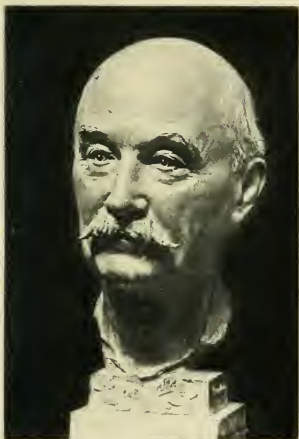


SELECTED POEMS  
OF  
THOMAS HARDY



*By Hans Thornycroft R.S.A.*

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1922

4741

F16

cop. 2

# CONTENTS

## PART I

### POEMS CHIEFLY LYRICAL

	PAGE
AFTER THE VISIT . . . . .	3
TO MEET, OR OTHERWISE . . . . .	5
THE DIFFERENCE . . . . .	7
ON THE DEPARTURE PLATFORM . . . . .	8
IN A CATHEDRAL CITY . . . . .	10
"I SAY I'LL SEEK HER" . . . . .	11
SONG OF HOPE . . . . .	12
BEFORE AND AFTER SUMMER . . . . .	14
FIRST SIGHT OF HER AND AFTER . . . . .	15
THE SUN ON THE BOOKCASE . . . . .	16
"WHEN I SET OUT FOR LYONNESSE" . . . . .	17
AT THE WORD "FAREWELL" . . . . .	18
DITTY . . . . .	20
THE NIGHT OF THE DANCE . . . . .	22
TO LIZBIE BROWNE . . . . .	23
"LET ME ENJOY" . . . . .	26
THE BALLAD-SINGER . . . . .	27
THE DIVISION . . . . .	28
YELL'HAM-WOOD'S STORY . . . . .	29

2032825

	PAGE
HER INITIALS . . . . .	30
THE WOUND . . . . .	31
A MERRYMAKING IN QUESTION . . . . .	32
“HOW GREAT MY GRIEF” . . . . .	33
AT AN INN . . . . .	34
A BROKEN APPOINTMENT . . . . .	36
AT NEWS OF A WOMAN'S DEATH . . . . .	37
MIDDLE-AGE ENTHUSIASMS . . . . .	39
IN A EWELEAZE . . . . .	41
A SPOT . . . . .	42
THE DARKLING THRUSH . . . . .	43
THE TEMPORARY THE ALL . . . . .	45
THE GHOST OF THE PAST . . . . .	47
THE SELF-UNSEEING . . . . .	49
TO LIFE . . . . .	50
UNKNOWING . . . . .	51
AT HIS FUNERAL . . . . .	53
NEWS FOR HER MOTHER . . . . .	54
LOST LOVE . . . . .	56
WHERE THE PICNIC WAS . . . . .	57
THE GOING . . . . .	59
“I FOUND HER OUT THERE” . . . . .	61
WITHOUT CEREMONY . . . . .	63
THE VOICE . . . . .	64
A DREAM OR NO . . . . .	65
AFTER A JOURNEY . . . . .	67
BEENY CLIFF . . . . .	69
AT CASTLE BOTEREL . . . . .	71

# CONTENTS

vii

PAGE

THE PHANTOM HORSEWOMAN . . . . .	73
ON A MIDSUMMER EVE . . . . .	75
"MY SPIRIT WILL NOT HAUNT THE MOUND" . . . . .	76
THE HOUSE OF HOSPITALITIES . . . . .	77
"SHUT OUT THAT MOON" . . . . .	78
"REGRET NOT ME" . . . . .	79
IN THE MIND'S EYE . . . . .	81
AMABEL . . . . .	82
"I SAID TO LOVE" . . . . .	84
REMINISCENCES OF A DANCING MAN . . . . .	86
IN A WOOD . . . . .	88
HE ABJURES LOVE . . . . .	90
THE DREAM-FOLLOWER . . . . .	92
WESSEX HEIGHTS . . . . .	93
TO A MOTHERLESS CHILD . . . . .	96
"I NEED NOT GO" . . . . .	97
SHELLEY'S SKYLARK . . . . .	99
WIVES IN THE SERE . . . . .	101
TO AN UNBORN PAUPER CHILD . . . . .	102
THE DEAD MAN WALKING . . . . .	104
"I LOOK INTO MY GLASS" . . . . .	106
EXEUNT OMNES . . . . .	107

## PART II

### POEMS NARRATIVE AND REFLECTIVE

PAYING CALLS . . . . .	111
FRIENDS BEYOND . . . . .	112

	PAGE
IN FRONT OF THE LANDSCAPE . . . . .	115
THE CONVERGENCE OF THE TWAIN . . . . .	119
THE SCHRECKHORN . . . . .	122
GEORGE MEREDITH . . . . .	123
A SINGER ASLEEP . . . . .	124
IN THE MOONLIGHT . . . . .	127
A CHURCH ROMANCE . . . . .	128
THE ROMAN ROAD . . . . .	129
THE OXEN . . . . .	130
SHE HEARS THE STORM . . . . .	131
AFTER THE LAST BREATH . . . . .	132
NIGHT IN THE OLD HOME . . . . .	134
THE DEAR . . . . .	136
ONE WE KNEW . . . . .	137
NEUTRAL TONES . . . . .	139
TO HIM . . . . .	140
ROME : THE VATICAN—SALA DELLE MUSE . . . . .	141
ROME : AT THE PYRAMID OF CESTIUS . . . . .	143
ON AN INVITATION TO THE UNITED STATES . . . . .	145
AT A LUNAR ECLIPSE . . . . .	146
THE SUBALTERNS . . . . .	147
THE SLEEP-WORKER . . . . .	149
BEYOND THE LAST LAMP . . . . .	150
THE FACE AT THE CASEMENT . . . . .	152
THE DEAD QUIRE . . . . .	155
THE PINE-PLANTERS . . . . .	161
THE BURGHERS . . . . .	163
THE CORONATION . . . . .	167

# CONTENTS

ix

	PAGE
A COMMONPLACE DAY . . . . .	170
HER DEATH AND AFTER . . . . .	172
IN DEATH DIVIDED . . . . .	178
IN TENEBRIS . . . . .	180
“I HAVE LIVED WITH SHADES” . . . . .	182
A POET . . . . .	184

## PART III

### WAR POEMS, AND LYRICS FROM “THE DYNASTS”

EMBARKATION . . . . .	187
DEPARTURE . . . . .	188
THE GOING OF THE BATTERY . . . . .	189
DRUMMER HODGE . . . . .	191
THE MAN HE KILLED . . . . .	192
THE SOULS OF THE SLAIN . . . . .	193
“MEN WHO MARCH AWAY” . . . . .	199
BEFORE MARCHING, AND AFTER . . . . .	201
IN TIME OF “THE BREAKING OF NATIONS” . . . . .	203
FROM “THE DYNASTS”—	
THE NIGHT OF TRAFALGAR . . . . .	204
HUSSAR’S SONG: “BUDMOUTH DEARS” . . . . .	206
“MY LOVE’S GONE A-FIGHTING” . . . . .	208
THE EVE OF WATERLOO . . . . .	209
CHORUS OF THE PITIES . . . . .	211
LAST CHORUS . . . . .	213



PART I  
POEMS CHIEFLY LYRICAL





## AFTER THE VISIT

(To F. E. D.)

COME again to the place  
Where your presence was as a leaf that skims  
Down a drouthy way whose ascent bedims  
The bloom on the farer's face.

Come again, with the feet  
That were light on the green as a thistledown  
ball,  
And those mute ministrations to one and to all  
Beyond a man's saying sweet.

Until then the faint scent  
Of the bordering flowers swam unheeded away,  
And I marked not the charm in the changes of  
day  
As the cloud-colours came and went.

Through the dark corridors  
Your walk was so soundless I did not know  
Your form from a phantom's of long ago  
Said to pass on the ancient floors,

Till you drew from the shade,  
And I saw the large luminous living eyes  
Regard me in fixed inquiring-wise  
As those of a soul that weighed,

Scarce consciously,  
The eternal question of what Life was,  
And why we were there, and by whose strange  
laws  
That which mattered most could not be.

## TO MEET, OR OTHERWISE

WHETHER to sally and see thee, girl of my  
dreams,  
Or whether to stay  
And see thee not ! How vast the difference  
seems  
Of Yea from Nay  
Just now. Yet this same sun will slant its  
beams  
At no far day  
On our two mounds, and then what will the  
difference weigh !

Yet I will see thee, maiden dear, and make  
The most I can  
Of what remains to us amid this brake  
Cimmerian  
Through which we grope, and from whose  
thorns we ache,  
While still we scan  
Round our frail faltering progress for some path  
or plan.

By briefest meeting something sure is won ;  
It will have been :

6 TO MEET, OR OTHERWISE

Nor God nor Demon can undo the done,  
    Unsight the seen,  
Make muted music be as unbegun,  
    Though things terrene  
Groan in their bondage till oblivion supervene.

So, to the one long-sweeping symphony  
    From times remote  
Till now, of human tenderness, shall we  
    Supply one note,  
Small and untraced, yet that will ever be  
    Somewhere afloat  
Amid the spheres, as part of sick Life's antidote.

## ON THE DEPARTURE PLATFORM

WE kissed at the barrier ; and passing through  
She left me, and moment by moment got  
Smaller and smaller, until to my view  
    She was but a spot ;

A wee white spot of muslin fluff  
That down the diminishing platform bore  
Through hustling crowds of gentle and rough  
    To the carriage door.

Under the lamplight's fitful glowers,  
Behind dark groups from far and near  
Whose interests were apart from ours,  
    She would disappear,

Then show again, till I ceased to see  
That flexible form, that nebulous white ;  
And she who was more than my life to me  
    Had vanished quite. . . .

We have penned new plans since that fair fond  
    day,  
And in season she will appear again—

Perhaps in the same soft white array—  
But never as then !

—“ And why, young man, must eternally fly  
A joy you'll repeat, if you love her well ? ”

—O friend, nought happens twice thus ; why,  
I cannot tell !

## IN A CATHEDRAL CITY

THESE people have not heard your name ;  
No loungers in this placid place  
Have helped to bruit your beauty's fame.

The grey Cathedral, towards whose face  
Bend eyes untold, has met not yours ;  
Your shade has never swept its base,

Your form has never darked its doors,  
Nor have your faultless feet once thrown  
A pensive pit-pat on its floors.

Along the street to maidens known  
Blithe lovers hum their tender airs,  
But in your praise voice not a tone. . . .

—Since nought bespeaks you here, or bears  
As I, your imprint through and through  
Here might I rest, till my heart shares  
The spot's unconsciousness of you !

SALISBURY.



“ I SAY I’LL SEEK HER ”

I SAY, “ I’ll seek her side  
Ere hindrance interposes ” ;  
But eve in midnight closes,  
And here I still abide.

When darkness wears I see  
Her sad eyes in a vision ;  
They ask, “ What indecision  
Detains you, Love, from me ?—

“ The creaking hinge is oiled,  
I have unbarred the backway,  
But you tread not the trackway ;  
And shall the thing be spoiled ?

“ Far cockcrows echo shrill,  
The shadows are abating,  
And I am waiting, waiting ;  
But O, you tarry still ! ”

## SONG OF HOPE

O SWEET To-morrow !—  
    After to-day  
    There will away  
This sense of sorrow.  
Then let us borrow  
Hope, for a gleaming  
Soon will be streaming,  
    Dimmed by no gray—  
    No gray !

While the winds wing us  
    Sighs from The Gone,  
    Nearer to dawn  
Minute-beats bring us ;  
When there will sing us  
Larks, of a glory  
Waiting our story  
    Further anon—  
    Anon !

Doff the black token,  
    Don the red shoon,  
    Right and retune  
Viol-strings broken ;

Null the words spoken  
In speeches of rueing,  
The night cloud is hueing,  
    To-morrow shines soon—  
        Shines soon !

## BEFORE AND AFTER SUMMER

### I

Looking forward to the spring  
One puts up with anything.  
On this February day,  
Though the winds leap down the street  
Wintry scourgings seem but play,  
And these later shafts of sleet  
—Sharper pointed than the first—  
And these later snows—the worst—  
Are as a half-transparent blind  
Riddled by rays from sun behind.

### II

Shadows of the October pine  
Reach into this room of mine :  
On the pine there swings a bird ;  
He is shadowed with the tree.  
Mutely perched he bills no word ;  
Blank as I am even is he.  
For those happy suns are past,  
Fore-discerned in winter last.  
When went by their pleasure, then ?  
I, alas, perceivéd not when.

## FIRST SIGHT OF HER AND AFTER

A DAY is drawing to its fall  
I had not dreamed to see ;  
The first of many to enthrall  
My spirit, will it be ?  
Or is this eve the end of all  
Such new delight for me ?

I journey home : the pattern grows  
Of moon-shades on the way :  
“ Soon the first quarter, I suppose,”  
Sky-glancing travellers say.  
I realize that it, for those,  
Has been a common day.

## THE SUN ON THE BOOKCASE

(*Student's Love-song*: 1870)

ONCE more the cauldron of the sun  
Smears the bookcase with winy red,  
And here my page is, and there my bed,  
And the apple-tree shadows travel along  
Soon their intangible track will be run,  
    And dusk grow strong  
    And they have fled.

Yes: now the boiling ball is gone.  
And I have wasted another day. . . .  
But wasted—*wasted*, do I say?  
Is it a waste to have imaged one  
Beyond the hills there, who, anon,  
    My great deeds done,  
    Will be mine alway?

“WHEN I SET OUT FOR LYONNESSE”

(1870)

WHEN I set out for Lyonesse,  
A hundred miles away,  
The rime was on the spray,  
And starlight lit my lonesomeness  
When I set out for Lyonesse  
A hundred miles away.

What would bechance at Lyonesse  
While I should sojourn there  
No prophet durst declare,  
Nor did the wisest wizard guess  
What would bechance at Lyonesse  
While I should sojourn there.

When I came back from Lyonesse  
With magic in my eyes,  
All marked with mute surmise  
My radiance rare and fathomless,  
When I came back from Lyonesse  
With magic in my eyes!

## AT THE WORD "FAREWELL"

SHE looked like a bird from a cloud  
On the clammy lawn,  
Moving alone, bare-browed,  
In the dim of dawn.  
The candles alight in the room  
For my parting meal  
Made all things withoutdoors loom  
Strange, ghostly, unreal.

The hour itself was a ghost,  
And it seemed to me then  
As of chances the chance furthestmost  
I should see her again.  
I beheld not where all was so fleet  
That a Plan of the past  
Which had ruled us from birthtime to meet  
Was accomplished at last.

No prelude did I there perceive  
To a drama at all,  
Or foreshadow what fortune might weave  
From beginnings so small.



But I rose as if quicked by a spur  
I was bound to obey,  
And stepped through the casement to her  
Still alone in the gray.

"I am leaving you. . . . Farewell!" I said  
As I followed her on  
By an alley bare boughs overspread:  
"I soon must be gone!"  
Even then the scale might have been turned  
Against love by a feather,  
—But crimson one cheek of hers burned  
When we came in together.

## DITTY

(E. L. G.)

BENEATH a knap where flown  
    Nestlings play,  
Within walls of weathered stone,  
    Far away  
From the files of formal houses,  
By the bough the firstling browses,  
Lives a Sweet : no merchants meet,  
No man barter, no man sells  
    Where she dwells.

Upon that fabric fair  
    “ Here is she ! ”  
Seems written everywhere  
    Unto me.  
But to friends and nodding neighbours,  
Fellow-wights in lot and labours,  
Who descry the times as I,  
No such lucid legend tells  
    Where she dwells.

Should I lapse to what I was  
    Ere we met ;

(Such will not be, but because  
Some forget  
Let me feign it)—none would notice  
That where she I know by rote is  
Spread a strange and withering change,  
Like a drying of the wells  
Where she dwells.

To feel I might have kissed—  
Loved as true—  
Otherwhere, nor Mine have missed  
My life through,  
Had I never wandered near her,  
Is a smart severe—severer  
In the thought that she is nought,  
Even as I, beyond the dells  
Where she dwells.

And Devotion droops her glance  
To recall  
What bondservants of Chance  
We are all.  
I but found her in that, going  
On my errant path unknowing,  
I did not out-skirt the spot  
That no spot on earth excels,  
—Where she dwells !

## THE NIGHT OF THE DANCE

THE cold moon hangs to the sky by its horn,  
And centres its gaze on me ;  
The stars, like eyes in reverie,  
Their westering as for a while forborne,  
Quiz downward curiously.

Old Robert hauls the backbrand in,  
The green logs steam and spit ;  
The half-awakened sparrows flit  
From the riddled thatch ; and owls begin  
To whoo from the gable-slit.

Yes ; far and nigh things seem to know  
Sweet scenes are impending here ;  
That all is prepared ; that the hour is near  
For welcomes, fellowships, and flow  
Of sally, song, and cheer ;

That spigots are pulled and viols strung ;  
That soon will arise the sound  
Of measures trod to tunes renowned ;  
That She will return in Love's low tongue  
My vows as we wheel around.

## TO LIZBIE BROWNE

### I

DEAR Lizbie Browne,  
Where are you now ?  
In sun, in rain ?—  
Or is your brow  
Past joy, past pain,  
Dear Lizbie Browne ?

### II

Sweet Lizbie Browne,  
How you could smile,  
How you could sing !—  
How archly wile  
In glance-giving,  
Sweet Lizbie Browne !

### III

And, Lizbie Browne,  
Who else had hair  
Bay-red as yours,

Or flesh so fair  
Bred out of doors,  
Sweet Lizbie Browne ?

## IV

When, Lizbie Browne,  
You had just begun  
To be endeared  
By stealth to one,  
You disappeared  
My Lizbie Browne !

## V

Ay, Lizbie Browne,  
So swift your life,  
And mine so slow,  
You were a wife  
Ere I could show  
Love, Lizbie Browne.

## VI

Still, Lizbie Browne,  
You won, they said,  
The best of men  
When you were wed.  
Where went you then,  
O Lizbie Browne ?

## VII

Dear Lizbie Browne,  
I should have thought,  
" Girls ripen fast,"  
And coaxed and caught  
You ere you passed,  
Dear Lizbie Browne !

## VIII

But, Lizbie Browne,  
I let you slip ;  
Shaped not a sign ;  
Touched never your lip  
With lip of mine,  
Lost Lizbie Browne !

## IX

So, Lizbie Browne,  
When on a day  
Men speak of me  
As not, you'll say,  
" And who was he ? "—  
Yes, Lizbie Browne !

## “ LET ME ENJOY ”

### I

LET me enjoy the earth no less  
Because the all-enacting Might  
That fashioned forth its loveliness  
Had other aims than my delight.

### II

About my path there flits a Fair,  
Who throws me not a word or sign ;  
I'll charm me with her ignoring air,  
And laud the lips not meant for mine.

### III

From manuscripts of moving song  
Inspired by scenes and dreams unknown  
I'll pour out raptures that belong  
To others, as they were my own.

### IV

And some day hence, toward Paradise  
And all its blest—if such should be—  
I will lift glad, afar-off eyes,  
Though it contain no place for me.



## THE BALLAD-SINGER

SING, Ballad-singer, raise a hearty tune ;  
Make me forget that there was ever a one  
I walked with in the meek light of the moon  
    When the day's work was done.

Rhyme, Ballad-rhymer, start a country song ;  
Make me forget that she whom I loved well  
Swore she would love me dearly, love me long,  
    Then—what I cannot tell !

Sing, Ballad-singer, from your little book ;  
Make me forget those heart-breaks, achings,  
    fears ;  
Make me forget her name, her sweet, sweet  
    look—  
    Make me forget her tears.

## THE DIVISION

RAIN on the windows, creaking doors,  
With blasts that besom the green,  
And I am here, and you are there,  
And a hundred miles between !

O were it but the weather, Dear,  
O were it but the miles  
That summed up all our severance,  
There might be room for smiles.

But that thwart thing betwixt us twain,  
Which nothing cleaves or clears,  
Is more than distance, Dear, or rain,  
And longer than the years !

189-.

## YELL'HAM-WOOD'S STORY

COOMB-FIRTREES say that Life is a moan,  
And Clyffe-hill Clump says " Yea ! "  
But Yell'ham says a thing of its own :  
    It's not " Gray, gray  
    Is Life alway ! "  
    That Yell'ham says,  
Nor that Life is for ends unknown.

It says that Life would signify  
    A thwarted purposing :  
That we come to live, and are called to die.  
    Yes, that's the thing  
    In fall, in spring,  
    That Yell'ham says :—  
    " Life offers—to deny ! "

1902.

## HER INITIALS

UPON a poet's page I wrote  
Of old two letters of her name ;  
Part seemed she of the effulgent thought  
Whence that high singer's rapture came.

—When now I turn the leaf the same  
Immortal light illumes the lay,  
But from the letters of her name  
The radiance has waned away !

1869.

## THE WOUND

I CLIMBED to the crest,  
And, fog-festooned,  
The sun lay west  
Like a crimson wound :

Like that wound of mine  
Of which none knew,  
For I'd given no sign  
That it pierced me through.

## A MERRYMAKING IN QUESTION

“ I WILL get a new string for my fiddle,  
And call to the neighbours to come,  
And partners shall dance down the middle  
Until the old pewter-wares hum ;  
And we'll sip the mead, cyder, and rum ! ”

From the night came the oddest of answers :  
A hollow wind, like a bassoon,  
And headstones all ranged up as dancers,  
And cypresses droning a croon,  
And gurgoyles that mouthed to the tune.

“HOW GREAT MY GRIEF”

(TRIOLET)

How great my grief, my joys how few,  
    Since first it was my fate to know thee !  
—Have the slow years not brought to view  
How great my grief, my joys how few,  
Nor memory shaped old times anew,  
    Nor loving-kindness helped to show thee  
How great my grief, my joys how few,  
    Since first it was my fate to know thee ?

## AT AN INN

WHEN we as strangers sought  
Their catering care,  
Veiled smiles bespoke their thought  
Of what we were.  
They warmed as they opined  
Us more than friends—  
That we had all resigned  
For love's dear ends.

And that swift sympathy  
With living love  
Which quicks the world—maybe  
The spheres above,  
Made them our ministers,  
Moved them to say,  
“ Ah, God, that bliss like theirs  
Would flush our day ! ”

And we were left alone  
As Love's own pair ;  
Yet never the love-light shone  
Between us there,



But that which chilled the breath  
Of afternoon,  
And palsied unto death  
The pane-fly's tune.

The kiss their zeal foretold,  
And now deemed come,  
Came not : within his hold  
Love lingered numb.  
Why cast he on our port  
A bloom not ours ?  
Why shaped us for his sport  
In after-hours ?

As we seemed we were not  
That day afar,  
And now we seem not what  
We aching are.  
O severing sea and land,  
O laws of men,  
Ere death, once let us stand  
As we stood then !

## A BROKEN APPOINTMENT

                                  You did not come,  
And marching Time drew on and wore me  
numb.—

Yet less for loss of your dear presence there  
Than that I thus found lacking in your make  
That high compassion which can overbear  
Reluctance for pure loving-kindness' sake  
Grieved I, when, as the hope-hour stroked its  
sum,

                                  You did not come.

                                  You love not me,  
And love alone can lend you loyalty ;  
—I know and knew it. But, unto the store  
Of human deeds divine in all but name,  
Was it not worth a little hour or more  
To add yet this : Once, you, a woman, came  
To soothe a time-torn man ; even though it be  
                                  You love not me ?

## AT NEWS OF A WOMAN'S DEATH

NOT a line of her writing have I,  
Not a thread of her hair,  
No mark of her late time as dame in her dwelling,  
whereby  
I may picture her there ;  
And in vain do I urge my unsight  
To conceive my lost prize  
At her close, whom I knew when her dreams  
were upbrimming with light,  
And with laughter her eyes.

What scenes spread around her last days,  
Sad, shining, or dim ?  
Did her gifts and compassions enray and enarch  
her sweet ways  
With an aureate nimb ?  
Or did life-light decline from her years,  
And mischances control  
Her full day-star ; unease, or regret, or fore-  
bodings, or fears  
Disennoble her soul ?

Thus I do but the phantom retain  
Of the maiden of yore  
As my relic ; yet haply the best of her—fined  
in my brain  
It may be the more  
That no line of her writing have I,  
Nor a thread of her hair,  
No mark of her late time as dame in her dwelling,  
whereby  
I may picture her there.

*March 1890.*

## MIDDLE-AGE ENTHUSIASMS

To M. H.

WE passed where flag and flower  
Signalled a jocund throng ;  
We said : " Go to, the hour  
Is apt ! "—and joined the song ;  
And, kindling, laughed at life and care,  
Although we knew no laugh lay there.

We walked where shy birds stood  
Watching us, wonder-dumb ;  
Their friendship met our mood ;  
We cried : " We'll often come :  
We'll come morn, noon, eve, everywhen ! "  
—We doubted we should come again.

We joyed to see strange sheens  
Leap from quaint leaves in shade ;  
A secret light of greens  
They'd for their pleasure made.  
We said : " We'll set such sorts as these ! "  
—We knew with night the wish would cease.

“ So sweet the place,” we said,

“ Its tacit tales so dear,

Our thoughts, when breath has sped,

Will meet and mingle here ! ” . . .

“ Words ! ” mused we. “ Passed the mortal  
door,

Our thoughts will reach this nook no more.”

## IN A EWELEAZE

THE years have gathered grayly  
Since I danced upon this leaze  
With one who kindled gaily  
Love's fitful ecstasies !  
But despite the term as teacher  
I remain what I was then  
In each essential feature  
Of the fantasies of men.

Yet I note the little chisel  
Of never-napping Time  
Defacing ghastr and grizzel  
The blazon of my prime.  
When at night he thinks me sleeping  
I feel him boring sly  
Within my bones, and heaping  
Quaintest pains for by and by.

Still, I'd go the world with Beauty,  
I would laugh with her and sing,  
I would shun divinest duty  
To resume her worshipping.  
But she'd scorn my brave endeavour,  
She would not balm the breeze  
By murmuring " Thine for ever ! "  
As she did upon this leaze.

1890.

## A SPOT

IN years defaced and lost,  
Two sat here, transport-tossed,  
Lit by a living love  
The wilted world knew nothing of :  
    Scared momentarily  
    By gaingivings,  
    Then hoping things  
    That could not be. . . .

Of love and us no trace  
Abides upon the place ;  
The sun and shadows wheel,  
Season and season sere-ward steal ;  
    Foul days and fair  
    Here, too, prevail,  
    And gust and gale  
    As everywhere.

But lonely shepherd souls  
Who bask amid these knolls  
May catch a faery sound  
On sleepy noontides from the ground :  
    “ O not again  
    Till Earth outwears  
    Shall love like theirs  
    Suffuse this glen ! ”



## THE DARKLING THRUSH

I LEANT upon a coppice gate  
    When Frost was spectre-gray,  
And Winter's dregs made desolate  
    The weakening eye of day.  
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky  
    Like strings of broken lyres,  
And all mankind that haunted nigh  
    Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be  
    The Century's corpse outleant,  
His crypt the cloudy canopy,  
    The wind his death-lament.  
The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
    Was shrunken hard and dry,  
And every spirit upon earth  
    Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among  
    The bleak twigs overhead  
In a full-hearted evensong  
    Of joy illimited ;

An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,  
In blast-beruffled plume,  
Had chosen thus to fling his soul  
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carollings  
Of such ecstatic sound  
Was written on terrestrial things  
Afar or nigh around,  
That I could think there trembled through  
His happy good-night air  
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew  
And I was unaware.

*December 1900.*

## THE TEMPORARY THE ALL

(SAPPHICS)

CHANGE and chancefulness in my flowering  
youthtime

Set me sun by sun near to one unchosen ;  
Wrought us fellowlike, and despite divergence,  
Fused us in friendship.

“ Cherish him can I while the true one forth-  
come—

Come the rich fulfiller of my prevision ;  
Life is roomy yet, and the odds unbounded.”  
So self-communed I.

Thwart my wistful way did a damsel saunter,  
Fair, albeit unformed to be all-eclipsing ;  
“ Maiden meet,” held I, “ till arise my forefelt  
Wonder of women.”

Long a visioned hermitage deep desiring,  
Tenements uncouth I was fain to house in ;  
“ Let such lodging be for a breath-while,”  
thought I,  
“ Soon a more seemly.

“ Then, high handiwork will I make my life-  
deed,

Truth and Light outshow ; but the ripe time  
pending,

Intermissive aim at the thing sufficeth.”

Thus I . . . But lo, me !

Mistress, friend, place, aims to be bettered  
straightway,

Bettered not has Fate or my hand's achieve-  
ment ;

Sole the showance those of my onward earth-  
track—

Never transcended !

## THE GHOST OF THE PAST

WE two kept house, the Past and I,  
The Past and I ;  
Through all my tasks it hovered nigh  
Leaving me never alone.  
It was a spectral housekeeping  
Where fell no jarring tone,  
As strange, as still a housekeeping  
As ever has been known.

As daily I went up the stair  
And down the stair,  
I did not mind the Bygone there—  
The Present once to me ;  
Its moving meek companionship  
I wished might ever be,  
There was in that companionship  
Something of ecstasy.

It dwelt with me just as it was,  
Just as it was  
When first its prospects gave me pause  
In wayward wanderings,

Before the years had torn old troths  
As they tear all sweet things,  
Before gaunt griefs had wrecked old troths  
And dulled old rapturings.

And then its form began to fade,  
Began to fade,  
Its gentle echoes faintlier played  
At eves upon my ear  
Than when the autumn's look embrowned  
The lonely chambers here,  
When autumn's settling shades embrowned  
Nooks that it haunted near.

And so with time my vision less,  
Yea, less and less  
Makes of that Past my housemistress,  
It dwindles in my eye ;  
It looms a far-off skeleton  
And not a comrade nigh,  
A fitting fitful skeleton  
Dimming as days draw by.

## THE SELF-UNSEEING

HERE is the ancient floor,  
Footworn and hollowed and thin,  
Here was the former door  
Where the dead feet walked in.

She sat here in her chair,  
Smiling into the fire ;  
He who played stood there,  
Bowing it higher and higher.

Childlike, I danced in a dream ;  
Blessings emblazoned that day ;  
Everything glowed with a gleam ;  
Yet we were looking away !

## TO LIFE

O LIFE with the sad seared face,  
I weary of seeing thee,  
And thy draggled cloak, and thy hobbling pace,  
And thy too-forced pleāsantry !

I know what thou would'st tell  
Of Death, Time, Destiny—  
I have known it long, and know, too, well  
What it all means for me.

But canst thou not array  
Thyself in rare disguise,  
And feign like truth, for one mad day,  
That Earth is Paradise ?

I'll tune me to the mood,  
And mumm with thee till eve ;  
And maybe what as interlude  
I feign, I shall believe !



## UNKNOWING

WHEN, soul in soul reflected,  
We breathed an æthered air,  
    When we neglected  
    All things elsewhere,  
And left the friendly friendless  
To keep our love aglow,  
    We deemed it endless . . .  
    —We did not know !

When panting passion-goaded,  
We planned to hie away,  
    But, unforeboded,  
    All the long day  
Wild storms so pierced and pattered  
That none could up and go,  
    Our lives seemed shattered . . .  
    —We did not know !

When I found you, helpless lying,  
And you waived my long misprise,  
    And swore me, dying,  
    In phantom-guise

To wing to me when grieving,  
And touch away my woe,  
    We kissed, believing . . .  
    —We did not know !

But though, your powers out-reckoning,  
You tarry dead and dumb,  
    Or scorn my beckoning,  
    And will not come ;  
And I say, “ Why thus inanely  
Brood on her memory so : ”  
    I say it vainly—  
    I feel and know !

## AT HIS FUNERAL

THEY bear him to his resting-place—  
In slow procession sweeping by ;  
I follow at a stranger's space ;  
His kindred they, his sweetheart I.  
Unchanged my gown of garish dye,  
Though sable-sad is their attire ;  
But they stand round with griefless eye,  
Whilst my regret consumes like fire !

187-.

## NEWS FOR HER MOTHER

### I

ONE mile more is  
Where your door is  
    Mother mine!—  
Harvest's coming,  
Mills are strumming,  
    Apples fine,  
And the cyder made to-year will be as wine.

### II

Yet, not viewing  
What's a-doing  
    Here around  
Is it thrills me,  
And so fills me  
    That I bound  
Like a ball or leaf or lamb along the ground.

### III

Tremble not now  
At your lot now  
    Silly soul!

Hosts have sped them  
Quick to wed them,  
Great and small,

Since the first two sighing half-hearts made a  
whole.

## IV

Yet I wonder,  
Will it sunder  
Her from me ?  
Will she guess that  
I said " Yes,"—that  
His I'd be,

Ere I thought she might not see him as I see !

## V

Old brown gable,  
Granary, stable,  
Here you are !  
O my mother,  
Can another  
Ever bar

Mine from thy heart, make thy nearness seem  
afar ?

## LOST LOVE

I PLAY my sweet old airs—  
The airs he knew  
When our love was true—  
But he does not balk  
His determined walk,  
And passes up the stairs.

I sing my songs once more,  
And presently hear  
His footstep near  
As if it would stay ;  
But he goes his way,  
And shuts a distant door.

So I wait for another morn  
And another night  
In this soul-sick blight ;  
And I wonder much  
As I sit, why such  
A woman as I was born !

## WHERE THE PICNIC WAS

WHERE we made the fire  
In the summer-time  
Of branch and briar  
On the hill to the sea  
I slowly climb  
Through winter mire,  
And scan and trace  
The forsaken place  
Quite readily.

Now a cold wind blows,  
And the grass is gray,  
But the spot still shows  
As a burnt circle—aye,  
And stick-ends, charred,  
Still strew the sward  
Whereon I stand,  
Last relic of the band  
Who came that day!

Yes, I am here  
Just as last year,

And the sea breathes brine  
From its strange straight line  
Up hither, the same  
As when we four came.  
—But two have wandered far  
From this grassy rise  
Into urban roar  
Where no picnics are,  
And one—has shut her eyes  
For evermore.



## THE GOING

WHY did you give no hint that night  
That quickly after the morrow's dawn,  
And calmly, as if indifferent quite,  
You would close your term here, up and be  
    gone  
    Where I could not follow  
    With wing of swallow  
To gain one glimpse of you ever anon !

    Never to bid good-bye,  
    Or lip me the softest call,  
Or utter a wish for a word, while I  
Saw morning harden upon the<sup>r</sup> wall,  
    Unmoved, unknowing  
    That your great going  
Had place that moment, and altered all.

Why do you make me leave the house  
And think for a breath it is you I see  
At the end of the alley of bending boughs  
Where so often at dusk you used to be ;  
    Till in darkening dankness  
    The yawning blankness  
Of the perspective sickens me !

You were she who abode  
By those red-veined rocks far West,  
You were the swan-necked one who rode  
Along the beetling Beeny Crest,  
And, reining nigh me,  
Would muse and eye me,  
While Life unrolled us its very best.

Why, then, latterly did we not speak,  
Did we not think of those days long dead,  
And ere your vanishing strive to seek  
That time's renewal? We might have said,  
"In this bright spring weather  
We'll visit together  
Those places that once we visited."

Well, well! All's past amend,  
Unchangeable. It must go.  
I seem but a dead man held on end  
To sink down, soon. . . . O you could not  
know  
That such swift fleeing  
No soul foreseeing—  
Not even I—would undo me so!

*December 1912.*

“ I FOUND HER OUT THERE ”

I FOUND her out there  
On a slope few see,  
That falls westwardly  
To the salt-edged air,  
Where the ocean breaks  
On the purple strand,  
And the hurricane shakes  
The solid land.

I brought her here,  
And have laid her to rest  
In a noiseless nest  
No sea beats near.  
She will never be stirred  
In her loamy cell  
By the waves long heard  
And loved so well.

So she does not sleep  
By those haunted heights  
The Atlantic smites  
And the blind gales sweep,

Whence she often would gaze  
At Dundagel's famed head,  
While the dipping blaze  
Dyed her face fire-red ;

And would sigh at the tale  
Of sunk Lyonesse,  
As a wind-tugged tress  
Flapped her cheek like a flail ;  
Or listen at whiles  
With a thought-bound brow  
To the murmuring miles  
She is far from now.

Yet her shade, maybe,  
Will creep underground  
Till it catch the sound  
Of that western sea  
As it swells and sobs  
Where she once domiciled,  
And joy in its throbs  
With the heart of a child.

*December 1912.*

## WITHOUT CEREMONY

It was your way, my dear,  
To be gone without a word  
When callers, friends, or kin  
Had left, and I hastened in  
To rejoin you, as I inferred.

And when you'd a mind to career  
Off anywhere—say to town—  
You were all on a sudden gone  
Before I had thought thereon,  
Or noticed your trunks were down.

So, now that you disappear  
For ever in that swift style,  
Your meaning seems to me  
Just as it used to be :  
“ Good-bye is not worth while ! ”

## THE VOICE

WOMAN much missed, how you call to me, call  
to me,  
Saying that now you are not as you were  
When you had changed from the one who was  
all to me,  
But as at first, when our day was fair.

Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you,  
then,  
Standing as when I drew near to the town  
Where you would wait for me: yes, as I knew  
you then,  
Even to the original air-blue gown!

Or is it only the breeze, in its listlessness  
Travelling across the wet mead to me here,  
You being ever consigned to existlessness,  
Heard no more again far or near?

Thus I; faltering forward,  
Leaves around me falling,  
Wind oozing thin through the thorn from  
norward  
And the woman calling.

*December 1912.*

## A DREAM OR NO

WHY go to Saint-Juliot? What's Juliot to me?

Some strange necromancy  
But charmed me to fancy

That much of my life claims the spot as its key.

Yes. I have had dreams of that place in the  
West,

And a maiden abiding  
Thereat as in hiding ;

Fair-eyed and white-shouldered, broad-browed  
and brown-tressed.

And of how, coastward bound on a night long  
ago,

There lonely I found her,  
The sea-birds around her,

And other than nigh things uncaring to know.

So sweet her life there (in my thought has it  
seemed)

That quickly she drew me  
To take her unto me,

And lodge her long years with me. Such have  
I dreamed.

But nought of that maid from Saint-Juliot I  
see ;  
Can she ever have been here,  
And shed her life's sheen here,  
The woman I thought a long housemate with  
me ?

Does there even a place like Saint-Juliot exist ?  
Or a Vallency Valley  
With stream and leafed alley,  
Or Beeny, or Bos with its flounce flinging mist ?

*February 1913*



## AFTER A JOURNEY

HERETO I come to view a voiceless ghost ;  
Whither, O whither will its whim now draw  
me ?

Up the cliff, down, till I'm lonely, lost,  
And the unseen waters' ejaculations awe me.  
Where you will next be there's no knowing,  
Facing round about me everywhere,  
With your nut-coloured hair,  
And gray eyes, and rose-flush coming and  
going.

Yes : I have re-entered your olden haunts at  
last ;

Through the years, through the dead scenes  
I have tracked you ;

What have you now found to say of our past—  
Viewed across the dark space wherein I have  
lacked you ?

Summer gave us sweets, but autumn wrought  
division ?

Things were not lastly as firstly well  
With us twain, you tell ?

But all's closed now, despite Time's derision.

I see what you are doing : you are leading  
me on

To the spots we knew when we haunted here  
together,

The waterfall, above which the mist-bow shone

At the then fair hour in the then fair weather,  
And the cave just under, with a voice still so  
hollow

That it seems to call out to me from forty  
years ago,

When you were all aglow,

And not the thin ghost that I now frailly follow !

Ignorant of what there is flitting here to see,

The waked birds preen and the seals flop  
lazily,

Soon you will have, Dear, to vanish from me,

For the stars close their shutters and the  
dawn whitens hazily.

Trust me, I mind not, though Life lours,

The bringing me here ; nay, bring me here  
again !

I am just the same as when

Our days were a joy, and our paths through  
flowers.

PENTARGAN BAY.

## BEENY CLIFF

*March 1870—March 1913*

### I

O THE opal and the sapphire of that wandering  
western sea,  
And the woman riding high above with bright  
hair flapping free—  
The woman whom I loved so, and who loyally  
loved me.

### II

The pale mews plained below us, and the waves  
seemed far away  
In a nether sky, engrossed in saying their cease-  
less babbling say,  
As we laughed light-heartedly aloft on that clear-  
sunned March day.

### III

A little cloud then cloaked us, and there flew an  
irised rain,  
And the Atlantic dyed its levels with a dull mis-  
featured stain,  
And then the sun burst out again, and purples  
prinked the main.

## IV

—Still in all its chasmal beauty bulks old Beeny  
to the sky,  
And shall she and I not go there once again now  
March is nigh,  
And the sweet things said in that March say  
anew there by and by ?

## V

What if still in chasmal beauty looms that wild  
weird western shore,  
The woman now is—elsewhere—whom the  
ambling pony bore,  
And nor knows nor cares for Beeny, and will  
laugh there nevermore.

## AT CASTLE BOTEREL

As I drive to the junction of lane and highway,  
And the drizzle bedrenches the waggonette,  
I look behind at the fading byway,  
And see on its slope, now glistening wet,  
Distinctly yet

Myself and a girlish form benighted  
In dry March weather. We climb the road  
Beside a chaise. We had just alighted  
To ease the sturdy pony's load  
When he sighed and slowed.

What we did as we climbed, and what we  
talked of  
Matters not much, nor to what it led,—  
Something that life will not be balked of  
Without rude reason till hope is dead,  
And feeling fled.

It filled but a minute. But was there ever  
A time of such quality, since or before,  
In that hill's story? To one mind never,  
Though it has been climbed, foot-swift, foot-  
sore,  
By thousands more.

Primaeval rocks form the road's steep border,  
And much have they faced there, first and  
last,  
Of the transitory in Earth's long order ;  
But what they record in colour and cast  
Is—that we two passed.

And to me, though Time's unflinching rigour,  
In mindless rote, has ruled from sight  
The substance now, one phantom figure  
Remains on the slope, as when that night  
Saw us alight.

I look and see it there, shrinking, shrinking,  
I look back at it amid the rain  
For the very last time ; for my sand is sinking,  
And I shall traverse old love's domain  
Never again.

*March 1913.*

## THE PHANTOM HORSEWOMAN

### I

QUEER are the ways of a man I know :  
He comes and stands  
In a careworn craze,  
And looks at the sands  
And the seaward haze  
With moveless hands  
And face and gaze,  
Then turns to go . . .  
And what does he see when he gazes so ?

### II

They say he sees as an instant thing  
More clear than to-day,  
A sweet soft scene  
That once was in play  
By that briny green ;  
Yes, notes always  
Warm, real, and keen,  
What his back years bring—  
A phantom of his own figuring.

## III

Of this vision of his they might say more :  
Not only there  
Does he see this sight,  
But everywhere  
In his brain—day, night,  
As if on the air  
It were drawn rose-bright—  
Yea, far from that shore  
Does he carry this vision of heretofore :

## IV

A ghost-girl-rider. And though, toil-tried,  
He withers daily,  
Time touches her not,  
But she still rides gaily  
In his rapt thought  
On that shagged and shaly  
Atlantic spot,  
And as when first eyed  
Draws rein and sings to the swing of the tide.



## ON A MIDSUMMER EVE

I IDLY cut a parsley stalk  
And blew therein towards the moon ;  
I had not thought what ghosts would walk  
With shivering footsteps to my tune.

I went, and knelt, and scooped my hand  
As if to drink, into the brook,  
And a faint figure seemed to stand  
Above me, with the bygone look.

I lipped rough rhymes of chance, not choice,  
I thought not what my words might be ;  
There came into my ear a voice  
That turned a tenderer verse for me.

“ MY SPIRIT WILL NOT HAUNT  
THE MOUND ”

MY spirit will not haunt the mound  
Above my breast,  
But travel, memory-possessed,  
To where my tremulous being found  
Life largest, best.

My phantom-footed shape will go  
When nightfall grays  
Hither and thither along the ways  
I and another used to know  
In backward days.

And there you'll find me, if a jot  
You still should care  
For me, and for my curious air ;  
If otherwise, then I shall not,  
For you, be there.

## THE HOUSE OF HOSPITALITIES

HERE we broached the Christmas barrel,  
Pushed up the charred log-ends ;  
Here we sang the Christmas carol,  
And called in friends.

Time has tired me since we met here  
When the folk now dead were young.  
Since the viands were outset here  
And quaint songs sung.

And the worm has bored the viol  
That used to lead the tune,  
Rust eaten out the dial  
That struck night's noon.

Now no Christmas brings in neighbours,  
And the New Year comes unlit ;  
Where we sang the mole now labours,  
And spiders knit.

Yet at midnight if here walking,  
When the moon sheets wall and tree,  
I see forms of old time talking,  
Who smile on me.

“ SHUT OUT THAT MOON ”

CLOSE up the casement, draw the blind,  
Shut out that stealing moon,  
She wears too much the look she wore  
Before our lutes were strewn  
With years-deep dust, and names we read  
On a white stone were hewn.

Step not forth on the dew-dashed lawn  
To view the Lady's Chair,  
Immense Orion's glittering form,  
The Less and Greater Bear :  
Stay in; to such sights we were drawn  
When faded ones were fair.

Brush not the bough for midnight scents  
That come forth lingeringly,  
And wake the same sweet sentiments  
They breathed to you and me  
When living seemed a laugh, and love  
All it was said to be.

Within the common lamp-lit room  
Prison my eyes and thought ;  
Let dingy details crudely loom,  
Mechanic speech be wrought :  
Too fragrant was Life's early bloom,  
Too tart the fruit it brought !

“ REGRET NOT ME ”

REGRET not me ;  
Beneath the sunny tree  
I lie uncaring, slumbering peacefully.

Swift as the light  
I flew my faery flight ;  
Ecstatically I moved, and feared no night.

I did not know  
That heydays fade and go,  
But deemed that what was would be always so.

I skipped at morn  
Between the yellowing corn,  
Thinking it good and glorious to be born.

I ran at eves  
Among the piled-up sheaves,  
Dreaming, “ I grieve not, therefore nothing  
grieves.”

Now soon will come  
The apple, pear, and plum,  
And hinds will sing, and autumn insects hum.

Again you will fare  
To cyder-makings rare,  
And junketings ; but I shall not be there.

Yet gaily sing  
Until the pewter ring  
Those songs we sang when we went gipsying !

And lightly dance  
Some triple-timed romance  
In coupled figures, and forget mischance ;

And mourn not me  
Beneath the yellowing tree ;  
For I shall mind not, slumbering peacefully.

## IN THE MIND'S EYE

THAT was once her casement,  
And the taper nigh,  
Shining from within there,  
Beckoned, " Here am I ! "

Now, as then, I see her  
Moving at the pane ;  
Ah ; 'tis but her phantom  
Borne within my brain !—

Foremost in my vision  
Everywhere goes she ;  
Change dissolves the landscapes,  
She abides with me.

Shape so sweet and shy, Dear,  
Who can say thee nay ?  
Never once do I, Dear,  
Wish thy ghost away.

\*

## AMABEL

I MARKED her ruined hues,  
Her custom-straitened views,  
And asked, " Can there indwell  
My Amabel ? "

I looked upon her gown,  
Once rose, now earthen brown ;  
The change was like the knell  
Of Amabel.

Her step's mechanic ways  
Had lost the life of May's ;  
Her laugh, once sweet in swell,  
Spoilt Amabel.

I mused : " Who sings the strain  
I sang ere warmth did wane ?  
Who thinks its numbers spell  
His Amabel ? "—

Knowing that, though Love cease,  
Love's race shows no decrease ;  
All find in dorp or dell  
An Amabel.



—I felt that I could creep  
To some housetop and weep  
That Time the tyrant fell  
Ruled Amabel !

I said (the while I sighed  
That love like ours had died),  
“ Fond things I’ll no more tell  
To Amabel,

“ But leave her to her fate,  
And fling across the gate,  
‘ Till the Last Trump, farewell,  
O Amabel ! ’ ”

1866.

16 WESTBOURNE PARK VILLAS.

## “ I SAID TO LOVE ”

I SAID to Love,  
“ It is not now as in old days  
When men adored thee and thy ways  
All else above ;  
Named thee the Boy, the Bright, the One  
Who spread a heaven beneath the sun,”  
I said to Love.

I said to him,  
“ We now know more of thee than then ;  
We were but weak in judgment when,  
With hearts abrim,  
We clamoured thee that thou would'st please  
Inflict on us thine agonies,”  
I said to him.

I said to Love,  
“ Thou art not young, thou art not fair,  
No elfin darts, no cherub air,  
Nor swan, nor dove  
Are thine ; but features pitiless,  
And iron daggers of distress,”  
I said to Love.

“ Depart then, Love ! . . .

—Man’s race shall perish, threatenest thou,  
Without thy kindling coupling-vow ?

The age to come the man of now

Know nothing of ?—

We fear not such a threat from thee ;

We are too old in apathy !

*Mankind shall cease.*—So let it be,”

I said to Love.

## REMINISCENCES OF A DANCING MAN

### I

WHO now remembers Almack's balls—  
Willis's sometime named—  
In those two smooth-floored upper halls  
For faded ones so famed ?  
Where as we trod to trilling sound  
The fancied phantoms stood around,  
Or joined us in the maze,  
Of the powdered Dears from Georgian years,  
Whose dust lay in sightless sealed-up biers,  
The fairest of former days.

### II

Who now remembers gay Cremorne,  
And all its jaunty jills,  
And those wild whirling figures born  
Of Jullien's grand quadrilles ?  
With hats on head and morning coats  
There footed to his prancing notes  
Our partner-girls and we ;  
And the gas-jets winked, and the lustres clinked,  
And the platform throbbed as with arms en-  
linked  
We moved to the minstrelsy.

## III

Who now recalls those crowded rooms  
Of old yclept "The Argyle,"  
Where to the deep Drum-polka's booms  
We hopped in standard style ?  
Whither have danced those damsels now !  
Is Death the partner who doth moue  
Their wormy chaps and bare ?  
Do their spectres spin like sparks within  
The smoky halls of the Prince of Sin  
To a thunderous Jullien air ?

## IN A WOOD

PALE beech and pine so blue,  
Set in one clay,  
Bough to bough cannot you  
Live out your day ?  
When the rains skim and skip,  
Why mar sweet comradeship,  
Blighting with poison-drip  
Neighbourly spray ?

Heart-halt and spirit-lame,  
City-opprest,  
Unto this wood I came  
As to a nest ;  
Dreaming that sylvan peace  
Offered the harrowed ease—  
Nature a soft release  
From men's unrest.

But, having entered in,  
Great growths and small  
Show them to men akin—  
Combatants all !

Sycamore shoulders oak,  
Bines the slim sapling yoke,  
Ivy-spun halters choke  
    Elms stout and tall.

Touches from ash, O wych,  
    Sting you like scorn !  
You, too, brave hollies, twitch  
    Sidelong from thorn.  
Even the rank poplars bear  
Lothly a rival's air,  
Cankering in blank despair  
    If overborne.

Since, then, no grace I find  
    Taught me of trees,  
Turn I back to my kind,  
    Worthy as these.  
There at least smiles abound,  
There discourse trills around,  
There, now and then, are found  
    Life-loyalties.

1887 : 1896.

## HE ABJURES LOVE

At last I put off love,  
For twice ten years  
The daysman of my thought,  
And hope, and doing ;  
Being ashamed thereof,  
And faint of fears  
And desolations, wrought  
In his pursuing,

Since first in youthtime those  
Disquietings  
That heart-enslavement brings  
To hale and hoary,  
Became my housefellows,  
And, fool and blind,  
I turned from kith and kind  
To give him glory.

I was as children be  
Who have no care ;  
I did not think or sigh,  
I did not sicken ;  
But lo, Love beckoned me,  
And I was bare,



And poor, and starved, and dry,  
And fever-stricken.

Too many times ablaze  
With fatuous fires,  
Enkindled by his wiles  
To new embraces,  
Did I, by wilful ways  
And baseless ires,  
Return the anxious smiles  
Of friendly faces.

No more will now rate I  
The common rare,  
The midnight drizzle dew,  
The gray hour golden,  
The wind a yearning cry,  
The faulty fair,  
Things dreamt, of comelier hue  
Than things beholden! . . .

—I speak as one who plumbs  
Life's dim profound,  
One who at length can sound  
Clear views and certain.  
But—after love what comes?  
A scene that lours,  
A few sad vacant hours,  
And then, the Curtain.

## THE DREAM-FOLLOWER

A DREAM of mine flew over the mead  
    To the halls where my old Love reigns ;  
And it drew me on to follow its lead :  
    And I stood at her window-panes ;

And I saw but a thing of flesh and bone  
    Speeding on to its cleft in the clay ;  
And my dream was scared, and expired on a  
    moan,  
And I whitely hastened away.

## WESSEX HEIGHTS

(1896)

THERE are some heights in Wessex, shaped as  
if by a kindly hand  
For thinking, dreaming, dying on, and at crises  
when I stand,  
Say, on Ingpen Beacon eastward, or on Wyls-  
Neck westwardly,  
I seem where I was before my birth, and after  
death may be.

In the lowlands I have no comrade, not even  
the lone man's friend—  
Her who suffereth long and is kind; accepts  
what he is too weak to mend :  
Down there they are dubious and askance ;  
there nobody thinks as I,  
But mind-chains do not clank where one's next  
neighbour is the sky.

In the towns I am tracked by phantoms having  
weird detective ways—  
Shadows of beings who fellowed with myself  
of earlier days :

They hang about at places, and they say harsh  
heavy things—

Men with a frigid sneer, and women with tart  
disparagings.

Down there I seem to be false to myself, my  
simple self that was,

And is not now, and I see him watching,  
wondering what crass cause

Can have merged him into such a strange  
continuator as this,

Who yet has something in common with him-  
self, my chrysalis.

I cannot go to the great grey Plain ; there's a  
figure against the moon,

Nobody sees it but I, and it makes my breast  
beat out of tune ;

I cannot go to the tall-spired town, being barred  
by the forms now passed

For everybody but me, in whose long vision  
they stand there fast.

There's a ghost at Yell'ham Bottom chiding  
loud at the fall of the night,

There's a ghost in Fromm-side Vale, thin-lipped  
and vague, in a shroud of white,

There is one in the railway-train whenever I do  
not want it near,

I see its profile against the pane, saying what I  
would not hear.

As for one rare fair woman, I am now but a  
thought of hers,  
I enter her mind and another thought succeeds  
me that she prefers ;  
Yet my love for her in its fulness she herself  
even did not know ;  
Well, time cures hearts of tenderness, and now  
I can let her go.

So I am found on Ingpen Beacon, or on Wyls-  
Neck to the west,  
Or else on homely Bulbarrow, or little Pilsdon  
Crest,  
Where men have never cared to haunt, nor  
women have walked with me,  
And ghosts then keep their distance ; and I  
know some liberty.

## TO A MOTHERLESS CHILD

AH, child, thou art but half thy darling mother's;  
Hers couldst thou wholly be,  
My light in thee would outglow all in others;  
She would relive to me.  
But niggard Nature's trick of birth  
Bars, lest she overjoy,  
Renewal of the loved on earth  
Save with alloy.

The Dame has no regard, alas, my maiden,  
For love and loss like mine—  
No sympathy with mind-sight memory-laden;  
Only with fickle eyne.  
To her mechanic artistry  
My dreams are all unknown,  
And why I wish that thou couldst be  
But One's alone!

“ I NEED NOT GO ”

I NEED not go  
Through sleet and snow  
To where I know  
She waits for me ;  
She will tarry me there  
Till I find it fair,  
And have time to spare  
From company.

When I've overgot  
The world somewhat,  
When things cost not  
Such stress and strain,  
Is soon enough  
By cypress sough  
To tell my Love  
I am come again.

And if some day,  
When none cries nay,  
I still delay  
To seek her side,

## “ I NEED NOT GO ”

(Though ample measure  
Of fitting leisure  
Await my pleasure)  
She will not chide.

What—not upbraid me  
That I delayed me,  
Nor ask what stayed me  
So long ? Ah, no !—  
New cares may claim me,  
New loves inflame me,  
She will not blame me,  
But suffer it so.



## SHELLEY'S SKYLARK

*(The neighbourhood of Leghorn: March 1887)*

SOMEWHERE afield here something lies  
In Earth's oblivious eyeless trust  
That moved a poet to prophecies—  
A pinch of unseen, unguarded dust :

The dust of the lark that Shelley heard,  
And made immortal through times to be ;—  
Though it only lived like another bird,  
And knew not its immortality :

Lived its meek life ; then, one day, fell—  
A little ball of feather and bone ;  
And how it perished, when piped farewell,  
And where it wastes, are alike unknown.

Maybe it rests in the loam I view,  
Maybe it throbs in a myrtle's green,  
Maybe it sleeps in the coming hue  
Of a grape on the slopes of yon inland scene.

Go find it, faeries, go and find  
That tiny pinch of priceless dust,

And bring a casket silver-lined,  
And framed of gold that gems encrust ;

And we will lay it safe therein,  
And consecrate it to endless time ;  
For it inspired a bard to win  
Ecstatic heights in thought and rhyme.

## WIVES IN THE SERE

### I

NEVER a careworn wife but shows,  
    If a joy suffuse her,  
Something beautiful to those  
    Patient to peruse her,  
Some one charm the world unknowns,  
    Precious to a muser,  
Haply what, ere years were foes,  
    Moved her mate to choose her.

### II

But, be it a hint of rose  
    That an instant hues her,  
Or some early light or pose  
    Wherewith thought renews her—  
Seen by him at full, ere woes  
    Practised to abuse her—  
Sparely comes it, swiftly goes,  
    Time again subdues her.

## TO AN UNBORN PAUPER CHILD

### I

BREATHE not, hid Heart : cease silently,  
And though thy birth-hour beckons thee,  
Sleep the long sleep :  
The Doomsters heap  
Travails and teens around us here,  
And Time-wraiths turn our songsingings to fear.

### II

Hark, how the peoples surge and sigh,  
And laughters fail, and greetings die :  
Hopes dwindle ; yea,  
Faiths waste away,  
Affections and enthusiasms numb ;  
Thou canst not mend these things if thou dost  
come.

### III

Had I the ear of wombèd souls  
Ere their terrestrial chart unrolls,  
And thou wert free  
To cease, or be,  
Then would I tell thee all I know,  
And put it to thee : Wilt thou take Life so ?

## IV

Vain vow ! No hint of mine may hence  
 To theeward fly : to thy locked sense  
     Explain none can  
     Life's pending plan :  
 Thou wilt thy ignorant entry make  
 Though skies spout fire and blood and nations  
     quake.

## V

Fain would I, dear, find some shut plot  
 Of earth's wide wold for thee, where not  
     One tear, one qualm,  
     Should break the calm.  
 But I am weak as thou and bare ;  
 No man can change the common lot to rare.

## VI

Must come and bide. And such are we—  
 Unreasoning, sanguine, visionary—  
     That I can hope  
     Health, love, friends, scope  
 In full for thee ; can dream thou'lt find  
 Joys seldom yet attained by humankind !

## THE DEAD MAN WALKING

THEY hail me as one living,  
But don't they know  
That I have died of late years,  
Untombed although ?

I am but a shape that stands here,  
A pulseless mould,  
A pale past picture, screening  
Ashes gone cold.

Not at a minute's warning,  
Not in a loud hour,  
For me ceased Time's enchantments  
In hall and bower.

There was no tragic transit,  
No catch of breath,  
When silent seasons inched me  
On to this death. . . .

—A Troubadour-youth I rambled  
With Life for lyre,  
The beats of being raging  
In me like fire.

But when I practised eyeing  
    The goal of men,  
It iced me, and I perished  
    A little then.

When passed my friend, my kinsfolk  
    Through the Last Door,  
And left me standing bleakly,  
    I died yet more ;

And when my Love's heart kindled  
    In hate of me,  
Wherefore I knew not, died I  
    One more degree.

And if when I died fully  
    I cannot say,  
And changed into the corpse-thing  
    I am to-day ;

Yet is it that, though whiling  
    The time somehow  
In walking, talking, smiling,  
    I live not now.

“ I LOOK INTO MY GLASS ”

I LOOK into my glass,  
And view my wasting skin,  
And say, “ Would God it came to pass  
My heart had shrunk as thin ! ”

For then, I, undistrest  
By hearts grown cold to me,  
Could lonely wait my endless rest  
With equanimity.

But Time, to make me grieve,  
Part steals, lets part abide ;  
And shakes this fragile frame at eve  
With throbbings of noontide.



## EXEUNT OMNES

### I

EVERYBODY else, then, going,  
And I still left where the fair was ? . . .  
Much have I seen of neighbour loungers  
Making a lusty showing,  
Each now past all knowing.

### II

There is an air of blankness  
In the street and the littered spaces ;  
Thoroughfare, steeple, bridge and highway  
Wizen themselves to lankness ;  
Kennels dribble dankness.

### III

Folk all fade. And whither,  
As I wait alone where the fair was ?  
Into the clammy and numbing night-fog  
Whence they entered hither.  
Soon one more goes thither.

*June 2, 1913.*

PART II  
POEMS NARRATIVE AND  
REFLECTIVE

## PAYING CALLS

I WENT by footpath and by stile  
    Beyond where bustle ends,  
Strayed here a mile and there a mile,  
    And called upon some friends.

On certain ones I had not seen  
    For years past did I call,  
And then on others who had been  
    The oldest friends of all.

It was the time of midsummer  
    When they had used to roam ;  
But now, though tempting was the air,  
    I found them all at home.

I spoke to one and other of them  
    By mound and stone and tree  
Of things we had done ere days were dim,  
    But they spoke not to me.

## FRIENDS BEYOND

WILLIAM DEWY, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Led-  
low late at plough,  
Robert's kin, and John's, and Ned's,  
And the Squire, and Lady Susan, lie in Mellstock  
churchyard now !

"Gone," I call them, gone for good, that group  
of local hearts and heads ;  
Yet at mothy curfew-tide,  
And at midnight when the noon-heat breathes  
it back from walls and leads

They've a way of whispering to me—fellow-  
wight who yet abide—  
In the muted, measured note  
Of a ripple under archways, or a lone cave's  
stillicide :

"We have triumphed : this achievement turns  
the bane to antidote,  
Unsuccesses to success,  
Many thought-worn eves and morrows to a  
morrow free of thought.

“ No more need we corn and clothing, feel of old  
 terrestrial stress ;  
 Chill detraction stirs no sigh ;  
 Fear of death has even bygone us : death gave  
 all that we possess.”

*W. D.*—“ Ye mid burn the old bass-viol that I  
 set such value by.”

*Squire*—“ You may hold the manse in fee,  
 You may wed my spouse, may let my  
 children’s memory of me die.”

*Lady*—“ You may have my rich brocades, my  
 laces ; take each household key ;  
 Ransack coffer, desk, bureau ;  
 Quiz the few poor treasures hid there, con  
 the letters kept by me.”

*Far.*—“ Ye mid zell my favourite heifer, ye mid  
 let the charlock grow,  
 Foul the grinterns, give up thrift.”

*Wife*—“ If ye break my best blue china,  
 children, I shan’t care or ho.”

*All*—“ We’ve no wish to hear the tidings, how  
 the people’s fortunes shift ;  
 What your daily doings are ;  
 Who are wedded, born, divided ; if your  
 lives beat slow or swift.

“ Curious not the least are we if our intents  
 you make or mar,

If you quire to our old tune,  
If the City stage still passes, if the weirs still  
    roar afar.”

—Thus, with very gods’ composure, freed those  
    crosses late and soon  
    Which, in life, the Trine allow  
(Why, none witteth), and ignoring all that haps  
    beneath the moon,

William Dewy, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Led-  
    low late at plough,  
    Robert’s kin, and John’s, and Ned’s,  
And the Squire, and Lady Susan, murmur  
    mildly to me now.

## IN FRONT OF THE LANDSCAPE

PLUNGING and labouring on in a tide of visions,  
Dolorous and dear,  
Forward I pushed my way as amid waste  
waters  
Stretching around,  
Through whose eddies there glimmered the  
customed landscape  
Yonder and near

Blotted to feeble mist. And the coomb and  
the upland  
Coppice-crowned,  
Ancient chalk-pit, milestone, rills in the grass-  
flat  
Stroked by the light,  
Seemed but a ghost-like gauze, and no sub-  
stantial  
Meadow or mound.

What were the infinite spectacles featuring fore-  
most  
Under my sight,

Hindering me to discern my paced advancement,  
 Lengthening to miles ;  
 What were the re-creations killing the daytime  
 As by the night ?

O they were speechful faces, gazing insistent,  
 Some as with smiles,  
 Some as with slow-born tears that brinily  
 trundled  
 Over the wrecked  
 Cheeks that were fair in their flush-time, ash  
 now with anguish,  
 Harrowed by wiles.

Yes, I could see them, feel them, hear them,  
 address them—  
 Halo-bedecked—  
 And, alas, onwards, shaken by fierce unreason,  
 Rigid in hate,  
 Smitten by years-long wryness born of mis-  
 prison,  
 Dreaded, suspect.

Then there would breast me shining sights,  
 sweet seasons  
 Further in date ;  
 Instruments of strings with the tenderest  
 passion  
 Vibrant, beside  
 Lamps long extinguished, robes, cheeks, eyes  
 with the earth's crust  
 Now corporate.



Also there rose a headland of hoary aspect  
 Gnawed by the tide,  
 Frilled by the nimb of the morning as two  
 friends stood there  
 Guilelessly glad—  
 Wherefore they knew not—touched by the  
 fringe of an ecstasy  
 Scantly descried.

Later images too did the day unfurl me,  
 Shadowed and sad,  
 Clay cadavers of those who had shared in the  
 dramas,  
 Laid now at ease,  
 Passions all spent, chiefest the one of the broad  
 brow  
 Sepulture-clad.

So did beset me scenes, miscalled of the bygone,  
 Over the leaze,  
 Past the clump, and down to where lay the  
 beheld ones ;  
 —Yea, as the rhyme  
 Sung by the sea - swell, so in their pleading  
 dumbness  
 Captured me these.

For, their lost revisiting manifestations  
 In their live time  
 Much had I slighted, caring not for their purport,  
 Seeing behind

Things more coveted, reckoned the better worth  
 calling  
 Sweet, sad, sublime.

Thus do they now show hourly before the  
 intenser  
 Stare of the mind  
 As they were ghosts avenging their slights by  
 my bypast  
 Body-borne eyes,  
 Show, too, with fuller translation than rested  
 upon them  
 As living kind.

Hence wag the tongues of the passing people,  
 saying  
 In their surmise,  
 " Ah—whose is this dull form that perambu-  
 lates, seeing nought  
 Round him that looms  
 Whithersoever his footsteps turn in his farings,  
 Save a few tombs ? "

## THE CONVERGENCE OF THE TWAIN

*(Lines on the loss of the "Titanic")*

### I

IN a solitude of the sea  
Deep from human vanity,  
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly  
couches she.

### II

Steel chambers, late the pyres  
Of her salamandrine fires,  
Cold currents thrud, and turn to rhythmic tidal  
lyres.

### III

Over the mirrors meant  
To glass the opulent  
The sea-worm crawls—grotesque, slimed, dumb,  
indifferent.

### IV

Jewels in joy designed  
To ravish the sensuous mind  
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black  
and blind.

## V

Dim moon-eyed fishes near  
 Gaze at the gilded gear  
 And query: "What does this vaingloriousness  
 down here?" . . .

## VI

Well: while was fashioning  
 This creature of cleaving wing,  
 The Immanent Will that stirs and urges every-  
 thing

## VII

Prepared a sinister mate  
 For her—so gaily great—  
 A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

## VIII

And as the smart ship grew  
 In stature, grace, and hue,  
 In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

## IX

Alien they seemed to be:  
 No mortal eye could see  
 The intimate welding of their later history,

X

Or sign that they were bent  
By paths coincident

On being anon twin halves of one august event,

XI

Till the Spinner of the Years  
Said " Now ! " And each one hears,

And consummation comes, and jars two hemi-  
spheres.

## THE SCHRECKHORN

*(With thoughts of Leslie Stephen: June 1897)*

ALOOF, as if a thing of mood and whim ;  
Now that its spare and desolate figure gleams  
Upon my nearing vision, less it seems  
A looming Alp-height than a guise of him  
Who scaled its horn with ventured life and limb,  
Drawn on by vague imaginings, maybe,  
Of semblance to his personality  
In its quaint glooms, keen lights, and rugged  
trim.

At his last change, when Life's dull coils un-  
wind,  
Will he, in old love, hitherward escape,  
And the eternal essence of his mind  
Enter this silent adamantine shape,  
And his low voicing haunt its slipping snows  
When dawn that calls the climber dyes them  
rose ?

## GEORGE MEREDITH

(1828-1909)

FORTY years back, when much had place  
That since has perished out of mind,  
I heard that voice and saw that face.

He spoke as one afoot will wind  
A morning horn ere men awake ;  
His note was trenchant, turning kind.

He was of those whose wit can shake  
And riddle to the very core  
The counterfeits that Time will break. . . .

Of late, when we two met once more,  
The luminous countenance and rare  
Shone just as forty years before.

So that, when now all tongues declare  
His shape unseen by his green hill,  
I scarce believe he sits not there.

No matter. Further and further still  
Through the world's vaporous vitiating air  
His words wing on—as live words will.

*May 1909.*

## A SINGER ASLEEP

(*Algernon Charles Swinburne, 1837–1909*)

### I

IN this fair niche above the unslumbering sea,  
That sentrys up and down all night, all day,  
From cove to promontory, from ness to bay,  
The Fates have fitly bidden that he should be  
Pillowed eternally.

### II

—It was as though a garland of red roses  
Had fallen about the hood of some smug nun  
When irresponsibly dropped as from the sun,  
In fulth of numbers freaked with musical closes,  
Upon Victoria's formal middle time  
His leaves of rhythm and rhyme.

### III

O that far morning of a summer day  
When, down a terraced street whose pave-  
ments lay



Glassing the sunshine into my bent eyes,  
I walked and read with a quick glad surprise  
New words, in classic guise,—

## IV

The passionate pages of his earlier years,  
Fraught with hot sighs, sad laughters, kisses,  
tears ;  
Fresh-fluted notes, yet from a minstrel who  
Blew them not naïvely, but as one who knew  
Full well why thus he blew.

## V

I still can hear the brabble and the roar  
At those thy tunes, O still one, now passed  
through  
That fitful fire of tongues then entered new !  
Their power is spent like spindrift on this shore ;  
Thine swells yet more and more.

## VI

—His singing-mistress verily was no other  
Than she the Lesbian, she the music-mother  
Of all the tribe that feel in melodies ;  
Who leapt, love-anguished, from the Leucadian  
steep  
Into the rambling world-encircling deep  
Which hides her where none sees.

## VII

And one can hold in thought that nightly here  
His phantom may draw down to the water's  
    brim,

And hers come up to meet it, as a dim  
Lone shine upon the heaving hydrosphere,  
And mariners wonder as they traverse near,  
    Unknowing of her and him.

## VIII

One dreams him sighing to her spectral form :  
" O teacher, where lies hid thy burning line ;  
Where are those songs, O poetess divine  
Whose very orts are love incarnadine ? "  
And her smile back : " Disciple true and warm,  
    Sufficient now are thine." . . .

## IX

So here, beneath the waking constellations,  
Where the waves peal their everlasting strains,  
And their dull subterrene reverberations  
Shake him when storms make mountains of  
    their plains—  
Him once their peer in sad improvisations,  
And deft as wind to cleave their frothy manes—  
I leave him, while the daylight gleam declines  
    Upon the capes and chines.

## IN THE MOONLIGHT

“ O LONELY workman, standing there  
In a dream, why do you stare and stare  
At her grave, as no other grave there were ?

“ If your hopeless eyes so importune  
Her soul by the shine of this corpse-cold moon,  
Maybe you'll raise her phantom soon ! ”

“ Why, fool, it is what I would rather see  
Than all the living folk there be ;  
But alas, there is no such joy for me ! ”

“ Ah—she was one you loved, no doubt,  
Through good and evil, through rain and  
drought,  
And when she passed, all your sun went out ? ”

“ Nay : she was the woman I did not love,  
Whom all the others were ranked above,  
Whom during her life I thought nothing of.”

## A CHURCH ROMANCE

(MELLSTOCK, *circa* 1835)

SHE turned in the high pew, until her sight  
Swept the west gallery, and caught its row  
Of music-men with viol, book, and bow  
Against the sinking sad tower-window light.

She turned again ; and in her pride's despite  
One strenuous viol's inspirer seemed to throw  
A message from his string to her below,  
Which said : " I claim thee as my own forth-  
right ! "

Thus their hearts' bond began, in due time  
signed,  
And long years thence, when Age had scared  
Romance,  
At some old attitude of his or glance  
That gallery-scene would break upon her mind,  
With him as minstrel, ardent, young, and trim,  
Bowing " New Sabbath " or " Mount Ephraim."

## THE ROMAN ROAD

THE Roman Road runs straight and bare  
As the pale parting-line in hair  
Across the heath. And thoughtful men  
Contrast its days of Now and Then,  
And delve, and measure, and compare ;

Visioning on the vacant air  
Helmed legionaries, who proudly rear  
The Eagle, as they pace again  
The Roman Road.

But no tall brass-helmed legionnaire  
Haunts it for me. Uprises there  
A mother's form upon my ken,  
Guiding my infant steps, as when  
We walked that ancient thoroughfare,  
The Roman Road.

## THE OXEN

CHRISTMAS Eve, and twelve of the clock.

“ Now they are all on their knees,”  
An elder said as we sat in a flock  
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where  
They dwelt in their strawy pen,  
Nor did it occur to one of us there  
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave  
In these years ! Yet, I feel,  
If some one said on Christmas Eve,  
“ Come ; see the oxen kneel

“ In the lonely barton by yonder coomb  
Our childhood used to know,”  
I should go with him in the gloom,  
Hoping it might be so.

## SHE HEARS THE STORM

THERE was a time in former years—  
While my roof-tree was his—  
When I should have been distressed by fears  
At such a night as this !

I should have murmured anxiously,  
“ The pricking rain strikes cold ;  
His road is bare of hedge or tree,  
And he is getting old.”

But now the fitful chimney-roar,  
The drone of Thorncombe trees,  
The Froom in flood upon the moor,  
The mud of Mellstock Leaze,

The candle slanting sooty wick'd,  
The thuds upon the thatch,  
The eaves-drops on the window flicked,  
The clacking garden-hatch,

And what they mean to wayfarers,  
I scarcely heed or mind ;  
He has won that storm-tight roof of hers  
Which Earth grants all her kind.

## AFTER THE LAST BREATH

(J. H. 1813-1904)

THERE'S no more to be done, or feared, or  
hoped ;  
None now need watch, speak low, and list,  
and tire ;  
No irksome crease outsmoothed, no pillow  
sloped  
Does she require.

Blankly we gaze. We are free to go or stay ;  
Our morrow's anxious plans have missed their  
aim ;  
Whether we leave to-night or wait till day  
Counts as the same.

The lettered vessels of medicaments  
Seem asking wherefore we have set them here ;  
Each palliative its silly face presents  
As useless gear.

And yet we feel that something savours well ;  
We note a numb relief withheld before ;



Our well-beloved is prisoner in the cell  
Of Time no more.

We see by littles now the deft achievement  
Whereby she has escaped the Wrongers all,  
In view of which our momentary bereavement  
Outshapes but small.

1904.

## NIGHT IN THE OLD HOME

WHEN the wasting embers redden the chimney-  
breast,  
And Life's bare pathway looms like a desert  
track to me,  
And from hall and parlour the living have gone  
to their rest,  
My perished people who housed them here come  
back to me.

They come and seat them around in their mouldy  
places,  
Now and then bending towards me a glance of  
wistfulness,  
A strange upbraiding smile upon all their faces,  
And in the bearing of each a passive tristfulness.

“ Do you uphold me, lingering and languishing  
here,

A pale late plant of your once strong stock ? ”  
I say to them ;

“ A thinker of crooked thoughts upon Life in  
the sere,

And on That which consigns men to night after  
showing the day to them ? ”

“—O let be the Wherefore ! We fevered our  
years not thus :

Take of Life what it grants, without question ! ”  
they answer me seemingly.

“ Enjoy, suffer, wait : spread the table here  
freely like us,

And, satisfied, placid, unfretting, watch Time  
away beamingly ! ”

## THE DEAR

I PLODDED to Fairmile Hill-top, where  
A maiden one fain would guard  
From every hazard and every care  
Advanced on the roadside sward.

I wondered how succeeding suns  
Would shape her wayfarings,  
And wished some Power might take such ones  
Under its warding wings.

The busy breeze came up the hill  
And smartened her cheek to red,  
And hazed her hair. Commiserate still,  
“ Good-morning, my Dear ! ” I said.

She glanced from me to the far-off gray,  
And, with proud severity,  
“ Good-morning to you—though I may say  
I am not *your* Dear,” quoth she :

“ For I am the Dear of one not here—  
One far from his native land ! ”—  
And she passed me by ; and I did not try  
To make her understand.

## ONE WE KNEW

(M. H. 1772-1857)

SHE told how they used to form for the country dances—

“The Triumph,” “The New-rigged Ship”—  
To the light of the guttering wax in the panelled  
manses,  
And in cots to the blink of a dip.

She spoke of the wild “poussetting” and  
“allemanding”  
On carpet, on oak, and on sod ;  
And the two long rows of ladies and gentlemen  
standing,  
And the figures the couples trod.

She showed us the spot where the maypole was  
yearly planted,  
And where the bandsmen stood  
While breeched and kerchiefed partners whirled,  
and panted  
To choose each other for good.

She told of that far-back day when they learnt  
astounded  
Of the death of the King of France :

Of the Terror ; and then of Bonaparte's un-  
bounded  
Ambition and arrogance.

Of how his threats woke warlike preparations  
Along the southern strand,  
And how each night brought tremors and  
trepidations  
Lest morning should see him land.

She said she had often heard the gibbet creaking  
As it swayed in the lightning flash,  
Had caught from the neighbouring town a small  
child's shrieking  
At the cart-tail under the lash. . . .

With cap-framed face and long gaze into the  
embers—  
We seated around her knees—  
She would dwell on such dead themes, not as  
one who remembers,  
But rather as one who sees.

She seemed one left behind of a band gone  
distant  
So far that no tongue could hail :  
Past things retold were to her as things existent,  
Things present but as a tale.

*May 20, 1902.*

## NEUTRAL TONES

WE stood by a pond that winter day,  
And the sun was white, as though chidden of  
    God,  
And a few leaves lay on the starving sod,  
    —They had fallen from an ash, and were  
    gray.

Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove  
Over tedious riddles solved years ago ;  
And words played between us to and fro—  
    On which lost the more by our love.

The smile on your mouth was the deadest thing  
Alive enough to have strength to die ;  
And a grin of bitterness swept thereby  
    Like an ominous bird a-wing. . . .

Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,  
And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me  
Your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree,  
    And a pond edged with grayish leaves.

1867.

WESTBOURNE PARK VILLAS.

## TO HIM

PERHAPS, long hence, when I have passed away,  
Some other's feature, accent, thought like mine,  
Will carry you back to what I used to say,  
And bring some memory of your love's decline.

Then you may pause awhile and think, " Poor  
jade ! "

And yield a sigh to me—as ample due,  
Not as the tittle of a debt unpaid  
To one who could resign her all to you—

And thus reflecting, you will never see  
That your thin thought, in two small words  
conveyed,

Was no such fleeting phantom-thought to me,  
But the Whole Life wherein my part was played ;  
And you amid its fitful masquerade  
A Thought—as I in yours but seem to be.

1866.

WESTBOURNE PARK VILLAS.



## ROME

### THE VATICAN—SALA DELLE MUSE

(1887)

I SAT in the Muses' Hall at the mid of the day,  
And it seemed to grow still, and the people to  
pass away,  
And the chiselled shapes to combine in a haze  
of sun,  
Till beside a Carrara column there gleamed forth  
One.

She looked not this nor that of those beings  
divine,  
But each and the whole—an essence of all the  
Nine ;  
With tentative foot she neared to my halting-  
place,  
A pensive smile on her sweet, small, marvellous  
face.

“ Regarded so long, we render thee sad ? ”  
said she.

“ Not you,” sighed I, “ but my own in-  
constancy !

I worship each and each ; in the morning one,  
And then, alas ! another at sink of sun.

“ To-day my soul clasps Form ; but where is  
my troth  
Of yesternight with Tune : can one cleave to  
both ? ”

—“ Be not perturbed,” said she. “ Though  
apart in fame,  
As I and my sisters are one, those, too, are the  
same.”

—“ But my love goes further—to Story, and  
Dance, and Hymn,  
The lover of all in a sun-sweep is fool to whim—  
Is swayed like a river-weed as the ripples run ! ”  
—“ Nay, wight, thou sway'st not. These are  
but phases of one ;

“ And that one is I ; and I am projected from  
thee,  
One that out of thy brain and heart thou causeth  
to be—  
Extern to thee nothing. Grieve not, nor thy-  
self becall,  
Woo where thou wilt ; and rejoice thou canst  
love at all ! ”

## ROME

AT THE PYRAMID OF CESTIUS  
NEAR THE GRAVES OF SHELLEY AND KEATS

(1887)

Who, then, was Cestius,  
And what is he to me?—

Amid thick thoughts and memories multi-  
tudinous  
One thought alone brings he.

I can recall no word  
Of anything he did ;

For me he is a man who died and was interred  
To leave a pyramid

Whose purpose was exprest  
Not with its first design,

Nor till, far down in Time, beside it found their  
rest  
Two countrymen of mine.

Cestius in life, maybe,  
Slew, breathed out threatening ;

I know not. This I know : in death all silently  
He does a rarer thing,

In beckoning pilgrim feet  
With marble finger high  
To where, by shadowy wall and history-haunted  
street,  
Those matchless singers lie.

—Say, then, he lived and died  
That stones which bear his name  
Should mark, through Time, where two im-  
mortal Shades abide ;  
It is an ample fame.

ON AN INVITATION TO THE  
UNITED STATES

I

My ardours for emprize nigh lost  
Since Life has bared its bones to me,  
I shrink to seek a modern coast  
Whose riper times have yet to be ;  
Where the new regions claim them free  
From that long drip of human tears  
Which peoples old in tragedy  
Have left upon the centuried years.

II

For, wonning in these ancient lands,  
Enchased and lettered as a tomb,  
And scored with prints of perished hands,  
And chronicled with dates of doom,  
Though my own Being bear no bloom  
I trace the lives such scenes enshrine,  
Give past exemplars present room,  
And their experience count as mine.

## AT A LUNAR ECLIPSE

THY shadow, Earth, from Pole to Central Sea,  
Now steals along upon the Moon's meek shine  
In even monochrome and curving line  
Of imperturbable serenity.

How shall I link such sun-cast symmetry  
With the torn troubled form I know as thine,  
That profile, placid as a brow divine,  
With continents of moil and misery ?

And can immense Mortality but throw  
So small a shade, and Heaven's high human  
    scheme  
Be hemmed within the coasts yon arc implies ?

Is such the stellar gauge of earthly show,  
Nation at war with nation, brains that teem,  
Heroes, and women fairer than the skies ?

## THE SUBALTERNS

### I

“Poor wanderer,” said the leaden sky,  
“I fain would lighten thee,  
But there are laws in force on high  
Which say it must not be.”

### II

—“I would not freeze thee, shorn one,” cried  
The North, “knew I but how  
To warm my breath, to slack my stride;  
But I am ruled as thou.”

### III

—“To-morrow I attack thee, wight,”  
Said Sickness. “Yet I swear  
I bear thy little ark no spite,  
But am bid enter there.”

### IV

—“Come hither, Son,” I heard Death say;  
“I did not will a grave

Should end thy pilgrimage to-day,  
But I, too, am a slave !,"

v

We smiled upon each other then,  
And life to me had less  
Of that fell look it wore ere when  
They owned their passiveness.



## THE SLEEP-WORKER

WHEN wilt thou wake, O Mother, wake and  
see—

As one who, held in trance, has laboured long  
By vacant rote and prepossession strong—  
The coils that thou hast wrought unwittingly ;

Wherein have place, unrealized by thee,  
Fair growths, foul cankers, right enmeshed with  
wrong,

Strange orchestras of victim-shriek and song,  
And curious blends of ache and ecstasy ?—

Should that day come, and show thy opened  
eyes

All that Life's palpitating tissues feel,  
How wilt thou bear thyself in thy surprise ?—

Wilt thou destroy, in one wild shock of shame,  
Thy whole high heaving firmamental frame,  
Or patiently adjust, amend, and heal ?

## BEYOND THE LAST LAMP

*(Near Tooting Common)*

### I

WHILE rain, with eve in partnership,  
Descended darkly, drip, drip, drip,  
Beyond the last lone lamp I passed  
    Walking slowly, whispering sadly,  
    Two linked loiterers, wan, downcast :  
Some heavy thought constrained each face,  
And blinded them to time and place.

### II

The pair seemed lovers, yet absorbed  
In mental scenes no longer orbed  
By love's young rays. Each countenance  
    As it slowly, as it sadly  
    Caught the lamplight's yellow glance,  
Held in suspense a misery  
At things which had been or might be.

### III

When I retrod that watery way  
Some hours beyond the droop of day,

Still I found pacing there the twain  
Just as slowly, just as sadly,  
Heedless of the night and rain.  
One could but wonder who they were  
And what wild woe detained them there.

## IV

Though thirty years of blur and blot  
Have slid since I beheld that spot,  
And saw in curious converse there  
Moving slowly, moving sadly  
That mysterious tragic pair,  
Its olden look may linger on—  
All but the couple ; they have gone.

## V

Whither ? Who knows, indeed. . . . And yet  
To me, when nights are weird and wet,  
Without those comrades there at tryst  
Creeping slowly, creeping sadly,  
That lone lane does not exist.  
There they seem brooding on their pain,  
And will, while such a lane remain.

## THE FACE AT THE CASEMENT

IF ever joy leave  
An abiding sting of sorrow,  
So befell it on the morrow  
Of that May eve. . . .

The travelled sun dropped  
To the north-west, low and lower,  
The pony's trot grew slower,  
Until we stopped.

" This cosy house just by  
I must call at for a minute,  
A sick man lies within it  
Who soon will die.

" He wished to marry me,  
So I am bound, when I drive near him,  
To inquire, if but to cheer him,  
How he may be."

A message was sent in,  
And wordlessly we waited,  
Till some one came and stated  
The bulletin.

And that the sufferer said,  
For her call no words could thank her ;  
As his angel he must rank her  
Till life's spark fled.

Slowly we drove away,  
When I turned my head, although not  
Called to ; why I turned I know not  
Even to this day.

And lo, there in my view  
Pressed against an upper lattice  
Was a white face, gazing at us  
As we withdrew.

And well did I divine  
It to be the man's there dying,  
Who but lately had been sighing  
For her pledged mine.

Then I deigned a deed of hell ;  
It was done before I knew it ;  
What devil made me do it  
I cannot tell !

Yes, while he gazed above,  
I put my arm about her  
That he might see, nor doubt her  
My plighted Love.

The pale face vanished quick,  
As if blasted, from the casement,

And my shame and self-abasement  
Began their prick.

And they prick on, ceaselessly,  
For that stab in Love's fierce fashion  
Which, unfired by lover's passion,  
\* Was foreign to me.

She smiled at my caress,  
But why came the soft embowment  
Of her shoulder at that moment  
She did not guess.

Long long years has he lain  
In thy garth, O sad Saint Cleather :  
What tears there, bared to weather,  
Will cleanse that stain !

Love is long-suffering, brave,  
Sweet, prompt, precious as a jewel ;  
But O, too, Love is cruel,  
Cruel as the grave.

## THE DEAD QUIRE

### I

BESIDE the Mead of Memories,  
Where Church-way mounts to Moaning Hill,  
The sad man sighed his phantasies :  
    He seems to sigh them still.

### II

“ 'Twas the Birth-tide Eve, and the hamleteers  
Made merry with ancient Mellstock zest,  
But the Mellstock quire of former years  
    Had entered into rest.

### III

“ Old Dewy lay by the gaunt yew tree,  
And Reuben and Michael a pace behind.  
And Bowman with his family  
    By the wall that the ivies bind.

### IV

“ The singers had followed one by one,  
Treble, and tenor, and thorough-bass ;  
And the worm that wasteth had begun  
    To mine their mouldering place.

## V

“ For two-score years, ere Christ-day light,  
Mellstock had throbb'd to strains from these ;  
But now there echoed on the night  
    No Christmas harmonies.

## VI

“ Three meadows off, at a dormer'd inn,  
The youth had gathered in high carouse,  
And, ranged on settles, some therein  
    Had drunk them to a drowse.

## VII

“ Loud, lively, reckless, some had grown,  
Each dandling on his jigging knee  
Eliza, Dolly, Nance, or Joan—  
    Livers in levity.

## VIII

“ The taper flames and hearthfire shine  
Grew smoke-hazed to a lurid light,  
And songs on subjects not divine  
    Were warbled forth that night.

## IX

“ Yet many were sons and grandsons here  
Of those who, on such eves gone by,  
At that still hour had throated clear  
    Their anthems to the sky.



## X

“ The clock belled midnight ; and ere long  
One shouted, ‘ Now ’tis Christmas morn ;  
Here’s to our women old and young,  
And to John Barleycorn ! ’

## XI

“ They drink the toast, and shout again :  
The pewter-ware rings back the boom,  
And for a breath-while follows then  
A silence in the room.

## XII

“ When nigh without, as in old days,  
The ancient quire of voice and string  
Seemed singing words of prayer and praise  
As they had used to sing.

## XIII

“ *While shepherds watch’d their flocks by night,—*  
Thus swells the long familiar sound  
In many a quaint symphonic flight  
To, *Glory shone around.*

## XIV

“ The sons defined their fathers’ tones,  
The widow his whom she had wed,  
And others in the minor moans  
The viols of the dead.

## XV

“ Something supernal has the sound  
As verse by verse the strain proceeds,  
And stilly staring on the ground  
    Each roysterer holds and heeds.

## XVI

“ Towards its chorded closing bar  
Plaintively, thinly, waned the hymn,  
Yet lingered, like the notes afar  
    Of banded seraphim.

## XVII

“ With brows abashed, and reverent tread,  
The hearkeners sought the tavern door :  
But nothing, save wan moonlight, spread  
    The empty highway o'er.

## XVIII

“ While on their hearing fixed and tense  
The aerial music seemed to sink,  
As it were gently moving thence  
    Along the river brink.

## XIX

“ Then did the Quick pursue the Dead  
By crystal Froom that crinkles there ;  
And still the viewless quire ahead  
    Voiced the old holy air.

## XX

“ By Bank-walk wicket, brightly bleached,  
It passed, and 'twixt the hedges twain,  
Dogged by the living ; till it reached  
The bottom of Church Lane.

## XXI

“ There, at the turning, it was heard  
Drawing to where the churchyard lay :  
But when they followed thitherward  
It smalled, and died away.

## XXII

“ Each headstone of the quire, each mound,  
Confronted them beneath the moon ;  
But no more floated therearound  
That ancient Birth-night tune.

## XXIII

“ There Dewy lay by the gaunt yew tree,  
There Reuben and Michael, a pace behind,  
And Bowman with his family  
By the wall that the ivies bind. . . .

## XXIV

“ As from a dream each sobered son  
Awoke, and musing reached his door :  
'Twas said that of them all, not one  
Sat in a tavern more.”

## XXV

—The sad man ceased ; and ceased to heed  
His listener, and crossed the leaze  
From Moaning Hill towards the mead—  
The Mead of Memories.

1897.

## THE PINE-PLANTERS

(In *The Woodlanders*)

### I

FROM the bundle at hand here  
I take each tree,  
And set it to stand, here  
Always to be ;  
When, in a second,  
As if from fear  
Of Life unreckoned  
Beginning here,  
It starts a sighing  
Through day and night,  
Though while there lying  
'Twas voiceless quite.

### ii

It will sigh in the morning,  
Will sigh at noon,  
At the winter's warning,  
In wafts of June ;

Grieving that never  
    Kind Fate decreed  
It should for ever  
    Remain a seed,  
And shun the welter  
    Of things without,  
Unneeding shelter  
    From storm and drought

## III

Thus, all unknowing  
    For whom or what  
We set it growing  
    In this bleak spot,  
It still will grieve here  
    Throughout its time,  
Unable to leave here,  
    Or change its clime ;  
Or tell the story  
    Of us to-day  
When, halt and hoary,  
    We pass away.

## THE BURGHERS

(*Casterbridge*: 17—)

THE sun had wheeled from Grey's to Dammer's  
Crest,  
And still I mused on that Thing imminent :—  
At length I sought the High-street to the West.

The level flare raked pane and pediment,  
And my worn face, and shaped my nearing  
friend  
Like one of those the Furnace held unshent.

“ I've news concerning her,” he said. “ Attend.  
They fly to-night at the late moon's first gleam :  
Watch with thy steel : two righteous thrusts  
will end

Her shameless visions and his passioned dream.  
I'll watch with thee, to testify thy wrong—  
To aid, maybe.—Law consecrates the scheme.”

I started, and we paced the flags along  
Till I replied : “ Since it has come to this  
I'll do it ! But alone. I can be strong.”

Three hours past Curfew, when the Froom's  
mild hiss

Reigned sole, undulled by whirr of merchandize,  
From Pummery-Tout to where the Gibbet is,

I crossed my pleasaunce hard by Glyd'path  
Rise,

And stood beneath the wall. Eleven strokes  
went,

And to the door they came, contrariwise,

And met in clasp so close I had but bent

My lifted blade on either to have let

Their two souls loose upon the firmament.

But something held my arm. "A moment yet

As pray-time ere you wantons die!" I said;

And then they saw me. Swift her gaze was set

With eye and cry of love illimited

Upon her Heart-king. Never upon me

Had she thrown look of love so thorough-  
sped! . . .

At once she flung her faint form shieldingly

On his, against the vengeance of my vows;

The which o'erruling, her shape shielded he.

Blanked by such love, I stood as in a drowse,

And the slow moon edged from the upland nigh,

My sad thoughts moving thuswise: "I may  
house



And I may husband her, yet what am I  
But licensed tyrant to this bonded pair?  
Says Charity, Do as ye would be done by." . . .

Hurling my iron to the bushes there  
I bade them stay. And, as if brain and breast  
Were passive, they walked with me to the stair.

Inside the house none watched; and on we prest  
Before a mirror, in whose gleam I read  
Her beauty, his,—and my own face unblest;

Till at her room I turned. "Madam," I said,  
"Have you the wherewithal for this? Pray  
speak.

Love fills no cupboard. You'll need daily  
bread."

"We've nothing, sire," said she; "and  
nothing seek.

'Twere base in me to rob my lord unaware;  
Our hands will earn a pittance week by week."

And next I saw she had piled her raiment rare  
Within the garde-robés, and her household  
purse,

Her jewels, her least lace of personal wear,

And stood in homespun. Now grown wholly  
hers,

I handed her the gold, her jewels all,  
And him the choicest of her robes diverse.

“ I’ll take you to the doorway in the wall,  
And then adieu,” I told them. “ Friends,  
withdraw.”

They did so ; and she went—beyond recall.

And as I paused beneath the arch I saw  
Their moonlit figures—slow, as in surprise—  
Descend the slope, and vanish on the haw.

“ ‘ Fool,’ some will say,” I thought. “ But  
who is wise,  
Save God alone, to weigh my reasons why ? ”  
—“ Hast thou struck home ? ” came with the  
boughs’ night-sighs.

It was my friend. “ I have struck well. They  
fly,  
But carry wounds that none can cicatrize.”  
—“ Not mortal ? ” said he. “ Linger—  
worse,” said I.

## THE CORONATION

AT Westminster, hid from the light of day,  
Many who once had shone as monarchs lay.

Edward the Pious, and two Edwards more,  
The second Richard, Henrys three or four ;

That is to say, those who were called the  
Third,  
Fifth, Seventh, and Eighth (the much self-  
widowed),

And James the Scot, and near him Charles the  
Second,  
And, too, the second George could there be  
reckoned.

Of women, Mary and Queen Elizabeth,  
And Anne, all silent in a musing death ;

And William's Mary, and Mary, Queen of Scots,  
And consort - queens whose names oblivion  
blots ;

And several more whose chronicle one sees  
Adorning ancient royal pedigrees.

—Now, as they drowsed on, freed from Life's  
old thrall,  
And heedless, save of things exceptional,

Said one: “What means this throbbing  
thudding sound  
That reaches to us here from overground ;

“A sound of chisels, augers, planes, and saws,  
Infringing all ecclesiastic laws ?

“And these tons-weight of timber on us  
pressed,  
Unfelt here since we entered into rest ?

“Surely, at least to us, being corpses royal,  
A meet repose is owing by the loyal ? ”

“—Perhaps a scaffold ! ” Mary Stuart sighed,  
“If such still be. It was that way I died.”

“—Od's ! Far more like,” said he the many-  
wived,  
“That for a wedding 'tis this work's contrived.

“Ha-ha ! I never would bow down to Rimmon,  
But I had a rare time with those six women ! ”

“Not all at once ? ” gasped he who loved  
confession.

“Nay, nay ! ” said Hal. “That would have  
been transgression.”

“—They build a catafalque here, black and tall,  
Perhaps,” mused Richard, “ for some funeral ? ”

And Anne chimed in : “ Ah, yes : it may be  
so ! ”

“ Nay ! ” squeaked Eliza. “ Little you seem  
to know—

“ Clearly ’tis for some crowning here in state,  
As they crowned us at our long bygone date ;

“ Though we’d no such a power of carpentry,  
But let the ancient architecture be ;

“ If I were up there where the parsons sit,  
In one of my gold robes, I’d see to it ! ”

“ But you are not,” Charles chuckled. “ You  
are here,  
And never will know the sun again, my dear ! ”

“ Yea,” whispered those whom no one had  
addressed ;

“ With slow, sad march, amid a folk distressed,  
We were brought here, to take our dusty rest.

“ And here, alas, in darkness laid below,  
We’ll wait, and listen, and endure the show. . . .  
Clamour dogs kingship ; afterwards not so ! ”

## A COMMONPLACE DAY

THE day is turning ghost,  
And scuttles from the kalendar in fits and  
furtively,  
To join the anonymous host  
Of those that throng oblivion ; ceding his place,  
maybe,  
To one of like degree.

I part the fire-gnawed logs,  
Rake forth the embers, spoil the busy flames,  
and lay the ends  
Upon the shining dogs ;  
Further and further from the nooks the twilight's  
stride extends,  
And beamless black impends.

Nothing of tiniest worth  
Have I wrought, pondered, planned ; no one  
thing asking blame or praise,  
Since the pale corpse-like birth  
Of this diurnal unit, bearing blanks in all its  
rays—  
Dullest of dull-hued Days !

Wanly upon the panes  
The rain slides, as have slid since morn my  
    colourless thoughts ; and yet  
Here, while Day's presence wanes,  
And over him the sepulchre-lid is slowly lowered  
    and set,  
He wakens my regret.

Regret—though nothing dear  
That I wot of, was toward in the wide world at  
    his prime,  
Or bloomed elsewhere than here,  
To die with his decease, and leave a memory  
    sweet, sublime,  
Or mark him out in Time. . . .

—Yet, maybe, in some soul,  
In some spot undiscerned on sea or land, some  
    impulse rose,  
Or some intent upstole  
Of that enkindling ardency from whose maturer  
    glows  
The world's amendment flows ;

But which, benumbed at birth  
By momentary chance or wile, has missed its  
    hope to be  
Embodied on the earth ;  
And undervoicings of this loss to man's futurity  
May wake regret in me.

## HER DEATH AND AFTER

THE summons was urgent, and forth I went  
By the way of the Western Wall, so drear  
On that winter night, and sought a gate—  
    Where one, by Fate,  
Lay dying that I held dear.

And there, as I paused by her tenement,  
And the trees shed on me their rime and hoar,  
I thought of the man who had left her lone—  
    Him who made her his own  
When I loved her, long before.

The rooms within had the piteous shine  
That home-things wear when there's aught  
    amiss ;  
From the stairway floated the rise and fall  
    Of an infant's call,  
Whose birth had brought her to this.

Her life was the price she would pay for that  
    whine—  
For a child by the man she did not love.  
" But let that rest for ever," I said,  
    And bent my tread  
To the bedchamber above.



She took my hand in her thin white own,  
 And smiled her thanks—though nigh too weak—  
 And made them a sign to leave us there,  
     Then faltered, ere  
 She could bring herself to speak.

“ Just to see you before I go—he’ll condone  
 Such a natural thing now my time’s not much—  
 When Death is so near it hustles hence  
     All passioned sense  
 Between woman and man as such !

“ My husband is absent. As heretofore  
 The City detains him. But, in truth,  
 He has not been kind. . . . I will speak no  
     blame,  
     But—the child is lame ;  
 O, I pray she may reach his ruth !

“ Forgive past days—I can say no more—  
 Maybe if we’d wedded you’d now repine ! . . .  
 But I treated you ill. I was punished. Farewell !  
     —Truth shall I tell ?  
 Would the child were yours and mine !

“ As a wife I’ve been true. But, such my  
     unease  
 That, could I insert a deed back in Time,  
 I’d make her yours, to secure your care ;  
     And the scandal bear,  
 And the penalty for the crime ! ”

—When I had left, and the swinging trees  
Rang above me, as lauding her candid say,  
Another was I. Her words were enough :  
    Came smooth, came rough,  
I felt I could live my day.

Next night she died ; and her obsequies  
In the Field of Tombs where the earthworks  
    frowned  
Had her husband's heed. His tendance spent,  
    I often went  
And pondered by her mound.

All that year and the next year whiled,  
And I still went thitherward in the gloam ;  
But the Town forgot her and her nook,  
    And her husband took  
Another Love to his home.

And the rumour flew that the lame lone child  
Whom she wished for its safety child of mine,  
Was treated ill when offspring came  
    Of the new-made dame,  
And marked a more vigorous line.

A smarter grief within me wrought  
Than even at loss of her so dear,  
That the being whose soul my soul suffused  
    Had a child ill-used,  
I helpless to interfere !

One eve as I stood at my spot of thought  
 In the white-stoned Garth with these brooding  
     glooms,  
 Her husband neared ; and to shun his nod  
     By her hallowed sod  
 I went from among the tombs

To the Cirque of the Gladiators which faced—  
 That haggard mark of Imperial Rome,  
 Whose Pagan echoes mock the chime  
     Of our Christian time  
 From its hollows of turf and loam.

The sun's gold touch was just displaced  
 From the vast Arena where men once bled,  
 When her husband followed ; bowed ; half-  
     passed,  
     With lip upcast ;  
 Then, halting, sullenly said :

“ It is noised that you visit my first wife's tomb.  
 Now, I gave her an honoured name to bear  
 While living, when dead. So I've claim to ask  
     Your right to task  
 My patience by darkling there ?

“ There's decency even in death, I assume ;  
 Preserve it, sir, and keep away ;  
 For the mother of my first-born you  
     Show mind undue !  
 —Sir, I've nothing more to say.”

A desperate stroke discerned I then—  
 God pardon—or pardon not—the lie ;  
 She had sighed that she wished (lest the child  
     should pine  
     Of slights) 'twere mine,  
 So I said : “ But the father I.

“ That you thought it yours is the way of men ;  
 But I won her troth long ere your day :  
 You learnt how, in dying, she summoned me ?  
     'Twas in fealty.  
 —Sir, I've nothing more to say,

“ Save that, if you'll hand me my little maid,  
 I'll take her, and rear her, and spare you toil.  
 Think it more than a friendly act none can ;  
     I'm a lonely man,  
 While you've a large pot to boil.

“ If not, and you'll put it to ball or blade—  
 To-night, to-morrow night, anywhen—  
 I'll meet you here. . . . But think of it,  
     And in season fit  
 Let me hear from you again.”

—Well, I went away, hoping ; but nought I  
     heard  
 Of my stroke for the child, till there greeted me  
 A little voice that one day came  
     To my window-frame  
 And babbled innocently :

“ My father, who’s not my own, sends word  
I’m to stay here, sir, where I belong ! ”

Next a writing came : “ Since the child was the  
fruit

Of your lawless suit,  
Pray take her, to right a wrong.”

And I did. And I gave the child my love,  
And the child loved me, and estranged us none.  
But compunctions loomed ; for I’d harmed the  
dead

By what I’d said  
For the good of the living one.

—Yet though, God wot, I am sinner enough,  
And unworthy the woman who drew me so,  
Perhaps this wrong for her darling’s good  
She forgives, or would,  
If only she could know !

## IN DEATH DIVIDED

### I

I SHALL rot here, with those whom in their  
day  
You never knew,  
And alien ones who, ere they chilled to clay,  
Met not my view,  
Will in your distant grave-place ever neighbour  
you.

### II

No shade of pinnacle or tree or tower,  
While earth endures,  
Will fall on my mound and within the hour  
Steal on to yours ;  
One robin never haunt our two green covertures.

### III

Some organ may resound on Sunday noons  
By where you lie,  
Some other thrill the panes with other tunes  
Where moulder I ;  
No selfsame chords compose our common  
lullaby.

## IV

The simply-cut memorial at my head  
Perhaps may take  
A rustic form, and that above your bed  
A stately make ;  
No linking symbol show thereon for our tale's  
sake.

## V

And in the monotonous moils of strained,  
hard-run  
Humanity,  
The eternal tie which binds us twain in one  
No eye will see  
Stretching across the miles that sever you  
from me.

## IN TENEBRIS

“Considerabam ad dexteram, et videbam; et non erat qui cognosceret me. . . . Non est qui requirat animam meam.”—*Ps. cxli.*

WHEN the clouds' swoln bosoms echo back the  
shouts of the many and strong  
That things are all as they best may be, save a  
few to be right ere long,  
And my eyes have not the vision in them to  
discern what to these is so clear,  
The blot seems straightway in me alone; one  
better he were not here.

The stout upstanders chime, All's well with us :  
ruers have nought to rue !  
And what the potent so often say, can it fail to  
be somewhat true ?  
Breezily go they, breezily come; their dust  
smokes around their career,  
Till I think I am one born out of due time, who  
has no calling here.



Their dawns bring lusty joys, it seems ; their  
evenings all that is sweet ;  
Our times are blessed times, they cry : Life  
shapes it as is most meet,  
And nothing is much the matter ; there are  
many smiles to a tear ;  
Then what is the matter is I, I say. Why  
should such an one be here ? . . .

Let him in whose ears the low-voiced Best is  
killed by the clash of the First,  
Who holds that if way to the Better there be, it  
exacts a full look at the Worst,  
Who feels that delight is a delicate growth  
cramped by crookedness, custom, and fear,  
Get him up and be gone as one shaped awry ;  
he disturbs the order here.

1895-96.

## “ I HAVE LIVED WITH SHADES ”

### I

I HAVE lived with Shades so long,  
So long have talked to them,  
Since from the forest's hem  
I sped to street and throng,  
That sometimes they  
In their dim style  
Will pause awhile  
To hear my say ;

### II

And take me by the hand,  
And lead me through their rooms  
In the To-be, where Dooms  
Half-wove and shapeless stand :  
And show from there  
The dwindled dust  
And rot and rust  
Of things that were.

### III

“ Now turn,” they said to me  
One day : “ Look whence we came,  
And signify his name  
Who gazes thence at thee.”—

—“ Nor name nor race  
Know I, or can,”  
I said, “ Of man  
So commonplace.

IV

“ He moves me not at all ;  
I note no ray or jot  
Of rareness in his lot,  
Or star exceptional.  
    Into the dim  
    Dead throngs around  
    He’ll sink, nor sound  
    Be left of him.”

V

“ Yet,” said they, “ his frail speech,  
Hath accents pitched like thine—  
Thy mould and his define  
A likeness each to each—  
    But go ! Deep pain  
    Alas, would be  
    His name to thee,  
    And told in vain ! ”

*Feb. 2, 1899.*

## A POET

ATTENTIVE eyes, fantastic heed,  
Assessing minds, he does not need,  
Nor urgent writs to sup or dine,  
Nor pledges in the rosy wine.

For loud acclaim he does not care  
By the august or rich or fair,  
Nor for smart pilgrims from afar,  
Curious on where his hauntings are.

But soon or later, when you hear  
That he has doffed this wrinkled gear,  
Some evening, at the first star-ray,  
Come to his graveside, pause, and say :

“ Whatever his message—glad or grim—  
Two bright-souled women clave to him ” ;  
Stand and say that while day decays,  
It will be word enough of praise.

*July 1914.*

PART III

WAR POEMS, AND LYRICS FROM  
"THE DYNASTS"



## EMBARKATION

*(Southampton Docks)*

HERE, where Vespasian's legions struck the  
sands,

And Cerdic with his Saxons entered in,  
And Henry's army leapt afloat to win  
Convincing triumphs over neighbour lands,

Vaster battalions press for further strands,  
To argue in the self-same bloody mode  
Which this late age of thought, and pact, and  
code,

Still fails to mend.—Now deckward tramp the  
bands,

Yellow as autumn leaves, alive as spring ;  
And as each host draws out upon the sea  
Beyond which lies the tragical To-be,  
None dubious of the cause, none murmuring,

Wives, sisters, parents, wave white hands and  
smile,

As if they knew not that they weep the while.

## DEPARTURE

*(Southampton Docks)*

WHILE the far farewell music thins and fails,  
And the broad bottoms rip the bearing brine—  
All smalling slowly to the gray sea line—  
And each significant red smoke-shaft pales,

Keen sense of severance everywhere prevails,  
Which shapes the late long tramp of mounting  
men

To seeming words that ask and ask again :  
“ How long, O ruling Teutons, Slavs, and Gaels

Must your wroth reasonings trade on lives like  
these,

That are as puppets in a playing hand ?—  
When shall the saner softer polities  
Whereof we dream, have sway in each proud  
land,

And patriotism, grown Godlike, scorn to stand  
Bondslave to realms, but circle earth and seas ? ”



## THE GOING OF THE BATTERY

### I

RAIN came down drenchingly ; but we un-  
blenchingly  
Trudged on beside them through mirk and  
through mire,  
They stepping steadily—only too readily!—  
Scarce as if stepping brought parting-time  
nigher.

### II

Great guns were gleaming there, living things  
seeming there,  
Cloaked in their tar-cloths, upmouthed to the  
night ;  
Wheels wet and yellow from axle to felloe,  
Throats blank of sound, but prophetic to sight.

### III

Gas-glimmers drearily, bleakly, eerily  
Lit our pale faces outstretched for one kiss,  
While we stood prest to them, with a last quest  
to them  
Not to court perils that honour could miss.

## IV

Sharp were those sighs of ours, blinded these  
 eyes of ours,  
 When at last moved away under the arch  
 All we loved. Aid for them each woman prayed  
 for them,  
 Treading back slowly the track of their march.

## V

Someone said: "Nevermore will they come:  
 evermore  
 Are they now lost to us." O it was wrong!  
 Though may be hard their ways, some Hand  
 will guard their ways,  
 Bear them through safely, in brief time or long.

## VI

—Yet, voices haunting us, daunting us, taunt-  
 ing us,  
 Hint in the night-time when life beats are low  
 Other and graver things . . . Hold we to  
 braver things,  
 Wait we, in trust, what Time's fulness shall  
 show.

## DRUMMER HODGE

### I

THEY throw in Drummer Hodge, to rest  
    Uncoffined—just as found :  
His landmark is a kopje-crest  
    That breaks the veldt around ;  
And foreign constellations west  
    Each night above his mound.

### II

Young Hodge the Drummer never knew—  
    Fresh from his Wessex home—  
The meaning of the broad Karoo,  
    The Bush, the dusty loam,  
And why uprose to nightly view  
    Strange stars amid the gloam.

### III

Yet portion of that unknown plain  
    Will Hodge for ever be ;  
His homely Northern breast and brain  
    Grow up a Southern tree,  
And strange-eyed constellations reign  
    His stars eternally.

## THE MAN HE KILLED

“ HAD he and I but met  
By some old ancient inn,  
We should have sat us down to wet  
Right many a nipperkin !

“ But ranged as infantry,  
And staring face to face,  
I shot at him as he at me,  
And killed him in his place.

“ I shot him dead because—  
Because he was my foe,  
Just so : my foe of course he was ;  
That's clear enough ; although

“ He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,  
Off-hand like—just as I—  
Was out of work—had sold his traps—  
No other reason why.

“ Yes ; quaint and curious war is !  
You shoot a fellow down  
You'd treat if met where any bar is,  
Or help to half-a-crown.”

1902.

## THE SOULS OF THE SLAIN

### I

THE thick lids of Night closed upon me  
Alone at the Bill

Of the Isle by the Race<sup>1</sup>—

Many-caverned, bald, wrinkled of face—

And with darkness and silence the spirit was  
on me

To brood and be still.

### II

No wind fanned the flats of the ocean,

Or promontory sides,

Or the ooze by the strand,

Or the bent-bearded slope of the land,

Whose base took its rest amid everlong motion

Of criss-crossing tides.

### III

Soon from out of the Southward seemed  
nearing

A whirr, as of wings

Waved by mighty-vanned flies,

Or by night-moths of measureless size,

<sup>1</sup> The "Race" is the turbulent sea-area off the Bill of Portland, where contrary tides meet.

And in softness and smoothness well-nigh  
 beyond hearing  
 Of corporal things.

## IV

And they bore to the bluff, and alighted—  
 A dim-discerned train  
 Of sprites without mould,  
 Frameless souls none might touch or might  
 hold—  
 On the ledge by the turreted lantern, far-sighted  
 By men of the main.

## V

And I heard them say "Home!" and I  
 knew them  
 For souls of the felled  
 On the earth's nether bord  
 Under Capricorn, whither they'd warred,  
 And I neared in my awe, and gave heedfulness  
 to them  
 With breathings inheld.

## VI

Then, it seemed, there approached from the  
 northward  
 A senior soul-flame  
 Of the like filmy hue:  
 And he met them and spake: "Is it you,

O my men ? ” Said they, “ Aye ! We bear  
 homeward and hearthward  
 To feast on our fame ! ”

## VII

“ I’ve flown there before you,” he said  
 then :

“ Your households are well ;  
 But—your kin linger less

On your glory and war-mightiness  
 Than on dearer things.”—“ Dearer ? ” cried  
 these from the dead then,  
 “ Of what do they tell ? ”

## VIII

“ Some mothers muse sadly, and murmur  
 Your doings as boys—  
 Recall the quaint ways  
 Of your babyhood’s innocent days.  
 Some pray that, ere dying, your faith had grown  
 firmer,  
 And higher your joys.

## IX

“ A father broods : ‘ Would I had set him  
 To some humble trade,  
 And so slacked his high fire,  
 And his passionate martial desire ;

Had told him no stories to woo him and whet  
 him  
 To this dire crusade ! ' "

## X

" And, General, how hold out our sweet-  
 hearts,  
 Sworn loyal as doves ? "

—" Many mourn ; many think  
 It is not unattractive to prink  
 Them in sables for heroes. Some fickle and  
 fleet hearts  
 Have found them new loves."

## XI

" And our wives ? " quoth another  
 resignedly,  
 " Dwell they on our deeds ? "

—" Deeds of home ; that live yet  
 Fresh as new—deeds of fondness or fret ;  
 Ancient words that were kindly expressed or  
 unkindly,  
 These, these have their heeds."

## XII

—" Alas ! then it seems that our glory  
 Weighs less in their thought  
 Than our old homely acts,  
 And the long-ago commonplace facts



Of our lives—held by us as scarce part of our  
 story,  
 And rated as nought ! ”

## XIII

Then bitterly some : “ Was it wise now  
 To raise the tomb-door  
 For such knowledge ? Away ! ”

But the rest : “ Fame we prized till to-day ;  
 Yet that hearts keep us green for old kindness  
 we prize now  
 A thousand times more ! ”

## XIV

Thus speaking, the trooped apparitions  
 Began to disband  
 And resolve them in two :

Those whose record was lovely and true  
 Bore to northward for home : those of bitter  
 traditions  
 Again left the land,

## XV

And, towering to seaward in legions,  
 They paused at a spot  
 Overbending the Race—

That engulfing, ghastr, sinister place—  
 Whither headlong they plunged, to the fathom-  
 less regions  
 Of myriads forgot.

## XVI

And the spirits of those who were homing  
Passed on, rushingly,  
Like the Pentecost Wind ;  
And the whirr of their wayfaring thinned  
And surceased on the sky, and but left in the  
gloaming  
Sea-mutterings and me.

*December, 1899.*

“ MEN WHO MARCH AWAY ”

(SONG OF THE SOLDIERS)

WHAT of the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away  
Ere the barn-cocks say  
Night is growing gray,  
Leaving all that here can win us ;  
What of the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away ?

Is it a purblind prank, O think you,  
Friend with the musing eye,  
Who watch us stepping by  
With doubt and dolorous sigh ?  
Can much pondering so hoodwink you !  
Is it a purblind prank, O think you,  
Friend with the musing eye ?

Nay. We well see what we are doing,  
Though some may not see—  
Dalliers as they be—  
England's need are we ;

Her distress would leave us rueing :

Nay. We well see what we are doing,  
Though some may not see !

In our heart of hearts believing  
    Victory crowns the just,  
    And that braggarts must  
    Surely bite the dust,  
Press we to the field ungrieving,  
In our heart of hearts believing  
    Victory crowns the just.

Hence the faith and fire within us  
    Men who march away  
    Ere the barn-cocks say  
    Night is growing gray,  
Leaving all that here can win us ;  
Hence the faith and fire within us  
    Men who march away.

*September 5, 1914.*

## BEFORE MARCHING, AND AFTER

(IN MEMORIAM F. W. G.)

ORION swung southward aslant  
Where the starved Egdon pine-trees had  
    thinned,

The Pleiads aloft seemed to pant  
With the heather that twitched in the wind ;

But he looked on indifferent to sights such as  
    these,

Unswayed by love, friendship, home joy or  
    home sorrow,

And wondered to what he would march on the  
    morrow.

The crazed household clock with its whirr  
Rang midnight within as he stood,

He heard the low sighing of her

Who had striven from his birth for his good ;

But he still only asked the spring starlight, the  
    breeze,

What great thing or small thing his history  
    would borrow

From that Game with Death he would play on  
    the morrow.

When the heath wore the robe of late  
summer,  
And the fuchsia-bells, hot in the sun,  
Hung red by the door, a quick comer  
Brought tidings that marching was done  
For him who had joined in that game overseas  
Where Death stood to win ; though his memory  
would borrow  
A brightness therefrom not to die on the morrow.

*September, 1915.*

IN TIME OF  
"THE BREAKING OF NATIONS"

I

ONLY a man harrowing clods  
    In a slow silent walk  
With an old horse that stumbles and nods  
    Half asleep as they stalk.

II

Only thin smoke without flame  
    From the heaps of couch grass :  
Yet this will go onward the same  
    Though Dynasties pass.

III

Yonder a maid and her wight  
    Come whispering by ;  
War's annals will cloud into night  
    Ere their story die.

FROM "THE DYNASTS"

THE NIGHT OF TRAFALGAR

*(Boatman's Song)*

I

IN the wild October night-time, when the wind  
raved round the land,  
And the Back-sea met the Front-sea, and our  
doors were blocked with sand,  
And we heard the drub of Dead-man's Bay,  
where bones of thousands are,  
We knew not what the day had done for us at  
Trafalgar.

Had done,  
Had done,  
For us at Trafalgar!

II

"Pull hard, and make the Nothe, or down we  
go!" one says, says he.  
We pulled; and bedtime brought the storm;  
but snug at home slept we.



Yet all the while our gallants after fighting  
 through the day,  
 Were beating up and down the dark, sou'-west  
 of Cadiz Bay.

The dark,  
 The dark,  
 Sou'-west of Cadiz Bay !

## III

The victors and the vanquished then the storm  
 it tossed and tore,  
 As hard they strove, those worn-out men, upon  
 that surly shore ;  
 Dead Nelson and his half-dead crew, his foes  
 from near and far,  
 Were rolled together on the deep that night at  
 Trafalgar.

The deep,  
 The deep,  
 That night at Trafalgar !

## HUSSAR'S SONG

“ BUDMOUTH DEARS ”

I

WHEN we lay where Budmouth Beach is,  
O the girls were fresh as peaches  
With their tall and tossing figures and their eyes  
of blue and brown !  
And our hearts would ache with longing  
As we paced from our sing-songing  
With a smart *Clink ! Clink !* up the Esplanade  
and down.

.I

They distracted and delayed us  
By the pleasant pranks they played us,  
And what marvel, then, if troopers, even of  
regiments of renown,  
On whom flashed those eyes divine, O,  
Should forget the countersign, O,  
As we tore *Clink ! Clink !* back to camp above  
the town.

## III

Do they miss us much, I wonder,  
Now that war has swept us sunder,  
And we roam from where the faces smile to  
    where the faces frown ?  
And no more behold the features  
Of the fair fantastic creatures,  
And no more *Clink ! Clink !* past the parlours  
    of the town ?

## IV

Shall we once again there meet them ?  
Falter fond attempts to greet them ?  
Will the gay sling-jacket glow again beside the  
    muslin gown ?—  
Will they archly quiz and con us  
With a sideway glance upon us,  
While our spurs *Clink ! Clink !* up the Esplanade  
    and down ?

“ MY LOVE’S GONE A-FIGHTING ”

*(Country-girl’s Song)*

I

My Love’s gone a-fighting  
Where war-trumpets call,  
The wrongs o’ men righting  
Wi’ carbine and ball,  
And sabre for smiting,  
And charger, and all !

II

Of whom does he think there  
Where war-trumpets call,  
To whom does he drink there,  
Wi’ carbine and ball  
On battle’s red brink there,  
And charger, and all ?

III

Her, whose voice he hears humming  
Where war-trumpets call,  
“ I wait, Love, thy coming  
Wi’ carbine and ball,  
And bandsmen a-drumming  
Thee, charger and all ! ”

## THE EVE OF WATERLOO

*(Chorus of Phantoms)*

THE eyelids of eve fall together at last,  
And the forms so foreign to plain and tree  
Lie down as though native, and slumber fast.

Sore are the thrills of misgiving we see  
In the artless green growths at this harlequinade,  
Distracting a vigil where calm should be!

The sod seems opprest, and the field afraid  
Of a Something to come, whereof these are the  
proofs,—  
Neither earthquake, nor storm, nor eclipse's  
shade.

Yea, the coneys are scared by the thud of hoofs,  
And their white scuts flash at their vanishing  
heels,  
And swallows abandon the hamlet-roofs.

The mole's tunnelled chambers are crushed by  
wheels,  
The lark's eggs scattered, their owners fled,  
And the hare's hid litter the sapper unseals.

The snail draws in at the terrible tread,  
But in vain; he is crushed by the felloe-rim;  
The worm asks what can be overhead,

And wriggles deep from a scene so grim,  
And guesses him safe ; for he does not know  
What a foul red rain will be soaking him.

Beaten about by the heel and toe  
Are butterflies, sick of the day's long rheum,  
To die of a worse than the weather-foe.

Trodden and bruised to a miry tomb  
Are ears that have greened but will never be  
gold,  
And flowers in the bud that will never bloom.

So the season's intent, ere its fruit unfold,  
Is frustrate, and mangled, and made succumb,  
Like a youth of promise struck stark and cold.

And what of these who to-night have come ?  
—The young sleep sound ; but the weather  
awakes  
In the veterans, pains from the past that numb ;

Old stabs of Ind, old Peninsular aches,  
Old Friedland chills, haunt their moist mud bed ;  
Cramps from Austerlitz ; till their slumber  
breaks.

And each soul sighs as he shifts his head  
On the loam he's to lease with the other dead  
From to-morrow's dew-fall till Time be sped.

## CHORUS OF THE PITIES

*(After the Battle)*

### SEMICHORUS I

To Thee whose eye all Nature owns,  
Who hurlest Dynasts from their thrones,<sup>1</sup>  
And liftest those of low estate  
We sing, with Her men consecrate !

### II

Yea, Great and Good, Thee, Thee we hail,  
Who shak'st the strong, Who shield'st the frail,  
Who hadst not shaped such souls as we  
If tendermercy lacked in Thee !

### I

Though times be when the mortal moan  
Seems unascending to Thy throne,  
Though seers do not as yet explain  
Why Suffering sobs to Thee in vain ;

### II

We hold that Thy unscanted scope  
Affords a food for final Hope,

<sup>1</sup> καθείλε ΔΥΝΑΣΤΑΣ ἀπὸ θρόνων.—*Magnificat.*

That mild-eyed Prescience ponders nigh  
Life's loom, to lull it by and by.

## I

Therefore we quire to highest height  
The Wellwiller, the kindly Might  
That balances the Vast for weal,  
That purges as by wounds to heal.

## II

The systemed suns the skies enscroll  
Obey Thee in their rhythmic roll,  
Ride radiantly at Thy command,  
Are darkened by Thy Masterhand !

## I

And these pale panting multitudes  
Seen surging here, their moils, their moods,  
All shall " fulfil their joy " in Thee,  
In Thee abide eternally !

## II

Exultant adoration give  
The Alone, through Whom all living live,  
The Alone, in Whom all dying die,  
Whose means the End shall justify ! Amen.



## LAST CHORUS

### SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS

LAST as first the question rings  
Of the Will's long travailings ;

Why the All-mover,

Why the All-prover

Ever urges on and measures out the droning  
tune of Things.<sup>1</sup>

## II

Heaving dumbly

As we deem,

Moulding numbly

As in dream,

Apprehending not how fare the sentient subjects  
of Its scheme.

### SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES

Nay ;—shall not Its blindness break ?

Yea, must not Its heart awake,

<sup>1</sup> Hor. *Epis.* i. 12.

Promptly tending  
 To Its mending  
 In a genial germinating purpose, and for loving-  
 kindness' sake ?

## II

Should It never  
 Curb or cure  
 Aught whatever  
 Those endure  
 Whom It quickens, let them darkle to extinction  
 swift and sure.

## CHORUS

But—a stirring thrills the air  
 Like to sounds of joyance there  
 That the rages  
 Of the ages  
 Shall be cancelled, and deliverance offered from  
 the darts that were,  
 Consciousness the Will informing, till It fashion  
 all things fair !