

Birds of Passage

Mathilde Blind

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Birds of Passage.

Prelude.

WHAT a twitter! what a tumult! what a whirr of wheeling wings!
Birds of Passage hear the message which the Equinoctial brings.

Birds of Passage hear the message and beneath the flying clouds,
Mid the falling leaves of autumn, congregate in clamorous crowds.

Shall they venture on the voyage? are the nestlings fledged for flight;
Fit to face the fluctuant storm—winds and the elemental night?

What a twitter! what a tumult! to the wild wind's marching song
Multitudinous Birds of Passage round the cliffs of England throng.

And o'er tempest—trodden Ocean, cloud—entangled day and night,

Birds of Passage.

Birds of Passage

Birds on birds, in corporate motion, wing a commonwealth in flight.

Waves, like hollow graves beneath them, hoarsely howling, yawn for prey;
And the welkin glooms above them shifting formless, grey in grey.

And across the Bay of Biscay on undaunted wing they flee,
Where mild seas move musically murmuring of the Odyssey;

Where the gurgling whirlpools glitter and by soft Circean Straits,
Fell Charybdis lies in ambush, and the ravenous Scylla waits;

Where a large Homeric laughter lingers in the echoing caves,
And in playful exultation Dolphins leap from dimpling waves;

Where, above the fair Sicilian, flock-browsed, flower-pranked meadows, looms
Ætna hoariest of Volcanoes ominously veiled in fumes;

Where the seas roll blue and bluer, high and higher arch the skies,
And as measureless as ocean new horizons meet the eyes;

Where at night the ancient heavens bend above the ancient earth,
With the young-eyed Stars enkindled fresh as at their hour of birth;

Where old Egypt's desert, stretching leagues on leagues of level land,
Gleams with threads of channelled waters, green with palms on either hand;

Where the Fellah strides majestic through the glimmering dourah plain,
And in rosy flames flamingoes rise from rustling sugar-cane;

On and on, along old Nilus, seeking still an ampler light,
O'er its monumental mountains, Birds of Passage take their flight.

Where the sacred Isle of Philæ, twinned within the sacred stream,
Floats, like some rapt Opium-eater's labyrinthine lotos dream,

Birds on birds take up their quarters in each creviced capital,
In each crack of frieze and cornice, in each cleft of roof and wall.

Birds of Passage

And within those twilight–litten, holy halls of Death and Birth,
Even the gaily twittering swallows, even the swallows, hush their breath.

And they cast the passing shadows of their palpitating wings
O'er the fallen gods of Egypt and the prostrate heads of Kings.

Even as shadows Birds of Passage cast upon their onward flight
Have men's generations vanished, waned and vanished into night.

Songs of the Orient.

Welcome to Egypt.

THE Palms stood motionless as Pyramids
Against the golden halo of the sky;
Interminable crops of wheat and rye
Mantled the plain with downy coverlids
Of silken green, where little freckled kids
Frolicked beneath the staid maternal eye;
And babe–led buffaloes plashed trampling by,
Sprinkling cool water on their dusty lids.

Spake the grave Arab, as his flashing glance
Swept the large, luminous verdure's dewy sheen,
Sedately, with a bronze–like countenance:
" [Nehârak Saïd!](#) Lo, this happy day,
My country decks herself in sumptuous green,
And smiling welcome, Lady, bids you stay."

The Sphinx.

WANDERER, behold Life's riddle writ in stone,
Fronting Eternity with lidless eyes;
Of all that is beneath the changing skies,
Immutably abiding and alone.
The handiwork of hands unseen, unknown,
When Pharaohs of immortal dynasties
Built Pyramids to brave the centuries,
Cheating Annihilation of her own.

The heart grows hushed before it. Nay, methinks
That Man, and all on which Man wastes his breath,
The World, and all the World inheriteth,

With infinite, inexorable links
Grappling the soul; that love, hate, birth and death
Dwindle to nothingness before thee Sphinx.

Sphinx–Money.

WHERE Pyramids and temple–wrecks are piled
Confusedly on camel–coloured sands,
And the mute Arab motionlessly stands,
Like some swart god who never wept or smiled,
I picked up mummy relics of the wild
(And sea–shells once with clutching baby hands),
And felt a wafture from old Motherlands,
And all the morning wonder of a Child

To find Sphinx–money. So the Beduin calls
Small fossils of the waste. Nay, poet's gold;
'Twill give thee entrance to those rites of old,
When hundred–gated Thebes, with storied walls,
Gleamed o'er her Plain, and vast processions rolled
To Amon–Ra through Karnak's pillared halls.

The Tombs of the Kings.

WHERE the mummied Kings of Egypt, wrapped in linen fold on fold,
Couched for ages in their coffins, crowned with crowns of dusky gold,

Lie in subterranean chambers, biding to the day of doom,
Counterfeit life's hollow semblance in each mazy mountain tomb,

Grisly in their gilded coffins, mocking masks of skin and bone,
Yet remain in change unchanging, balking Nature of her own;

Mured in mighty Mausoleums, walled in from the night and day,
Lo, the mortal Kings of Egypt hold immortal Death at bay.

For so spake the Kings of Egypt those colossal ones whose hand
Held the peoples from Pitasa to the Kheta's conquered land;

Who, with flash and clash of lances and war–chariots, stormed and won
Many a town of stiff–necked Syria to high–towering Askalon:

Birds of Passage

"We have been the faithful stewards of the deathless gods on high;
We have built them starry temples underneath the starry sky.

"We have smitten rebel nations, as a child is whipped with rods:
We the living incarnation of imperishable gods.

"Shall we suffer Death to trample us to nothingness? and must
We be scattered, as the whirlwind blows about the desert dust?

"No! Death shall not dare come near us, nor Corruption shall not lay
Hands upon our sacred bodies, incorruptible as day.

"Let us put a bit and bridle, and rein in Time's headlong course;
Let us ride him through the ages as a master rides his horse.

"On the changing earth unchanging let us bide till Time shall end,
Till, reborn in blest Osiris, mortal with Immortal blend."

Yea, so spake the Kings of Egypt, they whose lightest word was law,
At whose nod the far-off nations cowered, stricken dumb with awe.

And Fate left the haughty rulers to work out their monstrous doom;
And, embalmed with myrrh and ointments, they were carried to the tomb;

Through the gate of [Bab-el-Molouk](#), where the sulphur hills lie bare,
Where no green thing casts a shadow in the noon's tremendous glare;

Where the unveiled Blue of heaven in its bare intensity
Weighs upon the awe-struck spirit with the world's immensity;

Through the Vale of Desolation, where no beast or bird draws breath,
To the Coffin-Hills of [Tuat](#) the Metropolis of Death.

Down down down into the darkness, where, on either hand, dread Fate,
In the semblance of a serpent, watches by the dolorous gate;

Down down down into the darkness, where no gleam of sun or star
Sheds its purifying radiance from the living world afar;

Sphinx-Money.

Birds of Passage

Where in labyrinthine windings, darkly hidden, down and down,
Proudly on his marble pillow, with old Egypt's double crown,

And his mien of cold commandment, grasping still his staff of state,
Rests the mightiest of the Pharaohs, whom the world surnamed the Great.

Swathed in fine Sidonian linen, crossed hands folded on the breast,
There the mummied Kings of Egypt lie within each painted chest.

And upon their dusky foreheads Pleiades of flaming gems,
Glowing through the nether darkness, flash from luminous diadems.

Where is Memphis? Like a Mirage, melted into empty air:
But these royal gems yet sparkle richly on their raven hair.

Where is Thebes in all her glory, with her gates of beaten gold?
Where Syenê, or that marvel, Heliopolis of old?

Where is Edfu? Where Abydos? Where those pillared towns of yore
Whose auroral temples glittered by the Nile's thick-peopled shore?

Gone as evanescent cloudlands, Alplike in the afterglow;
But these Kings hold fast their bodies of four thousand years ago.

Sealed up in their Mausoleums, in the bowels of the hills,
There they hide from dissolution and Death's swiftly grinding mills.

Scattering fire, Uræus serpents guard the Tombs' tremendous gate;
[While Troth holds the trembling balance, weighs the heart and seals its fate.](#)

And a multitude of mummies in the swaddling clothes of death,
Ferried o'er the sullen river, on and on still hasteneth.

And around them and above them, blazoned on the rocky walls,
Crowned with stars, enlaced by serpents, in divine processions,

Ibis-headed, jackal-featured, vulture-hooded, pass on high,
Gods on gods through Time's perspectives pilgrims of Eternity.

Sphinx-Money.

Birds of Passage

There, revealed by fitful flashes, in a gloom that may be felt,
Wild Chimæras flash from darkness, glittering like Orion's belt.

And on high, o'er shining waters, in their barks the gods sail by,
[In the Sunboat and the Moonboat](#), rowed across the rose-hued sky.

Night, that was before Creation, watches sphinx-like, starred with eyes,
And the hours and days are passing, and the years and centuries.

But these mummied Kings of Egypt, pictures of a perished race,
Lie, of Death forgotten, face by immemorial face.

Though the glorious sun above them, burning on the naked plain,
Clothes the empty wilderness with the golden, glowing grain;

Though the balmy Moon above them, floating in the milky Blue,
Fills the empty wildernesses with a silver fall of dew;

Though life comes and flies unresting, like the shadow which a dove
Casts upon the Sphinx, in passing, for a moment from above;

Still these mummied Kings of Egypt, wrapped in linen, fold on fold,
Bide through the ages in their coffins, crowned with crowns of dusky gold.

Had the sun once brushed them lightly, or a breath of air, they must
Instantaneously have crumbled into evanescent dust.

Pale and passive in their prisons, they have conquered, chained to death;
And their lineaments look living now as when they last drew breath!

Have they conquered? Oh the pity of those Kings within their tombs,
Locked in stony isolation in those petrifying glooms!

Motionless where all is motion in a rolling Universe,
Heaven, by answering their prayer, turned it to a deadly curse.

Left them fixed where all is fluid in a world of star-winged skies;
Where, in myriad transformations, all things pass and nothing dies;

Sphinx-Money.

Nothing dies but what is tethered, kept when Time would set it free,
To fulfil Thought's yearning tension upward through Eternity.

Hymn to [Horus](#).

HAIL, God revived in glory!
The night is over and done;
Far mountains wrinkled and hoary,
Fair cities great in story,
Flash in the rising sun.

Behold the Dawn uncloses
The shutters of the night;
The Waste and her oases
Blossoms a rose of roses
Beneath thy rose-red light.

Hail, golden House of Horus,
Lap of heaven's holiest God!
From lotos-banks before us
Birds in ecstatic chorus
Fly, singing, from the sod.

Up, up, into the shining,
Translucent morning sky,
No longer dull and pining,
With drooping plumes declining,
The storks and eagles fly.

The Nile amid his rushes
Reflects thy risen disk;
A light of gladness gushes
Through kindling halls, and flushes
Each flaming Obelisk.

Vast Temples catch thy splendour;
Vistas of columns shine
Celestial, with a tender
Rose-bloom on every slender
Papyrus-pillared shrine.

In manifold disguises,
And under many names,

Hymn to Horus.

Thrice-holy son of Isis,
We worship him who rises
A child-god fledged in flames.

Hail, sacred Hawk, who, winging,
Crossest the heavenly sea!
With harp-playing, with singing,
With linen robes, white clinging,
We come, fair God, to thee.

Thou whom our soul espouses,
When weary of the way,
Enter our golden houses,
And, with thy mystic spouses,
Rest from the long, long way.

Nuit.

THE all upholding,
The all enfolding,
The all beholding,
Most secret Night;
From whose abysses,
With wordless blisses,
The Sun's first kisses,
Called gods to light.

One god undying,
But multiplying,
Restlessly trying,
Doing: undone.
Through myriad changes,
He sweeps and ranges;
But life estranges
Many in one.

In wild commotion,
Out of the ocean,
With moan and motion,
Wave upon waves,
Mingling in thunder,
Rise and go under:
Break, life, asunder;
Night has her graves.

[Egyptian Theosophy](#) .

FAR in the introspective East
A meditative Memphian Priest

Would solve such is the Sage's curse
The riddle of the Universe.

Thought, turning round itself, revolved,
How was this puzzling World evolved?

How came the starry sky to be,
The sun, the earth, the Nile, the sea?

And Man, most tragi-comic Man,
Whence came he here, and where began?

Communing with the baffling sky,
Who twinkled, but made no reply,

He brooded, till his heated brain
Grew fairly addled with the strain.

For in that dim, benighted age
Philosopher and hoary sage

Had not yet had the saving grace
To teach the Schools that Time and Space,

And all the marvels they contain,
Are but the phantoms of the brain.

But that profound Egyptian Seer
Maybe who knows? came pretty near;

When, after days of strenuous fast,
He hit the startling truth at last;

And on select, mysterious nights,
Veiled in occult, symbolic rites:

He taught that once upon a time
To disbelieve it were a crime

The World's great egg refute who can,
That meditates on Life and Man

While deafening cacklings spread the news
Was laid by an Almighty Goose.

The Moon of Ramadân .

The sunset melts upon the Nile,
The stony desert glows,
Beneath heaven's universal smile,
One burning damask rose;
And like a Peri's pearly boat,
No longer than a span,
Look, faint on fiery sky afloat,
The Moon of Ramadân.

Our boat drifts idly with the Stream,
Our boatmen ship the oar;
Vistas of endless temples gleam
On either topaz shore;
And swimming over groves of Palm,
A crescent weak and wan,
There steals into the perfect calm
The Moon of Ramadân.

All nature seems to bask in peace
And hush her lowest sigh;
Above the river's golden fleece
The happy Halcyons fly.
And lost in some old lotos dream,
The pensive Pelican
Sees mirrored in the mazy stream
The Moon of Ramadân.

Black outlined on the golden air
A turbaned Silhouette,
The Mueddin invites to prayer

The Moon of Ramadân .

From many a Minaret.
Our dusky boatmen hear the call,
And prostrate, man on man,
They bow, adoring, one and all,
The Moon of Ramadân.

Where Luxor's rose-flushed columns shine
Above the river's brim,
The priests with incense once, and wine,
Made sacrifice to Him,
The highest god of Thebes, and head
Of all the heavenly clan;
But now the Moslem hails instead
The Moon of Ramadân.

The gods have come, the gods have gone,
Yet wedded to their walls,
Winged with the serpent of the Sun
In mute processions,
They stride from door to massy door,
Bound nations in their van,
Though Amon's Sun has waned before
The Moon of Ramadân.

Yea, even proud Egypt's proudest king,
Who chastised rebel lands,
[And brought his gods for offering](#)
[Mountains of severed hands:](#)
Who singly, like a god of War,
Smote hosts that swerved and ran,
Lies low 'neath Allah's scimitar
The Moon of Ramadân.

And Isis, Queen, whose sacred disk's
Horned splendour crowned her brow,
While fires of flashing Obelisks
Flamed in the Afterglow;
And white-robed priests who served her shrine
Have turned Mahommedan,
And worship Him who wears for sign
The Moon of Ramadân.

The rosy lotos, flower and leaf,
Which wreathed each sacred lake,
With Nature's loveliest bas-relief,
Has followed in their wake;

The Moon of Ramadân .

Yea, with the last true Pharaoh's death,
The lotos leaves, grown wan,
Have changed to lily white beneath
The Moon of Ramadân.

The gods may come, the gods may go,
And royal realms change hands;
But the most ancient Nile will flow,
And flood the desert sands;
And nightly will he glass the stars'
Unearthly caravan,
Nor care if it be Rome's red Mars
Or Moon of Ramadân.

The sunset fades upon the Nile;
The desert's stony gloom,
Receding blankly mile on mile,
Grows silent as a tomb.
All weary wanderers, man and beast,
Hie, fasting, to the Khan,
While shines above their nightly feast
The Moon of Ramadân.

The Beautiful Beeshareen Boy.

BEAUTIFUL, black-eyed boy,
O lithe-limbed Beeshareen!
Face that finds no maid coy,
Page for some peerless queen:
Some Orient queen of old,
Sumptuous in woven gold,
Close-clinging fold on fold,
Lightning, with gems between.

Bred in the desert, where
Only to breathe and be
Alive in living air
Is finest ecstasy;
Where just to ride or rove,
With sun or stars above,
Intoxicates like love,
When love shall come to thee.

Thy lovely limbs are bare;
Only a rag, in haste,
Draped with a princely air,

The Beautiful Beeshareen Boy.

Girdles they slender waist.
And gaudy beads and charms,
Dangling from neck and arms,
Ward off dread spells and harms
Of Efreets of the waste.

Caressed of wind and sun,
Across the white-walled town
Fawnlike we saw thee run,
Light Love in Mocha brown!
Wild Cupid, without wings,
Twanging thy viol strings;
With crocodiles and rings
Bartered for half a crown.

Spoilt darling of our bark,
Smiling with teeth as white
As when across the dark
There breaks a flash of light.
And what a careless grace
Showed in thy gait and pace;
Eyes starlike in a face
Sweet as a Nubian night!

Better than Felt or Fez,
High on thy forehead set,
Countless in lock and tress,
Waved a wild mane of jet.
Kings well might envy thee
What courts but rarely see,
Curls of rich ebony
Coiled in a coronet.

Lo in dim days long since
The strolling Almehs tell,
Thou shouldst have been a prince,
Boy of the ebon fell!
If truth the poet sings,
Thy tribe, oh Beduin, springs
From those lost tribes of Kings,
Once Kings in Israel.

Ah me! the camp-fires gleam
Out yonder, where the sands
Fade like a lotos dream
In hollow twilight lands.

The Beautiful Beeshareen Boy.

Our sail swells to the blast,
Our boat speeds far and fast,
Farewell! And to the last
Smile, waving friendly hands.

* * * * *

From England's storm-girt isle,
O'er seas where seagulls wail,
Rocked on the rippling Nile,
We drift with drooping sail.
On waters hushed at night,
Where stars of Egypt write
In hieroglyphs of light
Their undeciphered tale.

Forlorn sits Assouan;
Where is her boy, her pride?
Now in the lamplit Khan,
Now by the riverside,
Or where the Soudanese,
Under mimosa trees,
Chant mournful melodies,
We've sought him far and wide.

Oh, desert-nurtured Child,
How dared they carry thee,
Far from thy native Wild,
Across the Western Sea?
Packed off, poor boy, at last,
With many a plaster cast
Of plinth and pillar vast,
And waxen mummies piled!

Ah! just like other ware,
For a lump sum or so
Shipped to the World's great Fair
To big Chicago Show!
With mythic beasts and things,
Beetles and bulls with wings,
And imitation Sphinx,
Ranged row on curious row!

Beautiful, black-eyed boy;
Ah me! how strange it is
That thou, the desert's joy,

* * * * *

Whom heavenly winds would kiss,
With Ching and Chang-hwa ware,
Blue pots and bronzes rare,
Shouldst now be over there
Shown at Porkopolis.

Gone like a lovely dream,
Child of the starry smile;
Gone from the glowing stream
Glassing its greenest isle!
We've sought, but sought in vain;
Thou wilt not come again,
Never for bliss or pain,
Home to thy orphaned Nile.

The Dying Dragoman.

FAR in the fiery wilderness,
Beyond the town of Assouan,
Left languishing in sore distress,
There lay a dying Dragoman.
Alone amid the waste, alone,
The hot sand burnt him to the bone;
And on his breast, like heated stone,
The burden of the air did press.

His head was pillowed on a tomb,
Reared to some holy Sheik of old;
The irresistible Simoom
Whirled drifts of sand that rose and rolled
Around him, and the panting air
Was one sulphureous spectral glare,
Shot with such gleams as lights the lair
Of tigers in a jungle's gloom.

Groaning, he closed his bloodshot eyes,
As if to shut out all he feared;
And greedily a swarm of flies
Fell on his face and tangled beard.
He lay like one who ne'er would lift
His head above that ashy drift;
When lo, there gleamed across a rift
The blue oasis of the skies.

Like smoke dispersing far and wide,
The draggled sands were blown away;

The Dying Dragoman.

The wild clouds in a refluent tide
 Receded from the face of day.
The lingering airs yet lightly blew
Till the last speck cleared out of view,
And left the hushed Eternal Blue,
 And nothing else beside.

Then once again, with change of moods,
 A mighty shadow, broadening, fell
Across those shadeless solitudes,
 Without a Palm, without a Well.
Wing wedged in wing, an ordered mass
Unnumbered numbers pass and pass,
As if one Will, one only, was
 In all those moving multitudes.

A chord thrilled in the sick man's brain;
 He raised his heavy-lidded eyes,
He raised his heavy head with pain,
 And caught a glimpse of netted skies,
Meshed in ten thousand wings in flight
That cleft the air. Oh wondrous sight!
He gasped, he shrieked in sheer delight:
 "The Storks! The Storks fly home again!

"I too, O Storks, I too, even I,
 Would see my native land again.
Oh, had I wings that I might fly
 With you, wild birds, across the main!
Take, take me to the land, I pray,
The land where nests are full in May,
The land where my young children play:
 Oh, take me with you, or I die.

"My lonely heart blooms like a flower,
 My children, when I think of you,
My love is like an April shower,
 And fills my heart with drops of dew.
Along their unknown tracks, ah me!
The Storks will fly across the sea;
My children soon will hail with glee
 Their red bills on the rain-washed tower."

Home-sickness seized him for the herds
 That browse upon the fresh green leas;
Home-sickness for the cuckoo birds

The Dying Dragoman.

That shout afar in feathery trees;
For running stream and rippling rill
That, racing, turning his woodland mill:
And tears on tears began to fill
His eyes, confusing all he sees.

Again he doats on rosy cheeks
Of children rolling in the grass;
Again the busy days and weeks,
The months and years serenely pass.
Black forest clocks tick day and night,
His board and bed are snowy white,
His humble house is just as bright
As if it were a house of glass.

Again, beneath the high-peaked roof,
His wife's unresting shuttle flies
Across the even warp and woof;
Again his thrifty mother plies
Her wheel, that hums like noontide bees;
And lint-locked babes about her knees
Hark to strange tales of talking trees,
And Storks deep versed in sage replies.

Again the ring of swinging chimes
Calls all the pious folk to church,
With shining Sunday face, betimes,
Through rustling woods of beech and birch
Full of moist glimmering hollows where
The pines bow murmuring as in prayer,
And musically through the air
The forest's mighty Choral swells.

Again, O Lord, again he sees
The place where Heaven came down one day;
Where, in a space of bloom and bees,
He won his wife one morn of May.
Warm pulses shook and thrilled his blood,
Wild birds were singing in the wood,
The flowering world in bridal mood
Joined in the Pinewood's symphonies.

Again, O Lord, in grief and fear,
He bids good-bye to all he loves;
The waters swell, the woods are sere,
The Storks are gone, and hushed the doves.

The Dying Dragoman.

He goes with them; he goes to heal
The sickness whose insidious seal
Is set on him. Ah, tears will steal
And blur the Storks that disappear.

A furnace fire behind the hill,
The sun has burnt itself away;
The ghost of light, transparent, chill,
Yet floats upon the edge of day.
And all the desert holds its breath
As if it felt and crouched beneath
The filmy, flying bat of death
About a heart for ever still.

And one by one, seraphic, bland,
The bright stars open in the skies;
The large above the Shadow land
The white-faced moon begins to rise.
And all the wilderness grows wan
Beneath the stars, that one by one
Look down upon the lifeless man
As if they were his children's eyes.

A Fantasy.

I was an Arab,
I loved my horse;
Swift as an arrow
He swept the course.

Sweet as a lamb
He came to hand;
He was the flower
Of all the land.

Through lonely nights
I rode afar;
God lit His lights
Star upon star.

God's in the desert;
His breath the air:
Beautiful desert,
Boundless and bare!

A Fantasy.

Free as the wild wind,
Light as a foal;
Ah, there is room there
To stretch one's soul.

Far reached my thought,
Scant were my needs:
A few bananas
And lotus seeds.

Sparkling as water
Cool in the shade,
Ibrahim's daughter,
Beautiful maid.

Out of thy Kulleh,
Fairest and first,
Give me to drink
Quencher of thirst.

I am athirst, girl;
Parched with desire,
Love in my bosom
Burns as a fire.

Green thy oasis,
Waving with Palms;
Oh, be no niggard,
Maid, with thy alms.

Kiss me with kisses,
Buds of thy mouth,
Sweeter than Cassia
Fresh from the South.

Bind me with tresses,
Clasp with a curl;
And in caresses
Stifle me, girl.

I was an Arab
Ages ago!

A Fantasy.

Hence this home-sickness
And all my woe.

The Desert.

UNCIRCUMSCRIBED, unmeasured, vast,
Eternal as the Sea;
What lacks the tidal sea thou hast
Profound stability.

Beneath the sun that burns and brands
In hushed Noon's halting breath,
Calm as the Sphinx upon thy sands
Thou art nay, calm as death.

The desert foxes hide in holes,
The jackal seeks his lair;
The sombre rocks, like reddening coals,
Glow lurid in the glare.

Only some vulture far away,
Bald-headed, harpy-eyed,
Flaps down on lazy wing to prey
On what has lately died.

No palm tree lifts a lonely shade,
No dove is on the wing;
It seems a land which Nature made
Without a living thing,

Or wreckage of some older world,
Ere children grew, or flowers,
When rocks and hissing stones were hurled
In hot, volcanic showers.

The solemn Blue bends over all;
Far as winged thought may flee
Roll ridges of black mountain wall,
And flat sands like the sea.

No trace of footsteps to be seen,
No tent, no smoking roof;
Nay, even the vagrant Beeshareen

The Desert.

Keeps warily aloof.

But yon, mid tumbled hillocks prone,
Some human form I scan

A human form, indeed, but stone:

A cold, colossal Man!

How came he here mid piling sands,
Like some huge cliff enisled,
Osiris-wise, with folded hands,
Mute spirit of the Wild?

Ages ago the hands that hewed,
And in the living rock
Carved this Colossus, granite-thewed
And curled each crispy lock:

Ages ago have dropped to rest
And left him passive, prone,
Forgotten on earth's barren breast,
Half statue and half stone.

And Persia ruled and Palestine;
And o'er her violet seas
Arose, with marble gods divine,
The grace of god-like Greece.

And Rome, the Mistress of the World,
Amid her diadem
Of Eastern Empires set impearled
The Scarab's mystic gem.

Perchance he has been lying here
Since first the world began,
Poor Titan of some earlier sphere
Of prehistoric Man!

To whom we are as idle flies,
That fuss and buzz their day;
While still immutable he lies,
As long ago he lay.

Empurpled in the Afterglow,
Thou, with the Sun alone,
Of all the stormy waste below,
Art King, but king of stone!

Uncircumscribed, unmeasured, vast,
Eternal as the Sea,
The present here becomes the past,
For all futurity.

Scarabæus Sisyphus.

I'VE watched thee, Scarab! Yea, an hour in vain
I've watched thee, slowly toiling up the hill,
Pushing thy lump of mud before thee still
With patience infinite and stubborn strain.
Strive as thou mayst, spare neither time nor pain,
To screen thy burden from all chance of ill;
Push, push, with all a beetle's force of will,
Thy ball, alas! rolls ever down again.

Toil without end! And why? That after thee
Dim hosts of groping Scarabs too shall climb
This self-same height? Accursèd progeny
Of Sisyphus, what antenatal crime
Has doomed us too to roll incessantly
Life's Stone, recoiling from the Alps of time?

The Colossi of the Plain.

ANCIENT of Days! Before the Trojan Wars
You towered as now in your colossal prime,
Watching the rosy footed morning climb
O'er far Arabia's flushing mountain bars.
Despite your weird disfigurement and scars
You dwarf all other monuments. Sublime
Survivors of old Thebes! you baffle Time,
And sit in silent conclave with the Stars.

Ah, once below you through the glittering plain
Stretched avenues of Sphinxes to the Nile;
And, flanked with towers, each consecrated fane
Enshrined its god. The broken gods lie prone
In roofless halls, their hallowed terrors gone,
Helpless beneath Heaven's penetrating smile.

Mourning Women.

ALL veiled in black, with faces hid from sight,
Crouching together in the jolting cart,
What forms are these that pass alone, apart,
In abject apathy to life's delight?
The motley crowd, fantastically bright,
Shifts gorgeous through each dazzling street and mart;
Only these sisters of the suffering heart
Strike discords in this symphony of light.

Most wretched women! whom your prophet dooms
To take love's penalties without its prize!
Yes; you shall bear the unborn in your wombs,
And water dusty death with streaming eyes,
And, wailing, beat your breasts among the tombs;
But souls ye have none fit for Paradise.

The Sâkiyeh.

"**HOW** long shall Man be Nature's fool?" Man cries;
"Be like those great, gaunt oxen, drilled and bound,
Inexorably driven round and round
To turn the water-wheel with bandaged eyes?
And as they trudge beneath Egyptian skies,
Watering the wrinkled desert's beggared ground,
The hoarse Sâkiyeh's lamentable sound
Fills all the land as with a people's sighs?"

Poor Brutes! Who in unconsciousness sublime,
Replenishing the ever-empty jars, Endow the waste with palms and harvest gold:
And men, who move in rhythm with moving stars, Should shrink to give the borrowed lives they hold:
Bound blindfold to the groaning wheel of Time.

Internal Firesides.

BEWILDERINGLY, from wildly shaken cloud,
Invisible hands, deft moving everywhere,
Have woven a winding sheet of velvet air,
And laid the dead earth in her downy shroud.
And more and more, in white confusion, crowd
Wan, whirling flakes, while o'er the icy glare
Blue heaven that was glooms blackening o'er the bare
Tree skeletons, to ruthless tempest bowed.

Nay, let the outer world be winter-locked;
Beside the hearth of glowing memories
I warm my life. Once more our boat is rocked,
As on a cradle by the palm-fringed Nile;
And, sharp-cut silhouettes, in single file,
Lank camels lounge against transparent skies.

On Reading the "Rubáiyát" of Omar Khayyám

In a Kentish Rose Garden.

BESIDE a Dial in the leafy close,
Where every bush was burning with the Rose,
With million roses falling flake by flake
Upon the lawn in fading summer snows:

I read the Persian Poet's rhyme of old,
Each thought a ruby in a ring of gold
Old thoughts so young, that, after all these years,
They're writ on every rose-leaf yet unrolled.

You may not know the secret tongue aright
The Sunbeams on their rosy tablets write;
Only a poet may perchance translate
Those ruby-tinted hieroglyphs of light.

Songs of the Occident.

Roman Anemones.

THE maiden meadows softly blush
Beneath the enamoured breeze,
And break into one purple flush
Of frail anemones.

Violet and rose and vermeil white,
Woven of sun and showers,
They seem to be embodied light
Transfigured into flowers.

Ave Maria in Rome.

FAR away dim violet mountains
 Fade away from sight;
Flashing from fantastic fountains,
 Jets the liquid light,
Where from Nymph's or Triton's lip
Bubbling waters drip and drip,
 Bubbling day and night.

Pealed from tower to answering tower,
 O'er the city swells,
Ringing in the hallowed hour,
 Rhythm of bells on bells;
And on wings of Choral Song,
Confluent hearts to Mary throng,
 From low, cloistered cells.

On the golden ground of even,
 Like a half-way home,
On the pilgrim to heaven
 Floats St. Peter's Dome;
High, high, in the air alone,
Man's dread Thought transformed to stone,
 Pinnacled o'er Rome. *Pincio.*

The New Proserpine.

WHERE, countless as the stars of night,
 The daisies made a milky way
Across fresh lawns, and flecked with light,
 Old Ilex groves walled round with bay,

I saw thee stoop, oh lady sweet,
 And with those pale, frail hands of thine
Gather the spring flowers at our feet,
 Fair as some late-born Proserpine.

Yea, gathering flowers, thou might'st have been
 That goddess of the ethereal brow,
Revisiting this radiant scene
 From realm of dolorous shades below.

Thou might'st have been that Queen of Sighs,
Love-bound by Hades' dreadful spell;
For veiled within thy heaven-blue eyes,
There lay the Memory of Hell. *Villa Pamfili Doria.*

Soul-Drift.

I LET my soul drift with the thistledown
Afloat upon the honeymooning breeze;
My thoughts about the swelling buds are blown,
Blown with the golden dust of flowering trees.

On fleeting gusts of desultory song,
I let my soul drift out into the Spring;
The Psyche flies and palpitates among
The palpitating creatures on the wing.

Go, happy Soul! run fluid in the wave,
Vibrate in light, escape thy natal curse;
Go forth no longer as my body-slave,
But as the heir of all the Universe. *Villa Borghese*

On a Torso of Cupid.

PEACH trees and Judas trees,
Poppies and roses,
Purple anemones
In garden closes!
Lost in the limpid sky,
Shrills a gay lark on high;
Lost in the covert's hush,
Gurgles a wooing thrush.

Look, where the ivy weaves,
Closely embracing,
Tendrils of clinging leaves
Round him enlacing,
With Nature's sacredness
Clothing the nakedness,
Clothing the marble of
This poor, dismembered love.

Gone are the hands whose skill
Aimed the light arrow,

Soul-Drift.

Strong once to cure or kill,
Pierce to the marrow;
Gone are the lips whose kiss
Held hives of honeyed bliss;
Gone too the little feet,
Overfond, overfleet.

O helpless god of old,
Maimed mid the tender
Blossoming white and gold
Of April splendour!
Shall we not make thy grave
Where the long grasses wave;
Hide thee, O headless god,
Deep in the daisied sod?

Here thou mayst rest at last
After life's fever;
After love's fret is past
Rest thee for ever.
Nay, broken God of Love,
Still must thou bide above
While, left for woe or weal,
Thou has a heart to feel. *Villa Mattei.*

The Mirror of Diana.

Popular Name for Lake Nemi.

SHE floats into the quiet skies,
Where, in the circle of hills,
Her immemorial mirror fills
With light, as of a Virgin's eyes
When, love a-tremble in their blue,
They glow twin violets dipped in dew.

Mild as a metaphor of Sleep,
Immaculately maiden-white,
The Queen Moon of ancestral night
Beholds her image in the deep:
As if a-gaze she beams above
Lake Nemi's magic glass of love.

White rose, white lily of the vale,

The Mirror of Diana.

Perfume the even breath of night;
In many a burst of sweet delight
The love throb of the nightingale
Swells through lush flowering woods and fills
The circle of the listening hills.

White rose, white lily of the skies,
The Moon-flower blossoms in the lake;
The nightingale for her fair sake
With hopeless love's impassioned cries
Seems fain to sing till song must kill
Himself with one tumultuous trill.

And all the songs and all the scents,
The light of glowworms and the fires
Of fire-flies in the cypress spires;
And all the wild wind instruments
Of pine and ilex as the breeze
Sweeps out their mystic harmonies;

All are but Messengers of May
To that white orb of maiden fire
Who fills the moth with mad desire
To die enamoured in her ray,
And turns each dewdrop in the grass
Into a fairy looking-glass.

O Beauty, far and far above
The night moth and the nightingale!
Far, far above life's narrow pale,
O Unattainable! O Love!
Even as the nightingale we cry
For some Ideal set on high.

Haunting the deep reflective mind,
You may surprise its perfect Sphere
Glassed like the Moon within her mere,
Who at a puff of alien wind
Melts in innumerable rings,
Elusive in the flux of things.

On Guido's Aurora.

GLORIOUS, in saffron robes and veil unfurled,
Borne on the wind of her ecstatic flight,

On Guido's Aurora.

Aurora floats before the Lord of Light,
And showers her roses on a jubilant world.
Lo, where he beams, ambrosial, yellow curled,
The God of Day, with unapparent might,
Checking his fiery steeds, that plunge and bite
As if from heaven his Chariot should be hurled.

And on the Clouds a many-tinted band
Of Hours dance round their Leader, grave or gay
As glowing near or in his wake they sway;
While poised above the sun-awakened land
The Morning Star, fair herald of the day,
Hovers, a Cupid, back-blown torch in hand.

Spring in the Alps.

THE flowers are at their Bacchanals
Among the lusty green;
Wild Orchis and Narcissus waltz
With Marguerite for queen.
Birds join in glees and madrigals
To little loves unseen;
And unimprisoned Waterfalls
Flash laughing in between.

The Sunlight, leaping from the Heights,
Flames o'er the fields of May,
Winged with unnumbered swallow-flights
Fresh from the long sea way;
And butterflies and insect mites,
Born with the new-blown day,
Cross fires in shifting opal lights
From spray to beckoning spray.

The dandelion puffs her balls,
Free spinsters of the air,
Who scorn to wait for beetle calls
Or bees to find them fair;
But breaking through the painted walls
Their sisters tamely bear,
Fly off in dancing down, which falls
And sprouts up everywhere.

And far above Earth's flower-filled lap
And rosy revelry,
The mountain mothers feed her sap

Spring in the Alps.

From herded clouds on high
Each pinnacle and frozen pap
Whose life has long gone by,
A bridge which spans the mighty gap
Between the earth and sky. *St. Gotthardt.*

The Agnostic.

NOT in the hour of peril, thronged with foes,
Panting to set their heel upon my head,
Or when alone from many wounds I bled
Unflinching beneath Fortune's random blows;
Not when my shuddering hands were doomed to close
The unshrinking eyelids of the stony dead;
Not then I missed my God, not then but said:
"Let me not burden God with all man's woes!"

But when resurgent from the womb of night
Spring's Oriflamme of flowers waves from the Sod;
When peak on flashing Alpine peak is trod
By sunbeams on their missionary flight;
When heaven-kissed Earth laughs, garmented in light;
That is the hour in which I miss my God.

A Bridal in the Bois de Boulogne.

HOW the lilacs, the lilacs are glowing and blowing!
And white through the delicate verdure of May
The blossoming boughs of the hawthorn are showing,
Like beautiful brides in their bridal array; With cobwebs for laces, and dewdrops for pearls, Fine as a queen's dowry for workaday girls.

In an aisle of Acacias enlaced and enlacing,
Where the silvery sunlight tunnels the shade,
Where snowflakes of butterflies airily chasing
Each other in trios flash down the arcade: Arrayed in white muslin the wedded bride Looks fresh as a daisy, the groom by her side.

The guests flitted round her with light-hearted laughter;
They hunted the slipper, they kissed the ring;
Of days gone before and of days coming after
They thought of no more than the bird on the wing. Were the loves and the laughter and lilacs of May, With the sunshine above, not enough for the day?

Birds of Passage

And the lilacs, the lilacs are blowing and glowing!

They pluck them by handfuls and pile them in a mass;
And the sap of the Springtide is rising and flowing

Through the veins of the greenwood, the blades of the grass; Up, up to the last leaf a dance on the tree, It leaps like a fountain abundant and free.

The blackbirds are building their nests in the bushes,

And whistle at work, as the workpeople do;
The trees swing their censers, the wind comes in gushes

Of delicate scent mixed of honey and dew. Now loud and now loud through the garrulous trees A burst of gay music is blown with the breeze.

And the girls and the boys from the faubourgs of Paris,

The premature gamins as wise as fourscore;
The vain little Margots and the wide-awake Harrys,

Surprised into childhood, grew simple once more, And vied with the cuckoo as, shouting at play, They dashed through the thickets and darted away.

Ah, fair is the forest's green glimmering splendour,

The leaves of the lime tree a network of light;
And fringing long aisles of acacia, a tender

And delicate veiling of virginal white, Where, framed in the gladdening flowers of May, The bride and her bridesmaids beam gladder than they.

They have crowned her brown tresses with hawthorn in blossom,

They have made her a necklace of daisies for pearls;
They have set the white lily against her white bosom,

Enthroned on the grass mid a garland of girls; With the earth for a footstool, the sky-roof above, She is queen of the Springtide and Lady of Love.

Oh, the lilacs, the lilacs are glowing and blowing!

They pluck them by bushels as blithely they go
Through the green, scented dusk where the hawthorn is showing

A luminous whiteness of blossoming snow. And the Sun ere he goes gives the Moon half his light, As a lamp to lead Love on the bridal night.

A White Night.

THE land lay deluged by the Moon;

The molten silver of the lake
Shimmered in many a broad lagoon

Between grey isles, whose copse and brake
Lay folded on the water's breast
Like halcyons in a floating nest.

And like a child who trusts in God
 When in the dark it lies alone,
Stretched on the aromatic sod
 My heart was laid against your own,
Against your heart, which seemed to be
Mine own to all Eternity.

Lapped in illimitable light,
 The woods and waters seemed to swoon,
And clouds like angels—winged the night
 And slipped away into the Moon,
Lost in that radiant flame above
As we were lapped and lost in love. *Achensee.*

The Forest Pool.

LOST amid gloom and solitude,
A pool lies hidden in the wood,
A pool the autumn rain has made
Where flowers with their fair shadows played.

Bare as a beggar's board, the trees
Stand in the water to their knees;
The birds are mute, but far away
I hear a bloodhound's sullen bay.

Blue-eyed forget-me-nots that shook,
Kissed by a little laughing brook,
Kissed too by you with lips so red,
Float in the water drowned and dead.

And dead and drowned 'mid leaves that rot,
Our angel-eyed Forget-me-not,
The love of unforgotten years,
Floats corpse-like in a pool of tears *Delamore Forest.*

Noonday Rest.

THE willows whisper very, very low
 Unto the listening breeze;
Sometimes they lose a leaf which, flickering slow,
 Faints on the sunburnt leas.

Beneath the whispering boughs and simmering skies,
On the hot ground at rest,
Still as a stone, a ragged woman lies,
Her baby at the breast.

Nibbling around her browse monotonous sheep,
Flies buzz about her head;
Her heavy eyes are shuttered by a sleep
As of the slumbering dead.

The happy birds that live to love and sing,
Flitting from bough to bough,
Peer softly at this ghastly human thing
With grizzled hair and brow.

O'er what strange ways may not these feet have trod
That match the cracking clay?
Man had no pity on her no, nor God
A nameless castaway!

But Mother Earth now hugs her to her breast,
Defiled or undefiled;
And willows rock the weary soul to rest,
As she, even she, her child. *Hampstead Heath.*

Cross-Roads.

THE rain beat in our faces,
And shrill the wild airs grew;
The long-maned clouds in races
Coursed o'er heaven's windy blue.

The tortured trees were lashing
Each other in their wrath,
Their wet leaves wildly dashing
Across the forest path.

We did not heed the sweeping
Of storm-bewildered rain;
Our cheeks were wet with weeping,
Our hearts were wrung with pain.

For where the cross-roads sever,
Parting to East and West,
We bade good-bye for ever,
To what we each loved best. *The Moors.*

The Moat.

AROUND this lichened home of hoary peace,
Invulnerable in its glassy moat,
A breath of ghostly summers seems to float
And murmur mid the immemorial trees.
The tender slopes, where cattle browse at ease,
Swell softly, like a pigeon's emerald throat;
And, self-oblivious, Time forgets to note
The flight of velvet-footed centuries.

The very sunlight hushed within the close,
Sleeps indolently by the Yew's slow shade;
Still as a relic some old Master made
The jewelled peacock's rich enamel glows;
And on yon mossy wall that youthful rose
Blooms like a rose that never means to fade. *Groombridge.*

Shakespearean Sonnets.

Anne Hathaway's Cottage.

IS this the Cottage, ivy-girt and crowned,
And this the path down which our Shakespeare ran,
When, in the April of his love, sweet Anne
Made all his mighty pulses throb and bound;
Where, mid coy buds and winking flowers around,
She blushed a rarer rose than roses can,
To greet her Will even Him, fair Avon's Swan
Whose name has turned this plot to holy ground!

To these dear walls, once dear to Shakespeare's eyes,
Time's Vandal hand itself has done no wrong;
This nestling lattice opened to his song,
When, with the lark, he bade his love arise
In words whose strong enchantment never dies
Old as these flowers, and, like them, ever young.

Anne Hathaway.

HIS Eve of Women! She, whose mortal lot
Was linked to an Immortal's unaware,
With Love's lost Eden in her blissful air,
Perchance would greet him in this blessed spot.
No shadow of the coming days durst blot,
The flower-like face, so innocently fair,
As lip met lip, and lily arms, all bare,
Clung round him in a perfect lover's knot.

Was not this Anne the flame-like daffodil
Of Shakespeare's March, whose maiden beauty took
His senses captive? Thus the stripling brook
Mirrors a wild flower nodding by the mill,
Then grows a river in which proud cities look,
And with a land's load widens seaward still

Cleve Woods.

SWEET Avon glides where clinging rushes seem
To stay his course, and, in his flattering glass,
Meadows and hills and mellow woodlands pass,
A fairer world as imaged in a dream.
And sometimes, in a visionary gleam,
From out the secret covert's tangled mass,
The fisher-bird starts from the rustling grass,
A jewelled shuttle shot along the stream.

Even here, methinks, when moon-lapped shallows smiled
Round isles no bigger than a baby cot,
Titania found a glowworm-lighted child,
Led far astray, and, with anointing hand
Sprinkling clear dew from a forget-me-not,
Hailed him the Laureate of her Fairyland.

Lost Treasure.

THE autumn day steals, pallid as a ghost,
Along these fields and man-forsaken ways;
And o'er the hedgerows bramble-knotted maze
The whitening locks of Old Man's Beard are tost.
Here, shrunk by centuries of fire and frost,
A crab tree stands where lingering gossip says
In ocean-moated England's golden days,

Great treasure, in a frolic, once was lost.

Here fresh from fumes of some Falstaffian bout,
When famous champions, fired by many a bet,
Had drained huge bumpers while the stars would set
Beneath its reeling branches by the way,
Till twice twelve hours of April bloom were out
Locked in oblivion Shakespeare lost a day.

The Avon.

WHAT are the Willows whispering in a row,
Nodding their old heads o'er the river's edge?
What does the West wind whisper to the sedge
And to the shame-faced purples drooping low?
Why sobs the water, in its broken flow
Lapping against the grey weir's ruined ledge?
And, in the thorny shelter of the hedge,
What bird unloads his heart of woe?

Green Avon's haunted! Look, from yonder bank
The willow leans, that hath not ceased to weep,
Whence, hanging garlands, fair Ophelia sank;
Since Jacques moped here the trees have had a tongue;
And all these streams and whispering willows keep
The moan of Desdemona's dying song.

Evensong.

(Holy Trinity Church.)

THE hectic autumn's dilatory fire
Has turned this lime tree to a sevenfold brand,
Which, self consuming, lights the sunless land,
A death to which all poet souls aspire.
Above the graves, where all men's vain desire
Is hushed at last as by a Mother's hand,
And, Time confounded, Love's blank records stand,
The Evensong swells from the pulsing choir.

What incommunicable presence clings
To this grey church and willowy twilight stream?
Am I the dupe of some delusive dream?

Or, like faint fluid phosphorent rings
On refluent seas, doth Shakespeare's spirit gleam
Pervasive round these old familiar things?

Shakespeare.

YEARNING to know herself for all she was,
Her passionate clash of warring good and ill,
Her new life ever ground in Death's old mill,
With every delicate detail and *en masse*,
Blind Nature strove. Lo, then it came to pass,
That Time, to work out her unconscious Will,
Once wrought the Mind which she had groped for still,
And she beheld herself as in a glass.

The world of men, unrolled before our sight,
Showed like a map, where stream and waterfall
And village–cradling vale and cloud–capped height
Stand faithfully recorded, great and small;
For Shakespeare was, and at his touch, with light
Impartial as the Sun's, revealed the All.

Cedars of Lebanon at Warwick Castle.

CEDARS of Lebanon! Labyrinths of Shade,
Making a mystery of open day;
With layers of gloom keeping the Sun at bay,
And solemn boughs which never bloom or fade.
Contemporaries of that great Crusade,
When militant Christendom leaped up one day,
Fired by the Cross, and rushing to the fray,
Poured Eastward as oracular Peter bade.

Borne hither when Christ's Sepulchre was won,
And planted by hoar Warwick's feudal walls,
You grew, o'ershadowing every rival stem.
When English woods don May's fresh coronals,
Say, Mourn ye still lost Jerusalem,
Funeral trees beloved of Lebanon?

Miscellaneous Pieces.

Pastiche.

I.

LOVE, oh, Love's a dainty sweeting,
Wooing now, and now retreating;
Brightest joy and blackest care,
Swift as light, and light as air.

II.

Would you seize and fix and capture
All his evanescent rapture?
Bind him fast with golden curls,
Fetter with a chain of pearls?

III.

Would you catch him in a net,
Like a white moth pranked with jet?
Clutch him, and his bloomy wing
Turns a dead, discoloured thing!

IV.

Pluck him like a rosebud red,
And he leaves a thorn instead;
Let him go without a care,
And he follows unaware.

V.

Love, oh Love's a dainty sweeting,
Wooing now, and now retreating;
Lightly come, and lightly gone,
Lost when most securely won!

Marriage.

LOVE springs as lightly from the human heart
As springs the lovely rose upon the brier,
Which turns the common hedge to floral fire,
As Love wings Time with rosy-feathered dart.

But marriage is the subtlest work of art
Of all the arts which lift the spirit higher;
The incarnation of the heart's desire
Which masters Time set on Man's will apart.

The Many try, but oh! how few are they
To whom that finest of the arts is given
Which shall teach Love, the rosy runaway,
To bide from bridal Morn to brooding Even.
Yet this this only is the narrow way
By which, while yet on earth, we enter heaven.

Once We Played.

ONCE we played at love together
Played it smartly, if you please;
Lightly, as a windblown feather,
Did we stake a heart apiece.

Oh, it was delicious fooling!
In the hottest of the game,
Without thought of future cooling,
All too quickly burned Life's flame.

In this give-and-take of glances,
Kisses sweet as honey dews,
When we played with equal chances,
Did you win, or did I lose?

Was your heart then hurt to bleeding,
In the ardour of the throw?
Was it then I lost, unheeding,
Lost my heart so long ago?

Who shall say? The game is over.
Of us two who loved in fun,
One lies low beneath the clover,
One lies lonely in the sun.

Affinities.

I.

I will take your thoughts to my heart;
I will keep and garner them there
Locked in a casket apart.
Far above rubies or rare
Pearls from the prodigal deep,
Which men stake their lives on to find,
And women their beauty to keep,
I will treasure the pearls of your mind.

How long has it taken the earth
To crystallize gems in a mine?
How long was the sea giving birth
To her pearls, washed in bitterest brine?
What sorrows, what struggles, what fierce
Endeavour of lives in the past,
Hearts tempered by fire and tears,
To fashion your manhood at last!

II.

TAKE me to thy heart, and let me
Rest my head a little while;
Rest my heart from griefs that fret me
In the mercy of thy smile.

In a twilight pause of feeling,
Time to say a moment's grace,
Put thy hands, whose touch is healing,
Put them gently on my face.

Found too late in Life's wild welter,
All I ask, for weal and woe,
Friend, a moment's friendly shelter,
And thy blessing ere I go.

III.

FULL many loves and friendships dear
Have blossomed brightly in my path;
And some were like the primrose rathe,

And withered with the vernal year.

And some were like the joyous rose,
Most prodigal with scent and hue,
That glows while yet the sky is blue,
And falls with every wind that blows

Mere guests and annuals of the heart;
But you are that perennial bay,
Greenest when greener leaves decay,
Whom only death shall bid depart.

To a Friend.

With a Volume of Verses.

TO you who dwell withdrawn, above
The world's tumultuous strife,
And, in an atmosphere of love,
Have triumphed over life;

To you whose heart has kept so young
Beneath the weight of years,
I give these passion flowers of song,
Still wet with undried tears.

You too have trod that stony path
Which steeply winds afar,
And seen, through nights of storm and wrath,
The bright and Morning Star;

Where, shining o'er the Alps of time
On valleys full of mist,
It beckons us to peaks sublime,
Oh, brave Idealist.

As Many Stars.

AS many stars as are aglow
Deep in the hollows of the night
As many as the flowers that blow

To a Friend.

Beneath the kindling light;

As many as the birds that fly
Unpiloted across the deep;
As many as the clouds on high,
And all the drops they weep;

As many as the leaves that fall
In autumn, on the withering lea,
When wind to thundering wind doth call,
And sea calls unto sea;

As many as the multitude
Of quiet graves, where mutely bide
The wicked people and the good,
Laid softly side by side;

So many thoughts, so many tears,
Such hosts of prayers, are sent on high,
Seeking, through all Man's perished years,
A love that will not die.

Love's Vision.

TRANSPORTED out of self by Youth's sweet madness,
Emulous of love, to Love's empyrean height,
Where I beheld you aureoled in light,
My soul upsprang on wings of angel-gladness.
Far, far below, the earth and all earth's badness
A speck of dust slipped darkling into night,
As suns of fairer planets flamed in sight,
Pure orbs or bliss unstained by gloom or sadness.

Lo, as I soared etherially on high,
You vanished, from my swimming eyes aloof,
Alone, alone, within the empty sky,
I reached out giddily, and reeling fell
From starriest heaven, to plunge in lowest hell,
My proud heart broken on Earth's humblest roof.

A Parable.

BETWEEN the sandhills and the sea

A narrow strip of silver sand,
Whereon a little maid doth stand,
Who picks up shells continually
Between the sandhills and the sea.

Far as her wondering eyes can reach
A Vastness, heaving grey in grey
To the frayed edges where the day
Furls his red standard on the breach,
Between the skyline and the beach.

The waters of the flowing tide
Cast up the seapink shells and weed;
She toys with shells, and doth not heed
The ocean, which on every side
Is closing round her vast and wide.

It creeps her way as if in play,
Pink shells at her pink feet to cast;
But now the wild waves hold her fast,
And bear her off and melt away
A Vastness heaving gray in gray.

Between Sleep and Waking.

SOFTLY in a dream I heard,
Ere the day was breaking,
Softly call a cuckoo bird
Between sleep and waking.

Calling through the rippling rain
And red orchard blossom;
Calling up old love again,
Buried in my bosom;

Calling till he brought you too
From some magic region;
And the whole spring followed you,
Birds on birds in legion.

Youth was in your beaming glance,
Love a rainbow round you;
Blushing trees began to dance,
Wreaths of roses crowned you.

Between Sleep and Waking.

And I called your name, and woke
 To the cuckoo's calling;
And you waned in waning smoke,
 As the rain was falling.

Had the cuckoo called "Adieu,"
 Ere the day was breaking?
All the old wounds bled anew
 Between sleep and waking.

Rest.

WE are so tired, my heart and I.
Of all things here beneath the sky
One only thing would please us best
Endless, unfathomable rest.

We are so tired; we ask no more
Than just to slip out by Life's door;
And leave behind the noisy rout
And everlasting turn about.

Once it seemed well to run on too
With her importunate, fevered crew,
And snatch amid the frantic strife
Some morsel from the board of life.

But we are tired. At Life's crude hands
We ask no gift she understands;
But kneel to him she hates to crave
The absolution of the grave.

Mystery of Mysteries.

BEFORE the abyss of the unanswering grave
 Each mortal stands at last aloof, alone,
 With his beloved one turned as deaf as stone,
However rebel love may storm and rave.
No will, however strong, avails to save
 The wrecked identity knit to our own;
 We may not hoard one treasured look or tone,
Dissolved in foam on Death's dissolving wave.

Rest.

Birds of Passage

Is this the End? This handful of brown earth
For all releasing elements to take
And free for ever from the bonds of birth?
Or will true life from Life's disguises break,
Called to that vast confederacy of minds
Which casts all flesh as chaff to all the winds?