

# LATER POEMS

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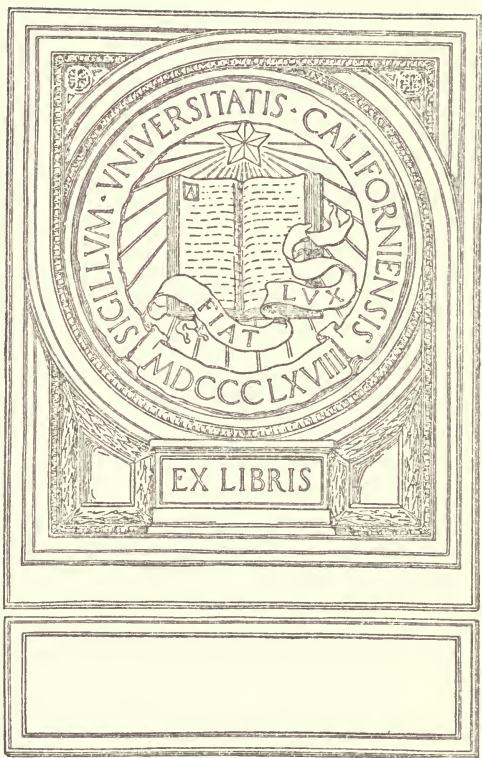
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By  
JOHN  
BANISTER  
TABB

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LATER POEMS BY J. B. TABB





LATER POEMS  
BY JOHN B. TABB

MK

NEW YORK  
MITCHELL KENNERLEY  
MCMX

953  
T112  
lat

To M. A. C.  
to whom  
My Right Reverend Father in Christ  
the late  
Bishop Alfred A. Curtis, D.D.  
commended his son



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# LATER POEMS

## CHRIST AND THE PAGAN

I HAD no God but these,  
The sacerdotal Trees,  
And they uplifted me.  
*"I hung upon a Tree."*

The sun and moon I saw,  
And reverential awe  
Subdued me day and night.  
*"I am the perfect Light."*

Within a lifeless Stone—  
All other gods unknown—  
I sought Divinity.  
*"The Corner-Stone am I."*

For sacrificial feast  
I slaughtered man and beast,  
Red recompense to gain.  
“*So I, a Lamb, was slain.*”

“*Yea; such My hungering Grace  
That wheresoe’er My face  
Is hidden, none may grope  
Beyond eternal Hope.*”

## THE GOOD THIEF

**I**F thou, like Zacheus, wouldst see  
Thy Lord and Master, climb the tree,  
And for His passing wait with me.

Here, nearer to its native skies,  
No intervening darkness lies  
Between the soul and Paradise.

Was ever mortal penance brier  
As mine? A moment of belief—  
Turnkey of Heaven, beware—a thief!

## CHRIST TO DUMB CREATURES

**F**OR man or for your fellows die,  
Ye bleeding victims, e'en as I  
The life they spare not freely give  
That in Me all again may live.  
The lamb, the fish, I fed upon  
With my Humanity are one.

## AD BESTIAS

**Y**E have the power to lift us higher.  
The Prodigal among the swine  
Refound the pearl cast forth in mire,  
The wisdom lost in wine.

And he, the outcast of the East—  
The lord of luxury, discrowned—  
Again the dawn of reason found  
In darkness of the beast.

Aye, when a Babe He laid Him down  
Among the beasts in Bethlehem,  
Of brutal power He gave to them  
To forge the Martyr's crown.

## MOMENTS

**L**IKE the manna, mute as snow,  
Swift the Moments come & go,  
Each sufficient for the needs  
Of the multitude it feeds;  
One to all, and all to one,  
Superfluity to none,  
Ever dying but to give  
Life whereon alone we live.

## LONELINESS

**I** WALK beside a lonely lake  
Where, ere thy natal day,  
I loved for contemplation's sake  
At eventide to stray.

The mist, reawakened from the wave,  
Enfolds me as before,  
But from thy solitary grave  
Thou comest now no more.

## ABASHED

THE cock crows; & behold the hidden Day—  
The thrice-denied—appears,  
And Darkness, conscience-stricken, steals away  
His face bedewed with tears.



## CHRISTMAS

**T**HE world His cradle is;  
The stars His worshippers;  
His "place on earth," the mother's kiss  
On lips new pressed to hers.

For she alone to Him  
In perfect light appears,  
The one horizon never dim  
With penitential tears.

## THE BABE TO THE GIFT-BEARER

**I** CANNOT hold within My hands  
Thy gift, but here My mother stands  
To take it as My own.  
It is thro' her I come to thee,  
And now our go-between is she  
Till I am older grown.

## SPECULUM AMORIS

**M**Y GOD the Baby is  
That rests upon my knee.

Into those eyes of His

I gaze mine own to see.

And He looks up to meet in mine

Reflected all the love Divine.

A Maid my mother is:

And I a sireless Son.

No other deed like this

Has Love eternal done—

To make her motherhood for Me

The mirror of Divinity.

## THE BREEZE AT BETHLEHEM

**I** THAT have lashed the sea  
And from the forest torn the rooted tree,  
Come now, my passion spent,  
A lowly penitent,  
Sweet Child, to Thee.

Alike Thy sovereign will  
The strong & weak, O slumbering Babe, fulfil.  
As I before Thee now  
Shall waves submissive bow,  
And storms be still.

## PRISONER'S BASE

**T**HO' Almighty, far from me,  
Little Babe, you cannot be;  
If perchance you get away,  
Back you come on Christmas-day,  
And we children hold you here  
In our hearts, a Prisoner.

## AT THE MANGER

WHEN first her Christmas watch to keep  
Came down the silent angel, Sleep,  
With snowy sandals shod,  
Beholding what His mother's hands  
Had wrought, with softer swaddling-bands  
She swathed the Son of God.

Then skilled in mysteries of night,  
With tender visions of delight  
She wreathed His resting place,  
Till wakened by a warmer glow  
Than heaven itself had yet to show,  
He saw His mother's face.

## EPIPHANY

**R**EASON, have done!  
Of thee I'll none  
While face to face I see the sun.

Be thine the ray  
To point the way  
In darkness: but, behold, 'tis day.

Should faith divine  
Forbear to shine,  
Again I'll place my hand in thine.

For in thy sight  
To walk aright  
Is prelude to the perfect light.

## CHRIST AND THE WINDS

FROM Bethlehem to Calvary,  
By night and day, by land and sea,  
His closest followers were we.

We soothed Him on His mother's breast;  
We shared with John the place of rest;  
With Magdalen His feet we pressed.

We saw His twilight agony;  
To us He breathed His latest sigh;  
With us He sought again the sky.

And now of all to whom His tone,  
His face and gesture once were known,  
We, wanderers, remain alone.



## IN EXTREMIS

**L**ORD, as from Thy body bleeding,  
Wave by wave is life receding  
From these limbs of mine:  
As it drifts away from me  
To the everlasting sea,  
Blend it, Lord, with Thine.

## HOLY SATURDAY

**O** EARTH, who daily kissed His feet  
Like lowly Magdalen,—how sweet  
(As oft His mother used) to keep  
The silent watches of His sleep,  
Till love demands the Prisoner,  
And Death replies, “He is not here.  
He passed my portal, where, afraid,  
My footsteps faltered to invade  
The region that beyond me lies:  
Then, ere the dawn, I saw Him rise  
In glory that dispelled my gloom  
And made a Temple of the Tomb.”

## BROTHER ASS AND ST. FRANCIS

**I**T came to pass  
That "Brother Ass"  
(As he his Body named,)        
Unto the Saint  
Thus made complaint:  
"I am unjustly blamed.

"Whate'er I do,  
Like Balaam you  
Requite me with a blow,  
As for offence  
To recompense  
An ignominious foe.

"God made us one,  
And I have done  
No wickedness alone;  
Nor can I do  
Apart, as you,  
An evil all my own.

“If Passion stir,  
’Tis you that spur  
My frenzy to the goal:  
Then be the blame  
Where sits the shame,  
Upon the goading soul.

“Should one or both  
Be blind or loth  
Our brotherhood to see,  
Remember this,  
You needs must miss  
Or enter heaven through *me*.”

To this complaint  
The lowly saint  
In tears replied, “Alas,  
If so it be,  
God punish me  
And bless thee, Brother Ass.”

## NATURE

**I**T is His garment; and to them  
Who touch in faith its utmost hem  
He, turning, says again, "I see  
That virtue hath gone out of me."

## HELPLESSNESS

**I**N patience as in labour must thou be  
A follower of Me,  
Whose hands & feet, when most I wrought for thee,  
Were nailed unto a tree.

## THE VIGIL

“STAY for me here”—Ah, well doth Love obey  
Thy mandate: for the stars have burnt away  
The web of darkness, & disrobe the day  
In twilight chill.

“Stay for me here”—I cannot choose but wait.  
The day is spent: & at the ponderous gate  
Of sunset, still I linger desolate.—  
Was this thy will?

“Stay for me here”—An echo in the gloom  
Of midnight warns me of approaching doom.  
As at the temple, so before the tomb,  
I wait thee still.

## MY PORTION

**I** KNOW not what a day may bring;  
For now 'tis Sorrow that I sing,  
And now 'tis Joy.  
In both a Father's hand I see;  
For one renews the Man in me,  
And one the Boy.



## BEATITUDE

**A**ND is it well with thee?  
Ay, past all dreaming, well!  
For here we dwell  
Where none may weep,  
And Paradise is ours again to keep—  
The tree of knowledge in the midst thereof.  
Time-ripened love—  
The leaves no more for healing, but for food  
Of life renewed,  
Fresh with the dew, from vanished faith distilled,  
Of hope fulfilled.  
All round us angels be  
To guard the gateways, not with sword of flame,  
But fragrant breathings of the holy Name,  
That never more an after thought of sin  
May enter in.

## MY NEIGHBOUR

**M**Y neighbour as myself to love,  
Thou hast commanded me,  
And in obedience I prove  
That Thou Thyself art he.

## O'ERCOME

**I** PAUSE for tears. But thou, my lute,  
Why art thou, like thy master, mute?  
Hath harmony within thee bred  
The hope thou hast interpreted?

Nay; if thou falter, Love may deem  
Our passion but an idle dream.  
Speak then, my lute, that all may hear  
How silence holds me prisoner.

## BEAUTY

SHE sleeps—her hiding-place unknown  
To other worshippers,  
Till Art, her lover, comes alone  
To press his lips to hers.

## THE VOYAGER

**F**AR inland, where the sea,  
Throughout the day,  
Lives but in memory—  
From twilight gray  
As foamless tides of sleep  
Their heights attain—  
Back to the distant deep  
I drift again;

And, as of old, a boy  
Seem I to be,  
With Innocence and Joy  
Afloat with me,  
Till, all too soon, the star  
Of Morn appears,  
And on the slumber-bar  
We part in tears.

## DEPRECATION

**L**OW, I listen in my grave  
For the silence soon to be  
When a slow-receding wave,  
Hushed, is memory.

Now the falling of a tear  
Or the breathing half-suppressed  
Of a sigh, re-echoed here,  
Holds me from my rest.

O, ye breakers of the past  
From the never-resting deep,  
On the coast of slumber cast,  
Cease, and let me sleep.

## AT THE EBB-TIDE

O MARSHES that remain  
In anguish dumb  
Till over you again  
The waters come!

So must thy life abide  
In silent pain,  
Till Love, the truant tide,  
Come back again.

## IN ÆTERNUM

**I**F Life and Death be things that *seem*,  
If Death be sleep, and Life a dream,  
May not the everlasting sleep  
The dream of life eternal keep ?



## THE STROKE OF THE HOUR

**I**F I were dead, and yonder chime  
Retold the fairy-tale of Time,  
At distance I perchance might hear,  
And half in pity, half in fear,  
Perceive the future life to be  
But an immortal Memory.

## LOSS

**F**OR one extinguished light  
Of Love, all heaven is night;  
For one frail flower the less,  
The world a wilderness.

## INITIATED

**T**HOU hast put on the livery,  
And learned the shibboleth,  
And pledged for all eternity  
The brotherhood of Death.

Yet to thy wonder-wakened eyes  
The light, however clear,  
But solves the deeper mysteries  
That lay about thee here.

## THE LUTE-PLAYER

**H**E touched the strings; & lo, the strain—  
As waters dimple to the rain—  
Spontaneous rose and fell again.

In swaddling clothes or silence bound,  
His genius a soul had found,  
And wakened it to light and sound.

## DEPARTURE

**G**O now thy way, but whereso'er thou art,  
If sick again for home,  
Know that the place forsaken in my heart  
Is vacant till thou come.!

## DEJECTION

**T**HE sun is gone; & the forsaken sea—  
Her glance a tear  
Wherein all depths of tenderness appear—  
Looks back at me,  
Where I upon the strand,  
The centre of the lone horizon, stand  
Forlorn as she,  
To know that when her darkness drifts away  
Mine own must stay.

## SONG

**F**ADE not yet, O summer day,  
For my love hath answered yea.  
Keep us from the coming night,  
Lest our blossom suffer blight.

Fear thou not: if love be true,  
Closer will it cleave to you;  
'Tis the darkened hours that prove  
Faith or faithlessness in Love.

## NOMADS

WE are but pilgrims; and the skin  
That covers us, the tent wherein,  
Awake or sleeping, we abide  
Till death a dwelling-house provide.



## FINIS

O TO be with thee sinking to thy rest,  
Thy journey done;  
The world thou leavest blessing thee and blest,  
O setting sun;  
The clouds, that ne'er the morning joys forget,  
Again aglow,  
And leaf and flower with tears of twilight wet  
To see thee go.

## QUO VADIS?

THE sedge was sere; the water still,  
As waiting for the wintry chill;  
When, shadow-like along the hill,  
She moved alone.

The owl, upon a blasted limb,  
From sepulchres of silence dim  
Made charnel echoes mock for him  
Their dying moan.

Upon the forehead of the night  
The moon, foreboding in affright—  
A film of solitary light—  
Above her shone.

What meant the omen of the bird?  
The moon with blinding vapours blurred?  
What in her heart of anguish stirred  
The stifled groan?

A plunge, a ripple, and a sigh  
Of waters;—fleeting soul, reply,  
Was it for death of Love to die,  
Or to atone?

## LEAVES

**A**LL your sylvan prophecies  
But a phantom sigh!  
“Yea, we listened to the breeze  
Tempting us to fly  
Like the summer birds and bees  
From the branches high:  
Now beneath our naked trees  
Shadowless we lie,  
In the autumn mysteries  
Doomed, alas, to die.”

## VICTIMS

**B**EHOLD, throughout the land,  
On many a smoking pyre  
The maple-martyrs stand  
Ablaze in autumn fire.

The winds are hushed in prayer,  
Till, falling one by one,  
Dumbfounded leaves declare  
The sacrifice is done.

## FOG

THE ghost am I  
Of winds that die  
Alike on land or sea,  
In silence deep  
To shroud and keep  
Their mournful memory.

A spirit white  
I stalk the night,  
Or, shadowing the skies,  
Forbid the sun  
To look upon  
My noonday mysteries.

## NIGHTFALL

**N**OW, weary, one by one we lay  
Aside the panoply of day;  
And, like to little children, creep  
Defenceless, to the arms of sleep.

Our heads upon her bosom, soon  
Forgotten are the cares of noon,  
That, shorn of shadows, helpless lie  
As Samson in captivity.

## CLIFFS

**F**OR ever face to face,  
As towered of old  
Within the Holy Place  
The wings of gold.

One heralding the day  
With kindled crest;  
One reddened with the ray  
That fires the west.

The bosom-vale between  
Alike their own;  
To each a heaven unseen,  
A world unknown.



## TO THE WHEATFIELD

GIVE *us this day our daily bread.*  
“Oh wheat,” the wind, in passing, said,  
“ ’Tis you that answer everywhere  
This call of Life’s incessant prayer;  
Bow, then, in reverence your head,  
For ’tis the Master’s gift you bear.”

## THE FORFEITURE

WHO first beneath the mistletoe  
On Christmas night is found,  
Must pay a forfeiture, we know,  
To them that stand around.  
Approach, ye angel choirs, and then  
Make way for happier sons of men.

## HEREDITY

I DIED at sea; and homeward bound,  
I journey half the world around  
To rest where native dust is found.

'Tis strange, if dust be dust, that I  
E'en now to dust returning, sigh  
As dust with kindred dust to lie.

But haply, as from sire to son,  
From son to sire emotions run  
That make the lineal current one.

## THE BIRTHDAY

**A**NOTHER blossom blooms for thee  
Upon the never-failing Tree  
Of Life—the same in breath and hue  
As was the first that drank the dew,  
When God within His garden stood  
Alone, and found it “very good.”

So be it, when—thy garden done,  
And all thy labours one by one  
Recorded—thro’ the twilight dim  
He comes to bid thee walk with Him  
Into a vaster solitude,  
Thou too behold it very good!

SICUT IN PRINCIPIO

**A** PENTECOSTAL breath—  
The wind that baffles Death—  
Moves: and from sterile sand  
The sea brings forth the Land,  
Out of whose wounded side  
All life is satisfied.

## MEMORY

**I** GO not to the grave to weep,  
But to my heart, wherein I keep  
A hidden manna that hath fed  
Alike the living and the dead.

We gathered it as, day by day,  
It fell from heaven upon our way,  
To be, if haply one were gone,  
The bread for both to feed upon.

## RACERS

**T**HE winds from many a cloudy mane  
Shake off the sweat of gathering rain  
And whicker with delight;  
No slope of pasture-lands they need,  
Whereon to rest, or drink, or feed,  
Their life the rapture of the speed,  
The frenzy of the flight.

## NOCHE TRISTE

**T**HE night that bore me to my dead,  
Along the dreary way  
The meadow-frogs in chorus said,  
“We sing the vanished day;  
Think not that life is all with you:  
*Her* night hath stars and voices too.”



## CONSOLATION

**H**ENCEFORTH alone to bear  
The cross thou canst not share  
Is sweet to me;  
For 'twas the heavier part  
That lay upon thy heart  
Which now is free.

## UNIGENITUS

**A**FTER the man-child morn,  
Of night no babe is born:  
After a God, no room  
For man in Mary's womb.

## A WIND-CALL

DUST thou art, and unto dust,  
Playfellow, return thou must;  
Lingering death it is to stay  
In the prison-house of clay—  
Bricks of Egypt, year by year,  
Walling up a sepulchre.

Better far the soul to free  
From its cold captivity,  
And with us, thy comrades, go  
Wheresoe'er we list to blow.  
Come, for soon again to dust  
Playfellow, return thou must.

## WITHDRAWN

**I** MISS thee everywhere.  
The places dear to thee,  
Familiar shadows wear  
Henceforth for memory.

And where thou hast not been,  
Thou seemest to repose  
As near—tho' never seen—  
As fragrance to the rose.

## WRINKLES

**T**HIS, biting Frost—this, branding Sun—  
This, Wind or drenching Rain hath done:  
Each perfecting the Sculptor's plan  
Upon the godlike image, Man.

## DEATH

**I**<sup>4</sup>PASSED him daily, but his eyes,  
On others musing, missed me,  
Till suddenly, with pale surprise,  
He caught, & clasped, & kissed me.  
Since then his long-averted glance  
Is fixed upon my countenance.

## IN AUTUMN

**N**OW that the birds are gone  
That sang the summer through,  
And now that, one by one,  
The leaves are going too,  
Is all their beauty but a show  
To fade for ever when they go?

Nay; what is heard and seen,  
In time must pass away;  
But Beauty, born within,—  
The blossom of a day—  
Unto its hiding place again  
Returns for ever to remain.

## THE BREEZE

**T**HRO' thee the ocean knows  
The fragrance of the rose;  
And inlands, far away,  
The blossom of the spray.

Thro' thee, to every wave  
A whisper of the grave;  
And to each grave a sigh  
Of Life that cannot die.



## FULFILLED

'T WAS August: and a Gypsy Breeze  
Came wandering thro' the wood.  
"Our fortunes!" cried the lover Trees  
That first before her stood.

"Sir Hickory the king shall be  
Of all this wide demesne;  
And you," she added tenderly,  
"Fair Maple, shall be queen."

They listened, smiling as she spoke,  
Nor heeded what she told,  
Till came the morning when they woke  
Arrayed in red and gold.

## LOVE IMMORTAL

THE soul that sees no hell below,  
No heaven above,  
All other mysteries may know,  
But never Love.

If from the prison-walls of Time  
No life may fly,  
Then Love and Innocence and Crime  
Alike must die.

## WINTER RAIN

**R**AIN on the roof and rain  
On the burial-place of grain;  
To one a voice in vain;  
To one, o'er hill and plain  
The pledge of life again.

Rain on the sterile sea,  
That hath no need of thee,  
Nor keeps thy memory—  
'Tis thou that teachest me  
The range of charity.

## THE STAR TO THE WATCHER

**F**AREWELL! I may not meet thee till the day  
Hath passed away;  
But in the bosom of the noontide sea,  
I'll dream of thee.

Alike are we the votaries of Night;  
A voice hath said,  
Let there for other worshippers be light,  
For lovers, shade.

## HARBOURS

**F**ULL many a noonday nook I know  
Where memory is fain to go  
And wait in silence till the shade  
Of sleep the solitude invade.

For these the resting-places are  
Of dreams that, journeying afar,  
Pause in their migratory flight  
This side the continent of night.

## ST MARY OF EGYPT

**S**TRONG to suffer, strong to sin,  
Loving much, and much forgiven,  
In the desert realm a queen,  
Penance-crowned, to cope with Heaven,  
Solitude alone could be  
Room enough for GOD and thee.

Long the vigil, stern the fast;  
Morn, with night's anointing, chill;  
Noon with passion overcast;  
Night with phantoms fouler still;  
Prayer and penitential tears  
Battling with the lust of years.

Low upon the parching sand,  
Shrivelled in the blight of day,  
As beneath a throbbing brand  
Prone thy ghastly shadow lay,  
Till the manacles of hell  
From thy fevered spirit fell.

Then, O Queen of Solitude!  
Silence led thee as a bride,  
Clothed anew in maidenhood,  
To an altar purified,  
Lit with holy fires, to prove  
Self the sacrifice of Love.

## LIFE'S GULF STREAM

**S**TARS, that in the darkness bloom  
Wither in the light;  
Dreams, begotten of the gloom,  
Take their morning flight.

And, the gleam of fancy gone,  
From the current of the dawn  
Tidal memories are drawn  
To the coast of Night.



## THE LIFE-GIVER

THE earth to us her bread  
Of life doth give;  
And we to her, our dead,  
That they may live.

In vain the vision blest  
Of Heaven were found,  
Did Faith no ladder rest  
Upon the ground.

## REVISITED

**A** LONELY road I tread again,  
As once with Love's companion, Pain,  
Who faltered, "Love is fled."

To-day, a shadow not mine own  
Along a lonelier path is thrown,  
That tells me "Pain is dead."

## INSCRIPTIONS

**T**HE epitaph of Night  
The Sunbeams write;  
The epitaph of Day,  
The Shadows gray;  
One requiem of Wind & Wave  
Above each grave.

## THE GRAVE-DIGGER

**H**ERE underneath the sod,  
Where night till now hath been,  
With every lifted clod  
I let the sunshine in.

How dark soe'er the gloom  
Of Death's approaching shade,  
The *first* within the tomb  
Is light, that cannot fade.

And from the deepest grave  
I banish it in vain;  
For, like a tidal wave,  
Anon 'twill come again.

## OUR SECRET

THE interval  
We both recall,  
To each was all.

A moment's space,  
That time nor place  
Can e'er efface.

'Tis all our own,  
A secret known  
To us alone.

My life to thee  
As thine to me  
Eternity.

## THE OLD YEAR'S BLESSING

**L**IKE Simeon of old,  
The new-born Babe I hold  
Upon my heart:  
According to thy word,  
Let now thy servant, LORD,  
In peace depart.

## THE TEST

**T**HE dead there are, who live;  
The living, who are dead:  
The poor, who still can give;  
The rich, who lack for bread;  
To Love it is and Love alone  
That Life or Luxury is known.

## THE SOUL'S QUEST

**I** LAID my vesture by  
Upon this spot,  
And here returning, I  
Behold it not.  
Dost thou, O earth, resume  
The relics of the tomb?

Whereto the Earth replies:

“Be not afraid ;  
Safe in my keeping lies  
What here was laid:  
A thousand forms refine  
What shall again be thine.”



TO AN AMATEUR

LOVE thy violin:  
Let thy soul therein  
Learn the unity  
Of the mystic three,  
When the string and bow—  
Parted lovers—meet,  
And in music know  
Life in Love complete.

## HIDDEN

**T**HE sweetest warblers—one in light,  
And one in darkness, screened from sight—  
By voice alone prevail;  
So let the Poet sing his song,  
As far secluded from the throng  
As Lark or Nightingale

## THE DAWN STAR

**F**EED me, O morning, till the ray  
That love hath kindled in the shade,  
Lost in the satisfying day  
Of Light's perfection, fade.

## NEIGHBOUR

**F**ULL many a heedless fellow-man  
Had passed him on the way,  
But Night, the Good Samaritan,  
Beholding where he lay,  
Upbore him to the Inn of Sleep,  
And there I heard him say,  
Whate'er the charges of his keep,  
O Landlord, I'll repay.

## TEARS

OUT of the deep are we,  
Out of that inland sea  
Whereof the briny wave  
Beats to the yawning grave.

## TWO EASTER LILIES

**B**EHOLD the reed of scorn,  
Like Aaron's rod,  
Hath blossomed to adorn  
The risen God.

And she, the broken bloom  
That balmed His feet,  
Is first before His tomb,  
Her LORD to greet.

ANIMULA VAGA

**D**O quickly what thou hast to do;  
For, till to dust again,  
O coffin-worm, the temple fall,  
A fledgling I remain.

Nay; till the utmost particle  
Another form hath found,  
Tho' plumed for the empyrean,  
I flutter near the ground.

## INFLUENCES

**E**ACH separate life is fed  
From many a fountain-head:  
Tides that we never know  
Into our being flow,  
And rays of the remotest star  
Converge to make us what we are.



## AT THE LAST

**L**ITTLE squirrel in the tree,  
Faithless other friends to me,  
Therefore to the birds and thee  
Have I come.

Men have reason; ye have love  
—Gift all other gifts above—  
Proving what, alas, to prove  
They are dumb.

## THE DIAL

**A**DREAMER in the dark, I grow  
Prophetic in the morning glow;  
Thereon a slender shade I throw—  
A sign in Babylon to say  
“Thou’rt in the balance weighed, O Day,  
Found wanting, and shalt waste away.”  
And now in Night’s pavilion, all  
The stars are writing on the wall,  
“Behold, thy kingdom too must fall.”

## BREAKERS

'TIS well the dimples sweet  
To kiss away—  
The marks of little feet  
That love the spray;

For, once the children gone,  
'T were mockery  
The vestiges upon  
The sand to see.

## HER PILOT

**D**EATH seemed afraid to wake her;  
For, traversing the deep,  
When home he came to take her,  
He kept her fast asleep.

And, haply, from her dreaming  
Of many a risk to run  
She woke, with rapture beaming,  
To find her voyage done.

## SURVIVAL

THE tempest past—  
A home in ruin laid;  
But lo! where last  
The little children played  
At hide-and-seek,  
A footprint small  
Pleads silently,  
As if afraid to speak.  
“Behold in me  
A memory,  
The least & last of all!”

## THE HAUNTED MOON

**S**TILL closer doth she cowl with night  
Her visage white,  
To hide her from the spectre grey  
Of yesterday—  
Deep buried in his sepulchre  
To all but her.

# ON HIS BLINDNESS

## FIAT LUX

“GIVE us this day our daily bread,” and *light*:  
For more to me, O LORD, than food is sight:  
And I at noon have been  
In twilight, where my fellow-men were seen  
“As trees” that walked before me. E’en to-day  
From time to time there falls upon my way  
A feather of the darkness. But again  
It passes; and amid the falling rain  
Of tears, I lift, O LORD, mine eyes to Thee,  
For, lo! I *see*!



## GOING BLIND

BACK to the primal gloom  
Where life began,  
As to my mother's womb  
Must I a man  
Return:  
Not to be born again,  
But to remain:  
And in the School of Darkness learn  
What mean  
"The things unseen."

## BLIND

**A** GAIN as in the desert way,  
Behold my guides—a cloud by day,  
A flame by night:  
For darkness wakens with the morn,  
But dreams, of midnight slumber born,  
Bring back the light.

## MAMMY\*

**I** LOVED her countenance whereon,  
Despite the longest day,  
The tenderness of visions gone  
In shadow seemed to stay.  
And now, when faithless sight is fled  
Beyond my waking gaze,  
Of darkness I am not afraid,—  
It is my Mammy's face.

\* This is the American Southern child's name for the negro nurse.

## IN BLINDNESS

**F**OR me her life to consecrate,  
My Lady Light  
Within her shadowy convent gate  
Is lost to sight.

I may not greet her; but a grace—  
A gleam divine—  
The rapture of her hidden face  
Suffuses mine.

## IN TENEBRIS

**T**HE dawn to ours is dusk to other eyes;  
And, light away,  
Our stars returning to their native skies  
Forget the day.

If then, some life be brighter for the shade  
That darkens mine,  
To both, O LORD, more manifest be made  
The light divine.

## PROXIMITY

**T**HE day is nearer to the night  
Than to another day:  
If closer to the living Light,  
In darkness let me stay.

## BENIGHTED

**H**ER mistress would not have her stay;  
And so the fair hand-maiden, Day—  
My Hagar—banished from my sight,  
Has left me to her rival, Night.

But still she lingers in the glow  
Of life above us and below:  
The stars my Sarah's progeny;  
My Hagar's, sands beside the sea.

## OUR STARS

**M**Y twilight is before the dark,  
And thine before the day;  
O'er both alike a beacon-spark  
To keep us in the way.  
The darkness can but brighten mine;  
Let not the noon extinguish thine.



## THE SMITER

**T**HEY bound Thine eyes, & questioned, “Tell us now  
Who smote Thee.” Thou wast silent. When to-day  
Mine eyes are holden, and again they say,  
“Who smote Thee?” LORD, I tell them it is Thou.

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