# SONGS

OF

# THE SUN-LANDS.

BY

JOAQUIN MILLER,

AUTHOR OF "SONGS OF THE SIERRAS."

"The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them."

BOSTON:

ROBERTS BROTHERS.

1873.

308253

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# ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

## PART I.

*Primeval forests! virgin sod!*
*That Saxon hath not ravish'd yet!*
*Lo! peak on peak in column set,*
*In stepping stairs that reach to God!*

*Here we are free as sea or wind,*
*For here are set the snowy tents*
*In everlasting battlements,*
*Against the march of Saxon mind.*

# SONGS OF THE SUN-LANDS.

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## ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

### PRELUDE

WELL! who shall lay hand on my harp but me,
Or shall chide my song from the sounding trees?
The passionate sun and the resolute sea,
These were my masters, and only these.

These were my masters, and only these,
And these from the first I obey'd, and they
Shall command me now, and I shall obey
As a dutiful child that is proud to please.

There never were measures as true as the sun,
The sea hath a song that is passingly sweet,
And yet they repeat, and repeat, and repeat,
The same old runes though the new years run.

By unnamed rivers of the Oregon north,
  That roll dark-heaved into turbulent hills,
  I have made my home. . . . The wild heart thrills
With memories fierce, and a world storms forth.

On eminent peaks that are dark with pine,
  And mantled in shadows and voiced in storms,
  I have made my camps: majestic gray forms
Of the thunder-clouds, they were companions of mine;

And face set to face, like to lords austere,
  Have we talk'd, red-tongued, of the mysteries
  Of the circling sun, of the oracled seas,
While ye who judged me had mantled in fear.

Some fragment of thought in the unfinish'd words;
  A cry of fierce freedom, and I claim no more.
  What more would you have from the tender of herds
And of horse on an ultimate Oregon shore?

From men unto God go forth, as alone,
  Where the dark pines talk in their tones of the sea
  To the unseen God in a harmony
Of the under seas, and know the unknown.

'Mid white Sierras, that slope to the sea,
  Lie turbulent lands. Go dwell in the skies,
And the thundering tongues of Yosemité
  Shall persuade you to silence, and you shall be wise.

Yea, men may deride, and the thing it is well;
  Turn well and aside from the one wild note
  To the song of the bird with the tame, sweet throat;
But the sea sings on in his cave and shell.

Let the white moons ride, let the red stars fall,
  O great, sweet sea! O fearful and sweet!
  Thy songs they repeat, and repeat, and repeat:
And these, I say, shall survive us all.

I but sing for the love of song and the few
  Who loved me first and shall love me last;
  And the storm shall pass as the storms have pass'd,
For never were clouds but the sun came through.

## Part I.

### I.

FAR up in the hush of the Amazon River,
And mantled and hung in the tropical trees,
There are isles as grand as the isles of the seas;
And the waves strike strophes, and keen reeds quiver,
As the sudden canoe shoots apast them and over
The strong, still tide to the opposite shore,
Where the blue-eyed men by the sycamore
Sit mending their nets 'neath the vine-twined cover;

### II.

Sit weaving their threads of bark and of grasses,
They wind and they spin, on the clumsy wheel,
Into hammocks red-hued with the cochineal,
To trade with the single black ship that passes,
With foreign old freightage of curious old store,
And as still and as slow as if half asleep, —
A cunning old trader that loves to creep
Above and adown in the shade of the shore.

III.

And the blue-eyed men that are mild as the dawns —
  Oh, delicate dawns of the grand Andes! —
  Lift up soft eyes that are deep like seas,
And mild yet wild as the red-white fawns';

IV.

And they gaze into yours, then weave, then listen,
  Then look in wonder, then again weave on,
  Then again look wonder that you are not gone,
While the keen reeds quiver and the bent waves glisten;

V.

But they say no words while they weave and wonder,
  Though they sometimes sing, voiced low like the dove,
  And as deep and as rich as their tropical love,
A-weaving their net threads through and under.

VI.

Yea, a pure, true people you may trust are these,
  That weave their threads where the quick leaves quiver;
  And this is their tale of the Isles of the river,
And the why that their eyes are so blue like seas,

And the why that the men draw water and bear
  The wine or the water in the wild boar skin,
  And do live in the woods, and do weave and spin,
And so bear with the women full burthen and share.

VII.

A curious old tale of a curious old time,
  That is told you betimes by a quaint old crone,
  Who sits on the rim of an island alone,
As ever was told you in story or rhyme.

VIII.

Her brown, bare feet dip down to the river,
  And dabble and plash to her cŏmical tone;
  And she holds in her hands a strange green stone,
As she talks to the boat where the bent reeds quiver.

IX.

And the quaint old crone has a singular way
  Of holding her head to the side and askew,
  And smoothing the stone in her palms all day,
As saying, "I 've nothing at all for you,"
Until you have anointed her palm, and you
  Have touch'd on the delicate spring of a door
  That silver has open'd perhaps before;
For woman is woman the wide world through.

X.

The old near truth on the far new shore!
I bought and I paid for it; so did you:
The tale may be false or the tale may be true;
I give as I got it, and who can more?
And if I have purchased a beautiful lie,
And liked it well, and believed it true,
I have done it before; and so have you,
And have been contented, and so have I.

XI.

If I have made journeys to difficult shores,
And woven delusions in innocent verse,
If none be the wiser, why, who is the worse?
The field it was mine, and the fruit it is yours.

XII.

A sudden told tale. You may read as you run.
A part of it hers, some part is my own,
Crude, and too carelessly woven and sown,
As I sail'd on the Mexican seas in the sun.

XIII.

She tells in her tale of a brave young knight,
A singer and knight of most knightly birth,
Aback in the darlingest days of the earth;
Oh, dear old days that are lost to sight!

XIV.

Oh, dear old days, when the hot rhymes rang
  Like steel upon steel when toss'd to the sky;
  When lovers could love, when maidens could die
But never deceive, and the song-men sang
  In passion as pure as the blush of the grape,
To clashing of swords, for a maiden's sweet sigh,
  Nor measured for gold as men measuring tape,
Who turn from the counter to turning of lays
On degenerate deeds in degenerate days.

XV.

O carpet-knight singer! shrewd merchant of song!
Get gold and be glad, buy, sell, and be strong!
Sweet Cyprian, I kiss you, I pay you, we part:
Go! you have my gold, but who has my heart?
Go, splendid made singer, so finish'd, so fair,
Go sing you of heaven, with never a prayer,
Of hearts that are aching, with never a heart,
Of Nature, all girded and bridled by art;
  Go sing you of battles, with never a scar,
Of sunlight, with never a soul for the noon;
Move cold and alone like a broken, bright moon,
  And shimmer and shine like a far, cold star.

XVI.

'Twas nations ago, when the Amazons were,
That a fair young knight — says the quaint old crone,
With her head sidewise, as she smoothes at the stone —
Came over the seas, with his golden hair,
And a great black steed, and glittering spurs,
And a sword that had come from crusaders down,
And a womanly face in a manly frown,
And a heart as tender and as true as hers.

XVII.

And fairest, and foremost in love as in war
Was the brave young knight of the brave old days,
Of all of the knights, with their knightly ways,
That had journey'd away to the world afar
In the name of Spain; of the splendid few
Who bore her banner in the new-born world,
From the sea-rim, up where the clouds are curl'd,
And the condors beat their wings in the blue.

XVIII.

He was born, says the crone, where the brave are fair,
And blown from the banks of the Guadalquiver,

And yet blue-eyed, with the Celt's soft hair,
With never a drop of the dark, deep river
Of Moorish blood that had swept through Spain,
And plash'd the world with its tawny stain.

XIX.

He sat on his steed, and his sword was bloody
With heathen blood; the battle was done;
And crown'd in fire, wreathed and ruddy
With antique temples built up to the sun,
Below on the plain lay the beautiful city
At the conquerors' feet; the red street strown
With dead, with gold, and with gods overthrown.
His heart rebell'd and arose with pity,
He raised his head with a proud disdain,
And rein'd his steed on the reeking plain,
As the heathen pour'd, in a helpless flood,
With never a wail and with never a blow,
At last, to even provoke a foe,
Through gateways, wet with the pagan's blood.

XX.

"Ho, forward! smite!" but the minstrel linger'd,
He reach'd his hand and he touch'd the rein,
He humm'd an air, and he toy'd and finger'd
The arching neck and the glossy mane.

XXI.

He rested the heel, he rested the hand,
  Though the thing was death to the man to dare
  To doubt, to question, to falter there,
Nor heeded at all to the hot command.

XXII.

He wiped his steel on his black steed's mane,
  He sheathed it deep, then look'd at the sun,
  Then counted his comrades, one by one,
With booty return'd from the plunder'd plain.

XXIII.

He lifted his face to the flashing snow,
  He lifted his shield of steel as he sang,
  And he flung it away till it clang'd and rang
On the granite rocks in the plain below,
Then cross'd his bosom. Made overbold,
  He lifted his voice and sang, quite low
  At first, then loud in the long-ago,
When a love endured though the days grew old.

XXIV.

They heard his song, the chief on the plain
  Stood up in his stirrups, and, sword in hand,

He cursed and he call'd with a loud command
To the blue-eyed boy to return again;
To lift his shield again to the sky,
And come and surrender his sword or die.

XXV.

He wove his hand in the stormy mane,
He lean'd him forward, he lifted the rein,
He struck the flank, he wheel'd and sprang,
And gayly rode in the face of the sun,
And bared his sword and he bravely sang,
"Ho! come and take it!" but there came not one.

XXVI.

And so he sang, with his face to the south:
"I shall go; I shall search for the Amazon shore,
Where the curses of man they are heard no more,
And kisses alone shall embrace the mouth.

XXVII.

"I shall journey in search of the Incan Isles,
Go far and away to traditional land,
Where Love is a queen in a crown of smiles,
And battle has never imbrued a hand;

XXVIII.

"Where man has never despoiled or trod;
  Where woman's hand with a woman's heart
  Has fashion'd an Eden from man apart,
And she walks in her garden alone with God.

XXIX.

"I shall seek that Eden, and all my years
  Shall sit and repose, shall sing in the sun;
  And the tides may rest or the tides may run,
And men may water the world with tears;

XXX.

"And the years may come and the years may go,
  And men make war, may slay and be slain,
But I not care, for I never shall know
  Of man, or of aught that is man's again.

XXXI.

"The waves may battle, the winds may blow,
  The mellow rich moons may ripen and fall,
The seasons of gold they may gather or go,
  The mono may chatter, the paroquet call,

XXXII.

"And who shall take heed, take note, or shall know
If the Fates befriend, or if ill befall,
Of worlds without, or of worlds at all,
Of heaven above, or of hell below."

XXXIII.

'Twas the song of a dream and the dream of a singer,
Drawn fine as the delicate fibres of gold,
And broken in two by the touch of a finger,
And blown as the winds blow, rent and roll'd
In dust, and spent as a tale that is told.

XXXIV.

Alas! for his dreams and the songs he sung:
The beasts beset him; the serpents they hung,
Red-tongued and terrible, over his head.
He clove and he thrust with his keen, quick steel,
He coax'd with his hand and urged with his heel,
Till his steel was broken, and his steed lay dead.

XXXV.

He toil'd to the river, he lean'd intent
To the wave, and away through the fringe of boughs,
From beasts that pursued; and breathed his vows,
For soul and body were well-nigh spent.

XXXVI.

His arm arch'd over, as do arms on seas,
For sign, or for sound; the thin lips press'd,
And the two hands cross'd on the helpless breast,
For there came no sound through the sweep of the trees.

XXXVII.

'Twas the king of rivers, and the Isles were near;
Yet it moved so strange, so still, so strong,
And gave no sound, not even the song
Of a sea-bird screaming defiance or fear.

XXXVIII.

It was dark and dreadful! Wide like an ocean,
Much like a river but more like a sea,
Save that there was naught of the turbulent motion
Of tides, or of winds blown back, or a-lee.

XXXIX.

Yea, strangely strong was the wave and slow,
And half-way hid in the dark deep tide,
Great turtles they paddled them to and fro,
And away to the Isles and the opposite side.

XL.

The nude black boar through abundant grass
  Stole down to the water and buried his nose,
  And crush'd white teeth till the bubbles rose
As white and as bright as the globes of glass.

XLI.

Yea, steadily moved it, mile upon mile,
  Above and below and as still as the air;
  The bank made slippery here and there
By the slushing slide of the crocodile.

XLII.

The great trees bent to the tide like slaves;
  They dipp'd their boughs as the stream swept on,
  And then drew back, then dipp'd and were gone,
Away to the seas with the resolute waves.

XLIII.

The land was the tide's; the shore was undone;
  It look'd as the lawless, unsatisfied seas
  Had thrust up an arm through the tangle of trees,
And clutch'd at the citrons that grew in the sun;

And clutch'd at the diamonds that hid in the sand,
And laid heavy hand on the gold, and a hand
On the redolent fruits, on the rubies-like wine,
And the stones like the stars when the stars are divine;

XLIV.

Had thrust through the rocks of the ribb'd Andes;
  Had wrested and fled; and had left a waste
  And a wide way strewn in precipitate haste,
As he bore them away to the buccaneer seas.

XLV.

O, heavens, the eloquent song of the silence!
  Asleep lay the sun in the vines, on the sod,
And asleep in the sun lay the green-girdled islands,
  As rock'd to their rest in the cradle of God.

XLVI.

God's poet is silence! His song is unspoken,
  And yet so profound, so loud, and so far,
It fills you, it thrills you with measures unbroken,
  And as soft, and as fair, and as far as a star.

XLVII.

The shallow seas moan. From the first they have mutter'd
And mourn'd, as a child, and have wept at their will. . . .
The poems of God are too grand to be utter'd:
The dreadful deep seas they are loudest when still.

XLVIII.

"I shall die," he said, "by the solemn deep river,
By the king of the rivers, and the mother of seas,
So far, and so far from my Guadalquiver,
Near, and so near to the dreaded Andes.

XLIX.

"Let me sing one song by the grand old river,
And die;" and he reach'd and he brake him a reed
From the rim of the river, where they lift and quiver,
And he trimm'd it and notch'd it with all his speed
With his treacherous blade, in the sweep of the trees,
As he stood with his head bent low on his breast,
And the vines in his hair and the wave to his knees,
And bow'd like to one who would die to rest.

L.

"I shall fold my hands, for this is the river
  Of death," he said, "and the sea-green isle
Is an Eden set by the gracious Giver
  Wherein to rest." He listened the while,
Then lifted his head, then lifted a hand
  Arch'd over his brow, and he lean'd and listen'd, —
'Twas only a bird on a border of sand, —
  The dark stream eddy'd and gleam'd and glisten'd
Stately and still as the march of a moon,
  And the martial notes from the isle were gone, —
  Gone as a dream dies out with the dawn,
And gone as far as the night from the noon.

LI.

'Twas only a bird on a border of sand,
  Slow piping, and diving it here and there,
  Slim, gray, and shadowy, light as the air,
That dipp'd below from a point of the land.

LII.

"Unto God a prayer and to love a tear,
And I die," he said, "in a desert here,
So deep that never a note is heard
But the listless song of that soulless bird."

LIII.

He moved to a burthen of blossoms rare,
  And stood in the red-white sweets to his knees, —
The pink and the purple that filled the air
  With fragrance sweet as a breeze of bees.

LIV.

He crush'd the blooms to the sod untrod,
  The mateless man, in an Eden, fair
  As the one of old, in his fierce despair,
So hidden from man by the hand of God;

LV.

Ay, hidden above by the vines and mosses,
  And zoned about by the tide like seas,
  And curtain'd above by the linden-trees,
Well wove and inwove in intricate crosses;

LVI.

The trees that lean'd in their love unto trees,
  That lock'd in their loves, and were so made strong,
Stronger than armies; ay, stronger than seas
  That rush from their caves in a storm of song.

LVII.

"A miser of old his last, great treasure
  Flung far in the sea, and he fell and he died;
  And so shall I give, O terrible tide,
To you my song and my last sad measure."

LVIII.

He blew on his reed by the still, strong river,
  Blew low at first, like a dream, then long,
Then loud, then loud as the keys that quiver,
  And fret, and toss with their freight of song.

LIX.

He sang and he sang with a resolute will,
  Till the mono rested above on his haunches,
And held his head to the side and was still, —
  Till a bird blew out of the night of branches,
Alit on a reed, and with delicate skill
  Sang sadder than love, so sweeter than sad,
Till the boughs did burthen and the reeds did fill
  With beautiful birds, and the boy was glad.

LX.

Our loves they are told by the myriad-eyed stars,
  Yet love it is well in a reasonable way,
  And fame it is fair in its way for a day,
Borne dusty from books and bloody from wars;
And death, I say, is an absolute need,
  And a calm delight, and an ultimate good;

But a song that is blown from a watery reed
  By a soundless deep from a boundless wood,
With never a hearer to heed or to prize
  But God and the birds and the hairy wild beasts,
  Is sweeter than love, than fame, or than feasts,
Or any thing else that is under the skies.

LXI.

The quick leaves quiver'd, and the sunlight danced;
  As the boy sang sweet, and the birds said, "Sweet;"
  And the tiger crept close, and lay low at his feet,
And he sheath'd his claws in the sun, entranced.

LXII.

The serpent that hung from the sycamore bough,
  And sway'd his head in a crescent above,
Had folded his neck to the white limb now,
  And fondled it close like a great black love.

LXIII.

But the hands grew weary, the heart wax'd faint,
The loud notes fell to a far-off plaint,
The sweet birds echo'd no more, "Oh, sweet,"
  The tiger arose and unsheath'd his claws,
  The serpent extended his iron jaws,
And the frail reed shiver'd and fell at his feet.

LXIV.

A sound on the tide, and he turned and cried,
"Oh, give God thanks, for they come, they come!"
He look'd out afar on the opaline tide,
Then clasp'd his hands, and his lips were dumb.

LXV.

A sweeping swift crescent of sudden canoes!
As light as the sun of the south and as soon,
And true and as still as a sweet half-moon
That leans from the heavens, and loves and wooes!

LXVI.

The Amazons came in their martial pride,
As full on the stream as a studding of stars,
All girded in armor as girded in wars,
In foamy white furrows dividing the tide.

LXVII.

With a face as brown as the boatmen's are,
Or the brave, brown hand of a harvester;
And girdled in gold, and crown'd in hair
In a storm of night, all studded with rare

Rich stones, that fretted the full of a noon,
  The Queen on a prow stood splendid and tall,
  As petulant waters would lift, and fall,
And beat, and bubble a watery rune:

LXVIII.

Stood forth for the song, half lean'd in surprise,
  Stood fair to behold, and yet grand to behold,
  And austere in her face, and saturnine-soul'd,
And sad and subdued, in her eloquent eyes.

LXIX.

And sad were they all; yet tall and serene
  Of presence, but silent, and brow'd severe
As for some things lost, or for some fair, green,
  And beautiful place, to the memory dear.

LXX.

"O Mother of God! Thrice merciful saint!
  I am saved!" he said, and he wept outright;
  Ay, wept as even a woman might,
For the soul was full and the heart was faint.

LXXI.

"Stay! stay!" cried the Queen, and she leapt to the land,
And she lifted her hand, and she lower'd their spears,
A woman! a woman! ho! help! give a hand!
"A woman! a woman! we know by the tears."

LXXII.

Then gently as touch of the truest of woman,
They lifted him up from the earth as he fell,
And into the boat, with a half-hidden swell
Of the heart that was holy and tenderly human.

LXXIII.

They spoke low-voiced as a vesper prayer;
They pillowed his head as only the hand
Of woman can pillow, and push'd from the land,
And the Queen she sat threading the gold of his hair.

LXXIV.

Then away with the wave, and away to the Isles,
In a song of the oars of the crescented fleet
That timed together in musical wiles
In bubbles of melodies swift and sweet.

# ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

## Part II.

*Forsake the city. Follow me*
*To where the white caps of a sea*
*Of mountains break and break again,*
*As blown in foam against a star —*
*As breaks the fury of a main —*
*And there remains, as fix'd, as far.*

*Forsake the people. What are they*
*That laugh, that live, that love, by rule?*
*Forsake the Saxon. What are these*
*That shun the shadows of the trees:*
*The Druid-forests? . . . Go thy way,*
*We are not one. I will not please*
*You; — fare you well, O wiser fool!*

*But you who love me; — Ye who love*
*The shaggy forests, fierce delights*
*Of sounding waterfalls, of heights*
*That hang like broken moons above,*
*With brows of pine that brush the sun,*
*Believe and follow. We are one;*
*The wild man shall to us be tame;*
*The woods shall yield their mysteries;*
*The stars shall answer to a name,*
*And be as birds above the trees.*

# ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

---

## PRELUDE.

IN the days when my mother, the Earth, was young,
And you all were not, nor the likeness of you,
She walk'd in her maidenly prime among
The moonlit stars in the boundless blue.

Then the great sun lifted his shining shield,
And he flash'd his sword as the soldiers do,
And he moved like a king full over the field,
And he look'd, and he loved her brave and true.

And looking afar from the ultimate rim,
As he lay at rest in a reach of light,
He beheld her walking alone at night,
Where the buttercup stars in their beauty swim.

So he rose up flush'd in his love, and he ran,
And he reach'd his arms, and around her waist
He wound them strong like a love-struck man,
And he kiss'd and embraced her, brave and chaste.

So he nursed his love like a babe at its birth,
And he warm'd in his love as the long years ran,
Then embraced her again, and sweet mother Earth
Was a mother indeed, and her child was man.

The sun is the sire, the mother is earth!
What more do you know? what more do I need?
The one he begot, and the one gave birth,
And I love them both, and let laugh at your creed.

And who shall pronounce that the child of the sun,
With his rich sun-worship, was utterly wrong
In the far, new years when the stars kept song?
But judge, and be judged; — condemn, and have done.

And who shall proclaim they were all unwise
In their great, warm faith? Time answers us not:
The quick fool questions; but who replies?
The wise man hesitates, hush'd in thought.

## Part II.

I.

THEY swept to the Isles through the furrows of foam,
They alit on the land as love hastening home,
And below the banana, with leaf like a tent,
They tenderly laid him, they bade him take rest;
They brought him strange fishes and fruits of the best,
And he ate and took rest with a patient content.

II.

They watch'd with him well, and he rose up strong;
He stood in their midst, and they said, "How fair!"
And they said, "How tall!" And they toy'd with his hair,
And they touch'd his limbs, and they said, "How long!
And how strong they are; and how brave she is,
That she made her way through the wiles of man,
That she braved his wrath, that she broke the ban
Of his desolate life for the loves of this!"

III.

They wove for him garments with womanly pride,
  But he held his head with a sense of shame
In his strange deceit and his sex denied,
  Then pursed his brow with a touch of blame.

IV.

They wrought for him armor of cunning attire,
  They brought him a sword and a great shell shield,
  And implored him to shiver the lance on the field,
And to follow their beautiful Queen in her ire.

V.

But he took him apart; then the Amazons came
  And entreated of him with their eloquent eyes
And their earnest and passionate souls of flame,
  And the soft, sweet words that are broken of sighs,
To be one of their own, but he still denied,
  And he warr'd with himself, and his chivalrous heart
  Arose and rebell'd at the treacherous part
He play'd for his life; and he grew to despise
The thought of himself with a shudder of shame,
And bow'd and abash'd he stole farther aside.

VI.

He stood by the palms and he lean'd in unrest,
  And standing alone, look'd out and afar,
  For his own fair land where the castles are,
With irresolute arms on a restless breast.

VII.

He relived his loves, and recall'd his wars,
  He gazed and he gazed with a soul distress'd,
  Like a far sweet star that is lost in the west,
Till the day was broken to a dust of stars.

VIII.

They sigh'd, and they left him alone in the care
  Of faithfullest matron; they moved to the field
  With the lifted sword and the sounding shield
High fretting magnificent storms of hair.

IX.

And, true as the moon in her march of stars,
  The Queen stood forth in her fierce attire
Worn as they train'd, or worn in the wars,
  As bright and as chaste as a flash of fire.

X.

With girdles of gold and of silver cross'd,
  And plaited, and chased, and bound together,
  Broader and stronger than belts of leather,
Cunningly fashion'd and blazon'd and boss'd —
With diamonds circling her, stone upon stone,
  Above the breast where the borders fail,
Below the breast where the fringes zone,
  She moved in a glittering garment of mail.

XI.

The form made hardy and the waist made spare
  From athlete sports and adventures bold,
  The breastplate, fasten'd with clasps of gold,
Was clasp'd, as close as the breasts could bear. —
And bound and drawn to a delicate span,
  It flash'd in the red front ranks of the field —
Was fashion'd full trim in its intricate plan
  And gleam'd as a sign, as well as a shield,
That the virgin Queen was unyielding still,
  And pure as the tides that around her ran;
True to her trust, and strong in her will
  Of war, and hatred to the touch of man.

XII.

The field it was theirs in storm or in shine,
  So fairly they stood that the foe came not
  To the battle again, and the fair forgot
The rage of battle; and they trimm'd the vine,
They tended the fields of the tall green corn,
  They crush'd the grape, and they drew the wine
In great round gourds or the bended horn,
  And seem'd as souls that are half divine.

XIII.

They bathed in the wave in the amber morn,
  They took repose in the peaceful shade
  Of eternal palms, and were never afraid;
Yet still did they sigh, and look far and forlorn.

XIV.

Then down where waves by the white sands ran
  And left them laved with kisses, and these
They journey'd away with the caravan
  Of the grand old tide to the grander seas.—
Where the rim of the wave was weaving a spell,
  And the grass grew soft where it hid from the sun,
  Would the Amazons gather them every one
At the call of the Queen or the sound of her shell:

XV.

Would come in strides through the kingly trees,
  And train and marshal them brave and well
In the golden noon, in the hush of peace
  Where the shifting shades of the fan-palms fell;
Would lean on their long quick quivering swords;
  Would rest on their shields in a line at the side;
Would lift their brows to the front and tow'rds
  Their Queen as she moved in her matchless pride:

XVI.

Would train till flush'd and as warm as wine,
  Would reach with their limbs, would thrust with the lance,
  Attack, retire, retreat and advance,
Then wheel in column, then fall in line;
Stand thigh and thigh with the limbs made hard
And rich and round as the swift-limb'd pard,
Or a racer train'd, or a white bull caught
In the lasso's toils, where the tame are not.

XVII.

Would curve as the waves curve, swerve in line;
  Would dash through the trees, would train with the bow,

Then back to the lines, now sudden, then slow,
Then flash their swords in the sun at a sign;
Would settle the foot right firm afront,
Then sound the shield till the sound was heard
Afar, as the horn in the black boar hunt;
Yet, stranger than all, say never a word.

XVIII.

When shadows fell far from the westward, and when
The sun had kiss'd hands and made sail for the east,
They would kindle the fires and gather them then,
Well-worn and most merry with song, to the feast.

XIX.

There feasting in circles, they sang of the sun,
Their prowess or valor, in peril or pain;
Till the Isles were awake and the birds were outdone;
And long ere the dawn were up singing again.

XX.

They sang of all things, but the one, sacred one,
That could make them most glad, as they lifted the gourd
And pass'd it around, with its rich purple hoard,
From the Island that lay with its front to the sun.

XXI.

Though lips were made luscious, and eyes as divine
As the eyes of the skies that bend down from above;
Though hearts were made glad and most mellow with love,
As dripping gourds drain'd of their burthens of wine;
Though brimming, and dripping, and bent of their shape
Were the generous gourds from the juice of the grape,
They could sing not of love, they could breathe not a thought
Of the savor of life; love sought, or unsought.

XXII.

Their loves they were not; they had banish'd the name
Of man, and the uttermost mention of love, —
The moonbeams about them, the quick stars above,
The mellow-voiced waves, they were ever the same,
In sign, and in saying, of the old true lies;
But they took no heed; no answering sign,
Save glances averted and half-hush'd sighs,
Went back from the breasts with their loves divine.

XXIII.

They sang of their freedom with a will, and well, —
They paid for it well when the price was blood;

They beat on the shield, and they blew on the shell,
  When their wars were not, for they held it good
To be glad and to sing till the flush of the day,
  In an annual feast, when the broad leaves fell;
  Yet some sang not, and some sigh'd, "Ah, well!" —
For there 's far less left you to sing or to say,
When mettlesome love is banish'd, I ween, —
  To hint at as hidden, or to half disclose
In the swift sword-cuts of the tongue, made keen
  With wine at a feast, — than one would suppose.

XXIV.

So the days wore by, but they brought no rest
  To the minstrel knight, though the sun was as gold,
And the Isles were green, and the Amazons blest
  In the splendor of arms, and as pure as bold.

XXV.

He now would resolve to reveal to her all,
  His sex and his race in a well-timed song;
  And his love of peace, his hatred of wrong,
And his own deceit, though the sun should fall.

XXVI.

Then again he would linger, and knew not how
He could best proceed, and deferr'd him now
Till a favorite day, then the fair day came,
And still he delayed, and reproach'd him the same.

XXVII.

Then again he did vow to reveal full soon,
  Then deeply he blush'd, then upbraided sore
  The winds that had blown from the Castile shore,
And walk'd by the waves in the great white moon.

XXVIII.

He still said nought, but, subduing his head,
  He wander'd by day in a dubious spell
Of unutterable thought of the truth unsaid,
  To the indolent shore; and he gather'd a shell,
And he shaped its point to his passionate mouth,
  And he turn'd to a bank and began to blow,
  While the Amazons train'd in a troop below,
And as soft and as sweet as a kiss of the South.

XXIX.

It stirr'd their souls, and they ceased to train
In troop by the shore, as the tremulous strain

Fell down from the hill through the tasselling trees;
And a murmur of song, like the sound of bees
In the clover crown of a queenly spring,
  Came back unto him, and he laid the shell
Aside on the bank, and began to sing
  Of eloquent love; and the ancient spell
Of passionate song was his, and the Isle,
  As waked to delight from its slumber long,
Came back in echoes; yet all this while
  He knew not at all the sin of his song.

XXX.

Then the Amazons lifted with glad surprise,
  Stood splendid at first and look'd far and fair,
  Set forward a foot, and shook back their hair,
Like clouds push'd back from the sun-lit skies.

# ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

## Part III.

*I know upon this earth a spot*
*Where clinking coins, that clink as chains*
*Upon the souls of men, are not;*
*Nor man is measured for his gains*
*Of gold that stream with crimson stains.*

*The rivers run unmaster'd yet,*
*Unmeasured sweep their sable bredes:*
*The pampas unpossess'd is set*
*With stormy banners of her steeds,*
*That rival man in martial deeds.*

*The snow-topp'd towers crush the clouds*
*And break the still abode of stars,*
*Like sudden ghosts in snowy shrouds,*
*New broken through their earthly bars,*
*And condors whet with crooked beaks*
*The lofty limits of the peaks.*

*O men that fret as frets the main!*
*You irk one with your eager gaze*
*Down in the earth for fat increase—*
*Eternal talks of gold and gain,*
*Your shallow wit, your shallow ways . . .*
*And breaks my soul across the shoal*
*As breakers break on shallow seas.*

# ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

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## PRELUDE.

LO, Isles of the Incas! Amazon Isles,
The sun hath loved you, clothed and crown'd,
And touch'd you tenderly, girt you round
With a sunset wave in a wealth of smiles.

O Isles of a wave in an ocean of wood!
O white waves lost in the wilds I love!
Let the red stars rest on your breast from above,
And sing to the sun, for his love it is good.

He has made you his heirs, he has given you gold,
And wrought for you garments of limitless green,
With beautiful bars of the scarlet between,
And of silver seams fretting you fold on fold.

He has kiss'd and caress'd you, loved you true,
Yea, loved as a God loves, loved as I
Shall learn to love when the stars shall lie
Like blooms at my feet in a field of blue.

## Part III.

I.

THEY bared their brows to the palms above,
But some look'd level into comrade's eyes,
And they then remember'd that the thought of love
Was the thing forbidden, and they sank in sighs.

II.

They turn'd from the training, to heed in throng
To the old, old tale; and they train'd no more,
As he sang of love; and some on the shore,
And full in the sound of the eloquent song,
With a womanly air and irresolute will
Went listlessly onward as gathering shells;
Then gazed in the waters, as women in spells;
Then turned to the song and sigh'd, and were still.

III.

And they said no word. Some tapp'd on the sand
With the sandall'd foot, keeping time to the sound,
In a sort of dream; some timed with the hand,
And one held eyes full of tears to the ground.

IV.

She thought of the days when their wars were not,
  As she lean'd and listen'd to the old, old song,
When they sang of their loves, and she well forgot
  The hard oppressions and a world of wrong.
Like a pure true woman, with her trust in tears
  And the things that are true, she relived them in thought,
Though hush'd and crush'd in the fall of the years;
  She lived but the fair, and the false she forgot
As a tale long told, or as things that are dreams;
  And the quivering curve of the lip confest
The silent regrets, and a soul that teems
  With a world of love in a brave true breast.

V.

Then this one younger, who had known no love,
  Nor look'd upon man but in blood on the field,
  She bow'd her head, and she lean'd on her shield,
And her heart beat quick as the wings of a dove
That is blown from the sea, where the rests are not
  In the time of storms; and by instinct taught
  Grew pensive, and sigh'd; and she thought and she thought
Of some wonderful things, and — she knew not of what.

VI.

Then this one thought of a love forsaken,
  She thought of a brown sweet babe, and she thought
Of the bread-fruits gather'd, of the swift fish taken
  In intricate nets, like a love well sought.

VII.

She thought of the moons of her maiden dawn,
  Mellow'd and fair with the forms of man;
So dearer indeed to dwell upon
  Than the beautiful waves that around her ran;

VIII.

So fairer indeed than the fringes of light
  That lie at rest on the west of the sea
In furrows of foam on the borders of night,
  And dearer indeed than the songs to be —
Than calling of dreams from the opposite land,
  To the land of life, and of journeys dreary
  When the soul goes over from the form grown weary,
And walks in the cool of the trees on the strand.

IX.

But the Queen was enraged and would smite him at first
With the sword unto death, yet it seem'd that she durst

Not touch him at all; and she moved as to chide,
And she lifted her face, and she frown'd at his side,
Then touch'd on his arm; then she look'd in his eyes
  And right full in his soul, but she saw no fear
  In the pale fair face, and with frown severe
She press'd her lips as suppressing her sighs.

X.

She banish'd her wrath, she unbended her face,
  She lifted her hand and put back his hair
  From his fair sad brow, with a penitent air,
And forgave him all with an unutter'd grace;
For she said no word. Yet no more was severe;
  She stood as subdued by the side of him still,
  Then averted her face with a resolute will,
As to hush a regret, or to hide back a tear.

XI.

She sigh'd to herself: "A stranger is this,
  And ill and alone, that knows not at all
  That a throne shall totter and the strong shall fall,
At the mention of love and its banefullest bliss.
O life that is lost in bewildering love —
  But a stranger is sacred!" She lifted a hand

And she laid it as soft as the breast of a dove
  On the minstrel's mouth. It was more than the wand
Of the tamer of serpents; for she did no more
  Than to bid with her eyes and to beck with her hand,
And the song drew away to the waves of the shore;
  Took wings, as it were, to the verge of the land.

XII.

But her heart was oppress'd. With penitent head
She turn'd to her troop, and, retiring, she said:
"Alas! and alas! shall it come to pass
That the panther shall die from a blade of grass?
That the tiger shall yield at the bent-horn blast?
  That we, who have conquered a world and all
  Of men and of beasts in the world, must fall
Ourselves, at the mention of love, at last?"

XIII.

The singer was fretted, and farther apart
He wander'd, perplex'd; and he felt his heart
Beat quick and troubled, and all untamed,
  As he saw her move with marvellous grace
  To her troop below; he turn'd from his place,

Oppress'd and humbled, and sore ashamed
That he lived in the land in the shield of a lie;
  That he dared not stand forth face to face
  To the truth, and die as a knight should die.

XIV.

The tall brown Queen, when turn'd to her troop,
  Led minstrel and all to the innermost part
Of the palm-crown'd Isle, where great trees group
  In armies, to battle when black storms start,
And made her retreat from the sun by the trees
  That are topped like tents, where the fire-flies
  Are a light to the feet, and a fair lake lies
As cool as the coral-set centres of seas.

XV.

And here the carpets of Nature were spread,
  Made pink with blossoms and fragrant bloom;
Her soft couch, canopied overhead,
  Allured to sleep with the deep perfume.

XVI.

The sarsaparilla had woven its thread
  So through and through, like the threads of gold;
  'Twas stronger than thongs in its thousandfold,
And on every hand and up overhead

Ran thick as threads on the rim of a reel,
  Through red leaf and dead leaf, bough and vine,
  The green and the gray leaf, coarse and fine,
And the cactus tinted with cochineal.

XVII.

And every color that the Master Sun
  Has painted and hung in the halls of God,
  Blush'd in the boughs or spread on the sod,
Pictured and woven and wound as one.

XVIII.

The tamarind and the cocoa-tree,
The quick cinchona, the red sangre,
The keen caressa, the sycamore,
Were woof and warp as wide as the shore.

XIX.

The palm-trees lorded the copse like kings,
  Their tall tops tossing the indolent clouds
  That folded the Isle in the dawn, like shrouds,
Then fled from the sun like to living things.
The cockatoo swung in the vines below,
  And muttering hung on a golden thread,
Or moved on the moss'd bough to and fro,
  In plumes of gold and array'd in red.

XX.

The lake lay hidden away from the light,
  As asleep in the Isle from the tropical noon,
  And narrow and bent like a new-born moon,
And fair as a moon in the noon of the night.

XXI.

'Twas shadow'd by forests, and fringed by ferns,
  And fretted anon by the fishes that leapt
  At indolent flies that slept or kept
Their drowsy tones on the tide by turns.

XXII.

And here in the dawn when the day was strong
  And newly aroused from leafy repose,
  With dews on his feet and tints of the rose
In his great flush'd face, was a sense and song
That the tame old world has nor known nor heard
  The soul was fill'd with the soft perfumes,
The eloquent wings of the humming bird
Beguiled the heart, they purpled the air
And allured the eye, as so everywhere
On the rim of the wave, or across it in swings,
  They swept or they sank in a sea of blooms,
And wove and wound in a song of wings.

XXIII.

The senses drank of the fragrance deep,
  The glad soul question'd it whether or no
  It had risen above or yet dwelt below,
Or whether to laugh for love or to weep.

XXIV.

A bird in scarlet and gold, made mad
  With sweet delights, through the branches slid
  And kiss'd the lake on a drowsy lid
Till the ripples ran and the face was glad:

XXV.

Was glad and lovely as lights that sweep
  The face of heaven when stars are forth
  In autumn time through the awful north,
Or the face of a child when it smiles in sleep.

XXVI.

And here was the Queen, in the tropical noon,
  When the wave and the world and all were asleep,
  And nothing look'd forth to betray or to peep
Through glories of jungle in garments of June,

To bathe with her court in the waters that bent
In the beautiful lake through tasselling trees,
And the tangle of blooms in a burden of bees,
As bold and as sharp as a bow unspent.

XXVII.

And strangely still, and more strangely sweet,
  Was the lake that lay in its cradle of fern,
  As still as a moon with her horns that turn
In the night, like lamps to some delicate feet.

XXVIII.

They came and they stood by the brink of the tide,
  They hung their shields on the boughs of the trees,
They lean'd their lances against the side,
  Unloosed their sandals, and busy as bees
That ply with industrious wing perfumes,
  Ungather'd their robes in the rustle of leaves
And nodding of reeds and the beautiful blooms
  That wound them as close as the wine-vine weaves.

XXIX.

The minstrel had falter'd, and further aside
  Than ever before he averted his head;
He pick'd up a pebble and fretted the tide,
  Then turn'd with a countenance flush'd and red.

XXX.

He feign'd him ill, he wandered away,
  He sat him down by the waters alone,
And prayed for pardon, as a knight should pray,
  And rued an error not all his own.

XXXI.

The Amazons press'd to the girdle of reeds,
  Two and by two they advanced to the wave,
  They challenged each other, and bade be brave,
And banter'd, and vaunted of valorous deeds.

XXXII.

They push'd and they parted the curtains of green,
  All timid at first; then look'd at the wave
  And laugh'd; retreated, then came up brave
To the brink of the water, led on by their Queen.

XXXIII.

Again they retreated, again advanced,
  And parted the boughs in a proud disdain,
Then bent their heads to the waters, and glanced
  Below, then blush'd, and then laugh'd again;

XXXIV.

A bird awaken'd, then all dismay'd
  With a womanly sense of a beautiful shame
  That strife and changes had left the same,
They shrank to the leaves and the sombre shade.

XXXV.

At last, press'd forward a beautiful pair
  And bent to the wave, and bending they blush'd
  As rich as the wines, when the waters rush'd
To the dimpled limbs, and laugh'd in their hair.

XXXVI.

The fair troop follow'd with shouts and cheers,
  They cleft the wave, and the friendly ferns
  Came down in curtains and curves and turns,
And a brave palm lifted a thousand spears.

XXXVII.

From under the ferns and away from the land,
  And out in the wave until lost below,
  There lay, as white as a bank of snow,
A long and a beautiful border of sand.

XXXVIII.

Here clothed alone in their clouds of hair
  And curtain'd about by the palm and fern,
And made as their Maker had made them, fair,
  And splendid of natural grace and turn;

XXXIX.

Untrammell'd by art and untroubled by man
  They tested their strength, or tried their speed,
And here they wrestled, and there they ran,
  As supple and lithe as the watery reed.

XL.

The great trees shadow'd the bow-tipp'd tide,
And nodded their plumes from the opposite side,
As if to whisper, Take care! take care!
But the meddlesome sunshine here and there,
Kept pointing a finger right under the trees, —
  Kept shifting the branches and wagging a hand
  At the round brown limbs on the border of sand,
And seem'd to whisper, Ho! what are these?

XLI.

The gold-barr'd butterflies to and fro
  And over the waterside wander'd and wove
  As heedless and idle as clouds that rove
And drift by the peaks of perpetual snow.

XLII.

A monkey swung out from a bough in the skies,
  White-whisker'd and ancient, and wisest of all
  Of his populous race, and he heard them call.
And he watch'd them long, with his head sidewise,
From under his brows of amber and brown,
  All patient and silent and never once stirr'd;
Then he shook his head and he hasten'd him down
  To his army below and said never a word.

# ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

## Part IV.

*There is many a love in the land, my love,*
*But never a love like this is;*
*Then kill me dead with your love, my love,*
*And cover me up with kisses.*

*So kill me dead and cover me deep*
*Where never a soul discovers;*
*Deep in your heart to sleep, to sleep*
*In the darlingest tomb of lovers.*

# ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

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## PRELUDE.

IT seems to me that Mother Earth
Is weary from eternal toil
And bringing forth by fretted soil
In all the agonies of birth.
Sit down! sit down! Lo, it were best
That we should rest, that she should rest

Let buffalo possess the land,
Let foxes populate the towns,
And wild deer wander through the downs.
Here we will laugh, nor lift a hand;
And laugh that man should ever care
For flock or field or mansion fair!

No ship shall founder in the seas,
Nor soldier fall in martial line,
Nor miner perish in the mine.
Here we shall tent beneath the trees,

Where wife nor maid shall wait or weep,
For Earth shall sleep, and all shall sleep.

I think we then shall all be glad,
At least I know we are not now;
Not one. And even Earth somehow
Seems growing old and over sad.
Then fold your hands, for it were best
That we should rest, that she should rest.

## Part IV.

I.

THE wanderer took him apart from the place;
He look'd up in the boughs at the gold birds there,
He counted the humming-birds fretting the air,
And brush'd at the butterflies fanning his face.

II.

He sat him down in a crook of the wave
And away from the Amazons, under the skies
Where great trees curved to a leaf-lined cave,
And lifted his hands and shaded his eyes;

III.

And he held his head to the north when they came
To run on the reaches of sand from the south,
And he pull'd at his chin, and he pursed his mouth,
And he shut his eyes with a shudder of shame.

He reach'd from the bank and he brake him a reed —
  A bamboo reed — from the brink below;
And he notched it and trimm'd it with all his speed,
  And lifted it up and began to blow
As if to himself; as the sea sometimes
  Does soothe and soothe in a low, sweet song,
  When his rage is spent, and the beach swells strong
With sweet repetitions of alliterate rhymes.

IV.

The echoes blew back from the indolent land;
  Silent and still sat the tropical bird,
  And only the sound of the reed was heard,
As the Amazons ceased from their sports on the sand.

V.

They rose from the wave, and inclining the head,
  They listen'd intent, with the delicate tip
  Of the finger touch'd to the pouting lip,
Till the brown Queen turn'd in the tide, and led
Through the opaline lake, and under the shade,
  And along the shore, and below the ferns
  Where the bent boughs reach'd and return'd by turns,
To the shore where the chivalrous singer played.

VI.

He bended his head and he shaded his eyes
  As well as he might with his lifted fingers,
And ceased to sing. But in mute surprise,
  He saw them linger as a child that lingers
  Allured by a song thrown down to the street,
And looks bewilder'd about from its play,
  For the last loved notes that fall at its feet;
And he heard them whisper, he saw them sway
  Aside and before and silent and sweet.

VII.

The soft notes swell'd, and the air swept loud,
  They drew to the sound as if borne in a dream;
As blown in the purple and gold of a cloud,
  Or borne on the breast of a crystalline stream.

VIII.

But the singer was vexed; he averted his head;
  He lifted his eyes to the mosses aside
  For a brief, little time, but they turn'd to the tide
In spite of his will, or of prayers well said.

IX.

He press'd four fingers against each lid,
Till the light was gone; yet for all that he did
It seem'd that the lithe forms lay and beat
Afloat in his face and full under his feet.

X.

He seem'd to behold the billowy breasts,
And the rounded limbs in their pure unrests—
To see them swim as the mermaid swims,
With the drifting dimpled, delicate limbs,
Folded and hidden in robes of hair;
While fishes of gold shot here and there
Below their breasts and above their feet,
Like birds in a beautiful garden of sweet.

XI.

It seems to me there is more that sees
Than the eyes in man; you may close your eyes,
You may turn your back, and may still be wise
In sacred and marvellous mysteries.

XII.

He saw as one sees the sun of a noon
In the sun-kiss'd south, when the eyes are closed—

He saw as one sees the bars of a moon
That fall through the boughs of the tropical trees,
  When he lies at length, and is all composed,
And asleep in his hammock by the sundown seas.

XIII.

He heard the waters beat, bubble and fret;
  He lifted his eyes, yet forever they lay
  Afloat in the tide; and he turn'd him away
And resolved to fly and for aye to forget.

XIV.

He rose up strong, and he cross'd him twice,
  He nerved his heart and he lifted his head,
He crush'd the treacherous reed in a trice,
  With an angry foot, and he turn'd and fled;

XV.

And flying, confused like a pitiful slave,
  He question'd himself most sore as he fled,
If he most was a knight, or most was a knave,—
  And flying he hurriedly turn'd his head
Back over his shoulder, and sudden aside,
  With an eager glance, with meddlesome eyes,
  As a woman will turn: and he saw arise
The beautiful Queen from the silvery tide.

XVI.

She toss'd her hair, and she turn'd her eyes
With all of their splendor to his as he fled,
And all their glory, and a strange surprise,
And a sad reproach and a world unsaid.

XVII.

He beat on their shields, they rose in array,
As aroused from a trance, and hurriedly came
From out of the wave and he wander'd away,
Wild-fretting his sensitive soul with blame,
Until all array'd; then ill and opprest,
And bitterly cursing the treacherous reed,
Return'd with his hand on his turbulent breast,
And struck to the heart, and most ill indeed.

XVIII.

Alone he would sit in the shadows at noon,
Alone he would sit by the waters at night;
Would sing sad-voiced, as a woman might,
With pale, kind face to the cold, pale moon.

XIX.

He would here advance, and would there retreat,
As a petulant child that has lost its way
In the redolent walks of a sultry day,
And wanders around with irresolute feet.

XX.

He would press his hand in pain to his heart,
  He would fold his hands, he would toss his hair
From his brow, then turn to the palms, and apart
  From eyes that pursued, with a pitiful air.

XXI.

He made him a harp of mahogany wood,
  He strung it well with the sounding strings
  Of the ostrich thews, from the ostrich wings,
And play'd and sang in a sad sweet rune.
  He hang'd his harp in the vines, and stood
By the tide at night, in the palms at noon,
  And lone as a ghost in the shadowy wood.

XXII.

Then two grew sad, and alone sat she
  By the great, strong stream, and she bow'd her head,
  Then lifted her face to the tide and said,
"O, pure as a tear and as strong as a sea,
  Yet tender to me as the touch of a dove,
I had rather sit sad and alone by thee,
  Than to go and be glad, with a legion in love."

XXIII.

She sat sometime at the wanderer's side
As the kingly water went wandering by;
And the two once look'd, and they knew not why,
Full sad in each other's eyes, and they sigh'd.

XXIV.

She courted the solitude under the rim
Of the trees that reach'd to the resolute stream,
And gazed in the waters as one in a dream,
Till her soul grew heavy and her eyes grew dim
To the fair delights of her own fair Isles.
She turn'd her face to the stranger again,
He cheer'd with song and allured with smiles,
But cheer'd, and allured, and soothed in vain.

XXV.

She bow'd her head with a beautiful grief
That grew from her pity; she forgot her arms,
And she made neglect of the battle alarms
That threaten'd the land; the banana's leaf
Made shelter; he lifted his harp again,
She sat, she listen'd intent and long,
Forgetting her care and forgetting her pain —
Made sad for the singer, made glad from his song.

XXVI.

But the braves waxed cold; the white moons waned,
  And the brown Queen marshall'd them never once more,
  With sword and with shield, in the palms by the shore;
But they sat them down to repose, or remained
Apart and scatter'd in the tropic-leaf'd trees,
  As sadden'd by song, or for loves delay'd,
  Or away in the Isle in couples they stray'd,
Not at all content in their Isles of peace.

XXVII.

They wander'd away to the lakes once more,
  Or walk'd in the moon, or they sigh'd, or slept,
Or they sat in pairs by the shadowy shore,
  And silent song with the waters kept.

XXVIII.

There was one who stood by the waters one eve,
  With the stars on her hair, and the bars of the moon
  Broken up at her feet by the bountiful boon
Of extending old trees, who did questioning grieve:

"The birds they go over us two and by two;
The mono is mated; his bride in the boughs
Sits nursing his babe, and his passionate vows
Of love, you may hear them the whole day through.

"The lizard, the cayman, the white-toothed boar,
The serpents that glide in the sword-leaf'd grass,
The beasts that abide or the birds that pass,
They are glad in their loves as the green-leaf'd shore.

"There is nothing that is that can yield one bliss
Like an innocent love; the leaves have tongue
And the tides talk low in the reeds, and the young
And the quick buds open their lips but for this.

"In the steep and the starry silences,
On the stormy levels of the limitless seas,
Or here in the deeps of the dark-brow'd trees,
There is nothing so much as a brave man's kiss.

"There is nothing so strong, in the stream, on the land,
In the valley of palms, on the pinnacled snow,
In the clouds of the gods, on the grasses below,
As the silk-soft touch of a baby's brown hand.

"It were better to sit and to spin on a stone
The whole year through with a babe at the knee,
With its brown hands reaching caressingly,
Than to sit in a girdle of gold and alone.

'O barren dull days, where never the brown
Sweet hand of a babe hides back in the hair
When a mother comes home with her burthen of care,
And over the life of her life bends down.

"It were better perhaps to be mothers of men,
And to murmur not much; there are clouds in the sun. . . .
Can a woman undo what the gods have done?
Nay, the things must be as the things have been."

XXIX.

They wander'd well forth, some here and some there,
Unsatisfied some and irresolute all.
The sun was the same, the moonlight did fall
Rich-barr'd and refulgent; the stars were as fair
As ever were stars; the fruitful clouds cross'd
And the harvest fail'd not; yet the fair Isle grew
As a prison to all, and they search'd on through
The magnificent shades as for things that were lost.

XXX.

The minstrel, more pensive, went deep in the wood,
  And oft-time delay'd him the whole day through,
  As charm'd by the deeps, or the sad heart drew
Some solaces sweet from the solitude.

XXXI.

The singer forsook them at last, and the Queen
  Came seldom then forth from the fierce deep wood,
  And her warriors, dark-brow'd and bewildering stood
In bands by the wave in the complicate screen
Of overbent boughs. They would lean on their spears
  And would talk sometimes low-voiced and by twos,
  As allured by longings they could not refuse,
And would sidewise look, as beset by their fears.

XXXII.

They wander'd and watched as the days waxed full,
  All listless and slow, and spurning the shells
  With brown sandall'd feet, to the whimsical swell
Of the wine-dark wave with its foam like wool.

XXXIII.

Once, wearied and sad, by the shadowy trees
  In the flush of the sun they sank to their rests,
  The dark hair veiling the beautiful breasts
That arose in billows, as mists veil seas.

XXXIV.

Then away to the dream-world one and by one;
  The great red sun in his purple was roll'd,
  And red-wing'd birds and the birds of gold
Were above in the trees like the beams of the sun.

XXXV.

Then the sun came down, with his ladders of gold
  Built up of his beams, and the souls arose
  And ascended on these, and the fair repose
Of the negligent forms was a feast to behold.

XXXVI.

The round brown limbs they were reached or drawn,
  The grass made dark with the fervor of hair;
  And here were the rose-red lips, and there
A flushed breast rose like a sun at a dawn.

XXXVII.

The copper-bound shields lay silent beside,
  Their lances were lean'd to the leaning old trees,
  While away in the sun an irresolute breeze
With a rippled quick step stole over the tide.

XXXVIII.

Then black-wing'd birds blew over in pair,
  Listless and slow, as they call'd of the seas,
  And sounds came down through the tangle of trees
As lost, and nestled and hid in their hair.

XXXIX.

They started disturbed, they sprang as at war
  To lance and to shield; but the dolorous sound
  Was gone from the wood; they gazed around
And saw but the birds, black-winged and afar.

XL.

They gazed at each other, then turn'd them unheard,
  Slow trailing their lances in long single line;
  They moved through the forest, all dark as the sign
Of death that fell down from the ominous bird.

XLI.

Then the great sun died, and a rose-red bloom
  Grew over his grave in a border of gold,
  And a cloud with a silver-white rim was roll'd
Like a cold gray stone at the door of a tomb.

XLII.

Then away on the wave the invisible night,
  With her eyes of stars and her storms of hair,
  Sail'd on in her wonderful ships of air,
And the Isle lay dimpled in calm delight.

. . . . .

XLIII.

Strange voices were heard, sad visions were seen,
  By sentries, betimes, on the opposite shore,
Where broad boughs bended their curtains of green
  Far over the wave with their tropical store.

XLIV.

A sentry bent low on her palms and she peer'd
  Suspiciously through; and, heavens! a man,
Low-brow'd and wicked, look'd backward, and jeer'd
  And taunted right full in her face as he ran:

XLV.

A low crooked man, with eyes like a bird, —
  As round and as cunning, — who came from the land
  Of lakes, where the clouds lie low and at hand,
And the songs of the bent black swans are heard;

XLVI.

Where men are most cunning and cruel withal,
  And are famous as spies, and are supple and fleet,
  And are webb'd like the water-fowl under the feet,
And they swim like the swans, and like pelicans call.

XLVII.

And again, on a night when the moon she was not,
  A sentry saw stealing, as still as a dream,
  A sudden canoe down the mid of the stream,
Like gleamings of light, and as swift as a thought.

XLVIII.

And lo! as it pass'd, from the prow there arose
  A dreadful and gibbering, hairy old man,
  Loud laughing, as only a maniac can,
And shaking a lance at the land of his foes;

XLIX.

Then sudden it vanish'd, as swift as it came,
  Far down through the walls of the shadowy wood,
And the great moon rose like a forest aflame,
  All threat'ning, sullen, and red like blood.

# ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

## Part V.

*Well, we have threaded through and through*
*The gloaming forests. Fairy Isles,*
*Afloat in sun and summer smiles,*
*As fallen stars in fields of blue;*
*Some futile wars with subtile love*
*That mortal never vanquish'd yet,*
*Some symphonies by angels set*
*In wave below, in bough above,*
*Were yours and mine; but here adieu.*

*And if it come to pass some days*
*That you grow weary, sad, and you*
*Lift up deep eyes from dusty ways*
*Of mart and moneys, to the blue*
*And pure cool waters, isle and vine,*
*And bathe you there, and then arise*
*Refresh'd by one fresh thought of mine,*
*I rest content; I kiss your eyes,*
*I kiss your hair, in my delight:*
*I kiss my hand, and say, "Good-night.'*

*May love be thine by sun or moon,*
*May peace be thine by peaceful way*
*Through all the darling days of May,*
*Through all the genial days of June,*
*To golden days that die in smiles*
*Of sunset on the blessed Isles.*

# ISLES OF THE AMAZONS.

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## PRELUDE.

WHEN spires shall shine on the Amazon's shore,
From temples of God, and time shall have roll'd
Like a scroll from the border the limitless wold;
When the tiger is tamed, and the mono no more

Swings over the waters to chatter and call
To the crocodile sleeping in rushes and fern;
When cities shall gleam, and their battlements burn
In the sunsets of gold, where the cocoa-nuts fall;

'Twill be something to lean from the stars and to know
That the engine, red-mouthing with turbulent tongue,
The white ships that come, and the cargoes that go,
We invoked them of old when the nations were
young:

'Twill be something to know that we named them of old, —
That we said to the nations, Lo! here is the fleece
That allures to the rest, and the perfectest peace,
With its foldings of sunlight shed mellow like gold:

That we were the Carsons in kingdoms untrod,
And follow'd the trail through the rustle of leaves,
And stood by the wave where solitude weaves
Her garments of mosses, and lonely as God:

That we did make venture when singers were young,
Inviting from Europe, from long-trodden lands
That are easy of journeys, and holy from hands
Laid upon by the Masters when giants had tongue:

The prophet should lead us, — and lifting a hand
To the world on the way, like a white guiding star,
Point out and allure to the fair and unknown,
And the far, and the hidden delights of a land.

Behold my Sierras! there singers shall throng;
The Andes shall break through the wings of the night
As the fierce condor breaks through the clouds in his flight;
And I here plant the cross and possess them with song.

## Part V.

I.

I TELL you that love is the bitterest sweet
That ever laid hold on the heart of a man;
A chain to the soul, and to cheer as a ban,
And a bane to the brain, and a snare to the feet.

II.

Ay! who shall ascend on the hollow white wings
Of love but to fall; to fall and to learn,
Like a moth, and a man, that the lights lure to burn,
That the roses have thorns, and the honey-bee stings?

III.

I say to you surely that grief shall befall;
I lift you my finger, I caution you true,
And yet you go forward, laugh gayly, and you
Must learn for yourself, then mourn for us all.

IV.

You had better be drown'd than to love and to dream,
  It were better to sit on a moss-grown stone,
  And away from the sun, and forever alone,
Slow pitching white pebbles at trout in the stream.

V.

Alas for a heart that is left forlorn!
  If you live you must love; if you love, regret, —
It were better, perhaps, we had never been born,
  Or better, at least, we could well forget.

VI.

The clouds are above us, and snowy and cold,
  And what is beyond but the steel-gray sky,
  And the still far stars that twinkle and lie
Like the eyes of a love or delusions of gold!

VII.

Ah! who would ascend? The clouds are above.
  Ay! all things perish; to rise is to fall.
And alack for lovers, and alas for love,
  And alas that we ever were born at all.

VIII.

The minstrel now stood by the border of wood,
  But not as alone; with a resolute heart;
He reach'd his hand, like to one made strong,
Forgot his silence and resumed his song,
  And aroused his soul, and assumed his part
With a passionate will, in the palms where he stood.

IX.

"She is sweet as the breath of the Castile rose,
  She is warm to the heart as a world of wine,
And as rich to behold as the rose that grows
  With its red heart bent to the tide of the Rhine.

"O hot blood born of the heavens above!
  I shall drain her soul, I shall drink her up;
I shall love with a searching and merciless love,
  I shall sip her lips as the brown bees sup,

"From the great gold heart of the buttercup!
  I shall live and love! I shall have my day,
Let the suns fall down or the moons rise up,
  And die in my time, and who shall gainsay?

"What boots me the battles that I have fought
With self for honor? My brave resolves;
And who takes note? The soul dissolves
In a sea of love, and the land is forgot.

"The march of men, and the drift of ships,
The dreams of fame, and desires for gold,
Shall go for aye, as a tale that is told,
Nor divide for a day my lips from her lips.

"And a knight shall rest, and none shall say nay,
In a green Isle wash'd by an arm of the seas,
And wall'd from the world by the white Andes,
For the years are of age and can go their way."

. . . . . .

X.

The sentinel stood on the farthermost land,
And shouted aloud to the shadowy forms:
"He comes, he comes, in the strength of storms,"
And struck her shield, and, her sword in hand,

XI.

She cried, "He comes with his silver spears,
With flint-tipp'd arrows and bended bows,
To take our blood, though we give him tears,
And to flood our Isle in a world of woes."

XII.

"He comes, O Queen of the sun-kiss'd Isle,
He comes as a wind comes, blown from the seas,
In a cloud of canoes, on the curling breeze,
With his shields of tortoise and of crocodile."

XIII.

She dared them come like a storm of seas,
To come as the winds come, fierce and frantic;
As sounding down to the far Atlantic,
And sounding away to the deep Andes.

XIV.

She rush'd her down where the white tide ran,
She breasted away where the breakers reel'd,
She shook her sword in the foeman's van,
And beat, as the waves beat, sword on shield.

. . . . . .

XV.

Sweeter than swans are a maiden's graces!
Sweeter than fruits are the kisses of morn!
Sweeter than babes is a love new-born,
But sweeter than all are a love's embraces.

XVI.

She slept at peace, and the sentries' warning
  Could hardly awaken the splendid Queen;
  She slept in peace in the opaline
Hush and blush of the tropic morning;

XVII.

And bound about by the twining glory,
  Vine and trellis in the vernal morn,
  As still and sweet as a babe new-born,
The brown Queen dream'd of the old new story.

XVIII.

But hark! her sentry's passionate words,
The sound of shields, and the clash of swords!
And slow she comes, her head on her breast,
And her two hands held as to plead for rest.

XIX.

Where, O where, are the Juno graces?
  Where, O where, is the glance of Jove,
When the Queen comes forth from the sacred places,
  Hidden away in the heart of the grove?

XX.

Too deep, too deep, of the waters of love,
The beautiful woman had drunk in the wood:
The dangerous, wonderful waters that fill
The soul with wine that subdues the will.
She doubled her hands and she helpless stood,
With her head held down and her hands above.

XXI.

They rallied around as of old, — they besought her,
With swords to the sun and the sounding shield,
To lead them again to the glorious field,
So sacred to Freedom; and, breathless, they brought her
Her buckler and sword, and her armor all bright
With a thousand gems enjewell'd in gold.
She lifted her head with the look of old,
An instant only; with all of her might
She sought to be strong and majestic again:
She bared them her arms and her ample brown breast;
They lifted her armor, they strove to invest
Her form in armor, but they strove in vain;

XXII.

It closed no more, but clanged on the ground,
Like the fall of a knight, with an ominous sound,
And she shook her hair and she cried, "Alas!
That love should come and that life should pass;"
And she cried, "Alas! to be cursed . . . and bless'd,
For the nights of love and the noons of rest."

XXIII.

Her warriors wonder'd; they wandered apart,
  And trail'd their swords, and subdued their eyes
  To earth in sorrow and in hush'd surprise,
And forgot themselves in their pity of heart.

XXIV.

"O Isles of the sun," cried the blue-eyed youth,
  "O Edens new-made and let down from above!
  Be sacred to peace and to passionate love,
Made happy in peace and made holy with truth.

XXV.

"O gardens of God, new-planted below!
  Shall rivers be red? Shall day be night?"
He stood in the wood with his face to the foe,
  Apart with his buckler and sword for the fight.

XXVI.

But the fair Isle fill'd with the fierce invader;
  They form'd on the strand, they lifted their spears,
  Where never was man for years and for years,
And moved on the Queen. She lifted and laid her
Finger-tip to her lips. For O sweet
  Was the song of love, and the song new-born,
  That the minstrel blew in the virgin morn,
Away where the trees and the soft sands meet.

XXVII.

The strong men lean'd and their shields let fall,
  And slowly they moved with their trailing spears,
  And heads bow'd down as if bent with years,
And an air of gentleness over them all.

XXVIII.

The men grew glad as the song ascended,
  They lean'd their lances against the palms,
  They reach'd their arms as to reach for alms,
And the Amazons came — and their reign was ended.

XXIX.

They reach'd their arms to the arms extended,
  Put by their swords, and no more seem'd sad,
But moved as the men moved, tall and splendid, —
  Mingled together, and were all made glad.

XXX.

Then the Queen stood tall, as of old she had stood,
With her face to the sun and her breast to the foe;
Then moved like a king, unheeding and slow,
And aside to the singer in the fringe of the wood.

XXXI.

She led him forth, and she bade him sing:
Then bade him cease; and the gold of his hair
She touch'd with her hands; she embraced him there,
Then lifted her voice and proclaim'd him King.

XXXII.

And the men made fair in their new-found loves,
They all cried, "King!" and again and again,
Cried, "Long may they live, and long may they reign,
As true in their loves as the red-bill'd doves:

XXXIII.

"Ay, long may they live, and long may they love,
And their blue-eyed babes with the years increase,
And we all have love, and we all have peace,
While the seas are below or the sun is above.

XXXIV.

"Let the winds blow fair and the fruits be gold,
And the gods be gracious to King and to Queen,
While the tides are gray or the Isles are green,
Or the moons wax new, or the moons wane old!"

XXXV.

The tawny old crone here lays her stone
On the leaning grass and reaches a hand;
The day like a beautiful dream has flown,
The curtains of night come down on the land,
And I dip to the oars; but ere I go,
I tip her an extra bright pesos or so,
And I smile my thanks, for I think them due·
But, fairest of readers, now what think you?

# FROM SEA TO SEA.

5*

*We glide through golden seas of grain;*
*We shoot, a shining comet, through*
*The mountain range against the blue*
*And then below the walls of snow,*
*We blow the desert dust amain;*
*We brush the gay madrona tree,*
*We greet the orange groves below, —*
*We rest beneath the oaks; and we*
*Have cleft a continent in twain.*

## FROM SEA TO SEA.

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I.

SHAKE hands! kiss hands in haste to the sea,
Where the sun comes in, and mount with me
The matchless steed of the strong New World,
That champs and chafes with a strength untold,—
And away to the West, where the waves are curl'd,
As they kiss white palms to the capes of gold!
A girth of brass and a breast of steel,
A breath of fire and a flaming mane,
An iron hoof and a steel-clad heel,
A Mexican bit and a massive chain
Well tried and wrought in an iron rein;
And away! away! with a shout and yell
That had stricken a legion of old with fear,
That had started the dead from their graves whilere,
And startled the damn'd in hell as well.

Stand up! stand out! where the wind comes in,
And the wealth of the seas pours over you,
As its health floods up to the face like wine,
And a breath blows up from the Delaware

And the Susquehanna. We feel the might
Of armies in us; the blood leaps through
The frame with a fresh and a keen delight
As the Alleghanies have kiss'd the hair,
With a kiss blown far through the rush and din,
By the chestnut burs and through boughs of pine.

II.

O seas in a land! O lakes of mine!
By the love I bear and the songs I bring
Be glad with me! lift your waves and sing
A song in the reeds that surround your isles! —
A song of joy for this sun that smiles,
For this land I love and this age and sign;
For the peace that is and the perils pass'd;
For the hope that is and the rest at last!

III.

O heart of the world's heart! West! my West!
Look up! look out! There are fields of kine,
There are clover-fields that are red as wine;
And a world of kine in the fields take rest,
And ruminate in the shade of trees
That are white with blossoms or brown with bees.

There are emerald seas of corn and cane;
There are cotton-fields like a foamy main,
To the far-off South where the sun was born,
Where the fair have birth and the loves knew morn.
There are isles of oak and a harvest plain,
Where brown men bend to the bending grain;
There are temples of God and towns new-born,
And beautiful homes of beautiful brides;
And the hearts of oak and the hands of horn
Have fashion'd them all and a world besides. . . .
. . . A yell like the yell of the Iroquois,
And out of Eden, — and Illinois!

IV.

A rush of rivers and a brush of trees,
A breath blown far from the Mexican seas,
And over the great heart-vein of earth!
. . . By the South-Sun-land of the Cherokee,
By the scalp-lock-lodge of the tall Pawnee,
And up the La Platte. What a weary dearth
Of the homes of men! What a wild delight
Of space! of room! What a sense of seas,
Where the seas are not! What a salt-like breeze!
What dust and taste of quick alkali!

. . . Then hills! green, brown, then black like night,
All fierce and defiant against the sky!

By night and by day! The deeps of the night
Are rolling upon us, yet fiercer the flight.
Lo! darkness bends down like a mother of grief
On the limitless plain, and the fall of her hair
It has mantled a world. The stars are in sheaf,
Yet onward we plunge like a beast in despair
Through the thick of the night; and the thundering
cars!
They have crush'd and have broken the beautiful day;
Have crumbled it, scatter'd it far away,
And blown it above to a dust of stars.

V.

At last! at last! O steed new-born,
Born strong of the will of the strong New World,
We shoot to the summit, with the shafts of morn,
Of the mount of Thunder, where clouds are curl'd,
Below in a splendor of the sun-clad seas.
A kiss of welcome on the warm west breeze

Blows up with a smell of the fragrant pine,
And a faint, sweet fragrance from the far-off seas
Comes in through the gates of the great South Pass
And thrills the soul like a flow of wine.
The hare leaps low in the storm-bent grass,
The mountain ram from his cliff looks back,
The brown deer hies to the tamarack;
And afar to the South with a sound of the main,
Roll buffalo herds to the limitless plain. . . .

On, on, o'er the summit; and onward again,
And down like the sea-dove the billow enshrouds,
And down like the swallow that dips to the sea,
We dart and we dash and we quiver and we
Are blowing to heaven white billows of clouds.

VI.

Thou "City of Saints!" O antique men,
And men of the Desert as the men of old!
Stand up! be glad! When the truths are told,
When Time has utter'd his truths and when
His hand has lifted the things to fame
From the mass of things to be known no more;
When creeds have perish'd and have pass'd away,

Opinions that lorded their little day,—
A monument set in the desert sand,
A pyramid rear'd on an inland shore,
And their architects, shall have place and name.

O sea, land-lost! O desolate land,
Made brown with grain, and made green with bay;
Let mock who will, gainsay it who may,
No little thing has it been to rear
A resting-place in the desert here,
For Fathers bound to a farther land;
No little thing with a foe at hand
That has known no peace, save with these strong men,
And the peace unbroken with the blameless Penn.

VII.

The Humboldt desert and the alkaline land,
And the seas of sage and of arid sand,
That stretch away till the strain'd eye carries
The soul where the infinite spaces fill,
Are far in the rear, and the fair Sierras
Are under our feet, and the heart beats high,
And the blood comes quick; but the lips are still
With awe and wonder, and all the will
Is bow'd with a grandeur that frets the sky.

A flash of lakes through the fragrant trees,
A song of birds and a sound of bees
Above in the boughs of the sugar-pine.
The pick-axe stroke in the placer mine,
The boom of blasts in the gold-ribb'd hills,
The grizzly's growl in the gorge below
Are dying away, and the sound of rills
From the far-off shimmering crest of snow,
The laurel green and the ivied oak,
A yellow stream and a cabin's smoke,
The brown bent hills and the shepherd's call,
The hills of vine and of fruits, and all
The sweets of Eden are here, and we
Look out and afar to a limitless sea.

We have lived in age in a half-moon-wane!
We have seen a world! We have chased the sun
From sea to sea; but the task is done.
We here descend to the great white main, —
To the King of Seas, with the temples bare
And a tropic breath on the brow and hair.

We are hush'd with wonder, and all apart
We stand in silence till the heaving heart

Fills full of heaven, and then the knees
Go down in worship, on the golden sands.
With faces seaward, and with folded hands
We gaze on the beautiful Balboa seas.

BY THE SUN-DOWN SEAS.

# BY THE SUN-DOWN SEAS.

## PART I.

### I.

LIKE fragments of an uncompleted world,
From bleak Alaska, bound in ice and spray,
To where the peaks of Darien lie curl'd
In clouds, the broken lands loom bold and gray.
The seamen nearing San Francisco Bay
Forget the compass here; with sturdy hand
They seize the wheel, look up, then bravely lay
The ship to shore by rugged peaks that stand
The stern and proud patrician fathers of the land.

### II.

They stand white stairs of heaven, — stand a line
Of lifting, endless, and eternal white.
They look upon the far and flashing brine,
Upon the boundless plains, the broken height
Of Kamiakin's battlements. The flight
Of time is underneath their untopp'd towers.
They seem to push aside the moon at night,
To jostle and to loose the stars. The flowers
Of heaven fall about their brows in shining showers.

III.

They stand a line of lifted snowy isles
High held above a toss'd and tumbled sea, —
A sea of wood in wild unmeasured miles:
White pyramids of Faith where man is free;
White monuments of Hope that yet shall be
The mounts of matchless and immortal song. . . .
I look far down the hollow days; I see
The bearded prophets, simple-soul'd and strong,
That strike the sounding harp and thrill the heeding
throng.

IV.

Serene and satisfied! supreme! as lone
As God, they loom like God's archangels churl'd:
They look as cold as kings upon a throne:
The mantling wings of night are crush'd and curl'd
As feathers curl. The elements are hurl'd
From off their bosoms, and are bidden go,
Like evil spirits, to an under-world.
They stretch from Cariboo to Mexico,
A line of battle-tents in everlasting snow.

. . . . . .

V.

See once Columbia's scenes, then roam no more;
No more remains on earth to cultured eyes;
The cataract comes down, a broken roar,
The palisades defy approach, and rise
Green moss'd and dripping to the clouded skies.
The cañon thunders with its full of foam,
And calls loud-mouth'd, and all the land defies;
The mounts make fellowship and dwell at home
In snowy brotherhood beneath their purpled dome.

VI.

The rainbows swim in circles round, and rise
Against the hanging granite walls till lost
In drifting dreamy clouds and dappled skies,
A grand mosaic intertwined and toss'd
Along the mighty cañon, bound and cross'd
By storms of screaming birds of sea and land;
The salmon rush below, bright red and boss'd
In silver. Tawny, tall, on either hand
You see the savage spearman nude and silent stand.

VII.

Here sweep the wide wild waters cold and white
And blue in their far depths; divided now

By sudden swift canoe as still and light
As feathers nodding from the painted brow
That lifts and looks from out the imaged prow.
Ashore you hear the papoose shout at play;
The curl'd smoke comes from underneath the bough
Of leaning fir: the wife looks far away
And sees a swift sweet bark divide the dashing spray.

VIII.

Slow drift adown the river's levell'd deep,
And look above; lo, columns! woods! the snow!
The rivers rush upon the brink and leap
From out the clouds three thousand feet below,
And land afoam in tops of firs that grow
Against your river's rim: they plash, they play,
In clouds, now loud and now subdued and slow,
A thousand thunder tones; they swing and sway
In idle winds, long leaning shafts of shining spray.

IX.

An Indian summer-time it was, long past,
We lay on this Columbia, far below
The stormy water-falls, and God had cast
Us heaven's stillness. Dreamily and slow
We drifted as the light bark chose to go.

An Indian girl with ornaments of shell
Began to sing. . . . The stars may hold such flow
Of hair, such eyes, but rarely earth. There fell
A sweet enchantment that possess'd me as a spell:

X.

We saw the elk forsake the sable wood,
Step quick across the rim of shining sand,
Breast out in troop against the flashing flood,
Then brisket deep with lifted antlers stand,
And ears alert, look sharp on either hand,
Then whistle shrill to dam and doubting fawn
To follow, lead with black nose to the land.
They cross'd, they climb'd the heaving hills, were gone,
A sturdy charging line with crooked sabres drawn:

XI.

Then black swans cross'd us slowly low and still;
Then other swans, wide-wing'd and white as snow,
Flew overhead and topp'd the timber'd hill,
And call'd and sang afar coarse-voiced and slow,
Till sounds roam'd lost in sombre firs below. . . .
Then clouds blew in, and all the sky was cast
With tumbled and tumultuous clouds that grow

Red thunderbolts. . . . A flash! A thunder-blast!
The clouds were rent, and lo! Mount Hood hung white
and vast.

. . . . . .

XII.

Once, morn by morn, when snowy mountains flamed
With sudden shafts of light that shot a flood
Into the vale, like fiery arrows aim'd
At night from mighty battlements, there stood
Upon a cliff high-limn'd against Mount Hood,
A matchless bull fresh forth from sable wold,
And standing so seem'd grander 'gainst the wood
Than winged bull that stood with tips of gold
Beside the brazen gates of Nineveh of old.

XIII.

A time he toss'd the dewy turf, and then
Stretch'd forth his wrinkled neck, and long and loud
He call'd above the far abodes of men
Until his breath became a curling cloud
And wreathed about his neck a misty shroud.

He then as sudden as he came pass'd on
With lifted head, majestic and most proud,
And lone as night in deepest wood withdrawn
He roam'd in silent rage until another dawn.

XIV.

What drove the hermit from the valley herd,
What cross of love, what cold neglect of kind,
Or scorn of unpretending worth had stirr'd
The stubborn blood and drove him forth to find
A fellowship in mountain cloud and wind,
I ofttime wonder'd much; and ofttime thought
The beast betray'd a royal monarch's mind,
To lift above the low herd's common lot,
And make them hear him still when they had fain
forgot.

. . . . . .

XV.

His broad-brimm'd hat push'd back with careless air,
The proud vaquero sits his steed as free
As winds that toss his black abundant hair.
No rover ever swept a lawless sea
With such a haught and heedless air as he

Who scorns the path, and bounds with swift disdain
Away: a peon born, yet born to be
A splendid king; behold him ride, and reign,
The only perfect monarch of the mottled plain.

XVI.

How brave he takes his herds in branding days,
On timber'd hills that belt about the plain;
He climbs, he wheels, he shouts through winding ways
Of hiding ferns and hanging fir; the rein
Is loose, the rattling spur drives swift; the mane
Blows free; the bullocks rush in storms before;
They turn with lifted heads, they rush again,
Then sudden plunge from out the wood, and pour
A cloud upon the plain with one terrific roar.

XVII.

Now sweeps the tawny man on stormy steed,
His gaudy trappings toss'd about and blown
Above the limbs as lithe as any reed;
The swift long lasso twirl'd above is thrown
From flying hand; the fall, the fearful groan
Of bullock toil'd and tumbled in the dust —
The black herds onward sweep, and all disown

The fallen struggling monarch that has thrust
His tongue in rage and roll'd his red eyes in disgust.

. . . . . .

XVIII.

A morn in Oregon! The kindled camp
Upon the mountain brow that broke below
In steep and grassy stairway to the damp
And dewy valley, snapp'd and flamed aglow
With knots of pine. Above, the peaks of snow,
With under-belts of sable forests, rose
And flash'd in sudden sunlight. To and fro
And far below, in lines and winding rows,
The herders drove their bands, and broke the deep repose.

XIX.

I heard their shouts like sounding hunter's horn,
The lowing herds made echoes far away;
When lo! the clouds came driving in with morn
Toward the sea, as fleeing from the day.
The valleys fill'd with curly clouds. They lay
Below, a levell'd sea that reach'd and roll'd
And broke like breakers of a stormy bay
Against the grassy shingle fold on fold,
So like a splendid ocean, snowy white and cold.

XX.

The peopled valley lay a hidden world,
The shouts were shouts of drowning men that died,
The broken clouds along the border curl'd,
And bent the grass with weighty freight of tide.
A savage stood in silence at my side,
Then sudden threw aback his beaded strouds
And stretch'd his hand above the scene, and cried,
As all the land lay dead in snowy shrouds:
"Behold! the sun upon a silver sea of clouds."

XXI.

Here lifts the land of clouds! The mantled forms,
Made white with everlasting snow, look down
Through mists of many cañons, and the storms
That stretch from Autumn time until they drown
The yellow hem of Spring. The cedars frown,
Dark-brow'd, through banner'd clouds that stretch and stream
Above the sea from snowy mountain crown.
The heavens roll, and all things drift or seem
To drift about and drive like some majestic dream.

XXII.

In waning Autumn time, when purpled skies
Begin to haze in indolence below
The snowy peaks, you see black forms arise
In rolling thunder banks above, and throw
Quick barricades about the gleaming snow.
The strife begins! The battling seasons stand
Broad breast to breast. A flash! Contentions grow
Terrific. Thunders crash, and lightnings brand
The battlements. The clouds possess the stormy land.

XXIII.

Then clouds blow by, the swans take loftier flight,
The yellow blooms burst out upon the hill,
The purple camas comes as in a night,
Tall spiked and dripping of the dews that fill
The misty valley. . . . Sunbeams break and spill
Their glory till the vale is full of noon.
The roses belt the streams, no bird is still. . . .
The stars, as large as lilies, meet the moon
And sing of summer, born thus sudden full and soon.

## BY THE SUN-DOWN SEAS.

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### Part II.

I.

A TALE half told and hardly understood;
The talk of bearded men that chanced to meet,
That lean'd on long quaint rifles in the wood,
That look'd in fellow faces, spoke discreet
And low, as half in doubt and in defeat
Of hope; a tale it was of lands of gold
That lay toward the sun. Wild wing'd and fleet
It spread among the swift Missouri's bold
Unbridled men, and reach'd to where Ohio roll'd.

II.

The long chain'd lines of yoked and patient steers;
The long white trains that pointed to the west,
Beyond the savage west; the hopes and fears
Of blunt untutor'd men, who hardly guess'd

Their course; the brave and silent women, dress'd
In homely spun attire, the boys in bands,
The cheery babes that laugh'd at all, and bless'd
The doubting hearts with laughing lifted hands,
Proclaim'd an exodus for far untraversed lands.

III.

The Plains! The shouting drivers at the wheel;
The crash of leather whips; the crush and roll
Of wheels; the groan of yokes and grinding steel
And iron chain, and lo! at last the whole
Vast line, that reach'd as if to touch the goal,
Began to stretch and stream away and wind
Toward the west, as if with one control;
Then hope loom'd fair, and home lay far behind;
Before, the boundless plain, and fiercest of their kind.

IV.

The way lay wide and green and fresh as seas
And far away as any reach of wave;
The sunny streams went by in belt of trees;
And here and there the tassell'd, tawny brave
Swept by on horse, look'd back, stretch'd forth and gave

A yell of hell, and then did wheel and rein
Awhile, and point away, dark-brow'd and grave,
Into the far and dim and distant plain
With signs and prophecies, and then plunged on again.

V.

Some hills at last began to lift and break;
Some streams began to fail of wood and tide,
The sombre plain began betime to take
A hue of weary brown, and wild and wide
It stretch'd its naked breast on every side. . . .
A babe was heard at last to cry for bread
Amid the deserts; cattle low'd and died,
And dying men went by with broken tread,
And left a long black serpent line of wreck and dead.

VI.

Strange hunger'd birds, black-wing'd and still as death,
And crown'd of red with hooked beaks, blew low
And close about, till we could touch their breath—
Strange unnamed birds, that seem'd to come and go
In circles now, and now direct and slow,

Continual, yet never touch the earth;
Slim foxes shied and shuttled to and fro
At times across the dusty weary dearth
Of life, look'd back, then sank like crickets in a hearth.

VII.

The dust arose, a long dim line like smoke
From out a riven earth. The wheels went by,
The thousand feet in harness and in yoke,
They tore the ways of ashen alkali,
And desert winds blew sudden, swift and dry.
The dust! it sat upon and fill'd the train!
It seem'd to fret and fill the very sky.
Lo! dust upon the beasts, the tent, the plain,
And dust, alas! on breasts that rose not up again.

VIII.

They sat in desolation and in dust
By dried-up desert streams; the mother's hands
Hid all her bended face; the cattle thrust
Their tongues and faintly call'd across the lands.
The babes, that knew not what the way through sands
Could mean, would ask if it would end to-day. . . .
The panting wolves slid by, red-eyed, in bands
To streams beyond. The men look'd far away,
And silent saw that all a boundless desert lay.

IX.

They rose by night; they struggled on and on
As thin and still as ghosts; then here and there
Beside the dusty way before the dawn,
Men silent laid them down in their despair,
And died. But woman! Woman, frail as fair!
May man have strength to give to you your due;
You falter'd not, nor murmur'd anywhere,
You held your babes, held to your course, and you
Bore on through burning hell your double burthens
through.

X.

They stood at last, the decimated few,
Above a land of running streams, and they . . . ?
They push'd aside the boughs, and peering through
Beheld afar the cool, refreshing bay;
Then some did curse, and some bend hands to pray;
But some look'd back upon the desert, wide
And desolate with death, then all the day
They wept. But one, with nothing left beside
His dog to love, crept down among the ferns and died.

. . . . . .

XI.

I stand upon the green Sierra's wall;
Toward the east, beyond the yellow grass,
I see the broken hill-tops lift and fall,
Then sands that shimmer like a sea of glass,
In all the shining summer days that pass.
There lies the nation's great high road of dead.
Forgotten aye, unnumber'd, and, alas!
Unchronicled in deed or death; instead,
The stiff aristocrat lifts high a lordly head.

XII.

My brave and unremember'd heroes, rest;
You fell in silence, silent lie and sleep.
Sleep on unsung, for this, I say, were best;
The world to-day has hardly time to weep;
The world to-day will hardly care to keep
In heart her plain and unpretending brave.
The desert winds, they whistle by and sweep
About you; brown'd and russet grasses wave
Along a thousand leagues that lie one common grave.

XIII.

The proud and careless pass in palace car
Along the line you blazon'd white with bones;

Pass swift to people, and possess and mar
Your lands with monuments and letter'd stones
Unto themselves. Thank God! this waste disowns
Their touch. His everlasting hand has drawn
A shining line around you. Wealth bemoans
The waste your splendid grave employs. Sleep on,
No hand shall touch your dust this side of God and dawn.

XIV.

There came another, far less noble race;
They shot across the iron grooves, a host
Of school'd and cunning men; they push'd from place
The simple pioneer, and mock'd, and most
Of all set strife along the peaceful coast.
The rude unletter'd settler, bound and coil'd
In controversy, then before the boast
Of bold contentious men, confused and foiled,
Turn'd mute to wilder lands, and left his home despoil'd.

XV.

I let them stride across with grasping hands
And strive for brief possession; mark and line
With lifted walls the new divided lands,
And gather growing herds of lowing kine.

I could not covet these, could not confine
My heart to one; all seem'd to me the same,
And all below my mountain home, divine
And beautiful held in another's name,
As if the herds and lands were mine, subdued and tame.

. . . . . .

XVI.

I have not been, shall not be, understood;
I have not wit, nor will, to well explain,
But that which men call good I find not good.
The lands the savage held, shall hold again,
The gold the savage spurn'd in proud disdain
For centuries; go, take them all; build high
Your gilded temples; strive and strike and strain
And crowd and controvert and curse and lie
In church and state, in town and citadel, and — die.

XVII.

And who shall grow the nobler from it all?
The mute and unsung savage loved as true, —
He felt, as grateful felt, God's blessings fall
About his lodge and tawny babes as you
In temples, — Moslem, Christian monk, or Jew.

. . . The sea, the great white, braided, bounding sea,
Is laughing in your face; the arching blue
Remains to God; the mountains still are free,
A refuge for the few remaining tribes and me.

XVIII.

Your cities! from the first the hand of God
Has been against them; sword and flood and flame,
The earthquake's march, and pestilence, have trod
To undiscerning dust the very name
Of antique capitals; and still the same
Sad destiny besets the battlefields
Of Mammon and the harlot's house of shame.
Lo! man with monuments and lifted shields
Against his city's fate. A flame! his city yields.

. . . . . .

XIX.

Whose ill had I devised, what evil done,
That I was bidden to arise and go? . . .
I hear the clear Columbian waters run,
I see the white Pacific flash and flow
Below the swaying cedar-trees that grow

On peaks pre-eminent; but never mine
Again the wooded way on steed of snow,
The freeman's mountain camp in cloud or shine,
Or pure companionship of meek-eyed mottled kine.

XX.

What wonder that I swore a prophet's oath
Of after days. . . . I push'd the boughs apart,
I stood, look'd forth, and then look'd back, all loath
To leave my shadow'd wood. I gather'd heart
From very fearfulness; with sudden start
I plunged in the arena; stood a wild
Uncertain thing, and artless all in art. . . .
The brave approved, the fair lean'd fair and smiled,—
The lions touch with velvet-touch a timid child.

XXI.

But now enough of men. Enough, brief day
Of tamer life. The court, the castle gate
That open'd wide along a pleasant way,
The gracious converse of the kingly great
Had made another glad and well elate
With hope. A world of thanks; but I am grown
Aweary. . . . I am not of this estate;
The poor, the plain brave border-men alone
Were my first love, and these I will not now disown.

XXII.

Who loves the least may oft lament most loud:
I stand mute-mouth'd upon a far gray shore;
The soul lifts up, a lone and white-wing'd cloud,
And like some sea-bird back and then before
The storm of seas, it seeks my land once more;
And here about the peaceful peaks, as white
As steps of God, until the fates restore
My feet, shall it abide: the sea at night
Has flash'd reflections back from foamy fields of light.

XXIII.

I know a grassy slope above the sea,
The utmost limit of the westmost land.
In savage, gnarl'd, and antique majesty
The great trees belt about the place, and stand
In guard, with mailèd limb and lifted head
Against the cold approaching civic pride.
The foamy brooklets seaward leap; the bland
Still air is fresh with touch of wood and tide,
And peace, eternal peace, possesses wild and wide.

XXIV.

Here I return, here I abide and rest;
Some flocks and herds shall feed along the stream;

Some corn and climbing vines shall make us blest
With bread and luscious fruit. . . . The sunny dream
Of savage men in moccasins that seem
To come and go in silence, girt in shell,
Before a sun-clad cabin-door, I deem
The harbinger of peace. Hope weaves her spell
Again about the wearied heart, and all is well.

XXV.

Here I shall sit in sunlit life's decline
Beneath my vine and sombre verdant tree.
Some tawny maids in other tongues than mine
Shall minister. Some memories shall be
Before me. I shall sit and I shall see,
That last vast day that dawn shall re-inspire,
The sun fall down upon the farther sea,
Fall wearied down to rest, and so retire,
A splendid sinking isle of far-off fading fire.

## BY THE SUN-DOWN SEAS.

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### Part III.

I.

THE stormy Isles of story and of song,
Lo! yonder lie, white lifting from the sea.
The head is bow'd a time, then loud and long
The shouts go up; men lean tiptoed, to be
One instant nearer; turn, catch high and free
Their little babes above the leaning band,
And lift and point and bid them look and see
And laugh with them and shout with lifted hand
To see at last the land; their sires' sires' darling land.

II.

Thou, mother of brave men, of nations! Thou,
The white-brow'd Queen of bold white-bearded Sea!
Thou wert of old even the same as now,
So strong, so tame yet fierce, so bound yet free,
A contradiction and a mystery;
Serene, yet passionate, in ways thine own.

Thy white ships wind and weave all time for thee
The zones of earth, aye thou hast set and sown
The seas in bed of blossom'd sail, white-spread and
blown.

III.

Above yon inland populace the skies
Are pink and mellow'd soft in rosy light.
The crown of earth! A halo seems to rise
And hang perpetual above by night,
And dash by day the heavens, till the sight
Betrays the city's presence to the wave. . . .
You hear a hollow sound as of the might
Of seas; you see the march of fair and brave
In millions; moving, moving, moving toward—a grave.

IV.

I see above a crowded world a-cross
Of gold. It grows like some great cedar-tree
Upon a peak in shroud of cloud and moss,
Made bare and bronzed in far antiquity.
Stupendous pile! The grim Yosemité
Has rent apart his granite wall, and thrown
Its rugged front before us. . . . Here I see
The strides of giant men in cryptic stone,
And turn, and slow descend where sleep the great alone.

V.

The mighty captains have come home to rest;
The brave return'd to sleep amid the brave.
The sentinel that stood with steely breast
Before the fiery hosts of France, and gave
The battle-cry that roll'd, receding wave
On wave, the foeman flying back and far,
Is here. How still! Yet louder now the grave
Than ever-crushing Belgian battle-car
Or blue and battle-shaken seas of Trafalgar.

VI.

The verger stalks in stiff importance o'er
The hollow, deep, and strange responding stones;
He stands with lifted staff unchid before
The forms that once had crush'd or fashion'd thrones,
And coldly points you out the coffin'd bones:
He stands composed where armies could not stand
A little time before. . . . The hand disowns
The idle sword, and now instead the grand
And golden cross makes sign and takes austere command.

VII.

The Abbey broods beside the turbid Thames;
Her mother heart is fill'd with memories;
Her every niche is stored with storied names;
They move before me like a mist of seas.
I am confused, am made abash'd by these
Most kingly souls, grand, silent, and severe.
I am not equal, I should sore displease
The living . . . dead. I dare not enter; drear
And stain'd in storms of grander days all things appear.

VIII.

I go! but shall I not return again
When Art has taught me gentler, kindlier skill,
And time has given force and strength of strain?
I go! O ye that dignify and fill
The chronicles of earth! I would instil
Into my soul somehow the atmosphere
Of sanctity that here usurps the will;
But go; I seek the tomb of one — a peer
Of peers — whose dust a fool refused to cherish here.

. . . . . .

IX.

O master, here I bow before a shrine;
Before the lordliest dust that ever yet

Moved animate in human form divine.
Lo! dust indeed to dust. The mould is set
Above thee and the ancient walls are wet,
And drip all day in dank and silent gloom,
As if the cold gray stones could not forget
Thy great estate shrunk to this sombre room,
But learn to weep perpetual tears above thy tomb.

X.

Through broken panes I hear the schoolboys shout,
I see the black-wing'd engines sweep and pass,
And from the peopled narrow plot without,
Well grown with brier, moss, and heaving grass,
I see the Abbey loom an ivied mass,
Made eloquent of faiths, of fates to be,
Of creeds, and perish'd kings; and still, alas,
O soldier-childe! most eloquent of thee,
Of thy sad life, and all the unseal'd mystery.

XI.

Before me lie the oak-crown'd Annesley hills,
Before me lifts the ancient Annesley Hall
Above the mossy oaks. . . . A picture fills
With forms of other days. A maiden tall

And fair; a fiery restless boy, with all
The force of man; a steed that frets without;
A long thin sword that rusts upon the wall....
The generations pass.... Behold! about
The ivied hall the fair-hair'd children sport and shout.

XII.

A line of elms along the hill-top run;
The diadem of oaks is torn away;
Discrown'd the promontory meets the sun,
And here is set the record of a day,
Of meaning full and memories; and gray
With annals dear to Annesley Hall, it stands,
A stone, with but this single word to say —
But "Inkerman!" and lifts its unseen hands,
And beckons far to battle-fields of other lands.

XIII.

I look into the dread, forbidding tomb;
Lo! darkness — death. The soul on shifting sand
That belts Eternity gropes in the gloom....
The black-wing'd bird goes forth in search of land,
But turns no more to reach my reaching hand....

O land beyond the land! I lean me o'er
Thy dust in prayer devout. . . . I rise, I stand
Erect; the stormy seas are thine no more;
A weary white-wing'd dove has touch'd the olive shore.

XIV.

A bay wreath woven by the sun-down west
Hangs damp and stain'd upon the dank gray wall,
Above thy time-soil'd tomb and tatter'd crest;
A bay-wreath gather'd by the seas that call
To orient Cathay, that break and fall
On shell-lined shores before Tahiti's breeze. . . .
A slab, a crest, a wreath, and these are all
Neglected, tatter'd, torn; yet only these
The world bestows for song that rivall'd singing seas.

XV.

A bay-wreath wound by one more truly brave
Than Shastan; fair as thy eternal fame,
She sat and wove above the sunset wave,
And wound and sang thy measures and thy name.
'Twas wound by one, yet sent with one acclaim
By many, fair and warm as flowing wine,
And purely true, and tall as growing flame,
That list and lean in moonlight's mellow shine
To tropic tales of love in other tongues than thine.

XVI.

I bring this idle reflex of thy task,
And my few loves, to thy forgotten tomb:
I leave them here; and here all pardon ask
Of thee, and patience ask of singers whom
Thy majesty hath silenced. I resume
My staff, and now my face is to the West;
My feet are worn; the sun is gone, a gloom
Has mantled Hucknall, and the minstrel's zest
For fame is broken here, and here he pleads for rest.

# IN THE INDIAN SUMMER.

*Sing songs, and give love in oblations;*
*Be glad, and forget in a rhyme*
*Mutations of time, and mutations*
*Of thought, that is fiercer than time.*

## IN THE INDIAN SUMMER.

---

THE sunlight lay in gathered sheaves
Along the ground, the golden leaves
Possessed the land and lay in bars
Above the lifted lawn of green
Beneath the feet, or fell, as stars
Fall, slantwise, shimmering and still
Upon the plain, upon the hill,
And heaving hill and plain between.

Some steeds in panoply were seen,
Strong, martial trained, with manes in air,
And tasselled reins and mountings rare;
Some silent people here and there,
That gathered leaves with listless will,
Or moved adown the dappled green,
Or looked away with idle gaze
Against the gold and purple haze.
You might have heard red apples fall,

The pheasant on the farther hill,
A single, lonely, locust trill,
Or sliding sable cricket call
From out the grass, but that was all.

A wanderer of many lands
Was I, a weary Ishmaelite
That knew the sign of lifted hands;
Had seen the Crescent-mosques, had seen
The Druid oaks of Aberdeen;
Then crossed the hilly seas, and saw
The sable pines of Mackinaw,
And lakes that lifted cold and white.

I saw the sweet Miami, saw
The swift Ohio bent and rolled
Between his gleaming walls of gold,
The Wabash banks of gray papaw,
The Mississippi's ash; at morn
Of autumn, when the oak is red,
Saw slanting pyramids of corn,
The level fields of spotted swine,
The crooked lanes of lowing kine,
And in the burning bushes saw
The face of God, with bended head.

But when I saw her face, I said,
"Earth has no fruits so fairly red
As these that swing above my head;
No purpled leaf, no poppied land,
Like this that lies in reach of hand."

Some maple leaves hung overhead,
In scarlet hues and many kind;
Some danced about upon the sand,
As dancers dancing hand in hand,
Begirt in gold, arrayed in red,
To soft songs whistled in the wind.

Her image seemed a spirit's then;
She filled the lawn whereon she stood,
And, soft, unto myself I said:
"O soul, inured to rue and rime,
To barren toil and bitter bread,
To biting rime, to bitter rue,
Earth is not Nazareth; be good.
O sacred Indian-summer time
Of scarlet fruits, of fragrant wood,
Of purpled clouds, of curling haze —
O days of golden dreams and days
Of banished, vanished tawny men,

Of martial songs and manly deeds —
Be fair to-day, and bear me true."
We mounted, turned the sudden steeds
Toward the yellow hills, and flew.

My faith! but she rode fair, and she
Had scarlet berries in her hair,
And on her hands white starry stones.
The satellites of many thrones
Fall down before her gracious air
In that full season. Fair to see
Are pearly shells, red virgin gold,
And yellow fruits, and sun-down seas,
And babes sun-brown; but all of these,
And all fair things of sea besides,
Before the matchless, manifold
Accomplishments of her who rides
With autumn summer in her hair,
And knows her steed and holds her fair
And stately in her stormy seat,
They lie like playthings at her feet.

By heaven! she was more than fair,
And more than good, and matchless wise,
With all the lovelight in her eyes,
And all the midnight in her hair.

The blowing hair! the bannered manes!
The rustling leaves in whispers blown!
The sounding feet made melody,
And earth was filled and I was glad
With sweet delight; ay, even sad
From pure excess of joy, that fills
The soul sometimes too eager grown. . . .

Through leafy avenues and lanes,
And lo! we climbed the yellow hills,
With russet leaves about the brows
That reached from over-reaching trees.
With purpled briers to the knees
Of steeds that fretted foamy thews,
We turned to look a time below
Beneath the ancient arch of boughs,
That bent above us as a bow
Of promise, bound in many hues.

I reached my hand. I could refuse
All fruits but this, the touch of her
At such a time. But lo! she leaned
With lifted face and soul, and leant
As leans devoutest worshipper,
Beyond the branches scarlet screened

And looked above me and beyond,
So fixed and silent, still and fond,
She seemed the while she looked to lose
Her very soul in such intent.
She looked on other things, but I,
I saw nor scarlet leaf nor sky;
I looked on her, and only her.

Afar the city lay in smokes
Of battle, and the martial strokes
Of Progress thundered through the land
And struck against the yellow trees,
And rolled in hollow echoes on
Like sounding limits of the seas
That smite the shelly shores at dawn.

Beyond, below, on either hand
There reached a lake in belt of pine,
A very dream; a distant dawn
Asleep in all the autumn shine,
Some like one of another land
That I once laid a hand upon,
And loved too well, and named as mine.

She sometimes touched with dimpled hand
The drifting mane with dreamy air,

She sometimes pushed aback her hair;
But still she leaned and looked afar,
As silent as the statues stand, —
For what? For falling leaf? For star,
That runs before the bride of death? . . .
The elements were still; a breath
Stirred not, the level western sun
Poured in his arrows every one;
Spilled all his wealth of purpled red
On velvet poplar leaf below,
On arching chestnut overhead
In all the hues of heaven's bow.

She sat the upper hill, and high.
I spurred my black steed to her side;
"The bow of promise, lo!" I cried,
And lifted up my eyes to hers
With all the fervid love that stirs
The blood of men beneath the sun,
And reached my hand, as one undone,
In suppliance to hers above:
"The bow of promise! give me love!
I reach a hand, I rise or fall,
Henceforth from this: put forth a hand
From your high place and let me stand —

Stand soul and body, white and tall!
Why, I would live for you, would die
To-morrow, but to live to-day.
Give me but love, and let me live
To die before you. I can pray
To only you, because I know,
If you but give what I bestow,
That God has nothing left to give."

Christ! still her stately head was raised,
And still she silent sat and gazed
Beyond the trees, beyond the town,
To where the dimpled waters slept,
Nor splendid eyes once bended down
To eyes that lifted up and wept.

She spake not, nor subdued her head
To note a hand or heed a word;
And then I questioned if she heard
My life-tale on that leafy hill,
Or any fervid word I said,
And spoke with bold, vehement will.

She moved, and from her bridled hand
She sudden drew the dainty glove,

Then gazed again upon the land.
The dimpled hand, a snowy dove,
Alit, and moved along the mane
Of glossy skeins; then, overbold,
It fell across the mane, and lay
Before my eyes a sweet bouquet
Of clustered kisses, white as snow.
I should have seized it reaching so,
But something bade me back, — a ban;
Around the third fair finger ran
A shining, hateful hoop of gold.

Ay, then I turned, I looked away,
I sudden felt forlorn and chill;
I whistled, like, for want to say,
And then I said, with bended head,
"Another's ship from other shores,
With richer freight, with fairer stores,
Shall come to her some day instead;"
Then turned about, — and all was still.

Yea, you had chafed at this, and cried,
And laughed with bloodless lips, and said
Some bitter things to sate your pride,
And tossed aloft a lordly head,

And acted well some wilful lie,
And, most like, cursed yourself — but I . . .
Well, you be crucified, and you
Be broken up with lances through
The soul, then you may turn to find
Some ladder-rounds in keenest rods,
Some solace in the bitter rind,
Some favor with the gods irate —
The everlasting angered gods —
And ask not overmuch of fate.

I was not born, was never blessed,
With cunning ways, nor wit, nor skill
In woman's ways, nor words of love,
Nor fashioned suppliance of will.
A very clown, I think, had guessed
How out of place and plain I seemed;
I, I, the idol-worshipper,
Who saw nor maple-leaves nor sky
But took some touch and hue of her.
Then, after all, what right had I
To lift my eyes to eyes that beamed
So far beyond, so far above?

I am a pagan, heathen, lo!
A savage man, of savage lands;
Too quick to love, too slow to know
The sign that tame love understands,
Or cold approaches pride demands.

. . . . . .

Some heedless hoofs went sounding down
The broken way. The woods were brown,
And homely now; some idle talk
Of folk and town; a broken walk;
But sounding feet made song no more
For me along that leafy shore.

The sun caught up his gathered sheaves;
A squirrel caught a nut, and ran;
A rabbit rustled in the leaves;
A whirling bat, black-winged and tan,
Blew swift between us; sullen night
Fell down upon us; mottled kine,
With lifted heads, went lowing down
The rocky ridge toward the town,
And all the woods grew dark as wine.

# OLIVE LEAVES.

*O boy at peace upon the Delaware!*
*O brother mine, that fell in battle front*
*Of life, so braver, nobler far than I,*
*The wanderer who vexed all gentleness,*
*Receive this song; I have but this to give.*
*I may not rear the rich man's ghostly stone;*
*But you, through all my follies loving still*
*And trusting me . . . nay, I shall not forget.*

*A failing hand in mine, and fading eyes*
*That look'd in mine as from another lana,*
*You said: "Some gentler things; a song for Peace.*
*'Mid all your songs for men one song for God."*
*And then the dark-brow'd mother, Death, bent down*
*Her face to yours, and you were born to Him.*

# OLIVE LEAVES.

---

## AT BETHLEHEM.

"In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wild waste there still is a tree."

"Though the many lights dwindle to one light,
There is help if the heavens have one."

"Change lays not her hand upon truth."

WITH incense and myrrh and sweet spices,
Frankincense and sacredest oil
In ivory, chased with devices
Cut quaint and in serpentine coil;
Heads bared, and held down to the bosom;
Brows massive with wisdom and bronzed;
Beards white as the white may in blossom,
And borne to the breast and beyond,—
Came the Wise of the East, bending lowly
On staffs, with their garments girt round
With girdles of hair, to the Holy
Child Christ, in their sandals. The sound

Of song and thanksgiving ascended —
  Deep night! Yet some shepherds afar
Heard a wail with the worshipping blended,
  And they then knew the sign of the star.

## IN PALESTINE.

---

O JEBUS! thou mother of prophets,
Of soldiers and heroes of song;
Let the crescent oppress thee and scoff its
Blind will, let the days do thee wrong;

But to me thou art sacred and splendid,
And to me thou art matchless and fair,
As the tawny sweet twilight, with blended
Sunlight and red stars in her hair.

Thy fair ships once came from sweet Cyprus,
And fair ships drew in from Cyrene,
With fruits and rich robes and sweet spices
For thee and thine eminent queen;

And camels came in with the traces
Of white desert dust in their hair
As they kneel'd in the loud market-places,
And Arabs with lances were there.

'Tis past, and the Bedouin pillows
His head where thy battlements fall,
And thy temples flash gold to the billows,
Never more over turreted wall.

'Tis past, and the green velvet mosses
Have grown by the sea, and now sore
Does the far billow mourn for his losses
Of lifted white ships to the shore.

Let the crescent uprise, let it flash on
Thy dust in the garden of death,
Thy chasten'd and passionless passion
Sunk down to the sound of a breath;

You lived like a king on a throne and
You died like a queen of the south;
For you lifted the cup with your own hand
To your proud and your passionate mouth;

Like a splendid swift serpent surrounded
With fire and sword, in your side
You struck your hot fangs and confounded
Your foes; you struck deep, and so — died.

## BEYOND JORDAN.

---

AND they came to him, mothers of Judah,
Dark-eyed and in splendor of hair,
Bearing down over shoulders of beauty,
And bosoms half hidden, half bare;

And they brought him their babes and besought him
Half kneeling, with suppliant air,
To bless the brown cherubs they brought him,
With holy hands laid in their hair.

Then reaching his hands he said, lowly,
"Of such is My Kingdom;" and then
Took the brown little babes in the holy
White hands of the Saviour of men;

Held them close to his heart and caress'd them,
Put his face down to theirs as in prayer,
Put their hands to his neck, and so bless'd them
With baby hands hid in his hair.

## FAITH.

---

THERE were whimsical turns of the waters,
There were rhythmical talks of the sea,—
There were gather'd the darkest-eyed daughters
Of men, by the dark Galilee.

A blowing full sail, and a parting
From multitudes, living in him,
A trembling of lips, and tears starting
From eyes that look'd downward and dim.

A mantle of night and a marching
Of storms, and a sounding of seas,
Of furrows of foam and of arching
Black billows; a bending of knees;
The rising of Christ — an entreating —
Hands reach'd to the seas as he saith,
"Have Faith!" And lo! still are repeating
All seas, "Have Faith! Have Faith! Have Faith!"

## HOPE.

---

WHAT song is well sung not of sorrow?
What triumph well won without pain
What virtue shall be, and not borrow
Bright lustre from many a stain?

What birth has there been without travail?
What battle well won without blood?
What good shall earth see without evil
Ingarner'd as chaff with the good?

Lo! the Cross set in rocks by the Roman,
And nourish'd by blood of the Lamb,
And water'd by tears of the woman,
Has flourish'd, has spread like a palm;

Has spread in the frosts, and far regions
Of snows in the North, and South sands,
Where never the tramp of his legions
Was heard, or has reach'd forth his red hands.

Be thankful: the price and the payment,
  The birth, the privations and scorn,
The cross, and the parting of raiment,
  Are finish'd. The star brought us morn:

Look starward; stand far and unearthy,
  Free-soul'd as a banner unfurl'd.
Be worthy, O brother, be worthy!
  For a God was the price of the world.

## CHARITY.

---

HER hands were clasped downward and doubled,
Her head was held down and depress'd,
Her bosom, like white billows troubled,
Fell fitful and rose in unrest;

Her robes were all dust, and disorder'd
Her glory of hair, and her brow,
Her face, that had lifted and lorded,
Fell pallid and passionless now.

She heard not accusers that brought her
In mockery hurried to Him,
Nor heeded, nor said, nor besought her
With eyes lifted doubtful and dim.

All crush'd and stone-cast in behavior,
She stood as a marble would stand,
Then the Saviour bent down, and the Saviour
In silence wrote on in the sand.

What wrote He? How fondly one lingers
  And questions, what holy command
Fell down from the beautiful fingers
  Of Jesus, like gems in the sand.

O better the Scian uncherish'd
  Had died ere a note or device
Of battle was fashion'd, than perish'd
  This only line written by Christ.

He arose and he look'd on the daughter
  Of Eve, like a delicate flower,
And he heard the revilers that brought her —
  Men stormy, and strong as a tower;

And he said, "She has sinn'd; let the blameless
  Come forward and cast the first stone!"
But they, they fled shamed and yet shameless;
  And she, she stood white and alone.

Who now shall accuse and arraign us?
  What man shall condemn and disown?
Since Christ has said only the stainless
  Shall cast at his fellows a stone.

For what man can bare us his bosom,
  And touch with his forefinger there,
And say, 'Tis as snow, as a blossom?
  Beware of the stainless, beware!

O woman, born first to believe us;
  Yea, also born first to forget;
Born first to betray and deceive us,
  Yet first to repent and regret!

O first then in all that is human,
  Lo! first where the Nazarene trod,
O woman! O beautiful woman!
  Be then first in the kingdom of God!

## THE LAST SUPPER.

---

"And when they had sung a hymn they went out
into the Mount of Olives."

WHAT song sang the twelve with the Saviour
When finish'd the sacrament wine?
Were they bow'd and subdued in behavior,
Or bold as made bold with a sign?

Were the hairy breasts strong and defiant?
Were the naked arms brawny and strong?
Were the bearded lips lifted reliant,
Thrust forth and full sturdy with song!

What sang they? What sweet song of Zion
With Christ in their midst like a crown?
While here sat Saint Peter, the lion;
And there like a lamb, with head down,

Sat Saint John, with his silken and raven
  Rich hair on his shoulders, and eyes
Lifting up to the faces unshaven
  Like a sensitive child's in surprise.

Was the song as strong fishermen swinging
  Their nets full of hope to the sea?
Or low, like the ripple-wave, singing
  Sea-songs on their loved Galilee?

Were they sad with foreshadow of sorrows,
  Like the birds that sing low when the breeze
Is tip-toe with a tale of to-morrows, —
  Of earthquakes and sinking of seas?

Ah! soft was their song as the waves are
  That fall in low musical moans;
And sad I should say as the winds are
  That blow by the white gravestones.

## A SONG FOR PEACE.

---

I.

AS a tale that is told, as a vision,
Forgive and forget; for I say
That the true shall endure the derision
Of the false till the full of the day;

II.

Ay, forgive as you would be forgiven;
Ay, forget, lest the ill you have done
Be remember'd against you in heaven
And all the days under the sun.

III.

For who shall have bread without labor?
And who shall have rest without price?
And who shall hold war with his neighbor
With promise of peace with the Christ?

IV.

The years may lay hand on fair heaven;
  May place and displace the red stars;
May stain them, as blood-stains are driven
  At sunset in beautiful bars;

V.

May shroud them in black till they fret us
  As clouds with their showers of tears;
May grind us to dust and forget us,
  May the years, O, the pitiless years!

VI.

The precepts of Christ are beyond them;
  The truths by the Nazarene taught,
With the tramp of the ages upon them,
  They endure as though ages were nought;

VII.

The deserts may drink up the fountains,
  The forests give place to the plain,
The main may give place to the mountains,
  The mountains return to the main;

VIII.

Mutations of worlds and mutations
  Of suns may take place, but the reign
Of Time, and the toils and vexations
  Bequeath them, no, never a stain.

IX.

Go forth to the fields as one sowing,
  Sing songs and be glad as you go,
There are seeds that take root without showing,
  And bear some fruit whether or no.

X.

And the sun shall shine sooner or later,
  Though the midnight breaks ground on the morn,
Then appeal you to Christ, the Creator,
  And to gray-bearded Time, His first-born.

# FALLEN LEAVES.

*Some fugitive lines that allure us no more,*
*Some fragments that fell to the sea out of time;*
*Unfinish'd and guiltless of thought as of rhyme,*
*Thrown now on the world like waifs on the shore.*

# FALLEN LEAVES.

---

## PALM LEAVES.

THATCH of palm and a patch of clover,
Breath of balm in a field of brown,
The clouds blew up and the birds flew over,
And I look'd upward: but who look'd down?

Who was true in the test that tried us?
Who was it mock'd? Who now may mourn
The loss of a love that a cross denied us,
With folded hands and a heart forlorn?

God forgive when the fair forget us.
The worth of a smile, the weight of a tear,
Why, who can measure? The fates beset us.
We laugh a moment; we mourn a year.

## THOMAS OF TIGRE.

---

KING of Tigre, comrade true!
Where in all thine isles art thou?
Sailing on Fonseca blue?
Nearing Amapala now?
King of Tigre, where art thou?

Battling for Antilles' queen?
Sabre hilt, or olive bough?
Crown of dust, or laurel green?
Roving love, or marriage vow?
King and comrade, where art thou?

Sailing on Pacific seas?
Pitching tent in Pimo now?
Underneath magnolia trees?
Thatch of palm, or cedar bough?
Soldier-singer, where art thou?

Coasting on the Oregon?
Saddle, bow, or birchen prow?
Round the Isles of Amazon?
Pampas, plain, or mountain brow?
Prince of rovers, where art thou?

Answer me from out the West.
I am weary, stricken now;
Thou art strong and I would rest:
Reach a hand with lifted brow, —
King of Tigre, where art thou?

## IN YOSEMITE VALLEY.

---

SOUND! sound! sound!
O colossal walls, as crown'd
In one eternal thunder!
Sound! sound! sound!
O ye oceans overhead,
While we walk, subdued in wonder,
In the ferns and grasses, under
And beside the swift Merced!

Fret! fret! fret!
Streaming, sounding banners, set
On the giant granite castles
In the clouds and in the snow!
But the foe he comes not yet, —
We are loyal, valiant vassals,
And we touch the trailing tassels,
Of the banners far below.

Surge! surge! surge!
From the white Sierra's verge,

To the very valley blossom.
Surge! surge! surge!
Yet the song-bird builds a home,
And the mossy branches cross them,
And the tasselled tree-tops toss them,
In the clouds of falling foam.

Sweep! sweep! sweep!
O ye heaven-born and deep,
In one dread, unbroken chorus!
We may wonder or may weep, —
We may wait on God before us;
We may shout or lift a hand, —
We may bow down and deplore us,
But may never understand.

Beat! beat! beat!
We advance, but would retreat
From this restless, broken breast
Of the earth in a convulsion.
We would rest, but dare not rest,
For the angel of expulsion
From this Paradise below
Waves us onward and . . . we go.

## DEAD IN THE SIERRAS.

---

HIS footprints have failed us,
Where berries are red,
And madroños are rankest.
The hunter is dead!

The grizzly may pass
By his half-open door;
May pass and repass
On his path, as of yore;

The panther may crouch
In the leaves on his limb;
May scream and may scream, —
It is nothing to him.

Prone, bearded, and breasted
Like columns of stone;
And tall as a pine —
As a pine overthrown!

His camp-fires gone,
  What else can be done
Than let him sleep on
  Till the light of the sun?

Ay, tombless! what of it?
  Marble is dust,
Cold and repellent;
  And iron is rust.

## IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

---

WHERE the cocoa and cactus are neighbors,
Where the fig and the fir-tree are one;
Where the brave corn is lifting bent sabres
And flashing them far in the sun;

Where the maidens blush red in their tresses
Of night, and retreat to advance,
And the dark, sweeping eyelash expresses
Deep passion, half hush'd in a trance;

Where the fig is in leaf, where the blossom
Of orange is fragrant as fair, —
Santa Barbara's balm in the bosom,
Her sunny, soft winds in the hair;

Where the grape is most luscious, where laden
Long branches bend double with gold;
Los Angelos leans like a maiden,
Red, blushing, half shy, and half bold.

Where passion was born, and where poets
  Are deeper in silence than song,
A love knows a love, and may know its
  Reward, yet may never know wrong.

Where passion was born and where blushes
  Gave birth to my songs of the South,
And a song is a love-tale, and rushes,
  Unchid, through the red of the mouth;

Where an Adam in Eden reposes,
  I repose, I am glad, and take wine
In the clambering, redolent roses,
  And under my fig and my vine.

## WHO SHALL SAY?

---

A SINKING sun, a sky of red,
In bars and banners overhead,
And blown apart like curtains drawn;
Afar a-sea a blowing sail
That shall go down before the dawn;
And they are passion-toss'd and pale
The two that stand and look alone
And silent, as two shafts of stone
Set head and foot above the dead.

They watch the ship, the weary sun,
The banner'd streamers every one,
Till darkness hides them in her hair.
The winds come in as cold as death,
And not a palm above the pair
To lift a lance or break a breath.

The hollow of the ocean fills
Like sounding hollow halls of stone,
And not a banner streams above;
The sea is set in snowy hills.
The ship is lost. The winds are blown
Unheeded now; yet who shall say:
"We had been wiser so than they
Who wept and watch'd the parting sail
In silence; mute with sorrow, pale
With weeping for departed love"?

## A LOVE-SONG.

---

IF earth is an oyster, love is the pearl,
As pure as pure caresses;
Then loosen the gold of your hair, my girl,
And hide my pearl in your tresses.

So, coral to coral and pearl to pearl,
And a cloud of curls above me,
O bury me deep, my beautiful girl,
And then confess you love me.

The world goes over my beautiful girl
In glitter and gold and odor of roses,
In eddies of splendor, in oceans of pearl,
But here the heaven reposes. . . .

The world it is wide; men go their ways,
But love it is wise, and of all the hours,
And of all the beautiful sun-born days,
It sips their sweets as the bees sip flowers.

## DOWN INTO THE DUST.

---

IS it worth while that we jostle a brother
  Bearing his load on the rough road of life?
Is it worth while that we jeer at each other
  In blackness of heart? — that we war to the knife?
  God pity us all in our pitiful strife.

God pity us all as we jostle each other;
  God pardon us all for the triumphs we feel
When a fellow goes down 'neath his load on the heather,
  Pierced to the heart: words are keener than steel,
  And mightier far for woe or for weal.

Were it not well, in this brief little journey
  On over the isthmus, down into the tide,
We give him a fish instead of a serpent,
  Ere folding the hands to be and abide
  Forever and aye in dust at his side?

Look at the roses saluting each other;
  Look at the herds all at peace on the plain—
Man, and man only, makes war on his brother,
  And laughs in his heart at his peril and pain;
  Shamed by the beasts that go down on the plain.

Is it worth while that we battle to humble
  Some poor fellow-soldier down into the dust?
God pity us all! Time eftsoon will tumble
  All of us together like leaves in a gust,
  Humbled indeed down into the dust.

## IN SAN FRANCISCO.

---

LO! here sit we mid the sun-down seas
And the white sierras. The swift, sweet breeze
Is about us here; and a sky so fair
Is bending above in its azaline hue,
That you gaze and you gaze in delight, and you
See God and the portals of heaven there.

Yea, here sit we where the white ships ride
In the morn, made glad and forgetful of night,
The white and the brown men side by side
In search of the truth, and betrothed to the right;
For these are the idols, and only these,
Of men that abide by the sun-down seas.

The brown brave hand of the harvester,
The delicate hand of the prince untried,
The rough hard hand of the carpenter,
They are all upheld with an equal pride;
And the prize it is his to be crown'd or blest,
Prince or peon, who bears him best.

Yea, here sit we by the golden gate,
  Nor demanding much, but inviting you all,
Nor publishing loud, but daring to wait,
  And great in much that the days deem small;
And the gate it is God's, to Cathay, Japan, —
And who shall shut it in the face of man?

## SHADOWS OF SHASTA.

---

IN the place where the grizzly reposes,
  Under peaks where a right is a wrong,
I have memories richer than roses,
  Sweet echoes more sweet than a song;

Sounds sweet as the voice of a singer
  Made sacred with sorrows unsaid,
And a love that implores me to linger
  For the love of dead days and their dead.

But I turn, throwing kisses, returning
  To strife and to turbulent men,
As to learn to be wise, as unlearning
  All things that were manliest then.

## AT SEA.

---

WE part as ships on a pathless main,
Gayly enough, for the sense of pain
Is asleep at first: but ghosts will arise
When we would repose, and the forms will come
And walk when we walk, and will not be dumb,
Nor yet forget with their wakeful eyes.

When we most need rest, and the perfect sleep,
Some hand will reach from the dark, and keep
The curtains drawn and the pillows toss'd
Like a tide of foam; and one will say
At night, — O Heaven, that it were day!
And one by night through the misty tears
Will say, — O Heaven, the days are years,
And I would to Heaven that the waves were cross'd.

## A MEMORY OF SANTA BARBARA.

---

YEA, Santa Barbara is fair;
A sunny clime and sweet to touch,
For tamer men of gentler mien,
But as for me — another scene.
A land below the Alps I know,
Set well with grapes and girt with much
Of woodland beauty; I shall share
My rides by night below the light
Of Manua Loa, ride below
The steep and starry Hebron height;
Shall lift my hands in many lands,
See South Sea palm, see Northland fir,
See white-wing'd swans, see red-bill'd doves;
See many lands and many loves,
But never more the face of her.

And what her name or where the place
Of her who makes my Mecca's prayer,
Concerns you not; not any trace

Of entrance to my temple's shrine
Remains. The memory is mine,
And none shall pass the portals there.

The present! take it, hold it thine,
But that one hour out from all
The years that are, or yet shall fall,
I pluck it out, I name it mine,
And whistle by the rest, and laugh
To see it blown about as chaff;
That hour bound in sunny sheaves,
With tassell'd shocks of golden shine,
That hour, wound in scarlet leaves,
Is mine. I stretch a hand and swear
An oath that breaks into a prayer;
By heaven, it is wholly mine!

I see the gold and purple gleam
Of autumn leaves, a reach of seas,
A silent rider like a dream
Moves by, a mist of mysteries,
And these are mine, and only these,
Yet they be more in my esteem,
Than silver'd sails on coral'd seas.

Let red-leaf'd boughs sweet fruits bestow,
Let fame of foreign lands be mine,
Let blame of faithless men befall;
It matters nothing; over all,
One hour arches like a bow
Of promise blent in many hues,
That tide nor time shall bid decline;
Or storms of all the years refuse.

## SUMMER FROSTS.

---

FROSTS of an hour! Fruits of a season!
Who foresees them? Slain in a day,
The loves of a lustrum. Who shall say
The heart has sense or the soul has reason?

. . . One not knowing and one not caring.
. . . Leaves in their pathway. Let them part;
She with the gifts of a gracious bearing,
He with the pangs of a passionate heart.

## SLEEP THAT WAS NOT SLEEP.

---

. . . . . .

BACK there, madam! Mark you, there!
I lie crouch'd against the wall,
And I dare not lift a finger,
Dare not lift my eyes or call,
While you hesitate and linger,
Leering through your tangled hair;
Drop the curtains! Back, I say!
Lift aside your tangled hair
Overhanging coffin'd clay,
Resurrected for a day,
Cold and wet as cast-away.

. . . . . .

. . . It was hard, but what was better
For a man so strangely born
Underneath the stars or sun,
Than the savage race I run
Through the midnight to the morn,
Spite of fate or prison fetter?

Through the darkness to the dawn,
What beneath the sun was better?
Then I turn'd, and . . . you were gone.
. . . Glory had a price; I paid her!
Truth was doubtful; I betray'd her!
You obey'd her to the letter.
And what profits? nothing, save
That I have slain the days full well, —
That you . . . are dead and in your grave;
That I . . . am living and in hell.

. . . . . .

Yea! before-time you beset me,
Laugh'd and vow'd to not forget me,
Leer'd and mock'd with all your might
When the fever held its riot
And the doctors bade be quiet.
Christ! you came to my bedside
In the middle of the night,
With your two hands on your heart, —
And you press'd on my bedside,
And so press'd upon your heart
That the blood, all thick and blacken'd,
When your bony fingers slacken'd,
Oozed between them to the floor, —
Oh, that ghostly, gory floor!

And your mantle it was moulded,
And streak'd yellow where it folded,
Then your heavy, slimy hair,
On your bosom blue and bare,
Which you did not try to hide!
That you know was nothing fair,
As you press'd on my bedside!
Then your eyes had such a glare,
And the smell of death was there,
And the spirits that were with you
Whistled through the mossy door,
And they danced upon my bosom,
And they tangled up my hair,
And made crosses on the floor.

. . . . .

It was not my fault, remember,
  All this life of black disasters,
All this life of dark December,
  All this heart-sickness and sadness.
Though we both did have our masters,
  Yours was Love and mine Ambition,
Mine is driving me to madness,
  Yours, it drove you to perdition.

. . . . .

Yes, some time, if you will have it,
When this hot brain is less rabid,
When our masters both are sleeping,
When the storm the stars is keeping,
Leave that yellow moulded mantle,
That dull, sullen, frozen stare,
And the cold death in your hair,
And I will no more upbraid you;
Leave the darkness where they laid you,
Leave the dampness you inhabit.

I will meet you just one minute
By the oak-tree, you remember,
With the grape-vine tangled in it;
I will tell you one sweet story,
With sweet balm and healing in it;
You will sigh *Memento mori*, —
But remember, now remember,
I remain there but one minute.

. . . . .

## "SIERRAS ADIOS."

---

WITH the buckler and sword into battle
I moved, I was matchless and strong;
I stood in the rush and the rattle
Of shot, and the spirit of song
Was upon me; and youthful and splendid
My armor flashed far in the sun
As I sang of my land. It is ended,
And all has been done, and undone.

I descend with my dead in the trenches,
To-night I bend down on the plain
In the dark, and a memory wrenches
The soul; I turn up to the rain
The cold and the beautiful faces,
Ay, faces forbidden for years,
Turn'd up to my face with the traces
Of blood to the white rain of tears.

Count backward the years on your fingers,
  While forward rides yonder white moon,
Till the soul turns aside, and it lingers
  By a grave that was born of a June;
By the grave of a soul, where the grasses
  Are tangled as witch-woven hair;
Where footprints are not, and where passes
  Not any thing known anywhere;

By a grave without tombstone or token,
  At a tomb where not fern leaf or fir,
Root or branch, was once bended or broken,
  To bestow there the body of her;
For it lives, and the soul perish'd only,
  And alone in that land, with these hands,
Did I lay the dead soul, and all lonely
  Does it lie to this day in the sands.

Lo! a wild little maiden with tresses
  Of gold on the wind of the hills:
Ay, a wise little maiden that guesses
  Some good in the cruelest ills;
And a babe with its baby-fists doubled,
  And thrust to my beard, and within,

As he laughs like a fountain half-troubled,
  When my finger chucks under his chin.

Should the dead not decay, when the culture
  Of fields be resumed in the May?
Lo! the days are dark-wing'd as the vulture!
  Let them swoop, then, and bear them away:
By the walks let me cherish red flowers,
  By the wall teach one tendril to run;
Lest I wake, and I watch all the hours
  I shall ever see under the sun.

It is well, may be so, to bear losses,
  And to bend and bow down to the rod;
If the scarlet red bars and the crosses
  Be but rounds up the ladder to God.
But this mocking of men! Ah, that enters
  The marrow! the murmurs that swell
To reproach for my song-love, that centres,
  Vast land, upon thee, are not well.

And I go, thanking God in my going,
  That an ocean flows stormy and deep,
And yet gentler to me is its flowing
  Than the storm that forbids me to sleep.

And I go, thanking God, with hands lifted,
That a land lies beyond where the free
And the gentle of-heart and the gifted
Of soul have a home in the sea.

Cambridge: Press of John Wilson & Son.

# *MR. MILLER'S*

# SONGS OF THE SUN-LANDS.

*Selections from some criticisms of Mr. Miller's new volume of Poems, which have appeared in the English journals.*

*From the Athenæum.*

"Songs of the Sun-Lands" is, it will be seen, similar in character to "Songs of the Sierras," previously published. The same kind of materials is used, and the same kind of faults and excellence in their use is observable. Mr. Miller's muse in this, its second flight, has taken the same direction as in its first essay, but, upon the whole, we think, with a stronger wing. The new work gives evidence that the author has not, as was feared, intensified his former mannerism, but has profited by the advice of friends and critics.

*From the Academy.*

Mr. Miller has a faculty of making himself felt through what he writes, and we quit his poems with a mingled sense of admiration and regret: admiration of his really great powers; regret that he seems unable to pursue one of two courses in their application, &c.

*From the Westminster Review.*

We some time ago called especial attention to this new American poet's first work, "The Songs of the Sierras," nor do we repent of our criticism. He has perhaps lost something of that boldness, and that flavor of originality which in a certain way reminded one of Walt Whitman without his special weaknesses and extravagances. Still, to counterbalance this loss, he has gained a certain polish. Yet here we perceive a danger. But Mr. Miller must be careful that he does not buy elegance at too dear a price. We ourselves prefer the roughness of the backwoods of America to all the drawing-room conventionalities of Europe. We prefer Mr. Joaquin Miller's native reed-pipe to any guitar. The most perfect poem in the

present collection is without doubt "The Isles of the Amazons." Here we see Mr. Miller at his best. Here he has put forth his real strength. It is, in short, a poem which will live.

*From the Standard.*

No poetry of the present age has any claim to the unconventional freedom, the supreme independence, the spontaneity, the bold and vigorous originality, the all-pervading passion, the unresting energy, and the prodigal wealth of imagery which stamp the poetry before us. . . . For further specimens of Mr. Miller's present poems we must send our readers to the volume itself, which is, with all its faults, a very garden of delight, adorned everywhere as it is with the fairest blooms of fancy, and breathing everywhere as it does of the sweetest and purest inspirations of the muse.

*From the London Sunday Times.*

The success both in England and America of Mr. Joaquin Miller's "Songs of the Sierras" has been uncontested. The tide of passionate life with which they were charged, and the fervor of poetic appreciation and sympathy they displayed, combined with the startling beauty and power of portions of the workmanship to render men insensible to irregularities and inequalities of style. . . . Here we bid farewell to Mr. Miller's delightful volume. A pleasanter companion into the enchanted gardens of poetry we do not seek. He knows

> "each lane and every alley green,
> Dingle or bushy dell of the wild wood,
> And every bosky bourn from side to side,"

and he conducts us to scenes to which we have no other guide. That Mr. Miller had poetic inspiration his first volume abundantly proved. That his verse will not be a mere well at which the traveller can drink once ere pursuing his journey, but a full river of song hurrying through forest and meadow, and bearing with it carol of bird and scent of flower and hay, is now sufficiently established.

*From the Bookseller.*

Resembling his previously published collection, in that the verses are principally descriptive of strange, far-away countries, and contain numerous bright, beautiful pictures of external nature, these songs of the sun-lands will be warmly welcomed as the riper efforts of a real poet. . . . And so we might proceed through poem after poem, finding images of great and sterling poetic value. Nor, perhaps, would it be difficult to discover some that might be called trivial and poor; but we prefer to judge a writer by his best rather than by his worst; and Mr. Miller's best lines stamp him a true man, — a man of sympathetic instincts and deep reverence for all that is high and noble in nature and humanity.

*From the Nonconformist.*

Of all American poetry in recent years, that of Mr. Joaquin Miller is the freshest. He is a new poet in the proper sense of the term. He owes allegiance to no transatlantic masters, and he is no servile imitator of the modern minstrelsy of our own country. In outward form — in the mechanism of his poetry — he of course follows the fashion of the times; but the spirit is new, the tone is individual and distinct. In his poems for the first time the prairies, the sierras, and the new and old life of the Far West of America, have been fairly poetized, so to speak. . . . "Songs of the Sun-Lands" contains nothing, perhaps, superior to "Arizonian" in Mr. Miller's "Songs of the Sierras;" yet it contains no poem so crude as one or two poems in his former volume. The best here is, undoubtedly, "The Isles of the Amazons." . . . Notwithstanding these defects, however, we maintain that we have in Mr. Joaquin Miller a new poet, who with more culture and higher aims is fully capable of producing in the future a poem that the world will not willingly let die.

*From the Globe.*

His poetry is in no danger of suffering neglect, nor is it likely to lack admirers. By his earlier volume, "The Songs of the Sierras," he fully proved his right to be heard; and students of poetry have not forgotten the influence of the fresh thought and freer music his verse contained. That, in truth, was the essence of Mr. Miller's achievement. He had somehow broken away from the ordinary standards of poetical composition without sacrifice of musical effect. The verse was larger and with less restraint than could be found in other singers, moving with a more continuous flow, and advancing in a cadence always varied and not recurring. Something instructive in the style seemed to image both the singer and the thing sung of, so that we were influenced not so much by this or that particular thought, as by the romantic and picturesque effect of the whole, with its fearless and confident description, and its untamed yet tuneful melody. To follow the poet was like following a keen, swift rider, who rides eagerly, it matters not whither, and who attracts us by a wild grace and a beautiful skill as he rushes through scenes of luxuriant loveliness that would cause a less impetuous horseman to pause and linger. That was the character of his verse as we knew it in the earlier volume, and that also is its character here. What was best in the earlier work is retained in this, and it still remains the best the poet can do.

*From the Morning Post.*

The author appears to be a true poet, with all the natural fire and tenderness — the spark and dew — that fall from Helicon. . . . In the present collection of poems he has largely contributed to his own fame, which was already very great, and to the pleasure of all who can listen with sympathy to the pathetic muse expressing her feelings in simple but inspired strains.

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