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Wayne K. Chapman

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*Verses 1856-1884*  
Elizabeth Dickinson West



A Critical Edition  
Edited by Wayne K. Chapman et alii



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*Verses 1856-1884*



E. D. W.

# *Verses 1856-1884*

A Critical Edition

by

Elizabeth Dickinson West

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Edited and introduced by Wayne K. Chapman



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Cover: *Girl in a Meadow* (possibly the picture exhibited as *Among the Poppies* in 1889) by Aloysius O’Kelly (c. 1850/53–c. 1926). Oil on canvas, 45.7 x 35.5 cm. (18 x 14 ins.). See EDW’s “Poppies (An Idyl Fragment),” as well as the draft of it and sequel in Appendix B.

Frontispiece: Elizabeth Dickinson West (c. 1892?), reproduced from *Fragments from Old Letters, E. D. [Edward Dowden] to E. D. W. [Elizabeth Dickinson West], 1869–1892*, Second Series (J. M. Dent, 1914), facing p. 151.

The present volume complements work undertaken in *Edward Dowden: A Critical Edition of the Complete Poetry*, a Special Online Number of *The South Carolina Review* (Summer 2010) also available on CUDP’s Bibliographic Studies webpage.

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# Introduction

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by Wayne K. Chapman

This book is the product of collaboration between myself and the students of Literary Editing (English 441) during eight of the sixteen weeks of spring semester 2013 at Clemson University. Like any critical edition, it engages with and acknowledges a number of texts, the most evident being published and unpublished materials relating to *Verses by E.D.W.* (i.e., Elizabeth Dickinson West), privately printed on two separate occasions, the first in 1876, the second as Part II in 1883, both by E. Ponsoby, 116 Grafton Street, Dublin. One of the poet's achievements is that she won the heart of the prolific scholar, editor and poet Edward Dowden (1843-1913), becoming his second wife in 1895 and, after his death in 1913, his capable literary executrix. She inspired a collection of poems called *A Woman's Reliquary*, published posthumously by Elizabeth Butler Yeats at the Cuala Press out of respect for Dowden's friendship with her father but to the consternation of her brother W. B. Yeats, in a few years Ireland's first Nobel Laureate. ED and EDW might have considered themselves "a writing couple" long before they were married—a sort of lesser Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Indeed, Robert Browning was the subject of a book by Dowden and, it seems, a favored correspondent of EDW, according to Professor Roderick Gow (University College Dublin) in his essay "Edward Dowden, Elizabeth Dickinson West and the Poetry of Robert Browning," published in the Irish forum section of *The South Carolina Review*, spring 2013. Was EDW the "dark lady" of Dowden's sonnets, by analogy to Dowden's work on Shakespeare? Coventry Patmore's *The Angel in the House*, somewhat analogous to Dowden's *A Woman's Reliquary*, is perhaps suggested although decidedly old-fashioned by 1914 and, in 1931, when Patmore's sentimental book was ridiculed by Virginia Woolf. See, too, my introduction to *Edward Dowden: A Critical Edition of the Complete Poetry*, a Special Online Number of *The South Carolina Review* (Summer 2010) also available on CUDP's Bibliographic Studies webpage.

No "Angel" in Dowden's house (she was "Aunt Bessie" to his daughters), EDW continues to be both a mystery and an enigma that justifies reading her poems now that a complete text has been made of them that may be freely accessed online. Her interest in Dowden, her teacher and first reader of sonnets that she began writing in 1872, seems beyond a doubt. Their subjects are in many ways reciprocal: Robert Browning, for example; the sea; the exploration of religious articles of faith; a display of learning; and a love of nature. She was the lesser poet, though it seems significant that, while she cannot have assigned importance to her little book in private installments of 1876 and 1883, she *did* manage to preserve them by placing copies in various libraries of note.

The base text chosen for the present volume is the bound two-part assembly of *Verses* 1876 and 1883 at UCLA, digitized and reprinted from the collections of the University of California—a copy is annotated by the poet, including a fair-hand copy of an unpublished poem inscribed in the endpapers. This base text is then compared with a similarly bound but more extensively annotated copy in the British Library, London; a slightly corrected copy of Part I in the private collection of Roderick Gow, Dublin; an annotated copy of Parts I and II in the National Library of Ireland, Dublin; and manuscripts in the Edward Dowden papers at the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

# Texts and Abbreviations

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(as employed in the notes and collations that follow, constituting the *apparatus criticus* of this renovated edition of *Verses*)

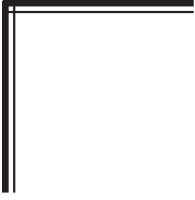
<i>UCLA</i>	Inscribed Copy	[In this <b>base text</b> , the poet's annotations are transcribed in <i>bold italics</i> .] University of California Libraries, Los Angeles (PR 4613 D4424A17 1876).
<i>BL</i>	Inscribed Copy	British Library (London) 11646 df3. This copy bears in the endpapers an early draft of "The Fortunate Isles" (unpublished).
<i>NLI</i>	Inscribed Copy	National Library of Ireland (Dublin), as reported by Professor Roderick Gow. This copy bears in the endpapers a fair-hand draft of "The Fortunate Isles," following the early draft in <i>BL</i> .
<i>HEH</i>	Manuscript Folios	Henry E. Huntington Library (San Marino, California), Edward Dowden Coll. (1869–1912): "Poppies: A Morsel of Dramatic Lyric" (HM 39182[2]); "Sequel to certain verses called 'Poppies'" (HM 39183[3]); and "A Sonnet concerning a Hazel Stick of a Price more than one-&-sixpence" (HM 39184[4]). All poems in the hand of EDW.

Copies of the characteristically bound-up set of *Verses* in its two parts also are known to exist in the Baylor University Library (inscribed "To A. J. Armstrong from E. D. Dowden" but, evidently, otherwise unmarked) and in the Rare Book Collection of the New York Public Library (similarly inscribed to Clara Barrus but "With the author's ms. notes"). These copies are listed on WorldCat and have not been consulted in this study.

We are indebted to Professor Gow, too, for information about a unique copy of *Verses*, Part I (1876), which he obtained by ordering on the Internet. A fair-hand copy of the first sonnet to appear in Part II (1883) was inscribed at the end of this copy. Confusion over titles has been cleared up, as well, in consultation with him.

Together, the materials considered in this project convey the sense that the poet was diligent at her craft and regarded *Verses* as a work in progress. Accordingly, this edition of her poetry emphasizes the textual-genetic elements of her process of composition. My sixteen fellow editors have exercised new-found skills and can congratulate themselves in recovering texts long forgotten. In the overdue reconsideration of the poems and scholarship of Edward Dowden, the work at hand contributes a piece to that complicated puzzle. In that sense, this book is a downpayment.

Finally, I am personally grateful for the cooperation and expert assistance rendered by librarians and administrators with whom I have dealt, over the years, on the Dowdens. Clemson University, moreover, deserves thanks for making it all possible. —WKC



*Verses*  
Part I (1876)



## PEACE

- 1 We are as wanderers on the pebbly shore,
- 2 Beside the margin of an unknown sea
- 3 Horizonless in haze of mystery.
- 4 Whose waves come lapping as they lapped before
- 5 We watched their motion,—now as evermore
- 6 Recurrent in their calm persistency.
- 7 No ocean laughter, but serenity
- 8 That hushes all vain wishes to explore
- 9 The silent spaces of the far-off deep.
- 10 All time, or long or short, forgetting there,
- 11 We look and listen only till we fill
- 12 Our eyes and ears with peace. Then if a sleep
- 13 Comes o'er our senses, —sleep, —nor greatly care;
- 14 Feeling the unheard waves will murmur still.

March 1872

## UNCERTAINTY

- 1 If of our seeming knowledge aught were sure,—
- 2 If of the formless moods that hurry past
- 3 We might seize only one and hold it fast;
- 4 (Were it of all the mood most cold and poor),
- 5 It would be easy bravely to endure
- 6 The sight of what our fate was at its worst.
- 7 No tear from eye, nor wail from lip need burst.
- 8 Our souls, possessed in patience, might inure
- 9 Our lives to sober action. But our strength
- 10 Is wasted in this long uncertainty.
- 11 Our creeds elude our moods,—our moods our creeds,
- 12 In ever-baffled chase, until at length
- 13 We find that we have *spent* or energy,
- 14 And that our toil hath small result in deeds.

March 1872

---

Edward Dowden made the following comment on these poems: “‘Uncertainty’ and ‘Peace’ are perhaps better as pieces of literary structure than the other [‘Faith’]....I had copied—not for publication, but as bits of your work—the sonnets ‘Uncertainty’ and ‘Peace’....The line ‘We find that we have spent our energy’ [in ‘Uncertainty’] strikes me as prosaic....The close of the other sonnet seems to me as good as Wordsworth’s own. (*Fragments from Old Letters, ED to EDW [1869-1892]*, p.12

## TRUST

1 Trust—O thou whosoe'er for truth hast sought,  
 2 With mind's toil and with long drawn-out unrest.  
 3 And sinkings of all hopes that by thy quest  
 4 Thou mightst to any goal of peace be brought,  
 5 Or, ever learning might'st some good be taught;  
 6 And bitter questionings if good be best,—  
 7 Or reckless pleasure—and all men for nought.  
 8 One day it may be thou shalt find faith's test  
 9 And trial season o'er. Then quietly,  
 10 Without the weary effort of the brain,  
 11 Thy heart's eyes shall the near-far things behold;  
 12 And That thou couldst not find shall find out thee  
 13 Truth will not wait aloof for thee to attain.  
 14 But its great certitude shall thee enfold.

April 1872

## PRAYER

1 Praying to Thee our wills do not require  
 2 That Thou, the Lord who doest all things well,  
 3 Guiding thy world by laws immutable,  
 4 Shouldst, whne some wishes of our hearts' suspire  
 5 Thee-ward in faith, grant unto the desire  
 6 Of each man that which suits his own small need,  
 7 (Lest other's wishes fail if *his* succeed,  
 8 Being contrary): but lower will to higher  
 9 Can, in proud meekness and strong helplessness,  
 10 Yield, and own Law as girdling Destiny.  
 11 Thou, setting us within fixed bounds, didst give  
 12 Great passive strength to human littleness—  
 13 Only we cry to Thee for *sympathy*;  
 14 If Thou wilt *love* us, we can bear and live.

May 1872

---

*Trust* EDW has inscribed two Xes beside the title (at left), for some reason. In a letter of April 30, 1872, Edward Dowden remarks to her: "The 'Trust' sonnet gives me great enlargement—you know the devotional word?" (*Fragments from Old Letters, E.D. to E.D.W. [1869-1892]*, p.23)

*Prayer* Dowden comments, on May 17, 1872, that "in 'Prayer' there is something of a labored movement in the verse as if the thought retarded its own expression—I do not note as a fault, but as a fact." (*Fragments from Old Letters*, p.29.)

### FAITH'S GAIN

- 1 Truly our hearts are strangely fashionéd :
- 2 Strange mood is ours which follows long suspense
- 3 'Twixt two beliefs, and agony intense
- 4 To know if men and all their love be led,
- 5 By passage forth among the things called dead,
- 6 To death indeed, —or truest permanence :
- 7 Just when our faint hope grows to confidence.
- 8 A new sense comes that we could *now* instead
- 9 Accept the hopeless creed without despair,
- 10 Let go our certainties' most precious joys—
- 11 Wherefore? Is it that, tired, we cease to care
- 12 For that our faith hath won in sorest strife?—
- 13 Nay—but because a strength *no* creed destroys
- 14 Grows in us through that wrestling for Heaven's life.

### EYTE

- 1 Think you that he who in that far-off day.
- 2 Whereto he reacheth through all days of life
- 3 Of feeble labour and of passion's strife,
- 4 Shall hear Christ's voice, what time that voice shall say
- 5 The promised εὖγε, —and the crown shall lay
- 6 Of that great guerdon-word upon his heart ;
- 7 Would not forthwith in peace and strength depart,
- 8 Hearing but that alone, and go his way
- 9 Back to the same old toil or toil more stern?
- 10 What were Christ's "enter joy" without "well done!?"
- 11 Is not the first word better than the rest
- 12 That follow after?—Then if man's love yearn
- 13 To give *all* gifts —and yet must give but *one* —
- 14 Let it give εὖγε, —Christ's first gift and best.

May 1872

## ΑΠΑΡΝΗΣΑΣΘΩ 'ΕΑΥΤΟΝ

- 1 When Christ hath spoken to a human heart,
- 2 “*Take up thy cross—and follow after Me*
- 3 *Renouncing self;*” (whether its will be free
- 4 To yield up things possessed, or, harder part,
- 5 It feel it hath no choice but take pain’s smart
- 6 All unassuaged by sense of power:) then he
- 7 Whose will gives gladly or bears patiently
- 8 Would form the thought of restitution start
- 9 Grieved and indignant,—he who once have poured
- 10 His free-will or his patience forth, (and meant
- 11 His gift should be accepted, though in worth
- 12 It were so poor,)—*he* would not see restored
- 13 Things he renounced in true abandonment;
- 14 Would not choose Heaven to give joys missed on earth.

May 1872

## THE “HIGHER RULE”

- 1 Say not that joy is lost for men whose fate,
- 2 Or men whose calling by some voice of right,
- 3 Is to forego for ever some delight
- 4 Of earth’s dear happiness—to watch and wait,
- 5 Seeing unseen things’ substance by a great
- 6 Faith’s evidence,—to walk by faith not sight—
- 7 (Yea, find even faith fail almost, though not quite:)
- 8 These are the souls elect to high estate.
- 9 Unworthy they, yet counted through God’s grace
- 10 Worthy to share in the deep mystery
- 11 Of Eucharistic joy that conquers pain.
- 12 Therefore exultant let them take their place
- 13 Where they may touch Christ’s cross by sympathy,
- 14 And in self-losing find Life’s truest gain.

Week before Easter 1872

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*ΑΠΑΡΝΗΣΑΣΘΩ 'ΕΑΥΤΟΝ* Greek, translates to “renounce himself.” This is a reference to either Luke 9:23, which says, “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me,” or Matthew 16:24, which says, “Then Jesus said unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (King James Bible).

## THE MELANCHOLY OF GEORGE ELIOT

- 1 Strength won by conquest over strength is thine,
- 2 Thou woman who with resolute manly will,
- 3 Hast wrestled down thy heart's desires until
- 4 They owned thy stern creed's sway. Thou lett'st no sign
- 5 Of 'natural tears' bedim the steadfast shine

*evermore*

- 6 Of thy ~~Athene~~-soul's eyes: but <sup>^</sup>with still
- 7 Keen gaze of hopelessness confront'st all ill
- 8 Of Destiny. From thee no brute-like whine
- 9 Escapes—of terror, pain, or thirst for joy,
- 10 Nor devil's irony. Thou dost remain
- 11 Conscious of sad high human victory.
- 12 What though no hope of retribution buoy
- 13 Thy purpose above earthly fate,—one gain
- 14 Of faith that right is right suffices thee

July 1872

## A SEPTEMBER MORNING

- 1 In presence of the furze and heather glow,
- 2 And of the brightness that went everywhere,
- 3 Mystic, intangible, throughout the air,
- 4 I sat. And did that outer light bestow
- 5 some inward light on me? I only know
- 6 That I beheld against the morning sky
- 7 How the low hills rose strangely large and high,
- 8 Transfigured in the glory of the show;
- 9 And Beauty seemed not hiding Truth, but true,
- 10 Its substance filling all. (He found no place
- 11 The Demon-Lie\* that *No* to all things saith.)
- 12 And I, believing, wrote glad words to you—
- 13 (You heard them) how your calling by God's grace
- 14 Was to a poet's work through life or death.

March 1872

\*Mephistopheles, "der Geist der stets verneint."

*The Melancholy of George Eliot* The NLI copy bears a single manuscript correction in the text.

6 (Athene-soul's...but with still] soul's...but evermore with still *BL*

*A September Morning* R. Gow notes that, beneath the title in the NLI copy, EDW enters the dedication "to EA" (almost certainly Edward Dowden).

11, note by EDW translates to "the spirit that ever denies," originally applied to Mephistopheles. The German quotation is in Johann Goethe's *Faust*. EDW was fond of the German Romantic author, as was her scholar-husband, Edward Dowden.



## COLOUR-MUSIC

- 1 There is rich gladness in the fresh leaved trees,  
 2 And in the daily-deepening grass of May,  
 3 Wherein the music of the sunbeams' play  
 4 Goes ringing on in infinite melodies,  
 5 Not loud, but passing with a tender ease  
 6 From the sweet primrose to the cowslip's tone  
 7 On where from many-mingled flowers are thrown  
 8 Joyous, confused, all colour harmonies.  
*Here and therein*  
 9 There is deep pleasure: ~~here~~ wherein may lie  
 10 Man's heart awhile to hear the loveliness,—  
 11 Yet can this summer beauty wake no thrill  
 12 Like his respondent rapture strange and high,  
 13 When sunset clouds some bare moor's dreariness  
 14 Seem with great solemn organ-tones to fill.

May 1872

## TO R. BROWNING

- 1 True-hearted seer, whose keen and steady eye,  
 2 Keeping a view point on an eminence  
 3 That reacheth Aither o'er the world of sense,  
 4 Doth, as from prophet's watch-tower, thence descry  
 5 Proportions of the things of earth and sky,—  
 6 Tell us thy vision when *our* sight is bound  
 7 Where little swellings of the lower ground  
 8 Seem our life's only truths because they lie  
 9 Betwixt the soul and things whereof it saith  
 10 'This I *believe*,' (which meaneth, "this I let  
 11 Please vacant fancy on one day in seven.")  
 12 Strengthen thy brethren by thy strength of faith,  
 13 And teach our human love in trust to set  
 14 Its continuity 'twixt Earth and Heaven.

August 1872

---

*Colour-Music* Edward Dowden wrote of this poem: "Your 'Colour Musics' [sic] has in it the lyrical cry of pleasure. It is full delight and therefore could not but be good." (*Fragments from Old Letters, E.D. to E.D.W. [1869-1892]*, p.29)

9 There...pleasure here within may lie] There...pleasure: and therein *BL*

## BROWNING AND SHELLEY

- 1 Strong poet soul, thou yearnest to thy friend
- 2 That other poet soul elect by thee
- 3 For worship, in that deep affinity
- 4 Wherein two human natures seek to blend,
- 5 And set their opposite forces to one end.
- 6 It had been surely good for earth if he,
- 7 While dwelling in that flesh though ne'er didst see,
- 8 Had in his need had help thy strength could lend,
- 9 (Help better far than that wild deaf "west wind"
- 10 Wherein in agony went out his cry
- 11 That meant a seeking for his God unknown—)
- 12 Good will it be for heaven when thou shalt find
- 13 Thy Shelley there,—and two souls, drawing nigh,
- 14 Perfect together things each wrought alone.

August 1872

---

9 *that wild deaf "west wind"* See Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind": "O Wild West Wind!... Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;/ Destroyer and Preserver; hear, O hear!" Shelley and Browning were both subjects of important studies by EDW's professor, and, later, husband Edward Dowden. Her own friendship with Browning has been documented by Roderick Gow in

"Edward Dowden, Elizabeth Dickinson West and the Poetry of Robert Browning," *The South Carolina Review* 45.2 (Spring 2013), pp. 47-57.

**FEAR**  
**AN EXPERIENCE ON THE WESTERN COAST OF SCOTLAND**

1 They lay there underneath the noonday sky,  
 2 The shining islands on the shining sea.  
 3 They had lain there as beautiful ere we,  
 4 Passing, beheld them, and they still would lie  
 5 In brightness there when we had long passed by.  
 6 And when I felt their gleaming, suddenly  
 7 A spell of nameless terror compassed me  
 8 With closer coils than midnight fear. Then I  
 9 Sought with strained eyes for some minutest spot  
 10 *Unbeautiful*, that there my human soul  
 11 Might break the mystic bindings of that sight.  
 12 But, finding nowhere where that light was not,  
 13 The self of me seemed pressed within a whole  
 14 Of mindless beauty—and it perished quite.

**WHAT THE HEATHER SAID**

1 The heather looked at me: it looked and smiled:  
 2 I know its soul saw mine, there on the green  
 3 And purple mountain slopes. What did it mean  
 4 When with a gaze as innocently wild  
 5 As the glad open countenance of a child  
 6 It met my human eyes? First spoke to me  
 7 A quivering light of tender mockery  
 8 From the hill's face: "Ha, traitor, you beguiled  
 9 The heather's soul to give its best in vain!  
 10 It gave you its own joy—free, strong, pure-hued.  
 11 Why bring you not due payment back again  
 12 To it of fair fresh verse?" Then, changing mood,  
 13 It said, "O man, gifts worthier than all art  
 14 You bring to-day, large silence from your heart."

August 1872

**“THE NIGHT COMETH WHEREIN NO MAN CAN WORK”**

- 1 Let not our human immortality
- 2 Be a perpetual vision in our sight;
- 3 Lest we, too soon beholding infinite
- 4 Spaces of time our own, grow idly free
- 5 From urgency to completing aught,—lest we,
- 6 Viewing our life stretched beyond bounds of earth,
- 7 Deem it of small account if time ’twixt birth
- 8 Of each man and his death, should only be
- 9 A school-time for his soul, (no earthly deeds’
- 10 Achievement being end whereto had served
- 11 Soul’s schooling). Show us only in some needs
- 12 The light eternal; let our wills be nerved
- 13 Hourly to strenuous toil by sense that all
- 14 Work of life’s day must close ere death’s night fall.

July 1872

**PERSONALITY**

- 1 She is a little child whose life hath known
- 2 Only the gladdening play of nine sweet years.
- 3 Why did there rise those vague and shuddering fears
- 4 In her young soul—that bright soul of her own
- 5 Which in the sunshine of home love had grown
- 6 From baby-hood? Because the mystery
- 7 That girdeth round all personality,
- 8 And setteth each man utterly alone,
- 9 Came to her then. She said “I am an *I*.”
- 10 Why am I *I*?” “I wish it was not so.”
- 11 Why are *I*’s in the world?” That self same speech
- 12 Rising from myriad hearts, is one great cry,
- 13 *To what?* ay, whither doth that utterance go?
- 14 Doth it the Void, ...or answering I Soul reach?

---

*“The Night Cometh...”* The title comes from a letter by Thomas Carlyle (1822) to Jane Welch, eventually his wife. Professor Gow traces the origin to the Gospel according to St. John, Chapter 29: “The night cometh when no man can work.”

*Personality.* No date.

## A QUESTION

- 1 What is for man the ultimate use and worth  
 2 Of that sweet herbage he calls poetry,  
 3 Which, ever deepening, spreadeth wide and free  
 4 Throughout the grounds of habitable earth,  
 5 Primeval, and yet daily new in birth,  
 6 Whose roots of life must darkly hidden be  
 7 Far down from sight of his philosophy?  
 8 —Is this but pasture for his heart in dearth  
 9 Of human nature's daily needful food  
 10 Of joy? all the rich growth of rhythm and rhyme  
 11 And beauty's imagery, ... just a deep  
 12 Lush clover meadow, where in oxlike mood  
 13 Souls, starved elsewhere, may, for a little time,  
 14 Feed on delight, till, satiate, they sleep. ?

---

14. The query mark is inscribed by EDW in the British Library copy for an unknown reason, as one can find it again at the end of Sonnet I of the following sequence. Professor Gow notes that the query mark also occurs in the National Library of Ireland copy.

No date.

## A SEQUENCE OF SONNETS

## I

- 1 What shall we take as comfort for the pain
- 2 Felt by our human spirits when they view
- 3 The little done of all they dreamed to do;
- 4 The impulses that ever urge in vain
- 5 Large longings met by incommensurate gain,
- 6 And dull decay of ardour to pursue
- 7 Ideal hopes that prove themselves untrue?
- 8 —Is *this* the comfort we may then attain,
- 9 Calmly to see the utter littleness
- 10 Of all within the individual soul,
- 11 And merge our restless care for our own lot
- 12 In a deep faith that in the large success
- 13 And grand sure tendings of the human whole,
- 14 Failure and loss of *one* life matters not. ?

## II

- 1 But is there consciousness within that whole?
- 2 And will the thing we call Humanity
- 3 Know of our love or care at all that we
- 4 For its great sake our murmuring thoughts control
- 5 Finding a joy in its joy to console
- 6 Our selfish griefs? Or may it only be
- 7 We give our yearnings to a mockery,
- 8 A bare abstraction that outside each soul
- 9 Exists not? When beneath the surface show
- 10 We seek to reach some ultimate certitude
- 11 Nought else but this one substant truth we find
- 12 “*Thought is,*” (of knowledge this our ποῦ στῶ)
- 13 Nor with this primal essence find endowed
- 14 Aught manifest except as personal mind.

---

I.14 The query mark is inscribed in the British Library copy by EDW in the same manner and for the same unknown purpose as one finds at the end of the preceding poem.

II.12 The Greek text is derived from Archimedes quotation. It can be translated as: “Give me a place to stand and I (will) move the earth.”

## III

1 We could unlearn desire for happiness,  
 2 If in some way our own loss were a gain  
 3 To some existence that might still remain  
 4 Nor perish out in ultimate aimlessness.  
 5 We could rejoice to feel that we had less  
 6 That it might have the more—that so our pain  
 7 Were *sacrifice*, and therefore not in vain;  
 8 Could gladly die for some one lastingness.  
 9 —But what is this thing that it hath a claim?  
 10 For if *each* man be only made for nought,  
 11 Of what account is all Humanity?  
 12 What value can there be in the mere name  
 13 By which the image to our minds is brought  
 14 Of myriad worthless things' totality?

## IV

1 O Thou abiding Personality,  
 2 (If that old creed which says thou art, be right),  
 3 Only in Thy light shall our hearts see light  
 4 To read a little of the mystery  
 5 That holdeth us and all the things that be.  
 6 O Love of God we ask Thee for a sight  
 7 Of Thee Thyself, —we need not the delight  
 8 Of promised joys throughout Eternity.  
 9 If we can only find some stable thing  
 10 Existent on throughout the ceaseless flow  
 11 Of Being passing into Nothingness—  
 12 Some one substantial Good to which to bring  
 13 Our love, we can our selfish hopes forego,  
 14 In trust *our* failure may be *its* success.

## V

- 1 It is enough if we can find out Thee,  
 2 And know our work and we are Thine, O Lord.  
 3 Do thou with us according to Thy word—  
 4 Our lips spake truly when they said that we  
 5 Beholding Thee, could gladly cease to be,  
 6 And let *our* work fail; if this faith were sure  
 7 That Thy work would for evermore endure,  
 8 Could well forget *our* instability.  
 9 Do Thou with us according to Thy word—  
 10 Yet what that word of Thine? not death but life  
 11 Thou givest—*death* for Thee were all we need—  
 12 Yet not to death Thou call'st us—we have heard  
 13 A voice that bids us rise to joyous strife  
 14 To labour, sure that our true selves succeed.

February 1872



**“I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY”**

- 1 How if the body, emptied of the breath
- 2 Of vital force that while it therein dwelt
- 3 Kept it coherent, in corruption melt
- 4 Slowly from semblance left unharmed by death,
- 5 By law which human atoms scattereth
- 6 Forth through the soil or air to be anew
- 7 Made parts of lives—how shall these words be true
- 8 Which, over graves of human love, faith saith,
- 9 *“That this, the thing committed to the earth*
- 10 *Shall, risen, live with soul”?* Yea, though earth’s wind
- 11 Disperse man’s show of matter, this may be;
- 12 *Form* may return to its own world of birth.
- 13 There, where Real Essences the soul may find
- 14 *Substance* of old corporeal entity.

August 1872

**REST**

I

- 1 When there have been within a human heart
- 2     Wrestlings with doubt or sin;
- 3 When Thou has granted to its better part
- 4     Strength, a great strength to win;

II

- 5 Keep Thou that heart at rest a little while,
- 6     By Thy near grace subdued;
- 7 In Thy felt love, as in a mother’s smile,
- 8     Let it find certitude.

III

- 9 Healer! it needeth tending from Thee now,
- 10     Limbs ache, and wounds are deep;
- 11 Set Thy great kiss upon the throbbing brow;
- 12     Soothe thought to quiet sleep.

---

*Rest.* Two Xs have been inscribed beside the title, for unknown reasons, in the UCLA copy. “I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body” is based on a line from the Apostle’s Creed.

IV

- 13 Souls that to live by their own strength had tried  
14 Are by Thy love brought low,  
15 Feeling their weakness, emptied of their pride,  
16 By Thee who all dost know.

V

- 17 Yet let them not too long a space abide  
18 In that strange peace of Thine;  
19 Break their repose, and send them from Thy side  
20 Filled with new strength divine.

VI

- 21 Father, Great Mother, to Thy love they yearn,  
22 Meekly would stay with Thee;  
23 Yet must Thou bid them to the world return.  
24 Thy witnesses to be.

VII

- 25 Souls that through joy or grief some blest new birth  
26 Into Thy kingdom gain;  
27 Growing, as children in the life of earth,  
28 Full manhood must attain.

VIII

- 29 Bid them go forth from out Thy home of grace,  
30 Tender Thou art, yet stern;  
31 Choose Thou in Thy great outer world their place  
32 Till Thy large truth they learn.

June 1872

## EARTH'S USELESS PLACES

1 He knoweth peace who to some mountain height  
 2 Hath climbed, and in the stillness waiteth there,  
 3 To rest awhile tired limbs and panting breath,  
 4 And brain sun-fevered in the steep ascent.  
 5 — He lieth in the purple fragrant heath,  
 6 And feels so near to the great hollow sky,  
 7 That circleth over, round and under him;  
 8 Yet hath no fear of it; it is not like  
 9 The sky that from the plains seems oftentimes  
 10 A brazen surface, hard, flat, beautiful.  
 11 He lets the pure stern wind swept over him,  
 12 Wind the life-giver, breathéd forth from God.  
 13 — Peace of the mountains is not like the peace  
 14 Wherewith the sad sea-murmurs fill the mind,  
 15 A strange sweet lethargy, wherein the will  
 16 That struggled yeilds itself at last to fate,  
 17 And wild desires for knowledge sink to sleep—  
 18 Yet sleep unresting, hearing restless waves.  
 19 —There is strong calmness in the mountain mood;  
 20 no outer sound o'ermasters there the mind  
 21 With influences irresistible,  
 22 As doth the soft voice of the inhuman sea.  
 23 Man feels among the hills enduringness,  
 24 His own enduringness not less but more—  
 25 Bounded by boundless sky his will seems free  
 26 Although the ocean's vastness crushed it in.  
 . . . . .  
 27 Surely it is most good for us to be  
 28 Sometimes at rest upon these grounds which earth  
 29 Keepeth apart above her cultured fields  
 30 Sanctified to the use of uselessness,  
 31 (If usefulness mean clothing, house, or food,  
 32 To satisfy the needs of human brutes).  
 33 In uselessness the hills are consecrate,  
 34 Themselves the consecrators of all earth,  
 35 Revealers of her lowly common truths.  
 36 They ma nifest the glory of her plains.  
 37 For from the heights alone the eye can see  
 38 The level land in true proportion spread,  
 39 And judge what tracts of it be large, what small

40 And trace the windings of the streams and roads,  
41 And the fair colours of the low extent  
42 Of fields of pasture, corn and meadow land;  
43 Those very fields that seem so commonplace  
44 When we have sight of them and them alone

. . . . .

45 He who at any time hath known the joy  
46 Of resting thus within the mountain's calm.  
47 Will sometimes, after, on the common roads,  
48 If his glance meet with, unexpectedly,  
49 A pine tree, larch, or even one bright bush  
50 Of furze in blossom, or some bracken fern,  
51 Or any thing that serves to link his thought  
52 To the far beauty of the holy heights,  
53 Feel a deep sudden thrill shoot through his sense;  
54 As if an entrance to a real world  
55 Again were broken from a world of dreams  
56 And with a shock of change he passed therein.

. . . . .

57 Truly I know not how this is, nor why.  
58 Yet am I sure the mountain peace is good

. . . . .

59 And there are mountain lands in some men's lives.

June 1872

“THE MOUNT THAT IS CALLED OLIVET”

I

- 1 Why stand ye gazing, men of Galilee,
- 2 Into the deep sky arching overhead,
- 3 As though ye waited there some proof to see
- 4 That there was truth in words the Master said?

II

- 5 Hath He not spoken, “I will come again,”
- 6 And “Where I am, there shall ye also be”?
- 7 Need ye some vision to make this more plain?
- 8 Must ye have sight to give faith certainty?

III

- 9 Rather go back to your Jerusalem,
- 10 Unto what work ye find before you set,
- 11 These things are safe, with all the love of them;
- 12 Need ye delay upon Mount Olivet?

IV

- 13 Why stand ye gazing, men of Galilee,
- 14 Ye who have watched God’s cloud from sight receive
- 15 Blessings of earth? Yea, though most good they be.
- 16 Better it is if *thus* ye see them leave.

V

- 17 Have ye not faith in all the words ye said?
- 18 Why need ye linger here to test your creed?
- 19 Doubt ye at all the “rising of the dead” –
- 20 Or that its First-fruits Christ, is risen indeed?

---

“*The Mount That Is Called Olivet*” The poem’s title is a reference to the The Mount of Olives located in East Jerusalem, an important location in Christian, Jewish, and Islamic belief systems, where Jesus is said to have given his end-time prophecy. The quotation is found in The Gospel of Luke 21:37 in the Christian New Testament.

20 First-fruits Christ, ] First-fruits, *BL*. (Evidentially, the omission is made for the sake of meter.)

## VI

- 21 Unto your life's Jerusalem return  
 22 Gladly, for if ye take "great joy" with you,  
 23 Joy of a confidence most calm and stern,  
 24 Old ways and common will seem high and new

June 1872

## BY THE SEA

## I

- 1 There urged me a vacant longing:  
 2 I came to the jubilant sea:  
 3 To watch how its white waves were thronging  
 4 Round the rocks tumultuously.

## II

- 5 Within *me* there had been no motion  
 6 Of joy or of sorrow that day;  
 7 A rainbow-light over the ocean  
 8 Was chasing the driving spray.

## III

- 9 And in impulse of strong young madness  
 10 Sea shouted its laugh to the sun:  
 11 Then I yearned towards its mighty gladness,  
 12 To be with that great life, one.

## IV

- 13 But its joy and my dull vague sorrow  
 14 Divided remained that day;  
 15 They were *two* for many a morrow,  
 16 Till desire almost died away.

## V

17 When suddenly (was I waking?  
 18 Or was it an inland dream?)  
 19 Somewhere the waves were breaking,  
 20 From their foamed crests flashed a gleam.

## VI

21 And somehow no longer divided  
 22 Was I from the joy of the sea.  
 23 Do I know if *my* life was tided  
 24 Into *its* life? or its into me?

## VII

25 Can I tell if this strange new seeming—  
 26 This flooding of glad surprise,  
 27 Will vanish, like joys of dreaming,  
 28 From the vision of waking eyes?

## VIII

29 I know not; but waves are rushing;  
 30 Wind-driven spray to the sun  
 31 Answers, in rainbow hues flushing;  
 32 And I and that ocean are one.

June 1872

## To C. D. R.

## I

1 You tell me the mists of the morning will close o'er the sky again,  
 2 That the clouds will thicken and darken, dropping their chilling rain.

---

*To C.D.R.* C.D.R. possibly refers to Charles Dickinson West, as Professor Gow notes, a cousin and Church of Ireland clergyman.

## II

- 3 Long had the mists of the morning hidden the infinite blue,  
4 Grey was the vapour, yet sometimes, flushed with faint reddening hue.

## III

- 5 Hours passed, and then near the noonday, woke there a breeze in the air,  
6 Breaking the mists, and they vanished, leaving the heavens' truth bare.

## IV

*Then*

- 7 ~~And~~ the great depth like an ocean, meeting all things with its tide,  
8 Looked into eyes that looked upward, and they were satisfied.

## V

- 9 *Now* if old mists gather, stealing, up through the air once more—  
10 And the shrouded sky look leaden, just as it looked before;

## VI

*abides**knew—*

- 11 Still safe and supreme that one vision ~~will be~~ which our noon-tide ~~knew~~  
12 No gloom of the afternoon, closing, could make its brightness untrue.

## VII

- 13 And may not the wind in the evening freshen again, and the light  
14 Of a great deep sunset glory, stream through rent clouds on our sight.

---

7 And ] Then, *BL*

11 will be . . . knew ] abides . . . knows—, *BL*

No date for this poem's completion is provided.



**LINES**  
**(TWO POETS)**

I

1 Poet whose own soul  
2 Knoweth of no goal  
3 Whither it and its wild hopes are tending;  
4 Floating as amid  
5 Scas whose shores are hid,  
6 Or down river without source or ending.

II

7 Surely those may'st well  
8 Of thine own heart tell,  
9 Of its fullness or its restless longing;  
10 Nothing hast thou known  
11 But this truth alone,  
12 That within thyself vague thoughts are thronging.

III

13 All outside must seem  
14 Like a deep soft dream.  
15 Thine own life and all men's lives enclasping.  
16 Let thy song's words eatch  
17 With convulsive snatch  
18 Any substance that will meet their grasping.

IV

19 Tell thy mood's employ,  
20 Whether grief or joy,  
21 Tenderly bedeck thy own emotions.  
22 Utter all its tale,  
23 With a laugh or wail,  
24 Infant- like to deaf old mother ocean.

---

*Title* The poem was printed without title in *Verses* (1876) though the Contents page gave it as "Lines." EDW inscribed the title "(Two Poets)" in the blank space over the poem in the BL copy.

## V

- 25 Larger theme for art  
 26 Poet, choose, whose heart  
 27 Outside self hath found secure abiding;  
 28 For thy fellows' needs  
 29 Chant thou forth as creeds  
 30 Fair truths rescued from their wonted hiding.

## VI

- 31 In the great wide earth  
 32 There is more of worth  
 33 For thy song than one man's pain or pleasure  
 34 Underneath the sun  
 35 There have deeds been done  
 36 Fitter far to be high verse's treasure.

## VII

- 37 Bind the world's great Past  
 38 To its Present, fast,  
 39 Let the strong men, dead, join strong men living;  
 40 Let thy earnest speech  
 41 To earth's Future reach:  
 42 Minds unborn may take what thine is giving.

## VIII

- 43 No man can forget  
 44 Things that deep are set  
 45 In the life that his is and none other's;  
 46 Yet these should but serve  
 47 Heart and brain to nerve  
 48 For glad helpful work for men his brothers.

*June 1872.*

“AND THE SEA RETURNED UNTO HIS STRENGTH  
WHEN THE MORNING APPEARED”  
(EXODUS, XIV. 27)

I

- 1 Now let the sea come closing
- 2 Once more over the place;
- 3 Let its fair surface, reposing,
- 4 Wear an unseamed face.

II

- 5 Wind—God’s spirit, came sweeping
- 6 Rolling Time’s waters aside,
- 7 One narrow pathway keeping
- 8 Dry ‘mid their mighty tide.

III

- 9 Now let the world’s waves cover
- 10 Safely again that track:
- 11 Truth of the soul have passed over,
- 12 Nothing can bring them back.

*May 1872.*

## PROGRESSION

## I

- 1 Gladly they let the dream from out their lives depart:
- 2 Henceforth they need it not—its perfect work is wrought.
- 3 It was the παιδαγωγός whereby souls were brought
- 4 Into the great earth-school where heart doth learn from heart.

## II

- 5 And that school's entrance, found, needs nevermore be sought:
- 6 What though in seeking it with wistful life's desire,
- 7 There was a strange high joy. They enter into higher
- 8 Joy, who pass in where Love's abiding truths are taught.

## III

- 9 In lessons riding through the changing earthly years;
- 10 Reaching through faith, through knowledge, through self-retinence
- 11 Deep patience, true fraternity, till, lastly, thence
- 12 Unto the deathless ἀγάπη each spirit nears.

---

*Progression* No date.

3 The Greek word means "tutor, educator of children."

12 The Greek word means "love, affection, fondness."

## A "TRUCE OF GOD"

## I

- 1 Rest—nor send back a wish
- 2 To the glow of sunshine that lay
- 3 Steeping the rippled sea,
- 4 And the bright cliffs yesterday.

## II

- 5 Rest—nor send forth a fear
- 6 To the morrow's storm or its rain,
- 7 Stir not a thought to guess
- 8 What presage those clouds contain,

## III

- 9 Edging the far horizon
- 10 With a long low dark streak.
- 11 Wait till the Future cometh
- 12 Vex not thy mood to seek.

## IV

- 13 Surely it is enough
- 14 In the infinite Present to be,
- 15 Yea to be closed therein
- 16 From thy hope and thy memory

## V

- 17 Closed in the circling good
- 18 Of the stillness that is spread,
- 19 All through the monotone
- 20 Of the grey-blue sky over-head.

---

*Title* The concept of "The Peace and Truce of God" (Pax Dei) was a medieval European movement of the Roman Catholic Church to limit private warfare between the feudal lords—a measure to suspend hostilities temporarily during the period of certain church festivities..

VI

- 21 All through the monotone  
22 Of the grey-blue sea beneath,  
23 All through the monotone  
24 Of the solemn sunless heath.

VII

- 25 From the dark purple heath  
26 Gone is the life-light of red:  
27 Beautiful is it still;  
28 Calm, like a face that is dead.

VIII

- 29 This is a "truce of God"  
30 For the earth and the sky and the sea;  
31 A day that *is*, 'twixt the days  
32 That *were* and the days that *will be*.

IX

- 33 Deep is earth's calm to-day  
34 Unbroken by sun or by wind,  
35 Rest therein and respond  
36 With the joyless calm of a mind

*August 1872.*

## THE RIVER AND THE TIDE

## I

1 Cometh joy — but joy must, like the sea,  
 2           Ebb and flow:  
 3 What doth keep man's heart abidingly  
 4           When the tide is low?

## II

5 Inland gusheth from the mountain side  
 6           Love's fresh rill;  
 7 Flows to where the risings of joy's tide  
 8           Come the stream to fill.

## III

9 Gladly takes the river from the sea  
 10           That great gift;  
 11 Lets the tide-waves, flooding mightily,  
 12           Its own waves uplift

## IV

13 With a rush and swell the waters run  
 14           Till they seem  
 15 As were thus for ever mixed in one,  
 16           Floods of sea and stream.

## V

17 Sinks the tide, and back to whence it came  
 18           Ebbing goes.  
 19 Yet the river onward with the same  
 20           Impulse ever flows.

## VI

21 It can let the sea-waves come and go  
 22           As they will;  
 23 For a source that has no tidal flow  
 24           Feeds its current still.

## VII

- 25 Out of Life's hard rock that spring hath birth,  
 26           None knows why;  
 27 And can, flowing, keep that place of earth,  
 28           Joy's ebbs would leave dry

September 1872

## A RETROSPECT

## I

- 1 Then was it, after all, mere human dreaming—  
 2 Fancies thrown outward by an o'erwrought brain,  
 3 Fevered with minglings of strong joy and pain?  
 4 Did not the heaven uncloze, and Truth forth streaming,  
 5 Like Pentecostal fire, or dovelike wings,  
 6 Bear to us God's free gifts of holy things?

## II

- 7 What did our hearts behold? — Earth's light seemed blended  
 8 With the pure light of Light invisible,  
 9 In one great radiancy that waxed to fill  
 10 Us and all space with love; and doubt was ended;  
 11 And our dim faith was lost in blesséd sight;  
 12 Merged in clear hope of life the infinite.

## III

- 13 Must our eyes, opening now in sober waking,  
 14 Find that the world is as it was before;  
 15 Feel its old darkness pressing evermore.  
 16 Darkness of That which still no answer making  
 17 To sad men's questionings of "what" and "why"—  
 18 Doth o'er the chaos of our being lie?

## IV

- 19 Or are we dreaming *now*? and was that vision  
 20 Something that through long-trancéd senses broke,  
 21 And in each spirit its Pure-Reason woke,  
 22 Teaching 'twixt true and false to make decision?  
 23 — Ah! — who can tell us what these things may mean?  
 24 We only know that joy in us hath been.



## V

- 25 Know we indeed this? then through the years remaining,  
 26 Now since a light hath shinéd once, although,  
 27 Waning, that glory fled ere we could know  
 28 Its source, our souls can cease from their vague straining,  
 29 Their wail of “who will show us any good?”  
 30 We can accept all things not understood.

## VI

- 31 For, whether dream or truth, Joy’s touch brought healing,  
 32 Strengthening faint hearts with utmost fate to cope,  
 33 Giving stern vigour that needs neither hope  
 34 Nor faith, but waiteth till God’s great revealing  
 35 End with a deeper joy our life-long test—  
 36 Or till Death’s answer come—the dreamless rest.

March 1873

## LINES

## I

- 1 I did not care to write to you,  
 2 My Friend, this many a day—  
 3 Why? just because two whole weeks through,  
 4 Upon the hills—upon the bay,  
 5 Beneath the sky’s September blue,  
 6 The tender brooding sunshine lay  
 7 Form morn till eve. I think you knew  
 8 All I could wish to say.

## II

- 9 Was not all well with us while each  
 10 Day met the same bright sea  
 11 That swelled or rippled up the beach?  
 12 I let the golden moments be:  
 13 What need had we for words to reach  
 14 From me to you, from you to me?  
 15 Is not this silence fittest speech  
 16 For best reality?

## III

17 What could my letters give you? Nought  
 18 But just the same old aid—  
 19 A few poor scraps of broken thought  
 20 (Perchance in some new phrase arrayed),  
 21 A little learned, a little taught,  
 22 In idle game so often played,  
 23 Searchings of matters vainly sought,  
 24 Vexed questions re-essayed.

## IV

25 Or trivial household gossipings  
 26 Of who has come, who gone,  
 27 Whence, whither,—little gatherings  
 28 Form what was said and what was done,  
 29 And talk of sequences chance brings  
 30 Form day to day. You needed none  
 31 Of matters such-like. Larger things  
 32 Are here! The sun hath shone!

## V

33 And shineth on—a fair wide pall  
 34 Of light essential lent  
 35 From upper air serene, doth fall,  
 36 Seeming in infinite content  
 37 To fold our lives phenomenal,  
 38 And merge each little accident—  
 39 Earth's Many lies within this All  
 40 In glad abandonment.

## VI

41 Let us be silent! lest we break  
 42 This peace, not knowing whence  
 43 It came. We can but let it make  
 44 Life large awhile. The hush intense  
 45 Of the great present calm doth take  
 46 A pathos from our half-felt sense  
 47 That the old winds and waves will wake,  
 48 This radiance vanish hence.

September 1875.

## IN SEPTEMBER

## I

1 Was it but yesterday, or long ago;  
 2 That mystic autumn day? Time's gliding flow  
 3 Is hard to mark and mete; we cannot know,  
 4 Nought else beholding, whether swift or slow  
 5 Its movement is the while it onward tends.

## II

6 Again the lucid deep September haze  
 7 Trembles in morning hours: around me plays  
 8 (Intangible as half-felt dream that weighs  
 9 In coming sleep), the memory of a blaze  
 10 That somewhere on a far off hill-side blends.

## III

11 Its purple reds with flakes of green and gold  
 12 From a deep furze and humble sea, out rolled  
 13 In radiant calm amid soft mists that fold  
 14 Its limits round, aglow as if no cold  
 15 Or darkness ever had been, nor could be.

## IV

16 I shut my eyes; and as I feel the flame  
 17 Of sunshine, red, through closed lids—the same  
 18 Strange light which on that morning somehow came  
 19 (From soul or sense, I know not, nor its name,)  
 20 Streams in unbroken continuity.

## V

21 Till time and space seem words as idle air,  
 22 For all the Now seems Then, and Here seems There,  
 23 And I am loath to stir a thought, nor care  
 24 To question whether months and years it were  
 25 Since then—or but one slumberous moment's lapse.



## XI

51 Come there not now, although that ecstasy  
 52 Was transient likewise, gracious years when we  
 53 May find our portion 'mid the things that be  
 54 No loans from joy, but perpetuity  
 55 Of fair sad happiness, grave equal faith?

## XII

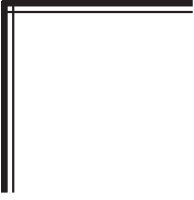
56 In surest comradeship of heart and mind,  
 57 That needs not memory's sweetnesses to bind  
 58 Its constancies—enough one tie to find—  
 59 Brave human help exchanged, to face with blind  
 60 Stern hopefulness all mysteries of death.

(September 1875)

## SONNET

1 My verses' worth and worthlessness I know.  
 2 Haply while on the beach there lie amassed  
 3 Brown tangled wrack and drift-wood, lately east  
 4 Further than wont by wind and tidal flow  
 5 Up from the sea (that sea which still with slow  
 6 And lulléd strength endureth, guarding fast  
 7 The coast's low-water mark), you may have passed,  
 8 Upon the sands, strewn clots of foam. They show  
 9 How high erewhile the ocean's surge hath come,  
 10 Which, ebbing, leaveth symbols to attest  
 11 Its upper reach, else doubted. Import more  
 12 Lies in the dwindled morsels of sea-scum  
 13 Than their own worth—each signifies a crest  
 14 Which some deep-breasted wave here jubilant bore.

(November 1875)



*Verses*  
PART TWO (1883)



## PEGASUS

## I

- 1 What is my Pegasus? A fiery horse
- 2 Bearing the rider in its curbless course
- 3 He recks not where—by swift-winged fancy's force?

## II

- 4 Nay mine (I love him, he my needs doth suit
- 5 The better) is a wingless, slow-paced brute,
- 6 Patient, stout-built, in temper resolute.

## III

- 7 A steed that never may through Ether dart;
- 8 He serves me well enough to draw my cart,
- 9 Laden with moods and thoughts from brain and heart.

## IV

- 10 He drew my loads in years long, long ago;
- 11 Yet how no sign of age the beast doth show:
- 12 Perhaps by use his muscles stronger grow.

## V

- 13 Gee ho! good ass of mine! The roads are rough—
- 14 A few years longer pull your master's stuff:
- 15 For him and you the grave has rest enough!

SONNET  
(EUTHANASIA)

- 1    If suddenly the darkness closed, while light
- 2    Present to sense at height of fullness lay,
- 3    No need were there for hope that dawn of day
- 4    Would break anew; for, came it so, the Night
- 5    Would seem to give Noon's sweetness infinite
- 6    And timeless being; and, lest twilight's grey
- 7    Might touch the sunshine with a chill decay,
- 8    Enfold it safe. . . . Ah! *if* Death's dark aright
- 9    Would fall on us in earthly life (like veil
- 10    On Moses' face while still irradiate
- 11    With God-lit glory), in our hour supreme
- 12    Of joy or ardour, ere its glow in pale,
- 13    Slow wanings sink: then were men's souls good fate
- 14    Complete without the Resurrection Dream.

1876

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Title: "Euthanasia" originated from a fair-hand copy inscribed in the end papers of a copy of *Verses* (1876) owned by Professor Gow and lacking Part II. This title is restored to the poem here although the poem appeared in the 1883 second series beneath the title "Sonnet."

13 men's ] our



**FIRST CONVERSION**  
**(OR ANYTHING SIMILAR THERETO)**

I

1 They sang a song of exultation,  
 2 When joy that worketh strong salvation  
 3 Rushed, like the wind of God—and cleft  
 4 Earth's level sea of commonplace,  
 5 And parted it, to right, to left—  
 6 Leaving between a sacred space.  
 7     A moment's pathway for the pilgrim band  
 8     Of hopes that sought the Resurrection land.

II

9 Too soon they sang that strain victorious,  
 10 Not counting how the Country glorious  
 11 Lay far—beyond Life's wilderness.  
 12 They saw not the long stretch of years  
 13 Not blank, but filled with new access  
 14 Each day, of pleasures, toils, or fears.  
 15     They knew not—Ah!—that ere their love should gain  
 17     It's goal, the wish that made it Faith would wane.

1881

**DIRGE**  
**(SUGGESTED BY CHOPIN'S FUNERAL MARCH)**

- 1      Dig her grave, and lay her deep:  
 2      Let clay her beauty cover,  
 3      Hiding her from friend and lover;  
 4      All her sweetness, all her mirth  
 5      Now for evermore is over.  
 6      Sleepeth she the dreamless sleep.  
 7      Dust to dust, and earth to earth!  
 8      Vain is weeping; yet men weep.
- 9      Ah, the beauty of the sunlit world!  
 10     Ah, the greenness of Spring's leaves unfurled!  
 11     Ah, the birds' song, and their swift wings' motion!  
 12     Ah, the laughter of the rippled ocean!  
 13     Ah, the winds with scent of hawthorn laden!  
 14     Ah, the strength and grace of youth and maiden!  
 15     Ah, man's desire of life, so deep, so vain;  
 16     He goeth hence, and cometh not again.
- 17     Yet, her life had richest joy;  
 18     Her's it was while it she tasted.  
 19     Death perchance hath kindly hasted  
 20     To the maiden, ere the years  
 21     Vigour of her life had wasted,  
 22     Dimming it with pain's alloy.  
 23     Therefore triumph with our tears  
 24     Mingle. Death doth death destroy!

25 Never shall her beauty know decay!  
 26 Never fade to twilight's cold her day!  
 27 Life for her within its bliss is rounded;  
 28 Knoweth *she* that death that bliss hath bounded?  
 29 We, the living, praise the Dead, whose spirit  
 30 Doth the lot of God's most loved inherit:  
 31     *We*, too, that *our* best joy might never wane,  
 32     Would die with her, and count life's loss a gain.

33     Triumph we for her! yet weep;  
 34     Weep because the grave must cover,  
 35     Hidden from her friend and lover,  
 36     All her sweetness and her mirth.  
 37     All is ended! all is over!  
 38     Bear her gently, lay her deep.  
 39     Dust in dust, and earth in earth!  
 40     Let her sleep her dreamless sleep!

April 1880.

**DIRGE**  
**(SUGGESTED BY THE FUNERAL MARCH IN BEETHOVEN'S TWELFTH**  
**SONATA)**

I

1     When man's breath doth fail  
 2     Let no useless wail  
 3 With the mourners' funeral strain be blended.  
 4     Bear we on our Dead,  
 5     With firm, silent tread,  
 6 To the grave where all his hopes are ended.

II

7     All things ebb and flow;  
 8     Life must come and go.  
 9 Men must bow in sternest adoration  
 10     Of the mighty Fate  
 11     That unmoved doth wait  
 12 For thou worship of Renunciation.

## III

13      Mortals though we be,  
 14      Yet may dignity  
 15      Be of man's frail being proud distinction:  
 16      Let it cloak us round  
 17      Till Earth's burial ground  
 18      Hide in Nature's life our life's extinction.

## IV

19      Bear we on our Dead;  
 20      Leave vain words unsaid:  
 21      Silent honour is his best ovation.  
 22      He hath lived. His deeds  
 23      Shall not miss their meeds,  
 24      Though his own be but annihilation.

## V

25      Resteth he in peace;  
 26      Pain with joy doth cease.  
 27      He sleeps well who sleeps to waken never.  
 28      *We* will evermore,  
 29      Though our hearts be sore,  
 30      Praise the Earth, whose glory liveth ever.

April 1880

### ANOTHER VERSION OF THE FOREGOING DIRGE

## I

1      When our joy doth fail,  
 2      Let no idle wail  
 3      With its requiem in our hearts be blended:  
 4      But with steadfast tread  
 5      Let us bear Hope, dead,  
 6      Onward to that grave where pain is ended.

II

7 All things ebb and flow;  
 8 Joy must come and go:  
 9 Let us bow in sternest adoration  
 10 Of the unmoved Fate  
 11 That doth round us wait  
 12 To receive our hearts' renunciation.

III

13 Vanquished though we be,  
 14 Yet, let dignity  
 15 Be of human sadness' proud distinction;  
 16 Let it cloak us round,  
 17 Till Earth's burial ground  
 18 Hide in Nature's joy *our* joy's extinction.

IV

19 Bliss, if dead, is dead;  
 20 Words were idle said;  
 21 Sorrow's clamour brings not restoration:  
 22 Little profiteth  
 23 Human yearnings' breath  
 24 In the rigid corpse to wake sensation.

V

25 Requiescat! Peace  
 26 Comes when hope doth cease,  
 27 When some good hath been renounced for ever.  
 28 Men may evermore,  
 29 Though each heart be sore,  
 30 Feel *Man's* jubilation that faileth never.

April 1880

“OÚ SONT LES NEIGES D’ANTAN?”

I

- 1 Say ye that as transient as the snow  
 2 Human hearts’ pure joy doth come and go?  
 3 Fall as Heaven’s resistless grace,  
 4 Rest unchanged for one brief space,  
 5 Perfected upon earth’s face:  
 6 Vanish then, and leave no trace,  
 7 Fading with a waning sure and slow,  
 8 As the passing of the winter snow?

II

- 9 Yea, but if *indeed* as winter’s snow  
 10 Joy hath come—I answer: Bc it is so.  
 11 Fear not, lest of its dear grace  
 12 Aught should perish from that place;  
 13 Where, transfiguring life’s face,  
 14 It hath shone one blesséd space:  
 15 All its essence *they* shall find, who know  
 16 How to seek it as they seek the snow.

III

- 17 Seek ye the lost beauty of the snow?  
 18 Ye shall find it where the Spring’s herbs grow  
 19 Strong and tender on its place,  
 20 Find it wheresoe’er the race  
 21 Of swift brooks hath o’er the face  
 22 Of the green land borne its grace;  
 23 See in clouds above, or grass below,  
 24 Transmutations of earth’s vanished snow.

## IV

- 25 Find the substance of past joy e'en so:  
 26 Living on in all the thoughts that grow  
 27 Out of hearts where for a space  
 28 Once it rested. Seek and trace  
 29 In new deeds and words its grace,  
 30 Keeping evermore that place  
 31 Where, to eyes unheeding, it as snow,  
 32 Dreamlike, only seemed to come and go.

April 1881

SONNET  
(SYMPATHY)

- 1 I will not question of your words to me;  
 2 I will not ask myself how much I heard:  
 3 It is not enough for me to know they stirred  
 4 Some part of that great circumambient sea  
 5 Wherein the speech of all Humanity  
 6 Vibrates for evermore in waves of sound—  
 7 Enough to *feel* that in the air around  
 8 Unseen your utterance moveth ceaselessly.
- 9 You need not hear the answer that went out  
 10 When thought grew vocal, and with motion swift  
 11 Passed from my soul. Enough! I let it go,  
 12 Where, in the same air-ocean rolled about,  
 13 Your words and my words, somehow as they drift,  
 14 May met—though *we* who sent them, do not know.

1872

## SONNET

## (INTERCESSORY PRAYER)

"HE SHALL PURIFY THE SONS OF LEVI."

- 1 Did ye with vigils, and with tears that fall
- 2 As drops of the heart's blood, the Lord implore
- 3 To succor in some need your loved, and pour
- 4 On *their* souls light and peace, nor heed at all
- 5 Your own? God, hearkening to your prayer, may call
- 6 Its truth to trial. From His blessings' store,
- 7 If He but grant the boon ye asked—no more—
- 8 Can ye rejoice? Ah! Though to you befall
- 9 To see glad hands of other *give* that gift
- 10 Ye won from Heaven? ... When human love's desire
- 11 This test can bear, which parts from dross its gold,
- 12 Christ counts it worthy to *His* love to lift
- 13 True intercession.... Purified by fire
- 14 Are they who are among His priests enrolled.

August 1881.

**GOD'S MESSAGES**  
**(FROM THE GERMAN)**

## I

- 1 God sent a human soul as messenger
- 2       To mine,
- 3 When He would first a precious gift confer,
- 4       The wine
- 5 He blesseth—earthly love's glad draught, which sent
- 6 Into the heart of Man, is sacrament
- 7       Of Heaven's love pledge and sign.





**TO ROBERT BROWNING**  
**(ON RE-READING SOME POEMS LONG UNREAD)**

- 1    Friend, “strong since joyful” —guide upon the heights  
2        Of life’s best blessedness and life’s best pain,  
3        Awhile I left thee; now I come again,  
4    Urged by thy vigour lent of old, which fights  
5    Within my soul, and there makes good its rights  
6        Over the sloths and langours of the plain.  
7        Lead me! I, if I follow thee, am sane  
8    From sad, sick dreams and lotus flower delights,  
9        That o’er the indolence of heart’s despair  
10    Shed charm of Art. Thy nobler Art doth cope  
11        With doubts and ills; and they who with thee dare  
12    Thought’s strenuous climb on rugged mountain slope,  
13        Find vision purged like thine, by that keen air,  
14        To catch dear glimpses of a far-off hope.

August 30, 1881

“DOWRIES”  
(FROM THE GERMAN)

I

- 1 Let not woman empty-handed
- 2 Go to hearth of whom she weds with.
- 3 Let her bring him wealth to make her
- 4 Welcomed to his life as equal,
- 5 Not as beggar, whom for pity
- 6 It should shelter, clothe, and nourish.
- 7 Maiden, spin beside your mother
- 8 By her cottage door in sunshine,
- 9 By the fire in winter's evenings;
- 10 Spin and weave much goodly raiment,
- 11 Goodly store of household linen:
- 12 Fit provision for the comfort
- 13 Of his home whose heart elects you
- 14 In that home to rule his mistress
- 15 Of your own, your husband's substance
- 16 Through the many years and happy.

II

- 17 Damsel fair, in higher station,
- 18 Born to wealth that others toiled for
- 19 With a father's gold for portion:
- 20 You must also bring your bridegroom
- 21 Dowry wrought by your own spinning;
- 22 Goodly stuff that hath been woven
- 23 By yourself in years of girlhood,
- 24 In the years before he loved you.
- 25 Bring him all their cherished fancies,
- 26 Bright, or grey with morning sadness;
- 27 All the dreaming, all the thinking
- 28 Of a young, fresh brain (unwearied
- 29 By cold weight of custom's pressure);
- 30 All your school-taught arts and learnings;
- 31 All your ardours for the larger
- 32 Knowledge life spreads out before you.

---

*Title* The German poet is unknown. Possibly the source is the same as in “God’s Messages (From the German).”

## III

33 Woman old, whom earth's strange chances  
34 Parted here from friend your dearest;  
35 If, indeed, in God's Hereafter  
36 Men may meet: then richer dowry  
37 You may bring than if in bygone  
38 Years your life with his were mingled,  
39 In the freshness of its girlhood,  
40 Ere love's work in it were finished.  
41 Ampler store of goodly substance,  
42 By a heart's experience woven;  
43 Beautiful with all the varied  
44 Faith and gladness, doubt and sorrow,  
45 Pathos of dear joys' renuncements,  
46 Gains of tender force for pity:  
47 All the things that love, enduring  
48 Through the long years, wrought within you.

August 1881

“THERE SHALL BE NO MORE SEA”

(WRITTEN AFTER READING, AT THE SEA-SIDE, A VOLUME OF ROMAN  
CATHOLIC SERMONS, VIVIDLY DEPICTING HELL)

I

- 1 “There shall be no more Sea.” Ah! Surely this
- 2 Doth only mean for souls who reach the bliss
- 3 Of Paradise. *They* need no more the kiss
- 4 Of Earth’s great mother Sea; *they* will not miss
- 5 Whose pulses with new-risen life beat high,
- 6 Soothings from this aeonian lullaby,
- 7 Which winneth now men’s weariness to lie
- 8 Within its sound, and be content to die.

II

- 9 Hearts, strong in vigour of their fresh great joy,
- 10 Shall need no leap of laughing waves to buoy
- 11 Them with an alien gladness, and destroy
- 12 A little while their human cares’ annoy;
- 13 And eyes, whereon the light of Heaven doth break,
- 14 Need nevermore pathetic pleasure take
- 15 In ocean gleams, whose beauty here can make
- 16 Dim lives worth living, if but for its sake.

III

- 17 Yet, though the *Blessed* need no more the Sea,
- 18 Will not God leave her to the *Lost*? That she
- 19 Who could not save them from their woe, may be
- 20 Their nurse to comfort, ever tenderly
- 21 With vast low hushabies to still
- 22 The restlessness of pain incurable;
- 23 And with a sense of vague, fair sadness fill
- 24 Their hunger for lost good adorable.

---

*Title* and l. 1 derive from Revelation 21.1 as quoted in a Roman Catholic book of sermons, the particular sermon of which “vividly depict[s] Hell.”

6 *aeonian* lasting for an indefinitely long period of time.

## IV

- 25 Men love her, Earth's old sea—she loves them well;  
26 If she may be their mother, too, in Hell,  
27 Will she not rock them there will lulling swell  
28 Of all her waters? Till (Ah, who can tell?)  
29 Her constancy shall not have wrought in vain,  
30 And souls, who nevermore God's grace could gain,  
31 May to the peace of dreamless sleep attain—  
32 Lost to all gladness, lost alike to pain.

1881

SONNET  
“LOVE YOUR ENEMIES”

- 1 Ay, love them, Christian, since thou dost believe  
 2     That they who harmed thee could not touch thine all,  
 3     Or put thy joy’s dear life beyond recall.  
 4 Why shouldst *thou* grudge their finite gain? or grieve?  
 5 They loss amends unmeasured shall receive.  
 6     Harder *his* task, upon whose heart doth fall  
 7     Some chill renunciation, as a pall  
 8 Final in its own blankness, which doth leave  
 9 No hope of clearer dawn, or gladder spring.  
 10 If *this* man love his brother who hath wrought  
 11 By luck or will his damage, he doth bring  
 12 A sacrifice, with rarer incense fraught  
 13 From Godless creed, to God (if God there be),  
 14 Than thine, in thy sweet, easy charity.

1880

ACQUIESCENCE

I

- 1 They tell me that from one dear hill-side spot  
 2 The furze and heather hath been swept away.  
 3 And herbs for household use, in garden clay,  
 4 Grow trimly now within its cultured plot.  
 5 Where nevermore upon September day  
 6 Shall purpled gold respond to sunlight’s ray.

II

- 7 And do I wish it otherwise? Ah, no!  
 8 That blessed acre’s beauty was as bread  
 9 Of sacrament, whereby my heart was fed  
 10 One bye-gone morn. Unwistful I let go  
 11 The outer symbol, for the grace is fled  
 12 That sanctified the moorland’s gold and red.

August 1880

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*Sonnet.* The subtitle quotes Matthew 5.44: “But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

*Acquiescence* In the UCLA copy, EDW has made an inscription above the title: “M. approves—1882,” (or, conjecturally, the date might be 1884, after publication of *Verses*, Part II).

## DOUBT

- 1 You say that Doubt doth as a vapour chill  
 2 Creep o'er the soul, and all its vigour kill,  
 3 By Fear, that, numbing energies of will,  
 4 Folds it with presence irresistible.
- 5 I tell you, Doubt can other semblance take:  
 6 To me it seems, as sunbeam burst, to make  
 7 In a grey sky of certitude a break  
 8 Of gleam and glow that bid the heart awake.  
 9 To you and me it cometh; yet the same  
 10 Which *you* call *Fear*, for *me* hath other name;  
 11 I call *Hope*—the precious doubt that came  
 12 With dove-winged darts, as Pentecostal flame—  
 13 The blessed *chance* that not yet proven true  
 14 Might Renunciation's creed, whereto  
 15 I lent sad faith; its touch doth still endure  
 16 Again! again! my soul with impulse new!  
 17 Methinketh that if *no* belief secure  
 18 In *certitude* may be, we hold most sure  
 19 Life's gladness (whence flows force), who thus inure  
 20 Our hearts to live by creed most sternly poor:  
 21 For thus, if daily wont that faith attain  
 22 Which needs not promised Heaven, then this dear gain  
 23 Is ours: that to our mood austerely sane  
 24 Doubt, when it cometh, bringeth joy, not pain.

September 1882



“CUI BONO?”

- 1 With a chance friend of mine I walked to-day
- 2 A mile or two. We talked along the way
- 3 Of many things—the weather, the concerns
- 4 Of folk we knew, until by devious turns
- 5 We found ourselves on graver matters' ground,
- 6 And there at variance. Words of her's around
- 7 A creed she “Christian” called, set narrow bound,
- 8 Essayed to measure out by petty rule
- 9 Of some small shibboleth of her own school,
- 10 The heights, and breadths, and depths of Heaven and earth,
- 11 The grace of God, and human actious' worth.
- 12 (I fancy her own life could speak in *deeds*
- 13 Language of larger doctrine than her creeds'!)
  
- 14 I might have waived reply with courteous guile.
- 15 Or give response of many-meaninged smile;
- 16 But somehow then a passing impulse stirred
- 17 Desire in me to demonstrate absurd
- 18 The logic of the cant's plain import (bare
- 19 From texts that wrapped it from life's open air).
  
- 20 Her doctrine reckoned for the sole elect
- 21 To grace of Heaven, a blessed phrase-bound sect.
- 22 I took for mine, what liker seemed to me
- 23 Christ's Gospel, not some devil's parody.
- 24 How God in all His earth were source of good,
- 25 Whence floweth every noble act or mood
- 26 Of souls that know Him, or that know Him not:
- 27 Who leaves uncared by love no human lot:
- 28 Who freely gifts of grace divine hath laid
- 29 In gift of life, on all the hearts he made;
- 30 Who sees with mercy's justice infinite
- 31 The utmost, inmost of our wrong and right.

---

Title “Cui bono” is a Latin adage meaning “to whose benefit” that is often used to suggest deceit or hidden motives furthering self-interest. The Roman orator Marcus Tullius Cicero used the phrase in his speech, *Pro Roscio Amerino*: “*L. Cassius ille quem populus Romanus verissimum et sapientissimum iudicem putabat identidem in causis quaerere solebat 'cui bono' fuisse,*” which translates to, “The famous Lucius Cassius, whom the Roman people used to regard as a very honest and wise judge, was in the habit of asking, time and again, “To whose benefit?”

32 (I write some few of many things I said:  
 33 You guess, of course, the track discourse was led.)  
 34 With need to utter thoughts, my thoughts grew clear;  
 35 And my belief in them awhile sincere;  
 36 A flash of faith struck from my heart cast out  
 37 That heart's own haunting presences of doubt.

38 Our contest ended soon. I had the best  
 39 Of it, I fancied; and we both sought rest  
 40 In change of theme. But when the little heat  
 41 Of speech was past, I felt as if defeat  
 42 Or victory had been worth about the same  
 43 To me. A swift collapse of interest came  
 44 Across my mood—the feeling “need I care  
 45 To win in strife so idle? What if fair  
 46 Appear *this* creed, while *that* repulsive seems;  
 47 Matters it much, when both alike are dreams?  
 48 What profits it, (except for bare delight  
 49 In jousts of words,) in shadows' cause to fight?”

*October 1881*

POPPIES  
(AN IDYL FRAGMENT)

I

- 1 A troth they plighted on that August day,  
2 When chance had bid them meet upon the way  
3 That goes hard by the wind-swept corn fields, down  
4 From the fresh moorland towards the fishing town.

II

- 5 Encompassed them the sea and the deep sky  
6 As witnesses. Within them seemed to lie  
7 A love like sea and sky—in certitude,  
8 To last through every varying light and mood.

III

- 9 Alack! What evil Fate this omen planned,  
10 That she that hour should hold in heedless hand  
11 The way-side flowers she plucked her gown to dress—  
12 *Poppies*, the symbol of forgetfulness.

---

*Poppies (An Idyl Fragment)* Undated. See Appendix B for the complete text of the early draft version extant in the Edward Dowden papers at the Henry E. Huntington Library. Referred to in the collation below as *HEH*, the manuscript poem was entitled “*Poppies / A morsel of dramatic lyric.*” Roman numerals lacking.

2 them] us *HEH*

5 them] us *HEH*

6 witnesses.] witnesses *HEH*

7 like see and sky—in certitude,] that fixed as their great certitude, *HEH*

8 To] Should *HEH*

9 Alack! What...planned,] Alack what...planned *HEH*

10 she that hour should hold in heedless hand] I that morn should carry in my hand, *HEH*

11 The way-side flowers she plucked her gown to dress—] Plucked for an idle whim to deck my dress,  
*HEH*

12 *Poppies*, the symbol of forgetfulness?] *Poppies--the symbol of forgetfulness.* *HEH*

## IV

- 13 The flower that to men's joy or pain brings sleep,  
 14 Lay in the hands that then in vow to keep  
 15 The hearts' clasp whole and true eternally,  
 16 Were clasped in presence of God's sky and sea.

## V

- 17 The years went by. No hour of parting set  
 18 Its breach between their lives, and they are yet  
 19 Each the same man or woman, with the gain  
 20 Of strength matured by use of heart or brain.

## VI

- 21 But when they meet and talk—a half-felt sense  
 22 Is in their eyes, of some deep difference  
 23 (Some change more truly felt, because untold),  
 24 'Twixt what is now, and what was once of old.

## VII

- 25 And why? Ah, from the poppies' touch then laid  
 26 On the fair purposed promise that they made,  
 27 (Beside those corn-fields reaped long years ago,)  
 28 Some potent bale that morn did haply flow,

---

13 men's joy...sleep,] men's Joy...sleep *HEH*  
 14 Lay...vow] Was...view *HEH*  
 15 whole and true eternally,] firm & true eternally *HEH*  
 18 their lives, and they] our lives--and we *HEH*  
 19 woman,] woman-- *HEH*  
 20 by...or] through...& *HEH*  
 21 they meet and] we meet & *HEH*  
 22 their eyes,] our eyes-- *HEH*  
 23 *Lacking* in *HEH*  
 24 and...old.] &...old: *HEH*  
 24a Is this because some power of bale hath told *HEH*  
 25 And why? Ah,] Upon us from *HEH*  
 26 fair purposed...they made,] fair-purposed...we made: *HEH*  
 27-28 *Lacking* in *HEH*

## VIII

- 29 Which with its working slow and sure doth creep  
 30 Into the soul, and dull its love to sleep,  
 31 Leaving all other forces in it free  
 32 From subtle influence of the lethargy.

## IX

- 33 Who knows if t'was the poppies harmed their lot?  
 34 She only knows that *him* she blameth not.  
 35 And yet, and yet, the wish *will* come that luck  
 36 Had not, ill-omened, bid her stoop and pluck  
 37 Those scarlet blossoms, glowing by the way  
 38 Just ere they met, that old bright August day.

---

29 and sure] & sure, *HEH*

30 the soul, and dull its] our souls & dulls their *HEH*

31 it] us *HEH*

32 lethargy.] lethargy? *HEH*

33 Who knows it t'was the poppies harmed their lot?] I know not if the Poppies harmed our lot *HEH*

34 She only knows that *him* she blameth not.] I only know that, Friend, I blame you not *HEH*

35 And yet, and yet, the wish *will* come that luck] And yet there somehow comes a wish that luck *HEH*

36 ill-omened, bid her stop and] ill omened, bid me stoop & *HEH*

37 blossoms, glowing by the way] blossoms there upon my way *HEH*

38 they met, that old bright] I met you on that *HEH*

**THE RIVER OF TIME**  
(WRITTEN AT THE AGE OF FOURTEEN)

I

1 I dreamed a dream; 'twas a half waking dream:  
2 This is my dream: I stood upon the shore  
3 Of a great river, whose strong waves did seem  
4 To roll on ceaselessly for evermore.

II

5 I looked. Upon its current strong afloat  
6 Were many vessels, hurrying toward the sea;  
7 One living soul there sat in each frail boat,  
8 And they must onward go unceasingly.

III

9 And yet methought that towards the river's shore  
10 Some souls their eyes with lingering looks did turn;  
11 But while they gazed the stream them onward bore,  
12 And to that spot they never might return.

IV

13 Then thought I, "what may that Great River be  
14 Which ever bareth swift and sure along  
15 Unto the great immeasurable sea,  
16 Those vessels frail upon its current strong?"

V

17 Straightway I heard a voice sound in mine ears  
18 That said: "That River rolling toward the sea  
19 Is Time; and all its ceaseless waves are years  
20 That bear men onward toward Eternity."

---

Undated. EDW was born in 1842 or 1843; hence the poem was first written, as the subtitle suggests, in 1856 or 1857. Although some of the works in her Verses (1876, 1883) were not dated when published, it is likely that "The River of Time" is the oldest poem in the collection. It seems odd that such juvenile work should join poems, generally, written between her 30th and 40th year.

## ART AND POPULARITY

## TO R. BROWNING

(“NO MAN HAVING DRUNK OLD WINE STRAIGHTWAY DESIRETH NEW, FOR HE SAITH THE OLD IS BETTER.”)

- 1 Haply thy life were harmed if earth her fame
  - 2 Had proffered ere years proved thou didst not need
  - 3 Drink of applause Art's daily force to feed;
  - 4 Ere the Ποητης—God—deep source whence came
  - 5 Thy poets impulse bade thee *first* to claim
  - 6 Reward like to His own—true artists' meed
  - 7 Of joy that flows in essence of the deed,
  - 8 Unreached by accident of laud or blame.
- 
- 9 But now, since thou through uncrowned days
  - 10 Didst draw soul's strength from draughts of that old wine
  - 11 Of gladness which doth evermore sustain
  - 12 All Nature's working, human or divine:
  - 13 No fear for thee, lest thou that first good gain
  - 14 Shouldst quit, to thirst for new wine of men's praise

1882

## ART AND POPULARITY

(A COUNTERPART TRUTH TO THE FOREGOING)

- 1 Said I thou didst not need to feed thy Art
- 2 From daily draughts of wine of human praise,
- 3 While God sustained thee in unlauded days
- 4 With Earth's old gladness, which makes vigour dart
- 5 Through the soul's pulses? Ay, but yet my heart
- 6 Saith that this thought of you is but a phase
- 7 Of truth concerning thee; and on me lays
- 8 Urgence to speak the half truth's counterpart.

---

*To R. Browning*

*Paranetical quotation* Luke 5.39 (adapted from the King James translation of the Bible).

*(A Counterpart Truth to the Foregoing.)*

1 Thou didst... Thy Art] you did... your Art *BL*

3 thee] you *BL*; 6 thee] you *BL*

7 thee] you *BL*

- 9 For thou hadst need of us. Pure artists' joy  
 10 Could not suffice thy soul's whole thirst to slake.  
 11 Tasted alone, God's precious wine would cloy.  
 12 Thy manhood needed *men*, thy gains to share.  
 13 Thy brethren's sympathy, not praise, can make  
 14 Thy life complete that else imperfect were.

1882.

### FROM THE GERMAN OF JOHAN SALIS SEEWIS

(ON THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS MOTHER'S DEATH)

- 1 Mother, my mother here, and mother *there*,  
 2 There where Death is not, where no tears shall flow,  
 3 I am thy son; this head, with its gray hair,  
 4 Is thine own child's thou leftst so long ago  
 5 Life's evening falls; and, through the darkening air,  
 6 Star-like the long-lost angel face show.  
 7 Thine bids me come—my mortal flesh to share  
 8 Thy tomb—my soul, through thine, new birth to know.
- 9 Once, born to earth, upon thy arm I lay,  
 10 Whilst thou in pain and bliss didst bend o'er me,  
 11 The smile of hope and love no tongue can say.
- 12 So, when I, issuing from Death's dark, shall see  
 13 First the effulgence of Heaven's perfect day,  
 14 Let me again awhile thy baby be.

1881

### ADRIFT

#### I

- 1 Unto my Faith, as to a spar, I bind  
 2 My Love—and Faith and Love adrift I cast  
 3 On a dim sea. I know not if at last  
 4 They the eternal shore of God shall find.

---

(*A Counterpart Truth to the Foregoing*)

9 thou hadst] you had *BL*; 10 thy] your *BL*; 12 Thy...thy] your... its *BL*; 13 Thy] And *BL*; 14 Thy] A *BL*.  
*From the German of Johan Salis Seewis* The title emerged from Johann Gaudenz von Salis-Seewis (1762-1834). Seewis was a Swiss soldier and poet, a friend of German Romantic writers such as Goethe and Schiller.



## II

- 5 I only know that neither waves nor wind  
 6 Can sunder them: the cords are tied so fast  
 7 That Faith shall never—doubts and dangers past—  
 8 Come safe to land, and Love be left behind.

1881

## APOLOGIA

(To S.L.T.)

## I

- 1 Is there the “Rising from the Dead”—then we,  
 2 Careless through faith, may bury utterly,  
 3 Dear things that die—desires that may not be.

## II

- 4 There is no need to rise upon the plot  
 5 Wherein they rest, a stone to mark the spot:  
 6 Its place may be by all the world forgot;

## III

- 7 And over it green grass or corn may grow;  
 8 Or feet of busy men pass to and fro—  
 9 Of men who ask not what there lies below.

## IV

- 10 It is enough that *He* who gives Death’s sleep  
 11 To joys beloved—evermore doth keep  
 12 *His* record of where each lies buried deep.

---

*Apologia (To S.L.T.)* Inserted in BL copy, after the title and before parenthetical dedication, the inscription “To R.P. Graves—a reply—”; and beside that the following inscription (in another hand?), cancelled: “These initials give no clue whatever to the names of the person to whom this is addressed”; a row of ellipses added across the page between V and VI; followed by inscription on p. 47 (at lower right); “Turn over”; this anticipates the draft MS of “The Fortunate Isles” on verso of p. 47 and blank endpaper. See Appendix.

## V

- 13 No shrine for their sweet *memory* need we make,  
 14 For they *themselves*, when Easter-morn shall break,  
 15 Shall hear His voice—and to new life awake.

## VI

- 16 But if for Man *one* life—*no more*—there be;  
 17 Then lay we our lost blessings tenderly  
 18 In some fair sepulchre that eyes may see.

## VII

- 19 Since all must crumble to the common dust;  
 20 One fate befall the just and the unjust:  
 21 To graven words of monument we trust

## VIII

- 22 To win for our best gladnesses the grace  
 23 Of life prolonged on sunlit earth a space,  
 24 Finding in minds of living men a place.

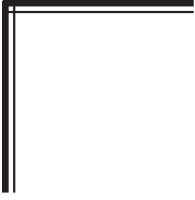
## IX

- 25 (And when this book's vague rhyming uttereth  
 26 Dear thoughts safe hid, if sure were earlier faith—  
 27 What means this but a heart's recoil from death?)

## X

- 28 What means it but that Love, since *Heaven's* hopes wane,  
 29 Takes as its portion Art's good lesser gain  
 30 On *Earth*—to prove itself not spent in vain? )

April 4, 1883



*APPENDICES*



**APPENDIX A:** “The Fortunate Isles” transcribed from BL and NLI copies of *Verses*, with Wordsworth’s “Stepping Westward”

---

HOLOGRAPH DRAFT ON ENDPAPERS OF BRITISH LIBRARY COPY

[P. 47, verso]

The Fortunate Isles

1

- 1 In children’s hearts the precious old-world dream
- 2 I[s] born anew, of Earthly Paradise,
- 3 Of Avillion, of “Happy Isles” that seem  
Unreal—yet most real—
- 4 ~~{?Ecily} real~~—a bright land that lies
- 5 On “other side of Nowhere”—far away

2

- 6 What way your child hood’s dream? The imaged bliss
- 7 That mine be held as Earth’s ideal Best—  
Her gift I craved in x portion
- 8 (Or [?you] for—me who was myself)—was but this—
- 9 A moorland acre slanting towards the West
- 10 On some far hill, where from a setting sun
- 11 Is poured light’s dearest glow ere day is done

3

- 12 I know not why my Fancy glorified
- 13 This simple scene—I cannot analyse
- 14 The charm that gave that sunlit stern hillside
- 15 Such haunting beauty for my inner eyes:
- 16 And haply you will smile at me and say
- 17 “Your Paradise one findeth every day.”

x portion

---

*The Fortunate Isles.* The BL copy concludes with two pages of a handwritten early draft of this unpublished poem by EDW, quoted here courtesy of the British Library. West obviously intended five stanzas of six lines each, but stanza 1 is defective and short by a line and a rhyme. The reader is referred to the later fair-hand version of the poem in the NLI copy, a transcript of which follows.

*title* an allusion to the Irish paradise, Tir-na-nog, or the Happy Isles.

9 West: this pun on the poet’s name occurs again in l. 22 of this draft and is explained as an allusion to Wordsworth’s “Stepping Westward” in a note beside the date following l. 29.

*x portion* This insert makes clear wording interjected between ll. 7 and 8, where revisions somewhat obscured by erasures. Cf. NLI copy, l. 9: “Her gift I craved in portion....”

[Facing endpaper, recto]

4

- 18 I only know this dream hath come to me  
 In childhood's lonely hours  
 19 ~~Amid my childhood's play~~ in moods that fell  
 20 Again, again, with sweet monotone,  
 21 Like wind-borne strokes of a great-distant bell:--  
 22 I only know that in the far-off West  
 23 Some mystic good seemed waiting my soul's quest.

5

The old vague

- 24 I only know ~~my vague old~~ vision lures  
 25 Grave adult thoughts to trust its promise still:  
 26 Hopes pass with passing years—my dream endures.  
   this     some where  
 27 As if some how in an Earth <sup>^</sup> attainable—  
 28 A dream of joy shed forth from setting sun  
 29 O'er Love's deep hour of calm ere life be done

June ... 1884—

---

The holograph poem is followed on the blank endpaper by a playful, pseudo-scholarly note in the hand of EDW: "See Wordsworth's Stepping Westward." Having dated the poem (just above) "June ... 1884—", she observes that it represents an "old fancy of a Westward movement" (featuring puns on her name, "West," in lines 9 and 22 and rhymes, respectively, "Best" and "quest") paradoxically from before EDW's Wordsworthian period. Notice that the date is confirmed by the fair copy inscribed at the end of the NLI copy, transcribed below. The Wordsworth poem and his own note follow at the end of Appendix A.

HOLOGRAPH DRAFT ON ENDPAPERS OF NATIONAL LIBRARY OF  
IRELAND COPY

[P. 47, verso to facing endpaper]

The Fortunate Isles

- 1 In children's hearts the precious old world dream
- 2 Is born anew—of Earthly Paradise—
- 3 Of Avillion—of Happy Isles that seem
- 4 Unreal—yet most real—land that lies
- 5 On “other side of nowhere”—far away
- 6 Where lucky chance may lead one some fine day.
  
- 7 What was your childhood's dream? The imaged bliss
- 8 That mine beheld as earth's ideal Best
- 9 Her gift I craved in portion was but this
- 10 A moorland acre slanting towards the West
- 11 On some far hill, where from a setting sun
- 12 Is poured light's dearest glow ere day is done
  
- 13 I know not why my fancy glorified
- 14 This simple scene I cannot analyse
- 15 The charm that gave that sunlit stern hillside
- 16 Such haunting beauty for my inner eyes
- 17 And haply you will smile at me and say
- 18 “Your Paradise one findeth every day.”
  
- 19 I only know this (that erased) dream hath come to me
- 20 In childhood's lonely hours, in moods that fell
- 21 Again, again, with strict monotony
- 22 Like wind borne strokes of a great distant bell
- 23 I only know that in a far-off West
- 24 Some mystic good seemed waiting for my soul's quest.
  
- 25 I only know that old vague vision lures
- 26 Grave adult thoughts to trust its promise still
- 27 Hopes pass with passing years. My dream endures
- 28 As if somehow somewhere attainable
- 29 A dream of joy shed forth from setting sun
- 30 O'er loves deep hour of calm ere life be done.

June 1884

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

---

STEPPING WESTWARD

- 1    *“What, you are stepping westward?” — “Yea.”*  
 2    --’T would be a wildish destiny,  
 3    If we, who thus together roam  
 4    In a strange Land, and far from home,  
 5    Were in this place the guests of Chance:  
 6    Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,  
 7    Though home or shelter he had none,  
 8    With such a sky to lead him on?
- 9    The dewy ground was dark and cold;  
 10   Behind, all gloomy to behold;  
 11   And stepping westward seemed to be  
 12   A kind of *heavenly* destiny:  
 13   I liked the greeting; ’t was a sound  
 14   Of something without place or bound;  
 15   And seemed to give me spiritual right  
 16   To travel through that region bright.
- 17   The voice was soft, and she who spake  
 18   Was walking by her native lake:  
 19   The salutation had to me  
 20   The very sound of courtesy:  
 21   Its power was felt; and while my eye  
 22   Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,  
 23   The echo of the voice enwrought  
 24   A human sweetness with the thought  
 25   Of travelling through the world that lay  
 26   Before me in my endless way.

---

Wordsworth’s note (1805, 1807): “While my Fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening after sunset, in our road to a Hut where, in the course of our Tour, we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed Women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, “What, you are stepping westward?”

**APPENDIX B:** Poems by EDW in the Edward Dowden Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library—transcribed from mss.: “Poppies, a morsel of dramatic lyric” (HM 39182), “A Sequel to certain verses called ‘Poppies’” (HM 39183), and “A Sonnet concerning a Hazel Stick of a Price more than one-&-sixpence” (HM 39184)

---

## HOLOGRAPH DRAFT OF “POPPIES, A MORSEL OF DRAMATIC LYRIC”

### Poppies

A morsel of dramatic lyric

1 A troth we plighted on that August day,  
2 When chance had bid us meet upon the way  
3 That goes hard by the wind-swept corn fields, down  
4 From the fresh moorland to the fishing town.

5 Encompassed us the sea and the deep sky  
6 As witnesses – Within us seemed to lie  
7 A love that fixed as their great certitude,  
8 Should last through ev’ry varying light & mood.

9 Alack what evil Fate the omen planned  
10 That I that morn should carry in my hand,  
11 Plucked for an idle whim to deck my dress,  
12 Poppies—the symbols of forgetfulness.

13 The flower that to man’s Joy or pain brings sleep  
14 Was in the hands that then in view to keep  
15 The hearts’ clasp firm & true eternally  
16 Were clasped in presence of God’s sky and sea.

---

17 The years went by. No hour of parting set  
18 Its breach between our lives – and we are yet  
19 Each the same man or woman – with the gain  
20 Of strength matured through use of heart & brain.

21 But when we meet & talk – a half-felt sense  
22 Is in our eyes – of some deep difference  
23 ’Twixt what is now, & what was once of old:  
24 Is this because some power of bale hath told  
25 Upon us from from the poppies touch then laid  
26 On the fair-purposed promise that we made:  
27 Which with its working slow & sure, doth creep  
28 Into our souls & dulls their love to sleep,  
29 Leaving all other forces in us free  
30 From subtle influence of the lethargy?

---

The finished, retitled poem “Poppies (an Idyl Fragment)” is dated “1881” in Verses, Part II (1883). The HEH copy is incorrectly attributed to Dowden although the “Sequel...” (see below), in the same handwriting and signed “EDW,” is only conjecturally attributed to West. May would be the season for poppies in Ireland.



- 
- 31 I know not if the Poppies harmed our lot  
 32 I only know that, Friend, I blame you not  
 33 And yet there somehow comes a wish that luck  
 34 Had not, ill omened, bid me stoop & pluck  
 35 Those scarlet blossoms there upon my way  
 36 Just ere I met you on that August day.

### HOLOGRAPH DRAFT OF "SEQUEL TO CERTAIN VERSES CALLED 'POPPIES'"

#### Sequel to certain verses called "Poppies"

- 1 I made a rhyme half sadly, half in jest,  
 2 (Where playful words an inner pain confessed)  
 3 Concerning certain wayside flowers that grew  
 4 In one old year whose memory still is new—  
 5 But when I read again what I had writ,  
       spoke  
 6 An answer to itself, ~~grew~~ out of it  
 7 (For grievous thoughts, like nettles, oft are things)  
 8 (That when grasped firmly have no longer stings)
- 9 Dear friend, I need not vex me overmuch  
 10 If there did come from those red poppies touch  
 11 Some potency that dulled your heart to sleep:  
 12 It is enough if my heart wake and keep  
 13 The watch for both—No feeble clinging mood  
 14 Its love hath been—but earnest Motherhood.
- 15 A Story saith that when God's hand had made  
 16 Women of old, upon her soul He laid  
       A charge for ever        in patience  
 17 ~~The name of Eve~~— that ~~thus for ever~~ she  
 18 Might as the Mother of all Manhood be—
- 19 And are not mothers oft-times well content  
 20 To sit by sleeping children, with eyes bent  
       [no stanza break]

---

*Sequel to certain verses called "Poppies"*

7 things)] things

8 (That| That

- 21 O'er them with love that as its recompense  
 22 Looks to no present end but its own sense  
 23 Of vigilance and care for their dear sake?—  
 24 And so if your heart slumber, mine may take  
 25 A Mother's post—and watch beside it, till  
 26 (Unless such hopes be dreams impossible)  
 27 The light of a glad Easter Morning breaks  
 28 O'er sleep-bound spirits.—That when yours awakes  
 29 Roused by the voice that bids all Dead things rise  
   its  
 30 I may be near, to great your opening Eyes—

Tuesday May 10<sup>th</sup> 1881

1 Winton Road

E.DW.

HOLOGRAPH DRAFT OF "A SONNET CONCERNING A HAZEL STICK  
OF A PRICE MORE THAN ONE-&-SIXPENCE"

A Sonnet concerning a Hazel  
Stick of a Price more than one-&-sixpence

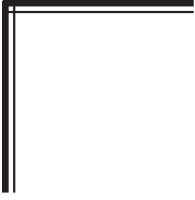
- 1 Not nourished only by the shower & shine  
 2 Fed from earth's sap, & blest by airs of heaven  
 3 This staff I bear of British stem, but given  
 4 By thee, behold its fibers intertwine  
 5 With strength of a man's heart, & power benign  
 6 Dearer than influence of the starry seven,  
 7 Lives 'neath the rind, where'er my steps are driven,  
 8 To comfort, to sustain. Be this my sign!  
 9 For he who fared in trackless breadth of sand  
 10 Weary, & scaled the air-o'erhanging verge  
 11 And thridded thorny maze, can prize this wand  
 12 Of luckier omen. Up its arteries urge  
 13 Force of the world & blood of man; my hand  
 14 Thrills to their stirring, will no buds emerge!

April 11, 1877.

---

*Sequel to ... "Poppies"* Evidently the address "1 Winton Road" was added beside the date and poet's initials and delivered to Professor Dowden. The address is in Dublin, between Rathmines and Ballsbridge.

*A Sonnet ...* Like "Sequel to ... "Poppies," this poem remained unpublished.



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