

SHE, TO HIM--I

When you shall see me in the toils of Time,
My lauded beauties carried off from me,
My eyes no longer stars as in their prime,
My name forgot of Maiden Fair and Free;

When in your being heart concedes to mind,
And judgment, though you scarce its process know,
Recalls the excellencies I once enshrined,
And you are irked that they have withered so:

Remembering that with me lies not the blame,
That Sportsman Time but rears his brood to kill,
Knowing me in my soul the very same -
One who would die to spare you touch of ill! -
Will you not grant to old affection's claim
The hand of friendship down Life's sunless hill?

1866.

SHE, TO HIM--II

Perhaps, long hence, when I have passed away,
Some other's feature, accent, thought like mine,
Will carry you back to what I used to say,
And bring some memory of your love's decline.

Then you may pause awhile and think, "Poor jade!"
And yield a sigh to me--as ample due,
Not as the tittle of a debt unpaid
To one who could resign her all to you -

And thus reflecting, you will never see
That your thin thought, in two small words conveyed,
Was no such fleeting phantom-thought to me,
But the Whole Life wherein my part was played;
And you amid its fitful masquerade
A Thought--as I in yours but seem to be.

1866.

SHE, TO HIM--III

I will be faithful to thee; aye, I will!
And Death shall choose me with a wondering eye
That he did not discern and domicile
One his by right ever since that last Good-bye!

I have no care for friends, or kin, or prime
Of manhood who deal gently with me here;
Amid the happy people of my time
Who work their love's fulfilment, I appear

Numb as a vane that cankers on its point,
True to the wind that kissed ere canker came;
Despised by souls of Now, who would disjoint
The mind from memory, and make Life all aim,

My old dexterities of hue quite gone,
And nothing left for Love to look upon.

1866.

SHE, TO HIM--IV

This love puts all humanity from me;
I can but maledict her, pray her dead,
For giving love and getting love of thee -
Feeding a heart that else mine own had fed!

How much I love I know not, life not known,
Save as some unit I would add love by;
But this I know, my being is but thine own--
Fused from its separateness by ecstasy.

And thus I grasp thy amplitudes, of her
Ungrasped, though helped by nigh-regarding eyes;
Canst thou then hate me as an envier
Who see unrecked what I so dearly prize?
Believe me, Lost One, Love is lovelier
The more it shapes its moan in selfish-wise.

1866.