

August 1867

Oh mock me not in my decline
 Mine is a bitter tale
 Thin cheek was once as fresh as thine
 Though now so wan and pale
 And I have joys as little and gay
 As I have seen a better day
 But let me not bewail
 Since fate ordain'd that I should pass
 Through all the grades and this the last

I lack a home O could this heart
 But speak one half its tale
 Or could this pen perform its part
 And mark what thought conceals
 Then I would paint on emerald page
 In glittering form the golden age
 Where hope itself reveals
 Our Bates wish contentments home
 Or loves immortal pinions borne

I was not my choice to roam abroad
 Has it seems my fate
 To reach the life I most adore
 And sorrow when to late
 But thus it was I spread my sail
 To soon to meet the coming gale
 Nor had I long to wait
 Before our ship without a mast
 Was driving onward through the blast

I will forbear a lengthy tale
 Which only speaks of sorrow
 Though none perhaps like me have seen
 That life of living horror
 Over this wreck on ocean tide
 Without a mast or helm to guide
 Or hope in the morrow
 If one complaint was but a sigh
 When all seemed waiting there to die

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And here I jump a space in time
 O'er gloom to in light
 And if I would these thoughts of mine
 Some other pen must write
 When fellow men by hunger driven
 To sleep the fair would hide from heaven
 Why should they then smile
 The curious world to lend an ear
 And laugh at horrors lingering fear

Of thirty men but one alone
 Ever reached his native land
 What now I know had then I known
 The last one of that band
 Had made his bed on a coral reef
 And escaped this bitter living grief
 But a monument I stand
 Of what I was, but hope no more
 Sweet home thy blessings can restore

I reached the shore, my weary feet
 Now bent toward the scene
 Where hope had taught me I should meet
 My friends celestial being
 But there beheld my cottage lay
 A heap of ruins in decay
 More like some phantom dream
 Where where my heart learned to rejoice
 I started at my own shrill voice

And when at last in fatter'd strains
 I awoke the silent spell
 And from my lips one cherished name
 In trembling accents fell
 I unconsciously glanced around to see
 For sure it did not sound like me
 Where I had loved to dwell
 Where I had dreamed immortal bliss
 Unconscious of a day like this