POEMS OF LONGFELLOW
Ex Libris
C. K. OGDEN

"Tristessa" More, p. xxviii

"Excelsior"

21/6
The Golden Poets
EDITED BY OLIPHANT SMEATON

LONGFELLOW
SELECTED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION
GEORGE SAINTSBURY

FRONTISPIECE AND VIGNETTE TITLE BY A. S. HARTRICK
COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALAN WRIGHT
POEMS
OF
LONGFELLOW
Selected and with an
Introduction
by
Professor George Saintsbury, LLD

TC & EC JACK
EDINBURGH
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INTRODUCTION

When the news of Longfellow's death reached London, nearly a quarter of a century ago, the evening papers published it just at the meeting time of a small private literary dining-club, of which he, Victor Hugo, and one or two other great foreigners were members. I happened to be in the chair (or vice-chair, I forget which) that evening; and thus it fell to my lot to propose the toast of his name, with the silent honours usual in such cases. I might, I think, have claimed the office by something more than right of accident. For few people can have been 'brought up' upon at least the earlier works of the poet, as far as Hiawatha, more than I was from childhood; and I venture to hope that still fewer have been more faithful to their bringing-up. I have met since, and I have fallen in love with, poetry of very different kinds from Longfellow's, and (in some cases) of kinds, if the word must be used, 'superior' to his. But I have never felt in the least inclined, in a capital popular phrase, to 'put him out of his place.'
Indeed, I think that he is a most excellent text for preaching the doctrine that no poet, who is a poet, ever can be put out of his place by another, with any lover of poetry who understands as well as loves.

There is no room in this brief introduction for numerous biographical details; and if there were they would be quite superfluous, and indeed mainly unimportant in themselves. Longfellow had one of those long but mainly easy and uneventful lives which are not least favourable to the production of poetry; he had two great domestic sorrows, but of the kind which men are rather specially fortunate to escape than specially unfortunate to meet with. Born at Portland, in Maine, of a good New England family, on 27th February 1807, he graduated at Bowdoin College in 1825; and next year, when not twenty years of age, was sent to Europe by the College trustees to qualify for a Professorship of Foreign Languages and Literature. Few men ever justified such a proceeding better, curious as it may now seem; it is safe to say that only to the still fewer whom the gods have chosen to ‘live easily’ like themselves, would the chance of justifying it fall. He held the post, and a similar one at Harvard afterwards, for nearly thirty years; but he was much more than a Professor of European Languages
INTRODUCTION

and Literature to a particular American college, or even to the United States at large. The peculiar excellence and variety of his translations, and the way in which his whole work, in prose as well as in verse, was saturated with the qualities of many literatures, made him a literary introducer and psychagogue to all his readers.

Longfellow began writing poems very early, and published some of them in magazines; but he was by no means in a hurry to present himself in regular book-form as a 'new and original' poet. He started formal authorship in 1835 with a translation from the Spanish—the Coplas of Don Jorge Manrique—and Outre-Mer, a prose account of his first European journey, written rather in the Washington Irving manner, and interspersed with verse, chiefly translation. He had married in 1831; but his wife died during a second tour in Europe, in the same year which saw the publication of the record of the first. This sorrow has left its mark on his second and principal prose work, Hyperion, which appeared in 1839. Here, too, there are many translations and some pieces of original verse; and the prose itself is of a highly florid cast, showing the influence both of Carlyle and of Richter, and, as was almost inevitable under that influence, giving touches of sentiment as well as of humour. The same year also saw the appearance of Longfellow's
first 'diploma piece' as a poet, *Voices of the Night*, which volume was followed at no long interval by *Ballads* (containing some of his best and worst things) in 1841, and by *Poems on Slavery* next year. In this last, 1842, he again went to Europe, and on his return married his second wife. For some time he busied himself with anthologies of his own translations and of other people's poems, though in the year after his second marriage he had published a very delightful thing, *The Spanish Student*, half borrowed, half original, but (except to readers in a fit of jaundice, as Edgar Poe was at the moment) everywhere acceptable. And three years later he began an important series of original works:—*The Belfry of Bruges*, 1846; *Evangeline*, 1847; *Kavanagh* (in prose), 1849; *The Seaside and the Fireside*, 1850; and *The Golden Legend*, 1851. In this last he tried upon early German poetry much the same methods which he had already tried upon later Spanish drama, and with an equally satisfactory effect to fit readers. Then he waited a few years; and in 1855 produced the Indian poem of *Hiawatha*, with which, perhaps, the list of his original and constitutive poetical baggage may be said to close.

Not that he did not do good things afterwards; but that these, as usually happens to all but the very greatest poets, and sometimes
even to them, were not new in kind, though by no means mere replicas in individual quality.

The *Courtship of Miles Standish* was published in 1858; and, five years after, Longfellow began a collection of verse, the *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, which was continued at intervals (1863–1872–1874) till it attained very considerable bulk, and became in fact his largest original work. It did not, however, absorb him during the period of its composition; on the contrary, not to mention an enormous anthology of dozens of volumes called *Poems of Places*, which he might well have left to other hands, he produced during these ten years a small collection (*Flower de Luce, 1867*) of the short lyrical pieces at which he was best; *New England Tragedies*, 1868, embodying the gruesome stories of that early persecution which Puritanism was always so ready to 'pass on' to others when it had the opportunity; a translation (1868–1870) of the *Divina Commedia*, which is laboriously faithful but ineffective in form; and a mystery-play, *Christus*, which takes up some suggestions in *The Golden Legend*, but not to good effect. His last decade (for he died on 24th March 1882) was also far from unfruitful, and saw the appearance of four small volumes of mainly occasional pieces, *Aftermath* (1874); *The Masque of Pandora* (1875), including the fine Jubilee poem on the anniversary of his own
graduation, *Morituri Salutamus; Keramos* (1878); and *Ultima Thule* (1880), to the last of which posthumous fragments were added under the title of *In the Harbour*.

Longfellow, happy in both his marriages while they lasted, was destined to a more painful termination of the second than even of the first, for his second wife died from her dress catching fire. She brought him, however, five children (there had been none of the first marriage), in whom he was happy; and the ties of friendship were as helpful to him as those of family. All the most distinguished men of letters of his own country, from Lowell and Emerson downwards, were his friends; even the hungry and ulcerated heart of Poe, despite the explosion above referred to, seems to have been not ill inclined to Longfellow on the whole. And for himself, he appears not to have known even the meaning of the proverbial irritability of the *vates* kind. He was equally free from that other kind of touchiness from which his own compatriot-contemporaries were for the most part the reverse of free; and his patriotism was as little fretful as it was intensely fervent. It is true indeed that he had unusually little to complain of—that he succeeded almost at once to his proper place, kept it throughout his life in popular opinion, and passed away early in the period when keeping it might have been
more difficult. But there is every reason to believe that he would have been equal to a very different fortune. The serenity without apathy which is so characteristic of his writing appears for once to have been at least as characteristic of his nature.

The fact, however, that a man is a good man and a gentleman, will no more make him a poet than the fact of his being a scoundrel and a cad will make (or not make) him so; two apparently self-evident propositions which have both been neglected in a rather astounding way by critics. To establish Longfellow's claim to be both a poet and a good one we must leave him, as a man, alone, and come to his works. Of the prose we need necessarily say little; but as Prose necessarily must say something. It has on the whole been undervalued, though the causes of the undervaluation are obvious enough, and to a certain extent justify it. Longfellow's critical work, though not to be spoken of disrespectfully, and even to be connected in a fashion both instructive and interesting with his strictly poetical characteristics, is of no very striking character, and mainly excellent schoolmastership, to bring the (at that time) very unliterary people of his country to literature. Outre-Mer is good topography, saturated with good literature. But Hyperion and Kavanagh (both of which, but
especially the former, deserve the descriptions already applied to the criticism and to _Outre-Mer_) take upon them the much more ambitious and responsible form of prose fiction, and expose themselves to all the tests—or, as the Greeks called it, the 'tortures'—which that dominant and multiform literary representative of the nineteenth century seems to invite. Some of these they are undoubtedly ill-fitted to stand. _Hyperion_ exercised a very great influence upon youth—and especially upon girls—of its own generation; and it may be permitted to think that the youth—and especially the girls—of other generations, before and since, have been subjected to worse. But both in sentiment and in reflection it admittedly follows the German Romantic School, which itself pretty early underlay the accusation of 'maundering.' _Kavanagh_, a very short tale, with some exceedingly good things in it, is probably to some tastes utterly spoilt, and is, I confess, to my own not a little injured, by a sentimental episode of a girl who loses her sight and her lover (he never knew he was her lover) during its progress, in the most irrelevant and wantonly episodic fashion that can well be conceived. Yet the book has real humour; it is full of passages of good conception; the schoolmaster-hero, who is always going to write a great romance and never does so, is a most ingenious
satire on the author himself, for he had after the success of *Hyperion* intended to do this; and there is a passage of satire, on the absence of demand for a 'national' poetry, to which I have always myself ascribed the failure of the book to please in America. But it is not a good book; and Longfellow's genius did not lie in its direction at all.

The work in which that genius is directed to its true end is voluminous, for the handiest edition of the whole—the Oxford one—contains some eight hundred and fifty pages of not very large type, arranged for the most part in double columns, and giving a total of perhaps forty or fifty thousand lines, *without* the version (except a few specimens) of the *Divina Commedia*. Yet Longfellow is among the least difficult authors to read, and he should be among the easiest to criticise; though, owing to some faults of his own and more of his critics, he has not always proved so. It is certainly an unfortunate thing for a poet that his most universally known and perhaps, for a long time at any rate, his most popular poem should be one of his own worst. It is still more unfortunate (for after all, a poet cannot help the bad taste of his readers) that it should be bad of and in itself. It is most unfortunate of all that its badness should exaggerate, accentuate, and caricature certain rather
too frequent characteristics of his. Now all these things are true of 'Excelsior.' The most rhadamanthine and the most ingenious of critics could hardly strain his severity or his ingenuity in finding fault with it. The title does not mean what it ought to mean to make any sense whatever of the piece; and does mean something quite different—a blunder which is accentuated by its being used as a refrain, and by the astoundingly unlucky description of it as in 'an unknown tongue.' The conduct of the ungrammatical youth is that of a mere lunatic; even Alpine Clubs, which were hardly founded when Longfellow wrote, would not defend it. That of the maiden would, in a famous French phrase, 'make dragoons blush.' And the theology of the conclusion matches the morality of the maiden, and the Latinity and common-sense of the youth, by intimating divine approval of what was, on the showing of the poet, pure suicide without a purpose or an aim—unless indeed the youth knew no other way to get to Italy to effect that improvement in his Latin of which there was such urgent need. The charges, often foolishly enough brought of late, against mid-nineteenth century 'sentiment' are here amply justified. The whole thing is sheer silliness—silliness so intense that, with the accompanying want of scholarship, it would damn even an
allowance of poetic expression much greater than that given here. One could but heartily wish the thing unwritten if it were not a curious literary point de repère, as to the way in which false taste, in poet and in readers at the same time, lashes the poet into a kind of paroxysm now and then.

But this paroxysm was never repeated. It is true, as has been said, that the worst things in it are caricatures and exaggerations of things that occur frequently in Longfellow; but these things in themselves are not despicable, and they are almost invariably accompanied by something else which redeems and transforms them. It will be, for most competent judges, something, that poets who may be called 'greater,' in critical slang, than he is—who are at any rate members of an extremely different school—have had a curious habit of 'taking notes' from him, not in the manner which foolish people call plagiarism, but as poets take from poets. The use made by Baudelaire (not exactly an exponent of early or mid-Victorian sentiment) of 'The Psalm of Life' in one of the finest of his poems, 'Le Guignon,' is unmistakable, and has not been mistaken. Yet 'The Psalm of Life' is one of the most mixed and dangerous of Longfellow's pieces;—it has been riddled with ridicule—or rather ridicule has attempted to riddle it, and
has sometimes made a hole or two. Mr. Swinburne is scarcely of the Longfellovian fellowship as that is understood by unfavourable critics: and yet some of the very finest and most characteristic verses of the Prelude to *Songs before Sunrise*—

‘Because man’s soul is man’s god still,’

fall in curiously with a stanza of another of the *Voices of the Night*, ‘The Light of Stars’ beginning—

‘The star of the unconquered will.’

Those who like tracing parallel passages will have good game with Longfellow and his successors among the English-writing poets of the last seventy years. But is this because he has ‘imitated’ others, or because others have ‘imitated’ him in the silly sense which has been already blackmarked? Not at all. It is because to him, as to all true poets, the great commonplaces of life have presented themselves, and because he has known how to treat these commonplaces with the poetic treatment which makes them not common.

What may be said, not against but of Longfellow, with truth is that in treating these great commonplaces he is, as a rule, more indulgent to the common auditor than the greatest poets are, or than some who are not greater than
he is; and that sometimes, as in 'Excelsior' and elsewhere, this indulgence leads him astray. He is in almost all respects the opposite of his contemporary Browning, just as their other contemporary Tennyson makes up a trinity of opposites with them both. Longfellow is one of the most automatic of poets—to every subject that presents itself he gives, like some springs, a sort of coating of true and natural but never artificially finished poetry, varying a good deal with the quality of his subject, the fulness or slackness, concentration or dilatation of the spring itself at the moment, and other accidents. Browning is the least automatic, the most determined to submit all matters that come in his way to an apparently eccentric process of his own—a process involving sometimes (not always) a minimum of artistic expenditure, but personal and wayward to the nth. Tennyson, as little automatic as Browning, is the pure artist, never satisfied till he has brought everything to his own ideal of perfection in expression and form. It follows that Browning cannot translate at all—he can only transpose into a key of his own utterly different from the original; that Tennyson has left us but a little translation or direct imitation, but that of curious perfection; that Longfellow almost seems to prefer translation, and while more than fairly
faithful, manages always to give it a flavour of his own.

If we pass from his translations to his original verse, the same or an analogous quality confronts us. Longfellow is never startlingly felicitous; nor, on the other hand, does the sense of his felicity grow on us as we perceive more and more fully the exquisiteness of the art with which, but without artificiality, it is attained. You never have to question yourself, or him, to find out what he means; and you never are tempted almost or altogether to neglect his meaning, for the sake of the poetic supremacy with which it is conveyed. But that meaning is never contemptible—it is not so even in 'Excelsior,' if the piece could be stripped of its absurdities of expression and ornament. It is sometimes very admirable; and it is almost invariably conveyed with less or more—not unfrequently with a very considerable 'more'—of poetic treatment.

Now these are the conditions and specifications of a kind of poet who never can be too plentiful, and who, as a matter of fact, is decidedly rare. If, as some people talk with commendable gravity, poetry is a high and holy thing which ought to be cultivated like religion—that which enables the greatest number of persons to cultivate it is surely to be welcomed. If, on
the other hand, as light and frivolous folk prefer to insist, poetry is one of the greatest and absolutely the most harmless of pleasures—surely, again, the man who offers this in a manner that the multitude can and do appreciate, is a benefactor of his species. Nay more, there must as surely be something not of the first-comer, something which Apollo has not given to everybody, in the man who can do this. There are so many poets who have not succeeded in giving pleasure to anybody, whether of the great vulgar or of the small, whether of the promiscuous or the fastidious feeders!

We may, however, devote a few words to this 'small vulgar' itself, and beat up its quarters briefly but without much mercy. For my own part, I made up my mind long ago, that the critic who pooh-poohs Longfellow's poetry is a bad critic. For one of the attributes of the critic is that he shall be, strictly by derivation and definition, a separator, a man who is able to discern the good from the bad, even though they be mixed like the heap of grain that Venus set Psyche to sort. A critic who must have his poetry sorted out for him, presented in its quiddity, 'neat,' to vary the metaphor, may pride himself upon his taste, but is in effect confessing his incompetence. In His idio-syncrasy.
many cases, I fear, even the taste is not quite so genuine as it appears or would like to appear. The critics in question would too certainly at one time have adopted one current standard of poetic supremacy, at another another. At any rate they may be left in the mire with this dilemma. If they cannot see the poetry in Longfellow because of the other things not quite so poetical which are there, they lack the first qualification of the critic, which is to know poetry when he sees it. If they cannot separate and judge it, they lack the second, which is to see it and treat it by itself. So, enough of them.

Adopting a different style of criticism ourselves, it may be well for us to survey the different divisions of the poet's verse, no one of which can be completely represented here, while large parts of it can only be represented at all by a sort of brick-of-the-house process. This last, however, is no such great misfortune, for Longfellow, in this not differing from most other poets, is by no means at his best in his longest poems, even the non-dramatic ones. Of the dramatic pieces, The Spanish Student (already commended) and the little miracle-play inserted in The Golden Legend, are by far the best. But of course it is open to any one to say that neither is a play at all; the second
being a mere clever pastiche, while the first is partly that, and still more a loosely told but capital story which the whim of the writer has thrown into dramatic instead of narrative form. And there is a good deal in this, though for my part I should not like The Spanish Student so well if it were not partly in verse, and I never read it afresh without liking it better. The New England Tragedies, the Divine Tragedy (Christus), and Michael Angelo are exposed to the same critical description, which, however, would have to take a more uncomplimentary colouring. The slight but ambitious Masque of Pandora is by no means without merit; but it wanted another man, and above all a younger man, to write it.

Very pedantic critics of form might object to the separation of The Golden Legend itself from this group. To my fancy, however, it occupies a middle place between the dramatic and the purely narrative pieces. It proceeds, no doubt, as the excellent old French phrase has it, 'by personages'—there are names as shoulder-headings to the different paragraphs of the verse. But in reality it is nearly as pure a narrative as the original Der Arme Heinrich of Hartmann von der Aue, from which it was taken. The speakers (except perhaps Elsie) have no personality—we can neglect
them altogether, or at least regard them as the personages of a poem with 'then said So-and-so,' forming part of the verse. Often, there is no reason why there should be any 'So-and-so' at all. The thing is really a sort of dreamy panorama with a certain number of cinematograph effects to enliven it—a thing that poets found out ages and ages before panoramas or cinematographs were invented or thought of. And it is (to me at least) a very delightful thing. I happen to have a fairly wide acquaintance with mediæval poetry in the original tongues, and a great devotion to the Middle Ages. I do not say that Longfellow has gone very deeply into mediæval sentiment. It was not his way to go very deeply, or to appear to go very deeply (which is perhaps a different thing), into anything. He may in parts and passages be at a disadvantage with Mr. William Morris, as he certainly is in The Wayside Inn. But here also his 'superficiality,' as it seems to some folk, has a curious quality of not being so very superficial after all. His etching is not deeply bitten; his colour is but a sort of preliminary wash. But somehow or other both are right as far as they go, and both give to the spectator an effect much more trustworthy than some far more heavily treated plates and pictures. The opening
diablerie, and that of the scene between Prince Henry and Lucifer; the ‘Tale of the Monk Felix’ and Elsie’s of the Sultan’s daughter; Lucifer in the church; the Prince’s picture of the cathedral; Friar Claus in the cellar; the Abbess’s soliloquy; the Prince and Elsie at Genoa; the voyage; the crucial scene, and the lovers’ final dialogue—are things as to which I shall respectfully ask any critic to be very sure of his criticism before he dismisses them as ordinary. We must try to make room for most of them here; and if we have to leave out any, the omission will more than justify itself should it send any one to the original. I think I can promise that, if he has any natural taste for poetry, he will not be satisfied till he knows the whole of the poem itself. For combined variety and charm there is nothing of Longfellow’s in bulk that can be compared to it.

At this point, years ago at any rate, there would have been, supposing that many people read the words which I have just written, a chorus of indignant voices, interrupting to cry, ‘What! do you mean to say that you prefer this second-hand mediaeval medley to Evangeline?’ Certainly I prefer it very much; and what is more, I am certain, as I by no means always am, that, whether I prefer it or not, it
ought to be preferred. *Evangeline* is a pretty poem; it lends itself admirably to illustration for drawing-room-table books; it was a clever revival of an old though hopeless experiment in metre; its sentiment is not false; and it has some beautiful passages. We need not attach the slightest importance to the American criticism which says that Longfellow did not take the trouble to go west and south to get local colour for the bayous and the prairies—that he is not true to it. I think the bayous rather nice myself; and, as I am not likely ever to visit the originals, I do not care whether they are like or not. We need not attend to the grave historians who tell us (I believe quite correctly) that the Acadians, instead of being mercilessly, were rather long-sufferingly dealt with. These things do not matter to poetry at all. The poem, as it seems to me, suffers from two quite different defects, one of matter, one of form. The weakness in matter is twofold. In the first place the characters, with hardly the slight exception of 'Basil the Blacksmith,' have no character at all. Longfellow is never very strong at this; but even Elsie in the *Legend* is far more of a person than Evangeline, and Prince Henry than Gabriel. Secondly, the pathetic conclusion is one of those 'possible improbabilities' which, as all good
critics have noticed from the dawn of criticism, 'Evan-
geline.' How did all those years pass? Of course if Evangeline made a point of a 'stern chase,' if she insisted on always coming up with Gabriel (as an Irishman might say) just after he had gone somewhere else—there is nothing to say. But when she settled at Philadelphia it was different. The post may not have been very effective, and there may have been no newspapers to advertise in; but trappers wandered everywhere, and though, as I have said, it is possible, it is in the very last degree improbable that even three or four years could have passed, let alone the twenty or thirty required by the story, before Gabriel heard of her whereabouts. It is all very well to say that this is a prosaic criticism, like Mrs. Barbauld's when she told Coleridge that *The Ancient Mariner* was deficient in probability. Coleridge has brought it about that the *poetical* reader of *The Ancient Mariner* never thinks about probability: and Longfellow has not done this. He has not achieved the 'suspension of disbelief,' in Cole-
ridge's own great words.

We ought, however, to give some special atten-
tion to the form of this, which is also the form of *The Courtship of Miles Standish*—the English hexameter. Longfellow had tried this earlier,
in his translation of Tegner's 'Children of the Lord's Supper' and one or two other pieces. It was not surprising that so careful a student of the Germans—who had taken to the metre pretty far back in the eighteenth century—should attempt it; but the previous experiments of Coleridge might have influenced him even without this. I shall frankly say that for my part I believe this English hexameter to be a hopeless and impossible mistake, always and in every form, as such;—though it can be made a very effective measure by letting it follow its natural bent with us and become anapestic. But this is not the place for a prosodic disquisition of the general kind. We must confine ourselves to the special faults or merits of Longfellow's hexameter. The defects of the whole, and of most individual lines, seem to me—in spite of some passable verses and a few effective and fairly sustained passages—to be undeniable. The chief of them, which in a way includes or excuses all or most of the others, is a quality for which French has one short and final word of three letters, mou; but which we cannot indicate at all exactly by 'soft,' and only piece-meal and inadequately by 'flaccid' and others. The line lacks spring, coil and recoil, resilience and its corollary resonance. I myself think the not uncommon opinion that English has
few spondees incorrect; but Longfellow is very unlucky with his, though, oddly enough, he is fond of that rather dangerous thing the spondaic ending. Usually he oscillates between almost wholly dactylic lines of a very loose, fragile, and rickety construction, and spondees of such a questionable character as

'She in turn related her love and all its disasters'—

where it is difficult to say whether 'she in'—which is little more than one syllable, or 'turn-re'—which hardly any pronunciation will get into more than a trochee—is the more incompetent representative of the double-long foot. But not to spend too much time upon technical details (which could be largely multiplied, but for which we have no room), it may be said, I think, without any injustice, that, save in a few passages, the effect of the whole is monotonously slipshod, and very inferior to that even of rhythmical prose.

The Courtship of Miles Standish itself needs little notice; none indeed as far as the vehicle is concerned. It was naturally interesting to Americans, as dealing with the rather slender and not always pleasant materials of their early history, and to the poet and his friends as embodying a family tradition. But these things of course have nothing to do with poetic merit itself.
As a story it is so slight that to criticise it as such—to point out that Priscilla is rather pert for a Puritan maiden, and that John Alden is a nincompoop or something worse—would be absurd. But if people like it they may; I suppose those who do would call it 'idyllic.'

Not thus to be dismissed is Hiawatha, though a great deal of what has been said by others about Hiawatha, its fidelity to authorities, the trustworthiness of these authorities, and so forth, may be dismissed with alacrity and decision. It is enough to say that the effect which the poet wished to produce—the presentation of an entirely strange civilisation, or half-civilisation, with imagery, diction, metre, and all adapted in strangeness—is well and even triumphantly achieved. No matter where he got the metre, and no matter whether he mixed the local colour in more senses than one. The whole is of a piece—united and congruous in effect, without gap or jar. And this is a merit which some people put highest in poetry, and which nobody can put low. Of course the Devil's Advocate, seeing his advantage, may go on and ask whether it is not all rather too complete, rather too much of a piece—whether the unvarying and unvaried plainsong of the trochaic dimeter does not 'get on the nerves' after a time, and not so very long a time; whether the constant repetition of
barbaric words with their English synonyms 'Hiawatha.'


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barbaric words with their English synonyms does not overpass the effect of strange terms in poetry, and begin to produce rather that of reading a lexicon; whether Longfellow's old defect of insufficiently marked character—though Pau-puk-Keewis and Iagoo, and even Nokomis have some—is not unfortunately felt. Perhaps the poet’s counsel will have to 'confess and avoid' a little in this part of the matter. But on reading Hiawatha again, after a good many years' interval, I find that it bears the test much better than some things which I used to like when I liked it first, and which the outrage of time has, I fear, irreparably defaced for me. Perhaps it would stand shortening or thinning; but then it is fair to remember that it is, from one point of view, such a mere 'bundle of episodes'—there is so very little connection running through it, except the unity of treatment spoken of above, and the presence of Hiawatha as a sort of 'hero-when-wanted'—that there is no need to read it all at once. Read in batches, and at the right moment, it is very good reading, not merely for the exotic manners and unfamiliar imagery, not merely for the pleasant if not overdone music of the soft, strange, Indian names, but for other things more sheerly poetical. Indeed, as I look through the twenty-two cantos yet again, to determine what to give
here, the whole being impossible, I find myself rather unexpectedly confronted with that other difficulty, what not to give, which is the selector’s greatest compliment. I have given rather less than I might, with the same hope, as in the case of The Spanish Student and The Golden Legend, that the fragments will serve as baits.

Of Longfellow’s magnum opus in a certain sense, The Tales of a Wayside Inn, I shall not say much. It was a little unfortunate, as I have said, in coinciding with a not wholly dissimilar attempt, Mr. William Morris’s Earthly Paradise, which has not only much more art as a whole, but a much higher level of poetical merit in the parts. Where the contact is even closer, as in ‘King Robert of Sicily,’ the contrast is especially disastrous. But read in itself, and as a frank attempt at tale-telling in verse rather than at narrative poetry, it is good pastime enough, and sometimes something very much better. The worst thing about it is its exceeding inequality. The opening story, ‘Paul Revere’s Ride,’ has the drawback that the excellent Paul does not seem to have run the slightest danger, though, if his friend in the belfry had been observed and caught (as he ought to have been), and hanged (as he might have been with much better right than André), it would have given some point. ‘The Ballad
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of Carmilhan,' again, is an imitation of the worst German manner—sham 'silly sooth'; its failure being intensified by the reminder which the name gives of a very different thing in German, Hauff's most powerful and gruesome prose story. Elsewhere there are excellent things—much if not all of 'The Saga of King Olaf,' and many smaller ones. But the distinction which I have just drawn had better be kept in mind throughout.

And so we are left with those shorter poems which, if people would only throw away mistaken traditional theories of poetry, are the real test of a poet's gift, unless he is an altogether exceptional person as well as poet, like Dante. In a short poem, the poet has only got to attend to the poetry. He can leave the story and the characters to the persons to whom they properly belong—the novelist and the dramatist. There is nothing to prevent him being as 'subjective' or as 'objective' as he chooses. Instead of being more or less tied to one metre, he may try a hundred in as many different poems. He has not the slightest excuse for 'padding'; and his critics have no excuse for excusing him if he does pad. The immense, the legitimate, the natural charm of variety, instead of having to be painfully sought for, presents itself unsought to him, unless he is so
incompetent that *ex hypothesi* he falls out of our consideration. From the stock objections of the criticaster to digressions, episodes, purple patches, &c., he is free by the very fact of the matter.

Accordingly, all Longfellow's best work is of this kind, and there is a very great deal of it. He never lost his skill at it, from the early *Voices of the Night* to the singularly beautiful introduction of *Ultima Thule*. If he made his worst slip here in 'Excelsior,' he redeemed that slip by almost literally a hundred things that were not slips. As to the objections to 'sentiment,' 'convention,' 'over-facility,' and the like, I have hinted the lines of an impregnable fortification against them above, and it is not necessary to expand or emphasise these lines much. Sentiment, when it becomes (as it has rather a tendency to become) sentimentalism, is not the best of things; but it is at any rate better than the cheap and childish paradox; and much better than the banal brutality, which have been sometimes offered in its place. All conventions (except in pure 'manners') are bad; but a clean and kindly convention is, at any rate, less bad than a dirty and ill-natured one. As for over-facility, that opens a very difficult critical question, which I venture to think not many of the objectors are quite learned in their craft.
enough to handle. For this quality is very intimately connected with that other, of adapting poetry to the general capacity, which has been noted above.

For my part, I am sorry ‘as a Christian’ (compare Rowena’s observation and Wamba’s comment) for those who cannot see poetry in Longfellow’s lyrics; but my sorrow in any other capacity is a good deal tempered by uncharitable doubt whether they really see the poetry of Poe or of Whitman, of Rossetti or of Blake. I am extremely glad, as a matter of pure humanity, that there are a large number of persons who can and do see it.

It is to be seen in various forms and ways—in description, suggestion, musical accompaniment of thought. Of the two famous poetic processes, Longfellow, no doubt, oftener adopts that of adorning and exalting the familiar, than that of seizing and making familiar the strange; but it would be unjust (the refusal is indeed at the root of all the injustice that has been done to him) to refuse him command of a certain middle way, a combination of the two nearer to the earth than to the ether, but not involving banishment from this latter. And this is what makes his companionship and guideship so valuable for those who are not exactly at home on the mountain-tops of poetry; who cannot
(or cannot at first) breathe its more rarefied air. Some, of course, of his things, especially the 'Psalm of Life' itself, are so hackneyed, so sullied by the ignoble use of cheap quotation and stale tagging of morals, that it needs the accident of fresh acquaintance, or the much rarer property of that real critical spirit which is proof against all hackneying, to enjoy them thoroughly. Others, like 'The Bridge' for instance, pay the rather comic and unfair, but very real penalty of being so indissolubly associated with their usual musical setting, that the actual poetical music is, as it were, dinned out of hearing. But in late work as in early, in the unhackneyed things as in the hackneyed, there never fails for long together, or rather there is almost always present, this unpretentious and apparently easy gift of communicating something of poetical treatment, something of poetical effect, to everything, or almost everything, that is touched. It may be a happy epithet of description; it may be a musical phrase or rhythm; it may be a suggestion of thought or feeling just charmed into freedom from the merely prosaic and banal; it may even be a borrowed plume of reading freshly set in the poet's cap, a relish of out-of-the way literature happily instilled; it may be a dozen other things tedious to particularise. But the poeticising—the disrealising
and yet realising—touch is always in it, or in it so often as to obscure and cover the failures. Nay, these failures themselves, save in one or two cases, especially that gibbeted above, are themselves so modest and so little offending, that, even without the successes, they would almost escape notice. The entire absence of pretentiousness is here also a wonderful preservative. Longfellow may be sometimes insignificant, he may ofttimes have the rather evanescent touch of the *improvisatore*, but he is never positively dull or offensive, rarely absurd.

Not often has a poet made a more definite promise than in the *Voices of the Night*, which, be it remembered, appeared in 1839 after a considerable apprenticeship both to speech and silence, but some years before the capital appearances of Tennyson in the *Poems* of 1842, and of Browning in *Bells and Pomegranates*. They are all given here as they were finally united by their author; and though no large handful, it is a handful of very pleasant delights. The Prelude—with its well-chosen combination of the metrical qualities of the Ballad quatrain and the Romance six—is really a remarkable foreshadowing of Longfellow's poetical career, and the baggage he was to take with him on it; the delight in Nature; the delight in a quiet but not vulgar fancy; the delight in literature;
the sympathy with humanity; the sense—rather remarkable in a person of so equable a temper, and showing itself at a time when the 'browner shades' were not even near—of the passing of time and the vanity of things. And this variety shows itself at more development in what follows—the graceful 'Hymn to the Night,' the 'fine confused feeding' and 'extremely valuable thoughts,' as Wordsworth said of his own poems, of the 'Psalm of Life,' the more than pretty sentiment of 'The Reaper,' and the not less than fine bravery of 'The Light of Stars.'

For the two original ballads, 'The Skeleton in Armour' and 'The Wreck of the Hesperus,' I shall never shirk declaring admiration. If not the strongest of meat, they are dishes of milk very well crumbled with bread for poetical babes, and the said babes, when they grow up, will be very lucky if they find no worse food even then, and may come back to them with relish from the strong meat itself. The first Miscellaneous Poems sustain the note well, especially 'It is not always May'; and 'The Goblet of Life' is, I think, better than its 'Psalm,' a sentiment which may sound immoral, but which corresponds to the general experience of critical readers of poetry.

The Belfry of Bruges shows Longfellow in that peculiar character of his, the character of
a poetical cicerone of foreign lands and the things appertaining to them, and the note is not monotonous. It is true that there are some weak things here which accordingly we do not give, it not being necessary, as in the case of 'Excelsior,' to justify unfavourable criticism, to escape the charge of not giving the poet's most famous things. 'The Arsenal at Springfield,' for instance, is a piece of mere claptrap, out of harmony with some of his own most spirited work, and merely an instance of a cant common at the time, though unhappily not unknown in many other times.

Of the *Songs and Sonnets*, 'Seaweed' is peculiarly beautiful, and the famous 'The Day is Done' is one of those which I shall not throw to the sentiment-hunting wolves. The sonnet itself was not one of Longfellow's special domains; he was not quite intense enough for it in meaning on the one hand, nor quite impeccable enough in form on the other. 'The Evening Star' is the best of them, 'The Cross of Snow,' for all its pathetic subject (his wife's death) and its not unhappy idea, being ruined by the *unblessed word 'benedight.'*

But I am letting myself be betrayed into too much particularisation. To specify the pleasant things in *The Seaside and the Fireside* and in *Birds of Passage* would most unjustifiably curtail
the room available for those good things themselves. Let me only mention 'The Building of the Ship,' so admirably conducted and climaxed, with its famous and justly praised political ending—one of the rare pieces of political verse which need no special prejudice in favour of their sentiments to conciliate admiration; 'Chrysaor,' the most Browningesque thing in Longfellow; the *almost* adequate 'Secret of the Sea'; and the delectable 'King Witlaf's Drinking Horn' in the first parcel: the stately and noble 'Ladder of St. Augustine' and 'Haunted Houses'; 'My Lost Youth'; the once more famous 'Golden Milestone,' 'Santa Filomena,' 'Sandalphon' (oddly suggestive and unsuggestive of a poet of the next generation who has never had his meed, Mr. O'Shaughnessy); 'Weariness'; and many another, in the second.

Some think this kind of sampling an impertinence, but I do not believe that either good poets or good critics agree with them. One is only performing the modest duty of an ancient apprentice, when he shouted, 'What d'ye lack?' and vaunted the wares offered. If they were good wares they were none the worse, and those who were induced to buy them were the better. And these are good wares!

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.
VOICES OF THE NIGHT

Πότνια, πότνια νυξ,
υπνοδότερα τῶν πολυπήνων βροτῶν
'Ερεβόθην τίς μόλε μόλε κατάπτερος
'Αγαμεμνόνιον ἐπὶ δόμων
υπὸ γὰρ ἀλγέων, ὑπὸ τε συμφόρας
dioixómeβ', oixómeβa.

Euripides.

PRELUDE

PLEASANT it was, when woods were green,
And winds were soft and low,
To lie amid some sylvan scene,
Where, the long drooping boughs between,
Shadows dark and sunlight sheen
Alternate come and go;

Or where the denser grove receives
No sunlight from above,
But the dark foliage interweaves
In one unbroken roof of leaves,
Underneath whose sloping eaves
The shadows hardly move.

Beneath some patriarchal tree
I lay upon the ground;
His hoary arms uplifted he,
LONGFELLOW

And all the broad leaves over me
Clapped their little hands in glee,
With one continuous sound;—

A slumbrous sound, a sound that brings
The feelings of a dream,
As of innumerable wings,
As, when a bell no longer swings,
Faint the hollow murmur rings
O'er meadow, lake, and stream.

And dreams of that which cannot die,
Bright visions, came to me,
As lapped in thought I used to lie,
And gaze into the summer sky,
Where the sailing clouds went by,
Like ships upon the sea;

Dreams that the soul of youth engage
Ere Fancy has been quelled;
Old legends of the monkish page,
Traditions of the saint and sage,
Tales that have the rime of age,
And chronicles of Eld.

And, loving still these quaint old themes,
Even in the city's throng
I feel the freshness of the streams,
That, crossed by shades and sunny gleams,
Water the green land of dreams,
The holy land of song.
Therefore, at Pentecost, which brings

The Spring, clothed like a bride,
When nestling buds unfold their wings,
And bishop's-caps have golden rings,
Musing upon many things,
I sought the woodlands wide.

The green trees whispered low and mild:
It was a sound of joy!
They were my playmates when a child,
And rocked me in their arms so wild:
Still they looked at me and smiled,
As if I were a boy;

And ever whispered, mild and low,
'Come, be a child once more!'
And waved their long arms to and fro,
And beckoned solemnly and slow;
O, I could not choose but go
Into the woodlands hoar,—

Into the blithe and breathing air,
Into the solemn wood,
Solemn and silent everywhere!
Nature with folded hands seemed there,
Kneeling at her evening prayer!
Like one in prayer I stood.

Before me rose an avenue
Of tall and sombrous pines;
Abroad their fan-like branches grew,
LONGFELLOW

And, where the sunshine darted through,
Spread a vapour soft and blue,
   In long and sloping lines.

And, falling on my weary brain,
   Like a fast-falling shower,
The dreams of youth came back again,
Low lisplings of the summer rain,
Dropping on the ripened grain,
   As once upon the flower.

Visions of childhood! Stay, O stay!
   Ye were so sweet and wild!
And distant voices seemed to say,
   'It cannot be! They pass away!
Other themes demand thy lay;
   Thou art no more a child!

'The land of Song within thee lies,
   Watered by living springs;
The lids of Fancy's sleepless eyes
Are gates unto that Paradise,
Holy thoughts, like stars, arise,
   Its clouds are angels' wings.

'Learn, that henceforth thy song shall be,
   Not mountains capped with snow,
Nor forests sounding like the sea,
Nor rivers flowing ceaselessly,
Where the woodlands bend to see
   The bending heavens below.
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!

(Hymn to Night.)
VOICES OF THE NIGHT

'There is a forest where the din
Of iron branches sounds!
A mighty river roars between,
And whosoever looks therein
Sees the heavens all black with sin,
Sees not its depths, nor bounds.

'Athwart the swinging branches cast,
Soft rays of sunshine pour;
Then comes the fearful wintry blast;
Our hopes, like withered leaves, fall fast;
Pallid lips say, "It is past!
We can return no more!"

'Look, then, into thine heart, and write!
Yes, into Life's deep stream!
All forms of sorrow and delight,
All solemn Voices of the Night,
That can soothe thee, or affright,—
Be these henceforth thy theme.'

HYMN TO THE NIGHT

'Ασπασίη, τριλλιστός.

I HEARD the trailing garments of the Night
Sweep through her marble halls!
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
Stoop o'er me from above;
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
As of the one I love.
LONGFELLOW

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
    The manifold, soft chimes,
That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,
    Like some old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
    My spirit drank repose;
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,—
    From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
    What man has borne before!
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
    And they complain no more.

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer!
    Descend with broad-winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice-prayed-for, the most fair,
    The best-belov'd Night!

A PSALM OF LIFE

WHAT THE HEART OF THE YOUNG MAN
    SAID TO THE PSALMIST

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
    Life is but an empty dream!
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
    And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
    And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
    Was not spoken of the soul.
Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
   Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
   Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
   And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
   Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
   In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
   Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, how'er pleasant!
   Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
   Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
   We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
   Footprints on the sands of time;—

Footprints, that perhaps another,
   Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
   Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
   With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
   Learn to labour and to wait.
THE REAPER AND THE FLOWERS

THERE is a Reaper whose name is Death,
   And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
   And the flowers that grow between.

'Shall I have naught that is fair?' saith he;
   'Have naught but the bearded grain?
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
   I will give them all back again.'

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
   He kissed their drooping leaves;
It was for the Lord of Paradise
   He bound them in his sheaves.

'My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,'
   The Reaper said, and smiled;
'Dear tokens of the earth are they,
   Where He was once a child.

'They shall all bloom in fields of light,
   Transplanted by my care,
And saints, upon their garments white,
   These sacred blossoms wear.'

And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
   The flowers she most did love;
She knew she should find them all again
   In the fields of light above.
O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day;
'Twas an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.

THE LIGHT OF STARS

The night is come, but not too soon;
And sinking silently,
All silently, the little moon
Drops down behind the sky.

There is no light in earth or heaven
But the cold light of stars;
And the first watch of night is given
To the red planet Mars.

Is it the tender star of love?
The star of love and dreams?
O no! from that blue tent above,
A hero's armour gleams,

And earnest thoughts within me rise,
When I behold afar,
Suspended in the evening skies,
The shield of that red star.

O star of strength! I see thee stand
And smile upon my pain;
Thou beckonest with thy mailed hand,
And I am strong again.
Within my breast there is no light  
But the cold light of stars;  
I give the first watch of the night  
To the red planet Mars.

The star of the unconquered will,  
He rises in my breast,  
Serene, and resolute, and still,  
And calm, and self-possessed.

And thou, too, whosoever thou art,  
That readest this brief psalm,  
As one by one thy hopes depart,  
Be resolute and calm.

O fear not in a world like this,  
And thou shalt know ere long,  
Know how sublime a thing it is  
To suffer and be strong.

FOOTSTEPS OF ANGELS

When the hours of Day are numbered,  
And the voices of the Night  
Wake the better soul, that slumbered,  
To a holy, calm delight;

Ere the evening lamps are lighted,  
And, like phantoms grim and tall,  
Shadows from the fitful firelight  
Dance upon the parlour wall;
Then the forms of the departed
   Enter at the open door;
The belovèd, the true-hearted,
   Come to visit me once more;

He, the young and strong, who cherished
   Noble longings for the strife,
By the roadside fell and perished,
   Weary with the march of life!

They, the holy ones and weakly,
   Who the cross of suffering bore,
Folded their pale hands so meekly,
   Spake with us on earth no more!

And with them the Being Beauteous,
   Who unto my youth was given,
More than all things else to love me,
   And is now a saint in heaven.

With a slow and noiseless footstep
   Comes that messenger divine,
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
   Lays her gentle hand in mine.

And she sits and gazes at me
   With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
   Looking downward from the skies.

Uttered not, yet comprehended,
   Is the spirit's voiceless prayer,
Soft rebukes, in blessings ended,
   Breathing from her lips of air.
O, though oft depressed and lonely,
   All my fears are laid aside,
If I but remember only
   Such as these have lived and died!

FLOWERS

Spake full well, in language quaint and olden,
   One who dwelleth by the castled Rhine,
When he called the flowers, so blue and golden,
   Stars, that in earth's firmament do shine.

Stars they are, wherein we read our history,
   As astrologers and seers of eul;
Yet not wrapped about with awful mystery,
   Like the burning stars, which they beheld.

Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous,
   God hath written in those stars above;
But not less in the bright flowerets under us
   Stands the revelation of His love.

Bright and glorious is that revelation,
   Written all over this great world of ours:
Making evident our own creation,
   In these stars of earth, these golden flowers.

And the Poet, faithful and far-seeing,
   Sees, alike in stars and flowers, a part
Of the self-same, universal being,
   Which is throbbing in his brain and heart.
Gorgeous flowerets in the sunlight shining,
  Blossoms flaunting in the eye of day,
Tremulous leaves, with soft and silver lining,
  Buds that open only to decay;

Brilliant hopes, all woven in gorgeous tissues,
  Flaunting gaily in the golden light,
Large desires, with most uncertain issues,
  Tender wishes, blossoming at night!

'These in flowers and men are more than seeming;
  Workings are they of the self-same powers,
Which the Poet, in no idle dreaming,
  Seeth in himself and in the flowers.

Everywhere about us are they glowing,
  Some like stars, to tell us Spring is born;
Others, their blue eyes with tears o'erflowing,
  Stand like Ruth amid the golden corn;

Not alone in Spring's armorial bearing,
  And in Summer's green-emblazoned field,
But in arms of brave old Autumn's wearing,
  In the centre of his brazen shield;

Not alone in meadows and green alleys,
  On the mountain-top, and by the brink
Of sequestered pools in woodland valleys,
  Where the slaves of nature stoop to drink;

Not alone in her vast dome of glory,
  Not on graves of bird and beast alone,
But in old cathedrals, high and hoary,
  On the tombs of heroes, carved in stone;
In the cottage of the rudest peasant,
    In ancestral homes, whose crumbling towers,
Speaking of the Past unto the Present,
    Tell us of the ancient Games of Flowers;

In all places, then, and in all seasons,
    Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings,
Teaching us, by most persuasive reasons,
    How akin they are to human things.

And with childlike, credulous affection
    We behold their tender buds expand;
Emblems of our own great resurrection,
    Emblems of the bright and better land.

THE BELEAGUERED CITY

I have read, in some old, marvellous tale,
    Some legend strange and vague,
That a midnight host of spectres pale
    Beleaguered the walls of Prague.

Beside the Moldau's rushing stream,
    With the wan moon overhead,
There stood, as in an awful dream,
    The army of the dead.

White as a sea-fog landward bound,
    The spectral camp was seen,
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,
    The river flowed between.
No other voice nor sound was there,  
No drum, nor sentry's pace;  
The mist-like banners clasped the air,  
As cloud with clouds embrace.

But when the old cathedral bell  
Proclaimed the morning prayer,  
The white pavilions rose and fell  
On the alarmed air.

Down the broad valley fast and far  
The troubled army fled;  
Up rose the glorious morning star,  
The ghastly host was dead.

I have read, in the marvellous heart of man,  
That strange and mystic scroll,  
That an army of phantoms vast and wan  
Beleaguer the human soul.

Encamped beside Life's rushing stream,  
In Fancy's misty light,  
Gigantic shapes and shadows gleam  
Portentous through the night.

Upon its midnight battle-ground  
The spectral camp is seen,  
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,  
Flows the River of Life between.

No other voice nor sound is there  
In the army of the grave;  
No other challenge breaks the air,  
But the rushing of Life's wave.
And when the solemn and deep church-bell
Entreats the soul to pray,
The midnight phantoms feel the spell,
The shadows sweep away.

Down the broad Vale of Tears afar
The spectral camp is fled;
Faith shineth as a morning star,
Our ghastly fears are dead.

MIDNIGHT MASS FOR THE DYING YEAR

YES, the Year is growing old,
And his eye is pale and bleared!
Death, with frosty hand and cold,
Plucks the old man by the beard,
Sorely, sorely!

The leaves are falling, falling,
Solemnly and slow;
Caw! caw! the rooks are calling,
It is a sound of woe,
A sound of woe!

Through woods and mountain passes
The winds, like anthems, roll;
They are chanting solemn masses,
Singing, 'Pray for this poor soul,
Pray, pray!'

And the hooded clouds, like friars,
Tell their beads in drops of rain,
And patter their doleful prayers;
But their prayers are all in vain,
All in vain!
There he stands in the foul weather,
The foolish, fond Old Year,
Crowned with wild flowers and with heather,
   Like weak, despisèd Lear,
   A king, a king!

Then comes the summer-like day,
   Bids the old man rejoice!
His joy! his last! O, the old man gray
   Loveth that ever-soft voice,
   Gentle and low.

To the crimson woods he saith,
   To the voice gentle and low
Of the soft air, like a daughter's breath,
   'Pray do not mock me so!
   Do not laugh at me!'

And now the sweet day is dead;
   Cold in his arms it lies;
No stain from its breath is spread
   Over the glassy skies,
   No mist or stain!

Then, too, the Old Year dieth,
   And the forests utter a moan,
Like the voice of one who crieth
   In the wilderness alone,
   'Vex not his ghost!'

Then comes, with an awful roar,
   Gathering and sounding on,
The storm-wind from Labrador,
   The wind Euroclydon,
   The storm-wind!
Howl! howl! and from the forest
Sweep the red leaves away!
Would, the sins that thou abhorrest,
O Soul! could thus decay,
And be swept away!

For there shall come a mightier blast,
There shall be a darker day;
And the stars, from heaven downcast,
Like red leaves be swept away!
Kyrie, eleyson!
Christe, eleyson!

L'ENVOI

Y e voices, that arose
After the Evening's close,
And whispered to my restless heart repose!

Go, breathe it in the ear
Of all who doubt and fear,
And say to them, 'Be of good cheer!'

Y e sounds, so low and calm,
That in the groves of balm
Seemed to me like an angel's psalm!

Go, mingle yet once more
With the perpetual roar
Of the pine forest, dark and hoar!
VOICES OF THE NIGHT

Tongues of the dead, not lost
But speaking from death’s frost,
Like fiery tongues at Pentecost!

Glimmer, as funeral lamps,
Amid the chills and damp
Of the vast plain where Death encamps!
BALLADS

THE SKELETON IN ARMOUR

'SPEAK! speak! thou fearful guest!
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armour drest,
Comest to daunt me!
Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me?'

Then, from those cavernous eyes
Pale flashes seemed to rise,
As when the Northern skies
Gleam in December;
And, like the water's flow
Under December's snow,
Came a dull voice of woe
From the heart's chamber.

'I was a Viking old!
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald in song has told,
No Saga taught thee
Take heed, that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse!
   For this I sought thee.

'Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
   Tamed the gerfalcon;
And, with my skates fast-bound,
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
   Trembled to walk on.

'Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare,
   Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the were-wolf's bark,
Until the soaring lark
   Sang from the meadow.

'But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
   With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
   By our stern orders.
Longfellow

'Many a wassail-bout
Wore the long Winter out;
Often our midnight shout
Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk's tale
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail,
Filled to o'erflowing.

'Once, as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
Burning yet tender;
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
Fell their soft splendour.

'I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest's shade
Our vows were plighted.
Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frightened.

'Bright in her father's hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
Chaunting his glory;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter's hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
To hear my story.

'While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
And as the wind-gusts waft
The sea-foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking-horn
Blew the foam lightly.

'She was a Prince's child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
I was discarded!
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew's flight,
Why did they leave that night
Her nest unguarded?

'Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,—
Fairest of all was she
Among the Norsemen!
When on the white sea-strand,
Waving his armèd hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand,
With twenty horsemen.
'Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast,
    When the wind failed us;
And with a sudden flaw
Came round the gusty Skaw,
So that our foe we saw
    Laugh as he hailed us.

'And as to catch the gale
Round veered the flapping sail,
Death! was the helmsman's hail,
    Death without quarter!
Mid-ships with iron keel
Struck we her ribs of steel;
Down her black hulk did reel
    Through the black water!

'As with his wings aslant,
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
    With his prey laden,
So toward the open main,
Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane,
    Bore I the maiden.

'Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o'er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
    Stretching to leeward;
There for my lady's bower
Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
    Stands looking seaward.

'There lived we many years;
Time dried the maiden's tears;
She had forgot her fears,
    She was a mother;
Death closed her mild blue eyes,
Under that tower she lies;
Ne'er shall the sun arise
    On such another!

'Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen!
Hateful to me were men,
    The sunlight hateful!
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear,
Fell I upon my spear,
    O, Death was grateful!

'Thus, seamed with many scars,
Bursting these prison bars,
Up to its native stars
    My soul ascended!
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior's soul,
Skoal! to the Northland! skoal!'
    —Thus the tale ended.
THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS

IT was the schooner Hesperus,
That sailed the wintry sea;
And the Skipper had taken his little daughter,
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds
That ope in the month of May.

The Skipper he stood beside the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth,
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailor,
Had sailed the Spanish Main,
' I pray thee, put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane.

' Last night the moon had a golden ring,
And to-night no moon we see!'
The Skipper he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the North-east,
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.
Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.

'Come hither! come hither! my little daughter,
And do not tremble so;
For I can weather the roughest gale
That ever wind did blow.'

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar,
And bound her to the mast.

'O father! I hear the church-bells ring,
O say, what may it be?'
'Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast!'
And he steered for the open sea.

'O father! I hear the sound of guns,
O say, what may it be?'
'Some ship in distress, that cannot live
In such an angry sea!'

'O father! I see a gleaming light,
O say, what may it be?'
But the father answered never a word,
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies,
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
On his fixed and glassy eyes.
Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
   That saved she might be;
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave
   On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
   Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost the vessel swept
   Towards the reef of Norman's Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between
   A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf
   On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
   She drifted a dreary wreck,
And a whooping billow swept the crew
   Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
   Looked soft as carded wool,
But the cruel rocks they gored her side
   Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
   With the masts went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass she stove and sank,—
   Ho! ho! the breakers roared!

At daybreak on the bleak sea-beach
   A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair
   Lashed close to a drifting mast.
The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
   The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,
   On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,
   In the midnight and the snow!
Christ save us all from a death like this,
   On the reef of Norman's Woe!
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

UNDER a spreading chestnut-tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long;
His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands.
(The Village Blacksmith)
They love to see the flaming forge,
    And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
    Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
    And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
    He hears his daughter's voice
Singing in the village choir,
    And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice
    Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
    How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
    A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing,
    Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begin,
    Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done,
    Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
    For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
    Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
    Each burning deed and thought.
ENDYMION

THE rising moon has hid the stars;
Her level rays, like golden bars,
Lie on the landscape green,
With shadows brown between.

And silver white the river gleams
As if Diana, in her dreams,
Had dropt her silver bow
Upon the meadows low.

On such a tranquil night as this,
She woke Endymion with a kiss,
When, sleeping in the grove,
He dreamed not of her love.

Like Dian's kiss, unasked, unsought,
Love gives itself, but is not bought;
Nor voice, nor sound betrays
Its deep, impassioned gaze.

It comes,—the beautiful, the free,
The crown of all humanity,—
In silence and alone
To seek the elected one.

It lifts the boughs, whose shadows deep
Are Life's oblivion, the soul's sleep,
And kisses the closed eyes
Of him who slumbering lies.
O weary hearts! O slumbering eyes!
O drooping souls, whose destinies
Are fraught with fear and pain,
Ye shall be loved again!

No one is so accursed by fate,
No one so utterly desolate,
But some heart, though unknown,
Responds unto his own.

Responds,—as if with unseen wings,
An angel touched its quivering strings;
And whispers, in its song,
‘Where hast thou stayed so long?’

IT IS NOT ALWAYS MAY

No hay pájaros en los nidos de antaño.—Spanish Proverb.

The sun is bright,—the air is clear,
The darting swallows soar and sing,
And from the stately elms I hear
The bluebird prophesying Spring.

So blue yon winding river flows,
It seems an outlet from the sky,
Where waiting till the west-wind blows,
The freighted clouds at anchor lie.

All things are new;—the buds, the leaves,
That gild the elm-tree’s nodding crest,
And even the nest beneath the eaves;—
There are no birds in last year’s nest!
LONGFELLOW

All things rejoice in youth and love,
The fulness of their first delight!
And learn from the soft heavens above
The melting tenderness of night.

Maiden, that read'st this simple rhyme,
Enjoy thy youth, it will not stay;
Enjoy the fragrance of thy prime,
For O, it is not always May!

Enjoy the Spring of Love and Youth,
To some good angel leave the rest;
For Time will teach thee soon the truth,
There are no birds in last year's nest!

THE RAINY DAY

The day is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering Past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.
GOD'S ACRE

LIKE that ancient Saxon phrase, which calls
The burial-ground God's-Acre! It is just;
It consecrates each grave within its walls,
And breathes a benison o'er the sleeping dust.

God's-Acre! Yes, that blessed name imparts
Comfort to those who in the grave have sown
The seed that they had garnered in their hearts,
Their bread of life, alas! no more their own.

Into its furrows shall we all be cast,
In the sure faith that we shall rise again
At the great harvest, when the archangel's blast
Shall winnow, like a fan, the chaff and grain.

Then shall the good stand in immortal bloom
In the fair gardens of that second birth,
And each bright blossom mingle its perfume
With that of flowers which never bloomed on earth.

With thy rude ploughshare, Death, turn up the sod,
And spread the furrow for the seed we sow;
This is the field and Acre of our God,
This is the place where human harvests grow!

TO THE RIVER CHARLES

River! that in silence windest
Through the meadows, bright and free,
Till at length thy rest thou findest
In the bosom of the sea!
Four long years of mingled feeling,
    Half in rest, and half in strife,
I have seen thy waters stealing
    Onward, like the stream of life.

Thou hast taught me, Silent River!
    Many a lesson, deep and long;
Thou hast been a generous giver;
    I can give thee but a song.

Oft in sadness and in illness
    I have watched thy current glide,
Till the beauty of its stillness
    Overflowed me like a tide.

And in better hours and brighter,
    When I saw thy waters gleam,
I have felt my heart beat lighter,
    And leap onward with thy stream.

Not for this alone I love thee,
    Nor because thy waves of blue
From celestial seas above thee
    Take their own celestial hue.

Where yon shadowy woodlands hide thee,
    And thy waters disappear,
Friends I love have dwelt beside thee,
    And have made thy margin dear.

More than this;—thy name reminds me
    Of three friends, all true and tried;
And that name, like magic, binds me
    Closer, closer to thy side.
Friends my soul with joy remembers!
How like quivering flames they start,
When I fan the living embers
On the hearth-stone of my heart!

'Tis for this, thou Silent River!
That my spirit leans to thee;
Thou hast been a generous giver,
Take this idle song from me.

BLIND BARTIMEUS

BLIND Bartimeus at the gates
Of Jericho in darkness waits;
He hears the crowd;—he hears a breath
Say, 'It is Christ of Nazareth!'
And calls, in tones of agony,
Τεθσο, ἐλέησον με!

The thronging multitudes increase;
Blind Bartimeus, hold thy peace!
But still, above the noisy crowd,
The beggar's cry is shrill and loud;
Until they say, 'He calleth thee!'
Θάρσει, εἴειραι φωνεί σε!

Then saith the Christ, as silent stands
The crowd, 'What wilt thou at my hands?'
And he replies, 'O give me light!
Rabbi, restore the blind man's sight.'
And Jesus answers "Ἰπαγε·
'Ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε!"
Ye that have eyes, yet cannot see,
In darkness and in misery,
Recall those mighty Voices Three,
'Ημεν, ἐλέησόν με!
Θάρσει, ἐγείραι, ὑπαγε!
Η πίστις σου σέσωκε σε!

THE GOBLET OF LIFE

Filled is Life's goblet to the brim;
And though my eyes with tears are dim,
I see its sparkling bubbles swim,
And chant a melancholy hymn
With solemn voice and slow.

No purple flowers,—no garlands green,
Conceal the goblet's shade or sheen,
Nor maddening draughts of Hippocrene,
Like gleams of sunshine, flash between
Thick leaves of mistletoe.

This goblet, wrought with curious art,
Is filled with waters, that upstart
When the deep fountains of the heart,
By strong convulsions rent apart,
Are running all to waste.

And as it mantling passes round,
With fennel is it wreathed and crowned,
Whose seed and foliage sun-imbrowned
Are in its waters steeped and drowned,
And give a bitter taste.
Above the lowly plants it towers,
The fennel, with its yellow flowers,
And in an earlier age than ours
Was gifted with the wondrous powers,
    Lost vision to restore.

It gave new strength, and fearless mood;
And gladiators, fierce and rude,
Mingled it in their daily food;
And he who battled and subdued,
    A wreath of fennel wore.

Then in Life's goblet freely press
The leaves that give it bitterness,
Nor prize the coloured waters less,
For in thy darkness and distress
    New light and strength they give!

And he who has not learned to know
How false its sparkling bubbles show,
How bitter are the drops of woe
With which its brim may overflow,
    He has not learned to live.

The prayer of Ajax was for light;
Through all that dark and desperate fight,
The blackness of that noonday night,
He asked but the return of sight,
    To see his foeman's face.

Let our unceasing, earnest prayer
Be, too, for light,—for strength to bear
Our portion of the weight of care
That crushes into dumb despair
One half the human race.

O suffering, sad humanity!
O ye afflicted ones, who lie
Steeped to the lips in misery,
Longing, and yet afraid to die,
    Patient, though sorely tried!

I pledge you in this cup of grief,
Where floats the fennel's bitter leaf!
The Battle of our Life is brief,
The alarm,—the struggle,—the relief,
    Then sleep we side by side.

MAIDENHOOD

MAIDEN! with the meek brown eyes,
    In whose orbs a shadow lies
Like the dusk in evening skies!

Thou whose locks outshine the sun,
Golden tresses, wreathed in one,
As the braided streamlets run!

Standing, with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and childhood fleet!

Gazing, with a timid glance,
On the brooklet's swift advance,
On the river's broad expanse!
Deep and still, that gliding stream
Beautiful to thee must seem
As the river of a dream.

Then why pause with indecision,
When bright angels in thy vision
Beckon thee to fields Elysian?

Seest thou shadows sailing by,
As the dove, with startled eye,
Sees the falcon's shadow fly?

Hearest thou voices on the shore,
That our ears perceive no more,
Deafened by the cataract's roar?

O, thou child of many prayers!
Life hath quicksands,—Life hath snares!
Care and age come unawares!

Like the swell of some sweet tune,
Morning rises into noon,
May glides onward into June.

Childhood is the bough, where slumbered
Birds and blossoms many-numbered;—
Age, that bough with snows encumbered.

Gather, then, each flower that grows,
When the young heart overflows,
To embalm that tent of snows.

Bear a lily in thy hand;
Gates of brass cannot withstand
One touch of that magic wand,
Bear through sorrow, wrong, and ruth,  
In thy heart the dew of youth,  
On thy lips the smile of truth.

O, that dew, like balm, shall steal  
Into wounds that cannot heal,  
Even as sleep our eyes doth seal;

And that smile, like sunshine, dart  
Into many a sunless heart,  
For a smile of God thou art.

EXCELSIOR

The shades of night were falling fast,  
As through an Alpine village passed  
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,  
A banner with the strange device,  
Excelsior!

His brow was sad; his eye beneath  
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,  
And like a silver clarion rung  
The accents of that unknown tongue,  
Excelsior!

In happy homes he saw the light  
Of household fires gleam warm and bright;  
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,  
And from his lips escaped a groan,  
Excelsior!
Try not the Pass! the old man said;
Dark lowers the tempest overhead,
The roaring torrent is deep and wide!
And loud that clarion voice replied,
Excelsior!

'O stay,' the maiden said, 'and rest
Thy weary head upon this breast!'
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
But still he answered, with a sigh,
Excelsior!

'Beware the pine-tree's withered branch!
Beware the awful avalanche!'
This was the peasant's last Good-night.
A voice replied, far up the height,
Excelsior!

At break of day, as heavenward
The pious monks of Saint Bernard
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,
A voice cried through the startled air,
Excelsior!

A traveller, by the faithful hound,
Half-buried in the snow was found,
Still grasping in his hand of ice
That banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!
There in the twilight cold and gray,
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell, like a falling star,
Excelsior!

CARILLON

In the ancient town of Bruges,
In the quaint old Flemish city,
As the evening shades descended,
Low and loud and sweetly blended,
Low at times and loud at times,
And changing like a poet's rhymes,
Rang the beautiful wild chimes
From the Belfry in the market
Of the ancient town of Bruges.

Then, with deep sonorous clangour
Calmly answering their sweet anger,
When the wrangling bells had ended,
Slowly struck the clock eleven,
And, from out the silent heaven,
Silence on the town descended.
Silence, silence everywhere,
On the earth and in the air,
Save that footsteps here and there
Of some burgher home returning,
By the street lamps faintly burning,
For a moment woke the echoes
Of the ancient town of Bruges,
But amid my broken slumbers
Still I heard those magic numbers,
As they loud proclaimed the flight
And stolen marches of the night;
Till their chimes in sweet collision
Mingled with each wandering vision,
Mingled with the fortune-telling
Gipsy-bands of dreams and fancies,
Which amid the waste expanses
Of the silent land of trances
Have their solitary dwelling;
All else seemed asleep in Bruges,
In the quaint old Flemish city.

And I thought how like these chimes
Are the poet’s airy rhymes,
All his rhymes and roundelays,
His conceits, and songs, and ditties,
From the belfry of his brain,
Scattered downward, though in vain,
On the roofs and stones of cities!
For by night the drowsy ear
Under its curtains cannot hear,
And by day men go their ways,
Hearing the music as they pass,
But deeming it no more, alas!
Than the hollow sound of brass.

Yet perchance a sleepless wight,
Lodging at some humble inn
In the narrow lanes of life,
When the dusk and hush of night
Shut out the incessant din
Of daylight and its toil and strife,
May listen with a calm delight
To the poet's melodies,
Till he hears, or dreams he hears,
Intermingled with the song
Thoughts that he has cherished long;
Hears amid the chime and singing
The bells of his own village ringing,
And wakes, and finds his slumbrous eyes
Wet with most delicious tears.

Thus dreamed I, as by night I lay
In Bruges, at the Fleur-de-Blé,
Listening with a wild delight
To the chimes that, through the night,
Rang their changes from the Belfry
Of that quaint old Flemish city.

THE BELFRY OF BRUGES

In the market-place of Bruges stands the belfry old
and brown;
Thrice consumed and thrice rebuilted, still it watches
o'er the town.

As the summer morn was breaking, on that lofty tower
I stood,
And the world threw off the darkness, like the weeds
of widowhood.

Thick with towns and hamlets studded, and with
streams and vapours gray,
Like a shield embossed with silver, round and vast
the landscape lay.
At my feet the city slumbered. From its chimneys here and there,
Wreaths of snow-white smoke ascending, vanished, ghost-like, into air.

Not a sound rose from the city at that early morning hour,
But I heard a heart of iron beating in the ancient tower.

From their nests beneath the rafters sang the swallows wild and high;
And the world, beneath me sleeping, seemed more distant than the sky.

Then most musical and solemn, bringing back the olden times,
With their strange unearthly changes rang the melancholy chimes,

Like the psalms from some old cloister, when the nuns sing in the choir;
And the great bell tolled among them, like the chanting of a friar.

Visions of the days departed, shadowy phantoms filled my brain;
They who live in history only seemed to walk the earth again;

All the Foresters of Flanders,—mighty Baldwin Bras de Fer,
Lyderick du Bucq and Cressy Philip, Guy de Dampierre.
I beheld the pageants splendid that adorned those days of old;
Stately dames, like queens attended, knights who bore the Fleece of Gold.

Lombard and Venetian merchants with deep-laden argosies;
Ministers from twenty nations; more than royal pomp and ease.

I beheld proud Maximilian, kneeling humbly on the ground;
I beheld the gentle Mary, hunting with her hawk and hound;

And her lighted bridal-chamber, where a duke slept with the queen,
And the armed guard around them, and the sword unsheathed between.

I beheld the Flemish weavers, with Namur and Juliers bold,
Marching homeward from the bloody battle of the Spurs of Gold;

Saw the fight at Minnewater, saw the White Hoods moving west,
Saw great Artevelde victorious scale the Golden Dragon's nest.

And again the whiskered Spaniard all the land with terror smote;
And again the wild alarum sounded from the tocsin's throat;
Till the bell of Ghent responded o'er lagoon and dike of sand,
'I am Roland! I am Roland! there is victory in the land!'

Then the sound of drums aroused me. The awakened city's roar
Chased the phantoms I had summoned back into their graves once more.

Hours had passed away like minutes; and, before I was aware,
Lo! the shadow of the belfry crossed the sun-illumined square.

**NUREMBERG**

In the valley of the Pegnitz, where across broad meadow-lands
Rise the blue Franconian mountains, Nuremberg, the ancient, stands.

Quaint old town of toil and traffic, quaint old town of art and song,
Memories haunt thy pointed gables, like the rooks that round them throng:

Memories of the Middle Ages, when the emperors, rough and bold,
Had their dwelling in thy castle, time-defying, centuries old;
And thy brave and thrifty burghers boasted, in their uncouth rhyme,
That their great imperial city stretched its hand through every clime.

In the court-yard of the castle, bound with many an iron band,
Stands the mighty linden planted by Queen Cuni-gunde’s hand;

On the square the oriel window, where in old heroic days
Sat the poet Melchior singing Kaiser Maximilian’s praise.

Everywhere I see around me rise the wondrous world of Art:
Fountains wrought with richest sculpture standing in the common mart;

And above cathedral doorways saints and bishops carved in stone,
By a former age commissioned as apostles to our own.

In the church of sainted Sebald sleeps enshrined his holy dust,
And in bronze the Twelve Apostles guard from age to age their trust;

In the church of sainted Lawrence stands a pix of sculpture rare,
Like the foamy sheaf of fountains, rising through the painted air.
Here, when Art was still religion, with a simple, reverent heart,
Lived and laboured Albrecht Dürer, the Evangelist of Art;

Hence in silence and in sorrow, toiling still with busy hand,
Like an emigrant he wandered, seeking for the Better Land.

*Emigravit* is the inscription on the tombstone where he lies;
Dead he is not, but departed,—for the artist never dies.

Fairer seems the ancient city, and the sunshine seems more fair,
That he once has trod its pavement, that he once has breathed its air!

Through these streets so broad and stately, these obscure and dismal lanes,
Walked of yore the Master-singers, chanting rude poetic strains.

From remote and sunless suburbs came they to the friendly guild,
Building nests in Fame's great temple, as in spouts the swallows build.

As the weaver plied the shuttle, wove he too the mystic rhyme,
And the smith his iron measures hammered to the anvil's chime;
Thanking God, whose boundless wisdom makes the flowers of poesy bloom
In the forge's dust and cinders, in the tissues of the loom.

Here Hans Sachs, the cobbler-poet, laureate of the gentle craft,
Wisest of the Twelve Wise Masters, in huge folios sang and laughed.

But his house is now an ale-house, with a nicely sanded floor,
And a garland in the window, and his face above the door;

Painted by some humble artist, as in Adam Puschmann's song,
As the old man gray and dove-like, with his great beard white and long.

And at night the swart mechanic comes to drown his cark and care,
Quaffing ale from pewter tankards, in the master's antique chair.

Vanished is the ancient splendour, and before my dreamy eye
Wave these mingled shapes and figures, like a faded tapestry.

Not thy Councils, not thy Kaisers, win for thee the world's regard;
But thy painter, Albrecht Dürer, and Hans Sachs thy cobbler-bard.
Thus, O Nuremberg, a wanderer from a region far away,
As he paced thy streets and court-yards, sang in thought his careless lay:

Gathering from the pavement’s crevice, as a floweret of the soil,
The nobility of labour,—the long pedigree of toil.

THE NORMAN BARON

Dans les moments de la vie où la réflexion devient plus calme et plus profonde, où l’intérêt et l’avarice parlent moins haut que la raison, dans les instants de chagrin domestique, de maladie, et de péril de mort, les nobles se repentiennent de posséder des serfs, comme d’une chose peu agréable à Dieu, qui avait créé tous les hommes à son image.

Thierry, Conquête de l’Angleterre.

In his chamber, weak and dying,
Was the Norman baron lying;
Loud, without, the tempest thundered,
And the castle-turret shook.

In this fight was Death the gainer,
Spite of vassal and retainer,
And the lands his sires had plundered,
Written in the Doomsday Book.

By his bed a monk was seated,
Who in humble voice repeated
Many a prayer and pater-noster,
From the missal on his knee;
And, amid the tempest pealing,
Sounds of bells came faintly stealing,
Bells, that from the neighbouring kloster
Rang for the Nativity.

In the hall the serf and vassal
Held, that night, their Christmas wassail;
Many a carol, old and saintly,
    Sang the minstrels and the waits;

And so loud these Saxon gleemen
Sang to slaves the songs of freemen,
That the storm was heard but faintly,
    Knocking at the castle-gates.

Till at length the lays they chanting
Reached the chamber terror-haunted,
Where the monk, with accents holy,
    Whispered at the baron's ear.

Tears upon his eyelids glistened,
As he paused awhile and listened,
And the dying baron slowly
    Turned his weary head to hear.

‘Wassail for the kingly stranger
Born and cradled in a manger!
King like David, priest like Aaron,
    Christ is born to set us free!’
And the lightning showed the sainted
Figures on the casement painted,
And exclaimed the shuddering baron,
‘Miserere, Domine!’

In that hour of deep contrition
He beheld, with clearer vision,
Through all outward show and fashion,
Justice, the Avenger, rise.

All the pomp of earth had vanished,
Falsedhood and deceit were banished,
Reason spake more loud than passion,
And the truth wore no disguise.

Every vassal of his banner,
Every serf born to his manor,
All those wronged and wretched creatures,
By his hand were freed again.

And, as on the sacred missal
He recorded their dismissal,
Death relaxed his iron features,
And the monk replied, ‘Amen!’

Many centuries have been numbered
Since in death the baron slumbered
By the convent’s sculptured portal,
Mingling with the common dust:
But the good deed, through the ages
Living in historic pages,
Brighter grows and gleams immortal,
Unconsumed by moth or rust.

RAIN IN SUMMER

How beautiful is the rain!
After the dust and heat,
In the broad and fiery street,
In the narrow lane,
How beautiful is the rain!

How it clatters along the roofs,
Like the tramp of hoofs!
How it gushes and struggles out
From the throat of the overflowing spout!

Across the window-pane
It pours and pours;
And swift and wide,
With a muddy tide,
Like a river down the gutter roars
The rain, the welcome rain!

The sick man from his chamber looks
At the twisted brooks;
He can feel the cool
Breath of each little pool;
His fevered brain
Grows calm again,
And he breathes a blessing on the rain.
From the neighbouring school
Come the boys,
With more than their wonted noise
And commotion;
And down the wet streets
Sail their mimic fleets,
Till the treacherous pool
Ingulfs them in its whirling
And turbulent ocean.

In the country, on every side,
Where far and wide,
Like a leopard's tawny and spotted hide,
Stretches the plain;
To the dry grass and the drier grain
How welcome is the rain!

In the furrowed land
The toilsome and patient oxen stand;
Lifting the yoke-encumbered head,
With their dilated nostrils spread,
They silently inhale
The clover-scented gale,
And the vapours that arise
From the well-watered and smoking soil
For this rest in the furrow after toil
Their large and lustrous eyes
Seem to thank the Lord,
More than man's spoken word.

Near at hand,
From under the sheltering trees,
The farmer sees
His pastures, and his fields of grain,
As they bend their tops
To the numberless beating drops
Of the incessant rain.
He counts it as no sin
That he sees therein
Only his own thrift and gain.

These, and far more than these,
The Poet sees!
He can behold
Aquarius old
Walking the fenceless fields of air;
And from each ample fold
Of the clouds about him rolled
Scattering everywhere
The showery rain,
As the farmer scatters his grain.

He can behold
Things manifold
That have not yet been wholly told,—
Have not been wholly sung nor said.
For his thought, that never stops,
Follows the water-drops
Down to the graves of the dead,
Down through chasms and gulfs profound,
To the dreary fountain-head
Of lakes and rivers under ground;
And sees them, when the rain is done,
On the bridge of colours seven
Climbing up once more to heaven,
Opposite the setting sun.
Thus the Seer,  
With vision clear,  
Sees forms appear and disappear  
In the perpetual round of strange  
Mysterious change  
From birth to death, from death to birth,  
From earth to heaven, from heaven to earth;  
Till glimpses more sublime  
Of things, unseen before,  
Unto his wondering eyes reveal  
The Universe, as an immeasurable wheel  
Turning for evermore  
In the rapid and rushing river of Time.

TO A CHILD

Dear child! how radiant on thy mother's knee,  
With merry-making eyes and jocund smiles,  
Thou gazest at the painted tiles,  
Whose figures grace,  
With many a grotesque form and face,  
The ancient chimney of thy nursery!  
The lady with the gay macaw,  
The dancing girl, the grave bashaw  
With bearded lip and chin;  
And, leaning idly o'er his gate,  
Beneath the imperial fan of state,  
The Chinese mandarin.

With what a look of proud command  
Thou shakest in thy little hand  
The coral rattle with its silver bells,  
Making a merry tune!
Thousands of years in Indian seas
That coral grew, by slow degrees,
Until some deadly and wild monsoon
Dashed it on Coromandel's sand!

Those silver bells
Reposed of yore,
As shapeless ore,
Far down in the deep-sunken wells
Of darksome mines,
In some obscure and sunless place
Beneath huge Chimborazo's base,
Or Potosí's o'erhanging pines!

And thus for thee, O little child,
Through many a danger and escape,
The tall ships passed the stormy cape;
For thee in foreign lands remote,
Beneath a burning tropic clime,
The Indian peasant, chasing the wild goat,
Himself as swift and wild,
In falling clutched the frail arbute,
The fibres of whose shallow root,
Uplifted from the soil, betrayed
The silver veins beneath it laid,
The buried treasures of the miser Time.

But, lo! thy door is left ajar!
Thou hearest footsteps from afar!
And, at the sound,
Thou turnest round
With quick and questioning eyes,
Like one who, in a foreign land,
Beholds on every hand
Some source of wonder and surprise!
And, restlessly, impatiently,
Thou strivest, strugglest, to be free.
The four walls of thy nursery
Are now like prison walls to thee.
No more thy mother's smiles,
No more the painted tiles,
Delight thee, nor the playthings on the floor.

THE OCCULTATION OF ORION

I saw, as in a dream sublime,
The balance in the hand of Time.
O'er East and West its beam impended;
And day, with all its hours of light,
Was slowly sinking out of sight,
While, opposite, the scale of night
Silently with the stars ascended.

Like the astrologers of elder,
In that bright vision I beheld
Greater and deeper mysteries.
I saw, with its celestial keys,
Its chords of air, its frets of fire,
The Samian's great Æolian lyre,
Rising through all its sevenfold bars,
From earth unto the fixed stars.
And through the dewy atmosphere
Not only could I see, but hear,

1 Astronomically speaking, this title is incorrect, as I apply to a constellation what can properly be applied to some of its stars only. But my observation is made from the hill of song, and not from that of science, and will, I trust, be found sufficiently accurate for the present purpose.
Its wondrous and harmonious strings,
In sweet vibration, sphere by sphere,
From Dian's circle light and near,
Onward to vaster and wider rings,
Where, chanting through his beard of snows,
Majestic, mournful, Saturn goes,
And down the sunless realms of space
Reverberates the thunder of his bass.

Beneath the sky's triumphal arch
This music sounded like a march,
And with its chorus seemed to be
Preluding some great tragedy.
Sirius was rising in the east;
And slow ascending one by one
The kindling constellations shone.
Begirt with many a blazing star
Stood the great giant Algebar,
Orion, hunter of the beast!
His sword hung gleaming by his side,
And on his arm the lion's hide
Scattered across the midnight air
The golden radiance of its hair.

The moon was pallid, but not faint;
And beautiful as some fair saint,
Serenely moving on her way
In hours of trial and dismay.
As if she heard the voice of God,
Unharmed with naked feet she trod
Upon the hot and burning stars,
As on the glowing coals and bars,
That were to prove her strength, and try
Her holiness and her purity.
Thus moving on, with silent pace,
And triumph in her sweet pale face,
She reached the station of Orion.
Aghast he stood in strange alarm!
And suddenly from his outstretched arm
Down fell the red skin of the lion
Into the river at his feet.
His mighty club no longer beat
The forehead of the bull; but he
Reeled as of yore beside the sea,
When, blinded by Œnepion,
He sought the blacksmith at his forge,
And, climbing up the mountain gorge,
Fixed his blank eyes upon the sun.

Then, through the silence overhead,
An angel with a trumpet said,
'For evermore, for evermore,
The reign of violence is o'er!'
And, like an instrument that flings
Its music on another's strings,
The trumpet of the angel cast
Upon the heavenly lyre its blast,
And on from sphere to sphere the words
Re-echoed down the burning chords,—
'For evermore, for evermore,
The reign of violence is o'er!'

THE BRIDGE

I
STOOD on the bridge at midnight,
As the clocks were striking the hour,
And the moon rose o'er the city
   Behind the dark church-tower.
I saw her bright reflection
   In the waters under me,
Like a golden goblet falling
   And sinking into the sea.

And far in the hazy distance
   Of that lovely night in June,
The blaze of the flaming furnace
   Gleamed redder than the moon.

Among the long black rafters
   The wavering shadows lay,
And the current that came from the ocean
   Seemed to lift and bear them away,

As, sweeping and eddying through them,
   Rose the belated tide,
And, streaming into the moonlight,
   The seaweed floated wide.

And like those waters rushing
   Among the wooden piers
A flood of thoughts came o'er me
   That filled my eyes with tears.

How often, O how often,
   In the days that had gone by,
I had stood on that bridge at midnight
   And gazed on that wave and sky!

How often, O how often,
   I had wished that the ebbing tide
Would bear me away on its bosom
   O'er the ocean wild and wide!
For my heart was hot and restless,
   And my life was full of care,
And the burden laid upon me
   Seemed greater than I could bear.

But now it has fallen from me,
   It is buried in the sea;
And only the sorrow of others
   Throws its shadow over me.

Yet whenever I cross the river
   On its bridge with wooden piers,
Like the odour of brine from the ocean
   Comes the thought of other years.

And I think how many thousands
   Of care-encumbered men,
Each bearing his burden of sorrow,
   Have crossed the bridge since then.

I see the long procession
   Still passing to and fro,
The young heart hot and restless,
   And the old subdued and slow!

And for ever and for ever,
   As long as the river flows,
As long as the heart has passions,
   As long as life has woes,

The moon and its broken reflection
   And its shadows shall appear,
As the symbol of love in heaven,
   And its wavering image here.
SONGS AND SONNETS

SEAWEED

When descends on the Atlantic
The gigantic
Storm-wind of the equinox,
Landward in his wrath he scourges
The toiling surges,
Laden with seaweed from the rocks:
From Bermuda's reefs; from edges
Of sunken ledges,
In some far-off, bright Azore;
From Bahama, and the dashing,
Silver-flashing
Surges of San Salvador;
From the tumbling surf, that buries
The Orkneyan skerries,
Answering the hoarse Hebrides;
And from wrecks of ships, and drifting
Spars, uplifting
On the desolate, rainy seas;—
Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting
Currents of the restless main;
Till in sheltered coves, and reaches
Of sandy beaches,
All have found repose again.
So when storms of wild emotion
    Strike the ocean
Of the poet's soul, ere long
From each cave and rocky fastness,
    In its vastness,
Floats some fragment of a song:
From the far-off isles enchanted,
    Heaven has planted
With the golden fruit of Truth;
From the flashing surf, whose vision
    Gleams Elysian
In the tropic clime of Youth;
From the strong Will, and the Endeavour
    That for ever
Wrestle with the tides of Fate;
From the wreck of Hopes far-scattered,
    Tempest-shattered,
Floating waste and desolate;—
Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
    On the shifting
Currents of the restless heart;
Till at length in books recorded,
    They, like hoarded
Household words, no more depart.

THE DAY IS DONE

The day is done, and the darkness
    Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wasted downward
    From an eagle in his flight.
I see the lights of the village
   Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
   That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,
   That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
   As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
   Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
   And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
   Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
   Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,
   Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavour;
   And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
   Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
   Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labour,
   And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
   Of wonderful melodies.
Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

AFTERNOON IN FEBRUARY

The day is ending,
The night is descending;
The marsh is frozen,
The river dead.

Through clouds like ashes
The red sun flashes
On village windows
That glimmer red.

The snow recommences;
The buried fences
Mark no longer
The road o'er the plain;
While through the meadows,  
Like fearful shadows,  
Slowly passes  
A funeral train.

The bell is pealing,  
And every feeling  
Within me responds  
To the dismal knell;

Shadows are trailing,  
My heart is bewailing  
And toiling within  
Like a funeral bell.

THE OLD CLOCK ON THE STAIRS

L'éternité est une pendule, dont le balancier dit et redit sans cesse ces deux mots seulement, dans le silence des tombeaux: "Toujours! jamais! Jamais! toujours!"

Jacques Bridaine.

SOMewhat back from the village street  
Stands the old-fashioned country-seat.  
Across its antique portico  
Tall poplar-trees their shadows throw;  
And from its station in the hall  
An ancient timepiece says to all,—  
'For ever—never!  
Never—for ever!'

Half-way up the stairs it stands,  
And points and beckons with its hands  
From its case of massive oak,  
Like a monk, who, under his cloak,
There youths and maidens dreaming strayed
(The Old Clock on the Stairs.)
Crosses himself, and sighs, alas!
With sorrowful voice to all who pass,—
  'For ever—never!
    Never—for ever!'

By day its voice is low and light;
But in the silent dead of night,
Distinct as a passing footprint's fall,
It echoes along the vacant hall,
Along the ceiling, along the floor,
And seems to say, at each chamber-door,—
  'For ever—never!
    Never—for ever!'

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,
Through days of death and days of birth,
Through every swift vicissitude
Of changeful time, unchanged it has stood,
And as if, like God, it all things saw,
It calmly repeats those words of awe,—
  'For ever—never!
    Never—for ever!'

In that mansion used to be
Free-hearted Hospitality;
His great fires up the chimney roared;
The stranger feasted at his board;
But, like the skeleton at the feast,
That warning timepiece never ceased,—
  'For ever—never!
    Never—for ever!'

There groups of merry children played,
There youths and maidens dreaming strayed;
O precious hours! O golden prime,
And affluence of love and time!
Even as a miser counts his gold,
Those hours the ancient timepiece told,—
‘For ever—never!
Never—for ever!’

From that chamber, clothed in white,
The bride came forth on her wedding night;
There, in that silent room below,
The dead lay in his shroud of snow;
And in the hush that followed the prayer,
Was heard the old clock on the stair,—
‘For ever—never!
Never—for ever!’

All are scattered now and fled,
Some are married, some are dead;
And when I ask, with throbs of pain,
‘Ah! when shall they all meet again?’
As in the days long since gone by,
The ancient timepiece makes reply,—
‘For ever—never!
Never—for ever!’

Never here, for ever there,
Where all parting, pain, and care,
And death, and time shall disappear,—
For ever there, but never here!
The horologe of Eternity
Sayeth this incessantly,—
‘For ever—never!
Never—for ever!’
I SHOT an arrow into the air,  
     It fell to earth, I knew not where;  
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight  
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,  
     It fell to earth, I knew not where;  
For who has sight so keen and strong  
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak  
I found the arrow, still unbroke;  
And the song, from beginning to end,  
I found again in the heart of a friend.

THE EVENING STAR

LO! in the painted oriel of the West,  
     Whose panes the sunken sun incarnadines,  
Like a fair lady at her casement, shines  
The evening star, the star of love and rest!  
And then anon she doth herself divest  
     Of all her radiant garments, and reclines  
Behind the sombre screen of yonder pines,  
With slumber and soft dreams of love oppressed.  
O my beloved, my sweet Hesperus!  
     My morning and my evening star of love!  
My best and gentlest lady! even thus,  
     As that fair planet in the sky above,  
Dost thou retire unto thy rest at night,  
And from thy darkened window fades the light.
AUTUMN

THOU comest, Autumn, heralded by the rain,
With banners, by great gales incessant fanned,
Brighter than brightest silks of Samarcand,
And stately oxen harnessed to thy wain!
Thou standest, like imperial Charlemagne,
Upon thy bridge of gold; thy royal hand
Outstretched with benedictions o’er the land,
Blessing the farms through all thy vast domain!
Thy shield is the red harvest moon, suspended
So long beneath the heaven’s o’erhanging eaves;
Thy steps are by the farmer’s prayers attended;
Like flames upon an altar shine the sheaves;
And, following thee, in thy ovation splendid,
Thine almoner, the wind, scatters the golden leaves!

THE CROSS OF SNOW

IN the long, sleepless watches of the night,
A gentle face—the face of one long dead—
Looks at me from the wall, where round its head
The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.
Here in this room she died; and soul more white
Never through martyrdom of fire was led
To its repose; nor can in books be read
The legend of a life more benedight.
There is a mountain in the distant West
That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines
Displays a cross of snow upon its side.
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast
These eighteen years, through all the changing scenes
And seasons, changeless since the day she died
THE SEASIDE AND THE FIRESIDE

DEDICATION

As one who, walking in the twilight gloom,
Hears round about him voices as it darkens,
And seeing not the forms from which they come,
Pauses from time to time, and turns and hearkens;

So walking here in twilight, O my friends!
I hear your voices, softened by the distance,
And pause, and turn to listen, as each sends
His words of friendship, comfort, and assistance.

If any thought of mine, or sung or told,
Has ever given delight or consolation,
Ye have repaid me back a thousandfold
By every friendly sign and salutation.

Thanks for the sympathies that ye have shown!
Thanks for each kindly word, each silent token,
That teaches me, when seeming most alone,
Friends are around us, though no word be spoken.

Kind messages, that pass from land to land;
Kind letters, that betray the heart's deep history,
In which we feel the pressure of a hand,—
One touch of fire,—and all the rest is mystery!
The pleasant books, that silently among
  Our household treasures take familiar places,
And are to us as if a living tongue
  Spake from the printed leaves or pictured faces!

Perhaps on earth I never shall behold,
  With eye of sense, your outward form and
  semblance;
Therefore to me ye never will grow old,
  But live for ever young in my remembrance.

Never grow old, nor change, nor pass away!
  Your gentle voices will flow on for ever,
When life grows bare and tarnished with decay,
  As through a leafless landscape flows a river.

Not chance of birth or place has made us friends,
  Being oftentimes of different tongues and nations,
But the endeavour for the selfsame ends,
  With the same hopes, and fears, and aspirations.

Therefore I hope to join your seaside walk,
  Saddened, and mostly silent, with emotion;
Not interrupting with intrusive talk
  The grand, majestic symphonies of ocean.

Therefore I hope, as no unwelcome guest,
  At your warm fireside, when the lamps are
  lighted,
To have my place reserved among the rest,
  Nor stand as one unsought and uninvited!
BUILD me straight, O worthy Master!
Staunch and strong, a goodly vessel,
That shall laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!

The merchant's word
Delighted the Master heard;
For his heart was in his work, and the heart
Giveth grace unto every Art.

A quiet smile played round his lips,
As the eddies and dimples of the tide
Play round the bows of ships
That steadily at anchor ride.
And with a voice that was full of glee,
He answered, 'Ere long we will launch
A vessel as goodly, and strong, and staunch,
As ever weathered a wintry sea!'

And first with nicest skill and art,
Perfect and finished in every part,
A little model the Master wrought,
Which should be to the larger plan
What the child is to the man,
Its counterpart in miniature;
That with a hand more swift and sure
The greater labour might be brought
To answer to his inward thought.
And as he laboured, his mind ran o'er
The various ships that were built of yore,
And above them all, and strangest of all,
Towered the Great Harry, crank and tall,
Whose picture was hanging on the wall,
With bows and stern raised high in air,
And balconies hanging here and there,
And signal lanterns and flags afloat,
And eight round towers, like those that frowned
From some old castle, looking down:
Upon the drawbridge and the moat.
And he said with a smile, 'Our ship, I wis,
Shall be of another form than this!'

It was of another form, indeed;
Built for freight, and yet for speed,
A beautiful and gallant craft;
Broad in the beam, that the stress of the blast,
Pressing down upon sail and mast,
Might not the sharp bows overwhelm;
Broad in the beam, but sloping aft
With graceful curve and slow degrees,
That she might be docile to the helm,
And that the currents of parted seas,
Closing behind, with mighty force,
Might aid and not impede her course.

In the ship-yard stood the Master,
   With the model of the vessel,
That should laugh at all disaster,
   And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!

Covering many a rood of ground,
Lay the timber piled around;
Timber of chestnut, and elm, and oak,
And scattered here and there, with these,
The knarred and crooked cedar knees;
Brought from regions far away,
From Pascagoula's sunny bay,
And the banks of the roaring Roanoke!
Ah! what a wondrous thing it is
To note how many wheels of toil
One thought, one word, can set in motion!
There's not a ship that sails the ocean,
But every climate, every soil,
Must brings its tribute, great or small,
And help to build the wooden wall!

The sun was rising o'er the sea,
And long the level shadows lay,
As if they, too, the beams would be
Of some great, airy argosy,
Framed and launched in a single day.
That silent architect, the sun,
Had hewn and laid them every one,
Ere the work of man was yet begun.
Beside the Master, when he spoke,
A youth, against an anchor leaning,
Listened, to catch his slightest meaning.
Only the long waves, as they broke
In ripples on the pebbly beach,
Interrupted the old man's speech.

Beautiful they were, in sooth,
The old man and the fiery youth!
The old man, in whose busy brain
Many a ship that sailed the main
Was modelled o'er and o'er again;—
The fiery youth, who was to be
The heir of his dexterity,
The heir of his house, and his daughter's hand,
When he had built and launched from land
What the elder head had planned.

'Thus,' said he, 'will we build this ship!
Lay square the blocks upon the slip,
And follow well this plan of mine.
Choose the timbers with greatest care;
Of all that is unsound beware;
For only what is sound and strong
To this vessel shall belong.
Cedar of Maine and Georgia pine
Here together shall combine.
A goodly frame, and a goodly fame,
And the Union be her name!
For the day that gives her to the sea
Shall give my daughter unto thee!'

The Master's word
Enraptured the young man heard;
And as he turned his face aside,
With a look of joy and a thrill of pride,
Standing before
Her father's door,
He saw the form of his promised bride.
The sun shone on her golden hair,
And her cheek was glowing fresh and fair
With the breath of morn and the soft sea air.
Like a beauteous barge was she,
Still at rest on the sandy beach,
Just beyond the billow's reach;
But he
Was the restless, seething, stormy sea!
Ah, how skilful grows the hand
That obeyeth Love's command!
It is the heart, and not the brain,
That to the highest doth attain,
And he who followeth Love's behest
Far excelleth all the rest!

Thus with the rising of the sun
Was the noble task begun,
And soon throughout the shipyard's bounds
Were heard the intermingled sounds
Of axes and of mallets, plied
With vigorous arms on every side;
Plied so deftly and so well,
That, ere the shadows of evening fell,
The keel of oak for a noble ship,
Scarfed and bolted, straight and strong,
Was lying ready, and stretched along
The blocks, well placed upon the slip.
Happy, thrice happy, every one
Who sees his labour well begun,
And not perplexed and multiplied
By idly waiting for time and tide!

And when the hot, long day was o'er,
The young man at the Master's door
Sat with the maiden calm and still.
And within the porch, a little more
Removed beyond the evening chill,
The father sat, and told them tales
Of wrecks in the great September gales,
Of pirates coasting the Spanish Main,
And ships that never came back again,
The chance and change of a sailor's life,
Want and plenty, rest and strife,
His roving fancy, like the wind,
That nothing can stay, and nothing can bind,
And the magic charm of foreign lands,
With shadows of palms, and shining sands,
Where the tumbling surf,
O'er the coral reefs of Madagascar,
Washes the feet of the swarthy Lascar
As he lies alone and asleep on the turf.

And the trembling maiden held her breath
At the tales of that awful, pitiless sea,
With all its terror and mystery,
The dim, dark sea, so like unto Death,
That divides and yet unites mankind!
And whenever the old man paused, a gleam
From the bowl of his pipe would awhile illume
The silent group in the twilight gloom,
And thoughtful faces, as in a dream;
And for a moment one might mark
What had been hidden by the dark,
That the head of the maiden lay at rest,
Tenderly, on the young man's breast!

Day by day the vessel grew,
With timbers fashioned strong and true,
Stemson and keelson and sternson-knee,
Till, framed with perfect symmetry,
A skeleton ship rose up to view!
And around the bows and along the side
The heavy hammers and mallets plied,
Till after many a week, at length,
Wonderful for form and strength,
Sublime in its enormous bulk,
Loomed aloft the shadowy hulk!
And around it columns of smoke, up-wreathing,
Rose from the boiling, bubbling, seething
Caldron, that glowed,
And overflowed
With the black tar, heated for the sheathing.
And amid the clamours
Of clattering hammers,
He who listened heard now and then
The song of the Master and his men:—

‘Build me straight, O worthy Master,
Staunch and strong, a goodly vessel,
That shall laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!’

With oaken brace and copper band,
Lay the rudder on the sand,
That, like a thought, should have control
Over the movement of the whole;
And near it the anchor, whose giant hand
Would reach down and grapple with the land,
And immovable and fast
Hold the great ship against the bellowing blast!
And at the bows an image stood,
By a cunning artist carved in wood,
With robes of white, that far behind
Seemed to be fluttering in the wind.
It was not shaped in a classic mould,
Not like a Nymph or Goddess of old,
Or Naiad rising from the water,
But modelled from the Master’s daughter!
On many a dreary and misty night,
'Twill be seen by the rays of the signal light,
Speeding along through the rain and the dark,
Like a ghost in its snow-white sark,
The pilot of some phantom bark,
Guiding the vessel, in its flight,
By a path none other knows aright!
Behold, at last,
Each tall and tapering mast
Is swung into its place;
Shrouds and stays
Holding it firm and fast!

Long ago,
In the deer-haunted forests of Maine,
When upon mountain and plain
Lay the snow,
They fell,—those lordly pines!
Those grand, majestic pines!
'Mid shouts and cheers
The jaded steers,
Panting beneath the goad,
Dragged down the weary, winding road
Those captive kings so straight and tall,
To be shorn of their streaming hair,
And, naked and bare,
To feel the stress and the strain
Of the wind and the reeling main,
Whose roar
Would remind them for evermore
Of their native forests they should not see again.
And everywhere
The slender, graceful spars
Poise aloft in the air,
And at the mast-head,
White, blue, and red,
A flag unrolls the stripes and stars.
Ah! when the wanderer, lonely, friendless,
In foreign harbours shall behold
That flag unrolled,
'Twill be as a friendly hand
Stretched out from his native land,
Filling his heart with memories sweet and endless!

All is finished! and at length
Has come the bridal day
Of beauty and of strength.
To-day the vessel shall be launched!
With fleecy clouds the sky is blanched,
And o'er the bay,
Slowly, in all his splendours dight,
The great sun rises to behold the sight.

The ocean old,
Centuries old,
Strong as youth, and as uncontrolled,
Paces restless to and fro,
Up and down the sands of gold.
His beating heart is not at rest;
And far and wide,
With ceaseless flow,
His beard of snow
Heaves with the heaving of his breast.
He waits impatient for his bride.
There she stands,
With her foot upon the sands,
Decked with flags and streamers gay,
In honour of her marriage day,
Her snow-white signals fluttering, blending,
Round her like a veil descending,
Ready to be
The bride of the gray old sea.

On the deck another bride
Is standing by her lover's side.
Shadows from the flags and shrouds,
Like the shadows cast by clouds,
Broken by many a sunny fleck,
Fall around them on the deck.

The prayer is said,
The service read,
The joyous bridegroom bows his head;
And in tears the good old Master
Shakes the brown hand of his son,
Kisses his daughter's glowing cheek
In silence, for he cannot speak,
And ever faster
Down his own the tears begin to run.
The worthy pastor—
The shepherd of that wandering flock,
That has the ocean for its wold,
That has the vessel for its fold,
Leaping ever from rock to rock—
Spake, with accents mild and clear,
Words of warning, words of cheer,
But tedious to the bridegroom's ear.
He knew the chart
Of the sailor's heart,
All its pleasures and its griefs,
All its shallows and rocky reefs,
All those secret currents, that flow
With such resistless undertow,
And lift and drift, with terrible force,
The will from its moorings and its course.
Therefore he spake, and thus said he:

'Like unto ships far off at sea,
Outward or homeward bound, are we.
Before, behind, and all around,
Floats and swings the horizon's bound,
Seems at its distant rim to rise
And climb the crystal wall of the skies,
And then again to turn and sink,
As if we could slide from its outer brink.
Ah! it is not the sea,
It is not the sea that sinks and shelves,
But ourselves
That rock and rise
With endless and uneasy motion,
Now touching the very skies,
Now sinking into the depths of ocean.
Ah! if our souls but poise and swing
Like the compass in its brazen ring,
Ever level and ever true
To the toil and the task we have to do,
We shall sail securely, and safely reach
The Fortunate Isles, on whose shining beach
The sights we see, and the sounds we hear,
Will be those of joy and not of fear!'
Then the Master,
With a gesture of command,
Waved his hand;
And at the word,
Loud and sudden there was heard,
All around them and below,
The sound of hammers, blow on blow,
Knocking away the shores and spurs.
And see! she stirs!
She starts,—she moves,—she seems to feel
The thrill of life along her keel,
And, spurning with her foot the ground,
With one exulting, joyous bound,
She leaps into the ocean’s arms!

And lo! from the assembled crowd
There rose a shout, prolonged and loud,
That to the ocean seemed to say,
‘Take her, O bridegroom, old and gray,
Take her to thy protecting arms,
With all her youth and all her charms!’

How beautiful she is! How fair
She lies within those arms, that press
Her form with many a soft caress
Of tenderness and watchful care!
Sail forth into the sea, O ship!
Through wind and wave, right onward steer!
The moistened eye, the trembling lip,
Are not the signs of doubt or fear.

Sail forth into the sea of life,
O gentle, loving, trusting wife,
And safe from all adversity
Upon the bosom of that sea
Thy comings and thy goings be!
For gentleness and love and trust
Prevail o'er angry wave and gust;
And in the wreck of noble lives
Something immortal still survives!

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O UNION, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
We know what Master laid thy keel,
What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'Tis of the wave and not the rock;
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale!
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee,—are all with thee!
THE SEASIDE AND THE FIRESIDE

CHRYSAOR

JUST above yon sandy bar,
As the day grows fainter and dimmer,
Lonely and lovely, a single star
Lights the air with a dusky glimmer.

Into the ocean faint and far
Falls the trail of its golden splendour,
And the gleam of that single star
Is ever refulgent, soft, and tender.

Chrysaor, rising out of the sea,
Showed thus glorious and thus emulous,
Leaving the arms of Callirrhoe,
For ever tender, soft, and tremulous.

Thus o'er the ocean faint and far
Trailed the gleam of his falchion brightly;
Is it a God, or is it a star
That, entranced, I gaze on nightly!

THE SECRET OF THE SEA

AH! what pleasant visions haunt me
As I gaze upon the sea!
All the old romantic legends,
All my dreams, come back to me.

Sails of silk and ropes of sandal,
Such as gleam in ancient lore;
And the singing of the sailors,
And the answer from the shore!
Most of all, the Spanish ballad
Haunts me oft, and tarries long,
Of the noble Count Arnaldos
And the sailor’s mystic song.

Like the long waves on a sea-beach,
   Where the sand as silver shines,
With a soft, monotonous cadence,
   Flow its unrhymed lyric lines ;—

Telling how the Count Arnaldos,
   With his hawk upon his hand,
Saw a fair and stately galley,
   Steering onward to the land ;—

How he heard the ancient helmsman
   Chant a song so wild and clear,
That the sailing sea-bird slowly
   Poised upon the mast to hear,

Till his soul was full of longing,
   And he cried, with impulse strong,—
‘Helmsman! for the love of heaven,
   Teach me, too, that wondrous song!’

‘Wouldst thou,’—so the helmsman answered,—
   ‘Learn the secret of the sea?
Only those who brave its dangers
   Comprehend its mystery!’

In each sail that skims the horizon,
   In each landward-blowing breeze,
I behold that stately galley,
   Hear those mournful melodies ;
Till my soul is full of longing
For the secret of the sea,
And the heart of the great ocean
Sends a thrilling pulse through me.

SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT

SOUTHWARD with fleet of ice
   Sailed the corsair Death;
Wild and fast blew the blast,
   And the east-wind was his breath.

His lordly ships of ice
   Glisten in the sun;
On each side, like pennons wide,
   Flashing crystal streamlets run.

His sails of white sea-mist
   Dripped with silver rain;
But where he passed there were cast
   Leaden shadows o'er the main.

Eastward from Campobello
   Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed;
Three days or more seaward he bore,
   Then, alas! the land-wind failed.

Alas! the land-wind failed,
   And ice-cold grew the night;
And never more, on sea or shore,
   Should Sir Humphrey see the light.
He sat upon the deck,
The Book was in his hand;
‘Do not fear! Heaven is as near,’
He said, ‘by water as by land!’

In the first watch of the night,
Without a signal’s sound,
Out of the sea, mysteriously,
The fleet of Death rose all around.

The moon and the evening star
Were hanging in the shrouds;
Every mast, as it passed,
Seemed to rake the passing clouds.

They grappled with their prize,
At midnight black and cold!
As of a rock was the shock;
Heavily the ground-swell rolled.

Southward through day and dark
They drift in close embrace,
With mist and rain o’er the open main;
Yet there seems no change of place.

Southward, for ever southward,
They drift through dark and day;
And like a dream, in the Gulf-Stream
Sinking, vanish all away.

THE LIGHTHOUSE

The rocky ledge runs far into the sea,
And on its outer point, some miles away,
The Lighthouse lifts its massive masonry,
A pillar of fire by night, of cloud by day.
Even at this distance I can see the tides,
   Upheaving, break unheard along its base,
A speechless wrath, that rises and subsides
   In the white lip and tremor of the face.

And as the evening darkens, lo! how bright,
   Through the deep purple of the twilight air,
Beams forth the sudden radiance of its light
   With strange, unearthly splendour in the glare!

Not one alone; from each projecting cape
   And perilous reef along the ocean’s verge,
Starts into life a dim, gigantic shape,
   Holding its lantern o’er the restless surge.

Like the great giant Christopher it stands
   Upon the brink of the tempestuous wave,
Wading far out among the rocks and sands,
   The night-o’ertaken mariner to save.

And the great ships sail outward and return,
   Bending and bowing o’er the billowy swells,
And ever joyful, as they see it burn,
   They wave their silent welcomes and farewells.

They come forth from the darkness, and their sails
   Gleam for a moment only in the blaze,
And eager faces, as the light unveils,
   Gaze at the tower, and vanish while they gaze.

The mariner remembers when a child,
   On his first voyage, he saw it fade and sink;
And when, returning from adventures wild,
   He saw it rise again o’er ocean’s brink,
Steadfast, serene, immovable, the same
Year after year, through all the silent night
Burns on for evermore that quenchless flame,
Shines on that inextinguishable light!

It sees the ocean to its bosom clasp
The rocks and sea-sand with the kiss of peace;
It sees the wild winds lift it in their grasp,
And hold it up, and shake it like a fleece.

The startled waves leap over it; the storm
Smites it with all the scourges of the rain,
And steadily against its solid form
Press the great shoulders of the hurricane.

The sea-bird wheeling round it, with the din
Of wings and winds and solitary cries,
Blinded and maddened by the light within,
Dashes himself against the glare, and dies.

A new Prometheus, chained upon the rock,
Still grasping in his hand the fire of Jove,
It does not hear the cry, nor heed the shock,
But hails the mariner with words of love.

'Sail on!' it says, 'sail on, ye stately ships!
And with your floating bridge the ocean span;
Be mine to guard this light from all eclipse,
Be yours to bring man nearer unto man!'
THE SEASIDE AND THE FIRESIDE

THE FIRE OF DRIFT-WOOD
DEVEREUX FARM, NEAR MARBLEHEAD

We sat within the farmhouse old,
Whose windows, looking o'er the bay,
Gave to the sea-breeze, damp and cold,
An easy entrance, night and day.

Not far away we saw the port,
The strange, old-fashioned, silent town,
The lighthouse, the dismantled fort,
The wooden houses, quaint and brown.

We sat and talked until the night,
Descending, filled the little room;
Our faces faded from the sight,
Our voices only broke the gloom.

We spake of many a vanished scene,
Of what we once had thought and said,
Of what had been, and might have been,
And who was changed, and who was dead;

And all that fills the hearts of friends,
When first they feel, with secret pain,
Their lives thenceforth have separate ends,
And never can be one again;

The first slight swerving of the heart,
That words are powerless to express,
And leave it still unsaid in part,
Or say it in too great excess.
The very tones in which we spake
   Had something strange, I could but mark;
The leaves of memory seemed to make
   A mournful rustling in the dark.

Oft died the words upon our lips,
   As suddenly, from out the fire
Built of the wreck of stranded ships,
   The flames would leap and then expire.

And, as their splendour flashed and failed,
   We thought of wrecks upon the main,
Of ships dismasted, that were hailed
   And sent no answer back again.

The windows, rattling in their frames,
   The ocean, roaring up the beach,
The gusty blast, the bickering flames,
   All mingled vaguely in our speech;

Until they made themselves a part
   Of fancies floating through the brain,—
The long-lost ventures of the heart,
   That send no answers back again.

O flames that glowed! O hearts that yearned!
   They were indeed too much akin,
The drift-wood fire without that burned,
   The thoughts that burned and glowed within.
THE SEASIDE AND THE FIRESIDE 99

BY THE FIRESIDE

RESIGNATION

THERE is no flock, however watched and tended,
   But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howsoe’er defended,
   But has one vacant chair!

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
   And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
   Will not be comforted!

Let us be patient! These severe afflictions
   Not from the ground arise,
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
   Assume this dark disguise.

We see but dimly through the mists and vapours;
   Amid these earthly damps
What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers
   May be heaven’s distant lamps.

There is no Death! What seems so is transition;
   This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
   Whose portal we call Death.

She is not dead, the child of our affection,
   But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
   And Christ himself doth rule.
In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
   By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
   She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing
   In those bright realms of air;
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
   Behold her grown more fair,

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken
   The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
   May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her;
   For when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
   She will not be a child;

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,
   Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
   Shall we behold her face.

And though at times impetuous with emotion
   And anguish long suppressed,
The swelling heart heaves moaning like the ocean,
   That cannot be at rest,—

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling
   We may not wholly stay;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
   The grief that must have way.
THE BUILDERS

ALL are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time;
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Nothing useless is, or low;
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.

For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled;
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.

Truly shape and fashion these;
Leave no yawning gaps between;
Think not, because no man sees,
Such things will remain unseen.

In the elder days of Art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part;
For the Gods see everywhere.

Let us do our work as well,
Both the unseen and the seen;
Make the house, where Gods may dwell,
Beautiful, entire, and clean.
Else our lives are incomplete,  
   Standing in these walls of Time,  
Broken stairways, where the feet  
   Stumble as they seek to climb.

Build to-day, then, strong and sure,  
   With a firm and ample base;  
And ascending and secure  
   Shall to-morrow find its place.

Thus alone can we attain  
   To those turrets, where the eye  
Sees the world as one vast plain,  
   And one boundless reach of sky.

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

B  
LACK shadows fall  
   From the lindens tall,  
That lift aloft their massive wall  
   Against the southern sky;

And from the realms  
Of the shadowy elms  
A tide-like darkness overwhelms  
   The fields that round us lie.

But the night is fair,  
And everywhere  
A warm, soft vapour fills the air,  
   And distant sounds seem near;
And above, in the light
Of the star-lit night,
Swift birds of passage wing their flight
Through the dewy atmosphere.

I hear the beat
Of their pinions fleet,
As from the land of snow and sleet
They seek a southern lea.

I hear the cry
Of their voices high
Falling dreamily through the sky,
But their forms I cannot see.

O, say not so!
Those sounds that flow
In murmurs of delight and woe
Come not from wings of birds.

They are the throngs
Of the poet's songs,
Murmurs of pleasures, and pains, and wrongs,
The sound of winged words.

This is the cry
Of souls, that high
On toiling, beating pinions, fly,
Seeking a warmer clime.

From their distant flight
Through realms of light
It falls into our world of night,
With the murmuring sound of rhyme.
THE OPEN WINDOW

The old house by the lindens
Stood silent in the shade,
And on the gravelled pathway
The light and shadow played.

I saw the nursery windows
Wide open to the air;
But the faces of the children,
They were no longer there.

The large Newfoundland house-dog
Was standing by the door;
He looked for his little playmates,
Who would return no more.

They walked not under the lindens,
They played not in the hall;
But shadow, and silence, and sadness
Were hanging over all.

The birds sang in the branches,
With sweet, familiar tone;
But the voices of the children
Will be heard in dreams alone!

And the boy that walked beside me
He could not understand
Why closer in mine, ah! closer,
I pressed his warm, soft hand!
KING WITLAF'S DRINKING-HORN

WITLAF, a king of the Saxons,
Ere yet his last he breathed,
To the merry monks of Croyland
His drinking-horn bequeathed,—

That, whenever they sat at their revels,
And drank from the golden bowl,
They might remember the donor,
And breathe a prayer for his soul.

So sat they once at Christmas,
And bade the goblet pass;
In their beards the red wine glistened
Like dew-drops in the grass.

They drank to the soul of Witlaf,
They drank to Christ the Lord,
And to each of the Twelve Apostles,
Who had preached his holy word.

They drank to the Saints and Martyrs
Of the dismal days of yore,
And as soon as the horn was empty
They remembered one Saint more.

And the reader droned from the pulpit,
Like the murmur of many bees,
The legend of good Saint Guthlac,
And Saint Basil's homilies;
Till the great bells of the convent,
   From their prison in the tower,
Guthlac and Bartholomæus,
   Proclaimed the midnight hour.

And the Yule-log cracked in the chimney,
   And the Abbot bowed his head,
And the flamelets flapped and flickered,
   But the Abbot was stark and dead.

Yet still in his pallid fingers
   He clutched the golden bowl,
In which, like a pearl dissolving,
   Had sunk and dissolved his soul.

But not for this their revels
   The jovial monks forbore,
For they cried, 'Fill high the goblet!
   We must drink to one Saint more!'
BIRDS OF PASSAGE

... come i gru van cantando lor lai,
Facendo in aer di sè lunga riga.

DANTE.

PROMETHEUS

OR THE POET’S FORETHOUGHT

Of Prometheus, how undaunted
On Olympus’ shining bastions
His audacious foot he planted,
Myths are told and songs are chanted,
   Full of promptings and suggestions.

Beautiful is the tradition
   Of that flight through heavenly portals,
The old classic superstition
Of the theft and the transmission
   Of the fire of the Immortals!

First the deed of noble daring,
   Born of heavenward aspiration,
Then the fire with mortals sharing,
Then the vulture,—the despairing
   Cry of pain on crags Caucasian.

107
All is but a symbol painted
Of the Poet, Prophet, Seer;
Only those are crowned and sainted
Who with grief have been acquainted,
Making nations nobler, freer.

In their feverish exultations,
   In their triumph and their yearning,
In their passionate pulsations,
In their words among the nations,
   The Promethean fire is burning.

Shall it, then, be unavailing,
   All this toil for human culture?
Through the cloud-rack, dark and trailing,
Must they see above them sailing
   O'er life's barren crags the vulture?

Such a fate as this was Dante's,
   By defeat and exile maddened;
Thus were Milton and Cervantes,
Nature's priests and Corybantes,
   By affliction touched and saddened.

But the glories so transcendent
   That around their memories cluster,
And, on all their steps attendant,
Make their darkened lives resplendent
   With such gleams of inward lustre!
All the melodies mysterious
   Through the dreary darkness chanted;
Thoughts in attitudes imperious,
Voices soft, and deep, and serious,
   Words that whispered, songs that haunted!

All the soul in rapt suspension,
   All the quivering, palpitating
Chords of life in utmost tension,
With the fervour of invention,
   With the rapture of creating!

Ah, Prometheus! heaven-scaling!
   In such hours of exultation
Even the faintest heart, unquailing,
Might behold the vulture sailing
   Round the cloudy crags Caucasian!

Though to all there is not given
   Strength for such sublime endeavour,
Thus to scale the walls of heaven,
And to leaven with fiery leaven
   All the hearts of men for ever;

Yet all bards, whose heart unblighted
   Honour and believe the presage,
Hold aloft their torches lighted,
Gleaming through the realms benighted,
   As they onward bear the message!
THE LADDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE

SAINT AUGUSTINE! well hast thou said, That of our vices we can frame A ladder, if we will but tread Beneath our feet each deed of shame!

All common things, each day's events, That with the hour begin and end, Our pleasures and our discontents, Are rounds by which we may ascend.

The low desire, the base design, That makes another's virtues less; The revel of the ruddy wine, And all occasions of excess;

The longing for ignoble things; The strife for triumph more than truth; The hardening of the heart, that brings Irreverence for the dreams of youth;

All thoughts of ill; all evil deeds, That have their root in thoughts of ill; Whatever hinders or impedes The action of the nobler will;—

All these must first be trampled down Beneath our feet, if we would gain In the bright fields of fair renown The right of eminent domain.
We have not wings, we cannot soar;
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

The mighty pyramids of stone
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen, and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The distant mountains, that uprear
Their solid bastions to the skies,
Are crossed by pathways, that appear
As we to higher levels rise.

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

Standing on what too long we bore
With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
We may discern—unseen before—
A path to higher destinies.

Nor deem the irrevocable Past,
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
To something nobler we attain.
A MIST was driving down the British Channel,
The day was just begun,
And through the window-panes, on floor and panel,
Streamed the red autumn sun.

It glanced on flowing flag and rippling pennon,
And the white sails of ships;
And, from the frowning rampart, the black cannon
Hailed it with feverish lips.

Sandwich and Romney, Hastings, Hythe, and Dover
Were all alert that day,
To see the French war-steamers speeding over,
When the fog cleared away.

Sullen and silent, and like couchant lions,
Their cannon, through the night,
Holding their breath, had watched, in grim defiance,
The sea-coast opposite.

And now they roared at drum-beat from their stations
On every citadel;
Each answering each, with morning salutations,
That all was well.

And down the coast, all taking up the burden,
Replied the distant forts,
As if to summon from his sleep the Warden
And Lord of the Cinque Ports.
Him shall no sunshine from the fields of azure,
    No drum-beat from the wall,
No morning gun from the black fort's embrasure,
    Awaken with its call!

No more, surveying with an eye impartial
    The long line of the coast,
Shall the gaunt figure of the old Field Marshal
    Be seen upon his post!

For in the night, unseen, a single warrior,
    In sombre harness mailed,
Dreaded of man, and surnamed the Destroyer,
    The rampart wall had scaled.

He passed into the chamber of the sleeper,
    The dark and silent room,
And as he entered, darker grew, and deeper,
    The silence and the gloom.

He did not pause to parley or dissemble,
    But smote the Warden hoar;
Ah! what a blow! that made all England tremble
    And groan from shore to shore.

Meanwhile, without, the surly cannon waited,
    The sun rose bright o'erhead;
Nothing in Nature's aspect intimated
    That a great man was dead.
LONGFELLOW

HAUNTED HOUSES

ALL houses wherein men have lived and died
Are haunted houses. Through the open doors
The harmless phantoms on their errands glide,
With feet that make no sound upon the floors.

We meet them at the doorway, on the stair,
Along the passages they come and go,
Impalpable impressions on the air,
A sense of something moving to and fro.

There are more guests at table, than the hosts
Invited; the illuminated hall
Is thronged with quiet, inoffensive ghosts,
As silent as the pictures on the wall.

The stranger at my fireside cannot see
The forms I see, nor hear the sounds I hear;
He but perceives what is; while unto me
All that has been is visible and clear.

We have no title-deeds to house or lands;
Owners and occupants of earlier dates
From graves forgotten stretch their dusty hands,
And hold in mortmain still their old estates.

The spirit world around this world of sense
Floats like an atmosphere, and everywhere
Wafts through these earthly mists and vapours dense
A vital breath of more ethereal air.
Our little lives are kept in equipoise
By opposite attractions and desires;
The struggle of the instinct that enjoys,
And the more noble instinct that aspires.

These perturbations, this perpetual jar
Of earthly wants and aspirations high,
Come from the influence of an unseen star,
An undiscovered planet in our sky.

And as the moon from some dark gate of cloud
Throws o’er the sea a floating bridge of light,
Across whose trembling planks our fancies crowd
Into the realm of mystery and night,—

So from the world of spirits there descends
A bridge of light, connecting it with this,
O’er whose unsteady floor, that sways and bends
Wander our thoughts above the dark abyss.

THE EMPEROR’S BIRD’S-NEST

Once the Emperor Charles of Spain,
With his swarthy, grave commanders,
I forget in what campaign,
Long besieged, in mud and rain,
Some old frontier town of Flanders.

Up and down the dreary camp,
In great boots of Spanish leather,
Striding with a measured tramp,
These Hidalgos, dull and damp,
Cursed the Frenchmen, cursed the weather.
Thus as to and fro they went,
  Over upland and through hollow,
Giving their impatience vent,
Perch’d upon the Emperor’s tent,
  In her nest, they spied a swallow.

Yes, it was a swallow’s nest,
  Built of clay and hair of horses,
Mane, or tail, or dragoon’s crest,
Found on hedgerows east and west,
  After skirmish of the forces.

Then an old Hidalgo said,
  As he twirled his gray mustachio,
‘Sure this swallow overhead
Thinks the Emperor’s tent a shed,
  And the Emperor but a Macho!’

Hearing his imperial name
  Coupled with those words of malice,
Half in anger, half in shame,
Forth the great campaigner came
  Slowly from his canvas palace.

‘Let no hand the bird molest,’”
  Said he solemnly, ‘nor hurt her!’
Adding then, by way of jest,
‘Golondrina is my guest,
  ’Tis the wife of some deserter!’

Swift as bowstring speeds a shaft,
  Through the camp was spread the rumour,
And the soldiers, as they quaffed
Flemish beer at dinner, laughed
  At the Emperor’s pleasant humour.
So unharmed and unafraid
Sat the swallow still and brooded,
Till the constant cannonade
Through the walls a breach had made
And the siege was thus concluded.

Then the army, elsewhere bent,
Struck its tents as if disbanding,
Only not the Emperor's tent,
For he ordered, ere he went,
Very curtly, 'Leave it standing!'

So it stood there all alone,
Loosely flapping, torn and tattered,
Till the brood was fledged and flown,
Singing o'er those walls of stone
Which the cannon-shot had shattered.

THE TWO ANGELS

TWO angels, one of Life and one of Death,
Passed o'er our village as the morning broke;
The dawn was on their faces, and beneath,
The sombre houses hearsed with plumes of smoke.

Their attitude and aspect were the same,
Alike their features and their robes of white;
But one was crowned with amaranth, as with flame,
And one with asphodels, like flakes of light.

I saw them pause on their celestial way;
Then said I, with deep fear and doubt oppressed,
'Beat not so loud, my heart, lest thou betray
The place where thy beloved are at rest!'
And he who wore the crown of asphodels,
Descending, at my door began to knock,
And my soul sank within me, as in wells
The waters sink before an earthquake's shock.

I recognised the nameless agony,
The terror and the tremor and the pain,
That oft before had filled or haunted me,
And now returned with threefold strength again.

The door I opened to my heavenly guest,
And listened, for I thought I heard God's voice;
And, knowing whatsoever he sent was best,
Dared neither to lament nor to rejoice.

Then with a smile, that filled the house with light,
'My errand is not Death, but Life,' he said;
And ere I answered, passing out of sight,
On his celestial embassy he sped.

'Twas at thy door, O friend! and not at mine,
The angel with the amaranthine wreath,
Pausing, descended, and with voice divine,
Whispered a word that had a sound like Death.

Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,
A shadow on those features fair and thin;
And softly, from that hushed and darkened room,
Two angels issued, where but one went in.

All is of God! If he but wave his hand,
The mists collect, the rain falls thick and loud,
Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,
Lo! he looks back from the departing cloud.
Angels of Life and Death alike are his;
Without his leave they pass no threshold o'er;
Who, then, would wish or dare, believing this,
Against his messengers to shut the door?

**DAYLIGHT AND MOONLIGHT**

In broad daylight, and at noon,
Yesterday I saw the moon
Sailing high, but faint and white,
As a schoolboy's paper kite.

In broad daylight, yesterday,
I read a Poet's mystic lay;
And it seemed to me at most
As a phantom, or a ghost.

But at length the feverish day
Like a passion died away,
And the night, serene and still,
Fell on village, vale, and hill.

Then the moon, in all her pride,
Like a spirit glorified,
Filled and overflowed the night
With revelations of her light.

And the Poet's song again
Passed like music through my brain;
Night interpreted to me
All its grace and mystery.
MY LOST YOUTH

OFTEN I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me.

And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still:
‘A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.’

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams.

And the burden of that old song,
It murmurs and whispers still:
‘A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.’

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free;
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.

And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still:
‘A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'
I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
   And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
   And the bugle wild and shrill.
   And the music of that old song
   Throbs in my memory still:
   'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I remember the sea-fight far away,
   How it thundered o'er the tide!
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay,
   Where they in battle died.
   And the sound of that mournful song
   Goes through me with a thrill:
   'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
   The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a sabbath sound, as of doves
   In quiet neighbourhoods.
   And the verse of that sweet old song,
   It flutters and murmurs still:
   'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
   Across the schoolboy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
   Are longings wild and vain.
   And the voice of that fitful song
   Sings on, and is never still:
   'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

There are things of which I may not speak;
   There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
   And bring a pallor into the cheek,
   And a mist before the eye.
   And the words of that fatal song
   Come over me like a chill:
   'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
   When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
   And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
   As they balance up and down,
   Are singing the beautiful song,
   Are sighing and whispering still:
   'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
   And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
   And among the dreams of the days that were,
   I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

THE GOLDEN MILE-STONE

Leafless are the trees; their purple branches
Spread themselves abroad, like reefs of coral,
Rising silent
In the Red Sea of the winter sunset.

From the hundred chimneys of the village,
Like the Afreet in the Arabian story,
    Smoky columns
Tower aloft into the air of amber.

At the window winks the flickering fire-light;
Here and there the lamps of evening glimmer,
    Social watch-fires
Answering one another through the darkness.

On the hearth the lighted logs are glowing,
And like Ariel in the cloven pine-tree
    For its freedom
Groans and sighs the air imprisoned in them.

By the fireside there are old men seated,
Seeing ruined cities in the ashes,
    Asking sadly
Of the Past what it can ne'er restore them.

By the fireside there are youthful dreamers,
Building castles fair, with stately stairways,
    Asking blindly
Of the Future what it cannot give them.
By the fireside tragedies are acted
In whose scenes appear two actors only,
    Wife and husband,
And above them God the sole spectator.

By the fireside there are peace and comfort,
Wives and children, with fair, thoughtful faces,
    Waiting, watching
For a well-known footstep in the passage.

Each man's chimney is his Golden Mile-stone;
Is the central point, from which he measures
    Every distance
Through the gateways of the world around him.

In his farthest wanderings still he sees it;
Hears the talking flame, the answering night-wind,
    As he heard them
When he sat with those who were, but are not.

Happy he whom neither wealth nor fashion,
Nor the march of the encroaching city,
    Drives an exile
From the heart of his ancestral homestead.

We may build more splendid habitations,
Fill our rooms with paintings and with sculptures,
    But we cannot
Buy with gold the old associations!

SANTA FILOMENA

Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,
    Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts, in glad surprise,
    To higher levels rise.
The tidal wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls,
   And lifts us unawares
Out of all meaner cares.

Honour to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs,
   And by their overflow
Raise us from what is low!

Thus thought I, as by night I read
Of the great army of the dead,
   The trenches cold and damp,
   The starved and frozen camp,—

The wounded from the battle-plain,
In dreary hospitals of pain,
   The cheerless corridors,
   The cold and stony floors.

Lo! in that house of misery
A lady with a lamp I see
   Pass through the glimmering gloom,
   And flit from room to room.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss
   Her shadow, as it falls
   Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be
Opened and then closed suddenly,
   The vision came and went,
   The light shone and was spent.
On England's annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
That light its rays shall cast
From portals of the past.

A Lady with a Lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good,
Heroic womanhood.

Nor even shall be wanting here
The palm, the lily, and the spear,
The symbols that of yore
Saint Filomena bore.

SANDALPHON

Have you read in the Talmud of old,
In the Legends the Rabbins have told
Of the limitless realms of the air,
Have you read it,—the marvellous story
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory,
Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer?

How, erect, at the outermost gates
Of the City Celestial he waits,
With his feet on the ladder of light,
That, crowded with angels unnumbered,
By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered
Alone in the desert at night?

The Angels of Wind and of Fire
Chant only one hymn, and expire
With the song's irresistible stress;  
Expire in their rapture and wonder,  
As harp-strings are broken asunder  
By music they throb to express.

But serene in the rapturous throng,  
Unmoved by the rush of the song,  
With eyes unimpassioned and slow,  
Among the dead angels, the deathless  
Sandalphon stands listening breathless  
To sounds that ascend from below;

From the spirits on earth that adore,  
From the souls that entreat and implore  
In the fervour and passion of prayer;  
From the hearts that are broken with losses,  
And weary with dragging the crosses  
Too heavy for mortals to bear.

And he gathers the prayers as he stands,  
And they change into flowers in his hands,  
Into garlands of purple and red;  
And beneath the great arch of the portal,  
Through the streets of the City Immortal  
Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

It is but a legend, I know,—  
A fable, a phantom, a show,  
Of the ancient Rabbinical lore;  
Yet the old mediaeval tradition,  
The beautiful, strange superstition,  
But haunts me and holds me the more.
When I look from my window at night,
And the welkin above is all white,
   All throbbing and panting with stars,
Among them majestic is standing
Sandalphon the angel, expanding
   His pinions in nebulous bars.

And the legend, I feel, is a part
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart,
   The frenzy and fire of the brain,
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,
The golden pomegranates of Eden,
   To quiet its fever and pain.

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

BETWEEN the dark and the daylight,
   When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
   That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
   The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
   And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamp-light,
   Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
   And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:
   Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
   To take me by surprise.
BIRDS OF PASSAGE

A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old moustache as I am
Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you for ever,
Yes, for ever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away!

ENCELADUS

UNDER Mount Etna he lies,
It is slumber, it is not death;
For he struggles at times to arise,
And above him the lurid skies
Are hot with his fiery breath.
The crags are piled on his breast,
The earth is heaped on his head;
But the groans of his wild unrest,
Though smothered and half suppressed,
Are heard, and he is not dead.

And the nations far away
Are watching with eager eyes;
They talk together and say,
'To-morrow, perhaps to-day,
Enceladus will arise!'

And the old gods, the austere
Oppressors in their strength,
Stand aghast and white with fear
At the ominous sounds they hear,
And tremble, and mutter, 'At length!'

Ah me! for the land that is sown
With the harvest of despair!
Where the burning cinders, blown
From the lips of the overthrown
Enceladus, fill the air.

Where ashes are heaped in drifts,
Over vineyard and field and town,
Whenever he starts and lifts
His head through the blackened rifts
Of the crags that keep him down.

See, see! the red light shines!
'Tis the glare of his awful eyes!
And the storm-wind shouts through the pines
Of Alps and of Apennines,
'Enceladus, arise!'
SNOW-FLAKES

Out of the bosom of the Air,
Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken,
Over the woodlands brown and bare,
   Over the harvest fields forsaken,
   Silent, and soft, and slow
    Descends the snow.

Even as our cloudy fancies take
   Suddenly shape in some divine expression,
Even as the troubled heart doth make
    In the white countenance confession,
       The troubled sky reveals
       The grief it feels.

This is the poem of the air,
    Slowly in silent syllables recorded;
This is the secret of despair,
   Long in its cloudy bosom hoarded,
      Now whispered and revealed
        To wood and field.

A DAY OF SUNSHINE

O gift of God! O perfect day:
    Whereon shall no man work, but play;
Whereon it is enough for me,
Not to be doing, but to be!

Through every fibre of my brain,
Through every nerve, through every vein,
I feel the electric thrill, the touch
Of life, that seems almost too much.
LONGFELLOW

I hear the wind among the trees
Playing celestial symphonies;
I see the branches downward bent,
Like keys of some great instrument.

And over me unrolls on high
The splendid scenery of the sky,
Where through a sapphire sea the sun
Sails like a golden galloon.

Towards yonder cloud-land in the West,
Towards yonder Islands of the Blest,
Whose steep sierra far uplifts
Its craggy summits white with drifts.

Blow, winds! and waft through all the rooms
The snow-flakes of the cherry-blooms!
Blow, winds! and bend within my reach
The fiery blossoms of the peach!

O Life and Love!  O happy throng
Of thoughts, whose only speech is song!
O heart of man! canst thou not be
Blithe as the air is, and as free?

SOMETHING LEFT UNDONE

LABOUR with what zeal we will,
Something still remains undone,
Something uncompleted still
Waits the rising of the sun.

By the bedside, on the stair,
At the threshold, near the gates,
With its menace or its prayer,
Like a mendicant it waits;
Waits, and will not go away;
   Waits, and will not be gainsaid;
By the cares of yesterday
   Each to-day is heavier made;
Till at length the burden seems
   Greater than our strength can bear,
Heavy as the weight of dreams,
   Pressing on us everywhere.
And we stand from day to day,
   Like the dwarfs of times gone by,
Who, as northern legends say,
   On their shoulders held the sky.

WEARINESS

O LITTLE feet! that such long years
   Must wander on through hopes and fears,
   Must ache and bleed beneath your load;
I, nearer to the wayside inn
Where toil shall cease and rest begin,
   Am weary, thinking of your road!
O little hands! that, weak or strong,
   Have still to serve or rule so long,
   Have still so long to give or ask;
I, who so much with book and pen
Have toiled among my fellow-men,
   Am weary, thinking of your task.
O little hearts! that throb and beat
With such impatient, feverish heat,
   Such limitless and strong desires;
Mine that so long has glowed and burned,
With passions into ashes turned
   Now covers and conceals its fires.
O little souls! as pure and white
And crystalline as rays of light
Direct from heaven, their source divine;
Refracted through the mist of years,
How red my setting sun appears,
How lurid looks this soul of mine!

FATA MORGANA

O SWEET illusions of Song,
That tempt me everywhere,
In the lonely fields, and the throng
Of the crowded thoroughfare!

I approach, and ye vanish away,
I grasp you, and ye are gone;
But ever by night and by day
The melody soundeth on.

As the weary traveller sees
In desert or prairie vast,
Blue lakes, overhung with trees,
That a pleasant shadow cast;

Fair towns with turrets high,
And shining roofs of gold,
That vanish as he draws nigh,
Like mists together rolled,—

So I wander and wander along,
And for ever before me gleams
The shining city of song,
In the beautiful land of dreams.
But when I would enter the gate
Of that golden atmosphere,
It is gone, and I wander and wait
For the vision to reappear.

THE HAUNTED CHAMBER

Each heart has its haunted chamber,
Where the silent moonlight falls!
On the floor are mysterious footsteps,
There are whispers along the walls!
And mine at times is haunted
By phantoms of the Past,
As motionless as shadows
By the silent moonlight cast.

A form sits by the window,
That is not seen by day,
For as soon as the dawn approaches
It vanishes away.

It sits there in the moonlight,
Itself as pale and still,
And points with its airy finger
Across the window-sill.

Without, before the window,
There stands a gloomy pine,
Whose boughs wave upward and downward
As wave these thoughts of mine.

And underneath its branches
Is the grave of a little child,
Who died upon life’s threshold,
And never wept nor smiled.
What are ye, O pallid phantoms!
That haunt my troubled brain?
That vanish when day approaches,
And at night return again?

What are ye, O pallid phantoms!
But the statues without breath,
That stand on the bridge over-arching
The silent river of death?

THE MEETING

After so long an absence
At last we meet again:
Does the meeting give us pleasure,
Or does it give us pain?
The tree of life has been shaken,
And but few of us linger now,
Like the Prophet's two or three berries
In the top of the uttermost bough.

We cordially greet each other
In the old, familiar tone;
And we think, though we do not say it,
How old and gray he is grown!

We speak of a Merry Christmas
And many a Happy New Year;
But each in his heart is thinking
Of those that are not here.

We speak of friends and their fortunes,
And of what they did and said,
Till the dead alone seem living,
And the living alone seem dead.
And at last we hardly distinguish
   Between the ghosts and the guests;
And a mist and shadow of sadness
   Steals over our merriest jests.

VOX POPULI

WHEN Mazárvan the magician
   Journeyed westward through Cathay,
Nothing heard he but the praises
   Of Badoura on his way.

But the lessening rumour ended
   When he came to Khaledan,
There the folk were talking only
   Of Prince Camaralzaman.

So it happens with the poets:
   Every province hath its own;
Camaralzaman is famous
   Where Badoura is unknown.

THE CASTLE-BUILDER

A gentle boy, with soft and silken locks,
   A dreamy boy, with brown and tender eyes,
A castle-builder, with his wooden blocks,
   And towers that touch imaginary skies.

A fearless rider on his father's knee,
   An eager listener unto stories told
At the Round Table of the nursery,
   Of heroes and adventures manifold.
There will be other towers for thee to build;
There will be other steeds for thee to ride;
There will be other legends, and all filled
With greater marvels and more glorified.

Build on, and make thy castles high and fair,
Rising and reaching upward to the skies;
Listen to voices in the upper air,
Nor lose thy simple faith in mysteries.

CHANGED

From the outskirts of the town,
Where of old the mile-stone stood,
Now a stranger, looking down
I behold the shadowy crown
Of the dark and haunted wood.

Is it changed, or am I changed?
Ah! the oaks are fresh and green,
But the friends with whom I ranged
Through their thickets are estranged
By the years that intervene.

Bright as ever flows the sea,
Bright as ever shines the sun,
But, alas! they seem to me
Not the sun that used to be,
Not the tides that used to run.

AFTERMATH

When the Summer fields are mown,
When the birds are fledged and flown,
And the dry leaves strew the path;
With the falling of the snow,
With the cawing of the crow,
Once again the fields we mow
And gather in the aftermath.

Not the sweet, new grass with flowers
Is this harvesting of ours;
Not the upland clover bloom;
But the rowen mixed with weeds,
Tangled tufts from marsh and meads,
Where the poppy drops its seeds
In the silence and the gloom.

EPIMETHEUS
OR THE POET'S AFTERTHOUGHT

HAVE I dreamed? or was it real,
What I saw as in a vision,
When to marches hymeneal
In the land of the Ideal
Moved my thought o'er Fields Elysian?

What! are these the guests whose glances
Seemed like sunshine gleaming round me?
These the wild, bewildering fancies,
That with dithyrambic dances
As with magic circles bound me?

Ah! how cold are their caresses!
Pallid cheeks, and haggard bosoms!
Spectral gleam their snow-white dresses,
And from loose, dishevelled tresses
Fall the hyacinthine blossoms!
O my songs! whose winsome measures
Filled my heart with secret rapture!
Children of my golden leisures!
Must even your delights and pleasures
Fade and perish with the capture?

Fair they seemed, those songs sonorous,
When they came to me unbidden;
Voices single, and in chorus,
Like the wild birds singing o'er us
In the dark of branches hidden.

Disenchantment! Disillusion!
Must each noble aspiration
Come at last to this conclusion,
Jarring discord, wild confusion,
Lassitude, renunciation?

Not with steeper fall nor faster,
From the sun's serene dominions,
Not through brighter realms nor vaster,
In swift ruin and disaster,
Icarus fell with shattered pinions!

Sweet Pandora! dear Pandora!
Why did mighty Jove create thee
Coy as Thetis, fair as Flora,
Beautiful as young Aurora,
If to win thee is to hate thee?

No, not hate thee! for this feeling
Of unrest and long resistance
Is but passionate appealing,
A prophetic whisper stealing
O'er the chords of our existence.
Him whom thou dost once enamour
   Thou, beloved, never leavest;
In life's discord, strife, and clamour
Still he feels thy spell of glamour;
   Him of Hope thou ne'er bereavest.

Weary hearts by thee are lifted,
   Struggling souls by thee are strengthened,
Clouds of fear asunder rifted,
Truth from falsehood cleansed and sifted,
   Lives, like days in summer, lengthened!

Therefore art thou ever dearer,
   O my Sibyl, my deceiver!
For thou makest each mystery clearer,
And the unattained seems nearer,
   When thou fillest my heart with fever!

Muse of all the Gifts and Graces!
   Though the fields around us wither,
There are ampler realms and spaces,
Where no foot has left its traces:
   Let us turn and wander thither!

AMALFI

SWEET the memory is to me
   Of a land beyond the sea,
Where the waves and mountains meet,
Where, amid her mulberry-trees,
Sits Amalfi in the heat,
Bathing ever her white feet
In the tideless summer seas.
In the middle of the town,
From its fountains in the hills,
Tumbling through the narrow gorge,
The Canneto rushes down,
Turns the great wheels of the mills,
Lifts the hammers of the forge.

'Tis a stairway, not a street,
That ascends the deep ravine,
Where the torrent leaps between
Rocky walls that almost meet.
Toiling up from stair to stair
Peasant girls their burdens bear;
Sunburnt daughters of the soil,
Stately figures tall and straight,
What inexorable fate
Dooms them to this life of toil?

Lord of vineyards and of lands,
Far above the convent stands.
On its terraced walk aloof
Leans a monk with folded hands,
Placid, satisfied, serene,
Looking down upon the scene
Over wall and red tiled roof;
Wondering unto what good end
All this toil and traffic tend,
And why all men cannot be
Free from care and free from pain,
And the sordid love of gain,
And as indolent as he.
Where are now the freighted barks
From the marts of east and west?
Where the knights in iron sarks
Journeying to the Holy Land,
Glove of steel upon the hand,
Cross of crimson on the breast?
Where the pomp of camp and court?
Where the pilgrims with their prayers?
Where the merchants with their wares,
And their gallant brigantines
Sailing safely into port
Chased by corsair Algerines?

Vanished like a fleet of cloud,
Like a passing trumpet-blast,
Are those splendours of the past,
And the commerce and the crowd!
Fathoms deep beneath the seas
Lie the ancient wharves and quays
Swallowed by the engulfing waves;
Silent streets and vacant halls,
Ruined roofs and towers and walls;
Hidden from all mortal eyes
Deep the sunken city lies:
Even cities have their graves!

This is an enchanted land!
Round the headlands far away
Sweeps the blue Salernian bay
With its sickle of white sand:
Further still and furthermore
On the dim-discovered coast
Paestum with its ruins lies,
And its roses all in bloom
Seem to tinge the fatal skies
Of that lonely land of doom.

On his terrace, high in air,
Nothing doth the good monk care
For such worldly themes as these.
From the garden just below
Little puffs of perfume blow,
And a sound is in his ears
Of the murmur of the bees
In the shining chestnut-trees;
Nothing else he heeds or hears.
All the landscape seems to swoon
In the happy afternoon;
Slowly o'er his senses creep
The encroaching waves of sleep,
And he sinks as sank the town,
Unresisting, fathoms down,
Into caverns cool and deep!

Walled about with drifts of snow,
Hearing the fierce north wind blow,
Seeing all the landscape white,
And the river cased in ice,
Comes this memory of delight,
Comes this vision unto me
Of a long-lost Paradise
In the land beyond the sea.
THE SERMON OF ST. FRANCIS

Up soared the lark into the air,
A shaft of song, a winged prayer,
As if a soul, released from pain,
Were flying back to heaven again.

St. Francis heard; it was to him
An emblem of the Seraphim;
The upward motion of the fire,
The light, the heat, the heart’s desire.

Around Assisi’s convent gate
The birds, God’s poor who cannot wait,
From moor and mere and darksome wood
Came flocking for their dole of food.

‘O brother birds,’ St. Francis said,
‘Ye come to me and ask for bread,
But not with bread alone to-day
Shall ye be fed and sent away.

‘Ye shall be fed, ye happy birds,
With manna of celestial words;
Not mine, though mine they seem to be,
Not mine, though they be spoken through me.

‘O, doubly are ye bound to praise
The great Creator in your lays;
He giveth you your plumes of down,
Your crimson hoods, your cloaks of brown.

‘He giveth you your wings to fly
And breathe a purer air on high,
And careth for you everywhere,
Who for yourselves so little care!’
With flutter of swift wings and songs
Together rose the feathered throngs,
And singing scattered far apart;
Deep peace was in St. Francis' heart.

He knew not if the brotherhood
His homily had understood;
He only knew that to one ear
The meaning of his words was clear.

A DUTCH PICTURE

SIMON DANZ has come home again
From cruising about with his buccaneers;
He has singed the beard of the King of Spain,
And carried away the Dean of Jaen
And sold him in Algiers.

In his house by the Maese, with its roof of tiles,
And weathercocks flying aloft in air,
There are silver tankards of antique styles,
Plunder of convent and castle, and piles
Of carpets rich and rare.

In his tulip-garden there by the town,
Overlooking the sluggish stream,
With his Moorish cap and dressing-gown,
The old sea-captain, hale and brown,
Walks in a waking dream.

A smile in his gray mustachio lurks
Whenever he thinks of the King of Spain,
And the listed tulips look like Turks,
And the silent gardener as he works
Is changed to the Dean of Jaen.
He sits and smokes by the blazing brands,
And old seafaring men come in.

(A Dutch Picture.)
The windmills on the outermost
Verge of the landscape in the haze,
To him are towers on the Spanish coast,
With whiskered sentinels at their post,
Though this is the river Maese.

But when the winter rains begin,
He sits and smokes by the blazing brands,
And old seafaring men come in,
Goat-bearded, gray, and with double chin,
And rings upon their hands.

They sit there in the shadow and shine
Of the flickering fire of the winter night;
Figures in colour and design
Like those by Rembrandt of the Rhine,
Half darkness and half light.

And they talk of ventures lost or won,
And their talk is ever and ever the same,
While they drink the red wine of Tarragon,
From the cellars of some Spanish Don,
Or convent set on flame.

Restless at times with heavy strides
He paces his parlour to and fro;
He is like a ship that at anchor rides,
And swings with the rising and falling tides,
And tugs at her anchor-tow.

Voices mysterious far and near,
Sound of the wind and sound of the sea,
Are calling and whispering in his ear,
'Simon Danz! Why stayest thou here?
Come forth and follow me!'
So he thinks he shall take to the sea again
For one more cruise with his buccaneers,
To singe the beard of the King of Spain,
And capture another Dean of Jaen
And sell him in Algiers.

HAROUN AL RASCHID

ONE day, Haroun Al Raschid read
A book wherein the poet said:—

'Where are the kings, and where the rest
Of those who once the world possessed?

'They're gone with all their pomp and show,
They're gone the way that thou shalt go.

'O thou who choosest for thy share
The world, and what the world calls fair,

'Take all that it can give or lend,
But know that death is at the end!'

Haroun Al Raschid bowed his head:
Tears fell upon the page he read.
FLOWER-DE-LUCE

FLOWER-DE-LUCE

BEAUTIFUL lily, dwelling by still rivers,
    Or solitary mere,
Or where the sluggish meadow-brook delivers
    Its waters to the weir!

Thou laughest at the mill, the whir and worry
    Of spindle and of loom,
And the great wheel that toils amid the hurry
    And rushing of the flume.

Born in the purple, born to joy and pleasance,
    Thou dost not toil nor spin,
But makest glad and radiant with thy presence
    The meadow and the lin.

The wind blows, and uplifts thy drooping banner,
    And round thee throng and run
The rushes, the green yeomen of thy manor,
    The outlaws of the sun.

The burnished dragon-fly is thine attendant,
    And tilts against the field,
And down the listed sunbeam rides resplendent
    With steel-blue mail and shield.
Thou art the Iris, fair among the fairest,
Who, armed with golden rod
And winged with the celestial azure, bearest
The message of some God.

Thou art the Muse, who far from crowded cities
Hauntest the sylvan streams,
Playing on pipes of reed the artless ditties
That come to us as dreams.

O flower-de-luce, bloom on, and let the river
Linger to kiss thy feet!
O flower of song, bloom on, and make for ever
The world more fair and sweet.

PALINGENESIS

I lay upon the headland-height, and listened
To the incessant sobbing of the sea
In caverns under me,
And watched the waves, that tossed and fled and glistened,
Until the rolling meadows of amethyst
Melted away in mist.

Then suddenly, as one from sleep, I started;
For round about me all the sunny capes
Seemed peopled with the shapes
Of those whom I had known in days departed,
Apparelled in the loveliness which gleams
On faces seen in dreams.
A moment only, and the light and glory
Faded away, and the disconsolate shore
Stood lonely as before;
And the wild-roses of the promontory
Around me shuddered in the wind, and shed
Their petals of pale red.

There was an old belief that in the embers
Of all things their primordial form exists,
And cunning alchemists
Could re-create the rose with all its members
From its own ashes, but without the bloom,
Without the lost perfume.

Ah me! what wonder-working, occult science
Can from the ashes in our hearts once more
The rose of youth restore?
What craft of alchemy can bid defiance
To time and change, and for a single hour
Renew this phantom-flower?

'O, give me back,' I cried, 'the vanished splendours,
The breath of morn, and the exultant strife,
When the swift stream of life
Bounds o'er its rocky channel, and surrenders
The pond, with all its lilies, for the leap
Into the unknown deep!

And the sea answered, with a lamentation,
Like some old prophet wailing, and it said,
'Alas! thy youth is dead!
It breathed no more, its heart has no pulsation;
In the dark places with the dead of old
It lies for ever cold!'
Then said I, ‘From its consecrated cerements
I will not drag this sacred dust again,
    Only to give me pain;
But, still remembering all the lost endearments,
Go on my way, like one who looks before,
    And turns to weep no more.’

Into what land of harvests, what plantations
Bright with autumnal foliage and the glow
    Of sunsets burning low;
Beneath what midnight skies, whose constellations
Light up the spacious avenues between
    This world and the unseen!

Amid what friendly greetings and caresses,
What households, though not alien, yet not mine,
    What bowers of rest divine;
To what temptations in lone wildemernes,
What famine of the heart, what pain and loss,
    The bearing of what cross!

I do not know; nor will I vainly question
Those pages of the mystic book which hold
    The story still untold,
But without rash conjecture or suggestion
Turn its last leaves in reverence and good heed,
    Until ‘The End’ I read.

HAWTHORNE

MAY 23, 1864

HOW beautiful it was, that one bright day
In the long week of rain!
Though all its splendour could not chase away
    The omnipresent pain.
The lovely town was white with apple-blooms,
   And the great elms o'erhead
Dark shadows wove on their aerial looms
   Shot through with golden thread.

Across the meadows, by the gray old manse,
   The historic river flowed:
I was as one who wanders in a trance,
   Unconscious of his road.

The faces of familiar friends seemed strange;
   Their voices I could hear,
And yet the words they uttered seemed to change
   Their meaning to my ear.

For the one face I looked for was not there,
   The one low voice was mute;
Only an unseen presence filled the air,
   And baffled my pursuit.

Now I look back, and meadow, manse, and stream
   Dimly my thought defines;
I only see—a dream within a dream—
   The hill-top hearsed with pines.

I only hear above his place of rest
   Their tender undertone,
The infinite longings of a troubled breast,
   The voice so like his own.

There in seclusion and remote from men
   The wizard hand lies cold,
Which at its topmost speed let fall the pen,
   And left the tale half told.
LONGFELLOW

Ah! who shall lift that wand of magic power,
   And the lost clew regain?
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower
   Unfinished must remain!

THE WIND OVER THE CHIMNEY

SEE, the fire is sinking low,
   Dusky red the embers glow,
   While above them still I cower,
   While a moment more I linger,
   Though the clock, with lifted finger,
   Points beyond the midnight hour.

Sings the blackened log a tune
   Learned in some forgotten June
   From a school-boy at his play,
   When they both were young together,
   Heart of youth and summer weather
   Making all their holiday.

And the night-wind rising, hark!
   How above there in the dark,
   In the midnight and the snow,
   Ever wilder, fiercer, grander,
   Like the trumpets of Iskander,
   All the noisy chimneys blow!

Every quivering tongue of flame
   Seems to murmur some great name,
   Seems to say to me, 'Aspire!'
   But the night-wind answers, 'Hollow
   Are the visions that you follow,
   Into darkness sinks your fire!'
Then the flicker of the blaze
Gleams on volumes of old days,
Written by masters of the art,
Loud through whose majestic pages
Rolls the melody of ages,
Throb the harp-strings of the heart.

And again the tongues of flame
Start exulting and exclaim:
'These are prophets, bards, and seers;
In the horoscope of nations,
Like ascendant constellations,
They control the coming years.'

But the night-wind cries: 'Despair!
Those who walk with feet of air
Leave no long-enduring marks;
At God's forges incandescent
Mighty hammers beat incessant,
These are but the flying sparks.

'Dust are all the hands that wrought;
Books are sepulchres of thought;
The dead laurels of the dead
Rustle for a moment only,
Like the withered leaves in lonely
Churchyards at some passing tread.'

Suddenly the flame sinks down;
Sink the rumours of renown;
And alone the night-wind drear
Clamours louder, wilder, vaguer,—
'Tis the brand of Melcager
Dying on the hearth-stone here!'
And I answer,—'Though it be,
Why should that discomfort me?
   No endeavour is in vain;
Its reward is in the doing,
And the rapture of pursuing
   Is the prize the vanquished gain.'
MORITURI SALUTAMUS

POEM FOR THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE CLASS OF 1825 IN BOWDOIN
COLLEGE

Tempora labuntur, tacitisque senescimus annis,
Et fugiunt freno non remorante dies.
OVID, Pastorum, Lib. vi.

'O CAESAR, we who are about to die
Salute you!' was the gladiators' cry
In the arena, standing face to face
With death and with the Roman populace.

O ye familiar scenes,—ye groves of pine,
That once were mine and are no longer mine,—
Thou river, widening through the meadows green
To the vast sea, so near and yet unseen,—
Ye halls, in whose seclusion and repose
Phantoms of fame, like exhalations, rose
And vanished,—we who are about to die
Salute you; earth and air and sea and sky,
And the Imperial Sun that scatters down
His sovereign splendours upon grove and town.

Ye do not answer us! ye do not hear!
We are forgotten; and in your austere
And calm indifference, ye little care
Whether we come or go, or whence or where.
What passing generations fill these halls,
What passing voices echo from these walls,
Ye heed not; we are only as the blast,
A moment heard, and then for ever past.

Not so the teachers who in earlier days
Led our bewildered feet through learning's maze;
They answer us—alas! what have I said?
What greetings come there from the voiceless dead?
What salutation, welcome, or reply?
What pressure from the hands that lifeless lie?
They are no longer here; they all are gone
Into the land of shadows,—all save one.
Honour and reverence, and the good repute
That follows faithful service as its fruit,
Be unto him, whom living we salute.

The great Italian poet, when he made
His dreadful journey to the realms of shade,
Met there the old instructor of his youth,
And cried in tones of pity and of ruth:
'O, never from the memory of my heart
Your dear, paternal image shall depart,
Who while on earth, ere yet by death surprised,
Taught me how mortals are immortalised;
How grateful am I for that patient care
All my life long my language shall declare.'

To-day we make the poet's words our own,
And utter them in plaintive undertone;
Nor to the living only be they said,
But to the other living called the dead,
MORITURI SALUTAMUS

Whose dear, paternal images appear
Not wrapped in gloom, but robed in sunshine here;
Whose simple lives, complete and without flaw,
Were part and parcel of great Nature’s law;
Who said not to their Lord, as if afraid,
‘Here is thy talent in a napkin laid,’
But laboured in their sphere, as men who live
In the delight that work alone can give.
Peace be to them; eternal peace and rest,
And the fulfilment of the great behest:
‘Ye have been faithful over a few things,
Over ten cities shall ye reign as kings.’

And ye who fill the places we once filled,
And follow in the furrows that we tilled,
Young men, whose generous hearts are beating high,
We who are old, and are about to die,
Salute you; hail you; take your hands in ours,
And crown you with our welcome as with flowers!

How beautiful is youth! how bright it gleams
With its illusions, aspirations, dreams!
Book of Beginnings, Story without End,
Each maid a heroine, and each man a friend!
Aladdin’s Lamp, and Fortunatus’ Purse,
That holds the treasures of the universe!
All possibilities are in its hands,
No danger daunts it, and no foe withstands;
In its sublime audacity of faith,
‘Be thou removed!’ it to the mountain saith,
And with ambitious feet, secure and proud,
Ascends the ladder leaning on the cloud!
As ancient Priam at the Scæan gate
Sat on the walls of Troy in regal state
With the old men, too old and weak to fight,
Chirping like grasshoppers in their delight
To see the embattled hosts, with spear and shield,
Of Trojans and Achaians in the field;
So from the snowy summits of our years
We see you in the plain, as each appears,
And question of you; asking, 'Who is he
That towers above the others? Which may be
Atreides, Menelaus, Odysseus,
Ajax the great, or bold Idomeneus?'

Let him not boast who puts his armour on
As he who puts it off, the battle done.
Study yourselves; and most of all note well
Wherein kind Nature meant you to excel.
Not every blossom ripens into fruit;
Minerva, the inventress of the flute,
Flung it aside, when she her face surveyed
Distorted in a fountain as she played;
The unlucky Marsyas found it, and his fate
Was one to make the bravest hesitate.

Write on your doors the saying wise and old,
'Be bold! be bold!' and everywhere—'Be bold;
Be not too bold!' Yet better the excess
Than the defect; better the more than less;
Better like Hector in the field to die,
Than like a perfumed Paris turn and fly.

And now, my classmates; ye remaining few
That number not the half of those we knew,
Ye, against whose familiar names not yet
The fatal asterisk of death is set,
Ye I salute! The horologe of Time
 Strikes the half-century with a solemn chime,
And summons us together once again,
The joy of meeting not unmixed with pain.

Where are the others? Voices from the deep
Caverns of darkness answer me: 'They sleep!'
I name no names; instinctively I feel
Each at some well-remembered grave will kneel,
And from the inscription wipe the weeds and moss,
For every heart best knoweth its own loss.
I see their scattered gravestones gleaming white
Through the pale dusk of the impending night;
O'er all alike the impartial sunset throws
Its golden lilies mingled with the rose;
We give to each a tender thought, and pass
Out of the graveyards with their tangled grass,
Unto these scenes frequented by our feet
When we were young, and life was fresh and sweet.

What shall I say to you? What can I say
Better than silence is? When I survey
This throng of faces turned to meet my own,
Friendly and fair, and yet to me unknown,
Transformed the very landscape seems to be;
It is the same, yet not the same to me.
So many memories crowd upon my brain,
So many ghosts are in the wooded plain,
I fain would steal away, with noiseless tread,
As from a house where some one lieth dead.
I cannot go;—I pause;—I hesitate;  
My feet reluctant linger at the gate;  
As one who struggles in a troubled dream  
To speak and cannot, to myself I seem.

Vanish the dream! Vanish the idle fears!  
Vanish the rolling mists of fifty years!  
Whatever time or space may intervene,  
I will not be a stranger in this scene.  
Here every doubt, all indecision, ends;  
Hail, my companions, comrades, classmates, friends!

Ah me! the fifty years since last we met  
Seem to me fifty folios bound and set  
By Time, the great transcriber, on his shelves,  
Wherein are written the histories of ourselves.  
What tragedies, what comedies, are there!  
What joy and grief, what rapture and despair!  
What chronicles of triumph and defeat,  
Of struggle, and temptation, and retreat!  
What records of regrets, and doubts, and fears!  
What pages blotted, blistered by our tears!  
What lovely landscapes on the margin shine,  
What sweet, angelic faces, what divine  
And holy images of love and trust,  
Undimmed by age, unsoiled by damp or dust!

Whose hand shall dare to open and explore  
These volumes, closed and clasped for evermore?  
Not mine. With reverential feet I pass;  
I hear a voice that cries, 'Alas! alas!  
Whatever hath been written shall remain,  
Nor be erased nor written o'er again;  
The unwritten only still belongs to thee:  
Take heed, and ponder well what that shall be.'
As children frightened by a thunder-cloud
Are reassured if some one reads aloud
A tale of wonder, with enchantment fraught,
Or wild adventure, that diverts their thought,
Let me endeavour with a tale to chase
The gathering shadows of the time and place,
And banish what we all too deeply feel
Wholly to say, or wholly to conceal.

In mediæval Rome, I know not where,
There stood an image with its arm in air,
And on its lifted finger, shining clear,
A golden ring with the device, 'Strike here!'
Greatly the people wondered, though none guessed
The meaning that these words but half expressed,
Until a learned clerk, who at noonday
With downcast eyes was passing on his way,
Paused, and observed the spot, and marked it well,
Whereon the shadow of the finger fell;
And, coming back at midnight, delved, and found
A secret stairway leading under ground.
Down this he passed into a spacious hall,
Lit by a flaming jewel on the wall;
And opposite, in threatening attitude,
With bow and shaft a brazen statue stood.
Upon its forehead, like a coronet,
Were these mysterious words of menace set:
'That which I am, I am; my fatal aim
None can escape, not even yon luminous flame!'

Midway the hall was a fair table placed,
With cloth of gold, and golden cups enchased
With rubies, and the plates and knives were gold,
And gold the bread and viands manifold.
Around it, silent, motionless, and sad,
Were seated gallant knights in armour clad,
And ladies beautiful with plume and zone,
But they were stone, their hearts within were stone;
And the vast hall was filled in every part
With silent crowds, stony in face and heart.

Long at the scene, bewildered and amazed,
The trembling clerk in speechless wonder gazed;
Then from the table, by his greed made bold,
He seized a goblet and a knife of gold,
And suddenly from their seats the guests upsprang,
The vaulted ceiling with loud clamours rang,
The archer sped his arrow, at their call,
Shattering the lambent jewel on the wall,
And all was dark around and overhead;—
Stark on the floor the luckless clerk lay dead!

The writer of this legend then records
Its ghostly application in these words:
The image is the Adversary old,
Whose beckoning finger points to realms of gold;
Our lusts and passions are the downward stair
That leads the soul from a diviner air;
The archer, Death; the flaming jewel, Life;
Terrestrial goods, the goblet and the knife;
The knights and ladies, all whose flesh and bone
By avarice have been hardened into stone;
The clerk, the scholar whom the love of pelf
Tempts from his books and from his nobler self.

The scholar and the world! The endless strife,
The discord in the harmonies of life!
The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,
And all the sweet serenity of books;
The market-place, the eager love of gain,
Whose aim is vanity, and whose end is pain!
But why, you ask me, should this tale be told
To men grown old, or who are growing old?
It is too late! Ah, nothing is too late
Till the tired heart shall cease to palpitate.
Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles
Wrote his grand Oedipus, and Simonides
Bore off the prize of verse from his compeers,
When each had numbered more than fourscore years,
And Theophrastus, at fourscore and ten,
Had but begun his Characters of Men;
Chaucer, at Woodstock with the nightingales,
At sixty wrote the Canterbury Tales;
Goethe at Weimar, toiling to the last,
Completed Faust when eighty years were past.
These are indeed exceptions; but they show
How far the gulf-stream of our youth may flow
Into the arctic regions of our lives,
Where little else than life itself survives.

As the barometer foretells the storm
While still the skies are clear, the weather warm,
So something in us, as old age draws near,
Betrays the pressure of the atmosphere.
The nimble mercury, ere we are aware,
Descends the elastic ladder of the air;
The tell-tale blood in artery and vein
Sinks from its higher levels in the brain;
Whatever poet, orator, or sage
May say of it, old age is still old age.
It is the waning, not the crescent moon;
The dusk of evening, not the blaze of noon:
It is not strength, but weakness; not desire,
But its surcease; not the fierce heat of fire,
The burning and consuming element,
But that of ashes and of embers spent,
In which some living sparks we still discern,
Enough to warm, but not enough to burn.

What then? Shall we sit idly down and say
The night hath come; it is no longer day?
The night hath not yet come; we are not quite
Cut off from labour by the failing light;
Something remains for us to do or dare;
Even the oldest tree some fruit may bear;
Not Ædipus Coloneus, or Greek Ode,
Or tales of pilgrims that one morning rode
Out of the gateway of the Tabard Inn,
But other something, would we but begin;
For age is opportunity no less
Than youth itself, though in another dress,
And as the evening twilight fades away
The sky is filled with stars, invisible by day.
SONNETS

THE GALAXY

Torrent of light and river of the air,
Along whose bed the glimmering stars are seen
Like gold and silver sands in some ravine
Where mountain streams have left their channels bare!
The Spaniard sees in thee the pathway, where
His patron saint descended in the sheen
Of his celestial armour, on serene
And quiet nights, when all the heavens were fair.
Not this I see, nor yet the ancient fable
Of Phaeton's wild course, that scorched the skies
Where'er the hoofs of his hot coursers trod;
But the white drift of worlds o'er chasms of sable,
The star-dust, that is whirled aloft and flies
From the invisible chariot-wheels of God.

THE TIDES

I saw the long line of the vacant shore,
The sea-weed and the shells upon the sand,
And the brown rocks left bare on every hand
As if the ebbing tide would flow no more.
Then heard I, more distinctly than before,
The ocean breathe and its great breast expand,
And hurrying came on the defenceless land
The insurgent waters with tumultuous roar.
All thought and feeling and desire, I said,
Love, laughter, and the exultant joy of song
Have ebbed from me for ever! Suddenly o'er me
They swept again from their deep ocean bed,
And in a tumult of delight, and strong
As youth, and beautiful as youth, upbore me.

THE TWO RIVERS

SLOWLY the hour-hand of the clock moves round;
So slowly that no human eye hath power
To see it move! Slowly in shine or shower
The painted ship above it, homeward bound,
Sails, but seems motionless, as if aground;
Yet both arrive at last; and in his tower
The slumbrous watchman wakes and strikes the hour,
A mellow, measured, melancholy sound.
Midnight! the outpost of advancing day!
The frontier town and citadel of night!
The watershed of Time, from which the streams
Of Yesterday and To-morrow take their way,
One to the land of promise and of light,
One to the land of darkness and of dreams!

O River of Yesterday, with current swift
Through chasms descending, and soon lost to sight,
I do not care to follow in their flight
The faded leaves, that on thy bosom drift!
O River of To-morrow, I uplift
Mine eyes, and thee I follow, as the night
Wanes into morning, and the dawning light
Broadens, and all the shadows fade and shift!
I follow, follow, where thy waters run
Through unfrequented, unfamiliar fields,
Fragrant with flowers and musical with song;
Still follow, follow; sure to meet the sun,
And confident, that what the future yields
Will be the right, unless myself be wrong.

Yet not in vain, O River of Yesterday,
Through chasms of darkness to the deep descending,
I heard thee sobbing in the rain, and blending
Thy voice with other voices far away.
I called to thee, and yet thou wouldst not stay,
But turbulent, and with thyself contending,
And torrent-like thy force on pebbles spending,
Thou wouldst not listen to a poet's lay.
Thoughts, like a loud and sudden rush of wings,
Regrets and recollections of things past,
With hints and prophecies of things to be,
And inspirations, which, could they be things,
And stay with us, and we could hold them fast,
Were our good angels,—these I owe to thee.

And thou, O River of To-morrow, flowing
Between thy narrow adamantine walls,
But beautiful, and white with waterfalls,
And wreaths of mist, like hands the pathway showing;
I hear the trumpets of the morning blowing,
I hear thy mighty voice, that calls and calls,
And see, as Ossian saw in Morven's halls,
Mysterious phantoms, coming, beckoning, going!
It is the mystery of the unknown
That fascinates us; we are children still,
Wayward and wistful; with one hand we cling
To the familiar things we call our own,
And with the other, resolute of will,
Grop e in the dark for what the day will bring.

THE BROKEN OAR

ONCE upon Iceland's solitary strand
A poet wandered with his book and pen,
Seeking some final word, some sweet Amen,
Wherewith to close the volume in his hand.
The billows rolled and plunged upon the sand,
The circling sea-gulls swept beyond his ken,
And from the parting cloud-rack now and then
Flashed the red sunset over sea and land.
Then by the billows at his feet was tossed
A broken oar; and carved thereon he read,
'Oft was I weary, when I toiled at thee';
And like a man, who findeth what was lost,
He wrote the words, then lifted up his head,
And flung his useless pen into the sea.
STANZAS

DEDICATION

TO G. W. G.

WITH favouring winds, o'er sunlit seas,
We sailed for the Hesperides,
The land where golden apples grow;
But that, ah! that was long ago.

How far, since then, the ocean streams
Have swept us from that land of dreams,
That land of fiction and of truth,
The lost Atlantis of our youth!

Whither, ah, whither? Are not these
The tempest-haunted Hebrides,
Where sea-gulls scream, and breakers roar
And wreck and sea-weed line the shore?

Ultima Thule! Utmost Isle!
Here in thy harbours for a while
We lower our sails; a while we rest
From the unending, endless quest.

BECALMED

BECALMED upon the sea of Thought,
Still unattained the land it sought,
My mind, with loosely-hanging sails,
Lies waiting the auspicious gales.
LONGFELLOW

On either side, behind, before,
The ocean stretches like a floor,—
A level floor of amethyst,
Crowned by a golden dome of mist.

Blow, breath of inspiration, blow!
Shake and uplift this golden glow!
And fill the canvas of the mind
With wafts of thy celestial wind.

Blow, breath of song! until I feel
The straining sail, the lifting keel,
The life of the awakening sea,
Its motion and its mystery!

CURFEW

SOLEMNLY, mournfully,
Dealing its dole,
The Curfew Bell
Is beginning to toll.

Cover the embers,
And put out the light;
Toil comes with the morning,
And rest with the night.

Dark grow the windows,
And quenched is the fire;
Sound fades into silence,—
All footsteps retire.

No voice in the chambers,
No sound in the hall!
Sleep and oblivion
Reign over all!
THE HEMLOCK TREE

FROM THE GERMAN

O HEMLOCK tree! O hemlock tree! how faithful are thy branches!
    Green not alone in summer time,
    But in the winter's frost and rime!
O hemlock tree! O hemlock tree! how faithful are thy branches!

O maiden fair! O maiden fair! how faithless is thy bosom!
    To love me in prosperity,
    And leave me in adversity!
O maiden fair! O maiden fair! how faithless is thy bosom!

The nightingale, the nightingale, thou tak'st for thine example!
    So long as summer laughs she sings,
    But in the autumn spreads her wings.
The nightingale, the nightingale, thou tak'st for thine example!
The meadow brook, the meadow brook, is mirror of thy falsehood!
   It flows so long as falls the rain,
   In drought its springs soon dry again.
The meadow brook, the meadow brook, is mirror of thy falsehood!

**COPLAS DE MANRIQUE**

**FROM THE SPANISH**

[Don Jorge Manrique, the author of the following poem, flourished in the last half of the fifteenth century. He followed the profession of arms, and died on the field of battle. Mariana, in his History of Spain, makes honourable mention of him as being present at the siege of Uclés; and speaks of him as 'a youth of estimable qualities, who in this war gave brilliant proofs of his valour. He died young; and was thus cut off from long exercising his great virtues, and exhibiting to the world the light of his genius, which was already known to fame.' He was mortally wounded in a skirmish near Cañaute, in the year 1479.

The name of Rodrigo Manrique, the father of the poet, Conde de Paredes and Maestre de Santiago, is well known in Spanish history and song. He died in 1476; according to Mariana, in the town of Uclés; but, according to the poem of his son, in Ocaña. It was his death that called forth the poem upon which rests the literary reputation of the younger Manrique. In the language of his historian, 'Don Jorge Manrique, in an elegant Ode, full of poetic beauties, rich embellishments of genius, and high moral reflections, mourned the death of his father as with a funeral hymn.' This praise is not exaggerated. The poem is a model in its kind. Its conception is solemn and beautiful; and, in accordance with it, the style moves on,—calm, dignified, and majestic.]

O
LET the soul her slumbers break,
   Let thought be quickened, and awake;
Awake to see
How soon this life is past and gone,
And death comes softly stealing on,
How silently!
Swiftly our pleasures glide away,
Our hearts recall the distant day
With many sighs;
The moments that are speeding fast
We heed not, but the past,—the past,
More highly prize.

Onward its course the present keeps,
Onward the constant current sweeps,
Till life is done;
And, did we judge of time aright,
The past and future in their flight
Would be as one.

Let no one fondly dream again,
That Hope and all her shadowy train
Will not decay;
Fleeting as were the dreams of old,
Remembered like a tale that's told,
They pass away.

Our lives are rivers, gliding free
To that unfathomed, boundless sea,
The silent grave!
Thither all earthly pomp and boast
Roll, to be swallowed up and lost
In one dark wave.

Thither the mighty torrents stray,
Thither the brook pursues its way,
And tinkling rill.
There all are equal; side by side
The poor man and the son of pride
Lie calm and still.
I will not here invoke the throng
Of orators and sons of song,
The deathless few;
Fiction entices and deceives,
And, sprinkled o'er her fragrant leaves,
Lies poisonous dew.

To One alone my thoughts arise,
The Eternal Truth, the Good and Wise,
To Him I cry,
Who shared on earth our common lot,
But the world comprehended not
His deity.

This world is but the rugged road
Which leads us to the bright abode
Of peace above;
So let us choose that narrow way,
Which leads no traveller's foot astray
From realms of love.

Our cradle is the starting-place,
Life is the running of the race,
We reach the goal
When, in the mansions of the blest,
Death leaves to its eternal rest
The weary soul.

Did we but use it as we ought,
This world would school each wandering thought
To its high state.
Faith wings the soul beyond the sky,
Up to that better world on high,
For which we wait.
THE GOOD SHEPHERD
FROM THE SPANISH OF LOPE DE VEGA

SHEPHERD! who with thine amorous, sylvan song
Hast broken the slumber that encompassed me,
Who mad'st thy crook from the accursed tree,
On which thy powerful arms were stretched so long!
Lead me to mercy's ever-flowing fountains;
For thou my shepherd, guard, and guide shalt be;
I will obey thy voice, and wait to see
Thy feet all beautiful upon the mountains.

Hear, Shepherd! thou who for thy flock art dying,
O, wash away these scarlet sins, for thou
Rejoicest at the contrite sinner's vow.

O, wait! to thee my weary soul is crying,
Wait for me! Yet why ask it, when I see,
With feet nailed to the cross, thou'rt waiting still for me!

THE GRAVE
FROM THE ANGLO-SAXON

FOR thee was a house built
Ere thou wast born,
For thee was a mould meant
Ere thou of mother camest.
But it is not made ready,
Nor its depth measured,
Nor is it seen
How long it shall be.
Now I bring thee
Where thou shalt be;
Now I shall measure thee,
And the mould afterwards.

Thy house is not
Highly timbered,
It is unhigh and low;
When thou art therein,
The heel-ways are low,
The side-ways unhigh.
The roof is built
Thy breast full nigh,
So thou shalt in mould
Dwell full cold,
Dimly and dark.

Doorless is that house,
And dark it is within;
There thou art fast detained
And Death hath the key.
Loathsome is that earth-house,
And grim within to dwell.
There thou shalt dwell,
And worms shall divide thee.

Thus thou art laid,
And leavest thy friends;
Thou hast no friend,
Who will come to thee,
Who will ever see
How that house pleaseth thee;
Who will ever open
TRANSLATIONS

The door for thee,
And descend after thee;
For soon thou art loathsome
And hateful to see.

BEWARE
FROM THE GERMAN

I KNOW a maiden fair to see,
   Take care!
She can both false and friendly be,
   Beware! Beware!
   Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

She has two eyes, so soft and brown,
   Take care!
She gives a side-glance and looks down,
   Beware! Beware!
   Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

And she has hair of a golden hue,
   Take care!
And what she says, it is not true,
   Beware! Beware!
   Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

She has a bosom as white as snow,
   Take care!
She knows how much it is best to show
   Beware! Beware!
   Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!
She gives thee a garland woven fair,
Take care!
It is a fool's-cap for thee to wear,
Beware! Beware!
Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

THE CASTLE BY THE SEA
FROM THE GERMAN OF UHLAND

'Hast thou seen that lordly castle,
That Castle by the Sea?
Golden and red above it
The clouds float gorgeously.

'And fain it would stoop downward
To the mirrored wave below;
And fain it would soar upward
In the evening's crimson glow.'

'Well have I seen that castle,
That Castle by the Sea,
And the moon above it standing,
And the mist rise solemnly.'

'The winds and the waves of ocean,
Had they a merry chime?
Didst thou hear, from those lofty chambers,
The harp and the minstrel's rhyme?'

'The winds and the waves of ocean,
They rested quietly,
But I heard on the gale a sound of wail,
And tears came to mine eye.'
'And sawest thou on the turrets
   The King and his royal bride?
And the wave of their crimson mantles?
   And the golden crown of pride?

'Led they not forth, in rapture,
   A beauteous maiden there?
Resplendent as the morning sun,
   Beaming with golden hair?'

'Well saw I the ancient parents,
   Without the crown of pride;
They were moving slow, in weeds of woe,
   No maiden was by their side!'

THE BLACK KNIGHT

FROM THE GERMAN OF UHLAND

'TWAS Pentecost, the Feast of Gladness,
   When woods and fields put off all sadness.
   Thus began the King and spake:
'So from the halls
Of ancient Hofburg's walls,
   A luxuriant Spring shall break.'

Drums and trumpets echo loudly,
Wave the crimson banners proudly,
   From balcony the King looked on;
In the play of spears,
Fell all the cavaliers,
   Before the monarch's stalwart son.
To the barrier of the fight
Rode at last a sable Knight.
    ‘Sir Knight! your name and 'scutcheon, say!’
    ‘Should I speak it here,
Ye would stand aghast with fear;
    I am a Prince of mighty sway!’

When he rode into the lists,
The arch of heaven grew black with mists,
    And the castle 'gan to rock;
At the first blow,
Fell the youth from saddle-bow,
    Hardly rises from the shock.

Pipe and viol call the dances,
Torch-light through the high halls glances;
    Waves a mighty shadow in;
With manner bland
Doth ask the maiden's hand,
    Doth with her the dance begin.

Danced in sable iron sark,
Danced a measure weird and dark,
    Coldly clasped her limbs around;
From breast and hair
Down fall from her the fair
    Flowerets, faded, to the ground.

To the sumptuous banquet came
Every Knight and every Dame;
    'Twixt son and daughter all distraught,
With mournful mind
The ancient King reclined,
    Gazed at them in silent thought.
Pale the children both did look,
But the guest a beaker took:

'Golden wine will make you whole!'  
The children drank,
Gave many a courteous thank:

'O, that draught was very cool!'

Each the father's breast embraces,
Son and daughter; and their faces
  Colourless grow utterly;
Whichever way
Looks the fear-struck father gray,
  He beholds his children die.

'Woe! the blessed children both
Takest thou in the joy of youth;
  Take me, too, the joyless father!'
Spake the grim Guest,
From his hollow, cavernous breast;
  'Roses in the spring I gather!'

SONG OF THE SILENT LAND

FROM THE GERMAN OF SALIS

INTO the Silent Land!
  Ah! who shall lead us thither?
Clouds in the evening sky more darkly gather,
And shattered wrecks lie thicker on the strand.
Who leads us with a gentle hand
Thither, O thither,
Into the Silent Land?
Into the Silent Land!
To you, ye boundless regions
Of all perfection! Tender morning visions
Of beauteous souls! The Future's pledge and band!
Who in Life's battle firm doth stand,
Shall bear Hope's tender blossoms.
Into the Silent Land!

O Land! O Land!
For all the broken-hearted
The mildest herald by our fate allotted,
Beckons, and with inverted torch doth stand
To lead us with a gentle hand
To the land of the great Departed,
Into the Silent Land!

THE BOY AND THE BROOK

ARmenian Popular Song, FROM the Prose Version of Alishan

Down from yon distant mountain height
The brooklet flows through the village street;
A boy comes forth to wash his hands,
Washing, yes washing, there he stands,
In the water cool and sweet.

Brook, from what mountain dost thou come?
O my brooklet cool and sweet!
I come from yon mountain high and cold,
Where lieth the new snow on the old,
And melts in the summer heat.
Brook, to what river dost thou go?
    O my brooklet cool and sweet!
I go to the river there below
Where in bunches the violets grow,
    And sun and shadow meet.

Brook, to what garden dost thou go?
    O my brooklet cool and sweet!
I go to the garden in the vale
Where all night long the nightingale
    Her love-song doth repeat.

Brook, to what fountain dost thou go?
    O my brooklet cool and sweet!
I go to the fountain at whose brink
The maid that loves thee comes to drink,
And whenever she looks therein,
I rise to meet her, and kiss her chin,
    And my joy is then complete.
THE SPANISH STUDENT

ACT I

Scene III.—Preciosa’s chamber.

She stands at the open window.

Prec. How slowly through the lilac-scented air
Descends the tranquil moon!
Like thistle-down
The vapoury clouds float in the peaceful sky;
And sweetly from yon hollow vaults of shade
The nightingales breathe out their souls in song.
And hark! what songs of love, what soul-like sounds,
Answer them from below!

Serenade

Stars of the summer night!
Far in yon azure deeps,
Hide, hide your golden light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

Moon of the summer night!
Far down yon western steeps,
Sink, sink in silver light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

186
Wind of the summer night!
    Where yonder woodbine creeps,
Fold, fold thy pinions light!
    She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
    Sleeps!

Dreams of the summer night!
    Tell her, her lover keeps
Watch! while in slumbers light
    She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
    Sleeps!

(Enter Victorian by the balcony.)

Vict. Poor little dove! Thou tremblest like a leaf!
Prec. I am so frightened! 'Tis for thee I tremble!
I hate to have thee climb that wall by night!
Did no one see thee?
Vict. None, my love, but thou.
Prec. 'Tis very dangerous; and when thou art gone
I chide myself for letting thee come here
Thus stealthily by night. Where hast thou been?
Since yesterday I have no news from thee.

Vict. Since yesterday I have been in Alcalá.
Ere long the time will come, sweet Preciosa,
When that dull distance shall no more divide us;
And I no more shall scale thy wall by night
To steal a kiss from thee, as I do now.

Prec. An honest thief, to steal but what thou givest.

Vict. And we shall sit together unmolested,
And words of true love pass from tongue to tongue,
As singing birds from one bough to another.

Prec. That were a life to make time envious!
I knew that thou wouldst come to me to-night.
I saw thee at the play.
Sweet child of air!
Never did I behold thee so attired
And garmented in beauty as to-night!
What hast thou done to make thee look so fair?

**Prec.** Am I not always fair?

**Vikt.** Ay, and so fair
That I am jealous of all eyes that see thee,
And wish that they were blind.

**Prec.** I heed them not;
When thou art present, I see none but thee!

**Vikt.** There's nothing fair nor beautiful, but takes
Something from thee, that makes it beautiful.

**Prec.** And yet thou leavest me for those dusty books.

**Vikt.** Thou comest between me and those books
too often!
I see thy face in everything I see!
The paintings in the chapel wear thy looks,
The canticles are changed to sarabands,
And with the learned doctors of the schools
I see thee dance cachuchas.

**Prec.** In good sooth,
I dance with learned doctors of the schools
To-morrow morning.

**Vikt.** And with whom, I pray?

**Prec.** A grave and reverend Cardinal, and his Grace
The Archbishop of Toledo.

**Vikt.** What mad jest
Is this?

**Prec.** It is no jest; indeed it is not.

**Vikt.** Prithee, explain thyself.

**Prec.** Why, simply thus.
Thou knowest the Pope has sent here into Spain
To put a stop to dances on the stage.
Viet. I have heard it whispered.

Prec. Now the Cardinal
Who for this purpose comes, would fain behold
With his own eyes these dances; and the Archbishop
Has sent for me—

Viet. That thou mayst dance before them!
Now viva la cachucha! It will breathe
The fire of youth into these gray old men!
'Twill be thy proudest conquest!

Prec. Saving one.
And yet I fear these dances will be stopped,
And Preciosa be once more a beggar.

Viet. The sweetest beggar that e'er asked for alms;
With such beseeching eyes, that when I saw thee
I gave my heart away!

Prec. Dost thou remember
When first we met?

Viet. It was at Córdova,
In the cathedral garden. Thou wast sitting
Under the orange-trees, beside a fountain.

Prec. 'Twas Easter-Sunday. The full-blossomed
    trees
Filled all the air with fragrance and with joy.
The priests were singing, and the organ sounded,
And then anon the great cathedral bell.
It was the elevation of the Host.
We both of us fell down upon our knees,
Under the orange-boughs, and prayed together.
I never had been happy till that moment.

Viet. Thou blessed angel!

Prec. And when thou wast gone
I felt an aching here. I did not speak
To any one that day. But from that day
Bartolomé grew hateful unto me.

**Vict.** Remember him no more. Let not his shadow Come between thee and me. Sweet Preciosa!
I loved thee even then, though I was silent!

**Prec.** I thought I ne’er should see thy face again.
Thy farewell had a sound of sorrow in it.

**Vict.** That was the first sound in the song of love!
Scarce more than silence is, and yet a sound.
Hands of invisible spirits touch the strings
Of that mysterious instrument, the soul,
And play the prelude of our fate. We hear
The voice prophetic, and are not alone.

**Prec.** That is my faith. Dost thou believe these warnings?

**Vict.** So far as this. Our feelings and our thoughts
Tend ever on, and rest not in the Present.
As drops of rain fall into some dark well,
And from below comes a scarce audible sound,
So fall our thoughts into the dark Hereafter,
And their mysterious echo reaches us.

**Prec.** I have felt it so, but found no words to say it!
I cannot reason; I can only feel!
But thou hast language for all thoughts and feelings.
Thou art a scholar; and sometimes I think
We cannot walk together in this world!
The distance that divides us is too great!
Henceforth thy pathway lies among the stars;
I must not hold thee back.

**Vict.** Thou little sceptic!
Dost thou still doubt? What I most prize in woman
Is her affections, not her intellect!
The intellect is finite; but the affections
Are infinite, and cannot be exhausted.
Compare me with the great men of the earth;  
What am I? Why, a pigmy among giants!  
But if thou lovest,—mark me! I say lovest,—  
The greatest of thy sex excels thee not!  
The world of the affections is thy world,  
Not that of man's ambition. In that stillness  
Which most becomes a woman, calm and holy,  
Thou sittest by the fireside of the heart,  
Feeding its flame. The element of fire  
Is pure. It cannot change nor hide its nature,  
But burns as brightly in a Gipsy camp  
As in a palace hall. Art thou convinced?  

Prec. Yes, that I love thee, as the good love  
heaven;  
But not that I am worthy of that heaven.  
How shall I more deserve it?  

Vict. Loving more.  
Prec. I cannot love thee more; my heart is full.  

Vict. Then let it overflow, and I will drink it,  
As in the summer-time the thirsty sands  
Drink the swift waters of the Manzanares,  
And still do thirst for more.  

A Watchman (in the street). Ave Maria  
Purissima! 'Tis midnight and serene!  

Vict. Hear'st thou that cry?  

Prec. It is a hateful sound,  
To scare thee from me!  

Vict. As the hunter's horn  
Doth scare the timid stag, or bark of hounds  
The moor-fowl from his mate.  

Prec. Pray, do not go!  

Vict. I must away to Alcalà to-night.  
Think of me when I am away.
Prec.  
Fear not!
I have no thoughts that do not think of thee.

Vict. (giving her a ring).  And to remind thee of my love, take this,
A serpent, emblem of Eternity;
A ruby,—say, a drop of my heart's blood.

Prec. It is an ancient saying, that the ruby Brings gladness to the wearer, and preserves The heart pure, and, if laid beneath the pillow, Drives away evil dreams.  But then, alas!
It was a serpent tempted Eve to sin.

Vict. What convent of bare-footed Carmelites Taught thee so much theology?

Prec. (laying her hand upon his mouth).  Hush! hush!
Good night! and may all holy angels guard thee!

Vict. Good night! good night! Thou art my guardian angel!
I have no other saint than thou to pray to!

(He descends by the balcony.)

Prec. Take care, and do not hurt thee.  Art thou safe?

Vict. (from the garden).  Safe as my love for thee!  But art thou safe?

Others can climb a balcony by moonlight
As well as I.  Pray shut thy window close;
I am jealous of the perfumed air of night
That from this garden climbs to kiss thy lips.

Prec. (throwing down her handkerchief).  Thou silly child!  Take this to blind thine eyes.
It is my benison!

Vict.  And brings to me
VICTORIAN. Good night! good night!
Thou art my guardian angel!
(The Spanish Student.)
Sweet fragrance from thy lips, as the soft wind
Wafts to the out-bound mariner the breath
Of the belovèd land he leaves behind.

_Prec._ Make not thy voyage long.

_Vict._

To-morrow night
Shall see me safe returned. Thou art the star
To guide me to an anchorage. Good night!
My beauteous star! My star of love, good night!

_Prec._ Good night!

_Watchman (at a distance)._ Ave Maria Purissima!

**Scene V**

_Vict._

Good night!

But not to bed; for I must read awhile.

(Throwing himself into the arm-chair which Hypolito has left, and lays a large book open upon his knees.)

Must read, or sit in reverie and watch
The changing colour of the waves that break
Upon the idle sea-shore of the mind!
Visions of Fame! that once did visit me,
Making night glorious with your smile, where are ye?
O, who shall give me, now that ye are gone
Juices of those immortal plants that bloom
Upon Olympus, making us immortal?
Or teach me where that wondrous mandrake grows,
Whose magic root, torn from the earth with groans
At midnight hour, can scare the fiends away,
And make the mind prolific in its fancies!
I have the wish, but want the will, to act!
Souls of great men departed! Ye whose words
Have come to light from the swift river of Time,
Like Roman swords found in the Tagus' bed,
Where is the strength to wield the arms ye bore?
From the barred visor of Antiquity
Reflected shines the eternal light of Truth,
As from a mirror! All the means of action—
The shapeless masses, the materials—
Lie everywhere about us. What we need
Is the celestial fire to change the flint
Into transparent crystal, bright and clear.
That fire is genius! The rude peasant sits
At evening in his smoky cot, and draws
With charcoal uncouth figures on the wall.
The son of genius comes, foot-sore with travel,
And begs a shelter from the inclement night.
He takes the charcoal from the peasant's hand,
And, by the magic of his touch at once
Transfigured, all its hidden virtues shine,
And, in the eyes of the astonished clown
It gleams a diamond! Even thus transformed
Rude popular traditions and old tales
Shine as immortal poems, at the touch
Of some poor, houseless, homeless, wandering bard,
Who had but a night's lodging for his pains.
But there are brighter dreams than those of Fame,
Which are the dreams of Love! Out of the heart
Rises the bright ideal of these dreams,
As from some woodland fount a spirit rises
And sinks again into its silent deeps
Ere the enamoured knight can touch her robe!
'Tis this ideal that the soul of man,
Like the enamoured knight beside the fountain,
Waits for upon the margin of Life's stream;
Waits to behold her rise from the dark waters
Clad in a mortal shape! Alas! how many
Must wait in vain! The stream flows evermore,
But from its silent deeps no spirit rises!
Yet I, born under a propitious star,
Have found the bright ideal of my dreams.
Yes! she is ever with me. I can feel,
Here, as I sit at midnight and alone,
Her gentle breathing! on my breast can feel
The pressure of her head! God's benison
Rest ever on it! Close those beauteous eyes,
Sweet Sleep! and all the flowers that bloom at night
With balmy lips breathe in her ears my name!

(Gradually sinks asleep.)
EVANGELINE
A TALE OF ACADIE

This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighbouring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the huntsman?
Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian farmers,—
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the woodlands,
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven?
Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers for ever departed!
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts of October
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far o’er the ocean;
Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures, and is patient,
Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman’s devotion,
List to the mournful tradition still sung by the pines of the forest;
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the happy.

PART THE FIRST

In the Acadian land, on the shores of the Basin of Minas,
Distant, secluded, still, the little village of Grand Pré
Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows stretched to the eastward,
Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks without number.
Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised with labour incessant,
Shut out the turbulent tides; but at stated seasons the flood-gates
Opened, and welcomed the sea to wander at will o’er the meadows.
West and south there were fields of flax, and orchards
and cornfields
Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain; and away
to the northward
Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and aloft on the
mountains
Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from the mighty
Atlantic
Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from their
station descended.
There, in the midst of its farms, reposed the Acadian
village.
Strongly built were the houses, with frames of oak
and of hemlock,
Such as the peasants of Normandy built in the reign
of the Henries.
Thatched were the roofs, with dormer-windows; and
gables projecting
Over the basement below protected and shaded the
doors.
There in the tranquil evenings of summer, when
brightly the sunset
Lighted the village street and gilded the vanes on the
chimneys,
Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white caps and in
kirtles
Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs spinning the
golden
Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy shuttles
within doors
Mingled their sound with the whir of the wheels and
the songs of the maidens.
Solemnly down the street came the parish priest, and
the children
Paused in their play to kiss the hand he extended to bless them.
Reverend walked he among them; and up rose matrons and maidens,
Hailing his slow approach with words of affectionate welcome.
Then came the labourers home from the field, and serenely the sun sank
Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed. Anon from the belfry
Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the roofs of the village
Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of incense ascending,
Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes of peace and contentment.
Thus dwelt together in love these simple Acadian farmers,—
Dwelt in the love of God and of man. Alike were they free from
Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy, the vice of republics.
Neither locks had they to their doors, nor bars to their windows;
But their dwellings were open as day and the hearts of their owners;
There the richest was poor, and the poorest lived in abundance.

EVIL TIDINGS

MEANWHILE had spread in the village the tidings of ill, and on all sides
Wandered, wailing, from house to house the women and children.
Long at her father's door Evangeline stood, with her right hand
Shielding her eyes from the level rays of the sun, that, descending,
Lighted the village street with mysterious splendour, and roofed each
Peasant's cottage with golden thatch, and emblazoned its windows.
Long within had been spread the snow-white cloth on the table;
There stood the wheaten loaf, and the honey fragrant with wild-flowers;
There stood the tankard of ale, and the cheese fresh brought from the dairy;
And, at the head of the board, the great arm-chair of the farmer.
Thus did Evangeline wait at her father's door, as the sunset
Threw the long shadows of trees o'er the broad ambrosial meadows.
Ah! on her spirit within a deeper shadow had fallen,
And from the fields of her soul a fragrance celestial ascended,—
Charity, meekness, love, and hope, and forgiveness, and patience!
Then, all-forgetful of self, she wandered into the village,
Cheering with looks and words the mournful hearts of the women,
As o'er the darkening fields with lingering steps they departed,
Urged by their household cares, and the weary feet of their children.
Long at her father's door Evangeline stood

(Evangeline.)
Down sank the great red sun, and in golden, glistening vapours
Veiled the light of his face, like the Prophet descending from Sinai.
Sweetly over the village the bell of the Angelus sounded.

Meanwhile, amid the gloom, by the church Evangeline lingered.
All was silent within; and in vain at the door and the windows
Stood she, and listened and looked, till, overcome by emotion,
'Gabriel!' cried she aloud with tremulous voice; but no answer
Came from the graves of the dead, nor the gloomier grave of the living.
Slowly at length she returned to the tenantless house of her father.
Smouldered the fire on the hearth, on the board was the supper untasted,
Empty and drear was each room, and haunted with phantoms of terror.
Sadly echoed her step on the stair and the floor of her chamber.
In the dead of the night she heard the disconsolate rain fall
Loud on the withered leaves of the sycamore-tree by the window.
Keenly the lightning flashed; and the voice of the echoing thunder
Told her that God was in heaven, and governed the world He created!
Then she remembered the tale she had heard of the justice of Heaven;
Soothed was her troubled soul, and she peacefully slumbered till morning.

THE BAYOUS

It was the month of May. Far down the Beautiful River,
Past the Ohio shore and past the mouth of the Wabash,
Into the golden stream of the broad and swift Mississippi,
Floated a cumbrous boat, that was rowed by Acadian boatmen.
It was a band of exiles: a raft, as it were, from the shipwrecked Nation, scattered along the coast, now floating together,
Bound by the bonds of a common belief and a common misfortune;
Men and women and children, who, guided by hope or by hearsay,
Sought for their kith and their kin among the few-acred farmers
On the Acadian coast, and the prairies of fair Opelousas.
With them Evangeline went, and her guide, the Father Felician.
Onward o'er sunken sands, through a wilderness sombre with forests,
Day after day they glided adown the turbulent river;
Night after night, by their blazing fires, encamped on its borders.
Now through rushing chutes, among green islands, where plumelike
Cotton-trees nodded their shadowy crests, they swept with the current,
Then emerged into broad lagoons, where silvery sand-bars
Lay in the stream, and along the wimpling waves of their margin,
Shining with snow-white plumes, large flocks of pelicans waded.
Level the landscape grew, and along the shores of the river,
Shaded by china-trees, in the midst of luxuriant gardens,
Stood the houses of planters, with negro-cabins and dove-cots.
They were approaching the region where reigns perpetual summer,
Where through the Golden Coast, and groves of orange and citron,
Sweeps with majestic curve the river away to the eastward.
They, too, swerved from their course; and, entering the Bayou of Plaquemine,
Soon were lost in a maze of sluggish and devious waters,
Which, like a network of steel, extended in every direction.
Over their heads the towering and tenebrous boughs of the cypress
Met in a dusky arch, and trailing mosses in mid-air
Waved like banners that hang on the walls of ancient cathedrals.

Deathlike the silence seemed, and unbroken, save by the herons

Home to their roosts in the cedar-trees returning at sunset,

Or by the owl, as he greeted the moon with demoniac laughter.

Lovely the moonlight was as it glanced and gleamed on the water,

Gleamed on the columns of cypress and cedar sustaining the arches,

Down through whose broken vaults it fell as through chinks in a ruin.

Dreamlike, and indistinct, and strange were all things around them;

And o'er their spirits there came a feeling of wonder and sadness,—

Strange forebodings of ill, unseen and that cannot be compassed.

As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the turf of the prairies,

Far in advance are closed the leaves of the shrinking mimosa,

So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings of evil,

Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke of doom has attained it.

But Evangeline's heart was sustained by a vision, that faintly

Floated before her eyes, and beckoned her on through the moonlight.

It was the thought of her brain that assumed the shape of a phantom.
Through those shadowy aisles had Gabriel wandered before her,
And every stroke of the oar now brought him nearer and nearer.

Then in his place, at the prow of the boat, rose one of the oarsmen,
And, as a signal sound, if others like them peradventure
Sailed on those gloomy and midnight streams, blew a blast on his bugle.
Wild through the dark colonnades and corridors leafy the blast rang,
Breaking the seal of silence, and giving tongues to the forest.
Soundless above them the banners of moss just stirred to the music.
Multitudinous echoes awoke and died in the distance,
Over the watery floor, and beneath the reverberant branches:
But not a voice replied; no answer came from the darkness;
And, when the echoes had ceased, like a sense of pain was the silence.
Then Evangeline slept; but the boatmen rowed through the midnight,
Silent at times, then singing familiar Canadian boat-songs,
Such as they sang of old on their own Acadian rivers,
While through the night were heard the mysterious sounds of the desert,
Far off,—indistinct,—as of wave or wind in the forest,
Mixed with the whoop of the crane and the roar of the grim alligator.
Thus ere another noon they emerged from the shades; and before them
Lay, in the golden sun, the lakes of the Atchafalaya.
Water-lilies in myriads rocked on the slight undulations
Made by the passing oars, and, resplendent in beauty, the lotus
Lifted her golden crown above the heads of the boatmen.
Faint was the air with the odorous breath of magnolia blossoms,
And with the heat of noon; and numberless sylvan islands,
Fragrant and thickly embowered with blossoming hedges of roses,
Near to whose shores they glided along, invited to slumber.
Soon by the fairest of these their weary oars were suspended.
Under the boughs of Wachita willows, that grew by the margin,
 Safely their boat was moored; and scattered about on the greensward,
 Tired with their midnight toil, the weary travellers slumbered.
Over them vast and high extended the cope of a cedar.
Swinging from its great arms, the trumpet-flower and the grape-vine
Hung their ladder of ropes aloft like the ladder of Jacob,
On whose pendulous stairs the angels ascending, descending,
Were the swift humming-birds, that flitted from blossom to blossom.
Such was the vision Evangeline saw as she slumbered beneath it.
Filled was her heart with love, and the dawn of an opening heaven
Lighted her soul in sleep with the glory of regions celestial.

THE DESERT

Far in the West there lies a desert land, where the mountains
Lift, through perpetual snows, their lofty and luminous summits.
Down from their jagged, deep ravines, where the gorge, like a gateway,
Opens a passage rude to the wheels of the emigrant's wagon,
Westward the Oregon flows and the Walleway and Owyhee.
Eastward, with devious course, among the Wind-river Mountains,
Through the Sweet-water Valley precipitate leaps the Nebraska;
And to the south, from Fontaine-qui-bout and the Spanish sierras,
Fretted with sands and rocks, and swept by the wind of the desert,
Numberless torrents, with ceaseless sound, descend to the ocean,
Like the great chords of a harp, in loud and solemn vibrations.
Spreading between these streams are the wondrous, beautiful prairies,
Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in shadow and sunshine,
Bright with luxuriant clusters of roses and purple amorphas.
Over them wandered the buffalo herds, and the elk and the roebuck;
Over them wandered the wolves, and herds of riderless horses;
Fires that blast and blight, and winds that are weary with travel;
Over them wander the scattered tribes of Ishmael's children,
Staining the desert with blood; and above their terrible war-trails
Circles and sails aloft, on pinions majestic, the vulture,
Like the implacable soul of a chieftain slaughtered in battle,
By invisible stairs ascending and scaling the heavens.
Here and there rise smokes from the camps of these savage marauders;
Here and there rise groves from the margins of swift-running rivers;
And the grim, taciturn bear, the anchorite monk of the desert,
Climbs down their dark ravines to dig for roots by the brook-side,
And over all is the sky, the clear and crystalline heaven,
Like the protecting hand of God inverted above them.
Into this wonderful land, at the base of the Ozark Mountains,
Gabriel far had entered, with hunters and trappers behind him.
Day after day, with their Indian guides, the maiden and Basil
Followed his flying steps, and thought each day to o’ertake him.
Sometimes they saw, or thought they saw, the smoke of his camp-fire
Rise in the morning air from the distant plain; but at nightfall,
When they had reached the place, they found only embers and ashes.
And, though their hearts were sad at times and their bodies were weary,
Hope still guided them on, as the magic Fata Morgana
Showed them her lakes of light, that retreated and vanished before them.

IN THE HOSPITAL

Thus, on a Sabbath morn, through the streets deserted and silent,
Wending her quiet way, she entered the door of the almshouse.
Sweet on the summer air was the odour of flowers in the garden;
And she paused on her way to gather the fairest among them,
That the dying once more might rejoice in their fragrance and beauty.
Then, as she mounted the stairs to the corridors, cooled by the east wind,
Distant and soft on her ear fell the chimes from the belfry of Christ Church,
While, intermingled with these, across the meadows were wafted
Sounds of psalms, that were sung by the Swedes in their church at Wicaco.
Soft as descending wings fell the calm of the hour on her spirit;
Something within her said, 'At length thy trials are ended';
And, with light in her looks, she entered the chambers of sickness.
Noiselessly moved about the assiduous, careful attendants,
Moistening the feverish lip, and the aching brow, and in silence
Closing the sightless eyes of the dead, and concealing their faces,
Where on their pallets they lay, like drifts of snow by the roadside.
Many a languid head, upraised as Evangeline entered,
Turned on its pillow of pain to gaze while she passed, for her presence
Fell on their hearts like a ray of the sun on the walls of a prison.
And, as she looked around, she saw how Death, the consoler,
Laying his hand upon many a heart, had healed it for ever.
Many familiar forms had disappeared in the night time; Vacant their places were, or filled already by strangers.
Suddenly, as if arrested by fear or a feeling of wonder,
Still she stood, with her colourless lips apart, while a shudder
Ran through her frame, and, forgotten, the flowerets dropped from her fingers,
And from her eyes and cheeks the light and bloom of the morning.
Then there escaped from her lips a cry of such terrible anguish,
That the dying heard it, and started up from their pillows.
On the pallet before her was stretched the form of an old man.
Long, and thin, and gray were the locks that shaded his temples;
But, as he lay in the morning light, his face for a moment
Seemed to assume once more the forms of its earlier manhood;
So are wont to be changed the faces of those who are dying.
Hot and red on his lips still burned the flush of the fever,
As if life, like the Hebrew, with blood had besprinkled its portals,
That the Angel of Death might see the sign, and pass over.
Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay, and his spirit exhausted
Seemed to be sinking down through infinite depths in the darkness,
Darkness of slumber and death, for ever sinking and sinking.
Then through those realms of shade, in multiplied reverberations,
Heard he that cry of pain, and through the hush that succeeded
Whispered a gentle voice, in accents tender and saint-like,
‘Gabriel! O my beloved!’ and died away into silence.
Then he beheld, in a dream, once more the home of his childhood;
Green Acadian meadows, with sylvan rivers among them,
Village, and mountain, and woodlands; and, walking under their shadow,
As in the days of her youth, Evangeline rose in his vision.
Tears came into his eyes; and as slowly he lifted his eyelids,
Vanished the vision away, but Evangeline knelt by his bedside.
Vainly he strove to whisper her name, for the accents unuttered
Died on his lips, and their motion revealed what his tongue would have spoken.
Vainly he strove to rise; and Evangeline, kneeling beside him,
Kissed his dying lips, and laid his head on her bosom.
Sweet was the light of his eyes; but it suddenly sank into darkness,
As when a lamp is blown out by a gust of wind at a casement.

All was ended now,—the hope, and the fear, and the sorrow,
All the aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied longing,
All the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish of patience!
And, as she pressed once more the lifeless head to her bosom,
Meekly she bowed her own, and murmured, 'Father, I thank thee!'

Still stands the forest primeval; but far away from its shadow,
Side by side, in their nameless graves, the lovers are sleeping.
Under the humble walls of the little Catholic churchyard,
In the heart of the city, they lie, unknown and unnoticed.
Daily the tides of life go ebbing and flowing beside them,—
Thousands of throbbing hearts, where theirs are at rest and for ever,
Thousands of aching brains, where theirs no longer are busy,
Thousands of toiling hands, where theirs have ceased from their labours,
Thousands of weary feet, where theirs have completed their journey!

Still stands the forest primeval; but under the shade of its branches
Dwells another race, with other customs and language.
Only along the shore of the mournful and misty Atlantic
Linger a few Acadian peasants, whose fathers from exile
Wandered back to their native land to die in its bosom.
In the fisherman's cot the wheel and the loom are still busy;
Maidens still wear their Norman caps and their kirtles of homespun,
And by the evening fire repeat Evangeline's story,
While from its rocky caverns the deep-voiced, neighbouring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.
THE SONG OF HIAWATHA

THE PEACE-PIPE

ON the Mountains of the Prairie,
On the great Red Pipe-stone Quarry,
Gitche Manito, the mighty,
He the Master of Life, descending,
On the red crags of the quarry
Stood erect, and called the nations,
Called the tribes of men together.

From his footprints flowed a river,
Leaped into the light of morning,
O'er the precipice plunging downward
Gleamed like Ishkoodah, the comet.
And the Spirit, stooping earthward,
With his finger on the meadow
Traced a winding pathway for it,
Saying to it, 'Run in this way!'

From the red stone of the quarry
With his hand he broke a fragment,
Moulded it into a pipe-head,
Shaped and fashioned it with figures;
From the margin of the river
Took a long reed for a pipe-stem,
With its dark green leaves upon it;
Filled the pipe with bark of willow,
With the bark of the red willow;
Breathed upon the neighbouring forest,
Made its great boughs chafe together,
Till in flame they burst and kindled;
And erect upon the mountains,
Gitche Manito, the mighty,
Smoked the calumet, the Peace-Pipe,
As a signal to the nations.

And the smoke rose slowly, slowly,
Through the tranquil air of morning,—
First a single line of darkness,
Then a denser, bluer vapour,
Then a snow-white cloud unfolding,
Like the tree-tops of the forest
Ever rising, rising, rising,
Till it touched the top of heaven,
Till it broke against the heaven,
And rolled outward all around it.
From the Vale of Tawasentha,
From the Valley of Wyoming,
From the groves of Tuscaloosa,
From the far-off Rocky Mountains,
From the Northern lakes and rivers
All the tribes beheld the signal,
Saw the distant smoke ascending,
The Pukwana of the Peace-Pipe.

And the Prophets of the nations
Said: 'Behold it, the Pukwana!
By this signal from afar off,
Bending like a wand of willow,
Waving like a hand that beckons,
Gitche Manito, the mighty,
Calls the tribes of men together,
Calls the warriors to his council!'
Down the rivers, o'er the prairies,
Came the warriors of the nations,
Came the Delawares and Mohawks,
Came the Choctaws and Camanches,
Came the Shoshonies and Blackfeet,
Came the Pawnees and Omahas,
Came the Mandans and Dacotahs,
Came the Hurons and Ojibways,
All the warriors drawn together
By the signal of the Peace-Pipe,
To the Mountains of the Prairie,
To the great red Pipe-stone Quarry.

And they stood there on the meadow,
With their weapons and their war-gear,
Painted like the leaves of Autumn,
Painted like the sky of morning,
Wildly glaring at each other;
In their faces stern defiance,
In their hearts the feuds of ages,
The hereditary hatred,
The ancestral thirst of vengeance.

Gitche Manito, the mighty,
The creator of the nations,
Looked upon them with compassion,
With paternal love and pity;
Looked upon their wrath and wrangling
But as quarrels among children,
But as feuds and fights of children!

Over them he stretched his right hand,
To subdue their stubborn natures,
To allay their thirst and fever,
By the shadow of his right hand;
Spake to them with voice majestic
As the sound of far-off waters,
Falling into deep abysses,
Warning, chiding, spake in this wise;—
'O my children! my poor children!
Listen to the words of wisdom,
Listen to the words of warning,
From the lips of the Great Spirit,
From the Master of Life, who made you.
'I have given you lands to hunt in,
I have given you streams to fish in,
I have given you bear and bison,
I have given you roe and reindeer,
I have given you brant and beaver,
Filled the marshes full of wild-fowl,
Filled the rivers full of fishes;
Why then are you not contented?
Why then will you hunt each other?
'I am weary of your quarrels,
Weary of your wars and bloodshed,
Weary of your prayers for vengeance,
Of your wranglings and dissensions;
All your strength is in your union,
All your danger is in discord;
Therefore be at peace henceforward,
And as brothers live together.
'I will send a Prophet to you,
A Deliverer of the nations,
Who shall guide you and shall teach you,
Who shall toil and suffer with you.
If you listen to his counsels,
You will multiply and prosper;
If his warnings pass unheeded,
You will fade away and perish!
'Bathe now in the stream before you,
Wash the war-paint from your faces,
Wash the blood-stains from your fingers,
Bury your war-clubs and your weapons,
Break the red stone from this quarry,
Mould and make it into Peace-Pipes,
Take the reeds that grow beside you,
Deck them with your brightest feathers,
Smoke the calumet together,
And as brothers live henceforward!'

Then upon the ground the warriors
Threw their cloaks and shirts of deerskin,
Threw their weapons and their war-gear,
Leaped into the rushing river,
Washed the war-paint from their faces.
Clear above them flowed the water,
Clear and limpid from the footprints
Of the Master of Life descending;
Dark below them flowed the water,
Soiled and stained with streaks of crimson,
As if blood were mingled with it!

From the river came the warriors,
Clean and washed from all their war-paint;
On the banks their clubs they buried,
Buried all their warlike weapons.
Gitche Manito, the mighty,
The Great Spirit, the creator,
Smiled upon his helpless children!

And in silence all the warriors
Broke the red stone of the quarry,
Smoothed and formed it into Peace-Pipes,
Broke the long reeds by the river,
Decked them with their brightest feathers,
And departed each one homeward,
While the Master of Life, ascending,
Through the opening of cloud-curtains,
Through the doorways of the heaven,
Vanished from before their faces,
In the smoke that rolled around him,
The Pukwana of the Peace-Pipe!

HIAWATHA AND MUDJEKEEWIS

OUT of childhood into manhood
Now had grown my Hiawatha,
Skilled in all the craft of hunters,
Learned in all the lore of old men,
In all youthful sports and pastimes,
In all manly arts and labours.
Swift of foot was Hiawatha;
He could shoot an arrow from him,
And run forward with such fleetness,
That the arrow fell behind him!
Strong of arm was Hiawatha;
He could shoot ten arrows upward,
Shoot them with such strength and swiftness,
That the tenth had left the bowstring
Ere the first to earth had fallen!

He had mittens, Minjekahwun,
Magic mittens made of deerskin;
When upon his hands he wore them,
He could smite the rocks asunder,
He could grind them into powder.
He had moccasins enchanted,
Magic moccasins of deerskin;
When he bound them round his ankles,
When upon his feet he tied them,
At each stride a mile he measured!

Much he questioned old Nokomis
Of his father Mudjekeewis;
Learned from her the fatal secret
Of the beauty of his mother,
Of the falsehood of his father;
And his heart was hot within him,
Like a living coal his heart was.

Then he said to old Nokomis,
'I will go to Mudjekeewis,
See how fares it with my father,
At the doorways of the West-Wind,
At the portals of the Sunset!'

From his lodge went Hiawatha,
Dressed for travel, armed for hunting;
Dressed in deerskin shirt and leggings,
Richly wrought with quills and wampum;
On his head his eagle-feathers,
Round his waist his belt of wampum,
In his hand his bow of ash-wood,
Strung with sinews of the reindeer;
In his quiver oaken arrows,
Tipped with jasper, winged with feathers;
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,
With his moccasins enchanted.

Warning said the old Nokomis,
'Go not forth, O Hiawatha!
To the kingdom of the West-Wind,
To the realms of Mudjekeewis,
Lest he harm you with his magic,
Lest he kill you with his cunning!'

But the fearless Hiawatha
Heeded not her woman's warning;
Forth he strode into the forest,
At each stride a mile he measured;
Lurid seemed the sky above him,
Lurid seemed the earth beneath him,
Hot and close the air around him,
Filled with smoke and fiery vapours,
As of burning woods and prairies,
For his heart was hot within him,
Like a living coal his heart was.

So he journeyed westward, westward,
Left the fleetest deer behind him,
Left the antelope and bison;
Crossed the rushing Esconaba,
Crossed the mighty Mississippi,
Passed the Mountains of the Prairie,
Passed the land of Crows and Foxes,
Passed the dwellings of the Blackfeet,
Came unto the Rocky Mountains,
To the kingdom of the West-Wind,
Where upon the gusty summits
Sat the ancient Mudjekeewis,
Ruler of the winds of heaven.

Filled with awe was Hiawatha
At the aspect of his father.
On the air about him wildly
Tossed and streamed his cloudy tresses,
Gleamed like drifting snow his tresses,
Glared like Ishkoodah, the comet,
Like the star with fiery tresses.

Filled with joy was Mudjekeewis
When he looked on Hiawatha,
Saw his youth rise up before him.
In the face of Hiawatha,
Saw the beauty of Wenonah
From the grave rise up before him.

'Welcome!' said he, 'Hiawatha,
To the kingdom of the West-Wind!
Long have I been waiting for you!
Youth is lovely, age is lonely,
Youth is fiery, age is frosty;
You bring back the days departed,
You bring back my youth of passion,
And the beautiful Wenonah!'

Many days they talked together,
Questioned, listened, waited, answered;
Much the mighty Mudjekeewis
Boasted of his ancient prowess,
Of his perilous adventures,
His indomitable courage,
His invulnerable body.

Patiently sat Hiawatha,
Listening to his father's boasting;
With a smile he sat and listened,
Uttered neither threat nor menace,
Neither word nor look betrayed him;
But his heart was hot within him,
Like a living coal his heart was.

Then he said, 'O Mudjekeewis,
Is there nothing that can harm you?
Nothing that you are afraid of?'
And the mighty Mudjekeewis,
Grand and gracious in his boasting,
Answered, saying, 'There is nothing,
Nothing but the black rock yonder,
Nothing but the fatal Wawbeek!'
And he looked at Hiawatha
With a wise look and benignant,
With a countenance paternal,
Looked with pride upon the beauty
Of his tall and graceful figure,
Saying, 'O my Hiawatha!
Is there anything can harm you?
Anything you are afraid of?'

But the wary Hiawatha
Paused awhile, as if uncertain,
Held his peace, as if resolving,
And then answered, 'There is nothing,
Nothing but the bulrush yonder,
Nothing but the great Apukwa!'

And as Mudjekeewis, rising,
Stretched his hand to pluck the bulrush,
Hiawatha cried in terror,
Cried in well-dissembled terror,
'Kago! kago! do not touch it!'
'Ah, kaween!' said Mudjekeewis,
'No indeed, I will not touch it!'

Then they talked of other matters;
First of Hiawatha's brothers,
First of Wabun, of the East-Wind,
Of the South-Wind, Shawondasee,
Of the North, Kabibonokka;
Then of Hiawatha's mother,
Of the beautiful Wenonah,
Of her birth upon the meadow,
Of her death, as old Nokomis
Had remembered and related.

And he cried, 'O Mudjekeewis,
It was you who killed Wenonah,
Took her young life and her beauty,
Broke the Lily of the Prairie,
Trampled it beneath your footsteps;
You confess it! you confess it!
And the mighty Mudjekeewis
Tossed upon the wind his tresses,
Bowed his hoary head in anguish,
With a silent nod assented.

Then upstarted Hiawatha,
And with threatening look and gesture
Laid his hand upon the black rock,
On the fatal Wawbeek laid it,
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,
Rent the jutting crag asunder,
Smote and crushed it into fragments,
Hurled them madly at his father,
The remorseful Mudjekeewis;
For his heart was hot within him,
Like a living coal his heart was.

But the ruler of the West-Wind
Blew the fragments backward from him,
With the breathing of his nostrils,
With the tempest of his anger,
Blew them back at his assailant;
Seized the bulrush, the Apukwa,
Dragged it with its roots and fibres
From the margin of the meadow,
From its ooze, the giant bulrush;
Long and loud laughed Hiawatha!

Then began the deadly conflict,
Hand to hand among the mountains;
From his eyrie screamed the eagle,
The Keneu, the great war-eagle;
Sat upon the crags around them,
Wheeling flapped his wings above them.
   Like a tall tree in the tempest
Bent and lashed the giant bulrush;
And in masses huge and heavy
Crashing fell the fatal Wawbeek;
Till the earth shook with the tumult
And confusion of the battle,
And the air was full of shoutings,
And the thunder of the mountains,
Starting, answered, 'Baim-wawa!'

Back retreated Mudjekeewis,
Rushing westward o'er the mountains,
Stumbling westward down the mountains,
Three whole days retreated fighting,
Still pursued by Hiawatha
To the doorways of the West-Wind,
To the portals of the Sunset,
To the earth's remotest border,
Where into the empty spaces
Sinks the sun, as a flamingo
Drops into her nest at nightfall,
In the melancholy marshes.

'Hold!' at length cried Mudjekeewis,
'Hold, my son, my Hiawatha!
'Tis impossible to kill me,
For you cannot kill the immortal.
I have put you to this trial,
But to know and prove your courage;
Now receive the prize of valour!

'Go back to your home and people,
Live among them, toil among them,
Cleanse the earth from all that harms it,
Clear the fishing-grounds and rivers,
Slay all monsters and magicians,
All the Wendigoes, the giants,
All the serpents, the Kenabeeks,
As I slew the Mishe-Mokwa,
Slew the Great Bear of the mountains.

‘And at last when Death draws near you,
When the awful eyes of Pauguk
Glare upon you in the darkness,
I will share my kingdom with you;
Ruler shall you be thenceforward
Of the Northwest-Wind, Keewaydin,
Of the home-wind, the Keewaydin.’

Thus was fought that famous battle
In the dreadful days of Shah-shah,
In the days long since departed,
In the kingdom of the West-Wind.
Still the hunter sees its traces
Scattered far o'er hill and valley;
Sees the giant bulrush growing
By the ponds and water-courses,
Sees the masses of the Wawbeek
Lying still in every valley.

Homeward now went Hiawatha;
Pleasant was the landscape round him,
Pleasant was the air above him,
For the bitterness of anger
Had departed wholly from him,
From his brain the thought of vengeance,
From his heart the burning fever.

Only once his pace he slackened,
Only once he paused or halted,
Paused to purchase heads of arrows
Of the ancient Arrow-maker,
In the land of the Dacotahs,
Where the Falls of Minnehaha
Flash and gleam among the oak-trees,
Laugh and leap into the valley.

There the ancient Arrow-maker
Made his arrow-heads of sandstone,
Arrow-heads of chalcedony,
Arrow-heads of flint and jasper,
Smoothed and sharpened at the edges,
Hard and polished, keen and costly.

With him dwelt his dark-eyed daughter,
Wayward as the Minnehaha,
With her moods of shade and sunshine,
Eyes that smiled and frowned alternate,
Feet as rapid as the river,
Tresses flowing like the water,
And as musical a laughter;
And he named her from the river,
From the waterfall he named her,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water.

Was it then for heads of arrows,
Arrow-heads of chalcedony,
Arrow-heads of flint and jasper,
That my Hiawatha halted
In the land of the Dacotahs?

Was it not to see the maiden,
See the face of Laughing Water
Peeping from behind the curtain,
Hear the rustling of her garments
From behind the waving curtain,
As one sees the Minnehaha
Gleaming, glancing through the branches,
As one hears the Laughing Water
From behind its screen of branches?

Who shall say what thoughts and visions
Fill the fiery brains of young men?
THE SONG OF HIAWATHA

Who shall say what dreams of beauty
Filled the heart of Hiawatha?
All he told to old Nokomis,
When he reached the lodge at sunset,
Was the meeting with his father,
Was his fight with Mudjekeewis;
Not a word he said of arrows,
Not a word of Laughing Water.

HIAWATHA'S FASTING

YOU shall hear how Hiawatha
Prayed and fasted in the forest,
Not for greater skill in hunting,
Not for greater craft in fishing,
Not for triumphs in the battle,
And renown among the warriors,
But for profit of the people,
For advantage of the nations.

First he built a lodge for fasting,
Built a wigwam in the forest,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
In the blithe and pleasant Spring-time,
In the Moon of Leaves he built it,
And, with dreams and visions many,
Seven whole days and nights he fasted.

On the first day of his fasting
Through the leafy woods he wandered;
Saw the deer start from the thicket,
Saw the rabbit in his burrow,
Heard the pheasant, Bena, drumming,
Heard the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
Rattling in his hoard of acorns,
Saw the pigeon, the Omeme,
Building nests among the pine-trees,
And in flocks the wildgoose, Wawa,
Flying to the fenlands northward,
Whirring, wailing far above him.

'Master of Life!' he cried, desponding,
'Must our lives depend on these things?'

On the next day of his fasting
By the river's brink he wandered,
Through the Muskoday, the meadow,
Saw the wild rice, Mahnomonee,
Saw the blueberry, Meenahga,
And the strawberry, Odahmin,
And the gooseberry, Shahbomin,
And the grape-vine, the Bemahgut,
Trailing o'er the alder-branches,
Filling all the air with fragrance!

'Master of Life!' he cried, desponding,
'Must our lives depend on these things?'

On the third day of his fasting
By the lake he sat and pondered,
By the still, transparent water;
Saw the sturgeon, Nahma, leaping,
Scattering drops like beads of wampum,
Saw the yellow perch, the Sahwa,
Like a sunbeam in the water,
Saw the pike, the Maskenozha,
And the herring, Okahahwis,
And the Shawgashee, the crawfish!

'Master of Life!' he cried, desponding,
'Must our lives depend on these things?'

On the fourth day of his fasting
In his lodge he lay exhausted;
From his couch of leaves and branches
Gazing with half-open eyelids,
Full of shadowy dreams and visions,
On the dizzy, swimming landscape,
On the gleaming of the water,
On the splendour of the sunset.

And he saw a youth approaching,
Dressed in garments green and yellow,
Coming through the purple twilight,
Through the splendour of the sunset;
Plumes of green bent o'er his forehead,
And his hair was soft and golden.

Standing at the open doorway,
Long he looked at Hiawatha,
Looked with pity and compassion
On his wasted form and features,
And, in accents like the sighing
Of the South-Wind in the tree-tops,
Said he, 'O my Hiawatha!
All your prayers are heard in heaven,
For you pray not like the others;
Not for greater skill in hunting,
Not for greater craft in fishing,
Not for triumph in the battle,
Nor renown among the warriors,
But for profit of the people,
For advantage of the nations.

'From the Master of Life descending,
I, the friend of man, Mondamin,
Come to warn you and instruct you,
How by struggle and by labour
You shall gain what you have prayed for.
Rise up from your bed of branches,
Rise, O youth, and wrestle with me!'  
Faint with famine, Hiawatha  
Started from his bed of branches,  
From the twilight of his wigwam  
Forth into the flush of sunset  
Came, and wrestled with Mondamin;  
At his touch he felt new courage  
Throbbing in his brain and bosom,  
Felt new life and hope and vigour  
Run through every nerve and fibre.  
So they wrestled there together  
In the glory of the sunset,  
And the more they strove and struggled,  
Stronger still grew Hiawatha;  
Till the darkness fell around them,  
And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,  
From her nest among the pine-trees,  
Gave a cry of lamentation,  
Gave a scream of pain and famine.  
'Tis enough!' then said Mondamin,  
Smiling upon Hiawatha,  
'But to-morrow, when the sun sets,  
I will come again to try you.'  
And he vanished, and was seen not;  
Whether sinking as the rain sinks,  
Whether rising as the mists rise,  
Hiawatha saw not, knew not,  
Only saw that he had vanished,  
Leaving him alone and fainting,  
With the misty lake below him,  
And the reeling stars above him.  

On the morrow and the next day,  
When the sun through heaven descending,
Like a red and burning cinder
From the hearth of the Great Spirit,
Fell into the western waters,
Came Mondamin for the trial,
For the strife with Hiawatha;
Came as silent as the dew comes,
From the empty air appearing,
Into empty air returning,
Taking shape when earth it touches,
But invisible to all men
In its coming and its going.

Thrice they wrestled there together
In the glory of the sunset,
Till the darkness fell around them,
Till the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
From her nest among the pine-trees,
Uttered her loud cry of famine,
And Mondamin paused to listen.

Tall and beautiful he stood there,
In his garments green and yellow;
To and fro his plumes above him
Waved and nodded with his breathing,
And the sweat of the encounter
Stood like drops of dew upon him.

And he cried, 'O Hiawatha!
Bravely have you wrestled with me,
Thrice have wrestled stoutly with me,
And the Master of Life, who sees us,
He will give to you the triumph!'

Then he smiled, and said: 'To-morrow
Is the last day of your conflict,
Is the last day of your fasting.
You will conquer and o'ercome me;
Make a bed for me to lie in,
Where the rain may fall upon me,
Where the sun may come and warm me;
Strip these garments, green and yellow,
Strip this nodding plumage from me,
Lay me in the earth, and make it
Soft and loose and light above me.

'Let no hand disturb my slumber,
Let no weed nor worm molest me,
Let not Kahgahgee, the raven,
Come to haunt me and molest me,
Only come yourself to watch me,
Till I wake, and start, and quicken,
Till I leap into the sunshine.'

And thus saying, he departed;
Peacefully slept Hiawatha,
But he heard the Wawonaissa,
Heard the whippoorwill complaining,
Perched upon his lonely wigwam;
Heard the rushing Sebowisha,
Heard the rivulet rippling near him,
Talking to the darksome forest;
Heard the sighing of the branches,
As they lifted and subsided
At the passing of the night-wind,
Heard them, as one hears in slumber
Far-off murmurs, dreamy whispers:
Peacefully slept Hiawatha.

On the morrow came Nokomis,
On the seventh day of his fasting,
Came with food for Hiawatha,
Came imploring and bewailing,
Lest his hunger should o'ercome him
Lest his fasting should be fatal.
But he tasted not, and touched not,
Only said to her, 'Nokomis,
Wait until the sun is setting,
'Till the darkness falls around us,
'Till the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
Crying from the desolate marshes,
 Tells us that the day is ended.'

Homeward weeping went Nokomis,
Sorrowing for her Hiawatha,
Fearing lest his strength should fail him,
Lest his fasting should be fatal.
He meanwhile sat weary waiting
For the coming of Mondamin,
'Till the shadows, pointing eastward,
Lengthened over field and forest,
'Till the sun dropped from the heaven,

Floating on the waters westward,

As a red leaf in the Autumn

Falls and floats upon the water,
Falls and sinks into its bosom.

And behold! the young Mondamin,
With his soft and shining tresses,
With his garments green and yellow,
With his long and glossy plumage,
Stood and beckoned at the doorway.

And as one in slumber walking,
Pale and haggard, but undaunted,
From the wigwam Hiawatha
Came and wrestled with Mondamin.

Round about him spun the landscape,
Sky and forest reeled together,
And his strong heart leaped within him,
As the sturgeon leaps and struggles
In a net to break its meshes.
Like a ring of fire around him
Blazed and flared the red horizon,
And a hundred suns seemed looking
At the combat of the wrestlers.
Suddenly upon the greensward
All alone stood Hiawatha,
Panting with his wild exertion,
Palpitating with the struggle;
And before him, breathless, lifeless,
Lay the youth, with hair dishevelled,
Plumage torn, and garments tattered,
Dead he lay there in the sunset.
And victorious Hiawatha
Made the grave as he commanded,
Stripped the garments from Mondamin,
Stripped his tattered plumage from him,
Laid him in the earth, and made it
Soft and loose and light above him;
And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
From the melancholy moorlands,
Gave a cry of lamentation,
Gave a cry of pain and anguish!
Homeward then went Hiawatha
To the lodge of old Nokomis,
And the seven days of his fasting
Were accomplished and completed.
But the place was not forgotten
Where he wrestled with Mondamin;
Nor forgotten nor neglected
Was the grave where lay Mondamin,
Sleeping in the rain and sunshine,
Where his scattered plumes and garments
Faded in the rain and sunshine.
   Day by day did Hiawatha
Go to wait and watch beside it;
Kept the dark mould soft above it,
Kept it clean from weeds and insects,
Drove away, with scoffs and shoutings,
Kahgahgee, the king of ravens.
   Till at length a small green feather
From the earth shot slowly upward,
Then another and another,
And before the Summer ended
Stood the maize in all its beauty,
With its shining robes about it,
And its long, soft, yellow tresses;
And in rapture Hiawatha
Cried aloud, 'It is Mondamin!
Yes, the friend of man, Mondamin!'
   Then he called to old Nokomis
And Iagoo, the great boaster,
Showed them where the maize was growing
Told them of his wondrous vision,
Of his wrestling and his triumph,
Of this new gift to the nations,
Which should be their food for ever.
   And still later, when the Autumn
Changed the long green leaves to yellow,
And the soft and juicy kernels
Grew like wampum hard and yellow,
Then the ripened ears he gathered,
Stripped the withered husks from off them,
As he once had stripped the wrestler,
Gave the first Feast of Mondamin,
And made known unto the people
This new gift of the Great Spirit.
HIAWATHA'S FISHING

Forth upon the Gitche Gumee,
   On the shining Big-Sea-Water,
With his fishing-line of cedar,
Of the twisted bark of cedar,
Forth to catch the sturgeon Nahma,
Mishe-Nahma, King of Fishes,
In his birch-canoe exulting
All alone went Hiawatha.

Through the clear, transparent water
He could see the fishes swimming
Far down in the depths below him;
See the yellow perch, the Sahwa,
Like a sunbeam in the water,
See the Shawgashee, the crawfish,
Like a spider on the bottom,
On the white and sandy bottom.

At the stern sat Hiawatha,
With his fishing-line of cedar;
In his plumes the breeze of morning
Played as in the hemlock branches;
On the bows, with tail erected,
Sat the squirrel, Adjidaumo;
In his fur the breeze of morning
Played as in the prairie grasses.

On the white sand of the bottom
Lay the monster Mishe-Nahma,
Lay the sturgeon, King of Fishes;
Through his gills he breathed the water,
With his fins he fanned and winnowed,
With his tail he swept the sand-floor.
There he lay in all his armour;
On each side a shield to guard him,
Plates of bone upon his forehead,
Down his sides and back and shoulders
Plates of bone with spine projecting.
Painted was he with his war-paints,
Stripes of yellow, red, and azure,
Spots of brown and spots of sable;
And he lay there on the bottom,
Fanning with his fins of purple,
As above him Hiawatha
In his birch-canoe came sailing,
With his fishing-line of cedar.

'Take my bait,' cried Hiawatha,
Down into the depths beneath him,
'Take my bait, O Sturgeon, Nahma!
Come up from below the water,
Let us see which is the stronger!
And he dropped his line of cedar
Through the clear, transparent water,
Waited vainly for an answer,
Long sat waiting for an answer,
And repeating loud and louder,
'Take my bait, O King of Fishes!'

Quiet lay the sturgeon, Nahma,
Fanning slowly in the water,
Looking up at Hiawatha,
Listening to his call and clamour,
His unnecessary tumult,
Till he wearied of the shouting;
And he said to the Kenozha,
To the pike, the Maskenozha,
'Take the bait of this rude fellow,
Break the line of Hiawatha!'
In his fingers Hiawatha
Felt the loose line jerk and tighten;
As he drew it in, it tugged so
That the birch-canoe stood end-wise,
Like a birch-log in the water,
With the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
Perched and frisking on the summit.

Full of scorn was Hiawatha
When he saw the fish rise upward,
Saw the pike, the Maskenozha,
Coming nearer, nearer to him,
And he shouted through the water,
'Esā! esā! shame upon you!
You are but the pike, Kenozha,
You are not the fish I wanted,
You are not the King of Fishes!'

Reeling downward to the bottom
Sank the pike in great confusion,
And the mighty sturgeon, Nahma,
Said to Ugudwash, the sun-fish,
To the bream, with scales of crimson,
'Take the bait of this great boaster,
Break the line of Hiawatha!'

Slowly upward, wavering, gleaming,
Rose the Ugudwash, the sunfish,
Seized the line of Hiawatha,
Swung with all his weight upon it,
Made a whirlpool in the water,
Whirled the birch-canoe in circles,
Round and round in gurgling eddies,
Till the circles in the water
 Reached the far-off sandy beaches,
Till the water-flags and rushes
Nodded on the distant margins.
But when Hiawatha saw him
Slowly rising through the water,
Lifting up his disc refulgent,
Loud he shouted in derision,
‘Esa! esa! shame upon you!
You are Ugudwash, the sun-fish,
You are not the fish I wanted,
You are not the King of Fishes!’

Slowly downward, wavering, gleaming,
Sank the Ugudwash, the sun-fish,
And again the sturgeon, Nahma,
Heard the shout of Hiawatha,
Heard his challenge of defiance,
The unnecessary tumult,
Ringing far across the water.

From the white sand of the bottom
Up he rose with angry gesture,
Quivering in each nerve and fibre,
Clashing all his plates of armour,
Gleaming bright with all his war-paint;
In his wrath he darted upward,
Flashing leaped into the sunshine,
Opened his great jaws, and swallowed
Both canoe and Hiawatha.

Down into that darksome cavern
Plunged the headlong Hiawatha,
As a log on some black river
Shoots and plunges down the rapids,
Found himself in utter darkness,
Groped about in helpless wonder,
Till he felt a great heart beating,
Throbbing in that utter darkness.

And he smote it in his anger,
With his fist, the heart of Nahma,
Felt the mighty King of Fishes
Shudder through each nerve and fibre,
Heard the water gurgle round him
As he leaped and staggered through it,
Sick at heart, and faint and weary.

Crosswise then did Hiawatha
Drag his birch-canoe for safety,
Lest from out the jaws of Nahma,
In the turmoil and confusion,
Forth he might be hurled and perish.
And the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
Frisked and chattered very gaily,
Toiled and tugged with Hiawatha
Till the labour was completed.

Then said Hiawatha to him,
'O my little friend, the squirrel,
Bravely have you toiled to help me;
Take the thanks of Hiawatha,
And the name which now he gives you;
For hereafter and for ever
Boys shall call you Ajidaumo,
Tail-in-air the boys shall call you!'

And again the sturgeon, Nahma,
Gasped and quivered in the water,
Then was still, and drifted landward
Till he grated on the pebbles,
Till the listening Hiawatha
Heard him grate upon the margin,
Felt him strand upon the pebbles,
Knew that Nahma, King of Fishes,
Lay there dead upon the margin.

Then he heard a clang and flapping,
As of many wings assembling,
Heard a screaming and confusion,
As of birds of prey contending,
Saw a gleam of light above him,
Shining through the ribs of Nahma,
Saw the glittering eyes of sea-gulls,
Of Kayoshk, the sea-gulls, peering,
Gazing at him through the opening,
Heard them saying to each other,
'Tis our brother, Hiawatha!'  
And he shouted from below them,
Cried exulting from the caverns:
'O ye sea-gulls! O my brothers!
I have slain the sturgeon, Nahma;
Make the rifts a little larger,
With your claws the openings widen,
Set me free from this dark prison,
And henceforward and for ever
Men shall speak of your achievements,
Calling you Kayoshk, the sea-gulls,
Yes, Kayoshk, the Noble Scratchers!

And the wild and clamorous sea-gulls
Toiled with beak and claws together,
Made the rifts and openings wider
In the mighty ribs of Nahma,
And from peril and from prison,
From the body of the sturgeon,
From the peril of the water,
They released my Hiawatha.

He was standing near his wigwam,
On the margin of the water,
And he called to old Nokomis,
Called and beckoned to Nokomis,
Pointed to the sturgeon, Nahma,
Lying lifeless on the pebbles,
With the sea-gulls feeding on him.

'I have slain the Mishe-Nahma,
Slain the King of Fishes!' said he;
'Look! the sea-gulls feed upon him,
Yes, my friends Kayoshk, the sea-gulls;
Drive them not away, Nokomis,
They have saved me from great peril
In the body of the sturgeon,
Wait until their meal is ended,
Till their craws are full with feasting,
Till they homeward fly, at sunset,
To their nests among the marshes;
Then bring all your pots and kettles,
And make oil for us in Winter.'

And she waited till the sun set,
Till the pallid moon, the Night-sun,
Rose above the tranquil water,
Till Kayoshk, the sated sea-gulls,
From their banquet rose with clamour,
And across the fiery sunset
Winged their way to far-off islands,
To their nests among the rushes.

To his sleep went Hiawatha,
And Nokomis to her labour,
Toiling patient in the moonlight,
Till the sun and moon changed places,
Till the sky was red with sunrise,
And Kayoshk, the hungry sea-gulls,
Came back from the reedy islands,
Clamorous for their morning banquet.

Three whole days and nights alternate
Old Nokomis and the sea-gulls
Stripped the oily flesh of Nahma,
Till the waves washed through the rib-bones,
Till the sea-gulls came no longer,
And upon the sands lay nothing
But the skeleton of Nahma.

HIAWATHA'S WOOING

'As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman,
Though she bends him, she obeys him,
Though she draws him, yet she follows,
Useless each without the other!'

Thus the youthful Hiawatha
Said within himself and pondered,
Much perplexed by various feelings,
Listless, longing, hoping, fearing,
Dreaming still of Minnehaha,
Of the lovely Laughing Water,
In the land of the Dacotahs.
'Wed a maiden of your people,'
Warning said the old Nokomis;
'Go not eastward, go not westward,
For a stranger, whom we know not!
Like a fire upon the hearthstone
Is a neighbour's homely daughter;
Like the starlight or the moonlight
Is the handsomest of strangers!'

Thus dissuading spake Nokomis,
And my Hiawatha answered
Only this: 'Dear old Nokomis,
Very pleasant is the firelight,
But I like the starlight better,  
Better do I like the moonlight!'

Gravely then said old Nokomis:  
'Bring not here an idle maiden,  
Bring not here a useless woman,  
Hands unskilful, feet unwilling;  
Bring a wife with nimble fingers,  
Heart and hand that move together,  
Feet that run on willing errands!'

Smiling answered Hiawatha:  
'In the land of the Dacotahs  
Lives the Arrow-maker's daughter,  
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,  
Handsomest of all the women.  
I will bring her to your wigwam,  
She shall run upon your errands,  
Be your starlight, moonlight, firelight,  
Be the sunlight of my people!'

Still dissuading said Nokomis:  
'Bring not to my lodge a stranger  
From the land of the Dacotahs!  
Very fierce are the Dacotahs,  
Often is there war between us,  
There are feuds yet unforgotten,  
Wounds that ache and still may open!'

Laughing answered Hiawatha:  
'For that reason, if no other,  
Would I wed the fair Dacotah,  
That our tribes might be united,  
That old feuds might be forgotten,  
And old wounds be healed for ever!'

Thus departed Hiawatha  
To the land of the Dacotahs,
To the land of handsome women;
Striding over moor and meadow,
Through interminable forests,
Through uninterrupted silence.

With his moccasins of magic,
At each stride a mile he measured;
Yet the way seemed long before him,
And his heart outran his footsteps;
And he journeyed without resting,
Till he heard the cataract's laughter,
Heard the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to him through the silence.
'Pleasant is the sound!' he murmured,
'Pleasant is the voice that calls me!'

On the outskirts of the forest,
'Twixt the shadow and the sunshine,
Herds of fallow deer were feeding,
But they saw not Hiawatha;
To his bow he whispered, 'Fail not!'
To his arrow whispered, 'Swerve not!
Sent it singing on its errand,
To the red heart of the roebuck;
Threw the deer across his shoulder,
And sped forward without pausing.

At the doorway of his wigwam
Sat the ancient Arrow-maker,
In the land of the Dacotahs,
Making arrow-heads of jasper,
Arrow-heads of chalcedony.
At his side, in all her beauty,
Sat the lovely Minnehaha,
Sat his daughter, Laughing Water,
Plaiting mats of flags and rushes;
Of the past the old man's thoughts were,
And the maiden's of the future.

He was thinking, as he sat there,
Of the days when with such arrows
He had struck the deer and bison,
On the Muskoday, the meadow;
Shot the wildgoose, flying southward,
On the wing, the clamorous Wawa;
Thinking of the great war-parties,
How they came to buy his arrows,
Could not fight without his arrows.
Ah, no more such noble warriors
Could be found on earth as they were!
Now the men were all like women,
Only used their tongues for weapons!

She was thinking of a hunter,
From another tribe and country,
Young and tall and very handsome,
Who one morning in the Spring-time
Came to buy her father's arrows,
Sat and rested in the wigwam,
Lingered long about the doorway,
Looking back as he departed.
She had heard her father praise him,
Praise his courage and his wisdom;
Would he come again for arrows
To the Falls of Minnehaha?
On the mat her hands lay idle,
And her eyes were very dreamy.

Through their thoughts they heard a footstep,
Heard a rustling in the branches,
And with glowing cheek and forehead,
With the deer upon his shoulders,
Suddenly from out the woodlands
Hiawatha stood before them.
    Straight the ancient Arrow-maker
Looked up gravely from his labour,
Laid aside the unfinished arrow,
Bade him enter at the doorway,
Saying, as he rose to meet him,
‘Hiawatha, you are welcome!’

At the feet of Laughing Water
Hiawatha laid his burden,
Threw the red deer from his shoulders;
And the maiden looked up at him,
Looked up from her mat of rushes,
Said with gentle look and accent,
‘You are welcome, Hiawatha!’

Very spacious was the wigwam,
Made of deerskin dressed and whitened,
With the Gods of the Dacotahs
Drawn and painted on its curtains,
And so tall the doorway, hardly
Hiawatha stooped to enter,
Hardly touched his eagle-feathers
As he entered at the doorway.

Then uprose the Laughing Water,
From the ground fair Minnehaha,
Laid aside her mat unfinished,
Brought forth food and set before them,
Water brought them from thebrooklet,
Gave them food in earthen vessels,
Gave them drink in bowls of basswood,
Listened while the guest was speaking,
Listened while her father answered;
But not once her lips she opened,
Not a single word she uttered.
    Yes, as in a dream she listened
To the words of Hiawatha,
As he talked of old Nokomis,
Who had nursed him in his childhood,
As he told of his companions,
Chibiabos, the musician,
And the very strong man, Kwasind,
And of happiness and plenty
In the land of the Ojibways,
In the pleasant land and peaceful.

'After many years of warfare,
Many years of strife and bloodshed,
There is peace between the Ojibways
And the tribe of the Dacotahs.'
Thus continued Hiawatha,
And then added, speaking slowly,
'那就是 this peace may last for ever,
And our hands be clasped more closely,
And our hearts be more united,
Give me as my wife this maiden,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Loveliest of Dacotah women!'

And the ancient Arrow-maker
Paused a moment ere he answered,
Smoked a little while in silence,
Looked at Hiawatha proudly,
Fondly looked at Laughing Water,
And made answer very gravely:
'Yes, if Minnehaha wishes;
Let your heart speak, Minnehaha!'

And the lovely Laughing Water
Seemed more lovely, as she stood there,
Neither willing nor reluctant,
As she went to Hiawatha,
Softly took the seat beside him,
While she said, and blushed to say it,
'I will follow you, my husband!'

This was Hiawatha's wooing!
Thus it was he won the daughter
Of the ancient Arrow-maker,
In the land of the Dacotahs!

From the wigwam he departed,
Leading with him Laughing Water;
Hand in hand they went together,
Through the woodland and the meadow,
Left the old man standing lonely
At the doorway of his wigwam,
Heard the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to them from the distance,
Crying to them from afar off,
'Fare thee well, O Minnehaha!'

And the ancient Arrow-maker
Turned again unto his labour,
Sat down by his sunny doorway,
Murmuring to himself, and saying:
'Thus it is our daughters leave us,
Those we love, and those who love us!
Just when they have learned to help us,
When we are old and lean upon them,
 Comes a youth with flaunting feathers,
With his flute of reeds, a stranger
Wanders piping through the village,
Beckons to the fairest maiden,
And she follows where he leads her,
Leaving all things for the stranger!'

Pleasant was the journey homeward,
Through interminable forests,
Over meadow, over mountain,
Over river, hill, and hollow.
Short it seemed to Hiawatha,
Though they journeyed very slowly,
Though his pace he checked and slackened
To the steps of Laughing Water.

Over wide and rushing rivers
In his arms he bore the maiden;
Light he thought her as a feather,
As the plume upon his head-gear;
Cleared the tangled pathway for her,
Bent aside the swaying branches,
Made at night a lodge of branches,
And a bed with boughs of hemlock,
And a fire before the doorway
With the dry cones of the pine-tree.

All the travelling winds went with them,
O'er the meadow, through the forest;
All the stars of night looked at them,
Watched with sleepless eyes their slumber;
From his ambush in the oak-tree
Peeped the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
Watched with eager eyes the lovers;
And the rabbit, the Wabasso,
Scampered from the path before them,
Peering, peeping from his burrow,
Sat erect upon his haunches,
Watched with curious eyes the lovers.

Pleasant was the journey homeward!
All the birds sang loud and sweetly
Songs of happiness and heart's-ease;
Sang the bluebird, the Owaissa,
'Happy are you, Hiawatha,
Having such a wife to love you!'
Sang the robin, the Opechee,
'Happy are you, Laughing Water,
Over wide and rushing rivers
In his arms he bore the maiden.

(Hiawatha.)
Having such a noble husband!

From the sky the sun benignant
Looked upon them through the branches,
Saying to them, 'O my children,
Love is sunshine, hate is shadow,
Life is checkered shade and sunshine,
Rule by love, O Hiawatha!'

From the sky the moon looked at them,
Filled the lodge with mystic splendours,
Whispered to them, 'O my children,
Day is restless, night is quiet,
Man imperious, woman feeble;
Half is mine, although I follow;
Rule by patience, Laughing Water!'

Thus it was they journeyed homeward;
Thus it was that Hiawatha
To the lodge of old Nokomis
Brought the moonlight, starlight, firelight,
Brought the sunshine of his people,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Handsomest of all the women
In the land of the Dacotahs,
In the land of handsome women.

THE GHOSTS

Never stoops the soaring vulture
On his quarry in the desert,
On the sick or wounded bison,
But another vulture, watching
From his high aerial look-out,
Sees the downward plunge, and follows;
And a third pursues the second,
Coming from the invisible ether,
First a speck, and then a vulture,
Till the air is dark with pinions.

So disasters come not singly;
But as if they watched and waited,
Scanning one another's motions,
When the first descends, the others
Follow, follow, gathering flockwise
Round their victim, sick and wounded,
First a shadow, then a sorrow,
Till the air is dark with anguish.

Now, o'er all the dreary Northland,
Mighty Peboan, the Winter,
Breathing on the lakes and rivers,
Into stone had changed their waters.
From his hair he shook the snowflakes,
Till the plains were strewn with whiteness,
One uninterrupted level,
As if, stooping, the Creator
With his hand had smoothed them over.

Through the forest, wide and wailing,
Roamed the hunter on his snow-shoes;
In the village worked the women,
Pounded maize, or dressed the deerskin;
And the young men played together
On the ice the noisy ball-play,
On the plain the dance of snow-shoes.

One dark evening, after sundown,
In her wigwam Laughing Water
Sat with old Nokomis, waiting
For the steps of Hiawatha
Homeward from the hunt returning.

On their faces gleamed the firelight,
Painting them with streaks of crimson,
In the eyes of old Nokomis
Glimmered like the watery moonlight,
In the eyes of Laughing Water
Glistened like the sun in water;
And behind them crouched their shadows
In the corners of the wigwam,
And the smoke in wreaths above them
Climbed and crowded through the smoke-flue.

Then the curtain of the doorway
From without was slowly lifted;
Brighter glowed the fire a moment,
And a moment swerved the smoke-wreath,
As two women entered softly,
Passed the doorway uninvited,
Without word of salutation,
Without sign of recognition,
Sat down in the farthest corner,
Crouching low among the shadows.

From their aspect and their garments,
Strangers seemed they in the village;
Very pale and haggard were they,
As they sat there sad and silent,
Trembling, cowering with the shadows.

Was it the wind above the smoke-flue,
Muttering down into the wigwam?
Was it the owl, the Koko-koho,
Hooting from the dismal forest?
Sure a voice said in the silence:
'These are corpses clad in garments,
These are ghosts that come to haunt you,
From the kingdom of Ponemah,
From the land of the Hereafter!'

Homeward now came Hiawatha
From his hunting in the forest,
With the snow upon his tresses,
And the red deer on his shoulders.
At the feet of Laughing Water
Down he threw his lifeless burden;
Nobler, handsomer she thought him,
Than when first he came to woo her,
First threw down the deer before her,
As a token of his wishes,
As a promise of the future.
Then he turned and saw the strangers,
Cowering, crouching with the shadows;
Said within himself, 'Who are they?
What strange guests has Minnehaha?'
But he questioned not the strangers,
Only spake to bid them welcome
To his lodge, his food, his fireside.
When the evening meal was ready,
And the deer had been divided,
Both the pallid guests, the strangers,
Springing from among the shadows,
Seized upon the choicest portions,
Seized the white fat of the roebuck,
Set apart for Laughing Water,
For the wife of Hiawatha;
Without asking, without thanking,
Eagerly devoured the morsels,
Flitted back among the shadows
In the corner of the wigwam.
Not a word spake Hiawatha,
Not a motion made Nokomis,
Not a gesture Laughing Water;
Not a change came o'er their features;
Only Minnehaha softly
Whispered, saying, 'They are famished;
Let them do what best delights them;
Let them eat, for they are famished.'

Many a daylight dawned and darkened,
Many a night shook off the daylight
As the pine shakes off the snow-flakes
From the midnight of its branches;
Day by day the guests unmoving
Sat there silent in the wigwam;
But by night, in storm or starlight,
Forth they went into the forest,
Bringing firewood to the wigwam,
Bringing pine-cones for the burning,
Always sad and always silent.

And whenever Hiawatha
Came from fishing or from hunting,
When the evening meal was ready,
And the food had been divided,
Gliding from their darksome corner,
Came the pallid guests, the strangers,
Seized upon the choicest portions
Set aside for Laughing Water,
And without rebuke or question
Flitted back among the shadows.

Never once had Hiawatha
By a word or look reproved them;
Never once had old Nokomis
Made a gesture of impatience;
Never once had Laughing Water
Shown resentment at the outrage.
All had they endured in silence,
That the rights of guests and stranger,
That the virtue of free-giving,
By a look might not be lessened,
By a word might not be broken.

Once at midnight Hiawatha,
Ever wakeful, ever watchful,
In the wigwam, dimly lighted
By the brands that still were burning,
By the glimmering, flickering firelight,
Heard a sighing, oft repeated,
Heard a sobbing, as of sorrow.

From his couch rose Hiawatha,
From his shaggy hides of bison,
Pushed aside the deerskin curtain,
Saw the pallid guests, the shadows,
Sitting upright on their couches,
Weeping in the silent midnight.

And he said: 'O guests! why is it
That your hearts are so afflicted,
That you sob so in the midnight?
Has perchance the old Nokomis,
Has my wife, my Minnehaha,
Wronged or grieved you by unkindness,
Failed in hospitable duties?'

Then the shadows ceased from weeping,
Ceased from sobbing and lamenting,
And they said, with gentle voices:
'We are ghosts of the departed,
Souls of those who once were with you.
From the realms of Chibiabos
Hither have we come to try you,
Hither have we come to warn you.

'Cries of grief and lamentation
Reached us in the Blessed Islands;
Cries of anguish from the living,
Calling back their friends departed,'
Sadden us with useless sorrow.
Therefore have we come to try you;
No one knows us, no one heeds us.
We are but a burden to you,
And we see that the departed
Have no place among the living.

'Think of this, O Hiawatha!
Speak of it to all the people,
That henceforward and for ever
They no more with lamentations
Sadden the souls of the departed
In the Islands of the Blessed.

'Do not lay such heavy burdens
In the graves of those you bury,
Not such weight of furs and wampum,
Not such weight of pots and kettles,
For the spirits faint beneath them,
Only give them food to carry,
Only give them fire to light them.

'Four days is the spirit's journey
To the land of ghosts and shadows,
Four its lonely night encampments;
Four times must their fires be lighted.
Therefore, when the dead are buried,
Let a fire, as night approaches,
Four times on the grave be kindled,
That the soul upon its journey
May not lack the cheerful firelight,
May not grope about in darkness.

'Farewell, noble Hiawatha!
We have put you to the trial,
To the proof have put your patience,
By the insult of our presence,
By the outrage of our actions.
We have found you great and noble.
Fail not in the greater trial,
Faint not in the harder struggle.'

When they ceased, a sudden darkness
Fell and filled the silent wigwam.
Hiawatha heard a rustle
As of garments trailing by him,
Heard the curtain of the doorway
Lifted by a hand he saw not,
Felt the cold breath of the night air,
For a moment saw the starlight;
But he saw the ghosts no longer,
Saw no more the wandering spirits
From the kingdom of Ponemah,
From the land of the Hereafter.

THE FAMINE

O THE long and dreary Winter!
O the cold and cruel Winter!
Ever thicker, thicker, thicker
Froze the ice on lake and river,
Ever deeper, deeper, deeper
Fell the snow o'er all the landscape,
Fell the covering snow, and drifted
Through the forest, round the village.

Hardly from his buried wigwam
Could the hunter force a passage;
With his mittens and his snow-shoes
Vainly walked he through the forest,
Sought for bird or beast and found none,
Saw no track of deer or rabbit,
In the snow beheld no footprints,
In the ghastly, gleaming forest
Fell, and could not rise from weakness,
Perished there from cold and hunger.
    O the famine and the fever!
O the wasting of the famine!
O the blasting of the fever!
O the wailing of the children!
O the anguish of the women!
    All the earth was sick and famished;
Hungry was the air around them,
Hungry was the sky above them,
And the hungry stars in heaven
Like the eyes of wolves glaring at them!
    Into Hiawatha's wigwam
Came two other guests, as silent
As the ghosts were, and as gloomy,
Waited not to be invited,
Did not parley at the doorway,
Sat there without word of welcome
In the seat of Laughing Water;
Looked with haggard eyes and hollow
At the face of Laughing Water.
    And the foremost said: 'Behold me!
I am Famine, Bukadawin!'
And the other said: 'Behold me!
I am Fever, Ahkosewin!'
    And the lovely Minnehaha
Shuddered as they looked upon her,
Shuddered at the words they uttered,
Lay down on her bed in silence,
Hid her face, but made no answer;
Lay there trembling, freezing, burning
At the looks they cast upon her,
At the fearful words they uttered.
Forth into the empty forest
Rushed the maddened Hiawatha;
In his heart was deadly sorrow,
In his face a stony firmness;
On his brow the sweat of anguish
Started, but it froze and fell not.

Wrapped in furs and armed for hunting,
With his mighty bow of ash-tree,
With his quiver full of arrows,
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,
Into the vast and vacant forest
On his snow-shoes strode he forward.

'Gitche Manito, the Mighty!'
Cried he with his face uplifted
In that bitter hour of anguish,
'Give your children food, O father!
Give us food, or we must perish!
Give me food for Minnehaha,
For my dying Minnehaha!'

Through the far-resounding forest,
Through the forest vast and vacant
Rang that cry of desolation,
But there came no other answer
Than the echo of his crying,
Than the echo of the woodlands,
'Minnehaha! Minnehaha!'

All day long roved Hiawatha
In that melancholy forest,
Through the shadow of whose thickets,
In the pleasant days of Summer,
Of that ne'er forgotten Summer,
He had brought his young wife homeward
From the land of the Dacotahs;
When the birds sang in the thickets,  
And the streamlets laughed and glistened,  
And the air was full of fragrance,  
And the lovely Laughing Water  
Said with voice that did not tremble,  
'I will follow you, my husband!'

In the wigwam with Nokomis,  
With those gloomy guests, that watched her,  
With the Famine and the Fever,  
She was lying, the Beloved,  
She the dying Minnehaha.

‘Hark!’ she said; ‘I hear a rushing,  
Hear a roaring and a rushing,  
Hear the Falls of Minnehaha  
Calling to me from a distance!’

‘No, my child!’ said old Nokomis,  
’'Tis the night-wind in the pine-trees!’  
‘Look!’ she said; ‘I see my father  
Standing lonely at his doorway,  
Beckoning to me from his wigwam  
In the land of the Dacotahs!’

‘No, my child!’ said old Nokomis,  
’'Tis the smoke, that waves and beckons!’  
‘Ah!’ said she, ‘the eyes of Pauguk  
Glare upon me in the darkness,  
I can feel his icy fingers  
Clasping mine amid the darkness!  
Hiawatha! Hiawatha!’

And the desolate Hiawatha,  
Far away amid the forest,  
Miles away among the mountains,  
Heard that sudden cry of anguish,  
Heard the voice of Minnehaha
Calling to him in the darkness,
‘Hiawatha! Hiawatha!’

Over snow-fields waste and pathless,
Under snow-encumbered branches,
Homeward hurried Hiawatha,
Empty-handed, heavy-hearted,
Heard Nokomis moaning, wailing:
‘Wahonowin! Wahonowin!
Would that I had perished for you,
Would that I were dead as you are!
Wahonowin! Wahonowin!’

And he rushed into the wigwam,
Saw the old Nokomis slowly
Rocking to and fro and moaning,
Saw his lovely Minnehaha
Lying dead and cold before him,
And his bursting heart within him
Uttered such a cry of anguish,
That the forest moaned and shuddered,
That the very stars in heaven
Shook and trembled with his anguish.

Then he sat down still and speechless,
On the bed of Minnehaha,
At the feet of Laughing Water,
At those willing feet, that never
More would lightly run to meet him,
Never more would lightly follow.

With both hands his face he covered,
Seven long days and nights he sat there,
As if in a swoon he sat there,
Speechless, motionless, unconscious
Of the daylight or the darkness.
Then they buried Minnehaha;
In the snow a grave they made her,
In the forest deep and darksome,
Underneath the moaning hemlocks;
Clothed her in her richest garments,
Wrapped her in her robes of ermine;
Covered her with snow, like ermine,
Thus they buried Minnehaha.

And at night a fire was lighted,
On her grave four times was kindled,
For her soul upon its journey
To the Islands of the Blessed.
From his doorway Hiawatha
Saw it burning in the forest,
Lighting up the gloomy hemlocks;
From his sleepless bed uprising,
From the bed of Minnehaha,
Stood and watched it at the doorway,
That it might not be extinguished,
Might not leave her in the darkness.

'Farewell!' said he, 'Minnehaha!
Farewell, O my Laughing Water!
All my heart is buried with you,
All my thoughts go onward with you!
Come not back again to labour,
Come not back again to suffer,
Where the Famine and the Fever
Wear the heart and waste the body.
Soon my task will be completed,
Soon your footsteps I shall follow
To the Islands of the Blessed,
To the Kingdom of Ponemah,
'To the Land of the Hereafter!'
ONE Autumn night, in Sudbury town,
Across the meadows bare and brown,
The windows of the wayside inn
Gleamed red with firelight through the leaves
Of woodbine, hanging from the eaves
Their crimson curtains rent and thin.

As ancient is this hostelry
As any in the land may be,
Built in the old Colonial day,
When men lived in a grander way,
With ampler hospitality;
A kind of old Hobgoblin Hall,
Now somewhat fallen to decay,
With weather-stains upon the wall,
And stairways worn, and crazy doors,
And creaking and uneven floors,
And chimneys huge, and tiled and tall.
A region of repose it seems,
A place of slumber and of dreams,
Remote among the wooded hills!
For there no noisy railway speeds,
Its torch-race scattering smoke and gleeds;
But noon and night, the panting teams
Stop under the great oaks, that throw
Tangles of light and shade below,
On roofs and doors and window-sills.
Across the road the barns display
Their lines of stalls, their mows of hay;
Through the wide doors the breezes blow,
The wattled cocks strut to and fro,
And, half effaced by rain and shine,
The Red Horse prances on the sign.

Round this old-fashioned, quaint abode
Deep silence reigned, save when a gust
Went rushing down the country road,
And skeletons of leaves, and dust,
A moment quickened by its breath,
Shuddered and danced their dance of death,
And through the ancient oaks o'erhead
Mysterious voices moaned and fled.

But from the parlour of the inn
A pleasant murmur smote the ear,
Like water rushing through a weir;
Oft interrupted by the din
Of laughter and of loud applause,
And, in each intervening pause,
The music of a violin.
The firelight, shedding over all
The splendour of its ruddy glow,
Filled the whole parlour large and low;
It gleamed on wainscot and on wall,
It touched with more than wonted grace
Fair Princess Mary's pictured face;
It bronzed the rafters overhead,
On the old spinet's ivory keys
It played inaudible melodies,
It crowned the sombre clock with flame,
The hands, the hours, the maker's name,
And painted with a livelier red
The Landlord's coat-of-arms again;
And, flashing on the window-pane,
Emblazoned with its light and shade
The jovial rhymes, that still remain,
Writ near a century ago,
By the great Major Molineaux,
Whom Hawthorne has immortal made.

Before the blazing fire of wood
Erect the rapt musician stood;
And ever and anon he bent
His head upon his instrument,
And seemed to listen, till he caught
Confessions of its secret thought,—
The joy, the triumph, the lament,
The exultation and the pain;
Then, by the magic of his art,
He soothed the throbings of its heart,
And lulled it into peace again.

Around the fireside at their ease
There sat a group of friends, entranced
With the delicious melodies;
Who from the far-off noisy town
Had to the wayside inn come down,
To rest beneath its old oak-trees.
The firelight on their faces glanced,
Their shadows on the wainscot danced,
And, though of different lands and speech,
Each had his tale to tell, and each
Was anxious to be pleased and please.
And while the sweet musician plays,
Let me in outline sketch them all,
Perchance uncouthly as the blaze
With its uncertain touch portrays
Their shadowy semblance on the wall.

But first the Landlord will I trace:
Grave in his aspect and attire;
A man of ancient pedigree,
A Justice of the Peace was he,
Known in all Sudbury as 'The Squire.'
Proud was he of his name and race,
Of old Sir William and Sir Hugh,
And in the parlour, full in view,
His coat-of-arms, well framed and glazed,
Upon the wall in colours blazed;
He beareth gules upon his shield,
A chevron argent in the field,
With three wolf's-heads, and for the crest
A Wyvern part-per-pale addressed
Upon a helmet barred; below
The scroll reads, 'By the name of Howe.'
And over this, no longer bright,
Though glimmering with a latent light,
Was hung the sword his grandsire bore
In the rebellious days of yore,
Down there at Concord in the fight.

A youth was there, of quiet ways,
A Student of old books and days,
To whom all tongues and lands were known
And yet a lover of his own;
With many a social virtue graced,
And yet a friend of solitude;
A man of such a genial mood
The heart of all things he embraced,
And yet of such fastidious taste,
He never found the best too good.
Books were his passion and delight,
And in his upper room at home
Stood many a rare and sumptuous tome,
In vellum bound, with gold bedight,
Great volumes garmented in white,
Recalling Florence, Pisa, Rome.
He loved the twilight that surrounds
The borderland of old romance;
Where glitter hauberk, helm, and lance,
And banner waves, and trumpet sounds,
And ladies ride with hawk on wrist,
And mighty warriors sweep along,
Magnified by the purple mist,
The dusk of centuries and of song.
The chronicles of Charlemagne,
Of Merlin and the Mort d'Arthure,
Mingled together in his brain
With tales of Flores and Blanche-fleur,
Sir Ferumbras, Sir Eglamour,
Sir Launcelot, Sir Morgadour,
Sir Guy, Sir Bevis, Sir Gawain.

A young Sicilian, too, was there;
In sight of Etna born and bred,
Some breath of its volcanic air
Was glowing in his heart and brain,
And, being rebellious to his liege,
After Palermo's fatal siege,
Across the western seas he fled,
In good King Bomba's happy reign.
His face was like a summer night,
All flooded with a dusky light;
His hands were small; his teeth shone white
As sea-shells, when he smiled or spoke;
His sinews supple and strong as oak;
Clean shaven was he as a priest
Who at the mass on Sunday sings,
Save that upon his upper lip
His beard, a good palm's length at least,
Level and pointed at the tip,
Shot sideways, like a swallow's wings.
The poets read he o'er and o'er,
And most of all the Immortal Four
Of Italy; and next to those,
The story-telling bard of prose,
Who wrote the joyous Tuscan tales
Of the Decameron, that make
Fiesole's green hills and vales
Remembered for Boccaccio's sake.
Much too of music was his thought;
The melodies and measures fraught
With sunshine and the open air,
Of vineyards and the singing sea
Of his belovèd Sicily;
And much it pleased him to peruse
The songs of the Sicilian muse,—
Bucolic songs by Meli sung
In the familiar peasant tongue,
That made men say, 'Behold! once more
The pitying gods to earth restore
Theocritus of Syracuse!'

A Spanish Jew from Alicant
With aspect grand and grave was there;
Vender of silks and fabrics rare,
And attar of rose from the Levant.
Like an old Patriarch he appeared,
Abraham or Isaac, or at least
Some later Prophet or High Priest;
With lustrous eyes, and olive skin,
And, wildly tossed from cheeks and chin,
The tumbling cataract of his beard.
His garments breathed a spicy scent
Of cinnamon and sandal blent,
Like the soft aromatic gales
That meet the mariner, who sails
Through the Moluccas, and the seas
That wash the shores of Celebes.
All stories that recorded are
By Pierre Alphonse he knew by heart,
And it was rumoured he could say
The Parables of Sandabar,
And all the Fables of Pilpay,—
Or if not all, the greater part!
Well versed was he in Hebrew books,
Talmud and Targum, and the lore
Of Kabala; and evermore
There was a mystery in his looks;
His eyes seemed gazing far away,
As if in vision or in trance
He heard the solemn sackbut play,
And saw the Jewish maidens dance.
A Theologian, from the school
Of Cambridge on the Charles, was there;
Skilful alike with tongue and pen,
He preached to all men everywhere
The Gospel of the Golden Rule,
The New Commandment given to men,
Thinking the deed, and not the creed,
Would help us in our utmost need.
With reverent feet the earth he trod,
Nor banished nature from his plan,
But studied still with deep research
To build the Universal Church,
Lofty as is the love of God,
And ample as the wants of man.

A Poet, too, was there, whose verse
Was tender, musical, and terse;
The inspiration, the delight,
The gleam, the glory, the swift flight
Of thoughts so sudden, that they seem
The revelations of a dream,
All these were his; but with them came
No envy of another's fame;
He did not find his sleep less sweet
For music in some neighbouring street,
Nor rustling hear in every breeze
The laurels of Miltiades.
Honour and blessings on his head
While living, good report when dead,
Who, not too eager for renown,
Accepts, but does not clutch, the crown!
Last the Musician, as he stood
Illumined by that fire of wood;
Fair-haired, blue-eyed, his aspect blithe,  
His figure tall and straight and lithe,  
And every feature of his face  
Revealing his Norwegian race;  
A radiance, streaming from within,  
Around his eyes and forehead beamed,  
The Angel with the violin,  
Painted by Raphael, he seemed.

He lived in that ideal world  
Whose language is not speech, but song;  
Around him evermore the throng  
Of elves and sprites their dances whirled;  
The Strömkarl sang, the cataract hurled  
Its headlong waters from the height;  
And mingled in the wild delight  
The scream of sea-birds in their flight,  
The rumour of the forest trees,  
The plunge of the implacable seas,  
The tumult of the wind at night,  
Voices of eld, like trumpets blowing,  
Old ballads, and wild melodies  
Through mist and darkness pouring forth,  
Like Elivagar's river flowing  
Out of the glaciers of the North.

The instrument on which he played  
Was in Cremona's workshops made,  
By a great master of the past,  
Ere yet was lost the art divine;  
Fashioned of maple and of pine,  
That in Tyrolian forests vast  
Had rocked and wrestled with the blast.  
Exquisite was it in design,
Perfect in each minutest part,
A marvel of the lutist's art;
And in its hollow chamber, thus,
The maker from whose hands it came
Had written his unrivalled name,—
'Antonius Stradivarius.'

And when he played, the atmosphere
Was filled with magic, and the ear
Caught echoes of that Harp of Gold,
Whose music had so weird a sound,
The hunted stag forgot to bound,
The leaping rivulet backward rolled,
The birds came down from bush and tree,
The dead came from beneath the sea,
The maiden to the harper's knee!

The music ceased; the applause was loud,
The pleased musician smiled and bowed;
The wood-fire clapped its hands of flame,
The shadows on the wainscot stirred,
And from the harpsichord there came
A ghostly murmur of acclaim,
A sound like that sent down at night
By birds of passage in their flight,
From the remotest distance heard.

Then silence followed; then began
A clamour for the Landlord's tale,—
The story promised them of old,
They said, but always left untold;
And he, although a bashful man,
And all his courage seemed to fail,
Finding excuse of no avail,
Yielded; and thus the story ran.
THE BALLAD OF SVEND DYRING

SVEND DYRING he rideth adown the glade;

_I myself was young!

There he hath wooed him so winsome a maid;

_Fair words gladden so many a heart._

Together were they for seven years,
And together children six were theirs.

Then came Death abroad through the land,
And blighted the beautiful lily-wand.

Svend Dyring he rideth adown the glade,
And again hath he wooed him another maid.

He hath wooed him a maid and brought home a bride,
But she was bitter and full of pride.

When she came driving into the yard,
There stood the six children weeping so hard.

There stood the small children with sorrowful heart;
From before her feet she thrust them apart.

She gave to them neither ale nor bread;

_'Ye shall suffer hunger and hate,' she said._

She took from them their quilts of blue,

_And said: 'Ye shall lie on the straw we strew.'_

She took from them the great wax-light;

_'Now ye shall lie in the dark at night.'_

In the evening late they cried with cold;
The mother heard it under the mould.

The woman heard it the earth below:

_'To my little children I must go.'
She standeth before the Lord of all:
'And may I go to my children small?'

She prayed him so long, and would not cease,
Until he bade her depart in peace.

'At cock-crow thou shalt return again;
Longer thou shalt not there remain!'

She girded up her sorrowful bones,
And rifted the walls and the marble stones.

As through the village she flitted by,
The watch-dogs howled aloud to the sky.

When she came to the castle gate,
There stood her eldest daughter in wait.

'Why standest thou here, dear daughter mine?
How fares it with brothers and sisters thine?'

'Never art thou mother of mine,
For my mother was both fair and fine.

'My mother was white, with cheeks of red,
But thou art pale, and like to the dead.'

'How should I be fair and fine?
I have been dead; pale cheeks are mine.

'How should I be white and red,
So long, so long have I been dead?'

When she came in at the chamber door,
There stood the small children weeping sore.

One she braided, another she brushed,
The third she lifted, the fourth she hushed.

The fifth she took on her lap and pressed,
As if she would suckle it at her breast.
Then to her eldest daughter said she,
'Do thou bid Svend Dyring come hither to me.'

Into the chamber when he came
She spake to him in anger and shame.
'I left behind me both ale and bread;
My children hunger and are not fed.
'I left behind me quilts of blue;
My children lie on the straw ye strew.
'I left behind me the great wax-light;
My children lie in the dark at night.
'If I come again unto your hall,
As cruel a fate shall you befall!
'Now crows the cock with feathers red;
Back to the earth must all the dead.
'Now crows the cock with feathers swart;
The gates of heaven fly wide apart.
'Now crows the cock with feathers white;
I can abide no longer to-night.'

Whenever they heard the watch-dogs wail,
They gave the children bread and ale.
Whenever they heard the watch-dogs bay,
They feared lest the dead were on their way.
Whenever they heard the watch-dogs bark;
_I myself was young_
They feared the dead out there in the dark.
_Fair words gladden so many a heart._
The spire of Strasburg Cathedral. Night and storm. Lucifer, with the Powers of the Air, trying to tear down the Cross.

Lucifer. Hasten! hasten!
O ye spirits!
From its station drag the ponderous Cross of iron, that to mock us
Is uplifted high in air!
Voices. O, we cannot!
For around it
All the Saints and Guardian Angels Throng in legions to protect it;
They defeat us everywhere!

The Bells.
Laudo Deum verum!
Plebem voco!
Congrego clerum!

Lucifer. Lower! lower!
Hover downward!
Seize the loud, vociferous bells, and Clashing, clanging, to the pavement Hurl them from their windy tower!
Voices. All thy thunders
Here are harmless!
For these bells have been anointed,
And baptized with holy water!
They defy our utmost power.

The Bells.
Defunctos plora!
Pestem fugo!
Festa decoro!

Lucifer. Shake the casements!
Break the painted
Panes, that flame with gold and crimson;
Scatter them like leaves of Autumn,
Swept away before the blast!
Voices. O, we cannot!
The Archangel
Michael flames from every window,
With the sword of fire that drove us
Headlong, out of heaven, aghast!

The Bells.
Funera plango!
Fulgura frango!
Sabbata pango!

Lucifer. Aim your lightnings
At the oaken,
Massive, iron-studded portals!
Sack the house of God, and scatter
Wide the ashes of the dead!
Voices. O, we cannot!
The Apostles
And the Martyrs, wrapped in mantles,
Stand as warders at the entrance,
Stand as sentinels o'erhead!

*The Bells.*

Excito lentos!
Dissippo ventos!
Paco cruentos!

*Lucifer.* Baffled! Baffled!
Inefficient,
Craven spirits! leave this labour
Unto Time, the great Destroyer!
Come away, ere night is gone!

*Voices.* Onward! onward!
With the night-wind,
Over field and farm and forest,
Lonely homestead, darksome hamlet,
Blighting all we breathe upon!

*(They sweep away. Organ and Gregorian Chant.)*

*Choir.*

Nocte surgentes
Vigilemus omnes.

THE MONK FELIX

*A Farm in the Odenwald. A Garden. Morning.*


Prince Henry (reading). One morning all alone,
Out of his convent of gray stone,
Into the forest older, darker, grayer,
His lips moving as if in prayer,
His head sunken upon his breast
As in a dream of rest,
Walked the Monk Felix. All about
The broad, sweet sunshine lay without,
Filling the summer air;
And within the woodlands as he trod,
The dusk was like the Truce of God
With worldly woe and care;
Under him lay the golden moss;
And above him the boughs of hoary trees
Waved, and made the sign of the cross,
And whispered their Benedicites;
And from the ground
Rose an odour sweet and fragrant
Of the wild-flowers and the vagrant
Vines that wandered,
Seeking the sunshine, round and round.

These he heeded not, but pondered
On the volume in his hand,
A volume of Saint Augustine,
Wherein he read of the unseen
Splendours of God's great town
In the unknown land,
And, with his eyes cast down
In humility, he said:
'I believe, O God,
What herein I have read,
But, alas: I do not understand!'

And lo! he heard
The sudden singing of a bird,
A snow-white bird, that from a cloud
Dropped down,
And among the branches brown
Sat singing
So sweet, and clear, and loud,
It seemed a thousand harp-strings ringing.

And the Monk Felix closed his book,
And long, long,
With rapturous look,
He listened to the song,
And hardly breathed or stirred,
Until he saw, as in a vision,
The land Elysian,
And in the heavenly city heard
Angelic feet
Fall on the golden flagging of the street.
And he would fain
Have caught the wondrous bird,
But strove in vain;
For it flew away, away,
Far over hill and dell,
And instead of its sweet singing
He heard the convent bell
Suddenly in the silence ringing
For the service of noonday.
And he retraced
His pathway homeward sadly and in haste.

In the convent there was a change!
He looked for each well-known face,
But the faces were new and strange;
New figures sat in the oaken stalls,
New voices chanted in the choir;
Yet the place was the same place,
The same dusky walls
Of cold, gray stone,
The same cloister and belfry and spire.
A stranger and alone
Among that brotherhood
The Monk Felix stood.
'Forty years,' said a Friar,
'Have I been Prior
Of this convent in the wood,
But for that space
Never have I beheld thy face!'
The heart of the Monk Felix fell:
And he answered, with submissive tone,
'This morning, after the hour of Prime,
I left my cell,
And wandered forth alone.
Listening all the time
To the melodious singing
Of a beautiful white bird,
Until I heard
The bells of the convent ringing
Noon from their noisy towers.
It was as if I dreamed;
For what to me had seemed
Moments only, had been hours!'
'Years!' said a voice close by.
It was an aged monk who spoke,
From a bench of oak
Fastened against the wall;—
He was the oldest monk of all.
For a whole century
Had he been there,
Serving God in prayer,
The meekest and humblest of his creatures.
He remembered well the features
Of Felix, and he said,
Speaking distinct and slow:
'One hundred years ago,
When I was a novice in this place,
There was here a monk, full of God's grace,
Who bore the name
Of Felix, and this man must be the same.'

And straightway
They brought forth to the light of day
A volume old and brown,
A huge tome, bound
In brass and wild boar's hide,
Wherein were written down
The names of all who had died
In the convent, since it was edified.
And there they found,
Just as the old monk said,
That on a certain day and date,
One hundred years before,
Had gone forth from the convent gate,
The Monk Felix, and never more
Had entered that sacred door.
He had been counted among the dead!
And they knew, at last,
That, such had been the power
Of that celestial and immortal song,
A hundred years had passed,
And had not seemed so long
As a single hour!

(Elsie comes in with flowers.)

_Elsie._ Here are flowers for you,
But they are not all for you.
Some of them are for the Virgin
And for Saint Cecilia.

*Prince Henry.* As thou standest there,
Thou seemest to me like the angel
That brought the immortal roses
To Saint Cecilia’s bridal chamber.

*Elsie.* But these will fade.

*Prince Henry.* Themselves will fade,
But not their memory,
And memory has the power
To re-create them from the dust.
They remind me, too,
Of martyred Dorothea,
Who from celestial gardens sent
Flowers as her witnesses
To him who scoffed and doubted.

*Elsie.* Do you know the story
Of Christ and the Sultan’s daughter,
That is the prettiest legend of them all.

*Prince Henry.* Then tell it to me.
But first come hither.
Lay the flowers down beside me,
And put both thy hands in mine.
Now tell me the story.

*Elsie.* Early in the morning
The Sultan’s daughter
Walked in her father’s garden,
Gathering the bright flowers,
All full of dew.

*Prince Henry.* Just as thou hast been doing
This morning, dearest Elsie.

*Elsie.* And as she gathered them,
She wondered more and more
Who was the Master of the Flowers,
And made them grow
Out of the cold, dark earth.
‘In my heart,’ she said,
‘I love him; and for him
Would leave my father’s palace,
To labour in his garden.’

Prince Henry. Dear, innocent child!
How sweetly thou recallest
The long-forgotten legend,
That in my early childhood
My mother told me!
Upon my brain
It reappears once more,
As a birth-mark on the forehead
When a hand suddenly
Is laid upon it, and removed!

Elsie. And at midnight,
As she lay upon her bed,
She heard a voice
Call to her from the garden,
And, looking forth from her window,
She saw a beautiful youth
Standing among the flowers.
It was the Lord Jesus;
And she went down to him,
And opened the door for him;
And he said to her, ‘O maiden!
Thou hast thought of me with love,
And for thy sake
Out of my Father’s kingdom
Have I come hither:
I am the Master of the Flowers,
My garden is in Paradise,
And if thou wilt go with me,
Thy bridal garland
Shall be of bright red flowers.'
And then he took from his finger
A golden ring,
And asked the Sultan's daughter
If she would be his bride.
And when she answered him with love,
His wounds began to bleed,
And she said to him,
'O love! how red thy heart is,
And thy hands are full of roses.'
'For thy sake,' answered he,
'For thy sake is my heart so red,
For thee I bring these roses;
I gathered them at the cross
Whereon I died for thee!
Come, for my Father calls.
Thou art my elected bride!'
And the Sultan's daughter
Followed him to his Father's garden.

Prince Henry. Wouldst thou have done so, Elsie?

Elsie. Yes, very gladly.

Prince Henry. Then the Celestial Bridegroom
Will come for thee also.
Upon thy forehead he will place,
Not his crown of thorns,
But a crown of roses.
In thy natal chamber,
Like Saint Cecilia,
Thou shalt hear sweet music
And breathe the fragrance
Of flowers immortal!
Go now and place these flowers
Before her picture.

STRASBURG AND THE CATHEDRAL

_A street in Strasburg. Night._ Prince Henry wandering alone, wrapped in a cloak.

Prince Henry. Still is the night. The sound of feet
Has died away from the empty street,
And like an artisan, bending down
His head on his anvil, the dark town
Sleeps, with a slumber deep and sweet.
Sleepless and restless, I alone,
In the dusk and damp of these walls of stone,
Wander and weep in my remorse!

_Crier of the Dead (ringing a bell)._  
  Wake! wake!
  All ye that sleep!
  Pray for the Dead!
  Pray for the Dead!

Prince Henry. Hark! with what accents loud and hoarse
This warder on the walls of death
Sends forth the challenge of his breath!
I see the dead that sleep in the grave!
They rise up and their garments wave,
Dimly and spectral, as they rise,
With the light of another world in their eyes!

*Crier of the Dead.*
Wake! wake!
All ye that sleep!
Pray for the Dead!
Pray for the Dead!

*Prince Henry.* Why for the dead, who are at rest?
Pray for the living, in whose breast
The struggle between right and wrong
Is raging terrible and strong,
As when good angels war with devils!
This is the Master of the Revels,
Who, at Life's flowing feast, proposes
The health of absent friends, and pledges,
Not in bright goblets crowned with roses,
And tinkling as we touch their edges,
But with his dismal, tinkling bell,
That mocks and mimics their funeral knell!

*Crier of the Dead.*
Wake! wake!
All ye that sleep!
Pray for the Dead!
Pray for the Dead!

*Prince Henry.* Wake not, beloved! be thy sleep
Silent as night is, and as deep!
There walks a sentinel at thy gate
Whose heart is heavy and desolate,
And the heavings of whose bosom number
The respirations of thy slumber,
As if some strange, mysterious fate
Had linked two hearts in one, and mine
Went madly wheeling about thine,
Only with wider and wilder sweep!

*Crier of the Dead (at a distance).*

Wake! wake!
All ye that sleep!
Pray for the Dead!
Pray for the Dead!

*Prince Henry.* Lo! with what depth of blackness thrown
Against the clouds, far up the skies
The walls of the cathedral rise,
Like a mysterious grove of stone,
With fitful lights and shadows blending,
As from behind, the moon, ascending,
Lights its dim aisles and paths unknown!
The wind is rising; but the boughs
Rise not and fall not with the wind
That through their foliage sob and soughs;
Only the cloudy rack behind,
Drifting onward, wild and ragged,
Gives to each spire and buttress jagged
A seeming motion undefined.
Below on the square, an armed knight,
Still as a statue and as white,
Sits on his steed, and the moonbeams quiver
Upon the points of his armour bright
As on the ripples of a river.
He lifts the visor from his cheek,
And beckons, and makes as he would speak.
FRIAR CLAUS IN THE CELLAR


Friar Claus. I always enter this sacred place
With a thoughtful, solemn, and reverent pace,
Pausing long enough on each stair
To breathe an ejaculatory prayer,
And a benediction on the vines
That produce these various sorts of wines!
For my part, I am well content
That we have got through with the tedious Lent!
Fasting is all very well for those
Who have to contend with invisible foes;
But I am quite sure it does not agree
With a quiet, peaceable man like me,
Who am not of that nervous and meagre kind
That are always distressed in body and mind!
And at times it really does me good
To come down among this brotherhood,
Dwelling for ever under ground,
Silent, contemplative, round and sound;
Each one old, and brown with mould,
But filled to the lips with the ardour of youth,
With the latent power and love of truth,
And with virtues fervent and manifold.

I have heard it said, that at Eastertide,
When buds are swelling on every side,
And the sap begins to move in the vine,
Then in all cellars, far and wide,
The oldest, as well as the newest, wine
Begins to stir itself, and ferment,
With a kind of revolt and discontent
At being so long in darkness pent,
And fain would burst from its sombre tun
To bask on the hillside in the sun;
As in the bosom of us poor friars,
The tumult of half-subdued desires
For the world that we have left behind
Disturbs at times all peace of mind!
And now that we have lived through Lent,
My duty it is, as often before,
To open awhile the prison-door,
And give these restless spirits vent.

Now here is a cask that stands alone,
And has stood a hundred years or more,
Its beard of cobwebs, long and hoar,
Trailing and sweeping along the floor,
Like Barbarossa, who sits in his cave,
Taciturn, sombre, sedate, and grave,
Till his beard has grown through the table of stone!
It is of the quick and not of the dead!
In its veins the blood is hot and red,
And a heart still beats in those ribs of oak
That time may have tamed, but has not broke.
It comes from Bacharach on the Rhine,
Is one of the three best kinds of wine,
And cost some hundred florins the ohm;
But that I do not consider dear,
When I remember that every year
Four butts are sent to the Pope of Rome.
And whenever a goblet thereof I drain,
The old rhyme keeps running in my brain:

At Bacharach on the Rhine,
At Hochheim on the Main,
And at Würzburg on the Stein,
Grow the three best kinds of wine!

They are all good wines, and better far
Than those of the Neckar, or those of the Ahr.
In particular Würzburg well may boast
Of its blessed wine of the Holy Ghost,
Which of all wines I like the most.
This I shall draw for the Abbot's drinking,
Who seems to be much of my way of thinking.

(Fills a flagon.)

Ah! how the streamlet laughs and sings!
What a delicious fragrance springs
From the deep flagon while it fills,
As of hyacinths and daffodils!
Between this cask and the Abbot's lips
Many have been the sips and slips;
Many have been the draughts of wine,
On their way to his, that have stopped at mine;
And many a time my soul has hankered
For a deep draught out of his silver tankard,
When it should have been busy with other affairs,
Less with its longings and more with its prayers.
But now there is no such awkward condition,
No danger of death and eternal perdition;
So here's to the Abbot and Brothers all,
Who dwell in this convent of Peter and Paul!

(He drinks.)
O cordial delicious! O soother of pain!
It flashes like sunshine into my brain!
A benison rest on the Bishop who sends
Such a fudder of wine as this to his friends!
And now a flagon for such as may ask
A draught from the noble Bacharach cask,
And I will be gone, though I know full well
The cellar's a cheerfuller place than the cell.
Behold where he stands, all sound and good,
Brown and old in his oaken hood;
Silent he seems externally
As any Carthusian monk may be;
But within, what a spirit of deep unrest!
What a seething and simmering in his breast!
As if the heaving of his great heart
Would burst his belt of oak apart!
Let me unloose this button of wood,
And quiet a little his turbulent mood.

(Sets it running.)

See! how its currents gleam and shine,
As if they had caught the purple hues
Of autumn sunsets on the Rhine,
Descending and mingling with the dews;
Or as if the grapes were stained with the blood
Of the innocent boy, who, some years back,
Was taken and crucified by the Jews,
In that ancient town of Bacharach;
Perdition upon those infidel Jews,
In that ancient town of Bacharach!
The beautiful town that gives us wine
With the fragrant odour of Muscadine!
I should deem it wrong to let this pass
Without first touching my lips to the glass,
For here in the midst of the current I stand,
Like the stone Pfalz in the midst of the river,
Taking toll upon either hand,
And much more grateful to the giver.

(He drinks.)

Here, now, is a very inferior kind,
Such as in any town you may find,
Such as one might imagine would suit
The rascal who drank wine out of a boot.
And, after all, it was not a crime,
For he won thereby Dorf Hüffelsheim.
A jolly old toper! who at a pull
Could drink a postilion's jack-boot full,
And ask with a laugh, when that was done,
If the fellow had left the other one!
This wine is as good as we can afford
To the friars, who sit at the lower board,
And cannot distinguish bad from good,
And are far better off than if they could,
Being rather the rude disciples of beer
Than of anything more refined and dear!

(Fills the other flagon and departs.)

THE ABBESS'S SOLILOQUY

The neighbouring Nunnery. The Abbess Irmingard
sitting with Elsie in the moonlight.

Irmingard. The night is silent, the wind is still,
The moon is looking from yonder hill
Down upon convent, and grove, and garden;
The clouds have passed away from her face,
Leaving behind them no sorrowful trace,
Only the tender and quiet grace
Of one, whose heart has been healed with pardon!

And such am I. My soul within
Was dark with passion and soiled with sin.
But now its wounds are healed again;
Gone are the anguish, the terror, and pain;
For across that desolate land of woe,
O'er whose burning sands I was forced to go,
A wind from heaven began to blow;
And all my being trembled and shook,
As the leaves of the tree, or the grass of the field,
And I was healed, as the sick are healed,
When fanned by the leaves of the Holy Book!

As thou sittest in the moonlight there,
Its glory flooding thy golden hair,
And the only darkness that which lies
In the haunted chambers of thine eyes,
I feel my soul drawn unto thee,
Strangely, and strongly, and more and more,
As to one I have known and loved before;
For every soul is akin to me
That dwells in the land of mystery!
I am the Lady Irmingard,
Born of a noble race and name!
Many a wandering Suabian bard,
Whose life was dreary, and bleak, and hard,
Has found through me the way to fame.
Brief and bright were those days, and the night
Which followed was full of a lurid light,
Love, that of every woman's heart
Will have the whole, and not a part,
That is to her, in Nature's plan,
More than ambition is to man,
Her light, her life, her very breath,
With no alternative but death,
Found me a maiden soft and young,
Just from the convent's cloistered school,
And seated on my lowly stool,
Attentive while the minstrels sung.

Gallant, graceful, gentle, tall,
Fairest, noblest, best of all,
Was Walter of the Vogelweid;
And, whatsoever may betide,
Still I think of him with pride!
His song was of the summer-time,
The very birds sang in his rhyme;
The sunshine, the delicious air,
The fragrance of the flowers, were there;
And I grew restless as I heard,
Restless and buoyant as a bird,
Down soft, aërial currents sailing,
O'er blossomed orchards, and fields in bloom,
And through the momentary gloom
Of shadows o'er the landscape trailing,
Yielding and borne I knew not where,
But feeling resistance unavailing.

And thus, unnoticed and apart,
And more by accident than choice,
I listened to that single voice
Until the chambers of my heart
Were filled with it by night and day.
One night—it was a night in May—
Within the garden, unawares,
Under the blossoms in the gloom,
I heard it utter my own name
With protestations and wild prayers;
And it rang through me, and became
Like the archangel's trump of doom,
Which the soul hears, and must obey;
And mine arose as from a tomb,
My former life now seemed to me
Such as hereafter death may be,
When in the great Eternity
We shall awake and find it day.
It was a dream, and would not stay;
A dream, that in a single night
Faded and vanished out of sight.
My father's anger followed fast
This passion, as a freshening blast
Seeks out and fans the fire, whose rage
It may increase, but not assuage.
And he exclaimed: 'No wandering bard
Shall win thy hand, O Irmingard!
For which Prince Henry of Hoheneck
By messenger and letter sues.'

Gently, but firmly, I replied:
'Henry of Hoheneck I discard!
Never the hand of Irmingard
Shall lie in his as the hand of a bride!'
This said I, Walter, for thy sake;
This said I, for I could not choose.
After a pause, my father spake
In that cold and deliberate tone
Which turns the hearer into stone,
And seems itself the act to be
That follows with such dread certainty;
'This, or the cloister and the veil!'
No other words than these he said,
But they were like a funeral wail;
My life was ended, my heart was dead.
That night from the castle-gate went down,
With silent, slow, and stealthy pace,
Two shadows, mounted on shadowy steeds,
Taking the narrow path that leads
Into the forest dense and brown.
In the leafy darkness of the place,
One could not distinguish form nor face,
Only a bulk without a shape,
A darker shadow in the shade;
One scarce could say it moved or stayed.
Thus it was we made our escape!
A foaming brook, with many a bound,
Followed us like a playful hound;
Then leaped before us, and in the hollow
Paused, and waited for us to follow,
And seemed impatient, and afraid
That our tardy flight should be betrayed
By the sound our horses' hoof-beats made
And when we reached the plain below,
We paused a moment and drew rein
To look back at the castle again;
And we saw the windows all aglow
With lights, that were passing to and fro:
Our hearts with terror ceased to beat;
The brook crept silent to our feet;
We knew what most we feared to know.
Then suddenly horns began to blow;
And we heard a shout, and a heavy tramp,
And our horses snorted in the damp
Night-air of the meadows green and wide,
And in a moment, side by side,
So close, they must have seemed but one,
The shadows across the moonlight run,
And another came, and swept behind,
Like the shadow of clouds before the wind!

How I remember that breathless flight,
Across the moors in a summer night!
How under our feet the long, white road
Backward like a river flowed,
Sweeping with its fences and hedges,
Whilst farther away, and overhead,
Paler than I, with fear and dread,
The moon fled with us, as we fled
Along the forest’s jagged edges!

All this I can remember well;
But of what afterwards befell
I nothing further can recall
Than a blind, desperate, headlong fall;
The rest is a blank and darkness all.
When I awoke out of this swoon,
The sun was shining, not the moon,
Making a cross upon the wall
With the bars of my windows narrow and tall;
And I prayed to it, as I had been wont to pray,
From early childhood, day by day,
Each morning, as in bed I lay!
I was lying again in my own room!
And I thanked God, in my fever and pain,
That those shadows on the midnight plain
Were gone, and could not come again!
I struggled no longer with my doom!

This happened many years ago.
I left my father's home to come
Like Catherine to her martyrdom,
For blindly I esteemed it so.
And when I heard the convent door
Behind me close, to ope no more,
I felt it smite me like a blow.
Through all my limbs a shudder ran,
And on my bruised spirit fell
The dampness of my narrow cell
As night-air on a wounded man,
Giving intolerable pain.

But now a better life began.
I felt the agony decrease
By slow degrees, then wholly cease,
Ending in perfect rest and peace!
It was not apathy, nor dulness,
That weighed and pressed upon my brain,
But the same passion I had given
To earth before, now turned to heaven
With all its overflowing fulness.

Alas! the world is full of peril!
The path that runs through the fairest meads,
On the sunniest side of the valley, leads
Into a region bleak and sterile!
Alike in the high-born and the lowly,  
The will is feeble, and passion strong.  
We cannot sever right from wrong;  
Some falsehood mingles with all truth;  
Nor is it strange the heart of youth  
Should waver and comprehend but slowly  
The things that are holy and unholy!  
But in this sacred, calm retreat,  
We are all well and safely shielded  
From winds that blow, and waves that beat,  
From the cold, and rain, and blighting heat,  
To which the strongest hearts have yielded.  
Here we stand as the Virgins Seven,  
For our celestial bridegroom yearning;  
Our hearts are lamps for ever burning,  
With a steady and unwavering flame,  
Pointing upward, for ever the same,  
Steadily upward toward the heaven!

The moon is hidden behind a cloud;  
A sudden darkness fills the room,  
And thy deep eyes, amid the gloom,  
Shine like jewels in a shroud.  
On the leaves is a sound of falling rain;  
A bird, awakened in its nest,  
Gives a faint twitter of unrest,  
Then smooths its plumes and sleeps again.  
No other sounds than these I hear;  
The hour of midnight must be near.  
Thou art o’erspent with the day’s fatigue  
Of riding many a dusty league;  
Sink, then, gently to thy slumber;  
Me so many cares encumber,
So many ghosts, and forms of fright,
Have started from their graves to-night,
They have driven sleep from mine eyes away:
I will go down to the chapel and pray.

LUCIFER AT SALERN

*Enter* Lucifer as a Doctor.

*Lucifer.* This is the great school of Salern!
A land of wrangling and of quarrel,
Of brains that seethe, and hearts that burn,
Where every emulous scholar hears,
In every breath that comes to his ears,
The rustling of another's laurels!
The air of the place is called salubrious;
The neighbourhood of Vesuvius lends it
An odour volcanic, that rather mends it,
And the buildings have an aspect lugubrious,
That inspires a feeling of awe and terror
Into the heart of the beholder,
And befits such an ancient homestead of error,
Where the old falsehoods moulder and smoulder,
And yearly by many hundred hands
Are carried away, in the zeal of youth,
And sown like tares in the field of truth,
To blossom and ripen in other lands.

What have we here, affixed to the gate?
The challenge of some scholastic wight,
Who wishes to hold a public debate
On sundry questions wrong or right!
Ah, now this is my great delight!
For I have often observed of late
That such discussions end in a fight.
Let us see what the learned wag maintains
With such a prodigal waste of brains.

(Reads.)

'Whether angels in moving from place to place
Pass through the intermediate space;
Whether God himself is the author of evil,
Or whether that is the work of the Devil;
When, where, and wherefore Lucifer fell,
And whether he now is chained in hell.'

I think I can answer that question well!
So long as the boastful human mind
Consents in such mills as this to grind,
I sit very firmly upon my throne!
Of a truth it almost makes me laugh,
To see men leaving the golden grain
To gather in piles the pitiful chaff
That old Peter Lombard thrashed with his brain,
To have it caught up and tossed again
On the horns of the Dumb Ox of Cologne!

But my guests approach! there is in the air
A fragrance, like that of the Beautiful Garden
Of Paradise, in the days that were!
An odour of innocence, and of prayer,
And of love, and faith that never fails,
Such as the fresh young heart exhales
Before it begins to wither and harden!
I cannot breathe such an atmosphere!
My soul is filled with a nameless fear,
That, after all my trouble and pain,
After all my restless endeavour,
The youngest, fairest soul of the twain,
The most ethereal, most divine,
Will escape from my hands for ever and ever.
But the other is already mine!
Let him live to corrupt his race,
Breathing among them, with every breath,
Weakness, selfishness, and the base
And pusillanimous fear of death.
I know his nature, and I know
That of all who in my ministry
Wander the great earth to and fro,
And on my errands come and go,
The safest and subtlest are such as he.

THE COTTAGE

The Cottage in the Odenwald. Ursula spinning.
Summer afternoon. A table spread.

Ursula. I have marked it well,—it must be true,—
Death never takes one alone, but two!
Whenever he enters in at a door,
Under roof of gold or roof of thatch,
He always leaves it upon the latch,
And comes again ere the year is o’er.
Never one of a household only!
Perhaps it is a mercy of God,
Lest the dead there under the sod,
In the land of strangers, should be lonely!
Ah me! I think I am lonelier here!
It is hard to go,—but harder to stay!

(Looking through the open door.)
Who is it coming under the trees?  
A man, in the Prince’s livery dressed!  
He looks about him with doubtful face,  
As if uncertain of the place.  
He stops at the beehives;—now he sees  
The garden gate;—he is going past!  
Can he be afraid of the bees?  
No; he is coming in at last!  
He fills my heart with strange alarm!  

(Enter a Forester.)

Forester. Is this the tenant Gottlieb’s farm?  
Ursula. This is his farm, and I his wife.  
Pray sit. What may your business be?  
Forester. News from the Prince!  
Ursula. Of death or life?  
Forester. You put your questions eagerly!  
Ursula. Answer me, then! How is the Prince?  
Forester. I left him only two hours since  
Homeward returning down the river,  
As strong and well as if God, the Giver,  
Had given him back his youth again.  
Ursula (despairingly). Then Elsie, my poor child,  
is dead!  
Forester. That, my good woman, I have not said.  
Don’t cross the bridge till you come to it,  
Is a proverb old, and of excellent wit.  
Ursula. Keep me no longer in this pain!  
Forester. It is true your daughter is no more;  
That is, the peasant she was before.  
Ursula. Alas! I am simple and lowly bred,  
I am poor, distracted, and forlorn,  
And it is not well that you of the court  
Should mock me thus, and make a sport
Of a joyless mother whose child is dead,  
For you, too, were of mother born!  

_Forester._ Your daughter lives, and the Prince is well!  
You will learn ere long how it all befell.  
Her heart for a moment never failed;  
But when they reached Salerno's gate,  
The Prince's nobler self prevailed,  
And saved her for a nobler fate.  
And he was healed, in his despair,  
By the touch of St. Matthew's sacred bones;  
Though I think the long ride in the open air,  
That pilgrimage over stocks and stones,  
In the miracle must come in for a share!  

_Ursula._ Virgin! who loveth the poor and lowly,  
If the loud cry of a mother's heart  
Can ever ascend to where thou art,  
Into thy blessed hands and holy  
Receive my prayer of praise and thanksgiving!  
Let the hands that bore our Saviour bear it  
Into the awful presence of God;  
For thy feet with holiness are shod,  
And if thou bearest it he will hear it.  
Our child who was dead again is living!  

_Forester._ I did not tell you she was dead;  
If thou thought so 'twas no fault of mine;  
At this very moment, while I speak,  
They are sailing homeward down the Rhine,  
In a splendid barge, with golden prow,  
And decked with banners white and red  
As the colours on your daughter's cheek.  
They call her the Lady Alicia now;  
For the Prince in Salerno made a vow  
That Elsie only would he wed.
PRINCE HENRY. We are alone. The wedding guests
Ride down the hill, with plumes and cloaks.
(The Golden Legend.)
Ursula. Jesu Maria! what a change,
All seems to me so weird and strange!

Forester. I saw her standing on the deck,
Beneath an awning cool and shady;
Her cap of velvet could not hold
The tresses of her hair of gold,
That flowed and floated like the stream,
And fell in masses down her neck.
As fair and lovely did she seem
As in a story or a dream
Some beautiful and foreign lady.
And the Prince looked so grand and proud,
And waved his hand thus to the crowd
That gazed and shouted from the shore,
All down the river, long and loud.

Ursula. We shall behold our child once more;
She is not dead! She is not dead!
God, listening, must have overheard
The prayers, that, without sound or word,
Our hearts in secrecy have said!

HENRY AND ELSIE

The Castle of Vautsburg on the Rhine. Prince Henry
and Elsie standing on the terrace at evening. The
sound of bells heard from a distance.

Prince Henry. We are alone. The wedding guests
Ride down the hill, with plumes and cloaks,
And the descending dark invests
The Niederwald, and all the nests
Among its hoar and haunted oaks.
Elsie. What bells are those, that ring so slow,
So mellow, musical, and low?

Prince Henry. They are the bells of Geisenheim,
That with their melancholy chime
Ring out the curfew of the sun.

Elsie. Listen, beloved.

Prince Henry. They are done.

Dear Elsie! many years ago
Those same soft bells at eventide
Rang in the ears of Charlemagne,
As, seated by Fastrada’s side
At Ingelheim, in all his pride,
He heard their sound with secret pain.

Elsie. Their voices only speak to me
Of peace and deep tranquillity,
And endless confidence in thee.

Prince Henry. Thou knowest the story of her ring,
How, when the court went back to Aix,
Fastrada died; and how the king
Sat watching by her night and day
Till into one of the blue lakes,
Which water that delicious land,
They cast the ring drawn from her hand;
And the great monarch sat serene
And sad beside the fated shore,
Nor left the land for evermore.

Elsie. That was true love.

Prince Henry. For him the queen
Ne’er did what thou hast done for me.

Elsie. Wilt thou as fond and faithful be?
Wilt thou so love me after death?

Prince Henry. In life’s delight, in death’s dismay,
In storm and sunshine, night and day,
In health, in sickness, in decay,
Here and hereafter, I am thine!
Thou hast Fastrada's ring. Beneath
The calm blue waters of thine eyes
Deep in thy steadfast soul it lies,
And, undisturbed by this world's breath,
With magic light its jewels shine!
This golden ring, which thou hast worn
Upon thy finger since the morn,
Is but a symbol and a semblance,
An outward fashion, a remembrance,
Of what thou wearest within unseen,
O my Fastrada, O my queen!
Behold! the hill-tops all aglow
With purple and with amethyst;
While the whole valley deep below
Is filled, and seems to overflow,
With a fast-rising tide of mist.
The evening air grows damp and chill;
Let us go in.

_Elsie._ Ah, not so soon.
See yonder fire! it is the moon
Slow rising o'er the eastern hill.
It glimmers on the forest tips,
And through the dewy foliage drips
In little rivulets of light,
And makes the heart in love with night.

_Prince Henry._ Oft on this terrace, when the day
Was closing, have I stood and gazed,
And seen the landscape fade away,
And the white vapours rise and drown
Hamlet and vineyard, tower and town,
While far above the hill-tops blazed.
But then another hand than thine
Was gently held and clasped in mine;
Another head upon my breast
Was laid, as thine is now, at rest.
Why dost thou lift those tender eyes
With so much sorrow and surprise?
A minstrel’s, not a maiden’s hand,
Was that which in my own was pressed.
A manly form usurped thy place,
A beautiful, but bearded face,
That now is in the Holy Land,
Yet in my memory from afar
Is shining on us like a star.
But linger not. For while I speak,
A sheeted spectre white and tall,
The cold mist, climbs the castle wall,
And lays his hand upon thy cheek!

(They go in.)
NOTES

Page 6, l. 16. *Hymn to the Night.*—The motto translated by Longfellow in the last line but one of this piece, viz. 'The welcome, the thrice-prayed-for, the most fair,' is from Homer, Iliad, bk. vii. 448.

P. 20. *Skeleton in Armour.*—Longfellow has a note of his own dealing at some length with the subject of this poem, which connects the old tradition of an early discovery of the mainland of America by the Norsemen, with an actual round tower at Newport, and an actual dug-up skeleton in armour.

P. 46. *Belfry of Bruges,* l. 19.—The Foresters of Flanders: the title of Foresters was given to the early Governors of Flanders, who received their appointment from the King of France.

P. 48, l. 4. *Knights who bore the Fleece of Gold.*—Philip le Bon, when he married Isabella of Portugal, on January 10, 1439, instituted on the same day the Order of the Golden Fleece.

P. 48, l. 19. *The Bloody Battle of the Spurs of Gold.*—Fought under the walls of Courtray (July 11, 1302), between the French and the Flemings, the former commanded by Robert Comte d'Artois, and the latter by Guillaume de Juliers and Jean Comte de Namur. The French were completely routed, and from the large number of gold spurs found on the dead knights the affair received the name the 'Battle of the Spurs of Gold.'

P. 50, l. 11. *The Poet Melchior.*—Melchior Pfinzing, a famous German poet of the sixteenth century, author of *Teuerdank.*

P. 52, l. 7. *The Twelve Wise Masters.*—The original Corporation of the Meistersingers.

P. 61. *The Occultation of Orion.*—Longfellow acknowledges the incorrectness of this title. A star can be 'occulted,' but not a constellation.
P. 132. *Something Left Undone.*—Compare this with the ‘Psalm of Life’ in the poem imitated by Baudelaire.

P. 173. *Translations.*—The combined excellence and abundance of Longfellow's translations make selection equally necessary and difficult. Those chosen here, are, I believe, fairly representative, and the last stanza of the Prelude, which he prefixed to his last bundle of experiments, should be noted:—

'I have but marked the place,
   But half the secret told;
   That following this slight trace
   Others might find the gold.'

P. 186. *The Spanish Student.*—Victorian, a student of Alcala, but of noble blood, loves Preciosa, a (supposed) gipsy dancing girl. She has another, but a dishonourable, lover in the Count of Liora.

P. 196. *Evangeline.*—The story of this poem is almost universally known. The heroine, the daughter of an Acadian (Nova Scotian) farmer in mid-eighteenth century, is betrothed to Gabriel, the son of the village blacksmith. The Acadians, having been disloyal to the Government, are deported from their country and located in different parts of the (present) United States. The lovers were separated, and never met till Gabriel was on his deathbed.

P. 215. *Hiawatha.*—The story is made up out of Algonquin and other Indian tribal legends. The hero, who is the son of the West Wind, teaches his people many new customs and arts, amongst other things the invention of music.

P. 279. *The Golden Legend.*—Prince Henry of Hoheneck suffers from a mysterious disease for which the only cure is said to be the love of a pure maiden who consents to die for him. Elsie, the daughter of one of his vassals, offers herself for the sacrifice, but before it the pair journey to Salerno, the great medical school of Italy, to seek advice. The Evil One, who has persecuted the Prince throughout, appears as a doctor, and the tragedy is about to take place. But at the last moment Prince Henry's better nature prevails. He refuses the sacrifice, rescues Elsie from the fiend, and the pair are wedded.
GLOSSARY

The numbers refer to the page and the line of the text wherein the word explained occurs

Adjidaumo (sub.), the red squirrel (Amer. Ind.), 229, 2
Afreet (sub.), genii, 123, 10. Cf. Arabian Nights
Ahkosewin (sub.), fever (Amer. Ind.), 261, 26
Almoner (sub.), dispenser of bounties, 74, 14
Apukwa (sub.), a bulrush (Amer. Ind.), 224, 14
Arbute (sub.), the arbutus, a plant of the creeper type, 60, 20

Baim-wawa (sub.), the rolling sound of the thunder (Amer. Ind.), 226, 10
Bemahgut (sub.), grape vine (Amer. Ind.), 230, 15
Bena (sub.), the pheasant (Amer. Ind.), 229, 28
Bukadawin (sub.), famine (Amer. Ind.), 261, 24

Chimborazo (sub.), a towering peak in the Andes, 60, 11
Coromandel (sub.), a portion of the east coast of the mighty peninsula of Hindostan, 60, 4
Corybanites (sub.), the priests of Cybele in ancient Greece, 108, 19

Eld (sub.), long ago, 2, 21
Esa (interj.), shame on you (Amer. Ind.), 240, 13
Euroclydon (sub.), a rushing mighty wind, 17, 29

Flagging (sub.), pavement, 283, 15

Gitche Gumee, Big-Sea-Water—Lake Superior (Amer. Ind.), 238, 1
Gitche Manito, the Great Spirit, the Master of Life (Amer. Ind.), 215, 3
Hesperides (sub.), Isles of the Blest, 120, 13
Hidalgos, the nobility of Spain of the lowest class, famed for their pride and poverty, 115, 25
Hippocrene (sub.), a rare kind of Greek wine: sometimes called Hippocras during later ages, 38, 14

Ishkoodah (sub.), fire, also the comet (Amer. Ind.), 215, 11

Kabibonokka (sub.), North Wind (Amer. Ind.), 224, 26
Kago (verb neg.), do not (Amer. Ind.), 224, 19
Kahgahgee (sub.), raven (Amer. Ind.), 234, 10
Kaween (neg. adv.), no indeed (Amer. Ind.), 224, 20
Kayoshk (sub.), sea-gull (Amer. Ind.), 243, 7
Kee-way-din (sub.), the North-West Wind, the Home Wind (Amer. Ind.), 227, 10
Kenabeeks (sub.), a serpent (Amer. Ind.), 227, 2
Keneu (sub.), the great eagle (Amer. Ind.), 225, 33
Kirtle (sub.), a short skirt, 198, 13
Koko-koho (sub.), the owl (Amer. Ind.), 255, 26

Lea (sub.), a plain, meadow, 103, 8

Mahnomonee (sub.), wild rice (Amer. Ind.), 230, 11
Mandrake (sub.), a plant supposed to be a sovereign specific for madness, if plucked at night, 193, 17
Maskenozha (sub.), the pike (Amer. Ind.), 230, 27
Menahga (sub.), blueberry (Amer. Ind.), 230, 12
Minjekahwun (sub.), Hiawatha’s mittens (Amer. Ind.), 220, 23
Minnehaha (sub.), laughing water (Amer. Ind.), 227, 33
Mishe-Mokwa (sub.), the great bear (Amer. Ind.), 227, 3
Mishe-Nahma (sub.), the great sturgeon (Amer. Ind.), 238, 6
Moundamin (sub.), Indian corn (Amer. Ind.), 231, 29
Mows (sub.), cocks, haycocks, 267, 6
Muajekteewis (sub.), the West Wind, father of Hiawatha (Amer. Ind.), 221, 4
Muskoday (sub.), meadow (Amer. Ind.), 230, 10

 Nahma (sub.), sturgeon (Amer. Ind.), 230, 23
Odahmin (sub.), strawberry (Amer. Ind.), 230, 13
Okakahvis (sub.), herring (Amer. Ind.), 230, 23
Omeme (sub.), the pigeon (Amer. Ind.), 230, 1
Opechee (sub.), robin (Amer. Ind.), 252, 33
Orestes (sub.), Grecian hero, son of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, who slew his mother and Aegistheus for their murder of Agamemnon, 6, 13
Owaissa (sub.), blue-bird (Amer. Ind.), 252, 30

Pauguk (sub.), death (Amer. Ind.), 227, 6
Peboan (sub.), winter (Amer. Ind.), 254, 12
Pentecost (sub.), an ecclesiastical festival held in commemoration of the conferring of the tongues of fire upon the Apostles (Acts ii. 1-4), 3, 1; also 19, 3
Ponemah (sub.), the land of spirits, the hereafter (Amer. Ind.), 255, 31
Potosi (sub.), the richest silver mines of South America were situated here, 60, 12
Pukwana (sub.), smoke (Amer. Ind.), 216, 25

Roland (sub.), nephew of Charlemagne: killed by treachery in the Pass of Roncesvalles by the Moors, 49, 2

Sahwa, the yellow perch (Amer. Ind.) 230, 25
Shahbomin (sub.), gooseberry (Amer. Ind.), 230, 14
Shah-shah (adv.), long ago (Amer. Ind.), 227, 13
Shawgashee (sub.), crawfish (Amer. Ind.), 230, 29
Shawondasee (sub.), the South Wind (Amer. Ind.), 224, 25
Shuh-shuh-gah (sub.), heron (Amer. Ind.), 232, 16
Sierra (sub.), mountain peak, 132, 11
Skoal (sub.), health (Scandin.), 25, 27

Tenebrous (adj.), dark, 203, 16

Ugudwash (sub.), sun-fish (Amer. Ind.), 240, 20

Viking (sub.), the warrior chiefs of the Norsemen, 20, 17
Wabasso (sub.), rabbit (Amer. Ind.), 252, 22
Wabun (sub.), the East Wind (Amer. Ind.), 224, 24
Wahonowin (interj.), cry of lamentation (Amer. Ind.), 264, 8
Wampum (sub.), beads of shell (Amer. Ind.), 221, 18
Wawa (sub.), the wild goose (Amer. Ind.), 230, 3
Wawbeek (sub.), a rock (Amer. Ind.), 223, 33
Wawonaissa (sub.), whip-poor-will (Amer. Ind.), 234, 17
Wendigoes (sub.), giants (Amer. Ind.), 227, 1
Wimpling (adj.), gently rippling, 203, 5
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I know a maiden fair to see
I lay upon the headland-height, and listened
I like that ancient Saxon phrase, which calls
In broad daylight, and at noon
In his chamber, weak and dying
In the Acadian land, on the shores of the Basin of Minas
In the ancient town of Bruges
In the long, sleepless watches of the night
In the market-place of Bruges stands the belfry old and brown
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Into the Silent Land!
I saw, as in a dream sublime
I saw the long line of the vacant shore
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Maiden! with the meek brown eyes
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