, or convent bell,
Or cry of the ocean ? I cannot tell ;
But a voice in her heart has locked the spell.

She does not hear the organ's swell ;
In vain she strives her beads to tell,
For a voice in her heart has locked the spell.

She broods among the tangled fears,
The undergrowth of perished years,
That darken round the lake of tears.

Silent and dank, they fringe the brim
Of waters motionless and dim,
Unmoved by wings of Seraphim.

No lights on the altar the spirit sees,
The cloistered aisles are but leafless trees,
And the music, the sigh of the evening breeze.

No matin or vesper bell for her ;
The leafless branches never stir
In the pale, pale light of the days that were.

No matin or vesper hymn or prayer
Can shut those eyes' wide-open stare
At the glimmering darkness everywhere.

The sweetest singing dies away ;
No note of birds for those who stray
In the land that is neither night nor day.

PART III.

In the shadowy light of the silent land,
With the tall gaunt hedges on either hand,
On the long, dim road doth the spirit stand.

Under the hedges the air is chill,
And the mists sleep over the forest still,
And are folded like wings on the sides of the hill.

Her arms are crossed upon her breast,
Her round limbs shape the shadowy vest,
Her feet are worn with seeking rest.

To her cheeks no rose hath summer brought,
While on their pallor time hath wrought
The troubled lines of an after-thought.

But sweet is the gaze of those sad dark eyes,
And sweet their look of mute surprise,
As something in the road she spies.

Spurned under foot, o'ergrown with moss,
Counted of foolish men but loss,
On the cold, hard road lies Jesus' cross.

In the dim twilight as she stood,
She saw the marks of Jesus' Blood,
Then stooped and kissed the Holy Rood.

There are sounds of joy from the years gone by,
There's a pale red light in the forward sky,
And a star looks down through the mist on high.

Hush ! for the light falls clear from that star,
Hush ! for the day-dawn kindles afar,
Hush ! for the gate of the sky is ajar.

What is the voice of the boundless sea
As it clasps the lands excitedly ?
Not the voice of the dead, but of what shall be—

Of what shall be when the world shall cease,
And oceans die in the reign of peace,
When God grants pardon and release.

O sweetest taste of Jesus' Blood !
Joy bursts upon her like a flood ;
The spirit kisseth Holy Rood.

A low wind moaneth evermore,
The nuns still kneel upon the floor,
But Jesus trod this way before.

She lifts the sacred emblem up ;
This was His drink, His bitter cup ;
And all His loved with Him must sup.

Beneath its arms she bows her head,
Those arms so rudely fashionèd,
Which Jesus made His dying bed.

She bends beneath the cross's weight,
But now no longer desolate,
She stands before the convent gate.

Sweeter and sweeter the sisters sing,
From arch and roof the echoes ring,
While God above is listening.

“ *Ave Maria*, Virgin blest,
Help the sin-stained and distrest,
Grant the weary-hearted rest ! ”

The altar-lights are shining fair,
And Jesus' cross is standing there ;
The darkness brightens everywhere.

In silent bliss the spirit kneels,
For mortal utterance half conceals
The deepest joy the bosom feels.

She bears her burden day by day ;
It wakens her at morning grey,
And calms her at eve's setting ray.

She bears it through the length of years ;
The rough wood drives away her fears,
The blood-stains check all earthly tears.

Through daily round of deed and psalm,
She moves in silent strength and calm,
The cross her solace and her balm.

She bears it round from door to door,
And lonely hearts that ached before,
Find joy and peace for evermore.

So in the present, people say,
Of holy deed and prayer alway,
She finds to-morrow and yesterday.

COGGESHALL, ESSEX,
November 12, 1886.

JUSTIN.

“Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος . . . καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο.”

DEDICATION.

O POOR, sad hearts that struggle on and wait,
Like shipwrecked sailors on a spar at sea,
Through deepening glooms, if haply, soon or late,
Some day-dawn glimmer of what is to be,
Not knowing Christ, nor gladdened by His Love
And Life indwelling—to you I dedicate
These humble musings, praying that from above,
On you, being faithful found, the light may shine
Of Life incarnate and of Love divine.
Take, then, these thoughts, in loving memory
Of those dead hearts that brought it first to me.

Down by the sea, in infinite solitude
And wrapt in darkness, save when gleams of light
Broke from the moon aslant the hurrying clouds
That fled the wind, lay Justin, worn with grief,
And heart-sick with vain searching after God.
He heeded not the cold white foam that crept
In silence round his feet, nor the tall sedge
That sighed like lonely forest round his head ;
His heart was weary of this weight of being,
Weary of all the mystery of life,
Weary of all the littleness of men,
And the dark riddle that he could not solve—
Why men should be, why pain and sin and death,
And where were hid the lineaments of God.
No voice was near. Behind, a lofty cape,
Whose iron face was scarred by many a storm,
Loomed threatening in the dark, and cleft the main,
And laid its giant hand upon the deep.
One grizzled oak tree crowned it, and the surf
Broke ever at its base, with ceaseless voice

Powerless to mar its silent majesty.
Sweet was the loneliness to Justin, sweet
Perturbèd nature, as in harmony
With the dark thoughts that beat upon his soul.
Nor speechless long he lay. The tide of grief,
O'erflowing thè narrow limits of the mind,
Broke from him, and in burning words he cried :
" O God, if God there be in this foul chase !
O Fate, if Fate it be that drives us thus !
O Chance, if it be Thou that mouldeth all !
Stern Power, whate'er Thy name, that sit'st sublime
Above creation, throned creation's Lord,
With feet upon the spheres, whose flaming arms
Scatter new worlds from age to age, to roll
Thro' the dim cycles of all time, to bloom
Into warm life—what iron law impels,
Or wanton cruelty in the eternal deep
Of mind supreme, Thee to send sin and death
To prey thus on the créatures of Thine hands,
Until the white skulls crumble back to earth
From whence they sprung ? O Chance ! O Fate ! O
God !
My soul is broken with the clang of worlds ;
The universe is discord-all to me,

I see dark planets roll o'er human graves ;
I feel them quivering with the cries of souls.
I know no more. O Power, whose face is veiled
From man in Thine own greatness,—Thou, whom I
Thro' weary years have sought, but sought in vain,
In every shadow upon every hill,
In the sweet features of a child, or on
The illimitable sea, in heat, in cold,
And in the rain that clothes the earth with buds,
And in the breath of things invisible,
Till, worn and helpless, now I long for death,—
Let me before I die hear some still voice
(If such indeed there be), some undertone
That, flowing from eternity thro' all
The jarring voices that now rend the soul,
Shall blend them into one long harmony :
So let me hearing die, and dying rest."

He ceased, and, sweet as after day of storm
Flows the still sea at even—the winds and waves
Asleep in purple mists—a silence crept
Over the worlds and flooded Justin's soul ;
And in the silence Justin heard a voice,
And the warm throbbing of a human heart.

And thro' the darkness moved the form of Christ,
White-robed, with crown of thorns and those sad eyes
That saw His Mother weep beside the cross.
Then from innumerable throats uprose
One glorious music, one great hymn of praise
From all creation, th' universal sounds
Of tireless nature,—thunders of the sea
On clouded crags where arctic winds at night
Tear at its foaming lips, a land of ice
And spectral suns ; the deep-toned mountains, too,
All shadow-clad in forests, send their voice
From caverns subterranean, where the newts
And blind-worms fear no day ; the lion's roar
On viewless waste ; the thundering cataract,
And huge leviathan. Nor only these,
But from the laughing groves and vine-clad hills
And valleys come sweet sounds—the notes of birds,
The hum of insects, when the meridian sun
Drives the glad reapers to their noonday meal,
By leaf-arched brook ; and lowings from the fold,
In cooler evening, when the maidens ply
Their daily task ; the children's innocent mirth,
And angels' songs, cloud-wafted from the deep
Of heaven's blue ; and, fainter still, the sounds

Of far-off worlds and the orb'd universe.
But that which ran thro' all, and linked them all
In one long harmony—that undertone
Which made them music—was the voice of Christ
And the soft beating of His human heart.
A calm light stole on Justin, and a peace,
Unknown before, unutterable, deep
Within the spirit's depths—a new-born sense
As if his heart had eyes, and every eye
Saw God thro' all in His own loveliness.
The vision passed, and slowly Justin rose,
Unwilling quickly to disturb the peace
Which his strange dream had poured into his soul,
And the last accents of the voice that yet
Throbb'd in his heart and kindled all his love.
There was a stillness and a hush o'er nature,
The sweet expectancy of early dawn
That waits its king ; the wind had fall'n, the sea
And shore spoke but in whispers ; only birds
Felt not the universal awe, but from their nests,
Dew-sprinkled, woke with songs the sleeping woods,
Through which, a faded beauty, peered the moon.
Then, turning, Justin suddenly beheld
A man of years, with long dark robes and hair

Whiter than sea-foam in the moonlight seen,
Strewn on black rocks, who, seeing Justin rise,
Moved nearer to him, saying, "O my son!
For son thou art in this new faith whereto
I call thee, seeing thou wilt be born again
By water and the washing of thy soul
From its vain creeds, me hath the Father sent
(In His great mercy loving thee and all)
To be a witness to thee of thy dream,
To solve the mysteries thou couldst not solve
By thine own searching, and to lead thee now
To that dear Voice thou heard'st, and lay thine
head
Upon the Heart that filled thy soul with peace."

So by the sea, among the frowning rocks,
They sat in converse, while the aged priest
Led Justin's spirit onward thro' the gloom
Of vain philosophies, as one who guides
An alpine traveller up some dizzy height,
Where opening views expand at every step
Thro' lessening mist, till Justin gazed at last
Upon a manger rude, and, sleeping, laid therein,
He saw the features of the Son of God.

“My Father,” then cried Justin, “now my heart
Reads the bright message of my dream. I see
How vain and futile all philosophies,
But this the last which burns into my soul
With fire of love so wondrous ; yet I see
How even they, with weak and tremulous hand,
Point toward the Christ and lead men up to Him.
I now descry His footsteps in dead years,
He guiding me unconscious, knowing Him not.
When first my limbs, full-grown in sinewy youth,
Felt the strong life within, my spirit glad
Moved like broad day enshrined in cloudless skies ;
No care I knew, no sorrow grieved my heart,
But all was joy—a throbbing, flowing joy.
I wandered thro’ the forests and the wilds,
On mountain height, above the birth of storms ;
I heard unmoved the thunder at my feet,
And tottering crags that filled abysmal depths
With shattered pinnacles, and voices dread
That made earth tremble to its central fire ;
I heard the lion’s roar, but felt no fear :
The many-fingered forests clapped their hands,
They breathed my life, the lions were free as I,—
I felt all nature and myself were one ;

Birds, beasts, and insects, breathing flowers and trees,
And charmed life linked us in brotherhood.
I watched the rising sun from day to day
Surprise the world with glories ever new.
No clouds obscured ; the rosy hands of dawn
But lifted us to realms of joyousness
And deepening light. No thought of setting day
Saddened my heart, and in the silent eve
I saw the new sun, like a golden seed,
Hid in the crimson bosom of the old,
Full of fresh life and hope and songs of birds,
To wake the morn. The fish and I were friends ;
Their silvery shinings could no swifter pierce
The lucid depths and shallows than could I ;
They were my brothers, too, for they had life,
And life meant joy, and joy was brotherhood.
My comrades laughed, and called me 'ocean's king,'
'Neptune, the ocean's king.' 'Not so,' said I ;
'Call me not king, but rather friend of all !'
Thus passed the years, till one day in a wood,
As I lay dreaming by a moss-edged pool,
Whose twinkling eyes were laughing at the trees
That laughed in golden glories overhead,
While burnished beetles, green and amber-hued,

Skimmed o'er its waves, I heard a strange wild note,
Above the notes of birds, so beautiful,
It thrilled my soul, and made my pulses glow
With warmer life. The leaves were pushed aside,
And, stepping thro' the shadows, came a youth,
God-like in motion, tall and supple-limbed,
Drenched with the dappled sunlight, and begirt
With skin of leopard clasped about the waist
With silver. Pendant from his neck there hung
A shell, such as Apollo found at dawn,
Sea-voiced and singing to the plaintive wind,
Careless who heard. This, when he held and struck
With skilful hand, gave forth divinest sounds,
Softer than the low humming of the bees,
And sweeter than the trill of nightingale ;
Or, stern and powerful, as his mood would change,
Like the loud voice that fills the midnight trees
And runs before the chariot of the storm,
Startling all nature, crying, 'Lo ! he comes,
The Storm-God comes !' or, shrill as winter winds
That wail at evening round the woodman's hut,
When close-drawn lattice and the blazing hearth
And meal well earned make glad the hearts within
Of children and of sire. 'O youth !' I cried,

Gaining my speech at last, 'fain would I know
The art that can so charm the sense,—not birds
Or aught on earth so beautiful. Could I
But follow thee in all thy wanderings,
But hear thee play and drink my spirit's fill
Of those wild melodies, how would not joy
Grow more intense ! After such wakening life
Were poor indeed, the common lot of beasts
And flowers ; but man I see is higher,
(Tho' till this hour content). These strains have roused
Immortal sense within of something great ;
Unutterable longings chafe the soul,
Dreams of the gods, and voices of dead years.
The liquid strains so thrilled me with their power
That, with expanded consciousness, I saw
The birth of empires, heard the rolling spheres,
Masts snapped at sea, and, in strange concourse blent,
The din of cities, cries of wasted hearts,
Marshalling of steeds, ravings of fevered men ;
While, over all the moaning of a sea,
And faint, a voice growing stronger, 'Is this all ?'
If Music has such power, She, and not life,
Must be man's good. Oh, let me follow Thee,
Her worshipper, for She can satisfy.'

Then, with a smile like sunlight on his face,
He sang this song in answer, carelessly—

‘O Soul, glad Soul, what wert thou without song?

Morns never smiling, wilds without a tree,
A waste of voiceless twilight wide and long,

Dark rivers dying in eternal sea,

O Soul, sad Soul, *that* wert thou without song.

‘O Soul, sad Soul, the rivers have to die,

Morn grows to eve, trees wither by the way,
Clouds hide the sun and tears fall from the sky ;

But Music lives though earth should melt away.

Oh ! joy, glad Soul, she will not let thee die.’

“He scarce had ceased when such a pain convulsed

His features as the agony that comes

At death, and with one ringing cry he shook

An adder from his foot, then wildly fled,

With face distorted, blanched with deadly fear,

Eyes glaring madly, thro’ the tangled glade,

Like some chased stag that hears the hounds behind,

Nor recks what lies before. I followed fast,

But swift as wind he fled. A river deep

And rapid flowed hard by, whose rocky sides,
Upheaved by some convulsion, frowning stood
To guard its narrow channel. There a cliff
Stretched half across the stream, and at its foot
The hurrying waters curled in many a fold
Of creamy white. Him, on the rocks I found
There lying, prostrate, racked with anguish sore,
And cold with coming death ; his foaming lips
Were bloodless, and his limbs, all stained and torn,
Writhed helplessly. I brought green moss and placed
For pillow 'neath his head ; I laved his brow
And face and clotted hair ; but all in vain
I strove, for ever a wild look would come
In his dark eyes, and shade of ghastly fear.
Colder he grew, and silent, till at length
I thought him dead, and wondered, pitying him,
And his fair form so helpless on the sand,
As some white statue fallen from its niche,
Broken irreparably. A sudden thought
Flashed on my mind. The shell—the shell was there,
Still round his neck. If I could strike some sounds
Of that new power that had so swayed my soul,
What might not chance ! For music should indeed,
If god of men, be master over death,

And light up fire within the chilling breast.
I seized the shell and struck it : one low sound
Broke from it, dying among the cliffs and roar
Of current, soft as a child's moan in dreams.
But, ere I touched again, with a wild laugh
That made the forests ring and scared the owls
From their day-sleep, and drove them hooting out
In blinding sunlight, suddenly he sprang,
Clutched with mad hands the shell, and, crushing it,
Flung the white fragments in the waves below.
He saw them sink, then crying aloud, ' 'Tis vain !
'Tis vain ; the shadow comes ! ' he fell back dead.
O death-cry in the roaring of the waves,
O death-cry in the stillness of the rocks,
O death-cry in the laughing of the trees !
The shadow passing by had fallen on me,
Never to rise. So thought I then. I broke
Into loud weeping thus that life should end,
In pain and loathsomeness, the fairest flower
Of nature dying unfruitful. Stygian dark
And horrors of the shades passed over me,
Cries of the Furies and the torrent's roar
Rang in my ears, and voices out of hell
Re-echoed, ' Vain ! 'tis vain ; the shadow comes ! '

I hid the dead with moss, then turned and fled,
I cared not whither, so that I might fly
From the dark thoughts that drove me night and day,
And sights of death that haunted me. All changed
The glorious world ! and rapine, lust, and death
Glared in each face, and blasted all but wilds
Where man was not. Then, Father, came the thought
That in that higher nature might be peace
Which music roused, but could not satisfy ;
So sought I wisdom and the secret, dread,
Of life and death, nor knew I where to find.
I journeyed to the blazing East, and there,
In blinding simooms and a sun that scorched
League upon league of sand, I stood before
The stony monster that primeval hands,
Fraught with mad longings, shaped with giant tools
From mountain-side. O passionless cold lips !
O smile of scorn ! O glance of burning hate !
I placed my lips against its stony mouth,
On fire to hear, tho' hearing were to die,
The secret of the Sphinx. I heard the birth
And death of empires, heard the rolling spheres,
Masts snapped at sea, and, in strange concourse blent,
The din of cities, cries of wasted hearts,

Marshalling of steeds, ravings of fevered men,
While over all the moaning of a sea,
And faint a voice, growing stronger, 'This is all.'
And this was all; and so I journeyed home,
Heart-sick, and with dark thoughts that gnawed my
soul

As fire eats out a tree, when thunder-clouds
Darken the woods, and lightning blasts the stems,
With fruit half-ripe. The unexpressed desire
For something further than the furthest star,
For something deeper than the lowest deep,
For something behind all, thro' all, in all,
Drove me to fathom all philosophy.
Thus long time sought I God, not knowing, in fire,
In cold, in light, and, mole-like, closed my eyes,
And groped thro' nature, while the truth I sought
Was at my door, His hand upon my latch,
And I too blind to see, for the dark shade
Of things material hung upon my sight.
Oh, Father, I was fearful lest the truth
Should grind my soul to powder if I found.
For what was I but man? and God, the God
Of this great universe, what should He care
For one worn heart among a myriad stars?

If I should find—what should I find, indeed,
But some great power my senses could not grasp,
A part of some vast whole I could not see,
And I no more to Him than breathing clay?
What link between the Maker and the made?
For men can draw no nourishment from stones
And things in nature savē thro' beasts and flowers,
Which link the two ; and so, methought, if God
Should be the God I deem Him, how can He,
The hidden Force that blindly moves the world,
Soothe the fierce hunger in the soul of man
That craves for love? What sympathy between
The finite and the infinite? Life itself
Grew hard to breathe beneath eternal clouds ;
No sun, no goal, to cheer it. But I see
In this dear Christ the answer of my soul ;
The plēdge of God's great love ; the link that binds
The Godhead and the manhood into one ;
The undertone that makes one harmony
Of our existence, giving life and peace
And love for men where once a fruitless search
Thro' the blind forces of the universe
In weary years shut out the light of day,
And dried the fount of love within the soul."

He ceased, and answered lovingly the Sage :
" Son, I perceive that now thy soul hath found
The peace it sought, and in the rifted Side
A hiding-place and shelter from the blast.
Now I perceive the Spirit, as at first,
Moves on the troubled waters of thy mind,
And from dark chaos bringeth light and peace.
And now in this still hour, when every day
On the dim altar lies the Son of God,
That offering of which the prophet spake,*
And feeds His children with their daily bread,
Let us speak on of those high themes that lift
The soul from out the trammels of this life
Up to the throne of God ; and so, perchance,
As on that country road at eventide,
The risen One shall come with gentle voice
And set our hearts on fire." †

Thus they conversed,
Unconscious of aught else in trance divine.
And, as a mist rising from vale and hill
Discloses fields, and further off the dawn
On the broad sea, until there rolls unveiled
The long full glory of the landscape, thus,

* Mal. i. 11.

† St. Luke xxiv. 13-35.

As Justin sat, clearer his vision grew
Of this new faith, until he saw the Christ
Come towards him thro' the mists of dying creeds
That once had shrouded Him. And thus they spake ;
And Justin learned how suffering here and sin
Resisted were but powers to try the soul,
And forge it out more strong for this hard life,
More bright for that hereafter, and that Christ,
Informing all the soul with His great love,
Can purge the thoughts and bend the stubborn will.
For other creeds but touch the edge of being,
But this new life breathes life into our life ;
For Christ hath trod our path before, and conquered all,
In the cold desert and upon the cross,
With bleeding hands and feet.

Then, kneeling down
Upon the cold, hard rocks, with lifted face
Turned to the glimmering east, he cried, " O God !
Lord of innumerable worlds which move,
Zone upon zone, thro' that thick night which hangs
About Thy feet for ever—Thou, whose voice
From the dead earth can frame the souls of men,
The lips that murmur praises, and the eyes
That kindle into love—O Thou, from whom

In the blind past flowed forth the light and power
That make creation circle round Thy throne
Thro' all the ages—Thou, to whom alone
Time's self is dead, and death is but new life
That flows unseen thro' this great universe,
Reframing all and springing in new forms
More worthy Thee—O Thou, in whom unite
The past, the present, and the future—Thou,
The centre of all time, the great I AM,
Heart of eternity,—in Thee I find,
O God, my God, the resting-place I sought,
In Thee I find the answer of my quest,
In Thee the satisfaction of my soul.
I thank Thee Thou hast led me like a child
To these sweet streams for which my soul hath longed
Thro' the dim past. And now I see anew
How all creation, like some pyramid,
Built on a waste of ages as the sands
Of a great desert, doth on every side,
Step upon step, lead upward to Thy throne.
Inscrutable Thy ways, O God, and yet
Thro' the thick clouds that hide Thy face there comes
A beam of light, the offspring of Thy love;
For in my dreams I heard a human voice,

And the warm beating of a human heart
Throbbing thro' nature ; and I saw far off
In the dim void the suffering face of Christ.
O Christ in God ! O God in Christ ! O God !
Pledge of the Father's love, O Fount of light !
Thine was the Voice that stilled my fearful heart,
Thine was the Heart that filled my soul with peace.
O Christ, the centre of humanity !
O God, the heart of this great universe !
O Christ in God ! Thou linkest all to Thee
By Thy torn side and bleeding hands and feet.
How can we fear, tho' long and loud the storm,
If thro' the darkness comes a human Voice ?
How can we tremble, when our head is laid
Upon that breast where beats a human Heart ?
O Man in God, that bringest God to men !
O God in Man, that liftest man to God !
Effulgence of the essence which, divine,
Without Thee incommunicable were ;
Strong Light to light all mysteries, and Thou,
The perfect rest I sought through weary years
On trackless wastes ! Behold, in faith and love,
O God, my God, I come, I come to Thee."
He ceased, and, slowly rising from his knees,

He saw the priest afar with tearful eyes,
And arms outstretched in thankfulness, and said,
"I would be born again in this new faith,
My Father, by the washing of my soul
From its dark stains, for I am but a babe,
And would learn life anew." So, silent, moved
They to the shore, absorbed in thoughts too deep
For earthly speech, and silence fell awhile
Upon the earth in reverence to its God,
And sky and ocean seemed to wait in awe.
There, by the long white ripples on the shore,
The priest stooped down in that still hour, and took
A handful from the waves, the eternal sea,
That, like the love of God, flows over all,
Or height or depth, and levels all, and thus
Baptized he Justin in the Triune Name,
And on his forehead made the holy sign ;
And, as the water fell on him, the sun
Rose in full glory, and the sky grew bright,
And angels sang far off, for day had dawned
Upon the ocean and in Justin's soul.

Then spake the priest, "My son, in this calm sea
I read thy life, all stillness now and peace,

In the sweet morning 'neath the new-born day.
But see, the wind now breaks it into waves,
Which, rising from their sleep, each tipped with light,
Make that long golden pathway to the sun.
So shall it be with thee. Thy soul now yearns
To rest for ever at the feet of Christ ;
But suffering, pain, and toil shall sweep across
Its stillness, and the strife of noisy tongues,
And persecution, cold, and nakedness
Shall break its surface ; but each pain shall be
Bright with the love of Christ, and all thy life
Shall be a path to lead men up to Him."

So the priest parted, blessing him, and Justin
Rose from his knees and moved among all men,
And reasoned with them of the love of God
And his dear Christ, and led men up to Him
From false philosophies, until at last
His life set in the crimson of his blood,
And rose in splendour near the throne of God.

EVOLUTION.

THOU stand'st complete in every part,
An individual of thy kind ;
But whence thou cam'st and what thou art,
Didst ever ask thee of thy mind ?

Thou claim'st a portion of God's earth ;
Thou say'st to all men, " This is I ;"
Thou hast a date to mark thy birth,
And other date when thou shalt die.

Thy years are in the planets' years ;
A space in all that mighty span,
A little space of smiles and tears,
Is writ in shining letters—" Man."

Thou hear'st the mighty ocean roll,
Thou seest death on every hand ;
There loom strange phantoms in thy soul,
And boundless heavens arch the land.

Thy feet are on the sand and clay,
Which once had other growths than these,
And in the great world's yesterday,
Heard murmurs of the tropic seas.

Life out of death, death out of life,
In endless cycles rolling on,
And fire-gleams flashing from the strife
Of what will come and what has gone.

A perfect whole, a perfect plan,
Ay, doubtless, in the perfect mind,
An onward march since time began,
With yet no laggart left behind.

All blended in a wondrous chain,
Each link the fittest for its place;
The stronger made to bear the strain,
The weaker formed to give it grace.

But what art thou and what am I?
What place is ours in all this scheme?
What is it to be born and die?
Are we but phases in a dream,

That earth or some prime mother dreams,
Folded away in crimson skies ?
Or are we dazzled with the beams
Of light too strong for new-born eyes ?

Certes, we are not very much ;
We cannot cause ourselves to be ;
Not even the limbs by which we touch
Are really owned by thee and me.

But they were fashioned years ago,
Ay, centuries ; since earth's natal morn,
The wondering ages saw them grow,
Till our time came and we were born.

And we are present, future, -past—
Shall live again, have lived before,
Like billows on the beaches cast
Of tides that flow for evermore.

And yet thou sayest, " This is I ;
I am marked off from all my kind ;
I look not to the by-and-by ;
I care not for what lies behind."

That may be so ; but to mine eyes
 A being of wondrous make thou art
 The point at which infinities
 Converge, touch, and for ever part.

Thou canst not unmake what has been,
 Nor hold back that which is to come ;
 We dwell upon the waste between
 In the small " now " which is our home.

" Though this be so," thou answerest, " still
 I feel and know myself to be :
 Thy creed would make the perfect will
 In God's sight like a stone or tree."

Ah no ! for stone and tree are one,
 And perfect will bears different fruit ;
 The will is grander than the sun,
 The body brother to the brute.

But in the ages thou shalt be
 A link from unknown to unknown,
 A bridge across a darkling sea,
 A light on the world's pathway thrown

Ay, such is man — a moan in sleep ;
A passing dream ; he thinks and is,
And then falls back into the deep —
Where other deeps call unto this.

But in that thinking, in that pause,
That dream which did so little yield,
There met a universe of laws,
And branched out into wider field.

We live not for ourselves — ah no !
We do not live ; man lives in us.
The race dwells in us ; even so
The race will live, though we pass thus.

The forces that have fashioned thee
Have rolled through space since time began —
Have ranged the heavens, the earth, the sea,
And in God's time have made thee man.

And so to further goal they move,
When thou hast passed from mortal sight ;
To fashion beings that will prove
More wondrous still, more full of light.

We are the foam-crest on the wave,
Lit for a moment by the sun ;
A moment thus we toss and rave,
Then fall back ere our day is done.

Thou then art twain—the force that builds
The broad foundations of the race,
And separate light from God that gilds
The soul with individual grace.

God looks at both : the one displays
The laws that work His purpose still ;
The other thine own spirit sways,
And here God asks the perfect will.

I would not have thee think the less
Of this small part which is man's soul,
Nor miss the exceeding blessedness
Of knowing thyself a separate whole.

“What proof,” thou sayest, “if this be true,
That thou and I survive the shock
Which summons all we are and do
To credit of the primal stock ?

“ If I and thou a moment are
Conscious of self, of touch, of sight,
Then vanish like a falling star,
And sink in everlasting night,

“ What proof that in the overthrow
The thing that says, knows, ‘ This is I,’
Will not pass with the rest, and go
Dissolved into the vast supply ? ”

Though formed of elemental dust,
And moulded through such countless years,
We perish not with these, but must
Survive the rolling of the spheres.

We must, I say ; for what most high
In man ? Is't not the subtle part,
The power which tells me, “ This is I ;
I am not everything thou art ” ?

Would God have laboured then and wrought
With fire and water, life and death,
And through the weary cycles brought
A creature with the vital breath,

And breathed such power within his soul,
And crowned him with such wondrous grace,
And said, "Go forth from pole to pole,
And meet thy brother face to face,"

If this strange power were meant to sink
Back into chaos or be lost,
Or cast off as a broken link,
Or die like wave along the coast?

Not that God's way. On—ever on,
To nobler, purer, higher things ;
From out the ages that are gone
Each newer, grander era springs.

So nought is lost, but all must pass,
And life through varied stages move ;
From the pale fungus in the grass,
To deepest depths of light and love.

And we must pass—we shall not die ;
Changed and transformed, but still the same,
To grander heights of mystery,
To fairer realms than whence we came.

God will not let His work be lost ;
 Too wondrous is the mind of man,
Too many ages it has cost
 The huge fulfilment' of His plan.

But on we pass, for ever on,
 Through death to other deaths and life ;
To brighter lights when these are gone ;
 To broader thought, more glorious strife ;

To vistas opening out of these ;
 To wonders shining from afar,
Above the surging of the seas,
 Above the course of moon and star ;

To higher powers of will and deed,
 All bounds and limits left behind ;
To truths undreamt in any creed ;
 To deeper love, more God-like mind.

For this the sky and sea and earth
 God moulded with His ice and fire ;
For this the ages gave us birth,
 And filled our hearts with mad desire.

Great God ! we move into the vast ;
All questions vain—the shadows come !
We hear no answer from the past ;
The years before us all are dumb.

We trust Thy purpose and Thy will,
We see afar the shining goal ;
Forgive us if there linger still
Some human fear within our soul !

Forgive us, if when crumbling in
The world that we have loved and known,
With forms so fair to us, we sin
By eyes averted from Thy throne !

Forgive us, if with thoughts too wild,
And eyes too dim to pierce the gloom,
We shudder like a frightened child
That enters at a darkened room !

Forgive us, if when dies away
All human sound upon our ears,
We hear not, in the swift decay,
Thy loving voice to calm our fears !

But lo ! the dawn of fuller days ;
 Horizon-glories fringe the sky !
Our feet would climb the shining ways
 To meet man's widest destiny.

Come, then, all sorrow's recompense !
 The kindling sky is flaked with gold ;
Above the shattered screen of sense,
 A voice like thunder cries, " Behold ! "

1887.

HYMN.

AFTER THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION.

We hail Thee now, O Jesu,
Upon Thine Altar-throne,
Though sight and touch have failed us,
And faith perceives alone !
Thy love has veiled Thy Godhead,
And hid Thy power divine,
In mercy to our weakness,
Beneath an earthly sign.

We hail Thee now, O Jesu !
In silence hast thou come ;
For all the hosts of heaven
With wonderment are dumb—
So great the condescension,
So marvellous the love,
Which for our sakes, O Saviour,
Have drawn Thee from above.

We hail Thee now, O Jesu !
For law and type have ceased,
And Thou in each Communion
Art Sacrifice and Priest ;
We offer to the Father,
In union, Lord, with Thee,
Thy precious Blood and Body
To cleanse and set us free.

We hail Thee now, O Jesu !
For death is drawing near,
And in Thy presence only
Its terrors disappear.
Dwell with us, sweetest Saviour,
And guide us through the night,
Till shadows end in glory,
And faith be lost in sight.

Amen.

HYMN.

AFTER RECEIVING THE HOLY COMMUNION.

I HAVE Thee now, O Jesu,
Enshrined within my soul,
In all Thy love and fulness,
With power to make me whole.
Though cold and so unworthy,
Though weak and stained with sin,
I opened to Thee, Jesu,
And Thou hast entered in.

I have Thee now, O Jesu !
And oh, the thrill divine
To feel that Thou art in me,
To know that Thou art mine !
I have Thee, too, O Jesu,
As pledge of future bliss ;
But faith is lost in wonder
At rapture more than this.

I have Thee now, O Jesu !
Purge all my dross away,
Light up my inmost being
With Thy full flood of day ;
Do Thou, O Lord, shine through me
In all my words and ways,
Till others catch Thy glory,
And join in endless praise.

I have Thee now, O Jesu !
Oh, never more depart !
Grant that no fresh offences
Shall drive Thee from my heart ;
Till down the long dark valley,
The path which Thou hast trod,
There dawns in cloudless splendour
The vision of my God.

Amen.

CATHOLICISM.

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, under one Shepherd.”—JOHN x. 16.

HAST thou not seen the tints unfold,
From earth, sky, sea, and setting sun,
When all the glare of day was done,
And melt in one long stream of gold ?

So down the dim-lit glades of time,
Age after age, things divers blend,
Each working for the same great end,
And in its working each sublime.

Was it in vain that Buddha taught,
Or that Mohammed lived and died ?
Have they not, working side by side
In differing climes, God's purpose wrought ?

O Christian sage, who lov'st thy creeds !
Think not the ropes that bind thee fast,
Like storm-tossed sailor, to the mast,
Can answer yet each brother's needs.

And rail not thou at those half-known,
Who, groping thro' a darker night,
Have found perhaps a dimmer light
Than that thou sternly call'st thine own.

Wouldst *thou* have spent, like them, thy youth,
Thy manhood, and thy weak old age,
In one long search thro' nature's page,
An unassisted search, for truth ?

Oh, dream not the Almighty's powers
Must ever work in one known way ;
Nor think those planets have no day
Whose suns are other suns than ours.

HYMN.

“ Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.”—REV. iii. 20.

I HEARD a voice at midnight, and it cried,
“ O weary heart, O soul for which I died,
Why wilt thou spurn My wounded hands and side ?

“ Is there a heart more tender, more divine,
Than that sad heart which gave itself for thine ?
Could there be love more warm, more full than Mine ?

“ What other touch can still thy trembling breath ?
What other hand can hold thee after death ?
What bread so sweet to him that hungereth ?

“ Warm is thy chamber, soft and warm thy bed ;
Bleak, howling winds are round the path I tread ;—
The Son of man can nowhere lay His head.

“Wilt thou not open to Me? To and fro
I wander, weary, thro’ the driving snow ;
But colder still that thou wouldst spurn Me so.

“I have a crown more bright than all that be,
I have a kingdom wider than the sea ;
But both have I abandoned, seeking thee.

“Poor, weary heart, so worn and sad within !
Oh, open to thy Friend, thy Stay from sin,
That I, with all My love, may enter in.”

I heard a voice at midnight, and I cried,
“O Lord, I need Thy wounded hands and side—
I need Thy love,—Lord, enter and abide.”

LINES.

I SOMETIMES think that had I seen Thy face
In those old days when Thou wast with us here,
Clothed with our flesh, a man as we are men,
The very sight had filled my soul with grace ;
I should have clung to Thee, and not again
Moved from Thy side, no lurking doubt or fear
Could drive me from so sweet a hiding-place.

So think I sometimes, and would almost pray
That other age were chosen my faith to prove
More near Thine own (if such a prayer might be),
Full of Thy memories. But no ; each day
Hath its own light, O Christ, and proofs of Thee ;
For there was one who saw Thy look of love,
Yet, having wealth, went sorrowful away.

HYMN.

HAIL, sacred Feast, to weary mortals given,
Pledge of God's love ! O Christ, we here adore
Thee, the slain Lamb, and Thee, the Bread from
heaven—

Our life and peace, our joy for evermore.

Feed us, dear Lord, Thine own great love supplying
Our lack of faith, our need of every grace ;
Dwell in us richly, till, on Thee relying,
We reach our home and see Thee face to face.

"THE CROWN OF THORNS."

WITH each new day new cares will wait for thee,
Trials and heart-aches ; yet do thou not fear,
But take them lovingly, and, weaving them
Into a crown of thorns, wear and let be
For ever on thy head, a diadem,
More royal than gold, the dearest token here
Of that sad voice that whispers, " Follow Me."

RESIGNATION.

No selfish grief, no clamourings at our loss,
Shall break the sacred stillness of the dim
Dawn of eternity ; we leave thee here,
Far from the winds and waves that round us toss.
Where every pain is soothed and every fear,
In the safe keeping of the arms of Him
That saw His Mother weep beside the cross.

1884.

REQUIESCAT.

GENERAL GORDON.

O THOU twice hero—hero in thy life
And in thy death—we have no power to crown
Thy nobleness ; we weep thine arm in strife ;
We weep, but glory in thy life laid down.

There comes no voice from Egypt, none did stand
Beside thee fall'n ; as who the winepress trod,
Thou wert alone ; thy face is hid in sand,
And thy last moments in the ear of God.

Dying as thou didst, no stone can guard thy name,
No storied marble mark thy dust beneath.
What need? The whole world knows thee, speaks
thy fame,
And all the world hath shuddered at thy death.

Hath shuddered ; yet the stroke that laid thee low
Shall wring men's hearts with envy, and new eyes,
Age after age, shall kindle in the glow
Of thy great life and life's self-sacrifice.

We cannot dream the days of glory passed,
That England bears no heroes in her age ;
Strong honour lives, and breathed in thee, the last
And greatest hero on her history's page.

Saint ! hero ! through the clouds of doubt that loom
O'er darkling skies, thy life hath power to bless ;
We thank thee thou hast shown us in the gloom :
Once more Christ's power and childlike manliness.

1885.

IN MEMORIAM.

A. H. MACRONOCHIE.

Two watchers sit beside the dead ;
From hour to hour no prayer is said,
For they are dumb and he is dead ;
And snows are curling round his head,
While God's white wings are overspread.

None heard the sad heart's stifled cry ---
None, save the two dogs sitting by,
And Him that watcheth in the sky.
It passed, that agonizing cry,
In gloom as deep as Calvary !

None saw the last look on that face
Where men once read such love and grace ;
No hand was nigh to smooth the trace
Of anguish on that pallid face.
The patient hero wins the race
Alone in God's great dwelling-place.

Earth folded him with gentle hands
In Nature's whitest swathing bands ;
A snow-veil on his face and hands,
And silence on those northern lands.
Thro' cloud-rift in the west expands
A light from where God's temple stands.

The new-born soul in Paradise
Forgets the snow and wintry skies—
Forgets, in sunny Paradise,
The dying body's agonies.
Lord, keep him till that form shall rise
To meet Thee coming in the skies !

1888.

AN EPIGRAM.

THEY ARE BURIED IN THE CANADIAN NORTH-WEST, 1885.

GROWING to full manhood now,
With the care lines on our brow,
We, the youngest of the nations,
With no childish lamentations,
Weep, as only strong men weep,
For the noble hearts that sleep,
Pillowed where they fought and bled,
The loved and lost, our glorious dead!

Toil and sorrow come with age,
Manhood's rightful heritage;
Toil our arms more strong shall render,
Sorrow make our hearts more tender,
In the heartlessness of time,
Honour lays a wreath sublime
Deathless glory, where they bled,
Our loved and lost, our glorious dead!

Wild the prairie grasses wave
 O'er each hero's new made grave ;
 Time shall write such wrinkles o'er us,
 But the future spreads before us
 Glorious in that sunset land
 Nerving every heart and hand,
 Comes a brightness none can shed,
 But the dead, the glorious dead !

Lay them where they fought and fell,
 Every heart shall ring their knell,
 For the lessons they have taught us,
 For the glory they have brought us,
 Tho' our hearts are sad and bowed,
 Nobleness still makes us proud
 Proud of light their names shall shed
 In the roll call of our dead !

Growing to full manhood now,
 With the care-lines on our brow,
 We, the youngest of the nations,
 With no childish lamentations,
 Weep, as only strong men weep,
 For the noble hearts that sleep

Where the call of duty led,
Where the lonely prairies spread,
Where for us they fought and bled,
Our loved, our lost, our glorious dead !

1885.

BRITISH WAR SONG.

“WARS and rumours of wars”—the clouds lower over
the sea,

And a man must now be a man, if ever a man can
be;

“Wars and rumours of wars”—a cry from the flaming
East,

For the vultures are gathered together, and the lions
roar over the feast.

War! Shall we flinch! Shall we tremble! Shall we
shrink like cowards from the fray?

Better all Britons were dead than their glory passed
away!

The clouds may be dark and lowering, the storm may
be loud and long,

But the hearts of our men are true, and the arms of
our men are strong.

From the thousand years of glory, from the grave
of heroes gone,

Comes a voice on the breath of the storm, and a
power to spur us on :

A man must now be a man, and every man be true,
For the grave that covers our glory shall cover each
Briton too.

1885.

THE POET'S SONG.

I hid in the world and sang,
And I sang so loud and long
That all the ages rang
With the music of my song.

I sang of the earth and sky,
I sang of the whispering seas,
I sang of the mountains high,
And I sang of the flowers and trees ;

I sang of the early spring,
I sang of the dawning day,
I sang, for I had to sing
As the young lambs have to play ;

Till heaven and earth were ringing,
And all the people heard,
And they said, " We love his singing,
For his song is the song of the bird."

ESTRANGEMENT.

Do you remember how, one autumn night,
We sat upon the rocks and watched the sea
In dreamlike silence, while the moonlight fell
On you and me?

How, as we lingered musing, side by side,
A cold, white mist crept down and hid the sea
And dimmed the moon, and how the air grew chill
Round you and me?

The mist and chill of that drear autumn night,
When we sat silent looking on the sea,
I often think has never passed away
From you and me.

1882.

ON THE CLIFF.

I SEE the great blue ocean kiss the sky
Far to the South, I hear the sea-gulls wail
Among the crags, while underneath the sail
Goes swiftly by.

The sun looks down upon the twinkling sea ;
I hear the waters breaking far below ;
And all is joyous, save the cloud of woe
That hangs o'er me.

The loving sky can ever kiss the sea,
The ripple and the zephyr never part ;
Then why—oh, why—should thy sweet loving heart
Be torn from me ?

LINES WRITTEN ON FINISHING
THE LIFE OF MILTON.

I CLOSED the book, but fancied still
I heard, like distant music roll,
The far-off echoes in my soul
Of his great life. I listened till,
Entranced, I thought that I could hear
His grand old voice amid the gloom ;
And in the twilight-flooded room
I almost felt that he was near.

Thou didst not die, O Milton, when
Thy life on earth had ceased to be ;
They *never* die who pass, like thee,
Enriching all their brother-men.
As often, on the edge of morn,
Lingers one star, its fellows gone,
Thou shin'st alone, and shalt shine on,
An age of ages yet unborn.

ISOLATION.

A SONG AT SUNSET.

THERE'S a lonely spot in the soul of man,
More lone than the moonless sea ;
And a gulf, that never a bridge can span,
'Tween him and all that be ;
And the lips we kiss, and the eyes we love,
And the glory of golden hair,
Melt like the stars in the mist above,
And shed no sunlight there.

There's a weary voice in the soul of man
That cries for the great "to be,"
Like the moan of the worlds when time began,
Or the wail of the wind by the sea ;
And only the fall of the faded leaf
And the sigh of the night in the trees,
Can utter the spirit's lonely grief
And the sorrow that no one sees.

TOO LATE.

THE DYING MAGDALEN.

Hope? What! hope!—you say there is hope for the
long-lost one!

Hope! when the light is out; hope! when the oil
is done;

Hope! No, no, good lady! no hope for me, at least;
No home for me but the clammy grave when life has
ceased.

Hope! Well, there might have been hope had my
mother lived; but, then,

God struck her dead, and I was left alone among
men.

God knows how I loved her; and shall I never see
her again?

Is there no glimpse of heaven for those who are
doomed to pain?

Oh, cannot she come and kiss me? Oh, cannot she
pray by my side,
As she did long ago on that terrible evening before
she died?

If *she* prayed God would hear her, and perhaps—
but no ;
I'm too old a sinner for mercy—there is nothing for
me but woe.

You say that I yet could be saved if I sorrowed for
my sin ;

That the Lord is at heaven's gate to take poor sinners
in !

God knows that I hate my sin, but I feel that it
cannot be ;

I've so often forsaken *Him*, that He *must* have for-
saken me.

Nay, don't offer a prayer for me, lady, it's only
mocking at God :

Who knows but my tired heart *still* may rest beneath
the sod ?

For I always loved the sunny fields and the sweet,
sweet flowers,
And longed to be pure once again like them, in my
better hours.

But after I first had fallen the devil opened my eyes,
And I saw that the *world* knew my shame; and I
hadn't the heart to rise;
So I gave up trying to be good, and sank down lower
in sin,
Tho' the thought of poor dead mother made me
always hate it within.

Oh, many's the night that I've wandered about thro'
rain and snow,
Wandered about in the street, and didn't know where
to go;
And I've often crept to the river and looked at it,
still and black,
And thought how every one spurned me—but some-
thing held me back.

I remember how once, when I stopped, half-dead,
one rainy day,
To rest on *his steps* for a moment, the servants drove
me away ;
Drove me away like a dog from the door of the man
for whom,
O God ! I had given up all in this world and beyond
the tomb.

But don't weep at my story, good lady ; I'm not
worth it living or dead !

Ha, ha ! I'm not frightened of Death, nor the devils
that dance round my bed :

There cannot be any hell deeper nor fuller of devils
and strife

Than the hell that burns in my heart, and the fire
that eats out life.

A MOOD.

As some great cloud upon a mountain's breast,
Hanging for ever, shutteth out the sun,
Its chilly fingers twining in the trees
And blighting them, so ever one dark thought
Broods o'er my life and makes my spirit droop
Beneath its baleful shade. A demon form
Is ever at my side, whose icy touch
Freezes my warmest thoughts, and makes them hang
Like dull, cold icicles about my heart.
I feel his presence 'mid my fellow-men ;
I see his image in the restless sea
That gnaws the land ; and on the towering top,
Where everything is still, amid the rocks,
Worn bald by fleeting years, I hear his tread.
I see his footsteps in the lonely wild,
Where forests ever spring and ever die ;
But, most of all, I feel him near at night,

When all the world is shrouded in the gloom
Of dreamful Sleep,—so like his brother Death ;
I see his eyeballs on the glittering sky ;
I hear his laughter ringing from the stars,
That look at me and say, “ O helpless worm,
Upon a world of worms, dost thou not know
The dust thou treadest in was once like thee,
And laughed its laugh, and had its time to weep,
And now lies helpless, trampled on, forgot,
Scattered upon thy tiny globe which hangs
Chained to its sun in black infinity ?
That thou—thou, too—must soon be dust again,
Forgotten, helpless, trampled on by those
That shall come after thee ? ”

I even hear

His voice amid the voices of my friends,
Harsh, taunting me with death, and dreams of death.
And, when I gaze in rapture on the face
Of whom I love, he casts a hideous light,
That lets me see, behind the sweet, warm flesh,
The lightless skull, and o'er the rounded form
The shades of death, aye dark and darker growing,
Until the life-light melts into the night.
Oh, would that I could break the cursèd chain

That binds this monster to me! for my life
Is like some gloomy valley that lies chill
Beneath a frowning precipice. And yet
The thread of gloom is woven in my being,
And I am loth to rend it, for my thoughts
Have long been shaded by it. Ever since
I first could play, I used to watch the boys,
So joyous in their sports, and saw them men,
Grown chilly-hearted in a chilly world,
Grown weary with the burden of their life,
All restless, seeking rest yet finding change;
And then I saw the gathering shadows lower
Upon the evening of their life, and then
They merged into the dark, and all was still—
Dust under dust, forgotten by the world
In ugly loathsomeness.

The demon still
Was at my side in after-years, and threw
A shade on every friendship, as a cloud
Floats past the sun and dims the flowering fields.
Oft have I wondered at the woodland stream
That dances on, through dappled-lighted woods,
O'er mossy pebbles glinting in the sun,
Like eyes of merry children round the fire,

And never seems to think that it must thread
The misty fen, where every flower grows rank
Amid the lazy ooze, and sink at last
Beneath the boundless sea. Oh, happy they,
Who thus go laughing on from year to year,
And never know the mystery of being,
And never start and shudder at the dream
That they and all mankind are dreaming—Life.
And strive to wake, but fall back helplessly ;
Who fancy sunlight, when the sky is dark,
And never know that time, like India's snake,
Enwraps us with his gaudy-coloured folds
Of changing seasons, till his dread embrace
Has crushed out life ; who live, and laugh, and weep,
And tread the dust of myriads underfoot,
And see men die around them, yet whose life,
The demon form that stalks beside my path,
The consciousness of never-ending change,
Has never darkened, as it darkens mine,
Beneath the shadow of the wings of Death.

March, 1882.

KNOWLEDGE.

THEY were islanders, our fathers were,
And they watched the encircling seas,
And their hearts drank in the ceaseless stir,
And the freedom of the breeze ;
Till they chafed at their narrow bounds
And longed for the sweep of the main,
And they fretted and fumed like hounds
Held in within sight of the plain,
And the play
And the prey.

So they built them ships of wood, and sailed
To many an unknown coast ;
They braved the storm and battles hailed,
And danger they loved most ;
Till the tiny ships of wood
Grew powerful on the globe,

And the new-found lands for good
They wrapped in a wondrous robe
Of bold design,
Our brave ensign.

And islanders yet in a way are we,
Our knowledge is still confined,
And we hear the roar of encircling sea,
To be crossed in the ship of the mind ;
And we dream of lands afar,
Unknown, unconquered yet,
And we chafe at the bounds there are,
And our spirits fume and fret
For the prize
Of the wise.

But we'll never do aught, I know, unless
We are brave as our sires of old,
And face like them the bitterness
Of the battle and storm and cold ;
Unless we boldly stand,
When men would hold us back,

With the helm-board in our hand,
And our eyes to the shining track
Of what may be
Beyond the sea.

There are rocks out there in that wide, wide sea,
'Neath many a darkling stream,
And souls that once sailed out bold and free
Have been carried away in a dream ;
For they never came back again—
On the deep the ships were lost ;
But in spite of the danger and pain,
The ocean has still to be crossed,
And only they do
Who are brave and true.

1887.

BEYOND.

My heart it lies beyond, dear,
 In the land of the setting day,
Where the whispers are soft and fond, dear,
 Of the voices that pass away ;
And oft, when the night is falling,
 And a calm is on the sea,
I fancy I hear them calling
 From that far-off land for me.

It is only idle dreaming,
 But the dream is full of rest,
And up where that glory is streaming,
 From the gates of the golden west,
I wander away in spirit,
 With a mingled joy and pain,
Till I almost seem to inherit
 The sweet dead past again.

I see the old dear faces,
I greet them hand to hand ;
But sadly too, for the places
Seem strange in that curious land ;
Till a new light breaks, and all other
Grows dim to my streaming eyes ;
For a son has found his mother
In the depths of the throbbing skies.

Yes, my heart it lies beyond, dear,
Where that sun is burning low,
And were you not so fond, dear,
I might perhaps—but no !
Are you weary already with walking ?
And tears ! What tears, dear, too !
How selfish of me to be talking,
My darling, in this way to you !

A FANCY.

A LITTLE sprite sat on a moonbeam,
When the night was waning away,
And over the world to the eastward
Spread the first faint flush of the day.
The moonbeam was cold and slippery,
And a fat little fairy was he ;
Around him the white clouds were sleeping,
And under him slumbered the sea.

Then the old moon looked out of her left eye,
And laughed when she thought of the fun,
For she knew that the moonbeam he sat on
Would soon melt away in the sun ;
So she gave a slight shrug of her shoulders,
And winked at a bright little star—
The moon was remarkably knowing,
As old people always are.

“Great madam,” then answered the fairy,
“No doubt you are wonderfully wise,
And know probably more than another
Of the ins and the outs of the skies.
But to think that we don’t in our own way
An interest in sky-things take,
Is a common and fatal blunder
That sometimes you great ones make.

“For I’ve looked up from under the heather,
And watched you night after night,
And marked your silent motion,
And the fall of your silvery light.
I have seen you grow larger and larger,
I have watched you fade away ;
I have seen you turn pale as a snowdrop
At the sudden approach of day.

“So don’t think for a moment, great madam,
Tho’ a poor little body I be,
That I haven’t my senses about me,
Or am going to fall into the sea.

I have had what you only could give me—
A pleasant night ride in the sky ;
But a new power arises to eastward,
So now, useless old lady, good-bye.”

He whistled a low sweet whistle,
And up from the earth so dark,
With its wings bespangled with dewdrops,
There bounded a merry lark.
He's mounted the tiny singer,
And soared through the heavens away,
With his face all aglow in the morning,
And a song for the rising day.

1887.

JACK.

You'RE only a dumb little dog, Jack,
About ten or twelve pounds or so,
And your wits must be all in a fog, Jack,
If you have any wits, I know.

But you've two such soft brown eyes, Jack,
And such long grey silky hair ;
And, what very much more I prize, Jack,
Such a warm little heart in there.

They say warm hearts are rare, Jack,
And I almost believe that it's true ;
But there ar'n't many hearts can compare, Jack,
With that staunch little heart in you.

Of course, we that speak and can read, Jack,
Have plenty of friendships sweet ;
But, in spite of them all, there's a need, Jack,
For a friend like the friend at my feet.

This planet must seem a queer place, Jack,
To your poor little limited mind ;
For I fancy you never can trace, Jack,
The reasons for half that you find.

You're not bothered with questions like us, Jack,
About forces and morals and laws ;
And you never get worried or fuss, Jack,
When you cannot discover a cause.

But you go your own little way, Jack,
With a wag of the tail for a friend ;
And in spite of our talk, I dare say, Jack,
That we don't do much more in the end.

UNDER THE PINES.

“LIFE is sad,” says the wind in the pines
To the still soul listening,
While the pale, pale day declines
Like a white bird on the wing.

“Life is sad,” says the quiet earth
Under the churchyard wall,
Where the spring flowers have their birth
And the autumn leaflets fall.

“Life is sad,” say the daisies that blow there
And stretch out their heads to the sun ;

“Life is sad,” say the poor hearts that go there
To weep when the day’s work is done.

“Life is sad,” from below, from on high,
From forest and meadow and tree,
From the clouds that drift over the sky
And the days that die into the sea.

Then up and be brave with thy sorrow,
Like a man with his face to the blast ;
Not from hope of the joys of to-morrow,
Nor rest when the warfare is past ;

But strong that weak souls may grow strong,
That men may take heart by the way,
Till the heavens break forth with the song
That will herald eternal day.

1887.

AN ODE.

WHAT boots it to be great ?
To live in royal state
And feast with kings,
Since now all things
One doom await ?

What boots it to be fair ?
Sweet eyes and golden hair,
And youthful bloom,
Since in the tomb
All foulness there ?

To live in royal state—
That is not to be great ;
Sweet eyes and golden hair—
That is not to be fair.

What is it to be great ?
Content with thine estate ;

To serve thy God and King
In everything—
That is it to be great.

What is it to be fair ?
Sweet modesty to wear ;
To keep thine honour sure,
Thy bosom pure—
That is it to be fair.
Much boots it to be great,
Much boots it to be fair.

LONDON, 1883.

THE SKYLARK'S MESSAGE.

SWEET little upturned faces,
 Poor little hands and feet,
Little eyes that are careworn and anxious
 From hunger and want in the street,
Hear ye that skylark singing
 Like an angel far away?
'Tis bringing to you a message
 From the Golden Gates of day.

Ah, little know ye of the meadows,
 Poor little blistered feet,
Down in the smoke of the city,
 Down in the noise of the street!
But it sings of a better country,
 Where tired little hearts can rest;
Of a sun that shines for ever,
 And the love of a Father's breast.

O poor little weary spirits,
I would that ye knew its song,
For the world is very heartless,
And your journey may be long ;
And ye need such heavenly music
To cheer you in the night,
Little hearts that are now so noble,
Little souls that are now so white.

I would that ye heard it always,
That sweet bird's voice within,
When the heart is sad and lonely
In the long, long struggle with sin ;
Till a rest comes out of the sunset
For the labouring hands and feet,
And a silence has fallen for ever
On the noise and the dust of the street.

LONDON, 1883.

A QUESTION.

O YE Wise of the Earth, *are ye wise?*

“ We can tell from a bone,” ye say,

“ An animal’s shape and size,

And the size and shape of its prey.”—

“ For such and such joint,” say ye,

“ For such and such use must be.”

When I show that since time began

The soul hath longed for the skies,

Ye say, “ Death is the end of Man.”—

O ye Wise of the Earth, *are ye wise?*

*ON DARWIN'S TOMB IN WEST-
MINSTER ABBEY.*

THE Muse, when asked what words alone
Were worthy tribute to his fame,
Took up her pen, and on the stone
Inscribed his name.

LONDON, 1883.

EPITAPH ON DR. JENNER.

IN sterner fight than Waterloo
He saved his hapless brothers ;
Not by his own arm, it is true,
But by the arms of others.

1886.

*WAHONOMIN.**

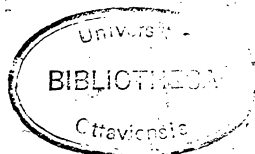
THE INDIAN'S JUBILEE HYMN TO THE QUEEN.

GREAT mother ! from the depths of forest wilds,
From mountain pass and burning sunset plain,
We, thine unlettered children of the woods,
Upraise to thee the everlasting hymn
Of nature, language of the skies and seas,
Voice of the birds and sighings of the pine
In wintry wastes. We know none other tongue,
Nor the smooth speech that, like the shining leaves,
Hides the rough stems beneath. We bring our song,
Wood-fragrant, rough, yet autumn-streaked with love,
And lay it as a tribute at thy feet.
But should it vex thee thus to hear us sing,
Sad in the universal joy that crowns
This year of years, and shouldst thou deem our voice
But death-cry of the ages that are past,

* Indian for a cry of lamentation.

Bear with us—say, “ My children of the woods,
In language learnt from bird and wood and stream,
From changing moons and stars and misty lakes,
Pour forth their love, and lay it at my feet ;
The voice is wild and strange, untuned to ear
Of majesty, ill-timed to fevered pulse
Of this young age, and meteor-souls that flash
New paths upon night’s dome ; yet will I hear
This singing of my children ere they die.”

Great mother ! thou art wise, they say, and good,
And reignest like the moon in autumn skies,
The world about thy feet. We have not seen
Thy face, nor the wild seas of life that surge
Around thy throne ; but we have stood by falls,
Deep-shadowed in the silence of the woods,
And heard the water-thunders, and have said,
Thus is the voice of men about our Queen.
What is the red man but the forest stream,
The cry of screech-owl in the desert wilds ?
This flood that overflows the hills and plains
Is not for us. Back, Westward, Northward, ay,
Up to eternal winter ’neath the stars,
Our path must be in silence, till the snows



And sun and wind have bleached our children's
bones.

The red must go ; the axe and plough and plane
Are not for him. We perish with the pine,
We vanish in the silence of the woods ;
Our footsteps, like the war-trail in the snow,
Grow fainter while the new spring buds with life.

Great mother ! the white faces came with words
Of love and hope, and pointed to the skies,
And in the sunrise splendour set the throne
Of the Great Spirit, and upon the cross
Showed us His Son, and asked a throne for Him.
Their speech was music ; but in camp at night
We brooded o'er the matter round the fire,
The shadowy pines about us, and the stars,
Set in the silent heavens, looking down.
We brooded o'er the matter days and years,
For thus each thought and thus each spake in words :
" We children of the woods have lived and died
In these our forests, since the first moon tipped
Their thousand lakes and rivers with her beams,
Pale silver in the fading sky of even.
Our fathers' faces kindled in the glow

Of setting suns ; they read the starlit sky ;
They heard the Spirit's breathing on the storm,
And on the quaking earth they felt His tread ;
But never yet the story of His Son
Was wafted to them from the sighing woods,
Or bird or stream. Our fathers' God is ours ;
And as for these new words, we watch and wait."

Great mother ! we have waited days and years,
Thro' spring and summer—summer, autumn, spring ;
Brooding in silence, for anon we dreamed
A bird's voice in our hearts half sung, "'Tis true."
We listened and we watched the pale face come,
When, lo ! new gods came with them—gods of iron
And fire, that shook the forests as they rushed,
Filling with thunder and loud screeching, plains,
Mountains, and woods, and dimming with their breath
The shining skies. These new gods, who were they,
That came devouring all, and blackening earth
And sky with smoke and thunder ? We knew not,
But fled in terror further from the face
Of these white children and their gods of iron ;
We heard no more their story of the Son,
And words of love. Their own lives were not love,

But war concealed and fire beneath the ash.
Thus ever now the burden of our speech—
We perish with the pine tree and the bird,
We vanish in the silence of the woods,
The white man's hunting-ground, it is not ours;
We care not for his gods of iron and fire;
Our home is in the trackless wilds, the depths
Of mountain solitudes, by starlit lakes,
By noise of waters in the unchanging woods.

Great mother! we have wondered that thy sons,
Thy pale sons, should have left thy side and come
To these wild plains, and sought the haunts of bears
And red men. Why their battle with the woods?
Whither they go upon their gods of iron,
Out of the golden sunrise to the mists
Of purple evening in the setting west?
Their lives have scarce as many moons as ours,
Nor happier are. We know not what they seek;
For death's cold finger chills their fevered life,
As in the wilds he stills the meanest worm,
And death flies with them over all their paths,
And waits them in the heart of wildest waste;
They cannot break his power. Forgive these thoughts.
If, as they rise like mists, they dim the gold

That zones thy brow. They came to us at night,
As we have sat in council round the fire ;
They seemed the echo of the sighing pines
Far in our soul. One evening rose a chief,
White-headed, bowed with years, one hand on staff,
One on death's arm, preparing for the way.
" My sons," he said, " these people are not wise.
We bide our time, and they will pass away ;
Then shall the red man come like bird in spring,
And build the broken camp, and hunt and fish
In his old woods. These people pass away ;
For I have thought through many nights and days,
And wondered what they seek ; and now I know,
And knowing, say these people are not wise.
They found these plains beneath the burning west,
And westward, ever westward, still they press,
Seeking the shining meadows of the land
Where the sun sleeps, and, folded 'neath his wings,
The happy spirits breathe eternal day.
But I have lived thro' five score changing years,
And I have talked with wintry-headed chiefs,
And I have heard that kingdom is not reached
Thro' woods and plains, but by the bridge of death.
This people is not wise ; we bide our time."

Great mother ! they have told us that the snows
Of fifty winters sleep about thy throne,
And buds of spring now blossom with sweet breath
Beneath thy tread. They tell us of the sea,
And other lands, where other children dwell ;
Of mighty cities and the gleam of gold,
Of empires wider than the shining plains
Viewed from giant hill, that lift thy throne above
The clouded mountain-tops. They tell us, too,
Of wonders in the home of man ; of gods
Of iron and fire made servants, and of fire
Snatched from the clouds to flash man's swiftest
thought ;

But these are not for us. The forest flower
Droops in the haunts of man ; it needs the sky,
And smokeless air, and glances of the sun
Thro' rustling leaves. We perish with the woods ;
The plains are all before thee. Send thy sons
To plant and build, and drive their flashing gods,
Startling the forests, till, like ocean's bounds,
Thine empire rolls in splendour from wide east
To widest west, broad fields of gold for thee
And thy white children ; but our spirits wait
Amid the silent ages, and we pass

To where our fathers dwell, by silent streams,
And hunt in trackless wilds through cloudless days.
The wheels of thy great empire, as it moves
From east to west, from south to icy north,
Crush us to earth. We perish with the woods.

Great mother ; if the changing moons have brought
Thee nearer to the darksome bridge that spans
The gulf between this and the eternal day,
If thy path and thy children's be the same,
And thy feet follow where thy fathers went,
Perchance thy soul upon earth's utmost verge,
The eternal sky about thee, and the deeps
Unfathomable beyond—perchance thy soul,
Grown weary with the fever of thy life,
May yearn for song of bird, and sighing pine,
And silent meditation of the woods ;
Perchance, when, looking back from infinite skies
To restless man, thy soul, too, echoes, " Why ? "
" Where ? " and " Whither ? " and thy heart may love
This death-song of thy children, ere they pass
With birds and forests to the silent land.
Perchance the white face told us what was true,
And love and hope wait by the throne of God.

The ruffled lake gives out but broken gleams
Of the clear stars above ; so, restless life
May be the troubled reflex of the skies.
The world rolls onward, ever on and on,
Through clouded vast and moans of dying years,
Into the depths of sunset ; but the light
Blinds our dim eyes, we cannot see the goal.
The spirit of the world is not for us ;
We perish with the pine tree and the bird ;
We bow our heads in silence. We must die.

1887.

THE WAYSIDE CROSS.

A WAYSIDE cross at set of day
Unto my spirit thus did say—

“O soul, my branching arms you see
Point four ways to infinity.

“One points to infinite above,
To show the height of heavenly love.

“Two point to infinite width, which shows
That heavenly love no limit knows.

“One points to infinite beneath,
To show God's love is under death.

“The four arms join, an emblem sweet
That in God's heart all loves will meet.”

I thanked the cross as I turned away
For such sweet thoughts in the twilight grey.

A BIRTHDAY.

THE three Fates sat in a house of birth,
Ah, well a day ; ah, well a day ;
Their eyes were bright, but not with mirth—
They have no love for the sons of earth—
And their lips were parched and gray.

Their gray locks hung from brow to chin,
Ah, well a day ; ah, well a day ;
One held the distaff, and one did spin,
And one held shears in her fingers thin ;
Three silent hags were they.

We saw not the thread which the sisters spun,
Ah, well a day ; ah, well a day ;
Nor whether in white or in black begun,
But on her with the shears, that elder one,
Our eyes were fixed alway.

A thread, I ween, of tangled years,
Ah, well a day; ah, well a day;
God stay her hand that holds the shears;
Our hopes are stronger than our fears
For the bud upon life's spray.

April 7, 1888.

SONNETS.

ACROSS THE SEA.

THE confines of our being are not these
White limbs of sense. Our true selves broader are
And higher than the path of furthest star.
Beyond the reach of sense, each hears and sees
And feels. The root alone of giant trees
Touches the earth ; their branches pierce to heaven.
"To-day," "Here," "There," are to the body given ;
Our spirits watch among the eternities.

Dearest, our beings can mingle, and our lips
Kiss off the dark world-sadness from the soul ;
Our hands can clasp, our eyes return love's gaze,
Tho' waste lands moan between, where crimson dips
The westering sun, and tho' wide oceans roll ;
Tho' being so far, we breathe in different days.

1886.

LOVE'S SHADOWS.

THERE come dull days in love's clear atmosphere,
When clouds and doubt obscure the wide expanse.

The woods are still ; no songs of birds entrance ;
No sunlight falls, and desolate and drear,
As if harmonious with the lurking fear
Which sucks love's peace, the leaden waves that
glance

From rock-bound coast the general gloom en-
hance ;
And spectral winds are wailing far and near.

When suddenly, and oft in darkest hour,
I hear some strain of music, or some voice,
Or some of thy dear writing chance I see,
When, lo ! the spell is broken, and the power
Of darkness, earth, and sea, and sky rejoice,
And all my being thrills with songs of thee.

*ON BEING GIVEN A PIECE
OF EDELWEISS BEFORE VISITING
SWITZERLAND.*

THINE everlasting mountains and their snows
And awful silence, floweret, know I not ;
I have not wandered to thy native spot
Among the crags, but oft as I repose,
Musing by winter fire at daylight's close,
In fancy have I viewed those depths of sky
And infinite clouded crags, while fronting high,
Peak upon peak, the eternal Alps uprose.

Mysterious power, God-planted in the soul,
That thus transcends all space and the confined
Limits of sense, Imagination hail !
Pledge art thou of that life when death shall roll
Back our flesh prison-bars, and the freed mind
Shall grasp the giant truths behind the veil.

ROME.

IMPERIAL city, slumb'ring on the throne
Of vanished empire; once thy voice and hands
Rocked the wide world; thy fingers wove the lands
Into thy girdle; who for crown alone
Didst wear the stars. Yet still in undertone
Man hears thy deathless utterance, tho' Time's sands
Roll centuries; thou clasp'st the earth with bands
Of speech, art, law, and subtle powers unknown.

Thou wast not meant to die; thy mighty heart
Pulsed with the universe. Thy deeds of old
Flame like the sunset skies thro' clouds which
throng;
They blazon on thy throne a name apart
In red of mighty victories, in gold
Of all things valorous and great and strong.

1888.

TIME.

I SAW Time in his workshop carving faces ;
Scattered around his tools lay, blunting griefs,
Sharp cares that cut out deeply in reliefs
Of light and shade ; sorrows that smooth the traces
Of what were smiles. Nor yet without fresh graces
His handiwork, for ofttimes rough were ground
And polished, oft the pinched made smooth and
round ;
The calm look, too, the impetuous fire replaces.

Long time I stood and watched ; with hideous grin
He took each heedless face between his knees,
And graved and scarred and bleached with boiling
tears.

I wondering turned to go, when, lo ! my skin
Feels crumpled, and in glass my own face sees
Itself all changed, scarred, careworn, white with
years.

WORDS.

WORDS are but passing symbols of the deep
Crying unto deep in individual souls.

And men are words on the great voice that rolls
Through Nature, since that morn when from their
sleep

The elements heard, and they who vigil keep
On Heaven's battlements, to distant poles
Re-echoed, "Let light be!"—such voice as tolls
The birth and death of all who laugh or weep.

Not uniform, but in a wondrous plan,
Each diverse from his fellows, symbol each
Of varying thought in the eternal mind.
Now at the feet of every age of man
We sit and learn. Haply, in perfect speech
Its voice will be God's message to our kind.

THE POETS EMPIRE.

WHAT power can break the inner harmonies,
The rich imaginings, heard like distant sea
O'er purple meadow-lands at evè, while we
Look starwards mute? Hopes that like mountains rise
Into mid-heaven, and to entranced eyes
Horizon-glories of what is to be,—
All these and more lie round us infinitely,
Beyond all language fair in cloudless skies.

This is the poet's empire. Here may he
Reign king-like, throned in splendour and in power
No power can shake, so he indeed be king.
Free as the wind, untamed as the sea,
When earth weighs heavily, most in that hour
He cleaves the heavens in scorn on eagle-wing.

1887.

IN MEMORIAM. E. S.

HER love was that full love which, like a tide,
Flows in and out life's smallest gulfs and bays,
And fills with music through long summer days
Cold hearts that else would stern and dark abide.
Her smile would cheer, her faintest look could chide ;
No soul too outcast, none too lowly born,
For her kind ear ; and none too high for scorn
Of mean pretence, or wrong, or foolish pride.

She loved all Nature ; mountain, stream, and tree
To her were 'thoughts or language for the thought
She could not utter, signs of truths too high
To set to words. Her love, too, like a tide,
Flowed daily back with cares its surface brought
To the still vast beneath eternal sky.

November 21, 1886.

TRUTH.

I SAW Truth on the mountains, golden-shod
With day-dawn, girt about with skies
Of azure mist, half veiling from man's eyes
Her silent face and gaze upturned to God.
Beneath were clouded steeps of shale and sod,
Tracked deviously by feet that human-wise
Toiled upward, but toiled vainly towards the prize;
Some following, shunning some where others trod.

Yet in the darkness oft there came, "I see,"
From eager hearts I met. "Behold!" men cried,
Yet variously; "such are Truth's features high."
Self's shadow, from the soul's intensity
Cast on the mist, not such the face I spied,
Calm, sovereign, silent, upturned 'midst the sky.

1887.

SHAKESPEARE.

UNSEEN in the great minster dome of time,
Whose shafts are centuries, its spangled roof
The vaulted universe, our master sits,
And organ-voices like a far-off chime
Roll thro' the aisles of thought. The sunlight flits
From arch to arch, and, as he sits aloof,
Kings, heroes, priests, in concourse vast, sublime,
Glances of love and cries from battle-field,
His wizard power breathes on the living air.
Warm faces gleam and pass, child, woman, man,
In the long multitude ; but he, concealed,
Our bard eludes us, vainly each face we scan,
It is not he ; his features are not there ;
But, being thus hid, his greatness is revealed.

AT MADAME TUSSAUD'S.

I STOOD in that strange show, the other day,
On Baker Street, where all the famous men,
Fair dames, and murderers come to life again,
With clockwork breast and face of mimic clay,
To scare the young. Thrice in the long display,
Blundering, I thought wax flesh, then, with surprise
At being deceived, I turned with cautious eyes
And took for wax all those that thronged my way.

So in this age, methinks, when in the light
Of fuller knowledge, forms that men have reared
And worshipped turn to dust, too hasty youths,
Shunning the whirlpool jaws of credulous sight,
Rush towards a Scylla far more to be feared,
And take for shadows all too living truths.

1885.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

'Twas afternoon in winter, and the light
Sloped softly up the walls, as day was done,
In tremulous cloud-beams, while the westering sun
Blazoned with saints the columns opposite.
All sounds had died away ; to left and right
Was silence, tho' I seemed to hear again
The spirit-echoes of the last Amen
Far in the groined shadowings out of sight.

Oh ! silence strange, so deep, so vast, profound ;
Ten ages slumber in the dust beneath,
And yet no voice,—no voice from those who trod
These aisles before and lie so still around.

Oh ! is it that they lose all voice in death,
Seeing what they see, and being so close to God ?

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

WE stand above the abyss ; beneath our feet
 Around and onward infinite darkness rolls .
 The sky above is black ; the watch-bell tolls
The dying year . While slow on silent feet
Pale ghosts come towards us from the ice-locked street
 Of thought's great city ; faces young and old,
 Eyes sunken, features set and deathly cold
And noiseless bear the dead year's winding-sheet.

But lo ! where now we stand is worn with tread
 Of millions ; in the darkness feel, the ground
 Is dust of powdered bones ; sure, on this peak
The years have died, and millions of the dead
 Have waited vainly through the gloom profound,
 For dawn of day or trumpet-voice to speak.

1888.

AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM.

THY glory alone, O God, be the end of all that I say ;
Let it shine in every deed, let it kindle the prayers
that I pray ;

Let it burn in my innermost soul, till the shadow of
self pass away,

And the light of Thy glory, O God, be unveiled in
the dawning of day.

1885.

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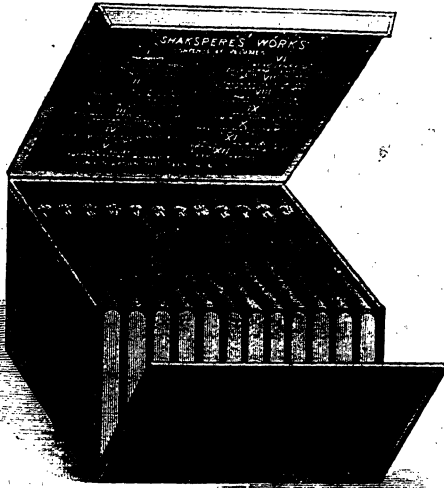
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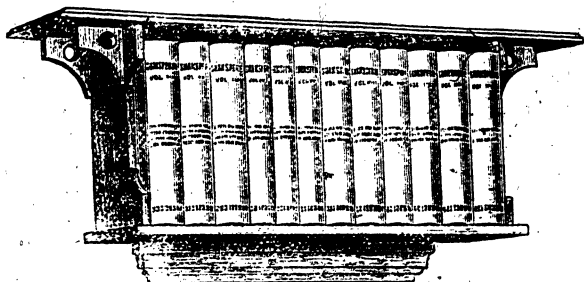
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