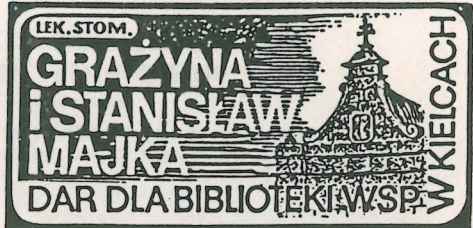


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# DELPHIC DAYS.

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A Greek Idyl

811  
S672d

BY

DENTON J. SNIDER.

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ST. LOUIS:  
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Book First.

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*Delphi.*

## ARGUMENT.

*The modern pilgrim on his way to Delphi, approaches by the Corinthian Gulf (called Kolpos, Bosom, in Greek); after landing he passes through a plain in which are vineyards and olive-trees, when he begins to ascend a mountain road, which leads to his destination. He has come from the other hemisphere, from the banks of the Mississippi, to see and to feel what can still be seen and felt in a place which was once the center of Greek Heathendom. Delphi (its modern name is Kastri), Parnassus, Castalia are still in existence as natural objects, and bring back the old world of the Gods, strangely commingled with the new. Kahokia, mentioned in the text, is not a Greek but an Indian word, being the name of a small quiet village, settled first by the French, on the Mississippi not far from St. Louis.*

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*Cyclet First.*

I. Prelude

There! it strikes on the sands! the end, and still  
the beginning!

Now I am come to the coast! whither, O  
whither the way!

Long has my shallop been rocked on the beautiful  
Bosom of waters,

Rising in ripples of joy over the heart of fair  
Greece;—

On the Corinthian Bosom, bared to the touch of  
the sunbeams

That are wreathing its swell softly in flashes of  
gold.

But the coquettish light sport of the sea with its  
dimples of laughter

Quickly behind me I leave,—here now I leap  
on the shore

Where is the road through vineyards and olives  
and hills up to Delphi :

Held in a hymn of the God, thither I pass to  
his shrine.

From the world's other side, from the banks  
of the turbulent river

Always rushing in rage down to the realms of  
the Sun,

Where the vast flow of the waters doth sweep  
by the fens of Kahokia,

Thence I a pilgrim have come over the ocean  
and earth.

Wild is the turmoil that restlessly whirls in the  
stream of the River,

Fierce are the insects that swarm through the  
great vale on its banks.

But now in truth I have come to the much sung  
home of the Muses,

Now the thing I behold when may be spoken  
the name.

Look! the glistening heights of Parnassus rise  
in the distance,

Over the land and the sea still they are sending  
their gleams.

With that top for my mark I joyously start on  
my journey,

For the way thither, I know, lies in Apollo's  
bright realm.

First are the vineyards preparing their drops  
of mild inspiration,



That put courage in hearts for the ascent of the  
mount ;  
Not unmindful I pass them, for many a leaflet  
and tendril  
Here are woven in wreaths which the young  
Bacchus entwine,  
And the vine is beginning to sip from the soil a  
sweet nectar  
Which it will hold to our lips when has been  
mellowed the year.  
Next come the Olives, now full of sweet poesy,  
in a vast orchard  
Strown all over the plain, sporting in sunbeams  
and song.  
Often I stop for a moment to snatch from the  
tip of a leaflet,  
Just a few notes of a hymn which I hereafter  
may sing ;  
And I intend every day, as long as I linger at  
Delphi,  
To return to these trees that I may breathe of  
their strain.  
Many a hearty young Olive is here full of lusty  
rejoicing,  
Many a trunk that is old, wrinkled and bent to  
the ground,  
Yet with rich fruit it is laden. Bright runnels  
of water are playing  
Round the roots of the trees, lispng a lay with  
the brink,

For they are bearing the dew of the Muses  
adown from Parnassus:

Joyous the Olives upspring to the refrain of  
the brook.

Also the trill of the birds that are singing un-  
seen in the branches

Joins in the laugh of the leaves tuned to the  
lay of the rill;

Every twig in the orchard is bent with Parnas-  
sian songsters

Matching their voice to the clime in the new  
season of spring.

Some of their throats are breathing the sunniest  
note of the panspipe,

Some have the clarion's blast rousing the heroes  
to war.

But oh behold — in the distance there rises a  
beautiful image

Through the long lines of the leaves, flitting  
around mid the trees;

'Tis the Greek maiden, busy at work, arrayed  
in white garments:

Scarce can I rightly discern whether that shape  
be a dream.

Into the palm of her hand each berry appears  
to be flying,

There it nestles in glee, softly, unwilling to  
leave;

Nor would I, were I in its place, desert those  
embraces,

In their soft pressure caressed would I forever  
repose.  
Soon a song she intones to the chime of the brook  
and the leaflets,  
Now deepest thrills can be felt through the  
Parnassian world,  
Thus for miles I walk in the musical Olives to  
Krissa,  
All is attuning my soul for the approach to the  
fane —  
To the great Delphian fane where lie the domains  
of the Sungod,  
To the Castalian fount where are the Muses  
enshrined ;  
See! I have entered already the presence of  
Gods in my journey ;  
Hear! within me a lyre throbs in a rapturous  
strain.

2. Up the Mountain.

Upward from Krissa I pass on the winding and  
rock-pointed pathway  
Toward the Delphian heights,— still 'tis the  
walk of an hour,  
Easy the road is not, but gladly I grapple the  
hillside,  
Clamber about on the stones, yet with Parnas-  
sus in view

Always glimmering white in the distance far up  
above me:

'Tis a beacon of snow held there aloft in the  
skies.

Dusk, the dark Lady, has thrown her first veil of  
thin gauze o'er the mountain;

Still from its silvery top falls a soft splendor  
of light.

Now she commences to lay her dim hand on the  
face of Apollo,

Who near his Delphian home loiters there under  
the sea

Loth to quit the abode that he loves. But look  
down in the valley

Where the glad Olives erewhile danced with  
the beams of the sun; —

There the black dragons of Night are creeping in  
stealth up the hillside

Out of the valleys below that are now filled  
with their folds,

Mid the cliffs they will soon coil around me, but  
still I trudge forward

Dreaming of things yet unseen at the great  
shrine of the God.

Hark! there rise behind me loud notes of melo-  
dious laughter,—

'Tis the maids who return home from the  
orchards below;

All day long they have stooped in hard labor, and  
still they are merry;

Work intoxicates here, flushed with the  
draughts from the hills.  
Slower I go on my way, by that group I am soon  
overtaken,  
E'en in the dark I can see folds softly white  
falling down.  
But as they hear, when I greet their approach,  
the foreigner's accent,  
Quickly they start the sweet hymn while to the  
village we pass,  
So to the song of the maidens I grandly enter  
high Delphi,  
In a procession of old, like a great pomp of  
the God.  
But that rhythmical chant with its gait has at-  
tuned all my fancies,  
Now they move in long strides round the  
Parnassian heights ;  
Scarce can I bridle their gallop into the short-  
stepping English,  
Always they reach out their feet spurning my  
modern restraints.  
'Tis the command of the God, I feel I must  
march to his quickstep,  
And I must sing to his note while here I tarry  
his guest.

## 3. Entrance to Delphi.

What is that strain which is sung by the maids as  
we enter the hamlet?

Some refrain I can hear throbbing by spells in  
the song.

*Sas agapó,—sas agapó — all' entrepomaí na  
sas eipó;*

Thee I love,— thee I love — but I shame me to  
tell thee; —

Such is the version I make causing my heart to  
rebound.

Love, then, is the sweet theme to whose music I  
march into Delphi,

And to its beat I must step after an apron  
and robe —

Apron of red that flames in the night like the  
fierce torch of Eros,

Robe as of Parian folds, white as Parnassian  
snow.

In deep faith I follow the omen that heralds me  
onward,

Gone is all my fatigue, of a new world now I  
dream.

On my ankles so jaded fleet pinions appear to  
be growing,

And by to-morrow methinks they will be ready  
for flight;

Feathery-footed like Hermes, the messenger swift  
of Olympus,  
I some message shall bring down to our Earth  
from the Gods.

*Sas agapó, — sas agapó — all' entrepomai na  
sas eipó: —*

Thee I love, — thee I love — but I shame me to  
tell thee; —

Their confession is sweet, it I shall take to my  
heart.

Ha! already young Eros is here, is flying before  
me

Unto Apollo's high fane — both of these  
deities rise.

Who can resist two Gods, each one of them being  
almighty?

I shall not try to resist, nor do I wish to  
resist;

Both my worship shall have as long as I stay  
here at Delphi,

Sunlight and love are my prayer, mingled  
together in song.

*Sas agapó, — sas agapó — all' entrepomai na  
sas eipó;*

Thee I love, — thee I love — but I shame me to  
tell thee; —

You are ashamed then to tell what you already  
have told?

Oh subtle Loxias, doubler of words, thou hast  
doubled their meaning,

Wiles already hast put into the hearts of  
the maids;

For they say that they love, and yet too they  
say they don't say so;

What a puzzle is this which they are singing  
to me? —

Oh you are women, for what you refuse, just  
that you are granting,

And you deny you confess what you confess  
you deny.

Is it not strange to say what you say, then say  
you don't say it,

And by concealment reveal what you declare  
you conceal?

There — the ambiguous oracle on me is breathing  
already,

And a riddle inspires just when I enter his  
town.



## Cyclet Second.

### I. The New Pantheon.

All the Gods here at Delphi begin to assemble  
around me,  
And of some share of my life each is secur-  
ing command ;  
Each is breathing into my heart subtle need of  
his worship,  
And there is now not a God whom I would  
blot from my soul.  
So I must build a Panthéon in which they shall  
all dwell together,  
Gods and Goddesses too, all without chiding or  
strife ;  
With the hymn I shall build it, the ancient  
material of Orpheus :  
Every stone of the fane shall be itself a new  
song,

And it shall move to its place in the pile to the  
sound of sweet music,

Sung to the beat of the hymns as in the dance  
of the youths.

See the chorus of marbles as up from the depths  
of the mountain

They are coming with joy into the light of the  
sun!

All the edges drop off as they fit their tread to  
the measure,

Like the white Graces they move to the clear  
note of the song.

Joyous are even the stones, as they spring into  
order and sunlight,

To have left the dark realm where Chaos sits  
in the earth,—

Stones most deeply attuned, to harmony hewn  
by that music;

Each on the other doth rise, building a glori-  
ous fane;

Now the marbles join hands in a row of far-shin-  
ing columns,

Round the bright temple they move in a per-  
petual dance.

So these hymns that I build move round my  
stately Pantheon—

Naught but a chorus and song, all the day long  
in a whirl.

## 2. The Delphic Symphony.

Come, it is my desire to have you go with me to  
ramble

Only this one afternoon dipped in the balm of  
the clime ;

To the harmonious choir of Nature we joyous  
shall listen —

Such as she forms for herself here on the  
Delphian hills.

Out of the windows of rock are peering the eyes  
of the flowers,

Wishing to see the fair world, wishing them-  
selves to be seen ;

They make the tapestry which is now hanging  
adown from the hill-tops,

All their bright colors you see melting to beauty  
the cliffs.

Over them hover Parnassian bees, the merry  
musicians,

In a thousandfold hum striking the note of the  
flowers ;

All with variance, from the big drum of the  
bumble-bee's pinions

To the small pipe of the fly in yon acacia's  
blooms.

Air and sky to the melody are most deeply ac-  
cordant,

They have a festival too, for they are married  
to-day,  
And they now kiss in the bridal embrace, while  
lofty Phloubouki  
Blandly his shaggy old sides sways in the  
waves of the song.  
Leave me not out, I have also my place in the  
symphony Delphian,  
For my body is changed into a many-stringed  
harp,  
Which is struck by the throbs that are sent from  
the soul of this Nature,  
Till I am one with it too, chanting the music I  
feel.  
Even crabbed old Prosy would turn to a hymn  
now at Delphi,  
And his lips be a lyre touched by the hand of  
a Muse.  
But look up, for yonder are leaping white folds  
of the dancers ;  
Youths the bright circle have formed, then all  
the maidens appear  
In a procession slow-stepping, until they entwine  
in the chorus,  
When the hymn doth arise, tuned to the step  
of the dance.  
Simple the strain, but it melts to one movement  
the voice and the body,  
And it unites with the notes which the glad  
flowers prelude ;—

List! they all with the clime here one deep har-  
mony utter,  
Tuned as of old to the chords strung on Apol-  
lo's sweet lyre.

### 3. Serenity.

Any little thing pleases me now, and it pleases  
me greatly,  
For a Delphian joy softly me holds in its  
arms,  
And whatever I see, I am rocked to a musical  
measure;  
On my path are unchained thousands of im-  
ages glad  
As I walk round this hill to the sun. Just now  
yonder raven  
Is the delight of mine eye as he doth glide  
down the vale;  
Look at his happy high flight, yet he shows not  
the smallest exertion,  
While the deep gloss of his back sports in the  
dance of the rays,  
And to me, the beholder, reveals subtle splen-  
dors of color  
As he changes his place mid the bright play of  
the beams.  
But the thing which rejoices me most is the ease  
of his movement,

Not a feather he stirs in his bold flight  
through the skies.

Wide-extended his wings are, and still he doth fly  
without flapping;

Simply he moves, you would say — but who  
can tell how he moves?

Effort appears not, lost in the triumph and grace  
of his pinions;

Struggle no clog puts on *him*, lord of the  
paths of the air.

Always from tip to tip in full swoop his wings he  
outstretches,

Yet in repose he remains during his rapidest  
flight.

See! now he rises without one stroke — but now  
he is falling,

Slowly descending beneath where are the  
Olives at play.

Suddenly I fall with him, I start from the side  
of this mountain,

Not a feather I stir as through the sunbeams I  
sail;

No exertion I make in order to fly, not a strug-  
gle —

Simply I move of myself, knowing not why it  
is so.

Do you not see I am flown — without effort  
flown down to yon orchard?

A fair phantom is there guiding the wings of  
my soul;

So I fly like the raven, without one flap of my  
pinions —

Nay, without pinions I fly, sinking away in  
the leaves.

4. Rain on the Roof.

Many are now the delightful sounds that are  
uttered by Nature,

Many too are the joys that she instils in her  
tones ;

But of all of her sounds, the one which to me is  
most pleasant

Is the fall of the rain as it doth beat on the  
roof

Over my head. In the day-time driven home by  
the shower,

Long I sit with my hand under my chin, and  
list

To its song and its dance, for its drops have  
come down from Parnassus,

Rhythmical drops out of clouds born on the  
Muses' high seat.

Thus they are dowered just from their source  
with symphonious movement,

As a chorus of youths step to the pipe and the  
drum.

I recline by the fire underneath the low tiles of  
my cabin

Out of the rain's merry dash, still I can hear  
all its notes.

Then I am led by them off into thoughts of a  
musical cadence,

And the whole world keeps time to the soft  
pat of the rain.

Many a form now comes up before me far dis-  
tant from Delphi,

Out of the shadows they rise, yet in the glee-  
fullest mood;

Many a shape that is real, and many a vision of  
poets,

Many an image of joy — all to the beat of the  
rain.

Fragments of life I live over again, now sweetly  
attuned,

Though they a discord were once in the re-  
frain of my years;

Hopes of the future too in an harmonious swell  
overflow me,

Every hope has its wings dipped in the rain-  
bow of song;

Joyous I fly on its pinions far over the ways of  
the ocean,

And the glad time of return in soft embraces I  
feel.

Images fall to the Earth from the musical Del-  
phian Heavens —

All have the rhythm of rain heard in the dance  
of the drops.



But in the night-time, lying on carpets strown  
out by my hostess  
Love I to glide into sleep to the mild music of  
rain,  
For its notes wind subtly along through the  
gates of my slumber,  
Enter the palace of dreams playing soft strains  
till the dawn ;  
And they gently attune to sweet sounds all my  
memories errant,  
That through the fields of the past wantonly  
roam in the night ;  
All my hopes, all my wandering thoughts slip into  
the measure  
Beaten by drops of the rain on the low roof  
overhead.  
Struggle has fled from the soul and life is discord-  
ant no longer,  
The great universe glides into melodious  
hymns ;  
Softly in slumber the deepest I hear the lay of  
the rainfall,  
And I sleep to its notes wrapped in a garment  
of dreams.

5. The Maid and the Muse.

Every morn ere Apollo has touched the high top  
of Phloubouki,

From the rugs I arise, then to my worship I  
go ;  
For a still morning prayer I breathe at the fount  
of Castalia  
To the harmonious forms that have their home  
in the stream ;  
And I pray them to show to my reverent eyes a  
small fragment  
Out of that beautiful world mirrored within  
the clear depths.  
Many a draught I take of the water that laughs  
from the fountain,  
Hands and face too I lave in the cool flow of  
the rill,  
But no cup will I dip for a drink from the brook  
of the Muses,  
There I fall down on my knees, prop my  
two hands on the stones,  
And then slowly my lips I press to the crystalline  
water :  
When I feel a soft kiss from a bright maid in  
the stream.  
Fain would I sink to that shape and be lost in  
tender embraces,  
Live a transparent life there with her under the  
wave,  
Or, attended by nymphs, expire on the couch of  
her mosses :  
But with a touch to her lips, quick from my  
worship I rise.

For thus early are passing this way the maids of  
the village,

Down to the Olives they pass, mingling their  
labor with hymns.

They too take a cool drink from the stream as it  
bubbles pellucid,

And with their finger tips moist tinge their  
fresh cheeks with its drops;

Then the roses come pulsing into the lilies by  
heart-throbs :

Long I stand by the rill—slyly I glance in each  
face.

Thus I do every sunrise, and I am always re-  
warded

With some image of joy that doth illumine all  
the day.

So a maiden this morning leaped on a rock by  
the wayside,

Drew up her horse by the bit, gave a quick  
spring and a whirl;

For a moment she flew through the air, then lit  
in the saddle

Like a bird on a branch—wings she must have,  
I am sure.

Bravo I cry, and she sends to my greeting a  
proud smile of triumph,

Then away, away, into the Olives she  
speeds

Riding over the rocks down the steep like a bold  
Palicari :

But she leaves me that smile as the fond toy of  
the day,  
For wherever I stroll, with that phantom I find  
myself playing,  
Through all my thoughts it doth wind, giving  
them color and mood,  
Though they be on the Earth's other side. Thus  
it wakes along with me;  
But in my afternoon nap slyly it enters my  
dream;  
There amid the absurd irresponsible throng of  
my visions  
It is swimming in glee showing the laugh in a  
mask.  
Fain would I fix its vanishing form of delight in  
these measures,  
That I might look at it oft, would even show  
it to friends.

#### 6. The Maid's Question

What art thou writing, she asks me, here in the  
shade of the Olives?  
For a pencil and book often I see in thy  
hand,  
Whilst on the paper thou makest strange letters  
in a strange language;  
Quickly they dance through a line, then they  
turn back at the end.

Restlessly too thou dost stop sometimes with a  
look of vexation,  
As if a God held thine arm from its free sweep  
to its scope.  
But 'tis only a rock that checks for a moment  
Castalia,  
Or a small pebble perchance fretting the flow  
of the stream ;  
Yet the Muse is soon there and slyly removes the  
obstruction,  
Rapidly then darts thy hand through all the  
symbols unknown.  
Now to my fancy there bubbles just out of the  
point of thy pencil  
Words like the drops that well up into the  
Muses' abode.  
Look ! thou seemest at times to count on the tips  
of thy fingers,  
That in a measure the lines train to the tones  
of thy voice ;  
Thus like the tremulous thrill of the sea they  
dance in their motion,  
Joined in a rise and a fall led by the Graces in  
hand ;  
Every word neatly glides into lines of incessant  
recurrence,  
Just as Castalia skips joyous along the same  
rocks,  
Though the crystalline flow of its waters be less  
or be greater,

Though wild droplets may dash out of the  
stream in their joy.

Read me thy words, I beg thee, e'en if I know  
not their meaning,

Gladly I hear them move to the command of  
thy voice.

For they have a light rhythmical tread, like the  
youths of the chorus,

To caramousa and drum daintily stepping in  
time.

“ Poesy's flatterer sweet, it is well thou knowest  
not English, ”

Modestly then I replied, though I believed all her  
words.

#### 7. The Poet's Answer.

Yes, these lines that I write are quite like the  
youths of the chorus;

Many the dancers we see moving along with the  
step,

Some are better, some worse, and some may be  
said to be neither ;

Some will fall out of time in the fierce rush of  
their zeal ;

Some do not know yet the step in spite of the  
care of the master,

Whatever pains he may take, they will not tread  
to his beat.



Some move in time, it is true, but have little  
grace in the movement.

Some merely walk through the dance to the rude  
stroke of the drum.

Some are too buoyant in spirit forgetting the  
moderate measure,

Some are sluggards in gait, e'en sinking down  
to blank prose.

But there are others—the most of them—  
beautiful youths of the chorus,

Maidens with soft-glowing cheeks, forms of  
white grace in the dance—

Note them, I pray thee, how freely they step to  
the sound of the music,

How their fair bodies thrill just to the voice of  
the Muse

Who now speaks to them out of the fount of  
limpid Castalia,

And they list and obey all what their Goddess  
commands.

These make the chorus along with its hymn a  
glorious vision

Fallen from ages of old down to the life of  
to-day ;

In its movement it mirrors that ancient Greek  
heaven refulgent,

Though a cloud now and then vary the sun-  
shine of song.

Look not at those who are always making mistakes  
or are awkward,

Though the master may beat vainly and long  
with his hand,  
Nod with his head, e'en stamp with his foot that  
they fall into measure —  
Every misstep that they take throbs a fierce  
jar in his soul.  
But nearly all of the youths have obeyed now,  
though full of mad frolic,  
And they follow the beat with an unconscious  
light tread.  
Backward and forward they move, then around  
the circle together,  
Many a garland they weave, out of their mo-  
tions of grace ;  
Often a beautiful youth who is placed at the head  
of the chorus  
Leaps in the air and whirls, forming a flower  
of folds.  
First look at all of them, merrily winding around  
on the greensward ;  
Then thou singly wilt choose one who shall  
gladden thee most,  
Seek what is beautiful ever, the ugly need not be  
sought for :  
So the dance will delight, for it is joyous and  
fair.



## 8. Dimitri.

O Dimitri, I hail thee — thou art a poetical  
being,  
Thou wert born a hymn, placid content is thy  
life.  
Musical too are thy days as they flow in harmoni-  
ous cadence,  
All thy moments of time are little waves of  
sweet sounds.  
Here thou dost lie on this stone, smooth frag-  
ment of some ancient temple,  
From whose broken forms gush many beauti-  
ful strains;  
For they were fashioned by hands that were  
tuned to the lyre of Apollo,  
Still the marble breathes notes thrilled from  
the heart of the God.  
Hark! this stone, O Dimitri, is singing a hymn,  
in deep concord  
With thy nature and life, as I behold thee just  
now.  
Both of you are full sweetly attuned by the clime  
to one key-note,  
Though the instruments are greatly diverse in  
their kind.  
Truly a child of Delphi thou art — of its music  
and temples,

And thou art one with the rays which thou dost  
lie-in all day.

No wild winds can ever disturb thy serenity's  
ocean,

As thine eyes half-shut, look into nought but  
the sun.

Not even cranky old Seismos can shake thy  
repose everlasting

As on thy elbow propped, resting thy head on  
thy hand

Thou dost recline on this column outstretched.  
Let me sit down beside thee,

And be transformed by thy spell into a Del-  
phian lyre;

For I wish to be played upon here by invisible  
fingers,

And in the soul of my soul feel the calm strains  
of the God.

But I must take out my book and my pencil,  
stung by a madness

Which the Muses have sent from yon Castalian  
brook,

And no rest can I find till in measures I shape  
what they whisper;

Punishment 'tis, I fear, for an old curse in my  
blood.

But oh Dimitri, a greater thou art than the  
maker of poems,

Thou art a poem thyself sung through har-  
monious days.

## 9. Parnassian Clouds.

Dost thou behold yon tattered cloudlets of film  
that are flying

Up the valley below as with the wings of a  
bird?

Subtlest gauze are their bodies, resisting no beam  
of Apollo,

But their speed is the wind's, with the light  
gossamer's play.

Millions on millions they hasten, all of them  
silvery, lucent:

At my feet they now swim as I go round the  
high mount.

Not unimportant their errand of love, if thou  
couldst but divine it:

Secret duty they have, to them entrusted by  
Gods.

Guess it thou canst not, although thou endeavor,  
so let me tell thee:

Hither they hasten to join armies of deep-  
drenching clouds

Far up Parnassus; around his high top, and his  
sides they assemble,

Till from their watery films grow the dense  
hosts of the storm.

Thence they descend from the summit with huge  
sieves of water

Which on the Olives are poured that with  
much fruit they be hung.  
Every beautiful rill that leaps down the beautiful  
Mountain,  
Will be full in its banks, far overflowing the  
plain,  
Bearing the gift of new life to all of the vine-  
yards and orchards;  
Then too the flowers will spring, dressing the  
hills in their robes,  
For the beautiful spirit of Nature they win from  
her body,  
And they deck her fair form till it doth mirror  
her soul.  
That is what comes of these filmy cloudlets when  
once they are gathered  
Into drops of the rain or in Parnassian  
streams.  
Look! the Heavens are full of them — at their  
speed too I wonder;  
They in their chase for the top strike the rough  
sides of the steep  
And thus lose of their delicate moisture. How  
rapt is their struggle  
The very uppermost height yonder to gain in  
their race!  
Thus would I say to them: Patience, O little,  
silvery cloudlet,  
Dash not so madly thy drops where they are  
lost on the rocks;

Be thou controlled by the hand of a God along  
with thine instinct,  
He will lead thee in time where thou wilt join  
all thy kin  
On yon summit from which is sent the sweet dew  
of the Muses:  
Thence every pasture of Earth verdant will  
grow from thy drops.

## 10. The Flight.

Tired of the Muses' incessant throng I fled to the  
mountain,  
They had embraced me too hard in the still  
clasp of their arms;  
Round their fountain I loitered, and down their  
streamlet I sauntered;—  
Too many kisses they gave, I could not stand  
so much love.  
So to the cliffs I wandered, trying to think about  
nothing,  
And I succeeded quite well just the first time  
that I tried.  
One empty day I longed for — a day which was  
utterly empty,  
That I might lay it between other bright Del-  
phian days  
Always filled to an overflow rich with the whispers  
of Muses:

For my feeling was blunt with the excess of  
delight.

Much too long had I tried to look at Olympian  
radiance ;

Both of my eyes were blind from the fierce  
gleams of the Gods.

So their presence I shunned, I ran from their  
haunts, from their temples,

Free of the Gods I would live just the short  
course of the sun.

To the Korykian cave I retire, to the core of the  
mountain,

There to remain in the dark far from the  
shapes of the light ;

Into the gloomy recesses I enter with flickering  
taper :

Look at this arch overhead — this after all is a  
fane ;

And behold these crystalline figures built by the  
droplets —

Hundreds of images rise dripped from above  
to the Earth.

So they are here, the bright forms are here too,  
and dwell in their temple :

It is Pan, I should say, with all the train of  
his nymphs.

Truly if man will not build their abode, it is built  
by kind Nature,

Even their statues she forms deftly from rocks  
of the mount,

Setting them up in their temples. Escape from  
the Gods here in Hellas!

Here they were born in the past, here they at  
present appear;

In dark caverns they shine as well as in realms of  
the sunlight:

If thou flee from a God, thou wilt but rush to  
his arms.

## Cyclet Third.

### I. The Parnassian Spinner.

Let me calmly think over what gave me to-day  
the most pleasure,

Whiling the hours away as I lie stretched on  
this rug,

Ready on cloudlets of slumber to enter the portal  
of dreamland :

Thither to carry along something of joy is my  
wish ;

I shall keep it and sport with it all the lone spell  
of the night-tide,

And new colors shall weave through the bright  
play of its hues.

What is my choice, then, out of the throng of  
beautiful visions ?

'Tis a maiden I saw spring on her horse from  
a rock



At the side of the road as she went from the  
village this morning,  
For her image and feat with me have gone all  
the day.  
On the air she appeared to fly with invisible  
pinions  
From the top of that stone, till in the saddle she  
lit ;  
Then old Sorrel starts off on a trot as she takes  
up her spindle,  
Also the distaff she holds — draws out a flock  
of the wool,  
With her fingers she sorts it and pulls it to suit-  
able thinness,  
Then gives the spindle a whirl till the small  
fibers be spun ;  
Next she skillfully reels the white yarn on the  
spool of the spindle,  
Till the clew has been made ready for shuttle  
and loom.  
That is the maiden for me — each moment of life  
is an action,  
Brings to the world a new deed, which, be it  
small, yet is good.  
So all the while that her horse moves rapidly  
down to the Olives,  
She is spinning the thread for the fair folds in  
the dance ;  
Each of the threads has the glance of her eye and  
touch of her finger

Which they will carry along into the garment  
when wove.

Thus they musical ever must be with her skill  
and her fancy,

For they all will declare what she has laid in  
her work ;

When the folds of white raiment shall wave on  
the youths in the chorus,

Glorious hymns they will sing, which were  
inwrought of her soul ;

Every thread will join its own little strain to that  
music

That from the garment doth rise, tuned to the  
play of the folds.

## 2. Color and Song on Parnassus.

Out by the Delphian way to Arachoba Kalligy-  
naika,

Town of the beautiful maids, under Parnassian  
tops,

Slowly I climbed, when far up the mount I beheld  
a red apron

Dropping in flames to the ground over a lap  
of white folds.

Both of the hues stood out on the air afar up the  
mountain ;

Form I could scarcely discern in the twin  
colors' embrace.

On white modesty's folds there lay the redness of  
passion,

Chaste was the view to the eye, yet ever chal-  
lenged to love.

Wings of crimson appeared to rest on the down  
of a bosom ;

Bird it was to the look with its bright plumage  
enskyed.

Bird it was and loudly it sang on the perch of the  
vineyard,

Till the sides of the mount sweetly were flooded  
with song

Overflowing the Olives with music mellowed by  
distance :

Vocal all Nature it made — vocal it made me in  
turn.

Nightingale I was going to say — but in verses of  
poets

That poor birdling has sung till it has lost all  
its voice.

There I look at the tints and list to the lay of  
the songstress,

Till together they melt into harmonious  
tones ;

Some dear pain fills her throat and sets all the  
hilltops to throbbing,

Still the warm notes have a soul white as the  
robe of the maid.

Love now ingrains with its blush those folds of  
modesty candid —

So speaks softly her dress, so too speaks softly  
her song.

See! another has joined her, infolding the same  
red pinions

Over the fleeces beneath; now there are two of  
the birds;

Yet another draws near, then another, Oh, still  
another: —

Now a dozen or more stand on yon ridge far  
above.

Give me, O fancy, some image in which to im-  
prison these singers,

That I may take them along when I Parnassus  
shall leave,

And be able to list to their strain in my journey  
forever;

Simply say, 'tis a flock— flock of bright birds  
on the slope,

That together high up there have lit, the red-  
winged, white-bodied,

Nature's boon to this clime, born of the sun and  
the heights.

Note the color of voices attuned to the color of  
garments,

Hinting the passion of youth tempered with  
chastity's snow.

Hark to the choir! their lay is of love with its  
pang and its pleasure;

All of the flock are alike — have but one note  
in the heart.

List ! that note I have too in my heart — I am  
going to sing it —  
Merely a bird would I be — now I fly up to  
that flock.

### 3. The Reason Why.

Wherefore are all of the maids on these hills ar-  
rayed in like colors ?

Why has each thrush in the field ever the same  
kind of plumes ?

Why can sing but one lay the nightingale hid in  
the hedges ?

Nature has given the law which all her children  
controls.

She has appareled the shapes that move on the  
slant of this mountain ;

Delphian instinct they have, deeper by far than  
design.

These bright robes are one with the sun and the  
sky, with the hilltops,

Here they grow from the soil, any thing else  
can not be.

Slowly I saunter along by the road and gaze at  
the colors ;

Red on white from the heights falls in mine eye  
with a spell,

And attaches some strong invisible thread to my  
heartstrings

That I am drawn to yon maid out of my way  
up the steep.

There for the raindrops she busily loosens the  
earth of the vineyard

Whose fine rootlets must sip ere of the wine  
we may sip ;

Labor has modeled the turn of her limbs with  
the skill of a sculptor,

While the Graces have drawn every line of her  
shape ;

Gentle exertion, the subtlest of painters, has  
penciled her features,

Dipped in Parnassian airs are all the hues of  
her face.

As I approach, the red garment she grasps, on  
the white she adjusts it —

Still she is but a bird pruning her plumes for  
display

When peradventure some mate of her kind that  
way may be flying ;

Now the same tints I observe twinned in her  
visage and form,

For her cheeks are two roses imbedded in gar-  
lands of lilies —

Passion's rapturous flush chastened in snowy  
restraint.

What can nature now mean,—the sly dame —  
by displaying these colors?

Still I ask of myself, springing with joy up  
the steep.

Thou art a fool, a blind fool— was the answer I  
heard to my question,—  
Look at thyself and think what thou art doing  
just now.  
Hast not thou been allured by that bird to fly up  
this hillside  
Through the enchantment of hues — what  
better reason than this?  
When she drew thither thine eyes — still more,  
when she drew thy footsteps —  
That was the aim of this dress, its divine end  
was fulfilled;  
For to a bird it transformed thee, so that thou  
flew'st up the mountain  
Where was the apron of red laid on the kirtle  
of white.

#### 4. The Black Lover.

Yonder the crow swims down through the river  
of air in the valley,  
River that fills the high banks built out of  
mountains of stone;  
Sportively now he flaps his black wings in the  
glare of the sunshine,  
Then he whirls over for fun right on his back  
in the air,  
And appears to be falling. But with a caw he  
soon catches

Wind in his plumage of jet, then with the  
sunbeams he skims  
Gaily along in his flight; more boldly he oars  
too his pinions,  
Even he glides up the rays toward the fierce  
eye of the day.  
That rough note is but laughter; — again he  
whirls over, laughing  
That all the world he can fool by a mere feint  
of a fall.  
Some black gallant he is, from amorous con-  
quest returning  
Mongst the dusky young fowl that have their  
home in these hills.  
So the crow in his gayety sports down the Del-  
phian valley  
In a wild play with his wings till to the Olives  
he sinks:  
There the maids are at work, and they also of  
love are singing;  
Even the crow of the air seems to drop down  
to their song.  
So too I dally in sunshine with Eros whose wings  
I have borrowed,  
Every day I now sport, over the Olives up-  
borne,  
And at times I seem to be falling — in love to be  
falling,  
But I catch myself soon, high in the air, with  
a laugh.



## 5. Modern Temple of Bacchus.

Here is, said Yankos, the merry resort of the town — let us enter,

Magazee is its name as thou wilt hear from each tongue;

Floor it has none; hence be not surprised that thy step is so noiseless,

For the ground has been wrought to a thick carpet of dust

By the tread of the feet of these villagers now for some ages;

Bow as you enter, — your head else will be rapped from above.

Not a chair can be seen, sit down on this bench at the table;

Table and bench are adorned, carved in the jackknife's strong lines.

Somewhat dark is the room, from a single low door it is lighted:

Still on a counter displayed see the huge bottles of joy.

Upwards glance — no ceiling obstructs the view of the rafters,

Quinces, pomegranates there hang in the dry orchard of beams.

But let us try these immaculate drops now — drops of pure virtue,

That from the Delphian rocks by the good  
vine are distilled.  
In their fragrance they subtly are breathing the  
breath of the wine-god,  
Who will not leave his old realm though he in  
poverty come.  
This, O friend, is the temple of Bacchus —  
temple not ancient,  
Where still his worshipers meet, they are  
assembled here now;  
Poor God, how I do pity thee, banished to dirt  
and to darkness,  
Who dost illumine the soul with all thy flashes  
divine!  
Once thou didst dwell in the light mid pillars of  
white alabaster,  
Many a statue of old with thy young form  
was imbreathed,  
Wound with tendrils and leaves of the grapes  
and crowned with its clusters; —  
Sculptured oft were thy deeds high on the  
temple and tomb.  
Still O Bacchus thou livest, on mortals still  
breathest divinely,  
I can see thy old flash here in this rude  
Magazee.  
Now I invoke thy divinity for a sly touch of thy  
frenzy,—  
Glorious madman of Gods, rattle thy thyrses  
in mine eyes.

## 6. The Wine God and the Love God.

Often sly little Eros I find in the train of wild  
Bacchus,  
Covered with tendrils and leaves, hid in the  
clusters of grapes ;  
Then the young rogue peeps out of the foliage  
which he has stolen,  
From his small puffy cheeks flashing light  
dimples of laughs.  
Oft with fair Semele's son he is seen unfolding  
new pinions,  
Oft flies after that God, rapidly chasing each  
draught  
As it sparkles down into the soul through the  
ducts of the body ;  
Love with the thrill of the wine enters high  
fantasy's hall.  
How the weird juice doth glide into every dark  
nook of our being,  
Which it then makes all light with its swift  
flashes divine,  
And with its rapture it touches the body's invis-  
ible genius,  
Giving a wing to each sense till it mounts up  
to the sun !  
Soon the Muses, although they be shy, appear  
to the wine-god,

Showing their secretest wealth to the devout  
of his train.

All the Nine will pass before eyes that are rapt in  
his worship,

Seen in their beautiful form only through drops  
of the wine ;

To the adorer true-hearted they come with tender  
embraces,

Whisper a hymn of their own which he remem-  
bers and writes.

Raise the bowl to my lips, advance it full to my  
tongue-tip,

That its sly power may glide into the soul at a  
touch ;

For I wish to behold the resplendent forms of the  
Muses,

Their soft cadence to catch lisping Olympian  
song.

But look here—on the rim of this beaker is  
balancing Eros,

Flapping his pinions in play, ready to fly with  
a draught.

#### 7. Conflict of Gods at Delphi.

The wild throng of the Gods this time has un-  
settled me somewhat,

And a confusion divine sports on the throne of  
my brain ;

For too many Olympian guests have knocked at  
my palace,

Too much divinity here me the poor mortal  
assailed.

First came Bacchus, the leaf-covered, grape-  
haired beautiful stripling;

To me he gave a small craze just at the tip of  
the tongue.

Eros followed hard after, and soothed me with  
soft little wing-strokes,

Him I fondled and hugged but by his arrow  
was stung;

Still from that puncture I suffer a strange inde-  
finable tickle;

Henceforth I must take care how I caress the  
mad boy.

Bacchus and Eros, I find now, share the domains  
of Apollo

Here in his Delphian seat, they too are perched  
on these rocks.

Wine doth offer its beaker of humorous rapture  
to wisdom,

Love hurls a torch in the soul, kindling each  
faculty high.

Nor is absent the Muse from the hallowed home  
of the Sungod,

All of the Sisters lurk still in Castalia's  
stream;

These too gave a low rap at my door and demanded admittance,  
While the wings of the Boy fanned balmy air  
in my face.  
Thus many Gods are driving me — all of them  
often together,  
Often singly they come, pulling me hither and  
yon,  
Whence among them great strife. But Eros is  
always the victor,  
For the Nine him assist turning his flutter to  
hymns,  
And a delicious melody flows from the flap of his  
pinions  
Which even Jove subdues to the sweet lull of  
its spell.  
Yet I know not if Eros it be who has help from  
the Muses,  
Or if the Muses it be who are by Eros in-  
spired.  
Ask me not to decide, I pray, the difficult ques-  
tion,  
If I sing for my love or if I love for my  
song.  
Both are divine, I assure thee, and both have my  
fervidest worship,  
And a temple to both I shall erect with the  
hymn;

Love is divine, but divine are also the pearl-drop-  
ping Muses,  
Either may grapple my hand — then I am led  
by a God.  
Nor forget in the Delphian background stands  
ever Apollo,  
Who well knows what he does, whether he love  
or he sing.

## Cyclet Fourth.

### 1. The Saints and the Muses.

Holy Castalia is not deserted, it still has a worship,

Though divinities new here are enthroned out of place;

For the dark-stoled Saint now presides in the bright-dropping fountain,

The fair fane of the Muse yields to the shrine of Saint John.

Still there is joy in the thought that continuous is the devotion,

That the beauty antique gleams through the ages of night.

But the black robe of the Saint has banished white folds of the Goddess;

Long are his hair and his beard, gloomy his thoughts are and grim;

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Skull and bones lie around him, while he on eternity maunders,

Starved into tatters of flesh, wrinkled in form to a rag.

This is the body that made revelations of beasts and of monsters

Whose grisly offspring have slimed many Parnassian rills.

Banish, O Psyche, forever the brood of dragons and devils,

All the dark brood of Hell born in the brain of the Saints,

Who have changed the beautiful world to a jungle of goblins,

Till the horrible craze seems to have made us all mad.

What a pity that now they possession should have of Castalia,

And such monsters should breed right in the Muses' glad stream!

So have the clear-voiced Sisters been frightened away from their waters,

Always to sing they refuse when they with horror are filled.

Oh the Saints atrabiliary, dismal their thought and their raiment,

Dark they are to the eye, equally dark to the soul.

And I confess, the angels are not to my liking, though radiant,

They are some neutral thing, though all their  
wings be of gold,  
For they seem but of one sex, or what is the  
same thing, of no sex;  
If they be woman or man, surely it does them  
no good.  
But the nymphs I adore, as they show their forms  
in the fountain,  
Often I look at them bathe, sporting their  
limbs in its splash,  
Nor do they hide the white body away in the  
dungeon of garments,  
As if guilty they were, having divinity's  
form.

## 2. The Castalian Washers.

What is that sound re-echoing out of the gorge  
of Bagenyi  
Where the Castalian fount shows the first  
crystalline throb?  
Oft the dull thud is repeated and smites the  
rough side of the mountain;  
'Tis the blow of a maul in the firm hand of  
a dame  
Who is washing and pounding the folds into  
whiteness and order;  
Even the folds must be beat ere to new music  
they move.

Then they will glide full winsomely into the  
rhythm of sculpture,

And they will glow in the dance on the fair  
youth as he treads.

Just behold those vigorous blows from the arm  
of the washer:

Seeing a thing made clean gives a delight to  
the Gods.

Many Nausicaas now are preparing their own and  
their brothers'

Irreproachable robes for the gay dance at the  
feast.

But, Oh think—this is Poesy's fount, the rill  
of Castalia,

Which is now used by the town cleansing its  
filth in the stream.

What do the Muses say to it as they arise from  
the water?

Are they, I wonder, in wrath, or do they  
sanction this use?

But a voice, playing over the surface, thus spake  
from the brooklet:

“It is right, it is right, and I approve every  
blow.

Many a stain besmirches the raiment of sunny  
Parnassus;

Great is the need just now that it be thoroughly  
bucked.

Pound the garments, O washers, with all the  
fierce might of your muscle,

For they again must be clean ere we the Muses  
arise.  
Dash them and drench them and rinse them in  
the clear depths of Castalia,  
That they not only white but also musical  
be.  
Long and carelessly have they been worn, until  
the white drapery  
Seems the dress of despair, rumped to  
numberless rucks.”  
Gladly I look at the furious washers wielding the  
beetle  
Pitiless on the grim filth with irrepressible  
brawn;  
These are now the true nymphs of the stream,  
full of anger and vengeance  
That the bright robes have been soiled with all  
the dirt of the earth.  
Many a feature they have that tells of their  
pedigree ancient,  
Still their limbs are undraped as in the ages of  
old;  
Full the bare arms are of swift-sweeping, merci-  
less tendon and muscle,  
And there peers the nude thigh from the short  
kirtle below,  
While the stout bosom is dancing a dance in the  
watery mirror,  
Softly imparting its swell to the white folds in  
the stream.

Sad necessity — nymphs of Castalia transformed  
    into washers,  
    Turned to Furies to-day, forced to belabor  
    mere filth !  
But for the festival wait, when the youths shall  
    move in the chorus,  
    Then the glory of brawn from every ruffle will  
    gleam,  
And the folds of the garments antique will leap  
    in their splendor,  
    For once more they are new, fresh from the  
    Muses' clear rill.

### 3. Castalia's Horror.

On the edge of the chasm behold yon child in the  
    distance  
    Gathering flowers alone, lost in the joy of the  
    hours.  
With its own sweet thoughts it pleasantly seems  
    to be sporting,  
    As it doth skip round the rocks, busy from  
    blossom to bloom.  
While I look at its play I feel indefinable  
    longing,  
    For a young voice I can hear echoing over the  
    seas.  
Nearer it comes to the perilous edge of the cliff —  
    and yet nearer :

I am afraid lest it fall — what a fierce pang in  
my breast!

Still along on the brink of the chasm in peace it  
is playing;

I would shout, but a bridge built of one voice  
can not reach.

Now it sees a new flower inclining just over the  
margin

With a cup of fresh red; thither it springs and  
it bends

Over that precipice deep of hundreds of horrible  
fathoms,

Reaching out its small hand for the bright gem  
of the cliff.

Agony gives a rude wrench to the heart — it seizes  
the fancy:

See! down, down the child falls into the depths  
with a plunge!

Brains are dashed on the rocks that bloodily now  
are bespattered,

Crushed are its flesh and bones to an indiffer-  
ent pulp;

Red with the stain has become the pure flow of  
the rill of Castalia,

Its white pebbles are fouled with the thick  
blotches of blood.—

Hold, O Fancy, for thou hast defiled the stream  
of the Muses,

These are thine own ghastly shows, hideous  
specters of death,

For the child is safe — now it runs in delight up  
the hill-side  
Quite away from the brink; also the flower it  
has,  
Which along with a nosegay it joyously brings to  
its father,  
Who in an Olive's fresh shade rests from the  
heat of the day.  
O grisly Fancy, Castalia cannot endure thy  
horrors,  
From grim phantoms she flees back to her cave  
in the rocks.  
One drop of scarlet thrown into her stream will  
stain her clear waters;  
Stay thy sanguineous hand, smear not the  
Muses with gore,  
For the white folds of their robes will speedily  
show the dark blood-spot,  
So that the Furies they seem, not the mild  
Goddesses, bright  
With these rays wherein they now dwell mid  
choruses happy,  
Here in the Delphian world ruled from Par-  
nassian tops.  
Every song of the Sisters is deftly inwoven of  
sunshine,  
Every note is a joy hymned in accord with  
the beams.

Then let me banish forever all blood, all terror  
and darkness :  
Only with Phœbus henceforth I am determined  
to dwell.

4. The Old and the New Gods of Delphi.

At the waters of joyous Castalia I met an old  
woman,  
Often she crossed herself as she was passing  
the brook ;  
From her lips of lean wrinkles darkly she mut-  
tered a prayer  
To the Saint in the fount where the bright  
Muses once dwelt.  
I must acknowledge, the presence here of that  
weazen old woman,  
With the thought of the Saint, drove all the  
Sisters away,  
And in their place was gushing the waters of bit-  
ter resentment,  
Till my Delphian mood nearly was drowned in  
the surge.  
When she had ended her prayer, quickly she  
turned and addressed me :  
Why, O stranger, I ask, do you not make  
sacred signs  
Of the Cross on your breast as you pass St.  
John's holy chapel?



Infidel art thou — a Turk — thus to neglect  
Christian rites? —

Yes, I fear it is true, thy belief is not mine — I  
answered:

In my heart I abhor here such a gesture to  
make,

Or now even to think of the Cross with its hor-  
rible torture :

Any thought of the kind hurls into chaos my  
days.

Here at Delphi there is no death — only life in  
its beauty —

Save the death through that Cross, death of  
the Muses and Gods.

I am one with the Earth now, one with the good-  
ness of Nature,

Simply I live through the hours filled with the  
joy of her strain ;

After this life I think not of realms of tumultuous  
anguish ;

Nor do I wish for myself any one ever to  
die ;

Time was once when I hoped for decease or  
desired some ransom

From Fate's clutch, and perchance thus to  
relieve me of pain ;

But I live now in this Delphian sunshine, I sigh  
for no Heaven,

Merely I wish to remain blent in the harmony  
sweet

That doth swell from the two great worlds with-  
out and within me :

Double that chorus of worlds, but their deep  
music is one.

Very different once, it is true, were my thoughts  
and my feelings,

And again they may change in the still beat of  
the years. —

I do not think the old woman could know quite  
what I was saying,

Still I continued to speak, talking perchance to  
myself :

Do not suppose that harmonious living is not a  
religion,

Though it be not thine own, though too its  
source be remote.

Like some melody sweeter by distance, the old  
Gods of Hellas

Softly arise and attune to a new concord my  
life,

And at this moment they are commanding most  
deeply my worship ;

The Castalian nymphs, too, I adore from my  
soul,

But above all others I daily commune with  
Apollo,

Who still loves his old haunts, though he  
unkinged must come.

Look up yonder at Delphi — think what Apollo  
once made it —

For he made it the soul in the fair body of  
Greece,  
And he decked it with all of the splendor of  
shrines and of temples:  
Look at it now, the poor clump — 'tis the  
abode of the Saints.  
Nay, good woman, to these do not ask me to offer  
devotion;  
Here I must see the old Gods as they once  
reigned from these heights.

5. Night at Delphi.

In the moonlight yonder uprises to heaven  
Phloubouki,  
All alive it appears under the beams of the  
night;  
Monsters of darkness are crawling far up to the  
perch of its summit,  
While its cavernous sides house many hideous  
shapes.  
Not for the world would I enter this hour the gorge  
of Bagenyi,  
Out of fear of the ghosts which there abide in  
the dark.  
Now is the reign of Dian, the sister of bright-  
faced Apollo,  
But the clear God has fled from the dim earth  
and its nooks;

Men are asleep until his return, avoiding the  
Goddess,  
Not a fold can be seen in the faint glimmer of  
rays ;  
Hushed are also the hymns of the maidens, the  
children of sunshine,  
All the birds are at rest, save the dull brooders  
of night.  
But the fantastic huge monsters of chaos break  
loose from the mountain,  
Out of the caverns they come whither they fled  
from the God :  
For the sister, though gracious, is weak and can  
not control them,  
Can not the dragons control freed from the  
light of the sun.  
At her spell the whole brood doth seem to leap  
forth to existence,  
Under her smile they are born, born in her  
mystical beams.  
O high Apollo, well wert thou named the slayer  
of Python ;  
The huge serpent was pierced by the keen  
arrow shot forth  
From thy bow all light ; of old it was slain here  
at Delphi,  
And this rock was transformed into the eye of  
the world.  
Once again, O day-god, place on the bow-string  
that arrow,

Slaughter the numberless brood which has been  
reared in the night,  
And the infinite throng of phantasmas, the mon-  
ster-begotten,  
Pierce — and restore thy bright reign as it was  
once on these heights.

6. The Building of the Temple.

Who first built on this hill-side the temple to  
far-darting Phœbus?  
An old story it is, ancient is too the dis-  
pute.  
Three are the legends which are now gracefully  
asking our credence:  
Out of the authors of old let them with pru-  
dence be scanned.  
This is the first report, that the structure was  
built of the laurel,  
Tree of Apollo's love — whom he once wooed  
as a maid,  
Beautiful Daphne, changed to a tree and then  
wrought to a temple:  
This account I believe, for it is worthy of  
faith.  
I myself have built a small fane out of leaflets  
and branches,  
In it I sing to the God many a laurel-crowned  
hymn,

That the harmony sweet of the Muses may float  
in his presence :

There he gives me to dwell viewing his glorious  
face.

Then the second report of it comes, and this I  
must tell thee :

It was built by the bees, architects first of the  
world,

And its walls they made of their cells, and the  
mortar was honey,

Sweetest of artists they build all of their in-  
stinct to form.

Then they filled the fair home of Apollo with  
stores from the flowers,

So that the dew of these bees sweetened the  
bread of mankind.

Also this story I cannot deny, for I ate of the  
honey,

And the same structure beheld where dear  
Apollo resides.

Yet the third account too I believe — it was builded  
by Vulcan —

On the Olympian heights fair it arose in his  
shop.

Many a line can still be seen that was drawn by  
his compass,

All the stones have been hewn by a divinity's  
skill,

To a deep subtle music taking their place in the  
temple,

Chanting when they are there soft unaccountable hymns.  
Round this fane is forever reposing a chorus of sculpture,  
Forms of the Gods above, copied from thence into stone;  
And this temple entire was borne down to men from Olympus,  
In a transport divine guided by Hermes the swift;  
For it is modeled, they say, from palaces mighty of marble,  
Which there repose on the heights in a perpetual day,  
Reared by Vulcan himself when he built the Olympian city  
For the bright Gods to indwell — whence they come down to our earth.  
All the reports I believe — all three are worthy of credence —  
And they are true I maintain, if thou but know what is true.

#### 7. Delphi the Seeress.

In the old ages was Delphi prophetic, doubly prophetic;  
Destiny distant it showed both for itself and the world.

What it to others in vision foretold was what  
itself suffered,

Always the arrow turned back into itself that  
it shot.

What it saw in the sport of the hours, was but  
its own image,

For in its soul was the type of the great One  
and the All.

So, in revealing itself, the universe too it re-  
vealed--

What else could it declare but what it had in  
itself?

Such is the prophet, alas! and such is the painful  
prediction,

At his own heart he directs what he presages  
to man,

For he too is a man. When beautiful Hellas in  
passion

Turned against its dear self arms that were  
meant for its foe,

Then too Delphi was turned, of its own fore-  
knowledge the victim,

For it also was Greek, it was involved in the  
doom.

That irreversible word which was uttered by  
priestess enraptured,

Held the dim fate of herself, also the fate of  
the fane;

She was rent in her soul by the might of the same  
strong convulsion



Which she saw in the land, since it lay too in herself.

Brother was turned against brother and Delphi was turned against Delphi —

Then fair Hellas was lost — Delphi the seeress was lost.

Look at the ruins which peep here — they lay in the foresight of Delphi,

Still she could not escape what she so clearly foresaw;

Nor yet could she by silence avoid her dolorous duty:

When to be prophet she ceased, then she had ceased to exist.

Strange is, O prophet, thy lot, — what thou seest and sayest to others

Is but thyself and thy fate which thou behold'st in the Hours.

#### 8. The Foreign Shepherd at Delphi.

It is night — from below to the highest Delphian summits

Darkness covers the earth, Silence has opened her reign.

No one would say that here was once the bright home of Apollo,

So completely extinct are all the beams of his face.

Yet behold a single dim light far off in the  
valley,

Where the Olives are -- what can it mean, do  
you think?

'Tis the camp-fire lit by a shepherd -- Wallachian  
shepherd,

Who sojourns for a while that he may pasture  
his flock

On the thyme that sprouts in the spring from the  
sides of Parnassus:

Stranger he comes from afar, seeking the suc-  
culent herbs.

That small light with its rays bores a hole through  
the darkness to Delphi

Till it reaches the eye; by it white fragments  
I see

Faintly trying to send some gleam of their  
ancient perfection

As they peer out at my feet, with their bright  
smile broke in twain.

Here the shepherd remains for the festival fair of  
the spring-tide,

And on the slant of the hills mingles his herd  
with the flowers.

But when summer has come, he flees to his home  
in the mountains

Toward the distant North, shunning the rage  
of the Dog.

There he recounts to his rustic neighbors who  
gather around him,

What he has seen far away — wonders of  
climate and sky,  
Wonders of ruins festooned with many a song  
and story,  
Dowered with magical spell by the weird hand  
of a God.  
Notice his light, how it shimmers across the waves  
of the darkness!  
Now it doth seem to go out; now it doth flicker  
anew  
Dimly, as if a lone beacon tossing about on the  
ocean;  
Now a blaze it sends up flashing the tips of the  
cliffs.  
Yet all alone it shines in the valley — no other  
shepherd  
Hither has come from abroad for the Parnas-  
sian food.  
But I can see in that flamelet, though distant,  
the Olives rejoicing,  
Its small glow they feel like the approach of  
the dawn;  
Also Castalia leaps in its light with a fresh laugh  
of gladness,  
As her diamonds are lit by a soft ray in the  
night.  
Still it is only a wandering flash by a stranger  
enkindled,  
Throwing its sheen for a time over the village  
and hills;

He will sojourn in the valley merely along with  
the flowers,

Then for his home he departs; with many  
yeanlings increased

Is his herd, and is fed to sleek fatness on thyme  
of Parnassus;

Fragrance also is borne from the sweet flowers  
and herbs.

So the rude barbarous shepherd — the distant  
Wallachian shepherd,

Builds a small camp-fire too, where was the  
Muses' abode.

Book Second.

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*In the Olives.*

## ARGUMENT.

*The Olives at Delphi form one of the chief features in the landscape, and they are also intimately connected with the social and economical life of the people. They extend down the hill-side for miles to the rivulet Pleistos, and in the Olive season the whole village is occupied with picking the crop. The sojourner from abroad will wander through the orchard in all directions, and talk with the people; he will not fail of many a little adventure. He will notice antique customs, old habits of speech and thought; ancient relics of various kinds and even monuments he will stumble upon in his rambles. But chiefly he will obtain pure draughts of the old idyllic life which from time immemorial has existed on these hills. Yet certain modern matters will intrude themselves even into the Olives at Delphi, and produce some discords with the Delphic life and mood. Still he will dream of transplanting the Olive to his home.— It is to be noticed that the word “ Olives ” has, in this poem as well as in Greek, three meanings: a place, a tree, a fruit; to these three, one may add a fourth meaning.*

## Epoclet First.

### I. The Olive.

In fair Hellas there grow many joyous young  
sprouts, but the Olive

Was the first love of my heart, and will remain  
to the last.

See how it shoots up there on the hill-side and in  
the valley!

Youth is the name of that tree, beauty its  
form and its life.

Softly it waves in the wind that comes like a  
breath from Parnassus —

Wind sweetly tuned in the twigs, sent from the  
heights by a Muse,

Who outpours her melodious tones in the rustle  
of branches,

And imbreathes all her grace on the young  
leaves in the dance.  
So each tree, each leaflet doth move in the mer-  
riest humor,  
Yet they all move at once, forming a chorus of  
joy  
Over the fields, far down through the vale, to the  
limit of vision,  
Turning their silver-green robes to the mild  
sway of the breeze.  
Everywhere on the branches there hang multitu-  
dinous berries,  
All in a laugh and a dance with the gay leaves  
and the limbs.  
Some are ripe with dark-brown visage, and ready  
to gather,  
Often they fall of themselves into the lap of  
the earth ;  
Others are young, quite young, and still cling to  
the arms of the mother,  
Though their cheeks have a flush, turning to  
blushes of love.  
Why do the Olives rejoice? In their shade are  
Parnassian maidens,  
Wafted by thoughts of the dance like the light  
leaves of the tree  
In the wind. The fruit from the ground and the  
branches they gather —



Fairest fruit themselves, tinted by airs from  
the hills —

All with fluttering hearts, as they think of the  
chorus to-morrow,

For then a festival is, with the bright dance at  
the trees.

## 2. The Songsters in the Olives

What a choir of birds I hear as I pass through  
the Olives!

Spring has just come down the vale, now it is  
tuning all throats.

Each glad songster doth seem in this grove his  
voice to be testing

On the sunny bland air made for the note of  
the heart.

Thousandfold are the tones that through one  
another are darting,

Winding around in soft turns; tender with love  
they embrace.

Yet the whole orchestra deeply to one limpid note  
is attuned,

Though some discords may rise o'er the clear  
lake of the sound.

What is the strain that they carol? List, till we  
catch its fine pulses —

'Tis the gladness of youth throbbing in hymns  
at the spring.

Thousands are also the songsters amid the new  
leaves of the branches,

Each one piping his best, each with some trill  
of his own.

Some have a loud full voice heard afar, but it has  
little beauty,

Some have a small low note, but it of sweetness  
is full;

Some utter sounds that ferociously hiss with the  
hiss of a serpent,

Even the sound will bite though but of air be  
its fangs;

Some are old, going back in their strain to the  
ages heroic:

Oft deep voices I hear, chanting, I fancy, of  
Troy.

Some are young, just fledged, and cannot yet fly  
from the branches,

Or if they did seek to fly, down they would  
flutter to earth.

Still they all sang — the Greek songsters — sang  
in melodious measures,

Though there were many engulfed in the  
grand swell of the whole.

Each seemed trying to drown all the others in  
oceans of music:

But I could hear one voice sweeter than all of  
the rest

And much stronger; in some of its notes it rang  
like a bugle,

Then it would melt in its strain till the soul  
gushed at the eye.  
So they continued to sing — that tuneful Parnas-  
sian army,  
Mid the poetical leaves adding their sparkle to  
song.  
What are the songsters trying to do? As I  
think, I shall tell thee —  
They are trying to win places of perch in this  
grove,  
That they forever may dwell in the glittering  
palace of Olives,  
And be heard of all men, haply, who stroll  
through the trees.  
Often concealed from the eye they are chanting  
melodious roundels;  
On the dark berries they feast, nourishment  
rich for the song.  
All are my joy, both the broad-winged poets and  
pin-feathered nurslings,  
For each one of them sips music and mirth  
from the clime.  
I too am going to stretch out my wings in the  
branches and flutter,  
Also my throat I shall tune though it should  
fright all the grove.

## 3. The Olive Pickers.

Hear the glad voices that pass down the Delphian  
way in the morning!

Who are these people? I ask,— why do they  
sing on the road?

Pickers of Olives they are, now hastening into  
the orchards

Where yon silvery creek spans with its girdle  
the dale.

All day long they must stoop, still joyously chant  
they a ditty;

As they pick, one by one, berries that lie on  
the ground.

Toilsome yet merry the task is, since labor is sea-  
soned with gladness,

So they love their fatigue, for 'tis the food of  
their mirth.

Thus they sing as they toil, and they mid the  
Olives are happy,

Ere the Parnassian tops yet have been climbed  
by the sun;

Maidens are most of them singing along with the  
birds before sunrise,

While long shades of the hills stretch from the  
East down the vale.

Where the road is crossed by the runnel my  
stand I have taken;

There the paths from the town all come together in one ;  
There I look at the merry young throng and receive friendly greeting  
From cerulean eyes set in a frame of gold hair.  
The fresh hummers continue to pour from the hives of the village  
For an hour or two ; each in mine eye drops a smile,  
That is shed from the lips as invisible dew of the Graces ;  
'Tis their alms to my heart, which a poor pilgrim has come.  
Still the one has not passed yet, the right one ; impatient I loiter  
Till she arrives from the heights, winged as a sweet morning dream.  
To her glance I am bound, and by it am borne to the Olives,  
There now with it I sport, happy the rest of the day.

#### 4. The Song in the Olives.

List to yon maid who is singing far up on the side of the mountain,  
Where the vineyards hang, slanting adown with the steep ;

All alone she works, and a hymn she attunes to  
her labor,

While she is trimming the vines for the bright  
nectar of Fall ;

Scarce her shape can I see, but her voice rings  
over the valley,

Wafting its notes through the air, till they  
rebound from the hills

That lie opposite ; then, most lightly they fall to  
the Olives

Where underneath the young trees hundreds of  
maidenly hands

Are now busy — busy in picking the harvest of  
berries ;

Though they are hid by the leaves, still I well  
know they are there.

Hark ! it is the response ; not unheard have the  
notes of the maiden

Fallen into that grove ; list to the echo from  
thence.

For from the trees another refrain swells up to  
the mountain ;

Many sweet voices there are, melted by dis-  
tance to one.

Resonant, clear and full is the strain, from the  
Olives ascending,

And it responds to the first with a deep fervor  
of song.

What are they singing of? Love — the oneness  
of man and of woman ;

Mouths by nature are twain, but the fond kiss  
makes them one ;  
Two pairs of eyes with one glance, and two pairs  
of lips with one promise —  
And in the breasts of the two one happy heart  
with its throb.  
Let the bodies be double, within them is only  
one feeling ;  
Voices may also be twain, but the sweet song  
makes them one.  
Love has transmuted into one harmony both of  
these echoes,  
Swift-winged Eros now sweeps over the mount-  
ain and vale.  
Thus the vineyard answers the Olives, the Olives  
the vineyard ;  
Though far asunder in space, both have one  
passionate strain.

## 5. Elpinike.

In the new rays of the morning I walk to the  
Delphian Olives  
That are strown on the hill warm with the love  
of the sun ;  
Far down the valley they reach to the crystal-  
line ripple of Pleistus,  
Whose slender form they embrace in a soft  
forest of limbs.

Mild is the breath of the wind that sets all the  
branches in motion,

While the green wavelets of leaves roll down  
the sides of the mount.

Thither I turn my wandering steps in search of a  
maiden,

Whom this morn I beheld there as I entered  
the trees;

Whom before I had seen in my dreams as a  
vision of beauty,

Now the dim shadow is filled with the fresh  
fullness of life.

'Twas a form that always would draw the eye of  
a stranger,

Who to Parnassus had come seeking the face  
of a maid

That had haunted his fancy from youth in all his  
high moments,

To him had spoken perchance in his most rap-  
turous mood.

Passing the fount of the Muses she sped from  
the heights of the village,

Seemed on the air to uprise, when her swift  
features I spied;

As on a picture above me I gazed at the beauti-  
ful image;

All of me changed to a hope which she most  
sweetly returned.

In the glint of her eyes I beheld waving torches  
of Eros,



Who before Helen's look flew and enkindled  
the air,  
One more glance she threw back at me just as  
she entered the Olives,  
Then disappeared in the leaves as a bright  
dream in the clouds;  
Now I must follow her footsteps till perchance I  
may find her,  
For some priestess she was once when Apollo  
here ruled.

6. The Fountain in the Olives.

As I stray round the hills through the Olives,  
soon I grow thirsty,  
And this thirst is so sharp that it cuts down to  
the soul.  
So I seek for a spring which will cool the throbs  
of my fever:  
Here is a basin of stone filled with a crystal-  
line draught.  
Deftly the rock has been hewn to receive the rill  
of the mountain,  
Which transparently rests in the embrace of  
the moss;  
And a small groove has been scratched in the  
stone for the fall of the water,  
Thence down the side of the rock trickles the  
thirst-quenching stream.

Two little lips it doth fashion through which the  
runnel is gliding,  
Just where the drops with a laugh over the brim  
give a leap,  
And the stranger they gently invite to their pearls  
with a babble,  
Promising kisses of joy to every one of his  
sips.  
Fondly the brooklet has wound its way down  
from Parnassian summits,  
Bringing along in its breast all the fresh breath  
of the Spring —  
Whispering many a hymn from above on the  
brink in its passage :  
'Tis impregnated still with the low note of the  
Muse.  
Softly I lean to the sedge and lay my mouth to  
the crystal,  
Touch the sweet lips of the stream while of  
another I think.  
But this stone — look how it is worn — worn off  
with the kisses  
Which the wayfarers gave, ages on ages be-  
fore.  
Still the musical burn unceasing flows down from  
the mountain,  
Still the lips in the rock are just as fresh as of  
yore.  
Now each day for my walk I go by the rill in the  
Olives,

Held as I saunter along in the soft arms of a  
Muse:

Then when I drink, I fervently press those lips of  
the brooklet,

While I list to the hymn sung in its dance down  
the hill.

Draught of Parnassus — what could I do but join  
in the music?

So I in unison chant, tuning my voice to the  
stream.

7. Eros in the Olives.

Many an hour I wander amid the vast orchard of  
Olives,

Gaze at the sparkle of leaves silvering over the  
hills;

Even the branches I love as they rollick and  
laugh in the sunbeams,

And their gay humor instill into each throb of  
the heart.

Under the trees I stop wherever a maiden is  
working,

Furtive glances I cast into the path of her  
eye,

That she may see them and with them perchance  
she may covertly dally:

Then I pass on in my search, for 'tis another I  
seek.

Long I hunt, deceived in my way by fantastic  
vain glimmers,

Often I stray from the road, often I think of  
return.

But at last I discover the form that imbreathes  
all my fancies ;

Deep in the grove she is hid where but few  
strangers approach.

Great is my joy ; she knows too my face from the  
morn when she saw me

At the Castalian rill, bent o'er the stream for  
a drink.

At the exchange of a look I begin to gather the  
olives

Scattered under the trees — such was her  
laughing command ;

I, the servant of Eros, now find it the sweetest of  
labor

When I stoop to the ground, thence to collect  
the rich fruit ;

And my delight is to heap in the basket of Greek  
Elpinike,

All the olives I pick, passing the day in  
fond toil.

One subtle ray from her eye overflows me with  
beautiful visions ;

All the reward that I ask is but to look in her  
face.

## 8. The Three Paths.

Many the paths that lead from the village  
down to the Olives,

All directions they branch, winding amid the  
dense trees.

This is the first one — it goes direct to the ancient  
Metochi,

Where the monks have their home in a low  
cloister of gloom.

Gentle and good are the men, they have breathed  
all their days into prayer,

All their thoughts rise above, shunning the  
Olives below

Where are the maids. From the hill I look at  
the roof of the cloister,

As it peacefully lies in the embrace of the  
leaves;

But this path I avoid as if mid its rocks dwelt a  
dragon

Snapping its jaws in my face. So I pass on  
to the next

Which is the second, and leads to the mill that  
presses the berries,

Where only men are at work, making the sweet-  
flavored oil.

Clear is the flow of the brook through the moss  
to the whirl of the mill-wheel,

Friendly the look of the men seeing the  
stranger appear.  
But not the flow of the brook with its babble  
along the fresh channel,  
Not the old rustic mill, not the kind welcome  
of men  
Can detain me from this path, the third one,  
that leads to the Olives  
Down in the valley below whither the maidens  
have gone.  
There at times I can see, as it flits mid the trees  
a red apron,  
Like a small tongue of flame leaping in folds  
from the ground;  
Or perchance in a flutter of wind I behold the  
white garment,  
As it seemeth to fly, winged with a pinion of  
red ;  
For it appears in the distance some bird of grace-  
fullest plumage,  
Crimson doth flow down its breast, snow doth  
reflect from its back.  
Then, oh hear, that merry bright bird with song  
too is gifted,  
Now in the Olives it sings notes that well out  
of the trees  
Wave after wave, until they flow over me up to  
the hill-tops:  
Undulations of hymns thrilled from a joyous  
young heart.

This is the path I am led in by Eros unerring,  
my master —  
Down to the Olives I go, down to the Olives  
I go.

## 9. The Metochi.

Ah I confess, the Metochi I shun — the place of  
calm prayer ;  
Lapped in eternal repose mid the soft plies of  
the limbs,  
Placid it rests as if now in Heaven. Old are the  
Olives  
That around it have grown — sentinels faithful  
and fond,  
Though their trunks, so twisted and scarred, have  
lost their fresh juices ;  
Not a maid can be found who will delay in their  
shade ;  
Into the valley below they look, where sprout the  
young Olives,  
With a mild disdain from the high perch of  
their site.  
Holy the men are who dwell there, devoted to  
prayer incessant ;  
Every moment they turn into the notes of a  
psalm  
That like incense sweet rises up from their cells  
into Heaven :

Now their low chant I can hear from the small  
chapel of Saints,  
Gently accusing me thence for my sins. Shall I  
enter the chapel?  
No — Eros now is my God, here I am tied to his  
wings;  
He has my soul and has flown long before me far  
down to the valley  
Where the young Olives are, glorious sprouts  
of the Earth,  
That are leaping in sunlight away from the  
gloomy Metochi —  
Each little leaf on its twig sings a small poem  
of love.  
What will boot all my prayers without any soul?  
Let me tell thee,  
Body must follow the soul — down to the  
Olives I go.



## Cyclet Second.

### I. Philemon and Baucis

In the hut I stopped where Philemon dwelt with  
his Baucis,

Aged they were and infirm, still they were liv-  
ing alone ;

Happy their days sped along like the mellowest  
hours of autumn, —

Hazy and dim to the sight, yet they of sun-  
shine were full.

Love is here seen in its purity, cleansed from the  
dross of its passion,

Though the senses subside, still it remains in  
its glow ;

And it often doth seem in the soul to redouble  
its fervor,

Love of Psyche it is, bodiless spirit di-  
vine.  
Long they together have lived till each resembles  
the other,  
Time has them moulded to one till they no  
longer need speech;  
Each doth feel as the other, each doth think as  
the other,  
Though the hearts may be twain, still there is  
felt but one pulse.  
Always they go down together at sunrise into the  
Olives,  
There they remain all the day, culling the  
fruit at their ease;  
Then at eve they return to their home of delight  
in the cabin,  
Sweetly they lie down to rest, labor and years  
give repose;  
And in the trance of the night, in the spell that  
is wrought by soft slumber,  
Both are caressed by one song, both of them  
have the same dream.  
Aged Olives they are and wrinkled — but notice  
them closely:  
All the year round on the twigs blossoms are  
bursting to light.  
So may I be when Time has crowned me with  
garlands of silver,

Though he bend the old trunk, still it shall  
flower anew.

Yet in my heart I would rather remain the young  
tree of the orchard

Round which the maidens will dance with the  
fresh rose in their cheeks.

2. Cluck, Cluck!

Look at yon crow as he skims through the sun-  
shine over the treetops!

'Tis a dark spot with wings playing mid beams  
of mild light.

How he rejoices to sport all the day in ethereal  
splendor,

Though each feather be dipped in the grave  
color of night!

List to his note: Cluck, cluck — through the hills  
re-echoing deeply,

Like the low hollow sound from two quick  
blows on a drum.

Down the vale he flies, to a dot soon shrinking by  
distance:

Still his voice can be heard from the black  
speck in the sky.

Where is he going, I wonder? Cluck, cluck —  
see now, he is sinking

Down to the orchard below where his dark  
spouse he beholds

Sitting expectant, alone, on the lusty young  
branch of an Olive ;

Thence too her cluck can be heard, clucking  
her ebony lord.

That hoarse caw was the note, warm and tender,  
of love — of the crow's love :

Now he vaults to the twigs that to soft dalliance  
bid.

There is the silver-green sparkle of leaves, like  
the laughter of waters,

There are the maids underneath tuning their  
throats for the hymn ;

Thither too I must go ; Cluck, cluck — the crow  
I must follow,

Clucking me down to the trees that so much  
music conceal.

### 3. The New Garment.

I had wound many hours through tortuous paths  
in the Olives,

Wasting the minutes with joys under the laugh  
of the leaves,

When not far from Arachoba, town of the beau-  
tiful women,

Pearly a fountain sprang out just at the edge  
of the road ;

In the stream, as it merrily flowed over pebbles,  
stood washers —

Fifty maidens or more who from the village  
had come.

Fair was the vision to fall in the eye of the way-  
worn stranger,

Healing the journey's fatigue more than a bath  
in the brook.

There I stopped on the bank and watched the har-  
monious movement

Flowing in glee out of forms tuned to a rhythm  
unheard.

In that crystalline water stood many a Phidian  
model —

Many a snow-white limb dimpled to folds by  
the waves;

And they seemed as if all were begotten of anti-  
que sculpture,

Which an artist of old once may have wrought  
on these hills,

Or were the daughters breathed into life by some  
ancient poet,

As in his rapture he sang over these valleys his  
strain.

Naked the hinge of the knee is, and naked the  
white is above it,

While the pale modest thigh hides in the kirtle  
for shame;

And the waters are whirled in a fit of supreme  
exaltation,

As the tremulous rill leaps round the ankles  
below;

Arms are bared to the shoulder while hands are  
in play with the streamlet,

Round the loose garment a zone hardly restrains  
the coy dance

Led by the fair twin sisters that ride on the swell  
of the bosom :

Thus in that gallery new wander I long and  
reflect.

From the brink I touch with mine eye each turn  
of their members,

Drink the Olympian draughts which are distilled  
from their forms.

This is my wish : That I were but one little drop  
of the brooklet,

That I might innocent play round the domains  
of their wealth,

And unsuspected might brush in my sportiveness  
o'er the white surface :

Now 'tis the beautiful world wholly forbidden  
to touch.

But the eye must select — it rests on a deep-  
bosomed maiden,

Wound are the strands of her hair into long  
tresses of gold,

Freely they fall down her neck and drop at her  
side to the water,

Bushy tips of the braid lave in the sport of the  
rill.

There she stands in the crystal, intent on the glow  
of a garment,

Phoustanella 'tis called, ruffled to many a  
ply ;  
Even the folds sing a strain in the dexterous hand  
of the maiden,  
Falling in graceful grooves as they grow white  
at her touch.  
When from the bank I addressed her, she turned  
her face from the fountain,  
Wrapped me in eyes of soft blue, gently caress-  
ing with looks  
That I thought I was borne in a dream to the blue  
dome of Heaven :  
“ Give me that garment,” I cried, “ long have  
I sought such a garb ;  
Shining reward I shall give thee if I can now but  
possess it,  
If the white folds shall be mine trained to the  
skill of thy hand.  
For my body I long to enwrap in the waves of  
their music,  
And my soul to attune unto their rhythmical  
flow.  
Maid of Arachoba, thine is the handy-work which  
I shall treasure —  
I shall carry it hence over the sea to my  
home.”

## 4. The Mantili.

I had intended to stop making Delphian hymns  
on the washers,

But when I see them at work, I cannot bridle  
my verse.

In the bare limb and its movement of grace there  
is soft attraction :

It is wicked, some say, still I delight in these  
shapes.

If I now were at home, I would shun them for  
moral example,

And my head I would turn quickly a different  
way

When I saw them; but here propriety slightly  
may slacken,

No staid dame me beholds — let me indulge  
then mine eye.

Hundreds of washers there are, now standing by  
groups in the water,

Swashing the garments about in the clear flow  
of the rill.

What a clatter of tongues amid gay laughter and  
gossip!

All the love in the town now is discussed and  
much more.

Out of the hundreds one I select, altogether the  
fairest,



For without just the one, hundreds and hundreds are none.

Thither I loiter and stop on the brink of the brook  
where she washes,

Quickly she takes up a cup, goes to the head of  
the spring,

Where the gush of the crystalline water first leaps  
to the sunlight :

To me she offers a drink with a sweet welcome  
of words.

But an old crone beside her now asks the ridiculous  
question :

Art thou married or not — stranger, at home  
hast a wife ?

To your question, said I, in this presence there is  
but one answer :

Not a man would confess though a new bride  
he had led

Not an hour ago from the church ; indeed I am  
certain,

Not a man would confess that he before ever  
loved.

Then I threw in the face of the maiden a small  
jet of water

To whose droplets my lips just had been fer-  
vently touched.

Thus I secretly sent her a kiss in the dash of  
the crystal —

How all the washers there laughed ! Hundreds  
were laughing at me.

Yet the maid was not angry, but asked me:

Hast a mantili?

Give it into my hand — let me but wash it for thee. —

So I reached her my handkerchief soiled with the sweat of the journey;

Under her touch it was changed into a pearl of the rill,

And in the sun she outstretched it on a Parnasian laurel

Till my mantili was filled with high Apollo's mild glow.

That is a glorious prize, — a handkerchief full of glad sunshine;

Now I can wipe from my brow all my vexation and toil. —

Long I sat on a stone and looked at the joy of her motions,

While she was working for me with a sweet thought on her face.

But that maiden was washing something beside my mantili,

In her glances she laved every quick throb of my heart;

And with the beams of her face she filled each nook of my bosom,

So that I carry them there with her fair picture enshrined.

## 5. The Answer of Eros.

See yon eagle, how proudly he sails round the  
craggs of the mountain!

Tawny and dark is his suit, stretched are his  
talons and beak,

And his eye fiercely glistens afar, throws fiery  
glances

Down to the Olives beneath, — what can he  
mean, do you think?

Prey — for into the silver-green orchard comes  
the shy pheasant,

That it may warily taste there a delicious  
repast.

So in innocence sweetly it feasts and plays after  
dinner

Hide-and-go-seek mid the rocks till it has  
wearied of sport.

There — see the swoop — down pounces the rob-  
ber, and soon the poor pheasant

Is borne up to the clouds to be consumed on  
the cliff. —

Maiden, beware, who art singing and playing now  
under the Olives,

The destroyer may come, unto thy hiding-place  
lured

By the song and the laugh which are rising up  
over the tree-tops :

Like the eagle he seeks dainties of innocence  
sweet. —

These words spake the old moralizer, still hinting  
within me ;

Me he intended to hit, thus then I answered his  
thrusts :

My little wings are not of the eagle, but of light-  
flying Eros ;

Beak he has none, I affirm, but a sweet mouth  
for a kiss ;

Nor has he talons, but only the wee pretty hand  
of the baby ;

And he lives on the air, following fancy's  
bright flowers.

Look in mine eye, old Goody ; — where's the  
fierce flash of the falcon ?

See ! its soft amorous globe melts in the glance  
of a maid.

## Cyclet Third.

### I. The Greek Peasant's Question.

“Have you, O stranger, in *your* country Olives?”  
the rude peasant asks me,

As I look up at the limbs hung with large drop-  
pings of jet.

Ah, Good Friend, I reply, my country produces  
no Olives,

Carpets of silver-green leaves sparkle not over  
our plains;

On the wayside you find not these trees with a  
dome built of berries,

And with the twigs in between holding rich  
layers of fruit.

There is not seen this light-hearted, delicate sway  
of the tree-tops,

As they move in the breeze sent from Parnassus  
above;

Nor underneath the branches the graceful dance  
of the maidens,

In sweet concord attuned to the bright move-  
ment of leaves ;

Nor is the hymn heard there as it breathes from  
the hearts of the youthful,

Winning the body to rhythm as in the chorus it  
moves.

There we sing not, because, I should say, we  
possess not the Olive,

Work is not seasoned with song, crowned not  
with poesy's bloom.

Nor the folds do we own, the immaculate folds  
of the dancers

Waving soft notes in accord with the glad leaves  
and the lay.

Yes, the truth must be told — my country pro-  
duces no Olives,

And by some it is said that they will never  
grow there,

But I do not believe it.— So I say to the peas-  
ant,

Who in deep marvel is lost how any land can  
exist

Wholly without the beautiful world of the silvery  
Olives,

And all the music and mirth which underneath  
them are born.

I must confess too, now that I think of the matter more closely,  
I have to wonder myself how without Olives man is.

## 2. Gunpowder in Hellas.

There is one ugly sound I sometimes hear in the  
Olives;  
Nowhere pleasant to me, here it is doubly accursed:  
'Tis the crack of a gun. The fire-red cap and  
shag mantle  
Yonder I dimly can see gliding along through  
the trees;  
There the hunter stealthily lurks for the hare or  
the pheasant,  
Or for the birds in the twigs at the great feast  
of the fruit.  
Through the orchard afar the report on the silence  
is carried  
Where a transparent repose lay in the beams  
of the sun;  
All the Olives are frightened to a continuous  
flutter,  
For their enemy comes who is here shooting  
their peace—  
Driving off from their leafy embrace the Parnassian songsters.

Driving the poesy off which the glad Olives  
enfolds.

That rude echo chimes not with the notes of the  
lyre or panspipe,

Nor with the voices of maids ever preludeing  
the hymn.

But the whiff from the gun is the breath of some  
demon infernal

Which doth obscure in a cloud even Apollo's  
high lamp.

I too am frightened, carelessly stretched in the  
shade of an Olive,

Playing on a soft lute that is attuned to the  
clime;

For I did not expect to hear such a sound in this  
orchard

Where in ages antique I was disporting my  
hours.

Now I am roused, but the joyous old realm  
departs from my vision,

At the rude shock of that crack vanishing into  
the years.

So at once I wake up in this world, yet somewhat  
astonished,

As a sulphurous smell greets my return to my  
time.

That was the puff which blew the old world down  
into the new one,

Blew the whole race with a whiff through all  
the thousands of years;



For on gunpowder's flash we moderns have come  
from old Hellas

To our realms by the West on either side of the  
sea.

I too am blown by that puff just while I lie here  
in this orchard,

Ages on ages I whiz, pressed in a sharp point  
of time;

Out of the temples of Gods I drop to this Byzan-  
tine chapel,

Blasted from Delphi the old, down into Kastri  
the new.

### 3. The Folly.

In our world there are many fools, many kinds  
too of folly;

But the greatest fool mid the great types of  
his kind

Is the man who in stupid caprice is enraged at  
the Muses,

For a refusal to grant gifts which are theirs to  
bestow.

Yet of such folly to day I was guilty, and them I  
berated:

“Your stale fount may I shun, never again  
hear your name!

Both are always cut up in the hash of merciless  
rhymesters:

Men in two thousand years weary have grown  
of that dish.

Would that old Seismos might sink Castalia into  
his caverns,

So that never again one single drop of her  
rill

Would appear on the face of the earth, or flow  
down to the Olives!

For some dolt will be found always intent on  
her stream,

And of her drops he will ever be tipping,  
declaring them sovereign

In all cases of rage from a poetic flea-  
bite.

Then he will start to scribble in verse his deliri-  
ous frenzies,

And ascribe them all to his deep draught at  
the spring;

Though his fancy steps not a Grace but capers a  
Dervish —

Morbid caprice of disease, not the mild move-  
ment of health.”

Thus many voices were chiding around me in  
horrible discord —

Each one trying to scold louder than all of the  
rest;

Into the world of the damned I thought for a  
time I had fallen,

Into the Hades new made of the Critic's  
curse;

For I imagined that I was one of those critical  
spirits

Plunged into torture eterne at the mere name  
of the Muse,

And within me I heard only blasphemy, pain,  
and confusion,

Just because for a day all the sweet Sisters I  
banned.

Where they are not, ah, there is the dolorous  
realm of Pluto,

There are the sunless days passed in damnation  
and ruth.

Back I rush to the Delphian hill-side and drink  
of its fountain,

That I be free from the fiends who are now  
racking my soul:

Never, I swear it, again in my life shall I mock  
you, oh Muses,

But if you will permit, always your mocker  
I'll mock.

#### 4. The Kahokian Shopman at Delphi.

Once on a visit to Delphi there came a Kahokian  
shopman,

Calico, Candy and Cans, Sugar and Coffee and  
Tea

Had been the single refrain of his life, his soul's  
sweetest music,

Which underneath evermore had a metallic  
sharp clink.

When he looked at the Delphian walls written  
over with letters,

In that work he beheld nought but a pile of old  
rocks;

Then I triumphantly showed him a column's  
most beautiful fragment:

It was a broken stone good for a counter, per-  
haps;

Also I stepped off the space and sought to build  
up the old temple

For his fancy anew, decked with its sculpture  
and frieze,

Quite as it lay many ages ago in the smile of the  
sungod —

“Stick to the facts, the hard facts,” was his  
response to my words.

Here stood the Hall of the Council far overlook-  
ing the valley,

There the Gymnasium lay, shining with forms  
of the youths,

Yonder above sat the people beholding the games  
of the Stadion —

“What is the good of all that?” asked his  
inquisitive mind.

Now in our walk let us pass up the rill to the  
cleft of Castalia,

Where the Muses once rose from the clear  
fountain of pearls,

Singing their strains till the mountain broke open  
this passage to hear them :

“ ’Tis but a gully, I guess, worn in the cliff  
by this run,”

And he began to grow weary. I said: Let us  
go to the Olives

Where they reach to the vale down from the  
tops of the hills,

Forming an ocean of leaves full of points of a  
silvery sparkle —

“ Silver, Sir, did you say? That is the point  
I would see.”

But the merry young trees were but wood — a lot  
of green saplings —

And the berries I plucked fresh from the twigs  
he declared

Crude to his taste and rank to his smell and de-  
formed to his eyesight.

Still I continued to talk of the Parnassian  
breath,

And of the manifold play of the jocund leaves in  
the sunbeams,

And of the laughter of rills as through the  
orchard they leap,

And of the trill of the birds attuned to the hue of  
the flowers:

“ All that we have at home, better, I think,  
than ’tis here.”

But at last the Greek maiden I pointed out under  
an Olive :

Look in the depth of her eye dipped in the blue  
of yon sky,  
Notice the Phidian forearm turned to the grace-  
fullest taper,  
And the white bend of her brow swept o'er  
with wavelets of gold,  
And the movement of form that is filling the air  
with its fragrance ;  
“ Oh good lord ” he cried “ she is some young  
country wench ;  
Look, she has no stockings, merely a pair of blue  
leggins  
Which do not hide her nude feet slipped in the  
scraggy old shoes.”  
Ended our Delphian walk, I conducted him home  
to my cabin,  
Nor could the secret I keep which the dear  
Sisters me told,  
But after bashful pretenses began I to read him  
my poems:  
“ Friend, isn't what thou hast read, rather a  
fanciful thing?”  
Ah, no Nymphs he saw in the stream, no Muses  
he heard, but  
Sugar and Coffee and Tea, Calico, Candy and  
Cans.

## 5. Ditto's Book on Greece.

Thereunto said the shopman who came from the  
fens of Kahokia :

Now I have seen all Greece, merely a fraud  
it has been—

And the words of his voice were pitched in a  
screech of defiance,

Discontent had her seat just on the curl of his  
lip.

No one need talk to me now — he continued — I  
know all about it ;

All that is here I have seen, all too that ever  
was here.

When I go home, a book I have the intention of  
writing,

Just in order to show what the delusions have  
been,

And I purpose to prove to mankind the plain  
proposition,

That the Greeks are cheats, having deceived all  
the world —

Aye, all the world, if I be not, perchance, the  
single exception —

By that language of lies which they have poesy  
called.

For they said that Castalia here is the fount of  
the Muses ;

But of its water I drank, yet not a poem I  
made ;  
And I labored a day to climb to the peak of  
Parnassus,  
Those false Sisters to see — only a rock I be-  
held. —  
Ah, my friend, I replied, the market already is  
glutted,  
Shopmen have written ere this many a booklet  
on Greece,  
And very learned Professors who had as great  
talent as shopmen,  
Weighing Olympian Gods as they would sugar  
and tea.

## 6. Zalisca.

I was passing along on the cliff of steep Pap-  
padeia,  
To the brink I slipped, into the chasm I  
peered,  
Where many hundreds of feet the rocks leap  
straight to the bottom,  
Till they reach a dark mouth gaping adown the  
deep gorge.  
I am shaken with shudders sent up from invisible  
monsters,  
As my head I extend o'er the precipitous  
edge ;



Out the abysm beneath there darts through the  
eye a keen torture —

Out the passionate gloom couched far below in  
the rift:

There lies Zálisca. Scarcely I dare look down, I  
look forward

To the opposite bank where are huge columns  
of stone;

Slowly I sink with mine eye on its layers down  
to the wolf-hole,

From the summit half way; round it the eagles  
now fly,

For like fortresses there they have built inaccess-  
sible eyries:

Thence I begin with a look lower, still lower,  
to sink,

When of a sudden I fall — fall down the dire  
steep in my fancy,

Whiz along by the rocks, by the wild eagles I  
whiz.

So I fell — I never could light, but still I kept  
falling

Down that infernal chasm — never could get  
on my feet.

It was a dream of a fall and yet it was horribly  
real;

Thus my fancy me tricked, for it would leave  
me no ground,

But it cheated my eyes with an empty appearance  
of landing,

Which would give a fresh start to a new furious plunge.

Finally from the abyss Nymph Zálisca spoke in high anger :

Thy weak sight cannot reach thus the inside of my fane ;

Now I have punished thy sin, have punished presumptuous fancy ;

If thou wouldst come where I am, seek not the horrors of night,

Shun the chaotic chasm forever devoid of the sunshine,

But, above all, my abode seek not with fancy alone.

Go down slowly this mountain, then ascend the small valley,

Every step is firm ground, though somewhat long is the road.

There at once thou wilt enter my door, and I shall receive thee,

There too Apollo will shine just at the mid-hour of day. —

So the Nymph reprovngly said as I turned from my gazing,

Still to be falling I seemed though I was walking away,

For my fancy still sought to keep up that play of delusion,

Like a machine in the brain which in its whirl could not stop.

Such was Zalisca's penalty for the abuse of the  
Muses,  
Some other way I must seek to the enchant-  
ress's grot.

7. The Olives by Night.

It is night ; I go out from my hut for a view of  
the Olives,  
That I may see how they look when great  
Apollo withdraws.  
So I cast a long glance far over the sweep of the  
valley:  
Trees are a dark dense coil winding around up  
the hills.  
Only to sunshine do they belong — e'en the sister  
of Phœbus,  
Mild-glancing Artemis there can not illumine  
the leaves ;  
Yet to-day when I passed underneath them, how  
gaily they fluttered  
As with the sunbeams they played soft inter-  
twinings of love !  
In the night their glister doth change into dark  
lines of silence,  
Moonlight can not entice from their hid sparkle  
a laugh.  
But beyond them upsprings the huge mountain  
with three-pronged trident,

Like a wraith of despair under the sheen of the  
    moon;  
And it seems to threaten the Olives that cower  
    below it,  
    Sinking to darkness in fright, till they can flee  
    to the Dawn.  
At those shapes too I shudder, I haste to my  
    cabin in terror —  
    Shadows I can not endure, nor the great giant  
    up there.  
For I now have become so at one with the sport  
    of the Olives,  
    That unhappy I am when I behold not their  
    dance.  
Then I stretch out on the rug, and speedily grasp  
    for my note-book,  
    Scribble by flickers of light that a faint taper  
    sends forth,  
And I seek to illumine myself from the thoughts  
    of the day-time;  
    Scarcely a flash can I get out of my memory's  
    ward,  
Suddenly then I drop over, a dream — the Olives  
    return now,  
All the darkness has fled, Phoebus is shining on  
    high.

## 8. The Same Dream.

What is the reason the dream-god sends me so  
often one vision?

Three successive nights has he despatched the  
same dream.

Seldom his messages hither withstand the light  
of the morning :

Into Lethe they fly borne on the pinions of  
Sleep.

This one, however, always persists in remaining  
the day-time,

Gently it hovers above while I am taking my  
walk

Through the Olives, whose leaves in a thrill at-  
tune my bright vision,

Till I am swaying aloft on the vast swell of  
their notes.

Over the Ocean I pass to my home, transplanting  
the Olive

Into a golden vale lying afar by the  
West,

Where flows down to the realms of the sun the  
wonderful River,

Banding together the world in the soft span of  
its stream,

Laughingly joining the summer to winter, the  
winter to summer,

While on its path each clime plants a fair gar-  
den of fruits.

On the banks of that river, just where it laves its  
dear city,

Over a bottom of marl rests the vast surface of  
trees ;

And the barbarian Boreas seems not to mangle  
their leaflets,

Which with the sparkle of seas sweep to the  
North and the South.

Long I looked at the infinite stretch of the silver-  
green Olives,

As they lay in the sun, waving betimes in the  
wind.

Quite as much they appeared to rejoice in the  
name of Kahokia,

As in Delphi's fond name they are rejoicing  
to-day.

Fruit too they bore, the fairest and richest —  
richer than Delphian —

All around in the twigs densely the berries  
hung down.

Just from the soil rose the trees where once was  
the stench of foul water,

Where only reptiles bred, making their couch  
in the slime ;

There the countless vermin that sting swarmed  
out of the quagmires,  
Pestilence hovered above, ready to pounce on  
its prey ;  
And the only music there heard was the roar of  
the bull-frog  
Mid the million-fold buzz sent from an insect  
world.  
But the Olive now is enthroned which I brought  
from Parnassus,  
Sloughs wear the smile of the Muse, banished  
are fever and noise,  
And the leaves, like the curl of the waters, send  
forth a soft laughter,  
As they join in the dance over the floor of the  
tops ;  
The bland breezes, fair daughters of Æolus,  
gently embrace them,  
Many sweet notes they lisp, as they unite in  
the sport.  
But behold ! a bright circle of forms is wreathing  
the Olives,  
While a glad music intertwines into the move-  
ments of grace,  
Youths and maidens have joined their hands into  
links of the chorus,  
Songs now arise from the vale through the  
whole length of the stream ;

Under the branches where once was heard but  
the discord of insects,  
Hymns sprout forth with the fruit, labor is  
lightened with lays;  
All the great valley that was erewhile but a hor-  
rible jungle,  
With the glad Olives is filled, filled is with  
music and song.



Book Third.

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*Elpinike.*

## ARGUMENT.

*The character which has been flitting in the background of the Delphic landscape from the beginning, and whose name has been already heard in a passing way, now moves into the foreground, and becomes the center round which all the scenery, history, memories and suggestions of Delphi group themselves, along with glimpses into the Past, Present, and Future.*

## Cyclet First.

### I. Sharing the Pomegranate.

In these verses I wish to build a new temple to  
Fortune,  
For the Goddess to-day showed me a favor  
divine ;  
I shall raise her a temple and deck it with friezes  
of marble  
Which will emblazon her deed worthy of  
glorious Gods.  
For she led me direct to the house where dwells  
Elpinike,  
Whom to behold I had wished all the long day  
of unrest.  
Just at dusk I sauntered around through the lanes  
of the village,  
With a sweet image in mind ta'en from a maid  
I had seen

Giving her horse to drink at a fountain early this  
morning:

Lorn and unhappy I strayed in a delicious still  
pain,

When a door was opened that stood on my path,  
and the image

Flew into body at once, with transformation  
divine.

Such is always the brightest Olympian present of  
Fortune,

When the dear shadow she turns into fresh life  
at her touch;

So I beheld the pale lines of my fancy to color  
transmuted,

Till my soul became eye — then too mine eye  
became soul.

That was Elpinike. She spake and besought me  
to enter,

Enter I did in her home, following footsteps so  
dear;

From the joist where it hung on a nail she took  
down a pomegranate;

Which had been plucked by her hand in the  
glad season of fruits;

And the heart within it was full of sweet juice  
and of redness,

Warm with a passionate glow, soft to the lips  
as a kiss;

Quickly she broke the hard rind, and quickly she  
peeled off its fragments,

When the heart was revealed, crimson, translucent all through.  
With her fingers gently she parted in twain the pomegranate,  
And she reached me the half — half of that bright scarlet heart;  
Just in the middle most deftly she drew the line of partition,  
So that each half seemed a whole while it remained still a half;  
And no violence rude she employed to make the division,  
But the parts of the fruit fell as by nature in twain;  
For the one side had grown as if it belonged to me only,  
Grown to be given away with the coy blush of a maid;  
But the other red side that glowed in her hand like a beacon,  
Wary she kept for herself — all she bestowed not at once.  
What a joy for the soft-hearted fruit that no power convulsive  
Tore asunder its cells filled with the blood of its life!  
Then we sat down at the hearth by the fire and ate the pomegranate,  
Picking out one by one seeds sweetly wrapped in the pulp,

And each seed was a word ensanguined in the  
heart's color,  
And each word was a note hymned by the  
Muses' mild breath.

2. Hymns Sung and Unsung.

Here I lie down on the sunlit slant of skyey  
Parnassus;  
Thousands of hymns in a dance joyfully play  
through my brain;  
Every line is dipped in the beams that are sent  
from Apollo,  
In me all is transfused to a mild glow by their  
spell.  
Silent the hymns seem to follow each other in  
endless procession,  
Just their finger-tips touch as they glide by  
through the air,  
And they are formed out of hundreds of  
images, jointed with music:  
While they are flitting along in their sweet  
faces I peer.  
Then from the pageant I snatch one, the shape  
that seems to me brightest,  
And I seek to impose fetters of verse on her  
form;  
But she refuses to dance and to laugh as she did  
in her freedom,

Only in freedom she sings joined to her sisters  
in song.  
So that train of translucent dreams in its center  
is broken  
When their beautiful queen falls into measures  
and feet.  
Ah, I feel that the best of my hymns are not those  
which are written,  
Brightest of visions are quenched in the em-  
brace of the word ;  
For they are born in a dance of the spirit and  
share in its movement,  
Led in the musical throng where they are  
joined to their kin.  
Still I shall catch them — the butterflies — e'en  
though many escape me,  
Though their wings of gold sheen rudely are  
brushed by my hand ;  
From their pinions bright scales will remain on  
the tips of my fingers,  
Though the fair phantom be flown, seen in its  
splendor no more.  
So the hymns of the ages drop many deeds into  
Lethe,  
Even the song of the hour leaves many min-  
utes unsung ;  
And to-day there are thousands of hymns rising  
up with the moments,  
And with the moments they sink down to ob-  
livion's shades.

But in their motion I live — I exist but a cyclet  
of visions

Into the links of a chain woven by ticks of  
the clock.

But here comes the maidenly form for which I  
was grasping,

Not a dream mid dreams, but all alone and  
herself.

Oh, Elpinike whenever I see the soft turn of thy  
body,

All my images vain dart at a glance into  
life.

### 3. Citrons of Chios.

To the house I came where dwelleth the fair  
Elpinike ;

We sat down by the fire that in the chimney  
was lit,

On the hearth the twigs of the oak and the olive  
were sparkling,

There on the mats we sat down round the bright  
blaze of the fire.

Large was the company — youthful and old —  
about her assembled,

Crowds of suitors and guests who find delight  
in her look.

Many a story was told of the time of the Great  
Revolution,



How Palicaris so bold slew then the barbarous  
Turk.

Next they sang, sang gaily of wine and of cer-  
tain three maidens,

Who dispensed to the guests liquid of poesy's  
flame.

But to me Elpinike came with a jar full of sweet-  
meats,

Bade me to eat of the fruit — citrons from  
Chios they were,

Made by her hand of deep skill and then laid  
away for occasion,

Till the right one should come who could en-  
joy her sweet art.

Though she would not confess, I knew it was she  
who had made them,

For her delicate touch in the preserves I could  
taste,

And the fragrance that flows from her look I  
found in each morsel,

Now mildly flavored anew with the low whis-  
per she breathed.

Long she stood there before me, pretending to  
hold me the server,

Longer I caused her to stand uttering words  
for delay

Sweeter than citrons of Chios — words that were  
sweetened by Eros

With the glance of the eye and the soft touch  
of the hand.

Then she reached me a beaker that brimmed with  
Castalia's pure water  
Just from the spring by the rock, redolent  
with a new song  
Fresh from the Muse; with her face in each drop  
I drank off the crystal —  
Draughts that reach to the soul, quenching its  
thirst by the hymn.  
Now I do nothing but eat of the junkets of fair  
Elpinike,  
With them I drink of the brook, limpid Cas-  
talia's stream.

#### 4. The Judgment.

Tell me what is that voice which I hear, like the  
sound of a trumpet?  
On the dusk air it rides down to the vale from  
the town.  
Some stern duty to men it commands as it were  
from the Heavens,  
Like the final loud blast bidding to judgment  
the world. —  
That sound—'tis but the horn of the strict  
overseer of Olives  
Summoning all of our folk out of the orchard  
below,  
That he may measure the labor which has been  
done by our fingers ;

So we render account daily for that which we  
do. —

Judgment it is, then ; well, let me be thy judge,  
Elpinike ;

What to-day hast thou done ? very severe I shall  
be.

Thou hast gathered, I notice, many a basket of  
olives,

Here in the sack they all lie — each had a  
touch of thy hand.

Now as I think of their destiny happy, I become  
jealous,

What I can not obtain, they without asking  
possess ;

For they receive the glance of thine eye, and are  
grasped by thy fingers,

Then they repose for awhile in the caress of  
thy palm.

Would that I were an olive that I by thee might  
be gathered,

Softly be ta'en to thy hand for a sweet mo-  
ment's embrace !

Nay, I would like to be crushed in the might of  
its fervidest pressure,

Till I would redden the palm with the warm  
drops from my breast.

Nor is this all of thy work, for I see the heart of  
a stranger

As the chief prize of to-day — which thou didst  
pluck with thine eyes

When this morning thou wert descending the  
hillside of Delphi:

Here it lies mid the fruit, mid the dark berries  
it throbs

In the strain of a hymn and beats time with a  
curious movement:

It in these Delphian groves thou art detaining  
in song.

But the just judge releases it not, and this is his  
judgment:

Thou hast no blame, O maid, thou canst not  
help being fair;

Nor can I censure this heart for being the captive  
of beauty:

Let it sing on in its bonds till it shall sing  
itself free.

##### 5. The Name Transformed.

“What is your name?” — she asked me as if she  
were eager to know it,

For the laugh that was gay fell into soberer  
tones.

“What is your name, pray, tell it me?” — thus  
she descends to petition:

So I look in her eyes as I pronounce her my  
name.

Then she seeks to repeat it, but the rude sounds  
make her stumble;

Still I love her mistakes filled with her voice  
and her soul ;

For the erratic light play of her words doth seem  
a lost rainbow,

And each lisp of her tongue is the stray note  
of a hymn.

“ What is your name ? ” again she demands and  
again I repeat it ;

Many a lesson she learns syllabled after my  
speech.

But the melodious blunders that fall from her  
lips I pity,

Pity the Delphian note tied to a barbarous  
word,

“ Leave the harsh tones that only belong in the  
throat of a stranger,

Whisper nought in mine ear but that soft  
music of thine ; ”

So I say to her, yet she persists in trying to  
utter

With exactness my name wound in a wreath of  
sweet sound.

Eros, the flattering rogue, has shot a bad thought  
in my bosom :

That the Greek maid by some spell seeks to  
get hold of my name

And to make it her own. Still daily continued  
her effort

Till the rude Saxon she tamed to the soft kiss  
of her lips ;

Now she has learned my name and also pronounces it rightly,  
Tuned to the accents of love which the fair Helen once spoke.  
I confess hitherto my name was not to my liking,  
But it I took as it came, from an invisible fate,  
Not of my choice or control. But as uttered by Greek Elpinike,  
Now I hear with delight what was my horror before ;  
For of the rough blocks of sound she has built a musical temple,  
Rarest rhythmical notes rise from untunable speech,  
And in my soul the fond image she wakes of a new revelation  
Which I never had dreamed dwelt in the breath of a maid ;  
Deep are the throbs that are borne on the air that is pulsed from her bosom,  
Borne on the wings of the word which she has caught from my lips.  
But not only my name she winds in a garland of music,  
Even myself she surrounds with the refrain of her voice,  
So that she changes me into a subtle, harmonious measure,

And all the day I can hear choruses over the  
heights ;  
Fain would I swoon forever away to a hymn of  
her breathing,  
Till each word of my voice rayed the full  
grace of her form.  
Thus she gently transforms me along with my  
name and my language,  
The whole world she transforms into her  
melody sweet ;  
All the trees of the forest and all the stars of the  
Heavens —  
Even the soul of man hymns to the sway of  
her song.

6. The Draught of Castalia.

Why in such rapturous mood do I walk through  
the Olives this morning?  
Something within me has wings and is attempt-  
ing to fly ;  
For my feet have no weight and are set on the  
earth with an effort ;  
Elpinike I saw leading her horse down the  
hill  
On whose slant are strown the high rocky nests  
of the Delphians,

By them spiti called — built on the rock out  
of rock ;  
Soon she stopped at the rill which flows from  
the source of the Muses,  
Me she invited to drink, scooping her cup in  
the stream ;  
So I drank off the draught — in each drop there  
sparkled a verselet,  
Then the beaker she took, drinking herself of  
the stream.  
Sweet was the laugh of the brook o'er the peb-  
bles, yet sweeter the maiden ;  
Both in beauty seemed one, both in the soul  
sang a hymn.  
Stooping near to the current she bathed face and  
hands in the water,  
When like a nymph she arose out of the crys-  
talline stream ;  
Over her cheek had spread the soft glow of the  
dawn rosy-fingered,  
And her form was a dream sent from some  
Goddess of old.  
Well I know that then she was touched by one of  
the Muses  
Reaching out of their brook where they have  
always their home ;  
For by hand divine had her body become a sweet  
poem,



Which all her motions sang tuned to the  
softest refrain.  
Still on my heart-strings now I can hear the  
strains of that music  
As through the Olives I walk, dreaming of  
what I beheld.

7. The Delphian Weaver.

I am seeking some word to express what I feel  
in this sunlight,  
As through the village I go, threading around  
in the lanes;  
Quite impossible 'tis to find any name for the  
humor,  
Which refuses to slip into the trammels of  
speech;  
But Tranquillity let it be called for the sake of  
these verses,  
Since they demand some word, though not  
exactly to fit.  
Tranquil I saunter along, the village also is  
tranquil,  
Both of us have the same mood, both of us  
seem all alone;  
For the people have gone to the fields — to the  
Olives and vineyards:  
Labor is lord of the place, busy he keepeth his  
folk.

Hark! through the passionless play of the sun-  
beams falls a low music,

Like the chord of a lyre by a weird finger-tip  
touched;

Into this radiant repose so softly the tones are  
transfused,

That they seem to be one with the calm soul of  
the hour,

And to embosom within their lull some speech-  
less emotion,

Which on the air of to-day rests in serenest  
delight.

But what causes that sound? On tip-toe I slip  
to the dwelling

Out of which wells to the sun all that sweet  
fountain of notes;

Open the window stands—sly curious glimpses  
I cast there;

Look! it is but a loom, ancient in form and  
much worn.

But the hand of deft Elpinike is plying the shut-  
tle;

There she sits on the stool—slightly she tips  
it aside

That it move with her body, which steadily back-  
wards and forwards

Sweeps with a manifold grace flowing down  
into the threads.

Out of her fingers the shuttle doth dart through  
the warp like a dolphin

Under the sea, while the woof thrills at the  
touch of her skill.

Soon she rouses the loom into singing through all  
of its timbers,

And she subtly entwines in its refrain her own  
self.

For she builds a sweet poem out of the move-  
ments of body

Sent in soft waves through the room with the  
deep throbs of her soul.—

Tell me, I beg thee, what art thou thinking  
about, Elpinike?

Much would I like to be told — something of  
joy it must be,

Thus to attune thy body, and even the loom and  
the shuttle,

That they unite in one strain with the glad  
sport of the rays.—

She replied: For thee I am weaving a white  
phoustanella;

When thy costume I see, deeply ashamed I  
feel;

All those drab dappled garments of Franks, the  
tasteless barbarians,

Throw now quickly away that thou appear in  
new dress;

Truly this is no place for them here in the dells  
of Parnassus,

Even the child in the field laughs at their color  
and shape.

Yet not one but a dozen, nay I a hundred shall  
make thee ;  
Hence in secret I weave busily all the day  
long.  
Then my hope shall be full when thou movest in  
folds like the chorus,  
And each fold is a note sung to the tread of  
the youths ;  
More than a hundred fair garments — with  
rhythm of song I shall fill them,  
Whose clear strain thou wilt hear as they en-  
circle thy form.—  
So she arranged the web that ever a harmony  
subtle  
Flowed from the quick-flying threads after the  
stroke of the loom ;  
Every thread had a thrill in accord with the  
whole of the music,  
For it was touched by the thought that was in-  
spiring the maid:  
And that thought was of me when I would ap-  
pear in her vesture —  
Graceful white folds falling down, echoing  
softly her soul.

8. The New Didaskali.

When I go now on my walk through Delphi, every  
one knows me,

Gives a familiar salute with a fair word or a  
nod,  
And they call me Didaskali — that is, the Master  
or Teacher,  
With a strange guess at my life, hinted per-  
chance in my face.  
I accept the kind title and always return friendly  
greeting  
To every nod of the head, to every smile of  
the eye.  
Children no longer look up and laugh at the  
foreigner's costume,  
But they will follow my steps, gently take  
hold of my hand,  
Babbling their little delights in many a word of  
old Homer,  
And these words too I greet like the dear faces  
of friends.  
Even the mother will stop the full sweep of her  
loom to salute me,  
As she sits weaving the threads for the phous-  
tána's white folds.  
With the Papás too, the priest, I oft take a stroll  
up the mountain —  
Dark-haired, long-robed priest, with his hair  
parted like Christ's  
Just in the middle, and falling loosely over his  
shoulders;  
Kindly and good is the man, with not a stain  
on his soul.

Hours pass unnoticed as over the valley we look  
from the summit,  
Talking of things far away on the wide world's  
other half  
Where is my home by the River. But with  
Elpinike I play now  
Teacher all the day long, teaching her mouth-  
wrenching words  
Ta'en from my language — words that before  
never flowed from her tongue-tip :  
Willing the master doth work, willing too  
seemeth the maid ;—  
For she keeps asking : What is the name of this  
thing in English ?  
So I utter the sounds which she attempts to  
repeat ;  
O'er the rough vocables then she skips like a  
brook over boulders —  
Still her stammer I love, for it is fair as her-  
self,  
Even new beauty reveals, for she always resem-  
bles Castalia  
When a rock may be cast into the flow of its  
stream ;  
For it will ripple and warble around the ugly in-  
truder,  
Making a melody new sung from the rill of the  
Muse ;  
Were there naught in the way of the stream, the  
beautiful water

Onward would flow in its course, lispings not  
even a note,  
But with the babble and dash of its drops now a  
hymn it is singing  
In the struggle it makes for its own happy  
repose.  
Often merely a pebble thrown into pearly Cas-  
talia  
Tunes her to sweetest of notes which she be-  
fore never sang.  
So in that streamlet I throw a large stone or per-  
chance a small pebble  
Which the clear waters embrace with a pellucid  
soft throb.  
Such is the way that I teach Elpinike the words  
of my language,  
Which with her musical breath she doth con-  
vert to a song.  
Sweet are all her mistakes, for they drip with  
melodious honey,  
Sweeter by far is her mouth twisted to utter  
my words,  
And the rude sounds of my voice that through  
her soft lips are but spoken  
Changed are at once to a strain that hath the  
breath of the Muse.  
But the day on which the Greek maiden has  
learned to talk English,  
Shall a holiday be for the whole Delphian  
world,

And a great pomp of the God that moves with  
the notes of high music

I myself shall arrange to an Olympian  
hymn.

9. The Delphian World.

Industry sends not the cloud of its smoke through  
the Delphian valley,

The black vomit of coal is not beheld from  
high flues,

Nor can be heard the unmusical hum that floats  
from great cities,

Crazing the ear and the soul with the mad  
sounds of unrest.

Not a wagon is here, not even two wheels with  
their axle;

And if they were now here, there is no road in  
the town.

Not the hub of a cart can be found in the pre-  
cincts of Delphi,

Merely a sculptured wheel once I beheld on a  
stone.

From these ways is absent the vehicle's rumble  
and rattle,

Dust defiles not the robes, silver and green, of  
of the trees,

Nor does soot in the Heavens besmirch the gold  
beams of Apollo,



Nor on Earth does it soil here the white folds  
of the youths  
And of the maids, as they joyously move to the  
step of the chorus :  
Heaven and Earth are two notes blent into one  
sweet accord.  
Marble would glisten to-day, as if it were in the  
old temple  
Which on this hillside was perched with the  
bright column and frieze ;  
Many the far-darting gleams it would send down  
over the valley,  
On every sunbeam a thrill thence it would  
pulse to the eye.  
Nor has Castalia, pure virgin, been soiled by the  
ooze of the sewer,  
But the sweet Nymph has a face sparkling,  
translucent with smiles.  
Steam, the rude blower and puffer, and always  
in a great hurry  
Has not disturbed the repose that still envel-  
ops these hills.  
What then is here, dost thou ask? Let me tell  
thee — 'tis the glad Olives,  
'Tis the poetical life, visions outside of the  
world,  
'Tis the fair setting of nature for each appearance  
of beauty,  
'Tis the hymn that is sung both by us mortals  
and Gods ;

And still here are the folds and the form of divine  
Elpinike,  
Fairest of maids on the Earth, dream of what  
Helen once was.  
Smut from Industry's chimney, dust from Com-  
merce's highway,  
Have not blotched her pure robes, have not  
begrimed her white limbs.

## Cyclet Second.

### I. The Rise of the Nymphs.

Never ask me what I am going to do on the morrow —

Whether I Delphi shall leave, or shall remain yet awhile —

I do not know, Good Host, for I cannot form any purpose:

All my intentions are bound with the tight cords of a God;

'Tis a small merry God whose life is merely to dally,

Yet his linked little arms strong are as Hercules' limbs.

To the endless caprice of his wings on my back I am fastened,

Ever together we sport round the new flowers of Spring,

And we scent in each blossom the freshest Parnassian fragrance,  
Even the honey we sip, dripping it into a hymn.  
Only so much of myself I can tell thee: down to the Olives  
Once at least I shall go, fondly there wasting the hours.  
For there always the maidens are near, and still nearer is dreamland —  
Both even melt into one under the dance of the leaves.  
There I lie on the grass by the runnel of pearly Castalia  
Mid the trees, while I list to the small voices of Nymphs,  
If perchance some low little whisper of theirs may be uttered,  
That will redouble my joy, turning the minutes to hymns.  
Long in waiting I lie without any note of their presence,  
Till Elpinike appear on the green brink of the stream.  
Then at once the coy Nymphs are starting to rise from the water,  
Graceful and joyous they rise out of the ripple serene;  
Softly the lilies are peering above the crystalline surface,

And their bosoms unfold whitest Parnassian  
    snows ;  
All undraped are their forms of delight — sweet  
    Nature's own daughters,  
    Born here into the world, loosed from the  
    trammels of shame  
Which jealous custom has thrown over beauty.  
    But now in Castalia  
    They are free from their bonds, free from the  
    prison of clothes.  
This is the reason why so intently I peer in that  
    fountain ;  
    Always some bathers divine I can behold in its  
    depths.  
Out of the long dripping tresses of jet they are  
    pressing the water ;  
    Mark the twinkle of hands laid on the locks  
    that are dark.  
Under the glassy transparency purling over the  
    pebbles  
    I behold the fair limbs tremulous in the clear  
    wave :  
Quite enough of Olympian beauty to wake soft  
    suggestion,  
    As the outlines of white swim in the wavering  
    stream.  
Slowly they come up the shelve of the bank  
    from the watery mirror,  
    Shining their bodies arise, marbles that move  
    into life,

And at each step they bring to the vision fresh  
raptures, revealing  
Some new perfection of form hitherto lost in  
the wave.

There at last all the Nymphs of the stream are  
standing before me,  
As the Goddesses stood once before Paris, the  
judge  
Judging the boon of the world. The hours have  
flown into seconds,  
Time has a thousand new wings freshly put on  
for his flight,  
While I am lying and looking, entranced in  
Olympian visions:  
Life is with them too short, yet is without them  
too long.

Smite me dead at this view, I would pray, that  
never another  
May hereafter intrude into the scope of mine  
eye ;

Or this lot would I choose, O mysterious fates of  
existence,  
Let me eternally live with this fair dream in  
my soul ;

For the dull life of man may be worth immortal-  
ity's dower,  
If it some image embalm that is immortal in  
joy.

Such are the beautiful shapes that start up from  
the brook of Castalia,

When on the brink thou dost stand, O Elpinike  
my fair,  
At my side here under the Olives, the famous  
green sproutings,  
Which at the view of the Nymphs quiver with  
love in each leaf.

2. The Empty Sarcophagus.

Notice, O Dearest, this tomb of marble that lies  
in the vineyard.  
Stained with the rust of the years, gnawed by  
the frost and the rain ;  
Yet in old Delphian days it was perfect and white  
as the linen  
Which then shrouded the form laid in its  
snowy embrace.  
This was the lid of the tomb and on it is scul-  
ptured the princess —  
She who once must have lived, hence she who  
once must have loved.  
Still in the stone you can see the white folds  
wave down her fair body,  
As on the cushion she lies propping her head  
with her arm ;  
And the neat zone round her waist hath the span  
of the hand of a lover  
Just beneath the shy breast hinting the first  
thought of youth.

From the hem of the loose-flowing vestment is  
peering the ankle,

While the lines of the limbs upwards are traced  
in the folds.

But the soft curves of her body are only alive in  
this fragment,

The fond clasp of those arms long since has fal-  
len to dust,

And the hue of the eyes, once brimming with  
flashes of Eros,

Now forever is lost in an impassive blank  
stare;

What thinkest thou has become of the millions  
on millions of treasure

That poured out of those lips at the low whisper  
of love?

Lost, all lost forever and ever. Come then, and  
quickly;

For each moment is winged bearing away in  
its flight

Opportunity: life is the use of opportune mo-  
ments;

Swift, now give me thine eyes raying with  
sweetest desire;

And, may I ask it? — with violence throw thy  
embraces around me,

That I may see in thy glance all the bright  
rainbows of life,

And be chained to thy breast in the tight living  
links of thy fetters,



Ere thy body be chilled into this stone on a  
tomb.

Earth is the happy abode of love with its fount of  
caresses:

Hades will cut them all off — quick, let each  
minute be gain.

### 3. Retrospection and Comfort.

'Tis not every day Elpinike I find in gay  
humor:

For sometimes she looks back to her bright  
days in the past;

Retrospection for all is a sigh-heaving work of  
the spirit,

But for the Grecian maid ever is double the  
pang.

“ See yon dwelling, inwards have fallen the roof  
and the rafters,

Only the walls now stand — they too are rifted  
with breaks.

Many a tendril and vine have begun to creep over  
the ruins,

In their luxuriant folds soon will be hidden each  
stone.

Once we there lived, and yet can be seen the  
form of my lattice

Which the foliage trains still to its winding  
embrace.

Everywhere overrun is my garden with weeds  
and with brambles,

Though pretty flowers peep out from the rank  
growth of the soil.

But behold here also the fragments of some  
ancient temple

That once stood on this spot, far overlooking  
the vale ;

Never again will a mortal be able to put them  
together

Into the whole of that fane as it once rose on  
this height.

Over the hill-side are scattered the beautiful bits  
of white marble,

Often I gather them still, piece them in fancy  
to one.

They were broken by Seismos, the dark-minded  
shaker of Delphi,

Once he the temple destroyed, he is our enemy  
yet ;

Even our modest abode he smote and upheaved  
in his anger ;

Here deserted it lies, still by the flowers be-  
loved.

Often my father has told me with sighs, this  
house was my dower,

All the wealth that I have now is reduced to  
these stones,

And my inheritance, splendid of old, is invested  
in ruins —

Seismos my dower has seized, dowerless now I  
am left.

Once I possessed for myself this beautiful dwell-  
ing and garden,

Many suitors I had from all Parnassian  
towns,

When to my Delphian home there came the time  
of convulsion;

Now all alone I must mourn, left a poor dower-  
less maid." —

Cease thy plaint, Elpinike, sorrow becomes not  
thy presence; —

Think, a dower thou hast richer than any on  
earth.

Has not the world ever wooed thee, and sought  
to inherit thy beauty?

Seismos may rave in his wrath, thou in thy  
ruins hast all.

Part of thy wealth may be wasted, still thou art  
queen of Parnassus,

Holding melodious sway over the songs of its  
youths;

Look now at me who have crossed the broad  
ocean simply to see thee,

Simply to carry thy face back to my home in  
my soul.

## 4. The Festooned Column.

Here in this alley there lies the fragment of some  
ancient column,  
Half imbedded in soil, tipped to one side in its  
fall;  
See the shape of the flower there sculptured in  
happiest outline,  
Just in the bloom of its growth with all the  
leaves on the stalk.  
Even in marble it has a fresh look as if blowing  
in springtide,  
Though rude handfuls of Time long have been  
flung on its form;  
Gently it clings to the stone and lovingly winds  
round the pillar,  
Yet it turns to my glance with a soft smile in  
in its eye.  
So art thou, divine Elpinike, the flower of  
Delphi,  
Ancient thou art, I should say, just in the bud  
of thy youth;  
For if the Delphian priestess now were alive in  
her beauty,  
She thy form would assume, robed in the waves  
of white folds.  
But though so young, thou art hid, methinks in  
the ages of Delphi,

Beautiful flower to-day sprung from a fancy  
of old.

Note but this leaf, how graceful it lies in the  
curve of the marble,

Then another succeeds — half of it only you  
see ;

Then still further below is beheld the mere tip of  
a leaflet,

All the others are hid in the dark tomb of the  
ground.

But the day will come when the leaves shall leap  
from their cover,

And the day will come when Elpinike shall  
bloom,

Now I am going to dig from the rubbish this  
column of flowers,

Piece together its parts, cleanse from the dirt  
every line,

Set up the column in light that again it may sun  
itself proudly:

Then what a fragrance will rise out of that  
flowery shaft !

##### 5. Elpinike's Dream.

'Tis not the first, not the second nor third time  
that I have listened

To the tale of thy dreams — was Elpinike's  
reply.

What is the reason I love thee? Because thou  
art a good dreamer —

Well do I know thou canst dream better awake  
than asleep.

Now it is *my* turn — list then while I shall tell  
thee a vision

Which ingrains all my life both in the day-  
time and night.

Once mid these hills and valleys I passed a sunny  
existence,

Though between now and then ages have thrust  
all their wrath.

Full of action heroic a youth I sprang down the  
mountain,

In each motion of limb felt I the might of a  
God;

And as I wrought, I sang in harmonious measures  
of beauty,

To my action I sang fitting the voice to the  
hand.

Nay, each feat, each movement dropped of itself  
into music,

Every deed was a song, every song was a  
deed.

Suddenly then on the side of these hills I was  
changed to a flower,

Flower that merely was fair while here inactive  
it bloomed.

Thousands and thousands of years I continued to  
grow on the hill-side,

All men my beauty admired, sought too me  
often to pluck ;  
Some dug me out by the roots and bore me to  
far-distant countries,  
For a while I would thrive nursed in the warmth  
of their love.  
Still of the pang I never was rid that I dwelt  
among strangers,  
So I wilted at heart — then I would die from  
the soil.  
But when elsewhere I drooped I continued to  
bloom on Parnassus,  
And my fragrance I threw into each nook of the  
world.  
But they treated me as they would treat some  
small pretty flower,  
They would sport with my buds, breathe in my  
heart's rich perfume,  
And would admire the shape of my leaves be-  
dewed of the Graces,  
Oft in their rude native clay sought they to  
copy my form.  
Oh how tired I grew of being forever a  
flower !  
Longing for sinews and blood sought I the  
man-making deed.  
Once I dreamed that I rose like a youth — the  
ancient Achilles —  
For the armor I sprang, though in the dress of  
a maid ;

Over the tops of the hills there came to me blasts  
of a trumpet  
Calling me back to the life which I once led in  
the world;  
Up from the ground leaped the flower — anew I  
was storming old Ilium,  
Nobly I sang of my act, nobly I acted my  
song.  
But again I was slain by divine irreversible  
arrow —  
Then with my death I awoke, just as to Hades  
I fell.  
Still in my heart, though awake I may be, I have  
a deep longing,  
For — I can not tell what — still a deep longing  
I have.

#### 6. The Cure of Ennui.

As I arose from my cot, I had a disgust this  
morning,  
Which had crept in my soul during the visions  
of night,  
And I said to myself: “To-day I’ll not make  
any poems,  
For I am tired to death, dreaming so much in  
the sun.  
Of the ceaseless procession of fancies fully I’m  
sated,



Proper it is some rest now I should have from  
the throng ;  
Grant me a day without the Muses, without the  
Greek maiden,  
Oh for one day of repose, free from the Olives  
and leaves !  
Let Castalia flow down to the sea without giving  
me trouble,  
And the Nymphs in the rill bathe out of reach  
of mine eye."—  
So my course I direct to the rocks, the bare rocks  
on the mountain,  
And as bare as a rock is the white page of my  
brain.  
Also I go to Krissa, prosaic in dress and in cus-  
toms,  
Freed from the memories old which on the  
Delphian stones  
Are engraved everywhere that they speak with  
the breath of Apollo:  
Now mine ears I have stopped to the sweet  
notes of their voice.  
Then I scourge from my presence each rapturous  
child of my fancy.  
Till in terror it flees, seeking a nook in the  
clouds ;  
Almost with anger out of the air I smite every  
image  
That for a moment may dance, trying to flatter  
mine eye.

But above all other shapes Elpinike I shunned in  
the Olives,  
During one day I resolved not to behold the  
Greek maid.  
Strictly my promise I kept until the first shade  
of the nightfall,  
When I went by the spring, thinking of nought  
in my mood.  
There she was standing right in the line of my  
eye — the enchantress —  
Purpose melted away like a thin frost in the  
sun.  
Home I am driven amid the incessant wild dance  
of the visions  
That had snapped the weak thread tying them  
down in their cells;  
All the orgies of fancy broke loose in a fierce  
Bacchic frenzy,  
To revenge the restraint put on one Delphian  
day.  
Bring me a light, O hostess — where is my paper  
and pencil?  
For these riotous shapes I must enchain in my  
verse;  
Ere they will cease, I must cast them in musical  
far-shining fetters:  
If the right word I can catch, then I am freed  
of their throng.

## 7. Greek Mockery.

Mockery was to-night the new strain of bright  
Elpinike,  
Grecian mockery too, drenching me through  
with its spray ;  
And there was salt in that dash of her spirits  
from oceans of humor,  
Nor could refuge I find as it would splash in  
my face.  
First she mocked my gait with the strut and stride  
of an actor,  
Then my titter she mocked with a low titter  
herself ;  
Turns of my head, the roll of mine eye, my  
hands' thoughtless gesture  
With my Humph and my Ha — even my silence  
she mocked.  
So I was forced to look at myself in the mirror  
of Comus ;  
And my accent I heard, say what I might to  
that Greek :  
All the twists and turns of my tongue in speak-  
ing her language  
Were thrown back on my ear trebly contorted  
and gnarled,  
While a thousandfold mimicry wantonly played  
in her features,

To the words of her speech adding much salt  
of their own.  
Truly to-day tart Comedy's Muse held sway in  
Castalia,  
And from the fount to the maid handed a mask  
as she drank  
Early this morning, when from the village she  
passed to the Olives:  
For each morning she drinks out of a wonder-  
ful cup  
Wrought both outside and inside with many a  
figure of fancy;  
E'en on the rim the clear draught touches her  
lips through a dance  
Wreathed of the bodies of maidens and youths  
to a circle of garlands,  
Whom the Graces bedew with all their fra-  
grance of form.  
Also the cup is reached by a Muse to her out of  
the fountain  
Bubbling forth from the depths, dark and un-  
known, of the Earth.  
Every day from some one of the Sisters she has  
inspiration,  
Drawn from Castalia's draught which she has  
drunk in the morn.  
So the Nine take turns in the gift that her days  
may all differ:  
Thus fair poesy's dreams line her laborious  
hours,

And in each jet of her humor there plays a fanciful rainbow  
Leaping in bright-colored mirth out of my reach to the skies.  
There — just now she was mocking me whilst I spoke of the Muses ; —  
Then the Olives she mocks — mocks e'en my love for herself.  
But at last I caught her and kissed her : “ Mock that, merry mocker,  
Just as oft as you wish ; ” only my language she mocked.

#### 8. The Triumph of Eros.

Certainly all the hours to-day I was laughed at by Eros,  
For the triumphant young scamp led me astray from my plan.  
As I sauntered along, projecting a new mighty poem  
That would reveal all the Gods, mysteries deep would unfold,  
That would the universe set to new music and make me immortal,—  
Into the Olives I strolled, secretly fanned by his wings.  
Suddenly there, as I wandered around, I met Elpinike :

Eros, the rogue, was my guide, always he plays  
me such pranks.

Not a step further I went, I could not move a  
step further;

There I had to remain till of his spell I was  
free.

So the flexible rod I grasped, and at once began  
beating

On the limbs of the trees till the ripe berries  
would fall;

Long I labored and hard, for under the branches  
the maiden

Was with her mother at work, picking the  
fruit from the ground.

When each twig of the tree I had bared of its  
delicate burden,

And a dark layer of fruit wound through the  
blades of the grain,

Then for hours I stooped and helped her gather  
the berries;

Simply a look was my pay, furtively wreathed  
in a smile,

As her hood she adjusted over her chin and her  
forehead,

Always trying to hide what she was careful to  
show.

Meanwhile I was attentively talking to the dear  
mother

Of small things far away: mothers have also  
their charm.

Thus I was bound in a chain that was linked with  
successions of glances  
There the trees underneath, nor could I stir  
from the spot.  
Freedom's wildest delight I had in the trammels  
of prison,  
All the while too a hymn swelled in my bosom  
suppressed.  
While I was thrall'd beneath the green leaves in  
the laugh of his fetters,  
Eros fluttered in sport over the tops of the  
trees;  
Often I saw just the tip of his wing or the point  
of his arrow,  
As he would flit through the twigs, leaving a  
radiant film  
That would hang in the air for a moment then  
pass into nothing;  
When I looked for his form, always he  
vanished away.  
Often too over my head I heard the low chuck  
of his titter,  
As he would giggle in glee, mocking my limbs  
in the gyves.  
So the young scapegrace till nightfall o'er me  
continued to triumph,  
Badgered me there with his jibes as I lay  
helpless in bonds;  
And instead of the mighty magnificent poem I  
planned there,

Now I have written these small tiniest verses  
of love  
Dictated madly by him, the tyrant of soul and of  
body:  
Only disgust I can feel now as the poem I  
read.  
Still, Elpinike, meet me again in the Olives to-  
morrow,  
Thou art the poem thyself which I would put  
into verse.

## 9. Stephane.

A new maiden I met in my stroll through the  
Olives — Stéphane;  
She had one eye of blue that in its depth showed  
a sky,  
While the other was black and was lit with fiery  
glances;  
Eros had into them both shot all the might of  
his dart.  
When I went up and talked to the maid, I was  
greatly embarrassed  
Which of the eyes to address, each one de-  
manding my look;  
Each was a jealous tyrant, shamefully lordling the  
other,  
Each had a spy of her acts following just at  
her side.



Each of those spheres I loved all alone, but both  
not together,  
Separate each I would seek, both I would flee  
for my life.  
'Tis not easy to manage two lovers though kept  
far asunder,  
But if they happen to meet, both may be lost  
by a look.  
What a torture I felt in answering two diverse  
glances!  
For whichever I chose, that was the end of my  
joy.  
Only when into the one burning look two eyes  
may be melted,  
Is the fervor redoubled till it flames down to  
the soul.  
But alas! now the glances are twain — to each  
other are hostile —  
With two looks from one face, tell me, I pray,  
what to do.  
This misfortune, however, was not the end of my  
troubles:  
Elpinike beheld as I conversed with that  
maid.  
Jealousy then for the first time she showed in a  
frown on her visage,  
Saying: which eye dost thou love — is it the  
blue or the black?  
In one body she has two souls, each pulling  
asunder:

Ha, two sweethearts in one fine it must be to  
possess.

Wive her, I pray, and then thou wilt have two  
wives in thy household,

Though her sweet person be one in the embrace  
of thine arms;

And whenever she looks in thine eyes that are  
brimming with rapture,

I defy thee to tell which of thy wives it may  
be.

So thy kisses must always be halved for concord  
domestic,

Lest the one of her looks eat up the other in  
wrath.

In that quarrel of glances thy life will be merry  
with asking :

Please now, what says the blue? what says the  
black, if it please?

Go thy ways — thou art double thyself as the  
eyes of Stephane,

Thy false heart has two beats, thou hast two  
masks in one face.

10. Not Yet Ready.

Thrice already have I resolved on departure from  
Delphi,

Thrice has my purpose been smit by the strong  
hand of a God,

So that it prostrate has lain in my bosom and  
helplessly quivered,

Faint were its struggles to rise after that blow  
from above.

But again there comes to my soul the pang of  
decision,

For the hours of my stay haste to their limit  
in time ;

Shall I remain still longer, or shall I set out  
to-morrow ?

Shall I quit the bright fount with all its pearls  
still unstrung ?

Shall I suddenly leave the fair image and stop  
making poems ?

Shall the Delphian days live or be changed to  
a dream ?

Now in my life they are real, deep-linked in the  
chain of my moments,

But they must lapse when I leave into pale  
Memory's shades.

Yet it surely is time I should start. By my  
thoughts torn asunder,

I go down to the vale, under the Olives I  
walk ;

Every leaflet is stirring its wings to fly from the  
tree tops,

Pinions to me it doth give that I take part in  
its flight ;

And the green millions with silver-starred sparkle  
now dance in the sunlight,

Till their lustre and sport seem to be part of  
myself.

Under the fairest young tree now I saunter — I  
find Elpinike —

Purpose again is laid out by a soft dart of the  
God.

## Cyclet Third.

### I. All in One.

Cast thy look upwards — yonder glistens the snow  
of Parnassus,

Downward now let it fall — there is the glow  
of the rays;

Winter thou seest above, while below in the vale  
is the summer,

Both an influence fair lend to the eye and the  
soul.

But at my feet here cometh the Spring leaping  
out of the mountan,

With young flowers and buds in his soft finger-  
tips held.

Seasons now fly not in terror away from the face  
of each other,

But together they dwell, for they are brothered  
in joy,

And to-day they are dressed in light folds of  
azure translucence —

All can be seen through the haze, yet too the  
haze can be seen.

The bright world is beheld in a dream behind its  
blue curtain,

Still that curtain so fine wondrously too is be-  
held;

While it is subtly revealing fair Nature, itself is  
revealed,

While it others adorns, 'tis thus adorned  
itself.

So art thou, Elpinike, here in the midst of the  
Olives,

Through thee I see all the world, clearly re-  
flected and new;

The old Earth has become a new planet in thee  
discovered,

I a new person am born, born while I gaze in  
thine eyes;

All is seen with new vision and is enrobed in new  
colors,

Which do not hide or distort, but which reveal  
what is true;

And at the same time, thee, Elpinike, sweet  
mirror of Nature,

Thee I behold in thyself while in thee all I be-  
hold.

## 2. Elpinike's Horror.

Thou hast read me, O friend thy new poem, —  
replied Elpinike,

And translated it too, still I can not under-  
stand ;

Surely thou wert possessed when writing to-day  
by a spirit

From thy home far away ; here it belongs not,  
I know.

For in Hellas we dip each word in the beams of  
Apollo,

That they illumine what they touch while too  
they shine of themselves.

Look at yon Olive that stands on the edge of  
steep Pappadeia

Where the cleft descends hundreds of fathoms  
straight down ;

Over the dismal abyss more than half of the tree  
is inclining,

While its stubborn roots grapple for help in  
the rocks.

But the fruit, the fair crop of the branches, drops  
off in the chasm,

Where it is dark as night, nought can be seen  
from the top ;

And for man there is no descent, whatever his  
courage,

Into that depth below — steep as a line in the  
wall ;  
Nor durst any one venture to climb on the limbs  
for the berries,  
Lest the treacherous tree loosen its grasp from  
the brink.  
Thus all its olives are wasted because they fall  
into darkness,  
Yet they are good as the rest, excellent dainties  
would make,  
And they would serve well to nourish the beauti-  
ful voice of the singer  
Who doth sing at the feast hymns full of  
Delphic delight.  
But not a man will descend to that gloom —  
much less will a woman :  
Thus are thy words sometimes, just like those  
olives, my friend.  
For they fall down deep into darkness, said  
Elpinike,  
Whence I can not for my life gather their  
forms or their sense.  
So, let me frankly confess to thy face, were also  
thy verses  
Which thou wert reading just now — olives  
that fell in the gorge.  
They may be good, but so deep they lie that I  
cannot get at them ;  
How I quake to go down into that rayless  
abyss



Where they are lodged now! Think, but a woman  
I am, a Greek maiden  
Gloomy depths I avoid — give me my place in  
the sun  
Making the world as cheerful and bright as a  
temple of marble:  
Oh the dark chasms of soul, worse them I hate  
than this gorge!

## 3. In Corinthian Haze.

Look, O Dearest, away from this summit down  
into yon valley!  
There is the mantle of haze spread o'er the  
Olives and plain;  
From the heights far above, it reaches below to  
the waters  
Of the Corinthian Sea lying in azure re-  
pose.  
Near us light blue is the mountain; deep blue  
it grows in the distance,  
Whilst through the colors so faint, Helius  
scatters his gold.  
Why, thou askest, was made this haze, and what  
is it good for? —  
Beautiful merely to be and to delight with its  
hue.  
For it attuneth the soul with its quiet harmonious  
grandeur;

All of it thou must behold, else thou beholdest  
but naught.

Near by it will not be seen — but away in aerial  
distance

Canst thou observe its frail form ever refusing  
the touch.

Here thou canst not say that it is nor point to it  
yonder

In a particular spot; still it exists and is  
fair.

So do I feel when I look on thy beauty, O  
Elpinike,

I can not say that it lies in thy sweet lips or  
thy cheek

Or thy forehead; I know thou art fair, I ques-  
tion no further,

But delight my fond eye viewing the whole of  
thy form.

I desire not to seek for the deep-hidden reason  
of beauty,

Lest it should vanish like haze when it is  
sought to be grasped;

In thy presence I lose every thought — am trans-  
formed to pure vision;

Simply I know thou art fair — what of thee  
more would I know?

## 4. The Delphic Mood.

Who made the haze and what he made it for, are  
stupid questions,

Any answer thereto I in my soul do dis-  
dain ;

Look ! it is one fair color upon this picture of  
Nature

That is stretched till the sea for the delight of  
us all.

Not any origin wish I to seek of the beautiful  
object,

Not any use shall I ask when it before me doth  
lie ;

Simply I try to surrender myself to the waves of  
its beauty,

There unconsciously float while I am rocked to  
repose.

Clouds are white, and valleys are green, and  
mountains are mottled,

Yet they all are but one and they excite but one  
joy.

Silver-green are the leaves of the Olive, golden  
the sunbeams,

But the mild haze draws a veil wove of trans-  
parent light blue ;

In the distance shineth the sea ; beheld through  
this curtain,

In a calm rapture it lies passing beyond out of  
sight,  
And it speaks to the soul of some tranquil home  
in the future  
That doth rise far away out of the ken of the  
Now,  
Dimly receding in haze, and yet from this summit  
revealed,  
Hinting of worlds that have been, hinting of  
worlds still to be,  
Whither the heart doth turn oftentimes with deep  
aspiration:—  
Hold! the Olives appear, thither at once let us  
go;  
To this glorious world they belong — I seek not  
another,  
Here is the strain of the Muse, here is the  
rapture of love,  
But above all, thy form is beheld on our Earth,  
Elpinike,  
Round thee now Olives have joined in the gay  
whirl of the dance;  
See how the tops of the trees in the sunshine  
with light palpitation  
Flutter afar down the mount full of the joy of  
the hour!  
Under the sport of the leaflets are winding the  
youths of the chorus,  
There is the home of my heart, thither I pass  
through the haze.

## 5. Apollo and Elpinike.

Often it seemeth to me that Apollo doth play  
with his Delphi,  
Hiding his joyous young face merely for sport  
in the clouds  
For a few moments, till we may see what the  
world is without him,  
Then he throws off the mask, making us laugh  
in his beams.  
Thrice to-day I attempted to stir from the house  
when I saw him  
Out on the mountains above, dancing in glee  
o'er the tops.  
Thither I also wanted to go and join in that  
chorus,  
All of sunbeams composed, over Parnassian  
heights.  
But at once he would dive in a cloud and there  
remain hidden,  
Even some droplets of rain down he would dash  
in my face.  
I, beholding him frown from his darkened throne  
in the heavens,  
Quickly returned to the house, deeming him  
moody the while.  
But as soon as I passed in the door and was  
looking behind me,

Shining he was again — laughing aloud at my  
fright.

So three times to-day he has acted, — so,  
Elpinike,

Thou hast acted to-day, Delphian child of the  
God.

For thou hast told the story, so pitiful, of thy  
misfortunes,

That I was ready to weep, when just behind in  
thine eyes

I beheld the faint twinkle of smiles pursuing  
each other,

So that I answered their laugh right in thy  
mirror of tears.

'Tis thy delight to make me afraid with thy frown  
for a moment,

But the cloud in thy face breaks into dimples  
of joy.

#### 6. The Old Temple Seen.

Wretched hovels now hold the high site of  
Apollo's great temple,

Yet some walls can be seen which of the past  
try to tell;

But no more we behold the smooth white embrace  
of the columns

Round the cell of the God which his clear spirit  
indwelt;

And the front of the temple is gone, the far-  
shining forehead,

Where in sculpture were read deeds of the God  
in his might;

Also the frieze, the soft fillet around the head of  
the structure,

Telling a story of old in a low hymn writ of  
stone,

Has been lost from Delphi along with thousands  
of marbles,

Singing each one some strain to the Great Man  
or the God. —

No, these words are not true, for I saw erewhile  
the old temple :

I can the secret impart how thou canst see it as  
well.

I was down in the valley where sports the or-  
chard of Olives,

Elpinike was there — stood at my side as I  
looked,

And she lent me her beautiful eyes, her soul too  
she lent me,

Bade me upward to glance where was the Del-  
phian town;

Through a long verdant view enchased by the  
weft of the branches

The old temple I saw rise once again in its  
pride;

Thither the leaves made a framework of grace  
fullest lines for its splendor,

Through them the marble upsprang gleaming  
    anew from the hill,  
Just as fair Elpinike began in her smiles to en-  
    wrap me,  
And as I felt her mild breath freighted with  
    words from her soul.  
I looked up through the twigs and the leaves and  
    beheld ancient Delphi  
Filled with beauty and light, moving to meas-  
    ures of hymns.

7. Carpe Diem.

Out on the slant of the hill-side lies the old  
    Delphian graveyard:  
By it oft I must pass when to the Olives I  
    go;  
Ancient coffins of stone through the fields in dis-  
    order are scattered:  
Some are just broken in twain struck by a single  
    rude blow,  
Others have had many blows from the ages and  
    crumbled to fragments,  
Still a few have remained whole in the tempest  
    of time.  
But they all are now empty where once were laid  
    the dear bodies,  
Laid with many a tear in the thick casket of  
    rock,



Strong enough to preserve what it held in its  
chamber forever:

But not e'en ashes are here speaking of life  
and its sleep.

How I would like to behold some one of the  
shapes in its splendor

Rise now out of this stone, in a new Delphian  
birth,

And with the flow of the folds sweep there  
through the Halls of Apollo,

Mid the high columns that shine as in the days  
of the God!

But the fair body has perished in spite of the  
strength of the fortress;

So Elpinike thou too must by dark Death be  
entombed.

But let us fly from the thought — let us hurry  
away to the Olives:

There dark Acheron's stream dries in the  
sheen of the leaves,

There are the happy domains of Eros illumed by  
the sunbeams,

There let us know what is love, yielding to  
honeyed caress

While the Hours still lend us their wings and be-  
dew the sweet senses:

For I feel sorely afraid, love may not be after  
death;

Eros, the gladsome, flees from the gloomy regard  
of grim Pluto,

But the Olives he seeks sporting his wings in  
 the trees ;  
 Nor will the light-darter Phœbus descend to the  
 realm of Hades,  
 Only over the Earth hovers his gold-dropping  
 car.

## 8. Seismos.

Didst thou notice just now that rattle of sash at  
 the window?  
 On its hinge turned the door, yet at the sill was  
 no guest.  
 Also the pan on the fire slightly tipped, and in it  
 the water  
 Quivered from some hidden touch with rapid  
 shudders of fear.  
 List ! a low heavy rumble that rolls far away in  
 the distance —  
 Then it dies with a gasp, in a faint mutter of  
 wrath ;  
 Pray, what is it? — To thee I shall tell the truth  
 undistorted,  
 Though I love not to think what I now feel I  
 must speak ;  
 But thou must know what is here. It was Seismos  
 the God of the Earthquake,  
 Who just turned on his side in a wild frenzy of  
 dreams ;

For he is still here beneath us, and often he gives  
us a warning

That he feverish is, restless for deeper re-  
venge.

When he turns in his bed, he rumples the earth  
like a cover:

Just at present he sleeps under this quilt of the  
ground,

And in his dream he grasps it and wrinkles it oft  
till it tremble:

Rigid Parnassian tops roll like the waves of the  
sea,

And the rock-pillared plane of the earth at his  
touch is as water;

Its deep billows' low roar was the dull sound  
thou hast heard.

Once, it is said, long ago he in person rose up  
from this mountain,

Huge was his visage of stone, wrinkled with  
many a rift,

Mighty the brawn of his arm, his leg had the tot-  
ter of hill-tops:

Round him a barbarous blast swept from the  
wilds of the North,

Temples were sunk in the earth, the Gods disap-  
peared in the tempest,

Since then our Delphi has been nought but the  
film of a dream.

Even my days — said she — reach back to a year  
when he smote us,

All of us fled from our homes, many he dragged to his cave.  
Since this spell of his ire, he feverish sleeps in his chamber,  
Still again he will rise, for in his heart he is wroth,  
Wroth at our Delphian God and wroth at our Delphian sunshine,  
Both he would sink into night where he has sway mid the rocks.—  
Elpinike, where is thy basket? cease thy foreboding,  
Glorious Apollo has come, peering just out of the clouds ;  
Wait till Seismos arrive of himself, do not bring him beforehand ;  
Down to the Olives haste, great will the crop be to-day.

9. The Foe of Delphi.

See this rock that is lying here in the midst of the village ;  
'Tis as large as a house, rugged and sharp are its sides.  
Surly and ugly it lies, crouched down in the street like a watch-dog  
That will not stir from his place however much we may coax.

So we all, when we enter our hamlet, have to go  
round it;  
Graze but the edges of flint, see, you are bitten  
by fangs.  
Whence the intruder, you ask? Look upward to  
yon craggy summit  
Overhanging the town, thence you will see it  
was broke;  
For the rift is still fresh at the point where the  
cliff was sundered,  
And this fragment would fit were it but placed  
on that break:  
Now with its mass of huge ruin it stops up the  
entrance to Delphi  
For the stranger who seeks in his long journey  
our town.  
But for us dwellers it is a dark threat as well as  
a hindrance,  
Hinting of chaos and death which were once  
rolled from the steep—  
Hither hurled by a God, by the dark-minded,  
rough-handed Seismos,  
Down on the hamlet in sleep at the still middle  
of night.  
That dire moment, O friend, I still can distinctly  
remember,  
As my father me clasped from the soft rugs  
where I lay  
Wrapped in the folds of sweet slumber and  
cradled by beautiful visions:

Quickly he bore me away, naked and bruised  
in limb.

Up to that time I had lived an harmonious sport  
of existence,

Now my life lies in twain, cleft by a horrible  
hour. —

Thus Elpinike was speaking as she came out of  
the Olives,

And with a shudder she brushed past the rough  
rock in the path.

Certain it is that barbarous Seismos was angry at  
Delphi,

Seeking to whelm the whole town into his  
rocky domains;

The broad earth there surged like a wave or  
whirled like an eddy,

Mountains quivered above smit by the hand of  
the God;

To and fro like a pendulum swung he lofty  
Phloubouki,

Crags he tore off in his wrath, hurling them  
down on the roofs.

Fifty people were lost then, but the Greek  
maiden was rescued,

Elpinike was saved, dowered with beauty di-  
vine;

Even Seismos, the brute, with rapture was seized,  
or with pity

At her beauty's distress, letting her flee from  
his grasp.

Now I tremble with terror and love as I think of  
her danger,  
And with a fervor more deep to my embrace  
her I clasp ;  
Temples are buried, houses are crushed, whole  
peoples have perished —  
But the Greek maiden survives, fair Elpinike  
still lives ;  
And when the morn has touched her soft eye  
with its finger of roses,  
Down to the Olives she speeds, singing a hymn  
on her way ;  
The glad stream of her notes I wander along to  
the well-head,  
Beakers of pearls there I dip out of the foun-  
tain of song.

10. Castalia's Captivity.

Many the deeds of wickedness that are recorded  
of Seismos ;  
But the one which is worst I shall relate to  
thee now —  
He attempted to ravish Castalia. Under her  
fountain  
All the fast earth he quaked, sought to break  
up to her bed,  
And to bear her away as once Proserpine from  
Enna

Was borne off by a God to the Tartarean  
realm.

But our good mother Earth was firm and refused  
him a passage,

Nor to his blows did she yield though she was  
sorely assailed.

Raging he filled the fair lap of the Nymph with  
stones from the mountain,

Hurled from the summit above, till she was lost  
to the sight.

Then she was clasped in the arms of Seismos, of  
rock-hearted Seismos :

Still her low wail we heard while her clear tears  
bubbled out,

So that we knew where she was, revealed by the  
sigh of her waters,

And we rescued her thence when the old brute  
fell asleep.

Still she is fair as she rests in her bed, though  
bruised by the Titan,

And a low music she makes with her trans-  
parent sweet song,

When on the pebbles she dances away down into  
the valley

Where the Olives are seen — thither she hies  
with her stream.



## II. The Lost Old World Regained.

Still I am pained when I think how many a beautiful maiden

In that convulsion was lost — lost to us all evermore.

Oh! the fair forms that lie in the cold embraces of Seismos,

That would trance the eye as they proceed to the dance,

Festively dressed in white linen robes of grace-fullest flexure,

Moving in concord their limbs to the soft waving of sounds,

Fragrantly breathed on by Muses from near Parnassian summits —

One harmonious voice they would become in the soul.

Little use can it be to seek for them since the dark giant

Has devoured their forms or has them bitten to shreds.

Even those whom after long labor we rescued, were mangled

By his rude hand of rock till but a fragment they lay.

But they are gone from our view, buried deep in the caverns of Seismos,

Lost to Apollo's abode, temple of beauty and  
light.

Who would not weep for them? — Hold thy kind-  
red tears, Elpinike;

Thou dost remain on our earth, still too the  
Olives remain;

Thy bright eyes now reflect all that ever was lost  
in fair Hellas,

In thee I see all its maids, Helen herself I be-  
hold.

One is enough, I tell thee, one is far better than  
many —

If only thee I can win, then I have won in  
thee all.

## Cyclet Fourth.

### I. Immortality.

Calmly has Phœbus laid down his bright shield  
on the top of the mountain,

As in the West he descends, clad in his armor  
of gold;

Now he commences to cast off his mail for a  
plunge in the ocean,

Like a warrior on high, weary with spoils of  
the day;

Radiant Delphi he leaves for a time and bright  
Elpinike,

While the afternoon sheen slowly is swooning  
to eve.

Hark! there rises a sullen low moan from the  
tops of the Olives:

People are beating the fruit down with a piti-  
less rod.

So the hapless young trees must surrender the  
stores of their branches,

Scourged by the hand of harsh fate, stript of  
their glory and pride.

Many a leaf in a slow, sad whirl to the ground  
now is falling,

Quits unwilling the twig where it could sport  
all the day.

Many a branch, too, full of fresh juices and ten-  
der, is broken

By the rude blows that fall on the bright head  
of the tree.

Even the limbs are lopped by the knife and  
borne to the village,

Where in the hearth they are cast, quickly to  
ashes are burnt.

So there remains of the merry new dance that  
took place in the tree-tops,

Nought but the dust of the pyre that in the  
chimney is left.

As I walk through the trees of the orchard, a  
tear will keep dropping

When I think of the fate which my young  
Olives once smote.

Nor can I tell what there is in the air of to-day  
that affects me;

Always I melt at some view, joining fair youth  
to decay.

What are these fragments of stone? A sarco-  
phagus, broken to pieces,

Which I stumble against as they lie strown in  
my path.  
Here mid the fallen green branches and leaves  
is the hollow stone casket  
Where a young body once lay, torn from its  
parents' fond arms ;  
And in the midst of the Olives, under the sport of  
the leaflets,  
Urns were once placed in the rock, holding  
sweet youth and its love.  
But the stone still remains, though long since  
has perished the treasure,  
Fate refuses return by an unchanging  
decree ;  
Nor is Nature, methinks, to her children wholly  
impartial,  
Some she recalls to her breast, others forever  
she spurns.  
Seasons depart and return with delight to the  
Delphian hill-side,  
Disappear for a time but are restored with new  
birth ;  
High Parnassus, propped on its pillars, knows no  
mutation,  
Though for the summer it change merely its  
vestment of snow ;  
Ever green are the pines that slope down the sides  
of the mountain,  
While the leaf of the bush hints, when it falls,  
the new bud ;

Still too Castalia is here—the perennial musical  
runnel,

Singing the same happy strain heard by the  
poets of old ;

But, ah youth, the fairest, loveliest blossom of  
Nature

Passes away at its bloom by irreversible  
law ;

Man, the top of creation, decays, and soon drops  
into ashes —

Flung by time on the earth as a mere handful  
of dust.

What is fairest must die, its place is soon filled  
by another,

While there endures the rude rock ages on ages  
the same.

Thus have perished the youths and thus have  
perished the Olives,

But not thus shall I die, if my behest be  
obeyed ;

For a testament I have bequeathed with the  
single provision :

Plant a young Olive or two over my grave by  
the rill ;

Then I cannot but think I shall wake to the joy  
of the leaflets,

As I lie in repose under my blanket of  
earth ;

Or if I sleep, I shall dream once more the sweet  
dreams of my lifetime,

When I roamed through the trees, sporting  
with image and song.  
But the Olive there planted, I know, will rejoice  
to spread o'er me,  
Through the soil it will send rootlets to  
wreath me in love ;  
With the sap I shall rise, and the tree I shall  
render immortal,  
For my deathless soul I shall imbreathe in the  
leaves ;  
There they forever will sport in the golden  
network of sunbeams,  
Just as I saw them of old as I lay down by the  
stream.

## 2. Renascence.

True it is, Elpinike, of me, thou faithful ob-  
server —  
What thou hast said with a laugh, I must con-  
fess with a sigh :  
Silvery hairs have begun to intrude on the slant  
of my temples,  
With their dark comrades they stay winding in  
subtle embrace ;  
Nor can they be any longer expelled by the hand  
of rude power,  
For their sum is too great, so they defiant  
remain.

Many a wrinkle has furrowed deeply the field of  
my forehead,

Running aslant and across — marks by my life  
branded there;

Many a channel spreads out like a fan from the  
lake of my eyelids,

Passages cut through my cheeks by the fierce  
tempest and flood;

Often, I tell thee, have they been filled with hot  
torrents of sorrow

When the dark cloud of fate burst on my head  
from above.

Never again will these channels be smoothed from  
my visage, oh never!

Like the fair rose of youth which I behold in  
thy face;

Worn too deep in the storm they have been to be  
now leveled over,

Traces will always remain where the wild cur-  
rent once swept.

Still, Elpinike, like thee I shall bloom in spite of  
my body,

Richer shall be, too, the yield from the deep  
furrows of life,

Golden forever the stream shall flow through the  
tear-riven channel,

E'en from the wounds of the tree buds shall  
burst forth to the sun.

For the glow of thy youth I shall hand thee sweet  
draughts of my fancy,



And for the flash of thine eyes see me throw  
sparkles of words ;  
With the red morn in thy cheek I shall mingle  
the gold of my evening,  
And with thy youthful embrace now I shall  
match a young dream.  
For my soul's latest garland exchange thy body's  
sweet poem,—  
I too fresh flowers shall wreath while there is  
life in this frame,  
Know that age is transformed into youth by Love  
and the Muses,  
And though Time crisp the flesh, Poesy blos-  
soms eterne.  
Look at this aged Olive beneath which now we  
are sitting,  
Centuries long have sought vainly to blast its  
young life.  
Twisted and knotted and bent it has been by the  
winds and the tempests,  
E'en full of holes is the trunk ; hark ! it is hol-  
low within.  
Here it was cruelly struck by an axe in the hands  
of a peasant,  
There a branch it once lost, dearer, methinks,  
than itself ;  
Nay, it has once been rifted in twain from the  
top to the bottom  
In some violent storm sent from above by the  
Gods.

Still it is giving forth branches and shoots from  
its body so shattered,  
E'en on its scars you may see sprouts leaping  
out of the bark,  
And it buries its wounds in an overgrowth smooth  
of new tissue,  
Still their place can be told by the fresh rind  
and the buds.  
Youthful its head of silver-green leaves rises up  
in the orchard,  
No one would think of its age, were the old  
trunk not beheld.  
Every branch too is laden above with a rich crop  
of olives ;  
Far more it bears of the fruit than the young  
tree in the soil ;  
For out of each ancient fibre of wood shoots up-  
ward a sapling,  
Till around the hoar stem dances a cluster of  
youths  
With the thousandfold laugh of the leaves and  
the limbs on the hill-side :  
'Tis a hymn you would say, sung by Parnassian  
choirs.  
Tree of the Muses, thyself into youth eternally  
changing,  
Even thy age is the soil in which is nourished  
thy bloom,  
And the older thou growest, and the more wrink-  
led thy body,

The more sprouts seem to spring from the  
rich fibre of years.  
Such may I be — age into youth forever trans-  
forming,  
Till the old trunk when it falls shall be borne  
off to the pyre.

3. The Last Words of Apollo.

Not every day does Apollo smile on the hill-side  
of Delphi,  
But he covers his face in the dark folds of the  
clouds ;  
For he has two garments — the white one of  
youth and of radiance,  
And another one grained in the deep colors of  
night.  
From the second he shakes out the showers and  
sprinkles the Olives :  
Then I am driven to roof, while Elpinike re-  
mains  
Out in the storm at her work, and sings to the  
fall of the raindrops  
Melodies sweet of her soul, though all the  
Olives be wet.  
There in the cabin I couch on a rug alongside of  
the fireplace,  
Look at the blaze and think — think of the  
maid in the rain.

But as I sit there alone, Apollo rises within  
me

Bright is the form of the God, mildly serene is  
his glance,

Proud is the lip though and high is the tread of  
the slayer of Python,

And from his body divine sparkles ambrosial  
youth.

Of a sudden each hidden dark chamber within me  
is lighted,

And a new sunrise I have all to myself in the  
hut.

Thus he to me familiarly talks in tones of fair  
promise ;

“ Though unseen by thine eye, do not suppose  
I am lost ;

For I oft leave the sky to rise in the hearts of  
my people,

Often I change my abode here from without to  
within.

He knoweth not my true worship who can not  
carry my sunshine

Through the time of dark days that I insert in  
the bright ;

For the world I have built out of layers of clouds  
and of sunlight,

Although man I have made only of beams, if  
he will.

Often the heavens must darken and tempests  
will bury my visage,

But my boon thou hast not till thou art Phœbus  
thyself.

Look now under the Olives, thine own Elpinike  
is busy

In the fierce rain, still she sings — sings in the  
storm of her love.

She my true worshiper is, for she bears my  
face in her bosom,

So that wherever she stays, there I am shining  
all day.”

#### 4. The Outlook.

The last evening it was that I saw Elpinike at  
Delphi :

Softly her words in mine ear throbbed the low  
strain of a hymn

After I had come home and lain down on my  
rugs at the hearthstone :

There I lay down by myself, filled with her  
musical speech.

Always my thoughts were lingering over her  
tones and her glances,

Till by degress I had strayed into the realm of  
the dream ;

Then each wandering fancy was buoyed with the  
wish of my waking,

And each hope of my heart turned at its birth  
to be true ;

Every image in sleep was full of the glimpses of  
daytime,

And what I thought of awake, changed to a  
vision by night.

For I dreamed I had borne far away divine  
Elpinike,

Out of her bright Greek home over the breadth  
of the sea ;

So impassioned had I become in the spell of her  
beauty

That the Delphian rocks could I without her  
not leave.

Then I led the Parnassian queen along in my  
journey,

Joyous we turned from the Dawn glimmering  
faint on the heights,

Toward the Evening we fled on the fire-winged  
chariot of Hesper,

Where are the garden and trees hanging with  
apples of gold,

Which long ago were by Poets beheld from top  
of Parnassus,

Like an island of dreams floating Olympian  
fruits,

As it lay far off in the West mid the sheen of  
Apollo:

Now the presage is true and Elpinike has  
come.

There in my land by the sunset I built her a  
home, a new temple,

That she might have an abode fit for a Goddess of old;  
And I built it of whitest and purest of far-glancing marble,  
Round it I drew a bright frieze leaping with forms of the feast,  
While the roof was supported by many a glistening column;  
Many a sculpture I placed in the fair hall of the fane.  
In the beams of the sun how merry the dance of the marbles!  
The whole temple did dance as with new lustre it rose.  
There it stood on the banks that hold the great Father of Waters,  
Monster huge of the West — tawny the flow of his mane —  
Ever leaping along down his deep-delved path to the sea-caves  
Where he doth rest from his race mid his sleek dolphins and calves.  
Smear'd is his face with the clay of each land that he laves in his passage,  
Cloudy with turmoil his brow as he defiantly rolls,  
Rearing his head from the stream, he shakes his muddy old chaplet,  
In some anger he seems ever to hurry along.

Hitherto he is said to have been the terror of  
Muses,  
And they have fled from his banks, shrieking  
in fear or disgust.  
Still there boldly I built a Greek fane to mine  
own Elpinike,  
And I installed her within, that of my house  
she be queen.  
Joyous and faithful she sped with me over the  
continents mighty,  
Over the ocean she passed, neither she flinched  
nor she tired;  
Soon a new Hellas she found, and a new Parnas-  
sian garden  
Filled with the fragrance of flowers grown in  
Apollo's domain.  
There she was happy — and in her new home by  
the side of the River  
Always her glances serene tokened her love-  
liest mood;  
Robed too she was in the folds; when she moved  
through the mansion of marble,  
Graces followed her train, strewing their wealth  
as she passed;  
And on the shore where raged that turbulent God  
of the River  
Oft she attuned the sweet hymn, calming  
the wrath of the wave;  
Filled was her strain of delight with the ancient  
Delphian measures,



That Castalia had throbb'd from her clear  
source long ago,  
As she went dancing adown the green hill through  
the orchard and vineyard,  
Winding in choruses bright, garlands of maid-  
ens and youths.  
But a cry fell into my dream so loud I still can  
remember,  
“ O Elpinike, stay ! why wilt thou flee from  
my side ? ”  
As I woke I caught stray notes of a vanishing  
music :  
Farewell, ye Olives, and hills ! farewell, O  
Delphian days !



## NOTE.

It has been repeatedly suggested by friends that I ought to append to the present book some account of its origin, with an explanation of the locality in which its incidents are placed. My answer usually has been that those who wish any further description of Delphi can find the details in my *Walk in Hellas*, and in the writings of travelers on Greece.

Still I may now be permitted to take advantage of this reprint of the book in order to add a note here out of the way, at a point which only the most persistent reader will ever reach, unless he skips. At the present time there is a new interest in Delphi from the fact that the old town may be soon brought to light by excavation, which, we all hope, will be the work of the American Archæological Institute. My most persistent reader — I only dare speak of him in the singular — may be interested in hearing a word concerning this book, which is itself a sort of poetic excavation of antiquity.

It was written on Delphic ground during the winter and spring of 1879, in the midst of the scenery which it attempts to describe and to fill with the antique spirit of the place. At that time I passed several months in the Parnassian region, and the unforeseen, but perhaps natural, result was these poems.

After I had returned home, they were printed in St. Louis the following year (1880), though the book was never published. A local bookseller permitted his name to appear on the title page, in the publisher's place, but he had nothing to do with publication. Five hundred copies were printed, of which a large portion perished in a fire at the bindery. Of the rest,

some were sold, but the most were given away; a few wandered into the hands of reviewers, through whom the book received a little notice in the public press. Also two or three friends took the trouble to write and to print articles calling attention to the poems.

All this seems long ago now (1891). After the lapse of a dozen years — quite a large fragment of a human life — I have gone back to the book and tried to live over its experience anew, by means of reading and recollection. In this state of mind, I have subjected it to a thorough revision, and have made a good many small corrections, of which the book had always stood in need. But there has been no attempt to re-write it, or seriously alter its character; the little Delphic brook remains what it was, only some unsightly weeds have been removed from the clear flow of the stream.

Thus the book has been given a new chance to make its way in the world. I may say that it has always had a small quiet life in the hearts of its friends, a life quite removed from the busy whirl of the time's literature. Thus its existence has been somewhat like that which it has described, a Delphic existence, with an idyllic repose in a secluded nook. Probably such will always be the life of this book, in deep accord with its character. Still the friends just mentioned continue to speak of it, and thus provoke some inquiry for it by their comments in private conversation. This demand, though neither loud nor strong, it is always worth an author's while to satisfy; here lies his reward, if he is to have any reward.

Still I doubt if I had re-printed this book, if another purpose had not urged me. The period has arrived when it is reasonable in every man to bring together the scattered results of the labor of a life-time, and especially, to give to the children of his brain their earthly inheritance, as far as he has any to give. *Delphic Days* is one of the products of a love for classical antiquity, and a continued intercourse with its spirit. The book forms an integral part of a series of works which have sprung up along the furrows of the

workman's life, and which seek to transfuse what is best of Hellenic spirit into our Western world, as well as to embody the same in a human experience. These works, which are at least an attempt to free classicism of pedantry and to make it live afresh, are now to be collected and published. *Delphic Days* is a link, I must believe, a necessary link in the chain.

It need hardly be said that these effusions bubbled out on the spot, with no violence on my part, as far as I am aware. They were written in immediate view of the scenes, under olive trees, at the fountain's side, on the mountain tops. Their direct source was not books, but Greek Nature and Life, as they stood before my eyes for months. Undoubtedly antiquity continually plays into the modern landscape, and colors it. This interfusion of the old and the new is probably what gives the main tone of the book. Still I would have the reader remember that these poems were not composed in a library with shelves full of Greek and Latin authors, but in the open air of Delphi, mid breezes fresh from Parnassus just above me.

A new and lasting experience in life was that stay in the Delphic world — a world so small and so primitive, yet so complete and self-contained, at the same time so full of ancient recollections. Once in it, I could not soon leave it; and when I did leave it after several weeks' sojourn, I had to go back to it, before quitting Greece finally. To me that spot was the jewel of the whole European journey. Oldest Hellas — not the Athenian and historic, but the Homeric and pre-historic — seemed there to rise suddenly to life in the present, and to take hold of the senses, the heart and the imagination. Nature gave a setting of grandeur, over which Memory played with all her magic.

To the well disposed reader I may be permitted to give a hint or point of view, from which I would like him to consider the book. As I now look back at it through so many years, I think I can judge of it as something which is removed from me into the distance. I may, accordingly, make the statement, that, while it

consists of detached pieces written in various moods, it is nevertheless one in spirit, and portrays a Whole — this Whole being the little idyllic world of Delphi. The poems, therefore, are not to be taken separately, in the final judgment of the work, but as parts of the totality. The question which must be put to them, at last, is, Do they, taken together, portray a world? Each poem has, or ought to have its own little light, but it must receive its chief illumination from the whole of them. In form, the work is lyrical, not mythical; that is, it has no story to hold its parts together, and to keep the stream of interest flowing in the channel of narration; its bond is more impalpable, and lies entirely in the spirit common to them all. At the same time the poems ought to show their outer visible scene, and leave in the reader a complete picture of this Delphic world.

Now a few words in regard to the meter, to which objection is sometimes made. I can only say that this too came of itself. The elegiac distich, in which the poems are written, had no meaning for me till I touched classic soil. I had read this meter in the Greek and Latin poets, but without any inner sense of it, in spite of the rules of scansion. As far as I could see or feel, it had no necessity of being just so and not otherwise; it corresponded to no music or rhythm within me, or in the world. It was an artificial knack, and not an art; it might just as well, or even better, have been some other metrical form. The best modern reproduction of this measure is, doubtless, to be found in Goethe; not the most accurate, still the best reproduction. But Goethe too had left me uncertain and uninitiated. All this, however, changed after a short stay in Rome. There both Nature and Mind began without effort to clothe themselves in the present rhythmical garb. I do not now recollect the exact moment of my Roman visit when this metrical spirit took possession; before I was aware, it was installed and at work. Again the Roman Elegiac poets were read with new meaning and delight; the Greek Anthology

brought all its honey in thousands of little cells fashioned after the pattern of this meter; Goethe's *Elegies* were pored over with fresh inspiration, and found to be better than their classic originals. Such was my Roman experience in the present matter; the journey to Delphi came later, but kept time to the same measure.

The metrical tendency, which has been above indicated, retained its hold on me as long as I remained in classic lands; it did not let go at once after I had come home; even now it sometimes haunts me. But in Italy and Greece, the hills and the valleys, the winds and the waves took shape and moved to this measure; the life of the people, their manners, their thoughts and actions had some subtle attunement to it; the palaces, the temples, the monuments seemed to have been built to its beat. Even the gait of the traveler in classical lands keeps in a kind of rhythm to this classical music; his images rise and move in harmony with it; his words of necessity drop into the same cadence.

Some such experience everybody has who goes to Italy and enjoys it, for this enjoyment is a musical attunement of the soul to the land. In fact, every age, every people, every great deed of man and every grand object of nature has its own measure, its own metrical expression flowing from the heart of it, and attuning the ear which can hear. Greece, Rome, England, Marathon, Gettysburg, each has its special musical beat; the forest, the ocean, Niagara, all have it too, ready to give it to the man who can seize it and put it into language. Just here lies the function of the poet. This measured movement of the thing itself he must catch, and make the movement of his poem; such is the only true meter. Its undulations must flow out of the soul of the theme, and not be fastened upon the same from the outside. All nice adjustment of feet and syllables, of vowels and consonants, never touches the source of genuine versification. Of course we must reach the outposts of prosody by counting

feet and syllables; but the heart of the fortress is not taken by storming an outpost. Nothing is plainer than that the great poets are neither smooth nor regular versifiers; still they are true, true to the thing to be sung about, and this should be the supreme object with every singer, great or small.

A few prosodical remarks, however, may be helpful to some readers. The meter in which the book is written is named the elegiac, and is composed of the hexameter and the pentameter, so called, though the latter also has six beats. The two lines together constitute the distich, which is the fundamental metrical norm, since its repetition runs through the poem. The distich has a certain completeness in itself, quite as much as the rhymed couplet in English. The second line of the distich (pentameter) falls into two equal parts, separated by a strong cæsural pause:

Héld in a hýmn of the Góð, || thítter I páss to his shríne.

The effect of this metrical scheme is to give a very emphatic ending to the distich; one might almost say, it has a double ending. Herein lies its chief difference from the hexameter, which runs on, line after line, without being held up in any such emphatic way, and hence is better adapted to continuous narration. It is manifest that the elegiac distich grew out of the hexameter, out of the need of breaking up the Homeric continuity, and of marking more strongly the single thought or image. The distich in its very form hints the transition from the epical to the lyrical, from the narrative to the reflective manner. The grand hexametral organism of Homer broke up into its elegiac units; thus the metrical change images, to a certain extent, the political and social change in Greece after the time of its greatest poet.

Still the hexameter exists in the elegiac distich, is, in fact, the little longer half of it. This hexameter, as reproduced in English, has met with violent opposition. Mr. Spedding the critic, Mr. Swinburne the poet, and Lord Derby, the translator of Homer, with others, have



strongly condemned its use. It has been pronounced an acknowledged failure. Who acknowledged such failure? Longfellow is not far from being the most popular English-speaking poet of the last two generations; *Evangeline* and *Miles Standish*, written in hexameters, are not far from being the most popular of the larger poems of Longfellow. Where is the failure? Clough's *Tober na Vuolich* and Kingsley's *Andromeda* do not indicate failure. Of course, there can be poor hexameters, as there can be poor blank-verse, or poor prose.

The trouble does not lie, then, in the English language, as is sometimes claimed; it lies in the man who uses the English language. The unperverted ear will take the hexameter in our tongue, as anybody can easily discover by testing the matter. But the person who reads the English hexameter with Greek and Latin scansion in his head is lost, because he has a false standard. Then comes classic pedantry; how much will not that account for! Into its wilderness we cannot possibly enter.

The attempt here is to employ the free hexameter, free from classic pedantry, yet adhering to the hexametral norm. There must be freedom in its employment, but not license; there must also be law but not servitude. To unite harmoniously freedom and law is as necessary in a metrical as in a political organism.

In Germany, the battle over the strict and the free construction of the hexameter has been going on for a century. Two of Germany's most distinguished poets, Voss and Goethe, have been the exemplars, if not the leaders of the two tendencies. The translation of Homer by Voss in hexameters, is a marvelous, but artificial product; very few readers in these days will think that it has much genuine Homeric life. But Goethe's hexameters, though freely constructed, are instinct with poetic vitality; on the whole, they are the best since those of Homer. They are not so elegant as some which the Latin poets have written, but they

have more life. Voss satirized the metrical freedoms of Goethe and Schiller, in a distich:

In Weimar und Jena macht man Hexameter, wie der;  
Aber die Pentametér sind doch noch excellentér.

Voss was justified in seeking to curb metrical excesses; still the Weimar poets were right in the deeper sense, for they united metrical freedom with the observance of the law. As far as I can see, the literary judgment of the world has set its seal upon the work of the Weimar poets; there is a consensus of the competent in their favor.

Rules, however, the best rules can give only an external help in versification. The exact point at which freedom becomes license, or law becomes tyranny, must be left at last to good taste and sound judgment. Even then people of good taste and sound judgment will differ about some cases.

Finally, I shall revert to what I said before: the meter must be felt to proceed from the thing itself, and not to be made by the poet, and applied from the outside. He must be gifted with an inner ear that can catch the true measure of the object which he portrays. In the present case, the question must be, Does the Delphic world itself give the beat of the measure here employed and move to the same by its own musical nature? If not, then the verse drops down to mere classical reminiscence and imitation — perchance lower.









**WITHDRAWN**



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