

Lays from the West

M. A. Nicholl

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Lays from the West

M. A. Nicholl

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Then the spirit reached her fingers,
Taper things of rosy snow,
Took my songs, and as she took them,
“Tiny germs,” she whispered “go!
Root among the coming hours,
Seeds are ye of many flowers,
Which from out the winds will grow!”

* * * * *

Lays from the West

Dedicated

WITH MUCH GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION

TO

MRS. T. SPOTISWOOD ASH,

THE MANOR HOUSE,

BELLAGHY, IRELAND.

* * * * *

IN THE NORTHWEST.

“I'll not forget Old Ireland, were it fifty times as fair.”

In myriads o'er the prairie
Bright flowers bloom strangely fair,
There's beauty in the clear blue sky,
There's sweetness in the air;
And loveliness, with lavish hand,
Decks dell and dingle gay;
Yet still I love my native land—
The Green Isle, far away.

The poplar quivers in the breeze,
And by the blue lake's side.
The regal iris, tall and fair,
Blooms in her native pride;
But I dream of the broad beeches' shade
In glens beside Lough Neagh
And my longing thoughts go back to thee,
O, Green Isle, far away!

Strange birds, in painted plumage gay,
In hundreds haunt the grove;
O'er marsh and moor, the loon and heron,
The coot and plover rove;
But I miss the lark's glad matin song,
And the thrush and blackbird's lay,
The summer songsters, sweet and wild,
In the Green Isle, far away.
Along the blue horizon line
The “bluffs” rise 'gainst the sky,
But in dreams I see Old Erin's coast—
Her mountains wild and high
Slieve Gallon, with his hoary head
Gold-crowned at close of day,
When sunset lights the grand old hills
In the Green Isle, far away.

Lays from the West

There's beauty in the woodland wilds
With their varied foliage fair,
But, cowering from the light of day,
The grim wolf shelters there.
Ah! dear old woods, where I have roamed
At eve of summer day,
No hidden dangers haunt your glades,
In the Green Isle, far away.

The clear Assiniboine winds free
Through many a fertile vale;
The antlered deer and graceful hind
Bound o'er the wooded dale;
But I miss the quiet rural scenes—
The farm-house, thatched and grey,
That memory fondly pictures now
Of the Green Isle, far away.

The Sabbath morn its holy calm
Breathes o'er the prairie lands,
And the answering heart hears Nature's psalm
And the wild woods clap their hands.
But I long to hear the church bell's sound
Tell to these wilds that day,
When thousands meet to praise and pray
In the Green Isle far away.

Here life lays hold of brighter things
For the fair years to be,
But the deathless Past and all her dreams,
Old land, belong to thee!
The buried love, the buried hope
Of youth's glad summer day,
That blend with unforgotten scenes
Of the Green Isle, far away.

And while we love this pleasant land
And own it good and fair,
Our hearts' first love goes backward
And fondly lingers there—
Back to the dear home country,
Then forward to that day

IN THE NORTHWEST.

Lays from the West

When all shall meet together,
From the Green Isle pass'd away.

SONG.

“In the gloaming Oh, my darling.”

Oh! green-bosomed Isle, as the summer day's gloaming,
Lies dreamy and dun on the prairie's wild breast
There my worn, wayward heart o'er the wild waves is roaming
Far, far to the scenes that are dearest and best.

As by bluff and by woodland, by swamp and by meadow,
The gloom gathers round in its dim, mystic pall,
Then my fancies come forth, spirit-children of shadow,
Slow gliding from haunts where the lone night-birds call.

When the wind, ardent lover, in songful caressing,
Speaks low to the grasses that bend to his breath,
And the dew woos the rose with the balm of its blessing
And steals it with love from the shadow of death.

Then I seek the wild glen, when the new moon is beaming
All weirdly and wan, through a cloud's fleecy haze,
'Till I stand, young and free, in the land of my dreaming,
Clasping hands with the phantoms of happier days.

And then, oh! mavourneen, in grey distance flying
The present, the real, grows dimmer, and dies,
See but the moonbeams, but hear the winds sighing,
And bask, fancy bound, in the light of your eyes.

My own! though the years in the gloom of their sadness
Stand, frowning, 'tween me and the light of my star,
And memory can feel the wild might of loves madness,
Or scoff as rude Time its first sweetness would mar.

SONG.

Lays from the West

Again, by the banks where Moyola is flowing
We stray as the moonbeams smile sweet through the dell

Unheeded the moments, unmarked in their going,
Nor dreamed we of woe in the sound of "farewell."

Is it lost—all the light of the fair morning vision?
Is spirit to spirit unanswering, cold?
No, it never shall die, while in memory's Elysian
It lingers in beauty and brightness untold.

Love is love, and though Fate blasts our hope vines may sever
From the stay which their tendrils in fondness entwine
Yet the past of our joy we must cherish forever
And spirit meet spirit at memory's shrine.

A MEMORY.

“Indulgent Memory wakes, and, lo! they live!”
—RODGERS

Deathless, while the years are flying,
And all lesser hopes are dying.
To my widowed heart near lying
 By a life–time's love embalmed,
Is a memory, dear and tender,
And in dreams its bygone splendour
Sweetest, holiest, balm can render
 To my grief, by Time uncalmed.

In life's morning, young and early
Glistening fair through dew–drops pearly,
Burst a bud that promised fairly
 Through the length of future days.
Ah! it charmed my passion'd dreaming,
Bathed in beauty's brightness, beaming
Fadeless still, and deathless seeming
 In fond Hope's delusive haze.

And, as when in wild December,
June's calm twilights we remember,
So this dream in shadowy splendour

Ever haunts my lonely way;
And I see in fond delusion,
Glowing as in light Elysian,
The entrancing, old–time vision
 Doom'd so early to decay.

Days when Hope, how false! still flaunted
Through my dreamings, love enchanted,
Framed by busy Fancy, haunted

A MEMORY.

Lays from the West

By glad visions of delight,—
Morns of light, and sunsets golden,
Dreams of legends, grand and olden,
Hopes for future years, withholden
 From our youthful, yearning sight.

Past and gone! Ah! vain my sighing,—
Hope's dead leaves are round me lying,
But their fragrances, undying,
 Like a hallowed incense rise;
And I feel, with joy unspoken,
That the spirit love unbroken
Leaves this Memory for a token
 Of its truth, that never dies.

In that land whose beauty vernal
Through tried ages blooms eternal
Thou, in bliss undreamed, supernal
 Baskest in the glory—light
Where celestial joys inspire
All heaven's vast, unnumbered choir
With sweet songs that never tire,
 Through the fadeless summer bright.

Here, how sad this dreary roaming,
Through the shadows of earth's gloaming,
Waiting for the longed—for coming
 Of the lingering Morning Star;
But swift time is onward fleeting—
Backward is the past retreating,
Nearer, nearer draws our meeting
 In the future, dim and far.

AFTER LIFE'S FEVER.

Obit, June, 1882.

—“And then, a flood of light, a seraph's hymn,
And God's own smile, forever, and forever.”

Oh! pale, calm face; eyes by the Death-kiss sealed,
Cold hands, upon the silent bosom folden;
Oh! soul, set free—of all sin's sickness healed,
Basking in light, from mortal eyes withholden,
In coelo quies.

Still heart, that ached and throbb'd with human passion,
Locks, white with snow of many a winter past,
Tired body, weary after earth's poor fashion,
Sleep calmly till the waking trumpet blast—
In coelo quies.

All over now—the heart-ache and the burning
Of thoughts, so trammelled by this “mortal coil;”
The soul has cast behind its moans and yearning,
The hands are resting from the long life's toil,—
In coelo quies.

I, mournful gazer, watching by the portal
Whence thou, from death to life, hast entered in,
Would fain catch one stray gleam of light immortal,
To tell me, ever drowning earth's wild din,
In coelo quies.

I might not hear the angel welcome ringing,
Nor see the pearly portals open wide,
Wherein the ransomed band, the new song singing,
In white robes wander by life's river side,

Lays from the West

In coelo quies.

“*In coelo quies*,” while the storms are beating
Along earth's desert moorlands, wild and wide;
While skies shall lower, and angry waves are meeting
Thy bark is moored—thou art beyond the tide,
In coelo quies.

“*In coelo quies*”—Rest, pure, deep, eternal,
Peace, in a perfect, blissful, endless calm;
Charmed by the beatific joys supernal,
Lull'd by the melody of seraph's psalm,
In coelo quies.

Here, we but dream it all—the rest—the glory,
Here we but yearn for it in sob and pain;
Till knees wax weary and till locks grow hoary,
Still “westward journeying,” at length to gain,
In coelo quies.

But *thou* mayest sleep; thy toilsome warfare ended,
The long, rough life—path has been nobly trod,
And with our lost ones, thou sweet songs hast blended,
To hail them found, beside the throne of God?
In coelo quies.

LIGHT AT EVENTIDE.

Round us in the stillness spreading,
Comes the night.
Mortal ears can't hear the treading
Of her footsteps, soft and light.

Dusky veil that shades the valleys,
Bringing rest;
Shadowy glooms in greenwood alleys.
Twilight dreamings, sweet and blest.

All the day-time cares are ended,
And instead,
Now by unseen bands attended,
Far, in fancy, we are led.

Misty forms of mystic seeming
Hover near;
Memory's myriad tapers gleaming
Light old scenes and make them clear—

Morn's vain hopes, and noon's stern sorrows,
Tears and cares;
Days of toiling, and to-morrow's
Bringing less of wheat than tares.

And the chequered, varied pages
Of life's book
Seem a sea whose calms and rages
Now the tired heart cannot brook.

Evening calm! ah, best and purest
Time of peace;

LIGHT AT EVENTIDE.

Lays from the West

Soothing balm, when hope is surest,
To bid all vain doubting cease.

Pointing on, when near the pleasant,
Rest awaits;
When we leave this weary present
And have gained the pearly gates.

And as evening shadows, creeping,
Gather round
Dim eyes, worn so weak with weeping,
Learn to smile as peace is found.

In the hope so full of cheering
And delight—
Home, sweet home! our rest we're nearing!
Evening time shall bring us light.

Light of heaven! Earth's gloom adorning
With thy smile,
Earnest of the eternal morning
After this brief "little while."

CHRISTMAS EVE.

Ruddy bright the dying embers
In the glooming, glow and burn,
Scenes of olden-time Decembers,
Ashes now in Times' great urn,
That the heart so well remembers
At this haunted hour reborn:—
All the fairy scenes Elysian
Born again in recollection,
Seen with mirror-like reflection,
Throng upon the wondering vision.
Once again I hear the river
In the darkness rush and roar,
See the pine-boughs wave and quiver,
Hear the oak trees, blasted, hoar,
Muttering, as their gaunt arms shiver,
“Come again, oh! days of yore!”
Come, oh times of hope and longing,
When the beauteous, pure ideal,
Seemed tangible and real—
“Love the light of Truth's belonging.”

And the woodland walks, enchanted,
By the moonlight's mystic sheen,
Seen as near as when Hope flaunted
In the distance, dimly seen,
That the witch'd hour seems haunted
By the joys that once have been.
Dear old days! they seem returning.
Though their radiance long has vanished,
Though their rays stern fate has banished,
Fancy still can see them burning.

See their magic, nameless graces,
Through the shadows flit and gleam,
See again beloved faces
Shine around as in a dream,
And the well-remembered places
Of the bygone, nearer seem,
Till all present melancholy,
Fades away, and sweet and tender,

Lays from the West

Visions of life's spring-time splendour,
Gleam among the bay and holly.

Hark! the Christmas bells are ringing
From the grey church-steeple near,
And the choir are sweetly singing,
“Nowel! Hail Messiah here!
Nowel! for He cometh, bringing
Unto all mankind good cheer.”
Through the night the music stealing
Bringeth soothing sweet and pleasant,
Sheds a peace upon the present,
Future days in light revealing.

AT ANCHOR.

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever”
HEBREWS xiii. 8.

In life's young morning blue-eyed promise smiled
O'er a fair future of enchanting grace,
And sweet toned love the golden hours beguiled,
And Fortune's radiant smile illumed the place.

But change, dread vulture, swooped upon her prey.
And seized my treasures as Time's car sped on,
Then traitor love took wings, and fled away.
And long ere noon I wept a setting sun.

Then Phoenix-like, beside the smoldering pile,
Kind friendship rose with open, outstretched hands,
But, ere I grasped them, death with icy smile
Had rudely snapp'd in twain the three-fold bands.

E'en while I mourned, I heard a thrilling voice
That said in stirring accents, “Up! arise!
Work, that in harvest time thou mayest rejoice!”
And Fame stood pointing to the brightening skies.

Then dreams, false phantoms, filled the gloaming air
And lured me, spell-bound, by a labyrinth maze,
But morning beams awakened new despair—
The meteor glories passed in mist and haze.

Through shady groves I strayed, and on before
Walked high-browed Knowledge, calm-eyed and severe

AT ANCHOR.

Lays from the West

Unwearied still, I trod his footprints o'er,
But fainting fell, the longed-for prize anear.

Hard-smitten then, I wept; all woe—all gloom!
The heart-void still unfilled, ached keen and sore,
When through the inky darkness shot a gleam
Of new-born glory, unrevealed before.

Dear Lord! How frail these bauble-toys of Time
When Thy "forever" dawns upon the heart;
Thy perfect fullness, Saviour, how divine,
E'en while we taste its blessedness in part!
Still yesterday, to-day, while ages roll
In grand, eternal vastness, still the same,
Oh! potent Healer! every whit made whole,
I sing glad Hallelujah to Thy name!

THE OLD TRYSTING PLACE.

“Die erste Liebe ist die beste.”

Through the green boughs the golden sunshine falling
Glints on the glades and lonely woodland bowers;
Bird answers bird, through the wide woodlands calling,
In the deep hush of the calm summer hours.

The limpid river winding through the meadows,
Laughing and sparkling in the sunny noon,
Takes peaceful tones here, 'neath the beeches' shadows,
And sings sweet idylls in low, fitful tune.

Songs of the olden days, of hopes and pleasures,
Songs of the love of youth's glad morning times,
That sigh around our path like dream-world treasures,
Soothing as music of the vesper chimes.

The rustic bridge, the leaves' soft shadows playing
Down in the water-depths, and from away
'Mong the blue hills, come mingled echoes straying,
The pleasant sounds that fill the summer day.

Aburnum's gold, and quivering beech-leaves blending,
Sway, dancing in the breezes, to and fro;
Wild hyacinths, their blue heads lowly bending,
Listen the secrets of the winds to know.

Oh! quaint old trysting-place! oh! lights and shadows,
And sounds that haunt the dreams of Life's glad May!
Dreams withered like the May-flowers in the meadows
Or roses of the Junes long passed away.

THE OLD TRYSTING PLACE.

Lays from the West

Here, oft in dreams, I see my own true maiden,
The pure flower-face, the rippling golden hair;
Ah! many years have roll'd past, sorrow-laden,
Since blue-eyed Edmee waited for me there!

Ah! murmuring brook, with waving willow fringes,
Ah! woodland picture, all your charmed glow
Is touched and changed by Truth's own sober tinges,
Tints that youth's eager eyes see not, nor know.

Fraught with these gleams of old-time faith and feeling,
Fraught with the memory of "what might have been,"
A still, small voice says all is God's wise dealing,
Behind the clouds is brightness yet unseen.

Young love and hope in all their matchless glory,
Smile on our morning-time, then fade away;
Teaching unwilling hearts the sad, true story,
No lasting joy is here, all knows decay.

"Die erste Liebe ist die beste," leaving
A holy radiance round the scenes we knew;
A potent power to point lone spirits, grieving,
To deathless Love whose charms are ever new.

It ever shows, "in part," in sweet tuition,
What we shall know when we have gained the light,
When all our highest hopes fade in fruition,
Where the Eternal Summer beameth bright.

THY WORD IS A LIGHT UNTO MY FEET.

Oh! Light of Lights! dark, dark is earth's long way,
Cloud upon cloud looms o'er the path I stray;
Far-off and dim the heavenly Land appears,
Through the thick mist of weak distrust—and fears.
Helpless, I seek Thy Word, and hear Thy voice,
That bids me always in the Lord rejoice;
Pointing from doubts within, and this world's wile
To peace and victory, in “a little while.”

Oh! Saviour, Friend, how dark is life's rough path.
What gloom and sorrow haunts this Vale of Death;
Subtle the way, beset with many a snare
And hidden evils lurking everywhere.
But in this Light that shows my love, I see,
This path Thou'st trod, and borne these griefs, for me,
“Fear not!” I hear in tones of tenderest love
“’Tis in thy weakness that my strength I prove.”

The world's temptations rage on life's wild sea,
Drifting the fragile bark I steer to Thee,
But safe I pass the rocks and angry waves,
Helped by Thy mighty arm that shields and saves.
And still above the wind's and water's roar
A calm voice hails me from the distant shore,
“Cast all your care undoubtingly on Me,
Fully and freely, for I care for thee.”

When twilight shades fall round me, dim and grey,
All those I love the most are far away,
I look to Thee, and dry my willful tears—
With love like Thine, I dread no lonely years.
If 'tis Thy will, let bitter partings come,
Sweet shall the meetings be in yonder Home;
While here I have Thy love that cannot die,
And could I feel alone when Thou art nigh?

Lays from the West

Weary with waiting for Thy promised rest,
Dismayed with doubts, with sinfulness distressed;
“Oh! let Thy kingdom come!” I pray “that I
May join the glad new song they sing on high;”
Then thy sweet words bring patience, “I prepare
For thee an heavenly mansion, bright and fair,
That where I am Thou mayest with Me abide,
And taste full joy for ever by My side.”

I bless thee, Saviour, for this word of life,
This light to guide me safe through every strife,
This lantern o'er my pathway shining clear
To show the dangers, and the Helper near.
I love to see it beaming, day by day,
Thine own bright smile, that lights the darksome way;
“Led by Thy counsel,” oh! what joy to be
“Received in glory,” Lord, at last by Thee.

MEMORIES.

“In der Weit, weit,
Aus der Einsamkeit,
Wollen sie Dich locken.”—FAUST.

When the glad, bright days of our youth's fresh prime,
Shall have pass'd, as a dream that at morning dies;
When the long blank stretch of the coming time
Like a desolate desert before us lies,
Dreary and cheerless, 'neath sunless skies.

When young, sweet love, with her luring smile,
The mystic charm—light of halcyon hours,
Shall no more with her witch'ry our souls beguile,
As the leaves grow seer on Life's fading bowers,
And the blushes are pale on its withering flowers.

When the strains we loved in the days of yore
No more with their sweetness our heart's—chords thrill,
When Hope's roseate meteors glow no more,
Like the summer sunrise o'er vale and hill,
That our dreamings with radiance were wont to fill.

When these are gone, shall the lone heart know
No solace the solitude's gloom to cheer?
Shall no stray beams lighten the spirit's woe
As it moans “alone!” e'en when crowds are near?
Must *all* be lost that was once so dear?

Ah, no! Though Time is a thief, I ween,
Stealing youth's best wealth as the swift years go,
Still the memories of pleasures which once have been—
The dreams of the beautiful “Long ago,”
Are our own to keep, and shall aye be so!

“THE KING IS DEAD.”

Hush! There's a solemn pause,
And looks of fear!
You ask—Whence comes the cause?
Grim Death is here!

Oh! well thou answerest, well—
'Tis fairly said;
Our hearts thrill to the knell,
“The King is dead!”

Dead! And the bell swings, swings
On in its deep, sad tone;
We own the King of Kings
Is King alone!

We crown our Kings, we place
Bay leaves on victors' brow,
But all our mortal race
Can boast is *now*.

The body lay in state,
All fair to mortal eye;
The soul's eternal fate—
Oh! Death, thy mystery!

Lays from the West

TO "X. Y. Z.,"
On receiving a paper from him.

"Old places have a charm for me
The new can ne'er attain;
Old faces—how I long to see
Their kindly looks again!"—Anon.

"X. Y. Z.," your paper was
A welcome thing, indeed, to me;
It brought the memories of old days,
Like fragrance wafted o'er the sea.

It spake about familiar nooks,
The dear old paths I know so well;
I almost thought I heard the brooks,
Or roamed again my favourite dell.

The happy hours, the rustic glades,
The gloaming time, the twilight stroll,
Ah, me! these April evening shades
With old-time dreams can haunt one's soul.

The heart feels young again and free,
And no such word is known as care;
Sweet rays of light that used to be
Seem hovering in the twilight air!

The hedges and the fields of green,
The lanes, the flowers, the wild bird's trill,
The trees, seen down the water's sheen.
The cattle lowing o'er the hill!

Your well-drawn school-life picture, too,

TO "X. Y. Z.," On receiving a paper from him.

Lays from the West

My school-time morn recalls again;
'Tis like an old tune, sweet and true,
That mingles pleasing notes with pain.

The fields, the schools, the village way,
The quaint, old-fashioned, country rhyme,
All come, like mystic glows that stray
Across the yellowing fields of Time.

The English lanes have lovely flowers,
And moss, and ferns, and birds that sing,
But Erin—green Erin—still is ours.
And to her name our fond hearts cling.

Each land we visit claims some grace—
Some special charm it calls its own;
Yet patriot souls must love the place
Which childhood's happy memories crown.

LOVE.

When first from Eden's blissful bowers,
Man roamed o'er earth in exile driven,
Kind Heaven, to cheer his lonely hours,
A source of joy to him hath given.

'Tis Love, that lights our darkest days,
'Tis Love, that cheers our keenest woe,
'Tis Love, whose soul inspiring rays,
Gilds all our lives with heaven-lent glow.

Ambition leads us for a while
To follow many a meteor light—
Whose flickering beams our souls beguile,
And lure us on to hopeless night.

And Fame may sound her clarion voice—
Wealth bring his hoards from every clime,
But Age shall come, and earth's frail joys
Must own the sway of sovereign Time.

But Love, as flying years go past,
Shall glow with holier, tenderer beam,
And shine, our guiding star at last
Till our dull hearts shall catch a gleam.

And when our life on earth is o'er
And we from all our toil shall rest,
The beams of Love will light that shore
Where Love has ransomed all the Blest!

A BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY.

“Tis sweet, when year by year we lose
Friends out of sight, in faith to muse
How grows in Paradise our store!”—KEBLE.

His Birthday! but to-night there is no gladness,
As in the bright old days forever flown;
And in my heart one aching thought of sadness
Seems ever whispering, Alone! Alone!

The darkness gathers round, and, wan and olden,
The worn day paler grows, and dies away,
And all life's light and brightness now seem folden
Beneath the twilight's dusky mantle gray.

The old church tower, amid the shadows looming,
Stands grim and sombre in the dying light;
The trees with leafless branches shiver, moaning,
As the sad winds sigh softly through the night.

Weird looks the ruined church, where ivy creeping
Decks the old walls fast mouldering in decay;
And peace rests o'er the graves in whose calm keeping,
In quiet safety, sleeps the treasured clay.

Here in this corner, where his grave is lying,
The fir trees throw deep shade, and soft and low,
When summer eve or winter day is dying,
The winds seem ever sighing songs of woe!

Oh! cherished spot! beloved beyond all measure,
Your holy peace that brings a balm so blest!
When turning from the world, in grief or pleasure,

Lays from the West

I seek your calm, and hunger for your rest!

How feeble, then, seem all the ties that bound me
To this world's ways, that held such charms for me
And heaven-born dreams and holy thoughts surround me
Until from earth's vain things my soul is free!

Then do I feel this wound of Mercy's giving
Draws all my hopes from earth to holier love.
An e'en while here, sin-stained and lonely living,
My heart is with my treasure fixed above!

Still, looking upward to the Heavenly Mansion,
Where he abides—where we shall meet him there—
Where soul with soul shall blend in the expansion
Of that world's higher life, immortal, fair!

That land of beauty, where the Lamb in glory
Gathers His own to perfect bliss and peace,
Where all the ransomed sing Redemption's story
In joys celestial that can never cease.

Thrice happy lot was thine, oh, blessed spirit!
So early called from this dark vale of woe—
From chequered scenes of warfare—to inherit
That perfect love that God's own favoured know.

Then could we wish thee back to dwell with mortals
And bear those storms that toss Time's troubled sea?
No! from that home beyond the pearly portals
Thou canst not come, but we will go to thee!

IN MEMORIAM

OF

R. A. WILSON, ESQ.,

EDITOR OF THE BELFAST MORNING NEWS.

Fair vales of Ulster! in the noontide smiling,
Blue Northern mountains, frowning to the sky;
Rivers that flow along, with song beguiling
The summer day *your* beauties, too, must die!

Know ye no *requiem*? Ah! streamlets borrow
Your tones from tearful voices! Mountains blue,
O'er your high heads let heavy clouds of sorrow
Tell that ye mourn the death of Patriot true.

Erin! green Erin! let your great heart feel it!
Bid all your sons and daughters, fair and brave,
By dropping tears and mourning faces tell it,
As they place laurels on a new-made grave!

Lowly he lies to day? Death's deep, calm slumber
Has claimed another of our cherished ones;
As he, the talented, ranks with the number
Of Erin's lost, best-loved—her gifted sons!

Lays from the West

“Barney Maglone” is dead! Let the winds sighing
On their fleet wings, bear far the wail of woe
To every land. Let them in wild, sad crying
Tell out to all the sorrow that we know.

Our Poet, and not all Westminster's glory
Could ever give him half so loved a grave
As this green mound, with simple cross, whose story
Shall live 'mong annals of our gifted brave!

Methinks that far among old Ireland's mountains
I hear the breezes sing a sad dirge, low,
Wild, and yet soft, with tears from many fountains
And murmuring riven wailing in their flow.

The grand old woods, with leafy branches waving,
Mingle their many harps in one refrain,
Blent with the waves, whose foam our coast is laving,
Rolling afar, weeping aloud the strain—

Waters and wondrous deep,
Mountains and valleys;
Woodlands and heathery steep,
Lone greenwood alleys,

Sound the long wail of woe,
Tell the news, sad and low,
Let all the wide world know
Of the loved, lost one!

Waves of deep, boundless sea,
Boiling for ever free,
Tell through the time to be
Of the bright, lost one!

Erin, whose bosom green,

Lays from the West

His own, his loved shrine has been,
Feel the woe thou hast seen
For the true, lost one!

His land, in weal or woe,
In dark gloom or sunny glow,
Do all Ireland's great ones know
Such zeal as this lost one?

Bright dreams! ah, how fleeting
Was his life's fair story!
Swift, swift was the meeting
Of Death, with earth's glory!

Unrivalled in splendour
His sky was at morning,
Still brightening, its grandeur
His noonday adorning.

But a dark cloud rose glooming,
Ah, me! 'twas Death's shadow!
It chilled the heat blooming
Of hillside or meadow!

Oh, waters and wondrous deep,
Mountains and valleys,
Woodlands and heathery steep,
Lone greenwood alleys—

Sound the weird wail of woe,
Tell the news sad and low,
Let all the wide world knew
Of Erin's best lost one!

WELCOME TO SPRING.

Oh, Spring! sweet Spring! with your golden hours,
Thrice welcome back to our vales and bowers!
I have sighed for you through the Winter's gloom,
And counted the months, till again you come.
Then, welcome, sweetest! I hail you here,
Fairest child of the smiling year!

I have watched for your advent with longing eyes,
As you lingered 'neath sunnier southern skies;
I have wafted songs o'er the winds to thee
The sighs of a lover's fond constancy.
Then, welcome, darling! to glen and grove,
Child of gladness, and hope, and love!

I see your footprints along the woods,
And your magic touch on the opening buds,
Bursting to birth on hedge and tree,
In promise of vernal life to be.
Then, welcome, Spring! to our land again,
Bringing beauty and me in your happy train!

I have marked where you paused by the streamlet's side,
There smiled the primrose, in early pride,
All golden fair 'mid her leaves of green.
Dropped from your garland, oh, beauteous queen!
Then, welcome! to brighten our long-left bower
Fair child of sunshine, and joy, and flowers!

I have paused entranced in the early morn,
When the birds awoke as the day was born,
Pealing welcomes wild in their native glee.
And my heart went out in their songs to thee,
On the fresh winds borne o'er the hills along,
Child of music, and mirth, and song!

Lays from the West

Oh, Spring! sweet Spring! 'neath your gentle reign.
Life, light, and beauty are born again;
And sad hearts, hopeless in Winter days,
Break forth to singing glad songs of praise—
For that promise renewed in your yearly birth
Of a fadeless Spring and a ransomed Earth!

ONLY "A LITTLE WHILE."

I saw the sun arise in light at morning;
My being drank the beauty, like some dream
That comes when all is dark, the gloom adorning
With gilding mystic—bright—a soul—world gleam

I saw the noontide flush on grove and meadow,
I heard the coo of birds that seem'd at rest;
And the fair radiance, all undimm'd by shadow,
Was like a foretaste of the bright and blest.

I saw, when evening's mellow sunlight glinted,
Far and anear, gleaming on wood and gold;
Mountain and valley shone all carmine-tinted,
Old Ocean's burnished breast seem'd heaving gold.

Only "a little while" since morn rose brightly,
Followed by noontide calm: a little while
Since sunset glory lit all Nature, lightly
Blessing the earth with one sweet parting smile.

Only "a little while" a meet type, showing
How brief is earth's short day—how soon 'tis o'er;
Morn, noon, and night, still onward, onward going,
So soon to land us on the eternal shore.

Only "a little while," poor child of sadness!
The shadows must come first, the clouds and gloom;
Then, the full glow of Heaven, the new born gladness,
When Christ, thy risen Lord, prepares thee room.

In that fair Home, where He has passed before us,
And in "a little while," shall call us in;

ONLY "A LITTLE WHILE."

Lays from the West

Here, with His love's own glory shining o'er us,
Strong in His strength, we run that goal to win!

Only "a little while," gay child of pleasure!
The night is spent so far—the morn is near;
Then think! oh, think! where hast thou hid thy treasure?
In these frail, dying toys that charm thee here.

Oh! in "a little while," their borrowed radiance
Shall fade, as starlight fades when dawn is nigh;
And all earth's glittering show, her smiles and fragrance,
In the fierce fire of wrath shall melt and die!

Only "a little while!" would we but ponder
These three brief words, their length and breadth and
height
A solemn sign to each, a ray of wonder
From the Unseen, to light the spirit's night.

"A little while"—past, present, future blending
Shall be a tale soon told, and pass'd for aye;
Then the eternal life, that cannot die—unending,
Undying woe, or Heaven's own dazzling day.

LIFE'S PATHWAY.

We walk among labyrinths of wonder, but tread the mazes with
a club;
We sail in chartless seas, but behold! the Pole-star is above
us—TUPPER.

Life is a pathway, stretched from morn till eve,

ONLY "A LITTLE WHILE."

Lays from the West

O'er which, through shade and sunshine, we must go
And, whether bright or dark this life we live,
Its end must bring us unto joy or woe;
Joy, that no mortal's holiest dreams can know,
Or dread, unending; fearful depths of woe!

This path is fair at morning, wondrous fair;
With verdant windings, hiding from the view
The far-off journey, and what may be there,
Hid by the Future hilltops, high and blue;
And morn's glad sunlight smiles from dazzling skies,
Gilding the path we tread with heaven-lent dyes.

Oh! youth is sweet! for tender hands are near,
And eyes aglow with Love's own magic ray,
Heart meeting heart, each to the other dear—
Through hours that, ere we count them, glide away;
For none can turn to seek a cherished place—
One only life, whose path we can't retrace!

And soon they pass, these meteor joys of earth,
That flash and gleam along the troubled way;
Till wondering wanderers question if their birth
Dawns from a Land that knows no sad decay;
Some sinless region, from whose portals bright
These fleeting rays descent in heavenly light.

Such glorious hues, in golden glory glowing,
When sunrise splendour glads the morning sky;
That bloom awhile, and as they bloom bestowing
Beauty and light, so soon to melt and die,
Leaving a yearning in the darkened heart
To know more closely what we see in part.

The noonday calm, the sunny Summer hours,
The wild-birds' warbled songs, the balmy air;
Life's early pathway strewn with earth's sweet flowers—
Can these be dying things—so bright, so fair?
Or lights to lead us o'er a chequered road,
And cheer the shadows to a blest abode?

Lays from the West

Oh! spell-bound Fancy fain would wander far,
If we might only break this mortal thrall;
And roam, unshackled, o'er Time's broken bar,
Trace these gleams whose glory lights on all!
Then would we see in all below, above,
The Great Creator's perfect power and love.

Yet in this path that stretched before us lies
We may, as oft with weary feet we tread
Through chequered ways of change, see through the mysteries
The living promise from their gleamings shed,
That far from mortal things, and sin, and care,
There is a glorious world, unchanging, fair.

Oh! may we trace in all that lives and grows
The shadows of a perfect life, unseen;
As when some star that in the twilight glows
In mirrored dimly in the water's sheen,
And we can see, in the calm lake's cool breast,
The far-off glow that lingers in the West.

Thus, as we onward go, may thoughts be ours
Whose holy pureness in our souls may raise
An anthem of thanksgiving, till life's hours,
Ending, shall find our hearts' attuned to praise
That Love which cheered us on earth's chequered way,
O'er the long path that led to Cloudless Day!

CLOUDS IN MAY.

“May is here, sweet 'Mois de Marie,' but my sky is overcast!”—ST. GERMAN.

The hush of twilight, fair and still
Great cloud-ranks, bright with gorgeous dyes
That linger in the Western skies,
Ere Night's deep gloom steals o'er the hill.
The wind sighs softly round the eaves,
The May's fresh sweetness fills the air,
And Peace seems hovering everywhere.
Oh, restless heart, that aches and grieves!—
Grieves when the earth is bright and green,
And Summer's balmy breeze and flowers
Are brightening, charming all the hours
That span the long, long “bridge between”
Dear hopes and their fruition, laid
In many a way, by human plan.
But ah! these dream-world thoughts of man
Soon, soon can droop, and blight and fade!

We know 'tis best. Then wherefore try
To ask whence come the darksome clouds?
We know 'tis God's own hand that shroud
Our coming days in mysteries.
“A little while,” and there is room
In that bright, blessed land above,
To see, and feel, and taste the love
That sends us now the clouds and gloom.
Why come the clouds? God only knows
Why human hearts need pain and woe;
But Faith's glad gleams still come and go,
Like sunbeams flashing on the snows
Of earth's dark winter-time, and He
Shall smile at last, and frosts shall melt,
And heavenly sunshine shall be felt
When Time fades in Eternity

A FRAGMENT.

“My spirit beats her mortal bars
As down dark tides the glory glides,
Then, star-like, mingles with the stars.”—TENNYSON.

Oh, restful peace of night! The balmy air
Laden with myriad sounds of things so fair,
The waving branches, and the leaves' low whispering
The wondrous songs the winding river sings,
That through the meadow-lands and forest ways,
By flowery nooks, and glades, and valleys strays.

Oh! shadowy time of dreams, and mysteries,
And longing hopes! Far in the dark blue skies
The star-worlds glimmer brightly through the night;
The flowers are sleeping that at close of day
Wept dew-tears, as the sun's last fading light
From glen and moor land slowly passed away,
When amorous zephyrs wooed them softly sighing
In odorous breaths, as eve's last glow was dying.

Oh! stars, that through the darkness smile and gleam,
Like glory-rays that gild the dreary gloom,
Or like some soul-world glance or mystic dream
That from the mind's vast store of summer bloom
We feel at times—your influence comes to raise
Our hearts above earth's night of doubts and haze
For all these holy thoughts of peace, that spring
From hearts at rest from daytime cares and pains,
Are messengers of love, sent from the King
That in the blessed country lives and reigns.
And from its gates, above the starry heaven,
Come mystic rays that round our pathway stray—
His guiding lights that to our souls are given,
Foretastes that cheer and brighten all our way!

SPRING THOUGHTS.

“Of the bright things in earth and air
How little can the heart embrace—
Soft shades and gleaming lights are there
I know it well, but cannot trace!”—KEBLE

Spring comes again, and the freed flowers are springing
From the cold, frost-bound earth;
And on the budding trees the wild birds singing,
Hail Nature's glad new birth!

And hope awakes from many a heart-grave using,
Glad gloriously and new;
And many souls, in faith and trust, are prizing
That promise sweet and true;

Summer and Winter, ever coming, going,
Springtime and Harvest days,
And falling leaves and opening buds are showing
God's ever faithful ways.

That point us to the resurrection morning,
And to the gladsome day,
When light eternal, the far East adorning,
Shall chase these glooms away.

And she shall rise who left our home so early,
And left our hearts in gloom,
Clad like the flowers, in beauty's bloom all fairly
Arising from the tomb.

In that fair Spring and in that Summer shadeless,
With her we, too, shall live—

Lays from the West

There, 'neath His smile whose glory, beaming fadeless,
Eternal peace shall give.

And all these ties that Time's rough hand had driven
Shall be united there,
And every cross a Father's hand had given
Be gemmed with jewels fair!

LINES.

On reading "Lays of Love and Fatherland," by X. Y. Z.

Oh! say not now that Erin's harp
Is left untouched by minstrel hand;
Oh! say not that no minstrel heart
Sings now of "Love and Fatherland."
Green Ulster's mountains and her vales
Hear once again a patriot's lyre;
Ierna's legendary tales
Once more are told in patriot fire!

And hearts beat high, as when of old
In chieftain's hall or peasant's cot
The stories of our land were told
In songs whose spell was half forgot
Till, touched again, the chords resound
That bid our slumbering zeal return,
And souls, so long in coldness bound,
With old-time fire and fervour burn!

And favoured ones, whom love shall bless
In life's bright, sunny morning hours,
Shall sing in joy and happiness
These songs in Hope's enchanted bowers,
For youth hath dreams, and tho' they go
like sunset fading from the sky,
The cherished songs of "long ago,"
While memory lives, can never die.

Song's potent powers, like holy things
That hover round our path unseen,
On airy wings, to fancy brings
Old scenes, new-clad in fairy sheen.
And like sweet music heard at eve
In some cathedral, old and grey,
Such songs can cheer the hearts that grieve,

LINES.

Lays from the West

And chase all present gloom away.

IF "SOMEONE" LOVES US.

If life's path grows dull and dreary,
 With grim shadows on it cast;
If the tired heart grows weary
 When all joy seem o'er and past;
When e'en Hope hath ceased to cheer us
 With its warm and sunny ray,
And the peace that once was near us
From our pathway steals away
 There's one source where we can borrow
 Sweetest wealth to keep and claim,
If we feel in joy or sorrow
 Someone loves us all the same!

If fair-faced Pleasure brightly
 Beam upon our happy home,
And our hearts with hope beat lightly
 Of brighter days to come;
If fickle Fortune, smiling,
 Strew the pleasant path with flowers,
And Mirth, with song beguiling,
 Lead the merry-footed hours—
 There's a deeper, holier gladness
 That is ours to keep and claim,
If we feel in joy or sadness
 Someone loves us all the same!

If our thoughts, at evening blending
 With the dim and shadowy light,
Bring us dreams of bliss unending
 In the Haven, calm and bright—
Oh! how sweet the thought—"for ever
 'Mong the sinless *we* shall stand,
There united, ne'er to sever,
 In the bright and better land:"
 And e'en then, refined and holy,
 Free from earthly stain and sin,
 Shall the pure heart, meek and lowly,
 Wear the crown true love shall win.

NEW YEAR'S SONG.

“Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky.
The flying clouds, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night—
Ring out, wild bells, and let it die!

“Ring out the Old; ring in the New!
Ring, happy bells, across the snow!
The year is going; let it go—
Ring out the false! ring in the truer!”—TENNYSON.

Oh! welcome! welcome! glad New Year!
We hail with joy your birth.
Let peace and love reign far and near,
And plenty fill the earth!

Old Year, good-bye! a last good-bye
To sorrow, woe and sin!
Let all of darkness with thee die
And all of light begin!

When first we bade you welcome here
We hailed you with delight;
But ah! how many then were near,
So far away to-night!

Ah! well! if thorns were 'mong thy flowers,
Or clouds were in thy sky,
We owe thee many blissful hours
Whose memory ne'er can die!

Farewell, farewell, for aye, Old Year,

Lays from the West

And as you pass from view,
For all those golden hours a tear
That pass away with you!

“Le Roi est mort!” “Vive le Roi!”
The Old Year, weeping, dies!
Ere we can mourn, a joyous chime
Peals through the midnight skies.

Oh! welcome! welcome! New-born Year!
We join the strains of joy;
To everyone our hearts hold dear
Be peace without alloy!

May fadeless light their pathway bless;
And, for a lasting stay,
Oh! may they find that happiness
That cannot pass away.

For years may come, and years may go,
And earthly joys grow old;
But heavenly love no change can know—
No time can make it cold.

Oh! welcome! welcome! New-born Year!
And, as we hail your birth,
May pure and holy thoughts come near
And raise our hopes from earth!

OUR NATIVE LAND.

Our Native Land! Our Native Land!
Long may old Erin's vales be green;
May plenty smile on every hand,
Be want and woe unseen!
Oh! let us join with heart and hand
To raise the song—Our Native Land!

Our Native Land! Our Native Land!
May countless blessings on her smile
May dove-eyed Peace her lily-wand
Wave o'er pure Emerald Isle—
Her sons, united brethren, stand,
To raise the song—Our Native Land!

Our Native Land! Our Native Land!
Let patriot voices join the song,
And swell the chorus high and grand,
Till every breeze shall bear it on.
O'er flowery mead and wave-kissed strand
Loud let it ring—Our Native Land!

Our Native Land! Our Native Land!
Let Erin's sense the notes prolong,
Together joined—a mighty band
United by one common song.
'Tis Honour's right—her just command
Then let us love Our Native Land!

TO THE SEA.

Oh! rolling waves, while ye sing around me,
My poises beat to your fitful tune,
And higher thoughts in my breast awaken,
But the spell must vanish too soon, too soon.
Here while I lie let your echoes linger,
And rest awhile on this lute of mine;
And though I play with an erring finger,
The sounds shall charm if they're caught from thine.
And my song shall be rich in melody,
Learned from thy singing, oh' tuneful Sea!

Sadly sigh while the clouds loom o'er thee,
Dark and grey in yon stormy sky;
Foaming billows, your angry wailing
Fills my soul like a hopeless cry!
Heaving breast with your great heart throbbing
Ocean pulses that wildly thrill;
Wandering waves in such cadence breaking,
Rolling, rolling, and never still.
Oh! that my soul, like thine, were free,
Eager and restless, oh! beautiful Sea!

The clouds disperse, and like glory breaking
In fancy's eyes o'er a poet's dream,
Clad in the sunlight the waters glisten,
And dazzling bright in the radiance gleam.
Far and wide o'er the scene of grandeur
My glad eyes wander, my heart beats high;
Lost in a maze of light and wonder,
I faint in a dream of ecstasy;
And the spirit of beauty thou seem'st to me
In that flood of glory, oh! changing Sea!

Yet best I love when the mystic gloaming
Grows dim, and the crimson sunset dies;
For I dream that your mighty tones are changing,
And in psalms of praise through the shadows rise.
Oh! Nature's organ! Methinks thy numbers

Lays from the West

Keep time with the songs of Cherubim,
While through hidden caves come the echoes swelling
Their chorus grand to the ocean hymn;
And my soul, adorning, ascends with thee,
In deep thanksgiving, oh! wondrous Sea!

A FAREWELL SONG.

Oh! sometimes when our hearts are gay,
And Pleasure round us smiles,
Too soon the hours may pass away
That rosy Mirth beguiles;
And we may feel a tinge of pain
Amid the festal cheer,
And pause to ask, "When, when again,
Shall all be gathered here?"

But ah! the future's dusky veil
Hides coming years from view;
And still our yearning eyes must fail
To pierce its darkness through.
But Memory can hold the past
That we have loved so well;
And, like a halo round it cast,
Affection's light may dwell.

And thus, my friends, though call'd away
To join another scene,
My thoughts shall often backward stray
To all that once has been.
And bygone hours shall come again—
The cherished times and dear.
And bring the moments in their train
When I was with you here.

And as sweet flowers, tho' sere and dead,
Can by their fragrance bring
Remembrance of the days long fled
Again on Memory's wing.
So many a kindly smile I'll mourn
With deep and fond regret;
For though I never may return,
I never can forget.

SOLITUDE.

“Solitude delighteth well to feed on many thoughts;
There, as thou sittest peaceful, communing with Fancy,
The precious poetry of life shall gild its leaden cares”
—TUPPER

Come, Solitude! best soother of my mind—
The sole companion of my happiest hours;
The spell, all potent, of thy gentle powers
Here in this lovely spot, I come to find.

Below yon mountains, in the sunset beams,
Lough Neagh's glassy waters widely spread;
And through the distance, like a shining thread,
The “Silver Bann” along the valley gleams.

Lough Neagh! often in the evening light
I've watched the golden sunset kiss thy breast,
Then, as it died on many a wavelet's crest,
Homeward, unwilling, turned, with fond “Goodnight.”

The bare trees in the planting moan and sigh;
I've watched their leaves from buds, till they had grown
To vernal beauty. Withered now and strewn
Upon the walks, all sere and dead they lie.

And in the Spring, when the young leaves came first,
Here, often in my lone imaginings,
What golden dreams I knew of glorious things;
Visions my willing mind too fondly nurse.

Visions that, like the leaves, to beauty grew,

SOLITUDE.

Lays from the West

Gladdening my heart thro' sunny summer hours;
Clad in bright garlands, woven from Fancy's bowers
Radiant with Hope's fair light of mellow hue.

And are they withered too? All those swept dreams
That I had hoped in future years to see
Around me bloom, in living, grand reality;
No longer far-off things, or misty, meteor gleams.

Some like these leaves, have fallen by the way,
Never again in spring to wake to birth;
While some are mine e'en now, whose priceless worth
Shall bloom and ripen, knowing no decay!

Round me the shadows deepen; and I see
My dead dreams in a phantom band draw near.
And dim AEolian strains fall on my ear,
like some wild mystic requiem's fitful melody!

Oh! Solitude! thou canst alone restore
The buried bygone, till the haunted isles
Of memory's chambers shine in moonlight smiles
Shadows of sunlight from the days of yore.

Oh! Solitude! come often for my guest!
Still, when I meet thee in sequestered glade,
I feel thy presence lasting peace has made;
Of life's sweet things, I hold thee first and best!

WITH A WHITE ROSE.

Long ago, in ages olden,
When our world was new;
When old Time was young and golden,
When men's hearts were true;
Fairer flowers than now are growing
Blossom'd everywhere—
Beauty to the earth bestowing,
Sweetness to the air!

Well men loved them, fondly dreaming
They were not of earth;
In their glorious beauty seeming
Of a higher birth.
And in those Elysian bowers,
In the days of old,
Speaking all their thoughts in flowers,
Thus their love they told:—

One alone, of purest whiteness,
Of them all was queen;
Sweeter than their hues of brightness
Was its snowy sheen.

If this flower as pledge were given
By true hearts in love,
Though on earth by sad doubts driven,
Yet their life above
Would be one in joy unending,
Undivided there,
Soul with soul in glory blending
In that kingdom fair.

This the legend I have told thee
Of the flower I send.
Oh, may its sweet leaves unfold thee
Hope, with such an end!

“THE EXILE'S REVERIE.”

It is sweet to dream of the vanished times, in this changing
land of ours,
When we touch the hidden spring of thought, with the wand of
mystic powers,
That Remembrance yields to our yearning hearts, that are
lonely left, and pine
For the loves once ours, till shadowy forms come round us,
and flit and shine.

Through the gloom that wraps the earth-tired soul, that
drifts on life's sea apart,
Missing the clasp of a kindred hand, or thrill of heart to
heart.
Alone! alone! on the wide, wide world, where hope can console
no more;
Alone! alone! on the friendless waste, strange, on a stranger
shore.

Oft times when the gloaming gathers round, and the night wind
moans on the hill
Like a ghostly voice from the buried dead, when all around is
still,
In the midnight darkness and silence, I call through the mist
and maze,
To the sunny joys of the glad, bright dream, of the golden,
bygone days.

Then the poem of the wakened long-ago, to the music of memory
flows,
Now filled as with bridal gladness, now wailing out dirge-
like woes;
Through sunshine and summer glories, through brightness and
fragrant blooms,
Through howling storms, 'neath winter skies, through weeping
and murky glooms.

Lays from the West

And then, when the weird strain ceases, and the fitful music
is done,
The pictures I love to gaze on, rise slowly, one by one
Through the mist of the past slow coming, they give to our
eyes once more,
What Death has stolen from me, and Death can alone restore.

Again, as in early childhood, I feel the fond caress
Of my mother's lips, or I hear the tones of my father's voice
that bless
His child in its gleeful gambols; Oh! happy and peaceful
hours!
Ye come in visions of golden noons, and sunshine, and shady
bowers!

And the low-breathed prayer when the sunset glow'd crimson in
the West,
And the sweet "Good-night," and the tender kiss, ere I sank
to tranquil rest;
Mother! that prayer still haunts me, adown the dreary years,
And the earnest tones of thy gentle voice, can steep my soul
in tears.

My brothers! faithful hearted! strong in your love, and true;
Oh! breaking heart, do you mock me? Can *they* have
perished too?
In their morning time, when they shared my dreams of a Crown
and a Life-fight won,
Thank God, it was their's so early, when my fight had but
begun!

Oh, darling, best-beloved! keen now is the aching smart,
As when Death's chill touch on our clasped hands fell, when
he breathed the hard word "part,"
Only for earth's short span, my sweet, for love can never
die,
And the spirit bond but strengthens, as Time's wild waves
sweep bye.

Mine! by the vows soft-whispered, where hand in hand we
strayed

"THE EXILE'S REVERIE."

Lays from the West

In twilight hours, through summer lanes, or roamed in the
lonely glade;
But the dream in its glory perished, and earth's brightest
hope was fled,
And light from my life was faded, when they laid thee with
the dead!

Elsie! my bright-haired sister! tender blossom and pure!
You drooped in that last storm's fury, too fragile its might
to endure;
And then I left the home-nest when my last sweet dove had
flown,
And sought to forget, amid stranger scenes, the sorrows my
soul had known.

It's thus the shadowy phantoms come back from the spirit-
shore,

When I cry in my lonely anguish for the joys now mine no
more.
I thrill with a passion'd yearning for the fuller life to be,
When my tired soul faints in wonder, lost in earth's
mystery!

CHURCH ISLAND, COUNTY DERRY.

“Oh, search with mother—love the gifts
Our land can boast;
Fair Erna's isles—Neagh's wooded slopes—
Green Antrim's coast.”—MACCARTHY.

In peerless beauty, flushing, glowing,
O'er broad Lutigh Neagh's breast,
The sunset banner hovers, throwing
Its glory over the West.
And varied banks of glen and wood,
That smile round Neagh's smiling flood,
In this sweet hour seem fitting theme
For Poet's song or artist's dream.

Round the horizon, sternly frowning,
The mountains like a barrier rise,
The purple range, Slieve Gallion crowning,
Towers grimly to the western skies.
Northward Losgh Beg's bright waters play
Round the Church Isle, where, lone and grey.
The ruined pile with ivied walls
To present days the past recalls.

On many a grave the sunset gleams,
Where calmly rest the sleeping dead—
Tired mortals, done with mortal dreams
In other life, whetted they have fled.
E'en now they live! Oh! if tonight
One soul might earthward take its flight,
In awful tones methinks t'would say—
“Prepare for death, oh child of clay!”

Oh, time—worn walls! full many a word
Ye echoed in the Sabbath calm;
Love, warning, blessing, oft ye heard,

Lays from the West

And solemn prayer, and chanted psalm;
And funeral dirge, as wild and high'
Rose on the gale the *caione*-cry,
Borne far and wide, o'er fern and brake,
As passed the cortege o'er the lake.

And legends of the days gone by
Tell that if, when a funeral train
Passed there, dark clouds swept over the sky,
And howled the wind and sobbed the rain,
Such storm was still an omen blest,
And told the spirit's happy rest.
If all were calm—then woe the dead!
Sad rose their wailing, weird and dread!

And that before a chieftain's death,
On moonless nights, by lightning shown,
How oft they saw the water-wraith,
And heard the weeping banshee's groan.
How many a barque, at midnight toss'd
And in the angry waters lost,
In the gray dawn-light seemed to glide
In phantom-beauty o'er the tide.

But ah! the past and all its lore
Is fading from our hearts away,
And memories of the times of yore
Are all forgotten in to day!
And now, 'tis but by peasants old
These cherished legends can be told;
For Erin's harp is mute and still,
Its mystic notes no heart can thrill!

Once minstrel hearts awoke its strain,
And swept its chords with master-hand;
But who can wake these lays again
In songs of love and fatherland?
Oh! when again shall such as they
Wake passion'd song and warrior's lay?
Till Erin's vales once more resound
With harp-notes long in silence bound!

LIVINGSTONE.

At last thou art resting; thy life—work is ended—
Thy life—work so nobly and faithfully done;
And thy name, with the names of the mightiest blended,
Shall be honored and loved as the ages roll on!

Far away in the wilds, as thy life—scene closed slowly,
How thy soul must have pined for one home—voice to cheer;
But the God, ever kind, of the high and the lowly,
With blessings and strength to thy spirit was near!

How sweet to thy tired soul that glorious light breaking
In beauty untold o'er the land of the blest,
As thou heard'st, in the hour of that wond'rous awaking—
“Well done, faithful servant, now enter thy rest!”

Great Britain's Columbus—her son and our glory!
Her true hearts with love shall beat high at thy name;
Thou shalt stand 'mong the first in our country's proud
story,
And be graven with fire on the Temple of Fame!

Oh! that some minstrel soul, from the days long departed
Would awake, a meet requiem o'er thee to sing—
And tell of thy brave deeds—the high, lion—hearted—
Till the listening nations their homage would bring!

A DREAM AT SUNRISE.

Sapphire and rosy brightness in the East;
Fresh, light-winged zephyrs o'er the hilltops stray
And through the valleys roam, through glens and woods
Waking the leaves and flowers to morning life,
Seeming to tell to all—"The sun is near!"
Slow—brightening now, the rose-light deeper grown
The sapphire flames in wondrous golden maze,
And, all unrivalled, the great King of Day,
In dazzling glory, mounts his regal throne!

To me a vision down the sunbeams came,
When wrapt in wonder by the beauty—spell,
My soul, entranced, afar from earth did soar,
Unshackled, free, and drank the grandeur of the hour
Brightest and fairest hour of all the day,
When new life thrills the veins as when of old
The morning stars their high thanksgivings raised,
And all the sons of God did shout for joy!
Wondering, I cried, "Oh, Earth is very fair!
I cannot see the shadow of man's fall
On aught around me—sin has left no trace:
Oh! for a bower in such a scene as this,
Where Love and Beauty, blessed by Peace, might dwell!"

Then round me, on the light wind softly borne,
I heard the numbers of an unseen harp,
And turning, saw an angel near me stand.
He sang of earthly love, and the soft tones
Of his sweet harp were like Aeolian strains
Far breathing o'er some blissful Eden world!
And as I listened, all my holiest dreams
Of harmony, ideal, grand, and high,
Seem'd discord. Then methought I saw,
Upon the morning hills, a bower arise.
Bright flowers of wondrous hues around it bloomed,
All, all of beauty that the heart could dream
Was there; and, lov'lier far than all,
A sweet-eyed maiden, twining rose-wreaths fair!

Lays from the West

Dark clouds arose and dimmed the glowing sky;
The lightnings flashed, and fearful thunder pealed;
And, as they shook the bower, I hid mine eyes,
Fearing to see the beauteous visions fade.

The fierce storm ceased. I raised mine eyes again,
And saw the wreck of what was once so fair;
The flowers had perished, and the maiden wept—
Then all the picture melted into air!

“This shows,” the angel said, “what sin has done;
Death and decay must fall on earthly things.
See that you read God's mighty Teacher right—
The Book of Nature wide before you spread.
'Twas given for man to look on, love, and learn;
But men have eyes, and will not read its lore—
Ears, and the God-sent teachings will not hear!
Earth's glories and her brightness all must fade;
Yet, while they linger, still they say, 'Prepare.'”

“LINES ON VISITING EARLY SCENES.”

Oh! well-known scenes of childhood's days,
Again ye meet my longing eyes;
And still, as memory backward strays,
A thousand tender visions rise;
Of days when youth's all potent powers
Could trace in light the coming hours,
Of dreams that withered with the flowers
That round my pathway sprung!

When fond Belief, unchill'd by Time,
Built airy castles, high and grand;
When fickle Fancy's dreams sublime
Made Earth appear a fairyland!
Yon school-house seems the same to day—
Each well-remembered turn and way
Are there—yet, ah! how far away
Are childhood's hours from me!

Still, still the same—the cherished scene,
That ever thro' the varying years,
Deep-graven on my heart has been,
In morns of joy—in nights of tears.
And oft in darksome times of pain,
When hope seem'd dead, and comfort vain,
Ye shone upon life's desert plain
A friendly light, and true.

And often when the tide of care
Beat strong against my fragile bark—
When stormy doubt loom'd everywhere,
With nought to light the gloomy dark—
The faith I knew in early days,
Ere yet I trod the world's hard ways,
Led gently through the 'wilder maze,
And whispered words of peace!

Lays from the West

Sweet peace, amid the din and strife
And holy thoughts and calm repose;
The promise of a better life—
The joy that from *believing* flows!
As when amid these scenes I'd stray,
And dream through all the golden day
Of coming years, in bright array,
Till earth would seem a heaven!

The Hand that led Youth's steps aright,
The Love that blessed its careless hours—
Shall they not strengthen for the fight,
Then wreath the Victor's brow with flowers?
Yes! and ere from these scenes I go,
I've learned what all must come to know—
Earth's wisdom is but empty show—
“The child shall teach the man!”

IDOL WORSHIP.

Idol worship in these later ages,
When the light of learning shines so clear,
Golden sayings graved on million pages—
Wisdom's voices sounding far and near.

Idol worship, subtle and deceiving,
Lives mis-spent and talents thrown away;
Grim remorse, and after years of grieving—
Skeletons that haunt us night and day.

Idols have we manifold in number—
Idols worshipped both in age and youth;
Visions that beguile life's fitful slumber,
Soul-destroying, blinding us to truth.

All unreal dreams that fade and perish,
Painted idols, rich in gilded shrines—
Airy phantoms that we blindly cherish,
Clad in borrowed tints from Fancy's mines.

All the shining, glittering, worthless splendour—
All the brilliance of the earthly toy
That we deck with careful hands and tender,
Is not gold, but dross and foul alloy.

Earth-born idols, lovely but in seeming,
Flitting round us in the moonlight hours
On Love's holy shrine we place them dreaming,
“Though all else may leave us, *this* is ours!”

Oh! like meteor-flashings gleaming only
Through the far-off vapours, dense and dark,

Lays from the West

Disappearing, leaves, misled and lonely
Mid the angry waves, the storm-beat bark.

So our earthly idols, vain, deceiving,
Come with promise fair for future years;
Fill us with false hopes, forsake us, leaving
Nought but memory's torture, gloom and tears.

Oh! may we, their many tempting scorning
From earth's sceptres lift our yearning sigh
To fadeless flowers the heavenly hills adorning
That shall be ours when we have gained the high.

Not the joy whose end is gloom and sadness—
Withering flowers that deck the earthly sod
Patience hath her crown—eternal gladness—
By the living “hid with Christ in God.”

IN WINTER DAYS.

Spring, and Summer—time, and Autumn
Now are flown—
Dreamy noontides—mellow sunsets—
Balmy twilights—all are gone!

Hope's bright visions, carmine-tinted,
Where are they?
Dreams that mocked us in the sunlight
Now in Winter pass'd away.

Joy shall reign when Spring returning
Wakes the flowers
That the tender Earth has guarded
Safely thro' the Winter hours;

But the sad winds round me sighing
Seem to sing
She hath treasures in her bosom
That she cannot yield in Spring!

And I weep in yearning sadness,
Worse than vain,
For the vanished joys that Summer
Ne'er can bring to me again!

PARTED.

Slow lingering months with swifter pace move on—
Let this dark winter of my life be past;
This cloud athwart the sky of summer thrown—
Whose gloom and darkness on my heart is cast.

Parted—Death's deep, dark river rolls between;
Those talks and rambled when the day was done
And now among the things that once have been,
And I am left in sadness here alone!

Parted! Oh, me, he is for ever gone!
How hopeless *now* the sunset's golden ray;
How far off seem those joys we both have known,
How cheerless look the paths we used to stray!

Just when the autumn days grew short and chill,
When all its sunny hours seemed past and o'er,
And moaning winds swept wildly o'er the hill,
Like some sere leaf he fell, to rise no more.

The spring shall come, and leaves grow green again,
And vernal beauty to the earth return;
Sunshine and flowers shall deck the hill and plane,
And birds awake with song to greet the morn.

But he has flown far from our wintry sphere,
Where fadeless summer glads the spring-bright clime;
Not where the tempest clouds spread grief and fear,
But safely moored beyond the waves of time!

Mine is the weeping—his the blissful change;
Mine is the waiting—his the sighed—for peace;

PARTED.

Lays from the West

Mine through these dreary, lingering years to range,
until I find a land where partings cease.

RETROSPECTIVE.

I'm free from the city's noises now,
And the city cares that bound me;
I chase their shadows off my brow,
Mid the rural scenes around me.

And alone in the shadowy evening light,
In the deepening gloom and sadness,
I roam the paths of past delight
Of youth's wild dream of gladness.

I see the panorama vast
That to these eyes is giving
The joyous scenes of that dead past
Still in my bosom living.

I call those thoughts and memories back
That stern-faced Toil has banished,
And wander o'er the beaten track
Of happy days long vanished.

The friends of youth for whom I sigh—
The true and tender-hearted;
The happiness of days gone by,
The pleasures long departed:

I see them all again to-night,
They seem to come and linger
Like pictures traced in truest light
By Memory's artist finger.

Those happy times, to me how dear!
Well loved, yet lost for ever;

Lays from the West

Those forms that I can fancy near,
Can they return? Ah, never!

Grim Time's dark shadow of decay
Falls on our hopes when brightest;
A cloud may dim our sky of May
When happy hearts beat lightest.

When golden sunbeams softly fall
In light on shrub and flower,
E'en then a storm to blight them all
May in the distance lour!

But still when evening's shadowy light
Steals round in gloom and sadness,
I'll feel a thrill of old delight,
Of youth's wild dream of gladness!

DUNLUCE.

In concert grand the tuneful waves
Break wildly on the foam-girt shore,
And through a thousand secret caves
The shrill wind-voices loudly roar.
Now are the harps of the Ocean waking,
'Mid the howling winds and the billows breaking!

The mermaid leaves her ocean home
To sing her love-songs, soft and tender;
The moonlight gilds the breaker's foam,
And bathes the sea in silvery splendour;
And the splashing spray on the White Rocks falling
Sounds like lonely voices of Ocean calling.

Oh, lone Dunluce! looking o'er the sea,
With tower and keep so grim and hoary,
Do the waves' wild revels recall to thee
The days of your long-departed glory—
When the wan, weird moonlight is round thee streaming,
With the stars' pale light on your gray walls beaming?

Oh, stern old relic of bygone ages!
Oh, stout old scorner of Time's rude hand!
Your name shall live in our history's pages
While a poet sings in our native land;
And your fame shall be heard in old Erin's story
When we tell of the days of her vanished glory.

Ah! many a tale not in history's keeping,
Of lordly chieftain and lady fair,
in the gloom of Oblivion now are sleeping,
And can never be told in the twilight there;
Who repose unremembered in graves unknown,
Where the storms of past ages have o'er them blown.

Lays from the West

I can almost fancy the winds are singing
Those stories forgotten by all but thee,
And the rolling waves in their turn are bringing
Back mem'ries of olden chivalry;
Wild minstrels around thee in darkness stealing
The scenes of the long ago revealing

I hear in the distance their harp-notes swelling
In a dirge-like wail o'er the moaning sea,
And I think that their mournful strains are telling
A thousand tales of the past to me.
The echoing caves to their songs replying,
As each fitful sound on the gale is dying.

Wild minstrels of Nature, whose poet-fire
Rings out through her solitudes, wild and grand.
Let your spirit rest on my feeble lyre,
And I'll chain it there with a willing hand.
And when Night hangs her myriad star-lamps shine
Let me blend her notes with your wondrous chord.

THOUGHTS AT EVENTIDE.

“I hold it true, with one who sings
To one clear lute of divers tunes.
That men may rise on stepping–stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.”—TENNYSON

Lo! the sunset fire is burning in the roseate sky of evening
Where grand in dying glory sinks the god of day to rest
And wide o'er the dewy meadows lie the golden lights and
shadows,
Like gleams that come to cheer us from the regions the
blest!
Slow the fiery orb is sinking down below the purple
mountains;
Still the splendour of his radiance lingers round us for a
while;
And the peaceful country bowers, and the stately run towers,
Are rejoicing in the beauty of the glad, refulgent smiles.

From the trees and from the meadows the bird–song wild and
tender,
In sweet and mingled chorus, like vesper songs, arise
With the evening zephyrs blending, on their airy wings
ascending,
Like anthems of thanksgiving they are ringing thro' the
skies.

The children's happy voices from the village playground
stealing,
With the cadence of their laughter, come floating through
the air;
And the face of Nature smiling, every thought of care
beguiling,
Soothes my restless soul to musing in the twilight calm and
fair,—

Keeps my soul in peaceful musing, 'mid the tranquil summer

Lays from the West

gloaming,
When the cares of day are ended, and its labours all are
done;
When the Dove of Peace is stealing o'er the valleys, bringing
healing
On her white wings to the weary, with the rest that they
have won.

Here let me sit and ponder on life's long and varied story,
On the things that are, and have been, and the times that
are to be;
Of the past and of the present, of the darksome days and
pleasant,
And the future years, still hidden, that are kept in store
for me.

But, the past—should I deplore it? All my longing can't
restore it;
Still it lies beyond my reaching, to come back to me no
more;
It is right to keep and cherish, or to let its memory perish,
Like a dream to be forgotten, when the hours of sleep are
o'er?

Like a dream to be forgotten, like a phantom, a delusion
That but lured away our moments with its subtle, witching
powers,
Till it sinks our souls in sadness with the dreams of
gladness,
And the thoughts of vanished pleasures that can ne'er again
be ours.

Let me cease this idle longing for the days that have
departed,
It is worse than useless wishing for a light grown dim and
dead:
For joy so lovely seeming, when we clasp them in our
dreaming,
And know we must awaken and remember all is fled.

Let past failures be our beacon through the breakers spread

THOUGHTS AT EVENTIDE.

Lays from the West

around us,
To show where danger meets us on life's rough and troubled
main—
Where earth's joys like billows meeting, on the rock's care
are beating,
And we see them dashed and shattered where they can not
rise again.

Let me wake, and cease repining; let me learn life's sternest
lesson—
Joys when born of earth are earthy, and must therefore fade
and die;
Let me feel new knowledge glowing, on my opening eye
bestowing
The experience that will lead me to a fairer, by—and-by.

'Tis our past has made our present, so our present makes our
future,
Let us work, and cease of wishing—let us *do*, not
dream through life;
Ever mindful, never straying, with our earnest hearts still
praying
For the guerdon of the worker, and the winner in the
strife.

LIFE.

Life is a day. In its morning bright
We frolic and scamper, free and light.
'Tis a happy path that we have to run,
The way is pleasant when new-begun.
The sky of our youth is clear and blue,
With no clouds to impede our raptured view;
There's a prize to win in its golden hours—
Let us work with zeal, and that prize is ours.
There's a laurel crown for the victor's brow,
And a time to win it—that time is now!
Now, when our hearts are young and gay,
Ere the light of our morning fades away.
It is hard to work 'neath the noon-day sun,
But the rest shall be sweet when the work is done;
It is hard to struggle and fight alone,
But the prize we win shall be all our own.

The noontide fades, and the evening grey
Overtakes us soon on our weary way;
But our day of working will soon be o'er,
And the rest is nearer us than before.

Life is a night, to watch and pray
For the coming dawn of a brighter day;
But our lamps are trimmed—we have nought to fear,
The darkness is fleeting—the dawn is near.

And now we see through a darkened glass
The shadowy scenes of the future pass;
But then, in a morn of unclouded light,
It shall break in glory upon our sight.
The Master shall come when the night is o'er,
And bid us to work and watch no more;
He shall tell His servants their work is done,
And bestow the crown they have nobly won!

A SUMMER SONG.

The summer flowers in regal bloom
 Make field and garden fair,
Their fragrance in the dreamy noon
 Perfumes the balmy air;
The river murmurs through the vale
 Upon its sea-bound way,
And o'er the pleasant hill and dale
 The birds sing blythe and gay,—
And river, flowers, and birds to me
Are ever bringing thoughts of Thee!

The woods at eve are cool and lone;
 And when I linger there,
There's something in the wind's soft moan
 That whispers Thou art near.
My thoughts by Fancy's chains are bound
 As by a magic spell,
And strange, sweet visions wrap me round
 While in the lonely dell,—
And rustling leaves and murmuring streams
To me are bringing sweetest dreams.

The sunset saddens in the West,
 The stars peep through the skies;
The weary day is hush'd to rest
 By gentlest zephyr sighs;
The wavelets break upon the shore.
 The moon shines o'er the sea,
The sandy beech I wander o'er
 Alone to dream of Thee,—
And stars, and sky, and moonlit sea,
All, all are bringing thoughts of Thee!

EVENING.

Red shines the sunset in the evening sky,
And paints the cloud-ranks in rich crimson glow,
Till every varying tint in rival splendour burns,
And earth and ocean catch the gleam, and smile
In new-born glory for a time, and then,
As the enraptured gaze absorbs the scene,
It fades, and, growing dim and dimmer, dies.
It is a glimpse from worlds unseen—a light from the
 Invisible,
Foreshadowing things the brighter yet to be.
A soft wind-whisper wanders thro' the boughs,
And wakes a thousand harps in forest lands,
That all the sultry day were hushed, till now,
When the fair twilight spreads her dreamy spell:
They wake to melody so softly sweet that one might think
An angel's wing had stirr'd the varied leaves.
And swept the woodlands with ethereal song.
Now the great sea, with all its restless waves,
Seems calmer grown, as forth the stars appear,
And smile upon us from the silent skies,
Where nightly, looking down the azure depths,
Like guardian angels o'er a sinning world,
In their grand, silent eloquence, they show
The marvels of their great Creator's power.
This is the time when dreams will come, and bring
Days which have fled, and we would fain recall.
A shadow thrown across the moonlit walk—
A breeze that, sighing, lifts the woodbine leaves, and strays
In through the open lattice, may restore
The scenes that long in memory have slept.
Ah, me! stern Time can take out youth away—
Whiten our hair and mark our brows with age;
But Memory, kind Memory, that holds the past,
He cannot claim. Remembrance still is ours,
And we may grasp her magic wand and touch
The secret spring that hides our bygone years.
The murmur of a brook that flowing glides
Between its violet banks, can call a sigh
From that far time when we could roam at eve.
To hear the birds that sang the sunset down,
With wild, glad vesper-songs by Nature taught.
The earnest face and tender eyes, that beamed
With a whole world of deep, undying love,
Rises again before my tear-dimm'd sight.

Lays from the West

Then came a time when, with slow steps, and voices low and
sad,

They laid *her* down to rest. Then life grew dark,
And all that I had left on earth to love
Was but a grave, beneath the churchyard trees,
Where I could sit for dreary hours and weep.
Years fly apace. The wildest grief grows calm—
As storm—clouds lowering in the noonday sky,
Seem darkest when they hang above our heads—
So we most feel the stroke of sorrow when it falls;
But Hope draws near, and, pointing to the Future, whispers—
“Wait:”

Yes, wait awhile; and for a few short years
Struggle, and fight, and bear the burden well.
The sun that sank below the purple hills,
Leaving the earth to darkness and to night,
Shall bring new glory to the morning sky.
Death's night of gloom shall have its morn of bliss,
And we shall find within the golden gates
Our flowers that withered, in eternal bloom!

TO "W. C. T."

Oh, sad one, who wails for thy love that is slighted
Left lone and forsaken, all joy fled away;
Thy day—dream of beauty o'ershadowed and blighted,
Thy sky once so rosy now clouded and gray.
Thine idol was earthly, and earth—like must perish;
The casket was doubtlessly faultless and fair;
But 'tis only the soul—gem the poet can cherish,
And blend with, his dreamings in gladness or care.

The glory that shone like the East in the morning
On the radiant ideal was sweet to behold;
But, alas! 'twas thy fancy had wrought its adorning,
And without it the real is worthless and cold.
And the poet's high soul ever craves for that beauty
That must be arrayed in the white robe of Truth;
The Love, Heaven—born, that walks hand—clasped with Duty,
That thro' life's changing years keeps the heart in its
youth.

Then shall Truth at the shrine of the False linger pining
No! Nature rebels, and Hope whispers, Arise!
There are regions unknown in the glad sunlight shining—
In the paths of thy calling where happiness lies!
Oh, linger not weeping, in gloom and in sadness,
The days that are coming thy healing shall bring;
And a love, brighter far, horn of Truth and of Gladness,
Shall Phoenix—like up from the dead ashes spring!

SUMMER LONGINGS.

There's a sound of woe in the forest lands,
A wailing sigh in the wild wind's breath;
The woods are waving their naked hands
As they mourn fair Summer's death.

Through the leafless groves in the twilight hours
Come gusts of music that sink and swell,
And I cry, "Come back, with your light and flowers,
Fair Queen of the year that I love so well!"

Come back to gladden the earth again,
For the woods are grim in their winter woe,
There's a dreary look on the lonely plain,
And the hills and mountains are crowned with snow.

And I fancy I hear from the distant hills
A blast of wind sweeping o'er the lea,
From the gray old hawthorns and foam-clad rills,
To tell a word of their woe to me.

Oh, Summer so lovely, lost and dead,
I miss your sunshine and balmy hours,
And blissful calms, when the noontide shed
Its dreamy radiance on fields and flowers!

I miss your bird-songs that called me up
To welcome the blush of the golden morn,
When the dew-pearls gleamed in the harebell's cup,
And the lark soared high o'er the fields of corn.

I miss the hush of the quiet eves,
When the gloaming stole through the silent wood,

Lays from the West

And the low-toned zephyrs that stirred the leaves
Were like elfin harps in the solitude.

Oh! Spring, return with your tender buds,
And thousand splendours to deck the earth;
Come back and reign in the grand old woods,
And Winter shall fly at your welcome birth.

Come back, and wide o'er the hills and vales,
The birds your welcome in glee shall sing;
And their songs shall float on the gentle gales
Till the earth in gladness and joy shall ring!

MY TREASURES.

Yes, I have treasures—not of gold or silver,
Yet they are hoarded with a miser's care;
Cherished and loved more tenderly and fondly
Than purest gems, or jewels rich and rare.

Only a scrap of paper, old and faded,
Only some withered rose-leaves, sere and dry;
And one long tress of hair, all bright and golden,
Dear relics of the happy days gone by.

Well I remember that long, dreamy summer,
With all its sunshine and its cloudless days;
The pleasant rambles through the lanes at even,
When earth was glowing in the sunset rays.

And when the Autumn, in his mellow splendour,
Clothed field and forest in autumnal dyes,
'Twas sweet to wander in the still, weird twilight,
And watch the moon ascend the eastern skies.

Oh! blissful hours! ah, vows so softly spoken,
Ye held a subtle witchery for me;
I dreamed a heart of love and trust unbroken
Was mine—and mine alone—through time to be.

Alas! not mine that blossom that I cherished,
And hoped would bloom through all the coming years;
Death's chill hand fell upon it, and it perished,
And left with me but memory and tears!

Oh, woods! though Autumn left you bare and leafless,
Spring has returned, and brought you life and mirth;

Lays from the West

But the dead dream of youth's bright golden morning
Of love and beauty, can it wake to birth?

It cannot be; the times that have departed,
The days of gladness, can return no more;
And I am lonely left and broken-hearted,
Like some sad exile on a foreign shore,—

Who, gazing backwards, through the years can picture
A time when love and friendship were his own;
Then turning to the present, lone and cheerless,
Finds all his happiness in life is gone.

So, now, life's evening shadows, grim and dreary,
In deepest gloom, are round my pathway shed;
The beams of hope are growing dim and weary,
And all that once was bright is cold and dead!

Oh, long-lost love! the gloomy years are fleeting,
Through life's dark dream they ever hurry fast;
Great waves upon the brink of Time they're meeting,
And, mingling, rush to form the shadowy Past!

THE GIFTED.

Say, are the gifted born the sons of woe—
The favoured ones on whom kind Heaven hath smiled,
And dowered so richly with its priceless store;
The lords of earth, the monarchs of the soil—
Men who are bless'd with minds that angels have:
Are these to bear the jibe of vulgar tongues,
To feel the taunts fell Envy madly hurls,
Or brook the scorn gaunt Jealousy may show?
To them such things are but the angry blast
That mars the bosom of the placid lake,
Which smiles in dimpling ripples at its wrath!
They *have* their “world of flower, and song, and gem,”
The land of beauty where the poet dwells—
His green Parnassus where the muses reign:
Not hidden nor unseen; oh! look abroad,
And tell me if thine eye no beauty sees.
The solemn grandeur of the Autumn woods,
Bright-crimsoned with the dying Summer's blood;
The mountains in their hoary splendour drest,
The valleys with their fields of golden grain,
The glens deep hidden, where a thousand flowers
In modest beauty shun the noontide glare;
The wild-birds' song, the murmur of the streams
That through their heathery banks of fragrance glide.
All these are theirs—their solace, their delight;
Each with its charm of mystic beauty fraught;
The gleams that pierce the clouds of common life,
And let the light of Heaven's own sunshine in!
They have their dreams in twilight's shadowy hour,
When they can strike their golden lyre, and feel
The holy joy the poet calls his own.
And the soft breeze that sings among the boughs
In numbers like the famed AEolian harp
Seems blending with its tones, till earthly cares
Melt, as beneath the syren's spell, and die!

Thus lightly o'er the waves his bark goes on,
Hope for a beacon shining bright above.
While firmly at the helm stands fair Content
To steer him safely till he reach the shore.
And then, when Death's grim portals open wide,
And he has reached the Land he dreamed and sung,

Lays from the West

Oh! bliss to wander o'er the streets of gold,
His harp-notes mingling with the choirs of Heaven!
His hopes all realized, "faith lost in sight"—
His life a poem which God Himself hath read!

MORNING.

The gladsome Morning looked across the hills,
Clad in his richly tinted robes; the opal dawn,
Faint blushing in the East, grew clear and brighter,
Till the resplendent sunrise decked the sky.
It shone upon the woods—the birds awoke
To chant their welcome to the god of day.
It shone upon the meadows, and the flowers
Ope'd their eyes, where the bright dew-tears glistened
As they had wept thro' the long hours of night,
Heedless of how the star-beams smiled and played;
And the pale, tender moon, with pitying ray,
Looked down upon their lowly, drooping heads,
Now lifted gladly to the morning light,
Till the warm sunshine kissed their tears away.
And clouds of fragrance from their beds arose,
That amorous zephyrs, as they wandered by,
Wafted, like sweetest incense, to the sky!
It shone upon the rivers, as they flowed
Through fertile meadow-lands, so rich in loveliness;
Sweet streams, that, rippling on in restful song,
Took up a tone more joyous in that hour;
And whispering leaves, and birds that, far and near,
From grove and hedgerow, warbling clear and sweet
In blending music, trembled in the air—
Like matin hymns, that on Creation's wings
Were upwards borne to the Creator's Throne!

ANOTHER YEAR.

Another year has well nigh passed,
With all its smiles and tears,
And joys and sorrows that are cast
In Time's great stream, whose waters vast
Roll to the ocean of the Past,
Bearing our hopes and fears,
Where 'neath its waves they mingle fast
With all our vanished years.

Another year! a span of Time,
That tells of lifework done;
A book, some pages dark with crime—
Some grand, and holy, and sublime;
A trumpet, telling every clime
Of battles lost and won:
A knell of woe—a joy-bell's chime,
Hope dead, and bliss begun!

Another year! In Spring's sweet hours
What blissful thoughts we knew!
What hopes, that came with opening flowers,
What visions, nurse in spring-wreathed bowers,
When Fancy lent her magic powers
To trace in brilliant hue
Castles of air, and dream-built towers
Too soon to fade from view!

Another year! and I can trace
Footprints o'er Summer's way,
But turn to find a vacant place,
Where once I met a cherished face,
And well-loved form of youth and grace,
Now pass'd from earth away—
This year the goal of one bright race,
The close of one fair day.

Lays from the West

Autumn is dead. The year is old,
The dull November days are chill;
The bare woods dreary to behold;
The northern blast blows keen and cold,
Far sighing over waste and world,
O'er wintry vale and hill;
And in its moan are requiems told
For true hearts dead and still!

So must it be. Each passing year
Still bears some joy away;
Some darling treasure, held too dear,
In trembling bliss, in hope and fear,
Which we would fancy safe and near,
Departs, and seems to say—
“We have no lasting city here,
Earth's life is but a day!”

But Christmas, coming round again,
Shall bring his wonted cheer;
And Pleasure, in his jovial train,
With rosy mirth and glee shall reign,
To chase these thoughts of gloom and pain
That haunt the dying year;
And grief-parched lips the cup shall drain
Of “Peace and good-will here!”

Lays from the West

WITH A SHAMROCK.

Here, in these triple leaves, oh! read from me,
What I, for *thee*, have dreamed their mystic spell,
Faith, Hope and Love, joined hand in hand, I see,
And this the message that they seem to tell:—

Love, for the present, and the time to he,
Faith, that its might and truth can never die;
Hope, that beyond the future clouds and mystery
Points to a smiling scene, and cloudless sky.

“WAITING FOR THE MAY,”

“Ah! my heart is weary waiting, waiting for the May!”
Old thoughts come back from the old time,
Where, at even, the sunset light
Gilds wood and world, ere the glory dies,
And darkness gathers along the skies
And the world is left in night.

Old songs float round in the gloaming,
Sweet fragments that come and go;
They are echoes, I know, from the olden times,
Holy, as music vesper chimes,
In the days of “Long Ago!”

And faces shine in the firelight;
And laughter rings through the rooms;
And memories of bygone springtime eves
Come back to my lone heart that aches and grieves
In the chill of life's winter glooms,

Then, the May of love that I longed—for
Was hid in the future haze;
I dreamed it a land of joy unknown,
Where bliss and beauty would be my own
Through the length of life's fair days.

So in hope for the May I waited
As gay as the joyous hours
That sped so fast, on their lightsome wings
Thro' flowers, and sunlight, and glorious things
That lived in youth's fairy bowers;

But the hopes I nursed in that springtime—
Ah! me, but those times were bright!
Are withered now, and no fruit I see,

“WAITING FOR THE MAY,”

Lays from the West

Though the blossoms were fair on every tree
In the glow of their promise–light!

Yet, when by the grave where I buried
Those hopes, I stand and weep,
I hear Faith say, as the storm–winds blow,—
“If in patience, and sorrow, and tears ye sow,
The guerdon of joy ye shall reap!”

AWAKENED.

The glories of fair April's pride
Are smiling round on every hand,
And springtide beauties, far and wide,
As with a garment clothe the land.

In shady nooks, in lonely glades,
In forest alleys wild flowers spring,
In budding stalls, in twilight shades,
In lonely woods the birdies sing.

The violet's bloom on many a bank
Is mirror'd in the waters sheen;
And 'mong the grasses long and rank
The yellow primrose flower is seen.

In yon dim wood the trestle sings
'Mong boughs that clasp hands overhead,
And through the air his glad song rings,
As in that April long since dead.

The brook has still the same soft flow,
Whose murmur filled the evening air
In those old days of long ago,
Though I may never wander there.

I shut my eyes, and see no more
The hurrying throng of city ways
And call to life that dream of yore,
And feel the thrall of bygone days.

The passion'd yearning for the time,
The glorious time that was to be,

AWAKENED.

Lays from the West

The restless young heart's dreams sublime,
Of all the future held for me.

Ah! fair the blossoms Hope's tree bore!
I dreamed of Autumn's golden grain—
Oh! fatal blooms! ye brought a store
Of deep remorse, of life-long pain!

Oh! dream of youth, I see you now
With calmer eyes, and world-taught mind,
And know these care-lines on my brow
My waking hour has left behind.

All false the glow that round you shone,
Though fair as Fancy's dream-land light:—
With all your rainbow decking gone
I view your naked wreck to-night.

I look and bless the sudden blast
That tore my idol from its throne;
And bless the keen pain of the past—
If pain for error could atone.

False love! bereft of all your wiles
Dead dream whose sweetness all is o'er,
The memories of your tears or smiles
Can touch my wakened heart no more.

I lay you in your grave to-night
And seal the stone without a sigh,
Rejoicing that your gloom and blight
No more can cloud my brightening sky.

“ONLY.”

Only relics, yet precious and pure
Are the dreams of the days of old,
Though they tell of wounds that no charm can cure,
And of bright hopes, dead and cold.
Only visions of forest ways,
Only thoughts of happier days,
Only the glow of Life's sunrise haze
When the morning sun was shining.

Only, it may be, a lock of hair,
Or a flower sere and dry;
Only a pictured face, how fair
In the light of the times gone by!
Only a sigh for what may not be,
Only a yearning wish to see
The light beyond the mystery
That for weary souls is shining.

Only thoughts of the gladsome time
When the world of youth was bright;
Only memories of joys sublime—
The gleams of youth's fairy light,
Only sweet flashes that come and go,
Only the thrall that sets heart aglow,
Only the spells we were wont to know
When Fancy's rays were shining.

Only voices we hear no more,
But the echoes haunt our ears;
Only dreams that are past and o'er
That we mourn through the lonely years
Only to find that the sunny gleam
Of earth's love fades like a passing dream,
Only to wait for that deathless beam
That “beyond the tide” is shining.

Lays from the West

Only the clasp of a parting hand
On the silent rivers' shore,
As the dear one sails for the unseen Land
And we see his face no more,—
Only to gaze o'er the waters drear,
Only to wait till the call we hear,
“Come over now, for rest is near
Where the true life light is shining.”

Only the burden all must bear,
Only earth's weight of woe;
Only to learn from each dreary care
The patience the pure must know.
Only this:—but what welcomes wait
To hail us home at the pearly gate;
Only to toil until night is late
And awake where the Morn is shining.

FIRST PSALM.

How blessed are they who turn their steps
From paths the wicked choose,
Who stand not in the sinners ways,
And scorners' seats refuse.

Who take their solace and delight
In meditation pure—
The law of God—its depth and height,
Its wisdom, might, and power.

They, like the trees on verdant banks
Whereby sweet rivers flow,
Shall bring forth fruit, and fadeless leaves,
And prosperously grow.

But such is not the sinners' end—
Like the light chaff are they,
Which when the softest winds arise,
Are quickly swept away.

They shall not in the judgment stand,
Nor sinners, scorning grace
Be in the congregation found
Where righteous men find place.

The Lord himself the righteous knows—
He marks them from their birth,
But godless ways of sinful men
Shall perish from the earth.

HER NAME.

The purple heather on the brae
Was all abloom; by glen and weld
The wild birds sang the live-long day,
The corn-fields ripened into gold.

The garden blooms were wonderous fair;
Red roses blushed in regal glow;
Carnations scented all the air,
Pure was the lilies' virgin snow.

But fairer than the garden flowers,
Or all the summer blooms, wean
Was she, whose smiles beguiled the hours—
Was she, whose presence charmed the scene.

Oh! pleasant were the sylvian glades,
Oh! sweet the hush of summer noon;
Roaming 'neath tangled green-wood shades
We deemed *that* twilight came too soon!

Our home-ward way lay through the wood,
We lingered by the streamlet's side,—
False vows were made what time we stood
There, 'neath the elms, that eventide.

I carved her name upon a tree,—
A gnarled old ash-tree, gaunt and grey;
“The name may stay,” she said to me,
“When I, perchance, am far away!”

Swiftly the summers come and go,
And life grows stern, and love grows cold;

HER NAME.

Lays from the West

Dim are the days of long ago—
Their joys a story long since told.

But, sometimes, at the close of day,
I dream of that dim wood, and see,
A name upon an ash-tree grey—
'Tis all the past has left to me!

MEMORY.

“And other days come back to me
With recollected music.”—BYRON.

How memory's boundless store is fraught
With wonders, mystic and sublime!
Bright gleams, that oft we set at nought;
Sweet messengers from Heaven's own clime.
The wind that stirs the boughs at eve—
A star that glimmers in the blue
Of nights gemm'd crown, oftimes may wreath
A halo, strangely sweet and new.
Round hopes and fears we used to know
In life's young morning, long ago.

The cadence of the sighing waves
That break in song along the shore,
The winds that sigh thro', hidden caves
Are echoes from the days of yore.
The moonlight, stealing o'er the sea,
So calm, above the restless tide,
Is like the light that used to be
In many a by-gone eventide,
As memory comes, and paints each scene,
Of loves and joys that once have been.

We feel the power, and own the spell,
That bid the lonely spirit stray,
In thought, to where our lost ones dwell,
Now from our paths so far away
We say “'tis dreams that Fancy brings,”
And go our way, forgetting still;
But on the winds are angels' wings,
And spirit power, our souls that thrill
With yearning for that life unseen,
Hid far behind this mortal screen.

Lays from the West

For Memory still with subtle art
Unfolds the bygone to our eyes,
And still the lonely, longing heart
Would soar beyond earth's mysteries,
Till wearied grown of useless tears,
And longing for the olden days,
We turn to see the future years
Lie smiling 'neath hope's rosy haze,
And view the past with hopeful love,
Made sure our life is "hid above."—

Hid far away from mortal ken,—
These wonderous gleams that round us stray,
These meteors, 'mong the haunts of men,
These holy thoughts, that day by day,
Shine in their light of Heavenly hue
O'er chequered paths of work and love,
Refreshing as the tender dew,
Are stray—beams from the light above
Men call it Memory, but we know
'Tis Heaven's warm light on earth's cold snow!

TWILIGHT.

Twilight's shades are round me creeping,
Nature dons her robe of gray;
Through the blue the stars are peeping,
Sunset's last, faint streaks decay.

Visions come of bygone hours,
Ere these eyes were dimmed by tears,
Youth's bright scenes unwreathed with flowers
Dimly seen through mist of years.

Softly through the summer gloaming
Steals this picture of the past;
Through the wood the breeze is roaming
Moon beams round their shadows cast.

MEMORY.

Lays from the West

By the murmuring, flowing river,
Sits a maiden waiting there;
Graven on my heart forever
Is that form of beauty rare!

Vows are plighted, love is given,
Trusting love without alloy,
And the calm, blue, starry heaven
Whispers but of truth and joy!

By the murmuring, flowing river,
Where the shore the waters lave,
Now the moon beams fall and quiver
On a green and lonely grave!

Token sad of fond love slighted,
Of a rose cut down in bloom,
Of a fair young blossom blighted
All too lovely for the tomb.

Softly through the summer gloaming
Sighs the breeze a requiem low,
And my sad heart, ever moaning
Answers to its tones of woe!

TOLD IN THE TWILIGHT.

We left our ink–stained office–desk,
Two, young in years, yet old in care;
We laid aside our world–face mask,
We laid aside our daily task
To breathe the country air.

We laid aside our musty books,
Grown almost hateful to our eyes;
We longed to roam the country nooks,
We longed to hear the murmuring brooks,
And see the sunny skies.

We longed to hear the birds again,
Minstrels that through the woodlands stray;
We longed to hear the reaper's strain
Sung in the fields of golden grain
On the bright harvest day.

Oh! pleasant were the breezy downs!
Oh! fair the lanes and fields;
Far from the weary noise of towns,
We half–forgot grim Care's dark frowns,
'Mong peace such quiet yields.

He said, The busy city's street
The path of labour and of woe,
The anxious faces, hurrying feet,
The things that every day I meet,
Are what I hate to know!

Oh! might I bathe in Lethe's stream,
Forget the happy days gone by,
And know this life a fleeting dream,
And look on every passing scene

TOLD IN THE TWILIGHT.

Lays from the West

As with a stranger's eye.

To walk along this quiet lane,
To feel this evening calm,
Ah! how it soothes my tired brain
With peace I thought that ne'er again
Would bless me with its balm.

'Twas in a lane like this, at even
My life's peace came to me;
A great, sweet joy to me was given,
A pure, true love, whose hope has riven
Earth's gloom and mystery.

A maiden, lovely as the glow
Of Fancy's soul-land light,
Once vowed to me for weal and woe,
As calm or storm would come or go,
Her love was 'mine by right!

'Twas Spring-time then, ere Autumn's blast
Sighed with its dreary moan,
To shake the brown leaves falling fast,
Her sweet life-tale was told and past,
And I was left alone!

'Twas hard to think that *she* was dead,
'Twas hard to bear such pain;
'Twas hard to feel all brightness fled,
'Twas hard to count bright days swift sped
That could not come again!

I sought her grave at eve, alone,
And there before me lay
Her tomb, a lily carved on stone,
Meet emblem of my darling one
So early called away.

Lays from the West

And, 'neath the lily, words so sweet,
In dreams they haunt my rest;
Oft at their sound I turn to weep
'He giveth His beloved sleep.'
Oh! portion purest, best!

Sleep to the weary body, worn,
On earth, with pain and care,
To meet the ransomed soul, new-born,
On the Great Resurrection Morn,
In God-like beauty fair.

There, at her grave, I bade farewell
To all my heart loved best;
I left our home, I could not dwell
"Mong scenes our love had marked so well,
I felt Grief's wild unrest."

This is my story told to you—
My holiest dream of life;
The blest home-love that once I knew
When she, so good, so fair, so true,
I called my own—my wife!

My sunshine faded when she died,
Such joy I might not know;
God called her early from my side,
And when I lost my gentle bride
The world seemed full of woe!

He knew 'twas best—my stubborn heart
Had need of chastening pain;
To bow beneath the rod's keen smart,
To learn, by grief, the better part,
To feel such loss is gain.

And now no earthly idol smiles,
No pleasant passions lure;

TOLD IN THE TWILIGHT.

Lays from the West

No fleeting phantom now beguiles
My soul from heaven with tempting wiles,
My hope is fixed and sure.

She waits for me—the swift year's flight
I count like miser's gold;
I keep the “watches of the night,”
I wait until the morning light
Its glories snail unfold.

SUNSET.

A burning flood of glory blazing far along the West,
And clouds on clouds aglowing towering o'er the mountains'
 crest
Till the shining, burnished columns and the ranks of crimson
 vie
In a living trail of splendour, lighting all the evening sky.

The grand October sunset burns above the mountains' brow,
Whose grey old heads shine redly, light-kissed and ruddy now;
There the sunshine loves to linger in a parting glow of
 light,
Ere Day his throne resigneth to the dusky reign of Night.

But low and lower sinking, the sun goes down the West
And the dazzling beams are fading along the Ocean's breast
Till, pale and paler growing, the grandeur dies away,
And the wild waves and the breezes seem wailing for the Day!

For the fair Day, that has vanished—the brightness that is
 fled,
And for all the sunny hours that are passed away and dead,
The rosy flush of sunrise, the gladsome time of morn,
And bird-songs sweet, that far and near told when the Day was
 born!

The tranquil hush of noontide, the mellow evening hours
But ah! the Day's departure left desolate the bowers,
And woodland haunts, and flowery dells, and mountain streams
 and glades
Are lonely left in deepening gloom, and mystic twilight
 shades!

But through the Night's grim darkness the star-lamps bright
 shall burn,

SUNSET.

Lays from the West

'Till the lone Earth, cheered and hopeful, shall wait for
Day's return,
And gaze with wistful longing, till the dawn the far East
hills,
And the sun in regal beauty smile o'er the grand old hills.

Then life and light and brightness shall be her own again,
And in the new-found gladness she'll forget the night of pain
Forget the hours of darkness when deep in gloom she lay,
And her weeping-time of sadness be "as waters that pass
away!"

Thus, this dreary night of sorrow through which we wander
here
Be only transient darkness the long bright Day is near,
Whose light of peace and glory the ransomed spirit fills,
As it hails the dawn eternal upon the Heavenly Hills!

“CONSIDER THE LILIES.”

Not gold nor diamond flash of dazzling brightness,
No costly thing of earth Thou givest for thought;
But these sweet simple flowers, beside whose whiteness
The great king's glory all would seem as nought.

Thou knewest how soon must fade all earth's poor splendour,
Worthless its wealth to Thine all-seeing eye;
The short-lived glimmer of its pomp and grandeur
Fleeting and transient only born to die.

Thou would'st not point our love to earth's frail treasure,
But to these lilies, beautiful and pure;
They toil nor spin not, yet their life's full measure
Thou metest, and their day is kept secure.

Oh, lilies! well I love your snowy pureness!
That once the Master deigned while here to trace,
Pledges of His dear love, whose truth and serene
Are faintly shadowed in your beauty's grace.

Meek teachers! could I learn that lesson given!
If God so clothe the grass with beauty rare,
Shall He not guide us on our way to heaven,
And guard our pathway till we enter there?

Oh give me, Lord, a soul of lily whiteness,
Washed in the blood that Thou hast shed for me,
Thy Spirit's light to pierce earth's gloom with brightness
And show the way thro' mist and cloud to Thee

Give me a heart whose treasure is in heaven,
Not for to-morrow feeling anxious thought;

“CONSIDER THE LILIES.”

Lays from the West

Even as my day, so shall my strength be given,
And grace sufficient—can I want for aught?

Oh, give me faith, that on Thy love relying,
From doubt's dark thrall I may be ever free;
And clothe me, Lord, that in the hour of dying,
Thy righteousness, blest robe, may cover me!

Thus may I walk, by Thee, my Guide, befriended,
'Joyous with joy that knows no sad decay;
That when earth's sun has set her brief day ended
My morn may break and shine to "perfect day"

SONGS OF THE SEA.

“My soul is full of longing
For the secret of the sea,
And the heart of the great ocean
Sends a restless pulse through me.”—LONGFELLOW

In the grey light of the morning, ere the sun has lit the sky
When the winds rave loud and wildly, to the angry waters
How the mighty, foaming billows thunder forth, in ceaseless
 roar,
Songs majestic, wild with anguish, woeful waitings evermore.
In the dawn light, in the gloaming, beating, breaking, o'er
 and o'er,
Telling out the ocean stories, to the wide, encircling shore;
And I listen, till the legends of the past, a shadowy host,
Seem to gather round, and people storied Antrim's rock-bound
 coast.

Where the grandeur of the Causeway smiles in scorn at Art's
 weak hand,
Seem the wild waves ever singing of the high schemes Nature
 plann'd,
When she hurled the giant columns, by some mighty earthquake
 shock,
Till they stand, huge pillar-wonders, by the paved,
 mysterious rock;
And the dark caves, weird and frowning, echoing the sea's
 wild strife,
Seem to hold some spell unearthly, of the ocean's secret
 life.

Where th'Atlantic rolls sublimely, lashing round Port
 Ballintrae,
Language cannot paint the grandeur of the waves, in awful
 play!
Beating, breaking, wildly seething, whilst in restless,
 fitful roar,
Deep to far-off deep is calling, answering round from shore
 to shore.

Lays from the West

And the spirit of the ocean seems to fill its heaving breast
With ten thousand prison'd longings, wailing out in wild
unrest.

Softening down to calmer music, round the White Rocks and the
caves,
With a tender, nameless pathos, softly sing the curling waves
To the battlements and turrets, and the old towers, grim and
hoary.
Where the stern Macquillan chieftains reigned in once
unconquered glory.
There Dunluce, in lonely grandeur, frowns in wild, and
deathless pride,
Sentinel of bygone ages, Time-tried warder by the tide.

Grey Dunluce, in concert blending, winds, and waves, and
sounding sea,
Seem to sing a dirge of sorrow for the glory fled from thee,
Rolling onward to the Skerries, wailing far in requiem moan
Till they catch the surf's bold thunder round toe rock at
Innishone,
Where the foam-girt shore re-echoes with the burthen of the
song,
And the angry dashing billows wide and far the cry prolong.

When the moonlight, pale and faintly, gleams on Malin Head's
blue crest,
And its silvery pathway shimmers far across the ocean's
breast;
When the yeasty breakers glisten softly in the shadowy light,
When the rocks seem mystic castles, looming grimly thro' the
night;
Then the solemn songs of Ocean, fraught with precious, new-
found lore
Bring for Fancy unknown treasure, priceless gems for
Thought's great store!

Grand old Ocean! how my spirit longs to catch thy melody
Do thine heart's great pulses quicken with a secret life, oh,
Sea?
Far adown the blue waves, hidden by the hearings of your
breast,
Is there soul to tune your singing, to its ceaseless, wild

Lays from the West

unrest?

Oh! thou dread and wondrous ocean, tell these mystic songs to
me

For their cadence, grand and changeful, haunts my path with
mystery.

THE MOONLIGHT.

Silvery moonlight, clear and bright,
Shining down on our earth to-night,
Soft as the touch of an angels' wing,
Tender, beautiful, holy thing!

Seeking the glen where the cool waters flow—
Lighting the bank where the violets grow;
Gilding the crest of the foamy rill;
Falling in silence upon the hill;
Piercing the depths of the forest glade,
Glancing down thro' the leafy shade,
Till the loneliest haunts of the wild wood seem
To rejoice in the light of thy radiant beam!

Glistening out on the trackless deep,
Where the spirits of ocean their revels keep;
Lighting the path over the billows' foam,
As the mermaid glides from her gem-built home,
And the peri's song o'er the heaving sea
Sounds in fitful, plaintive melody!

Pouring down on the mountain pass,
Where, tripping light o'er the dewy grass,
The fairies join in their wild, weird dance,
And the mystic forms thro' the moonbeams glance,
While far and wide on the wind is borne
Through answering echoes, the elfin horn.

Flooding with glory the prairie's breast,
Till, all transformed, in the radiance drest,
The shanty, south of the poplar wood,
Seems a sylvian lodge in the solitude;
And the settler dreams, with a moistened eye,
Of the moonlights and loves of the times gone by.

Lays from the West

Gleaming fair on the city towers
Where the clocks, thro' the night, chime the passing hours,
On the city's heart that no longer beats,
With the ebb and flow of its noisy streets,
And their living pulse—throbs that come and go,
To the smile of joy, and the throb of woe!

Smiling down from a cloudless sky,
On the village homes, that all peaceful lie;
Where simple hearts, in a happier life,
Know nought of the city's cares and strife,—
The hardy sons of honest toil,
Pensioners free of their parent soil!

To hopeful hearts in the morn of youth,
The dream—land of Love, and the type of Truth,
Where the future shows 'neath its veil of light
An Eden of blissful, untold delight

In the stern, hard struggle of manhood's days
When tired feet stumble o'er life's rough ways,
And in age's twilight of shadowy gloom,
A dream of the rest that is yet to come.

Shine on, silvery moonlight, shine!
Gladden earth with your beams benign;
On restless ocean, on tranquil lake,
Through forest alleys, by fern and brake;
By quiet village, and crowded town,
By mountain, prairie, and breezy down;
O'er sights of gladness, o'er scenes of woe,
Let the tender light of thy pure beams glow,
And the weary and hopeless shall bless your light.
And the child of joy have more pure delight.

“GOODNIGHT.”

“Until the day break, and the shadows flee away.”
Cant. 2.17

Goodnight, beloved! see the sun descending,
Behind the woodlands of the far, bright West,
And in the glory of the daylights ending,
The “light at eventide” brings dreams of rest.

Goodnight, beloved! now the grey-eyed gloaming
Glides through the valleys with an unheard tread,
And haunts the woodlands, where the wild winds moaning
Wails o'er the leaves of Autumn, sere and dead.

Goodnight, beloved! see the pale stars peeping
Through the blue curtain of the shadowy skies;—
The lamps the angels hold, their night-watch keeping,
O'er souls who wait their call to Paradise!

Goodnight, beloved! a faint, lingering glory,
Of dying daylight glows in parting smile;
Its last kiss lighting all the hill-tops hoary,
As though the hour with brightness to beguile.

So now, I dream, a tender love-light lingers
O'er all the bygone, in a charmed glow,—
That hides the marks of Time's relentless fingers
And gilds the cherished dreams of long ago.

How fair it shines! but ah! the West grows dimmer,
The crimson radiance melts to sober grey,
And so earth's dream-light fades in fitful glimmer,
Its meteor brightness swiftly dies away.

“GOODNIGHT.”

Lays from the West

Goodnight, beloved! for the shadows darken
In gloom around me, and I cannot see;
Come nearer, nearer still; beloved, hearken;
I hear a far-off voice that calls for me.

Goodnight, beloved! a new light is breaking
As earth's light fades to brighten nevermore;
Goodnight, beloved! till that glad awaking
When morning shines upon the other shore.

LOST.

The sunset burns on roof and spire,
And streets with busy passers rife;
But ah! it lacks the dream-world fire,
That once 'twas wont to call to life.

That once it kindled in the days
Of woodland haunt and country lane,
Before I knew the city's ways,
Before I learned that life has pain.

Oh! present, with your armed host
Of anxious cares, barbed sharp, and keen
Fade! for the light of pleasures lost
Shines forth from days that once have been.

A fairer sunset charms the West
A mellow radiance fills the air;
A scene with old-time beauty drest,
Lies stretched before me, smiling fair.

A rustic range-wall, gnarled and old,
A wooden bridge that spans a stream;
The glory of the sunset's gold.
The sweetness of my first love-dream!

Two hearts that meet in passion'd thrill,
Whose perfect bliss no words can tell;
But once in life that joy we feel,
And feeling, prize, alas! too well!

Oh! Time and Doubt! ye fill the heart
With sepulchres of Love and Truth;

LOST.

Lays from the West

Our hopes lie dead but memory's part
Must still be played till life shall cease.

Oh! swift years ever drifting fleet
A down life's current, tempest toss'd,
Roll on! till on Time's brink we meet
And hail the life where nought is lost!

GOOD WISHES

TO —— ON HIS MARRIAGE.

My friend, on this your wedding-day,
Where Love and Hope unite,
To yield with Hymenal ray
The bridal morning bright.—
When hands are clasped
And cups are quaffed,
When round go wishes true,
This song of mine
For Auld Lang Syne
I send to her and you.
An echo of the bygone times
To mingle with your wedding chimes!

“Good luck,” on this your wedding morn,
“God speed” for years to be;
Good wishes, of old friendship born
For days ye both shall see.
When in your bowers,
Bloom promise-flowers,
Ah! ne'er may sorrow's gloom
Bring shadow there,
May sunlight fair
Your hearth and home illumine!
All good, all joy, all blessing true,
I wish to your fair bride and you!

May Heaven its choicest riches send
To bless your life's long way;
May Love its lasting beauty lend
That age can't steal away.
Oh! may your sky
As swift years fly
Be cloudless, bright and fair;
May joys' own glow
Dispel all woe,
And chase away grim care!

Lays from the West

May every good that God can send
Be yours through all your life, my friend!

“ONLY FRIENDS.”

We said “good–bye” in a quiet lane,
the gloaming, years ago;
few were our words about “parting pain”—
we were “only friends” you know.

Good friends had we been in the dear, dead hours,
that still in our hearts would live,
At morn we had wandered the wild–wood bowers,
We had roamed through the lanes at eve.

We had gathered the sweets of the summer glades,
The rose, and the violet blue;
We had talked of Love in the twilight shades,
And of hearts that were tried and true.

But of our heart's hopes, or our own love–dreams,
Ah! never a word said we,
For Fate had forbidden our lips such themes,
And “friends” we could only be.

And our farewell came, like a boding gloom,
That darkened life's morning ray,
And joy's glad glow, and Hope's tender bloom
Died out of one heart that day.

How we thought in that hour of the bygone days,
Of the golden summer prime,
Of the mountains wild, and the woodland ways,
And the spell of the gloaming time!

And, it may be, the memory of whispered words
Came o'er us with subtle power,

“ONLY FRIENDS.”

Lays from the West

Awaking, unbidden, our full hearts' chords
In the pain of that parting hour.

For our hands were clasped, and our lips once met,
The first time, and the last;
Ah me! 'twere well could we all forget,
Some scenes in our buried past;—

For the blue outline of the mountains high,
The lake, and the woodland green,
The quiet lane, and the twilight sky,
Too oft in my dreams are seen!

And still, tho' the summers are bright and fair,
And the summer woods are gay,
To me there is something wanting there
That has passed from my life away!

ODE TO SUMMER.

Beauteous Queen! with crown of flowers,
On your tresses sunny sheen;
Welcome! to the "Lone-Land" bowers,
To our prairies, wild and green!
In your path spring flowers to meet you,
Nature's choicest glories greet you,
Fair Enchantress! I entreat you,
Listen to my lay!

Smiling Summer, down the ages,
Still your praises have been sung,
And the poets and the sages,
Who have spoke with gifted tongue,—
In our legends, old and hoary,
Thrilling song, and 'trancing story,
Live to-day in deathless glory,
Thrill our souls anew!

Still their songs our breasts inspire,
Still is theirs undying fame;
Theirs the untaught poet-fire,
That I may not hope to claim;—
Louder than the war-host dashing,
Brighter than their bright spears clashing,
Shine their souls, like lightning flashing
Through their thunder-words!

Radiant Queen! Their songs combining
Yield to thee their highest praise,
Round thy brows of beauty twining,
Fadeless garlands of their lays;—
Lays whose light our gloom has rifted,
And our yearnings heavenward lifted,
As we soar with them, the gifted,
Far from earth away.

Lays from the West

Queen of Beauty! Still we sing thee,
Worthy of the poets' song;
Willing homage still we bring thee
As the ages roll along.
Songs of birds, and breath of flowers,
Wind-notes, charming woodland bowers,
Morn's fresh glories, gloaming hours,
Yield their sweets to thee!

Now the prairie-lands are smiling
With the wealth thy reign bestows,
Brightness golden days beguiling,
O'er smooth sands life's river flows.
Through the air glad sounds are ringing,
Nature summer idylls singing,
I, my simple off'ring bringing,
Kneel at Summer's feet!

CHANGED.

It seems the same as it used to be, when I watched the sunset
glow,
In the days of beauty and gladness, the times of long ago;
Like a light that is dim and far-off, for dark years, full of
pain,
Lie, rolled between me and the beautiful past, that never can
come again!

Yet Ireland's hills are as verdant now, and the sun, as he
sinks to rest,
As then pours his parting glory, o'er Slieve Gallion's purple
crest,
A glory that brightens and lingers, as though it were fain to
stay,
Till the twilight shadows darken, and daylight dies away.

On Mullaboy the darkness looms weird on the lonely hill,
The cattle have ceased their lowing, and the song-birds'
notes are still;
And here, in the gloom and silence, 'neath the stars and the
quiet sky,
Old memories throng around me, of days long, long gone by.

Two scenes are ever fairest, and first in this heart of mine,
And with clearer light and brighter, 'mong the dimmer
phantoms shine,
And perfect in light and shadow, in tracing true and grand
Are the pictures as memory paints them, with firm and master-
hand.

The first is a cloudless moonlight, in calm and silvery
sheen,
And the range of the Morne Mountains in the dim background is
seen;
Beneath them the sea is rolling, all fair in the gentle
light,

CHANGED.

Lays from the West

And beauty and peace are blending in the hush of the summer
night.

I gaze, till again in fancy, I hear the waves' soft roar,
As they break in wild sweet music along Rostrevor's shore;
And a voice with their song is blending telling the old sweet
tale,
Of a fond, true love, that through life's long years would
never change or fail.

That picture fades before me and the second comes in view—
A walk 'neath o'er-arching beeches, with the sunlight
glinting through
Leaves that rustle and whisper on branches that wave above,
A silent, tearful parting, the death of a deathless love!

Dead, and yet unforgotten, worn, but never estranged,
The glory and brightness of morning to the darkness of
midnight changed!
And life is dull and dreary, and joy from earth is fled,
For the love that was light and beauty, and joy and peace, is
dead.

SABBATH ON THE PRAIRIE.

The year's first, blushing roses,
 Were decking the prairie's breast;
And the summer garb of beauty
 Made fair the wild North-West.
It flashed in the sedgy hollows,
 And smiled in the woodland dell;
It whispered in low, soft zephyrs
 That breathed o'er the lake and fell.
How it glowed in the mystic star-shine
 Of the clear blue Northern sky;
How it crimson'd and flushed in grandeur
 In the sunset's sweet good-bye!
And gaudy birds from the South-land
 Made brilliant the poplar grove,
And plaintiff calls came sounding,
 From the haunts where the plovers rove.

With dream-notes in the gloaming
 The wind-lutes swept the boughs,—
Sweet songs of the distant stretches,
 Where the moose and bison browse.
And we lay in our camp, and listened,
 And thought of the wilds untrod;
Of the misty, lonely future,
 And the homes on the stranger sod.

And still o'er the wide, wide ocean,
 Our eager thoughts would stray,
To the homes and scenes, to the loves and hopes
 Of the youth-time, far away.
Then we slept, to dream of the morrow,
 “'Twill be Sunday at home,” we said;
“But our church must be the prairie,
 With the blue sky overhead.”

The Sabbath dawned in beauty,
 With a calm whose breath of peace,
Made a solemn grand cathedral

Lays from the West

Of the wild vast wilderness.
The woods were the soft-toned organs,
And the winds, thro' their alleys dim,
Now raised some high, glad anthem,
Now chanted some low, sweet hymn.

We came from our tents together,
And stood on the lone hill-side,
To join in the songs of Nature,
That Sabbath morning-tide.
“With one consent let all the earth,”
Swelled on' the sunny air.
And then, how each home-sick, heart went forth
In that strange hour of prayer!
And the text the preacher gave us
Was, “Rejoice in the Lord always,”
Alike in the summer sunshine,
And the gloom of winter days.
And the clouds of our gloom were banished
Like the mists from the morning air;
We had strength for the untried future
For God is everywhere.

AT EVENING.

Slowly along the darkening sky
The twilight comes with stealthy tread;
Far out to west great cloud-ranks lie,
By sunset flushed a rosy red.
Oh! shadows of the gloaming time,
Gather, and loom, and darkly fall,
The winding path to Fancy's clime,
Lies hidden 'neath your dusky pall.

Pent in the city, now I dream
Of country scenes, of lanes and flowers,
Of woodland glen, and woodland stream,
Pictures of bygone sunset hours!
Oh, bygone! mighty claims you own,
That summon me to seek your shrine,
I hear the call and wait alone,
Until the charmed light shall shine.

'Tis breaking! Glistening near and far
A radiance floats, of dazzling light
Untouched by Time, or Tempest-scar
I view my past again to-night!
Oh! fair, false hope, your fruit is pain,
Oh, Love! when life's spring leaves were green,
Sweet, e'en in thought to see again
Th' Elysian called "what might have been."

"What might have been," we scan it o'er
And charmed we live the dreams in thought,
But wake to find that mist-world shore,
Like cloudy vapor melt to nought—
The brightness fades, the sweet rays die,
Deep darkness falls and night is come;
A wan new moon looks down the sky,
And stars are trembling in the gloom.

Lays from the West

Morning, and noon, and evening grey,
And mystic twilight, all are flown;
And e'en my dreams are pass'd away,—
Again I find myself alone!
Young love's sweet morn, when hope was nigh.
Stern noonday toiling, which is best?
Ah! me, they all must fade and die,—
'Tis but the end can give us rest.

IN PEACE.

The name, the age, and a sentence written
On a marble cross o'er a grassy mound,
Where, calmly beneath sleeps the tired heart smitten,
Cruelly pierced by a dastard wound,
At peace in the heart of the restless city.
She slumbers well in her lowly bed,
With never a tear of love or pity
By kindly mourner above her shed.

High birth is safely, its rank and splendor,
Blazoned lineage, pride and show,
Scorn coward justice, who fears to tender,
The lash to vice, in this world below,
What matter—a thousand such things have happened
Man has been false since woman was fair;—
But say, must he stand at yon High Tribunal,
And what account shall he render there?

TO THE SEA.

'Tis eventide and the sun is dying,
Painting the sky in its roseate beam,
And out to sea-ward the cloud-ranks lying,
Are crimson-bright in his parting beam;
In dazzling light o'er the waves extending,
In burnished glow on each foamy crest,
At the golden portals of sunset ending,
Its pathway illumines the ocean's breast.
Oh! light of the sunset, soft and tender,
Oh! waves that shine in the rosy glow,
Oh! mountains, so grand in your hoary splendour,
Oh! billowy ocean that heaves below!

Oh! rolling waves, that are ever beating,
In wild, sweet music along the shore,
Tell me tales ye are still repeating,
Sighing and moaning forever more;
In seething foam 'mong the grey rocks meeting,
Where, rushing, ye break in doleful roar!

Sighing on in your restless roaming
Wailing so wildly and ceaselessly;
In the morning light, or the shadowy gloaming,
Tell me, what are thy songs, oh, sea!

Is thine the wail of a life-long sorrow,
The hopeless crying of hope long dead;
The dearth of loneliness that cannot borrow
One beam of light from the brightness fed,
To point to the dawn of a fairer morrow
Far away in the future spread?

But, heedless, it rolls in its wonderous splendour,
Onward, in cadence sublime and vast;
Are these ocean-songs, in their mystic grandeur
Requiems sung for the vanished past?

Lays from the West

It is buried and dead, yet still unsmitten,
It lives and blooms in one hidden spot,
Where in Memory's chamber each scene is written,
Graven too deeply for Time to blot!

But see! o'er the waters the light grows dimmer,
The white-winged sea-gulls to Westward fly;
Pale stars look down in a fitful glimmer
As the crimson fades from the opal sky.
I soon shall sleep, and perchance in dreaming,
I'll live again in the time that's fled,
And fancy the rays of its brightness beaming
In mellow radiance around my bed
And it may be I'll dream not of bliss that's fleeting
But of that fair life that is yet to be,
Where no cloud can arise to dim our meeting
As I stand with *him* by the Jasper Sea!

NOT LOST.

“Mine,” saith the Lord, “these jewels bright and peerless.
Mine, in the day when I shall count mine own!”
So He has called them, and the hearts left cheerless
Sad and bereaved, must mourn the loved ones flown
“Mine,” saith the Lord, He gave, and He has taken
In wisdom infinite He dealt the blow;
And round our hearth their places are forsaken
But *they* are gathered to His fold, we know!

Home-gathered early, when the sun so brightly
In life's fair morning tinged their curls with gold,
And o'er their snowy brows all calm and lightly—
The joyous span of earth's brief time had roll'd.
Home-gathered early; fair to mortal seeming,
The promises that o'er their pathway hung,
But ah! we cannot e'en in fondest dreaming
Conceive their bliss amid the cherub throng.

Eye hath not seen, nor to man's heart is given,
To know what to His loved one He bestows
What joys untold the ransomed band in heaven,
Through the eternal, blissful ages knows.
And the bereavement is no hopeless sorrow,
No lasting parting, but an ending pain;
We feel that upward, toward the glad to-morrow
Are drawn these links of the earth-binding chain.

For well we know that these, our darlings, entered,
Into His joy, shall be at last restored
So while our hope in perfect faith is centred
We wait for resurrection in the Lord.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

Worn and wearied on earth's road
Oft with stumbling feet I go;
Eyes that fain would look to God
Dim and weak with sin and woe.
But when, all my guilty stains
Rise in dread immensity,
Then I know my Saviour's pains
Took the load of guilt from me.
Pardoned, healed, redeemed, restored,
Then I look to Christ, my Lord!

When the clouds of sorrow rise,
And the light of woe is dim,
When the subtle Tempter tries
To win back my soul to him.
Then I look to One Who said,
"All things I have overcome;
Onward go, be not afraid
I shall guide to yonder Home!"
Then what evil can betide
While I lean on Christ, my Guide?

Worn with toil of earthly strife—
Wearied hands and heart grown faint,
Tired of all the ills of life,
For the water brooks I pant,
Then above the world's wild din,
I can hear "Come unto Me;
I shall heal these wounds of sin,
Give you rest, and make you free!"
When my doubting soul is blest
When I look to Christ my Rest.

Journeying o'er this path of tears
Oft my doubting heart is cold,
Far away my Home appears—
The gates of pearl—the street of gold.
Can I ever enter there?

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

Lays from the West

All the way with danger rife,—
Then the Master's voice I hear,

“I am the Way, the Truth, the Life!
Ah! what doubt can then dismay
While I walk with Christ, the Way!

“Looking unto Jesus” still
I can bid my doubting cease,
Joyful, though beset with ill,
Fighting, yet at perfect peace—
Sorrowful, yet filled with joy,
Tossed, yet feeling all secure;
Earth nor Hell cannot annoy
While my peace with Him is sure!
“Looking unto Jesus,” blest!
Soul at anchor, heart at rest!

BY THE WAVES.

A merry leap on the sunny air,
And a gleam of tresses, golden bright;
A 'witching face that is wonderous fair,
A creature of beauty and joy and light.

A rocky coast with the waves at play,
Wild wandering waves that are mad with glee;
"Tell me, what do the wild waves say,
Are their words in their music?" she asks of me.

I start and shiver, my heart grows cold,
Aye, cold in the flush of the August sun,
Whose glory lies on the sea like gold,
In farewell radiance, ere day is done.

The eager smile from her lips has died,
For the pain on my face was plain to see,
And she turns to pace the sand by my side
Watching the billows silently.

She does not know—could my darling dream,
Of lost, dead love in her golden world,
Where the hope—flowers bloom, and the joy—lights gleam
'Neath the rosy light of Love's flag unfurled!

Oh! girlie mine, with the true brown eyes,
And the perfect faith in your fair to be,
Could I lead you back o'er the bridge of sighs
That spans the gulf 'tween the past and me.

I could show you love in its full—tide swell,
Its syren beauty its dream—world light;

Lays from the West

Then, the gathering storm, and the deep-toned knell,
As Love lies bleeding in clouds and night!

Would you step aside from the shining coils
That circle to-day round your dainty feet,
Could I show you the woes without the wiles,
In the dregs of that chalice, bitter-sweet?

Ah! no, sweet maid, you must "live and learn,"
Though experience is bought, it cannot be sold;
And the heart joy's thrill, and the heartache's burn,
Must needs be felt, they were never told!

So live and smile in your fair to-day
And wear the jewel of maiden-faith;
May its diadem gleam on your brow for aye,
And Truth with your Love walks in step with death.

**IN MEMORIAM.
A. S.**

Oh! land of partings, brief and sad probation—
When all is brightest, then farewell must come!
And the lone mourner weeps in desolation,
Earth's fairest seeping in the silent tomb.

Far from her home, where kindly hands have tendered
As graceful tribute, to her well-loved name;
Not by chill stranger—feeling coldly rendered,
But by the care respect and love can claim.

And still her memory shall be loved and cherished,
By all who knew her in her sojourn here;
Like some fair flower that in the morning perished
In spring's bright hours when skies were blue and clear

Oh' widowed mother—heart! dead e'en to hoping
Longing to leave the life whence joy has flown.
The eager hands through earth's grim shadows groping!
“Darling, come back to me, I am alone!”

Oh! yearning heart—cry, in deep anguish spoken,
In sleepless midnights, or in twilight dreams!
Oh! aching pain—throb of the spirit broken,
Soon shall these clouds be pierced by Mercy's beams.

These deep, dense clouds of anguish and repining—
Darkness and gloom that but the present show
E'en now, behind them, in the brightness shining.
Wait angel—bands that minister to woe.

Soon shall they come, and bring the consolation,

Lays from the West

When the first burst of agony is o'er,
Then when thy soul is calmed by resignation,
Point to the meeting on the other shore:—

Where safe at home, in Christ's eternal keeping,
Celestial joy her ransomed being fills,
She waits, when thou hast left this vale of weeping
To greet thee on the Everlasting Hills.

CHRISTMAS.

FIFTY YEARS AGO.

Christmas! why child, can this be Christmas Eve?
Ah, me! the years run swiftly on;
Threads in the warp of this short life we live.
And now my chequered web is well nigh spun.

And Christmas seems not what it used to be,—
The good old customs all are changed, I wean;
Yet memory of old times is left with me—
The days whose brightness these dimm'd eyes have seen.

Come, Elsie, bring your stool beside my chair,
Stir up the fire to shine with brighter glow,
And while it flickers on your sunny hair,
I'll tell a Christmas-tale of long ago—

Full fifty years ago, when I was young,
And this grey hair like yours was golden-bright,
When mirth and laughter dwelt on brow and tongue,
In fleet winged hours, that sped with magic flight.

Sometimes, in waking dreams it all comes back,—
Familiar forms move softly through the room,
Then leave me, gliding up the moonlight track,
Wafting sweet music down the twilight gloom.

And at these times I see the home that stood,
In the lone highland valley far away;
The snow-crowned hills, the lake, the lonely wood,
Through which I wandered many a summer day.

CHRISTMAS.

Lays from the West

And I was happy in those summers, child!—
Life in its morning brightness knows not gloom,
The rose-tinged future—mists hide waste and wild
As sharp thorns hide beneath the rose's bloom.

And girlhood seemed like some fair sunny day
Without a cloud to mar the summer sky.
On pleasure's airy pinions borne away
Too swiftly far the winged hours sped by.

Then came a glory-crown to gild the years,—
I loved; but 'twas no fancy of the hour,
No fleeting day—dream fraught with hopes and fears,
But Love, that ruled my soul with sovereign power.

A love that strengthened as the days went past,—
Dearer and holier far than all beside;
An Eden—world of beauty grand and vast,
With joys new-born, out spreading far and wide.

Seemed then mine own; and the long years to be,
Would fill my life with happiness and light,
While this great love would shed its beams on me
In glad refulgence making all things bright

For he—the hero of my life's romance,
Was dear to me—ah! words can never show
That passion'd love, how every tone and glance
Tender or cold, brought happiness or woe

But cherished hatred goads to bitter end
And, mocking, fain would quench youth's ardent fire
We saw a shadow on our life descend—
The full charged storm—cloud of long-gathering ire.

Lays from the West

My father boasted his high birth and name
And owned a pedigree that he could trace,
Back to the stern old chiefs, whose hostile fame—
He held the pride and honor of our race.

And still when Christmas came he loved to see
All the old customs of our sires kept up,
Huge yule-logs graced the hearth, and Christmas glee
Rang high, 'mid merry song and festal cup.

And on that Christmas day of which I tell
The seasons revelry was held the same;
The stately hall with guests was furnished well
And, 'mong, the rest, was bidden Hector Graem

He drank to me—"his lady fair and bright,"
As was the custom of the olden time,
"Your lady! never, while the sun gives light
Shall Graem ever wed with child of mine!"

And pointing to the door with haughty mein
My father bade him from his board begone;—
And then a curtain fell upon life's scene—
Blackness of darkness where Hope's sun had shone

Some family-feud, in days long passed away
Between the Graems and the MacDonnell's rose.
And still its memory in his bosom lay
Though seeming peace was made between the foes

But ah! my child, how can I tell the rest?
I lived; but Heaven in mercy spared the blow
Of thought and memory then, and weeks that pass'd
Were one drear blank—I felt not then my woe.

Child, you have never loved, and cannot know
How drear and hopeless youth itself may seem;

CHRISTMAS.

Lays from the West

The long, blank loveless years to wonder through,
With nought, save memory of a bygone dream.

But sorrow kills not, we may laugh or weep,
Still Time by stealthy gliding steals away;
And Winter snows again lay white and deep,
And once again they welcomed Christmas day.

I watched them with sad eyes that knew no smile,
And a dull mind from which all hope had flown,
A listless heart that nothing could beguile
Back to the gladness that it once had known.

The dull December twilight grey and cold,
Fell weird and grim upon the lonely moor;
The wild wind raged o'er wintry waste and old,
And in the storm a stranger sought our door.

He asked a shelter from the bitter night
My father's brown cheek blanched to hear *that* tone,
He led him forward to the yule-log's light,
A lost—a mourned, but now a new-found son!

Oh! sweetest welcomes on the wanderer fell!
The last of our long race—returning home;
Home to the long-tired hearts that loved him well
No more an exile, by strange shores to roam.

“Bid me not rest” he said, “until you know,
I have a friend who claims his welcome now,
For, but for him, the depth of Alpines snow
Had been my grave, and you had lost your son.”

“Then wherefore wait?” my mother gently said,
“Let him come hither till I bless his name!”
And Roderick turned, and forth the stranger led
And once again, I looked on Hector Graem.

CHRISTMAS.

Lays from the West

No welcome—glow lit up the old man's eye,
Surprise or anger seemed to hold him dumb,
My mother clasped his hand with sob and sigh,
But to full hearts the fewest words will come

Then Hector kissed her hand with courtly grace,—
Bowed lowly to my father, half in scorn,
“Old ills” he said “are hardest to erase
From hearts where gratitude was never born”

But as he spoke the glistening tear drops fell
From those old eyes, that seldom tear drops know.
“You here” he said “love breaks hates baleful spell,
And gratitude comes forth to yield her due!”

“Let feuds and errors perish with the Past,—
’Tis thus I lay them in a deep dug—grave“
And, beckoning me beside him, there, at last,
His blessing, once refused, he fondly gave!

Ah! life is very fair, and love is sweet!
The dark sky cleared, the sun shone out again,
Earth seemed a heaven, with perfect bliss replete,
And new—born gladness healed the sting of pain

And standing by the window hand in hand,
Hearing the storm howl o'er the wastes of snow.
We were the happiest of the happy band
That merry Christmas fifty years ago!

BEGINNINGS.

At dawn sweet flushes softly creep
Along the brightening sky,
Pale watchers whom lone vigils keep
Perceive the sign, and cry,
The night is gone, the bright day comes,
And gladsome light the East illumines!

Bright blossoms on the branches burst,
Then Autumn fruits grow there;
So, dreams that sickly hope had burst
Grown real, make life fair.
And dreams we prize as holy things
That haunt our path on mystic wings.

And so, across life's weary road,
Made dark by many a woe,
We hear the tender words of God,
"Come, follow where I go!"
And listening to that gentle voice
Is fixed the best and earliest choice.

First, we must pray, and watch, and wait,
And bear the daily cross,
And, till we reach the Master's gate,
Count earthly gain as lost,
Then hear, "good servant, nobly done,"
By patience hath the crown been won.

IN REPLY TO "ALONE."

It is the joyous time of June,
And Nature glads the smiling land
Arrayed in garments gay and green
Bestowed by nature's lavish hand.
Oh! soft the lullaby of streams
'Neath shadow of o'er arching trees,
When all sweet, summer music seems
To float around us on the breeze.
It greets us in the greenwood glades—
By forest aisles and alleys lone,
Where, wandering in the twilight shades
The poet calls the hour his own.
Perchance he dreams some minstrel hand,
Wakes woodland harps to heavenly song,
While spirits from the golden land
On white wings bear the notes along.

But to thine eyes the world is grim,
And life is dark through falling tears;
Hath Hope's soft ray grown dull and dim
And paled the brightness of your years?
I know your woe—for I have knelt
Beside the new made, grassy mound—
The anguish of bereavement felt
And moaned beneath the piercing wound.

Through the soft azur veil of e'en
The stars look down with watching eyes,
Beacons to life our souls to heaven
And tell of love beyond the skies
To tell, tho' earth is bright and fair,
Still Heaven must be our lasting home;
A land untouched by sin and care
Where pain and parting never come.

Not far away; scarce out of sight,
A shadowy veil, a misty cloud,
Is roll'd between us and the light,

Lays from the West

From mortal eyes the bliss to shroud.

Oh, thou whose poet-mind can feel
The magic spell of beauty's powers
Let these, His "meaner works" reveal
That fairer life that shall be ours.
Where we shall find in fadeless bloom
The love Time's withering blast had slain,
Restored from death and from the tomb
To life, immortal life again.
And while we weep for earth-joys fled,
Or sigh to feel ourselves "alone,"
While fragrant memories of the dead,
Like perfumes round our path are strewn;
Let us not think them wholly lost;—
These flowers that glad the wondering vision,
Slept 'neath the winter storm and frost
Then sprung to beauty half Elysian.
Fair blossoms deck the orchard bough
The promise-fruit of harvest hours;
Nought have we but that promise now,
Yet faith already shows it ours.
Oh! sweet the light around our tombs,
Where promise-buds in faith are sown;
Faith's eye discerns eternal blooms,
In stature of God's fullness blown.
Still ours—the true and tender heart,—
The form that trod these paths awhile;
We said "good-night" content to part
Until the morning light shall shine.
Oh! blessed hope! Oh! promise sweet
The harvest of the Lord is sure;
His Hand shall give the guerdon meet
To all that to the end endure!