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AN ERRING WOMAN'S
LOVE

ELLA
WHEELER
WILCOX



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AN ERRING WOMAN'S LOVE

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by

Ella Wheeler Wilcox



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POEMS OF POWER

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KINGDOM OF LOVE AND OTHER
POEMS

THE BEAUTIFUL LAND OF NOD

AN AMBITIOUS MAN

AN ERRING WOMAN'S LOVE

MEN, WOMEN AND EMOTIONS

THREE WOMEN: A Story in Verse



Ella Wheeler Wilcox

AN ERRING WOMAN'S LOVE

BY

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

AUTHOR OF

"POEMS OF PASSION," "POEMS OF PLEASURE," "MAURINE," ETC.

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LOUISE MEARS AND W. P. HOOPER

CHICAGO

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AN ERRING WOMAN'S LOVE.

PART I.

SHE was a light and wanton maid :
Not one whom fickle Love betrayed,
For indolence was her undoer.
Fair, frivolous, and very poor,
She scorned the thought of toil, in youth,
And chose the path that leads from truth.

More women fall from want of gold,
Than love leads wrong, if truth were told ;
More women sin for gay attire
Than sin through passion's blinding fire.
Her god was gold : and gold she saw
Prove mightier than the sternest law
With judge and jury, priest and king ;

So, made herself an offering
At Mammon's shrine ; and lived for power,
And ease, and pleasures of the hour.

Who looks beneath life's outer crust
Is satisfied that God is just ;
Who looks not under, but about,
Finds much to make him sad with doubt.
For Virtue walks with feet worn bare,
While Sin rides by with coach and pair :
Men praise the modest heart and chaste,
And yet they let it go to waste,
And follow, fierce to have and hold
Some creature, wanton, selfish, bold.

She saw but this, life's outer side,
No higher faith was hers to guide ;
She worshipped gold, and hated toil,
And hence her youth with all its soil,
With all its sins too dark to name,
Of secret crimes and public shame,

With all its trail of broken lives,
Of ruined homes, neglected wives,
And weeping mothers. Proud and gay
She went her devastating way
With untouched brow and fadeless grace.

Not time but feeling marks the face.
Sin on the outer being tells
Not till the startled soul rebels :
And she felt nothing but content.
She was too light and indolent
To worry over days to come.
This little earth held all life's sum
She thought, and to be young and fair,
Well clothed, well fed, was all her care.
With pitying eyes and lifted head
She gazed on those who toiled for bread,
And laughed to scorn the talk she heard
Of punishment for those who erred,
And virtue's certain recompense.
She seemed devoid of moral sense,

An ignorant thing whose appetites
Bound her horizon of delights.

Men were her puppets to control;
Unconscious of a heart or soul
She lived and gloried, in the ease
She purchased, by her power to please
The eye and senses. Life's one woe
Which caused her pitying tears to flow,
Was poverty. Though hearts might break
And homes be ruined for her sake,
She showed no mercy. But when need
Of gold she saw, her heart would bleed.
The lack of clothing, fire and food,
Was earth's one pain, she understood.
The suffering poor oft blest her name,
Nor questioned whence the ducats came,
She gave so freely. Once she found
A fainting woman on the ground,
A wailing child clasped to her breast.
With her own hands she bath'd and dress'd

The weary waifs! gave food and gold
And clothed them warmly from the cold,
Nor guessed that one she lured from home
Had caused that suffering pair to roam
Unhoused, neglected. Then one day,
Unheralded across her way,
The conqueror came. She knew not why,
But with the first glance of his eye,
A feeling, new and unexplained,
Woke in her what she oft had feigned.
And when his arm stole near her waist,
As startled maidens blush with chaste
Sweet fear at love's advances, so
She blushed from brow to breast of snow.
Strange, new emotions, fraught with joy
And pain commingled, made her coy;
But when he would have clasped her neck
With gems that might a queen bedeck
And offered gold, her lips grew white,
With sudden anger at the sight
Of what had been her god for years.

She flung them from her. Then such tears
As only spring from love's despair
Welled from her eyes. "So, lady fair,
My gifts are scorned?" quoth he, and laughed.
"Like Cleopatra, you have quaffed
Such lordly pearls in draughts of wine,
You spurn poor simple gems like mine.
Well, well, fair queen, I'll bring to you
A richer gift next time——Adieu."

His light words stung like lash of whip;
With gasping breath and ashen lip
She strove to speak, but he was gone.
She kneeled and pressed her mouth upon
The latch his hand had touched, the floor
His foot had trod, and o'er and o'er
She sobbed his name, as children moan
A mother's name when left alone.

Out from the dim and roseate gloom
And subtle odors of her room,

Accusing memories rose. She felt
A loneliness that seemed to belt
The universe in its embrace.
It was as if from some high place
A giant hand had reached and hurled
To nothingness her petty world,
And left her staring, awed, alone,
Up into regions vast, unknown.
There is no other loneliness
That can so sadden and oppress
As when beside the burned-out fire
Of sated passion and desire
The wakening spirit, in a glance,
Beholds its lost inheritance.
She rose and turned the dim lights higher,
Brought forth rich gems and grand attire,
And robed herself in feverish haste ;
Before the mirror posed and paced,
With jewels on her breast and wrists ;
Then sudden clenched her little fists
And beat her face until it bled,

And tore her garments shred from shred,
Gazed in the mirror, spoke her name
And hissed a word that told her shame,
Then on her knees fell sobbing there.

There are sweet messengers of prayer,
Who down through space on soft wings steal,
And offer aid to all who kneel.
Her lips, unused to pious phrase,
Recalled some words of bygone days,
And "Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my soul to keep"
She whispered timidly, and then
"Lord let me be a child again
And grow up good." The strange prayer said,
Like some o'er weary child, her head
She pillowed on her arm, and wept
Low, shuddering sobs, until she slept
And dreamed; and in that dream she thought
She sat within a vine-wreathed cot;
An infant slumbered on her breast,

She crooned a lullaby, and pressed
Its waxen hand against her cheek,
While one too proud and fond to speak,
The happy father of the child,
Stood near, and gazing on them, smiled.

She woke while still the lullaby
Was on her lips—then such a cry,
As souls in fabled realms below
Might utter, voiced her awful woe.

The mighty moral labor pain
Of new-born conscience wracked her brain
And tore her soul. She understood
The meaning now of womanhood,
And chastity, and o'er her came
The full, dark sense of all her shame.
As some poor drunken wretch, at night,
Wakes up to know his piteous plight,
And sees, while sinking in the mire,
Afar, his waiting hearth-light's fire;

So now she saw from depths of sin,
The hearth-light of the might-have-been.
How beautiful, how like a star
That lost light shone, but ah, how far!

She reached her longing arms toward space,
And lifted up her tear-wet face.
"Oh, God," she wailed, "I have been bad!
I see it all, and I am sad,
And long to be a good girl now.
Lord, Lord, will some one show me how?
Why, men have trod the burning track
Of sin for years, and then gone back!
And cannot I for sin atone,
Or did Christ die for men alone?
I want to lead an honest life,
I want to be his own true wife
And hold upon my breast his child."
Then suddenly her voice grew wild,
"No, no," she cried, "it could not be,
Those infant eyes would torture me—

Though God condoned my sinful ways
I could not meet my child's pure gaze."

She hid her face upon her knees,
And swayed as reeds sway in a breeze,
"Oh, Christ," she moaned, "could I forget
There might be something for me yet:
But though both God and man forgave,
And I should win the love I crave,
Why, memory would drive me mad."

When woman drifts from good to bad,
To make her final fall complete,
She puts her soul beneath her feet.
Man's dual selves seem separate;
He leaves his soul outside sin's gate
And finds it waiting when he tires
Of carnal pleasures and desires.
Depleted, sickened and depressed,
As souls must be with such a test,
Yet strong enough to help him grope
Back into happiness and hope.

But woman, far more complicate,
Can take no chances with her fate;
A subtle creature, finely spun,
Her body and her soul are one.
And now this erring woman wept
The soul she murdered while it slept.
She felt too stunned with pain to think.
She seemed to stand upon a brink;
Behind her loomed the sinful past,
Below her, rocks, beyond her, vast
And awful darkness. Not one ray
Of sun or star to show the way!
She drew a long and shuddering breath;
"There is no other path but death
For me to tread," she sighed, "and so
I will prepare my house and go."

As housewives move with willing feet
And skilful hands to make things neat,
And ready for some welcome one,
She toiled until her tasks were done.

Then, seated at her desk, she wrote
With painful care, a tear-wet note.
The childish penmanship was rude,
Ill spelled the words, the phrasing crude ;
Yet thought and feeling both were there
And mighty love and great despair.
“Dear heart,” it ran, “you did not know
How, from the first, I loved you so,
That sin grew hateful in my sight.
And so I leave it all to-night.
The kiss I gave, dear heart, to you
Was love's first kiss, as pure and true
As ever lips of maiden gave.
I think 'twill warm my lonely grave,
And light the pathway I must tread
Among the hapless, homeless dead.”

“When God formed worlds, He failed to make
A path for erring feet to take
Back into light and peace again,
Unless they were the feet of men.”

When woman errs, and then regrets,
Her sun of hope forever sets,
And life is hung with deepest gloom.
In all the world there is no room
For such as she; and so I hold
That death itself is not so cold
As life has seemed, since by love's light
I saw there was a wrong and right,
And that my birthright had been sold,
By my own hands, for tarnished gold.
I hated labor, hence I fell;
But now I love you, dear, so well,
No greater boon my soul could crave
Than just to toil, a galley slave,
Through burdened years and years of life,
If at the last you called me wife
For one supreme and honored hour.
Alas! too late I learn love's power,
Too late I realize my loss,
And have no strength to bear my cross
Of loneliness and dark disgrace.

There cannot be another place
So desolate, so full of fear,
As earth to me, without you, dear.

You will not understand, I know,
How one like me can love you so.
It was a strange, strange thing. Love came
So like a swift, devouring flame
And burned my frail, fair-weather boat
And left me on the waves afloat,
With nothing but a broken spar.
The distant shores seem very far;
I cannot reach them, so I sink.
God will forgive my sins, I think,
Because I die for love, like One
The good Book tells about, His Son.

For erring woman death can bring
No pain so keen as memory's sting.
Good night, good-by. God bless you, dear,
And give you love, and joy, and cheer.

But sometimes, in the dark night, say
A prayer for one who went astray,
And found no pathway back, and died
For love of you—a suicide.”

When morn his glorious pinions spread
They found the erring woman dead.

PART II.

She woke as one wakes from a deep
And dreamless, yet exhausting sleep.

A strange confusion filled her mind
And sorrows vague and undefined,

Like half-remembered faces pressed
To memory's window, in her breast,

Gazed at her with reproachful eyes.
She felt a sudden, dazed surprise,

Commingled with a sense of dread,
"I did but sleep—I am not dead,

The potion and the purpose failed
And I still live," she wildly wailed.

"Nay thou art dead, rash suicide"
A sad voice spake: and at her side

She saw a weird and shadowy crowd
With anguished lips, and shoulders bowed,

And orbs that seemed the wells of woe.
She shrieked and veiled her eyes. "No, no!

I am not dead! I ache with life.
An earthly passion's hopeless strife

Still tortures me." "Yet thou art dead."
The voice with sad insistence said.

"But love and sorrow and regret
All die with death. *I* feel them yet."

"God bade thee live, and only He
Can say when thou shalt cease to be."

"But I was sin-sick, sad, alone—
I thought by death I could atone,

And died that Christ might show me how."
"Christ bore His burden, why not thou?"

"Oh, lead me to His holy feet
And let my penance be complete."

"What! thinkest thou to find that path—
Thou who hast tempted Heaven's wrath

By thy rash deed? Nay, nay not so,
'Tis but perfected spirits go

To that supreme and final goal.
A self-sought death delays the soul.

With yonder shuddering, woeful throng
Of suicides thy ways belong.

Close to the earth a shadowy band,
Unseen but seeing all, they stand

Until their natural time to die,
As God intended, shall draw nigh.

On earth, repentant, sick of sin,
A ministering angel thou hadst been,

Whose patient toil and deeds divine
Had rescued souls as sad as thine.

Each deed a firm ascending stair
To lead beyond thy great despair.

But now it is thy mournful fate
To linger here and meditate

On thy dark past—to stand so near
The earthly plane that thou canst hear

Thy lover's voice, while old desire
Shall burn within thee like a fire,

And grief shall root thee to the spot
To find how soon thou art forgot.

But since thou hast endured the woes
That only fragile woman knows,

And loved as only woman can,
Thou shalt not suffer all that man

Must suffer when he interferes
With God's great law. In death's dim spheres

That justice waits, which men refuse.
Thy sex shall in some part excuse

Thy desperate deed. When God shall send
A second death to be thy friend,

Thou need'st not fear a darker fate—
Go forth with yonder throng and wait."

A SONG OF REPUBLICS.

FAIR Freedom's ship, too long adrift—
Of every wind the sport—
Now rigged and manned, her course well planned
Sails proudly out of port ;
And fluttering gaily from the mast
This motto is unfurled,
Let all men heed its truth who read :
“ Republics Rule the World ! ”

The universe is high as God !
Good is the final goal ;
The world revolves and man evolves
A purpose and a soul.
No church can bind, no crown forbid
Thought's mighty upward course—
Let kings give way before its sway,
For God inspires its force.

The hero of a vanished age
Was one who bathed in gore;
Who best could fight was noblest knight
In savage days of yore;
Now warrior chiefs are out of date,
The times have changed. To-day
We call men great who arbitrate
And keep war's hounds at bay.

The world no longer looks to priest
Or prince to know its needs;
Earth's human throng has grown too strong
To rule with courts and creeds.
We want no kings but kings of toil—
No crowns but crowns of deeds.
Not royal birth but sterling worth
Must mark the man who leads.

Proud monarchies are out of step
With modern thought to-day,
For Brotherhood is understood

And thrones must pass away.
Men dare to think. Concerted thought
Contains more power than swords :
The force that binds united minds
Defeats mere savage hordes.

Man needs no arbitrary hand
To keep him in control,
He feels the power grow hour by hour
Of his expanding soul ;
In God's stupendous scheme of worlds,
He knows he has a place.
He is no slave to cringe, and crave
Some worthless monarch's grace.

As ocean billows undermine
The haughty shores each hour,
Time's sea has brought its waves of thought
To crumble thrones of power ;
And one by one shall kingdoms fall
Like leaves before the blast,

As man with man combines to plan
Republics formed to last.

Columbia balked a tyrant king,
And built upon a rock,
In Freedom's name, a shrine whose fame
Outlived the century's shock.
Now France within our port has set
Her symbol of re-birth.
Her lifted hand tells sea and land,
Republics light the earth.

One mighty church for all the world
Would make men far more kind.
One government would bring content
To many a restless mind.
Sail on, fair ship of Freedom, sail
The wide sea's breadth and length.
'Till worlds unite to make the might
Of "One Republic's" strength.

WORTH WHILE.

IT is easy enough to be pleasant,
When life flows by like a song,
But the man worth while is one who will smile,
When everything goes dead wrong.
For the test of the heart is trouble,
And it always comes with the years,
And the smile that is worth the praises of earth,
Is the smile that shines through tears.

It is easy enough to be prudent,
When nothing tempts you to stray,
When without or within no voice of sin
Is luring your soul away ;
But it's only a negative virtue
Until it is tried by fire,
And the life that is worth the honor on earth,
Is the one that resists desire.

By the cynic, the sad, the fallen,
Who had no strength for the strife,
The world's highway is cumbered to-day,
They make up the sum of life.
But the virtue that conquers passion,
And the sorrow that hides in a smile,
It is these that are worth the homage on earth.
For we find them but once in a while.

COLEUR DE ROSE.

I WANT more lives in which to love
This world so full of beauty,
I want more days to use the ways
I know of doing duty;
I ask no greater joy than this
(So much I am life's lover,)
When I reach age to turn the page
And read the story over,
(Oh love stay near!)

Oh rapturous promise of the Spring!
Oh June fulfilling after!
If Autumns sigh, when Summers die,
'Tis drowned in Winter's laughter.
Oh maiden dawns, oh wifely noons,
Oh siren sweet, sweet nights,

I'd want no heaven could earth be given
Again with its delights,
(If love stayed near!)

There are such glories for the eye,
Such pleasures for the ear,
The senses reel with all they feel
And see and taste and hear;
There are such ways of doing good,
Such ways of being kind,
And bread that's cast on waters fast
Comes home again, I find.
(Oh love stay near.)

There are such royal souls to know,
There is so much to learn,
While secrets rest in Nature's breast
And unnamed stars still burn.
God toiled six days to make this earth,
I think the good folks say—
Six lives we need to give full meed

Of praise—one for each day,
(If love stay near.)

But oh ! if love fled far away,
Or veiled his face from me,
One life too much, why then were such
A life as this would be.
With sullen May and blighted June
Blurred dawn and haggard night,
This dear old world in space were hurled
If love lent not his light.
(Oh love stay near.)

MEMORIAL DAY—1892.

THE quiet graves of our country's braves
Through thirty Junes and Decembers
Have solemnly lain under sun and rain,
And yet the Nation remembers.

The marching of feet and the flags on the street
Told once again this morning,
In the voice of the drum how the day had come
For those lowly beds' adorning.

Then swiftly back on Time's worn track
His three decades seemed driven,
And with startled eyes, I saw arise
From graves by fancy riven,

The Gray and the Blue in a grand review.
Oh, vast were the hosts they numbered:

As they wheeled and swayed in a dress parade
O'er the graves where they long had slumbered.

The colors were not, as when they fought,
Ranked one against the other,
But a mingled hue of gray and blue,
As brother marching with brother.

And a blue flower lay on each coat of gray
Like forget-me-nots on a boulder,
And the gray moss lace in its Southern grace
Was knotted on each blue shoulder.

The vision fled, but I think our dead,
If they could come back with the living,
Would clasp warm hands o'er hostile lands,
Forgetting old wrongs and forgiving.

'Mong the blossoms of Spring that you gather
and bring
To graves that tho' lowly are royal,

Let the blue flower prevail, though modest and
pale,

Since it speaks of the hue that was loyal.

But tie each bouquet with a ribbon of gray

And lay it on memory's altar,

For the dead who fought for the cause they
thought

Was right, and who did not falter.

LIFE'S TRACK.

THIS game of life is a dangerous play,
Each human soul must watch alway,
 From the first to the very last.
I care not however strong and pure—
Let no man say he is perfectly sure
 The dangerous reefs are past.

For many a rock may lurk near by,
That never is seen when the tide is high—
 Let no man dare to boast.
When the hand is full of trumps—beware,
For that is the time when thought and care
 And nerve are needed most.

As the oldest jockey knows to his cost,
Full many a well-run race is lost

A brief half length from the wire.
And many a soul that has fought with sin,
And gained each battle, at last gives in
To sudden, fierce desire.

And vain seems the effort of spur and whip,
Or the hoarse, hot cry of the pallid lip,
When once we have fallen back.
It is better to keep on stirrup and rein,
The steady poise and the careful strain
In speeding along Life's track.

A watchful eye and a strong, true hand
Will carry us under the Judge's stand,
If prayer, too, does its part.
And little by little the struggling soul
Will grow and strengthen and gain control
Over the passionate heart.

WHEN BABY SOULS SAIL OUT.

WHEN from our mortal vision
Grown men and women go,
To sail strange fields Elysian
And know what spirits know,
I think of them as tourists,
In some sun-gilded clime,
'Mong happy sights and dear delights
We all shall find, in time.

But when a child goes yonder
And leaves its mother here,
Its little feet must wander,
It seems to me, in fear.
What paths of Eden beauty
What scenes of peace and rest
Can bring content to one who went
Forth from a mother's breast.

When Baby Souls Sail Out.

In palace gardens, lonely,
A little child will roam,
And weep for pleasures only
Found in its humble home—
It is not won by splendor,
Nor bought by costly toys,
To hide from harm on mother's arm
Makes all its sum of joys.

It must be when the baby
Goes journeying off alone,
Some angel (Mary may be),
Adopts it for her own.
Yet when a child is taken
Whose mother stays below
With weeping eyes, through Paradise,
I seem to see it go.

With troops of angels trying
To drive away its fear,
I seem to hear it crying

“I want my mamma here.”
I do not court the fancy,
It is not based on doubt,
It is a thought that comes unsought
When baby souls sail out.

AN ODE TO TIME.

HO! sportsman Time, whose chargers fleet
The moments, madly driven,
Beat in the dust beneath their feet
Sweet hopes that years have given;
Turn, turn aside those reckless steeds,
Oh! do not urge them my way;
There's nothing that Time wants or needs
In this contented by-way.

You have down-trodden, in your race,
So much that proves your power,
Why not avoid my humble place,
Why rob me of my dower?
With your vast cellars, cavern deep,
Packed tier on tier with treasures,
You would not miss them should I *keep*
My little store of pleasures.

As one who frightened, flying flings
Her riches down at random,
Your course is paved with precious things
Life casts before your tandem :
The warrior's fame, the conqueror's crown,
Great creeds for ages cherished,
Beneath your chariot-wheels were thrown
And crushed to earth they perished.

Although to just and generous deeds
Your heart is not a stranger,
I have the feeling that one needs
To guard his wealth from danger.
And though a most heroic light
Oft on your pathway lingers,
I'd hide my treasures, if I might,
From contact with your fingers.

You are the loyal friend of Truth,
Go seek her, make her stronger,
And leave the remnant of my youth

To me a little longer.

There's work enough for you before
Eternity shall wed you :

Why stoop to steal my simple store,
Why make me shun and dread you ?

You do not need my joys, I say,
Home, love, and friends united—
I beg you turn and go the way
Where wrong waits to be righted ;
Or pause, and let us chat a while :
I'll listen (not too near you)
For Oh ! no matter how you smile,
I fear you, Time, I fear you !

A MARRIED COQUETTE.

SIT still, I say, and dispense with heroics!

I hurt your wrists? Well, you have hurt me.
It is time you found out that all men are not
stoics,

Nor toys to be used as your mood may be.
I will not let go of your hands, nor leave you
Until I have spoken. No man, you say
Dared ever so treat you before? I believe you
For you have dealt only with *boys* till to-
day.

You women lay stress on your fine perception,
Your intuitions are prated about;
You claim an occult sort of conception
Of matters which men must reason out.

So then, of course, when you asked me kindly
To "call again soon" you read my heart ;
I cannot believe you were acting blindly,
You saw my passion for you from the start.

You are one of these women who charm with-
out trying ;

The clay you are made of is magnet ore,
And I am the steel ; yet, there's no denying
You led me to loving you more and more.
You are fanning a flame that may burn too
brightly,
Oft easily kindled, but hard to put out ;
I am not a man to be played with lightly,
To come at a gesture and go at a pout.

A brute you call me, a creature inhuman ;
You say I insult you, and bid me go.
And you? Oh you are a saintly woman,
With thoughts as pure as the drifted snow.
Pah! you are but one of a thousand beauties

Who think they are living exemplary lives.
They break no commandments, and do all their
duties
As Christian women and spotless wives.

But with drooping of lids, and lifting of faces,
And baring of shoulders, and well-timed sighs,
And the devil knows what other subtle graces,
You are mental wantons, who sin with the
eyes.

You lure Love to wake, yet bid passion keep
under,

You tempt us to fall but bid reason control;
And then you are full of an outraged wonder,
When we get to wanting you, body and soul.

Why, look at yourself! You were no stranger
To the fact that my heart was already on fire.
When you asked me to call you knew my danger,
Yet here you are, dressed in the gown I ad-
mire;

And half of the evil on earth is invented
By vain, pretty women with nothing to do
But to keep themselves manicured, powdered,
and scented
And seek for sensations, amusing and new.

But when *I* play at Love at a woman's commanding,

I always am certain to win one game;
So there—there—there! I will leave my branding
On the lips that are free now to cry "Shame,
shame!"

You hate me? Quite likely! It does not surprise me.

Brute force? I confess it; *but still you were
kissed;*

And one thing is certain—you cannot despise me

For having been played with, controlled, and dismissed.

And the next time you see that a man is attracted

By the beauty and graces that are not for him,

Don't lead him on to be half distracted—

Keep out of deep waters although you can swim.

For when he is caught in the whirlpool of passion,

Where many bold swimmers are seen to drown,

A man will reach out and, in desperate fashion,
Will drag whoever is nearest him down.

Though the strings of his heart may be wrenched and riven

By a maiden coquette who has led him along,
She can be pardoned, excused, and forgiven,

For Innocence blindfolded walks into wrong.

But she who has willingly taken the fetter

That Hymen forges at Cupid's command—

Well, she is a woman who ought to know better;

She needs no mercy at any man's hand.

In the game of hearts, though a woman be winner,

The odds are ever against her, you know;

The world is ready to call her a sinner,

And man is ready to make her so.

Shame is likely, and sorrow is certain,

And the man has the best of it, end as it may.

So now, my lady, we'll drop the curtain,

And put out the lights. We are through with our play.

NEW YEAR.

NEW YEAR, I look straight in your eyes,
Our ways and our interests blend,
You may be a foe in disguise
But I shall believe you a friend.
We get what we give in our measure,
We cannot give pain and get pleasure,
I give you good will and good cheer
And you must return it, New Year.

We get what we give in this life,
Though often the giver indeed
Waits long upon doubting and strife
Ere proving the truth of my Creed.
But somewhere, someway, and forever
Reward is the meed of endeavor—
And if I am really worth while,
New Year, you will give me your smile.

You hide in your mystical hand
No "luck" that I cannot control,
If I trust my own courage and stand
On the Infinite strength of my soul.
Man holds in his brain and his spirit
A power that is God-like, or near it,
And he who has measured his force
Can govern events and their course.

You come with a crown on your brow,
New Year, without blemish or spot.
Yet you, and not I, sir, must bow,
For time is the servant of thought.
Whatever you bring me of trouble
Shall turn into good and then double.
If my spirit looks up without fear
To the Source that you came from, New Year.

DOUBLE CARNATIONS.

A WILD pink nestled in a garden bed,
A rich Carnation flourished high above her,
One day he chanced to see her pretty head
And leaned and looked again, and grew to love
her.

The moss (her humble mother), saw with fear
The ardent glances of the princely stranger ;
With many an anxious thought and dewy tear
She sought to hide her darling from this danger.

The gardener-guardian of this noble bud
A cruel trellis interposed between them.
No common Pink should mate with royal blood,
He said, and sought in every way to wean them.

The poor Pink pined and faded day by day :
Her restless lover from his prison bower

Called in a priestly bee who passed that way,
And sent a message to the sorrowing flower.

The fainting Pink wept as the bee drew near,
Droning his prayers, and begged him to confess
her.

Her weary mother, over-taxed by fear,
Slept, while the priest leaned low to shrive and
bless her.

But Lo! ere long the tale went creeping out,
The rich Carnation and the Pink were married!
The cunning bee had brought the thing about
While Mamma Moss in Slumber's arms had tar-
ried.

And proud descendants of that loving pair,
The offspring of that true and ardent passion,
Are famous for their beauty everywhere,
And leaders in the floral world of fashion.

SWIMMING SONG.

I AM coming, coming to thee,
My strong-armed lover, the Sea!
On thy great, broad breast, I will lie and rest,
And thou shalt talk to me.

I have come to thee, all unsought,
I have stolen an hour from thought!
And peace and power, thou canst give in that
hour,
Which thy rival Earth gives not.

Alone here, under the sky,
And the whole world drifting by!
Thy breast of brine thrills close to mine,
While the cloudless sun sails high.

I fly, but thou givest chase—
Thy kisses are on my face!

Be bold and free as thou wilt, oh Sea,
There is life in thy close embrace.

Throat and cheek and tress
Are damp where thy salt lips press!
There is strength and bliss in thy daring kiss,
And joy in thy bold caress.

And what is the Earth to me?
I have left it all, oh Sea!
With its dust and soil, and strife and toil,
For one glad hour with thee.

REGRET AND REMORSE.

REGRET with streaming eyes doth seem alway
A maiden widowed on her wedding day.

While dark Remorse with eyes too sad for
tears
A crushed, desponding Magdalene appears.

One with a hungering heart unsatisfied
Mourns for imagined joys that were denied.

The other pierced by recollected sin,
Broods o'er the scars of pleasures that have
been.

EASTER MORN.

A TRUTH that has long lain buried
At Superstition's door,
I see, in the dawn uprising,
In all its strength once more.

Hidden away in the darkness,
By Ignorance crucified,
Crushed under stones of dogmas—
Yet lo! it has not died.

It stands in the light transfigured,
It speaks from the heights above,
*“Each soul is its own redeemer
There is no law but Love.”*

And the spirits of men are gladdened
As they welcome this Truth re-born,
With its feet on the grave of Error
And its eyes to the Easter Morn.

BLIND.

WHATEVER a man may think or feel

He can tell to the world and it hears aright:
But it bids the woman conceal, conceal,

And woe to the thoughts that at last ignite.
She may serve up gossip or dwell on fashion,
Or play the critic with speech unkind,
But alas for the woman who speaks with passion,
For the world is blind—for the world is blind.

It is woman who sits with her starved desire,
And drinks to sorrow in cups of tears:

She reads by the light of her soul on fire
The secrets of love through lonely years:
But out of all she has felt or heard
Or read by the glow of her soul's white flame,

If she dare but utter aloud one word—
How the world cries shame—how the world
cries shame.

It cannot distinguish between the glow
Of a gleaming star, in the sky of gold,
Or a spent cigar in the dust below—
'Twixt unclad Eve, or a wanton bold;
And ever if woman speaks what she feels
(And feels consistent with God's great plan),
It has cast her under its juggernaut wheels,
Since the world began—since the world began.

TWO WOMEN.

I KNOW two women, and one is chaste
And cold as the snows on a winter waste.
Stainless ever in act and thought
(As a man, born dumb, in speech errs not.)
But she has malice toward her kind,
A cruel tongue and a jealous mind.
Void of pity and full of greed,
She judges the world by her narrow creed :
A brewer of quarrels, a breeder of hate,
Yet she holds the key to "Society's" Gate.

The other woman, with heart of flame,
Went mad for a love that marred her name :
And out of the grave of her murdered faith
She rose like a soul that has passed through
death.

Her aims are noble, her pity so broad,
It covers the world like the mercy of God.
A soother of discord, a healer of woes,
Peace follows her footsteps wherever she goes.
The worthier life of the two, no doubt,
And yet "Society" locks her out.

AS YOU GO THROUGH LIFE.

DON'T look for the flaws as you go through
life;

And even when you find them,
It is wise and kind to be somewhat blind,
And look for the virtue behind them ;
For the cloudiest night has a hint of light
Somewhere in its shadows hiding :
It's better by far to hunt for a star,
Than the spots on the sun abiding.

The current of life runs ever away
To the bosom of God's great ocean.
Don't set your force 'gainst the river's course,
And think to alter its motion.
Don't waste a curse on the universe,
Remember, it lived before you :

Don't butt at the storm with your puny form,
But bend and let it go o'er you.

The world will never adjust itself
To suit your whims to the letter,
Some things must go wrong, your whole life long,
And the sooner you know it the better.
It is folly to fight with the Infinite,
And go under at last in the wrestle.
The wiser man shapes into God's plan,
As water shapes into a vessel.

THE YELLOW-COVERED ALMANAC.

I LEFT the farm when mother died and changed
my place of dwelling

To daughter Susie's stylish house right on the
city street :

And there was them before I came that sort of
scared me, telling

How I would find the town folks ways so
difficult to meet ;

They said I'd have no comfort in the rustling,
fixed up throng,

And I'd have to wear stiff collars, every week-
day, right along.

I find I take to city ways just like a duck to
water ;

I like the racket and the noise and never tire
of shows :

And there's no end of comfort in the mansion
of my daughter,
And everything is right at hand and money
freely flows;
And hired help is all about, just listenin' to my
call—
But I miss the yellow almanac off my old
kitchen wall.

The house is full of calendars from attic to the
cellar,
They're painted in all colors and are fancy
like to see,
But in this one particular I'm not a modern
feller,
And the yellow-covered almanac is good
enough for me.
I'm used to it, I've seen it round from boyhood
to old age,
And I rather like the jokin' at the bottom of
the page.

I like the way its "S" stood out to show the
week's beginnin':

(In these new-fangled calendars the days
seem sort of mixed),

And the man upon the cover, tho' he wa'n't
exactly winnin',

With lungs and liver all exposed still showed
how we are fixed;

And the letters and credentials that was writ
to Mr. Ayer

I've often on a rainy day found readin' pretty
fair.

I tried to buy one recently, there wa'n't none
in the city!

They toted out great calendars, in every shape
and style.

I looked at 'em in cold disdain, and answered
'em in pity—

I'd rather have my almanac than all that
costly pile;

And tho' I take to city life, I'm lonesome after
all
For that old yellow almanac upon my kitchen
wall.

SUCCESS.

As we gaze up life's slope, as we gaze
In the morn, ere the dewdrops are dry,
What splendor hangs over the ways,
What glory gleams there in the sky ;
What pleasures seem waiting us, high
On the peak of that beauteous slope,
What rainbow-hued colors of hope
As we gaze.

As we climb up the hill, as we climb,
Our hearts, our illusions, are rent :
For Fate, who is spouse of old Time,
Is jealous of youth and content.
With brows that are brooding and bent,
She shadows our sunlight of gold,
And the way grows lonely and cold
As we climb.

As we toil on, through trouble and pain,
- There are hands that will shelter and feed :
But once let us dare to *attain*—
They will bruise our bare hearts till they bleed.
'Tis the worst of all crimes to succeed, —
Know this as ye feast on a crust,
Know this in the darkness and dust,
Ye who climb.

As we stand on the heights of success,
Lo! success seems as sad as defeat !
Through the lives we may succor and bless
Alone may its bitter turn sweet ;
And the world lying there at our feet,
With its cavilling praise and its sneer,
We must pity, condone, but not hear,
Where we stand.

As we live on those heights, we must live
With the courage and pride of a god ;
For the world, it has nothing to give

But the scourge of the lash and the rod.

Our thoughts must be noble and broad,

Our purpose must challenge men's gaze,

While we seek not their blame or their praise

As we live.

IT ALL WILL COME OUT RIGHT.

WHATEVER is a cruel wrong,
 Whatever is unjust,
The honest years that speed along
 Will trample in the dust.
In restless youth I railed at fate
 With all my puny might,
But now I know if I but wait
 It all will come out right.

Though Vice may don the judge's gown
 And play the censor's part,
And Fact be cowed by Falsehood's frown
 And Nature ruled by art ;
Though Labor toils through blinding tears
 And idle Wealth is might,
I know the honest, earnest years
 Will bring it all out right.

Though poor and loveless creeds may pass
For pure religion's gold ;
Though ignorance may rule the mass
While truth meets glances cold,
I know a law complete, sublime,
Controls us with its might,
And in God's own appointed time
It all will come out right.

THE LITTLE WHITE HEARSE.

SOMEBODY'S baby was buried to-day—

The empty white hearse from the grave rumbled back,

And the morning somehow seemed less smiling and gay

As I paused on the walk while it crossed on its way,

And a shadow seemed drawn o'er the sun's golden track.

Somebody's baby was laid out to rest,

White as a snowdrop, and fair to behold,

And the soft little hands were crossed over the breast,

And those hands and the lips and the eyelids were pressed

With kisses as hot as the eyelids were cold.

Somebody saw it go out of her sight,
Under the coffin lid—out through the door;
Somebody finds only darkness and blight
All through the glory of summer-sun light;
Somebody's baby will waken no more.

Somebody's sorrow is making me weep:
I know not her name, but I echo her cry,
For the dearly bought baby she longed so to
keep,
The baby that rode to its long-lasting sleep
In the little white hearse that went rumbling
by.

I know not her name, but her sorrow I know;
While I paused on the crossing I lived it
once more,
And back to my heart surged that river of woe
That but in the breast of a mother can flow;
For the little white hearse has been, too, at
my door.

REALIZATION.

(At the Old Homestead.)

I TREAD the paths of earlier times
Where all my steps were set to rhymes.

I gaze on scenes I used to see
When dreaming of a vague To be.

I walk in ways made bright of old
By hopes youth-limned in hues of gold.

But lo! those hopes of future bliss
Seem dull beside the joy that *is*.

My noonday skies are far more bright
Than those dreamed of in morning's light,

And life gives me more joys to hold
Than all it promised me of old.

THE LADY AND THE DAME.

So, thou hast the art, good dame, thou swear-
est,

To keep Time's perishing touch at bay
From the roseate splendor of the cheek so ten-
der,

And the silver threads from the gold away.
And the tell-tale years that have hurried by us
Shall tip-toe back, and, with kind good-will,
They shall take the traces from off our faces,
If we will trust to thy magic skill.

Thou speakest fairly ; but if I listen

And buy thy secret, and prove its truth,
Hast thou the potion and magic lotion
To give me also the *heart* of youth?
With the cheek of rose and the eye of beauty,

And the lustrous locks of life's lost prime,
Wilt thou bring thronging, each hope and long-
ing
That made the glory of that dead Time?

When the sap in the trees sets young buds
bursting,
And the song of the birds fills the air like
spray,
Will rivers of feeling come once more stealing
From the beautiful hills of the far-away?
Wilt thou demolish the tower of reason
And fling forever down into the dust,
The caution time brought me, the lessons life
taught me,
And put in their places my old sweet trust?

If Time's foot-print from my brow is driven,
Canst thou, too, take with thy subtle powers,
The burden of thinking, and let me go drinking,
The careless pleasures of youth's bright hours?

If silver threads from my tresses vanish,
If a glow once more in my pale cheek
gleams,
Wilt thou slay duty and give back the beauty
Of days untroubled by aught but dreams?

When the soft fair arms of the siren Summer
Encircle the earth in their languorous fold,
Will vast, deep oceans of sweet emotions
Surge through my veins as they surged of
old?

Canst thou bring back from a day long-van-
ished

The leaping pulse and the boundless aim?

I will pay thee double, for all thy trouble,
If thou wilt restore all these, good dame.

LOVE'S SUPREMACY.

As yon great Sun in his supreme condition
Absorbs small worlds and makes them all his
own,

So does my love absorb each vain ambition
Each outside purpose which my life has
known.

Stars cannot shine so near that vast orb's splen-
dor,

They are content to feed his flames of fire;
And so my heart is satisfied to render
Its strength, its all, to meet thy strong desire.

As in a forest when dead leaves are falling,
From all save some perennial green tree,
So one by one I find all pleasures palling
That are not linked with or enjoyed by thee.
And all the homage that the world may proffer,

I take as perfumed oils or incense sweet,
And think of it as one thing more to offer
And sacrifice to Love, at thy dear feet.

I love myself because thou art my lover,
My name seems dear since uttered by thy
voice ;

Yet argus-eyed I watch and would discover
Each blemish in the object of thy choice.
I coldly sit in judgment on each error,
To my soul's gaze I hold each fault of me,
Until my pride is lost in abject terror,
Lest I become inadequate to thee.

Like some swift-rushing and sea-seeking river,
Which gathers force the farther on it goes,
So does the current of my love forever
Find added strength and beauty as it flows.
The more I give, the more remains for giving,
The more receive, the more remains to win.
Ah ! only in eternities of living
Will life be long enough to love thee in.

THE PÆAN OF PEACE.

WITH ever some wrong to be righting,
With self ever seeking for place,
The world has been striving and fighting
Since man was evolved out of space.
Bold history into dark regions,
His torchlight has fearlessly cast,
He shows us tribes warring in legions,
In jungles of ages long passed.

Religion, forgetting her station,
Forgetting her birthright from God,
Set nation to warring with nation
And scattered dissension abroad.
Dear creeds have made men kill each other.
Fair faith has bred hate and despair,
And brother has battled with brother
Because of a difference in prayer.

But earth has grown wiser and kinder,
For man is evolving a soul :
From wars of an age that was blinder,
We rise to a peace-girdled goal.
Where once men would murder in treason
And slaughter each other in hordes,
They now meet together and reason,
With thoughts for their weapons, not swords.

The brute in humanity dwindles,
And lessens as time speeds along,
And the spark of Divinity kindles
And blazes up brightly and strong.
The seer can behold in the distance
The race that shall people the world ;
Strong men of a godlike existence
Unarmed, and with war banners furled.

No longer the bloodthirsty savage
Man's vast spirit strength shall unfold ;
And tales of red warfare and ravage

Shall seem like ghost stories of old.
For the booming of guns and the rattle
Of carnage and conflict shall cease,
And the bugle call, leading to battle,
Shall change to a pæan of peace.

THE ETERNAL WILL.

THERE is no thing we cannot overcome.

Say not thy evil instinct is inherited,
Or that some trait inborn makes thy whole life
forlorn,
And calls down punishment that is not mer-
ited.

Back of thy parents and grand-parents lies
The Great Eternal Will. That, too, is thine
Inheritance; strong, beautiful, divine,
Sure lever of success for one who tries.

Pry up thy faults with this great lever, Will.
However deeply bedded in propensity;
However firmly set, I tell thee firmer yet
Is that vast power that comes from Truth's
immensity.

Thou art a part of that strange world, I say. .

Its forces lie within thee, stronger far
Than all thy mortal sins and frailties are.

Believe thyself divine, and watch, and pray.

There is no noble height thou canst not climb.

All triumphs may be thine in Time's futur-
ity,

If whatsoe'er thy fault, thou dost not faint or
halt,

But lean upon the staff of God's security.

Earth has no claim the soul can not contest.

Know thyself part of that Eternal Source,
And naught can stand before thy spirit's force.

The soul's divine inheritance is best.

INSIGHT.

ON the river of life, as I float along,
I see with the spirit's sight
That many a nauseous weed of wrong
Has root in a seed of right.
For evil is good that has gone astray,
And sorrow is only blindness,
And the world is always under the sway
Of a changeless law of kindness.

The commonest error a truth can make
Is shouting its sweet voice hoarse,
And sin is only the soul's mistake
In misdirecting its force.
And love, the fairest of all fair things
That ever to man descended,
Grows rank with nettles and poisonous things
Unless it is watched and tended.

There could not be anything better than this
Old world in the way it began,
And though some matters have gone amiss
From the great original plan ;
And however dark the skies may appear,
And however souls may blunder,
I tell you it all will work out clear,
For good lies over and under.

HEAVEN AND HELL.

WHILE forced to dwell apart from thy dear face
Love, robed like sorrow, led me by the hand
And taught my doubting heart to understand
That which has puzzled all the human race.
Full many a sage has questioned where in space
Those counter worlds were? where the mystic
strand
That separates them: I have found each land,
And Hell is vast, and Heaven a narrow space.

In the small compass of thy clasping arms
In reach and sight of thy dear lips and eyes
There, there for me the joy of heaven lies.
Outside, lo! chaos, terrors' wild alarms
And all the desolation fierce and fell
Of void and aching nothingness, makes Hell.

A WOMAN'S LOVE.

So vast the tide of Love within me surging,
It overflows like some stupendous sea,
The confines of the Present and To-be;
And 'gainst the Past's high wall I feel it urg-
ing,
As it would cry "Thou too shalt yield to me!"

All other loves my supreme love embodies;
I would be she on whose soft bosom nursed
Thy clinging infant lips to quench their
thirst;
She who trod close to hidden worlds where God
is,
That she might have, and hold, and see thee
first.

I would be she who stirred the vague fond
fancies,

Of thy still childish heart ; who through bright
days

Went sporting with thee in the old-time plays,
And caught the sunlight of thy boyish glances
In half-forgotten and long-buried Mays.

Forth to the end, and back to the beginning,
My love would send its inundating tide,
Wherein all landmarks of thy past should
hide.

If thy life's lesson *must* be learned through
sinning,
My grieving virtue would become thy guide.

For I would share the burden of thy errors,
So when the sun of our brief life had set,
If thou didst walk in darkness and regret,
E'en in that shadowy world of nameless terrors,
My soul and thine should be companions yet.

And I would cross with thee those troubled
oceans

Of dark remorse whose waters are despair :

All things my jealous reckless love would
dare,

So that thou mightst not recollect emotions

In which it did not have a part and share.

There is no limit to my love's full measure,

Its spirit gold is shaped by earth's alloy ;

I would be friend and mother, mate and toy,

I'd have thee look to me for every pleasure,

And in me find all memories of joy.

Yet though I love thee in such selfish fashion,

I would wait on thee, sitting at thy feet,

And serving thee, if thou didst deem it meet.

And couldst thou give me one fond hour of pas-
sion,

I'd take that hour and call my life complete.

REFORM.

THE time has come when men with hearts and
brains

Must rise and take the misdirected reins
Of government; too long left in the hands
Of aliens and of lackeys. He who stands
And sees the mighty vehicle of State

Hauled through the mire to some ignoble
fate

And makes not such bold protest as he can,

Is no American.

TO ANOTHER WOMAN'S BABY

I LIST your prattle, baby boy,
And hear your pattering feet
With feelings more of pain than joy
And thoughts of bitter-sweet.

While touching your soft hands in play
Such passionate longings rise
For my wee boy who strayed away
So soon to Paradise.

You win me with your infant art;
But when our play is o'er,
The empty cradle in my heart
Seems lonelier than before.

Sweet baby boy you do not guess
How oft mine eyes are dim,
Or that my lingering caress
Is sometimes meant for *him*.

DIAMONDS.

THE tears of fallen women turned to ice
By man's cold pity for repentant vice.

RUBIES.

THE crimson life-drops from a virgin heart
Pierced to the core by Cupid's fatal dart.

SAPPHIRES.

LOST rays of light that wandered off alone
And down through space were hurled
From that great sapphire sun beyond our own
Pale, puny little world.

TURQUOISE.

A BABY went to heaven while it slept,
And waking missed its mother's arms and
wept.
Those angel tear-drops falling earthward through
God's azure skies, into the turquoise grew.

MEMORY'S RIVER.

IN nature's bright blossoms not always reposes
That strange subtle essence more rare than
their bloom,

Which lies in the hearts of Carnations and roses,
That unexplained something by men called
perfume.

Though modest the flower, yet great is its
power

And pregnant with meaning each pistil and
leaf,

If only it hides there, if only abides there,
The fragrance suggestive of love, joy, and
grief.

Not always the air that a master composes
Can stir human heart-strings with pleasure or
pain.

But strange, subtle chords, like the scent of the
roses,

Breathe out of some measures, though simple
the strain.

And lo! when you hear them, you love them
and fear them,

You tremble with anguish, you thrill with
delight.

For back of them slumber old dreams without
number,

And faces long vanished peer out into sight.

Those dear foolish days when the earth seemed
all beauty,

Before you had knowledge enough to be sad,
When youth held no higher ideal of duty

Than just to lilt on through the world and
be glad.

On harmony's river, they seemed to float hither
With all the sweet fancies that hung round
that time,

Life's burdens and troubles turn into air-bubbles

And break on the music's swift current of rhyme.

Fair Folly comes back with her spell while you listen,

And points to the paths where she led you of old.

You gaze on past sunsets, you see dead stars glisten,

You bathe in life's glory, you swoon in death's cold.

All pains and all pleasures surge up through those measures,

Your heart is wrenched open with earthquakes of sound.

From ashes and embers rise Junes and Decembers,

Lost Islands in fathoms of feeling refound.

Some airs are like outlets of memory's oceans,
They rise in the past and flow into the heart.
And down them float ship-wrecks of mighty
emotions,
All sea-soaked and storm-tossed and drifting
apart.
Their fair timbers battered, their lordly sails
tattered,
Their skeleton crew of dead days on their
decks—
Then a crash of chords blending, a crisis, an
ending,
The music is over, and vanished the wrecks.

“HAS BEEN.”

THAT melancholy phrase “It might have
been,”

However sad, doth in its heart enfold
A hidden germ of promise! for I hold
Whatever might have been shall be.

Though in
Some other realm and life, the soul must win
The goal that erst was possible. But cold
And cruel as the sound of frozen mold
Dropped on a coffin, are the words “Has
been.”

“She has been beautiful”—“he has been great,”
“Rome has been powerful,” we sigh and
say.

It is the pitying crust we toss decay,
The dirge we breathe o'er some degenerate
state

An epitaph for fame's unburied dead.
God pity those who live to hear it said.

A MINOR CHORD.

I HEARD a strain of music in the street—
A wandering waif of sound. And then
 straightway
A nameless desolation filled the day.
The great green earth that had been fair and
 sweet
Seemed but a tomb; the life I thought re-
 plete
With joy, grew lonely for a vanished May.
Forgotten sorrows resurrected lay
Like bleaching skeletons about my feet.
Above me stretched the silent suffering sky
Dumb with vast anguish for departed suns
That brutal time to nothingness has hurled.
The daylight was as sad as smiles that lie
Upon the wistful un-kissed mouths of nuns,
And I stood prisoned in an awful world.

LAST LOVE.

THE first flower of the spring is not so fair
Or bright, as one the ripe midsummer brings.
The first faint note the forest warbler sings
Is not as rich with feeling, or so rare
As when, full master of his art, the air
Drowns in the liquid sea of song he flings
Like silver spray from beak, and breast, and
wings.

The artist's earliest effort wrought with care,
The bard's first ballad, written in his tears,
Set by his later toil seems poor and tame.
And into nothing dwindles at the test.
So with the passions of maturer years
Let those who will demand the first fond
flame,
Give me the heart's *last love*, for that is best.

DEATH'S PROTEST.

WHY dost thou shrink from my approach, oh
Man?

Why dost thou ever flee in fear, and cling
To my false rival life? I do but bring
Thee rest and calm. Then wherefore dost thou
ban

And curse me? Since the forming of God's plan
I have not hurt or harmed a mortal thing,
I have bestowed sweet balm for every sting
And peace eternal for earth's stormy span.
The wild mad prayers for comfort sent in vain
To knock at the indifferent heart of Life
I, Death, have answered. Knowest thou not 'tis
he

My cruel rival who sends all thy pain
And wears the soul out in unending strife?
Why dost thou hold to him, then, spurning me?

DUTY'S PATH.

OUT from the harbor of youth's bay
There leads the path of pleasure ;
With eager steps we walk that way
To brim joy's largest measure.
But when with morn's departing beam
Goes youth's last precious minute,
We sigh "'twas but a fevered dream—
There's nothing in it."

Then on our vision dawns afar
The goal of glory, gleaming
Like some great radiant solar star
And sets us longing, dreaming.
Forgetting all things left behind,
We strain each nerve to win it,
But when 'tis ours—alas! we find
There's nothing in it.

We turn our sad, reluctant gaze
Upon the path of duty;
Its barren, uninviting ways
Are void of bloom and beauty.
Yet in that road, though dark and cold,
It seems as we begin it,
As we press on—lo! we behold
There's Heaven in it.

SEPTEMBER.

MY life's long radiant Summer halts at last
And lo! beside my pathway I behold
Pursuing Autumn glide: nor frost nor cold
Has heralded her presence; but a vast
Sweet calm that comes not till the year has
passed

Its fevered solstice, and a tinge of gold
Subdues the vivid coloring of bold
And passion-hued emotions. I will cast
My August days behind me with my May,
Nor strive to drag them into Autumn's place,
Nor swear I hope when I do but remember.
Now violet and rose have had their day
I'll pluck the soberer asters with good grace
And call September nothing but September.

MARCH.

LIKE some reformer, who with mien austere,
Neglected dress and loud insistent tones,
More rasping than the wrongs which she be-
moans,

Walks through the land and wearies all who
hear,

While yet we know the need of such reform;
So comes unlovely March, with wind and
storm,

To break the spell of winter, and set free
The poisoned brooks and crocus beds op-
pressed.

Severe of face, gaunt-armed, and wildly dressed,
She is not fair nor beautiful to see.

But merry April and sweet smiling May
Come not till March has first prepared the
way.

THE SUMMER GIRL.

SHE'S the jauntiest of creatures, she's the daintiest of misses,

With her pretty patent leathers or her alligator ties,

With her eyes inviting glances and her lips inviting kisses

As she wanders by the ocean or strolls under country skies.

She's a captivating dresser, and her parasols are stunning,

Her fads will take your breath away, her hats are dreams of style;

She is not so very bookish, but with repartee and punning

She can set the savants laughing and make even dudelets smile.

She has no attacks of talent, she is not a stage-struck maiden,

She is wholly free from hobbies, and she dreams of no "career;"

She is mostly gay and happy, never sad or care beladen,

Though she sometimes sighs a little if a gentleman is near.

She's a sturdy little walker and she braves all kinds of weather,

And when the rain or fog or mist drive rival crimps a-wreck,

Her fluffy hair goes curling like a kinked-up ostrich feather

Around her ears and forehead and the white nape of her neck.

She is like a fish in water, she can handle reins and racket,

From head to toe and finger tips she's thoroughly alive;

When she goes promenading in a most distract-
ing jacket

The rustle round her feet suggests how laun-
dresses may thrive.

She can dare the wind and sunshine in the
most bravado manner,

And after hours of sailing she has merely
cheeks of rose.

Old Sol himself seems smitten and at most will
only tan her,

Though to everybody else he gives a danger-
signal nose.

She's a trifle sentimental, and she's fond of ad-
miration,

And she sometimes flirts a little in the sea-
son's giddy whirl ;

But win her if you can, sir, she may prove your
life's salvation,

For an angel masquerading oft is she the sum-
mer girl.

SUN SHADOWS.

THERE never was success so nobly gained,
Or victory so free from selfish dross
But in the winning some one had been pained
Or some one suffered loss.

There never was so nobly planned a fête
Or festal throng with hearts on pleasure bent
But some neglected one outside the gate
Wept tears of discontent.

There never was a bridal morning fair
With hope's blue skies and love's unclouded
sun
For two fond hearts, that did not bring de-
spair
To some sad other one.

THOUGHTS.

THOUGHTS do not need the wings of words
To fly to any goal.
Like subtle lightnings, not like birds,
They speed from soul to soul.

Hide in your heart a bitter thought
Still it has power to blight.
Think Love, although you speak it not,
It gives the world more light.

THE END OF THE SUMMER.

THE birds laugh loud and long together

When Fashion's followers speed away

At the first cool breath of autumn weather.

Why, this is the time, cry the birds, to stay!

When the deep calm sea and the deep sky over

Both look their passion through sun-kissed
space,

As a blue-eyed maid and her blue-eyed lover

Might each gaze into the other's face.

Oh, this is the time when careful spying

Discovers the secrets Nature knows.

You find when the butterflies plan for flying

(Before the thrush or the blackbird goes),

You see some day by the water's edges,

A brilliant border of red and black;

And then off over the hills and hedges
It flutters away on the summer's track.

The shy little sumacs, in lonely places,
Bowed all summer with dust and heat,
Like clean-clad children with rain-washed faces,
Are dressed in scarlet from head to feet.
And never a flower had the boastful summer
In all the blossoms that decked her sod,
So royal hued as that later comer
The purple chum of the goldenrod.

Some chill gray dawn you note with grieving
That the King of Autumn is on his way.
You see with a sorrowful slow believing
How the wanton woods have gone astray.
They wear the stain of bold caresses,
Of riotous revels with old King Frost ;
They dazzle all eyes with their gorgeous dresses,
Nor care that their green young leaves are
lost.

A wet wind blows from the East one morning,
The wood's gay garments looked dragged
out.

You hear a sound and your heart takes warn-
ing—

The birds are planning their winter route.
They wheel and settle and scold and wrangle,
Their tempers are ruffled, their voices loud ;
Then *whirr*—and away in a feathered tangle
To fade in the south like a passing cloud.

Envoi.

A songless wood stripped bare of glory—
A sodden moor that is black and brown ;
The year has finished its last love-story—
Oh, let us away to the gay bright town.

“HE THAT LOOKETH.”

YEA! she and I have broken God's command,
And in His sight are branded with our
shame.

And yet I do not even know her name,
Nor ever in my life have touched her hand
Or brushed her garments. But I chanced to
stand

Beside her in the throng! A sweet swift
flame

Shot from her flesh to mine—and hers the
blame

Of willing looks that fed it; aye, that fanned
The glow within me to a hungry fire.

There was an invitation in her eyes.

Had she met mine with coldness or surprise

I had not plunged on headlong in the mire
Of amorous thought. The flame leaped high
and higher ;

Her breath and mine pulsated into sighs,
And soft glance melted into glance kiss-wise,
And in God's sight, both yielded to desire.

WAIL OF AN OLD-TIMER.

EACH new invention doubles our worries an'
our troubles,
These scientific fellows are spoilin' of our land.
With motor, wire, an' cable, now'days we're
scarcely able
To walk or ride in peace o' mind, an' 'tis n't
safe to stand.

It fairly makes me crazy to see how tarnal lazy
The risin' generation grows—an' science is to
blame.
With telephones for talkin', an' messengers for
walkin',
Our young men sit an' loaf, an' smoke, without
a blush o' shame.

An' then they wan't contented until some one
invented

A sort o' jerky tape-line clock, to help on
wasteful ways.

An' that infernal ticker spends money fur 'em
quicker

Than any neighborhood o' men in good old
bygone days.

The risin' generation is bent so on creation,
Folks haven't time to talk or sing or cry or
even laugh.

But if you take the notion to want some such
emotion,

They've got it all on tap fur you, right in the
phonograph.

But now a crazy creature has introduced the
feature

Of artificial weather, I think we're nearly
through.

For when we once go strainin' to keep it dry
or rainin'
To suit the general public, 'twill bust the
world in two.

CONCENTRATION.

THE age is too diffusive. Time and Force
Are frittered out and bring no satisfaction.
The way seems lost to straight determined
action.
Like shooting stars that zig-zag from their
course
We wander from our orbit's pathway! spoil
The rôle we're fitted for, to fail in twenty.
Bring empty measures that were shaped for
plenty,
At last as guerdon for a life of toil.
There's lack of greatness in this generation
Because no more man centres on one thought.
We know this truth and yet we heed it not,
The secret of success is Concentration.

A WARNING.

THERE was a flame, oh such a tiny flame,
One fleeting hour had spanned its birth and
death.

But for a silly child with playful breath
Who fanned it into fury. It became
A mighty conflagration. Ah the cost!
House, home, and thoughtless child alike were
lost.

Lady beware. Fan not the harmless glow
Of admiration into ardent love.
Lean not with red curled smiling lips above
The flickering spark of sinless flame and blow,
Lest in the sudden waking of desire
Thou, like the child, shalt perish in the fire.

WAS, IS, AND YET-TO-BE.

WAS, Is, and Yet-to-Be

Were chatting over a cup of tea.

In tarnished finery smelling of must,
Was talked of people long turned to dust;

Of titles and honors and high estate,
All forgotten or out of date;

Of wonderful feasts in the long ago,
Of pride that perished with nothing to show.

“I loathe the present”—said Was, with a
groan.

“I live in pleasures that I *have* known.”

The Yet-to-be, in a gown of gauze,
Looked over the head of musty Was,

And gazed far off into misty space
With a wrapt expression upon her face.

“Such wonderful pleasures are coming to me,
Such glory, such honor,” said Yet-to-be.

“No one dreamed, in the vast Has Been
Of such successes as I shall win.

The past, the present, why what are they?
I live for the joy of a future day.”

Then practical Is, in a fresh print dress,
Spoke up with a laugh, “I must confess

I find to-day so pleasant,” she said
“I never look back, and seldom ahead.

What ever has been, is a finished sum.
What ever will be, why let it come.

To-day is mine. And so you see
I have the past and the yet-to-be;

For to-day is the future of yesterday,
And the past of to-morrow. I live while I
may,

And I think the secret of pleasure is this,
And this alone," said practical Is.

MISTAKES.

GOD sent us here to make mistakes.

To strive, to fail, to re-begin.

To taste the tempting fruit of sin,
And find what bitter food it makes.

To miss the path, to go astray,

To wander blindly in the night.

But searching, praying for the light,
Until at last we find the way.

And looking back along the past

We know we needed all the strain

Of fear and doubt and strife and pain
To make us value peace, at last.

Who fails, finds later triumph sweet.

Who stumbles once, walks then with care,

And knows the place to cry "Beware"
To other unaccustomed feet.

Through strife the slumbering soul awakes,
We learn on errors troubled route
The truths we could not prize without
The sorrow of our sad mistakes.

DUAL.

YOU say that your nature is double: that life
Seems more and more intricate, complex, and
dual,

Because in your bosom there wages the strife
'Twixt an angel of light and a beast that is
cruel:

An angel who whispers your spirit has wings,
And a beast who would chain you to temporal
things.

I listen with interest to all you have told,
And now let me give you my view of your
trouble;

You are to be envied, not pitied; I hold

That every strong nature is always made double.

The beast has his purpose, he need not be slain,
He should serve the good angel in harness and
chain.

The body that never knows carnal desires,
The heart that to passion is always a stran-
ger,

Is merely a furnace with unlighted fires;
It sends forth no warmth while it threatens
no danger.

But who wants to shiver in cold safety there?
Touch flame to the fuel! then watch it with
care.

Those wild, fierce emotions that trouble your
soul

Are sparks from the great source of passion
and power;

Throne reason above them, and give it control,
And turn into blessing this dangerous dower.
By lightnings unguided destruction is hurled,
But chained and directed they gladden the
world.

THE RAPE OF THE MIST.

HIGH o'er the clouds a sunbeam shone,
While far down under him,
With a subtle grace that was all her own,
The mist gleamed fair and dim.

He looked at her with his burning eyes,
And longed to fall at her feet ;
Of all sweet things there under the skies
He thought her the thing most sweet.

He had wooed oft, as a sunbeam may,
Wave and blossom and flower,
But never before had he felt the sway
Of a great love's mighty power.

Tall cloud mountains and vast-space seas,
Wind and tempest and fire,

What are obstacles such as these
To a heart that is filled with desire!

Boldly he trod over cloud and star,
Boldly he swam through space,
She caught the glow of his eyes afar
And veiled her delicate face.

The mist grew pale with a vague, strange fright,
As fond yet fierce he came,
He was so strong and he was so bright,
And his breath was a breath of flame.

Close to his heart she was clasped and kissed,
She swooned in love's alarms:
And dead lay the beautiful pale-faced mist
In the sunbeam's passionate arms.

THE ALL-CREATIVE SPARK.

PAIN can go guised as joy, dross pass for gold,
Vulgarity can masquerade as wit,
Or spite wear friendship's garments; but I hold
That passionate feeling has no counterfeit.
Chief jewel from Jove's crown 'twas sent men,
lent
For inspiration and for sacrament.

Jove never could have made the Universe
Had he not glowed with passion's sacred fire;
Though man oft turns the blessing to a curse,
And burns himself on his own funeral pyre,
Though scarred the soul be where its light
burns bright,
Yet where it is not, neither is there might.

Yea, it was set in Jove's resplendent crown
When he created worlds; that done, why,
hence,
He cast the priceless, awful jewel down
To be man's punishment and recompense.
And that is how he sees and hears our tears
Unmoved and calm from the eternal spheres.

But sometimes, since he parted with all passion,
In trifling mood, to pass the time away,
He has created men in that same fashion,
And many women (jesting as gods may),
Who have no souls to be inspired or fired,
Mere sport of idle gods who have grown tired.

And these poor puppets, gazing in the dark
At their own shadows, think the world no
higher;
And when they see the all-creative spark
In other souls, they straightway cry out, "Fire!"
And shriek, and rave, till their dissent is spent,
While listening gods laugh loud in merriment.

BE NOT CONTENT.

BE not content, contentment means inaction,
The growing soul aches on its upward quest;
Satiety is twin to satisfaction—
All great achievements spring from life's un-
rest.

The tiny roots, deep in the dark mould hiding,
Would never bless the earth with leaf and
flower

Were not an inborn restlessness abiding
In seed and germ, to stir them with its power.

Were man contented with his lot forever,
He had not sought strange seas with sails un-
furled,
And the vast wonder of our shores had never
Dawned on the gaze of an admiring world.

Prize what is yours, but be not quite contented.

There is a healthful restlessness of soul
By which a mighty purpose is augmented
In urging men to reach a higher goal.

So when the restless impulse rises, driving
Your calm content before it, do not grieve;
It is the upward reaching of the spirit
Of the God in you to achieve, achieve.

ACTION.

FOREVER stars are winging
 Their swift and endless race ;
Forever suns are swinging
 Their mighty globes through space.
Since by his law required
To join God's spheres inspired,
The earth has never tired,
 But whirled and whirled and whirled.
Forever streams are flowing,
Forever seeds are growing,
Always is Nature showing
 That Action rules the world.

And since by God requested
 To *be*, the glorious light
Has never paused or rested
 But travelled day and night.

Yet pigmy man, unseeing
The purpose of his being,
Demands escape and freeing
 From universal force.
But law is law forever,
And like a mighty lever
It thrusts him tow'rd endeavor,
 And speeds him on his course.

TWO ROSES.

A HUMBLE wild-rose, pink and slender,
Was plucked and placed in a bright bouquet,
Beside a Jacqueminot's royal splendor,
And both in my lady's boudoir lay.

Said the haughty bud, in a tone of scorning,
"I wonder why you are called a rose?
Your leaves will fade in a single morning,
No blood of mine in your pale cheek glows.

"Your coarse green stalk shows dust of the
highway,
You have no depths of fragrant bloom;
And what could you learn in a rustic byway
To fit you to lie in my lady's room?

"If called to adorn her warm white bosom,
What have you to offer for such a place,

Beside my fragrant and splendid blossom,
Ripe with color and rich with grace?"

Said the sweet wild-rose, "Despite your dower
Of finer breeding and deeper hue,
Despite your beauty, fair, high-bred flower,
It is I who should lie on her breast, not you.

"For small account is your hot-house glory
Beside the knowledge that came to me
When I heard by the wayside love's old story,
And felt the kiss of the amorous bee."

SHRINES.

ABOUT a holy shrine or sacred place
Where many hearts have bowed in earnest
prayer,
The loveliest spirits congregate from space,
And bring their sweet uplifting influence there.

If in your chamber you pray oft and well,
Soon will these angel messengers arrive
And make their home with you, and where
they dwell
All worthy toil and purposes shall thrive.

I know a humble plainly furnished room,
So thronged with presences serene and bright,
The heaviest heart therein forgets its gloom
As in some gorgeous temple filled with light.

Those heavenly spirits, beauteous and divine,
Live only in an atmosphere of prayer ;
Make for yourself a sacred, fervent shrine,
And you will find them swiftly flocking there.

SATIETY.

To yearn for what we have not had, to sit
With hungry eyes glued on the Future's gate,
Why that is heaven compared to having it
With all the power gone to appreciate.

Better to wait and yearn, and still to wait,
And die at last with unappeased desire,
Than live to be the jest of such a fate,
For that is my conception of hell-fire.

THE WATCHER.

SHE gave her soul and body for a carriage,
And liveried lackey with a vacant grin,
And all the rest—house, lands—and called it
marriage—
The bargain made, a husband was thrown in.

And now, despite her luxury, she's faded,
Gone is the bloom that was so fresh and
bright;
She has the dark-rimmed eye, the countenance
jaded,
Of one who watches with the sick at night.

Ah, heaven, she does! her sick heart, sick and
dying,
Beyond the aid of human skill to save,

In that cold room her breast is hourly lying,
And her grim thoughts crowd near to dig its
grave.

And yet it lingers, suffering and wailing,
As sick hearts will that feed upon despair,
And that lone watcher, unrelieved, is paling
With vigils that no pitying soul can share.

Ah, lady! it is hardly what you thought it,
This life of luxury and social power;
You gave yourself as principal and bought it,
But God extracts the interest hour by hour.

A SOLAR ECLIPSE.

IN that great journey of the stars through space
About the mighty, all-directing Sun,
The pallid, faithful Moon, has been the one
Companion of the Earth. Her tender face,
Pale with the swift, keen purpose of that race,
Which at Time's natal hour was first begun,
Shines ever on her lover as they run
And lights his orbit with her silvery smile.

Sometimes such passionate love doth in her rise,
Down from her beaten path she softly slips,
And with her mantle veils the Sun's bold eyes,
Then in the gloaming finds her lover's lips.
While far and near the men our world call wise
See only that the Sun is in eclipse.

THE DEPTHS.

NOT only sun-kissed heights are fair. Below
The cold, dark billows of the frowning deep
Do lovely blossoms of the ocean sleep,
Rocked gently by the waters to and fro.
The coral beds with magic colors glow,
And priceless pearl-encrusted mollusks heap
The glittering rocks where shining atoms leap
Like living broken rainbows.

Even so

We find the sea of sorrow. Black as night
The sullen surface meets our frightened gaze.
As down we sink to darkness and despair.
But at the depths! such beauty, such delight!
Such flowers as never grew in pleasure's ways.
Ah! not alone are sun-kissed summits fair.

A SUGGESTION.

To C. A. D.

LET the wild red-rose bloom. Though not to
thee

So delicately perfect as the white

And unwed lily drooping in the light,

Though she has known the kisses of the bee

And tells her amorous tale to passers-by

In perfumed whispers and with untaught grace,

Still let the red-rose bloom in her own place ;

She could not be, the lily should she try.

Why to the wondrous nightingale cry hush,

Or bid her cease her wild heart-breaking lay,

And tune her voice to imitate the way

The whip-poor-will makes music, or the thrush?

All airs of sorrow to one theme belong
And passion is not copyrighted yet.
Each heart writes its own music. Why not let
The nightingale unchided sing her song?

LIFE'S OPERA.

LIKE an opera-house is the world I ween,
Where the passionate lover of music is seen
 In the balcony near the roof :
While the very best seat in the first stage-box
Is filled by the person who laughs and talks
 Through the harmony's warp and woof.

LUCK.

LUCK is the tuning of our inmost thought
To chord with God's great plan. That done,
ah, know,
Thy silent wishes to results shall grow,
And day by day shall miracles be wrought.
Once let thy being selflessly be brought
To chime with universal good, and lo!
What music from the spheres shall through
thee flow!
What benefits shall come to thee unsought!
Shut out the noise of traffic! Rise above
The body's clamor! With the soul's fine ear
Attune thyself to harmonies divine.
All, all are written in the key of Love;
Keep to the score, and thou hast naught to
fear,
Achievements yet undreamed of shall be
thine.

THE SALT SEA-WIND.

WHEN Venus, mother and maker of blisses,
Rose out of the billows, large-limbed, and
fair,
She stood on the sands and blew sweet kisses
To the salt sea-wind as she dried her hair.

And the salt sea-wind was the first to caress
her,
To praise her beauty and call her sweet,
The first of the whole wide world to possess
her,
She, that creature of light and heat.

Though the sea is old with its sorrows and
angers,
And the world has forgotten why love was
born,

Yet the salt sea-wind is full of the languors
That Venus taught on her natal morn.

And now whoever dwells there by the ocean,
And feels the wind on his hair and face,
Is stirred by a subtle and keen emotion,
The lingering spell of that first embrace.

NEVER MIND.

WHATEVER your work and whatever its worth,
No matter how strong or clever,
Some one will sneer if you pause to hear
And scoff at your best endeavor.
For the target art has a broad expanse,
And wherever you chance to hit it,
Though close be your aim to the bullseye fame,
There are those who will never admit it.

Though the house applauds while the artist
plays
And a smiling world adores him,
Somebody is there with an ennuied air
To say that the acting bores him.
For the tower of art has a lofty spire
With many a stair and landing,

And those who climb seem small oft time
To one at the bottom standing.

So work along in your chosen niche
With a steady purpose to nerve you;
Let nothing men say who pass your way
Relax your courage or swerve you.
The idle will flock by the Temple of Art
For just the pleasure of gazing,
But climb to the top and do not stop
Though they may not all be praising

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