

**GOULD
ELIZABETH
PORTER**

STRAY PEBBLES FROM THE
SHORES OF THOUGHT

Elizabeth Gould
Stray Pebbles from
the Shores of Thought

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Stray Pebbles from the Shores of Thought:

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Elizabeth Porter Gould

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POEMS OF NATURE

TO WALT WHITMAN

"I loafe and invite my soul."

And what do I feel?

An influx of life from the great central power
That generates beauty from seedling to flower.

"I loafe and invite my soul."

And what do I hear?

Original harmonies piercing the din
Of measureless tragedy, sorrow, and sin.

"I loafe and invite my soul."

And what do I see?

The temple of God in the perfected man
Revealing the wisdom and end of earth's plan.

August, 1891.

TO SUMMER HOURS

DAY

Trip lightly, joyous hours,
While Day her heart reveals.
Such wealth from secret bowers
King Time himself ne'er steals.
O joy, King Time ne'er steals!

NIGHT

Breathe gently, tireless hours,
While Night in beauty sleeps.
Hold back e'en softest showers, —
Enough that mortal weeps.
Ah me, that my heart weeps!

A TRUE VACATION

IN A HAMMOCK

"Cradled thus and wind caressed,"
Under the trees,
(Oh what ease.)
Nature full of joyous greeting;
Dancing, singing, naught secreting,
Ever glorious thoughts repeating —
Pause, O Time,
I'm satisfied!
Now all life
Is glorified!

Porter Manse, Wenham, Mass.

A QUESTION

Is life a farce?

Tell me, O breeze,

Bearing the perfume of flowers and trees,

While gaily decked birds

Pour forth their gladness in songs beyond words,

And cloudlets coquette in the fresh summer air

Rejoicing in everything being so fair —

Is life a farce?

How can it be, child,

When Nature at heart

Is but the great spirit of love and of art

Eternally saying, "I must God impart."

Is life a farce?

Tell me, O soul,

Struggling to act out humanity's whole

'Midst Error and Wrong,

And failure in sight of true victory's song;

With Wisdom and Virtue at times lost to view,

And love for the many lost in love for the few —

Is life a farce?

How can it be, child,

When humanity's heart

Is but the great spirit of love and of art
Eternally crying, "I must God impart."

TO A BUTTERFLY

O butterfly, now prancing
Through the air,
So glad to share
The freedom of new living,
Come, tell me my heart's seeking.
Shall I too know
After earth's throe
Full freedom of my being?
Shall I, as you,
Through law as true,
Know life of fuller meaning?

O happy creature, dancing,
Is time too short
With pleasure fraught
For you to heed my seeking?

Ah, well, you've left me thinking:
If here on earth
A second birth
Can so transform a being,
Why may not I
In worlds on high
Be changed beyond earth's dreaming?

IN A HAMMOCK

The rustling leaves above me,
The breezes sighing round me,
A network glimpse of bluest sky
To meet the upturned seeing eye,
The greenest lawn beneath me,
Loved flowers and birds to greet me,
A well-kept house of ancient days
To tell of human nature's ways, —
Oh happy, happy hour!

Whence comes all this to bless me,
The soft wind to caress me,
The life which does my strength renew
For purer visions of the true?
Alas! no one can tell me.
But, hush! let Nature lead me.
Let even wisest questions cease
While I breathe in such life and peace
This happy, happy hour.

Porter Manse, Wenham, Mass.

O RARE, SWEET SUMMER DAY

"The day is placid in its going,
To a lingering motion bound,
Like a river in its flowing —
Can there be a softer sound?"

– *Wordsworth.*

O rare, sweet summer day,
Could'st thou not longer stay?
The soothing, whispering wind's caress
Was bliss to weary brain,
The songs of birds had power to bless
As in fair childhood's reign.

The tinted clouds were free from showers,
The sky was wondrous clear,
The precious incense of rare flowers
Made sweet the atmosphere;
The shimmering haze of mid-day hour
Was balm to restlessness,
While thought of silent hidden power
Was strength for helplessness —
O rare, sweet summer day,
Could'st thou not longer stay?

Porter Manse.

AN OLD MAN'S REVERIE

Blow breezes, fresh breezes, on Love's swiftest wing,
And bear her the message my heart dares to sing.
Pause not on the highways where gathers earth's dust,
Nor in the fair heavens, though cloudlets say must.
But blow through the valleys where flowers await
To give of their essence ere yielding to fate;
Or blow on the hill tops where atmospheres lie
Imbued with the health which no money can buy.
But fail not, O breezes, on Love's swiftest wing
To bear her the message my heart dares to sing.

The breezes, thus laden, sped on in their flight,
As, cradled in hammock, I sang in delight,
On that blest summer day in the years long ago,
When life was all sunshine and youth all aglow.
The sweets of the valleys, the breath of the hills
Were gathered – the best that our loved earth distills —
As, obedient still to my wish, on they flew
To the home of my darling they now so well knew.

Alas for the breezes, alas for my heart,
Alas for my message, so full of love's art!
If only the breezes had followed their will,
And loitered among the pure cloudlets so still,
They'd have met a fair soul from the earth just set free
In search of their help for its message to me;
The message my darling, with last fleeting breath,
In vain tried to utter, o'ertaken by death.

The breezes, fresh breezes, have blown on since then,
With messages laden again and again.
As for me, I send none. I wait only their will
To bring me that message my lone heart to fill.
They'll find it some day in a light zephyr chase,
For nothing is lost in pure love's boundless space.

ON JEFFERSON HILL

(BEFORE THE PRESIDENTIAL RANGE.)

The sovereign mountains bask in sunset rays,
The valleys rest in peace;
The lingering clouds melt into twilight haze,
The birds their warbling cease;
The villagers' hour of welcome sleep is near,
The cattle wander home,
While wrapped in summer-scented atmosphere,
Calm evening comes to roam
With gentle pace
Through star-lit space,
Till moon-kissed Night holds all in her embrace,
And Morning waits to show her dawn-flushed face.

ON SUGAR HILL

TO F. B. F

The lovely valleys nestling in the arms
Of glorious mountain peaks;
The purple tint of sunset hour, and charms
The evening hour bespeaks;
The monarch peak kissed by the rising sun,
While clouds keep guard below;
Grand, restful views, with foliage autumn-won,
And Northern lights rare glow, —
Will e'er recall,
In memory's hall,
The happy days when on fair "Look-Off's" height,
Sweet friendship cast her hues of golden light.

Hotel Look-Off, September, 1891.

AT FAIRFIELDS¹, WENHAM

June, 1890.

Buttercups and daisies,
Clover red and white,
Ferns and crown-topped grasses
Waving with delight,
Dainty locust-blossoms,
All that glad June yields,
Welcome me with gladness
To dearly-loved "Fairfields."
But where's my happy collie dog,
My Rosa?

The orioles sing greeting,
The butterflies come near,
The hens cease not their cackling,
The horses neigh "I'm here,"
The cows nod "I have missed you,"
The pigs' eyes even shine,
And from the red-house hearth-stone
Comes pet cat Valentine.
But where's my happy collie dog,
My Rosa?

¹ "Fairfields" is but another name for "Porter Manse."

I miss her joyful greeting,
Her handsome, high-bred face,
Her vigorous, playful action
In many a fair field chase.
Not even lively Sancho
Can fill for me her place.

O Rosa, happy Rosa,
Gone where the good dogs go,
Dost find such fields as "Fairfields,"
More love than we could show?

BLOSSOM-TIME

Blossoms floating through the air,
Bearing perfumes rich and rare,
Free from trouble, toil, and care.
Would I were a blossom!

Robins singing in the trees,
Feeling every velvet breeze,
Free from knowledge that bereaves.
Would I were a robin!

Violets peaceful in the vale,
Telling each its happy tale,
Free from worldly noise and sale.
Would I were a violet!

Blessed day of needed wealth,
Full of Nature's perfect health,
Fill me with thy power.

Then like blossoms I shall be,
Wafting only purity,
Or like robins, singing free
'Midst the deepening mystery,
Or like violets, caring naught
Only to reflect God's thought."

Porter Manse.

THE PRIMROSE

Who tells you, sweet primrose, 'tis time to wake up
After dreaming all day?
Who changes so quickly your sombre green dress
To the yellow one gay,
And makes you the pet of the twilight's caress,
And of poet's sweet lay?
Who does, primrose, pray?

The primrose, secure on his emerald throne,
Looked up quickly to say,
"A dear lovely fairy glides down from his throne
In the sun's golden ray,
And with a sweet kiss opens wide all our eyes,
Saying, 'Now is your day.'
And lo! when he's gone we are filled with surprise
At our wondrous array,
So fresh and so gay.
Do tell us the name of this fairy, I pray,
Who gives of his beauty, and then hies away
Without thanks, without pay.
Does he linger your way?"

JOY, ALL JOY

Lying on the new-mown hay, in a sightly field,
On a summer day,
With no care to weigh,
Or a bitter thought to stay all that sense might yield —
What a joy to have always!

Sky as blue as blue can be, perfect green all round,
Birdlings on the wing
Ere they pause to sing
On the top of bush or tree, or on sweet hay-mound —
Restful joy in everything!

Butterflies just come to light, proud of freedom's hour,
Cows in pastures near,
Wondering why I'm here,
Chipmunks now and then in sight, bees in clover-flower —
Added joy when these appear!

Happy children far and near climbing loads of hay,
Running here and there.
Farmer's work to share,
Skipping, shouting loud and clear, full of daring play —
Children's joy! Joy everywhere!

AMONG THE PINES

Far up in air the pines are murmuring
Love songs sweet and low,
With a rhythmic flow,
Worthy of the glad sun's glow.

The airy clouds are o'er them bending,
Captured by the sound
Of such pleasure found
In a playful daily round.

The birds pause in their flight to listen,
Wondering all the while
How the trees can smile
Rooted so to earthly guile.

The hush of summer noon enwraps them
Perfumed from below
By the flowers that show
They, too, murmuring love songs know.

All nature finds a joy in loving —
Oh, that I could hear
Love songs once so dear
Death has hushed forever here!

Intervale Woods, North Conway.

CONSCIOUS OR UNCONSCIOUS?

The earthquake's shock, the thunder's roar,
The lightning's vivid chain,
The ocean's strength, the deluge's pour,
The wildest hurricane,

Are moods that Nature loves to show
To man who boasts his birth
From conscious force she could not know
Because denied soul-worth.

But is it true she does not share
A knowledge in God's plan?
Must not she His own secret bear
To so touch soul of man?

Those who deny this see not clear
Into the heart of things;
For how could otherwise God here
Reveal His wanderings?

POEMS OF LOVE

LOVE'S HOW AND WHY

How do I love thee?
Oh, who knows
How the blush of the rose
Can its secret disclose?
Oh, who knows?

Why do I love thee?
Ah, who cares
Sound a passion he shares
With the angels? Who dares,
Yes, who dares?

LOVE'S GUERDON

Thine eyes are stars to hold me
To love's pure rapturous height.
Thy thoughts are pearls to lead me
To truth beyond earth's sight.
Thy love is life to keep me
Forever in God's light.

A BIRTHDAY GREETING

Thy birthday, dear?

Oh, would I had the poet's art
By which I could my wish impart
For thy new year;
But e'en a poet's pen of gold
Would fail my wish to thee unfold
In earthly sphere.

Thy birthday, dear?

Oh, would I had the painter's skill
Prophetic visions to fulfill
For thy new year;
But e'en a painter's rarest brush
Would but my holy visions crush,
Or fail to cheer.

Thy birthday, dear?

Oh, would I had sweet music's aid
To vitalize the prayers I've made
For thy new year;
Alas! not even music's best
Could put in form my soul's behest
For thee, my dear.

That only will expression find

In purest depths of thine own mind
This coming year;
As, guided by the inner light,
There'll come to thee the new-born sight
Of ravished seer.

But in this sight thou may'st so feel
Eternal beauty o'er thee steal —
God's gift, my dear —
That thou can'st find the blessed art
By which to make e'en depths of heart
In form appear.

Yet, it may be a heaven's birthday
Will have to dawn for us to say
Our best things, dear.
For, as thou know'st, Truth's deepest well
Must e'er reflect, its depths to tell
Heaven's atmosphere.

THREE KISSES

The kiss still burns upon my brow,
That kiss of long ago,
When in the flush of love's first hour
He said he loved me so.

Another burns yet deeper still,
The kiss of wedded bliss,
When soul met soul in rapture sweet —
Oh, pure love's burning kiss!

The third was laid away with him,
A kiss for heaven's day,
(O heart abide God's way) —
When in the life beyond earth's change,

Beyond these mysteries sad and strange,
New life will spring from out the old,
New thoughts will larger truth unfold,
And love have endless sway.

IF I WERE ONLY SURE

If I were only sure
He loves me still,
As in the realms of beauteous space
(Alas! so far from my embrace)
He bides God's will,
I could be more content to bear
The bitter anguish and despair
Which now me fill.

If I were only sure
He waits for me
To join him in the heavenly realm
(Oh, how the thought does overwhelm)
When body-free,
I could the better bear my fate,
As day by day I learn to wait
In silent agony.

O Father, in my doubt
One thing is sure,
That Thou, all love, could ne'er destroy
(Death only is in earth's alloy)
Such love so pure
As that which blessed our union here,
The love which knew no change nor fear —

Such must endure.

ABSENCE

The days are happy here, dear,
But happier would they be
Could'st thou be near to bless me
With love's sweet ministry;

Then all this beauty round me
Would on my memory lie,
As prayers of sainted mother,
Or childhood's lullaby.

Hotel Look-Off, Sugar Hill, N.H.

A LOVE SONG

Oh! ecstasy rare
Comes down to share
The heart that with human love trembles;
While all on the earth
Is crowned with new birth
And everything heaven resembles.

But grief and despair
Have latent their share
In hearts that with human love tremble,
Since fires of love
Enkindled above
In frail earthen vessels assemble.

Still, ecstasy rare
Comes down to share
The heart that with human love trembles;
While all on the earth
Is crowned with new birth
And everything heaven resembles.

IN HER GARDEN

She picks me June roses.
Were ever such roses?
Their fragrance would honor
The heavenly halls.

She finds me pet pansies.
Such wondrous-eyed pansies,
And lovely nasturtiums
That run on the walls.

Sweet peas she's now bringing,
While all the time singing.
And I? Ask the flowers
To tell what befalls.

LOVE'S WISH

Would I were beautiful!
Then you at Beauty's shrine might freely dine,
A welcome guest
For joy's bequest.
But, dear, if this were so, —
If I were Beauty's child, all undefiled,
To make you blest
In beauty's quest,

You might forget to see
The soul's pure hidden shrine wherein e'er shine
The things that test
Love's true behest.
Would I were beautiful,
That you might better see the soul in me!
That wish is best,
Is 't not, dearest?

IS THERE ANYTHING PURER?

Oh, the prayer of a dear virgin-heart,
Breathed forth with true love's gentle art!
Is there anything purer
On land or on sea,
More laden with blessing
For you or for me?

It is sweeter than song ever heard,
More precious than love's spoken word.
It is fraught with a keen recognition
Of truest soul-need and fruition.
Is there anything purer
On land or on sea,
More laden with comfort
For you or for me?

It is oftentimes born in great pain,
With no ray of hope's blessed gain.
But as lulled by the angels at midnight
Ere reaching the infinite daylight
Is there anything surer,
On land or on sea,
To bring the God-Father
To you or to me?

LONGING

Through all this summer joy and rest,
Though lying on fair Nature's breast,
There breathes the longing heart's desire,
Would he were here!

The thrill of pain kind Nature feels;
For all the while there o'er me steals
Like holy chimes in midnight air,
"He'll soon be here."

And flowers and trees, vales, hills, and birds
Make haste to echo her glad words,
"He'll soon be here."

YOUNG LOVE'S MESSAGE

Sing too, little bird, what my heart sings to-day.
Dost thou know? —
I'll speak low —
"Oh, I do love him so."

Hold safe, waving grass, in thy rhythmical flow,
What I say,
Till the day
When as sweet new-mown hay

Thou can'st bear it to him in the fragrance loved best.
Thou dost fear? —
Oh, love dear,
How I wish thou wert here!

But pause, little cloud, thou canst carry it now,
I am sure,
Sweet and pure,
Though the winds do allure;

For thou art on the way to the west where he is.
But dost know? —
Tell him low,
"That I do love him so,
Oh! I do love him so."

A DIARY'S SECRET

January 1, 1867

God's love was once enough
My heart to satisfy,
When in the days of childhood's faith
I knew not doubt or sigh.

But since I saw Roy's face,
And knew his love's sweet cheer,
And felt the anguish and despair
Which come from partings here,

So hungry have I grown
No love can satisfy,
And all my childhood's faith in God
Doth mock me as a lie.

But still in these dark hours
I hold one anchor fast:
Perhaps this is the *woman's* way
To reach God's love at last.

January 1, 1887

The deepening years have proved
Love's conquest justified.
The woman's hungry heart at last
In God is satisfied.

A MONOLOGUE

Has Love come?

Ah, too late!

Already Death stands o'er me

With hungry eyes that bore me —

O cruel fate,

That after all life's years

Of sacrifice and tears,

'Tis Death, not Love, that wins.

But, stay! This message bear,

Ere yet Death's work begins:

"In other realms earth's losses

Will change from saddening crosses

To love-crowned joy,

Where Death shall have no mission,

But Love his sweet fruition

Without alloy."

A PRICELESS GIFT

'Twas much he asked – a virgin heart
Unknown to worldly ways.
What could he give? Ah, well he knew
He lacked sweet virtue's praise.

The virgin heart was given to him
Without a doubting thought,
When, lo! through seeming sacrifice
A miracle was wrought;

A miracle of love and grace,
Revealing woman's power;
For, clothed in purity, he rose
To meet the coming hour.

THE OCEAN'S MOAN

Last night the ocean's moan
Was to my ears
The deep sad undertone
Of vanished years,

Bearing a burden,
A bliss unattained,
A strife and a longing,
A life sad and pained,
To the shores vast and free
Of eternity's sea.

But in that undertone
Of restless pain,
Came at length a monotone
Of sweet refrain,

Bearing a passion
Long known to the sea —
Told in moments of silence
A sad heart to free —
To be borne me some day
In the ocean's own way.

And this rare monotone

Of mystery
Was now that passion-moan
Of secrecy,

Bearing, "I love her,
My moaning ne'er'll cease
Till she on my breast
Findeth love's perfect peace;
Till she on my breast
Findeth love's perfect rest."

Oh, is there tenderer tone
For mortal ear,
Than such a monotone,
Distinct and clear,

Bearing its comfort,
Its heavenly peace,
Its help for all sorrow,
Its heart-pain release,
To a soul waiting long
For love's tender, true song?

And now the ocean's moan
Is to my ears
The dearest undertone
Of all the years,

Bearing a memory,

A sweet bliss attained,
A gratified longing,
A life's joys regained,
To the shores vast and free
Of eternity's sea.

Boar's Head, Hampton, N.H.

LOVE'S FLOWER

Love's sweet and tender flower
Of pure, perennial life,
Blooms ever fresh in power
O'er all earth's wrong and strife.

Pluck not in haste, young man,
This flower of wondrous hue,
Nor dare to crush, nor fail to scan.
Such beauty ever new.

Gaze at it long, young girl,
And guard its sacred blush;

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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