Classic Poetry Series

Emma Lazarus

- 93 poems -

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Emma Lazarus (22 July 1849 – 19 November 1887)

Emma Lazarus was an American Jewish poet born in New York City.

She is best known for "The New Colossus", a sonnet written in 1883; its lines appear on a bronze plaque in the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty placed in 1903. The sonnet was written for and donated to an auction, conducted by the "Art Loan Fund Exhibition in Aid of the Bartholdi Pedestal Fund for the Statue of Liberty" to raise funds to build the pedestal.

Emma Lazarus was honored by the Office of the Manhattan Borough President in March 2008 and was included in a map of historical sites related or dedicated to important women.

Background

Lazarus was the fourth of seven children of Moshe Lazarus and Esther Nathan, Sephardic Jews whose families, originally from Portugal, had been settled in New York since the colonial period. She was related through her mother to Benjamin N. Cardozo, Associate Justice of the US Supreme Court.

From an early age, she studied American and British literature, as well as several languages, including German, French, and Italian. Her writings attracted the attention of Ralph Waldo Emerson. He corresponded with her until his death.

Literary Career

Lazarus wrote her own poems and edited many adaptations of German poems, notably those of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Heinrich Heine. She also wrote a novel and two plays. Her most famous work is "The New Colossus", which is inscribed on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty. Lazarus' close friend Rose Hawthorne Lathrop was inspired by "The New Colossus" to found the Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne.

Lazarus began to be more interested in her Jewish ancestry after reading the George Eliot novel, Daniel Deronda, and as she heard of the Russian pogroms that followed the assassination of Tsar Nicholas II in 1881. As a result of this anti-Semitic violence, thousands of destitute Ashkenazi Jews emigrated from the Russian Pale of Settlement to New York. This led Lazarus to write articles on the subject as well as the poem for which she was most famous in her lifetime, "Song of a Semite" (1882). Lazarus began at this point to advocate on behalf of indigent Jewish refugees and helped establish the Hebrew Technical Institute in New York to provide vocational training to help destitute Jewish immigrants become self-supporting.

She traveled twice to Europe, first in 1883 and again from 1885 to 1887. She returned to New York City seriously ill after her second trip and died two months later on November 19, 1887, most likely from Hodgkin's lymphoma.

She is also an important forerunner of the Zionist movement. She argued for the creation of a Jewish homeland thirteen years before Theodor Herzl began to use the term Zionism. Lazarus is buried in Beth-Olom Cemetery in Brooklyn.

Works:

Lazarus, Emma (1888). The Poems of Emma Lazarus. Houghton, Mifflin and Company.

1492

Thou two-faced year, Mother of Change and Fate,
Didst weep when Spain cast forth with flaming sword,
The children of the prophets of the Lord,
Prince, priest, and people, spurned by zealot hate.
Hounded from sea to sea, from state to state,
The West refused them, and the East abhorred.
No anchorage the known world could afford,
Close-locked was every port, barred every gate.
Then smiling, thou unveil'dst, O two-faced year,
A virgin world where doors of sunset part,
Saying, "Ho, all who weary, enter here!
There falls each ancient barrier that the art
Of race or creed or rank devised, to rear
Grim bulwarked hatred between heart and heart!"

Emma Lazarus

A June Night

Ten o'clock: the broken moon
Hangs not yet a half hour high,
Yellow as a shield of brass,
In the dewy air of June,
Poised between the vaulted sky
And the ocean's liquid glass.

Earth lies in the shadow still;
Low black bushes, trees, and lawn
Night's ambrosial dews absorb;
Through the foliage creeps a thrill,
Whispering of yon spectral dawn
And the hidden climbing orb.

Higher, higher, gathering light,
Veiling with a golden gauze
All the trembling atmosphere,
See, the rayless disk grows white!
Hark, the glittering billows pause!

Faint, far sounds possess the ear.
Elves on such a night as this
Spin their rings upon the grass;
On the beach the water-fay
Greets her lover with a kiss;
Through the air swift spirits pass,
Laugh, caress, and float away.

Shut thy lids and thou shalt see
Angel faces wreathed with light,
Mystic forms long vanished hence.
Ah, too fine, too rare, they be
For the grosser mortal sight,
And they foil our waking sense.

Yet we feel them floating near,
Know that we are not alone,
Though our open eyes behold
Nothing save the moon's bright sphere,
In the vacant heavens shown,
And the ocean's path of gold.

Emma Lazarus

A Masque Of Venice

(A Dream.)

Not a stain,
In the sun-brimmed sapphire cup that is the sky-
Not a ripple on the black translucent lane
Of the palace-walled lagoon.
Not a cry
As the gondoliers with velvet oar glide by,
Through the golden afternoon.

From this height
Where the carved, age-yellowed balcony o'erjuts
Yonder liquid, marble pavement, see the light
Shimmer soft beneath the bridge,
That abuts
On a labyrinth of water-ways and shuts
Half their sky off with its ridge.

We shall mark
All the pageant from this ivory porch of ours,
Masques and jesters, mimes and minstrels, while we hark
To their music as they fare.
Scent their flowers
Flung from boat to boat in rainbow radiant showers
Through the laughter-ringing air.

See! they come,
Like a flock of serpent-throated black-plumed swans,
With the mandoline, viol, and the drum,
Gems afire on arms ungloved,
Fluttering fans,
Floating mantles like a great moth's streaky vans
Such as Veronese loved.

But behold
In their midst a white unruffled swan appear.
One strange barge that snowy tapestries enfold,
White its tasseled, silver prow.
Who is here?
Prince of Love in masquerade or Prince of Fear,
Clad in glittering silken snow?

Cheek and chin
Where the mask's edge stops are of the hoar-frosts hue,
And no eyebeams seem to sparkle from within
Where the hollow rings have place.
Yon gay crew
Seem to fly him, he seems ever to pursue.
'T is our sport to watch the race.

At his side
Stands the goldenest of beauties; from her glance,

From her forehead, shines the splendor of a bride,
And her feet seem shod with wings,
To entrance,
For she leaps into a wild and rhythmic dance,
Like Salome at the King's.

'T is his aim
Just to hold, to clasp her once against his breast,
Hers to flee him, to elude him in the game.
Ah, she fears him overmuch!
Is it jest,-
Is it earnest? a strange riddle lurks half-guessed
In her horror of his touch.

For each time
That his snow-white fingers reach her, fades some ray
From the glory of her beauty in its prime;
And the knowledge grows upon us that the dance
Is no play
'Twixt the pale, mysterious lover and the fay-
But the whirl of fate and chance.

Where the tide
Of the broad lagoon sinks plumb into the sea,
There the mystic gondolier hath won his bride.
Hark, one helpless, stifled scream!
Must it be?
Mimes and minstrels, flowers and music, where are ye?
Was all Venice such a dream?

Emma Lazarus

Admetus: To my friend, Ralph Waldo Emerson

He who could beard the lion in his lair,
To bind him for a girl, and tame the boar,
And drive these beasts before his chariot,
Might wed Alcestis. For her low brows' sake,
Her hairs' soft undulations of warm gold,
Her eyes' clear color and pure virgin mouth,
Though many would draw bow or shiver spear,
Yet none dared meet the intolerable eye,
Or lipless tusk, of lion or of boar.
This heard Admetus, King of Thessaly,
Whose broad, fat pastures spread their ample fields
Down to the sheer edge of Amphrysus' stream,
Who laughed, disdainful, at the father's pride,
That set such value on one milk-faced child.

One morning, as he rode alone and passed
Through the green twilight of Thessalian woods,
Between two pendulous branches interlocked,
As through an open casement, he descried
A goddess, as he deemed, — in truth a maid.
On a low bank she fondled tenderly
A favorite hound, her floral face inclined
Above the glossy, graceful animal,
That pressed his snout against her cheek and gazed
Wistfully, with his keen, sagacious eyes.

One arm with lax embrace the neck enwreathed,
With polished roundness near the sleek, gray skin.
Admetus, fixed with wonder, dared not pass,
Intrusive on her holy innocence
And sacred girlhood, but his fretful steed
Snuffed the large air, and champed and pawed the ground;
And hearing this, the maiden raised her head.
No let or hindrance then might stop the king,
Once having looked upon those supreme eyes.
The drooping boughs disparting, forth he sped,
And then drew in his steed, to ask the path,
Like a lost traveller in an alien land.
Although each river-cloven vale, with streams
Arrowy glancing to the blue Ægean,
Each hallowed mountain, the abode of gods,
Pelion and Ossa fringed with haunted groves,
The height, spring-crowned, of dedicate Olympus,
And pleasant sun-fed vineyards, were to him
Familiar as his own face in the stream,
Nathless he paused and asked the maid what path
Might lead him from the forest. She replied,
But still he tarried, and with sportsman's praise
Admired the hound and stooped to stroke its head,
And asked her if she hunted. Nay, not she:

Her father Pelias hunted in these woods,
Where there was royal game. He knew her now, —
Alcestis, — and her left her with due thanks:
No goddess, but a mortal, to be won
By such a simple feat as driving boars
And lions to his chariot. What was that
To him who saw the boar of Calydon,
The sacred boar of Artemis, at bay
In the broad stagnant marsh, and sent his darts
In its tough, quivering flank, and saw its death,
Stung by sure arrows of Arcadian nymph?

To river-pastures of his flocks and herds
Admetus rode, where sweet-breathed cattle grazed,
Heifers and goats and kids, and foolish sheep
Dotted cool, spacious meadows with bent heads,
And necks' soft wool broken in yellow flakes,
Nibbling sharp-toothed the rich, thick-growing blades.
One herdsmen kept the innumerable droves —
A boy yet, young as immortality —
In listless posture on a vine-grown rock.
Around him huddled kids and sheep that left
The mother's udder for his nighest grass,
Which sprouted with fresh verdure where he sat.
And yet dull neighboring rustics never guessed
A god had been among them till he went,
Although with him they acted as he willed,
Renouncing shepherds' silly pranks and quips,
Because his very presence made them grave.
Amphryssius, after their translucent stream,
They called him, but Admetus knew his name, —
Hyperion, god of sun and song and silver speech,
Condemned to serve a mortal for his sin
To Zeus in sending violent darts of death,
And raising hand irreverent, against
The one-eyed forgers of the thunderbolt.
For shepherd's crook he held the living rod
Of twisted serpents, later Hermes' wand.
Him sought the king, discovering soon hard by,
Idle, as one in nowise bound to time,
Watching the restless grasses blow and wave,
The sparkle of the sun upon the stream,
Regretting nothing, living with the hour:
For him, who had his light and song within,
Was naught that did not shine, and all things sang.
Admetus prayed for his celestial aid
To win Alcestis, which the god vouchsafed,
Granting with smiles, as grant all gods, who smite
With stern hand, sparing not for piteousness,
But give their gifts in gladness.

Thus the king
Led with loose rein the beasts as tame as kine,
And townsfolk thronged within the city streets,
As round a god; and mothers showed their babes,
And maidens loved the crowned intrepid youth,
And men would worship, though the very god
Who wrought the wonder dwelled unnoted nigh,
Divinely scornful of neglect or praise.
Then Pelias, seeing this would be his son,
As he had vowed, called for his wife and child.
With Anaxibia, Alcestis came,
A warm flush spreading o'er her eager face
In looking on the rider of the woods,
And knowing him her suitor and the king.

Admetus won Alcestis thus to wife,
And these with mated hearts and mutual love
Lived a life blameless, beautiful: the king
Ordaining justice in the gates; the queen,
With grateful offerings to the household gods,
Wise with the wisdom of the pure in heart.
One child she bore, — Eumelus, — and he throve.
Yet none the less because they sacrificed
The firstlings of their flocks and fruits and flowers,
Did trouble come; for sickness seized the king.
Alcestis watched with many-handed love,
But unavailing service, for he lay
With languid limbs, despite his ancient strength
Of sinew, and his skill with spear and sword.
His mother came, Clymene, and with her
His father, Pheres: his unconscious child
They brought him, while forlorn Alcestis sat
Discouraged, with the face of desolation.
The jealous gods would bind his mouth from speech,
And smite his vigorous frame with impotence;
And ruin with bitter ashes, worms, and dust,
The beauty of his crowned, exalted head.
He knew her presence, — soon he would not know,
Nor feel her hand in his lie warm and close,
Nor care if she were near him any more.
Exhausted with long vigils, thus the queen
Held hard and grievous thoughts, till heavy sleep
Possessed her weary senses, and she dreamed.
And even in her dream her trouble lived,
For she was praying in a barren field
To all the gods for help, when came across
The waste of air and land, from distant skies,
A spiritual voice divinely clear,
Whose unimaginable sweetness thrilled
Her aching heart with tremor of strange joy:

'Arise, Alcestis, cast away white fear.
A god dwells with you: seek, and you shall find.'
Then quiet satisfaction filled her soul
Almost akin to gladness, and she woke.
Weak as the dead, Admetus lay there still;
But she, superb with confidence, arose,
And passed beyond the mourners' curious eyes,
Seeking Amphryssius in the meadow-lands.
She found him with the godlike mien of one
Who, roused, awakens unto deeds divine:
'I come, Hyperion, with incessant tears,
To crave the life of my dear lord the king.
Pity me, for I see the future years
Widowed and laden with disastrous days.
And ye, the gods, will miss him when the fires
Upon your shrines, unfed, neglected die.
Who will pour large libations in your names,
And sacrifice with generous piety?
Silence and apathy will greet you there
Where once a splendid spirit offered praise.
Grant me this boon divine, and I will beat
With prayer at morning's gates, before they ope
Unto thy silver-hoofed and flame-eyed steeds.
Answer ere yet the irremeable stream
Be crossed: answer, O god, and save!'
She ceased,
With full throat salt with tears, and looked on him,
And with a sudden cry of awe fell prone,
For, lo! he was transmuted to a god;
The supreme aureole radiant round his brow,
Divine refulgence on his face, — his eyes
Awful with splendor, and his august head
With blinding brilliance crowned by vivid flame.
Then in a voice that charmed the listening air:
'Woman, arise! I have no influence
On Death, who is the servant of the Fates.
Howbeit for thy passion and thy prayer,
The grace of thy fair womanhood and youth,
Thus godlike will I intercede for thee,
And sue the insatiate sisters for this life.
Yet hope not blindly: loth are these to change
Their purpose; neither will they freely give,
But haggling lend or sell: perchance the price
Will countervail the boon. Consider this.
Now rise and look upon me.' And she rose,
But by her stood no godhead bathed in light,
But young Amphryssius, herdsman to the king,
Benignly smiling.
Fleet as thought, the god
Fled from the glittering earth to blackest depths
Of Tartarus; and none might say he sped
On wings ambrosial, or with feet as swift

As scouring hail, or airy chariot
Borne by flame-breathing steeds ethereal;
But with a motion inconceivable
Departed and was there. Before the throne
Of Ades, first he hailed the long-sought queen,
Stolen with violent hands from grassy fields
And delicate airs of sunlit Sicily,
Pensive, gold-haired, but innocent-eyed no more
As when she laughing plucked the daffodils,
But grave as one fulfilling a strange doom.
And low at Ades' feet, wrapped in grim murk
And darkness thick, the three gray women sat,
Loose-robed and chapleted with wool and flowers,
Purple narcissi round their horrid hair.
Intent upon her task, the first one held
The slender thread that at a touch would snap;
The second weaving it with warp and woof
Into strange textures, some stained dark and foul,
Some sanguine-colored, and some black as night,
And rare ones white, or with a golden thread
Running throughout the web: the farthest hag
With glistening scissors cut her sisters' work.
To these Hyperion, but they never ceased,
Nor raised their eyes, till with soft, moderate tones,
But by their powerful persuasiveness
Commanding all to listen and obey,
He spoke, and all hell heard, and these three looked
And waited his request:
'I come, a god,
At a pure mortal queen's request, who sues
For life renewed unto her dying lord,
Admetus; and I also pray this prayer.'
'Then cease, for when hath Fate been moved by prayer?'
'But strength and upright heart should serve with you.'
'Nay, these may serve with all but Destiny.'
'I ask ye not forever to forbear,
But spare a while, — a moment unto us,
A lifetime unto men.' 'The Fates swerve not
For supplications, like the pliant gods.
Have they not willed a life's thread should be cut?
With them the will is changeless as the deed.
O men! ye have not learned in all the past,
Desires are barren and tears yield no fruit.

How long will ye besiege the thrones of gods
With lamentations? When lagged Death for all
Your timorous shirking? We work not like you,
Delaying and relenting, purposeless,
With unenduring issues; but our deeds,
Forever interchained and interlocked,
Complete each other and explain themselves.'

'Ye will a life: then why not any life?'
'What care we for the king? He is not worth
These many words; indeed, we love not speech.
We care not if he live, or lose such life
As men are greedy for, — filled full with hate,
Sins beneath scorn, and only lit by dreams,
Or one sane moment, or a useless hope, —
Lasting how long? — the space between the green
And fading yellow of the grass they tread.'
But he withdrawing not: 'Will any life
Suffice ye for Admetus?' 'Yea,' the crones
Three times repeated. 'We know no such names
As king or queen or slave: we want but life.
Begone, and vex us in our work no more.'

With broken blessings, inarticulate joy
And tears, Alcestis thanked Hyperion,
And worshipped. Then he gently: 'Who will die,
So that the king may live?' And she: 'You ask?
Nay, who will live when life clasps hands with shame,
And death with honor? Lo, you are a god;
You cannot know the highest joy of life, —
To leave it when 't is worthier to die.
His parents, kinsmen, courtiers, subjects, slaves, —
For love of him myself would die, were none
Found ready; but what Greek would stand to see
A woman glorified, and falter? Once,
And only once, the gods will do this thing
In all the ages: such a man themselves
Delight to honor, — holy, temperate, chaste,
With reverence for his dæmon and his god.'
Thus she triumphant to the very door
Of King Admetus' chamber. All there saw
Her ill-timed gladness with much wonderment.
But she: 'No longer mourn! The king is saved:
The Fates will spare him. Lift your voice in praise;
Sing pæans to Apollo; crown your brows
With laurel; offer thankful sacrifice!'
'O Queen, what mean these foolish words misplaced?
And what an hour is this to thank the Fates?'
'Thrice blessed be the gods! — for God himself
Has sued for me, — they are not stern and deaf.
Cry, and they answer: commune with your soul,
And they send counsel: weep with rainy grief,
And these will sweeten you your bitterest tears.
On one condition King Admetus lives,
And ye, on hearing, will lament no more,
Each emulous to save.' Then — for she spake
Assured, as having heard an oracle —
They asked: 'What deed of ours may serve the king?'
'The Fates accept another life for his,

And one of you may die.' Smiling, she ceased.
But silence answered her. 'What! do ye thrust
Your arrows in your hearts beneath your cloaks,
Dying like Greeks, too proud to own the pang?
This ask I not. In all the populous land
But one need suffer for immortal praise.
The generous Fates have sent no pestilence,
Famine, nor war: it is as though they gave
Freely, and only make the boon more rich
By such slight payment. Now a people mourns,
And ye may change the grief to jubilee,
Filling the cities with a pleasant sound.
But as for me, what faltering words can tell
My joy, in extreme sharpness kin to pain?
A monument you have within my heart,
Wreathed with kind love and dear remembrances;
And I will pray for you before I crave
Pardon and pity for myself from God.

Your name will he the highest in the land,
Oftenest, fondest on my grateful lips,
After the name of him you die to save.
What! silent still? Since when has virtue grown
Less beautiful than indolence and ease?
Is death more terrible, more hateworthy,
More bitter than dishonor? Will ye live
On shame? Chew and find sweet its poisoned fruits?
What sons will ye bring forth — mean-souled like you,
Or, like your parents, brave — to blush like girls,
And say, 'Our fathers were afraid to die!'
Ye will not dare to raise heroic eyes
Unto the eyes of aliens. In the streets
Will women and young children point at you
Scornfully, and the sun will find you shamed,
And night refuse to shield you. What a life
Is this ye spin and fashion for yourselves!
And what new tortures of suspense and doubt
Will death invent for such as are afraid!
Acastus, thou my brother, in the field
Foremost, who greeted me with sanguine hands
From ruddy battle with a conqueror's face, —
These honors wilt thou blot with infamy?
Nay, thou hast won no honors: a mere girl
Would do as much as thou at such a time,
In clamorous battle, 'midst tumultuous sounds,
Neighing of war-steeds, shouts of sharp command,
Snapping of shivered spears; for all are brave
When all men look to them expectantly;
But he is truly brave who faces death
Within his chamber, at a sudden call,
At night, when no man sees, — content to die

When life can serve no longer those he loves.'
Then thus Acastus: 'Sister, I fear not
Death, nor the empty darkness of the grave,
And hold my life but as a little thing,
Subject unto my people's call, and Fate.
But if 't is little, no greater is the king's;
And though my heart bleeds sorely, I recall
Astydamia, who thus would mourn for me.
We are not cowards, we youth of Thessaly,
And Thessaly — yea, all Greece — knoweth it;
Nor will we brook the name from even you,
Albeit a queen, and uttering these wild words
Through your unwonted sorrow.' Then she knew
That he stood firm, and turning from him, cried
To the king's parents: 'Are ye deaf with grief,
Pheres, Clymene? Ye can save your son,
Yet rather stand and weep with barren tears.
O, shame! to think that such gray, reverend hairs
Should cover such unvenerable heads!
What would ye lose?— a remnant of mere life,
A few slight raveled threads, and give him years
To fill with glory. Who, when he is gone,
Will call you gentlest names this side of heaven, —
Father and mother? Knew ye not this man
Ere he was royal, — a poor, helpless child,
Crownless and kingdomless? One birth alone
Sufficeth not, Clymene: once again
You must give life with travail and strong pain.
Has he not lived to outstrip your swift hopes?
What mother can refuse a second birth
To such a son? But ye denying him,
What after-offering may appease the gods?
What joy outweigh the grief of this one day?
What clamor drown the hours' myriad tongues,
Crying, 'Your son, your son? where is your son,
Unnatural mother, timid, foolish man?'
Then Pheres gravely: 'These are graceless words
From you our daughter. Life is always life,
And death comes soon enough to such as we.
We twain are old and weak, have served our time,
And made our sacrifices. Let the young
Arise now in their turn and save the king.'
'O gods! look on your creatures! do ye see?
And seeing, have ye patience? Smite them all,
Unsparing, with dishonorable death.
Vile slaves! a woman teaches you to die.
Intrepid, with exalted steadfast soul,
Scorn in my heart, and love unutterable,
I yield the Fates my life, and like a god
Command them to revere that sacred head.
Thus kiss I thrice the dear, blind, holy eyes,
And bid them see; and thrice I kiss this brow,

And thus unfasten I the pale, proud lips
With fruitful kissings, bringing love and life,
And without fear or any pang, I breathe
My soul in him.'
'Alcestis, I awake.
I hear, I hear — unspeak thy reckless words!
For, lo! thy life-blood tingles in my veins,
And streameth through my body like new wine.
Behold! thy spirit dedicate revives
My pulse, and through thy sacrifice I breathe.
Thy lips are bloodless: kiss me not again.
Ashen thy cheeks, faded thy flowerlike hands.
O woman! perfect in thy womanhood
And in thy wifehood, I adjure thee now
As mother, by the love thou bearest our child,
In this thy hour of passion and of love,
Of sacrifice and sorrow, to unsay
Thy words sublime!' 'I die that thou mayest live.'
'And deemest thou that I accept the boon,
Craven, like these my subjects? Lo, my queen,
Is life itself a lovely thing, — bare life?
And empty breath a thing desirable?
Or is it rather happiness and love
That make it precious to its inmost core?
When these are lost, are there not swords in Greece,
And flame and poison, deadly waves and plagues?
No man has ever lacked these things and gone
Unsatisfied. It is not these the gods refuse
(Nay, never clutch my sleeve and raise thy lip), —
Not these I seek; but I will stab myself,
Poison my life and burn my flesh, with words,
And save or follow thee. Lo! hearken now:
I bid the gods take back their loathsome gifts:
I spurn them, and I scorn them, and I hate.
Will they prove deaf to this as to my prayers?
With tongue reviling, blasphemous, I curse,
With mouth polluted from deliberate heart.
Dishonored be their names, scorned be their priests,
Ruined their altars, mocked their oracles!
It is Admetus, King of Thessaly,
Defaming thus: annihilate him, gods!
So that his queen, who worships you, may live.'
He paused as one expectant; but no bolt
From the insulted heavens answered him,
But awful silence followed. Then a hand,
A boyish hand, upon his shoulder fell,
And turning, he beheld his shepherd boy,
Not wrathful, but divinely pitiful,
Who spake in tender, thrilling tones: 'The gods
Cannot recall their gifts. Blaspheme them not:
Bow down and worship rather. Shall he curse
Who sees not, and who hears not, — neither knows

Nor understands? Nay, thou shalt bless and pray, —
Pray, for the pure heart, purged by prayer, divines
And seeth when the bolder eyes are blind.
Worship and wonder, — these befit a man
At every hour; and mayhap will the gods
Yet work a miracle for knees that bend
And hands that supplicate.'
Then all they knew
A sudden sense of awe, and bowed their heads
Beneath the stripling's gaze: Admetus fell,
Crushed by that gentle touch, and cried aloud:
'Pardon and pity! I am hard beset.'

There waited at the doorway of the king
One grim and ghastly, shadowy, horrible,
Bearing the likeness of a king himself,
Erect as one who serveth not, — upon
His head a crown, within his fleshless hands
A sceptre, — monstrous, winged, intolerable.
To him a stranger coming 'neath the trees,
Which slid down flakes of light, now on his hair,
Close-curled, now on his bared and brawny chest,
Now on his flexile, vine-like veinéd limbs,
With iron network of strong muscle thewed,
And godlike brows and proud mouth unrelaxed.
Firm was his step; no superfluity
Of indolent flesh impeded this man's strength.
Slender and supple every perfect limb,
Beautiful with the glory of a man.
No weapons bare he, neither shield: his hands
Folded upon his breast, his movements free
Of all incumbrance. When his mighty strides
Had brought him nigh the waiting one, he paused:
'Whose palace this? and who art thou, grim shade?'
'The palace of the King of Thessaly,
And my name is not strange unto thine ears;
For who hath told men that I wait for them,
The one sure thing on earth? Yet all they know,
Unasking and yet answered. I am Death,
The only secret that the gods reveal.
But who art thou who darest question me?'
'Alcides; and that thing I dare not do
Hath found no name. Whom here awaitest thou?'
'Alcestis, Queen of Thessaly, — a queen
Who wooed me as the bridegroom woos the bride,
For her life sacrificed will save her lord
Admetus, as the Fates decreed. I wait
Impatient, eager; and I enter soon,
With darkening wing, invisible, a god,
And kiss her lips, and kiss her throbbing heart,
And then the tenderest hands can do no more

Than close her eyes and wipe her cold, white brow,
Inurn her ashes and strew flowers above.'
'This woman is a god, a hero, Death.
In this her sacrifice I see a soul
Luminous, starry: earth can spare her not:
It is not rich enough in purity
To lose this paragon. Save her, O Death!
Thou surely art more gentle than the Fates,
Yet these have spared her lord, and never meant
That she should suffer, and that this their grace,
Beautiful, royal on one side, should turn
Sudden and show a fearful, fatal face.'
'Nay, have they not? O fond and foolish man,
Naught comes unlooked for, unforeseen by them.
Doubt when they favor thee, though thou mayest laugh
When they have scourged thee with an iron scourge.
Behold, their smile is deadlier than their sting,
And every boon of theirs is double-faced.
Yea, I am gentler unto ye than these:
I slay relentless, but when have I mocked
With poisoned gifts, and generous hands that smite
Under the flowers? for my name is Truth.
Were this fair queen more fair, more pure, more chaste,
I would not spare her for your wildest prayer
Nor her best virtue. Is the earth's mouth full?
Is the grave satisfied? Discrown me then,
For life is lord, and men may mock the gods
With immortality.' 'I sue no more,
But I command thee spare this woman's life,
Or wrestle with Alcides.' 'Wrestle with thee,
Thou puny boy!' And Death laughed loud, and swelled
To monstrous bulk, fierce-eyed, with outstretched wings,
And lightnings round his brow; but grave and firm,
Strong as a tower, Alcides waited him,
And these began to wrestle, and a cloud
Impenetrable fell, and all was dark.

'Farewell, Admetus and my little son,
Eumelus, — O these clinging baby hands!
Thy loss is bitter, for no chance, no fame,
No wealth of love, can ever compensate
For a dead mother. Thou, O king, fulfill
The double duty: love him with my love,
And make him bold to wrestle, shiver spears,
Noble and manly, Grecian to the bone;
And tell him that his mother spake with gods.
Farewell, farewell! Mine eyes are growing blind:
The darkness gathers. O my heart, my heart!'
No sound made answer save the cries of grief
From all the mourners, and the suppliance
Of strick'n Admetus: ' O have mercy, gods!

O gods, have mercy, mercy upon us!'
Then from the dying woman's couch again
Her voice was heard, but with strange sudden tones:
'Lo, I awake, — the light comes back to me.
What miracle is this?' And thunders shook
The air, and clouds of mighty darkness fell,
And the earth trembled, and weird, horrid sounds
Were heard of rushing wings and fleeing feet,
And groans; and all were silent, dumb with awe,
Saving the king, who paused not in his prayer:
'Have mercy, gods!' and then again, 'O gods,
Have mercy!'

Through the open casement poured
Bright floods of sunny light; the air was soft,
Clear, delicate as though a summer storm
Had passed away; and those there standing saw,
Afar upon the plain, Death fleeing thence,
And at the doorway, weary, well-nigh spent,
Alcides, flushed with victory.

Emma Lazarus

Afternoon

Small, shapeless drifts of cloud
Sail slowly northward in the soft-hued sky,
With blur half-tints and rolling summits bright,
By the late sun caressed; slight hazes shroud
All things afar; shineth each leaf anigh
With its own warmth and light.

O'erblown by Southland airs,
The summer landscape basks in utter peace:
In lazy streams the lazy clouds are seen;
Low hills, broad meadows, and large, clear-cut squares
Of ripening corn-fields, rippled by the breeze,
With shifting shade and sheen.

Hark! and you may not hear
A sound less soothing than the rustle cool
Of swaying leaves, the steady wiry drone
Of unseen crickets, sudden chirpings clear
Of happy birds, the tinkle of the pool,
Chafed by a single stone.

What vague, delicious dreams,
Born of this golden hour of afternoon,
And air balm-freighted, fill the soul with bliss,
Transpierced like yonder clouds with lustrous gleams,
Fantastic, brief as they, and, like them, spun
Of gilded nothingness!

All things are well with her.
'T is good to be alive, to see the light
That plays upon the grass, to feel (and sigh
With perfect pleasure) the mild breezes stir
Among the garden roses, red and white,
With whiffs of fragrancy.

There is no troublous thought,
No painful memory, no grave regret,
To mar the sweet suggestions of the hour:
The soul, at peace, reflects the peace without,
Forgetting grief as sunset skies forget
The morning's transient shower.

Emma Lazarus

Agamemnon's Tomb

Uplift the ponderous, golden mask of death,
And let the sun shine on him as it did
How many thousand years agone! Beneath
This worm-defying, uncorrupted lid,
Behold the young, heroic face, round-eyed,
Of one who in his full-flowered manhood died;
Of nobler frame than creatures of to-day,
Swathed in fine linen cerecloths fold on fold,
With carven weapons wrought of bronze and gold,
Accoutred like a warrior for the fray.

We gaze in awe at these huge-modeled limbs,
Shrunk in death's narrow house, but hinting yet
Their ancient majesty; these sightless rims
Whose living eyes the eyes of Helen met;
The speechless lips that ah! what tales might tell
Of earth's morning-tide when gods did dwell
Amidst a generous-fashioned, god-like race,
Who dwarf our puny semblance, and who won
The secret soul of Beauty for their own,
While all our art but crudely apes their grace.

We gather all the precious relics up,
The golden buttons chased with wondrous craft,
The sculptured trinkets and the crystal cup,
The sheathed, bronze sword, the knife with brazen haft.
Fain would we wrest with curious eyes from these
Unnumbered long-forgotten histories,
The deeds heroic of this mighty man,
On whom once more the living daylight beams,
To shame our littleness, to mock our dreams,
And the abyss of centuries to span.

Yet could we rouse him from his blind repose,
How might we meet his searching questionings,
Concerning all the follies, wrongs, and woes,
Since his great day whom men call King of Kings,
Victorious Agamemnon? How might we
Those large, clear eyes confront, which scornfully
Would view us as a poor, degenerate race,
Base-souled and mean-proportioned? What reply
Give to the beauty-loving Greek's heart-cry,
Seeking his ancient gods in vacant space?

What should he find within a world grown cold,
Save doubt and trouble? To his sunny creed
A thousand gloomy, warring sects succeed.
How of the Prince of Peace might he be told,
When over half the world the war-cloud lowers?
How would he mock these faltering hopes of ours,
Who knows the secret now of death and fate!
Humbly we gaze on the colossal frame,

And mutely we accept the mortal shame,
Of men degraded from a high estate.

Emma Lazarus

Age And Death

Come closer, kind, white, long-familiar friend,
Embrace me, fold me to thy broad, soft breast.
Life has grown strange and cold, but thou dost bend
Mild eyes of blessing wooing to my rest.
So often hast thou come, and from my side
So many hast thou lured, I only bide
Thy beck, to follow glad thy steps divine.
Thy world is peopled for me; this world's bare.
Through all these years my couch thou didst prepare.
Thou art supreme Love-kiss me-I am thine!

Emma Lazarus

An Epistle

I.

Master and Sage, greetings and health to thee,
From thy most meek disciple! Deign once more
Endure me at thy feet, enlighten me,
As when upon my boyish head of yore,
Midst the rapt circle gathered round thy knee
Thy sacred vials of learning thou didst pour.
By the large lustre of thy wisdom orbed
Be my black doubts illumined and absorbed.

II.

Oft I recall that golden time when thou,
Born for no second station, heldst with us
The Rabbi's chair, who art priest and bishop now;
And we, the youth of Israel, curious,
Hung on thy counsels, lifted reverent brow
Unto thy sanctity, would fain discuss
With thee our Talmud problems good and evil,
Till startled by the risen stars o'er Seville.

III.

For on the Synagogue's high-pillared porch
Thou didst hold session, till the sudden sun
Beyond day's purple limit dropped his torch.
Then we, as dreamers, woke, to find outrun
Time's rapid sands. The flame that may not scorch,
Our hearts caught from thine eyes, thou Shining One.
I scent not yet sweet lemon-groves in flower,
But I re-breathe the peace of that deep hour.

IV.

We kissed the sacred borders of thy gown,
Brow-aureoled with thy blessing, we went forth
Through the hushed byways of the twilight town.
Then in all life but one thing seemed of worth,
To seek, find, love the Truth. She set her crown
Upon thy head, our Master, at thy birth;
She bade thy lips drop honey, fired thine eyes
With the unclouded glow of sun-steeped skies.

V.

Forgive me, if I dwell on that which, viewed
From thy new vantage-ground, must seem a mist

Of error, by auroral youth endued
With alien lustre. Still in me subsist
Those reeking vapors; faith and gratitude
Still lead me to the hand my boy-lips kissed
For benison and guidance. Not in wrath,
Master, but in wise patience, point my path.

VI.

For I, thy servant, gather in one sheaf
The venomed shafts of slander, which thy word
Shall shrivel to small dust. If haply grief,
Or momentary pain, I deal, my Lord
Blame not thy servant's zeal, nor be thou deaf
Unto my soul's blind cry for light. Accord-
Pitying my love, if too superb to care
For hate-soiled name-an answer to my prayer.

VII.

To me, who, vine to stone, clung close to thee,
The very base of life appeared to quake
When first I knew thee fallen from us, to be
A tower of strength among our foes, to make
'Twixt Jew and Jew deep-cloven enmity.
I have wept gall and blood for thy dear sake.
But now with temperate soul I calmly search
Motive and cause that bound thee to the Church.

VIII.

Four motives possible therefor I reach-
Ambition, doubt, fear, or mayhap-conviction.
I hear in turn ascribed thee all and each
By ignorant folk who part not truth from fiction.
But I, whom even thyself didst stoop to teach,
May poise the scales, weigh this with that confliction,
Yea, sift the hid grain motive from the dense,
Dusty, eye-blinding chaff of consequence.

IX.

Ambition first! I find no fleck thereof
In all thy clean soul. What! could glory, gold,
Or sated senses lure thy lofty love?
No purple cloak to shield thee from the cold,
No jeweled sign to flicker thereabove,
And dazzle men to homage-joys untold

Of spiritual treasure, grace divine,
Alone (so saidst thou) coveting for thine!

X.

I saw thee mount with deprecating air,
Step after step, unto our Jewish throne
Of supreme dignity, the Rabbi's chair;
Shrinking from public honors thrust upon
Thy meek desert, regretting even there
The placid habit of thy life foregone;
Silence obscure, vast peace and austere days
Passed in wise contemplation, prayer, and praise.

XI.

One less than thou had ne'er known such regret.
How must thou suffer, who so lov'st the shade,
In Fame's full glare, whom one stride more shall set
Upon the Papal seat! I stand dismayed,
Familiar with thy fearful soul, and yet
Half glad, perceiving modest worth repaid
Even by the Christians! Could thy soul deflect?
No, no, thrice no! Ambition I reject!

XII.

Next doubt. Could doubt have swayed thee, then I ask,
How enters doubt within the soul of man?
Is it a door that opens, or a mask
That falls? and Truth's resplendent face we scan.
Nay, 't is a creeping, small, blind worm, whose task
Is gnawing at Faith's base; the whole vast plan
Rots, crumbles, eaten inch by inch within,
And on its ruins falsehood springs and sin.

XIII.

But thee no doubt confused, no problems vexed.
Thy father's faith for thee proved bright and sweet.
Thou foundst no rite superfluous, no text
Obscure; the path was straight before thy feet.
Till thy baptismal day, thou, unperplexed
By foreign dogma, didst our prayers repeat,
Honor the God of Israel, fast and feast,
Even as thy people's wont, from first to least.

XIV.

Yes, Doubt I likewise must discard. Not sleek,
Full-faced, erect of head, men walk, when doubt
Writhes at their entrails; pinched and lean of cheek,
With brow pain-branded, thou hadst strayed about
As midst live men a ghost condemned to seek
That soul he may nor live nor die without.
No doubts the font washed from thee, thou didst glide
From creed to creed, complete, sane-souled, clear-eyed.

XV.

Thy pardon, Master, if I dare sustain
The thesis thou couldst entertain a fear.
I would but rout thine enemies, who feign
Ignoble impulse prompted thy career.
I will but weigh the chances and make plain
To Envy's self the monstrous jest appear.
Though time, place, circumstance confirmed in seeming,
One word from thee should frustrate all their scheming.

XVI.

Was Israel glad in Seville on the day
Thou didst renounce him? Then mightst thou indeed
Snap finger at whate'er thy slanderers say.
Lothly must I admit, just then the seed
Of Jacob chanced upon a grievous way.
Still from the wounds of that red year we bleed.
The curse had fallen upon our heads-the sword
Was whetted for the chosen of the Lord.

XVII.

There where we flourished like a fruitful palm,
We were uprooted, spoiled, lopped limb from limb.
A bolt undreamed of out of heavens calm,
So cracked our doom. We were destroyed by him
Whose hand since childhood we had clasped. With balm
Our head had been anointed, at the brim
Our cup ran over-now our day was done,
Our blood flowed free as water in the sun.

XVIII.

Midst the four thousand of our tribe who held
Glad homes in Seville, never a one was spared,

Some slaughtered at their hearthstones, some expelled
To Moorish slavery. Cunningly ensnared,
Baited and trapped were we; their fierce monks yelled
And thundered from our Synagogues, while flared
The Cross above the Ark. Ah, happiest they
Who fell unconquered martyrs on that day!

XIX.

For some (I write it with flushed cheek, bowed head),
Given free choice 'twixt death and shame, chose shame,
Denied the God who visibly had led
Their fathers, pillared in a cloud of flame,
Bathed in baptismal waters, ate the bread
Which is their new Lord's body, took the name
Marranos the Accursed, whom equally
Jew, Moor, and Christian hate, despise, and flee.

XX.

Even one no less than an Abarbanel
Prized miserable length of days, above
Integrity of soul. Midst such who fell,
Far be it, however, from my duteous love,
Master, to reckon thee. Thine own lips tell
How fear nor torture thy firm will could move.
How thou midst panic nowise disconcerted,
By Thomas of Aquinas wast converted!

XXI.

Truly I know no more convincing way
To read so wise an author, than was thine.
When burning Synagogues changed night to day,
And red swords underscored each word and line.
That was a light to read by! Who'd gainsay
Authority so clearly stamped divine?
On this side, death and torture, flame and slaughter,
On that, a harmless wafer and clean water.

XXII.

Thou couldst not fear extinction for our race;
Though Christian sword and fire from town to town
Flash double bladed lightning to efface
Israel's image-though we bleed, burn, drown
Through Christendom-'t is but a scanty space.
Still are the Asian hills and plains our own,

Still are we lords in Syria, still are free,
Nor doomed to be abolished utterly.

XXIII.

One sole conclusion hence at last I find,
Thou whom ambition, doubt, nor fear could swerve,
Perforce hast been persuaded through the mind,
Proved, tested the new dogmas, found them serve
Thy spirit's needs, left flesh and sense behind,
Accepted without shrinking or reserve,
The trans-substantial bread and wine, the Christ
At whose shrine thine own kin were sacrificed.

XXIV.

Here then the moment comes when I crave light.
All's dark to me. Master, if I be blind,
Thou shalt unseal my lids and bless with sight,
Or groping in the shadows, I shall find
Whether within me or without, dwell night.
Oh cast upon my doubt-bewildered mind
One ray from thy clear heaven of sun-bright faith,
Grieving, not wroth, at what thy servant saith.

XXV.

Where are the signs fulfilled whereby all men
Should know the Christ? Where is the wide-winged peace
Shielding the lamb within the lion's den?
The freedom broadening with the wars that cease?
Do foes clasp hands in brotherhood again?
Where is the promised garden of increase,
When like a rose the wilderness should bloom?
Earth is a battlefield and Spain a tomb.

XXVI.

Our God of Sabaoth is an awful God
Of lightnings and of vengeance,-Christians say.
Earth trembled, nations perished at his nod;
His Law has yielded to a milder sway.
Theirs is the God of Love whose feet have trod
Our common earth-draw near to him and pray,
Meek-faced, dove-eyed, pure-browed, the Lord of life,
Know him and kneel, else at your throat the knife!

XXVII.

This is the God of Love, whose altars reek
With human blood, who teaches men to hate;
Torture past words, or sins we may not speak
Wrought by his priests behind the convent-grate.
Are his priests false? or are his doctrines weak
That none obeys him? State at war with state,
Church against church-yea, Pope at feud with Pope
In these tossed seas what anchorage for hope?

XXVIII.

Not only for the sheep without the fold
Is the knife whetted, who refuse to share
Blessings the shepherd wise doth not withhold
Even from the least among his flock-but there
Midmost the pale, dissensions manifold,
Lamb flaying lamb, fierce sheep that rend and tear.
Master, if thou to thy pride's goal should come,
Where wouldst thou throne-at Avignon or Rome?

XXIX.

I handle burning questions, good my lord,
Such as may kindle fagots, well I wis.
Your Gospel not denies our older Word,
But in a way completes and betters this.
The Law of Love shall supersede the sword,
So runs the promise, but the facts I miss.
Already needs this wretched generation,
A voice divine-a new, third revelation.

XXX.

Two Popes and their adherents fulminate
Ban against ban, and to the nether hell
Condemn each other, while the nations wait
Their Christ to thunder forth from Heaven, and tell
Who is his rightful Vicar, reinstate
His throne, the hideous discord to dispel.
Where shall I seek, master, while such things be,
Celestial truth, revealed certainty!

XXXI.

Not miracles I doubt, for how dare man,
Chief miracle of life's mystery, say HE KNOWS?

How may he closely secret causes scan,
Who learns not whence he comes nor where he goes?
Like one who walks in sleep a doubtful span
He gropes through all his days, till Death unclose
His cheated eyes and in one blinding gleam,
Wakes, to discern the substance from the dream.

XXXII.

I say not therefore I deny the birth,
The Virgin's motherhood, the resurrection,
Who know not how mine own soul came to earth,
Nor what shall follow death. Man's imperfection
May bound not even in thought the height and girth
Of God's omnipotence; neath his direction
We may approach his essence, but that He
Should dwarf Himself to us-it cannot be!

XXXIII.

The God who balances the clouds, who spread
The sky above us like a molten glass,
The God who shut the sea with doors, who laid
The corner-stone of earth, who caused the grass
Spring forth upon the wilderness, and made
The darkness scatter and the night to pass-
That He should clothe Himself with flesh, and move
Midst worms a worm-this, sun, moon, stars disprove.

XXXIV.

Help me, O thou who wast my boyhood's guide,
I bend my exile-weary feet to thee,
Teach me the indivisible to divide,
Show me how three are one and One is three!
How Christ to save all men was crucified,
Yet I and mine are damned eternally.
Instruct me, Sage, why Virtue starves alone,
While falsehood step by step ascends the throne.

Emma Lazarus

Arabesque

On a background of pale gold
I would trace with quaint design,
Penciled fine,
Brilliant-colored, Moorish scenes,
Mosques and crescents, pages, queens,
Line on line,
That the prose-world of to-day
Might the gorgeous Past's array
Once behold.

On the magic painted shield
Rich Granada's Vega green
Should be seen;
Crystal fountains, coolness flinging,
Hanging gardens' skyward springing
Emerald sheen;
Ruddy when the daylight falls,
Crowned Alhambra's beetling walls
Stand revealed;

Balconies that overbrow
Field and city, vale and stream.
In a dream
Lulled the drowsy landscape basks;
Mark the gleam
Silvery of each white-swathed peak!
Mountain-airs caress the cheek,
Fresh from the snow.

Here in Lindaraxa's bower
The immortal roses bloom;
In the room
Lion-guarded, marble-paven,
Still the fountain leaps to heaven.
But the doom
Of the banned and stricken race
Overshadows every place,
Every hour.

Where fair Lindaraxa dwelt
Flits the bat on velvet wings;
Mute the strings
Of the broken mandoline;
The Pavilion of the Queen
Widely flings
Vacant windows to the night;
Moonbeams kiss the floor with light
Where she knelt.

Through these halls that people stepped
Who through darkling centuries
Held the keys

Of all wisdom, truth, and art,
In a Paradise apart,
Lapped in ease,
Sagely pondering deathless themes,
While, befooled with monkish dreams,
Europe slept.

Where shall they be found today?
Yonder hill that frets the sky
'The last Sigh
Of the Moor' is named still.
There the ill-starred Boabdil
Bade good-by
To Granada and to Spain,
Where the Crescent ne'er again
Holdeth sway.

Vanished like the wind that blows,
Whither shall we seek their trace
On earth's face?
The gigantic wheel of fate,
Crushing all things soon or late,
Now a race,
Now a single life o'erruns,
Now a universe of suns,
Now a rose.

Emma Lazarus

Assurance

Last night I slept, and when I woke her kiss
Still floated on my lips. For we had strayed
Together in my dream, through some dim glade,
Where the shy moonbeams scarce dared light our bliss.
The air was dank with dew, between the trees,
The hidden glow-worms kindled and were spent.
Cheek pressed to cheek, the cool, the hot night-breeze
Mingled ouir hair, our breath, and came and went,
As sporting with our passion. Low and deep
Spake in mine ear her voice: "And didst thou dream,
This could be buried? This could be sleep?
And love be thrall to death! Nay, whatso seem,
Have faith, dear heart; this is the thing that is!"
Thereon I woke, and on my lips her kiss.

Emma Lazarus

August Moon

Look! the round-cheeked moon floats high,
In the glowing August sky,
Quenching all her neighbor stars,
Save the steady flame of Mars.
White as silver shines the sea,
Far-off sails like phantoms be,
Gliding o'er that lake of light,
Vanishing in nether night.
Heavy hangs the tasseled corn,
Sighing for the cordial morn;
But the marshy-meadows bare,
Love this spectral-lighted air,
Drink the dews and lift their song,
Chirp of crickets all night long;
Earth and sea enchanted lie
'Neath that moon-usurped sky.

To the faces of our friends
Unfamiliar traits she lends-
Quaint, white witch, who looketh down
With a glamour all her own.
Hushed are laughter, jest, and speech,
Mute and heedless each of each,
In the glory wan we sit,
Visions vague before us flit;
Side by side, yet worlds apart,
Heart becometh strange to heart.

Slowly in a moved voice, then,
Ralph, the artist spake again-
'Does not that weird orb unroll
Scenes phantasmal to your soul?
As I gaze thereon, I swear,
Peopled grows the vacant air,
Fables, myths alone are real,
White-clad sylph-like figures steal
'Twixt the bushes, o'er the lawn,
Goddess, nymph, undine, and faun.
Yonder, see the Willis dance,
Faces pale with stony glance;
They are maids who died unwed,
And they quit their gloomy bed,
Hungry still for human pleasure,
Here to trip a moonlit measure.
Near the shore the mermaids play,
Floating on the cool, white spray,
Leaping from the glittering surf
To the dark and fragrant turf,
Where the frolic trolls, and elves
Daintily disport themselves.
All the shapes by poet's brain,
Fashioned, live for me again,

In this spiritual light,
Less than day, yet more than night.
What a world! a waking dream,
All things other than they seem,
Borrowing a finer grace,
From yon golden globe in space;
Touched with wild, romantic glory,
Foliage fresh and billows hoary,
Hollows bathed in yellow haze,
Hills distinct and fields of maize,
Ancient legends come to mind.
Who would marvel should he find,
In the copse or nigh the spring,
Summer fairies gamboling
Where the honey-bees do suck,
Mab and Ariel and Puck?
Ah! no modern mortal sees
Creatures delicate as these.
All the simple faith has gone
Which their world was builded on.
Now the moonbeams coldly glance
On no gardens of romance;
To prosaic senses dull,
Baldur's dead, the Beautiful,
Hark, the cry rings overhead,
'Universal Pan is dead!''
'Requiescant!' Claude's grave tone
Thrilled us strangely. 'I am one
Who would not restore that Past,
Beauty will immortal last,
Though the beautiful must die-
This the ages verify.
And had Pan deserved the name
Which his votaries misclaim,
He were living with us yet.
I behold, without regret,
Beauty in new forms recast,
Truth emerging from the vast,
Bright and orbed, like yonder sphere,
Making the obscure air clear.
He shall be of bards the king,
Who, in worthy verse, shall sing
All the conquests of the hour,
Stealing no fictitious power
From the classic types outworn,
But his rhythmic line adorn
With the marvels of the real.
He the baseless feud shall heal
That estrangeth wide apart
Science from her sister Art.
Hold! look through this glass for me?
Artist, tell me what you see?'

'I!' cried Ralph. 'I see in place
Of Astarte's silver face,
Or veiled Isis' radiant robe,
Nothing but a rugged globe
Seamed with awful rents and scars.
And below no longer Mars,
Fierce, flame-crested god of war,
But a lurid, flickering star,
Fashioned like our mother earth,
Vexed, belike, with death and birth.'

Rapt in dreamy thought the while,
With a sphinx-like shadowy smile,
Poet Florio sat, but now
Spake in deep-voiced accents slow,
More as one who probes his mind,
Than for us-'Who seeks, shall find-
Widening knowledge surely brings
Vaster themes to him who sings.
Was veiled Isis more sublime
Than yon frozen fruit of Time,
Hanging in the naked sky?
Death's domain-for worlds too die.
Lo! the heavens like a scroll
Stand revealed before my soul;
And the hieroglyphs are suns-
Changeless change the law that runs
Through the flame-inscribed page,
World on world and age on age,
Balls of ice and orbs of fire,
What abides when these expire?
Through slow cycles they revolve,
Yet at last like clouds dissolve.
Jove, Osiris, Brahma pass,
Races wither like the grass.
Must not mortals be as gods
To embrace such periods?
Yet at Nature's heart remains
One who waxes not nor wanes.
And our crowning glory still
Is to have conceived his will.'

Emma Lazarus

Autumn Sadness

Air and sky are swathed in gold
Fold on fold,
Light glows through the trees like wine.
Earth, sun-quickened, swoons for bliss
'Neath his kiss,
Breathless in a trance divine.

Nature pauses from her task,
Just to bask
In these lull'd transfigured hours.
The green leaf nor stays nor goes,
But it grows
Royaler than mid-June's flowers.

Such impassioned silence fills
All the hills
Burning with unflickering fire-
Such a blood-red splendor stains
The leaves' veins,
Life seems one fulfilled desire.

While earth, sea, and heavens shine,
Heart of mine,
Say, what art thou waiting for?
Shall the cup ne'er reach the lip,
But still slip
Till the life-long thirst give o'er?

Shall my soul, no frosts may tame,
Catch new flame
From the incandescent air?
In this nuptial joy apart,
Oh my heart,
Whither shall we lonely fare?

Seek some dusky, twilight spot,
Quite forgot
Of the Autumn's Bacchic fire.
Where soft mists and shadows sleep,
There outweep
Barren longing's vain desire.

Emma Lazarus

Bar Kochba

Weep, Israel! your tardy meed outpour
Of grateful homage on his fallen head,
That never coronal of triumph wore,
Untombed, dishonored, and unchapleted.
If Victory makes the hero, raw Success
The stamp of virtue, unremembered
Be then the desperate strife, the storm and stress
Of the last Warrior Jew. But if the man
Who dies for freedom, loving all things less,
Against world-legions, mustering his poor clan;
The weak, the wronged, the miserable, to send
Their death-cry's protest through the ages' span-
If such an one be worthy, ye shall lend
Eternal thanks to him, eternal praise.
Nobler the conquered than the conqueror's end!

Emma Lazarus

Chopin

I

A dream of interlinking hands, of feet
Tireless to spin the unseen, fairy woof
Of the entangling waltz. Bright eyebeams meet,
Gay laughter echoes from the vaulted roof.
Warm perfumes rise; the soft unflickering glow
Of branching lights sets off the changeful charms
Of glancing gems, rich stuffs, the dazzling snow
Of necks unkerchieft, and bare, clinging arms.
Hark to the music! How beneath the strain
Of reckless revelry, vibrates and sobs
One fundamental chord of constant pain,
The pulse-beat of the poet's heart that throbs.
So yearns, though all the dancing waves rejoice,
The troubled sea's disconsolate, deep voice.

II

Who shall proclaim the golden fable false
Of Orpheus' miracles? This subtle strain
Above our prose-world's sordid loss and gain
Lightly uplifts us. With the rhythmic waltz,
The lyric prelude, the nocturnal song
Of love and languor, varied visions rise,
That melt and blend to our enchanted eyes.
The Polish poet who sleeps silenced long,
The seraph-souled musician, breathes again
Eternal eloquence, immortal pain.
Revived the exalted face we know so well,
The illuminated eyes, the fragile frame,
Slowly consuming with its inward flame,
We stir not, speak not, lest we break the spell.

III

A voice was needed, sweet and true and fine
As the sad spirit of the evening breeze,
Throbbing with human passion, yet devine
As the wild bird's untutored melodies.
A voice for him 'neath twilight heavens dim,
Who mourneth for his dead, while round him fall
The wan and noiseless leaves. A voice for him
Who sees the first green sprout, who hears the call
Of the first robin on the first spring day.
A voice for all whom Fate hath set apart,
Who, still misprized, must perish by the way,
Longing with love, for that they lack the art
Of their own soul's expression. For all these
Sing the unspoken hope, the vague, sad reveries.

IV

Then Nature shaped a poet's heart--a lyre
From out whose chords the lightest breeze that blows
Drew trembling music, wakening sweet desire.
How shall she cherish him? Behold! she throws
This precious, fragile treasure in the whirl
Of seething passions; he is scourged and stung,
Must dive in storm-vext seas, if but one pearl
Of art or beauty therefrom may be wrung.
No pure-browed pensive nymph his Muse shall be,
An amazon of thought with sovereign eyes,
Whose kiss was poison, man-brained, worldy-wise,
Inspired that elfin, delicate harmony.
Rich gain for us! But with him is it well?
The poet who must sound earth, heaven, and hell!

Emma Lazarus

City Visions

I

As the blind Milton's memory of light,
The deaf Beethoven's phantasy of tone,
Wroght joys for them surpassing all things known
In our restricted sphere of sound and sight,--
So while the glaring streets of brick and stone
Vix with heat, noise, and dust from morn till night,
I will give rein to Fancy, taking flight
From dismal now and here, and dwell alone
With new-enfranchised senses. All day long,
Think ye 't is I, who sit 'twixt darkened walls,
While ye chase beauty over land and sea?
Uplift on wings of some rare poet's song
Where the wide billow laughs and leaps and falls,
I soar cloud-high, free as the winds are free.

II

Who grasps the substance? who 'mid shadows strays?
He who within some dark-bright wood reclines,
'Twixt sleep and waking, where the needled pines
Have cushioned al his couch with soft brown sprays?
He notes not how the living water shines,
Trembling along the cliff, a flickering haze,
Brimming a wine-bright pool, nor lifts his gaze
To read the ancient wonders and the signs.
Does he possess the actual, or do I,
Who paint on air more than his sense receives,
The glittering pine-tufts with closed eyes behold,
Breathe the strong resinous perfume, see the sky
Quiver like azure flame between the leaves,
And open unseen gates with key of gold?

Emma Lazarus

Critic and Poet: an Epilogue

("Poetry must be simple, sensuous, or impassioned; this man is neither simple, sensuous, nor impassioned; therefore he is not a poet")

No man had ever heard a nightingale,
When once a keen-eyed naturalist was stirred
To study and define--what is a bird,
To classify by rote and book, nor fail
To mark its structure and to note the scale
Whereon its song might possibly be heard.
Thus far, no farther;--so he spake the word.
When of a sudden,--hark, the nightingale!

Oh deeper, higher than he could divine
That all-unearthly, untaught strain! He saw
The plain, brown warbler, unabashed. "Not mine"
(He cried) "the error of this fatal flaw.
No bird is this, it soars beyond my line,
Were it a bird, 'twould answer to my law."

Emma Lazarus

Destiny

1856

Paris, from throats of iron, silver, brass,
Joy-thundering cannon, blent with chiming bells,
And martial strains, the full-voiced pæan swells.
The air is starred with flags, the chanted mass
Throngs all the churches, yet the broad streets swarm
With glad-eyed groups who chatter, laugh, and pass,
In holiday confusion, class with class.
And over all the spring, the sun-floods warm!
In the Imperial palace that March morn,
The beautiful young mother lay and smiled;
For by her side just breathed the Prince, her child,
Heir to an empire, to the purple born,
Crowned with the Titan's name that stirs the heart
Like a blown clarion--one more Bonaparte.

1879

Born to the purple, lying stark and dead,
Transfixed with poisoned spears, beneath the sun
Of brazen Africa! Thy grave is one,
Fore-fated youth (on whom were visited
Follies and sins not thine), whereat the world,
Heartless howe'er it be, will pause to sing
A dirge, to breathe a sigh, a wreath to fling
Of rosemary and rue with bay-leaves curled.
Enmeshed in toils ambitious, not thine own,
Immortal, loved boy-Prince, thou tak'st thy stand
With early doomed Don Carlos, hand in hand
With mild-browed Arthur, Geoffrey's murdered son.
Louis the Dauphin lifts his thorn-ringed head,
And welcomes thee, his brother, 'mongst the dead.

Emma Lazarus

Don Pedrillo

Not a lad in Saragossa
Nobler-featured, haughtier-tempered,
Than the Alcalde's youthful grandson,
Donna Clara's boy Pedrillo.

Handsome as the Prince of Evil,
And devout as St. Ignatius.
Deft at fence, unmatched with zither,
Miniature of knightly virtues.

Truly an unfailing blessing
To his pious, widowed mother,
To the beautiful, lone matron
Who forswore the world to rear him.

For her beauty hath but ripened
In such wise as the pomegranate
Putteth by her crown of blossoms,
For her richer crown of fruitage.

Still her hand is claimed and courted,
Still she spurns her proudest suitors,
Doting on a phantom passion,
And upon her boy Pedrillo.

Like a saint lives Donna Clara,
First at matins, last at vespers,
Half her fortune she expendeth
Buying masses for the needy.

Visiting the poor afflicted,
Infinite is her compassion,
Scorning not the Moorish beggar,
Nor the wretched Jew despising.

And-a scandal to the faithful,
E'en she hath been known to welcome
To her castle the young Rabbi,
Offering to his tribe her bounty.

Rarely hath he crossed the threshold,
Yet the thought that he hath crossed it,
Burns like poison in the marrow
Of the zealous youth Pedrillo.

By the blessed Saint Iago,
He hath vowed immortal hatred
To these circumcised intruders
Who pollute the soil of Spaniards.

Seated in his mother's garden,
At high noon the boy Pedrillo

Playeth with his favorite parrot,
Golden-green with streaks of scarlet.

'Pretty Dodo, speak thy lesson,'
Coaxed Pedrillo-'thief and traitor'-
'Thief and traitor'-croaked the parrot,
'Is the yellow-skirted Rabbi.'

And the boy with peals of laughter,
Stroked his favorite's head of emerald,
Raised his eyes, and lo! before him
Stood the yellow-skirted Rabbi.

In his dark eyes gleamed no anger,
No hot flush o'erspread his features.
'Neath his beard his pale lips quivered,
And a shadow crossed his forehead.

Very gentle was his aspect,
And his voice was mild and friendly,
'Evil words, my son, thou speakest,
Teaching to the fowls of heaven.

'In our Talmud it stands written,
Thrice curst is the tongue of slander,
Poisoning also with its victim,
Him who speaks and him who listens.'

But no whit abashed, Pedrillo,
'What care I for curse of Talmud?
'T is no slander to speak evil
Of the murderers of our Saviour.

'To your beard I will repeat it,
That I only bide my manhood,
To wreak all my lawful hatred,
On thyself and on thy people.'

Very gently spoke the Rabbi,
'Have a care, my son Pedrillo,
Thou art orphaned, and who knoweth
But thy father loved this people?'

'Think you words like these will touch me?
Such I laugh to scorn, sir Rabbi,
From high heaven, my sainted father
On my deeds will smile in blessing.

'Loyal knight was he and noble,
And my mother oft assures me,
Ne'er she saw so pure a Christian,
'T is from him my zeal deriveth.'

'What if he were such another
As myself who stand before thee?'
'I should curse the hour that bore me,
I should die of shame and horror.'

'Harsher is thy creed than ours;
For had I a son as comely
As Pedrillo, I would love him,
Love him were he thrice a Christian.

'In his youth my youth renewing
Pamper, fondle, die to serve him,
Only breathing through his spirit-
Couldst thou not love such a father?'

Faltering spoke the deep-voiced Rabbi,
With white lips and twitching fingers,
Then in clear, young, steady treble,
Answered him the boy Pedrillo:

'At the thought my heart revolteth,
All your tribe offend my senses,
They're an eyesore to my vision,
And a stench unto my nostrils.

'When I meet these unbelievers,
With thick lips and eagle noses,
Thus I scorn them, thus revile them,
Thus I spit upon their garment.'

And the haughty youth passed onward,
Bearing on his wrist his parrot,
And the yellow-skirted Rabbi
With bowed head sought Donna Clara.

Emma Lazarus

Don Rafael

'I would not have,' he said,
'Tears, nor the black pall, nor the wormy grave,
Grief's hideous panoply I would not have
Round me when I am dead.

'Music and flowers and light,
And choric dances to guitar and flute,
Be these around me when my lips are mute,
Mine eyes are sealed from sight.

'So let me lie one day,
One long, eternal day, in sunshine bathed,
In cerements of silken tissue swathed,
Smothered 'neath flowers of May.

'One perfect day of peace,
Or ere clean flame consume my fleshly veil,
My life-a gilded vapor-shall exhale,
Brief as a sigh-and cease.

'But ere the torch be laid
To my unshrinking limbs by some true hand,
Athwart the orange-fragrant laughing land,
Bring many a dark-eyed maid

'From the bright, sea-kissed town;
My beautiful, beloved enemies,
Gemmed as the dew, voluptuous as the breeze,
Each in her festal gown.

'All those through whom I learned
The sweet of folly and the pains of love,
My Rose, my Star, my Comforter, my Dove,
For whom, poor moth, I burned.

'Loves of a day, and hour,
Or passions (vowed eternal) of a year,
Though each be strange to each, to me all dear
As to the bee the flower.

'Around me they shall move
In languid contra dances, and shall shed
Their smiling eyebeams as I were not dead,
But quick to flash back love.

'Something not alien quite
To tender ruth, perchance their breast shall fill,
Seeing him that was so mobile grown so still,
The fiery-veined so white.

'And when the dance is o'er,
The pinched guitar, the smitten tambourine,

Have ceased their rhythmic beat,-oh, friends of mine,
On my rich bier, then pour

'The garlands that ye wear,
The happy rose that on your bosom breathes,
The fresh-culled clusters and the dewy wreaths
That crown your fragrant hair.

'Though blind, I still shall see,
Though dead, shall feel your presence and shall know,
I who was beauty's life-long slave, shall so
Win her in death to me.

'Thanks, sisters, and farewell!
Back to your joys. My brother shall make room
For my tried sword upon the high-piled bloom,
And fire the pinnacle.

'My soul, pure flame, shall leap
To meet its parent essence once again
My body dust and ashes shall remain,
Tired heart and brain shall sleep.

'Life has one gate alone,
Obscure, beset with peril and fierce pain.
Large death has many portals to his fane,
Why choose we to make moan?

'Why dwell with worms and clay
When we may soar through air on wings of flame,
Dissolve to small, white dust our perfect frame,
And never know decay?

'A brother's pious hand
The pure, fire-winnowed ashes shall inurn,
And lay them in the orange grove where burn
Globed suns that scent the land.

'The leaf shall be more green,
Even for my dust-more snowy-soft the flower,
More juicy-sweet the fruit's live pulp-the bower
Richer that I have been.

'For I would not,' he said,
'Tears and the black pall and the wormy grave,
Grief's hideous panoply I would not have
Round me when I am dead.'

Emma Lazarus

Dreams

A DREAM of lilies: all the blooming earth,
A garden full of fairies and of flowers;
Its only music the glad cry of mirth,
While the warm sun weaves golden-tissued hours;
Hope a bright angel, beautiful and true
As Truth herself, and life a lovely toy,
Which ne'er will weary us, ne'er break, a new
Eternal source of pleasure and of joy.

A dream of roses: vision of Loves tree,
Of beauty and of madness, and as bright
As naught on earth save only dreams can be,
Made fair and odorous with flower and light;
A dream that Love is strong to outlast Time,
That hearts are stronger than forgetfulness,
The slippery sand than changeful waves that climb,
The wind-blown foam than mighty waters' stress.

A dream of laurels: after much is gone,
Much buried, much lamented, much forgot,
With what remains to do and what is done,
With what yet is, and what, alas! is not,
Man dreams a dream of laurel and of bays,
A dream of crowns and guerdons and rewards,
Wherein sounds sweet the hollow voice of praise,
And bright appears the wreath that it awards.

A dream of poppies, sad and true as Truth,—
That all these dreams were dreams of vanity;
And full of bitter penitence and ruth,
In his last dream, man deems 'twere good to die;
And weeping o'er the visions vain of yore,
In the sad vigils he doth nightly keep,
He dreams it may be good to dream no more,
And life has nothing like Death's dreamless sleep.

Emma Lazarus

Echoes

Late-born and woman-souled I dare not hope,
The freshness of the elder lays, the might
Of manly, modern passion shall alight
Upon my Muse's lips, nor may I cope
(Who veiled and screened by womanhood must grope)
With the world's strong-armed warriors and recite
The dangers, wounds, and triumphs of the fight;
Twanging the full-stringed lyre through all its scope.
But if thou ever in some lake-floored cave
O'erbrowed by rocks, a wild voice wooed and heard,
Answering at once from heaven and earth and wave,
Lending elf-music to thy harshest word,
Misprize thou not these echoes that belong
To one in love with solitude and song.

Emma Lazarus

Epochs

'The epochs of our life are not in the facts, but in the silent thought by the wayside as we walk.'-Emerson

I. Youth.

Sweet empty sky of June without a stain,
Faint, gray-blue dewy mists on far-off hills,
Warm, yellow sunlight flooding mead and plain,
That each dark copse and hollow overfills;
The rippling laugh of unseen, rain-fed rills,
Weeds delicate-flowered, white and pink and gold,
A murmur and a singing manifold.

The gray, austere old earth renews her youth
With dew-lines, sunshine, gossamer, and haze.
How still she lies and dreams, and veils the truth,
While all is fresh as in the early days!
What simple things be these the soul to raise
To bounding joy, and make young pulses beat,
With nameless pleasure finding life so sweet.

On such a golden morning forth there floats,
Between the soft earth and the softer sky,
In the warm air adust with glistening motes,
The mystic winged and flickering butterfly,
A human soul, that hovers giddily
Among the gardens of earth's paradise,
Nor dreams of fairer fields or loftier skies.

II. Regret.

Thin summer rain on grass and bush and hedge,
Reddening the road and deepening the green
On wide, blurred lawn, and in close-tangled sedge;
Veiling in gray the landscape stretched between
These low broad meadows and the pale hills seen
But dimly on the far horizon's edge.

In these transparent-clouded, gentle skies,
Wherethrough the moist beams of the soft June sun
Might any moment break, no sorrow lies,
No note of grief in swollen brooks that run,
No hint of woe in this subdued, calm tone
Of all the prospect unto dreamy eyes.

Only a tender, unnamed half-regret
For the lost beauty of the gracious morn;
A yearning aspiration, fainter yet,
For brighter suns in joyous days unborn,
Now while brief showers ruffle grass and corn,

And all the earth lies shadowed, grave, and wet;

Space for the happy soul to pause again
From pure content of all unbroken bliss,
To dream the future void of grief and pain,
And muse upon the past, in reveries
More sweet for knowledge that the present is
Not all complete, with mist and clouds and rain.

III. Longing.

Look westward o'er the steaming rain-washed slopes,
Now satisfied with sunshine, and behold
Those lustrous clouds, as glorious as our hopes,
Softened with feathery fleece of downy gold,
In all fantastic, huddled shapes uprolled,
Floating like dreams, and melting silently,
In the blue upper regions of pure sky.

The eye is filled with beauty, and the heart
Rejoiced with sense of life and peace renewed;
And yet at such an hour as this, upstart
Vague myriad longing, restless, unsubdued,
And causeless tears from melancholy mood,
Strange discontent with earth's and nature's best,
Desires and yearnings that may find no rest.

IV. Storm.

Serene was morning with clear, winnowed air,
But threatening soon the low, blue mass of cloud
Rose in the west, with mutterings faint and rare
At first, but waxing frequent and more loud.
Thick sultry mists the distant hill-tops shroud;
The sunshine dies; athwart black skies of lead
Flash noiselessly thin threads of lightning red.

Breathless the earth seems waiting some wild blow,
Dreaded, but far too close to ward or shun.
Scared birds aloft fly aimless, and below
Naught stirs in fields whence light and life are gone,
Save floating leaves, with wisps of straw and down,
Upon the heavy air; 'neath blue-black skies,
Livid and yellow the green landscape lies.

And all the while the dreadful thunder breaks,
Within the hollow circle of the hills,
With gathering might, that angry echoes wakes,
And earth and heaven with unused clamor fills.
O'erhead still flame those strange electric thrills.

A moment more,-behold! yon bolt struck home,
And over ruined fields the storm hath come!

V. Surprise.

When the stunned soul can first lift tired eyes
On her changed world of ruin, waste and wrack,
Ah, what a pang of aching sharp surprise
Brings all sweet memories of the lost past back,
With wild self-pitying grief of one betrayed,
Duped in a land of dreams where Truth is dead!

Are these the heavens that she deemed were kind?
Is this the world that yesterday was fair?
What painted images of folk half-blind
Be these who pass her by, as vague as air?
What go they seeking? there is naught to find.
Let them come nigh and hearken her despair.

A mocking lie is all she once believed,
And where her heart throbbed, is a cold dead stone.
This is a doom we never preconceived,
Yet now she cannot fancy it undone.
Part of herself, part of the whole hard scheme,
All else is but the shadow of a dream.

VI. Grief.

There is a hungry longing in the soul,
A craving sense of emptiness and pain,
She may not satisfy nor yet control,
For all the teeming world looks void and vain.
No compensation in eternal spheres,
She knows the loneliness of all her years.

There is no comfort looking forth nor back,
The present gives the lie to all her past.
Will cruel time restore what she doth lack?
Why was no shadow of this doom forecast?
Ah! she hath played with many a keen-edged thing;
Naught is too small and soft to turn and sting.

In the unnatural glory of the hour,
Exalted over time, and death, and fate,
No earthly task appears beyond her power,
No possible endurance seemeth great.
She knows her misery and her majesty,
And recks not if she be to live or die.

VII. Acceptance.

Yea, she hath looked Truth grimly face to face,
And drained unto the lees the proffered cup.
This silence is not patience, nor the grace
Of recognition, meekly offered up,
But mere acceptance fraught with keenest pain,
Seeing that all her struggles must be vain.

Her future clear and terrible outlies,-
This burden to be borne through all her days,
This crown of thorns pressed down above her eyes,
This weight of trouble she may never raise.
No reconcilement doth she ask nor wait;
Knowing such things are, she endures her fate.

No brave endeavor of the broken will
To cling to such poor stays as will abide
(Although the waves be wild and angry still)
After the lapsing of the swollen tide.
No fear of further loss, no hope of gain,
Naught but the apathy of weary pain.

VIII. Loneliness.

All stupor of surprise hath passed away;
She sees, with clearer vision than before,
A world far off of light and laughter gay,
Herself alone and lonely evermore.
Folk come and go, and reach her in no wise,
Mere flitting phantoms to her heavy eyes.

All outward things, that once seemed part of her,
Fall from her, like the leaves in autumn shed.
She feels as one embalmed in spice and myrrh,
With the heart eaten out, a long time dead;
Unchanged without, the features and the form;
Within, devoured by the thin red worm.

By her own prowess she must stand or fall,
This grief is to be conquered day by day.
Who could befriend her? who could make this small,
Or her strength great? she meets it as she may.
A weary struggle and a constant pain,
She dreams not they may ever cease nor wane.

IX. Sympathy.

It comes not in such wise as she had deemed,
Else might she still have clung to her despair.

More tender, grateful than she could have dreamed,
Fond hands passed pitying over brows and hair,
And gentle words borne softly through the air,
Calming her weary sense and wildered mind,
By welcome, dear communion with her kind.

Ah! she forswore all words as empty lies;
What speech could help, encourage, or repair?
Yet when she meets these grave, indulgent eyes,
Fulfilled with pity, simplest words are fair,
Caressing, meaningless, that do not dare
To compensate or mend, but merely soothe
With hopeful visions after bitter Truth.

One who through conquered trouble had grown wise,
To read the grief unspoken, unexpressed,
The misery of the blank and heavy eyes,-
Or through youth's infinite compassion guessed
The heavy burden,-such a one brought rest,
And bade her lay aside her doubts and fears,
While the hard pain dissolved in blessed tears.

X. Patience.

The passion of despair is quelled at last;
The cruel sense of undeserved wrong,
The wild self-pity, these are also past;
She knows not what may come, but she is strong;
She feels she hath not aught to lose nor gain,
Her patience is the essence of all pain.

As one who sits beside a lapsing stream,
She sees the flow of changeless day by day,
Too sick and tired to think, too sad to dream,
Nor cares how soon the waters slip away,
Nor where they lead; at the wise God's decree,
She will depart or bide indifferently.

There is deeper pathos in the mild
And settled sorrow of the quiet eyes,
Than in the tumults of the anguish wild,
That made her curse all things beneath the skies;
No question, no reproaches, no complaint,
Hers is the holy calm of some meek saint.

XI. Hope.

Her languid pulses thrill with sudden hope,
That will not be forgot nor cast aside,
And life in statelier vistas seems to ope,

Illimitably lofty, long, and wide.
What doth she know? She is subdued and mild,
Quiet and docile 'as a weaned child.'

If grief came in such unimagined wise,
How may joy dawn? In what undreamed-of hour,
May the light break with splendor of surprise,
Disclosing all the mercy and the power?
A baseless hope, yet vivid, keen, and bright,
As the wild lightning in the starless night.

She knows not whence it came, nor where it passed,
But it revealed, in one brief flash of flame,
A heaven so high, a world so rich and vast,
That, full of meek contrition and mute shame,
In patient silence hopefully withdrawn,
She bows her head, and bides the certain dawn.

XII. Compensation.

'T is not alone that black and yawning void
That makes her heart ache with this hungry pain,
But the glad sense of life hath been destroyed,
The lost delight may never come again.
Yet myriad serious blessings with grave grace
Arise on every side to fill their place.

For much abides in her so lonely life,-
The dear companionship of her own kind,
Love where least looked for, quiet after strife,
Whispers of promise upon every wind,
A quickened insight, in awakened eyes,
For the new meaning of the earth and skies.

The nameless charm about all things hath died,
Subtle as aureole round a shadow's head,
Cast on the dewy grass at morning-tide;
Yet though the glory and the joy be fled,
'T is much her own endurance to have weighed,
And wrestled with God's angels, unafraid.

XIII. Faith.

She feels outweariedd, as though o'er her head
A storm of mighty billows broke and passed.
Whose hand upheld her? Who her footsteps led
To this green haven of sweet rest at last?
What strength was hers, unreckoned and unknown?
What love sustained when she was most alone?

Unutterably pathetic her desire,
To reach, with groping arms outstretched in prayer,
Something to cling to, to uplift her higher
From this low world of coward fear and care,
Above disaster, that her will may be
At one with God's, accepting his decree.

Though by no reasons she be justified,
Yet strangely brave in Evil's very face,
She deems this want must needs be satisfied,
Though here all slips from out her weak embrace.
And in blind ecstasy of perfect faith,
With her own dream her prayer she answereth.

XIV. Work.

Yet life is not a vision nor a prayer,
But stubborn work; she may not shun her task.
After the first compassion, none will spare
Her portion and her work achieved, to ask.
She pleads for respite,-she will come ere long
When, resting by the roadside, she is strong.

Nay, for the hurrying throng of passers-by
Will crush her with their onward-rolling stream.
Much must be done before the brief light die;
She may not loiter, rapt in the vain dream.
With unused trembling hands, and faltering feet,
She staggers forth, her lot assigned to meet.

But when she fills her days with duties done,
Strange vigor comes, she is restored to health.
New aims, new interests rise with each new sun,
And life still holds for her unbounded wealth.
All that seemed hard and toilsome now proves small,
And naught may daunt her,-she hath strength for all.

XV. Victory.

How strange, in some brief interval of rest,
Backward to look on her far-stretching past.
To see how much is conquered and repressed,
How much is gained in victory at last!
The shadow is not lifted,-but her faith,
Strong from life's miracles, now turns toward death.

Though much be dark where once rare splendor shone,
Yet the new light has touched high peaks unguessed
In her gold, mist-bathed dawn, and one by one
New outlooks loom from many a mountain crest.

She breathes a loftier, purer atmosphere,
And life's entangled paths grow straight and clear.

Nor will Death prove an all-unwelcome guest;
The struggle has been toilsome to this end,
Sleep will be sweet, and after labor rest,
And all will be atoned with him to friend.
Much must be reconciled, much justified,
And yet she feels she will be satisfied.

XVI. Peace.

The calm outgoing of a long, rich day,
Checkered with storm and sunshine, gloom and light,
Now passing in pure, cloudless skies away,
Withdrawing into silence of blank night.
Thick shadows settle on the landscape bright,
Like the weird cloud of death that falls apace
On the still features of the passive face.

Soothing and gentle as a mother's kiss,
The touch that stopped the beating of the heart.
A look so blissfully serene as this,
Not all the joy of living could impart.
With dauntless faith and courage therewithal,
The Master found her ready at his call.

On such a golden evening forth there floats,
Between the grave earth and the glowing sky
In the clear air, unvexed with hazy motes,
The mystic-winged and flickering butterfly,
A human soul, that drifts at liberty,
Ah! who can tell to what strange paradise,
To what undreamed-of fields and lofty skies.!

Emma Lazarus

Exultation

BEHOLD, I walked abroad at early morning,
The fields of June were bathed in dew and lustre,
The hills were clad with light as with a garment.

The inexpressible auroral freshness,
The grave, immutable, aerial heavens,
The transient clouds above the quiet landscape,

The heavy odor of the passionate lilacs,
That hedged the road with sober-colored clusters,
All these o'ermastered me with subtle power,

And made my rural walk a royal progress,
Peopled my solitude with airy spirits,
Who hovered over me with joyous singing.

'Behold!' they sang, 'the glory of the morning.
Through every vein does not the summer tingle,
With vague desire and flush of expectation?

'To think how fair is life! set round with grandeur;
The eloquent sea beneath the voiceless heavens,
The shifting shows of every bounteous season;

'Rich skies, fantastic clouds, and herby meadows,
Gray rivers, prairies spread with regal flowers,
Grasses and grains and herds of browsing cattle:

'Great cities filled with breathing men and women,
Of whom the basest have their aspirations,
High impulses of courage or affection.

'And on this brave earth still those finer spirits,
Heroic Valor, admirable Friendship,
And Love itself, a very god among you.

'All these for thee, and thou evoked from nothing,
Born from blank darkness to this blaze of beauty,
Where is thy faith, and where are thy thanksgivings?'

The world is his who can behold it rightly,
Who hears the harmonies of unseen angels
Above the senseless outcry of the hour.

Emma Lazarus

Florence Nightingale

UPON the whitewashed walls
A woman's shadow falls,
A woman walketh o'er the darksome floors.
A soft, angelic smile
Lighteth her face the while,
In passing through the dismal corridors.

And now and then there slips
A word from out her lips,
More sweet and grateful to those listening ears
Than the most plaintive tale
Of the sad nightingale,
Whose name and tenderness this woman bears.

Her presence in the room
Of agony and gloom,
No fretful murmurs, no coarse words profane;
For while she standeth there,
All words are hushed save prayer;
She seems God's angel weeping o'er man's pain.

And some of them arise,
With eager, tearful eyes,
From off their couch to see her passing by.
Some, e'en too weak for this,
Can only stoop and kiss
Her shadow, and fall back content to die.

No monument of stone
Needs this heroic one,—
Her name is graven on each noble heart;
And in all after years
Her praise will be the tears
Which at that name from quivering lids will start.

And those who live not now,
To see the sainted brow,
And the angelic smile before it flits for aye,
They in the future age
Will kiss the storied page
Whereon the shadow of her life will lie.

Emma Lazarus

Fog

Light silken curtain, colorless and soft,
Dreamlike before me floating! what abides
Behind thy pearly veil's
Opaque, mysterious woof?

Where sleek red kine, and dappled, crunch day-long
Thick, luscious blades and purple clover-heads,
Nigh me I still can mark
Cool fields of beaded grass.

No more; for on the rim of the globed world
I seem to stand and stare at nothingness.
But songs of unseen birds
And tranquil roll of waves

Bring sweet assurance of continuous life
Beyond this silvery cloud. Fantastic dreams,
Of tissue subtler still
Than the wreathed fog, arise,

And cheat my brain with airy vanishings
And mystic glories of the world beyond.
A whole enchanted town
Thy baffling folds conceal-

An Orient town, with slender-steepled mosques,
Turret from turret springing, dome from dome,
Fretted with burning stones,
And trellised with red gold.

Through spacious streets, where running waters flow,
Sun-screened by fruit-trees and the broad-leaved palm,
Past the gay-decked bazaars,
Walk turbaned, dark-eyed men.

Hark! you can hear the many murmuring tongues,
While loud the merchants vaunt their gorgeous wares.
The sultry air is spiced
With fragrance of rich gums,

And through the lattice high in yon dead wall,
See where, unveiled, an arch, young, dimpled face,
Flushed like a musky peach,
Peers down upon the mart!

From her dark, ringleted and bird-poised head
She hath cast back the milk-white silken veil:
'Midst the blank blackness there
She blossoms like a rose.

Beckons she not with those bright, full-orbed eyes,
And open arms that like twin moonbeams gleam?

Behold her smile on me
With honeyed, scarlet lips!

Divine Scheherazade! I am thine.
I come! I come!-Hark! from some far-off mosque
The shrill muezzin calls
The hour of silent prayer,

And from the lattice he hath scared my love.
The lattice vanisheth itself-the street,
The mart, the Orient town;
Only through still, soft air

That cry is yet prolonged. I wake to hear
The distant fog-horn peal: before mine eyes
Stands the white wall of mist,
Blending with vaporous skies.

Elusive gossamer, impervious
Even to the mighty sun-god's keen red shafts!
With what a jealous art
Thy secret thou dost guard!

Well do I know deep in thine inmost folds,
Within an opal hollow, there abides
The lady of the mist,
The Undine of the air-

A slender, winged, ethereal, lily form,
Dove-eyed, with fair, free-floating, pearl-wreathed hair,
In waving raiment swathed
Of changing, irised hues.

Where her feet, rosy as a shell, have grazed
The freshened grass, a richer emerald glows:
Into each flower-cup
Her cool dews she distills.

She knows the tops of jagged mountain-peaks,
She knows the green soft hollows of their sides,
And unafraid she floats
O'er the vast-circled seas.

She loves to bask within the moon's wan beams,
Lying, night-long upon the moist, dark earth,
And leave her seeded pearls
With morning on the grass.

Ah! that athwart these dim, gray outer courts
Of her fantastic palace I might pass,
And reach the inmost shrine
Of her chaste solitude,

And feel her cool and dewy fingers press
My mortal-fevered brow, while in my heart
She poured with tender love
Her healing Lethe-balm!

See! the close curtain moves, the spell dissolves!
Slowly it lifts: the dazzling sunshine streams
Upon a newborn world
And laughing summer seas.

Swift, snowy-breasted sandbirds twittering glance
Through crystal air. On the horizon's marge,
Like a huge purple wraith,
The dusky fog retreats.

Emma Lazarus

Fra Pedro

Golden lights and lengthening shadows,
Flings the splendid sun declining,
O'er the monastery garden
Rich in flower, fruit and foliage.

Through the avenue of nut trees,
Pace two grave and ghostly friars,
Snowy white their gowns and girdles,
Black as night their cowls and mantles.

Lithe and ferret-eyed the younger,
Black his scapular denoting
A lay brother; his companion
Large, imperious, towers above him.

'T is the abbot, great Fra Pedro,
Famous through all Saragossa
For his quenchless zeal in crushing
Heresy amidst his townfolk.

Handsome still with hood and tonsure,
E'en as when the boy Pedrillo,
Insolent with youth and beauty,
Who reviled the gentle Rabbi.

Lo, the level sun strikes sparkles
From his dark eyes brightly flashing.
Stern his voice: 'These too shall perish.
I have vowed extermination.

'Tell not me of skill or virtue,
Filial love or woman's beauty-
Jews are Jews, as serpents serpents,
In themselves abomination.'

Earnestly the other pleaded,
'If my zeal, thrice reverend master,
E'er afforded thee assistance,
Serving thee as flesh serves spirit,

'Hounding, scourging, flaying, burning,
Casting into chains or exile,
At thy bidding these vile wretches,
Hear and heed me now, my master.

'These be nowise like their brethren,
Ben Jehudah is accounted
Saragossa's first physician,
Loved by colleague as by patient.

'And his daughter Donna Zara
Is our city's pearl of beauty,

Like the clusters of the vineyard
Droop the ringlets o'er her temples.

'Like the moon in starry heavens
Shines her face among her people,
And her form hath all the languor,
Grace and glamour of the palm-tree.

'Well thou knowest, thrice reverend master,
This is not their first affliction,
Was it not our Holy Office
Whose bribed menials fired their dwelling?

'Ere dawn broke, the smoke ascended,
Choked the stairways, filled the chambers,
Waked the household to the terror
Of the flaming death that threatened.

'Then the poor bed-ridden mother
Knew her hour had come; two daughters,
Twinned in form, and mind, and spirit,
And their father-who would save them?

'Towards her door sprang Ben Jehudah,
Donna Zara flew behind him
Round his neck her white arms wreathing,
Drew him from the burning chamber.

'There within, her sister Zillah
Stirred no limb to shun her torture,
Held her mother's hand and kissed her,
Saying, 'We will go together.'

'This the outer throng could witness,
As the flames enwound the dwelling,
Like a glory they illumined
Awfully the martyred daughter.

'Closer, fiercer, round they gathered,
Not a natural cry escaped her,
Helpless clung to her her mother,
Hand in hand they went together.

'Since that 'Act of Faith' three winters
Have rolled by, yet on the forehead
Of Jehudah is imprinted
Still the horror of that morning.

'Saragossa hath respected
His false creed; a man of sorrows,
He hath walked secure among us,
And his art repays our sufferance.'

Thus he spoke and ceased. The Abbot
Lent him an impatient hearing,
Then outbroke with angry accent,
'We have borne three years, thou sayest?

''T is enough; my vow is sacred.
These shall perish with their brethren.
Hark ye! In my veins' pure current
Were a single drop found Jewish,

'I would shrink not from outpouring
All my life blood, but to purge it.
Shall I gentler prove to others?
Mercy would be sacrilegious.

'Ne'er again at thy soul's peril,
Speak to me of Jewish beauty,
Jewish skill, or Jewish virtue.
I have said. Do thou remember.'

Down behind the purple hillside
Dropped the sun; above the garden
Rang the Angelus' clear cadence
Summoning the monks to vespers.

Emma Lazarus

From One Augur to Another

So, Calchas, on the sacred Palatine,
You thought of Mopsus, and o'er wastes of sea
A flower brought your message. I divine
(Through my deep art) the kindly mockery
That played about your lips and in your eyes,
Plucking the frail leaf, while you dreamed of home.
Thanks for the silent greeting! I shall prize,
Beyond June's rose, the scentless flower of Rome.
All the Campagna spreads before my sight,
The mouldering wall, the Caesars' tombs unwreathed,
Rome and the Tiber, and the yellow light,
Wherein the honey-colored blossom breathed.
But most I thank it--egoists that we be!
For proving then and there you thought of me.

Emma Lazarus

Gifts

'O World-God, give me Wealth!' the Egyptian cried.
His prayer was granted. High as heaven, behold
Palace and Pyramid; the brimming tide
Of lavish Nile washed all his land with gold.
Armies of slaves toiled ant-wise at his feet,
World-circling traffic roared through mart and street,
His priests were gods, his spice-balmed kings enshrined,
Set death at naught in rock-ribbed charnels deep.
Seek Pharaoh's race to-day and ye shall find
Rust and the moth, silence and dusty sleep.

'O World-God, give me beauty!' cried the Greek.
His prayer was granted. All the earth became
Plastic and vocal to his sense; each peak,
Each grove, each stream, quick with Promethean flame,
Peopled the world with imaged grace and light.
The lyre was his, and his the breathing might
Of the immortal marble, his the play
Of diamond-pointed thought and golden tongue.
Go seek the sun-shine race, ye find to-day
A broken column and a lute unstrung.

'O World-God, give me Power!' the Roman cried.
His prayer was granted. The vast world was chained
A captive to the chariot of his pride.
The blood of myriad provinces was drained
To feed that fierce, insatiable red heart.
Invulnerably bulwarked every part
With serried legions and with close-meshed Code,
Within, the burrowing worm had gnawed its home,
A roofless ruin stands where once abode
The imperial race of everlasting Rome.

'O Godhead, give me Truth!' the Hebrew cried.
His prayer was granted; he became the slave
Of the Idea, a pilgrim far and wide,
Cursed, hated, spurned, and scourged with none to save.
The Pharaohs knew him, and when Greece beheld,
His wisdom wore the hoary crown of Eld.
Beauty he hath forsworn, and wealth and power.
Seek him to-day, and find in every land.
No fire consumes him, neither floods devour;
Immortal through the lamp within his hand.

Emma Lazarus

Heroes

In rich Virginian woods,
The scarlet creeper reddens over graves,
Among the solemn trees enlooped with vines;
Heroic spirits haunt the solitudes,-
The noble souls of half a million braves,
Amid the murmurous pines.

Ah! who is left behind,
Earnest and eloquent, sincere and strong,
To consecrate their memories with words
Not all unmeet? with fitting dirge and song
To chant a requiem purer than the wind,
And sweeter than the birds?

Here, though all seems at peace,
The placid, measureless sky serenely fair,
The laughter of the breeze among the leaves,
The bars of sunlight slanting through the trees,
The reckless wild-flowers blooming everywhere,
The grasses' delicate sheaves,-

Nathless each breeze that blows,
Each tree that trembles to its leafy head
With nervous life, revives within our mind,
Tender as flowers of May, the thoughts of those
Who lie beneath the living beauty, dead,-
Beneath the sunshine, blind.

For brave dead soldiers, these:
Blessings and tears of aching thankfulness,
Soft flowers for the graves in wreaths enwove,
The odorous lilac of dear memories,
The heroic blossoms of the wilderness,
And the rich rose of love.

But who has sung their praise,
Not less illustrious, who are living yet?
Armies of heroes, satisfied to pass
Calmly, serenely from the whole world's gaze,
And cheerfully accept, without regret,
Their old life as it was,

With all its petty pain,
Its irritating littleness and care;
They who have scaled the mountain, with content
Sublime, descend to live upon the plain;
Steadfast as though they breathed the mountain-air
Still, wheresoe'er they went.

They who were brave to act,
And rich enough their action to forget;
Who, having filled their day with chivalry,

Withdraw and keep their simpleness intact,
And all unconscious add more lustre yet
Unto their victory.

On the broad Western plains
Their patriarchal life they live anew;
Hunters as mighty as the men of old,
Or harvesting the plenteous, yellow grains,
Gathering ripe vintage of dusk bunches blue,
Or working mines of gold;

Or toiling in the town,
Armed against hindrance, weariness, defeat,
With dauntless purpose not to serve or yield,
And calm, defiant, they struggle on,
As sturdy and as valiant in the street,
As in the camp and field.

And those condemned to live,
Maimed, helpless, lingering still through suffering years,
May they not envy now the restful sleep
Of the dear fellow-martyrs they survive?
Not o'er the dead, but over these, your tears,
O brothers, ye may weep!

New England fields I see,
The lovely, cultured landscape, waving grain,
Wide haughty rivers, and pale, English skies.
And lo! a farmer ploughing busily,
Who lifts a swart face, looks upon the plain,-
I see, in his frank eyes,

The hero's soul appear.
Thus in the common fields and streets they stand;
The light that on the past and distant gleams,
They cast upon the present and the near,
With antique virtues from some mystic land,
Of knightly deeds and dreams.

Emma Lazarus

How Long?

How long, and yet how long,
Our leaders will we hail from over seas,
Master and kings from feudal monarchies,
And mock their ancient song
With echoes weak of foreign melodies?

That distant isle mist-wreathed,
Mantled in unimaginable green,
Too long hath been our mistress and our queen.
Our fathers have bequeathed
Too deep a love for her, our hearts within.

She made the whole world ring
With the brave exploits of her children strong,
And with the matchless music of her song.
Too late, too late we cling
To alien legends, and their strains prolong.

This fresh young world I see,
With heroes, cities, legends of her own;
With a new race of men, and overblown
By winds from sea to sea,
Decked with the majesty of every zone.

I see the glittering tops
Of snow-peaked mounts, the wid'ning vale's expanse,
Large prairies where free herds of horses prance,
Exhaustless wealth of crops,
In vast, magnificent extravagance.

These grand, exuberant plains,
These stately rivers, each with many a mouth,
The exquisite beauty of the soft-aired south,
The boundless seas of grains,
Luxuriant forests' lush and splendid growth.

The distant siren-song
Of the green island in the eastern sea,
Is not the lay for this new chivalry.
It is not free and strong
To chant on prairies 'neath this brilliant sky.

The echo faints and fails;
It suiteth not, upon this western plain,
Out voice or spirit; we should stir again
The wilderness, and make the vales
Resound unto a yet unheard-of strain.

Emma Lazarus

Idyl

The swallows made twitter incessant,
The thrushes were wild with their mirth.
The ways and the woods were made pleasant,
And the flowering nooks of the earth.
And the sunshine sufficed to rejoice me,
And the air was as bracing as wine,
And the sky and the shadows and grasses
Were enough to make living divine.

Then I saw on the ground two gray robins,
One with glorious flame-colored vest,
'Neath the shade of some delicate bluebells,
By the breeze of the morning caressed.
They were singing of love in the shadow;
She was bashful, and modest, and coy,
And he sang to her tenderest love-songs,
And madrigals full of his joy.

And his song came forth clearer and clearer,
With each passionate, musical note;
Like the ripple of silvery waters,
It gushed from his beautiful throat.
His whole little bird-soul he offers,—
Ah! she listens to him as he sings:
Then he ceases, awaiting her answer,
With bright eyes and with quivering wings.

And I, too, stood awaiting it, breathless,
For his song was too sweet to disdain,
Till it came, little notes full of gladness,
With a plaintive and tender refrain.
And the songs died away in the distance,
And the forest alone heard the rest,
As the two little lovers flew upward,
To build them together a nest.

Emma Lazarus

In A Swedish Graveyard

After wearisome toil and much sorrow,
How quietly sleep they at last,
Neither dreading and fearing the morrow,
Nor vainly bemoaning the past!
Shall we give them our envy or pity?
Shall we shun or yearn after such rest,
So calm near the turbulent city,
With their heart stilled at length in their breast?

They all sleep with their heads lying westward,
Where all suns and all days have gone down.
Do they long for the dawn, looking eastward?
Do they dream of the strife and the crown?
Each one held a lit taper when dying:
Where hath vanished the fugitive flame?
With his love, and his joy, and his sighing,
Alas! and his youth and his name.

The living stands o'er him and dreameth,
And wonders what dreams came to him.
While the tender, brief twilight still gleameth,
With a light strangely mournful and dim.
And he wonders what lights and what shadows
Passed over these dead long ago,
When their feet now at rest trod these meadows,
And their hearts throbbed to pleasure or woe

What dreams came to them in their living?
The self-same that come now to thee.
If thou findest those dreams are deceiving,
Then these lives thou wilt know and wilt see:
The same visions of love and of glory,
The same vain regret for the past;
All the same poor and pitiful story,
Till the taper's extinguished at last.

All the treasures on earth that they cherished,
Now they care not to clasp nor to save;
And the poor little lights, how they perished,
Slowly dying alone in the grave!
With a flickering faint on the features
Of age, or of youth in its bloom:
Lighting up for grim Death his weak creatures,
In the darkness and night of the tomb,—

With a radiance ghostly and mournful,
On the good, on the just and unjust;
For a space, till the monarch, so scornful,
Turned the light and the lighted to dust.
No taper of earth he desired
In his halls where they quietly rest;
For all those who have toiled and are tired,

Utter darkness and sleep may be best.

Emma Lazarus

In Exile

Twilight is here, soft breezes bow the grass,
Day's sounds of various toil break slowly off,
The yoke-freed oxen low, the patient ass
Dips his dry nostril in the cool, deep trough.
Up from the prairie the tanned herdsmen pass
With frothy pails, guiding with voices rough
Their udder-lightened kine. Fresh smells of earth,
The rich, black furrows of the glebe send forth.

After the Southern day of heavy toil,
How good to lie, with limbs relaxed, brows bare
To evening's fan, and watch the smoke-wreaths coil
Up from one's pipe-stem through the rayless air.
So deem these unused tillers of the soil,
Who stretched beneath the shadowing oak tree, stare
Peacefully on the star-unfolding skies,
And name their life unbroken paradise.

The hounded stag that has escaped the pack,
And pants at ease within a thick-leaved dell;
The unimprisoned bird that finds the track
Through sun-bathed space, to where his fellows dwell;
The martyr, granted respite from the rack,
The death-doomed victim pardoned from his cell,-
Such only know the joy these exiles gain,-
Life's sharpest rapture is surcease of pain.

Strange faces theirs, wherethrough the Orient sun
Gleams from the eyes and glows athwart the skin.
Grave lines of studious thought and purpose run
From curl-crowned forehead to dark-bearded chin.
And over all the seal is stamped thereon
Of anguish branded by a world of sin,
In fire and blood through ages on their name,
Their seal of glory and the Gentiles' shame.

Freedom to love the law that Moses brought,
To sing the songs of David, and to think
The thoughts Gabirol to Spinoza taught,
Freedom to dig the common earth, to drink
The universal air-for this they sought
Refuge o'er wave and continent, to link
Egypt with Texas in their mystic chain,
And truth's perpetual lamp forbid to wane.

Hark! through the quiet evening air, their song
Floats forth with wild sweet rhythm and glad refrain.
They sing the conquest of the spirit strong,
The soul that wrests the victory from pain;
The noble joys of manhood that belong
To comrades and to brothers. In their strain
Rustle of palms and Eastern streams one hears,

And the broad prairie melts in mist of tears.

Emma Lazarus

In Memoriam

O FRIEND who passed away while flowers died,
Now that the land bursts into bloom again,
With vivid blossoms o'er the landscape wide,
Purple and white 'mongst, grasses golden-eyed,
In beauteous resurrection o'er the plain,—

My thoughts revert to thee, who liest still,
Under the pulsing, stirring, glowing earth;
Not rising with the lilac on the hill,
Not waking with the sunny daffodil,
Living and breathing with no second birth.

In these sweet days I dream I see thy grave,
A mockery of death, alive with flowers.
The delicate sprays and tender grasses wave,
Blue violets and the hardy crocus brave,
Wooed back to life by sunshine, dew, and showers.

I cannot deem that thou art lying there,
Asleep through all these fervent days of spring;
For I perceive thy spirit in the air,
Around me ever in my dream and prayer,
Enskied and hallowed by thy suffering.

When thou didst walk upon the earth before,
My trivial words and deeds alone were thine;
But now my holiest dreams are evermore
Blended with thoughts of thee, on that far shore,
Where thy pale, girlish face has grown divine.

Through the dark shadows thou must go alone;
And lo! thou hast a dauntless bravery,
A most majestic resignation shown;
A valiant patience, a faith not overthrown
By the dread terror of uncertainty.

The day had fled, from thee for evermore,
Thy soul was ebbing with the waning light,
And still thou asked, aweary and heartsore,
The same pathetic question o'er and o'er,—
'O, I am tired! will I go to-night?'

Aye, thou didst go,— and where? Thou knowest now.
Nature is innocent as well as fair;
Lillies, as well as amaranth, wreathe her brow.
She hath thy soul; because I cannot know
Where it may be, I feel it everywhere.

And thus the spring hath brought me flowers of worth.
O mourners, cease to weep o'er empty graves!
Open them all! no dead come trooping forth,
To fill with ghastly hosts the living earth;

Only the flowers bloom, the green grass waves.

Those ye laid low with solemn rites and tears,
Elude you; while ye weep, they all have flown.
And so I lay aside my doubts and fears;
My friend in day-dreams and at night appears,
And hovers near when I am most alone.

Emma Lazarus

In Memoriam—Rev. J. J. Lyons

ROSH-HASHANAH, 5638.

The golden harvest-tide is here, the corn
Bows its proud tops beneath the reaper's hand.
Ripe orchards' plenteous yields enrich the land;
Bring the first fruits and offer them this morn,
With the stored sweetness of all summer hours,
The amber honey sucked from myriad flowers,
And sacrifice your best first fruits to-day,
With fainting hearts and hands forespent with toil,
Offer the mellow harvest's splendid spoil,
To Him who gives and Him who takes away.

Bring timbrels, bring the harp of sweet accord,
And in a pleasant psalm your voice attune,
And blow the cornet greeting the new moon.
Sing, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord,
Who killeth and who quickeneth again,
Who woundeth and who healeth mortal pain,
Whose hand afflicts us, and who sends us peace.
Hail thou slim arc of promise in the West,
Thou pledge of certain plenty, peace, and rest.
With the spent year, may the year's sorrows cease.

For there is mourning now in Israel,
The crown, the garland of the branching tree
Is plucked and withered. Ripe of years was he.
The priest, the good old man who wrought so well
Upon his chosen globe. For he was one
Who at his seed-plot toiled through rain and sun.
Morn found him not as one who slumbereth,
Noon saw him faithful, and the restful night
Stole o'er him at his labors to requite
The just man's service with the just man's death.

What shall be said when such as he do pass?
Go to the hill-side, neath the cypress-trees,
Fall midst that peopled silence on your knees,
And weep that man must wither as the grass.
But mourn him not, whose blameless life complete
Rounded its perfect orb, whose sleep is sweet,
Whom we must follow, but may not recall.
Salute with solemn trumpets the New Year,
And offer honeyed fruits as were he here,
Though ye be sick with wormwood and with gall.

Emma Lazarus

In the Jewish Synagogue at Newport

Here, where the noises of the busy town,
The ocean's plunge and roar can enter not,
We stand and gaze around with tearful awe,
And muse upon the consecrated spot.

No signs of life are here: the very prayers
Inscribed around are in a language dead;
The light of the "perpetual lamp" is spent
That an undying radiance was to shed.

What prayers were in this temple offered up,
Wrung from sad hearts that knew no joy on earth,
By these lone exiles of a thousand years,
From the fair sunrise land that gave them birth!

How as we gaze, in this new world of light,
Upon this relic of the days of old,
The present vanishes, and tropic bloom
And Eastern towns and temples we behold.

Again we see the patriarch with his flocks,
The purple seas, the hot blue sky o'erhead,
The slaves of Egypt, -- omens, mysteries, --
Dark fleeing hosts by flaming angels led.

A wondrous light upon a sky-kissed mount,
A man who reads Jehovah's written law,
'Midst blinding glory and effulgence rare,
Unto a people prone with reverent awe.

The pride of luxury's barbaric pomp,
In the rich court of royal Solomon --
Alas! we wake: one scene alone remains, --
The exiles by the streams of Babylon.

Our softened voices send us back again
But mournful echoes through the empty hall:
Our footsteps have a strange unnatural sound,
And with unwonted gentleness they fall.

The weary ones, the sad, the suffering,
All found their comfort in the holy place,
And children's gladness and men's gratitude
'Took voice and mingled in the chant of praise.

The funeral and the marriage, now, alas!
We know not which is sadder to recall;
For youth and happiness have followed age,
And green grass lieth gently over all.

Nathless the sacred shrine is holy yet,
With its lone floors where reverent feet once trod.

Take off your shoes as by the burning bush,
Before the mystery of death and God.

Emma Lazarus

Influence

The fervent, pale-faced Mother ere she sleep,
Looks out upon the zigzag-lighted square,
The beautiful bare trees, the blue night-air,
The revelation of the star-strewn deep,
World above world, and heaven over heaven.
Between the tree-tops and the skies, her sight
Rests on a steadfast, ruddy-shining light,
High in the tower, an earthly star of even.
Hers is the faith in saints' and angels' power,
And mediating love--she breathes a prayer
For yon tired watcher in the gray old tower.
He the shrewd, skeptic poet unaware
Feels comforted and stilled, and knows not whence
Falls this unwonted peace on heart and sense.

Emma Lazarus

Life and Art

Not while the fever of the blood is strong,
The heart throbs loud, the eyes are veiled, no less
With passion than with tears, the Muse shall bless
The poet-sould to help and soothe with song.
Not then she bids his trembling lips express
The aching gladness, the voluptuous pain.
Life is his poem then; flesh, sense, and brain
One full-stringed lyre attuned to happiness.
But when the dream is done, the pulses fail,
The day's illusion, with the day's sun set,
He, lonely in the twilight, sees the pale
Divine Consoler, featured like Regret,
Enter and clasp his hand and kiss his brow.
Then his lips ope to sing--as mine do now.

Emma Lazarus

Links

The little and the great are joined in one
By God's great force. The wondrous golden sun
Is linked unto the glow-worm's tiny spark;
The eagle soars to heaven in his flight;
And in those realms of space, all bathed in light,
Soar none except the eagle and the lark.

Emma Lazarus

Lohengrin

THE holy bell, untouched by human hands,
Clanged suddenly, and tolled with solemn knell.

Between the massive, blazoned temple-doors,
Thrown wide, to let the summer morning in,
Sir Lohengrin, the youngest of the knights,
Had paused to taste the sweetness of the air.
All sounds came up the mountain-side to him,
Softened to music,— noise of laboring men,
The cheerful cock-crow and the low of kine,
Bleating of sheep, and twittering of the birds,
Commingled into murmurous harmonies—
When harsh, and near, and clamorous tolled the bell.
He started, with his hand upon his sword;
His face, an instant since serene and fair,
And simple with the beauty of a boy,
Heroic, flushed, expectant all at once.
The lovely valley stretching out beneath
Was now a painted picture,— nothing more;
All music of the mountain or the vale
Rang meaningless to him who heard the bell.
'I stand upon the threshold, and am called,'
His clear, young voice shrilled gladly through the air,
And backward through the sounding corridors.

'And have ye heard the bell, my brother knights,
Untouched by human hands or winds of heaven?
It called me, yea, it called my very name!'
So, breathing still of morning, Lohengrin
Sprang 'midst the gathering circle of the knights,
Eager, exalted. 'Nay, it called us all:
It rang as it hath often rung before,—
Because the good cause, somewhere on the earth,
Requires a champion,' with a serious smile,
An older gravely answered. 'Where to go?
We know not, and we know not whom to serve.'
Then spake Sir Percivale, their holiest knight,
And father of the young Sir Lohengrin:
'All that to us seems old, familiar, stale,
Unto the boy is vision, miracle.
Cross him not, brethren, in his first desire.
I will dare swear the summons rang to him,
Not sternly solemn, as it tolled to us,
But gracious, sweet, and gay as marriage-bells.'
His pious hands above the young man's head
Wandered in blessing, lightly touching it,
As fondly as a mother. 'Lohengrin,
My son, farewell,— God send thee faith and strength.'
' God send me patience and humility,'
Murmured the boyish knight, from contrite heart,
With head downcast for those anointing hands.
Then raising suddenly wide, innocent eyes,—

'Father, my faith is boundless as God's love.'

Complete in glittering silver armor clad,
With silver maiden-shield, blank of device,
Sir Lohengrin rode down the Montsalvatsch,
With Percivale and Tristram, Frimutelle
And Eliduc, to speed him on his quest.
They fared in silence, for the elder knights
Were filled with grave misgivings, solemn thoughts
Of fate and sorrow, and they heard the bell
Tolling incessant; while Sir Lohengrin,
Buoyant with hope, and dreaming like a girl,
With wild blood dancing in his veins, had made
The journey down the mount unconsciously,
Surprised to find that he had reached the vale.
Distinct and bowered in green the mountain loomed,
Topped with the wondrous temple, with its cross
Smitten to splendor by the eastern sun.
Around them lay the valley beautiful,
Imparadised with flowers and light of June;
And through the valley flowed a willowy stream,
Golden and gray, at this delicious hour,
With purity and sunshine. Here the knights,
Irresolute, gave pause — which path to choose?
'God lead me right!' said meek Sir Lohengrin;
And as he spoke afar upon the stream,
He saw a shining swan approaching them.
Full-breasted, with the current it sailed down,
Dazzling in sun and shadow, air and wave,
With unseen movement, wings a little spread,
Their downy under-feathers fluttering,
Stirred by its stately progress; in its beak
It held a silver chain, and drew thereby
A dainty carven shallop after it,
Embossed with silver and with ivory.
'Lead ye my charger up the mount again,'
Cried Lohengrin, and leaped unto the ground,
'For I will trust my guidance to the swan.'
' Nay, hold, Sir Lohengrin,' said Eliduc,
' Thou hast not made provision for this quest.'
' God will provide,' the pious knight replied.
Then Percival: 'Be faithful to thy vows;
Bethink thee of thine oath when thou art asked
Thy mission in the temple, or thy race.
Farewell, farewell.' 'Farewell,' cried Lohengrin,
And sprang into the shallop as it passed,
And waved farewells unto his brother knights,
Until they saw the white and silver shine
Of boat and swan and armor less and less,
Till in the willowy distance they were lost.

Skirting the bases of the rolling hills,

He glided on the river hour by hour,
All through the endless summer day. At first
On either side the willows brushed his boat,
Then underneath their sweeping arch he passed,
Into a rich, enchanted wilderness,
Cool, full of mystic shadows and rare lights,
Wherein the very river changed its hue,
Reflecting tender shades of waving green,
And mossy undergrowth of grass and fern.
Here yellow lilies floated 'midst broad leaves,
Upon their reedy stalks, and far below,
Beneath the flags and rushes, coppery bream
Sedately sailed, and flickering perch, and dace
With silvery lustres caught the glancing rays
Of the June sun upon their mottled scales.
'Midst the close sedge the bright-eyed water-mouse
Nibbled its food, while overhead, its kin,
The squirrel, frisked among the trees. The air
Was full of life and sound of restless birds,
Darting with gayer tints of red and blue
And speckled plumage 'mid gray willow leaves,
And sober alders, and light-foliaged birch.
Unnumbered insects fluttered o'er the banks,
Some dimpling the smooth river's slippery floor,
Leaping from point to point. Then passed the knight
'Twixt broad fields basking in excess of light,
And girt around by range on range of hills,
Green, umber, purple, waving limitless,
Unto the radiant crystal of the sky.
Through unfamiliar solitudes the swan
Still led him, and he saw no living thing
Save creatures of the wood, no human face,
Nor sign of human dwelling. But he sailed,
Holding high thoughts and vowing valorous vows,
Filled with vast wonder and keen happiness,
At the world's very beauty, and his life
Opened in spacious vistas measureless,
As lovely as the stream that bore him on.
So dazzled was the boyish Lohengrin
By all the vital beauty of the real,
And the yet wilder beauty of his dreams,
That he had lost all sense of passing time,
And woke as from a trance of centuries,
To find himself within the heart of hills,
The river widened to an ample lake,
And the swan faring towards a narrow gorge,
That seemed to lead him to the sunset clouds.
Suffused with color were the extremest heights;
The river rippled in a glassy flood,
Glorying in the glory of the sky.
O what a moment for a man to take
Down with him in his memory to the grave!

Life at that hour appeared as infinite
As expectation, sacred, wonderful,
A vision and a privilege. The stream
Lessened to force its way through rocky walls,
Then swerved and flowed, a purple brook, through woods
Dewy with evening, sunless, odorous.
There Lohengrin, with eyes upon the stream,
Now brighter than the earth, saw, deep and clear,
The delicate splendor of the earliest star.
All night, too full of sweet expectancy,
Too reverent of the loveliness, for sleep,
He watched the rise and setting of the stars..
All things were new upon that magic day,
Suggesting nobler possibilities,
For a life passed in wise serenity,
Confided with sublimely simple faith
Unto the guidance of the higher will.
In the still heavens hung the large round moon,
White on the blue-black ripples glittering,
And rolled soft floods of slumberous, misty light
Over dim fields and colorless, huge hills.
But the pure swan still bore its burden on,
The ivory shallop and the silver knight,
Pale-faced in that white lustre, neither made
For any port, but seemed to float at will
Aimlessly in a strange, unpeopled land.
So passed the short fair night, and morning broke
Upon the river where it flowed through flats
Wide, fresh, and vague in gray, uncertain dawn,
With cool air sweet from leagues of dewy grass.
Then 'midst the flush and beauty of the east,
The risen sun made all the river flow,
Smitten with light, in gold and gray again.
Rightly he judged his voyage but begun,
When the swan loitered by low banks set thick
With cresses, and red berries, and sweet herbs,
That he might pluck and taste thereof; for these
Such wondrous vigor in his frame infused,
They seemed enchanted and ambrosial fruits.
Day waxed and waned and vanished many times,
And many suns still found him journeying;
But when the sixth night darkened hill and wold,
He seemed bewitched as by a wizard's spell,
By this slow, constant progress, and deep sleep
Possessed his spirit, and his head drooped low
On the hard pillow of his silver shield.
Unconscious he was borne through silent hours,
Nor wakened by the dawn of a new day,
But in his dreamless sleep he never lost
The sense of moving forward on a stream.
Now fared the swan through tilled and cultured lands,
Dappled with sheep and kine on pastures soft,

Sprinkled with trim and pleasant cottages,
With men and women working noiselessly,
As in a picture; nearer then they drew,
And sounds of rural labor, spoken words,
Sir Lohengrin might hear, but still he slept,
Nor saw the shining turrets of a town,
Gardens and castles, domes and cross-topped spires
Fair in the distance, and the flowing stream,
Cleaving its liquid path 'midst many men,
And glittering galleries filled with courtly folk,
Ranged for a tourney-show in open air.
Ah! what a miracle it seemed to these,—
The white bird bearing on the river's breast
That curious, sparkling shallop, and within
The knight in silver armor, with bared head,
And crisp hair blown about his angel face,
Asleep upon his shield! They gazed on him
As on the incarnate spirit of pure faith,
And as the very ministrant of God.
But one great damsel throned beside a king,
With coroneted head and white, wan face,
Flushed suddenly, and clasped her hands in prayer,
And raised large, lucid eyes in thanks to Heaven.
Then, in his dreamless slumber, Lohengrin,
Feeling the steady motion of the boat
Suddenly cease, awoke. Refreshed, alert,
He knew at once that he had reached his port,
And saw that peerless maiden thanking Heaven
For his own advent, and his heart leaped up
Into his throat, and love o'ermastered him.
After the blare of flourished trumpets died,
A herald thus proclaimed the tournament:
'Greetings and glory to the majesty
Of the imperial Henry. By his grace,
This tourney has been granted to the knight,
Frederick of Telramund, who claims the hand
Of Lady Elsie, Duchess of Brabant,
His ward, and stands prepared to prove in arms
His rights against all champions in the lists,
Whom his unwilling mistress may select.
Sir Frederick, Lord of Telramund, is here:
What champion will espouse the lady's cause?'
Sir Frederick, huge in stature and in bulk,
In gleaming armor terribly equipped,
Advanced defiant, as the herald ceased.
Then Lohengrin, with spear and shield in hand,
Sprang lightly, from his shallop, in the lists.
His beaver raised disclosed his ardent face,
His whole soul shining from inspired eyes.
With cast-back head, sun-smitten silver mail,
Quivering with spirit, light, and life, he stood,
And flung his gauntlet at Sir Frederick's feet,

Crying with shrill, clear voice that rang again,
'Sir Lohengrin adopts the lady's cause.'
Then these with shock of conflict couched their spears
In deadly combat; but their weapons clanged
Harmless against their mail impregnable,
Or else were nimbly foiled by dexterous shields.
Unequal and unjust it seemed at first,—
The slender boy matched with the warrior huge,
Who bore upon him with the skill and strength
Of a tried conqueror; but the stranger knight
Displayed such agile grace in parrying blows,
Such fiery valor dealing his own strokes,
That men looked on in wonder, and his foe
Was hardly put upon it for his life.
Thrice they gave praise, to breathe, and to prepare
For fiercer battle, and the galleries rang
With plaudits, and the names of both the knights.
And they, with spirits whetted by the strife,
Met for the fourth, last time, and fenced and struck,
And the keen lance of Lohengrin made way,
Between the meshes of Sir Frederick's mail,
Through cuirass and through jerkin, to the flesh,
With pain so sharp and sudden that he fell.
Then Henry threw his warder to the ground,
And cried the stranger knight had won the day;
And all the lesser voices, following his,
Called, ' Lohengrin—Sir Lohengrin hath won!'
He, flushed with victory, standing in the lists,
Deafened with clamor of his very name,
Reëchoed to the heavens, felt himself
Alone and alien, and would fain float back
Unto the temple, had he not recalled
The fair, great damsel throned beside the king.
But lo! the swan had vanished, and the boat
He fancied he descried a tiny star,
Glimmering in the shining distances.
'His Majesty would greet Sir Lohengrin;
And Lady Elsie, Duchess of Brabant,
Would thank him for his prowess.' Thus proclaimed
The herald, while the unknown knight was led
To the imperial throne. Then Elsie spake:
'Thou hast redeemed my life from misery;
How may I worthily reward or thank?
Be thou the nearest to our ducal throne,
The highest knight of Limburg and Brabant,
The greatest gentleman,— unless thy rank,
In truth, be suited to thine own deserts,
And thou, a prince, art called to higher aims.'
'Madam, my thanks are rather due to Fate,
For having chosen so poor an instrument
For such a noble end. A knight am I,
The champion of the helpless and oppressed,

Bound by fast vows to own no other name
Than Lohengrin, the Stranger, in this land,
And to depart when asked my race or rank.
Trusting in God I came, and, trusting Him,
I must remain, for all my fate hath changed,
All my desires and hopes, since I am here.'

So ended that great joust, and in the days
Thereafter Elsie and Sir Lohengrin,
United by a circumstance so strange,
Loved and were wedded. A more courteous duke,
A braver chevalier, Brabant ne'er saw.
Such grace breathed from his person and his deeds,
Such simple innocence and faith looked forth
From eyes well-nigh too beautiful for man,
That whom he met, departed as his friend.
But Elsie, bound to him by every bond
Of love and honor and vast gratitude,
Being of lesser faith and confidence,
Tortured herself with envious jealousies,
Misdoubting her own beauty, and her power
To win and to retain so great a heart.
Each year Sir Lohengrin proclaimed a joust
In memory of the tourney where he won
His lovely Duchess, and his lance prevailed
Against all lesser knights. When his twain sons,
Loyal and brave and gentle as their sire,
Had grown to stalwart men, and his one girl,
Eyed like himself and as his Duchess fair,
Floramie, grew to gracious maidenhood,
He gave a noble tourney, and o'erthrew
The terrible and potent Duke of Cleves.
'Ha!' sneered the Dame of Cleves, 'this Lohengrin
May be a knight adroit and valorous,
But who knows whence he sprang?' and lightly laughed,
Seeing the hot blood kindle Elsie's cheek.
That night Sir Lohengrin sought rest betimes,
By hours of crowded action quite forespent,
And found the Duchess Elsie on her couch,
Staining the silken broideries with her tears.
'Why dost thou weep?' he questioned tenderly,
Kissing her delicate hands, and parting back
Her heavy yellow hair from brow and face.
'The Duchess Anne of Cleves hath wounded me.'
'Sweet, am not I at hand to comfort thee?'
And he caressed her as an ailing child,
Until she smiled and slept. But the next night
He found her weeping, and he questioned her,
With the same answer, and again she slept;
Then the third night he asked her why she grieved
And she uprising, white, with eager eyes,
Cried, 'Lohengrin, my lord, my only love,

For our sons' sake, who know not whence they spring,
Our daughter who remains a virgin yet,
Let me not hear folk girding at thy race.
I know thy blood is royal, I have faith;
But tell me all, that I may publish it
Unto our dukedom.' Hurt and wondering,
He answered simply, 'I am Lohengrin,
Son to Sir Percivale, and ministrant
Within the holy temple of the Grail.
I would thy faith were greater, this is all.
Now must I bid farewell.' ' O Lohengrin,
What have I done?' She clung about his neck,
And moistened all his beard with streaming tears;
But he with one long kiss relaxed her arms
Calmly from his embrace, and stood alone.
' Blame not thy nature now with vain reproofs.
This also is our fate: in all things else.
We have submitted,—let us yield in this,
With no less grace now that God tries our hearts,
Than when He sent us victory and love.'
' Yea, go, — you never loved me,' faltered she;
' I will not blame my nature, but your own.
Through all our wedded years I doubted you;
Your eyes have never brightened meeting mine
As I have seen them in religious zeal,
Or in exalted hours of victory.'
A look of perfect weariness, unmixed
With wrath or grief, o'erspread the knight's pale face;
But with the pity that a god might show
Towards one with ills impossible to him,
He drew anear, caressing her, and sighed:
' Through all our wedded years you doubted me?
Poor child, poor child! and it has come to this.
Thank Heaven, I gave no cause for your mistrust,
Desiring never an ideal more fair
Of womanhood than was my chosen wife.'
She, broken, sobbing, leaned her delicate head
On his great shoulder, and remorseful cried,
' O loyal, honest, simple Lohengrin,
Thy wife has been unworthy: this is why
Thou sayest farewell in accents cold and strange,
With alien eyes that even now behold
Things fairer, better, than her mournful face.'
But he with large allowance answered her:
'If this be truth, it is because I feel
That I belong no more unto myself,
Neither to thee, for God withdraws my soul
Beyond all earthly passions unto Him.
Now that we know our doom, with serious calm,
Beside thee I will sit, till break of day,
Thus holding thy chill hand and tell thee all.
This will resign thee, for I cannot think

How any human soul that hath beheld
Life's compensations and its miracles,
Can fail to trust in what is yet to come.'
Then he began from that auroral hour
When he first heard the temple bell, and told
The wonder of the swan that came for him,
His journey down the stream, the tournament,
His strength unwonted, combating the knight
Who towered above him with superior force
Of flesh and sinew,— how he prayed through all,
Imploring God to let the just cause win,
Unconscious of the close-thronged galleries,
Feeling two eyes alone that burned his soul.
She knew the rest. Therewith he kissed her brow
And ended,—' Now the knights will take me back
Into the temple; all who keep their vows,
Are welcomed there again to peace and rest.
There will my years fall from me like a cloak,
And I will stand again at manhood's prime.
Then when all errors of the flesh are purged
From these I loved here, they may follow me,
Unto perpetual worship and to peace.'
She lay quite calm, and smiling heard his voice,
Already grown to her remote and changed,
And when he ceased, arose and gazed in awe
On his transfigured face and kissed his brow,
And understood, accepting all her fate.
Anon he called his children, and to these:
'Farewell, sweet Florance and dear Percivale;
Here is my horn, and here mine ancient sword,—
Guard them with care and win with them repute.
Here, Elsie, is the ring my mother gave,—
Part with it never; and thou, Floramie,
Take thou my love,—I have naught else to give;
Be of strong faith in him thou mean'st to wed.'
So these communed together, till the night
Died from the brightening skies, and in the east
The morning star hung in aerial rose,
And the blue deepened; while moist lawn and hedge
Breathed dewy freshness through the windows oped.
Then on the stream, that nigh the palace flowed,
A stainless swan approached them; in its beak
It held a silver chain, and drew thereby
A dainty, carven shallop after it,
Embossed with silver and with ivory.
Followed by waved farewells and streaming eyes,
Sir Lohengrin embarked and floated forth
Unto perpetual worship and to peace.

Emma Lazarus

Lohengrin: Proem

THE alert and valiant faith that could respond,
Upon life's threshold, to the highest call,
Unquestioning of what might lie beyond,—
Courage afield and courtesy in hall,
And sweet, unbroken patience therewithal,
And simple loyalty,— can these things be
The virtues that have died with chivalry?

The lapsing stream that leads to love and fate,
Now mystic-shadowed, and now broad and free,
Reflecting all the gold of heaven's gate;
The snowy bird's symbolic purity,
The toilsome contest and the victory,
The troubled joy of life, and after these,
The crowning guerdon of the perfect peace,—

These dreams have filled my dazzled sense and brain,
With images so vivid that at last
I wake to life and find them all again
Repeated in the present as the past,
The hues recolored and the forms recast;
And in familiar eyes I see outshine
The old heroic faith in love divine.

No empty fable of a day long dead,
No baseless vision of some sanguine saint,
No legend, only half remembered,
Of prowess obsolete and virtues quaint;
But be this rather a reflection faint
Of that which taught me how the near and real
Surpass in strength and beauty the ideal.

Emma Lazarus

Long Island Sound

I see it as it looked one afternoon
In August,-by a fresh soft breeze o'erblown.
The swiftness of the tide, the light thereon,
A far-off sail, white as a crescent moon.
The shining waters with pale currents strewn,
The quiet fishing-smacks, the Eastern cove,
The semi-circle of its dark, green grove.
The luminous grasses, and the merry sun
In the grave sky; the sparkle far and wide,
Laughter of unseen children, cheerful chirp
Of crickets, and low lisp of rippling tide,
Light summer clouds fantastical as sleep
Changing unnoted while I gazed thereon.
All these fair sounds and sights I made my own.

Emma Lazarus

Magnetism

By the impulse of my will,
By the red flame in my blood,
By me nerves' electric thrill,
By the passion of my mood,
My concentrated desire,
My undying, desperate love,
I ignore Fate, I defy her,
Iron-hearted Death I move.
When the town lies numb with sleep,
Here, round-eyed I sit; my breath
Quickly stirred, my flesh a-creep,
And I force the gates of death.
I nor move nor speak-you'd deem
From my quiet face and hands,
I were tranced-but in her dream,
SHE responds, she understands.
I have power on what is not,
Or on what has ceased to be,
From that deep, earth-hollowed spot,
I can lift her up to me.
And, or ere I am aware
Through the closed and curtained door,
Comes my lady white and fair,
And embraces me once more.
Though the clay clings to her gown,
Yet all heaven is in her eyes;
Cool, kind fingers press mine eyes,
To my soul her soul replies.
But when breaks the common dawn,
And the city wakes-behold!
My shy phantom is withdrawn,
And I shiver lone and cold.
And I know when she has left,
She is stronger far than I,
And more subtly spun her weft,
Than my human wizardry.
Though I force her to my will,
By the red flame in my blood,
By my nerves' electric thrill,
By the passion of my mood,
Yet all day a ghost am I.
Nerves unstrung, spent will, dull brain.
I achieve, attain, but die,
And she claims me hers again.

Emma Lazarus

Marjorie’s Wooing

THE corn was yellow upon the cliffs,
The fluttering grass was green to see,
The waves were blue as the sky above,
And the sun it was shining merrily.

'Marjorie, Marjorie! do you love me,
Faithfully, truly as I love you?'
The little lass reddened, and whitened, and smiled,
And answered him with her clear eyes of blue.

'Marjorie, you are but gentle and young;
I am too old and too rough for you.'
The little lass, trustfully giving her hand,
Answered, 'I love you, faithful and true.'

'Marjorie, Marjorie, when shall we wed?'
'As soon as you will it,—to-morrow, to-day.'
'Marjorie, Marjorie, if you knew all,
Would you still say me the words that you say?'

'If I knew all?' said the little lass,
'I know you are Kenneth, the brave and strong;
I know that I love, and that you are good:
I will know it e'er, and have known it long.'

'Marjorie, Marjorie, if I should say
I fled from prison to come to you;
I stabbed a man all for jealous love;
I am not noble, nor good, nor true?'

'Kenneth, your eyes would belie your words,'
Boldly and bravely the lass replied.
'Why should God fill them with love and truth,
And your heart with cruelty, hate, and pride?'

'Marjorie, Marjorie, if I should say
That I loved many ere I loved you?'
'Ere you had seen me,' Marjorie said,
' How could you know I was loving and true?'

'Marjorie, Marjorie, if I should say
That I was outcast on land and on sea?'
'All the more reason,' the little maid said,
' Why you should ever be loved by me.'

'Marjorie, Marjorie, if I should say
That I was noble, and titled, and grand;
Lord of the woods, and the castle, and park,
Lord of the acres of corn o'er the land?'

Dropping a courtesy, the little lass said,
'Still should I love you and ever be true;

But if you found me too lowly and poor,
I should bid farewell and go die for you.'

'Marjorie, darling, I tell you then,
This is the truth, and the land is mine,
And the castle, the park, and the vessel far off,
And whatever is mine, is thine, dear, thine!'

Emma Lazarus

Marriage Bells

Music and silver chimes and sunlit air,
Freighted with the scent of honeyed orange-flower;
Glad, friendly festal faces everywhere.
She, rapt from all in this unearthly hour,
With cloudlike, cast-back veil and faint-flushed cheek,
In bridal beauty moves as in a trance
Alone with him, and fears to breathe, to speak,
Lest the rare, subtle spell dissolve perchance.
But he upon that floral head looks down,
Noting the misty eyes, the grave sweet brow--
Doubts if her bliss be perfect as his own,
And dedicates anew with inward vow
His soul unto her service, to repay
Richly the sacrifice she yields this day.

Emma Lazarus

Mater Amabilis

Down the goldenest of streams,
Tide of dreams,
The fair cradled man-child drifts;
Sways with cadenced motion slow,
To and fro,
As the mother-foot poised lightly, falls and lifts.

He, the firstling,-he, the light
Of her sight,-
He, the breathing pledge of love,
'Neath the holy passion lies,
Of her eyes,-
Smiles to feel the warm, life-giving ray above.

She believes that in his vision,
Skies elysian
O'er an angel-people shine.
Back to gardens of delight,
Taking flight,
His auroral spirit basks in dreams divine.

But she smiles through anxious tears;
Unborn years
Pressing forward, she perceives.
Shadowy muffled shapes, they come
Deaf and dumb,
Bringing what? dry chaff and tares, or full-eared sheaves?

What for him shall she invoke?
Shall the oak
Bind the man's triumphant brow?
Shall his daring foot alight
On the height?
Shall he dwell amidst the humble and the low?

Through what tears and sweat and pain,
Must he gain
Fruitage from the tree of life?
Shall it yield him bitter flavor?
Shall its savor
Be as manna midst the turmoil and the strife?

In his cradle slept and smiled
Thus the child
Who as Prince of Peace was hailed.
Thus anigh the mother breast,
Lulled to rest,
Child-Napoleon down the lilied river sailed.

Crowned or crucified-the same
Glows the flame
Of her deathless love divine.

Still the blessed mother stands,
In all lands,
As she watched beside thy cradle and by mine.

Whatso gifts the years bestow,
Still men know,
While she breathes, lives one who sees
(Stand they pure or sin-defiled)
But the child
Whom she crooned to sleep and rocked upon her knee.

Emma Lazarus

Matins

Gray earth, gray mist, gray sky:
Through vapors hurrying by,
Larger than wont, on high
Floats the horned, yellow moon.
Chill airs are faintly stirred,
And far away is heard,
Of some fresh-awakened bird,
The querulous, shrill tune.

The dark mist hides the face
Of the dim land: no trace
Of rock or river's place
In the thick air is drawn;
But dripping grass smells sweet,
And rustling branches meet,
And sounding water greet
The slow, sure, sacred dawn.

Past is the long black night,
With its keen lightnings white,
Thunder and floods: new light
The glimmering low east streaks.
The dense clouds part: between
Their jagged rents are seen
Pale reaches blue and green,
As the mirk curtain breaks.

Above the shadowy world,
Still more and more unfurled,
The gathered mists upcurled
Like phantoms melt and pass.
In clear-obscure revealed,
Brown wood, gray stream, dark field:
Fresh, healthy odors yield
Wet furrows, flowers, and grass.

The sudden, splendid gleam
Of one thin, golden beam
Shoots from the feathered rim
Of yon hill crowned with woods.
Down its embowered side,
As living waters slide,
So the great morning tide
Follows in sunny floods.

From bush and hedge and tree
Joy, unrestrained and free,
Breaks forth in melody,
Twitter and chirp and song:
Alive the festal air
With gauze-winged creatures fair,
That flicker everywhere,

Dart, poise, and flash along.

The shining mists are gone,
Slight films of gold swift-blown
Before the strong, bright sun
Or the deep-colored sky:
A world of life and glow
Sparkles and basks below,
Where the soft meads a-row,
Hoary with dew-fall, lie.

Does not the morn break thus,
Swift, bright, victorious,
With new skies cleared for us,
Over the soul storm-tost?
Her night was long and deep,
Strange visions vexed her sleep,
Strange sorrows bade her weep:
Her faith in dawn was lost.

No halt, no rest for her,
The immortal wanderer
From sphere to higher sphere,
Toward the pure source of day.
The new light shames her fears,
Her faithlessness, her tears,
As the new sun appears
To light her godlike way.

Emma Lazarus

Morning

GRAY-VESTED Dawn, with flameless, tranquil eye,
Cool hands, and dewy lips, is in the sky,
A sober nun, with starry rosary.

With eyes downcast and with uplifted palm,
She seems to whisper now her silent psalm;
Beneath her gaze the sleeping earth is calm.

Her prayer is ended, and she riseth slow,
And o'er the hills she quietly doth go,
Noiseless and gentle as the midnight snow.

Then suddenly the pale-east blushes red,
The flowers to see upraise a sleepy head,
The rosy colors deepen, grow, and spread.

A cool breeze whispers: 'She is coming now!'
And then the radiant colors burn and glow,
The white cast blushes over cheek and brow,

And glorious on the hills the Morning stands,
Her saffron hair back-blown from rosy bands,
And light and joy and fragrance in her hands.

Her foot has touched the hill-tops, and they shine;
She comes,— the willow rustles and the pine;
She smiles upon the fields a smile divine,

And all the earth smiles back; from mount to vale,
From oak to shuddering grass, from glen to dale,
Wet fields and flowers and glistening brooks cry 'Hail!'

Emma Lazarus

Niagara

Thou art a giant altar, where the Earth
Must needs send up her thanks to Him above
Who did create her. Nature cometh here
To lay its offerings upon thy shrine.
The morning and the evening shower down
Bright jewels, -- changeful opals, em'ralds fair.
The burning noon sends floods of molten gold,
The calm night crowns thee with its host of stars,
The moon enfolds thee with her silver veil,
And o'er thee e'er is arched the rainbow's span, --
The gorgeous marriage-ring of Earth and Heaven.
While ever from the holy altar grand
Ascends the incense of the mist and spray,
That mounts to God with thy wild roar of praise

Emma Lazarus

Off Rough Point

We sat at twilight nigh the sea,
The fog hung gray and weird.
Through the thick film uncannily
The broken moon appeared.

We heard the billows crack and plunge,
We saw nor waves nor ships.
Earth sucked the vapors like a sponge,
The salt spray wet our lips.

Closer the woof of white mist drew,
Before, behind, beside.
How could that phantom moon break through,
Above that shrouded tide?

The roaring waters filled the ear,
A white blank foiled the sight.
Close-gathering shadows near, more near,
Brought the blind, awful night.

O friends who passed unseen, unknown!
O dashing, troubled sea!
Still stand we on a rock alone,
Walled round by mystery.

Emma Lazarus

On A Tuft Of Grass

WEAK, slender blades of tender green,
With little fragrance, little sheen,
What maketh ye so dear to all?
Nor bud, nor flower, nor fruit have ye,
So tiny, it can only be
'Mongst fairies ye are counted tall.

No beauty is in this,— ah, yea,
E'en as I gaze on you to-day,
Your hue and fragrance bear me back
Into the green, wide fields of old,
With clear, blue air, and manifold
Bright buds and flowers in blossoming track.

All bent one way like flickering flame,
Each blade caught sunlight as it came,
Then rising, saddened into shade;
A changeful, wavy, harmless sea,
Whose billows none could bitterly
Reproach with wrecks that they had made.

No gold ever was buried there
More rich, more precious, or more fair
Than buttercups with yellow gloss.
No ships of mighty forest trees
E'er foundered in these guiltless seas
Of grassy waves and tender moss.

Ah, no! ah, no! not guiltless still,
Green waves on meadow and on hill,
Not wholly innocent are ye;
For what dead hopes and loves, what graves,
Lie underneath your placid waves,
While breezes kiss them lovingly!

Calm sleepers with sealed eyes lie there;
They see not, neither feel nor care
If over them the grass be green.
And some sleep here who ne'er knew rest,
Until the grass grew o'er their breast,
And stilled the aching pain within.

Not all the sorrow man hath known,
Not all the evil he hath done,
Have ever cast thereon a stain.
It groweth green and fresh and light,
As in the olden garden bright,
Beneath the feet of Eve and Cain.

It flutters, bows, and bends, and quivers,
And creeps through forests and by rivers,
Each blade with dewy brightness wet,

So soft, so quiet, and so fair,
We almost dream of sleeping there,
Without or sorrow or regret.

Emma Lazarus

On The Proposal To Erect A Monument In England To Lord Byron

The grass of fifty Aprils hath waved green
Above the spent heart, the Olympian head,
The hands crost idly, the shut eyes unseen,
Unseeing, the locked lips whose song hath fled;
Yet mystic-lived, like some rich, tropic flower,
His fame puts forth fresh blossoms hour by hour;
Wide spread the laden branches dropping dew
On the low, laureled brow misunderstood,
That bent not, neither bowed, until subdued
By the last foe who crowned while he o'erthrew.

Fair was the Easter Sabbath morn when first
Men heard he had not wakened to its light:
The end had come, and time had done its worst,
For the black cloud had fallen of endless night.
Then in the town, as Greek accosted Greek,
'T was not the wonted festal words to speak,
'Christ is arisen,' but 'Our chief is gone,'
With such wan aspect and grief-smitten head
As when the awful cry of 'Pan is dead!'
Filled echoing hill and valley with its moan.

'I am more fit for death than the world deems,'
So spake he as life's light was growing dim,
And turned to sleep as unto soothing dreams.
What terrors could its darkness hold for him,
Familiar with all anguish, but with fear
Still unacquainted? On his martial bier
They laid a sword, a helmet, and a crown-
Meed of the warrior, but not these among
His voiceless lyre, whose silent chords unstrung
Shall wait-how long?-for touches like his own.

An alien country mourned him as her son,
And hailed him hero: his sole, fitting tomb
Were Theseus' temple or the Parthenon,
Fondly she deemed. His brethren bare him home,
Their exiled glory, past the guarded gate
Where England's Abbey shelters England's great.
Afar he rests whose very name hath shed
New lustre on her with the song he sings.
So Shakespeare rests who scorned to lie with kings,
Sleeping at peace midst the unhonored dead.

And fifty years suffice to overgrow
With gentle memories the foul weeds of hate
That shamed his grave. The world begins to know
Her loss, and view with other eyes his fate.
Even as the cunning workman brings to pass
The sculptor's thought from out the unwieldy mass
Of shapeless marble, so Time lops away
The stony crust of falsehood that concealed

His just proportions, and, at last revealed,
The statue issues to the light of day,

Most beautiful, most human. Let them fling
The first stone who are tempted even as he,
And have not swerved. When did that rare soul sing
The victim's shame, the tyrant's eulogy,
The great belittle, or exalt the small,
Or grudge his gift, his blood, to disenthrall
The slaves of tyranny or ignorance?
Stung by fierce tongues himself, whose rightful fame
Hath he reviled? Upon what noble name
Did the winged arrows of the barbed wit glance?

The years' thick, clinging curtains backward pull,
And show him as he is, crowned with bright beams,
'Beauteous, and yet not all as beautiful
As he hath been or might be; Sorrow seems
Half of his immortality.' He needs
No monument whose name and song and deeds
Are graven in all foreign hearts; but she
His mother, England, slow and last to wake,
Needs raise the votive shaft for her fame's sake:
Hers is the shame if such forgotten be!

Emma Lazarus

Orpheus

ORPHEUS.
LAUGHTER and dance, and sounds of harp and lyre,
Piping of flutes, singing of festal songs,
Ribbons of flame from flaunting torches, dulled
By the broad summer sunshine, these had filled
Since the high noon the pillared vestibules,
The peristyles and porches, in the house
Of the bride's father. Maidens, garlanded
With rose and myrtle dedicate to Love,
Adorned with chaplets fresh the bride, and veiled
The shining head and wistful, girlish face,
Ineffable sweetness of divided lips,
Large light of clear, gray eyes, low, lucid brows,
White as a cloud, beneath pale, clustering gold.
When sunless skies uncertain twilight cast,
That makes a friend's face as an alien's strange,
Investing with a foreign mystery
The dear green fields about our very home.
Then waiting stood the gilded chariot
Before the porch, and from the vine-wreathed door,
Issued the white-veiled bride, while jocund youths
And mænads followed her with dance and song.
She came with double glory; for her lord,
Son of Apollo and Calliope,
Towered beside her, beautiful in limb
And feature, as though formed to magic strains,
Like the Bœotian city, that arose
In airy structures to Amphion's lute.
The light serene shone from his brow and eyes,
Of one whose lofty thoughts keep consonance
With the celestial music of the spheres.
His smile was fluent, and his speech outsang
The cadences of soft-stringed instruments.
He to the chariot led Eurydice,
And these twain, mounting with their paranymph,
Drove onward through the dusky twilit fields,
Preceded by the nymphs and singing youths,
And boys diffusing light and odors warm,
With flaming brands of aromatic woods,
And matrons bearing symbols of the life
Of careful wives, the distaff and the sieve;
And followed by the echoes of their songs,
The fragrance crushed from moist and trodden grass,
The blessing of the ever-present gods,
Whom they invoked with earnest hymns and prayer.
From Orpheus' portico, festooned with vines,
Issued a flood of rare, ambrosial light,
As though Olympian portals stood ajar,
And Hymen, radiant by his torch's flame,
Mystic with saffron vest and purple, stood
With hands munificent to greet and bless.
Ripe fruits were poured upon the married pair

Alighting, and the chariot wheels were burnt,
A token that the bride returned no more
Unto her father's house. With step resolved,
She crossed the threshold soft with flowers, secure
That his heroic soul who guided her,
Was potent and alert to grace her life,
With noble outlines and ideal hues,
Uplifting it to equal height with his.
EPITHALAMIUM. TO ZEUS.
Because thou art enthroned beyond our reach,
Behind the brightest and the farthest star,
And silence is as eloquent as speech,
To thee who knowest us for what we are,
We bring thee naught save brief and simple prayer,
Strong in its naked, frank sincerity.
Send sacred joys of marriage to this pair,
With fertile increase and prosperity.
Three nymphs had met beneath an oak that cast
Cool, dappled shadow on the glowing grass,
And liquid gleam of the translucent brook.
The air was musical with frolic sounds
Of feminine voices, and of laughter blithe.
Patines of sunshine fell like mottled gold
On the rose-white of bright bare limbs and neck,
On flowing, snowy mantles, and again
With sudden splendor on the gloriole
Of warm, rich hair. The fairest nymph reclined
Beneath the tree, and leaned her yellow head,
With its crisp, clustering rings, against the trunk,
And dipped her pure feet in the colorless brook,
Stirring the ripples into circles wide,
With cool, delicious plashings in the stream.
Her young companions lay upon the grass,
With indolent eyes half closed, and parted lips
Half-smiling, in the languor of the noon.
But suddenly these twain, arising, cried,
Startled and sharply, 'Lo, Eurydice,
Behold!' and she, uplifting frightened eyes,
Saw a strange shepherd watching with bold glance.
Veiling their faces with their mantles light,
Her sisters fled swift-footed, with shrill cries,
Adown the meadow, but her wet feet clung
To the dry grasses and the earthy soil.
'Eurydice, I love thee! fear me not,
For I am Aristæus, with gray groves
Of hoary olives, and innumerous flocks,
And precious swarms of yellow-vested bees.'
But she with sudden strength eluding him,
Sprang o'er the flowery turf, with back-blown hair,
And wing-like garments, shortened breath, and face
Kindled with shame and terror. In her flight
She ran through fatal flowers and tangled weeds,

And thick rank grass beside a stagnant pool,
When, with a keen and breathless cry of pain,
Abrupt she fell amidst the tall, green reeds.
Then Aristæus reached her, as a snake
Crept back in sinuous lines amidst the slime.
Desire was changed to pity, when he saw
The wounded dryad in her agony
Strive vainly to escape, repelling him
With feeble arms. 'Forgive me, nymph,' he cried;
' I will not touch, save with most reverent hands,
Thy sacred form. But let me bear thee hence,
And soothe thy bruise with healing herbs. 'Too late,
Leave me,' she sighed, 'and lead thou Orpheus here,
That I may see him ere the daylight fails.'
He left her pale with suffering, —earth seemed strange
Unto her eyes, who knew she looked her last
On level-stretching meadows, hazy hills,
And all the light and color of the sky.
Brief as a dream she saw her happy life,
Her father's face, her mother's blessed eyes,
The hero who, unheralded, appeared,
And all was changed,— all things put forth a voice,
As in the season of the singing birds.
She looked around revived, and saw again
The lapsing river and abiding sky.
Across the sunny fields came Aristæus,
With Orpheus following,— and after these,
Sad nymphs and heroes grave with sympathy.
Quite calm she lay, and almost wished to die
Before they reached her, if the throbbing pain
Of limb and heart could only thus be stilled.
But Orpheus hastened to her side, and mourned,
'Eurydice, Eurydice! Remain, —
For there is no delight of speech nor song
Among the dead. Will the gods jest with me,
And call this life, which must forevermore
Be but a void, a hunger, a desire,
A stretching out of empty hands to grasp
What earth nor sea nor heaven will restore?
Is this the life that I conceived and sang,
Rich with all noble opportunities
And beautiful realities?' But she:
'Brave Orpheus, search thou not the eternal gods,
Surely they love us dearer than we know.
Do thou refrain, for yet I hold my faith.
When I am gone, thou still wilt have thy lyre;
Love it and cherish,— it is Fate's best gift,
And with death's clearer vision, I can see
That in all ages men will be upraised
Nearer to gods through this than through aught else.
My death may but inspire a larger note,
A passionate cadence to thy strain, which else

Were not quite human, and thus incomplete.
And with this thought I am content to die.
Cease not to sing to me when I am gone;
Thy voice will reach me in the farthest spheres,
Or wake me out of silence. Now begin,
That I may float on those celestial waves
Into the darkness, as I oft have longed.'
ORPHEUS.
Once in a wild, bright vision, came to me
Beautiful music, luminous as morn,
An effluence of light and rapture born,
With eyes as full of splendor as the sea;
Dazzling as youth, with pinions frail as air,
Yet potent to uplift and soar as prayer.
Again I see her, cypress in her wreath,
Sad with all grave and tender mysteries;
Tears in her unimaginable eyes,
That look their first with wondering awe on Death.
Never again, in all the after years,
Will her lips laugh with utter mirthfulness;
Nor the strange longing in her eyes grow less,
Nor any time dispel their mist of tears.
Yea, with new numbers she completes her strain,
A song unsung before by gods or men;
But she hath lost, ah! lost for evermore,
The ringing note of joy ineffable,
The high assurance proud, that all is well,
The glad refrain that pealed from shore to shore.
O lyre, thou hast done with joyous things,
Triumphant ecstasies, exultant song;
Of subtle pain, keen anguish, hopeless wrong,
I fashion now another of thy strings,
And strike thee with a strong hand passionate,
Into a fuller music, adequate
Unto a soul that seeks insatiably,
With fond, illusive hope and faith divine;
For through all ages will my soul seek thine,
Eurydice, my lost Eurydice!
What solace to lament with empty hands
And smitten heart, above a mound of earth,
Vivid with mockery of perpetual flowers,
O'er one small urn that holds beneath its lid,
With overmeasure, all the flameless dust
And soulless ashes of our love? Yet this
Was Orpheus' life, to mourn beside the grave,
From his stringed lyre compelling wild response
And thrilling intonation of his grief,
That made the hearts of gnarled and knotty oaks
Ache as with human sympathy, and rived
The adamantine centre of the rock,
And lured the forest beasts, and hushed the birds,
Mavis and lark, while with wide, awful wings,

The eagle shadowed his exalted brow.
'Surely,' he cried, 'the senseless dust hears not,
More than the burnt brand hears old natural sounds
Innumerable rustle of young leaves.
It cannot be that only these remain,
The ashes of her glittering limbs, warm flesh,
And blessed hair,— my love had more than these
Where is the vital soul, that was to me
An inspiration and an influence?
The gods are not unstable like rash man,
Aimlessly to create and discreate,
With cruel and capricious fantasy,
For thus the immaculate skies would be a lie;
Eurydice is but withdrawn from me,
And disembodied, while mine eyesight blinds,
My senses are a hindrance, and obstruct
The accurate perception of my soul.
When mine own spirit, nightly disenthralled,
Soars to the land of dreams, whose boundaries,
By day, loom infinitely far and vague,
And yet, at night, become our very home,—
There still I see thee with the same bright form,
The same auroral eyes that made for me
Perpetual morning; and I stretch mine arms
Hungering after thee, and, calling, wake
Unto the vapid glare of languid dawn.
Yet all these things address my very soul,
Telling it that thou art not dead; for death
Is but the incarnation of man's fears;
Gods do not recognize it. If thou art
(As I have faith) in the known universe,
Yea, though it be in the extremest land,
Beyond the sunset, with its shining isles,
I will go forth and seek thee, nor will cease
To mourn thee and desire, till I have found.'
Thus Orpheus fared across the full-fed streams
Of Hebrus and of Strymon, and beyond
The purple outlines and aerial crags,
Snow-glittering of Scardus, Rhodope,
And grand Orbelus; through fair, fertile fields
Of Thessaly with increase of ripe corn,
Through Attica, Bœotia and Eubœa,
And southward to the royal-citied state,
Beautiful Corinth, throned upon the base
Of green Acrocorinthus, whose soft slope
Was dedicate with temples to the gods,
And towering over all the sacred shrine
Of Aphrodite. Upward from the town
The mountain rose defensive, where the walls
Of Corinth ended, and beyond the gates,
The radiant plain of the Corinthian Gulf
Stretched infinitely. Orpheus rested here,

Till he bethought him to ascend the mount,
With offerings at Aphrodite's shrine—
Not sanguine victims, but fresh myrtle wreath
And faultless rose—to sue the oracle
For help and guidance.
All the town was still,
The bright red band of sunrise lit the sky
Above the dark blue gulf, and Orpheus heard
A hundred birds saluting, from the brake,
Aurora, and cool rush of waterfalls.
Made murmurous music, while Athené breathed
The vigor of the morning in his soul.
Up the steep mountain side he passed, beyond
The silver growth of olives, and the belt
Of pines, to where the foam-white temple stood,
Smitten at once by all the beams of morn.
He saw the double peak, rose-white with snow
And early sunshine, of Parnassus cleave
The northern sky, and sacred Helicon
Erect its head, crowned with the Muses' grove,
The Bay of Crissa and Corinthian Gulf,
Below flashed restless, and a path of gold
Divided with clear, tremulous light the waves.
From the large beauty of the morn, he went
Into the holy limits of the shrine,
With warm air heavy with the odorous rose.
ORPHEUS.
I put into my prayer to thee, O mother,
The tumult and the passion of the ocean,
The unflecked purity of winnowed foam-wreaths;
To thee who sprang from these, the incarnation
Of all the huge sea holds of grace or splendor,
With its own light between thine amorous eyelids.
For I, in thy most sacred cause a pilgrim,
Have wandered tireless, from Thrace to Corinth,
'Midst foreign scenes and alien men and women.
And at my right hand Grief incessant follows,
And at my left walks Memory with the semblance
Of lost Eurydice's ethereal beauty.
Infatuate I gaze, until the vision
Thrills me to madness, and I start and tremble,
Remembering also Grief is my companion.
Onward through spacious fields, by copious waters,
Through purple growth of amaranth and crocus,
And past the marble beauty of great cities,
We three have journeyed,— strangers saw me reckless,
And knew at once that I had walked with sorrow,
And that the gods had chosen me their victim.
Are all my carols useless, worse than useless?
Shall my long pilgrimage, thus unrewarded,
End at the blank, insuperable ocean?
Hast thou no wise compassion, goddess, mother?

In all the measureless years' unfathomed chances,
Is the dear past to be repeated never?
O supreme mother! crowned with blessed poppy
As well as myrtle,— bring her here, or compass
My soul with death, that elsewhere I may seek her.
He ceased, and through the temple spread a mist
Ambrosial, and above the shrine a star
Serenely brightened, and a heavenly voice
Made sweet response: ' Love guides himself thy course
To the last sea-girt rock. No worthy soul
May ever truly seek, and fail to find.'
Still southward Orpheus journeyed, till he reached
Cape Tænarus, the last bleak point of Greece,
Desolate o'er an infinite waste of waves,
While sunset lit the western sea and sky
With yellow floods of warm, diffusive light,
Kindling his serious face and earnest eyes,
And glittering on his lyre. Long time he stood,
And gazed upon the trouble of the waves,
Expectant of a word, a sign— and still
No answer made the wild, indifferent sea.
Impetuous, he smote his quivering lyre
To reckless and sonorous melody,
Vibrating o'er the watery turbulence.
Then far below its western bath, the sun
Dipped and was gone, and all the sea was gray.
Still through the air rang those imploring notes,
Unutterably plaintive— till there came
From out the ocean cave of Tænarus
The shining forms of Oceanides,
With myriad faces raised supremely fair,
And myriad arms that beckoned as he sang.
Behold! a stir amidst the frothing brine,
As though upheaved by powers submarine,
In implicate confusion, wave on wave,
Then rose with windy manes and fiery eyes,
Proudly careering, the immortal steeds,
Bearing, within the shell-shaped car, the god
Of august aspect and imperial port,
With such profusion of ambrosial locks
As curl around the very front of Zeus.
He with benign regard the minstrel viewed,
Then whirling thrice his massy trident, struck
The scarpéd promontory with its fork.
And Orpheus felt the solid basis yield,
And heard the hollow rumbling, as when earth
Rocks to her centre, and high hills spit flame.
And lo! he stood before a sulphurous throne,
Set in an open space, wherefrom there streamed
Four rivers stagnant, black. Here Ades reigned,
His very presence unto mortal sense
Oppressive as low thunder in the air.

The triple-headed guardian of his realm
Crouched at his feet, and in the dismal murk,
The hideous Harpies hovered o'er his head.
The serpent-haired Eumenides stood near,
Brow-bound with sanguine fillets, and the Fates
Wielded the distaff, spindle, and sharp shears.
The air was dense with noisome influence,
And shadowy apparitions seemed to float
Athwart the dusk. But on the infernal throne
Conspicuous in beauty, by her lord,
Persephone was seated. Wonderment
Looked from her eyes, in seeing him, no god,
Who came before his time among the dead,
Unarmed with spear or shield, a glistening lyre
Nigh slipping from the loose grasp of his hands.
'Who comes unsummoned to my realm?' began
The baleful godhead in discordant tones,
Widely reverberant; and the low, clear voice
Of Orpheus answered: 'One who would remain,
If but the impotent body could be free
To follow the desires of the soul,—
Orpheus, an unskilled singer.' 'Birth and death
Are preordained for thee, presumptuous man.
What narrow space of time the Fates accord,
'Twould best become thee to bear worthily,
With dignity, and leave the rest to them,
The end as the beginning.' 'Plead for me,
O beautiful Persephone, — behold!
Eurydice was snatched with violent hand
From out mine eager arms, and I have sought
Her image o'er the peopled earth in vain.'
Then she: 'I may not summon her, nor hope
To swerve the haughty purpose of my lord.
With influence of thy familiar voice,
If thou canst touch her spirit, she is thine.'
But Ades: 'Who recalls the dead by prayer?
They whose calm souls are once possessed by death,
Find such a solid joy in grasping firm,
After life's phantasms, this reality,
That wisdom, grief, nor love persuadeth them
Their liberated spirits to confine
With fleshly limitations. Nathless sing,—
And prove life's glittering evanescence vain,
Outweighed by death's sublime security.'
ORPHEUS.
I render thanks, eternal gods, that ye
Empower myself to call Eurydice.
Man only can fulfill his own desire;
And if I fail, the sorrow rests with me.
Ye give what we deserve; I pray alone
Ne'er to be cursed with what I have not won.
And to whom else would I intrust my lyre,

This supreme invocation to intone?
But in myself I feel the love, the power,
The lyric inspiration, while the flower
Of all my life brings forth its proper fruit,
In this my loftiest, most godlike hour.
If I could make ye feel the agony
Of the strong man, O gods, condemned to see
The light fail from dear eyes, the white lips mute,
The elusive soul take flight eternally
To where we cannot follow it nor find,
With the most subtle searchings of the mind,
With the most passionate longings of the soul,
Deaf, unresponsive as the empty wind;
Then would your pity as your power be,
'Twould crown us all with immortality,
And grace us with completeness, make us whole,
Worthy to be the peers of deity.
For we are mighty now to slay and bless,
Yea, gifted with strange strength of steadfastness,
To conquer bodiless and viewless foes
Within ourselves, yet in our helplessness,
As children, in the presence of this Death,
Whom nor revolt nor patience conquereth,
Implacable, with grim mouth fastened close,
That with no hope our anguish answereth.
Resound with wildest utterance, O my lyre;
Let each note be a living flame of fire,
To reach her, to burn through her, to compel,
Strong with the infinite strength of my desire.
I am no god, yet Fate, Eurydice,
A goddess for my slave hath given me,—
Immortal Music, pure, ineffable;
And I send her, my handmaid, after thee.
If all wherein I put my faith as sure,
Be not delusions vain which death will cure;
If the sublime reliance of the soul
On her own powers be no empty lure,
Whereat the high gods laugh in bitter scorn;
If what I have achieved and what forborne,
Will lead me nearer to a worthy goal,
If all life's promises be not forsworn,—
Eurydice, appear! Before mine eyes,
O gods, I see a formless essence rise,
That moulds itself unto the music's beat,
Appareled in the glory of the skies.
Now, while I ring a more celestial tone,
The spirit more divinely bright hath grown,
To larger modulations, strains complete,
The white limbs from the shapeless mist are won,
As from the bosom of a summer cloud,
Wherewith a goddess would her semblance shroud.
Is this mine own creation? Is it truth,

That with warm life I have blank air endowed?
The soft cloud parts asunder,— yea, 'tis she!
Once more the face that was my star I see,
Crowned with the beauty of immortal youth,
Eurydice, my lost Eurydice!
Silent beside his silent, fallen lyre,
The singer stood, and clasped her in his arms,
Gazing upon this pale, fair face as one
Whose heart's supreme desire is satisfied.
'Is not this hour the hour I have foreseen,
Through all obstructions and infirmities
Of my mortality, and is it not
More glorious in fruition than I dreamed!
Yea, I have dreamed it all, eternal gods,
Even as now have pressed her to my heart
With the same clinging effort to retain,
And seen this breathing form, these lucent eyes
Vivid as now, instinct with life and love.
Yet have I waked to chill discouragement,
To vacant disappointment, and the sense
Of aching, unassuaged desire. O speak,
For in my dreams I never hear thy voice,
Save veiled and indistinct, a mockery
Of the old limpid music. Speak to me:
Thy flesh is warm, thy heart beats close to mine,
Thine upturned face is wet with human tears;
O speak to me,— lest I should wake again
To barren fields and empty skies of Thrace.'
Then in low, natural tones, Eurydice:
'Thy voice hath reached me in the farthest spheres,
And waked me out of silence.' 'Follow me,—
It is thyself,— if I must wake from this,
'Twill be to death or madness. Follow me,
From darkness palpable, to earth, to light
Of ample skies, and freshness of blown grass
And rolling waters.' 'Hold!' the jarring voice
Of Ades interposed: ''Tis excellent
The attribute we gave thee, to convert
To such a weapon as may overcome
The old hereditary foes of man,
Sleep, death, corruption, and necessity.
But to reveal thyself the peer of gods,
Not only through inspired ecstasy,
But through a continent persistency,
This never was accomplished by thy race,
And thou must yet be tried. This soul is thine,
For thou hast won her from the jaws of Hell;
Yea, she may follow thee as free as light,—
Lead thou the way and charm the hostile fiends.
Look forward ever; if thine eyes revert
But once to gaze on her, to reassure
Unworthy fears, or sate a mean desire,

Thou art not mate for us. She will dissolve
To empty air —never to be recalled.
ORPHEUS.
Back to the vital earth, O follow me,
Regained Eurydice.
To rippling well-heads and to sunlit plains,
Greened by soft wash of rains.
See orchards rosy with prolific bloom,
And vineyards' purple gloom.
Lulled by the languid flow of lilied streams,
There will I sing my dreams.
Behold! I chant a hymn of adoration,
Triumphant exultation,
For I can see, in all the universe,
No error and no curse.
The gods have naught withheld, in power and sway,
From him who will obey
Their own divine and everlasting laws.
Above the world's applause,
As vigorous as morning, he can rise,
Wrest the desired prize
From the clenched hands of Nemesis and Fate.
With victory elate,
I chant unmitigated prayer and praise
To gods who part our ways,
Seeing 'midst clamorous change incredible,
That all is ordered well.
In more harmonious strains, O lyre, express
My twice-born happiness;
Yea, utter and translate with larger sense
My rich experience,
That makes complete life's solemn threnody
Joy unalloyed and free,
Grief unexampled, victory at last,
When strife is overpast.
Through pathways hedged with horrors still they fared
Invulnerable. Darkness stayed them not,
Nor yet more dreadful light, revealing oft
The hideous fiends who rose on every side,
Huge shapes of ill, to gaze upon the twain.
A Greek, who, fleeing, smote a vibrant lyre,
That chimed to carols more divinely quired
Than those that fill with ravishment a grove,
Misty with moonlight, where the plain brown bird
Makes midnight vocal. Closely following him,
A woman with grave aspect, parted lips,
Upraising, in enthralléd ecstasy,
Large eyes serene, fulfilled with holier light
For having pierced beyond the boundaries
Of time and of mortality. The day
Shone through the murk at last, and filled their path
With dusky sunbeams; and far-stretching fields

Of soft, delicious green, and crystal skies,
Encouraged them; all perils past save one.
But a black, stagnant river crawled along,
Spanned by no bridge, and ferried by no sail,
With muddy tide between the day and them.
And Orpheus with enamored eyes passed on,
And saw not how the loathsome waters crept,
Nor how his magic song enchanted them
To solid substance; but he missed at once
The footsteps light that had inspired his lay.
Impetuous he turned to reassure
His fearful soul, and sate his hungry eyes;
But as he turned, the inspiration fled,
His lips refused to frame the fruitless words,
His eyes beheld,—O gods! Eurydice
Removed already far away from him,
By all the wide-expanded space, between
Our loftiest dream and our unworthy deed.
She gazed with no reproachful glance nor tears,
And Orpheus felt himself beneath her, fall,
Momently down from empyreal heights,
And lo! he stood within the fields of Thrace,
On earth familiar, 'neath familiar skies,
And heard a voice float through the shining air,
From unimaginable distances,
Faint as a dream, — 'Farewell, farewell, farewell.'
'Woe! woe! what lamentations may express
The fullness of my new calamity!
I, overbearing, who presumed to reach
The lordly and severe stability
Of the immortals, — whom may I invoke?
To whom may man appeal when he hath failed
Unto himself? What god will interpose
To thwart invincible necessity?
Lost, lost forever! I stood elevate,
For one brief moment dreaming I had won
The skill and power of true divinity.
Gods! with what lofty and superb disdain
Ye must look down on mine unworthy haste,—
Ye, who with grandeur of sublime repose,
And majesty of patience, still abide
Invariable through eternity!
Alas! my mighty visions were to me
Auspicious omens, and they fed my heart
With vigor and encouragement; but now,
This was no dream; for Hope, full-flushed and fair,
Born, like the freshness of auroral dew,
From unseen air, and traceless vanishing,
Consorts not with this mighty goddess, Truth,
With solemn and unfathomable eyes,
For Truth is one with Death and Destiny.
With what a depth of meaning didst thou turn,

For the last time, to me, Eurydice,
A glory 'midst the darkness, with that glance
Of infinite compassion, hands outstretched,
As if to save the from mine own defect.
With what humiliation and despair
I saw thee rising unattainably!—
The vault, the stream accursed had disappeared;
I was in Thrace uplooking to the sky.
O, to what harmonies I might have wed
The blessed tidings which all men await!
Now I can only make my song express
A distant echo, a suggestion vague,
Of the serene contentment of thy voice.
Sing this, my lyre, that all who hark to thee
With an attentive and a gentle ear,
May hear the promise, faint and yet assured,
Recall the grace and the deliciousness
Of immortality, and strive anew
Towards the ideal unattained by me,
Yet still accessible to stronger souls.'
Thus Orpheus, when the first wild burst of woe
Had passed; no need to seek her now;
No need to wander o'er the peopled earth.
Was he in truth a victim of the gods,
Or rather with a fairer fortune blest
Than happier men, selected for a fate
Divinely tragical, that he might know
The fullness of a life's experience,
And find expression adequate for all,
Simple as wisdom, and as dignified
As silence? From his kind he lived apart,
As one who cherishes a grief, nor seeks
Forgetfulness nor comfort; elevate
To glittering eminence by destiny,
And lonely through the privacy of woe
Beyond the reaches of man's sympathy.
Where lucid Hebrus bathes its golden sands,
He sat discoursing gracious harmonies,
Amidst the morning fields, when on his ears
Sounded with horrid dissonance the clang
Of smitten cymbals and the throb of drums.
But still the revelers remained unseen,
Till, rounding suddenly a neighboring hill,
The whole mad troop came dancing into sight.
First marched a jovial bacchanal, who bore
A crystal vessel, decked with branching vine,
Then youth and nymphs with ivy chapleted,
In purfled raiment of hues delicate,
With mitres, thyrsi, cymbals, drums and flutes,
Some balancing upon their graceful heads,
Regal with crisp-curled gold, their burdens light
Of baskets heaped with figs and dusky grapes.

And 'midst them all the sacrificial goat,
Adorned with berries. Thus the festal throng,
With wanton gestures, and with antic bounds,
And wild embracings, mad with wine, approached,
With peals of laughter, echoing faintly back
From jocund hill to hill, and lusty shouts
Of 'Bacché, Bacché!'
SONG.
With wassail all the night,
Celestial Bacchus, we have worshipped thee!
With riotous revel and with festal wine.
Still on the hills in early morning light,
With frolic dances and brisk jollity,
Our hymns of praise are thine.
For we have seen thee, god!
The fawn-skin slipping from thy shoulder bare,
Thy gestures lithe and loose, thine eyes that shine,
Thy rosy hands that waved a clustered rod
Of uncrushed grapes, and thine ambrosial hair,
Dripping with myrrh and wine.
Thou art not strict, severe,
Like loftier gods and ruthless goddesses,
Implacable like Pallas, Zeus, or Truth;
But to humanity akin and near,
Eager for folly, and the luxuries
Of lustful health and youth.
This crystal-vialed balm,
Divinely brewed, soothing as Lethe's streams,
Is the most generous gift of Deity,
Informing us with soft oblivion calm
Of Death and Fate, with joys beyond the dreams
Of grave sobriety.
Come, let us drink again.
Resound, O timbrels, and thou bird-voiced flute;
Thyrsus and pipes make shrill and dear acclaim,
To Bacchus, who impurples hill and plain
With vineyards bursting with increase of fruit,
Subtle as liquid flame.
Œoë! quaff and sing!
Who drinks no more, offends the deity
Of Bacchus! lo on Hebrus' grassy brink,
A minstrel sits, with gold lute glistening,
Marring our rites with stern solemnity,
Who doth not chant nor drink.
Ho! Orpheus, laugh again,
From mirthful heart, and join our happy throng;
Cease to lament with unappeased desire.
We bring a cordial for all grief and pain.
Add to the choral strain thy siren song,
And thine enchanted lyre.
For Fate hath answered thee
With cold derision; Death respondeth not.

Here is a god who soothes tire soul and sense
With sweet nepenthe,—thy Eurydice
Thou wilt not lure to earthly grove nor grot
With suasive eloquence.
Here, nymphs no whit less fair
Are waiting thee, with warm, caressing arms
And loving eyes, lips fit for gods to kiss,
And rosy shoulders, dimpling white and bare,—
Pliant and graceful, with innumerous Charms,
To sate thy heart with bliss.
ORPHEUS.
Hence, thou ignoble throng!
Dare ye profane the splendid purity,
The high nobility of morn, with rites
Lewd and disgusting, and delirious song,
Completing in dear sunshine, shamelessly,
Rude orgies of wild nights?
BACCHANTES.
Ha! he insults the god,
With his presumptuous and impious scorn.
Avenge, O bacchanals, the cause divine;
Compel him with the sacred cup and rod,
To quaff his salutation to the morn,
In frothing, Massic wine!
ORPHEUS.
Mad bacchanals, begone!
I honor all the gods and Nemesis.
They favor not such frantic revelry,
But blameless lives, and deeds most like their own,
The service of a patient heart submiss,
And staunch integrity.
Behold the morning hills,
Sky-kissed Libethra, delicate as air;
The fragile grasses gray with wreaths of dew.
Hark to the tumbling of the mountain rills
To Eos and Athene your first prayer
And sacrifice are due.
BACCHANTES.
With shameless blasphemy,
He dares proscribe, O god, thy rank and fame.
Enough! enough! he hath despised us long,
Bewailing his beloved Eurydice.
O nymphs, avenge yourselves in Liber's name,
Slay him 'midst dance and song.
Your deadly javelins fling
With flinty missiles at the singer proud,
Who deems himself an equal of the gods,
Because he hath the skill to pipe and sing,
With facile fluency of speech endowed.
Smite him with spears and rods.
ORPHEUS.
Ring forth, my lyre, again,—

With magic harmonies my doom avert,
In tones as plaintive and as rich as life.
BACCHANTES.
Our stones and javelins we have hurled in vain;
His lyre enchants them, he remains unhurt,
'Midst all the wrath and strife.
Toss the loud tambourine,
Its tight-drawn skin with noisy fingers smite;
Clash ye the cymbals, sing with fatal art;
Cast ye his sundered limbs the stream within,—
They irritate us, soft and bare and white;
Rend them, O nymphs, apart.
ORPHEUS.
Sweet Death, deliver me
Out of the reach of envy, lust, and hate;
Enfold me in thy large-embracing arms.
BACCHANTES.
Ah! will he now invoke Eurydice,
Madly resisting his allotted fate
With vile, unhallowed charms?
So with a clamorous swell
Of drums and timbrels, we o'erpower the breath
Of dulcet and persuasive melody.
ORPHEUS.
The maniacs conquer! O my lyre, farewell!
Approach, thou beautiful and welcome Death,
With lost Eurydice.

Emma Lazarus

Phantasies

I. Evening.

Rest, beauty, stillness: not a waif of a cloud
From gray-blue east sheer to the yellow west-
No film of mist the utmost slopes to shroud.

The earth lies grace, by quiet airs caressed,
And shepherdeth her shadows, but each stream,
Free to the sky, is by that glow possessed,
And traileth with the splendors of a dream
Athwart the dusky land. Uplift thine eyes!
Unbroken by a vapor or a gleam,

The vast clear reach of mild, wan twilight skies.
But look again, and lo, the evening star!
Against the pale tints black the slim elms rise,

The earth exhales sweet odors nigh and far,
And from the heavens fine influences fall.
Familiar things stand not for what they are:

What they suggest, foreshadow, or recall
The spirit is alert to apprehend,
Imparting somewhat of herself to all.

Labor and thought and care are at an end:
The soul is filled with gracious reveries,
And with her mood soft sounds and colors blend;

For simplest sounds ring forth like melodies
In this weird-lighted air-the monotone
Of some far bell, the distant farmyard cries,

A barking dog, the thin, persistent drone
Of crickets, and the lessening call of birds.
The apparition of yon star alone

Breaks on the sense like music. Beyond word
The peace that floods the soul, for night is here,
And Beauty still is guide and harbinger.

II. Aspiration.

Dark lies the earth, and bright with worlds the sky:
That soft, large, lustrous star, that first outshone,
Still holds us spelled with potent sorcery.

Dilating, shrinking, lightening, it hath won
Our spirit with its strange strong influence,
And sways it as the tides beneath the moon.

What impulse this, o'ermastering heart and sense?
Exalted, thrilled, the freed soul fain would soar
Unto that point of shining prominence,

Craving new fields and some unheard-of shore,
Yea, all the heavens, for her activity,
To mount with daring flight, to hover o'er

Low hills of earth, flat meadows, level sea,
And earthly joy and trouble. In this hour
Of waning light and sound, of mystery,

Of shadowed love and beauty-veiled power,
She feels her wings: she yearns to grasp her own,
Knowing the utmost good to be her dower.

A dream! a dream! for at a touch 't is gone.
O mocking spirit! thy mere fools are we,
Unto the depths from heights celestial thrown.

From these blind gropings toward reality,
This thirst for truth, this most pathetic need
Of something to uplift, to justify,

To help and comfort while we faint and bleed,
May we not draw, wrung from the last despair,
Some argument of hope, some blessed creed,

That we can trust the faith which whispers prayer,
The vanishings, the ecstasy, the gleam,
The nameless aspiration, and the dream?

III. Wherefore?

Deep languor overcometh mind and frame:
A listless, drowsy, utter weariness,
A trance wherein no thought finds speech or name,

The overstrained spirit doth possess.
She sinks with drooping wing-poor unfledged bird,
That fain had flown!-in fluttering breathlessness.

To what end those high hopes that wildly stirred
The beating heart with aspirations vain?
Why proffer prayers unanswered and unheard

To blank, deaf heavens that will not heed her pain?
Where lead these lofty, soaring tendencies,
That leap and fly and poise, to fall again,

Yet seem to link her with the utmost skies?

What mean these clinging loves that bind to earth,
And claim her with beseeching, wistful eyes?

This little resting-place 'twixt death and birth,
Why is it fretted with the ceaseless flow
Of flood and ebb, with overgrowth and dearth,

And vext with dreams, and clouded with strange woe?
Ah! she is tired of thought, she yearns for peace,
Seeing all things one equal end must know.

Wherefore this tangle of perplexities,
The trouble or the joy? the weary maze
Of narrow fears and hopes that may not cease?

A chill falls on her from the skyey ways,
Black with the night-tide, where is none to hear
The ancient cry, the Wherefore of our days.

IV. Fancies.

The ceaseless whirr of crickets fills the ear
From underneath each hedge and bush and tree,
Deep in the dew-drenched grasses everywhere.

The simple sound dispels the fantasy
Of gloom and terror gathering round the mind.
It seems a pleasant thing to breathe, to be,

To hear the many-voiced, soft summer wind
Lisp through the dark thick leafage overhead-
To see the rosy half-moon soar behind

The black slim-branching elms. Sad thoughts have fled,
Trouble and doubt, and now strange reveries
And odd caprices fill us in their stead.

From yonder broken disk the redness dies,
Like gold fruit through the leaves the half-sphere gleams,
Then over the hoar tree-tops climbs the skies,

Blanched ever more and more, until it beams
Whiter than crystal. Like a scroll unfurled,
And shadowy as a landscape seen in dreams,

Reveals itself the sleeping, quiet world,
Painted in tender grays and whites subdued-
The speckled stream with flakes of light impearled,

The wide, soft meadow and the massive wood.
Naught is too wild for our credulity

In this weird hour: our finest dreams hold good.

Quaint elves and frolic flower-sprites we see,
And fairies weaving rings of gossamer,
And angels floating through the filmy air.

V. In the Night.

Let us go in: the air is dank and chill
With dewy midnight, and the moon rides high
O'er ghostly fields, pale stream, and spectral hill.

This hour the dawn seems farthest from the sky
So weary long the space that lies between
That sacred joy and this dark mystery

Of earth and heaven: no glimmering is seen,
In the star-sprinkled east, of coming day,
Nor, westward, of the splendor that hath been.

Strange fears beset us, nameless terrors sway
The brooding soul, that hungers for her rest,
Out worn with changing moods, vain hopes' delay,

With conscious thought o'erburdened and oppressed.
The mystery and the shadow wax too deep;
She longs to merge both sense and thought in sleep.

VI. Faerie.

From the oped lattice glance once more abroad
While the ethereal moontide bathes with light
Hill, stream, and garden, and white-winding road.

All gracious myths born of the shadowy night
Recur, and hover in fantastic guise,
Airy and vague, before the drowsy sight.

On yonder soft gray hill Endymion lies
In rosy slumber, and the moonlit air
Breathes kisses on his cheeks and lips and eyes.

'Twixt bush and bush gleam flower-white limbs, left bare,
Of huntress-nymphs, and flying raiment thin,
Vanishing faces, and bright floating hair.

The quaint midsummer fairies and their kin,
Gnomes, elves, and trolls, on blossom, branch, and grass
Gambol and dance, and winding out and in

Leave circles of spun dew where'er they pass.
Through the blue ether the freed Ariel flies;
Enchantment holds the air; a swarming mass

Of myriad dusky, gold-winged dreams arise,
Throng toward the gates of sense, and so possess
The soul, and lull it to forgetfulness.

VII. Confused Dreams.

O strange, dim other-world revealed to us,
Beginning there where ends reality,
Lying 'twixt life and death, and populous

With souls from either sphere! now enter we
Thy twisted paths. Barred is the silver gate,
But the wild-carven doors of ivory

Spring noiselessly apart: between them straight
Flies forth a cloud of nameless shadowy things,
With harpies, imps, and monsters, small and great,

Blurring the thick air with darkening wings.
All humors of the blood and brain take shape,
And fright us with our own imaginings.

A trouble weighs upon us: no escape
From this unnatural region can there be.
Fixed eyes stare on us, wide mouths grin and gape,

Familiar faces out of reach we see.
Fain would we scream, to shatter with a cry
The tangled woof of hideous fantasy,

When, lo! the air grows clear, a soft fair sky
Shines over head: sharp pain dissolves in peace;
Beneath the silver archway quietly

We float away: all troublous visions cease.
By a strange sense of joy we are possessed,
Body and spirit soothed in perfect rest.

VIII. The End of the Song.

What dainty note of long-drawn melody
Athwart our dreamless sleep rings sweet and clear,
Till all the fumes of slumber are brushed by,

And with awakened consciousness we hear
The pipe of birds? Look forth! The sane, white day

Blesses the hilltops, and the sun is near.

All misty phantoms slowly roll away
With the night's vapors toward the western sky.
The Real enchants us, the fresh breath of hay

Blows toward us; soft the meadow-grasses lie,
Bearded with dew; the air is a caress;
The sudden sun o'ertops the boundary

Of eastern hills, the morning joyousness
Thrills tingling through the frame; life's pulse beats strong;
Night's fancies melt like dew. So ends the song!

Emma Lazarus

Raschi In Prague

Raschi of Troyes, the Moon of Israel,
The authoritative Talmudist, returned
From his wide wanderings under many skies,
To all the synagogues of the Orient,
Through Spain and Italy, the isles of Greece,
Beautiful, dolorous, sacred Palestine,
Dead, obelisked Egypt, floral, musk-breathed Persia,
Laughing with bloom, across the Caucasus,
The interminable sameness of bare steppes,
Through dark luxuriance of Bohemian woods,
And issuing on the broad, bright Moldau vale,
Entered the gates of Prague. Here, too, his fame,
Being winged, preceded him. His people swarmed
Like bees to gather the rich honey-dew
Of learning from his lips. Amazement filled
All eyes beholding him. No hoary sage,
He who had sat in Egypt at the feet
Of Moses ben-Maimuni, called him friend;
Raschi the scholiast, poet, and physician,
Who bore the ponderous Bible's storied wisdom,
The Mischna's tangled lore at tip of tongue,
Light as a garland on a lance, appeared
In the just-ripened glory of a man.
From his clear eye youth flamed magnificent;
Force, masked by grace, moved in his balanced frame;
An intellectual, virile beauty reigned
Dominant on domed brow, on fine, firm lips,
An eagle profile cut in gilded bronze,
Strong, delicate as a head upon a coin,
While, as an aureole crowns a burning lamp,
Above all beauty of the body and brain
Shone beauty of a soul benign with love.
Even as a tawny flock of huddled sheep,
Grazing each other's heels, urged by one will,
With bleat and baa following the wether's lead,
Or the wise shepherd, so o'er the Moldau bridge
Trotted the throng of yellow-caftaned Jews,
Chattering, hustling, shuffling. At their head
Marched Rabbi Jochanan ben-Eleazar,
High priest in Prague, oldest and most revered,
To greet the star of Israel. As a father
Yearns toward his son, so toward the noble Raschi
Leapt at first sight the patriarch's fresh old heart.
'My home be thine in Prague! Be thou my son,
Who have no offspring save one simple girl.
See, glorious youth, who dost renew the days
Of David and of Samuel, early graced
With God's anointing oil, how Israel
Delights to honor who hath honored him.'
Then Raschi, though he felt a ball of fire
Globe itself in his throat, maintained his calm,
His cheek's opaque, swart pallor while he kissed

Silent the Rabbi's withered hand, and bowed
Divinely humble, his exalted head
Craving the benison.
For each who asked
He had the word of counsel, comfort, help;
For all, rich eloquence of thanks. His voice,
Even and grave, thrilled secret chords and set
Plain speech to music. Certain folk were there
Sick in the body, dragging painful limbs,
To the physician. These he solaced first,
With healing touch, with simples from his pouch,
Warming and lulling, best with promises
Of constant service till their ills were cured.
And some, gray-bearded, bald, and curved with age,
Blear-eyed from poring over lines obscure
And knotty riddles of the Talmud, brought
Their problems to this youth, who cleared and solved,
Yielding prompt answer to a lifetime's search.
Then, followed, pushed by his obsequious tribe,
Who fain had pedestaled him on their backs,
Hemming his steps, choking the airs of heaven
With their oppressive honors, he advanced,
Midst shouts, tumultuous welcomes, kisses showered
Upon his road-stained garments, through Prague's streets,
Gaped at by Gentiles, hissed at and reviled,
But no whit altering his majestic mien
For overwhelming plaudits or contempt.
Glad tidings Raschi brought from West and East
Of thriving synagogues, of famous men,
And flourishing academies. In Rome
The Papal treasurer was a pious Jew,
Rabbi Jehiel, neath whose patronage
Prospered a noble school. Two hundred Jews
Dwelt free and paid no tributary mark.
Three hundred lived in peace at Capua,
Shepherded by the learned Rabbi David,
A prince of Israel. In Babylon
The Jews established their Academy.
Another still in Bagdad, from whose chair
Preached the great rabbi, Samuel Ha-levi,
Versed in the written and the oral law,
Who blindfold could repeat the whole vast text
Of Mischna and Gemara. On the banks
Of Eden-born Euphrates, one day's ride
From Bagdad, Raschi found in the wilderness,
Which once was Babylon, Ezekiel's tomb.
Thrice ten perpetual lamps starred the dim shrine,
Two hundred sentinels held the sleepless vigil,
Receiving offerings. At the Feast of Booths
Here crowded Jews by thousands, out of Persia,
From all the neighboring lands, to celebrate
The glorious memories of the golden days.

Ten thousand Jews with their Academy
Damascus boasted, while in Cairo shone
The pearl, the crown of Israel, ben-Maimuni,
Physician at the Court of Saladin,
The second Moses, gathering at his feet
Sages from all the world.
As Raschi spake,
Forgetting or ignoring the chief shrine,
The Exile's Home, whereunto yearned all hearts,
All ears were strained for tidings. Some one asked:
'What of Jerusalem? Speak to us of Zion.'
The light died from his eyes. From depths profound
Issued his grave, great voice: 'Alas for Zion!
Verily is she fallen! Where our race
Dictated to the nations, not a handful,
Nay, not a score, not ten, not two abide!
One, only one, one solitary Jew,
The Rabbi Abraham Haceba, flits
Ghostlike amid the ruins; every year
Beggars himself to pay the idolaters
The costly tax for leave to hold a-gape
His heart's live wound; to weep, a mendicant,
Amidst the crumbled stones of palaces
Where reigned his ancestors, upon the graves
Where sleep the priests, the prophets, and the kings
Who were his forefathers. Ask me no more!'

Now, when the French Jew's advent was proclaimed,
And his tumultuous greeting, envious growls
And ominous eyebeams threatened storm in Prague.
'Who may this miracle of learning be?
The Anti-Christ! The century-long-awaited,
The hourly-hoped Messiah, come at last!
Else dared they never wax so arrogant,
Flaunting their monstrous joy in Christian eyes,
And strutting peacock-like, with hideous screams,
Who are wont to crawl, mute reptiles underfoot.'
A stone or two flung at some servile form,
Liveried in the yellow gaberdine
(With secret happiness but half suppressed
On features cast for misery), served at first
For chance expression of the rabble's hate;
But, swelling like a snow-ball rolled along
By mischief-plotting boys, the rage increased,
Grew to a mighty mass, until it reached
The palace of Duke Vladislaw. He heard
With righteous wrath his injured subjects' charge
Against presumptuous aliens: how these blocked
His avenues, his bridges; bared to the sun
The canker-taint of Prague's obscurest coigne;
Paraded past the churches of the Lord

One who denied Him, one by them hailed Christ.
Enough! This cloud, no bigger than one's hand,
Gains overweening bulk. Prague harbored, first,
Out of contemptuous ruth, a wretched band
Of outcast paupers, gave them leave to ply
Their money-lending trade, and leased them land
On all too facile terms. Behold! to-day,
Like leeches bloated with the people's blood,
They batten on Bohemia's poverty;
They breed and grow; like adders, spit back hate
And venomed perfidy for Christian love.
Thereat the Duke, urged by wise counsellors-
Narzerad the statesman (half whose wealth was pledged
To the usurers), abetted by the priest,
Bishop of Olmutz, who had visited
The Holy Sepulchre, whose long, full life
Was one clean record of pure piety-
The Duke, I say, by these persuasive tongues,
Coaxed to his darling aim, forbade his guards
To hinder the just anger of his town,
And ordered to be led in chains to him
The pilgrim and his host.

At noontide meal
Raschi sat, full of peace, with Jochanan,
And the sole daughter of the house, Rebekah,
Young, beautiful as her namesake when she brought
Her firm, frail pitcher balanced on her neck
Unto the well, and gave the stranger drink,
And gave his camels drink. The servant set
The sparkling jar's refreshment from his lips,
And saw the virgin's face, bright as the moon,
Beam from the curled luxuriance of black locks,
And cast-back linen veil's soft-folded cloud,
Then put the golden ear-ring by her cheek,
The bracelets on her hands, his master's pledge,
Isaac's betrothal gift, whom she should wed,
And be the mother of millions-one whose seed
Dwells in the gates of those which hate them.
So
Yearned Raschi to adorn the radiant girl
Who sat at board before him, nor dared lift
Shy, heavy lids from pupils black as grapes
That dart the imprisoned sunshine from their core.
But in her ears keen sense was born to catch,
And in her heart strange power to hold, each tone
O' the low-keyed, vibrant voice, each syllable
O' the eloquent discourse, enriched with tales
Of venturous travel, brilliant with fine points
Of delicate humor, or illustrated
With living portraits of world-famoused men,
Jews, Saracens, Crusaders, Islamites,

Whose hand he had grasped-the iron warrior,
Godfrey of Bouillon, the wise infidel
Who in all strength, wit, courtesy excelled
The kings his foes-imperial Saladin.
But even as Raschi spake an abrupt noise
Of angry shouts, of battering staves that shook
The oaken portal, stopped the enchanted voice,
The uplifted wine spilled from the nerveless hand
Of Rabbi Jochanan. 'God pity us!
Our enemies are upon us once again.
Hie thee, Rebekah, to the inmost chamber,
Far from their wanton eyes' polluting gaze,
Their desecrating touch! Kiss me! Begone!
Raschi, my guest, my son'-But no word more
Uttered the reverend man. With one huge crash
The strong doors split asunder, pouring in
A stream of soldiers, ruffians, armed with pikes,
Lances, and clubs-the unchained beast, the mob.
'Behold the town's new guest!' jeered one who tossed
The half-filled golden wine-cup's contents straight
In the noble pure young face. 'What, master Jew!
Must your good friends of Prague break bolts and bars
To gain a peep at this prodigious pearl
You bury in your shell? Forth to the day!
Our Duke himself claims share of your new wealth;
Summons to court the Jew philosopher!'
Then, while some stuffed their pokes with baubles snatched
From board and shelf, or with malignant sword
Slashed the rich Orient rugs, the pictured woof
That clothed the wall; others had seized and bound,
And gagged from speech, the helpless, aged man;
Still others outraged, with coarse, violent hands,
The marble-pale, rigid as stone, strange youth,
Whose eye like struck flint flashed, whose nether lip
Was threaded with a scarlet line of blood,
Where the compressed teeth fixed it to forced calm.
He struggled not while his free limbs were tied,
His beard plucked, torn and spat upon his robe-
Seemed scarce to know these insults were for him;
But never swerved his gaze from Jochanan.
Then, in God's language, sealed from these dumb brutes,
Swiftly and low he spake: 'Be of good cheer,
Reverend old man. I deign not treat with these.
If one dare offer bodily hurt to thee,
By the ineffable Name! I snap my chains
Like gossamer, and in his blood, to the hilt,
Bathe the prompt knife hid in my girdle's folds.
The Duke shall hear me. Patience. Trust in me.'
Somewhat the authoritative voice abashed,
Even hoarse and changed, the miscreants, who feared
Some strong curse lurked in this mysterious tongue,
Armed with this evil eye. But brief the spell.

With gibe and scoff they dragged their victims forth,
The abused old man, the proud, insulted youth,
O'er the late path of his triumphal march,
Befouled with mud, with raiment torn, wild hair
And ragged beard, to Vladislaw. He sat
Expectant in his cabinet. On one side
His secular adviser, Narzerad,
Quick-eyed, sharp-nosed, red-whiskered as a fox;
On the other hand his spiritual guide,
Bishop of Olmutz, unctuous, large, and bland.
'So these twain are chief culprits!' sneered the Duke,
Measuring with the noble's ignorant scorn
His masters of a lesser caste. 'Stand forth!
Rash, stubborn, vain old man, whose impudence
Hath choked the public highways with thy brood
Of nasty vermin, by our sufferance hid
In lanes obscure, who hailed this charlatan
With sky-flung caps, bent knees, and echoing shouts,
Due to ourselves alone in Prague; yea, worse,
Who offered worship even ourselves disclaim,
Our Lord Christ's meed, to this blaspheming Jew-
Thy crimes have murdered patience. Thou hast wrecked
Thy people's fortune with thy own. But first
(For even in anger we are just) recount
With how great compensation from thy store
Of hoarded gold and jewels thou wilt buy
Remission of the penalty. Be wise.
Hark how my subjects, storming through the streets,
Vent on thy tribe accursed their well-based wrath.'
And, truly, through closed casements roared the noise
Of mighty surging crowds, derisive cries,
And victims' screams of anguish and affright.
Then Raschi, royal in his rags, began:
'Hear me, my liege!' At that commanding voice,
The Bishop, who with dazed eyes had perused
The grieved, wise, beautiful, pale face, sprang up,
Quick recognition in his glance, warm joy
Aflame on his broad cheeks. 'No more! No more!
Thou art the man! Give me the hand to kiss
That raised me from the shadow of the grave
In Jaffa's lazar-house! Listen, my liege!
During my pilgrimage to Palestine
I, sickened with the plague and nigh to death,
Languished 'midst strangers, all my crumbling flesh
One rotten mass of sores, a thing for dogs
To shy from, shunned by Christian as by Turk,
When lo! this clean-breathed, pure-souled, blessed youth,
Whom I, not knowing for an infidel,
Seeing featured like the Christ, believed a saint,
Sat by my pillow, charmed the sting from pain,
Quenched the fierce fever's heat, defeated Death;
And when I was made whole, had disappeared,

No man knew whither, leaving no more trace
Than a re-risen angel. This is he!'
Then Raschi, who had stood erect, nor quailed
From glances of hot hate or crazy wrath,
Now sank his eagle gaze, stooped his high head,
Veiling his glowing brow, returned the kiss
Of brother-love upon the Christian's hand,
And dropping on his knees implored the three,
'Grace for my tribe! They are what ye have made.
If any be among them fawning, false,
Insatiable, revengeful, ignorant, mean-
And there are many such-ask your own hearts
What virtues ye would yield for planted hate,
Ribald contempt, forced, menial servitude,
Slow centuries of vengeance for a crime
Ye never did commit? Mercy for these!
Who bear on back and breast the scathing brand
Of scarlet degradation, who are clothed
In ignominious livery, whose bowed necks
Are broken with the yoke. Change these to men!
That were a noble witchcraft simply wrought,
God's alchemy transforming clods to gold.
If there be one among them strong and wise,
Whose lips anoint breathe poetry and love,
Whose brain and heart served ever Christian need-
And there are many such-for his dear sake,
Lest ye chance murder one of God's high priests,
Spare his thrice-wretched tribe! Believe me, sirs,
Who have seen various lands, searched various hearts,
I have yet to touch that undiscovered shore,
Have yet to fathom that impossible soul,
Where a true benefit's forgot; where one
Slight deed of common kindness sown yields not
As now, as here, abundant crop of love.
Every good act of man, our Talmud says,
Creates an angel, hovering by his side.
Oh! what a shining host, great Duke, shall guard
Thy consecrated throne, for all the lives
Thy mercy spares, for all the tears thy ruth
Stops at the source. Behold this poor old man,
Last of a line of princes, stricken in years,
As thy dead father would have been to-day.
Was that white beard a rag for obscene hands
To tear? a weed for lumpish clowns to pluck?
Was that benignant, venerable face
Fit target for their foul throats' voided rheum?
That wrinkled flesh made to be pulled and pricked,
Wounded by flinty pebbles and keen steel?
Behold the prostrate, patriarchal form,
Bruised, silent, chained. Duke, such is Israel!'
'Unbind these men!' commanded Vladislaw.
'Go forth and still the tumult of my town.

Let no Jew suffer violence. Raschi, rise!
Thou who hast served the Christ-with this priest's life,
Who is my spirit's counselor-Christ serves thee.
Return among thy people with my seal,
The talisman of safety. Let them know
The Duke's their friend. Go, publish the glad news!'
Raschi the Saviour, Raschi the Messiah,
Back to the Jewry carried peace and love.
But Narzerad fed his venomed heart with gall,
Vowing to give his fatal hatred vent,
Despite a world of weak fantastic Dukes
And heretic bishops. He fulfilled his vow.

Emma Lazarus

Reality

These things alone endure;
'They are the solid facts,' that we may grasp,
Leading us on and upward if we clasp
And hold them firm and sure.

In a wise fable old,
A hero sought a god who could at will
Assume all figures, and the hero still
Loosed not his steadfast hold,

For image foul or fair,
For soft-eyed nymph, who wept with pain and shame,
For threatening fiend or loathsome beast or flame,
For menace or for prayer.

Until the god, outbraved,
Took his own shape divine; not wrathfully,
But wondering, to the hero gave reply,
The knowledge that he craved.

We seize the god in youth;
All forms conspire to make us loose our grasp,—
Ambition, folly, gain,— till we unclasp
From the embrace of truth.

We grow more wise, we say,
And work for worldly ends and mock our dream,
Alas! while all life's glory and its gleam,
With that have fled away.

If thereto we had clung
Through change and peril, fire and night and storm,
Till it assumed its proper, godlike form,
We might at last have wrung

An answer to our cries—
A brave response to our most valiant hope.
Unto the light of day this word might ope
A million mysteries.

O'er each man's brow I see
The bright star of his genius shining clear;
It seeks to guide him to a nobler sphere,
Above earth's vanity.

Up to pure height of snow,
Its beckoning ray still leads him on and on;
To those who follow, lo, itself comes down
And crowns at length their brow.

The nimbus still doth gleam
On these the heroes, sages of the earth,

The few who found, in life of any worth,
Only their loftiest dream.

Emma Lazarus

Restlessness

Would I had waked this morn where Florence smiles,
A-bloom with beauty, a white rose full-blown,
Yet rich in sacred dust, in storied stone,
Precious past all the wealth of Indian isles-
From olive-hoary Fiesole to feed
On Brunelleschi's dome my hungry eye,
And see against the lotus-colored sky,
Spring the slim belfry graceful as a reed.
To kneel upon the ground where Dante trod,
To breathe the air of immortality
From Angelo and Raphael-TO BE-
Each sense new-quickened by a demi-god.
To hear the liquid Tuscan speech at whiles,
From citizen and peasant, to behold
The heaven of Leonardo washed with gold-
Would I had waked this morn where Florence smile!

Emma Lazarus

Saint Romualdo

I give God thanks that I, a lean old man,
Wrinkled, infirm, and crippled with keen pains
By austere penance and continuous toil,
Now rest in spirit, and possess 'the peace
Which passeth understanding.' Th' end draws nigh,
Though the beginning is yesterday,
And a broad lifetime spreads 'twixt this and that-
A favored life, though outwardly the butt
Of ignominy, malice, and affront,
Yet lighted from within by the clear star
Of a high aim, and graciously prolonged
To see at last its utmost goal attained.
I speak not of mine Order and my House,
Here founded by my hands and filled with saints-
A white society of snowy souls,
Swayed by my voice, by mine example led;
For this is but the natural harvest reaped
From labors such as mine when blessed by God.
Though I rejoice to think my spirit still
Will work my purposes, through worthy hands,
After my bones are shriveled into dust,
Yet have I gleaned a finer, sweeter fruit
Of holy satisfaction, sure and real,
Though subtler than the tissue of the air-
The power completely to detach the soul
From her companion through this life, the flesh;
So that in blessed privacy of peace,
Communing with high angels, she can hold,
Serenely rapt, her solitary course.

Ye know, O saints of heaven, what I have borne
Of discipline and scourge; the twisted lash
Of knotted rope that striped my shrinking limbs;
Vigils and fasts protracted, till my flesh
Wasted and crumbled from mine aching bones,
And the last skin, one woof of pain and sores,
Thereto like yellow parchment loosely clung;
Exposure to the fever and the frost,
When 'mongst the hollows of the hills I lurked
From persecution of misguided folk,
Accustoming my spirit to ignore
The burden of the cross, while picturing
The bliss of disembodied souls, the grace
Of holiness, the lives of sainted men,
And entertaining all exalted thoughts,
That nowise touched the trouble of the hour,
Until the grief and pain seemed far less real
Than the creations of my brain inspired.
The vision, the beatitude, were true:
The agony was but an evil dream.
I speak not now as one who hath not learned
The purport of those lightly-bandied words,

Evil and Fate, but rather one who knows
The thunders of the terrors of the world.
No mortal chance or change, no earthly shock,
Can move or reach my soul, securely throned
On heights of contemplation and calm prayer,
Happy, serene, no less actual joy
Of present peace than faith in joys to come.

This soft, sweet, yellow evening, how the trees
Stand crisp against the clear, bright-colored sky!
How the white mountain-tops distinctly shine,
Taking and giving radiance, and the slopes
Are purpled with rich floods of peach-hued light!
Thank God, my filmy, old dislustred eyes
Find the same sense of exquisite delight,
My heart vibrates to the same touch of joy
In scenes like this, as when my pulse danced high,
And youth coursed through my veins! This the one link
That binds the wan old man that now I am
To the wild lad who followed up the hounds
Among Ravenna's pine-woods by the sea.
For there how oft would I lose all delight
In the pursuit, the triumph, or the game,
To stray alone among the shadowy glades,
And gaze, as one who is not satisfied
With gazing, at the large, bright, breathing sea,
The forest glooms, and shifting gleams between
The fine dark fringes of the fadeless trees,
On gold-green turf, sweet-brier, and wild pink rose!
How rich that buoyant air with changing scent
Of pungent pine, fresh flowers, and salt cool seas!
And when all echoes of the chase had died,
Of horn and halloo, bells and baying hounds,
How mine ears drank the ripple of the tide
On the fair shore, the chirp of unseen birds,
The rustling of the tangled undergrowth,
And the deep lyric murmur of the pines,
When through their high tops swept the sudden breeze!
There was my world, there would my heart dilate,
And my aspiring soul dissolve in prayer
Unto that Spirit of Love whose energies
Were active round me, yet whose presence, sphered
In the unsearchable, unbodied air,
Made itself felt, but reigned invisible.
This ere the day that made me what I am.
Still can I see the hot, bright sky, the sea
Illimitably sparkling, as they showed
That morning. Though I deemed I took no note
Of heaven or earth or waters, yet my mind
Retains to-day the vivid portraiture
Of every line and feature of the scene.
Light-hearted 'midst the dewy lanes I fared

Unto the sea, whose jocund gleam I caught
Between the slim boles, when I heard the clink
Of naked weapons, then a sudden thrust
Sickening to hear, and then a stifled groan;
And pressing forward I beheld the sight
That seared itself for ever on my brain-
My kinsman, Ser Ranieri, on the turf,
Fallen upon his side, his bright young head
Among the pine-spurs, and his cheek pressed close
Unto the moist, chill sod: his fingers clutched
A handful of loose weeds and grass and earth,
Uprooted in his anguish as he fell,
And slowly from his heart the thick stream flowed,
Fouling the green, leaving the fair, sweet face
Ghastly, transparent, with blue, stony eyes
Staring in blankness on that other one
Who triumphed over him. With hot desire
Of instant vengeance I unsheathed my sword
To rush upon the slayer, when he turned
In his first terror of blood-guiltiness.

. . . . . .

Within my heart a something snapped and brake.
What was it but the chord of rapturous joy
For ever stilled? I tottered and would fall,
Had I not leaned against the friendly pine;
For all realities of life, unmoored
From their firm anchorage, appeared to float
Like hollow phantoms past my dizzy brain.
The strange delusion wrought upon my soul
That this had been enacted ages since.
This very horror curdled at my heart,
This net of trees spread round, these iron heavens,
Were closing over me when I had stood,
Unnumbered cycles back, and fronted HIM,
My father; and he felt mine eyes as now,
Yet saw me not; and then, as now, that form,
The one thing real, lay stretched between us both.
The fancy passed, and I stood sane and strong
To grasp the truth. Then I remembered all-
A few fierce words between them yester eve
Concerning some poor plot of pasturage,
Soon silenced into courteous, frigid calm:
This was the end. I could not meet him now,
To curse him, to accuse him, or to save,
And draw him from the red entanglement
Coiled by his own hands round his ruined life.
God pardon me! My heart that moment held
No drop of pity toward this wretched soul;
And cowering down, as though his guilt were mine,
I fled amidst the savage silences

Of that grim wood, resolved to nurse alone
My boundless desolation, shame, and grief.
There, in that thick-leaved twilight of high noon,
The quiet of the still, suspended air,
Once more my wandering thoughts were calmly ranged,
Shepherded by my will. I wept, I prayed
A solemn prayer, conceived in agony,
Blessed with response instant, miraculous;
For in that hour my spirit was at one
With Him who knows and satisfies her needs.
The supplication and the blessing sprang
From the same source, inspired divinely both.
I prayed for light, self-knowledge, guidance, truth,
And these like heavenly manna were rained down
To feed my hungered soul. His guilt was mine.
What angel had been sent to stay mine arm
Until the fateful moment passed away
That would have ushered an eternity
Of withering remorse? I found the germs
In mine own heart of every human sin,
That waited but occasion's tempting breath
To overgrow with poisoned bloom my life.
What God thus far had saved me from myself?
Here was the lofty truth revealed, that each
Must feel himself in all, must know where'er
The great soul acts or suffers or enjoys,
His proper soul in kinship there is bound.
Then my life-purpose dawned upon my mind,
Encouraging as morning. As I lay,
Crushed by the weight of universal love,
Which mine own thoughts had heaped upon myself,
I heard the clear chime of a slow, sweet bell.
I knew it-whence it came and what it sang.
From the gray convent nigh the wood it pealed,
And called the monks to prayer. Vigil and prayer,
Clean lives, white days of strict austerity:
Such were the offerings of these holy saints.
How far might such not tend to expiate
A riotous world's indulgence? Here my life,
Doubly austere and doubly sanctified,
Might even for that other one atone,
So bound to mine, till both should be forgiven.

They sheltered me, not questioning the need
That led me to their cloistered solitude.
How rich, how freighted with pure influence,
With dear security of perfect peace,
Was the first day I passed within those walls!
The holy habit of perpetual prayer,
The gentle greetings, the rare temperate speech,
The chastening discipline, the atmosphere
Of settled and profound tranquillity,

Were even as living waters unto one
Who perisheth of thirst. Was this the world
That yesterday seemed one huge battlefield
For brutish passions? Could the soul of man
Withdraw so easily, and erect apart
Her own fair temple for her own high ends?
But this serene contentment slowly waned
As I discerned the broad disparity
Betwixt the form and spirit of the laws
That bound the order in strait brotherhood.
Yet when I sought to gain a larger love,
More rigid discipline, severer truth,
And more complete surrender of the soul
Unto her God, this was to my reproach,
And scoffs and gibes beset me on all sides.
In mine own cell I mortified my flesh,
I held aloof from all my brethren's feasts
To wrestle with my viewless enemies,
Till they should leave their blessing on my head;
For nightly was I haunted by that face,
White, bloodless, as I saw it 'midst the ferns,
Now staring out of darkness, and it held
Mine eyes from slumber and my brain from rest
And drove me from my straw to weep and pray.
Rebellious thoughts such subtle torture wrought
Upon my spirit that I lay day-long
In dumb despair, until the blessed hope
Of mercy dawned again upon my soul,
As gradual as the slow gold moon that mounts
The airy steps of heaven. My faith arose
With sure perception that disaster, wrong,
And every shadow of man's destiny
Are merely circumstance, and cannot touch
The soul's fine essence: they exist or die
Only as she affirms them or denies.

This faith sustain me even to the end:
It floods my heart with peace as surely now
As on that day the friars drove me forth,
Urging that my asceticism, too harsh,
Endured through pride, would bring into reproach
Their customs and their order. Then began
My exile in the mountains, where I bode
A hunted man. The elements conspired
Against me, and I was the seasons' sport,
Drenched, parched, and scorched and frozen alternately,
Burned with shrewd frosts, prostrated by fierce heats,
Shivering 'neath chilling dews and gusty rains,
And buffeted by all the winds of heaven.
Yet was this period my time of joy:
My daily thoughts perpetual converse held
With angels ministrant; mine ears were charmed

With sweet accordance of celestial sounds,
Song, harp and choir, clear ringing through the air.
And visions were revealed unto mine eyes
By night and day of Heaven's very courts,
In shadowless, undimmed magnificence.
I gave God thanks, not that He sheltered me,
And fed me as He feeds the fowls of air-
For had I perished, this too had been well-
But for the revelation of His truth,
The glory, the beatitude vouchsafed
To exalt, to heal, to quicken, to inspire;
So that the pinched, lean excommunicate
Was crowned with joy more solid, more secure,
Than all the comfort of the vales could bring.
Then the good Lord touched certain fervid hearts,
Aspiring toward His love, to come to me,
Timid and few at first; but as they heard
From mine own lips the precious oracles,
That soothed the trouble of their souls, appeased
Their spiritual hunger, and disclosed
All of the God within them to themselves,
They flocked about me, and they hailed me saint,
And sware to follow and to serve the good
Which my word published and my life declared.
Thus the lone hermit of the mountain-top
Descended leader of a band of saints,
And midway 'twixt the summit and the vale
I perched my convent. Yet I bated not
One whit of strict restraint and abstinence.
And they who love me and who serve the truth
Have learned to suffer with me, and have won
The supreme joy that is not of the flesh,
Foretasting the delights of Paradise.
This faith, to them imparted, will endure
After my tongue hath ceased to utter it,
And the great peace hath settled on my soul.

Emma Lazarus

Sic Semper Liberatoribus!

As one who feels the breathless nightmare grip
His heart-strings, and through visioned horrors fares,
Now on a thin-ledged chasm's rock-crumbling lip,
Now on a tottering pinnacle that dare
The front of heaven, while always unawares
Weird monsters start above, around, beneath,
Each glaring from some uglier mask of death,

So the White Czar imperial progress made
Through terror-haunted days. A shock, a cry
Whose echoes ring the globe-the spectre's laid.
Hurled o'er the abyss, see the crowned martyr lie
Resting in peace-fear, change, and death gone by.
Fit end for nightmare-mist of blood and tears,
Red climax to the slow, abortive years.

The world draws breath-one long, deep-shuddering sigh,
At that which dullest brain prefigured clear
As swift-sure bolt from thunder-threatening sky.
How heaven-anointed humblest lots appear
Beside his glittering eminence of fear;
His spiked crown, sackcloth purple, poisoned cates,
His golden palace honey-combed with hates.

Well is it done! A most heroic plan,
Which after myriad plots succeeds at last
In robbing of his life this poor old man,
Whose sole offense-his birthright-has but passed
To fresher blood, with younger strength recast.
What men are these, who, clamoring to be free,
Would bestialize the world to what they be?

Whose sons are they who made the snow-wreathed head
Their frenzy's target? In their Russian veins,
What alien current urged on to smite him dead,
Whose word had loosed a million Russian chains?
What brutes were they for whom such speechless pains,
So royally endured, no human thrill
Awoke, in hearts drunk with the lust to kill?

Not brutes! No tiger of the wilderness,
No jackal of the jungle, bears such brand
As man's black heart, who shrinks not to confess
The desperate deed of his deliberate hand.
Our kind, our kin, have done this thing. We stand
Bowed earthward, red with shame, to see such wrong
Prorogue Love's cause and Truth's-God knows how long!

Emma Lazarus

Song

Venus.

Frosty lies the winter-landscape,
In the twilight golden-green.
Down the Park's deserted alleys,
Naked elms stand stark and lean.

Dumb the murmur of the fountain,
Birds have flown from lawn and hill.
But while yonder star's ascendant,
Love triumphal reigneth still.

See the keen flame throb and tremble,
Brightening in the darkening night,
Breathing like a thing of passion,
In the sky's smooth chrysolite.

Not beneath the moon, oh lover,
Thou shalt gain thy heart's desire.
Speak to-night! The gods are with thee
Burning with a kindred fire.

Emma Lazarus

Song from Heine

MY heart, my heart is heavy,
Though merrily blooms the May;
Out on the ancient bastion,
Under the lindens I stay.
There stands by yon gray old tower,
The sentry-house of the town;
A red clad peasant soldier
Goes pacing up and down.
He toys with his shining musket,
That gleams in the sunset red,
Presenting and shouldering arms now,—
I wish he would shoot me dead!

Emma Lazarus

Sonnet

STILL northward is the central mount of Maine,
From whose high crown the rugged forests seem
Like shaven lawns, and lakes with frequent gleam,
'Like broken mirrors,' flash back light again.
Eastward the sea, with its majestic plain,
Endless, of radiant, restless blue, superb
With might and music, whether storms perturb
Its reckless waves, or halcyon winds that reign,
Make it serene as wisdom. Storied Spain
Is the next coast, and yet we may not sigh
For lands beyond the inexorable main;
Our noble scenes have yet no history.
All subtler charms than those that feed the eye,
Our lives must give them; 'tis an aim austere,
But opes new vistas, and a pathway clear.

Emma Lazarus

Spring Longing

Lilac hazes veil the skies.
Languid sighs
Breathes the mild, caressing air.
Pink as coral's branching sprays,
Orchard ways
With the blossomed peach are fair.

Sunshine, cordial as a kiss,
Poureth bliss
In this craving soul of mine,
And my heart her flower-cup
Lifteth up,
Thirsting for the draught divine.

Swift the liquid golden flame
Through my frame
Sets my throbbing veins afire.
Bright, alluring dreams arise,
Brim mine eyes
With the tears of strong desire.

All familiar scenes anear
Disappear-
Homestead, orchard, field, and wold.
Moorish spires and turrets fair
Cleave the air,
Arabesqued on skies of gold.

Low, my spirit, this May morn,
Outward borne,
Over seas hath taken wing:
Where the mediaeval town,
Like a crown,
Wears the garland of the Spring.

Light and sound and odors sweet
Fill the street;
Gypsy girls are selling flowers.
Lean hidalgos turn aside,
Amorous-eyed,
'Neath the grim cathedral towers.

Oh, to be in Spain to-day,
Where the May
Recks no whit of good or evil,
Love and only love breathes she!
Oh, to be
'Midst the olive-rows of Seville!

Or on such a day to glide
With the tide
Of the berylline lagoon,

Through the streets that mirror heaven,
Crystal paven,
In the warm Venetian noon.

At the prow the gondolier
May not hear,
May not see our furtive kiss;
But he lends with cadenced strain
The refrain
To our ripe and silent bliss.

Golden shadows, silver light,
Burnish bright
Air and water, domes and skies;
As in some ambrosial dream,
On the stream
Floats our bark in magic wise.

Oh, to float day long just so!
Naught to know
Of the trouble, toil, and fret!
This is love, and this is May:
Yesterday
And to-morrow to forget!

Whither hast thou, Fancy free,
Guided me,
Wild Bohemian sister dear?
All thy gypsy soul is stirred
Since yon bird
Warbled that the Spring was here.

Tempt no more! I may not follow,
Like the swallow,
Gayly on the track of Spring.
Bounden by an iron fate,
I must wait,
Dream and wonder, yearn and sing.

Emma Lazarus

Spring Star

I.

Over the lamp-lit street,
Trodden by hurrying feet,
Where mostly pulse and beat
Life's throbbing veins,
See where the April star,
Blue-bright as sapphires are,
Hangs in deep heavens far,
Waxes and wanes.

Strangely alive it seems,
Darting keen, dazzling gleams,
Veiling anon its beams,
Large, clear, and pure.
In the broad western sky
No orb may shine anigh,
No lesser radiancy
May there endure.

Spring airs are blowing sweet:
Low in the dusky street
Star-beams and eye-beams meet.
Rapt in his dreams,
All through the crowded mart
Poet with swift-stirred heart,
Passing beneath, must start,
Thrilled by those gleams.

Naught doth he note anear,
Fain through Night's veil to peer,
Reach that resplendent sphere,
Reading her sign.
Where point those sharp, thin rays,
Guiding his weary maze,
Blesseth she or betrays,
Who may divine?

'Guard me, celestial light,
Lofty, serenely bright:
Lead my halt feet aright,'
Prayerful he speaks.
'For a new ray hath shone
Over my spirit lone.
Be this new soul the one
whom my soul seeks.'

II.

Beside her casement oped the maiden sits,
Where the mild evening spirit of the Spring

Gently between the city's homesteads flits
To kiss her brows, and floats on languid wing,
Vague longings in her breast awakening.
While her heart trembles 'neath those dim, deep skies,
As the quick sea that 'neath the globed moon lies.

Where her eyes rest the full-orbed evening star
Burns with white flame: it beckons, shrinks, dilates.
She, dazzled by that shining world afar,
May not withdraw her gaze: breathless she waits.
Some promised joy from Heaven's very gates
Unto her soul seems proffered. When shall be
The bright fulfilment of that star's decree?

Nor glad nor sad is she: she doth not know
That through the city's throng one threads his way,
Thrilled likewise by that planet's mystic glow,
And hastes to seek her. What sweet change shall sway
Her spirit at his coming? What new ray
Upon his shadowy life from her shall fall?
The silent star burns on, and knoweth all.

Emma Lazarus

St Michael's Chapel

When the vexed hubbub of our world of gain
Roars round about me as I walk the street,
The myriad noise of Traffic, and the beat
Of Toil's incessant hammer, the fierce strain
Of struggle hand to hand and brain to brain,
Ofttimes a sudden dream my sense will cheat,
The gaudy shops, the sky-piled roofs retreat,
And all at once I stand enthralled again
Within a marble minster over-seas.
I watch the solemn gold-stained gloom that creeps
To kiss an alabaster tomb, where sleeps
A lady 'twixt two knights' stone effigies,
And every day in dusky glory steeps
Their sculptured slumber of five centuries.

Emma Lazarus

Success

Oft have I brooded on defeat and pain,
The pathos of the stupid, stumbling throng.
These I ignore to-day and only long
To pour my soul forth in one trumpet strain,
One clear, grief-shattering, triumphant song,
For all the victories of man's high endeavor,
Palm-bearing, laurel deeds that live forever,
The splendor clothing him whose will is strong.
Hast thou beheld the deep, glad eyes of one
Who has persisted and achieved? Rejoice!
On naught diviner shines the all-seeing sun.
Salute him with free heart and choral voice,
'Midst flippant, feeble crowds of spectres wan,
The bold, significant, successful man.

Emma Lazarus

Sunrise

Weep for the martyr! Strew his bier
With the last roses of the year;
Shadow the land with sables; knell
The harsh-tongued, melancholy bell;
Beat the dull muffled drum, and flaunt
The drooping banner; let the chant
Of the deep-throated organ sob-
One voice, one sorrow, one heart-throb,
From land to land, from sea to sea-
The huge world quires his elegy.
Tears, love, and honor he shall have,
Through ages keeping green his grave.
Too late approved, too early lost,
His story is the people's boast.
Tough-sinewed offspring of the soil,
Of peasant lineage, reared to toil,
In Europe he had been a thing
To the glebe tethered-here a king!
Crowned not for some transcendent gift,
Genius of power that may lift
A Caesar or a Bonaparte
Up to the starred goal of his heart;
But that he was the epitome
Of all the people aim to be.
Were they his dying trust? He was
No less their model and their glass.
In him the daily traits were viewed
Of the undistinguished multitude.
Brave as the silent myriads are,
Crushed by the juggernaut world-car;
Strong with the people's strength, yet mild,
Simple and tender as a child;
Wise with the wisdom of the heart,
Able in council, field, and mart;
Nor lacking in the lambent gleam,
The great soul's final stamp-the beam
Of genial fun, the humor sane
Wherewith the hero sports with pain.
His virtues hold within the span
Of his obscurest fellow-man.
To live without reproach, to die
Without a fear-in these words lie
His highest aims, for none too high.
No triumph his beyond the reach
Of patient courage, kindly speech;
And yet so brave the soul outbreathed,
The great example he bequeathed,
Were all to follow, we should see
A universal chivalry.

His trust, the People! They respond

From Maine to Florida, beyond
The sea-walled continent's broad scope,
Honor his pledge, confirm his hope.
Hark! over seas the echo hence,
The nations do him reverence.
An Empress lays her votive wreath
Where peoples weep with bated breath.
The world-clock strikes a fateful hour,
Bright with fair portents, big with power,-
The first since history's course has run,
When kings' and peoples' cause is one;
Those mourn a brother-these a son!

O how he loved them! That gray morn,
When his wound-wasted form was borne
North, from the White House to the sea,
Lifting his tired lids thankfully,
'How good,' he murmured in his pain,
'To see the people once again!'
Oh, how they loved him! They stood there,
Thronging the road, the street, the square,
With hushed lips locked in silent prayer,
Uncovered heads and streaming eyes,
Breathless as when a father dies.
The records of the ghostly ride,
Past town and field at morning-tide.

When life's full stream is wont to gush
Through all its ways with boisterous rush,
-The records note that once a hound
Had barked, and once was heard the sound
Of cart-wheels rumbling on the stones-
And once, mid stifled sobs and groans,
One man dared audibly lament,
And cried, 'God bless the president!'
Always the waiting crowds to send
A God-speed to his journey's end-
The anxious whisper, brow of gloom,
As in a sickness-sacred room,
Till his ear drank with ecstasy
The rhythmic thunders of the sea.

Tears for the smitten fatherless,
The wife's, the mother's life-distress,
To whom the million-throated moan
From throne and hut, may not atone
For one hushed voice, one empty chair,
One presence missing everywhere.
But only words of joy and sheer,
The people from his grave shall hear.
Were they not worthy of his trust,
From whose seed sprang the sacred dust?

He broke the bars that separate
The humble from the high estate.
And heirs of empire round his bed
Mourn with the 'disinherited.'

Oh, toil-worn, patient Heart that bleeds,
Whose martyrdom even his exceeds,
Wronged, cursed, despised, misunderstood-
Oh, all-enduring multitude,
Rejoice! amid you tears, rejoice!
There issues from this grave a voice,
Proclaiming your long night is o'er,
Your day-dawn breaks from shore to shore.
You have redeemed his pledge, remained
Secure, erect, and self-sustained,
Holding more dear one thing alone,
Even than the blood of dearest son,
Revering with religious awe
The inviolable might of Law.

Emma Lazarus

Sympathy

Therefore I dare reveal my private woe,
The secret blots of my imperfect heart,
Nor strive to shrink or swell mine own desert,
Nor beautify nor hide. For this I know,
That even as I am, thou also art.
Thou past heroic forms unmoved shalt go,
To pause and bide with me, to whisper low:
"Not I alone am weak, not I apart
Must suffer, struggle, conquer day by day.
Here is my very cross by strangers borne,
Here is my bosom-sin wherefrom I pray
Hourly deliverance--this my rose, my thorn.
This woman my soul's need can understand,
Stretching o'er silent gulfs her sister hand."

Emma Lazarus

Symphonic Studies (After Schumann)

Prelude

Blue storm-clouds in hot heavens of mid-July
Hung heavy, brooding over land and sea:
Our hearts, a-tremble, throbbed in harmony
With the wild, restless tone of air and sky.
Shall we not call im Prospero who held
In his enchanted hands the fateful key
Of that tempestuous hour's mystery,
And with controlling wand our spirits spelled,
With him to wander by a sun-bright shore,
To hear fine, fairy voices, and to fly
With disembodied Ariel once more
Above earth's wrack and ruin? Far and nigh
The laughter of the thunder echoed loud,
And harmless lightnings leapt from cloud to cloud.

I

Floating upon a swelling wave of sound,
We seemed to overlook an endless sea:
Poised 'twixt clear heavens and glittering surf were we.
We drank the air in flight: we knew no bound
To the audacious ventures of desire.
Nigh us the sun was dropping, drowned in gold;
Deep, deep below the burning billows rolled;
And all the sea sang like a smitten lyre.
Oh, the wild voices of those chanting waves!
The human faces glimpsed beneath the tide!
Familiar eyes gazed from profound sea-caves,
And we, exalted, were as we had died.
We knew the sea was Life, the harmonious cry
The blended discords of humanity.

II

Look deeper yet: mark 'midst the wave-blurred mass,
In lines distinct, in colors clear defined,
The typic groups and figures of mankind.
Behold within the cool and liquid glass
Bright child-folk sporting with smooth yellow shells,
Astride of dolphins, leaping up to kiss
Fair mother-faces. From the vast abyss
How joyously their thought-free laughter wells!
Some slumber in grim caverns unafraid,
Lulled by the overwhelming water's sound,
And some make mouths at dragons, undismayed.
Oh dauntless innocence! The gulfs profound
Reëcho strangely with their ringing glee,
And with wise mermaids' plaintive melody.

III

What do the sea-nymphs in that coral cave?
With wondering eyes their supple forms they bend
O'er something rarely beautiful. They lend
Their lithe white arms, and through the golden wave
They lift it tenderly. Oh blinding sight!
A naked, radiant goddess, tranced in sleep,
Full-limbed, voluptuous, 'neath the mantling sweep
Of auburn locks that kiss her ankles white!
Upward they bear her, chanting low and sweet:
The clinging waters part before their way,
Jewels of flame are dancing 'neath their feet.
Up in the sunshine, on soft foam, they lay
Their precious burden, and return forlorn.
Oh, bliss! oh, anguish! Mortals, Love is born!

IV

Hark! from unfathomable deeps a dirge
Swells sobbing through the melancholy air:
Where love has entered, Death is also there.
The wail outrings the chafed, tumultuous surge;
Ocean and earth, the illimitable skies,
Prolong one note, a mourning for the dead,
The cry of souls not to be comforted.
What piercing music! Funeral visions rise,
And send the hot tears raining down our cheek.
We see the silent grave upon the hill
With its lone lilac-bush. O heart, be still!
She will not rise, she will not stir nor speak.
Surely, the unreturning dead are blest.
Ring on, sweet dirge, and knell us to our rest!

V

Upon the silver beach the undines dance
With interlinking arms and flying hair;
Like polished marble gleam their limbs left bare;
Upon their virgin rites pale moonbeams glance.
Softer the music! for their foam-bright feet
Print not the moist floor where they trip their round:
Affrighted they will scatter at a sound,
Leap in their cool sea-chambers, nibly fleet,
And we shall doubt that we have ever seen,
While our sane eyes behold stray wreaths of mist,
Shot with faint colors by the moon-rays kissed,
Floating snow-soft, snow-white, where these had been.

Already, look! the wave-washed sands are bare,
And mocking laughter ripples through the air.

VI

Divided 'twixt the dream-world and the real,
We heard the waxing passion of the song
Soar as to scale the heavens on pinions strong.
Amidst the long-reverberant thunder-peal,
Against the rain-blurred square of light, the head
Of the pale poet at the lyric keys
Stood boldly cut, absorbed in reveries,
While over it keen-bladed lightnings played.
"Rage on, wild storm!" the music seemed to sing:
"Not all the thunders of thy wrath can move
The soul that's dedicate to worshipping
Eternal Beauty, everlasting Love."
No more! the song was ended, and behold,
A rainbow trembling on a sky of gold!

Epilogue

Forth in the sunlit, rain-bathed air we stepped,
Sweet with the dripping grass and flowering vine,
And saw through irised clouds the pale sun shine.
Back o'er the hills the rain-mist slowly crept
Like a transparent curtain's silvery sheen;
And fronting us the painted bow was arched,
Whereunder the majestic cloud-shapes marched:
In the wet, yellow light the dazzling green
Of lawn and bush and tree seemed stained with blue.
Our hearts o'erflowed with peace. With smiles we spake
Of partings in the past, of courage new,
Of high achievement, of the dreams that make
A wonder and a glory of our days,
And all life's music but a hymn of praise.

Emma Lazarus

Tannhauser

The Landgrave Hermann held a gathering
Of minstrels, minnesingers, troubadours,
At Wartburg in his palace, and the knight,
Sir Tannhauser of France, the greatest bard,
Inspired with heavenly visions, and endowed
With apprehension and rare utterance
Of noble music, fared in thoughtful wise
Across the Horsel meadows. Full of light,
And large repose, the peaceful valley lay,
In the late splendor of the afternoon,
And level sunbeams lit the serious face
Of the young knight, who journeyed to the west,
Towards the precipitous and rugged cliffs,
Scarred, grim, and torn with savage rifts and chasms,
That in the distance loomed as soft and fair
And purple as their shadows on the grass.
The tinkling chimes ran out athwart the air,
Proclaiming sunset, ushering evening in,
Although the sky yet glowed with yellow light.
The ploughboy, ere he led his cattle home,
In the near meadow, reverently knelt,
And doffed his cap, and duly crossed his breast,
Whispering his 'Ave Mary,' as he heard
The pealing vesper-bell. But still the knight,
Unmindful of the sacred hour announced,
Disdainful or unconscious, held his course.
'Would that I also, like yon stupid wight,
Could kneel and hail the Virgin and believe!'
He murmured bitterly beneath his breath.
'Were I a pagan, riding to contend
For the Olympic wreath, O with what zeal,
What fire of inspiration, would I sing
The praises of the gods! How may my lyre
Glorify these whose very life I doubt?
The world is governed by one cruel God,
Who brings a sword, not peace. A pallid Christ,
Unnatural, perfect, and a virgin cold,
They give us for a heaven of living gods,
Beautiful, loving, whose mere names were song;
A creed of suffering and despair, walled in
On every side by brazen boundaries,
That limit the soul's vision and her hope
To a red hell or and unpeopled heaven.
Yea, I am lost already,-even now
Am doomed to flaming torture for my thoughts.
O gods! O gods! where shall my soul find peace?'
He raised his wan face to the faded skies,
Now shadowing into twilight; no response
Came from their sunless heights; no miracle,
As in the ancient days of answering gods.
With a long, shuddering sigh he glanced to earth,
Finding himself among the Horsel cliffs.

Gray, sullen, gaunt, they towered on either side;
Scant shrubs sucked meagre life between the rifts
Of their huge crags, and made small darker spots
Upon their wrinkled sides; the jaded horse
Stumbled upon loose, rattling, fallen stones,
Amidst the gathering dusk, and blindly fared
Through the weird, perilous pass. As darkness waxed,
And an oppressive mystery enwrapped
The roadstead and the rocks, Sir Tannhauser
Fancied he saw upon the mountain-side
The fluttering of white raiment. With a sense
Of wild joy and horror, he gave pause,
For his sagacious horse that reeked of sweat,
Trembling in every limb, confirmed his thought,
That nothing human scaled that haunted cliff.
The white thing seemed descending,-now a cloud
It looked, and now a rag of drifted mist,
Torn in the jagged gorge precipitous,
And now an apparition clad in white,
Shapely and real,-then he lost it quite,
Gazing on nothing with blank, foolish face.
As with wide eyes he stood, he was aware
Of a strange splendor at his very side,
A presence and a majesty so great,
That ere he saw, he felt it was divine.
He turned, and, leaping from his horse, fell prone,
In speechless adoration, on the earth,
Before the matchless goddess, who appeared
With no less freshness of immortal youth
Than when first risen from foam of Paphian seas.
He heard delicious strains of melody,
Such as his highest muse had ne'er attained,
Float in the air, while in the distance rang,
Harsh and discordant, jarring with those tones,
The gallop of his frightened horse's hoofs,
Clattering in sudden freedom down the pass.
A voice that made all music dissonance
Then thrilled through heart and flesh of that prone knight,
Triumphantly: 'The gods need but appear,
And their usurped thrones are theirs again!'
Then tenderly: 'Sweet knight, I pray thee, rise;
Worship me not, for I desire thy love.
Look on me, follow me, for I am fain
Of thy fair, human face.' He rose and looked,
Stirred by that heavenly flattery to the soul.
Her hair, unbraided and unfilleted,
Rained in a glittering shower to the ground,
And cast forth lustre. Round her zone was clasped
The scintillant cestus, stiff with flaming gold,
Thicker with restless gems than heaven with stars.
She might have flung the enchanted wonder forth;
Her eyes, her slightest gesture would suffice

To bind all men in blissful slavery.
She sprang upon the mountain's dangerous side,
With feet that left their print in flowers divine,-
Flushed amaryllis and blue hyacinth,
Impurpled amaranth and asphodel,
Dewy with nectar, and exhaling scents
Richer than all the roses of mid-June.
The knight sped after her, with wild eyes fixed
Upon her brightness, as she lightly leapt
From crag to crag, with flying auburn hair,
Like a gold cloud, that lured him ever on,
Higher and higher up the haunted cliff.
At last amidst a grove of pines she paused,
Until he reached her, breathing hard with haste,
Delight, and wonder. Then upon his hand
She placed her own, and all his blood at once
Tingled and hotly rushed to brow and cheek,
At the supreme caress; but the mere touch
Infused fresh life, and when she looked at him
With gracious tenderness, he felt himself
Strong suddenly to bear the blinding light
Of those great eyes. 'Dear knight,' she murmured low,
'For love of me, wilt thou accord this boon,-
To grace my weary home in banishment?'
His hungry eyes gave answer ere he spoke,
In tones abrupt that startled his own ears
With their strange harshness; but with thanks profuse
She guided him, still holding his cold hand
In her warm, dainty palm, unto a cave,
Whence a rare glory issued, and a smell
Of spice and roses, frankincense and balm.
They entering stood within a marble hall,
With straight, slim pillars, at whose farther end
The goddess led him to a spiral flight
Of stairs, descending always 'midst black gloom
Into the very bowels of the earth.
Down these, with fearful swiftness, they made way,
The knight's feet touching not the solid stair,
But sliding down as in a vexing dream,
Blind, feeling but that hand divine that still
Empowered him to walk on empty air.
Then he was dazzled by a sudden blaze,
In vast palace filled with reveling folk.
Cunningly pictured on the ivory walls
Were rolling hills, cool lakes, and boscage green,
And all the summer landscape's various pomp.
The precious canopy aloft was carved
In semblance of the pleached forest trees,
Enameled with the liveliest green, wherethrough
A light pierced, more resplendent than the day.
O'er the pale, polished jasper of the floor
Of burnished metal, fretted and embossed

With all the marvelous story of her birth
Painted in prodigal splendor of rich tincts,
And carved by heavenly artists,-crystal seas,
And long-haired Nereids in their pearly shells,
And all the wonder of her lucent limbs
Sphered in a vermeil mist. Upon the throne
She took her seat, the knight beside her still,
Singing on couches of fresh asphodel,
And the dance ceased, and the flushed revelers came
In glittering phalanx to adore their queen.
Beautiful girls, with shining delicate heads,
Crested with living jewels, fanned the air
With flickering wings from naked shoulders soft.
Then with preluding low, a thousand harps,
And citherns, and strange nameless instruments,
Sent through the fragrant air sweet symphonies,
And the winged dancers waved in mazy rounds,
With changing lustres like a summer sea.
Fair boys, with charming yellow hair crisp-curled,
And frail, effeminate beauty, the knight saw,
But of strong, stalwart men like him were none.
He gazed thereon bewitched, until the hand
Of Venus, erst withdrawn, now fell again
Upon his own, and roused him from his trance.
He looked on her, and as he looked, a cloud
Auroral, flaming as at sunrising,
Arose from nothing, floating over them
In luminous folds, like that vermilion mist
Penciled upon the throne, and as it waxed
In density and brightness, all the throng
Of festal dancers, less and less distinct,
Grew like pale spirits in a vague, dim dream,
And vanished altogether; and these twain,
Shut from the world in that ambrosial cloud,
Now with a glory inconceivable,
Vivid and conflagrant, looked each on each.

All hours came laden with their own delights
In that enchanted place, wherein Time
Knew no divisions harsh of night and day,
But light was always, and desire of sleep
Was satisfied at once with slumber soft,
Desire of food with magical repast,
By unseen hands on golden tables spread.
But these the knight accepted like a god,
All less was lost in that excess of joy,
The crowning marvel of her love for him,
Assuring him of his divinity.
Meanwhile remembrance of the earth appeared
Like the vague trouble of a transient dream,-
The doubt, the scruples, the remorse for thoughts
Beyond his own control, the constant thirst

For something fairer than his life, more real
Than airy revelations of his Muse.
Here was his soul's desire satisfied.
All nobler passions died; his lyre he flung
Recklessly forth, with vows to dedicate
His being to herself. She knew and seized
The moment of her mastery, and conveyed
The lyre beyond his sight and memory.
With blandishment divine she changed for him,
Each hour, her mood; a very woman now,
Fantastic, voluble, affectionate,
And jealous of the vague, unbodied air,
Exacting, penitent, and pacified,
All in a breath. And often she appeared
Majestic with celestial wrath, with eyes
That shot forth fire, and a heavy brow,
Portentous as the lowering front of heaven,
When the reverberant, sullen thunder rolls
Among the echoing clouds. Thus she denounced
Her ancient, fickle worshippers, who left
Her altars desecrate, her fires unfed,
Her name forgotten. 'But I reign, I reign!'
She would shrill forth, triumphant; 'yea, I reign.
Men name me not, but worship me unnamed,
Beauty and Love within their heart of hearts;
Not with bent knees and empty breath of words,
But with devoted sacrifice of lives.'
Then melting in a moment, she would weep
Ambrosial tears, pathetic, full of guile,
Accusing her own base ingratitude,
In craving worship, when she had his heart,
Her priceless knight, her peerless paladin,
Her Tannhauser; then, with an artful glance
Of lovely helplessness, entreated him
Not to desert her, like the faithless world,
For these unbeautiful and barbarous gods,
Or she would never cease her prayers to Jove,
Until he took from her the heavy curse
Of immortality. With closer vows,
The knight then sealed his worship and forswore
All other aims and deeds to serve her cause.
Thus passed unnoted seven barren years
Of reckless passion and voluptuous sloth,
Undignified by any lofty thought
In his degraded mind, that sometime was
Endowed with noble capability.
From revelry to revelry he passed,
Craving more pungent pleasure momently,
And new intoxications, and each hour
The siren goddess answered his desires.
Once when she left him with a weary sense
Of utter lassitude, he sat alone,

And, raising listless eyes, he saw himself
In a great burnished mirror, wrought about
With cunning imagery of twisted vines.
He scarcely knew those sunken, red-rimmed eyes,
For his who in the flush of manhood rode
Among the cliffs, and followed up the crags
The flying temptress; and there fell on him
A horror of her beauty, a disgust
For his degenerate and corrupted life,
With irresistible, intense desire,
To feel the breath of heaven on his face.
Then as Fate willed, who rules above the gods,
He saw, within the glass, behind him glide
The form of Venus. Certain of her power,
She had laid by, in fond security,
The enchanted cestus, and Sir Tannhauser,
With surfeited regard, beheld her now,
No fairer than the women of the earth,
Whom with serenity and health he left,
Duped by a lovely witch. Before he moved,
She knew her destiny; and when he turned,
He seemed to drop a mask, disclosing thus
An alien face, and eyes with vision true,
That for long time with glamour had been blind.
Hiding the hideous rage within her breast,
With girlish simpleness of folded hands,
Auroral blushes, and sweet, shamefast mien,
She spoke: 'Behold, my love, I have cast forth
All magic, blandishments and sorcery,
For I have dreamed a dream so terrible,
That I awoke to find my pillow stained
With tears as of real woe. I thought my belt,
By Vulcan wrought with matchless skill and power,
Was the sole bond between us; this being doffed,
I seemed to thee an old, unlovely crone,
Wrinkled by every year that I have seen.
Thou turnedst from me with a brutal sneer,
So that I woke with weeping. Then I rose,
And drew the glittering girdle from my zone,
Jealous thereof, yet full of fears, and said,
'If it be this he loves, then let him go!
I have no solace as a mortal hath,
No hope of change or death to comfort me
Through all eternity; yet he is free,
Though I could hold him fast with heavy chains,
Bound in perpetual imprisonment.'
Tell me my vision was a baseless dream;
See, I am kneeling, and kiss thy hands,-
In pity, look on me, before thy word
Condemns me to immortal misery!'
As she looked down, the infernal influence
Worked on his soul again; for she was fair

Beyond imagination, and her brow
Seemed luminous with high self-sacrifice.
He bent and kissed her head, warm, shining, soft,
With its close-curling gold, and love revived.

But ere he spoke, he heard the distant sound
Of one sweet, smitten lyre, and a gleam
Of violent anger flashed across the face
Upraised to his in feigned simplicity
And singleness of purpose. Then he sprang,
Well-nigh a god himself, with sudden strength
to vanquish and resist, beyond her reach,
Crying, 'My old Muse calls me, and I hear!
Thy fateful vision is no baseless dream;
I will be gone from this accursed hall!'
Then she, too, rose, dilating over him,
And sullen clouds veiled all her rosy limbs,
Unto her girdle, and her head appeared
Refulgent, and her voice rang wrathfully:
'Have I cajoled and flattered thee till now,
To lose thee thus! How wilt thou make escape?
ONCE BEING MINE THOU ART FOREVER MINE:
Yea, not my love, but my poor slave and fool.'
But he, with both hands pressed upon his eyes,
Against that blinding lustre, heeded not
Her thundered words, and cried in sharp despair,
'Help me, O Virgin Mary! and thereat,
The very bases of the hall gave way,
The roof was rived, the goddess disappeared,
And Tannhauser stood free upon the cliff,
Amidst the morning sunshine and fresh air.

Around him were the tumbled blocks and crags,
Huge ridges and sharp juts of flinty peaks,
Black caves, and masses of the grim, bald rock.
The ethereal, unfathomable sky,
Hung over him, the valley lay beneath,
Dotted with yellow hayricks, that exhaled
Sweet, healthy odors to the mountain-top.
He breathed intoxicate the infinite air,
And plucked the heather blossoms where they blew,
Reckless with light and dew, in crannies green,
And scarcely saw their darling bells for tears.
No sounds of labor reached him from the farms
And hamlets trim, nor from the furrowed glebe;
But a serene and sabbath stillness reigned,
Till broken by the faint, melodious chimes
Of the small village church that called to prayer.
He hurried down the rugged, scarped cliff,
And swung himself from shelving granite slopes
To narrow foot-holds, near wide-throated chasms,
Tearing against the sharp stones his bleeding hands,

With long hair flying from his dripping brow,
Uncovered head, and white, exalted face.
No memory had he of his smooth ascent,
No thought of fear upon those dreadful hills;
He only heard the bell, inviting him
To satisfy the craving of his heart,
For worship 'midst his fellow men. He reached
The beaten, dusty road, and passed thereon
The pious peasants faring towards the church,
And scarce refrained from greeting them like friends
Dearly beloved, after long absence met.
How more than fair the sunburnt wenches looked,
In their rough, homespun gowns and coifs demure,
After the beauty of bare, rosy limbs,
And odorous, loose hair! He noted not
Suspicious glances on his garb uncouth,
His air extravagant and face distraught,
With bursts of laughter from the red-cheeked boys,
And prudent crossings of the women's breasts.
He passed the flowering close about the church,
And trod the well worn-path, with throbbing heart,
The little heather-bell between his lips,
And his eyes fastened on the good green grass.
Thus entered he the sanctuary, lit
With frequent tapers, and with sunbeams stained
Through painted glass. How pure and innocent
The waiting congregation seemed to him,
Kneeling, or seated with calm brows upraised!
With faltering strength, he cowered down alone,
And held sincere communion with the Lord,
For one brief moment, in a sudden gush
Of blessed tears. The minister of God
Rose to invoke a blessing on his flock,
And then began the service,-not in words
To raise the lowly, and to heal the sick,
But an alien tongue, with phrases formed,
And meaningless observances. The knight,
Unmoved, yet thirsting for the simple word
That might have moved him, held his bitter thoughts,
But when in his own speech a new priest spake,
Looked up with hope revived, and heard the text:
'Go, preach the Gospel unto all the world.
He that believes and is baptized, is saved.
He that believeth not, is damned in hell!'
He sat with neck thrust forth and staring eyes;
The crowded congregation disappeared;
He felt alone in some black sea of hell,
While a great light smote one exalted face,
Vivid already with prophetic fire,
Whose fatal mouth now thundered forth his doom.
He longed in that void circle to cry out,
With one clear shriek, but sense and voice seemed bound,

And his parched tongue clave useless to his mouth.
As the last words resounded through the church,
And once again the pastor blessed his flock,
Who, serious and subdued, passed slowly down
The arrow aisle, none noted, near the wall,
A fallen man with face upon his knees,
A heap of huddled garments and loose hair,
Unconscious 'mid the rustling, murmurous stir,
'Midst light and rural smell of grass and flowers,
Let in athwart the doorway. One lone priest,
Darkening the altar lights, moved noiselessly,
Now with the yellow glow upon his face,
Now a black shadow gliding farther on,
Amidst the smooth, slim pillars of hewn ash.
But from the vacant aisles he heard at once
A hollow sigh, heaved from a depth profound.
Upholding his last light above his head,
And peering eagerly amidst the stalls,
He cried, 'Be blest who cometh in God's name.'
Then the gaunt form of Tannhauser arose.
'Father, I am a sinner, and I seek
Forgiveness and help, by whatso means
I can regain the joy of peace with God.'
'The Lord hath mercy on the penitent.
'Although thy sins be scarlet,' He hath said,
'Will I not make them white as wool?' Confess,
And I will shrive you.' Thus the good priest moved
Towards the remorseful knight and pressed his hand.
But shrinking down, he drew his fingers back
From the kind palm, and kissed the friar's feet.
'Thy pure hand is anointed, and can heal.
The cool, calm pressure brings back sanity,
And what serene, past joys! yet touch me not,
My contact is pollution,-hear, O hear,
While I disburden my charged soul.' He lay,
Casting about for words and strength to speak.
'O father, is there help for such a one,'
In tones of deep abasement he began,
'Who hath rebelled against the laws of God,
With pride no less presumptuous than his
Who lost thereby his rank in heaven?' 'My son,
There is atonement for all sins,-or slight
Or difficult, proportioned to the crime.
Though this may be the staining of thy hands
With blood of kinsmen or of fellow-men.'
'My hands are white,-my crime hath found no name,
This side of hell; yet though my heart-strings snap
To live it over, let me make the attempt.
I was a knight and bard, with such a gift
Of revelation that no hour of life
Lacked beauty and adornment, in myself
The seat and centre of all happiness.

What inspiration could my lofty Muse
Draw from those common and familiar themes,
Painted upon the windows and the walls
Of every church,-the mother and her child,
The miracle and mystery of the birth,
The death, the resurrection? Fool and blind!
That saw not symbols of eternal truth
In that grand tragedy and victory,
Significant and infinite as life.
What tortures did my skeptic soul endure,
At war against herself and all mankind!
The restless nights of feverish sleeplessness,
With balancing of reasons nicely weighed;
The dawn that brought no hope nor energy,
The blasphemous arraignment of the Lord,
Taxing His glorious divinity
With all the grief and folly of the world.
Then came relapses into abject fear,
And hollow prayer and praise from craven heart.
Before a sculptured Venus I would kneel,
Crown her with flowers, worship her, and cry,
'O large and noble type of our ideal,
At least my heart and prayer return to thee,
Amidst a faithless world of proselytes.
Madonna Mary, with her virgin lips,
And eyes that look perpetual reproach,
Insults and is a blasphemy on youth.
Is she to claim the worship of a man
Hot with the first rich flush of ripened life?'
Realities, like phantoms, glided by,
Unnoted 'midst the torment and delights
Of my conflicting spirit, and I doffed
the modest Christian weeds of charity
And fit humility, and steeled myself
In pagan panoply of stoicism
And self-sufficing pride. Yet constantly
I gained men's charmed attention and applause,
With the wild strains I smote from out my lyre,
To me the native language of my soul,
To them attractive and miraculous,
As all things whose solution and whose source
Remain a mystery. Then came suddenly
The summons to attend the gathering
Of minstrels at the Landgrave Hermann's court.
Resolved to publish there my pagan creed
In harmonies so high and beautiful
That all the world would share my zeal and faith,
I journeyed towards the haunted Horsel cliffs.
O God! how may I tell you how SHE came,
The temptress of a hundred centuries,
Yet fresh as April? She bewitched my sense,
Poisoned my judgment with sweet flatteries,

And for I may not guess how many years
Held me a captive in degrading bonds.
There is no sin of lust so lewd and foul,
Which I learned not in that alluring hell,
Until this morn, I snapped the ignoble tie,
By calling on the Mother of our Lord.
O for the power to stand again erect,
And look men in the eyes! What penitence,
What scourging of the flesh, what rigid fasts,
What terrible privations may suffice
To cleanse me in the sight of God and man?'
Ill-omened silence followed his appeal.
Patient and motionless he lay awhile,
Then sprang unto his feet with sudden force,
Confronting in his breathless vehemence,
With palpitating heart, the timid priest.
'Answer me, as you hope for a response,
One day, at the great judgment seat yourself.'
'I cannot answer,' said the timid priest,
'I have not understood.' 'Just God! is this
The curse Thou layest upon me? I outstrip
The sympathy and brotherhood of men,
So far removed is my experience
From their clean innocence. Inspire me,
Prompt me to words that bring me near to them!
Father,' in gentler accents he resumed,
'Thank Heaven at your every orison
That sin like mine you cannot apprehend.
More than the truth perchance I have confessed,
But I have sinned, and darkly,-this is true;
And I have suffered, and am suffering now.
Is there no help in your great Christian creed
Of liberal charity, for such a one?'
'My son,' the priest replied, 'your speech distraught
Hath quite bewildered me. I fain would hope
That Christ's large charity can reach your sin,
But I know naught. I cannot but believe
That the enchantress who first tempted you
Must be the Evil one,-your early doubt
Was the possession of your soul by him.
Travel across the mountain to the town,
The first cathedral town upon the road
That leads to Rome,-a sage and reverend priest,
The Bishop Adrian, bides there. Say you have come
From his leal servant, Friar Lodovick;
He hath vast lore and great authority,
And may absolve you freely of your sin.'

Over the rolling hills, through summer fields,
By noisy villages and lonely lanes,
Through glowing days, when all the landscape stretched
Shimmering in the heat, a pilgrim fared

Towards the cathedral town. Sir Tannhauser
Had donned the mournful sackcloth, girt his loins
With a coarse rope that ate into his flesh,
Muffled a cowl about his shaven head,
Hung a great leaden cross around his neck;
And bearing in his hands a knotty staff,
With swollen, sandaled feet he held his course.
He snatched scant rest at twilight or at dawn,
When his forced travel was least difficult.
But most he journeyed when the sky, o'ercast,
Uprolled its threatening clouds of dusky blue,
And angry thunder grumbled through the hills,
And earth grew dark at noonday, till the flash
Of the thin lightning through the wide sky leapt.
And tumbling showers scoured along the plain.
Then folk who saw the pilgrim penitent,
Drenched, weird, and hastening as as to some strange doom,
Swore that the wandering Jew had crossed their land,
And the Lord Christ had sent the deadly bolt
Harmless upon his cursed, immortal head.
At length the hill-side city's spires and roofs,
With all its western windows smitten red
By a rich sunset, and with massive towers
Of its cathedral overtopping all,
greeted his sight. Some weary paces more,
And as the twilight deepened in the streets,
He stood within the minster. How serene,
In sculptured calm of centuries, it seemed!
How cool and spacious all the dim-lit aisles,
Still hazy with fumes of frankincense!
The vesper had been said, yet here and there
A wrinkled beldam, or mourner veiled,
Or burly burgher on the cold floor knelt,
And still the organist, with wandering hands,
Drew from the keys mysterious melodies,
And filled the church with flying waifs of song,
That with ethereal beauty moved the soul
To a more tender prayer and gentler faith
Than choral anthems and the solemn mass.
A thousand memories, sweet to bitterness,
Rushed on the knight and filled his eyes with tears;
Youth's blamelessness and faith forever lost,
The love of his neglected lyre, his art,
Revived by these aerial harmonies.
He was unworthy now to touch the strings,
Too base to stir men's soul to ecstasy
And high resolves, as in the days agone;
And yet, with all his spirit's earnestness,
He yearned to feel the lyre between his hands,
To utter all the trouble of his life
Unto the Muse who understands and helps.
Outworn with travel, soothed to drowsiness

By dying music and sweet-scented air,
His limbs relaxed, and sleep possessed his frame.
Auroral light the eastern oriels touched,
When with delicious sense of rest he woke,
Amidst the cast and silent empty aisles.
'God's peace hath fallen upon me in this place;
This is my Bethel; here I feel again
A holy calm, if not of innocence,
Yet purest after that, the calm serene
Of expiation and forgiveness.'
He spake, and passed with staff and wallet forth
Through the tall portal to the open square,
And turning, paused to look upon the pile.
The northern front against the crystal sky
Loomed dark and heavy, full of sombre shade,
With each projecting buttress, carven cross,
Gable and mullion, tipped with laughing light
By the slant sunbeams of the risen morn.
The noisy swallows wheeled above their nests,
Builded in hidden nooks about the porch.
No human life was stirring in the square,
Save now and then a rumbling market-team,
Fresh from the fields and farms without the town.
He knelt upon the broad cathedral steps,
And kissed the moistened stone, while overhead
The circling swallows sang, and all around
The mighty city lay asleep and still.

To stranger's ears must yet again be made
The terrible confession; yet again
A deathly chill, with something worse than fear,
Seized the knight's heart, who knew his every word
Widened the gulf between his kind and him.
The Bishop sat with pomp of mitred head,
In pride of proven virtue, hearkening to all
With cold, official apathy, nor made
A sign of pity nor encouragement.
The friar understood the pilgrim's grief,
The language of his eyes; his speech alone
Was alien to these kind, untutored ears.
But this was truly to be misconstrued,
To tear each palpitating word alive
From out the depths of his remorseful soul,
And have it weighed with the precision cool
And the nice logic of a reasoning mind.
This spiritual Father judged his crime
As the mad mischief of a reckless boy,
That call for strict, immediate punishment.
But Tannhauser, who felt himself a man,
Though base, yet fallen through passions and rare gifts
Of an exuberant nature rankly rich,
And knew his weary head was growing gray

With a life's terrible experience,
Found his old sense of proper worth revive;
But modestly he ended: 'Yet I felt,
O holy Father, in the church, this morn,
A strange security, a peace serene,
As though e'en yet the Lord regarded me
With merciful compassion; yea, as though
Even so vile a worm as I might work
Mine own salvation, through repentant prayers.'
'Presumptuous man, it is no easy task
To expiate such sin; a space of prayer
That deprecates the anger of the Lord,
A pilgrimage through pleasant summer lands,
May not atone for years of impious lust;
Thy heart hath lied to thee in offering hope.'
'Is there no hope on earth?' the pilgrim sighed.
'None through thy penance,' said the saintly man.
'Yet there may be through mediation, help.
There is a man who by a blameless life
Hath won the right to intercede with God.
No sins of his own flesh hath he to purge,-
The Cardinal Filippo,-he abides,
Within the Holy City. Seek him out;
This is my only counsel,-through thyself
Can be no help and no forgiveness.'

How different from the buoyant joy of morn
Was this discouraged sense of lassitude,
The Bishop's words were ringing in his ears,
Measured and pitiless, and blent with these,
The memory of the goddess' last wild cry,-
'ONCE BEING MINE, THOU ART FOREVER MINE.'
Was it the truth, despite his penitence,
And the dedication of his thought to God,
That still some portion of himself was hers,
Some lust survived, some criminal regret,
For her corrupted love? He searched his heart:
All was remorse, religious and sincere,
And yet her dreadful curse still haunted him;
For all men shunned him, and denied him help,
Knowing at once in looking on his face,
Ploughed with deep lines and prematurely old,
That he had struggled with some deadly fiend,
And that he was no longer kin to them.
Just past the outskirts of the town, he stopped,
To strengthen will and courage to proceed.
The storm had broken o'er the sultry streets,
But now the lessening clouds were flying east,
And though the gentle shower still wet his face,
The west was cloudless while the sun went down,
And the bright seven-colored arch stood forth,
Against the opposite dull gray. There was

A beauty in the mingled storm and peace,
Beyond clear sunshine, as the vast, green fields
Basked in soft light, though glistening yet with rain.
The roar of all the town was now a buzz
Less than the insects' drowsy murmuring
That whirred their gauzy wings around his head.
The breeze that follows on the sunsetting
Was blowing whiffs of bruised and dripping grass
Into the heated city. But he stood,
Disconsolate with thoughts of fate and sin,
Still wrestling with his soul to win it back
From her who claimed it to eternity.
Then on the delicate air there came to him
The intonation of the minster bells,
Chiming the vespers, musical and faint.
He knew not what of dear and beautiful
There was in those familiar peals, that spake
Of his first boyhood and his innocence,
Leading him back, with gracious influence,
To pleasant thoughts and tender memories,
And last, recalling the fair hour of hope
He passed that morning in the church. Again,
The glad assurance of God's boundless love
Filled all his being, and he rose serene,
And journeyed forward with a calm content.

Southward he wended, and the landscape took
A warmer tone, the sky a richer light.
The gardens of the graceful, festooned with hops,
With their slight tendrils binding pole to pole,
Gave place to orchards and the trellised grape,
The hedges were enwreathed with trailing vines,
With clustering, shapely bunches, 'midst the growth
Of tangled greenery. The elm and ash
Less frequent grew than cactus, cypresses,
And golden-fruited or large-blossomed trees.
The far hills took the hue of the dove's breast,
Veiled in gray mist of olive groves. No more
He passed dark, moated strongholds of grim knights,
But terraces with marble-paven steps,
With fountains leaping in the sunny air,
And hanging gardens full of sumptuous bloom.
Then cloisters guarded by their dead gray walls,
Where now and then a golden globe of fruit
Or full-flushed flower peered out upon the road,
Nodding against the stone, and where he heard
Sometimes the voices of the chanting monks,
Sometimes the laugh of children at their play,
Amidst the quaint, old gardens. But these sights
Were in the suburbs of the wealthy towns.
For many a day through wildernesses rank,
Or marshy, feverous meadow-lands he fared,

The fierce sun smiting his close-muffled head;
Or 'midst the Alpine gorges faced the storm,
That drave adown the gullies melted snow
And clattering boulders from the mountain-tops.
At times, between the mountains and the sea
Fair prospects opened, with the boundless stretch
Of restless, tideless water by his side,
And their long wash upon the yellow sand.
Beneath this generous sky the country-folk
Could lead a freer life,-the fat, green fields
Offered rich pasturage, athwart the air
Rang tinkling cow-bells and the shepherds' pipes.
The knight met many a strolling troubadour,
Bearing his cithern, flute, or dulcimer;
And oft beneath some castle's balcony,
At night, he heard their mellow voices rise,
Blent with stringed instruments or tambourines,
Chanting some lay as natural as a bird's.
Then Nature stole with healthy influence
Into his thoughts; his love of beauty woke,
His Muse inspired dreams as in the past.
But after this came crueler remorse,
And he would tighten round his loins the rope,
And lie for hours beside some wayside cross,
And feel himself unworthy to enjoy
The splendid gift and privilege of life.
Then forth he hurried, spurred by his desire
To reach the City of the Seven Hills,
And gain his absolution. Some leagues more
Would bring him to the vast Campagna land,
When by a roadside well he paused to rest.
'T was noon, and reapers in the field hard by
Lay neath the trees upon the sun-scorched grass.
But from their midst one came towards the well,
Not trudging like a man forespent with toil,
But frisking like a child at holiday,
With light steps. The pilgrim watched him come,
And found him scarcely older than a child,
A large-mouthed earthen pitcher in his hand,
And a guitar upon his shoulder slung.
A wide straw hat threw all his face in shade,
But doffing this, to catch whatever breeze
Might stir among the branches, he disclosed
A charming head of rippled, auburn hair,
A frank, fair face, as lovely as a girls,
With great, soft eyes, as mild and grave as kine's.
Above his head he slipped the instrument,
And laid it with his hat upon the turf,
Lowered his pitcher down the well-head cool,
And drew it dripping upward, ere he saw
The watchful pilgrim, craving (as he thought)
The precious draught. 'Your pardon, holy sir,

Drink first,' he cried, 'before I take the jar
Unto my father in the reaping-field.'
Touched by the cordial kindness of the lad,
The pilgrim answered,-'Thanks, my thirst is quenched
From mine own palm.' The stranger deftly poised
The brimming pitcher on his head, and turned
Back to the reaping-folk, while Tannhauser
Looked after him across the sunny fields,
Clasping each hand about his waist to bear
The balanced pitcher; then, down glancing, found
The lad's guitar near by, and fell at once
To striking its tuned string with wandering hands,
And pensive eyes filled full of tender dreams.
'Yea, holy sir, it is a worthless thing,
And yet I love it, for I make it speak.'
The boy again stood by him and dispelled
His train of fantasies half sweet, half sad.
'That was not in my thought,' the knight replied.
'Its worth is more than rubies; whoso hath
The art to make this speak is raised thereby
Above all loneliness or grief or fear.'
More to himself than to the lad he spake,
Who, understanding not, stood doubtfully
At a loss for answer; but the knight went on:
'How came it in your hands, and who hath tuned
your voice to follow it.' 'I am unskilled,
Good father, but my mother smote its strings
To music rare.' Diverted from one theme,
Pleased with the winsome candor of the boy,
The knight encouraged him to confidence;
Then his own gift of minstrelsy revealed,
And told bright tales of his first wanderings,
When in lords' castles and kings' palaces
Men still made place for him, for in his land
The gift was rare and valued at its worth,
And brought great victory and sounding fame.
Thus, in retracing all his pleasant youth,
His suffering passed as though it had not been.
Wide-eyed and open-mouthed the boy gave ear,
His fair face flushing with the sudden thoughts
That went and came,-then, as the pilgrim ceased,
Drew breath and spake: 'And where now is your lyre?'
The knight with both hands hid his changed, white face,
Crying aloud, 'Lost! lost! forever lost!'
Then, gathering strength, he bared his face again
Unto the frightened, wondering boy, and rose
With hasty fear. 'Ah, child, you bring me back
Unwitting to remembrance of my grief,
For which I donned eternal garb of woe;
And yet I owe you thanks for one sweet hour
Of healthy human intercourse and peace.
'T is not for me to tarry by the way.

Farewell!' The impetuous, remorseful boy,
Seeing sharp pain on that kind countenance,
Fell at his feet and cried, 'Forgive my words,
Witless but innocent, and leave me not
Without a blessing.' Moved unutterably,
The pilgrim kissed with trembling lips his head,
And muttered, 'At this moment would to God
That I were worthy!' Then waved wasted hands
Over the youth in act of blessing him,
But faltered, 'Cleanse me through his innocence,
O heavenly Father!' and with quickening steps
Hastened away upon the road to Rome.
The noon was past, the reapers drew broad swaths
With scythes sun-smitten 'midst the ripened crop.
Thin shadows of the afternoon slept soft
On the green meadows as the knight passed forth.

He trudged amidst the sea of poisonous flowers
On the Campagna's undulating plain,
With Rome, the many-steepled, many-towered,
Before him regnant on her throne of hills.
A thick blue cloud of haze o'erhung the town,
But the fast-sinking sun struck fiery light
From shining crosses, roofs, and flashing domes.
Across his path an arching bridge of stone
Was raised above a shrunken yellow stream,
Hurrying with the light on every wave
Towards the great town and outward to the sea.
Upon the bridge's crest he paused, and leaned
Against the barrier, throwing back his cowl,
And gazed upon the dull, unlovely flood
That was the Tiber. Quaggy banks lay bare,
Muddy and miry, glittering in the sun,
And myriad insects hovered o'er the reeds,
Whose lithe, moist tips by listless airs were stirred.
When the low sun had dropped behind the hills,
He found himself within the streets of Rome,
Walking as in a sleep, where naught seemed real.
The chattering hubbub of the market-place
Was over now; but voices smote his ear
Of garrulous citizens who jostled past.
Loud cries, gay laughter, snatches of sweet song,
The tinkling fountains set in gardens cool
About the pillared palaces, and blent
With trickling of the conduits in the squares,
The noisy teams within the narrow streets,-
All these the stranger heard and did not hear,
While ringing bells pealed out above the town,
And calm gray twilight skies stretched over it.
Wide open stood the doors of every church,
And through the porches pressed a streaming throng.
Vague wonderment perplexed him, at the sight

Of broken columns raised to Jupiter
Beside the cross, immense cathedrals reared
Upon a dead faith's ruins; all the whirl
And eager bustle of the living town
Filling the storied streets, whose very stones
Were solemn monuments, and spake of death.
Although he wrestled with himself, the thought
Of that poor, past religion smote his heart
With a huge pity and deep sympathy,
Beyond the fervor which the Church inspired.
Where was the noble race who ruled the world,
Moulded of purest elements, and stuffed
With sternest virtues, every man a king,
Wearing the purple native in his heart?
These lounging beggars, stealthy monks and priests,
And womanish patricians filled their place.
Thus Tannhauser, still half an infidel,
Pagan through mind and Christian through the heart,
Fared thoughtfully with wandering, aimless steps,
Till in the dying glimmer of the day
He raised his eyes and found himself alone
Amid the ruined arches, broken shafts,
And huge arena of the Coliseum.
He did not see it as it was, dim-lit
By something less than day and more than night,
With wan reflections of the rising moon
Rather divined than seen on ivied walls,
And crumbled battlements, and topless columns-
But by the light of all the ancient days,
Ringed with keen eager faces, living eyes,
Fixed on the circus with a savage joy,
Where brandished swords flashed white, and human blood
Streamed o'er the thirsty dust, and Death was king.
He started, shuddering, and drew breath to see
The foul pit choked with weeds and tumbled stones,
The cross raised midmost, and the peaceful moon
Shining o'er all; and fell upon his knees,
Restored to faith in one wise, loving God.
Day followed day, and still he bode in Rome,
Waiting his audience with the Cardinal,
And from the gates, on pretext frivolous,
Passed daily forth,-his Eminency slept,-
Again, his Eminency was fatigued
By tedious sessions of the Papal court,
And thus the patient pilgrim was referred
Unto a later hour. At last the page
Bore him a missive with Filippo's seal,
That in his name commended Tannhauser
Unto the Pope. The worn, discouraged knight
Read the brief scroll, then sadly forth again,
Along the bosky alleys of the park,
Passed to the glare and noise of summer streets.

'Good God!' he muttered, 'Thou hast ears for all,
And sendest help and comfort; yet these men,
Thy saintly ministers, must deck themselves
With arrogance, and from their large delight
In all the beauty of the beauteous earth,
And peace of indolent, untempted souls,
Deny the hungry outcast a bare word.'
Yet even as he nourished bitter thoughts,
He felt a depth of clear serenity,
Unruffled in his heart beneath it all.
No outward object now had farther power
To wound him there, for the brooding o'er those deeps
Of vast contrition was boundless hope.

Yet not to leave a human chance untried,
He sought the absolution of the Pope.
In a great hall with airy galleries,
Thronged with high dignitaries of the Church,
He took his seat amidst the humblest friars.
Through open windows came sweet garden smells,
Bright morning light, and twittered song of birds.
Around the hall flashed gold and sunlit gems,
And splendid wealth of color,-white-stoled priests,
And scarlet cardinals, and bishops clad
In violet vestments,-while beneath the shade
Of the high gallery huddled dusky shapes,
With faded, travel-tattered, sombre smocks,
And shaven heads, and girdles of coarse hemp;
Some, pilgrims penitent like Tannhauser;
Some, devotees to kiss the sacred feet.
The brassy blare of trumpets smote the air,
Shrill pipes and horns with swelling clamor came,
And through the doorway's wide-stretched tapestries
Passed the Pope's trumpeters and mace-bearers,
His vergers bearing slender silver wands,
Then mitred bishops, red-clad cardinals,
The stalwart Papal Guard with halberds raised,
And then, with white head crowned with gold ingemmed,
The vicar of the lowly Galilean,
Holding his pastoral rod of smooth-hewn wood,
With censer swung before and peacock fans
Waved constantly by pages, either side.
Attended thus, they bore him to his throne,
And priests and laymen fell upon their knees.
Then, after pause of brief and silent prayer,
The pilgrims singly through the hall defiled,
To kiss the borders of the papal skirts,
Smiting their foreheads on the paven stone;
Some silent, abject, some accusing them
Of venial sins in accents of remorse,
Craving his grace, and passing pardoned forth.
Sir Tannhauser came last, no need for him

To cry 'Peccavi,' and crook suppliant knees.
His gray head rather crushed than bowed, his face
Livid and wasted, his deep thoughtful eyes,
His tall gaunt form in those unseemly weeds,
Spake more than eloquence. His hollow voice
Brake silence, saying, 'I am Tannhauser.
For seven years I lived apart from men,
Within the Venusberg.' A horror seized
The assembled folk; some turbulently rose;
Some clamored, 'From the presence cast him forth!'
But the knight never ceased his steady gaze
Upon the Pope. At last,-'I have not spoken
To be condemned,' he said, 'by such as these.
Thou, spiritual Father, answer me.
Look thou upon me with the eyes of Christ.
Can I through expiation gain my shrift,
And work mine own redemption?' 'Insolent man!'
Thundered the outraged Pope, 'is this the tone
Wherewith thou dost parade thy loathsome sin?
Down on thy knees, and wallow on the earth!
Nay, rather go! there is no ray of hope,
No gleam, through cycles of eternity,
For the redemption of a soul like thine.
Yea, sooner shall my pastoral rod branch forth
In leaf and blossom, and green shoots of spring,
Than Christ will pardon thee.' And as he spoke,
He struck the rod upon the floor with force
That gave it entrance 'twixt two loosened tiles,
So that it stood, fast-rooted and alone.
The knight saw naught, he only heard his judge
Ring forth his curses, and the court cry out
'Anathema!' and loud, and blent therewith,
Derisive laughter in the very hall,
And a wild voice that thrilled through flesh and heart:
'ONCE BEING MINE, THOU ART FOREVER MINE!'
Half-mad he clasped both hands upon his brow,
Amidst the storm of voices, till they died,
And all was silence, save the reckless song
Of a young bird upon a twig without.
Then a defiant, ghastly face he raised,
And shrieked, ''T is false! I am no longer thine!'
And through the windows open to the park,
Rushed forth, beyond the sight and sound of men.

By church nor palace paused he, till he passed
All squares and streets, and crossed the bridge of stone,
And stood alone amidst the broad expanse
Of the Campagna, twinkling in the heat.
He knelt upon a knoll of turf, and snapped
The cord that held the cross about his neck,
And far from him the leaden burden flung.
'O God! I thank Thee, that my faith in Thee

Subsists at last, through all discouragements.
Between us must no type nor symbol stand,
No mediator, were he more divine
Than the incarnate Christ. All forms, all priests,
I part aside, and hold communion free
Beneath the empty sky of noon, with naught
Between my nothingness and thy high heavens-
Spirit with spirit. O, have mercy, God!
Cleanse me from lust and bitterness and pride,
Have mercy in accordance with my faith.'
Long time he lay upon the scorching grass,
With his face buried in the tangled weeds.
Ah! who can tell the struggles of his soul
Against its demons in that sacred hour,
The solitude, the anguish, the remorse?
When shadows long and thin lay on the ground,
Shivering with fever, helpless he arose,
But with a face divine, ineffable,
Such as we dream the face of Israel,
When the Lord's wrestling angel, at gray dawn,
Blessed him, and disappeared.
Upon the marsh,
All night, he wandered, striving to emerge
From the wild, pathless plain,-now limitless
And colorless beneath the risen moon;
Outstretching like a sea, with landmarks none,
Save broken aqueducts and parapets,
And ruined columns glinting 'neath the moon.
His dress was dank and clinging with the dew;
A thousand insects fluttered o'er his head,
With buzz and drone; unseen cicadas chirped
Among the long, rank grass, and far and near
The fire-flies flickered through the summer air.
Vague thoughts and gleams prophetic filled his brain.
'Ah, fool!' he mused, 'to look for help from men.
Had they the will to aid, they lack the power.
In mine own flesh and soul the sin had birth,
Through mine own anguish it must be atoned.
Our saviours are not saints and ministers,
But tear-strung women, children soft of heart,
Or fellow-sufferers, who, by some chance word,
Some glance of comfort, save us from despair.
These I have found, thank heaven! to strengthen trust
In mine own kind, when all the world grew dark.
Make me not proud in spirit, O my God!
Yea, in thy sight I am one mass of sin,
One black and foul corruption, yet I know
My frailty is exceeded by thy love.
Neither is this the slender straw of hope,
Whereto I, drowning, cling, but firm belief,
That fills my inmost soul with vast content.
As surely as the hollow faiths of old

Shriveled to dust before one ray of Truth,
So will these modern temples pass away,
Piled upon rotten doctrines, baseless forms,
And man will look in his own breast for help,
Yea, search for comfort his own inward reins,
Revere himself, and find the God within.
Patience and patience!' Through the sleepless night
He held such thoughts; at times before his eyes
Flashed glimpses of the Church that was to be,
Sublimely simple in the light serene
Of future ages; then the vision changed
To the Pope's hall, thronged with high priests, who hurled
Their curses on him. Staggering, he awoke
Unto the truth, and found himself alone,
Beneath the awful stars. When dawn's first chill
Crept though the shivering grass and heavy leaves,
Giddy and overcome, he fell and slept
Upon the dripping weeds, nor dreamed nor stirred,
Until the wide plain basked in noon's broad light.
He dragged his weary frame some paces more,
Unto a solitary herdsman's hut,
Which, in the vagueness of the moonlit night,
Was touched with lines of beauty, till it grew
Fair as the ruined works of ancient art,
Now squat and hideous with its wattled roof,
Decaying timbers, and loose door wide oped,
Half-fallen from the hinge. A drowsy man,
Bearded and burnt, in shepherd habit lay,
Stretched on the floor, slow-munching, half asleep,
His frugal fare; for thus, at blaze of noon,
The shepherds sought a shelter from the sun,
Leaving their vigilant dogs beside their flock.
The knight craved drink and bread, and with respect
For pilgrim weeds, the Roman herdsman stirred
His lazy length, and shared with him his meal.
Refreshed and calm, Sir Tannhauser passed forth,
Yearning with morbid fancy once again
To see the kind face of the minstrel boy
He met beside the well. At set of sun
He reached the place; the reaping-folk were gone,
The day's toil over, yet he took his seat.
A milking-girl with laden buckets full,
Came slowly from the pasture, paused and drank.
From a near cottage ran a ragged boy,
And filled his wooden pail, and to his home
Returned across the fields. A herdsman came,
And drank and gave his dog to drink, and passed,
Greeting the holy man who sat there still,
Awaiting. But his feeble pulse beat high
When he descried at last a youthful form,
Crossing the field, a pitcher on his head,
Advancing towards the well. Yea, this was he,

The same grave eyes, and open, girlish face.
But he saw not, amidst the landscape brown,
The knight's brown figure, who, to win his ear,
Asked the lad's name. 'My name is Salvator,
To serve you, sir,' he carelessly replied,
With eyes and hands intent upon his jar,
Brimming and bubbling. Then he cast one glance
Upon his questioner, and left the well,
Crying with keen and sudden sympathy,
'Good Father, pardon me, I knew you not.
Ah! you have travelled overmuch: your feet
Are grimed with mud and wet, your face is changed,
Your hands are dry with fever.' But the knight:
'Nay, as I look on thee, I think the Lord
Wills not that I should suffer any more.'
'Then you have suffered much,' sighed Salvator,
With wondering pity. 'You must come with me;
My father knows of you, I told him all.
A knight and minstrel who cast by his lyre,
His health and fame, to give himself to God,-
Yours is a life indeed to be desired!
If you will lie with us this night, our home
Will verily be blessed.' By kindness crushed,
Wandering in sense and words, the broken knight
Resisted naught, and let himself be led
To the boy's home. The outcast and accursed
Was welcomed now by kindly human hands;
Once more his blighted spirit was revived
By contact with refreshing innocence.
There, when the morning broke upon the world,
The humble hosts no longer knew their guest.
His fleshly weeds of sin forever doffed,
Tannhauser lay and smiled, for in the night
The angel came who brings eternal peace.

Far into Wartburg, through all Italy,
In every town the Pope sent messengers,
Riding in furious haste; among them, one
Who bore a branch of dry wood burst in bloom;
The pastoral rod had borne green shoots of spring,
And leaf and blossom. God is merciful.

Emma Lazarus

The Banner Of The Jew

Wake, Israel, wake! Recall to-day
The glorious Maccabean rage,
The sire heroic, hoary-gray,
His five-fold lion-lineage:
The Wise, the Elect, the Help-of-God,
The Burst-of-Spring, the Avenging Rod.

From Mizpeh's mountain-ridge they saw
Jerusalem's empty streets, her shrine
Laid waste where Greeks profaned the Law,
With idol and with pagan sign.
Mourners in tattered black were there,
With ashes sprinkled on their hair.

Then from the stony peak there rang
A blast to ope the graves: down poured
The Maccabean clan, who sang
Their battle-anthem to the Lord.
Five heroes lead, and following, see,
Ten thousand rush to victory!

Oh for Jerusalem's trumpet now,
To blow a blast of shattering power,
To wake the sleepers high and low,
And rouse them to the urgent hour!
No hand for vengeance-but to save,
A million naked swords should wave.

Oh deem not dead that martial fire,
Say not the mystic flame is spent!
With Moses' law and David's lyre,
Your ancient strength remains unbent.
Let but an Ezra rise anew,
To lift the BANNER OF THE JEW!

A rag, a mock at first-erelong,
When men have bled and women wept,
To guard its precious folds from wrong,
Even they who shrunk, even they who slept,
Shall leap to bless it, and to save.
Strike! for the brave revere the brave!

Emma Lazarus

The Birth Of Man

A Legend of the Talmud.

I.

When angels visit earth, the messengers
Of God's decree, they come as lightning, wind:
Before the throne, they all are living fire.
There stand four rows of angels-to the right
The hosts of Michael, Gabriel's to the left,
Before, the troop of Ariel, and behind,
The ranks of Raphael; all, with one accord,
Chanting the glory of the Everlasting.
Upon the high and holy throne there rests,
Invisible, the Majesty of God.
About his brows the crown of mystery
Whereon the sacred letters are engraved
Of the unutterable Name. He grasps
A sceptre of keen fire; the universe
Is compassed in His glance; at His right hand
Life stands, and at His left hand standeth Death.

II.

Lo, the divine idea of making man
Had spread abroad among the heavenly hosts;
And all at once before the immortal throne
Pressed troops of angels and of seraphim,
With minds opposed, and contradicting cries:
'Fulfill, great Father, thine exalted thought!
Create and give unto the earth her king!'
'Cease, cease, Almighty God! create no more!'
And suddenly upon the heavenly sphere
Deep silence fell; before the immortal throne
The angel Mercy knelt, and thus he spoke:
'Fulfill, great Father, thine exalted thought!
Create the likeness of thyself on earth.
In this new creature I will breathe the spirit
Of a divine compassion; he shall be
Thy fairest image in the universe.'
But to his words the angel Peace replied,
With heavy sobs: 'My spirit was outspread,
Oh God, on thy creation, and all things
Were sweetly bound in gracious harmony.
But man, this strange new being, everywhere
Shall bring confusion, trouble, discord, war.'
'Avenger of injustice and of crime,'
Exclaimed the angel Justice, 'he shall be
Subject to me, and peace shall bloom again.
Create, oh Lord, create!' 'Father of truth,'
Implored with tears the angel Truth, 'Thou bring'st
Upon the earth the father of all lies!'

And over the celestial faces gloomed
A cloud of grief, and stillness deep prevailed.
Then from the midst of that abyss of light
Whence sprang the eternal throne, these words rang forth:
'Be comforted, my daughter! Thee I send
To be companion unto man on earth.'
And all the angels cried, lamenting loud:
'Thou robbest heaven of her fairest gem.
Truth! seal of all thy thoughts, Almighty God,
The richest jewel that adorns thy crown.'
From the abyss of glory rang the voice:
'From heaven to earth, from earth once more to heaven,
Shall Truth, with constant interchange, alight
And soar again, an everlasting link
Between the world and sky.'
And man was born.

Emma Lazarus

The Choice

I saw in dream the spirits unbegot,
Veiled, floating phantoms, lost in twilight space;
For one the hour had struck, he paused; the place
Rang with an awful Voice:
'Soul, choose thy lot!
Two paths are offered; that, in velvet-flower,
Slopes easily to every earthly prize.
Follow the multitude and bind thine eyes,
Thou and thy sons' sons shall have peace with power.
This narrow track skirts the abysmal verge,
Here shalt thou stumble, totter, weep and bleed,
All men shall hate and hound thee and thy seed,
Thy portion be the wound, the stripe, the scourge.
But in thy hand I place my lamp for light,
Thy blood shall be the witness of my Law,
Choose now for all the ages!'
Then I saw
The unveiled spirit, grown divinely bright,
Choose the grim path. He turned, I knew full well
The pale, great martyr-forehead shadowy-curled,
The glowing eyes that had renounced the world,
Disgraced, despised, immortal Israel.

Emma Lazarus

The Cranes of Ibicus

Here was a man who watched the river flow
Past the huge town, one gray November day.
Round him in narrow high-piled streets at play
The boys made merry as they saw him go,
Murmuring half-loud, with eyes upon the stream,
The immortal screed he held within his hand.
For he was walking in an April land
With Faust and Helen. Shadowy as a dream
Was the prose-world, the river and the town.
Wild joy possessed him; through enchanted skies
He saw the cranes of Ibycus swoop down.
He closed the page, he lifted up his eyes,
Lo--a black line of birds in wavering thread
Bore him the greetings of the deathless dead!

Emma Lazarus

The Crowing of the Red Cock

Across the Eastern sky has glowed
The flicker of a blood-red dawn,
Once more the clarion cock has crowed,
Once more the sword of Christ is drawn.
A million burning rooftrees light
The world-wide path of Israel's flight.

Where is the Hebrew's fatherland?
The folk of Christ is sore bestead;
The Son of Man is bruised and banned,
Nor finds whereon to lay his head.
His cup is gall, his meat is tears,
His passion lasts a thousand years.

Each crime that wakes in man the beast,
Is visited upon his kind.
The lust of mobs, the greed of priest,
The tyranny of kings, combined
To root his seed from earth again,
His record is one cry of pain.

When the long roll of Christian guilt
Against his sires and kin is known,
The flood of tears, the life-blood spilt,
The agony of ages shown,
What oceans can the stain remove,
From Christian law and Christian love?

Nay, close the book; not now, not here,
The hideous tale of sin narrate,
Reëchoing in the martyr's ear,
Even he might nurse revengeful hate,
Even he might turn in wrath sublime,
With blood for blood and crime for crime.

Coward? Not he, who faces death,
Who singly against worlds has fought,
For what? A name he may not breathe,
For liberty of prayer and thought.
The angry sword he will not whet,
His nobler task is -- to forget.

Emma Lazarus

The Day Of Dead Soldiers

WELCOME, thou gray and fragrant Sabbath-day,
To deathless love and valor dedicate!
Glorious with the richest flowers of May,
With early roses, lingering lilacs late,
With vivid green of grass and leaf and spray,
Thou bringest memories that far outweigh
The season's joy with thoughts of death and fate.

What words may paint the picture on the air
Of this broad land to-day from sea to sea?
The rolling prairies, purple valleys rare,
And royal mountains, endless rivers free,
Filled full with phantoms flitting everywhere,
Pale ghosts of buried armies, slowly there
From countless graves uprising silently.

A calm, grave day,—the sunlight does not shine
But thin, gray clouds bedrape the sky o'erhead.
The delicate air is filled with spirits fine,
The temperate breezes whisper of the dead.
What visions and what memories divine,
O holy Sabbath flower-day, are thine,
Painted in light against a field of red!

Behold the fairest spots in all the land,
To-day in this mid-season of fresh flowers,
Are heroes' graves, —by many a tender hand
Sprinkled With odorous, radiant-colored showers;
By mild, moist breezes delicately fanned,
Sending o'er distant towns their perfumes bland,
Loading with sweet aroma sunless hours.

Who knows what tremulous, dusky hands set free,
Deck quaintly with gay flowers the graves unknown?
What wealth of bloom is shed exuberantly,
On the far grave in Illinois alone,
Where the last hero, sleeping peacefully,
Beyond detraction and mistrust, doth lie,
By the glad winds of prairies overblown?

With hymns and prayer be this day sanctified,
And consecrate to heroes' memories;
Not with wild, violent grief for those who died,
O wives and mothers, but with patience wise,
Calm resignation, and a thankful pride,
That they have left their land a fame so wide,
So rich a page of thrilling histories.

Emma Lazarus

The Death Of Raschi

[Aaron Ben Mier 'loquitur.']

If I remember Raschi? An I live,
Grandson, to bless thy grandchild, I'll forget
Never that youth and what he did for Prague.
Aye, aye, I know! he slurred a certain verse
In such and such a prayer; omitted quite
To stand erect there where the ritual
Commands us rise and bow towards the East;
Therefore, the ingrates brand him heterodox,
Neglect his memory whose virtue saved
Each knave of us alive. Not I forget,
No more does God, who wrought a miracle
For his dear sake. The Passover was here.
Raschi, just wedded with the fair Rebekah,
Bode but the lapsing of the holy week
For homeward journey with his bride to France.
The sacred meal was spread. All sat at board
Within the house of Rabbi Jochanan:
The kind old priest; his noble, new-found son,
Whose name was wrung in every key of praise,
By every voice in Prague, from Duke to serf
(Save the vindictive bigot, Narzerad);
The beautiful young wife, whose cup of joy
Sparkled at brim; next her the vacant chair
Awaited the Messiah, who, unannounced,
In God's good time shall take his place with us.
Now when the Rabbi reached the verse where one
Shall rise from table, flinging wide the door,
To give the Prophet entrance, if so be
The glorious hour have sounded, Raschi rose,
Pale, grave, yet glad with great expectancy,
Crossed the hushed room, and, with a joyous smile
To greet the Saviour, opened the door.
A curse!
A cry, 'Revenged!' a thrust, a stifled moan,
The sheathing of a poniard-that was all!
In the dark vestibule a fleeing form,
Masked, gowned in black; and in the room of prayer,
Raschi, face downward on the stone-cold floor,
Bleeding his life out. Oh! what a cry was that
(Folk shuddered, hearing, roods off in the street)
Wherewith Rebekah rushed to raise her lord,
Kneeling beside him, striving in vain to quench
With turban, veil, torn shreds of gown, stained hands,
The black blood's sickening gush. He never spoke,
Never rewarded with one glance of life
The passion in her eyes. He met his end
Even as beneath the sickle the full ear
Bows to its death-so beautiful, silent, ripe.

Well, we poor Jews must gulp our injuries,

Howe'er they choke us. What redress in Prague
For the inhuman murder? A strange Jew
The victim; the suspected criminal
The ducal counselor! Such odds forbade
Revenge or justice. We forbore to seek.
The priest, discrowned o' the glory of his age,
The widow-bride, mourned as though smitten of God,
Gave forth they would with solemn obsequies
Bury their dead, and crave no help from man.
Now of what chanced betwixt the night of murder
And the appointed burial I can give
Only the sum of gossip-servants' tales,
Neighbors' reports, close confidences leaked
From friends and kindred. Night and day, folk said,
Rebekah wept, prayed, fasted by the corpse,
Three mortal days. Upon the third, her eyes,
Sunk in their pits, glimmered with wild, strange fire.
She started from her place beside the dead,
Kissed clay-cold brow, cheeks, lids, and lips once more,
And with a maniac's wan, heart-breaking smile,
Veiled, hooded, glided through the twilight streets,
A sable shadow. From the willow-grove,
Close by the Moldau's brink, beyond the bridge,
Her trace was lost. 'T was evening and mild May,
Air full of spring, skies perfect as a pearl;
Yet one who saw her pass amidst the shades
O' the blue-gray branches swears a sudden flame,
As of miraculous lightning, thrilled through heaven.
One hour thereafter she reentered Prague,
Slid swiftly through the streets, as though borne on
By ankle-wings or floating on soft cloud,
Smiling no more, but with illumined eyes,
Transfigured brow, grave lips, and faltering limbs,
So came into the room where Raschi lay
Stretched 'twixt tall tapers lit at head and foot.
She held in both hands leafy, flowerless plants,
Some she had fastened in her twisted hair,
Stuck others in her girdle, and from all
Issued a racy odor, pungent-sweet,
The living soul of Spring. Death's chamber seemed
As though clear sunshine and a singing bird
Therein had entered. From the precious herb
She poured into a golden bowl the sap,
Sparkling like wine; then with a soundless prayer,
White as the dead herself, she held the cup
To Raschi's mouth. A quick, small flame sprang up
From the enchanted balsam, died away,
And lo! the color dawned in cheek and lips,
The life returned, the sealed, blind lids were raised,
And in the glorious eyes love reawoke,
And, looking up, met love.
So runs the tale,

Mocked by the worldly-wise; but I believe,
Knowing the miracles the Lord hath wrought
In every age for Jacob's seed. Moreover,
I, with the highest and meanest Jew in Prague,
Was at the burial. No man saw the dead.
Sealed was the coffin ere the rites began,
And none could swear it went not empty down
Into the hollow earth. Too shrewd our priest
To publish such a wonder, and expose
That consecrated life to second death.
Scarce were the thirty days of mourning sped,
When we awoke to find his home left bare,
Rebekah and her father fled from Prague.
God grant they had glad meeting otherwhere!

Emma Lazarus

The Elixir

'Oh brew me a potion strong and good!
One golden drop in his wine
Shall charm his sense and fire his blood,
And bend his will to mine.'

Poor child of passion! ask of me
Elixir of death or sleep,
Or Lethe's stream; but love is free,
And woman must wait and weep.

Emma Lazarus

The Feast Of Lights

Kindle the taper like the steadfast star
Ablaze on evening's forehead o'er the earth,
And add each night a lustre till afar
An eightfold splendor shine above thy hearth.
Clash, Israel, the cymbals, touch the lyre,
Blow the brass trumpet and the harsh-tongued horn;
Chant psalms of victory till the heart takes fire,
The Maccabean spirit leap new-born.

Remember how from wintry dawn till night,
Such songs were sung in Zion, when again
On the high altar flamed the sacred light,
And, purified from every Syrian stain,
The foam-white walls with golden shields were hung,
With crowns and silken spoils, and at the shrine,
Stood, midst their conqueror-tribe, five chieftains sprung
From one heroic stock, one seed divine.

Five branches grown from Mattathias' stem,
The Blessed John, the Keen-Eyed Jonathan,
Simon the fair, the Burst-of Spring, the Gem,
Eleazar, Help of-God; o'er all his clan
Judas the Lion-Prince, the Avenging Rod,
Towered in warrior-beauty, uncrowned king,
Armed with the breastplate and the sword of God,
Whose praise is: 'He received the perishing.'

They who had camped within the mountain-pass,
Couched on the rock, and tented neath the sky,
Who saw from Mizpah's heights the tangled grass
Choke the wide Temple-courts, the altar lie
Disfigured and polluted-who had flung
Their faces on the stones, and mourned aloud
And rent their garments, wailing with one tongue,
Crushed as a wind-swept bed of reeds is bowed,

Even they by one voice fired, one heart of flame,
Though broken reeds, had risen, and were men,
They rushed upon the spoiler and o'ercame,
Each arm for freedom had the strength of ten.
Now is their mourning into dancing turned,
Their sackcloth doffed for garments of delight,
Week-long the festive torches shall be burned,
Music and revelry wed day with night.

Still ours the dance, the feast, the glorious Psalm,
The mystic lights of emblem, and the Word.
Where is our Judas? Where our five-branched palm?
Where are the lion-warriors of the Lord?
Clash, Israel, the cymbals, touch the lyre,
Sound the brass trumpet and the harsh-tongued horn,
Chant hymns of victory till the heart take fire,

The Maccabean spirit leap new-born!

Emma Lazarus

The Garden Of Adonis

(The Garden of Life in Spenser's 'Faerie Queene.')
IT is no fabled garden in the skies,
But bloometh here— this is no world of death;
And nothing that once liveth, ever dies,
And naught that breathes can ever cease to breathe,
And naught that bloometh ever withereth.
The gods can ne'er take back their gifts from men,
They gave us life,— they cannot take again.

Who hath known Death, and who hath seen his face?
On what high mountain have ye met with him?
Within what lowest valley is there trace
Of his feared footsteps? in what forest dim,
In what great city, in what lonely ways?
Nay, there is no such god, but one called Change,
And all he does is beautiful and strange.

It is but Change that lays our darlings low,
And, though we doubt and fear, forsakes them not.
Where red lips smiled do sweetest roses blow,
And star-flowers bloom above the lovely spot
Where gleamed the eyes, with blue forget-me-not.
And through the grasses runs the same wave there
We knew of old within the golden hair.

Dig in the earth— ye shall not surely find
Death or death's semblance; only roots of flowers,
And all fair, goodly things there live enshrined,
With the foundations of the glad green bowers,
Through which the sunshine comes in golden showers.
And all the blossoms that this earth enwreathe,
Are for assurance that there is no death.

O mother, raise thy tear-bathed lids again:
Thy child died not, he only liveth more—
His soul is in the sunshine and the rain,
His life is in the waters and the shore,
He is around thee all the wide world o'er;
The daisy thou hast plucked smiles back at thee,
Because it doth again its mother see.

What noble deed that ever lived, is dead,
Or yet hath lost its power to inspire
Courage in hearts that sicken, and to shed
New faith and hope when hands and footsteps tire,
And make sad, downcast eyes look upward higher?
Yea, all men see and know it, whence it came;
It purifies them like a burning flame.

And dreams? What dreams were ever lost and gone,
But wandering in strange lands we found again?
When least we think of these dear birdlings flown,

We find that bright and fresh they still remain.
The garden of all life is round us then;
And he is blind who doth not know and see,
And praise the gods for immortality.

Emma Lazarus

The Guardian Of The Red Disk

Spoken by a Citizen of Malta-1300.

A curious title held in high repute,
One among many honors, thickly strewn
On my lord Bishop's head, his grace of Malta.
Nobly he bears them all,-with tact, skill, zeal,
Fulfills each special office, vast or slight,
Nor slurs the least minutia,-therewithal
Wears such a stately aspect of command,
Broad-checked, broad-chested, reverend, sanctified,
Haloed with white about the tonsure's rim,
With dropped lids o'er the piercing Spanish eyes
(Lynx-keen, I warrant, to spy out heresy);
Tall, massive form, o'ertowering all in presence,
Or ere they kneel to kiss the large white hand.
His looks sustain his deeds,-the perfect prelate,
Whose void chair shall be taken, but not filled.
You know not, who are foreign to the isle,
Haply, what this Red Disk may be, he guards.
'T is the bright blotch, big as the Royal seal,
Branded beneath the beard of every Jew.
These vermin so infest the isle, so slide
Into all byways, highways that may lead
Direct or roundabout to wealth or power,
Some plain, plump mark was needed, to protect
From the degrading contact Christian folk.

The evil had grown monstrous: certain Jews
Wore such a haughty air, had so refined,
With super-subtile arts, strict, monkish lives,
And studious habit, the coarse Hebrew type,
One might have elbowed in the public mart
Iscariot,-nor suspected one's soul-peril.
Christ's blood! it sets my flesh a-creep to think!
We may breathe freely now, not fearing taint,
Praise be our good Lord Bishop! He keeps count
Of every Jew, and prints on cheek or chin
The scarlet stamp of separateness, of shame.

No beard, blue-black, grizzled or Judas-colored,
May hide that damning little wafer-flame.
When one appears therewith, the urchins know
Good sport's at hand; they fling their stones and mud,
Sure of their game. But most the wisdom shows
Upon the unbelievers' selves; they learn
Their proper rank; crouch, cringe, and hide,-lay by
Their insolence of self-esteem; no more
Flaunt forth in rich attire, but in dull weeds,
Slovenly donned, would slink past unobserved;
Bow servile necks and crook obsequious knees,
Chin sunk in hollow chest, eyes fixed on earth

Or blinking sidewise, but to apprehend
Whether or not the hated spot be spied.
I warrant my Lord Bishop has full hands,
Guarding the Red Disk-lest one rogue escape!

Emma Lazarus

The New Colossus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Emma Lazarus

The New Ezekiel

What, can these dead bones live, whose sap is dried
By twenty scorching centuries of wrong?
Is this the House of Israel, whose pride
Is as a tale that's told, an ancient song?
Are these ignoble relics all that live
Of psalmist, priest, and prophet? Can the breath
Of very heaven bid these bones revive,
Open the graves and clothe the ribs of death?

Yea, Prophesy, the Lord hath said. Again
Say to the wind, Come forth and breathe afresh,
Even that they may live upon these slain,
And bone to bone shall leap, and flesh to flesh.
The Spirit is not dead, proclaim the word,
Where lay dead bones, a host of armed men stand!
I ope your graves, my people, saith the Lord,
And I shall place you living in your land.

Emma Lazarus

The South

Night, and beneath star-blazoned summer skies
Behold the Spirit of the musky South,
A creole with still-burning, languid eyes,
Voluptuous limbs and incense-breathing mouth:
Swathed in spun gauze is she,
From fibres of her own anana tree.

Within these sumptuous woods she lies at ease,
By rich night-breezes, dewy cool, caressed:
'Twixt cypresses and slim palmetto trees,
Like to the golden oriole's hanging nest,
Her airy hammock swings,
And through the dark her mocking-bird yet sings.

How beautiful she is! A tulip-wreath
Twines round her shadowy, free-floating hair:
Young, weary, passionate, and sad as death,
Dark visions haunt for her the vacant air,
While movelessly she lies
With lithe, lax, folded hands and heavy eyes.

Full well knows she how wide and fair extend
Her groves bright-flowered, her tangled everglades,
Majestic streams that indolently wend
Through lush savanna or dense forest shades,
Where the brown buzzard flies
To broad bayou 'neath hazy-golden skies.

Hers is the savage splendor of the swamp,
With pomp of scarlet and of purple bloom,
Where blow warm, furtive breezes faint and damp,
Strange insects whir, and stalking bitterns boom-
Where from stale waters dead
Oft looms the great-jawed alligator's head.

Her wealth, her beauty, and the blight on these,-
Of all she is aware: luxuriant woods,
Fresh, living, sunlit, in her dream she sees;
And ever midst those verdant solitudes
The soldier's wooden cross,
O'ergrown by creeping tendrils and rank moss.

Was her a dream of empire? was it sin?
And is it well that all was borne in vain?
She knows no more than one who slow doth win,
After fierce fever, conscious life again,
Too tired, too weak, too sad,
By the new light to be stirred or glad.

From rich sea-islands fringing her green shore,
From broad plantations where swart freemen bend
Bronzed backs in willing labor, from her store

Of golden fruit, from stream, from town, ascend
Life-currents of pure health:
Her aims shall be subserved with boundless wealth.

Yet now how listless and how still she lies,
Like some half-savage, dusky Indian queen,
Rocked in her hammock 'neath her native skies,
With the pathetic, passive, broken mien
Of one who, sorely proved,
Great-souled, hath suffered much and much hath loved!

But look! along the wide-branched, dewy glade
Glimmers the dawn: the light palmetto-trees
And cypresses reissue from the shade,
And SHE hath wakened. Through clear air she sees
The pledge, the brightening ray,
And leaps from dreams to hail the coming day.

Emma Lazarus

The Supreme Sacrifice

Well-nigh two thousand years hath Israel
Suffered the scorn of man for love of God;
Endured the outlaw's ban, the yoke, the rod,
With perfect patience. Empires rose and fell,
Around him Nebo was adored and Bel;
Edom was drunk with victory, and trod
On his high places, while the sacred sod
Was desecrated by the infidel.
His faith proved steadfast, without breach or flaw,
But now the last renouncement is required.
His truth prevails, his God is God, his Law
Is found the wisdom most to be desired.
Not his the glory! He, maligned, misknown,
Bows his meek head, and says, "Thy will be done!"

Emma Lazarus

The Taming of the Falcon

The bird sits spelled upon the lithe brown wrist
Of yonder turbaned fowler, who had lamed
No feather limb, but the winged spirit tamed
With his compelling eye. He need not trust
The silken coil, not set the thick-limed snare;
He lures the wanderer with his steadfast gaze,
It shrinks, it quails, it trembles yet obeys.
And, lo! he has enslaved the thing of air.
The fixed, insistent human will is lord
Of all the earth;--but in the awful sky
Reigns absolute, unreached by deed or word
Above creation; through eternity,
Outshining the sun's shield, the lightening's sword,
The might of Allah's unaverted eye.

Emma Lazarus

The Valley Of Baca

PSALM LXXXIV.

A brackish lake is there with bitter pools
Anigh its margin, brushed by heavy trees.
A piping wind the narrow valley cools,
Fretting the willows and the cypresses.
Gray skies above, and in the gloomy space
An awful presence hath its dwelling-place.

I saw a youth pass down that vale of tears;
His head was circled with a crown of thorn,
His form was bowed as by the weight of years,
His wayworn feet by stones were cut and torn.
His eyes were such as have beheld the sword
Of terror of the angel of the Lord.

He passed, and clouds and shadows and thick haze
Fell and encompassed him. I might not see
What hand upheld him in those dismal ways,
Wherethrough he staggered with his misery.
The creeping mists that trooped and spread around,
The smitten head and writhing form enwound.

Then slow and gradual but sure they rose,
Those clinging vapors blotting out the sky.
The youth had fallen not, his viewless foes
Discomfited, had left the victory
Unto the heart that fainted not nor failed,
But from the hill-tops its salvation hailed.

I looked at him in dread lest I should see,
The anguish of the struggle in his eyes;
And lo, great peace was there! Triumphantly
The sunshine crowned him from the sacred skies.
'From strength to strength he goes,' he leaves beneath
The valley of the shadow and of death.

'Thrice blest who passing through that vale of Tears,
Makes it a well,'-and draws life-nourishment
From those death-bitter drops. No grief, no fears
Assail him further, he may scorn the event.
For naught hath power to swerve the steadfast soul
Within that valley broken and made whole.

Emma Lazarus

The World’s Justice

If the sudden tidings came
That on some far, foreign coast,
Buried ages long from fame,
Had been found a remnant lost
Of that hoary race who dwelt
By the golden Nile divine,
Spake the Pharaoh's tongue and knelt
At the moon-crowned Isis' shrine-
How at reverend Egypt's feet,
Pilgrims from all lands would meet!

If the sudden news were known,
That anigh the desert-place
Where once blossomed Babylon,
Scions of a mighty race
Still survived, of giant build,
Huntsmen, warriors, priest and sage,
Whose ancestral fame had filled,
Trumpet-tongued, the earlier age,
How at old Assyria's feet
Pilgrims from all lands would meet!

Yet when Egypt's self was young,
And Assyria's bloom unworn,
Ere the mythic Homer sung,
Ere the gods of Greece were born,
Lived the nation of one God,
Priests of freedom, sons of Shem,
Never quelled by yoke or rod,
Founders of Jerusalem-
Is there one abides to-day,
Seeker of dead cities, say!

Answer, now as then, THEY ARE;
Scattered broadcast o'er the lands,
Knit in spirit nigh and far,
With indissoluble bands.
Half the world adores their God,
They the living law proclaim,
And their guerdon is-the rod,
Stripes and scourgings, death and shame.
Still on Israel's head forlorn,
Every nation heaps its scorn.

Emma Lazarus

To Carmen Sylva

Oh, that the golden lyre divine
Whence David smote flame-tones were mine!
Oh, that the silent harp which hung
Untuned, unstrung,
Upon the willows by the river,
Would throb beneath my touch and quiver
With the old song-enchanted spell
Of Israel!

Oh, that the large prophetic Voice
Would make my reed-piped throat its choice!
All ears should prick, all hearts should spring,
To hear me sing
The burden of the isles, the word
Assyria knew, Damascus heard,
When, like the wind, while cedars shake,
Isaiah spake.

For I would frame a song to-day
Winged like a bird to cleave its way
O'er land and sea that spread between,
To where a Queen
Sits with a triple coronet.
Genius and Sorrow both have set
Their diadems above the gold-
A Queen three-fold!

To her the forest lent its lyre,
Hers are the sylvan dews, the fire
Of Orient suns, the mist-wreathed gleams
?????? Of mountain streams.
She, the imperial Rhine's own child,
Takes to her heart the wood-nymph wild,
The gypsy Pelech, and the wide,
White Danube's tide.

She who beside an infant's bier
Long since resigned all hope to hear
The sacred name of 'Mother' bless
Her childlessness,
Now from a people's sole acclaim
Receives the heart-vibrating name,
And 'Mother, Mother, Mother!' fills
The echoing hills.

Yet who is he who pines apart,
Estranged from that maternal heart,
Ungraced, unfriended, and forlorn,
The butt of scorn?
An alien in his land of birth,
An outcast from his brethren's earth,
Albeit with theirs his blood mixed well

When Plevna fell?

When all Roumania's chains were riven,
When unto all his sons was given
The hero's glorious reward,
Reaped by the sword,-
Wherefore was this poor thrall, whose chains
Hung heaviest, within whose veins
The oldest blood of freedom streamed,
Still unredeemed?

O Mother, Poet, Queen in one!
Pity and save-he is thy son.
For poet David's sake, the king
Of all who sing;
For thine own people's sake who share
His law, his truth, his praise, his prayer;
For his sake who was sacrificed-
His brother-Christ!

Emma Lazarus

To R.W.E.

As when a father dies, his children draw
About the empty hearth, their loss to cheat
With uttered praise & love, & oft repeat
His all-familiar words with whispered awe.
The honored habit of his daily law,
Not for his sake, but theirs whose feeble feet
Need still that guiding lamp, whose faith, less sweet,
Misses that tempered patience without flaw,
So do we gather round thy vacant chair,
In thine own elm-roofed, amber-rivered town,
Master & Father! For the love we bear,
Not for thy fame's sake, do we weave this crown,
And feel thy presence in the sacred air,
Forbidding us to weep that thou art gone.

Emma Lazarus

Venus of the Louvre

Down the long hall she glistens like a star,
The foam-born mother of Love, transfixed to stone,
Yet none the less immortal, breathing on.
Time's brutal hand hath maimed but could not mar.
When first the enthralled enchantress from afar
Dazzled mine eyes, I saw not her alone,
Serenely poised on her world-worshipped throne,
As when she guided once her dove-drawn car,--
But at her feet a pale, death-stricken Jew,
Her life adorer, sobbed farewell to love.
Here Heine wept! Here still he weeps anew,
Nor ever shall his shadow lift or move,
While mourns one ardent heart, one poet-brain,
For vanished Hellas and Hebraic plain.

Emma Lazarus

Wings

DAWN opes her pensive eyes,
In the yet starry skies,
A roseate blush upon her cheek and brows.
Her purple mantle still
Lies on the sky-kissed hill,
And a blue, solemn shade thereon it throws.

The earth lies hushed and calm.
No chant of praise, no psalm
Riseth to greet the rose-crowned queen of day.
Each blade of grass, each leaf,
Stands out in sharp relief,
Against the rayless blue and silver gray.

All nature seems to wait
For some new deed of Fate;
The silence is a sacred, reverent prayer,—
When hark! from some sweet throat
One thrilling, quivering note
Fills with its tremulous music all the air.

Then from the dewy grass
A tiny form doth pass,
A little soul all music and all wings.
All nature's voice is heard,
Embodied in this bird,
That darteth up and, rising, ever sings.

It mounteth still and sings:
What soul yearns not for wings,
To follow after, burst its prison bars,
And learn the secret there,
In those clear realms of air,
The secret of the rainbow and the stars;

To rush as swift as light,
Within those regions bright
Of throbbing, scintillant, intensest blue;
The air all breathless cleave,
And far below to leave
Regrets and tears, the raindrop and the dew.

Ah! caged 'mongst meaner things,
The soul can use no wings,
And beats against the bars it cannot pass;
But it might humbly turn,
Essaying first to learn
The secret of the flowers and the grass.

Emma Lazarus

Youth And Death

What hast thou done to this dear friend of mine,
Thou cold, white, silent Stranger? From my hand
Her clasped hand slips to meet the grasp of thine;
Here eyes that flamed with love, at thy command
Stare stone-blank on blank air; her frozen heart
Forgets my presence. Teach me who thou art,
Vague shadow sliding 'twixt my friend and me.
I never saw thee till this sudden hour.
What secret door gave entrance unto thee?
What power in thine, o'ermastering Love's own power?

Emma Lazarus