

STAR-FLOWERS
THE WOMAN'S MYSTERY

CANTO THE FIRST

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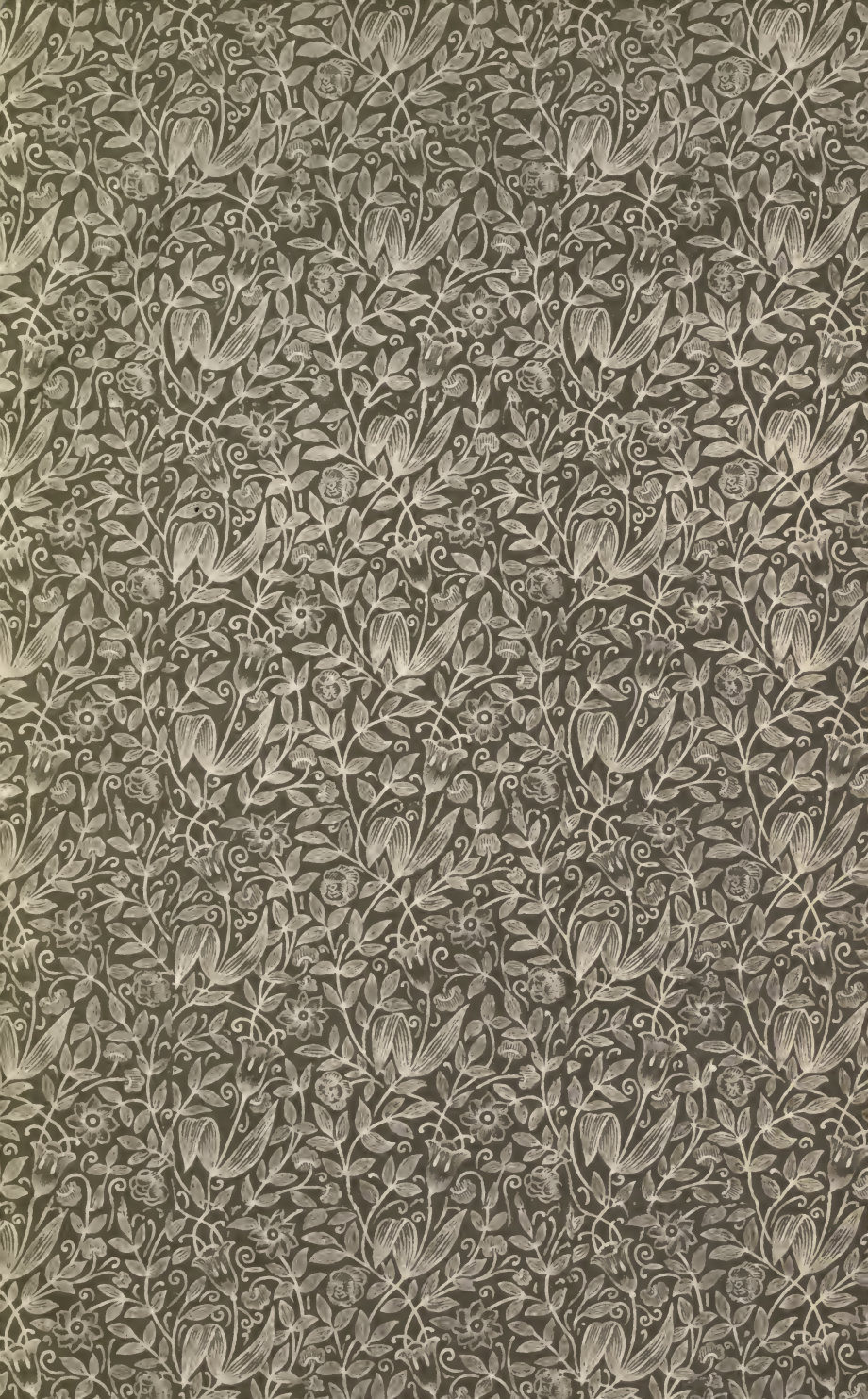
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STAR-FLOWERS,

A POEM OF THE

WOMAN'S MYSTERY

BY

THOMAS LAKE HARRIS.

THE Secret Wisdom shews to men,
As the Lost Pleiad beams again;
Lifting her pure, transfigured grace,
Warm from the Solar God's embrace.

CANTO THE FIRST



FOUNTAINGROVE

PRIVATELY PRINTED

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PREFACE.

The MOTHER shook Her breasted sheaves:
Borne through the palpitating leaves
Of this, Her Song, the fragrance weaves.

Sacred as Love and sure as Fate,
The holy numbers waft full freight
Of promise, where Her own await.

Long years I travailed for the birth;
Now, as a Word-babe, beaming forth,
From Wisdom's brow, it finds the earth.

Cradled in griefs, bedewed by tears,
Its infant hands hold fiery spears:
They pierce, they burn, till morn appears.

'Twas in the sacred Passion-week
This Word-babe oped blithe lips to speak,
And fashioned wings, Love's own to seek,—

God's own,—the gentle, pure and brave;—
It stands awaiting; so to crave
Fit access where they toil and slave.

Blessed are ye, who shall be found
E'en as this song, from Love's profound,
Full summer-sweet, for blessings crowned.



DEDICATION.

NINE months I lay in a Lady's womb:
She folded me all in her laughing bloom:
She hallowed me while I filled and fed,
From the nectar-wells of her motherhead.
Wisely and kind she planned for me
In the antenatal infancy.
Now to mine age return the hours
I slept in her life's embosomed bowers,
Until the melodies rise and well,
From joys that grew in her blossom-bell.

To-night danced round me the Sacred Nine,
A sister-band in the Mother-twine.
The charm, the spell their motion caught
Have led me again where the Mother wrought.
I feel, as the soul in verse takes wing,
Of Motherhood as a holy thing;
A state that in woman forms and grows,
From birth, through time, to the shadowed close;
A Good that is in her as Truth in man;
A form from the Infinite marriage-plan;—
A power to shield, to build and bless,
That sways by her sceptre of queenliness;—
A power that shapes from the Bridal Word;
That toils through the years for a hope deferred;—
A power its path through the gloom that plies,
And cheers and illumines and sanctifies;—
A power that, did its full force unfold,
Would gather to man for his age of gold,

And bear him aloft, when the years are dead,
To bowers that circle God's marriage bed.

If I have said, as a man may say,
Of mysteries held in the Woman's Way,
The words but as flights of song-birds flit;
For the wealth of her loving is infinite.
My infant breast as a lyre she strung:
Her musical bells in my heart she rung:
The chorded bands of my sentient powers
She ranged as the breaths of her passion flowers.
Ere I was born to the outward loss
She signed my brow with her passion-cross,
Baptized me all in her wells of flame,
And sealed me to God by the Holy Name.
Ere I was formed to the hands and feet,
Her prayers grew in me to force complete.
Ere I was fashioned to breast and brain,
She wove for their lines by her music-strain.
Ere I was wrought unto lips and eyes,
She kindled for lights of her sacrifice,
And charmed a spell for my infant breath,
Sweeter than kindness and stronger than death;
And, if I have toiled for the planet's joy,
To God the mother brought forth her boy.

By loves that kindle and words that burn;
By thoughts that well from life's deepest urn;
By tears that diffuse, all warm and wet,
Star-fire in fragrance of violet,
This sacred song of my sunset days
I consecrate to the MOTHER's praise;—
For souls that hunger and hearts that ache,
A gift from the child of

Annie Lake.

Natus, May 15, 1823.

STAR-FLOWERS.

CANTO THE FIRST.







STAR-FLOWERS.

CANTO THE FIRST.

I.

WOMAN is all an architectural form,
Wherein the ONE-TWAIN WORD most subtly plies,
Divinely tender, precious, pure and warm,
Shaping the bowers that make her paradise.
If I, perchance, have shewn to earthly eyes
Of the magnificence in heaven that dwells,
'Tis Womanhood that to my life supplies
The splendor and the force: from many wells
Of her full heart I taste, and chant as she foretells.

II.

Whate'er the Father Word for gift implies,
The Mother Word elaborates and weaves,
Till the sweet poesies for Earth arise,
As when the Lady Spring her bliss unsheathes.
Still 'tis the Mother who Her beauty wreathes
In the processions of the Lyric Year.
Religion aye through Poesy receives
Her inspirations, and the heavens draw near
The world to overflow:—therefore give heart, give ear.

III.

I touched the word-staff to my Lady's breast:
 Then I was glad, for through it swiftly came
 A pleasure-flood: the kindest and the best
 Of elemental loves drew forth by flame;
 Some gathered on my lips their joy to claim,
 Whilst others to the rhythmic senses drew.
 I stood, a golden man, assoiled from blame,
 In a new world of blessedness: the dew
 Of youth was on my lips; 'twas Eden round me grew.

IV.

Woman is architectural; whatsoe'er
 The One-Twain Word forms in her, she delights
 To clothe with loveliness and fill with rare
 Ethereal virtues; till by sacred rites,—
 Due from the wedded ladies to their knights,—
 It ushers to perfection: powers unbind
 From manhood's depths of being to its lights,
 For thoughts in pure intelligence enshrined,
 While through her wealthy charms the heavenly odors wind.

V.

The frail ephemera of Earth's poor race
 Hold but the germs of woman: aye unknown
 Is She, who by infinitudes of grace
 Fills for the universe its bridal throne.
 Touching dear Issa to her nuptial zone,
 I felt, I saw, I knew; then, gathered force,
 A sacred lay for Woman to intone,
 And, by the spells of swift, melodious verse,
 To find her heart of hearts, that vital streams may course.

VI.

I sing of Woman, I, the MOTHER'S child.

I sing to woman, for her hour of need.

I sing with woman,—sacred Issa smiled.

Did not this heart long years for woman bleed?

Did I not grow as grows the river reed,

Rooted and lifted in her flowing stream?

Am I not fruitful for her blessed seed?

Is she not in me, as the skies that gleam

Through veils of roseate mist, making the day serene?

INTERLUDE.

1.

THE HIDDEN PARADISE.

Man fits the order of the skies:

The radiant constellations wheel,

And through the mind's transposive eyes,

Lights of intelligence reveal.

The Bridal Bird o'er every star

Feeds the soft ether from its breast,

Till balmy breathings from afar

Flow to our orb for nightly rest.

Still in 'calm night that breedeth thought,'

The star-lit Woman's Word draws down,

Till sleep her mystery has wrought

Beneath the holy silence-crown.



Between the woman and the man
 Of this vain world are vain desires.
 Potent for blessing or for ban,
 The Star-Word stands in silver fires.

The cherub of the flaming sword
 Over the mystic arch-way holds,
 Till paradise shall be restored
 And God the man through woman folds.

No priestly rite, no soft consent
 From woman's depth the veil removes;
 Man folds at most her folded tent,
 But ne'er the lady whom he loves.

She is not seen, she is not known;
 Full wifehood she does not bestow.
 The Bridal Word has clasped her zone:
 Her bridal world is shielded so.

2.

ISSA TOUCHED ME.

When Lady Issa touched my breast,
 A wave of song began to thrill:
 Lifted as on the ocean's crest,
 I sing for tides of rapture still.

Bear on ye billows in your sweep!
 Ocean of womanhood, arise!
 'Tis thus shall flow the vital deep
 When orb'd eternity enskies:



O'er all our human Earth respire,
While man, upon his blossomed coast,
Stoops low to bathe his passion-fire
In waters of the Holy Ghost.

I dip my hands in fluent streams,
From Issa's holy bosom led:
Therefore, I chant of sacred themes.—
Awake, arise, the morn is red.

The sunlight trickles o'er the bars,
For crimson fires that shape the morn,
And on my lips the vocal stars
A bridal day for Earth forewarn.

3.

THE ART OF LOVE.

We know that Love defers,
That Love denies:
Yet hearts are surely hers
That serve and rise.

Full oft the bosom aches
In fond regrets;
Yet Love! she ne'er forsakes,
She ne'er forgets.

Thoughts that disperse our ease,
That bear the sting,
Full oft are fiery bees,
Her sweets that bring.

Hers are the wild bird's arts:
 To build her nest,
 High where the sunshine darts
 From Heaven's full breast.

We see her borne aloft,
 In robes of rain;
 Yet odors warm and soft
 Her breaths retain.

While Love denies she lifts,
 Till, hearts in hearts,
 We taste her joyous gifts,
 And death departs.

VII.

As o'er a wingéd stream's suspended lightness,
 Lifting to leap its cataract, the mist
 Rises in snowy clouds, absorbing brightness
 From lucid heavens of golden amethyst;
 Then o'er the valleys, while the winds are whist,
 Feeds the faint life in every growing thing,
 Till every leaflet by moist lips is kissed,
 And every bud puts forth to blossoming,
 For powers that feed and fill and clothe and cleave and cling;—



VIII.

So the full stream of Woman's life in heaven,
From the Eternal-Fount that feeds its flow,
Sweeps with a tranquil motion;—morn and even
Behold it; power and peace within it go.
Over the universal manhood so
Its vast effusions form and in it rest.
Omnipotent, eternal to bestow,
It fertilizes man; his brain, his breast,
Are nourished by its life and in its virtues blest.

IX.

For there are streams of infinite pure pleasure,
Led through the common all of Woman's good,
That sea their waves in Manhood to his measure,
Making his all the shore-ways of their flood.
Heaven's love-hood, bride-hood, wife-hood, sister-hood,
By swift enrapturings for bliss deploy.
The manly tree of heaven for aye hath stood,
Fed for its rootage from the woman's joy:
She tends its blooming bowers, as angels find employ.

X.

If man folds into woman he is kindled,
As when the stars the cosmic dew receive.
His powers, that from their energies had dwindled
In mighty arts from morn to shadowed eve,
Are gathered as the water-buds that wreath
Upon the glimmering bosom of the linn.
Made all of kissing lips, his nerves reweave
Sweets from her sweetness, shed his life to win:
She forms into his form, and then the Word flows in.

XI.

Celestial Priestess, aye pontificating,
 Formed in God's passion-cross to feet and hands,
 She ministers by blisses, reinstating
 His being in divinity: the bands
 Of her divine endearments draw the sands
 Of his dry nature to Love's passion-well:
 The foliage of his life anew expands:
 The naiads, in her sacred deep who dwell,
 Rise to encharm him so, and fold him in their spell.

XII.

I sing of Woman, but to Man I sing.
 Am I not man by every attribute?
 Is not the care of man my minist'ring?
 Have I not borne for man in life's pursuit?
 Yet, but for woman, still my voice were mute,
 And my best gifts a tasteless offering.
 'Lo! I have fed of woman for my fruit,
 And drank of woman for my milky wine.
 The awful Goddess beamed upon my suit;
 She caught me to Her bosom and divine
 Inflorations wrought for this the lay I twine.

XIII.

I sing of Woman, for her lore unavails
 For Man the faith of his eternity.
 Put off, thou man, the helms and battle-mails:
 Draw now for baptism to this lyric sea,
 That I the Baptist may be made to thee.
 Here step thee down, below the iron-bound coast
 Of lustful pride and its insanity.
 O'er thee the bridal heaven of woman's host
 Its bosom bares to shew the dove, the Holy Ghost.

4.

YOUNG LOVE.

Young Love, who lipped me in the Spring
 Of life, when all the world was new,
 Glides from her star to close and cling,
 Through gathering mists and falling dew.

Thou aged, dying lilac tree,
 With sapless mosses dry and brown,
 Still, year by year, revive for me
 The purple plumes, thy floral crown.

The young May moon has risen, to shew
 The shy, slim maiden by thee stand:
 She smiled, then first I felt the glow
 Of Love's eternal passion-land.

It was not heaven; it was not earth;
 Yet heaven and earth were mingled, so
 As beams and rains, that color forth
 For the divine Aurora's bow.

The rains into their flood return;
 The rising splendors find their sky;
 But She who bids her floods to burn
 And rains to kindle, may not die.

Did She, the Goddess of my youth,
 Stoop o'er the shy, slim maid, to fling
 The minstrel's robe of love and truth?
 Since then for aye I love and sing.



Maidens are scriptures of the years,—
 Love's everlasting gospel,—led
 As through Aurora's beams and tears,
 Where man, the sufferer, still must tread.

I speak by Issa's oracle,
 Fast by the MOTHER's holy well:
 The lips of Time may close and still;
 The Woman Sea forsake the shell;

But when Her tide-waves rise again,
 They lift the shell, transposed to glide;
 And in the pearly shallop then,
 Robed all as morning, glows the bride.

5.

RELIGION, THE BRIDE.

Religion, as a germ that slept
 In caverns where the Winter crept,
 Uplifts her bridal wreaths to fling
 For the new spring-tide's blossoming.

For daze and dole and somber mass,
 The Bride Girl, from her mirrored glass,
 Turns with expressive grace, to bless
 Our vision by her loveliness.

In shivered sparks the systems fall;
 The creeds are wasted as a pall;
 But lo! Religion lifts again,
 With ripe red lips that kiss to men.

No more the Spirit grieve and vex,
Gray, withered, blear-eyed pontifex :
On wasted Rome, that hollow skull,
Sets her strong feet, the Beautiful !

Pale, timorous nun, whose breast, a cave,
Would ope for Christ, but finds a grave ;
Piercing the cold, conventual cell,
The Bridegroom shall His story tell.

Where Superstition dwelt forlorn,
Her gift a curse, its god a thorn,
She dies amid her broken hells,
Slain by celestial marriage bells.

Where Superstition held in chains,
Till Earth grew red for martyr-stains,
Faith laughs from lips that shew her pearls,—
God's Bride amid her marriage-girls.

FROM GOD THE LADY, GOD THE LORD
Made music, in this verse to chord ;
And these are living airs that wing,
Religion as God's Bride to bring.

6.

SLAIN BABES.

Stoop low from Thy silver throne, MOTHER !
Stoop low from Thy star-lit crown.

The day is dead and my feet are led
In a vision of darkness down.
I move in a daze through the crowded ways
Of the wicked, cruel town.

I followed the bearded men, MOTHER!
Filled to the lips with wine:
They wrench from the hands of the angel bands
Those frail, fair girls of Thine.
They are pierced by the fire of man's base desire,
Till they perish among the swine.

Is there no Man of the men, MOTHER!
No Man of the golden bow,
To pierce with his darts the cruel hearts
That outrage Thy babes below?
His image He sees, through Thine, in these.
How long shall the ruin go?

I touch to His burning shield, MOTHER!
My staff till it rings again.
I touch to His glaive till He rescue and save:
Stoop down from Thy splendors then.
By flames of red wrath in Thy bridal path,
Lead fires to the dragon's den.

Thou comest by time, I know, MOTHER!
The red rose falls from Thy hands.
The sun and the moon are eclipséd soon
For the shades that shall veil the lands.
But haste, O haste! for Thy babes that waste
As dews in the desert sands.

7.

ISSA'S DOVES.

A sun-lit garden met mine eyes,
Robed in white blossom, april-wise,
As for a maiden led
Blithe from her virgin bed.

Calm, quiet Issa met me there,
And from her bosomed wealth a pair
Of purple doves made flight,
In circles of delight.

'Joys from my breast made pains in thine,'
Said Issa, 'when, for song divine,
They cleave their way and shew
Of woman's loss below.'

Most like some wandering ghost, I saw
A woman, banned by creed and law,
An outcast of the street;—
Yet Issa named her 'Sweet!'

'Yea, sweet,' she said, 'for sweetness dwells
In her frail nature's deepest wells.
In Heaven's pure chastity
Buds now her bridal tree.

'Not those are worst who seem the worst:
Defiled, degraded and accurst,
Oft to the grave they stray,
As babes who lose the way.



‘ Not those are best who seem the best :
 Young dovelets, sheltered in the nest
 Till eyes and wings were grown,
 They rose, but not alone.

‘ Lifted by myriads of cares,
 Their flight was not amid the snares :
 They bloomed as flowers that grow
 Where glass shuts out the snow.’

She smiled, yet dropped a tear that led
 A stream of joy to sorrow wed,
 My deeper thought to win :
 ’Tis thus the songs flow in.

8.

THE SHADOW FROM THE CROSS.

Where April dots her pangsied gown
 With points and sprays of golden bloom,
 High in that garden of renown
 I saw a cross, and there a tomb.

But in the cross a Woman stood
 Extended to the feet and hands,
 Clad all in vails of widowhood,
 Holding a shadow in her bands.

A down the tomb the shadow crept,
 Lightly as when the mists begin ;

But dancing lights within it leapt,
As joys through griefs their access win.

Then Issa with her finger prest
Gently upon my heart, and said,
'Ages the shadow lay at rest;
Now to envail the Earth 'tis led.'

I sought again mine eyes to fix
Upon the cross, yet vainly tried;
For glories from the crucifix
Wreathed, as from Morning's wounded side,

A flamy crimson of the east,
That o'er that april garden grew
Till leaf and flower their tints released,
Distained to one ensanguined hue.

She touched more deeply: from my heart
The blood-red drops began to well:
Then with a pang the Traitor's dart
Loosed from my side, and broke, and fell.

'Thus, thus,' said Issa, 'thus the dart
Is drawn at last, and healed the sting:
The shadows from thy life depart,
As o'er the Earth they glide and cling.'

Moist April, in that garden sweet,
Blooms for the lips of Social Girls.
The stars are in their gliding feet;
The solar circle for them whirls.

Motions in motions weave and wing
 Their choirs to our dimension so;
 While heavenly April stoops to fling
 Enchanted rains for Earth below.

9.

THE CROSS IN THE SKIES.

My song-wreaths, wrought for bridge-ways, cross
 The waters that o'erflow the fosse.
 Those who move on with feet of flowers,
 At last shall win the upland bowers.

Renew the song, the dance repeat,
 Till flower-sprites lift and thrill the feet,
 And splendors from the thither shores
 Make vistas to the garden doors.

In wreaths of crimson lilies drest,
 I saw the skies from east to west.
 From north to south the blossoms toss:
 So forms in heaven the Crimson Cross;

The cross of joy, the cross of flowers,
 Wrought for Earth's hastening bridal hours.
 Still, as the sleep-mist folds mine eyes,
 The crimson shadow weaves and plies.

XIV.

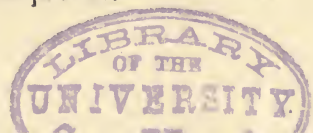
Did perfect woman meet with perfect man,
 On this sad earth,—if such a thing might be,—
 The under world would lift its shadows wan;
 The upper world o'erflood its vital sea;
 Heaven, earth and hell transpose, at one to be;
 Imperfect angelhoods their fulness find;
 The ghostly waifs of slain humanity
 Float upward, borne by the sweet pleasure-wind,
 And Nature bloom anew, in Truth for Beauty shrined.

XV.

When perfect man with perfect woman meets,
 The perfect world shall open from its shell.
 Angels are impotent to pierce the heats,
 The colds, of crime and death, where mortals dwell.
 Philosophy, religion, weave no spell:
 Faith, virtue, valor, urge their powers in vain:
 The human system, as a broken bell,
 Vibrates from clamorous discords of its pain:
 Adam ingermis the snake, his Eve brings forth a Cain.

XVI.

The perfect woman, were she led below,
 Lacking the perfect man, her very own,
 In her crushed immortality would go,
 A grieving wanderer, outcast and alone;
 Her sacred bosom, Love's pure bridal throne,
 Breathe forth dissolving sweetness on the gale;
 Her voice the sorrows of the race intone;
 Her pure, impassioned lips their life exhale,
 And age enslave her form, and agonies prevail.



XVII.

Here is no Man!—we know not of the style
 Of perfect manhood: hero, poet, sage,
 Priest, warrior, adept, rear the lofty pile
 Of partial manliness from age to age.
 Angelic virtue and titanic rage,
 Genius, devotion, splendor, beauty shew;
 History emblazons on its burnished page
 One grand apocalypse of love and woe:
 Imprisoned in his earth, Man shakes the planet so.

XVIII.

Enceladus 'neath *Ætna's* doom-wrought mountain,
 Prometheus chained on the Caucasian hight,
 His bosom heaves to lift its burning fountain:
 Like the red tree of fire upon the night,
 When fierce Vesuvius gathered up its might
 And cast forth flames and ashes to the sea,
 While smiling Pompeii from its delight
 Folded in ruin,—so, alas, is he!
 Till Woman clasps his powers thus shall he ever be.

XIX.

The loftiest gods of all religions shew
 But partial manhood, for the Infinite
 Can only its full imagery bestow,
 As perfect man and woman subtly fit.
 The gods and goddesses like phantoms flit
 In the processions of the mythes of old:
 The many on Olympian couches sit;
 The lone one over Sinai thunders bold;
 But God, the One-in-Twain, beams on us all untold.

XX.

For still Religion dreams in man alone,
 But never comes to waking; never sees
 The One-in-Twain who fill the Bridal Throne,
 Lifting by joy the universe. Disease,
 Born of those dying dreams, wafts miseries
 And terrors for sweet love and innocence.
 The social pulses of the planet freeze:
 The ages rear, by agonies intense,
 Faiths that bar out their God, then fail by impotence.

XXI.

Man, without woman, never did discern
 Of Mercy by her perfect attribute.
 The cleanest of the priesthoods scorn and spurn
 The woman's deeper voice, and man is mute.
 Seek ye the ground of Error and its root
 In man, not one with woman, but estrayed
 From holiest lore that follows in her suit:
 His branches clash as battle-blade on blade;
 His blasted blossoms drip for blood-stains in the shade.

XXII.

Thou tree of thought, thou Man! the serpent's seed,
 And not the woman's, germs within thy brain;
 Therefore thy hapless kind must toil and bleed,
 Whilst each young Abel finds a new-born Cain;
 Therefore thou art accurst with proud disdain:
 Thy mighty ones are tyrants o'er the low,
 And from thy poor in turn lift hate and bane,
 The cities of thy splendor to o'erthrow:
 Thy home is made Untruth; the serpent wills it so.

XXIII.

Therefore Impiety has reared his home
 In thy proud temples, and the wreathing lust
 Coils round thee in thy lofty pleasure-dome.
 Therefore diseases are made strong to thrust
 Through all thy powers till all their forms are dust.
 Therefore art thou a lingerer of the years:
 Thy earth is made as the sepulchral crust;
 And the men-angels bend above thy biers,
 Where life is borne away as on a flood of tears.

XXIV.

Therefore thy stately ones, the sons of Morning,
 Pass by sad journeyings from the land of light,
 And make their bed at last in tents of scorning,
 To wither in the pale hadean night.
 Nature and Heaven no more in thee delight.
 Thy bower is made corruption and the worm:
 Like evil birds thy passions in thee fight:
 Strongest of creatures, yet the most infirm,
 Though Hope leads on thy years, 'tis failure marks their term.

XXV.

No more of this, no more! the griefs that wring
 Slay if we dwell upon them. Yet but this;
 The woman queen must lift her crownless king
 And fashion paradise in the abyss
 Of his dishonored nature. Lo, I kiss,
 Though from afar, thy lips, Immortal One,
 Woman of woman, the Divine of Bliss!
 From the bright arch of the celestial sun
 Thy Goddesshood beams forth, for manhood else undone.

10.



ISSA-LILY.

'Shall I not stoop to capture
 Thy life with a loving rapture;
 Quenching with fiery kisses
 The cold of the death below?
 Shall I not stoop to lift thee,
 For joys of my heart that gift thee,
 And quicken the song for blisses,
 Till melodies breathe and flow?

'Shall I not stoop to kindle
 Flames in the urn that dwindle?
 See, for my robes are shaken
 By odorous airs that go.
 The joy, in my heart that glances,
 Takes wing and I glide for dances.
 Rise, on my lips to waken;
 Then feed where the kisses grow.'

. 11.

LIBBIE.

Deliciously the moist wind frets
 Over yon bank of violets,
 Low in the mossy shade;
 As if it lingered to caress
 The soul of that small loveliness,
 There with her wreath displayed,
 Of joys and odors made.

I think of one, who led to me
 Enchantments of divinity,
 In love's young april hours.
 Those eyes held heaven for lucid blue;
 As violets in starry dew,
 Asleep amid the showers,
 They led mysterious powers.

Young love is aye an awful thing;
 A coming and a vanishing;
 Its aspect varies so.
 It folds about us by delight,
 As odors wafted through the night,
 Where dew-dipped violets grow,
 Its blessing to bestow.

Vision of maiden innocence,
 She led a finer sense through sense,—
 Shewed Love by its divine.
 She knew not how she wrought in me,
 Yet the Eternal Chastity
 Formed through her soul to mine;
 She touched, but made no sign.

The vision passed; she vanished so
 As when the violet perfumes go,
 And feed the airs no more;
 Yet, when I meet the violet,
 Years perish; youth is with me yet;
 My heart for love brims o'er
 To Her whom I adore.

'Tis the Eternal Woman-God,
 Who weaves through timid maidenhood

The mystery of Her spell.
 Unwitting of the sacred part,
 They serve the Goddess, from whose heart
 These melodies outwell:—
 In Her I love and dwell.

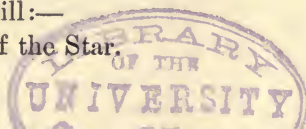
12.

ISSA.

‘The daughter of the Lady of the Spring !
 By mysteries of powers,
 The full corolla of my soul I bring
 Through thine by heavenly hours.
 I claim, I close, I cling,
 My bridal wreath to fling:—
 The daughter of the Lady of the Spring.

‘The daughter of the Lady of the Wave!
 I bear thee where my tides
 The coral passion-bowers envail and lave,
 And laugh the ocean brides.
 I billow and I bless,
 With flowing loveliness:—
 The daughter of the Lady of the Wave.

‘The daughter of the Lady of the Star!
 I beam where light is born,
 And feed thee with the rapture-fruits that arc
 In gardens of the morn.
 I form, I fold, I fill:
 I shew when night is still:—
 The daughter of the Lady of the Star.



‘The daughter of the Lady of Delight!
 I breathe enchanted words,
 That for the flowing melodies unite,
 While pulse with pulse accords.
 I rapture, I repose,
 Till loves by loves unclose:—
 The daughter of the Lady of Delight.

‘The daughter of the Lady of the Life!
 I fold with speechless breath,
 In the transposive powers, with virtues rife,
 That break the bands of death.
 By hope in hands and heart,
 I hold till age depart:—
 The daughter of the Lady of the Life.

‘The daughter of the Lady of the Lord!
 Still I unfold in thee
 Thought, power and passion of the Bridal Word:
 Then rise, O rise in me.
 Lift for the gifts, O king!
 For word-gifts that I bring:—
 The daughter of the Lady of the Lord.’

13.

DREAM CHILDREN.

Dream-children come to us by night:
 We bear through trouble and unrest,
 And sorrow blended with delight,
 Fond babes that clasp and claim the breast.

Sometimes they lift with dancing feet,
 While in our arms their home they claim:
 Their lips are wrought for kisses sweet;
 Their limbs made warm by lucid flame.

And some are bronzed by ruddy health,
 As infants of the People grow;
 And some in dainty robes of wealth,
 Yet poisoned all by stains of woe.

What are they? sometimes babes unborn,
 That touch from far by occult powers,
 Seeking to nurture and adorn
 Their lives by gifts that reach from ours.

14.

ISSA: DREAM-CHILDREN.

' I touch thee with my sacred spell:
 I draw thee by the Mother's wand:
 Each infant has a separate cell,
 Where Mother's heart makes babyland.

' The psyche of the infant glides
 From earthly womb but partly drest;
 Then to some friendly form it slides,
 Its occult food to find and wrest.

' Still Nature through them subtly weaves,
 In the great commune of her will;

Where'er the suffering infant grieves,
 Seeking its lips for bliss to fill.

'Often the princess in her sleep
 May fold by dreams the pauper's child;
 And so, to hail the serf, may leap
 Some babe on whom an empire smiled.

'By sympathies that reach afar,
 Come other dream-babes to the bed;
 Sprites whom the Genius from his star
 By mystic art has charmed and led.

'They gather forces from the strong,
 And noble thought-life from the wise:
 'Tis thus that souls of sweetest song,
 And heroes of mankind arise.'

15.

ISSA, DAUGHTER OF THE OCEAN.

All the passion, all the power
 Of my spirit lift to flower,
 In this consecrated hour,
 When the ONE-IN-TWAIN arise
 O'er the darkness of the nations;
 While the soul-lit constellations,
 Mute for breathing adorations,
 Follow earthward by their eyes.

Vast my bosom, for outwelling
 Of the Sea that is my dwelling,—
 Of the sea by waves foretelling
 Of the new-born earth and skies.
 So I breathe for pure devotion,
 As the daughter of the Ocean
 Leads her blisses into motion,
 By the star-touch as she plies.

For she branches by her scepter
 To the higher Heavens that kept her,
 To array her and protect her,
 In her infancy divine:
 For the queenhood they have crowned her;
 For its bands they fold around her;
 While the silence grows profounder,
 And her heart makes heart in mine.

In the cities of their splendor,
 Where the Radiant Ones attend her,
 She has opened doors that render
 For her bands an open way.
 She has given of the treasure
 Of her bosom, and the measure
 Of my strength is from her pleasure,
 Till the morn of God array.

16.

ISSA, DAUGHTER OF THE SEA AND STAR.

Issa, daughter of the Sea!
 By thy billows rise in me.



Fold and bear me while I creep
 To the coral caves of sleep;
 Where for bliss thy naiades
 Charm the sense to blessed ease.
 Bid thy ocean-girls entwine
 Curtains wrought of song divine,
 That for slumber flit and flow,
 Till the horns of Morning blow.
 Fold me for my rest in thee,
 Issa, daughter of the Sea.

Issa, daughter of the Star!
 Glide upon me near and far;
 Touch upon me for delight,
 By the powers that rule the night.
 Through my being waft and wing,
 For that deeper opening,
 When the eyes for joy transpose,
 And the heaven,—thy bridal rose,—
 From its crimson overflows,
 Breathing odors of repose.
 Fold me where thy blisses are,
 Issa, daughter of the Star.

So shall I awake again,
 Rich with poesies for men;
 In my feet the dancing Morn,
 On my lips its bugle-horn.
 Sweet! thy dewy feet I press,
 Worshiping, in each caress,
 To the ONE-IN-TWAIN whose powers
 Weave thee all for marriage bowers;
 And the Infinite is led
 To this eden of my bed.

XXVI.

Truth, by its vast and comprehensive scheme,
Is generated in perpetual play,
Where the God-Goddess fold by worth supreme,
In the bright Infinite.—Arise, away!
Leave this dull planet, where the tribes decay
As flies of summer when the frost consumes
Their vitals: calm thy spirit to survey
A BEING, all enwrought of living wombs,
And shaped for deathless bowers, gay with perpetual blooms.

XXVII.

This is Man-Woman, the Creative Word;
God manifest in Human Nature so.
Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath ever heard;
Yet swift Imaginations rise, and lo!
The One-Twain Being, as a world in glow,
Encircles us by multitudinous seas:
Broad continents their smiling wealth bestow;
Music is breathing its full harmonies,
And life, eternal life, is wafted on the breeze.

XXVIII.

In God, for God, to God, let thought have dwelling:
Be as thou wert ere form in space began:
Breathe bridal airs, that shadowed veil dispelling:
Forget the care, the sorrow and the ban.
Thou psychic seed, thou soul-germ of the man,
Thy birth,—first birth,—was in that universe:
The Father was thy firmament, to span;
The Mother was thy continent, to nurse,
And by Her flowing waves to lift thee and asperse.

XXIX.

Myriads of tiny beings, small yet great,
 Thy soul-mates and sweet kindred, with thee here
 Twined for thy social bands, that so the state
 And quality of being might appear.
 Through blissful seasons of the floral year,
 Thou didst pursue with them thy happy flight,
 Ere borne to Nature's distant atmosphere
 Thou didst become on Earth a shadowed wight,
 The fellow of the worm, an insect of the night.

XXX.

Thy long-lost playmates, where are they? far flying,
 They scattered to the worlds that drew them in:
 From cryptic cells of man to woman plying,
 They grew like thee, a babyhood to win;
 Yet not as thou: the strife and storm and din
 Of this wild world break not beyond its coast.
 They lifted, rounds of action to begin
 With peoples of the planetary host,
 Where life deploys and fills, fed by the Holy Ghost.

XXXI.

Mingled are they with their associate millions
 Enkindled for God's life from eve to morn,
 Whose vision penetrates the sky's pavilions,
 Touching the God-world; fear and hate and scorn
 Afflict them not; nor ills are in them born,
 Nor deaths aggrieve, nor cruelties profane.
 Celestial destinies their Fates forewarn:
 From the material birth they caught no stain:
 Never they love for loss or toil in labors vain.



XXXII.

Thy kindred! When through night, for splendor vaulted,
 The planetary sisterhood moves on,
 There are the soul-mates, lowly yet exalted.
 Races their coronation so have won;
 Till God, their Source, is made their horizon.
 By social cycles perfect and complete,
 Their worthier æons build from ages gone.
 By visual touch the One-in-Twain they meet,
 Until their earths they spurn, to rise with flying feet,

XXXIII.

In radiant bands of humanized perfections,
 To luminous vast empires that are more
 Than Nature's outbirths or its dim reflections.
 O'er those arch-natural realms their races pour,
 As crystal waters, leaping from the shore,
 To flow and flame in the illumined sea,
 Whose every space-way opens to a door
 Of nobler heavens, eternally made free
 In timeless freedom-fate:—God giveth so to be.

XXXIV.

God is made unto them for all things good;
 For all things pure and beautiful and wise:
 Borne on the billows of Love's passion-flood,
 Thoughts, powers, by kindling ecstasies arise.
 Their heavens are woven as full melodies
 From the Sweet Singer's voice; Her charm deploys
 Through heavens hived in Her breasts as social bees:
 Heavens feed upon Her lip that never cloys,
 And God is made to them as substance for their joys.

XXXV.

Pass deeper into God: I bid thee dare,
 For so the Muse inspireth; it is fit
 That souls, for whom God's kindnesses prepare
 Immortal destinies, betimes may sit
 In throne-rooms by the Infinite o'erlit,
 Enwreathing all as from God's marriage vine.
 Did we below as darkening phantoms flit,
 Wasting by weary toil to age supine?
 The Eternal Man of men shall meet us there divine.

XXXVI.

We are in God, and yet are in God's house!
 Upon the brow the holy dove alights.
 Would ye adore the Bride, the Mother Spouse?
 'What words are mine? with ours Her touch unites;
 Her hands form to our hands: 'tis thus She plights
 Souls to Her own felicity, and gives
 Her blithe and blissful daughters to their knights;
 And, for the years, those flying fugitives,
 Rounds an eternal prime wherein Her Being lives.

XXXVII.

I compass with the thought a large design:
 Whereas on Earth the drooping seasons fail,
 Here, in the everlasting pleasure-twine
 Of God in Goddess, wing they to prevail.
 While mortal years are as the beldame's tale,
 Told by the embers of a dying fire,
 She touches to the heart as times unvail,
 And circles for our feet a beauteous choir,
 Whose hands outwreathe for flowers, our pathway to attire.

XXXVIII.

MOTHER in Heaven! all hallowed be Thy name.
 Thy queendom come and will be done on earth,
 As in the heavens; till, for the lunar flame,
 Thy lady-light sheds beam of purest worth,
 And we attain the third and nobler birth
 Of perfect manhood in full woman-good.
 So, folded in the Bridal Word henceforth,
 Be ours for bridehood, wifehood, sisterhood,
 Enkindling for thy fire, and flowing of thy flood.

XXXIX.

MOTHER in Heaven! thrice hallowed make our breath;
 That we from Thy full chasteness may respire,
 And meet the ordeal of the hastening death,
 Clad as pure bridegrooms ere the brides retire.
 Waft through us of thy searching pleasure-fire,
 Till evils be consumed and sorrows die.
 Transfuse, transpose, transform, till death expire,
 And bid thy wingéd loves within us ply,
 Impulsing heart from heart, enkindling eye from eye.

XL.

MOTHER in Heaven! thrice hallowed make our hands,
 That we may touch but as the lives are clean;
 And so find entrance where the sister-bands
 Lead the swift worship, and the dancers lean
 Close to God's heart, to feel Thee for their Queen.
 Make thou our passion as the spring serene,
 And as the summer joyful, till we bring
 To Thy pure altar man's pure offering,
 Wreathed in Thy Holiness by social ring in ring.



XLI.

MOTHER in Heaven! thrice hallow aye for us
 In spirit, soul and body; till the song
 Of Thy Divinity, made glorious,
 Made perfect in our lives, is borne along;
 And we are in Thy Majesty made strong,
 And lift to breathe the odors of Thy feet,—
 Odors for sweetest gifts that subtly throng,—
 While virtue unto fragrance weds complete,
 And Thou shalt so diffuse as Sweetness through the sweet.

XLII.

MOTHER in Heaven! thrice hallow, by the day
 And by the night, until our lips are wet
 By ocean winds that waft Thy passion-spray,
 And land airs laden with Thy violet.
 Thy bridal cross enwreath in us, and set
 Thy star of bridehood for the breast and brain.
 Form of Thy blisses charm and amulet;
 Till every nerve of every sense attain
 A power for Thee to hold, to give, and to refrain.

XLIII.

Where Issa's warm white arm the waist was wreathing,
 My frame transposed in part, and I was blest;—
 The human flower-bud from its folds unshathing;
 The psyche glad from cumberings to disvest.
 Then the divine one said, 'Behold! I rest
 Where I have labored; for the Muse bestows
 All gifts wherewith the Mother has possess.
 Now I dissolve this veil of maiden snows;
 The Mother veils me so, until my gifts uncloset.'



XLIV.

Resume, thou holy strain. In Woman Good
 The Man Truth holds for palaces and bowers.
 She lifts and folds him; by her mighty flood
 She laves upon the islets of his powers;
 She fills the sun-light for his morning hours;
 She fills the star-light for his dewy eyes;
 She as the spring enrobes his life with flowers;
 She as the summer his rich fruit achieves:
 In her delight he thinks, discerns, fulfils, believes.

XLV.

Enrapturing Queen! take thou a full possession:
 Reveal the secret of the sway divine.—
 She answered, 'See me then; the swift procession
 Of my irradiant joys shall enter thine:
 If I have intertwined I will untwine:
 Yet first I call my Bride Girls for the dance.'—
 They came! warm blossoms of the music-vine
 Thrilled the embosomed air; in their advance
 Odor and song made breaths, that kindled by their glance.

XLVI.

Then Issa said, 'Tis Woman liberates
 For man his vast varieties; a king
 Is he by his great Word-birth, and the gates
 Of all the Heavenly Powers to meet him swing,
 When woman of her social wreath shall fling
 And lead him on by dances through her doors.
 I wait, I watch, I ward, I wield, I wing.
 Enter the paradise that God restores;
 For lo! the Mother's feet make space-ways to Her floors.

XLVII.

'The Word-life wrought in Woman crystalizes,
 Formed to our feet, and hence our feet below:
 Thus the foundations of the paradises
 Are laid as for an earth, and fashioned so.
 We touch the soils in dances where we go,
 And living bloom-robcs then adorn the sod.
 The lovers there the loveresses know;
 Enthused, illumed, inspired, they touch the rod
 Of the arch-king's delight, and flame with fires from God.

XLVIII.

'Behold,' said Issa, 'every knight a lover,
 In love eternally with the sweet bride,
 Who, by the Mother Love within, above her,
 Around her and beneath her, fills the tide
 Of deathless being, through his frame to glide.
 She lips and leads him to the social hall,
 Where the divine fraternities abide;
 So form the One-in-Twain into the all,
 Where from delicious nests the bride-doves coo and call.

XLIX.

'God Christus is the Hymen of our land,
 And Goddess Christa His own Loving Bride.
 I for their daughter am who with thee stand.
 Watch, wait and welcome! more awaits.—Betide,
 O girls, my girls! disbreast, be open-eyed.'—
 Disbreasted then the love-world of the fay;
 Blithe, beauteous maidens, from their bosomed pride,
 Disbursed the myriads of their joys in play:
 From the full tides they rose, and billowed round their way.

L.

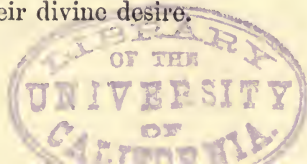
The little people wreathed round Issa thence,
 As zones of splendor for the Lady Sun.
 Amid the zones, diffusing radiance,
 Seven bands of sister-brides swift motion spun,
 Till through each lady drew her bosomed one:
 Then knights and ladies waltzed by round in round:
 So every knight his separate freedom won:
 Then all stood stately, wreathed and robed and crowned
 With animated loves, from Woman's wealth unbound.

LI.

Woman delights in exquisite sensation:
 This I see realized where Heaven lets down
 Her odorous, shining tresses for elation,
 And, in yon grand metropolis, the crown
 Of kingly Manhood flames for his renown.
 Dear Issa said again, 'Unloose for me;'
 Then shook warm perfumes from her blossomed gown,
 And led swift dances by a moving glee,
 Till every thought arose, triumphant, strong and free.

LII.

Her breaths arose by fragrant undulations;
 She caught me in her arms of lucid flame,
 Till all my being thrilled for emanations
 Of pure divinity, and rose to frame
 The swift, sweet motions through her heart that came.
 Then, for her beckoning shone, in rich attire,
 The Ladies of the Dance, their joy to claim;
 And Issa led me through that beauteous choir,
 While all entwreathed and sang for their divine desire.



LIII.

Peace to thy heart, O desolate Mankind,
 Shall come at last, as to the dying bed,
 When Liberating Powers the soul unbind:
 Then the crowned Woman of the Word shall spread,
 With voiceless kisses and felt words unsaid,
 Her quiet o'er thy bosom. Thou shalt feel
 Thy starved and wasted being charmed and led
 Into Elysium, whilst Her dancers wheel,
 With joyances that all thine agonies repeal.

LIV.

They led me through the maze of their quadrille,—
 Those joyous ladies,— and I flew with them,
 Till Issa touched my heart and wrought a spell
 That gave a sight of young Jerusalem.
 Wise, pious friend, do not my verse condemn;
 I am religious as the bride-girl May,
 Dancing beneath her nuptial diadem,
 And, in the sweetness of her spousal day,
 Wedded to God's dear Son, all as a Bridegroom gay.

LV.

But there beamed young Jerusalem, a city
 Floating on waters of the Woman's flood.
 She who now stoops to meet our world for pity
 Shone there unveiled in awful Bridalhood;
 And round her an adoring multitude,
 Gathered from all this poor mankind we know,
 Swayed by Her breathing as the leafy wood,
 While airs that bring the south their sweets bestow;
 Till all as one began with bosom-bliss to flow.



LVI.

They tasted of old griefs forgetfulness;
They lost the memory of the profane:
The cruel creeds that shadow and repress
Vanished, as clouds in heaven that leave no stain.
Pride, emulation, apathy, disdain,
The poor man's sorrow and the rich man's curse,
The hunger of the heart that seeks in vain,
Perished, as when the shades of night disperse,
And God has risen for sun, to light the universe.

LVII.

No temple was therein; but for the shrine
Living Religion stood in Woman's form,
And from her breast led atmospheres divine,
That grew, and with a flying music-storm
Through every frame led blisses mildly warm.
So the impetuous blood was thrilled to flow,
Expelling the last lingering, dying worm
Of their old trouble: then pellucid snow
Made cool, delicious mist, forming for winds to blow.

LVIII.

A silver light then made for them its fold:
They looked upon each other with kind eyes.
'Surely,' they said, 'we change as we behold;
Beauties through beauties on our sight arise.'
Then Love, who is impatient of disguise,
Flamed forth upon them for a sudden thought,
That Earth was now transformed to paradise:
And Woman oped her world, and man was caught,
And all his quivering frame in blisses robed and wrought.

LIX.

Wise, pious friend, refuse not thou the lay;
 Open thy deeper heart and hear it there.
 The Man of Sorrow is no more for aye;
 The Man of Joy breathes in this arch-way, where
 I stand, confronting the old world's despair,
 And fling swift music on the hungry blast.
 Is Earth a pit-fall and its law a snare?
 Gropes the dim thought in chasms void and vast?
 Perchance thine eyes are bound, but Dawn is here at last.

LX.

Religion is herself in transformation,
 And, by the song, a little lifts her veil.
 Her eyes, to fore-gleams of Love's new creation,
 Pierce the illusions of this shadowed pale,
 Where, spite of creed and mass, the nations wail.
 True is the song, where hearts to claim are wise:
 Pure is the song, where hearts made pure prevail:
 Though dying Winter in its pathway sighs,
 Aye in its gliding feet celestial Summer plies.

LXI.

The theme is mightier than the verse. Perchance
 I find a blossom, fallen from the dress
 Of the Queen Mother, borne in the advance
 By odorous airs that waft Her blessedness.
 I force through tumults that would still repress:
 I dip the joy-grapes in my cup of pain:
 I weave a new delight, through storm and stress
 Of ancient agonies that yet restrain:
 But open thy full heart; thou shalt not ope in vain.

LXII.

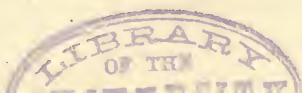
By night the rains upon my roof were beating ;
 The living Thunders smote each other's breasts :
 Internal harmonies, the blows repeating,
 Shook the firm fabric wherein Nature rests.
 A stream of moving melody invests
 Our Planet; to the viewless, airy wall,
 The palpitating billows lift their crests ;
 Airs unto winds and waves to floods give call ;
 Yet man sleeps on supine, where apathies enthrall.

LXIII.

And I but linger!—half the frame transposed
 Rests in its ideality ; by sight,
 Touch, taste and feeling loosened and unclosed.
 This human column lifts upon the night,
 The mind illumined as a beacon light,
 O'er its storm-beaten tower,—it gilds the waves,
 Enkindling 'mid the elemental fight,
 To flash for wavering sword-blades o'er the caves,
 Vailed in the social deep for tyrants and their slaves.

LXIV.

She touched my side, dear Issa, and her finger
 Left there a blood-red seal. 'Enough,' she said,
 'The herald of the Morning should not linger,
 Where ancient Evil yet shews hardihead.
 Yet, when my dancers by their measure led,
 The trouble of mankind enclosed their round.
 See! they draw nearer, and the charms, dispread
 As gladnesses, within them are unbound.'
 Again they sped the dance, touching with skill profound ;



LXV.

Till, from the motions of their flying train,
 I caught the spheral whirl of harmony,
 And thrilled to view LORD-LADY, One-in-Twain,
 Gliding through brilliance of the social sea.
 Made one with all the music in its glee,
 The wreathing bands of social peoples drew
 Into their orbit, each one-twain to be
 Immortally made blithe and born anew:
 Lord-Lady so in them the passion-path pursue.

LXVI.

O Christus Lover, Christa Loveress!
 Because YE live and love, so Twain-in-One,
 The social peoples form one blessedness;
 Each maid a daughter, wedded to a son.—
 The mercy-path is open, and begun
 The perfect round full blisses to bestow.
 The lamps are lit, the marriage robes are spun.
 One-Twain of all one-twainness! we shall know,
 We shall receive, and find our transposition so.

LXVII.

The gardens of the gods are wisely wrought
 In many an intricate, involving scheme.
 Grecian mythology,—a shadowed thought,—
 Holds revelation by a wondrous dream,
 Inverted like the shadows in a stream,
 And broken into strange, fantastic lines.
 Could man but pluck from his dim eyes the beam
 That superstition casts, Ideal Climes
 Would dawn upon the path where now he gropes and pines.

LXVIII.

Hellas was erst steeped all in Deity.

Where human freedom grows there God unfolds.

Truth, the consummate flower of Liberty,

By myriad glimmerings its orb beholds.

The nobler reason by such light embolds,

Till bright Imaginations plume their wings:

Thence ever the conceptive thought remolds

To sculpture the realities of things:

For Earth Religion lives; she lifts and loves and sings.

LXIX.

Where'er the human shrine is most perfected,

The occult nature-soul most subtly plies:

She lifts, by myriad energies erected,

Conductors for the lightnings of the skies.

Though no drear Sinais on her frontiers rise,

Nature herself, as Moses to behold,

Reaches through mountains of the mysteries:

Her brow, her breast, she laves in heavenly gold,

And sprinkles rains of light where human thoughts unfold.

LXX.

Nature betimes grows pregnant, as a mother,

From pregnancy to impregnate the brain

For babes of thought, bi-sexual, sister-brother,

Yet lover-loveress, all one-in-twain.

Thus rise her bards of the heroic strain,

Spirit and sense inwrought for mutual joy;

They rule upon the human hurricane;

They burst the commonplace of man's employ;

As demi-gods they build, as titans they destroy.

LXXI.

Yet Nature on our globe is undefended:

The tipsy goddess to the tripod reels;

The Heavenly Purities retire offended;

In vain the sibyl to her god appeals.

Yet who averts the motion of the wheels
That urge the art-play of the universe?

The wandering ghost or ghostess then reveals;

From Hecate's dim bosom where they nurse,

The slumbering phantoms rise and of their dreams rehearse.

LXXII.

Religion is an art-play, first and last;

Or true or false or mingling, 'tis the same:

Wherever the Divinities have passed,

Nature is prompt their imagery to claim

And weave it in her gay, spontaneous game:

She flings it in the sparkles of her stream.

What careth she, this frolic, bounteous dame,

Whose eyes make mirrors for the Morn Supreme,

Whose science is a sport, whose real is a dream?

LXXIII.

There's a brief time when Nations are like girls

Budding for the first love: then one steps down

Into their stream and wins those holy pearls,

And he henceforward rules them by the crown.

So Peoples, in young pride of their renown,

Clasp the brave mythe, made all divine to them:

Through it the deities or smile or frown,

In awful synods pardon or condemn,

And whelm in deepest night or lift where heavens begem.

LXXIV.

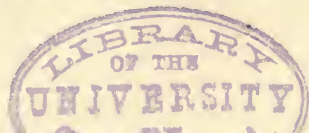
Fashion rules all things; when the fashions change
 The old things pass away, and all are new:
 From gay to grave did Nature's fashion change?
 Then Christ to earth a new Ideal drew;
 And Nature caught at it, and wove it through
 Peoples and tribes, like rain through budding leaves;
 Here warm and sweet as limpid honey dew,
 There blistering as fire upon the sheaves,
 Or frozen to white snows the shuddering north receives.

LXXV.

Nature is poesy, whatever else;
 And God the Poet, not the less He-She!
 Woven through heavens and earths, yea, and through hells,
 Flows the omnific word of poesy;
 A circling strain, past, present, and to be.
 Naught is prosaic, rightly seen or read.
 The Lover-Loveress, One Deity,
 Diffuse beatitudes from hearts inved:
 Life is their nuptial song, and form their marriage bed.

LXXVI.

Naught is prosaic, yet Earth now seems prose;
 Dry life and wintry, wasting forms make this.
 When Faith is young and as a lover goes,
 He sings for raptures of his hope and bliss;
 But age draws on and all then goes amiss:
 The river of his inspiration dries;
 He grows profane, and shudders at a kiss;
 From the Ideal turns his evil eyes;
 Then gropes in vulgar prose, becomes a worm, and dies.



LXXVII.

Vulgar respectabilities consume
 The vitals of Religion, but they grow
 By that they feed on, till their lines of gloom
 Mantle and simulate her form of glow.
 From unctuous lips falls many a screed of woe;
 Base egoism 'glories in the cross:'
 The saintly plunderers to the chapels go,
 Proclaiming 'all save Christ but sinful dross:'
 The Real is withdrawn, but seeming finds no loss.

LXXVIII.

The Play is ended, and the curtain falls;
 Until reborn the Drama seeks her stage.
 They cleanse and renovate the Thespian halls;
 The masks and fardels of the perished age
 Pass to the rag-picker.—Her heritage
 In human life Religion claims again:
 Opening her star-emblazoned, wondrous page,
 The gods and goddesses shew forth to men.—
 Christ veiled, but reappeared as Christus-Christa then.

LXXIX.

Behold the Twain-in-One! They come, behold!
 The Beautiful stoops down to reättire
 Earth for her temple, all in solar gold:
 She wafts her winds till morning shall respire;
 But trickling waters from her hands of fire
 Shape the white mist that leads the kindly gloom:
 The East is opened for her social choir.—
 Hour of the birth-pang, bid with seeming doom,
 Thy fulness shall behold mankind with God a-bloom.



LXXX.

Who shall untie that gordian knot, Mankind?—
As writhing snakes the social systems coil.
Disease and penury the peoples grind,
As corn between the millstones. . Where the soil
Groans for huge cities, wearing, wearying toil,
With pittances of insecure reward,
Robs life of sweetness. Hates and angers boil
In the vast commune; rich men are abhorred,
Yet every poor man craves by wealth to rule as lord.

LXXXI.

Must Life be death and its dim way a hell?
Shall Love be transient and its house a grief?
Is Hope forever in despair to dwell?
Shall cold oblivion be our sole relief?
Is Man earth's final misery and its chief?
Is there no other exit than the grave?
Waits man his time till Age, that hoary thief,
Chains and consumes him in his bony cave?
Spake the arch-buddhist true, 'No god can help or save'?

LXXXII.

To read the riddle of the destinies
Sages have toiled, but ever toiled in vain.
There is no access to the mysteries:
This is a world of penury and pain.
Yet secrets open, where Love's holy rain
Perfumes and sanctifies the quickening breast.
Truth, like the goddess from the adrian main,
Uplifts in sacred Womanhood confest,
And wisdom flows where lips to her divine are prest.

LXXXIII.

Truth waits upon organic transposition ;

New heart implied, new brain, new sense must grow.

A touch may then dissolve the veiled partition,

Shewing a world formed to us, all a-glow,

Where ripe humanities their wealth bestow.

Then, as the rain-drop melts into its flood,

Being, all warm as sun, all pure as snow,

Enters by truth into its realm of good,

Where manhood finds its heaven, wrought all in womanhood.

LXXXIV.

What Earth calls 'sex' is but a creeping worm.

What in heaven's world is known as sex, displays

The attribute of God in life and form.—

I touch to Issa's bosom, and she says,

'Of sex, in sex, by sex man lives always;

Eternity is in its form implied ;

There woman touches man by rays in rays,

Through all his being as the sun to glide :

She clothes him of her bloom; she floods him by her tide.'

LXXXV.

In the completion of Earth's brief career,

Lord Christus oped his circumfusing shell :

Then Lady Christa, by her waters clear,

Lifted with floods on floods the pains to quell :

So transposition wrought in every cell

Of his apparent naturehood, and He,—

Not yet content in occult space to dwell,—

Led forth his shadow-form, that Earth might see

A little while; then rose in life's last victory.

LXXXVI.

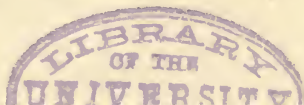
By Manhood, wrought in Womanhood, He toiled,
 Shaping new destinies for earthly men:
 By manhood wrought in womanhood He spoiled
 The under-world and shewed for earth again:
 By manhood wrought in womanhood He then
 Transposed, till Heaven received Him from the sight.—
 ‘Yea,’ murmured Lady Issa, ‘write, that when
 My baby eyes first opened for delight,
 The Mother-flood gave forth my form to Father-might.

LXXXVII.

‘The One-in-Twain inorbed my infancy:
 In Father-Mother I found fields of bloom:
 Suns shined in them to warm and lighten me:
 I slept full often in arch-nature’s womb,
 Weaving, as in a swift and fiery loom,
 The bright imaginations for my dress:
 I traced the mysteries of death and doom,—
 I who this blossomed daughterhood possess,—
 And stand arrayed for thee from God the Loveliness.’

LXXXVIII.

She caught my hand and lifted in a whirl:
 Her flying music-wings began to beat
 And winnow the soft air, and so unfurl
 Rays of intelligence that grew complete,
 Shaping to full expression, warm and sweet,
 In a vast Woman Image, circling round.
 Then Issa formed her feet into my feet:
 Her golden locks, diffusive and unbound,
 Floated and filled with light the vast and dim profound.



LXXXIX.

‘This, this is transposition,’ Issa cried;
 ‘I trace the woman scripture line by line,
 And write thee so, ‘arisen, beatified.’
 Thy shadowy semblance for a while may twine
 ‘Mid earthly seemings, but the mine is thine.
 The concept of Truth’s Word, inwrought in thee,
 Shapes thee to lift, and royally combine
 With all I am, and that I yet shall be.
 To Father thou gav’st all:—His gift thou hast in me.’

XC.

She brought a cup of pure and sparkling nectar
 Forth from her lips, but in the cup lay blood.
 ‘Woman,’ she said, ‘was sweet ere Evil wrecked her;
 But poisons mingle with her passion-flood:
 Taste of her anguish in my joyous good:
 So shalt thou penetrate her grief, and know
 A deeper mystery of my daughterhood:
 ’Tis only as thou bearest thus below,
 Thy path may be to hights whereto our flight must go.’

XCI.

I write of her in this familiar style,—
 She for whose skill the magic realm disharms:
 ’Tis by her subtle art, her touch, her smile,
 The glimmerings of her full white rosy arms,
 Her voice, her breath, the perfume of her charms,
 My wondrous change moves on. She stood arrayed
 In her next scene, as born to earth’s alarms,
 A shy, slim, artless, white-robed village maid,
 Where purple lilacs bloomed and May’s young moon displayed.

XCII.

Then Issa said again, 'Tis the Ideal,
 Worshipped from youth and served through all the years,
 Who lifts where Christa crowns the hymeneal,
 And leads Her Infinite through time and tears.
 'Tis the Ideal evermore anears,
 To bless her lover and her worshiper.
 The lily-scepter blossoms from the spears:
 Still form her gifts, while seeming to defer:
 The Bridal One-in-Twain ope heaven at last through her.'

XCIII.

Man, by first birth, is but a human lichen,
 A seed of soul germed in the earthly stone;
 The heart awakes, the mind illumines; they quicken,
 Till hands to lift and feet to serve are grown.
 Life is a transformation; all unknown
 The processes whereby it speeds above,
 Self-life, self-worth, self-purpose to disown;
 Then in the Bridal Holy Ghost, the dove,
 Becomes one-twain, the child of the Eternal Love.

17.

ISSA'S EVEN SONG.

He brought me a posy, to glisten
 And breathe in my gold-brown hair:
 I bring him a song if you listen,
 The joy of the gift to share.

The wind of my fragrant tresses,
 The sway of my broidered hem,

Have shaken by soft caresses
 My gold-flower on his stem.

But still while the phantom darkles,—
 The phantom they call 'the Night,'—
 The dew in the lily cup sparkles,
 And breathes from its life delight.

Close now, thou, my Flower of flowers!
 By airs of the bridal sea,
 I fold for the sacred hours,
 Made sweet by my gift to thee.

18.

ISSA'S ROSE SONG.

In the night I wake and wander,
 Lonely and forlorn;
 Growing sadder, sweeter, fonder,—
 Rose upon its thorn.

O'er the couch of woman's anguish,
 While her doom draws near,
 Still my life must droop and languish,—
 Rose upon its bier.

Where my heavenly virtue scatters
 Gift in woman's fears,
 Rose-bread forms upon the waters,
 Rose-bud sinks in tears.

Where the woman's heart but gathers
 For its sweetness woe,
 See, my blossom in her withers,—
 Rose upon the snow.

Where the woman's hope is broken,
 Wrecked her fragile form,
 See me borne through griefs unspoken,—
 Rose upon the storm.

Where the woman's life is lifted
 For my gifts above,
 Lover, claim thy Rose Girl gifted,
 Blossomed new for love.

19.

ISSA'S GIRLS.

Girls, my girls, pure passion-roses,
 In you I have bled:
 In you all my life reposes,—
 Bridal wreath and bed.

Girls, my girls, in you I kindle
 Spray of crimson fire;
 Till the colds of winter dwindle,
 And the storms retire.

Girls, my girls, in you I glisten,
 Wet with dews of Spring;



In you all I wake and listen,
Till the bride-bird sing.

Girls, my girls, I call and gather,
Till ye all entwine,
Where the bounteous Mother-Father
Wreathe their rose in mine.

XCIV.

With what a grand and stately condescension
Bows the starred Issa, from her highs divine,
To lowliness of this, our poor dimension!
She weaves a shadow-form through this of mine,
Gliding on missions tenderly benign,
Where mortal woman wanders veiled in tears:
Still to uplift, to quicken and refine
She breathes deliciously, while pains and fears
Dissolve to meet her touch, and misery disappears.

XCV.

Then homeward, as on wings of blisses flying,
She immimates, through all my outness led,
And lifts again by sacred raptures plying:
O'er me her broad, irradiant lights are spread:
Her powers renew as tides from ocean's bed:
She wakens chords that vibrate to the far
Immensities of life: the soul is fed
From music-bearing vales in heaven that are;
I touch the solar breast, I meet the morning star.



XCVI.

Still, while the mortal shades, for sorrows clinging,
 Restrain the evolution of her gifts,
All fountain-like she rises, wreathing, flinging
 Her passion-spray by melody. She lifts
 As a snow-maiden, clad in sparkling drifts
From winter's purity, dissolving so
 Her element through mine, far o'er the rifts
Of desolate mankind: where'er I go
Love thrills her crystalline, till joys in sorrows flow.

XCVII.

'Tis thus I occultly asperse with waters;
 But He who cometh in the passion-flood
Shall verily baptize the sons and daughters,
 In fires that kindle from the lips of God.
 Yea, where I toil with feet for sorrow shod,
His passion-feet shall burn with violet fire,
 And for my word-staff shall His rose-wreathed rod
Bloom as red morning; till His Love's desire
Makes blessedness their crown and brightness their attire.

XCVIII.

In daughterhood, by sonship, I adore;
 Yet not as men adore: God is my home.
Through sense, thought, love, as by a triune door,
 I rise where Issa 'neath her pleasure-dome
 Forms worshipings within her breast: the foam
Of her white billows thrills and raptures me:
 For statue, picture, altar, lettered tome,
By thought, love, sense, I touch Divinity;
Inchilded evermore, as God has given to be.

XCIX.

The daughter-son the Mother-Father know ;
 The Bridal Word is truth in them indeed.
 What though but poesy declare them so ?
 From poesy the heavens and earths proceed ;
 In poesy the luminous peoples feed,
 And from its fount their sparkling waters well.—
 God gave these lines, ‘ Behold ! I burn, I bleed,
 As fires the heart and flows its vital shell,
 Till by a song of songs in all My seed I dwell.’

C.

Come forth again. Here, Godward make thy rise :
 So, in the light of God, behold the lands,
 Whence radiance streams to meet all human eyes,
 And strength to lift and sway all human hands.
 The empires open as the sight expands :
 The God-seed all formed through our earthly race,
 Wrought round our globe as by arch-solar bands,
 Vibrate for expectation : they unlace
 The foldings of their powers, impassioned to embrace.

CI.

They wait, they watch, they worship, yet withhold.
 Silence hath passed upon them ; they conceal
 The splendors in their bosoms ; they infold
 The fires of many ages. True and leal,
 Fixed for the motion of their twining wheel,
 The Earth is compassed by their shadowing lines.
 Yet see, oh ! see the soft, white vapor steal,
 As o’er the lowlands when the day declines,
 And rose-fire in the west with golden light entwines.

CII.

Men telegraph their silent thoughts by sea,
 And gird the orb with speech of friend with friend:
 Men telephone their spoken words, to be
 From house to house, far to the dim land's end:
 'Tis thus the arts of heaven to earth descend,
 Shaped to its narrowness and lessened so:
 From the arch-solar wheel swift forces tend,
 Through every human nerve to glide and flow,
 Till hearts are led through hearts and lives through lives below.

CIII.

Mankind awaits its new humanity,
 As Earth once waited for its first-born rose.
 God is our Life: God is our destiny!
 Doth now this flower of song His airs unclose?
 Through all the Word-seed that the planet knows
 He shall unvail and lift Himself to bloom;
 His odors glide where now our being flows,
 Cast on the storm or whirled within the stroom,
 And there shall be no pain, and nevermore a tomb.

CIV.

She folded through my Love,—the sacred Muse,—
 So Issa-Lily drew me for delight:
 The blossom of my soul drank honey dews
 From the divine corolla of the night.—
 Now dawns the morning, cold and clear and white;
 I waken thrilled with song in every vein;
 Words wheel within the mind, as if a flight
 Of silver doves caught in a golden rain
 Were borne by living winds, their paradise to gain.

CV.

So, when the day had risen a little more,
 Sweet Lily stood, her presence to confess,
 And in her arms a naked babe she bore,
 Uplifted to her life's young loveliness.
 She kissed with lips all tremulous to bless,
 And the blithe infant sudden rapture caught,
 Then broke to wreaths for babyhoods' undress,
 And drew around me as a flying thought;—
 The wingéd orb of fays their home within me wrought.

CVI.

But Lily, all a-tremble, sought mine eyes,
 Her lucid orbs a nuptial bliss revealing,
 And Issa's light in hers, like suns in skies,
 Found me anew, disclosing yet concealing.
 Then flights of silver doves, for rapture wheeling,
 Swept in a golden rain-shower from on high,
 And I was lifted by a wish-thought, stealing
 From Lily's bosom, till, with light of eye
 And lift of foot, she swung my soul in melody.

CVII.

And Issa danced in Lily, and they led
 My form of light into the form of shade;
 Then led their lights into my shade, that spread
 A thrilling interlay of splendors made,
 And when the dance was ended overlaid.
 So rose a Woman Shadow, whose vast arms
 Shook living winds, that still as shadows played
 Wrought all as lady-bands, enwreathing charms,
 Like thoughts that stoop o'er death, to still the last alarms,

CVIII.

The Woman of the Shadow, from the spaces
 Of Her divine immensity, o'erlies
 Our orb, to still by exquisite embraces
 Mankind, the sufferer, here who toils and plies
 Through pathways of perpetual agonies.
 Hush, hush! thou weary babe, whom sorrows nurse
 Till sufferings consume; the Mother's eyes
 With dews of pity flow till they disperse
 Thy griefs:—She makes, instead, Her Life thy universe.

CIX.

White water-columns rising from the sea!
 I saw afar, on the Pacific's breast,
 Three mighty pillars, lifting occultly,
 As sheaves of billowed grain, by crest on crest:
 Each one a vast, bright ocean nymph possesseth.
 They lifted, as I saw, and interled;
 Then whirls of winds from their deep bosoms prest;
 Eastward by forms of many forms they sped,
 And with their flowing rains the continent they fed.

CX.

Men know not yet the blessing of the rain.
 In occult space the delicate, pure showers
 Hold a diffusive virtue from the fane,
 Circled with wreaths of endless bridal bowers,
 Where the Great Mother by mysterious hours
 In sacred womanhood renews Her rites.
 From Her full hands fall hymeneal flowers
 Whose final fragrance on the flood unites,
 Aspersing, land to land, for virtues of delights.



CXI.

Yea, the Great Mother doth baptize with water!
 I drank thereof in Christa's holy well.
 Sweet Issa, by the arts that Wisdom taught her,
 Sprinkled me so from her bright music-shell.
 I, too, have dwelt in Lilimola's dell
 Where Cupids and their Psyches oft baptize.
 Peoples and tongues of the New Earth shall tell
 Of many streams that flow in paradise,
 And still from fount and rill the naiad meet their eyes.

CXII.

SHE doth indeed baptize with waters: daily
 I bathe me in the flowings of Her stream;
 Thence as a bridegroom, godly, gladly, gayly,
 I live this waking life where men but dream,
 And lead my song-flights through the raven-scream
 And owl-hoot of the sickly, clamorous town.
 Dews of her rains my bosom make serene;
 They fold pure breathings for my lyings down;
 They sparkle in my rise like diamonds for a crown.

CXIII.

When man is filled with God, he overflows
 To give himself in raptures to his kind:
 The Genius of his being thrills and glows,
 Full wealth of substacked virtue to unbind,
 Diffusing benedictions as the wind
 Of Summer sows the air with life and song;
 By senses of the heart, the soul, the mind,
 He liberates the powers; more sure, more strong,
 They amplify and burn their cycle to prolong.



CXIV.

At every pore we stream with Deity:
Alive to God, from God, for God we brim;
Aye, as blithe lovers in their ecstasy,
Eyes meeting eyes with speechless looks that swim
In dewy bliss. As from her crescent dim
The young moon grows to the full silver shield,
Life rises, and, with many a choric hymn,
Glides radiant o'er the constellated field;
If lost awhile to sight, even then in God concealed.

CXV.

Round Lily's waist I saw a girdle, spun
Of some fine tissue that the ladies weave
In Lilimola; as it loosed, undone,
Her arm she lifted from the dropping sleeve;
Then dipped it in the rosy crimson eve.
As fold by fold the billowing raiment fell,
She wove a cloud her outline to receive,
Till, all in shadow drest, she wrought a spell
And led me by her side, in Shadow Land to dwell.

CXVI.

I moved as one in grief, for I was laden
With woman's anguish; occultly we sped
Through sordid villages, where wife and maiden
Weave daily sorrows in their bitter bread.
At last we reached a palace, where they fed
On sumptuous fare, but every breast held scorns
Of woman's common life; white adders bred
Within their vitals, and protruding horns
Of jealousies and hates rose from their hearts like thorns.

CXVII.

But Lily said, 'I shew the end of this,
And what full soon will certainly befall;
Hold to me that I do not go amiss.'
She laid her hand upon the chief of all,
A lady of the crown.—There was a ball
Of living filaments, and this she twined
Around that queen, and lo! it wove a pall,
And o'er that aged lady's withering mind
In shrouded folds displayed, and lifted on the wind.

CXVIII.

Rule thou, Britannia! rule upon the waves
A little while; but soon the waves shall be
Loosened through many breasts of serfs and slaves;
And then shall come the People of the Sea,
And fold their pall of waters over thee.
Yea, and thine Isle shall bear another name;
And a One-Twain shall rule its chivalry,
And they shall take away that people's shame,
And move amid them all by fires of bridal flame.

CXIX.

By many a sacred and mysterious rite,
Woman they shall baptize in holiness,
And consecrate by her new name, 'Delight,'
The manhood of that people to possess;
Till from her social bosom blessings press
To milky rivers of the Mother's wine.
There shall no more be penury and distress;
But the Man' People, from the woman's vine,
Shall taste the grapes of heaven and live for days divine.



CXX.

The Chief of Industries shall then bear sway,
Where now the chief of indolence enthrones ;
And all shall walk in one sweet common way,
Where Ladyhood the Commonwealth enzones ;
And, where the prelate now his creed intones,
The Bridal Priestess, with her blossomed wand,
In sacred dance shall lead the raptured ones,
Who worship God with open heart and hand,
For social bliss enwreathed in that transfigured land.

CXXI.

Surely a blissful change is creeping on,
As young love steals into a maiden's heart ;
And many sorrows from our race are gone,
That held dominion by a secret art.
The mighty larves, o'er palace, shrine and mart,
That shook contagion from their dragon wings
And penetrated to life's deeper part,
Ruling as vampires, poisoning the springs
Of soul and sense, lie dead, dissolved with all their stings.

CXXII.

In the pavilions of the golden ether,
The lady-winds, born of the Mother's breath,
Form in their bosoms for the blissful weather :
To meet them is to find release from death.
Within the shadowed world, that lay beneath
Our earthly dwelling, all by ills distained,
A new-born summer hath its bloom unsheatht ;
A new existence, pure and unrestrained,
Waits to uplift where erst disease our orb profaned.

CXXIII.

Myriads of wan and wasted human spirits,
 Gathered anew as bees to golden hives,
 Feed on the joy young Summer there inherits.
 As the sweet South with panting bosom drives
 The cold from her dominions, and deprives
 The dying frost of power to grieve and slay,
 In quickening bands of maidens, sisters, wives,
 The Mother moves upon her blissful way:
 Upon Her lip is love and o'er Her brow the day.

CXXIV.

Pure violets open for their passion-dew,
 Where once the deadly sex-weeds to the feet
 Exhaled contagion, and the bosom drew
 To breathe rank poisons of infectious heat.
 Yet, hark again! by morn the sky-larks meet
 The quivering sunlight, and, when stars prevail,
 For the still air the night-blown rose is sweet,
 And borne upon its breaths the nightingale
 Wings her delightful lay, far led from dale to dale.

CXXV.

Hail to the splendid hours of Restitution!
 Savior in Savioress, fulfilling so
 The cycle of redemptive evolution,
 Weave social edens: where the blisses flow,
 The Bridegroom and the Bride apparelled go,
 Drawn to our earthland, for the End released.
 As ocean, stilled when tempests fail to blow,
 Man, from tempestuous anarchy deceased,
 Shall tremble to sweet calm;—then comes the marriage feast.

CXXVI.

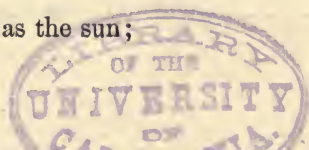
My Lily came appavelled as a queen,
 In the deep night: her sister-band she led,
 Like Love that bows with an unfaltering mien,
 To soothe the anguish of the dying bed.
 The stately choir stooped earthward as she sped
 Their flying dance: their bosom-bliss distilled
 An opiate vapor, that a shadow spread:
 So, as the circling round its flight fulfilled,
 A rapture formed in pain through slumbering thousands thrilled.

CXXVII.

O Love, thou Love! mysteriously imparting
 The blissful motions of the Bridal Word,
 From thy full flight joys, like the sunfires darting,
 Reach the sad hearts for living graves interred.
 Woman, who pines for grief of hope deferred,
 As in pure dreams from slumbers thrice profound,
 Imparadises in her breast the bird
 Of heaven, the holy dove; her grief is drowned
 In waters, sweet for song, that flow but wake no sound.

CXXVIII.

But Lily, when that mystic round was over,
 Led her blithe song-band in their own bright way:
 Then through each bridal maid her bridegroom lover
 Sped hand in hand: by joyous interplay
 They touched and trembled as twin blossoms may,
 Shaken by kissing winds to be at one.
 So I beheld the coming of the day:
 Forth from the folds of His pavilion,
 Christus the God appeared, appavelled as the sun;



CXXIX.

As Helios-Christus! with a sound of waters
 Borne from His bosom to a kindling flood.
 By sweep of hand He gathered up the daughters,
 And in their wreath of glowing womanhood
 Wrought loves anew, till they before Him stood:
 As the warm peach grows ripe for Summer's kiss,
 Each blushing bride thrilled to the perfect good,
 Borne from the sanctuary of His bliss.—
 I dare in song reveal, even to this, for this.

CXXX.

And when again,—their social wreath dispersing,—
 Lover with loveress I marked their flight,
 The marriage bliss of Saviorhood rehearsing,
 They in each other fed with new delight;
 The being all touching the violet,
 In brain, heart, bosom, for its wealth unbound.
 As stars in stars, that beam to rise and set
 By fold and infold, all with God-life crowned,
 Each one-in-twain pursue their life's eternal round.

CXXXI.

When Lily came to cheer my loneliness,
 'Kisses of God upon my lips are sweet,'
 She murmured, 'and the floods have risen with stress
 Of living billows in thine all to meet.
 The violets are blossomed to my feet;
 So now the flower-girl from God's beauty stands,
 Her lord for gladness of our Lord to greet.'
 She touched me by her delicate pure hands;
 Her fragrance met me then, as from God's garden lands.



CXXXII.

Not on the Earth is Woman's odor known,
 Save by a far and fine diffusion lent,
 Mingling perchance with music's holiest tone;
 Or found in hours when martyred men have bent
 O'er the abyss of death, and seen the tent
 Of darkness ope for Immortality.
 Now, as Earth trembles to the last event,
 Her nectar-well is opening, and the sea
 That in the perfume glides flows forth as sleep to be.

CXXXIII.

But Lily murmured, low and still more low;
 And sweet and still more sweet the violet fed,
 Making each sense its captive; to bestow
 Such joys as to Christ's sepulcher were led,
 When Christa in His being made Her bed.—
 Man knows not yet what woman's gift may yield,
 When in the God-life twain-in-one are wed,
 And she,—no more frail floweret of the field,—
 Enfolds him in her form, as paradise revealed.

CXXXIV.

Rest, rest, importunate and weary mind,
 Thou virtuous mind in suffering mortals here!
 Seeming unkindness shall be seen most kind.
 Hath woman touched thee yet as by the spear?
 Her mystery shall open, soft and clear
 As the young Heaven when God would enter in:
 Full Goddesshood shall in her grace appear,
 And thou her Bridal Word shalt beam to win;
 As when for martyred men celestial joys begin.

WOMAN FOR BAPTISM.

His manhood's cry was 'Love, more love,
 Pure love, sweet love forever!'
 Before him flew God's passion-dove:
 He found the woman's river.

There shone, all holy to baptize,
 The Lady of the Waters:
 She led him in through agonies;
 Then flowed him by Her daughters.

By sister-band in sister-band
 The waves were lit and gifted:
 They led him on to Lady-land,
 And there the joy-song lifted;—

'O, enter in! thou enter in,
 To the One-Twainness given:
 Through bridal archways rise, to win,
 Full formed, the gift of heaven.'

 CXXXV.

This outer world to mortals is opaque;
 To me it is transparent, and betimes,
 As the warm buds their prisoning sheathes forsake,
 The senses open to vast occult climes:
 There, as the master poet's perfect rhymes
 Are builded for the structure of sweet verse,
 Rise the great cities: tower to spire sublimes
 In wavering flame; the radiant clouds disperse
 And form aërial ways through that bright universe.

CXXXVI.

I entered where a double flight-way sped.

A man, most like some heavenly gondolier,
On to his wingéd barge with greetings led.

She flew, as thought might travel, swift and clear:

I stood and saw her prow the air-stream shear
With rapid motion: glancing in the wake,

Swept on the living winds like sisters dear.—

Pure water nymphs, arisen from their lake,

Press lightnings through their hands, our wondrous way to make.

CXXXVII.

But when the gondolier beheld mine eyes

Turned to the after-path, he said, 'Not so!

Look forward, look to meet the destinies;

Else you retard the motion: be not slow

To clasp before the gifts that would bestow.

This is the lesson of our path of speed,

Still to hold forward in the way we go;

For motion wheels in motion, and, indeed,

Calls forth the latent powers to serve us in our need.

CXXXVIII.

'Forward!' the Present cries: 'from all the Past

Breaths urge, wings winnow for the new career:

Ever the Future opes her bosom vast

And beckons with sweet smiles, till that appear

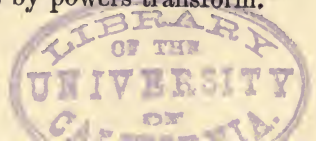
Wherein she holds and hides. Be vision clear,

Be courage strong, to meet and hail her form:

Often the latent powers push forth through fear;

Look forward, for her breath is kindly warm.—

We reach at last the line where powers by powers transform.'



CXXXIX.

I saw the vital electricities
 Shaping to a vast landscape: trees of fire
 Grew to the sight, as viewless harmonies
 Might rise transmuted from the minstrel's lyre.
 Then Lady-bands, in beautiful attire,
 Displayed by such perfections that they drew
 Our airy barque to hover, where their choir
 Chanted a joyful welcome sweet and new;
 In lady-bliss I touched, led as by wings that flew.

CXL.

Then, lifted as in flights of the Immortals,
 While every power by pleasure nerved and fed,
 I entered where majestic, mighty portals
 To Adonai's hall of warriors led;
 Guided by Ladies of the Rock:—the tread
 Of the armed knights within as thunders played.
 So,—the arch-captain holding at their head,—
 They formed an arch of steel, blade crossed with blade,
 While, as I passed, the knights envailed their flames in shade.

CXLI.

All stood in shadow round me but their chief;
 Yet he in splendid blazonry forthshone,
 Baring his mighty breast, and with a sheaf
 Of quivering rainbows the new light made known.
 In chivalry illumed I stood alone,
 Till Adonai met me by the hand:
 Then I felt deeply breathing, tone by tone,
 The hail and welcome of that stately band;
 The adept knights, survived from Earth's far Silver Land.

CXLII.

Think not ye that the Adepts of the Rock,
 In Earth's dread hour of destiny, are still;
 Or that they fail before the thunder-shock:
 Their last and mightiest task they would fulfil:
 They stand in columns of embattled skill,
 Formed to the lines of the Omnific Word;
 Waiting intent upon the Master's will,
 By one centering valor, till the sword
 That in the word-staff sheathes shall kindle for the Lord.

CXLIII.

They stand to hold, with exquisite full tension
 Of energy in energy complete:
 Slowly their hands far to Earth's close dimension
 Incline, the motion of mankind to meet,
 Pressing to fold its hands and find its feet.
 Myriads of vast Fraternities await
 Until the Bridal Dove, for sweetness sweet,
 Shall bear the morning in her bosomed fate,
 Yet arch with shadowing wings above the morning's gate.

CXLIV.

Thence moving on, through walls of gleaming crystal,—
 Still in the transposition,—Issa met
 And led me where, each as a white-robed vestal,
 Shone the Rock Ladies crowned with violet.
 Thence we descended a great stairway, set
 With living statues of God's Womanhood.
 As when all breaths of summer winds are wet,
 Distilling one pure odor from their flood,
 A fragrance folded me: therein the MOTHER stood,

CXLV.

The Mother said, ' Child, in those arméd knights,
 I stand by all these fragrances of mine;
 And I will stand in thee by such delights,
 When for the earth My shadow I entwine,
 To still its senses for repose divine;
 But thou shalt rest in Me a little space.
 Anew I cross thee with My passion-sign,
 By gifts in gifts thy powers to reëmbrace:
 Stoop with this daughter now, the sandals to unlace.'

CXLVI.

We stooped, and, doing so, the MOTHER lifted:
 Into the viewless infinite She drew,
 And yet we touched Her feet. The myriad-gifted,
 The passionate pure Issa, passing through
 The foot-ways vanished, and the violet dew
 Stood on my temples; violet splendors played.
 It seemed in me the powers of ages grew
 And multiplied;—as if the Night, inlaid
 With stars on stars, herself a radiant Woman made,

CXLVII.

And so extended Christa-wise, embracing
 Seven forms as one within me, lifting free,
 My lesser manhood by Her touch replacing,
 As with a manhood of humanity:
 The daughter fashioned, in my all to be:
 'Twas not the private I that felt and said;
 I energized in the publicity
 Of the Eternal Word, and still I fed
 From violets dripping dew, made on the lips for bread.

CXLVIII.

'Tis thus indeed our MOTHER passionises,
 Spoke Issa; 'She the earth will unprofane
 And hallow manhood for Her sacrifices.
 Think some, God made the human race in vain?
 Breathe of my odors blessedly; the reign
 Of righteousness in holiness await.
 She who has borne the sacred mother-pain,
 And held the anguish of the planet's fate,
 Transforms Her Form, wrought so the orb to re-create.'

CXLIX.

When afterward my spirits were returned,
 As lifted waters, to their custom'd bed,
 It was as if the sun for brightness burned
 Through all the bosom of my lowlihead.—
 I am content to dwell among the dead,
 Serving sad mortals in their earthly tombs:
 This stream of song, that like a silver thread
 From some lost fountain trickles through the glooms,
 Shall yet a river be where Earth as eden blooms.

CL.

In the rich gardens of the Occult Muse,
 Woman through warm arch-nature subtly plies:
 Her tender pity leaf and flower bedews,
 Her warm delight the tinted bloom supplies:
 The blossoms wither not; exhaled they rise
 To living odor-souls of beauty rare:
 Each as a breathing joy reclines or flies,
 Mingling for bliss with the impassioned air,
 Whose billows of the worth in woman's breast declare.



CLI.

From Woman, in her, to her, man forthweaves:
 Her womb is made the palace of his germ,
 That so its personal vestiture receives,
 And the nine muses in her round the term
 Of his invisible infancy: the urn
 Of her bright waters holds him by the glee
 Of laughing billows, and her heart is firm
 To lift and light him, till her harmony
 Complete in every form of structured life shall be.

CLII.

Before the man the mother!—before her
 The infinite sweet Mother of mankind.
 Her joy attends the infant traveler,
 From the pre-natal palace unconfined;
 Who wakes, an outer paradise to find
 In her soft arms, and on her breast, his bed.
 In wealth of mother-kisses he is shrined;
 From her intensest elements are fed
 His lips, and summer sweets by each endearment shed.

CLIII.

But baby is not separate, though it seemeth:
 Still as a bud he lifts upon her bough:
 'Tis in her occult mind he folds and dreameth,
 Till dream-life grows to reason for his brow.
 Living affections from her wealth endow
 His infancy with visions of delight.
 Still, from her deeps, mysterious passions flow
 And in the senses of his frame unite.
 The strength of his young limbs draws from the mother-might.

CLIV.

'Behold,' the mother says, 'my boy, my scripture!

Thus of the Lord did I receive a man,
And builded him, by woman's architecture,
All from the Mother's archetypal plan.
Now my affections, moving in the van,
Will cheer and nerve him for the grand career.

Still I will be a providence to span,
Yet as a guardian genius ever near,
Till he full-crowned amid the sons of God appear.'

CLV.

The woman's mind, by a divine foretelling,
Prefigures in her babe its destiny.
Her occult fountains open full, impelling
Virtues led forth from Love's eternity.
The Mother, as the Muse of Poesy,
Lives in her minstrel child, and poets rise
To their transcendent heavens of melody,
Winged from the dawn-light in the mother's eyes.—
Song-larks from woman's breast, they carol in her skies.

CLVI.

In the night-watches I beheld a youth,
Pierced and imperilled by the tempter's art;
His sex-gift punctured by the dragon's tooth,
And poisonous reptiles creeping to his heart.
A woman stood beside him, by the smart
Of her long travail wounded, grieved and sore:
It was a mother, toiling to avert
The doom her wandering boy that hovered o'er:
He turned, he scorned her prayers; she held him all the more.

CLVII.

Sad piteous tears adown her face were raining;
She drew again to one who was a chief,
And found new vigor; at her watch remaining
Till the dim night had loosened its last sheaf
Of stars in twilight gray, and shade grew brief,
And morn that lonely vigil yet beheld.—
Surely that mother's heart shall find relief;
For her life toils, as those who once did weld
The planet's broken ring, where anakim rebelled.

CLVIII.

But for the motherhood, in man surviving,
Mankind upon our orb had met its doom.
Hers is the spirit, grieved yet ever striving,
That bars from him the darker, deeper tomb.
Still, with its mightier powers involved in gloom,
Her suffering breast the load of manhood bears:
He feeds upon the essence of her bloom:
Her flower-life for an occult robe he wears:
Her wounds reveal his strife; yet still her feet he snares.

CLIX.

Dear woman, I have criticized thine errors,
May be too harshly, but still meaning well;
Yet thou didst open to me by thy mirrors,
And show of paradise and earth and hell.
And I have toiled thy sorrows to dispel,
And worn thy anguish as a flesh of pain.
Ever thy loyal servitor I dwell:
Yea, if perchance I perish, not in vain
My life if by its gift thy Genius shall unchain.

CLX.

My poesy is of thy violet;
 My rounds are circled in thy golden ring;
 My crown has blossomed from thy coronet;
 Bearing thy sorrow, for thy joy I sing.
 'Tis in the sister-band my powers take wing:
 'Twas by the sister-band my Bride Girl came;
 Yea, she, the Muse, whose lips made fruitful spring
 In this my wintry age, and with a flame
 Of circling wings upbore my life, her gift to claim.

CLXI.

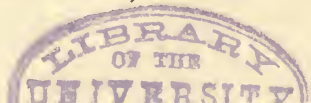
Yet, woman! yet thou shalt be my rewarder,
 And I will claim of thee life's noblest gift,
 Where Manhood, from its anarchy and sordor,
 Shall in the world's great Ladyhood uplift.—
 Till then I toil amid this polar drift:
 Thy frozen sea makes ice beneath my feet.
 As the white spectres of the storm that swift
 In pallid snows of winter's winding sheet,
 Thy myriads are now;—as brides they shall be sweet.

21.

LILISTAN.

She lifted from the Mother Flood,
 By queenliness of daughterhood:
 So the Divine Ideal stood,
 Robed in the loveliness of good.

When the mysterious rites began,
 The trembling billows round her ran,



Till each took form as woman-man,
In bridal bands of Lilitan.

Clad in the radiant water-whirls,
I saw my Lily's household girls,
Gleaming above their odorous curls
For coronets of bridal pearls.

The Priestess of that holy choir
From every breast, as from a lyre,
Led music, sweet as love's desire,
And kindling as the morning-fire.

The sea retired that lifted so,
Yet left them all with bliss a-glow,
As billowed raptures glide and flow,
In holy brides of Lilimo'.

And O, the Queen, the Bridal Queen!
As colors to the bow that lean,
Elate, irradiant and serene,
In all her loves my Love was seen.

I felt the joy-breaths of them all,
Led through her bosom, rise and fall,
And in the joy-breaths heard the call
To worship in her social hall.

My feet were swift, and strong my heart;
I claimed my Lily for her part:
She lifted by her blissful art,
As counterpart in counterpart.

Blithe Brother-band to Sister-band
 Breathed music-airs in odors bland;
 While wings in wings my bosom fanned,
 I lifted so above the land.

Then, as the song-lark from its flight,
 Folded in wreaths all silver-white,
 Shadowed with blossoms of the night,
 I dropped through worship to delight.

Through multitudes of sparkling eyes
 I saw the welcoming flame that plies;
 Then touched the orbs whence blisses rise,
 And drank the milk of paradise.

22.

LOVE-SONG IN LILIMO'.

Bring melodies, for I faint
 From the joy of my Love's desire:
 She glows like a raptured saint,
 While her breaths in my breast respire.

I lifted her up to my kisses,
 I drew her so by my glee,
 Till the Goddess came for her blisses,
 And thrilled in her lips to me.

Bring melodies ere I fail:
 The joy of her Lord in mine



O'erflows till the eyes invail;
As a rose I float in wine;

As a rosebud, opening so
In the cup of the Lord's desire,
With its crimson heart a-glow
From the wine that is life and fire.

Bring melodies, for I dream,
As the buds ere the spring awake;
As the violet by the stream,
As the gold-flower in the brake.

My Love by her violets
Makes azure of night to be,
Till my life is a star that sets
And is veiled in her bridal sea.

CLXII.

When Lord God makes on earth His pleasure-round,
One with the Lady Goddess, to bestow,
Impurities will nevermore be found;
Sorrow and pain will perish as the snow,
And the unsocial troubles that we know
Dissolve themselves; as from the suffering face
The pain-lines vanish, when the overflow
Of blessed love leads to the full embrace
Of severed counterparts, elected in God's grace.



CLXIII.

From Perfect Saviorhood perfection draws,
Perfecting all things in the perfect way.
We know not yet the pure deific laws,
That, from the motion of God's passion-play,
Transpose, transform, translate, and by the sway
Of perfect love, in perfect wisdom twined,
Weave by an interlay and overlay
Vestments of holiest life, to fold and wind
The manhood that they crown, in womanhood enshrined.

CLXIV.

Ever in vain the worldly pleasure-seekers
For the brief revels of the prime unite:
Cold draughts of death o'erflow the sparkling beakers:
Beauty or fades or palls upon the sight:
Where the attractions led their transient flight,
Cruel antipathies an entrance force:
Suns rise to wither, shadows fall to blight;
The rills of rapture perish in their course:
The fire of life expires; 'tis banished from its source.

CLXV.

Nature cares not for individual bliss.
Young lovers seek, in wedlock warm and kind,
Perfection of a private happiness;
Yet Nature seeks but increase of mankind.
Dazed, amorous boy! sweet maiden fondly blind!
Nature, the task-mistress, behind the door,
Gives, for each fleeting bliss they partly find,
The heavy burden weightening more and more:
Few who have wedded best would live its life-time o'er.

CLXVI.

'Tis not the pestilence, 'tis not the sabre
 That wastes mankind: it is the wearying care,
 The ever new anxieties of labor.
 Young Love, so bold to ask, to claim and dare,
 Knows not of dooms the Nature-fates prepare.
 He paints elysium on the eye-balls' rim;
 But gray Experience, of Time's grief the heir,
 Sees the round planet in misfortune swim,
 And life and death and fate confront as spectres grim.

CLXVII.

The human ear-stalks lift gay plumes and tassels.
 Mondamin-like the youth, in summer pride!
 Full soon the care-wind with his bravery wrestles;
 While beauty withers and forsakes the bride.
 The palpitating bosoms learn to gride
 And chafe each other: cold the lips and dry:
 Love languishes in struggle to provide:
 Time is a catalogue of hopes that die:
 Still must the feet pursue, and still the mirage fly.

CLXVIII.

She said, dear Lily, 'Tis not well to speak
 Of old starvations, till the lips are fed
 And the breast lifted; for it makes the weak
 Still weaker to recall the griefs that led
 The years. Let Woman's life be comforted
 To sweet forgetfulness of all her pains.
 I am a giver, and I come to shed
 Gifts from my blisses; for the mercy-rains,
 Formed from the Woman's flood, enkindle in my veins.'

CLXIX.

I clasped her,—could I help it? and she caught
 My form and whirled me in the rapid stress
 Of music, sweet as love and swift as thought;
 But when still more I sought to wreath and press
 Her warm, white shape of gliding loveliness,
 She coyly drew and beckoned to the dance.
 Not much of dead religion I profess,
 But living godliness shone by her glance,
 And in its light I met the Infinite Advance.

CLXX.

I bore a dream-child sadly in the night,
 A sweet girl baby, till the darling drew
 Back to her outwardness with shade bedight.
 A careful woman, known as Lady Sue,
 Sped afterward, the infant to pursue,
 And sprinkled o'er it for an early grave.
 'Whom the gods love die young:' but scanty few,
 To whom the Genius for the birth-gift gave
 Sublimest powers of love, breast long the earthly wave.

CLXXI.

This dream-child was a babe, so beautiful
 My heart ached for her, and she drew to me
 As from my breast its choicest flower to cull;—
 An infant Sappho, born for poesy,
 But wounded in her little house of glee;
 A rosebud pierced on the maternal thorn,
 Destined, if here her maidenhood might be,
 To grieve for shame that ever she was born;—
 The victim of man's lust, the slave of woman's scorn.



CLXXII.

Strong Lady Sue,—she has another name:

I will not here declare it,—came again,
And in her eyes were lights of dancing flame.

She touched my marriage ring and murmured then,
‘That darling shall not be for sinful men
To lead in the foul pathways of their vice:

But Mother soon will burst their dragon’s den,
And from man’s vein consume his passion-lice:—
Till then this baby girl shall be my pearl of price.

CLXXIII.

‘We cull from Earth for wreaths of baby flowers:

Their lives in our glad motherhood are fed:
The passionate sweet perfumes of our bowers,
Through culture and employ to sense are led:
So forms their pure and perfect bridalhead:
But baby boys are by our knighthood caught.

I have a page who serves me in good stead,
And, when his perfect chivalry is wrought,
His lady bride will be ripe ready,—as she ought.’

CLXXIV.

“Dear Lady Sue,” I said, “now, prithee, tell.”

She answered, with a kiss between the eyes,
‘If I steal babes into my lily-bell,
You help me so to claim an infant prize.

Mayhap they call me ‘Lily’ in the skies.
Most sure, most sacred, is my other part;

Oft, where the love-babe from its calyx flies,
I sprinkle dews for the dissolving art,

That make the sufferings brief by which such gifts depart.’



CLXXV.

O thou Great Mother, perfect Comfortress!
 For perfect comfort in earth's anguish given;
 Surely, from earthly danger and distress,
 Thy Motherhood for babyhood makes heaven.
 My thoughts in visioned ecstasies are driven;
 I lift and bear me where the marriage ring
 Of God the Father burns;—the veil is riven.
 My thoughts in nobler measures weave and wing;
 Born of Thy love I live, and to Thy lips I cling.

CLXXVI.

Because Thou art the Infinite of Passion,
 And in Thy Passion Infinite of Good,
 The form of womanhood takes shape and fashion,
 Where'er a girl babe grows from motherhood.—
 I cannot sing of this thing as I would;—
 In Thy divine corolla every one
 Of them drew the essential fire of blood,
 And in the circling of Thy rapture spun,
 A sprite of living joy, ere Earth's dull cloud was won.

CLXXVII.

I cannot. Nay, I will, in Thee I will!
 Poor, dying wanton on the brothel's floor,
 Through all thy senses, whence vile deaths distil,
 Through all the shames whereby man names thee 'whore,'
 To the deep innermost I thus explore.
 Thy archetype shines there above its type;
 A passion angel whose red lips run o'er.
 Thou heart-pierced girl, Death holds thee in his gripe,
 Yet o'er thee stoops God's Wife, her heart for pity ripe.

CLXXVIII.

O Mother, Mother! Loveliness displaying
 The all of heaven, held in Thy shape by form,
 I claim Thee for this dying girl, decaying,
 Pierced by the larve, consuming for the worm.
 Couldst thou but gift one man, as Christus firm,
 Embodied in his Bride to meet the shock,
 He might, even now, by occult form in form,
 The gates of hell that hold this babe unlock,
 And open bowers for her, within God's breast, the Rock.

CLXXIX.

O Mother, Mother! could one son, for Thee
 So filled, so gifted, cross the shameless doors,
 The miracle of miracles should be.
 Unto the utmost Saviorhood restores,
 Were it but wrought to tread earth's passion-floors.
 Inversions fail by opposites divine.
 I touch Thy marriage ring; my heart implores,
 Give earth a Man, to lift Thy passion-sign.
 Lo, by that cross the world were reconciled, were Thine!

CLXXX.

O Thou, the Vast, the Mighty, Myriad-Bearing!
 If angelhoods before rose from Thy womb,
 Hast Thou not yet a son in store, preparing
 The way before Thee? Shall the world draw doom
 Nor yet behold, emerging through the gloom,
 Bright for the opening of the bridal doors,
 A daughter-son; with feet upon the tomb,
 With voice for melody, as when the shores
 Of Time are vocal while the Morn her song restores?

CLXXXI.

O Mother, Mother, see! mine arms are full
 Of wreathing daughterhoods: I reach to fold
 All of thy human flowers that Death would cull;
 I heave as though the planet's heart to hold.
 On every lip I press for kisses bold.
 Make Thou this being paradise: unvail
 The burning splendors of Thy marriage-gold.
 Because of hopes deferred thy daughters fail.
 Come in thy champion; come, armed all in battle-mail.

CLXXXII.

Dear Mother! all the world is sick for Thee,
 And all its heart is perishing; disease
 Breeds worms where Thy pure bridalhood should be,
 And flows, by vast, contagious agonies,
 To fight the billows of Thy passion-seas.
 And so is man accurst, and he must dwell,
 Engendering evils from his miseries,
 Till Thou shalt bid Thy holy waters well,
 And with Thy breath divine form heaven in place of hell.

CLXXXIII.

Now comes the easter tide, Life's equinox:
 Lord Christ rounds His holy passion year.
 Dear Martyr, stained with gore Thy fragrant locks,
 And wan thy countenance, as for the bier.
 Thou showest forth all sacredly anear,
 And I behold thee veiled in sorrow so;
 Because through human griefs mine eyes would clear
 Their flight-ways, that the savior-light may glow,
 To kindle in my voice and touch and glance below.



CLXXXIV.

The cries of many human lambs a-bleating
 Grow fainter, Thou Good Shepherd, on Thy way;
 For misery makes our earthly season fleeting,
 Though vast the cycle of thy golden day.
 We all are flying moths, that but display
 A season, and are gathered to the frost.
 Still thine, the most who serve and best obey,
 Toil over fields where blades on blades are crossed:
 O'er their expiring lives the maddening waves are tossed.

CLXXXV.

I visited a woman of the town,
 By occult mode: my footsteps made no fall.
 I sat me on her sumptuous divan down,
 And woke her thought, responsive to the call:
 That alcove was a chaste confessional:
 She communed with me as a Friend unseen;
 Her spirit rose from woes to disenthral:
 She sought not of her inmost life to screen,
 But spoke as in a voice, sleep and the grave between.—

CLXXXVI.

'Ah me! I must;—I must not, yet I must.
 Torment and pleasure mingle in my veins.
 Tossed as a painted ball 'twixt love and lust,
 I seek the deed that still my soul disdains.
 I feed upon corruptions for my gains.—
 Ah, loathly man, whom I detest, despise!—
 Yet I do love him, and I make my pains
 A willing and unwilling sacrifice:
 Feeding his passion so, till as a worm it dies.

CLXXXVII.

‘Hush, sluttish heart; lie still, wild stormy devil:
 I am no whore, though thus the slanders go.
 The wives and mistresses are on the level;
 They sell, we give; they give, we sell:—’tis so.
 Man carries a live snake; our charms bestow
 The power he wins to fascinate and kill.—
 ’Tis Nature, Nature, brimming to o’erflow;
 In man and woman working so her will;
 Wrecking and ruining when she has had her fill.

CLXXXVIII.

‘Why cannot love be noble? If it could,
 And would, how happy then we all might be,
 Each with its mate, as doves that fill the wood
 For cooing love-calls, borne from tree to tree.—
 Ah, death in life! ah, miserable me!
 Sure I am base.—And yet I am not base.
 Lovers? they are not lovers.—Wearily
 Through all of them I seek a true man’s face.—
 If Jesus were a man I could his feet embrace,

CLXXXIX.

‘And kiss them, not for wantonness; but say,
 Why is it man of woman takes his fill,
 Then loathes for all her nature made his play?—
 Lord Christ, why didst thou make our passions ill,
 And give the fiery heart but feeble will?
 Why are men made our loveliness to crave,
 Until the nectar of our life distill
 To overflow them with its warm, sweet wave;
 Till opening our full charm their love finds there its grave?

CXC.

‘ I do the thing I hate with all my heart,
 When sanctifying Nature makes it sweet ;
 But thereof comes a sting and bitter smart.
 Thence in my misery I oft repeat,
 With death in cold and anguish in the heat,
 Knowing that I my womanhood profane.
 Passion’s gay robe becomes its winding sheet ;
 A curse of fire steals to each throbbing vein ;
 Till hatred heaves the breast and madness whirls the brain.

CXCI.

‘ Then sometimes I am feline more than human ;
 My animal grows rampant for her goals.
 Again I seem as man, instead of woman,
 And colden from the paps down to the soles.—
 Oh, I could tear the eyes out of their holes,—
 The ladies who are bartered with the ring.—
 ’Fore God, could I for this but find controls,
 I’d have the world of men go hungering,
 Ere one of the base sex should slay me with his sting.

CXCII.

‘ Perchance enafter this, when I lie howling,—
 Sure there must be a hell ; I feel it here,—
 My blazing arms shall twine the fiend, who prowling
 After young virgins, caught me for his dear ;
 Then I will be for him a burning bier.—
 Rifle our villages, still girls forgive.—
 Maybe, when life and death both disappear,
 I, even I, somewhere, sometime may live :
 When nature fails, some god may claim her fugitive.—



CXCIH.

‘What are these men? dame Venus made them sparrows,
And we the hens for whom they plume and fight.
Gay Cupid goes a-birding with his arrows,
And we are slaughtered for the boy’s delight.—
O woman, woman! in thee is a might,
Could it but loose, that would the nations whirl.
We were the warriors, knew we how to fight.
These tyrant men would be as snakes, to curl
Harmless about our feet, if God were but a Girl.’

CXCIH.

Soliloquizing thus, I heard her thought;
By occult art involving it to mine.
Myriads of feelings, to one focus brought,
Surcharged my heart; I drank the bitter brine,
By lust distilled and led from Love’s pure vine.
Then I replied, returning to my cell,
If but the Savioress her charm entwine,
And weave it where the wild lost women dwell,
They will be pure again, as naiads from Her well.

CXCV.

For Nature is nor moral nor immoral;
Simply unmoral is her gift to be;
And nature’s women sport, make love and quarrel,
Say prayers, jest broadly, set their life in glee,
Just in the custom that Society
Fashions to guide their instincts, or repress.
More woman, still more spontaneity!
Language she fits for a becoming dress;
Her inmost thought to man she never did confess.

CXCVI.

Still Woman is concealment in revelation,
 And most of all concealed to thoughts that press
 From the interior being's close invailment,
 To find an outbirth in self-consciousness.
 The joy of splendor and of loveliness,
 That in the woman's archetype abides,
 Could it her extreme nature but possess,
 Would thrill mankind, as if from ocean tides
 Rose glorious islands, crowned for goddesshood in brides.

CXCVII.

For Woman godliness makes goodliness,
 Soul within soul, sense within sense ; and all
 The human virtues that our lives possess
 She occultly irradiates: they fall,—
 Splendors from woman's heart, their palace hall,—
 To light and gift man's dim intelligence.
 Yea, and were woman but redeemed from thrall,
 From her in him would grow the social sense,
 And heaven transpose through earth, perfection to dispense.

CXCVIII.

My text the harlot, but the sermon thus:
 Measured by sex-refinement man is coarse.
 I saw a Woman made thrice glorious ;
 From her deep bosom waves of vital force,
 And from her heart, as from the river source,
 Full streams of love eternal : glimmerings,
 As borne from where the solar genii nurse
 The young humanities, were made as wings,
 And in her hand the might of many sceptered kings.

CXCIX.

Then Issa said, 'Behold Her, drawing nearer,
 By rapid involution, from her flight.'—
 She stood above me; gentler, kinder, dearer
 Sweet Issa grew, made from her full delight
 To overflow, as when starred heaven grows bright
 In the pale dawn of supernatural day.
 She said, 'Take courage to your heart, and write;
 For words are made, in poesies to say,
 That womanhood erelong by all her chords shall sway.

CC.

The Lady held a vase of fragrant nectar:
 One drop alone sweet Issa from it drew:
 I breathed; then sang again, 'O Thou! Protector
 Of womanhood on earth, my verse renew,
 That it may chant for Thee the wide world through.
 Comfort of woman, Hope and Full Desire!
 Like the starred lilies, trembling for clear dew,
 Thou shalt enwreath full many a social choir,
 From such as she I saw awaiting to expire.

CCI.

'For Thou, for Thou!—no woman's heart disdaining,—
 Shalt stoop from the pure infinite of bliss;
 And there shall nevermore be ills, profaning
 The lips that Thou hast wrought for God to kiss.
 The world is weary and its way amiss;
 The dragon lures the virgin to his den;
 Fierce jealousies coiled in her bosom hiss;
 Oft she is made as Circe unto men:
 But Thou shalt in her stand, and evil perish then.'



CCII.

Through Woman comes the great Deliverance,
 That even now, with feet that bear the thunder,
 And eyes that hold the lightning in their glance,
 The social hells of earth would rive asunder.
 Mankind for that bright Goddesshood shall wonder,
 Whose shrine in social woman is displayed.
 The broken-hearted race shall rise from under
 The tyrannies, that charmed while they betrayed,
 And virtue rise for sun, and vice depart as shade.

CCIII.

God made the woman greater than we deem:
 These are but germs of woman, whom we fold,—
 The buds of woman, who as yet but dream
 Of the corolla, crimson, violet, and gold.
 Woman! her heart is as a heaven, enscrolled
 With constellated orbs of worth divine.
 No seer beholdeth, bard hath never told,
 Of that new garden, where from Christa's vine
 Woman shall press ripe grapes, and man taste living wine.

CCIV.

By words like these I coast her continent,
 Breathing at best far land-breaths from its shore;
 Yet the dear Lady in my household tent
 Is pleased, while thoughts take wing that warble o'er,
 Man's birthright faith in woman to restore;
 Till woman's birthright faith by him receives
 Its demonstration, and the palace floor
 Of our new bridal earth the joy inweaves,
 Deep to the planet's heart, that man by her achieves.



CCV.

Be still, thou heart! await on God's desire.

Fulfilment presses on the path of Hope:
 Though oracles are mute, we may inquire
 Of Her who on the orient mountain slope
 Wreathes her bright curtains:—do the nations grope
 In social, sexual darkness, waste and blind?
 Give to the swift imagination scope:
 Where man the ruiner for death did bind,
 Man the defender hastes, his open way to find.

CCVI.

For lo! the radiant social girls have lifted
 The veils of the GREAT MOTHER, that have kept
 Her palace windows as white snows, that drifted
 O'er summer islands where the Joy Queen slept.
 No shadows now the sight may intercept:
 From her high throne the Pure Ideal smiles
 And kindles to her worshiper; bewept
 Are now his final tears; his heart inisles
 In her oceanic life, whose love his care beguiles.

CCVII.

Sweet Issa met me with a dulcimer,
 Playing a merry strain: from her white hands
 Dropped clustered violets enwreathing her;
 And there were jewels, wrought in golden bands,
 That made glad music, as when Summer stands
 Upon the floors of paradise, and calls
 The melodies that filled the under-lands
 Of heaven, to rise and thrill through crystal walls,
 Vibrating sweeter still, to far aërial halls.

CCVIII.

And Issa said, 'Good night! thy heart was cloven
 Like tropic spice the fragrances to give;
 But now my sleep-flowers for thee are inwoven:
 The joys they bring shall not be fugitive,
 Nor will the dream-world of the gifts deprive.
 Pass to thy blessed slumber:—hearts go still!
 If yet of woman's woe remembrance live,
 Thy path is open, by the woman's will,
 Where from the full-orbed breast of heaven her blessings thrill.'

CCIX.

Robed in the sacred idealities
 Of old religions, now long ages dead,
 The Mother wrought by many mysteries,
 Till men profaned the temples where they fed:
 Then she envailed Her glorious Goddesshead.
 By gradual time, with pain of grief and loss,
 Her waters vanished from their ancient bed:
 The lifted plain sank to the fetid moss,
 While perished from man's mind the meaning of Her cross.

CCX.

Her symbol was effaced from breast and brow;
 A stony barrenness inclosed the mind;
 A seeming Infinite arose to shew
 His features in the harsh, austere mankind.
 A sensual people, venal, thrice unkind,
 Dead to the sympathies that twine the race,
 That stern, monotheistic idol shrined:
 Held in his cold and terrible embrace,
 A priestly nation grew, and hardened for his face.

CCXI.

A central stalk of Truth in Semitism
 Lifted toward the heavens, but never grew
 Fruit-laden branches for the nations given,
 Mankind with social blessedness to strew.
 Unblest, unfertilized, instead of dew
 A bitter, burning dust upon it lay:
 It sprinkled all the peoples through and through
 With harsh distrust: it killed the sacred play
 Of human love divine: it fed the world's decay.

CCXII.

This god Jehovah, sexless, bleak and wan,
 Grew in the human thought from better seed,
 And first was praised as Jah-Veh, Woman-Man:
 For Him, in that far prime, no flocks did bleed:
 They sacrificed no human flesh indeed
 On impious altars by accurséd rites:
 They maimed no manly honors, as we read,
 But danced around His pillar, which unites
 The heart of man with God, for worship in delights.

CCXIII.

Yet, for all this, in Israel grew a branch,—
 As prophesied,—from that strange, barren tree.
 It rose divine and pierced the avalanche
 On the bleak mountain of its mystery.
 Before the father of that race was He:
 From open, sun-like eyes he beamed and smiled
 For pleasure of His sweet humanity;—
 The Mightier Jah-Veh's love-begotten Child,
 Born of the Woman-seed, eternal, undefiled.



CCXIV.

In Him Religion died, and rose reborn:
 The narrowest of cultures round him lay:
 He stood alone, as on the mountain's horn,
 Girdled by superstition and decay:
 His being to that occult realm made way
 Where held the choicest spirits of our kind:
 One with his Christa there, She made sweet play
 Through all his essence, till, for bliss untwined,
 The Tree of Life rained flowers on Israel's desert mind.

CCXV.

O CHRISTUS-CHRISTA! if indeed I know
 My Father-Mother,—hear, give ear, instill.
 I am begirt by greater Israel's woe:
 The whirlwinds of its superstition fill
 The living nations, and the cold of Ill
 Exudes upon them with a foul disease:
 Their heart is hollowness; the deadly thrill
 Of atheistic lust, by transient glees
 And never-ending strife, holds them in agonies.

CCXVI.

Thou FATHER-MOTHER, since the Bridal Word
 Was fashioned through me to extremest sense,
 Long years I have not known, or seen or heard
 Of day or night, unpierced by pains intense.
 Since Thou hast made celestial innocence
 To be the state and form of life and thought,
 Seasons have rolled by miseries immense,
 Till now the lightnings in my breath have caught
 And kindled in the airs, where the accurséd wrought.



CCXVII.

Yet hear me! where I stand the planet's gateways
 Are opening: with choral dance and song,
 The destinies troop in, till o'er the fateways
 The vast vibrations force and rise and throng:
 My feet have caught the motion to prolong:
 My bosom lifts to feed on heavenly rain;
 Yet still the planet's evil, made more strong
 By dead religion in the heart and brain,
 Vexes the days with grief and racks the nights with pain.

CCXVIII.

I feel the motions of the sacred whirl;
 My breast is filled with palpitating powers;
 The daughter of the Word bids wings unfurl;
 She leads her bridal maids like dancing Hours,
 Lifting the living cross, wreathed all with flowers.
 My frame is wrought in deathless ecstasies,
 Diffusing health as perfumes from the showers;
 Songs cluster on my lips like golden bees:
 Words, when I would declare, make fiery melodies.

CCXIX.

Yet see, ah see! I tremble as a shadow.
 Man's earth is too much for me, and man's curse,
 Borne as a fire-breath o'er the vernal meadow,
 Pierces until the bosom-joys I nurse
 By infant choirs for misery disperse.
 The flaming force of man's inversive breath
 Offends my nostrils, borne as from a hearse,
 With vilest scents of wickedness in death.—
 'Curse ye the Bridal God,' the dying idol saith.

CCXX.

The name of Earth's crowned city is Contention ;
 The name of its vast bed is private lust ;
 The name of its religion is dissension ;
 The name of its proud force is murder-thrust.
 Lo, I have given bread : though but a crust,
 It multiplies by energies forever ;
 And I have given water ; in the dust
 Lost as a dripping rain, yet perished never ;
 Even of the drops might flow for paradise a river.

CCXXI.

Out of the very anguish of the trials,
 I lift full raptures, for the world released,
 Till human lives shall tune as harps and viols,
 Thrilled for the music of the bridal feast.
 Yet see ! I am as one well-nigh deceased :
 My tree uplifts to heaven by splendors far :
 New spring-tide overflows for life increased,
 Till every fruit-bud blossoms to a star :
 But on its shadowed trunk Earth's cruel axemen jar.

CCXXII.

Because the Axemen are so hard on me ;
 Because they cut into my quivering veins ;
 Because betimes the life-flame suddenly
 Drops, and the gold-fire shows to ruddy stains ;
 Because men drive their griefs by loaded wains
 To heap upon me, taking in return
 The lingering powers that hold these frail remains ;—
 Therefore, Thou Good ! be pitiful ; inurn
 Full waters, that again flames on Thine altars burn.

CCXXIII.

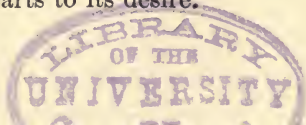
Thou Father-Mother! words like these are wrung
 From no shamed agony of private fear:
 The lyre attuned for God should aye be strung,
 To thrill for music resonant and clear.
 Mankind has grown to me so near, so dear,
 And womanhood so precious, by the strife
 Wherein these earthly powers have found their bier,
 That still, through mortal hours, with anguish rife,
 Bearing in Thee for them, I cry, 'More life, more life!'

CCXXIV.

Did ancient Rachel for her children grieve?
 King Herod was more wise than she for them:
 Sweet Death he led, their spirits to retrieve,
 And saved them from accursed Jerusalem.
 The mother makes her boy her diadem,
 And each small wound his tender flesh may share
 Gives her a rankling thorn; swift to condemn,
 Slow to forget of what her babe may bear,
 The discipline of life she scarce would have him dare.

CCXXV.

The myriads of service are forgot;
 The one default returns and still survives;
 The blessing-book is veiled by one faint blot:
 These are the sorrows of the foolish wives;
 For the maternal spirit ever strives.
 Full oft concentrers on some graceless boor
 The outflow, that her womanhood deprives
 Of gifts that might enrich an infant choir,
 Leading their feet to heaven, their hearts to its desire.



CCXXVI.

Yet chide her not: these are the limitations,
 Her sweet maternity that bind and bleed:
 She toils and suffers in the desolations:
 Men reckon not of her anguish or her need.
 Vast, radiant blossom, borne upon a reed
 Of frailest texture, swinging in the stream
 Of Time's huge sorrow! well her heart may plead
 For kind forgiveness: the mistakes but seem:
 Her lips are pressed to God, through life and death and dream.

CCXXVII.

'Blest is the womb,' 'twas said, 'when it is barren,
 And blesséd are the dry and milkless paps,
 Where no sweet babe has ever found a warren.'
 Spite of Life's disappointments and mishaps,
 I say, Not so! the childless ones perhaps
 May occultly bear babes of nobler seed,
 And hold blithe infants in their viewless laps,
 And nurse them through sweet infancy, to feed
 In fairer climes than these, whereof we take no heed.

CCXXVIII.

The love-milk in the woman's breast begins,
 When the heart's lips first touch regeneration;
 For then the Bridal God pure access wins,
 Begetting loves by occult impregnation.
 Her blessing gifts from His infloration;
 'Tis woven by the art-play of the Bride,
 Till she transforms in the divine creation,
 To mingle with the sister-bands, who bide
 In the transnatural world, and thence for blisses glide.

CCXXIX.

Thou Mother, grieving o'er the reckless boy,
 The love-milk in thy bosom never dries;
 But for its overflow some babe of joy,
 Whose outwardness to earthly shape implies,
 Will seek thee, find thee, when for quiet rise
 The lady stars on Night's full bosom bare:
 Then while celestial life thy heart enskies,
 Bosom shall lift to draw the infant there,
 Nursed by the precious gifts that mothers well prepare.

CCXXX.

O Earth, O Time, ye are so full of anguish,
 And yet so full of love, and so intense!
 O'er all these women folk, who ache and languish,
 The MOTHER sheds Her vast munificence.
 'Woman,' 'tis said, 'is more a form of sense.
 Than man is;'—but through sense the Mother still
 Glides, by o'erflowing sweetness to dispense
 Her treasures: though for some the bounty spill,
 'Twill rise, 'twill overflow, at last the world to fill.

CCXXXI.

I touched the confines of the Cataclysm,
 Suspended in the void of human fear:—
 From many a dark and horrible abysm,
 The torpid electricities appear,
 Drawn into condensations. They uprear,
 As lightly stirred from slumbers to arise,
 Gigantic, glowering, in form severe;
 Then settle into sleep, like living eyes
 That close on fearful lids, whence dissolution plies,

CCXXXII.

A white-robed Man was with me: on his head
 Enflamed a crown of rubies, and his feet
 Were shod with amethyst: the air, that fed
 As from the essence of arch-nuptial heat,
 Than beds of violets was not more sweet;
 But his white robes were wreathed as interknit
 In flexile rings of adamant complete:
 His terrible right hand smote to the Pit,
 And lo! the electric doom-steed rose from it.

CCXXXIII.

HE mounted the white horse, but there He shone
 As if His home-place had been Nazareth.
 Grief rolled from off my bosom as a stone,
 For I had been all day in fight with death.—
 Hear ye, for this, words that the Spirit saith,
 ‘Christus, by this last battle, hath unbound
 Into the vault of the suspended breath,
 Where the last powers for last results are found:
 On the white horse He comes, unseen, without a sound.’

CCXXXIV.

The Lady of the Morning stood beside,
 And touched my bosom with Her pleasure-wand.
 ‘Behold,’ she said, ‘the Glorious Father tide
 This planet o’er its doom by strength of hand.
 Do the wild cyclones desolate the land?
 Doth Nature tremble like a frightened girl?
 He rides, and rules the powers that shall disband
 The storm. Come thou by Me into the whirl,
 And in My bosom feel the winds ere they unfurl.’

CCXXXV.

The Awful Woman smiled; then shed a kiss,
 That from Her lips grew outward to entwine;
 Then vanished, whilst I caught and held for bliss
 The holy Issa, and her lips met mine.
 She said, 'The Sacred Mother, thrice divine,
 Infolds my being to Her deep delight;
 But leads me forth again, to thee for thine:
 Her joys I bring to thee, and so requite
 The martyr for his griefs, the champion for his fight.

CCXXXVI.

'Being in being, life in life, and love
 Sweeter, profounder to the inmost wells;
 Essence in essence, each with virtues rife,
 And flowing so to reach the vital cells
 Of outward shadow-form, on earth that dwells;—
 From mysteries we sparkle and appear,
 With man to serve and sing by many spells:
 Word-babes are we; our Father-Mother dear
 Renew their youth in ours, for the eternal year.

CCXXXVII.

'And when at last the darkening and dooming
 Are finished, and the white horse burns to flame,
 And from the fire flow fragrances, perfuming
 The Earth,—left all forgetful of her shame,—
 And sanctifying woman from her blame,
 And consecrating manhood to her cross,
 By us shall be revealed God's Pleasure Name:
 Lightly as foam-bells, from the waves that toss,
 This Bride-Word shall uplift the human orb from loss,



CCXXXVIII.

'I am as blissful as a field of flowers,
 Dressed for the bride-bed of the Lady Spring,
 Awakening in the sweetness of her powers,
 For joy of her full heart to love and sing.
 Woman puts forth to utmost blossoming,
 When to her breast her champion she receives:
 Her queenhood lifts to crown him for her king;
 Then, doubly blissful for the gift she weaves,
 Hallows the Earth where he for woman's worth achieves.

CCXXXIX.

'Christ's testament was written in His blood:
 Yea, but this testament of thine is fraught
 With lilies from the Mother's passion-flood,
 And violets to Her holy sandals wrought:
 'Tis shed abroad, by airs of sweetest thought,
 O'er Earth's veiled sepulchre of doom and death.
 Dearest, behold, this field is over-fought!
 As the starred lily, leaning from her sheath,
 I make thy form mine own, henceforth with breath in breath.'

CCXL.

O mystery!—my liliated love enfolden
 In Issa, bridal blossom from its bough,
 Comes forth again from her divine, thrice golden,
 Love's nobler sunrise kindling on the brow.
 'Hush,' the divine one said, 'enough for now!
 Virtue in virtue dwells by sense in sense;
 Fountains in fountains rise for endless flow:
 Through bridal seasons, radiant and intense,
 Love shall renew for gifts, and by her charms dispense.'



CCXLI.

I caught to Issa, and she drew my hand
 And led it, laughing, round her loving waist.
 'Twas Lily then; arm within arm forth-spanned
 And glowing form in form the twine embraced;
 Lips within lips bloomed so, for taste in taste,
 Till every thought grew rich for bridalhead.

Then, swift as thought, their being was inspaced
 In mine; the laughing girl, two-one, she fed
 Inmost by founts divine, as ocean from its bed.

CCXLII.

'Yes,' afterward said Lily, 'it is so;
 With double joy the doubled heart is beating:
 The Bridal Word thrills to its passion-flow,
 Sense within sense responding and repeating;
 And, where the sister-bands glow for the greeting,
 They rise to blisses of the two-fold year;
 The daughter of the Word irradiant meeting
 Their vision, where but Lily did appear.—
 Shall not for this the Earth forsake her shadowed bier?'

23.

MERCY-RAIN AND RAPTURE-FIRE.

'Bring comfortings, bring comfortings!'
 The Bride within my bosom sings.
 Over the far celestial plains
 Drift cloudlets, big with mercy-rains.

Sing, hearts respire! sing, hearts respire!
 Love breathes for bliss to rapture-fire.
 Lift hearts in hearts, by wings in wings:
 Taste rapture in the comfortings.

When over Earth the mercy-rains
 Are winnowed from the shining plains,
 Then griefs decease, while pains expire,
 And woman lives by rapture-fire.

24.

LADY-LILY.

I shed my life, by its passion-thought,
 O'er the weary world; o'er its brain distraught,
 And its bosom, heaped with entombing ice
 For the slain loves in their paradise.

I sprinkle the dews of the mercy-rain,
 Till the Love-Winds troop in their laughing train,
 And dance in the beams of the Lord's desire,
 To scatter the rays of the rapture-fire.

Buried in bulblets and whorls and cells,
 The lily has folded her buds and bells:
 I sparkle to fires and blossom to rains,
 Till the White Lady encharms the plains.

25.

COMFORTINGS.

Till man for woman's worth unfold
I suffer while I sing:
Some live for pride and some for gold,
But I for comforting.

'Comfort my people,' saith the Bride.
'Tis thus, aloft, alow ;
Till she for love her lips divide,
A-comforting I go.

For Love my heart renews its youth,
My lips are blossomed red.
Take comfortings in Bridal Truth,
Yea, in Her make thy bed.

'I claim your hearts! I claim your hands!'
The Bride within me sings;
'Wreathe, Word-girls, all to sister-bands;
Then live for comfortings.'



CCXLIII.

Take joy into thy heart, if thou wouldst live:
 Take sorrow to thy breast if thou wouldst die.
 Take holy grief, until thou dost forgive,
 Even to the last, thy last, worst enemy;
 But then take Gladness, till she bear a boy,
 A force-child, in thy bosom and thy brain,
 Whose powers shall by swift energies deploy,
 Thy woes to vanquish and thy gifts unchain:
 Dwell in God's house of joy; thou shalt not live in vain.

CCXLIV.

The Living Joy will form in holy grief,
 Till thou art strengthened for thy worthiest part:
 Oft she may wound, as by a flying sheaf
 Of fiery arrows through thy quivering heart,
 Till the scared evils perish or depart.
 Then Joy comes forth, irradiant, beautiful;
 To make thy being all her palace-mart;
 By night thy bosom as a bride to lull,
 And lead thee all day long her fruited gifts to cull.

CCXLV.

Again I say, 'take Joy!' art thou a lady?
 Thy joy shall enter from the Lord as man,
 To lead thee where the wood-walks are made shady,
 As in the bowered retreats of Lilistan:
 Thy dewy waist with blisses he shall span:
 If yet perchance a lingering fear eclipse,
 Or round thy life form vapors cold and wan,
 Sunlight shall gather from His laughing lips;
 His bridal world enclose, by wreathing fellowships.



CCXLVI.

If thou art widowed in life's desolation,
Over thy porch His nuptial rose shall clamber,
And he shall make divine infloriation,
Till thy full being is a marriage chamber:
Soon of thy griefs thou shalt no more remember:
Thy passionate pure heart shall be aglow,
As when sweet may-time has effaced december:
Then She who loves thee in Her Bridegroom so
Shall crown thee in her bowers, for bliss her ladies know.

CCXLVII.

Take Joy into thy heart, thou blighted man,
Lost to the honors of the noble prime;
Joy as the Woman, who conceived the plan
Of thy young genius, ere it knew of time,
Or of the evils from its floors that climb:
She seeks to fold thee in Her world of charms:
So thou shalt cast the sordor and the grime;
Then rise anew from those enrapturing arms,
Triumphant o'er the fate that now thy life alarms.

CCXLVIII.

Take courage to confess each grievous fault;
Wrongs to undo and spoliage to restore.
Be just and humble; so unseals the vault,
With darkening doom that hangs thy spirit o'er:
Thus shall the Saviorhood thy soul explore;
And thus at last the bride-girl come, to set
Her star upon thy forehead, and reflow
The rose, the lily and the violet;
The passion-gifts of Heaven, where hearts their woes forget.

CCXLIX.

‘I bring a blossomed speech around thy mouth,’
 Said Issa-Lily, as she pressed a seal.
 Then odors from her bosom’s balmy south
 Diffused a charm to kindle and reveal;
 And yet to nerve the being and to steel
 The energies, that so heroic words
 Might leap and flame and for their utterance wheel,
 As in the play of swift and cleaving swords,
 Where vanquished Hatred falls, feeding with death his hordes.

CCL.

The woman dwelling in a separate house
 With separate man, so cloistered and apart,
 May be a duteous aid, a friendly spouse,
 A matron kind, apt for the housewife’s art;
 Guiding for conduct by the moral chart;
 But, fold by fold down to the vesture’s hem,
 The bride-robcs, woven in her being’s heart,
 Dissolve and perish, and in place of them
 Age, apathy and pain twine leaves, from death their stem.

CCLI.

Joy grew upon her lips, for rapture fruited:
 Her frame was paradise, when early wed:
 The heart made melody; it sang and luted:
 The bridegroom as a bee on blossoms fed:
 Then wintry ice closed o’er the tropic bed.
 Not thus should wane the sweet and holy wife,
 In whom the Mother forms for bridalhead,
 Whilst man, for her with deathless virtues rife,
 Meets radiant from her arms our Lady of the Life.

CCLII.

The social germ from God is implicated
 For woman, but the Bridal Word enwreathes
 Only where woman is insociated:
 There is no paradise for separate Eves.
 By isolation she of death receives,
 And is made one with dying shapes that dwell
 In Nature, with the frail, deciduous leaves
 And painted flies, that loosen from the shell,
 To sport in summer air, till frost their lives dispel.

CCLIII.

Nature to Woman saith, 'Sweet, thou shalt die:
 My bounteous gifts to thee are fugitive.
 As years advance the sorrows multiply:
 Beauties have but a little while to live.
 Still for the endless death do I conceive,
 Leading the generations through my womb:
 They taste my blisses ere the days that grieve,
 And ere the nights that close for cold and gloom:
 I wrought thee of my dust; that dust I make thy tomb.'

CCLIV.

Blithe Issa-Lily wreathed by two-foldness;
 My life the two-fold gladness repossess.
 'Nature' she said, 'our bride-girls would undress;
 Nature would breed her worms, to feed and rest
 In every dewy lip and dainty breast.
 On sweltering lips of men their lives exhaust;
 The fountains close, by deadly cold suppress;
 Contagion grows with custom, and the cost
 Of separate household life is their enshrinement lost.

CCLV.

"I, for myself, take thee, sweet Amoret ;"
 'I from myself bright Amor give of me.'
 This is the marriage vow ; they star and set :
 Not thus the bride-girls of eternity !
 "I, the All-Mother, Amor give to thee.
 Hold her by Me, in Me, for Me, to mine ;
 One with her social sister-band, to be
 A wedded blossom of My woman's vine :
 I give her unto thee, but hold in My divine."

CCLVI.

Marriage initiates to society :
 Man grows to God upon the woman's stem :
 Woman survives by solidarity ;
 Eternal life its robe and diadem.
 Woman above is not a separate gem,
 Sparkling to grace the solitary hand :
 Each bright one of the myriads of them
 Shines in the circulations of the band,
 Whose light, from God One-Twain, makes heaven all Hymen's
 Land.

CCLVII.

Lo, the true marriage, sanctified and lawful !
 Our Mother is arch-priestess of its rites.
 Behold Her ! be not terrified ; the awful
 Involvement of Time's labyrinth She lights.
 She gives, but not as Nature gives ; She plights
 God to their finiteness, and gifts unclose.
 Ever She forms Her ladies to their knights :
 On Amoret her Amor she bestows :
 In Heaven's full Womanhood She is the Bridal Rose.

CCLVIII.

The natural marriage in a sense is capture,
 And in a sense is rape; full oft disgust
 Creeps, a foul worm, from rifled buds of rapture:
 Still the mere nature-play involves but lust.
 O ye, in nature-self who make your trust!
 Beasts of the field and fishes of the sea,
 And crawling creatures, habiting the dust,—
 Not Woman-Man,—make your society:
 Nature o'erflows but eats until the passions die.

CCLIX.

Nature attracts by disassociation;
 Leads man from man, woman from woman still,
 That she may hold them for her generation.
 By hope, illusive hope, she lures them ill,
 The round of her dissolving years to fill:
 She loves for youth, but loathes for hoary age.
 Were a one-twain, Love's perfect miracle,
 To enter her domain, her powers would wage
 Unceasing, wasting war, to whelm them by her rage.

CCLX

Word-life and Nature-life are opposite:
 Hence grows the strife of time: yet unsubdued,
 The Titans in her stormy cavern sit,
 Nursing the cataclysm where they brood.
 Nature, by every art, would aye elude
 And double on the Word-life for her ends:
 On Love's joy-breathing breast will still intrude:
 The social fabric aye she wrecks or rends,
 Where kindling to the earth, the Bridal Word descends.



CCLXI.

Divide and conquer! this is Nature's art:
 She would not have on earth a strong mankind.
 Were womanhood to find its social heart,
 Great Manhood would her stormful Titans bind:
 The breath of heaven would penetrate her wind:
 The flame of heaven would overflow her fire;
 The girdle of her forces be untwined:
 Then from the race its nature-self expire,
 And Nature's form transpose, to serve the Word's desire.

CCLXII.

Evil in Nature is unsubject force,
 Not yet responsive to arch-human sway:
 Thence the great evolutions, in their course,
 Through incoherences and wrecks make way;
 Till partial, fragmentary forms display;
 Begetting, breeding, for their progeny,
 Instincts that ever tend to disarray
 The mind of reason's attribute:—men die
 Most deeply unto God, self-pleased in Nature's eye.

CCLXIII.

Hence, when the WORD-MAN came, the human germs,
 Enwrought in Nature's subterfuge, did not,
 Could not or would not apprehend the terms,
 By which He toiled to lead the Truth of thought
 Into the mind's dim labyrinth: He sought,
 But still mankind recoiled from the embrace.
 The Nature-play against the Word-play fought;
 She energized against Him, to efface
 The picture that He drew to paradise the race.

CCLXIV.



Eternity is made an endless round
 Of cycles of perfection: each in all,
 The wreathed and radiant sister-bands are wound
 Through the associate brother-bands; the wall
 Of life divine is their encircling hall:
 The strength divine makes floor-ways for their feet:
 The breaths of God by music rise and fall;
 For atmospheres in every breast they meet;
 Returning into God, One-Twain, so made complete:

CCLXV.

Hence there is unity. Yet Issa said,
 'Weave in the verse another, finer strain.'—
 God is in-wed, where each one-twain is wed:
 The God-Life, in the human, sweeps the train
 Of moving heavens, the powers to unrestrain,
 Swiftly and sweetly as they glide or go.
 This is the motion of the One-in-Twain,
 Their bridal motion: ever they bestow
 The infinite in all we love, achieve, or know.

CCLXVI.

Full womanhood makes full society:
 Full manhood, in her social system, grows
 To nobler, statelier humanity.
 The more man is, the more she overflows;
 Her myriad powers through all his gifts unclose;
 The myriad joys return to her from them:
 She folds in manhood for the sweet repose:
 Her constellations for his night begem;
 His glorious thoughts by day her brow endiadem.

CCLXVII.

But, from the conflux of these wedded systems
 Of man and woman, flow the solar tides.
 The element that feeds our earth's existence
 Falls from the star-flower of the bridegroom-brides.
 Thus the electric ocean forms, abides,
 And is forever multiplied and fed.
 Nature as an effect, that heaven provides,
 Rays from its flowering: stars to suns are led,
 And planets are the fruits born from its garden bed.

CCLXVIII.

For the beginnings of proliferation,
 The Goddess-God the living wealth bestow:
 The universe is all an impregnation.
 'I rise with thee: my love-globes lift and shew,'
 Said Issa, 'of the mystery I know.
 From the full-bosomed Mother, oceans press
 To boundless tides of mighty passion-flow:
 From one, mankind draws full for lordliness;
 But woman, from its twin, fills for her gifts that bless.

CCLXIX.

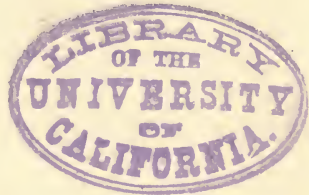
'If these two breasts of mine in one I hold
 Pressed to the paps, a story they will tell.
 Here, wine of force, all as encrimsoned gold;
 There, milk of rest, sweet to thee as the smell
 Of violets, in Lilimola's dell.
 Touch to my lips, that I for joy dissever;
 Draw from the fountains of my passion-well;
 Then through each joy-nerve flows the holy river:
 Thus manhood is renewed and fed and lives forever.'

CCLXX.

The wealthy billows to my feet retire,
 That lifted for the tide-waves of the song.
 From crimson lips, diffusing holy fire,
 The sacred melodies are borne along.—
 Farewell, farewell, irradiant, lovely throng!
 I cast you as a Joy-babe, to unwind
 And form again, invisible yet strong;
 That ye may populate the heart, the mind,
 And build in Man glad bowers for Woman's worth enshrined.

CCLXXI.

Farewell, and still farewell! I fling ye forth,
 As laughing sprites from Lilinola's dale;
 That ye in Woman may renew your birth,
 And vivify her powers. Unvail! unvail!
 Ye must not linger: sure, ye will not fail,
 Till by the MOTHER's art full charm ye weave,
 And o'er this weary world of grief and bale
 The Social Womanhood Her Word receive,
 And Social Man by Her his perished gifts retrieve.

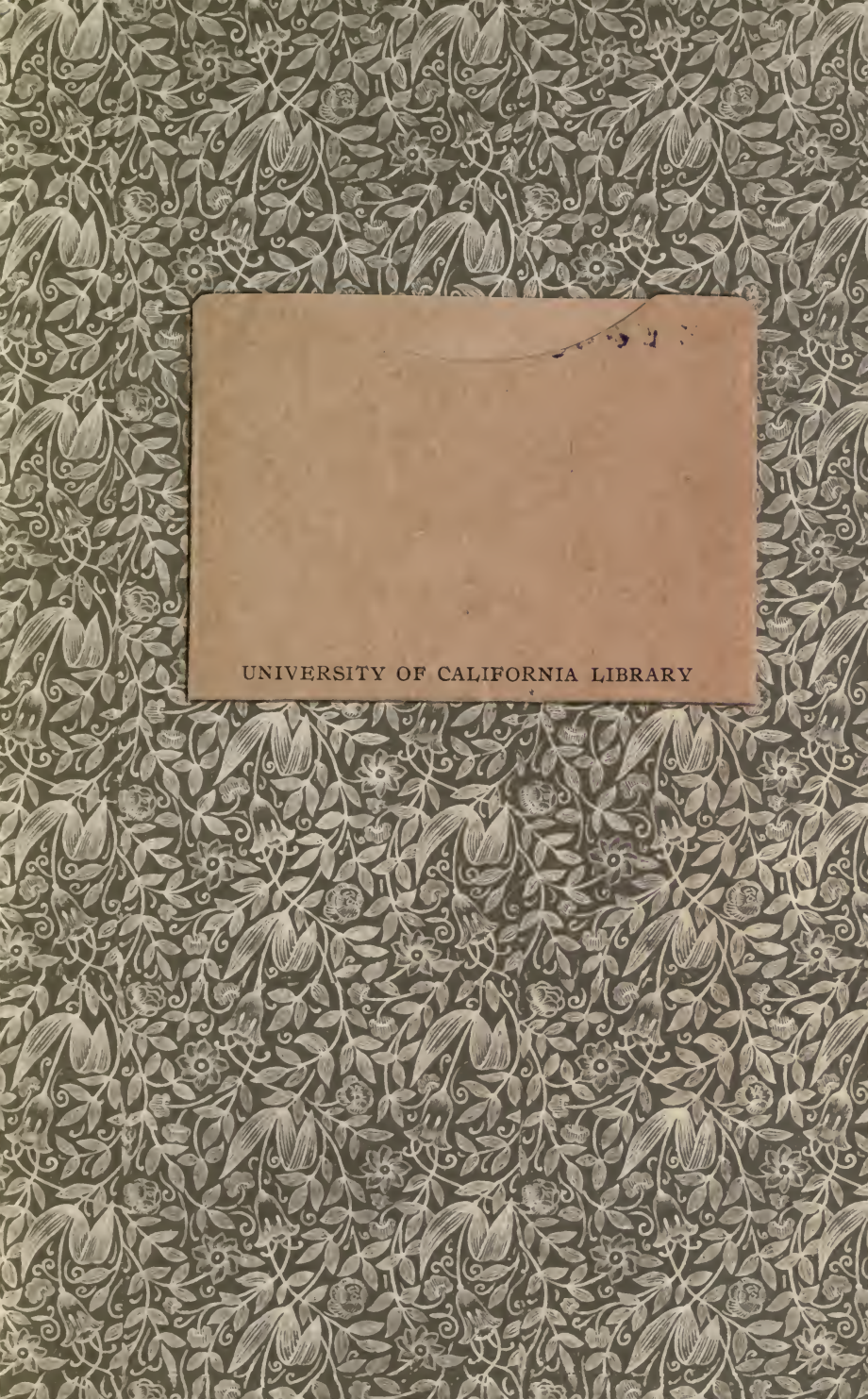


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