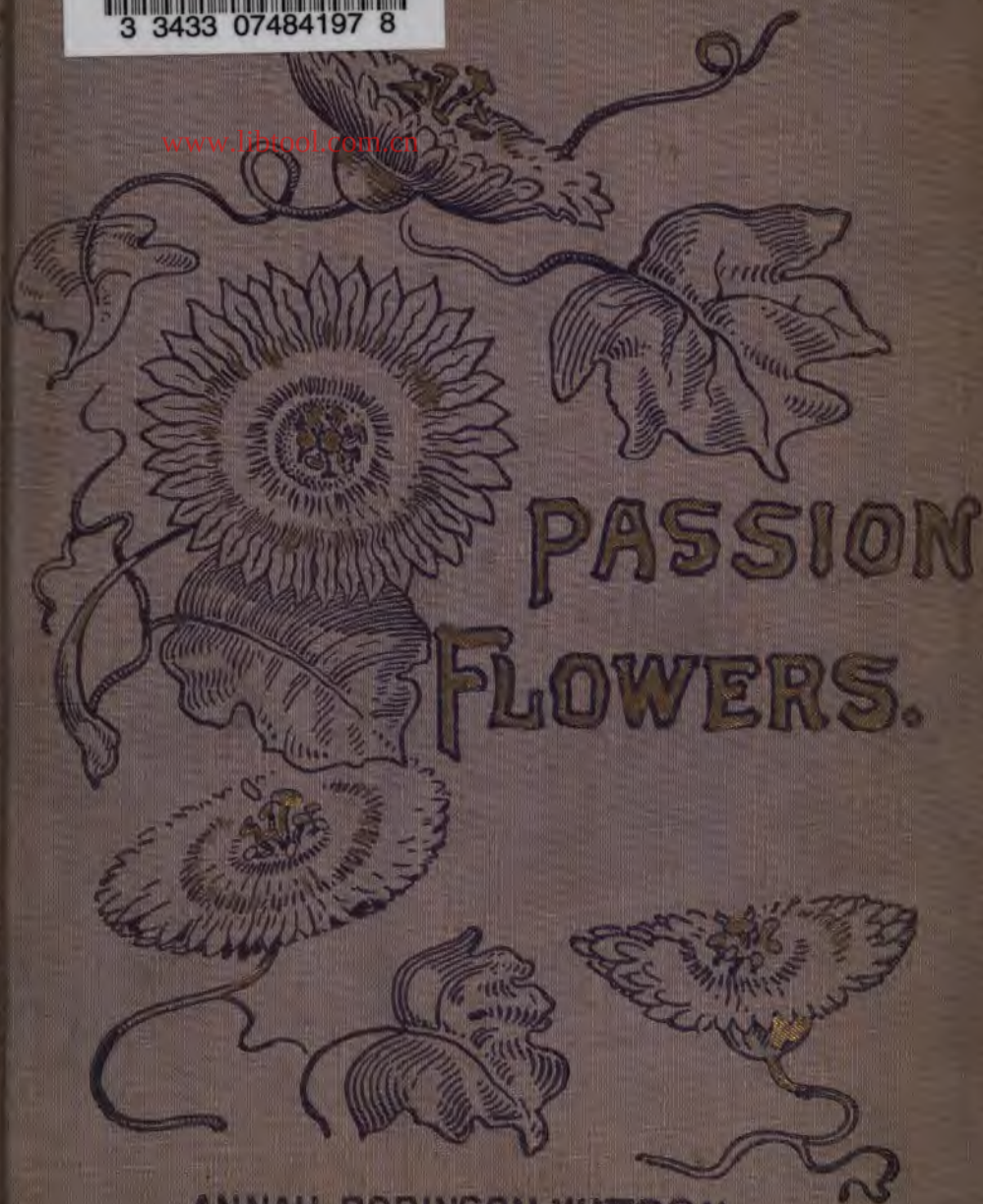


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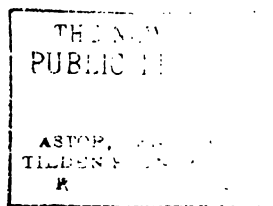
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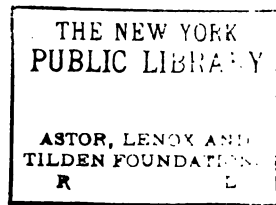
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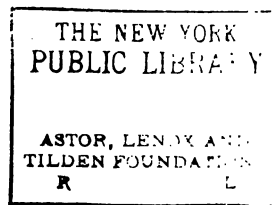
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Passion Flowers.

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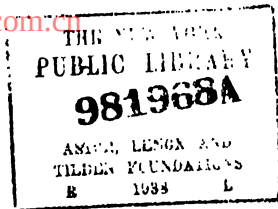
Annah Robinson Watson.

Lowell once said: "I consider every poem I write as a letter to all those whom I hold personally dear. I feel that I have made a truer communication of myself so than in any other way."

*Richmond, Virginia :
Whittet & Shepperson, Printers.
Nineteen-One.*

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BY

Mrs. ANNAH ROBINSON WATSON,

1901.

To
Him who Understands.

*I have not soared among the glittering stars
To bring to earth the secret things of Mars—
To yoke electric steeds, and fill the space
With winged sounds afit from place to place.
I have not voyaged the faint, far ether seas,
Where sails of Earth may catch the Heavenly breeze,—
Ah! no, nor great nor wondrous things I've done,
No seer's sight, no laurels have I won;
I've only loved and walked from day to day
A sweet home path, from which I thrust away,
As chance was mine, the thorn and sharp-edged stone,
To save the ones I loved a tear or moan.
And that is all—no trophies do I bring,
But humblest gift, the songs you've heard me sing.*

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Proem.

“UNBAR THE PORTAL! OPEN WIDE
THE FORTRESS WHERE THOU DOST ABIDE.”
’TIS POESY DEMANDS REPLY:
WE STAND REVEALED, MY HEART AND I.

A. R. W.

Memphis, Tennessee.

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Passion Flowers.

Love's Lyric.

I love my Love! do you ask me why?
Go ask of the tree why it flowers,
Go ask the violet in its bed,
Go ask the roses, white and red,
Why they deck the earth's fair bowers.

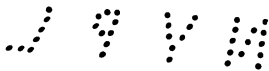
I love my Love! do you ask me why?
Go ask of the stream, in its flowing,
Why the rapturous bound—the eager rush—
The ardent haste through the forests' hush—
Why it leaps and sings in its going.

I love my Love! Oh! passionate heart,
Keep still, lest thy fervid throbbing
Should rend the fragile Gate of Life,
And loose thee from this happy strife,
Thy Love, of thee, quick robbing.

Anchored.

Some time, when I am not watching,
My ship will come home to me.
It will slip through the dusk to its moorings,
From over the treacherous sea,
And I'll know all my days of waiting,
And prayers and heart-sick delay,
Have brought my soul into harbor,
In His own mysterious way.

Some time, when I'm least expecting,
And my eyes are turned from the sea,
My ship will cast her anchor,
As she glides o'er the waves to me;
And I'll know all my wistful longing,
And all my delayed delight
Have wrought for my soul's safe anchor
In His haven beyond the night.



A Ballad of Love.

Entre Nous.

Each heart has a message for some other heart,
And I have a message for you ;
Come nearer, my love, while I whisper the words,
For 'tis sacredly *entre nous*.

I have sought and found, and my passionate heart
Beats only and ever for you,
And I know that as long as the world shall last
For me 'twill be *entre nous*.

And the whole wide world is better for this ;
The love that I lavish on you,
It is brighter and purer and fairer because
Of this secret I hold *entre nous*.

The glory of loving's the glory of life
 (Dearest heart, this my message for you),
And its aureole circles your brow with its light—
 This my secret, just *entre nous*.

I would die in the tilt, like the knights of old,
 Or I'd live weary years for you;
Grant a word in reply to my passionate cry—
 'Twill be sacredly *entre nous*.

Telepathy.

Across insensate space, where'er thou art,
 My being's current sets, and swiftly flies,
Fond impulse of my inmost soul and heart—
 Thou 'lt know, e'en though beyond the seas, the
 skies.

Heartsease.

Dear little one, whose azure eyes
Are lifted to mine in a dim surprise,
Guessing their pain and deep unrest—
Come, nestle close to thy mother's breast.

Dear little Healer, baby mine,
Dumb lips moving in mystic sign
Of some fair vision the blue eye sees,
Come closer, I need thee, little Heartsease.

Secrets are held in each pink palm,
A subtle, sweet and precious balm,
About my heart, before it break,
Of dimpled arms a cordon make.

Dear little Healer, earthly woes
Thou'lt banish; ah! thy mother knows,
For at thy touch her sorrow flees,
The touch of her baby, "Little Heartsease."

My Lady Arachne's Penance.

My Lady Arachne flits i' the gloom, distraught i' the
search for me,
An' her wee white foot for the treadle feels i' the
place it was wont to be;
She croons the song i' the garret lorn,
Which lured the wheel around,
The while her fingers encircle the dark,
Then droop—for I am not found.

The moonbeams sift through the lattice high on my
lady's wonderful hair;
She falters, a-smoothing the long gold strands to
spin—but I am not there.
The spider offers her silken thread,
Her wheel to my lady would loan;
The wind it would chant in her stead a rune
With a spell like Arachne's own.

But it may not be, an' wi' hopeless dole she searches
the awesome space,
Ashiver wi' tears she may not shed, making moan
i' the ghostly place:
"Ah! woe it is me, an' a piteous plight
Is it mine, for a penitent wraith;
They hae ta'en my wheel, an' I may not spin,
An' I may not keep my faith."

"Some jealous ghou! for despite has ta'en away my
spinning wheel,
An' I vowed to spin my long gold hair, till he came,
my lover leal.
Ah! woe is me—my doom is dree!
For he may not find me now
By the silken threads o' my shining hair
Hung out i' the winds, I trow."

.
I' the days ago! Arachne scorned the lover who
loved her best,
For that wi' toil his hand was soiled—an' her soul
it may not rest.

His heart she brak' or ere she died,
An' her vow it is to spin
The golden hair that snared his heart,
I' penance for her sin.

To Paradise.

It is not some far voyage cross the seas,
Where sullen waves in angry billows beat,
And low descending clouds, in phalanx bold,
Flash out their menace as they wrathful meet.
It is not travel o'er the arid plains,
Where scorching glare and burning winds unite,
It is not weary struggling up the path,
To dim and distant frozen mountain height.
Ah! no; 'tis sudden freedom, and the sound
Of song exultant, and of sinless mirth!
A swift ecstatic vision of delight!—
Escape from galling manacles of earth!
The Lord's dear promise shows how short the way—
"In paradise thou'lt be with me to-day."

Between the Leaves.

Oh! the day was bright, and the world seemed young,
And my heart was a youthful rover;
When we wandered between the alder rows,
'Mong the fragrant rose-red clover.

How fair she was! oh! ravishing dream,
Which set my soul all a-quiver,
The day we walked 'mid the clover blooms,
That grew on the path to the river.

It was "Love's Young Dream"—ah! yes, mayhap—
But I thrill to its memories tender,
And know that all of life's other dreams
For this I would gladly surrender.

Her rose-red lips and her azure eyes,
Her tones of unconscious caressing;
Her dear little hand clasped close in mine,
Seemed each love's sweetness confessing.

And it all comes back as I turn the page
And gaze at this four-leaf clover—
Safe pressed—oh! Love, I would die content
Could we live that dead day over.

The Iconoclast.

Within the shadowed temple of my heart,
Embalmed in fragrance of the roses dead—
That bloomed erstwhile in Life's glad Pleasurance—
Lies low upon its chill and narrow bed
The Thing I loved, enshrouded, passionless and still.
Is it a lesser crime, in careless scorn,
As thou hast done, to kill my dearest, best—
The Thing of Spirit and of Aspiration born—
Less than hadst thou sheathed Damascan blade
In flesh and blood and thus hadst taken life?
Alas! alas! my Ideal, pure and fair,
Thou 'st murdered in a harsh, unhallowed strife;
For all my prayers it may not breathe again,
And on thy soul there rests the guilt of Cain.

Passion Flowers.

Oh! tremulous blossom, wind-blown and a-quiver,
With tenuous tendrils responsive and fine;
There's a subtle suggestiveness vague and bewildering,
Exhaled on the breath of your mystical vine.

How palpitant, pulsing, empurpled, your petals,
How clinging, caressing, and fragrant your touch,
Like the pressure of lips that departing still linger
While half way confessing they've loved over-much.

Do you guess, dimly, down in your heart, Virgin
Blossom,
That the loves of a life are its most precious dower,
And yet that full oft they are transient and fleeting,
And fragile and short-lived as you, Passion
Flower?

It is true; but my passionate heart's all a-quiver
 With love—love supreme—which, I vow, shall
 endure,
Till the worlds and the suns and the mad circling
 planets
 Again are but chaos—eternal and pure.

Attuned.

In the lyrics of love and the lyrics of grief,
 From the harp that my soul has strung,
May be heard the elusive and haunting strains
 Of the songs your own soul has sung.

In October.

The goldenrod was aflame in the fields,
With dew was the green grass wet;
A faint blue haze hung over the hills,
Where the earth and the sky lines met.
And the green of the grass, and the gold of the fields,
Where the grain in the summer stood,
Were swathed in dreams that drifted slow
On the breath of the russet wood.

.

Ah! then it was morning; now it is night,
With a long, long day between;
And the dreams that danced in the morning sun
Are gone with its gladsome sheen.
A flush of crimson, a dash of gold,
In the far, far glittering west,
And nearer, the curves of a silken wing,
Where a lone bird flies to its nest.

A chill wind creeps from the russet wood,
For the joyous sun is set;
The grass so green is seared and pale,
And with tears of the Night is wet.
The bird is astir in its empty nest,
While the dreary dark drifts down,
And I list alone to the tread of the Night,
In her trailing diaphanous gown.

Arachne.

She lives in the garden beneath a rose,
And "receives" in the shade of a lily;
The grasses bend to her silken touch,
And so does the daffy-down-dilly.
Her hammock swings from the violet's tips,
Their purple coverlets hide her;
She bathes herself in the dew of their lips,
How dainty she is—the spider.

In the Beginning.

Such time as soulless space no creature knew,
When striving forces shape nor form had traced,
When yet unconscious chaos held its sway,
And darkness brooded o'er the seething waste,
There rose from out the swirling, lurid mass,
That throbbed in molten waves of quivering might,
A wondrous thing, a sphere set free and whirled
Athwart the blackness of the senseless night.
But One kept watch above the wars of force;
His will attraction and cohesion lent;
His breath the mighty bubble trembling, felt,
As reeling into space 'twas onward sent.

Long cycles came and went, His breath slow cooled
The spinning sphere and checked its restless speed,
Its molten liquid chilled and motion wild
It tamed to feel the yoke His word decreed.

Then granite ribs encased the restless ball,
And humid clouds spread wings for upward flight,
Then sudden Earth grew conscious of her Lord,
And knew His smile: that moment there was light!

Then verdure came, and humble crawling things,
And blossoms, quick to try their gladsome life,
And birds to wing the fragrant azure sky,
And fill the upper space with songful strife;
And then a silvern mist, a dewy sheen,
Which wrapped the earth, as in a garment fair,
For her baptismal morn, and over all
A wondrous Presence: God was everywhere.

And all was good that was, and yet was not
Inscribed by angels on stupendous scroll
Of things created, *one* which might aspire—
Among them all was not a *living soul*.
Then God took counsel with Himself, the while
Slow length'ning shadows fell, and Silence laid
Her wand on listening hill and vale, and lo!
God spake, and man in His own image made.

Complete the earth. Long eons saw it grow
From dismal nothingness to vernal sod
Instinct with life, but incomplete, 'till breathed
A soul which shared the nature of its God.

Nobility.

If thou wouldst grow a soul serene and great,
If thou wouldst noble be, then put away
The petty things that mark the low estate,
And cumber him who 'd reach the fuller day.
What matter that the winds be hot or cold,
What matter that the sky be overcast;
What matter that thy coffers teem with gold,
Or whether worldlings' smiles or frowns thou hast?
But it doth matter that thou leave behind
The whims and fancies, trifles which obscure
The vision, and the aspirations bind
To smaller reaches and to aims impure.
So mayst thou find, with soul uplifted, free,
The fair and tranquil realm of true nobility.

Mia Chiquita Cara.

Just over the casement hangs the moon,
And mirrors itself in the silent moat,
While far on the lake is the dip of an oar,
And over the terrace a song is afloat.
The Troubadour so mournful sings,
 “ Mia Chiquita Cara,” sings,
 “ Mia Chiquita Cara.”

“ Fairest in fair Castile,” he sings ;
 “ My Love in her tower strong and high—
But love it shall burst her prison bars,
 And release her, ah ! the moments fly.”
The Troubadour, imploring, sings,
 “ Mia Chiquita Cara,” sings,
 “ Mia Chiquita Cara.”

List! There's a sound on the winding stair!
And a rustle astir on the oaken floor;
For they come to search in the tower high,
While sounds afar the dip of his oar,
And the passionate lay the Troubadour sings,
"Mia Chiquita Cara," sings,
"Mia Chiquita Cara."

Hush, there's a spectre that walketh the place!
She dons its robe and in ghostly guise,
Flits thro' the gloom, and adown the stair,
And out, 'neath the love-lit starry skies,
To the Troubadour she goes. He sings,
"Mia Chiquita Cara," sings,
"Mia Chiquita Cara."

A Baby's Birthday.

Let me clasp you awhile to my heart, little one ;
I will shelter you safe from all harm ;
I have longed for this, the rapturous bliss,
Of a baby's encircling arms.

Let me think just a moment that *she* has come back—
My own little baby that's dead ;
Let me close my eyes and smother the cries
That would tell it is *you* instead.

Just a little while—you will ease my pain,
As none but a baby can—
For so did she, who tarried with me
Just one year's meagre span.

Let me clasp you awhile to my heart, little one ;
I will brush the hot tears aside,
And smile again, as I did on her—
My own little darling who died.

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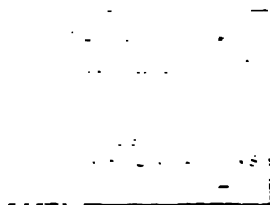
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"Let me clasp you awhile to my heart, little one."

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The Divine Passion.

Mother Love.

When she is gone and solemn stillness lies
 Along the way her eager feet have trod;
When upward glances of your tender eyes
 Would follow her who has gone home to God:
What will you cherish most of gifts she wore,
 Her tender eyes, a fancied grace of speech,
A fancied cleverness in ancient lore,
 A fancied scope or an aspiring reach
Of thought, original and pure and strong?
 What will you cherish most when she has left
This earthly tabernacle, and you long
 With sad and aching heart because bereft?
Of all her gifts you'll cherish one above:
 The gift none else can give—her mother-love.

Shakespeare.

What time the earth was young and felt the thrill—
The ecstasy of life new-found and strange,
Across the fresh-made downs, the swelling hills,
He passed, the finite image of the Infinite,
The human voicing of the One Divine;
Since then the God in man so faint hath grown,
So overcast with earthly lust, with greed for gain,
It is not strange that clouded vision sees,
But evidenced an earth-born, mongrel race,
Which lives a fleeting day and strives and dies.

But through the ages, as to save alive
The faith of man in kinship most divine,
Hath sometime been this marvel wrought anew,
This speech of Infinite through finite voice,
Then him inspired men have list'ning called;
'Twas in this wise inspired He the bard,
Who sang into the eager ear of earth

The grandest strains since sang the morning stars ;
The sweetest songs since limpid waters tuned
Their silver drops to tell a rhythmic tale—
The breath of God breathes through his wondrous
 lays,
And God is proved in making such a man.

With an American Beauty.

There's a Mystic who delves and in secret distils
 A draught for the spirit's repose,
And he's hidden a few of the magical drops
 Deep down in the heart of the rose.

The Promise.

Ho! thou who toilest, and art heavy laden;
Thou weary one, with care and labor pressed;
Thou who hast found the day's long round of duty,
Heavy beyond thy strength, there cometh rest—
A long, long rest, *His* promised rest.

Ho! thou who thirsteth, who, with longing vision,
Lifteth tear-dimmed eyes to glowing west,
Where dying day hath set a crimson jewel
To shine upon the evening's throbbing breast—
There cometh rest, *His* promised rest.

Ho! thou who waitest, while the twilight lingers—
The night draws on apace, with slumber blest—
Stand ready, loose thy cares and many burdens,
Discard them all as garments, ere thou rest—
He giveth *His* beloved rest.

In Distant Arcadie.

I gaze upon the far, far light
That glorifies the fragrant night,
Where still and calm, serene and high,
The moon drifts in an azure sky.
And o'er my soul, so wistful grown,
There steals the thought, *each* is alone—
Alone in longings undefined,
Which float upon the sensuous wind
From distant Arcadie.

I hear the far, far swish of waves
That rock and roll o'er silent graves,
And in their tone I catch the faint
Sad echo of a nameless plaint—
While slowly steals, elusive, sweet,
With dim suggestions, soaring, fleet,
A thought of care-free, joyous days,
When life began in flowered ways,
Of primal Arcadie.

Who has not known that yearning cry,
That longing for the pure and high,
That homesick sense of something lost—
A something far beyond the cost
Of all the paltry things this life
May offer, though its realm be rife
With prideful gifts? Alas! the soul
Craves ever, spurning all life's dole,
Its distant Arcadie.

Limitations.

"So far, no farther!" though decreed,
The noblest soul will scorn to fret,
And noblest effort make, e'en though
There is a limitation set.

Consolation.

I stand alone and silent look
My future in the face—
Alone, as though none other breathed
The world's great empty space.

I strain my ears for sound of hope,
In all this land of doubt;
But life for me is just a lute,
With all the strings torn out.

Through black despair there only gleams
This one consoling thought,
Since Death hath sealed to-day thy heart,
No change can there be wrought.

My kiss is on thy pallid lids,
And shut within their keep,
The vision of my deathless love,
To cheer thy lonely sleep.

I shudder, thinking evils might
Have thrust our lives apart;
Thou might'st have ceased to love, or Fate
Have hurled some poisoned dart.

And so, enwrapped within my grief,
This thought illumines the day;
Our love is safe, I calmly wait;
Thou'lt love me now for aye.

A Life.

'Twas springtime, we met. The heart of the summer
Lavished its fragrance upon us, wed;
The bliss of the angels the autumn brought us,
And now it is winter, for she lies dead.

Dandelions.

Abroad, the song of birds,
And intoxicant perfume!
Again hath come the time
When the dandelions bloom.
Again among the trees,
Where the locust shadows gloom,
I flit in childish joy,
Where the dandelions bloom.

Oh! days forever gone,
Oh! heart that held no room
For sorrow's bitter pang,
Come, the dandelions bloom;
Their gold is in the grass,
Where each blue bell waves a plume,
And my heart is wistful grown
Since the dandelions bloom.

A sweet, elusive voice
Floats as from a shadowed tomb;
“Come, come, oh! Sweet, and see
How the dandelions bloom!”

On the Heights.

Stand still, oh! doubting soul, upon the height,
Where floods of ambient, pulsing light,
Burst sudden from the mighty heart of God
To glad the waiting earth, to thrill the sod—
Uplift thy chalice where the incense clouds
Arise, and float, and wrap as filmy shrouds
The hills eternal, while they tireless stand,
To do His bidding in the beauteous land.
Stand still, and lave thee, oh! thou dormant soul,
In morn’s baptismal mist, and hear the roll
Of sweet concordant strains from Nature’s choir,
And say, if thou dost dare, while they inspire,
That life of man is but as grass or flower,
And is not crowned by an immortal dower.

Mammy's Lullaby.

De stars is all a-shinin'
Up in de silunt sky,
De birds is all a-noddin'
Up in de cedars high.

Go sleep, my darlin' babies, ole Mammy's settin' near,
Ter hep de angils gward yuh from eb'ry sort er fear.

De flow's is all a-foldid,
De honey bee's at res';
An' close I hole my baby
'Gin his Mammy's bres'.

Fol' de lids, my darlin', ober yer eyes so blue,
De angils sho ter be watchin' an' tekkin kere er you.

De wurl is all es quiet
As do duh wus no kere,
As do duh wus no sorrer
Ter eber start er tear;

But still duh's lots o' suff'rin' all de wide wurl o'er,
Folks wid heart-strin's breakin', folks wid hearts
dat's so'.

Froo bofe light and darkness,
We's trabin' long de way
Dat leads us sho' an' sartin
On tuh jedgmen' day.
I hopes de angil Gabril, on resserrection morn,
Ull fine us whar we orter be, a-lis'nin' fuh de horn.
So sleep, my darlin' babies, all de long night froo,
De angils an' yo' Mammy's bofe er tekkin kere o' you.

Heredity.

Thou art no aimless drift from wreck of ocean,
Upon a shore, unconscious, idly cast—
Thou art inheritor of primal forces;
To-day holds in solution all the Past.

Asphodel.

The time it was when heart of the earth
Lifts up its gold to the waiting sky,
And moulds its pelf into shining cups,
And nectar brews for them wantonly.

And over the earth was shimmer of green
And hint of secrets the buds would tell,
And all abloom in a garden fair
Was the gold of earth, the Asphodel.

A maiden came, I stood entranced;
I saw her pause in the garden fair;
A glint of gold in the brown, brown eyes,
And a glint of gold in the shining hair.

Caressing blooms around her sprang
The yellow blooms of the Asphodel,
And sudden, athwart the hush of earth,
The yellow glory of sunset fell.

My soul it swooned in wildering rush
Of rapturous joy and ecstasy,
And Fate and Time seemed empty words,
And life a delicious mystery.

We stood revealed, my Love and I;
Each heart, though silent, quick to tell
Its glad sweet thought, and from that day
I fondly called *her* Asphodel.

And now again have come the days,
When golden cups of Asphodel
Are filled with nectar to the brim
Of every ruffled yellow bell.

But, ah! my soul is steeped in woe,
And over the garden sounds a knell,
For cold and still, beneath the sod,
Lies low my Love, my Asphodel.

The Optimist Butterfly.

There 's a waiting sweet,
Though hidden it lie
In the heart of the sheltered rose,
Then search, say I, till you find,
Say I,
The Optimist Butterfly.

What need to doubt,
To groan or sigh,
Though thorns should many be;
I'll ever try, for the sweets
I'll try—
The Optimist Butterfly.

The pessimist worm,
Creeps frowning by,
With never a glance at the sky,
Nor a thought that I was a worm,
Yes, I—
The Optimist Butterfly.

A Knell.

Hush! Friar Time is telling his beads,
The old year lies a-dying!
Far in the belfry rings the knell,
“Slumber well—slumber well”—
While the winds are mockingly crying.

Hark! there's a sound in the graveyard dim,
And a whisper among the sleepers,
“There's a passing soul,” the belfry rings,
While a bird of ill omen croaks and sings
Of Death, most cruel of reapers.

List! there's a stir in the long dead grass,
For the earth is awake and a-quiver,
While the wind laughs shrill and shrieks aloud,
And one sits hastily weaving a shroud,
And the trees are all a-shiver.

Hark to the loom, how the shuttle flies,
Back and forth in its weaving;
For woof and warp of the shroud it makes,
Lo! broken hopes and hearts it takes
Of the old year's fierce bereaving.

See! here's a chaplet to wind his brows,
Salt tears encrust the flowers;
Here are brazen coins his lids to press,
A thistle posie his hands to caress,
And clasp through eternal hours.

Hist! there are eerie sounds afloat,
With spectres the place is filling;
They'll hold a wake and gibe at the dead
In whispers hoarse around his bed,
With the last hard struggle thrilling.

See! he'll be swathed in a winding sheet,
As a mummy his secrets folding,
In tissue of dreams and stifled songs
Of human cries and human wrongs,
His peace forever holding.

Quick! see the grave the ghouls have scooped,
With thick-ribbed ice for lining;
There's a ghostly laugh, the coffin falls,
"Ashes to ashes!" a phantom calls,
But there's not a breath of repining.

Here! lay him deep 'neath the frozen sod,
And hide in his grave forever
The days that are gone, the tears that are shed,
The griefs that were borne and words that were said;
Unearth them never—never.

Hush! the tapers burn out in the sky,
The Shades to their haunts are hieing,
And Time bends low his beads to tell,
While slow in the belfry tolls the knell,
"The old year lies a-dying."

One of the Weary.

Hush! do not grieve; keep still, let the passing
Of seraphs be felt, mayhap seen, in the place.
Hush! for the faint, fitful flutter of breathing
Grows less, and disturbs not the peace of her face;
Life at the best is so weary. Let her rest—rest.

She is heart of thy heart? Be it so, but God's keeping
Is safer than thine. Thou would'st shield from
His hand
Thy Dearest? Be quiet, she listens, is speaking—
“Dear Love”—with that thought she has passed
to the land
Of those who *were* weary, but *are* blest and at rest.

A Baby.

What can you do, you dearest of babies;
 You sweet lazy baby, say what can you do?
Mother and father and brother are working—
 All of us working, sweet baby, but you.

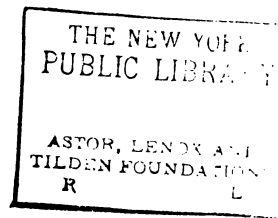
Sitting all day a-blinking and winking,
 Winking and thinking the whole day long;
Nurse to hold you, no one to scold you,
 Crowing and crooning a sweet little song.

.

Crooning and tuning myself to the lessons
 That seem very strange to me, fresh from the skies,
Learning your language and learning to love you,
 Watching you all with my blue baby eyes.

Then, when I've grown as wise as my brother,
 These dimpled white hands as strong as his, too;
Oh! then I will help you; now, thinking and loving
 Are surely enough for a baby to do.

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At Eventide.

I'm alone, and the day with its burdens
Has passed through the gates of the west,
Paying toll with a bit of rich raiment
A princess might claim as her best.
'Tis now, when Night's handmaid, Twilight,
Comes over the grass, wet with dew,
In sandals of silence, and blesses—
'Tis now, Love, I'm nearest to you.

'Tis now, 'twixt the daylight and darkness
The world seems the farthest away,
And a conjurer's wand dipped in Lethe
Transforms all the cares of the day.
'Tis now, when the pansy-eyed Twilight
From a mystical garland of rue,
Gives her potion for rest and forgetting
'Tis now, Love, I'm nearest to you.

I'm alone, and afar through the stillness
Steals faintly the voice of the stream,
While the Twilight, with long trailing tresses,
Enwraps me in vision and dream;
And I bridge all the distance between us
With hopes and with faith strong and true,
And you cross on the bridge with the Twilight—
So 'tis now, Love, I'm nearest to you.

•

Love's Beginning.

How lonely the walks of the freshly-made Eden,
How gloomy the place, though so wondrously fair,
'Till God sent His love in the shape of a woman
To Adam, who wandered disconsolate there.

A Mother's Quest.

Oh! where has he gone, with his golden hair,
And his blue, blue eyes, I pray?
These classic aisles, with their sombre piles,
Have many a darksome way.

Oh! how shall I find, ye sages wise—
I have searched this crowded place;—
The boy who left my sheltering arms
With the love light on his face.

He came in the flush of his boyish pride,
His heart unstained and true;
No worldly blot was upon his soul,
I trusted my boy to you.

I've searched through all the dim, dim aisles
And over the campus green;
A youth I met who clasped my hand,
But my boy I have not seen.

The youth bowed low, in a courtly way,
And spoke with an accent low,
But his eye held not the tender light
Of the boy's I used to know.

I came, for my ceaseless longing grew
So strong I could not wait;
You do not know a mother's heart,
Though your learning be so great.

But sure, with all your cunning lore,
And all your wondrous art,
You'll find the lad, though you cannot see
His picture in my heart.

You cannot give me back my boy!
You cannot grant my plea—
Alas!—I will long through all the days
For the boy you took from me.

The Message.

Awake! they come, the heralds of the King;
High float their banners on exultant air.
Awake! their footfalls echo 'cross the plains,
Glad tidings of a hope divine they bear,
A message from the King.

Around the world speed answers to the call;
The hillocks green uplift them at the sound,
And list'ning tombs respond with glad acclaim:
For in their hearts, most sacred kept, are found
Dear tokens of the King.

Unbar thy gates, O Earth—the flowers loose;
They wait within thy sepulchre below,
And long to greet the morn when He arose,
To tell from perfumed lips with love aglow
How tender is the King.

In mould so pure where He has lain, they were;
 'Tis hallowed, for the King did rest within;
And in the heart of every flower that blows,
 A dim remembrance lives that it has been
 Some time anear the King.

'Tis this that lends them subtle power to cheer,
 To glad the earth-worn pilgrim, soothe his care;
Then shall we fear some day to lay us down
 Where He has been, the narrow bed to share,
 That held the King?

I do believe, when this poor senseless clay
 Shall, wearied, court the rest profound and deep;
In blind and voiceless, but all conscious way,
 It will rejoice to feel that He did sleep
 Aneath the sod, our King.

I do believe, each Easter when the throng
 Of heaven's heralds crowd the gladsome land;
When song and blossom and rejoicing hosts
 Of spirits freed, make harmonies so grand,
 They reach the King—

That it will chance, these bodies laid so low,
May somehow feel the universal thrill;
That haply in the flowers, the air, the vine,
They'll conscious live, and speak— full sure they
will
Themselves soon see the King.

The Revealer.

How fair she looks, with that sweet calm
Upon her brow; upon her face
The look of peace it has not known
Before. There is a wondrous grace
New-born to her. She lived a life
Of constant, unimportant strife
In homely things, no hero deeds
Filled up its span. Is she the same?
How fair she was we did not know,
'Till Death, the greater Revealer, came.

Earth and the Rain King.

In Time of Drouth.

Be pitiful, Sun, I languish and shrink from thy
 amorous gaze,
While weary and drooping I'm watching *his* pennons
 of slow circling haze;
For bliss of his presence I'm yearning; for balm of
 his touch I sigh.
Oh! Sun, know I hate thy caresses; for kiss of his
 lips I die.
I lift up my heart; is he coming? Say, cool, startled
 winds that creep out
From your haunts in the forests, oh! answer; oh!
 answer, faint zephyrs, my doubt;
And say, ye impalpable odors that steal to my hot,
 fevered brow,
Do ye waft me a thought from my Lover, or herald
 his quick coming now?

Hush! hush! he is coming, coming! be still, oh! my
heart in thy place;
Keep silence, his tread wakes the heavens, his voice
stirs the measureless space.
I know his step on the mountains, the torture of
doubting is past,
The current, electric, resistless is athrill through my
soul at last.
Oh! hilltops I feel that he's near me—oh! valleys
arouse and rejoice;
Oh! streamlet, sing softly thy carol and harken the
tones of his voice;
Oh! dumb, thirsting leaves, take comfort; and blos-
soms with mute, folded lips;
Panting meadows, look up to the heavens, where are
sailing his purple cloud-ships.

“I am coming, coming!” shouts grandly his trumpet
athwart the black skies,
As flash of his swift lightning glances awaken half
echoed replies.

He is coming! my king, now his love-call flies pulsing
along the glad air;
Oh! Sun, I can laugh at thy wooing—to be wantonly
glad I dare.
Oh! quivering leaflets and flowers; oh! broad, parch-
ing fields of grain;
Oh! Valley, oh! Streamlet, awaken, our Rain-King
is with us again.
Down, down, pour his passionate kisses, he holds me
enthralled in his power;
Expectancy yields to fruition—I could die in this
ecstatic hour.

The Master Musician.

He tightens, lengthens, loosens, snaps the strings,
While all my soul with agony is mute!
He may not stay His hand, else were untuned
The harsh and jangling chords of Life's sad Lute
To Heaven's Symphonies.

A Little Child Shall Lead Them.

Oh! tell me, gentle seraphs, is he here—
The little child who strayed beyond my call?
I followed when he left,
My heart so sad, bereft,
I needs must seek him, weeping, far and near.

Oh! help me, gentle seraphs; ope the gate;
It seemed I saw his footsteps on the way!
It seemed I caught a gleam
Of his tresses in a dream,
And quick I hastened, lest I be too late.

Take pity, gentle seraphs; let me in:
For all the world is empty since he's gone.
My mother's heart must break,
If my little one you take.
Since he is here, oh! seraphs, let me in!

A Confession.

Say, what doth it profit, my soul, my soul,
That I weep and cry as I longing wait?
Alas! the most worthless of earthly things
Is repentance, my soul, when it comes too late.

I loved him? Yes, I will swear it now,
With a madness never confessed nor told;
I loved him, and yet for a triumph small,
His heart I broke—his honor I sold.

Could I draw near to his distant place,
Where he might know each passionate tear,
And the anguished cry of my tortured soul,
I would rend the heavens, but he should hear.

“Oh! Love,” I would cry; “Forgive, forgive!”
If he answered, then I could bear my fate;
But, ah! the most hopeless of earthly things
Is repentance, my soul, when it comes too late.

An Old Time Silhouette.

I'se de king o' all de "Qua'tuhs,"
Ain' you nevvuh hearn o' Jake?
 Dey couldn' run de "Place" d'out'n me;
I dances fuh old Marsa,
W'ile I rattles o' de bones,
 En keeps de flies frum pesterin' o' he.

I'se good at trackin' rabbits,
En at huntin' o' de coon;
 En at wadin' fuh de crawfish in de stream,
En at ketchin' o' de minners,
En at grubbin fuh de wurms,
 En at heppin' hitch de sorril kerridge team.

I hes time tuh loaf en lissin
W'en I'se comp'nin wid de burds,
 En a-layin' whar de clovuh's sweet en high.
I hes hearn de bees er dronin',
En de crickits whut dey chu'ps
 Ter de katydids dat answers hoppin' by.

Ole Marsa he looks ti'ed,
En old Miss she's po'ly too,
 En I'se glad dat I is Jake instid o' dey;
Fuh dey sees er heap er trouble,
En I'se notice many er day
 Dat w'ite folks, dey ain' got no time tuh play.

De "Big House" mighty fine,
En de cheers look mighty sof';
 But I'de ruther be er rollin' on de flo'
O' de cabin, w'en at night
De niggers hes er sight
 O' fun whut Marsa could'n hev, yuh know.

He's skeer'd 'bout de craps,
'Bout de rain en 'bout de shine;
 I ain't skeer'd 'bout er nothin' 'tall, yuh see.
I'se de king o' all de "Qua'tuhs,"
Crackin' whups en crackin' jokes,
 An', folks, now doan yuh wush dat yuh wuz me?

My Heart and I.

We ventured out one sunny morn—

My Heart and I—

With shimmer of shifting, gladsome light

Athwart the pathway to the height,

Which we would scale ere came the night—

My Heart and I.

With song and laughter, went we twain—

My Heart and I—

With staff and eager joyous tread,

Bedecked with roses white and red,

We quickly up the pathway sped—

My Heart and I.

“How tranquil seems the fragrant slope!”

My Heart and I—

Said each to each. “Is this the land

Of which they spake, the pilgrim band,

In warning?”—we did not understand—

My Heart and I.

But, ah! how long ago—how long!—
My Heart and I
Have struggled on: the pilgrim's tale
Was true, and many a bitter wail
We've heard through mountain gorge and vale—
My Heart and I.

And oftentimes we fain would rest—
My Heart and I—
And lie where petals of the rose,
Adrift, woo each to sweet repose,
In solitudes the song bird knows—
My Heart and I.

But pilgrims may not pause, and so
My Heart and I
Must haste, still gazing to the height,
With humble prayer, that some faint light
May lead us, when shall fall the night—
My Heart and I.

Wooing Time.

'Tis choosing time! Comes a quiver
Along the expectant air;
There's a whirl of wings, the sparrows
Are flitting everywhere.
'Tis building time, and the songster
Trills, from the budding vine,
To a tiny coquette of a sweetheart—
He chants a valentine.

'Tis choosing time! There's a thrilling
Beneath the sombre sod;
The clover wakes and stretches,
The blue bells wake and nod;
The daffodil is donning
Her gown of gold spun fine;
Of the Iris tall and slender
She's the chosen valentine.

'Tis wooing time. There's a wonder
Astir in my eager breast,
And a rush of passionate gladness—
Of all things, love is the best.
There's a query—who will answer,
And whisper how *I* shall divine
And know, as each of the sparrows
Knows his own valentine?

'Tis wooing time! I listen,
With ear to the sensitive mould,
To learn if his coming footsteps
The earth to the moss hath told.
'Tis loving time! I am waiting;
There's a spell in the air like wine—
Oh! heart, a herald is crying,
“He cometh—thy valentine!”

Oh! heart of my heart, give answer;
I swoon with a mad'ning delight,
With agony sweet and compelling,
With joy resistless in might.

Oh! tell if they presage his coming,
Oh! answer, give token or sign;
My heart for his heart is waiting,
Come swiftly, my valentine!

Peace.

Come lift the filmy curtain where it falls
Athwart the shadowed portal of her room;
Her bird within its gilded cage still calls,
And may not fathom all this brooding gloom.
The place is thronged with roses, rare and white,
She loved them so, it seemeth meet and right
To fill the pulseless hand, and 'neath the feet
To make a snowy path of petals sweet,
Whose fragrance may as heralds mount on high,
And tell the angels that she draweth nigh.
Her prisoned soul hath burst its gilded bars;
It soareth higher than the moon, the stars,
And backward wings the sweetest gift of grace,
'The peace which passeth understanding,' to her face.

A Little Stranger.

Has a tiny speechless pilgrim
Strayed within your open door;
Mute and wonder-struck—a stranger,
Asking gifts from out your store?
Have you seen the mystic message
In the peaceful, azure eyes,
Have you paused to guess the meaning
Of their sweet, yet dumb, surprise?

Did you catch the faint, low echoes
Wafted from the land afar;
When the eager little pilgrim
Left the gates of heaven ajar—
In the hush of orient midnight,
When the shepherds lay asleep,
And the cool and slanting shadows
Wrapped the silent, drowsy sheep?

When the angels with their chanting
Roused the startled shepherd throng,
'Twas the message of the Christ-child,
Lent the gladness to their song.
"Love," they sang; "Divine, compelling,
Self-surrendered, Heaven unsealed—
All the mystery celestial
By the Christ-child now revealed."

Not a mortal babe more lowly,
Neither robe nor diadem;
Only heralded by seraphs,
Came the Babe of Bethlehem.
Since that night each tiny pilgrim
Welcomed to the homes of earth
Brings anew the precious tidings
Which proclaimed the Christ-child's birth.

Every little one is sacred
Since the Lord of light and life
Could descend an infant stranger,
Helpless in a world of strife.

Every little one brings tidings
In a speech beyond our ken;
And 'tis love, the sweet translation,
Must make clear to hearts of men.

Of Such Is the Kingdom.

He wandered out, but not beyond the call
Of angels, watching at the little gate,
From which on either side the path leads straight,
For baby feet, so tender and so small,
To earth, and up to Mary, mother mild,
Who with a love, compassionate, divine,
Keeps every little one whom we resign,
In joyous durance, an immortal child.
He had but touched the tiny roseate feet
To earth, one moment thrilled to eager arms,
But faintly caught the sound of life's alarms,
When came a call he knew, resistless, sweet.
One gift of earth he bore to that fair place—
It was the memory of his mother's face.

Bereft.

I knew just how much I loved him; there comes no
 revealing to me
Of the depths of passionate feeling; I knew what the
 world would be
 Without him.

I had visions of its desolation, I had measured its
 emptiness drear,
And had looked with frightened eyes often, to this
 possible woe—now here
 Without him.

You need not talk about sorrow, nor tell me the value
 of tears;
Be quiet, the height of my effort will be only to live
 thro' the years
 Without him.

Ambition! the children! be quiet. How dare you
name them to me?

In this vast solitude I inhabit only shadows they
seem to be,

Without him.

.

Oh! God, forgive this first moment's despairing and
hopeless regret;

Oh! help me to stifle this moaning; 'tis all that I
feel as yet,

Without him.

Oh! help me be silent, submissive; oh! lay thy hand
on my heart,

To still its rebellious beatings and teach it to do
its part

Without him.

Without him, oh! terror of darkness; without him
I grope in despair!

Oh! angels, reach down from heaven, and tell me
I'll not be there

Without him.

Night of Memorial Day.

The sun droops low to westward,
The stars straggle out in the sky;
The breeze creeping after the shadows
Goes shuddering fitfully by.
The crowd has gone, not a murmur's
Astir in the desolate place,
And only a squadron of flowers
Keeps watch at the statue's base.

No longer the sound of music
Gives measure for reverent tread
Of maidens tender and matrons
O'er the sacred homes of the dead.
But now, when the throng has vanished,
The place, grown silent and chill,
Comes one through the gloom and darkness
A promise of love to fulfill.

And he keeps watch with the blossoms
Who charged in the thick of the fight,
His heart the "gray" is still wearing,
He's sentinel here to-night.
A warrior feeble and weary
In the life of the day no part,
But a deathless love is thrilling
The veteran's changeless heart.

The light dies down in the heavens,
A radiance, flickering, dim,
Is a-tremble over the hillocks
As if it were beckoning him.
They're coming, his comrades loyal,
Faint quivers along the grass
He hears as the spectral army
In review is beginning to pass.

They're coming! The earth seems to waken;
The stars to pale up on high,
The moon to shiver and flutter
Affrighted, 'way off in the sky.

There's something alive in the silence!
An essence pervading the air!
The place is crowded with phantoms,
And the dear old "gray" they wear.
They come like vaporous waftings
Of tent fires smouldering low,
Like smoke blown far from battle
Adrift on the breezes slow.

All the night's instinct with memories
Of deeds of highest emprise,
Of whisperings of wondrous valor,
And echoes of battle cries.
They live again in the glory
Of glad and exultant days,
When fortunes of war seemed blessing
The path of our valiant "grays."

Just once each year, when the faithful
This day to their memory give,
They camp 'mong their tents of em'rald
For a night the old life to live.

Of the fragrance, the wine of the flowers,
They quaff, each a spirit's fill;
For even in Heaven there's nothing
That's sweeter than love to them still.

And when Peace, who keepeth eternal
Her watch in high tower above,
Sounds a reveille faint and recalls them—
All of earth they forget but its love—

.

The moon droops low in the heavens,
The stars have forgot to shine.
There are conscious things in the grasses,
A-watch, but they give no sign.
The crowd has gone, not a murmur's
Astir in the desolate place;
And only a squadron of flowers
Keeps watch at the statue's base.

A Twist of Tobacco.

From plains of Araby the Blest,
Through Inde, the lotus-land of rest,
O'er sunny Spain, each on its quest,
The breezes go.

A secret on the pulsing wings,
With odors laden'd—wondrous things—
Each breeze from haunts elysian brings
Upon its mission.

Now fields of emerald flitting o'er,
They loose their rare and precious store
Of spices, sweets, and mystic lore,
Where leaflets wait.

The secret theirs—I may not tell—
The crumpled leaves have kept it well;
It lies within each dusky cell
So safe enfolded.

But in the hazy rings that rise
Above the dreamful, tranquil eyes
Of him on whom its power lies
 May be discerned

Dim outlines of the castles fair,
Where dwell magicians of the air,
Who grant the gifts the breezes bear
 These blessed leaves.

Some secret every heart doth hold,
And roses, lilies, violets fold
Each with its sweets what hath been told
 To it alone.

Constancy.

He treasures the trifle of cast-off bloom,
The rose-red petals that share his doom—
Because they were worn on her cruel heart,
They are kissed in her stead as he walks apart.

Under the Cypress.

Oh! Love, is it Christmas in Heaven?
Do seraphs with ecstatic lay
Awaken the echoes celestial
As on the first Christmas Day?
Dear Love! do you roam the fair uplands
Where never is darkness nor night,
And gather the undying flowers
To garland the throne for His sight?

Oh! Love, is there any remembrance
Reaching back to this desolate place—
Do you know it is Christmas, in Heaven—
Can you see there are tears on my face?
Oh! Dearest, I envy the angels;
I envy each one that is near—
I envy the blossoms you smile on—
Your smiles, how I long for them here!

I envy the casket that holds you
 Away from my heart's close embrace;
I envy the sod that enfolds you,
 And shuts from my kisses your face.

It is Christmas, but bells only jangle,
 Each stroke is a heart throb of pain;
The music is gone from their pealing,
 I would they were silent again.
All life is but blank desolation—
 But bitterness, woe and despair;
There gleams but one hope in the darkness,
 One Christmas I'll wake with you there.

Veiled.

Behind a veil, the commonplace,
 Behind a screen of homely things,
The Self may dwell in glorious realm,
 And plume for flight its hidden wings.

In Quest of the Angels.

“Oh! wist ye whither went they?
The joyous angel throng—
Who sang to the list’ning heavens
Their wonderful Christmas song?
Oh! wist ye whither went they?
Cleaving the ambient light—
When the stars grew pale as ’neath a veil
With the flash of wings in flight?

.

“Oh! one went northward flying,
E’en now may ye catch the gleam
Of the trailing line of glory,
Like the sweep of a golden stream.
And one went floating southward,
Wings steeped in a rare perfume,
The song to take and the world to wake
Where endless summers bloom.

“Another swift to eastward—
Faint rays shot up the sky,
Across the sentient heavens
There passed a gladsome cry,
And one turned off, still singing,
To the crimson flushing west,
As precious dew—the priceless news
He carried to the blest.

“Another there was whose pinions
Were lifted for farther sweep,
In upward widening circles
They cleft the azure deep:
To those in the Beautiful City,
In Paradise he sped,
They’d waited long for the joyous song
Which should glad the souls of the dead.”

.

“Oh! search I’ve made to northward,
But the angel was not there.
I only heard in the silence
One note so rich and rare.

It e'en must have been an echo
Of song which had swept the place,
And it seemed to me, as it might be,
Of a seraph's voice a trace.

"And search I've made to southward,
I looked where white and red,
In wanton joy of living,
The rose its petals shed.
'Twas the haunt of delight and beauty,
And joy was abroad in the land,
But I found not there, though I sought with care,
E'en one of the angel band.

"And then I turned, sore longing—
So gladly would I go
Where the happy dead are list'ning
To the song which must banish woe—
But the gate of that land, it was fastened,
I could only see from afar
The faintest gleam of a silver beam
As loosed from a distant star.

“My soul it was faint and weary
As I thought me of the west,
Soft shadows fell with the evening
Like a benison of rest.
But I heard, as it were, the quiver
Of pinions swift in flight,
While the air around was a-thrill with sound
Which had drifted from a height.

“Oh! whither, whither, went they?
May the world not gaze again
On those who sang when the heavens rang
With Peace and good will to men?”

.

“They bide in the earth, yet mortals
May not see them face to face,
It is only given the faithful
Their blissful steps to trace.
Look on such as are burdened,
Who walk grief’s path along,
Who smile, but bend ’neath the yoke the while—
Be sure they’ve heard the song.

“And look to the bed of anguish,
On those who serve and pray,
Forgetting self—the footsteps
Of the angels went that way.
Where’er love seeks the fallen
Or comforts the sick and sad,
’Tis there has been seen and heard, I ween,
Full oft the tidings glad.

“The search leads ever upward,
Through doubts mayhap and fear,
For the way is girt with shadows,
And dimmed with many a tear.
Not here shalt thou see the angels,
But this great boon may win,
Though faint and weak, to follow meek,
Along the path they’ve been.”

Widowed.

It is not she alone whose Idol sleeps
 Beneath the green of kindly flowering sod
Is widowed. Ah! no, it is not she
 Who may uplift her tearful eyes to God,
And say, with tender sobs, Thy will be done.
 There walks, alas! in secret grief and woe
Another, doubly widowed, though no weeds
 Reveal her soul. She may not moan nor go
To any mound where others weep; alone
 She walks in silence on her separate way
From which *he* has elected to depart.
 Her heart is broken—cold and ashen gray
The rose-hued Palace, where she dwelt at rise
Of life's glad sun, 'tis there she slowly dies.

The Answer.

I had sought in the heart of the red, red rose,
From the perfumed lips of each blossom that blows;
I had asked of the swift winged swallow in flight,
Of the palpitant wind in the hush of the night.

I had gazed in the sapphire sheen of the deep,
And called on the stars when the world was asleep;
I had delved in the wisdom of sages of old,
Encrusted with rust, and with dust and with mould.

I had sought for the solving of life's mystic "why."
For the purpose of life, why men should not die
And escape from the turmoil, the weight and the pain
Which humanity ever has battled in vain.

But baffled by rose and by swallow and wind,
And inscrutable deep, nowhere could I find
A reason for being, for toiling—for life—
For grinding existence and pitiful strife.

But sudden there passed, as a swift flash of light,
A radiant soul, gift divine to my sight;
Enraptured, ecstatic, transported, I rose,
For the vision it brought me the balm of life's woes.

Ah! the problem, 'tis solved, worked out and unsealed;
To my heart comes the answer, by thy heart revealed:
Life's purpose and reason, on earth and above,
You have taught me— ah! dearest, 'tis love, it is love.

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