



ROBT BROWNING

The book cover features a dark green background with intricate, repeating floral and vine patterns. A vertical strip on the left side is filled with large, detailed red flowers and green foliage. A central rectangular label with a gold border contains the author's name in a black, serif font. The label is decorated with small, light-colored floral motifs. The entire cover is framed by a thin gold border.

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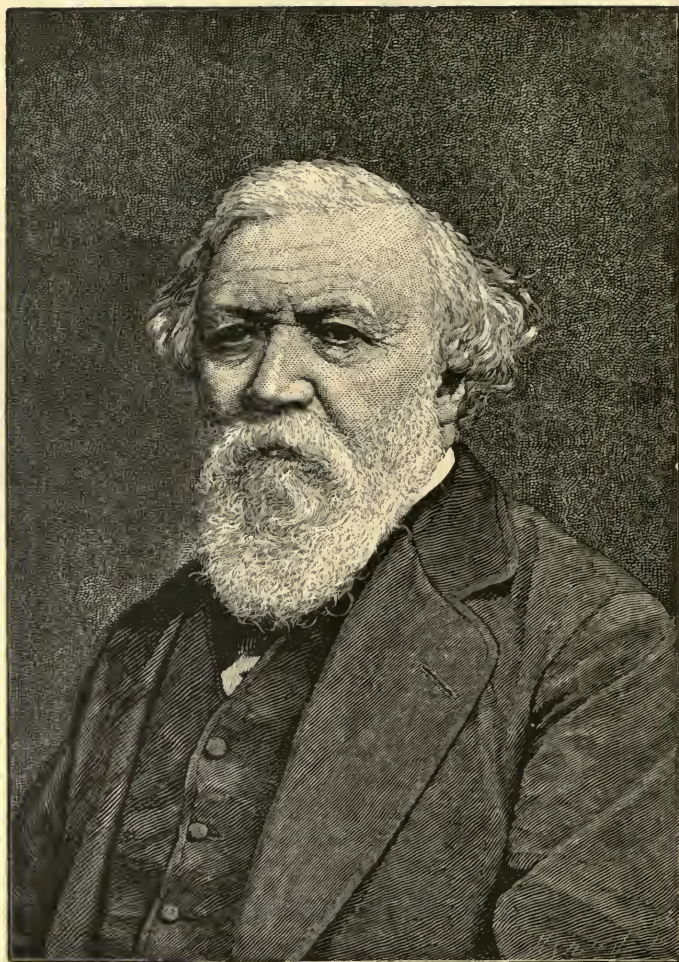


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Robert Browning



SELECTIONS  
FROM  
THE POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
ROBERT BROWNING.

*FROM THE SIXTH LONDON EDITION.  
(FIRST AND SECOND SERIES.)*



NEW YORK:  
THOMAS Y. CROWELL & CO.,



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PRESS OF BERWICK & SMITH,  
BOSTON, MASS.

DEDICATED TO  
ALFRED TENNYSON.

IN POETRY—ILLUSTRIOUS AND CONSUMMATE;  
IN FRIENDSHIP—NOBLE AND SINCERE.

---

IN the present selection from my poetry, there is an attempt to escape from the embarrassment of appearing to pronounce upon what myself may consider the best of it. I adopt another principle; and by simply stringing together certain pieces on the thread of an imaginary personality, I present them in succession, rather as the natural development of a particular experience than because I account them the most noteworthy portion of my work. Such an attempt was made in the volume of selections from the poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning; to which—in outward uniformity at least—my own would venture to become a companion.

A few years ago, had such an opportunity presented itself, I might have been tempted to say a word in reply to the objections my poetry was used to encounter. Time has kindly co-operated with my disinclination to write the poetry and the criticism besides. The readers I am at last privileged to expect, meet me fully half-way; and if, from the fitting stand-point, they must still “censure me in their wisdom,” they have previously “awakened their senses that they may the better judge.” Nor do I apprehend any more charges of being wilfully obscure, unconscientiously careless, or perversely harsh. Having hitherto done my utmost in the art to which my life is a devotion, I cannot engage to increase the effort; but I conceive that there may be helpful light, as well as re-assuring warmth, in the attention and sympathy I gratefully acknowledge.

LONDON, May 14, 1872.

R. B.



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A Face. — Page 1.





## SELECTIONS FROM ROBERT BROWNING.

### MY STAR.

ALL that I know  
Of a certain star  
Is, it can throw  
(Like the angled spar)  
Now a dart of red,  
Now a dart of blue ;  
Till my friends have said  
They would fain see, too,  
My star that dartles the red and the  
blue !  
Then it stops like a bird ; like a  
flower, hangs furled :  
They must solace themselves with  
the Saturn above it.  
What matter to me if their star is a  
matter ?  
Mine has opened its soul to me ;  
therefore I love it.

### A FACE.

If one could have that little head of  
hers  
Painted upon a background of pale  
gold,  
Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers !  
No shade encroaching on the match-  
less mould  
Of those two lips, which should be  
opening soft  
In the pure profile ; not as when she  
laughs,  
For that spoils all : but rather as if  
aloft  
Yon hyacinth, she loves so, leaned its  
staff's  
Burthen of honey-colored buds, to  
kiss  
And capture 'twixt the lips apart for  
this.

Then her lithe neck, three fingers  
might surround.  
How it should waver, on the pale gold  
ground,  
Up to the fruit-shaped, perfect chin it  
lifts !  
I know, Correggio loves to mass, in  
rifts  
Of heaven, his angel faces, orb on orb  
Breaking its outline, burning shades  
absorb :  
But these are only massed there, I  
should think,  
Waiting to see some wonder momentarily  
Grow out, stand full, fade slow against  
the sky  
(That's the pale ground you'd see this  
sweet face by),  
All heaven, meanwhile, condensed  
into one eye  
Which fears to lose the wonder,  
should it wink.

### MY LAST DUCHESS.

#### FERRARA.

THAT's my last Duchess painted on  
the wall,  
Looking as if she were alive. I call  
That piece a wonder, now : Frà Pan-  
dolf's hands  
Worked busily a day, and there she  
stands.  
Will't please you sit and look at her ?  
I said  
"Frà Pandolf" by design : for never  
read  
Strangers like you that pictured coun-  
tenance,  
The depth and passion of its earnest  
glance,

But to myself they turned (since none  
 puts by  
 The curtain I have drawn for you,  
 but I),  
 And seemed as they would ask me, if  
 they durst,  
 How such a glance came there; so,  
 not the first  
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir,  
 'twas not  
 Her husband's presence only, called  
 that spot  
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: per-  
 haps  
 Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her  
 mantle laps  
 Over my lady's wrist too much," or  
 "Paint  
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint  
 Half-flush that dies along her throat;"  
 such stuff  
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause  
 enough  
 For calling up that spot of joy. She  
 had  
 A heart—how shall I say?—too  
 soon made glad,  
 Too easily impressed: she liked what-  
 e'er  
 She looked on, and her looks went  
 everywhere.  
 Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her  
 breast,  
 The dropping of the daylight in the  
 West,  
 The bough of cherries some officious  
 fool  
 Broke in the orchard for her, the  
 white mule  
 She rode with round the terrace,—all  
 and each  
 Would draw from her alike the ap-  
 proving speech,  
 Or blush, at least. She thanked men,  
 —good! but thanked  
 Somehow—I know not how—as if  
 she ranked  
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old  
 name  
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to  
 blame  
 This sort of trifling? Even had you  
 skill  
 In speech—(which I have not)—to  
 make your will  
 Quite clear to such an one, and say,  
 "Just this  
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you  
 miss,

Or there exceed the mark"—and  
 if she let  
 Herself be lessened so, nor plainly  
 set  
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made  
 excuse,  
 —E'en then would be some stooping;  
 and I choose  
 Never to stoop. O sir! she smiled,  
 no doubt,  
 Whene'er I passed her; but who  
 passed without  
 Much the same smile? This grew; I  
 gave commands;  
 Then all smiles stopped together.  
 There she stands  
 As if alive. Will't please you rise?  
 We'll meet  
 The company below, then. I repeat,  
 The Count your master's known  
 munificence  
 Is ample warrant that no just pre-  
 tence  
 Of mine for dowry will be disal-  
 lowed;  
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I  
 avowed  
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll  
 go  
 Together down, sir. Notice Neptune,  
 though,  
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,  
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in  
 bronze for me!

## SONG FROM "PIPPA PASSES."

I.

GIVE her but a least excuse to love  
 me!  
 When—where—  
 How—can this arm establish her  
 above me,  
 If fortune fixed her as my lady  
 there,  
 There already, to eternally reprove  
 me?  
 ("Hist!" said Kate the queen;  
 But "Oh," cried the maiden, binding  
 her tresses,  
 "'Tis only a page that carols un-  
 seen,  
 Crumbling your hounds their  
 messes!")

## II.

Is she wronged?— To the rescue of  
her honor,  
My heart!  
Is she poor?— What costs it to be-  
come a donor?  
Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to  
part.  
But that fortune should have thrust  
all this upon her!  
("Nay, list!" bade Kate the queen;  
And still cried the maiden, binding  
her tresses,  
" 'Tis only a page that carols un-  
seen,  
Fitting your hawks their jesses! ")

## CRISTINA.

## I.

SHE should never have looked at me  
if she meant I should not love  
her!  
There are plenty . . . men, you call  
such, I suppose . . . she may  
discover  
All her soul to, if she pleases, and yet  
leave much as she found them:  
But I'm not so; and she knew it when  
she fixed me, glancing round  
them.

## II.

What? To fix me thus meant noth-  
ing? But I can't tell (there's  
my weakness)  
What her look said!—no vile cant,  
sure, about "need to strew the  
bleakness  
Of some lone shore with its pearl-seed,  
that the sea feels"—no "strange  
yearning  
That such souls have, most to lavish  
where there's chance of least  
returning."

## III.

Oh! we're sunk enough here, God  
knows! but not quite so sunk  
that moments,  
Sure though seldom, are denied us,  
when the spirit's true endow-  
ments  
Stand out plainly from its false ones,  
and apprise it if pursuing  
Or the right way or the wrong way,  
to its triumph or undoing.

## IV.

There are flashes struck from mid-  
nights, there are fire-flames  
noondays kindle,  
Whereby piled-up honors perish,  
whereby swollen ambitions  
dwindle;  
While just this or that poor impulse,  
which for once had play unsti-  
fled,  
Seems the sole work of a lifetime  
that away the rest have trifled.

## V.

Doubt you if, in some such moment,  
as she fixed me, she felt clearly,  
Ages past the soul existed, here an  
age 'tis resting merely,  
And hence fleets again for ages; while  
the true end, sole and single,  
It stops here for is, this love way,  
with some other soul to mingle?

## VI.

Else it loses what it lived for, and  
eternally must lose it;  
Better ends may be in prospect,  
deeper blisses (if you choose it),  
But this life's end and this love-bliss  
have been lost here. Doubt you  
whether  
This she felt as, looking at me, mine  
and her souls rushed together?

## VII.

Oh, observe! Of course, next moment,  
the world's honors, in derision,  
Trampled out the light forever.  
Never fear but there's provision  
Of the Devil's to quench knowledge,  
lest we walk the earth in rap-  
ture!  
—Making those who catch God's se-  
cret, just so much more prize  
their capture!

## VIII.

Such am I: the secret's mine now!  
She has lost me, I have gained  
her;  
Her soul's mine: and thus, grown  
perfect, I shall pass my life's  
remainder.  
Life will just hold out the proving both  
our powers, alone and blended;  
And then, come next life quickly!  
This world's use will have  
been ended.

## COUNT GISMOND.

## AIX IN PROVENCE.

## I.

CHRIST God who savest man, save  
 most  
 Of men Count Gismond who saved  
 me!  
 Count Gauthier, when he chose his  
 post,  
 Chose time and place and company  
 To suit it: when he struck at length  
 My honor, 'twas with all his strength.

## II.

And doubtlessly, ere he could draw  
 All points to one, he must have  
 schemed!  
 That miserable morning saw  
 Few half so happy as I seemed,  
 While being dressed in queen's array  
 To give our tourney prize away.

## III.

I thought they loved me, did me grace  
 To please themselves: 'twas all  
 their deed.  
 God makes, or fair or foul, our face:  
 If showing mine so caused to bleed  
 My cousins' hearts, they should have  
 dropped  
 A word, and straight the play had  
 stopped.

## IV.

They, too, so beauteous! Each a  
 queen  
 By virtue of her brow and breast;  
 Not needing to be crowned, I mean,  
 As I do. E'en when I was dressed,  
 Had either of them spoke, instead  
 Of glancing sideways with still head!

## V.

But no: they let me laugh, and sing  
 My birthday song quite through,  
 adjust  
 The last rose in my garland, fling  
 A last look on the mirror, trust  
 My arms to each an arm of theirs,  
 And so descend the castle-stairs—

## VI.

And come out on the morning troop  
 Of merry friends who kissed my  
 cheek,

And called me queen, and made me  
 stoop  
 Under the canopy—(a streak  
 That pierced it, of the outside sun,  
 Powdered with gold its gloom's soft  
 dun)—

## VII.

And they could let me take my state  
 And foolish throne amid applause  
 Of all come there to celebrate  
 My queen's-day—Oh, I think the  
 cause  
 Of much was, they forgot no crowd  
 Makes up for parents in their shroud!

## VIII.

However that be, all eyes were bent  
 Upon me, when my cousins cast  
 Theirs down; 'twas time I should  
 present  
 The victor's crown, but . . . there,  
 'twill last  
 No long time . . . the old mist again  
 Blinds me as then it did. How vain!

## IX.

See! Gismond's at the gate, in talk  
 With his two boys: I can proceed.  
 Well, at that moment, who should  
 stalk  
 Forth boldly—to my face, indeed—  
 But Gauthier? and he thundered  
 "Stay!"  
 And all staid. "Bring no crowns, I  
 say!

## X.

"Bring torches! Wind the penance-  
 sheet  
 About her! Let her shun the chaste,  
 Or lay herself before their feet!  
 Shall she, whose body I embraced  
 A night long, queen it in the day?  
 For honor's sake no crowns, I say!"

## XI.

I? What I answered? As I live,  
 I never fancied such a thing  
 As answer possible to give.  
 What says the body when they  
 spring  
 Some monstrous torture-engine's  
 whole  
 Strength on it? No more says the  
 soul.

## XII.

Till out strode Gismond: then I knew  
That I was saved. I never met  
His face before; but, at first view,  
I felt quite sure that God had set  
Himself to Satan: who would spend  
A minute's mistrust on the end?

## XIII.

He strode to Gauthier, in his throat  
Gave him the lie, then struck his  
mouth  
With one back-handed blow that  
wrote  
In blood men's verdict then. North,  
South,  
East, West, I looked. The lie was  
dead  
And damned, and truth stood up in-  
stead.

## XIV.

This glads me most, that I enjoyed  
The heart o' the joy, with my con-  
tent  
In watching Gismond unalloyed  
By any doubt of the event;  
God took that on him—I was bid  
Watch Gismond for my part: I did.

## XV.

Did I not watch him while he let  
His armorer just brace his greaves,  
Rivet his hauberk, on the fret  
The while! His foot . . . my mem-  
ory leaves  
No least stamp out, nor how anon  
He pulled his ringing gauntlets on.

## XVI.

And e'en before the trumpet's sound  
Was finished, prone lay the false  
knight,  
Prone as his lie, upon the ground:  
Gismond flew at him, used no  
sleight  
O' the sword, but open-breasted  
drove,  
Cleaving till out the truth he clove.

## XVII.

Which done, he dragged him to my  
feet,  
And said, "Here die, but end thy  
breath  
In full confession, lest thou fleet  
From my first to God's second  
death!

Say, hast thou lied?" And, "I have  
lied  
To God and her," he said, and died.

## XVIII.

Then Gismond, kneeling to me, asked  
— What safe my heart holds, though  
no word  
Could I repeat now, if I tasked  
My powers forever, to a third,  
Dear even as you are. Pass the rest  
Until I sank upon his breast.

## XIX.

Over my head his arm he flung  
Against the world; and scarce I  
felt  
His sword (that dripped by me and  
swung)  
A little shifted in its belt,  
For he began to say the while  
How South our home lay many a  
mile.

## XX.

So 'mid the shouting multitude  
We two walked forth to never more  
Return. My cousins have pursued  
Their life, untroubled as before  
I vexed them. Gauthier's dwelling-  
place  
God lighten! May his soul find  
grace!

## XXI.

Our elder boy has got the clear  
Great brow; though when his broth-  
er's black  
Full eye shows scorn, it . . . Gismond  
here?  
And have you brought my tercel  
back?  
I was just telling Adela  
How many birds it struck since May.

## EURYDICE TO ORPHEUS.

A PICTURE BY FREDERICK LEIGH-  
TON, R.A.

BUT give them me, the mouth, the  
eyes, the brow!  
Let them once more absorb me! One  
look now

Will lap me round forever, not to  
 pass  
 Out of its light, though darkness lie  
 beyond:  
 Hold me but safe again within the  
 bond  
 Of one immortal look! All woe  
 that was,  
 Forgotten, and all terror that may  
 be,  
 Defied, — no past is mine, no future:  
 look at me!

### THE GLOVE.

(PETER RONSARD *loquitur*.)

"HEIGHO," yawned one day King  
 Francis,  
 "Distance all value enhances!  
 When a man's busy, why, leisure  
 Strikes him as wonderful pleasure:  
 'Faith, and at leisure once is he?  
 Straightway he wants to be busy.  
 Here we've got peace; and aghast  
 I'm  
 Caught thinking war the true pas-  
 time.  
 Is there a reason in metre?  
 Give us your speech, master Peter!"  
 I who, if mortal dare say so,  
 Ne'er am at loss with my Naso,  
 "Sire," I replied, "joys prove cloud-  
 lets:  
 Men are the merest Ixions" —  
 Here the King whistled aloud, "Let's  
 . . . Heigho . . . go look at our  
 lions!"  
 Such are the sorrowful chances  
 If you talk fine to King Francis.  
 And so, to the court-yard proceeding,  
 Our company, Francis was leading,  
 Increased by new followers tenfold  
 Before he arrived at the penfold;  
 Lords, ladies, like clouds which be-  
 dizen  
 At sunset the western horizon.  
 And Sir de Lorge pressed 'mid the  
 foremost  
 With the dame he professed to adore  
 most —  
 Oh, what a face! One by fits eyed  
 Her, and the horrible pitside;

For the penfold surrounded a hollow  
 Which led where the eye scarce dared  
 follow,  
 And shelved to the chamber secluded  
 Where Bluebeard, the great lion,  
 brooded.  
 The king hailed his keeper, an Arab  
 As glossy and black as a scarab,  
 And bade him make sport, and at  
 once stir  
 Up and out of his den the old mon-  
 ster.  
 They opened a hole in the wire-  
 work  
 Across it, and dropped there a fire-  
 work,  
 And fled: one's heart's beating re-  
 doubled;  
 A pause, while the pit's mouth was  
 troubled,  
 The blackness and silence so utter,  
 By the firework's slow sparkling and  
 sputter;  
 Then earth in a sudden contortion  
 Gave out to our gaze her abortion.  
 Such a brute! Were I friend Clem-  
 ent Marot  
 (Whose experience of nature's but  
 narrow,  
 And whose faculties move in no small  
 mist  
 When he versifies David the Psalm-  
 ist)  
 I should study that brute to describe  
 you  
*Illum Juda Leonem de Tribu.*  
 One's whole blood grew curdling and  
 creepy  
 To see the black mane, vast and  
 heapy,  
 The tail in the air stiff and straining,  
 The wide eyes, nor waxing nor wan-  
 ing,  
 As over the barrier which bounded  
 His platform, and us who surrounded  
 The barrier, they reached and they  
 rested  
 On space that might stand him in best  
 stead;  
 For who knew, he thought, what the  
 amazement,  
 The eruption of clatter and blaze  
 meant,  
 And if, in this minute of wonder,  
 No outlet, 'mid lightning and thun-  
 der,  
 Lay broad, and, his shackles all shiv-  
 ered,  
 The lion at last was delivered?

Ay, that was the open sky o'erhead!  
 And you saw by the flash on his forehead,  
 By the hope in those eyes wide and steady,  
 He was leagues in the desert already,  
 Driving the flocks up the mountain,  
 Or catlike couched hard by the fountain

To waylay the date-gathering negress:  
 So guarded he entrance or egress.

"How he stands!" quoth the king:  
 "we may well swear  
 (No novice, we've won our spurs elsewhere,

And so can afford the confession),  
 We exercise wholesome discretion  
 In keeping aloof from his threshold;  
 Once hold you, those jaws want no fresh hold,  
 Their first would too pleasantly purloin

The visitor's brisket or sirloin:  
 But who's he would prove so foolhardy?

Not the best man of Marignan, par-dieu!"

The sentence no sooner was uttered,  
 Than over the rails a glove fluttered,  
 Fell close to the lion, and rested:  
 The dame 'twas, who flung it and jested

With life so, De Lorge had been wooing  
 For months past; he sat there pursuing

His suit, weighing out with nonchalance  
 Fine speeches like gold from a balance.

Sound the trumpet, no true knight's a tARRIER!

De Lorge made one leap at the barrier,

Walked straight to the glove, — while the lion

Ne'er moved, kept his far-reaching eye on

The palm-tree-edged desert-spring's sapphire,

And the musky oiled skin of the Kaf-fir, —

Picked it up, and as calmly retreated,  
 Leaped back where the lady was seated,

And full in the face of its owner  
 Flung the glove.

"Your heart's queen,  
 you dethrone her?  
 So should I!" — cried the King —  
 "'twas mere vanity,  
 Not love, set that task to humanity!"  
 Lords and ladies alike turned with loathing  
 From such a proved wolf in sheep's clothing.

Not so, I; for I caught an expression  
 In her brow's undisturbed self-possession

Amid the Court's scoffing and merriment, —

As if from no pleasing experiment  
 She rose, yet of pain not much heedful

So long as the process was needful, —  
 As if she had tried, in a crucible,  
 To what "speeches like gold" were reducible,

And, finding the finest prove copper,  
 Felt smoke in her face was but proper;  
 To know what she had *not* to trust to,

Was worth all the ashes and dust too.

She went out 'mid hooting and laughter;

Clement Marot staid; I followed after,

And asked, as a grace, what it all meant?

If she wished not the rash deed's recalment?

"For I" — so I spoke — "am a poet:  
 Human nature, — behoves that I know it!"

She told me, "Too long had I heard  
 Of the deed proved alone by the word:

For my love — what De Lorge would not dare!

With my scorn — what De Lorge could compare!

And the endless descriptions of death  
 He would brave when my lip formed a breath,

I must reckon as braved, or, of course,  
 Doubt his word — and moreover, perforce,

For such gifts as no lady could spurn,  
 Must offer my love in return.

When I looked on your lion, it brought  
 All the dangers at once to my thought,

Encountered by all sorts of men,  
 Before he was lodged in his den, —

From the poor slave whose club or  
bare hands  
Dug the trap, set the snare on the  
sands,  
With no King and no Court to ap-  
plaud,  
By no shame, should he shrink, over-  
awed,  
Yet to capture the creature made  
shift,  
That his rude boys might laugh at  
the gift,  
— To the page who last leaped o'er  
the fence  
Of the pit, on no greater pretence  
Than to get back the bonnet he  
dropped,  
Lest his pay for a week should be  
stopped.  
So, wiser I judged it to make  
One trial what 'death for my sake'  
Really meant, while the power was  
yet mine,  
Than to wait until time should de-  
fine  
Such a phrase not so simply as I,  
Who took it to mean just 'to die.'  
The blow a glove gives is but weak:  
Does the mark yet discolor my cheek?  
But, when the heart suffers a blow,  
Will the pain pass so soon, do you  
know?"

I looked, as away she was sweeping,  
And saw a youth eagerly keeping  
As close as he dared to the doorway.  
No doubt that a noble should more  
weigh  
His life than befits a plebeian;  
And yet, had our brute been Ne-  
mean—  
(I judge by a certain calm fervor  
The youth stepped with, forward to  
serve her)  
— He'd have scarce thought you did  
him the worst turn  
If you whispered, "Friend, what you'd  
get, first earn!"  
And when, shortly after, she carried  
Her shame from the Court, and they  
married,  
To that marriage some happiness,  
inaugre  
The voice of the Court, I dared augur.  
For De Lorge, he made women with  
men vie,  
Those in wonder and praise, these in  
envy:

And, in short, stood so plain a head  
taller  
That he wooed and won . . . how do  
you call her?  
The beauty, that rose in the sequel  
To the King's love, who loved her a  
week well.  
And 'twas noticed he never would  
honor  
De Lorge (who looked daggers upon  
her)  
With the easy commission of stretch-  
ing  
His legs in the service, and fetching  
His wife, from her chamber, those  
straying  
Sad gloves she was always mislaying,  
While the King took the closet to chat  
in,—  
But of course this adventure came  
pat in.  
And never the King told the story,  
How bringing a glove brought such  
glory,  
But the wife smiled— "His nerves  
are grown firmer:  
Mine he brings now and utters no  
murmur."

*Veniēti occurrite morbo!* .  
With which moral I drop my theorbo.

## SONG.

## I.

NAY but you, who do not love her,  
Is she not pure gold, my mistress?  
Holds earth aught—speak truth—  
above her?  
Aught like this tress, see, and this  
tress,  
And this last fairest tress of all,  
So fair, see, ere I let it fall!

## II.

Because, you spend your lives in  
praising;  
To praise, you search the wide world  
over;  
Then why not witness, calmly gazing,  
If earth holds aught—speak truth  
—above her?  
Above this tress, and this, I touch  
But cannot praise, I love so much:



A SERENADE AT THE  
VILLA.

I.

THAT was I, you heard last night,  
When there rose no moon at all,  
Nor, to pierce the strained and tight  
Tent of heaven, a planet small :  
Life was dead, and so was light.

II.

Not a twinkle from the fly,  
Not a glimmer from the worm.  
When the crickets stopped their cry,  
When the owls forbore a term,  
You heard music : that was I.

III.

Earth turned in her sleep with pain,  
Sultrily suspired for proof :  
In at heaven and out again,  
Lightning!—where it broke the  
roof,  
Bloodlike, some few drops of rain.

IV.

What they could my words expressed,  
O my love, my all, my one !  
Singing helped the verses best ;  
And, when singing's best was done,  
To my lute I left the rest.

V.

So wore night ; the east was gray,  
White the broad-faced hemlock-  
flowers ;  
There would be another day ;  
Ere its first of heavy hours  
Found me, I had passed away.

VI.

What became of all the hopes,  
Words and song and lute as well ?  
Say, this struck you—"When life  
gropes  
Feebly for the path where fell  
Light last on the evening slopes,

VII.

"One friend in that path shall be,  
To secure my step from wrong ;  
One to count night day for me,  
Patient through the watches long,  
Serving most with none to see."

VIII.

Never say—as something bodes—  
"So, the worst has yet a worse !  
When life halts 'neath double loads,  
Better the task-master's curse  
Than such music on the roads !

IX.

"When no moon succeeds the sun,  
Nor can pierce the midnight's tent,  
Any star, the smallest one,  
While some drops, where lightning  
rent,  
Show the final storm begun—"

X.

"When the fire-fly hides its spot,  
When the garden-voices fail  
In the darkness thick and hot,—  
Shall another voice avail,  
That shape be where these are not ?

XI.

"Has some plague a longer lease,  
Proffering its help uncouth ?  
Can't one even die in peace ?  
As one shuts one's eyes on youth,  
Is that face the last one sees ?"

XII.

Oh, how dark your villa was,  
Windows fast and obdurate !  
How the garden grudged me grass  
Where I stood—the iron gate  
Ground its teeth to let me pass !

YOUTH AND ART.

I.

It once might have been, once only :  
We lodged in a street together,  
You, a sparrow on the housetop  
lonely,  
I, a lone she-bird of his feather.

II.

Your trade was with sticks and clay,  
You thumbed, thrust, patted, and  
polished,  
Then laughed, "They will see, some  
day,  
Smith made, and Gibson demol-  
ished."

## III.

My business was song, song, song :  
I chirped, cheeped, trilled, and  
twittered,  
"Kate Brown's on the boards ere  
long,  
And Grisi's existence embittered!"

## IV.

I earned no more by a warble  
Than you by a sketch in plaster :  
You wanted a piece of marble,  
I needed a music-master.

## V.

We studied hard in our styles,  
Chipped each at a crust like Hin-  
doos,  
For air, looked out on the tiles,  
For fun, watched each other's win-  
dows.

## VI.

You lounged, like a boy of the South,  
Cap and blouse — nay, a bit of beard  
too ;  
Or you got it, rubbing your mouth  
With fingers the clay adhered to.

## VII.

And I — soon managed to find  
Weak points in the flower-fence fa-  
cing,  
Was forced to put up a blind  
And be safe in my corset-lacing.

## VIII.

No harm ! It was not my fault  
If you never turned your eye's tail  
up  
As I shook upon E *in alt.*,  
Or ran the chromatic scale up ;

## IX.

For spring bade the sparrows pair,  
And the boys and girls gave guesses,  
And stalls in our street looked rare  
With bulrush and watercresses.

## X.

Why did not you pinch a flower  
In a pellet of clay and fling it?

Why did not I put a power  
Of thanks in a look, or sing it?

## XI.

I did look, sharp as a lynx  
(And yet the memory rankles),  
When models arrived, some minx  
Tripped up stairs, she and her  
ankles.

## XII.

But I think I gave you as good !  
"That foreign fellow,—who can  
know  
How she pays, in a playful mood,  
For his tuning her that piano?"

## XIII.

Could you say so, and never say,  
"Suppose we join hands and for  
tunes,  
And I fetch her from over the way,  
Her, piano, and long tunes and short  
tunes?"

## XIV.

No, no ; you would not be rash,  
Nor I rasher and something over :  
You've to settle yet Gibson's hash,  
And Grisi yet lives in clover.

## XV.

But you meet the Prince at the  
Board,  
I'm queen myself at *bals-paré*,  
I've married a rich old lord,  
And you're dubbed knight and an  
R.A.

## XVI.

Each life's unfulfilled, you see ;  
It hangs still, patchy and scrappy :  
We have not sighed deep, laughed  
free,  
Starved, feasted, despaired, — been  
happy.

## XVII.

And nobody calls you a dunce,  
And people suppose me clever :  
This could but have happened once,  
And we missed it, lost it forever.

THE FLIGHT OF THE  
DUCHESS.

## I.

YOU'RE my friend:  
I was the man the Duke spoke to;  
I helped the Duchess to cast off his  
yoke, too:  
So, here's the tale from beginning to  
end,  
My friend!

## II.

Ours is a great wild country:  
If you climb to our castle's top,  
I don't see where your eye can stop;  
For when you've passed the corn-field  
country,  
Where vineyards leave off, flocks are  
packed,  
And sheep-range leads to cattle-tract,  
And cattle-tract to open-chase,  
And open-chase to the very base  
O' the mountain where, at a funeral  
pace,  
Round about, solemn and slow,  
One by one, row after row,  
Up and up the pine-trees go,  
So, like black priests up, and so  
Down the other side again  
To another greater, wilder country,  
That's one vast red drear burnt-up  
plain,  
Branched through and through with  
many a vein  
Whence iron's dug, and copper's  
dealt;  
Look right, look left, look straight  
before, —  
Beneath they mine, above they smelt,  
Copper-ore and iron-ore,  
And forge and furnace mould and  
melt,  
And so on, more and ever more,  
Till at the last, for a bounding belt,  
Comes the salt sand hoar of the great  
seashore,  
— And the whole is our Duke's coun-  
try.

## III.

I was born the day this present Duke  
was —  
(And O, says the song, ere I was old!)  
In the castle where the other Duke  
was —  
(When I was happy and young, not  
old!)

I in the kennel, he in the bower:  
We are of like age to an hour.  
My father was huntsman in that day:  
Who has not heard my father say,  
That, when a boar was brought to  
bay,

Three times, four times out of five,  
With his huntspear he'd contrive  
To get the killing-place transfixed,  
And pin him true, both eyes betwixt?  
And that's why the old Duke would  
rather

He lost a salt-pit than my father,  
And loved to have him ever in call;  
That's why my father stood in the  
hall

When the old Duke brought his in-  
fant out

To show the people, and while they  
passed

The wondrous bantling round about,  
Was first to start at the outside blast  
As the Kaiser's courier blew his horn,  
Just a month after the babe was born.  
"And," quoth the Kaiser's courier,  
"since

The Duke has got an heir, our Prince  
Needs the Duke's self at his side:"  
The Duke looked down and seemed  
to wince,

But he thought of wars o'er the world  
wide,

Castles a-fire, men on their march,  
The toppling tower, the crashing arch;  
And up he looked, and a while he  
eyed

The row of crests and shields and  
banners

Of all achievements after all manners,  
And "Ay," said the Duke with a  
surly pride.

The more was his comfort when he  
died

At next year's end, in a velvet suit,  
With a gilt glove on his hand, his foot  
In a silken shoe for a leather boot,  
Petticoated like a herald,

In a chamber next to an ante-room,  
Where he breathed the breath of page  
and groom,

What he called stink, and they, per-  
fume:

— They should have set him on red  
Berold

Mad with pride, like fire to manage!  
They should have got his cheek fresh  
tannage

Such a day as to-day in the merry  
sunshine!

Had they stuck on his fist a rough-foot merlin!

(Hark, the wind's on the heath at its game!

Oh for a noble falcon-lanner  
To flap each broad wing like a banner,

And turn in the wind, and dance like flame!)

Had they broached a cask of white beer from Berlin!

—Or if you incline to prescribe mere wine,

Put to his lips when they saw him pine,

A cup of our own Moldavia fine,  
Cotnar for instance, green as May sorrel

And rosy with sweet, — we shall not quarrel.

## IV.

So, at home, the sick tall yellow Duchess

Was left with the infant in her clutches,

She being the daughter of God knows who:

And now was the time to revisit her tribe.

Abroad and afar they went, the two,  
And let our people rail and gibe

At the empty hall and extinguished fire,

As loud as we liked, but ever in vain,  
Till after long years we had our desire,

And back came the Duke and his mother again.

## V.

And he came back the pertest little ape

That ever affronted human shape;  
Full of his travel, struck at himself.

You'd say, he despised our bluff old ways?

—Not he! For in Paris they told the elf

That our rough North land was the Land of Lays,

The one good thing left in evil days;  
Since the Mid-Age was the Heroic Time,

And only in wild nooks like ours  
Could you taste of it yet as in its prime,

And see true castles with proper towers,

Young-hearted women, old-minded men,

And manners now as manners were then.

So, all that that old Dukes had been,  
without knowing it,

This Duke would fain know he was, without being it;

'Twas not for the joy's self, but the joy of his showing it,

Nor for the pride's self, but the pride of our seeing it,

He revived all usages thoroughly worn-out,

The souls of them fumed-forth, the hearts of them torn-out:

And chief in the chase his neck he perilled,

On a lathy horse, all legs and length.  
With blood for bone, all speed, no strength;

—They should have set him on red Berold

With the red eye slow consuming in fire,

And the thin stiff ear like an abbey spire!

## VI.

Well, such as he was, he must marry, we heard;

And out of a convent, at the word,  
Came the lady, in time of spring.

—Oh, old thoughts they cling, they cling!

That day, I know, with a dozen oaths

I clad myself in thick hunting-clothes  
Fit for the chase of urox or buffle

In winter-time when you need to muffle.

But the Duke had a mind we should cut a figure,

And so we saw the lady arrive:  
My friend, I have seen a white crane bigger!

She was the smallest lady alive,  
Made in a piece of nature's madness,

Too small, almost, for the life and gladness

That over-filled her, as some hive  
Out of the bears' reach on the high trees

Is crowded with its safe merry bees:  
In truth, she was not hard to please!

Up she looked, down she looked,  
round at the mead,

Straight at the castle, that's best indeed



The Flight of the Duchess. — Page 13.



To look at from outside the walls:  
 As for us, styled the "serfs and  
 thralls,"  
 She as much thanked me as if she had  
 said it,  
 (With her eyes, do you understand?)  
 Because I patted her horse while I  
 led it;  
 And Max, who rode on her other  
 hand,  
 Said, no bird flew past but she in-  
 quired  
 What its true name was, nor ever  
 seemed tired—  
 If that was an eagle she saw hover,  
 And the green and gray bird on the  
 field was the plover,  
 When suddenly appeared the Duke:  
 And as down she sprung, the small  
 foot pointed  
 On to my hand,—as with a rebuke,  
 And as if his backbone were not  
 jointed,  
 The Duke stepped rather aside than  
 forward,  
 And welcomed her with his grandest  
 smile;  
 And, mind you, his mother all the  
 while  
 Chilled in the rear, like a wind to  
 nor'ward;  
 And up, like a weary yawn, with its  
 pulleys  
 Went, in a shriek, the rusty portcul-  
 lis;  
 And, like a glad sky the north-wind  
 sullies,  
 The lady's face stopped its play,  
 As if her first hair had grown gray;  
 For such things must begin some one  
 day.

## VII.

In a day or two she was well again;  
 As who should say, "You labor in  
 vain!  
 "This is all a jest against God, who  
 meant  
 I should ever be, as I am, content  
 And glad in his sight; therefore, glad  
 I will be."  
 So, smiling as at first went she.

## VIII.

She was active, stirring, all fire—  
 Could not rest, could not tire—  
 To a stone she might have given life!  
 (I myself loved once, in my day)

—For a shepherd's, miner's, hunts-  
 man's wife,  
 (I had a wife, I know what I say)  
 Never in all the world such an one!  
 And here was plenty to be done,  
 And she that could do it, great or  
 small,

She was to do nothing at all.  
 There was already this man in his  
 post,  
 This in his station, and that in his  
 office,  
 And the Duke's plan admitted a wife,  
 at most,  
 To meet his eye, with the other tro-  
 phies,  
 Now outside the hall, now in it,  
 To sit thus, stand thus, see and be  
 seen,

At the proper place in the proper  
 minute,  
 And die away the life between.  
 And it was amusing enough, each in-  
 fraction  
 Of rule—(but for after-sadness that  
 came)

To hear the consummate self-satisfac-  
 tion  
 With which the young Duke and the  
 old dame

Would let her advise, and criticise,  
 And, being a fool, instruct the  
 wise,

And, childlike, parcel out praise or  
 blame:  
 They bore it all in complacent guise,  
 As though an artificer, after contriv-  
 ing

A wheel-work image as if it were  
 living,  
 Should find with delight it could mo-  
 tion to strike him!

So found the Duke, and his mother  
 like him:

The lady hardly got a rebuff—  
 That had not been contemptuous  
 enough.

With his cursed smirk, as he nodded  
 applause,  
 And kept off the old mother-cat's  
 claws.

## IX.

So, the little lady grew silent and  
 thin,  
 Paling and ever paling,  
 As the way is with a hid chagrin;  
 And the Duke perceived that she  
 was ailing,

And said in his heart, "'Tis done to spite me,  
"But I shall find in my power to right me!"  
Don't swear, friend! The old one, many a year,  
Is in hell; and the Duke's self . . . you shall hear.

## x.

Well, early in autumn, at first winter-warning,  
When the stag had to break with his foot, of a morning,  
A drinking-hole out of the fresh tender ice,  
That covered the pond till the sun, in a trice,  
Loosening it, let out a ripple of gold,  
And another and another, and faster and faster,  
Till, dimpling to blindness, the wide water rolled,  
Then it so chanced that the Duke our master  
Asked himself what were the pleasures in season,  
And found, since the calendar bade him be hearty,  
He should do the Middle Age no treason  
In resolving on a hunting-party.  
Always provided, old books showed the way of it!  
What meant old poets by their strictures?  
And when old poets had said their say of it,  
How taught old painters in their pictures?  
We must revert to the proper channels,  
Workings in tapestry, paintings on panels,  
And gather up woodcraft's authentic traditions:  
Here was food for our various ambitions,  
As on each case, exactly stated—  
To encourage your dog, now, the properest cliirrup,  
Or best prayer to St. Hubert on mounting your stirrup—  
We of the household took thought and debated.  
Blessed was he whose back ached with the jerkin  
His sire was wont to do forest-work in;

Blesseder he who nobly sunk "ohs"  
And "ahs" while he tugged on his grandsire's trunk-hose;  
What signified hats if they had no rims on,  
Each slouching before and behind like the scallop,  
And able to serve at sea for a shallop,  
Loaded with lacquer and looped with crimson?  
So that the deer now, to make a short rhyme on't,  
What with our Venerers, Prickers, and Verderers,  
Might hope for real hunters at length and not murderers,  
And oh the Duke's tailor, he had a hot time on't!

## xi.

Now you must know that when the first dizziness  
Of flap-hats and buff-coats and jack-boots subsided,  
The Duke put this question, "The Duke's part provided,  
Had not the Duchess some share in the business?"  
For out of the mouth of two or three witnesses  
Did he establish all fit-or-unfitnesses;  
And, after much laying of heads together,  
Somebody's cap got a notable feather  
By the announcement with proper unction  
That he had discovered the lady's function;  
Since ancient authors gave this tenet,  
"When horns wind a mort and the deer is at siege,  
Let the dame of the castle prick forth on her jennet,  
And with water to wash the hands of her liege  
In a clean ewer with a fair towelling,  
Let her preside at the disembowelling."  
Now, my friend, if you had so little religion  
As to catch a hawk, some falcon-lanner,  
And thrust her broad wings like a banner  
Into a coop for a vulgar pigeon;  
And if day by day and week by week  
You cut her claws, and sealed her eyes,



And clipped her wings, and tied her  
beak,  
Would it cause you any great sur-  
prise  
If, when you decided to give her an  
airing,  
You found she needed a little pre-  
paring?  
— I say, should you be such a cur-  
mudgeon,  
If she clung to the perch, as to take it  
in dudgeon?  
Yet when the Duke to his lady signi-  
fied,  
Just a day before, as he judged most  
dignified,  
In what a pleasure she was to partici-  
pate, —  
And, instead of leaping wide in  
flashes,  
Her eyes just lifted their long  
lashes,  
As if pressed by fatigue even he could  
not dissipate,  
And duly acknowledged the Duke's  
forethought,  
But spoke of her health, if her health  
were worth aught,  
Of the weight by day and the watch  
by night.  
And much wrong now that used to be  
right,  
So, thanking him, declined the hunt-  
ing, —  
Was conduct ever more affronting?  
With all the ceremony settled —  
With the towel ready, and the sewer  
Polishing up his oldest ewer,  
And the jennet pitched upon, a pic-  
bald,  
Black-barred, cream-coated, and pink  
eye-balled, —  
No wonder if the Duke was nettled!  
And when she persisted reverthe-  
less, —  
Well, I suppose here's the time to  
confess  
That there ran half round our lady's  
chamber  
A balcony nose of the hardest to  
clamber;  
And that Jacynth the tire-woman,  
ready in waiting,  
Staid in call outside, what need of  
relating?  
And since Jacynth was like a June  
rose, why, a fervent  
Adorer of Jacynth of course was  
your servant;

And if she had the habit to peep  
through the casement,  
How could I keep at any vast dis-  
tance?  
And so, as I say, on the lady's per-  
sistence,  
The Duke, dumb stricken with  
amazement,  
Stood for a while in a sultry smother,  
And then, with a smile that partook  
of the awful,  
Turned her over to his yellow mother  
To learn what was decorous and law-  
ful;  
And the mother smelt blood with a  
cat-like instinct,  
As her cheek quick whitened through  
all its quince-tinct.  
Oh, but the lady heard the whole  
truth at once!  
What meant she? — Who was she?  
— Her duty and station,  
The wisdom of age and the folly of  
youth, at once,  
Its decent regard and its fitting rela-  
tion —  
In brief, my friends, set all the devil  
in hell free  
And turn them out to carouse in a  
belfry  
And treat the priests to a fifty-part  
canon,  
And then you may guess how that  
tongue of hers ran on!  
Well, somehow or other it ended at  
last,  
And, licking her whiskers, out she  
passed;  
And after her, — making (he hoped) a  
face  
Like Emperor Nero or Sultan Sa-  
ladin,  
Stalked the Duke's self with the au-  
stere grace  
Of ancient hero or modern paladin,  
From door to staircase—oh such a  
solemn  
Unbending of the vertebral column!

## XII.

However, at sunrise our company  
mustered;  
And here was the huntsman bidding  
unkennel,  
And there 'neath his bonnet the prick-  
er blustered,  
With feather dank as a bough of wet  
fennel;

For the court-yard walls were filled  
with fog  
You might cut as an axe chops a log.—  
Like so much wool for color and bulk-  
iness:  
And out rode the Duke in a perfect  
sulkiness;  
Since, before breakfast, a man feels  
but queasily,  
And a sinking at the lower abdomen  
Begins the day with indifferent  
omen.  
And lo! as he looked around un-  
easily,  
The sun ploughed the fog up and  
drove it asunder,  
This way and that, from the valley  
under;  
And, looking through the court-yard  
arch,  
Down in the valley, what should meet  
him  
But a troop of gypsies on their march?  
No doubt with the annual gifts to  
greet him.

## XIII.

Now, in your land, gypsies reach you,  
only  
After reaching all lands beside:  
North they go, South they go, troop-  
ing or lonely,  
And still, as they travel far and wide,  
Catch they and keep now a trace here,  
a trace there,  
That puts you in mind of a place here,  
a place there.  
But with us, I believe they rise out of  
the ground,  
And nowhere else, I take it, are found  
With the earth-tint yet so freshly em-  
browned;  
Born, no doubt, like insects which  
breed on  
The very fruit they are meant to feed  
on.  
For the earth—not a use to which  
they don't turn it,  
The ore that grows in the mountain's  
womb,  
Or the sand in the pits like a honey-  
comb,  
They sift and soften it, bake it and  
burn it—  
Whether they weld you, for instance,  
a snaffle  
With side-bars never a brute can  
baffle;

Or a lock that's a puzzle of wards  
within wards;  
Or, if your colt's fore foot inclines to  
curve inwards,  
Horseshoes they hammer which turn  
on a swivel  
And won't allow the hoof to shrivel.  
Then they cast bells like the shell  
of the winkle  
That keep a stout heart in the ram  
with their tinkle;  
But the sand—they pinch and pound  
it like otters;  
Commend me to gypsy glass-makers  
and potters!  
Glasses they'll blow you, crystal,  
clear,  
Where just a faint cloud of rose shall  
appear,  
As if in pure water you dropped and  
let die  
A bruised black-blooded mulberry;  
And that other sort, their crowning  
pride,  
With long white threads distinct in-  
side,  
Like the lake-flower's fibrous roots  
which dangle  
Loose such a length and never tangle,  
Where the bold sword-lily cuts the  
clear waters,  
And the cup-lily couches with all the  
white daughters:  
Such are the works they put their  
hand to,  
The uses they turn and twist iron and  
sand to.  
And these made the troop, which our  
Duke saw sally  
Toward his castle from out of the  
valley,  
Men and women, like new-hatched  
spiders,  
Come out with the morning to greet  
our riders.  
And up they wound till they reached  
the ditch,  
Whereat all stopped save one, a  
witch  
That I knew, as she hobbled from the  
group,  
By her gait directly and her stoop,  
I, whom Jacynth was used to impor-  
tune  
To let that same witch tell us our for-  
tune.  
The oldest gypsy then above ground;  
And, sure as the autumn season came  
round,

She paid us a visit for profit or pas-  
time,  
And every time, as she swore, for the  
last time.  
And presently she was seen to sidle  
Up to the Duke till she touched his  
bridle,  
So that the horse of a sudden reared  
up  
As under its nose the old witch peered  
up  
With her worn-out eyes, or rather eye-  
holes,  
Of no use now but to gather brine,  
And began a kind of level whine  
Such as they used to sing to their  
viols  
When their ditties they go grinding  
Up and down with nobody minding ;  
And then, as of old, at the end of the  
humming  
Her usual presents were forthcoming  
— A dog-whistle blowing the fiercest  
of trebles  
(Just a seashore stone holding a doz-  
en fine pebbles),  
Or a porcelain mouth-piece to screw  
on a pipe-end, —  
And so she awaited her annual stip-  
end.  
But this time the Duke would scarcely  
vouchsafe  
A word in reply ; and in vain she  
felt  
With twitching fingers at her belt  
For the purse of sleek pine-martin  
pelt,  
Ready to punt what he gave in her  
pouch safe, —  
Till, either to quicken his apprehen-  
sion,  
Or possibly with an after-intention,  
She was come, she said, to pay her  
duty  
To the new Duchess, the youthful  
beauty.  
No sooner had she named his lady,  
Than a shine lit up the face so shady,  
And its smirk returned with a novel  
meaning —  
For it struck him, the babe just want-  
ed weaning ;  
If one gave her a taste of what life  
was and sorrow,  
She, foolish to-day, would be wiser  
to-morrow ;  
And who so fit a teacher of trouble  
As this sordid crone bent well-nigh  
double ?

So, glancing at her wolf-skin vesture  
(If such it was, for they grow so lux-  
sute  
That their own fleece serves for nat-  
ural fur-suit)  
He was contrasting, 'twas plain from  
his gesture,  
The life of the lady so flower-like and  
delicate  
With the loathsome squalor of this  
helicat.  
I, in brief, was the man the Duke  
beckoned  
From out of the throng ; and while I  
drew near  
He told the crone — as I since have  
reckoned  
By the way he bent and spoke into  
her ear  
With circumspection and mystery —  
The main of the lady's history,  
Her frowardness and ingratitude ;  
And for all the crone's submissive  
attitude  
I could see round her mouth the loose  
plaits tightening,  
And her brow with assenting intelli-  
gence brightening,  
As though she engaged with hearty  
good will  
Whatever he now might enjoin to  
fulfil,  
And promised the lady a thorough  
frightening.  
And so, just giving her a glimpse  
Of a purse, with the air of a man who  
imps  
The wing of the hawk that shall fetch  
the hernshaw,  
He bade me take the gypsy mother  
And set her telling some story or  
other  
Of hill or dale, oak-wood or fernshaw,  
To while away a weary hour  
For the lady left alone in her bower,  
Whose mind and body craved exer-  
tion  
And yet shrank from all better diver-  
sion.

## XIV.

Then clapping heel to his horse, the  
mere curveter,  
Out rode the Duke, and after his  
hollo  
Horses and hounds swept, huntsman  
and servitor,  
And back I turned and bade the crone  
follow.

And what makes me confident what's  
to be told you  
Had all along been of this crone's  
devising,  
Is, that, on looking round sharply,  
behold you,  
There was a novelty quick as surpris-  
ing :  
For first, she had shot up a full head  
in stature,  
And her step kept pace with mine nor  
faltered,  
As if age had foregone its usurpature,  
And the ignoble mien was wholly  
altered,  
And the face looked quite of another  
nature,  
And the change reached too, whatever  
the change meant,  
Her shaggy wolf-skin cloak's arrange-  
ment :  
For where its tatters hung loose like  
sedges,  
Gold coins were glittering on the  
edges,  
Like the band-roll strung with toman  
Which proves the veil a Persian  
woman's :  
And under her brow, like a snail's  
horns newly  
Come out as after the rain he paces,  
Two unmistakable eye-points duly  
Live and aware looked out of their  
places.  
So, we went and found Jacynth at the  
entry  
Of the lady's chamber standing sen-  
try ;  
I told the command and produced my  
companion,  
And Jacynth rejoiced to admit any  
one,  
For since last night, by the same  
token,  
Not a single word had the lady  
spoken :  
They went in both to the presence  
together,  
While I in the balcony watched the  
weather.

## xv.

And now, what took place at the very  
first of all,  
I cannot tell, as I never could learn  
it :  
Jacynth constantly wished a curse to  
fall  
On that little head of hers and burn it

If she knew how she came to drop so  
soundly  
Asleep of a sudden, and there con-  
tinue  
The whole time, sleeping as pro-  
foundly  
As one of the boars my father would  
pin you  
'Twixt the eyes where life holds gar-  
rison,  
— Jacynth forgive me the comparison!  
But where I begin my own narration  
Is a little after I took my station  
To breathe the fresh air from the  
balcony,  
And, having in those days a falcon  
eye,  
To follow the hunt through the open  
country,  
From where the bushes thinlier  
crested  
The hillocks, to a plain where's not  
one tree.  
When, in a moment, my ear was  
arrested  
By — was it singing, or was it saying,  
Or a strange musical instrument play-  
ing  
In the chamber? — and to be certain  
I pushed the lattice, pulled the cur-  
tain,  
And there lay Jacynth asleep,  
Yet as if a watch she tried to keep,  
In a rosy sleep along the floor  
With her head against the door ;  
While in the midst, on the seat of  
state,  
Was a queen — the gypsy woman late,  
With head and face downbent  
On the lady's head and face intent :  
For, coiled at her feet like a child at  
ease,  
The lady sat between her knees,  
And o'er them the lady's clasped  
hands met,  
And on those hands her chin was set,  
And her upturned face met the face  
of the crone  
Wherein the eyes had grown and  
grown  
As if she could double and quadruple  
At pleasure the play of either pupil  
— Very like, by her hands' slow fan-  
ning,  
As up and down like a gor-crow's  
flappers  
They moved to measure, or bell-  
clappers.  
I said, " Is it blessing, is it banning,

Do they applaud you or burlesque  
you —

Those hands and fingers with no flesh  
on?"

But, just as I thought to spring in to  
the rescue,

At once I was stopped by the lady's  
expression :

For it was life her eyes were drinking  
From the crone's wide pair above un-  
winking,

— Life's pure fire, received without  
shrinking,

Into the heart and breast whose heav-  
ing

Told you no single drop they were  
leaving,

— Life, that filling her, passed red-  
undant

Into her very hair, back swerving  
Over each shoulder, loose and abun-  
dant,

As her head thrown back showed the  
white throat curving ;

And the very tresses shared in the  
pleasure,

Moving to the mystic measure,  
Bounding as the bosom bounded.

I stopped short, more and more con-  
founded,

As still her cheeks burned and eyes  
glistered,

As she listened and she listened : .

When all at once a hand detained  
me,

The selfsame contagion gained me,  
And I kept time to the wondrous  
chime,

Making out words and prose and  
rhyme,

Till it seemed that the music furl'd  
its wings like a task fulfilled, and  
dropped

From under the words it first had  
propped,

And left them midway in the world,  
Word took word as hand takes  
hand,

I could hear at last, and understand,  
And when I held the unbroken thread,  
The gypsy said, —

“ And so at last we find my tribe.  
And so I set thee in the midst,  
And to one and all of them describe  
What thou saidst and what thou  
didst,

Our long and terrible journey through,  
And all thou art ready to say and do

In the trials that remain :

I trace them the vein and the other  
vein

That meet on thy brow and part again,  
Making our rapid mystic mark :

And I bid my people prove and probe  
Each eye's profound and glorious  
globe,

Till they detect the kindred spark  
In those depths so dear and dark,

Like the spots that snap and burst  
and flee,

Circling over the midnight sea.  
And on that round young cheek of  
thine

I make them recognize the tinge,  
As when of the costly scarlet wine  
They drip so much as will impinge  
And spread in a thinnest scale afloat  
One thick gold drop from the olive's  
coat

Over a silver plate whose sheen  
Still through the mixture shall be seen.  
For so I prove thee, to one and all,  
Fit, when my people ope their breast,  
To see the sign, and hear the call,  
And take the vow, and stand the test  
Which adds one more child to the  
rest —

When the breast is bare and the arms  
are wide,

And the world is left outside.  
For there is probation to decree,  
And many and long must the trials be  
Thou shalt victoriously endure,  
If that brow is true and those eyes  
are sure ;

Like a jewel-finder's fierce assay  
Of the prize he dug from its moun-  
tain tomb, —

Let once the vindicating ray  
Leap out amid the anxious gloom,  
And steel and fire have done their  
part,

And the prize falls on its finder's  
heart ;

So, trial after trial past,  
Wilt thou fall at the very last  
Breathless, half in trance  
With the thrill of the great deliver-  
ance,

Into our arms for evermore ;  
And thou shalt know, those arms  
once curled

About thee, what we knew before,  
How love is the only good in the  
world.

Henceforth be loved as heart can love.  
Or brain devise, or hand approve !

Stand up, look below,  
It is our life at thy feet we throw  
To step with into light and joy ;  
Not a power of life but we enjoy  
To satisfy thy nature's want ;  
Art thou the tree that props the

plant,  
Or the climbing plant that seeks the  
tree —

Canst thou help us, must we help  
thee ?

If any two creatures grew into one,  
They would do more than the world  
has done ;

Though each apart were never so  
weak,

Ye vainly through the world should  
seek

For the knowledge and the might  
Which in such union grew their right :

So, to approach at least that end,  
And blend,—as much as may be,  
blend

Thee with us or us with thee, —  
As climbing plant or propping tree,  
Shall some one deck thee over and  
down,

Up and about, with blossoms and  
leaves ?

Fix his heart's fruit for thy garland  
crown,

Cling with his soul as the gourd-vine  
cleaves,

Die on thy boughs and disappear  
While not a leaf of thine is sere ?

Or is the other fate in store,  
And art thou fitted to adore,  
To give thy wondrous self away,  
And take a stronger nature's sway ?  
I foresee and could foretell

Thy future portion, sure and well :  
But those passionate eyes speak true,  
speak true,

Let them say what thou shalt do !  
Only be sure thy daily life,

In its peace or in its strife,  
Never shall be unobserved ;  
We pursue thy whole career,

And hope for it, or doubt, or fear, —  
Lo, hast thou kept thy path or  
swerved,

We are beside thee in all thy ways,  
With our blame, with our praise,  
Our shame to feel, our pride to show,  
Glad, angry — but indifferent, no !

Whether it be thy lot to go,  
For the good of us all, where the  
haters meet

In the crowded city's horrible street ;

Or thou step alone through the morass  
Where never sound yet was

Save the dry quick clap of the stork's  
bill,

For the air is still, and the water  
still,

When the blue breast of the dipping  
coot

Dives under, and all is mute.

So at the last shall come old age,  
Decrepit as befits that stage ;

How else wouldst thou retire apart  
With the hoarded memories of thy  
heart,

And gather all to the very least  
Of the fragments of life's earlier feast,

Let fall through eagerness to find  
The crowning dainties yet behind ?

Ponder on the entire past  
Laid together thus at last,

When the twilight helps to fuse  
The first fresh with the faded hues,

And the outline of the whole,  
As round eve's shades their frame-  
work roll,

Grandly fronts for once thy soul.  
And then as, 'mid the dark, a gleam

Of yet another morning breaks,  
And like the hand which ends a  
dream,

Death, with the might of his sun-  
beam,

Touches the flesh and the soul  
awakes,

Then"—

Ay, then indeed something  
would happen !

But what ? For here her voice  
changed like a bird's ;

There grew more of the music and  
less of the words ;

Had Jacynth only been by me to clap  
pen

To paper and put you down every  
syllable

With those clever clerkly fingers,  
All I've forgotten as well as what  
lingers

In this old brain of mine that's but ill  
able

To give you even this poor version  
Of the speech I spoil, as it were, with  
stammering !

—More fault of those who had the  
hammering

Of prosody into me and syntax,  
And did it, not with hobnails but tin-  
tacks !

But to return from this excursion, —

Just, do you mark, when the song  
 was sweetest,  
 The peace most deep and the charm  
 completest,  
 There came, shall I say, a snap—  
 And the charm vanished!  
 And my sense returned, so strangely  
 banished,  
 And, starting as from a nap,  
 I knew the crone was bewitching my  
 lady,  
 With Jacynth asleep; and but one  
 spring made I  
 Down from the casement, round to  
 the portal,  
 Another minute and I had entered,—  
 When the door opened, and more  
 than mortal  
 Stood, with a face where to my mind  
 centred  
 All beauties I ever saw or shall see,  
 The Duchess: I stopped as if struck  
 by palsy.  
 She was so different, happy and beau-  
 tiful,  
 I felt at once that all was best,  
 And that I had nothing to do, for the  
 rest,  
 But wait her commands, obey and be  
 dutiful.  
 Not that, in fact, there was any com-  
 manding;  
 I saw the glory of her eye,  
 And the brow's height and the  
 breast's expanding,  
 And I was hers to live or to die.  
 As for finding what she wanted,  
 You know God Almighty granted  
 Such little signs should serve wild  
 creatures  
 To tell one another all their desires,  
 So that each knows what his friend  
 requires,  
 And does its bidding without teach-  
 ers.  
 I preceded her; the crone  
 Followed silent and alone;  
 I spoke to her, but she merely jab-  
 bered  
 In the old style; both her eyes had  
 sunk  
 Back to their pits; her stature  
 shrunk;  
 In short, the soul in its body sunk  
 Like a blade sent home to its scab-  
 bard.  
 We descended, I preceding;  
 Crossed the court with nobody heed-  
 ing;

All the world was at the chase,  
 The court-yard like a desert-place,  
 The stable emptied of its small fry;  
 I saddled myself the very paltry  
 I remember patting while it carried  
 her,  
 The day she arrived and the Duke  
 married her.  
 And, do you know, though it's easy  
 deceiving  
 One's self in such matters, I can't help  
 believing  
 The lady had not forgotten it either,  
 And knew the poor devil so much  
 beneath her  
 Would have been only too glad, for  
 her service,  
 To dance on hot ploughshares like a  
 Turk dervise,  
 But, unable to pay proper duty where  
 owing it,  
 Was reduced to that pitiful method  
 of showing it.  
 For though, the moment I began set-  
 ting  
 His saddle on my own nag of Be-  
 rold's begetting  
 (Not that I meant to be obtrusive),  
 She stopped me, while his rug was  
 shifting,  
 By a single rapid finger's lifting,  
 And, with a gesture kind but conclu-  
 sive,  
 And a little shake of the head, re-  
 fused me,—  
 I say, although she never used me,  
 Yet when she was mounted, the  
 gypsy behind her,  
 And I ventured to remind her,  
 I suppose with a voice of less steady-  
 ness  
 Than usual, for my feeling exceeded  
 me,  
 —Something to the effect that I was  
 in readiness  
 Whenever God should please she  
 needed me,—  
 Then, do you know, her face looked  
 down on me  
 With a look that placed a crown on  
 me,  
 And she felt in her bosom,—mark,  
 her bosom—  
 And, as a flower-tree drops its  
 blossom,  
 Dropped me . . . ah! had it been a  
 purse  
 Of silver, my friend, or gold that's  
 worse,

Why, you see, as soon as I found myself  
 So understood,—that a true heart so  
 may gain  
 Such a reward,—I should have gone  
 home again,  
 Kissed Jacynth, and soberly drowned  
 myself!  
 It was a little plait of hair  
 Such as friends in a convent make  
 To wear, each for the other's sake,—  
 This, see, which at my breast I wear,  
 Ever did (rather to Jacynth's grudge-  
 ment),  
 And ever shall till the Day of Judg-  
 ment.  
 And then,—and then,—to cut short,  
 —this is idle,  
 These are feelings it is not good to  
 foster,—  
 I pushed the gate wide, she shook the  
 bridle,  
 And the palfrey bounded,—and so  
 we lost her.

## XVI.

When the liquor's out why clink the  
 cannikin?  
 I did think to describe you the panic in  
 The redoubtable breast of our master  
 the manikin,  
 And what was the pitch of his moth-  
 er's yellowness,  
 How she turned as a shark to snap  
 the spare-rib  
 Clean off, sailors say, from a pearl-  
 diving Carib,  
 When she heard, what she called the  
 flight of the feloness  
 — But it seems such child's play,  
 What they said and did with the lady  
 away!  
 And to dance on, when we've lost the  
 music,  
 Always made me—and no doubt  
 makes you—sick.  
 Nay, to my mind, the world's face  
 looked so stern  
 As that sweet form disappeared  
 through the postern,  
 She that kept it in constant good-  
 humor,  
 It ought to have stopped; there  
 seemed nothing to do more.  
 But the world thought otherwise and  
 went on,  
 And my head's one that its spite was  
 spent on:

Thirty years are fled since that morn-  
 ing,  
 And with them all my head's adorn-  
 ing.  
 Nor did the old Duchess die outright,  
 As you expect, of suppressed spite,  
 The natural end of every adder  
 Not suffered to empty its poison-  
 bladder:  
 But she and her son agreed, I take  
 it,  
 That no one should touch on the story  
 to wake it,  
 For the wound in the Duke's pride  
 rankled fiery;  
 So, they made no search and small  
 inquiry:  
 And when fresh gypsies have paid us  
 a visit, I've  
 Noticed the couple were never in-  
 quisitive,  
 But told them they're folks the Duke  
 don't want here,  
 And bade them make haste and cross  
 the frontier.  
 Brief, the Duchess was gone and the  
 Duke was glad of it,  
 And the old one was in the young  
 one's stead,  
 And took, in her place, the household's  
 head,  
 And a blessed time the household had  
 of it!  
 And were I not, as a man may say,  
 cautious  
 How I trench, more than needs, on  
 the nauseous,  
 I could favor you with sundry touches  
 Of the paint-smutches with which the  
 Duchess  
 Heightened the mellowness of her  
 cheek's yellowness  
 (To get on faster) until at last her  
 Cheek grew to be one master-plaster  
 Of mucus and fucus from mere use of  
 ceruse:  
 In short, she grew from scalp to  
 adder  
 Just the object to make you shudder.

## XVII.

You're my friend—  
 What a thing friendship is, world  
 without end!  
 How it gives the heart and soul a stir-  
 up  
 As if somebody broached you a glori-  
 ous runlet,



And poured out, all lovelily, spark-  
lingly, sunlit,  
Our green Moldavia, the streaky  
sirup,  
Cotnar as old as the time of the  
Druids—  
Friendship may match with that mon-  
arch of fluids ;  
Each supples a dry brain, fills you its  
ins-and-outs,  
Gives your life's honr-glass a shake  
when the thin sand doubts  
Whether to run on or stop short, and  
guarantees  
Age is not all made of stark sloth and  
arrant ease.  
I have seen my little lady once more,  
Jacynth, the gypsy, Berold, and the  
rest of it,  
For to me spoke the Duke, as I told  
you before ;  
I always wanted to make a clean  
breast of it :  
And now it is made— why, my heart's  
blood, that went trickle,  
Trickle, but anon, in such muddy  
driblets,  
Is pumped up brisk now, through the  
main ventricle,  
And genially floats me about the gib-  
lets.  
I'll tell you what I intend to do :  
I must see this fellow his sad life  
through—  
He is our Duke, after all,  
And I, as he says, but a serf and thrall.  
My father was born here, and I in-  
herit  
His fame, a chain he bound his son  
with ;  
Could I pay in a lump I should pre-  
fer it,  
But there's no mine to blow up and  
get done with :  
So, I must stay till the end of the  
chapter.  
For, as to our middle-age-manners-  
adapter,  
Be it a thing to be glad on or sorry on,  
Some day or other, his head in a mo-  
rion  
And breast in a hauberker, his heels  
he'll kick up,  
Slain by an onslaught fierce of hic-  
cup.  
And then, when red doth the sword  
of our Duke rust,  
And its leathern sheath lie o'ergrown  
with a blue crust,

Then I shall scrape together my earn-  
ings ;  
For, you see, in the churchyard Ja-  
cynth reposes,  
And our children all went the way of  
the roses :  
It's a long lane that knows no turn-  
ings.  
One needs but little tackle to travel  
in ;  
So, just one stout cloak shall I indue :  
And for a staff, what beats the jave-  
lin  
With which his boars my father  
pinned you ?  
And then, for a purpose you shall  
hear presently,  
Taking some Cotnar, a tight plump  
skinful,  
I shall go journeying, who but I,  
pleasantly !  
Sorrow is vain and despondency sin-  
ful.  
What's a man's age ? He must hurry  
more, that's all ;  
Cram in a day, what his youth took a  
year to hold :  
When we mind labor, then only,  
we're too old—  
What age had Methusalem when he  
begat Saul ?  
And at last, as its haven some buffeted  
ship sees  
(Come all the way from the north-  
parts with sperm oil),  
I hope to get safely out of the tur-  
moil  
And arrive one day at the land of the  
gypsies,  
And find my lady, or hear the last  
news of her  
From some old thief and son of Luci-  
fer,  
His forehead chapleted green with  
wreathy hop,  
Sunburned all over like an Æthiop.  
And when my Cotnar begins to oper-  
ate  
And the tongue of the rogue to run at  
a proper rate,  
And our wine-skin, tight once, shows  
each flaccid dent,  
I shall drop in with—as if by acci-  
dent—  
“ You never knew, then, how it all  
ended,  
What fortune good or bad attended  
The little lady your Queen be-  
friended ? ”

—And when that's told me, what's remaining?  
 This world's too hard for my explaining.  
 The same wise judge of matters equine  
 Who still preferred some slim four-year-old  
 To the big-boned stock of mighty Be-  
 rold,  
 And, for strong Cotnar, drank French  
 weak wine,  
 He also must be such a lady's scorner!  
 Smooth Jacob still robs homely Esau:  
 Now up, now down, the world's one  
 seesaw.  
 —So, I shall find out some snug cor-  
 ner  
 Under a hedge, like Orson the wood-  
 knight,  
 Turn myself round and bid the world  
 good-night,  
 And sleep a sound sleep till the trum-  
 pet's blowing  
 Wakes me (unless priests cheat us  
 laymen)  
 To a world where will be no further  
 throwing  
 Pearls before swine that can't value  
 them. Amen!

## SONG FROM "PIPPA PASSES."

THE year's at the spring,  
 And day's at the morn ;  
 Morning's at seven ;  
 The hill-side's dew-pearled ;  
 The lark's on the wing ;  
 The snail's on the thorn ;  
 God's in his heaven —  
 All's right with the world.

"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE  
 GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT  
 TO AIX."

[16—.]

I.

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and  
 he ;  
 I galloped, Dirck galloped, we gal-  
 loped all three ;

"Good speed!" cried the watch, as  
 the gate-bolts undrew ;  
 "Speed!" echoed the wall to us gal-  
 loping through ;  
 Behind shut the postern, the lights  
 sank to rest,  
 And into the midnight we galloped  
 abreast.

II.

Not a word to each other ; we kept the  
 great pace  
 Neck by neck, stride by stride, never  
 changing our place ;  
 I turned in my saddle and made its  
 girths tight,  
 Then shortened each stirrup, and set  
 the pique right,  
 Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained  
 slacker the bit,  
 Nor galloped less steadily Roland a  
 whit.

III.

'Twas moonset at starting ; but, while  
 we drew near  
 Lokeren, the cocks crew, and twilight  
 dawned clear ;  
 At Boom, a great yellow star came  
 out to see ;  
 At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as  
 could be ;  
 And from Meeheln church-steeple we  
 heard the half-chime,  
 So, Joris broke silence with, "Yet  
 there is time!"

IV.

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden  
 the sun,  
 And against him the cattle stood black  
 every one,  
 To stare through the mist at us gallop-  
 ing past ;  
 And I saw my stout galloper Roland  
 at last,  
 With resolute shoulders, each butting  
 away  
 The haze, as some bluff river head-  
 land its spray :

V.

And his low head and crest, just one  
 sharp ear bent back  
 For my voice, and the other pricked  
 out on his track ;  
 And one eye's black intelligence, —  
 ever that glance  
 O'er its white edge at me, his own  
 master, askance !



“Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear.  
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer.” — Page 25.



And the thick heavy spume-flakes  
which aye and anon  
His fierce lips shook upwards in gal-  
loping on.

## VI.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried  
Joris, "Stay spur!  
Your Roos galloped bravely, the  
fault's not in her,  
We'll remember at Aix"—for one  
heard the quick wheeze  
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck  
and staggering knees,  
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of  
the flank,  
As down on her haunches she shud-  
dered and sank.

## VII.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and  
I,  
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud  
in the sky;  
The broad sun above laughed a piti-  
less laugh,  
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright  
stubble like chaff;  
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire  
sprang white,  
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for  
Aix is in sight!"

## VIII.

"How they'll greet us!"—and all in  
a moment his roan  
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead  
as a stone;  
And there was my Roland to bear the  
whole weight  
Of the news which alone could save  
Aix from her fate,  
With his nostrils like pits full of  
blood to the brim,  
And with circles of red for his eye-  
sockets' rim.

## IX.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each  
holster let fall,  
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go  
belt and all,  
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted  
his ear,  
Called my Roland his pet-name, my  
horse without peer;

Clapped my hands, laughed and sang,  
any noise, bad or good,  
Till at length into Aix Roland gal-  
loped and stood.

## X.

And all I remember is, friends flock-  
ing round  
As I sat with his head 'twixt my  
knees on the ground;  
And no voice but was praising this  
Roland of mine,  
As I poured down his throat our last  
measure of wine,  
Which (the burgesses voted by com-  
mon consent)  
Was no more than his due who  
brought good news from Ghent.

## SONG FROM "PARACELBUS."

## I.

HEAP cassia, sandal-buds, and stripes  
Of labdanum, and aloe-balls,  
Smeared with dull nard an Indian  
wipes  
From out her hair: such balsam  
falls  
Down seaside mountain pedes-  
tals,  
From tree-tops where tired winds are  
fain,  
Spent with the vast and howling  
main,  
To treasure half their island gain.

## II.

And strew faint sweetness from some  
old  
Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud  
Which breaks to dust when once un-  
rolled;  
Or shredded perfume, like a cloud  
From closet long to quiet vowed,  
With mothied and dropping arras  
hung,  
Mouldering her lute and books  
among,  
As when a queen, long dead, was  
young.

THROUGH THE METIDJA  
TO ABD-EL-KADR.

[1842.]

## I.

As I ride, as I ride,  
With a full heart for my guide,  
So its tide rocks my side,  
As I ride, as I ride,  
That, as I were double-eyed,  
He, in whom our Tribes confide,  
Is descried, ways untried  
As I ride, as I ride.

## II.

As I ride, as I ride  
To our Chief and his Allied,  
Who dares chide my heart's pride  
As I ride, as I ride?  
Or are witnesses denied —  
Through the desert waste and wide  
Do I glide unspied  
As I ride, as I ride?

## III.

As I ride, as I ride,  
When an inner voice has cried,  
The sands slide, nor abide  
(As I ride, as I ride)  
O'er each visioned homicide  
That came vaunting (has he lied?)  
To reside — where he died,  
As I ride, as I ride.

## IV.

As I ride, as I ride,  
Ne'er has spur my swift horse plied,  
Yet his hide, streaked and pied,  
As I ride, as I ride,  
Shows where sweat has sprung and  
dried,  
— Zebra-footed; ostrich-thighed —  
How has vied stride with stride  
As I ride, as I ride!

## V.

As I ride, as I ride,  
Could I loose what Fate has tied,  
Ere I pride, she should hide  
(As I ride, as I ride)  
All that's meant me — satisfied  
When the Prophet and the Bride  
Stop veins I'd have subside  
As I ride, as I ride!

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH  
CAMP.

## I.

You know, we French stormed Ratis-  
son :  
A mile or so away  
On a little mound, Napoleon  
Stood on our storming-day;  
With neck out-thrust, you fancy  
how,  
Legs wide, arms locked behind,  
As if to balance the prone brow  
Oppressive with its mind.

## II.

Just as perhaps he mused, "My plans  
That soar, to earth may fall,  
Let once my army-leader Lannes  
Waver at yonder wall," —  
Out 'twixt the battery smokes there  
flew  
A rider, bound on bound  
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew  
Until he reached the mound.

## III.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,  
And held himself erect  
By just his horse's mane, a boy:  
You hardly could suspect —  
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,  
Scarce any blood came through)  
You looked twice ere you saw his  
breast  
Was all but shot in two.

## IV.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by  
God's grace  
We've got you Ratisbon!  
The Marshal's in the market-place,  
And you'll be there anon  
To see your flag-bird flap his vans  
Where I, to heart's desire,  
Perched him!" The chief's eye  
flashed: his plans  
Soared up again like fire.

## V.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently  
Softened itself, as sheathes  
A film the mother-eagle's eye  
When her bruised eaglet breathes

"You're wounded!"—"Nay," the  
 soldier's pride  
 Touched to the quick, he said,  
 "I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief  
 beside,  
 Smiling, the boy fell dead.

### THE LOST LEADER.

#### I.

Just for a handful of silver he left us,  
 Just for a ribbon to stick in his  
 coat—  
 Found the one gift of which fortune  
 bereft us,  
 Lost all the others, she lets us  
 devote;  
 They, with the gold to give, doled  
 him out silver,  
 So much was theirs who so little  
 allowed:  
 How all our copper had gone for his  
 service!  
 Rags—were they purple, his heart  
 had been proud!  
 We that had loved him so, followed  
 him, honored him,  
 Lived in his mild and magnificent  
 eye,  
 Learned his great language, caught  
 his clear accents,  
 Made him our pattern to live and  
 to die!  
 Shakspeare was of us, Milton was for  
 us,  
 Burns, Shelley, were with us,—  
 they watch from their graves!  
 He alone breaks from the van and  
 the freemen,  
 He alone sinks to the rear and the  
 slaves!

#### II.

We shall march prospering,—not  
 through his presence;  
 Songs may inspire us,—not from  
 his lyre;  
 Deeds will be done,—while he boasts  
 his quiescence,  
 Still bidding crouch whom the rest  
 bade aspire;  
 Blot out his name, then, record one  
 lost soul more,  
 One task more declined, one more  
 footpath untrod,

One more devil's-triumph and sorrow  
 for angels,  
 One wrong more to man, one more  
 insult to God!  
 Life's night begins: let him never  
 come back to us!  
 There would be doubt, hesitation,  
 and pain,  
 Forced praise on our part—the glim-  
 mer of twilight,  
 Never glad confident morning again!  
 Best fight on well, for we taught him  
 — strike gallantly,  
 Menace our heart ere we master his  
 own;  
 Then let him receive the new knowl-  
 edge and wait us,  
 Pardoned in heaven, the first by  
 the throne!

### IN A GONDOLA.

*He sings.*

I SEND my heart up to thee, all my  
 heart  
 In this my singing.  
 For the stars help me, and the sea  
 bears part;  
 The very night is clinging  
 Closer to Venice' streets to leave one  
 space  
 Above me, whence thy face  
 May light my joyous heart to thee its  
 dwelling-place.

*She speaks.*

Say after me, and try to say  
 My very words, as if each word  
 Came from you of your own accord,  
 In your own voice, in your own  
 way:  
 "This woman's heart and soul and  
 brain  
 Are mine as much as this gold chain  
 She bids me wear; which" (say again)  
 "I choose to make by cherishing  
 A precious thing, or choose to fling  
 Over the boat-side, ring by ring."  
 And yet once more say . . . no word  
 more!  
 Since words are only words. Give  
 o'er!

Unless you call me, all the same,  
Familiarly by my pet name,  
Which if the Three should hear you  
call,

And me reply to, would proclaim  
At once our secret to them all.  
Ask of me, too, command me, blame—  
Do, break down the partition-wall  
'Twi'x't us, the daylight world beholds  
Curtained in dusk and splendid folds!  
What's left but—all of me to take?  
I am the Three's: prevent them, slake  
Your thirst! 'Tis said, the Arab sage,  
In practising with gems, can lose  
Their subtle spirit in his cruce  
And leave but ashes: so, sweet mage,  
Leave them my ashes when thy use  
Sucks out my soul, thy heritage!

*He sings.*

I.

Past we glide, and past, and past!  
What's that poor Agnese doing  
Where they make the shutters fast?  
Gray Zanobi's just a-wooing  
To his couch the purchased bride:  
Past we glide!

II.

Past we glide, and past, and past!  
Why's the Pucci Palace flaring  
Like a beacon to the blast?  
Guests by hundreds, not one caring  
If the dear host's neck were wried:  
Past we glide!

*She sings.*

I.

The moth's kiss, first!  
Kiss me as if you made believe  
You were not sure, this eve,  
How my face, your flower, had pursed  
Its petals up; so, here and there  
You brush it, till I grow aware  
Who wants me, and wide ope I burst.

II.

The bee's kiss, now!  
Kiss me as if you entered gay  
My heart at some noonday,  
A bud that dares not disallow  
The claim, so all is rendered up,  
And passively its shattered cup  
Over your head to sleep I bow.

*He sings.*

I.

What are we two?  
I am a Jew,  
And carry thee, farther than friends  
can pursue,  
To a feast of our tribe;  
Where they need thee to bribe  
The Devil that blasts them unless he  
imbibe  
Thy . . . Scatter the vision forever!  
And now,  
As of old, I am I, thou art thou!

II.

Say again, what we are?  
The sprite of a star,  
I lure thee above where the destinies  
bar  
My plumes their full play  
Till a ruddier ray  
Than my pale one announce there is  
withering away  
Some . . . Scatter the vision forever!  
And now,  
As of old, I am I, thou art thou!

*He muses.*

Oh! which were best, to roam or  
rest?  
The land's lap or the water's breast?  
To sleep on yellow millet-sheaves,  
Or swim in lucid shallows, just  
Eluding water-lily leaves,  
An inch from Death's black fingers,  
thrust  
To lock you, whom release he must;  
Which life were best on summer  
eves?

*He speaks, musing.*

Lie back; could thought of mine im-  
prove you?  
From this shoulder let there spring  
A wing; from this, another wing;  
Wings, not legs and feet, shall move  
you!  
Snow-white must they spring, to  
blend  
With your flesh, but I intend  
They shall deepen to the end,  
Broader, into burning gold,  
Till both wings crescent-wise infold



Your perfect self, from 'neath your  
 feet  
 To o'er your head, where, lo, they  
 meet  
 As if a million sword-blades hurled  
 Defiance from you to the world!

Rescue me thou, the only real!  
 And scare away this mad ideal  
 That came, nor motions to depart!  
 Thanks! Now, stay ever as thou art!

*Still he muses.*

I.

What if the Three should catch at  
 last  
 Thy serenader? While there's cast  
 Paul's cloak about my head, and fast  
 Gian pinions me, Himself has past  
 His stilet through my back; I reel;  
 And . . . is it thou I feel?

II.

They trail me, these three godless  
 knaves,  
 Past every church that saints and  
 saves,  
 Nor stop till, where the cold sea  
 raves  
 By Lido's wet accursed graves,  
 They scoop mine, roll me to its  
 brink,  
 And . . . on thy breast I sink!

*She replies, musing.*

Dip your arm o'er the boat-side,  
 elbow-deep,  
 As I do: thus: were death so unlike  
 sleep,  
 Caught this way? Death's to fear  
 from flame or steel,  
 Or poison doubtless; but from water  
 — feel!  
 Go find the bottom! Would you stay  
 me? There!  
 Now pluck a great blade of that rib-  
 bon-grass  
 To plait in where the foolish jewel  
 was,  
 I flung away: since you have praised  
 my hair,  
 'Tis proper to be choice in what I  
 wear.

*He speaks.*

Row home? must we row home? Too  
 surely  
 Know I where its front's demurely  
 Over the Guidecca piled;  
 Window just with window mating,  
 Door on door exactly waiting,  
 All's the set face of a child:  
 But behind it, where's a trace  
 Of the staidness and reserve,  
 And formal lines without a curve,  
 In the same child's playing-face?  
 No two windows look one way  
 O'er the small sea-water thread  
 Below them. Ah, the autumn day  
 I, passing, saw you overhead!  
 First, out a cloud of curtain blew,  
 Then a sweet cry, and last came  
 you —  
 To catch your lory that must needs  
 Escape just then, of all times then,  
 To peck a tall plant's fleecy seeds  
 And make me happiest of men.  
 I scarce could breathe to see you  
 reach  
 So far back o'er the balcony,  
 To catch him ere he climbed too  
 high  
 Above you in the Smyrna peach,  
 That quirk the round smooth cord of  
 gold,  
 This coiled hair on your head, un-  
 rolled,  
 Fell down you like a gorgeous snake  
 The Roman girls were wont, of old,  
 When Rome there was, for coolness'  
 sake  
 To let lie curling o'er their bosoms  
 Dear lory, may his beak retain  
 Ever its delicate rose stain,  
 As if the wounded lotus-blossoms  
 Had marked their thief to know  
 again!  
 Stay longer yet, for others' sake  
 Than mine! What should your cham-  
 ber do?  
 — With all its rarities that ache  
 In silence while day lasts, but wake  
 At night-time and their life renew,  
 Suspended just to pleasure you  
 Who brought against their will to  
 gether  
 These objects, and, while day lasts,  
 weave  
 Around them such a magic tether  
 That dumb they look: your harp,  
 believe,

With all the sensitive tight strings  
Which dare not speak, now to itself  
Breathes slumberously, as if some  
elf

Went in and out the chords, his wings  
Make murmur, wheresoe'er they  
graze,

As an angel may, between the maze  
Of midnight palace-pillars, on  
And on, to sow God's plagues, have  
gone

Through guilty glorious Babylon.  
And while such murmurs flow, the  
nymph

Bends o'er the harp-top from her  
shell

As the dry limpet for the lymph  
Come with a tune he knows so well.  
And how your statues' hearts must  
swell!

And how your pictures must descend  
To see each other, friend with friend!  
Oh, could you take them by surprise,  
You'd find Schidone's eager Duke  
Doing the quaintest courtesies  
To that prin saint by Haste-thee-  
Luke!

And, deeper into her rock den,  
Bold Castelfranco's Magdalen  
You'd find retreated from the ken  
Of that robed counsel-keeping Ser—  
As if the Tizian thinks of her,  
And is not, rather, gravely bent  
On seeing for himself what toys  
Are these, his progeny invent,  
What litter now the board employs  
Whereon he signed a document  
That got him murdered! Each en-  
joys

Its night so well, you cannot break  
The sport up: so, indeed must make  
More stay with me, for others' sake.

*She speaks.*

I.

To-morrow, if a harp-string, say,  
Is used to tie the jasmine back  
That overfloods my room with sweets,  
Contrive your Zorzi somehow meets  
My Zanze! If the ribbon's black,  
The Three are watching: keep away!

II.

Your gondola—let Zorzi wreathe  
A mesh of water-weeds about  
Its prow, as if he unaware

Had struck some quay or bridge-foot  
stair!

That I may throw a paper out  
As you and he go underneath.

There's Zanze's vigilant taper; safe  
are we.

Only one minute more to-night with  
me?

Resume your past self of a month  
ago!

Be you the bashful gallant, I will  
be

The lady with the colder breast than  
snow.

Now bow you, as becomes, nor touch  
my hand

More than I touch yours when I step  
to land,

And say, "All thanks, Siora!"—  
Heart to heart

And lips to lips! Yet once more, ere  
we part,

Clasp me and make me thine, as mine  
thou art!

*He is surprised, and stabbed.*

It was ordained to be so, sweet!—  
and best

Comes now, beneath thine eyes, upon  
thy breast.

Still kiss me! Care not for the cow-  
ards! Care

Only to put aside thy beauteous hair  
My blood will hurt! The Three, I do  
not scorn,

To death, because they never lived:  
but I

Have lived indeed, and so—(yet one  
more kiss)—can die!

## A LOVERS' QUARREL.

I.

OH, what a dawn of day!  
How the March sun feels like May!

All is blue again  
After last night's rain,  
And the South dries the hawthorn  
spray.

Only, my Love's away!  
I'd as lief that the blue were gray.

## II.

Runnels, which rillels swell,  
Must be dancing down the dell,  
With a foaming head  
On the beryl bed  
Paven smooth as a hermit's cell :  
Each with a tale to tell,  
Could my love but attend as well.

## III.

Dearest, three months ago,  
When we lived blocked up with  
snow, —  
When the wind would edge  
In and in his wedge,  
In, as far as the point could go —  
Not to our ingle, though,  
Where we loved each the other so !

## IV.

Laughs with so little cause !  
We devised games out of straws.  
We would try and trace  
One another's face  
In the ash, as an artist draws ;  
Free on each other's flaws,  
How we chattered like two church  
daws !

## V.

What's in the "Times" ? — a scold  
At the Emperor deep and cold ;  
He has taken a bride  
To his grewsome side,  
That's as fair as himself is bold :  
There they sit ermine-stoled,  
And she powders her hair with gold.

## VI.

Fancy the Pampas' sheen !  
Miles and miles of gold and green  
Where the sunflowers blow  
In a solid glow,  
And to break now and then the  
screen —  
Black neck and eyeballs keen,  
Up a wild horse leaps between !

## VII.

Try, will our table turn ?  
Lay your hands there light, and yearn  
Till the yearning slips  
Through the finger-tips  
In a fire which a few discern,  
And a very few feel burn,  
And the rest, they may live and  
learn !

## VIII.

Then we would up and pace,  
For a change, about the place,  
Each with arm o'er neck :  
'T is our quarter-deck,  
We are seamen in woeful case.  
Help in the ocean-space !  
Or, if no help, we'll embrace.

## IX.

Sec, how she looks now, dressed  
In a sleding-cap and vest !  
'T is a huge fur cloak —  
Like a reindeer's roke  
Falls the lappet along the breast :  
Sleeves for her arts to rest,  
Or to hang, as my Love likes best.

## X.

Teach me to flirt a fan  
As the Spanish ladies can,  
Or I tint your lip  
With a burnt stick's tip  
And you turn into such a man !  
Just the two spots that span  
Half the bill of the young male swan.

## XI.

Dearest, three months ago  
When the mesmerizer Snow  
With his hand's first sweep  
Put the earth to sleep  
'Twas a time when the heart could  
show  
All — how was earth to know,  
'Neath the mute hand's to-and-fro ?

## XII.

Dearest, three months ago  
When we loved each other so,  
Lived and loved the same  
Till an evening came  
When a shaft from the Devil's bow  
Pierced to our ingle-glow,  
And the friends were friend and foe !

## XIII.

Not from the heart beneath —  
'Twas a bubble born of breath,  
Neither sneer nor vaunt,  
Nor reproach nor taunt.  
See a word, how it severeth !  
Oh, power of life and death  
In the tongue, as the Preacher saith !

## XIV.

Woman, and will you cast  
For a word, quite off at last  
Me, your own, your You, —  
Since, as truth is true,  
I was You all the happy past —  
Me do you leave aghast  
With the memories We anassed ?

## XV.

Love, if you knew the light  
That your soul casts in my sight,  
How I look to you  
For the pure and true,  
And the beauteous and the right, —  
Bear with a moment's spite  
When a mere mote threatens the white!

## XVI.

What of a hasty word ?  
Is the fleshly heart not stirred  
By a worm's pin-prick  
Where its roots are quick ?  
See the eye, by a fly's-foot blurred —  
Ear, when a straw is heard  
Scratch the brain's coat of curd !

## XVII.

Foul be the world or fair  
More or less, how can I care ?  
'Tis the world the same  
For my praise or blame,  
And endurance is easy there.  
Wrong in the one thing rare —  
Oh, it is hard to bear !

## XVIII.

Here's the spring back or close,  
When the almond-blossom blows ;  
We shall have the word  
In a minor third  
There is none but the cuckoo knows :  
Heaps of the guelder-rose !  
I must bear with it, I suppose.

## XIX.

Could but November come,  
Were the noisy birds struck dumb  
At the warning slash  
Of his driver's-lash —  
I would laugh like the valiant Thumb  
Facing the castle glum  
And the giant's fee-faw-fum !

## XX.

Then, were the world well stripped  
Of the gear wherein equipped  
We can stand apart,  
Heart dispense with heart  
In the sun, with the flowers un-  
nipped, —  
Oh, the world's hangings ripped,  
We were both in a bare-walled crypt !

## XXI.

Each in the crypt would cry,  
" But one freezes here ! and why ?  
When a heart, as chill,  
At my own would thrill  
Back to life, and its fires out-fly ?  
Heart, shall we live or die ?  
The rest . . . settle by and by ! "

## XXII.

So, she'd efface the score,  
And forgive me as before.  
It is twelve o'clock:  
I shall hear her knock  
In the worst of a storm's uproar:  
I shall pull her through the door,  
I shall have her for evermore !

## EARTH'S IMMORTALITIES.

## FAME.

SEE, as the prettiest graves will do in  
time,  
Our poet's wants the freshness of its  
prime;  
Spite of the sexton's browsing horse,  
the sods  
Have straggled through its binding  
osier rods;  
Headstone and half-sunk footstone  
lean awry,  
Wanting the brick-work promised by  
and by;  
How the minute gray lichens, plate  
o'er plate,  
Have softened down the crisp-cut  
name and date !

## LOVE.

So, the year's done with !  
(*Love me forever!*)  
All March begun with,  
April's endeavor ;



The Last Ride together. — Page 33.



May-wreaths that bound me  
June needs must sever;  
Now snows fall round me,  
Quenching June's fever —  
(*Love me forever!*)

## THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER.

## I.

I SAID — Then, dearest, since 'tis so,  
Since now at length my fate I know,  
Since nothing all my love avails,  
Since all, my life seemed meant for,  
fails,  
Since this was written and needs  
must be —  
My whole heart rises up to bless  
Your name in pride and thankfulness!  
Take back the hope you gave, — I  
claim  
Only a memory of the same,  
— And this beside, if you will not  
blame,  
Your leave for one more last ride  
with me.

## II.

My mistress bent that brow of hers;  
Those deep dark eyes where pride  
demurs  
When pity would be softening through,  
Fixed me a breathing-while or two  
With life or death in the balance:  
right!  
The blood replenished me again;  
My last thought was at least not  
vain:  
I and my mistress, side by side,  
Shall be together, breathe and ride,  
So, one day more an I defied.  
Who knows but the world may end  
to-night?

## III.

Hush! if you saw some western cloud  
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed  
By many benedictions — sun's  
And moon's and evening-star's at  
once —  
And so, you, looking and loving  
best,  
Conscious grew, your passion drew  
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine  
too.

Down on you, near and yet more near,  
Till flesh must fade for heaven was  
here! —  
Thus leant she and lingered — joy and  
fear  
Thus lay she a moment on my  
breast.

## IV.

Then we began to ride. My soul  
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped  
scroll  
Freshening and fluttering in the  
wind.  
Past hopes already lay behind.  
What need to strive with a life  
awry?  
Had I said that, had I done this,  
So might I gain, so might I miss.  
Might she have loved me? just as  
well  
She might have hated, who can tell!  
Where had I been now if the worst  
befell?  
And here we are riding, she and I.

## V.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?  
Why, all men strive and who suc-  
ceeds?  
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,  
Saw other regions, cities new,  
As the world rushed by on either  
side.  
I thought, — All labor, yet no less  
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.  
Look at the end of work, contrast  
The petty done, the undone vast,  
This present of theirs with the hope-  
ful past!  
I hoped she would love me: here  
we ride.

## VI.

What hand and brain went ever  
paired?  
What heart alike conceived and  
dared?  
What act proved all its thought had  
been?  
What will but felt the fleshy screen?  
We ride and I see her bosom heave.  
There's many a crown for who can  
reach.  
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!  
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,  
A soldier's doing! what atones?  
They scratch his name on the Abbey-  
stones.  
My riding is better, by their leave.

## VII.

What does it all mean, poet? Well,  
Your brains beat into rhythm, you  
tell

What we felt only; you expressed  
You hold things beautiful the best,  
And pace them in rhyme so, side  
by side.

'Tis something, nay 'tis much: but  
then,

Have you yourself what's best for  
men?

Are you—poor, sick, old ere your  
time—

Nearer one whit your own sublime  
Than we who have never turned a  
rhyme?

Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I ride.

## VIII.

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave  
A score of years to Art, her slave,  
And that's your Venus, whence we  
turn

To yonder girl that fords the burn!

You acquiesce, and shall I repine?  
What, man of music, you grown gray  
With notes and nothing else to say,  
Is this your sole praise from a friend,  
"Greatly his opera's strains intend,  
But in music we know how fashions  
end!"

I gave my youth; but we ride, in  
fine.

## IX.

Who knows what's fit for us? Had  
fate

Proposed bliss here should sublimate  
My being—had I signed the bond—  
Still one must lead some life beyond,  
Have a bliss to die with, dim-de-  
scribed.

This foot once planted on the goal,  
This glory-garland round my soul,  
Could I desery such? Try and test!  
I sink back shuddering from the quest.  
Earth being so good, would heaven  
seem best?

Now, heaven and she are beyond  
this ride.

## X.

And yet—she has not spoke so long!  
What if heaven be that, fair and  
strong

At life's best, with our eyes upturned  
Whither life's flower is first dis-  
cerned.

We, fixed so, ever should so abide?  
What if we still ride on, we two,  
With life forever old yet new,  
Changed not in kind but in degree,  
The instant made eternity,—  
And heaven just prove that I and she  
Ride, ride together, forever ride?

## MESMERISM.

## I.

ALL I believed is true!  
I am able yet  
All I want, to get  
By a method as strange as new.  
Dare I trust the same to you?

## II.

If at night, when doors are shut,  
And the wood-worm picks,  
And the death-watch ticks,  
And the bar has a flag of smut,  
And a cat's in the water-butt—

## III.

And the socket floats and flares,  
And the house-beams groan,  
And a foot unknown  
Is surmised on the garret-stairs,  
And the locks slip unawares—

## IV.

And the spider, to serve his ends,  
By a sudden thread,  
Arms and legs outspread,  
On the table's midst descends,  
Comes to find, God knows what  
friends!—

## V.

If since eve drew in, I say,  
I have sat and brought  
(So to speak) my thought  
To bear on the woman away,  
Till I felt my hair turn gray—

## VI.

Till I seemed to have and hold,  
In the vacancy  
'Twixt the wall and me  
From the hair-plait's chestnut-gold  
To the foot in its muslin fold—



## VII.

Have and hold, then and there,  
Her, from head to foot,  
Breathing and mute,  
Passive and yet aware,  
In the grasp of my steady stare —

## VIII.

Hold and have, there and then,  
All her body and soul  
That completes my whole,  
All that women add to men,  
In the clutch of my steady ken —

## IX.

Having and holding, till  
I imprint her fast  
On the void at last  
As the sun does whom he will  
By the calotypist's skill —

## X.

Then, — if my heart's strength serve,  
And through all and each  
Of the veils I reach  
To her soul and never swerve,  
Knitting an iron nerve —

## XI.

Command her soul to advance  
And inform the shape  
Which has made escape  
And before my countenance  
Answers me glance for glance —

## XII.

I, still with a gesture fit  
Of my hands that best  
Do my soul's behest,  
Pointing the power from it,  
While myself do steadfast sit —

## XIII.

Steadfast and still the same  
On my object bent,  
While the hands give vent  
To my ardor and my aim  
And break into very flame —

## XIV.

Then I reach, I must believe,  
Not her soul in vain,  
For to me again  
It reaches, and past retrieve  
Is wound in the toils I weave ;

## XV.

And must follow as I require,  
As befits a thrall,  
Bringing flesh and all,  
Essence and earth-attire,  
To the source of the tractile fire :

## XVI.

Till the house called hers, not mine,  
With a growing weight  
Seems to suffocate  
If she break not its leaden line  
And escape from its close confine.

## XVII.

Out of doors into the night !  
On to the maze  
Of the wild wood-ways,  
Not turning to left nor right  
From the pathway, blind with sight —

## XVIII.

Making through rain and wind  
O'er the broken shrubs,  
'Twi'x the stems and stubs,  
With a still, composed, strong mind,  
Not a care for the world behind —

## XIX.

Swifter and still more swift,  
As the crowding peace  
Doth to joy increase  
In the wide blind eyes uplift  
Through the darkness and the drift!

## XX.

While I — to the shape, I, too,  
Feel my soul dilate :  
Nor a whit abate,  
And relax not a gesture due,  
As I see my belief come true.

## XXI.

For, there ! have I drawn or no  
Life to that lip ?  
Do my fingers dip  
In a flame which again they throw  
On the cheek that breaks aglow ?

## XXII.

Ha ! was the hair so first ?  
What, unfileted,  
Made alive, and spread  
Through the void with a rich outburst,  
Chestnut gold-interspersed ?

## XXIII.

Like the doors of a casket-shrine,  
See, on either side,  
Her two arms divide  
Till the heart betwixt makes sign,  
"Take me, for I am thine!"

## XXIV.

"Now—now"—the door is heard!  
Hark, the stairs! and near—  
Nearer—and here—  
"Now!" and, at call the third,  
She enters without a word.

## XXV.

On doth she march and on  
To the fancied shape;  
It is, past escape,  
Herself, now: the dream is done,  
And the shadow and she are one.

## XXVI.

First, I will pray. Do Thou  
That ownest the soul,  
Yet wilt grant control  
To another, nor disallow  
For a time, restrain me now!

## XXVII.

I admonish me while I may,  
Not to squander guilt,  
Since require Thou wilt  
At my hand its price one day!  
What the price is, who can say?

## BY THE FIRESIDE.

## I.

How well I know what I mean to  
do  
When the long dark autumn even-  
ings come;  
And where, my soul, is thy pleasant  
hue?  
With the music of all thy voices,  
dumb  
In life's November too!

## II.

I shall be found by the fire, suppose,  
O'er a great wise book, as beseem-  
eth age;

While the shutters flap as the cross-  
wind blows,  
And I turn the page, and I turn the  
page,  
Not verse now, only prose!

## III.

Till the young ones whisper, finger  
on lip,  
"There he is at it, deep in Greek:  
Now then, or never, out we slip  
To cut from the hazels by the creek  
A mainmast for our ship!"

## IV.

I shall be at it indeed, my friends!  
Greek puts already on either side  
Such a branch-work forth as soon ex-  
tends  
To a vista opening far and wide,  
And I pass out where it ends.

## V.

The outside frame, like your hazel-  
trees—  
But the inside-archway widens fast,  
And a rarer sort succeeds to these,  
And we slope to Italy at last  
And youth, by green degrees.

## VI.

I follow wherever I am led,  
Knowing so well the leader's hand:  
O woman-country, wooed not wed,  
Loved all the more by earth's male-  
lands,  
Laid to their hearts instead!

## VII.

Look at the ruined chapel again  
Half-way up in the Alpine gorge!  
Is that a tower, I point you plain,  
Or is it a mill, or an iron forge  
Breaks solitude in vain?

## VIII.

A turn, and we stand in the heart of  
things;  
The woods are round us, heaped  
and dim:  
From slab to slab how it slips and  
springs,  
The thread of water single and slim,  
Through the ravage some torrent  
brings!

## IX.

Does it feed the little lake below ?  
That speck of white just on its marge  
Is Pella ; see, in the evening glow,  
How sharp the silver spear-heads  
charge  
When Alp meets heaven in snow !

## X.

On our other side is the straight-up  
rock ;  
And a path is kept 'twixt the gorge  
and it  
By bowlder-stones, where lichens  
mock  
The marks on a moth, and small  
ferns fit  
Their teeth to the polished block.

## XI.

Oh the sense of the yellow mountain  
flowers,  
And thorny balls, each three in one,  
The chestnuts throw on our path in  
showers !  
For the drop of the woodland fruit's  
begun,  
These early November hours,

## XII.

That crimson the creeper's leaf across  
Like a splash of blood, intense, ab-  
rupt,  
O'er a shield else gold from rim to  
boss,  
And lay it for show on the fairy-  
cupped  
Elf-needled mat of moss,

## XIII.

By the rose-flesh mushrooms, undi-  
vulged  
Last evening — nay, in to-day's first  
dew  
Yon sudden coral nipple bulged,  
Where a freaked fawn-colored  
flaky crew  
Of toad-stools peep indulged.

## XIV.

And yonder, at foot of the fronting  
ridge  
That takes the turn to a range be-  
yond,

Is the chapel reached by the one-  
arched bridge,  
Where the water is stopped in a  
stagnant pond  
Danced over by the midge.

## XV.

The chapel and bridge are of stone  
alike,  
Blackish-gray and mostly wet ;  
Cut hemp-stalks steep in the narrow  
dike.  
See here again, how the lichens fret  
And the roots of the ivy strike !

## XVI.

Poor little place, where its one priest  
comes  
On a festa-day, if he comes at all,  
To the dozen folk from their scattered  
homes,  
Gathered within that precinct small  
By the dozen ways one roams —

## XVII.

To drop from the charcoal-burners'  
huts,  
Or climb from the hemp-dresser's  
low shed,  
Leave the grange where the wood-  
man stores his nuts,  
Or the wattled cote where the  
fowlers spread  
Their gear on the rock's bare juts.

## XVIII.

It has some pretension too, this front,  
With its bit of fresco half-moon-  
wise  
Set over the porch, Art's early wont :  
'Tis John in the Desert, I surmise,  
But has borne the weather's brunt —

## XIX.

Not from the fault of the builder,  
though,  
For a pent-house properly projects  
Where three carved beams make a  
certain show,  
Dating — good thought of our archi-  
tect's —  
'Five, six, nine, he lets you know.

## XX.

And all day long a bird sings there,  
And a stray sheep drinks at the  
pond at times ;

The place is silent and aware ;  
It has had its scenes, its joys and  
crimes,  
But that is its own affair.

## XXI.

My perfect wife, my Leonor,  
O heart, my own ! O eyes, mine  
too !  
Whom else could I dare look back-  
ward for,  
With whom beside should I dare  
pursue  
The path gray heads abhor ?

## XXII.

For it leads to a crag's sheer edge with  
them ;  
Youth, flowery all the way, there  
stops —  
Not they ; age threatens and they con-  
ternn,  
Till they reach the gulf wherein  
youth drops,  
One inch from our life's safe hem !

## XXIII.

With me, youth led . . . I will speak  
now,  
No longer watch you as you sit  
Reading by firelight, that great brow  
And the spirit-small hand propping  
it,  
Mutely my heart knows how —

## XXIV.

When, if I think but deep enough,  
You are wont to answer, prompt as  
rhyme ;  
And you, too, find without rebuff  
Response your soul seeks many a  
time,  
Piercing its fine flesh-stuff.

## XXV.

My own, confirm me ! If I tread  
This path back, is it not in pride  
To think how little I dreamed it led  
To an age so blest that, by its side,  
Youth seems the waste instead ?

## XXVI.

My own, see where the years con-  
duct !  
At first, 'twas something our two  
souls

Should mix as mists do ; each is  
sucked  
In each now : on, the new stream  
rolls,  
Whatever rocks obstruct.

## XXVII.

Think, when our one soul under-  
stands  
The great Word which makes all  
things new,  
When earth breaks up and heaven  
expands,  
How will the change strike me and  
you  
In the house not made with hands ?

## XXVIII.

Oh ! I must feel your brain prompt  
mine,  
Your heart anticipate my heart,  
You must be just before, in fine,  
See and make me see, for your part,  
New depths of the divine !

## XXIX.

But who could have expected this  
When we two drew together first  
Just for the obvious human bliss,  
To satisfy life's daily thirst  
With a thing men seldom miss ?

## XXX.

Come back with me to the first of  
all,  
Let us lean and love it over again,  
Let us now forget and now recall,  
Break the rosary in a pearly rain,  
And gather what we let fall !

## XXXI.

What did I say ? — that a small bird  
sings  
All day long, save when a brown  
pair  
Of hawks from the wood float with  
wide wings  
Strained to a bell : 'gainst noonday  
glare  
You count the streaks and rings.

## XXXII.

But at afternoon or almost eve  
'Tis better ; then the silence grows  
To that degree, you half believe  
It must get rid of what it knows,  
Its bosom does so heave.

## XXXIII.

Hither we walked then, side by side,  
 Arm in arm and cheek to cheek,  
 And still I questioned or replied,  
 While my heart, convulsed to really  
 speak,  
 Lay choking in its pride.

## XXXIV.

Silent the crumbling bridge we cross,  
 And pity and praise the chapel  
 sweet,  
 And care about the fresco's loss,  
 And wish for our souls a like re-  
 treat,  
 And wonder at the moss.

## XXXV.

Stoop and kneel on the settle under,  
 Look through the window's grated  
 square :  
 Nothing to see ! For fear of plunder,  
 The cross is down and the altar  
 bare,  
 As if thieves don't fear thunder.

## XXXVI.

We stoop and look in through the  
 grate,  
 See the little porch and rustic door,  
 Read duly the dead builder's date ;  
 Then cross the bridge that we  
 crossed before,  
 Take the path again — but wait !

## XXXVII.

Oh moment one and infinite !  
 The water slips o'er stock and  
 stone ;  
 The West is tender, hardly bright :  
 How gray at once is the evening  
 grown —  
 One star, its chrysolite !

## XXXVIII.

We two stood there with never a  
 third,  
 But each by each, as each knew  
 well :  
 The sights we saw and the sounds we  
 heard,  
 The lights and the shades made up  
 a spell  
 Till the trouble grew and stirred.

## XXXIX.

Oh, the little more, and how much it  
 is !  
 And the little less, and what worlds  
 away !  
 How a sound shall quicken content  
 to bliss,  
 Or a breath suspend the blood's  
 best play,  
 And life be a proof of this !

## XL.

Had she willed it, still had stood the  
 screen  
 So slight, so sure, 'twixt my love  
 and her :  
 I could fix her face with a guard be-  
 tween,  
 And find her soul as when friends  
 confer,  
 Friends—lovers that might have  
 been.

## XLI.

For my heart had a touch of the wood-  
 land line,  
 Wanting to sleep now over its best.  
 Shake the whole tree in the summer-  
 prime,  
 But bring to the last leaf no such  
 test !  
 "Hold the last fast!" runs the  
 rhyme.

## XLII.

For a chance to make your little  
 much,  
 To gain a lover and lose a friend,  
 Venture the tree and a myriad such,  
 When nothing you mar but the year  
 can mend :  
 But a last leaf — fear to touch !

## XLIII.

Yet should it unfasten itself and fall  
 Eddying down till it find your face  
 At some slight wind — best chance of  
 all !  
 Be your heart henceforth its dwell-  
 ing-place  
 You trembled to forestall !

## XLIV.

Worth how well, those dark gray  
 eyes,  
 That hair so dark and dear, how  
 worth

That a man should strive and agonize,  
And taste a veriest hell on earth  
For the hope of such a prize!

## XLV.

You might have turned and tried a  
man,  
Set him a space to weary and wear,  
And prove which suited more your  
plan,  
His best of hope or his worst de-  
spair,  
Yet end as he began.

## XLVI.

But you spared me this, like the heart  
you are,  
And filled my empty heart at a  
word.  
If two lives join, there is oft a scar,  
They are one and one, with a shad-  
ow third;  
One near one is too far.

## XLVII.

A moment after, and hands unseen  
Were hanging the night around us  
fast;  
But we knew that a bar was broken  
between  
Life and life: we were mixed at last  
In spite of the mortal screen.

## XLVIII.

The forests had done it; there they  
stood;  
We caught for a moment the pow-  
ers at play:  
They had mingled us so, for once and  
good,  
Their work was done — we might  
go or stay,  
They relapsed to their ancient mood.

## XLIX.

How the world is made for each of us!  
How all we perceive and know in it  
Tends to some moment's product  
thus,  
When a soul declares itself — to wit,  
By its fruit, the thing it does!

## L.

Be hate that fruit, or love that fruit,  
It forwards the general deed of  
man,

And each of the Many helps to recruit  
The life of the race by a general  
plan;  
Each living his own, to boot.

## LI.

I am named and known by that mo-  
ment's feat;  
There took my station and degree;  
So grew my own small life com-  
plete,  
As nature obtained her best of me —  
One born to love you, sweet!

## LII.

And to watch you sink by the fireside  
now  
Back again, as you mutely sit  
Musing by fire-light, that great brow  
And the spirit-small hand propping  
it,  
Yonder, my heart knows how!

## LIII.

So, earth has gained by one man the  
more,  
And the gain of earth must be  
heaven's gain too;  
And the whole is well worth think-  
ing o'er  
When autumn comes: which I  
mean to do  
One day, as I said before.

ANY WIFE TO ANY HUS-  
BAND.

## I.

My love, this is the bitterest, that  
thou —  
Who art all truth, and who dost love  
me now  
As thine eyes say, as thy voice  
breaks to say —  
Shouldst love so truly, and couldst  
love me still  
A whole long life through, had but  
love its will,  
Would death, that leads me from  
thee, brook delay.

II.

I have but to be by thee, and thy hand  
Will never let mine go, nor heart  
withstand  
The beating of my heart to reach  
its place.  
When shall I look for thee and feel  
thee gone?  
When cry for the old comfort and  
find none?  
Never, I know! Thy soul is in thy  
face.

III.

Oh, I should fade—'tis willed so!  
Might I save,  
Gladly I would, whatever beauty  
gave  
Joy to thy sense, for that was pre-  
cious too.  
It is not to be granted. But the soul  
Whence the love comes, all ravage  
leaves that whole;  
Vainly the flesh fades; soul makes  
all things new.

IV.

It would not be because my eye grew  
dim  
Thou couldst not find the love there,  
thanks to Him  
Who never is dishonored in the  
spark  
He gave us from his fire of fires, and  
bade  
Remember whence it sprang, nor be  
afraid  
While that burns on, though all the  
rest grow dark.

V.

So, how thou wouldst be perfect,  
white and clean  
Outside as inside, soul and soul's de-  
mesne  
Alike, this body given to show it  
by!  
Oh, three-parts through the worst of  
life's abyss,  
What plaudits from the next world  
after this,  
Couldst thou repeat a stroke and  
gain the sky!

VI.

And is it not the bitterer to think  
That, disengage our hands and thou  
wilt sink

Although thy love was love in very  
deed?  
I know that nature! Pass a festive  
day,  
Thou dost not throw its relic-flower  
away,  
Nor bid its music's loitering echo  
speed.

VII.

Thou let'st the stranger's glove lie  
where it fell;  
If old things remain old things all is  
well,  
For thou art grateful as becomes  
man best:  
And hadst thou only heard me play  
one tune,  
Or viewed me from a window, not so  
soon  
With thee would such things fade  
as with the rest.

VIII.

I seem to see! We meet and part;  
'tis brief;  
The book I opened keeps a folded  
leaf,  
The very chair I sat on, breaks the  
rank;  
That is a portrait of me on the wall—  
Three lines, my face comes at so  
sight a call:  
And for all this, one little hour to  
thank!

IX.

But now, because the hour through  
years was fixed,  
Because our inmost beings met and  
mixed,  
Because thou once hast loved me—  
wilt thou dare  
Say to thy soul and Who may list be-  
side,  
"Therefore she is immortally my  
bride;  
Chance cannot change my love, nor  
time impair.

X.

"So, what if in the dusk of life that's  
left,  
I, a tired traveller of my sun bereft,  
Look from my path when, mimick-  
ing the same,  
The fire-fly glimpses past me, come  
and gone?"

— Where was it till the sunset? where  
anon  
It will be at the sunrise! What's  
to blame?"

## XI.

Is it so helpful to thee? Canst thou  
take  
The mimic up, nor, for the true thing's  
sake,  
Put gently by such efforts at a beam?  
Is the remainder of the way so long,  
Thou need'st the little solace, thou  
the strong?  
Watch out thy watch, let weak ones  
doze and dream.

## XII.

-- Ah, but the fresher faces! "Is it  
true,"  
Thou'lt ask, "some eyes are beautiful  
and new?  
Some hair,—how can one choose  
but grasp such wealth?  
And if a man would press his lips to  
lips  
Fresh as the wilding hedge-rose-cup  
there slips  
The dewdrop out of, must it be by  
stealth?"

## XIII.

"It cannot change the love still kept  
for her,  
More than if such a picture I prefer  
Passing a day with, to a room's bare  
side:  
The painted form takes nothing she  
possessed,  
Yet, while the Titian's Venus lies at  
rest,  
A man looks. Once more, what is  
there to chide?"

## XIV.

So must I see, from where I sit and  
watch,  
My own self sell myself, my hand  
attach  
Its warrant to the very thefts from  
me—  
Thy singleness of soul that made me  
proud,  
Thy purity of heart I loved aloud,  
Thy man's-truth I was bold to bid  
God see!

## XV.

Love so, then, if thou wilt! Give all  
thou canst  
Away to the new faces — disen-  
tranced,  
(Say it and think it) obdurate no  
more,  
Re-issue looks and words from the old  
mint,  
Pass them afresh, no matter whose  
the print,  
Image, and superscription once they  
bore!

## XVI.

Re-coin thyself, and give it them to  
spend,—  
It all comes to the same thing at the  
end,  
Since mine thou wast, mine art,  
and mine shalt be,  
Faithful or faithless: sealing up the  
sum  
Or lavish of my treasure, thou must  
come  
Back to the heart's place here I  
keep for thee!

## XVII.

Only, why should it be with stain at  
all?  
Why must I, 'twixt the leaves of  
coronal,  
Put any kiss of pardon on thy  
brow?  
Why need the other women know so  
much,  
And talk together, "Such the look  
and such  
The smile he used to love with, then  
as now!"

## XVIII.

Might I die last and show thee!  
Should I find  
Such hardships in the few years left  
behind,  
If free to take and light my lamp,  
and go  
Into thy tomb, and shut the door and  
sit,  
Seeing thy face on those four sides of  
it  
The better that they are so blank, I  
know!



## XIX.

Why, time was what I wanted, to turn  
o'er  
Within my mind each look, get more  
and more  
By heart each word, too much to  
learn at first;  
And join thee all the fitter for the  
pause  
'Neath the low door-way's lintel.  
That were cause  
For lingering, though thou calledst,  
if I durst!

## XX.

And yet thou art the nobler of us  
two:  
What dare I dream of, that thou canst  
not do.  
Outstripping my ten small steps  
with one stride?  
I'll say then, here's a trial and a  
task;  
Is it to bear?—if easy, I'll not  
ask:  
Though love fail, I can trust on in  
thy pride.

## XXI.

Pride?—when those eyes forstall  
the life behind  
The death I have to go through!—  
when I find,  
Now that I want thy help most, all  
of thee!  
What did I fear? Thy love shall hold  
me fast  
Until the little minute's sleep is  
past  
And I wake saved.— And yet it  
will not be!

## IN A YEAR.

## I.

NEVER any more,  
While I live,  
Need I hope to see his face  
As before.  
Once his love grown chill,  
Mine may strive:  
Bitterly we re-embrace,  
Single still.

## II.

Was it something said,  
Something done,  
Vexed him? was it touch of hand,  
Turn of head?  
Strange! that very way  
Love begun:  
I as little understand  
Love's decay.

## III.

When I sewed or drew,  
I recall  
How he looked as if I sung,  
— Sweetly too.  
If I spoke a word,  
First of all  
Up his cheek the color sprung,  
Then he heard.

## IV.

Sitting by my side,  
At my feet,  
So he breathed but air I breathed,  
Satisfied!  
I, too, at love's brim  
Touched the sweet:  
I would die if death bequeathed  
Sweet to him.

## V.

“ Speak, I love thee best ! ”  
He exclaimed:  
“ Let thy love my own foretell ! ”  
I confessed:  
“ Clasp my heart on thine  
Now unblamed,  
Since upon thy soul as well  
Hangeth mine ! ”

## VI.

Was it wrong to own,  
Being truth?  
Why should all the giving prove  
His alone?  
I had wealth and ease,  
Beauty, youth:  
Since my lover gave me love,  
I gave these.

## VII.

That was all I meant,  
— To be just,  
And the passion I had raised,  
To content.

Since he chose to change  
 Gold for dust,  
 If I gave him what he praised  
 Was it strange ?

## VIII.

Would he loved me yet,  
 On and on,  
 While I found some way undreamed  
 — Paid my debt !  
 Gave more life and more,  
 Till all gone,  
 He should smile " She never seemed  
 Mine before.

## IX.

" What, she felt the while,  
 Must I think ?  
 Love's so different with us men !"  
 He should smile :  
 " Dying for my sake —  
 White and pink !  
 Can't we touch these bubbles then  
 But they break ?"

## X.

Dear, the pang is brief,  
 Do thy part,  
 Have thy pleasure ! How perplexed  
 Grows belief !  
 Well, this cold clay clod  
 Was man's heart :  
 Crumble it, and what comes next ?  
 Is it God ?

## SONG FROM "JAMES LEE."

## I.

OH, good gigantic smile o' the brown  
 old earth,  
 This autumn morning ! How he  
 sets his bones  
 To bask i' the sun, and thrusts out  
 knees and feet  
 For the ripple to run over in its mirth :  
 Listening the while, where on the  
 heap of stones  
 The white breast of the sea-lark twit-  
 ters sweet.

## II.

That is the doctrine, simple, ancient,  
 true ;  
 Such is life's trial, as old earth  
 smiles and knows.

If you loved only what were worth  
 your love,  
 Love were clear gain, and wholly well  
 for you.  
 Make the low nature better by your  
 throes !  
 Give earth yourself, go up for gain  
 above !

## A WOMAN'S LAST WORD.

## I.

LET's contend no more, Love,  
 Strive nor weep :  
 All be as before, Love,  
 — Only sleep !

## II.

What so wild as words are ?  
 I and thou  
 In debate, as birds are,  
 Hawk on bough !

## III.

See the creature stalking  
 While we speak !  
 Hush and hide the talking,  
 Cheek on cheek.

## IV.

What so false as truth is,  
 False to thee ?  
 Where the serpent's tooth is,  
 Shun the tree —

## V.

Where the apple reddens,  
 Never pry —  
 Lest we lose our Edens,  
 Eve and I.

## VI.

Be a god, and hold me  
 With a charm !  
 Be a man, and fold me  
 With thine arm !

## VII.

Teach me, only teach, Love !  
 As I ought  
 I will speak thy speech, Love.  
 Think thy thought —



Meeting at Night. — Page 45.



## VIII.

Meet, if thou require it,  
Both demands,  
Laying flesh and spirit  
In thy hands.

## IX.

That shall be to-morrow,  
Not to-night :  
I must bury sorrow  
Out of sight :

## X.

— Must a little weep, Love,  
(Foolish me !)  
And so fall asleep, Love,  
Loved by thee.

## MEETING AT NIGHT.

## I.

THE gray sea and the long black land;  
And the yellow half-moon large and  
low;  
And the startled little waves that  
leap  
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,  
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,  
And quench its speed i' the slushy  
sand.

## II.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented  
beach ;  
Three fields to cross till a farm ap-  
pears ;  
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp  
scratch  
And blue spurt of a lighted match,  
And a voice less loud, through joys  
and fears,  
Than the two hearts beating each to  
each !

## PARTING AT MORNING.

ROUND the cape of a sudden came the  
sea,  
And the sun looked over the moun-  
tain's rim :  
And straight was a path of gold for  
him,  
And the need of a world of men for  
me.

## WOMEN AND ROSES.

## I.

I DREAM of a red-rose tree.  
And which of its roses three  
Is the dearest rose to me ?

## II.

Round and round, like a dance of  
snow  
In a dazzling drift, as its guardians,  
go  
Floating the women faded for ages,  
Sculptured in stone, on the poet's  
pages.  
Then follow women fresh and gay,  
Living and loving and loved to-day.  
Last, in the rear, flee the multitude  
of maidens,  
Beauties yet unborn. And all, to one  
cadence,  
They circle their rose on my rose-tree.

## III.

Dear rose, thy term is reached,  
Thy leaf hangs loose and bleached :  
Bees pass it unimpeached.

## IV.

Stay, then, stoop, since I cannot  
climb,  
You, great shapes of the antique time,  
How shall I fix you, fire you, freeze  
you,  
Break my heart at your feet to please  
you ?  
Oh, to possess and be possessed !  
Hearts that beat 'neath each pallid  
breast !  
Once but of love, the poesy, the pas-  
sion,  
Drink but once and die !— In vain,  
the same fashion,  
They circle their rose on my rose-tree

## V.

Dear rose, thy joy's undimmed ;  
Thy cup is ruby-rimmed,  
Thy cup's heart nectar-brimmed.

## VI.

Deep, as drops from a statue's plinth  
The bee sucked in by the hyacinth,  
So will I bury me while burning,  
Quench like him at a plunge my  
yearning,

Eyes in your eyes, lips on your lips !  
 Fold me fast where the cincture slips,  
 Prison all my soul in eternities of  
 pleasure,  
 Girdle me for once ! But no — the  
 old measure,  
 They circle their rose on my rose-tree.

## VII.

Dear rose without a thorn,  
 Thy bud's the babe unborn :  
 First streak of a new morn.

## VIII.

Wings, lend wings for the cold, the  
 clear !  
 What is far conquers what is near.  
 Roses will bloom nor want behold-  
 ers,  
 Sprung from the dust where our flesh  
 moulders.  
 What shall arrive with the cycle's  
 change ?  
 A novel grace and a beauty strange.  
 I will make an Eve, be the Artist that  
 began her,  
 Shaped her to his mind ! — Alas ! in  
 like manner  
 They circle their rose on my rose-tree.

## MISCONCEPTIONS.

## I.

THIS is a spray the bird clung to,  
 Making it blossom with pleasure,  
 Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,  
 Fit for her nest and her treasure.  
 Oh, what a hope beyond measure  
 Was the poor spray's, which the fly-  
 ing feet hung to, —  
 So to be singled out, built in, and sung  
 to !

## II.

That is a heart the queen leant on,  
 Thrilled in a minute erratic,  
 Ere the true bosom she bent on,  
 Meet for love's regal dalmatic.  
 Oh, what a fancy ecstatic  
 Was the poor heart's, ere the wan-  
 derer went on, —  
 Love to be saved for it, proffered to,  
 spent on !

## A PRETTY WOMAN.

## I.

THAT fawn-skin-dappled hair of hers,  
 And the blue eye  
 Dear and dewy,  
 And that infantine fresh air of hers !

## II.

To think men cannot take you, Sweet,  
 And infold you,  
 Ay, and hold you,  
 And so keep you what they make  
 you, Sweet !

## III.

You like us for a glance, you know —  
 For a word's sake  
 Or a sword's sake :  
 All's the same, whate'er the chance,  
 you know.

## IV.

And in turn we make you ours, we  
 say —  
 You and youth too,  
 Eyes and mouth too,  
 All the face composed of flowers, we  
 say.

## V.

All's our own, to make the most of,  
 Sweet —  
 Sing and say for,  
 Watch and pray for,  
 Keep a secret or go boast of, Sweet !

## VI.

But for loving, why, you would not,  
 Sweet,  
 Though we prayed you,  
 Paid you, brayed you  
 In a mortar — for you could not,  
 Sweet !

## VII.

So, we leave the sweet face fondly  
 there :  
 Be its beauty  
 Its sole duty !  
 Let all hope of grace beyond, lie  
 there !

## VIII.

And while the face lies quiet there,  
 Who shall wonder  
 That I ponder  
 A conclusion ? I will try it there.

## IX.

As, — why must one, for the love fore-  
gone,  
Scout mere liking?  
Thunder-striking  
Earth, — the heaven, we looked above  
for, gone!

## X.

Why, with beauty, needs there  
money be,  
Love with liking?  
Crush the fly-king  
In his gauze, because no honey-bee?

## XI.

May not liking be so simple-sweet,  
If love grew there  
'Twould undo there  
All that breaks the cheek to dimples  
sweet?

## XII.

Is the creature too imperfect, say?  
Would you mend it,  
And so end it?  
Since not all addition perfects aye!

## XIII.

Or is it of its kind, perhaps,  
Just perfection —  
Whence, rejection  
Of a grace not to its mind, perhaps?

## XIV.

Shall we burn up, tread that face at  
once  
Into tinder,  
And so hinder  
Sparks from kindling all the place at  
once?

## XV.

Or else kiss away one's soul on her?  
Your love fancies!  
—A sick man sees  
Truer, when his hot eyes roll on her!

## XVI.

Thus the craftsman thinks to grace  
the rose, —  
Plucks a mould-flower.  
For his gold flower,  
Uses fine things that efface the rose:

## XVII.

Rosy rubies make its cup more rose,  
Precious metals  
Ape the petals, —  
Last, some old king locks it up, mo-  
rose!

## XVIII.

Then how grace a rose? I know a  
way!  
Leave it, rather.  
Must you gather?  
Smell, kiss, wear it — at last, throw  
away!

## A LIGHT WOMAN.

## I.

So far as our story approaches the end,  
Which do you pity the most of us  
three? —  
My friend, or the mistress of my  
friend  
With her wanton eyes, or me?

## II.

My friend was already too good to lose,  
And seemed in the way of improve-  
ment yet,  
When she crossed his path with her  
hunting-noose,  
And over him drew her net.

## III.

When I saw him tangled in her toils,  
A shame, said I, if she adds just  
him  
To her nine and ninety other spoils,  
The hundredth for a whim!

## IV.

And before my friend be wholly hers,  
How easy to prove to him, I said,  
An eagle's the game her pride pre-  
fers,  
Though she snaps at a wren instead!

## V.

So, I gave her eyes my own eyes to  
take,  
My hand sought hers as in earnest  
need,  
And round she turned for my noble  
sake,  
And gave me herself indeed.

## VI.

The eagle am I, with my fame in the world,  
The wren is he, with his maiden face.  
— You look away and your lip is curled?  
Patience, a moment's space!

## VII.

For see, my friend goes shaking and white;  
He eyes me as the basilisk:  
I have turned, it appears, his day to night,  
Eclipsing his sun's disk.

## VIII.

And I did it, he thinks, as a very thief:  
"Though I love her — that, he comprehends —  
One should master one's passions  
(love, in chief),  
And be loyal to one's friends!"

## IX.

And she, — she lies in my hand as tame  
As a pear late basking over a wall;  
Just a touch to try, and off it came;  
'Tis mine, — can I let it fall?

## X.

With no mind to eat it, that's the worst!  
Were it thrown in the road, would the case assist?  
'Twas quenching a dozen blue-flies' thirst  
When I gave its stalk a twist.

## XI.

And I, — what I seem to my friend,  
you see;  
What I soon shall seem to his love,  
you guess:  
What I seem to myself, do you ask of me?  
No hero, I confess.

## XII.

'Tis an awkward thing to play with souls,  
And matter enough to save one's own:

Yet think of my friend, and the burning coals  
He played with for bits of stone!

## XIII.

One likes to show the truth for the truth;  
That the woman was light is very true:  
But suppose she says, — Never mind that youth!  
What wrong have I done to you?

## XIV.

Well, anyhow, here the story stays,  
So far at least as I understand;  
And, Robert Browning, you writer of plays,  
Here's a subject made to your hand!

## LOVE IN A LIFE.

## I.

Room after room,  
I hunt the house through  
We inhabit together.  
Heart, fear nothing, for, heart, thou shalt find her —  
Next time, herself! — not the trouble behind her  
Left in the curtain, the couch's perfume!  
As she brushed it, the cornice-wreath blossomed anew:  
Yon looking-glass gleamed at the wave of her feather.

## II.

Yet the day wears,  
And door succeeds door;  
I try the fresh fortune —  
Range the wide house from the wing to the centre.  
Still the same chance! she goes out as I enter.  
Spend my whole day in the quest, — who cares?  
But 'tis twilight, you see, — with such suites to explore,  
Such closets to search, such alcoves to importune!



## LIFE IN A LOVE.

ESCAPE me ?

Never—  
Beloved !

While I am I, and you are you,  
So long as the world contains us both,  
Me the loving and you the loth,  
While the one eludes, must the other  
pursue.

My life is a fault at last, I fear :

It seems too much like a fate, in-  
deed !

Though I do my best I shall scarce  
succeed.

But what if I fail of my purpose here?  
It is but to keep the nerves at strain,  
To sour one's eyes and laugh at a  
fall,

And baffled, get up and begin again,—  
So the chase takes up one's life,  
that's all.

While, look but once from your far-  
thest bound

At me so deep in the dust and dark,  
No sooner the old hope goes to ground  
Than a new one, straight to the self-  
same mark,

I shape me—  
Ever  
Removed !

## THE LABORATORY.

## ANCIEN RÉGIME.

## I.

Now that I, tying thy glass mask  
tightly,  
May gaze through these faint smokes  
curling whitely,  
As thou pliest thy trade in this devil's-  
smithy—  
Which is the poison to poison her,  
prithée ?

## II.

He is with her, and they know that I  
know  
Where they are, what they do : they  
believe my tears flow  
While they laugh, laugh at me, at me  
fled to the drear  
Empty church, to pray God in, for  
them !—I am here.

## III.

Grind away, moisten and mash up  
thy paste,  
Pound at thy powder,—I am not in  
haste !  
Better sit thus and observe thy  
strange things,  
Than go where men wait me, and  
dance at the King's.

## IV.

That in the mortar—you call it a  
gum ?  
Ah, the brave tree whence such gold  
oozings come !  
And yonder soft vial, the exquisite  
blue,  
Sure to taste sweetly,—is that poison  
too ?

## V.

Had I but all of them, thee and thy  
treasures,  
What a wild crowd of invisible pleas-  
ures !  
To carry pure death in an earring, a  
casket,  
A signet, a fan-mount, a filigree bas-  
ket !

## VI.

Soon, at the King's, a mere lozenge  
to give,  
And Pauline should have just thirty  
minutes to live !  
But to light a pastile, and Elise with  
her head  
And her breast and her arms and her  
hands, should drop dead !

## VII.

Quick—is it finished? The color's  
too grin !  
Why not soft like the vial's, enticing  
and dim ?  
Let it brighten her drink, let her turn  
it and stir,  
And try it and taste, ere she fix and  
prefer !

## VIII.

What a drop ! She's not little, no  
minion like me !  
That's why she insnared him : this  
never will free  
The soul from those masculine eyes,  
— say, " No !"  
To that pulse's magnificent come and  
go.

## IX.

For only last night, as they whispered,  
I brought  
My own eyes to bear on her so, that  
I thought  
Could I keep them one-half minute  
fixed, she would fall  
Shrivalled; she fell not; yet this does  
it all!

## X.

Not that I bid you spare her the pain;  
Let death be felt and the proof remain:  
Brand, burn up, bite into its grace —  
He is sure to remember her dying  
face!

## XI.

Is it done? Take my mask' off! Nay,  
be not morose;  
It kills her, and this prevents seeing  
it close:  
The delicate droplet, my whole fortune's  
fee!  
If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt  
me?

## XII.

Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold  
to your fill,  
You may kiss me, old man, on my  
mouth if you will!  
But brush this dust off me, lest horror  
it brings  
Ere I know it — next moment I dance  
at the King's!

## GOLD HAIR:

## A STORY OF PORNIC.

## I.

OH, the beautiful girl, too white,  
Who lived at Pornic down by the  
sea,  
Just where the sea and the Loire  
unite!  
And a boasted name in Brittany  
She bore, which I will not write.

## II.

Too white, for the flower of life is  
red;  
Her flesh' was the soft seraphic  
screen

Of a soul that is meant (her parents  
said)  
To just see earth, and hardly be  
seen,  
And blossom in heaven instead.

## III.

Yet earth saw one thing, one how  
fair!  
One grace that grew to its full on  
earth:  
Smiles might be sparse on her cheek  
so spare,  
And her waist want half a girl's  
girth,  
But she had her great gold hair.

## IV.

Hair, such a wonder of flix and floss,  
Freshness and fragrance — floods of  
it, too!  
Gold, did I say? Nay, gold's mere  
dross:  
Here, Life smiled, "Think what I  
meant to do!"  
And Love sighed, "Fancy my loss!"

## V.

So, when she died, it was scarce more  
strange  
Than that, when some delicate  
evening dies,  
And you follow its spent sun's pallid  
range,  
There's a shoot of color startles the  
skies  
With sudden, violent change, —

## VI.

That, while the breath was nearly to  
seek,  
As they put the little cross to her  
lips,  
She changed; a spot came out on her  
cheek,  
A spark from her eye in mid-eclipse.  
And she broke forth, "I must speak!"

## VII.

"Not my hair!" made the girl her  
moan —  
"All the rest is gone or to go;  
But the last, last grace, my all, my  
own,  
Let it stay in the grave, that the  
ghosts may know!  
Leave my poor gold hair alone!"

## VIII.

The passion thus vented, dead lay she:  
Her parents sobbed their worst on  
that,  
All friends joined in, nor observed  
degree:  
For indeed the hair was to wonder  
at,  
As it spread — not flowing free,

## IX.

But curled around her brow, like a  
crown,  
And coiled beside her cheeks, like a  
cap,  
And calmed about her neck — ay,  
down  
To her breast, pressed flat, without  
a gap  
I' the gold, it reached her gown.

## X.

All kissed that face, like a silver wedge  
'Mid the yellow wealth, nor dis-  
turbed its hair:  
E'en the priest allowed death's privi-  
lege,  
As he planted the crucifix with care  
On her breast, 'twixt edge and edge.

## XI.

And thus was she buried, inviolate  
Of body and soul, in the very space  
By the altar; keeping saintly state  
In Pornic church, for her pride of  
race,  
Pure life and piteous fate.

## XII.

And in after-time would your fresh  
tear fall,  
Though your mouth might twitch  
with a dubious smile,  
As they told you of gold both robe  
and pall,  
How she prayed them leave it alone  
a while,  
So it never was touched at all.

## XIII.

Years flew; this legend grew at last  
The life of the lady; all she had  
done,  
All been, in the memories fading fast  
Of lover and friend, was summed in  
one  
Sentence survivors passed:

## XIV.

To wit, she was meant for heaven,  
not earth;  
Had turned an angel before the  
time:  
Yet, since she was mortal, in such  
dearth  
Of frailty, all you could count a  
crime  
Was — she knew her gold hair's worth.

## XV.

At little pleasant Pornic church,  
It chanced, the pavement wanted  
repair,  
Was taken to pieces: left in the lurch,  
A certain sacred space lay bare,  
And the boys began research.

## XVI.

'Twas the space where our sires would  
lay a saint,  
A benefactor, — a bishop, suppose,  
A baron with armor-adornments  
 quaint,  
Dame with chased ring and jewelled  
rose,  
Things sanctity saves from taint;

## XVII.

So we come to find them in after-days  
When the corpse is presumed to  
have done with gauds  
Of use to the living, in many ways:  
For the boys get pelf, and the town  
applauds,  
And the church deserves the praise.

## XVIII.

They grubbed with a will: and at  
length — *O cor*  
*Humanum, pectora caeca*, and the  
rest! —  
They found — no gaud they were pry-  
ing for,  
No ring, no rose, but — who would  
have guessed? —  
A double Louis-d'or!

## XIX.

Here was a case for the priest: he  
heard,  
Marked, inwardly digested, laid

Finger on nose, smiled, "A little bird  
Chirps in my ear:" then, "Bring  
a spade,  
Dig deeper!" — he gave the word.

## xx.

And lo, when they came to the coffin-  
lid,  
Or rotten planks which composed it  
once,  
Why, there lay the girl's skull wedged  
amid  
A mint of money, it served for the  
nonce  
To hold in its hair-heaps hid!

## xxi.

Hid there? Why? Could the girl  
be wont  
(She the stainless soul) to treasure  
up  
Money, earth's trash and heaven's  
affront?  
Had a spider found out the com-  
munion-cup,  
Was a toad in the christening-font?

## xxii.

Truth is truth: too true it was.  
Gold! She hoarded and hugged it  
first,  
Longed for it, leaned o'er it, loved it  
— alas —  
Till the humor grew to a head and  
burst,  
And she cried, at the final pass, —

## xxiii.

"Talk not of God, my heart is stone!  
Nor lover nor friend — be gold for  
both!  
Gold I lack; and, my all, my own,  
It shall hide in my hair. I scarce  
die loth  
If they let my hair alone!"

## xxiv.

Louis-d'ors, some six times five,  
And duly double, every piece.  
Now, do you see? With the priest to  
shrive,  
With parents preventing her soul's  
release  
By kisses that kept alive, —

## xxv.

With heaven's gold gates about to  
ope,  
With friends' praise, gold-like, linger-  
ing still,  
An instinct had bidden the girl's hand  
grope  
For gold, the true sort — "Gold in  
heaven, if you will;  
But I keep earth's too, I hope."

## xxvi.

Enough! The priest took the grave's  
grim yield;  
The parents, they eyed that price of  
sin  
As if *thirty pieces* lay revealed  
On the place to *bury strangers in*,  
The hideous Potter's Field.

## xxvii.

But the priest bethought him:  
"Milk that's spilt"  
— You know the adage! Watch  
and pray!  
Saints tumble to earth with so slight a  
tilt!  
It would build a new altar; that,  
we may!"  
And the altar therewith was built.

## xxviii.

Why I deliver this horrible verse?  
As the text of a sermon, which now  
I preach.  
Evil or good may be better or worse  
In the human heart, but the mix-  
ture of each  
Is a marvel and a curse.

## xxix.

The candid incline to surmise of late  
That the Christian faith may be  
false, I find;  
For our Essays-and-Reviews' debate  
Begins to tell on the public mind,  
And Colenso's words have weight:

## xxx.

I still, to suppose it true, for my part,  
See reasons and reasons; this, to  
begin:  
'Tis the faith that launched point-  
blank her dart  
At the head of a lie — taught Original  
Sin,  
The Corruption of Man's Heart.



"Ages ago, a lady there,  
At the farthest window facing the East." — Page 53.



THE STATUE AND THE  
BUST.

THERE'S a palace in Florence, the  
world knows well,  
And a statue watches it from the  
square,  
And this story of both do our townsmen tell.

Ages ago, a lady there,  
At the farthest window facing the East  
Asked, "Who rides by with the royal  
air?"

The bridesmaids' prattle around her  
ceased;  
She leaned forth, one on either hand:  
They saw how the blush of the bride  
increased —

They felt by its beats her heart expand —  
As one at each ear and both in a  
breath  
Whispered, "The Great Duke Ferdin-  
dand."

That selfsame instant, underneath,  
The Duke rode past in his idle way,  
Empty and fine, like a swordless  
sheath.

Gay he rode, with a friend as gay,  
Till he threw his head back — "Who  
is she?"  
— "A bride the Riccardi brings home  
to-day."

Hair in heaps lay heavily  
Over a pale brow spirit-pure —  
Carved like the heart of the coal-  
black tree,

Crisped like a war-steed's encolure —  
And vainly sought to dissemble her  
eyes  
Of the blackest black our eyes endure.

And lo, a blade for a knight's emprise  
Filled the fine empty sheath of a  
man, —  
The Duke grew straightway brave  
and wise.

He looked at her, as a lover can,  
She looked at him, as one who awakes:  
The past was a sleep, and her life  
began.

Now, love so ordered for both their  
sakes,  
A feast was held, that selfsame night,  
In the pile which the mighty shadow  
makes.

(For Via Larga is three-parts light,  
But the palace overshadows one,  
Because of a crime which may God  
requite!

To Florence and God the wrong was  
done,  
Through the first republic's murder  
there  
By Cosimo and his cursed son.)

The Duke (with the statue's face in  
the square)  
Turned, in the midst of his multi-  
tude,  
At the bright approach of the bridal  
pair.

Face to face the lovers stood  
A single minute and no more,  
While the bridegroom bent as a man  
subdued —

Bowed till his bonnet brushed the  
floor —  
For the Duke on the lady a kiss con-  
ferred,  
As the courtly custom was of yore.

In a minute can lovers exchange a  
word?  
If a word did pass, which I do not  
think,  
Only one out of the thousand heard.

That was the bridegroom. At day's  
brink  
He and his bride were alone at last  
In a bed-chamber by a taper's blink.

Calmly he said that her lot was cast,  
That the door she had passed was  
shut on her  
Till the final catafalque repassed.

The world meanwhile, its noise and  
stir,  
Through a certain window facing the  
East,  
She could watch like a convent's  
chronicler.

Since passing the door might lead to  
a feast,  
And a feast might lead to so much  
beside,  
He, of many evils, chose the least.

"Freely I choose too," said the bride —  
"Your window and its world suffice,"  
Replied the tongue, while the heart  
replied —

"If I spend the night with that devil  
twice,  
May his window serve as my loop of  
hell  
Whence a damned soul looks on  
paradise!

"I fly to the Duke who loves me well,  
Sit by his side and laugh at sorrow  
Ere I count another ave-bell.

"'T is only the coat of a page to bor-  
row,  
And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim,  
And I save my soul — but not to-mor-  
row" —

(She checked herself and her eye  
grew dim)  
"My father tarries to bless my state :  
I must keep it one day more for  
him.

"Is one day more so long to wait?  
Moreover the Duke rides past, I know;  
We shall see each other, sure as fate."

She turned on her side and slept.  
Just so!  
So we resolve on a thing, and sleep :  
So did the lady, ages ago.

That night the Duke said, "Dear or  
cheap  
As the cost of this cup of bliss may  
prove  
To body or soul, I will drain it deep."

And on the morrow, bold with love,  
He beckoned the bridegroom (close on  
call,  
As his duty bade, by the Duke's al-  
cove)

And smiled, " 'Twas a very funeral,  
Your lady will think, this feast of  
ours, —  
A shame to efface, whate'er befall!

"What if we break from the Arno  
bowers,  
And try if Petraja, cool and green,  
Cure last night's fault with this morn-  
ing's flowers?"

The bridegroom, not a thought to be  
seen  
On his steady brow and quiet mouth,  
Said, "Too much favor for me se  
mean!

"But, alas! my lady leaves the South;  
Each wind that comes from the Apen-  
nine  
Is a menace to her tender youth :

"Nor a way exists, the wise opine,  
If she quits her palace twice this  
year,  
To avert the flower of life's decline."

Quoth the Duke, "A sage and a kind-  
ly fear.  
Moreover Petraja is cold this spring:  
Be our feast to-night as usual here!"

And then to himself — "Which night  
shall bring  
Thy bride to her lover's embraces,  
fool —  
Or I am the fool, and thou art the  
king!

"Yet my passion must wait a night,  
nor cool —  
For to-night the envoy arrives from  
France  
Whose heart I unlock with myself,  
my tool.

"I need thee still and might miss per-  
chance.  
To-day is not wholly lost, beside,  
With its hope of my lady's counte-  
nance :

"For I ride — what should I do but  
ride?  
And, passing her palace, if I list,  
May glance at its window — well be-  
tide!"

So said, so done: nor the lady missed  
One ray that broke from the ardent  
brow,  
Nor a curl of the lips where the spirit  
kissed.



Be sure that each renewed the vow,  
No morrow's sun should arise and set  
And leave them then as it left them  
now.

But next day passed, and next day yet,  
With still fresh cause to wait one day  
more  
Ere each leaped over the parapet.

And still, as love's brief morning wore,  
With a gentle start, half smile, half  
sigh,  
They found love not as it seemed be-  
fore.

They thought it would work infalli-  
bly,  
But not in despite of heaven and  
earth :  
The rose would blow when the storm  
passed by.

Meantime they could profit, in win-  
ter's dearth,  
By store of fruits that supplant the  
rose :  
The world and its ways have a certain  
worth :

And to press a point while these op-  
pose  
Were simple policy; better wait :  
We lose no friends and we gain no  
foes.

Meantime, worse fates than a lover's  
fate,  
Who daily may ride and pass and look  
Where his lady watches behind the  
grate !

And she—she watched the square  
like a book  
Holding one picture and only one,  
Which daily to find she undertook :

When the picture was reached the  
book was done,  
And she turned from the picture at  
night to scheme  
Of tearing it out for herself next sun.

So weeks grew months, years; gleam  
by gleam  
The glory dropped from their youth  
and love,  
And both perceived they had dreamed  
a dream ;

Which hovered as dreams do, still  
above :  
But who can take a dream for a truth ?  
Oh, hide our eyes from the next re-  
move !

One day as the lady saw her youth  
Depart, and the silver thread that  
streaked  
Her hair, and, worn by the serpent's  
tooth,

The brow so puckered, the chin so  
peaked,—  
And wondered who the woman was,  
Hollow-eyed and haggard-cheeked

Fronting her silent in the glass—  
"Summon here," she suddenly said,  
"Before the rest of my old self pass,

"Him, the Carver, a hand to aid,  
Who fashions the clay no love will  
change,  
And fixes a beauty never to fade.

"Let Robbia's craft so apt and strange  
Arrest the remains of young and fair,  
And rivet them while the seasons  
range.

"Make me a face on the window  
there,  
Waiting as ever, mute the while,  
My love to pass below in the square !

"And let me think that it may beguile  
Dreary days which the dead must  
spend  
Down in their darkness under the  
aisle,

"To say, 'What matters it at the end ?  
I did no more while my heart was  
warm  
Than does that image, my pale-faced  
friend.'

"Where is the use of the lip's red  
charm,  
The heaven of hair, the pride of the  
brow,  
And the blood that blues the inside  
arm—

"Unless we turn, as the soul knows  
how,  
The earthly gift to an end divine ?  
A lady of clay is as good, I trow."

But long ere Robbia's cornice, fine  
With flowers and fruits which leaves  
inlace,  
Was set where now is the empty  
shrine —

(And, leaning out of a bright blue  
space,  
As a ghost might lean from a chink of  
sky,  
The passionate pale lady's face —

Eying ever, with earnest eye  
And quick-turned neck at its breath-  
less stretch,  
Some one who ever is passing by —)

The Duke had sighed like the simplest  
wretch  
In Florence, "Youth — my dream  
escapes!  
Will its record stay!" And he bade  
them fetch

Some subtle moulder of brazen  
shapes —  
"Can the soul, the will, die out of a  
man  
Ere his body finds the grave that  
gapes?"

"John of Douay shall effect my plan,  
Set me on horseback here aloft,  
Alive, as the crafty sculptor can,

"In the very square I have crossed so  
oft:  
That men may admire, when future  
suns  
Shall touch the eyes to a purpose soft,

"While the mouth and the brow stay  
brave in bronze —  
Admire and say, 'When he was alive  
How he would take his pleasure  
once!'

"And it shall go hard but I contrive  
To listen the while, and laugh in my  
tomb  
At idleness which aspires to strive."

So! While these wait the trump of  
doom,  
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,  
Nights and days in the narrow room?

Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder  
What a gift life was, ages ago,  
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

Only they see not God, I know,  
Nor all that chivalry of his,  
The soldier-saints who, row on row,

Burn upward each to his point of  
bliss —  
Since, the end of life being mani-  
fest,  
He had burned his way through the  
world to this.

I hear you reproach, "But delay was  
best,  
For their end was a crime." — Oh!  
a crime will do  
As well, I reply, to serve for a test,

As a virtue golden through and  
through,  
Sufficient to vindicate itself  
And prove its worth at a moment's  
view!

Must a game be played for the sake of  
pelf?  
Where a button goes, 'twere an epi-  
gram  
To offer the stamp of the very Guelph.

The true has no value beyond the  
sham:  
As well the counter as coin, I sub-  
mit,  
When your table's a hat, and your  
prize, a dram.

Stake your counter as boldly every  
whit,  
Venture as warily, use the same  
skill,  
Do your best, whether winning or los-  
ing it,

If you choose to play! — is my princi-  
ple.  
Let a man contend to the uttermost  
For his life's set prize, be it what it  
will!

The counter, our lovers staked, was  
lost  
As surely as if it were lawful coin:  
And the sin I impute to each frustrate  
ghost

Is, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,  
Though the end in sight was a vice, I  
say.  
You of the virtue (we issue join)  
How strive you? *De te, fabula!*

## LOVE AMONG THE RUINS.

## I.

WHERE the quiet-colored end of even-  
ing smiles,  
Miles and miles,  
On the solitary pastures where our  
sheep  
Half-asleep  
Tinkle homeward through the twi-  
light, stray or stop  
As they crop—  
Was the site once of a city great and  
gay  
(So they say),  
Of our country's very capital, its  
prince,  
Ages since,  
Held his court in, gathered councils,  
wielding far  
Peace or war.

## II.

Now,—the country does not even  
boast a tree,  
As you see,  
To distinguish slopes of verdure, cer-  
tain rills  
From the hills  
Intersect and give a name to (else  
they run  
Into one),  
Where the dom. and daring palace  
shot its spires  
Up like fires  
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a  
wall  
Bounding all,  
Made of marble, men might march on  
nor be pressed,  
Twelve abreast.

## III.

And such plenty and perfection, see,  
of grass  
Never was!  
Such a carpet as, this summer-time,  
o'er-spreads  
And embeds

Every vestige of the city, guessed  
alone,  
Stock or stone—  
Where a multitude of men breathed  
joy and woe  
Long ago;  
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up,  
dread of shame  
Struck them tame;  
And that glory and that shame alike,  
the gold  
Bought and sold.

## IV.

Now,—the single little turret that  
remains  
On the plains,  
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd  
Overscored,  
While the patching houseleek's head  
of blossom winks  
Through the chinks—  
Marks the basement whence a tower  
in ancient time  
Sprang sublime,  
And a burning ring, all round, the  
chariots traced  
As they raced,  
And the monarch and his minions  
and his dames  
Viewed the games.

## V.

And I know—while thus the quiet-  
colored eve  
Smiles to leave  
To their folding, all our many tink-  
ling fleeces  
In such peace,  
And the slopes and rills in undistin-  
guished gray  
Melt away—  
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow  
hair  
Waits me there  
In the turret whence the charioteers  
caught soul  
For the goal,  
When the king looked, where she  
looks now, breathless, dumb  
Till I come.

## VI.

But he looked upon the city, every side,  
Far and wide,  
All the mountains topped with tem-  
ples, all the glades  
Colonnades,

All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,  
— and then,  
All the men !  
When I do come, she will speak not,  
she will stand,  
Either hand  
On my shoulder, give her eyes the  
first embrace  
Of my face,  
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight  
and speech  
Each on each.

## VII.

In one year they sent a million fight-  
ers forth  
South and North,  
And they built their gods a brazen  
pillar high  
As the sky,  
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in  
full force —  
Gold, of course.  
O heart ! O blood that freezes, blood  
that burns !  
Earth's returns  
For whole centuries of folly, noise and  
sin !  
Shut them in,  
With their triumphs and their glories  
and the rest !  
Love is best.

## TIME'S REVENGES.

I've a Friend, over the sea ;  
I like him, but he loves me.  
It all grew out of the books I write ;  
They find such favor in his sight  
That he slaughters you with savage  
looks  
Because you don't admire my books.  
He does himself though, — and if some  
vein  
Were to snap to-night in this heavy  
brain,  
To-morrow month, if I lived to try,  
Round should I just turn quietly,  
Or out of the bedclothes stretch my  
hand  
Till I found him, come from his for-  
eign land  
To be my nurse in this poor place,  
And make my broth and wash my  
face

And light my fire and, all the while,  
Bear with his old good-humored  
smile  
That I told him " Better have kept  
away  
Than come and kill me, night and  
day,  
With, worse than fever throbs and  
shoots,  
The creaking of his clumsy boots." I  
am as sure that this he would do,  
As that Saint Paul's is striking two.  
And I think I rather . . . woe is me !  
— Yes, rather should see him than  
not see,

If lifting a hand would seat him there  
Before me in the empty chair  
To-night, when my head aches indeed,  
And I can neither think nor read,  
Nor make these purple fingers hold  
The pen: this garret's freezing cold !

And I've a Lady — there he wakes  
The laughing fiend and prince of  
snakes

Within me, at her name, to pray  
Fate send some creature in the way  
Of my love for her, to be down-torn,  
Upthrust and outward-borne,  
So I might prove myself that sea  
Of passion which I needs must be !  
Call my thoughts false and my fancies  
quaint,  
And my style infirm and its figures  
faint,

All the critics say, and more blame  
yet,

And not one angry word you get.  
But, please you, wonder I would put  
My cheek beneath that lady's foot  
Rather than trample under mine  
The laurels of the Florentine,  
And you shall see how the Devil  
spends

A fire God gave for other ends !  
I tell you, I stride up and down  
This garret, crowned with love's best  
crown,

And feasted with love's perfect feast,  
To think I kill for her, at least,  
Body and soul and peace and fame,  
Alike youth's end and manhood's  
aim,

— So is my spirit, as flesh with sin,  
Filled full, eaten out and in  
With the face of her, the eyes of her,  
The lips, the little chin, the stir  
Of shadow round her mouth; and she  
— I'll tell you, — calmly would decree

That I should roast at a slow fire,  
If that would compass her desire  
And make her one whom they invite  
To the famous ball to-morrow night.

There may be heaven ; there must be  
hell ;  
Meantime, there is our earth here —  
well !

WARING.

I.

WHAT'S become of Waring  
Since he gave us all the slip,  
Chose land-travel or seafaring,  
Boots and chest or staff and scrip,  
Rather than pace up and down  
Any longer London town ?

II.

Who'd have guessed it from his lip  
Or his brow's accustomed bearing,  
On the night he thus took ship  
Or started landward ? — little caring  
For us, it seems, who supped together  
(Friends of his too, I remember)  
And walked home through the merry  
weather  
The snowiest in all December.  
I left his arm that night myself  
For what's-his-name's, the new pros-  
poet  
Who wrote the book there on the  
shelf —  
How, forsooth, was I to know it  
If Waring meant to glide away  
Like a ghost at break of day ?  
Never looked he half so gay !

III.

He was prouder than the Devil :  
How he must have cursed our revel !  
Ay, and many other meetings,  
Indoor visits, outdoor greetings  
As up and down he paced this Lon-  
don,  
With no work done, but great works  
undone,  
Where scarce twenty knew his name.  
Why not, then, have earlier spoken,  
Written, bustled ? Who's to blame  
If your silence kept unbroken ?

“ True, but there were sundry jot-  
tings,  
Stray-leaves, fragments, blurs and  
blottings,  
Certain first steps were achieved  
Already which ” — (is that your mean-  
ing ?)  
“ Had well borne out who'er believed  
In more to come ! ” But who goes  
gleaning  
Hedge-side chan-cel-blades, while full-  
sheaved  
Stand cornfields by him ? Pride, o'er-  
weening  
Pride alone, puts forth such claims  
O'er the day's distinguished names.

IV.

Meantime, how much I loved him,  
I find out now I've lost him.  
I who cared not if I moved him,  
Who could so carelessly accost him,  
Henceforth never shall get free  
Of his ghostly company,  
His eyes that just a little wink  
As deep I go into the merit  
Of this and that distinguished spirit —  
His cheeks' raised color, soon to sink,  
As long I dwell on some stupendous  
And tremendous (Heaven defend us!)  
Monstr'-inform'-ingens-horrend-ous  
Demoniaco-seraphic  
Penman's latest piece of graphic.  
Nay, my very wrist grows warm  
With his dragging weight of arm.  
E'en so, swimmingly appears,  
Through one's after-supper musings,  
Some lost lady of old years  
With her beauteous vain endeavor  
And goodness unrepaid as ever ;  
The face, accustomed to refusings,  
We, puppies that we were . . . Oh,  
never  
Surely, nice of conscience, scrupled  
Being aught like false, forsooth, to ?  
Telling aught but honest truth to ?  
What a sin, had we centupled  
Its possessor's grace and sweetness !  
No ! she heard in its completeness  
Truth, for truth's a weighty matter,  
And, truth at issue, we can't flatter !  
Well, 'tis done with ; she's exempt  
From damning us through such a  
sally ;  
And so she glides, as down a valley,  
Taking up with her contempt,  
Past our reach ; and in, the flowers  
Shut her unregarded hours.

## v.

Oh, could I have him back once  
more,  
This Waring, but one-half day more !  
Back, with the quiet face of yore,  
So hungry for acknowledgment  
Like mine ! I'd fool him to his bent.  
Feed, should not he, to heart's content ?

I'd say, "to only have conceived,  
Planned your great works, apart from  
progress,  
Surpasses little works achieved !"  
I'd lie so, I should be believed.  
I'd make such havoc of the claims  
Of the day's distinguished names  
To feast him with, as feasts an ogress  
Her feverish sharp-toothed gold-  
crowned child !  
Or as one feasts a creature rarely  
Captured here, unreconciled  
To capture ; and completely gives  
Its pettish humors license, barely  
Requiring that it lives.

## vi.

Ichabod, Ichabod,  
The glory is departed !  
Travels Waring East away ?  
Who, of knowledge, by hearsay,  
Reports a man upstart  
Somewhere as a god,  
Hordes grown European-hearted,  
Millions of the wild made tame  
On a sudden at his fame ?  
In Vishnu-land what Avatar ?  
Or who in Moscow, towards the Czar,  
With the demurest of footfalls  
Over the Kremlin's pavement bright  
With serpentine and syenite,  
Steps, with five other generals  
That simultaneously take snuff,  
For each to have pretext enough  
And kerchiefwise unfold his sash  
Which, softness' self, is yet the stuff  
To hold fast where a steel chain snaps,  
And leave the grand white neck no  
gash ?

Waring in Moscow, to those rough  
Cold northern natures borne per-  
haps,

Like the lambwhite maiden dear  
From the circle of mute kings  
Unable to repress the tear,  
Each as his sceptre down he flings,  
To Dian's fame at Taurica,  
Where now a captive priestess, she  
alway

Mingles her tender grave Hellenic  
speech

With theirs, tuned to the hailstone-  
beaten beach :  
As pours some pigeon, from the  
myrrhy lands  
Rapt by the whirlblast to fierce Scyth-  
ian strands

Where breed the swallows, her melo-  
dious cry

Amid their barbarous twitter !  
In Russia ? Never ! Spain were  
fitter !

Ay, most likely 'tis in Spain  
That we and Waring meet again  
Now, while he turns down that cool  
narrow lane

Into the blackness, out of grave Ma-  
drid

All fire and shine, abrupt as when  
there's slid

Its stiff gold blazing pall  
From some black coffin-lid.

Or, best of all,  
I love to think

The leaving us was just a feint ;  
Back here to London did he slink,  
And now works on without a wink  
Of sleep, and we are on the brink  
Of something great in fresco-paint :  
Some garret's ceiling, walls and floor,  
Up and down and o'er and o'er  
He splashes, as none splashed before  
Since great Caldara Polidore.

Or Music means this land of ours  
Some favor yet, to pity won

By Purcell from his Rosy Bowers, —  
"Give me my so-long promised son,  
Let Waring end what I begun !"

Then down he creeps and out he steals,  
Only when the night conceals

His face ; in Kent 'tis cherry-time,  
Or hops are picking : or at prime

Of March he wanders as, too happy,  
Years ago when he was young,

Some mild eve when woods grew  
sappy,

And the early moths had sprung  
To life from many a trembling sheath

Woven the warm boughs beneath ;  
While small birds said to themselves

What should soon be actual song,  
And young gnats, by tens and twelves

Made as if they were the throng  
That crowd around and carry aloft

The sound they have nursed, so sweet  
and pure,

Out of a myriad noises soft,  
Into a tone that can endure

Amid the noise of a July noon  
When all God's creatures crave their  
    boon,

All at once, and all in tune,  
And get it, happy as Waring then,  
Having first within his ken  
What a man might do with men :  
And far too glad, in the even-glow,  
To mix with the world he meant to  
    take

Into his hand, he told you, so —  
And out of it his world to make,  
To contract and to expand  
As he shut or oped his hand.

O Waring ! what's to really be ?  
A clear stage and a crowd to see !  
Some Garrick, say, out shall not he  
The heart of Hamlet's mystery pluck ?  
Or, where most unclean beasts are  
    rife,

Some Junius — am I right ? — shall  
    tuck

His sleeve, and forth with flaying-  
    knife !

Some Chatterton shall have the luck  
Of calling Rowley into life !  
Some one shall somehow run a muck  
With this old world, for want of strife  
Sound asleep. Contrive, contrive  
To rouse us, Waring ! Who's alive ?  
Our men scarce seem in earnest now.  
Distinguished names ! — but 'tis, some-  
    how,

As if they played at being names  
Still more distinguished, like the  
    games

Of children. Turn our sport to ear-  
    nest

With a visage of the sternest !  
Bring the real times back, confessed  
Still better than our very best !

## II.

### I.

“ When I last saw Waring ” . . .  
(How all turned to him who spoke !  
You saw Waring ? Truth or joke ?  
In land-travel or sea-faring ?)

### II.

“ We were sailing by Triest  
Where a day or two we harbored :  
A sunset was in the West,  
When, looking over the vessel's side,  
One of our company espied  
A sudden speck to larboard.

And as a sea-duck flies and swims  
At once, so came the light craft up,  
With its sole lateen sail that trims  
And turns (the water round its rims  
Dancing, as round a sinking cup)  
And by us like a fish it curled,  
And drew itself up close beside,  
Its great sail on the instant furled,  
And o'er its thwarts a shrill voice  
    cried

(A neck as bronzed as a Lascar's)  
‘ Buy wine of us, you English Brig ?  
Or fruit, tobacco and cigars ?  
A pilot for you to Triest ?  
Without one, look you ne'er so big,  
They'll never let you up the bay !  
We natives should know best.’  
I turned, and ‘ just those fellows’  
    way,’

Our captain said, ‘ The 'long-shore  
    thieves  
Are laughing at us in their sleeves.’

### III.

“ In truth, the boy leaned laughing  
    back ;

And one half-hidden by his side  
Under the furled sail, soon I spied,  
With great grass hat and kerchief  
    black,

Who looked up with his kingly  
    throat,  
Said somewhat, while the other  
    shook

His hair back from his eyes to look  
Their longest at us ; then the boat,  
I know not how, turned sharply  
    round,

Laying her whole side on the sea  
As a leaping fish does ; from the lee  
Into the weather, cut somehow  
Her sparkling path beneath our bow,  
And so went off, as with a bound,  
Into the rosy and golden half

O' the sky, to overtake the sun  
And reach the shore, like the sea-  
    calf

Its singing cave ; yet I caught one  
Glance ere away the boat quite  
    passed,

And neither time nor toil could mar  
Those features : so I saw the last  
Of Waring ! ” — You ? Oh, never  
    star

Was lost here but it rose afar !  
Look East, where whole new thou-  
    sands are !

In Vishnu-land what Avatar ?

HOME THOUGHTS, FROM  
ABROAD.

## I.

OH, to be in England now that April's  
there,  
And whoever wakes in England sees,  
some morning, unaware,  
That the lowest boughs and the brush-  
wood sheaf  
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny  
leaf,  
While the chaffinch sings on the  
orchard bough  
In England — now !  
And after April, when May follows  
And the white-throat builds, and all  
the swallows !  
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree  
in the hedge  
Leans to the field and scatters on the  
clover  
Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent  
spray's edge —  
That's the wise thrush : he sings each  
song twice over  
Lest you should think he never could  
recapture  
The first fine careless rapture !  
And though the fields look rough with  
hoary dew,  
And will be gay when noontide wakes  
anew  
The buttercups, the little children's  
dower  
— Far brighter than this gaudy melon-  
flower !

## THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND.

THAT second time they hunted me  
From hill to plain, from shore to sea,  
And Austria, hounding far and wide  
Her blood-hounds through the coun-  
tryside  
Breathed hot and instant on my  
trace. —  
I made six days a hiding-place  
Of that dry green old aqueduct  
Where I and Charles, when boys, have  
plucked  
The fire-flies from the roof above,  
Bright creeping through the moss they  
love :

— How long it seems since Charles  
was lost !

Six days the soldiers crossed and  
crossed

The country in my very sight ;  
And when that peril ceased at night,  
The sky broke out in red dismay  
With signal fires ; well, there I lay  
Close covered o'er in my recess,  
Up to the neck in ferns and cress,  
Thinking on Metternich our friend,  
And Charles's miserable end,  
And much beside, two days ; the  
third,

Hunger o'ercame me when I heard  
The peasants from the village go  
To work among the maize ; you know,  
With us in Lombardy, they bring  
Provisions packed on mules, a string,  
With little bells that cheer their task,  
And casks, and boughs on every cask  
To keep the sun's heat from the  
wine ;

These I let pass in jingling line,  
And, close on them, dear noisy crew,  
The peasants from the village, too ;  
For at the very rear would troop  
Their wives and sisters in a group  
To help, I knew ; when these had  
passed,

I threw my glove to strike the last,  
Taking the chance : she did not start,  
Much less cry out, but stooped apart,  
One instant rapidly glanced round,  
And saw me beckon from the ground :  
A wild bush grows and hides my  
crypt ;  
She picked my glove up while she  
stripped

A branch off, then rejoined the rest  
With that ; my glove lay in her breast :  
Then I drew breath ; they disap-  
peared :

It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone  
Exactly where my glove was thrown.  
Meanwhile came many thoughts ; on  
me  
Rested the hopes of Italy ;  
I had devised a certain tale  
Which, when 'twas told her, could  
not fail

Persuade a peasant of its truth ;  
I meant to call a freak of youth  
This hiding, and give hopes of pay,  
And no temptation to betray.  
But when I saw that woman's face,  
Its calm simplicity of grace.



Our Italy's own attitude  
In which she walked thus far, and  
stood,

Planting each naked foot so firm,  
To crush the snake and spare the  
worm —

At first sight of her eyes, I said,  
"I am that man upon whose head  
They fix the price, because I hate  
The Austrians over us : the State  
Will give you gold—oh, gold so  
much !—

If you betray me to their clutch,  
And be your death, for aught I know,  
If once they find you saved their foe.  
Now, you must bring me food and  
drink,

And also paper, pen and ink,  
And carry safe what I shall write  
To Padua, which you'll reach at night  
Before the duomo shuts ; go in,  
And wait till Tenebræ begin ;  
Walk to the third confessional,  
Between the pillar and the wall,  
And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes  
peace?*

Say it a second time, then cease ;  
And if the voice inside returns,  
*From Christ and Freedom ; what con-  
cerns*

*The cause of Peace?* — for answer, slip  
My letter where you placed your lip ;  
Then come back happy : we have done  
Our mother service — I, the son,  
As you the daughter of our land !"

Three mornings more, she took her  
stand  
In the same place, with the same  
eyes :

I was no surer of sunrise  
Than of her coming : we conferred  
Of her own prospects, and I heard  
She had a lover — stout and tall,  
She said — then let her eyelids fall,  
"He could do much" — as if some  
doubt

Entered her heart, — then, passing  
out,

"She could not speak for others, who  
Had other thoughts ; herself she  
knew :"

And so she brought me drink and  
food.

After four days, the scouts pursued  
Another path ; at last arrived  
The help my Paduan friends contrived  
To furnish me : she brought the news.  
For the first time I could not choose

But kiss her hand, and lay my own  
Upon her head — "This faith was  
shown

To Italy, our mother ; she  
Shows my hand and blesses thee."  
She followed down to the sea-shore ;  
I left and never saw her more.

How very long since I have thought  
Concerning — much less wished for —  
aught

Beside the good of Italy,  
For which I live and mean to die !  
I never was in love ; and since  
Charles proved false, what shall now  
convince

My inmost heart I have a friend ?  
However, if I pleased to spend  
Real wishes on myself — say, three —  
I know at least what one should be.  
I would grasp Metternich until  
I felt his red wet throat distil  
In blood through these two hands.

And next,  
— Nor much for that am I perplexed —  
Charles, perjured traitor, for his part,  
Should die slow of a broken heart  
Under his new employers. Last  
— Ah ! there, what should I wish ?  
For fast

Do I grow old and out of strength.  
If I resolved to seek at length  
My father's house again, how scared!  
They all would look, and unprepared!  
My brothers live in Austria's pay  
— Disowned me long ago, men say ;  
And all my early mates who used  
To praise me so — perhaps induced  
More than one early step of mine —  
Are turning wise : while some opine  
"Freedom grows license," some sus-  
pect

"Haste breeds delay," and recollect  
They always said, such premature  
Beginnings never could endure !  
So, with a sullen "All's for best,"  
The land seems settling to its rest.  
I think then, I should wish to stand  
This evening in that dear, lost land,  
Over the sea the thousand miles,  
And know if yet that woman smiles  
With the calm smile ; some little  
farm

She lives in there, no doubt : what  
harm

If I sat on the door-side bench,  
And while her spindle made a trench,  
Fantastically in the dust,  
Inquired of all her fortunes — just

Her children's ages and their names,  
 And what may be the husband's  
     aims  
 For each of them. I'd talk this  
     out,  
 And sit there, for an hour about,

Then kiss her hand once more, and  
     lay  
 Mine on her head, and go my way.

So much for idle wishing — how  
 It steals the time ! To business now.

## THE ENGLISHMAN IN ITALY.

### PIANO DI SORRENTO.

FORTÙ, Fortù, my beloved one, sit here by my side,  
 On my knees put up both little feet ! I was sure, if I tried,  
 I could make you laugh spite of Scirocco. Now, open your eyes,  
 Let me keep you amused, till he vanish in black from the skies,  
 With telling my memories over, as you tell your beads ;  
 All the Plain saw me gather, I garland — the flowers or the weeds.

Time for rain ! for your long hot dry autumn had networked with brown  
 The white skin of each grape on the bunches, marked like a quail's crown,  
 Those creatures you make such account of, whose heads, — specked with  
     white

Over brown like a great spider's back, as I told you last night, —  
 Your mother bites off for her supper. Red-ripe as could be,  
 Pomegranates were chapping and splitting in halves on the tree.  
 And betwixt the loose walls of great flintstone, or in the thick dust  
 On the path, or straight out of the rock-side, wherever could thrust  
 Some burnt sprig of bold hardy rock-flower its yellow face up,  
 For the prize were great butterflies fighting, some five for one cup.  
 So, I guessed, ere I got up this morning, what change was in store,  
 By the quick rustle-down of the quail-nets which woke me before  
 I could open my shutter, made fast with a bough and a stone,  
 And look through the twisted dead vine-twigs, sole lattice that's known.  
 Quick and sharp rang the rings down the net-poles, while, busy beneath,  
 Your priest and his brother tugged at them, the rain in their teeth.  
 And out upon all the flat house-roofs, where split figs lay drying,  
 The girls took the frails under cover : nor use seemed in trying  
 To get out the boats and go fishing, for, under the cliff,  
 Fierce the black water frothed o'er the blind rock. No seeing our skiff  
 Arrive about noon from Amalfi ! — our fisher arrive,  
 And pitch down his basket before us, all trembling alive,  
 With pink and gray jellies, your sea-fruit ; you touch the strange lumps,  
 And mouths gape there, eyes open, all manner of horns and of humps,  
 Which only the fisher looks grave at, while round him like imps,  
 Cling screaming the children as naked and brown as his shrimps ;  
 Himself too as bare to the middle — you see round his neck  
 The string and its brass coin suspended, that saves him from wreck.  
 But to-day not a boat reached Salerno : so back, to a man,  
 Came our friends, with whose help in the vineyards grape-harvest began.  
 In the vat, half-way up in our house-side, like blood the juice spins,  
 While your brother all bare-legged is dancing till breathless he grins  
 Dead-beaten in effort on effort to keep the grapes under,  
 Since still, when he seems all but master, in pours the fresh plunder  
 From girls who keep coming and going with basket on shoulder,  
 And eyes shut against the rain's driving ; your girls that are older, —

For under the hedges of aloe, and where, on its bed  
 Of the orchard's black mould, the love-apple lies pulpy and red,  
 All the young ones are kneeling and filling their laps with the snails  
 Tempted out by this first rainy weather, — your best of regales,  
 As to-night will be proved to my sorrow, when, supping in state,  
 We shall feast our grape-gleaners (two dozen, three over one plate)  
 With lasagne so tempting to swallow in slippery ropes,  
 And gourds fried in great purple slices, that color of popes.  
 Meantime, see the grape-bunch they've brought you : the rain-water slips  
 O'er the heavy blue bloom on each globe which the wasp to your lips  
 Still follows with fretful persistence. Nay, taste, while awake,  
 This half of a curd-white smooth cheese-ball that peels, flake by flake.  
 Like an onion, each smoother and whiter : next, sip this weak wine  
 From the thin green glass flask, with its stopper, a leaf of the vine ;  
 And end with the prickly pear's red flesh that leaves through its juice  
 The stony black seeds on your pearl-teeth.

Scirocco is loose !

Hark, the quick, whistling pelt of the olives which, thick in one's track,  
 Tempt the stranger to pick up and bite them, though not yet half black !  
 How the old twisted olive-trunks shudder, the medlars let fall  
 Their hard fruit, and the brittle great fig-trees snap off, figs and all,  
 For here comes the whole of the tempest ! no refuge, but creep  
 Back again to my side and my shoulder, and listen or sleep.

Oh ! how will your country show next week, when all the vine-boughs  
 Have been stripped of their foliage to pasture the mules and the cows ?  
 Last eve, I rode over the mountains ; your brother, my guide,  
 Soon left me, to feast on the myrtles that offered, each side,  
 Their fruit-balls, black, glossy, and luscious, — or strip from the sorbs  
 A treasure, or, rosy and wondrous, those hairy gold orbs !  
 But my mule picked his sure sober path out, just stopping to neigh  
 When he recognized down in the valley his mates on their way  
 With the fagots and barrels of water. And soon we emerged  
 From the plain where the woods could scarce follow ; and still, as we urged  
 Our way, the woods wondered, and left us. Up, up still we trudged,  
 Though the wild path grew wilder each instant, and place was e'en grudged  
 'Mid the rock-chasms and piles of loose stones like the loose broken teeth  
 Of some monster which climbed there to die, from the ocean beneath —  
 Place was grudged to the silver-gray fume-weed that clung to the path,  
 And dark rosemary ever a-dying, that, 'spite the wind's wrath,  
 So loves the salt rock's face to seaward : and lentisks as stanch  
 To the stone where they root and bear berries : and . . . what shows a branch  
 Coral-colored, transparent, with circlets of pale seagreen leaves ;  
 Over all trod my mule with the caution of gleaners o'er sheaves.  
 Still, foot after foot like a lady, still, round after round,  
 He climbed to the top of Calvano : and God's own profound  
 Was above me, and round me the mountains, and under, the sea,  
 And within me my heart to bear witness what was and shall be.  
 Oh, heaven and the terrible crystal ! no rampart excludes  
 Your eye from the life to be lived in the blue solitudes.  
 Oh, those mountains, their infinite movement ! still moving with you ;  
 For, ever some new head and breast of them thrusts into view  
 To observe the intruder ; you see it, if quickly you turn  
 And, before they escape you, surprise them. They grudge you should learn  
 How the soft plains they look on, lean over and love (they pretend)  
 — Cower beneath them, the black sea-pine crouches, the wild fruit-trees bend.  
 E'en the myrtle-leaves curl, shrink and shut : all is silent and grave :  
 'Tis a sensual and timorous beauty, — how fair ! but a slave.

So, I turned to the sea ; and there slumbered, as greenly as ever  
 Those isles of the siren, your Galli. No ages can sever  
 The Three, nor enable their sister to join them, — half-way  
 On the voyage, she looked at Ulysses — no farther to-day !  
 Though the small one, just launched in the wave, watches breast-high and  
 steady

From under the rock her bold sister, swum half-way already.  
 Fortū, shall we sail there together, and see, from the sides,  
 Quite new rocks show their faces, new haunts where the siren abides ?  
 Shall we sail round and round them, close over the rocks, though unseen,  
 That ruffle the gray glassy water to glorious green ?  
 Then scramble from splinter to splinter, reach land, and explore,  
 On the largest, the strange square black turret with never a door,  
 Just a loop to admit the quick lizards ? Then, stand there and hear  
 The birds' quiet singing, that tells us what life is, so clear ?  
 — The secret they sang to Ulysses when, ages ago,  
 He heard and he knew this life's secret, I hear and I know.

Ah, see ! The sun breaks o'er Calvano. He strikes the great gloom  
 And flutters it o'er the mount's summit in airy gold fume.  
 All is over. Look out, see, the gypsy, our tinker and smith,  
 Has arrived, set up bellows and forge, and down-squatted forthwith  
 To his hammering under the wall there ! One eye keeps aloof  
 The urchins that itch to be putting his Jew's-harp to proof,  
 While the other, through locks of curled wire, is watching how sleek  
 Shines the hog, come to share in the windfall. Chew, abbot's own cheek !  
 All is over. Wake up and come out now, and down let us go,  
 And see the fine things got in order at church for the show  
 Of the Sacrament, set forth this evening. To-morrow's the Feast  
 Of the Rosary's Virgin, by no means of Virgins the least :  
 As you'll hear in the off-hand discourse which (all nature, no art)  
 The Dominican brother, these three weeks, was getting by heart.  
 Not a pillar nor post but is dizen'd with red and blue papers ;  
 All the roof waves with ribbons, each altar ablaze with long tapers.  
 But the great masterpiece is the scaffold rigged glorious to hold  
 All the fiddlers and fifers and drummers and trumpeters bold  
 Not afraid of Bellini nor Auber : who, when the priest's hoarse,  
 Will strike us up something that's brisk for the feast's second course.  
 And then will the flaxen-wigged Image be carried in pomp  
 Through the plain, while, in gallant procession, the priests mean to stomp  
 All round the glad church lie old bottles with gunpowder stopped,  
 Which will be, when the Image re-enters, religiously popped.  
 And at night from the crest of Calvano great bonfires will hang :  
 On the plain will the trumpets join chorus, and more poppers bang.  
 At all events, come — to the garden, as far as the wall ;  
 See me tap with a hoe on the plaster, till out there shall fall  
 A scorpion with wide angry nippers !

— "Such trifles !" you say ?

Fortū, in my England at home, men meet gravely to-day  
 And debate, if abolishing corn-laws be righteous and wise !  
 — If t'were proper, Scirocco should vanish in black from the skies !

## UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY.

(AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN PERSON OF QUALITY.)

## I.

HAD I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,  
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-square ;  
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there !

## II.

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least !  
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast ;  
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

## III.

Well now, look at our villa ! stuck like the horn of a bull  
Just on a mountain edge as bare as the creature's skull,  
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull !  
— I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's turned wool.

## IV.

But the city, oh the city — the square with the houses ! Why ?  
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's something to take the eye !  
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry ;  
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by ;  
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high ;  
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly.

## V.

What of a villa ? Though winter be over in March by rights,  
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the heights :  
You've the brown ploughed land before, where the oxen steam and wheeze,  
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray olive-trees.

## VI.

Is it better in May, I ask you ? You've summer all at once ;  
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.  
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers well,  
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows-out its great red bell  
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell.

## VII.

Is it ever hot in the square ? There's a fountain to spout and splash !  
In the shade it sings and springs ; in the shine such foam-bows flash  
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and paddle and pash  
Round the lady atop in her conch — fifty gazers do not abash,  
Though all that she wears is some weeds round her waist in a sort of sash.

## VIII.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you linger,  
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted forefinger.  
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the corn and mingle,  
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a-tingle.  
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is shrill,  
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs on the hill.  
Enough of the seasons, — I spare you the months of the fever and chill.

## IX.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells begin :  
 No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence rattles in :  
 You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin.  
 By and by there's the travelling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth  
 Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market beneath.  
 At the post-office such a scene-picture — the new play, piping hot !  
 And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.  
 Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes,  
 And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law of the  
 Duke's !  
 Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so  
 Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, St. Jerome, and Cicero,  
 " And moreover " (the sonnet goes rhyming), " the skirts of Saint Paul has  
 reached,  
 Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous than ever he  
 preached."  
 Noon strikes, — here sweeps the procession ! our Lady borne smiling and  
 smart,  
 With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords stuck in her heart !  
*Bang-whang-whang* goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife ;  
 No keeping one's haunches still: it's the greatest pleasure in life.

## X.

But bless you, it's dear — it's dear ! fowls, wine, at double the rate.  
 They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays passing the gate  
 It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me, not the city !  
 Beggars can scarcely be choosers : but still — ah, the pity, the pity !  
 Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with cowls and sandals,  
 And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding the yellow candles ;  
 One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross with handles,  
 And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better prevention of scan-  
 dals :  
*Bang-whang-whang* goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife.  
 Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure in life !

## PICTOR IGNOTUS.

[FLORENCE, 15—.]

I COULD have painted pictures like  
 that youth's  
 Ye praise so. How my soul springs  
 up ! No bar  
 Stayed me — ah, thought which sad-  
 dens while it soothes !  
 — Never did fate forbid me, star by  
 star,  
 To outburst on your night, with all  
 my gift  
 Of fires from God : nor would my  
 flesh have shrunk

From seconding my soul, with eyes  
 uplift  
 And wide to heaven, or, straight like  
 thunder, sunk  
 To the centre, of an instant ; or  
 around  
 Turned calmly and inquisitive, to  
 scan  
 The license and the limit, space and  
 bound,  
 Allowed to truth made visible in  
 man.  
 And, like that youth ye praise so, all  
 I saw,  
 Over the canvas could my hand  
 have flung,

Each face obedient to its passion's law,  
 Each passion clear proclaimed without a tongue :  
 Whether Hope rose at once in all the blood,  
 A-tiptoe for the blessing of embrace,  
 Or Rapture drooped the eyes, as when her brood  
 Pull down the nesting dove's heart to its place ;  
 Or Confidence lit swift the forehead up,  
 And locked the mouth fast, like a castle braved, —  
 O human faces ! bath it spilt, my cup ?  
 What did ye give me that I have not saved ?  
 Nor will I say I have not dreamed (how well !)  
 Of going — I, in each new picture, — forth,  
 As, making new hearts beat and bosoms swell,  
 To Pope or Kaiser, East, West, South, or North,  
 Bound for the calmly satisfied great State,  
 Or glad aspiring little burgh, it went,  
 Flowers cast upon the car which bore the freight,  
 Through old streets named afresh from the event,  
 Till it reached home, where learned age should greet  
 My face, and youth, the star not yet distinct  
 Above his hair, lie learning at my feet ! —  
 Oh ! thus to live, I and my picture, linked  
 With love about, and praise, till life should end,  
 And then not go to heaven, but linger here,  
 Here on my earth, earth's every man my friend,  
 The thought grew frightful, 'twas so wildly dear !  
 But a voice changed it. Glimpses of such sights  
 Have scared me, like the revels through a door  
 Of some strange house of idols at its rites !

This world seemed not the world it was, before :  
 Mixed with my loving trusting ones, there trooped  
 . . . Who summoned those cold faces that begun  
 To press on me and judge me ?  
 Though I stooped  
 Shrinking, as from the soldiery a nun,  
 They drew me forth, and spite of me . . . enough !  
 These buy and sell our pictures, take and give,  
 Count them for garniture and household-stuff,  
 And where they live needs must our pictures live  
 And see their faces, listen to their prate,  
 Partakers of their daily pettiness,  
 Discussed of, — " This I love, or this I hate,  
 This likes me more, and this affects me less !"  
 Wherefore I chose my portion. If at whiles  
 My heart sinks, as monotonous I paint  
 These endless cloisters and eternal aisles  
 With the same series, Virgin, Babe, and Saint,  
 With the same cold calm beautiful regard, —  
 At least no merchant traffics in my heart ;  
 The sanctuary's gloom at least shall ward  
 Vain tongues from where my pictures stand apart :  
 Only prayer breaks the silence of the shrine  
 While, blackening in the daily candle-smoke,  
 They moulder on the damp wall's travertine,  
 'Mid echoes the light footstep never woke.  
 So, die my pictures ! surely, gently die !  
 O youth ! men praise so, — holds their praise its worth ?  
 Blown harshly, keeps the trump its golden cry ?  
 Tastes sweet the water with such specks of earth ?

## FRA LIPPO LIPPI.

I AM poor brother Lippo, by your  
leave  
You need not clap your torches to my  
face.  
Zooks! what's to blame? you think  
you see a monk!  
What, 'tis past midnight, and you go  
the rounds,  
And here you catch me at an alley's  
end  
Where sportive ladies leave their  
doors ajar?  
The Carmine's my cloister: hunt it  
up,  
Do,—harry out, if you must show  
your zeal,  
Whatever rat, there, haps on his  
wrong hole,  
And nip each softling of a wee white  
mouse,  
*Weke, weke*, that's crept to keep him  
company!  
Aha! you know your betters? Then,  
you'll take  
Your hand away that's fiddling on  
my throat,  
And please to know me likewise.  
Who am I?  
Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a  
friend  
Three streets off—he's a certain . . .  
how d'ye call?  
Master—a . . . Cosimo of the Medici,  
I' the house that caps the corner.  
Boh! you were best!  
Remember and tell me the day you're  
hanged,  
How you affected such a gullet's-  
gripe!  
But yon, sir, it concerns you that your  
knaves  
Pick up a manner, nor discredit you:  
Zooks! are we pilchards, that they  
sweep the streets  
And count fair prize what comes into  
their net?  
He's Judas to a tittle, that man is!  
Just such a face! Why, sir, you make  
amends.  
Lord, I'm not angry! Bid your hang-  
dogs go  
Drink out this quarter-florin to the  
health  
Of the munificent House that harbors  
me  
(And many more beside, lads! more  
beside!)

And all's come square again. I'd like  
his face—  
His, elbowing on his comrade in the  
door  
With the pike and lantern,—for the  
slave that holds  
John Baptist's head a-dangle by the  
hair  
With one hand ("Look you, now," as  
who should say)  
And his weapon in the other, yet un-  
wiped!  
It's not your chance to have a bit of  
chalk,  
A wood-coal or the like? or you  
should see!  
Yes, I'm the painter, since you style  
me so.  
What, brother Lippo's doings, up and  
down,  
You know them, and they take you?  
like enough!  
I saw the proper twinkle in your  
eye—  
'Tell you, I liked your looks at very  
first.  
Let's sit and set things straight now,  
hip to haunch.  
Here's spring come, and the nights  
one makes up bands  
To roam the town and sing out car-  
nival,  
And I've been three weeks shut with-  
in my mew,  
A-painting for the great man, saints  
and saints  
And saints again. I could not paint  
all night—  
Onf! I leaned out of window for fresh  
air.  
There came a hurry of feet and little  
feet,  
A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and  
whiffs of song,—  
*Flower o' the broom,*  
*Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!*  
*Flower o' the quince,*  
*I let Lisa go, and what good in life*  
*since?*  
*Flower o' the thyme*—and so on.  
Round they went.  
Scarce had they turned the corner  
when a titter  
Like the skipping of rabbits by moon-  
light,—three slim shapes,  
And a face that looked up . . . zooks,  
sir, flesh and blood  
That's all I'm made of! Into shreds  
it went,



Curtain and counterpane and cover-  
let,  
All the bed-furniture — a dozen knots,  
There was a ladder! Down I let my-  
self,  
Hands and feet, scrambling somehow,  
and so dropped,  
And after them. I came up with the  
fun  
Hard by Saint Lawrence, hail fellow,  
well met, —  
*Flower o' the rose,*  
*If I've been merry, what matter who*  
*knows?*  
And so, as I was stealing back again,  
To get to bed and have a bit of sleep  
Ere I rise up to-morrow and go work  
On Jerome knocking at his poor old  
breast  
With his great round stone to subdue  
the flesh,  
You snap me of the sudden. Ah, I  
see!  
Though your eye twinkles still, you  
shake your head —  
Mine's shaved — a monk, you say —  
the sting's in that!  
If Master Cosimo announced himself,  
Mum's the word naturally; but a  
monk!  
Come, what am I a beast for? tell us,  
now!  
I was a baby when my mother died  
And father died and left me in the  
street.  
I starved there, God knows how, a  
year or two  
On fig-skins, melon-parings, rinds and  
shucks,  
Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty  
day,  
My stomach being empty as your  
hat,  
The wind doubled me up and down I  
went,  
Old aunt Lapaccia trussed me with  
one hand  
(Its fellow was a stinger, as I knew),  
And so along the wall, over the  
bridge,  
By the straight cut to the convent.  
Six words there,  
While I stood munching my first  
bread that month:  
"So, boy, you're minded," quoth the  
good fat father  
Wiping his own month, 'twas refec-  
tion-time, —  
"To quit this very miserable world?"

Will you renounce? . . . "the mouth-  
ful of bread?" thought I;  
By no means! Brief, they made a  
monk of me;  
I did renounce the world, its pride  
and greed,  
Palace, farm, villa, shop, and banking-  
house,  
Trash, such as these poor devils of  
Medici  
Have given their hearts to — all at  
eight years old.  
Well, sir, I found in time, you may  
be sure,  
'Twas not for nothing — the good  
bellyful,  
The warm serge and the rope that  
goes all round,  
And day-long blessed idleness beside!  
"Let's see what the urchin's fit for"  
— that came next.  
Not overmuch their way, I must con-  
fess.  
Such a to-do! They tried me with  
their books:  
Lord, they'd have taught me Latin in  
pure waste!  
*Flower o' the clove,*  
*All the Latin I construe is, "Amo" I*  
*love!*  
But, mind you, when a boy starves  
in the streets  
Eight years together as my fortune  
was,  
Watching folk's faces to know who  
will fling  
The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch  
he desires,  
And who will curse or kick him for  
his pains, —  
Which gentleman processional and  
fine,  
Holding a candle to the Sacrament,  
Will wink and let him lift a plate and  
catch  
The droppings of the wax to sell  
again,  
Or holla for the Eight and have him  
whipped, —  
How say I? — nay, which dog bites,  
which lets drop  
His bone from the heap of offal in the  
street, —  
Why, soul and sense of him grow  
sharp alike,  
He learns the look of things, and none  
the less  
For admonition from the hunger-  
pinch.

I had a store of such remarks, be  
 sure,  
 Which, after I found leisure, turned  
 to use :  
 I drew men's faces on my copy-books,  
 Scrawled them within the antiphona-  
 ry's marge,  
 Joined legs and arms to the long  
 music-notes,  
 Found eyes and nose and chin for A's  
 and B's,  
 And made a string of pictures of the  
 world  
 Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and  
 noun,  
 On the wall, the bench, the door.  
 The monks looked black.  
 "Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him  
 out, d'ye say ?  
 In no wise. Lose a crow and catch  
 a lark.  
 What if at last we get our man of  
 parts,  
 We Carmelites, like those Camaldo-  
 lese  
 And Preaching Friars, to do our  
 church up fine  
 And put the front on it that ought to  
 be !"  
 And hereupon he bade me daub away.  
 Thank you! my head being crammed,  
 the walls a blank,  
 Never was such prompt disemburden-  
 ing.  
 First every sort of monk, the black  
 and white,  
 I drew them, fat and lean: then, folks  
 at church,  
 From good old gossips waiting to con-  
 fess  
 Their cribs of barrel-droppings, can-  
 dle-ends, —  
 To the breathless fellow at the altar-  
 foot,  
 Fresh from his murder, safe and sit-  
 ting there  
 With the little children round him in  
 a row  
 Of admiration, half for his beard, and  
 half  
 For that white anger of his victim's  
 son  
 Shaking a fist at him with one fierce  
 arm,  
 Signing himself with the other be-  
 cause of Christ  
 (Whose sad face on the cross sees only  
 this  
 After the passion of a thousand years),

Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her  
 head  
 (Which the intense eyes looked  
 through), came at eve  
 On tiptoe, said a word, dropped in a  
 loaf,  
 Her pair of earrings and a bunch of  
 flowers  
 (The brute took growling), prayed, and  
 so was gone.  
 I painted all, then cried, "'Tis ask  
 and have ;  
 Choose, for more's ready !" — laid the  
 ladder flat,  
 And showed my covered bit of clois-  
 ter-wall.  
 The monks closed in a circle and  
 praised loud  
 Till checked, taught what to see and  
 not to see,  
 Being simple bodies, — "That's the  
 very man !  
 Look at the boy who stoops to pat the  
 dog !  
 That woman's like the Prior's niece  
 who comes  
 To care about his asthma: it's the  
 life !"  
 But there my triumph's straw-fire  
 flared and funked ;  
 Their betters took their turn to see  
 and say :  
 The Prior and the learned pulled a face  
 And stopped all that in no time.  
 "How? what's here ?  
 Quite from the mark of painting, bless  
 us all !  
 Faces, arms, legs, and bodies like the  
 true  
 As much as pea and pea ! it's devil's  
 game !  
 Your business is not to catch men with  
 show,  
 With homage to the perishable clay.  
 But lift them over it, ignore it all,  
 Make them forget there's such a thing  
 as flesh.  
 Your business is to paint the souls of  
 men —  
 Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke . . .  
 no, it's not . . .  
 It's vapor done up like a new-born  
 babe —  
 (In that shape when you die it leaves  
 your mouth),  
 It's . . . well, what matters talking,  
 it's the soul !  
 Give us no more of body than shows  
 soul !



“How? what’s here?  
Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all!” — Page 72.



Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising God,  
 That sets us praising, — why not stop with him?  
 Why put all thoughts of praise out of our head  
 With wonder at lines, colors, and what not?  
 Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!  
 Rub all out, try at it a second time!  
 Oh! that white smallish female with the breasts,  
 She's just my niece . . . Herodias, I would say, —  
 Who went and danced, and got men's heads cut off!  
 Have it all out!" Now, is this sense, I ask?  
 A fine way to paint soul, by painting body  
 So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go farther  
 And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does for white  
 When what you put for yellow's simply black,  
 And any sort of meaning looks intense  
 When all beside itself means and looks naught.  
 Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,  
 Left foot and right foot, go a double step,  
 Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,  
 Both in their order? Take the prettiest face,  
 The Prior's niece . . . patron saint — is it so pretty  
 You can't discover if it means hope, fear,  
 Sorrow or joy? won't beauty go with these?  
 Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,  
 Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash,  
 And then add soul and heighten them threefold?  
 Or say there's beauty with no soul at all —  
 (I never saw it — put the case the same —)  
 If you get simple beauty and naught else,  
 You get about the best thing God invents:

That's somewhat: and you'll find the soul you have missed,  
 Within yourself, when you return him thanks.  
 "Rub all out!" Well, well, there's my life, in short,  
 And so the thing has gone on ever since.  
 I'm grown a man no doubt, I've broken bounds:  
 You should not take a fellow eight years old  
 And make him swear to never kiss the girls.  
 I'm my own master, paint now as I please —  
 Having a friend, you see, in the Corner-house!  
 Lord, it's fast holding by the rings in front —  
 Those great rings serve more purposes than just  
 To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse!  
 And yet the old schooling sticks, the old grave eyes  
 Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,  
 The heads shake still — "It's art's decline, my son!  
 You're not of the true painters, great and old;  
 Brother Angelico's the man, you'll find;  
 Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer:  
 Fag on at flesh, you'll never make the third!"  
*Flower o' the pine,  
 You keep your mistr . . . manners, and  
 I'll stick to mine!*  
 I'm not the third, then: bless us, they must know!  
 Don't you think they're the likeliest to know,  
 They with their Latin? So, I swallow my rage,  
 Clinch my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and paint  
 To please them — sometimes do, and sometimes don't;  
 For, doing most, there's pretty sure to come  
 A turn, some warm eve finds me at my saints —  
 A laugh, a cry, the business of the world —  
*(Flower o' the peach,  
 Death for us all, and his own life for each!)*

And my whole soul revolves, the cup  
 runs over,  
 The world and life's too big to pass for  
 a dream,  
 And I do these wild things in sheer  
 despite,  
 And play the fooleries you catch me  
 at  
 In pure rage! The old mill-horse,  
 out at grass  
 After hard years, throws up his stiff  
 heels so,  
 Although the miller does not preach  
 to him  
 The only good of grass is to make  
 chaff.  
 What would men have? Do they like  
 grass or no—  
 May they or mayn't they? all I want's  
 the thing  
 Settled forever one way. As it is,  
 You tell too many lies and hurt your-  
 self:  
 You don't like what you only like too  
 much,  
 You do like what, if given you at  
 your word,  
 You find abundantly detestable.  
 For me, I think I speak as I was  
 taught.  
 I always see the garden, and God  
 there  
 A-making man's wife: and, my lesson  
 learned,  
 The value and significance of flesh,  
 I can't unlearn ten minutes after-  
 wards.  
 You understand me: I'm a beast, I  
 know.  
 But see, now—why, I see as cer-  
 tainly  
 As that the morning-star's about to  
 shine,  
 What will hap some day. We've a  
 youngster here  
 Comes to our convent, studies what I  
 do,  
 Slouches and stares and lets no atom  
 drop:  
 His name is Guidi—he'll not mind  
 the monks—  
 They call him Hulking Tom, he lets  
 them talk—  
 He picks my practice up—he'll paint  
 apace,  
 I hope so—though I never live so  
 long,  
 I know what's sure to follow. You  
 be judge!

You speak no Latin more than I,  
 belike;  
 However, you're my man, you've  
 seen the world  
 —The beauty and the wonder and  
 the power,  
 The shapes of things, their colors,  
 lights, and shades,  
 Changes, surprises,—and God made  
 it all!  
 —For what? Do you feel thankful,  
 ay or no,  
 For this fair town's face, yonder  
 river's line,  
 The mountain round it and the sky  
 above,  
 Much more the figures of man, woman,  
 child,  
 These are the frame to? What's it  
 all about?  
 To be passed over, despised? or dwelt  
 upon,  
 Wondered at? oh, this last of course!  
 —you say.  
 But why not do as well as say,—  
 paint these  
 Just as they are, careless what comes  
 of it?  
 God's works—paint any one, and  
 count it crime  
 To let a truth slip. Don't object,  
 "His works  
 Are here already; nature is complete:  
 Suppose you reproduce her—(which  
 you can't)  
 There's no advantage! you must beat  
 her, then."  
 For, don't you mark? we're made so  
 that we love  
 First when we see them painted,  
 things we have passed  
 Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to  
 see;  
 And so they are better, painted—  
 better to us,  
 Which is the same thing. Art was  
 given for that;  
 God uses us to help each other so,  
 Lending our minds out. Have you  
 noticed, now  
 Your cullion's hanging face? A bit  
 of chalk,  
 And trust me but you should, though!  
 How much more  
 If I drew higher things with the same  
 truth!  
 That were to take the Prior's pulpit-  
 place,  
 Interpret God to all of you! Oh, oh.

It makes me mad to see what men  
 shall do  
 And we in our graves! This world's  
 no blot for us  
 Nor blank; it means intensely, and  
 means good:  
 To find its meaning is my meat and  
 drink.  
 "Ay, but you don't so instigate to  
 prayer!"  
 Strikes in the Prior: "when your  
 meaning's plain  
 It does not say to folks—remember  
 matins,  
 Or, mind you fast next Friday!"  
 Why, for this  
 What need of art at all? A skull  
 and bones,  
 Two bits of stick nailed cross-wise,  
 or, what's best,  
 A bell to chime the hour with, does  
 as well.  
 I painted a Saint Lawrence six months  
 since  
 At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine  
 style:  
 "How looks my painting, now the  
 scaffold's down?"  
 I ask a brother: "Hugely," he re-  
 turns—  
 "Already not one phiz of your three  
 slaves  
 Who turn the Deacon off his toasted  
 side,  
 But's scratched and prodded to our  
 heart's content,  
 The pious people have so eased their  
 own  
 With coming to say prayers there in  
 a rage:  
 We get on fast to see the bricks be-  
 neath.  
 Expect another job this time next  
 year,  
 For pity and religion grow i' the  
 crowd—  
 Your painting serves its purpose!"  
 Hang the fools!

—That is—you'll not mistake an  
 idle word  
 Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, Got  
 wot  
 Tasting the air this spicy night which  
 turns  
 The unaccustomed head like Chianti  
 wine!  
 Oh, the church knows! don't misre-  
 port me, now

It's natural a poor monk out of bounds  
 Should have his apt word to excuse  
 himself:  
 And hearken how I plot to make  
 amends.  
 I have bethought me: I shall paint a  
 piece  
 . . . There's for you! Give me six  
 months, then go, see  
 Something in Sant' Ambrogio's!  
 Bless the nuns!  
 They want a cast o' my office. I shall  
 paint  
 God in the midst, Madonna and her  
 babe,  
 Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-  
 brood,  
 Lilies and vestments and white faces,  
 sweet  
 As puff on puff of grated orris-root  
 When ladies crowd to church at mid-  
 summer.  
 And then i' the front, of course a saint  
 or two—  
 Saint John, because he saves the  
 Florentines,  
 Saint Ambrose, who puts down in  
 black and white  
 The convent's friends and gives them  
 a long day,  
 And Job, I must have him there past  
 mistake,  
 The man of Uz (and Us without  
 the z,  
 Painters who need his patience).  
 Well, all these  
 Secured at their devotion, up shall  
 come  
 Out of a corner when you least ex-  
 pect,  
 As one by a dark stair into a great  
 light,  
 Music and talking, who but Lippo!  
 I!—  
 Mazed, motionless, and moon-struck  
 —I'm the man!  
 Back I shrink—what is this I see  
 and hear?  
 I, caught up with my monk's things  
 by mistake,  
 My old serge gown and rope that goes  
 all round,  
 I, in this presence, this pure company!  
 Where's a hole, where's a corner for  
 escape?  
 Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a  
 thing  
 Forward, puts out a soft palm—"No!  
 so fast!"

—Addresses the celestial presence,  
 “nay —  
 He made you and devised you, after  
 all,  
 Though he's none of you! Could  
 Saint John there, draw —  
 His camel-hair make up a painting-  
 brush?  
 We come to brother Lippo for all that,  
*Iste perfect opus!*” So, all smile —  
 I shuffle sideways with my blushing  
 face  
 Under the cover of a hundred wings  
 Thrown like a spread of kirtles when  
 you're gay  
 And play hot cockles, all the doors  
 being shut  
 Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops  
 The hot-head husband! Thus I scut-  
 tle off  
 To some safe bench behind, not let-  
 ting go  
 The palm of her, the little lily thing  
 That spoke the good word for me in  
 the nick,  
 Like the Prior's niece . . . Saint  
 Lucy, I would say.  
 And so all's saved for me, and for the  
 church  
 A pretty picture gained. Go, six  
 months hence!  
 Your hand, sir, and good-by: no  
 lights, no lights!  
 The street's hushed, and I know my  
 own way back.  
 Don't fear me! There's the gray  
 beginning. Zooks!

ANDREA DEL SARTO.

(CALLED “THE FAULTLESS PAINT-  
 ER.”)

But do not let us quarrel any more,  
 No, my Lucrezia! bear with me for  
 once:  
 Sit down and all shall happen as you  
 wish.  
 You turn your face, but does it bring  
 your heart?  
 I'll work then for your friend's friend,  
 never fear,  
 Treat his own subject after his own  
 way,

Fix his own time, accept too his own  
 price,  
 And shut the money into this small  
 hand  
 When next it takes mine. Will it?  
 tenderly?  
 Oh, I'll content him, — but to-morrow,  
 Love!  
 I often am much wearier than you  
 think,  
 This evening more than usual: and it  
 seems  
 As if — forgive now — should you let  
 me sit  
 Here by the window, with your hand  
 in mine,  
 And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,  
 Both of one mind, as married people  
 use,  
 Quietly, quietly the evening through,  
 I might get up to-morrow to my work  
 Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us  
 try.  
 To-morrow, how you shall be glad for  
 this!  
 Your soft hand is a woman of itself,  
 And mine, the man's bared breast  
 she curls inside.  
 Don't count the time lost, neither;  
 you must serve  
 For each of the five pictures we re-  
 quire:  
 It saves a model. So! keep looking  
 so —  
 My serpentine beauty, rounds on  
 rounds!  
 —How could you ever prick those  
 perfect ears,  
 Even to put the pearl there! oh, so  
 sweet —  
 My face, my moon, my everybody's  
 moon,  
 Which everybody looks on and calls  
 his,  
 And, I suppose, is looked on by in  
 turn,  
 While she looks — no one's: very  
 dear, no less.  
 You smile? why, there's my picture  
 ready made,  
 There's what we painters call our  
 harmony!  
 A common grayness silvers every  
 thing, —  
 All in a twilight, you and I alike  
 — You, at the point of your first pride  
 in me  
 (That's gone, you know) — but I, *sz*  
 every point;



My youth, my hope, my art, being all  
 toned down  
 To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.  
 There's the bell clinking from the  
 chapel-top;  
 That length of convent-wall across  
 the way  
 Holds the trees safer, huddled more  
 inside;  
 The last monk leaves the garden;  
 days decrease,  
 And autumn grows, autumn in every  
 thing.  
 Eh? the whole seems to fall into a  
 shape,  
 As if I saw alike my work and self  
 And all that I was born to be and  
 do,  
 A twilight-piece. Love, we are in  
 God's hand.  
 How strange now, looks the life he  
 makes us lead;  
 So free we seem, so fettered fast we  
 are!  
 I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!  
 This chamber, for example — turn  
 your head —  
 All that's behind us! You don't un-  
 derstand  
 Nor care to understand about my art,  
 But you can hear at least when peo-  
 ple speak:  
 And that cartoon, the second from the  
 door  
 — It is the thing, Love! so such things  
 should be:  
 Behold Madonna! — I am bold to say.  
 I can do with my pencil what I know,  
 What I see, what at bottom of my  
 heart  
 I wish for, if I ever wish so deep —  
 Do easily, too — when I say, perfectly,  
 I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are  
 judge,  
 Who listened to the Legate's talk last  
 week;  
 And just as much they used to say in  
 France.  
 At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!  
 No sketches first, no studies, that's  
 long past:  
 I do what many dream of, all their  
 lives,  
 — Dream? strive to do, and agonize  
 to do,  
 And fail in doing. I could count  
 twenty such  
 On twice your fingers, and not leave  
 this town,

Who strive — you don't know how  
 the others strive  
 To paint a little thing like that you  
 smeared  
 Carelessly passing with your robes  
 afloat, —  
 Yet do much less, so much less, Some-  
 one says,  
 (I know his name, no matter) — so  
 much less!  
 Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am  
 judged.  
 There burns a truer light of God in  
 them,  
 In their vexed beating stuffed and  
 stopped-up brain,  
 Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on  
 to prompt  
 This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's  
 hand of mine.  
 Their works drop groundward, but  
 themselves, I know,  
 Reach many a time a heaven that's  
 shut to me,  
 Enter and take their place there sure  
 enough,  
 Though they come back and cannot  
 tell the world.  
 My works are nearer heaven, but I  
 sit here.  
 The sudden blood of these men! at a  
 word —  
 Praise them, it boils, or blame them,  
 it boils too.  
 I, painting from myself and to myself,  
 Know what I do, am unmoved by  
 men's blame  
 Or their praise either. Somebody  
 remarks  
 Morello's outline there is wrongly  
 traced,  
 His hue mistaken; what of that? or  
 else,  
 Rightly traced and well ordered;  
 what of that?  
 Speak as they please, what does the  
 mountain care?  
 Ah, but a man's reach should exceed  
 his grasp,  
 Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-  
 gray,  
 Placid and perfect with my art: the  
 worse!  
 I know both what I want and what  
 might gain;  
 And yet how profitless to know, to  
 sigh  
 "Had I been two, another and my-  
 self,

Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.

Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth

The Urbinate who died five years ago. ('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)

Well, I can fancy how he did it all, Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,

Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,

Above and through his art—for it gives way;

That arm is wrongly put—and there again—

A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,

Its body, so to speak: its soul is right, He means right—that, a child may understand.

Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:

But all the play, the insight and the stretch—

Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?

Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,

We might have risen to Rafael, I and you.

Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—

More than I merit, yes, by many times.

But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,

And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,

And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird

The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—

Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!

Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged

"God and the glory! never care for gain.

The present by the future, what is that?

Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!

Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"

I might have done it for you. So it seems:

Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.

Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;

The rest avail not. Why do I need you?

What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo? In this world, who can do a thing,

will not;

And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:

Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—

And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,

God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.

'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,

That I am something underrated here, Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.

I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,

For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.

The best is when they pass and look aside;

But they speak sometimes: I must bear it all.

Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,

And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!

I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,

Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear, In that humane great monarch's golden look,—

One finger in his beard or twisted curl

Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,

One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,

The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,

I painting proudly with his breath on me,

All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,

Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls

Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—

And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,

This in the background, waiting on my work,

To crown the issue with a last reward!

A good time, was it not, my kingly days?  
 And had you not grown restless . . .  
     but I knew —  
 'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct said;  
 Too live the life grew, golden and not gray;  
 And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt  
 Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.  
 How could it end in any other way?  
 You called me, and I came home to your heart.  
 The triumph was, to have ended there; then, if  
 I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?  
 Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,  
 You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!  
 "Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;  
 The Roman's is the better when you pray,  
 But still the other's Virgin was his wife" —  
 Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge  
 Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows  
 My better fortune. I resolve to think.  
 For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,  
 Said one day Agnolo his very self.  
 To Rafael . . . I have known it all  
     these years . . .  
 (When the young man was flaming out his thoughts  
 Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,  
 Too lifted up in heart because of it)  
 "Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub  
 Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,  
 Who, were he set to plan and execute  
 As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,  
 Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"  
 To Rafael's! — And indeed the arm is wrong.  
 I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,  
 Give the chalk here — quick, thus the line should go!

Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!  
 Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,  
 (What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?  
 Do you forget already words like those?)  
 If really there was such a chance so lost, —  
 Is, whether you're — not grateful — but more pleased.  
 Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!  
 This hour has been an hour! Another smile?  
 If you would sit thus by me every night  
 I should work better, do you comprehend?  
 I mean that I should earn more, give you more.  
 See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;  
 Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,  
 The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.  
 Come from the window, love, — come in, at last,  
 Inside the melancholy little house  
 We built to be so gay with. God is just  
 King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights  
 When I look up from painting, ever tired out.  
 The walls become illumined, brick from brick  
 Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,  
 That gold of his I did cement them with!  
 Let us but love each other. Must you go?  
 That cousin here again? he waits outside?  
 Must see you — you, and not with me? Those loans?  
 More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?  
 Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?  
 While hand and eye and something of a heart  
 Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?  
 I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit

The gray remainder of the evening  
 out,  
 Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly  
 How I could paint, were I but back  
 in France,  
 One picture, just one more — the Vir-  
 gin's face,  
 Not your's this time! I want you at  
 my side  
 To hear them — that is, Michel Ag-  
 nolo —  
 Judge all I do and tell you of its  
 worth.  
 Will you? To-morrow satisfy your  
 friend.  
 I take the subjects for his corridor,  
 Finish the portrait out of hand —  
 there, there,  
 And throw him in another thing or  
 two  
 If he demurs : the whole should prove  
 enough  
 To pay for this same cousin's freak.  
 Beside,  
 What's better and what's all I care  
 about,  
 Get you the thirteen scudi for the  
 ruff!  
 Love, does that please you? Ah, but  
 what does he.  
 The cousin' what does ne to please  
 you more

I am grown beacern. as oia age to-  
 night  
 regret little. I would change still  
 .ess  
 Since there my past life lies, why  
 alter it?  
 The very wrong to Francis! — it is  
 true  
 I took his coin, was tempted and com-  
 plied,  
 And built this house and sinned, and  
 all is said.  
 My father and my mother died of  
 want.  
 Well, had I riches of my own? you  
 see  
 How one gets rich! Let each one  
 bear his lot.  
 They were born poor, lived poor, and  
 poor they died :  
 And I have labored somewhat in my  
 time  
 And not been paid profusely. Some  
 good son  
 Paint my two hundred pictures — let  
 him try!

No doubt, there's something strikes a  
 balance. Yes,  
 You loved me quite enough, it seems  
 to-night.  
 This must suffice me here. What  
 would one have?  
 In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one  
 more chance —  
 Four great walls in the New Jerusa-  
 lem,  
 Meted on each side by the angel's  
 reed,  
 For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo, and me  
 To cover — the three first without a  
 wife,  
 While I have mine! So — still they  
 overcome  
 Because there's still Lucrezia, — as I  
 choose.

Again the cousin's whistle! Go,  
 my love.

### THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT SAINT PRAX- ED'S CHURCH

ROME. 15 —.

VANITY, saith the preacher, vanish  
 Draw round my bed : is Anselm keep-  
 ing back?  
 Nephews — sons mine . . . ah God, I  
 know not! Well —  
 She, men would have to be your  
 mother once,  
 Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she  
 was!  
 What's done is done, and she is dead  
 beside,  
 Dead long ago, and I am Bishop  
 since,  
 And as she died so must we die our-  
 selves,  
 And thence ye may perceive the  
 world's a dream.  
 Life, how and what is it? As here I  
 lie  
 In this state-chamber, dying by de-  
 grees,  
 Hours and long hours in the dead  
 night, I ask  
 "Do I live, am I dead?" Peace  
 peace seems all.

Saint Praxed's ever was the church  
for peace ;  
And so, about this tomb of mine. I  
fought  
With tooth and nail to save my niche,  
ye know :  
— Old Gandolf cozened me, despite  
my care ;  
Shrewd was that snatch from out the  
corner South  
He graced his carrion with, God curse  
the same !  
Yet still my niche is not so cramped  
but thence  
One sees the pulpit on the epistle-  
side,  
And somewhat of the choir, those  
silent seats,  
And up into the æry dome where live  
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to  
lurk ;  
And I shall fill my slab of basalt  
there,  
And 'neath my tabernacle take my  
rest,  
With those nine columns round me,  
two and two,  
The odd one at my feet where Anselm  
stands :  
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare,  
the ripe  
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty  
pulse.  
— Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-  
stone,  
Put me where I may look at him !  
True peach,  
Rosy and flawless : how I earned the  
prize !  
Draw close : that conflagration of my  
church  
— What then ? So much was saved  
if aught were missed !  
My sons, ye would not be my death ?  
Go dig  
The white-grape vineyard where the  
oil-press stood,  
Drop water gently till the surface  
sunk,  
And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know  
not, I ! . . .  
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves  
soft,  
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,  
Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli*,  
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the  
nape,  
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's  
breast . . .

Sons, all have I bequeathed you,  
villas, all,  
That brave Frascati villa with its  
bath,  
So, let the blue lump poise between  
my knees,  
Like God the Father's globe on both  
his hands  
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so  
gay,  
For Gandolf shall not choose but see  
and burst !  
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our  
years :  
Man goeth to the grave, and where is  
he ?  
Did I say, basalt for my slab, sons ?  
Black —  
'Twas ever antique-black I meant !  
How else  
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come  
beneath ?  
The bass-relief in bronze ye promised  
me,  
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of,  
and perchance  
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or  
so,  
The Saviour at his sermon on the  
mount,  
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one  
Pan  
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last  
garment off,  
And Moses with the tables . . . but I  
know  
Ye mark me not ! What do they  
whisper thee,  
Child of my bowels, Anselm ? Ah,  
ye hope  
To revel down my villas while I gasp  
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy  
travertine  
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top  
chuckles at !  
Nay, boys, ye love me — all of jasper,  
then !  
'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest  
I grieve  
My bath must needs be left behind  
alas !  
One block, pure green as a pistachio-  
nut,  
There's plenty jasper somewhere in  
the world —  
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to  
pray  
Horses for ye, and brown Greek  
manuscripts,

And mistresses with great smooth  
marbly limbs?  
—That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,  
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's  
every word,  
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second  
line—  
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves  
his need!  
And then how I shall lie through cen-  
turies,  
And hear the blessed mutter of the  
mass,  
And see God made and eaten all day  
long,  
And feel the steady candle-flame, and  
taste  
Good strong thick stupefying incense-  
smoke!  
For as I lie here, hours of the dead  
night,  
Dying in state and by such slow de-  
grees,  
I fold my arms as if they clasped a  
crook,  
And stretch my feet forth straight as  
stone can point,  
And let the bedclothes, for a mort-  
cloth, drop  
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's  
work:  
And as yon tapers dwindle, and  
strange thoughts  
Grow, with a certain humming in my  
ears,  
About the life before I lived this life,  
And this life too, popes, cardinals,  
and priests,  
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the  
mount,  
Your tall pale mother with her talk-  
ing eyes,  
And new-found agate urns as fresh  
as day,  
And marble's language, Latin pure,  
discreet,  
—Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our  
friend?

No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!  
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrim-  
age.  
All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the  
Pope  
My villas! Will ye ever eat my  
heart?  
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's  
quick,  
They glitter like your mother's for  
my soul,  
Or ye would heighen my impover-  
ished frieze,  
Piece out its starved design, and fill  
my vase  
With grapes, and add a visor and a  
Tern,  
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx  
That in his struggle throws the thyrs-  
us down,  
To comfort me on my entablature  
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask  
"Do I live? am I dead?" There,  
leave me, there!  
For ye have stabbed me with ingratu-  
tude  
To death: ye wish it — God, ye wish  
it! Stone—  
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy  
squares which sweat  
As if the corpse they keep were ooz-  
ing through—  
And no more *lapis* to delight the  
world!  
Well go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers  
there,  
But in a row: and, going, turn your  
backs  
—Ay, like departing altar-minis-  
trants,  
And leave me in my church, the  
church for peace,  
That I may watch at leisure if he  
leers—  
Old Gandelf at me, from his onion-  
stone,  
As still he envied me, so fair she  
was!

## A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S.

## I.

O GALUPPI, Baldassaro, this is very sad to find!  
I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove me deaf and blind:  
But, although I take your meaning, 'tis with such a heavy mind!

## II.

Here you come with your old music, and here's all the good it brings.  
 What, they lived once thus at Venice where the merchants were the kings,  
 Where Saint Mark's is, where the Doges used to wed the sea with rings?

## III.

Ay, because the sea's the street there; and 'tis arched by . . . what you call  
 . . . Shylock's bridge with houses on it, where they kept the carnival:  
 I was never out of England — it's as if I saw it all.

## IV.

Did young people take their pleasure when the sea was warm in May?  
 Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to mid-day,  
 When they made up fresh adventures for the morrow, do you say?

## V.

Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and lips so red, —  
 On her neck the small face buoyant, like a bell-flower on its bed,  
 O'er the breast's superb abundance where a man might base his head?

## VI.

Well, and it was graceful of them: they'd break talk off and afford  
 — She, to bite her mask's black velvet, he, to finger on his sword,  
 While you sat and played Toccatas, stately at the clavichord?

## VII.

What? Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths diminished, sigh on sigh,  
 Told them something? Those suspensions, those solutions — "Must we  
 die?"  
 Those commiserating sevenths — "Life might last! we can but try!"

## VIII.

"Were you happy?" — "Yes." — "And are you still as happy?" — "Yes.  
 And you?"  
 — "Then, more kisses!" — "Did I stop them, when a million seemed so  
 few?"  
 Hark, the dominant's persistence till it must be answered to!

## IX.

So, an octave struck the answer. Oh, they praised you, I dare say!  
 "Brave Galuppi! that was music! good alike at grave and gay!  
 I can always leave off talking when I hear a master play!"

## X.

Then they left you for their pleasure: till in due time, one by one,  
 Some with lives that came to nothing, some with deeds as well undone,  
 Death stepped tacitly, and took them where they never see the sun.

## XI.

But when I sit down to reason, think to take my stand nor swerve,  
 While I triumph o'er a secret wrung from nature's close reserve,  
 In you come with your cold music till I creep through every nerve.

## XII.

Yes, you, like a ghostly cricket, creaking where a house was burned:  
 "Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice spent what Venice earned.  
 The soul, doubtless, is immortal — where a soul can be discerned.

## XIII.

"Yours for instance: you know physics, something of geology, Mathematics are your pastime; souls shall rise in their degree; Butterflies may dread extinction, — you'll not die, it cannot be!

## XIV.

"As for Venice and her people, merely born to bloom and drop, Here on earth they bore their fruitage, mirth and folly were the crop: What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing had to stop?

## XV.

"Dust and ashes!" So you creak it, and I want the heart to scold. Dear dead women, with such hair, too — what's become of all the gold Used to hang and brush their bosoms? I feel chilly and grown old.

### HOW IT STRIKES A CONTEMPORARY.

I ONLY knew one poet in my life :  
And this, or something like it, was  
his way.

You saw go up and down Vallado-  
lid,  
A man of mark, to know next time  
you saw.

His very serviceable suit of black  
Was courtly once and conscientious  
still,  
And many might have worn it, though  
none did :

The cloak, that somewhat shone and  
showed the threads,  
Had purpose, and the ruff, signifi-  
cance.

He walked, and tapped the pavement  
with his cane,  
Scenting the world, looking it full in  
face :

An old dog, bald and blindish, at his  
heels.

They turned up, now, the alley by  
the church,  
That leads no whither; now, they  
breathed themselves

On the main promenade just at the  
wrong time.

You'd come upon his scrutinizing hat,  
Making a peaked shade blacker than  
itself

Against the single window spared  
some house

Intact yet with its mouldered Moor-  
ish work, —

Or else surprise the ferrel of his stick  
Trying the mortar's temper 'tween  
the chinks

Of some new shop a-building, French  
and fine.

He stood and watched the cobbler at  
his trade,

The man who slices lemons into drink,  
The coffee-roaster's brazier, and the  
boys

That volunteer to help him turn its  
winch.

He glanced o'er books on stalls with  
half an eye,

And fly-leaf ballads on the vendor's  
string,

And broad-edge bold-print posters by  
the wall.

He took such cognizance of men and  
things,

If any beat a horse, you felt he saw;  
If any cursed a woman, he took note;

Yet stared at nobody, — you stared at  
him,

And found, less to your pleasure than  
surprise,

He seemed to know you and expect  
as much.

So, next time that a neighbor's  
tongue was loosed,

It marked the shameful and notorious  
fact

We had among us, not so much a  
spy,

As a recording chief-inquisitor,  
The town's true master if the town  
but knew!

We merely kept a governor for form,  
While this man walked about and  
took account





How it strikes a Contemporary. — Page 84.



Of all thought, said and acted, then  
 went home,  
 And wrote it fully to our Lord the  
 King  
 Who has an itch to know things, he  
 knows why,  
 And reads them in his bedroom of a  
 night.  
 Oh, you might smile! there wanted  
 not a touch,  
 A tang of . . . well, it was not wholly  
 ease,  
 As back into your mind the man's  
 look came.  
 Stricken in years a little, such a brow  
 His eyes had to live under!—clear  
 as flint  
 On either side o' the formidable nose  
 Curved, cut and colored like an eagle's  
 claw.  
 Had he to do with A.'s surprising  
 fate?  
 When altogether old B. disappeared,  
 And young C. got his mistress,—was't  
 our friend,  
 His letter to the King, that did it  
 all?  
 What paid the bloodless man for so  
 much pains?  
 Our Lord the King has favorites mani-  
 fold,  
 And shifts his ministry some once a  
 month:  
 Our city gets new governors at  
 whiles,—  
 But never word or sign, that I could  
 hear,  
 Notified, to this man about the streets,  
 The King's approval of those letters  
 conned  
 The last thing duly at the dead of  
 night.  
 Did the man love his office? Frowned  
 our Lord,  
 Exhorting when none heard—"Be-  
 seech me not!  
 Too far above my people,—beneath  
 me!  
 I set the watch,—how should the  
 people know?  
 Forget them, keep me all the more in  
 mind!"  
 Was some such understanding 'twixt  
 the two?  
 I found no truth in one report at  
 least—  
 That if you tracked him to his home,  
 down lanes

Beyond the Jewry, and as clean to  
 pace,  
 You found he ate his supper in a  
 room  
 Blazing with lights, four Titians on  
 the wall,  
 And twenty naked girls to change his  
 plate!  
 Poor man, he lived another kind of  
 life  
 In that new stuccoed third house by  
 the bridge,  
 Fresh-painted, rather smart than  
 otherwise!  
 The whole street might o'erlook him  
 as he sat,  
 Leg crossing leg, one foot on the dog's  
 back,  
 Playing a decent cribbage with his  
 maid  
 (Jacynth, you're sure her name was)  
 o'er the cheese  
 And fruit, three red halves of starved  
 winter-pears,  
 Or treat of radishes in April. Nine,  
 Ten, struck the church clock, straight  
 to bed went he.

My father like the man of sense he  
 was.  
 Would point him out to me a dozen  
 times  
 "St—St." he'd whisper, "the Corre-  
 gidor"  
 I had been used to think that person-  
 age  
 Was one with lacquered breeches,  
 lustrous belt,  
 And feathers like a forest in his hat,  
 Who blew a trumpet and proclaimed  
 the news,  
 Announced the bull-fights, gave each  
 church its turn,  
 And memorized the miracle in vogue!  
 He had a great observance from us  
 boys;  
 We were in error; that was not the  
 man.

I'd like now, yet had haply been  
 afraid,  
 To have just looked, when this man  
 came to die,  
 And seen who lined the clean gay  
 garret sides,  
 And stood about the neat low truckle-  
 bed,  
 With the heavenly manner of relieving  
 his guard.

Here had been, mark, the general-in-chief,  
 Through a whole campaign of the world's life and death,  
 Doing the King's work all the dim day long,  
 In his old coat and up to knees in mud,  
 Smoked like a herring, dining on a crust, —  
 And, now the day was won, relieved at once!  
 No further show or need of that old coat,  
 You are sure, for one thing! Bless us, all the while  
 How sprucely we are dressed out, you and I!  
 A second, and the angels alter that.  
 Well, I could never write a verse, — could you?  
 Let's to the Prado and make the most of time.

---

PROTUS.

AMONG these latter busts we count by scores,  
 Half-emperors and quarter-emperors,  
 Each with his bay-leaf fillet, loose-thonged vest,  
 Loric and low-browed Gorgon on the breast, —  
 One loves a baby face, with violets there,  
 Violets instead of laurel in the hair,  
 As those were all the little locks could bear.

Now read here. "Protus ends a period  
 Of empery beginning with a god;  
 Born in the porphyry chamber at Byzant,  
 Queens by his cradle, proud and ministrant:  
 And if he quickened breath there,  
 t'would like fire  
 Pantingly through the dim vast realm transpire.  
 A fame that he was missing, spread afar:  
 The world, from its four corners, rose in war,

Till he was borne out on a balcony  
 To pacify the world when it should see.  
 The captains ranged before him, one, his hand  
 Made baby points at, gained the chief command.  
 And day by day more beautiful he grew  
 In shape, all said, in feature and in hue,  
 While young Greek sculptors gazing on the child  
 Became, with old Greek sculpture reconciled.  
 Already sages labored to condense  
 In easy tomes a life's experience:  
 And artists took grave counsel to impart  
 In one breath and one hand-sweep, all their art,  
 And make his graces prompt as blossoming  
 Of plentifully watered palms in spring:  
 Since well beseems it, whose mounts the throne,  
 For beauty, knowledge, strength, should stand alone,  
 And mortals love the letters of his name."

— Stop! Have you turned two pages?  
 Still the same.  
 New reign, same date. The scribe goes on to say  
 How that same year, on such a month and day,  
 "John the Pannonian, groundedly believed  
 A blacksmith's bastard, whose hard hand reprieved  
 The Empire from its fate the year before, —  
 Came, had a mind to take the crown, and wore  
 The same for six years (during which the Huns  
 Kept off their fingers from us), till his sons  
 Put something in his liquor" — and so forth.  
 Then a new reign. Stay — "Take at its just worth"  
 (Subjoins an annotator) "What I give As hearsay. Some think, John let Protus live  
 And slip away. 'Tis said, he reached man's age  
 At some blind northern court; made first a page,

Then tutor to the children ; last, of  
 use  
 About the hunting stables. I deduce  
 He wrote the little tract 'On worm-  
 ing dogs,'  
 Whereof the name in sundry cata-  
 logues  
 Is extant yet. A Protus of the race  
 Is rumored to have died a monk in  
 Thrace,—  
 And, if the same, he reached senili-  
 ty.'

Here's John the smith's rough-ham-  
 mered head. Great eye,  
 Gross jaw and griped lips do what  
 granite can  
 To give you the crown-grasper.  
 What a man !

MASTER HUGUES OF SAXE-  
 GOTHA.

I.

HISr, but a word, fair and soft !  
 Forth and be judged, Master  
 Hugues !  
 Answer the question I've put you so  
 oft :  
 What do you mean by your moun-  
 tainous fugues ?  
 See, we're alone in the loft, —

II.

I, the poor organist here,  
 Hugues, the composer of note,  
 Dead though, and done with, this  
 many a year :  
 Let's have a colloquy, something to  
 quote,  
 Make the world prick up its ear !

III.

See, the church empties apace :  
 Fast they extinguish the lights.  
 Hallo there, sacristan ! Five min-  
 utes' grace !  
 Here's a crank pedal wants set-  
 ting to rights,  
 Balks one of holding the base.

IV.

See, our huge house of the sounds,  
 Hushing its hundreds at once,  
 Bids the last loiterer back to his  
 bounds !  
 — Oh, you may challenge them !  
 not a response  
 Get the church-saints on their rounds !

V.

(Saints go their rounds, who shall  
 doubt ?  
 — March, with the moon to admire,  
 Up nave, down chancel, turn tran-  
 sept about,  
 Supervise all betwixt pavement and  
 spire,  
 Put rats and mice to the rout —

VI.

Aloys and Jurien and Just —  
 Order things back to their place,  
 Have a sharp eye lest the candlesticks  
 rust,  
 Rub the church-plate, darn the sac-  
 rament-lace,  
 Clear the desk-velvet of dust.)

VII.

Here's your book, younger folks  
 shelve !  
 Played I not off-hand and run-  
 ningly,  
 Just now, your masterpiece, hard  
 number twelve ?  
 Here's what should strike, could  
 one handle it cunningly :  
 Help the axe, give it a helve !

VIII.

Page after page as I played,  
 Every bar's rest, where one wipes  
 Sweat from one's brow, I looked up  
 and surveyed,  
 O'er my three claviers, you forest  
 of pipes  
 Whence you still peeped in the shade.

IX.

Sure you were wishful to speak,  
 You, with brow ruled like a score,  
 Yes, and eyes buried in pits on each  
 cheek,  
 Like two great breves, as they  
 wrote them of yore,  
 Each side that bar, your straight beak !

## X.

Sure you said—"Good, the mere notes!  
Still, could'st thou take my intent,  
Know what procured me our Company's votes—  
A master were lauded and sciolists shent,  
Parted the sheep from the goats!"

## XI.

Well then, speak up, never flinch!  
Quick, ere my candle's a snuff  
—Burnt, do you see? to its uttermost inch—  
I believe in you, but that's not enough:  
Give my conviction a clinch!

## XII.

First you deliver your phrase  
— Nothing propound, that I see,  
Fit in itself for much blame or much praise—  
Answered no less, where no answer needs be:  
Off start the Two on their ways.

## XIII.

Straight must a Third interpose,  
Volunteer needlessly help;  
In strikes a Fourth, a Fifth thrusts in his nose,  
So the cry's open, the kennel's a-yelp,  
Argument's hot to the close.

## XIV.

One dissertates, he is candid;  
Two must discept,—has distinguished;  
Three helps the couple, if ever yet man did;  
Four protests; Five makes a dart at the thing wished:  
Back to One, goes the case bandied.

## XV.

One says his say with a difference:  
More of expounding, explaining!  
All now is wrangle, abuse, and vociferance;  
Now there's a truce, all's subdued, self-restraining:  
Five, though, stands out all the stiffer hence.

## XVI.

One is incisive, corrosive;  
Two retorts, nettled, curt, crepitant;  
Three makes rejoinder, expansive, explosive;  
Four overbears them all, strident and strepitant:  
Five . . . O Danaides, O Sieve!

## XVII.

Now, they ply axes and crowbars;  
Now, they prick pins at a tissue  
Fine as a skein of the casuist Escobar's  
Worked on the bone of a lie. To what issue?  
Where is our gain at the Two-bars?

## XVIII.

*Est fuga, volbitur rota.*  
On we drift: where looms the dim port?  
One, Two, Three, Four, Five, contribute their quota;  
Something is gained, if one caught, but the import;  
Show it us, Hugues of Saxe-Gotha!

## XIX.

What with affirming, denying,  
Holding, resposting, subjoining,  
All's like . . . it's like . . . for an instance I'm trying . . .  
There! See our roof, its gilt moulding and groining  
Under those spider-webs lying!

## XX.

So your fugue broadens and thickens,  
Greatens and deepens and lengthens,  
Till we exclaim—"But where's music, the dickens?  
Blot ye the gold, while your spider-web strengthens  
—Blacked to the stoutest of tickens?"

## XXI.

I for man's effort am zealous:  
Prove me such censure unfounded!  
Seems it surprising a lover grows jealous—  
Hopes 'twas for something, his organ-pipes sounded,  
Tiring three boys at the bellows?

XXII.

Is it your moral of Life?  
Such a web, simple and subtle,  
Weave we on earth here in impotent  
    strife,  
Backward and forward each throw-  
    ing his shuttle,  
Death ending all with a knife?

XXIII.

Over our heads truth and nature —  
Still our life's zigzags and dodges,  
Ins and outs, weaving a new legisla-  
    ture —  
God's gold just shining its last  
    where that lodges,  
Palled beneath man's usurpature.

XXIV.

So we o'ershroud stars and roses,  
Cherub and trophy and garland;  
Nothings grow something which  
    quietly closes  
Heaven's earnest eye: not a glimpse  
    of the far land  
Gets through our comments and  
    glazes.

XXV.

Ah, but traditions, inventions  
(Say we and make up a visage),  
So many men with such various in-  
    tentions,  
Down the past ages, must know  
    more than this age!  
Leave we the web its dimensions!

XXVI.

Who thinks Hugues wrote for the  
    deaf,  
Proved a mere mountain in labor?

Better submit; try again; what's the  
    clef?  
'Faith, 'tis no trifle for pipe and for  
    labor —  
Four flats, the minor in F.

XXVII.

Friend, your fugue taxes the finger:  
Learning it once, who would lose  
    it?  
Yet all the while a misgiving will  
    linger,  
Truth's golden o'er us although we  
    refuse it —  
Nature, through cobwebs we string  
    her.

XXVIII.

Hugues! I advise *meâ paná*  
(Counterpoint glares like a Gorgon)  
Bid One, Two, Three, Four, Five,  
    clear the arena!  
Say the word, straight I unstop the  
    full-organ,  
Blare out the *mode Palestrina*.

XXIX.

While in the roof, if I'm right there,  
    . . . Lo you, the wick in the socket!  
Hallo, you sacristan, show us a light  
    there!  
Down it dips, gone like a rocket.  
What, you want, do you, to come una-  
    wares,  
Sweeping the church up for first  
    morning-prayers,  
And find a poor devil has ended his  
    cares  
At the foot of your rotten-runged rat-  
    riddled stairs?  
Do I carry the moon in my pocket?

ABT VOGLER.

(AFTER HE HAS BEEN EXTEMPORIZING UPON THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF HIS INVENTION.)

I.

Would that the structure brave, the manifold music I build,  
Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work,  
Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as when Solomon willed  
    Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk,

Man, brute, reptile, fly,—alien of end and of aim,  
 Adverse, each from the other heaven-high, hell-deep removed,—  
 Should rush into sight at once as he named the ineffable Name,  
 And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the princess he loved!

## II.

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful building of mine,  
 This which my keys in a crowd pressed and impertuned to raise!  
 Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dispart now and now combine,  
 Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master his praise!  
 And one would bury his brow with a blind plunge down to hell,  
 Burrow a while and build, broad on the roots of things.  
 Then up again swim into sight, having basèd me my palace well,  
 Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the nether springs.

## III.

And another would mount and march, like the excellent minion he was,  
 Ay, another and yet another, one crowd but with many a crest,  
 Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent as glass,  
 Eager to do and die, yield each his place to the rest;  
 For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with fire,  
 When a great illumination surprises a festal night—  
 Outlining round and round Rome's dome from space to spire)  
 Up, the pinnacled glory reached, and the pride of my soul was in sight.

## IV.

In sight? Not half! for it seemed, it was certain, to match man's birth,  
 Nature in turn conceived, obeying an impulse as I;  
 And the emulous heaven yearned down, made effort to reach the earth,  
 As the earth had done her best, in my passion, to scale the sky:  
 Novel splendors burst forth, grew familiar and dwelt with mine,  
 Not a point nor peak but found, but fixed its wandering star;  
 Meteor-moons, balls of blaze: and they did not pale nor pine,  
 For earth had attained to heaven, there was no more near nor far.

## V.

Nay more; for there wanted not who walked in the glare and glow,  
 Presences plain in the place; or, fresh from the Protoplast,  
 Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind should blow,  
 Lured now to begin and live, in a house to their liking at last;  
 Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed through the body and gone,  
 But were back once more to breathe in an old world worth their new:  
 What never had been, was now; what was, as it shall be anon;  
 And what is,—shall I say, matched both? for I was made perfect too.

## VI.

All through my keys that gave their sounds to a wish of my soul,  
 All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed visibly forth,  
 All through music and me! For think, had I painted the whole,  
 Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so wonder-worth.  
 Had I written the same, made verse—still, effect proceeds from cause,  
 Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale is told;  
 It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws,  
 Painter and poet are proud, in the artist-list enrolled:—



VII.

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,  
 Existent behind all laws : that made them, and, lo, they are !  
 And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,  
 That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star.  
 Consider it well : each tone of our scale in itself is naught ;  
 It is everywhere in the world — loud, soft, and all is said :  
 Give it to me to use ! I mix it with two in my thought,  
 And, there ! Ye have heard and seen : consider and bow the head !

VIII.

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music I reared :  
 Gone ! and the good tears start, the praises that come too slow ;  
 For one is assured at first, one scarce can say that he feared,  
 That he even gave it a thought, the gone thing was to go.  
 Never to be again ! But many more of the kind  
 As good, nay, better perchance : is this your comfort to me ?  
 To me, who must be saved because I cling with my mind  
 To the same, same self, same love, same God : ay, what was, shall be.

IX.

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable Name ?  
 Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made with hands !  
 What, have fear of change from thee who art ever the same ?  
 Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy power expands ?  
 There shall never be one lost good ! What was, shall live as before ;  
 The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound ;  
 What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more ;  
 On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven, a perfect round.

X.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall exist ;  
 Not its semblance, but itself ; no beauty, nor good, nor power  
 Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist,  
 When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.  
 The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,  
 The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,  
 Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard ;  
 Enough that he heard it once : we shall hear it by and by.

XI.

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence  
 For the fulness of the days ? Have we withered or agonized ?  
 Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence ?  
 Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be prized ?  
 Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,  
 Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe ;  
 But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear :  
 The rest may reason and welcome ; 'tis we musicians know.

XII.

Well, it is earth with me ; silence resumes her reign :  
 I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce.  
 Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord again,  
 Sliding by semitones, till I sink to the minor, — yes,  
 And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien ground,  
 Surveying a while the heights I rolled from into the deep ;  
 Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my resting-place is found,  
 The C Major of this life : so, now I will try to sleep.

## TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA.

I.

I WONDER do you feel to-day  
As I have felt since, hand in hand,  
We sat down on the grass, to stray  
In spirit better through the land,  
This morn of Rome and May?

II.

For me, I touched a thought, I know,  
Has tantalized me many times  
(Like turns of thread the spiders  
throw  
Mocking across our path), for  
rhymes  
To catch at and let go.

III.

Help me to hold it! First it left  
The yellowing fennel, run to seed  
There, branching from the brick-  
work's cleft,  
Some old tomb's ruin; yonder weed  
Took up the floating weft,

IV.

Where one small orange cup amassed  
Five beetles, — blind and green they  
glope  
Among the honey-meal: and last,  
Everywhere on the grassy slope,  
I traced it. Hold it fast!

V.

The champaign with its endless fleece  
Of feathery grasses everywhere!  
Silence and passion, joy and peace,  
An everlasting wash of air —  
Rome's ghost since her decease.

VI.

Such life here, through such lengths  
of hours,  
Such miracles performed in play,  
Such primal naked forms of flowers,  
Such letting nature have her way  
While heaven looks from its towers!

VII.

How say you? Let us, O my dove,  
Let us be unashamed of soul,  
As earth lies bare to heaven above!  
How is it under our control  
To love or not to love?

VIII.

I would that you were all to me,  
You that are just so much, no more.  
Nor yours nor mine, nor slave nor  
free!  
Where does the fault lie? What  
the core  
O' the wound, since wound must be?

IX.

I would I could adopt your will,  
See with your eyes, and set my  
heart  
Beating by yours, and drink my fill  
At your soul's springs, — your part,  
my part  
In life, for good and ill.

X.

No. I yearn upward, touch you  
close,  
Then stand away. I kiss your  
cheek,  
Catch your soul's warmth, — I pluck  
the rose  
And love it more than tongue can  
speak —  
Then the good minute goes.

XI.

Already how am I so far  
Out of that minute? Must I go  
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,  
Onward, whenever light winds  
blow,  
Fixed by no friendly star?

XII.

Just when I seemed about to learn!  
Where is the thread now? Off  
again!  
The old trick! Only I discern —  
Infinite passion, and the pain  
Of finite hearts that yearn.

## "DE GUSTIBUS —"

I.

YOUR ghost will walk, you lover of  
trees  
(If our loves remain),  
In an English lane,  
By a cornfield-side a-flutter with pop-  
pies.

Hark, those two in the hazel cop-  
pice —  
A boy and a girl, if the good fates  
please,  
Making love, say, —  
The happier they!  
Draw yourself up from the light of  
the moon,  
And let them pass, as they will too  
soon,  
With the beanflower's boon,  
And the blackbird's tune,  
And May, and June!

## II.

What I love best in all the world  
Is a castle, precipice-encurled,  
In a gash of the wind-grieved Apen-  
nine.  
Or look for me, old fellow of mine  
(If I get my head from out the mouth  
O' the grave, and loose my spirit's  
bands,  
And come again to the land of lands),  
In a seaside house to the farther  
South,  
Where the baked cicala dies of  
drouth,  
And one sharp tree — 'tis a cypress —  
stands,  
By the many hundred years red-  
rusted,  
Rough, iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'er-  
crusted,  
My sentinel to guard the sands  
To the water's edge. For, what ex-  
pands  
Before the house, but the great  
opaque  
Blue breadth of sea without a break?  
While, in the house, forever crumbles  
Some fragment of the frescoed walls,  
From blisters where a scorpion  
sprawls.  
A girl bare-footed brings, and tumbles  
Down on the pavement, green-flesh  
melons,  
And says there's news to-day, — the  
king  
Was shot at, touched in the liver-  
wing,  
Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling:  
— She hopes they have not caught the  
felons.  
Italy, my Italy!  
Queen Mary's saying serves for me —  
(When fortune's malice  
Lost her, Calais)

Open my heart and you will see  
Graved inside of it, "Italy."  
Such lovers old are I and she:  
So it always was, so shall ever be!

## THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL.

## A PICTURE AT FANO.

## I.

DEAR and great Angel, wouldst thou  
only leave  
That child, when thou hast done  
with him, for me!  
Let me sit all the day here, that when  
eve  
Shall find performed thy special  
ministry,  
And time come for departure, thou,  
suspending  
Thy flight, may'st see another child  
for tending,  
Another still to quiet and retrieve.

## II.

Then I shall feel thee step one step,  
no more,  
From where thou standest now, to  
where I gaze.  
— And suddenly my head is covered  
o'er  
With those wings, white above the  
child who prays  
Now on that tomb — and I shall feel  
thee guarding  
Me, out of all the world; for me, dis-  
carding  
Yon heaven thy home, that waits  
and opes its door.

## III.

I would not look up thither past thy  
head  
Because the door opes, like that  
child, I know,  
For I should have thy gracious face  
instead,  
Thou bird of God! And wilt thou  
bend me low  
Like him, and lay, like his, my hands  
together,  
And lift them up to pray, and gently  
tether  
Me, as thy lamb there, with thy  
garment's spread?

## IV.

If this was ever granted, I would  
rest

My head beneath thine, while thy  
healing hands  
Close-covered both my eyes beside  
thy breast,

Pressing the brain which too much  
thought expands,  
Back to its proper size again, and  
smoothing

Distortion down till every nerve had  
soothing,

And all lay quiet, happy, and sup-  
pressed.

## V.

How soon all worldly wrong would  
be repaired!

I think how I should view the  
earth and skies  
And sea, when once again my brow  
was bared

After thy healing, with such differ-  
ent eyes.

O world, as God has made it! All is  
beauty:

And knowing this is love, and love is  
duty.

What further may be sought for or  
declared?

## VI.

Guercino drew this angel I saw  
teach

(Alfred, dear friend!)—that little  
child to pray,

Holding the little hands up, each to  
each

Pressed gently,—with his own  
head turned away

Over the earth where so much lay be-  
fore him

Of work to do, though heaven was  
opening o'er him,

And he was left at Fano by the  
beach.

## VII.

We were at Fano, and three times we  
went

To sit and see him in his chapel  
there,

And drink his beauty to our soul's  
content

—My angel with me too: and since  
I care

For dear Guercino's fame (to which in  
power  
And glory comes this picture for a  
dower,  
Fraught with a pathos so magnifi-  
cent)

## VIII.

And since he did not work thus ear-  
nestly

At all times, and has else endured  
some wrong—

I took one thought his picture struck  
from me,

And spread it out, translating it to  
song.

My love is here. Where are you, dear  
old friend?

How rolls the Wairoa at your world's  
far end?

This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.

## EVELYN HOPE.

## I.

BEAUTIFUL Evelyn Hope is dead!  
Sit and watch by her side an hour.

That is her book-shelf, this her bed;  
She plucked that piece of geranium-  
flower,

Beginning to die too, in the glass;  
Little has yet been changed, I

think:

The shutters are shut, no light may  
pass

Save two long rays through the  
hinge's chink.

## II.

Sixteen years old when she died!  
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my

name;

It was not her time to love; beside,  
Her life had many a hope and aim,

Duties enough and little cares,  
And now was quiet, now astir,

Till God's hand beckoned unawares,—  
And the sweet white brow is all of  
her.

## III.

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?  
What, your soul was pure and true,

The good stars met in your horoscope,  
Made you of spirit, fire, and dew—

And just because I was thrice as old,  
 And our paths in the world diverged  
 so wide,  
 Each was naught to each, must I be  
 told?  
 We were fellow mortals, naught  
 beside?

## IV.

No, indeed! for God above  
 Is great to grant, as mighty to make,  
 And creates the love to reward the  
 love:  
 I claim you still, for my own love's  
 sake!  
 Delayed it may be for more lives yet,  
 Through worlds I shall traverse,  
 not a few:  
 Much is to learn, much to forget  
 Ere the time be come for taking  
 you.

## V.

But the time will come, — at last it  
 will,  
 When, Evelyn Hope, what meant  
 (I shall say)  
 In the lower earth, in the years long  
 still,  
 That body and soul so pure and gay?  
 Why your hair was amber, I shall  
 divine,  
 And your mouth of your own gera-  
 nium's red —  
 And what you would do with me, in  
 fine,  
 In the new life come in the old one's  
 stead.

## VI.

I have lived (I shall say) so much  
 since then,  
 Given up myself so many times,  
 Gained me the gains of various men,  
 Ransacked the ages, spoiled the  
 climes;  
 Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full  
 scope,  
 Either I missed or itself missed me:  
 And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!  
 What is the issue? let us see!

## VII.

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while!  
 My heart seemed full as it could  
 hold;  
 There was place and to spare for the  
 frank young smile,  
 And the red young mouth, and the  
 hair's young gold.

So hush, — I will give you this leaf to  
 keep:  
 See, I shut it inside the sweet cold  
 hand!  
 There, that is our secret: go to sleep!  
 You will wake, and remember, and  
 understand.

## MEMORABILIA.

## I.

Ah! did you once see Shelley plain,  
 And did he stop and speak to you,  
 And did you speak to him again?  
 How strange it seems, and new!

## II.

But you were living before that,  
 And also you are living after;  
 And the memory I started at —  
 My starting moves your laughter!

## III.

I crossed a moor, with a name of its  
 own  
 And a certain use in the world, no  
 doubt,  
 Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone  
 'Mid the blank miles round about:

## IV.

For there I picked up on the heather  
 And there I put inside my breast  
 A moulted feather, an eagle-feather!  
 Well, I forget the rest.

## APPARENT FAILURE.

"We shall soon lose a celebrated building."  
*Paris Newspaper.*

## I.

No, for I'll save it! Seven years  
 since,  
 I passed through Paris, stopped a  
 day  
 To see the baptism of your Prince;  
 Saw, made my bow, and went my  
 way:

Walking the heat and headache off,  
I took the Seine-side, you surmise,  
Thought of the Congress, Gortscha-  
koff,  
Cavour's appeal and Buol's replies,  
So sauntered till—what met my  
eyes?

## II.

Only the Doric little Morgue!  
The dead-house where you show  
your drowned:  
Petarch's Vaucluse makes proud the  
Sorgue,  
Your Morgue has made the Seine  
renowned.  
One pays one's debt in such a case;  
I plucked up heart and entered,—  
stalked,  
Keeping a tolerable face  
Compared with some whose cheeks  
were chalked:  
Let them! No Briton's to be  
balked!

## III.

First came the silent gazers; next,  
A screen of glass, we're thankful  
for;  
Last, the sight's self, the sermon's  
text,  
The three men who did most abhor  
Their life in Paris yesterday,  
So killed themselves: and now,  
enthroned  
Each on his copper couch, they lay  
Fronting me, waiting to be owned.  
I thought, and think, their sin's  
atoned.

## IV.

Poor men, God made, and all for  
that!  
The reverence struck me; o'er each  
head  
Religiously was hung its hat,  
Each coat dripped by the owner's  
bed,  
Sacred from touch: each had his  
berth,  
His bounds, his proper place of  
rest,  
Who last night tenanted on earth  
Some arch, where twelve such slept  
abreast,—  
Unless the plain asphalté seemed  
best.

## V.

How did it happen, my poor boy?  
You wanted to be Buonaparte  
And have the Tuileries for toy,  
And could not, so it broke your  
heart?  
You, old one by his side, I judge,  
Were, red as blood, a socialist,  
A leveller! Does the Empire grudge  
You've gained what no Republic  
missed?  
Be quiet, and unclinch your fist!

## VI.

And this—why, he was red in vain,  
Or black,—poor fellow that is blue!  
What fancy was it, turned your brain?  
Oh, women were the prize for you!  
Money gets women, cards and dice  
Get money, and ill-luck gets just  
The copper couch and one clear nice  
Cool squirt of water o'er your bust,  
The right thing to extinguish lust!

## VII.

It's wiser being good than bad;  
It's safer being meek than fierce:  
It's fitter being sane than mad.  
My own hope is, a sun will pierce  
The thickest cloud earth ever  
stretched;  
That, after Last, returns the First,  
Though a wide compass round be  
fetched;  
That what began best, can't end  
worst,  
Nor what God blessed once, prove  
accurst.

## PROSPICE.

FEAR death?—to feel the fog in my  
throat,  
The mist in my face,  
When the snows begin, and the blasts  
denote  
I am nearing the place,  
The power of the night, the press of  
the storm,  
The post of the foe;  
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a  
visible form,  
Yet the strong man must go:

For the journey is done and the summit attained,  
And the barriers fall,  
Though a battle's to fight ere the gherdon be gained,  
The reward of it all.  
I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more,  
The best and the last!  
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,  
And bade me creep past.  
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers  
The heroes of old,  
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears  
Of pain, darkness, and cold.  
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,  
The black minute's at end,  
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,  
Shall dwindle, shall blend,  
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,  
Then a light, then thy breast,  
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,  
And with God be the rest!

"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME."

(See Edgar's song in "LEAR.")

I.

My first thought was, he lied in every word,  
That hoary cripple, with malicious eye  
Askance to watch the working of his lie  
On mine, and mouth scarce able to afford  
Suppression of the glee, that pursed and scored  
Its edge, at one more victim gained thereby.

II.

What else should he be set for, with his staff?  
What, save to waylay with his lies, insnare

All travellers who might find him posted there,  
And ask the road? I guessed what skull-like laugh  
Would break, what crutch gin write my epitaph  
For pastime in the dusty thoroughfare,

III.

If at his counsel I should turn aside  
Into that ominous tract which, all agree,  
Hides the Dark Tower. Yet acquiescingly  
I did turn as he pointed: neither pride  
Nor hope rekindling at the end deserted,  
So much as gladness that some end might be.

IV.

For, what with my whole world-wide wandering,  
What with my search drawn out through years, my hope  
Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope  
With that obstreperous joy success would bring, —  
I hardly tried now to rebuke the spring  
My heart made, finding failure in its scope.

V.

As when a sick man very near to death  
Seems dead indeed, and feels begin and end  
The tears, and takes the farewell of each friend,  
And hears one bid the other go, draw breath,  
Freeller outside ("since all is o'er," he saith,  
"And the blow fallen no grieving can amend");

VI.

While some discuss if near the other graves  
Be room enough for this, and when a day  
Suits best for carrying the corpse away,  
With care about the banners, scarves, and staves:

And still the man hears all, and only craves  
He may not shame such tender love  
and stay.

## VII.

Thus, I had so long suffered in this quest,  
Heard failure prophesied so oft,  
been writ  
So many times among "The Band"  
— to wit,  
The knights who to the Dark Tower's  
search addressed  
Their steps — that just to fail as they,  
seemed best,  
And all the doubt was now — should  
I be fit?

## VIII.

So, quiet as despair, I turned from  
him,  
That hateful cripple, out of his high-  
way  
Into the path he pointed. All the  
day  
Had been a dreary one at best, and  
dim  
Was settling to its close, yet shot one  
grim  
Red leer to see the plain catch its  
estray.

## IX.

For mark! no sooner was I fairly  
found  
Pledged to the plain, after a pace  
or two,  
Than, pausing to throw backward  
a last view  
O'er the safe road, 'twas gone; gray  
plain all round:  
Nothing but plain to the horizon's  
bound.  
I might go on: naught else remained  
to do.

## X.

So, on I went. I think I never saw  
Such starved ignoble nature; noth-  
ing thrive:  
For flowers — as well expect a ce-  
dar grove!  
But cockle, spurge, according to their  
law  
Might propagate their kind, with none  
to awe,  
You'd think; a burr had been a  
treasure trove.

## XI.

No! penury, inertness, and grimace,  
In some strange sort, were the  
land's portion. "See  
Or shut your eyes," said Nature  
peevishly,  
"It nothing skills: I cannot help my  
case:  
'Tis the Last Judgment's fire must  
cure this place,  
Calcine its clods and set my prison-  
ers free."

## XII.

If there pushed any ragged thistle-  
stalk  
Above its mates, the head was  
chopped; the bents  
Were jealous else. What made  
those holes and rents  
In the dock's harsh swarth leaves,  
bruised as to balk  
All hope of greenness? 'tis a brute  
must walk  
Pushing their life out, with a brute's  
intent.

## XIII.

As for the grass, it grew as scant as  
hair  
In leprosy: thin dry blades pricked  
the mud  
Which underneath looked kneaded  
up with blood.  
One stiff blind horse, his every bone  
a-stare,  
Stood stupefied, however he came  
there:  
Thrust out past service from the  
Devil's stud!

## XIV.

Alive? he might be dead for aught I  
know,  
With that red gaunt and colloped  
neck a-strain,  
And shut eyes underneath the rusty  
mane;  
Seldom went such grotesqueness  
with such woe;  
I never saw a brute I hated so;  
He must be wicked to deserve such  
pain.

## XV.

I shut my eyes and turned them on  
my heart.  
As a man calls for wine before he  
fights,





"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came" — Page 99, Stanza XXI.



I asked one draught of earlier, happier sights,  
Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.  
Think first, fight afterwards—the soldier's art:  
One taste of the old time sets all to rights.

XVI.

Not it! I fancied Cuthbert's reddening face  
Beneath its garniture of curly gold,  
Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold  
An arm in mine to fix me to the place,  
That way he used. Alas, one night's disgrace!  
Out went my heart's new fire and left it cold.

XVII.

Giles then, the soul of honor—there he stands  
Frank as ten years ago when knighted first.  
What honest man should dare (he said) he durst.  
Good—but the scene shifts—faugh! what hangman hands  
Pin to his breast a parchment? His own bands  
Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon and curst!

XVIII.

Better this present than a past like that;  
Back therefore to my darkening path again!  
No sound, no sight as far as eye could strain.  
Will the night send a howlet or a bat?  
I asked: when something on the dismal flat  
Came to arrest my thoughts and change their train.

XIX.

A sudden little river crossed my path  
As unexpected as a serpent comes.  
No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms;  
This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath  
For the fiend's glowing hoof—to see the wrath  
Of its black eddy bespate with flakes and spumes.

XX.

So petty yet so spiteful! All along,  
Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it;  
Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit  
Of mute despair, a suicidal throng:  
The river which had done them all the wrong,  
Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

XXI.

Which, while I forded,—good saints, how I feared  
To set my foot upon a dead man's cheek,  
Each step, or feel the spear I thrust to seek  
For hollows, tangled in his hair or beard!  
—It may have been a water-rat I speared,  
But, ugh! it sounded like a baby's shriek.

XXII.

Glad was I when I reached the other bank.  
Now for a better country. Vain presage!  
Who were the strugglers, what war did they wage  
Whose savage trample thus could pad the dank  
Soil to a splash? Toads in a poisoned tank,  
Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage—

XXIII.

The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.  
What penned them there, with all the plain to choose?  
No footprint leading to that horrid mews,  
None out of it. Mad brewage set to work  
Their brains, no doubt, like galley-slaves the Turk  
Pits for his pastime, Christians against Jews.

XXIV.

And more than that—a furlong on—why, there!  
What bad use was that engine for that wheel,

Or brake, not wheel — that harrow  
fit to reel  
Men's bodies out like silk? with all  
the air  
Of Tophet's tool, on earth left un-  
ware,  
Or brought to sharpen its rusty  
teeth of steel.

## XXV.

Then came a bit of stubbed ground,  
once a wood,  
Next a marsh, it would seem, and  
now mere earth  
Desperate and done with; (so a fool  
finds mirth,  
Makes a thing and then mars it, till  
his mood  
Changes and off he goes!) within a  
rood —  
Bog, clay, and rubble, sand and  
stark black dearth.

## XXVI.

Now blotches rankling, colored gay  
and grim,  
Now patches where some leanness  
of the soil's  
Broke into moss or substances like  
boils;  
Then came some palsied oak, a cleft  
in him  
Like a distorted mouth that splits its  
rim  
Gaping at death, and dies while it  
recoils.

## XXVII.

And just as far as ever from the  
end:  
Naught in the distance but the even-  
ing, naught  
To point my footstep farther! At  
the thought,  
A great black bird, Apollyon's bosom  
friend,  
Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing  
dragon-penned  
That brushed my cap — perchance  
the guide I sought.

## XXVIII.

For, looking up, aware I somehow  
grew,  
'Spite of the dusk, the plain had  
given place

All round to mountains — with such  
name to grace  
Mere ugly heights and heaps now  
stolen in view.  
How thus they had surprised me, —  
solve it, you!  
How to get from them was no  
clearer case.

## XXIX.

Yet half I seemed to recognize some  
trick  
Of mischief happened to me, God  
knows when —  
In a bad dream perhaps. Here  
ended, then,  
Progress this way. When, in the  
very nick  
Of giving up, one time more, came a  
click  
As when a trap shuts — you're in-  
side the den

## XXX.

Burningly it came on me all at once,  
This was the place! those two hills  
on the right,  
Crouched like two bulls locked  
horn in horn in fight;  
While to the left, a tall scalped moun-  
tain . . . Dunce,  
Dotard, a-dozing at the very nonce,  
After a life spent training for the  
sight!

## XXXI.

What in the midst lay but the Tower  
itself?  
The round squat turret, blind as  
the fool's heart,  
Built of brown stone, without a  
counterpart  
In the whole world. The tempest's  
mocking elf  
Points to the shipman thus the unseen  
shelf  
He strikes on, only when the tim-  
bers start.

## XXXII.

Not see? because of night perhaps? —  
why, day  
Came back again for that! before it  
left,  
The dying sunset kindled through  
a cleft:  
The hills, like giants at a hunting,  
lay,

Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay, —  
 "Now stab and end the creature —  
 to the heft!"

## XXXIII.

Not hear? when noise was every-  
 where! it tolled  
 Increasing like a bell. Names in  
 my ears  
 Of all the lost adventurers my  
 peers, —  
 How such a one was strong, and such  
 was bold,  
 And such was fortunate, yet each of  
 old  
 Lost, lost! one moment knelled the  
 woe of years.

## XXXIV.

There they stood, ranged along the  
 hill-sides, met  
 To view the last of me, a living  
 frame  
 For one more picture! in a sheet of  
 flame  
 I saw them and I knew them all.  
 And yet  
 Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I  
 set,  
 And blew "*Childe Roland to the  
 Dark Tower came.*"

## A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL.

SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL  
 OF LEARNING IN EUROPE.

LET us begin and carry up this corpse,  
 Singing together.  
 Leave we the common crofts, the  
 vulgar thorpes,  
 Each in its tether  
 Sleeping safe in the bosom of the  
 plain,  
 Cared-for till cock-crow:  
 Look out if yonder be not day again  
 Rimming the rock-row!  
 That's the appropriate country; there,  
 man's thought,  
 Rarer, intenser,  
 Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it  
 ought,  
 Chafes in the censer.

Leave we the unlettered plain its herd  
 and crop;  
 Seek we sepulture  
 On a tall mountain, citied to the top,  
 Crowded with culture!  
 All the peaks soar, but one the rest  
 excels:  
 Clouds overcome it;  
 No, yonder sparkle is the citadel's  
 Circling its summit.  
 Thither our path lies; wind we up the  
 heights!  
 Wait ye the warning?  
 Our low life was the level's and the  
 night's:  
 He's for the morning.  
 Step to a tune, square chests, erect  
 each head,  
 'Ware the beholders!  
 This is our master, famous, calm, and  
 dead,  
 Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling  
 thorpe and croft  
 Safe from the weather!  
 He, whom we convoy to his grave  
 aloft,  
 Singing together,  
 He was a man born with thy face and  
 throat,  
 Lyric Apollo!  
 Long he lived nameless: how should  
 spring take note  
 Winter would follow?  
 Till lo, the little touch, and youth  
 was gone!  
 Cramped and diminished,  
 Moaned he, "New measures, other  
 feet anon!  
 "My dance is finished?"  
 No, that's the world's way; (keep the  
 mountain side,  
 Make for the city!)  
 He knew the signal, and stepped on  
 with pride  
 Over men's pity;  
 Left play for work, and grappled with  
 the world  
 Bent on escaping;  
 "What's in the scroll," goth he,  
 "thou keepest furled?  
 Show me their shaping,  
 Theirs who most studied man, the  
 bard and sage, —  
 Give!" — So, he gowned him,  
 Straight got by heart that book to its  
 last page:  
 Learned, we found him.

Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes  
 like lead,  
 Accents uncertain :  
 "Time to taste life," another would  
 have said,  
 "Up with the curtain !"  
 This man said rather, "Actual life  
 comes next ?  
 Patience a moment !  
 Grant I have mastered learning's  
 crabbed text,  
 Still there's the comment.  
 Let me know all ! Prate not of most  
 or least,  
 Painful or easy !  
 Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up  
 the feast,  
 Ay, nor feel queasy."  
 Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,  
 When he had learned it,  
 When he had gathered all books had  
 to give !  
 Sooner, he spurned it.  
 Image the whole, then execute the  
 parts —  
 Fancy the fabric  
 Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike  
 fire from quartz,  
 Ere mortar dab brick !  
 (Here's the town-gate reached ;  
 there's the market-place  
 Gaping before us.)  
 Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace  
 (Hearten our chorus !)  
 That before living he'd learn how to  
 live —  
 No end to learning :  
 Earn the means first—God surely  
 will contrive  
 Use for our earning.  
 Others mistrust and say, "But time  
 escapes !  
 Live now or never !"  
 He said, "What's time ? Leave Now  
 for dogs and apes !  
 Man has Forever."  
 Back to his book then : deeper  
 drooped his head :  
*Calculus* racked him :  
 Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of  
 lead :  
*Tussis* attacked him.  
 'Now, master, take a little rest !' —  
 not he !  
 (Caution redoubled !  
 Step two abreast, the way winds  
 narrowly !)  
 Not a whit troubled,  
 Back to his studies, fresher than at  
 first,  
 Fierce as a dragon  
 He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred  
 thirst)  
 Sucked at the flagon.  
 Oh, if we draw a circle premature,  
 Heedless of far gain,  
 Greedy for quick returns of profit,  
 sure  
 Bad is our bargain !  
 Was it not great ? did not he throw  
 on God  
 (He loves the burthen)—  
 God's task to make the heavenly pe-  
 riod  
 Perfect the earthen ?  
 Did not he magnify the mind, show  
 clear  
 Just what it all meant ?  
 He would not discount life, as fools  
 do here,  
 Paid by instalment.  
 He ventured neck or nothing—heaven-  
 en's success  
 Found, or earth's failure :  
 "Wilt thou trust death or not ?" He  
 answered, "Yes !  
 Hence with life's pale lure !"  
 That low man seeks a little thing to  
 do,  
 Sees it and does it :  
 This high man, with a great thing to  
 pursue,  
 Dies ere he knows it.  
 That low man goes on adding one to  
 one,  
 His hundred's soon hit :  
 This high man, aiming at a mil-  
 lion,  
 Misses an unit.  
 That, has the world here—should he  
 need the next,  
 Let the world mind him !  
 This, throws himself on God, and un-  
 perplexed  
 Seeking shall find him.  
 So, with the throttling hands of death  
 at strife,  
 Ground he at grammar ;  
 Still, through the rattle, parts of  
 speech were rife :  
 While he could stammer  
 He settled *Hoti's* business—let it  
 be !—  
 Properly based *Oun*—  
 Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic  
*De*,  
 Dead from the waist down.

Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place :

Hail to your purlieus,  
All ye highfliers of the feathered race,  
Swallows and curlews !  
Here's the top-peak ; the multitude below

Live, for they can, there :  
This man decided not to Live but Know —

Bury this man there ?  
Here — here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,  
Lightnings are loosened,  
Stars come and go ! Let joy break with the storm,

Peace let the dew send !  
Lofty designs must close in like effects :

Loftily lying,  
Leave him — still loftier than the world suspects,  
Living and dying.

### CLEON.

"As certain also of your own poets have said"—

CLEON the poet (from the sprinkled isles,  
Lily on lily, that o'erlace the sea,  
And laugh their pride when the light wave lips "Greece"),—  
To Protus in his Tyranny: much health !

They give thy letter to me, even now :  
I read and seem as if I heard thee speak.

The master of thy galley still unloads  
Gift after gift ; they block my court at last

And pile themselves along its portico  
Royal with sunset, like a thought of thee ;

And one white she-slave, from the group dispersed  
Of black and white slaves (like the checker-work

Pavement, at once my nation's work and gift,  
Now covered with this settle-down of doves)

One lyric woman, in her crocus vest  
Woven of sea-wools, with her two white hands  
Commends to me the strainer and the cup  
Thy lip hath bettered ere it blesses mine.

Well counselled, king, in thy munificence !  
For so shall men remark, in such an act

Of love for him whose song gives life its joy,

Thy recognition of the use of life :  
Nor call thy spirit barely adequate  
To help on life in straight ways, broad enough

For vulgar souls, by ruling and the rest.

Thou, in the daily building of thy tower,—

Whether in fierce and sudden spasms of toil,

Or through dim lulls of unapparent growth,

Or when the general work, 'mid good acclaim,

Climbed with the eye to cheer the architect,—

Didst ne'er engage in work for mere work's sake :

Hadst ever in thy heart the luring hope

Of some eventual rest a-top of it,  
Whence, all the tumult of the building hushed,

Thou first of men mightst look out to the East :

The vulgar saw thy tower, thou sawest the sun.

For this, I promise on thy festival  
To pour libation, looking o'er the sea,

Making this slave narrate thy fortunes, speak

Thy great words, and describe thy royal face—

Wishing thee wholly where Zeus lives the most,

Within the eventual element of calm.

Thy letter's first requirement meets me here.

It is as thou hast heard : in one short life

I, Cleon, have effected all those things  
Thou wonderingly dost enumerate.

That epos on thy hundred plates of gold

Is mine, and also mine the little chant  
 So sure to rise from every fishing-  
 bark  
 When, lights at prow, the seamen  
 haul their net.  
 The image of the sun-god on the  
 phare,  
 Men turn from the sun's self to see, is  
 mine ;  
 The Pœcile, o'er-storied its whole  
 length,  
 As thou didst hear, with painting, is  
 mine too.  
 I know the true proportions of a man  
 And woman also, not observed before ;  
 And I have written three books on  
 the soul,  
 Proving absurd all written hitherto,  
 And putting us to ignorance again.  
 For music, — why, I have combined  
 the moods,  
 Inventing one. In brief, all arts are  
 mine ;  
 Thus much the people know and recog-  
 nize,  
 Throughout our seventeen islands.  
 Marvel not !  
 We of these latter days, with greater  
 mind  
 Than our forerunners, since more  
 composite,  
 Look not so great, beside their simple  
 way,  
 To a judge who only sees one way at  
 once,  
 One mind-point and no other at a  
 time, —  
 Compares the small part of a man of  
 us  
 With some whole man of the heroic  
 age,  
 Great in his way — not ours, nor  
 meant for ours.  
 And ours is greater, had we skill to  
 know :  
 For, what we call this life of men on  
 earth,  
 This sequence of the soul's achieve-  
 ments here,  
 Being, as I find much reason to con-  
 ceive,  
 Intended to be viewed eventually  
 As a great whole, not analyzed to  
 parts,  
 But each part having reference to  
 all, —  
 How shall a certain part, pronounced  
 complete,  
 Endure effacement by another part ?

Was the thing done ? — then, what's  
 to do again ?  
 See, in the checkered pavement oppo-  
 site,  
 Suppose the artist made a perfect  
 rhomb,  
 And next a lozenge, then a trape-  
 zoid —  
 He did not overlay them, superim-  
 pose  
 The new upon the old and blot it out,  
 But laid them on a level in his work,  
 Making at last a picture ; there it  
 lies.  
 So first the perfect separate forms  
 were made,  
 The portions of mankind ; and after,  
 so,  
 Occurred the combination of the  
 same.  
 For where had been a progress, other-  
 wise ?  
 Mankind, made up of all the single  
 men, —  
 In such a synthesis the labor ends.  
 Now mark me ! those divine men of  
 old time  
 Have reached, thou sayest well, each  
 at one point  
 The outside verge that rounds our  
 faculty ;  
 And where they reached, who can do  
 more than reach ?  
 It takes but little water just to touch  
 At some one point the inside of a  
 sphere,  
 And, as we turn the sphere, touch all  
 the rest  
 In due succession : but the finer air  
 Which not so palpably nor obviously,  
 Though no less universally, can touch  
 The whole circumference of that  
 emptied sphere,  
 Fills it more fully than the water  
 did ;  
 Holds thrice the weight of water in  
 itself  
 Resolved into a subtler element.  
 And yet the vulgar call the sphere  
 first full  
 Up to the visible height — and after,  
 void ;  
 Not knowing air's more hidden prop-  
 erties.  
 And thus our soul, misknown, cries  
 out to Zeus  
 To vindicate his purpose in our life :  
 Why stay we on the earth unless to  
 grow ?



Long since, I imaged, wrote the fiction out,  
 That ho or other god descended here  
 And, once for all, showed simultaneously  
 What, in its nature, never can be shown  
 Piecemeal or in succession; showed,  
 I say,  
 The worth both absolute and relative  
 Of all his children from the birth of time,  
 His instruments for all appointed work.  
 I now go on to image, -- might we hear  
 The judgment which should give the due to each,  
 Show where the labor lay and where the ease,  
 And prove Zeus' self, the latent everywhere!  
 This is a dream: -- but no dream, let us hope,  
 That years and days, the summers and the springs,  
 Follow each other with unwaning powers.  
 The grapes which dye thy wine, are richer far  
 Through culture, than the wild wealth of the rock;  
 The suave plum than the savagely-tasted drupe;  
 The pastured honey-bee drops choicer sweet;  
 The flowers turn double, and the leaves turn flowers;  
 That young and tender crescent moon, thy slave,  
 Sleeping upon her robe as if on clouds,  
 Refines upon the women of my youth.  
 What, and the soul alone deteriorates?  
 I have not chanted verse like Homer, no --  
 Nor swept string like Terpander, no -- nor carved  
 And painted men like Phidias and his friend:  
 I am not great as they are, point by point.  
 But I have entered into sympathy  
 With these four, running these into one soul,  
 Who, separate, ignored each others' arts.  
 Say, is it nothing that I know them all?

The wild-flower was the larger; I have dashed  
 Rose-blood upon its petals, pricked its cup's  
 Honey with wine, and driven its seed to fruit,  
 And show a better flower if not so large.  
 I stand myself. Refer this to the gods  
 Whose gift alone it is! which, shall I dare  
 (All pride apart) upon the absurd pretext  
 That such a gift by chance lay in my hand,  
 Discourse of lightly or depreciate?  
 It might have fallen to another's hand: what then?  
 I pass too surely: let at least truth stay!  
 And next, of what thou followest on to ask.  
 This being with me, as I declare, O king!  
 My works in all these varicolored kinds,  
 So done by me, accepted so by men --  
 Thou askest, if (my soul thus in men's hearts)  
 I must not be accounted to attain  
 The very crown and proper end of life?  
 Inquiring thence how, now life closeth up,  
 I face death with success in my right hand:  
 Whether I fear death less than dost thyself  
 The fortunate of men? "For" (writest thou),  
 "Thou leavest much behind, while I leave naught.  
 Thy life stays in the poems men shall sing,  
 The pictures men shall study; while my life,  
 Complete and whole now in its power and joy,  
 Dies altogether with my brain and arm,  
 Is lost indeed; since, what survives myself?  
 The brazen statue to o'erlook my grave,  
 Set on the promontory which I named.  
 And that -- some supple courtier of my heir

Shall use its robed and sceptred arm,  
perhaps  
To fix the rope to, which best drags it  
down.  
I go then : triumph thou, who dost  
not go !”

Nay, thou art worthy of hearing my  
whole mind.  
Is this apparent, when thou turn'st to  
muse  
Upon the scheme of earth and man in  
chief,  
That admiration grows as knowledge  
grows ?  
That imperfection means perfection  
hid,  
Reserved in part, to grace the after-  
time ?  
If, in the morning of philosophy,  
Ere aught had been recorded, nay  
perceived,  
Thou, with the light now in thee,  
couldst have looked  
On all earth's tenantry, from worm  
to bird,  
Ere man, her last, appeared upon the  
stage —  
Thou wouldst have seen them perfect,  
and deduced  
The perfectness of others yet unseen.  
Conceding which, — had Zeus then  
questioned thee  
“ Shall I go on a step, improve on  
this,  
Do more for visible creatures than is  
done ? ”  
Thou wouldst have answered, “ Ay,  
by making each  
Grow conscious in himself — by that  
alone.  
All's perfect else : the shell sucks fast  
the rock,  
The fish strikes through the sea, the  
snake both swims  
And slides, forth range the beasts,  
the birds take flight,  
Till life's mechanics can no farther  
go —  
And all this joy in natural life, is  
put,  
Like fire from off thy finger into each,  
So exquisitely perfect is the same.  
But 'tis pure fire, and they mere  
matter are :  
It has them, not they it ; and so I  
choose  
For man, thy last premeditated work  
(If I might add a glory to the scheme)

That a third thing should stand apart  
from both,  
A quality arise within his soul,  
Which, intro-active, made to super-  
vise  
And feel the force it has, may view it-  
self,  
And so be happy.” Man might live  
at first  
The animal life : but is there nothing  
more ?  
In due time, let him critically learn  
How he lives ; and, the more he gets  
to know  
Of his own life's adaptabilities,  
The more joy-giving will his life be-  
come.  
Thus man, who hath this quality, is  
best.

But thou, king, hadst more reasona-  
bly said :  
“ Let progress end at once, — man  
make no step  
Beyond the natural man, the better  
beast,  
Using his senses, not the sense of  
sense ! ”  
In man there's failure, only since he  
left  
The lower and unconscious forms of  
life.  
We called it an advance, the render-  
ing plain  
Man's spirit might grow conscious of  
man's life,  
And, by new lore so added to the  
old,  
Take each step higher over the brute's  
head.  
This grew the only life, the pleasure-  
house,  
Watch-tower and treasure-fortress of  
the soul,  
Which whole surrounding flats of  
natural life  
Seemed only fit to yield subsistence  
to ;  
A tower that crowns a country. But  
alas,  
The soul now climbs it just to perish  
there !  
For thence we have discovered ('tis  
no dream —  
We know this, which we had not else  
perceived)  
That there's a world of capability  
For joy, spread round about us, meant  
for us.

Inviting us ; and still the soul craves  
 all,  
 And still the flesh' replies, "Take no  
 jot more  
 Than ere thou clombst the tower to  
 look abroad !  
 Nay, so much less as that fatigue has  
 brought  
 Deduction to it." We struggle, fain  
 to enlarge  
 Our bounded physical reciprocity,  
 Increase our power, supply fresh oil  
 to life,  
 Repair the waste of age and sickness :  
 no,  
 It skills not ! life's inadequate to joy,  
 As the soul sees joy, tempting life to  
 take.  
 They praise a fountain in my garden  
 here  
 Wherein a Naiad sends the water-bow  
 Thin from her tube : she smiles to see  
 it rise.  
 What if I told her, it is just a thread  
 From that great river which the hills  
 shunt up,  
 And mock her with my leave to take  
 the same ?  
 The artificer has given her one small  
 tube  
 Past power to widen or exchange—  
 what boots  
 To know she might spout oceans if  
 she could ?  
 She cannot lift beyond her first thin  
 thread :  
 And so a man can use but a man's  
 joy  
 While he sees God's. Is it for Zeus  
 to boast,  
 "See, man, how happy I live, and de-  
 spair—  
 That I may be still happier—for thy  
 use !"  
 If this were so, we could not thank  
 our lord,  
 As hearts beat on to doing : 'tis not  
 so—  
 Malice it is not. Is it carelessness ?  
 Still, no. If care—where 's the sign ?  
 I ask,  
 And get no answer, and agree in  
 sun,  
 O king ! with thy profound discour-  
 agement,  
 Who seest the wider but to sigh the  
 more.  
 Most progress is most failure : thou  
 sayest well.

The last point now. Thou dost ex-  
 cept a case—  
 Holding joy not impossible to one  
 With artist-gifts—to such a man as I  
 Who leave behind me living works  
 indeed ;  
 For, such a poem, such a painting  
 lives.  
 What? dost thou verily trip upon a  
 word,  
 Confound the accurate view of what  
 joy is  
 (Caught somewhat clearer by my eyes  
 than thine)  
 With feeling joy? confound the know-  
 ing how  
 And showing how to live (my faculty)  
 With actually living?— Otherwise  
 Where is the artist's vantage o'er the  
 king?  
 Because in my great epos I display  
 How divers men young, strong, fair,  
 wise, can act—  
 Is this as though I acted? if I  
 paint,  
 Carve the young Phœbus, am I there-  
 fore young?  
 Methinks I'm older that I bowed my-  
 self  
 The many years of pain that taught  
 me art!  
 Indeed, to know is something, and to  
 prove  
 How all this beauty might be en-  
 joyed, is more :  
 But, knowing naught, to enjoy is  
 something too.  
 Yon rower, with the moulded muscles  
 there,  
 Lowering the sail, is nearer it than I.  
 I can write love-odes : thy fair slave's  
 an ode.  
 I get to sing of love, when grown too  
 gray  
 For being beloved : she turns to that  
 young man,  
 The muscles all a-ripple on his back.  
 I know the joy of kingship : well,  
 thou art king !  
 "But," sayest thou—(and I marvel,  
 I repeat,  
 To find thee tripping on a mere word)  
 "what  
 Thou writest, paintest, stays ; that  
 does not die.  
 Sappho survives, because we sing her  
 songs,  
 And Æschylus, because we read his  
 plays !"

Why, if they live still, let them come  
and take  
Thy slave in my despite, drink from  
thy cup,  
Speak in my place. Thou diest while  
I survive?  
Say rather that my fate is deadlier  
still,  
In this, that every day my sense of  
joy  
Grows more acute, my soul (intensified  
By power and insight) more enlarged,  
more keen;  
While every day my hair falls more  
and more,  
My hand shakes, and the heavy years  
increase —  
The horror quickening still from year  
to year,  
The consummation coming past escape,  
When I shall know most, and yet  
least enjoy —  
When all my works wherein I prove  
my worth,  
Being present still to mock me in  
men's mouths,  
Alive still, in the phrase of such as  
thou,  
I, I the feeling, thinking, acting  
man,  
The man who loved his life so over-  
much,  
Shall sleep in my urn. It is so hor-  
rible,  
I dare at times imagine to my need  
Some future state revealed to us by  
Zeus,  
Unlimited in capability  
For joy, as this is in desire for joy,  
—To seek which, the joy-hunger  
forces us:  
That, stung by straitness of our life,  
made strait  
On purpose to make prized the life at  
large —  
Freed by the throbbing impulse we  
call death,  
We burst there, as the worm into the  
fly,  
Who, while a worm still, wants his  
wings. But no!  
Zeus has not yet revealed it; and alas,  
He must have done so, were it possi-  
ble!

Live long and happy, and in that  
thought die,

Glad for what was! Farewell. And  
for the rest,  
I cannot tell thy messenger aright  
Where to deliver what he bears of  
thine  
To one called Paulus; we have heard  
his fame  
Indeed, if Christus be not one with  
him —  
I know not, nor am troubled much to  
know.  
Thou canst not think a mere barbarian  
Jew  
As Paulus proves to be, one circum-  
cised,  
Hath access to a secret shut from us?  
Thou wrongest our philosophy, O  
king,  
In stooping to inquire of such an  
one,  
As if his answer could impose at all!  
He writeth, doth he? well, and he  
may write.  
Oh, the Jew findeth scholars! certain  
slaves  
Who touched on this same isle,  
preached him and Christ;  
And (as I gathered from a by-stander)  
Their doctrine could be held by no  
sane man.

### INSTANS TYRANNUS.

#### I.

Of the million or two, more or less,  
I rule and possess,  
One man, for some cause undefined,  
Was least to my mind.

#### II.

I struck him, he grovelled of course —  
For, what was his force?  
I pinned him to earth with my weight  
And persistence of hate;  
And he lay, would not moan, would  
not curse,  
As his lot might be worse.

#### III.

“Were the object less mean, would  
he stand  
At the swing of my hand!  
For obscurity helps him, and blots  
The hole where he squats.”

So, I set my five wits on the stretch  
 To inveigle the wretch.  
 All in vain! Gold and jewels I  
     threw,  
 Still he couched there perdue ;  
 I tempted his blood and his flesh,  
 Hid in roses my mesh,  
 Choicest eates and the flagon's best  
     spilth :  
 Still he kept to his filth.

## iv.

Had he kith now or kin, were access  
 To his heart, did I press :  
 Just a son or a mother to seize !  
 No such booty as these.  
 Were it simply a friend to pursue  
 'Mid my million or two,  
 Who could pay me, in person or pelf,  
 What he owes me himself !  
 No : I could not but smile through  
     my chafe :  
 For the fellow lay safe  
 As his mates do, the midge and the  
     nit,  
 — Through minuteness, to wit.

## v.

Then a humor more great took its  
     place  
 At the thought of his face :  
 The droop, the low cares of the  
     mouth,  
 The trouble uncouth  
 'Twixt the brows, all that air one is  
     fain  
 To put out of its pain.  
 And, "no!" I admonish myself,  
 "Is one mocked by an elf,  
 Is one baffled by toad or by rat ?  
 The gravamen's in that !  
 How the lion, who crouches to suit  
 His back to my foot,  
 Would admire that I stand in debate !  
 But the small turns the great  
 If it vexes you, — that is the thing !  
 Toad or rat vex the king ?  
 Though I waste half my realm to  
     unearth  
 Toad or rat, 'tis well worth !"

## vi.

So, I soberly laid my last plan  
 To extinguish the man.  
 Round his creep-hole, with never a  
     break,  
 Ran my fires for his sake ;

Over-head, did my thunder combine  
 With my under-ground mine :  
 Till I looked from my labor content  
 To enjoy the event

## vii.

When sudden . . . how think ye, the  
     end ?  
 Did I say "without friend" ?  
 Say rather, from marge to blue marge  
 The whole sky grew his target  
 With the sun's self for visible boss,  
 While an Arm ran across,  
 Which the earth heaved beneath like  
     a breast,  
 Where the wretch was safe prest !  
 Do you see ? Just my vengeance  
     complete,  
 The man sprang to his feet,  
 Stood erect, caught at God's skirts,  
     and prayed !  
 — So, I was afraid !

## AN EPISTLE

CONTAINING THE STRANGE MEDI-  
 CAL EXPERIENCE OF KARSHISH,  
 THE ARAB PHYSICIAN.

KARSHISH, the picker-up of learning's  
     crumbs,  
 The not-incurious in God's handi-  
     work  
 (This man's-flesh he hath admirably  
     made,  
 Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a  
     paste,  
 To coop up and keep down on earth  
     a space  
 That puff of vapor from his mouth,  
     man's soul)  
 — To Abib, all-sagacious in our art,  
 Breeder in me of what poor skill I  
     boast,  
 Like me inquisitive how pricks and  
     cracks  
 Befall the flesh through too much  
     stress and strain,  
 Whereby the wily vapor fain would  
     slip  
 Back and rejoin its source before the  
     term, —  
 And aptest in contrivance (under  
     God)

To baffle it by deftly stopping such :—  
 The vagrant Scholar to his Sage at home  
 Sends greeting (health and knowledge, fame with peace)  
 Three samples of true snake-stone—  
 rarer still,  
 One of the other sort, the melon-shaped  
 (But fitter, pounded fine, for charms than drugs),  
 And writeth now the twenty-second time.

My journeyings were brought to Jericho :  
 Thus I resume. Who, studious in our art,  
 Shall count a little labor unrepaid ?  
 I have shed sweat enough, left flesh and bone  
 On many a flinty furlong of this land.  
 Also, the country-side is all on fire  
 With rumors of a marching hitherward.  
 Some say Vespasian cometh, some, his son.  
 A black lynx snarled and pricked a tufted ear ;  
 Lust of my blood inflamed his yellow balls :  
 I cried and threw my staff, and he was gone.  
 Twice have the robbers stripped and beaten me,  
 And once a town declared me for a spy ;  
 But at the end, I reach Jerusalem,  
 Since this poor covert where I pass the night,  
 This Bethany, lies scarce the distance thence  
 A man with plague-sores at the third degree  
 Runs till he drops down dead. Thou laughest here !  
 'Sooth, it elates me, thus reposed and safe,  
 To void the stuffing of my travel-scrip,  
 And share with thee whatever Jewry yields.  
 A viscid cholera is observable  
 In tertians, I was nearly bold to say ;  
 And falling-sickness hath a happier cure  
 Than our school wots of : there's a spider here

Weaves no web, watches on the ledge of tombs,  
 Sprinkled with mottles on an ash-gray back ;  
 Take five and drop them . . . but who knows his mind,  
 The Syrian runagate I trust this to ?  
 His service payeth me a sublimate  
 Blown up his nose to help the ailing eye.  
 Best wait : I reach Jerusalem at morn,  
 There set in order my experiences,  
 Gather what most deserves, and give thee all —  
 Or I might add, Judæa's gum-tragacanth  
 Scales off in purer flakes, shines clearer-grained,  
 Cracks 'twixt the pestle and the porphyry,  
 In fine exceeds our produce. Scalp-disease  
 Confounds me, crossing so with leprosy :  
 Thou hadst admired one sort I gained at Zoar —  
 But zeal outruns discretion. Here I end.

Yet stay ! my Syrian blinketh gratefully,  
 Protesteth his devotion is my price —  
 Suppose I write what harms not, though he steal ?  
 I half resolve to tell thee, yet I blush,  
 What set me off a-writing first of all.  
 An itch I had, a sting to write, a tang !  
 For, be it this town's barrenness, — or else  
 The Man had something in the look of him, —  
 His case has struck me far more than 'tis worth.  
 So, pardon if — (lest presently I lose,  
 In the great press of novelty at hand,  
 The care and pains this somehow stole from me)  
 I bid thee take the thing while fresh in mind,  
 Almost in sight — for, wilt thou have the truth ?  
 The very man is gone from me but now,  
 Whose ailment is the subject of discourse.  
 Thus then, and let thy better wit help all !



"A black lynx snarled and pricked a tufted ear."— Page 110.





'Tis but a case of mania : sub-  
induced  
By epilepsy, at the turning-point  
Of trance prolonged unduly some  
three days  
When, by the exhibition of some drug  
Or spell, exorcization, stroke of art  
Unknown to me and which 'twere  
well to know,  
The evil thing, out-breaking, all at  
once,  
Left the man whole and sound of body  
indeed, —  
But, flinging (so to speak) life's gates  
too wide,  
Making a clear house of it too sud-  
denly,  
The first conceit that entered might  
inscribe  
Whatever it was minded on the wall  
So plainly at that vantage, as it were  
(First come, first served), that nothing  
subsequent  
Attaineth to erase those fancy-scravls  
The just-returned and new-established  
soul  
Hath gotten now so thoroughly by  
heart  
That henceforth she will read or these  
or none.  
And first — the man's own firm con-  
viction rests  
That he was dead (in fact they buried  
him)  
— That he was dead and then restored  
to life  
By a Nazarene physician of his tribe :  
— 'Sayeth, the same bade " Rise," and  
he did rise.  
" Such cases are diurnal," thou wilt  
cry.  
Not so this figment ! — not, that such  
a fume,  
Instead of giving way to time and  
health,  
Should eat itself into the life of life,  
As saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones,  
and all !  
For see, how he takes up the after-  
life.  
The man — it is one Lazarus a Jew,  
Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of  
age,  
The body's habit wholly laudable,  
As much, indeed, beyond the common  
health  
As he were made and put aside to  
show.  
Think, could we penetrate by any drug

And bathe the wearied soul and wor-  
ried flesh,  
And bring it clear and fair, by three  
days' sleep !  
Whence has the man the balm that  
brightens all ?  
This grown man eyes the world now  
like a child.  
Some elders of his tribe, I should pre-  
mise,  
Led in their friend, obedient as a  
sheep,  
To bear my inquisition. While they  
spoke,  
Now sharply, now with sorrow, — told  
the case, —  
He listened not except I spoke to  
him,  
But folded his two hands and let  
them talk,  
Watching the flies that buzzed : and  
yet no fool.  
And that's a sample how his years  
must go.  
Look if a beggar, in fixed middle-life,  
Should find a treasure, — can he use  
the same  
With straitened habitude and tastes  
starved small,  
And take at once to his impoverished  
brain  
The sudden element that changes  
things,  
That sets the undreamed-of rapture  
at his hand,  
And puts the cheap old joy in the  
scorned dust ?  
Is he not such an one as moves to  
mirth —  
Warily parsimonious, when no need,  
Wasteful as drunkenness at undue  
times ?  
All prudent counsel as to what befits  
The golden mean, is lost on such an  
one :  
The man's fantastic will is the man's  
law.  
So here — we call the treasure knowl-  
edge, say,  
Increased beyond the fleshly facul-  
ty —  
Heaven opened to a soul while yet on  
earth,  
Earth forced on a soul's use while  
seeing heaven :  
The man is witless of the size, the  
sum,  
The value in proportion of all things,  
Or whether it be little or be much.

Discourse to him of prodigious armaments  
 Assembled to besiege his city now,  
 And of the passing of a mule with gourds —  
 'Tis one! Then take it on the other side,  
 Speak of some trifling fact, — he will gaze rapt  
 With stupor at its very littleness  
 (Far as I see), as if in that indeed  
 He caught prodigious import, whole results;  
 And so will turn to us the by-standers  
 In ever the same stupor (note this point),  
 That we, too, see not with his opened eyes.  
 Wonder and doubt come wrongly into play,  
 Preposterously, at cross purposes.  
 Should his child sicken unto death, — why, look  
 For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness,  
 Or pretermission of the daily craft!  
 While a word, gesture, glance from that same child  
 At play or in the school or laid asleep,  
 Will startle him to an agony of fear,  
 Exasperation, just as like. Demand  
 The reason why — "'tis but a word," object —  
 "A gesture" — he regards thee as our lord  
 Who lived there in the pyramid alone,  
 Looked at us (dost thou mind?) when, being young,  
 We both would unadvisedly recite  
 Some charm's beginning, from that book of his,  
 Able to bid the sun throb wide and burst  
 All into stars, as suns grown old are wont.  
 Thou and the child have each a veil alike  
 Thrown o'er your heads, from under which ye both  
 Stretch your blind hands and trifle with a match  
 Over a mine of Greek fire, did ye know!  
 He holds on firmly to some thread of life —  
 (It is the life to lead perforcedly)  
 Which runs across some vast, distracting orb

Of glory on either side that meagre thread,  
 Which, conscious of, he must not enter yet —  
 The spiritual life around the earthly life:  
 The law of that is known to him as this,  
 His heart and brain move there, his feet stay here.  
 So is the man perplexed with impulses  
 Sudden to start off crosswise, not straight on,  
 Proclaiming what is right and wrong across,  
 And not along, this black thread through the blaze —  
 "It should be" balked by "here it cannot be."  
 And oft the man's soul springs into his face  
 As if he saw again and heard again  
 His sage that bade him "Rise," and he did rise.  
 Something, a word, a tick o' the blood within  
 Admonishes: then back he sinks at once  
 To ashes, who was very fire before,  
 In sedulous recurrence to his trade  
 Whereby he earneth him the daily bread;  
 And studiously the humbler for that pride,  
 Professedly the faultier that he knows  
 God's secret, while he holds the thread of life.  
 Indeed the especial marking of the man  
 Is prone submission to the heavenly will —  
 Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.  
 'Sayeth, he will wait patient to the last  
 For that same death which must restore his being  
 To equilibrium, body loosening soul  
 Divorced even now by premature full growth:  
 He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to live  
 So long as God please, and just how God please.  
 He even seeketh not to please God more  
 (Which meaneth, otherwise) than as God please.  
 Hence, I perceive not he affects to preach

<p>The doctrine of his sect whate'er it be,          Make proselytes as madmen thirst to do:          How can he give his neighbor the real ground,          His own conviction? Ardent as he is—          Call his great truth a lie, why, still the old          "Be it as God please" re-assureth him.          I probed the sore as thy disciple should:          "How, beast," said I, "this stolid carelessness          Sufficeth thee, when Rome is on her march          To stamp out like a little spark thy town,          Thy tribe, thy crazy tale and thee at once?"          He merely looked with his large eyes on me.          The man is apathetic, you deduce?          Contrariwise, he loves both old and young,          Able and weak, affects the very brutes          And birds—how say I? flowers of the field—          As a wise workman recognizes tools          In a master's workshop, loving what they make.          Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb:          Only impatient, let him do his best,          At ignorance and carelessness and sin—          An indignation which is promptly curbed:          As when in certain travel I have feigned          To be an ignoramus in our art          According to some preconceived design,          And happened to hear the land's practitioners          Steeped in conceit sublimed by ignorance,          Prattle fantastically on disease,          Its cause and cure—and I must hold my peace!</p> <p>Thou wilt object— Why have I not ere this          Sought out the sage himself, the Nazarene          Who wrought this cure, inquiring at the source,</p>	<p>Conferring with the frankness that befits?          Alas! it grieveth me, the learned leech          Perished in a tumult many years ago,          Accused, — our learning's fate, — of wizardry,          Rebellion, to the setting up a rule          And creed prodigious as described to me.          His death, which happened when the earthquake fell          (Prefiguring, as soon appeared, the loss          To occult learning in our lord the sage          Who lived there in the pyramid alone),          Was wrought by the mad people— that's their wont!          On vain recourse, as I conjecture it,          To his tried virtue, for miraculous help—          How could he stop the earthquake?          That's their way!          The other imputations must be lies:          But take one, though I loath to give it thee,          In mere respect for any good man's fame.          (And after all, our patient Lazarus          Is stark mad; should we count on what he says?          Perhaps not: though in writing to a leech          'Tis well to keep back nothing of a case.)          This man so cured regards the curer, then,          As—God forgive me! who but God himself,          Creator and sustainer of the world,          That came and dwelt in flesh on it a while!          —'Sayeth that such an one was born and lived,          Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at his own house,          Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught I know,          And yet was . . . what I said nor choose repeat,          And must have so avouched himself, in fact,          In hearing of this very Lazarus          Who saith—but why all this of what he saith?          Why write of trivial matters, things of price</p>
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Calling at every moment for remark?  
I noticed on the margin of a pool  
Blue-flowering borage, the Aleppo  
sort,  
Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is  
strange!

Thy pardon for this long and tedious  
case,  
Which, now that I review it, needs  
must seem  
Unduly dwelt on, prolixly set forth!  
Nor I myself discern in what is  
writ  
Good cause for the peculiar interest  
And awe indeed this man has touched  
me with.  
Perhaps the journey's end, the weariness  
Had wrought upon me first. I met  
him thus:  
I crossed a ridge of short sharp broken  
hills  
Like an old lion's cheek teeth. Out  
there came  
A moon made like a face with certain  
spots  
Multiform, manifold, and menacing:  
Then a wind rose behind me. So we  
met  
In this old sleepy town at unware,  
The man and I. I send thee what is  
writ.  
Regard it as a chance, a matter risked  
To this ambiguous Syrian: he may  
lose,  
Or steal, or give it thee with equal  
good.  
Jerusalem's repose shall make  
amends  
For time this letter wastes, thy time  
and mine;  
Till when, once more thy pardon and  
farewell!

The very God! think, Abib; dost  
thou think?  
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving  
too—  
So, through the thunder comes a human  
voice  
Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats  
here!  
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in  
myself!  
Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive  
of mine:  
But love I gave thee, with myself to  
love,

And thou must love me who have  
died for thee!"  
The madman saith He said so: it is  
strange.

CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS;  
OR, NATURAL THEOLOGY IN THE  
ISLAND.

"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether  
such a one as thyself."

[WILL sprawl, now that the heat of  
day is best,  
Flat on his belly in the pit's much  
mire,  
With elbows wide, fists clinched to  
prop his chin.  
And, while he kicks both feet in the  
cool slush,  
And feels about his spine small eft-  
things course,  
Run in and out each arm, and make  
him laugh:  
And while above his head a pompion-  
plant,  
Coating the cave-top as a brow its  
eye,  
Creeps down to touch and tickle hair  
and beard,  
And now a flower drops with a bee  
inside,  
And now a fruit to snap at, catch and  
crunch,—  
He looks out o'er yon sea which sun-  
beams cross  
And recross till they weave a spider-  
web  
(Meshes of fire, some great fish breaks  
at times),  
And talks to his own self, howe'er he  
please,  
Touching that other, whom his dam  
called God.  
Because to talk about Him, vexes  
—ha,  
Could He but know! and time to vex  
is now,  
When talk is safer than in winter-  
time.  
Moreover Prosper and Miranda sleep  
In confidence he drudges at their  
task:

And it is good to cheat the pair, and  
gibe,  
Letting the rank tongue blossom into  
speech.]

Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos !  
'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o'  
the moon.

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to  
match,  
But not the stars ; the stars came  
otherwise ;  
Only made clouds, winds, meteors,  
such as that :  
Also this isle, what lives and grows  
thereon,  
And snaky sea which rounds and  
ends the same.

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at  
ease :  
He hated that He cannot change His  
cold,  
Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an icy  
fish  
That longed to 'scape the rock-stream  
where she lived,  
And thaw herself within the luke-  
warm brine  
O' the lazy sea, her stream thrusts far  
amid,  
A crystal spike 'twixt two warm  
walls of wave ;  
Only, she ever sickened, found re-  
pulse  
At the other kind of water, not her  
life  
(Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred  
o' the sun),  
Flounced back from bliss she was not  
born to breathe,  
And in her old bounds buried her  
despair,  
Hating and loving warmth alike ; so  
He.

'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun,  
this isle,  
Trees and the fowls here, beast and  
creeping thing.  
Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a  
leech ;  
Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of  
foam,  
That floats and feeds ; a certain bad-  
ger brown,  
He hath watched hunt with that  
slant white-wedged eye

By moonlight ; and the pie with the  
long tongue  
That pricks deep into oakwarts for a  
worm,  
And says a plain word when she finds  
her prize,  
But will not eat the ants ; the ants  
themselves  
That build a wall of seeds and settled  
stalks  
About their hole — He made all these  
and more,  
Made all we see, and us, in spite :  
how else ?  
He could not, Himself, make a second  
self  
To be His mate : as well have made  
Himself :  
He would not make what He dislikes  
or slights,  
An eyesore to Him, or not worth His  
pains ;  
But did, in envy, listlessness, or sport,  
Make what Himself would fain, in a  
manner, be —  
Weaker in most points, stronger in a  
few,  
Worthy, and yet mere playthings all  
the while,  
Things He admires and mocks too, —  
that is it.  
Because, so brave, so better though  
they be,  
It nothing skills if He begin to plague.  
Look now, I melt a gourd-fruit into  
mash,  
Add honeycomb and pods, I have  
perceived,  
Which bite like finches when they  
bill and kiss, —  
Then, when froth rises bladdery,  
drink up all,  
Quick, quick, till maggots scamper  
through my brain ;  
Last, throw me on my back i' the  
seeded thyme,  
And wanton, wishing I were born a  
bird.  
Put case, unable to be what I wish,  
I yet could make a live bird out of  
clay :  
Would not I take clay, pinch my  
Caliban  
Able to fly ? — for, there, see, he hath  
wings,  
And great comb like the hoopoe's to  
admire,  
And there, a sting to do his foes of-  
fence,

There, and I will that he begin to  
live,  
Fly to yon rock-top, nip me off the  
horns  
Of grigs high up that make the  
merry din  
Saucy through their veined wings,  
and mind me not.  
In which feat, if his leg snapped,  
brittle clay,  
And he lay stupid-like,—why, I  
should laugh ;  
And if he, spying me, should fall to  
weep,  
Beseech me to be good, repair his  
wrong,  
Bid his poor leg smart less or grow  
again,—  
Well, as the chance were, this might  
take or else  
Not take my fancy : I might hear his  
cry,  
And give the manikin three legs for  
one,  
Or pluck the other off, leave him like  
an egg,  
And lessoned he was mine and merely  
clay.  
Were this no pleasure, lying in the  
thyme,  
Drinking the mash, with brain be-  
come alive,  
Making and marring clay at will ?  
So He.

'Thinketh, such shows nor right nor  
wrong in Him,  
Nor kind, nor cruel : He is strong and  
Lord.  
'Am strong myself compared to yon-  
der crabs  
That march now from the mountain  
to the sea ;  
'Let twenty pass, and stone the  
twenty-first,  
Loving not, hating not, just choosing  
so.  
'Say, the first straggler that boasts  
purple spots  
Shall join the file, one pincer twisted  
off ;  
'Say, This bruised fellow shall receive  
a worm,  
And two worms he whose nippers  
end in red  
As it likes me each time, I do : so He.

Well then, 'supposeth He is good i'  
the main,

Placable if His mind and ways were  
guessed,  
But rougher than His handiwork, be  
sure !  
Oh, He hath made things worthier  
than Himself,  
And envieth that, so helped, such  
things do more  
Than He who made them ! What  
consoles but this ?  
That they, unless through Him, do  
naught at all,  
And must submit : what other use in  
things ?  
'Hath cut a pipe of pithless elder-  
joint  
That, blown through, gives exact the  
scream o' the jay  
When from her wing you twitch the  
feathers blue :  
Sound this, and little birds that hate  
the jay  
Flock within stone's throw, glad their  
foe is hurt :  
Put case such pipe could prattle and  
boast forsooth  
"I catch the birds, I am the crafty  
thing,  
I make the cry my maker cannot  
make  
With his great round mouth ; he must  
blow through mine !"  
Would not I smash it with my foot ?  
So He.

But wherefore rough, why cold and  
ill at ease ?  
Aba, that is a question ! Ask, for  
that,  
What knows,—the something over  
Setebos  
That made Him, or He, may be, found  
and fought,  
Worsted, drove off and did to noth-  
ing, perchance.  
There may be something quiet o'er  
His head,  
Out of His reach, that feels nor joy  
nor grief,  
Since both derive from weakness in  
some way.  
I joy because the quails come ; would  
not joy  
Could I bring quails here when I have  
a mind :  
This Quiet, all it hath a mind to,  
doth.  
'Esteemeth stars the outposts of its  
couch,

But never spends much thought nor  
care that way.  
It may look up, work up, — the worse  
for those  
It works on ! 'Careth but for Sete-  
bos  
The many-handed as a cuttle-fish,  
Who, making Himself feared through  
what He does,  
Looks up, first, and perceives he can-  
not soar  
To what is quiet and hath happy life ;  
Next looks down here, and out of  
very spite  
Makes this a bauble-world to ape yon  
real,  
These good things to match those, as  
hips do grapes.  
'Tis solace making baubles, ay, and  
sport.  
Himself peeped late, eyed Prosper at  
his books  
Careless and lofty, lord now of the  
isle :  
Vexed, 'stitched a book of broad  
leaves, arrow-shaped,  
Wrote thereon, he knows what, pro-  
digious words ;  
Has peeled a wand and called it by a  
name ;  
Weareth at whiles for an enchanter's  
robe  
The eyed skin of a supple ocelot ;  
And hath an ounce sleeker than  
youngling mole,  
A four-legged serpent he makes cower  
and couch,  
Now snarl, now hold its breath and  
mind his eye,  
And saith she is Miranda and my  
wife ;  
'Keeps for his Ariel a tall pouch-bill  
crane  
He bids go wade for fish and straight  
disgorge ;  
Also a sea-beast, lumpish, which he  
snared,  
Blinded the eyes of, and brought  
somewhat tame,  
And split its toe-webs, and now pens  
the drudge  
In a hole o' the rock, and calls him  
Caliban ;  
A bitter heart that bides its time and  
bites.  
'Plays thus at being Prosper in a  
way,  
Taketeth his mirth with make-believes :  
so He.

His dam held that the Quiet made all  
things  
Which Setebos vexed only : 'holds  
not so.  
Who made them weak, meant weak-  
ness He might vex.  
Had He meant other, while His hand  
was in,  
Why not make horny eyes no thorn  
could prick,  
Or plate my scalp with bone against  
the snow,  
Or overscale my flesh 'neath joint and  
joint,  
Like an orc's armor ? Ay, — so spoil  
His sport !  
He is the One now : only He doth all.  
'Saith, He may like, perchance, what  
profits Him.  
Ay, himself loves what does him  
good ; but why ?  
'Gets good no otherwise. This blinded  
beast  
Loves whoso places flesh-meat on his  
nose,  
But, had he eyes, would want no  
help, would hate  
Or love, just as it liked him : He hath  
eyes.  
Also it pleaseth Setebos to work,  
Use all His hands, and exercise much  
craft,  
By no means for the love of what is  
worked.  
'Tasteth, himself, no finer good i' the  
world  
When all goes right, in this safe sum-  
mer-time,  
And he wants little, hungers, aches  
not much,  
Than trying what to do with wit and  
strength.  
'Falls to make something : 'piled yon  
pile of turfs,  
And squared and stuck there squares  
of soft white chalk,  
And, with a fish-tooth, scratched a  
moon on each,  
And set up endwise certain spikes of  
tree,  
And crowned the whole with a sloth's  
skull a-top,  
Found dead i' the woods, too hard  
for one to kill.  
No use at all i' the work, for work's  
sole sake ;  
'Shall some day knock it down again :  
so He.

'Saiſt He is terrible : watch His feats  
in proof !  
One hurricane will ſpoil ſix good  
months' hope.  
He hath a ſpite againſt me, that I  
know,  
Juſt as He favors Proſper, who knows  
why ?  
So it is, all the ſame, as well I find.  
'Wove wattles half the winter, fenced  
them firm  
With ſtone and ſtake to ſtop ſhe-  
tortoises  
Crawling to lay their eggs here : well,  
one wave,  
Feeling the foot of Him upon its  
neck,  
Gaped as a ſnake does, lolled out its  
large tongue,  
And licked the whole labor flat : ſo  
much for ſpite.  
'Saw a ball flame down late (yonder  
it lies)  
Where, half an hour before, I ſlept  
' the ſhade :  
Often they ſcatter ſparkles : there is  
force !  
'Dug up a newt He may have envied  
once  
And turned to ſtone, ſhut up inside a  
ſtone  
Pleaſe Him and hinder this ? — What  
Proſper does ?  
Aha, if he would tell me how ! Not  
He !  
There is the ſport : diſcover how or  
die !  
All need not die, for of the things o'  
the iſle  
Some flee afar, ſome dive, ſome run  
up trees ;  
Thoſe at His mercy, — why, they  
pleaſe Him moſt  
When . . . when . . . well, never try  
the ſame way twice !  
Repeat what act has pleaſed, He may  
grow wroth.  
You muſt not know His ways, and  
play Him off,  
Sure of the iſſue. 'Doth the like him-  
ſelf :  
'Spareth a ſquirrel that it nothing  
fears  
But ſteals the nut from underneath  
my thumb,  
And when I threaten, bites ſtoutly in  
defence :  
'Spareth an urchin that contrariwiſe,  
Curls up into a ball, pretending death

For fright at my approach : the two  
ways pleaſe.  
But what would move my choler more  
than this,  
That either creature counted on its  
life  
To-morrow and next day and all days  
to come,  
Saying forſooth in the inmoſt of its  
heart,  
" Because he did ſo yeſterday with me,  
And otherwiſe with ſuch another  
brute,  
So muſt he do henceforth and al-  
ways." — Ay ?  
'Would teach the reaſoning couple  
what " muſt " means :  
'Doth as he likes, or wherefore Lord ?  
So He.  
'Conceiveth all things will continue  
thus,  
And we ſhall have to live in fear of  
Him  
So long as He lives, keeps His  
ſtrength : no change,  
If He have done His beſt, make no  
new world  
To pleaſe Him more, ſo leave off  
watching this, —  
If He ſurpriſe not even the Quiet's  
ſelf  
Some ſtrange day, — or, ſuppoſe,  
grow into it  
As grubs grow butterflies : eſe, here  
are we,  
And there is He, and nowhere help at  
all.  
'Believeth with the life, the pain ſhall  
ſtop.  
His dam held different, that after  
death  
He both plagued enemies and feaſted  
friends :  
Idly ! He doth His worſt in this our  
life,  
Giving juſt reſpite leſt we die through  
pain,  
Saving laſt pain for worſt, — with  
which, an end.  
Meanwhile, the beſt way to eſcape  
His ire  
Is, not to ſeem too happy. 'Sees  
himſelf,  
Yonder two flies, with purple films  
and pink,  
Baſk on the pompion-bell above : kill-  
both.



'Sees two black painful beetles roll  
their ball  
On head and tail as if to save their  
jives :  
Moves them the stick away they  
strive to clear.

Even so, 'would have Him miscon-  
ceive, suppose  
This Caliban strives hard and ails no  
less,  
And always, above all else, envies  
Him ;

Wherefore he mainly dances on dark  
nights,  
Moans in the sun, gets under holes to  
laugh,  
And never speaks his mind save  
housed as now :

Outside, 'groans, curses. If He caught  
me here,  
O'erheard this speech, and asked,  
" What chucklest at ? "

'Would, to appease Him, cut a finger  
off,  
Or of my three kid yearlings burn  
the best,  
Or let the toothsome apples rot on tree,  
Or push my tame beast for the ore to  
taste :

While myself lit a fire, and made a  
song  
And sung it, "*What I hate, be conse-  
crate  
To celebrate Thee and Thy state, no mate  
For Thee ; what see for envy in poor  
me ?*"

Hoping the while, since evils some-  
times mend,  
Warts rub away and sores are cured  
with slime,  
That some strange day, will either  
the Quiet catch  
And conquer Setebos, or likelier  
He  
Decrepit may doze, doze, as good as  
die.

[What, what? A curtain o'er the  
world at once!  
Crickets stop hissing; not a bird—  
or, yes,  
There scuds His raven that hath told  
Him all!  
It was fool's play, this prattling!  
Ha! The wind  
Shoulders the pillared dust, death's  
house o' the move,  
And fast invading fires begin! White  
blaze—  
A tree's head snaps—and there,  
there, there, there,  
His thunder follows! Fool to gibe  
at Him!  
Lo! 'Lieth flat and loveth Setebos!  
'Maketh his teeth meet through his  
upper lip,  
Will let those quails fly, will not eat  
this month  
One little mess of whelks, so he may  
'scape!]

## SAUL.

## I.

SAID Abner, " At last thou art come! Ere I tell, ere thou speak,  
Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I wished it, and did kiss his  
cheek.

And he, " Since the King, O my friend! for thy countenance sent,  
Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor until from his tent  
Thou return with the joyful assurance the King liveth yet,  
Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with the water be wet.  
For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of three days,  
Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of prayer nor of praise,  
To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their strife,  
And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back upon life.

## II.

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God's child with his dew  
On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still living and blue  
Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as if no wild heat  
Were now raging to torture the desert!"

## III.

Then I, as was meet,  
Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and rose on my feet,  
And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder. The tent was unlooped;  
I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under I stooped;  
Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch, all withered and gone,  
That extends to the second enclosure, I groped my way on  
Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open. Then once more I prayed,  
And opened the foldskirts and entered, and was not afraid  
But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!" And no voice replied.  
At the first I saw naught but the blackness; but soon I descried  
A something more black than the blackness—the vast, the upright  
Main prop which sustains the pavilion: and slow into sight  
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all.  
Then a sunbeam, that burst through the tent-roof, showed Saul.

## IV.

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both arms stretched out wide  
On the great cross-support in the centre, that goes to each side;  
He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there as, caught in his pants  
And waiting his change, the king serpent all heavily hangs,  
Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliverance come  
With the spring-time,—so agoized Saül, drear and stark, blind and dumb.

## V.

Then I tuned my harp,—took off the lilies we twine round its chords  
Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide—those sunbeams like  
swords!  
And I first played the tune all our sheep know, as, one after one,  
So docile they come to the pen-door till folding be done.  
They are white, and untorn by the bushes, for lo, they have fed  
Where the long grasses stifle the water within the stream's bed;  
And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star  
Into eve and the blue far above us,—so blue and so far!

## VI.

--Then the tupe, for which quails on the cornland will each leave his mate  
To fly after the player; then, what makes the crickets elate  
Till for boldness they fight one another: and then, what has weight  
To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside his sand house—  
There are none such as he for a wonder, half bird and half mouse!  
God made all the creatures and gave them our love and our fear,  
To give sign, we and they are his children, one family here.

## VII.

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers, their wine-song, when hand  
Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friendship, and great hearts expand  
And grow one in the sense of this world's life.— And then, the last song  
When the dead man is praised on his journey—"Bear, bear him along  
With his few faults shut up like dead flowerets! Are balm seeds not here  
To console us? The land has none left such as he on the bier.

Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!" — And then, the glad chant  
Of the marriage, — first go the young maidens, next, she whom we vaunt  
As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling. — And then, the great march  
Wherein man runs to man to assist him and buttress an arch  
Naught can break; who shall harm them, our friends? — Then, the chorus  
intoned

As the Levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned,  
But I stood here: for here in the darkness Saul groaned.

## VIII.

And I paused, held my breath in such silence, and listened apart;  
And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered: and sparkles 'gan dart  
From the jewels that woke in his turban at once with a start  
All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies courageous at heart.  
So the head: but the body still moved not, still hung there erect.  
And I bent once again to my playing, pursued it unchecked,  
As I sang, —

## IX.

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! No spirit feels waste,  
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.  
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,  
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock  
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,  
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.  
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold dust divine,  
And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full draught of wine,  
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell  
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.  
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ  
All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy!  
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father, whose sword thou didst guard  
When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for glorious reward?  
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother, held up as men sung  
The low song of the nearly departed, and hear her faint tongue  
Joining in while it could to the witness, 'Let one more attend,  
I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime, and all was for best!'  
Then they sung through their tears in strong triumph, not much, but the  
rest.

And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the working whence grew  
Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the spirit strained true:  
And the friends of thy boyhood — that boyhood of wonder and hope,  
Present promise and wealth of the future beyond the eye's scope, —  
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people is thine;  
And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on one head combine!  
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and rage (like the throe)  
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor and lets the gold go)  
High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame crowning them, — all  
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature — King Saul!"

## X.

And lo, with that leap of my spirit, — heart, hand, harp, and voice,  
Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each bidding rejoice  
Saul's fame in the light it was made for — as when, dare I say,  
The Lord's army, in rapture of service, strains through its array,  
And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot — "Saul!" cried I, and stopped,  
And waited the thing that should follow. Then Saul, who hung propped  
By the tent's cross-support in the centre, was struck by his name.  
Have ye seen when Spring's arrow summons goes right to the aim,

And some mountain, the last to withstand her, that held (he alone,  
While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers) on a broad bust of stone  
A year's snow bound about for a breastplate, — leaves grasp of the sheet?  
Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down to his feet,  
And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive yet, your mountain of old,  
With his rents, the successive bequeathings of ages untold —  
Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles, each furrow and scar  
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest — all hail, there they are!  
— Now again to be softened with verdure, again hold the nest  
Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to the green on his crest  
For their food in the ardors of summer. One long shudder thrilled  
All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank and was stilled  
At the King's self left standing before me, released and avaric.  
What was gone, what remained? All to traverse 'twixt hope and despair.  
Death was past, life not come: so he waited. A while his right hand  
Held the brow, helped the eyes, left too vacant, forthwith to remand  
To their place what new objects should enter: 'twas Saul as before.  
I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes, nor was hurt any more  
Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye watch from the shore,  
At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean — a sun's slow decline  
Over hills which, resolved in stern silence, o'erlap and intertwine  
Base with base to knit strength more intensely: so, arm folded arm  
O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

## XI.

What spell or what charm  
(For, a while there was trouble within me), what next should I urge  
To sustain him where song had restored him? — Song filled to the verge  
His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all that it yields  
Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty: beyond, on what fields,  
Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to brighten the eye  
And bring blood to the lip, and commend them the cup they put by?  
He saith, "It is good;" still he drinks not: he lets me praise life,  
Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

## XII.

Then fancies grew rife  
Which had come long ago on the pasture, when round me the sheep  
Fed in silence — above, the one eagle wheeled slow as in sleep;  
And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world that might lie  
'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip 'twixt the hill and the sky.  
And I laughed — "Since my days are ordained to be passed with my flocks,  
Let me people at least, with my fancies, the plains and the rocks,  
Dream the life I am never to mix with, and image the show  
Of mankind as they live in those fashions I hardly shall know!  
Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses, the courage that gains,  
And the prudence that keeps what men strive for." And now these old  
trains  
Of vague thought came again; I grew surer; so, once more the string  
Of my harp made response to my spirit, as thus —

## XIII.

"Yea, my King,"  
I began — "thou dost well in rejecting mere comforts that spring  
From the mere mortal life held in common by man and by brute:  
In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in our soul it bears fruit.  
Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree, — how its stem trembled first  
Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler; then safely outburst

The fan-branches all round ; and thou mindest when these too, in turn  
 Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed perfect : yet more was to learn,  
 E'en the good that comes in with the palm-fruit. Our dates shall we slight,  
 When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow ? or care for the plight  
 Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced them ? Not so ! stem and  
 branch

Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while the palm-wine shall stanch  
 Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour thee such wine.  
 Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for ! the spirit be thine !  
 By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee, thou still shalt enjoy  
 More indeed, than at first when, unconscious, the life of a boy.  
 Crush that life, and behold its wine running ! Each deed thou hast done  
 Dies, revives, goes to work in the world : until e'en as the sun  
 Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil him, though tempests efface,  
 Can find nothing his own deed produced not, must everywhere trace  
 The results of his past summer-prime, — so, each ray of thy will,  
 Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long over, shall thrill  
 Thy whole people, the countless, with ardor, till they too give forth  
 A like cheer to their sons : who in turn, fill the South and the North  
 With the radiance thy deed was the germ of. Carouse in the past !  
 But the license of age has its limit : thou diest at last,  
 As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose at her height,  
 So with man — so his power and his beauty forever take flight.  
 No ! Again a long draught of my soul-wine ! Look forth o'er the years !  
 'Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual ; begin with the seer's !  
 Is Saul dead ? In the depth of the vale make his tomb — bid arise  
 A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square, till, built to the skies,  
 Let it mark where the great First King slumbers : whose fame would ye

know ?  
 Up above see the rock's naked face, where the record shall go  
 In great characters cut by the scribe, — Such was Saul, so he did ;  
 With the sages directing the work, by the populace chid, —  
 For not half, they'll affirm, is comprised there ! Which fault to amend,  
 In the grove with his kind grows the cedar, whercon they shall spend  
 (See, in tablets 'tis level before them) their praise, and record  
 With the gold of the graver, Saul's story, — the statesman's great word  
 Side by side with the poet's sweet comment. The river's a-wave  
 With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other when prophet-winds rave :  
 So the pen gives unborn generations their due and their part  
 In thy being ! Then, first of the mighty, thank God that thou art !"

## XIV.

And behold while I sang . . . but O Thou who didst grant me, that day,  
 And, before it, not seldom hast granted thy help to essay,  
 Carry on and complete an adventure, — my shield and my sword  
 In that act where my soul was thy servant, thy word was my word, —  
 Still be with me, who then at the summit of human endeavor  
 And scaling the highest, man's thought could, gazed hopeless as ever  
 On the new stretch of heaven above me — till, mighty to save,  
 Just one lift of thy hand cleared that distance — God's throne from man's  
 grave !

Let me tell out my tale to its ending — my voice to my heart  
 Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels last night I took part,  
 As this morning I gather the fragments, alone with my sheep !  
 And still fear lest the terrible glory vanish like sleep,  
 For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while Hebron upheaves  
 The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder, and Kidron retrieves  
 Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

## XV.

I say then, — my song

While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and, ever more strong,  
 Made a proffer of good to console him — he slowly resumed  
 His old motions and habitudes kingly. The right hand replumed  
 His black locks to their wonted composure, adjusted the swathes  
 Of his turban, and see — the huge sweat that his countenance bathes,  
 He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now his loins as of yore,  
 And feels slow for the armlets of price, with the clasp set before.  
 He is Saul, ye remember in glory, — ere error had bent  
 The broad brow from the daily communion; and still, though much spent  
 Be the life and the bearing that front you, the same, God did choose,  
 To receive what a man may waste, desecrate, never quite lose.  
 So sank he along by the tent-prop, still, stayed by the pile  
 Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he leaned there a while,  
 And sat out my singing — one arm round the tent-prop, to raise  
 His bent head, and the other hung slack — till I touched on the praise  
 I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man patient there;  
 And thus ended, the harp falling forward. Then first I was 'ware  
 That he sat, as I say, with my head just above his vast knees  
 Which were thrust out on each side around me, like oak-roots which please  
 To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked up to know  
 If the best I could do had brought solace: he spoke not, but slow  
 Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care  
 Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow: through my hair  
 The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my head, with kind power —  
 All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a flower.  
 Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinized mine —  
 And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but where was the sign?  
 I yearned — "Could I help thee, my father, inventing a bliss,  
 I would add, to that life of the past, both the future and this;  
 I would give thee new life altogether, as good, ages hence  
 As this moment, — had love but the warrant, love's heart to dispense!"

## XVI.

Then the truth came upon me. No harp more — no song more! outbroke —

## XVII.

"I have gone the whole round of creation: I saw and I spoke;  
 I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my brain  
 And pronounced on the rest of his handwork — returned him again  
 His creation's approval or censure: I spoke as I saw.  
 I report, as a man may of God's work — all's love, yet all's law.  
 Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each faculty tasked  
 To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a dewdrop was asked.  
 Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at Wisdom laid bare.  
 Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank, to the Infinite Care!  
 Do I task any faculty highest to image success?  
 I but open my eyes, — and perfection, no more and no less,  
 In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is seen God  
 In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.  
 And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew  
 (With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)  
 The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete,  
 As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet.  
 Yet with all this abounding experience, this deity known,  
 I shall dare to discover some province, some gift of my own.

There's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to hoodwink,  
 I am fain to keep still in abeyance (I laugh as I think),  
 Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot ye, I worst  
 E'en the Giver in one gift. — Behold, I could love if I durst!  
 But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may o'ertake  
 God's own speed in the one way of love: I abstain for love's sake.  
 — What, my soul? see thus far and no farther? when doors great and small,  
 Nine and ninety flew ope at our touch, should the hundredth appal?  
 In the least things have faith, yet distrust in the greatest of all?  
 Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,  
 That I doubt his own love can compete with it? Here the parts shift?  
 Here, the creature surpass the creator, — the end, what began?  
 Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,  
 And dare doubt he alone shall not help him, who yet alone can?  
 Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare will, much less power,  
 To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the marvellous dower  
 Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to make such a soul,  
 Such a body, and then such an earth for insphering the whole?  
 And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm tears attest)  
 These good things being given, to go on, and give one more, the best?  
 Ay, to save and redeem and restore him, maintain at the height  
 This perfection, — succeed, with life's dayspring, death's minute of night?  
 Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul, the mistake,  
 Saul, the failure, the ruin he seems now, — and bid him awake  
 From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set  
 Clear and safe in new light and new life, — a new harmony yet  
 To be run and continued, and ended — who knows? — or endure!  
 The man taught enough by life's dream, of the rest to make sure;  
 By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning intensified bliss,  
 And the next world's reward and repose, by the struggles in this.

## XVIII.

"I believe it! 'Tis thou, God, that givest, 'tis I who receive:  
 In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.  
 All's one gift: thou canst grant it moreover, as prompt to my prayer,  
 As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air,  
 From thy will, stream the worlds, life and nature, thy dread Sabaoth:  
 I will? — the mere atoins despise me! Why am I not loth  
 To look that, even that in the face too? Why is it I dare  
 Think but lightly of such impuissance? What stops my despair?  
 This; — 'tis not what man Does which exalts him, but what man Would do!  
 See the King — I would help him, but cannot, the wishes fall through.  
 Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,  
 To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would — knowing which,  
 I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak through me now!  
 Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst thou — so wilt thou!  
 So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown —  
 And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down  
 One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,  
 Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with death!  
 As thy love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved  
 Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being beloved!  
 He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak  
 'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek  
 In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be  
 A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,  
 Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a Hand like this hand  
 Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

## XIX.

I know not too well how I found my way home in the night.  
 There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left and to right,  
 Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the aware :  
 I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as strugglingly there,  
 As a runner beset by the populace famished for news—  
 Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell loosed with her crews ;  
 And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled and shot  
 Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge : but I fainted not,  
 For the Hand still impelled me at once and supported, suppressed  
 All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy behest,  
 Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank to rest.  
 Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered from earth—  
 Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's tender birth ;  
 In the gathered intensity brought to the gray of the hills ;  
 In the shuddering forests' held breath ; in the sudden wind-thrills ;  
 In the startled wild beasts that bore oft, each with eye sidling still  
 Though averted with wonder and dread ; in the birds stiff and chill  
 That rose heavily as I approached them, made stupid with awe :  
 E'en the serpent that slid away silent—he felt the new law.  
 The same stared in the white humid faces upturned by the flowers ;  
 The same worked in the heart of the cedar and moved the vine-bowers :  
 And the little brooks witnessing murmured, persistent and low,  
 With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—"E'en so, it is so !"

## RABBI BEN EZRA.

## I.

GROW old along with me !  
 The best is yet to be,  
 The last of life, for which the first  
 was made ;  
 Our times are in His hand  
 Who saith, "A whole I planned,  
 Youth shows but half ; trust God :  
 see all, nor be afraid !"

## II.

Not that, amassing flowers,  
 Youth sighed, "Which rose make  
 ours,  
 Which lily leave and then as best  
 recall !"  
 Not that, admiring stars,  
 It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars ;  
 Mine be some figured flame which  
 blends, transcends them all !"

## III.

Not for such hopes and fears  
 Annulling youth's brief years,  
 Do I remonstrate : folly wide the  
 mark !

Rather I prize the doubt  
 Low kinds exist without,  
 Finished and finite clods, untroubled  
 by a spark.

## IV.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,  
 Were man but formed to feed  
 On joy, to solely seek and find and  
 feast.  
 Such feasting ended, then  
 As sure an end to men ;  
 Irks care the crop-full bird ? Frets  
 doubt the maw-crammed beast ?

## V.

Rejoice we are allied  
 To That which doth provide  
 And not partake, effect and not  
 receive !  
 A spark disturbs our clod :  
 Nearer we hold of God  
 Who gives, than of His tribes that  
 take, I must believe.

## VI.

Then, welcome each rebuff  
 That turns earth's smoothness rough,  
 Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand  
 but go !



Be our joys three-parts pain !  
Strive, and hold cheap the strain ;  
Learn, nor account the pang ; dare,  
never grudge the throe !

## VII.

For thence, — a paradox  
Which comforts while it mocks, —  
Shall life succeed in that it seems to  
fail :

What I aspired to be,  
And was not, comforts me :  
A brute I might have been, but would  
not sink i' the scale.

## VIII.

What is he but a brute  
Whose flesh hath soul to suit,  
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs  
want play ?

To man, propose this test —  
Thy body at its best,  
How far can that project thy soul on  
its lone way ?

## IX.

Yet gifts should prove their use :  
I own the Past profuse  
Of power each side, perfection every  
turn :

Eyes, ears took in their dole,  
Brain treasured up the whole ;  
Should not the heart beat once "How  
good to live and learn" ?

## X.

Not once beat "Praise be thine !  
I see the whole design,  
I, who saw power, see now love per-  
fect too.

Perfect I call Thy plan :  
Thanks that I was a man !  
Maker, remake, complete, — I trust  
what Thou shalt do !"

## XI.

For pleasant is this flesh ;  
Our soul, in its rose-mesh  
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns  
for rest :

Would we some prize might hold  
To match those manifold  
Possessions of the brute, — gain most,  
as we did best !"

## XII.

Let us not always say  
"Spite of this flesh to-lay  
I strove, made head, gained ground  
upon the whole !"  
As the bird wings and sings,  
Let us cry "All good things  
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more,  
now, than flesh helps soul !"

## XIII.

Therefore I summon age  
To grant youth's heritage,  
Life's struggle having so far reached  
its term :  
Thence shall I pass, approved  
A man, for aye removed  
From the developed brute ; a God  
though in the germ.

## XIV.

And I shall thereupon  
Take rest, ere I be gone  
Once more on my adventure brave  
and new :  
Fearless and unperplexed,  
When I wage battle next,  
What weapons to select, what armor  
to indue.

## XV.

Youth ended, I shall try  
My gain or loss thereby ;  
Leave the fire ashes, what survives  
is gold : -  
And I shall weigh the same,  
Give life its praise or blame :  
Young, all lay in dispute ; I shall  
know, being old.

## XVI.

For, note when evening shuts,  
A certain moment cuts  
The deed off, calls the glory from the  
gray :  
A whisper from the west  
Shoots — "Add this to the rest,  
Take it and try its worth : here dies  
another day."

## XVII.

So, still within this life,  
Though lifted o'er its strife,  
Let me discern, compare, pronounce  
at last,

"This rage was right i' the main,  
That acquiescence vain :  
The Future I may face now I have  
proved the Past."

## XVIII.

For more is not reserved  
To man, with soul just nerved  
To act to-morrow what he learns to-  
day :  
Here, work enough to watch  
The Master work, and catch  
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of  
the tool's true play.

## XIX.

As it was better, youth  
Should strive, through acts uncouth,  
Toward making, than repose on aught  
found made :  
So, better, age, exempt  
From strife, should know, than tempt  
Further. Thou waitedst age · wait  
death, nor be afraid !

## XX.

Enough now, if the Right  
And Good and Infinite  
Be named here, as thou callest thy  
hand thine own,  
With knowledge absolute,  
Subject to no dispute  
From fools that crowded youth, nor  
let thee feel alone.

## XXI.

Be there, for once and all,  
Severed great minds from small,  
Announced to each his station in the  
Past !  
Was I, the world arraigned,  
Were they, my soul disdained,  
Right? · Let age speak the truth and  
give us peace at last !

## XXII.

Now, who shall arbitrate ?  
Ten men love what I hate,  
Shun what I follow, slight what I re-  
ceive ;  
Ten, who in ears and eyes  
Match me : we all surmise,  
They, this thing, and I, that : whom  
shall my soul believe ?

## XXIII.

Not on the vulgar mass  
Called "work," must sentence pass,  
Things done, that took the eye and  
had the price ;  
O'er which, from level stand,  
The low world laid its hand,  
Found straightway to its mind, could  
value in a trice :

## XXIV.

But all, the world's coarse thumb  
And finger failed to plumb,  
So passed in making up the main ac-  
count :  
All instincts immature,  
All purposes unsure,  
That weighed not as his work, yet  
swelled the man's amount :

## XXV.

Thoughts hardly to be packed  
Into a narrow act,  
Fancies that broke through language  
and escaped :  
All I could never be,  
All, men ignored in me,  
This, I was worth to God, whose  
wheel the pitcher shaped.

## XXVI.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,  
That metaphor ! and feel  
Why time spins fast, why passive lies  
our clay, —  
Thou, to whom fools propound,  
When the wine makes its round,  
"Since life fleets, all is change ; the  
Past gone, seize to-day !"

## XXVII.

Fool ! All that is, at all,  
Lasts ever, past recall ;  
Earth changes, but thy soul and God  
stand sure :  
What entered into thee,  
That was, is, and shall be :  
Time's wheel runs back or stops :  
Potter and clay endure.

## XXVIII.

He fixed thee mid this dance  
Of plastic circumstance,  
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst  
fain arrest :

Machinery just meant  
To give thy soul its bent,  
Try thee, and turn thee forth suffi-  
ciently impressed.

## XXX.

What though the earlier grooves  
Which ran the laughing loves  
Around thy base, no longer pause and  
press ?

What though, about thy rim,  
Skull-things in order grim  
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the  
sterner stress ?

## XXXI.

Look not thou down but up !  
To uses of a cup,  
The festal board, lamp's flash, and  
trumpet's peal,  
The new wine's foaming flow,  
The Master's lips aglow !  
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what  
needst thou with earth's wheel ?

## XXXII.

But I need, now as then,  
Thee, God, who mouldest men !  
And since, not even while the whirl  
was worst,  
Did I, — to the wheel of life  
With shapes and colors rife,  
Bound dizzily, — mistake my end, to  
slake Thy thirst :

## XXXIII.

So, take and use Thy work,  
Amend what flaws may lurk,  
What strain o' the stuff, what warp-  
ings past the aim !  
My times be in Thy hand !  
Perfect the cup as planned !  
Let age approve of youth, and death  
complete the same !

## EPILOGUE.

FIRST SPEAKER, *as David.*

## I.

ON the first of the Feast of Feasts,  
The Dedication Day,  
When the Levites joined the priests  
At the altar in robed array,  
Gave signal to sound and say, —

## II.

When the thousands, rear and van,  
Swarming with one accord,  
Became as a single man  
(Look, gesture, thought, and word),  
In praising and thanking the Lord, —

## III.

When the singers lift up their voice,  
And the trumpets made endeavor,  
Sounding, "In God rejoice !"  
Saying, "In Him rejoice  
Whose mercy endureth forever !"

## IV.

Then the Temple filled with a cloud,  
Even the House of the Lord ;  
Porch bent and pillar bowed :  
For the presence of the Lord,  
In the glory of His cloud,  
Had filled the House of the Lord.

SECOND SPEAKER, *as Renan.*

Gone now ! All gone across the dark  
so far,  
Sharpening fast, shuddering ever,  
shutting still,  
Dwindling into the distance, dies  
that star  
Which came, stood, opened once !  
We gazed our fill  
With upturned faces on as real a Face  
That, stooping from grave music  
and mild fire,  
Took in our homage, made a visible  
place  
Through many a depth of glory,  
gyre on gyre,  
For the dim human tribute. Was  
this true ?  
Could man indeed avail, mere praise  
of his,  
To help by rapture God's own rap-  
ture too,  
Thrill with a heart's red tinge that  
pure pale bliss ?  
Why did it end ? Who failed to beat  
the breast,  
And shriek, and throw the arms  
protesting wide,  
When a first shadow showed the star  
addressed  
Itself to motion, and on either side  
The rims contracted as the rays  
retired ;  
The music, like a fountain's sicken-  
ing pulse,

Subsided on itself : a while transpired  
 Some vestige of a Face no pangs  
 convulse,  
 No prayers retard ; then even this  
 was gone,  
 Lost in the night at last. We, lone  
 and left  
 Silent through centuries, ever and  
 anon  
 Venture to probe again the vault  
 bereft  
 Of all now save the lesser lights, a mist  
 Of multitudinous points, yet suns,  
 men say —  
 And this leaps ruby, this lurks ame-  
 thyst,  
 But where may hide what came  
 and loved our clay ?  
 How shall the sage detect in yon ex-  
 pance  
 The star which chose to stoop and  
 stay for us ?  
 Unroll the records ! Hailed ye such  
 advance  
 Indeed, and did your hope evanish  
 thus ?  
 Watchers of twilight, is the worst  
 averred ?  
 We shall not look up, know our-  
 selves are seen,  
 Speak, and be sure that we again are  
 heard,  
 Acting or suffering, have the disk's  
 serene  
 Reflect our life, absorb an earthly  
 flame,  
 Nor doubt that, were mankind inert  
 and numb,  
 Its core had never crimsoned all the  
 same,  
 Nor, missing ours, its music fallen  
 dumb ?  
 Oh, dread succession to a dizzy post,  
 Sad sway of sceptre whose mere  
 touch appals,  
 Ghastly dethronement, cursed by  
 those the most  
 On whose repugnant brow the  
 crown next falls !

## THIRD SPEAKER.

I.  
 Witless alike of will and way divine,  
 How heaven's high with earth's low  
 should intertwine !  
 Friends, I have seen through your  
 eyes : now use mine !

II.  
 Take the least man of all mankind,  
 as I ;  
 Look at his head and heart, find how  
 and why  
 He differs from his fellows utterly :

III.  
 Then, like me, watch when nature by  
 degrees  
 Grows alive round him, as in Arctic  
 seas  
 (They said of old) the instinctive  
 water flees

IV.  
 Toward some elected point of central  
 rock,  
 As though, for its sake only, roamed  
 the flock  
 Of waves about the waste : a while  
 they mock

V.  
 With radiance caught for the occa-  
 sion, — hues  
 Of blackest hell now, now such reds  
 and blues  
 As only heaven could fitly interfuse, —

VI.  
 The mimic monarch of the whirlpool,  
 king  
 O' the current for a minute : then they  
 wring  
 Up by the roots and oversweep the  
 thing,

VII.  
 And hasten off, to play again else-  
 where  
 The same part, choose another peak  
 as bare,  
 They find and flatter, feast and fin-  
 ish there.

VIII.  
 When you see what I tell you, — na-  
 ture dance  
 About each man of us, retire, ad-  
 vance,  
 As though the pageant's end were to  
 enhance

His worth, and—once t'ne life, his  
product, gained—  
Roll away elsewhere, keep the strife  
sustained,  
And show thus real, a thing the North  
but feigned,—

X.  
When you acknowledge that one  
world could do  
All the diverse work, old yet ever  
new,  
Divide us, each from other, me from  
you,—

XI.  
Why! where's the need of Temple,  
when the walls  
O' the world are that? What use of  
swells and falls  
From Levites' choir, priests' cries,  
and trumpet-calls?

XII.  
That one Face, far from vanish, rather  
grows,  
Or decomposes but to recompose,  
Become my universe that feels and  
knows!

A WALL.

I.  
On the old wall here! How I could  
pass  
Life in a long midsummer day,  
My feet confined to a plot of grass,  
My eyes from a wall not once away!

II.  
And lush and lithe do the creepers  
clothe  
Yon wall I watch, with a wealth of  
green:  
Its bald red bricks draped, nothing  
loth,  
In lappets of tangle they laugh be-  
tween.

III.  
Now, what is it makes pulsate the  
robe?  
Why tremble the sprays? What  
life o'erbrims

The body,—the house, no eye can  
probe,—  
Divined as, beneath a robe, the  
limbs?

IV.  
And there again! But my heart may  
guess  
Who tripped behind; and she sang  
perhaps:  
So, the old wall throbbed, and its  
life's excess  
Died out and away in the leafy  
wraps.

V.  
Wall upon wall are between us: life  
And song should away from heart  
to heart!  
I—prison-bird, with a ruddy strife  
At breast, and a lip whence storm-  
notes start—

VI.  
Hold on, hope hard in the subtle thing  
That's spirit: though cloistered fast,  
soar free;  
Account as wood, brick, stone, this  
ring  
Of the rueful neighbors, and—forth  
to thee!

APPARITIONS.

I.  
Such a starved bank of moss  
Till, that May-morn,  
Blue ran the flash across:  
Violets were born!

II.  
Sky—what a scowl of cloud  
Till, near and far,  
Ray on ray split the shroud:  
Splendid, a star!

III.  
World—how it walled about  
Life with disgrace  
Till God's own smile came out:  
That was thy face!

## NATURAL MAGIC.

## I.

ALL I can say is — I saw it !  
 The room was as bare as your hand.  
 I locked in the swarth little lady, —  
 I swear,  
 From the head to the foot of her —  
 well, quite as bare !  
 "No Nautch shall cheat me," said I,  
 "taking my stand  
 At this bolt which I draw !" And  
 this bolt — I withdraw it,  
 And there laughs the lady, not bare,  
 but embowered  
 With — who knows what verdure,  
 o'erfruted, o'erflowered ?  
 Impossible ! Only — I saw it !

## II.

All I can sing is — I feel it !  
 This life was as blank as that room ;  
 I let you pass in here. Precaution,  
 indeed ?  
 Walls, ceiling, and floor, — not a  
 chance for a weed !  
 Wide opens the entrance : where's  
 cold now, where's gloom ?  
 No May to sow seed here, no June to  
 reveal it,  
 Behold you enshrined in these blooms  
 of your bringing,  
 These fruits of your bearing — nay,  
 birds of your winging !  
 A fairy-tale ! Only — I feel it !

## MAGICAL NATURE.

## I.

FLOWER — I never fancied, jewel —  
 I profess you !  
 Bright I see and soft I feel the out-  
 side of a flower.  
 Save but glow inside and — jewel, I  
 should guess you,  
 Dim to sight and rough to touch :  
 the glory is the dower.

## II.

You, forsooth, a flower ? Nay, my  
 love, a jewel —  
 Jewel at no mercy of a moment in  
 your prime !

Time may fray the flower-face : kind  
 be time or cruel,  
 Jewel, from each facet, flash your  
 laugh at time !

## GARDEN FANCIES.

## I. THE FLOWER'S NAME.

## I.

HERE's the garden she walked across,  
 Arm in my arm, such a short while  
 since :  
 Hark, now I push its wicket, the  
 moss  
 Hinders the hinges and makes them  
 wince !  
 She must have reached this shrub ere  
 she turned,  
 As back with that murmur the  
 wicket swung ;  
 For she laid the poor snail, my chance  
 foot spurned,  
 To feed and forget it the leaves  
 among.

## II.

Down this side of the gravel-walk  
 She went while her robe's edge  
 brushed the box :  
 And here she paused in her gracious  
 talk  
 To point me a moth on the milk-  
 white phlox.  
 Roses, ranged in valiant row,  
 I will never think that she passed  
 you by !  
 She loves you noble roses, I know ;  
 But yonder, see, where the rock-  
 plants lie !

## III.

This flower she stopped at, finger on  
 lip,  
 Stooped over, in doubt, as settling  
 its claim ;  
 Till she gave me, with pride to make  
 no slip,  
 Its soft meandering Spanish name.  
 What a name ! Was it love, or praise ?  
 Speech half-asleep, or song half-  
 awake ?  
 I must learn Spanish, one of these  
 days,  
 Only for that slow sweet name's  
 sake.



"Lay on the grass and forgot the oaf  
Over a jolly chapter of Rabelais." — Page 133.





## IV.

Roses, — if I live and do well,  
I may bring her, one of these days,  
To fix you fast with as fine a spell,  
Fit you each with his Spanish  
phrase.  
But do not detain me now ; for she  
lingers  
There, like sunshine over the ground,  
And ever I see her soft white fingers  
Searching after the bud she found.

## V.

Flower, you Spaniard, look that you  
grow not,  
Stay as you are and be loved fore-  
ever !  
Bud, if I kiss you 'tis that you blow  
not,  
Mind, the shut pink mouth opens  
never !  
For while it pouts, her fingers wres-  
tle,  
Twinkling the audacious leaves be-  
tween,  
Till round they turn and down they  
nestle ;  
Is not the dear mark still to be  
seen ?

## VI.

Where I find her not, beauties vanish ;  
Whither I follow her, beauties flee :  
Is there no method to tell her in  
Spanish  
June's twice June since she breathed  
it with me ?  
Come, bud, show me the least of her  
traces,  
Treasure my lady's lightest footfall !  
— Ah, you may flout and turn up your  
faces —  
Roses, you are not so fair after all !

## II.

SIBRANDUS SCHAFNABURGENSIS.

## I.

PLAGUE take all your pedants, say I !  
He who wrote what I hold in my  
hand,  
Centuries back was so good as to die,  
Leaving this rubbish to cumber the  
land ;  
This, that was a book in its time,  
Printed on paper and bound in  
leather,

Last month in the white of a matin-  
prime  
Just when the birds sang all to-  
gether.

## II.

Into the garden I brought it to read,  
And under the arbutue and laurus-  
tine  
Read it, so help me grace in my need,  
From title-page to closing line.  
Chapter on chapter did I count,  
As a curious traveller counts Stone-  
henge ;  
Added up the mortal amount,  
And then proceeded to my revenge.

## III.

Yonder's a plum-tree with a crevice  
An owl would build in, were he but  
sage ;  
For a lap of moss, like a fine pont  
levis  
In a castle of the middle age,  
Joins to a lip of gum, pure amber ;  
When he'd be private, there might  
he spend  
Hours alone in his lady's chamber :  
Into this crevice I dropped ou  
friend.

## IV.

Splash, went he, as under he ducked,  
— At the bottom, I knew, rain-drip  
pings stagnate ;  
Next, a handful of blossoms I plucked  
To bury him with, my bookshelf's  
magnate ;  
Then I went indoors, brought out a  
loaf,  
Half a cheese, and a bottle of Cha-  
blis ;  
Lay on the grass and forgot the oaf  
Over a jolly chapter of Rabelais.

## V.

Now, this morning, betwixt the moss  
And gum that locked our friend in  
limbo,  
A spider had spun his web across,  
And sat in the midst with arm-  
akinbo :  
So, I took pity, for learning's sake,  
And, *de profundis, accentibus letis,*  
*Cantate!* quoth I, as I got a rake ;  
And up I fished his delectable trea-  
tise.

## VI.

Here you have it, dry in the sun,  
 With all the binding all of a blister,  
 And great blue spots where the ink  
 has run,  
 And reddish streaks that wink and  
 glisten  
 O'er the page so beautifully yellow :  
 Oh, well have the droppings played  
 their tricks !  
 Did he guess how toadstools grow,  
 this fellow ?  
 Here's one stuck in his chapter six !

## VII.

How did he like it when the live  
 creatures  
 Ticked and toused and browsed  
 him all over,  
 And worm, slug, eft, with serious  
 features,  
 Came in, each one, for his right of  
 trover ?  
 - When the water-beetle with great  
 blind deaf face  
 Made of her eggs the stately de-  
 posit,  
 And the newt borrowed just so much  
 of the preface  
 As tiled in the top of his black  
 wife's closet ?

## VIII.

All that life and fun and romping,  
 All that frisking and twisting and  
 coupling,  
 While slowly our poor friend's leaves  
 were swamping,  
 And clasps were cracking, and cov-  
 ers suppling !  
 As if you had carried sour John  
 Knox  
 To the playhouse at Paris, Vienna,  
 or Munich,  
 Fastened him into a front-row box,  
 And danced off the ballet with  
 trousers and tunic.

## IX.

Come, old martyr ! What, torment  
 enough is it ?  
 Back to my room shall you take  
 your sweet self.  
 Good-by, mother-beetle ; husband-  
 eft, *sufficit* !  
 See the snug niche I have made on  
 my shelf !

A.'s book shall prop you up, B.'s shall  
 cover you,  
 Here's C. to be grave with, or D. to  
 be gay,  
 And with E. on each side, and F. right  
 over you,  
 Dry-rot at ease till the Judgment-  
 day !

## IN THREE DAYS.

## I.

So, I shall see her in three days  
 And just one night, but nights are  
 short,  
 Then two long hours, and that is  
 morn.  
 See how I come, unchanged, unworn !  
 Feel, where my life broke off from  
 thine,  
 How fresh the splinters keep and  
 fine, —  
 Only a touch, and we combine !

## II.

Too long, this time of year, the days !  
 But nights, at least the nights are  
 short.  
 As night shows where her one moon  
 is,  
 A hand's-breadth of pure light and  
 bliss,  
 So life's night gives my lady birth  
 And my eyes hold her ! What is  
 worth  
 The rest of heaven, the rest of earth ?

## III.

O loaded curls ! release your store  
 Of warmth and scent, as once before  
 The tingling hair did, lights and darks  
 Outbreaking into fairy sparks,  
 When under curl and curl I pried  
 After the warmth and scent inside,  
 Through lights and darks how mani-  
 fold —  
 The dark inspired, the light con-  
 trolled,  
 As early Art embrowns the gold !

## IV.

What great fear, should one say,  
 "Three days,  
 That change the world, might change  
 as well

Your fortune ; and if joy delays,  
Be happy that no worse befell !”  
What small fear, if another says,  
“ Three days and one shortnight are  
side

May throw no shadow on your ways ;  
But years must teem with change  
untried,

With chance not easily defied,  
With an end somewhere undescried.”  
No fear ! — or, if a fear be born  
This minute, fear dies out in scorn.  
Fear ? I shall see her in three days  
And one night, now the nights are  
short,

Then just two hours, and that is  
morn !

THE LOST MISTRESS.

I.

ALL's over, then : does truth sound  
bitter

As one at first believes ?  
Hark, 'tis the sparrows' good-night  
twitter

About your cottage eaves !

II.

And the leaf-buds on the vine are  
woolly,

I noticed that to-day ;  
One day more bursts them open fully :  
You know the red turns gray.

III.

To-morrow we meet the same then,  
dearest ?

May I take your hand in mine ?  
Mere friends are we, — well, friends  
the merest  
Keep much that I resign.

IV.

Each glance of the eye so bright and  
black,

Though I keep with heart's en-  
deavor, —

Your voice, when you wish the snow-  
drops back,

Though it stay in my soul forever, —

v.

Yet I will but say what mere friends  
say,

Or only a thought stronger ;  
I will hold your hand but as long as  
all may,

Or so very little longer !

ONE WAY OF LOVE.

I.

ALL June I bound the rose in sheaves.  
Now, rose by rose, I strip the leaves  
And strew them where Pauline may  
pass.

She will not turn aside ? Alas !  
Let them lie. Suppose they die ?  
The chance was they might take her  
eye.

II.

How many a month I strove to suit  
These stubborn fingers to the lute !  
To-day I venture all I know.  
She will not hear my music ? So !  
Break the string ; fold music's wing :  
Suppose Pauline had bade me sing !

III.

My whole life long I learned to love.  
This hour my utmost art I prove  
And speak my passion — heaven or  
hell ?

She will not give me heaven ? 'Tis  
well !

Lose who may — I still can say,  
Those who win heaven, blest are  
they !

RUDEL TO THE LADY OF  
TRIPOLI.

I.

I KNOW a Mount, the gracious Sun  
perceives

First, when he visits, last, too, when  
he leaves

The world ; and, vainly favored, it  
repays

The day-long glory of his steadfast  
gaze

By no change of its large calm front  
 of snow.  
 And, underneath the Mount, a Flower  
 I know,  
 He cannot have perceived, that  
 changes ever  
 At his approach; and, in the lost  
 endeavor  
 To live his life, has parted, one by  
 one,  
 With all a flower's true graces, for the  
 grace  
 Of being but a foolish mimic sun,  
 With ray-like florets round a disk-  
 like face.  
 Men nobly call by many a name the  
 Mount  
 As over many a land of theirs its  
 large  
 Calm front of snow like a triumphal  
 targe  
 Is reared, and still with old names,  
 fresh names vie,  
 Each to its proper praise and own ac-  
 count:  
 Men call the Flower, the Sunflower,  
 sportively.

## II.

O Angel of the East! one, one gold  
 look  
 Across the waters to this twilight  
 nook,  
 —The far sad waters, Angel, to this  
 nook!

## III.

Dear Pilgrim, art thou for the East  
 indeed?  
 Go!—saying ever as thou dost pro-  
 ceed,  
 That I, French Rudel, choose for my  
 device  
 A sunflower outspread like a sacri-  
 fice  
 Before its idol. See! These inex-  
 pert  
 And hurried fingers could not fail to  
 hurt  
 The woven picture; 'tis a woman's  
 skill  
 Indeed; but nothing baffled me, so,  
 ill  
 Or well, the work is finished. Say,  
 men feed  
 On songs I sing, and therefore bask  
 the bees  
 On my flower's breast as on a plat-  
 form broad:

But, as the flower's concern is not  
 for these  
 But solely for the sun, so men ap-  
 plaud  
 In vain this Rudel, he not looking  
 here  
 But to the East—the East! Go, say  
 this, Pilgrim dear!

## NUMPHOLEPTOS.

STILL you stand, still you listen, still  
 you smile!  
 Still melts your moonbeam through  
 me, white a while,  
 Softening, sweetening, till sweet and  
 soft  
 Increase so round this heart of mine,  
 that oft  
 I could believe your moonbeam-smile  
 has past  
 The pallid limit and, transformed at  
 last,  
 Lies, sunlight and salvation—warms  
 the soul  
 It sweetens, softens! Would you  
 pass that goal,  
 Gain love's birth at the limit's hap-  
 pier verge,  
 And, where an iridescence lurks, but  
 urge  
 The hesitating pallor on to prime  
 Of dawn!—true blood-streaked, sun-  
 warmth, action-time,  
 By heart-pulse ripened to a ruddy glow  
 Of gold above my clay—I scarce  
 should know  
 From gold's self, thus suffused! For  
 gold means love.  
 What means the sad slow silver smile  
 above  
 My clay but pity, pardon?—at the  
 best,  
 But acquiescence that I take my rest,  
 Contented to be clay, while in your  
 heaven  
 The sun reserves love for the Spirit-  
 Seven  
 Companioning God's throne they lamp  
 before,  
 —Leaves earth a mute waste only  
 wandered o'er  
 By that pale soft sweet disem-  
 passioned moon  
 Which smiles me slow forgiveness!  
 Such, the boon

I beg? Nay, dear, submit to this—  
 just this  
 Supreme endeavor! As my lips now  
 kiss  
 Your feet, my arms convulse your  
 shrouding robe,  
 My eyes, acquainted with the dust,  
 dare probe  
 Your eyes above for—what, if born,  
 would blind  
 Mine with redundant bliss, as flash  
 may find  
 The inert nerve, sting awake the pal-  
 sied limb,  
 Bid with life's ecstasy sense over-  
 brim  
 And suck back death in the resurging  
 joy—  
 So grant me—love, whole, sole, with-  
 out alloy!

Vainly! The promise withers! I  
 employ  
 Lips, arms, eyes, pray the prayer  
 which finds the word,  
 Make the appeal which must be felt,  
 not heard,  
 And none the more is changed your  
 calm regard:  
 Rather, its sweet and soft grow harsh  
 and hard—  
 Forbearance, then repulsion, then dis-  
 dain.  
 Avert the rest! I rise, see!—make,  
 again  
 Once more, the old departure for  
 some track  
 Untried yet through a world which  
 brings me back  
 Ever thus fruitlessly to find your  
 feet,  
 To fix your eyes, to pray the soft and  
 sweet  
 Which smile there—take from his  
 new pilgrimage  
 Your outcast, once your inmate, and  
 assuage  
 With love—not placid pardon now—  
 his thirst  
 For a mere drop from out the ocean  
 erst  
 He drank at! Well, the quest shall  
 be renewed.  
 Fear nothing! Though I linger, un-  
 imbued  
 With any drop, my lips thus close. I  
 go!  
 So did I leave you, I have found you  
 so,

And doubtlessly, if fated to return,  
 So shall my pleading persevere and  
 earn  
 Pardon—not love—in that same  
 smile, I learn,  
 And lose the meaning of, to learn  
 once more,  
 Vainly!

What fairy track do I ex-  
 plore?  
 What magic hall return to, like the  
 gem  
 Centuply-angled o'er a diadem?  
 You dwell there, hearted; from your  
 midmost home  
 Rays forth—through that fantastic  
 world I roam  
 Ever—from centre to circumference,  
 Shaft upon colored shaft: this crim-  
 sons thence,  
 That purples out its precinct through  
 the waste.  
 Surely I had your sanction when I  
 faced,  
 Fared forth upon that untried yellow  
 ray  
 Whence I retrack my steps? They  
 end to-day  
 Where they began, before your feet,  
 beneath  
 Your eyes, your smile: the blade is  
 shut in sheath,  
 Fire quenched in flint; irradiation,  
 late  
 Triumphant through the distance,  
 finds its fate,  
 Merged in your blank pure soul, alike  
 the source  
 And tomb of that prismatic glow:  
 divorce  
 Absolute, all-conclusive! Forth I  
 fared,  
 Treading the lambent flamelet: little  
 cared  
 If now its flickering took the topaz  
 tint,  
 If now my dull-caked path gave sul-  
 phury hint  
 Of subterranean rage—no stay nor  
 stint  
 To yellow, since you sanctioned that  
 I bathe,  
 Burnish me, soul and body, swim and  
 swathe  
 In yellow license. Here I reek suf-  
 fused  
 With crocus, saffron, orange, as I  
 used

With scarlet, purple, every dye o' the  
 bow  
 Born of the storm-cloud. As before,  
 you show  
 Scarce recognition, no approval, some  
 Mistrust, more wonder at a man be-  
 come  
 Monstrous in garb, nay—flesh dis-  
 guised as well,  
 Through his adventure. Whatsoe'er  
 befell,  
 I followed, wheresoe'er it wound, that  
 vein  
 You authorized should leave your  
 whiteness, stain  
 Earth's sombre stretch beyond your  
 midmost place  
 Of vantage, — trode that tinct where-  
 of the trace  
 On garb and flesh repel you! Yes, I  
 plead  
 Your own permission—your com-  
 mand, indeed,  
 That who would worthily retain the  
 love  
 Must share the knowledge shrined  
 those eyes above,  
 Go boldly on adventure, break  
 through bounds  
 O' the quintessential whiteness that  
 surrounds  
 Your feet, obtain experience of each  
 tinge  
 That bickers forth to broaden out,  
 impinge  
 Plainer his foot its pathway all dis-  
 tinct  
 From every other. Ah, the wonder,  
 linked  
 With fear, as exploration manifests  
 What agency it was first tipped the  
 crests  
 Of unnamed wild-flower, soon pro-  
 truding grew  
 Portentous mid the sands, as when  
 his hue  
 Betrays him and the burrowing snake  
 gleams through;  
 Till, last . . . but why parade more  
 shame and pain?  
 Are not the proofs upon me? Here  
 again  
 I pass into your presence, I receive  
 Your smile of pity, pardon, and I  
 leave . . .  
 No, not this last of times I leave you,  
 mute,  
 Submitted to my penance, so my  
 foot

May yet again adventure, tread, from  
 source  
 To issue, one more ray of rays which  
 course  
 Each other, at your bidding, from the  
 sphere  
 Silver and sweet, their birthplace,  
 down that drear  
 Dark of the world,—you promise  
 shall return  
 Your pilgrim jewelled as with drops  
 o' the urn  
 The rainbow paints from, and no  
 smatch at all  
 Of ghastliness at edge of some cloud-  
 pall  
 Heaven covers before, as earth awaits  
 the fall  
 O' the bolt and flash of doom. Who  
 trusts your word  
 Tries the adventure: and returns—  
 absurd  
 As frightful—in that sulphur-steeped  
 disguise  
 Mocking the priestly cloth-of-gold,  
 sole prize  
 The arch-heretic was wont to bear  
 away  
 Until he reached the burning. No, I  
 say:  
 No fresh adventure! No more seek-  
 ing love  
 At end of toil, and finding, calm  
 above  
 My passion, the old statuesque re-  
 gard,  
 The sad petrific smile!

O you—less hard  
 And hateful than mistaken and ob-  
 tuse  
 Unreason of a she-intelligence!  
 You very woman with the pert pre-  
 tence  
 To match the male achievement!  
 Like enough!  
 Ay, you were easy victors, did the  
 rough  
 Straightway efface itself to smooth,  
 the gruff  
 Grind down and grow a whisper,—  
 did man's truth  
 Subdue, for sake of chivalry and  
 ruth,  
 Its rapier edge to suit the bulrush-  
 spear  
 Womanly falsehood fights with! O  
 that ear

All fact pricks rudely, that thrice-  
superfine  
Feminity of sense, with right divine  
To waive all process, take result  
stain-free  
From out the very muck wherein . . .  
Ah me !  
The true slave's querulous outbreak !  
All the rest  
Be resignation ! Forth at your behest  
I fare. Who knows but this — the  
crimson-quest —  
May deepen to a sunrise, not decay  
To that cold sad sweet smile ? — which  
I obey.

## APPEARANCES.

## I.

AND so you found that poor room  
dull,  
Dark, hardly to your taste, my  
Dear ?  
Its features seemed unbeautiful :  
But this I know — 'twas there, not  
here,  
You plighted troth to me, the word  
Which — ask that poor room how it  
heard !

## II.

And this rich room obtains your praise  
Unqualified, — so bright, so fair,  
So all whereat perfection stays ?  
Ay, but remember — here, not there,  
The other word was spoken ! Ask  
This rich room how you dropped the  
mask !

## THE WORST OF IT.

## I.

WOULD it were I had been false, not  
you !  
I that am nothing, not you that are  
all :  
I, never the worse for a touch or two  
On my speckled hide ; not you, the  
pride  
Of the day, my swan, that a first  
fleck's fall  
On her wonder of white must un-  
swan, undo !

## II.

I had dipped in life's struggle and,  
out again,  
Bore specks of it here, there, easy  
to see,  
When I found my swan and the cure  
was plain ;  
The dull turned bright as I caught  
your white  
On my bosom : you saved me — saved  
in vain  
If you ruined yourself, and all  
through me !

## III.

Yes, all through the speckled beast  
I am,  
Who taught you to stoop ; you gave  
me yourself,  
And bound your soul by the vows  
which damn :  
Since on better thought you break,  
as you ought,  
Vows — words, no angel set down,  
some elf  
Mistook, — for an oath, an epigram !

## IV.

Yes, might I judge you, here were my  
heart,  
And a hundred its like, to treat as  
you pleased !  
I choose to be yours, for my proper  
part,  
Yours, leave me or take, or mar or  
make ;  
If I acquiesce, why should you be  
teased  
With the conscience-prick and the  
memory-smart ?

## V.

But what will God say ? O my  
Sweet,  
Think, and be sorry you did this  
thing !  
Though earth were unworthy to feel  
your feet,  
There's a heaven above may de-  
serve your love :  
Should you forfeit heaven for a snapt  
gold ring  
And a promise broke, were it just  
or meet ?

## VI.

And I to have tempted you! I, who  
 tried  
 Your soul, no doubt, till it sank!  
 Unwise,  
 I loved and was lowly, loved and  
 aspired,  
 Loved, grieving or glad, till I made  
 you mad,  
 And you meant to have hated and  
 despised—  
 Whereas, you deceived me nor in-  
 quired!

## VII.

She, ruined? How? No heaven for  
 her?  
 Crowns to give, and none for the  
 brow  
 That looked like marble and smelt  
 like myrrh?  
 Shall the robe be worn, and the  
 palm-branch borne,  
 And she go graceless, she graced now  
 Beyond all saints, as themselves  
 aver?

## VIII.

Hardly! That must be understood!  
 The earth is your place of penance,  
 then;  
 And what will it prove? I desire  
 your good,  
 But, plot as I may, I can find no  
 way  
 How a blow should fall, such as falls  
 on men,  
 Nor prove too much for your woman-  
 hood.

## IX.

It will come, I suspect, at the end of  
 life,  
 When you walk alone, and review  
 the past;  
 And I, who so long shall have done  
 with strife,  
 And journeyed my stage and earned  
 my wage  
 And retired as was right,—I am  
 called at last  
 When the Devil stabs you, to lend  
 the knife.

## X.

He stabs for the minute of trivial  
 wrong,  
 Nor the other hours are able to  
 save,

The happy, that lasted my whole life  
 long:  
 For a promise broke, not for first  
 words spoke,  
 The true, the only, that turn my grave  
 To a blaze of joy and a crash of song.

## XI.

Witness beforehand! Off I trip  
 On a safe path gay through the  
 flowers you flung:  
 My very name made great by your lip,  
 And my heart aglow with the good  
 I know  
 Of a perfect year when we both were  
 young,  
 And I tasted the angels' fellowship.

## XII.

And witness, moreover . . . Ah, but  
 wait!  
 I spy the loop whence an arrow  
 shoots!  
 It may be for yourself, when you  
 meditate,  
 That you grieve—for slain ruth,  
 murdered truth:  
 "Though falsehood escape in the end,  
 what boots?  
 How truth would have triumphed!"  
 —you sigh too late.

## XIII.

Ay, who would have triumphed like  
 you, I say!  
 Well, it is lost now; well, you must  
 bear,  
 Abide and grow fit for a better day.  
 You should hardly grudge, could I  
 be your judge!  
 But hush! For you, can be no de-  
 spair:  
 There's amends: 'tis a secret; hope  
 and pray!

## XIV.

For I was true at least—oh, true  
 enough!  
 And, Dear, truth is not as good as  
 it seems!  
 Commend me to conscience! Idle  
 stuff!  
 Much help is in mine, as I mope and  
 pine,  
 And skulk through day, and scowl in  
 my dreams  
 At my swan's obtaining the crow's  
 rebuff.



## xv.

Men tell me of truth now — "False!"  
 I cry:  
 Of beauty — "A mask, friend! Look  
 beneath!"  
 We take our own method, the Devil  
 and I,  
 With pleasant and fair and wise  
 and rare:  
 And the best we wish to what lives,  
 is — death;  
 Which even in wishing, perhaps we  
 lie!

## xvi.

Far better commit a fault and have  
 done —  
 As you, Dear! — forever: and  
 choose the pure,  
 And look where the healing waters  
 run,  
 And strive and strain to be good  
 again,  
 And a place in the other world in-  
 sure,  
 All glass and gold, with God for its  
 sun.

## xvii.

Misery! What shall I say or do?  
 I cannot advise, or, at least, per-  
 suade.  
 Most like, you are glad you deceived  
 me — rue  
 No whit of the wrong: you endured  
 too long,  
 Have done no evil and want no aid,  
 Will live the old life out and chance  
 the new.

## xviii.

And your sentence is written all the  
 same,  
 And I can do nothing, — pray, per-  
 haps:  
 But somehow the world pursues its  
 game, —  
 If I pray, if I curse, — for better or  
 worse:  
 And my faith is torn to a thousand  
 scraps,  
 And my heart feels ice while my  
 words breathe flame.

## xix.

Dear, I look from my hiding-place.  
 Are you still so fair? Have you  
 still the eyes?

Be happy! Add but the other grace,  
 Be good! Why want what the  
 angels vaunt?  
 I knew you once: but in Paradise,  
 If we meet, I will pass nor turn  
 my face.

## TOO LATE.

## I.

HERE was I with my arm and heart  
 And brain, all yours for a word, a  
 want  
 Put into a look — just a look, your  
 part, —  
 While mine, to repay it . . . vainest  
 vaunt,  
 Were the woman, that's dead, alive  
 to hear,  
 Had her lover, that's lost, love's  
 proof to show!  
 But I cannot show it; you cannot  
 speak  
 From the churchyard neither, miles  
 removed,  
 Though I feel by a pulse within my  
 cheek,  
 Which stabs and stops, that the  
 woman I loved  
 Needs help in her grave and finds  
 none near,  
 Wants warmth from the heart which  
 sends it — so!

## II.

Did I speak once angrily, all the drear  
 days  
 You lived, you woman I loved so  
 well,  
 Who married the other? Blame or  
 praise,  
 Where was the use then? Time  
 would tell,  
 And the end declare what man for you,  
 What woman for me was the choice  
 of God.  
 But, Edith dead! no doubting more!  
 I used to sit and look at my life  
 As it rippled and ran till, right before,  
 A great stone stopped it: oh, the  
 strife  
 Of waves at the stone some devil  
 threw  
 In my life's mid-current, thwarting  
 God!

## III.

But either I thought, "They may  
churn and chide  
A while, — my waves which came  
for their joy  
And found this horrible stone full-  
tide :  
Yet I see just a thread escape,  
deploy  
Through the evening-country, silent  
and safe,  
And it suffers no more till it finds  
the sea."  
Or else I would think, "Perhaps some  
night  
When new things happen, a meteor-  
ball  
Mayslip through the sky in a line of  
light,  
And earth breathe hard, and land-  
marks fall,  
And my waves no longer champ nor  
chafe,  
Since a stone will have rolled from  
its place : let be !"

## IV.

But, dead ! All's done with : wait  
who may,  
Watch and wear and wonder who  
will.  
Oh, my whole life that ends to-day !  
Oh, my soul's sentence, sounding  
still,  
"The woman is dead, that was none  
of his ;  
And the man, that was none of hers,  
may go !"  
There's only the past left : worry that !  
Wreak, like a bull, on the empty  
coat,  
Rage, its late wearer is laughing at !  
Tear the collar to rags, having  
missed his throat ;  
Strike stupidly on — "This, this, and  
this,  
Where I would that a bosom re-  
ceived the blow !"

## V.

I ought to have done more : once my  
speech  
And once your answer, and there,  
the end,  
And Edith was henceforth out of  
reach !  
Why, men do more to deserve a  
friend,

Be rid of a foe, get rich, grow wise,  
Nor, folding their arms, stare fate in  
the face.  
Why, better even have burst like a  
thief  
And borne you away to a rock for  
us two,  
In a moment's horror, bright, bloody,  
and brief,  
Then changed to myself again — "I  
slew  
Myself in that moment ; a ruffian  
lies  
Somewhere : your slave, see, born  
in his place !"

## VI.

What did the other do ? You be  
judge !  
Look at us, Edith ! Here are we  
both !  
Give him his six whole years : I  
grudge  
None of the life with you, nay, I  
loathe  
Myself that I grudged his start in  
advance  
Of me who could overtake and  
pass.  
But, as if he loved you ! No, not  
he,  
Nor any one else in the world, 'tis  
plain :  
Who ever heard that another, free  
As I, young, prosperous, sound, and  
sane,  
Poured life ont, proffered it — "Half  
a glance  
Of those eyes of yours and I drop  
the glass !"

## VII.

Handsome, were you ? 'Tis more  
than they held,  
More than they said ; I was 'ware  
and watched :  
I was the 'scapegrace, this rat belled  
The cat, this fool got his whiskers  
scratched :  
The others ? No head that was  
turned, no heart  
Broken, my lady, assure yourself !  
Each soon made his mind up ; so and  
so  
Married a dancer, such and such  
Stole his friend's wife, stagnated slow,  
Or mandered, unable to do as  
much,

And muttered of peace where he had  
no part :  
While, hid in the closet, laid on the  
shelf, —

## VIII.

On the whole, you were let alone, I  
think !  
So, you looked to the other, who  
acquiesced ;  
My rival, the proud man, — prize  
your pink  
Of poets ! A poet he was ! I've  
guessed :  
He rhymed you his rubbish nobody  
read,  
Loved you and doved you — did not  
I laugh !  
There was a prize ! But we both  
were tried.  
O heart of mine, marked broad  
with her mark,  
*Tekel*, found wanting, set aside,  
Scorned ! See, I bleed these tears  
in the dark  
Till comfort come and the last be  
bled :  
He ? He is tagging your epitaph.

## IX.

If it would only come over again !  
— Time to be patient with me, and  
probe  
This heart till you punctured the  
proper vein,  
Just to learn what blood is : twitch  
the robe  
From that blank lay-figure your fancy  
draped,  
Prick the leathern heart till the —  
verses spirt !  
And late it was easy ; late, you  
walked  
Where a friend might meet you ;  
Edith's name  
Arose to one's lip if one laughed or  
talked ;  
If I heard good news, you heard the  
same ;  
When I woke, I knew that your breath  
escaped ;  
I could bide my time, keep alive,  
alert.

## x.

And alive I shall keep and long, you  
will see !  
I knew a man, was kicked like a  
dog

From gutter to cesspool ; what cared  
he

So long as he picked from the filth  
his prog ?

He saw youth, beauty, and genius die,  
And jollily lived to his hundredth  
year.

But I will live otherwise : none of  
such life !

At once I begin as I mean to end.  
Go on with the world, get gold in its  
strife,

Give your spouse the slip, and be-  
tray your friend !

There are two who decline, a woman  
and I,

And enjoy our death in the dark-  
ness here.

## XI.

I liked that way you had with your  
curls

Wound to a ball in a net behind :  
Your cheek was chaste as a Quaker-  
girl's,

And your mouth — there was never,  
to my mind,

Such a funny mouth, for it would not  
shut ;

And the dented chin too — what a  
chin !

There were certain ways when you  
spoke, some words

That you know you never could pro-  
nounce :

You were thin, however ; like a bird's  
Your hand seemed — some would  
say, the pounce

Of a scaly-footed hawk — all but !  
The world was right when it called  
you thin.

## XII.

But I turn my back on the world : I  
take

Your hand, and kneel, and lay to  
my lips.

Bid me live, Edith ! Let me slake  
Thirst at your presence ! Fear no  
slips !

'Tis your slave shall pay, while his  
soul endures,

Full due, love's whole debt, *sum-  
mum jus*.

My queen shall have high observance,  
planned

Courtship made perfect, no least  
line

Crossed without warrant. There you stand,  
 Warm too, and white too : would this wine  
 Had washed all over that body of yours,  
 Ere I drank it, and you down with it, thus !

## BIFURCATION.

WE were two lovers ; let me lie by her,  
 My tomb beside her tomb. On hers inscribe —  
 “ I loved him ; but my reason bade prefer  
 Duty to love, reject the tempter’s bribe  
 Of rose and lily when each path diverged,  
 And either I must pace to life’s far end  
 As love should lead me, or, as duty urged,  
 Plod the worn causeway arm in arm with friend.  
 So, truth turned falsehood : ‘ How I loathe a flower,  
 How prize the pavement ! ’ still carressed his ear —  
 The deafish friend’s — through life’s day, hour by hour.  
 As he laughed (coughing) ‘ Ay, it would appear ! ’  
 But deep within my heart of hearts there hid  
 Ever the confidence, amends for all,  
 That heaven repairs what wrong earth’s journey did,  
 When love from life-long exile comes at call.  
 Duty and love, one Broadway, were the best —  
 Who doubts ? But one or other was to choose.  
 I chose the darkling half, and wait the rest  
 In that new world where light and darkness fuse.”

Inscribe on mine — “ I loved her : love’s track lay  
 O’er sand and pebble, as all travellers know.

Duty led through a smiling country, gay  
 With greensward where the rose and lily blow.

‘ Our roads are diverse : farewell, love ! ’ said she :  
 ‘ ‘Tis duty I abide by : homely sward  
 And not the rock-rough picturesque for me !

Above, where both roads join, I wait reward.

Be you as constant to the path whereon

I leave you planted ! ’ But man needs must move,  
 Keep moving — whither, when the star is gone

Whereby he steps secure nor strays from love ?

No stone but I was tripped by, stumbling-block

But brought me to confusion. Where I fell,

There I lay flat, if moss disguised the rock :

Thence, if flint pierced, I rose and cried, ‘ All’s well !

Duty be mine to tread in that high sphere

Where love from duty ne’er disparts, I trust,

And two halves make that whole, whereof — since here

One must suffice a man — why, this one must ! ”

Inscribe each tomb thus : then, some sage acquaint

The simple — which holds sinner, which holds saint !

## A LIKENESS.

SOME people hang portraits up  
 In a room where they dine or sup :  
 And the wife clinks tea-things under,  
 And her cousin, he stirs his cup,  
 Asks, “ Who was the lady, I wonder ? ” —

“ ‘Tis a daub John bought at a sale,”  
 Quoth the wife, — looks black as thunder.

“ What a shade beneath her nose !  
 Snuff-taking, I suppose,” —  
 Adds the cousin, while John’s corns ail.



A Likeness. — Page 144.



Or else, there's no wife in the case,  
 But the portrait's queen of the place,  
 Alone mid the other spoils  
 Of youth, — masks, gloves, and foils,  
 And pipe-sticks, rose, cherry-tree,  
 jasmine,  
 And the long whip, the tandem-  
 lasher,  
 And the cast from a fist ("not, alas!  
 mine,  
 But my master's, the Tipton Slasher")  
 And the cards where pistol-balls mark  
 ace,  
 And a satin shoe used for a cigar-  
 case,  
 And the chamois-horns ("shot in the  
 Chablais")  
 And prints — Rarey drumming on  
 Cruiser,  
 And Sayers, our champion, the  
 bruiser,  
 And the little edition of Rabelais :  
 Where a friend, with both hands in  
 his pockets  
 May saunter up close to examine it,  
 And remark a good deal of Jane  
 Lamb in it,  
 "But the eyes are half out of their  
 sockets ;  
 That hair's not so bad, where the  
 gloss is,  
 But they've made the girl's nose a  
 proboscis :  
 Jane Lamb, that we danced with at  
 Vichy !  
 What, is not she Jane? Then, who  
 is she?"

All that I own is a print,  
 An etching, a mezzotint ;  
 'Tis a study, a fancy, a fiction,  
 Yet a fact (take my conviction),  
 Because it has more than a hint  
 Of a certain face, I never  
 Saw elsewhere touch or trace of :  
 In women I've seen the face of :  
 Just an etching, and, so far, clever.

I keep my prints an imbrogllo,  
 Fifty in one portfolio  
 When somebody tries my claret,  
 We turn round chairs to the fire,  
 Chirp over days in a garret,  
 Chuckle o'er increase of salary,  
 Taste the good fruits of our leisure,  
 Talk about pencil and lyre,  
 And the National Portrait Gallery :  
 Then I exhibit my treasure.

After we've turned over twenty,  
 And the debt of wonder my crony  
 'owes  
 Is paid to my Marc Antonios,  
 He stops me — "*Festina lentè!*  
 What's that sweet thing there, the  
 etching?"  
 How my waistcoat strings want  
 stretching,  
 How my cheeks grow red as toma-  
 toes,  
 How my heart leaps! But hearts,  
 after leaps, ache.

"By the by, you must take, for a  
 keepsake,  
 That other, you praised, of Volpato's."  
 The fool! would he try a flight far-  
 ther and say —  
 He never saw, never before to-day,  
 What was able to take his breath  
 away,  
 A face to lose youth for, to occupy  
 age  
 With the dream of, meet death with, —  
 why, I'll not engage  
 But that, half in a rapture and half in  
 a rage,  
 I should toss him the thing's self —  
 " 'Tis only a duplicate,  
 A thing of no value! Take it, I  
 supplicate!"

## MAY AND DEATH.

## I.

I wish that when you died last May,  
 Charles, there had died along with  
 you  
 Three parts of spring's delightful  
 things ;  
 Ay, and, for me, the fourth part too

## II.

A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps!  
 There must be many a pair of  
 friends  
 Who, arm in arm, deserve the warm  
 Moon-births and the long evening-  
 ends.

## III.

So, for their sake, be May still May !  
 Let their new time, as mine of old,  
 Do all it did for me : I bid  
 Sweet sights and sounds throng  
 manifold.

## iv.

Only, one little sight, one plant,  
Woods have in May, that starts up  
green  
Save a sole streak which, so to speak,  
Is spring's blood, spilt its leaves be-  
tween, —

## v.

That, they might spare; a certain  
wood  
Might miss the plant; their loss  
were small:  
But I, — whene'er the leaf grows  
there,  
Its drop comes from my heart,  
that's all.

## A FORGIVENESS.

I AM indeed the personage you know.  
As for my wife, — what happened  
long ago —  
You have a right to question me, as I  
Am bound to answer.

(“Son, a fit reply!”

The monk half spoke, half ground  
through his clinched teeth,  
At the confession-grate I knelt  
beneath.)

Thus then all happened, Father!  
Power and place  
I had as still I have. I ran life's  
race,  
With the whole world to see, as only  
strains  
His strength some athlete whose pro-  
digious gains  
Of good appal him: happy to ex-  
cess, —  
Work freely done should balance  
happiness  
Fully enjoyed; and, since beneath  
my roof  
Housed she who made home heaven,  
in heaven's behoof  
I went forth every day, and all day  
long  
Worked for the world. Look, how  
the laborer's song  
Cheers him! Thus sang my soul,  
at each sharp throe  
Of laboring flesh and blood — “She  
loves me so!”

One day, perhaps such song so knit  
the nerve  
That work grew play and vanished.  
“I deserve  
Haply my heaven an hour before the  
time!”  
I laughed, as silverly the clockhouse-  
chime  
Surprised me passing through the pos-  
tern gate  
— Not the main entry where the  
menials wait  
And wonder why the world's affairs  
allow  
The master sudden leisure. That  
was how  
I took the private garden-way for  
once.

Forth from the alcove, I saw start,  
ensconce  
Himself behind the porphyry vase, a  
man.

My fancies in the natural order ran:  
“A spy, — perhaps a foe in ambus-  
cade, —  
A thief, — more like, a sweetheart of  
some maid  
Who pitched on the alcove for tryst  
perhaps.”

“Stand there!” I bid.

Whereat my man but wraps  
His face the closelier with uplifted  
arm  
Whereon the cloak lies, strikes in  
blind alarm  
This and that pedestal as, — stretch  
and stoop, —  
Now in, now out of sight, he thrids  
the group  
Of statues, marble god and goddess  
ranged  
Each side the pathway, till the gate's  
exchanged  
For safety: one step thence, the  
street, you know!

Thus far I followed with my gaze  
Then, slow,  
Near on admiringly, I breathed again,  
And — back to that last fancy of the  
train —  
“A danger risked for hope of just a  
word  
With — which of all my nest may be  
the bird



This poacher coverts for her plumage,  
 pray?  
 Carmen? Juana? Carmen seems too  
 gay  
 For such adventure, while Juana's  
 grave  
 — Would scorn the folly. I applaud  
 the knave!  
 He had the eye, could single from  
 my brood  
 His proper fledgeling!"

As I turned, there stood  
 In face of me, my wife stone-still  
 stone-white.  
 Whether one bound had brought her,  
 — at first sight  
 Of what she judged the encounter,  
 sure to be  
 Next moment, of the venturesome man  
 and me, —  
 Brought her to clutch and keep me  
 from my prey;  
 Whether impelled because her death  
 no day  
 Could come so absolutely opportune  
 As now at joy's height, like a year in  
 June  
 Stayed at the fall of its first ripened  
 rose;  
 Or whether hungry for my hate —  
 who knows? —  
 Eager to end an irksome lie, and taste  
 Our tingling true relation, hate em-  
 braced  
 By hate one naked moment: — any-  
 how  
 There stone-still stone-white stood  
 my wife, but now  
 The woman who made heaven within  
 my house.  
 Ay, she who faced me was my very  
 spouse  
 As well as love — you are to recollect!  
 "Stay!" she said. "Keep at least  
 one soul unspotted  
 With crime, that's spotless hitherto  
 — your own!  
 Kill me who court the blessing, who  
 alone  
 Was, am, and shall be guilty, first to  
 last!  
 The man lay helpless in the toils I  
 cast  
 About him, helpless as the statue  
 there  
 Against that strangling bell-flower's  
 bondage: tear

Away and tread to dust the para-  
 site,  
 But do the passive marble no despite!  
 I love him as I hate you. Kill me!  
 Strike  
 At one blow both infinitudes alike  
 Out of existence — hate and love!  
 Whence love?  
 That's safe inside my heart, nor will  
 remove  
 For any searching of your steel, I  
 think.  
 Whence hate? The secret lay on lip,  
 at brink  
 Of speech, in one fierce tremble to  
 escape,  
 At every form wherein your love took  
 shape,  
 At each new provocation of your kiss.  
 Kill me!"

We went in.

Next day after this  
 I felt as if the speech might come.  
 spoke —  
 Easily, after all.

"The lifted cloak  
 Was screen sufficient: I concern my-  
 self  
 Hardly with laying hands on who for  
 pelf —  
 Whate'er the ignoble kind — may  
 prowl and brave  
 Cuffing and kicking proper to a knave  
 Detected by my household's vigilance.  
 Enough of such! As for my love-ro-  
 manance —  
 I, like our good Hidalgo, rub my  
 eyes  
 And wake and wonder how the film  
 could rise  
 Which changed for me a barber's  
 basin straight  
 Into — Mambrino's helm? I hesitate  
 Nowise to say — God's sacramental  
 cup!  
 Why should I blame the brass which,  
 burnished up,  
 Will blaze, to all but me, as good as  
 gold?  
 To me — a warning I was overbold  
 In judging metals. The Hidalgo  
 waked  
 Only to die, if I remember, — staked  
 His life upon the basin's worth, and  
 lost:  
 While I confess torpidity at most

In here and there a limb ; but, lame  
and halt,  
Still should I work on, still repair my  
fault  
Ere I took rest in death, — no fear at  
all!  
Now, work — no word before the cur-  
tain fall ! ”

The “curtain” ? That of death on  
life, I meant :  
My “word” permissible in death’s  
event,  
Would be — truth, soul to soul ; for,  
otherwise,  
Day by day, three years long, there  
had to rise  
And, night by night, to fall upon our  
stage —  
Ours, doomed to public play by heri-  
tage —  
Another curtain, when the world,  
perforce  
Our critical assembly, in due course  
Came and went, witnessing, gave  
praise or blame  
To art-mimetic. It had spoiled the  
game  
If, suffered to set foot behind our  
scene,  
he world had witnessed how stage-  
king and queen,  
Gallant and lady, but a minute since  
Earning each the other, would  
evince  
No sign of recognition as they took  
His way and her way to whatever  
Waited them in the darkness either  
side  
Of that bright stage where lately  
groom and bride  
Had fired the audience to a frenzy-fit  
Of sympathetic rapture — every whit  
Earned as the curtain fell on her and  
me,  
— Actors. Three whole years, noth-  
ing was to see  
But calm and concord : where a  
speech was due  
There came the speech ; when smiles  
were wanted too  
Smiles were as ready. In a place like  
mine,  
Where foreign and domestic cares  
combine,  
There’s audience every day and all  
day long ;  
But finally the last of the whole  
throng

Who linger lets one see his back. For  
her —  
Why, liberty and liking : I aver,  
Liking and liberty ! For me — I  
breathed,  
Let my face rest from every wrinkle  
wreathed  
Smile-like about the mouth, unlearned  
my task  
Of personation till next day bade  
mask,  
And quietly betook me from that  
world  
To the real world, not pageant : there  
unfurled  
In work, its wings, my soul, the fretted  
power.  
Three years I worked, each minute of  
each hour  
Not claimed by acting : — work I may  
dispense  
With talk about, since work in evi-  
dence,  
Perhaps in history ; who knows or  
cares ?

After three years, this way, all una-  
wares,  
Out acting ended. She and I, at close  
Of a loud night-feast, led, between two  
rows  
Of bending male and female loyalty,  
Our lord the king down staircase,  
while, held high  
At arm’s length did the twisted tapers’  
flare  
Herald his passage from our palace  
where  
Such visiting left glory evermore.  
Again the ascent in public, till at door  
As we two stood by the saloon — now  
blank  
And disencumbered of its guests —  
there sank  
A whisper in my ear, so low and yet  
So unmistakable ! “ I half forget  
The chamber you repair to, and I want  
Occasion for one short word — if you  
grant  
That grace — within a certain room  
you called  
Our ‘ Study,’ for you wrote there while  
I scrawled  
Some paper full of faces for my sport.  
That room I can remember. Just one  
short  
Word with you there, for the remem-  
brance’ sake ! ”

"Follow me thither!" I replied.

We break  
The gloom a little, as with guiding  
lamp

I lead the way, leave warmth and  
cheer, by damp,

Blind, disused, serpentine ways afar  
From where the habitable chambers  
are, —

Ascend, descend stairs tunnelled  
through the stone, —

Always in silence, — till I reach the  
lone

Chamber sepulchred for my very own  
Out of the palace-quarry. When a  
boy,

Here was my fortress, stronghold from  
annoy,

Proof-positive of ownership; in youth  
I garnered up my gleanings here —  
uncouth

But precious relics of vain hopes, vain  
fears;

Finally, this became in after-years  
My closet of intrenchment to with-  
stand

Invasion of the foe on every hand —  
The multifarious herd in bower and  
hall,

State-room, — rooms whatsoe'er the  
style, which call

On masters to be mindful that, before  
Men, they must look like men and  
something more.

Here, — when our lord the king's be-  
stowment ceased

To deck me on the day that, golden-  
fleece'd,

I touched ambition's height, — 'twas  
here, released

From glory (always symbolled by a  
chain!)

No sooner was I privileged to gain  
My secret domicile than glad I flung  
That last toy on the table — gazed  
where hung

On hook my father's gift, the arque-  
buss —

And asked myself "Shall I envisage  
thus

The new prize and the old prize,  
when I reach

Another year's experience? — own  
that each

Equalled advantage — sportsman's —  
statesman's tool?

That brought me down an eagle, this  
— a fool!"

Into which room on entry, I set down  
The lamp, and turning saw whose  
rustled gown

Had told me my wife followed, pace  
for pace.

Each of us looked the other in the  
face.

She spoke. "Since I could die  
now" . . .

(To explain

Why that first struck me, know —  
not once again

Since the adventure at the porphyry's  
edge

Three years before, which sundered  
like a wedge

Her soul from mine, — though daily,  
smile to smile,

We stood before the public, — all the  
while

Not once had I distinguished, in that  
face

I paid observance to, the faintest  
trace

Of feature more than requisite for  
eyes

To do their duty by and recognize:  
So did I force mine to obey my will  
And pry no farther. There exists  
such skill, —

Those know who need it. What  
physician shrinks

From needful contact with a corpse?  
He drinks

No plague so long as thirst for knowl-  
edge, — not

An idler impulse, — prompts inquiry.  
What,

And will you disbelieve in power to  
bid

Our spirit back to bounds, as though  
we chid

A child from scrutiny that's just and  
right

In manhood? Sense, not soul, ac-  
complished sight,

Reported daily she it was — not how  
Nor why a change had come to cheek  
and brow.)

"Since I could die now of the truth  
concealed,

Yet dare not, must not die, — so seems  
revealed

The Virgin's mind to me, — for death  
means peace,

Wherein no lawful part have I, whose  
lease

Of life and punishment the truth  
 avowed  
 May haply lengthen,—let me push  
 the shroud  
 Away, that steals to muffle ere is just  
 My penance-fire in snow! I dare—I  
 must  
 Live, by avowal of the truth—this  
 truth—  
 I loved you! Thanks for the fresh  
 serpent's tooth  
 That, by a prompt new pang more  
 exquisite  
 Than all preceding torture, proves  
 me right!  
 I loved you yet I lost you! May I  
 go  
 Burn to the ashes, now my shame you  
 know?"

I think there never was such—how  
 express?—  
 Horror coquetting with voluptuous-  
 ness,  
 As in those arms of Eastern work-  
 manship—  
 Yataghan, kandjar, things that rend  
 and rip,  
 Gash rough, slash smooth, help hate  
 so many ways,  
 Yet ever keep a beauty that betrays  
 Love still at work with the artificer  
 Throughout his quaint devising. Why  
 prefer,  
 Except for love's sake, that a blade  
 should writhe  
 And bicker like a flame?—now play  
 the scythe  
 As if some broad neck tempted,—  
 now contract  
 And needle off into a fineness lacked  
 For just that puncture which the heart  
 demands?  
 Then, such adornment! Wherefore  
 need our hands  
 Enclose not ivory alone, nor gold  
 Roughened for use, but jewels? Nay,  
 behold!  
 Fancy my favorite—which I seem to  
 grasp  
 While I describe the luxury. No asp  
 Is diapered more delicate round  
 throat  
 Than this below the handle! These  
 denote  
 —These mazy lines meandering, to  
 end  
 Only in flesh they open—what in-  
 tend

They else but water-purlings—pale  
 contrast  
 With the life-crimson where they  
 blend at last?  
 And mark the handle's dim pellucid  
 green,  
 Carved, the hard jadestone, as you  
 pinch a bean,  
 Into a sort of parrot-bird! He pecks  
 A grape-bunch; his two eyes are  
 ruby-specks  
 Pure from the mine: seen this way,  
 —glassy blank,  
 But turn 'them,—lo the inmost fire,  
 that shrank  
 From sparkling, sends a red dart right  
 to aim!  
 Why did I choose such toys? Per-  
 haps the game  
 Of peaceful men is warlike, just as  
 men  
 War-wearied get amusement from that  
 pen  
 And paper we grow sick of—statesfolk  
 tired  
 Of merely (when such measures are  
 required)  
 Dealing out doom to people by three  
 words,  
 A signature and seal: we play with  
 swords  
 Suggestive of quick process. That is  
 how  
 I came to like the toys described you  
 now,  
 Store of which glittered on the walls  
 and strewed  
 The table, even, while my wife pur-  
 sued  
 Her purpose to its ending. "Now you  
 know  
 This shame, my three years' torture,  
 let me go,—  
 Burn to the very ashes! You—I  
 lost,  
 Yet you—I loved!"

The thing I pity most  
 In men is—action prompted by sur-  
 prise  
 Of anger: men? nay, bulls—whose  
 onset lies  
 At instance of the firework and the  
 goad!  
 Once the foe prostrate,—trampling  
 once bestowed,—  
 Prompt follows placability, regret,  
 Atonement. Trust me, blood-warmth  
 never yet

Betokened strong will ! As no leap  
of pulse  
Pricked me, that first time, so did  
none convulse  
My veins at this occasion for resolve.  
Had that devolved which did not then  
devolve  
Upon me, I had done—what now to  
do  
Was quietly apparent.

“Tell me who  
The man was, crouching by the por-  
phyry vase !”

“No, never ! All was folly in his  
case,  
All guilt in mine. I tempted, he com-  
plied.”

“And yet you loved me ?”

“Loved you. Double-dyed  
In folly and in guilt, I thought you  
gave  
Your heart and soul away from me to  
slave  
At statecraft. Since my night in you  
seemed lost,  
I stung myself to teach you, to your  
cost,  
What you rejected could be prized  
beyond  
Life, heaven, by the first fool I threw  
a fond  
Look on, a fatal word to.”

“And you still  
Love me ? Do I conjecture well, or  
ill ?”

“Conjecture—well, or ill ! I had  
three years  
To spend in learning you.”

“We both are peers  
In knowledge, therefore : since three  
years are spent  
Ere thus much of yourself I learn—  
who went  
Back to the house, that day, and  
brought my mind  
To bear upon your action : uncom-  
bined  
Motive from motive, till the dross,  
deprived  
Of every purer particle, survived  
At last in native simple hideousness,  
Utter contemptibility, nor less

Nor more. Contemptibility—exempt  
How could I, from its proper due—  
contempt ?

I have too much despised you to di-  
vert  
My life from its set course by help or  
hurt

Of your all-despicable life—perturb  
The calm I work in, by—men’s  
mouths to curb,  
Which at such news were clamorous  
enough—

Men’s eyes to shut before my broid-  
ered stuff

With the huge hole there, my em-  
blazoned wall

Blank where a scutcheon hung,—by,  
worse than all,

Each day’s procession, my paraded life  
Robbed and impoverished through the  
wanting wife

—Now that my life (which means—  
my work) was grown  
Riches indeed ! Once, just this worth  
alone

Seemed work to have, that profit  
gained thereby

Of good and praise would—how re-  
wardingly !—

Fall at your feet,—a crown I hoped  
to cast

Before your love, my love should  
crown at last.

No love remaining to cast crown  
before,

My love stopped work now : but con-  
tempt the more

Impelled me task as ever head and  
hand,

Because the very fiends weave ropes  
of sand

Rather than taste pure hell in idle-  
ness.

Therefore I kept my memory down  
by stress

Of daily work I had no mind to stay  
For the world’s wonder at the wife  
away.

Oh, it was easy all of it, believe,  
For I despised you ! But your words  
retrieve

Importantly the past. No hate as-  
sumed

The mask of love at any time ! There  
gloomed

A moment when love took hate’s  
semblance, urged

By causes you declare ; but love’s  
self pursued

Away a fancied wrong I did both loves  
— Yours and my own : by no hate's  
help, it proves,  
Purgation was attempted. Then, you  
rise

High by how many a grade! I did  
despise—

I do but hate you. Let hate's pun-  
ishment

Replace contempt's! First step to  
which ascent—

Write down your own words I re-  
utter you!

*I loved my husband and I hated—  
who*

*He was, I took up as my first chance,  
mere*

*Mud-ball to fling and make love foul  
with!* Here

Lies paper!"

"Would my blood for ink suffice!"

"It may: this minion from a land of  
spice,

Silk, feather— every bird of jewelled  
breast—

This poniard's beauty, ne'er so  
lightly prest

Above your heart there." . . .

"Thus?"

"It flows, I see.  
Dip there the point and write!"

"Dictate to me!  
Nay, I remember."

And she wrote the words.  
I read them. Then—"Since love, in  
you, affords

License for hate, in me, to quench (I  
say)

Contempt— why, hate itself has  
passed away

In vengeance— foreign to contempt.  
Depart

Peaceably to that death which East-  
ern art

Imbued this weapon with, if tales be  
true!

Love will succeed to hate. I pardon  
you—

Dead in our chamber!"

True as truth the tale.  
She died ere morning; then, I saw  
how pale

Her cheek was ere it wore day's paint-  
disguise.

And what a hollow darkened 'neath  
her eyes,

Now that I used my own. She sleeps  
as erst

Beloved, in this your church: ay,  
yours!

Immersed  
In thought so deeply, Father? Sad,  
perhaps?

For whose sake, hers or mine or his  
who wraps

— Still plain I seem to see!— about  
his head

The idle cloak, — about his heart (in-  
stead

Of cuirass) some fond hope he may  
elude

My vengeance in the cloister's soli-  
tude?

Hardly, I think! As little helped  
his brow

The cloak then, Father — as your  
grate helps now!

## CENCIAJA.

*Ogni cenicio vuol entrare in bucato.* — It-  
alian Proverb.

MAY I print, Shelley, how it came to  
pass

That when your Beatrice seemed —  
by lapse

Of many a long month since her sen-  
tence fell —

Assured of pardon for the parricide, —  
By intercession of staunch friends, or,

say,  
By certain pricks of conscience in the

Pope,  
Conniver at Francesco Cenci's guilt, —  
Suddenly all things changed, and

Clement grew

"Stern," as you state, "nor to be  
moved nor bent,

But said these three words coldly, 'She  
must die;'

Subjoining 'Pardon? Paolo Santa  
Croce

*Murdered his mother also yestereve,  
And he is fled: she shall not flee, at  
least!*"

— So, to the letter, sentence was fulfilled?  
Shelley, may I condense verbosity  
That lies before me, into some few words

Of English, and illustrate your superb  
Achievement by a rescued anecdote,  
No great things, only new and true  
beside?

As if some mere familiar of a house  
Should venture to accost the group  
at gaze

Before its Titian, famed the wide  
world through,  
And supplement such pictured mas-  
terpiece

By whisper "Searching in the arch-  
ives here,

I found the reason of the Lady's fate,  
And how by accident it came to pass  
She wears the halo and displays the  
palm :

Who, haply, else had never suffered  
— no,

Nor graced our gallery, by conse-  
quence."

Who loved the work would like the  
little news :

Who lauds your poem lends an ear to  
me

Relating how the penalty was paid  
By one Marchese dell' Oriolo, called  
Onofrio Santa Croce otherwise,  
For his complicity in matricide  
With Paolo his own brother, — he  
whose crime

And flight induced "those three words  
— She must die."

Thus I unroll you then the manu-  
script.

"God's justice" — (of the multi-  
plicity

Of such communications extant still,  
Recording, each, injustice done by  
God

In person of his Vicar-upon-earth,  
Scarce one but leads off to the self-  
same tune) —

"God's justice, tardy though it prove  
perchance,

Rests never on the track until it reach  
Delinquency. In proof I cite the  
case

Of Paolo Santa Croce."

Many times  
The youngster, — having been impor-  
tunate

That Marchesine Costanza, who re-  
mained

His widowed mother, should supplant  
the heir

Her elder son, and substitute himself  
In sole possession of her faculty, —  
And meeting just as often with re-  
buff, —

Blinded by so exorbitant a lust  
Of gold, the youngster straightway  
tasked his wits,

Casting about to kill the lady — thus.

He first, to cover his iniquity,  
Writes to Onofrio Santa Croce, then  
Authoritative lord, acquainting him  
Their mother was contamination —  
wrought

Like hell-fire in the beauty of their  
House

By dissoluteness and abandonment  
Of soul and body to impure delight.  
Moreover, since she suffered from  
disease,

Those symptoms which her death  
made manifest

Hydroptic, he affirmed were fruits of  
sin

About to bring confusion and dis-  
grace

Upon the ancient lineage and high  
fame

O' the family, when published. Duty-  
bound,

He asked his brother — what a son  
should do?

Which when Marchese dell' Oriolo  
heard

By letter, being absent at his land  
Oriolo, he made answer, this, no more:

"It must behove a son, — things  
haply so, —

To act as honor prompts a cavalier  
And son, perform his duty to all

three,  
Mother and brothers" — here advice

broke off.

By which advice informed and for-  
tified

As he professed himself — as bound  
by birth

To hear God's voice in primogeni-  
ture —

Paolo, who kept his mother company  
In her domain Subiaco, straightway

dared  
His whole enormity of enterprise

And, falling on her, stabbed the lady  
 dead ;  
 Whose death demonstrated her innocence.  
 And happened, — by the way, — since  
 Jesus Christ  
 Died to save man, just sixteen hundred years.  
 Costanza was of aspect beautiful  
 Exceedingly, and seemed, although  
 in age  
 Sixty about, to far surpass her peers  
 The coëtaneous dames, in youth and  
 grace.

Done the misdeed, its author takes  
 to flight,  
 Foiling thereby the justice of the  
 world :  
 Not God's however, — God, be sure,  
 knows well  
 The way to clutch a culprit. Witness  
 here !  
 The present sinner, when he least expects,  
 Sng-cornered somewhere i' the Basilicate,  
 Stumbles upon his death by violence.  
 A man of blood assaults the man of  
 blood  
 And slays him somehow. This was  
 afterward :  
 Enough, he promptly met with his  
 deserts,  
 And, ending thus, permits we end  
 with him,  
 And push forthwith to this important  
 point —  
 His matricide fell out, of all the  
 days,  
 Precisely when the law-procedure  
 closed  
 Respecting Count Francesco Cenci's  
 death  
 Chargeable on his daughter, sons, and  
 wife.  
 " Thus patricide was matched with  
 matricide,"  
 A poet not inelegantly rhymed :  
 Nay, fratricide — those Princes  
 Massimo ! —  
 Which so disturbed the spirit of the  
 Pope  
 That all the likelihood Rome entertained  
 Of Beatrice's pardon vanished  
 straight,  
 And she endured the piteous death.

Now see

The sequel — what effect commandment had  
 For strict inquiry into this last case,  
 When Cardinal Aldobrandini (great  
 His efficacy — nephew to the Pope !)  
 Was bidden crush — ay, though his  
 very hand  
 Got soiled i' the act — crime spawning  
 everywhere !  
 Because, when all endeavor had been  
 used  
 To catch the aforesaid Paolo, all in  
 vain —  
 " Make perquisition," quoth our  
 Eminence,  
 " Throughout his now deserted domicile !  
 Ransack the palace, roof, and floor, to  
 find  
 If haply any scrap of writing, hid  
 In nook or corner, may convict — who  
 knows ? —  
 Brother Onofrio of intelligence  
 With brother Paolo, as in brotherhood  
 Is but too likely : crime spawns everywhere !"

And, every cranny searched accordingly,  
 There comes to light — O lynx-eyed  
 Cardinal ! —  
 Onofrio's unconsidered writing-scrap,  
 The letter in reply to Paolo's prayer,  
 The word of counsel that — things  
 proving so,  
 Paolo should act the proper knightly  
 part,  
 And do as was incumbent on a son,  
 A brother — and a man of birth, be  
 sure !

Whereat immediately the officers  
 Proceeded to arrest Onofrio — found  
 At foot-ball, child's play, unaware of  
 harm,  
 Safe with his friends, the Orsini, at  
 their seat  
 Monte Giordano ; as he left the house  
 He came upon the watch in wait for  
 him  
 Set by the Barigel, — was caught and  
 caged.

News of which capture being, that  
 same hour,  
 Conveyed to Rome, forthwith our  
 Eminence



Commands Taverna, Governor and Judge,

To have the process in especial care,  
Be, first to last, not only president  
In person, but inquisitor as well,  
Nor trust the by-work to a substitute :  
Bids him not, squeamish, keep the  
bench, but scrub  
The floor of Justice, so to speak, — go  
try

His best in prison with the criminal ;  
Promising, as reward for by-work  
done

Fairly on all-fours, that, success obtained

And crime avowed, or such connivency

With crime as should procure a decent death —

Himself will humbly beg — which means, procure —

The Hat and Purple from his relative  
The Pope, and so repay a diligence

Which, meritorious in the Cenci-case,  
Mounts plainly here to Purple and  
the Hat.

Whereupon did my lord the Governor

So masterfully exercise the task  
Enjoined him, that he, day by day,  
and week

By week, and month by month, from  
first to last

Deserved the prize : now, punctual at  
his place,

Played Judge, and now, assiduous at  
his post,

Inquisitor — pressed cushion and  
scoured plank,

Early and late. Noon's fervor and  
night's chill,

Naught moved whom morn would,  
purpling, make amends !

So that observers laughed as, many a  
day,

He left home, in July when day is  
flame,

Posted to Tordinona-prison, plunged  
into the vault where daylong night is  
ice,

There passed his eight hours on a  
stretch, content,

Examining Onofrio : all the stress  
Of all examination steadily

Converging into one pin-point, — he  
pushed

Tentative now of head and now of  
heart.

As when the nut-hatch taps and tries  
the nut

This side and that side till the kernel  
sounds, —

So did he press the sole and single  
point

— What was the very meaning of the  
phrase

" *Do what beseems an honored cavalier?* "

Which one persistent question-tor-  
ture, — plied

Day by day, week by week, and month  
by month,

Morn, noon, and night, — fatigued  
away a mind

Grown imbecile by darkness, solitude,  
And one vivacious memory gnawing  
there

As when a corpse is confined with a  
snake :

— Fatigued Onofrio into what might  
seem

Admission that perchance his judg-  
ment groped

So blindly, feeling for an issue — aught  
With semblance of an issue from the  
toils

Cast of a sudden round feet late so  
free, —

He possibly might have envisaged,  
scarce

Recoiled from — even were the issue  
death

— Even her death whose life was death  
and worse !

Always provided that the charge of  
crime,

Each jot and tittle of the charge were  
true.

In such a sense, belike, he might ad-  
vise

His brother to expurgate crime with  
. . . well,

With blood, if blood must follow on  
" *the course* "

*Taken as might beseem a cavalier.* "

Whereupon process ended, and re-  
port

Was made without a minute of delay  
To Clement, who, because of those two  
crimes

O' the Massimi and Cenci flagrant late,  
Must needs impatiently desire result.

Result obtained, he bade the Gov-  
ernor

Summon the Congregation and despatch.

Summons made, sentence passed accordingly

—Death by beheading. When his death-decree

Was intimated to Onofrio, all Man could do—that did he to save himself.

'Twas much, the having gained for his defence

The Advocate o' the Poor, with natural help

Of many noble friendly persons fain To disengage a man of family,

So young too, from his grim entanglement.

But Cardinal Aldobrandini ruled There must be no diversion of the law.

Justice is justice, and the magistrate Bears not the sword in vain. Who sins must die.

So, the Marchese had his head cut off

In Place Saint Angelo beside the Bridge,

With Rome to see, a concourse infinite ;

Where magnanimity demonstrating Adequate to his birth and breed,—

—poor boy!— He made the people the accustomed speech,

Exhorted them to true faith, honest works,

And special good behavior as regards

A parent of no matter what the sex,

Bidding each son take warning from himself.

Truly, it was considered in the boy

Stark staring lunacy, no less, to snap

So plain a bait, be hooked and hauled ashore

By such an angler as the Cardinal !

Why make confession of his privy To Paolo's enterprise? Mere sealing lips—

Or, better, saying, "When I counselled him

*To do as might beseem a cavalier,* ' What could I mean but, *'Hide our parent's shame*

*As Christian ought, by aid of Holy Church!*

*Bury it in a convent—ay, beneath Enough dotation to prevent its ghost*

*From troubling earth!*" Mere saying thus,—'tis plain,

Not only were his life the recompense,

But he had manifestly proved himself

True Christian, and in lieu of punishment

Been praised of all men!—So the populace.

Anyhow, when the Pope made promise good

(That of Aldobrandini, near and dear)

And gave Taverna, who had toiled so much,

A cardinal's equipment, some such word

As this from mouth to ear went saucily :

"Taverna's cap is dyed in what he drew

From Santa Croce's veins!" So joked the world.

I add : Onofrio left one child behind,

A daughter named Valeria, dowered with grace

Abundantly of soul and body, doomed To life the shorter for her father's fate.

By death of her, the Marquisate returned

To that Orsini House from whence it came :

Oriolo having passed as donative To Santa Croce from their ancestors.

And no word more? By all means ! Would you know

The authoritative answer, when folks urged

"What made Aldobrandini, hound-like stanch,

Hunt out of life a harmless simpleton?"

The answer was—"Hatred implacable,

By reason they were rivals in their love."

The Cardinal's desire was to a dame Whose favor was Onofrio's. Pricked with pride,

The simpleton must ostentatiously Display a ring, the Cardinal's love-gift,

Given to Onofrio as the lady's gage ;

Which ring on finger, as he put forth hand

To draw a tapestry, the Cardinal Saw and knew, gift and owner, old and young ;

Whereon a fury entered him — the  
fire  
He quenched with what could quench  
fire only — blood.

Nay, more: "there want not who  
affirm to boot,

The unwise boy, a certain festal eye,  
Feigned ignorance of who the wight  
might be

That pressed too closely on him with  
a crowd.

He struck the Cardinal a blow: and  
then,

To put a face upon the incident,  
Dared next day, smug as ever, go pay  
court

I' the Cardinal's ante-chamber. Mark  
and mend,

Ye youth, by this example how may  
greed

Vainglorious, operate in worldly  
souls!"

So ends the chronicler, beginning  
with

"God's justice, tardy though it prove  
perchance,

Rests never till it reach delinquency."

Ay, or how otherwise had come to  
pass

That Victor rules, this present year,  
in Rome?

PORPHYRIA'S LOVER.

I.

THE rain set early in to-night,  
The sullen wind was soon awake,  
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,  
And did its worst to vex the lake,  
I listened with heart fit to break.

II.

When glided in Porphyria; straight  
She shut the cold out and the storm,  
And kneeled, and made the cheerless  
grate

Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;  
Which done, she rose, and from her  
form

III.

Withdrew the dripping cloak and  
shawl,  
And laid her soiled gloves by, un-  
tied

Her hat and let the damp hair fall,  
And, last, she sat down by my side  
And called me. When no voice re-  
plied,

IV.

She put my arm about her waist,  
And made her smooth white shoul-  
der bare,  
And all her yellow hair displaced,  
And, stooping, made my cheek lie  
there,  
And spread, o'er all, her yellow  
hair, —

V.

Murmuring how she loved me — she  
Too weak, for all her heart's en-  
deavor,  
To set its struggling passion free  
From pride, and vainer ties dis-  
sever,  
And give herself to me forever.

VI.

But passion sometimes would pre-  
vail,  
Nor could to-night's gay feast re-  
strain  
A sudden thought of one so pale  
For love of her, and all in vain:  
So, she was come through wind and  
rain.

VII.

Be sure I looked up at her eyes  
Happy and proud: at last I knew  
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise  
Made my heart swell, and still it  
grew  
While I debated what to do.

VIII.

That moment she was mine, mine  
fair,  
Perfectly pure and good: I found  
A thing to do, and all her hair  
In one long yellow string I wound  
Three times her little throat around,

IX.

And strangled her. No pain felt she:  
I am quite sure she felt no pain.  
As a shut bud that holds a bee,  
I warily oped her lids: again  
Laughed the blue eyes without a  
stain.

## x.

And I untightened next the tress  
 About her neck; her cheek once  
 more  
 Blushed bright beneath my burning  
 kiss:  
 I propped her head up as before.  
 Only, this time my shoulder bore

## xi.

Her head, which droops upon it still:  
 The smiling rosy little head,  
 So glad it has its utmost will,  
 That all it scorned at once is fled,  
 And I, its love, am gained instead!

## xii.

Porphyria's love: she guessed not  
 how  
 Her darling one wish would be  
 heard.  
 And thus we sit together now.  
 And all night long we have not  
 stirred,  
 And yet God has not said a word!

### FILIPPO BALDINUCCI ON THE PRIVILEGE OF BURIAL.

*A Reminiscence of A.D. 1676.*

## i.

No, boy, we must not (so began  
 My Uncle — he's with God long  
 since —  
 A-petting me, the good old man!)  
 We must not (and he seemed to  
 wince,  
 And lose that laugh whereto had  
 grown  
 His chuckle at my piece of news,  
 How cleverly I aimed my stone)  
 I fear we must not pelt the Jews!

## ii.

When I was young indeed, — ah, faith  
 Was young and strong in Florence  
 too!  
 We Christians never dreamed of  
 scathe  
 Because we cursed or kicked the  
 crew.

But now — well, well! The olive-  
 crops  
 Weighed double then, and Arno's  
 pranks  
 Would always spare religious shops  
 Whenever he o'erflowed his banks!

## iii.

I'll tell you (and his eye regained  
 Its twinkle) tell you something  
 choice!  
 Something may help you keep un-  
 stained  
 Your honest zeal to stop the voice  
 Of unbelief with stone-throw — spite  
 Of laws, which modern fools enact,  
 That we must suffer Jews in sight  
 Go wholly unmolested! Fact!

## iv.

There was, then, in my youth, and yet  
 Is, by San Frediano, just  
 Below the Blessed Olivet,  
 A wayside ground wherein they  
 thrust  
 Their dead, — these Jews, — the more  
 our shame!  
 Except that, so they will but die,  
 We may perchance incur no blame  
 In giving hogs a hoist to stye.

## v.

There, anyhow, Jews stow away  
 Their dead; and, — such their inso-  
 lence, —  
 Slink at odd times to sing and pray  
 As Christians do — all make-pre-  
 tence! —  
 Which wickedness they perpetrate  
 Because they think no Christians see  
 They reckoned here, at any rate,  
 Without their host: ha, ha, he, he!

## vi.

For, what should join their plot of  
 ground  
 But a good Farmer's Christian field?  
 The Jews had hedged their corner  
 round  
 With bramble-bush to keep con-  
 cealed  
 Their doings: for the public road  
 Ran betwixt this their ground and  
 that  
 The Farmer's, where he ploughed and  
 sowed,  
 Grew corn for barn and grapes for  
 vat.

VII.

So, properly to guard his store  
 And gull the unbelievers too,  
 He builds a shrine and, what is more,  
 Procures a painter whom I knew,  
 One Buti (he's with God) to paint  
 A holy picture there — no less  
 Than Virgin Mary free from taint  
 Borne to the sky by angels : yes !

VIII.

Which shrine he fixed, — who says  
 him nay ? —  
 A-facing with its picture-side  
 Not, as you'd think, the public way,  
 But just where sought these hounds  
 to hide  
 Their carrion from that very truth  
 Of Mary's triumph : not a hound  
 Could act his mummeries uncouth  
 But Mary shamed the pack all  
 round !

IX.

Now, if it was amusing, judge !  
 — To see the company arrive,  
 Each Jew intent to end his trudge  
 And take his pleasure (though alive)  
 With all his Jewish kith and kin  
 Below ground, have his venom out,  
 Sharpen his wits for next day's sin,  
 Curse Christians, and so home, no  
 doubt !

X.

Whereas, each pliz upturned beholds  
 Mary, I warrant, soaring brave !  
 And in a trice, beneath the folds  
 Of filthy garb which gowns each  
 knave,  
 Down drops it — there to hide grimace,  
 Contortion of the mouth and nose  
 At finding Mary in the place  
 They'd keep for Pilate, I suppose !

XI.

At last, they will not brook — not  
 they ! —  
 Longer such outrage on their tribe :  
 So, in some hole and corner, lay  
 Their heads together — how to bribe  
 The meritorious Farmer's self  
 To straight undo his work, restore  
 Their chance to meet, and muse on  
 self —  
 Pretending sorrow, as before !

XII.

Forthwith, a posse, if you please,  
 Of Rabbi This and Rabbi That  
 Almost go down upon their knees  
 To get him lay the picture flat.  
 The spokesman, eighty years of age,  
 Gray as a badger, with a goat's  
 — Not only beard but bleat, gins wage  
 War with our Mary. Thus he  
 dotes : —

XIII.

“ Friends, grant a grace ! How He  
 brews toil  
 Through life in Florence — why re-  
 late  
 To those who lay the burden, spoil  
 Our paths of peace ? We bear our  
 fate.  
 But when with life the long toil ends,  
 Why must you — the expression  
 craves  
 Pardon, but truth compels me,  
 friends ! —  
 Why must you plague us in our  
 graves ?

XIV.

“ Thoughtlessly plague, I would be-  
 lieve !  
 For how can you — the lords of ease  
 By nurture, birthright — e'en conceive  
 Our luxury to lie with trees  
 And turf, — the cricket and the bird  
 Left for our last companionship :  
 No harsh deed, no unkindly word,  
 No frowning brow nor scornful lip !

XV.

“ Death's luxury, we now rehearse  
 While, living, through your streets  
 we fare  
 And take your hatred : nothing worse  
 Have we, once dead and safe, to  
 bear !  
 So we refresh our souls, fulfil  
 Our works, our daily tasks ; and  
 thus  
 Gather you grain — earth's harvest —  
 still  
 The wheat for you, the straw for us.

XVI.

“ What flouting in a face, what harm,  
 In just a lady borne from bier  
 By boys' heads, wings for leg and  
 arm ?  
 You question. Friends, the harm  
 is here —

That just when our last sigh is heaved,  
And we would fain thank God and  
you  
For labor done and peace achieved,  
Back comes the Past in full review!

## XVII.

"At sight of just that simple flag,  
Starts the foe-feeling serpent-like  
From slumber. Leave it lulled, nor  
drag —

Though fangless — forth, what needs  
must strike

When stricken sore, though stroke be  
vain  
Against the mailed oppressor!  
Give

Play to our fancy that we gain  
Life's rights when once we cease to  
live!

## XVIII.

"Thus much to courtesy, to kind,  
To conscience! Now to Florence  
folk!

There's core beneath this apple-rind,  
Beneath this white of egg there's  
yolk!

Beneath this prayer to courtesy,  
Kind, conscience — there's a sum to  
pouch!

How many ducats down will buy  
Our shame's removal, sirs? Avouch!

## XIX.

"Removal, not destruction, sirs!  
Just turn your picture! Let it  
front

The public path! Or memory errs,  
Or that same public path is wont  
To witness many a chance befall  
Of lust, theft, bloodshed — sins  
enough,

Wherein our Hebrew part is small.  
Convert yourselves!" — he cut up  
rough.

## XX.

Look you, how soon a service paid  
Religion yields the servant fruit!  
A prompt reply our Farmer made  
So following: "Sirs, to grant your  
suit

Involves much danger! How? Trans-  
pose

Our Lady? Stop the chastisement,  
All for your good, herself bestows?  
What wonder if I grudge consent?

## XXI.

— "Yet grant it: since, what cash I  
take  
Is so much saved from wicked use.  
We know you! And, for Mary's  
sake,

A hundred ducats shall induce  
Concession to your prayer. One day  
Suffices: Master Buti's brush  
Turns Mary round the other way,  
And deluges your side with slush.

## XXII.

"Down with the ducats therefore!"

Dump,  
Dump, dump it falls, each counted  
piece,  
Hard gold. Then out of door they  
stump,  
These dogs, each brisk as with new  
lease

Of life, I warrant, — glad he'll die  
Henceforward just as he may  
choose,

Be buried and in clover lie!  
Well said Esaias — "stiff-necked  
Jews!"

## XXIII.

Off posts without a minute's loss  
Our Farmer, once the cash in poke,  
And summons Buti — ere its gloss  
Have time to fade from off the  
joke —

To chop and change his work, undo  
The done side, make the side, now  
blank,  
Recipient of our Lady — who,  
Displaced thus, had these dogs to  
thank!

## XXIV.

Now, you're no boy I need instruct  
In technicalities of Art!  
My nephew's childhood sure has  
sucked

Along with mother's-milk some part  
Of painter's-practice — learned, at  
least,

How expeditiously is plied  
A work in fresco — never ceased  
When once begun — a day, each  
side.

## XXV.

So, Buti — he's with God — begins:  
First covers up the shrine all round  
With hoarding; then, as like as twins,  
Paints, t'other side the burial-  
ground,

New Mary, every point the same ;  
 Next, sluices over, as agreed,  
 The old ; and last—but, spoil the  
     game  
 By telling you ? Not I, indeed !

XXVI.

Well, ere the week was half at end,  
 Out came the object of this zeal,  
 This fine alacrity to spend  
 Hard money for mere dead men's  
     weal !  
 How think you ? That old spokes-  
     man Jew

Was High Priest, and he had a  
     wife  
 As old, and she was dying too,  
 And wished to end in peace her  
     life !

XXVII.

And he must humor dying whims,  
 And soothe her with the idle hope  
 They'd say their prayers and sing  
     their hymns  
 As if her husband were the Pope !  
 And she did die—believing just  
 This privilege was purchased !  
     Dead

In comfort through her foolish trust !  
 "Stiff-necked ones," well Esaias  
     said !

XXVIII.

So, Sabbath morning, out of gate  
 And on to way, what sees our arch  
 Good Farmer ? Why, they hoist their  
     freight—

The corpse—on shoulder, and so,  
     march !

"Now for it, Buti !" In the nick  
 Of time 'tis pully-haully, hence  
 With hoarding ! O'er the wayside  
     quick

There's Mary plain in evidence !

XXIX.

And here's the convoy halting : right !  
 Oh, they are bent on howling psalms  
 And growling prayers, when oppo-  
     site !

And yet they glance, for all their  
     qualms,  
 Approve that promptitude of his,  
 The Farmer's—duly at his post  
 To take due thanks from every phiz,  
 Sour smirk—nay, surly smile  
     almost !

XXX.

Then earthward drops each brow  
     again ;  
 The solemn task's resumed ; they  
     reach  
 Their holy field—the unholy train :  
     Enter its precinct, all and each,  
 Wrapt somehow in their godless rites ;  
     Till, rites at end, up-waking, lo  
 They lift their faces ! What delights  
     The mourners as they turn to go ?

XXXI.

Ha, ha, he, he ! On just the side  
 They drew their purse-strings to  
     make quit  
 Of Mary,—Christ the Crucified  
 Fronted them now—these biters  
     bit !  
 Never was such a hiss and snort,  
 Such screwing nose and shooting  
     lip !  
 Their purchase—honey in report—  
     Proved gall and verjuice at first sip !

XXXII.

Out they break, on they bustle, where,  
 A-top of wall, the Farmer waits  
 With Buti : never fun so rare !  
 The Farmer has the best : he rates  
 The rascal, as the old High Priest  
 Takes on himself to sermonize—  
 Nay, sneer "We Jews supposed, at  
     least,  
 Theft was a crime in Christian  
     eyes !"

XXXIII.

"Theft?" cries the Farmer, "Eat  
     your words !  
 Show me what constitutes a breach  
 Of faith in aught was said or heard !  
 I promised you in plainest speech  
 I'd take the thing you count disgrace  
     And put it here—and here 'tis put !  
 Did you suppose I'd leave the place  
     Blank therefore, just your rage to  
     glut ?

XXXIV.

"I guess you dared not stipulate  
     For such a damned impertinence !  
 So, quick, my graybeard, out of gate  
     And in at Ghetto ! Haste you  
     hence !

As long as I have house and land,  
To spite you irreligious chaps  
Here shall the Crucifixion stand —  
Unless you down with cash, per-  
haps!"

xxxv.

So snickered he and Buti both.  
The Jews said nothing, interchanged  
A glance or two, renewed their oath  
To keep ears stopped and hearts  
estranged  
From grace, for all our Church can do.  
Then off they scuttle: sullen jog  
Homewards, against our Church to  
brew  
Fresh mischief in their synagogue.

xxxvi.

But next day — see what happened,  
boy!  
See why I bid you have a care  
How you pelt Jews! The knaves em-  
ploy  
Such methods of revenge, forbear  
No outrage on our faith, when free  
To wreak their malice! Here they  
took  
So base a method — plague o' me  
If I record it in my Book!

xxxvii.

For, next day, while the Farmer sat  
Laughing with Buti, in his shop,  
At their successful joke, — rat-tat, —  
Door opens, and they're like to drop  
Down to the floor as in there stalks  
A six-foot-high herculean-built  
Young he-Jew with a beard that balks  
Description. "Help, ere blood be  
spilt!"

xxxviii.

— Screamed Buti: for he recognized  
Whom but the son, no less no more,  
Of that High Priest his work surprised  
So pleasantly the day before!  
Son of the mother, then, whereof  
The bier he lent a shoulder to,  
And made the moans about, dared  
scoff  
At sober, Christian grief — the Jew!

xxxix.

"Sirs, I salute you! Never rise!  
No apprehension!" (Buti, white  
And trembling like a tub of size,  
Had tried to smuggle out of sight

The picture's self — the thing in oils,  
You know, from which a fresco's  
dashed  
Which courage speeds while caution  
spoils)  
"Stay and be praised, sir, una-  
bashed!

xl.

"Praised, — ay, and paid too: for I  
come  
To buy that very work of yours.  
My poor abode, which boasts — well,  
some  
Few specimens of Art, secures  
Haply, a masterpiece indeed  
If I should find my humble means  
Suffice the outlay. So, proceed!  
Propose — ere prudence inter-  
venes!"

xli.

On Buti, cowering like a child,  
These words descended from aloft,  
In tone so ominously mild,  
With smile terrifically soft  
To that degree — could Buti dare  
(Poor fellow) use his brains, think  
twice?  
He asked, thus taken unaware,  
No more than just the proper price!

xlii.

"Done!" cries the monster. "I dis-  
burse  
Forthwith your moderate demand.  
Count on my custom — if no worse  
Your future work be, understand,  
Than this I carry off! No aid!  
My arm, sir, lacks nor bone nor  
thews:  
The burden's easy, and we're made,  
Easy or hard, to bear — we Jews!"

xliii.

Crossing himself at such escape,  
Buti by turns the money eyes  
And, timidly, the stalwart shape  
Now moving doorwards; but, more  
wise,  
The Farmer, — who, though dumb,  
this while  
Had watched advantage, — straight  
conceived  
A reason for that tone and smile  
So mild and soft! The Jew — be-  
lieved!



XLIV.

Mary in triumph borne to deck  
 A Hebrew household! Pictured where  
 No one was used to bend the neck  
 In praise or bow the knee in prayer!  
 Borne to that domicile by whom?  
 The son of the High Priest!  
 Through what?  
 An insult done his mother's tomb!  
 Saul changed to Paul—the case  
 came pat!

XLV.

"Stay, dog-Jew . . . gentle sir, that  
 is!  
 Resolve me! Can it be, she  
 crowned—  
 Mary, by miracle— Oh bliss!—  
 My present to your burial-ground?  
 Certain, a ray of light has burst  
 Your veil of darkness! Had you  
 else,  
 Only for Mary's sake, unpursed  
 So much hard money? Tell—oh,  
 tell's!"

XLVI.

Round— like a serpent that we took  
 For worm and trod on—turns his  
 bulk  
 About the Jew. First dreadful look  
 Sends Buti in a trice to skulk  
 Out of sight somewhere, safe—alack!  
 But our good Farmer faith made  
 bold:  
 And firm (with Florence at his back)  
 He stood, while gruff the gutturals  
 rolled—

XLVII.

"Ay, sir, a miracle was worked,  
 By quite another power, I trow,  
 Than ever yet in canvas lurked,  
 Or you would scarcely face me now!  
 A certain impulse did suggest  
 A certain grasp with this right-  
 hand,  
 Which probably had put to rest  
 Our quarrel,— thus your throat once  
 spanned!

XLVIII.

"But I remembered me, subdued  
 That impulse, and you face me still!  
 And soon a philosophic mood  
 Succeeding (hear it, if you will!)

Has altogether changed my views  
 Concerning Art. Blind prejudice!  
 Well may you Christians tax us Jews  
 With scrupulosity too nice!

XLIX.

"For, don't I see,— let's issue  
 join!—  
 Whenever I'm allowed pollute  
 (I—and my little bag of coin)  
 Some Christian palace of repute,—  
 Don't I see stuck up everywhere  
 Abundant proof that cultured taste  
 Has Beauty for its only care,  
 And upon Truth no thought to  
 waste?"

L.

"Jew, since it must be, take in  
 pledge  
 Of payment'— so a Cardinal  
 Has sighed to me as if a wedge  
 Entered his heart—' this best of all  
 My treasures!' Leda, Ganymede,  
 Or Antiope: swan, eagle, ape  
 (Or what's the beast of what's the  
 breed),  
 And Jupiter in every shape!

LI.

"Whereat if I presume to ask  
 'But, Eminence, though Titian's  
 whisk  
 Of brush have well performed its task,  
 How comes it these false godships  
 frisk  
 In presence of— what yonder frame  
 Pretends to image? Surely, odd  
 It seems, you let confront The Name  
 Each beast the heathen called his  
 god!"

LII.

"Benignant smiles me pity straight  
 The Cardinal. 'Tis Truth, we  
 prize!  
 Art's the sole question in debate!  
 These subjects are so many lies.  
 We treat them with a proper scorn  
 When we turn lies— called gods for-  
 sooth—  
 To lies' fit use, now Christ is born.  
 Drawing and coloring are Truth.

LIII.

"Think you I honor lies so much  
 As scruple to parade the charms  
 Of Leda— Titian, every touch—  
 Because the thing within her arms

Means Jupiter who had the praise  
And prayer of a benighted world?  
Benighted I too, if, in days  
Of light, I kept the canvas furled!

LIV.

"So ending, with some easy gibe.  
What power has logic! I, at once,  
Acknowledged error in our tribe,  
So squeamish that, when friends  
enconce

A pretty picture in its niche  
To do us honor, deck our graves,  
We fret and fume and have an itch  
To strangle folk — ungrateful  
knaves!

LV.

"No, sir! Be sure that — what's its  
style,  
Your picture? — shall possess un-  
grudged  
A place among my rank and file  
Of Ledas and what not — be judged  
Just as a picture! — and (because  
I fear me much I scarce have bought  
A Titian) Master Buti's flaws  
Found there, will have the laugh  
flaws ought!"

LVI.

So, with a scowl, it darkens door —  
This bulk — no longer! Buti makes  
Prompt glad re-entry; there's a score  
Of oaths, as the good Farmer wakes  
From what must needs have been a  
trance,  
Or he had struck (he swears) to  
ground  
The bold bad mouth that dared ad-  
vance  
Such doctrine the reverse of sound!

LVII.

Was magic here? Most like! For,  
since,  
Somehow our city's faith grows still  
More and more lukewarm, and our  
Prince  
Or loses heart or wants the will  
To check increase of cold. 'Tis  
"Live  
And let live! Languidly repress  
The Dissident! In short, — contrive  
Christians must bear with Jews: no  
less!"

LVIII.

The end seems, any Israelite  
Wants any picture, — pishes, poohs,  
Purchases, hangs it full in sight  
In any chamber he may choose!  
In Christ's crown, one more thorn we  
rue!  
In Mary's bosom, one more sword!  
No, boy, you must not pelt a Jew!  
O Lord, how long? How long, O  
Lord?

## SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH CLOISTER.

I.

GR-R-R — there go, my heart's abhor-  
rence!  
Water your damned flower-pots,  
do!  
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,  
God's blood, would not mine kill  
you!  
What? your myrtle-bush wants trim-  
ming?  
Oh, that rose has prior claims —  
Needs its leaden vase filled brim-  
ming?  
Hell dry you up with its flames!

II.

At the meal we sit together:  
*Salve tibi!* I must hear  
Wise talk of the kind of weather,  
Sort of season, time of year:  
*Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely*  
*Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt:*  
*What's the Latin name for "parsley"?*  
What's the Greek name for Swine's  
Snout?

III.

Whew! We'll have our platter bur-  
nished,  
Laid with care on our own shelf!  
With a fire-new spoon we're fur-  
nished,  
And a goblet for ourself,  
Rinsed like something sacrificial  
Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps —  
Marked with L. for our initial!  
(He-he! There his lily snaps!)



Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister. — Page 164.



## IV.

Saint, forsooth! While brown Do-  
lores  
Squats outside the Convent bank  
With Sanchicha, telling stories,  
Steeping tresses in the tank,  
Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horse-  
hairs,  
— Can't I see his dead eye glow,  
Bright as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?  
(That is, if he'd let it show!)

## V.

When he finishes refection,  
Knife and fork he never lays  
Cross-wise, to my recollection,  
As do I, in Jesu's praise.  
I the Trinity illustrate,  
Drinking watered orange-pulp—  
In three sips the Arian frustrate;  
While he drains his at one gulp.

## VI.

Oh, those melons? If he's able  
We're to have a feast! so nice!  
One goes to the Abbot's table,  
All of us get each a slice.  
How go on your floyers? None  
double?  
Not one fruit-sort can you spy?  
Strange!—And I, too, at such trouble  
Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

## VII.

There's a great text in Galatians,  
Once you trip on it, entails  
Twenty-nine distinct damnations,  
One sure, if another fails:  
If I trip him just a-dying,  
Sure of heaven as sure can be,  
Spin him round and send him flying  
Off to hell, a Manichee?

## VIII.

Or, my scrofulous French novel  
On gray paper with blunt type!  
Simply glance at it, you grovel  
Hand and foot in Belial's gripe:  
If I double down its pages  
At the woful sixteenth print,  
When he gathers his greengages,  
Ope a sieve and slip it in't?

## IX.

Or, there's Satan!—one might ven-  
ture  
Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave

Such a flaw in the indenture  
As he'd miss till, past retrieve,  
Blasted lay that rose-acacia  
We're so proud of! *Hy, Zy, Hine . . .*  
'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratiâ*  
*Ave, Virgo!* Gr-r-r— you swine!

## THE HERETIC'S TRAGEDY.

## A MIDDLE-AGE INTERLUDE.

ROSA MUNDI; SEU, FULCITE ME FLORIBUS.  
A CONCEIT OF MASTER GYSBRECHT,  
CANON-REGULAR OF SAINT JODOCUS-BY-  
THE-BAR, YPRES CITY. CANTUQUE, *Vir-  
gilius*. AND HATH OFTEN BEEN SUNG  
AT HOCK-TIDE AND FESTIVALS. GAVI-  
SUS ERAM, *Jessides*.

(It would seem to be a glimpse from the  
burning of Jacques du Bourg-Molay, at  
Paris, A.D. 1314; as distorted by the refra-  
ction from Flemish brain to brain, during the  
course of a couple of centuries.)

## I.

PREADMONISHETH THE ABBOT DEO-  
DAET.

THE Lord, we look to once for all,  
Is the Lord we should look at, all  
at once:  
He knows not to vary, saith Saint  
Paul,  
Nor the shadow of turning, for the  
nonce.  
See him no other than as he is!  
Give both the infinitudes their  
due—  
Infinite mercy, but, I wis,  
As infinite a justice too.  
[*Organ: plagal-cadence.*  
As infinite a justice too.

## II.

## ONE SINGETH.

John, Master of the Temple of God,  
Falling to sin the Unknown Sin,  
What he bought of Emperor Alda-  
brod,  
He sold it to Sultan Saladin:  
Till, caught by Pope Clement, a-buzz-  
ing there,  
Hornet-prince of the mad wasps'  
hive,

And clipt of his wings in Paris square,  
They bring him now to be burned  
alive.

[*And wanteth there grace of lute  
or clavicithern, ye shall say to  
confirm him who singeth —*

We bring John now to be burned  
alive.

## III.

In the midst is a goodly gallows built ;  
'Twixt fork and fork, a stake is  
stuck ;  
But first they set divers tumbrils  
a-tilt,  
Make a trench all round with the  
city muck ;  
Inside they pile log upon log, good  
store ;  
Fagots not few, blocks great and  
small,  
Reach a man's mid-thigh, no less, no  
more, —  
For they mean he should roast in  
the sight of all.

## CHORUS.

We mean he should roast in the  
sight of all.

## IV.

Good sappy bavins that kindle forth-  
with ;  
Billets that blaze substantial and  
slow ;  
Pine-stump split deftly, dry as pith ;  
Larch-heart that chars to a chalk-  
white glow :  
Then up they hoist me John in a chafe,  
Sling him fast like a log to scorch,  
Spit in his face, then leap back safe,  
Sing " Laudes," and bid clap-to the  
torch.

## CHORUS.

*Laus Deo* — who bids clap-to the  
torch.

## V.

John of the Temple, whose fame so  
bragged,  
Is burning alive in Paris square !  
How can he curse, if his mouth is  
gagged ?  
Or wriggle his neck, with a collar  
there ?  
Or heave his chest, while a band goes  
round ?  
Or threat with his fist, since his  
arms are spliced ?

Or kick with his feet, now his legs are  
bound ?

— Thinks John, I will call upon  
Jesus Christ.

[*Here one crosseth himself.*

## VI.

Jesus Christ — John had bought and  
sold,  
Jesus Christ — John had eaten and  
drunk ;  
To him, the Flesh meant silver and  
gold.

(*Salva reverentiâ.*)

Now it was, " Saviour, bountiful lamb,  
I have roasted thee Turks, though  
men roast me !

See thy servant, the plight wherein I  
am !

Art thou a saviour ? Save thou  
me ! "

## CHORUS.

'Tis John the mocker cries, " Save  
thou me ! "

## VII.

Who maketh God's menace an idle  
word ?

— Saith, it no more means what it  
proclaims,

Than a damsel's threat to her wanton  
bird ? —

For she too prattles of ugly names.

— Saith, he knoweth but one thing, —  
what he knows ?

That God is good and the rest is  
breath ;

Why else is the same styled Sharon's  
rose ?

Once a rose, ever a rose, he saith.

## CHORUS.

Oh, John shall yet find a rose, he  
saith.

## VIII.

Alack, there be roses and roses, John !  
Some honeyed of taste like your  
leman's tongue :

Some, bitter ; for why ? (roast gayly  
on !)

Their tree struck root in devil's  
dung.

When Paul once reasoned of righteous-  
ness

And of temperance and of judgment  
to come,

Good Felix trembled, he could no less :  
John, snickering, crooked his  
wicked thumb.

CHORUS.

What cometh to John of the wicked  
thumb ?

IX.

Ha, ha ! John plucketh now at his  
rose  
To rid himself of a sorrow at heart !  
Lo, — petal on petal, fierce rays un-  
close ;  
Anther on anther, sharp spikes out-  
start ;  
And with blood for dew, the bosom  
boils ;  
And a gust of sulphur is all its smell ;  
And lo, he is horribly in the toils  
Of a coal-black giant flower of hell !

CHORUS.

What maketh heaven, That maketh  
hell.

X.

So, as John called now, through the  
fire again,  
On the Name, he had cursed with,  
all his life —  
To the Person, he bought and sold  
again —  
For the Face, with his daily buffets  
rife —  
Feature by feature It took its place ;  
And his voice, like a mad dog's  
choking bark,  
At the steady whole of the Judge's  
face —  
Died. Forth John's soul flared into  
the dark.

SUBJOINETH THE ABBOT DEODAET.  
God help all poor souls lost in the  
dark !

HOLY-CROSS DAY.

ON WHICH THE JEWS WERE FORCED  
TO ATTEND AN ANNUAL CHRIS-  
TIAN SERMON IN ROME.

[“ Now was come about Holy-Cross Day,  
and now must my lord preach his first ser-  
mon to the Jews : as it was of old cared for  
in the merciful bowels of the Church, that,

so to speak, a crumb, at least, from her con-  
spicuous table here in Rome, should be,  
though but once yearly, cast to the famish-  
ing dogs, under-trampled and bespitten-upon  
beneath the feet of the guests. And a mov-  
ing sight in truth, this, of so many of the  
besotted blind restif and ready-to-perish He-  
brews ! now maternally brought — nay (for  
He saith, ‘ Compel them to come in ’), haled,  
as it were, by the head and hair, and against  
their obstinate hearts, to partake of the  
heavenly grace. What awakenin, what  
striving with tears, what working of a yeasty  
conscience ! Nor was my lord wanting to  
himself on so apt an occasion ; witness the  
abundance of conversions which did inconti-  
nently reward him : though not to my lord  
be altogether the glory.” — *Diary by the  
Bishop's Secretary, 1600.*]

What the Jews really said, on thus being  
driven to church, was rather to this effect : —

I.

FEE, faw, fum ! bubble and squeak !  
Blessedst Thursday's the fat of the  
week.

Rumble and tumble, sleek and rough,  
Stinking and savory, smug and gruff,  
Take the church-road, for the bell's  
due chime  
Gives us the summons — 'tis sermon-  
time !

II.

Boh, here's Barnabas ! Job, that's  
you ?  
Up stumps Solomon — bustling too ?  
Shame, man ! greedy beyond your  
years  
To handsel the bishop's shaving-  
shears ?  
Fair play's a jewel ! Leave friends  
in the lurch ?  
Stand on a line ere you start for the  
church !

III

Higgledy piggledy, packed we lie,  
Rats in a hamper, swine in a sty,  
Wasps in a bottle, frogs in a sieve,  
Worms in a carcass, fleas in a sleeve.  
Hist ! square shoulders, settle your  
thumbs  
And buzz for the bishop — here he  
comes.

IV.

Bow, wow, wow — a bone for the  
dog !  
I liken his Grace to an acorned hog.

What, a boy at his side, with the  
bloom of a lass,  
To help and handle my lord's hour-  
glass!  
Didst ever behold so lithe a chine?  
His cheek hath laps like a fresh-  
singed swine.

## V.

Aaron's asleep—shove hip to haunch,  
Or somebody deal him a dig in the  
paunch!  
Look at the purse with the tassel and  
knob,  
And the gown with the angel and  
thingumbob!  
What's he at, quotha? reading his  
text!  
Now you've his curtsey—and what  
comes next?

## VI.

See to our converts—you doomed  
black dozen—  
No stealing away—nor cog nor  
cozen!  
You five, that were thieves, deserve  
it fairly;  
You seven, that were beggars, will  
live less sparely;  
You took your turn and dipped in the  
hat,  
Got fortune—and fortune gets you;  
mind that!

## VII.

Give your first groan—compunction's  
at work;  
And soft! from a Jew you mount to  
a Turk.  
Lo, Micah,—the selfsame beard on  
chin  
He was four times already converted  
in!  
Here's a knife, clip quick—it's a sign  
of grace—  
Or he ruins us all with his hanging-  
face.

## VIII.

Whom now is the bishop a-leering at?  
I know a point where his text falls  
pat.  
I'll tell him to-morrow, a word just  
now  
Went to my heart and made me vow  
To meddle no more with the worst of  
trades:  
Let somebody else play his serenades!

## IX.

Groan all together now, whee—hee  
—hee!  
It's a-work, it's a-work, ah, woe is  
me!  
It began, when a herd of us, picked  
and placed,  
Were spurred through the Corso,  
stripped to the waist;  
Jew brutes, with sweat and blood  
well spent  
To usher in worthily Christian Lent.

## X.

It grew, when the hangman entered  
our bounds,  
Yelled, pricked us out to his church  
like hounds:  
It got to a pitch, when the hand in-  
deed  
Which gutted my purse, would throt-  
tle my creed:  
And it overflows, when, to even the  
odd,  
Men I helped to their sins, help me to  
their God.

## XI.

But now, while the scapegoats leave  
our flock,  
And the rest sit silent and count the  
clock,  
Since forced to muse the appointed  
time  
On these precious facts and truths  
sublime,—  
Let us fitly employ it, under our  
breath,  
In saying Ben Ezra's Song of Death.

## XII.

For Rabbi Ben Ezra, the night he  
died,  
Called sons and sons' sons to his side,  
And spoke, "This world has been  
harsh and strange;  
Something is wrong: there needeth a  
change.  
But what, or where? at the last or  
first?  
In one point only we sinned, at worst.

## XIII.

"The Lord will have mercy on Jacob  
yet,  
And again in his border see Israel  
set.



When Judah beholds Jerusalem,  
The stranger-seed shall be joined to  
them :  
To Jacob's House shall the Gentiles  
cleave,  
So the Prophet saith and his sons be-  
lieve.

## XIV.

"Ay, the children of the chosen race  
Shall carry and bring them to their  
place :  
In the land of the Lord shall lead the  
same,  
Bondsman and handmaids. Who  
shall blame,  
When the slaves enslave, the op-  
pressed ones o'er  
The oppressor triumph for evermore !

## XV.

"God spoke, and gave us the word to  
keep :  
Bade never fold the hands nor sleep  
'Mid a faithless world, — at watch and  
ward,  
Till Christ at the end relieve our  
guard.  
By his servant Moses the watch was  
set :  
Though near upon cock-crow, we keep  
it yet.

## XVI.

"Thou ! if thou wast he, who at mid-  
watch came,  
By the starlight, naming a dubious  
name !  
And if, too heavy with sleep — too  
rash  
With fear — O thou, if that martyr-  
gash  
Fell on thee coming to take thine own,  
And we gave the Cross, when we  
owed the Throne —

## XVII

"Thou art the Judge. We are  
bruised thus.  
But, the Judgment over, join sides  
with us !  
Thine too is the cause ! and not more  
thine  
Than ours, is the work of these dogs  
and swine,  
Whose life laughs through and spits  
at their creed,  
Who maintain thee in word, and defy  
thee in deed !

## XVIII.

"We withstood Christ then ? Be  
mindful how  
At least we withstand Barabbas now !  
Was our outrage sore ? But the worst  
we spared,  
To have called these — Christians, had  
we dared !  
Let defiance to them pay mistrust of  
thee,  
And Rome make amends for Calvary !

## XIX.

"By the torture, prolonged from age  
to age,  
By the infamy, Israel's heritage,  
By the Ghetto's plague, by the garb's  
disgrace,  
By the badge of shame, by the felon's  
place,  
By the branding-tool, the bloody  
whip,  
And the summons to Christian fellow-  
ship, —

## XX.

"We boast our proof that at least the  
Jew  
Would wrest Christ's name from the  
Devil's crew.  
Thy face took never so deep a shade  
But we fought them in it, God our  
aid !  
A trophy to bear, as we march, thy  
band  
South, East, and on to the Pleasant  
Land !"  
*[The late Pope abolished this bad  
business of the sermon. — R. B.]*

## AMPHIBIAN.

## I.

THE fancy I had to-day,  
Fancy which turned a fear !  
I swam far out in the bay,  
Since waves laughed warm and  
clear.

## II.

I lay and looked at the sun,  
The noon-sun looked at me :  
Between us two, no one  
Live creature, that I could see.

## III.

Yes ! There came floating by  
 Me, who lay floating too,  
 Such a strange butterfly !  
 Creature as dear as new :

## IV.

Because the membraned wings  
 So wonderful, so wide,  
 So sun-suffused, were things  
 Like soul and naught beside.

## V.

A handbreadth over head !  
 All of the sea my own,  
 It owned the sky instead ;  
 Both of us were alone.

## VI.

I never shall join its flight,  
 For naught buoys flesh in air.  
 If it touch the sea — good-night !  
 Death sure and swift waits there.

## VII.

Can the insect feel the better  
 For watching the uncouth play  
 Of limbs that slip the fetter,  
 Pretend as they were not clay ?

## VIII.

Undoubtedly I rejoice  
 That the air comports so well  
 With a creature which had the choice  
 Of the land once. Who can tell ?

## IX.

What if a certain soul  
 Which early slipped its sheath,  
 And has for its home the whole  
 Of heaven, thus look beneath,

## X.

Thus watch one who, in the world,  
 Both lives and likes life's way,  
 Nor wishes the wings unfurled  
 That sleep in the worm, they say ?

## XI.

But sometimes when the weather  
 Is blue, and warm waves tempt  
 To free one's self of tether,  
 And try a life exempt

## XII.

From worldly noise and dust,  
 In the sphere which overbrims  
 With passion and thought, — why,  
 just  
 Unable to fly, one swims !

## XIII.

By passion and thought upborne,  
 One smiles to one's self — "They  
 fare  
 Scarce better, they need not scorn  
 Our sea, who live in the air !"

## XIV.

Emancipate through passion  
 And thought, with sea for sky,  
 We substitute, in a fashion,  
 For heaven — poetry :

## XV.

Which sea, to all intent,  
 Gives flesh such noon-disport  
 As a finer element  
 Affords the spirit-sort.

## XVI.

Whatever they are, we seem :  
 Imagine the thing they know ;  
 All deeds they do, we dream ;  
 Can heaven be else but so ?

## XVII.

And meantime, yonder streak  
 Meets the horizon's verge ;  
 That is the land, to seek  
 If we tire or dread the surge ;

## XVIII.

Land the solid and safe —  
 To welcome again (confess !)  
 When, high and dry, we chafe  
 The body, and don the dress.

## XIX.

Does she look, pity, wonder  
 At one who mimics flight,  
 Swims — heaven above, sea under,  
 Yet always earth in sight ?

## ST. MARTIN'S SUMMER.

## I.

No protesting, dearest !  
 Hardly kisses even !  
 Don't we both know how it ends ?  
 How the greenest leaf turns searest ?  
 Bluest outbreak — blankest heaven ?  
 Lovers — friends ?

## II.

You would build a mansion,  
 I would weave a bower  
 — Want the heart for enterprise.  
 Walls admit of no expansion :  
 Trellis-work may haply flower  
 Twice the size.

## III.

What makes glad Life's Winter ?  
 New buds, old blooms after.  
 Sad the sighing " How suspect  
 Beams would ere mid-autumn splin-  
 ter,  
 Roof-tree scarce support a rafter,  
 Walls lie wrecked ? "

## IV.

You are young, my princess !  
 I am hardly older :  
 Yet — I steal a glance behind !  
 Dare I tell you what convinces  
 Timid me that you, if bolder,  
 Bold — are blind ?

## V.

Where we plan our dwelling  
 Grooms a graveyard surely !  
 Headstone, footstone moss may  
 drape, —  
 Name, date, violets hide from spell-  
 ing, —  
 But, though corpses rot obscurely,  
 Ghosts escape.

## VI.

Ghosts ! O breathing Beauty,  
 Give my frank word pardon !  
 What if I — somehow, some-  
 where —  
 Pledged my soul to endless duty  
 Many a time and oft ? Be hard on  
 Love — laid there ?

## VII.

Nay, blame grief that's fickle,  
 Time that proves a traitor,  
 Chance, change, all that purpose  
 warps, —  
 Death who spares to thrust the sickle,  
 Which laid Love low, through flow-  
 ers which later  
 Shroud the corpse !

## VIII.

And you, my winsome lady,  
 Whisper me with like frankness !  
 Lies nothing buried long ago ?  
 Are you — which shimmer mid what's  
 shady  
 Where moss and violet run to rank-  
 ness —  
 Tombs, or no ?

## IX.

Who taxes you with murder ?  
 My hands are clean — or nearly !  
 Love being mortal needs must  
 pass.  
 Repentance ? Nothing were absurder.  
 Enough ; we felt Love's loss se-  
 verely ;  
 Though now — alas !

## X.

Love's corpse lies quiet therefore,  
 Only Love's ghost plays truant,  
 And warns us have in wholesome  
 awe  
 Durable mansionry ; that's wherefore  
 I weave but trellis-work, pursuant  
 — Life, to law.

## XI.

The solid, not the fragile,  
 Tempts rain and hail and thunder.  
 If bower stand firm at autumn's  
 close,  
 Beyond my hope, — why, boughs were  
 agile ;  
 If bower fall flat, we scarce need  
 wonder  
 Wreathing — rose !

## XII.

So, truce to the protesting,  
 So, muffled be the kisses !  
 For, would we but avow the truth,  
 Sober is genuine joy. No jesting !  
 Ask else Penelope, Ulysses —  
 Old in youth !

## XIII.

For why should ghosts feel angered?  
 Let all their interference  
 Be faint march-music in the air!  
 "Up! Join the rear of us the van-  
 guard!  
 Up, lovers, dead to all appearance,  
 Laggard pair!"

## XIV.

The while you clasp me closer,  
 The while I press you deeper,  
 As safe we chuckle,—under  
 breath,  
 Yet all the slyer, the jocosier,—  
 "So, life can boast its day, like leap-  
 year,  
 Stolen from death!"

## XV.

Ah me — the sudden terror!  
 Hence quick — avaunt, avoid me,  
 You cheat, the ghostly flesh-dis-  
 guised!  
 Nay, all the ghosts in one! Strange  
 error!  
 So, 'twas Death's self that clipped  
 and coyed me,  
 Loved — and lied!

## XVI.

Ay, dead loves are the potent!  
 Like any cloud they used you,  
 Mere semblance you, but sub-  
 stance they!  
 Build we no mansion, weave we no  
 tent!  
 Mere flesh — their spirit interfused  
 you!  
 Hence, I say!

## XVII.

All theirs, none yours the glamour!  
 Theirs each low word that won  
 me,  
 Soft look that found me Love's,  
 and left  
 What else but you — the tears and  
 clamor  
 That's all your very own! Undone  
 me —  
 Ghost-bereft!

## JAMES LEE'S WIFE.

## I.

JAMES LEE'S WIFE SPEAKS AT  
 THE WINDOW.

## I.

AH, Love, but a day,  
 And the world has changed!  
 The sun's away,  
 And the bird estranged;  
 The wind has dropped,  
 And the sky's deranged:  
 Summer has stopped.

## II.

Look in my eyes!  
 Wilt thou change too?  
 Should I fear surprise?  
 Shall I find aught new  
 In the old and dear,  
 In the good and true,  
 With the changing year?

## III.

Thou art a man,  
 But I am thy love.  
 For the lake, its swan;  
 For the dell, its dove;  
 And for thee — (oh, haste!)  
 Me to bend above,  
 Me, to hold embraced.

## II.

BY THE FIRESIDE.

## I.

Is all our fire of shipwreck wood,  
 Oak and pine?  
 Oh, for the ill's half-understood,  
 The dim dead woe  
 Long ago  
 Befallen this bitter coast of France!  
 Well, poor sailors took their chance;  
 I take mine.

## II.

A ruddy shaft our fire must shoot  
 O'er the sea;  
 Do sailors eye the casement — mute  
 Drenched and stark,  
 From their bark —

And envy, gnash their teeth for hate  
O' the warm safe house and happy  
    freight  
    — Thee and me ?

III.

God help you, sailors, at your need !  
Spare the curse !  
For some ships, safe in port indeed,  
    Rot and rust,  
    Run to dust,  
All through worms i' the wood, which  
    crept,  
Gnawed our hearts out while we  
    slept :  
That is worse.

IV.

Who lived here before us two ?  
Old-world pairs.  
Did a woman ever — would I knew ! —  
    Watch the man  
    With whom began  
Love's voyage full-sail, — (now, gnash  
    your teeth !)  
When planks start, open hell beneath  
Unawares ?

III.

IN THE DOORWAY.

I.

THE swallow has set her six young on  
    the rail,  
And looks seaward :  
The water's in stripes like a snake,  
    olive-pale  
To the leeward, —  
On the weather-side, black, spotted  
    white with the wind.  
" Good fortune departs, and disaster's  
    behind, " —  
Hark, the wind with its wants and its  
    infinite wail !

II.

Our fig-tree, that leaned for the salt-  
    ness, has furl'd  
Her five fingers,  
Each leaf like a hand opened wide to  
    the world  
Where there lingers

No glint of the gold, Summer sent for  
her sake :  
How the vines writhe in rows, each  
    impaled on its stake !  
My heart shrivels up and my spirit  
shrinks curled.

III

Yet here are we two ; we have love,  
    house enough,  
With the field there,  
This house of four rooms, that field  
red and rough,  
Though it yield there,  
For the rabbit that robs, scarce a  
    blade or a bent ;  
If a magpie alight now, it seems an  
event ;  
And they both will be gone at Novem-  
ber's rebuff.

IV.

But why must cold spread ? but  
    wherefore bring change  
To the spirit,  
God meant should mate his with an  
infinite range,  
And inherit  
His power to put life in the darkness  
and cold ?  
O, live and love worthily, bear and  
    be bold !  
Whom Summer made friends of, let  
Winter estrange !

IV.

ALONG THE BEACH.

I.

I WILL be quiet and talk with you,  
And reason why you are wrong.  
You wanted my love — is that much  
true ?  
And so I did love, so I do :  
What has come of it all along ?

II.

I took you — how could I otherwise ?  
For a world to me, and more ;  
For all, love greatens and glorifies  
Till God's a-glow, to the loving  
    eyes,  
In what was mere earth before.

## III.

Yes, earth — yes, mere ignoble earth !  
 Now do I misstate, mistake ?  
 Do I wrong your weakness and call  
 it worth ?  
 Expect all harvest, dread no dearth,  
 Seal my sense up for your sake ?

## IV.

O Love, Love, no, Love ! not so, indeed  
 You were just weak earth, I knew :  
 With much in you waste, with many  
 a weed,  
 And plenty of passions run to seed,  
 But a little good grain too.

## V.

And such as you were, I took you for  
 mine :  
 Did not you find me yours,  
 To watch the olive and wait the  
 vine,  
 And wonder when rivers of oil and  
 wine  
 Would flow, as the Book assures ?

## VI.

Well, and if none of these good things  
 came,  
 What did the failure prove ?  
 The man was my whole world, all  
 the same,  
 With his flowers to praise or his  
 weeds to blame,  
 And, either or both, to love.

## VII.

Yet this turns now to a fault — there !  
 there !  
 That I do love, watch too long,  
 And wait too well, and weary and  
 wear ;  
 And 'tis all an old story, and my de-  
 spair  
 Fit subject for some new song :

## VIII.

“How the light, light love, he has  
 wings to fly  
 At suspicion of a bond :  
 My wisdom has bidden your pleasure  
 good-by,

Which will turn up next in a laughing  
 eye,  
 And why, should you look be-  
 yond ?”

## V.

## ON THE CLIFF.

## I.

I LEANED on the turf,  
 I looked at a rock  
 Left dry by the surf ;  
 For the turf, to call it grass were to  
 mock :  
 Dead to the roots, so deep was done  
 The work of the summer sun.

## II.

And the rock lay flat  
 As an auvil's face :  
 No iron like that !  
 Baked dry ; of a weed, of a shell, no  
 trace :  
 Sunshine outside, but ice at the core,  
 Death's altar by the lone shore.

## III.

On the turf, sprang gay  
 With his films of blue,  
 No cricket, I'll say,  
 But a warhorse, barded and chan-  
 ironed too,  
 The gift of a quixote-mage to his  
 knight,  
 Real fairy, with wings all right.

## IV.

On the rock, they scorch  
 Like a drop of fire  
 From a brandished torch,  
 Fall two red fans of a butterfly :  
 No turf, no rock, — in their ugly stead,  
 See, wonderful blue and red !

## V.

Is it not so  
 With the minds of men ?  
 The level and low,  
 The burnt and bare, in themselves ;  
 but then  
 With such a blue and red grace, not  
 theirs,  
 Love settling unawares !

VI.

READING A BOOK, UNDER THE CLIFF.

I.

"STILL ailing, Wind? Wilt be appeased or no?

Which needs the other's office, thou or I?

Dost want to be disburthened of a woe,

And can, in truth, my voice untie Its links, and let it go?

II.

"Art thou a dumb, wronged thing that would be righted,

Intrusting thus thy cause to me? Forbear!

No tongue can mend such pleadings; faith, required

With falsehood,—love, at last aware Of scorn,—hopes, early blighted,—

III.

"We have them; but I know not any tone

So fit as thine to falter forth a sorrow:

Dost think men would go mad without a moan,

If they knew any way to borrow A pathos like thy own?

IV.

"Which sigh wouldst mock, of all the sighs? The one

So long escaping from lips starved and blue,

That lasts while on her pallet-bed the nun

Stretches her length; her foot comes through

The straw she shivers on;

V.

"You had not thought she was so tall: and spent,

Her shrunk lids open, her lean fingers shut

Close, close, their sharp and livid nails indent

The clammy palm; then all is mute:

That way, the spirit went.

VI.

"Or wouldst thou rather that I understand

Thy will to help me?—like the dog I found

Once, pacing sad this solitary strand, Who would not take my food, poor hound,

But whined, and licked my hand."

VII.

All this, and more, comes from some young man's pride

Of power to see,—in failure and mistake,

Relinquishment, disgrace, on every side,—

Merely examples for his sake,

Helps to his path untried:

VIII.

Instances he must—simply recognize?

Oh, more than so!—must, with a learner's zeal,

Make doubly prominent, twice emphasize,

By added touches that reveal

The god in babe's disguise.

IX.

Oh, he knows what defeat means, and the rest!

Himself the undefeated that shall be:

Failure, disgrace, he flings them you to test,—

His triumph, in eternity

Too plainly manifest!

X.

Whence, judge if he learn forthwith what the wind

Means in its moaning—by the happy prompt

Instinctive way of youth, I mean; for kind

Calm years, exacting their account

Of pain, mature the mind:

XI.

And some midsummer morning, at the lull

Just about daybreak, as he looks across

A sparkling foreign country, wonderful

To the sea's edge for gloom and  
gloss,  
Next minute must annul, —

## XII.

Then, when the wind begins among  
the vines,  
So low, so low, what shall it say  
but this?  
"Here is the change beginning, here  
the lines  
Circumscribe beauty, set to bliss  
The limit time assigns."

## XIII.

Nothing can be as it has been be-  
fore;  
Better, so call it, only not the same.  
To draw one beauty into our hearts'  
core,  
And keep it changeless! such our  
claim;  
So answered, — Never more!

## XIV.

Simple? Why this is the old woe o'  
the world;  
Tune, to whose rise and fall we  
live and die.  
Rise with it, then! Rejoice that man  
is hurled  
From change to change unceas-  
ingly,  
His soul's wings never furled!

## XV.

That's a new question; still replies  
the fact,  
Nothing endures: the wind moans,  
saying so;  
We moan in acquiescence: there's  
life's pact,  
Perhaps probation — do I know?  
God does: endure his act!

## XVI.

Only, for man, how bitter not to  
grave  
On his soul's hands' palms one fair  
good wise thing  
Just as he grasped it! For himself,  
death's wave;  
While time first washes — ah, the  
sting! —  
O'er all he'd sink to save.

## VII.

## AMONG THE ROCKS.

## I.

Oh, good gigantic smile o' the brown  
old earth,  
This autumn morning! How he  
sets his bones  
To bask i' the sun, and thrusts out  
knees and feet  
For the ripple to run over in its  
mirth;  
Listening the while, where on the  
heap of stones  
The white breast of the sea-lark twit-  
ters sweet.

## II.

That is the doctrine, simple, ancient,  
true;  
Such is life's trial, as old earth  
smiles and knows.  
If you loved only what were worth  
your love,  
Love were clear gain, and wholly  
well for you:  
Make the low nature better by your  
throes!  
Give earth yourself, go up for gain  
above!

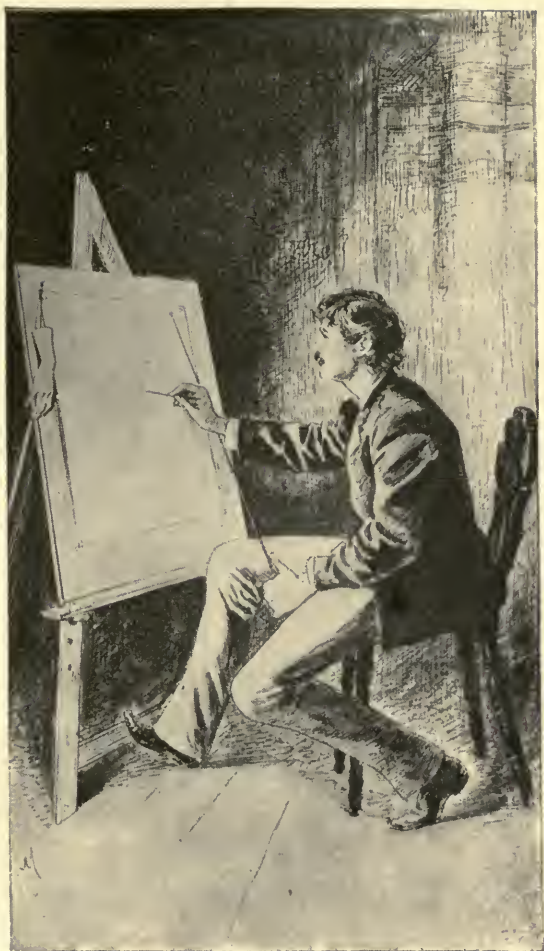
## VIII.

## BESIDE THE DRAWING-BOARD.

## I.

"As like as a Hand to another  
Hand!"  
Whoever said that foolish thing,  
Could not have studied to understand  
The counsels of God in fashioning,  
Out of the infinite love of his heart,  
This Hand, whose beauty I praise,  
apart  
From the world of wonder left to  
praise,  
If I tried to learn the other ways  
Of love, in its skill, or love, in its  
power.  
"As like as a Hand to another  
Hand!"  
Who said that, never took his stand,  
Found and followed, like me, an hour,





"If haply I might reproduce  
One motive of the mechanism." — Page 177.



The beauty in this,—how free, how fine  
 To fear, almost,—of the limit-line !  
 As I looked at this, and learned and drew,  
     Drew and learned, and looked again,  
 While fast the happy minutes flew,  
 Its beauty mounted into my brain,  
 And a fancy seized me : I was fain  
 To efface my work, begin anew,  
 Kiss what before I only drew ;  
 Ay, laying the red chalk 'twixt my lips,  
     With soul to help if the mere lips failed,  
 I kissed all right where the drawing ailed,  
 Kissed fast the grace that somehow slips  
 Still from one's soulless finger-tips.

II.

'Tis a clay cast, the perfect thing,  
 From Hand live once, dead long ago :  
 Princess-like it wears the ring  
 To fancy's eye, by which we know  
 That here at length a master found  
     His match, a proud lone soul its mate,  
 As soaring genius sank to ground  
     And pencil could not emulate  
 The beauty in this,—how free, how fine  
 To fear almost !—of the limit-line.  
 Long ago the god, like me  
 The worm, learned, each in our degree :  
 Looked and loved, learned and drew,  
     Drew and learned and loved again,  
 While fast the happy minutes flew,  
 Till beauty mounted into his brain  
 And on the finger which outvied  
     His art he placed the ring that's there,  
 Still by fancy's eye descried,  
     In token of a marriage rare :  
 For him on earth, his art's despair,  
 For him in heaven, his soul's fit bride.

III.

Little girl with the poor coarse hand  
 I turned from to a cold clay cast—  
 I have my lesson, understand  
     The worth of flesh and blood at last !

Nothing but beauty in a Hand ?  
     Because he could not change the hue,  
     Mend the lines and make them true  
 To this which met his soul's demand,—  
     Would Da Vinci turn from you ?  
 I hear him laugh my woes to scorn—  
 "The fool forsooth is all forlorn  
 Because the beauty, she thinks best,  
 Lived long ago or was never born,—  
 Because no beauty bears the test  
 In this rough peasant Hand ! Confessed  
 'Art is null and study void !'  
 So sayest thou ? So said not I,  
 Who threw the faulty pencil by,  
 And years instead of hours employed,  
 Learning the veritable use  
 Of flesh and bone and nerve beneath  
 Lines and hue of the outer sheath,  
 If haply I might reproduce  
 One motive of the mechanism,  
 Flesh and bone and nerve that make  
 The poorest coarsest human hand  
 An object worthy to be scanned  
 A whole life long for their sole sake.  
 Shall earth and the cramped moment-space  
 Yield the heavenly crowning grace ?  
 Now the parts and then the whole !  
 Who art thou, with stunted soul  
 And stunted body, thus to cry  
 'I love,—shall that be life's strait dole ?  
 I must live beloved or die !'  
 This peasant hand that spins the wool  
 And bakes the bread, why lives it on,  
 Poor and coarse with beauty gone,—  
 What use survives the beauty ?  
     Fool !"

Go, little girl with the poor coarse hand !  
 I have my lesson, shall understand.

IX.

ON DECK.

I.

THERE is nothing to remember in me,  
 Nothing I ever said with a grace,  
 Nothing I did that you care to see,  
     Nothing I was that deserves a place  
 In your mind, now I leave you, set  
     you free.

## II.

Conceded! In turn, concede to me,  
Such things have been as a mutual  
flame.  
Your soul's locked fast; out, love for  
a key,  
You might let it loose, till I grew  
the same  
In your eyes, as in mine you stand:  
strange plea!

## III.

For then, then, what would it matter  
to me  
That I was the harsh, ill-favored  
one?  
We both should be like as pea and  
pea;  
It was ever so since the world be-  
gun:  
So, let me proceed with my reverie.

## IV.

How strange it were if you had all  
me,  
As I have all you in my heart and  
brain,  
You, whose least word brought gloom  
or glee,  
Who never lifted the hand in vain  
Will hold mine yet, from over the sea!

## V.

Strange, if a face, when you thought  
of me,  
Rose like your own face present  
now,  
With eyes as dear in their due de-  
gree,  
Much such a mouth, and as bright a  
brow,  
Till you saw yourself, while you cried  
" 'Tis She! "

## VI.

Well, you may, you must, set down to  
me  
Love that was life, life that was  
love;  
A tenure of breath at your lips' de-  
gree,  
A passion to stand as your thoughts  
approve,  
A rapture to fall where your foot  
might be.

## VII.

But did one touch of such love for me  
Come in a word or a look of yours,  
Whose words and looks will, circling,  
flee  
Round me and round while life en-  
dures,—  
Could I fancy "As I feel, thus feels  
He ;"

## VIII.

Why, fade you might to a thing like  
me,  
And your hair grow these coarse  
hanks of hair,  
Your skin, this bark of a gnarled  
tree,—  
You might turn myself!—should  
I know or care,  
When I should be dead of joy, James  
Lee?

## RESPECTABILITY.

## I.

DEAR, had the world in its caprice  
Deigned to proclaim "I know you  
both,  
Have recognized your plighted  
troth,  
Am sponsor for you: live in  
peace!"—  
How many precious months and years  
Of youth had passed, that speed so  
fast,  
Before we found it out at last,  
The world, and what it fears?

## II.

How much of priceless life were spent  
With men that every virtue decks,  
And women models of their sex,  
Society's true ornament,—  
Ere we dared wander, nights like  
this,  
Through wind and rain, and watch  
the Seine,  
And feel the Boulevard break again  
To warmth and light and bliss?

## III.

I know! the world proscribes not  
love;  
Allows my finger to caress  
Your lips' contour and downiness,  
Provided it supply a glove.

The world's good word!—the Institute!  
Guizot receives Montalembert!  
Eh? Down the court three lamp-ions flare:  
Put forward your best foot!

*DÛS ALITER VISUM; OR, LE BYRON DE NOS JOURS.*

I.

Stop, let me have the truth of that!  
Is that all true? I say, the day  
Ten years ago when both of us  
Met on a morning, friends—as thus  
We meet this evening, friends or  
what?—

II.

Did you—because I took your arm  
And sillily smiled, “A mass of  
brass  
That sea looks, blazing underneath!”  
While up the cliff-road edged with  
heath,  
We took the turns nor came to  
harm—

III.

Did you consider “Now makes twice  
That I have seen her, walked and  
talked  
With this poor pretty thoughtful  
thing,  
Whose worth I weigh: she tries to  
sing;  
Draws, hopes in time the eye grows  
nice;

IV.

“Reads verse and thinks she under-  
stands;  
Loves all, at any rate, that's great,  
Good, beautiful; but much as we  
Down at the bath-house love the  
sea,  
Who breathe its salt and bruise its  
sands:

V.

“While . . . do but follow the fish-  
ing-gull  
That flaps and floats from wave to  
cave!

There's the sea-lover, fair my friend!  
What then? Be patient, mark and  
mend!  
Had you the making of your skull?”

VI.

And did you, when we faced the  
church  
With spire and sad slate roof, aloof  
From human fellowship so far,  
Where a few graveyard crosses are,  
And garlands for the swallows'  
perch,—

VII.

Did you determine, as we stepped  
O'er the lone stone fence, “Let me  
get  
Her for myself, and what's the earth  
With all its art, verse, music,  
worth—  
Compared with love, found, gained,  
and kept?”

VIII.

“Schumann's our music-maker now;  
Has his march-movement youth and  
mouth?  
Ingres's the modern man that paints;  
Which will lean on me, of his  
saints?  
Heine for songs; for kisses, how?”

IX.

And did you, when we entered,  
reached  
The votive frigate, soft aloft  
Riding on air this hundred years,  
Safe-smiling at old hopes and  
fears,—  
Did you draw profit while she  
preached?

X.

Resolving, “Fools we wise men grow!  
Yes, I could easily blurt out curt  
Some question that might find reply  
As prompt in her stopped lips,  
dropped eye  
And rush of red to cheek and brow:

XI.

“Thus were a match made, sure and  
fast,  
'Mid the blue weed-flowers round  
the mound

Where, issuing, we shall stand and  
 stay  
 For one more look at baths and bay,  
 Sands, sea-gulls, and the old church  
 last—

## XII.

"A match 'twixt me, bent, wiggled,  
 and lamed,  
 Famous, however, for verse and  
 worse,  
 Sure of the Fortieth spare Arm-chair  
 When gout and glory seat me there,  
 So, one whose love-freaks pass un-  
 blamed,—

## XIII.

"And this young beauty, round and  
 sound  
 As a mountain-apple, youth and  
 truth  
 With loves and doves, at all events  
 With money in the Three per Cents ;  
 Whose choice of me would seem pro-  
 found :—

## XIV.

"She might take me as I take her.  
 Perfect the hour would pass, alas !  
 Climb high, love high, what matter ?  
 Still,  
 Feet, feelings, must descend the  
 hill :  
 An hour's perfection can't recur.

## XV.

"Then follows Paris and full time  
 For both to reason: 'Thus with  
 us,'  
 She'll sigh, 'Thus girls give body and  
 soul  
 At first word, think they gain the  
 goal,  
 When 'tis the starting-place they  
 climb!

## XVI.

"My friend makes verse and gets  
 renown ;  
 Have they all fifty years, his peers ?  
 He knows the world, firm, quiet, and  
 gay ;  
 Boys will become as much one  
 day :  
 They're fools ; he cheats, with beard  
 less brown.

## XVII.

"For boys say, *Love me or I die!*  
 He did not say, *The truth is, youth  
 I want, who am old and know too much ;  
 I'd catch youth : lend me sight and  
 touch!*  
*Drop heart's blood where life's wheels  
 grate dry!*"

## XVIII.

"While I should make rejoinder"—  
 (then  
 It was, no doubt, you ceased that  
 least  
 Light pressure of my arm in yours)  
 "I can conceive of cheaper cures  
 For a yawning-fit o'er books and  
 men.

## XIX.

"What? All I am, was, and might  
 be,  
 All, books taught, art brought, life's  
 whole strife,  
 Painful results since precious, just  
 Were fitly exchanged, in wise dis-  
 gust,  
 For two cheeks freshened by youth  
 and sea?"

## XX.

"All for a nosegay!—what came  
 first ;  
 With fields in flower, untried each  
 side ;  
 I rally, need my books and men,  
 And find a nosegay: 'drop it, then,  
 No match yet made for best or  
 worst!"

## XXI.

That ended me. You judged the porch  
 We left by, Norman ; took our look  
 At sea and sky ; wondered so few  
 Find out the place for air and view ;  
 Remarked the sun began to scorch ;

## XXII.

Descended, soon regained the baths,  
 And then, good-by! Years ten  
 since then :  
 Ten years! We meet: you tell me,  
 now,  
 By a window-seat for that cliff-  
 brow,  
 On carpet-stripes for those sand-  
 paths.

XXIII.

Now I may speak : you fool, for all  
Your lore ! Who made things plain  
in vain ?  
What was the sea for ? What, the  
gray  
Sad church, that solitary day,  
Crosses and graves and swallows'  
call ?

XXIV.

Was there naught better than to en-  
joy ?  
No feat which, done, would make  
time break,  
And let us pent-up creatures through  
Into eternity, our due ?  
No forcing earth teach heaven's em-  
ploy ?

XXV.

No wise beginning, here and now,  
What cannot grow complete (earth's  
feat)  
And heaven must finish, there and  
then ?  
No tasting earth's true food for  
men,  
Its sweet in sad, its sad in sweet ?

XXVI.

No grasping at love, gaining a share  
O' the sole spark from God's life at  
strife  
With death, so, sure of range above  
The limits here ? For us and love,  
Failure ; but, when God fails, de-  
spair.

XXVII.

This you call wisdom ? Thus you  
add  
Good unto good again, in vain ?  
You loved, with body worn and  
weak ;  
I loved, with faculties to seek :  
Were both loves worthless since ill-  
clad ?

XXVIII.

Let the mere star-fish in his vault  
Crawl in a wash of weed, indeed,  
Rose-jacynth to the finger-tips :  
He, whole in body and soul, out-  
strips  
Man, found with either in default.

XXIX.

But what's whole, can increase no  
more,  
Is dwarfed and dies, since here's its  
sphere.  
The Devil laughed at you in his  
sleeve !  
You knew not ? That I well be-  
lieve ;  
Or you had saved two souls : nay,  
four.

XXX.

For Stephanie sprained last night her  
wrist,  
Ankle or something. " Pooh," cry  
you ?  
At any rate she danced, all say,  
Vilely : her vogue has had its day.  
Here comes my husband from his  
whist.

CONFESSIONS.

I.

WHAT is he buzzing in my ears ?  
" Now that I come to die,  
Do I view the world as a vale of  
tears ? "  
Ah, reverend sir, not I !

II.

What I viewed there once, what I  
view again  
Where the physic bottles stand  
On the table's edge,—is a suburb  
lane,  
With a wall to my bedside hand.

III.

That lane sloped, much as the bottles  
do,  
From a house you could descry  
O'er the garden-wall : is the curtain  
blue  
Or green to a healthy eye ?

IV.

To mine, it serves for the old June  
weather  
Blue above lane and wall ;  
And that farthest bottle labelled  
" Ether "  
Is the house o'er-topping all.

## v.

At a terrace, somewhat near the stop-  
per,  
There watched for me, one June,  
A girl : I know, sir, it's improper,  
My poor mind's out of tune.

## vi.

Only, there was a way . . . you crept  
Close by the side, to dodge  
Eyes in the house, two eyes except :  
They styled their house "The  
Lodge."

## vii.

What right had a loungeur up their  
lane ?  
But, by creeping very close,  
With the good wall's help, — their  
eyes might strain  
And stretch themselves to Oes,

## viii.

Yet never catch her and me together,  
As she left the attic, there,  
By the rim of the bottle labelled  
"Ether,"  
And stole from stair to stair,

## ix.

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate.  
Alas,  
We loved, sir — used to meet :  
How sad and bad and mad it was —  
But then, how it was sweet !

## THE HOUSEHOLDER.

## I.

SAVAGE I was sitting in my house,  
late, lone :  
Dreary, weary with the long day's  
work :  
Head of me, heart of me, stupid as a  
stone :  
Tongue-tied now, now blasphem-  
ing like a Turk ;  
When, in a moment, just a knock,  
call, cry,  
Half a pang and all a rapture, there  
again were we ! —

"What, and is it really you again ?"  
quoth I :  
"I again, what else did you ex-  
pect ?" quoth She.

## II.

"Never mind, hie away from this old  
house —  
Every crumbling brick embrowned  
with sin and shame !  
Quick, in its corners ere certain  
shapes arouse !  
Let them — every devil of the  
night — lay claim,  
Make and mend, or rap and rend, for  
me ! Good-by !  
God be their guard from disturbance  
at their glee,  
Till, crash, comes down the carcass in  
a heap !" quoth I :  
"Nay, but there's a decency re-  
quired !" quoth She.

## III.

"Ah, but if you knew how time has  
dragged, days, nights !  
All the neighbor-talk with man and  
maid — suck men !  
All the fuss and trouble of street-  
sounds, window-sights :  
All the worry of flapping door and  
echoing roof ; and then,  
All the fancies . . . Who were they  
had leave, dared try  
Darker arts that almost struck des-  
pair in me ?  
If you knew but how I dwelt down  
here !" quoth I :  
"And was I so better off up there ?"  
quoth She.

## IV.

"Help and get it over ! *Re-united to  
his wife*  
(How draw up the paper lets the  
parish-people know !)  
*Lies M. or N., departed from this life,  
Day the this or that, month and year  
the so and so,*  
What i' the way of final flourish ?  
Prose, verse ? Try !  
*Affliction sore, long time he bore, or,  
what is it to be ?  
Till God did please to grant him ease.*  
Do end !" quoth I :  
"I end with — Love is all and  
Death is naught !" quoth She.



## TRAY.

SING me a hero! Quench my thirst  
Of soul, ye bards!  
Quoth Bard the first:  
"Sir Olaf, the good knight, did don  
His helm and eke his habergeon" . . .  
Sir Olaf and his bard! —

"That sin-scathed brow" (quoth  
Bard the second),  
"That eye wide ope as though Fate  
beckoned  
My hero to some steep, beneath  
Which precipice smiled tempting  
Death" . . .  
You too without your host have reck-  
oned!

"A beggar-child" (let's hear this  
third!)  
"Sat on a quay's edge: like a bird  
Sang to herself at careless play,  
And fell into the stream. 'Dismay!  
Help, you the standers-by!' None  
stirred.

"By-standers reason, think of wives  
And children ere they risk their lives.  
Over the balustrade has bounced  
A mere instinctive dog, and pounced  
Plumb on the prize. 'How well he  
dives!

"Up he comes with the child, see,  
tight  
In mouth, alive too, clutched from  
quite  
A depth of ten feet — twelve, I bet!  
Good dog! What, off again? There's  
yet  
Another child to save? All right!

"How strange we saw no other fall!  
It's instinct in the animal.  
Good dog! But he's a long while  
under:  
If he got drowned I should not won-  
der —  
Strong current, that against the wall!

"Here he comes, holds in mouth  
this time  
— What may the thing be? Well,  
that's prime!  
Now, did you ever? Reason reigns  
In man alone, since all Tray's pains  
Have fished — the child's doll from  
the slime!

"And so, amid the laughter gay,  
Trotted my hero off, — old Tray, —  
Till somebody, prerogativéd  
With reason, reasoned: 'Why he  
dived,  
His brain would show us, I should  
say.

"John, go and catch — or, if needs  
be,  
Purchase that animal for me!  
By vivisection, at expense  
Of half-an-hour and eighteen pence,  
How brain secretes dog's soul, we'll  
see!"

## CAVALIER TUNES.

## I.

## MARCHING ALONG.

## 1.

KENTISH Sir Byng stood for his King,  
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament  
swing:  
And, pressing a troop unable to stoop  
And see the rogues flourish and hon-  
est folk droop,  
Marched them along, fifty-score  
strong,  
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this  
song.

## II.

God for King Charles! Pym and  
such carles  
To the Devil that prompts 'em their  
treasonous parles!  
Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,  
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take  
nor sup  
Till you're —  
(Chorus) *Marching along, fifty-score  
strong,  
Great-hearted gentlemen,  
singing this song.*

## III.

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies'  
knell.  
Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young  
Harry as well!

England, good cheer! Rupert is  
near!  
Kentish and loyalists, keep we not  
here

*(Chorus) Marching along, fifty-score  
strong,  
Great-hearted gentlemen,  
singing this song.*

## IV.

Then, God for King Charles! Pym  
and his snarls  
To the Devil that pricks on such pest-  
ilent carles!  
Hold by the right, you double your  
might:

So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for  
the fight,

*(Chorus) March we along, fifty-score  
strong,  
Great-hearted gentlemen,  
singing this song.*

## II.

## GIVE A ROUSE.

## I.

KING CHARLES, and who'll do him  
right now?

King Charles, and who's ripe for fight  
now?

Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite  
now,

King Charles!

## II.

Who gave me the goods that went  
since?

Who raised me the house that sank  
once?

Who helped me to gold I spent since?  
Who found me in wine you drank  
once?

*(Chorus) King Charles, and who'll  
do him right now?*

*King Charles, and who's  
ripe for fight now?*

*Give a rouse: here's, in  
hell's despite now,  
King Charles!*

## III.

To whom used my boy George quasi  
else,

By the old fool's side that begot him?  
For whom did he cheer and laugh else,  
While Noll's damned troopers shot  
him?

*(Chorus) King Charles, and who'll  
do him right now?*

*King Charles, and who's  
ripe for fight now?*

*Give a rouse: here's, in  
hell's despite now,*

*King Charles!*

## III.

## BOOT AND SADDLE.

## I.

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!  
Rescue my castle before the hot day  
Brightens to blue from its silvery  
gray,

*(Chorus) Boot, saddle, to horse, and  
away!*

## II.

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd  
say;

Many's the friend there, will listen  
and pray,

"God's luck to gallants that strike up  
the lay—

*(Chorus) Boot, saddle, to horse, and  
away!"*

## III.

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,  
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Round-  
heads' array:

Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this,  
by my fay,

*(Chorus) Boot, saddle, to horse, and  
away?"*

## IV.

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, hon-  
est and gay,

Laughs when you talk of surrender-  
ing, "Nay!

I've better counsellors; what coun-  
sel they?

*(Chorus) Boot, saddle, to horse, and  
away!"*



After. — Page 185.



## BEFORE.

## I.

LET them fight it out, friend! things  
have gone too far.  
God must judge the couple: leave  
them as they are  
— Whichever one's the guiltless, to  
his glory,  
And whichever one the guilt's with,  
to my story!

## II.

Why, you would not bid men, sunk  
in such a slough,  
Strike no arm out farther, stick and  
stink as now,  
Leaving right and wrong to settle the  
embroilment,  
Heaven with snaky hell, in torture  
and entoilment?

## III.

Who's the culprit of them? How  
must he conceive  
God — the queen he caps to, laughing  
in his sleeve,  
" 'Tis but decent to profess one's self  
beneath her:  
Still, one must not be too much in  
earnest, either!"

## IV.

Better sin the whole sin, sure that  
God observes:  
Then go live his life out! Life will  
try his nerves,  
When the sky, which noticed all,  
makes no disclosure,  
And the earth keeps up her terrible  
composure.

## V.

Let him pace at pleasure, past the  
walls of rose,  
Pluck their fruits when grape-trees  
graze him as he goes!  
For he 'gins to guess the purpose of  
the garden,  
With the sly mute thing, beside there,  
for a warden.

## VI.

What's the leopard-dog-thing, con-  
stant at his side,  
A leer and lie in every eye of its ob-  
sequious hide?

When will come an end to all the  
mock obeisance,  
And the price appear that pays for  
the misfeasance?

## VII.

So much for the culprit. Who's the  
martyred man?  
Let him bear one stroke more, for be  
sure he can!  
He that strove thus evil's lump with  
good to leaven,  
Let him give his blood at last and get  
his heaven!

## VIII.

All or nothing, stake it! Trusts he  
God or no?  
Thus far and no farther? farther? be  
it so!  
Now, enough of your chicane of pru-  
dent pauses,  
Sage provisos, sub-intents, and saving-  
clauses!

## IX.

Ah, "forgive" you bid him? While  
God's champion lives,  
Wrong shall be resisted: dead, why,  
he forgives.  
But you must not end my friend ere  
you begin him:  
Evil stands not crowned on earth,  
while breath is in him.

## X.

Once more — Will the wronger, at  
this last of all,  
Dare to say, "I did wrong," rising in  
his fall?  
No? — Let go, then! Both the fight-  
ers to their places!  
While I count three, step you back as  
many paces!

## AFTER.

TAKE the cloak from his face, and at  
first  
Let the corpse do its worst!

How he lies in his rights of a man.  
Death has done all death can.  
And, absorbed in the new life he  
leads,  
He recks not, he heeds

Nor his wrong nor my vengeance :  
 both strike  
 On his senses alike,  
 And are lost in the solemn and  
 strange  
 Surprise of the change.

Ha, what avails death to erase  
 His offence, my disgrace?  
 I would we were boys as of old  
 In the field, by the fold :  
 His outrage, God's patience, man's  
 scorn  
 Were so easily borne !

I stand here now, he lies in his place :  
 Cover the face !

### HERVÉ RIEL.

#### I.

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen  
 hundred ninety-two,  
 Did the English fight the French, —  
 woe to France !  
 And, the thirty-first of May, helter-  
 skelter through the blue,  
 Like a crowd of frightened porpoises  
 a shoal of sharks pursue,  
 Came crowding ship on ship to St.  
 Malo on the Rance,  
 With the English fleet in view.

#### II

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with  
 the victor in full chase ;  
 First and foremost of the drove, in  
 his great ship, Damfreville ;  
 Close on him fled, great and small,  
 Twenty-two good ships in all ;  
 And they signalled to the place  
 " Help the winners of a race !  
 Get us guidance, give us harbor,  
 take us quick — or, quicker still,  
 Here's the English can and will ! "

#### III.

Then the pilots of the place put out  
 brisk and leapt on board ;  
 " Why, what hope or chance have  
 ships like these to pass ? "  
 laughed they :  
 ' Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all  
 the passage scarred and scored,

Shall the ' Formidable ' here with her  
 twelve and eighty guns  
 Think to make the river-mouth by  
 the single narrow way,  
 Trust to enter where ' tis ticklish for a  
 craft of twenty tons,  
 And with flow at full beside ?  
 Now, ' tis slackest ebb of tide.  
 Reach the mooring ? Rather say,  
 While rock stands or water runs,  
 Not a ship will leave the bay ! "

#### IV.

Then was called a council straight.  
 Brief and bitter the debate :  
 " Here's the English at our heels ;  
 would you have them take in  
 tow  
 All that's left us of the fleet, linked  
 together stern and bow,  
 For a prize to Plymouth Sound ?  
 Better run the ships aground ! "  
 (Ended Damfreville his speech.)  
 " Not a minute more to wait !  
 Let the Captains all and each  
 Shove ashore, then blow up, burn  
 the vessels on the beach !  
 France must undergo her fate.

#### V.

" Give the word ! ' But no such  
 word  
 Was ever spoke or heard ;  
 For up stood, for out stepped, for in  
 struck amid all these  
 — A Captain ? A Lieutenant ? A  
 Mate — first, second, third ?  
 No such man of mark, and meet  
 With his betters to compete !  
 But a simple Breton sailor pressed  
 by Tourville for the fleet,  
 A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel  
 the Croisickese.

#### VI.

And, " What mockery or malice have  
 we here ? " cries Hervé Riel :  
 " Are you mad, you Malouins ? Are  
 you cowards, fools, or rogues ?  
 Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me  
 who took the soundings, tell  
 On my fingers every bank, every shal-  
 low, every swell  
 ' Twixt the offing here and Grève  
 where the river disembogues ?  
 Are you bought by English gold ? Is  
 it love the lying's for ?  
 Morn and eve, night and day,

Have I piloted your bay,  
Entered free and anchored fast at the  
foot of Solidor.

Burn the fleet and ruin France ?  
That were worse than fifty  
Hogues !

Sirs, they know I speak the truth !  
Sirs, believe me there's a way !

Only let me lead the line,  
Have the biggest ship to steer,  
Get this 'Formidable' clear,  
Make the others follow mine,  
And I lead them, most and least, by a  
passage I know well,  
Right to Solidor past Grève,  
And there lay them safe and  
sound ;

And if one ship misbehave,  
— Keel so much as grate the  
ground,

Why, I've nothing but my life, —  
here's my head !" cries Hervé  
Riel.

## VII.

Not a minute more to wait.

"Steer us in, then, small and great !  
Take the helm, lead the line, save  
the squadron !" cried its chief.  
Captains, give the sailor place !

He is Admiral, in brief,  
Still the north-wind, by God's grace !  
See the noble fellow's face  
As the big ship, with a bound,  
Clears the entry like a hound,  
Keeps the passage as its inch of way  
were the wide sea's profound !

See, safe through shoal and rock,  
How they follow in a flock,  
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a  
keel that grates the ground,

Not a spar that comes to grief !  
The peril, see, is past,  
All are harbored to the last.  
And just as Hervé Riel hollas "An-  
chor !" — sure as fate,  
Up the English come, too late !

## VIII.

So, the storm subsides to calm :

They see the green trees wave  
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.  
Hearts that bled are stanch'd with  
balm.

"Just our rapture to enhance,  
Let the English rake the bay,  
Gnash their teeth and glare askance  
As they cannonade away !

'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant rid-  
ing on the Rance !"

How hope succeeds despair on each  
Captain's countenance !

Out burst all with one accord,  
"This is Paradise for Hell !  
Let France, let France's King  
Thank the man that did the  
thing !"

What a shout, and all one word,  
"Hervé Riel !"

As he stepped in front once more,  
Not a symptom of surprise  
In the frank blue Breton eyes,  
Just the same man as before.

## IX.

Then said Damfreville, "My friend,  
I must speak out at the end,  
Though I find the speaking hard.  
Praise is deeper than the lips :  
You have saved the King his ships,  
You must name your own reward.  
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse !  
Demand whate'er you will,  
France remains your debtor still.  
Ask to heart's content and have ! or  
my name's not Damfreville."

## X.

Then a beam of fun outbroke  
On the bearded mouth that spoke,  
As the honest heart laughed through  
Those frank eyes of Breton blue :  
"Since I needs must say my say,  
Since on board the duty's done,  
And from Malo Roads to Croisic  
Point, what is it but a run ? —  
Since 'tis ask and have, I may —  
Since the others go ashore —  
Come ! A good whole holiday !  
Leave to go and see my wife, whom  
I call the Belle Anrore !"  
That he asked and that he got, —  
nothing more.

## XI.

Name and deed alike are lost :  
Not a pillar nor a post  
In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as  
it befell ;  
Not a head in white and black  
On a single fishing-smack,  
In memory of the man but for whom  
had gone to wrack  
All that France saved from the  
fight whence England bore the  
bell.

Go to Paris : rank on rank  
 Search the heroes flung pell-mell  
 On the Louvre, face and flank !  
 You shall look long enough ere you  
 come to Hervé Riel.

So, for better and for worse,  
 Hervé Riel, accept my verse !  
 In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once  
 more  
 Save the squadron, honor France,  
 love thy wife the Belle Aurore !

## IN A BALCONY.

CONSTANCE and NORBERT.

*Nor.* Now !*Con.* Not now !*Nor.* Give me them again, those hands —

Put them upon my forehead, how it throbs !  
 Press them before my eyes, the fire comes through !  
 You cruellest, you dearest in the world,  
 Let me ! The Queen must grant whate'er I ask —  
 How can I gain you and not ask the Queen ?  
 There she stays waiting for me, here stand you ;  
 Some time or other this was to be asked ,  
 Now is the one time — what I ask, I gain :  
 Let me ask now, Love !

*Con.* Do, and ruin us !*Nor.* Let it be now, Love ! All my soul breaks forth.

How I do love you ! Give my love its way !  
 A man can have but one life and one death,  
 One heaven, one hell. Let me fulfil my fate —  
 Grant me my heaven now ! Let me know you mine,  
 Prove you mine, write my name upon your brow,  
 Hold you and have you, and then die away,  
 If God please, with completion in my soul !

*Con.* I am not yours then ? How content this man !

I am not his — who change into himself,  
 Have passed into his heart and beat its beats,  
 Who give my hands to him, my eyes, my hair,  
 Give all that was of me away to him —  
 So well, that now, my spirit turned his own,  
 Takes part with him against the woman here,  
 Bids him not stumble at so mere a straw  
 As caring that the world be cognizant  
 How he loves her and how she worships him.  
 You have this woman, not as yet that world.  
 Go on, I bid, nor stop to care for me  
 By saving what I cease to care about,  
 The courtly name and pride of circumstance —  
 The name you'll pick up and be cumbered with  
 Just for the poor parade's sake, nothing more ;  
 Just that the world may slip from under you —  
 Just that the world may cry " So much for him —  
 The man predestined to the heap of crowns :  
 There goes his chance of winning one, at least ! "

*Nor.* The world !*Con.* You love it ! Love me quite as well,

And see if I shall pray for this in vain !  
 Why must you ponder what it knows or thinks ?



*Nor.* You pray for — what, in vain ?

*Con.*

Oh my heart's heart,

How I do love you, Norbert ! That is right :

But listen, or I take my hands away !

You say, " Let it be now : " you would go now

And tell the Queen, perhaps six steps from us,

You love me — so you do, thank God !

*Nor.*

Thank God !

*Con.* Yes, Norbert, — but you fain would tell your love,

And, what succeeds the telling, ask of her

My hand. Now take this rose and look at it,

Listening to me. You are the minister,

The Queen's first favorite, nor without a cause.

To-night completes your wonderful year's-work

(This palace-feast is held to celebrate)

Made memorable by her life's success,

The junction of two crowns, on her sole head,

Her house had only dreamed of anciently :

That this mere dream is grown a stable truth,

To-night's feast makes authentic. Whose the praise ?

Whose genius, patience, energy, achieved

What turned the many heads and broke the hearts ?

You are the fate, your minute's in the heaven.

Next comes the Queen's turn. " Name your own reward ! "

With leave to clinch the past, chain the to-come,

Put out an arm and touch and take the sun

And fix it ever full-faced on your earth,

Possess yourself supremely of her life, —

You choose the single thing she will not grant ;

Nay, very declaration of which choice

Will turn the scale and neutralize your work :

At best she will forgive you, if she can.

You think I'll let you choose — her cousin's hand ?

*Nor.* Wait. First, do you retain your old belief

The Queen is generous, — nay, is just ?

*Con.*

There, there,

So men make women love them, while they know

No more of women's hearts than . . . look you here,

You that are just and generous beside,

Make it your own case ! For example now,

I'll say — I let you kiss me, hold my hands —

Why ? do you know why ? I'll instruct you, then —

The kiss, because you have a name at court,

This hand and this, that you may shut in each

A jewel, if you please to pick up such.

That's horrible ? Apply it to the Queen —

Suppose I am the Queen to whom you speak.

" I was a nameless man ; you needed me :

Why did I proffer you my aid ? there stood

A certain pretty cousin at your side.

Why did I make such common cause with you ?

Access to her had not been easy else.

You give my labors here abundant praise ?

'Faith, labor, which she overlooked, grew play.

How shall your gratitude discharge itself ?

Give me her hand ! "

*Nor.*

And still I urge the same.

Is the Queen just ? just — generous or no !

*Con.* Yes, just. You love a rose ; no harm in that :

But was it for the rose's sake or mine  
 You put it in your bosom? mine, you said —  
 Then, mine you still must say or else be false.  
 You told the Queen you served her for herself;  
 If so, to serve her was to serve yourself,  
 She thinks, for all your unbelieving face!  
 I know her. In the hall, six steps from us,  
 One sees the twenty pictures; there's a life  
 Better than life, and yet no life at all.  
 Conceive her born in such a magic dome,  
 Pictures all round her! why, she sees the world,  
 Can recognize its given things and facts,  
 The fight of giants or the feast of gods,  
 Sages in senate, beauties at the bath,  
 Chases and battles, the whole earth's display,  
 Landscape and sea-piece, down to flowers and fruit —  
 And who shall question that she knows them all,  
 In better semblance than the things outside?  
 Yet bring into the silent gallery  
 Some live thing to contrast in breath and blood,  
 Some lion, with the painted lion there —  
 You think she'll understand composedly?  
 — Say, "That's his fellow in the hunting-piece  
 Yonder, I've turned to praise a hundred times?"  
 Not so. Her knowledge of our actual earth,  
 Its hopes and fears, concerns and sympathies,  
 Must be too far, too mediate, too unreal.  
 The real exists for us outside, not her:  
 How should it, with that life in these four walls,  
 That father and that mother, first to last  
 No father and no mother — friends, a heap,  
 Lovers, no lack — a husband in due time,  
 And every one of them alike a lie!  
 Things painted by a Rubens out of naught  
 Into what kindness, friendship, love should be;  
 All better, all more grandiose than life,  
 Only no life; mere cloth and surface-paint,  
 You feel, while you admire. How should she feel?  
 Yet now that she has stood thus fifty years  
 The sole spectator in that gallery,  
 You think to bring this warm real struggling love  
 In to her of a sudden, and suppose  
 She'll keep her state untroubled? Here's the truth:  
 She'll apprehend truth's value at a glance,  
 Prefer it to the pictured loyalty?  
 You only have to say "So men are made,  
 For this they act; the thing has many names,  
 But this the right one: and now, Queen, be just!"  
 Your life slips back; you lose her at the word:  
 You do not even for amends gain me.  
 He will not understand! O Norbert, Norbert!  
 Do you not understand?

*Nor.*

The Queen's the Queen.

I am myself — no picture, but alive  
 In every nerve and every muscle, here  
 At the palace-window o'er the people's street,  
 As she in the gallery where the pictures glow:  
 The good of life is precious to us both.  
 She cannot love; what do I want with rule?

When first I saw your face a year ago  
 I knew my life's good, my soul heard one voice —  
 "The woman yonder, there's no use of life  
 But just to obtain her! heap earth's woes in one  
 And bear them — make a pile of all earth's joys  
 And spurn them, as they help or help not this;  
 Only, obtain her!" — how was it to be?  
 I found you were the cousin of the Queen;  
 I must then serve the Queen to get to you.  
 No other way. Suppose there had been one,  
 And I, by saying prayers to some white star  
 With promise of my body and my soul,  
 Might gain you, — should I pray the star or no?  
 Instead, there was the Queen to serve! I served,  
 Helped, did what other servants failed to do.  
 Neither she sought nor I declared my end.  
 Her good is hers, my recompense be mine,  
 I therefore name you as that recompense.  
 She dreamed that such a thing could never be?  
 Let her wake now. She thinks there was more cause  
 In love of power, high fame, pure loyalty?  
 Perhaps she fancies men wear out their lives  
 Chasing such shades. Then, I've a fancy too;  
 I worked because I want you with my soul:  
 I therefore ask your hand. Let it be now!

*Con.* Had I not loved you from the very first,  
 Were I not yours, could we not steal out thus  
 So wickedly, so wildly, and so well,  
 You might become impatient. What's conceived  
 Of us without here, by the folks within?  
 Where are you now? immersed in cares of state  
 Where am I now? — intent on festal robes —  
 We two, embracing under death's spread hand!  
 What was this thought for, what that scruple of yours  
 Which broke the council up? — to bring about  
 One minute's meeting in the corridor!  
 And then the sudden sleights, strange secrecies,  
 Complots inscrutable, deep telegraphs,  
 Long-planned chance-meetings, hazards of a look,  
 "Does she know? does she not know? saved, or lost?"  
 A year of this compression's ecstasy  
 All goes for nothing! you would give this up  
 For the old way, the open way, the world's,  
 His way who beats, and his who sells his wife!  
 What tempts you? — their notorious happiness,  
 That you are ashamed of ours? The best you'll gain  
 Will be — the Queen grants all that you require,  
 Concedes the cousin, rids herself of you  
 And me at once, and gives us ample leave  
 To live like our five hundred happy friends  
 The world will show us with officious hand  
 Our chamber-entry and stand sentinel,  
 Where we so oft have stolen across its traps!  
 Get the world's warrant, ring the falcons' feet,  
 And make it duty to be bold and swift,  
 Which long ago was nature. Have it so!  
 We never hawked by rights till flung from fist?  
 Oh, the man's thought! no woman's such a fool.

*Nor.* Yes, the man's thought and my thought, which is more —

One made to love you, let the world take note !  
 Have I done worthy work ? be love's the praise,  
 Though hampered by restrictions, barred against  
 By set forms, blinded by forced secrecies !  
 Set free my love, and see what love can do  
 Shown in my life — what work will spring from that !  
 The world is used to have its business done  
 On other grounds, find great effects produced  
 For power's sake, fame's sake, motives in men's mouth.  
 So, good : but let my low ground shame their high !  
 Truth is the strong thing. Let man's life be true !  
 And love's the truth of mine. Time prove the rest !  
 I choose to wear you stamped all over me,  
 Your name upon my forehead and my breast,  
 You, from the sword's blade to the ribbon's edge,  
 That men may see, all over, you in me —  
 That pale loves may die out of their pretence  
 In face of mine, shames thrown on love fall off.  
 Permit this, Constance ! Love has been so long  
 Subdued in me, eating me through and through,  
 That now 'tis all of me and must have way.  
 Think of my work, that chaos of intrigues,  
 Those hopes and fears, surprises and delays,  
 That long endeavor, earnest, patient, slow,  
 Trembling at last to its assured result —  
 Then think of this revulsion ! I resume  
 Life after death (it is no less than life,  
 After such long unlovely laboring days),  
 And liberate to beauty life's great need  
 O' the beautiful, which, while it prompted work,  
 Suppressed itself erewhile. This eve's the time,  
 This eve intense with yon first trembling star  
 We seem to pant and reach ; scarce aught between  
 The earth that rises and the heaven that bends :  
 All nature self-abandoned, every tree  
 Flung as it will, pursuing its own thoughts  
 And fixed so, every flower and every weed,  
 No pride, no shame, no victory, no defeat ;  
 All under God, each measured by itself.  
 These statues round us stand abrupt, distinct,  
 The strong in strength, the weak in weakness fixed,  
 The Muse forever wedded to her lyre,  
 The Nymph to her fawn, the Silence to her rose :  
 See God's approval on his universe !  
 Let us do so — aspire to live as these  
 In harmony with truth, ourselves being true !  
 Take the first way, and let the second come !  
 My first is to possess myself of you ;  
 The music sets the march-step — forward, then !  
 And there's the Queen, I go to claim you of,  
 The world to witness, wonder, and applaud.  
 Our flower of life breaks open. No delay !  
*Con.* And so shall we be ruined, both of us.  
 Norbert, I know her to the skin and bone :  
 You do not know her, were not born to it,  
 To feel what she can see or cannot see.  
 Love, she is generous, — ay, despite your smile,  
 Generous as you are : for, in that thin frame  
 Pain-twisted, punctured through and through with cares,

There lived a lavish soul until it starved  
 Debarred all healthy food. Look to the soul —  
 Pity that, stoop to that, ere you begin  
 (The true man's-way) on justice and your rights,  
 Exactions and acquittance of the past!  
 Begin so — see what justice she will deal!  
 We women hate a debt as men a gift.  
 Suppose her some poor keeper of a school  
 Whose business is to sit through summer months  
 And dole out children leave to go and play,  
 Herself superior to such lightness — she  
 In the arm-chair's state and pedagogic pomp,  
 To the life, the laughter, sun and youth outside:  
 We wonder such a face looks black on us?  
 I do not bid you wake her tenderness  
 (That were vain truly — none is left to wake),  
 But, let her think her justice is engaged  
 To take the shape of tenderness, and mark  
 If she'll not coldly pay its warmest debt!  
 Does she love me, I ask you? not a whit:  
 Yet, thinking that her justice was engaged  
 To help a kinswoman, she took me up —  
 Did more on that bare ground than other loves  
 Would do on greater argument. For me,  
 I have no equivalent of such cold kind  
 To pay her with, but love alone to give  
 If I give any thing. I give her love:  
 I feel I ought to help her, and I will.  
 So, for her sake, as yours, I tell you twice  
 That women hate a debt as men a gift.  
 If I were you, I could obtain this grace —  
 Could lay the whole I did to love's account,  
 Nor yet be very false as courtiers go —  
 Declaring my success was recompense;  
 It would be so, in fact: what were it else?  
 And then, once loose her generosity, —  
 Oh, how I see it! then, were I but you  
 To turn it, let it seem to move itself,  
 And make it offer what I really take,  
 Accepting just, in the poor cousin's hand,  
 Her value as the next thing to the Queen's —  
 Since none love Queens directly, none dare that,  
 And a thing's shadow or a name's mere echo  
 Suffices those who miss the name and thing!  
 You pick up just a ribbon she has worn,  
 To keep in proof how near her breath you came.  
 Say, I'm so near I seem a piece of her —  
 Ask for me that way — (oh, you understand)  
 You'd find the same gift yielded with a grace,  
 Which, if you make the least show to extort . . .  
 — You'll see! and when you have ruined both of us,  
 Dissertate on the Queen's ingratitude!  
*Nor.* Then, if I turn it that way, you consent?  
 'Tis not my way; I have more hope in truth:  
 Still, if you won't have truth — why, this indeed,  
 Were scarcely false, as I'd express the sense.  
 Will you remain here?

*Con.* O best heart of mine,  
 How I have loved you! then, you take my way?

Are mine as you have been her minister,  
 Work out my thought, give it effect for me,  
 Paint plain my poor conceit and make it serve ?  
 I owe that withered woman every thing —  
 Life, fortune, you, remember ! Take my part —  
 Help me to pay her ! Stand upon your rights ?  
 You, with my rose, my hands, my heart on you ?  
 Your rights are mine — you have no rights but mine.

*Nor.* Remain here. How you know me !

*Con.* Ah, but still —

*[He breaks from her : she remains. Dance-music from within]*

*Enter the QUEEN.*

*Queen.* Constance ? She is here as he said. Speak quick !  
 Is it so ? Is it true or false ? One word ?

*Con.* True.

*Queen.* Mercifullest Mother, thanks to thee !

*Con.* Madam ?

*Queen.* I love you, Constance, from my soul.

Now say once more, with any words you will,

'Tis true, all true, as true as that I speak.

*Con.* Why should you doubt it ?

*Queen.* Ah, why doubt ? why doubt ?

Dear, make me see it ! Do you see it so ?

None see themselves ; another sees them best.

You say, " Why doubt it ? " — you see him and me

It is because the Mother has such grace

That if we had but faith — wherein we fail —

Whate'er we yearn for would be granted us ;

Howbeit we let our whims prescribe despair,

Our very fancies thwart and cramp our will,

And so, accepting life, abjure ourselves.

Constance, I had abjured the hope of love

And being loved, as truly as yon palm

The hope of seeing Egypt from that plot.

*Con.* Heaven !

*Queen.* But it was so, Constance, it was so !

Men say — or do men say it ? fancies say —

" Stop here, your life is set, you are grown old.

Too late — no love for you, too late for love —

Leave love to girls. Be queen : let Constance love ! "

One takes the hint — half meets it like a child,

Ashamed at any feelings that oppose.

" O love, true, never think of love again !

I am a queen : I rule, not love, indeed. "

So it goes on ; so a face grows like this,

Hair like this hair, poor arms as lean as these,

Till, — nay, it does not end so, I thank God !

*Con.* I cannot understand —

*Queen.* The happier you !

Constance, I know not how it is with men :

For women (I am a woman now like you)

There is no good of life but love — but love !

What else looks good, is some shade flung from love ;

Love gilds it, gives it worth. Be warned by me,

Never you cheat yourself one instant ! Love,

Give love, ask only love, and leave the rest !

O Constance, how I love you !

*Con.* I love you.

*Queen.* I do believe that all is come through you.  
I took you to my heart to keep it warm  
When the last chance of love seemed dead in me ;  
I thought your fresh youth warmed my withered heart.  
Oh, I am very old now, am I not ?  
Not so ! it is true and it shall be true !

*Con.* Tell it me : let me judge if true or false.

*Queen.* Ah, but I fear you ! you will look at me  
And say, " She's old, she's grown unlovely quite  
Who ne'er was beauteous : men want beauty still."  
Well, so I feared — the curse ! so I felt sure !

*Con.* Be calm. And now you feel not sure, you say ?

*Queen.* Constance, he came, — the coming was not strange —  
Do not I stand and see men come and go ?

I turned a half-look from my pedestal  
Where I grow marble — " one young man the more !  
He will love some one ; that is naught to me ;  
What would he with my marble stateliness ?"  
Yet this seemed somewhat worse than heretofore ;  
The man more gracious, youthful, like a god,  
And I still older, with less flesh to change —  
We two those dear extremes that long to touch.  
It seemed still harder when he first began  
Absorbed to labor at the state-affairs  
The old way for the old end — interest.  
Oh, to live with a thousand beating hearts  
Around you, swift eyes, serviceable hands,  
Professing they've no care but for your cause,  
Thought but to help you, love but for yourself,  
And you the marble statue all the time  
They praise and point at as preferred to life,  
Yet leave for the first breathing woman's cheek,  
First dancer's, gypsy's, or street baladine's !  
Why, how I have ground my teeth to hear men's speech  
Stified for fear it should alarm my ear,  
Their gait subdued lest step should startle me,  
Their eyes declined, such queendom to respect,  
Their hands alert, such treasure to preserve,  
While not a man of them broke rank and spoke,  
Or wrote me a vulgar letter all of love,  
Or caught my hand and pressed it like a hand !  
There have been moments, if the sentinel  
Lowering his halbert to salute the queen,  
Had flung it brutally and clasped my knees,  
I would have stooped and kissed him with my soul.

*Con.* Who could have comprehended ?

*Queen.* Ay, who — who ?

Why, no one, Constance, but this one who did.  
Nor they, not you, not I. Even now perhaps  
It comes too late — would you but tell the truth.

*Con.* I wait to tell it.

*Queen.* Well, you see, he came,  
Outfaced the others, did a work this year  
Exceeds in value all was ever done,  
You know — it is not I who say it — all  
Say it. And so (a second pang and worse)  
I grew aware not only of what he did,  
But why so wondrously. Oh, never work

Like his was done for work's ignoble sake —  
 It must have finer aims to lure it on !  
 I felt, I saw, he loved— loved somebody.  
 And Constance, my dear Constance, do you know,  
 I did believe this while 'twas you he loved.

*Con.* Me, Madam ?

*Queen.* It did seem to me, your face  
 Met him where'er he looked : and whom but you  
 Was such a man to love ? It seemed to me,  
 You saw he loved you, and approved the love,  
 And so you both were in intelligence.  
 You could not loiter in the garden, step  
 Into this balcony, but I straight was stung  
 And forced to understand. It seemed so true,  
 So right, so beautiful, so like you both,  
 That all this work should have been done by him  
 Not for the vulgar hope of recompense,  
 But that at last— suppose, some night like this—  
 Borne on to claim his due reward of me,  
 He might say, " Give her hand and pay me so."  
 And I (O Constance, you shall love me now !)  
 I thought, surmounting all the bitterness,  
 — " And he shall have it. I will make her blest,  
 My flower of youth, my woman's self that was,  
 My happiest woman's self that might have been !  
 These two shall have their joy and leave me here."  
 Yes— yes !

*Con.* Thanks !

*Queen.* And the word was on my lips  
 When he burst in upon me. I looked to hear  
 A mere calm statement of his just desire  
 For payment of his labor. When— O heaven,  
 How can I tell you ? cloud was on my eyes  
 And thunder in my ears at that first word  
 Which told 'twas love of me, of me, did all—  
 He loved me—from the first step to the last,  
 Loved me !

*Con.* You did not hear . . . you thought he spoke  
 Of love ? what if you should mistake ?

*Queen.* No, no—  
 No mistake ! Ha, there shall be no mistake !

He had not dared to hint the love he felt—  
 You were my reflex— (how I understood !)  
 He said you were the ribbon I had worn,  
 He kissed my hand, he looked into my eyes,  
 And love, love was the end of every phrase.  
 Love is begun ; this much is come to pass :  
 The rest is easy. Constance, I am yours !  
 I will learn, I will place my life on you,  
 But teach me how to keep what I have won !  
 Am I so old ? This hair was early gray ;  
 But joy ere now has brought hair brown again,  
 And joy will bring the cheek's red back, I feel.  
 I could sing once too ; that was in my youth.  
 Still, when men paint me, they declare me . . . yes,  
 Beautiful— for the last French painter did !  
 I know they flatter somewhat ; you are frank—  
 I trust you. How I loved you from the first !  
 Some queens would hardly seek a cousin out



And set her by their side to take the eye :  
 I must have felt that good would come from you.  
 I am not generous — like him — like you !  
 But he is not your lover after all :  
 It was not you he looked at. Saw you him ?  
 You have not been mistaking words or looks ?  
 He said you were the reflex of myself.  
 And yet he is not such a paragon  
 To you, to younger women who may choose  
 Among a thousand Norberts. Speak the truth !  
 You know you never named his name to me —  
 You know, I cannot give him up — ah God,  
 Not up now, even to you !

*Con.* Then calm yourself.

*Queen.* See, I am old — look here, you happy girl !

I will not play the fool, deceive myself ;  
 'Tis all gone : put your cheek beside my cheek —  
 Ah, what a contrast does the moon behold !  
 But then I set my life upon one chance,  
 The last chance and the best — am I not left,  
 My soul, myself ? All women love great men,  
 If young or old ; it is in all the tales :  
 Young beauties love old poets who can love —  
 Why should not he, the poems in my soul,  
 The love, the passionate faith, the sacrifice,  
 The constancy ? I throw them at his feet.  
 Who cares to see the fountain's very shape,  
 And whether it be a Triton's or a Nymph's  
 That pours the foam, makes rainbows all around ?  
 You could not praise indeed the empty couch ;  
 But I'll pour floods of love and hide myself.  
 How I will love him ! Cannot men love love ?  
 Who was a queen and loved a poet once  
 Humpbacked, a dwarf ? ah, women can do that !  
 Well, but men too : at least, they tell you so.  
 They love so many women in their youth,  
 And even in age they all love whom they please ;  
 And yet the best of them confide to friends  
 That 'tis not beauty makes the lasting love —  
 They spend a day with such and tire the next :  
 They like soul, — well then, they like fantasy,  
 Novelty even. Let us confess the truth,  
 Horrible though it be, that prejudice,  
 Prescription . . . curses ! they will love a queen,  
 They will, they do : and will not, does not — he ?

*Con.* How can he ? You are wedded : 'tis a name

We know, but still a bond. Your rank remains,  
 His rank remains. How can he, nobly souled  
 As you believe and I incline to think,  
 Aspire to be your favorite, shame and all ?

*Queen.* Hear her ! There, there now — could she love like me ?

What did I say of smooth-checked youth and grace ?  
 See all it does or could do ! so, youth loves !  
 Oh, tell him, Constance, you could never do  
 What I will — you, it was not born in ! I  
 Will drive these difficulties far and fast  
 As yonder mists curling before the moon.  
 I'll use my light too, gloriously retrieve  
 My youth from its enforced calamity,

Dissolve that hateful marriage, and be his,  
His own in the eyes alike of God and man.

*Con.* You will do — dare do . . . pause on what you say !

*Queen.* Hear her ! I thank you, sweet, for that surprise.

You have the fair face : for the soul, see mine !  
I have the strong soul : let me teach you, here.  
I think I have borne enough and long enough,  
And patiently enough, the world remarks,  
To have my own way now, unblamed by all.

It does so happen (I rejoice for it)  
This most unhopèd-for issue cuts the knot.  
There's not a better way of settling claims  
Than this : God sends the accident express :  
And were it for my subjects' good, no more,  
'Twere best thus ordered. I am thankful now,  
Mute, passive, acquiescent. I receive,  
And bless God simply, or should almost fear  
To walk so smoothly to my ends at last.

Why, how I baffle obstacles, spurn fate !  
How strong I am ! Could Norbert see me now !

*Con.* Let me consider ! It is all too strange.

*Queen.* You, Constance, learn of me ; do you, like me !

You are young, beautiful : my own, best girl,  
You will have many lovers, and love one —  
Light hair, not hair like Norbert's, to suit yours,  
And taller than he is, for yourself are tall.  
Love him, like me ! Give all away to him ;  
Think never of yourself ; throw by your pride,  
Hope, fear, — your own good as you saw it once,  
And love him simply for his very self  
Remember, I (and what am I to you ?)  
Would give up all for one, leave throne, lose life,  
Do all but just unlove him ! He loves me.

*Con.* He shall.

*Queen.* You, step inside my inmost heart !

Give me your own heart : let us have one heart !  
I'll come to you for counsel ; " this he says,  
This he does ; what should this amount to, pray ?  
Beseech you, change it into current coin !  
Is that worth kisses ? Shall I please him there ?"  
And then we'll speak in turn of you — what else ?  
Your love, according to your beauty's worth,  
For you shall have some noble love, all gold :  
Whom choose you ? we will get him at your choice.  
— Constance, I leave you. Just a minute since,  
I felt as I must die or be alone  
Breathing my soul into an ear like yours :  
Now, I would face the world with my new life,  
With my new crown. I'll walk around the rooms,  
And then come back and tell you how it feels.  
How soon a smile of God can change the world !  
How we are made for happiness — how work  
Grows play, adversity a winning fight !  
True I have lost so many years : what then ?  
Many remain : God has been very good.  
You, stay here ! 'Tis as different from dreams,  
From the mind's cold calm estimate of bliss,  
As these stone statues from the flesh and blood.  
The comfort thou hast caused mankind, God's moon !

[*She goes out, leaving CONSTANCE. Dance-music from within.*]

NORBERT enters.

*Nor.* Well? we have but one minute and one word!

*Con.* I am yours, Norbert!

Yes, mine.

*Con.* Not till now!

You were mine. Now I give myself to you.

*Nor.* Constance?

*Con.* Your own! I know the thriftier way

Of giving — haply, 'tis the wiser way.

Meaning to give a treasure, I might dole

Coin after coin out (each, as that were all,

With a new largess still at each despair),

And force you keep in sight the deed, preserve

Exhaustless to the end my part and yours,

My giving and your taking; both our joys

Dying together. Is it the wiser way?

I choose the simpler: I give all at once.

Know what you have to trust to, trade upon!

Use it, abuse it, — any thing but think

Hereafter, "Had I known she loved me so,

And what my means, I might have thriven with it."

This is your means. I give you all myself.

*Nor.* I take you and thank God.

*Con.* Look on through years!

We cannot kiss, a second day like this;

Else were this earth, no earth.

*Nor.* With this day's heat

We shall go on through years of cold.

*Con.* So, best!

— I try to see those years, — I think I see.

You walk quick and new warmth comes; you look back

And lay all to the first glow — not sit down

Forever brooding on a day like this

While seeing the embers whiten and love die.

Yes, love lives best in its effect; and mine,

Full in its own life, yearns to live in yours.

*Nor.* Just so. I take and know you all at once.

Your soul is disengaged so easily,

Your face is there, I know you; give me time,

Let me be proud and think you shall know me.

My soul is slower; in a life I roll

The minute out whereto you condense yours —

The whole slow circle round you I must move,

To be just you. I look to a long life

To decompose this minute, prove its worth.

'Tis the sparks' long succession one by one

Shall show you, in the end, what fire was crammed

In that mere stone you struck: how could you know,

If it lay ever unproved in your sight,

As now my heart lies? your own warmth would hide

Its coldness, were it cold.

*Con.* But how prove, how?

*Nor.* Prove in my life, you ask?

*Con.* Quick, Norbert — how?

*Nor.* That's easy told. I count life just a stuff

To try the soul's strength on, educe the man.

Who keeps one end in view makes all things serve.

As with the body — he who hurls a lance

Or heaps up stone on stone, shows strength alike,  
So I will seize and use all means to prove  
And show this soul of mine, you crown as yours,  
And justify us both.

*Con.*

Could you write books,  
Paint pictures! One sits down in poverty  
And writes or paints, with pity for the rich.

*Nor.* And loves one's painting and one's writing, then,  
And not one's mistress! All is best, believe,  
And we best as no other than we are.

We live, and they experiment on life —  
Those poets, painters, all who stand aloof  
To overlook the farther. Let us be  
The thing they look at! I might take your face  
And write of it, and paint it, — to what end?  
For whom? what pale dictatress in the air  
Feeds, smiling sadly, her fine ghost-like form  
With earth's real blood and breath, the beauteous life  
She makes despised forever? You are mine,  
Made for me, not for others in the world,  
Nor yet for that which I should call my art,  
The cold calm power to see how fair you look.  
I come to you; I leave you not, to write  
Or paint. You are, I am: let Rubens there  
Paint us!

*Con.* So, best!

*Nor.*

I understand your soul.  
You live, and rightly sympathize with life,  
With action, power, success. This way is straight;  
And time were short beside, to let me change  
The craft my childhood learnt: my craft shall serve.  
Men set me here to subjugate, enclose,  
Manure their barren lives, and force the fruit  
First for themselves, and afterward for me  
In the due tithe; the task of some one man,  
Through ways of work appointed by themselves.  
I am not bid create, — they see no star  
Transfiguring my brow to warrant that, —  
But bind in one and carry out their wills.  
So I began: to-night sees how I end.

What if it see, too, my first outbreak here  
Amid the warmth, surprise, and sympathy,  
And instincts of the heart that teach the head?  
What if the people have discerned at length  
The dawn of the next nature, the new man  
Whose will they venture in the place of theirs,  
And who, they trust, shall find them out new ways  
To heights as new which yet he only sees?  
I felt it when you kissed me. See this Queen,  
This people, — in our phrase, this mass of men, —  
See how the mass lies passive to my hand  
And how my hand is plastic, and you by  
To make the muscles iron! Oh, an end  
Shall crown this issue as this crowns the first!  
My will be on this people! then, the strain,  
The grappling of the potter with his clay,  
The long, uncertain struggle, — the success  
And consummation of the spirit-work,  
Some vase shaped to the curl of the god's lip,

While rounded fair for lower men to see  
 The Graces in a dance all recognize  
 With turbulent applause and laughs of heart!  
 So triumph ever shall renew itself;  
 Ever shall end in efforts higher yet,  
 Ever begin . . .

*Con.* I ever helping?

*Nor.*

Thus!

[As he embraces her, the QUEEN enters.]

*Con.* Hist, madam! So I have performed my part.  
 You see your gratitude's true decency,  
 Norbert? A little slow in seeing it!  
 Begin to end the sooner! What's a kiss?  
*Nor.* Constance?

*Con.* Why, must I teach it you again?

You want a witness to your dulness, sir?  
 What was I saying these ten minutes long?  
 Then I repeat, — when some young, handsome man  
 Like you has acted out a part like yours,  
 Is pleased to fall in love with one beyond,  
 So very far beyond him, as he says, —  
 So hopelessly in love that but to speak  
 Would prove him mad, — he thinks judiciously,  
 And makes some insignificant good soul,  
 Like me, his friend, adviser, confidant,  
 And very stalking-horse to cover him  
 In following after what he dares not face —  
 When his end's gained — (sir, do you understand?)  
 When she, he dares not face, has loved him first,  
 — May I not say so, madam? — tops his hope,  
 And overpasses so his wildest dream,  
 With glad consent of all, and most of her  
 The confidant who brought the same about —  
 Why, in the moment when such joy explodes,  
 I do hold that the merest gentleman  
 Will not start rudely from the stalking-horse,  
 Dismiss it with a "There, enough of you!"  
 Forget it, show his back unmannerly;  
 But like a liberal heart will rather turn  
 And say, "A tingling time of hope was ours;  
 Betwixt the fears and falterings, we two lived  
 A chanceful time in waiting for the prize:  
 The confidant, the Constance, served not ill.  
 And though I shall forget her in due time,  
 Her use being answered now, as reason bids,  
 Nay as herself bids from her heart of hearts, —  
 Still, she has rights, the first thanks go to her,  
 The first good praise goes to the prosperous tool,  
 And the first — which is the last — rewarding kiss."

*Nor.* Constance, it is a dream — ah, see, you smile!

*Con.* So, now his part being properly performed,  
 Madam, I turn to you and finish mine  
 As duly: I do justice in my turn.  
 Yes, madam, he has loved you — long and well;  
 He could not hope to tell you so — 'twas I  
 Who served to prove your soul accessible,  
 I led his thoughts on, drew them to their place  
 When else they had wandered out into despair,  
 And kept love constant toward its natural aim.

Enough, my part is played ; you stoop half-way  
 And meet us royally and spare our fears :  
 'Tis like yourself. He thanks you, so do I.  
 Take him — with my full heart ! my work is praised  
 By what comes of it. Be you happy, both !  
 Yourself — the only one on earth who can —  
 Do all for him, much more than a mere heart  
 Which though warm is not useful in its warmth  
 As the silk vesture of a queen ! fold that  
 Around him gently, tenderly. For him —  
 For him, — he knows his own part !

*Nor.* Have you done ?

I take the jest at last. Should I speak now ?  
 Was yours the wager, Constance, foolish child,  
 Or did you but accept it ? Well — at least  
 You lose by it.

*Con.* Nay, madam, 'tis your turn !  
 Restrain him still from speech a little more,  
 And make him happier and more confident !  
 Pity him, madam, he is timid yet !  
 Mark, Norbert ! Do not shrink now ! Here I yield  
 My whole right in you to the Queen, observe !  
 With her go put in practice the great schemes  
 You teem with, follow the career else closed —  
 Be all you cannot be except by her !  
 Behold her ! — Madam, say for pity's sake  
 Any thing — frankly say you love him ! Else  
 He'll not believe it : there's more earnest in  
 His fear than you conceive : I know the man !

*Nor.* I know the woman somewhat, and confess  
 I thought she had jested better : she begins  
 To overcharge her part. I gravely wait  
 Your pleasure, madam : where is my reward ?

*Queen.* Norbert, this wild girl (whom I recognize  
 Scarce more than you do, in her fancy-fit,  
 Eccentric speech, and variable mirth,  
 Not very wise perhaps and somewhat bold,  
 Yet suitable, the whole night's work being strange)  
 — May still be right : I may do well to speak  
 And make authentic what appears a dream  
 To even myself. For what she says is truth.  
 Yes, Norbert — what you spoke just now of love,  
 Devotion, stirred no novel sense in me,  
 But justified a warmth felt long before.  
 Yes, from the first — I loved you, I shall say :  
 Strange ! but I do grow stronger, now 'tis said.  
 Your courage helps mine : you did well to speak  
 To-night, the night that crowns your twelvemonths' toil ;  
 But still I had not waited to discern  
 Your heart so long, believe me ! From the first  
 The source of so much zeal was almost plain,  
 In absence even of your own words just now  
 Which opened out the truth. 'Tis very strange,  
 But takes a happy ending — in your love  
 Which mine meets : be it so ! as you choose me,  
 So I choose you

*Nor.* And worthily you choose.  
 I will not be unworthy your esteem,  
 No, madam. I do love you ; I will meet

Your nature, now I know it. This was well.  
 I see, — you dare and you are justified :  
 But none had ventured such experiment,  
 Less versed than you in nobleness of heart,  
 Less confident of finding such in me.  
 I joy that thus you test me ere you grant  
 The dearest, richest, beauteousest, and best  
 Of women to my arms : 'tis like yourself.  
 So — back again into my part's set words —  
 Devotion to the uttermost is yours,  
 But no, you cannot, madam, even you,  
 Create in me the love our Constance does.  
 Or — something truer to the tragic phrase —  
 Not you magnolia-bell superb with scent  
 Invites a certain insect — that's myself —  
 But the small eye-flower nearer to the ground.  
 I take this lady.

*Con.* Stay — not hers, the trap —  
 Stay, Norbert — that mistake were worst of all !  
 He is too cunning, madam ! It was I,  
 I, Norbert, who . . .

*Nor.* You, was it, Constance ? Then,  
 But for the grace of this divinest hour  
 Which gives me you, I might not pardon here !  
 I am the Queen's ; she only knows my brain :  
 She may experiment therefore on my heart  
 And I instruct her too by the result.  
 But you, Sweet, you who know me, who so long  
 Have told my heart-beats over, held my life  
 In those white hands of yours, — it is not well !

*Con.* Tush ! I have said it, did I not say it all ?  
 The life, for her — the heart-beats, for her sake !

*Nor.* Enough ! my cheek grows red, I think. Your test ?  
 There's not the meanest woman in the world,  
 Not she I least could love in all the world,  
 Whom, did she love me, did love prove itself,  
 I dare insult as you insult me now.

Constance, I could say, if it must be said,  
 " Take back the soul you offer, I keep mine ! "  
 But — " Take the soul still quivering on your hand,  
 The soul so offered, which I cannot use,  
 And, please you, give it to some playful friend,  
 For — what's the trifle he requites me with ? "  
 — I, tempt a woman, to amuse a man,  
 That two may mock her heart if it succumb ?  
 No : fearing God and standing 'neath his heaven,  
 I would not dare insult a woman so,  
 Were she the meanest woman in the world,  
 And he, I cared to please, ten emperors !

*Con.* Norbert !

*Nor.* I love once as I live but once.  
 What case is this to think or talk about ?  
 I love you. Would it mend the case at all  
 Should such a step as this kill love in me ?  
 Your part were done : account to God for it !  
 But mine — could murdered love get up again,  
 And kneel to whom you please to designate,  
 And make you mirth ? It is too horrible.  
 You did not know this, Constance ? now you know

That body and soul have each one life, but one ;  
And here's my love, here, living, at your feet.

*Con.* See the Queen ! Norbert — this one more last word —  
If thus you have taken jest for earnest — thus  
Loved me in earnest . . .

*Nor.* Ah, no jest holds here !  
Where is the laughter in which jest breaks up,  
And what this horror that grows palpable ?  
Madam — why grasp you thus the balcony ?  
Have I done ill ? Have I not spoken truth ?  
How could I other ? Was it not your test,  
To try me, what my love for Constance meant ?  
Madam, your royal soul itself approves,  
The first, that I should choose thus ! so one takes  
A beggar, — asks him, what would buy his child ?  
And then approves the expected laugh of scorn  
Returned as something noble from the rags.  
Speak, Constance, I'm the beggar ! Ha, what's this ?  
You two glare each at each like panthers now.  
Constance, the world fades : only you stand there !  
You did not, in to-night's wild whirl of things,  
Sell me — your soul of souls, for any price ?  
No — no — 'tis easy to believe in you !  
Was it your love's mad trial to o'ertop  
Mine by this vain self-sacrifice ? well, still —  
Though I should curse, I love you. I am love  
And cannot change : love's self is at your feet !

[*The QUEEN goes out*]

*Con.* Feel my heart : let it die against your own !

*Nor.* Against my own. Explain not : let this be  
This is life's height.

*Con.* Yours, yours, yours !

*Nor.*

You and I —

Why care by what meanders we are here  
I' the centre of the labyrinth ? Men have died  
Trying to find this place, which we have found.

*Con.* Found, found !

*Nor.*

Sweet, never fear what she can do !

We are past harm now.

*Con.*

On the breast of God.

I thought of men — as if you were a man.

Tempting him with a crown !

*Nor.*

This must end here :

It is too perfect.

*Con.*

There's the music stopped.

What measured heavy tread ? It is one blaze  
About me and within me.

*Nor.*

Oh, some death

Will run its sudden finger round this spark  
And sever us from the rest !

*Con.*

And so do well.

Now the doors open.

*Nor.*

'Tis the guard comes.

*Con.*

Kiss !





“And washed by the morning water-gold,  
Florence lay out on the mountain side.”— Page 205.



OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE.

I.

THE morn when first it thunders in  
 March,  
 The eel in the pond gives a leap,  
 they say.  
 As I leaned and looked over the aloed  
 arch  
 Of the villa-gate this warm March  
 day,  
 No flash snapped, no dumb thunder  
 rolled  
 In the valley beneath where, white  
 and wide  
 And washed by the morning water-  
 gold,  
 Florence lay out on the mountain-  
 side.

II.

River and bridge and street and  
 square  
 Lay mine, as much at my beck and  
 call,  
 Through the live translucent bath of  
 air,  
 As the sights in a magic crystal-ball.  
 And of all I saw and of all I praised,  
 The most to praise and the best to  
 see  
 Was the startling bell-tower Giotto  
 raised :  
 But why did it more than startle  
 me ?

III.

Giotto, how, with that soul of yours,  
 Could you play me false who loved  
 you so ?  
 Some slights if a certain heart en-  
 dures  
 Yet it feels, I would have your fel-  
 lows know !  
 I' faith, I perceive not why I should  
 care  
 To break a silence that snits them  
 best,  
 But the thing grows somewhat hard  
 to bear  
 When I find a Giotto join the rest.

IV.

On the arch where olives overhead  
 Print the blue sky with twig and  
 leaf

(That sharp-curved leaf which they  
 never shed),  
 'Twixt the aloes, I used to learn in  
 chief,  
 And mark through the winter after-  
 noons,  
 By a gift God grants me now and  
 then,  
 In the mild decline of those suns like  
 moons,  
 Who walked in Florence, besides her  
 men.

V.

They might chirp and chaffer, come  
 and go  
 For pleasure or profit, her men  
 alive —  
 My business was hardly with them, I  
 trow,  
 But with empty cells of the human  
 hive ;  
 — With the chapter-room, the cloister-  
 porch,  
 The church's apsis, aisle or nave,  
 Its crypt, one fingers along with a  
 torch,  
 Its face set full for the sun to shave.

VI.

Wherever a fresco peels and drops,  
 Wherever an outline weakens and  
 wanes  
 Till the latest life in the painting  
 stops,  
 Stands One whom each fainter pulse-  
 tick pains :  
 One, wishful each scrap should clutch  
 the brick,  
 Each tinge not wholly escape the  
 plaster,  
 — A lion who dies of an ass's kick,  
 The wronged great soul of an an-  
 cient Master.

VII.

For oh, this world and the wrong it  
 does !  
 They are safe in heaven with their  
 backs to it,  
 The Michaels and Rafaels, you hum  
 and buzz  
 Round the works of, you of the little  
 wit !  
 Do their eyes contract to the earth's  
 old scope,  
 Now that they see God face to face,

And have all attained to be poets, I  
hope?  
'Tis their holiday now, in any  
case.

## VIII.

Much they reckon of your praise and  
you!  
But the wronged great souls — can  
they be quit  
Of a world where their work is all to  
do,  
Where you style them, you of the  
little wit,  
Old Master This and Early the Other,  
Not dreaming that Old and New are  
fellows:  
A younger succeeds to an elder  
brother,  
Da Vincis derive in good time from  
Dellos.

## IX.

And here where your praise might  
yield returns,  
And a handsome word or two give  
help,  
Here, after your kind, the mastiff  
grins,  
And the puppy pack of poodles  
yelp.  
What, not a word for Stefano there,  
Of brow once prominent and starry,  
Called Nature's Ape and the world's  
despair  
For his peerless painting? (see Va-  
sari.)

## X.

There stands the Master. Study, my  
friends,  
What a man's work comes to! So  
he plans it,  
Performs it, perfects it, makes amends  
For the toiling and moiling, and  
then, *sic transit!*  
Happier the thrifty blind-folk labor,  
With upturned eye while the hand  
is busy,  
Not sidling a glance at the coin of  
their neighbor!  
'Tis looking downward makes one  
dizzy.

## XI.

"If you knew their work you would  
deal your dole."  
May I take upon me to instruct  
you?

When Greek Art ran and reached the  
goal,  
Thus much had the world to boast  
*in fructu* —  
The Truth of Man, as by God first  
spoken,  
Which the actual generations gar-  
ble,  
Was re-uttered, and Soul (which  
Limbs betoken)  
And Limbs (Soul informs) made  
new in marble.

## XII.

So, you saw yourself as you wished  
you were,  
As you might have been, as you  
cannot be;  
Earth here, rebuked by Olympus  
there:  
And grew content in your poor de-  
gree  
With your little power, by those  
statues' godhead,  
And your little scope, by their eyes'  
full sway,  
And your little grace, by their grace  
embodied,  
And your little date, by their forms  
that stay.

## XIII.

You would fain be kinglier, say, than  
I am?  
Even so, you will not sit like The-  
seus.  
You would prove a model? The Son  
of Priam  
Has yet the advantage in arms' and  
knees' use.  
You're wroth — can you slay your  
snake like Apollo?  
You're grieved — still Niobe's the  
grander!  
You live — there's the Racers' frieze  
to follow:  
You die — there's the dying Alex-  
ander.

## XIV.

So, testing your weakness by their  
strength,  
Your meagre charms by their  
rounded beauty,  
Measured by Art in your breadth and  
length,  
You learned — to submit is a mor-  
tal's duty.

— When I say “you,” ’tis the common soul,  
 The collective, I mean : the race of Man  
 That receives life in parts to live in a whole,  
 And grow here according to God’s clear plan.

XV.

Growth came when, looking your last on them all,  
 You turned your eyes inwardly one fine day  
 And cried with a start— What if we so small  
 Be greater and grander the while than they?  
 Are they perfect of lineament, perfect of stature?  
 In both, of such lower types are we  
 Precisely because of our wider nature;  
 For time, theirs—ours, for eternity.

XVI.

To-day’s brief passion limits their range;  
 It seethes with the morrow for us and more.  
 They are perfect—how else? they shall never change:  
 We are faulty—why not? we have time in store.  
 The Artificer’s hand is not arrested  
 With us; we are rough-hewn, no-wise polished.  
 They stand for our copy, and, once invested  
 With all they can teach, we shall see them abolished.

XVII.

’Tis a life-long toil till our lump be leaven—  
 The better! What’s come to perfection perishes.  
 Things learned on earth, we shall practise in heaven:  
 Works done least rapidly, Art most cherishes.  
 Thyself shalt afford the example,  
 Giotto!  
 Thy one work, not to decrease or diminish,  
 Done at a stroke, was just (was it not?) “O”  
 Thy great Campanile is still to finish.

XVIII.

Is it true that we are now, and shall be hereafter,  
 But what and where depend on life’s minute?  
 Hails heavenly cheer or infernal laughter  
 Our first step out of the gulf or in it?  
 Shall Man, such step within his endeavor,  
 Man’s face, have no more play and action  
 Than joy which is crystallized forever,  
 Or grief, an eternal petrification?

XIX.

On which I conclude, that the early painters,  
 To cries of “Greek Art and what more wish you?”—  
 Replied, “To become now self-acquainters,  
 And paint man, man, whatever the issue!  
 Make new hopes shine through the flesh they fray,  
 New fears aggrandize the rags and tatters:  
 To bring the invisible full into play,  
 Let the visible go to the dogs—  
 what matters?”

XX.

Give these, I exhort you, their guerdon and glory  
 For daring so much, before they well did it.  
 The first of the new, in our race’s story,  
 Beats the last of the old; ’tis no idle quiddit.  
 The worthies began a revolution,  
 Which if on earth you intend to acknowledge,  
 Why, honor them now! (ends my allocation)  
 Nor confer your degree when the folks leave college.

XXI.

There’s a fancy some lean to and others hate—  
 That, when this life is ended, begins  
 New work for the soul in another state,  
 Where it strives and gets weary,  
 loses and wins:

Where the strong and the weak, this  
world's congeries,  
Repeat in large what they practised  
in small,  
Through life after life in unlimited  
series;  
Only the scale's to be changed,  
that's all.

## XXII.

Yet I hardly know. When a soul has  
seen  
By the means of Evil that Good is  
best,  
And, through earth and its noise,  
what is heaven's serene, —  
When our faith in the same has  
stood the test —  
Why, the child grown man, you burn  
the rod,  
The uses of labor are surely done;  
There remaineth a rest for the people  
of God:  
And I have had troubles enough,  
for one.

## XXIII.

But at any rate I have loved the sea-  
son  
Of Art's spring-birth so dim and  
dewy;  
My sculptor is Nicolo the Pisan,  
My painter — who but Cimabue?  
Nor even was man of them all in-  
deed,  
From these to Ghiberti and Ghir-  
landajo,  
Could say that he missed my critic-  
meed.  
So, now to my special grievance —  
heigh-ho!

## XXIV.

Their ghosts still stand, as I said be-  
fore,  
Watching each fresco flaked and  
rasped,  
Blocked up, knocked out, or white-  
washed o'er:  
— No getting again what the Church  
has grasped!  
The works on the wall must take  
their chance;  
"Works never conceded to Eng-  
land's thick clime!"  
(I hope they prefer their inheritance  
Of a bucketful of Italian quick-  
lime.)

## XXV.

When they go at length, with such a  
shaking  
Of heads o'er the old delusion, sadly  
Each master his way through the  
black streets taking,  
Where many a lost work breathes  
though badly —  
Why don't they bethink them of who  
has merited?  
Why not reveal, while their pic-  
tures dree  
Such doom, how a captive might be  
out-ferreted?  
Why is it they never remember me?

## XXVI.

Nor that I expect the great Bigordi,  
Nor Sandro to hear me, chivalric,  
bellicose;  
Nor the wronged Lippino; and not a  
word I  
Say of a scrap of Frà Angelico's:  
But are you too fine, Taddeo Gaddi,  
To grant me a taste of your intonaco,  
Some Jerome that seeks the heaven  
with a sad eye?  
Not a churlish saint, Lorenzo Mo-  
naco?

## XXVII.

Could not the ghost with the close red  
cap,  
My Pollajolo, the twice a crafts-  
man,  
Save me a sample, give me the hap  
Of a muscular Christ that shows  
the draughtsman?  
No Virgin by him the somewhat petty,  
Of finical touch and tempera  
crumbly —  
Could not Alesso Baldovinetti  
Contribute so much, I ask him  
humbly?

## XXVIII.

Margheritone of Arezzo,  
With the grave-clothes garb and  
swaddling barret  
(Why purse up mouth and beak in a  
pet so,  
You bald old saturnine poll-clawed  
parrot?)  
Not a poor glimmering Crucifixion,  
Where in the foreground kneels the  
donor?  
If such remain, as is my conviction,  
The hoarding it does you but little  
honor.

XXIX.

They pass ; for them the panels may  
thrill,  
The tempera grow alive and tinglysh :  
Their pictures are left to the mercies  
still  
Of dealers and stealers, Jews and  
the English,  
Who, seeing mere money's worth in  
their prize,  
Will sell it to somebody calm as  
Zeno  
At naked High Art, and in ecstasies  
Before some clay-cold vile Carlino !

XXX.

No matter for these ! But Giotto,  
you,  
Have you allowed, as the town-  
tongues babble it—  
Oh, never ! it shall not be counted  
true—  
That a certain precious little tablet  
Which Buonarroti eyed like a lover,  
Was buried so long in oblivion's  
womb  
And, left for another than I to dis-  
cover,  
Turns up at last ! and to whom ?—  
to whom ?

XXXI.

I, that have haunted the dim San  
Spirito,  
(Or was it rather the Ognissanti ?)  
Patient on altar-step planting a weary  
toe !  
Nay, I shall have it yet ! *Detur  
amanti !*  
My Koh-i-noor — or (if that's a plati-  
tude)  
Jewel of Giamschid, the Persian  
Sofi's eye ;  
So, in anticipative gratitude,  
What if I take up my hope and  
prophecy ?

XXXII.

When the hour grows ripe, and a cer-  
tain dotard  
Is pitched, no parcel that needs in-  
voicing,  
To the worst side of the Mont St.  
Gothard,  
We shall begin by way of rejoicing ;

None of that shooting the sky (blank  
cartridge),  
Nor a civic guard, all plumes and  
lacquer,  
Hunting Radetzky's soul like a par-  
tridge  
Over Morello with squib and crack-  
er.

XXXIII.

This time we'll shoot better game and  
bag 'em hot :  
No mere display at the stone of  
Dante,  
But a kind of sober Witanagemot  
(Ex : "Casa Guidi," *quod videas  
ante*)  
Shall ponder, once Freedom restored  
to Florence,  
How Art may return that departed  
with her.  
Go, hated house, go each trace of the  
Lorraine's,  
And bring us the days of Orgagna  
hither !

XXXIV.

How we shall prologuize, how we  
shall perorate,  
Utter fit things upon art and history,  
Feel truth at blood-heat and falsehood  
at zero rate,  
Make of the want of the age no  
mystery,  
Contrast the fructuous and sterile  
eras,  
Show — monarchy ever its uncouth  
cub licks  
Out of the bear's shape into Chimæ-  
ra's,  
While Pure Art's birth is still the  
republic's !

XXXV.

Then one shall propose in a speech  
(curt Tuscan,  
Expurgate and sober, with scarcely  
an " *issimo* "),  
To end now our half-told tale of Cam-  
buscan,  
And turn the bell-tower's *alt* to  
*altissimo* :  
And, fine as the beak of a young  
beccaccia,  
The Campanile, the Duomo's fit  
ally,  
Shall soar up in gold full fifty braccia,  
Completing Florence, as Florence,  
Italy.

XXXVI.

Shall I be alive that morning the scarf  
 Is broken away, and the long-pent  
 fire,  
 Like the golden hope of the world,  
 unbaflled  
 Springs from its sleep, and up goes  
 the spire,  
 While, "God and the People" plain  
 for its motto,  
 Thence the new tricolor flaps at the  
 sky?  
 At least to foresee that glory of  
 Giotto  
 And Florence together, the first am  
 I!

NOTE.—The space left here tempts to a word on the line about Apollo the snake-slayer, which my friend Professor Colvin condemns, believing that the God of the Belvedere grasps no bow, but the Ægis, as described in the 15th Iliad. Surely the text represents that portentous object (θεῶνιν,

δεινὴν, ἀμφιδάσειαν, ἀριπρεπέ' —μαρμαρένῃ) as "shaken violently" or "held immovably" by both hands, not a single one, and that the left hand:—

ἀλλὰ σὺ γ' ἐν χεῖρεσσι λάβ' αἰγίδα θυσανόεσσαν

τὴν μάλ' ἐπισσεῖων φοβέειν ἤρωας Ἀχαιοῦς.  
 and so on, τὴν ἀρ' ὃ γ' ἐν χεῖρεσσιν ἔχων —χερσὶν ἔχ' ἀτρέμια, κ. τ. λ. Moreover, while he shook it he "shouted enormously," σείσ', ἐπὶ δ' αὐτὸς αὖτε μάλα μέγας, which the statue does not. Presently when Teukros, on the other side, plies the bow, it is τόξον ἔχων ἐν χειρὶ παλίντονον. Besides, by the act of discharging an arrow, the right arm and hand are thrown back as we see,—a quite gratuitous and theatrical display in the case supposed. The conjecture of Flaxman that the statue was suggested by the bronze Apollo Alexikakos of Kalamis, mentioned by Pausanias, remains probable; though the "hardness" which Cicero considers to distinguish the artist's workmanship from that of Miron is not by any means apparent in our marble copy, if it be one.—Feb. 16, 1880.

## BISHOP BLOUGRAM'S APOLOGY.

No more wine? then we'll push back chairs and talk.  
 A final glass for me, though; cool, i' faith!  
 We ought to have our Abbey back, you see.  
 It's different, preaching in basilicas,  
 And doing duty in some masterpiece  
 Like this of brother Pugin's, bless his heart!  
 I doubt if they're half baked, those chalk rosettes,  
 Ciphers and stucco-twiddlings everywhere;  
 It's just like breathing in a lime-kiln: eh?  
 These hot, long ceremonies of our Church  
 Cost us a little—oh, they pay the price,  
 You take me—amply pay it! Now we'll talk.

So, you despise me, Mr. Gigadibs.  
 No deprecation,—nay, I beg you, sir!  
 Beside 'tis our engagement: don't you know,  
 I promised, if you'd watch a dinner out,  
 We'd see truth dawn together?—truth that peeps  
 Over the glass's edge when dinner's done,  
 And body gets its sop and holds its noise,  
 And leaves soul free a little. Now's the time:  
 'Tis break of day! You do despise me then.  
 And if I say, "despise me,"—never fear!  
 I know you do not in a certain sense—  
 Not in my arm-chair, for example: here.  
 I will imagine you respect my place  
 (*Status, entourage, worldly circumstance*)





Bishop Blougram's Apology. — Page 216.



Quite to its value — very much indeed :  
 — Are up to the protesting eyes of you  
 In pride at being seated here for once —  
 You'll turn it to such capital account !  
 When somebody, through years and years to come,  
 Hints of the bishop, — names me — that's enough :  
 " Blougram ? I knew him " — (into it you slide)  
 " Dined with him once, a Corpus Christi Day,  
 All alone, we two ; he's a clever man :  
 And after dinner, — why, the wine you know, —  
 Oh, there was wine, and good ! — what with the wine . . .  
 ' Faith, we began upon all sorts of talk !  
 He's no bad fellow, Blougram ; he had seen  
 Something of mine he relished, some review :  
 He's quite above their humbug in his heart,  
 Half said as much, indeed — the thing's his trade.  
 I warrant, Blougram's sceptical at times :  
 How otherwise ? I like him, I confess !"  
*Che che*, my dear sir, as we say at Rome,  
 Don't you protest now ! It's fair give and take ;  
 You have had your turn, and spoken your home-truths :  
 The hand's mine now, and here you follow suit.

Thus much conceded, still the first fact stays —  
 You do despise me ; your ideal of life  
 Is not the bishop's : you would not be I.  
 You would like better to be Goethe, now,  
 Or Buonaparte, or, bless me, lower still,  
 Count D'Orsay, — so you did what you preferred,  
 Spoke as you thought, and, as you cannot help,  
 Believed or disbelieved, no matter what,  
 So long as on that point, whate'er it was,  
 You loosed your mind, were whole and sole yourself.  
 — That, my ideal never can include,  
 Upon that element of truth and worth  
 Never be based ! for say they make me Pope  
 (They can't — suppose it for our argument),  
 Why, there I'm at my tether's end, I've reached  
 My height, and not a height which pleases you :  
 An unbelieving Pope won't do, you say.  
 It's like those eerie stories nurses tell,  
 Of how some actor played Death on a stage,  
 With pasteboard crown, sham orb, and tinselled dart,  
 And called himself the monarch of the world ;  
 Then, going in the tire-room afterward,  
 Because the play was done, to shift himself,  
 Got touched upon the sleeve familiarly,  
 The moment he had shut the closet door,  
 By Death himself. Thus God might touch a Pope  
 At unawares, ask what his haubles mean,  
 And whose part he presumed to play just now ?  
 Best be yourself, imperial, plain, and true !

So, drawing comfortable breath again,  
 You weigh and find, whatever more or less  
 I boast of my ideal realized,  
 Is nothing in the balance when opposed  
 To your ideal, your grand simple life,  
 Of which you will not realize one jot.

I am much, you are nothing ; you would be all,  
I would be merely much : you beat me there.

No, friend, you do not beat me : hearken why !  
The common problem, yours, mine, every one's,  
Is — not to fancy what were fair in life  
Provided it could be, — but, finding first  
What may be, then find how to make it fair  
Up to our means : a very different thing !  
No abstract intellectual plan of life  
Quite irrespective of life's plainest laws,  
But one, a man, who is man and nothing more,  
May lead within a world which (by your leave)  
Is Rome or London, not Fool's-paradise.  
Embellish Rome, idealize away,  
Make paradise of London if you can,  
You're welcome, nay, you're wise.

A simile !

We mortals cross the ocean of this world  
Each in his average cabin of a life ;  
The best's not big, the worst yields elbow-room.  
Now for our six months' voyage — how prepare ?  
You come on shipboard with a landsman's list  
Of things he calls convenient : so they are !  
An India screen is pretty furniture,  
A piano-forte is a fine resource,  
All Balzac's novels occupy one shelf,  
The new edition fifty volumes long ;  
And little Greek books, with the funny type  
They get up well at Leipsic, fill the next :  
Go on ! slabbed marble, what a bath it makes !  
And Parma's pride, the Jerome, let us add !  
'Twere pleasant could Correggio's fleeting glow  
Hang full in face of one where'er one roams,  
Since he more than the others brings with him  
Italy's self, — the marvellous Modenese ! —  
Yet was not on your list before, perhaps.  
— Alas, friend ! here's the agent . . . is't the name ?  
The captain, or whoever's master here —  
You see him screw his face up ; what's his cry  
Ere you set foot on shipboard ? “ Six feet square ! ”  
If you won't understand what six feet mean,  
Compute and purchase stores accordingly —  
And if, in pique because he overhauls  
Your Jerome, piano and bath, you come on board  
Bare — why, you cut a figure at the first  
While sympathetic landsmen see you off ;  
Not afterward, when long ere half seas over,  
You peep up from your utterly naked boards  
Into some snug and well-appointed berth,  
Like mine for instance (try the cooler jug —  
Put back the other, but don't jog the ice !)  
And mortified you mutter “ Well and good ;  
He sits enjoying his sea-furniture ;  
'Tis stout and proper, and there's store of it :  
Though I've the better notion, all agree,  
Of fitting rooms up. Hang the carpenter,  
Neat ship-shape fixings and contrivances —

I would have brought my Jerome, frame and all !"  
 And meantime you bring nothing : never mind —  
 You've proved your artist-nature : what you don't  
 You might bring, so despise me, as I say.

Now come, let's backward to the starting-place.  
 See my way : we're two college friends, suppose.  
 Prepare together for our voyage, then ;  
 Each note and check the other in his work, —  
 Here's mine, a bishop's outfit ; criticise !  
 What's wrong ? why won't you be a bishop too ?

Why first, you don't believe, you don't and can't  
 (Not stately, that is, and fixedly  
 And absolutely and exclusively),  
 In any revelation called divine.  
 No dogmas nail your faith ; and what remains  
 But say so, like the honest man you are ?  
 First, therefore, overhaul theology !  
 Nay, I too, not a fool, you please to think,  
 Must find believing every whit as hard :  
 And if I do not frankly say as much,  
 The ugly consequence is clear enough.

Now wait, my friend : well, I do not believe —  
 If you'll accept no faith that is not fixed,  
 Absolute and exclusive, as you say.  
 You're wrong — I mean to prove it in due time.  
 Meanwhile, I know where difficulties lie  
 I could not, cannot solve, nor ever shall,  
 So give up hope accordingly to solve —  
 (To you, and over the wine). Our dogmas then  
 With both of us, though in unlike degree,  
 Missing full credence — overboard with them !  
 I mean to meet you on your own premise :  
 Good, there go mine in company with yours !

And now what are we ? unbelievers both,  
 Calm and complete, determinately fixed  
 To-day, to-morrow, and forever, pray ?  
 You'll guarantee me that ? Not so, I think !  
 In no wise ! all we've gained is, that belief,  
 As unbelief before, shakes us by fits,  
 Confounds us like its predecessor. Where's  
 The gain ? how can we guard our unbelief,  
 Make it bear fruit to us ? — the problem here.  
 Just when we are safest, there's a sunset-touch,  
 A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,  
 A chorus-ending from Euripides, —  
 And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears  
 As old and new at once as nature's self,  
 To rap and knock and enter in our soul,  
 Take hands and dance there, a fantastic ring,  
 Round the ancient idol, on his base again, —  
 The grand Perhaps ! We look on helplessly.  
 There the old misgivings, crooked questions are —  
 This good God, — what he could do, if he would,  
 Would, if he could — then must have done long since :  
 If so, when, where, and how ? some way must be, —

Once feel about, and soon or late you hit  
Some sense, in which it might be, after all.  
Why not "The Way, the Truth, the Life"?

That way

Over the mountain, which who stands upon  
Is apt to doubt if it be indeed a road ;  
While if he views it from the waste itself,  
Up goes the line there, plain from base to brow,  
Not vague, mistakable ! what's a break or two  
Seen from the unbroken desert either side ?  
And then (to bring in fresh philosophy)  
What if the breaks themselves should prove at last  
The most consummate of contrivances  
To train a man's eye, teach him what is faith ?  
And so we stumble at truth's very test !  
All we have gained then by our unbelief  
Is a life of doubt diversified by faith,  
For one of faith diversified by doubt :  
We called the chess-board white, — we call it black.

" Well," you rejoin, " the end's no worse, at least ;  
We've reason for both colors on the board :  
Why not confess then, where I drop the faith  
And you the doubt, that I'm as right as you ?"

Because, friend, in the next place, this being so,  
And both things even, — faith and unbelief  
Left to a man's choice, — we'll proceed a step,  
Returning to our image, which I like.

A man's choice, yes — but a cabin passenger's —  
The man made for the special life o' the world —  
Do you forget him ? I remember though !  
Consult our ship's conditions and you find  
One and but one choice suitable to all ;  
The choice, that you unluckily prefer,  
Turning things topsy-turvy — they or it  
Going to the ground. Belief or unbelief  
Bears upon life, determines its whole course,  
Begins at its beginning. See the world  
Such as it is, — you made it not, nor I ;  
I mean to take it as it is, — and you,  
Not so you'll take it, — though you get naught else.  
I know the special kind of life I like,  
What suits the most my idiosyncrasy,  
Brings out the best of me and bears me fruit  
In power, peace, pleasantness, and length of days.  
I find that positive belief does this  
For me, and unbelief, no whit of this.  
— For you, it does, however ? — that, we'll try !  
'Tis clear, I cannot lead my life, at least,  
Induce the world to let me peaceably,  
Without declaring at the outset, " Friends,  
I absolutely and peremptorily  
Believe !" — I say, faith is my waking life :  
One sleeps, indeed, and dreams at intervals,  
We know, but waking's the main point with us,  
And my provision's for life's waking part.

Accordingly, I use heart, head, and hand  
 All day, I build, scheme, study, and make friends;  
 And when night overtakes me, down I lie,  
 Sleep, dream a little, and get done with it,  
 The sooner the better, to begin afresh.  
 What's midnight doubt before the dayspring's faith?  
 You, the philosopher, that disbelieve,  
 That recognize the night, give dreams their weight—  
 To be consistent you should keep your bed,  
 Abstain from healthy acts that prove you man,  
 For fear you drowse perhaps at unawares!  
 And certainly at night you'll sleep and dream,  
 Live through the day and bustle as you please.  
 And so you live to sleep as I to wake,  
 To unbelieve as I to still believe?  
 Well, and the common sense o' the world calls you  
 Bed-ridden, — and its good things come to me.  
 Its estimation, which is half the fight,  
 That's the first-cabin comfort I secure:  
 The next . . . but you perceive with half an eye!  
 Come, come, it's best believing, if we may;  
 You can't but own that!

Next, concede again

If once we choose belief, on all accounts  
 We can't be too decisive in our faith,  
 Conclusive and exclusive in its terms,  
 To suit the world which gives us the good things.  
 In every man's career are certain points  
 Whereon he dares not be indifferent;  
 The world detects him clearly, if he dare,  
 As baffled at the game, and losing life.  
 He may care little or he may care much  
 For riches, honor, pleasure, work, repose,  
 Since various theories of life and life's  
 Success are extant which might easily  
 Comport with either estimate of these;  
 And whoso chooses wealth or poverty,  
 Labor or quiet, is not judged a fool  
 Because his fellow would choose otherwise:  
 We let him choose upon his own account  
 So long as he's consistent with his choice.  
 But certain points, left wholly to himself,  
 When once a man has arbitrated on,  
 We say he must succeed there or go hang.  
 Thus, he should wed the woman he loves most  
 Or needs most, whatsoever the love or need —  
 For he can't wed twice. Then, he must avouch,  
 Or follow, at the least, sufficiently,  
 The form of faith his conscience holds the best,  
 Whate'er the process of conviction was:  
 For nothing can compensate his mistake  
 On such a point, the man himself being judge:  
 He cannot wed twice, nor twice lose his soul.

Well now, there's one great form of Christian faith  
 I happened to be born in — which to teach  
 Was given me as I grew up, on all hands,  
 As best and readiest means of living by;

The same on examination being proved  
 The most pronounced moreover, fixed, precise  
 And absolute form of faith in the whole world —  
 Accordingly, most potent of all forms  
 For working on the world. Observe, my friend !  
 Such as you know me, I am free to say,  
 In these hard latter days which hamper one,  
 Myself — by no immoderate exercise  
 Of intellect and learning, but the tact  
 To let external forces work for me,  
 — Bid the street's stones be bread and they are bread ;  
 Bid Peter's creed, or rather, Hildebrand's,  
 Exalt me o'er my fellows in the world  
 And make my life an ease and joy and pride :  
 It does so, — which for me's a great point gained,  
 Who have a soul and body that exact  
 A comfortable care in many ways.  
 There's power in me and will to dominate  
 Which I must exercise, they hurt me else :  
 In many ways I need mankind's respect,  
 Obedience, and the love that's born of fear :  
 While at the same time, there's a taste I have,  
 A toy of soul, a titillating thing,  
 Refuses to digest these dainties crude.  
 The naked life is gross till clothed upon :  
 I must take what men offer, with a grace  
 As though I would not, could I help it, take !  
 An uniform I wear though over-rich —  
 Something imposed on me, no choice of mine ;  
 No fancy-dress worn for pure fancy's sake  
 And despicable therefore ! now folks kneel  
 And kiss my hand — of course the Church's hand.  
 Thus I am made, thus life is best for me,  
 And thus that it should be I have procured ;  
 And thus it could not be another way,  
 I venture to imagine.

You'll reply,

So far my choice, no doubt, is a success ;  
 But were I made of better elements,  
 With nobler instincts, purer tastes, like you,  
 I hardly would account the thing success  
 Though it did all for me I say.

But, friend,

We speak of what is ; not of what might be,  
 And how 'twere better if 'twere otherwise  
 I am the man you see here plain enough :  
 Grant I'm a beast, why, beasts must lead beasts' lives !  
 Suppose I own at once to tail and claws ;  
 The tailless man exceeds me : but being tailed  
 I'll lash out lion fashion, and leave apes  
 To dock their stump and dress their haunches up.  
 My business is not to remake myself,  
 But make the absolute best of what God made.  
 Or — our first simile — though you prove me doomed  
 To a viler berth still, to the steerage-hole,  
 The sheep-pen or the pig-sty, I should strive  
 To make what use of each were possible ;



And as this cabin gets upholstery,  
That hutch should rustle with sufficient straw.

But, friend, I don't acknowledge quite so fast  
I fail of all your manhood's lofty tastes  
Enumerated so complacently,  
On the mere ground that you forsooth can find  
In this particular life I choose to lead  
No fit provision for them. Can you not?  
Say you, my fault is I address myself  
To grosser estimators than should judge?  
And that's no way of holding up the soul,  
Which, nobler, needs men's praise perhaps, yet knows  
One wise man's verdict outweighs all the fools' —  
Would like the two, but, forced to choose, takes that.  
I pine among my million imbeciles  
(You think) aware some dozen men of sense  
Eye me and know me, whether I believe  
In the last winking Virgin, as I vow,  
And am a fool, or disbelieve in her  
And am a knave, — approve in neither case,  
Withhold their voices though I look their way :  
Like Verdi when, at his worst opera's end  
(The thing they gave at Florence — what's its name?)  
While the mad houseful's plaudits near out-bang  
His orchestra of salt-box, tongs, and bones,  
He looks through all the roaring and the wreaths  
Where sits Rossini patient in his stall.

Nay, friend, I meet you with an answer here —  
That even your prime men who appraise their kind  
Are men still, catch a wheel within a wheel,  
See more in a truth than the truth's simple self,  
Confuse themselves. You see lads walk the street  
Sixty the minute ; what's to note in that?  
You see one lad o'erstride a chimney-stack ;  
Him you must watch — he's sure to fall, yet stands !  
Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things.  
The honest thief, the tender murderer,  
The superstitious atheist, demirep  
That loves and saves her soul in new French books —  
We watch while these in equilibrium keep  
The giddy line midway: one step aside.  
They're classed and done with. I, then, keep the line  
Before your sage's. — just the men to shrink  
From the gross weights, coarse scales, and labels broad  
You offer their refinement. Fool, or knave?  
Why needs a bishop be a fool or knave  
When there's a thousand diamond weights between?  
So, I enlist them. Your picked twelve, you'll find,  
Profess themselves indignant, scandalized  
At thus being held unable to explain  
How a superior man who disbelieves  
May not believe as well : that's Schelling's way !  
It's through my coming in the tail of time,  
Nicking the minute with a happy tact.  
Had I been born three hundred years ago  
They'd say, "What's strange? Blougram of course believes ;"  
And, seventy years since, "disbelieves of course."

But now, "He may believe; and yet, and yet  
 How can he?" All eyes turn with interest.  
 Whereas, step off the line on either side —  
 You, for example, clever to a fault,  
 The rough and ready man who write apace,  
 Read somewhat seldomer, think perhaps even less —  
 You disbelieve! Who wonders and who cares?  
 Lord So-and-so — his coat bedropped with wax,  
 All Peter's chains about his waist, his back  
 Brave with the needlework of Noodledom —  
 Believes! Again, who wonders and who cares?  
 But I, the man of sense and learning too,  
 The able to think yet act, the this, the that,  
 I, to believe at this late time of day!  
 Enough; you see, I need not fear contempt.  
 — Except it's yours! Admire me as these may,  
 You don't. But whom at least do you admire?  
 Present your own perfection, your ideal,  
 Your pattern man for a minute — oh, make haste!  
 Is it Napoleon you would have us grow?  
 Concede the means; allow his head and hand  
 (A large concession, clever as you are),  
 Good! In our common primal element  
 Of unbelief (we can't believe, you know —  
 We're still at that admission, recollect!)  
 Where do you find — apart from, towering o'er  
 The secondary temporary aims  
 Which satisfy the gross taste you despise —  
 Where do you find his star? — his crazy trust  
 God knows through what or in what? it's alive  
 And shines and leads him, and that's all we want.  
 Have we aught in our sober night shall point  
 Such ends as his were, and direct the means  
 Of working out our purpose straight as his,  
 Nor bring a moment's trouble on success  
 With after-care to justify the same?  
 — Be a Napoleon and yet disbelieve —  
 Why, the man's mad, friend, take his light away!  
 What's the vague good o' the world, for which you dare  
 With comfort to yourself blow millions up?  
 We neither of us see it! we do see  
 The blown-up millions — spatter of their brains  
 And writhing of their bowels and so forth,  
 In that bewildering entanglement  
 Of horrible eventualities  
 Past calculation to the end of time!  
 Can I mistake for some clear word of God  
 (Which were my ample warrant for it all)  
 His puff of hazy instinct, idle talk,  
 "The State, that's I," quack-nonsense about crowns,  
 And (when one beats the man to his last hold)  
 A vague idea of setting things to rights,  
 Policing people efficaciously,  
 More to their profit, most of all to his own;  
 The whole to end that dimmest of ends  
 By an Austrian marriage, cant to us the Church,  
 And resurrection of the old *régime*?  
 Would I, who hope to live a dozen years,  
 Fight Austerlitz for reasons such and such?

No : for, concede me but the merest chance  
 Doubt may be wrong — there's judgment, life to come !  
 With just that chance, I dare not. Doubt proves right ?  
 This present life is all ? — you offer me  
 Its dozen noisy years, without a chance  
 That wedding an arch-duchess, wearing lace,  
 And getting called by divers new-coined names,  
 Will drive off ugly thoughts and let me dine,  
 Sleep, read, and chat in quiet as I like !  
 Therefore I will not.

Take another case,  
 Fit up the cabin yet another way.  
 What say you to the poets ? shall we write  
 Hamlet, Othello — make the world our own,  
 Without a risk to run of either sort ?  
 I can't ! — to put the strongest reason first.  
 " But try," you urge, " the trying shall suffice ;  
 The aim, if reached or not, makes great the life :  
 Try to be Shakspeare, leave the rest to fate !"  
 Spare my self-knowledge — there's no fooling me !  
 If I prefer remaining my poor self,  
 I say so not in self-dispraise but praise.  
 If I'm a Shakspeare, let the well alone ;  
 Why should I try to be what now I am ?  
 If I'm no Shakspeare, as too probable, —  
 His power and consciousness and self-delight  
 And all we want in common, shall I find —  
 Trying forever ? while on points of taste  
 Wherewith, to speak it humbly, he and I  
 Are dowered alike — I'll ask you, I or he,  
 Which in our two lives realizes most ?  
 Much, he imagined : somewhat, I possess.  
 He had the imagination ; stick to that !  
 Let him say, " In the face of my soul's works  
 Your world is worthless and I touch it not  
 Lest I should wrong them" — I'll withdraw my plea.  
 But does he say so ? look upon his life !  
 Himself, who only can, gives judgment there.  
 He leaves his towers and gorgeous palaces  
 To build the trimmest house in Stratford town ;  
 Saves money, spends it, owns the worth of things,  
 Giulio Romano's pictures, Dowland's lute ;  
 Enjoys a show, respects the puppets too,  
 And none more, had he seen its entry once,  
 Than " Pandulph, of fair Milan cardinal."  
 Why then should I who play that personage,  
 The very Pandulph Shakspeare's fancy made,  
 Be told that had the poet chanced to start  
 From where I stand now (some degree like mine  
 Being just the goal he ran his race to reach)  
 He would have run the whole race back, forsooth,  
 And left being Pandulph, to begin write plays ?  
 Ah, the earth's best can be but the earth's best !  
 Did Shakspeare live, he could but sit at home  
 And get himself in dreams the Vatican,  
 Greek busts, Venetian paintings, Roman walls,  
 And English books, none equal to his own.  
 Which I read, bound in gold (he never did).

—Terni's fall, Naples' bay, and Gothard's top—  
 Eh, friend? I could not fancy one of these;  
 But, as I pour this claret, there they are:  
 I've gained them—crossed St. Gothard last July  
 With ten mules to the carriage and a bed  
 Slung inside; is my hap the worse for that?  
 We want the same things, Shakspeare and myself,  
 And what I want, I have: he, gifted more,  
 Could fancy he too had it when he liked,  
 But not so thoroughly that, if fate allowed,  
 He would not have it also in my sense.  
 We play one game; I send the ball aloft  
 No less adroitly that of fifty strokes  
 Scarce five go o'er the wall so wide and high  
 Which sends them back to me: I wish and get.  
 He struck balls higher and with better skill,  
 But at a poor fence level with his head.  
 And hit—his Stratford house, a coat of arms,  
 Successful dealings in his grain and wool:  
 While I receive heaven's incense in my nose,  
 And style myself the cousin of Queen Bess.  
 Ask him, if this life's all, who wins the game?

Believe—and our whole argument breaks up.  
 Enthusiasm's the best thing, I repeat;  
 Only, we can't command it; fire and life  
 Are all, dead matter's nothing, we agree:  
 And be it a mad dream or God's very breath,  
 The fact's the same,—belief's fire, once in us,  
 Makes of all else mere stuff to show itself:  
 We penetrate our life with such a glow  
 As fire lends wood and iron—this turns steel,  
 That burns to ash—all's one, fire proves its power  
 For good or ill, since men call flare success.  
 But paint a fire, it will not therefore burn.  
 Light one in me, I'll find it food enough!  
 Why, to be Luther—that's a life to lead,  
 Incomparably better than my own.  
 He comes, reclaims God's earth for God, he says.  
 Sets up God's rule again by simple means,  
 Re-opens a shut book, and all is done.  
 He flared out in the flaring of mankind;  
 Such Luther's luck was: how shall such be mine?  
 If he succeeded, nothing's left to do:  
 And if he did not altogether—well,  
 Strauss is the next advance. All Strauss should be  
 I might be also. But to what result?  
 He looks upon no future: Luther did.  
 What can I gain on the denying side?  
 Ice makes no conflagration. State the facts,  
 Read the text right, emancipate the world—  
 The emancipated world enjoys itself  
 With scarce a thank-you: Blougram told it first  
 It could not owe a farthing,—not to him  
 More than Saint Paul! 'twould press its pay, you think?  
 Then add there's still that plaguy hundredth chance  
 Strauss may be wrong. And so a risk is run—  
 For what gain? not for Luther's, who secured  
 A real heaven in his heart throughout his life.  
 Supposing death a little altered things.

"Ay, but since really you lack faith," you cry,  
 "You run the same risk really on all sides,  
 In cool indifference as bold unbelief.  
 As well be Strauss as swing 'twixt Paul and him.  
 It's not worth having, such imperfect faith,  
 No more available to do faith's work  
 Than unbelief like mine. Whole faith, or none!"

Softly, my friend! I must dispute that point.  
 Once own the use of faith, I'll find you faith.  
 We're back on Christian ground. You call for faith:  
 I show you doubt, to prove that faith exists.  
 The more of doubt, the stronger faith, I say,  
 If faith o'ercomes doubt. How I know it does?  
 By life and man's free will, God gave for that!  
 To mould life as we choose it, shows our choice:  
 That's our one act, the previous work's his own.  
 You criticise the soil? it reared this tree —  
 This broad life and whatever fruit it bears!  
 What matter though I doubt at every pore,  
 Head-doubts, heart-doubts, doubts at my fingers' ends,  
 Doubts in the trivial work of every day,  
 Doubts at the very bases of my soul  
 In the grand moments when she probes herself —  
 If finally I have a life to show,  
 The thing I did, brought out in evidence  
 Against the thing done to me underground  
 By hell and all its brood, for aught I know?  
 I say, whence sprang this? shows it faith, or doubt?  
 All's doubt in me; where's break of faith in this?  
 It is the idea, the feeling and the love,  
 God means mankind should strive for and show forth  
 Whatever be the process to that end, —  
 And not historic knowledge, logic sound,  
 And metaphysical acumen, sure!  
 "What think ye of Christ," friend? when all's done and said,  
 Like you this Christianity, or not?  
 It may be false, but will you wish it true?  
 Has it your vote to be so if it can?  
 Trust you an instinct silenced long ago  
 That will break silence and enjoin you love  
 What mortified philosophy is hoarse,  
 And all in vain, with bidding you despise?  
 If you desire faith — then you've faith enough:  
 What else seeks God — nay, what else seek ourselves?  
 You form a notion of me, we'll suppose,  
 On hearsay; it's a favorable one:  
 "But still (you add), "there was no such good man,  
 Because of contradiction in the facts.  
 One proves, for instance, he was born in Rome,  
 This Blougram; yet throughout the tales of him  
 I see he figures as an Englishman."  
 Well, the two things are reconcilable.  
 But would I rather you discovered that,  
 Subjoining — "Still, what matter though they be?  
 Blougram concerns me naught, born here or there."

Pure faith indeed — you know not what you ask!  
 Naked belief in God the Omnipotent,

Omniscient, Omnipresent, sears too much  
 The sense of conscious creatures to be borne.  
 It were the seeing him, no flesh shall dare.  
 Some think, Creation's meant to show him forth :  
 I say it's meant to hide him all it can,  
 And that's what all the blessed evil's for.  
 Its use in Time is to environ us,  
 Our breath, our drop of dew, with shield enough  
 Against that sight till we can bear its stress  
 Under a vertical sun, the exposed brain  
 And lidless eye and disemprisoned heart  
 Less certainly would wither up at once  
 Than mind, confronted with the truth of him.  
 But time and earth case-harden us to live .  
 The feeblest sense is trusted most ; the child  
 Feels God a moment, ichors o'er the place,  
 Plays on, and grows to be a man like us  
 With me, faith means perpetual unbelief  
 Kept quiet like the snake 'neath Michael's foot  
 Who stands calm just because he feels it writhe.  
 Or, if that's too ambitious, — here's my box —  
 I need the excitation of a pinch  
 Threatening the torpor of the inside-nose  
 Nigh on the imminent sneeze that never comes.  
 "Leave it in peace !" advise the simple folk :  
 Make it aware of peace by itching-fits,  
 Say I — let doubt occasion still more faith !

You'll say, once all believed, man, woman, child,  
 In that dear middle-age these noodles praise.  
 How you'd exult if I could put you back  
 Six hundred years, blot out cosmogony,  
 Geology, ethnology, what not  
 {Greek endings, each the little passing-bell  
 That signifies some faith's about to die).  
 And set you square with Genesis again !  
 When such a traveller told you his last news,  
 He saw the ark a-top of Ararat  
 But did not climb there since 'twas getting dusk  
 And robber-bands infest the mountain's foot !  
 How should you feel, I ask, in such an age,  
 How act ? As other people felt and did ,  
 With soul more blank than this decanter's knob,  
 Believe — and yet lie, kill, rob, fornicate  
 Full in belief's face, like the beast you'd be !

No, when the fight begins within himself,  
 A man's worth something. God stoops o'er his head,  
 Satan looks up between his feet — both tug —  
 He's left, himself, i' the middle : the soul wakes  
 And grows. Prolong that battle through his life !  
 Never leave growing till the life to come !  
 Here we've got callous to the Virgin's winks  
 That used to puzzle people wholesomely :  
 Men have outgrown the shame of being folk.  
 What are the laws of nature, not to bend  
 If the Church bid them ? — brother Newman asks.  
 Up with the Immaculate Conception, then —  
 On to the rack with faith ! — is my advice.

Will not that hurry us upon our knees,  
 Knocking our breasts, "It can't be — yet it shall !  
 Who am I, the worm, to argue with my Pope ?  
 Low things confound the high things !" and so forth.  
 That's better than acquitting God with grace,  
 As some folks do. He's tried — no case is proved,  
 Philosophy is lenient — He may go !

You'll say, the old system's not so obsolete  
 But men believe still : ay, but who and where ?  
 King Boimba's lazzaroni foster yet  
 The sacred flame, so Antonelli writes ;  
 But even of these, what ragamuffin-saint  
 Believes God watches him continually,  
 As he believes in fire that it will burn,  
 Or rain that it will drench him ? Break fire's law,  
 Sin against rain, although the penalty  
 Be just a singe or soaking ? "No," he smiles ;  
 "Those laws are laws that can enforce themselves."

The sum of all is — yes, my doubt is great,  
 My faith's still greater, then my faith's enough.  
 I have read much, thought much, experienced much,  
 Yet would die rather than avow my fear  
 The Naples' liquefaction may be false,  
 When set to happen by the palace-cloek  
 According to the clouds or dinner-time.  
 I hear you recommend, I might at least  
 Eliminate, declassify my faith  
 Since I adopt it ; keeping what I must  
 And leaving what I can — such points as this.  
 I won't — that is, I can't throw one away.  
 Supposing there's no truth in what I hold  
 About the need of trial to man's faith,  
 Still, when you bid me purify the same,  
 To such a process I discern no end.  
 Clearing off one exeresence to see two,  
 There's ever a next in size, now grown as big,  
 That meets the knife : I cut and cut again !  
 First cut the Liquefaction, what comes last  
 But Fichte's clever cut at God himself ?  
 Experimentalize on sacred things !  
 I trust nor hand nor eye nor heart nor brain  
 To stop betimes : they all get drunk alike.  
 The first step, I am master not to take.

You'd find the cutting-process to your taste  
 As much as leaving growths of lies unpruned,  
 Nor see more danger in it, — you retort.  
 Your taste's worth mine ; but my taste proves more wise  
 When we consider that the steadfast hold  
 On the extreme end of the chain of faith  
 Gives all the advantage, makes the difference  
 With the rough purblind mass we seek to rule :  
 We are their lords, or they are free of us,  
 Just as we tighten or relax our hold.  
 So, other matters equal, we'll revert  
 To the first problem — which, if solved my way  
 And thrown into the balance, turns the scale —

How we may lead a comfortable life,  
How suit our luggage to the cabin's size.

Of course you are remarking all this time  
How narrowly and grossly I view life,  
Respect the creature-comforts, care to rule  
The masses, and regard complacently  
"The cabin," in our old phrase. Well, I do.  
I act for, talk for, live for this world now,  
As this world prizes action, life, and talk :  
No prejudice to what next world may prove,  
Whose new laws and requirements, my best pledge  
To observe then, is that I observe these now,  
Shall do hereafter what I do meanwhile.  
Let us concede (gratuitously though)  
Next life relieves the soul of body, yields  
Pure spiritual enjoyment : well, my friend,  
Why lose this life if the mean time, since its use  
May be to make the next life more intense ?

Do you know, I have often had a dream  
(Work it up in your next month's article)  
Of man's poor spirit in its progress, still  
Losing true life forever and a day  
Through ever trying to be and ever being —  
In the evolution of successive spheres —  
*Before* its actual sphere and place of life,  
Half way into the next, which having reached,  
It shoots with corresponding foolery  
Half way into the next still, on and off !  
As when a traveller, bound from North to South,  
Scouts fur in Russia ; what's its use in France ?  
In France spurns flannel ; where's its need in Spain ?  
In Spain drops cloth, too cumbersome for Algiers !  
Linen goes next, and last the skin itself,  
A superfluity at Timbuctoo.  
When, through his journey, was the fool at ease ?  
I'm at ease now, friend ; worldly in this world,  
I take and like its way of life ; I think  
My brothers, who administer the means,  
Live better for my comfort — that's good too ;  
And God, if he pronounce upon such life,  
Approves my service, which is better still.  
If he keep silence, — why, for you or me  
Or that brute-beast pulled-up in to-day's "Times,"  
What odds is't, save to ourselves, what life we lead ?

You meet me at this issue : you declare, —  
All special-pleading done with, truth is truth,  
And justifies itself by undreamed ways.  
You don't fear but it's better, if we doubt,  
To say so, act up to our truth perceived  
However feebly. Do then, — act away !  
'Tis there I'm on the watch for you. How one acts  
Is, both of us agree, our chief concern :  
And how you'll act is what I fain would see  
If, like the candid person you appear,  
You dare to make the most of your life's scheme  
As I of mine, live up to its full law



Since there's no higher law that counterchecks.  
 Put natural religion to the test  
 You've just demolished the revealed with — quick,  
 Down to the root of all that checks your will,  
 All prohibition to lie, kill, and thief,  
 Or even to be an atheistic priest !  
 Suppose a pricking to incontinence —  
 Philosophers deduce you chastity  
 Or shame, from just the fact that at the first  
 Whoso embraced a woman in the field,  
 Threw club down and forewent his brains beside,  
 So, stood a ready victim in the reach  
 Of any brother-savage, club in hand ;  
 Hence saw the use of going out of sight  
 In wood or cave to prosecute his loves :  
 I read this in a French book t'other day.  
 Does law so analyzed coerce you much ?  
 Oh, men spin clouds of fuzz where matters end,  
 But you who reach where the first thread begins,  
 You'll soon cut that ! — which means you can, but won't  
 Through certain instincts, blind, unreasoned-out,  
 You dare not set aside, you can't tell why,  
 But there they are, and so you let them rule.  
 Then, friend, you seem as much a slave as I,  
 A liar, conscious coward and hypocrite,  
 Without the good the slave expects to get,  
 In case he has a master after all !  
 You own your instincts ? why, what else do I,  
 Who want, am made for, and must have a God  
 Ere I can be aught, do aught ? — no mere name  
 Want, but the true thing with what proves its truth,  
 To wit, a relation from that thing to me,  
 Touching from head to foot — which touch I feel,  
 And with it take the rest, this life of ours !  
 I live my life here : yours you dare not live.

— Not as I state it, who (you please subjoin)  
 Disfigure such a life and call it names,  
 While, to your mind, remains another way  
 For simple men : knowledge and power have rights.  
 But ignorance and weakness have rights too.  
 There needs no crucial effort to find truth  
 If here or there or anywhere about :  
 We ought to turn each side, try hard and see,  
 And if we can't, be glad we've earned at least  
 The right, by one laborious proof the more,  
 To graze in peace earth's pleasant pasturage.  
 Men are not angels, neither are they brutes :  
 Something we may see, all we cannot see.  
 What need of lying ? I say, I see all.  
 And swear to each detail the most minute  
 In what I think a Pan's face — you, mere cloud :  
 I swear I hear him speak and see him wink,  
 For fear, if once I drop the emphasis,  
 Mankind may doubt there's any cloud at all.  
 You take the simple life — ready to see,  
 Willing to see (for no cloud's worth a face) —  
 And leaving quiet what no strength can move,  
 And which, who bids you move ? who has the right ?

I bid you ; but you are God's sheep, not mine :  
 " *Pastor est tui Dominus.*" You find  
 In this the pleasant pasture of our life  
 Much you may eat without the least offence,  
 Much you don't eat because your maw objects,  
 Much you would eat but that your fellow-flock  
 Open great eyes at you, and even butt,  
 And thereupon you like your mates so well  
 You cannot please yourself, offending them ;  
 Though when they seem exorbitantly sheep,  
 You weigh your pleasure with their butts and bleats  
 And strike the balance. Sometimes certain fears  
 Restrain you, real checks since you find them so ;  
 Sometimes you please yourself and nothing checks :  
 And thus you graze through life with not one lie,  
 And like it best.

But do you, in truth's name ?  
 If so, you beat — which means you are not I —  
 Who needs must make earth mine and feed my fill  
 Not simply unbutted at, unbickered with,  
 But motioned to the velvet of the sward  
 By those obsequious wethers' very selves.  
 Look at me, sir ; my age is double yours :  
 At yours, I knew beforehand, so enjoyed,  
 What now I should be — as, permit the word,  
 I pretty well imagine your whole range  
 And stretch of tether twenty years to come.  
 We have both minds and bodies much alike :  
 In truth's name, don't you want my bishopric,  
 My daily bread, my influence and my state ?  
 You're young, I'm old, you must be old one day ;  
 Will you find then, as I do hour by hour,  
 Women their lovers kneel to, who cut curls  
 From your fat lap-dog's ear to grace a brooch —  
 Dukes, who petition just to kiss your ring —  
 With much beside you know or may conceive ?  
 Suppose we die to-night : well, here am I,  
 Such were my gains, life bore this fruit to me,  
 While writing all the same my articles  
 On music, poetry, the fictile vase  
 Found at Albano, chess, Anacreon's Greek.  
 But you — the highest honor in your life,  
 The thing you'll crown yourself with, all your days,  
 Is — dining here and drinking this last glass  
 I pour you out in sight of amity  
 Before we part forever. Of your power  
 And social influence, worldly worth in short,  
 Judge what's my estimation by the fact —  
 I do not condescend to enjoin, beseech,  
 Hint secrecy on one of all these words !  
 You're shrewd and know that should you publish one  
 The world would brand the lie — my enemies first,  
 Who'd sneer — " the bishop's an arch-hypocrite  
 And knave perhaps, but not so frank a fool."'  
 Whereas I should not dare for both my ears  
 Breathe one such syllable, smile one such smile,  
 Before the chaplain who reflects myself —  
 My shade's so much more potent than your flesh.

What's your reward, self-abnegating friend ?  
 Stood you confessed of those exceptional  
 And privileged great natures that dwarf mine —  
 A zealot with a mad ideal in reach,  
 A poet just about to print his ode,  
 A statesman with a scheme to stop this war,  
 An artist whose religion is his art —  
 I should have nothing to object : such men  
 Carry the fire, all things grow warm to them,  
 Their druggets' worth my purple, they beat me.  
 But you — you're just as little those as I —  
 You, Gigadibs, who, thirty years of age,  
 Write stately for Blackwood's Magazine,  
 Believe you see two points in Hamlet's soul  
 Unseized by the Gerimans yet — which view you'll print —  
 Meantime the best you have to show being still  
 That lively lightsome article we took  
 Almost for the true Dickens, — what's its name ?  
 " The Slum and Cellar, or Whitechapel life  
 Linned after dark ! " it made me laugh, I know,  
 And pleased a month, and brought you in ten pounds.  
 — Success I recognize and compliment,  
 And therefore give you, if you choose, three words  
 (The card and pencil-scratch is quite enough)  
 Which whether here, in Dublin or New York,  
 Will get you, prompt as at my eyebrow's wink,  
 Such terms as never you aspired to get  
 In all our own reviews and some not ours.  
 Go write your lively sketches ! be the first  
 " Blougram, or the Eccentric Confidence " —  
 Or better simply say, " The Outward-bound."  
 Why, men as soon would throw it in my teeth  
 As copy and quote the infamy chalked broad  
 About me on the church-door opposite.  
 You will not wait for that experience though,  
 I fancy, howsoever you decide,  
 To discontinue — not detesting, not  
 Defaming, but at least — despising me !

Over his wine so smiled and talked his hour  
 Sylvester Blougram, styled *in partibus*  
*Episcopus, nec non* — (the dence knows what  
 It's changed to by our novel hierarchy)  
 With Gigadibs the literary man,  
 Who played with spoons, explored his plate's design,  
 And ranged the olive-stones about its edge,  
 While the great bishop rolled him out a mind  
 Long rumped, till creased consciousness lay smooth.

For Blougram, he believed, say, half he spoke.  
 The other portion, as he shaped it thus  
 For argumentatory purposes,  
 He felt his foe was foolish to dispute.  
 Some arbitrary accidental thoughts  
 That crossed his mind, amusing because new,  
 He chose to represent as fixtures there,  
 Invariable convictions (such they seemed

Beside his interlocutor's loose cards  
 Flung daily down, and not the same way twice)  
 While certain hell-deep instincts, man's weak tongue  
 Is never bold to utter in their truth  
 Because styled hell-deep ('tis an old mistake  
 To place hell at the bottom of the earth)  
 He ignored these, — not having in readiness  
 Their nomenclature and philosophy :  
 He said true things, but called them by wrong names.  
 "On the whole," he thought, "I justify myself  
 On every point where cavillers like this  
 Oppugn my life : he tries one kind of fence,  
 I close, he's worsted, that's enough for him.  
 He's on the ground : if ground should break away  
 I take my stand on, there's a firmer yet  
 Beneath it, both of us may sink and reach.  
 His ground was over mine and broke the first :  
 So, let him sit with me this many a year !"

He did not sit five minutes. Just a week  
 Sufficed his sudden healthy vehemence.  
 Something had struck him in the "Outward-bound"  
 Another way than Blougram's purpose was :  
 And having bought, not cabin-furniture  
 But settler's implements (enough for three)  
 And started for Australia — there, I hope,  
 By this time he has tested his first plough,  
 And studied his last chapter of Saint John.

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MR. SLUDGE, "THE MEDIUM."

Now, don't, sir ! Don't expose me ! Just this once !  
 This was the first and only time, I'll swear, —  
 Look at me, — see, I kneel, — the only time,  
 I swear, I ever cheated, — yes, by the soul  
 Of Her who hears — (your sainted mother, sir !)  
 All, except this last accident, was truth —  
 This little kind of slip ! — and even this,  
 It was your own wine, sir, the good champagne  
 (I took it for Catawba, you're so kind),  
 Which put the folly in my head !

"Get up ?"  
 You still inflict on me that terrible face ?  
 You show no mercy ? — Not for Her dear sake,  
 The sainted spirit's, whose soft breath even now  
 Blows on my cheek — (don't you feel something, sir ?)  
 You'll tell ?

Go tell, then ! Who the Devil cares  
 What such a rowdy chooses to . . . Aie — aie — aie !  
 Please, sir ! your thumbs are through my windpipe, sir !  
 Ch — ch !



Mr. Sludge, "The Medium." — Page 228.



Well, sir, I hope you've done it now !  
 O Lord ! I little thought, sir, yesterday,  
 When your departed mother spoke those words  
 Of peace through me, and moved you, sir, so much,  
 You gave me—(very kind it was of you)  
 These shirt-studs—(better take them back again,  
 Please, sir)—yes, little did I think so soon  
 A trifle of trick, all through a glass too much  
 Of his own champagne, would change my best of friends  
 Into an angry gentleman !

Though, 'twas wrong.  
 I don't contest the point ; your anger's just :  
 Whatever put such folly in my head,  
 I know 'twas wicked of me. There's a thick  
 Dusk undeveloped spirit (I've observed)  
 Owes me a grudge—a negro's, I should say,  
 Or else an Irish emigrant's ; yourself  
 Explained the case so well last Sunday, sir,  
 When we had summoned Franklin to clear up  
 A point about those shares i' the telegraph :  
 Ay, and he swore . . . or might it be Tom Paine ? . . .  
 Thumping the table close by where I crouched,  
 He'd do me soon a mischief : that's come true !  
 Why, now your face clears ! I was sure it would !  
 Then, this one time . . . don't take your hand away,  
 Through yours I surely kiss your mother's hand . . .  
 You'll promise to forgive me ?—or, at least,  
 Tell nobody of this ? Consider, sir !  
 What harm can mercy do ? Would but the shade  
 Of the venerable dead—one just vouchsafe  
 A rap or tip ! What bit of paper's here ?  
 Suppose we take a pencil, let her write,  
 Make the least sign, she urges on her child  
 Forgiveness ? There now ! Eh ? Oh ! 'Twas your foot,  
 And not a natural creak, sir ?

Answer, then !  
 Once, twice, thrice . . . see, I'm waiting to say " thrice !"  
 All to no use ? No sort of hope for me ?  
 It's all to post to Greeley's newspaper ?

What ? If I told you all about the tricks ?  
 Upon my soul !—the whole truth, and naught else,  
 And how there's been some falsehood—for your part,  
 Will you engage to pay my passage out,  
 And hold your tongue until I'm safe on board ?  
 England's the place, not Boston—no offence !  
 I see what makes you hesitate : don't fear !  
 I mean to change my trade and cheat no more,  
 Yes, this time really it's upon my soul !  
 Be my salvation !—under heaven, of course.  
 I'll tell some queer things. Sixty Vs must do.  
 A trifle, though, to start with ! We'll refer  
 The question to this table ?

How you're changed !  
 Then split the difference ; thirty more, we'll say.  
 Ay, but you leave my presents ! Else I'll swear

'Twas all through those : you wanted yours again,  
 So, picked a quarrel with me, to get them back!  
 Tread on a worm, it turns, sir! If I turn,  
 Your fault! 'Tis you'll have forced me! Who's obliged  
 To give up life yet try no self-defence?  
 At all events, I'll run the risk. Eh?

Done!

May I sit, sir? This dear old table, now!  
 Please, sir, a parting egg-nogg and cigar!  
 I've been so happy with you! Nice stuffed chairs,  
 And sympathetic sideboards; what an end  
 To all the instructive evenings! (It's alright.)  
 Well, nothing lasts, as Bacon came and said.  
 Here goes, — but keep your temper, or I'll scream!

Fol-lol-the-rido-liddle-iddle-ol!  
 You see, sir, it's your own fault more than mine;  
 It's all your fault, you curious gentlefolk!  
 You're prigs, — excuse me, — like to look so spry,  
 So clever, while you cling by half a claw  
 To the perch whereon you puff yourselves at roost,  
 Such piece of self-conceit as serves for perch  
 Because you chose it, so it must be safe.  
 Oh, otherwise you're sharp enough! You spy  
 Who slips, who slides, who holds by help of wing,  
 Wanting real foothold, — who can't keep upright  
 On the other perch, your neighbor chose, not you:  
 There's no outwitting you respecting him!  
 For instance, men love money — that, you know —  
 And what men do to gain it: well, suppose  
 A poor lad, say a help's son in your house,  
 Listening at keyholes, hears the company  
 Talk grand of dollars, V-notes, and so forth,  
 How hard they are to get, how good to hold,  
 How much they buy, — if, suddenly, in pops he —  
 "I've got a V-note!" — what do you say to him?  
 What's your first word which follows your last kick?  
 "Where did you steal it, rascal?" That's because  
 He finds you, fain would fool you, off your perch,  
 Not on the special piece of nonsense, sir,  
 Elected your parade-ground: let him try  
 Lies to the end of the list, — "He picked it up,  
 His cousin died and left it him by will,  
 The President flung it to him, riding by,  
 An actress trucked it for a curl of his hair,  
 He dreamed of luck and found his shoe enriched,  
 He dug up clay, and out of clay made gold" —  
 How would you treat such possibilities?  
 Would not you, prompt, investigate the case  
 With cow-hide? "Lies, lies, lies," you'd shout: and why?  
 Which of the stories might not prove mere truth?  
 This last, perhaps, that clay was turned to coin!  
 Let's see, now, give him me to speak for him!  
 How many of your rare philosophers,  
 In plaguy books I've had to dip into,  
 Believed gold could be made thus, saw it made,  
 And made it? Oh, with such philosophers  
 You're on your best behavior! While the iad —



With him, in a trice, you settle likelihoods,  
Nor doubt a moment how he got his prize :  
In his case, you hear, judge, and execute,  
All in a breath : so would most men of sense.

But let the same lad hear you talk as grand  
At the same keyhole, you and company,  
Of signs and wonders, the invisible world ;  
How wisdom scouts our vulgar unbelief  
More than our vulgarest credulity ;  
How good men have desired to see a ghost,  
What Johnson used to say, what Wesley did,  
Mother Goose thought, and fiddle-diddle-dee : —  
If he then break in with, "Sir, I saw a ghost!"  
Ah, the ways change! He finds you perched and prim ;  
It's a conceit of yours that ghosts may be :  
There's no talk now of cow-hide. "Tell it out!  
Don't fear us! Take your time and recollect!  
Sit down first ; try a glass of wine, my boy!  
And, David, (is not that your Christian name?)  
Of all things, should this happen twice, — it may, —  
Be sure, while fresh in mind, you let us know!"  
Does the boy blunder, blurt out this, blab that,  
Break down in the other, as beginners will?  
All's candor, all's considerateness, — "No haste!  
Pause and collect yourself! We understand!  
That's the bad memory, or the natural shock,  
Or the unexplained *phenomena!*"

Egad,

The boy takes heart of grace ; finds, never fear,  
The readiest way to ope your own heart wide,  
Show — what I call your peacock-perch, pet post  
To strut, and spread the tail, and squawk upon!  
"Just as you thought, much as you might expect!  
There be more things in heaven and earth, Horatio," . . .  
And so on. Shall not David take the hint,  
Grow bolder, stroke you down at quickened rate?  
If he ruffle a feather, it's "Gently, patiently!  
Manifestations are so weak at first!  
Doubting, moreover, kills them, cuts all short,  
Cures with a vengeance!"

There, sir, that's your style!

You and your boy — such pains bestowed on him,  
Or any headpiece of the average worth,  
To teach, say, Greek, would perfect him apace,  
Make him a Person ("Porson?" thank you, sir!)  
Much more, proficient in the art of lies.  
You never leave the lesson! Fire alight,  
Catch you permitting it to die! You've friends ;  
There's no withholding knowledge, — least from those  
Apt to look elsewhere for their soul's supply :  
Why should not you parade your lawful prize?  
Who finds a picture, digs a medal up,  
Hits on a first edition, — he henceforth  
Gives it his name, grows notable : how much more  
Who ferrets out a "medium"? "David's yours,  
You highly favored man? Then, pity souls

Less privileged! Allow us share your luck!"  
 So, David holds the circle, rules the roast,  
 Narrates the vision, peeps in the glass ball,  
 Sets-to the spirit-writing, hears the raps,  
 As the case may be.

Now mark! To be precise,—  
 Though I say, "lies" all these, at this first stage,  
 'Tis just for science' sake: I call such grubs  
 By the name of what they'll turn to, dragonflies.  
 Strictly, it's what good people style untruth;  
 But yet, so far, not quite the full-grown thing:  
 It's fancying, fable-making, nonsense-work,—  
 What never meant to be so very bad,—  
 The knack of story-telling, brightening up  
 Each dull old bit of fact that drops its shine.  
 One does see somewhat when one shuts one's eyes,  
 If only spots and streaks; tables do tip  
 In the oddest way of themselves: and pens, good Lord,  
 Who knows if you drive them or they drive you?  
 'Tis but a foot in the water and out again;  
 Not that duck-under which decides your dive.  
 Note this, for it's important: listen why.

I'll prove, you push on David till he dives  
 And ends the shivering. Here's your circle, now:  
 Two-thirds of them, with heads like you their host,  
 Turn up their eyes, and cry, as you expect,  
 "Lord, who'd have thought it!" But there's always one  
 Looks wise, compassionately smiles, submits  
 "Of your veracity no kind of doubt,  
 But—do you feel so certain of that boy's?  
 Really, I wonder! I confess myself  
 More chary of my faith!" That's galling, sir!  
 What! he the investigator, he the sage,  
 When all's done? Then, you just have shut your eyes,  
 Opened your mouth, and gulped down David whole,  
 You! Terrible were such catastrophe!  
 So, evidence is redoubled, doubled again,  
 And doubled besides; once more, "He heard, we heard,  
 You and they heard, your mother and your wife,  
 Your children and the stranger in your gates:  
 Did they, or did they not?" So much for him,  
 The black sheep, guest without the wedding-garb,  
 And doubting Thomas! Now's your turn to crow:  
 "He's kind to think you such a fool: Sludge cheats?  
 Leave you alone to take precautions!"

Straight

The rest join chorus. Thomas stands abashed,  
 Sips silent some such beverage as this,  
 Considers if it be harder, shutting eyes  
 And gulping David in good fellowship,  
 Than going elsewhere, getting, in exchange,  
 With no egg-nogg to lubricate the food,  
 Some just as tough a morsel. Over the way,  
 Holds Captain Sparks his court: is it better there?  
 Have not you hunting-stories, scalping-scenes,  
 And Mexican War exploits to swallow plump  
 If you'd be free o' the stove-side, rocking-chair,  
 And trio of affable daughters?

Doubt succumbs !

Victory ! All your circle's yours again !  
 Out of the clubbing of submissive wits,  
 David's performance rounds, each clink gets patched,  
 Every protrusion of a point's filed fine,  
 All's fit to set a-rolling round the world,  
 And then return to David finally,  
 Lies seven-feet thick about his first half-inch.  
 Here's a choice birth o' the supernatural,  
 Poor David's pledged to ! You've employed no tool  
 That laws exclaim at, save the Devil's own,  
 Yet screwed him into henceforth gulling you  
 To the top o' your bent, — all out of one half-lie !

You hold, if there's one half or a hundredth part  
 Of a lie, that's his fault, — his be the penalty !  
 I dare say ! You'd prove firmer in his place ?  
 You'd find the courage, — that first flurry over,  
 That mild bit of romancing-work at end, —  
 To interpose with " It gets serious, this ;  
 Must stop here. Sir, I saw no ghost at all.  
 Inform your friends I made . . . well, fools of them,  
 And found you ready made. I've lived in clover  
 These three weeks : take it out in kicks of me !"  
 I doubt it. Ask your conscience ! Let me know,  
 Twelve months hence, with how few embellishments  
 You've told almighty Boston of this passage  
 Of arms between us, your first taste o' the foil  
 From Sludge who could not fence, sir ! Sludge, your boy !  
 I lied, sir, — there ! I got up from my gorge  
 On offal in the gutter, and preferred  
 Your canvas-backs : I took their carver's size,  
 Measured his modicum of intelligence,  
 Tickled him on the cockles of his heart  
 With a raven feather, and next week found myself  
 Sweet and clean, dining daintily, dizened smart,  
 Set on a stool buttressed by ladies' knees,  
 Every soft smiler calling me her pet,  
 Encouraging my story to uncoil  
 And creep out from its hole, inch after inch,  
 " How last night, I no sooner snug in bed,  
 Tucked up, just as they left me, — than came raps !  
 While a light whisked" . . . " Shaped somewhat like a star ?"—  
 " Well, like some sort of stars, ma'am," — " So we thought !  
 And any voice ? Not yet ? Try hard next time,  
 If you can't hear a voice ; we think you may :  
 At least, the Pennsylvanian ' mediums ' did."  
 Oh, next time comes the voice ! " Just as we hoped !"  
 Are not the hoppers proud now, pleased, profuse  
 O' the natural acknowledgment ?

Of course !

So, off we push, illy-oh-yo, trim the boat,  
 On we sweep with a cat-ract ahead,  
 We're midway to the Horse-shoe : stop, who can,  
 The dance of bubbles gay about our prow !  
 Experiences become worth waiting for,  
 Spirits now speak up, tell their inmost mind,  
 And compliment the " medium " properly,

Concern themselves about his Sunday coat,  
 See rings on his hand with pleasure. Ask yourself  
 How you'd receive a course of treats like these !  
 Why, take the quietest hack and stall him up,  
 Cram him with corn a month, then out with him  
 Among his mates on a bright April morn,  
 With the turf to tread ; see if you find or no  
 A caper in him, if he bucks or bolts !  
 Much more a youth whose fancies sprout as rank  
 As toadstool-clump from melon-bed. 'Tis soon,  
 " Sirrah, you spirit, come, go, fetch and carry,  
 Read, write, rap, rub-a-dub, and hang yourself !"  
 I'm spared all further trouble ; all's arranged ;  
 Your circle does my business ; I may rave  
 Like an epileptic dervish in the books,  
 Foam, fling myself flat, rend my clothes to shreds ;  
 No matter : lovers, friends, and countrymen  
 Will lay down spiritual laws, read wrong things right  
 By the rule o' reverse. If Francis Verulam  
 Styles himself Bacon, spells the name beside  
 With a *y* and a *k*, says he drew breath in York,  
 Gave up the ghost in Wales when Cromwell reigned  
 (As, sir, we somewhat fear he was apt to say,  
 Before I found the useful book that knows),  
 Why, what harm's done ? The circle smiles apace,  
 " It was not Bacon, after all, do you see !  
 We understand ; the trick's but natural ;  
 Such spirits' individuality  
 Is hard to put in evidence : they incline  
 To gibe and jeer, these undeveloped sorts.  
 You see, their world's much like a jail broke loose,  
 While this of ours remains shut, bolted, barred,  
 With a single window to it. Sludge, our friend,  
 Serves as this window, whether thin or thick,  
 Or stained or stainless ; he's the medium-pane  
 Through which, to see us and be seen, they peep :  
 They crowd each other, hustle for a chance,  
 Tread on their neighbor's kibes, play tricks enough !  
 Does Bacon, tired of waiting, swerve aside ?  
 Up in his place jumps Barnum — ' I'm your man,  
 I'll answer you for Bacon ! ' Try once more ! "

Or else it's — " What's a ' medium ? ' He's a means,  
 Good, bad, indifferent, still the only means  
 Spirits can speak by ; he may misconceive,  
 Stutter, and stammer, — he's their Sludge and drudge.  
 Take him or leave him ; they must hold their peace,  
 Or else, put up with having knowledge strained  
 To half-expression through his ignorance.  
 Suppose, the spirit Beethoven wants to shed  
 New music he's brimful of ; why, he turns  
 The handle of this organ, grinds with Sludge,  
 And what he poured in at the mouth o' the mill  
 As a Thirty-third Sonata, (fancy now !)  
 Comes from the hopper as brand-new Sludge, naught else,  
 The Shakers' Hymn in G, with a natural F,  
 Or the ' Stars and Stripes ' set to consecutive fourths."

Sir, where's the scrape you did not help me through,

You that are wise? And for the fools, the folk  
 Who came to see,—the guests, (observe that word!)  
 Pray do you find guests criticise your wine,  
 Your furniture, your grammar, or your nose?  
 Then, why your "medium"? What's the difference?  
 Prove your Madeira red-ink and gamboge,—  
 Your Sludge, a cheat—then somebody's a goose  
 For vaunting both as genuine. "Guests!" Don't fear!  
 They'll make a wry face, not too much of that,  
 And leave you in your glory.

"No, sometimes  
 They doubt and say as much!" Ay, doubt they do!  
 And what's the consequence? "Of course they doubt"—  
 (You triumph) "that explains the hitch at once!  
 Doubt posed our 'medium,' puddled his pure mind;  
 He gave them back their rubbish: pitch chaff in,  
 Could flour come out o' the honest mill?" So, prompt  
 Applaud the faithful: cases flock in point,  
 "How, when a mocker willed a 'medium' once  
 Should name a spirit James whose name was George,  
 'James' cried the 'medium,'—'twas the test of truth!"  
 In short, a hit proves much, a miss proves more.  
 Does this convince? The better: does it fail?  
 Time for the double-shotted broadside, then—  
 The grand means, last resource. Look black and big!  
 "You style us idiots, therefore—why stop short?  
 Accomplices in rascality: this we hear  
 In our own house, from our invited guest  
 Found brave enough to outrage a poor boy  
 Exposed by our good faith! Have you been heard?  
 Now, then, hear us; one man's not quite worth twelve.  
 You see a cheat? Here's some twelve see an ass:  
 Excuse me if I calculate: good day!"  
 Out slinks the sceptic, all the laughs explode,  
 Sludge waves his hat in triumph!

Or—he don't.  
 There's something in real truth (explain who can!)  
 One casts a wistful eye at, like the horse  
 Who mopes beneath stuffed hay-racks and won't munch  
 Because he spies a corn-bag: hang that truth,  
 It spoils all dainties proffered in its place!  
 I've felt at times when, cockered, cosseted,  
 And coddled by the aforesaid company,  
 Bidden enjoy their bullying—never fear,  
 But o'er their shoulders spit at the flying man,—  
 I've felt a child; only, a fractious child  
 That, dandled soft by nurse, aunt, grandmother,  
 Who keep him from the kennel, sun, and wind,  
 Good fun and wholesome mud,—enjoined be sweet,  
 And comely and superior,—eyes askance  
 The ragged sons o' the gutter at their game,  
 Fain would be down with them i' the thick o' the filth,  
 Making dirt-pies, laughing free, speaking plain,  
 And calling granny the gray old cat she is.  
 I've felt a spite, I say, at you, at them,  
 Huggings and humbug—gnashed my teeth to mark  
 A decent dog pass! It's too bad, I say,  
 Ruining a soul so!

But what's "so," what's fixed,  
 Where may one stop? Nowhere! The cheating's nursed  
 Out of the lying, softly and surely spun  
 To just your length, sir! I'd stop soon enough:  
 But you're for progress. "All old, nothing new?  
 Only the usual talking through the mouth,  
 Or writing by the hand? I own, I thought  
 This would develop, grow demonstrable,  
 Make doubt absurd, give figures we might see,  
 Flowers we might touch. There's no one doubts you, Sludge!  
 You dream the dreams, you see the spiritual sights,  
 The speeches come in your head, beyond dispute.  
 Still, for the sceptics' sake, to stop all mouths,  
 We want some outward manifestation! — well,  
 The Pennsylvanians gained such; why not Sludge?  
 He may improve with time!"

Ay, that he may!  
 He sees his lot: there's no avoiding fate.  
 'Tis a trifle at first. "Eh, David? Did you hear?  
 You joggled the table, your foot caused the squeak,  
 This time you're . . . joking, are you not, my boy?" —  
 "N-n-no!" — and I'm done for, bought and sold henceforth.  
 The old good easy jog-trot way, the . . . eh?  
 The . . . not so very false, as falsehood goes,  
 The spinning out and drawing fine, you know, —  
 Really mere novel-writing of a sort,  
 Acting, or improvising, make-believe,  
 Surely not downright cheaterly, — any how,  
 'Tis done with and my lot cast; Cheat's my name:  
 The fatal dash of brandy in your tea  
 Has settled how you'll have the Souchong smack:  
 The caddy gives way to the dram-bottle.

Then, it's so cruel easy! Oh, those tricks  
 That can't be tricks, those feats by sleight of hand,  
 Clearly no common conjurer's! — no, indeed!  
 A conjurer? Choose me any craft i' the world  
 A man puts hand to; and with six mouths' pains,  
 I'll play you twenty tricks miraculous  
 To people untaught the trade. Have you seen glass blown,  
 Pipes pierced? Why, just this biscuit that I chip,  
 Did you ever watch a baker toss one flat  
 To the oven? Try and do it! Take my word,  
 Practise but half as much, while limbs are lithe,  
 To turn, shove, tilt a table, crack your joints,  
 Manage your feet, dispose your hands aright,  
 Work wires that twitch the curtains, play the glove  
 At end o' your slipper, — then put out the lights  
 And . . . there, there, all you want you'll get, I hope!  
 I found it slip, easy as an old shoe.

Now, lights on table again! I've done my part,  
 You take my place while I give thanks and rest.  
 "Well, Judge Humgruffin, what's your verdict, sir?  
 You, hardest head in the United States, —  
 Did you detect a cheat here? Wait! Let's see!  
 Just an experiment first, for candor's sake!  
 I'll try and cheat you, Judge! The table tilts:

Is it I that move it? Write! I'll press your hand:  
 Cry when I push, or guide your pencil, Judge!"  
 Sludge still triumphant! "That a rap, indeed?  
 That the real writing? Very like a whale!  
 Then, if, sir, you—a most distinguished man,  
 And, were the Judge not here, I'd say, . . . no matter!  
 Well, sir, if you fail, you can't take us in,—  
 There's little fear that Sludge will!"

Won't he, ma'am?  
 But what if our distinguished host, like Sludge,  
 Bade God bear witness that he played no trick,  
 While you believed that what produced the raps  
 Was just a certain child who died, you know,  
 And whose last breath you thought your lips had felt?  
 Eh? That's a capital point, ma'am: Sludge begins  
 At your entreaty with your dearest dead,  
 The little voice set lisping once again,  
 The tiny hand made feel for yours once more,  
 The poor lost image brought back, plain as dreams,  
 Which image, if a word had chanced recall,  
 The customary cloud would cross your eyes,  
 Your heart return the old tick, pay its pang!  
 A right mood for investigation, this!  
 One's at one's ease with Saul and Jonathan,  
 Pompey and Cæsar: but one's own lost child . . .  
 I wonder, when you heard the first clod drop  
 From the spadeful at the grave, did you feel free  
 To investigate who twitched your funeral scarf,  
 Or brushed your frounces? Then, it came of course  
 You should be stunned and stupid; then (how else?)  
 Your breath stopped with your blood, your brain struck work  
 But now, such causes fail of such effects,  
 All's changed,—the little voice begins afresh,  
 Yet you, calm, consequent, can test and try  
 And touch the truth. "Tests? Didn't the creature tell  
 Its nurse's name, and say it lived six years,  
 And rode a rocking-horse? Enough of tests!  
 Sludge never could learn that!"

He could not, eh?  
 You compliment him "Could not?" Speak for yourself!  
 I'd like to know the man I ever saw  
 Once,—never mind where, how, why, when,—once saw,  
 Of whom I do not keep some matter treasured  
 He'd swear I "could not" know, sagacious soul!  
 What? Do you live in this world's blow of blacks,  
 Palaver, gossipry, a single hour  
 Nor find one smut has settled on your nose,  
 Of a smut's worth, no more, no less?—one fact  
 Out of the drift of facts, whereby you learn  
 What some one was, somewhere, somewhen, somewhy?  
 You don't tell folk—"See what has stuck to me!  
 Judge Hungruffin, our most distinguished man,  
 Your uncle was a tailor, and your wife  
 Thought to have married Miggs, missed him, hit you!"—  
 Do you, sir, though you see him twice a week?  
 "No," you reply, "what use retelling it?  
 Why should I?" But, you see, one day you *should*.

Because one day there's much use, — when this fact  
 Brings you the Judge upon both gouty knees  
 Before the supernatural; proves that Sludge  
 Knows, as you say, a thing he "could not" know:  
 Will not Sludge thenceforth keep an outstretched face  
 The way the wind drives?

"Could not!" Look you now,  
 I'll tell you a story! There's a whiskered chap,  
 A foreigner, that teaches music here  
 And gets his bread, — knowing no better way.  
 He says, the fellow who informed of him  
 And made him fly his country and fall West,  
 Was a hunchback cobbler, sat, stitched soles, and sang,  
 In some outlandish place, the city Rome,  
 In a cellar by their Broadway, all day long;  
 Never asked questions, stopped to listen or look,  
 Nor lifted nose from lapstone; let the world  
 Roll round his three-legged stool, and news run in  
 The ears he hardly seemed to keep pricked up.  
 Well, that man went on Sundays, touched his pay,  
 And took his praise from government, you see;  
 For something like two dollars every week,  
 He'd engage tell you some one little thing  
 Of some one man, which led to many more  
 (Because one truth leads right to the world's end),  
 And make you that man's master — when he dined  
 And on what dish, where walked to keep his health,  
 And to what street. His trade was, throwing thus  
 His sense out, like an anteater's long tongue,  
 Soft, innocent, warm, moist, impassible,  
 And when 'twas crusted o'er with creatures — slick,  
 Their juice enriched his palate. "Could not Sludge!"  
 I'll go yet a step farther, and maintain,  
 Once the imposture plunged its proper depth  
 I' the rotten of your natures, all of you —  
 (If one's not mad nor drunk, and hardly then),  
 It's impossible to cheat — that's, be found out!  
 Go tell your brotherhood this first slip of mine,  
 All to-day's tale, how you detected Sludge,  
 Behaved unpleasantly, till he was fain confess,  
 And so has come to grief! You'll find, I think,  
 Why Sludge still snaps his fingers in your face.  
 There now, you've told them! What's their prompt reply?  
 "Sir, did that youth confess he had cheated me,  
 I'd disbelieve him. He may cheat at times;  
 That's in the 'medium'-nature, thus they're made,  
 Vain and vindictive, cowards, prone to scratch.  
 And so all cats are; still a cat's the beast  
 You coax the strange electric sparks from out,  
 By rubbing back its fur; not so a dog,  
 Nor lion, nor lamb: 'tis the cat's nature, sir!  
 Why not the dog's? Ask God, who made them beasts!  
 D've think the sound, the nicely balanced man  
 Like me" — (aside) — "like you yourself," — (aloud)  
 — "He's stuff to make a 'medium'?" Bless your soul,  
 'Tis these hysteric, hybrid half-and-halves,  
 Equivocal, worthless vermin yield the fire!  
 We must take such as we find them, 'ware their tricks,



Wanting their service. Sir, Sludge took in you —  
 How, I can't say, not being there to watch :  
 He was tried, was tempted by your easiness, —  
 He did not take in me !"

Thank you for Sludge !

I'm to be grateful to such patrons, eh,  
 When what you hear's my best word ? 'Tis a challenge :  
 "Snap at all strangers, half-tamed prairie-dog,  
 So you cower duly at your keeper's nod !  
 Cat, show what claws were made for, muffling them  
 Only to me ! Cheat others if you can,  
 Me, if you dare !" And, my wise sir, I dared —  
 Did cheat you first, made you cheat others next,  
 And had the help o' your vaunted manliness  
 To bully the incredulous. You used me ?  
 Have not I used you, taken full revenge,  
 Persuaded folk they knew not their own name,  
 And straight they'd own the error ! Who was the fool  
 When, to an awe-struck wide-eyed open-mouthed  
 Circle of sages, Sludge would introduce  
 Milton composing baby-rhymes, and Locke  
 Reasoning in gibberish, Homer writing Greek  
 In naughts and crosses, Asaph setting psalms  
 To crotchet and quaver ? I've made a spirit squeak  
 In sham voice for a minute, then outbroke  
 Bold in my own, defying the imbeciles —  
 Have copied some ghost's pothooks, half a page,  
 Then ended with my own scrawl undisguised.  
 "All right ! The ghost was merely using Sludge,  
 Suiting itself from his imperfect stock !"  
 Don't talk of gratitude to me ! For what ?  
 For being treated as a showman's ape,  
 Encouraged to be wicked and make sport,  
 Fret or sulk, grin or whimper, any mood  
 So long as the ape be in it and no man —  
 Because a nut pays every mood alike.  
 Curse your superior, superintending sort,  
 Who, since you hate smoke, send up boys that climb  
 To cure your chimney, bid a "medium" lie  
 To sweep you truth down ! Curse your women too,  
 Your insolent wives and daughters, that fire up  
 Or faint away if a male hand squeeze theirs,  
 Yet, to encourage Sludge, may play with Sludge  
 As only a "medium," only the kind of thing  
 They must humor, fondle . . . oh, to misconceive  
 Were too preposterous ! But I've paid them out !  
 They've had their wish — called for the naked truth,  
 And in she tripped, sat down, and bade them stare :  
 They had to blush a little and forgive !  
 "The fact is, children talk so ; in next world  
 All our conventions are reversed, — perhaps  
 Made light of : something like old prints, my dear !  
 The Judge has one, he brought from Italy,  
 A metropolis in the background, — o'er a bridge,  
 A team of trotting roadsters, — cheerful groups  
 Of wayside travellers, peasants at their work,  
 And, full in front, quite unconcerned, why not ?  
 Three nymphs conversing with a cavalier,

And never a rag among them : ' fine,' folk cry —  
 And heavenly manners seem not much unlike !  
 Let Sludge go on : we'll fancy it's in print !"  
 If such as came for wool, sir, went home shorn,  
 Where is the wrong I did them ? 'Twas their choice :  
 They tried the adventure, ran the risk, tossed up  
 And lost, as some one's sure to do in games ;  
 They fancied I was made to lose, — smoked glass  
 Useful to spy the sun through, spare their eyes :  
 And had I proved a red-hot iron plate  
 They thought to pierce, and, for their pains, grew blind,  
 Whose were the fault but theirs ? While, as things go,  
 Their loss amounts to gain, the more's the shame !  
 They've had their peep into the spirit-world,  
 And all this world may know it ! They've fed fat  
 Their self-conceit which else had starved : what chance  
 Save this, of cackling o'er a golden egg  
 And compassing distinction from the flock,  
 Friends of a feather ? Well, they paid for it,  
 And not prodigiously ; the price o' the play,  
 Not counting certain pleasant interludes,  
 Was scarce a vulgar play's worth. When you buy  
 The actor's talent, do you dare propose  
 For his soul beside ? Whereas, my soul you buy !  
 Sludge acts Macbeth, obliged to be Macbeth,  
 Or you'll not hear his first word ! Just go through  
 That slight formality, swear himself's the Thane,  
 And thenceforth he may strut and fret his hour,  
 Spout, sprawl, or spin his target, no one cares !  
 Why hadn't I leave to play tricks, Sludge as Sludge ?  
 Enough of it all ! I've wiped out scores with you —  
 Vented your fustian, let myself be streaked  
 Like tom-fool with your ochre and carmine,  
 Worn patchwork your respectable fingers sewed  
 To metamorphose somebody, — yes, I've earned  
 My wages, swallowed down my bread of shame,  
 And shake the crumbs off — where but in your face ?

As for religion — why, I served it, sir !  
 I'll stick to that ! With my *phenomena*  
 I laid the atheist sprawling on his back,  
 Propped up Saint Paul, or, at least, Swedenborg !  
 In fact, it's just the proper way to balk  
 These troublesome fellows — liars, one and all,  
 Are not these sceptics ? Well, to baffle them,  
 No use in being squeamish : lie yourself !  
 Erect your buttress just as wide o' the line,  
 Your side, as they've built up the wall on theirs ;  
 Where both meet, midway in a point, is truth,  
 High overhead : so, take your room, pile bricks,  
 Lie ! Oh, there's titillation in all shame !  
 What snow may lose in white, it gains in rose !  
 Miss Stokes turns — Rahab, — nor a bad exchange !  
 Glory be on her, for the good she wrought,  
 Breeding belief anew 'neath ribs of death,  
 Brow-beating now the unabashed before,  
 Ridding us of their whole life's gathered brains  
 By a live coal from the altar ! Why, of old,  
 Great men spent years and years in writing books

To prove we've souls, and hardly proved it then ;  
 Miss Stokes with her live coal, for you and me !  
 Surely, to this good issue, all was fair —  
 Not only fondling Sludge, but, even suppose  
 He let escape some spice of knavery, — well,  
 In wisely being blind to it ! Don't you praise  
 Nelson for setting spy-glass to blind eye  
 And saying . . . what was it — that he could not see  
 The signal he was bothered with ? Ay, indeed !

I'll go beyond : there's a real love of a lie,  
 Liars find ready-made for lies they make,  
 As hand for glove, or tongue for sugar-plum.  
 At best, 'tis never pure and full belief ;  
 Those farthest in the quagmire, — don't suppose  
 They strayed there with no warning, got no chance  
 Of a filth-speck in their face, which they clinched teeth,  
 Bent brow against ! Be sure they had their doubts,  
 And fears, and fairest challenges to try  
 The floor o' the seeming solid sand ! But no !  
 Their faith was pledged, acquaintance too apprised,  
 All but the last step ventured, kerchiefs waved,  
 And Sludge called "pet." 'twas easier marching on  
 To the promised land ; join those who, Thursday next,  
 Meant to meet Shakspeare ; better follow Sludge —  
 Prudent, oh sure ! — on the alert, how else ?  
 But making for the mid-bog, all the same !  
 To hear your outcries, one would think I caught  
 Miss Stokes by the scuff o' the neck, and pitched her flat,  
 Foolish-face-foremost ! Hear these simpletons,  
 That's all I beg, before my work's begun,  
 Before I've touched them with my finger-tip !  
 Thus they await me (do but listen, now !  
 It's reasoning, this is, — I can't imitate  
 The baby voice, though) "In so many tales  
 Must be some truth, truth though a pin-point big,  
 Yet, some : a single man's deceived, perhaps —  
 Hardly, a thousand : to suppose one cheat  
 Can gull all these, were more miraculous far  
 Than aught we should confess a miracle" —  
 And so on. Then the Judge suns up — (it's rare)  
 Bids you respect the authorities that leap  
 To the judgment-seat at once, — why, don't you note  
 The limpid nature, the unblemished life,  
 The spotless honor, indisputable sense  
 Of the first upstart with his story ? What —  
 Outrage a boy on whom you ne'er till now  
 Set eyes, because he finds raps trouble him ?

Fools, these are : ay, and how of their opposites  
 Who never did, at bottom of their hearts,  
 Believe for a moment ? — Men emasculate,  
 Blank of belief, who played, as eunuchs use,  
 With superstition safely, — cold of blood,  
 Who saw what made for them i' the mystery,  
 Took their occasion, and supported Sludge  
 — As proselytes ? No, thank you, far too shrewd !  
 — But promisers of fair play, encouragers  
 O' the claimant ; who in candor needs must hoist

Sludge up on Mars' Hill, get speech out of Sludge  
 To carry off, criticise, and cant about!  
 Didn't Athens treat Saint Paul so? — at any rate,  
 It's "a new thing," philosophy fumbles at.  
 Then there's the other picker out of pearl  
 From dung-heaps, — ay, your literary man,  
 Who draws on his kid gloves to deal with Sludge  
 Daintily and discreetly, — shakes a dust  
 O' the doctrine, flavors thence, he well knows how,  
 The narrative or the novel, — half-believes,  
 All for the book's sake, and the public's stare,  
 And the cash that's God's sole solid in this world!  
 Look at him! Try to be too bold, too gross  
 For the master! Not you! He's the man for muck;  
 Shovel it forth, full-splash, he'll smooth your brown  
 Into artistic richness, never fear!  
 Find him the crude stuff; when you recognize  
 Your lie again, you'll doff your hat to it,  
 Dressed out for company! "For company,"  
 I say, since there's the relish of success:  
 Let all pay due respect, call the lie truth,  
 Save the soft, silent, smirking gentleman  
 Who ushered in the stranger: you must sigh  
 "How melancholy, he, the only one  
 Fails to perceive the bearing of the truth  
 Himself gave birth to!" — There's the triumph's smack!  
 That man would choose to see the whole world roll  
 I' the slime o' the slough, so he might touch the tip  
 Of his brush with what I call the best of browns —  
 Tint ghost-tales, spirit-stories, past the power  
 Of the outworn number and bistre!

Yet I think

There's a more hateful form of foolery —  
 The social sage's, Solomon of saloons  
 And philosophic diner-out, the fribble  
 Who wants a doctrine for a chopping-block  
 To try the edge of his faculty upon,  
 Prove how much common sense he'll hack and hew  
 I' the critical minute 'twixt the soup and fish!  
 These were my patrons: these, and the like of them  
 Who, rising in my soul now, sicken it, —  
 These I have injured! Gratitude to these?  
 The gratitude, forsooth, of a prostitute  
 To the greenhorn and the bully — friends of hers,  
 From the wag that wants the queer jokes for his club,  
 To the snuff-box-decorator, honest man,  
 Who just was at his wits' end where to find  
 So genial a Pasiphae! All and each  
 Pay, compliment, protect from the police,  
 And how she hates them for their pains, like me!  
 So much for my remorse at thanklessness  
 Toward a deserving public!

But, for God?

Ay, that's a question! Well, sir, since you press —  
 (How you do tease the whole thing out of me!  
 I don't mean you, you know, when I say, "them":  
 Hate you, indeed! But that Miss Stokes, that Judge!

Enough, enough — with sugar : thank you, sir !  
 Now for it then ! Will you believe me, though ?  
 You've heard what I confess ; I don't unsay  
 A single word : I cheated when I could,  
 Rapped with my toe-joints, set sham hands at work,  
 Wrote down names weak in sympathetic ink,  
 Rubbed odic lights with ends of phosphor-match,  
 And all the rest ; believe that : believe this,  
 By the same token, though it seem to set  
 The crooked straight again, unsay the said,  
 Stick up what I've thrown down ; I can't help that,  
 It's truth ! I somehow vomit truth to-day.  
 This trade of mine — I don't know, can't be sure  
 But there was something in it, tricks and all !  
 Really, I want to light up my own mind.  
 They were tricks, — true, but what I mean to add  
 Is also true. First, — don't it strike you, sir ?  
 Go back to the beginning, — the first fact  
 We're taught is, there's a world beside this world,  
 With spirits, not mankind, for tenantry ;  
 That much within that world once sojourned here,  
 That all upon this world will visit there,  
 And therefore that we, bodily here below,  
 Must have exactly such an interest  
 In learning what may be the ways o' the world  
 Above us, as the disembodied folk  
 Have (by all analogic likelihood)  
 In watching how things go in the old world  
 With us, their sons, successors, and what not.  
 Oh, yes, with added powers probably,  
 Fit for the novel state, — old loves grown pure,  
 Old interests understood aright, — they watch !  
 Eyes to see, ears to hear, and hands to help,  
 Proportionate to advancement : they're ahead,  
 That's all — do what we do, but noblier done —  
 Use plate, whereas we eat our meals off delf  
 (To use a figure).

Concede that, and I ask  
 Next what may be the mode of intercourse  
 Between us men here, and those once-men there ?  
 First comes the Bible's speech ; then, history  
 With the supernatural element, — you know —  
 All that we sucked in with our mothers' milk,  
 Grew up with, got inside of us at last,  
 Till it's found bone of bone and flesh of flesh.  
 See now, we start with the miraculous,  
 And know it used to be, at all events :  
 What's the first step we take, and can't but take,  
 In arguing from the known to the obscure ?  
 Why, this : " What was before, may be to-day.  
 Since Samuel's ghost appeared to Saul, — of course  
 My brother's spirit may appear to me."  
 Go tell your teacher that ! What's his reply ?  
 What brings a shade of doubt for the first time  
 O'er his brow late so luminous with faith ?  
 " Such things have been," says he, " and there's no doubt ;  
 Such things may be : but I advise mistrust  
 Of eyes, ears, stomach, — more than all, of brain,

Unless it be of your great-grandmother,  
 Whenever they propose a ghost to you !"  
 The end is, there's a composition struck ;  
 'Tis settled, we've some way of intercourse  
 Just as in Saul's time ; only, different :  
 How, when, and where, precisely, — find it out !  
 I want to know, then, what's so natural  
 As that a person born into this world  
 And seized on by such teaching, should begin  
 With firm expectancy and a frank look-out  
 For his own allotment, his especial share  
 O' the secret, — his particular ghost, in fine ?  
 I mean, a person born to look that way,  
 Since natures differ : take the painter-sort,  
 One man lives fifty years in ignorance  
 Whether grass be green or red, — " No kind of eye  
 For color," say you ; while another picks  
 And puts away even pebbles, when a child,  
 Because of bluish spots and pinky veins —  
 " Give him forthwith a paint-box ! " Just the same  
 Was I born . . . " medium," you won't let me say, —  
 Well, seer of the supernatural  
 Everywhen, everyhow, and everywhere, —  
 Will that do ?

I and all such boys of course  
 Started with the same stock of Bible-truth ;  
 Only, — what in the rest you style their sense,  
 Instinct, blind reasoning but imperative,  
 This, betimes, taught them the old world had one law  
 And ours another : " New world, new laws," cried they :  
 " None but old laws, seen everywhere at work,"  
 Cried I, and by their help explained my life  
 The Jews' way, still a working way to me.  
 Ghosts made the noises, fairies waved the lights,  
 Or Santa Claus slid down on New-Year's Eve  
 And stuffed with cakes the stocking at my bed,  
 Changed the worn shoes, rubbed clean the fingered slate  
 O' the sum that came to grief the day before.

This could not last long : soon enough I found  
 Who had worked wonders thus, and to what end :  
 But did I find all easy, like my mates ?  
 Henceforth no supernatural any more ?  
 Not a whit : what projects the billiard-balls ?  
 " A cue," you answer : " Yes, a cue," said I ;  
 " But what hand, off the cushion, moved the cue ?  
 What unseen agency, outside the world,  
 Prompted its puppets to do this and that,  
 Put cakes and shoes and slates into their mind,  
 These mothers and aunts, nay even schoolmasters ? "  
 Thus high I sprang, and there have settled since.  
 Just so I reason, in sober earnest still,  
 About the greater godsend, what you call  
 The serious gains and losses of my life.  
 What do I know or care about your world  
 Which either is or seems to be ? This snap  
 O' my fingers, sir ! My care is for myself ;  
 Myself am whole and sole reality

Inside a raree-show and a market-mob  
 Gathered about it : that's the use of things.  
 'Tis easy saying they serve vast purposes,  
 Advantage their grand selves : be it true or false,  
 Each thing may have two uses. What's a star ?  
 A world, or a world's sun : doesn't it serve  
 As taper also, time-piece, weather-glass,  
 And almanac ? Are stars not set for signs  
 When we should shear our sheep, sow corn, prune trees ?  
 The Bible says so.

Well, I add one use  
 To all the acknowledged uses, and declare  
 If I spy Charles's Wain at twelve to-night,  
 It warns me, "Go, nor lose another day,  
 And have your hair cut, Sludge !" You laugh : and why ?  
 Were such a sign too hard for God to give ?  
 No : but Sludge seems too little for such grace :  
 Thank you, sir ! So you think, so does not Sludge !  
 When you and good men gape at Providence,  
 Go into history and bid us mark  
 Not merely powder-plots prevented, crowns  
 Kept on kings' heads by miracle enough,  
 But private mercies — oh, you've told me, sir,  
 Of such interpositions ! How yourself  
 Once, missing on a memorable day  
 Your handkerchief — just setting out, you know, —  
 You must return to fetch it, lost the train,  
 And saved your precious self from what befell  
 The thirty-three whom Providence forgot.  
 You tell, and ask me what I think of this ?  
 Well, sir, I think, then, since you needs must know,  
 What matter had you and Boston City to boot  
 Sailed skyward, like burnt onion-peelings ? Much  
 To you, no doubt : for me — undoubtedly  
 The cutting of my hair concerns me more,  
 Because, however sad the truth may seem,  
 Sludge is of all-importance to himself.  
 You set apart that day in every year  
 For special thanksgiving, were a heathen else :  
 Well, I who cannot boast the like escape,  
 Suppose I said "I don't thank Providence  
 For my part, owing it no gratitude ?" —  
 "Nay, but you owe as much" — you'd tutor me,  
 You, every man alive, for blessings gained  
 In every hour o' the day, could you but know !  
 I saw my crowning mercy : all have such,  
 Could they but see ! " Well, sir, why don't they see ?  
 " Because they won't look, — or perhaps they can't." —  
 Then, sir, suppose I can, and will, and do  
 Look, microscopically as is right,  
 Into each hour with its infinitude  
 Of influences at work to profit Sludge ?  
 For that's the case : I've sharpened up my sight  
 To spy a providence in the fire's going out,  
 The kettle's boiling, the dime's sticking fast  
 Despite the hole i' the pocket. Call such facts  
 Fancies, too petty a work for Providence,  
 And those same thanks which you exact from me,

Prove too prodigious payment : thanks for what,  
 If nothing guards and guides us little men ?  
 No, no, sir ! You must put away your pride,  
 Resolve to let Sludge into partnership !  
 I live by signs and omens : look at the roof  
 Where the pigeons settle — " If the farther bird,  
 The white, takes wing first, I'll confess when thrashed ;  
 Not, if the blue does " — so I said to myself  
 Last week, lest you should take me by surprise :  
 Off flapped the white, — and I'm confessing, sir !  
 Perhaps 'tis Providence's whim and way  
 With only me, i' the world : how can you tell ?  
 " Because unlikely ! " Was it likelier, now,  
 That this our one out of all worlds beside,  
 The what-d' you-call-'em millions, should be just  
 Precisely chosen to make Adam for,  
 And the rest o' the tale ? Yet the tale's true, you know :  
 Such undeserving clod was graced so once ;  
 Why not graced likewise undeserving Sludge ?  
 Are we merit-mongers, flaunt we filthy rags ?  
 All you can bring against my privilege  
 Is, that another way was taken with you, —  
 Which I don't question. It's pure grace, my luck.  
 I'm broken to the way of nods and winks,  
 And need no formal summoning. You've a help ;  
 Holloa his name or whistle, clap your hands,  
 Stamp with your foot or pull the bell : all's one,  
 He understands you want him, here he comes.  
 Just so, I come at the knocking : you, sir, wait  
 The tongue o' the bell, nor stir before you catch  
 Reason's clear tingle, nature's clapper brisk,  
 Or that traditional peal was wont to cheer  
 Your mother's face turned heavenward : short of these  
 There's no authentic intimation, eh ?  
 Well, when you hear, you'll answer them, start up  
 And stride into the presence, top of toe,  
 And there find Sludge beforehand, Sludge that sprung  
 At noise o' the knuckle on the partition-wall !  
 I think myself the more religious man.  
 Religion's all or nothing ; it's no mere smile  
 O' contentment, sigh of aspiration, sir —  
 No quality o' the finelier-tempered clay  
 Like its whiteness or its lightness ; rather, stuff  
 O' the very stuff, life of life, and self of self.  
 I tell you, men won't notice ; when they do,  
 They'll understand. I notice nothing else,  
 I'm eyes, ears, mouth of me, one gaze and gape,  
 Nothing eludes me, every thing's a hint,  
 Handle, and help. It's all absurd, and yet  
 There's something in it all, I know : how much ?  
 No answer ! What does that prove ? Man's still mar,  
 Still meant for a poor blundering piece of work  
 When all's done ; but, if somewhat's done, like this,  
 Or not done, is the case the same ? Suppose  
 I blunder in my guess at the true sense  
 O' the knuckle-summons, nine times out of ten, —  
 What if the tenth guess happen to be right ?  
 If the tenth shovel-load of powdered quartz  
 Yield me the nugget ? I gather, crush, sift all,



Pass o'er the failure, pounce on the success.  
 To give you a notion, now — (let who wins, laugh!)  
 When first I see a man, what do I first?  
 Why, count the letters which make up his name,  
 And as their number chances, even or odd,  
 Arrive at my conclusion, trim my course:  
 Hiram H. Horsefall is your honored name,  
 And haven't I found a patron, sir, in you?  
 "Shall I cheat this stranger?" I take apple-pips,  
 Stick one in either *canthus* of my eye,  
 And if the left drops first — (your left, sir, stuck)  
 I'm warned, I let the trick alone this time.  
 You, sir, who smile, superior to such trash,  
 You judge of character by other rules:  
 Don't your rules sometimes fail you? Pray, what rule  
 Have you judged Sludge by hitherto?

Oh, be sure,

You, everybody blunders, just as I,  
 In simpler things than these by far! For see:  
 I knew two farmers, — one, a wiseacre  
 Who studied seasons, rummaged almanacs,  
 Quoted the dew-point, registered the frost,  
 And then declared, for outcome of his pains,  
 Next summer must be dampish: 'twas a drought.  
 His neighbor prophesied such drought would fall,  
 Saved hay and corn, made cent per cent thereby,  
 And proved a sage indeed: how came his lore?  
 Because one brindled heifer, late in March,  
 Stiffened her tail of evenings, and somehow  
 He got into his head that drought was meant!  
 I don't expect all men can do as much:  
 Such kissing goes by favor. You must take  
 A certain turn of mind for this, — a twist  
 I' the flesh, as well. Be lazily alive,  
 Open-mouthed, like my friend the anteater,  
 Letting all nature's loosely guarded notes  
 Settle and, slied, be swallowed! Think yourself  
 The one i' the world, the one for whom the world  
 Was made, expect it tickling at your mouth!  
 Then will the swarm of busy buzzing flies,  
 Clouds of coincidence, break egg-shell, thrive,  
 Breed, multiply, and bring you food enough.  
 I can't pretend to mind your smiling, sir!  
 Oh, what you mean is this! Such intimate way,  
 Close converse, frank exchange of offices,  
 Strict sympathy of the immeasurably great  
 With the infinitely small, betokened here  
 By a course of signs and omens, raps and sparks, —  
 How does it suit the dread traditional text  
 O' the "Great and Terrible Name?" Shall the Heaven of heavens  
 Stoop to such child's play?

Please, sir, go with me

A moment, and I'll try to answer you.  
 The "*Magnum et terribile*" (is that right?)  
 Well, folk began with this in the early day;  
 And all the acts they recognized in proof  
 Were thunders, lightnings, earthquakes, whirlwinds, dealt

Indisputably on men whose death they caused.  
 There, and there only, folk saw Providence  
 At work, — and seeing it, 'twas right enough  
 All heads should tremble, hands wring hands amain,  
 And knees knock hard together at the breath  
 O' the Name's first letter ; why, the Jews, I'm told,  
 Won't write it down, no, to this very hour,  
 Nor speak aloud : you know best if't be so.  
 Each ague-fit of fear at end, they crept  
 (Because somehow people once born must live)  
 Out of the sound, sight, swing, and sway o' the Name,  
 Into a corner, the dark rest of the world,  
 And safe space where as yet no fear had reached ;  
 'Twas there they looked about them, breathed again,  
 And felt indeed at home, as we might say.  
 The current o' common things, the daily life,  
 This had their due contempt ; no Name pursued  
 Man from the mountain-top where fires abide,  
 To his particular mouse-hole at its foot  
 Where he ate, drank, digested, lived in short :  
 Such was man's vulgar business, far too small  
 To be worth thunder : "small," folk kept on, "small,"  
 With much complacency in those great days !  
 A mote of sand, you know, a blade of grass —  
 What was so despicable as mere grass,  
 Except perhaps the life o' the worm or fly  
 Which fed there ? These were "small" and men were great.  
 Well, sir, the old way's altered somewhat since,  
 And the world wears another aspect now :  
 Somebody turns our spyglass round, or else  
 Puts a new lens in it : grass, worm, fly grow big :  
 We find great things are made of little things,  
 And little things go lessening till at last  
 Comes God behind them. Talk of mountains now ?  
 We talk of mould that heaps the mountain, mites  
 That throng the mould, and God that makes the mites.  
 The Name comes close behind a stomach-cyst,  
 The simplest of creations, just a sac  
 That's mouth, heart, legs, and belly at once, yet lives  
 And feels, and could do neither, we conclude,  
 If simplified still further one degree :  
 The small becomes the dreadful and immense !  
 Lightning, forsooth ? No word more upon that ?  
 A tin-foil bottle, a strip of greasy silk,  
 With a bit of wire and knob of brass, and there's  
 Your dollar's worth of lightning ! But the cyst —  
 The life of the least of the little things ?

No, no !

Preachers and teachers try another tack,  
 Come near the truth this time : they put aside  
 Thunder and lightning : "That's mistake," they cry,  
 "Thunderbolts fall for neither fright nor sport,  
 But do appreciable good, like tides,  
 Changes o' the wind, and other natural facts —  
 'Good' meaning good to man, his body or soul.  
 Mediate, immediate, all things minister  
 To man, — that's settled : be our future text  
 'We are His children !'" So, they now harangue

About the intention, the contrivance, all  
That keeps up an incessant play of love, —  
See the Bridgewater book.

Amen to it !

Well, sir, I put this question : I'm a child ?  
I lose no time, but take you at your word :  
How shall I act a child's part properly ?  
Your sainted mother, sir, — used you to live  
With such a thought as this a-worrying you ?  
" She has it in her power to throttle me,  
Or stab or poison : she may turn me out,  
Or lock me in, — nor stop at this to-day,  
But cut me off to-morrow from the estate  
I look for " — (long may you enjoy it, sir !)  
" In brief, she may unhild the child I am."  
You never had such crotchets ? Nor have I !  
Who, frank confessing childship from the first,  
Cannot both fear and take my ease at once,  
So, don't fear, — know what might be, well enough,  
But know too, childlike, that it will not be,  
At least in my case, mine, the son and heir  
O' the kingdom, as yourself proclaim my style.  
But do you fancy I stop short at this ?  
Wonder if suit and service, son and heir  
Needs must expect, I dare pretend to find ?  
If, looking for signs proper to such an one,  
I straight perceive them irresistible ?  
Concede that homage is a son's plain right,  
And, never mind the nods and raps and winks,  
'Tis the pure obvious supernatural  
Steps forward, does its duty : why, of course !  
I have presentiments ; my dreams come true :  
I fancy a friend stands whistling all in white  
Blithe as a bob'link, and he's dead I learn.  
I take dislike to a dog my favorite long,  
And sell him : he goes mad next week, and snaps.  
I guess that stranger will turn up to-day  
I have not seen these three years : there's his knock.  
I wager " sixty peaches on that tree ! " —  
That I pick up a dollar in my walk,  
That your wife's brother's cousin's name was George —  
And win on all points. Oh ! you wince at this ?  
You'd fain distinguish between gift and gift,  
Washington's oracle and Sludge's itch  
O' the elbow when at whist he ought to trump ?  
With Sludge it's too absurd ? *Fine, draw the line  
Somewhere ; but, sir, your somewhere is not mine !*  
Bless us, I'm turning poet ! It's time to end.  
How you have drawn me out, sir ! All I ask  
Is — am I heir or not heir ? If I'm he,  
Then, sir, remember, that same personage  
(To judge by what we read i' the newspaper)  
Requires, beside one nobleman in gold  
To carry up and down his coronet,  
Another servant, probably a duke,  
To hold egg-nogg in readiness : why want  
Attendance, sir, when helps in his father's house  
Abound, I'd like to know ?

Enough of talk !  
 My fault is that I tell too plain a truth.  
 Why, which of those who say they disbelieve,  
 Your clever people, but has dreamed his dream,  
 Caught his coincidence, stumbled on his fact  
 He can't explain (he'll tell you smilingly),  
 Which he's too much of a philosopher  
 To count as supernatural, indeed,  
 So calls a puzzle and problem, proud of it :  
 Bidding you still be on your guard, you know,  
 Because one fact don't make a system stand,  
 Nor prove this an occasional escape  
 Of spirit beneath the matter : that's the way !  
 Just so wild Indians picked up, piece by piece,  
 The fact in California, the fine gold  
 That underlay the gravel — hoarded these,  
 But never made a system stand, nor dug !  
 So wise men hold out in each hollowed palm  
 A handful of experience, sparkling fact  
 They can't explain ; and since their rest of life  
 Is all explainable, what proof in this ?  
 Whereas I take the fact, the grain of gold,  
 And fling away the dirty rest of life,  
 And add this grain to the grain each fool has found  
 O' the million other such philosophers, —  
 Till I see gold, all gold and only gold,  
 Truth questionless though unexplainable,  
 And the miraculous proved the commonplace !  
 The other fools believed in mud, no doubt —  
 Failed to know gold they saw : was that so strange ?  
 Are all men born to play Bach's fiddle-fugues,  
 "Time" with the foil in carte, jump their own height,  
 Cut the mutton with the broadsword, skate a five,  
 Make the red hazard with the cue, clip nails  
 While swimming, in five minutes row a mile,  
 Pull themselves three feet up with the left arm,  
 Do sums of fifty figures in their head,  
 And so on, by the scores of instances ?  
 The Sludge with luck, who sees the spiritual facts,  
 His fellows strive and fail to see, may rank  
 With these, and share the advantage.

Ay, but share

The drawback ! Think it over by yourself :  
 I have not heart, sir, and the fire's gone gray.  
 Defect somewhere compensates for success,  
 Every one knows that. Oh, we're equals, sir !  
 The big-legged fellow has a little arm  
 And a less brain, though big legs win the race :  
 Do you suppose I 'scape the common lot ?  
 Say, I was born with flesh so sensitive,  
 Soul so alert, that, practice helping both,  
 I guess what's going on outside the veil,  
 Just as a prisoned crane feels pairing-time  
 In the islands where his kind are, so must fall  
 To capering by himself some shiny night,  
 As if your back-yard were a plot of spice —  
 Thus am I 'ware o' the spirit-world : while you,  
 Blind as a beetle that way, — for amends,

Why, you can double fist and floor me, sir!  
 Ride that hot hardmouthed horrid horse of yours,  
 Laugh while it lightens, play with the great dog,  
 Speak your mind though it vex some friend to hear,  
 Never brag, never bluster, never blush, —  
 In short, you've pluck, when I'm a coward — there!  
 I know it, I can't help it, — folly or no,  
 I'm paralyzed, my hand's no more a hand,  
 Nor my head, a head, in danger: you can smile,  
 And change the pipe in your cheek. Your gift's not mine.  
 Would you swap for mine? No! but you'd add my gift  
 To yours: I dare say! I too sigh at times,  
 Wish I were stouter, could tell truth nor flinch,  
 Kept cool when threatened, did not mind so much  
 Being dressed gayly, making strangers stare,  
 Eating nice things; when I'd amuse myself,  
 I shut my eyes and fancy in my brain,  
 I'm — now the President, now, Jenny Lind,  
 Now, Emerson, now, the Benicia Boy —  
 With all the civilized world a-wondering  
 And worshipping. I know it's folly and worse;  
 I feel such tricks sap, honeycomb the soul:  
 But I can't cure myself, — despond, despair,  
 And then, hey, presto, there's a turn o' the wheel,  
 Under comes uppermost, fate makes full amends;  
 Sludge knows and sees and hears a hundred things  
 You all are blind to, — I've my taste of truth,  
 Likewise my touch of falsehood, — vice no doubt,  
 But you've your vices also: I'm content.

What, sir? You won't shake hands? "Because I cheat!"  
 "You've found me out in cheating!" That's enough  
 To make an apostle swear! Why, when I cheat,  
*Mean to cheat, do cheat, and am caught in the act,*  
*Are you, or rather, am I sure o' the fact?*  
 (There's verse again, but I'm inspired somehow.)  
 Well then I'm not sure! I may be, perhaps,  
 Free as a babe from cheating: how it began,  
 My gift, — no matter; what 'tis got to be  
 In the end now, that's the question; answer that!  
 Had I seen, perhaps, what hand was holding mine,  
 Leading me whither, I had died of fright,  
 So, I was made believe I led myself.  
 If I should lay a six-inch plank from roof  
 To roof, you would not cross the street, one step,  
 Even at your mother's summons: but, being shrewd,  
 If I paste paper on each side the plank,  
 And swear 'tis solid pavement, why, you'll cross  
 Humming a tune the while, in ignorance  
 Beacon Street stretches a hundred feet below:  
 I walked thus, took the paper-cheat for stone.  
 Some impulse made me set a thing o' the move  
 Which, started once, ran really by itself;  
 Beer flows thus, suck the siphon; toss the kite,  
 It takes the wind and floats of its own force.  
 Don't let truth's lump rot stagnant for the lack  
 Of a timely helpful lie to leaven it!  
 Put a chalk-egg beneath the clucking hen,  
 She'll lay a real one, laudably deceived,

Daily for weeks to come. I've told my lie,  
 And seen truth follow, marvels none of mine ;  
 All was not cheating, sir, I'm positive !  
 I don't know if I move your hand sometimes  
 When the spontaneous writing spreads so far,  
 If my knee lifts the table all that height,  
 Why the inkstand don't fall off the desk a-tilt,  
 Why the accordion plays a prettier waltz  
 Than I can pick out on the piano-forte,  
 Why I speak so much more than I intend,  
 Describe so many things I never saw.  
 I tell you, sir, in one sense, I believe  
 Nothing at all, — that everybody can,  
 Will, and does cheat : but in another sense  
 I'm ready to believe my very self —  
 That every cheat's inspired, and every lie  
 Quick with a germ of truth.

You ask perhaps

Why I should condescend to trick at all  
 If I know a way without it? This is why !  
 There's a strange, secret, sweet self-sacrifice  
 In any desecration of one's soul  
 To a worthy end, — isn't it Herodotus  
 (I wish I could read Latin !) who describes  
 The single gift o' the land's virginity,  
 Demanded in those old Egyptian rites,  
 (I've but a hazy notion — help me, sir !)  
 For one purpose in the world, one day in a life,  
 One hour in a day — thereafter, purity,  
 And a veil thrown o'er the past for evermore !  
 Well now, they understood a many things  
 Down by Nile city, or wherever it was !  
 I've always vowed, after the minute's lie,  
 And the end's gain, — truth should be mine henceforth.  
 This goes to the root o' the matter, sir, — this plain  
 Plump fact : accept it, and unlock with it  
 The wards of many a puzzle !

Or, finally,

Why should I set so fine a gloss on things?  
 What need I care? I cheat in self-defence,  
 And there's my answer to a world of cheats !  
 Cheat? To be sure, sir! What's the world worth else?  
 Who takes it as he finds, and thanks his stars?  
 Don't it want trimming, turning, furbishing up  
 And polishing over? Your so-styled great men,  
 Do they accept one truth as truth is found,  
 Or try their skill at tinkering? What's your world?  
 Here are you born, who are, I'll say at once,  
 Of the luckiest whether as to head and heart,  
 Body and soul, or all that helps the same.  
 Well, now, look back : what faculty of yours  
 Came to its full, had ample justice done  
 By growing when rain fell, biding its time,  
 Solidifying growth when earth was dead,  
 Spiring up, broadening wide, in seasons due?  
 Never! You shot up and frost nipped you off,  
 Settled to sleep when sunshine bade you sprout ;

One faculty thwarted its fellow : at the end,  
 All you boast is, "I had proved a topping tree  
 In other climes" — yet this was the right clime  
 Had you foreknown the seasons. Young, you've force  
 Wasted like well-streams : old, — oh, then indeed,  
 Behold a labyrinth of hydraulic pipes  
 Through which you'd play off wondrous waterwork ;  
 Only, no water left to feed their play.  
 Young, — you've a hope, an aim, a love ; it's tossed  
 And crossed and lost : you struggle on, some spark  
 Shut in your heart against the puffs around,  
 Through cold and pain ; these in due time subside,  
 Now then for age's triumph, the boarded light  
 You mean to loose on the altered face of things, —  
 Up with it on the tripod ! It's extinct.  
 Spend your life's remnant asking — which was best,  
 Light smothered up that never peeped forth once,  
 Or the cold cresset with full leave to shine ?  
 Well, accept this too, — seek the fruit of it  
 Not in enjoyment, proved a dream on earth,  
 But knowledge, useful for a second chance,  
 Another life, — you've lost this world, you've gained  
 Its knowledge for the next. — What knowledge, sir,  
 Except that you know nothing ? Nay, you doubt  
 Whether 'twere better have been made man or brute,  
 If aught is true, if good and evil clash.  
 No foul, no fair, no inside, no outside,  
 There's your world !

Give it me ! I slap it brisk  
 With harlequin's pasteboard sceptre : what's it now ?  
 Changed like a rock-flat, rough with rusty weed,  
 At first wash-over o' the returning wave !  
 All the dry, dead, impracticable stuff  
 Starts into life and light again ; this world  
 Pervaded by the influx from the next.  
 I cheat, and what's the happy consequence ?  
 You find full justice straightway dealt you out,  
 Each want supplied, each ignorance set at ease,  
 Each folly fooled. No life-long labor now  
 As the price of worse than nothing ! No mere film  
 Holding you chained in iron, as it seems,  
 Against the outstretch of your very arms  
 And legs i' the sunshine moralists forbid !  
 What would you have ? Just speak and, there, you see !  
 You're supplemented, made a whole at last :  
 Bacon advises, Shakspeare writes you songs,  
 And Mary Queen of Scots embraces you.  
 Thus it goes on, not quite like life perhaps,  
 But so near, that the very difference piques,  
 Shows that e'en better than this best will be —  
 This passing entertainment in a hut  
 Whose bare walls take your taste — since, one stage more,  
 And you arrive at the palace : all half real,  
 And you, to suit it, less than real beside,  
 In a dream, lethargic kind of death in life,  
 That helps the interchange of natures, flesh  
 Transfused by souls, and such souls ! Oh, 'tis choice !  
 And if at whiles the bubble, blown too thin,

Seem nigh on bursting, — if you nearly see  
 The real world through the false, — what *do* you see?  
 Is the old so ruined? You find you're in a flock  
 O' the youthful, earnest, passionate — genius, beauty,  
 Rank and wealth also, if you care for these,  
 And all depose their natural rights, hail you  
 (That's me, sir) as their mate and yoke-fellow.  
 Participate in Sludgehood — nay, grow mine,  
 I veritably possess them — banish doubt,  
 And reticence and modesty alike!  
 Why, here's the Golden Age, old Paradise,  
 Or new Eutopia! Here is life indeed,  
 And the world well won now, yours for the first time!

And all this might be, may be, and with good help  
 Of a little lying shall be: so, Sludge lies!  
 Why, he's at worst your poet who sings how Greeks  
 That never were, in Troy which never was,  
 Did this or the other impossible great thing!  
 He's Lowell — it's a world, you smile and say,  
 Of his own invention — wondrous Longfellow,  
 Surprising Hawthorne! Sludge does more than they,  
 And acts the books they write: the more his praise!

But why do I mount to poets? Take plain prose —  
 Dealers in common sense, set these at work,  
 What can they do without their helpful lies?  
 Each states the law and fact and face o' the thing  
 Just as he'd have them, finds what he thinks fit,  
 Is blind to what misfits him, just records  
 What makes his case out, quite ignores the rest.  
 It's a History of the World, the Lizard Age,  
 The Early Indians, the Old Country War,  
 Jerome Napoleon, whatsoever you please,  
 All as the author wants it. Such a scribe  
 You pay and praise for putting life in stones,  
 Fire into fog, making the past your world.  
 There's plenty of "How did you contrive to grasp  
 The thread which led you through this labyrinth?  
 How build such solid fabric out of air?  
 How on so slight foundation found this tale,  
 Biography, narrative?" or, in other words,  
 "How many lies did it require o make  
 The portly truth you here present us with?" —  
 "Oh!" quoth the penman, purring at your praise,  
 "'Tis fancy all; no particle of fact:  
 I was poor and threadbare when I wrote that book  
 'Bliss in the Golden City.' I, at Thebes?  
 We writers paint out of our heads, you see!"  
 — "Ah, the more wonderful the gift in you,  
 The more creativeness and godlike craft!"  
 But I, do I present you with my piece,  
 It's "What, Sludge? When my sainted mother spoke  
 The verses Lady Jane Grey last composed  
 About the rosy bower in the seventh heaven  
 Where she and Queen Elizabeth keep house, —  
 You made the raps? 'Twas your invention that?  
 Cur, slave, and devil!" — eight fingers and two thumbs  
 Stuck in my throat?



Well, if the marks seem gone,  
 'Tis because stiffish cock-tail, taken in time,  
 Is better for a bruise than arnica.  
 There, sir! I bear no malice: 'tish't in me.  
 I know I acted wrongly: still, I've tried  
 What I could say in my excuse, — to show  
 The Devil's not all devil . . . I don't pretend,  
 An angel, much less such a gentleman  
 As you, sir! And I've lost you, lost myself,  
 Lost all, l-l-l . . .

No — are you in earnest, sir?  
 Oh, yours, sir, is an angel's part! I know  
 What prejudice prompts, and what's the common course  
 Men take to soothe their ruffled self-conceit:  
 Only you rise superior to it all!  
 No, sir, it don't hurt much; it's speaking long  
 That makes me choke a little: the marks will go!  
 What? Twenty V-notes more, and outfit too,  
 And not a word to Greeley? One — one kiss  
 O' the hand that saves me! You'll not let me speak  
 I well know, and I've lost the right, too true!  
 But I must say, sir, if She hears (she does)  
 Your sainted . . . Well, sir, — be it so! That's, I think,  
 My bed-room candle. Good-night! Bl-l-less you, sir!

R-r-r, you brute-beast and blackguard! Cowardly scamp!  
 I only wish I dared burn down the house  
 And spoil your sniggering! Oh! what, you're the man?  
 You're satisfied at last? You've found out Sludge?  
 We'll see that presently: my turn, sir, next!  
 I too can tell my story: brute, — do you hear? —  
 You throttled your sainted mother, that old hag,  
 In just such a fit of passion: no, it was . . .  
 To get this house of hers, and many a note  
 Like these . . . I'll pocket them, however . . . five,  
 Ten, fifteen . . . ay, you gave her throat the twist,  
 Or else you poisoned her! Confound the cuss!  
 Where was my head? I ought to have prophesied  
 He'll die in a year and join her: that's the way.  
 I don't know where my head is: what had I done?  
 How did it all go? I said he poisoned her,  
 And hoped he'd have grace given him to repent,  
 Whereon he picked this quarrel, bullied me,  
 And called me cheat: I thrashed him, — who could help?  
 He howled for mercy, prayed me on his knees  
 To cut and run and save him from disgrace:  
 I do so, and once off, he slanders me.  
 An end of him. Begin elsewhere anew!  
 Boston's a hole, the herring-pond is wide,  
 V-notes are something, liberty still more.  
 Beside, is he the only fool in the world?

## THE BOY AND THE ANGEL.

MORNING, evening, noon, and night,  
 "Praise God!" sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,  
 Whereby the daily meal was earned.

Hard he labored, long and well :  
 O'er his work the boy's curls fell.

But ever, at each period,  
 He stopped and sang, "Praise God!"

Then back again his curls he threw,  
 And cheerful turned to work anew.

Said Blaise, the listening monk,  
 "Well done ;  
 I doubt not thou art heard, my son,

"As well as if thy voice to-day  
 Were praising God, the Pope's great  
 way.

"This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome  
 Praises God from Peter's dome."

Said Theocrite, "Would God that I  
 Might praise him, that great way, and  
 die!"

Night passed, day shone ;  
 And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures alway :  
 A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, "Nor day nor  
 night  
 Now brings the voice of my delight."

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth,  
 Spread his wings and sank to earth ;

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,  
 Lived there, and played the craftsman  
 well ;

And morning, evening, noon, and  
 night,  
 Praised God in place of Theocrite.

And from a boy, to youth he grew ;  
 The man put off the stripling's hue ;

The man matured and fell away  
 Into the season of decay ;

And ever o'er the trade he bent,  
 And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will ; to him, all one  
 If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, "A praise is in mine ear ;  
 There is no doubt in it, no fear :

"So sing old worlds, and so  
 New worlds that from my footstool  
 go.

"Clearer loves sound other ways :  
 I miss my little human praise."

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off  
 fell  
 The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day : he flew to Rome,  
 And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by  
 The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight,  
 Stood the new Pope, Theocrite :

And all his past career  
 Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,  
 Till on his life the sickness weighed ;

And in his cell, when death drew near,  
 An angel in a dream brought cheer :

And rising from the sickness drear  
 He grew a priest, and now stood here.

To the East with praise he turned,  
 And on his sight the angel burned.

"I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell,  
 And set thee here : I did not well.

"Vainly I left my angel-sphere,  
 Vain was thy dream of many a year.

"Thy voice's praise seemed weak : it  
 dropped —  
 Creation's chorus stopped !

"Go back and praise again  
 The early way, while I remain.

"With that weak voice of our disdain  
 Take up creation's pausing strain.



"Said Blaise, the listening monk, 'Well done;  
I doubt-not thou art heard, my son.'" — Page 256.



"Back to the cell and poor employ :  
Resume the craftsman and the boy !"

Theocrite grew old at home :  
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

One vanished as the other died :  
They sought God side by side.

### A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

[SUPPOSED of Pamphylax the Antiochene :

It is a parchment, of my rolls the fifth,

Hath three skins glued together, is all Greek,

And goeth from *Epsilon* down to *Mu* :  
Lies second in the surnamed Chosen Chest,

Stained and conserved with juice of terebinth,

Covered with cloth of hair, and lettered *Xi*,

From Xanthus, my wife's uncle, now at peace :

*Mu* and *Epsilon* stand for my own name,

I may not write it, but I make a cross  
To show I wait His coming, with the rest,

And leave off here : beginneth Pamphylax.]

I said, "If one should wet his lips  
with wine,

And slip the broadest plantain-leaf  
we find,

Or else the lappet of a linen robe,  
Into the water-vessel, lay it right,

And cool his forehead just above the eyes,

The while a brother, kneeling either  
side,

Should chafe each hand and try to  
make it warm, —

He is not so far gone but he might  
speak."

This did not happen in the outer cave,  
Nor in the secret chamber of the rock,  
Where, sixty days since the decree  
was out,

We had him, bedded on a camel-skin,

And waited for his dying all the while ;  
But in the midmost grotto : since  
noon's light

Reached there a little, and we would  
not lose

The last of what might happen on  
his face.

I at the head, and Xantlus at the  
feet,

With Valens and the Boy, had lifted  
him,

And brought him from the chamber  
in the depths,

And laid him in the light where we  
might see :

For certain smiles began about his  
mouth,

And his lids moved, presageful of the  
end.

Beyond, and half way up the mouth  
o' the cave,

The Bactrian convert, having his  
desire,

Kept watch, and made pretence to  
graze a goat

That gave us milk, on rags of various  
herb,

Plantain and quiteh, the rocks' shade  
keeps alive :

So that if any thief or soldier passed  
(Because the persecution was aware),

Yielding the goat up promptly with  
his life,

Such man might pass on, joyful at a  
prize,

Nor care to pry into the cool o' the  
cave.

Outside was all noon and the burning  
blue.

"Here is wine," answered Xanthus,  
— dropped a drop ;

I stooped and placed the lap of cloth  
aright,

Then chafed his right hand, and the  
Boy his left :

But Valens had bethought him, and  
produced

And broke a ball of nard, and made  
perfume.

Only, he did — not so much wake, as  
— turn

And smile a little, as a sleeper does .

If any dear one call him, touch his  
face —

And smiles and loves, but will not be  
disturbed.

Then Xanthus said a prayer, but still  
he slept :  
It is the Xanthus that escaped to  
Rome,  
Was burned, and could not write the  
chronicle.

Then the Boy sprang up from his  
knees, and ran,  
Stung by the splendor of a sudden  
thought,  
And fetched the seventh plate of  
graven lead  
Out of the secret chamber, found a  
place,  
Pressing with finger on the deeper  
dints,  
And spoke, as 'twere his mouth pro-  
claiming first  
"I am the Resurrection and the Life."

Whereat he opened his eyes wide at  
once,  
And sat up of himself, and looked at  
us ;  
And thenceforth nobody pronounced  
a word :  
Only, outside, the Bactrian cried his  
cry  
Like the lone desert-bird that wears  
the ruff,  
As signal we were safe, from time to  
time

First he said, "If a friend declared  
to me,  
This my son Valens, this my other  
son,  
Were James and Peter, — nay, de-  
clared as well  
This lad was very John, — I could  
believe !  
— Could, for a moment, doubtlessly  
believe :  
So is myself withdrawn into my  
depths,  
The soul retreated from the perished  
brain  
Whence it was wont to feel and use  
the world  
Through these dull members, done  
with long ago.  
Yet I myself remain ; I feel myself :  
And there is nothing lost. Let be,  
a while !"

[This is the doctrine he was wont to  
teach,

How divers persons witness in each  
man,  
Three souls which make up one soul :  
first, to wit,  
A soul of each and all the bodily  
parts,  
Seated therein, which works, and is  
what Does,  
And has the use of earth, and ends  
the man  
Downward : but, tending upward for  
advice,  
Grows into, and again is grown into  
By the next soul, which, seated in  
the brain,  
Useth the first with its collected use,  
And feeleth, thinketh, willeth, — is  
what Knows :  
Which, duly tending upward in its  
turn,  
Grows into, and again is grown into  
By the last soul, that uses both the  
first,  
Subsisting whether they assist or no,  
And, constituting man's self, is what  
Is —  
And leans upon the former, makes  
it play,  
As that played off the first : and,  
tending up,  
Holds, is upheld by, God, and ends  
the man  
Upward in that dread point of inter-  
course,  
Nor needs a place, for it returns to  
Him.  
What Does, what Knows, what Is ;  
three souls, one man.  
I give the glossa of Theotypas.]  
And then, "A stick, once fire from  
end to end ;  
Now, ashes save the tip that holds a  
spark !  
Yet, blow the spark, it runs back,  
spreads itself  
A little where the fire was : thus I  
urge  
The soul that served me, till it task  
once more  
What ashes of my brain have kept  
their shape,  
And these make effort on the last o'  
the flesh,  
Trying to taste again the truth of  
things" —  
(He smiled) — "their very superficial  
truth ;  
As that ye are my sons, that it is long

Since James and Peter had release  
by death,  
And I am only he, your brother John,  
Who saw and heard, and could re-  
member all.

Remember all ! It is not much to say.  
What if the truth broke on me from  
above

As once and ofttimes ? Such might  
hap again :

Doubtlessly He might stand in pres-  
ence here,

With head wool-white, eyes, flame,  
and feet like brass,

The sword and the seven stars, as I  
have seen —

I who now shudder only and surmise  
'How did your brother bear that sight  
and live ?'

"If I live yet, it is for good, more love  
Through me to men : be naught but  
ashes here

That keep a while my semblance, who  
was John, —

Still, when they scatter, there is left  
on earth

No one alive who knew (consider this!)  
— Saw with his eyes and handled  
with his hands

That which was from the first, the  
Word of Life.

How will it be when none more saith  
'I saw' ?

"Such ever was love's way : to rise, it  
stoops.

Since I, whom Christ's mouth taught,  
was bidden teach,

I went, for many years, about the  
world,

Saying, 'It was so; so I heard and  
saw,'

Speaking as the case asked: and men  
believed.

Afterward came the message to my-  
self

In Patmos isle ; I was not bidden  
teach,

But simply listen, take a book and  
write,

Nor set down other than the given  
word,

With nothing left to my arbitrament  
To choose or change : I wrote, and  
men believed.

Then, for my time grew brief, no mes-  
sage more,

No call to write again, I found a way,

And, reasoning from my knowledge,  
merely taught

Men should, for love's sake, in love's  
strength, believe ;

Or I would pen a letter to a friend  
And urge the same as friend, nor less  
nor more :

Friends said I reasoned rightly, and  
believed.

But at the last, why, I seemed left  
alive

Like a sea-jelly weak on Patmos  
strand,

To tell dry sea-beach gazers how I  
fared

When there was mid-sea, and the  
mighty things ;

Left to repeat, 'I saw, I heard, I  
knew,'

And go all over the old ground again,  
With Antichrist already in the world,

And many Antichrists, who answered  
prompt

'Am I not Jasper as thyself art John ?  
Nay, young, whereas through age thou  
mayest forget :

Wherefore, explain, or how shall we  
believe ?'

I never thought to call down fire on  
such,

Or, as in wonderful and early days,  
Pick up the scorpion, tread the serpent  
dumb ;

But patient stated much of the Lord's  
life

Forgotten or misdelivered, and let it  
work :

Since much that at the first, in deed  
and word,

Lay simply and sufficiently exposed,  
Had grown (or else my soul was grown  
to match,

Fed through such years, familiar with  
such light,

Guarded and guided still to see and  
speak)

Of new significance and fresh result ;  
What first were guessed as points, I  
now knew stars,

And named them in the Gospel I have  
writ.

For men said, 'It is getting long  
ago :'

'Where is the promise of His coming ?'  
— asked

These young ones in their strength, as  
loth to wait,

Of me who, when their sires were  
born, was old.

I, for I loved them, answered, joyfully,  
 Since I was there, and helpful in my age ;  
 And, in the main, I think such men believed.  
 Finally, thus endeavoring, I fell sick,  
 Ye brought me here, and I supposed the end,  
 And went to sleep with one thought that, at least,  
 Though the whole earth should lie in wickedness,  
 We had the truth, might leave the rest to God.  
 Yet now I wake in such decrepitude  
 As I had slidden down and fallen afar,  
 Past even the presence of my former self,  
 Grasping the while for stay at facts which snap,  
 Till I am found away from my own world.  
 Feeling for foot-hold through a blank profound,  
 Along with unborn people in strange lands,  
 Who say — I hear said or conceive they say —  
 ' Was John at all, and did he say he saw ?  
 Assure us, ere we ask what he might see !'  
 " And how shall I assure them ? Can they share  
 — They, who have flesh, a veil of youth and strength  
 About each spirit, that needs must bide its time,  
 Living and learning still as years assist  
 Which wear the thickness thin, and let man see —  
 With me who hardly am withheld at all,  
 But shudderingly, scarce a shred between,  
 Lie bare to the universal prick of light ?  
 Is it for nothing we grow old and weak,  
 We whom God loves ? When pain ends, gain ends too.  
 To me, that story — ay, that Life and Death  
 Of which I wrote ' it was ' — to me, it is ;

— Is, here and now : I apprehend naught else.  
 Is not God now i' the world his power first made ?  
 Is not his love at issue still with sin,  
 Visibly when a wrong is done on earth ?  
 Love, wrong, and pain, what see I else around ?  
 Yea, and the Resurrection and Uprise  
 To the right hand of the throne — what is it beside,  
 When such truth, breaking bounds, o'erfloods my soul,  
 And, as I saw the sin and death, even so  
 See I the need yet transiency of both,  
 The good and glory consummated thence ?  
 I saw the Power ; I see the Love, once weak,  
 Resume the Power : and in this word ' I see,'  
 Lo, there is recognized the Spirit of both  
 That moving o'er the spirit of man, unblinds  
 His eye and bids him look. These are, I see ;  
 But ye, the children, his beloved ones too,  
 Ye need, — as I should use an optic glass  
 I wondered at erewhile, somewhere i' the world,  
 It had been given a crafty smith to make ;  
 A tube, he turned on objects brought too close,  
 Lying confusedly insubordinate  
 For the unassisted eye to master once :  
 Look through his tube, at distance now they lay,  
 Become succinct, distinct, so small, so clear !  
 Just thus, ye needs must apprehend what truth  
 I see, reduced to plain historic fact,  
 Diminished into clearness, proved a point  
 And far away : ye would withdraw your sense  
 From out eternity, strain it upon time,  
 Then stand before that fact, that Life and Death,  
 Stay there at gaze, till it dispart, dispread,



As though a star should open out, all sides,  
Grow the world on you, as it is my world.

"For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,  
And hope and fear, — believe the aged friend, —

Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,  
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is ;

And that we hold thenceforth to the uttermost  
Such prize despite the envy of the world,

And, having gained truth, keep truth : that is all.

But see the double way wherein we are led,

How the soul learns diversely from the flesh !

With flesh, that hath so little time to stray,

And yields mere basement for the soul's emprise,

Expect prompt teaching. Helpful was the light,

And warmth was cherishing and food was choice

To every man's flesh, thousand years ago,

As now to yours and mine ; the body sprang

At once to the height, and staid : but the soul, — no !

Since sages who, this noontide, meditate

In Rome or Athens, may descry some point

Of the eternal power, hid yestereve :  
And, as thereby the power's whole mass extends,

So much extends the ether floating o'er

The love that tops the might, the Christ in God.

Then, as new lessons shall be learned in these

Till earth's work stop and useless time run out,

So duly, daily, needs provision be  
For keeping the soul's prowess possible,

Building new barriers as the old decay,

Saving us from evasion of life's proof,

Putting the question ever, 'Does God love,

And will ye hold that truth against the world ?'

Ye know there needs no second proof with good

Gained for our flesh from any earthly source :

We might go freezing, ages, — give us fire,

Thereafter we judge fire at its full worth,

And guard it safe through every chance, ye know !

That fable of Prometheus and his theft,

How mortals gained Jove's fiery flower, grows old

(I have been used to hear the pagans own)

And out of mind ; but fire, howe'er its birth,

Here is it, precious to the sophist now  
Who laughs the myth of Æschylus to scorn,

As precious to those satyrs of his play,

Who touched it in gay wonder at the thing,

While were it so with the soul, — this gift of truth

Once grasped, were this our soul's gain safe, and sure

To prosper as the body's gain is wont, —

Why, man's probation would conclude, his earth

Crumble ; for he both reasons, and decides,

Weights first, then chooses : will he give up fire

For gold or purple once he knows its worth ?

Could he give Christ up were His worth as plain ?

Therefore, I say, to test man, the proofs shift,

Nor may he grasp that fact like other fact,

And straightway in his life acknowledge it,

As, say, the indubitable bliss of fire.  
Sigh ye, 'It had been easier once than now ?'

To give you answer I am left alive ;  
Look at me who was present from the first !

Ye know what things I saw ; then came a test,

My first, befitting me who so had  
 seen :  
 'Forsake the Christ thou sawest trans-  
 figured, Him  
 Who trod the sea and brought the  
 dead to life ?  
 What should wring this from thee ?'  
 — ye laugh and ask.  
 What wrung it ? Even a torchlight  
 and a noise,  
 The sudden Roman faces, violent  
 hands,  
 And fear of what the Jews might do !  
 Just that,  
 And it is written, 'I forsook and  
 fled :'  
 There was my trial, and it ended  
 thus.  
 Ay, but my soul had gained its truth,  
 could grow :  
 Another year or two,—what little  
 child,  
 What tender woman that had seen no  
 least  
 Of all my sights, but barely heard  
 them told,  
 Who did not clasp the cross with a  
 light laugh,  
 Or wrap the burning robe round,  
 thanking God ?  
 Well, was truth safe forever, then ?  
 Not so.  
 Already had begun the silent work  
 Whereby truth, deadened of its abso-  
 lute blaze,  
 Might need love's eye to pierce the  
 o'erstretched doubt.  
 Teachers were busy, whispering 'All  
 is true  
 As the aged ones report ; but youth  
 can reach  
 Where age gropes dimly, weak with  
 stir and strain,  
 And the full doctrine slumbers till to-  
 day.'  
 Thus, what the Roman's lowered  
 spear was found,  
 A bar to me who touched and handled  
 truth,  
 Now proved the glozing of some new  
 shrewd tongue,  
 This Ebion, this Cerinthus or their  
 mates,  
 Till imminent was the outcry 'Save  
 our Christ !'  
 Whereon I stated much of the Lord's  
 life  
 Forgotten or misdelivered, and let it  
 work.

Such work done, as it will be, what  
 comes next ?  
 What do I hear say, or conceive men  
 say,  
 'Was John at all, and did he say he  
 saw ?  
 Assure us, ere we ask what he might  
 see !'  
 "Is this indeed a burthen for late  
 days,  
 And may I help to bear it with you  
 all,  
 Using my weakness which becomes  
 your strength ?  
 For if a babe were born inside this  
 grot,  
 Grew to a boy here, heard us praise  
 the sun,  
 Yet had but yon sole glimmer in  
 light's place,—  
 One loving him and wishful he should  
 learn,  
 Would much rejoice himself was  
 blinded first  
 Month by month here, so made to  
 understand  
 How eyes, born darkling, apprehend  
 amiss :  
 I think I could explain to such a  
 child  
 There was more glow outside than  
 gleams he caught,  
 Ay, nor need urge 'I saw it, so be-  
 lieve !'  
 It is a heavy burthen you shall bear  
 In latter days, new lands, or old  
 grown strange,  
 Left without me, which must be very  
 soon.  
 What is the doubt, my brothers ?  
 Quick with it !  
 I see you stand conversing, each new  
 face,  
 Either in fields, of yellow summer  
 eyes,  
 On islets yet unnamed amid the sea ;  
 Or pace for shelter 'neath a portico  
 Out of the crowd in some enormous  
 town  
 Where now the larks sing in a soli-  
 tude ;  
 Or muse upon blank heaps of stone  
 and sand  
 Idly conjectured to be Ephesus :  
 And no one asks his fellow any  
 more  
 'Where is the promise of His com-  
 ing ?' but

'Was He revealed in any of His  
lives,  
As Power, as Love, as Influencing  
Soul?'

"Quick, for time presses, tell the  
whole mind out,  
And let us ask and answer and be  
saved!  
My book speaks on, because it cannot  
pass;  
One listens quietly, nor scoffs but  
pleads  
'Here is a tale of things done ages  
since:  
What truth was ever told the second  
day?  
Wonders, that would prove doctrine,  
go for naught.  
Remains the doctrine, love; well, we  
must love.  
And what we love most, power and  
love in one,  
Let us acknowledge on the record  
here,  
Accepting these in Christ: must  
Christ then be?  
Has He been? Did not we ourselves  
make Him?  
Our mind receives but what it holds,  
no more.  
First of the love, then; we acknowl-  
edge Christ—  
A proof we comprehend His love, a  
proof  
We had such love already in our-  
selves,  
Knew first what else we should not  
recognize.  
'Tis mere projection from man's in-  
most mind,  
And, what he loves, thus falls re-  
flected back,  
Becomes accounted somewhat out of  
him;  
He throws it up in air, it drops down  
earth's,  
With shape, name, story added, man's  
old way.  
How prove you Christ came otherwise  
at least?  
Next try the power: He made and  
rules the world:  
Certes there is a world once made,  
now ruled,  
Unless things have been ever as we  
see.  
Our sires declared a charioteer's  
yoked steeds

Brought the sun up the east and down  
the west,  
Which only of itself now rises, sets,  
As if a hand impelled it and a will,—  
Thus they long thought, they who  
had will and hands:  
But the new question's whisper is  
distinct,  
Wherefore must all force needs be  
like ourselves?  
We have the hands, the will; what  
made and drives  
The sun is force, is law, is named, not  
known,  
While will and love we do know;  
marks of these,  
Eye-witnesses attest, so books de-  
clare—  
As that, to punish or reward our race,  
The sun at undue times arose or set  
Or else stood still: what do not men  
affirm?  
But earth requires as urgently reward  
Or punishment to-day as years ago,  
And none expects the sun will inter-  
pose:  
Therefore it was mere passion and  
mistake,  
Or erring zeal for right, which changed  
the truth.  
Go back, far, farther, to the birth of  
things;  
Ever the will, the intelligence, the  
love,  
Man's!— which he gives, supposing  
he but finds,  
As late he gave head, body, hands,  
and feet,  
To help these in what forms he called  
his gods.  
First, Jove's brow, Juno's eyes were  
swept away,  
But Jove's wrath, Juno's pride con-  
tinued long;  
As last, will, power, and love dis-  
carded these,  
So law in turn discards power, love,  
and will.  
What proveth God is otherwise at  
least?  
All else, projection from the mind of  
man!  
Nay, do not give me wine, for I am  
strong,  
But place my gospel where I put my  
hands.  
"I say that man was made to grow,  
not stop;

That help, he needed once, and needs  
no more,

Having grown but an inch by, is  
withdrawn :

For he hath new needs, and new  
helps to these.

This imports solely, man should  
mount on each

New height in view ; the help where-  
by he mounts,

The ladder-rung his foot has left, may  
fall,

Since all things suffer change save  
God the Truth.

Man apprehends Him newly at each  
stage

Whereat earth's ladder drops, its ser-  
vice done ;

And nothing shall prove twice what  
once was proved.

You stick a garden-plot with ordered  
twigs

To show inside lie germs of herbs  
unborn.

And check the careless step would  
spoil their birth ;

But when herbs wave, the guardian  
twigs may go,

Since should ye doubt of virtues,  
question kinds,

It is no longer for old twigs ye look,  
Which proved once underneath lay

store of seed,  
But to the herb's self, by what light  
ye boast,

For what fruit's signs are. This  
book's fruit is plain,

Nor miracles need prove it any more.  
Doth the fruit show ? Then miracles

bade 'ware

At first of root and stem, saved both  
till now

From trampling ox, rough boar, and  
wanton goat.

What ? Was man made a wheelwork  
to wind up,

And be discharged, and straight  
wound up anew ?

No !—grown, his growth lasts ;  
taught, he ne'er forgets :

May learn a thousand things, not  
twice the same.

This might be pagan teaching : now  
hear mine.

" I say, that as the babe, you feed a  
while,

Becomes a boy and fit to feed him-  
self,

So, minds at first must be spoon-fed  
with truth :

When they can eat, babe's nurture is  
withdrawn.

I fed the babe whether it would or  
no :

I bid the boy or feed himself or starve.  
I cried once, ' That ye may believe in

Christ,  
Behold this blind man shall receive  
his sight !'

I cry now, ' Urgest thou, for I am  
*shrewd,*

*And smile at stories how John's word  
could cure—*

*Repeat that miracle and take my faith ?'*

I say, that miracle was duly wrought  
When, save for it, no faith was possi-  
ble.

Whether a change were wrought i'  
the shows o' the world.

Whether the change came from our  
minds which see

Of shows o' the world so much as  
and no more

Than God wills for His purpose,—  
(what do I

See now, suppose you, there where  
you see rock

Round us ?)—I know not ; such was  
the effect,

So faith grew, making void more  
miracles

Because too much : they would com-  
pel, not help.

I say, the acknowledgment of God in  
Christ

Accepted by thy reason, solves for  
thee

All questions in the earth and out of  
it,

And has so far advanced thee to be  
wise.

Wouldst thou improve this to re-  
prove the proved ?

In life's mere minute, with power to  
use that proof,

Leave knowledge and revert to how  
it sprung ?

Thou hast it ; use it and forthwith, or  
die !

For I say, this is death and the sole  
death,

When a man's loss comes to him from  
his gain,

Darkness from light, from knowledge  
ignorance,

And lack of love from love made  
manifest :

A lamp's death when, replete with oil, it chokes ;  
 A stomach's when, surcharged with food, it starves.  
 With ignorance was surety of a cure.  
 When man, appalled at nature, questioned first  
 'What if there lurk a might behind this might ?'  
 He needed satisfaction God could give,  
 And did give, as ye have the written word :  
 But when he finds might still redouble might,  
 Yet asks, 'Since all is might, what use of will ?'  
 — Will, the one source of might, — he being man  
 With a man's will and a man's might, to teach  
 In little how the two combine in large, —  
 That man has turned round on himself and stands :  
 Which in the course of nature is, to die.

“And when man questioned, ‘What if there be love behind the will and might, as real as they ?’ —  
 He needed satisfaction God could give,  
 And did give, as ye have the written word :  
 But when, beholding that love everywhere,  
 He reasons, ‘Since such love is everywhere,  
 And since ourselves can love and would be loved,  
 We ourselves make the love, and Christ was not,’ —  
 How shall ye help this man who knows himself,  
 That he must love and would be loved again,  
 Yet, owning his own love that proveth Christ,  
 Rejecteth Christ through very need of Him ?  
 The lamp o'erswims with oil, the stomach flags  
 Loaded with nurture, and that man's soul dies.  
 'If he rejoin, ‘But this was all the while

A trick ; the fault was, first of all, in thee,  
 Thy story of the places, names and dates,  
 Where, when, and how the ultimate truth had rise,  
 — Thy prior truth, at last discovered none,  
 Whence now the second suffers detriment.  
 What good of giving knowledge if, because  
 O' the manner of the gift, its profit fail ?  
 And why refuse what modicum of help  
 Had stopped the after-doubt, impossible  
 I' the face of truth — truth absolute, uniform ?  
 Why must I hit of this and miss of that,  
 Distinguish just as I be weak or strong,  
 And not ask of thee and have answer prompt,  
 Was this once, was it not once ? — then and now  
 And evermore, plain truth from man to man.  
 Is John's procedure just the heathen bard's ?  
 Put question of his famous play again  
 How for the ephemerals' sake, Jove's fire was filched,  
 And carried in a cane and brought to earth :  
*The fact is in the fable, cry the wise,  
 Mortals obtained the boon, so much is fact,  
 Though fire be spirit and produced on earth.*  
 As with the Titan's, so now with thy tale :  
 Why breed in us perplexity, mistake,  
 Nor tell the whole truth in the proper words ?’  
 “I answer, Have ye yet to argue out  
 The very primal thesis, plainest law,  
 — Man is not God but hath God's end to serve,  
 A master to obey, a course to take,  
 Somewhat to cast off, somewhat to become ?  
 Grant this, then man must pass from old to new,  
 From vain to real, from mistake to fact,

From what once seemed good, to what  
now proves best :

How could man have progression  
otherwise ?

Before the point was mooted 'What  
is God ?'

No savage man inquired 'What is  
myself ?'

Much less replied, 'First, last, and  
best of things.'

Man takes that title now if he believes  
Might can exist with neither will nor  
love,

In God's case — what he names now  
Nature's Law —

While in himself he recognizes love  
No less than might and will : and  
rightly takes.

Since if man prove the sole existent  
thing

Where these combine, whatever their  
degree,

However weak the might or will or  
love,

So they be found there, put in evi-  
dence, —

He is as surely higher in the scale  
Than any might with neither love nor  
will,

As life, apparent in the poorest midge  
(When the faint dust-speck flits, ye  
guess its wing),

Is marvellous beyond dead Atlas'  
self —

Given to the nobler midge for resting-  
place !

Thus, man proves best and highest —  
God, in fine,

And thus the victory leads but to de-  
feat,

The gain to loss, best rise to the worst  
fall,

His life becomes impossible, which is  
death.

"But if, appealing thence, he cower,  
avouch

He is mere man, and in humility  
Neither may know God nor mistake  
himself ;

I point to the immediate consequence  
And say, by such confession straight  
he falls

Into man's place, a thing nor God nor  
beast,

Made to know that he can know  
and not more :

Lower than God who knows all and  
can all,

Higher than beasts which know and  
can so far

As each beast's limit, perfect to an  
end,

Nor conscious that they know, nor  
craving more ;

While man knows partly but concei-  
ceives beside,

Creeps ever on from fancies to the  
fact,

And in this striving, this converting  
air

Into a solid he may grasp and use,  
Finds progress, man's distinctive mark  
alone,

Not God's, and not the beasts' : God  
is, they are,

Man partly is and wholly hopes to be.  
Such progress could no more attend  
his soul

Were all it struggles after found at  
first

And guesses changed to knowledge  
absolute,

Than motion wait his body, were all  
else

Than it the solid earth on every side,  
Where now through space he moves  
from rest to rest.

Man, therefore, thus conditioned,  
must expect

He could not, what he knows now,  
know at first ;

What he considers that he knows to-  
day,

Come but to-morrow, he will find mis-  
known ;

Getting increase of knowledge, since  
he learns

Because he lives, which is to be a  
man,

Set to instruct himself by his past  
self :

First, like the brute, obliged by facts  
to learn,

Next, as man may, obliged by his  
own mind,

Bent, habit, nature, knowledge turned  
to law.

God's gift was that man should concei-  
ve of truth,

And yearn to gain it, catching at mis-  
take,

As midway help till he reach fact in-  
deed.

The statuary ere he mould a shape  
Boasts a like gift, the shape's idea,  
and next

The aspiration to produce the same

So, taking clay, he calls his shape  
thereout,  
Cries ever 'Now I have the thing I  
see :'  
Yet all the while goes changing what  
was wrought,  
From falsehood like the truth, to  
truth itself.  
How were it had he cried 'I see no  
face,  
No breast, no feet i' the ineffectual  
clay ?'  
Rather commend him that he clapped  
his hands,  
And laughed 'It is my shape and  
lives again !'  
Enjoyed the falsehood, touched it on  
to truth,  
Until yourselves applaud the flesh  
indeed  
In what is still flesh-imitating clay.  
Right in you, right in him, such way  
be man's !  
God only makes the live shape at a  
jet.  
Will ye renounce this pact of crea-  
tureship ?  
The pattern on the Mount subsists no  
more,  
Seemed a while, then returned to  
nothingness ;  
But copies, Moses strove to make  
thereby,  
Serve still and are replaced as time  
requires :  
By these, make newest vessels, reach  
the type !  
If ye demur, this judgment on your  
head,  
Never to reach the ultimate, angels'  
law,  
Indulging every instinct of the soul  
There where law, life, joy, impulse  
are one thing !

"Such is the burthen of the latest  
time.

I have survived to hear it with my  
ears,  
Answer it with my lips : does this  
suffice ?  
For if there be a further woe than  
such,  
Wherein my brothers struggling need  
a hand,  
So long as any pulse is left in mine,  
May I be absent even longer yet,  
Plucking the blind ones back from  
the abyss,

Though I should tarry a new hun-  
dred years !"

But he was dead : 'twas about noon,  
the day  
Somewhat declining : we five buried  
him  
That eve, and then, dividing, went  
five ways,  
And I, disguised, returned to Ephe-  
sus.

By this, the cave's mouth must be  
filled with sand.  
Valens is lost, I know not of his  
trace ;

The Bactrian was but a wild childish  
man,  
And could not write nor speak, but  
only loved :

So, lest the memory of this go quite,  
Seeing that I to-morrow fight the  
beasts,

I tell the same to Phœbas, whom  
believe !

For many look again to find that face,  
Beloved John's to whom I minis-  
tered,

Somewhere in life about the world ;  
they err :

Either mistaking what was darkly  
spoke

At ending of his book, as he relates,  
Or misconceiving somewhat of this  
speech

Scattered from mouth to mouth, as I  
suppose.

Believe ye will not see him any more  
About the world with his divine re-  
gard !

For all was as I say, and now the  
man

Lies as he lay once, breast to breast  
with God.

[Cerinthus read and mused ; one  
added this :—

"If Christ, as thou affirmest, be of  
men

Mere man, the first and best but  
nothing more,—

Account Him, for reward of what He  
was,

Now and forever, wretchedest of all.  
For see ; Himself conceived of life as  
love,

Conceived of love as what must enter  
in,  
Fill up, make one with His each soul  
He loved :  
Thus much for man's joy, all men's  
joy for Him.  
Well, He is gone, thou sayest, to fit  
reward.  
But by this time are many souls set  
free,  
And very many still retained alive :  
Nay, should His coming be delayed  
a while,  
Say, ten years longer (twelve years,  
some compute)  
See if, for every finger of thy hands,  
There be not found, that day the  
world shall end,  
Hundreds of souls, each holding by  
Christ's word  
That He will grow incorporate with  
all,  
With me as Pamphylax, with him as  
John,  
Groom for each bride! Can a mere  
man do this?  
Yet Christ saith, this He lived and  
died to do.  
Call Christ, then, the illimitable God,  
Or lost!"

But 'twas Cerinthus that is lost.]

### FEARS AND SCRUPLES.

#### I.

HERE's my case. Of old I used to  
love him,  
This same unseen friend, before I  
knew :  
Dream there was none like him, none  
above him, —  
Wake to hope and trust my dream  
was true.

#### II.

Loved I not his letters full of beauty?  
Not his actions famous far and  
wide?  
Absent, he would know I vowed him  
duty;  
Present, he would find me at his  
side.

#### III.

Pleasant fancy! for I had but letters,  
Only knew of actions by hearsay :  
He himself was busied with my bet-  
ters ;  
What of that? My turn must come  
some day.

#### IV.

"Some day" proving—no day!  
Here's the puzzle.  
Passed and passed my turn is.  
Why complain?  
He's so busied! If I could but muz-  
zle  
People's foolish mouths that give  
me pain!

#### V.

"Letters?" (hear them!) "You a  
judge of writing?  
Ask the experts! How they shake  
the head  
O'er these characters, your friend's  
inditing—  
Call them forgery from A to Z!

#### VI.

"Actions? Where's your certain  
proof" (they bother)  
"He, of all you find so great and  
good,  
He, he only, claims this, that, the  
other  
Action—claimed by men, a multi-  
tude?"

#### VII.

I can simply wish I might refute  
you,  
Wish my friend would, — by a word,  
a wink, —  
Bid me stop that foolish mouth, —  
you brute you!  
He keeps absent, — why, I cannot  
think.

#### VIII.

Never mind! Though foolishness  
may flout me,  
One thing's sure enough: 'tis  
neither frost,  
No, nor fire, shall freeze or burn  
from out me  
Thanks for truth—though false-  
hood, gained—though lost.



## IX.

All my days, I'll go the softlier, sadlier,  
 For that dream's sake! How forget the thrill  
 Through and through me as I thought  
 "The gladlier  
 Lives my friend because I love him  
 still!"

## X.

Ah, but there's a menace some one utters!  
 "What and if your friend at home  
 play tricks?  
 Peep at hide-and-peek behind the  
 shutters?  
 Mean your eyes should pierce  
 through solid bricks?"

## XI.

"What and if he, frowning, wake  
 you, dreamy  
 Lay on you the blame that bricks—  
 conceal?  
 Say 'At least I saw who did not see me,  
 Does see now, and presently shall  
 feel?'"

## XII.

"Why, that makes your friend a  
 monster!" say you:  
 Had his house no window? At  
 first nod,  
 Would you not have hailed him?"  
 Hush, I pray you!  
 What if this friend happen to be—  
 God?"

## ARTEMIS PROLOGIZES.

I AM a goddess of the ambrosial  
 courts,  
 And save by Here, Queen of Pride,  
 surpassed  
 By none whose temples whiten this  
 the world.  
 Through heaven I roll my lucid moon  
 along;  
 I shed in hell o'er my pale people  
 peace;  
 On earth I, caring for the creatures,  
 guard  
 Each pregnant yellow wolf and fox-  
 bitch sleek,

And every feathered mother's cal-  
 low brood,  
 And all that love green haunts and  
 loneliness.  
 Of men, the chaste adore me, hang-  
 ing crowns  
 Of poppies red to blackness, bell and  
 stem,  
 Upon my image at Athenai here;  
 And this dead Youth, Asclepios bends  
 above,  
 Was dearest to me. He, my bus-  
 kined step  
 To follow through the wild-wood  
 leafy ways,  
 And chase the panting stag, or swift  
 with darts  
 Stop the swift ounce, or lay the leop-  
 ard low,  
 Neglected homage to another god:  
 Whence Aphrodite, by no midnight  
 smoke  
 Of tapers lulled, in jealousy de-  
 spatched  
 A noisome lust that, as the gadbee  
 stings,  
 Possessed his stepdame Phaidra for  
 himself  
 The son of Theseus her great absent  
 spouse.  
 Hippolotos exclaiming in his rage  
 Against the fury of the Queen, she  
 judged  
 Life insupportable; and, pricked at  
 heart  
 An Amazonian stranger's race should  
 dare  
 To scorn her, perished by the murder-  
 ous cord:  
 Yet, ere she perished, blasted in a  
 scroll  
 The fame of him her swerving made  
 not swerve.  
 And Theseus, read, returning, and  
 believed,  
 And exiled, in the blindness of his  
 wrath,  
 The man without a crime who, last as  
 first,  
 Loyal, divulged not to his sire the  
 truth.  
 Now Theseus from Poseidon had ob-  
 tained  
 That of his wishes should be granted  
 three,  
 And one he imprecated straight—  
 "Alive  
 May ne'er Hippolotos reach other  
 lands!"

Poseidon heard, ai ai! And scarce  
 the prince  
 Had stepped into the fixed boots of  
 the car  
 That give the feet a stay against the  
 strength  
 Of the Henetian horses, and around  
 His body flung the rein, and urged  
 their speed  
 Along the rocks and shingles of the  
 shore,  
 When from the gaping wave a mon-  
 ster flung  
 His obscene body in the coursers'  
 path.  
 These, mad with terror, as the sea-  
 bull sprawled  
 Wallowing about their feet, lost care  
 of him  
 That reared them; and the master-  
 chariot-pole  
 Snapping beneath their plunges like a  
 reed,  
 Hippolotos, whose feet were tram-  
 melled fast,  
 Was yet dragged forward by the  
 circling rein  
 Which either hand directed; nor they  
 quenched  
 The frenzy of their flight before each  
 trace,  
 Wheel-spoke and splinter of the woef-  
 ul car,  
 Each boulder-stone, sharp stub, and  
 spiny shell,  
 Huge fish-bone wrecked and wreathed  
 amid the sands  
 On that detested beach, was bright  
 with blood  
 And morsels of his flesh: then fell the  
 steeds  
 Head-foremost, crashing in their  
 mooned fronts,  
 Shivering with sweat, each white eye  
 horror-fixed.  
 His people, who had witnessed all  
 afar,  
 Bore back the ruins of Hippolotos.  
 But when his sire, too swoln with  
 pride, rejoiced  
 (Indomitable as a man foredoomed)  
 That vast Poseidon had fulfilled his  
 prayer,  
 I, in a flood of glory visible,  
 Stood o'er my dying votary, and, deed  
 By deed, revealed, as all took place,  
 the truth.  
 Then Theseus lay the woefullest of  
 men,

And worthy; but ere the death-veils  
 hid  
 His face, the murdered prince full  
 pardon breathed  
 To his rash sire. Whereat Athenai  
 wails.

So I, who ne'er forsake my votaries,  
 Lest to the cross-way none the honey-  
 cake  
 Should tender, nor pour out the dog's  
 hot life;  
 Lest at my fane the priests disconsolate  
 late  
 Should dress my image with some  
 faded poor  
 Few crowns, made favors of, nor dare  
 object  
 Such slackness to my worshippers who  
 turn  
 Elsewhere the trusting heart and  
 loaded hand,  
 As they had climbed Olumpos to re-  
 port  
 Of Artemis and nowhere found her  
 throne —  
 I interposed: and, this eventful  
 night —  
 (While round the funeral pyre the  
 populace  
 Stood with fierce light on their black  
 robes which bound  
 Each sobbing head, while yet their  
 hair they clipped  
 O'er the dead body of their withered  
 prince,  
 And, in his palace, Theseus prostrated  
 On the cold hearth, his brow cold as  
 the slab  
 'Twas bruised on, groaned away the  
 heavy grief —  
 As the pyre fell, and down the cross  
 logs crashed  
 Sending a crowd of sparkles through  
 the night,  
 And the gay fire, elate with mastery,  
 Towered like a serpent o'er the clotted  
 jars  
 Of wine, dissolving oils and frankin-  
 cense,  
 And splendid gums like gold), — my  
 potency  
 Conveyed the perished man to my re-  
 treat  
 In the thrice-venerable forest here.  
 And this white-bearded sage who  
 squeezes now  
 The berried plant, is Phoibos' son of  
 fame,

<p>Asclepius, whom my radiant brother taught The doctrine of each herb and flower and root, To know their secret'st virtue and express The saving soul of all : who so has soothed With lavers the torn brow and mur- dered cheeks, Composed the hair and brought its gloss again, And called the red bloom to the pale skin back, And laid the strips and jagged ends of flesh Even once more, and slacked the sinew's knot Of every tortured limb — that now he lies</p>	<p>As if mere sleep possessed him under neath These interwoven oaks and pines. Oh cheer, Divine presenter of the healing rod, Thy snake, with ardent throat and lulling eye, Twines his lithe spires around ! I say, much cheer ! Proceed thou with thy wisest pharma- cies ! And ye, white crowd of woodland sister-nymphs, Ply, as the sage directs, these buds and leaves That strew the turf around the twain ! While I Await, in fitting silence, the event.</p>
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## PHEIDIPPIDES.

χαίρετε, νικῶμεν.

FIRST I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock !  
Gods of my birthplace, demons and heroes, honor to all !  
Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron, co-equal in praise  
— Ay, with Zeus the Defender, with Her of the ægis and spear !  
Also, ye of the bow and the buskin, praised be your peer,  
Now, henceforth, and forever, — O latest to whom I upraise  
Hand and heart and voice ! For Athens, leave pasture and flock !  
Present to help, potent to save, Pan — patron I call !

Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix, see, I return !  
See, 'tis myself here standing alive, no spectre that speaks !  
Crowned with the myrtle, did you command me, Athens and you,  
“ Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta for aid !  
Persia has come, we are here, where is She ? ” Your command I obeyed,  
Ran and raced : like stubble, some field which a fire runs through,  
Was the space between city and city : two days, two nights did I burn  
Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up peaks.

Into their midst I broke : breath served but for “ Persia has come !  
Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute, water and earth ;  
Razed to the ground is Eretria — but Athens, shall Athens sink,  
Drop into dust and die — the flower of Hellas utterly die,  
Die, with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the stupid, the stander-by ?  
Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you stretch o'er destruction's  
brink ?

How, — when ? No care for my limbs ! — there's lightning in all and some —  
Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips give it birth ! ”

O my Athens — Sparta love thee ? Did Sparta respond ?  
Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,

Malice, — each eye of her gave me its glitter of gratified hate!  
Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast for excuses. I stood  
Quivering, — the limbs of me fretting as fire frets, an inch from dry wood:  
"Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they debate?  
Thunder, thou Zeus! Athene, are Spartans a quarry beyond  
Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis, clang them 'Ye must'!"

No bolt launched from Olumpos! Lo, their answer at last!  
"Has Persia come, — does Athens ask aid, — may Sparta befriend?  
Nowise precipitate judgment — too weighty the issue at stake!  
Count we no time lost time which lags through respect to the Gods!  
Ponder that precept of old, 'No warfare, whatever the odds  
In your favor, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable to take  
Full-circle her state in the sky!' Already she rounds to it fast:  
Athens must wait, patient as we — who judgment suspend."

Athens, — except for that sparkle, — thy name, I had mouldered to ash!  
That sent a blaze through my blood; off, off and away was I back,  
— Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the false and the vile!  
Yet "O Gods of my land!" I cried, as each hillock and plain,  
Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past them again,  
"Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honors we paid you erewhile?  
Vain was the filleted victim, the fulsome libation! Too rash  
Love in its choice, paid you so largely service so slack!

"Oak and olive and bay, — I bid you cease to inwreath  
Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the Persian's foot,  
You that, our patrons were pledged, should never adorn a slave!  
Rather I hail thee, Parnes, — trust to thy wild waste tract!  
Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain! What matter if slacked  
My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to cave  
No deity deigns to drape with verdure, — at least I can breathe,  
Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from the mute!"

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes' ridge;  
Gully and gap, I clambered and cleared till, sudden, bar  
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the way.  
Right! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure across:  
"Where I could enter, there I depart by! Night in the fosse?  
Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise! No bridge  
Better!" — when — ha! what was it I came on, of wonders that are?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he — majestic Pan!  
Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned his hoof:  
All the great God was good in the eyes grave-kindly — the curl  
Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal's awe,  
As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand I saw.  
"Halt, Pheidippides!" — halt I did, my brain of a whirl:  
"Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?" he gracious began:  
"How is it, — Athens, only in Hellas, holds me aloof?

"Athens, she only, rears me no fane, makes me no feast!  
Wherefore? Than I what godship to Athens more helpful of old?  
Ay, and still, and forever her friend! Put Pan to the test!  
Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn, have faith  
In the temples and tombs! Go, say to Athens, 'The Goat-God saith:  
When Persia — so much as strews not the soil — is cast in the sea,  
Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with your most and least,  
Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one cause with the free and the bold!'

“ Say Pan saith : ‘ Let this, foreshowing the place, be the pledge ! ’ ”  
 (Gay, the liberal hand held out this herbage I bear  
 — Fennel, whatever it bode — I grasped it a-tremble with dew.)  
 “ While, as for thee . . . ” But enough ! He was gone. If I ran hither  
 to —  
 Be sure that, the rest of my journey, I ran no longer, but flew.  
 Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on the razor’s edge !  
 Pan for Athens, Pan for me ! myself have a guerdon rare !

Then spoke Miltiades. “ And thee, best runner of Greece,  
 Whose limbs did duty indeed, — what gift is promised thyself ?  
 Tell it us straightway, — Athens the mother demands of her son ! ”  
 Rosily blushed the youth : he paused : but, lifting at length  
 His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the rest of his strength  
 Into the utterance — “ Pan spoke thus : ‘ For what thou hast done  
 Count on a worthy reward ! Henceforth be allowed thee release  
 From the racer’s toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in pelf ! ’ ”

“ I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to my mind !  
 Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel may grow, —  
 Pound — Pan helping us — Persia to dust, and, under the deep,  
 Whelm her away forever ; and then, — no Athens to save, —  
 Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the brave, —  
 Hie to my house and home : and, when my children shall creep  
 Close to my knees, — recount how the God was awful yet kind,  
 Promised their sire reward to the full — rewarding him — so ! ”

Unforeseeing one ! Yes, he fought on the Marathon day :  
 So, when Persia was dust, all cried “ To Akropolis !  
 Run, Pheidippides, one race more ! the meed is thy due !  
 ‘ Athens is saved, thank Pan, ’ go shout ! ” He flung down his shield,  
 Ran like fire once more : and the space ’twixt the Fennel-field  
 And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through,  
 Till in he broke : “ Rejoice, we conquer ! ” Like wine through clay,  
 Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died — the bliss !

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of salute  
 Is still “ Rejoice ! ” — his word which brought rejoicing indeed.  
 So is Pheidippides happy forever, — the noble strong man  
 Who could race like a God, bear the face of a God, whom a God loved so  
 well  
 He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was suffered to tell  
 Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he began,  
 So to end gloriously — once to shout, thereafter be mute :  
 “ Athens is saved ! ” — Pheidippides dies in the shout for his meed.

## THE PATRIOT.

## AN OLD STORY.

## I.

It was roses, roses, all the way,  
 With myrtle mixed in my path like  
 mad :  
 The house-roofs seemed to heave and  
 sway,  
 The church-spires flamed, such flags  
 they had,  
 A year ago on this very day.

## II.

The air broke into a mist with bells,  
 The old walls rocked with the crowd  
 and cries.  
 Had I said, " Good folk, mere noise  
 repels —  
 But give me your sun from yonder  
 skies !"  
 They had answered " And afterward,  
 what else ?"

## III.

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun  
 To give it my loving friends to  
 keep !  
 Naught man could do, have I left un-  
 done :  
 And you see my harvest, what I  
 reap  
 This very day, now a year is run.

## IV.

There's nobody on the house-tops  
 now —  
 Just a palsied few at the windows  
 set ;  
 For the best of the sight is, all allow,  
 At the Shambles' Gate — or, better  
 yet,  
 By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

## V.

I go in the rain, and, more than  
 needs,  
 A rope cuts both my wrists behind ;  
 And I think, by the feel, my forehead  
 bleeds,  
 For they fling, whoever has a mind,  
 Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

## VI.

Thus I entered, and thus I go !  
 In triumphs, people have dropped  
 down dead.  
 " Paid by the world, what dost thou  
 owe  
 Me ?" — God might question ; now  
 instead,  
 'Tis God shall repay : I am safer so.

## POPULARITY.

## I.

STAND still, true poet that you are !  
 I know you ; let me try and draw  
 you.  
 Some night you'll fail us : when afar  
 You rise, remember one man saw  
 you,  
 Knew you, and named a star !

## II.

My star, God's glow-worm ! Why  
 extend  
 That loving hand of His which leads  
 you,  
 Yet locks you safe from end to end  
 Of this dark world, unless He needs  
 you,  
 Just saves your light to spend ?

## III.

His clinched hand shall unclose at  
 last,  
 I know, and let out all the beauty :  
 My poet holds the future fast,  
 Accepts the coming ages' duty,  
 Their present for this past.

## IV.

That day, the earth's feast-master's  
 brow  
 Shall clear, to God the chalice rais-  
 ing ;  
 " Others give best at first, but Thou  
 Forever set'st our table praising,  
 Keep'st the good wine till now !"

## V.

Meantime, I'll draw you as you stand,  
 With few or none to watch and  
 wonder :

I'll say — a fisher, on the sand  
By Tyre the old, with ocean-plunder,  
A netful, brought to land.

## VI.

Who has not heard how Tyrian shells  
Enclosed the blue, that dye of dyes  
Whereof one drop worked miracles,  
And colored like Astarte's eyes  
Raw silk the merchant sells?

## VII.

And each by-stander of them all  
Could criticise, and quote tradition  
How depths of blue sublimed some  
pall  
—To get which, pricked a king's  
ambition;  
Worth sceptre, crown, and ball.

## VIII.

Yet there's the dye, in that rough  
mesh,  
The sea has only just o'er-whis-  
pered!  
Live wheelks, each lip's beard dripping  
fresh,  
As if they still the water's lisp  
heard  
Through foam the rock-weeds thresh.

## IX.

Enough to furnish Solomon  
Such hangings for his cedar-house,  
That, when gold-robed he took the  
throne  
In that abyss of blue, the Spouse  
Might swear his presence shone

## X.

Most like the centre-spike of gold  
Which burns deep in the blue-bell's  
womb  
What time, with ardors manifold,  
The bee goes singing to her groom,  
Drunken and overbold.

## XI.

Mere conchs! not fit for warp or  
woof!  
Till cunning come to pound and  
squeeze  
And clarify, — refine to proof  
The liquor filtered by degrees,  
While the world stands aloof.

## XII.

And there's the extract, flasked and  
fine,  
And priced and salable at last!  
And Hobbs, Nobbs, Stokes, and Nokes  
combine  
To paint the future from the past,  
Put blue into their line.

## XIII.

Hobbs hints blue, — straight he turtle  
eats:  
Nobbs prints blue, — claret crowns  
his cup:  
Nokes outdares Stokes in azure  
feats, —  
Both gorge. Who fished the murex  
up?  
What porridge had John Keats?

## PISGAH-SIGHTS. 1.

## I.

OVER the ball of it,  
Peering and prying,  
How I see all of it,  
Life there, outlying!  
Roughness and smoothness,  
Shine and defilement,  
Grace and uncouthness;  
One reconciliation.

## II.

Orbed as appointed,  
Sister with brother  
Joins, ne'er disjointed  
One from the other.  
All's lend-and-borrow;  
Good, see, wants evil,  
Joy demands sorrow,  
Angel weds devil!

## III.

"Which things must — *why* be?"  
Vain our endeavor!  
So shall things aye be  
As they were ever.  
"Such things should *so* be!"  
Sage our desistence!  
Rough-smooth let globe be,  
Mixed — man's existence!

## IV.

Man — wise and foolish,  
 Lover and scorner,  
 Docile and mulish —  
 Keep each his corner!  
 Honey yet gall of it!  
 There's the life lying,  
 And I see all of it,  
 Only, I'm dying!

## PISGAH-SIGHTS. 2.

## I.

COULD I but live again,  
 Twice my life over,  
 Would I once strive again?  
 Would not I cover  
 Quietly all of it —  
 Greed and ambition —  
 So, from the pall of it,  
 Pass to fruition?

## II.

“Soft!” I'd say, “Soul mine!  
 Threescore and ten years,  
 Let the blind mole mine  
 Digging out deniers!  
 Let the dazed hawk soar,  
 Claim the sun's rights too!  
 Turf 'tis thy walk's o'er,  
 Foliage thy flight's to.”

## III.

Only a learner,  
 Quick one or slow one,  
 Just a discernor,  
 I would teach no one.  
 I am earth's native:  
 No re-arranging it!  
 I be creative,  
 Chopping and changing it?

## IV.

March, men, my fellows!  
 Those who, above me  
 (Distance so mellow),  
 Fancy you love me:  
 Those who, below me  
 (Distance makes great so),  
 Free to forego me,  
 Fancy you hate so!

## V.

Praising, reviling,  
 Worst head and best head,  
 Past me defiling,  
 Never arrested,  
 Wanters, abounders,  
 March, in gay mixture,  
 Men, my surrounders!  
 I am the fixture.

## VI.

So shall I fear thee,  
 Mightiness yonder!  
 Mock-sun — more near thee,  
 What is to wonder?  
 So shall I love thee,  
 Down in the dark, — lest  
 Glowworm I prove thee,  
 Star that now sparklest!

## PISGAH-SIGHTS. 3.

## I.

GOOD, to forgive;  
 Best, to forget!  
 Living, we fret;  
 Dying, we live.  
 Fretless and free,  
 Soul, clap thy pinion!  
 Earth have dominion,  
 Body, o'er thee!

## II.

Wander at will,  
 Day after day, —  
 Wander away,  
 Wandering still —  
 Soul that canst soar!  
 Body may slumber:  
 Body shall cumber  
 Soul-flight no more.

## III.

Waft of soul's wing!  
 What lies above?  
 Sunshine and Love,  
 Skyblue and Spring!  
 Body hides — where?  
 Ferns of all feather,  
 Mosses and heather,  
 Yours be the care!



## AT THE "MERMAID."

The figure that thou here seest . . . Tut!  
Was it for gentle Shakspeare put?

B. JONSON. (*Adapted.*)

## I.

I—"Next Poet?" No, my hearties,  
I nor am nor fain would be!  
Choose your chiefs and pick your  
parties,  
Not one soul revolt to me!  
I, forsooth, sow song-sedition?  
I, a schism in verse provoke?  
I, blown up by bard's ambition,  
Burst—your bubble-king? You  
joke.

## II.

Come, be grave! The sherris man-  
tling  
Still about each mouth, mayhap,  
Breeds you insight—just a scant-  
ling—  
Brings me truth out—just a scrap.  
Look and tell me! Written, spoken,  
Here's my life-long work: and  
where  
—Where's your warrant or my token  
I'm the dead king's son and heir?

## III.

Here's my work: does work discover  
What was rest from work—my  
life?  
Did I live man's hater, lover?  
Leave the world at peace, at strife?  
Call earth ugliness or beauty?  
See things there in large or small?  
Use to pay its Lord my duty?  
Use to own a lord at all?

## IV.

Blank of such a record, truly,  
Here's the work I hand, this scroll,  
Yours to take or leave; as duly,  
Mine remains the unproffered soul.  
So much, no whit more, my debtors—  
How should one like me lay claim  
To that largess elders, betters  
Sell you cheap their souls for—  
fame?

## V.

Which of you did I enable  
Once to slip inside my breast  
There to catalogue and label  
What I like least, what love best,

Hope and fear, believe and doubt of,  
Seek and shun, respect—deride?  
Who has right to make a rout of  
Rarities he found inside?

## VI.

Rarities or, as he'd rather,  
Rubbish such as stocks his own:  
Need and greed (oh strange!) the  
Father  
Fashioned not for him alone!  
Whence—the comfort set a-strutting,  
Whence—the outcry "Haste, be-  
hold!  
Bard's breast open wide, past shut-  
ting,  
Shows what brass we took for  
gold!"

## VII.

Friends, I doubt not he'd display you  
Brass—myself call oreichalch,—  
Furnish much amusement; pray you  
Therefore, be content I balk  
Him and you, and bar my portal!  
Here's my work outside; opine  
What's inside me mean and mortal!  
Take your pleasure, leave me mine!

## VIII.

Which is—not to buy your laurel  
As last king did, nothing loth.  
Tale adorned and pointed moral  
Gained him praise and pity both.  
Out rushed sighs and groans by  
dozens,  
Forth by scores oaths, curses flew:  
Proving you were cater-cousins,  
Kith and kindred, king and you!

## IX.

Whereas do I ne'er so little  
(Thanks to sherris) leave ajar  
Bosom's gate—no jot nor tittle  
Grow we nearer than we are.  
Sinning, sorrowing, despairing,  
Body-ruined, spirit-wrecked,—  
Should I give my woes an airing,—  
Where's one plague that claims  
respect?

## X.

Have you found your life distasteful?  
My life did and does smack sweet.  
Was your youth of pleasure waste-  
ful?  
Mine I saved and hold complete.

Do your joys with age diminish ?  
When mine fail me, I'll complain.  
Must in death your daylight finish ?  
My sun sets to rise again.

## XI.

What, like you, he proved — your  
Pilgrim —  
This our world a wilderness,  
Earth still gray and heaven still  
grim,  
Not a hand there his might press,  
Not a heart his own might throb to,  
Men all rogues and women — say,  
Dolls which boys' heads duck and bob  
to,  
Grown folk drop or throw away ?

## XII.

My experience being other,  
How should I contribute verse  
Worthy of your king and brother ?  
Balaam-like I bless, not curse.  
I find earth not gray but rosy,  
Heaven not grim but fair of hue.  
Do I stoop ? I pluck a posy.  
Do I stand and stare ? All's blue.

## XIII.

Doubtless I am pushed and shoved  
by  
Rogues and fools enough : the more  
Good luck mine, I love, am loved by  
Some few honest to the core.  
Scan the near high, scout the far low !  
"But the low come close : " what  
then ?  
Simpletons ? My match is Marlowe ;  
Sciologists ? My mate is Ben.

## XIV.

Womankind — "the cat-like nature,  
False and fickle, vain and weak" —  
Scarcely this sad nomenclature  
Suits my tongue, if I must speak.  
Does the sex invite, repulse so,  
Tempt, betray, by fits and starts ?  
So becalm but to convulse so,  
Decking heads and breaking hearts ?

## XV.

Well may you blaspheme at fortune !  
I "threw Venus" (Ben, expound !)  
Never did I need importune  
Her, of all the Olympian round.

Blessings on my benefactress !  
Cursings suit — for aught I know —  
Those who twitched her by the back  
tress,  
Tugged and thought to turn her —  
so !

## XVI.

Therefore, since no leg to stand on  
Thus I'm left with, — joy or grief  
Be the issue, — I abandon  
Hope or care you name me Chief !  
Chief and king and Lord's anointed,  
I ? — who never once have wished  
Death before the day appointed :  
Lived and liked, not poohed and  
pished !

## XVII.

"Ah, but so I shall not enter,  
Scroll in hand, the common heart —  
Stopped at surface : since at centre  
Song should reach *Welt-schmerz*,  
world-smart !"  
"Enter in the heart ?" Its shelly  
Cuirass guard mine, fore and aft !  
Such song "enters in the belly  
And is cast out in the draught."

## XVIII.

Back then to our sherris-brewage !  
"Kingship" quotha ? I shall wait —  
Waive the present time : some new  
age . . .  
But let fools anticipate !  
Meanwhile greet me — "friend, good  
fellow,  
Gentle Will," my merry men !  
As for making Envy yellow  
With "Next Poet" — (Manners,  
Ben !)

## HOUSE.

## I.

SHALL I sonnet-sing you about my-  
self ?  
Do I live in a house you would like  
to see ?  
Is it scant of gear, has it store of pelf ?  
"Unlock my heart with a sonnet-  
key ?"

## II.

Invite the world, as my betters have done?

"Take notice: this building remains on view,  
Its suites of reception every one,  
Its private apartment and bedroom too;

## III.

"For a ticket, apply to the Publisher."

No: thanking the public, I must decline.

A peep through my window, if folks prefer;

But, please you, no foot over threshold of mine!

## IV.

I have mixed with a crowd and heard free talk

In a foreign land where an earthquake chanced

And a house stood gaping, naught to balk

Man's eye wherever he gazed or glanced.

## V.

The whole of the frontage shaven sheer,

The inside gaped: exposed to day,  
Right and wrong and common and queer,

Bare, as the palm of your hand, it lay.

## VI.

The owner? Oh, he had been crushed, no doubt!

"Odd tables and chairs for a man of wealth!

What a parcel of musty old books about!

He smoked,—no wonder he lost his health!

## VII.

"I doubt if he bathed before he dressed.

A brazier?—the pagan, he burned perfumes!

You see it is proved, what the neighbors guessed:

His wife and himself had separate rooms."

## VIII.

Friends, the goodman of the house at least

Kept house to himself till an earthquake came:

'Tis the fall of its frontage permits you feast.

On the inside arrangement you praise or blame.

## IX.

Outside should suffice for evidence:

And whoso desires to penetrate deeper, must dive by the spirit-sense—

No optics like yours, at any rate!

## X.

"Hoity toity! A street to explore,  
Your house the exception! 'With this same key  
*Shakspeare unlocked his heart,*' once more!"

Did Shakspeare? If so, the less Shakspeare he!

## SHOP.

## I.

So, friend, your shop was all your house!

Its front, astonishing the street,  
Invited view from man and mouse

To what diversity of treat  
Behind its glass—the single sheet!

## II.

What gimcracks, genuine Japanese:  
Gape-jaw and goggle-eye, the frog;

Dragons, owls, monkeys, beetles, geese;

Some crush-nosed human-hearted dog:

Queer names, too, such a catalogue!

## III.

I thought "And he who owns the wealth

Which blocks the window's vastitude,

—Ah, could I peep at him by stealth

Behind his ware, pass shop, intrude  
On house itself, what scenes were viewed!

## IV.

"If wide and showy thus the shop,  
What must the habitation prove?  
The true house with no name a-top—  
The mansion, distant one remove,  
Once get him off his traffic-groove!

## V.

"Pictures he likes, or books perhaps;  
And as for buying most and best,  
Commend me to these city chaps!  
Or else he's social, takes his rest  
On Sundays, with a Lord for guest.

## VI.

"Some suburb-palace, parked about  
And gated grandly, built last year:  
The four-mile walk to keep off gout;  
Or big seat sold by bankrupt peer:  
But then he takes the rail, that's  
clear.

## VII.

"Or, stop! I wager, taste selects  
Some out o' the way, some all-  
unknown  
Retreat: the neighborhood suspects  
Little that he who rambles lone  
Makes Rothschild tremble on his  
throne!"

## VIII.

Nowise! Nor Mayfair residence  
Fit to receive and entertain,—  
Nor Hampstead villa's kind defence  
From noise and crowd, from dust and  
drain,—  
Nor country-box was soul's domain!

## IX.

Nowise! At back of all that spread  
Of merchandise, woe's me, I find  
A hole i' the wall where, heels by  
head,  
The owner couched, his ware be-  
hind,  
— In cupboard suited to his mind.

## X.

For, why? He saw no use of life  
But, while he drove a roaring trade,  
To chuckle "Customers are rife!"  
To chafe "So much hard cash out-  
laid  
Yet zero in my profits made!

## XI.

"This novelty costs pains, but—  
takes?  
Cumbers my counter! Stock no  
more!  
This article, no such great shakes,  
Fizzes like wild fire? Underscore  
The cheap thing— thousands to the  
fore!"

## XII.

'Twas lodging best to live most nigh  
(Cramp, coffinlike as crib might be)  
Receipt of Custom; ear and eye  
Wanted no outworld: "Hear and  
see  
The bustle in the shop!" quoth he.

## XIII.

My fancy of a merchant-prince  
Was different. Through his wares  
we groped  
Our darkling way to— no to mince  
The matter— no black den where  
moped  
The master if we interloped!

## XIV.

Shop was shop only: household-  
stuff?  
What did he want with comforts  
there?  
"Walls, ceiling, floor, stay blank and  
rough,  
So goods on sale show rich and rare!  
'Sell and send home,' be shop's  
affair!"

## XV.

What might he deal in? Gems, sup-  
pose!  
Since somehow business must be  
done  
At cost of trouble,— see, he throws  
You choice of jewels, every one  
Good, better, best, star, moon, and  
sun!

## XVI.

Which lies within your power of  
purse?  
This ruby that would tip aright  
Solomon's sceptre? Oh, your nurse  
Wants simply coral, the delight  
Of teething baby,— stuff to bite!



A Tale. — Page 281.



## XVII.

Howe'er your choice fell, straight you  
took  
Your purchase, prompt your money  
rang  
On counter, — scarce the man forsook  
His study of the "Times," just  
swang  
Till-ward his hand that stopped the  
clang, —

## XVIII.

Then off made buyer with a prize,  
Then seller to his "Times" re-  
turned,  
And so did day wear, wear, till eyes  
Brightened apace, for rest was  
earned :  
He locked door long ere candle  
burned.

## XIX.

And whither went he? Ask him-  
self,  
Not me! To change of scene, I  
think.  
Once sold the ware and pursed the  
pelf,  
Chaffer was scarce his meat and  
drink,  
Nor all his music — money-chink.

## XX.

Because a man has shop to mind  
In time and place, since flesh must  
live,  
Needs spirit lack all life behind,  
All stray thoughts, fancies fugitive,  
All loves except what trade can  
give?

## XXI.

I want to know a butcher paints,  
A baker rhymes for his pursuit,  
A candlestick-maker much acquaints  
His soul with song, or, haply mute,  
Blows out his brains upon the flute!

## XXII.

But — shop each day and all day long!  
Friend, your good angel slept, your  
star  
Suffered eclipse, fate did you wrong!  
From where these sorts of treas-  
ures are,  
There should our hearts be — Christ,  
how far!

## A TALE.

## I.

WHAT a pretty tale you told me  
Once upon a time  
— Said you found it somewhere (scold-  
me!)  
Was it prose or was it rhyme,  
Greek or Latin? Greek, you said,  
While your shoulder propped my  
head.

## II.

Anyhow there's no forgetting  
This much if no more,  
That a poet (pray, no petting!)  
Yes, a bard, sir, famed of yore,  
Went where suchlike used to go,  
Singing for a prize, you know.

## III.

Well, he had to sing, nor merely —  
Sing but play the lyre;  
Playing was important clearly  
Quite as singing: I desire,  
Sir, you keep the fact in mind  
For a purpose that's behind.

## IV.

There stood he, while deep attention  
Held the judges round,  
— Judges able, I should mention,  
To detect the slightest sound  
Sung or played amiss: such ears  
Had old judges, it appears!

## V.

None the less he sang out boldly,  
Played in time and tune,  
Till the judges, weighing coldly  
Each note's worth, seemed, late or  
soon,  
Sure to smile "In vain one tries  
Picking faults out: take the prize!"

## VI.

When, a mischief! Were they seven  
Strings the lyre possessed?  
Oh, and afterwards eleven,  
Thank you! Well, sir, — who had  
guessed  
Such ill luck in store? — it happed  
One of those same seven strings  
snapped.

## VII.

All was lost, then! No! a cricket  
 (What "cicada"? Pooh!)  
 —Some mad thing that left its thicket  
 For mere love of music—flew  
 With its little heart on fire,  
 Lighted on the crippled lyre.

## VIII.

So that when (Ah joy!) our singer  
 For his truant string  
 Feels with disconcerted finger,  
 What does cricket else but fling  
 Fiery heart forth, sound the note  
 Wanted by the throbbing throat?

## IX.

Ay and, ever to the ending,  
 Cricket chirps at need,  
 Executes the hand's intending,  
 Promptly, perfectly,—indeed  
 Saves the singer from defeat  
 With her chirrup low and sweet.

## X.

Till, at ending, all the judges  
 Cry with one assent  
 "Take the prize—a prize who grudges  
 Such a voice and instrument?  
 Why, we took your lyre for harp,  
 So it shrilled us forth F sharp!"

## XI.

Did the conqueror spurn the creature,  
 Once its service done?  
 That's no such uncommon feature  
 In the case when Music's son  
 Finds his Lotte's power too spent  
 For aiding soul-development.

## XII.

No! This other, on returning  
 Homeward, prize in hand,  
 Satisfied his bosom's yearning:  
 (Sir, I hope you understand!)  
 —Said "Some record there must be  
 Of this cricket's help to me!"

## XIII.

So, he made himself a statue:  
 Marble stood, life-size;

On the lyre, he pointed at you,  
 Perched his partner in the prize;  
 Never more apart you found  
 Her, he throned, from him, she  
 crowned.

## XIV.

That's the tale: its application?  
 Somebody I know  
 Hopes one day for reputation  
 Through his poetry that's—Oh,  
 All so learned and so wise,  
 And deserving of a prize!

## XV.

If he gains one, will some ticket,  
 When his statue's built,  
 Tell the gazer "'Twas a cricket  
 Helped my crippled lyre, whose lilt  
 Sweet and low, when strength  
 usurped  
 Softness' place i' the scale, she  
 chirped?"

## XVI.

"For as victory was nighest,  
 While I sang and played,—  
 With my lyre at lowest, highest,  
 Right alike,—one string that made  
 'Love' sound soft was snapt in twain,  
 Never to be heard again,—

## XVII.

"Had not a kind cricket fluttered,  
 Perched upon the place  
 Vacant left, and duly uttered  
 'Love, Love, Love,' whene'er the  
 bass  
 Asked the treble to atone  
 For its somewhat sombre drone."

## XVIII.

But you don't know music! Where-  
 fore  
 Keep on casting pearls  
 To a—poet? All I care for  
 Is—(so tell him that a girl's  
 "Love" comes aptly in when gruff  
 Grows his singing. (There, enough!)













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