

LOVE AT PEACE.

THE valleys, that are splendid
With sun ere day is ended
And love-lutes take to tune,
See joyless and unfriended
The perfect bowstring bended,
Whose bow is called the moon.
They see the waters slacken
And all the sky's blue blacken,
While in the yellow bracken
Love lies in death or swoon.

The stars arise and brighten ;
The summer lightnings lighten,
Faint and as midnight mute ;
And far white snowfields tighten
The iron bands that frighten
No fairy's tender foot.
Across the stiller river
Stray flowers of ice may shiver,
Before the day deliver
The murmur of its lute.

The sleep of bird and flower
Proclaims that Heaven has power
 To guard its gentlest child.
The lover knows the hour,
And goes with dew for dower
 To wed in woodland wild.
The silvern grasses shake,
And through the startled brake
Glides the awakened snake,
 Untamable and mild.

The song of stars; the wail
Of women wild and pale,
 Forlorn and not forsaken;
The tremulous nightingale;
The waters wan that fail
 By frost-love overtaken,
Make sacred all the valley;
And softly, musically,
The breezes lull and rally,
 The pine stirs and is shaken.

Beneath whose sombre shade
I hold a lazy maid
 In chaste arms and too tender.
Lo! she is fair! God said;
And saw through the deep glade
 How sweet she was and slender.
But I—could I behold her
Curved shapeliness of shoulder?

I, whose strong arms enfold her
Immaculate surrender.

Pure as the dawns that quicken
On snow-topped mountains stricken
By first gray light that grows,
By beams that gather, thicken,
A web of fairy ticken,
To make a fairy rose :
Pure as the seas that lave
With phosphorescent wave
The sombre architrave
Of Castle No-man-knows.

Pure as the dreams, undreamt
(That men have in contempt,
That wise men yearn to see),
Of angel forms exempt
From mockeries that tempt
Who fly about the lea ;
Proclaiming things unheard,
Unknown to brightest bird,
Things, whose unspoken word
Is utmost secrecy.

So pure, so pale we lie,
Like angels eye to eye,
Like lovers lip to lip.
So, the elect knight, I
Keep vigil to the sky,
While the dumb moments slip.

So she, my bride, my queen,
So virginal, so keen,
Swoons, while the moon-rays lean
 To fan their silver ship.

No sleep, but precious kisses
In those pale wildernesses,
 Mark the dead hours of night,
No sleep so sweet as this is,
Whose pulse of purple blisses
 Beats calm and cool and light.
No life so fair with roses,
No day so swift to close is ;
No cushion so reposes
 Fair love so sweet and slight.

Sleep greets the morn and takes us ;
The wood that wonders makes us
 Soft noises heard above.
The sunny snake forsakes us,
The noon sun lastly wakes us,
 To watch the wooing dove ;
And day draws on delighted
To leave us there benighted,
Once more divinely plighted
 In perfect moon of love.