2010


Wayne K. Chapman

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Edward Dowden
A Critical Edition of the Complete Poetry

Edited by Wayne K. Chapman

A Special Online Issue of The South Carolina Review (42.3)
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This volume will reintroduce a significant poet of the nineteenth century to a modern audience which has forgotten, probably, that this distinguished Irish authority on Shakespeare, Goethe and Shelly thought of himself as a poet first. Our perception of Dowden today is that he was a better critic than he was a poet; and in the main, this judgment may be sound, but it goes untested due to the scarcity of his poetic works. Closer to the truth, as I suspect most readers will find, many of the lyrics from his first volume of poetry, *Poems* (1876), are astonishingly good and warrant comparison with his betters—Wordsworth, Shelley, Browning, the Rossettis—poets whose names were often cited in press reviews of Dowden’s early poetry. Without the commitment he made to his academic post at Trinity College, Dublin, he might have become another Meredith, given his obsession with the sonnet and use of lyric sequences to probe the essences of subject-matter with characteristic irony. Even so, his poetry was prominently featured in *Robert Bridges and Contemporary Poets* (pp. 81-98), Volume 8 of Alfred Miles’s series *The Poets and the Poetry of the Nineteenth Century* (Routledge, c. 1891-1906)—an influential tome which conferred canonical stature to a broader field of poets than we tend to observe from our distant perspective.

The verses selected by James A. Noble for Miles’s anthology bear up very well to the test of time—poems from narrative sequences such as “Heroines;” shorter occasional lyrics such as “The Corn-crake,” “Burdens,” “In the Cathedral Close,” and “Renunciants;” and sonnets from the Rossettian sequences “The Inner Life,” “In the Garden,” and “In the Galleries.” John Todhunter and Edmund Gosse, represented in the same volume, were close personal friends of Dowden’s. W. B. Yeats and William Watson, who as younger poets were gradually promoted from the “Ac Etiam” section of the book when their reputations sailed during later editions, were mentored by Dowden. While in Watson’s case, this master-to-apprentice relationship with Dowden must be shared with Tennyson, Dowden’s relationship with W. B. Yeats offers most to English literary history. Indeed, Dowden’s association with the Yeats family and, as a consequence, with the Irish literary revival has been most celebrated by Yeats scholars. I offer to the project my own credentials as a Yeatsian, as an editor, and as a student of Dowden and the period.

Because Dowden has been out of print for such a long time and deserves prominence in modern Anglo-Irish literature as “the one man of letters Dublin Unionism possessed” (in Yeats’s words), a thorough introduction to Dowden’s poetry must assess certain biographical, textual, and critical facts about his peculiar position in Irish poetry.

If Dowden was a luminary in Dublin and in Liverpool, with its large Irish population, his eventual schism with Yeats and the younger generation of home-grown Irish national poets may be compared with his affinity for the transplanted Irish audience of *The Argus*, a weekly run by Noble with contributions by Watson, Dowden and other notables. The appendices attached to this special online issue will simply permit opportunity for a bit more extended coverage on relationships, texts, and activities which will have to

*INTRODUCTION*

_by Wayne K. Chapman_
receive lighter treatment here. Above all, Dowden’s frequently assumed role of mentor or teacher demands treatment of his student “E.D.W.” (Elizabeth Dickinson West), whose platonic affair with Dowden was sponsored by a mutual friend, Robert Percival Graves (uncle of the modern poet who was his namesake), until the affair boiled over into marriage. I expect interest to be awakened on that writing couple, particularly stemming from the coincidence of verses written by Dowden and E.D.W. in the 1870s and ‘80s and from technical advice they received from painter J. B. Yeats (Dowden’s school friend) and Graves, respectively. Because some of these lyrics were written during Dowden’s supervision of the young W. B. Yeats’s education as a poet, they may well have been attributed to the wrong poet by Micheál Ó hAodha (“When Was Yeats First Published” in The Irish Times, 5 June 1965) and allowed to stand as a possibility by Richard J. Finneran in Editing Yeats’s Poems (Macmillan, 1983; rev. and “reconsidered” 1990). Yeats’s Reveries over Childhood and Youth speak to both Dowden’s and his father’s complicated friendship and the force of Dowden’s early influence on the poetry he was just beginning to write:

From our first arrival in Dublin, my father had brought me from time to time to see Edward Dowden…. Sometimes we were asked to breakfast, and afterwards my father would tell me to read out one of my poems. Dowden was wise in his encouragement, never overpraising and never unsympathetic, and he would sometimes lend me books. The orderly, prosperous house where all was in good taste, where poetry was rightly valued, made Dublin tolerable for a while, and for perhaps a couple of years he was an image of romance. (Autobiographies 85-86)

The early published work of Yeats with which Dowden is most associated were the verse plays The Island of Statues and Mosada, which he encouraged Sealy, Bryers & Walker to reprint as a pamphlet after it had first appeared in the Dublin University Review. Joining Dowden and the adult company of the Dublin literati and intelligentia in his home and capacious library on Sunday evenings brought to Yeats’s consciousness, on one occasion, the book Esoteric Buddhism by A. P. Sinnett, an instant enthusiasm that soon led Yeats and his school friend Charles Johnston to found the Dublin Hermetic Society or, as it became known in April 1886, the Dublin Theosophical Society. The library, eventually dispersed at Dowden’s death, gave place to the wonderful collection kept by bibliophile P. S. O’Hegarty at Highfield (Rathgar), Dowden’s final home in Dublin. It was the house in which Gráinne Yeats was raised before her marriage to Michael Yeats. The description of Dowden’s library as derived fractionally from catalogues and auction notices is still a rich tale to be reconstructed, in part, from the facsimile and abstracts prepared for this volume as Appendix A and Appendix B. Dowden was the veritable genius loci of this place.

Nevertheless, Yeats’s father was quick to offer opinions on Dowden’s various weaknesses as a poet—after the political rupture had occurred in the nineties between Dowden and the Celtic revivalists, after Dowden’s failure to endorse Wilde’s defense, and after actual decline in Dowden’s artifice as a poet. Still, it was Yeats senior who came to his friend’s defense as dissension visited the house of Yeats (at the Cuala Press) when Elizabeth Yeats agreed to publish the memorial volume A Woman’s Reliquary (poems to E.D.W.) without consulting her brother. Equivocally, J. B. Yeats begged WBY to withhold from the public his criticism of the work, as Dowden was “not only…a very old friend, but the best of friends” while, at the same time, scolding Elizabeth Yeats for failing to respect the author-
ity of her brother, on whose success the press depended. His opinion of Dowden’s poetry was given to WBY in the same letter, of December 11, 1913:

I have looked through Dowden’s books of poems and like them very much indeed and am grateful for them—for this history of his friendship with the present wife. And from a propagandist point of view I would say that they will do good to husbands and wives, who because of Dowden will read them and love each other more happily.

In the conjugal relation there is the bourgeois point of view, which is comfortable and affectionate and sentimental, and the workman’s point of view is romantic and poetical, and the aristocratic which is cynical and carnal and atheistical—Dowden’s poetry is as regards these things bourgeois. (Letters to His Son W. B. Yeats and Others 169)

The controversy over A Woman’s Reliquary, though brief, instructs us on the way two gifted readers at the time read Dowden; and their views, supported by a text of his poems, will prove helpful to current readers. Since the issues are complex, the only way to begin to air them justly is by means of such a text.

Ironically, Yeats was a candidate for Dowden’s position at TCD when the professor retired, but the prospect vanished in favor of the younger Thomas MacDonagh, whose own first effort as a published poet, Through the Ivory Gate (1903), was a patent imitation of early Yeats, to whom MacDonagh dedicated this book. When Yeats failed in his appointment to the TCD post, JBY conceded to Dowden himself that he was releaved to hear the news: “In the first place he [WBY] is naturally conservative & a very conservative & I dont want to see that side of his character developed—I would rather keep him in the ranks down among the poor soldiers fighting for sincerity & truth” (qtd. Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks 181-2).

In one of Dowden’s last letters, he wrote to J. B. Yeats about something Mrs. Dowden undoubtedly would have associated with his “sensuousness of capacities” and the “great spiritual and mystical forces of literature” that became invested in his poetry and with which she associated the influence of Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Browning (though no disciple), and Whitman (Poems [1914] xvvi, xvii). Dowden recalled:

Last Sunday, one of my visitors held forth on Christianity as a religion of sorrow, and all its art the product of the paganism in it. I mentioned, from a somewhat detached point of view, that it was a religion of joy—but since then I have read an article in the British Review on W. B. Yeats, “Fairies,” in which the writer admiringly mentions that W. B. Y’s God is joy, and that W. B. Y. is a Pagan. The Fairies, who sided neither with God nor Satan, are without souls and signify the passion of and for Joy in the Universe. The writer is a great admirer of the Poet. I, on the contrary, think that Paganism had become a very melancholy thing in its period of stoicism…. But I mention this only as an ascertainable historical fact, not as a dogmatic truth.

With characteristic charm and good humor, he closed on a textual metaphor: “I didn’t know what nonsense I was going to spin when I took up my fountain pen, and I have spun enough. But my letter has the merit of being legible. So indeed have your letters. All the strokes and loops in what you scribble are present in idea” (Letters of Edward Dowden 388-89).
The text for *The Critical Edition of the Complete Poetry* is based on a number of works, all out of copyright since, at the latest, 1964. The last editions of Dowden's poetry appeared, in the year after his death, in 1914. His last descendent, Dolly Robinson, the wife of Abbey Theatre director Lennox Robinson, died a few years ago; and J. M. Dent and Sons confirm that Dowden's poetry is in the public domain. Macmillan, who became Dowden's publisher (see BL. Add. Ms. 55029 [Macmillan Archive], letter of 5 June 1885) and the authority acknowledged for permitting inclusion of Noble's selection in the Miles anthology, no longer exercises an interest in his work. The Dent edition of *A Woman’s Reliquary* (1914) assumed the rights of the Cuala Press edition (1913)—although the latter series, including the Dowden volume, was reissued by Anne and Michael Yeats after 1964. I find the Cuala Press edition worth considering on variants but have used the Dent edition as a base text since in most instances it provides the better text and is the latest edition to be directed through to publication by Mrs. Dowden. Similarly, *Poems* (Dent, 1914) provides the most thorough guide on arrangement and content, after considering the Henry King editions of 1876 and 1877 (rev.), and differs mainly from its predecessors in the addition of forty-six poems not in *A Woman’s Reliquary* but written between 1877 and 1913.

The dates of individual poems are given in the apparatus when known, including the place of composition whenever possible. Dating the poems is not always possible; but as I read in the Contents of *Poems* 1914 (upon authority of Mrs. Dowden) and in annotated copies of *Poems* 1876 and 1877 at Kansas State University and the University of Kansas, respectively, Dowden’s arrangement and order of poems was thematic and, to a degree, qualitative (that is, he shifted forward later work, as his letters tell us, when he judged it better than earlier work, which, for the obverse reason, he dispersed nearer the end of the book). Twenty years ago, I discovered the KSU annotated copy of *Poems* in open stacks of the Farrell Library and, recognizing what it was, had it moved to Special Collections. The pencilled notations in Dowden’s hand give exact dates for 85 of the poems. Although these dates were not added to the 1877 second edition, which was revised very little as the collations in Part 1 of the present edition demonstrate, the dates were employed parenthetically in the table of contents of the 1914 Dent edition, complemented by nearly identical dates that she found in her own author-annotated copy of *Poems* 1877. These annotated copies, as well as the poetry notebook at the University of Texas from which their authority derives, are cited on p. 1 (below) and in the notes of Part 1. Sixty poems in the KSU copy are dated by month, day, and year; nine by month and year; and fifteen by year only. In one instance, “To a Year,” the date is given in the KSU copy as January 1, 1873, whereas E.D.D. gives the date as December 31, 1872, the discrepancy of a day.

In her Preface of 1914, Mrs. Dowden discloses a sad fact about the Henry S. King edition on which stood almost all public knowledge of his work as a poet:

…[A] great many people, to whom the author’s prose works are well known, have never even heard that he had written poetry. This is due in a measure to the fact that the published book of his poems only got into circulation by its first small edition. Its second edition found a silent apotheosis in flame at a great fire at the publisher’s in London, in which nearly the whole of it perished. (xii)

The mostly perished inventory of the second edition carried broadly positive notices quoted from reviews appearing in *The Spectator, The Examiner, The Westminster Review, The Pall*
Mall Gazette, and The Argus, three of which reviewers wondered if the promise of this first book of poetry would be fulfilled by even better work to come. The “apotheosis in flame” was therefore ironic.

- Mr Dowden shows a true poetic touch, which we do not say will win him a permanent place in English literature,—for that he must do more and loom larger on the mind of the present distracted generation than this little volume would accomplish for him,—but which we do venture to say is of the kind to win him such a place, if he can produce more volumes as pure and rare and delicate in flavour as this is. (The Spectator)

- Whether Mr Dowden will make any very striking or very immediate success with his poems we venture to doubt, for these are busy times, and more good verse is written than is read. But we do not think that what success he does attain will be ephemeral, but that whoever once reads his book will keep it, and re-read it with increased appreciation. (The Examiner)

- Mr Dowden’s next volume of verse will be looked forward to with anxious expectation. In him we fancy we discern a poet who will unite Browning’s vigorous power with Tennyson’s sweetness and clearness of expression. (Westminster Review)

With the addition of “Miscellaneous Poems of Later Dates” in 1914, Mrs. Dowden preserved the order of her husband’s early work but imposed a partly chronological arrangement on that and future editions of Dowden’s verse. She was ambitious to revive Dowden’s reputation as a poet. And Dent actually advertised a two-volume Poetical Works of Edward Dowden, counting its remake of the “old volume of Edward Dowden’s Poems of 1876” as one, with the “additions” just mentioned, and counting A Woman’s Reliquary as the other. The present SCR edition is therefore quasi-chronological: being strictly chronological in a tripartite divisional arrangement (i.e., “from Poems,” “Miscellaneous Poems of Later Dates,” and “A Woman’s Reliquary”), followed by a short section entitled “Uncollected Verses,” while maintaining sequences the poet designed. The division of “Uncollected Verses” is chronological according to the dates of publication, and this section is small because E.D.D. had laid her hands on almost all of the already published poetry, save for that of a more ephemeral nature—for example, that published in TCD anthologies such as Kottabos I and II and, conjecturally, in The Irish Monthly to accompany a review of his work.

Background for the Edition

A collected edition of Dowden’s poetry is the logical next step forward from scholarship which began nipping away at the least visible features of Yeats’s life with Joseph Hone’s biography of 1943 and Richard Ellmann’s seminal work, Yeats: the Man and the Masks (1948). There Dowden’s role as mentor is identified but not developed appreciably more than would be noticed in anyone’s reading of Yeats’s Autobiographies. The memoirs of Yeats’s friends Charles Johnston and John Eglinton (i.e. William K. Magee, a Dowden ally in the debate with Young Ireland in the 1890s) introduce slightly more
detail, as do historical contributions by Maurice Elliott and F. S. L. Lyons. Fuller treatments of this kind—in the dissertation of Kathryn Ludwigson (later a book in Twayne’s English Authors Series), in Phillip Marcus’s history of Yeats and the Celtic revival, in Jean Moorcroft Wilson’s life of William Watson, and in William Murphy’s exemplary biography of J. B. Yeats—all demonstrate need for someone to write, eventually, a full-length life of Dowden, the necessary first step of which is to put before the public this new, complete, indexed, and fully searchable edition of his poetry, because it is the poetry that bears directly on the riddle some of us have been working on with respect to the poetic apprenticeship of W. B. Yeats.


**Acknowledgments**

In the year 1990, my wife, Janet M. Manson, and I enjoyed seven months of multi-tasked research at the University of London (Royal Holloway and Bedford New College), courtesy of two Fulbright postdoctoral fellowships. While she finished her book on the U.S. diplomatic response to German U-boat warfare and I finished my first book on Yeats, we worked together on Leonard Woolf’s development as a political thinker and I began piecing in work on Dowden and other subjects. Hence my wife is the first person entitled to thanks. Later, my research on Dowden became a matter of serendipity in connection with Yeats.

Although it has been many years since I began research on this subject, I recall receiving assistance from a number of colleagues, independent scholars, and archivists, including Ernest Bates, Margaret Conrow, Philip Edwards, Warwick Gould, James Helyar, Cathy Henderson, Virginia Hyde, Stanton Linden, Sandy Mason, Christina Hunt Mahoney, William M. Murphy, Virginia Renner, and Deirdre Toomey. Also, more recently and with various degrees of complicity, the following students in Clemson University’s Writing and Publication Studies program enrolled in my course on literary editing, in the fall of 2009, and undertook the collation of textual variants under my supervision: Carolyn Bennett, Ashley Black, Stephanie Cox, Jefferson Donaldson, Collin Engelberger, Whitney Farrow, Victoria Jackson, Stephen Johnson, Jordan McKenzie, Leanna Moxley, Alexia Murdock, Kelly Murray, Kelly Riddle, Sean Rollins, Daniel Schutzman, Jennifer Soowal, and Meredith Spivey. Consequently, of great help in the assembly of the whole were my assistants Christina Cook and Carrie Kolb. My daughter, Charis Chapman, is responsible for providing technical expertise and for launching the PDF facsimile of the book as a special online issue of *The South Carolina Review*, the journal’s first of several projected in that medium. The Dowden issue will be followed by *Writing Modern Ireland* (SCR 43.1), guest-edited by Catherine Paul in autumn 2010, in the Bibliographic Studies series at Clemson University Digital Press.
Part 1—from Poems

(based on the 1914 Dent edition)

Annotated books and manuscripts cited in the notes for dates and title changes—

Texas MS    Edward Dowden. Poetry notebook. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austen, Texas.

Published sources cited in notes and collations (listed by date)—

Hibernia (June 1882) Hibernia (Dublin). June 1882 (the second of four issues in all).
The Wanderer

1 I cast my anchor nowhere (the waves whirled
2 My anchor from me); East and West are one
3 To me; against no winds are my sail furled;
4 —Merely my planet anchors to the Sun.

The Fountain
(An Introduction to the Sonnets)

1 Hush, let the fountain murmur dim
2 Melodious secrets; stir no limb,
3 But lie along the marge and wait,
4 Till deep and pregnant as with fate,
5 Fine as a star-beam, crystal-clear,
6 Each ripple grows upon the ear.
7 This is that fountain seldom seen
8 By mortal wanderer,—Hippocrene,—
9 Where the virgins three times three,
10 Thy singing brood, Mnemosyne,
11 Loosen’d the girdle, and with grave
12 Pure joy their faultless bodies gave
13 To sacred pleasure of the wave.
14 Listen! the lapsing waters tell
15 The urgence uncontrollable
16 Which makes the trouble of their breast,
17 And bears them onward with no rest
18 To ampler skies and some grey plain
19 Sad with the tumbling of the main.
20 But see, a sidelong eddy slips
21 Back into the soft eclipse
22 Of day, while careless fate allows,
23 Darkling beneath still olive boughs;
24 Then with chuckle liquid sweet

8 Hippocrene is the name of the fountain on Mt. Helion that was sacred to the Muses and, according to the myth, was built by the hooves of Pegasus. The water supposedly brings forth poetic inspiration when drunk.
10 Mnemosyne is the personification of memory in Greek mythology. She presided over a river in Hades from which dead souls would drink so as to not remember their past lives upon reincarnation.
25 Coils within its shy retreat;
26 This is mine, no wave of might,
27 But pure and live with glimmering light;
28 I dare not follow that broad flood
29 Of Poesy, whose lustihood
30 Nourishes mighty lands, and makes
31 Resounding music for their sakes;
32 I lie beside the well-head clear
33 With musing joy, with tender fear,
34 And choose for half a day to lean
35 Thus on my elbow where the green
36 Margin-grass and silver-white
37 Starry buds, the wind's delight,
38 Thirsting steer, nor goat-hoof rude
39 Of the branch-sundering Satyr brood
40 Has ever pashed; now, now, I stoop,
41 And in hand-hollow dare to scoop
42 This scantling from the delicate stream;
43 It lies as quiet as a dream,
44 And lustrous in my curvèd hand.
45 Were it a crime if this were drain'd
46 By lips which met the noonday blue
47 Fiery and emptied of its dew?
48 Crown me with small white marish-flowers!
49 To the good Dæmon, and the Powers
50 Of this fair haunt I offer up
51 In unprofanèd lily-cup
52 Libations; still remains for me
53 A bird's drink of clear Poesy;
54 Yet not as light bird comes and dips
55 A pert bill, but with reverent lips
56 I drain this slender trembling tide;
57 O sweet the coolness at my side,
58 And, lying back, to slowly pry
59 For spaces of the upper sky
60 Radiant 'twixt woven olive leaves;
61 And, last, while some fair show deceives
The closing eyes, to find a sleep
As full of healing and as deep
As on toil-worn Odysseus lay
Surge-swept to his Ionian bay.

In the Galleries

I. The Apollo Belvedere

Radiance invincible! Is that the brow
Which gleamed on Python while thy arrow sped?
Are those the lips for Hyacinthus dead
That grieved? Wherefore a God indeed art thou:
For all we toil with ill, and the hours bow
And break us, and at best when we have bled,
And are much marred, perchance propitiated
A little doubtful victory they allow:
We sorrow, and thenceforth the lip retains
A shade, and the eyes shine and wonder less.
O joyous Slayer of evil things! O great
And splendid Victor! God, whom no soil stains
Of passion or doubt, or grief or languidness,
—Even to worship thee I come too late.

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64 Odysseus is the mythological main character in Homer’s *The Odyssey*. He is the king of Ithaca who famously took ten years to return home after the Trojan War.

1. *The Apollo Belvedere* dated “1876” in *Texas MS* but “1868” in *KSU title* Apollo Belvedere is a marble structure from Classical Antiquity that demonstrates the ideals of aesthetic perfection.

2. Python, in Greek mythology, is the earth-dragon of Delphi.

3. Hyacinthus is a beautiful youth who causes a feud between Apollo and Zephyrus. Out of jealousy of Hycanithus’s preference of Apollo, Zephyrus blows Apollo’s discus off course which kills Hyacinthus. Zeus, then, does not allow Hades to claim the body of the young man, but instead creates the flower, Hyacinthus, from his blood.
II. The Venus of Melos

1 Goddess, or woman nobler than the God,
2 No eyes a-gaze upon Ægean seas
3 Shifting and circling past their Cyclades
4 Saw thee. The Earth, the gracious Earth, was trod
5 First by thy feet, while round thee lay her broad
6 Calm harvests, and great kine, and shadowing trees,
7 And flowers like queens, and a full year’s increase,
8 Clusters, ripe berry, and the bursting pod.
9 So thy victorious fairness, unallied
10 To bitter things or barren, doth bestow
11 And not exact; so thou art calm and wise;
12 Thy large allurement saves; a man may grow
13 Like Plutarch’s men by standing at thy side,
14 And walk thenceforward with clear-visioned eyes!
III. Antinous Crowned as Bacchus

(In the British Museum)

1. Who crowned thy forehead with the ivy wreath
2. And clustered berries burdening the hair?
3. Who gave thee godhood, and dim rites? Beware
4. O beautiful, who breathest mortal breath,
5. Thou delicate flame great gloom environeth!
6. The gods are free, and drinks a stainless air,
7. And lightly on calm shoulders they upbear
8. A weight of joy eternal, nor can Death
9. Cast o’er their sleep the shadow of her shrine.
10. O thou confessed too mortal by the o’er-fraught
11. Crowned forehead, must thy drooped eyes ever see
12. The glut of pleasure, those pale lips of thine
13. Still suck a bitter-sweet satiety,
14. Thy soul descend through cloudy realms of thought?

Dated “Feb. 25, 1873” in KSU and UK; Feb. 1873 P1914

Antinous: named for a member of the Roman Emperor Hadrian’s entourage who was deified after his death and depicted as the Roman God, Bacchus, who was the god of fertility.
IV. Leonardo’s “Monna Lisa”

1 Make thyself known, Sibyl, or let despair
2 Of knowing thee be absolute; I wait
3 Hour-long and waste a soul. What word of fate
4 Hides ’twixt the lips which smile and still forbear?
5 Secret perfection! Mystery too fair!
6 Tangle the sense no more lest I should hate
7 Thy delicate tyranny, the inviolate
8 Poise of thy folded hands, thy fallen hair.
9 Nay, nay,—I wrong thee with rough words; still be
10 Serene, victorious, inaccessible;
11 Still smile but speak not; lightest irony
12 Lurk ever ’neath thine eyelids’ shadow; still
13 O’ertop our knowledge; Sphinx of Italy
14 Allure us and reject us at they will!

Dated “Dec. 10, 1872” in KSU and UK.

The following footnote was printed below the poem, which was anticipated by a black-and-white image of Leonardo’s painting: “This famous painting, sometimes called La Gioconda, was bought by Francis I for four thousand gold florins and is now one of the glories of the Louvre. In Madonna Lisa the artist seems to have a sitter whose features possessed a singular degree the intellectual charm in which he delighted, and in whose smile was realized that inward, haunting, mysterious expression which had been ideal. It is said that he worked at her portrait during some portion of four successive years, causing music to be played during the sittings, that the rapt expressions might not fade from her countenance.” IL (1904)
V. St. Luke Painting the Virgin

(By Van der Weyden)

1. It was Luke’s will; and she, the mother-maid,
2. Would not gainsay; to please him pleased her best;
3. See, here she sits with dovelike heart at rest
4. Brooding, and smoothest brow; the babe is laid
5. On lap and arm, glad for the unarrayed
6. And swatheless limbs he stretches; lightly pressed
7. By soft maternal fingers the full breast
8. Seeks him, while half a sidelong glance is stayed
9. By her own bosom and half passes down
10. To reach the boy. Through doors and window-frame
11. Bright airs flow in; a river tranquilly
12. Washes the small, glad Netherlandish town.
13. Innocent calm! no token here of shame,

Dated “April 26, 1872” in KSU and UK.

Title St. Luke Painting the Virgin depicts the Christian belief that it was St. Luke who first created the image of Madonna and the Child.

Subtitle Rogier van der Weyden (c. 1399/1400–1464) is a painter from the Netherlands, a “Dutch Master.
Here are the needs of manhood satisfied!
Sane breath, amplitude for soul and sense,
The noonday silence of the summer hills,
And this embracing solitude; o'er all
The sky unsearchable, which lays its claim,—
A large redemption not to be annulled,—
Upon the heart; and far below, the sea
Breaking and breaking, smoothly, silently.
What need I any further? Now once more
My arrested life begins, and I am man
Complete with eye, heart, brain, and that within
Which is the centre and the light of being;
O dull! Who morning after morning chose
Never to climb these gorse and heather slopes
Cairn-crowned, but last within one seaward nook
Wasted my soul on the ambiguous speech
And slow eye-mesmerism of rolling waves,
Court ing oblivion of the heart. True life
That was not which possessed me while I lay
Prone on the perilous edge, mere eye and ear,
Staring upon the bright monotony,
Having let slide all force from me, each thought
Yield to the vision of the gleaming blank,
Each nerve of motion and of sense grow numb,
Till to the bland persuasion of some breeze,
Which played across my forehead and my hair,
The lost volition would efface itself,
And I was mingled wholly in the sound
Of tumbling billow and upjetting surge,
Long reluctation, welter and reflu ent moan,
And the reverberating tumultuousness
'Mid shelf and hollow and angle black with spray.
Yet under all oblivion there remained
A sense of some frustration, a pale dream
Of Nature mocking man, and drawing down,
As streams draw down the dust of gold, his will,
His thought and passion to enrich herself
The insatiable devourer.

Welcome earth,

On the Heights  dated “Feb 14 1873”  KSU, UK; Feb. 1872  P1914
These rocks which no insidious ocean saps,
But the wide air flows over, and the sun
Illumines. Take me, Mother, to thy breast,
Gather me close in tender, sustinent arms,
Lay bare thy bosom's sweetness and its strength
That I may drink vigour and joy and love.
Oh, infinite composure of the hills!
Thou large simplicity of this fair world,
Candour and calmness, with no mockery,
No soft frustration, flattering sigh or smile
Which masks a tyrannous purpose; and ye Powers
Of these sky-circled heights, and Presences
Awful and strict, I find you favourable,
Who seek not to exclude me or to slay,
Rather accept my being, take me up
Into your silence and your peace. Therefore
By him whom ye reject not, gracious Ones,
Not all unworthy of the world; he casts
Forth from him, never to resume again,
Veiled nameless things, frauds of the unfilled heart,
Fantastic pleasures, delicate sadnesses,
The lurid, and the curious, and the occult,
Coward sleights and shifts, the manners of the slave,
And long unnatural uses of dim life.
Hence with you! Robes of angels touch these heights
Blown by pure winds and I lay hold upon them.

Here is a perfect bell of purple heath,
Made for the sky to gaze at reverently,
As faultless as itself, and holding light,
Glad air and silence in its slender dome;
Small, but a needful moment in the sum
Of God's full joy—the abyss of ecstasy
O'er which we hang as the bright bow of foam
Above the never-filled receptacle
Hangs seven-hued where the endless cataract leaps.

O now I guess why you have summoned me,
Headlands and heights, to your companionship;
Confess that I this day am needful to you!
The heavens were loaded with great light, the winds
Brought you calm summer from a hundred fields,
All night the stars had pricked you to desire,
The imminent joy at its full season flowered,
There was a consummation, the broad wave
Toppled and fell. And had ye voice for this?
Sufficient song to unburden the urged breast?
A pastoral pipe to play? a lyre to touch?
The brightening glory of the heath and gorse
Could not appease your passion, nor the cry
Of this wild bird that flies from bush to bush.
Me therefore you required, a voice for song,
A pastoral pipe to play, a lyre to touch
I recognize your bliss to find me here;
The sky at morning when the sun upleaps
Demands her atom of intense melody,
Her point of quivering passion and delight,
And will not let the lark’s heart be at ease.
Take me, the brain with various, subtile fold,
The breast that knows swift joy, the vocal lips;
I yield you here the cunning instrument
Between your knees; now let the plectrum fall!

“LA RÉVÉLATION PAR LE DÉSERT”

“TOUJOURS LE DÉSERT SE MONTRE À L’HORIZON, QUAND VOUS PRONONCEZ LE NOM DE JÉHOVAH.” —EDGAR QUINET

Beyond the places haunted by the feet
Of thoughts and swift desires, and where the eyes
Of wing’d imaginings are wild, and dreams
Glide by on noiseless plumes, beyond the dim
Veiled sisterhood of ever-circling mists,
Who dip their urns in those enchanted meres
Where all thought fails, and every ardour dies,
And through the vapour dead looms a low moon,
Beyond the fountains of the dawn, beyond
The white home of the morning star, lies spread
A desert lifeless, bright, illimitable,

The world’s confine, o’er which no sighing goes
From weary winds of Time.

I sat me down

Upon a red stone flung on the red sand,
In length as great as some sarcophagus
Which holds a king, but scribbled with no runes,
Bald, and unstained by lichen or grey moss.
Save me no living thing in that red land
Showed under heaven; no furtive lizard slipped,
No desert weed pushed upward the tough spine
Or hairy lump, no slow bird was a spot
Of moving black on the deserted air,
Or stationary shrilled his tuneless cry;
No shadow stirr’d, nor luminous haze uprose,
Quivering against the blanched blue of the marge.
I sat unbonneted, and my throat baked,
And my tongue loll’d dogwise. Red sand below,
And one unlidded eye above—mere God
Blazing from marge to marge. I did not pray,
My heart was as a cinder in my breast,
And with both hands I held my head which throbbed.
I, who had sought for God, had followed God
Through the fair world which stings with sharp desire
For him of whom its hints and whisperings are,
Its gleams and tingling moments of the night,
I, who in flower, and wave, and mountain-wind,
And song of bird, and man’s diviner heart
Had owned the present Deity, yet strove
For naked access to his inmost shrine,—
Now found God doubtless, for he filled the heaven
Like brass, he breathed upon the air like fire.
But I, a speck ’twixt the strown sand and sky,
Being yet an atom of pure and living will,
And perdurable as any God of brass,
With all my soul, with all my mind and strength
Hated this God. O, for a little cloud
No bigger than a man’s hand on the rim,
To rise with rain and thunder in its womb,
And blot God out! But no such cloud would come.
I felt my brain on fire, heard each pulse tick;
It was a God to make a man stark mad;
I rose with neck out-thrust, and nodding head,
While with dry chaps I could not choose but laugh;
Ha, ha, ha, across the air it rang,
No sweeter than the barking of a dog,
Hard as the echo from an iron cliff;
It must have buffeted the heaven; I ceased,
I looked to see from the mid sky an arm,
And one sweep of the scimitar; I stood;
And when the minute passed with no event,
No doomsman's stroke, no sundering soul and flesh,
When silence dropt its heavy fold on fold,
And God lay yet inert in heaven, or scorn'd
His rebel antic-sized, grotesque,—I swooned.

Now when the sense returned my lips were wet,
And cheeks and chin were wet, with a dank dew,
Acrid and icy, and one shadow huge
Hung over me blue-black, while all around
The fierce light glared. O joy, a living thing,
Emperor of this red domain of sand,
A giant snake! One fold, one massy wreath
Arched over me; a man's expanded arms
Could not embrace the girth of this great lord
In his least part, and low upon the sand
His small head lay, wrinkled, a flaccid bag,
Set with two jewels of green fire, the eyes
That had not slept since making of the world.
Whence grew I bold to gaze into such eyes?
Thus gazing each conceived the other's thought,
Aware how each read each; the Serpent mused,
"Are all the giants dead, a long time dead,
Born of the broad-hipped women, grave and tall,
In whom God's sons poured a celestial seed?
A long time dead, whose great deeds filled the earth
With clamour as of beaten shields, all dead,
And Cush and Canaan, Mizraim and Phut,
And the boy Nimrod storming through large lands
Like earthquake through tower'd cities, these depart,
And what remains? Behold, the elvish thing
We raised from out his swoon, this now is man.
The pretty vermin! helpless to conceive
Of great, pure, simple sin, and vast revolt;
The world escapes from deluge these new days,
We build no Babels with the Shinar slime;
What would this thin-legged grasshopper with us,
The Dread Ones? Rather let him skip, and chirp
Hymns in his smooth grass to his novel God,
'The Father'; here no bland paternity
He meets, but visible Might blocks the broad sky,
My great Co-mate, the Ancient. Hence! avoid!
What wouldst thou prying on our solitude?
For thee my sly small cousin may suffice,
And sly small bites about the heart and groin;
Hence to his haunt! Yet ere thou dost depart
I mark thee with my sign.

A vibrant tongue
Had in a moment pricked upon my brow
The mystic mark of brotherhood, Cain’s brand,
But when I read within his eyes the words
“Hence” and “avoid,” dim horror seized on me,
And rising, with both arms stretched forth, and head
Bowed earthward, and not turning once I ran;
And what things saw me as I raced by them,
What hands plucked at my dress, what light wings brushed
My face, what waters in my hearing seethed,
I know not, till I reached familiar lands,
And saw grey clouds slow gathering for the night,
Above sweet fields, whence the June mowers strolled
Homewards with girls who chatted down the lane.

Is this the secret lying round the world?
A Dread One watching with unlieded eye
Slow century after century from his heaven,
And that great lord, the worm of the red plain,
Cold in mid sun, strenuous, untameable,
Coiling his solitary strength along
Slow century after century, conscious each
How in the life of his Arch-enemy
He lives, how ruin of one confounds the pair,—
Is this the eternal dual mystery?
One Source of being, Light, or Love, or Lord,
Whose shadow is the brightness of the world,
Still let thy dawns and twilights glimmer pure
In flow perpetual from hill to hill,
Still bathe us in thy tides of day and night;
Wash me at will a weed in thy free wave,
Drenched in the sun and air and surge of Thee.

129 A new stanza paragraph begins here in P1876, P1877.
The Morning Star

I

1 Backward betwixt the gates of the steepest heaven,
2 Faint from the insupportable advance
3 Of light confederate in the East, is driven

4 The starry chivalry, the helm and lance,
5 Which held keen ward upon the shadowy plain,
6 Yield to the stress and stern predominance

7 Of Day; no wanderer morning-moon awane
8 Floats through disheveled clouds, exanimate,
9 In disarray, with gaze of weariest pain;

10 O thou, sole Splendour, sprung to vindicate
11 Night’s ancient fame, thou in dread strife serene,
12 With back-blown locks, joyous yet desperate

13 Flamest; from whose pure ardour Earth doth win
14 High passionate pangs, thou radiant paladin.

II

15 Nay; strife must cease in song: far-sent and clear
16 Piercing the silence of this summer morn
17 I hear thy swan-song rapturous; I hear

18 Life’s ecstasy; sharp cries of flames which burn
19 With palpitating joy, intense and pure,
20 From altars of the universe, and yearn

[stanza break]
21 In eager spires; and under these the sure
22 Strong ecstasy of Death, in phrase too deep
23 For thought, too bright for dim investiture.

24 Of mortal words, and sinking more than sleep
25 Down holier places of the soul’s delight;
26 Cry, through the quickening dawn, to us who creep

27 ’Mid dreams and dews of the dividing night,
28 Thou searcher of the darkness and the light.

III

29 I seek thee, and thou art not; for the sky
30 Has drawn thee in upon her breast to be
31 A hidden talisman, while light soars high,

32 Virtuous to make wide heaven’s tranquillity
33 More tranquil, and her steadfast truth more true,
34 Yea even her overbowed infinity.

35 Of tenderness, when o’er wet woods the blue
36 Shows past white edges of a sundering cloud,
37 More infinitely tender. Day is new,

38 Night ended; how the hills are overflowed
39 With spaciousness of splendour, and each tree
40 Is touched; only not yet the lark is loud,

41 Since viewless still o’er city and plain and sea
42 Vibrates thy spirit-wingèd ecstasy.
A Child's Noonday Sleep

Because you sleep, my child, with breathing light
As heave of the June sea,
Because your lips soft petals dewy-bright
Dispart so tenderly;

Because the slumbrous warmth is on your cheek
Up from the hushed heart sent,
And in this midmost noon when winds are weak
No cloud lies more content;

Because nor song of bird, nor lamb's keen call
May reach you sunken deep,
Because your lifted arm I thus let fall
Heavy with perfect sleep;

Because all will is drawn from you, all power,
And Nature through dark roots
Will hold and nourish you for one sweet hour
Amid her flowers and fruits;

Therefore though tempests gather, and the gale
Through autumn skies will roar,
Though Earth send up to heaven the ancient wail
Heard by dead Gods of yore;

Though spectral faiths contend, and for her course
The soul confused must try,
While through the whirl of atoms and of force
Looms an abandoned sky;

Yet, know I, Peace abides, of earth's wild things
Centre, and ruling thence;
Behold, a spirit folds her budded wings
In confident innocence.
In The Garden

I. The Garden

1 Past the town’s clamour is a garden full
2 Of loneness and old greenery; at noon
3 When birds are hushed, save one dim cushat’s croon,
4 A ripen’d silence hangs beneath the cool
5 Great branches; basking roses dream and drop
6 A petal, and dream still; and summer’s boon
7 Of mellow grasses, to be levelled soon
8 By a dew-drenchèd scythe, will hardly stop
9 At the uprunning mounds of chestnut trees.
10 Still let me muse in this rich haunt by day,
11 And know all night in dusky placidness
12 It lies beneath the summer, with great ease
13 Broods in the leaves, and every light wind’s stress
14 Lifts a faint odour down the verdurous way.

II. Visions

1 Here I am slave of visions. When noon heat
2 Strikes the red walls, and their environ’d air
3 Lies steep’d in sun; when not a creature dare
4 Affront the fervour, from my dim retreat
5 Where woof of leaves embowers a beechen seat,
6 With chin on palm, and wide-set eyes I stare,
7 Beyond the liquid quiver and the glare,
8 Upon fair shapes that move on silent feet.
9 Those Three strait-robed, and speechless as they pass,
10 Come often, touch the lute, nor heed me more
11 Than birds or shadows heed; that naked child
12 Is dove-like Psyche slumbering in deep grass;
13 Sleep, sleep, — he heeds thee not, yon Sylvan wild
14 Munching the russet apple to its core.

*In The Garden  I. The Garden: “22 June 1867” KSU; “1867” UK; 1867 P1914  The poem is entitled “A garden” and dated “1876” beside title in pencil in Texas MS.*

3 A cushat is a type of pigeon with white patches on its wings and neck.

II. Visions  dated “1866” UK; 1866 P1914

9 “Those Three” may refer to The Three Graces, goddesses of charm, beauty, nature, creativity, and fertility in Greek mythology.

12 Psyche refers to the lover of cupid, from Greek mythology. Although hated by Venus, cupid’s mother and the goddess of love, she was eventually allowed to marry cupid and was granted immortality.

13 “Sylvan” means related to the woods or forest.
III. An Interior

1 The grass around my limbs is deep and sweet;
2 Yonder the house has lost its shadow wholly,
3 The blinds are dropped, and softly now and slowly
4 The day flows in and floats; a calm retreat
5 Of tempered light where fair things fair things meet;
6 White busts and marble Dian make it holy,
7 Within a niche hangs Dürer’s Melancholy
8 Brooding; and, should you enter, there will greet
9 Your sense with vague allurement effluence faint
10 Of one magnolia bloom; fair fingers draw
11 From the piano Chopin’s heart-complaint;
12 Alone, white-robed she sits; a fierce macaw
13 On the verandah, proud of plume and paint,
14 Screams, insolent despot, showing beak and claw.

7 Dürer’s] Durer’s P1876
III. An Interior  “1871” KSU, UK

6 “marble Dian” probably refers to a marble statue of Diana, Roman goddess of the hunt. She is associated with wild animals, the woodland, the moon, and the virtue of chastity.

7 “Durer’s Melancholy,” or Melencolia I, is a drawing by the German Renaissance artist Albrecht Durer (1471-1528). It contains symbols of alchemy and mathematics, and is said to portray the dangers of obsessive study, although there are many interpretations.

11 “Chopin’s heart-complaint” refers to Frederic Chopin (1810-1849), a Polish pianist and composer of the Romantic period. He died of pulmonary tuberculosis.
IV. The Singer

1 “That was the thrush’s last good-night,” I thought,
2 And heard the soft descent of summer rain
3 In the drooped garden leaves; but hush! again
4 The perfect iterance, — freer than unsought
5 Odours of violets dim in woodland ways,
6 Deeper than coilèd waters laid a-dream
7 Below mossed ledges of a shadowy stream,
8 And faultless as blown roses in June days.
9 Full-throated singer! art thou thus anew
10 Voiceful to hear how round theyself alone
11 The enrichèd silence drops for thy delight
12 More soft than snow, more sweet than honey-dew?
13 Now cease: the last faint western streak is gone,
14 Stir not the blissful quiet of the night.
V. A Summer Moon

Queen-moon of this enchanted summer night,
One virgin slave companioning thee, — I lie
Vacant to thy possession as this sky
Conquered and calmed by thy rejoicing might;
Swim down through my heart’s deep, thou dewy bright
Wanderer of heaven, till thought must faint and die,
And I am made all thine inseparably,
Resolved into the dream of thy delight.
Ah no! the place is common for her feet,
Not here, not here, —beyond the amber mist,
And breadths of dusky pine, and shining lawn,
And unstirred lake, and gleaming belts of wheat,
She comes upon her Latmos, and has kissed
The sidelong face of blind Endymion.

5 dewy bright] dewy-bright P1876, P1877

V. A Summer Moon “1866” KSU, UK; 1866 P1914 The poem was entitled “A summer moon” and dated “1876” at top in ink in Texas MS.
13 Latmos, or Latmus appears in Greek mythology as the site of the cave where Selene’s consort Endymion lies forever young and beautiful in blissful sleep.
14 “blind Endymion” refers to the mortal shepherd loved by Selene, goddess of the moon. Selene loved how Endymion looked when he was asleep in the cave on Mount Latmos, and she asked Endymion’s father Zeus to let him stay that way. Zeus put him into an eternal sleep, and Selene visits him nightly.
VI. A Peach

1 If any sense in mortal dust remains
2 When mine has been refined from flower to flower,
3 Won from the sun all colours, drunk the shower
4 And delicate winy dews, and gained the gains
5 Which elves who sleep in airy bells, a-swing
6 Through half a summer day, for love bestow,
7 Then in some warm old garden let me grow
8 To such a perfect, lush, ambrosian thing
9 As this. Upon a southward-facing wall
10 I bask, and feel my juices dimly fed
11 And mellowing, while my bloom comes golden grey:
12 Keep the wasps from me! but before I fall
13 Pluck me, white fingers, and o'er two ripe-red
14 Girl lips O let me richly swoon away!

VII. Early Autumn

1 If while I sit flatter'd by this warm sun
2 Death came to me, and kissed my mouth and brow,
3 And eyelids which the warm light hovers through,
4 I should not count it strange. Being half won
5 By hours that with a tender sadness run,
6 Who would not softly lean to lips which woo
7 In the Earth's grave speech? Nor could it aught undo
8 Of Nature's calm observances begun
9 Still to be here the idle autumn day.
10 Pale leaves would circle down, and lie unstirr'd
11 Where'er they fell; the tired wind hither call
12 Her gentle fellows; shining beetles stray
13 Up their green courts; and only yon shy bird
14 A little bolder grow ere evenfall.
VIII. Later Autumn

1  This is the year’s despair: some wind last night
2  Utter’d too soon the irrevocable word,
3  And the leaves heard it, and the low clouds heard;
4  So a wan morning dawned of sterile light;
5  Flowers drooped, or showed a startled face and white;
6  The cattle cowered, and one disconsolate bird
7  Chirped a weak note; last came this mist and blurred
8  The hills, and fed upon the fields like blight.
9  Ah, why so swift despair! There yet will be
10  Warm noons, the honey’d leavings of the year,
11  Hours of rich musing, ripest autumn’s core,
12  And late-heaped fruit, and falling hedge-berry,
13  Blossoms in cottage-crofts, and yet, once more,
14  A song, not less than June’s, fervent and clear.

VIII. Later Autumn is entitled “(In Autumn 1870)” and dated “1876” in ink beside title in Texas MS
The Heroines

HELENA

(Tenth year of Troy-Siege)

1 She stood upon the wall of windy Troy,
2 And lifted high both arms, and cried aloud
3 With no man near:—
   “Troy-town and glory of Greece
4 Strive, let the flame aspire, and pride of life
5 Glow to white heat! Great lords be strong rejoice,
6 Lament, know victory, know defeat—then die;
7 Fair is the living many-coloured play
8 Of hates and loves, and fair it is to cease,
9 To cease from these and all Earth’s comely things.
10 I, Helena, impatient of a couch
11 Dim-scented, and dark eyes my face had fed,
12 And soft captivity of circling arms,
13 Come forth to shed my spirit on you, a wind
14 And sunlight of commingling life and death.
15 City and tented plain behold who stands
16 Betwixt you! Seems she worth a play of swords,
17 And glad expense of rival hopes and Hates?
18 Have the Gods given a prize which may content,
19 Who set yours games afoot,—no fictile vase,
20 But a sufficient goblet of great gold,
21 Embossed with heroes, filled with perfumed wine?
22 How! Doubt ye? Thus I draw the robe aside
23 And bare the breasts of Helen.

Yesterday

24 A mortal maiden I beheld, the light
25 Tender within her eyes, laying white arms
26 Around her sire’s mailed breast, and heard her chide
27 Because his cheek was blood-splashed,—I beheld
28 And did not wish me her. O, not for this
29 A God’s blood thronged within my mother’s veins!
30 For no such tender purpose rose the swan
31 With ruffled plumes, and hissing in his joy
32 Flashed up the stream, and held with heavy wings
33 Leda, and curved the neck to reach her lips,
And stayed, nor left her lightly. It is well
to have quickened into glory one supreme.
Wifft hour, the century’s fiery-hearted bloom,
Which falls,—to stand a splendor paramount,
A beacon of high hearts and fates of men,
A flame blown round by clear, contending winds,
Which gladden in the contest and wax strong.
Cities of Greece, fair islands, and Troy town,
Accept a woman’s service; these my hands
Hold not the distaff, ply not at the loom;
I store from year to year no well-wrought web
For daughter’s dowry; wide the web I make,
Fine-tissued, costly as the Gods desire,
Shot with a gleaming woof of lives and deaths,
Inwrought with colours flowerlike, piteous, strange.
Oblivion yields before me: ye winged years
Which make escape from darkness, the red light
Of a wild dawn upon your plumes, I stand
The mother of the stars and winds of heaven,
Your eastern Eos; cry across the storm!
Through me man’s heart grows wider; little town
Asleep in silent sunshine and smooth air,
While babe grew man beneath your girdling towers,
Wake, wonder, left the eager head alert,
Snake-like, and swift to strike, while altar-flame
Rises for plighted faith with neighbor town
That slept upon the mountain-shelf, and showed
A small white temped in the morning sun.
Oh, ever one way tending you keen prows
Which shear the shadowy waves when stars are faint
And break with emulous cries unto the dawn,
I gaze and draw you onward; splendid names
Lurk in you, and high deeds, and unachieved
Virtues, and house-o’erwhelming crimes, while life
Leaps in sharp flame ere all be ashes grey.
Thus have I willed it ever since the hour
When that great lord, the one man worshipful,
Whose hands had haled the fierce Hippolyta
Lightly form out her throng of martial maids,
Would grace his triumph, strength his large joy
With splendor of the swan-begotten child,
Nor asked a ten years' siege to make acquist
Of all her virgin store. No dream that was,—
The moonlight in the woods, our singing stream,
Eurotas, the sleep panther at my feet,
And on my heart a hero's strong right hand.
O draught of love immortal! Dastard world
Too poor for great exchange of soul, too poor
For equal lives made glorious! O too poor
For Theseus and for Helena

Yet now
It yields once more a brightness, if no love;
Around me flash the tides, and in my ears
A dangerous melody and piercing-clear
Sing the twin siren-sisters, Death and Life;
I rise and gird my spirit for the close.

Last night Cassandra cried 'Ruin, ruin, and ruin!'
I mocked her not, nor disbelieved; the gloom
Gathers, and twilight takes the unwary world.
Hold me, ye Gods, a torch across the night,
With one long flare blown back o'er tower and town,
Till the last things of Troy complete themselves:
—Then blackness, and the grey dust of a heart.”

Atalanta

“Millanion, seven years ago this day
You overcame me by a golden fraud,
Traitor, and see I crown your cup with flowers,
With violets and white sorrel from dim haunts,—
A fair libation—ask you to what God?
To Artemis, to Artemis my Queen.

Not by my will did you escape the spear
Though piteous I might be for your glad life,
Husband, and for you foolish love: the Gods
Who heard your vows had care of you: I stopped
Half toward the beauty of the shining thing
Through some blind motion of an instant joy,—
As when our babe reached arms to pluck the moon
A great, round, fruit between dark apple-boughs,—
And half, marking your wile, to fling away
Needless advantage, conquer carelessly,
And pass the goal with one light finger-touch
Just while you leaned forth the bent body's length
To reach it. Could I guess I strove with three,
With Aphrodite, Eros, and the third—
Milanion? There upon the maple-post
Your right hand rested: the event had sprung
Compete form darkness, and possessed the world
Ere yet conceived: upon the edge of doom
I stood with foot arrested and blind heart,
Aware of nought save some unmastered fate
And reddening neck and brow. I heard you cry
'Judgment, both umpires!' saw you stand erect,
Panting, and with a face so glad, so great
It shone through all my dull bewilderment
A beautiful uncomprehended joy,
One perfect thing and bright in a strange world.
But when I looked to see my father shamed,
A-choke with rage and words of proper scorn,
He nodded, and the beard upon his breast
Pulled twice or thrice, well-pleased, and laughed aloud,
And while the wrinkles gathered round his eyes
Cried 'Girl, well done! My brother's son retain
Shrewd head upon your shoulders! Maidens ho!
A veil for Atalanta, and a zone
Male fingers may unclasp! Lead home the bride,
Prepare the nuptial chamber!' At his word
My life turned round: too great the shame had grown
With all men leagued to mock me. Could I stay,
Confront the vulgar gladness of the world
At high emprise defeated, a free life
Tethered, light dimmed, a virtue singular
Subdued to ways of common use and wont?
Must I become the men's familiar jest,
The comment of the matron-guild? I turned,
I sought the woods, sought silence, solitude,
Green depths divine, where the soft-footed ounce
Lurks, and the light deer comes and drinks and goes,
Familiar paths in which the mind might gain
Footing, and haply from a vantage-ground
Drive this new fate an arm’s-length, hand’s-breadth off
A little while, till certitude of sight
And strength retuned.
At evening I went back,
Walked past the idle groups at gossipry,
sought you, and laid my hand upon your wriest,
Drew you apart, and with no shaken voice
Spoke, while the swift, hard strokes my heart out-beat
Seemed growing audible, ‘Milanion,
A am your wife for freedom and fair deeds:
Choose: am I such an one a man could love?
What need you? Some soft song to soothe your life,
Or a clear cry at daybreak?’ And I ceased.
How deemed you that first moment? That the Gods
Had changed my heart? That I since morn had grown
Haunter of Aphrodite’s golden shrine,
had kneeled before the victress, vowed my vow,
Besought her pardon, ‘Aphrodite, grace!
Accept the rueful Atalanta’s gifts,
Rose wreaths and snow-white doves’?
In the dim woods
There is a sacred place, a solitude
Within their solitude, a heart of strength
Within their strength. The rocks are heaped around
A goblet of great waters ever fed
By one swift stream which flings itself in air
With all the madness, mirth and melody
Of twenty rivulets gathered in the hills
Where might escapes in gladness. Here the trees
Strike deeper roots into the heart of earth,
And hold more high communion with the heavens;
here in the hush of noon the silence broods
More full of vague divinity; the light
Slow-changing and the shadows as they shift
Seem characters of some inscrutable law,
And one who lingers long will almost hope
The secret of the world may be surprised
Ere he depart. It is a haunt beloved
Of Artemis, the echoing rocks have heard
Her laughter and her lore, and the brown stream
Flashed, smitten by the splendor of her limbs.
Hither I came; here turned, and dared confront
Pursuing thoughts; here held my life at gaze,
If ruined at least to clear loose wrack away,
Study its lines of bare dismantlement,
And shape a strict despair. With fixed hard lips,
Dry-eyed, I set my face against the stream
To Deal with fate; they play of woven light
Gleaming and glancing on the rippled flood
Grew to a tyranny; and one visioned face
Would glide into the circle of my sight,
Would glide and pass away, so glad, so great
The imminent joy it brought seemed charged with fear.
I rose, paced from trunk to trunk, brief track
This way and that; at least my will maintained
Her law upon my limbs; they needs must turn
At the appointed limit. A keen cry
Rose from heart—’Toils of the world grown strong,
‘Yield strength, yield strength to rend them to my hands;
‘Be thou apparent, Queen! In dubious ways
‘Lo my feet fail; cry down the forest blade,
‘Pierce with thry voice the tangle and dark boughs,
‘Call, and I follow thee.’

What things made up
Memorial for the Prescene of the place
Thenceforth to hold? Only the torrent’s leap
Endlessly vibrating, monotonous rhythm
Of the swift footstep pacing to and fro,
Only a soul’s reiterated cry
Under the calm, controlling, ancient trees,
And tutelary ward and watch of heaven
Felt through steep inlets which the upper airs
Blew wider.

On the grass as last I lay
Seized by a pace divine, I know not how;
Passive, yet never so possessed of power,
Strong, yet content to feel not use my strength
Sustained a babe upon the breasts of life
Yet armed with adult will, a shining spear.
O strong deliverance of the larger law
Which strove not with the less! Impetuous youth
Caught up in ampler forced of womanhood!
Co-operant ardours of joined lives! the calls
Of heart to heart in chase of strenuous deeds!
Virgin and wedded freedom not disjoined,
And loyal married service to my Queen!

Husband, have lesser gains these seven good years
Been yours because you chose no gracious maid
Whose hands had woven in the women’s room
Many fair garments, while her dreaming heart
Had prescience of the bridal; one whose claims,
Tender exactions feminine, had pleased
Fond husband, one whose gentle gifts had pleased,
Soft playful touches, little amorous words,
Untutored thoughts that widened up toward yours,
With trustful homage of uplifted eyes,
And sweetest sorrows lightly comforted?
Have we two challenged each the other’s heart
Too highly? Have our joys been all too large,
No gleaming gems on finger or on neck
A man may turn and touch caressingly,
But ampler than this heaven we stand beneath—
Wide wings of Presences august? Our lives,
Were it not better they had stood apart
A little space, letting the sweet sense grow
Of distance bridged by love? Had that full calm,—
I may not question since you call it true,—
Found in some rightness of a women’s will,
Been gladder through perturbing touch of doubt,
By brief unrest made exquisitely aware
Of all its dear possession? Have our eyes
Met with too calm directness—soul to soul
Turned with the unerroneous long regard,
Until no stuff remains for dreams to weave,
Nought but unmeasured faithfulness, clear depths
Pierced by the sun, and yielding to the eye
Which searches, yet no fathoms? Did my lips
Lay on your lips too great a pledge of love
With awe too rapturous? Teach me how I fail,
Recount what things your life has missed through me,
Appease me with new needs; my strength is weak
Trembling toward perfect service.”

In her eyes
Tears stood and utterance ceased. Wondering the boy
Parthenopœus stopped his play and gazed.
Europa

“He stood with head erect fronting the herd;
At the first sight of him I knew the God
And had no fear. The grass is sweet and long
Up the east land backed by a pale blue heaven:
Grey, shining gravel shelves toward the sea
Which sang and sparkled; between these he stood,
Beautiful, with imperious head, firm foot,
And eyes resolved on present victory,
Which swerved not from the full acquist of joy,
Calmly triumphant. Did I see at all
The creamy hide, deep dewlap, little horns,
Or hear the girls describe them? I beheld
Zeus, and the law of my completed life.
Therefore the ravishment of some great calm
Possessed me, and I could not basely start
Or scream; if there was terror in my breast
It was to see the inevitable bliss
In prone descent from heaven; apart I lived
Held in some solitude, intense and clear,
Even while amid the frolic girls I stooped
And praised the flowers we gathered, they and I,
Pink-streaked convolvulus the warm sand bears,
Orchids, dark poppies with the crumpled leaf,
And reeds and giant rushes from a pond
Where the blue dragon-fly shimmers and shifts.
All these were notes of music, harmonies
Fashioned to underlie a resonant song,
Which sang how no more days of flower-culling
Little Europa must desire; henceforth
The large needs of the world resumed her life,
So her least joy must be no trivial thing,
But ordered as the motion of the stars,
Or grand incline of sun-flower to the sun.

[stanza break]
By this the God was near; my soul waxed strong,
And wider orbed the vision of the world
As fate drew nigh. He stooped, all gentleness,
Inviting touches of the tender hands,
And wore the wreaths they twisted round his horns
In lordly-playful wise, me all this while
Summoning by great mandates at my heart,
Which silenced every less authentic call,
Away, away, from girlhood, home, sweet friends,
The daily dictates of my mother’s will,
Agenor’s cherishing hand, and all the ways
Of the calm household. I would fain have felt
Some ruth to part from these, the tender ties
Severing with thrills of passion. Can I blame
My heart for light surrender of things dear,
And hardness of a little selfish soul?
Nay: the decree of joy was over me,
There was the altar, I, the sacrifice
Foredoomed to life, not death; the victim bound
Looked for the stroke, the world’s one fact for her,
The blissful consummation: straight to this
Her course had tended from the hour of birth.
Even till this careless morn of maidenhood
A sudden splendour changed to life’s high noon:
For this my mother taught me gracious things,
My father’s thoughts had dealt with me, for this
The least flower blossomed, the least cloud went by,
All things conspired for this; the glad event
Summed my full past and held it, as the fruit
Holds the fair sequence of the bud and flower
In soft matureness.

Now he bent the knee;
I never doubted of my part to do,
Nor lingered idly, since to veil command
In tender invitation pleased my lord;

44 Agenor is a Phoenician king of Tyre and father of Europa.
55 birth.] birth, P1876, P1877
I sat, and round his neck one arm I laid
Beyond all chance secure. Whether my weight
Or the soft pressure of the encircling arm
Quickened in him some unexpected bliss
I know not, but his flight was one steep rush.
O uncontrollable and joyous rage!
O splendour of the multitudinous sea!
Swift foam about my feet, the eager stroke
Of the strong swimmer, new sea-creatures brave,
And uproar of blown conch, and shouting lips
Under the open heaven; till Crete rose fair
With steadfast shining peak, and promontories.

Shed not a leaf, O plane-tree, not a leaf,
Let sacred shadow, and slumbrous sound remain
Alway, where Zeus looked down upon his bride.”

Andromeda

““This is my joy—that when my soul had wrought
Her single victory over fate and fear,
He came, who was deliverance. At the first,
Though the rough-bearded fellows bruised my wrists
Holding them backwards while they drove the bolts,
And stared around my body, workman-like,
I did not argue nor bewail; but when
The flash and dip of equal oars had passed,
And I was left a thing for sky and sea
To encircle, gaze on, wonder at, not save—
The clear resolve which I had grasped and held,
Slipped as a dew-drop slips from some flower-cup
O’erweighted, and I longed to cry aloud
One sharp, great cry, and scatter the fixed will,
In fond self-pity. Have you watched night-long,

Europa 79 steadfast] stedfast P1876, 1877 82 bride.”] bride. P1877
Andromeda 1 “This] This P1876, P1877, PPNC (1891)

Europa 78 Crete is the largest Greek island in the Southern Aegean Sea.

Andromeda 1873 P1914
Andromeda In Greek mythology, Andromeda is an Ethiopian princess and daughter of Cassopeia; she was fastened to a rock and exposed to a sea monster sent by Poseidon, but was rescued by Perseus; also, a constellation that contains the Andromeda Galaxy.
Above a face from which the life recedes,
And seen death set his seal before the dawn?
You do not shriek and clasp the hands, but just
When morning finds the world once more all good
And ready for wave’s leap and swallow’s flight,
There comes a drift from undiscovered flowers,
A drone of a sailing bee, a dance of light
Among the awakened leaves, a touch, a tang,
A nameless nothing, and the world turns round,
And the full soul runs over, and tears flow,
And it is seen a piteous thing to die.
So fared it there with me; the ripple ran
Crisp to my feet; the tufted sea-pink bloomed
From a cleft rock, I saw the insects drop
From blossom into blossom; and the wide
Intolerable splendour of the sea,
Calm in a liquid hush of summer morn,
Girdled me, and no cloud relieved the sky.
I had refused to drink the proffered wine
Before they bound me, and my strength was less
Than needful: yet the cry escaped not, yet
My purpose had not fallen abroad in ruin;
Only the perfect knowledge I had won
Of things which fate decreed deserted me,
The vision I had held of life and death
Was blurred by some vague mist of piteousness,
Nor could I lean upon a steadfast will.
Therefore I closed both eyes resolved to search
Backwards across the abysm, and find Death there,
And hold him with my hand, and scan his face
By my own choice, and read his strict intent
On lip and brow,—not hunted to his feet
And cowering slavewise; ‘Death,’ I whispered, ‘Death,’
Calling him whom I needed: and he came.

Wherefore record the travail of the soul
Through darkness to grey light, the cloudy war,
The austere calm, the bitter victory?
It seemed that I had mastered fate, and held,
Still with shut eyes, the passion of my heart.
Compressed, and cast the election of my will
Into that scale made heavy with the woe
Of all the world, and fair relinquished lives.
Suddenly the broad sea was vibrated,
And the air shaken with confused noise
Not like the steadfast splash and creak of oars,
And higher on my foot the ripple slid.
The monster was abroad beneath the sun.
This therefore was the moment—could my soul
Sustain her trial? And the soul replied
A swift, sure 'Yes': yet must I look forth once,
Confront my anguish, nor drop blindly down
From horror into anguish: and I looked—
O thou deliverance, thou bright victory
I saw thee, and was saved! The middle air
Was cleft by thy impatience of revenge,
Thy zeal to render freedom on things bound:
The conquest sitting on thy brow, the joy
Of thy unerring flight became to me
Nowise mere hope, but full enfranchisement.
A sculptor of the isles has carved the deed
Upon a temple's frieze; the maiden chained
Lifts one free arm across her eyes to hide
The terror of the moment, and her head
Sideways averted writhes the slender neck:
While with a careless grace in flying curve,
And glad like Hermes in his aery poise,
Toward the gaping throat a youth extends
The sword held lightly. When to sacrifice
I pass at morn with my tall Sthenelos,

---

81 “Hermes” in Greek mythology, is the messenger of the gods.
84 “Sthenelos” in Greek Mythology was the son of Perseus and Andromeda and was a king of Mycenae.
I smile, but do not speak. No! when my gaze 
First met him I was saved; because the world 
Could hold so brave a creature I was free: 
Here one had come with not my father’s eyes 
Which darkened to the clamour of the crowd, 
And gave a grieved assent; not with the eyes 
Of anguish-stricken Cassiopeia, dry 
And staring as I passed her to the boat. 
Was not the beauty of his strength and youth 
Warrant for many good things in the world 
Which could not be so poor while nourishing him? 
What faithlessness of heart could countervail 
The witness of that brow? What dastard chains? 
Did he not testify of sovereign powers 
O’ermatching evil, awful charities 
Which save and slay, the terror of clear joy, 
Unquenchable intolerance of ill, 
Order subduing chaos, beauty pledged 
To conquest of all foul deformities? 
And was there need to turn my head aside, 
I, who had one sole thing to do, no more, 
To watch the deed? I know the careless grace 
My Perseus wears in manage of the steed, 
Or shooting the swift disc: not such the mode 
Of that victorious moment of descent 
When the large tranquil might his soul contains 
Was gathered for a swift abolishment 
Of proud brute-tyranny. He seemed in air 
A shining spear which hisses in its speed 
And smites through boss and breastplate. Did he see 
Andromeda, who never glanced at her 
But set his face against the evil thing? 
I know not; yet one truth I may not doubt 
How ere the wallowing monster blind and vast 
Turned a white belly to the sun, he stood 
Beside me with some word of comfort strong 
Nourishing the heart like choral harmonies. 
O this was then my joy, that I could give 
A soul not saved from wretched female fright,
124 Or anarchy of self-abandoned will,
125 But one which had achieved deliverance,
126 And wrought with shaping hands among the stuff
127 Which fate presented. Had I shrunk from Death?
128 Might I not therefore unashamed accept—
129 In a calm wonder of unaltering joy—
130 Life, the fair gift he laid before my feet?
131 Somewhat a partner of his deed I seemed;
132 His equal? Nay, yet upright at his side
133 Scarce lower by a head and helmet’s height
134 Touching my Perseus’ shoulder.
135 He has wrought
136 Great deeds. Athena loves to honour him;
137 And I have borne him sons. Look, yonder goes
138 Lifting the bow, Eleios, the last-born.”

Eurydice

1 “Now must this waste of vain desire have end:
2 Fetter these thoughts which traverse to and fro
3 The road which has no issue! We are judged.
4 O wherefore could I not uphold his heart?
5 Why claimed I not some partnership with him
6 In the strict test, urging my right of wife?
7 How have I let him fall? I, knowing thee
8 My Orpheus, bounteous giver of rich gifts,
9 Not all inured in practice of the will,

Andromeda 125 which] that PPNC (1891)
133 height] height, P1876, P1877, PPNC (1891)
134 [no stanza break] P1876, P1877, PPNC (1891)
138 last-born.”] last-born. P1876, P1877, PPNC (1891)

Andromeda 136 Athena is the Greek goddess of wisdom, useful crafts, and prudent warfare. She was also the guardian of the city of Athens.

Eurydice 1873 P1914
Eurydice is the wife of Orpheus

8 Orpheus in Greek mythology is a great musician and husband of Eurydice. He went to Hades to rescue Eurydice when she died, but ultimately failed to rescue her.
Worthier than I, yet weaker to sustain
An inner certitude against the blank
And silence of the senses; so no more
My heart helps thine, and henceforth there remains
No gift to thee from me, who would give all,
Only the memory of me growing faint
Until I seem a thing incredible,
Some high, sweet dream, which was not, nor could be.
Ay, and in idle fields of asphodel
Must it not be that I shall fade indeed,
No memory of me, but myself; these hands
Ceasing from mastery and use, my thoughts
Losing distinction in the vague, sweet air,
The heart’s swift pulses slackening to the sob
Of the forgetful river, with no deed
Pre-eminent to dare and to achieve,
No joy for climbing to, no clear resolve
From which the soul swerves never, no ill thing
To rid the world of, till I am no more
Eurydice, and shouldst thou at thy time
Descend, and hope to find a helpmate here,
I were grown slavish, like the girls men buy
Soft-bodied, foolish-faced, luxurious-eyed,
And meet to be another thing than wife.

Would that it had been thus: when the song ceased
And laughterless Aidoneus lifted up
The face, and turned his grave persistent eyes
Upon the singer, I had forward stepped
And spoken—’King! he has wrought well, nor failed,
Who ever heard divine large song like this,
Keener than sunbeam, wider than the air,
And shapely as the mould of faultless fruit?
And now his heart upon the gale of song
Soars with wide wing, and he is strong for flight,
Not strong for treading with the careful foot:
Grant me the naked trial of the will
Divested of all colour, scents and song:
The deed concerns the wife; I claim my share.’

Aidoneus is the god of the underworld and husband of Persephone. He is also known and referred to as Hades or Pluto.
48 O then because Persephone was by
49 With shadowed eyes when Orpheus sang of flowers,
50 He would have yielded. And I stepping forth
51 From the clear radiance of the singer’s heights,
52 Made calm through vision of his wider truth,
53 And strengthened by deep beauty to hold fast
54 The presences of the invisible things,
55 Had led the way. I know how in that mood
56 He leans on me as babe on mother’s breast,
57 Nor could he choose but let his foot descend
58 Where mind left lightest pressure; so are passed
59 The brute three-visaged, and the flowerless ways,
60 Nor have I turned my head; and now behold
61 The greyness of remote terrestrial light,
62 And I step swifter. Does he follow still?
63 O surely since his will embraces mine
64 Closer than clinging hand can clasp a hand:
65 No need to turn and dull with visible proof
66 The certitude that soul relies on soul!
67 So speed we to the day; and now we touch
68 Warm grass, and drink the Sun. O Earth, O Sun,
69 Not you I need, but Orpheus’ breast, and weep
70 The gladdest tears that ever woman shed,
71 And may be weak awhile, and need to know
72 The sustenance and comfort of his arms.

73 Self-foolery of dreams; come bitter truth.
74 Yet he has sung at least a perfect song
75 While the Gods heard him, and I stood beside
76 O not applauding, but at last content,
77 Fearless for him, and calm through perfect joy,
78 Seeing at length his foot upon the heights
79 Of highest song, by me discerned from far,
80 Now suddenly attained in confident
81 And errorless ascension. Did I ask
82 The lesser joy, lips’ touch and clasping arms,
83 Or was not this salvation? For I urged
84 Always, in jealous service to his art,

61 greyness] grayness P1876, P1877
73 [stanza break] P1876, P1877

48 Persephone is the queen of the underworld through marriage to Aidoneus/Hades/Pluto.
‘Now thou hast told their secrets to the trees
Of which they muse through lullèd summer nights;
Thou hast gazed downwards in the formless gulf
Of the brute-mind, and canst control the will
Of snake, and brooding panther firey-eyed,
And lark in middle heaven: leave these behind!
And let some careless singer of the fields
Set to the shallow sound of cymbal-stroke
The Faun a-dance; some less true-tempered soul,
Which cannot shape to harmony august
The splendour and the tumult of the world,
Inflame to frenzy of delirious rage
The Mœnad’s breast; yea, and the hearts of men,
Smoke of whose fire upcurls from little roofs,
Let singers of the wine-cup and the roast,
The whirling spear, the toy-like chariot-race,
And bickering counsel of contending kings
Delight them: leave thou these; sing thou for Gods.’
And thou hast sung for Gods; and I have heard.
I shall not fade beneath this sunless sky,
Mixed in the wandering, ineffectual tribe;
For these have known no moment when the soul
Stood vindicated, laying sudden hands
On immortality of joy, and love
Which sought not, saw not, knew not, could not know
The instruments of sense; I shall not fade.
Yea, and thy face detains me evermore
Within the realm of light. Love, wherefore blame
Thy heart because it sought me? Could the years’
Whole sum of various fashioned happiness
Exceed the measure of that eager face
Importunate and pure, still lit with song,
Turning from song to comfort of my love,
And thirsty for my presence? We are saved!
Yield Heracles, thou brawn and thews of Zeus,
Yield up thy glory on Thessalian ground,
Competitor of Death in single strife!

99 roast,] roast

93 In Greek mythology, a “faun” is a place-spirit of untamed woodlands.
97 In Greek mythology, a meenad is a female follower of Dionysus. This female follower would have been
known as an excessively wild or emotional woman.
The lyre methinks outdoes the club and fist,
And beauty’s ingress the outrageous force
Of tyrant though beneficent; supreme
This feat remains, a memory shaped for Gods.

Nor canst thou wholly lose me from thy life;
Still I am with thee; still my hand keeps thine;
Now I restrain from too intemperate grief
Being a portion of the thoughts that claim
Thy service; now I urge with that good pain
Which wastes and feeds the spirit, a desire
Unending; now I lurk within thy will
As vigour; now am gleaming through the world
As beauty; and if greater thoughts must lay
Their solemn light on thee, outshining mine,
And in some far faint-gleaming hour of Hell
I stand unknown and muffled by the boat
Leaning an eager ear to catch some speech
Of thee, and if some comer tell aloud
How Orpheus who had loved Eurydice
Was summoned by the Gods to fill with joy
And clamour of celestial song the courts
Of bright Olympus,—I, with pang of pride
And pain dissolved in rapture, will return
Appeased, with sense of conquest stern and high.”

But while she spoke, upon a chestnut trunk
Fallen from cliffs of Thracian Rhodope
Sat Orpheus, for he deemed himself alone,
And sang. But bands of wild-eyed women roamed
The hills, whom he had passed with calm disdain.
And now the shrilling Berecynthian pipe
Sounded, blown horn, and frantic female cries:
He ceased from song and looked for the event.

143  Olympus is the highest mountain in Greece and was known in Greek mythology as the home of the gods.
147  The Thracian Rhodope denotes a part of the Rhodope mountain range in Greece that lies within the city of Trace.
151  A Berecynthian pipe is a type of musical instrument that was very popular in Rome. It is the loudest of the double musical pipes of unequal length and was also known as the “mad pipe” from its featured role in the music of the frenzied dances of the Berecynthian festival.
By the Sea

I. The Assumption

1. Why would the open sky not be denied
2. Possession of me, when I sat to-day
3. Rock-couchèd, and round my feet the soft slave lay,
4. My singing Sea, dark-bosom’d, dusky-eyed?
5. She breathed low mystery of song, she sighed,
6. And stirred herself, and set lithe limbs to play
7. In blandishing serpent-wreaths, and would betray
8. An anklet gleaming, or a swaying side.
9. Why could she not detain me? Why must I
10. Devote myself to the dread Heaven, adore
11. The spacious pureness, the large ardour? Why
12. Sprang forth my heart as though all wanderings
13. Had end? To what last bliss did I upsoar
14. Beating on indefatigable wings?

II. The Artist’s Waiting

1. Tender impatience quickening, quickening;
2. O heart within me that art grown a sea,
3. How vexed with longing all thy live waves be,
4. How broken with desire! A ceaseless wing
5. O’er every green sea-ridge goes fluttering,
6. And there are cries and long reluctance,
7. Swift ardours, and the clash of waters free,
8. Fain for the coming of some perfect Thing.
9. Emerge white Wonder, be thou born a Queen!
10. Let shine the slendours of they loveliness
11. From the brow’s radiance to the equal poise
12. Of calm, victorious feet; let thy serene
13. Command go forth; replenish with strong joys

I. The Assumption  the open sky] the puissant sky  P1876

I. The Assumption “Aug 31 1872” KSU, UK; Aug. 1872 P1914
II. The Artist’s Waiting “Sept 19 1872” KSU, UK; Sept. 1872 P1914
III. Counsellors

1 Who are the chief counselors of me? Who know
2 My heart’s desire and every secret thing?
3 Three of one fellowship: the encompassing
4 Strong sea, who mindful of Earth’s ancient woe
5 Still surges on with swift, undaunted flow
6 That no sad shore should lack his comforting;
7 And next the serene Sky, whether he ring
8 With flawless blue a wilderness, or show
9 Tranced in the Twilight’s arms his fair child-star;
10 Third of the three, eldest and lordliest,
11 Love, all whose wings are wide above my head,
12 Whose eyes are clearer heavens, whose lips have said
13 Low words more rare than the quired sea-songs are,-
14 O love, high things and stern thou counsellest.

IV. Evening

1 Light ebbs from off the Earth; the fields are strange,
2 Dusk, trackless, tenantless; now the mute sky
3 Resigns itself to the Night and Memory,
4 And no wind will yon sunken clouds derange,
5 No glory enrapture them; from cot or grange
6 The rare voice ceases; one long-breathed sigh,
7 And steeped in summer sleep the world must lie;
8 All things are acquiescing in the change.
9 Hush! while the vaulted hollow of the night
10 Deepens, what voice is this the sea sends forth,
11 Disconsolate iterance, a passionless moan?
12 Ah! Now the Day is gone, and tyrannous Light,
13 And the calm presence of fruit-bearing Earth:
14 Cry, Sea! It is thy hour; thou art alone.
V. Joy

1 Spring-Tides of Pleasure in the blood, keen thrill
2 Of eager nerves—but ended as a dream;
3 Look! The wind quickens, and the long waves gleam
4 Shoreward, and all this deep noon hour will fill
5 Each lone sea-cave with mirth immeasurable,
6 Huge sport of Ocean’s brood; yet eve’s red sky
7 Fades o’er spent waters, weltering sullenly,
8 The dank piled weed, the sand-waste grey and still.
9 Sad Pleasure in the moon’s control! But Joy
10 Is stable; is discovered law; the birth
11 Of dreadful light; life’s one imperative way;
12 The rigour hid in song; flowers’ strict employ
13 Which turn to meet their sun; the roll of Earth
14 Swift and perpetual through the night and day.

VI. Ocean

1 More than bare mountains ‘neath a naked sky,
2 Or star-enchanted hollows of the night
3 When clouds are riven, or the most sacred light
4 Of summer dawns, art thou a mystery
5 And awe and terror and delight, O sea!
6 Our Earth is simple-hearted, sad to-day
7 Beneath the hush of snow, next morning gay
8 Because west-winds have promised to the lea
9 Violets and cuckoo-buds; and sweetly these
10 Live innocent lives, each flower in its green field,
11 Joying as children in sun, air, and sleep.
12 But thou art terrible, with the unrevealed
13 Burden of dim lamentful prophecies,
14 And thy lone life is passionate and deep.
VII. News for London

1 Whence may I glean a just return, my friend,
2 For tidings of your great world hither borne?
3 What garbs of new opinion men have worn
4 I wot not, nor what fame world-without-end
5 Sprouted last night, nor know I to contend
6 For Irving or the Italian; but forlorn
7 In this odd angle of the isle from morn
8 Till eve, nor sow, nor reap, nor get, nor spend.
9 Yet have I heard the sea-gulls scream for glee
10 Treading the drenched rock ridges, and the gale
11 Hiss over tremulous heath-bells, while the bee
12 Driven sidelong quested low; and I have seen
13 The live sea-hollows, and moving mounds grey-green,
14 And watched the flying foam-bow flush and fail.

Among the Rocks

1 Never can we be strangers, you and I,
2 Nor quite disown our mysteries of kin,
3 Grey Sea-rocks, since I sat an hour to-day
4 Companion of the Ocean and of you.
5 I, sensitive soft flesh a thorn invaedes,
6 The light breath of a rose can win aside,
7 Flesh fashioned to be hourly tried and thrill'd,
8 Delighted, tortured, to betray whose ward
9 The unready heart is ruler, still surprised,
10 With emissary flushes swift and false,
11 And tremulous to touches of the stars.
12 You, spiny ridges of the land, rude backs,
13 Clawless and wingless, half-created things,
14 Monsters at ease before the sun and sea,
15 Untamed, unshrinking, unpersuadable,
16 My kindred.

For the wide-delivering womb
17 Which casts abroad a mammoth as a man,
18 And still conceals the new and better birth,
19 Bore me and you. Old parents of the Sphinx
20 What words primval murmured in my ears
To-day between the lapping of the waves?

What recognitions flashed and disspeared?

What rare faint touches passed of sympathy

From you to me, from me to you? What sense

Of the ancestral things shadowed the heart,

Cloud-like, and with the pleasure of a cloud.

Therefore I know from henceforth that the shrill

Short crying of the sea-lark when his feet

Touch where the wave slips off the shining sand

Impregnate with sharp sea smells is to you

A passion and allurement; and the sun

At mid-day loads your sense with drowsy warmth,

And in the waver and echo of your caves,

You cherish memories of the billowy chaunt,

And ponder its dim prophecy.

And I,—

Lo here I strike upon the granite too,

Something is here austere and obdurate

As you are, something rugged and untamed.

A strength behind the will. I am not all

The shapely, agile creature named a man,

So artful, with the quick conceiving brain,

Nerve-network, and the hand to grasp and hold,

Most dexterous of kinds that wage the strife

Of being through the years. I am not all

This creature with the various heart, alive

To curious joys, rare anguish, skilled in shames,

Prides, hatreds, loves, fears, frauds, the heart which turns

A sudden venomous asp, the heart which bleeds

The red, great drops of glad self-sacrifice

Pierce below these and seek the primal layer!

Behind Apollo looming the Earth-born Ones,

Half-god, half-brute; behind this symmetry,

This versatility of heart and brain

A strength abides, sustaining thought and love,

Untamed, unshrinking, unpersuadable,

At ease before the powers of Earth and Heaven

Equal to any, of no younger years,

Calm as the greatest, haught as the best,

Of imprescriptible authority.

Down upon you I sink, and leave myself,

My vain, frail self, and find repose on you,

Prime Force, whether amassed through myriad years

From dear accretions of dead ancestry,
Or ever welling from the source of things
In undulation vast and unperceived,
Down upon you I sink and lose myself!
My child that shouts and races on the sand
Your cry restores me. Have I been with Pan,
Kissing the hoofs of his goat-majesty?
You come, no granite of the nether earth,
Bright sea-flower rather, shining foam that flies,
Yet sweet as blossom of our inland fields.

To A Year

Fly, Year, not backward down blind gulfs of night,
Thick with the swarm of miscreated things:
Forth, flying year, through calms and broader light,
Clear-eyed, strong-bosom’d year, on strenuous wings;
Bearing a song more high intoned, more holy
Than the wild Swan’s melodious melancholy,
More rapturous than the atom lark outflings.

I follow on slow foot and unsubdued:
Have I not heard thy cry across the wind?
Not seen thee, Slayer of the serpent brood,
Error, and doubt, and death, and anguish blind?
I follow, I shall know thee by thy plumes
Flame-tipped, when on that morn of conquered tombs,
I praise amidst my years the doom assigned.

A Song of the New Day

The tender Sorrows of the twilight leave me,
And shall I want the fanning of smooth wings?
Shall I not miss sweet sorrows? Will it grieve me
To hear no cooing from soft dove-like things?
Let Evening hear them! O wide Dawn uprisen,
Know me all thine; and ye, whose level flight
Has pierced the drear hours and the cloudy prison,
Cry for the pathless spaces and the light!

To a Year  “Jan 1 1873”  KSU; “Decr 1872”  UK; Dec. 31, 1872  P1914
A Song of the New Day  “Sept 29, 1872”  KSU, UK; Sept. 1872  P1914
**Swallows**

1. Wide fields of air left luminous,
2. Though now the uplands comprehend
3. How the sun’s loss is ultimate:
4. The silence grows; but still to us
5. From yon air-winnowing breasts elate
6. The tiny shrieks of glee descend.

7. Deft wings, each moment is resigned
8. Some touch of day, some pulse of light,
9. While yet in poised, delicious curve,
10. Ecstatic doublings down the wind,
11. Light dash and dip and sidelong swerve,
12. You try each dainty trick of flight.

13. Will not your airy glee relent
14. At all? The aimless frolic cease?
15. Know ye no touch of quelling pain,
16. Nor joy’s more strict admonishment,
17. No tender awe at day-light’s wane,
18. Ye slaves of delicate caprice?

19. Hush, once again that cry intense!
20. High-venturing spirits have your will!
21. Urge the last freak, prolong your glee,
22. Keen voyagers, while still the immense
23. Sea-spaces haunt your memory,
24. With zests and pangs ineffable.

25. Not in the sunshine of old woods
26. Ye won your warrant to be gay
27. By duteous, sweet observances,
28. Who dared through darkening solitudes,
29. And ’mid the hiss of alien seas,
30. The larger ordinance obey.

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17 day-light’s] daylight’s *DBIV (1906)*
29 seas] waves *P1876*

Dated July 1873 in *P1914*.

5 “Winnowing” means to separate the undesirable from desireable, usually in the context of blown-away chaff.
MEMORIALS OF TRAVEL

I. Coaching
(In Scotland)

1. Where have I been this perfect summer day,
2. —Or fortnight is it, since I rose from bed,
3. Devour’d that kippered fish, the oatmeal bread,
4. And mounted to this box? O bowl away
5. Swift stagers through the dusk, I will not say
6. “Enough,” nor care where I have been or be,
7. Nor know one name of hill, or lake, or lea,
8. Or moor, or glen! Were not the clouds at play
9. Nameless among the hills, and fair as dreams?
10. On such a day we must love things not words,
11. And memory take or leave them as they are.
12. On such a day! What unimagined streams
13. Are in the world, how many haunts of birds,
14. What fields and flowers,—and what an evening Star!

II. In a Mountain Pass
(In Scotland)

1. To what wild blasts of tyrannous harmony
2. Uprose these rocky walls, mass threatening mass,
3. Dusk, shapeless shapes, around a desolate pass?
4. What deep heart of the ancient hills set free
5. The passion, the desire, the destiny
6. Of this lost stream? Yon clouds that break and form,
7. Light vanward squadrons of the joyous storm,
8. They gather hither from what untrack’d sea?
9. Primeval kindred! here the mind regains
10. Its vantage ground against the world; here thought
11. Wings up the silent waste of air on broad
12. Undaunted pinion; man’s imperial pains
13. Are ours, and visiting fears, and joy unsought,
14. Native resolve, and partnership with God.

I. Coaching  5 “Stagers” means a veteran or one who is experienced. See III. The Castle below; “1876” Texas MS; “1867” KSU, UK; 1867 P1914

II. In a Mountain Pass  7 “Vanward” means forward or advanced as in vanguard. The poem was entitled “The pass” and dated “1876” in Texas MS; Sept 1967” KSU; “1867” UK; 1867 P1914
III. The Castle
(In Scotland)

1. The tenderest ripple touched and touched the shore;
2. The tenderest light was in the western sky;—
3. Its one soft phrase, closing reluctantly,
4. The sea articulated o'er and o'er
5. To comfort all tired things; and one might pore,
6. Till mere oblivion took the heart and eye,
7. On that slow-fading, amber rianicity
8. Past the long levels of the ocean-floor.
9. A turn,—the castle fronted me, four-square,
10. Holding its seaward crag, abrupt, intense
11. Against the west, an apparition bold
12. Of naked human will; I stood aware,
13. With sea and sky, of powers unowned of sense,
14. Presences awful, vast, and uncontrolled.

IV. Αισθητική φαντασία
(In Ireland)

1. The sound is in my ears of mountain streams!
2. I cannot close my lids but some grey rent
3. Of wildered rock, some water's clear descent
4. In shattering crystal, pine-trees soft as dreams
5. Waving perpetually, the sudden gleams
6. Of remote sea, a dear surprise of flowers,
7. Some grace or wonder of to-day's long hours
8. Straightaway posseses the moved sense, which teems
9. With fantasy unbid. O fair, large day!
10. The unpractised sense brings heavings from a sea
11. Of life too broad, and yet the billows range,
12. The elusive footing glides. Come, Sleep, allay
13. The trouble with thy heaviest balms, and change
14. These pulsing visions to still Memory.

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III. The Castle  “1876” in ink beside the original title “In Scotland,” of which the sonnet constitutes the first movement (see I. Coaching above) Tex MS; “Dec. 1867” KSU; “1867” UK; 1867 P1914

IV. “Αισθητική φαντασία” The title is Greek and may be translated as “Aesthetic Fantasy.” The poem is dated “April 1870” in ink at the end but also “1876” at left in Tex MS.
V. On the Sea-Cliff

(In Ireland)

1 Ruins of a church with its miraculous well,
2 O’er which the Christ, a squat-limbed dwarf of stone,
3 Great-eyed, and huddled on his cross, has known
4 The sea-mists and the sunshine, stars that fell
5 And stars that rose, fierce winter’s chronicle,
6 And centuries of dead summers. From his throne
7 Fronting the dawn the elf has ruled alone,
8 And saved this region fair from pagan hell.
9 Turn! June’s great joy abroad; each bird, flower, stream
10 Loves life, loves love; wide ocean amorous
11 Spreads to the sun’s embrace; the dulse-weeds sway,
12 The glad gulls are afloat. Grey Christ to-day
13 Our ban on thee! Rise, let the white breasts gleam,
14 Unvanquished Venus of the northern sea!

VI. Ascetic Nature

(In Ireland)

1 Passion and song, and the adornèd hours
2 Of floral lovliness, hopes grown most sweet,
3 And generous patience in the ripening heat,
4 A mother’s bosom, a bride’s face of flowers
5 —Knows Nature aught so fair? Witness ye Powers
6 Which rule the virgin heart of this retreat
7 To rarer issues, ye who render meet
8 Earth, purified and pure, for gracious heavenly dowers!
9 The luminous pale lake, the pearl-grey sky,
10 The wave that gravely murmurs meek desires,
11 The abashed yet lit expectance of the whole,
12 —These and their beauty speak of earthly fires
13 Long quenched, clear aims, deliberate sanctity,—
14 O’er the white forehead lo! the aureole.

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V. On the Sea-Cliff  11 “Dulse” is a type of red seaweed used as food. The poem is dated “Aug 71 & Feb 73” in KSU and UK; but 1867 in P1914.

VI. Ascetic Nature  “April 1870” in ink at bottom but “1876” at left beside title in Texas MS.
VII. Relics
(IN SWITZERLAND)

1 What relic of the dear, dead yesterday
2 Shall my heart keep? The visionary light
3 Of dawn? Alas! it is a thing too bright,
4 God does not give such memories away.
5 Nor choose I one fair flower of those that sway
6 To the chill breathing of the waterfall
7 In rocky angles black with scattering spray,
8 Fair though no sunbeam lays its coronal
9 Of light on their pale brows; nor glacier-gleam
10 I choose, nor eve’s red glamour; ’twas at noon
11 Resting I found this speedwell, while a stream,
12 That knew the immemorial inland croon,
13 Sang in my ears, and lulled me to a dream
14 Of English meadows, and one perfect June.

VIII. On the Pier of Boulogne
(A REMINISCENCE OF 1870)

1 A venal singer to a thrumming note
2 Chanted the civic war-song, that red flower
3 Of melody seized in a sudden hour
4 By frenzied winds of change, and borne afloat
5 A live light in the storm; and now by rote
6 To a cold crowd, while vague and sad the tide
7 Loomed after sunset and the grey gulls cried,
8 The verses quavered from a hireling throat.
9 Wherefore should English eyes their right forbear,
10 Or droop for smitten France? let the tossed sou,
11 Before they turn, be quittance for the stare.
12 O Lady, who, clear-voiced, with impulse true
13 To lift that cry “To Arms!” alone would dare,
14 My heart received a golden alms from you!

VII. Relics 11 stream. stream P1876
12 immemorial... croon.] immemorial, ... croon P1876
VIII. On the Pier of Boulogne 7 grey] gray P1876, P1877

VII. Relics 11 “Speedwell” is a herb with small blue flowers. A member of the snapdragon family. The poem was entitled “In Switzerland” and dated “Aug 1865” in Texas MS.
VIII. On the Pier of Boulogne: 10 “Sou” refers to the old French five-centime coin.
IX. DOVER
( IN A FIELD )

1 A joy has met me on this English ground
2 I looked not for. O gladness, fields still green!
3 Listen,—the going of a murmurous sound
4 Along the corn; there is not to be seen
5 In all the land a single piled sheaf
6 Or line of grain new-fallen, and not a tree
7 Has felt as yet within its lightest leaf
8 The year’s despair; nay, Summer saves for me
9 Her bright, late flowers. O my Summer-time
10 Named low as lost, I turn, and find you here—
11 Where else but in our blessed English clime
12 That lingers o’er the sweet days of the year,
13 Days of long dreaming under spacious skies
14 Ere melancholy winds of Autumn rise.

AN AUTUMN SONG

1 Long Autumn rain;
2 White mists which choke the vale, and blot the sides
3 Of the bewildered hills; in all the plain
4 No field agleam where the gold pageant was,
5 And silent o’er a tangle of drenched grass
6 The blackbird glides.

7 In the heart,—fire,
8 Fire and clear air and cries of water-springs,
9 And large, pure winds; all April’s quick desire,
10 All June’s possession; a most fearless Earth
11 Drinking great ardours; and the rapturous birth
12 Of wingèd things.
Burdens

Are sorrows hard to bear,—the ruin
Of flowers, the rotting of red fruit,
A love’s decease, a life’s undoing,
And summer slain, and song-birds mute,
And skies of snow and bitter air?
These things, you deem, are hard to bear.

But ah, the burden, the delight
Of dreadful joys! Noon opening wide,
Golden and great; the gulfs of night,
Fair deaths, and rent veils cast aside,
Strong soul to strong soul rendered up,
And silence filling like a cup.
Song
(From “’Tis Pity She’s a Queen.”—A.D. 1610.)

Act IV. Scene 2.

The Lady Margaret, with Susan and Lucy; Lady M. at her embroidery frame, singing.

1 Girls, when I am gone away,
2 On this bosom strew
3 Only flowers meek and pale,
4 And the yew.

5 Lay these hands down by my side,
6 Let my face be bare;
7 Bind a kerchief round the face,
8 Smooth my hair.

9 Let my bier be borne at dawn,
10 Summer grows so sweet,
11 Deep into the forest green
12 Where boughs meet.

13 Then pass away, and let me lie
14 One long, warm, sweet day
15 There alone with face upturn’d,
16 One sweet day.

17 While the morning light grows broad,
18 While noon sleepeth sound,
19 While the evening falls and faints,
20 While the world goes round.

21 Susan. Whence had you this song, lady?
L. Mar. Out of the air;
22 From no one an it be not from the wind
23 That goes at noonday in the sycamore trees.
24 —When said the tardy page he would return?
Susan. By twelve, upon this very hour.
L. Mar. Look now,
26 The sand falls down the glass with even pace,
27 The shadows lie like yesterday’s. Nothing
28 Is wrong with the world. You are a part of it,—
29 I stand within a magic circle charm’d
From reach of anything, shut in from you,
Leagues of my needle, and this frame I touch,
Waiting till doomsday come—

[Knocking heard] The messenger!
Quick, I will wait you here, and hold my heart
Ready for death, or too much ravishment.

[Exeunt both Girls.]

How the little sand-hill slides and slides; how many
Red grains would drop while a man's keen knife drawn
Across one's heart let the red life out?

Susan. [returning] Lady!

L. Mar. I know it by your eyes. O do not fear
to tell all punctually: I am carved of stone.

Still deep into the West I gazed; the light
Clear, spiritual, tranquil as a bird
Wide-winged that soars on the smooth gale and sleeps,
Was it from sun far-set or moon unrisen?
Whether from moon, or sun, or angel's face
It held my heart from motion, stayed my blood,
Betrayed each rising thought to quiet death
Along the blind charm'd way to nothingness,
Lull'd the last nerve that ached. It was a sky
Made for a man to waste his will upon,
To be received as wiser than all toil,
And much more fair. And what was strife of men?
And what was time?

Then came a certain thing.

Are intimations for the elected soul
Dubious, obscure, of unauthentic power
Since ghostly to the intellectual eye,
Shapeless to thinking? Nay, but are not we
Servile to words and an usurping brain,
Infidels of our own high mysteries,
Until the senses thicken and lose the world,
Until the imprisoned soul forgets to see,
And spreads blind fingers forth to reach the day,
Which once drank light, and fed on angels' food?

[stanza break]
It happened swiftly, came and straight was gone.
One standing on some aery balcony
And looking down upon a swarming crowd
Sees one man beckon to him with finger-tip
While eyes meet eyes; he turns and looks again—
The man is lost, and the crowd sways and swarms.

Shall such an one say “Thus ’tis proved a dream,
And no hand beckoned, no eyes met my own?”
Neither can I say this. There was a hint,
A thrill, a summons faint yet absolute,
Which ran across the West; the sky was touch’d,
And failed not to respond. Does a hand pass
Lightly across your hair? you feel it pass
Not half so heavy as a cobweb’s weight,
Although you never stir; so felt the sky
Not unaware of the Presence, so my soul
Scarce less aware. And if I cannot say
The meaning and monition, words are weak
Which will not paint the small wing of a moth,
Nor bear a subtile odour to the brain,
And much less serve the soul in her large needs.
I cannot tell the meaning, but a change
Was wrought in me; it was not the one man
Who come to the luminous window to gaze forth,
And who moved back into the darkened room
With awe upon his heart and tender hope;
From some deep well of life tears rose; the throng
Of dusty cares, hopes, pleasures, prides fell off,
And from a sacred solitude I gazed
Deep, deep into the liquid eyes of Life.

Sunsets

Did your eyes watch the mystic sunset splendours
Through evenings of old summers, slow of parting,—
Wistful while loveliest gains and fair surrenders
Hallow’d the West,—till tremulous tears came starting?

[stanza break]
5 Did your soul wing her way on noiseless pinion
6 Through lucid fields of air, and penetrated
7 With light and silence roam the wide dominion
8 Where Day and Dusk embrace,—serene, unmated?

9 And they are past the shining hours and tender,
10 And snows are fallen between, and winds are driven?
11 Nay, for I find across your face the splendour,
12 And in your wings the central winds of heaven.

13 They reach me, those lost sunsets. Undivining
14 Your own high mysteries you pause and ponder;
15 See, in my eyes the vanished light is shining,
16 Feel, through what spaces of clear heaven I wander!

**OASIS**

1 Let them go by—the heats, the doubts, the strife;
2 I can sit here and care not for them now,
3 Dreaming beside the glimmering wave of life
4 Once more,—I know not how.

5 There is a murmur in my heart, I hear
6 Faint, O so faint, some air I used to sing;
7 It stirs my sense; and odours dim and dear
8 The meadow-breezes bring.

9 Just this way did the quiet twilights fade
10 Over the fields and happy homes of men,
11 While one bird sang as now, piercing the shade,
12 Long since,—I know not when.
Foreign Speech

Ah, do not tell me what they mean,
The tremulous brook, the scarcely stirred
June leaves, the hum of things unseen,
This sovrn bird.

Do they say things so deep, and rare,
And perfect? I can only tell
That they are happy, and can bear
Such ignorance well;
Feeding on all things said and sung
From hour to hour in this high wood
Articulate in a strange, sweet tongue
Not understood.

In The Twilight

A noise of swarming thoughts,
A muster of dim cares, a foil’d intent,
With plots and plans, and counterplans and plots;
And thus along the city’s edges grey
Unmindful of the darkening autumn day
With a droop’d head I went.

My face rose,—through what spell?—
Not hoping anything from twilight dumb:
One star possessed her heaven. Oh! all grew well
Because of thee, and thy serene estate:
Silence…I let thy beauty make me great;
What though the black night come.
I. A Disciple

Master, they argued fast concerning Thee,
Proved what Thou art, denied what Thou art not,
Till brows were on the fret, and eyes grew hot,
And lip and chin were thrust out eagerly;
Then through the temple-door I slipped to free
My soul from secret ache in solitude,
And sought this brook, and by the brookside stood
The world’s Light, and the Light and Life of me.

It is enough, O Master, speak no word!
The stream speaks, and the endurance of the sky
Outpasses speech: I seek not to discern
Even what smiles for me Thy lips have stirred;
Only in Thy hand still let my hand lie,
And let the musing soul within me burn.

II. Theists

Who needs God most? That man whose pulses play
With fullest life-blood; he whose foot dare climb
To Joy’s high limit, solitude sublime
Under a sky whose splendour sure must slay
If Godless; he who owns the sovereign sway
Of that small inner voice and still, what time
His whole life urges toward one blissful crime,
And Hell confuses Heaven, and night, the day.

It is he whose faithfulness of love puts by
Time’s anodyne, and that gross palliative,
A Stoic pride, and bears all humanly;
He whose soul grows one long desire to give
Measureless gifts; ah! let him quickly die
Unless he lift frail hands to God and live.

I. A Disciple entitled “The disciple” and dated “1871” at bottom and “1876” at top, in ink, in Texas MS.
II. Theists dated “April 19 1872” in KSU, UK; April 1872 P1914
III. SEEKING GOD

1 I said “I will find God,” and forth I went
2 To seek Him in the clearness of the sky,
3 But over me stood unendurably
4 Only a pitiless, sapphire firmament
5 Ringing in the world,—blank splendour; yet intent
6 Still to find God, “I will go and seek,” said I,
7 “His way upon the waters,” and drew nigh
8 An ocean marge weed-strewn and foam-besprent;
9 And the waves dashed on idle sand and stone,
10 And very vacant was the long, blue sea;
11 But in the evening as I sat alone,
12 My window open to the vanishing day,
13 Dear God! I could not choose but kneel and pray
14 And it sufficed that I was found of Thee.

IV. DARWINISM IN MORALS

1 High instincts, dim previsions, sacred fears,
2 —Whence issuing? Are they but the brain’s amassed
3 Tradition, shapings of a barbarous past,
4 Remoulded ever by the younger years,
5 Mixed with fresh clay, and kneaded with new tears?
6 No more? The dead chief’s ghost a shadow cast
7 Across the roving clan, and thence at last
8 Comes God, who in the soul His law uprears?
9 Is this the whole? Has not the Future powers
10 To match the Past,—attractions, pulsings, tides,
11 And voices for purged ears? Is all our light
12 The glow of ancient sunsets and lost hours?
13 Advance no banners up heaven’s eastern sides?
14 Trembles the margin with no portent bright?
V. Awakening

With brain o’erworn, with heart a summer clod,
With eye so practised in each form around,—
And all forms mean,—to glance above the ground
Irks it, each day of many days we plod,
Tongue-tied and deaf, along life’s common road.
But suddenly, we know not how, a sound
Of living streams, an odour, a flower crowned
With dew, a lark upspringing from the sod,
And we awake. O joy and deep amaze!
Beneath the everlasting hills we stand,
We hear the voices of the morning seas,
And earnest prophesyings in the land,
While from the open heaven leans forth at gaze
The encompassing great cloud of witnesses.
VI. Fishers

1 We by no shining Galilean lake
2 Have toiled, but long and little fruitfully
3 In waves of a more old and bitter sea
4 Our nets we cast; large winds, that sleep and wake
5 Around the feet of Dawn and Sunset, make
6 Our spiritual inhuman company,
7 And formless shadows of water rise and flee
8 All night around us till the morning break.
9 Thus our lives wear—shall it be ever thus?
10 Some idle day, when least we look for grace,
11 Shall we see stand upon the shore indeed
12 The visible Master, and the Lord of us,
13 And leave our nets, nor question of His creed,
14 Following the Christ within a young man's face?

VII. Communion

1 Lord, I have knelt and tried to pray to-night,
2 But Thy love came upon me like a sleep,
3 And all desire died out; upon the deep
4 Of Thy mere love I lay, each thought in light
5 Dissolving like the sunset clouds, at rest
6 Each tremulous wish, and my strength weakness, sweet
7 As a sick boy with soon o'erwearied feet
8 Finds, yielding him unto his mother's breast
9 To weep for weakness there. I could not pray,
10 But with closed eyes I felt Thy bosom's love
11 Beating toward mine, and then I would not move
12 Till of itself the joy should pass away;
13 At last my heart found voice,—"Take me, O Lord,
14 And do with me according to Thy word."
VIII. A Sonnet for the Times

1 What! Weeping? Had ye your Christ yesterday,
2 Close wound in linen, made your own by tears,
3 Kisses, and pounds of myrrh, the sepulchre’s
4 Mere stone most venerable? And now ye say

5 “No man hath seen Him, He is borne away
6 We wot not where.” And so, with many a sigh,
7 Watching the linen clothes and napkin lie,

8 Ye choose about the grave’s sad mouth to stay.
9 Blind hearts! Why seek the living amongst the dead
10 Better than carols for the babe new-born
11 The shinning young men’s speech “He is not here;”
12 Why question where the feet lay, where the head?
13 Come forth; bright o’er the world breaks Easter morn,
14 He is arisen, Victor o’er grief and fear.

IX. Emmausward

1 Lord Christ, if Thou art with us and these eyes
2 Are holden, while we go sadly and say
3 “We hoped it had been He, and now to-day
4 Is the third day, and hope within us dies,”
5 Bear with us, O our Master, Thou art wise
6 And knowest our foolishness; we do not pray
7 “Declare Thyself, since weary grows the way
8 And faith’s new burden hard upon us lies.”
9 Nay, choose Thy time; but ah! whose’er Thou art
10 Leave us not; where have we heard any voice
11 Like Thine? Our hearts burn in us as we go;
12 Stay with us; break our bread; so, for our part
13 Ere darkness falls haply we may rejoice,
14 Haply when day has been far spent may know.
X. A Farewell

Thou movest from us; we shall see Thy face
No more. Ah, look below these troubled eyes,
This woman's heart in us that faints and dies,
Trust not our faltering lips, our sad amaze;
Glance some time downward from Thy golden place,
And know how we rejoice. It is meet, is wise;
High tasks are Thine, surrenders, victories,
Communing pure, mysterious works and ways.
Leave us: how should we keep Thee in these blown
Grey fields, or soil with earth a Master's feet?
Nor deem us comfortless: have we not known
Thee once, for ever. Friend, the pain is sweet
Seeing Thy completeness to have grown complete,
Thy gift it is that we can walk alone.

XI. Deliverance

I prayed to be delivered, O true God,
Not from the foes that compass us about,—
Them I might combat; not from any doubt
That wrings the soul; not from Thy bitter rod
Smiting the conscience; not from plagues abroad,
Nor my strong inward lusts; nor from the rout
Of worldly men, the scourge, the spit, the flout,
And the whole dolorous way the Master trod.
All these would rouse the life that lurks within,
Would save or slay; these things might be defied
Or strenuously endured; yea, pressed by sin
The soul is stung with sudden, visiting gleams;
Leave these, if Thou but scatter, Lord, I cried,
The counterfeiting shadows and vain dreams.
XII. Paradise Lost

O would you read that Hebrew legend true
Look deep into the little children’s eyes,
Who walk with naked souls in Paradise,
And know not shame; who, with miraculous dew
To keep the garden ever fair and new,
Want not our sobbing rains in their blue skies.
Among the trees God moves, and o’er them rise
All night in deeper heavens great stars to view.
Ah, how we wept when through the gate we came!
What boots it to look back? The world is ours,
Come, we will fare, my brothers, boldly forth;
Let that dread Angel wave the sword of flame
Forever idly round relinquished bowers—
Leave Eden there; we will subdue the earth.

The Resting Place

How all things transitory, all things vain
Desert me! Whither am I sinking slow
On the prone wing, to what predestined home,
What peace beyond all peace, what ultimate joy?
Nay, cease from questioning, care not to know,
Let bliss dissolve each thought, all function cease,
Fold close the wing, let the soft-flowing light
Permeate, and merely once uplift drooped lids
To mark the world remote, the abandoned shore,
Fretted with much vain pleasure, futile pain,
Far, far.

The deepening peach! a dawn of essences
Awful and incommunicably dear!
Grace opening into grace, joy quenching joy!
Thy waves and billows have gone over me
Blissful and calm, and still the dreams drop off,
And true things grow more true, and larger orbs
The strong salvation which has seized my soul.

[stanza break]
The stream of the attraction draws me on
Toward some centre; all will quickly end,
All be attained. The sweetness of repose
And this swift motion slay the consciousness
Of being, and bind up the will in sleep.
Silence and light accept my soul—I touch . . .
Is it death’s centre or the breast of God?

NEW HYMNS FOR SOLITUDE

I

1 I come to Thee not asking aught; I crave
2 No gift of Thine, no grace;
3 Yet where the suppliants enter let me have
4 Within Thy courts a place.

5 My hands, my heart contain no offering;
6 Thy name I would not bless
7 With lips untouched by altar-fire; I bring
8 Only my weariness.

9 These are the children, frequent in Thy home;
10 Grant, Lord, to each his share;
11 Then turn, and merely gaze on me, who come
12 To lay my spirit bare.

II

1 Yet one more step—no flight
2 The weary soul can bear—
3 Into a whiter light,
4 Into a hush more rare.

5 Take me, I am all Thine,
6 Thine now, not seeking Thee,—
7 Hid in the secret shrine,
8 Lost in the shoreless sea.

[stamza break]

New Hymns for Solitude
I. “March 9, 1873” KSU; “April 1872” UK; April 1872 P1914
II. “Oct 2, 1872” KSU, UK; Oct. 1872 P1914 Reprinted in LHS (1879) without varying, from this text.
Grant to the prostrate soul
Prostration new and sweet,
Make weak the weak, control
Thy creature at Thy feet.

Passive I lie: shine down,
Pierce through the will with straight
Swift beams, one after one,
Divide, disintegrate,

Free me from self,—resume
My place, and be Thou there;
Yet also keep me. Come
Thou Saviour and Thou Slayer!

III

Nothing remains to say to Thee, O Lord,
I am confessed,
All my lips' empty crying Thou hast heard,
My unrest, my rest.
Why wait I any longer? Thou dost stay,
And therefore, Lord, I would not go away.

Let me be at Thy feet a little space,
Forget me here;
I will not touch Thy hand, nor seek Thy face,
Only be near,
And this hour let Thy nearness deed the heart,
And when Thou goest I also will depart.

Then when Thou sleekest Thy way, and I, mine
Let the World be
Not wide and cold after this cherishing shrine
Illum'd by Thee,
Nay, but worth worship, fair, a radiant star,
Tender and strong as Thy chief angels are.

[stanza break]
19 Yet bid me not go forth: I cannot now
20 Take hold on joy,
21 Nor sing the swift, glad song, nor bind my brow;
22 Her wise employ
23 Be mine, the silent woman at Thy knee
24 In the low room in little Bethany.

IV

1 Ah, that sharp thrill through all my frame!
2 And yet once more! Withstand
3 I can no longer; in Thy name
4 I yield me to Thy hand.

5 Such pangs were in the soul unborn,
6 The fear, the joy were such,
7 When first it felt in that keen morn
8 A dread, creating touch.

9 Maker of man, Thy pressure sure
10 This grosser stuff must quell;
11 The spirit faints, yet will endure,
12 Subdue, control, compel.

13 The Potter's finger shaping me . . .
14 Praise, praise! the clay curves up
15 Not for dishonour, though it be
16 God's least adornèd cup.

V

1 Sins grew a heavy load and cold,
2 And pressed me to the dust;
3 "Whither," I cried, "can this be rolled
4 Ere I behold the Just?"

5 But now I claim them for my own;
6 Thy face I needs must find;
7 Lo! thus I wrought, yea, I alone,
8 Not weak, beguiled, or blind.

[stanza break]
9    See my full arms, my heaped-up shame,
10    An evil load I bring:
11    Thou, God, art a consuming flame,
12    Accept the hateful thing.
13    Pronounce the dread condemning word,
14    I stand in blessed fear;
15    Dear is Thy cleansing wrath, O Lord,
16    The fire that burns is dear.

VI

1    I found Thee in my heart, O Lord,
2    As in some secret shrine;
3    I knelt, I waited for Thy word,
4    I joyed to name Thee mine.
5    I feared to give myself away
6    To that or this; beside
7    Thy altar on my face I lay,
8    And in strong need I cried.
9    Those hours are past. Thou art not mine,
10   And therefore I rejoice,
11   I wait within no holy shrine,
12   I faint not for the voice.
13   In Thee we live; and every wind
14   Of heaven is Thine; blown free
15   To west, to east, the God unshrined
16   Is still discovering me.

VI. "April 18, 1872"  KSU, UK; April 1872  P1914
In the Cathedral Close

1 In the Dean’s porch a nest of clay
2 With five small tenants may be seen,
3 Five solemn faces, each as wise
4 As though its owner were a Dean;
5 Five downy fledglings in a row,
6 Packed close, as in the antique pew
7 The school-girls are whose foreheads clear
8 At the Venite shine on you.
9 Day after day the swallows sit
10 With scarce a stir, with scarce a sound,
11 But dreaming and digesting much
12 They grow thus wise and soft and round.
13 They watch the Canons come to dine,
14 And hear the mullion-bars across,
15 Over the fragrant fruit and wine
16 Deep talk of rood-screen and reredos.
17 Her hands with field-flowers drench’d, a child
18 Leaps past in wind-blown dress and hair,
19 The swallows turn their heads askew—
20 Five judges deem that she is fair.
21 Prelusive touches sound within,
22 Straightway they recognize the sign,
23 And, blandly nodding, they approve
24 The minuet of Rubinstein.

[stanza break]

---

4 as though its] as if its PPNC (1891)
16 Deep talk of rood-screen and reredos] Deep talk about the reredos P1876
24 Rubinstein] Rubenstein P1876, P1877 (Correction is inscribed by the poet in UK.)

In the Cathedral Close “1867” UK; 1876 P1914
1 “Dean” is an ecclesiastical magistrate subordinate to a bishop and administers a cathedral and its estates.
8 The “Venite” is a religious chant composed of parts of Psalms 95 and 96.
13 A “Canon” is a priest who serves on the staff of a cathedral.
16 A “rood-screen” is an ornate screen upon which is mounted the Great Rood, or crucifix, and separates the main altar of a cathedral from the main part of the church.
16 The “reredos” is an ornate screen or wall decoration at the back of an altar.
24 Anton Rubinstein (1829 – 1894) was a Russian-Jewish pianist, composer, and conductor who founded the Saint Petersburg Conservatory and rivaled Franz Liszt in reputation as a pianist.
They mark the cousins’ schoolboy talk,
(Male birds flown wide from minster bell),
And blink at each broad term of art,
Binomial or bicycle.

Ah! downy young ones, soft and warm,
Doth such a stillness mask from sight
Such swiftness? can such peace conceal
Passion and ecstasy of flight?

Yet somewhere ‘mid your Eastern suns,
Under a white Greek architrave
At morn, or when the shaft of fire
Lies large upon the Indian wave.

A sense of something dear gone-by
Will stir, strange longings thrill the heart
For a small world embowered and close,
Of which ye some time were a part.

The dew-drench’d flowers, the child’s glad eyes
Your joy unhuman shall control,
And in your wings a light and wind
Shall move from the Maestro’s soul.

---

32 flight?] flight. *P1876*
37 gone-by] gone by *PPNC (1891)*

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34 An “architrave” is the lintel that rests above columns in classical architecture.
First Love

1 My long first year of perfect love,
2 My deep new dream of joy;
3 She was a little chubby girl,
4 I was a chubby boy.

5 I wore a crimson frock, white drawers,
6 A belt, a crown was on it;
7 She wore some angel’s kind of dress
8 And such a tiny bonnet,

9 Old-fashioned, but the soft brown hair
10 Would never keep its place;
11 A little maid with violet eyes,
12 And sunshine in her face.

13 O my child-queen, in those lost days
14 How sweet was daily living!
15 How humble and how proud I grew,
16 How rich by merely giving!

17 She went to school, the parlour-maid
18 Slow stepping to her trot;
19 That parlour-maid, ah, did she feel
20 How lofty was her lot!

21 Across the road I saw her lift
22 My Queen, and with a sigh
23 I envied Raleigh; my new coat
24 Was hung a peg too high.

25 A hoard of never-given gifts
26 I cherished,—priceless pelf;
27 ’Twas two whole days ere I devour’d
28 That peppermint myself.

[stanza break]

23 Sir Walter Raleigh (c. 1552–1618) was an English writer, poet, soldier, courtier, and explorer famous, among other things, for his close friendship with Queen Elizabeth I.
In Church I only prayed for her—

“O God bless Lucy Hill;”

Child, may His angels keep their arms

Ever around you still.

But when the hymn came round, with heart

That feared some heart’s surprising

Its secret sweet, I climb’d the seat

‘Mid rustling and uprising;

And there against her mother’s arm

The sleeping child was leaning,

While far away the hymn went on,

The music and the meaning.

Oh I have loved with more of pain

Since then, with more of passion,

Loved with the aching in my love

After our grown-up fashion;

Yet could I almost be content

To lose here at your feet

A year or two, you murmuring elm,

To dream a dream so sweet.
THE SECRET OF THE UNIVERSE: AN ODE

(BY A WESTERN SPINNING DERVISH)

I spin, I spin, around, around,
   And close my eyes,
   And let the bile arise
From the sacred region of the soul’s Profound;
Then gaze upon the world; how strange! how new!
   The earth and heaven are one,
   The horizon-line is gone,
The sky how green! the land how fair and blue!
Perplexing items fade from my large view,
And thought which vexed me with its false and true
Is swallowed up in Intuition; this,
   This is the sole true mode
   Of reaching God,
And gaining the universal synthesis
Which makes All—One; while fools with peering eyes
Dissect, divide, and vainly analyse.
So round, and round, and round again!
How the whole globe swells within my brain,
The stars inside my lids appear,
The murmur of the spheres I hear
Throbbing and beating in each ear;
Right in my navel I can feel
The centre of the world’s great wheel.
Ah peace divine, bliss dear and deep,
No stay, no stop,
Like any top
Whirling with swiftest speed, I sleep.
O ye devout ones round me coming,
Listen! I think that I am humming;
No utterance of the servile mind
With poor chop-logic rules agreeing
Here shall ye find,
But inarticulate burr of man’s unsundered being.

By a Western Spinning Dervish] By a Spinning Dervish P1876

A “Spinning Dervish” is a member of an ascetic order of Sufi Islam engaged in a traditional spinning dance as a form of active meditation during a worship service. The word “Western” was introduced into the subtitle in KSU in the poet’s handwriting.
Ah, could we but devise some plan,
Some patent jack by which a man
Might hold himself ever in harmony
With the great Whole, and spin perpetually,
As all things spin
Without, within,
As Time spins off into Eternity,
And Space into the inane Immensity,
And the Finite into God’s Infinity,
Spin, spin, spin, spin.

Beau Rivage Hotel
Saturday Evening

Below there’s a brumming and strumming
And twiddling and fiddling amain,
And sweeping of muslins and laughter,
And pattering of luminous rain.

Fair England, resplendent Columbia,
Gaul, Teuton,—how precious a smother!
But the happiest is brisk little Polly
To galop with only her brother.

And up to the fourth étage landing,
Come the violins’ passionate cries,
Where the pale femme-de-chambre is sitting
With sleep in her beautiful eyes.

4 Fair England, resplendent Columbia.] “Miss Lucy fatigued?” “Non, Monsieur!” P1876, PPNC (1891)
5 Gaul, Teuton,—how precious a smother!] “Ach Himmel!” “How precious a smother!” P1876, PPNC (1891)

Variants in lines 4–5 are introduced in KSU in the poet’s hand. The poem is set in France or Switzerland.
In a June Night
(A STUDY IN THE MANNER OF ROBERT BROWNING)

I

1 See, the door opens of this alcove,
2 Here we are now in the cool night air
3 Out of the heat and smother; above
4 The stars are a wonder, alive and fair,
5 It is a perfect night,—your hand,—
6 Down these steps and we reach the garden,
7 And odorous, dim, enchanted land,
8 With the dusk stone-god for only warden.

II

9 Was I not right to bring you here?
10 We might have seen slip the hours within
11 Till God's new day in the East were clear,
12 And His silence abashed the dancers' din,
13 The each have gone away, the pain
14 And longing greatened, not satisfied,
15 By a hand's slight tough or a glance's gain,—
16 And now we are standing side by side!

III

17 Come to the garden's end,—not so,
18 Not by the grass, it would drench your feet;
19 See, here is a path where the trees o'ergrow
20 And the fireflies flicker; but, my sweet,
21 Lean on me now, for one cannot see
22 Here where the great leaves lie unfurled
23 To take the whole soul and the mystery
24 Of a summer night poured out for the world.

In a June Night This poem appeared in the magazine Kottabos paired with an exercise on Tennyson, which Dowden chose not to reprint. It appeared under the headings “Poems Written in Discipleship” and “Of the school of Mr. Browning.” There, a footnote declared that “These poems are in no sense parodies, but intend to be affectionate studies or sketches in the manner of some living master of song. The stanzas were not numbered, but the 72 lines of the poem overal scrupulously agree with the 1876 and subsequent editions of Poems. No variants were detected in Kottabos I (1869–74).
IV

25 Into the open air once more!
26 Yonder's the edge of the garden-wall
27 Where we may sit and talk,—deplore
28 This half-hour lost from so bright a ball,
29 Or praise my partner with the eyes
30 And the raven hair, or the other one
31 With her flaxen curls, and slow replies
32 As near asleep in the Tuscan sun.

V

33 Hush! do you hear on the beach's cirque
34 Just below, though the lake is dim,
35 How the little ripples do their work,
36 Fall and faint on the pebbled rim,
37 So they say what they want, and then
38 Break at the marge's feet and die;
39 It is so different with us men
40 Who never can once speak perfectly.

VI

41 Yet hear me,—trust that they mean indeed
42 Oh, so much more than the words will say
43 Or shall it be 'twixt us two agreed
44 That all we might spend a night and day
45 In striving to put in a word or thought,
46 Which were then from ourselves a thing apart,
47 Shall be just believed and quite forgot,
48 When my heart is felt against your heart.

VII

49 Ah, but that will not tell you all,
50 How I am yours not thus alone,
51 To find how your pulses rise and fall,
52 And winning you wholly be your own,
53 But yours to be humble, could you grow
54 The Queen that you are, remote and proud,
55 And I with only a life to throw
56 Where the others' flowers for your feet were stowed.
VIII

57 Well, you have faults too! I can blame
58 If you choose: this hand is not so white
59 Or round as a little one that came
60 On my shoulder once or twice to-night
61 Like a soft white dove. Envy her now!
62 And when you talked to that padded thing
63 And I passed you leisurely by, your brow
64 Was cold, not a flush nor fluttering.

IX

65 Such foolish talk! while that one star still
66 Dwells o’er the mountain’s margin-line
67 Till the dawn takes all; one may drink one’s fill
68 Of such quiet; there’s a whisper fine
69 In the leaves a-tremble, and now ’tis dumb;
70 We have lived long years, love, you and I,
71 And the heart grows faint; your lips, then: come,—
72 It were not so very hard to die.
FROM APRIL TO OCTOBER

I. Beauty

1. The beauty of the world, the loveliness
2. Of woodland pools, which doves have coo’d to sleep,
3. Dreaming the noontide through beneath the deep
4. Of heaven; the radiant blue’s benign caress
5. When April clouds are rifted; buds that bless
6. Each little nook and bower, where the leaves keep
7. Dew and light shadow, and quick lizards peep
8. For sunshine,—these, and the ancient stars no less,
9. And the sea’s mystery of dusk and bright
10. Are but the curious characters that lie,
12. Ah, where, divine One, is thy veiled retreat,
13. That I may creep to it and clasp thy feet,
14. And gaze in thy pure face though I should die?

II. Two Infinites

1. A lonely way, and as I went my eyes
2. Could not unfasten from the Spring’s sweet things,
3. Lush-sprouted grass, and all that climbs and clings
4. In loose, deep hedges, where the primrose lies
5. In her own fairness, buried blooms surprise
6. The plunderer bee and stop his murmurings,
7. And the glad flutter of a finch’s wings
8. Outstartle small blue-speckled butterflies.
9. Blissfully did one speedwell plot beguile
10. My whole heart long; I loved each separate flower,
11. Kneeling, I looked up suddenly—Dear God!
12. There stretched the shining plain for many a mile,
13. The mountains rose with what invincible power!
14. And how the sky was fathomless and broad!
III. THE DAWN

The Dawn,—O silence and wise mystery!
Was it a dream, the murmurous room, the glitter,
The tinkling songs, the dance, and that fair sitter
I talk'd aesthetics to so rapturously?
Sweet Heaven, they silentness and purity,
Thy sister-words of blame, not railings bitter,
With these great quiet leaves, and the light twitter
Of small birds wakening in the greenery,
And one stream stepping quickly on its way
So well it knows the glad work it must do,
Reclalm a wayward heart scarce answering true
To that sweet strain of hours that closes May;
How the pale marge quickens with pulsing new,
O welcome to thy world thou fair, great day!

IV. THE SKYLARK

There drops our lark into his secret nest!
All is felt silence and the broad blue sky;
Come, the incessant rain of melody
Is over; now earth's quietudes invest,
In cool and shadowy limit, that wild breast
Which trembled forth the sudden ecstasy
Till raptures came too swift, and song must die
Since midmost deeps of heaven grew manifest.
My poet of the garden-walk last night
Sang in rich leisure, ceased and sang again,
Of pleasure in green leaves, of odours given
By flowers at dusk, and many a dim delight;
The finer joy was thine keen-edged with pain,
Soarer! alone with thy own heart and heaven.

III. The Dawn entitled “The Dawn— a silence and wish mystery!...” Texas MS; “1865” KSU, UK; 1865 P1914

IV. The Skylark. “1866” KSU, UK; 1866 P1914
V. The Mill-Race

“Only a mill-race,” said they, and went by,
But we were wiser, spoke no word, and stayed;
It was a place to make the heart afraid
With so much beauty, lest the after sigh,
When one had drunk its sweetness utterly,
Should leave the spirit faint; a living shade
From beechen branches o’er the water played
To unweave that spell through which the conquering sky
Subdues the sweet will of each summer stream;
So this ran freshlier through the swaying weeds.
I gazed until the whole was as a dream,
Nor should have waked or wondered had I seen
Some smooth-limbed wood-nymph glance across the green,
Or Naiad lift a head amongst the reeds.

VI. In the Wood

A place where Una might have fallen asleep
Assured of quiet dreams, a place to make
Sad eyes bright with strange tears; a little lake
In the green heart of a wood; the crystal deep
Of heaven so wide if there should chance to stray
Into that stainless field some thin cloud-flake,
When not a breeze the trance of noon dare break,
About the middle it must melt away.
Lillies upon the water in their leaves,
Stirr’d by faint ripples that go curving on
To little reedy coves; a stream that grieves
To the fine grasses and wild flowers around;
And we two in a golden silence bound,
Not a line read of rich Endymion.

V. The Mill-race entitled “A mill-race”; “1876” in ink beside title Texas MS; A naiad is a type of Nymph who presided over wells, streams, and brooks in classical Greek mythology.

VI. In the Wood entitled “In a wood” and dated “Aug 1865” at bottom Texas MS; Endymion is a poem published by John Keats
VII. The Pause of Evening

1 Nightward on dimmest wing in Twilight’s train
2 The grey hours floated smoothly, lingeringly;
3 A solemn wonder was the western sky
4 Rich with the slow forsaking sunset-stain,
5 Barred by long violet cloud; hillside and plain
6 The feet of Night had touched; a wind’s low sigh
7 Told of whole pleasure lapsed,—then rustled by
8 With soft subsidence in the rippling grain.
9 Why in dark dews, unready to depart,
10 Did Evening pause and ponder, nor perceive
11 Star follow star into the central blue?
12 What secret was the burden of her heart?
13 What grave, sweet memory grew she loath to leave?
14 What finer sense, no morrow may renew?

VIII. In July

1 Why do I make no poems? Good my friend
2 Now is there silence through the summer woods,
3 In whose green depths and lawny solitudes
4 The light is dreaming; voicings clear ascend
5 Now from no hollow where glad rivulets wend,
6 But murmurings low of inarticulate moods,
7 Softer than stir of unfledged cushat broods,
8 Breathe, till ‘o’erdrowsed the heavy flower-heads bend.
9 Now sleep the crystal and heart-charmed waves
10 Round white, sunstricken rocks the noontide long,
11 Or ‘mid the coolness of dim lighted caves
12 Sway in a trance of vague deliciousness;
13 And I,—I am too deep in joy’s excess
14 For the imperfect impulse of a song.
IX. In September

1 Spring scarce had greener fields to show than these
2 Of mid September; through the still warm noon
3 The rivulets ripple forth a gladder tune
4 Than ever in the summer; from the trees
5 Dusk-green, and murmuring inward melodies,
6 No leaf drops yet; only our evenings swoon
7 In pallid skies more suddenly, and the moon
8 Finds motionless white mists out on the leas.
9 Dear chance it were in some rough wood-god’s lair
10 A month hence, gazing on the last bright field,
11 To sink o’er-drowsed, and dream that wild-flowers blew
12 Around my head and feet silently there,
13 Till Spring’s glad choir adown the valley pealed,
14 And violets trembled in the morning dew.

X. In the Window

1 A still grey evening: Autumn in the sky,
2 And Autumn on the hills and the sad wold;
3 No congregated towers of pearl and gold
4 In the vaporous West, no fiend limned duskily,
5 No angel whose reared trump must soon be loud,
6 Nor mountains which some pale green lake enfold
7 Nor islands in an ocean glacial-cold;
8 Hardly indeed a noticeable cloud.
9 Yet here I lingered, all my will asleep,
10 Gazing an hour with neither joy nor pain,
11 No noonday trance in midsummer more deep;
12 And wake with a vague yearning in the dim,
13 Blind room, my heart scarce able to restrain
14 The idle tears that tremble to the brim.
XI. An Autumn Morning

O what a morn is this for us who knew
The large, blue, summer mornings, heaven let down
Upon the earth for men to drink, the crown
Of perfect human living, when we grew
Great-hearted like the Gods! Come, we will strew
White ashes on our hair, not strive to drown
In faint hymn to the year’s fulfilled renown
The sterile grief which is the season’s due.
Lightly above the vine-rows of rich hills
Where the brown peasant girls move amid grapes
The shallow glances; let him cry for glee!
But yon pale mist diffused ’twixt paler shapes,—
Once sovereign trees,—my spirit also fills,
And an east-wind comes moaning from the sea.

SEA VOICES

Was it a lullaby the Sea went singing
About my feet, some old-world monotone,
Filled full of secret memories, and bringing
Not hope to sting the heart, but peace alone,
Sleep and the certitude of sleep to be
Wiser henceforth than all philosophy?

Truth! did we seek for truth with eye and brain
Through days so many and wasted with desire?
Listen, the same long gulping voice again:
Tired limbs lie slack as sands are, eyes that tire
Close gently, close forever, twilight grey
Receives you, tenderer than the glaring day.

[He sleeps, and after an interval awakes.]
[stanza break]

XI. An Autumn Morning 6 drown] drown, P1876

XI. An Autumn Morning entitled “October” and undated in Texas MS
Sea Voices dated “May 7 & 8—1872” KSU; UK; May 1872 P1914
Ah terror, ah delight! A sudden cry,
Anguish, or hope, or triumph. Awake, arise,—
The winds awake! Is ocean’s lullaby
This clarion-call? Her kiss, the spray that flies
Salt to the lip and cheek? Her motion light
Of nursing breasts, this swift pursuit and flight?

O wild sea-voices! Victory and defeat,
But ever deathless passion and unrest,
White wings upon the wind and flying feet,
Disdain and wrath, a reared and hissing crest,
The imperious urge, and last, a whole life spent
In bliss of one supreme abandonment.

A Aboard the “Sea-Swallow”

The gloom of the sea-fronting cliffs
Lay on the water, violet-dark,
The pennon drooped, the sail fell in,
And slowly moved our bark.

A golden day; the summer dreamed
In heaven and on the whispering sea,
Within our hearts the summer dreamed;
The hours had ceased to be.

Then rose the girls with bonnets loosed,
And shining tresses lightly blown,
Alice and Adela, and sang
A song of Mendelssohn.

O sweet, and sad, and wildly clear,
Through summer air it sinks and swells,
Wild with a measureless desire,
And sad with all farewells.

Aboard the “Sea-Swallow” dated “1865” KSU, UK; 1865 P1914 12 Jacob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (originally Felix Mendelssohn in the English-speaking world) was a German composer, pianist, organist, and conductor (1809-1847). The poem first appeared as Songs I, in KottabosI (1869-1874). See Uncollected Verses (below), p. 194.
Sea-sighing

1 This is the burden of the Sea,
   Loss, failure, sorrows manifold;
2 Yet something though the voice sound free
   Remains untold.
3
5 Listen! that secret sigh again
   Kept very low, a whole heart’s waste;
6 What means this inwardness of pain?
7 This sob repressed?
8
9 Some ancient sin, some supreme wrong,
   Some huge attempt God brought to nought,
10 All over while the world was young,
   And ne’er forgot?
11
13 Those lips, which open wide and cry,
   Weak as pale flowers or trembling birds,
14 Are proud, and fixed immutably
   Against such words.
15
17 Confession from that burdened soul
   No ghostly counsellor may win;
18 Could such as we receive its whole
   Passion and sin?
19
21 In this high presence priest or king,
   Prophet or singer of the earth,
22 With yon cast sea-weed were a thing
   Of equal worth.
23

In the Mountains

1 Fatigued of heart, and owning how the world
2 Is strong, too strong for will of mine, my steps
3 Through the tall pines I led, to reach that spur
4 Which strikes from off the mountain toward the West.
5 I hoped to lull a fretted heart to sleep,
6 And in the place of definite thought a sense
Possessed me, dim and sweet, of Motherhood,
The breasts of Nature, warmth, and soothing hands,
And tender, inarticulate nursing-words
Slow uttered o’er tired eyes.

But suddenly
Rude waking! Suddenly the rocks, the trees
Stood up in ranged power, rigid, erect,
And all cried out on me “Away with him!
Away! He is not of us, has no part
In ours or us! Traitor, away with him!”
And the birds shrilled it “Treason,” and the flowers
Stared up at me with small, hard, insolent eyes.
But I, who had been weak, was weak no more,
Nor shrank at all, but with deliberate step
Moved on, and with both hands waved off the throng,
And feared them not, nor sent defiance back.
Thus, till the pine-glooms fell away, and goats
Went tinkling and no herd-boy near; glad airs
With sunshine in them moved angelical
Upon the solitary heights; the sky
Held not a cloud from marge to marge; and now
Westward the sun was treading, calm and free.
I lay upon the grass, and how an hour
Went past I know not. When again time was,
The sun had fallen, and congregated clouds,
A vision of great glories, held the West,
And through them, and beyond, the hyaline
Led the charm’d spirit through infinite spaces on.
I think of all the men upon this earth
The sight was mine alone; it for my soul,
My soul for it, until all seeing died.
Where did I live transfigured? through what times
Of heaven’s great year? What sudden need of me
For sacrifice on altar, or for priest,
For soldier at the rampart, cup-bearer
At feasts of God, rapt singer in the joy
Of consonant praise, doom’d rebel for the fires?
—I know not, but somewhere some part I held,
Nor fail’d when summoned.

When the body took
Its guest once more the clouds were massy-grey,
The event was ended; yet a certain thing
Abode with me, which still eludes its name,
Yet lies within my heart like some great word
A mage has taught, and he who heard it once
Cannot pronounce, and never may forget.
But this I dare record, —when all was past,
And once again I turned to seek the vale,
And moved adown the slippery pine-wood path,
In the dimness every pine tree bowed to me
With duteous service, and the rocks lay couched
Like armèd followers round, and one bird sang
The song I chose, and heavy fragrance came
From unseen flowers, and all things were aware
One passed who had been called and consecrate.

"The Top of a Hill Called Clear"
(In sight of the Celestial City)

And all my days led on to this! the days
Of pallid light, of springs no sun would warm,
Of chilling rain autumnal, which decays
High woods while veering south the quick wings swarm,
The days of hot desire, of broken dreaming,
Mechanic toil, poor pride that was but seeming,
And bleeding feet, and sun-smit flowerless ways.

Below me spreads a sea of tranquil light,
No blue cloud thunder-laden, but pure air
Shot through and through with sunshine; from this height
A man might cast himself in joy's despair,
And find unhoped, to bear him lest he fall,
Swift succouring wings, and hands angelical,
And circling of soft eyes, and foreheads bright.

Under me light, and light is o'er my head,
And awful heaven and heaven to left and right;
In all His worlds this spot unvisited
God kept, save by the winging of keen light,
And the dread gaze of stars, and morning's wan
Virginity, for me a living man,
Living, not borne among the enfranchised dead.

"The Top of a Hill Called Clear" 17 His worlds] his worlds P1876, P1877
"The Top of a Hill Called Clear" “May 26 1872” KSU, UK; May 1872 P1914
New life,—not death! No glow the senses cast
Across the spirit, no pleasure shoots o’er me
Its scattering flaw, no words may I hold fast
Here, where God’s breath streams inexhaustibly;
But conquest stern is mine, a will made sane,
Life’s vision wide and calm, a supreme pain,
An absolute joy; and love the first and last.

The Initiation

Under the flaming wings of cherubim
I moved toward that high altar. O, the hour!
And the light waxed intenser, and the dim
Low edges of the hills and the grey sea
Were caught and captur’d by the present Power,
My sureties and my witnesses to be.

Then the light drew me in. Ah, perfect pain!
Ah, infinite moment of accomplishment!
Thou terror of pure joy, with neither wane
Nor waxing, but long silence and sharp air
As womb-forsaking babes breathe. Hush! the event
Let him who wrought Love’s marvelous things declare.

Shall I who fear’d not joy, fear grief at all?
I on whose mouth Life laid his sudden lips
Tremble at Death’s weak kiss, and not recall
That sundering from the flesh, the flight from time,
The judgments stern, the clear apocalypse,
The lightnings, and the Presences sublime.

How came I back to earth? I know not how,
Nor what hands led me, nor what words were said.
Now all things are made mine,—joy, sorrow; now
I know my purpose deep, and can refrain;
I walk among the living not the dead;
My sight is purged; I love and pity men.
Renunciants

Seems not our breathing light?
Sound not our voices free?
Bid to Life's festal bright
No gladder guests there be.

Ah, stranger, lay aside
Cold prudence! I divine
The secret you would hide,
And you conjecture mine.

You too have temperate eyes,
Have put your heart to school,
Are proved. I recognize
A brother of the rule.

I knew it by your lip,
A something when you smiled,
Which meant 'close scholarship,
A master of the guild.'

Well, and how good is life;
Good to be born, have breath,
The calms good and the strife,
Good life, and perfect death.

Come, for the dancers wheel,
Join we the pleasant din
—Comrade, it serves to feel
The sackcloth next the skin.
Speakers to God

First Speaker

Eastward I went and Westward, North and South,
And the wind blew me from deep zone to zone;
Many strong women did I love; my mouth
I gave for kisses, rose, and straight was gone.

I fought with heroes; there was joyous play
Of swords; my cities rose in every land;
Then forth I fared. O God, thou knowest, I lay
Ever within the hollow of thy land.

Second Speaker

I am borne out to thee upon the wave,
And the land lessens; cry nor speech I hear,
Nought but the leaping waters and the brave
Pure winds commingling. O the joy, the fear!

Alone with thee; sky’s rim and ocean’s rim
Touch, overhead the clear immensity
Is merely God; no eyes of seraphim
Gaze in . . . O God, Thou also art the sea!

Third Speaker

Thus it shall be a lifetime,—ne’er to meet;
A trackless land divides us lone and long;
Others, who seek Him, find, run swift to greet
Their Friend, approach the bridegroom’s door with song.

I stand, nor dare affirm I see or hear;
How should I dream, when strict is my employ?
Yet if some time, far hence, thou drawest near
Shall there be any joy like to our joy?

Speakers to God “Ap 25 & 26, 1873” KSU; “April 25.26 1873 UK; April 1873 P1914
In KSU, the speakers are identified parenthetically as follows: First Speaker “(Theist),” Second Speaker “(Pantheist),” Third Speaker “(Agnostic).”
Poesía
(To a Painter)

1. Paint her with robe and girdle laid aside,
2. Without a jewel upon her; you must hide
3. By sleight of artist from the gazer’s view
4. No whit of her fair body; calm and true
5. Her eyes must meet our passion, as aware
6. The world is beautiful, and she being fair
7. A part of it. She needs be no more pure
8. Than a dove is, nor could one well endure
9. More faultlessness than of a sovran rose,
10. Reserved, yet liberal to each breeze that blows.
11. Let her be all revealed, nor therefore less
12. A mystery of unsearchable loveliness;
13. There must be no discoveries to be made,
14. Save as a noonday sky with not a shade
15. Or floating cloud of Summer to the eye
17. Did common raiment hide her could we know
18. How hopeless were the rash attempt to throw
19. Sideways the veil which guards her womanhood?
20. Therefore her sacred vesture must elude
21. All mortal touch, and let her welcome well
22. Each comer, being still unapproachable.
23. Plant firm on Earth her feet, as though her own
24. Its harvests were, and, for she would be known
25. Fearless not fugitive, interpose no bar
26. ’Twixt us and her, Love’s radiant avatar,
27. No more to be possessed than sunsets are.
Musicians

I know the harps whereon the Angels play,
While in God’s listening face they gaze intent,
Are these frail hearts,—yours, mine; and gently they,
Leaning a warm breast toward the instrument,
And preluding among the tremulous wires,
First draw forth dreams of song, unfl edged desires,
Nameless regrets, sweet hopes which will not stay.

But when the passionate sense of heavenly things
Possesses the musician, and his lips
Part glowing, and the shadow of his wings
Grows golden, and fire streams from finger-tips,
And he is mighty, and his heart-throbs thicken,
And quick intolerable pulses quicken,
How his hand lords it in among the strings!

Ah the keen crying of the wires! the pain
Of restless music yearning to out-break
And shed its sweetness utterly, the rain
Of heavenly laughters, threats obscure which shake
The spirit, trampling tumults which dismay,
The fateful pause, the fiat summoning day,
The faultless flower of light which will not wane.

How wrought with you the awful lord of song?
What thirst of God hath he appeased? What bliss
Raised to clear ecstasy? O tender and strong
The eager melodist who leaned o’er this
Live heart of mine, who leans above it now:
The stern pure eyes! the ample, radiant brow!
Pluck boldly, Master, the good strain prolong.
MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

A DAY OF DEFECTION

1 This day among the days will never stand,
2 Carven and clear, a shape of fair delight,
3 With singing lips, and gaze of innocent might,
4 Crown’d queenwise, or the lyre within her hand,
5 And firm feet making conquest of a land
6 Heavy with fruitage; nay, from all men’s sight
7 Drop far, cold sun, and let remorseful Night
8 Cloke the shamed forehead, and the bosom’s brand.
9 Could but the hammer rive, the thunder-stone
10 Flung forth from heaven on some victorious morn
11 Grind it to dust! Slave, must I always see
12 Thy beauty soil’d? Must shining days foregone
13 Admit thee peer, and wondering new-born
14 To-morrow meet thy dull eyes’ infamy?

A Day of Defection  “Aug 24, 1872” KSU
**SONG AND SILENCE**

1. While Sorrow sat beside me many a day,
2. I,—with head turned from her, and yet aware
3. How her eyes’ light was on my brow and hair,
4. The light which bites and blights our gold to grey,—
5. Still sang, and swift winds bore my songs away
6. Full of sweet sounds, as of a lute-player
7. Who sees fresh colours, breathes the ripe soft air,
8. And hears the cuckoo shout in dells of May,
9. Being filled with ease and indolent of heart.
10. So sang I, Sorrow near me: chide me not,
11. O Joy, for silence now! Hereafter wise,
12. Large song may come, life blossoming in art,
13. From this new fate; but leave me, thou long sought,
14. To gaze awhile into those perfect eyes.

**LOVE-TOKENS**

1. I wear around my forehead evermore,
2. The circlet of your praise, pure gold; and how
3. I walk forth crown’d, the approving angels know,
4. And see how I am meeker than before
5. Being thus proud. For roses my full store,
6. Upon a cheek where flowers will scantly blow,
7. Is your lips’ one immortal touch, and lo!
8. All shame deserts my blood to the heart’s core.
9. Dare I display love’s choicest gift—this scar
10. Still sanguine-hued? Here ran your sudden brand
11. Sheer through the starting flesh, and let abroad
12. A traitor’s life; your wrathful eyes afar,
13. Had doom’d him first. Ah, gracious, valiant hand
14. Which drew me bleeding to the feet of God!

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*Song and Silence* entitled “An apology” and dated “1876” in *Texas MS*

*Love Tokens* “Nov 7, 1872” *KSU, UK; Nov. 1872 P1914*
A Dream

I dreamed I went to seek for her whose sight
Is sunshine to my soul; and in my dream
I found her not; then sank the latest beam
Of day in the rich west; upswam the Night
With sliding dews, and still I searched in vain,
Through thickest glooms of garden-alleys quaint,
On moonlit lawns, by glimmering lakes where faint
The ripples brake and died, and brake again.
Then said I, “At God’s inner court of light
I will beg for her;” straightaway toward the same
I went, and lo! upon the altar-stair,
She knelt with face uplifted, and soft hair
Fallen upon shoulders purely gowned in white
And on her parted lips I read my name.

Michelangelesque

Shaping thy life what if the stubborn stuff
Grudge to inform itself through each dull part
With the soul’s high invention, and thy art
Seem a defeated thing, and earth rebuff
Heaven’s splendour, choosing darkness,—leave the rough
Brute-parts unhewn. Toilest thou for the mart
Or for the temple? Does the God see start
Quick beauty from the block, it is enough.
The spirit, foiled elsewhere, presses to the mouth,
Disparts the lips, lives on the lighted brow,
Fills the wide nostrils, flings the imperious chin
Out proudly. Now behold! the lyric youth,
The wrestler stooping in the act to win,
Pythian Apollo with the vengeful bow.

A Dream 13 white] white, P1876, P1877

A Dream “Aug 3 1865” KSU, “Aug 3rd 1875” UK; Aug. 1875 P1914
Michelangelesque “Oct 1 1872” KSU, UK; Oct. 1872 P1914
14 “Pythian Apollo,” the prophetic deity of the Oracle of Delphi.
Life’s Gain

1 “Now having gained Life’s gain, how hold it fast?
2 The harder task! because the world is still
3 The world, and days creep slow, and wear the will,
4 And Custom, gendering in the heart’s blind waste,
5 Brings forth a wingèd mist, which with no haste
6 Upcircling the steep air, and charged with ill,
7 Blots all our shining heights adorable,
8 And leaves slain Faith, slain Hope, slain Love the last.”
9 O shallow lore of life! He who hath won
10 Life’s gain doth hold nought fast, who could hold all,
11 Holden himself of strong, immortal Powers.
12 The stars accept him; for his sake the Sun
13 Hath sworn in heaven an oath memorial;
14 Around his feet stoop the obsequious Hours.

Compensation

1 You shake your head and talk of evil days:
2 My friend, I learn’d ere I had told twelve years
3 That truth of yours,—how irrepressible tears
4 Surprise us, and strength fails, and pride betrays,
5 And sorrows lurk for us in all the ways
6 Of joyous living. But now to front my fears
7 I set a counter-truth which comes and cheers
8 Our after-life, when, temperate, the heart weighs
9 Evil with good. Do never smiles surprise
10 Sad lips? Did the glad violets blow last spring
11 In no new haunts? Or are the heavens not fair
12 After drench’d days of June, when all the air
13 Grows fragrant, and the rival thrushes sing,
14 Until stars gather into twilight skies?

Life’s Gain 4 Custom[,] custom, DBIV (1906) 13 Hath] Has P1876, DBIV (1906)
Compensation 4 betrays[,] betrays. P1876

Life’s Gain “Aug 16 1872” KSU, UK; Aug. 1872 P1914
Compensation undated in Texas MS
To a Child Dead as Soon as Born

A little wrath was on thy forehead, Boy,
Being thus defeated; the resolvèd will
Which death could not subdue, was threatening still
From lip and brow. I know that it was joy
No casual misadventure might destroy
To have lived, and fought and died. Therefore I kill
The pang for thee, unknown; nor count it ill
That thou hast entered swiftly on employ
Where Life would plant a warder keen and pure.
I thought to see a little piteous clay
The grave had need of, pale from light obscure
Of embryo dreams; thy face was as the day
Smit on by storm. Palms for my child, and bay!
Thus far thou hast done well, true son: endure.

Brother Death

When thou would' st have me go with thee, O Death,
Over the utmost verge, to the dim place,
Practise upon me with no amorous grace
Of fawning lips, and words of delicate breath,
And curious music thy lute uttereth;
Nor think for me there must be sought-out ways
Of cloud and terror; have we many days
Sojourned together, and this is thy faith?
Nay, be there plainness 'twixt us; come to me
Even as thou art, O brother of my soul;
Hold thy hand out and I will place mine there;
I trust thy mouth's inscrutable irony,
And dare to lay my forehead where the whole
Shadow lies deep of thy purpureal hair.

To a Child Dead as Soon as Born “written March 8. 1873” KSU The specific date may indicate that Dowden lost a son around this date.

Brother Death entitled “When thou wouldn't have me go with thee, O Death,...” and dated “1876” at the end of the poem but “1876” at the top in Texas MS.
The Mage

1 When I shall sing my songs the world will hear,
2 —Which hears not these,—I shall be white with age,
3 My beard on breast great as befits a mage
4 So skilled; but song is young, and in no drear
5 Tome-crammed, lamp-litten chamber shall mine fear
6 To pine ascetic. Where the woods are deep,
7 Thick leaves for arras, in a noonday sleep
8 Of breeze and bloom, gaze, but my art revere!
9 There I will sit, and score rare wisardry
10 In characters vermilion, azure, gold,
11 With bird, starred flower, and peering dragon-fly
12 Limned in the lines; and secrets shall be told
13 Of greatest Pan, and lives of wood-nymphs shy,
14 Blabbed by my goat-foot servitor overbold.

Wise Passiveness

1 Think you I choose or that or this to sing?
2 I lie as patient as yon wealthy stream
3 Dreaming among green fields its summer dream,
4 Which takes whate’er the gracious hours will bring
5 Into its quiet bosom; not a thing
6 Too common, since perhaps you see it there
7 Who else had never seen it, though as fair
8 As on the world’s first morn; a fluttering
9 Of idle butterflies; or the deft seeds
10 Blown from a thistle-head; a silver dove
11 As faultlessly; or the large, yearning eyes
12 Of pale Narcissus; or beside the reeds
13 A shepherd seeking lilies for his love,
14 And evermore the all-encircling skies.

The Mage  5  A “tome” is a book, esp. a very heavy, large, or learned book.
10 “Vermilion” refers to a brilliant scarlet red color.
12 To limn is to portray in words or describe.

The Mage  Entitled “The Majician” [sic] and dated 1876 in pencil beside title in Texas MS
Wise Passiveness  “Sept 26. 1865” KSU; “1865” UK; 1865 P1914
The Singer’s Plea

1 Why do I sing? I know not why, my friend;
2 The ancient rivers, rivers of renown,
3 A royal largess to the sea roll down,
4 And on those liberal highways nations send
5 Their tributes to the world,—stored corn and wine,
6 Gold-dust, the wealth of pearls, and orient spar,
7 And myrrh, and ivory, and cinnabar,
8 And dyes to make a presence-chamber shine.
9 But in the woodlands, where the wild-flowers are,
10 The rivulets, they must have their innocent will
11 Who all the summer hours are singing still,
12 The birds care for them, and sometimes a star,
13 And should a tired child rest beside the stream
14 Sweet memories would slide into his dream.

The Trespasser

1 Trespassers will be prosecuted,—so
2 Announced the inhospitable notice-board;
3 But silver-clear as any lady’s word
4 Come in, in, in, come in, now rich and low,
5 Now with tumultuous palpitating flow,
6 I swear by ring of Canace I heard.
7 “Sure,” said I, “this is no brown-breasted bird,
8 But some fair princess, lost an age ago
9 Through stepdame’s cursed spell, till the saints brought her
10 Who but myself, the knight foredoomed of grace.”
11 Alas! poor knight, in all that cockney place
12 You found no magic, save one radiant sight,
13 The huge, obstreperous house-keeper’s grand-daughter,
14 A child with eyes of pure ethereal light.

The Singer’s Plea  Entitled “Why do I sing? I do not know why my friend;—” and undated in Texas MS

The Trespasser  Entitled “Disenchantment” and dated “1876” beside title but “Sept 1865” at bottom in ink in Texas MS  “Sept 13. 1865” KSU, “1865” UK
RITUALISM

This is high ritual and a holy day;
I think from Palestrina the wind chooses
That movement in the firs; one sits and muses
In hushed heart-vacancy made meek to pray;
Listen! the birds are choristers with gay
Clear voices infantine, and with good will
Each acolyte flower has swung his thurible,
Censing to left and right these aisles of May.
For congregation, see! real sheep most clean,
And I—what am I, worshipper or priest?
At least all these I dare absolve from sin,
Ay, dare ascend to where the splendours shine
Of yon steep mountain-altar, and the feast
Is holy, God Himself being bread and wine.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

I, who lie warming here by your good fire,
Was once Prometheus and elsewhere have lain;
Ah, still in dreams they come,—the sudden chain,
The swooping birds, the silence, the desire
Of pitying, powerless eyes, the night, and higher
The keen stars; (if you please I fill again
The bowl, Silenus)—; yet ’twas common pain
Their beaks’ mad rooting; O, but they would tire,
And one go circling o’er the misty vast
On great, free wings, and one sit, head out-bent,
Poised for the plunge; then ’twas I crushed the cry
“Zeus, Zeus, I kiss your feet, and learn at last
The baseness of this crude self-government
Matched with glad impulse and blind liberty.”

Ritualism 12 Ay] Aye P1876
14 Himself] himself P1876
Prometheus Unbound 12 Zeus, Zeus,] Zeus, Zeus P1876 and P1877

Ritualism 2 “Palestrina” is an ancient city in Italy, about 35 km east of Rome.
7 An “acolyte” is any attendant, assistant, or follower.
Prometheus Unbound Entitled “Prometheus” and undated in Texas MS
King Mob

1 Dismiss, O sweet King Mob, your foot-lickers!
2 When you held court last night I too was there
3 To listen, and in truth well nigh despair
4 O’ercame me when I saw your greedy ears
5 Drink such gross poison. I could weep hot tears
6 To think how three drugged words avail to keep
7 A waking people still on the edge of sleep,
8 And lose the world a right good score of years.
9 I love you too, big Anarch, lately born,
10 Half beast, yet with a stupid heart of man,
11 And since I love, would God that I could warn
12 Work out the beast as shortly as you can,
13 Till which time oath of mine shall ne’er be sworn,
14 Nor knee be bent to you, King Caliban.

The Modern Elijah

1 What went ye forth to see? a shaken reed?—
2 Ye throngers of the Parthenon last night.
3 Prophet, yea more than prophet, we agreed;
4 No John a’ Desert with the girdle tight,
5 And locusts and wild honey for his need,
6 Before the dreadful day appears in sight
7 Urging one word to make the conscience bleed,
8 But an obese John Smith, “a shining light”
9 (Our chairman felt), “an honour to his creed.”
10 O by the gas, when buns and tea had wrought
11 Upon our hearts, how grew the Future bright,—
12 The Press, the Institutes, Advance of Thought,
13 And People’s Books, till every mother’s son
14 Can prove there is a God, or there is none.

King Mob “1876” in ink beside title Texas MS “Sept. 1865” KSU, “1865” UK; 1865 P1914
The Modern Elijah Entitled “The Forerunner” and dated “Aug 28 1865.” at bottom in Texas MS
David and Michal
(2 Samuel vi.16)

1 But then you don’t mean really what you say—
2 To hear this from the sweetest little lips,
3 O’er which each pretty word daintily trips
4 Like small birds hopping down a garden way,
5 When I had given my soul full scope to play
6 For once before her in the Orphic style
7 Caught from three several volumes of Carlyle,
8 And undivulged before this very day!
9 O young men of our earnest school confess
10 How it is deeply, darkly tragical
11 To find the feminine souls we would adore
12 So full of sense, so versed in worldly lore,
13 So deaf to the Eternal Silences,
14 So unbelieving, so conventional.

1  But then … say—] “But then … say”— Kottabosl (1869-74)
4  way] way;  Kottabosl (1869-74)
8  this] that  Kottabosl (1869-74)
9  school] school,  Kottabosl (1869-74)
10  is deeply, darkly] indeed is very  Kottabosl (1869-74)
WINDLE-STRAWs

I

1. Under grey clouds some birds will dare to sing,
2. No wild exultant chants, but soft and low;
3. Under grey clouds the young leaves seek the spring,
4. And lurking violets blow.

5. And waves make idle music on the strand,
6. And inland streams have lucky words to say,
7. And children's voices sound across the land
8. Although the clouds be grey.

II

1. Only maidenhood and youth,
2. Only eyes that are most fair,
3. And the pureness of a mouth,
4. And the grace of golden hair,
5. Yet beside her we grow wise,
6. And we breathe a finer air.

7. Words low-utter'd, simple-sweet,—
8. Yet, nor songs of morning birds,
9. Nor soft whisperings of the wheat
10. More than such clear-hearted words
11. Make us wait, and love, and listen,
12. Stir more mellow heart accord.

13. Only maiden-motions light,
14. Only smiles that sweetly go,
15. Girlish laughter pure and bright,
16. And a footfall like the snow,
17. What in these should make us wise?
18. What should bid the blossom blow?

[stanza break]
Child! on thee God's angels wait,
'Tis their robes that wave and part,
Make this summer air elate,
Fresh and fragrant, and thou art
But a simple child indeed,
One dare cherish to the heart.

III

Were life to last for ever, love,
We might go hand in hand,
And pause and pull the flowers that blow
In all the idle land,
And we might lie in sunny fields
And while the hours away
With fallings-out and fallings-in
For half a summer day.

But since we two must sever, love,
Since some dim hour we part,
I have no time to give thee much
But quickly take my heart,
"For ever thine," and "thine my love,"—
O Death may come apace,
What more of love could life bestow,
Dearest, than this embrace.

IV

Now drops in the abyss a day of life:
I count my twelve hours' gain;—
Tired senses? vain desires? a baffled strife,
Vexed heart and beating brain?

Ten pages traversed by a languid eye?
—Nay, but one moment's space
I gazed into the soul of the blue sky;
Rare day! O day of grace!
V

1 She kissed me on the forehead,
2    She spoke not any word,
3 The silence flowed between us,
4    And I nor spoke nor stirred.

5 So helpless for my sake it was,
6    So full of ruth, so sweet,
7 My whole heart rose and blessed her,
8    —Then died before her feet.

VI

1 Nay, more! yet more, for my lips are fain;
2    No cups for a babe; I ask the whole
3 Deep draught that a God could hardly drain,
4    —Wine of your soul.

5 Pour! for the goblet is great I bring,
6    Not worthless, rough with youths at strife,
7 And men that toil and women that sing,
8    —It is all my life.

VII

1 Look forward with those steadfast eyes
2    O Pilot of our star!
3 It sweeps through rains and driving snows,
4    Strong Angel, gaze afar!

5 Seest thou a zone of golden air?
6    Hearest thou the March-winds ring?
7 Or is thy heart prophetic yet
8    With stirrings of the Spring?
VIII

9 Words for my song like sighing of dim seas,
10 Words with no thought in them,—a piping reed,
11 An infant’s cry, a moan low-uttered,—these
12 Are all the words I need.
13 Others have song for broad-winged winds that pass,
14 For stars and sun, for standing men around;
15 I put my mouth low down into the grass,
16 And whisper to the ground.
Part 2—from Miscellaneous Poems of Later Dates

(based on the 1914 Dent edition)

Published sources attributed in notes and collations—

Hibernia (June 1882)   Hibernia (Dublin). June 1882 (the second of four issues in all).
AT THE OAR

1. I dare not lift a glance to you, yet stay
2. Ye Gracious Ones, still save me, hovering near;
3. If music live upon mine inward ear,
4. I know ye lean bright brow to brow, and say
5. Your secret things; if rippling breezes play
6. Cool on my cheeks, it is those robes ye wear
7. That wave, and shadowy fragrance of your hair
8. Drifted, the fierce noon fervour to allay,
9. Fierce fervour, ceaseless stroke, small speed, and I
10. Find grim contentment in the servile mood;
11. But should I gaze in yon untrammeled sky
12. Once, or behold your dewy eyes, my blood
13. Would madden, and I should fling with one free cry

THE DIVINING ROD

1. Here some time flowed my springs and sent a cry
2. Of joy before them up the shining air,
3. While morn was new, and heaven all blue and bare;
4. Here dipped the swallow to a tenderer sky,
5. And o’er my flowers lean’d some pure mystery
6. Of liquid eyes and golden-glimmering hair;
7. For which now, drouth and death, a bright despair,
8. Shardes, choking slag, the world’s dust small and dry.
9. Yet turn not hence thy faithful foot, O thou,
10. Diviner of my buried life; pace round,
11. Poising the hazel-wand; believe and wait,
12. Listen and lean; ah, listen! even now
13. Stirrings and mumurings of the underground
14. Prelude the flash and outbreak of my fate.

SALOME

(By Henri Regnault)

1. Fair sword of doom, and bright with martyr blood,
2. Thee Regnault saw not as mine eyes have seen;

Salome  The title and subtitle allude to a painting of 1870 (oil on canvas) by Henri Regnault (French, 1843-1871).
No Judith of the Faubourg, mænad-queen,
Pale on her tumbrel-throne, when the live flood
Foams through revolted Paris, unwithstood,
Is of thy kin. Blossom and bud between,
Clear-brow’d Salome, with her silk head’s sheen,
Lips where a linnet might have pecked for food,
Pure curves of neck, and dimpling hand aloft,
Moved like a wave at sunrise. Herod said –
“A boon for maiden freshness! Ask of me
What toy may please, though half my Galilee;”
And with beseeching eyes, and bird-speech soft,
She fluted: “Give me here John Baptist’s head.”

Watershed

Now on life’s crest we breathe the temperate air;
Turn either way; the parted paths o’erlook;
Dear, we shall never bid the Sphinx despair,
Nor read in Sibyl’s book.

The blue bends o’er us; good are Night and Day;
Some blissful influence from the starry Seven
Thrilled us ere youth took wing; wherefore essay
The vain assault on heaven?

And what great Word Life’s singing lips pronounce,
And what intends the sealing kiss of Death,
It skills us not; yet we accept, renounce,
And draw this tranquil breath.

Enough, one thing we know, haply anon
All truths; yet no truths better or nore clear
Than that your hand holds my hand; wherefore on!
The downward pathway, Dear!

Watershed 2 way;] way—PPNC (1891)
3 Dear.;] Dear! PPNC (1891)
5 Night and Day;] night and day; PPNC (1891)
6 starry] Starry PPNC (1891)
7 wherefore essay] why now essay PPNC (1891)
8 heaven?] Heaven? PPNC (1891)
9 Word] word PPNC (1891)
10 Death,] Death PPNC (1891)
13 know,] know; PPNC (1891)
14 truths; . . . truths] truths, . . . truth PPNC (1891)
15 wherefore] therefore, PPNC (1891)
The Guest

1 Rude is the dwelling, low the door,
2 No chamber this where men may feast,
3 I strew clean rushes on the floor,
4 Set wide my window to the East.

5 I can but set my little room
6 In order, then gaze forth and wait;
7 I know not if the Guest will come,
8 Who holds aloft his starry state.

Moriturus

1 Lord, when my hour to part is come,
2 And all the powers of being sink,
3 When eyes are filmed, and lips are dumb,
4 And scarce I hang upon the brink.

5 Grant me but this – in that strange light
6 Or blind amid confused alarms,
7 One moment’s strength to stand upright
8 And cast myself into Thy arms.

Alone

1 This is the shore of God’s lone love, which stirs
2 And heaves to some majestic tidal law;
3 And bright the illimitable horizons’ awe;
4 God’s love; yet all my soul cries out for hers.

Fame

1 My arches crumble; that bright dome I flung
2 Heavenward in pride decays; yet all unmoved
3 One column soars, and, graven in sacred tongue,
4 Endure the victor words – “This man was loved.”
Where wert Thou?

Where wert Thou, Master, 'mid that rain of tears,
When grey the waste before me stretched and wide,
And when with boundless silence ached mine ears?
"Child, I was at thy side."

Where wert Thou when I trod the obscure wood,
And one lone cry of sorrow was the wind,
And drop by heavy drop failed my heart's blood?
"Before thee and behind."

Where wert Thou when I fell and lay alone
Faithless and hopeless, yet through one dear smart
Not loveless quite, making my empty moan?
"Son, I was in thy heart."

A Wish

Could I roll off two heavy years
That lie on me like lead;
And see you past their cloudy tears,
Nor dream that you are dead.

I would not touch your lips, your hair,
Your breast, that once were mine;
Ah! not for me in Faith's despair
Love's sacramental wine.

Find you I must for only this
In some new earth or heaven,
To bare my sorry heart, and kiss
Your feet and be forgiven.
The Gift

“Now I draw near: alone, apart
I stood, nor deemed I should require
Such access, till my musing heart
Suddenly kindled to desire.

No farther from Thee than Thy feet!
No less a sight than all Thy face!
Nay, touch me where the heart doth beat,
Breathe where the throbbing brain hath place.

Yield me the best, the unnamed good,
The gift which most shall prove me near,
Thy wine for drink, Thy fruit for food,
Thy tokens of the nail, the spear!”

Such cry was mine: I lifted up
My face from treacherous speech to cease,
Daring to take the bitter cup,
But ah! Thy perfect gift was peace.

Quiet deliverance from all need,
A little space of boundless rest,
To live within the Light indeed
To lean upon the Master’s breast.
Recovery

1 I joy to know I shall rejoice again
2 Borne upward on the good tide of the world,
3 Shall mark the cowslip tossed, the fern uncurled
4 And hear the enraptured lark high o’er my pain,
5 And o’er green graves; and I shall love the wane
6 Of sea-charm’d sunsets with all winds upfurl’d,
7 And that great gale adown whose stream are whirl’d,
8 Pale autumn dreams, dead hopes, and broodings vain.
9 Nor do I fear that I shall faintlier bless
10 The joy of youth and maid, or the gold hair
11 Of a wild-hearted child; then, none the less,
12 Instant within my shrine, no man aware,
13 Feed on a living sorrow’s sacredness,
14 And lean my forehead on this altar-stair.

If it Might Be

1 If it might be, I would not have my leaves
2 Drop in autumnal stillness one by one,
3 Like these pale fluttering waifs that heap sad sheaves
4 Through mere inertia trembling, tottering down.

5 Better one roaring day, one wrestling night,
6 The dark musician’s fiercer harmony,
7 And then abandoned bareness, or the light
8 Of strange discovered skies, if it might be.

Winter Noontide

1 I go forth now, but not to fill my lap
2 With violets and white sorrel of the wood;
3 This is a winter noon; and I may hap
4 Upon a few dry sticks, and fire is good.

5 A quickening shrewdness edges the fore wind;
6 Some things stand clear in this dismantled hour
7 Which deep-leaved June had hidden; earth is kind,
8 The heaven is wide, and fire shall be my flower.
The Pool

A wood obscure in this man’s haunt of love,
And midmost in the wood where leaves fall sere,
A pool unplumbed; no winds these waters move,
Gathered as in a vase from year to year.

And he has thought that he himself lies drowned,
Wan-faced where the pale water glimmereth,
And that the voiceless man who paces around
The brink, nor sheds a tear now, is his wraith.

The Desire to Give

They who would comfort guess not the main grief—
Not that her hand is never on my hair,
Her lips upon my brow; the time is brief
At longest, and I grow inured to bear.

All that was ever mine I have and hold;
But that I cannot give by day or night
My poor gift which was dear to her of old,
And poorly given—that loss is infinite.

A Beech-Tree in Winter

Now in the frozen gloom I trace thy girth,
Broad beech, that with lit leaves upon a day
When heaven was wide and down the meadow May
Moved bride-like, touched my forehead in sweet mirth,
And blissful secrets told of the deep Earth,
Low in mine ear; wherefore this eve I lay
My hand thus close till stirrings faint bewray
Thy piteous secrets of the days of dearth;
Silence! yet to my heart from thine has passed
Divine contentment; it is well with thee;
Still let the stars slide o’er thee whispering fate,
The might be in thee of the shouldering blast,
Still let fire-fingered snow thy tiremaid be,
Still bearing springtime in thy bosom wait.
JUDGMENT

1 I stand for judgment; vain the will
  To judge myself, O Lord!
2 I cannot sunder good from ill
  With a dividing sword.
3 How should I know myself aright,
  Who would by Thee be known?
4 Let me stand naked in Thy sight;
  Thy doom shall be my own.
5 Slay in me that which would be slain!
  Thy justice be my grace!
6 If aught survive the joy, the pain,
  Still must it seek Thy face.

Dürer's "Melencolia"

1 The bow of promise, the lost flaring star,
2 Terror and hope are in mid-heaven; but She,
3 The mighty-wing'd crown'd Lady Melancholy,
4 Heeds not. O to what vision'd goal afar
5 Does her thought bear those steadfast eyes which are
6 A torch in darkness? There nor shore nor sea,
7 Nor ebbing Time vexes Eternity,
8 Where that lone thought outsoars the mortal bar.
9 Tools of the brain—the globe, the cube—no more
10 She deals with; in her hand the compass stays;
11 Nor those, industrious genius, of her lore
12 Student and scribe, thou gravest of the fays,
13 Expect this secret to enlarge thy store;
14 She moves through incommunicable ways.

Dürer's "Melencolia" is an allegorical engraving in Albrecht Dürer's Meisterstiche (1513).
Millet’s “The Sower”

Son of the Earth, brave flinger of the seed,
Strider of furrows, copesmate of the morn,
Which, stirr’d with quickening now of day unborn,
Approves the mystery of thy fruitful deed;
Thou, young in hope and old as man’s first need,
Through all the hours that laugh, the hours that mourn,
Hold’st to one strenuous faith, by time unworn,
Sure of the miracle—that the clod will breed.
Dark is this upland, pallid still the sky,
And man, rude bondslave of the glebe, goes forth
To labour; serf, yet genius of the soil,
Great his abettors—a confederacy
Of mightiest Powers, old laws of heaven and earth,
Foresight and Faith, and ever-during Toil.

At Mullion (Cornwall)
Sunday

Where the blue dome is infinite,
And choral voices of the sea
Chaunt the high lauds, or meek, as now,
Intone their ancient litany;

Where through his ritual pomp still moves
The Sun in robe pontifical,
Whose only creed is catholic light,
Whose benediction is for all;

I enter with glad face uplift,
Asperged on brow and brain and heart;
I am confessed, absolved, illumed,
Receive my blessing and depart.

Millet’s “The Sower” c. 1850 oil on canvas, possibly unfinished of peasant facing away from a hill and sunset.

At Mullion (Cornwall)  Mullion is a small fishing harbor in Cornwall, England, on the west coast of the Lizard Peninsula.
6  “Pontifical” possibly refers to episcopal attire.
10  “Asperged” is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as a verb, meaning to sprinkle or besprinkle.
The Winnower to the Winds  
(From Joachim de Bellay)

1. To yon light troop, who fly  
2. On wing that hurries by  
3. The wide world over,  
4. And with soft sibilance  
5. Bid every shadow dance  
6. Of the glad cover.

7. These violets I consign  
8. Lilies and sops-in-wine  
9. Roses, all yours,  
10. These roses vermeil-tinctured  
11. Their graces new-uncinctured  
12. And gilly-flowers.

13. So with your gentle breath  
14. Blow on the plain beneath  
15. Through my grange blow,  
16. What time I swink and strain,  
17. Winnowing my golden grain  
18. In noontide’s glow.

Emerson

1. Memnon the Yankee! bare to every star,  
2. But silent till one vibrant shaft of light  
3. Strikes; then a voice thrilling, oracular,  
4. And clear harmonies through the infinite.

The Winnower to the Winds (From Joachim de Bellay), subtitled after the French poet and critic, c. 1525–1560. His original poem was the French D’un vanneur de blé aux vents.  
10 “Vermeil” is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as a bright scarlet or red color.  
11 “Cincture” is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as to be girdled. “Uncinctured” can be interpreted as a freedom from this condition.

Emerson “Memnon” in Greek mythology is a great warrior and Ethiopian king. He was the son of Tithonus and Eos.
Yellow text

The South Carolina Review

Sent to an American Shakespeare Society

‘Twixt us through gleam and gloom in glorious play
League-long the leonine billows ramp and roll,
The same maturing sun illumes our day,
Ripens our blood—the sun of Shakespeare’s soul.

Nocturne

Ere sleep upheaves me on one glassy billow
To drift me down the deep,
I lie with easeful head upon my pillow,
Letting the minutes creep.

Until Time’s pulse is stayed and all earth’s riot
Fades in a limit white,
While over me curve fragrant wings of quiet
Tender and great as Night.

Then I gaze up. Divine, descending slumber
Thine access yet forbear,
Though vow I proffer none, nor blessings number,
Nor breathe a wordless prayer.

A Presence is within me and above me,
That takes me for its own,
A Motherhood, a bosom prompt to love me,
I know it and am known.

So softly I roll back the Spirit’s portals;
O be the entrance wide!
Silence and light from home of my Immortals
Flow in, a tranquil tide.

Calming, assuaging, cleansing, freshening, freeing,
It floods each inlet deep;
Now pass thou wave of Light, ebb thought and being!
Come thou dark wave of sleep!

Sent to an American Shakespeare Society It is presumed that Dowden is referring to the Shakespeare Association of America, founded in 1923.

Nocturne 8 “Tender and great as Night” potentially an allusion to John Keats’s “Ode to the Nightingale”: “tender is the night[.]”
The Whirligig

Glee at the cottage-doors to-day!
Small hearts with joy are big;
The merchant chanced to come our way
Who vends the whirligig.

You know the marvel-stick of deal,
And, where the top should taper,
Pinned lightly, the ecstatic wheel,
Flaunting its purple paper.

Raptures a halfpenny each; and see
The liberal-bosomed mother
Faltering; they tug at her skirts the three,
(Ah, soon will come another!)

Away they start! Swift, swifter fly
The buzzing, whirring chips,
O eyes grown great! O gleesome cry
From daubed, cherubic lips!

I as companion of my walk
Had chosen a soul heroic
(So much I love superior talk)
And Emperor and a Stoic.

The cowslip tossed; upsoared the lark;
Our choice was to recline us
Against an elm-bale, I and Mark
Aurelius Antoninus.

Pale victory lightened on his brow,
Grieved conquest wrung from pain;
Of Nature’s course he spake, and how
Man should sustain, abstain.

Physician of the soul, he spake
Of simples that allay
The blood, and how the nerves that ache
Freeze under ethic spray.

[stanza break]

I turned; perhaps his touch of pride
Moved me, a garb he wore;
I saw those children eager-eyed,
And Rome’s pale Emperor.

“You miss,” I said, “born Nature’s rule,
Her statutes unrepealed,
You would remove us from the school,
And from the playing-field.

And if our griefs be in vain, our joys
Vainer, all’s in the plan;
For what are we but gamesome boys?
Through these we grow to man.

I to my hornbook now give heed,
Now hear my playmates call,
Will ‘chase the rolling circles speed,
And urge the flying ball.’

Joys, pains, hopes, fears,—a mingled heap,
Grant me, nor Prince nor prig!
I want, sad Emperor, rosy sleep,
Leave me my whirligig.”

In haste I spoke; such gutsy talk
Oft wrongs these lips of mine;
Under grey clouds some day I’ll walk
Again with Antonine.

Paradise Lost and Found

Eve, to tell the truth, was not deceived;
The snake’s word seemed to tally
With something she herself conceived,
Sick of her happy valley.

The place amused her for a bit,
(Some think ‘twas half a day)
Then came, alas! a desperate fit
Of neurasthenia.

[stanza break]

The Whirligig 47-48, “chase the rolling circles speed, / And urge the flying ball” are lines quoted from Thomas Gray’s “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College.”
9 She tired of lions and grand,
10 She tired of thornless roses,
11 She felt she could no longer stand
12 Her Adam’s courtly glozes.

13 His “graceful consort,” “spouse adored,”
14 His amorous-pious lectures;
15 She found herself supremely bored,
16 If one may risk conjectures.

17 “Would he but scold for once!” sighed she,
18 “De haut en bas caressings,
19 Qualified by astronomy,
20 Prove scarce unmingled blessings.”

21 She strolled; fine gentlemen in wings
22 Would deftly light and stop her;
23 She looked demure; half-missed her “things,”
24 Half feared ’twas not quite proper.

25 They asked for Adam, always him,
26 Each affable Archangel,
27 Nor heeded charms of neck or limb,
28 Big with their stale evangel.

29 They dined; her cookery instinct stirred;
30 A dinner grew a dream,
31 Not berries cold, eternal curd,
32 And everlasting cream.

33 Boon fruit was hers, but tame in sooth;
34 One thought her soul would grapple—
35 To get her little ivory tooth
36 Deep in some wicked apple.

37 So, when that sinuous cavalier
38 Spired near the tree of evil,
39 The woman hasted to draw near;
40 Such luck!—the genuine devil!

41 And Satan, who to man had lied,
42 Man ever prone to palter,
43 The franker course with woman tried,
44 Assured she would not falter.

[stanza break]
He spoke of freedom and its pains,
Of passion and its sorrow,
Of sacrifice, and nobler gains
Wrung from a dark to-morrow.

He did not shirk the names of death,
Worn heart, a night of tears—
If here the woman caught her breath,
She dared to face her fears.

Perhaps he touched on pretty needs,
Named frill, flounce, furbelow,
Perhaps referred to sable weeds,
And dignity in woe.

Glowed like two rose-leaves both ear-lobes,
White grew her lips and set,
The sly snake picturing small white robes,
A roseate bassinet.

He smiled; then squarely told the curse,
Birth-pang, a lord and master;
She hung her head—"It might be worse,
It seems no huge disaster."

She mused—"A sin's a sin at most;
Life's joy outweighs my sentence;
What of my man, who now can boast
A virtue so portentous?"

Best for him too! Sweat, workman's groan
And death which makes us even;
I want a sinner of my own,
Who finds my breast his heaven."

Our General Mother, which is true
This tale, or that old story,
Tradition's fable convenue
Fashioned for Jahveh's glory?
After Metastasio

If seeking me she ask “What hap
Befell him? Whither is he fled,
My friend, my poor unhappy friend?”
Then softly answer “He is dead.”

Yet no! May never pang so keen
Be hers, and I the giver! Say,
If word be spoken, this alone,
“Weeping for you he went his way.”

After Metastasio is written in imitation of Pietro Antonio Domenico Trapassi (pseud. Metastasio), 1698-1782. Metastasio was an Italian librettist and poet much admired by Percy and Mary Shelley. His work was translated by Robert Southey and William Wordsworth and influenced Mary Russell Mitford’s “Christina, the Maid of the South Seas. The poem by Dowden seems an imitation of Metastasio rather than a translation. Metastasio is regarded as the most significant writer of the opera seria libretti. Dowden’s acquaintance with his work undoubtedly follows from his interest in and study of the English Romantics just named as well as the Renaissance period generally.
Here let the bliss of summer and her night
Be on my heart as wide and pure as heaven;
Now while o'er earth the tide of young delight
Brims to the full, calm'd by the wizard Seven,
And their high mistress, yon enchanted Moon;
The air is faint, yet fresh as primrose buds,
And dim with weft of honey-colour'd beams,
A bride-robe for the new espousèd June,
Who lies white-limbed among her flowers, nor dreams,
Such a divine content her being floods.

Awake, awake! The silence hath a voice;
Not thine, thou heart of fire, palpitating
Until all griefs change countenance and rejoice,
And all joys ache o'er-ripe since thou dost sing,
Not thine this voice of the dry meadow-lands,
Harsh iteration! note untuneable!
Which shears the breathing quiet with a blade
Of ragged edge! Say, wilt thou ne'er be still
Crier in June's high progress, whose commands
Upon no heedless drowzed heart are laid?

A corn crake is a brown, short-billed bird of the rail family, often found in European grain fields. In PPNC (1891), the seventh and tenth lines of each stanza are indented an extra two spaces.

The variant "spilth" in the 1882 printing of the poem refers to a spilling, especially anything spilled profusely.
III

21 Nay, cease not till thy breast disquieted
22 Hath won a term of ease; the dewy grass
23 Trackless at morn betrays not thy swift tread,
24 And through smooth-closing air thy call-notes pass,
25 To faint on yon soft-bosom’d pastoral steep
26 Thee bird the Night accepts; and I, through thee,
27 Reach to embalmèd hearts of summers dead,
28 Feel round my feet old, inland meadows deep,
29 And bow o’er flowers that not a leaf have shed,
30 Nor once have heard moan of an alien sea.

IV

31 Even while I muse thy halting-place doth shift,
32 Now nearer, now more distant—I have seen
33 When April, through her shining hair adrift,
34 Gleams a farewell, and elms are fledged with green,
35 The voiceful, wandering envoy of the Spring;
36 Thee, never; though the mower’s scythe hath dashed
37 Thy nest aside, but thou hast sped askant,
38 Viewless; then last we lose thee, and thy wing
39 Brushes Nilotic maize and thou dost chant
40 Haply all night to stony ears of Pasht.

22 grass] grass, PPNC (1891)
23 morn] morn, PPNC (1891)
24 pass,] pass Hibernia (June 1882), PPNC (1891)
25 steep] steep; Hibernia (June 1882) steep. PPNC (1891)
26 Thee bird the] Thee, bird, thee PPNC (1891) . . . I, through thee.] I through thee Hibernia (June 1882)
28 old,] old Hibernia (June 1882), PPNC (1891)
31 halting-place] halting place Hibernia (June 1882), PPNC (1891)
32 distant—] distant; Hibernia (June 1882) More distant now, now nearer: I have seen, PPNC (1891)
33 April, through . . . adrift,) April through . . . adrift Hibernia (June 1882) April through . . . a-drift PPNC (1891)
34 farewell, . . . fledged] farewell . . . fledg’d PPNC (1891)
35 voiceful,] voiceful PPNC (1891)
37 askant,] askant Hibernia (June 1882), PPNC (1891)
38 then last we] then, last, we Hibernia (June 1882), PPNC (1891)
39 maize and . . . chant] maize, and . . . chant Hibernia (June 1882), PPNC (1891)

39 “Nilotic” means of the Nile or Nile Valley.
40 “Pasht” is the name of the Egyptian cat-headed goddess, the Moon, also called Sekhet. Statues of Pasht are plentiful in the British Museum, London. She is the wife (or female aspect) of Ptah, the creative principle, or Egyptian Demiurgus. The reference seems to give evidence of Dowden’s familiarity with the deity as a figure in Theosophical lore, of which there were examples in his bountiful library.
Ah, now an end to thy inveterate tale!
The silence melts from the mid spheres of heaven;
Enough! before this peace has time to fail
From out my soul, or yon white cloud has driven
Up the moon’s path I turn, and I will rest
Once more with summer in my heart. Farewell!
Shut are the wild-rose cups; no moth’s awhirr;
My room will be moon-silvered from the west
For one more hour; thy note shall be a burr
To tease out thought and catch the slumbrous spell.

Variants for part V of “The Corn-Crake” in Hibernia (June 1882) are unknown as it was only possible to examine the extant copy in the National Library of Ireland for the printing of parts I-IV on p. 88.
In the cathedral

The altar-lights burn low, the incense-fume
Sickens: O listen, how the priestly prayer
Runs as a fenland stream; a dim despair
Hails through their chaunt of praise, who here inhume
A clay-cold Faith within its carven tomb.
But come thou forth into the vital air
Keen, dark, and pure! grave Night is no betrayer,
And if perchance some faint cold star illume
Her brow of mystery, shall we walk forlorn?
An altar of the natural rock may rise
Somewhere for men who seek; there may be borne
On the night-wind authentic prophecies:
If not, let this—to breathe sane breath—suffice,
Till in yon East, mayhap, the dark be worn.
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The South Carolina Review

EDGAR ALLAN POE

(Read at the Centenary Celebration, University of Virginia, 19th Jan. 1909)

Seeker for Eldorado, magic land,
Whose gold is beauty fine-spun, amber-clear,
O’er what Moon-mountains, down what Valley of fear
By what love waters fringed with pallid sand,
Did thy foot falter? Say what airs have fanned
Thy fervid brow, blown from no terrene sphere,
What rustling wings, what echoes thrilled thine ear
From mighty tombs whose brazen ports expand?
Seeker, who never quite attained, yet caught,
Moulded and fashioned, as by strictest law
The rainbow’d moon-mist and the flying gleam
To mortal loveliness, for pity and awe,
To us what carven dreams thy hand has brought
Dreams with the serried logic of a dream.

DEUS ABSCONDITUS

Since Thou dost clothe Thyself to-day in cloud,
Lord God in heaven, and no voice low or loud
Proclaims Thee,—see, I turn me to the Earth,
Its wisdom and its sorrow and its mirth,
Thy Earth perchance, but sure my very own,
And precious to me grows the clod, the stone,
A voiceless moor’s brooding monotony,
A keen star quivering through the sunset dye,
Young wrinkled beech leaves, saturate with light,
The arching wave’s suspended malachite;
I turn to men, Thy sons perchance, but sure
My brethren, and no face shall be too poor
To yield me some unquestionable gain
Of wonder, laughter, loathing, pity, pain,
Some dog-like craving caught in human eyes,
Some new-waked spirit’s April ecstasies;
These will not fail nor foil me; while I live
There will be actual truck in take and give,
But Thou has foiled me; therefore undistraught,

Deus Absconditus  The Latin title may be translated to mean “a god who is hidden from man.”
10 malachite: a green carbonate of copper used as an ore for making ornamental object.
I cease from seeking what will not be sought,
Or sought, will not be found through joy or fear,
If still Thou claimst me, seek me. I am here.

Subliminal

Door, little door,
Shadowed door in the innermost room of my heart,
I lean and listen, withdrawn from the stir and apart,
For a word of the wordless love.

And still you hide,
Yourself of me, who are more than myself, within,
And I wait if perchance a whisper I may win
From my soul on the other side.

What do I catch
Afloat on the air, for something is said or done?
Are there two who speak—my soul and the nameless One?
Little door, could I lift the latch.

Sigh for some want
Measureless sigh of desire, or a speechless prayer?
Rustle of robe of a priest at sacrifice there
Benediction or far-heard chaunt?

Could we but meet,
Myself and my hidden self in a still amaze!
But the tramp of men comes up, and the roll of drays,
And a woman’s cry from the street!

Louisa Shore
(AUTHOR OF “HANNIBAL, A DRAMA”)

Who dared to pluck the sleeve of Hannibal,
And hale him from the shades? Who bade the man,
Indomitable of brain, return to plan
A vast revenge and vowed? Wild clarions call;
Dusk faces flame; the turreted brute-wall

Louisa Catherine Shore (1824-1895) published in company with her sister Arabella save for the instance of her verse-drama on Hannibal (247-182 BC), published posthumously in 1898 by Grant Richards in London.
Moves, tramples, overwhelms; van clashes van;
Roman, Numidian, Carthaginian;
And griefs are here, unbowed, imperial
Who caught the world’s fierce tides? An English girl.
Shy dreamer ’neath fl eed elm and apple-bloom,
With Livy or Polybius on her knee,
Whose dreams were light as dew and pure as pearl,—
Yet poignant-witted; thow’d for thought; girl-groom
Sped to her Lord across the Midland Sea.

**Flowers from the South of France**

Thanks spoken under rainy skies,
And tossed by March winds of the North,
And faint ere they can find your eyes,
Pale thanks are mine and poor in worth,

Matched with your gift of dews and light,
Quick heart-beats of Southern spring,
Provençal flowers, pearl-pure, blood-bright,
Which heard the Mid-sea murmuring,

Listen! a lark in Irish air,
A sliver spray of ecstasy!
O wind of March blow wide and bear
This song of home as thanks for me.

Nay, but yourself find thanks more meet;
Blossoms like these which drank the sky
Strew in some shadowy alcove-seat,
And lay your violin where they lie;

Leave them; but with the first star rise,
And bring the bow, and poise at rest
The enchanted wood. Ah, shrill sweet cries!
A prisoned heart is in its breast.

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Louisa Shore 10 “Livy or Polybius”: Titus Livy (59 BC–AD 17), author of Roman classic history *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*; Polybius (c. 203–120 BC), Greek author of *The Histories*, an important history of the Hellenist period.
To Hester

(At the Piano)

1 So ends your fingers’ fine intrigue!
2 The netted guile! Nor yonder sat he
3 In pump and frill who made the gigue,
4 Your Neapolitan Scarlatti.

5 The twilight yields you to me; strange!
6 My dainty sprite, a most rare vision!
7 Well, is it not a wise exchange,
8 Live maid for ghost of dead musician?

9 Yet gently let the shadows troop
10 To darkness; lightly lie the dust on
11 Damon and Chloe, hose and hoop,
12 My bevy of the days Augustan.

13 What led my fancy down the track,
14 Through century-silent, shadowy mazes?
15 Perhaps that foolish bric-à-brac
16 Your pseudo-classic shelf that graces.

17 Or haply something I divined,
18 While on your face I stayed a dweller,
19 Of that fair ancestress—unsigned—
20 It pleases you to name a Kneller;

21 And still your fingers ran the keys,
22 Through quaint encounter, pretty wrangle
23 Light laughter, interspace of ease,
24 Fine turn, and softly-severed tangle,

25 Gigue, minuet, rondo, ritornelle—
26 Quaint jars with rose-leaf memories scented,
27 Stored with glad sound, when life went well,
28 Ere melancholy was invented,

29 When pleasure ran, a rippling tide,
30 And Phillida with Phyllis carolled,
31 Ere Werther yet for Lotte Sighed,
32 Or English maids adored Childe Harold;

Hester Dowden was the poet’s daughter.
Ere music shook the central heart,
Or soared to spheral heights inhuman,
Ere Titans stormed the heaven of art,
Let by the hammer-welder, Schumann.

Ah, well, we sigh beneath the load,
We sing our pain, our pride, our passion,
And Weltschmerz is the modern mode,
But sweet seventeen is still a fashion.

Let be a while the Infinite,
Those chords with tremulous fervour laden,
Where Chopin’s fire and dew unite—
I choose instead one mortal maiden.

Let sorrow rave, and sadness fret,
And all our century’s ailments pester,
I am not quite despairful yet—
There, at the keyboard, sits a Hester.

Unuttered

Song that is pent in me,
Song that is aching,
Ne’er to escape from me,
Sleeping or waking,

Down aspic! the dust of me,
Blown the world over
A century hence
Will envenom a lover.

His red lips grow vocal,
His great word is new,
And the world knows my secret,
Is dreaming of you.
Imitated from J. Soulary’s “Le Fossoyeur”

1 For every child new-born God brings to birth
2 A little grave-digger, deft at his trade,
3 Who ’neath his master’s feet still voids the earth,
4 There where one day the man’s dark plunge is made.

5 Do you know yours? Hideous perhaps is he,
6 You shudder seeing the workman at his task;
7 Such gracious looks commend who waits on me
8 I yield whole-hearted, nor for quarter ask.

9 A child rose-white, sweet-lipped, my steps he presses
10 On to the pit with coaxings and caresses,
11 Lovelier assassin none could chose to have.
12 Rogue, hast thou done? Let’s haste. The hour comes quick,
13 Give with a kiss the last stroke of the pick,
14 And gently lay me in my flowery grave.

Imitated from Goethe’s “Ganymede”

1 As with splendour of morning
2 Around me thou flamest,
3 O Spring time, my lover,
4 With a thousand delights and desires;
5 To my heart comes thronging
6 The sacred sense
7 Of thy glow everlasting,
8 O infinite beauty!

9 Would I might seize thee
10 In these my arms!

[stanza break]


Imitated from Goethe’s “Ganymede”: in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s ode of 1789, Ganymede is figuratively the son of Jupiter and a common figure in nineteenth-century poetry and prominent in the Goethe settings of Franz Schubert’s musical compositions. In this, the lyrics of Dowden “Poems of Later Dates” feature a good many adaptations of Goethe’s work, particularly from this point onward. See EDW’s note on the last four poems as introduced in the footnote to The Drops of Nectar. 1789 (below).
Ah! on thy bosom
I lie sore yearning;
Thy flowers, thy grasses,
Press close to my heart;
Fresh breeze of the morn
Thy coolest the burning
Thirst of my breast.
With love the nightingale
Calls to me from the misty valley!

I come, I am coming!
Whither? Ah, whither?
Upward! Upward the urge is!
Lower the clouds come drifting,
They stoop to the longing of love.
For me! for me!

Born in the lap of you
Upwards!
Embracing, embraced!
Upwards, even to the bosom
Of thee all-loving, my Father!

With a copy of my “Poems”

My slender, wondering Nautilus,
Sunk in the ooze—a thing how frail!—
Because you choose to have it thus
Through wavering waters luminous
Rises once more, sets up the sail;

It trembles to the sun, has fear
Of life, that knew no fear of death:
Ah! may kind Ariel, hovering near,
Speed the toy onward with his breath!
Prologue to Maurice Gerothwohl’s Version of Vigny’s
“Chatterton”
(March 1909)

1. Not yet to life inured, the Muse’s son,
2. Born to be lord of visions, Chatterton,
3. A youth, nor yet the master of his dream,
4. Poor, proud, o’erwrought, perplex’d in the extreme
5. By poetry, his demon, and by love—
6. Powers of the deep below, the height above—
7. Ringed by a world with dreams and love at strife,
8. Rejects in fiery spleen the gift of life.

9. Condemn, but pity!

In the South, they say,
10. Boys in their sportive mood affect a play;
11. The brands aglow they fashion in a ring,
12. Then in the ardent cirque a scorpion flinging;
13. Crouched motionless the creature lies, until
14. Urged by the fire you see him throb and thrill,
15. Whereon the laughter peals! Anon, he’ll shape
16. Right on the flames his course to make escape,
17. And backward draws o’erpowered. Fresh shouts of glee!
18. Next round the circle curving timorously
19. He seeks impossible exit; now, once more,
20. Quailing, and in the centre as before,
21. He shrinks despairing; lest, he knows his part,
22. Turns on himself, grown bold, his poisoned dart,
23. And on the instant dies. O then at height
24. We hear the cries uproarious of delight!
25. Doubtless the wretch on mortal crime was bent,
26. Doubtless the boys were good and innocent.

[stanza break]
Play not, O world of men, the savage boy,
Make not the poet, quickener of earth’s joy,
Your scorpion! Hardly once a hundred years
Compact of spirit and fire and dew, appears
He through whose song the spherical harmonies
Vibrate in mortal hearing. Nay, be wise,
For your own joy, and see he lacks not bread,
If ye but wreathe the white brows of the dead,
’Tis ye yourselves are disinherited.

A Song

When did such moons upheave?
When were such pure dawns born?
Yet fly morn into eve,
Fly eve into morn.

Lily and iris blooms,
Blooms of the orchard close,
Pass—for she comes, she comes,
Your sovereign, the rose.

Lark, that is heart of the height,
Thrush, that is voice of the vale,
Cease, it is nearing, the night
Of the nightingale.

Hasten great noon that glows,
Night, when the swift stars pale,
Hasten noon of the rose,
Night of the nightingale.
The Drops of Nectar. 1789
IMITATED FROM Goethe's "Die Nektartropfen"

1 When Minerva, granting graces
2 To her darling, her Prometheus,
3 Brought a brimming bowl of nectar
4 To the underworld from heaven
5 To rejoice his race of mortals,
6 And to quicken in their bosom
7 Of all gracious arts the impulse,
8 Fearing Jupiter should see her,
9 With a rapid foot she hastened,
10 And the golden bowl was shaken,
11 And there fell some slender sprinklings
12 On the verdurous plain below her.

13 Whereupon the bees grew busy
14 With the same in eager sucking,
15 Came the butterfly as eager
16 Some small drop to gather also.
17 Even the spider, the unshapely,
18 Hither crept and sucked with gusto.
19 Happy are they to have tasted,
20 They and other delicate creatures,
21 For they share henceforth with mortals
22 Art, of all earth's joys the fairest.

Amor as Landscape-Painter
IMITATED FROM Goethe's "Amor als Landschaftsmaler"

1 On a point of rock I sat one morning,
2 Gazed with fixèd eyes upon the vapour,
3 Like a sheet of solid grey outspreading
4 Did it cover all in plain and mountain.

[stanza break]

The Drops of Nectar. 1789  Dowden's use of the myth of Prometheus follows Dowden's intense interest in Shelley as well as Goethe. The last four lyrics in P1914, from this poem onward, were accompanied by the following note by EDW: "The four Goethe translations with which this volume closes are taken from jottings, hardly more than protoplasm. ¶ They much need re-handling, which they cannot now receive. Many lines are, as verse, defective for the ear … yet some contain sufficient beauty, as well as fidelity, in translation to justify, perhaps, their preservation as fragments of unfinished work. ¶ This does not apply to the other translations which were left by E. D. in fair MS. as completed."

Amor as Landscape-Painter  See EDW's "Editor's Note" just above.
By my side meanwhile a boy had placed him,
And he spake. “Good friend, how can’st thou calmly
Stare upon the void grey sheet before thee?
Hast thou then for painting and for modelling
All desire, it seemeth, lost for ever?”

On the child I looked, and thought in secret,
“Would the little lad then play the Master?”

“If thou wouldst be ever sad and idle,”
Spake the boy, “no thing of skill can follow.
Look! I’ll paint you straight a little picture,
Teach you how to paint a pretty picture.”

And thereon forth stretched he his forefinger,
Which was rosy even as a rose blossom,
To the ample canvas strained before him
Set to work at sketching with his finger.
There on high a glorious sun he painted,
Which mine eyes with its effulgence dazzled,
And the fringe of clouds he made it golden.
Through the clouds he let press forth the sunbeams,
Then the tree-tops delicate, light, he painted,
Late refreshed and quickened. Over the hill-range
Hill behind hill folded, for a background.
Nor were waters wanting. There below them
He the river limned, so true to Nature,
That it seemed to sparkle in the sunbeams,
That against its banks it seemed to murmur.

And there stood beside the river flowers,
And their colours glowed upon the meadow,
Gold and an enamel green and purple;
As if all were emerald and carbuncle.
Pure and clear above he limned the heaven,
And the azure mountains far and further,
So that I, new-born and all enraptured,
Gazed on now the painter, now the picture.

“I have given thee proof, perhaps,” so spake he,
“That this handicraft I’ve comprehended
But the hardest part is yet to follow.”

Then and with his finger-tip he outlined,
Using utmost care beside the thicket,
At the point where from earth’s gleaming surface
Was the sun cast back in all its radiance—
Outlined there the loveliest of maidens,
Fair of form, now clad in richest raiment,
Brown her hair and ’neath it cheeks the freshest
And the cheeks were of the self-same colour
As the pretty finger that had drawn them.

“O my boy,” I cried, “declare what master
Did receive thee in his school as pupil,
That so swiftly and so true to Nature
Thou with skill beginn’st and well completest?”

But while yet I spake a breeze uprises.
And behold, it sets astir the summits,
Curleth every wave upon the river,
Puffs the veil out of the charming maiden.
And, what me the astonished, more astonished,
Now the maiden’s foot is put in motion,
She advances, and to the place draws nearer,
Where I sit beside the cunning Master.

Now when all things, all things are in motion.
Trees and river, flowers and veil outblowing,
And the slender foot of her the fairest,
Think you I upon my rock stayed seated,
Speechless as a rock and as immobile?

THE WANDERER
IMITATED FROM GOETHE’S “DER WANDRER”

WANDERER

1  God’s grace be thine, young woman
2  And his, the boy who sucks
3  That breast of thine.
4  Here let me on the craggy scar,
5  In shade of the great elm,
6  My knapsack fl ing from me
7  And rest me by thy side.

[stanza break]
Woman
8 What business urges thee
9 Now in the heat of day
10 Along this dusty path?
11 Bringest thou some city merchandise
12 Into the country round?
13 Thou smilest, stranger,
14 At this my question.

Wanderer
15 No city merchandise I bring,
16 Cool now the evening grows,
17 Show me the rills
18 Whence thou dost drink,
19 My good young woman.

Woman
20 Here, up the rocky path,
21 Go onward. Through the shrubs
22 The path runs by the cot
23 Wherein I dwell,
24 On to the rills
25 From whence I drink.

Wanderer
26 Traces of ordering human hands
27 Betwixt the underwood.
28 These stones thou hast not so disposed,
29 Nature—thou rich dispensatrix.

Woman
30 Yet further up.

Wanderer
31 With moss o’erlaid, an architrave!
32 I recognize thee, plastic spirit,
33 Thou hast impressed thy seal upon the stone.

Woman
34 Further yet, stranger.

Wanderer
35 Lo, an inscription whereupon I tread,
36 But all illegible,
37 Worn out by wayfarers are ye,
38 Which should show forth your Master's piety,
39 Unto a thousand children's children.

Woman
40 In wonder, stranger, dost thou gaze
41 Upon these stones?
42 Up yonder round my cot
43 Are many such.

Wanderer
44 Up yonder?

Woman
45 Leftwards directly
46 On through the underwood,
47 Here!

Wanderer
48 Ye Muses! and ye Graces!

Woman
49 That is my cottage.

Wanderer
50 The fragments of a temple!

Woman
51 Here onwards on one side
52 The rivulet flows
53 From whence I drink.

Wanderer
54 Glowing, then hoverest
55 Above thy sepulchre,
56 Genius! Over thee
57 Is tumbled in a heap
58 Thy masterpiece,
59 O thou undying one!

Woman
60 Wait till I bring the vessel
61 That thou mayst drink.

Wanderer
62 Ivy hath clad around
Thy slender form divine.
How do ye upward strive
From out the wreck,
Twin columns!
And thou, the solitary sister there,
How do ye,
With sombre moss upon your sacred heads,
Gaze in majestic mourning down
Upon these scattered fragments
There at your feet,
Your kith and kin!
Where lie the shadows of the bramble bush,
Concealed by wrack and earth,
And the long grass wavers above.
Nature dost then so hold in price
Thy masterpiece’s masterpiece?
Dost thou, regardless, shatter thus
Thy sanctuary?
Dost sow the thistles therein?

Woman

How the boy sleeps!
Wouldst thou within the cottage rest,
Stranger? Wouldst here
Rather than ’neath the open heavens bide?
Now it is cool. Here, take the boy.
Let me go draw the water.
Sleep, darling, sleep!

Wanderer

Sweet is thy rest.
How, bathed in heavenly healthiness,
Restful he breathes!
Thou, born above the relics
Of a most sacred past,
Upon thee may its spirit rest.
He whom it environeth
Will in the consciousness of power divine
Each day enjoy.
Seedling so rich expand,
The shining spring’s
Resplendent ornament,
In presence of thy fellows shine,
And when the flower-sheath fades and falls
May from thy bosom rise
The abounding fruit,  
And ripening, front the sun.

WOMAN  
God bless him—and ever still he sleeps.  
Nought have I with this water clear  
Except a piece of bread to offer thee.

WANDERER  
I give thee thanks.  
How gloriously all blooms around  
And groweth green!

WOMAN  
My husband soon  
Home from the fields  
Returns. Stay, stay, O man,  
And eat with us thy evening bread.

WANDERER  
Here do ye dwell?

WOMAN  
There, between yonder walls,  
The cot. My father builded it  
Of brick, and of the wreckage stones.  
Here do we dwell.  
He gave me to a husbandman,  
And in our arms he died—  
Sweetheart—and hast thou slept?  
How bright he is—and wants to play.  
My rogue!

WANDERER  
O Nature! everlastingly conceiving.  
Each one thou bearest for the joy of life,  
All of thy babes thou hast endowed  
Lovingly with a heritage—a Name.  
High on the cornice doth the swallow build,  
Of what an ornament she hides  
All unaware.  
The caterpillar round the golden bough  
Spins her a winter quarters for her young.  
Thus dost thou patch in 'twixt the august  
Fragments of bygone time
137 For needs of thine—for thy own needs
138 A hut. O men—
139 Rejoicing over graves.
140 Farewell, thou happy wife.

Woman
141 Thou wilt not stay?

Wanderer
142 God keep you safe
143 And bless your boy.

Woman
144 A happy wayfaring!

Wanderer
145 Where doth the pathway lead me
146 Over the mountain there?

Woman
147 To Cuma.

Wanderer
148 How far is it hence?

Woman
149 'Tis three good miles.

Wanderer
150 Farewell!
151 O Nature! guide my way,
152 The stranger's travel-track
153 Which over graves
154 Of sacred times foregone
155 I still pursue.
156 Me to some covert guide,
157 Sheltered against the north,
158 And where from noontide's glare
159 A poplar grove protects.
160 And when at eve I turn
161 Home to the hut,
162 Made golden with the sun's last beam,
163 Grant that such wife may welcome me,
164 The boy upon her arm.
"Alexis and Dora"

IMITATED FROM Goethe’s "Alexis and Dora"

Ah, without stop or stay the ship still momentarily presses
On through the foaming deep, further and further from shore.
Far-traced the furrow is cut by the keel, and in it the dolphins
Bounding follow as though prey were before them in flight.
All betokens a fortunate voyage; light-hearted the shipman
Gently handles the sail that takes on it labour for all
Forward as pennon and streamer presses the voyager’s spirit,
One alone by the mast stands reverted and sad.
Mountains already blue he sees departing, he sees them
Sink in the sea, while sinks every joy from his gaze.
Also for thee has vanished the ship that bears thy Alexis,
Rob the, O Dora, of friend, robs thee of, ah! the betrothed.
Thou, too, gazest in vain after me. Our hearts are still beating
For one another, but ah! on one another no more.
Single moment wherein I have lived, thou weigh’st in the balance
More than all days erewhile coldly squandered by me.
Ah, in that moment alone, the last, arose in my bosom
Life unhoped for in thee, come down as a gift from the Gods.
Now in vain dost thou with thy light make glorious the æther,
Thy all-illumining day—Phœbus, by me is abhorred.
Back on myself I return, and fain would I there in the silence
Live o’er again the time when daily to me she appeared.
Was it possible beauty to see and never to feel it?
Did not the heavenly charm work on thy dullness of soul?
Blame not thyself, poor heart, so the poet proposes a riddle,
Artfully wrought into words oft to the ear of the crowd,
The network of images, lovely and strange, is a joy to the hearer,
Yet still there lacketh the word affirming the sense of the whole.
Is it at last disclosed, then every spirit is gladdened,
And in the verse perceives meaning of twofold delight.
Ah, why so late, O love, dost thou unbind from my forehead
Wrappings that darkened my eyes—why too late dost unbind?
Long time the freighted bark delayed for favouring breezes,
Fair at last rose the wind pressing off-shore to the sea.
Idle seasons of youth and idle dreams of the future
Ye have departed—for me only remaineth the hour;
Yes, it remains the gladness remaining for me; Dora, I hold thee.
Hope to my gaze presents, Dora, thy image alone.
Often on thy way to the temple I saw thee gay-decked and decorous,
Steppe the good mother beside, all ceremonious and grave.

"Alexis and Dora"  See EDW’s “Editor’s Note” above, at The Drop of Nectar. 1789.
Quick-footed wert thou and eager, bearing thy fruit to the market,
Quitting the well, thy head how daringly balanced the jar;
There, lo! thy throat was shown, thy neck more fair than all others,
Fairer than others were shown the poise and play of thy limbs.
Ofttime I held me in fear for the totter and crash of the pitcher,
Yet upright ever it stood, there where the kerchief was pleached.
Fairest neighbour, yes, my wont it was to behold thee,
As we behold the stars, as we contemplate the moon.
In them rejoicing, while never once in the tranquil bosom,
Even in shadow of thought stirs the desire to possess.
Thus did ye pass, my years. But twenty paces asunder
Our dwellings, thine and mine, nor once on thy threshold I trod.
Now the hideous deep divides us! Ye lie to the heavens,
Billows! your lordly blue to me is the colour of night.
Already was everything in motion. A boy came running
Swift to my father’s house, calling me down to the shore.
“The sail is already hoisted; it flaps in the wind,” so spake he.
“Weighed with a lusty cheer the anchor parts from the sand.
Come, Alexis! O come!” And gravely, in token of blessing,
Laid my good father his hand on the clustering curls of the son.
Careful the mother reached me a bundle newly made ready;
“Come back happy!” they cried. “Come back happy and rich.”
So out of doors, with the bundle under my arm, did I fling me,
And at the wall below, there by the garden gate,
Saw thee stand; thou smiledst upon me and spakest. “Alexis,
Yonder clamouring folk, are these thy comrades aboard?
Distant shores thou visitest now and merchandise precious
Thou dost deal in, and jewels for the wealthy city dames.
Wilt thou not bring me also one little light chain? I would buy it
Thankfully. I have wished so oft to adorn me with this.”
Holding my own I stood and asked, in the way of a merchant,
First of the form, the weight exact, of the order thou gavest.
Modest in truth was the price thou assignedst. While gazing upon thee,
Neck and shoulders I saw worthy of the jewels of our queen.
Louder sounded the cry from the ship. Then saidest thou kindly,
“Some of the garden fruit take thou with thee on thy way.
Take the rippest oranges—take white figs. The sea yields
Never a fruit at all. Nor doth every country give fruits.”
Thereon I stepped within; the fruit thou busily broughtest,
There in the gathered robe bearing a burden all gold.
Often I pleaded, “see this is enough,” and ever another
And fairer fruit down dropped, lightly touched, to thy hand.
Then at the last to the bower thou camest. There was a basket,
And the myrtle in bloom bent over thee, over me.
Skilfully didst thou begin to arrange the fruit and in silence.
Quick-footed wert thou and eager, bearing thy fruit to the market,
Quitting the well, thy head how daringly balanced the jar;
There, lo! thy throat was shown, thy neck more fair than all others,
Fairer than others were shown the poise and play of thy limbs.
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There in the gathered robe bearing a burden all gold.
Often I pleaded, “see this is enough,” and ever another
And fairer fruit down dropped, lightly touched, to thy hand.
Then at the last to the bower thou camest. There was a basket,
And the myrtle in bloom bent over thee, over me.
Skilfully didst thou begin to arrange the fruit and in silence.
First the orange, that lies heavy a globe of gold,
Then the tenderer fig, which slightest pressure will injure,
And with myrtle o’erlaid, fair adorned was the gift.
But I lifted it not. I stood, we looked one another
Full in the eyes. When straight the sight of my eyes waxed dim.
Thy bosom I felt on my own! and now my arm encircled
The stately neck, whereon thousandfold kisses I showered.
Sank thy head on my shoulder—by tender arms enfolded
As with a chain was he the man whom thou hast made blest.
The hands of Love I felt, he drew us with might together,
And thrice from a cloudless sky it thundered; and now there flowed
Tears from my eyes, down streaming, weeping wert thou. I wept,
And through sorrow and joy the world seemed to pass from our sense.
Ever more urgent their shoreward cry; but thither to bear me
My feet refused: I cried, “Dora, and art thou not mine?”
“For ever,” thou gently saidst. And thereon it seemed that our tears,
As by some breath divine, gently were blown from our eyes.
Nearer the cry “Alexis!” Then peered the boy, as he sought me,
In through the garden gate. How the basket he eyed.
How he constrained me. How I pressed thee once more by the hand.
How arrived I aboard? I know as one drunken I seemed.
Even so my companions took me to be; they bore with one ailing,
And already in haze of distance the city grew dim.
“For ever,” Dora, thy whisper was. In my ear it echoes
Even with the thunder of Zeus. There stood she by his throne,
She, his daughter, the Goddess of Love, and beside her the Graces.
So by the Gods confirmed this our union abides.
O then haste thee, our bark, with the favouring winds behind thee.
Labour, thou lusty keel, sunder the foaming flood!
Bring me to that strange haven; that so for me may the goldsmith
In his workshop anon fashion the heavenly pledge.
Ay, in truth, the chainlet shall grow to a chain, O Dora.
Nine times loosely wound shall it encircle thy neck.
Further, jewels most manifold will I procure for thee; golden
Bracelets also. My gifts richly shall deck thy hand.
There shall the ruby contend with the emerald; loveliest sapphire
Matched against jacinth shall stand, while with a setting of gold
Every gem may be held in a perfect union of beauty.
O what joy for the lover to grace with jewel and gold the beloved.
If pearls I view, my thought is of thee; there rises before me
With every ring the shape slender and fair of thy hand.
I will barter and buy, and out of them all the fairest
Thou shalt choose. I devote all my lading to thee.
But not jewel and gem alone shall thy lover procure thee.
What a housewife would choose, that will he bring with him too.
Coverlets delicate, woollen and purple, hemmed to make ready
A couch that grateful and soft fondly shall welcome the pair.
Lengths of the finest linen. Thou sittest and sewest and clothest
Me therein and thyself, and haply also a third.
Visions of hope delude my heart. Allay, O Divine Ones,
Flames of resistless desire wildly at work in my breast,
And yet I fain would recall delights that are bitter,
When care to me draws near, hideous, cold and unmoved.
Not the Erinnyes torch nor the baying of hounds infernal
 Strikes such terror in him, the culprit in realms of despair,
As that phantom unmoved in me who shows me the fair one
Far away. Open stands even now the garden gate,
And another, not I, draws near—for him fruits are falling,
And for him, too, the fig strengthening honey retains.
Him too doth she draw to the bower. Does he follow? O sightless
Make me, O Gods! destroy the vision of memory in me.
Yes—a maiden is she—she who gives herself straight to one lover,
She to another who woes as speedily turns her around.
Laugh not, O Zeus, this time at an oath audaciously broken—
Thunder more fiercely! strike! yet hold back thy lightning shaft.
Send on my trace the sagging clouds. In gloom as of night-time
Let thy bright lightning-flash strike this ill-fated mast.
Scatter the planks around and give to the raging waters
This my merchandise. Give me to the dolphins a prey.
Now ye Muses enough! In vain is your effort to image
How in a heart that loves alternate sorrow and joy.
Nor are ye able to heal those wounds which Love has inflicted,
Yet their assuagement comes, Gracious Ones, only from you.
A Woman’s Reliquary

(based on the 1914 Dent edition,

including an Editor’s Note on

the Genesis of the Collection for

the 1913 Cuala Press Edition)

Published sources attributed in notes and collations—

EDITOR’S NOTE

At the time of the poet’s death, on April 3, 1913, a fairly ambitious body of lyric poetry had been gathered and sorted in various ways. Part of this new work was directed to the enlarged posthumous edition of Poems (London: Dent, 1914), under the rubric “Miscellaneous Poems of Later Dates,” as presented above. TCD MS. 3120 seems to have provided copy text for that particular enhancement. Generally speaking, the arrangement and editing of those verses was almost entirely the work of Dowden’s second wife, Elizabeth Dickinson West Dowden (usually signed either “E.D.W.” or “E.D.D.”) to distinguish her initials from that of her husband. Aside from a few poems that remain unpublished to this day, the majority had been gathered together for the collection eventually called A Woman’s Reliquary, when Elizabeth Yeats, in honor of Dowden’s long friendship with Yeats père, John Butler Yeats, agreed to print 300 copies of the book on the letterpress without the consent of her brother, Cuala Press executive editor W. B. Yeats. Three extant manuscript notebooks provide evidence of the means by which copy text was produced for the Cuala Press edition, seemingly without a typescript.

The genesis of copy text for A Woman’s Reliquary began with a bound notebook (TCD MS. 3122, green leather, limp) containing poems in fair hand, evidently copied out and given to E.D.D. as a love token. In place of a title for the collection is a pressed sprig of greenery (flora), tipped in beneath the inscription: “Fons Signatus.” On the verso of this leaf is the quatrain selected as the verse epigraph for A Woman’s Reliquary. The poems thereafter are numbered, untitled, and all fair copies. There are but 74 (I–LXXIV) poems, with 14 “Additions” listed, beginning on numbered folio “48” and running to the last entry on folio 59. Copies are entered on rectos only, save for the verse epigraph. Thereafter, the order of the poems differs significantly. Directions are given in the “Additions” section for placement of poems within the numbered sequence of the notebook. But that in itself did not produce the arrangement followed at the next stage, in TCD MS. 3121 (labeled “EDD’s book”), where the title of the collection was finally settled, leading to a third bound manuscript notebook, now in the National Library of Ireland, NLI 225, with layout identical to the Cuala Press printing and bearing the address for its return by the printer to “Elizabeth D Dowden / Rockdale, Orwell Road / Rathgar, Dublin.” The evolution of the title may be interpreted as follows from a succession of cancellations and amendments: A Rosary (after poem I) > Fons signatus (after XLI and the inscription and sprig in TCD MS. 3122) > Carmina Cordis (tr. Song of the Heart) > A Woman’s Reliquary. In TCD MS. 3121, on the first page, there are three other inscriptions, showing the hand of both the poet (it seems) as well as his wife. First, “(This copy imperfect & superceded by EDD’s)”; second, “but some readings here are better” (canelled); and finally, “many things are added” (also cancelled). E.D.D.’s superceding copy is presumably NLI 225, which, besides fair-hand copies of all the poems in layout identical with the limited edition of 1913, carries Dowden’s “Note” (removed, perhaps, from one of the TCD notebooks, signed, and pasted at the beginning), which in turn provided text for an elaborate ruse he perpetrated before his death. This note appears as the “EDITOR’S NOTE” in the 1913 printing, followed immediately by the gentle disclaimer of the “Publishers note”: “If readers desire to attribute authorship of this book to the editor, no wrong is done to anyone.” The note is a charming piece of invention and somewhat peculiar if only because the poet thought it might be necessary. The text of the note is given here:
EDITOR’S NOTE

A reviewer not long since congratulated me on the possession of some interesting manuscripts, which, as a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles, I have had the good fortune to come across. Some years ago I purchased a handful of books from a lady, now dead, and among them a slender morocco-bound volume containing the verses which here I print. She told me that she was the only surviving relation, a niece of the writer of these poems. “You may do what you please with them,” she said; “the writer and the person addressed are both dead: the marriage was childless.” No wrong therefore can be done to anyone by the present publication. A sequence of a hundred love lyrics addressed to a wife is perhaps too much for the general public; but possibly some of the verses may ultimately find their way into anthologies. My task as editor has been that of securing an accurate text; and, for convenience of reference, I have prefixed a title to each poem, which however may be disregarded by a reader of the sequence. The general title “A Woman’s Reliquary” is written on the first page of the manuscript.

Edward Dowden.

Although the little book incensed W. B. Yeats when he learned of his sister’s agreeing to it (see the Introduction, above), the disagreement among the Yeatses had nothing to do with the size of the print run, as Cuala Press printings were characteristically small, one-off affairs. This one was finished, as advertised, “on the last day of September, in the year nineteen hundred and thirteen.” E.D.D. can hardly have been dissatisfied with the accuracy of the printing, which compares unusually well, for a hand-set book, with the subsequent printing of A Woman’s Reliquary by J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd in the following year. Elizabeth Corbet Yeats not only honored her father’s old friend but, in effect, spared the widow the cost of having to type the whole work for the commercial publisher. Possibly E.D.D. herself wrote for Dent the italicized headnote that appeared (on p. ix) between the Contents and Dowden’s “NOTE” on pages xi and xii (with the errant word “EDITOR’S” omitted):

“A Woman’s Reliquary” was first published in November 1913, at the Cuala Press, Dundrum, Co. Dublin, by Miss Elizabeth C. Yeats, in an edition of three hundred copies, now nearly exhausted. No second editions are printed by the Cuala Press. Hence the need for the present republication.

This sequence of Lyrics is now issued as third volume of Edward Dowden’s “Poems.”

Though the authorship is no longer veiled, the publishers retain the original preface, in which the writer concealed himself under the garb of Editor of an old MS. that had been confided to him. That disguise was from the outset a semi-transparent one.

The base text for the Critical Edition is, accordingly, the complete text of the 1914 Dent edition, taken from a copy in the possession of the editor, with provenance indicated, preciously, in the inscription: “With kind regards / EDD. / Feb 14 1915.”
[Epigraph]

1 The secret may be whispered in the shrine,
2 Life’s central word, or cried in all men’s ears
3 Down from the mountain height, it yet is mine
4 —He only who had heard the secret hears.

A Woman’s Reliquary

I

The Rosary

1 The beads thus at your girdle hung
2 Have little lustre as you see,
3 My verses faintly said or sung,
4 A poor believer’s rosary.

5 Yet think for what they stand, nor part
6 With these, if only coloured clay;
7 This meant an Ave from his heart,
8 And this, though pale, a Gloria.

II

Song a Shadow

1 The little breezes of my song
2 Waft perfumes, each a pallid wraith
3 Of hope, of memories treasured long,
4 And ever love, and ever faith:

5 Or think them shadows that across
6 The everlasting hills have run,
7 Whose life was merely sunshine’s loss;
8 Yet flying shades confess the sun.
III
SILENCE AND SPEECH

1 Others, with desolate arms, have flung
2 Their hands to heaven, and cried their grief,
3 And found, because a woe was sung,
4 Sad measured fragments of relief.

5 If such my lot, these lips were dumb;
6 Song were a broken, idle toy;
7 Lean to me, my beloved; come,
8 And hear what may be told of joy.

IV
A GARDEN INCLOSED

1 My soul a garden is inclosed,
2 But never wall was builded there
3 Save heaven’s bright boundary circumposed,
4 The depths of blue untrammell’d air.

5 No garth is guarded half so sure,
6 And here are blossoms for the bee,
7 And here, to make my bourne secure,
8 Horizons of infinity.

V
THE WELL

1 I stoop’d to many streams that run
2 Through the hot plain, and drank with greed,
3 Lores and new lores!—yet found not one
4 But left some smatch of marish-weed.

5 Blest be this well that holds the heaven
6 Radiant and calm within its breast!
7 Who stoopeth here to him is given
8 Joy at the midmost heart of rest.
VI
AFAR

1 I saw you then how far away,
2 As one might see at morning's birth
3 Some Oread of strange hills at play
4 On the uplifted rim of earth;

5 Nothing beyond you but the light
6 Of dawn and heaven's pellucid shell;
7 So with God's world, swung clear of night,
8 How should not all be safe and well?

VII
PREMONITIONS

1 Auroral pulses; quiverings
2 Too faint to flush the pallid East;
3 Nor yet the stir of earliest wings;
4 But morn awakens, night has ceased.

5 Dreams and the phantoms of the dark
6 Troop earthwards; see, across the lawn
7 A light breath lifts the leaves, and hark!
8 The alleluias of the dawn.

VIII
BUD AND BLOSSOM

1 Sweet and blind commotion of the sap
2 When the first ray thrills in the folded flower!
3 Virginal rapture tremulous; some great hap
4 Befallen; a law declared; a quickening power.

5 And henceforth life shall surely have a part
6 In all that joy which makes the many One;
7 The petals sever; the whole scented heart
8 Lies naked for encounter with the sun.

VIII / Bud and Blossom   The manuscript in the National Library of Ireland (NLI 225) introduced this poem as an afterthought, on the facing page (L4v), as poem VII(b). According to that numbering, the last poem in A Woman's Requary would be “C,” not “CI” as the sequence now stands.
IX
The Haven

1 It was not love, but o’er the array
2 Of maiden faces clustering there
3 My glance careered, which well might stay,
4 For this was frank and that was fair.

5 No haven for my sail that drove,
6 No pharos; sunniest isles I passed;
7 Then suddenly—it was not love—
8 The haven, and an anchor cast.

X
Manna

1 I lived on manna day and night,
2 So long! and still could live indeed;
3 Nor murmured that such bread was light,
4 My heaven-sent coriander-seed;

5 I lived on manna night and day,
6 No other food I craved or knew;
7 Without my tent each morn it lay
8 Pearl-pure, and sweet as honey-dew.

XI
Love’s Nudity

1 Naked this soul, for good or ill,
2 Must stand before her eyes;
3 So dear, so dread, his word and will
4 Who builded Paradise.

5 What if that gaze confirm my fear?
6 What if those eyes approve?
7 What if, so seen, she call me near
8 To hide me in her love?
XII

MIRACLES

1. That day you came and went faith grew
   In miracle; one while
2. The dream swam up—was all not true?—
   Of wondering Theophile;
3. Snows on the roofs, the ways, outspread;
   But lo! the radiant boy,
4. And in heap’d arms great roses red
   Pluck’d from God’s garth of joy;
5. Pluck’d from God’s garth of joy, and all
   The air was one warm stream
6. Of summer. Can such things befall?
   Or is it but a dream?

XII

LOVE’S LAW

1. If it were possible to spare
   Your ears my dreaded truth,
2. Fashions of friendship I might wear
   For pride perhaps or ruth.
3. But this is law, not choice—to lay
   My whole soul in your hand;
4. My part is only to obey,
   And yours to understand.
5. My part to speak and there to end;
   Be you strict arbiter;
6. Grant nought of all I need, my friend,
   If granting be to err.

XIV

LOVE’S ARTISTRY

1. Search me and know me; understand
   Sense, spirit, passion, thought:
2. Yet wherefore doubt? The craftsman’s hand
   Should know the thing it wrought.
   [stanza break]
Here joy has dealt with me, here pain;
Here ran your hand, here stay’d:
Was not a foolish carver fain
Of his own ivory maid?

XV
Credo Quia Impossibile

O silence, now all golden, what a word,
A star, into your shadowy waters fell!
I dare believe a shining thing I heard,
Because impossible.

XVI
Harvest

Wide harvest: all the plain
Is wealth; on every tree
Fulfilment; not in vain
May’s hope, June’s prophecy.

Joy is the vintager
Who treads the wine-press; lo!
A great, a golden year,
And, stamp’d, the clusters flow.

XVII
A Moment

Free forester of Dian’s train,
Yet swift arms girdled her about
At one glad word: and how refrain?
The dykes were down, the floods were out:

Life was abroad; it was not I
Who wrought a thing I knew not of;
It was the whole world’s ecstasy
That woke and trembled into love.
XVIII
GRIEF IN JOY

1 Grave joy; heaven's arch is deep
2 And clear; still, still endures
3 That grief although I cease to weep;
4 Take it, for I am yours:

5 And not less pure appears
6 My heaven encircling earth,
7 And tenderer for that rain of tears;
8 Grave joy—a sacred birth.

XIX
GIVING AND TAKING

1 Cross over from your side
2 Of giver for my sake,
3 Conceive what praises hide,
4 Know once the love I take:

5 So faith will rest assured,
6 Nor praise and wonder ache,
7 Joy may be well endured,
8 Cross over for my sake.

XX
THE INTERPRETER

1 Have I not look'd away from you?
2 When to the compass of one face
3 Did I contract the revenue
4 Of beauty or the springs of grace?

5 But if a deeper heaven lies bare
6 Now; and a more enchanted sea
7 Heaves; if the lit clouds are aware;
8 If the first star with mystery

9 Is laden; if some tremulous need
10 Stirs in the midnight's brooding wings,
11 Shall I not search your eyes to read
12 The secret in the face of things?
XXI
December

1 Flowerless December, but this morn
2 Of whirling rain and ruining cloud
3 Behold! a flower of light is born
4 By all heaven’s gentleness o’erbow’d;

5 Earth-born, yet scarce to earth akin;
6 The chalice opening late; no rose—
7 That is for youth; yet peer within!
8 Like gold the lily-pollen glows.

XXII
“I Will”

1 At last achievement past gainsay;
2 “I will” was spoken, and “I will”;
3 Southward we sped toward cape and bay
4 And talk’d of cloud and stream and hill.

5 Pearl of great price, not bought indeed,
6 Given to my breast, I own with awe,
7 Since given where greatest was the need
8 Also for you this thing was law.

XXIII
Love’s Sacrament

1 Let not thy sacramental bread and wine,
2 Lord Love, be found so sweet upon my lips
3 That I forget the Presence, which is thine;
4 Let not the lighted cloud the light eclipse.

5 Nay, for a joy o’erripe turns sullenness
6 Or wanes; heaven’s gift is ever at the prime;
7 Thy will it is in thine own way to bless;
8 Angels descend the ladder angels climb.
XXIV

**Ave Atque Vale**

1. Ah Love! When all is gain'd,
2. Graces no heart can tell,
3. Then first I know the attain'd
4. Is unattainable.

5. The wave that climbs and falls
6. Is still in radiant flight,
7. Wind-driven, more drawn by calls
8. Borne from the infinite.

9. Horizons ever new,
10. Cries that will ne’er be mute,
11. Love’s welcome an adieu,
12. Love’s conquest a pursuit.

XXV

**The Resting Place**

1. Where her heart throbs (come life, come death)
2. I lay my hand, nor can rehearse
3. The thoughts, but know that love and faith
4. Are pillars of the universe.

XXVI

**Impersonal**

1. Awe fell on me: we two shall be no more
2. Estrays, but still some part, whate’er ensue,
3. Of the vast sea that heaves without a shore,
4. Life limitless, love infinite—we two;

5. A sparkle in the smile of God’s glad deep,
6. A fruit that falls not from the unfading tree,
7. A flash of colour in the bow where leap
8. The sunlit torrents of eternity.
XXVII

Babblement

1 Once more my idle word
2 Craves to possess your ear,
3 All heard before, all heard
4 Only once more to hear.

5 This endless babbling stream
6 Far in the hills arose,
7 Through gloom it ran and gleam,
8 The chaliced rock o’erflows;

9 And should a slumbrous peace
10 Fall on your lids, the rill
11 Scarce heeds, nor yet will cease
12 Because inaudible.

XXVIII

Gratitude

1 Now silence! weighing down a steep descent
2 I sink to ultimate peace in final good;
3 Below life’s joyance lies this pure content,
4 Where all I am is merely gratitude.

XXIX

Embayed

1 Where bliss is calm as deep
2 Here let my shallop rest;
3 Heaven bends above us; sleep
4 Invades her sacred breast:

5 A mirror’d heaven below;
6 O’erhead—love’s infinite;
7 Here would I rest, nor know
8 The rapids of delight.
XXX
The Bowman

1. No stronghold brave she gained; in one so poor
2. No treasure-house; and yet I make my claim—
3. Ay, proud to be the crenell'd aperture
4. Through which the unerring Bowman took his aim.

5. And if his arrow struck the noblest heart,
6. How should I be remorseful? By his grace
7. Toward his high stand she glanced with sudden start,
8. And through the loophole dusk beheld His face.

XXXI
Gift on Gift

1. Love's kingdom first, a spirit divine,
2. I sought and all his righteousness;
3. These things are added and are mine;
4. He who would bless would doubly bless.

5. Love's kingdom which long since I sought
6. I have not left, I cannot leave;
7. But in his hand the Master brought
8. To Eden's bower the gracious Eve.

XXXII
The Chapel

1. The starry chapel, where I bow
2. My head in thanks or lift in praise,
3. Has altars four; at each a vow
4. I make, at each a hymn I raise.

5. Her brain: whose poignant quivering flame
6. Leaps, laughs and lightens from the pyre;
7. Dry logs I gathered—such my claim—
8. And laid in order: hers the fire.

9. Her soul: not as the Scribes it spoke,
10. Sundering things real from things that seem;
11. I felt the austere control; I woke,
12. And on the altar left a dream.

[stanza break]
13 Her breast, Love’s shrine: for very awe
14 So long, so long, I stood apart;
15 Then bow’d to dread benignant law,
16 And on the coals I cast a heart.

17 An altar last, whose incensed air
18 Quickens the breath like wildrose wine
18 Inhaled when all the land is fair,
20 And girdling heaven shows earth divine.

XXXIII
EXCHANGES

1 Receive my gift, Belovéd, such a dower
2 As heaven rejects not, and the breathing soil
3 Offers as purest incense—your own power
4 In blissful swift recoil.

5 All April gleams; breeze, sunshine, shower renew
6 The earth, and skyward floats a vernal drift;
7 The lit clouds sunder; see, a tenderer blue
8 Owns the reverting gift.

XXXIV
SURPRISES

1 The presage tells of rest, deep rest;
2 Joy enters wing’d for flight;
3 The clouds that pause around the West
4 Are thrill’d and fill’d with light.

5 The presage tells of joy: such need,
6 Such hope, is straight withdrawn;
7 Rest, lucid rest, has Love decreed,
8 The hush of earliest dawn.

XXXV
CHARITY AND KNOWLEDGE

1 Faith, Hope and Charity—these three,
2 The greatest Charity, ’tis writ;
3 But “Trinity in Unity”
4 The word were had I utter’d it.

[stanza break]
For what is Hope but Love that bends
Forth in the race with quickening breath?
And there are hours when Love ascends
To lose and find itself in Faith.

Knowledge, 'tis written, has her place
Lower than Love; and yet I own
At times this seems Love's loveliest grace—
Merely to know and to be known.

XXXVI
THE POTTER'S WHEEL

You took this fictile clay—a heart—
Shaped it to what you chose to make;
Applaud a little your own art,
Nay, cherish for the artist's sake.

To pressure light and strict it grew,
Curved as the potter's hand gave law;
Was it a chalice, wine or dew
Glimmering to hold, that you foresaw?

Nor think your artistry at end;
Still whirls the wheel—O joy and fear!—
Mar for a moment, still to mend,
Fashion it unto honour, Dear.

XXXVII
THE HOLY OF HOLIES

My brave, marauding honey-bee,
Down the deep flower-neck you have push'd
Your way to some dear mystery
Of gladness, and your hum is hush'd.

Even in a blossom's heart there lies
An inmost chamber of the heart,
Mystery beyond all mysteries,
Where the last veil is drawn apart.

[stanza break]
Found you a sun-warm'd palace there,
A white tent where you lie enfurl'd,
A cell, a temple, a chaste lair
That holds the sweetness of the world?

O my wise honey-bee! such joy
Lives not, you know, with buzz or bruit;
Be happy in your hush'd employ;
I pause, I ponder, and am mute.

XXXVIII

GOLD HAIR

That glory mass'd, your girlhood's vaunt,
The gold great hair by me unseen,
Was it the aureole of a saint?
Was it the rigol of a queen?

Yet here is wealth enough to bribe
A world of hearts; take but this one
Bright ingot sever'd from its tribe,
This wheat-sheaf in the August sun.

XXXIX

THE PITCHER

With what marmoreal grace the maid
Bore her brimm'd pitcher from the well,
One white arm curved, a hip that sway'd,
A foot that firmly fell.

The vessel on my shoulder set
Fluctuates with full felicity;
Add strength to bear my gladness, let
My burden steady me.

XL

TURF

Thank God for simple, honest, close-knit turf,
Sound footing for plain feet; nor moss, nor mire;
No silvery quicksand, no hot sulphurous scurf
Flung from a turmoil'd fire.

[stanza break]
So far your hand has led me: what is worth
A question now of all the heavens conceal?
Here shall we lie, and better love the Earth,
And let the planets reel.

XLI
FONS SIGNATUS

Still the clear spirit’s dignity;
To me love’s inmost shrine reveal’d;
Yet with no squander’d sweetness she
Gives largess from the fountain seal’d.

Never the blossom overblown,
And therefore a perpetual bride,
For whom the spirit’s loosen’d zone
Has worth, nor will be laid aside.

XLII
THE PLUMMET

I let my plummet sink and sink
Into this sea of blessing; when,
Or where should it touch shoal? I think
Love lies beyond our furthest ken.

Above, the sun-smit waves career;
They have their voices wild and free;
Below them, where no eye can peer,
Love’s great glad taciturnity.

XLIII
COMMUNITY

Of all her joys the Earth has need;
The kindly Mother finds her part
In plumping nut, and feathering seed,
And heart that ripens upon heart.

Her gifts to her own breast return—
Pride of the marshall’d spears of grain,
Passion of clouds that flush and burn,
And love’s pulsating old refrain.

[stanza break]
With all her infants’ glee is stirred
The spirit within her, grave and sweet,
The leap of lamb, the cry of bird,
And hands that touch and lips that meet.

And it may be that half her store
Of life and warmth is treasured up
From hearts like ours, her wine that bore,
And danced her dance, and crown’d her cup.

O blind it were to deem that we
Are in our proper bliss inisled!
The old Mother own’d community
Who bended over us and smiled.

XLIV
INDULGENCES

Ah, why has Love no general store
Wherein their merits in excess
Of duty saints like you could pour,
And folk like me their happiness?

Through us the sun would mount, and want
Be lighten’d; each might have his share;
Love’s Vicar could indulgence grant
Plenary or particular.

XLV
LOVE TOKENS

Two gifts: mere sparkling granite this;
Why given that day my heart inquires;
I think because in earth’s abyss
It felt the glow of central fires.

And now the earliest daffodils,
Sun-lovers, comrades of the breeze,
Through which earth’s sudden rapture thrills,
And spring’s awaken’d ecstasies.
XLVI

Britomart

1 Smile if you will at my dear need,
2 O bright-hair'd daughter of the North!
3 Yes, you are stronger; but we read
4 Out of the strong came sweetness forth.

[stanza break]

5 With me life's proper flame aspires
6 Through needs; each day new call I make
7 For bread, for wine, man's heart desires;
8 But Dian strength would give, not take.

9 Yet who was she that lay and toss'd,
10 O'ercome with mighty throes of heart,
11 Deep-struck, her virgin freedom lost?
12 —Not Amoret, it was Britomart.

XLVII

Love's Chord

1 Stand off from me; be still your own;
2 Love's perfect chord maintains the sense
3 Through harmony, not unison,
4 Of finest difference.

5 See not as I see; set your thought
6 Against my thought; call up your will
7 To grapple mine; gay bouts we fought,
8 Let us be wrestlers still.

9 Then, if we cannot choose but mate
10 And mingle wholly, it will be
11 The doom of law, a starry fate,
12 And glad necessity.

XLVIII

Hours and Moments

1 Yes, if need were we two could dare
2 To part, and still the days were bright,
3 Though less than these swift days that wear
4 Their nimbus of glad morn, glad night.

[stanza break]
Good hours would chime upon the clock;
But ah, the moments! which could be
The wing’d keybearer that unlocks
The gates of immortality?

XLIX
OLD LETTERS

Your letters flinging their good seed—
Wit, counsel, wisdom, thought—
Words that could shape my dream, my deed,
I miss them, do I not?

Yes, but how words dissect, divide
Our truths; their swiftest play
Hastens too slowly, strikes too wide,
Falters or falls away.

And now our meanings, whole and sole,
From sense to spirit outleap;
Truth now with joy is integral,
Deep answers unto deep.

So when speech comes to claim its share,
We feel, all words beneath,
Tremblings of heart oracular,
Accords of life and death.

L
THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE

Framed in old verse Italian
See Love in triumph charioted,
His captives follow maid and man
With corded wrist and bended head:

Glad children rather should be here,
Young heirs who never felt the rod,
Clad in the love that casts out fear,
And freedom of the sons of God.
LI

The Book of Hours

1 Blown sea-cliff, dreaming pasturage,
2 The moor, broad cornland flaunting flowers,
3 Each place we moved in is a page
4 Of my illumined Book of Hours.

5 Bird, bloom and bee are in the marge,
6 How fresh the tinctures, free the grace!
7 But in the midst and limn’d at large
8 The aureoled wonder of her face.

LII

The Couch

1 Sure resting-place above the shock
2 Of waters, safe from clambering waves,
3 Here be your couch, the living rock
4 Lull’d by the gulphing of the caves.

5 I shall be human still, and feast
6 My sense, your spy for brave things done:
7 Hug nature you, a drowsed sea-beast,
8 Slow-breathing, saturate with the sun.

LIII

Sea-Anemones

1 Look! the waves’ wash has reach’d this drain’d alcove:
2 Its crimson blooms retracted know at hand
3 The tidal flow; peer now! they thrill, they move,
4 Petals and anthers waver and expand.

5 “Praised, praised be God for thee,” my heart has cried,
6 “My little brother, the anemone!”
7 My spirit has also heard a jubilant tide,
8 And known the blissful whelming of the sea.”

LIII / Sea-Anemones

5 “Praised,...thee,”] ‘Praised,...thee’ WR 1913
6 “My little brother] ‘My little brother WR 1913
8 ...of the sea’] ...of the sea’ WR 1913
LIV

Burnet Roses

On sand-dunes of this western sea
Here, mid the bent grass, roses shine,
Clear-carven, chaliced ivory,
Brimm'd with the summer's perfumed wine.

Never those orbed splendours fed
From garden-mould, June's tended train,
Crimson or gold, soft-bosoméd,
Darted such transport to the brain.

How well with sweetness strength agrees!
The liberal air, the spacious light,
The sounding waves, have fashioned these;
Take them; such things are yours by right.

LV

Spring in Autumn

We are alone with sea and sun;
Give the child's instinct in you play,
And where the laughing ripples run
Step barefoot touch'd by wind and spray;

And let me smile; the autumn day
Mimics the springtime; seasons meet
One moment; let my fancies stray
With the glad ripples round your feet.

LVI

The Pilgrim

The sunset trance is in her eyes;
I know the spirit's homeless flight;
Estranged from earth, a pilgrim hies
To seek the founts of light.

Love frames no cage, love weaves no net;
I would not whisper a recall,
Nor choose to capture what is yet
Remote and virginal.
LVII

Sunrise

1 Lo! on yon eastern marge the sun:
2 The waves a miracle confess,
3 And awed, illumined tremors run
4 Through the sea-spaces measureless.

[stanza break]

5 I knew that mystery of the spear,
6 The shaft of flame, the poignant ray;
7 But knew not if ’twere bliss or fear
8 Such seizure by the arisen day.

LVIII

The Lost Dian

1 And if I lose your image, Dear,
2 One moment in the joy of you,
3 Think, the moon-marvel in the mere
4 A moment since was mirror’d true:

5 There lay the Dian, till at once
6 Thrill’d all the waters, and, behold!
7 The disk is scatter’d, and there runs
8 A rippled race of quivering gold.

LIX

Secrets

1 Noontide and summer; not a breeze
2 Abroad, and all the landscape shines;
3 Yet hush; what murmur’d mysteries!
4 There sounds a going in the pines.

5 Our spirits, rooted firm in earth,
6 Reach heavenward; not a branch astir;
7 Yet secrets as of death and birth
8 Are breath’d, nor crave interpreter.
LX

CLOUDS

1    Hourlong to-day I watch’d across the plain
2      The speechless intercourse of cloud and hill,
3    Approaches, hushed enfoldings, and again
4      Slow disengagements, sunderings soft and still.

5    Anon in ancient hollows, where the stream
6      Tumbles, or where the pinewood climbs the steep,
7    The fleecy vapours nestled as in dream,
8      Separate, yet side by side like folded sheep.

9    Last, height and heaven were bare; no pearly flake
10   But was a truant of the winnowing wind:
11    What gift of strength did those pale wanderers take?
12   What gift of sweetness did they leave behind?

LXI

SONG AND SUNSET

1    Tumultuous splendours in the West,
2      A brazier fuming chrysoprase,
3    Southward translucent amethyst
4      Veils mountain-capes and mountain-bays.

5    Extravagance of pomp! yet still,
6      As yester-evening grey, I hear
7    The self-same robin’s frugal bill
8      Pipe the same carol thin and clear.

LXII

NATURE’S NEED

1    We are two foam-flakes on a stream,
2      Two thistle-downs upon the air;
3    Yet joy is therefore not a dream;
4      Bear us, glad Power, we know not where!

[stanza break]
The mighty Mother has a need
Through us to ease her blissful ache;
Blow, breeze, and drive the lucky seed,
Flow, stream, and dance the water-flake.

LXIII

Waking

Waking is wonder; summer airs
Ripple the wheat-field, where a crew
Of wing’d sweet thieves in flights, in pairs,
Their knavish craft pursue.

They dip, lurk, eddy, swing and sway
Upon the stalk—glad, wrangling throats;
While silent to the wind-fleck’d bay
Glide home the pilchard-boats.

Waking is infant joy new born;
And how should wonder e’er be dead
For me, who lean toward the morn
Across so dear a head?

LXIV

The Village Well

Beneath the beech-tree’s dome of shade,
Her pitcher on the coping-stone,
There at the well the village-maid
Sits, muses, leans and dreams alone.

She gazes down where glimmering lies
The girdled fount, discovering there
Those mirror’d stars which are her eyes,
That wavering gold which is her hair.

Nor know I whether memories haunt
These waters, or some hidden fire
Would be allay’d, some nameless want,
The trouble of some dim desire.

[stanza break]
Lean, lean, Beloved, you alone,
Here where my happiness, a well,
Trembles, here where a face has shone
Secluded and adorable.

Gaze yet again where glimmering lies
The water of this fount of grace,
And watch intent! What if there rise
Wavering to sight the Naiad's face!

LXV

**Blossoms**

Bring, bring a rose to sate the eye,
Bring orchids for my sake,
Wing’d like some Orient butterfly,
And spotted like the snake.
But if I pluck a flower for you,
Let be the imperial rose,
Let be the blooms of vapoury mew
Hot garden-walls inclose.

Gorse from a wild hill's golden crown,
For plough or spade too poor;
A hare-bell from the windy down,
Heath from the purple moor;

It must have dared to meet the gale,
It must have loved the skies,
Have seen great sunset glories fail,
And watch’d the dawn uprise.

LXVI

**A Farewell**

The silver chime! and we must part;
Our lark shall be no nightingale:
I go; one moment heart on heart,
Enough for all the day's avail.

[stanza break]
LXVII

NEW HORIZONS

If love were but a curious maze
With halt at midmost, who would choose
Swift triumph? Better Dear delays,
And blind, bewildering avenues.

The frankness of the sea, the sky,
Become you, you who grant the whole
Fearless, and still the marges fly,
And deeper heavens allure the soul.

LXVIII

PAST AND PRESENT

Those rare unearthly years of ours
Moved on no fairer heavenlier range
Than these of full co-operant powers
Yet make earth’s harvest-sunshine strange.

Strange that the spirit of a star
Should stoop and enter at my door,
Still fire and dew as when afar,
Yet human to the ripe heart’s core.

And in my soul a fount that gush’d,
Lucid with wandering mountain-gleams,
In waterbreaks leap’d valeward, flush’d
With all its tributary streams.
LXIX
POVERTY AND PLENTY

1 I can remember when a child
2 I gave my fortune all away,
3 Two halfpennies, for my heart was wild
4 To bless that bedesman faint and grey.

5 And still I see his mute appeal,
6 The craving in his eyes I see,
7 Still hear his blessing and can feel
8 My leap of infant ecstasy.

9 Therefore I urge not—“Tell me true,
10 Say, are you happy?” nor take thought
11 Because, being wholly given to you,
12 I never yet could give you aught.

13 That you were rich, that I was poor,
14 And beggary all the trade I had,
15 ‘Tis this that makes my soul secure—
16 You gave and cannot but be glad.

LXX
WISE FOOLISHNESS

1 I posed you with Athene’s spear,
2 A virgin warrior, fancy-free;
3 How could I then divine that dear
4 And deep irrationality?

5 Fools both: you spendthrift in desire
6 So poor a man as me to bless,
7 And I who at my altar-fire
8 Sang hymns to Wisdom’s patroness.

9 Ah! and how swift time plies the wing;
10 Here sit we Doctors in Love’s school;
11 So learned we know the wisest thing
12 On earth is to have play’d the fool.

[stanza break]
O wise dear foolishness! Such lore
We grey-hair’d sages try to preach
To youngsters now. Nay, let’s give o’er,
Our rede to them is foreign speech.

**LXXI**

**CHILDHOOD**

Her earliest love (down, jealous rage!)
Was but the King of Scotland’s son,
Crusading Kenneth; eight her age,
My sweet, small, amorous simpleton.

Vanished the northern wizardry;
Next Harold slain in desperate fight,
Found by the Swan-neck (that was she;)
The third, I think, Aslauga’s knight.

Whereon names follow quick and thick,
But somewhat fretted by the moth,
Save one all gold—Theodoric!
Tut, child, to choose an Ostrogoth!

But when the lists were set one day,
Who like a thunderbolt bore down
All champions, bore the prize away?
Dear, a poor clerk in scholar’s gown.

**LXII**

**THE RIVAL**

Your rival—yes, and not an hour
Out of my sight; be jealous now!
The same grave face of tender power,
The same pure lips and brooding brow.

The hair mere sunshine wefted fine;
The eyes that look’d through life and death;
The spirit alive in every line,
Which grew to be my pulse, my breath.

[stanza break]
Room in my heart must be for two,
Nor know I which I should prefer,
Your rival who long since was you,
Or you proved all I dreamed of her.

LXXIII
SIXTEEN YEARS

Echoes of shawms and trumpets, Dear,
Vibrate; this day you came to me;
Think! Now begins our sixteenth year;
Praise, praise, and proud humility.

Think of a man assurance saves,
Sustains yet whelms in life and limb;
O strong salvation, all thy waves
And billows have gone over him!

LXXIV
TRUTHS AND TRUTH

We chased ideas years ago,
Truths seem’d our quarry day by day;
Has all our fire now smoulder’d low,
The hunter’s passion for his prey?

Or are we victors after strife?
Merchants retired from rich emloy?
Does truth put on the limbs of Life,
And wear the fervid face of joy?

LXXV
MADONNA

Always before me as we climb’d the height,
Always than mine a wider, steadier view,
Always at call a hand’s grasp firm, though light,
Till where she had stood I now was standing too.

Fain, fain to serve am I; yet be my part
To need a refuge, claim protectiveness,
So serving best the great Madonna-heart;
My gift to know all blessing, hers to bless.
LXXVI

Justice

1 Your cry was ever “Justice!” Did I deem
2 Justice a stern-brow’d goddess, sword in hand?
3 Stern-brow’d in truth, and in her eyes a gleam
4 Indignant, on her lips a dread command.
5 Yet you have shown her with a tenderer brow,
6 Sowing fair deeds, giver of cheer, of coins,
7 Strict, wise, benignant; and I name her now
8 “Love with the lighted lamp and girded loins.”

LXXVII

Liberality

1 The sun is not less free to all
2 In largess, though he yield
3 Some lovelier light angelical
4 To yonder hillside field.
5 The stream has mirth for all the wild
6 And all the wood, though here
7 —Listen!—its laughter of a child
8 Ring blithest and most clear.
9 Gladden the region; give away,
10 To each that claims, a part;
11 I grasp no miser’s gold who lay
12 This hand upon your heart.

LXXVIII

The Wave

1 Once more—how vain, how vain!—
2 The wave breaks up the shore,
3 Pale praise, unfruitful thanks again
4 And hopeless speech once more.

[stanza break]
5 High as the wave may run
6 It can but leave behind
7 One foam-bell glittering in the sun,
8 And quivering to the wind.

LXXIX

SPEECH A CLOUD

1 If all my words are but a cloud,
2 Half sun-suffused, half darkening you,
3 And winnowing song, or low or loud,
4 Scant help to let the radiance through,

5 Fling down some wide aerial shaft
6 Of sunbeams, an illumined stair,
7 That, past the shadowings of my craft,
8 Watchers may yet divine you there;

9 A stair from heaven to earth whereon
10 White Presences may come and go
11 Envoys, who at Love's bidding run,
12 To breathe your name to men below.

LXXX

THE SOURCE

1 Live water insuppressible,
2 Upwelling new and still the same,
3 Slender but lucid—who can tell
4 From what strong ribs of earth it came?

5 Look how the grains of yellow sand
6 Are toss'd! Now stoop; with finger-tip
7 Touch, or in hollow of your hand
8 Bear one light ripple to your lip.

9 So steams have sprung that broaden free
10 Past fane deep-fronted, bulwark brave;
11 This will not bear an argosy;
12 Enough! Egeria scoop'd the wave.
LXXXI

THE VIOLIN

1 No lucky Stradivarius this!
2 Poor fiddle, lacking craftsman’s name;
3 Yet poised, and to the bow submiss,
4 Some touch of music’s rapture came.

5 Is it because your hand can win
6 From every yearning thing its best?
7 Is it because, glad violin,
8 It lean’d and trembled toward your breast?

LXXXII

SEA-MEWS’ CRIES

1 If we were nested with a brood,
2 Safe in the fork twixt bough and bough,
3 Heaven’s silence or earth’s quietude
4 Long warblings might allow.

5 But sea-bird from the crag that flies
6 Across the voiceful plain, or flits
7 From ridge to ridge that climbs and cries,
8 Such shrill swift call befits.

LXXXIII

THE NORTH WIND

1 A wanderer in the mist was I,
2 Faltering ‘mid pallid wreaths adrift,
3 With naught to hope, to resist, descry,
4 And not a dream the cloud could lift.

5 You were the North wind, not for ease
6 Issuing, but strength to slay despair;
7 I lean’d forth, drank the quickening breeze,
8 Look’d—and behold, the heaven was bare!

9 And whether luck it was, or grace,
10 When thus I gazed around, abroad,
11 Blind feet had borne me to a place
12 That seem’d the very mount of God.
The Rapids

Where most the rapids swirl’d I lay
Motionless in our frail canoe;
The Indian guide whose toil seem’d play,
Lithe oarsman at the prow, were you.

Yet what a need of practiced eye,
Of poise or turn of wrist what need,
To shoot secure through jeopardy
With such a breathless, quivering speed!

And ever while the oar you plied
I knew no thought of life or death,
Nor felt the snakelike waters glide,
But lived in some deep heaven of faith.

The Challenge

Brain challenged brain to onset fierce,
Youth was our cartel-bearer gay,
And desperate was the quart-and-tierce,
But all my pride was in your play.

Honest renouncers, brain with brain;
And yet with springing heart I viewed
The dexterous arm that thrust amain,
And shifting grace of attitude.

Times alter; calm the seasons move;
Yet come, one bout!  I throw my gage,
And dare you, who can never prove
That youth was half so blest as age.

Knowledge and Truth

I circled wide, the sea-mew’s way,
Sway’d as in blissful idleness,
Loll’d on the wave yet found my prey
And gather’d knowledge none the less.

[stanza break]
The South Carolina Review

LXXXVII

EXCHANGE OF SEX

In some strange world, ere stars were old,
Or here ere ocean whelm’d a land,
You were a bearded sea-king bold,
I, a white maiden on the strand.

Strong arms compell’d her to your bark,
Light borne for all your ring-wrought gear;
You swept the waves from dawn to dark,
While pride was trembling through her fear.

She half remembers in a dream
Grey towers of her sea-eagle’s nest;
Sunshine and storm, the gloom, the gleam,
Warmth, might, male gladness on her breast.

You had your will, and very life
Of yours was then her cherish’d store;
Can you recall when I was wife,
And thoughts of yours grew babes I bore?

So now if sweet authority
Touches, though in a different sex,
Your love, and I approve it, why
Should instincts from the prime perplex?

LXXXVIII

THE STONE-BREAKER

On life’s roadside I sit and break
Poor learning’s stones for pay;
Nor is the trade too bad, I make
My half-a-crown a day

[stanza break]
5 My good hour comes; 'tis past the noon,
  And sure as sure can be
6 With kerchief’d head and kilted gown
  The mistress steps toward me;
7 Not slim perhaps as once she was,
  Yet still some girlish grace,
8 Not with light footing of the lass
  But just as brave a face;
9 She bears the can, she bears the mug,
  The bulging handkerchief;
10 Beneath the hedge is shelter snug,
  O hour of my relief!
11 And sure such bread is angels’ food,
  Such cheese heaven’s honey-dew;
12 Kind are the eyes as when I wooed,
  The heart as stout and true.
13 So when she goes my hammer plies
  Livelier on learning’s stones,
14 Till home I trudge to meet her eyes,
  Maybe with aching bones.

LXXXIX

THE NEW CIRCLE

1 Mistress of innocent spells, your brain,
  A kindlier Circe, rules my rout
2 Of thoughts and fancies. What a train
  Gather their queen about!
3 Smile at their awkward gambolling
  With queenly-humorous, wise regard;
4 And let them fling and spring and cling,
  Your rabble, ounce and pard.
5 Praise their quaint fawnings if you can,
  Or pierce at once through the disguise,
6 Their thwarted gestures tell of man,
  And human are their eyes.
XC

DISCIPLINE

1 Your strength at first contrôl’d the man
2 Too many an aim diverts, dilates;
3 He knew constraint and swifter ran
4 As through the Danube’s Iron Gates.

5 So ’twas in youth; your strength no less
6 Confirms me now, but you assuage
7 The strong control; your gentleness
8 Has made me great in this my age.

XCI

EVENTIDE

1 “Old friends,” so they have named us, “now grown one,
2 “And twilight peace for cares will make amends,
3 “Nothing so natural underneath the sun
4 “As such soft fading radiance for old friends.”

5 But we have wing’d our level western flight
6 Beyond the glimmering marge, the cloud-confine,
7 To heavens where peace is rapture of the light,
8 And all the shoreless sea is hyaline.

XCII

TRANSITION

1 Low drops the sun, but on these sands
2 The waves still laugh and clap their hands,
3 By awe untouch’d or fear;
4 Life is for them an ecstasy,
5 Nor child nor lamb has keener cry
6 Of joy, though night be near.

7 But turn! yon mountains take the light
8 Aware of transits infinite,
9 Clear-edged, intense, severe,
10 Back’d by pure spaces measureless;
11 In fortitude, submissiveness,
12 Some word of God they hear.
XCIII
GLOAMING

1 They come like shadows, so depart;
2 Theyroop, each man his several way,
3 Theirs is the morn; the eventide
4 Expectant; I expect the night;
5 Is mine; life may have worn my heart;
6 But while you sit by me and stay
7 They pass and you abide.
8 At even time shall be light.

XCIV
IN THE STORM

1 The storm is on us! How the flood
2 Is whipp'd, the woodlands roar!
3 Cloud topples westward over cloud,
4 We'll see the sun no more.
5 Because we had our brave repast,
6 Great light, clear airs, nor dearth
7 Of life or love, we stem the blast
8 And keep our faith in earth.

XCV
BETHESDA

1 One writes “Your words had power to sain
2 And soothe a grief”; but I, no fool,
3 Know whence this virtue mastering pain,
4 The secret of Bethesda's pool.
5 For common needs the waters lay
6 Sufficent, nor would I contemn;
7 Then dawn'd a high miraculous day;
8 An angel came and troubled them.
XCVI
Winnings

1 That gambler, he who raked the gold,
2 Each shadow'd eye a glittering spark,
3 Rose calm, push'd back the curtain-fold,
4 And took his way into the dark.

5 My gold is gift of grace, not luck,
6 But if a call should sound from far,
7 Back the dark curtain I could pluck,
8 And front—perchance the morning-star.

XCVII
Love and Death

1 If at the summons we, in sudden flight
2 With equal beat and poise of wing, beneath
3 Love’s arm of benediction flash’d from light,
4 To lose ourselves on the dark breast of Death;

5 Such flight were blissful close—The shadow’d face
6 Might wear a smile maternal, and, arrived
7 At that dim goal, a murmuring word of grace
8 Might thrill the vacant air—“These two have lived.”

XCVIII
The Blessed Ones

1 Because I am in love with life,
2 Because I breathe a finer air
3 Above the din and dust of strife,
4 The dead have grown more fair.

5 Their eyes send forth a sunset beam,
6 A tenderer ray on mine uplift;
7 Their voices sound a twilight stream,
8 This is also your gift.
Intimate Sorrow

Here leave me: something is your own
   By old prerogatives of blood;
Enter the shadow and alone,
   I ask not closer neighbourhood.

Mine too the grief; but Memory fills
   A deeper chalice with your tears;
Shootings there are and sudden thrills
   From all the half-forgotten years.

Pass through the portal dark and low,
   Single; without I keep my stand;
Yet take from me, before you go,
   The touch of no indifferent hand.

Lachrymatories

These lachrymatories we behold
   Were ravish’d from some sepulcher;
Tears fell and heads were bow’d of old;
   They turn’d and life was lawgiver.

Praise, praise and thanks, by day, by night
   Be yours, not chiefly that you laid
Those kind assuaging hands and light
   With all strong comfort on my head;

But that within Life’s radiant shrine,
   Where stands the glowing altar, where
The flame that leaps is fed with wine,
   My vase of tears you bade me bear.

Love’s Lord

When weight of all the garner’d years
   Bows me, and praise must find relief
In harvest-song, and smiles and tears
   Twist in the band that binds my sheaf;
5 Thou known Unknown, dark, radiant sea
6 In whom we live, in whom we move,
7 My spirit must lose itself in Thee,
8 Crying a name—Life, Light, or Love.

[EPILOGUE]

1 Think not the bird, from rung to rung
2 That climbs his high aerial stair,
3 Tells all his joy; the things unsung
4 Of his blue heaven are song’s despair.

5 Think not the spray that gleams and flies
6 From the toss’d crest is all the wave;
7 And feel my dear deep silences
8 Through loves that laud, through calls that crave.

The untitled epilogue to A Woman’s Reliquary was spaced off from “CL. Love’s Lord” in WR1913 but not otherwise represented on the Contents page. However, in WR1914, the title “Final” was given to the lyric in the Contents to differentiate the two poems, which were made to stand on facing pages to minimize confusion.
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Poems Written in Discipleship

II. Of the School of Mr. Tennyson

Songs

I.

1. The gloom of the sea-fronting cliffs
2. Lay on the water, violet dark,
3. The pennon drooped, the sail fell in,
4. And slowly moved our bark.

5. A golden day: the summer dreamed
6. In heaven, and on the whispering sea,
7. Within our hearts the summer dreamed;
8. It was pure bliss to be.

9. Then rose the girls with bonnets loosed,
10. And shining tresses lightly blown,
11. Alice and Adela, and sang
12. A song from Mendelssohn.

13. O sweet and sad, and wildly clear,
14. Through summer air it sinks and swells,
15. Sweet with a measureless desire,
16. And sad with all farewells.

II.

17. Down beside the forest stream
18. Went at eve my wife and I,
19. And my heart, as in a dream,
20. Heard the idle melody.

21. “Pleasant is this voice,” I said,
22. “Sweet are all the gliding years;”
23. But she turn’d away her head—
24. “Wife, why fill your eyes with tears?”

[stanza break]
“O the years are kind,” said she
“Dearest heart, I love thee well;”
But this voice brought back to me
What I know not how to tell.

Here I came three springs ago;
Ah, my babe’s sweet heart was gay;
Still the idle waters flow,
And it seems but yesterday.

First that morn he walk’d alone,
Laugh’d, and caught me by the knee;
Though I weep now, O my own,
Thou art all the world to me.

III. (Later Manner)

Rain, rain, and sunshine,
Dashed by winds together,
All her flowers are tossed and glad
In the wild June weather.

Which will she wear in her gown?
Drenched rose and Jessamine blossom;
I must stoop if I would smell
Their freshness at her bosom.

In the Lecture Room

Our doctor lectured divinely;
We felt our bosoms kindle
As we thought there really might be
A God in spite of Tyndall.

Outside the leaves were tossing,
The clouds raced over the blue,
The lark was in his heaven,
And God was there I knew.

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*In the Lecture Room* appeared in *KottabosII (1877)* over the initials “E.D.” Because publication followed *P1876* and was not included in *P1877*, the poem might have been selected for “Miscellaneous Poems of Later Dates” in *P1913/1914* but wasn’t. Hence, it shares the fate of *Songs II-III* (above) as stranded lyrics in the canon.
A Reverie

1   Alone by the river I lingered to rest;
2   I gazed on its waters reflecting each tree;
3   And I mused, as the sun sank away in the West,
4   On that current so placidly seeking the sea.

5   And I watched how the crest of that green mossy bank
6   Seemed to look with regret on its shadows below,
7   As deep in the waters' still bosom they sank
8   And joined not the stream's ever-vanishing flow.

9   And I thought—and my soul told its thought in a sigh—
10  Of the grief that had left my youth's gladness a blank:
11  While the current of sorrow for others rolled by,
12  But mine still remained, like that motionless bank.

13  And I looked on the waters so sweet in their calm,
14  And I looked on the waning sun's soft ruddy gleam,
15  And I prayed that the sweetness of heavenly balm
16  On my soul should be poured as on sun and on stream.

17  Then I vowed, as I rose, that my heart should rejoice,
18  And my life be as calm as the bank which I trod,
19  For my heart, like that bank, heard the murmuring voice
20  Of the waters which bade us be happy in God.

A Reverie appeared in IM(1881) over the initial “D.” It is conjecturally by Dowden, a likely contributor, as it follows immediately upon a lengthy review of his Poems by “M.R.”
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Look forward with those steadfast eyes

Long autumn rain;

Lo! on yon eastern marge the sun:

Live water insuppressible

Lo! on yon eastern marge the sun:

Lord, Christ, if Thou art with us and these eyes

Lord, I have knelt and tried to pray to-night,

Lord, when my hour to part is come,

Love's kingdom first, a spirit divine,

Lord, when my hour to part is come,

Let them go by—the heats, the doubts, the strife

Let not thy sacramental bread and wine,

It was Luke's will; and she, the mother-maid

It was not love, but o'er the array

In the Dean's porch a nest of clay

If love were but a curious maze

If it were possible to spare

If seeking me she ask "What hap"

If we were nested with a brood,

If while I sit flatter'd by this warm sun

In some strange world, ere stars were old,

In the open air once more

It was Luke's will; and she, the mother-maid

It was not love, but o'er the array

Let not thy sacramental bread and wine,

Let them go by—the heats, the doubts, the strife

Light ebbs from off the Earth; the fields are strange,

Let not thy sacramental bread and wine,

Look at this drain'd alcove

Look forward with those steadfast eyes

Long autumn rain;

Lo! on yon eastern marge the sun:

Live water insuppressible

Lo! on yon eastern marge the sun:

Lord, Christ, if Thou art with us and these eyes

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It was not love, but o'er the array

Let not thy sacramental bread and wine,

Let them go by—the heats, the doubts, the strife

Light ebbs from off the Earth; the fields are strange,
Now on life's crest we breathe the temperate air

Now silence! weighing down a steep descent

O silence, now all golden, what a word.

O what a morn is this for us who knew

O would you read that Hebrew legend true.

Of all her joys the Earth has need;

"Old friends," so they have named us, "now grown one,

On a point of rock I sat one morning.

On life's roadside I sit and break:

On sand-dunes of this western sea

Once more my idle word

Once more—how vain, how vain!

One writes "Your words had power to saith....

“Only a mill-race," said they, and went by.

Only maidenhood and youth,

Others, with desolate arms, have flung

Our doctor lectured divinely;

Paint her with robe and girdle laid aside

Passion and song, and the adorned hours

Past the town's clamour is a garden full.

Queen-moon of this enchanted summer night.

Radiance invincible! Is that the brow

Rain, rain, and sunshine

Receive my gift, Beloved, such a dower

Rude is the dwelling, low the door,

Ruins of a church with its miraculous well.

Search me and know me; understand.

Ruins of an ancient, miracle-laden well

See, the door opens of this alcove.

Seeker for Eldorado, magic land

Seems not our breathing light?

Shaping thy life what if the stubborn stuff

She kissed me on the forehead.

She stood upon the wall of windy Troy.

Since Thou dost clothe Thyself to-day in cloud,

Sins grew a heavy load and cold.

Smile if you will at my dear need,

So ends your fingers' fine intrigue!

Son of the Earth, brave flinger of the seed,

Song that is pent in me,

Spring-tides of Pleasure in the blood, keen thrill.

Stand off from me; be still your own

Still deep in the West I gazed; the light

Still the clear spirit's dignity;

Such foolish talk! while that one star still

Sure resting-place above the shock.

Sweet and blind commotion of the sap,

Tender impatience quickening, quickening.

Thank God for simple, honest, close-knit turf,

Thanks spoken under rainy skies.
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APPENDIX A

The Dowden Library Sale of 1914

In the April 1914 sale catalogue No. XCVII, entitled somewhat deceptively Old English Literature: A Special Catalogue of Valuable Books from the Library of the late Professor Edward Dowden . . ., Author of various works on Shakespeare, Shelley, Studies in English Literature, and others, Frank Hollings (Holborn, London) offered some 904 titles in the main alphabetized body and addendum of the booklet, the largest extant inventory of Dowden's fabled library, frequented by generations of students and writers in Dublin, including Yeats, Rolleston, Gogarty, Joyce, and many others. In small print, the catalogue advertised “many valuable works of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Authors; Books with coloured plates, by Cruikshank, Rowlandson, and a fine collection of Kate Greenaway’s Coloured Illustrated Books; a Large and Important Folk-lore Collection, Sporting and Gaming, Works by Modern Essayists, First Editions of Sir Walter Scott, Richard Jefferies, Rudyard Kipling, R. L. Stevenson, and others; Early Treatises on Medicine, Astrology, Mysticism, and other Occult Subjects”—hardly what we would now call “Old English Literature.” Even in 1914, the majority was nineteenth century and therefore relatively “modern.” Aimed at the English market, the catalogue's pitch avoided mentioning the Irish authors sprinkled in but of interest to collectors—for example, Wilde, Yeats, Gregory, and Hyde. Not surprisingly, it emphasized authors on which Dowden was expert (e.g., Browning, Shelley, Tennyson, Wordsworth) but lacked Shakespeare. It was a very small cross-section of the whole, as Mrs. Dowden estimated the library “latterly had grown to some twenty-four thousand volumes” (P1914 xiv). Undoubtedly, the vast majority did not make it beyond the precincts of Dublin's used booksellers in those days—Fred Hanna’s, Greene's, and others around the City, particularly those close-by Trinity College. (But see Appendix B for exceptions.)

In her September 1913 Preface to Dowden's Poems, Mrs. Dowden (“E.D.D.”) made the connection between his verse-writing (as opposed to his prose-writing), the recitative style of his “College lecturering,” and the “spiritual converse he gained” collecting books. She referred to his bibliophilia as “a fertile source of recreation in the collecting of rarities, old books, MSS. and curiosities” (xv) and likened her husband to a humane sportsman rather than an obsessed game hunter:

This was his shooting on the moors, his fishing in the rivers. No living creature ever lost its life for his amusement, but in this innocuous play he found unfailing pleasure, and many a piece of luck he had with his gun or rod in hitting some rare bird, or landing some big prize of a fish out of old booksellers’ catalogues or the “carts” in the back streets. (xv)

To wit, Wordsworth items 878, 879, and 880, which tell their own story. Being out of copyright but available to the editor, the Frank Hollings catalogue of Dowden “rarities” is reproduced on the following pages.
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Nearly every collector of fine and rare books includes Dickens among his list of esteemed authors. Dickens is essentially a collector's author, for the reason that his books in their original state make an irresistible appeal. To tell of the appearance of these is the purpose of this Bibliography. Due notice has been taken of the various issues of first editions, and the different 'points' involved have been carefully assembled and explained. An instance of how thorough the work is to be found in the fact that the description of 'The Pickwick Papers' occupies 27 pages.

Another feature relates to presentation copies, treated separately for the first time in any Bibliography.

Prices are of prime importance in a modern Bibliography, and with this fact in view the compiler has been collecting priced catalogues of big sales for a number of years. Enough figures are recorded to aid both the buyer and seller.

A number of important discoveries have been made by Mr. Eckel and set forth in his volume, and these will tend to settle finally questions which have heretofore been matters of controversy.

Illustrations and facsimiles are used in a Dickens bibliography for the first time, to make clear such 'points' as require them. These have been reproduced with great care and accuracy, and form a valuable addition to the book.

The edition is limited to 1,000 copies, 250 of which are large paper copies, signed by the compiler and the publishers.

CONTENTS.—The Important Novels; The Minor Books; Books in which Dickens had only a Limited Interest; Plays; Contributions to Newspapers, etc.; Writings Ascribed to Dickens; Some Costly Dickensiana; Miscellaneous and Un-classified; Presentation Copies; Speeches.

FRANK HOLLINGS, 7, Great Turnstile, Holborn, London.
APPENDIX B

Books Selected from Additional Auctions (1913-1916)

Between 5 November 1913 and 20 January 1916, there were five auctions transacted by Messrs. Hodgson & Co., at their rooms in Chancery Lane, London, in addition to the major one handled by Frank Hollings (see Appendix A), for the sale of most of Edward Dowden's literary effects. In all, descriptions of only 73 lots are listed here (abstracted from 146 pages of advertising) as a selection of content to complement the 904 lots in the Hollings sale. For the sake of economy, the editor has chosen to restrict the two appendices to monographs, omitting manuscripts, documents, letters, and artwork collected by Dowden as a professor at Trinity College, Dublin. All told, the firm’s records at the British Library show that his Estate did well by liquidating these assets for his heirs—realizing something in the vicinity of £3,000, a princely sum in those days, according to the abstracts of sales in the Hodgson Papers (BL Add MS. 54613, 54614, 54619, and 54620, Accounts with Purchases of Books, etc., 1911-1924). Hodgson claimed a 12.5% commission for expenses.

I. WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5. 1913

RARE OR EARLY EDITIONS OF VICTORIAN POETS AND WRITERS

133 Yeats (W.B.) Mosada, a Dramatic Poem, portrait of the author by J. B. Yeats, First Edition of the Author’s first publication, Presentation Copy with inscription “Prof. Dowden, with the Author’s Compts,” original wrapper Dublin 1886.

STANDARD EDITIONS OF ENGLISH CLASSICS, FROM CHAUCER TO WORDSWORTH,

328 Defoe (D.) Novels and Miscellaneous Works, portraits, 6 vols, 1854-6, System of Magic, History of Apparitions, &c. 5 vols, Oxford 1840-41, and 1 other 12 vols.

507 Blake (W.)—The Complaint and the Consolation; or Night Thoughts, by Edward Young, illustrated with 43 designs by William Blake, Original Edition, with the Explanation of the Plates at end (the margins of 2 ll. repaired and 1 slightly frayed), folio, half morocco, t. e. g. fore and lower edges uncut, 1797.

508 Blake (W.)— Etchings from his Works, on India paper, by W. Bell Scott, with descriptive text, folio, boards, 1878.

509 Blake (W.) Works, Poetic, Symbolic, and Critical, by E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats, portrait, and litho-plates and facsimiles large paper, 3 vols, imp. 8vo, half roan gill, t. e. g. 1893.

II. Thursday. November 6, 1913

REPRINTS OF RARE BOOKS.

478 Poliphili Hypnerotomachia, 1499—Facsimiles of the Woodcuts, folio, 1889; Daphnis and Chloe, by Angel Day, Large Paper, 1890, &c. 2 vols, Tudor Library, and 4 others (7)

481 Scot (r.) The Discoverie of Witchcraft, 1584, edited by B. Nicholson, sm. 4to, half morocco, t.e.g. 1886.

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY.

547 Ueberweg (F.) History of Philosophy, translated by Morris and Porter, 2 vols, 1875; Flint (R.) Historical Philosophy in France, 1893, and others 5 vols, cloth.


551 Bruno (Giordano) by J. Lewis McIntyre, frontispiece, 1903; Life of Paracelsus, by F. Hartmann, 1896, and others 6 vols.

554 Berkeley (G.) Complete Works, edited by A. C. Fraser portrait, 4 vols, Oxford 1901, and Life by the same, 1871 5 vols, cloth.

555 Berkeley (G.) Works, edited by G. Sampson, portrait, 3 vols, 1897; and Descartes, his Life and Times, by E. S. Haldane, portrait, 1905, and others 6 vols.

561 Green (T. H.) Prolegomena to Ethics, edited by Bradley, 1883, and Works, by Nettleship, vols 1 and 3, 1885; Green (J. H.) Spiritual Philosophy, 2 vols, 1865, and 1 other 6 vols.

560* Stephen (Leslie) English Thought in the 18th Century, 2 vols cloth 1876, and English Utilitarian[ism?] 3 vols buckram[?] 1900.

562 Hamilton (Sir W. Rowan) Life, with Selections from his Correspondence, &c. by R. P. Graves, portrait, 3 vols, cloth, Dublin 1882; Sidgwick (H.) Methods of Ethics, 1874, and others 10 vols.


577 Böhme—Studies in Jacob Böhme, by A. J. Penny, portrait, 1912; Biography of William Law, with Elucidation of the Writings of Böhme and Freher, Privately Printed, 1854, and others 5 vols.

590 Dowden (J.) The Medieval Church, and The Bishops of Scotland, portrait, 2 vols, 1910-12, &c. 6 vols, and others 10 vols.
III. FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1913

OCTAVO &c

606 Bohn's Antiquarian and Philosophical Library, 16 vols, v. y. and others 30 vols.
629 Wright (T.) Literature and Superstitions of the Middle Ages, 2 vols, cloth, 1846; Ludlow (J. M.) Popular Epics of the Middle Ages, 2 vols, 1865, and others 7 vols.
631 Witchcraft—Rare Tracts relating to Witchcraft (1618-64), half calf, J. R. Smith 1838; Jung-Stilling. Theory of Pneumatology, 1834, and others 10 vols.
632 Robinson (J.) on the Schisms in Freemasonry, half calf, Dublin 1798; Smedley and Taylor. The Occult Sciences, 1855, and others. 14 vols.

CELTIC FOLKLORE AND MYTHOLOGY

653 Malory (Sir T.) Le Morte Darthur, 2 vols, 1900; Rhys (J.) The Arthurian Legend, Oxford 1891, &c. 2 vols, and others 6 vols.
654 Nutt (A.) Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail with especial references to the Hypothesis of its Celtic Origin, cloth 1888.
655 Weston (J. L.) The Legends of Sir Gawain, and Sir Lancelot du Lac, 2 vols, 1897-1901, &c. 4 vols; The Fall of the Nibelungs, translated by M. Armour, plates by W. B. Macdougall, 1897, and 3 others.

PLATO & CLASSICS

668 Tyrell (R. Y.) Latin Poetry, and Essays on Greek Literature, 2 vols, 1895-1909; Rawlinson's Herodotus, abridged, by Grant, 2 vols, 1897, and others 20 vols.

PAMPHLETS & MISCELLANEOUS

894 Pamphlets—Dowden (E.) on the Criticism of Literature, 1864, Yeats (J. B.) Address delivered at King's Inns, Dublin, 1864, Pamphlets by W. L. Bowes (11) in 1 vol, 1818-25, Pain (T.) Common Sense, Phil. 1791, and others in 21 vols.
IV. TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1913

FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURY BOOKS

96 [Digby (Sir K.)] Two Treatises on the Immortality of Reasonable Soules, 1665; Vane (Sir H.) The Retired Man’s Meditations, 1655, and other Contemporary Divinity 20 vols, sm. 4to.

MODERN LITERATURE

510 Yeats (W. B.) Mosada, portrait, wrapper, Dublin 1886; The Great Cockney Tragedy, by E. Rhys, illustrations by J. B. Yeats, 1891 (2).

BOOKS ILLUSTRATED BY BLAKE, BEWICK, &c.

602 Blake (W.) The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, 27 leaves, the text and plates coloured by hand (reproduced in facsimile and limited to a few copies), 4to, half morocco, t.e.g. n.d.

603 Blake—Gay (J.) Fables, plates by Blake and others, 2 vols, roy. 8vo (stained and binding broken), 1793; Thornton’s Virgil, plates, 2 vols in 1, 1821, and others 5 vols.

604 Blake—Wollstonecraft (M.) Original Stories from Real Life, plates by Blake (stained), 1791; Campe (J. H.) Elementary Dialogues, plates by Blake, uncut, 1792, and others 11 vols.

605 Blake—Salzmann (C. G.) Gymnastics for Youth, plates by Blake and others, uncut, 1800; Hayley (W.) Ballads, plates, 12mo, old mottled calf, 1805, and others, illustrated by Blake (6)


634 Proclus, translated by Thomas Taylor, 2 vols, cloth, uncut Printed for the Author 1816.

V. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1913

BOOKS ON WITCHCRAFT, ASTROLOGY, EARLY MEDICINE, HUSBANDRY, TRAVEL, &C.

651 Lacinius (J.) Pretiosa Margarita, woodcuts, with the Aldine device on title and last leaf. First Edition, 12mo (stained) calf, Venetiis 1546; Gesneri de Rerum Fossilium, Lapidum, &c. woodcuts, 8 parts in 1 vol, vellum Tiguri 1565.

652 Pomponatii (P.) Opera [de Incantationibus, &c.], sm. 8vo, old calf, Basilew 1567; Cornelii Agrippæ de Occulta Philosophia, woodcuts (binding broken), Lugduni n.d. and others 5 vols.

653 Wieri (J.) De Praestigiis Daemonum, woodcut portrait, autograph of Thos.
Hutchinson on title (slightly defective), Basileae 1583; Bodini de Magorum Dræmonia, ib. 1581 2 vols, sm. 4to, old calf.

Pselli (M.) Dialogus de Energia seu Operacione Daemonum, Petro Morello interprete, 12mo, half calf, Paris 1577; Thyraæ (P.) Demoniaci, cum Locis Infestis, sm. 4to, half calf Colon. Agrip. 1604.

Daneau (L.) Les Sorciers, and Remonstrāce sur les Jeux de Sort (margins wormed), unbound, 1574; Joubert (L.) Traité du Ris, woodcut portrait, 12mo, calf (stained), Paris 1579, and others (5).

Lemnius (L.) De Miraculis Occultis Naturæ, John Locke's Copy, with his Autograph signature, 12mo, vellum Antverpiœ 1581.

Roberts (A.) Treatise of Witchcraft, 1616, Cotta's Trial of Witchcraft, 1616, and Potts. Trial of Witches at Lancaster, 3 in 1 vol (all imperfect), in 1 vol, sm. 4to, and 1 other.

Deacon (J.) and J. Walker. Dialogicall Discourses of Spirits and Devils, sm. 4to (binding broken) G. Bishop 1601.

Torquemada (A. de) The Spanish Mandevile of Myracles [treating of Necromancy, &c. and an account of the Polar Regions, with a Reference to Labrador], sm. 4to, half bound 1618.

Person (D. of Loghlands in Scotland) Varieties: or A Surveigh of Rare and Excellent Maters [Meteors, Armies and Duels, Sleepe and Dreames, Prodigies and Miracles, The Philosopher's Stone, Of the World: America briefly described, &c.], with blank leaves A and N 2, sm. 4to, old calf R. Badger 1635.

Witchcraft—A Detection of that sinful, shamful, lying Discours of Samual Harshnet (some margins cut into), Imprinted 1600, and 4 others in 1 vol, sm. 4to, half calf; Cotta on Witchcraft, sm. 4to (title and last leaf defective) 1625.

Lancre (P. de) Tableau de l’Inconstance des Mauvais Anges et Demons, folding plate (stained and last leaf repaired), sm. 4to, old calf Paris 1612.

Merlin—Prophétia Angelicana Merlini, 12mo, calf; Francofurti 1603; Heywood’s Life of Merlin, boards, Carmarthen 1812, and others 5 vols.


Webster (J.) The Displaying of supposed Witchcraft, folio (some 11. stained), old calf 1677.

Spencer (J.) Discourse concerning Prodigies, sm. 4to, calf, 1683: Glanvill (J.) Saducismus Triumphatus, 1682: Trial of Witches at Bury St. Edmunds, 1682, and others 5 vols.

Bovet (R.) Pandemonium on the Devil’s Cloyster, frontispiece (verso written on and some ll. stained), 12mo, 1684: Du Lude (Comte) Treatise of Spirits, morocco, g.e. 1723. 2 vols.

Calef (Robert)—More Wonders of the Invisible World: Or, The Wonders of the Invisible World, Display’d in Five Parts ...[including The Differences between the Inhabitants of Salem Village, and Mr. Parris their Minister, in
VI. TUESDAY JUNE 9, 1914


EARLY EDITIONS OF BURNS

146 Burns (R.), Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, an imperfect copy of the rare Kilmarnock Edition, consisting of pp. v-viii of the preliminary matter, and pp. 11-14, 25-38, 41-146, and 149-222, in all 101 original leaves, entirely uncut, 9 in. X 5 ½ in. (but some soiled), bound in boards [Kilmarnock: Printed by John Wilson 1786].

147 Burns (R.), Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, portrait by Beugo after Nasmyth (backed), First Edinburg Edition with the misprint “stinking” on p. 263, red morocco extra, inner dentelle borders, g.e. by Rivière, Edinburg: printed for the Author, and sold by Wm. Creech, 1787.


149 Burns (R.),—Poems ascribed to Robert Burns the Ayrshire Bard not contained in any edition of his Works hitherto published, Original Issue with the Cancel leaf (pp.53-4), original boards, uncut, with the printed label on the upper cover, with
book-plate of Jas. Currie, the Editor of Burns (rebacked) Glasgow, T. Stewart 1801.

Burns (R.)—Stewart’s Edition of Burn’s Poems…to which is added his Correspondence with Clarinda, &c. (the latter with separate title), frontispiece and engraved title, red levant morocco extra, g.e. Glasgow, T. Stewart, &c. 1802.

Burns (R.)—Letters addressed to Clarinda, &c. by Robert Burns, Never before Published [being the Appendix to Stewart’s Edition of the Poems], new calf; t.e.g. other edges uncut Glasgow, T. Stewart, &c. 1802.

VII. THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 1916

From the collection of the late PROFESSOR EDWARD DOWDEN, M.A., Litt.D. of Trinity College, Dublin.


ENGRAVINGS, MEZZOTINT PORTRAITS, ORIGINAL DRAWINGS AND BOOKS ON ART

258 Blake (W.) Illustrations to Dante, 7 etchings, Proofs on India Paper, within mounts, Original Issue [1827].

259 Blake (W.) Illustrations to the Book of Job, title and 21 etchings on India Paper, unbound London, Published by William Blake 1825.

260 Blake (W.)—Blair’s Grave, etchings by Schiavonetti after Blake, Original Edition, 4to (one plate defective, w.a. f.) 1808.

261 Blake (W.)—Thoughts on Outline Sculpture by G. Cumberland &c. 24 plates, 8 of which are by William Blake, 4to, cloth 1796.

262 Blake (W.) Works—The Songs of Innocence and Experience America, Song of Los, &c.(8), Facsimile Reproductions, in 1 vol, folio, (limited to 100 copies), half roan 1876.

263 Blake (W.) Jerusalem, Facsimile Reproduction of the rare Original Edition [1804], wrapper, uncut 1877.

264 Blake (W.) Illustrations to Paradise Lost, 12 coloured plates, 4to, in cloth portfolio, 1906, and to Blair’s Grave, in portfolio, Reprint, and 4 Engravings, &c. by the same [including a woodcut of the Flood] (6).

THE REMAINING PORTION OF THE LIBRARY OF THE LATE PROF. E. DOWDEN.

400 Percy Society—Gifford’s Dialogue of Witches [1603], &c. 1 7 parts, 1840-48; Early English Text Society, 8 parts of, 1864- 80 and others a parcel.

479 Helmont (F. M. van) concerning the Macrocosm and the Microcosm, 1685; Royal Society’s Transactions, the first 4 years, in 1 vol, folding plates, 1665-8, and others 20 vols.