

## DREAMS.

WHAT words are these that shudder through  
my sleep,  
Changing from silver into crimson flakes,  
And molten into gold  
Like the pale opal through those gray may sweep  
A scarlet flame, like eyes of crested snakes,  
Keen, furious, and too cold.

What words are these ? The pall of slumber lifts ;  
The veil of finiteness withdraws. The night  
Is heavier, life burns low :  
Yet to the quivering brain three goodly gifts  
The cruelty of Pluto and his might  
In the abyss bestow :

Change, foresight, fear. The pageant whirls and boils ;  
Restricted not by space an time, my dream  
Foresees the doom of Fate ;  
My spirit wrestles in the Dream-King's toils  
Always in vain, and Hope's forerunners gleam  
Always one step too late.

Not as when sunlight strikes the counterpane ;  
    Half wakening, sleep rolls back her iron wave,  
    And dawn brings blithesomeness ;  
Not as when opiates lull the tortured brain  
    And sprinkle lotus on the drowsy grave  
    Of earth's old bitterness ;

But as when consciousness half rouses up  
    And hurls back all the gibbering harpy crowd ;  
    And sleep's draught deepeneth,  
And all the furies of hell's belly sup  
    In the brain's palaces, and chant aloud  
    Songs that foretaste of Death.

Maddened, the brain breaks from beneath the goad,  
    Flings off again the foe, and from its hell  
    Brings for a moment peace,  
Till weariness and her infernal load  
    Of phantom memory-shapes return to quell  
    The shaken fortresses.

Till nature reassert her empery,  
    And the full tide of wakefulness at last  
    Foam on the shore of sleep  
To beat the white cliffs of reality  
    In vain, because their windy strength is past,  
    And only memories weep.

Why is the Finite real ? And that world  
    So larger, so more beautiful and fleet,  
    So free, so exquisite,

The world of dreams and shadows, not impearled  
With solitary shaft of Truth ? Too sweet,  
O children of the Night,

Are your wide realms for our philosophers,  
Who must in hard gray balance-shackles bind  
The essence of all thought :  
No sorer sexton in a grave inters  
The nobler children of a poet's mind  
Of wine and gold well wrought.

By the poor sense of touch they judge that this  
Or that is real or not. Have they divined  
This simplest spirit-bond,  
The joy of some bad woman's deadly kiss ;  
The thought-flash that well tunes a lover's mind  
Seas and gray gulfs beyond ?

So that which is impalpable to touch,  
They judge by touch ; the viewless they decide  
By sight ; their logic fails,  
Their jarring jargon jingles—even such  
An empty brazen pot—wise men deride  
The clouds that mimic whales.

My world shall be my dreams. Religion there  
And duty may disturb me not at all ;  
Nor doubts, nor fear of death.  
I straddle on no haggard ghostly mare ;  
Yea, through my God, I have leapt o'er a wall !  
(As poet David saith.)

The wall that ever girds Earth's thought with brass  
Is all a silver path my feet beneath,  
And o'er its level sward  
Of sea-reflecting white flowers and fresh grass  
I walk. Man's darkness is a leathern sheath,  
Myself the sun-bright sword !

I have no fear, nor doubt, nor sorrow now,  
For I give Self to God—I give my best  
Of soul and blood and brain  
To my poor Art—there comes to me somehow  
This fact ; Man's work is God made manifest ;  
Life is all Peace again.

And Dreams are beyond life. Their wider scope,  
Limitless Empire o'er the world of thought,  
Help my desires to press  
Beyond all stars toward God and Heaven and Hope ;  
And in the world-amazing chase is wrought  
Somehow—all Happiness.