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# The People's Edition

## Locksley Hall and other Poems



The  
**Poetical Works**  
of  
ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

Locksley Hall  
and other Poems

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# CONTENTS

|                               | PAGE |
|-------------------------------|------|
| ST. SIMEON STYLITES - - - - - | 7    |
| THE TALKING OAK - - - - -     | 16   |
| LOVE AND DUTY - - - - -       | 32   |
| THE GOLDEN YEAR - - - - -     | 36   |
| ULYSSES - - - - -             | 40   |
| TITHONUS - - - - -            | 43   |
| LOCKSLEY HALL - - - - -       | 46   |
| GODIVA - - - - -              | 65   |
| THE DAY-DREAM - - - - -       | 69   |
| PROLOGUE - - - - -            | 69   |
| THE SLEEPING PALACE - - - - - | 70   |
| THE SLEEPING BEAUTY - - - - - | 73   |
| THE ARRIVAL - - - - -         | 74   |
| THE REVIVAL - - - - -         | 76   |
| THE DEPARTURE - - - - -       | 77   |
| MORAL - - - - -               | 79   |
| L'ENVOI - - - - -             | 80   |
| EPILOGUE - - - - -            | 83   |
| AMPHION - - - - -             | 84   |
| ST. AGNES' EVE - - - - -      | 88   |
| SIR GALAHAD - - - - -         | 90   |
| EDWARD GRAY - - - - -         | 94   |





## ST. SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,  
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet  
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,  
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn and sob,  
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,  
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,  
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,  
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,  
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,  
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne

Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and  
snow ;

And I had hoped that ere this period closed  
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,  
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord : I do not breathe,  
Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.  
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still  
Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,  
Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crush'd  
My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,  
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,  
For I was strong and hale of body then ;  
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,  
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard  
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,  
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound  
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw  
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.  
Now am I feeble grown ; my end draws nigh ;  
I hope my end draws nigh : half deaf I am,  
So that I scarce can hear the people hum  
About the column's base, and almost blind,

And scarce can recognise the fields I know ;  
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew ;  
Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,  
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,  
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,  
Have mercy, mercy : take away my sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,  
Who may be saved ? who is it may be saved ?  
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here ?  
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.  
For did not all thy martyrs die one death ?  
For either they were stoned, or crucified,  
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn  
In twain beneath the ribs ; but I die here  
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.  
Bear witness, if I could have found a way  
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)  
More slowly-painful to subdue this home  
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,  
I had not stinted practice, O my God.

For not alone this pillar-punishment,  
Not this alone I bore : but while I lived  
In the white convent down the valley there,  
For many weeks about my loins I wore  
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,

Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose ;  
And spake not of it to a single soul,  
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,  
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all  
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this  
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,  
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.  
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay  
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones ;  
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice  
Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes  
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,  
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came  
To touch my body and be heal'd, and live :  
And they say then that I work'd miracles,  
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,  
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,  
Knowest alone whether this was or no.  
Have mercy, mercy ! cover all my sin.

Then, that I might be more alone with thee,  
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high  
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve ;  
And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose  
Twenty by measure ; last of all, I grew

Twice ten long weary weary years to this,  
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as this—  
Or else I dream—and for so long a time,  
If I may measure time by yon slow light,  
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns—  
So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and say,  
'Fall down, O Simeon : thou hast suffer'd long  
For ages and for ages !' then they prate  
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',  
Perplexing me with lies ; and oft I fall,  
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies  
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.

But yet

Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints  
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth  
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,  
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,  
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have  
stalls,

I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,  
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,  
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the saints ;

Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am wet  
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.  
I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back ;  
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck ;  
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,  
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die :  
O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am ;  
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin :  
'Tis their own doing ; this is none of mine ;  
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,  
That here come those that worship me ? Ha ! ha !  
They think that I am somewhat. What am I ?  
The silly people take me for a saint,  
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers :  
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)  
Have all in all endured as much, and more  
Than many just and holy men, whose names  
Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.  
What is it I can have done to merit this ?  
I am a sinner viler than you all.  
It may be I have wrought some miracles,  
And cured some halt and maim'd ; but what of that ?

It may be, no one, even among the saints,  
May match his pains with mine ; but what of that ?  
Yet do not rise ; for you may look on me,  
And in your looking you may kneel to God.  
Speak ! is there any of you halt or maim'd ?  
I think you know I have some power with Heaven  
From my long penance : let him speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from  
me.

They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark ! they  
shout

' St. Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,  
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,  
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,  
Can I work miracles and not be saved ?  
This is not told of any. They were saints.  
It cannot be but that I shall be saved ;  
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, ' Behold a saint !'  
And lower voices saint me from above.  
Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull chrysalis  
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death  
Spreads more and more and more, that God hath  
now

Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all  
My mortal archives.



O my sons, my sons,  
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname  
Stylites, among men ; I, Simeon,  
The watcher on the column till the end ;  
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes ;  
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become  
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now  
From my high nest of penance here proclaim  
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,  
A vessel full of sin : all hell beneath  
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve,  
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.  
I smote them with the cross ; they swarm'd again.  
In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest :  
They flapp'd my light out as I read : I saw  
Their faces grow between me and my book ;  
With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine  
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,  
And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify  
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns ;  
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast  
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,  
With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain,  
Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still

Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise :  
God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,  
Among the powers and princes of this world,  
To make me an example to mankind,  
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say  
But that a time may come—yea, even now,  
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs  
Of life—I say, that time is at the doors  
When you may worship me without reproach ;  
For I will leave my relics in your land,  
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,  
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,  
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain  
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,  
In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
These heavy, horny eyes. The end ! the end !  
Surely the end ! What's here ? a shape, a shade,  
A flash of light. Is that the angel there  
That holds a crown ? Come, blessed brother, come.  
I know thy glittering face. I waited long ;  
My brows are ready. What ! deny it now ?  
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ !  
'Tis gone : 'tis here again ; the crown ! the crown !  
So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,

And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
Sweet ! sweet ! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.  
Ah ! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints : I trust  
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,  
Among you there, and let him presently  
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,  
And climbing up into my airy home,  
Deliver me the blessed sacrament ;  
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,  
Aid all this foolish people ; let them take  
Example, pattern : lead them to thy light.

## THE TALKING OAK

ONCE more the gate behind me falls ;  
Once more before my face  
I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,  
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
    Beneath its drift of smoke ;  
And ah ! with what delighted eyes  
    I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,  
    Ere that, which in me burn'd,  
The love, that makes me thrice a man,  
    Could hope itself return'd ;

To yonder oak within the field  
    I spoke without restraint,  
And with a larger faith appeal'd  
    Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,  
    And told him of my choice,  
Until he plagiarised a heart,  
    And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heaven  
    None else could understand ;  
I found him garrulously given,  
    A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply  
Is many a weary hour ;  
'Twere well to question him, and try  
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,  
Whose topmost branches can discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place !

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,  
If ever maid or spouse,  
As fair as my Olivia, came  
To rest beneath thy boughs.—

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here  
Whatever maiden grace  
The good old Summers, year by year  
Made ripe in Sumner-chace :

'Old Summers, when the monk was fat,  
And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
The girls upon the cheek,

‘ Ere yet, in scorn of Peter’s-pence,  
And number’d bead, and shrift,  
Bluff Harry broke into the spence  
And turn’d the cowls adrift :

‘ And I have seen some score of those  
Fresh faces, that would thrive  
When his man-minded offset rose  
To chase the deer at five ;

‘ And all that from the town would stroll,  
Till that wild wind made work  
In which the gloomy brewer’s soul  
Went by me, like a stork :

‘ The slight she-slips of loyal blood,  
And others, passing praise,  
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
For puritanic stays :

‘ And I have shadow’d many a group  
Of beauties, that were born  
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
Or while the patch was worn ;

*The Talking Oak*

‘And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,  
About me leap’d and laugh’d  
The modish Cupid of the day,  
And shrill’d his tinsel shaft.

‘I swear (and else may insects prick  
Each leaf into a gall)  
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
Is three times worth them all ;

‘For those and theirs, by Nature’s law,  
Have faded long ago ;  
But in these latter springs I saw  
Your own Olivia blow,

‘From when she gamboll’d on the greens  
A baby-germ, to when  
The maiden blossoms of her teens  
Could number five from ten.

‘I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,  
(And hear me with thine ears,)  
That, tho’ I circle in the grain  
Five hundred rings of years—

‘Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
Did never creature pass  
So slightly, musically made,  
So light upon the grass :

‘For as to fairies, that will flit  
To make the greensward fresh,  
I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh.’

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
And overlook the chace ;  
And from thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
That oft hast heard my vows,  
Declare when last Olivia came  
To sport beneath thy boughs.

‘O yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town ;  
Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down.



*The Talking Oak*

‘And with him Albert came on his.

I look’d at him with joy :

As cowslip unto oxlip is,

So seems she to the boy.

‘An hour had past—and, sitting straight

Within the low-wheel’d chaise,

Her mother trundled to the gate

Behind the dappled grays.

‘But as for her, she stay’d at home,

And on the roof she went,

And down the way you use to come,

She look’d with discontent.

‘She left the novel half-uncut

Upon the rosewood shelf ;

She left the new piano shut :

She could not please herself.

‘Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,

And livelier than a lark

She sent her voice thro’ all the holt

Before her, and the park.

‘A light wind chased her on the wing,  
And in the chase grew wild,  
As close as might be would he cling  
About the darling child :

‘But light as any wind that blows  
So fleetly did she stir,  
The flower, she touch’d on, dipt and rose,  
And turn’d to look at her.

‘And here she came, and round me play’d,  
And sang to me the whole  
Of those three stanzas that you made  
About my “giant bole ;”

‘And in a fit of frolic mirth  
She strove to span my waist :  
Alas, I was so broad of girth,  
I could not be embraced.

‘I wish’d myself the fair young beech  
That here beside me stands,  
That round me, clasping each in each,  
She might have lock’d her hands.

*The Talking Oak*

‘Yet seem’d the pressure thrice as sweet  
As woodbine’s fragile hold,  
Or when I feel about my feet  
The berried briony fold.’

O muffle round thy knees with fern,  
And shadow Sumner-chace !  
Long may thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place !

But tell me, did she read the name  
I carved with many vows  
When last with throbbing heart I came  
To rest beneath thy boughs ?

‘O yes, she wander’d round and round  
These knotted knees of mine,  
And found, and kiss’d the name she found,  
And sweetly murmur’d thine.

‘A teardrop trembled from its source,  
And down my surface crept.  
My sense of touch is something coarse,  
But I believe she wept.

‘Then flush’d her cheek with rosy light,  
She glanced across the plain ;  
But not a creature was in sight :  
She kiss’d me once again.

‘Her kisses were so close and kind,  
That, trust me on my word,  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirr’d :

‘And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discern’d,  
Like those blind motions of the Spring,  
That show the year is turn’d.

‘Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet’s waving balm—  
The cushions of whose touch may press  
The maiden’s tender palm.

‘I, rooted here among the groves  
But languidly adjust  
My vapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust :

‘For ah ! my friend, the days were brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that, which breathes within the leaf,  
Could slip its bark and walk.

‘But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray, and branch, and stem,  
Have suck’d and gather’d into one  
The life that spreads in them,

‘She had not found me so remiss ;  
But lightly issuing thro’,  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,  
With usury thereto.’

O flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea,  
Pursue thy loves among the bowers  
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well ;  
A thousand thanks for what I learn  
And what remains to tell.

‘Tis little more : the day was warm ;  
At last, tired out with play,  
She sank her head upon her arm  
And at my feet she lay.

‘ Her eyelids dropp’d their silken eaves.  
I breathed upon her eyes  
Thro’ all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mix’d with sighs.

‘ I took the swarming sound of life—  
The music from the town—  
The murmurs of the drum and fife  
And lull’d them in my own.

‘ Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye ;  
A second flutter’d round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly ;

‘ A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine ;  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ancle fine,

*The Talking Oak*

‘Then close and dark my arms I spread,  
And shadow’d all her rest—  
Dropt dew upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast.

‘But in a pet she started up,  
And pluck’d it out, and drew  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dew.

‘And yet it was a graceful gift—  
I felt a pang within  
As when I see the woodman lift  
His axe to slay my kin.

‘I shook him down because he was  
The finest on the tree.  
He lies beside thee on the grass.  
O kiss him once for me.

‘O kiss him twice and thrice for me,  
That have no lips to kiss,  
For never yet was oak on lea  
Shall grow so fair as this.’

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,  
Look further thro' the chace,  
Spread upward till thy boughs discern  
The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,  
That but a moment lay  
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest  
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,  
The warmth it thence shall win  
To riper life may magnetise  
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,  
Or lapse from hand to hand,  
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet  
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,  
Nor wielded axe disjoint,  
That art the fairest-spoken tree  
From here to Lizard-point.



O rock upon thy towery-top  
All throats that gurgle sweet !  
All starry culmination drop  
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

All grass of silky feather grow—  
And while he sinks or swells  
The full south-breeze around thee blow  
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,  
That under deeply strikes !  
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,  
High up, in silver spikes !

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
But, rolling as in sleep,  
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
That makes thee broad and deep !

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
That only by thy side  
Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,  
    She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
    In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,  
    And praise thee more in both  
Than bard has honour'd beech or lime,  
    Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
    And mystic sentence spoke ;  
And more than England honours that,  
    Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode  
    Till all the paths were dim,  
And far below the Roundhead rode,  
    And humm'd a surly hymn.

## LOVE AND DUTY

OF love that never found his earthly close,  
What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts?  
Or all the same as if he had not been?

Not so. Shall Error in the round of time  
Still father Truth? O shall the braggart shout  
For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself  
Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law  
System and empire? Sin itself be found  
The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?  
And only he, this wonder, dead, become  
Mere highway dust? or year by year alone  
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,  
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,  
Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,  
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,  
The long mechanic paces to and fro,  
The set gray life, and apathetic end.

But am I not the nobler thro' thy love ?  
O three times less unworthy ! likewise thou  
Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy years,  
The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon  
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will bring  
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit  
Of wisdom. Wait : my faith is large in Time,  
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

Will some one say, Then why not ill for good ?  
Why took ye not your pastime ? To that man  
My work shall answer, since I knew the right  
And did it ; for a man is not as God,  
But then most Godlike being most a man.  
—So let me think 'tis well for thee and me—  
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine  
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so slow  
To feel it ! For how hard it seem'd to me,  
When eyes, love-languid thro' half tears would dwell  
One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,  
Then not to dare to see ! when thy low voice,  
Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep  
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a leash,  
And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,  
And on thy bosom (deep desired relief !)  
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weigh'd

Upon my brain, my senses and my soul !

For Love himself took part against himself  
To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—  
O this world's curse,—beloved but hated—came  
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,  
And crying, 'Who is this? behold thy bride,'  
She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard  
To alien ears, I did not speak to these—  
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me :  
Hard is my doom and thine : thou knowest it all.

Could Love part thus? was it not well to speak,  
To have spoken once? It could not but be well.  
The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,  
The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,  
And all good things from evil, brought the night  
In which we sat together and alone,  
And to the want, that hollow'd all the heart,  
Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,  
That burn'd upon its object thro' such tears  
As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way  
To those caresses, when a hundred times  
In that last kiss, which never was the last,  
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.

Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the words  
That make a man feel strong in speaking truth ;  
Till now the dark was worn, and overhead  
The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd  
In that brief night ; the summer night, that paused  
Among her stars to hear us ; stars that hung  
Love-charm'd to listen : all the wheels of Time  
Spun round in station, but the end had come.

O then like those, who clench their nerves to rush  
Upon their dissolution, we two rose,  
There—closing like an individual life—  
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,  
Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,  
Caught up the whole of love and utter'd it,  
And bade adieu for ever.

Live—yet live—  
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all  
Life needs for life is possible to will—  
Live happy ; tend thy flowers ; be tended by  
My blessing ! Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts  
Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou  
For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold,  
If not to be forgotten—not at once—  
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,  
O might it come like one that looks content,

With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,  
And point thee forward to a distant light,  
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart  
And leave thee freër, till thou wake refresh'd  
Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown  
Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow of pearl  
Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,  
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

## THE GOLDEN YEAR

WELL, you shall have that song which Leonard wrote :  
It was last summer on a tour in Wales :  
Old James was with me : we that day had been  
Up Snowdon ; and I wish'd for Leonard there,  
And found him in Llanberis : then we crost  
Between the lakes, and clamber'd half way up  
The counter side ; and that same song of his  
He told me ; for I banter'd him, and swore  
They said he lived shut up within himself,  
A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,  
That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,

Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech, 'Give,  
Cram us with all,' but count not me the herd !

To which 'They call me what they will,' he said :  
'But I was born too late : the fair new forms,  
That float about the threshold of an age,  
Like truths of Science waiting to be caught—  
Catch me who can, and make the catcher crown'd—  
Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.  
But if you care indeed to listen, hear  
These measured words, my work of yestermorn.

'We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move ;  
The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun ;  
The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her ellipse ;  
And human things returning on themselves  
Move onward, leading up the golden year.

'Ah, tho' the times, when some new thought can  
bud,  
Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,  
Yet oceans daily gaining on the land,  
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,  
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.

'When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,  
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt  
In many streams to fatten lower lands,  
And light shall spread, and man be liker man



Thro' all the season of the golden year.

'Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?  
If all the world were falcons, what of that?  
The wonder of the eagle were the less,  
But he not less the eagle. Happy days  
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

'Fly, happy happy sails, and bear the Press;  
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;  
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward  
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,  
Enrich the markets of the golden year.

'But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good  
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace  
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,  
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,  
Thro' all the circle of the golden year?'

Thus far he flow'd, and ended; whereupon  
'Ah, folly!' in mimic cadence answer'd James—  
'Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,  
Not in our time, nor in our children's time,  
'Tis like the second world to us that live;  
'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven  
As on this vision of the golden year.'

With that he struck his staff against the rocks  
And broke it,—James,—you know him,—old, but full

Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,  
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,  
O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis :  
Then added, all in heat :

‘What stuff is this !

Old writers push'd the happy season back,—  
The more fools they,—we forward : dreamers both :  
You most, that in an age, when every hour  
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,  
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt  
Upon the teeming harvest, should not plunge  
His hand into the bag : but well I know  
That unto him who works, and feels he works,  
This same grand year is ever at the doors.’

He spoke ; and, high above, I heard them blast  
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap  
And buffet round the hills, from bluff to bluff.

## ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,  
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.  
I cannot rest from travel : I will drink  
Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd  
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those  
That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when  
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;  
For always roaming with a hungry heart  
Much have I seen and known ; cities of men  
And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all ;  
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
I am a part of all that I have met ;  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades  
For ever and for ever when I move.

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !  
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life  
Were all too little, and of one to me  
Little remains : but every hour is saved  
From that eternal silence, something more,  
A bringer of new things ; and vile it were  
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—  
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild  
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
Of common duties, decent not to fail  
In offices of tenderness, and pay  
Meet adoration to my household gods,  
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port ; the vessel puffs her sail :  
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,  
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took  
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed  
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old ;  
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ;  
Death closes all : but something ere the end,  
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.  
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :  
The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the deep  
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,  
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.  
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho'  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we are ;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

## TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay and fall,  
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,  
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,  
And after many a summer dies the swan.  
Me only cruel immortality  
Consumes : I wither slowly in thine arms,  
Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream  
The ever-silent spaces of the East,  
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas ! for this gray shadow, once a man—  
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,  
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd  
To his great heart none other than a God !  
I ask'd thee, ' Give me immortality.'  
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,  
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.  
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,

And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,  
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd  
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,  
Immortal age beside immortal youth,  
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,  
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,  
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,  
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears  
To hear me? Let me go : take back thy gift :  
Why should a man desire in any way  
To vary from the kindly race of men,  
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all ?

A soft air fans the cloud apart ; there comes  
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.  
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals  
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,  
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.  
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,  
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,  
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team  
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,  
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,  
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo ! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
In silence, then before thine answer given  
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,  
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,  
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true ?  
'The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.'

Ay me ! ay me ! with what another heart  
In days far-off, and with what other eyes  
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—  
The lucid outline forming round thee ; saw  
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings ;  
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood  
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all  
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,  
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm  
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds  
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd  
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,  
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,  
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East :  
How can my nature longer mix with thine ?



Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet  
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam  
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes  
Of happy men that have the power to die,  
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.  
Release me, and restore me to the ground ;  
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave :  
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn ;  
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,  
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

## LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis  
early morn :  
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon  
the bugle-horn.  
  
'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews  
call,  
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley  
Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the  
sandy tracts,  
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went  
to rest,  
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the  
West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow  
shade,  
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver  
braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth  
sublime  
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of  
Time ;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land  
reposed ;  
When I clung to all the present for the promise that  
it closed :

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could  
see ;  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that  
would be.

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's  
breast ;  
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another  
crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd  
dove ;  
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to  
thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be  
for one so young,  
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observ-  
ance hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the  
truth to me,  
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to  
thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and a  
light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern  
night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden  
storm of sighs—  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel  
eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should  
do me wrong ;'  
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weeping, 'I have  
loved thee long.'

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his  
glowing hands ;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden  
sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the  
chords with might ;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in  
music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the  
copses ring,  
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness  
of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the  
stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the  
lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no  
more !  
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren  
shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs  
have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish  
tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ?—having known me—to  
decline  
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart  
than mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day by  
day,  
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise  
with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with a  
clown,  
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to  
drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent  
its novel force,  
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his  
horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy : think not they are  
glazed with wine.  
Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him : take his hand  
in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is over-  
wrought :  
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy  
lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—

Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand !

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,  
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth !

Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth !

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule !

Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool !

Well—'tis well that I should bluster !—Hadst thou less unworthy proved—

Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but  
bitter fruit?

I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the  
root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years  
should come

As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging  
rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the  
mind?

Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew  
her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd : sweetly did she speak  
and move :

Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to  
love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love  
she bore?

No—she never loved me truly : love is love for ever-  
more.



Comfort ? comfort scorn'd of devils ! this is truth the  
poet sings,  
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering  
happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart  
be put to proof,  
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on  
the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring  
at the wall,  
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows  
rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his  
drunken sleep,  
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou  
wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by the  
phantom years,  
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of  
thine ears ;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness  
on thy pain.

Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow : get thee to thy  
rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender  
voice will cry.

'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy trouble  
dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival brings  
thee rest.

Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the  
mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not  
his due.

Half is thine and half is his : it will be worthy of the  
two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty  
part,

With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a  
daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not exempt—  
Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Perish in thy self-contempt !

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy ! wherefore should I  
care ?  
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by  
despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon  
days like these ?  
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden  
keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets  
overflow.  
I have but an angry fancy : what is that which I  
should do ?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's  
ground,  
When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds are  
laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that  
Honour feels,  
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each  
other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier  
page.

Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous  
Mother-Age !

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the  
strife,  
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of  
my life ;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming  
years would yield,  
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's  
field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer  
drawn,  
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary  
dawn ;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him  
then,  
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs  
of men :

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping  
something new :  
That which they have done but earnest of the things  
that they shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could  
see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that  
would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic  
sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with  
costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd  
a ghastly dew  
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central  
blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind  
rushing warm,  
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the  
thunder-storm ;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-  
flags were furl'd  
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the  
world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful  
realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal  
law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left  
me dry,  
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the  
jaundiced eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out  
of joint :  
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from  
point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping  
nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-  
dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose  
runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process  
of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his  
youthful joys,  
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a  
boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger  
on the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the world is more and  
more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a  
laden breast,  
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness  
of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the  
bugle-horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for  
their scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd  
string?  
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so  
slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's  
pleasure, woman's pain—  
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a  
shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd  
with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto  
wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for  
some retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to  
beat ;



Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-  
starr'd ;—

I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's  
ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far  
away,

On from island unto island at the gateways of the  
day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and  
happy skies,

Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots  
of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European  
flag,

Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the  
trailer from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-  
fruited tree—

Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres  
of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this  
march of mind,  
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that  
shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope  
and breathing space ;  
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my  
dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they  
shall run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances  
in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows  
of the brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable  
books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my  
words are wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian  
child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious  
gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with  
lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or  
clime ?

I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,  
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's  
moon in Ajalon !

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward  
let us range,  
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing  
grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the  
younger day :  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when  
life begun :  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings,  
weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.  
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy  
yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley  
Hall!

Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the  
roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over  
heath and holt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunder-  
bolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire  
or snow ;  
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

## GODIVA

*I waited for the train at Coventry ;  
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,  
To watch the three tall spires ; and there I shaped  
The city's ancient legend into this :—*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,

New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate  
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,  
And loathed to see them overtax'd ; but she  
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,  
The woman of a thousand summers back,  
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled  
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought  
Their children, clamouring, ' If we pay, we starve !'  
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode  
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his hair  
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,  
And pray'd him, ' If they pay this tax, they starve.'  
Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,  
' You would not let your little finger ache  
For such as *these* ?'—' But I would die,' said she.  
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul :  
Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear ;  
' Oh ay, ay, ay, you talk !'—' Alas !' she said,  
' But prove me what it is I would not do.'  
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,  
He answer'd, ' Ride you naked thro' the town,  
And I repeal it ;' and nodding, as in scorn,

He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,  
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,  
Made war upon each other for an hour,  
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all  
The hard condition ; but that she would loose  
The people : therefore, as they loved her well,  
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,  
No eye look down, she passing ; but that all  
Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there  
Unclassp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,  
The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a breath  
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon  
Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook her head,  
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee ;  
Unclad herself in haste ; adown the stair  
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid  
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd  
The gateway ; there she found her palfrey trapt  
In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity :  
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,  
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.

The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout  
Had cunning eyes to see : the barking cur  
Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's footfall shot  
Light horrors thro' her pulses : the blind walls  
Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead  
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared : but she  
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw  
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field  
Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity :  
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,  
The fatal byword of all years to come,  
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,  
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their will,  
Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,  
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait  
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused ;  
And she, that knew not, pass'd : and all at once,  
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon  
Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,  
One after one : but even then she gain'd  
Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,  
To meet her lord, she took the tax away  
And built herself an everlasting name.

## THE DAY-DREAM

## PROLOGUE

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :  
A pleasant hour has passed away  
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,  
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.  
As by the lattice you reclined,  
I went thro' many wayward moods  
To see you dreaming—and, behind,  
A summer crisp with shining woods.  
And I too dream'd, until at last  
Across my fancy, brooding warm,  
The reflex of a legend past,  
And loosely settled into form.  
And would you have the thought I had,  
And see the vision that I saw,  
Then take the broidery-frame, and add  
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,  
And I will tell it. Turn your face,  
Nor look with that too-earnest eye—



The rhymes are dazzled from their place  
And order'd words asunder fly.

## THE SLEEPING PALACE

### I

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,  
Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
Here stays the blood along the veins.  
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,  
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,  
Like hints and echoes of the world  
To spirits folded in the womb.

### II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
On every slanting terrace-lawn.  
The fountain to his place returns  
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.  
Here droops the banner on the tower,  
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
The peacock in his laurel bower,  
The parrot in his gilded wires.

III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs :

    In these, in those the life is stay'd.

The mantles from the golden pegs

    Droop sleepily : no sound is made,

Not even of a gnat that sings.

    More like a picture seemeth all

Than those old portraits of old kings,

    That watch the sleepers from the wall.

IV

Here sits the Butler with a flask

    Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and there

The wrinkled steward at his task,

    The maid-of-honour blooming fair ;

The page has caught her hand in his :

    Her lips are sever'd as to speak :

His own are pouted to a kiss :

    The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V

Till all the hundred summers pass,

    The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,

Make prisms in every carven glass,

    And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.

Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.  
His state the king reposing keeps.  
He must have been a jovial king.

## VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
At distance like a little wood ;  
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
And grapes with bunches red as blood ;  
All creeping plants, a wall of green  
Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,  
And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
High up, the topmost palace spire.

## VII

When will the hundred summers die,  
And thought and time be born again,  
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?  
Here all things in their place remain,  
As all were order'd, ages since.  
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

I

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
She lying on her couch alone,  
Across the purple coverlet,  
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,  
On either side her tranced form  
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :  
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
And moves not on the rounded curl.

II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid  
Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
Languidly ever ; and, amid  
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,  
Gloweth forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
With bracelets of the diamond bright :  
Her constant beauty doth inform  
Stillness with love, and day with light.

III

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard  
In palace chambers far apart.

The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd  
That lie upon her charmed heart.  
She sleeps : on either hand upswells  
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest :  
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
A perfect form in perfect rest.

## THE ARRIVAL

### I

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
To those that seek them issue forth ;  
For love in sequel works with fate,  
And draws the veil from hidden worth.  
He travels far from other skies—  
His mantle glitters on the rocks—  
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
And lighter-footed than the fox.

### II

The bodies and the bones of those  
That strove in other days to pass,  
Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.

He gazes on the silent dead :  
‘ They perish’d in their daring deeds.’  
This proverb flashes thro’ his head,  
‘ The many fail : the one succeeds.’

III

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks :  
He breaks the hedge : he enters there :  
The colour flies into his cheeks :  
He trusts to light on something fair ;  
For all his life the charm did talk  
About his path, and hover near  
With words of promise in his walk,  
And whisper’d voices at his ear.

IV

More close and close his footsteps wind :  
The Magic Music in his heart  
Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
The quiet chamber far apart.  
His spirit flutters like a lark,  
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.  
‘ Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
How dark those hidden eyes must be !’

## THE REVIVAL

## I

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.  
There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks ;  
A fuller light illumined all,  
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,  
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

## II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,  
The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,  
The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,  
And all the long-pent stream of life  
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

## III

And last with these the king awoke,  
And in his chair himself uprear'd,

And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,  
    ' By holy rood, a royal beard !  
How say you ? we have slept, my lords.  
    My beard has grown into my lap.'  
The barons swore, with many words,  
    'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

IV

' Pardy,' return'd the king, ' but still  
    My joints are somewhat stiff or so.  
My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
    I mention'd half an hour ago ?'  
The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
    In courteous words return'd reply :  
But dallied with his golden chain,  
    And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE

I

AND on her lover's arm she leant,  
    And round her waist she felt it fold,  
And far across the hills they went  
    In that new world which is the old :



Across the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
And deep into the dying day  
The happy princess follow'd him.

## II

'I'd sleep another hundred years,  
O love, for such another kiss ;'  
'O wake for ever, love,' she hears,  
'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'  
And o'er them many a sliding star,  
And many a merry wind was borne,  
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,  
The twilight melted into morn.

## III

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep !'  
'O happy sleep, that lightly fled !'  
'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep !'  
'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead !'  
And o'er them many a flowing range  
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,  
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
The twilight died into the dark.

IV

‘A hundred summers ! can it be ?  
And whither goest thou, tell me where ?’  
‘O seek my father’s court with me,  
For there are greater wonders there.’  
And o’er the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
Beyond the night, across the day,  
Thro’ all the world she follow’d him.

MORAL

I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And if you find no moral there,  
Go, look in any glass and say,  
What moral is in being fair.  
Oh, to what uses shall we put  
The wildweed-flower that simply blows ?  
And is there any moral shut  
Within the bosom of the rose ?

II

But any man that walks the mead,  
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,

According as his humours lead,  
A meaning suited to his mind.  
And liberal applications lie  
In Art like Nature, dearest friend ;  
So 'twere to cramp its use, if I  
Should hook it to some useful end.

## L'ENVOI

## I

YOU shake your head. A random string  
Your finer female sense offends.  
Well—were it not a pleasant thing  
To fall asleep with all one's friends ;  
To pass with all our social ties  
To silence from the paths of men ;  
And every hundred years to rise  
And learn the world, and sleep again ;  
To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
And wake on science grown to more,  
On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
As wild as aught of fairy lore ;  
And all that else the years will show,  
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,

The vast Republics that may grow,  
The Federations and the Powers ;  
Titanic forces taking birth  
In divers seasons, divers climes ;  
For we are Ancients of the earth,  
And in the morning of the times.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
Thro' sunny decads new and strange,  
Or gay quinqueniads would we reap  
The flower and quintessence of change.

III

Ah, yet would I—and would I might !  
So much your eyes my fancy take—  
Be still the first to leap to light  
That I might kiss those eyes awake !  
For, am I right, or am I wrong,  
To choose your own you did not care ;  
You'd have *my* moral from the song,  
And I will take my pleasure there :  
And, am I right or am I wrong,  
My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',

To search a meaning for the song,  
Perforce will still revert to you ;  
Nor finds a closer truth than this  
All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,  
And evermore a costly kiss  
The prelude to some brighter world.

## IV

For since the time when Adam first  
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
And every bird of Eden burst  
In carol, every bud to flower,  
What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes,  
What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd ?  
Where on the double rosebud droops  
The fulness of the pensive mind ;  
Which all too dearly self-involved,  
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me ;  
A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
That lets thee neither hear nor see :  
But break it. In the name of wife,  
And in the rights that name may give,  
Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
And that for which I care to live.

## EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And, if you find a meaning there,  
O whisper to your glass, and say,  
‘What wonder, if he thinks me fair?’  
What wonder I was all unwise,  
To shape the song for your delight  
Like long-tail’d birds of Paradise  
That float thro’ Heaven, and cannot light?  
Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—  
But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
And either sacred unto you.

## AMPHION

MY father left a park to me,  
But it is wild and barren,  
A garden too with scarce a tree,  
And waster than a warren :  
Yet say the neighbours when they call,  
It is not bad but good land,  
And in it is the germ of all  
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great  
In days of old Amphion,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
Nor cared for seed or scion !  
And had I lived when song was great,  
And legs of trees were limber,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
And fiddled in the timber !

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,  
Such happy intonation,  
Wherever he sat down and sung  
He left a small plantation ;  
Wherever in a lonely grove  
He set up his forlorn pipes,  
The gouty oak began to move,  
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,  
And, as tradition teaches,  
Young ashes pirouetted down  
Coquetting with young beeches ;  
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
Ran forward to his rhyming,  
And from the valleys underneath  
Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent  
The woodbine wreaths that bind her,  
And down the middle, buzz ! she went  
With all her bees behind her :  
The poplars, in long order due,  
With cypress promenaded,  
The shock-head willows two and two  
By rivers gallopaded.



Came wet-shod alder from the wave,  
Came yews, a dismal coterie ;  
Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,  
Poussetting with a sloe-tree :  
Old elms came breaking from the vine,  
The vine stream'd out to follow,  
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine  
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,  
When, ere his song was ended,  
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,  
The country-side descended ;  
And shepherds from the mountain-caves  
Look'd down, half-pleased, half-frighten'd,  
As dash'd about the drunken leaves  
The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,  
And wanton without measure ;  
So youthful and so flexile then,  
You moved her at your pleasure.  
Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the twigs !  
And make her dance attendance ;  
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,  
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain ! in such a brassy age  
    I could not move a thistle ;  
The very sparrows in the hedge  
    Scarce answer to my whistle ;  
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick  
    With strumming and with scraping,  
A jackass heehaws from the rick,  
    The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound  
    Like sleepy counsel pleading ;  
O Lord !—'tis in my neighbour's ground,  
    The modern Muses reading.  
They read Botanic Treatises,  
    And Works on Gardening thro' there,  
And Methods of transplanting trees  
    To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose  
    O'er books of travell'd seamen,  
And show you slips of all that grows  
    From England to Van Diemen.  
They read in arbours clipt and cut,  
    And alleys, faded places,  
By squares of tropic summer shut  
    And warm'd in crystal cases.

*St. Agnes' Eve*

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,  
Are neither green nor sappy ;  
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,  
The spindlings look unhappy.  
Better to me the meanest weed  
That blows upon its mountain,  
The vilest herb that runs to seed  
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,  
And years of cultivation,  
Upon my proper patch of soil  
To grow my own plantation.  
I'll take the showers as they fall,  
I will not vex my bosom :  
Enough if at the end of all  
A little garden blossom.

ST. AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
Are sparkling to the moon :  
My breath to heaven like vapour goes :  
May my soul follow soon !

The shadows of the convent-towers  
    Slant down the snowy sward,  
Still creeping with the creeping hours  
    That lead me to my Lord :  
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
    As are the frosty skies,  
Or this first snowdrop of the year  
    That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,  
    To yonder shining ground ;  
As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
    To yonder argent round ;  
So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
    My spirit before Thee ;  
So in mine earthly house I am,  
    To that I hope to be.

Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,  
    Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
    In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;  
    The flashes come and go ;  
All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
    And strows her lights below,

And deepens on and up ! the gates  
Roll back, and far within  
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
To make me pure of sin.  
The sabbaths of Eternity,  
One sabbath deep and wide—  
A light upon the shining sea—  
The Bridegroom with his bride !

### SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,  
My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
My strength is as the strength of ten,  
Because my heart is pure.  
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,  
The horse and rider reel :  
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
And when the tide of combat stands,  
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
On whom their favours fall !  
For them I battle till the end,  
To save from shame and thrall :  
But all my heart is drawn above,  
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine :  
I never felt the kiss of love,  
Nor maiden's hand in mine.  
More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
Me mightier transports move and thrill ;  
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
A light before me swims,  
Between dark stems the forest glows,  
I hear a noise of hymns :  
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;  
I hear a voice but none are there ;  
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
The tapers burning fair.  
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
I find a magic bark ;  
I leap on board : no helmsman steers :  
I float till all is dark.  
A gentle sound, an awful light !  
Three angels bear the holy Grail :  
With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
On sleeping wings they sail.  
Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !  
My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
As down dark tides the glory slides,  
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne  
Thro' dreaming towns I go,  
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,  
The streets are dumb with snow.  
The tempest crackles on the leads,  
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail ;  
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
And gilds the driving hail.  
I leave the plain, I climb the height ;  
No branchy thicket shelter yields ;  
But blessed forms in whistling storms  
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given  
Such hope, I know not fear ;  
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
That often meet me here.  
I muse on joy that will not cease,  
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
Whose odours haunt my dreams ;  
And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
This mortal armour that I wear,  
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,  
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
And thro' the mountain-walls  
A rolling organ-harmony  
Swells up, and shakes and falls.  
Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear :  
' O just and faithful knight of God !  
Ride on ! the prize is near.'  
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;  
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,  
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
Until I find the holy Grail.



## EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town  
Met me walking on yonder way,  
'And have you lost your heart?' she said;  
'And are you married yet, Edward Gray?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me :  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more  
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
Against her father's and mother's will :  
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,  
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

'Shy she was, and I thought her cold ;  
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea ;  
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,  
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said !  
Cruelly came they back to-day :  
"You're too slight and fickle," I said,  
"To trouble the heart of Edward Gray."

‘ There I put my face in the grass—  
Whisper’d, “ Listen to my despair :  
I repent me of all I did :  
Speak a little, Ellen Adair ! ”

‘ Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
“ Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;  
And here the heart of Edward Gray ! ”

‘ Love may come, and love may go,  
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree ;  
But I will love no more, no more,  
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

‘ Bitterly wept I over the stone :  
Bitterly weeping I turn’d away :  
There lies the body of Ellen Adair !  
And there the heart of Edward Gray ! ’

THE END

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