

ROSE AND ROOF-TREE

GEORGE PARSONS LATHROP*

[Illustration: JESSAMINE]

Upon the enchanted ladder of his rhymes,
Round after round and patiently The poet
ever upward climbs.

DEDICATION.

I need give my verse no hint as to whom
it sings for. The rose, knowing her own

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right, makes servitors of the light-rays to carry her color. So every line here shall in some sense breathe of thee, and in its very face bear record of her whom, however unworthily, it seeks to serve and honor..

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WINDFALLS.

ROSE AND ROOF-TREE.

O wayward rose, why dost thou wreathe
so high, Wasting thyself in sweet-breath'd
ecstasy?

"The pulses of the wind my life uplift,
And through my sprays I feel the sunlight
sift;

"And all my fibres, in a quick consent
Entwined, aspire to fill their heavenward
bent.

"I feel the shaking of the far-off sea, And
all things growing blend their life with me:
"When men and women on me look, there
glows Within my veins a life not of the rose.
"Then let me grow, until I touch the sky,
And let me grow and grow until I die!"
So, every year, the sweet rose shooteth
higher, And scales the roof upon its wings
of fire,

And pricks the air, in lovely discontent,
With thorns that question still of its intent.

But when it reached the roof-tree, there
it clung, Nor ever farther up its blossoms
flung.

O wayward rose, why hast thou ceased
to climb? Hast thou forgot the ardor of thy
prime?

"O hearken!"—thus the rose-spray, listening,—

"With what weird music sweet these full
hearts ring!

"What mazy ripples of deep, eddying
sound, Rise, touch the roof-tree old, and
drift around,

"Bearing aloft the burden musical Of
joys and griefs from human hearts that fall!

"Green stem and fair, flush'd circle I will
lay Along the roof, and listen here alway;

"For rose and tree, and every leafy growth
That toward the sky unfolds with spiry blowth,

"No purpose hath save this, to breathe
a grace O'er men, and in men's hearts to
seek a place.

"Therefore, O poet, thou who gav'st to
me The homage of thy humble sympathy,

"No longer vest thy verse in rose-leaves
frail:- Let the heart's voice loud through

thy pæan wail!"

Lo, at my feet the wind of autumn throws
A hundred turbulent blossoms of the rose,
Full of the voices of the sea and grove
And air, and full of hidden, murmured love,
And warm with passion through the roof-
tree sent; Dew-drenched with tears;—all in
one wild gush spent!

MUSIC OF GROWTH.

Music is in all growing things; And underneath the silky wings
Of smallest insects there is stirred A pulse of air that must be
heard. Earth's silence lives, and throbs, and sings.

If poet from the vibrant strings Of his poor heart a measure flings,
Laugh not, that he no trumpet blows: It may be that Heaven

hears and knows His language of low listen-
ings.

A SONG LONG AGO.

Through the pauses of thy fervid singing
Fell crystal sound That thy fingers from the
keys were flinging Lightly around: I felt the
vine-like harmonies close clinging About my
soul; And to my eyes, as fruit of their sweet
bringing, The full tear stole!

MELANCHOLY.

Daughter of my nobler hope That dy-
ing gave thee birth, Sweet Melancholy! For
memory of the dead, In her dear stead, 'Bide
thou with me, Sweet Melancholy! As purple
shadows to the tree, When the last sun-rays
sadly slope Athwart the bare and darkening
earth, Art thou to me, Sweet Melancholy!

CONTENTMENT.

Glad hours have been when I have seen
Life's scope and each dry day's intent United;
so that I could stand In silence, covering
with my hand The circle of the universe,
Balance the blessing and the curse, And
trust in deeds without chagrin, Free from
to-morrow and yesterday-content.

PART FIRST.

AN APRIL ARIA.

When the mornings dankly fall With a
dim forethought of rain, And the robins richly
call To their mates mercurial, And the tree-
boughs creak and strain In the wind; When
the river's rough with foam, And the new-
made clearings smoke, And the clouds that

go and come Shine and darken frolicsome,
And the frogs at evening croak Undefined
Mysteries of monotone, And by melting beds
of snow Wind-flowers blossom all alone; Then
I know That the bitter winter's dead. Over
his head The damp sod breaks so mellow,—
Its mosses tipped with points of yellow,— I
cannot but be glad; Yet this sweet mood
will borrow Something of a sweeter sorrow,

To touch and turn me sad.

THE BOBOLINK.

How sweetly sang the bobolink, When
thou, my Love, wast nigh! His liquid mu-
sic from the brink Of some cloud-fountain
seemed to sink, Built in the blue-domed sky.

How sadly sings the bobolink! No more
my Love is nigh: Yet rise, my spirit, rise,
and drink Once more from that cloud-fountain's

brink,— Once more before I die!

THE SUN-SHOWER.

A penciled shade the sky doth sweep,
And transient glooms creep in to sleep Amid
the orchard; Fantastic breezes pull the trees
Hither and yon, to vagaries Of aspect tor-
tured.

Then, like the downcast dreamy fringe
Of eyelids, when dim gates unhinge That

locked their tears, Falls on the hills a mist
of rain,— So faint, it seems to fade again;
Yet swiftly nears.

Now sparkles the air, all steely-bright,
With drops swept down in arrow-flight, Keen,
quivering lines. Ceased in a breath the show-
ery sound; And teasingly, now, as I look
around, Sweet sunlight shines!

JUNE LONGINGS.

Lo, all about the lofty blue are blown
Light vapors white, like thistle-down, That
from their softened silver heaps opaque Scatter
delicate flake by flake, Upon the wide
loom of the heavens weaving Forms of fan-
cies past believing, And, with fantastic show
of mute despair, As for some sweet hope
hurt beyond repair, Melt in the silent voids
of sunny air.

All day the cooing brooklet runs in tune:
Half sunk i' th' blue, the powdery moon
Shows whitely. Hark, the bobolink's note!
I hear it, Far and faint as a fairy spirit!
Yet all these pass, and as some blithe bird,
winging, Leaves a heart-ache for his singing,
A frustrate passion haunts me evermore For
that which closest dwells to beauty's core.
O Love, canst thou this heart of hope re-

store?

A RUNE OF THE RAIN.

I.

O many-toned rain! O myriad sweet
voices of the rain! How welcome is its deli-
cate overture At evening, when the glowing-
moistur'd west Seals all things with cool
promise of night's rest!

At first it would allure The earth to kinder

mood, With dainty flattering Of soft, sweet
pattering: Faintly now you hear the tramp
Of the fine drops falling damp On the dry,
sun-seasoned ground And the thirsty leaves
around. But anon, imbued With a sudden,
bounding access Of passion, it relaxes All
timider persuasion, And, with nor pretext
nor occasion, Its wooing redoubles; And pounds
the ground, and bubbles In sputtering spray,

Flinging itself in a fury Of flashing white
away; Till the dusty road Flings a perfume
dank abroad, And the grass, and the wide-
hung trees, The vines, the flowers in their
beds, The vivid corn that to the breeze Rus-
tles along the garden-rows, Visibly lift their
heads,- And, as the shower wilder grows,
Upleap with answering kisses to the rain.

Then, the slow and pleasant murmur

Of its subsiding, As the pulse of the storm
beats firmer, And the steady rain Drops
into a cadenced chiding. Deep-breathing
rain, The sad and ghostly noise Wherewith
thou dost complain,— Thy plaintive, spiri-
tual voice, Heard thus at close of day Through
vaults of twilight-gray,— Doth vex me with
sweet pain! And still my soul is fain To
know the secret of that yearning Which in

thine utterance I hear returning.

Hush, oh hush! Break not the dreamy
rush Of the rain: Touch not the marring
doubt Words bring, to the certainty Of its
soft refrain, But let the flying fringes flout
Their gouts against the pane, And the gur-
gling throat of the water-spout Groan in the
eaves amain.

The earth is wedded to the shower. Dark-

ness and awe, gird round the bridal-hour!

II.

O many-tonèd rain! It hath caught the
strain Of a wilder tune, Ere the same night's
noon, When dreams and sleep forsake me,
And sudden dread doth wake me, To hear
the booming drums of heaven beat The long
roll to battle; when the knotted cloud, With
an echoing loud, Bursts asunder At the sud-

den resurrection of the thunder; And the
fountains of the air, Unsealed again sweep,
ruining, everywhere, To wrap the world in
a watery winding-sheet.

III.

O myriad sweet voices of the rain! When
the airy war doth wane, And the storm to
the east hath flown, Cloaked close in the
whirling wind, There's a voice still left be-

hind In each heavy-hearted tree, Charged
with tearful memory Of the vanished rain:
From their leafy lashes wet Drip the dews
of fresh regret For the lover that's gone! All
else is still. But the stars are listening; And
low o'er the wooded hill Hangs, upon list-
less wing Outspread, a shape of damp, blue
cloud, Watching, like a bird of evil That
knows no mercy nor reprieve, The slow and

silent death of the pallid moon.

IV.

But soon, returning duly, Dawn whitens
the wet hill-tops blueely. To her vision pure
and cold The night's wild tale is told On the
glistening leaf, in the mid-road pool, The
garden mold turned dark and cool, And
the meadow's trampled acres. But hark,
how fresh the song of the winged music-

makers! For now the moanings bitter, Left
by the rain, make harmony With the swal-
low's matin-twitter, And the robin's note,
like the wind's in a tree: The infant morn-
ing breathes sweet breath, And with it is
blent The wistful, wild, moist scent Of the
grass in the marsh which the sea nourisheth:
And behold! The last reluctant drop of
the storm, Wrung from the roof, is smit-

ten warm And turned to gold; For in its
veins doth run The very blood of the bold,
unsullied sun!

THE SONG-SPARROW.

Glimmers gray the leafless thicket Close
beside my garden gate, Where, so light, from
post to picket Hops the sparrow, blithe, se-
date; Who, with meekly folded wing, Comes
to sun himself and sing.

It was there, perhaps, last year, That
his little house he built; For he seems to
perk and peer, And to twitter, too, and tilt
The bare branches in between, With a fond,
familiar mien.

Once, I know, there was a nest, Held
there by the sideward thrust Of those twigs
that touch his breast; Though 'tis gone now.
Some rude gust Caught it, over-full of snow,—

Bent the bush,—and robbed it so

Thus our highest holds are lost, By the
ruthless winter's wind, When, with swift-
dismantling frost, The green woods we dwelt
in, thinn'd Of their leafage, grow too cold
For frail hopes of summer's mold.

But if we, with spring-days mellow, Wake
to woeful wrecks of change, And the spar-
row's ritornello Scaling still its old sweet

range; Can we do a better thing Than, with
him, still build and sing?

Oh, my sparrow, thou dost breed Thought
in me beyond all telling; Shootest through
me sunlight, seed, And fruitful blessing, with
that welling Ripple of ecstatic rest, Gur-
gling ever from thy breast!

And thy breezy carol spurs Vital mo-
tion in my blood, Such as in the sapwood

stirs, Swells and shapes the pointed bud Of
the lilac; and besets The hollows thick with
violets.

Yet I know not any charm That can
make the fleeting time Of thy sylvan, faint
alarm Suit itself to human rhyme: And my
yearning rhythmic word, Does thee grievous
wrong, dear bird.

So, however thou hast wrought This wild

joy on heart and brain, It is better left un-
taught. Take thou up the song again: There
is nothing sad afloat On the tide that swells
thy throat!

FAIRHAVEN BAY.

I push on through the shaggy wood, I
round the hill: 't is here it stood; And there,
beyond the crumbled walls, The shining Con-
cord slowly crawls,

Yet seems to make a passing stay, And
gently spreads its liliated bay, Curbed by this
green and reedy shore, Up toward the an-
cient homestead's door.

But dumbly sits the shattered house,
And makes no answer: man and mouse Long
since forsook it, and decay Chokes its deep
heart with ashes gray.

On what was once a garden-ground Dull

red-bloomed sorrels now abound; And boldly
whistles the shy quail Within the vacant
pasture's pale.

Ah, strange and savage, where he shines,
The sun seems staring through those pines
That once the vanished home could bless
With intimate, sweet loneliness.

The ignorant, elastic sod The feet of them
that daily trod Its roods hath utterly for-

got: The very fire-place knows them not.

For, in the weedy cellar, thick The ruined chimney's mass of brick Lies strown.
Wide heaven, with such an ease Dost thou, too, lose the thought of these?

Yet I, although I know not who Lived here, in years that voiceless grew Ere I was born,—and never can,— Am moved, because I am a man.

Oh glorious gift of brotherhood! Oh sweet
elixir in the blood, That makes us live with
those long dead, Or hope for those that
shall be bred

Hereafter! No regret can rob My heart
of this delicious throb; No thought of for-
tunes haply wrecked, Nor pang for nature's
wild neglect.

And, though the hearth be cracked and

cold, Though ruin all the place enfold, These
ashes that have lost their name Shall warm
my life with lasting flame!

CHANT FOR AUTUMN.

Veiled in visionary haze, Behold, the ethe-
real autumn days Draw near again! In broad
array, With a low, laborious hum These
ministers of plenty come, That seem to linger,
while they steal away.

O strange, sweet charm Of peaceful pain,
When yonder mountain's bended arm Seems
wafting o'er the harvest-plain A message
to the heart that grieves, And round us,
here, a sad-hued rain Of leaves that loosen
without number Showering falls in yellow,
umber, Red, or russet, 'thwart the stream!
Now pale Sorrow shall encumber All too
soon these lands, I deem; Yet who at heart

believes The autumn, a false friend, Can
bring us fatal harm? Ah, mist-hung av-
enues in dream Not more uncertainly ex-
tend Than the season that receives A sum-
mer's latest gleam!

But the days of death advance: They
tarry not, nor turn! I will gather the ashes
of summer In my heart, as an urn.

Oh draw thou nearer, Thou Spirit of

the distant height, Whither now that slender flight
Of swallows, winging, guides my sight! The hill cloth seem to me
A fading memory Of long delight, And in its distant blue
Half hideth from my view This shrinking season that must now retire;
And so shall hold it, hopeful, a desire And knowledge old as night and always new.
Draw nigher! And, with bended brow, I will be

thy reverer Through the long winter's term!

So, when the snows hold firm, And the
brook is dumb; When sharp winds come To
flay the hill-tops bleak, And whistle down
the creek; While the unhappy worm Crawls
deeper down into the ground, To 'scape Frost's
jailer on his round; Thy form to me shall
speak From the wide valley's bound, Recall
the waving of the last bird's wing, And help

me hope for spring.

BEFORE THE SNOW.

Autumn is gone: through the blue wood-
lands bare Shatters the windy rain. A thou-
sand leaves, Like birds that fly the mourn-
ful Northern air, Flutter away from the old
forest's eaves.

Autumn is gone: as yonder silent rill,
Slow eddying o'er thick leaf-heaps lately shed,

My spirit, as I walk, moves awed and still,
By thronging fancies wild and wistful led.

Autumn is gone: alas, how long ago The
grapes were plucked, and garnered was the
grain! How soon death settles on us, and
the snow Wraps with its white alike our
graves, our gain!

Yea, autumn's gone! Yet it robs not my
mood Of that which makes moods dear,—

some shoot of spring Still sweet within me;
or thoughts of yonder wood We walked in,—
memory's rare environing.

And, though they die, the seasons only
take A ruined substance. All that's best re-
mains In the essential vision that can make
One light for life, love, death, their joys,
their pains.

THE GHOSTS OF GROWTH.

Last night it snowed; and Nature fell
asleep. Forest and field lie tranced in gra-
cious dreams Of growth, for ghosts of leaves
long dead, me-seems, Hover about the boughs;
and wild winds sweep O'er whitened fields
full many a hoary heap From the storm-
harvest mown by ice-bound streams! With
beauty of crushed clouds the cold earth teems,
And winter a tranquil-seeming truce would

keep.

But such ethereal slumber may not bide
The ascending sun's bright scorn—not long,
I fear; And all its visions on the golden tide
Of mid-noon gliding off, must disappear.
Fair dreams, farewell! So in life's stir and
pride You fade, and leave the treasure of a
tear!

THE LILY-POND.

Some fairy spirit with his wand, I think,
has hovered o'er the dell, And spread this
film upon the pond, And touched it with
this drowsy spell.

For here the musing soul is merged In
moods no other scene can bring, And sweeter
seems the air when scourged With wander-
ing wild-bees' murmuring.

One ripple streaks the little lake, Sharp

purple-blue; the birches, thin And silvery,
crowd the edge, yet break To let a straying
sunbeam in.

How came we through the yielding wood,
That day, to this sweet-rustling shore? Oh,
there together while we stood, A butterfly
was wafted o'er,

In sleepy light; and even now His glim-
mering beauty doth return Upon me, when

the soft winds blow, And lilies toward the
sunlight yearn.

The yielding wood? And yet 't was both
To yield unto our happy march; Doubtful
it seemed, at times, if both Could pass its
green, elastic arch.

Yet there, at last, upon the marge We
found ourselves, and there, behold, In hosts
the lilies, white and large, Lay close, with

hearts of downy gold!

Deep in the weedy waters spread The
rootlets of the placid bloom: So sprung my
love's flower, that was bred In deep, still
waters of heart's-gloom.

So sprung; and so that morn was nursed
To live in light, and on the pool Wherein
its roots were deep immersed Burst into
beauty broad and cool.

Few words were said; a moment passed;
I know not how it came—that awe And ardor
of a glance that cast Our love in universal
law!

But all at once a bird sang loud, From
dead twigs of the gleamy beech; His notes
dropped dewy, as out of a cloud, A blessing
on our married speech.

Ah, Love! how fresh and rare, even now,

That moment and that mood return Upon
me, when the soft winds blow, And lilies
toward the sunlight yearn!

PART SECOND.

FIRST GLANCE.

A budding mouth and warm blue eyes;

A laughing face;—and laughing hair, So ruddy
does it rise From off that forehead fair;

Frank fervor in whate'er she said, And
a shy grace when she was still; A bright,
elastic tread; Enthusiastic will;

These wrought the magic of a maid As
sweet and sad as the sun in spring, Joyous,
yet half-afraid Her joyousness to sing.

What weighs the unworthiness of earth

When beauty such as this finds birth? Rare
maid, to look on thee Gives all things har-
mony!

”THE SUNSHINE OF THINE EYES.”

The sunshine of thine eyes, (Oh still, ce-
lestial beam!) Whatever it touches it fills
With the life of its lambent gleam.

The sunshine of thine eyes, Oh let it fall
on me! Though I be but a mote of the air,

I could turn to gold for thee!

"WHEN, LOOKING DEEPLY IN THY
FACE."

When, looking deeply in thy face, I catch
the undergleam of grace That grows be-
neath the outward glance, Long looking,
lost as in a trance Of long desires that fleet
and meet Around me like the fresh and sweet
White showers of rain which, vanishing, 'Neath

heaven's blue arches whirl, in spring; Suddenly then I seem to know Of some new fountain's overflow In grassy basins, with a sound That leads my fancy, past all bound, Into a region of retreat From this my life's bewildered heat. Oh if my soul might always draw From those deep fountains full of awe, The current of my days should rise Unto the level of thine eyes!

WITHIN A YEAR

I.

Lips that are met in love's Devotion sweet,
While parting lovers passionately greet, And
earth through heaven's arc more swiftly moves—
Oh, will they be less dear Within a year?

II.

Eyes in whose shadow-spell Far off I read
That which to lovers taking loving heed Dear

women's eyes full soon and plainly tell— Oh,
will you give such cheer This time a year?

III.

Behold! the dark year goes, Nor will re-
veal Aught of its purpose, if for woe or weal,
Swift as a stream that o'er the mill-weir
flows: Mayhap the end draws near Within
the year!

IV.

Yet, darling, once more touch Those lips
to mine. Set on my life that talisman di-
vine; Absence, new friends, I fear not overmuch—
- Even Death, should he appear Within the
year!

THE SINGING WIRE.

Hark to that faint, ethereal twang That
from the bosom of the breeze Has caught its
rise and fall: there rang Æolian harmonies!

I looked; again the mournful, chords,
In random rhythm lightly flung From off
the wire, came shaped in words; And thus,
meseemed, they sung.

"I, messenger of many fates, Strung to
the tones of woe or weal, Fine nerve that
thrills and palpitates With all men know or
feel,—

"Oh, is it strange that I should wail?

Leave me my tearless, sad refrain, When in
the pine-top wakes the gale That breathes
of coming rain.

”There is a spirit in the post; It, too,
was once a murmuring tree; Its sapless, sad,
and withered ghost Echoes my melody.

”Come close, and lay your listening ear
Against the bare and branchless wood. Say,
croons it not, so low and clear, As if it un-

derstood?"

I listened to the branchless pole That
held aloft the singing wire; I heard its muf-
fled music roll, And stirred with sweet de-
sire:

"O wire more soft than seasoned lute,
Hast thou no sunlit word for me? Though
long to me so coyly mute, Sure she may
speak through thee!"

I listened; but it was in vain. At first,
the wind's old, wayward will Drew forth the
tearless, sad refrain: That ceased, and all
was still.

But suddenly some kindling shock Struck
flashing through the wire: a bird, Poised on
it, screamed and flew; the flock Rose with
him, wheeled, and whirred.

Then to my soul there came this sense:

"Her heart has answered unto thine; She comes, to-night. Go, hie thee hence! Meet her: no more repine!"

Mayhap the fancy was far-fetched; And yet, mayhap, it hinted true. Ere moonrise, Love, a hand was stretched In mine, that gave me-you!

And so more dear to me has grown, Than rarest tones swept from the lyre, The minor-

movement of that moan In yonder singing
wire.

Nor care I for the will of states. Or
aught besides, that smites that string, Since
then so close it knit our fates, What time
the bird took wing!

MOODS OF LOVE.

I.

IN ABSENCE.

My love for thee is like a winged seed
Blown from the heart of thy rare beauty's
flower, And deftly guided by some breezy
power To fall and rest, where I should never
heed, In deepest caves of memory. There,
indeed, With virtue rife of many a sunny
hoar,– Ev'n making cold neglect and dark-
ness dower Its roots with life,–swiftly it 'gan
to breed, Till now wide-branching tendrils

it outspreads Like circling arms, to prison
its own prison, Fretting the walls with blooms
by myriads, And blazoning in my brain full
summer-season: Thy face, whose dearness
presence had not taught. In absence multi-
plies, and fills all thought.

II.

HEART'S FOUNTAIN.

Her moods are like the fountain's, chang-

ing ever, That spouts aloft a sudden, wa-
tery dome, Only to fall again in shatter-
ing foam, Just where the wedded jets them-
selves dissever, And palpitating downward,
downward quiver, Unfolded like a swift ethe-
real flower, That sheds white petals in a
blinding shower, And straightway soars anew
with blithe endeavor.

The sun may kindle it with healthful

fire; Upon it falls the cloud-gray's leaden
load; At night the stars shall haunt the whirling
spire: Yet these have but a transient garb
bestowed. So her glad life, whate'er the
hours impart, Plays still 'twixt heaven's cope
and her own clear heart.

III.

SOUTH-WIND SONG.

Soft-throated South, breathing of sum-

mer's ease (Sweet breath, whereof the violet's life is made!) Through lips moist-warm, as thou hadst lately stayed 'Mong rosebuds, wooing to the cheeks of these Loth blushes faint and maidenly-rich Breeze, Still doth thy honeyed blowing bring a shade Of sad foreboding. In thy hand is laid The power to build or blight rich fruit of trees, The deep, cool grass, and field of thick-

combed grain.

Even so my Love may bring me joy or
woe, Both measureless, but either counted
gain Since given by her. For pain and plea-
sure flow Like tides upon us of the self-same
sea. Tears are the gems of joy and misery!

IV.

THE LOVER'S YEAR

Thou art my morning, twilight, noon,

and eve, My Summer and my Winter, Spring
and Fall; For Nature left on thee a touch of
all The moods that come to gladden or to
grieve The heart of Time, with purpose to
relieve From lagging sameness. So do these
forestall In thee such o'erheaped sweetnesses
as pall Too swiftly, and the taster tasteless
leave.

Scenes that I love to me al- ways remain

Beautiful, whether under summer's sun Be-
held, or, storm-dark, stricken across with
rain. So, through all humors, thou 'rt the
same sweet one: Doubt not I love thee well
in each, who see Thy constant change is

changeful constancy.

V.

NEW WORLDS.

With my beloved I lingered late one night.
At last the hour when I must leave her came:
But, as I turned, a fear I could not name
Possessed me that the long sweet evening
might Prelude some sudden storm, whereby
delight Should perish. What if Death, ere

dawn, should claim One of us? What, though
living, not the same Each should appear to
each in morning-light?

Changed did I find her, truly, the next
day: Ne'er could I see her as of old again.
That strange mood seemed to draw a cloud
away, And let her beauty pour through ev-
ery vein Sunlight and life, part of me. Thus
the lover With each new morn a new world

may discover.

VI.

WEDDING-NIGHT.

At night, with shaded eyes, the summer moon
In tender meditation downward glances
At the dark earth, far-set in dim expanses,
And, welcomer than blazoned gold of noon,
Down through the air her steady lights are strewn.
The breezy forests sigh in

moonlit trances, And the full-hearted poet,
waking, fancies The smiling hills will break
in laughter soon.

Oh thus, thou gentle Nature, dost thou
shine On me to-night. My very limbs would
melt, Like rugged earth beneath yon ray
divine, Into faint semblance of what they
have felt: Thine eye doth color me, O wife,
O mine, With peace that in thy spirit long

hath dwelt!

LOVE'S DEFEAT.

A thousand times I would have hoped,
A thousand times protested; But still, as
through the night I groped, My torch from
me was wrested, and wrested.

How often with a succoring cup Unto
the hurt I hasted! The wounded died ere I
came up; My cup was still untasted,— Un-

tasted.

Of darkness, wounds, and harsh disdain
Endured, I ne'er repented. 'T is not of
these I would complain: With these I were
contented,– Contented.

Here lies the misery, to feel No work of
love completed; In prayerless passion still
to kneel, And mourn, and cry: "Defeated
Defeated!"

MAY AND MARRIAGE.

THE LOVER WHO THINKS.

Dost thou remember, Love, those hours
Shot o'er with random rainy showers, When
the bold sun would woo coy May? She
smiled, then wept—and looked another way.

We, learning from the sun and season,
Together plotted joyous treason 'Gainst maiden
majesty, to give Each other troth, and hence-

forth wedded live.

But love, ah, love we know is blind! Not
always what they seek they find When, grop-
ing through dim-lighted natures, Fond lovers
look for old, ideal statures.

What then? Is all our purpose lost? The
balance broken, since Fate tossed Uneven
weights? Oh well beware That thought, my
sweet: 't were neither fit nor fair!

Seek not for any grafted fruits From souls
so wedded at the roots; But whatso'er our
fibres hold, Let that grow forth in mutual,
ample mold!

No sap can circle without flaw Into the
perfect sphere we saw Hanging before our
happy eyes Amid the shade of marriage-
mysteries;

But all that in the heart doth lurk Must

toward the mystic shaping work: Sweet fruit
and bitter both must fall When the boughs
bend, at each year's autumn-call.

Ah, dear defect! that aye shall lift Us
higher, not through craven shift Of fault on
common frailty;—nay, But twofold hope to
help with generous stay!

I shall be nearer, understood: More prized
art thou than perfect good. And since thou

lov'st me, I shall grow Thy other self—thy
Life, thy Joy, thy Woe!

THE FISHER OF THE CAPE.

At morn his bark like a bird Slips lightly
oceanward— Sail feathering smooth o'er the
bay And beak that drinks the wild spray.
In his eyes beams cheerily A light like the
sun's on the sea, As he watches the waning
strand, Where the foam, like a waving hand

Of one who mutely would tell Her love, flutters faintly, "Farewell."

But at night, when the winds arise And pipe to driving skies, And the moon peers, half afraid, Through the storm-cloud's ragged shade, He hears her voice in the blast That sighs about the mast, He sees her face in the clouds As he climbs the whistling shrouds; And a power nerves his hand, Shall bring

the bark to land.

SAILOR'S SONG.

The sea goes up; the sky comes down.
Oh, can you spy the ancient town,— The
granite hills so hard and gray, That rib the
land behind the bay? O ye ho, boys! Spread
her wings! Fair winds, boys: send her home!
O ye ho!

Three years? Is it so long that we Have

lived upon the lonely sea? Oh, often I thought
we'd see the town, When the sea went up,
and the sky came down. O ye ho, boys!
Spread her wings! Fair winds, boys: send
her home! O ye ho!

Even the winter winds would rouse A
memory of my father's house; For round
his windows and his door They made the
same deep, mouthless roar. O ye ho, boys!

Spread her wings! Fair winds, boys: send
her home! O ye ho!

And when the summer's breezes beat,
Methought I saw the sunny street Where
stood my Kate. Beneath her hand She gazed
far out, far out from land. O ye ho, boys!
Spread her wings! Fair winds, boys: send
her home! O ye ho!

Farthest away, I oftenest dreamed That

I was with her. Then, it seemed A single
stride the ocean wide Had bridged, and
brought me to her side. O ye ho, boys!
Spread her wings! Fair winds, boys: send
her home. O ye ho!

But though so near we're drawing, now,
'T is farther off—I know not how. We
sail and sail: we see no home. Would we
into the port were come! O ye ho, boys!

Spread her wings! Fair winds, boys: send
her home! O ye ho!

At night, the same stars o'er the mast:
The mast sways round—however fast We fly—
still sways and swings around One scanty
circle's starry bound. O ye ho, boys! Spread
her wings! Fair winds, boys: send her home!
O ye ho!

Ah, many a month those stars have shone,

And many a golden morn has flown, Since
that so solemn, happy morn, When, I away,
my babe was born. O ye ho, boys! Spread
her wings! Fair winds, boys: send her home!
O ye ho!

And, though so near we're drawing, now,
'T is farther off—I know not how— I would
not aught amiss had come To babe or mother
there, at home! O ye ho, boys! Spread her

wings! Fair winds, boys: send her home! O
ye ho!

'T is but a seeming: swiftly rush The
seas, beneath. I hear the crush Of foamy
ridges 'gainst the prow. Longing outspeeds
the breeze, I know. O ye ho, boys! Spread
her wings! Fair winds, boys: send her home!
O ye ho!

Patience, my mates! Though not this

eve We cast our anchor, yet believe, If but
the wind holds, short the run: We 'll sail
in with to-morrow's sun. O ye ho, boys!
Spread her wings! Fair winds, boys: send
her home! O ye ho!

JESSAMINE.

Here stands the great tree still, with broad,
bent head, And wide arms grown aweary,
yet outspread With their old blessing. But

wan memory weaves Strange garlands now
amongst the darkening leaves. _And the
moon hangs low in the elm_.

Beneath these glimmering arches Jes-
samine Walked with her lover long ago, and
in This moon-made shade he questioned;
and she spoke: Then on them both love's
rarer radiance broke. _And the moon hangs
low in the elm_.

Sweet Jessamine we called her; for she
shone Like blossoms that in sun and shade
have grown, Gathering from each alike a
perfect white, Whose rich bloom breaks opaque
through darkest night. And the moon hangs
low in the elm.

And for this sweetness Walt, her lover,
sought To win her; wooed her here, his heart
full-fraught With fragrance of her being, and

gained his plea. So "We will wed," they
said, "beneath this tree." And the moon
hangs low in the elm.

Was it unfaith, or faith more full to her,
Made him, for fame and fortune longing,
spur Into the world? Far from his home he
sailed: And life paused; while she watched
joy vanish, veiled. And the moon hangs
low in the elm.

Oh, better at the elm tree's sun-browned
feet If he had been content to let life fleet Its
wonted way!—there rearing his small house;
Mowing and milking, lord of corn and cows!
And the moon hangs low in the elm.

For as against a snarling sea one steers,
Ever he battled with the beetling years; And
ever Jessamine must watch and pine, Her
vision bounded by the bleak sea-line. _And

the moon hangs low in the elm.

At last she heard no more. The neighbors said That Walt had married, faithless, or was dead. Yet naught her trust could move; the tryst she kept Each night still, 'neath this tree, before she slept. And the moon hangs low in the elm.

So, circling years went by; and in her face Slow melancholy wrought a tempered

grace Of early joy with sorrow's rich alloy—
Refinèd, rare, no doom should e'er destroy.
And the moon hangs low in the elm.

Sometimes at twilight, when sweet Jes-
samine, Slow-footed, weary-eyed, passed by
to win The elm, we smiled for pity of her,
and mused On love that so could live with
love refused. _And the moon hangs low in
the elm._

Nor none could hope for her. But she
had grown Too high in love for hope, and
bloomed alone, Aloft in pure sincerity se-
cure; For fortune's failures, in her faith too
sure. _And the moon hangs low in the elm._

Oh, well for Walt, if he had known her
soul! Discouraged on disaster's changeful
shoal Wrecking, he rested; starved on self-
ish pride Long years; nor would obey love's

homeward tide. _And the moon hangs low
in the elm._

But, bitterly repenting of his sin, Oh,
bitterly he learned to look within Sweet Jes-
samine's clear depth—when the past, dead,
Mocked him, and wild, waste years forever
fled! _And the moon hangs low in the elm._

Late, late, oh, late beneath the tree stood
two! In awe and anguish wondering: "Is

it true?" Two that were each most like to
some wan wraith: Yet each on each looked
with a living faith. _And the moon hangs
low in the elm._

Even to the tree-top sang the wedding-
bell; Even to the tree-top tolled the passing
knell. Beneath it Walt and Jessamine were
wed; Beneath it many a year she lieth dead!
And the moon hangs low in the elm.

Here stands the great tree still. But age
has crept Through every coil, while Walt
each night has kept The tryst alone. Hark!
with what windy might The boughs chant
o'er her grave their burial-rite! And the
moon hangs low in the elm. -

GRIEF'S HERO.

A youth unto herself Grief took, Whom
everything of joy forsook, And men passed

with denying head, Saying: "'T were better
he were dead."

Grief took him, and with master-touch
Molded his being. I marveled much To see
her magic with the clay, So much she gave—
and took away. Daily she wrought, and her
design Grew daily clearer and more fine,
To make the beauty of his shape Serve for
the spirit's free escape. With liquid fire she

filled his eyes. She graced his lips with swift
surmise Of sympathy for others' woe, And
made his every fibre flow In fairer curves.
On brow and chin And tinted cheek, drawn
clean and thin, She sculptured records rich,
great Grief! She made him loving, made
him lief.

I marveled; for, where others saw A fail-
ing frame with many a flaw, Meseemed a

figure I beheld Fairer than anything of old
Fashioned from sunny marble. Here Nature
was artist with no peer. No chisel's purpose
could have caught These lines, nor brush
their secret wrought. Not so the world weighed,
busily Pursuing drossy industry; But, satu-
rated with success, Well-guarded by a soft
excess Of bodily ease, gave little heed To
him that held not by their creed, Save o'er

the beauteous youth to moan: "A pity that
he is not grown To our good stature and
heavier weight, To bear his share of our
full freight." Meanwhile, thus to himself he
spoke: "Oh, noble is the knotted oak, And
sweet the gush of sylvan streams, And good
the great sun's gladding beams, The blush
of life upon the field, The silent might that
mountains wield. Still more I love to mix

with men, Meeting the kindly human ken;
To feel the force of faithful friends— The
thirst for smiles that never ends.

”Yet precious more than all of these I
hold great Sorrow’s mysteries, Whereby Gehenna’s
sultry gale Is made to lift the golden veil
’Twixt heaven’s starry-spherèd light Of truth
and our dim, sun-blent sight. Joy comes
to ripen; but ’tis Grief That garners in the

grainy sheaf. Time was I feared to know
or feel The spur of aught but gilded weal;
To bear aloft the victor, Fame, Would ev'n
have champed a stately shame Of bit and
bridle. But my fears Fell off in the pure
bath of tears. And now with sinews fresh
and strong I stride, to summon with a song
The deep, invigorating truth That makes
me younger than my youth. "O Sorrow,

deathless thy delight! Deathless it were but
for our slight Endurance! Truth like thine,
too rare, We dare but take in scantiest share.”

He died: the creatures of his kind Fared
on. Not one had known his mind.

But the unnamed yearnings of the air,
The eternal sky's wide-searching stare, The
undertone of brawling floods, And the old
moaning of the woods Grew full of memory.

The sun Many a brave heart has shone
upon Since then, of men who walked abroad
For joy and gladness praising God. But
widowed Grief lives on alone: She hath not
chosen, of them, one.

A FACE IN THE STREET.

Poor, withered face, that yet was once
so fair, Grown ashen-old in the wild fires
of lust— Thy star-like beauty, dimm'd with

earthly dust, Yet breathing of a purer native air;— They who whilom, cursed vultures, sought a share Of thy dead womanhood, their greed unjust Have satisfied, have stripped and left thee bare. Still, like a leaf warped by the autumn gust, And driving to the end, thou wrapp'st in flame And perfume all thy hollow-eyed decay, Feigning on those gray cheeks the blush that Shame

Took with her when she fled long since away.
Ah God! rain fire upon this foul-souled city
That gives such death, and spares its men,—
for pity!

THE BATHER.

Standing here alone, Let me pause awhile,
Drinking in the light Ere, with plunge of
white limbs prone, I raise the sparkling flight
Of foam-flakes volatile.

Now, in natural guise, I woo the death-
less breeze, Through me rushing fleet The
joy of life, in swift surprise: I grow with
growing wheat, And burgeon with the trees.

Lo! I fetter Time, So he cannot run;
And in Eden again—Flash of memory sublime!—
Dwell naked, without stain, Beneath the
dazed sun.

All yields brotherhood; Each least thing

that lives, Wrought of primal spores, Deep-
ens this wild sense of good That, on these
shaggy shores, Return to nature gives.

Oh, that some solitude Were ours, in
woodlands deep, Where, with lucent eyes,
Living lithe and limber-thewed, Our life's
shape might arise Like mountains fresh from
sleep!

To sounds of water falling, Hosts of del-

icate dreams Should lull us and allure With
a dim, enchanted calling, Blameless to live
and pure Like these sweet springs and streams.

But in a wilderness Alone may such life
be? Why of all things framed, In my human
form confessed Should I be ashamed, And
blush for honesty?

Rounded, strengthly limbs That knit me
to my kind— Your glory turns to grief! Shall

I for my soul sing hymns, Yet for my body
find No clear, divine belief?

Let me rather die, Than by faith uphold
Dogmas weak that dare The form that once
Christ wore deny Afraid with him to share
A purity twofold;

Yet, while sin remains On this saddened
earth, Humbly walk my ways! For my gar-
ments are as chains; And I fear to praise

My frame with careless mirth.

Joy and penance go Hand in hand, I see!
Would I could live so well, Soul of me should
never know When my coverings fell, Nor
feel this nudity!

HELEN AT THE LOOM.

Helen, in her silent room, Weaves upon
the upright loom, Weaves a mantle rich and
dark, Purpled over-deep. But mark How

she scatters o'er the wool Woven shapes,
till it is full Of men that struggle close,
complex; Short-clipp'd steeds with wrinkled
necks Arching high; spear, shield, and all
The panoply that doth recall Mighty war,
such war as e'en For Helen's sake is waged,
I ween. Purple is the groundwork: good!
All the field is stained with blood. Blood
poured out for Helen's sake; (Thread, run

on; and, shuttle, shake!) But the shapes
of men that pass Are as ghosts within a
glass, Woven with whiteness of the swan,
Pale, sad memories, gleaming wan From the
garment's purple fold Where Troy's tale is
twined and told. Well may Helen, as with
tender Touch of rosy fingers slender She
doth knit the story in Of Troy's sorrow and
her sin, Feel sharp filaments of pain Reeled

off with the well-spun skein, And faint blood-
stains on her hands From the shifting san-
guine strands. Gently, sweetly she doth sor-
row: What has been must be to-morrow;
Meekly to her fate she bows. Heavenly beau-
ties still will rouse Strife and savagery in
men: Shall the lucid heavens, then, Lose
their high serenity, Sorrowing over what must
be? If she taketh to her shame, Lo, they

give her not the blame,—Priam's wisest coun-
selors, Aged men, not loving wars: When
she goes forth, clad in white, Day-cloud touched
by first moonlight, With her fair hair, amber-
hued As vapor by the moon imbued With
burning brown, that round her clings, See,
she sudden silence brings On the gloomy
whisperers Who would make the wrong all
hers.

So, Helen, in thy silent room, Labor at
the storied loom; (Thread, run on; and,
shuttle, shake!) Let thy aching sorrow make
Something strangely beautiful Of this fab-
ric, since the wool Comes so tinted from the
Fates, Dyed with loves, hopes, fears, and
hates. Thou shalt work with subtle force
All thy deep shade of remorse In the tex-
ture of the weft, That no stain on thee be

left;- Ay, false queen, shalt fashion grief,
Grief and wrong, to soft relief. Speed the
garment! It may chance. Long hereafter,
meet the glance Of Enone; when her lord,
Now thy Paris, shall go t'ward Ida, at his
last sad end, Seeking her, his early friend,
Who alone can cure his ill Of all who love
him, if she will. It were fitting she should
see In that hour thine artistry, And her hus-

band's speechless corse In the garment of
remorse! But take heed that in thy work
Naught unbeautiful may lurk. Ah, how lit-
tle signifies Unto thee what fortunes rise,
What others fall! Thou still shalt rule, Still
shalt work the colored crewl. Though thy
yearning woman's eyes Burn with glorious
agonies, Pitying the waste and woe, And
the heroes falling low In the war around

thee, here, Yet that exquisitest tear 'Twixt
thy lids shall dearer be Than life, to friend
or enemy.

There are people on the earth Doomed
with doom of too great worth. Look on He-
len not with hate, Therefore, but compas-
sionate. If she suffer not too much, Seldom
does she feel the touch Of that fresh, au-
roral joy Lighter spirits may decoy To their

pure and sunny lives. Heavy honey 't is, she
hives. To her sweet but burdened soul All
that here she doth control— What of bitter
memories, What of coming fate's surmise,
Paris' passion, distant din Of the war now
drifting in To her quiet—idle seems; Idle as
the lazy gleams Of some stilly water's reach,
Seen from where broad vine-leaves pleach A
heavy arch, and, looking through, Far away

the doubtful blue Glimmers, on a drowsy
day, Crowded with the sun's rich gray, As
she stands within her room, Weaving, weav-
ing at the loom.

"O WHOLESOME DEATH."

O Wholesome Death, thy sombre funeral-
car Looms ever dimly on the lengthening
way Of life; while, lengthening still, in sad
array, My deeds in long procession go, that

are As mourners of the man they helped
to mar. I see it all in dreams, such as way-
lay The wandering fancy when the solid day
Has fallen in smoldering ruins, and night's
star, Aloft there, with its steady point of
light Mastering the eye, has wrapped the
brain in sleep. Ah, when I die, and plan-
ets take their flight Above my grave, still
let my spirit keep Sometimes its vigil of di-

vine remorse, 'Midst pity, praise, or blame
heaped o'er my corse!

BURIAL-SONG FOR SUMNER.

Now the last wreath of snow That melts,
in mist exhales White aspiration, and our
deep-voiced gales In chorus chant the mea-
sured march of spring, Whom griefs of life
and death Are burdening! Slow, slow— With
half-held breath— Tread slow, O mourners,

that all men may know What hero here lies
low!

O music, sweep From some deep cave,
and bear To us that gasp in this so meagre air
Sweet ministrings And consolations
of contorted sound, With agonies profound
Of nobly warring and enduring chords That
lie, close-bound, Unstirred as yet 'neath thy
wide, wakening wings; So that our hearts

break not in broken words. O music, that
hast power This darkness to devour In vivid
light; that from the dusk of grief Canst cause
to grow divergent flower and leaf, And from
death's darkest roots Bring forth the fairest
fruits;— Come thou, to quicken this hour Of
loss, and keep Thy spell on all, that none
may dare to weep!

For he whom now we mourn, As if from

giants born, Was strong in limb and strong
in brain, And nobly with a giant scorn With-
stood the direst pain That healing science
knows, When, by the dastard blows Of his
brute enemy Laid low, he sought to rise
again Through help of knife and fire,— The
awful enginery Wherewith men dare aspire
To wrest from Death his victims. Yea, Though
he who healed him shrank and throbbed

With horror of the wound, Brave Sumner
gave no sound, Nor flinched, nor sobbed,
But as though within the man Instant pre-
monition ran Of his high fate, Imperish-
able, sculptured state Enthroned in death
to hold, He stood, a statued form Of veiled
and voiceless storm, Inwardly quivering Like
the swift-smitten string Of unheard music,
yet As massively and firmly set As if he had

been marble or wrought gold!

Built in so brave a shape, How could he
hope escape The blundering people's wrath?
Who, seeing him strong, Supposed it right
to cast on him their wrong, Since he could
bear it all! Lo, now, the sombre pall Sweeps
their dull errors from the path, And leaves
it free For him, whose hushed heart no re-
proaches hath, Unto his grave to fare, In

shrouded majesty! His triumph fills the air:
Behold, the streets are bordered with vain
breath Of those who reverent watch the train
of death; But he has done with breathing!

Wise Death, still choosing near and far,
Thou couldst not strike a higher star From
out our heaven, and yet its light In falling
glorifies the night!

Leader in life, his lips, though dumb,

Still rule us by their restfulness, their smile
Of far-off meanings; and the people come
In tributary hosts for many a mile, Drawn
by an eloquence More solemn and intense
Than that wherewith he shook The Sen-
ate, while his look Of sober lightning cleft
the knotty growth Of error, that within the
riven root Uplifted, lit with peace, truth's
buds might shoot, And blow sweet breath

o'er all, however loth!

Unspeakings, though his eyes forget
The light that late forsook
Their chambers, there doth rise
Mysteriously yet A radiance thence
that glows On brows of them, the great and
wise, Poets and men of prophecies,
Who, with looks of strange repose,
Calm, exalted, here have met
Him to follow to his grave.
Well they know he's crossed their bound,

Yet, with baffled longing brave, Seek with
him the depths to sound That gulf our lonely
life around. Oh, on these mortal faces frail
What immortality Falls from the death-light
pale!

Ev'n thus the path unto thy tomb, Sum-
ner, all our brave and good Still shall pace
through time to come, For in distant Auburn
wood Seeing the glimmer of thy stone, They

a shaft shall deem it, thrown From a dawn
beyond the deep, And so haste with thee to
keep Angelic brotherhood! O herald, gone
before, For these throw wide the door, Make
room, make room!

Now, music, cease, And bitter brazen
trumpets hold your peace! Now, while the
dumb, white air Draws from our still de-
spair A purer prayer. Then must the sod

Fulfill its humble share, Meek-folded o'er
his breast, Here where he lies amongst the
waiting trees: They shall break bud when
warm winds from the west And southern
breezes come to touch the place Made pre-
cious by this grace Of memory dear to God.

We leave him where the granite Lion lies
And gazes toward the East, with woman's
eyes That read the riddle of the undying

sun, Bearing within her breast the stony
germ Of continents, but—lasting no less firm—
The memory of those marvels done, The
battles fought, the words that wrought To
free a race, and chasten one. We leave him
where the river slowly winds, A broken chain;
The river that so late its hero finds, With-
out a stain, Whose name so long expect-
tantly it bore; And, echoing now a people's
150

thought, The Charles shall murmur by this
reedy shore His fame forevermore.

ARISE, AMERICAN!

The soul of a nation awaking,— High vi-
sions of daybreak I saw, And the stir of a
state, the forsaking Of sin, and the worship
of law.

O pine-tree, shout! And hoarser Rush,
river, unto the sea, Foam-fettered and sun-

flushed, a courser That feels the prairie,
free!

Our birth-star beckons to trial All faith
of the far-fled years, Ere scorn was our share,
and denial, Or laughter for patriot's tears.

And lo, Faith comes forth the finer From
trampled thickets of fire, And the orient
opens diviner Before her; the heaven lifts
higher.

O deep, sweet eyes, and severer Than
steel! he knoweth who comes, Thy hero:
bend thine eyes nearer! Now wilder than
battle-drums

Thy glance in his blood is stirring! His
heart is alive like the main When the row-
eled winds are spurring, And the broad tides
shoreward strain.

O hero, art thou among us? O helper,

hidest thou still? Why hath he no anthem
sung us, Why waiteth, nor worketh our will?

For still a smirk or a favor Can hide the
face of the false; And the old-time Faith
seeks braver Upholders, and sacreder walls.

Yea, cunning is Christian evil, And sub-
tle the conscience' snare; But virtue's vol-
canic upheaval Shall cast fine device to the
air!

Too long has the land's soul slumbered,
And triumph bred dangerous ease,— Our vic-
tories all unnumbered, Our feet on the down-
bowed seas.

Come, then, simple and stalwart Life of
the earlier days! Come! Far better than all
were it— Our precepts, our prayers, and our
lays—

That the heart of the people should trem-

ble Accord to some mighty one's voice, The
helpless atoms assemble In music, their valor
to poise.

Come to us, mountain-dweller, Leader,
wherever thou art, Skilled from thy cra-
dle, a queller Of serpents, and sound to the
heart!

Modest, and mighty, and tender, Man
of an iron mold, Learned or unlearned, our

defender, American-souled!

THE SILENT TIDE

A tangled orchard round the farm-house
spreads, Wherein it stands home-like, but
desolate, 'Midst crowded and uneven-statured
sheds, Alike by rain and sunshine sadly stained.
A quiet country-road before the door Runs,
gathering close its ruts to scale the hill- A
sudden bluff on the New Hampshire coast,

That rises rough against the sea, and hangs
Crested above the boulder-sprinkled beach.
And on the road white houses small are
strung Like threaded beads, with intervals.
The church Tops the rough hill; then comes
the wheelwright's shop.

From orchard, church, and shop you hear
the sea, And from the farm-house windows
see it strike Sharp gleams through slender

arching apple-boughs.

Sea-like, too, echoing round me here there
rolls A surging sorrow; and even so there
breaks A smitten light of woe upon me,
now, Seeing this place, and telling o'er again
The tale of those who dwelt here once. Long
since It was, and they were two–two broth-
ers, bound By early orphanage and soli-
tude The closer, cleaving strongly each to

each, Till love, that held them many years
in gage, Itself swept them asunder. I have
heard The story from old Deacon Snow,
their friend, He who was boy and man with
them. A boy! What, he? How strange it
seems! who now is stiff And warped with
life's fierce heat and cold: his brows Are
hoary white, and on his head the hairs Stand
sparse as wheat-stalks on the bare field's

edge!

Reuben and Jerry they were named; but
two Of common blood and nurture scarce
were found More sharply different. For the
first was bold, Breeze-like and bold to come
or go; not rash, But shrewdly generous, pop-
ular, and boon: And Jerry, dark and sad-
faced. Whether least He loved himself or
neighbor none could tell, So cold he seemed

in wanted sympathy. Yet he would ponder
an hour at a time Upon a bird found
dead; and much he loved To brood i' th'
shade of yon wind-wavered pines. Often at
night, too, he would wander forth, Lured by
the hollow rumbling of the sea In moonlight
breaking, there to learn wild things, Such
as these dreamers pluck out of the dusk
While other men lie sleeping. But a star,

Rose on his sight, at last, with power to
rule Majestically mild that deep-domed sky,
High as youth's hopes, that stood above his
soul; And, ruling, led him dayward. That
was Grace, I mean Grace Brierly, daugh-
ter of the squire, Rivaling the wheelwright
Hungerford's shy Ruth For beauty. There-
fore, in the sunny field, Mowing the clover-
purpled grass, or, waked In keen December

dawns,—while creeping light And winter-tides
beneath the pallid stars Stole o'er the marsh
together,—a thought of her Would turn him
cool or warm, like the south breeze, And
make him blithe or bitter. Alas for him!
Eagerly storing golden thoughts of her, He
locked a phantom treasure in his breast.

He sought to chain the breezes, and to
lift A perfume as a pearl before his eyes—

Intangible delight! A time drew on When
from these twilight musings on his hopes
He woke, and found the morning of his love
Blasted, and all its rays shorn suddenly. For
Reuben, too, had turned his eye on Grace,
And she with favoring face the suit had met,
Known in the village; this dream-fettered
youth Perceiving not what passed, until too
late.

One holiday the young folks all had gone
Strawberrying, with the village Sabbath-
school; Reuben and Grace and Jerry, Ruth,
Rob Snow, And all their friends, youth-mates
that buoyantly Bore out 'gainst Time's ar-
madadas, like a fleet Of fair ships, sunlit, braced
by buffeting winds, Indomitably brave; but,
soon or late, Battle and hurricane or whirl
them deep Below to death, or send them

homeward, seared By shot and storm: so
went they forth, that day.

Two wagons full of rosy children rolled
Along the ruddy track, 'twixt swamp and
slope, Through deep, green-glimmering woods,
and out at last On grassy table-land, warm
with the sun And yielding tributary odors
wild Of strawberry, late June-rose, juniper,
Where sea and land breeze mingled. There

a brook Through a bare hollow flashing,
spurred, purred, And shot away, yet stayed—
a light and grace Unconscious and unceas-
ing. And thick pines, Hard by, drew darkly
far away their dim And sheltering, cool ar-
cades. So all dismount, And fields and for-
est gladden with their shout; Ball, swing,
and see-saw sending the light hearts Of the
children high o'er earth and everything. While

some staid, kindly women draw and spread
In pine-shade the long whiteness of a cloth,
The rest, a busy legion, o'er the grass Kneel-
ing, must rifle the meadow of its fruit.

O laughing Fate! O treachery of truth
To royal hopes youth bows before! That
day, Ev'n there where life in such glad mea-
sure beat Its round, with winds and wa-
ters, tunefully, And birds made music in the

matted wood, The shaft of death reached
Jerry's heart: he saw The sweet conspiracy
of those two lives, In looks and gestures read
his doom, and heard Their laughter ring to
the grave all mirth of his.

So Reuben's life in full leaf stood, its
fruit Hidden in a green expectancy; but all
His days were rounded with ripe conscious-
ness: While Jerry felt the winter's whiten-

ing blight, As when that frosty fern-work
and those palms Of visionary leaf, and trail-
ing vines, Quaint-chased by night-winds on
the pane, melt off, And naked earth, stone-
stiff, with bristling trees, Stares in the win-
ter sunlight coldly through. But yet he
rose, and clothed himself amain With mis-
ery, and once more put on life As a stained
garment. Highly he resolved To make his

deedless days henceforward strike Pure harmony—
a psalm of silences.

But on the Sunday, coming from the
church, He saw those happy, plighted lovers
walk Before proud Grace's father, and of
friends Heard comment and congratulation
given. Then with Rob Snow he hurried
to the beach, To a rough heap of stones
they two had reared In boyhood. There the

two held sad debate Of life's swift losses,
Bob inspiriting still, Jerry rejecting hope,
ev'n though his friend, Self-wounding (for
he loved Ruth Hungerford), Told how the
wheelwright's daughter longed for him, And
yet might make him glad, though Grace was
lost.

The season deepened, and in Jerry's heart
Ripened a thought charged with grave con-

sequence. His grief he would have stifled
at its birth, Sad child of frustrate longing!
But anon— Knowledge of Ruth's affection
being revealed, Which, if he stayed to let it
feed on him, Vine-like might wreath and
wind about his life, Lifting all shade and
sweetness out of reach Of Robert, so long
his friend—honor, and hopes He would not
name, kindled a torch for war Of various

impulse in him. Reuben wedded; Yet Jerry
lingered. Then, swift whisperings Along re-
verberant walls of gossips' ears Hummed
loud and louder a love for Ruth. Grace, too,
Involved him in a web of soft surmise With
Ruth; and Reuben questioned him thereof.
But a white, sudden anger struck like a bolt
O'er Jerry's face, that blackened under it:
He strode away, and left his brother dazed,

With red rush of offended self-conceit Stain-
ing his forehead to the hair. This flash
Of anger—first since boyhood's wholesome
strifes— On Jerry's path gleamed lurid; by
its light He shaped a life's course out.

There came a storm One night. He bade
farewell to Ruth; and when Above the seas
the bare-browed dawn arose, While the last
laggard drops ran off the eaves, He dressed,

but took some customary garb On his arm;
stole swiftly to the sands; and there Cast
clown his garments by the ancient heap Of
stones. At first brief pause he made, and
thought: "And thus I play, to win perchance
a tear From her whom, first, to save the
smallest care, I thought I could have died!"
But then at once Within the sweep of swirling
water-planes That from the great waves cir-

clad up and slid Instantly back, passing far
down the shore, Southward he made his
way. Next day he shipped Upon a whaler
outward bound. She spread Her mighty
wings, and bore him far away— So far, Death
seemed across her wake to stalk, Withering
her swift shape from the empty air, Until
her memory grew a faded dream.

Ah, what a desolate brightness that young

day Flung o'er the impassive strand and
dull green marsh And green-arched orchard,
ere it struck the farm! Storm-strengthened,
clear, and cool the morning rose To gaze
down on that frightened home, where dawned
Pale Ruth's discovery of her loss, who late,
Guessing some ill in Jerry's last-night words
Of vague farewell, woke now to certainty
Of strange disaster. So, when Reuben and
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Rob, Hither and thither searching, with locked
lips And eyes grown suddenly cold in ea-
ger dread, On those still sands beside the
untamed sea, Came to the garments Jerry
had thrown there, dumb They stood, and
knew he'd perished. If by chance Borne
out with undertow and rolled beneath The
gaping surge, or rushing on his death Free-
willed, they would not guess; but straight

they set Themselves to watch the changes
of the sea- The watchful sea that would not
be betrayed, The surly flood that echoed
their suspense With hollow-sounding hor-
ror. Thus three tides Hurlled on the beach
their empty spray, and brought Nor doubt-
dispelling death, nor new-born hope. But
with the fourth slow turn at length there
came A naked, drifting body impelled to

shore, An unknown sailor by the late storm
swept Out of the rigging of some laboring
ship. And him, disfigured by the water's
wear, The watching friends supposed their
dead; and so, Mourning, took up this out-
cast of the deep, And buried him, with church-
rite and with pall Trailing, and train of sad-
eyed mourners, there In the old orchard-lot
by Reuben's door.

Observed among the mourners walked
slight Ruth. Her grief had dropped a veil
of finer light Around her, hedging her with
sanctity Peculiar; all stood shy about her
save Rob Snow, he venturing from time to
time Some small, uncertain act of kindli-
ness. Long seemed she vowed from joy, but
when the birds Began to mate, and quiet
violets blow Along the brook-side, lo! she

smiled again; Again the wind-flower color in
her cheeks Blanch'd in a breath, and bloomed
once more; then stayed; Till, like the breeze
that rumors ripening buds, A delicate sense
crept through the air that soon These two
would scale the church-crowned hill, and
wed.

The seasons faced the world, and fled,
and came. In summer nights, the soft roll

of the sea Was shattered, resonant, beneath
a moon That, silent, seemed to hearken.
And every hour In autumn, night or day,
large apples fell Without rebound to earth,
upon the sod There mounded greenly by the
large slate slab In the old orchard-lot near
Reuben's door. But there were changes: af-
ter some long years Reuben and Grace be-
held a brave young boy Bearing their dou-

ble life abroad in one— Beginning new the
world, and bringing hopes That in their path
fell flower-like. Not at ease They dwelt,
though; for a slow discordancy Of temper—
weak-willed waste of life in bursts Of petulance—
had marred their happiness. And so the
boy, young Reuben, as he grew, Was chafed
and vexed by this ill-fitting mode Of life
forced on him, and rebelled. Too oft Brood-

ing alone, he shaped loose schemes of flight
Into the joyous outer world, to break From
the unwholesome wranglings of his home.
Then once, when at some slight demur he
made, Dispute ensued between the man and
wife, He burst forth, goaded, "Some day I
will leave— Leave you forever!" And his fa-
ther stared, Lifted and clenched his hand,
but let it unloose, Nerveless. The blow,

unstruck, yet quivered through The boy's
whole body.

Waiting for the night, Reuben made ready,
lifted latch, went forth; Then, with his lit-
tle bundle in his hand, Took the bleak road
that led him to the world. When Jerry eigh-
teen years had sailed, had bared His hurt
soul to the pitiless sun and drunk The rainy
brew of storms on all seas, tired Of wreck

and fever and renewed mischance That would
not end in death, a longing stirred Within
him to revisit that gray coast Where he was
born. He landed at the port Whence first
he sailed; and, as in fervid youth, Set forth
upon the highway, to walk home. Some
hoarding he had made, wherewith to en-
rich His brother's brood for spendthrift pur-
poses; And as he walked he wondered how

they looked, How tall they were, how many
there might be. At noon he set himself
beside the way, Under a clump of willows
sprouting dense O'er the weed-woven mar-
gin of a brook; While in the fine green branches
overhead Song-sparrows lightly perched, for
whom he threw From his scant bread some
crumbs, remembering well Old days when
he had played with birds like these— The

same, perhaps, or grandfathers of theirs,
Or earlier still progenitors: whereat They
chirped and chattered louder than before.
But, as he sat, a boy came down the road,
Stirring the noontide dust with laggard feet.
Young Reuben 't was, who seaward made
his way. And Jerry hailed him, carelessly,
his mood Moving to salutation, and the boy,
From under his torn hat-brim looking, an-

swered. Then, seeing that he eyed his scrap
of bread, The sailor bade him come and
share it. So They fell to talk; and Jerry,
with a rough, Quick-touching kindness, the
boy's heart so moved That unto him he
all his wrong confessed. Gravely the sailor
looked at him, and told His own tale of mad
flight and wandering; how, Wasted he had
come back, his life a husk Of withered seeds,

a raveled purse, though once With golden
years well stocked, all squandered now. At
ending, he prevailed, and Reub was won
To turn and follow. Jerry, though he knew
Not yet the father's name, said he that way
Was going, too, and he would intercede Be-
tween the truant and his father. Back To-
gether then they went. But on the way,
As now they passed from pines to farming-

land, The boy asked more. "T is queer you
should have come From these same parts,
and run away like me! You did not tell me
how it happened."

JERRY.

Foolish, All of it! But I thought it weight-
ier Than the world's history, once. I could
not stay And see my brother married to the
girl I loved; and so I went.

THE BOY.

I had an uncle That was in love. But
he—he drowned himself. Why do men do
so?

JERRY.

Drowned himself? And when?

THE BOY.

I don't know. Long ago; it's like a dream
To me. I was not born then. Deacon Snow

Has told me something of it. Mother cries
Even now, beside his grave. Poor uncle!

JERRY.

His grave! (_That_ could not be, then.)
Yet if it should be, How can I think Grace
cried—

THE BOY.

How did you know My mother's name
was Grace?

JERRY.

I am confused By what you say. But is
your mother's name Grace? How! Grace,
too?

A strange uneasiness In Jerry's breast
had waked. They walked awhile In silence.
This he could not well believe, That Grace
and Reuben unhappy were, nor that One
son alone was theirs. Therefore aside He

thrust that hidden, sharp foreboding: still
He trusted, still sustained a calm suspense,
And ranged among his memories. "Tell me,
son," He said, "about this Deacon Snow—
Rob Snow It must be, I suppose."

THE BOY.

Oh, do you know him?

JERRY.

A deacon now! Ay, once I knew Rob

Snow— A jolly blade, if ever any was, And
merry as the full moon.

THE BOY.

He has failed A good deal now, though,
since his wife died.

JERRY.

What! (Of course; of course; all's changed.)
He married!

THE BOY.

Why, How long you must have been away!
For since I can remember he has had a wife
And children. She was Gran'ther Hungerford's-

JERRY.

Her name was Ruth?

THE BOY.

Yes, Ruth! 'T is after her The deacon's
nicest daughter's named; _she's_ Ruth.

Then sadly Jerry pondered, and no more
Found speech. They tramped on sternly.
To the brow Of a long hill they came, whence
they could see The village and blue ocean;
then they sank Into a region of low-lying
fields Half-naked from the scythe, and oth-
ers veined With vines that 'midst disman-
tled, fallen corn Dragged all athwart a weight
of tawny gourds, Sun-mellowed, sound. And

now the level way Stretched forward ea-
gerly, for hard ahead It made the turn that
rounded Reuben's house. Between the still
road and the tossing sea Lay the wide swamp,
with all its hundred pools Reflecting leaden
light; anon they passed A farm-yard where
the noisy chanticleer Strutted and ruled,
as one long since had done; And then the
wayside trough with jutting spout Of an-

cient, mossy wood, that still poured forth
Its liquid largess to all comers. Soon A
slow cart met them, filled with gathered
kelp: The salt scent seemed a breath of
younger days. They reached the road-bend,
and the evening shone Upon them, calmly.
Jerry paused, o'erwhelmed. Reuben, sur-
prised, glanced at him, and then said, "Yon-
der's the house." Old Jerry gazed on him,

And trembled; for before him slowly grew
Through the boy's face the mingled fea-
tures there Of father and of mother—Grace's
mouth, Ripe, pouting lips, and Reuben's
square-framed eyes. But, mastering well his
voice, he bade the boy Wait by the wall,
till he a little while Went forward, and pre-
pared. So Reuben stayed; And Jerry with
uncertain step advanced, As dreaming of
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his youth and this his home. Slowly he
passed between the gateless posts Before
the unused front door, slowly too Beyond
the side porch with its woodbine thick Drap-
ing autumnal splendor. Thus he came Be-
fore the kitchen window, where he saw A
gray-haired woman bent o'er needle-work
In gathering twilight. And without a voice,
Rooted, he stood. He stirred not, but his
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glance Burned through the pane; uneasily
she turned, And seeing that shaggy stranger
standing there Expectant, shook her head,
as though to warn Some chance, wayfaring
beggar. He, though, stood And looked at
her immovably. Then, quick The sash up-
throwing, she made as if to speak Harshly;
but still he held his quiet eyes Upon her.
Now she paused; her throat throbbled full;

Her lips paled suddenly, her wan face flamed,
A fertile stir of memory strove to work Re-
newal in those features wintry cold. And
so she hung, while Jerry by a step Drawn
nearer, coming just beneath her, said, "Grace!"
And she murmured, "Jerry!" Then she bent
Over him, clasping his great matted head
With those worn arms, all joyless; and the
tears Fell hot upon his forehead from her

eyes. For now in this dim gloaming their
two souls Unfruited, by an instant insight
wild, Delicious, found the full, mysterious
clew Of individual being, each in each. But,
tremulously, soon they drew themselves Away
from that so sweet, so sad embrace, The
first, the last that could be theirs. Then
he, Summing his story in a word, a glance,
Added, "But though you see me broken down

And poor enough, not empty-handed quite
I come. For God set in my way a gift, The
best I could have sought. I bring it you In
memory of the love I bore. Not now Must
that again be thought of! Waste and black
My life's fields lie behind me, and a frost
Has stilled the music of my hopes, but here
If I may dwell, nor trouble you, such a joy
Were mine, I dare not ask it. Oh forgive

The weakness! Come and see my gift!"

Ah, tears Flowed fast, that night, from
springs of love unsealed Once more within
the ancient house—rare tears Of reconcilia-
tion, grief, and joy! A miracle, it seemed,
had here been wrought, The dead brought
back to life. And with him came The prodig-
al, repenting.

So, thenceforth, A spirit of peace within

the household dwelt. In Jerry a swift-sent
age these years had brought, To soften him,
wrought with all the woe at home Such open,
gracious dignity, that all For cheer and guid-
ance learned to look to him. But chiefly
th' younger Reuben sought his aid, And
he with homely wisdom shaped the lad To
a life's loving duty. Yet not long, Alas!
the kind sea-farer with them stayed. After

some years his storm-racked body drooped.
The season came when crickets cease to sing
And flame-curved leaves fly fast; and Jerry
sank Softly toward death. Then, on a boisterous
morn That beat the wrecked woods
with incessant gusts To wrest some last leaf
from them, he arose And passed away. But
those who loved him watched His fading,
half in doubt, and half afraid, As if he must

return again; for now Entering the past he
seemed, and not a life Beyond; and some
who thought of that old grave In the or-
chard, dreamed a breath's space that the
man Long buried had come back, and could
not die. But so he died, and, ceasing, made
request Beside that outcast of the deep to
lie. None other mark desired he but the
stone Set there long since, though at a stranger's

grave, In heavy memory of him thought dead.

They marked the earth with one more
mound beside The other, near a gap in the
low wall That looked out seaward. There
you ever hear The deep, remorseful requiem
of the sea; And there, in autumn, wind-
falls, showering thick Upon the grave, score
the slow, voiceless hours With unrebound-
ing stroke. All round about Green milk-

weed rankly thrives, and golden-rod Sprouts
from his prostrate heart in fine-poised grace
Of haughty curve, with every crest in flower.