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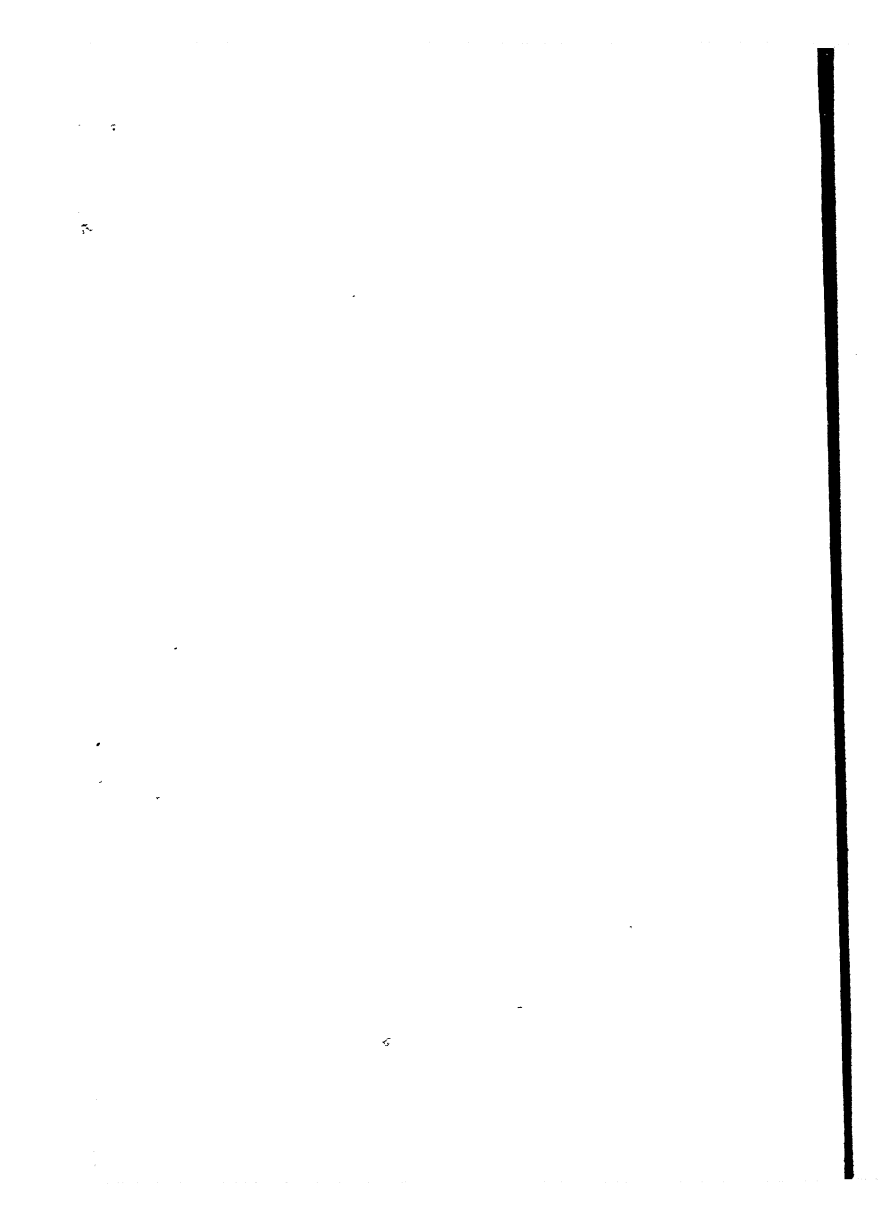
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EDGAR, Felham

DREAM FACES.

SLUMB'ROUS airs and sleep-tunes hover
O'er my weary head,
Day's desires and doubts are over,
And o'er all the past is shed
The glamour that our dreams recover
From memories of pleasures fled.

Ere the spells of sleep dissever
Links of yielding pain,
Soothe the soul of strong endeavour
With fair hopes that wax and wane,
Thronging forms float on forever
Through the portals of my brain.

And amid the myriads streaming
In the spirit's light,
Shines one dear face through my dreaming,
Vaguely through the gloom of night,
And those eyes ethereal beaming
Thrill my slumber with delight.

TO PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON — BLIND.

FAR off with darkened eyes,
 Lone, sightless, he stands,
 Turned all the gifts we prize
 To dust in his hands.
 Death has forsaken him,
 Night hath o'ertaken him,
 What can awaken him
 Whom Death answers not?

DIED 1887.

Dead, say ye true, he's dead?
 Silent the singing voice?
 If he be comforted,
 Can ye not rejoice?
 Death has o'ertaken him,
 Night has forsaken him,
 Cease! do not awaken him
 To sorrows forgot.

Though held to the sun awhile
 By the uplifting wind,
 Can dust wear the rainbow's smile?
 Can Sorrow be kind?
 Can the sick soul be comforted
 When Life's springs are poison-fed?
 Lo! Grief, queen in Laughter's stead,
 Steals o'er us unsought.

THESE woods afford full pleasant wandering
 Upon the margins of the doubtful year.
 Song-sparrows and the first red-breasts are here,
 And sweet bird voices through the forest ring.
 Above my head the wintry branches sing
 Almost a melancholy tune and drear,
 While underfoot broadcast the leaves lie sere,
 Dead to the touch of the awakening Spring.

Sodden and still they strew the oozy ground,
 Those leaves that were so light before the wind,
 Bedding all hollows and the spring-pools round
 Fringed with dissolving snow, and moss-enshrined.
 O surge of budding life with blossoms crowned,
 Man plants high hopes whose fruit shall no man find.

A MEMORY.

SOMETHING transient as may be
 Floating on a sunset sea
 Stray tints of sky-built radiancy—
 E'en as mournful as the wail
 Of some summer-haunting gale
 When the stars, cloud-shadowed, fail,

Was the light of my Lady's eye,
 Was the tone of each love-lit word,
 That thrilled through my soul till its deeps were stirred
 Ere Death said "Come," and she vanished by.

FLOWER-FRAGRANCE blent
 With lustier odours from the mountain pines,
 A star-beam sent
 Athwart the moonbeams' swift and strenuous lines,
 Soft minor chords
 Stealing across the unrest of a life,
 A woman's words
 To heal the fever of a lasting strife,—
 Such power is thine,
 O well-beloved and fair,
 To make divine
 My days that darkest were.
 For thou shalt be
 A Flame to kindle and a Breath to fan
 The life in me
 That nerveless, bloodless ran
 Downward through chances of the lapsing years
 To thee and all the gentleness in thee.
 Then buffeted as one that faintly nears
 A hope that looms and lessens in the night,
 Now sharer in that unimagined light,
 Which from the sympathy of hopes and fears
 ✓ Arises and is Love, whose wings expand,
 Shedding a splendour o'er life's shadowed strand.

SONG.

SPEAK to me not of other days,
Of happier themes and pleasant places,
Read to me not the poet's praise
Of perfect women's perfect faces.

But kiss once more my willing cheek
And stroke again my passive brow,
While, mother, unto thee I speak
The secret nope hath known till now.

Thy hand lies soft within my hair,
Thy voice falls sweet upon my brain,
But my lost love was wondrous fair,
And oh, for the touch of her hand again !

Her dark eyes shone with the sudden gleam
Of waters smitten of the sun,
Or glowed with ardours of a dream
Like forest pools where the shadows run.

Her voice and touch in unison
Thrilled through the silent night,
And when her face all dimly shone
These ministered delight.

Tho' spiritual forms uprise
To make less strange Death's lonely land,
I want the glory of her eyes,
The touch of her ethereal hand.

LEAF upon leaf from the yielding trees
Floats in the gloaming across the stream,
Reft by the fretful touch of the breeze,
Silent they sink in the twilight gleam.
Silently over my trembling soul
The twilight of sorrow steals unsought—
For we only live for a little day,
And the many dying are soon forgot.

What a fearful wind is blowing to night !
I hear it crashing the hill-side firs !
Angrily roars the torrent's might,
Fiercely the spirit within me stirs.
Darkly the hidden waters roll,
A body for burden the stream has caught,
For we only live for a little day,
And the many dying are soon forgot.

ONE AUTUMN PAST.

AND she, what shall I tell the hours of her?
 She for whose soul mine was as waves that are
 Companion to the strand whereon they mar
 Their lovely being, growing lovelier far.
 She for whose life my love bore blooms and flowers,
 As Ocean with his fairest foam endowers
 The sudden shore that stoops from wooded bowers
 To clasp and kiss him for a stormy space.
 She for whose tenderness of queenly grace
 ✓ And glance made marvellous by sovereign stress
 Of all that ministers to loveliness,
 I had dared aught but suffer Love's disgrace,
 Forsaking Love to plant a rival there
 Where my soul touched her soul, nor felt despair
 Should issue from the fairest mood of joy.
 Now clasped and scorching through my severed soul
 Remains the sense of what her beauty bore
 Or e'er her eyes foreshadowed Death's alloy
 Of sadness. Dear remembered eyes implore
 My grief to be forgetful of its sorrow,
 And even from the darkened tomb to borrow
 A light to shed her beauty everywhere
 That shapes of glory nourish the thin air,
 And give endurance to all souls' desire.

I stood where with the sunlight day made fire
Of all the sea, and to the moaning sea
Dark piny plumes made murmurous expense
Of music. The fervour of all elements
And Love possessed my strenuous soul of sense
Till past delight and present joy were one.
And through the fierce down-setting of the sun
Swift burning as a meteor through the night,
Her spirit flashed, and with such awful light
Confounding mine: and the weak sun's reign was spent.
Then the grey twilight of a vast content
Convulsed to calm the sea's heart and my own,
The night airs flowing with a landward moan.
But now like sound of voices murmuring
In Love's great hour of new-arisen bliss —
And now changed sudden to the seething hiss
That fierce Hate mutters for some loathed thing,
The sea that slept swift rose beneath the breeze
That touched at first its liquid notes to sound,
Then sweeping savage loosed the chains that bound
Its thunderous throat, till all the throbbing ground
Shook from the sea's tread, and the shivering trees
Complained beneath the wailing of the wind.
Seemed it as though the ocean's seething soul
Did in fierce rage a fit storm-utterance find
In thunder-token of the waves that roll
On earth, reverberate of his fiercest mood—
In lurid vision of the tempest brood,
The fire-fledged lightning with infuriate speed

Launched from the jaws of thunder. Far away
 With white caps burnished of the wreck of day
 The billows leaped as with tempestuous greed
 Of very heaven, which once it seemed indeed
 As though they grasped, and hid the sweeping sky.

O Love! whose life seemed bounded by the sigh
 That ushered in thy fervid timeless reign,
 And by the wail of tortured hopes that die
 Upon the moment of thy parting pain,
 What strife hadst thou with gods more great than
 thou?

What grief lay heavy on thy burdened brow?
 Long days and nights through months of weary pain
 My state seemed darkened in the eclipse of death,
 Till now at length the happier moment saith
 The spirit shall clasp departed joys again.
 Sweet sacred one, whose feet strayed forth afar
 From this our life, thy memory dwells in me,
 A force like conscience tender, stronger far;
 Rebuking sin and spreading the majesty
 Of holiness like raiment meet to wear
 Upon my altered state. Thou art a voice,
 Restful as silence on the sleeping air,
 Bidding the sadness of my heart rejoice,
 Murmuring the fruits that human frailties bear,
 And how the night-shades from man's being roll,
 And all grows sweet and wondrous strange and fair
 Thou loved one, guardian of my fleeting soul,

Thou knowest in what deep anguish I have bowed,
Staggering through woes with which I could not cope,
Till now the unillusive eyes of Hope
Swim like twin stars from forth a thunder-cloud
Into the holy quiet of the sky.
And by the mystery of their shining taught,
I see the path my feet perforce must try,
How though the thorns be sharp they poison not,—
And by the power of their pure influence,
Deep in the silent sanctuary of sense
I learn the ebb and flow of mortal feeling,
Darkness to light and light to shadow stealing,
As subtle as the seasons' ebb and flow
Where day leads day from summer-time to snow.
For Desolation scorches like the lightning
That cleaves in twain some fiery-hearted cloud,
Whose melting mass drifts westward ever bright'ning,
Adding a splendour to the sunset shroud
And dreary days of doubt and tribulation,
As Life's rays gloom toward the vale of night,
May feel some heavenly far-sent coruscation
And wear the semblance of a pure delight.
Yet with the vision of our mortal station
But this thing sure we know and surely see,—
That mournful are the days of lamentation,
And joyous the brief hours of jubilee.

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

Of passing forms and faces of the street,
But these he heeded not. For eagerly,
With faltering lips made only to be kissed,
He strove to conquer some perplexing sound,
An echo of the nursery ; perhaps it was
A brother's name or sister's—still 'twas sweet.
And at each repetition the old man
Himself pronounced it from his aged lips,
And an amused expression lit his face
To hear the child repeat it with a laugh.
And whether in the end he mastered it
I know not, as I mingled with the crowd.
But afterwards for a long time I mused
How human speech could bridge the gulf of years
Dividing Infancy from distant Age,
And weave the bonds of human sympathy
Across the chasm. But as I wandered on
I met a child wheeling an invalid.
And as I gazed I saw the withered hand
Drop helpless down ; which, when the child perceived,
She raised it tenderly upon her lap,
And silently looked up with pitying eyes.
No spoken word expressed her tenderness.
A deeper meaning lies in the desire
Of Age to mix with Infancy. There are
Two havens guarded from the shuddering seas
That storm the midway martyrdom of life.
The one where weariness craves peace awhile
And seeks some rest before the long repose—

Touched with slant rays of the departing sun.
The other, set amid the shining seas,
All tender with suffusion of the dawn,
And sweet with children's voices musical.
And oft to that fair-remembered place return
The voyagers who long since crossed its bounds—
The sunset fain to look upon the dawn.
And there, worn weary of the brawling world,
They hear the voice of childhood pure and strong ;
Tired eyes behold young eyes that know not sin ;
And souls closed flower-wise for the life to come
Soft open to receive the primal freshness
Of souls fresh budding in the tender dawn.



For the ocean of my life
 Love, thou art completeness —
 For its salt and bitter strife
 Thou art sun and sweetness —
 For my weary wandering soul
 Thou the still moon guiding,
 The haven where fierce waters roll
 To tranced calm subsiding.

Hither, Love ! come to me calling,
 Nestle in mine arms' embrace,
 Softly ere to slumber falling
 Sweetly dream a waking space.

There is love and there is hating
 In the weary world outside,
 And there is the bitter waiting
 For communion still denied.

We'll be deaf to human sorrow,
 For this evening set apart
 We shall look through life and borrow
 All that life and love impart.

All Nature's correspondencies
 In things that vanish, symbols that remain,
 And all her secret sympathies
 In visible life, assuredly contain
 Interpretations of the ways of love,
 Of all its bliss, of all its pain.

Pause by the sea-tides and behold
 Breathed on by air the moving waters tone
 A murmurous music manifold—
 Communion of two spirits that alone
 Were void of purpose, and as comfortless
 As sunless earth, as shadowed sun.

Linger within some forest's glades,
 And there, resultive of strange intercourse
 Of leaf with breeze, sweet sound invades
 The sense with allied music ; for a source
 And spirit of contagious influence
 Inhabits life, and is the force

Whence flowers that blow have power to thrill
 Their keen, sweet odours through the fainting brain,
 And were flowers scentless they would fill
 The sense of sight, and should all vision wane
 Upon the world, their blooms the blind young airs
 Would kiss and touch and kiss again.

And ever thus without an ending
 Forms with counter-forms are blending,
 The flower desires the butterfly,
 The bee demands the flower,
 The rainbow in the summer sky
 Feeds on the summer shower,
 Which from the melting cloud is fed.
 And in the reflex of thine eyes
 My spirit finds its Paradise,

Its solace in the splendour shed,
 Stormy wind to sea sonorous
 Chants in strong triumphant chorus,
 But zephyrs on a weary sea
 Breathe spiritual melody.
 And thus, though Nature be at strife,
 Thy calm her discords ere destroy,
 Thou sunset of my clouded life,
 And sunrise of my joy !

All the streams of tidal passion
 That within my being swim,
 At thy charmèd touch refashion
 The notes of their discordant hymn
 To swell with thy melodious hymn.
 For the ocean of my life,
 Love, thou art completeness,
 For its salt and bitter strife
 Thou art sun and sweetness ;—
 Yet at times of anguish'd yearning,
 The melancholy waters turning
 Drown the stream of thy devotion
 Poured within the restless ocean,
 Drown thy current's crystalness
 In the salt sea's bitterness.

I.

THE chords of my spirit are broken,
 The harp of my soul is unstrung,
 To the world in the dark I have spoken,
 Have cried while my heart was young.
 And what though the old world heeds not
 The voice of a youth in the air,
 The desire of my dreams yet pleads not
 The world's worn honours to bear.
 The only ambition I cherish,
 The only applause that I crave,
 Is for songs like the snow-flakes that perish
 The approval thy sympathy gave.
 And so for a season of leisure
 I've muffled the cadences vain
 To awake to a stronger measure,
 To resume a more resonant strain.
 In a mystical place I have shrouded
 The shrine where I worshipped so long,
 The memorial places are clouded,
 The musical fountains of song.

II.

Yet through the silent interval
 That issues from this solemn hour,
 Let high thought grow habitual,
 Let every weakness grow to power.
 Let nature sweep the hidden strings

That hold the secret soul in thrall,
 And light from mystic communings
 Upon my passive being fall.
 Oh! may the world's insensate voice
 Pass heedless as a thoughtless word,
 The vain, unprofitable noise,
 The strife from petty motives stirred.
 And yet, O world, I would not miss
 All that thou hast more deep to grant—
 The ecstasies of sudden bliss,
 The yearnings of a hidden want.
 I hear the cry of weariness
 Up from the anguished bosoms go—
 I hear the hymn of happiness
 Outswell the silent notes of woe.
 I hear—and hear not sounds that die,
 But feel or e'er the high mood wane
 The Brotherhood of sympathy,
 The Fellowship of pain.

III.

Ah, Helen, if this lingering strain
 Perchance revive in thee
 A faint regret akin to pain,
 Believe that unto me
 Its notes no less regretful are
 Altho' their sorrow cannot mar
 The melodies that joyous seem
 Because thou art the happy theme.

IV.

Now the last of Autumn days
Passes with the fitful breeze,
And a fairy dream of haze
Falters through the leafless trees.
As the wreathing folds of mist
Lighten when the sun has kissed,
So let Memory re-illuminate
Through the intervening gloom
All the sweet and far delight,
Ah, how swiftly put to flight,
Which was ours to clasp and hold
Ere the Summer sun grew old.
Ah, sweet Fancy! let her linger
On the joys that memories bring her,—
Let us roam again the woods
Where the shady solitudes
Breathed a happiness so tender
That no future e'er can render
Joys to me so fair as these;—
Where the forest's grassy floor
Felt the shadows stealing o'er
All the frail anemones;—
Where the shy intruding breeze
Trembling o'er the crumpled ferns,
Touched the pages wherein yearns
All the soul of Shelley's song,
Or Swinburne's mightier passion burns
Swift, sublime, triumphant, strong.

Ah ! the memory of those hours
Sweet with unforgotten flowers,
Fraught with music of the birds
And the sense of murmured words,
Brightens every coming morrow,
Ushered tho' it be with sorrow.
For Remembrance fills the mind
With fled happiness behind,
And sweet Hope, with wings that hover
O'er the future dim and dread,
Whispers, " When the winter's over,
When the dismal days are sped,
You will surely both recover
Joys as fair as joys that fled "
And I have not heart to harm her,
Valiant Hope with fragile wings,
Have not courage to alarm her
In her distant wanderings.
So I charge my angel Hope
With Despondency to cope.
Though her dreamy voice deceive,
Her sweet counsels never grieve.
Though she be as vain as fair,
She is braver than Despair.
She can fly the gulf of Death
Wafted on the spirit's breath,
Throwing light on hidden things,
When Despair's o'ershadowing wings-
Wrapped in darkness onward flee,

Cowering through Eternity.
 And if Hope with joy can pave
 Paths beyond the dreaded grave,
 May she not, while yet we live,
 Assurance of the future give?
 Yet if jealous Fate displant her
 From the future of her dreams,
 Fate reluctant still must grant her
 One sure light on troubled streams,
 One sure light through changeful seasons,
 One resplendent aureole—
 The shining of the pure allegiance
 Sealed between a soul and soul.

"BEHOLD, how transient is the race of man,
 Whose generations pass like melting snow
 Drifting before God's breath of love or hate;
 Bethink thee of our swift spun life and frail,
 And let the records of each perished age
 Bequeath to thee their everlasting glory.
 Some placid minds are happily content
 To languish only in each present day;
 But some there live who, seeking heart's repose,
 Grope through blind days of mediæval trance
 To the fair light of immemorial Greece,

Nor care to tread the toilsome backward way,
But hold communion with their perished gods.
Others, more valiant, feed their soul's desire
Upon the might and majesty of Greece,
And faring homeward to these latter days
Infuse the gladness of the world's young prime
Into her aged heart. Be thou of these."
Thus counselled oft the comrade of my youth,
A man of honoured years and high renown,
Who taught my mind the sad behests of life,
Strengthening the sinews of ambition
With all the passion of his eloquence.
But him too soon dark night made conquest of,
And I was cast a waif upon Life's shore,
Scorning to loiter on the shining sands
That gild the margin, but pursued my way
Laborious to the utmost bourne of Life,
A land where many may not enter in.
There sometimes doth the spirit pierce to Heaven,
But Hell is often easier to attain.
A land soul-sorrowful, where the solitude
Of awful thought inhabits a wilderness
Self-sought and self-compelled. There communing
With master-spirits of a vanished age
Whose melancholy I quaffed like burning wine,
I met my soul's desire—the nameless one
Belovèd among women. And we dwelt
Together in that foretime solitude,
And were most blessed in our sympathy.

Ah! she who ever dwelt thus sacredly
Within the holier places of my mind,
Was fair beyond belief in body and soul.
New might arose within me, and a veil
Was riven from the blindness of my eyes.
And now I left the hollow ways of thought
That harshly lead to unassuaged desire,
And Love received another minister,
And Earth revived for me her ancient smile.
But through the sweetness of those summer days
Concealed disaster, working like a blight,
Consumed the splendour of her full-blown prime,
Rare, radiant flower, scorning the reaper Death.
Ah, ruthless Death, to stoop that golden head
Low in the dust that fills thy fatal urn!
To thee inexorable shall I make plea?
Nay, though the embattled nations rose in might
To rend the secret from thy silent lips,
Of what avail? within thy hollow hand
Thou gulph'st them as the sea a drop of rain.
Death for the dying ones whose wavering wills
Hardly sustain the weight of mortal years,
Whom every obstacle annihilates.
Death unto them, ye warders of our fate!
But not for us with souls of mightier frame.
We do not want the calm, the poppied sleep—
We do not crave a dead Eternity,
Nor cease from turmoil here, nor rest at last.

STARS and sun and moon were noiseless
 Masses of fantastic flame,
 The Universe was lone and voiceless,
 Life a dread unuttered name,—
 When Destiny's remotest verge
 Thrilled beneath the spirit's breath,
 And Life had fellowship with Death,
 And Time saw years in æons merge.

Stars performed their measured courses,
 Myriad suns began to shine,
 And the vast harmonious forces
 Blended in the work divine.
 And the high God, ceasing never,
 His far purpose still unfurled—
 Every utterance a world,
 And his breath endures forever.

Then by all desire attended,
 Heralding our human race,
 Love appeared on earth with blended
 Joy and woe upon her face—
 Joy, for ah! how fair the vision
 Of those unaverted eyes,
 Yet within their orbit lies
 The mockery of a deep derision.

Swift the term and scant the measure
 Of our love-illumined years,

Soon the sweet well-springs of pleasure
 Flow in bitter streams of tears—
 Soon the riven veil is parted,
 And within the sepulchre
 Of the happier days that were,
 Love walks lonely, broken-hearted.

Lo! before the morn has broken
 Full-flush'd from the under skies,
 Often mystic words are spoken
 Where my listening spirit lies.
 And I see bright splendours winging
 Star-like flight from star to star,
 And soft voices from afar
 Fill my spirit with their singing.

A VOICE.

O'er the bounds of the uttermost heaven
 Past the light of the waning suns,
 Our mystical flight is driven
 Till the speed of our feet outruns
 The flight of the flagging years,
 And the sound of the singing spheres
 Grows faint in our ears.

ANOTHER VOICE.

Like a swarm of golden bees
 The Universe advances,

With a stately, vast increase,
Till the void expanses
Are thrilled and filled with awful light
Emerging from the hollow night.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Shall we strike with consternation
The progress of the peaceful stars,
And blast them with annihilation
In dire planetary wars?
Or with strong, remorseless hands
Gird them with inviolate bands,
Huddle them like flocks together,
Blow them onward like a feather,
And scatter them like desert sands?

CHORUS.

Nay, something more supreme
Lies in our power to mar.
Far off, with tender beam,
Speedeth Earth's sapphire star—
There yearning towards the skies
Dwells our proud sacrifice.

Man, the omnipotent
Lord of a day,
Paveth with high intent
The toil of his way.

For a few sunny hours
 Culleth immortal flowers.
 Lo! while he holds them fast,
 Swift is their glory past.
 Striving and conquering,
 Fulfilling his doom,
 Sadly, with broken wing,
 He sinks to the tomb.
 Yet for some little while
 Let him his soul beguile ;
 Fill him his spirit full
 Of visions most beautiful ;
 Crown him midway the fight,
 Ere the slack forces tire,
 Master of Love's delight,
 Lord of Desire.
 Then when his joy is won
 Is our pastime begun.
 Thou shalt kill his heart's compassion,
 Thou shalt kindle hatred there,
 Thou with subtle skill shalt fashion
 In foul semblance what was fair,
 Thou shalt lay his fortunes low,
 Thou his haughty soul shalt bow—
 Then when our dread work is done
 We shall bathe in the fiery sun.

Such, sometimes in the mystical dim night,
 The visions that dawn upon my aching sight.

And such the music from remotest spheres
That fills my mind with weird and haunting fears.
For in the fancies of delirious hours
I dream we are the playthings of fierce powers,
Who waft us with their cold, capricious breath
Broken and bruised, the toilsome way to death.
For as with boisterous and triumphant glee
A strong wind smites the unsuspecting sea,
So sudden a blast of misery now blows
Upon the serene calm of my repose.
For long ago you cast a flaming brand
Upon my heart, and all its ardours fanned
To a consuming passion, till bereft
Of your loved ministry, desertion left
Heart's shrine a desolation, and my fate
The symbol of high purpose desecrate.
And in those days I bade my soul at rest
Seek bird-like the warm shelter of your breast ;
And you did nourish it, and cherish long,
That, bird-like, in the melody of song
It sang your worship, till a sadness fell
Upon the music that you loved so well,
And the warm refuge of my Love's repose
Grew chill and cheerless as the wintry snows—
And my soul, songless and with broken wing,
Returned to me, — could you not let it sing ?

And I, I have dreamed my dream, — lived long enough
Within the memories of a perished love.

Having known Love's smile, and wept his tear divine,
Pressed on thy lips the kiss that sealed them mine
I cannot live as though this had not been.

For 'tis a bitter thing and hard, I ween,
To cease from loving and renew again
The thralldom of intolerable pain.

But do thou go thy perfect way ; God knows
Thou art more pure than any flower that blows.

I too had dreams that high Ambition fed,
And o'er the future a fair light was shed.

But now I have small joy in any thing—
The weary years in sad succession bring.

To-day I saw the sun flame bright in Heaven,
But o'er his steep, ascending path were driven
Dark clouds and envious mists, that all the day

He fared a dubious and uncertain way,
Till with the twilight star he sank to rest

Beyond the portals of the smiling west.

And I across the darkness onward spread
Must seek a blind way for sad feet to tread,

Though there be comfort that each path of gloom
Leads at life's sunset to the welcome tomb.

AUTUMNAL.

Last March-time found me in these woods alone,
 And now October suns shine drear upon
 Late Autum's herbage, and again I'm here.
 And are ye then the same, ye silent woods,
 As when I breathed the spring-time of your birth,
 And a responsive spring leapt up in me?
 Nay, I have changed not as ye surely have.
 Since those young days of thine, O Mother Earth,
 I've culled the sweetness of thy summer prime
 On banks of flowers that blew far, far from here,
 And heard the clangour of thy iron heart
 On rocks that stem the torrents of the sea.
 But now I bring a heart as fresh and pure
 Within thy leafy dwelling, and I feel
 That there hath gone a virtue from thy soul,
 And thy changed form is out of measure sad
 E'en to the joyous. I will lay me down
 And dream away, perchance if I may dream,
 The spells thy sorrow has inspired in me,
 Or weave them in a web of serious thought
 That sadness add thereto a subtler sting.
 Ah! now methinks a deep autumnal tone
 Thrills through me, and I fain would rise in might
 And fill with fervour the tired souls of men.
 Were this sweet spot a new Thermopylæ
 I could surpass almost Leonidas,
 And spill my blood for some héroic cause.
 Ah, well! such moods rise up reiterant

Within the mind with a remembrance keen
 Of power that swelled the soul when they had birth,
 Nor ever are they barren of their fruit.
 And now with eyes adream I seem to hear
 The squirrel chiding mid his hoarded nuts ;
 And still with dreaming eyes I see the leaves
 Fall through the calm upon the silent ground,
 Where crickets and cicadas lie asleep ;
 Or hear and see the acorns over-ripe
 Patter together through the falling leaves.

Not far from here there is a broad ravine
 Rich in its billowy elms, and the slopes
 In wide expanse are mellow with the tints
 That maples of all trees most glory in.
 In stately tiers trees rise of various growth
 Shifting the shadows on their sunny boughs,
 And wearing in the light intenser green.
 There musing one might write an ode to Autumn
 Rich with the colouring of her vivid brush.
 But I will steal me to my lone retreat
 And feed my fancy with sad thoughts of death,
 And tender hopes of new awakening.

The trees are silent ; only now and then
 There comes the rush of multitudinous wings,
 And thronging blackbirds chatter as they pass
 And merrily forsake the fading groves.
 But I will not forsake ye though ye change.

Though golden-rods and asters strew the ground
 Where late the scarlet-cups and lupines shone,
 In earlier time have I not loved the growth
 Of blood-roots white and painted trilliums,
 And seen the shivering trees enwrap themselves
 In foliage that the birds might hide and sing?
 And shall I now, tho' soon the wintry winds
 Will reel apace, forsake thy dying smile,
 Oh Earth, so weak that thou canst not put forth
 Thy weakest growth of grass or wayside weed?
 Nay, but as at the deathbed of a friend
 Will I abide and catch thy murmured words,
 Faint and yet audible, because mine ears
 Are blunted not to spiritual sounds.

And so farewell, ye fluttering, fragile leaves!
 There was a time when tempest in his mirth
 Made you his harp that he might smite thereon.
 Now have ye danced under the sun enough,
 So long have insects made of you their food
 That worn with very weariness ye fall
 From parent unto parent as ye die—
 From tree that bore you, to the mother earth.
 And we shall pass from life to very death,
 One parent to another, tho' we cling
 With such sad force to life, as trembling leaves
 Unto the parent branch. Yet could we read
 The riddle of our fate, perchance it were
 As simple as the death of autumn leaves.

