

## Poems / by Robert Bridges.

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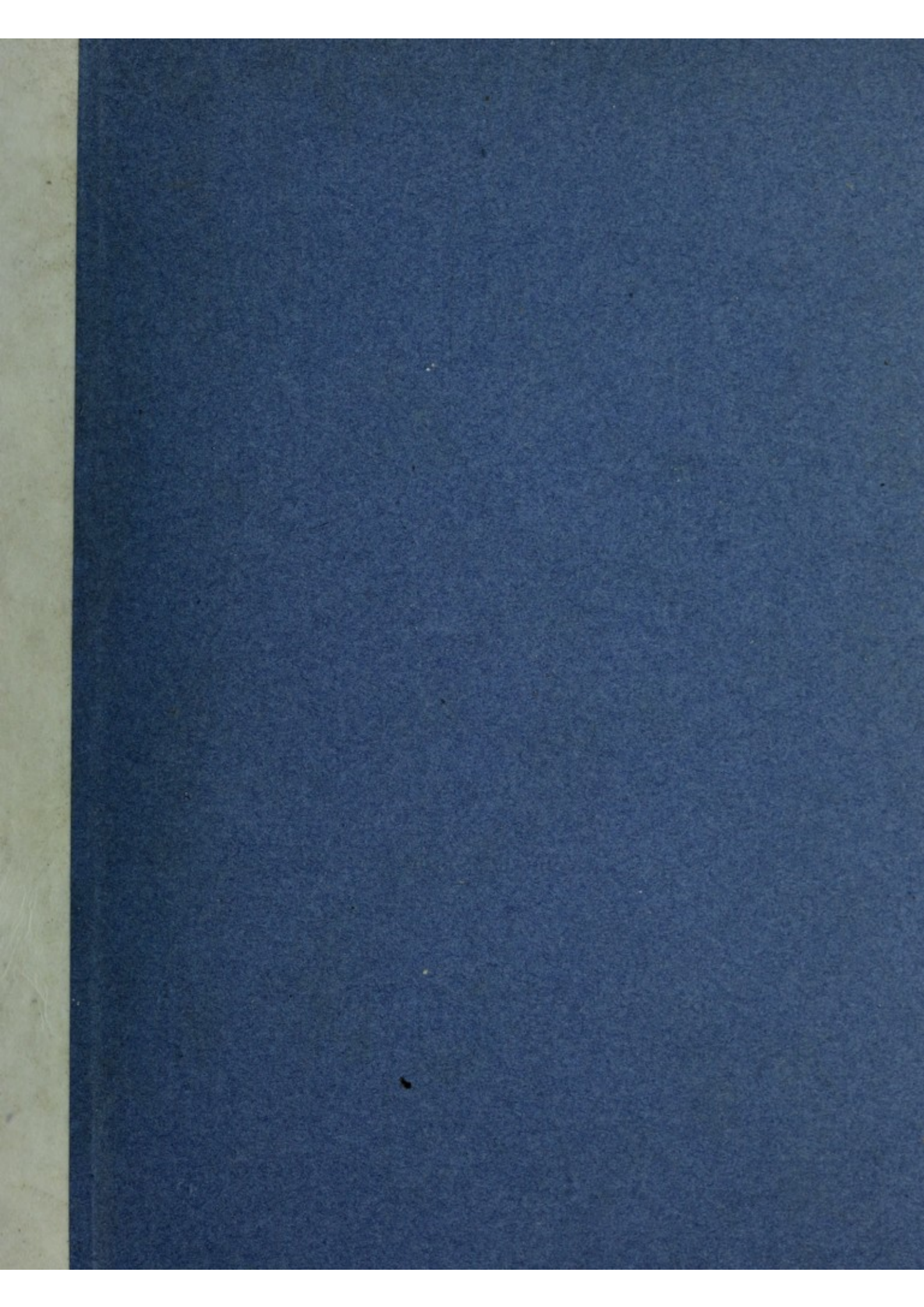
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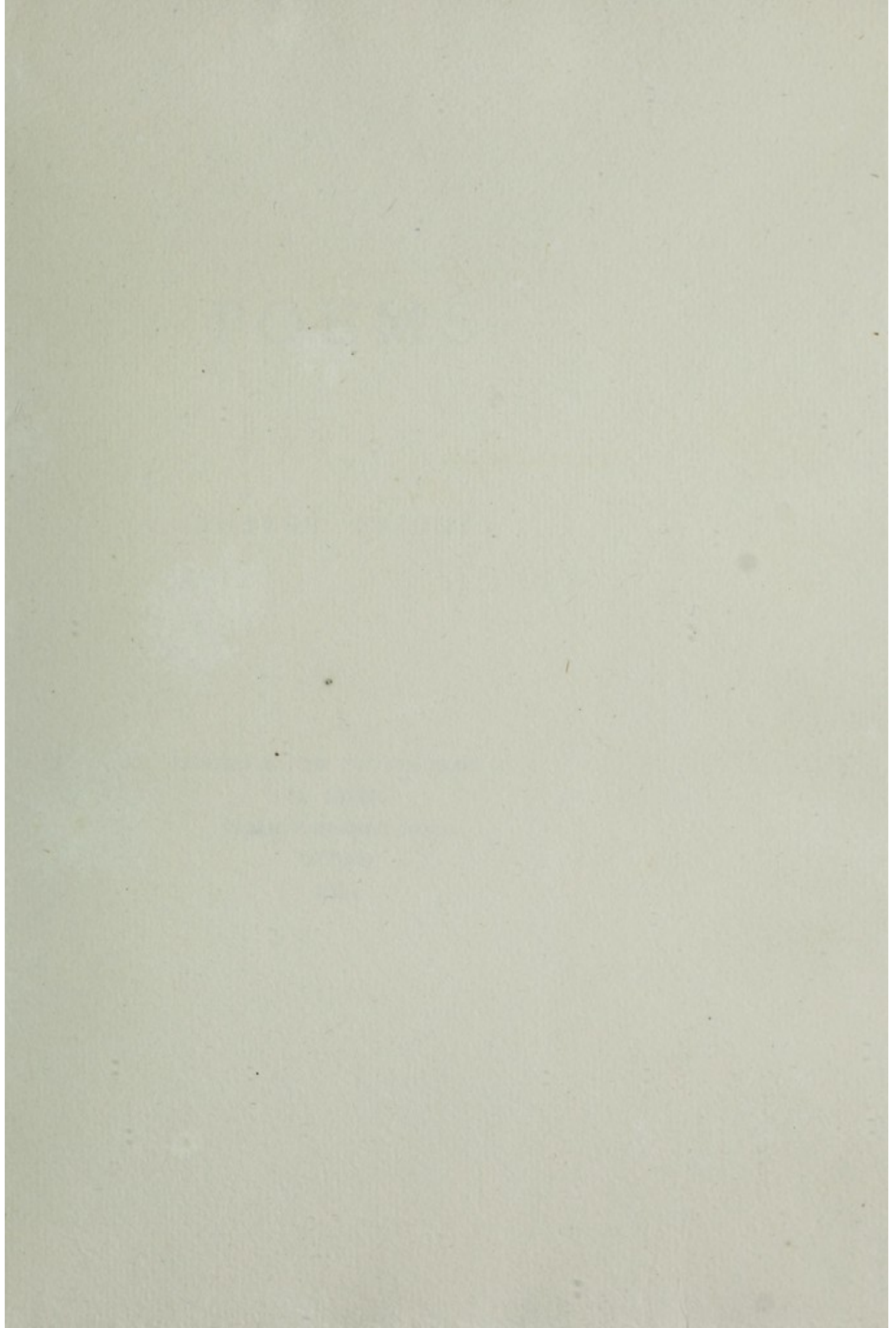
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Samuel Gee  
1884



EMERSON

1844

1844

# POEMS

BY

ROBERT BRIDGES

PRINTED AT THE PRIVATE PRESS OF

H. DANIEL

FELLOW OF WORCESTER COLLEGE

OXFORD

1884

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## CONTENTS

### FROM FIRST SERIES PUBLISHED 1873

1	<i>Clear and gentle stream</i>	page 1
2	<i>Dear lady when thou frownest</i>	4
3	<i>Poor withered rose and dry</i>	5
4	<i>I found to-day out walking</i>	7

### FROM SECOND SERIES PUBLISHED 1879

5	<i>Will Love again awake</i>	8
6	<i>Whither, O splendid ship</i>	10
7	<i>I saw the Virgin-mother clad in green</i>	12
8	<i>I know not how I came</i>	14
9	<i>There is a hill</i>	17
10	<i>Again with pleasant green</i>	21
11	<i>Behold! the radiant Spring</i>	25
12	<i>I have loved flowers that fade</i>	29
13	<i>Wherefore to-night so full of care</i>	30

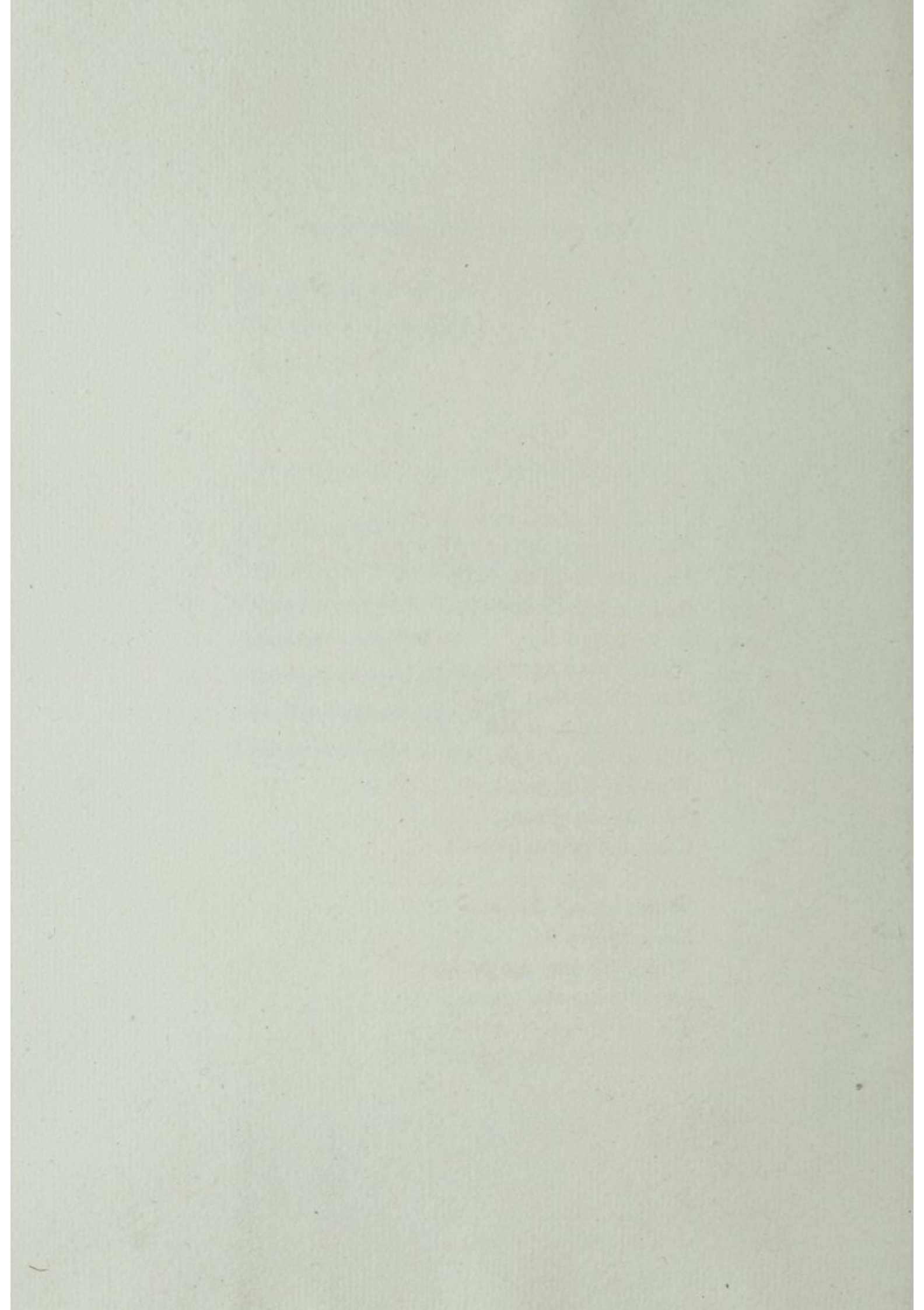
FROM THIRD SERIES PVBLISHED 1880

14	<i>Thou didst delight my eyes</i>	32
15	<i>When men were all asleep</i>	33
16	<i>I stand on the cliff</i>	35
17	<i>Perfect little body</i>	37

FOVRTH SERIES, 1882. NOT PVBLISHED BEFORE

18	<i>Joy, sweetest lifeborn joy</i>	39
19	<i>O my vague desires (from PROMETHEVS)</i>	42
20	<i>The full moon from her cloudless skies</i>	43
21	<i>I praise the tender flower</i>	44
22	<i>Awake my heart to be loved</i>	45
23	<i>Who that hath ever shot a shaft</i>	46
24	<i>O youth whose hope is high</i>	52

1870  
1871  
1872  
1873  
1874  
1875  
1876  
1877  
1878  
1879  
1880  
1881  
1882  
1883  
1884  
1885  
1886  
1887  
1888  
1889  
1890  
1891  
1892  
1893  
1894  
1895  
1896  
1897  
1898  
1899  
1900



ELEGY

CLEAR and gentle stream,  
Known and loved so long,  
That hast heard the song  
And the idle dream  
Of my boyish day ;  
While I once again  
Down thy margin stray,  
In the selfsame strain  
Still my voice is spent,  
With my old lament,  
And my idle dream,  
Clear and gentle stream !

Where my old seat was  
Here again I sit,  
Where the long boughs knit  
Over stream and grafs  
Thick tranfluent eaves :  
Where back eddies play

Shipwreck with the leaves,  
And the proud swans stray,  
Sailing one by one  
Out of stream and sun,  
And the fish lie cool  
In their chosen pool.

Many an afternoon  
Of the summer day  
Dreaming here I lay ;  
And I know how soon  
Idly at its hour  
First the deep bell hums  
From the minster tower,  
And then evening comes,  
Creeping up the glade,  
With her lengthening shade,  
And the tardy boon  
Of her brightening moon.

Clear and gentle stream,  
Ere again I go  
Where thou dost not flow,  
Well does it beseem  
Thee to hear again  
Once my youthful song,

That familiar strain  
 Silent now so long :  
 Be as I content  
 With my old lament,  
 And my idle dream,  
 Clear and gentle stream !





**D**EAR lady, when thou frowneſt,  
And my true love deſpiſeſt,  
And all thy vows diſowneſt  
That ſealed my venture wiſeſt ;  
I think thy pride's diſpleaſure  
Neglects a matchleſs treaſure  
Exceeding price and meaſure.

But when again thou ſmileſt,  
And love for love returneſt,  
And fear with joy beguileſt,  
And takeſt truth in earneſt ;  
Then, though I moſt adore thee,  
The ſum of my love for thee  
Seems poor, ſcant and unworthy.

**P**OOOR withered rose and dry,  
 Skeleton of a rose,  
 Risen to testify  
 To love's sad close :

Treasured for love's sweet sake,  
 That of joy past  
 Thou might'st again awake  
 Memory at last :

Yet is thy perfume sweet,  
 Thy petals red  
 Yet tell of summer heat,  
 And the gay bed :

Yet yet recall the glow  
 Of the gazing fun,  
 When at thy bush we two  
 Joined hands in one.

But, rose, thou hast not seen,  
 Thou hast not wept  
 The change that passed between  
 Whilst thou hast slept.

To me thou seemest yet  
 The dead dream's thrall :  
 While I live and forget  
 Dream, truth and all.

Thou art more fresh than I,  
 Rose, sweet and red :  
 Salt on my pale cheeks lie  
 The tears I shed.



I FOUND to-day out walking  
 The flower my love loves best.  
 What, when I stooped to pluck it,  
 Could dare my hand arrest ?

Was it a snake lay curling  
 About the root's thick crown ?  
 Or did some hidden bramble  
 Tear my hand reaching down ?

There was no snake uncurling,  
 And no thorn wounded me ;  
 'Twas my heart checked me, fighting  
 She is beyond the sea.

**W**ILL *Love again awake,  
That lies asleep so long?*  
O hush! ye tongues that shake  
The drowsy night with song.

*It is a lady fair  
Whom once he deigned to praise,  
That at the door doth dare  
Her sad complaint to raise.*

She must be fair of face,  
As bold in heart she seems,  
If she would match her grace  
With the delight of dreams.

*Her beauty would surprise  
Gazers on Autumn eves,  
Who watched the broad moon rise  
Vpon the scattered sheaves.*

O sweet must be the voice  
 He shall descend to hear,  
 Who doth in Heaven rejoice  
 His most enchanted ear.

*The smile, that rests to play  
 Upon her lip, foretells  
 What musical array  
 Tricks her sweet syllables.*

And yet her smiles have danced  
 In vain, if her discourse  
 Win not the soul entranced  
 In divine intercourse.

*She will encounter all  
 This trial without shame,  
 Her eyes men Beauty call,  
 And Wisdom is her name.*

Throw back the portals then,  
 Ye guards, your watch that keep,  
 Love will awake again  
 That lay so long asleep.

## A PASSER BY

**W**HITHER, O splendid ship, thy white fails crowding,  
 Leaning acrofs the bosom of the urgent West,  
 That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,  
 Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?  
 Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest,  
 When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,  
 Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest  
 In a summer haven, asleep, thy white fails furling.

I there before thee, in the country so well thou knowest,  
 Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air :  
 I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,  
 And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,  
 Thy fails for awning spread, thy masts bare :  
 Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snowcapped, grandest  
 Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair  
 Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,  
I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine  
That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,  
Thy port assured in a happier land than mine.  
But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,  
As thou, aflant with trim tackle and shrouding,  
From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line  
In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding.





## LATE SPRING EVENING

I SAW the Virgin-mother clad in green,  
 Walking the sprinkled meadows at sundown;  
 While yet the moon's cold flame was hung between  
 The day and night, above the dusky town:  
 I saw her brighter than the Western gold,  
 Whereto she faced in splendour to behold.

Her dress was greener than the tenderest leaf  
 That trembled in the sunset glare aglow:  
 Herself more delicate than is the brief,  
 Pink apple-blossom, that May showers lay low,  
 And more delicious than 's the earliest streak  
 The blushing rose shows of her crimson cheek.

With jealous grace her idle ears to please,  
 A music entered, making passion fain:  
 Three nightingales sat singing in the trees,  
 And praised the Goddesses for the fallen rain;  
 Which yet their unseen motions did arouse,  
 Or parting Zephyrs shook out from the boughs.

And o'er the treetops, scattered in mid air,  
 The exhausted clouds, laden with crimson light,  
 Floated, or seemed to sleep; and, highest there,  
 One planet broke the lingering ranks of night;  
 Daring day's company, so he might spy  
 The Virgin-queen once with his watchful eye.

And when I saw her, then I worshipped her,  
 And said,—O bounteous Spring, O beauteous Spring,  
 Mother of all my years, thou who dost stir  
 My heart to adore thee and my tongue to sing,  
 Flower of my fruit, of my heart's blood the fire,  
 Of all my satisfaction the desire!

How art thou every year more beautiful,  
 Younger for all the winters thou hast cast:  
 And I, for all my love grows, grow more dull,  
 Decaying with each season overpast!  
 In vain to teach him love must man employ thee,  
 The more he learns the less he can enjoy thee.

WOOING

**I** KNOW not how I came,  
New on my knightly journey,  
To win the fairest dame  
That graced my maiden tourney.

Chivalry's lovely prize  
With all men's gaze upon her,  
Why did she free her eyes  
On me, to do me honour ?

Ah ! ne'er had I my mind  
With such high hope delighted,  
Had she not first inclined,  
And with her eyes invited.

But never doubt I knew,  
 Having their glance to cheer me,  
 Vntil the day joy grew  
 Too great, too fure, too near me.

When hope a fear became,  
 And passion, grown too tender,  
 Now trembled at the shame  
 Of a despised furrender ;

And where my love at first  
 Saw kindness in her smiling,  
 I read her pride, and cursed  
 The arts of her beguiling.

Till winning less than won,  
 And liker wooed than wooing,  
 Too late I turned undone  
 Away from my undoing ;

And stood beside the door,  
 Whereto she followed, making  
 My hard leave-taking more  
 Hard by her sweet leave-taking.

Her speech would have betrayed  
Her thought, had mine been colder :  
Her eyes distrefs had made  
A leffer lover bolder.

But no! Fond heart distrust,  
Cried Wisdom, and confider :  
Go free, since go thou must,  
And so farewell I bid her.

And brisk upon my way  
I smote the stroke to fever,  
And should have lost that day  
My life's delight for ever ;

But when I saw her start  
And turn aside and tremble ;—  
Ah! she was true, her heart  
I knew did not dissemble.

**T**HERE is a hill beside the silver Thames,  
 Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine :  
 And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems  
 Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.  
     Straight trees in every place  
     Their thick tops interlace,  
 And pendant branches trail their foliage fine  
     Vpon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows :  
 His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade,  
 Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes  
 Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.  
     His winter floods lay bare  
     The stout roots in the air :  
 His summer streams are cool, when they have played  
     Among their fibrous hair.

A rusky island guards the sacred bower,  
 And hides it from the meadow, where in peace  
 The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,  
 Robbing the golden market of the bees :  
     And laden barges float  
     By banks of myofote ;  
 And scented flags and golden flower-de-lys  
     Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool  
 Eddies away, are tangled mats on mats  
 The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool  
 And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass ;  
     Where spreading crowfoot mats  
     The drowning nenuphars,  
 Waving the tassels of her silken grass  
     Below her silver stars.

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,  
 Not the white water-lily spoked with gold ;  
 Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows  
 On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold :  
     Yet should her roots but try  
     Within these deeps to lie,  
 Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold  
     Her waxen head so high.

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook  
 Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree  
 Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,  
 Forgetting soon his pride of fishery ;  
     And dreams, or falls asleep,  
     While curious fishes peep  
 About his nibbled bait, or scornfully  
     Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes by the pathway through the trees  
 An aged dame at evening trudges home :  
 And merry voices greet her, and she sees  
 Her dear grandchildren, down the hill that come  
     To meet her, and to bear  
     Her basket home with care,  
 Divining that, of all her treasures, some  
     Will be for them to share.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,  
 Whether he bathe at morning in the stream :  
 Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe  
 The meadows, busy with a blurring steam ;  
     Or watch, as fades the light,  
     The gibbous moon grow bright,  
 Vntil her magic rays dance in a dream,  
     And glorify the night.



Where is this bower beside the silver Thames ?  
 O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow !  
 O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,  
 No sharer of my secret I allow :  
     Left ere I come the while  
     Strange feet your shades defile ;  
 Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow  
     Within your guardian isle.



## SPRING

## INVITATION TO THE COVNTRY

**A** GAIN with pleafant green  
Has Spring renewed the wood,  
And where the bare trunks flood  
Are leafy arbours feen ;  
And back on budding boughs  
Come birds, to court and pair,  
Whofe rival amorous vows  
Amaze the fcented air.

The freams unbound anew  
Refill their moffy banks,  
The forward feafon pranks  
With flowers of varied hue :  
And fattered down the meads  
From hour to hour unfold  
A thoufand buds and beads  
In ftars and cups of gold.

Now hear, and see, and note,  
 The farms are all astir,  
 And every labourer  
 Has doffed his winter coat ;  
 And how with specks of white  
 They dot the brown hillside,  
 Or jaunt and sing outright  
 As by their teams they stride.

They sing to feel the Sun  
 Regain his wanton strength ;  
 To know the year at length  
 Rewards their labour done ;  
 To see the rootless stake  
 They set bare in the ground,  
 Burst into leaf, and shake  
 Its grateful scent around.

Ah now an evil lot  
 Is his who toils for gain,  
 Where crowded chimneys stain  
 The heavens his choice forgot ;  
 'Tis on the blighted trees  
 That deck his garden dim,  
 And in the tainted breeze  
 That sweet spring comes to him.

Far rather would I choofe  
 The grace of brutes that bask,  
 Than in an eager task,  
 My inborn honour lofe :  
 Would rather far enjoy  
 The body, than invent  
 A duty, to deftroy  
 The eafe which nature fent ;

And country life I praife  
 And lead, becaufe I find  
 The philofophic mind  
 Can take no middle ways ;  
 She will not leave her love  
 To mix with men, her art  
 Is all to ftrove above  
 The crowd, or ftand apart.

Thrice happy he, the rare  
 Prometheus, who can play  
 With hidden things, and lay  
 New realms of nature bare :  
 Whofe venturous ftrep has trod  
 Hell underfoot, and won  
 A crown from man and God  
 For all that he has done.—

That highest gift of all,  
 Since crabbèd fate did flood  
 My heart with sluggish blood,  
 I look not mine to call ;  
 But, like a truant freed,  
 Fly to the woods, and claim  
 A pleasure for the deed  
 Of my inglorious name.

And am content, denied  
 The best, in choos'ing right ;  
 For Nature can delight  
 Fancies unoccupied  
 With ecstasies so sweet  
 As none can even guefs,  
 Who walk not with the feet  
 Of joy in idleness.

Then leave your joyless ways,  
 My friend, my joys to see.  
 The day you come shall be  
 The choice of chosen days :  
 You shall be lost, and learn  
 New being, and forget  
 The world, till your return  
 Shall bring your first regret.

## SPRING

## REPLY

**B**EHOLD ! the radiant Spring,  
 In splendour decked anew,  
 Down from her heaven of blue  
 Returns on sunlit wing :  
 The zephyrs of her train  
 In fleecy clouds disport,  
 And birds to greet her reign  
 Summon their fylvan court.

For even in freet and square  
 Her tardy trees relent,  
 As some far-travell'd scent  
 Kindles the morning air ;  
 And forth their buds provoke,  
 Forgetting winter brown,  
 And all the mire and smoke  
 That wrapped the dingy town.

Now he that loves indeed  
 His pleasure must awake,  
 Left any pleasure take  
 Its flight, and he not heed ;  
 For of his few short years  
 Another now invites  
 His hungry soul, and cheers  
 His life with new delights.

And who loves Nature more  
 Than he, whose painful art  
 Has taught and skilled his heart  
 To read her skill and lore ?  
 Whose spirit leaps more high,  
 Plucking the pale primrose,  
 Than his whose feet must fly  
 The pasture where it grows ?

One long in city pent  
 Forgets, or must complain :  
 But think not I can stain  
 My heaven with discontent ;  
 Nor wallow with that sad,  
 Backsliding herd, who cry  
 That Truth must make man bad,  
 And pleasure is a lie.

Rather while Reason lives  
 To mark me from the beast,  
 I'll teach her serve at least  
 To heal the wound she gives :  
 Nor need she strain her powers  
 Beyond a common flight,  
 To make the passing hours  
 Happy from morn till night.

Since health our toil rewards,  
 And strength is labour's prize,  
 I hate not, nor despise  
 The work my lot accords ;  
 Nor fret with fears unkind  
 The tender joys, that bless  
 My hard-won peace of mind,  
 In hours of idleness.

Then what charm company  
 Can give, know I,—if wine  
 Go round, or throats combine  
 To set dumb music free.  
 Or deep in wintertide  
 When winds without make moan,  
 I love my own fireside  
 Not least when most alone.



Then oft I turn the page  
In which our country's name,  
Spoiling the Greek of fame,  
Shall found in every age :  
Or some Terentian play  
Renew, whose excellent  
Adjusted folds betray  
How once Menander went.

Or if grave study suit  
The yet unwearied brain,  
Plato can teach again,  
And Socrates dispute ;  
Till fancy in a dream  
Confront their souls with mine,  
Crowning the mind supreme,  
And her delights divine.

While pleasure yet can be  
Pleasant, and fancy sweet,  
I bid all care retreat  
From my philosophy ;  
Which, when I come to try  
Your simpler life, will find,  
I doubt not, joys to vie  
With those I leave behind.

**I** HAVE loved flowers that fade,  
 Within whose magic tents  
 Rich hues have marriage made  
 With sweet unmemoried scents :  
 A honeymoon delight,—  
 A joy of love at fight,  
 That ages in an hour :—  
 My song be like a flower !

I have loved airs, that die  
 Before their charm is writ  
 Vpon the liquid sky  
 Trembling to welcome it.  
 Notes, that with pulse of fire  
 Proclaim the spirit's desire,  
 Then die, and are nowhere :—  
 My song be like an air !

Die, song, die like a breath,  
 And wither as a bloom :  
 Fear not a flowery death,  
 Dread not an airy tomb !  
 Fly with delight, fly hence !  
 'Twas thine love's tender sense  
 To feast, now on thy bier  
 Beauty shall shed a tear.

**W**HEREFORE to-night so full of care,  
My foul, revolving hopeless strife,  
Pointing at hindrance, and the bare  
Painful escapes of fitful life ?

Shaping the doom that may befall  
By precedent of terror past :  
By love dishonoured, and the call  
Of friendship slighted at the last ?

By treasured names, the little store  
That memory out of wreck could save  
Of loving hearts, that gone before  
Call their old comrade to the grave ?

O foul be patient : thou shalt find  
A little matter mend all this ;  
Some strain of music to thy mind,  
Some praise for skill not spent amiss.

Again shall pleasure overflow  
Thy cup with sweetness, thou shalt taste  
Nothing but sweetness, and shalt grow  
Half sad for sweetness run to waste.

O happy life! I hear thee sing,  
O rare delight of mortal stuff!  
I praise my days for all they bring,  
Yet are they only not enough.



**T**HOU didst delight my eyes :  
 Yet who am I? nor first  
 Nor last nor best that durst  
 Once dream of thee for prize ;  
 Nor this the only time  
 Thou shalt set love to rhyme.

Thou didst delight my ear :  
 Ah! little praise ; thy voice  
 Makes other hearts rejoice,  
 Makes all ears glad that hear ;  
 And short my joy : but yet,  
 O song, do not forget.

For what wert thou to me ?  
 How shall I say ? The moon,  
 That poured her midnight noon  
 Vpon his wrecking sea ;—  
 A sail, that for a day  
 Has cheered the castaway.

**W**HEN men were all asleep the snow came flying,  
 In large white flakes falling on the city brown,  
 Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,  
 Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town ;  
 Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing ;  
 Lazily and incessantly floating down and down :  
 Silently fitting and veiling road, roof and railing ;  
 Hiding difference, making unevenness even,  
 Into angles and crevices softly drifting and failing.  
 All night it fell, and when full inches seven  
 It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,  
 Its clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven ;  
 And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness  
 Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare :  
 The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling whiteness ;  
 The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air ;  
 No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,  
 And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.

Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,  
 They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze  
 Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snow-balling ;  
 Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees ;  
 Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,  
 " O look at the trees ! " they cried, " O look at the trees ! "

With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder,  
 Following along the white deserted way,  
 A country company long dispersed afunder :

When now already the sun, in pale display  
 Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below  
 His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.

For now doors open and war is waged with the snow ;  
 And trains of sombre men, past tale of number,  
 Tread long brown paths as towards their toil they go :

But even for them no cares awhile encumber  
 Their minds diverted ; the daily word unspoken,  
 The daily thoughts of labour and sorrow flumber  
 At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm they  
 have broken.

**I** STAND on the cliff and watch the veiled sun paling  
 A silver field afar in the mournful sea,  
 The scourge of the surf, and plaintive gulls sailing  
 At ease on the gale that smites the shuddering lea :  
     Whose smile severe and chaste  
 June never hath stirred to vanity, nor age defaced.  
 In lofty thought strive, O spirit, for ever :  
 In courage and strength pursue thine own endeavour.

Ah! if it were only for thee, thou restless ocean  
 Of waves that follow and roar, the sweep of the tides ;  
 Were't only for thee, impetuous wind, whose motion  
 Precipitate all o'errides, and turns, nor abides :  
     For you sad birds and fair,  
 Or only for thee, bleak cliff, erect in the air ;  
 Then well could I read wisdom in every feature,  
 O well should I understand the voice of Nature.



But far away, I think, in the Thames valley,  
 The silent river glides by flowery banks :  
 And birds sing sweetly in branches that arch an alley  
 Of cloistered trees, moss-grown in their ancient ranks :  
 Where if a light air stray,  
 'Tis laden with hum of bees and scent of may.  
 Love and peace be thine, O spirit, for ever :  
 Serve thy sweet desire : despise endeavour,

And if it were only for thee, entranced river,  
 That scarce dost rock the lily on her airy stem,  
 Or stir a wave to murmur, or a rush to quiver ;  
 Were't but for the woods, and summer asleep in them :  
 For you my bowers green,  
 My hedges of rose and woodbine, with walks between,  
 Then well could I read wisdom in every feature,  
 O well should I understand the voice of Nature.



**P**ERFECT little body, without fault or stain on thee,  
 With promise of strength and manhood full and fair!  
     Though cold and stark and bare,  
 The bloom and the charm of life doth awhile remain on thee.

Thy mother's treasure wert thou ;—alas ! no longer  
     To visit her heart with wonderous joy ; to be  
     Thy father's pride ;—ah, he  
 Must gather his faith together, and his strength make stronger.

To me, as I move thee now in the last duty,  
     Dost thou with a turn or a gesture anon respond ;  
     Startling my fancy fond  
 With a chance attitude of the head, a freak of beauty.

Thy hand clasps, as 'twas wont, my finger, and holds it :  
     But the grasp is the clasp of Death, heartbreaking and stiff ;  
     Yet feels to my hand as if  
 'Twas still thy will, thy pleasure and trust that enfolds it.

So I lay thee there, thy sunken eyelids closing,—  
Go lie thou there in thy coffin, thy last little bed!—  
Propping thy wife, sad head,  
Thy firm, pale hands across thy chest disposing.

So quiet! doth the change content thee?—Death, whither hath  
he taken thee?  
To a world, do I think, that rights the disaster of this?  
The vision of which I miss,  
Who weep for the body, and wish but to warm thee and awaken  
thee?

Ah! little at best can all our hopes avail us  
To lift this sorrow, or cheer us, when in the dark,  
Unwilling, alone we embark,  
And the things we have seen and have known and have heard  
of, fail us.



**J**OY, sweetest lifeborn joy, where dost thou dwell ?  
 Vpon the formless moments of our being  
 Flitting, to mock the ear that heareth well,  
 To escape the trained eye that strains in seeing,  
 Dost thou fly with us whither we are fleeing ;  
 Or home in our creations, to withstand  
 Blackwingèd death, that slays the making hand ?

The making mind, that must untimely perish  
 Amidst its work which time may not destroy,  
 The beauteous forms which man shall love to cherish,  
 The glorious songs that combat earth's annoy ?  
 Thou dost dwell here, I know, divinest Joy :  
 But they who build thy towers fair and strong,  
 Of all that toil, feel most of care and wrong.

Sense is so tender, O and hope so high,  
 That common pleasures mock their hope and sense ;  
 And swifter than doth lightning from the sky  
 The ecstasy they pine for flashes hence,  
 Leaving the darkness and the woe immense,

Wherewith it seems no thread of light was woven,  
Nor doth the track remain where once 'twas cloven.

And heaven and all the stable elements  
That guard God's purpose mock us, though the mind  
Be spent in searching : for his old intents  
We see were never for our joy designed :  
They shine as doth the bright sun on the blind,  
Or like his pensioned stars, that hymn above  
His praise, but not toward us, that God is Love.

For who so well hath wooed the maiden hours  
As quite to have won the worth of their rich flow,  
To rob the night of mystery, or the flowers  
Of their sweet delicacy ere they go ?  
Nay, even the dear occasion when we know  
We miss the joy, and on the gliding day  
The special glories float and pass away,

Only life's common plod : still to repair  
The body and the thing which perisheth :  
The foil, the smutch, the toil and ache and wear,  
The grinding enginry of blood and breath,  
Pain's random darts, the heartless spade of death :  
All is but grief, and heavily we call  
On the last terror for the end of all.

Then comes the happy moment : not a stir  
 In any tree, no portent in the sky :  
 The morn doth neither hasten nor defer,  
 The morrow hath no name to call it by,  
 But life and joy are one,—we know not why,—  
 As though our very blood long breathless lain  
 Had tasted of the breath of God again.

And having tasted it I speak of it,  
 And praise him telling how I trembled then  
 When his touch strengthened me, as now I sit  
 In wonder, reaching out beyond my ken,  
 Reaching to turn the day back, and my pen  
 Urging to tell a tale which told would seem  
 The witless phantasy of them that dream.

But O most blestèd truth, for truth thou art,  
 Abide thou with me till my life shall end.  
 Divinity hath surely touched my heart ;  
 I have possessed more joy than earth can lend :  
 I may attain what time shall never spend.  
 Only let not my duller days destroy  
 The memory of thy witness and my joy.

O MY vague defires !  
 Ye lambent flames of the foul, her offspring fires :  
 That are my foul herself in pangs sublime  
 Rising and flying to heaven before her time :

What doth tempt you forth  
 To drown in the south or shiver in the frosty north ?  
 What seek ye or find ye in your random flying,  
 Ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying ?

Joy, the joy of flight !  
 They hide in the sun, they flare and dance in the night ;  
 Gone up, gone out of sight : and ever again  
 Follow fresh tongues of fire, fresh pangs of pain.

Ah ! they burn my soul,  
 The fires, devour my soul that once was whole :  
 She is scattered in fiery phantoms day by day,  
 But whither, whither ? ay whither ? away, away !

Could I but control  
 These vague defires, these leaping flames of the foul :  
 Could I but quench the fire : ah ! could I stay  
 My soul that flieth, alas, and dieth away !

THE full moon from her cloudless skies  
Turneth her face, I think, on me ;  
And from the hour when she doth rise  
Till when she sets, none else will see.

One only other ray she hath,  
That makes an angle close with mine,  
And glancing down its happy path  
Upon another spot doth shine.

But that ray too is sent to me,  
For where it lights there dwells my heart :  
And if I were where I would be,  
Both rays would shine, love, where thou art.



I PRAISE the tender flower,  
 That on a mournful day  
 Bloomed in my garden bower  
 And made the winter gay.  
 Its loveliness contented  
 My heart tormented.

I praise the gentle maid  
 Whose happy voice and smile  
 To confidence betrayed  
 My doleful heart awhile :  
 And gave my spirit deploring  
 Fresh wings for soaring.

The maid for very fear  
 Of love I durst not tell :  
 The rose could never hear,  
 Though I bespake her well :  
 So in my song I bind them  
 For all to find them.

AWAKE my heart to be loved, awake, awake !  
 The darknes silvers away, the morn doth break,  
 It leaps in the sky : unrifen lustres flake  
 The o'ertaken moon. Awake, O heart, awake !

She too that loveth awaketh and hopes for thee :  
 Her eyes already have sped the shades that flee,  
 Already they watch the path thy feet shall take :  
 Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake !

And if thou tarry from her,—if this could be,—  
 She cometh herself, O heart, to be loved, to thee ;  
 For thee would unashamed herself forsake :  
 Awake to be loved, my heart, awake, awake !

Awake, the land is scattered with light, and see,  
 Vncanopied sleep is flying from field and tree :  
 And blossoming boughs of April in laughter shake ;  
 Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake !

Lo all things wake and tarry and look for thee :  
 She looketh and faith, “O fun now bring him to me.  
 Come more adored, O adored, for his coming's fake,  
 And awake my heart to be loved : awake, awake !”

**W**HO that hath ever shot a shaft at heaven  
 Whether of wonder, praise or humble prayer,  
 But hath not straight received his answer given,  
 And been made strong with comforting, aware  
 Of strength and beauty for his purpose meant,  
 Whether it were a lark's song or a scent  
 That wanders on the quavering paths of the air ?

The sweetest of all birds, that fed my slumber  
 With music through the thought-exalting night,  
 Among forgotten fancies without number  
 Transfigured sorrow to a heart's delight.  
 And uninvited memories, that stole  
 With haunting trouble to their slavèd soul  
 Were turned to wondrous joys and aspects bright.

So intimate a part are we of Nature  
 That even to call us best part doth us wrong,  
 Being her mind, the meaning of her feature,  
 To whom her varied forms wholly belong.  
 So that what were not ours were worthless quite,

And thus to me it happened on that night  
 To be the love and joy of this bird's song.

As it came leaping on the dark unguarded  
 Silence of midnight to the door of the ear :  
 And finding the warm passages unwarded  
 Sped up the spiral stair, and mounted near  
 To where in unseen rooms the delicate sprite  
 That never sleeps sat watching through the night  
 Weaving the time in fancies strange and drear.

Nor was it that the heavenly music fluttered  
 The quick electric atoms ; rarer far,  
 The melody this bird of passion uttered  
 Coloured the firmament where all thoughts are :  
 As in the characters a poet's hand  
 Has traced, there lie—for poets understand—  
 Heart-thrills that shoot through blackness like a star.

And so, as summer eve will sweetly soften  
 The wayward thoughts of all who forth may fare,  
 To me there came the spirit who haunts not often  
 My heart for sorrow of the sadness there :  
 But now her face was lit with joy, her eyes  
 Were eager messengers of her surprise  
 That she was quit of her profound despair.

Clothed was she like a nun, and yet her vesture  
 Did sad despite unto her merry grace,  
 As gaily she came forward with a gesture  
 As gamefome as the childhood in her face,  
 That I had seen so long downcast and sad,  
 Robbed of the happy birthright which she had,  
 Which earth may steal away but not replace.

There is no sorrow like the slow heart-fearing,  
 When phantoms bred of earth spring up between  
 Two loving hearts, who grew to their endearing,  
 When all their pushing tendrils yet were green :  
 No time-struck ruin is so sad to see  
 As youth's disease : than thus, O Love, to be,  
 'Twere better for thy honour not to have been.

Had I not seen the servitude of folly,  
 The minute-measuring of days and nights,  
 With superstition preaching melancholy  
 And pleasure counterfeiting her own rights ;  
 Afraid to turn again and look behind,  
 Left truth should flame and overwhelm the mind,  
 Fanning her red regret of old delights.

The mimicry of woe that is a trouble  
 To them that practise it, but which to those

To whom the joy is owed makes sorrow double  
 Seeing the debtor destitute that owes.  
 The tinfelling of cruel bars, to blind  
 The caged bird to think the hand is kind  
 Which liberty denies and food bestows.

From which I hurried as a beast from burning,  
 Nor cared in flying where my terror led ;  
 Only beyond recall and past returning,  
 Nor now repent if then too far I fled.—  
 So long, dear life, as in my flesh thou reign'ft  
 I will sin with thee rather than against,  
 Let me die living rather than live dead.

But neither is there human pleasure rarer  
 Than love's renewal after long disdain,  
 Nor any touching tale for telling fairer  
 Than that wherein lost lovers meet again :  
 Such joy must happy souls beyond the grave,  
 If once again they meet, in Heaven have,  
 Without which all the joys of Heaven were vain.

'Twas even thus she came and in my dreaming,  
 My pleasure was not less than Heaven's may be :  
 The spiritual and unearthly seeming

So far outdid a touched reality :  
 As glances sent in love do more than tell  
 What words can never phrase or utter well,  
 And which 'tis shame and blindness not to see.

But now the joy was mine, for gentle pity  
 Of her who wearily lived long alone  
 With mopes and mummers in a sensuous city  
 That held no passion equal to her own,  
 For gentle pity, I say, constrained me well,  
 As pains those separated souls they tell  
 Prepare for Heaven, and mould their hearts of stone.

But their sweet ecstasy is all abiding  
 And cannot pall with time nor tire nor fade,  
 Nor any more can day of death, dividing  
 Their earthborn loves, those happy haunts invade.  
 But joy for ever—if that joy compare  
 With my best joy on earth, may I be there !  
 Though even from that I shrink and am afraid.

Now when I woke and thought upon this vision,  
 Wherein she smiled on me and I on her,  
 I could not quite be clear of all misprision  
 Who of us most was changed : or if it were

The song I heard not—sleeping as I heard—  
That shaped our empty dream, while sang the bird  
    Regardless of his fond interpreter.





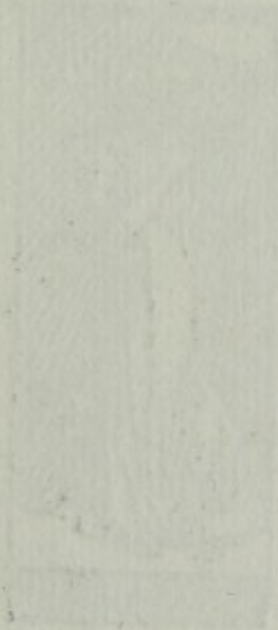
O YOVTH whose hope is high,  
Who dost to Truth aspire,  
Whether thou live or die,  
O look not back nor tire.

Thou that art bold to fly  
Through tempest, flood and fire,  
Nor dost not shrink to try  
Thy heart in torments dire :

If thou canst Death defy,  
If thy Faith is entire,  
Press onward, for thine eye  
Shall see thy heart's desire.

Beauty and love are nigh,  
And with their deathless quire  
Soon shall their eager cry  
Be numbered and expire.

8





77













