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# DRAMAS

BY

ROBERT BROWNING

*TWO VOLUMES IN ONE*



BOSTON  
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY  
New York: 11 East Seventeenth Street  
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1886

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TO ROBERT BROWNING.

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**THERE** is delight in singing, though none **hear**  
Beside the singer: and there is delight  
In praising, though the praiser sit alone  
And see the praised far off him, far above.  
Shakspeare is not our poet, but the world's,  
Therefore on him no speech! and brief for thee,  
Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,  
No man hath walkt along our roads with step  
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue  
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes  
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the breeze  
Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on  
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where  
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR



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DRAMAS  
BY  
ROBERT BROWNING.

VOL. I.



# PARACELsus.

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## PERSONS.

AUREOLUS PARACELsus.  
FESTUS & } his Friends.  
MICHAL, }  
APRILE, an Italian Poet.

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## I.—PARACELsus ASPIRES.

SCENE.—*Würzburg—a garden in the environs.* 1512.

FESTUS, PARACELsus, MICHAL.

*Par.* Come close to me, dear friends ; still closer ; thus !  
Close to the heart which, though long time roll by  
Ere it again beat quicker, pressed to yours,  
As now it beats—perchance a long, long time—  
At least henceforth your memories shall make  
Quiet and fragrant as befits their home.  
Nor shall my memory want a home in yours—  
Alas, that it requires too well such free

Forgiving love as shall embalm it there !  
 For if you would remember me aright—  
 As I was born to be—you must forget  
 All fitful, strange, and moody waywardness  
 Which e'er confused my better spirit, to dwell  
 Only on moments such as these, dear friends !  
 —My heart no truer, but my words and ways  
 More true to it : as Michal, some months hence,  
 Will say, “ this autumn was a pleasant time,”  
 For some few sunny days ; and overlook  
 Its bleak wind, hankering after pining leaves.  
 Autumn would fain be sunny—I would look  
 Liker my nature's truth ; and both are frail,  
 And both beloved for all their frailty !

*Mich.*

Aureole !

*Par.* Drop by drop !—she is weeping like a child !  
 Not so ! I am content—more than content—  
 Nay, Autumn wins you best by this its mute  
 Appeal to sympathy for its decay !  
 Look up, sweet Michal, nor esteem the less  
 Your stained and drooping vines their grapes bow down,  
 Nor blame those creaking trees bent with their fruit,  
 That apple-tree with a rare after-birth  
 Of peeping blooms sprinkled its wealth among !  
 Then for the winds—what wind that ever raved  
 Shall vex that ash that overlooks you both,  
 So proud it wears its berries ? Ah ! at length,  
 The old smile meet for her, the lady of this  
 Sequestered nest ! This kingdom, limited

Alone by one old populous green wall,  
 Tenanted by the ever-busy flies,  
 Gray crickets, and shy lizards, and quick spiders,  
 Each family of the silver-threaded moss—  
 Which, look through, near, this way, and it appears  
 A stubble-field, or a canebrake—a marsh  
 (Of bulrush whitening in the sun : laugh now !  
 Fancy the crickets, each one in his house,  
 Looking out, wondering at the world—or best,  
 Yon painted snail, with his gay shell of dew,  
 Travelling to see the glossy balls high up  
 Hung by the caterpillar, like gold lamps !

*Mich.* In truth we have lived carelessly and well !

*Par.* And shall, my perfect pair—each, trust me, born  
 For the other ; nay, your very hair, when mixed,  
 Is of one hue. For where save in this nook  
 Shall you two walk, when I am far away,  
 And wish me prosperous fortune ? Stay ! Whene'er  
 That plant shall wave its tangles lightly and softly,  
 As a queen's languid and imperial arm  
 Which scatters crowns among her lovers, you  
 Shall be reminded to predict to me  
 Some great success ! Ah, see ! the sun sinks broad  
 Behind St. Saviour's : wholly gone, at last !

*Fest.* Now, Aureole, stay those wandering eyes & whi  
 You are ours to-night at least ; and while you spoke  
 Of Michal and her tears, the thought came back  
 That none could leave what he so seemed to love :  
 But that last look destroys my dream—that look !

As if, where'er you gazed, there stood a star .  
 How far was Würzburg, with its church and spire,  
 And garden-walls, and all things they contain,  
 From that look's far alighting ?

*Par.* I but spoke  
 And looked alike from simple joy, to see  
 The beings I love best, shut in so well  
 From all rude chances like to be my lot,  
 That, when afar, my weary spirit,—disposed  
 To lose awhile its care in soothing thoughts  
 Of them, their pleasant features, looks, and words,—  
 Need never hesitate, nor apprehend  
 Encroaching trouble may have reached them too,  
 Nor have recourse to Fancy's busy aid  
 To fashion even a wish in their behalf  
 Beyond what they possess already here ;  
 But, unobstructed, may at once forget  
 Itself in them, assured how well they are.  
 Beside, this Festus knows, he thinks me one  
 Whom quiet and its charms attract in vain,  
 One scarce aware of all the joys I quit,  
 Too fill'd with airy hopes to make account  
 Of soft delights which free hearts garner up :  
 Whereas, behold how much our sense of all  
 That's beautiful proves alike ! When Festus learns  
 That every common pleasure of the world  
 Affects me as himself ; that I have just  
 As varied appetites for joy derived  
 From common things ; a stake in life, in short,



Like his ; a stake which rash pursuit of aims  
 That life affords not, would as soon destroy ;—  
 He may convince himself, that, this in view,  
 I shall act well advised : and last, because,  
 Though heaven and earth, and all things, were at stake.  
 Sweet Michal must not weep, our parting eve !

*Fest.* True : and the eve is deepening, and we sit  
 As little anxious to begin our talk  
 As though to-morrow I could open it  
 As we paced arm in arm the cheerful town  
 At sun-dawn ; and continue it by fits  
 (Old Tritheim busied with his class the while)  
 In that dim chamber where the noon-streaks peer  
 Half frightened by the awful tomes around ;  
 And here at home unbosom all the rest  
 From even-blush to midnight : but, to-morrow ' . .  
 Have I full leave to tell my inmost mind ?  
 We two were brothers, and henceforth the world  
 Will rise between us :—all my freest mind ?  
 'Tis the last night, dear Aureole !

*Par.* Oh, say on !  
 Devise some test of love—some arduous feat  
 To be performed for you—say on ! If night  
 Be spent the while, the better ! Recall how oft  
 My wondrous plans, and dreams, and hopes, and fears  
 Have—never wearied you . . . oh, no ! . . . as I  
 Recall, and never vividly as now,  
 Your true affection, born when Einsiedeln  
 And its green hills were all the world to us,

And still increasing to this night, which ends  
 My further stay at Würzburg . . . Oh, one day  
 You shall be very proud ! Say on, dear friends !

*Fest.* In truth ? 'Tis for my proper peace, indeed,  
 Rather than yours ; for vain all projects seem  
 To stay your course : I said my latest hope  
 Is fading even now. A story tells  
 Of some far embassy despatched to buy  
 The favour of an eastern king, and how  
 The gifts they offered proved but dazzling dust  
 Shed from the ore-beds native to his clime :  
 Just so, the value of repose and love,  
 I meant should tempt you, better far than I  
 You seem to comprehend—and yet desist  
 No whit from projects where repose nor love  
 Have part.

*Par.* Once more ? Alas ! as I forbode !

*Fest.* A solitary briar the bank puts forth  
 To save our swan's nest floating out to sea.

*Par.* Dear Festus, hear me. What is it you wish !  
 That I should lay aside my heart's pursuit,  
 Abandon the sole ends for which I live,  
 Reject God's great commission—and so die !  
 You bid me listen for your true love's sake :  
 Yet how has grown that love ? Even in a long  
 And patient cherishing of the selfsame spirit  
 It now would quell ; as though a mother hoped  
 To stay the lusty manhood of the child  
 Once weak upon her knees. I was not born

Informed and fearless from the first, but shrank  
 From aught which marked me out apart from men.  
 I would have lived their life, and died their death,  
 Lost in their ranks, eluding destiny :  
 But you first guided me through doubt and fear,  
 Taught me to know mankind and know myself ;  
 And now that I am strong and full of hope,  
 That, from my soul, I can reject all aims  
 Save those your earnest words made plain to me ;  
 Now, that I touch the brink of my design,  
 When I would have a triumph in their eyes,  
 A glad cheer in their voices—Michal weeps,  
 And Festus ponders gravely !

*Fest.* . . . . . When you deign  
 To hear my purpose . . .

*Par.* . . . . . Hear it? I can say  
 Beforehand all this evening's conference !  
 'Tis this way, Michal, that he uses : first,  
 Or he declares, or I, the leading points  
 Of our best scheme of life, what is man's end,  
 And what God's will—no two faiths e'er agreed  
 As his with mine : next, each of us allows  
 Faith should be acted on as best we may :  
 Accordingly, I venture to submit  
 A plan, in lack of better, for pursuing  
 The path which God's will seems to authorize :  
 Well—he discerns much good in it, avows  
 This motive worthy, that hope plausible,  
 A danger here, to be avoided—there,

An oversight to be repaired : at last  
 Our two minds go together—all the good  
 Approved by him, I gladly recognize ;  
 All he counts bad, I thankfully discard ;  
 And nought forbids my looking up at last  
 For some stray comfort in his cautious brow—  
 When, lo ! I learn that, spite of all, there lurks  
 Some innate and inexplicable germ  
 Of failure in my schemes ; so that at last  
 It all amounts to this—the sovereign proof  
 That we devote ourselves to God, is seen  
 In living just as though there were no God ;  
 A life which, prompted by the sad and blind  
 Lusts of the world, Festus abhors the most—  
 But which these tenets sanctify at once ;  
 Though to less subtle wits it seems the same,  
 Consider it how they may.

*Mich.*

Is it so, Festus ?

He speaks so calmly and kindly—is it so ?

*Par.* Reject those glorious visions of God's love  
 And man's design ; laugh loud that God should send  
 Vast longings to direct us ; say how soon  
 Power satiates these, or lust, or gold ; I know  
 The world's cry well, and how to answer it !  
 But this ambiguous warfare . . .

*Fest.*

. . . Wearies so

That you will grant no last leave to your friend  
 To urge it ?—for his sake, not yours ? I wish  
 To send my soul in good hopes after you ;

Never to sorrow that uncertain words,  
Erringly apprehended—a new creed,  
Ill understood—begot rash trust in you,  
And shared in your undoing.

*Par.* Choose your side:  
Hold or renounce: but meanwhile blame me not  
Because I dare to act on your own views,  
Nor shrink when they point onward, nor espy  
A peril where they most insure success.

*Fest.* Prove that to me—but that! Prove you abide  
Within their warrant, nor presumptuous boast  
God's labour laid on you; prove, all you covet  
A mortal may expect; and, most of all  
Prove the strange course you now affect, will lead  
To its attainment—and I bid you speed,  
Nay, count the minutes till you venture forth!  
You smile; but I had gathered from slow thought—  
Much musing on the fortunes of my friend—  
Matter I deemed could not be urged in vain:  
But it all leaves me at my need: in shreds  
And fragments I must venture what remains.

*Mich.* Ask at once, Festus, wherefore he should  
scorn . . .

*Fest.* Stay, Michal: Aureole, I speak guardedly  
And gravely, knowing well, whate'er your error,  
This is no ill-considered choice of yours—  
No sudden fancy of an ardent boy.  
Not from your own confiding words alone  
Am I aware your passionate heart long since

Gave birth to, nourished, and at length matures  
This scheme. I will not speak of Einsiedeln,  
Where I was born your elder by some years  
Only to watch you fully from the first :  
In all beside, our mutual tasks were fixed  
Even then—'twas mine to have you in my view  
As you had your own soul and those intents  
Which filled it when, to crown your dearest wish,  
With a tumultuous heart, you left with me  
Our childhood's home to join the favoured few  
Whom, here at Würzburg, Tritheim deigns to teach  
A portion of his lore : and not the best  
Of those so favoured, whom you now despise,  
Came earnest as you came ; resolved, like you,  
To grasp all, and retain all, and deserve  
By patient toil a wide renown like his.  
And this new ardour which supplants the old,  
I watched, too ; 'twas significant and strange,  
In one matched to his soul's content at length  
With rivals in the search for Wisdom's prize.  
To see the sudden pause, the total change ;  
From contest, the transition to repose—  
From pressing onward as his fellows pressed,  
To a blank idleness ; yet most unlike  
The dull stagnation of a soul, content,  
Once foiled, to leave betimes a thriveless quest.  
That careless bearing, free from all pretence  
Even of contempt for what it ceased to seek—  
Smiling humility, praising much, yet waiving



What it professed to praise—though not so well  
Maintained but that rare outbreaks, fierce as brief,  
Revealed the hidden scorn, as quickly curbed—  
That ostentatious show of past defeat,  
That ready acquiescence in contempt,  
I deemed no other than the letting go  
His shivered sword, of one about to spring  
Upon his foe's throat; but it was not thus:  
Not that way looked your brooding purpose then.  
For after-signs disclosed, what you confirmed,  
That you prepared to task to the uttermost  
Your strength, in furtherance of a certain aim,  
Which—while it bore the name your rivals gave  
Their own most puny efforts—was so vast  
In scope that it included their best flights,  
Combined them, and desired to gain one prize  
In place of many,—the secret of the world,  
Of man, and man's true purpose, path, and fate:  
—That you, not nursing as a mere vague dream  
This purpose, with the sages of the Past,  
Have struck upon a way to this, if all  
You trust be true, which following, heart and soul,  
You, if a man may, dare aspire to KNOW:  
And that this aim shall differ from a host  
Of aims alike in character and kind,  
Mostly in this,—to seek its own reward  
In itself only, not an alien end  
To blend therewith; no hope, nor fear, nor joy,  
Nor woe, to elsewhere move you, but this pure

Devotion to sustain you or betray :  
Thus you aspire.

*Par.*                    You shall not state it thus :  
I should not differ from the dreamy crew  
You speak of. I profess no other share  
In the selection of my lot, than this,  
A ready answer to the will of God  
Who summons me to be his organ : all  
Whose innate strength supports them shall succeed  
No better than your sages.

*Fest.*                    Such the aim, then,  
God sets before you ; and 'tis doubtless need  
That he appoint no less the way of praise  
Than the desire to praise ; for, though I hold  
With you, the setting forth such praise to be  
The natural end and service of a man,  
And think such praise is best attained when man  
Attains the general welfare of his kind—  
Yet, this, the end, is not the instrument.  
Presume not to serve God apart from such  
Appointed channel as He wills shall gather  
Imperfect tributes—for that sole obedience  
Valued, perchance. He seeks not that his altars  
Blaze—careless how, so that they do but blaze.  
Suppose this, then ; that God selected you  
To know (heed well your answers, for my faith  
Shall meet implicitly what they affirm)  
I cannot think you dare annex to such  
Selection aught beyond a steadfast will,

An intense hope, nor let your gifts create  
 Scorn or neglect of ordinary means  
 Conducive to success—make destiny  
 Dispense with man's endeavour. Now, dare you search  
 Your inmost heart, and candidly avow  
 Whether you have not rather wild desire  
 For this distinction, than security  
 Of its existence; whether you discern  
 The path to the fulfilment of your purpose  
 Clear as that purpose—and again, that purpose  
 Clear as your yearning to be singled out  
 For its pursuer. Dare you answer this?

*Par. (After a pause.)* No, I have nought to fear! Who  
 will may know

The secret'st workings of my soul. What though  
 It be so?—if indeed the strong desire  
 Eclipse the aim in me?—if splendour break  
 Upon the outset of my path alone,  
 And duskest shade succeed? What fairer seal  
 Shall I require to my authentic mission  
 Than this fierce energy?—this instinct striving  
 Because its nature is to strive?—enticed  
 By the security of no broad course,  
 With no success forever in its eyes!  
 How know I else such glorious fate my own,  
 But in the restless irresistible force  
 That works within me? Is it for human will  
 To institute such impulses?—still less,  
 To disregard their promptings? What should I

Do, kept among you all; your loves, your cares,  
 Your life—all to be mine? Be sure that God  
 Ne'er dooms to waste the strength he deigns impart!  
 Ask the gier-eagle why she stoops at once  
 Into the vast and unexplored abyss,  
 What full-grown power informs her from the first,  
 Why she not marvels, strenuously beating  
 The silent boundless regions of the sky!  
 Be sure they sleep not whom God needs! Nor fear  
 Their holding light his charge, when every hour  
 That finds that charge delayed, is a new death.  
 This for the faith in which I trust; and hence  
 I can abjure so well the idle arts  
 These pedants strive to learn and teach; Black Arts,  
 Great Works, the Secret and Sublime, forsooth—  
 Let others prize: too intimate a tie  
 Connects me with our God! A sullen fiend  
 To do my bidding, fallen and hateful sprites  
 To help me—what are these, at best, beside  
 God helping, God directing everywhere,  
 So that the earth shall yield her secrets up,  
 And every object shall be charged to strike,  
 Teach, gratify, her master God appoints?  
 And I am young, my Festus, happy and free!  
 I can devote myself; I have a life  
 To give; I, singled out for this, the One!  
 Think, think; the wide east, where old Wisdom sprung  
 The bright south, where she dwelt; the hopeful north,  
 All are past o'er—it lights on me! 'Tis time

New hopes should animate the world, new light  
 Should dawn from new revealings to a race  
 Weighed down so long, forgotten so long ; so shall  
 The heaven reserved for us, at last receive  
 Creatures whom no unwonted splendours blind,  
 But ardent to confront the unclouded blaze  
 Whose beams not seldom blessed their pilgrimage,  
 Not seldom glorified their life below.

*Fest.* My words have their old fate and make faint stand  
 Against your glowing periods. Call this, truth—  
 Why not pursue it in a fast retreat,  
 Some one of Learning's many palaces,  
 After approved example ; seeking there  
 Calm converse with the great dead, soul to soul,  
 Who laid up treasure with the like intent ?  
 —So lift yourself into their airy place,  
 And fill out full their unfulfilled careers,  
 Unravelling the knots their baffled skill  
 Pronounced inextricable, true !—but left  
 Far less confused ? A fresh eye, a fresh hand,  
 Might do much at their vigour's waning-point ;  
 Succeeding with new-breathed and earnest force,  
 As at old games a runner snatched the torch  
 From runner still : this way success might be.  
 But you have coupled with your enterprise,  
 An arbitrary self-repugnant scheme  
 Of seeking it in strange and untried paths.  
 What books are in the desert ? writes the sea  
 The secret of her yearning in vast caves

Where yours will fall the first of human feet  
 Has Wisdom sate there and recorded aught  
 You press to read? Why turn aside from her  
 To visit, where her vesture never glanced,  
 Now—solitudes consigned to barrenness  
 By God's decree, which who shall dare impugn?  
 Now—ruins where she paused but would not stay,  
 Old ravaged cities that, renouncing her,  
 She called an endless curse on, so it came—  
 Or, worst of all, now—men you visit, men,  
 Ignoblest troops that never heard her voice,  
 Or hate it, men without one gift from Rome  
 Or Athens,—these shall Aureole's teachers be!  
 Rejecting past example, practice, precept,  
 Aidless 'mid these he thinks to stand alone:  
 Thick like a glory round the Stagyrite  
 Your rivals throng, the sages: here stand you!  
 Whate'er you may protest, knowledge is not  
 Paramount in your love; or for her sake  
 You would collect all help from every source—  
 Rival or helper, friend, foe, all would merge  
 In the broad class of those who showed her haunts,  
 And those who showed them not.

*Par.*

What shall I say?

Festus, from childhood I have been possessed  
 By a fire—by a true fire, or faint or fierce,  
 As from without some master, so it seemed,  
 Repressed or urged its current: this but ill  
 Expresses what I would convey—but rather

I will believe an angel ruled me thus,  
Than that my soul's own workings, own high nature,  
So became manifest. I knew not then  
What whispered in the evening, and spoke out  
At midnight. If some mortal, born too soon,  
Were laid away in some great trance—the ages  
Coming and going all the while—till dawned  
His true time's advent, and could then record  
The words they spoke who kept watch by his bed,—  
Then I might tell more of the breath so light  
Upon my eyelids, and the fingers warm  
Among my hair. Youth is confused; yet never  
So dull was I but, when that spirit passed,  
I turned to him, scarce consciously, as turns  
A water-snake when fairies cross his sleep.  
And having this within me and about me  
While Einsiedeln, its mountains, lakes, and woods  
Confined me—what oppressive joy was mine  
When life grew plain, and I first viewed the thronged,  
The ever-moving concourse of mankind!  
Believe that ere I joined them—ere I knew  
The purpose of the pageant, or the place  
Consigned to me within its ranks—while yet  
Wonder was freshest and delight most pure—  
'Twas then that least supportable appeared  
A station with the brightest of the crowd,  
A portion with the proudest of them all!  
And from the tumult in my breast, this only  
Could I collect—that I must thenceforth die,

Or elevate myself far, far above  
 The gorgeous spectacle. I seemed to long  
 At once to trample on, yet save mankind—  
 To make some unexampled sacrifice  
 In their behalf—to wring some wondrous good  
 From heaven or earth for them—to perish, winning  
 Eternal weal in the act: as who should dare  
 Pluck out the angry thunder from its cloud,  
 That, all its gathered flame discharged on him,  
 No storm might threaten summer's azure sleep:  
 Yet never to be mixed with men so much  
 As to have part even in my own work—share  
 In my own largess. Once the feat achieved,  
 I would withdraw from their officious praise,  
 Would gently put aside their profuse thanks:  
 Like some knight traversing a wilderness,  
 Who, on his way, may chance to free a tribe  
 Of desert-people from their dragon-foe;  
 When all the swarthy race press round to kiss  
 His feet, and choose him for their king, and yield  
 Their poor tents, pitched among the sand-hills, for  
 His realm; and he points, smiling, to his scarf,  
 Heavy with riveled gold, his burgonet,  
 Gay set with twinkling stones—and to the east,  
 Where these must be displayed!

*Fest.* Good: let us hear  
 No more about your nature, "which first shrank  
 "From all that marked you out apart from men!"

*Par.* I touch on that; these words but analyze



That first mad impulse—'twas as brief as fond ;  
 For as I gazed again upon the show,  
 I soon distinguished here and there a shape  
 Palm-wreathed and radiant, forehead and full eye.  
 Well pleased was I their state should thus at once  
 Interpret my own thoughts : " Behold the clue  
 " To all," I rashly said, " and what I pine  
 " To do, these have accomplished : we are peers !  
 " They know, and therefore rule : I, too, will know !"  
 You were beside me, Festus, as you say ;  
 You saw me plunge in their pursuits whom Fame  
 Is lavish to attest the lords of mind ;  
 Not pausing to make sure the prize in view  
 Would satiate my cravings when obtained—  
 But since they strove I strove. Then came a slow  
 And strangling failure. We aspired alike,  
 Yet not the meanest plodder Tritheim schools  
 But faced me, all-sufficient, all-content,  
 Or staggered only at his own strong wits ;  
 While I was restless, nothing satisfied,  
 Distrustful, most perplexed. I would slur over  
 That struggle ; suffice it, that I loathed myself  
 As weak compared with them, yet felt somehow  
 A mighty power was brooding, taking shape  
 Within me ; and this lasted till one night  
 When, as I sate revolving it and more,  
 A still voice from without said—" See'st thou not,  
 " Desponding child, whence came defeat and loss ?  
 " Even from thy strength. Consider : hast thou gazed

‘ Presumptuously on Wisdom’s countenance,  
 “ No veil between ; and can thy hands which falter  
 “ Unguided by thy brain the mighty sight  
 “ Continues to absorb, pursue their task  
 “ On earth like these around thee—what their sense  
 “ Which radiance ne’er distracted, clear deseries ?  
 “ If thou wouldst share their fortune, choose their life,  
 “ Unfed by splendour. Let each task present  
 “ Its petty good to thee. Waste not thy gifts  
 “ In profitless waiting for the gods’ descent,  
 “ But have some idol of thine own to dress  
 “ With their array. Know, not for knowing’s sake,  
 “ But to become a star to men forever.  
 “ Know, for the gain it gets, the praise it brings,  
 “ The wonder it inspires, the love it breeds.  
 “ Look one step onward, and secure that step.”  
 And I smiled as one never smiles but once ;  
 Then first discovering my own aim’s extent,  
 Which sought to comprehend the works of God,  
 And God himself, and all God’s intercourse  
 With the human mind ; I understood, no less,  
 My fellow’s studies, whose true worth I saw.  
 But smiled not, well aware who stood by me  
 And softer came the voice—“ There is a way—  
 “ ’Tis hard for flesh to tread therein, imbued  
 “ With frailty—hopeless, if indulgence first  
 “ Have ripened inborn germs of sin to strength :  
 “ Wilt thou adventure for my sake and man’s,  
 “ Apart from all reward ? ” And last it breathed—

Be happy, my good soldier ; I am by thee,  
 ‘ Be sure, even to the end ! ’—I answered not,  
 Knowing Him. As He spoke, I was endued  
 With comprehension and a steadfast will ;  
 And when He ceased, my brow was sealed His own.  
 If there took place no special change in me,  
 How comes it all things wore a different hue  
 Thenceforward?—pregnant with vast consequence—  
 Teeming with grand results—loaded with fate ;  
 So that when quailing at the mighty range  
 Of secret truths which yearn for birth, I haste  
 To contemplate undazzled some one truth,  
 Its bearings and effects alone—at once  
 What was a speck expands into a star,  
 Asking a life to pass exploring thus,  
 Till I near craze. I go to prove my soul !  
 I see my way as birds their trackless way—  
 I shall arrive . what time, what circuit first,  
 I ask not : but unless God send his hail  
 Or blinding fire-balls, sleet, or stifling snow,  
 In some time—his good time—I shall arrive :  
 He guides me and the bird. In his good time !

*Mich.* Vex him no further, Festus ; it is so !

*Fest* Just thus you help me ever. This would hold  
 Were it the trackless air, and not a path  
 Inviting you, distinct with footprints yet  
 Of many a mighty spirit gone that way.  
 You may have purer views than theirs, perhaps,  
 But they were famous in their day—the proofs  
 Remain. At least accept the light they lend.

*Par.* Their light! the sum of all is briefly **this** :  
 They laboured, and grew famous ; and the fruits  
 Are best seen in a dark and groaning earth,  
 Given over to a blind and endless strife  
 With evils, which of all your Gods abates ?  
 No ; I reject and spurn them utterly,  
 And all they teach. Shall I still sit beside  
 Their dry wells, with a white lip and filmed eye,  
 While in the distance heaven is blue above  
 Mountains where sleep the unsunned tarns ?

*Fest.*

And yet

As strong delusions have prevailed ere now :  
 Men have set out as gallantly to seek  
 Their ruin ; I have heard of such—yourself  
 Avow all hitherto have failed and fallen.

*Mich.* Nay, Festus, when but as the pilgrims faint  
 Through the drear way, do you expect to see  
 Their city dawn afar amid the clouds ?

*Par.* Ay, sounds it not like some old well-known tale  
 For me, I estimate their works and them  
 So rightly, that at times I almost dream  
 I too have spent a life the sages' way,  
 And tread once more familiar paths. Perchance  
 I perished in an arrogant self-reliance  
 An age ago ; and in that act, a prayer  
 For one more chance went up so earnest, so  
 Instinct with better light let in by Death,  
**That** life was blotted out—not so completely  
 But scattered wrecks enough of it remain,

Dim memories ; as now, when seems once more  
 The goal in sight again : all which, indeed,  
 Is foolish, and only means—the flesh I wear,  
 The earth I tread, are not more clear to me  
 Than my belief, explained to you or no.

*Fest.* And who am I to challenge and dispute  
 That clear belief? I put away all fear.

*Mich.* Then Aureole is God's commissary ! he shall  
 Be great and grand—and all for us !

*Par.*

No, sweet !

Not great and grand. If I can serve mankind  
 'Tis well—but there our intercourse must end :  
 I never will be served by those I serve.

*Fest.* Look well to this ; here is a plague-spot, here,  
 Disguise it how you may ! 'Tis true, you utter  
 This scorn while by our side and loving us ;  
 'Tis but a spot as yet ; but it will break  
 Into a hideous blotch if overlooked.  
 How can that course be safe which from the first  
 Produces carelessness to human love ?  
 It seems you have abjured the helps which men  
 Who overpass their kind, as you would do,  
 Have humbly sought—I dare not thoroughly probe  
 This matter, lest I learn too much : let be,  
 That popular praise would little instigate  
 Your efforts, nor particular approval  
 Reward you ; put reward aside ; alone  
 You shall go forth upon your arduous task,  
 None shall assist you, none partake your toil,

None share your triumph—still you must retain  
 Some one to cast your glory on, to share  
 Your rapture with. Were I elect like you,  
 I would encircle me with love, and raise  
 A rampart of my fellows ; it should seem  
 Impossible for me to fail, so watched  
 By gentle friends who made my cause their own  
 They should ward off Fate's envy—the great gift,  
 Extravagant when claimed by me alone,  
 Being so a gift to them as well as me.  
 If danger daunted me or ease seduced,  
 How calmly their sad eyes should gaze reproach !

*Mich.* O Aureole, can I sing when all alone,  
 Without first calling, in my fancy, both  
 To listen by my side—even I ! And you ?  
 Do you not feel this ?—say that you feel this !

*Par.* I feel 'tis pleasant that my aims, at length  
 Allowed their weight, should be supposed to need  
 A further strengthening in these goodly helps !  
 My course allures for its own sake—its sole  
 Intrinsic worth ; and ne'er shall boast of mine  
 Adventure forth for gold and apes at once.  
 Your sages say, "if human, therefore weak :"  
 If weak, more need to give myself entire  
 To my pursuit ; and by its side, all else . . .  
 No matter ! I deny myself but little  
 In waiving all assistance save its own—  
 Would there were some real sacrifice to make  
 Your friends the sages threw their joys away  
 While I must be content with keeping mine

*Fest.* But do not cut yourself from human weal?  
 You cannot thrive—a man that dares affect  
 To spend his life in service to his kind,  
 For no reward of theirs, nor bound to them  
 By any tie; nor do so, Aureole! No—  
 There are strange punishments for such. Give up  
 (Although no visible good flow thence) some part  
 Of the glory to another; hiding thus,  
 Even from yourself, that all is for yourself.  
 Say, say almost to God—“I have done all  
 “For her—not for myself!”

*Par.* And who, but lately  
 Was to rejoice in my success like you?  
 Whom should I love but both of you?

*Fest.* I know not  
 But know this, you, that 'tis no wish of mine  
 You should abjure the lofty claims you make;  
 Although I can no longer seek, indeed,  
 To overlook the truth, that there will be  
 A monstrous spectacle upon the earth,  
 Beneath the pleasant sun, among the trees:  
 —A being knowing not what love is. Hear me!  
 You are endowed with faculties which bear  
 Annexed to them as 'twere a dispensation  
 To summon meaner spirits to do their will,  
 And gather round them at their need; inspiring  
 Such with a love themselves can never feel—  
 Passionless 'mid their passionate votaries.  
 I know not if you joy in this or no,

Or ever dream that common men can live  
 On objects you prize lightly, but which make  
 Their heart's sole treasure : the affections seem  
 Beauteous at most to you, which we must taste  
 Or die : and this strange quality accords,  
 I know not how, with you ; sits well upon  
 That luminous brow, though in another it scowls  
 An eating brand—a shame. I dare not judge you :  
 The rules of right and wrong thus set aside,  
 There's no alternative—I own you one  
 Of higher order, under other laws  
 Than bind us, therefore, curb not one bold glance !  
 'Tis best aspire. Once mingled with us all . . . .

*Mich.* Stay with us, Aureole ! cast those hopes away,  
 And stay with us ! An angel warns me, too,  
 Man should be humble ; you are very proud :  
 And God, dethroned, has doleful plagues for such !  
 He warns me not to dread a quick repulse,  
 Nor slow defeat, but a complete success !  
 You will find all you seek, and perish so !

*Par.* (*After a pause.*) Are these the barren first fruits  
 of my life ?

Is love like this the natural lot of all ?  
 How many years of pain might one such hour  
 O'erbalance ? Dearest Michal, dearest Festus,  
 What shall I say, if not that I desire  
 To merit this your love ; and will, dear friends,  
 In swerving nothing from my first resolves.  
 See, the great moon ! and ere the mottled owls



Were wide awake, I was to go. It seems  
 You acquiesce at last in all save this—  
 If I am like to compass what I seek  
 By the untried career I choose: and then,  
 If that career, making but small account  
 Of much of life's delight, will yet retain  
 Sufficient to sustain my soul—for thus  
 I understand these fond fears just expressed.  
 And first; the lore you praise and I neglect,  
 The labours and the precepts of old time,  
 I have not slightly disesteemed. But, friends,  
 Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise  
 From outward things, whate'er you may believe:  
 There is an inmost centre in us all,  
 Where truth abides in fulness; and around  
 Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,  
 This perfect, clear perception—which is truth;  
 A baffling and perverting carnal mesh  
 Blinds it, and makes all error: (and, "to know"  
 Rather consists in opening out a way  
 Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,  
 Than in effecting entry for a light  
 Supposed to be without.) Watch narrowly  
 The demonstration of a truth, its birth,  
 And you trace back the effluence to its spring  
 And source within us, where broods radiance vast,  
 To be elicited ray by ray, as chance  
 Shall favour: chance—for hitherto, your sage  
 Even as he knows not how those beams are born,

As little knows he what unlocks their fount ;  
And men have oft grown old among their books  
To die, case-hardened in their ignorance,  
Whose careless youth had promised what long years  
Of unremitted labour ne'er performed :  
While, contrary, it has chanced some idle day,  
That autumn loiterers just as fancy-free  
As the midges in the sun, have oft given vent  
To truth—produced mysteriously as cape  
Of cloud grown out of the invisible air.  
Hence, may not truth be lodged alike in all,  
The lowest as the highest ? some slight film  
The interposing bar which binds it up,  
And makes the idiot, just as makes the sage  
Some film removed, the happy outlet whence  
Truth issues proudly ? See this soul of ours !  
How it strives weakly in the child, is loosed  
In manhood, clogged by sickness, back compelled  
By age and waste, set free at last by death :  
Why is it, flesh enthralls it or enthrones ?  
What is this flesh we have to penetrate ?  
Oh, not alone when life flows still do truth  
And power emerge, but also when strange chance  
Ruffles its current ; in unused conjuncture,  
When sickness breaks the body—hunger, watching,  
Excess, or languor—oftenest death's approach—  
Peril, deep joy, or woe. One man shall crawl  
Through life, surrounded with all stirring things,  
Unmoved—and he goes mad ; and from the wreck

Of what he was, by his wild talk alone,  
You first collect how great a spirit he hid.  
Therefore, set free the soul alike in all,  
Discovering the true laws by which the flesh  
Bars in the spirit! We may not be doomed  
To cope with seraphs, but at least the rest  
Shall cope with us. Make no more giants, God!  
But elevate the race at once! We ask  
To put forth just our strength, our human strength,  
All starting fairly, all equipped alike,  
Gifted alike, all eagle-eyed, true-hearted—  
See if we cannot beat thy angels yet!  
Such is my task. I go to gather this  
The sacred knowledge, here and there dispersed  
About the world, long lost or never found.  
And why should I be sad, or lorn of hope?  
Why ever make man's good distinct from God's?  
Or, finding they are one, why dare mistrust?  
Who shall succeed if not one pledged like me?  
Mine is no mad attempt to build a world  
Apart from His, like those who set themselves  
To find the nature of the spirit they bore,  
And, taught betimes that all their gorgeous dreams  
Were only born to vanish in this life,  
Refused to fit them to this narrow sphere,  
But chose to figure forth another world  
And other frames meet for their vast desires,—  
Still, all a dream! Thus was life scorned; but life  
Shall yet be crowned: twine amaranth! I am priest!

And all for yielding with a lively spirit  
 A poor existence—parting with a youth  
 Like theirs who squander every energy  
 Convertible to good, on painted toys,  
 Breath-bubbles, gilded dust! And though I spurn  
 All adventitious aims, from empty praise  
 To love's award, yet whoso deems such helps  
 Important, and concerns himself for me,  
 May know even these will follow with the rest—  
 As in the steady rolling Mayne, asleep  
 Yonder, is mixed its mass of schistous ore.  
 My own affections, laid to rest awhile,  
 Will waken purified, subdued alone  
 By all I have achieved; till then—till then . . .  
 Ah! the time-wiling loitering of a page  
 Through bower and over lawn, till eve shall bring  
 The stately lady's presence whom he loves—  
 The broken sleep of the fisher whose rough coat  
 Enwraps the queenly pearl—these are faint types!  
 See how they look on me—I triumph now!  
 But one thing, Festus, Michal!—I have told  
 All I shall e'er disclose to mortal: say—  
 Do you believe I shall accomplish this?

*Fest.* I do believe!

*Mich.* I ever did believe!

*Par.* Those words shall never fade from out my brain  
 This earnest of the end shall never fade!  
 Are there not, Festus, are there not, dear Michal,  
 Two points in the adventure of the diver:

One—when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge?  
 One—when, a prince, he rises with his pearl?  
 Festus, I plunge!

*Fest.* I wait you when you rise!

## II.—PARACELSUS ATTAINS

SCENE.—Constantinople.—“*The House of the Greek-conjuror.*”  
 1521

PARACELSUS.

Over the waters in the vaporous west  
 The sun goes down as in a sphere of gold,  
 Behind the outstretched city, which between,  
 With all that length of domes and minarets,  
 Athwart the splendour, black and crooked runs  
 Like a Turk verse along a scimitar.  
 There lie, thou saddest writing, and awhile  
 Relieve my aching sight. 'Tis done at last!  
 Strange—and the juggles of a sallow cheat  
 Could win me to this act! 'Tis as yon cloud  
 Should voyage unwreck'd o'er many a mountain  
 And break upon a molehill. I have dared  
 Come to a pause with knowledge; sear for once  
 The heights already reach'd, without regard  
 To the extent above; fairly compute  
 What I have clearly gained; for once excluding  
 My future which should finish and fulfil

All half-gains, and conjectures, and mere hopes—  
 And this, because a fortune-teller bids  
 His credulous inquirers write thus much,  
 Their previous life's attainment, in his book,  
 Before his promised secret, as he vaunts,  
 Make that life perfect: here, accordingly,  
 'Mid the uncouth recordings of such dupes,  
 —Scrawled in like fashion, lie my life's results!

These few blurred characters suffice to note  
 A stranger wandered long through many lands,  
 And reaped the fruit he coveted in a few  
 Discoveries, as appended here and there,  
 The fragmentary produce of much toil,  
 In a dim heap, fact and surmise together  
 Confusedly massed, as when acquired; himself  
 Too bent on gaining more to calmly stay  
 And scrutinize the little which he gained:  
 Slipt in the blank space 'twixt an idiot's gibber  
 And a mad lover's ditty—lies the whole!

And yet those blottings chronicle a life—  
 A whole life,—mine! No thought to turn to act,  
 No problem for the fancy, but a life  
 Spent and decided, wasted past recall,  
 Or worthy beyond peer. Stay, turn the page  
 And take its chance,—thus: what, concerning “life”  
 Does this remembrancer set down?—“We say  
 ‘Time fleets, youth fades, life is an empty dream.’”

'Tis the mere echo of time ; and he whose heart  
 Beats first beneath a human heart, whose speech  
 Was copied from a human tongue, can never  
 Recall when he was living yet knew not this.  
 Nevertheless long seasons come and go,  
 'Till some one hour's experience shows what nought,  
 He deemed, could clearer show ; and ever after  
 An altered brow, and eye, and gait, and speech  
 Attest that now he knows the adage true  
 " ' Time fleets, youth fades, life is an empty dream.' "

Ay, my brave chronicler, and this same time  
 As well as any : let my hour speak now !

Now ! I can go no further ; well or ill—  
 'Tis done. I must desist and take my chance ;  
 I cannot keep on the stretch ; 'tis no back-shrinking—  
 For let the least assurance dawn, some end  
 To my toil seem possible, and I proceed  
 At any price, by any sacrifice :  
 Else, here I pause : the old Greek's prophecy  
 Is like to turn out true—" I shall not quit  
 " His chamber till I know what I desire !"  
 Was it the light wind sung it, o'er the sea ?

An end, a rest ! strange how the notion, once  
 Admitted, gains strength every moment ! Rest !  
 Where kept that thought so long ? this throbbing brow  
 To cease—this beating heart to cease—its crowd

Of gnawing thoughts to cease!—To dare let down  
My strung, so high-strung brain—to dare unnerve  
My harassed o'ertasked frame—to know my place.  
—My portion, my reward, my failure even,  
Assigned, made sure forever!—To lose myself  
Among the common creatures of the world—  
To draw some gain from having been a man—  
Neither to hope nor fear—to live at length!  
Oh, were it but in failure, to have rest!  
What, sunk insensibly so deep? Has all  
Been undergone for this? Was this the prayer  
My labour qualified me to present  
With no fear of refusal? Had I gone  
Carelessly through my task, and so judged fit  
To moderate my hopes; nay, were it now  
My sole concern to exculpate myself,  
And lessen punishment,—I could not choose  
An humbler mood to wait for the decree!  
No, no, there needs not this; no, after all,  
At worst I have performed my share of the task,  
The rest is God's concern—mine, merely this,  
To know that I have obstinately held  
By my own work. The mortal whose brave foot  
Has trod, unscathed, the temple-courts so far  
That he desecrates at length the shrine of shrines,  
Must let no sneering of the demons' eyes,  
Whose wrath he met unquailing, follow sly  
And fasten on him, fairly past their power,  
If where he stands he dares but stay; no, no—



He must not stagger, faint and fall at last,  
—Knowing a charm to baffle them ; behold,  
He bares his front—a mortal ventures thus  
Serene amid the echoes, beams, and glooms !  
If he be priest henceforth, or if he wake  
The god of the place to ban and blast him there,—  
Both well ! What's failure or success to me ?  
I have subdued my life to the one end  
Ordained life ; there alone I cannot doubt,  
That only way I may be satisfied.  
Yes, well have I subdued my life ! beyond  
The obligation of my strictest vows,  
The contemplation of my wildest bond,  
Which gave, in truth, my nature freely up,  
In what it should be, more than what it was—  
Consenting that whatever passions slept,  
Whatever impulses lay unmatu'ed,  
Should wither in the germ,—but scarce foreseein'  
That the soil, doomed thus to perpetual waste,  
Would seem one day, remembered in its youth  
Beside the parched sand-tract which now it is,  
Already strewn with faint blooms, viewless then.  
I ne'er engaged to root up loves so frail  
I felt them not ; yet now, 'tis very plain  
Some soft spots had their birth in me at first—  
If not love, say, like love : there was a time  
When yet this wolfish hunger after knowledge  
Set not remorselessly love's claims aside ;  
This heart was human once, or why recall

Einsiedeln, now, and Würzburg, which the Mayne  
Forsakes her course to fold as with an arm?

And Festus—my poor Festus, with his praise,  
And counsel, and grave fears—where is he now?  
Or the sweet maiden, long ago his bride?  
I surely loved them—that last night, at least,  
When we . . . gone! gone! the better: I am saved  
The sad review of an ambitious youth,  
Choked by vile lusts, unnoticed in their birth,  
But let grow up and wind around a will  
Till action was destroyed. No, I have gone  
Purging my path successively of aught  
Wearing the distant likeness of such lusts.  
I have made life consist of one idea:  
Ere that was master—up till that was born—  
I bear a memory of a pleasant life  
Whose small events I treasure; till one morn  
I ran o'er the seven little grassy fields,  
Startling the flocks of nameless birds, to tell  
Poor Festus, leaping all the while for joy,  
To leave all trouble for futurity,  
Since I had just determined to become  
The greatest and most glorious man on earth.  
And since that morn all life has been forgot;  
All is one day—one only step between  
The outset and the end: one tyrant aim,  
Absorbing all, fills up the interval—  
One vast unbroken chain of thought kept up

Through a career or friendly or opposed  
To its existence : life, death, light and shade  
The shows of the world, were bare receptacles  
Or indices of truth to be wrung thence,  
Not instruments of sorrow or delight :  
For some one truth would dimly beacon me  
From mountains rough with pines, and flit and wink  
O'er dazzling wastes of frozen snow, and tremble  
Into assured light in some branching mine,  
Where ripens, swathed in fire, the liquid gold—  
And all the beauty, all the wonder fell  
On either side the truth, as its mere robe ;  
Men saw the robe—I saw the august form.  
So far, then, I have voyaged with success,  
So much is good, then, in this working sea  
Which parts me from that happy strip of land—  
But o'er that happy strip a sun shone, too !  
And fainter gleams it as the waves grow rough,  
And still more faint as the sea widens ; last  
I sicken on a dead gulf, streaked with light  
From its own putrefying depths alone !  
Then—God was pledged to take me by the hand ;  
Now—any miserable juggler bends  
My pride to him. All seems alike at length :  
Who knows which are the wise and which the fools ?  
God may take pleasure in confounding pride  
By hiding secrets with the scorned and base—  
He who stoops lowest may find most—in short,  
I am here ; and all seems natural ; I start not .

And never having glanced behind to know  
 If I had kept my primal light from wane,  
 Am thus insensibly grown—what I am!

Oh, bitter ; very bitter !

And more bitter,

To fear a deeper curse, an inner ruin—  
 Plague beneath plague—the last turning the first  
 To light beside its darkness. Better weep  
 My youth and its brave hopes, all dead and gone,  
 In tears which burn ! Would I were sure to win  
 Some startling secret in their stead !—a tincture  
 Of force to flush old age with youth, or breed  
 Gold, or imprison moonbeams till they change  
 To opal shafts !—only that, hurling it  
 Indignant back, I might convince myself  
 My aims remained as ever supreme and pure !  
 Even now, why not desire, for mankind's sake,  
 That if I fail, some fault may be the cause,—  
 That, though I sink, another may succeed ?  
 O God, the despicable heart of us !  
 Shut out this hideous mockery from my heart !

'Twas politic in you, Aureole, to reject  
 Single rewards, and ask them in the lump ;  
 At all events, once launched, to hold straight on ;  
 For now 'tis all or nothing. Mighty profit  
 Your gains will bring if they stop short of such  
 Full consummation ! As a man, you had

A certain share of strength, and that is gone  
 Already in the getting these you boast.  
 Do not they seem to laugh, as who should say—  
 "Great master, we are here indeed; dragged forth  
 "To light: this hast thou done; be glad! now, seek  
 "The strength to use which thou has spent in getting!"

And yet 'tis surely much, 'tis very much,  
 Thus to have emptied youth of all its gifts,  
 To feed a fire meant to hold out till morn  
 Arrive with inexhaustible light; and lo,  
 I have heaped up my last, and day dawns not!  
 While I am left with gray hair, faded hands,  
 And furrowed brow. Ha, have I, after all,  
 Mistaken the wild nursling of my breast?  
 Knowledge it seemed, and Power, and Recompense!  
 Was she who glided through my room of nights,—  
 Who laid my head on her soft knees, and smoothed  
 The damp locks,—whose sly soothings just began  
 When my sick spirit craved repose awhile—  
 God! was I fighting Sleep off for Death's sake?  
 God! Thou art Mind! Unto the Master-Mind  
 Mind should be precious. Spare my mind alone!  
 All else I will endure: if, as I stand  
 Here, with my gains, thy thunder smite me down,  
 I bow me; 'tis thy will, thy righteous will;  
 I o'erpass life's restrictions, and I die:  
 And if no trace of my career remain,  
 Save a thin corpse at pleasure of the wind

In these bright chambers, level with the air,  
 See thou to it! But if my spirit fail,  
 My once proud spirit forsake me at the last.  
 Hast thou done well by me? So do not thou!  
 Crush not my mind, dear God, though I be crushed!  
 Hold me before the frequency of thy seraphs,  
 And say—“I crushed him, lest he should disturb  
 “My law. Men must not know their strength: behold,  
 “Weak and alone, how near he raised himself!”

But if delusions trouble me—and Thou,  
 Not seldom felt with rapture in thy help  
 Throughout my toil and wanderings, dost intend  
 To work man’s welfare through my weak endeavour—  
 To crown my mortal forehead with a beam  
 From thine own blinding crown—to smile, and guide  
 This puny hand, and let the work so framed  
 Be styled my work,—hear me! I covet not  
 An influx of new power, an angel’s soul:  
 It were no marvel then—but I have reached  
 Thus far, a man; let me conclude, a man!  
 Give but one hour of my first energy,  
 Of that invincible faith—one only hour!  
 That I may cover with an eagle-glance  
 The truths I have, and spy some certain way  
 To mould them, and completing them, possess!

Yet God is good: I started sure of that,  
 And why dispute it now? I’ll not believe

But some undoubted warning long ere this  
 Had reached me : stars would write his will in heaven,  
 As once when a labarum was not deemed  
 Too much for the old founder of these walls.  
 Then, if my life has not been natural,  
 It has been monstrous : yet, till late, my course  
 So acedently engrossed me, that delight,  
 A pausing and reflecting joy, 'tis plain,  
 Though such were meant to follow as its fruit,  
 Could find no place in it. True, I am worn ;  
 But who clothes summer, who is Life itself ?  
 God, that created all things, can renew !  
 And then, though after-life to please me now  
 Must have no likeness to the past, what hinders  
 Reward from springing out of toil, as changed  
 As bursts the flower from earth, and root, and stalk ?  
 What use were punishment, unless some sin  
 Be first detected ? let me know that first !

*(Aprile, from within)*

I hear a voice, perchance I heard  
 Long ago, but all too low,  
 So that scarce a thought was stirred  
 If really spoke the voice or no :  
 I heard it in my youth, when first  
 The waters of my life outburst :  
 But now their stream ebbs faint, I hear  
 The voice, still low, but fatal-clear—  
 As if all Poets, that God meant

Should save the world, and therefore lent  
 Great gifts to, but who, proud, refused  
 To do his work, or lightly used  
 Those gifts, or failed through weak endeavour,  
 And mourn, cast off by him forever,—  
 As if these leaned in airy ring  
 To call me; this the song they sing.

“Lost, lost! yet come,  
 With our wan troop make thy home :  
 Come, come! for we  
 Will not breathe, so much as breathe  
 Reproach to thee!  
 Knowing what thou sink’st beneath :  
 So we sank in those old years,  
 We who bid thee, come! thou last  
 Who, a living man, has life o’erpast,  
 And all together we, thy peers,  
 Will pardon ask for thee, the last  
 Whose trial is done, whose lot is cast  
 With those who watch, but work no more—  
 Who gaze on life, but live no more :  
 And yet we trusted thou shouldst speak  
 God’s message which our lips, too weak,  
 Refused to utter,—shouldst redeem  
 Our fault: such trust, and all, a dream!  
 So we chose thee a bright birthplace  
 Where the richness ran to flowers—  
 Couldst not sing one song for grace?



Nor make one blossom man's and curs?  
 Must one more recreant to his race  
 Die with unexerted powers,  
 And join us, leaving as he found  
 The world, he was to loosen, bound?  
 Anguish! ever and forever;  
 Still beginning, ending never!  
 Yet, lost and last one, come!  
 How couldst understand, alas,  
 What our pale ghosts strove to say,  
 As their shades did glance and pass  
 Before thee, night and day?  
 Thou wert blind, as we were dumb:  
 Once more, therefore, come, O come!  
 How shall we better arm the spirit  
 Who next shall thy post of life inherit—  
 How guard him from thy ruin?  
 Tell us of thy sad undoing  
 Here, where we sit, ever pursuing  
 Our weary task, ever renewing  
 Sharp sorrow, far from God who gave  
 Our powers, and man they could not save!"

APRILE enters.

A spirit better armed, succeeding me?  
 Ha, ha! our king that wouldst be, here at last?  
 Art thou the Poet who shall save the world?  
 Thy hand to mine. Stay, fix thine eyes on mine.  
 Thou wouldst be king? Still fix thine eyes on mine

*Par.* Ha, ha! why crouchest not? Am I not king?  
 So torture is not wholly unavailing!  
 Have my fierce spasms compelled thee from thy lair?  
 Art thou the Sage I only seemed to be,  
 Myself of after-time, my very self  
 With sight a little clearer, strength more firm,  
 Who robs me of my prize and takes my place  
 For just a fault, a weakness, a neglect?  
 I scarcely trusted God with the surmise  
 That such might come, and thou didst hear the while!

*Apr.* Thine eyes are lustreless to mine; my hair  
 Is soft, nay silken soft: to talk with thee  
 Flushes my cheek, and thou art ashy-pale,  
 True, thou hast laboured, hast withstood her lips,  
 The siren's! Yes, 'tis like thou hast attained!  
 Tell me, dear master, wherefore now thou comest?  
 I thought thy solemn songs would have their meed  
 In after-time; that I should hear the earth  
 Exult in thee, and echo with thy praise,  
 While I was laid forgotten in my grave.

*Par.* Not so! I know thee, I am not thy dupe!  
 Thou art ordained to follow in my track,  
 Even as thou sayest, succeeding to my place,  
 Reaping my sowing—as I scorned to reap  
 The harvest sown by sages passed away.  
 Thou art the sober searcher, cautious striver,  
 As if, except through me, thou had'st searched or striven  
 Ay, tell the world! Degrade me, after all,  
 To an aspirant after fame, not truth—  
 To all but envy of thy fate, be sure!

*Apr.* Nay, sing them to me ; I shall envy not :  
 Thou shalt be king ! Sing thou, and I will stand  
 Beside, and call deep silence for thy songs,  
 And worship thee, as I had ne'er been meant  
 To fill thy throne—but none shall ever know !  
 Sing to me : for already thy wild eyes  
 Unlock my heart-springs, as some crystal-shaft  
 Reveals by some chance blaze its parent fount  
 After long time—so thou reveal'st my soul !  
 All will flash forth at last, with thee to hear

*Par.* (His secret ! my successor's secret—fool !)

I am he that aspired to KNOW—and thou ?

*Apr.* I would LOVE infinitely, and be loved !

*Par.* Poor slave ! I am thy king indeed.

*Apr.* Thou deem'st

That—born a spirit, dowered even as thou,  
 Born for thy fate—because I could not curb  
 My yearnings to possess at once the full  
 Enjoyment ; yet neglected all the means  
 Of realizing even the frailest joy ;  
 Gathering no fragments to appease my want,  
 Yet nursing up that want till thus I die—  
 Thou deem'st I cannot trace thy safe, sure march,  
 O'er perils that o'erwhelm me, triumphing,  
 Neglecting nought below for aught above,  
 Despising nothing and insuring all—  
 Nor that I could (my time to come again)  
 Lead thus my spirit securely as thine own :  
 Listen, and thou shalt see I know thee well

I would love infinitely . . . Ah, lost! lost!

O ye who armed me at such cost,

Your faces shall I bear to see

With your gifts even yet on me?—

*Par.* (Ah, 'tis some moonstruck creature after all!

Such fond fools as are like to haunt this den :

They spread contagion, doubtless : yet he seemed

To echo one foreboding of my heart

So truly, that . . . no matter! How he stands

With eve's last sunbeam staying on his hair

Which turns to it, as if they were akin :

And those clear smiling eyes of saddest blue

Nearly set free, so far they rise above

The painful fruitless striving of that brow

And enforced knowledge of those lips, firm-set

In slow despondency's eternal sigh !

Has he, too, missed life's end, and learned the cause?)

Be calm, I charge thee, by thy fealty !

Tell me what thou wouldst be, and what I am.

*Apr.* I would love infinitely, and be loved.

First: I would carve in stone, or cast in brass,

The forms of earth. No ancient hunter, raised

Up to the gods by his renown ; no nymph

Supposed the sweet soul of a woodland tree,

Or sapphirine spirit of a twilight star,

Should be too hard for me ; no shepherd-king,

Regal with his white locks ; no youth who stands

Silent and very calm amid the throng,

His right hand ever hid beneath his robe

Until the tyrant pass; no lawgiver;  
 No swan-soft woman, rubbed with lucid oils,  
 Given by a god for love of her—too hard!  
 Each passion sprung from man, conceived by man,  
 Would I express and clothe it in its right form,  
 Or blend with others struggling in one form,  
 Or show repressed by an ungainly form.  
 For, if you marvelled at some mighty spirit  
 With a fit frame to execute his will—  
 Ay, even unconsciously to work his will—  
 You should be moved no less beside some strong,  
 Rare spirit, fettered to a stubborn body,  
 Endeavouring to subdue it, and inform it  
 With its own splendour! All this I would do,  
 And I would say, this done, “God’s sprites being made,  
 “He grants to each a sphere to be its world,  
 “Appointed with the various objects needed  
 “To satisfy its spiritual desires;  
 “So, I create a world for these my shapes  
 “Fit to sustain their beauty and their strength!”  
 And, at the word, I would contrive and paint  
 Woods, valleys, rocks, and plains, dells, sands, and wastes,  
 Lakes which, when morn breaks on their quivering bed,  
 Blaze like a wyvern flying round the sun;  
 And ocean-isles so small, the dogfish tracking  
 A dead whale, who should find them, would swim thrice  
 Around them, and fare onward—all to hold  
 The offspring of my brain. Nor these alone—  
 Bronze labyrinths, palace, pyramid, and crypt,

Baths, galleries, courts, temples, and terraces,  
Marts, theatres, and wharfs—all filled with men!  
Men everywhere! And this performed, in turn,  
When those who looked on, pined to hear the hopes,  
And fears, and hates, and loves which moved the crowd,—  
I would throw down the pencil as the chisel,  
And I would speak: no thought which ever stirred  
A human breast should be untold; no passions,  
No soft emotions, from the turbulent stir  
Within a heart fed with desires like mine—  
To the last comfort, shutting the tired lids  
Of him who sleeps the sultry noon away  
Beneath the tent-tree by the way-side well:  
And this in language as the need should be,  
Now poured at once forth in a burning flow,  
Now piled up in a grand array of words.  
This done, to perfect and consummate all,  
Even as a luminous haze links star to star,  
I would supply all chasms with music, breathing  
Mysterious notions of the soul, no way  
To be defined save in strange melodies.  
Last, having thus revealed all I could love,  
And having received all love bestowed on it,  
I would die: so preserving through my course  
God full on me, as I was full on men:  
And He would grant my prayer—"I have gone through  
"All loveliness of life; make more for me,  
"If not for men—or take me to thyself,  
"Eternal, infinite Love!"

If thou hast ne'er  
 Conceived this mighty aim, this full desire,  
 Thou hast not passed my trial, and thou art  
 No king of mine.

*Par.* Ah me!

*Apr.* But thou art here!

Thou didst not gaze like me upon that end  
 Till thine own powers for compassing the bliss  
 Were blind with glory; nor grow mad to grasp  
 At once the prize long patient toil should claim;  
 Nor spurn all granted short of that. And I  
 Would do as thou, a second time: nay, listen—  
 Knowing ourselves, our world, our task so great.  
 Our time so brief,—'tis clear if we refuse  
 The means so limited, the tools so rude  
 'To execute our purpose, life will fleet,  
 And we shall fade, and leave our task undone.  
 Rather, grow wise in time: what though our work  
 Be fashioned in despite of their ill-service,  
 Be crippled every way? 'Twere little praise  
 Did full resources wait on our good will  
 At every turn. Let all be as it is.  
 Some say the earth is even so contrived  
 That tree, and flower, a vesture gay, conceal  
 A bare and skeleton framework: had we means  
 That answered to our mind! But now I seem  
 Wrecked on a savage isle: how rear thereon  
 My patace? Branching palms the props shall be;  
 Fruit glossy mingling; gems are for the east;

Who heeds them? I can waive them. Serpent's scales,  
Birds' feathers, downy furs, and fishes' skins  
Must help me; and a little here and there  
Is all I can aspire to: still my art  
Shall show its birth was in a gentler clime.  
"Had I green jars of malachite, this way  
"I'd range them: where those sea-shells glisten above,  
"Cressets should hang, by right: this way we set  
"The purple carpets, as these mats are laid,  
"Woven of mere fern and rush and blossoming flag."  
Or if, by fortune, some completer grace  
Be spared to me, some fragment, some slight sample  
Of my own land's completer workmanship,  
Some trifle little heeded there, but here  
The place's one perfection—with what joy  
Would I enshrine the relic—cheerfully  
Foregoing all the marvels out of reach!  
Could I retain one strain of all the psalm  
Of the angels—one word of the fiat of God—  
To let my followers know what such things are!  
I would adventure nobly for their sakes:  
When nights were still, and still, the moaning sea,  
And far away I could descry the land  
Whence I departed, whither I return,  
I would dispart the waves, and stand once more  
At home, and load my bark, and hasten back,  
And fling my gains before them, rich or poor—  
"Friends," I would say, "I went far, far for them,  
'Past the high rocks the haunt of doves, the mounds



" Of red earth from whose sides strange trees grow out,  
 " Past tracts of milk-white minute blinding sand,  
 " Till, by a mighty moon, I tremblingly  
 " Gathered these magic herbs, berry and bud,  
 " In haste—not pausing to reject the weeds,  
 " But happy plucking them at any price.  
 " To me, who have seen them bloom in their own soil,  
 " They are scarce lovely : plait and wear them, you !  
 " And guess, from what they are, the springs that fed—  
 " The stars that sparkled o'er them, night by night,  
 " The snakes that travelled far to sip their dew ! ”  
 Thus for my higher loves ; and thus even weakness  
 Would win me honour. But not these alone  
 Should claim my care ; for common life, its wants  
 And ways, would I set forth in beauteous hues ·  
 The lowest hind should not possess a hope,  
 A fear, but I'd be by him, saying better  
 Than he his own heart's language. I would live  
 Forever in the thoughts I thus explored,  
 As a discoverer's memory is attached  
 To all he finds : they should be mine henceforth,  
 Imbued with me, though free to all before ;  
 For clay, once cast into my soul's rich mine  
 Should come up crusted o'er with gems : nor this  
 Would need a meaner spirit, than the first :  
 Nay, 'twould be but the selfsame spirit, clothed  
 In humbler guise, but still the selfsame spirit—  
 As one spring wind unbinds the mountain snow,  
 And comforts violets in their hermitage.

But, master, poet, who has done all this,  
How didst thou 'scape the ruin I have met ?  
Didst thou, when nerving thee to this attempt,  
Ne'er range thy mind's extent, as some wide hall,  
Dazzled by shapes that filled its length with light,  
Shapes clustered there to rule thee, not obey—  
That will not wait thy summons, will not rise  
Singly, nor when thy practised eye and hand  
Can well transfer their loveliness, but crowd  
By thee forever, bright to thy despair ?  
Didst thou ne'er gaze on each by turns, and ne'er  
Resolve to single out *one*, though the rest  
Should vanish, and to give that one, entire  
In beauty, to the world ; forgetting, so,  
Its peers, whose number baffles mortal power ?  
And, this determined, wert thou ne'er seduced  
By memories, and regrets, and passionate love,  
To glance once more farewell ? and did their eyes  
Fasten thee, brighter and more bright, until  
Thou couldst but stagger back unto their feet,  
And laugh that man's applause or welfare once  
Could tempt thee to forsake them ? Or when years  
Had passed, and still their love possessed thee wholly ;  
When from without some murmur startled thee  
Of darkling mortals, famished for one ray  
Of thy so-hoarded luxury of light,  
Didst thou ne'er strive even yet to break those spells,  
And prove thou couldst recover and fulfil  
Thy early mission, long ago renounced,

And, to that end, select some shape once more?  
 And did not mist-like influences, thick films,  
 Faint memories of the rest, that charmed so long  
 Thine eyes, float fast, confuse thee, bear thee off,  
 As whirling snow-drifts blind a man who treads  
 A mountain ridge, with guiding spear, through storm?  
 Say, though I fell, I had excuse to fall;  
 Say, I was tempted sorely: say but this.  
 Dear lord, Aprile's lord!

*Par.* Clasp me not thus,  
 Aprile! . . . That the truth should reach me thus!  
 We are weak dust. Nay, clasp not, or I faint!

*Apr.* My king! and envious thoughts could outrage thee!  
 Lo, I forget my ruin, and rejoice  
 In thy success, as thou! Let our God's praise  
 Go bravely through the world at last! What care  
 Through me or thee? I feel thy breath . . . why, tears?  
 Tears in the darkness—and from thee to me?

*Par.* Love me henceforth, Aprile, while I learn  
 To love; and, merciful God, forgive us both!  
 We wake at length from weary dreams; but both  
 Have slept in fairy-land; though dark and drear  
 Appears the world before us, we no less  
 Wake with our wrists and ankles jewelled still.  
 I, too, have sought to KNOW as thou to LOVE—  
 Excluding love as thou refusedst knowledge.  
 Still thou hast beauty and I, power. We wake:  
 What penance canst devise for both of us?

*Apr.* I hear thee faintly . . . the thick darkness! Even

Thine eyes are hid. 'Tis as I knew: I speak,  
 And now I die. But I have seen thy face!  
 O, poet, think of me, and sing of me!  
 But to have seen thee, and to die so soon!

*Par.* Die not, Aprile: we must never part.  
 Are we not halves of one dissevered world,  
 Whom this strange chance unites once more? **Part?**  
 never!

Till thou, the lover, know; and I, the knower,  
 Love—until both are saved. Aprile, hear!  
 We will accept our gains, and use them—now!  
 God, he will die upon my breast! Aprile!

*Apr.* To speak but once, and die! yet by his side.  
 Hush! hush!

Ha! go you ever girt about  
 With phantoms, powers? I have created such,  
 But these seem real as I!

*Par.* Whom can you see  
 Through the accursed darkness?

*Apr.* Stay; I know,  
 I know them: who should know them well as I?—  
 White brows, lit up with glory; poets all!

*Par.* Let him but live, and I have my reward!

*Apr.* Yes; I see now—**GOD IS THE PERFECT POET,**  
 Who in creation acts his own conceptions.  
 Shall man refuse to be aught less than God?  
 Man's weakness is his glory—for the strength  
 Which raises him to heaven and near God's self,  
 Came spite of it: God's strength his glory is,

For thence came with our weakness sympathy  
Which brought God down to earth, a man like us.  
Had you but told me this at first! . . . Hush! hush!

*Par.* Live! for my sake, because of my great sin,  
To help my brain, oppressed by these wild words  
And their deep import. Live! 'tis not too late:  
I have a quiet home for us, and friends.  
Michal shall smile on you . . . Hear you? Lean thus,  
And breathe my breath: I shall not lose one word  
Of all your speech—no little word, Aprile!

*Apr.* No, no . . . Crown me? I am not one of you!  
'Tis he, the king, you seek. I am not one . . .

*Par.* Give me thy spirit, at least! Let me love, too  
I have attained, and now I may depart.

### III.—PARACELSUS.

SCENE—*A chamber in the house of Paracelsus at Basil.* 1526.

PARACELSUS, FESTUS.

*Par.* Heap logs, and let the blaze laugh out!

*Fest.*

True, true!

'Tis very fit that all, time, chance, and change  
Have wrought since last we sate thus, face to face,  
And soul to soul—all cares, far-looking fears,  
Vague apprehensions, all vain fancies bred  
By your long absence, should be cast away,

Forgotten in this glad unhopèd renewal  
Of our affections.

*Par.* Oh, omit not aught  
Which witnesses your own and Michal's love !  
I bade you not spare that ! Forget alone  
The honours and the glories, and the rest,  
You seemed disposed to tell profusely out.

*Fest.* Nay, even your honours, in a sense, I wave,  
The wondrous Paracelsus—Life's dispenser,  
Fate's commissary, idol of the schools,  
And Courts, shall be no more than Aureole still—  
Still Aureole and my friend, as when we parted  
Some twenty years ago, and I restrained  
As I best could the promptings of my spirit,  
Which secretly advanced you, from the first,  
To the præminent rank which, since, your own  
Adventurous ardour, nobly triumphing,  
Has won for you.

*Par.* Yes, yes ; and Michal's face  
Still wears that quiet and peculiar light,  
Like the dim circlet floating round a pearl ?

*Fest.* Just so.

*Par.* And yet her calm sweet countenance  
Though saintly, was not sad ; for she would sing  
Alone . . . Does she still sing alone, bird-like,  
Not dreaming you are near ? Her carols dropt  
In flakes through that old leafy bower built under  
The sunny wall at Würzburg, from her lattice  
Among the trees above, while I, unseen,

Sate conning some rare scroll from Trithem's shelves,  
 Much wondering notes so simple could divert  
 My mind from study. Those were happy days!  
 Respect all such as sing when all alone.

*Fest.* Scarcely alone—her children, you may guess,  
 Are wild beside her . . .

*Par.* Ah, those children quite  
 Unsettle the pure picture in my mind:  
 A girl—she was so perfect, so distinct . . .  
 No change, no change! Not but this added grace  
 May blend and harmonize with its compeers,  
 And Michal may become her motherhood;  
 But 'tis a change—and I detest all change,  
 And most a change in ought I loved long since!  
 So Michal . . . you have said she thinks of me?

*Fest.* O very proud will Michal be of you!  
 Imagine how we sate, long winter-nights,  
 Scheming and wondering—shaping your presumed  
 Adventures, or devising their reward;  
 Shutting out fear with all the strength of hope.  
 Though it was strange how, even when most secure  
 In our domestic peace, a certain dim  
 And flitting shade could sadden all; it seemed  
 A restlessness of heart, a silent yearning,  
 A sense of something wanting, incomplete—  
 Not to be put in words, perhaps avoided  
 By mute consent—but, said or unsaid, felt  
 To point to one so loved and so long lost.  
 And then the hopes rose and shut out the fears—

How you would laugh should I recount them now !  
 I still predicted your return at last,  
 With gifts beyond the greatest vaunt of all,  
 All Tritheim's wondrous troop ; did one of which  
 Attain renown by any chance, I smiled—  
 As well aware of' who would prove his peer.  
 Michal was sure some woman, long ere this,  
 As beautiful as you were sage, had loved . . .

*Par.* Far-seeing, truly, to discern so much  
 In the fantastic projects and day-dreams  
 Of a raw, restless boy !

*Fest.* Say, one whose sunrise  
 Well warranted our faith in this full noon !  
 Can I forget the anxious voice which said,  
 "Festus, have thoughts like these e'er shaped themselves  
 "In other brains than mine—have their possessors  
 "Existed in like circumstance—were they weak  
 "As I—or ever constant from the first,  
 "Despising youth's allurements, and rejecting  
 "As spider-films the shackles I endure ?  
 "Is there hope for me ?"—and I answered grave  
 As an acknowledged elder, calmer, wiser,  
 More gifted mortal. O you must remember,  
 For all your glorious . . .

*Par.* Glorious ? ay, this hair,  
 These hands—nay, touch them, they are mine ! Recall  
 With all the said recallings, times when thus  
 To lay them by your own ne'er turned you pale,  
 As now. Most glorious, are they not ?



*Fest.*

Why . . . why . . .

Something must be subtracted from success  
 So wide, no doubt. He would be scrupulous, truly,  
 Who should object such drawbacks. Still, still, Aureole,  
 You are changed—very changed! 'Twere losing nothing  
 To look well to it: you must not be stolen  
 From the enjoyment of your well-won meed.

*Par.* My friend! you seek my pleasure, past a doubt  
 By talking, not of me, but of yourself,  
 You will best gain your point.

*Fest.*

Have I not said

All touching Michal and my children? Sure  
 You know, by this, full well how Aennechen looks  
 Gravely, while one disparts her thick brown hair;  
 And Aureole's glee when some stray gannet builds  
 Amid the birch-trees by the lake. Small hope  
 Have I that he will honour, the wild imp,  
 His namesake! Sigh not! 'tis too much to ask  
 That all we love should reach the same proud fate.  
 But you are very kind to humour me  
 By showing interest in my quiet life;  
 You, who of old could never tame yourself  
 To tranquil pleasures, must at heart despise . . .

*Par.* Festus, strange secrets are let out by Death,  
 Who blabs so oft the follies of this world:  
 And I am Death's familiar, as you know.  
 I helped a man to die, some few weeks since,  
 Warped even from his go-cart to one end—  
 The living on princes' smiles, reflected from

A mighty herd of favourites. No mean trick  
 He left untried ; and truly wellnigh wormed  
 All traces of God's finger out of him.  
 Then died, grown old ; and just an hour before—  
 Having lain long with blank and soulless eyes—  
 He sate up suddenly, and with natural voice  
 Said, that in spite of thick air and closed doors  
 God told him it was June ; and he knew well,  
 Without such telling, harebells grew in June ;  
 And all that kings could ever give or take  
 Would not be precious as those blooms to him.  
 Just so, allowing I am passing wise,  
 It seems to me much worthier argument  
 Why pansies,\* eyes that laugh, bear beauty's prize  
 From violets, eyes that dream—(your Michal's choice :—  
 Than all fools find to wonder at in me,  
 Or in my fortunes : and be very sure  
 I say this from no prurient restlessness—  
 No self-complacency—itching to turn,  
 Vary, and view its pleasure from all points,  
 And, in this matter, willing other men  
 Should argue and demonstrate to itself  
 The realness of the very joy it tastes.  
 What joy is better than the news of friends  
 Whose memories were a solace to me oft,  
 As mountain-baths to wild fowls in their flight ?  
 Yes, oft, than you wasted thought on me

\* *Citrinula* (*flammula*) herba Paracelso multum familiaris. DORM

If you were sage, and rightly valued bliss!  
 But there's no taming nor repressing hearts :  
 God knows I need such!—So you heard me speak?

*Fest.* Speak? when?

*Par.* When but this morning at my class?  
 There was noise and crowd enough. I saw you not.  
 Surely you know I am engaged to fill  
 The chair here?—that 'tis part of my proud fate  
 To lecture to as many thick-sculled youths  
 As please, each day, to throng the theatre,  
 To my great reputation, and no small  
 Danger of Basil's benches, long unused  
 To crack beneath such honour?

*Fest.* I was there ;  
 I mingled with the throng : shall I avow  
 I had small care to listen?—too intent  
 On gathering from the murmurs of the crowd  
 A full corroboration of my hopes!  
 What can I learn about your powers? but they  
 Know, care for nought beyond your actual state--  
 Your actual value ; and yet worship you!  
 Those various natures whom you sway as one!  
 But ere I go, be sure I shall attend . . .

*Par.* Stop, o' God's name : the thing's by no means yet  
 Past remedy ! Shall I read this morning's work  
 —At least in substance? Nought so worth the gaining  
 As an apt scholar ! Thus then, with all due  
 Precision and emphasis—(you, besides, are clearly  
 Guiltless of understanding a whit more;

The subject than your stool—allowed to be  
A notable advantage) . . .

*Fest.* Surely, Aureole,  
You laugh at me!

*Par.* I laugh? Ha, ha! thank heaven,  
I charge you, if't be so! for I forget  
Much—and what laughter should be like! No less,  
However, I forego that luxury,  
Since it alarms the friend who brings it back.  
True, laughter like my own must echo strange  
To thinking men; a smile were better far—  
So make me smile! If the exulting look  
You wore but now be smiling, 'tis so long  
Since I have smiled! Alas, such smiles are born  
Alone of hearts like yours, or shepherds old  
Of ancient time, whose eyes, calm as their flocks,  
Saw in the stars mere garnishry of heaven,  
In earth a stage for altars, nothing more.  
Never change, Festus: I say, never change!

*Fest.* My God, if he be wretched after all!

*Par.* When last we parted, Festus, you declared,  
—Or did your Michal's soft lips whisper words  
I have preserved? She told me she believed  
I should succeed (meaning, that in the search  
I then engaged in, I should meet success),  
And yet be wretched: now, she augured false.

*Fest.* Thank heaven! but you spoke strangely! could  
I venture  
To think bare apprehension lest your friend,



Remained unchanged in feature—nay, his brow  
 Seemed hued with triumph : every spirit then  
 Praising ; *his* heart on flame the while :—a tale !  
 Well, Festus, what discover you, I pray ?

*Fest.* Some foul deed sullies then a life which else  
 Were raised supreme ?

*Par.* Good : I do well—most well !  
 Why strive to make men hear, feel, fret themselves  
 With what 'tis past their power to comprehend ?  
 I would not strive now : only, having nursed  
 The faint surmise that one yet walked the earth,  
 One, at least, not the utter fool of show,  
 Not absolutely formed to be the dupe  
 Of shallow plausibilities alone ;  
 One who, in youth found wise enough to choose  
 The happiness his riper years approve,  
 Was yet so anxious for another's sake,  
 That, ere his friend could rush upon a course  
 Mad, ruinous, the converse of his own,  
 His gentler spirit essayed, prejudged for him  
 The perilous path, foresaw its destiny,  
 And warned the weak one in such tender words,  
 Such accents—his whole heart in every tone—  
 That oft their memory comforted that friend  
 When rather it should have increased despair :  
 —Having believed, I say, that this one man  
 Could never lose the wisdom from the first  
 His portion—how should I refuse to grieve  
 At even my gain if it attest his loss,

At triumph which so signally disturbs  
 Our old relation, proving me more wise?  
 Therefore, once more reminding him how well  
 He prophesied, I note the single flaw  
 That spoils his prophet's title: in plain words  
 You were deceived, and thus were you deceived—  
 I have not been successful, and yet am  
 Most wretched; there—'tis said at last; but give  
 No credit, lest you force me to concede  
 That common sense yet lives upon the earth.

*Fest.* You surely do not mean to banter me?

*Par.* You know, or (if you have been wise enough  
 To cleanse your memory of such matters) knew,  
 As far as words of mine could make it clear,  
 That 'twas my purpose to find joy or grief  
 Solely in the fulfilment of my plan,  
 Or plot, or whatsoe'er it was; rejoicing  
 Alone as it proceeded prosperously,  
 Sorrowing alone when any chance retarded  
 Its progress. That was in those Würzburg days!  
 Not to prolong a theme I thoroughly hate,  
 I have pursued this plan with all my strength;  
 And having failed therein most signally,  
 Cannot object to ruin, utter and drear  
 As all-excelling would have been the prize  
 Had fortune favoured me. I scarce do right  
 To vex your frank good spirit, late rejoiced  
 By my supposed prosperity, I know,  
 And, were I lucky in a glut of friends,

Would well agree to let your error live,  
 Nay, strengthen it with fables of success :  
 But mine is no condition to refuse  
 The transient solace of so rare a chance,  
 My solitary luxury, my Festus—  
 Accordingly I venture to put off  
 The wearisome vest of falsehood galling me,  
 Secure when he is by. I lay me bare,  
 Prone at his mercy—but he is my friend !  
 Not that he needs retain his aspect grave ;  
 That answers not my purpose ; for 'tis like,  
 Some sunny morning—Basil being drained  
 Of its wise population, every corner  
 Of the amphitheatre crammed with learned clerks,  
 Here Æcolampadius, looking worlds of wit,  
 Here Castellanus, as profound as he,  
 Munsterus here, Frobenius there,—all squeezed,  
 And staring, and expectant,—then, I say,  
 'Tis like that the poor zany of the show,  
 Your friend, will choose to put his trappings off  
 Before them, bid adieu to cap and bells  
 And motley with a grace but seldom judged  
 Expedient in such cases :—the grim smile  
 That will go round ! Is it not therefore best  
 To venture a rehearsal like the present  
 In a small way ? Where are the signs I seek,  
 The first-fruits and fair sample of the scorn  
 Due to all quacks ? Why, this will never do !

*Fest.* These are foul vapours, Aureole : rought beside



The effect of watching, study, weariness.  
 Were there a spark of truth in the confusion  
 Of these wild words, you would not outrage thus  
 Your youth's companion. I shall ne'er regard  
 These wanderings, bred of faintness and much study.  
 You would not trust a trouble thus to me,  
 To Michal's friend.

*Par.* I have said it, dearest Festus !  
 The manner is ungracious, probably ;  
 More may be told in broken sobs, one day,  
 And scalding tears, ere long : but I thought best  
 To keep that off as long as possible.  
 Do you wonder still ?

*Fest.* No ; it must oft fall out  
 That one whose labour perfects any work,  
 Shall rise from it with eye so worn, that he  
 Of all men least can measure the extent  
 Of what he has accomplished. He alone,  
 Who, nothing tasked, is nothing weary too,  
 Can clearly scan the little he effects :  
 But we, the bystanders, untouched by toil,  
 Estimate each aright.

*Par.* This worthy Festus  
 Is one of them, at last ! 'Tis so with all !  
 First, they set down all progress as a dream,  
 And next, when he, whose quick discomfiture  
 Was counted on, accomplishes some few  
 And doubtful steps in his career,—behold,

They look for every inch of ground to vanish  
Beneath his tread, so sure they judge success!

*Fest.* Few doubtful steps? when death retires before  
Your presence—when the noblest of mankind,  
Broken in body, or subdued in mind,  
May through your skill renew their vigour, raise  
The shattered frame to pristine stateliness?  
When men in racking pain may purchase dreams  
Of what delights them most—swooning at once  
Into a sea of bliss, or rapt along  
As in a flying sphere of turbulent light?  
When we may look to you as one ordained  
To free the flesh from fell disease, as frees  
Our Luther's burning tongue the fettered soul?  
When . . .

*Par.* Rather, when and where, friend, did you get  
This notable news?

*Fest.* Even from the common voice;  
From those whose envy, daring not dispute  
The wonders it decries, attributes them  
To magic and such folly.

*Par.* Folly? Why not  
To magic, pray? You find a comfort doubtless  
In holding, God ne'er troubles him about  
Us or our doings: once we were judged worth  
The devil's tempting . . . I offend: forgive me,  
And rest content. Your prophecy on the whole  
Was fair enough as prophesyings go;  
At fault a little in detail, but quite

Precise enough in the main ; accordingly  
 I pay due homage : you guessed long ago  
 (The prophet !) I should fail—and I have failed.

*Fest.* You mean to tell me, then, the hopes which fed  
 Your youth have not been realized as yet ?  
 Some obstacle has barred them hitherto ?  
 Or that their innate . . .

*Par.* As I said but now,  
 You have a very decent prophet's fame,  
 So you but shun details here. Little matters  
 Whether those hopes were mad,—the aims they sought,  
 Safe and secure from all ambitious fools ;  
 Or whether my weak wits are overcome  
 By what a better spirit would scorn : I fail.  
 And now methinks 'twere best to change a theme,  
 I am a sad fool to have stumbled on.  
 I say confusedly what comes uppermost ;  
 But there are times when patience proves at fault,  
 As now : this morning's strange encounter—you  
 Beside me once again ! you, whom I guessed  
 Alive, since hitherto (with Luther's leave)  
 No friend have I among the saints at rest,  
 To judge by any good their prayers effect—  
 I knew you would have helped me !—So would He,  
 My strange competitor in enterprise,  
 Bound for the same end by another path,  
 Arrived, or ill or well, before the time,  
 At our disastrous journey's doubtful close—  
 How goes it with Aprile ? Ah, your heaven

Receives not into its beatitudes  
 Mere martyrs for the world's sake ; heaven shuts fast  
 The poor mad poet is howling by this time !  
 Since you are my sole friend then, here or there,  
 I could not quite repress the varied feelings  
 This meeting wakens ; they have had their vent,  
 And now forget them. Do the rear-mice still  
 Hang like a fret-work on the gate (or what  
 In my time was a gate) fronting the road  
 From Einsiedeln to Lachen ?

*Fest.*

Trifle not !

Answer me—for my sake alone. You smiled  
 Just now, when I supposed some deed, unworthy  
 Yourself might blot the else so bright result ;  
 Yet if your motives have continued pure,  
 Your earnest will unfaltering, if you still  
 Remain unchanged, and if, in spite of this,  
 You have experienced a defeat that proves  
 Your aims forever unattainable—  
 I say not, you would cheerfully resign  
 The contest—mortal hearts are not so fashioned—  
 But sure you would resign it, ne'ertheless.  
 You sought not fame, nor gain, nor even love ;  
 No end distinct from knowledge,—I repeat  
 Your very words : once satisfied that knowledge  
 Is a mere dream, you would announce as much,  
 Yourself the first. But how is the event ?  
 You are defeated—and I find you here !

*Par.* As though “ here ” did not signify defeat !

I spoke not of my little labours here—  
 But of the break-down of my general aims :  
 That you, aware of their extent and scope,  
 Should look on these sage lecturings, approved  
 By beardless boys, and bearded dotards,—these  
 As a fit consummation of such aims,  
 Is worthy notice ! A professorship  
 At Basil ! Since you see so much in it,  
 And think my life was reasonably drained  
 Of life's delights to render me a match  
 For duties arduous as such post demands,—  
 Far be it from me to deny my power  
 To fill the petty circle lotted out  
 From infinite space, or justify the host  
 Of honours thence accruing : so, take notice,  
 This jewel dangling from my neck preserves  
 The features of a prince, my skill restored  
 To plague his people some few years to come :  
 And all through a pure whim. He had eased the earth  
 For me, but that the droll despair which seized  
 The vermin of his household, tickled me.  
 I came to see : here, drivelled the physician,  
 Whose most infallible nostrum was at fault ;  
 There quaked the astrologer, whose horoscope  
 Had promised him interminable years ;  
 Here a monk fumbled at the sick man's mouth  
 With some undoubted relic—a sudary  
 Of the Virgin ; while some other dozen knaves  
 Of the same brotherhood (he loved them ever)

Were actively preparing 'neath his nose  
Such a suffumigation as, once fired,  
Had stunk the patient dead ere he could groan.  
I cursed the doctor, and upset the brother ;  
Brushed past the conjurer ; vowed that the first gust  
Of stench from the ingredients just alight  
Would raise a cross-grained devil in my sword,  
Not easily laid ; and ere an hour, the prince  
Slept as he never slept since prince he was.  
A day—and I was posting for my life,  
Placarded through the town as one whose spite  
Had near availed to stop the blessed effects  
Of the doctor's nostrum, which, well seconded  
By the sudary, and most by the costly smoke—  
Not leaving out the strenuous prayers sent up  
Hard by, in the abbey—raised the prince to life ;  
To the great reputation of the seer,  
Who, confident, expected all along  
The glad event—the doctor's recompense—  
Much largess from his highness to the monks—  
And the vast solace of his loving people,  
Whose general satisfaction to increase,  
'The prince was pleased no longer to defer  
The burning of some dozen heretics,  
Remanded till God's mercy should be shown  
Touching his sickness, as a prudent pledge  
To make it surer : last of all were joined  
Ample directions to all loyal folk  
To swell the complement, by seizing me

Who—doubtless some rank sorcerer—had endeavoured  
 To thwart these pious offices, obstruct  
 The prince's cure, and frustrate Heaven, by help  
 Of certain devils dwelling in his sword.  
 By luck, the prince in his first fit of thanks  
 Had forced this bauble on me as an earnest  
 Of further favours. This one case may serve  
 To give sufficient taste of many such,  
 So let them pass : those shelves support a pile  
 Of patents, licenses, diplomas, titles,  
 From Germany, France, Spain, and Italy :  
 They authorize some honour : ne'ertheless,  
 I set more store by this Erasmus sent ;  
 He trusts me ; our Frobenius is his friend,  
 And him " I raised " (nay, read it,) " from the dead " .  
 I weary you, I see ; I merely sought  
 To show, there's no great wonder after all  
 That while I fill the class-room, and attract  
 A crowd to Basil, I get leave to stay ;  
 And therefore need not scruple to accept  
 The utmost they can offer—if I please :  
 For 'tis but right the world should be prepared  
 To treat with favour e'en fantastic wants  
 Of one like me, used up in serving her.  
 Just as the mortal, whom the Gods in part  
 Devoured, received in place of his lost limb  
 Some virtue or other—cured disease, I think ;  
 You mind the fables we have read together.

*Fest.* You do not think I comprehend a word ;

The time was, Aureole, you were apt enough  
 To clothe the airiest thoughts in specious breath ;  
 But surely you must feel how vague and strange  
 These speeches sound.

*Par.* Well, then : you know my hopes  
 I am assured, at length, those hopes were vain ;  
 That truth is just as far from me as ever ;  
 That I have thrown my life away ; that sorrow  
 On that account is vain, and further effort  
 To mend and patch what's marred beyond repairing,  
 As useless : and all this was taught to me  
 By the convincing, good old-fashioned method  
 Of force—by sheer compulsion. Is that plain ?

*Fest.* Dear Aureole ! you confess my fears were just  
 God wills not . . .

*Par.* Now, 'tis this I most admire—  
 The constant talk men of your stamp keep up  
 Of God's will, as they style it ; one would swear  
 Man had but merely to uplift his eye,  
 To see the will in question charactered  
 On the heaven's vault. 'Tis hardly wise to moot  
 Such topics : doubts are many and faith is weak.  
 I know as much of any will of God's,  
 As knows some dumb and tortured brute what Man,  
 His stern lord, wills from the perplexing blows  
 That plague him every way, and there, of course,  
 Where least he suffers, longest he remains—  
 My case ; and for such reasons I plod on,  
 Subdued, but not convinced. I know as little



Why I deserve to fail, as why I hoped  
Better things in my youth. I simply know  
I am no master here, but trained and beaten  
Into the path I tread ; and here I stay,  
Until some further intimation reach me,  
Like an obedient drudge : though I prefer  
To view the whole thing as a task imposed,  
Which, whether dull or pleasant, must be done—  
Yet, I deny not, there is made provision  
Of joys which tastes less jaded might affect ;  
Nay, some which please me too, for all my pride—  
Pleasures that once were pains : the iron ring  
Festering about a slave's neck grows at length  
Part of the flesh it eats. I hate no more  
A host of petty, vile delights, undreamed of  
Or spurned, before ; such now supply the place  
Of my dead aims : as in the autumn woods  
Where tall trees used to flourish, from their roots  
Springs up a fungous brood, sickly and pale,  
Chill mushrooms, coloured like a corpse's cheek.

*Fest.* If I interpret well what words I seize,  
It troubles me but little that your aims,  
Vast in their dawning, and most likely grown  
Extravagantly since, have baffled you.  
Perchance I am glad ; you merit greater praise ;  
Because they are too glorious to be gained,  
You do not bindly cling to them and die ;  
You fell, but have not sullenly refused  
To rise, because an angel worsted you

In wrestling, though the world holds not your peer,  
 And though too harsh and sudden is the change  
 To yield content as yet—still, you pursue  
 The ungracious path as though 'twere rosy-strewn.  
 'Tis well : and your reward, or soon or late,  
 Will come from Him whom no man serves in vain.

*Par.* Ah, very fine ! For my part, I conceive  
 The very pausing from all further toil,  
 Which you find heinous, would be as a seal  
 To the sincerity of all my deeds.  
 To be consistent I should die at once ;  
 I calculated on no after-life ;  
 Yet (how crept in, how fostered, I know not)  
 Here am I with as passionate regret  
 For youth, and health, and love so vainly lost,  
 As if their preservation had been first  
 And foremost in my thoughts ; and this strange fact  
 Humbled me wondrously, and had due force  
 In rendering me the more disposed to follow  
 A certain counsel, a mysterious warning—  
 You will not understand—but 'twas a man  
 With aims not mine, but yet pursued like mine,  
 With the same fervor and no more success,  
 Who perished in my sight ; but summoned me,  
 As I would shun the ghastly fate I saw,  
 To serve my race at once ; to wait no longer  
 Till God should interfere in my behalf,  
 And let the next world's knowledge dawn on this ;  
 But to distrust myself, put pride away,

And give my gains, imperfect as they were,  
 To men. I have not leisure to explain  
 How since, a strange succession of events  
 Has raised me to the station you behold,  
 Wherein I seem to turn to most account  
 The mere wreck of the past,—perhaps receive  
 Some feeble glimmering token that God views  
 And may approve my penance; therefore here  
 You find me—doing most good or least harm:  
 And if folks wonder much and profit little  
 'Tis not my fault; only, I shall rejoice  
 When my part in the farce is shuffled through,  
 And the curtain falls; I must hold out till then.

*Fest.* Till when, dear Aureole?

*Par.*

Till I'm fairly thrust

From my proud eminence. Fortune is fickle  
 And even professors fall: should that arrive,  
 I see no sin in ceding to my bent.  
 You little fancy what rude shocks apprise us  
 We sin: God's intimations rather fail  
 In clearness than in energy: 'twere well  
 Did they but indicate the course to take  
 Like that to be forsaken. I would fain  
 Be spared a further sample! Here I stand,  
 And here I stay, be sure, till forced to flit.

*Fest.* Remain but firm on that head; long ere then  
 All I expect will come to pass, I trust:  
 The cloud that wraps you will have disappeared.  
 Meantime, I see small chance of such event:

They praise you here as one whose lore, divulged  
 Already, eclipses all the past can show,  
 But whose achievements, marvellous as they be,  
 Are faint anticipations of a glory  
 About to be revealed. When Basil's crowds  
 Dismiss their teacher, I shall be content  
 That he depart.

*Par.* This favour at their hands  
 I look for earlier than your view of things  
 Would warrant. Of the crowd you saw to-day  
 Remove the full half sheer amazement draws,  
 The novelty, nought else; and next, the tribe  
 Whose innate blockish dulness just perceives  
 That unless miracles (as seem my works)  
 Be wrought in their behalf, their chance is slight  
 To puzzle the devil; next, the numerous set  
 Who bitterly hate established schools, so help  
 The teacher that oppugns them, and o'erthrows,  
 Till having planted his own doctrine, he  
 May reckon on their rancour in his turn;  
 Take, too, the sprinkling of sagacious knaves  
 Whose cunning runs not counter to the vogue.  
 But seeks, by flattery and nursing craft,  
 To force my system to a premature  
 Short-lived development . . . Why swell the list?  
 Each has his end to serve, and his best way  
 Of serving it: remove all these, remains  
 A scantling—a poor dozen at the best—  
 That really come to learn for learning's sake;

Worthy to look for sympathy and service,  
And likely to draw profit from my pains.

*Fest.* 'Tis no encouraging picture : still these few  
Redeem their fellows. Once implant the germ,  
Its growth, if slow, is sure.

*Par.* God grant it so !  
I would make some amends : but if I fail,  
The luckless rogues have this excuse to urge,  
That much is in my method and my manner,  
My uncouth habits, my impatient spirit,  
Which hinders of reception and result  
My doctrine : much to say, small skill to speak !  
Those old aims suffered not a looking-off,  
Though for an instant ; therefore, only when  
I thus renounced them and resolved to reap  
Some present fruit—to teach mankind some truth  
So dearly purchased—only then I found  
Such teaching was an art requiring cares  
And qualities peculiar to itself ;  
That to possess was one thing—to display,  
Another. Had renown been in my thoughts,  
Or popular praise, I had soon discovered it !  
One grows but little apt to learn these things

*Fest.* If it be so, which nowise I believe,  
There needs no waiting fuller dispensation  
To leave a labour to so little use .

Why not throw up the irksome charge at once ?

*Par.* A task, a task ! . . .

But wnaerefore hide from you

The whole extent of degradation, once  
Engaged in the confession? Spite of all  
My fine talk of obedience, and repugnance,  
Docility, and what not, 'tis yet to learn  
If when the old task really is performed,  
And my will free once more, to choose a new,  
I shall do aught but slightly modify  
The nature of the hated one I quit.  
In plain words, I am spoiled: my life still tends  
As first it tended. I am broken and trained  
To my old habits; they are part of me.  
I know, and none so well, my darling ends  
Are proved impossible: no less, no less,  
Even now what humours me, fond fool, as when  
Their faint ghosts sit with me, and flatter me,  
And send me back content to my dull round?  
How can I change this soul?—this apparatus  
Constructed solely for their purposes  
So well adapted to their every want,  
To search out and discover, prove and perfect;  
This intricate machine, whose most minute,  
Least obvious motions have their charm to me  
Though to none else—an aptitude I seize,  
An object I perceive, a use, a meaning,  
A property, a fitness, I explain,  
And I alone:—how can I change my soul?  
And this wronged body, worthless save when tasked  
Under that soul's dominion—used to care  
For its bright master's cares, and quite subdued

Its proper cravings—not to ail, nor pine,  
So the soul prosper—whither drag this poor,  
Tried, patient body? God! how I essayed,  
To live like that mad poet, for a while,  
To catch Aprile's spirit, as I hoped,  
And love alone! and how I felt too warped  
And twisted and deformed! What should I do?  
Even tho' released from drudgery, but return  
Faint, as you see, and halting, blind and sore,  
To my old life—and die as I begun!  
I cannot feed on beauty, for the sake  
Of beauty only; nor can drink in balm  
From lovely objects for their loveliness;  
My nature cannot lose her first intent;  
I still must hoard, and heap, and class all truths  
With one ulterior purpose: I must know!  
Would God translate me to his throne, believe  
That I should only listen to his words  
To further my own aims! For other men,  
Beauty is prodigally strewn around,  
And I were happy could I quench as they  
This mad and thriveless longing, be content  
With beauty for itself alone: alas!  
I have addressed a frock of heavy mail,  
Yet may not join the troop of sacred knights;  
And now the forest-creatures fly from me,  
The grass-banks cool, the sunbeams warm no more!  
Best follow, dreaming that ere night arrives

I shall o'ertake the company, and ride  
Glittering as they !

*Fest.* I think I apprehend  
What you would say : if you, in truth, design  
To enter once more on the life thus left,  
Seek not to hide that all this consciousness  
Of failure is assumed.

*Par.* My friend, my friend,  
I speak, you listen ; I explain, perhaps  
You understand : there our communion ends.  
Have you learnt nothing from to-day's discourse ?  
When we would thoroughly know the sick man's state  
We feel awhile the fluttering pulse, press soft  
The hot brow, look upon the languid eye,  
And thence divine the rest. Must I lay bare  
My heart, hideous and beating, or tear up  
My vitals for your gaze, ere you will deem  
Enough made known ? You ! who are you, forsooth ?  
That is the crowning operation claimed  
By the arch-demonstrator—heaven the hall,  
And earth the audience. Let Aprile and you  
Secure good places—'twill be worth your while.

*Fest.* Are you mad, Aureole ? What can I have said  
To call for this ? I judged from your own words.

*Par.* Oh, true ! A fevered wretch describes the ape  
That mocks him from the bed-foot, and you turn  
All gravely thither at once : or he recounts  
The perilous journey he has late performed,  
And you are puzzled much how that could be !



You find me here, half stupid and half mad  
 It makes no part of my delight to search  
 Into these things, much less to undergo  
 Another's scrutiny; but so it chances  
 That I am led to trust my state to you:  
 And the event is, you combine, contrast,  
 And ponder on my foolish words, as though  
 They thoroughly conveyed all hidden here—  
 Here, loathsome with despair, and hate, and rage!  
 Is there no fear, no shrinking, or no shame?  
 Will you guess nothing? will you spare me nothing?  
 Must I go deeper? Ay or no?

*Fest.* . . . Dear friend . . .

*Par.* True: I am brutal—'tis a part of it;  
 The plague's sign—you are not a lazar-haunter,  
 How should you know? Well then, you think it strange  
 I should profess to have failed utterly,  
 And yet propose an ultimate return  
 To courses void of hope; and this, because  
 You know not what temptation is, nor how  
 'Tis like to ply men in the sickliest part.  
 You are to understand, that we who make  
 Sport for the gods, are hunted to the end:  
 There is not one sharp volley shot at us,  
 Which if we manage to escape with life,  
 Though touched and hurt, we straight may slacken pace  
 And gather by the way-side herbs and roots  
 To stanch our wounds, secure from further harm--  
 No; we are chased to life's extremest verge.

It will be well indeed if I return,  
 A harmless busy fool to my old ways !  
 I would forget hints of another fate,  
 Significant enough, which silent hours  
 Have lately scared me with.

*Fest.* Another ! and what ?

*Par.* After all, Festus, you say well : I stand  
 A man yet—I need never humble me.  
 I would have been—something, I know not what ;  
 But though I cannot soar, I do not crawl :  
 There are worse portions than this one of mine ;  
 You say well !

*Fest.* Ah ! . . .

*Par* And deeper degradation !  
 If the mean stimulants of vulgar praise,  
 And vanity, should become the chosen food  
 Of a sunk mind ; should stifle even the wish  
 To find its early aspirations true ;  
 Should teach it to breathe falsehood like life-breath—  
 An atmosphere of craft, and trick, and lies ;  
 Should make it proud to emulate or surpass  
 Base natures in the practices which woke  
 Its most indignant loathing once . . . No, no !  
 Utter damnation is reserved for Hell !  
 I had immortal feelings—such shall never  
 Be wholly quenched—no, no !

My friend, you wear

A melancholy face, and truth to speak,  
 There's little cheer in all this dismal work ;

But 'twas not my desire to set abroad  
 Such memories and forebodings. I foresaw  
 Where they would drive; 'twere better you detailed  
 News of Lucerne or Zurich; or I described  
 Great Egypt's flaring sky, or Spain's cork-groves.

*Fest.* I have thought now: yes, this mood will pass  
 away.

I know you, and the lofty spirit you bear,  
 And easily ravel out a clue to all.  
 These are the trials meet for such as you,  
 Nor must you hope exemption: to be mortal  
 Is to be plied with trials manifold.  
 Look round! The obstacles which kept the rest  
 Of men from your ambition, you have spurned:  
 Their fears, their doubts, the chains that bind them best,  
 Were flax before your resolute soul, which nought  
 Avails to awe, save these delusions, bred  
 From its own strength, its selfsame strength, disguised—  
 Mocking itself. Be brave, dear Aureole! Since  
 The rabbit has his shade to frighten him,  
 The fawn his rustling bough, mortals their cares,  
 And higher natures yet their power to laugh  
 At these entangling fantasies, as you  
 At trammels of a weaker intellect.  
 Measure your mind's height by the shade it casts!  
 I know you.

*Par.* And I know you, dearest Festus!  
 And how you love unworthily; and how  
 All admiration renders blind.

*Fest.* You hold  
That admiration blinds?

*Par.* Ay, and alas!

*Fest.* Nought blinds you less than admiration will.  
Whether it be that all love renders wise  
In its degree; from love which blends with love—  
Heart answering heart—to love which spends itself  
In silent mad idolatry of some  
Preëminent mortal, some great soul of souls,  
Which ne'er will know how well it is adored:—  
I say, such love is never blind; but rather  
Alive to every the minutest spot  
Which mars its object, and which hate (supposed  
So vigilant and searching) dreams not of:  
Love broods on such: what then? When first perceived  
Is there no sweet strife to forget, to change,  
To overflush those blemishes with all  
The glow of general goodness they disturb?  
—To make those very defects an endless source  
Of new affection grown from hopes and fears?  
And, when all fails, is there no gallant stand  
Made even for much proved weak? no shrinking-back  
Lest, rising even as its idol sinks,  
It nearly reach the sacred place, and stand  
Almost a rival of that idol? Trust me,  
If there be fiends who seek to work our hurt,  
To ruin and drag down earth's mightiest spirits,  
Even at God's foot, 'twill be from such as love,  
Their zeal will gather most to serve their cause;

And least from those who hate, who most essay  
 By contumely and scorn to blot the light  
 Which will have entrance even to their hearts ;  
 For thence will our Defender tear the veil  
 And show within each heart, as in a shrine,  
 The giant image of Perfection, grown  
 In hate's despite, whose calumnies were spawned  
 In the untroubled presence of its eyes !  
 True admiration blinds not ; nor am I  
 So blind : I call your sin exceptional ;  
 It springs from one whose life has passed the bounds  
 Prescribed to life. Compound that fault with God !  
 I speak of men ; to common men like me  
 The weakness you confess endears you more—  
 Like the far traces of decay in suns :  
 I bid you have good cheer !

*Par.*

*Præclarè ! Optimè !*

Think of a quiet mountain-cloister'd priest  
 Instructing Paracelsus ! yet, 'tis so.  
 Come, I will show you where my merit lies.  
 'Tis in the advance of individual minds  
 That the slow crowd should ground their expectation  
 Eventually to follow—as the sea  
 Waits ages in its bed, 'till some one wave  
 Out of the multitude aspires, extends  
 The empire of the whole, some feet perhaps,  
 Over the strip of sand which could confine  
 Its fellows so long time : thenceforth the rest,  
 Even to the meanest, hurry in at once,

And so much is clear gained. I shall be glad  
 If all my labours, failing of aught else,  
 Suffice to make such inroad, and procure  
 A wider range for thought : nay, they do this ;  
 For, whatsoe'er my notions of true knowledge  
 And a legitimate success, may be,  
 I am not blind to my undoubted rank  
 When classed with others : I precede my age :  
 And whoso wills, is very free to mount  
 These labours as a platform, whence their own  
 May have a prosperous outset : but, alas !  
 My followers—they are noisy as you heard,  
 But for intelligence—the best of them  
 So clumsily wield the weapons I supply  
 And they extol, that I begin to doubt  
 Whether their own rude clubs and pebble-stones  
 Would not do better service than my arms  
 Thus vilely swayed—if error will not fall  
 Sooner before the old awkward batterings  
 Than my more subtle warfare, not half learned.

*Fest.* I would supply that art, then, and withhold  
 Its arms until you have taught their mystery.

*Par.* Content you, 'tis my wish ; I have recourse  
 To the simplest training. Day by day I seek  
 To wake the mood, the spirit which alone  
 Can make those arms of any use to men.  
 Of course, they are for swaggering forth at once  
 Graced with Ulysses' club, Achilles' shield—  
 Flash on us, all in armour, thou Achilles !

Make our hearts dance to thy resounding step !  
 A proper sight to scare the crows away !

*Fest.* Pity you choose not, then, some other method  
 Of coming at your point. The marvellous art  
 At length established in the world bids fair  
 To remedy all hindrances like these :  
 Trust to Frobenius' press the precious lore  
 Obscured by uncouth manner, or unfit  
 For raw beginners ; let his types secure  
 A deathless monument to after-times ;  
 Meanwhile wait confidently and enjoy  
 The ultimate effect : sooner or later,  
 You shall be all-revealed.

*Par.* The old dull question  
 In a new form ; no more. Thus : I possess  
 Two sorts of knowledge ; one,—vast, shadowy,  
 Hints of the unbounded aim I once pursued :  
 The other consists of many secrets, learned  
 While bent on nobler prize,—perhaps a few  
 First principles which may conduct to much :  
 These last I offer to my followers here.  
 Now bid me chronicle the first of these,  
 My ancient study, and in effect you bid me  
 Revert to the wild courses just abjured :  
 I must go find them scattered through the world.  
 Then, for the principles, they are so simple  
 (Being chiefly of the overturning sort,)   
 That one time is as proper to propound them  
 As any other—to-morrow at my class

Or half a century hence embalmed in print :  
 For if mankind intend to learn at all,  
 They must begin by giving faith to them,  
 And acting on them ; and I do not see  
 But that my lectures serve indifferent well :  
 No doubt these dogmas fall not to the earth,  
 For all their novelty and rugged setting.  
 I think my class will not forget the day  
 I let them know the gods of Israel,  
 Aëtius, Oribasius, Galen, Rhasis,  
 Serapion, Avicenna, Averröes,—  
 Were blocks !

*Fest.*                   And that reminds me, I heard something  
 About your waywardness : you burned their books,  
 It seems, instead of answering those sages.

*Par.* And who said that ?

*Fest.*   Some I met yesternight  
 With *Æcolampadius*. As you know, the purpose  
 Of this short stay at Basil was to learn  
 His pleasure touching certain missives sent  
 For our *Zuinglius* and himself. 'Twas he  
 Apprised me that the famous teacher here  
 Was my old friend.

*Par.*   Ab, I forgot : you went . . .

*Fest.* From *Zürich* with advices for the ear  
 Of *Luther*, now at *Wittemburg*—(you know,  
 I make no doubt, the differences of late  
 With *Carolostadius*)—and returning sought  
 Basil and . . .



*Par.* I remember. Here's a case, now,  
 Will teach you why I answer not, but burn  
 The books you mention: pray, does Luther dream  
 His arguments convince by their own force  
 The crowds that own his doctrine? No, indeed:  
 His plain denial of established points  
 Ages had sanctified and men supposed  
 Could never be oppugned while earth was under  
 And heaven above them—points which chance, or time  
 Affected not—did more than the array  
 Of argument which followed. Boldly deny!  
 There is much breath-stopping, hair-stiffening  
 Awhile; then, amazed glances, mute awaiting  
 The thunderbolt which does not come; and next,  
 Reproachful wonder and inquiry: those  
 Who else had never stirred, are able now  
 To find the rest out for themselves—perhaps  
 To outstrip him who set the whole at work,  
 —As never will my wise class its instructor.  
 And you saw Luther?

*Fest.* 'Tis a wondrous soul!

*Par.* True: the so-heavy chain which galled mankind  
 Is shattered, and the noblest of us all  
 Must bow to the deliverer—nay, the worker  
 Of our own projects—we who long before  
 Had burst its trammels, but forgot the crowd,  
 We should have taught, still groaned beneath the load:  
 This he has done and nobly. Speed that may!  
 Whatever be my chance or my despair,

What benefits mankind must glad me too :  
 And men seem made, though not as I believed,  
 For something better than the times produce :  
 Witness these gangs of peasants your new lights  
 From Suabia have possessed, whom Munzer leads,  
 And whom the duke, the landgrave, and the elector  
 Will calm 'in blood ! Well, well—'tis not my world

*Fest.* Hark !

*Par.* 'Tis the melancholy wind astir  
 Within the trees ; the embers too are gray,  
 Morn must be near.

*Fest.* Best ope the casement : see,  
 The night, late strewn with clouds and flying stars,  
 Is blank and motionless : how peaceful sleep  
 The tree-tops all together ! Like an asp,  
 The wind slips whispering from bough to bough.

*Par.* Ay ; you would gaze on a wind-shaken tree  
 By the hour, nor count time lost.

*Fest.* So you shall gaze :  
 'Those happy times will come again . . .

*Par.* Gone ! gone !  
 Those pleasant times ! Does not the moaning wind  
 Seem to bewail that we have gained such gains  
 And bartered sleep for them ?

*Fest.* It is our trust  
 That there is yet another world to mend  
 All error and mischance.

*Par.* Another world !  
 And why this world, this common world, to be

A make-shift, a mere foil, how fair soever,  
To some fine life to come? Man must be fed  
With angel's food, forsooth; and some few traces  
Of a diviner nature which look out  
Through his corporeal baseness, warrant him  
In a supreme contempt for all provision  
For his inferior tastes—some straggling marks  
Which constitute his essence, just as truly  
As here and there a gem would constitute  
The rock, their barren bed, a diamond.  
But were it so—were man all mind—he gains  
A station little enviable. From God  
Down to the lowest spirit ministrant,  
Intelligence exists which casts our mind  
Into immeasurable shade. No, no:  
Love, hope, fear, faith—these make humanity;  
These are its sign, and note, and character;  
And these I have lost!—gone, shut from me forever,  
Like a dead friend, safe from unkindness more!  
See morn at length. The heavy darkness seems  
Diluted; gray and clear without the stars;  
The shrubs bestir and rouse themselves, as if  
Some snake, that weighed them down all night, let go  
His hold; and from the east, fuller and fuller  
Day, like a mighty river, is flowing in;  
But clouded, wintry, desolate and cold:  
Yet see how that broad, prickly, star-shaped plant,  
Half down in the crevice, spreads its woolly leaves,  
All thick and glistening with diamond dew.

And you depart for Einsiedeln this day :  
 And we have spent all night in talk like this !  
 If you would have me better for your love,  
 Revert no more to these sad themes.

*Fest.*

One favour,

And I have done. I leave you, deeply moved ;  
 Unwilling to have fared so well, the while  
 My friend has changed so sorely : if this mood  
 Shall pass away—if light once more arise  
 Where all is darkness now—if you see fit  
 To hope, and trust again, and strive again ;  
 You will remember—not our love alone—  
 But that my faith in God's desire for man  
 To trust on his support, (as I must think  
 You trusted,) is obscured and dim through you :  
 For you are thus, and this is no reward.  
 Will you not call me to your side, dear friend ?

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#### IV.—PARACELSUS ASPIRES.

SCENE.—*A House at Colmar, in Alsatia.* 1528.

PARACELSUS, FESTUS.

*Par.* (*To John Oporinus, his secretary.*) *Sic itur ad astra!* Dear Von Visenburg  
 Is scandalized, and poor Torinus paralyzed,  
 And every honest soul that Basil holds  
 Aghast ; and yet we live, as one may say,  
 Just as though Liechtenfels had never set

So true a value on his sorry carcass,  
 And learned Pütter had not frowned us dumb.  
 We live ; and shall as surely start to-morrow  
 For Nuremburg, as we drink speedy scathe  
 To Basil in this mantling wine, suffused  
 With a delicate blush—no fainter tinge is born  
 I' th' shut heart of a bud : pledge me, good John—  
 “ Basil ; a hot plague ravage it, with Pütter  
 “ To stop the plague ! ” Even so ? Do you too share  
 Their panic—the reptiles ? Ha, ha ; faint through *them*,  
 Desist for *them* !—while means enough exist  
 To bow the stoutest braggart of the tribe  
 Once more in crouching sience—means to breed  
 A stupid wonder in each fool again,  
 Now big with admiration at the skill  
 Which stript a vain pretender of his plumes ;  
 And, that done, means to brand each slavish brow  
 So deeply, surely, ineffaceably,  
 That thenceforth flattery shall not pucker it  
 Out of the furrow of that hideous stamp  
 Which shows the next they fawn on, what they are,  
 This Basil, with its magnates one and all,  
 Whom I curse soul and limb. And now dispatch,  
 Dispatch, my trusty John ; and what remains  
 To do, whate'er arrangements for our trip  
 Are yet to be completed, see you hasten  
 This night ; we'll weather the storm at least : to-morrow  
 For Nuremburg ! Now leave us ; this grave clerk  
 Has divers weighty matters for my ear. (*Oporinus goes out.*)

And spare my lungs. At last, my gallant Festus,  
 I am rid of this arch-knave that follows me  
 As a gaunt crow a gasping sheep ; at last  
 May give a loose to my delight. How kind,  
 How very kind, my first, best, only friend !  
 Why this looks like fidelity. Embrace me :  
 Not a hair silvered yet ! Right : you shall live  
 Till I am worth your love ; you shall be proud,  
 And I—but let time show. Did you not wonder ?  
 I sent to you because our compact weighed  
 Upon my conscience—(you recall the night  
 At Basil, which the gods confound)—because  
 Once more I aspire ! I call you to my side ;  
 You come. You thought my message strange ?

*Fest.*

So strange

That I must hope, indeed, your messenger  
 Has mingled his own fancies with the words  
 Purporting to be yours.

*Par.*

He said no more,

'Tis probable, than the precious folks I leave  
 Said fifty-fold more roughly. Well-a-day,  
 'Tis true ; poor Paracelsus is exposed  
 At last ; a most egregious quack he proves,  
 And those he overreached must spit their hate  
 On one who, utterly beneath contempt,  
 Could yet deceive their toppling wits. You heard  
 Bare truth ; and at my bidding you come here  
 To speed me on my enterprise, as once  
 Your lavished wishes sped me, my own friend ?

*Fest.* What is your purpose, Aureole?

*Par.* Oh, for purpose,

There is no lack of precedents in a case  
Like mine ; at least, if not precisely mine,  
The case of men cast off by those they sought  
To benefit . . .

*Fest* They really cast you off?

I only heard a vague tale of some priest,  
Cured by your skill, who wrangled at your claim,  
Knowing his life's worth best ; and how the judge  
The matter was referred to, saw no cause  
To interfere, nor you to hide your full  
Contempt of him ; nor he, again, to smother  
His wrath thereat, which raised so fierce a flame  
That Basil soon was made no place for you.

*Par.* The affair of Liechtenfels ? the shallowest cause,  
The last and silliest outrage—mere pretence !  
I knew it, I foretold it from the first,  
How soon the stupid wonder you mistook  
For genuine loyalty—a cheering promise  
Of better things to come—would pall and pass ;  
And every word comes true. Saul is among  
The prophets ! Just so long as I was pleased  
To play off the mere marvels of my art—  
Fantastic gambols leading to no end—  
I got huge praise ; but one can ne'er keep down  
Our foolish nature's weakness : there they flocked,  
Poor devils, jostling, swearing, and perspiring,  
Till the walls rang again ; and all for me !

I had a kindness for them, which was right ;  
 But then I stopped not till I tacked to that  
 A trust in them and a respect—a sort  
 Of sympathy for them : I must needs begin  
 To teach them, not amaze them ; “ to impart  
 “ The spirit which should instigate the search  
 “ Of truth : ” just what you bade me ! I spoke out  
 Forthwith a mighty squadron, in disgust,  
 Filed off—“ the sifted chaff of the sack,” I said,  
 Redoubling my endeavours to secure  
 The rest ; when lo ! one man had stayed thus long  
 Only to ascertain if I supported  
 This tenet of his, or that ; another loved  
 To hear impartially before he judged,  
 And having heard, now judged ; this bland disciple  
 Passed for my dupe, but all along, it seems,  
 Spied error where his neighbours marvelled most •  
 That fiery doctor who had hailed me friend,  
 Did it because my by-paths, once proved wrong  
 And beacons properly, would commend again  
 The good old ways our sires jogged safely o’er,  
 Though not their squeamish sons ; the other worthy  
 Discovered divers verses of St. John,  
 Which, read successively, refreshed the soul,  
 But, muttered backwards, cured the gout, the stone,  
 The colic, and what not :—*quid multa* ? The end  
 Was a clear class-room, with a quiet leer  
 From grave folk, and a sour reproachful glance  
 From those in chief, who, cap in hand, installed



The new professor scarce a year before ;  
 And a vast flourish about patient merit  
 Obscured awhile by flashy tricks, but sure  
 Sooner or later to emerge in splendour—  
 Of which the example was some luckless wight  
 Whom my arrival had discomfited,  
 But now, it seems, the general voice recalled  
 To fill my chair, and so efface the stain  
 Basil had long incurred. I sought no better—  
 Nought but a quiet dismissal from my post ;  
 While from my heart I wished them better suited,  
 And better served. Good night to Basil, then !  
 But fast as I proposed to rid the tribe  
 Of my obnoxious back, I could not spare them  
 The pleasure of a parting kick.

*Fest.*

You smile :

Despise them as they merit !

*Par.*

If I smile,

'Tis with as very contempt as ever turned  
 Flesh into stone : this courteous recompense !  
 This grateful . . . Festus, were your nature fit  
 To be defiled, your eyes the eyes to ache  
 At gangrened blotches, eating poisonous blains,  
 The ulcered barky scurf of leprosy  
 Which finds—a man, and leaves—a hideous thing  
 That cannot but be mended by hell fire,  
 —I say that, could you see as I could show,  
 I would lay bare to you these human hearts  
 Which God cursed long ago, and devils make since

Their pet nest and their never-tiring home.  
 O, sages have discovered we are born  
 For various ends—to love, to know : has ever  
 One stumbled, in his search, on any signs  
 Of a nature in him formed to hate? To hate?  
 If that be our true object which evokes  
 Our powers in fullest strength, be sure 'tis hate!

*Fest.* But I have yet to learn your purpose, Aureole

*Par.* What purpose were the fittest now for me?  
 Decide! To sink beneath such ponderous shame—  
 To shrink up like a crushed snail—undergo  
 In silence and desist from further toil,  
 And so subside into a monument  
 Of one their censure blasted; or to bow  
 Cheerfully as submissively—to lower  
 My old pretensions even as Basil dictates—  
 To drop into the rank her wits assign me,  
 And live as they prescribe, and make that use  
 Of my poor knowledge which their rules allow—  
 Proud to be patted now and then, and careful  
 To practise the true posture for receiving  
 The amplest benefit from their hoofs' appliance,  
 When they shall condescend to tutor me.  
 Then one may feel resentment like a flame,  
 Prompting to deck false systems in Truth's garb,  
 And tangle and entwine mankind with error,  
 And give them darkness for a dower, and falsehood  
 For a possession : or one may mope away  
 Into a shade through thinking; or else drowse

Into a dreamless sleep, and so die off:  
 But I, but I—now Festus shall divine!  
 —Am merely setting out in life once more,  
 Embracing my old aims!—What thinks he now?

*Fest.* Your aims? the aims?—to know? and where is  
 found

The early trust . . .

*Par.* Nay, not so fast; I say,  
 The aims—not the old means. You know what made me  
 A laughing-stock; I was a fool; you know  
 The when and the how: hardly those means again!  
 Not but they had their beauty—who should know  
 Their passing beauty, if not I? But still  
 They were dreams, so let them vanish: yet in beauty,  
 If that may be. Stay—thus they pass in song!

(*He sings.*)

Heap cassia, sandal-buds, and stripes  
 Of labdanum, and aloe-balls  
 Smear'd with dull nard an Indian wipes  
 From out her hair: (such balsam falls  
 Down seaside mountain pedestals,  
 From summits where tired winds are fain,  
 Spent with the vast and howling main,  
 To treasure half their island-gain.)

And strew faint sweetness from some old  
 Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud,  
 Which breaks to dust when once unrolled;

And shred dim perfume, like a cloud  
 From chamber long to quiet vowed,  
 With moth'd and dropping arras hung,  
 Mouldering the lute and books among  
 Of queen, long dead, who lived there young.

Mine, every word!—and on such pile shall die  
 My lovely fancies, with fair perished things,  
 Themselves fair and forgotten; yes, forgotten,  
 Or why abjure them? So I made this rhyme  
 That fitting dignity might be preserved:  
 No little proud was I; though the list of drugs  
 Smacks of my old vocation, and the verse  
 Halts like the best of Luther's psalms!

*Fest.*

But, Aureole,

Talk not thus wildly and madly. I am here—  
 Did you know all, indeed! I have travelled far  
 To learn your wishes. Be yourself again!  
 For in this mood I recognize you less  
 Than in the horrible despondency  
 I witnessed last. You may account this, joy;  
 But rather let me gaze on that despair  
 Than hear these incoherent words, and see  
 This flushed cheek and intensely-sparkling eye!

*Par.* Why, man, I was light-hearted in my prime,  
 I am light-hearted now; what would you have?  
 Aprile was a poet, I make songs—  
 'Tis the very augury of success I want!  
 Why should I not be joyous now as then?

*Fest.* Joyous! and how? and what remains for joy?  
You have declared the ends (which I am sick  
Of naming) are impracticable.

*Par.* Ay,  
Pursued as I pursued them—the arch-fool!  
Listen: my plan will please you not, 'tis like;  
But you are little versed in the world's ways.  
This is my plan—(first drinking its good luck)—  
I will accept all helps; all I despised  
So rashly at the outset, equally  
With early impulses, late years have quenched:  
I have tried each way singly—now for both!  
All helps—no one sort shall exclude the rest.  
I seek to KNOW and to ENJOY at once,  
Not one without the other as before.  
Suppose my labour should seem God's own cause  
Once more, as first I dreamed, it shall not balk me  
Of the meanest, earthliest, sensuaest delight  
That may be snatched; for every joy is gain,  
And why spurn gain, however small? My soul  
Aan die then, nor be taunted "what was gained?"  
Nor, on the other hand, if pleasure meets me  
As though I had not spurned her hitherto,  
Shall she o'ereloud my spirit's rapt communion  
With the tumultuous past, the teeming future,  
Glorious with visions of a full success!

*Fest.* Success!

*Par.* And wherefore not? Why not prefer  
Results obtained in my best state of being,

To those derived alone from seasons dark  
 As the thoughts they bred? When I was best—my youth  
 Unwasted—seemed success not surest too?  
 It is the nature of darkness to obscure.  
 I am a wanderer: I remember well  
 One journey, how I feared the track was missed,  
 So long the city I desired to reach  
 Lay hid; when suddenly its spires afar  
 Flashed through the circling clouds; conceive my joy!  
 Too soon the vapours closed o'er it again,  
 But I had seen the city, and one such glance  
 No darkness could obscure: nor shall the present  
 A few dull hours, a passing shame or two,  
 Destroy the vivid memories of the past.  
 I will fight the battle out!—a little tired,  
 Perhaps—but still an able combatant.  
 You look at my gray hair and furrowed brow?  
 But I can turn even weakness to account:  
 Of many tricks I know, 'tis not the least  
 To push the ruins of my frame, whereon  
 The fire of vigour trembles scarce alive,  
 Into a heap, and send the flame aloft!  
 What should I do with age? so sickness lends  
 An aid; it being, I fear, the source of all  
 We boast of: mind is nothing but disease,  
 And natural health is ignorance.

*Fest.*

I see

But one good symptom in this notable plan:  
 I feared your sudden journey had in view

To wreak immediate vengeance on your foes ;  
 'Tis not so : I am glad.

*Par.*                                  And if I pleased  
 To spit on them, to trample them, what then ?  
 'Tis sorry warfare truly, but the fools  
 Provoke it : I had spared their self-conceit,  
 But if they must provoke me—cannot suffer  
 Forbearance on my part—if I may keep  
 No quality in the shade, must needs put forth  
 Power to match power, my strength against their strength,  
 And teach them their own game with their own arms—  
 Why be it so, and let them take their chance !  
 I am above them like a God—in vain  
 To hide the fact—what idle scruples, then,  
 Were those that ever bade me soften it,  
 Communicate it gently to the world,  
 Instead of proving my supremacy,  
 Taking my natural station o'er their heads,  
 Then owning all the glory was a man's,  
 And in my elevation man's would be !  
 But live and learn, though life's short ; learning, hard !  
 Still, one thing I have learned—not to despair :  
 And therefore, though the wreck of my past self,  
 I fear, dear Pütter, that your lecture-room  
 Must wait awhile for its best ornament,  
 The penitent empiric, who set up  
 For somebody, but soon was taught his place—  
 Now, but too happy to be let confess  
 His error, snuff the candles, and illustrate

*(Fiat experientia corpore vili)*

Your medicine's soundness in his person. Wait,  
Good Pütter!

*Fest.* He who sneers thus, is a God!

*Par.* Ay, ay, laugh at me! I am very glad  
You are not gulled by all this swaggering; you  
Can see the root of the matter!—how I strive  
To put a good face on the overthrow  
I have experienced, and to bury and hide  
My degradation in its length and breadth;  
How the mean motives I would make you think  
Just mingle as is due with nobler aims,  
The appetites I modestly allow  
May influence me—as I am mortal still—  
Do goad me, drive me on, and fast supplant  
My youth's desires: you are no stupid dupe;  
You find me out! Yes, I had sent for you  
To palm these childish lies upon you, Festus!  
Laugh—you shall laugh at me!

*Fest.* The past, then, A ireole  
Proves nothing? Is our interchange of love  
Yet to begin? Have I to swear I mean  
No flattery in this speech or that? For you,  
Whate'er you say, there is no degradation,  
These low thoughts are no inmates of your mind;  
Or wherefore this disorder? You are vexed  
As much by the intrusion of base views,  
Familiar to your adversaries, as they  
Were troubled should your qualities alight



Amid their murky souls : not otherwise,  
 A stray wolf which the winter forces down  
 From our bleak hills, suffices to affright  
 A village in the vales—while foresters  
 Sleep calm though all night long the famished troops  
 Snuff round and scratch against their crazy huts :  
 These evil thoughts are monsters, and will flee.

*Par.* May you be happy, Festus, my own friend !

*Fest.* Nay, further ; the delights you fain would think  
 The superseders of your nobler aims,  
 Though ordinary and harmless stimulants,  
 Will ne'er content you . . .

*Par.* Hush ! I once despised them  
 But that soon passes : we are high at first  
 In our demands, nor will abate a jot  
 Of toil's strict value ; but time passes o'er,  
 And humbler spirits accept what we refuse ;  
 In short, when some such comfort is doled out  
 As these delights, we cannot long retain  
 The bitter contempt which urges us at first  
 To hurl it back, but hug it to our breast  
 And thankfully retire. This life of mine  
 Must be lived out, and a grave thoroughly earned :  
 I am just fit for that and nought beside.  
 I told you once, I cannot now Enjoy,  
 Unless I deem my knowledge gains through joy ;  
 Nor can I Know, but straight warm tears reveal  
 My need of linking also joy to knowledge :  
 So on I drive—enjoying all I can,

And knowing all I can. I speak, of course,  
Confusedly; this will better explain—feel here!  
Quick beating, is it not?—a fire of the heart  
To work off someway, this as well as any!  
So Festus sees me fairly launched; his calm  
Compassionate look might have disturbed me once,  
But now, far from rejecting, I invite  
What bids me press the closer, lay myself  
Open before him, and be soothed with pity;  
And hope, if he command hope; and believe  
As he directs me—satiating myself  
With his enduring love: and Festus quits me  
To give place to some credulous disciple  
Who holds that God is wise, but Paracelsus  
Has his peculiar merits. I suck in  
That homage, chuckle o'er that admiration,  
And then dismiss the fool; for night is come,  
And I betake myself to study again,  
Till patient searchings after hidden lore  
Half wring some bright truth from its prison; my frame  
Trembles, my forehead's veins swell out, my hair  
Tingles for triumph! Slow and sure the morn  
Shall break on my pent room, and dwindling lamp,  
And furnace dead, and scattered earths and ores,  
When, with a failing heart and throbbing brow,  
I must review my captured truth, sum up  
Its value, trace what ends to what begins,  
Its present power with its eventual bearings,  
Latent affinities, the views it opens,

And its full length in perfecting my scheme ;  
 I view it sternly circumscribed, cast down  
 From the high place my fond hopes yielded it,  
 Proved worthless—which, in getting, yet had cost  
 Another wrench to this fast-falling frame ;  
 Then, quick, the cup to quaff, that chases sorrow !  
 I lapse back into youth, and take again  
 Mere hopes of bliss for proofs that bliss will be,  
 —My fluttering pulse, for evidence that God  
 Means good to me, will make my cause his own ;  
 See ! I have cast off this remorseless care  
 Which clogged a spirit born to soar so free,  
 And my dim chamber has become a tent,  
 Festus is sitting by me, and his Michal . . .  
 Why do you start ? I say, she listening here,  
 (For yonder's Würzburg through the orchard-boughs)  
 Motions as though such ardent words should find  
 No echo in a maiden's quiet soul,  
 But her pure bosom heaves, her eyes fill fast  
 With tears, her sweet lips tremble all the while !  
 Ha, ha !

*Fest.* It seems, then, you expect to reap  
 No unreal joy from this your present course,  
 Bat rather . . .

*Par.* Death ! To die ! I own that much  
 To what, at least, I was. I should be sad  
 To live contented after such a fall—  
 To thrive and fatten after such reverse !  
 The whole plan is a makeshift, but will last  
 My time.

*Fest.*           And you have never mused and said,  
 “ I had a noble purpose, and full strength  
 “ To compass it ; but I have stopped half-way,  
 “ And wrongly give the first fruits of my toil  
 “ To objects little worthy of the gift :  
 “ Why linger round them still ? why clench my fault ?  
 “ Why seek for consolation in defeat—  
 “ In vain endeavours to derive a beauty  
 “ From ugliness ? why seek to make the most  
 “ Of what no power can change, nor strive instead  
 “ With mighty effort to redeem the past,  
 “ And, gathering up the treasures thus cast down,  
 “ To hold a steadfast course ’till I arrive  
 “ At their fit destination, and my own ? ”  
 You have never pondered thus ?

*Par.*   Have I, you ask ?  
 Often at midnight, when most fancies come,  
 Would some such airy project visit me :  
 But ever at the end . . . or will you hear  
 The same thing in a tale, a parable ?  
 It cannot prove more tedious ; listen then !  
 You and I, wandering over the world wide,  
 Chance to set foot upon a desert coast :  
 Just as we cry, “ No human voice before  
 Broke the inveterate silence of these rocks ! ”  
 —Their querulous echo startles us ; we turn :  
 What ravaged structure still looks o’er the sea ?  
 Some characters remain, too ! While we read,  
 The sharp, salt wind, impatient for the last  
 Of even this record, wistfully comes and goes,

Or sings what we recover, mocking it.  
This is the record ; and my voice, the wind's.

*(He sings.)*

Over the sea our galleys went,  
With cleaving prows in order brave,  
To a speeding wind and a bounding wave—  
A gallant armament :  
Each bark built out of a forest-tree,  
Left leafy and rough as first it grew,  
And nailed all over the gaping sides,  
Within and without, with black-bull hides,  
Seethed in fat and suppled in flame,  
To bear the playful billows' game ;  
So each good ship was rude to see,  
Rude and bare to the outward view,  
But each upbore a stately tent ;  
Where cedar-pales in scented row  
Kept out the flakes of the dancing brine :  
And an awning drooped the mast below,  
In fold on fold of the purple fine,  
That neither noontide, nor star-shine,  
Nor moonlight cold which maketh mad,  
Might pierce the regal tenement.  
When the sun dawned, oh, gay and glad  
We set the sail and plied the oar ;  
But when the night-wind blew like breath,  
For joy of one day's voyage more,  
We sang together on the wide sea,

Like men at peace on a peaceful shore ;  
Each sail was loosed to the wind so free,  
Each helm made sure by the twilight star,  
And in a sleep as calm as death,  
We, the strangers from afar,

Lay stretched along, each weary crew  
In a circle round its wondrous tent,  
Whence gleamed soft light and curled rich scent,  
And with light and perfume, music too :  
So the stars wheeled round, and the darkness past  
And at morn we started beside the mast,  
And still each ship was sailing fast !

One morn, the land appeared !—a speck  
Dim trembling betwixt sea and sky—  
Avoid it, cried our pilot, check

The shout, restrain the longing eye !  
But the heaving sea was black behind  
For many a night and many a day,  
And land, though but a rock, drew nigh ;  
So we broke the cedar pales away,  
Let the purple awning flap in the wind,  
And a statue bright was on every deck  
We shouted, every man of us,  
And steered right into the harbour thus,  
With pomp and pæan glorious.

An hundred shapes of lucid stone !

All day we built a shrine for each—

A shrine of rock for every one—  
 Nor paused we till in the westering sun  
     We sate together on the beach  
 To sing, because our task was done ;  
 When lo ! what shouts and merry songs !  
 What laughter all the distance stirs !  
 What raft comes loaded with its throngs  
 Of gentle islanders ?  
 “ The isles are just at hand,” they cried ;  
     “ Like cloudlets faint at even sleeping,  
 “ Our temple-gates are opened wide,  
     “ Our olive-groves thick shade are keeping  
 “ For the lucid shapes you bring ”—they cried.  
 Oh, then we awoke with sudden start  
 From our deep dream ; we knew, too late,  
 How bare the rock, how desolate,  
 To which we had flung our precious freight :  
     Yet we called out—“ Depart !  
 “ Our gifts, once given, must here abide :  
     “ Our work is done ; we have no heart  
 “ To mar our work, though vain ”—we cried.

*Fest.* In truth ?

*Par.* Nay, wait : all this in tracings faint  
 May still be read on that deserted rock,  
 On rugged stones, strewn here and there, but piled  
 In order once ; then follows—mark what follows—  
 “ The sad rhyme of the men who proudly clung  
 “ To their first fault, and withered in their pride ! ”

*Fest.* Come back, then, Aureole ; as you fear God, come  
 This is foul sin ; come back : renounce the past,  
 Forswear the future ; look for joy no more,  
 But wait death's summons amid holy sights,  
 And trust me for the event—peace, if not joy !  
 Return with me to Einsiedeln, dear Aureole.

*Par.* No way, no way : it would not turn to good.  
 A spotless child sleeps on the flowering moss—  
 'Tis well for him ; but when a sinful man,  
 Envyng such slumber, may desire to put  
 His guilt away, shall he return at once  
 To rest by lying there ? Our sires knew well  
 (Spite of the grave discoveries of their sons)  
 The fitting course for such ; dark cells, dim lamps,  
 A stone floor one may writhe on like a worm ;  
 No mossy pillow, blue with violets !

*Fest.* I see no symptom of these absolute  
 And tyrannous passions. You are calmer now.  
 This verse-making can purge you well enough,  
 Without the terrible penance you describe.  
 You love me still : the lusts you fear, will never  
 Outrage your friend. To Einsiedeln, once more !  
 Say but the word !

*Par.* No, no ; those lusts forbid :  
 They crouch, I know, cowering with half-shut eye  
 Beside you ; 'tis their nature. Thrust yourself  
 Between them and their prey ; let some fool style me  
 Or king or quack, it matters not, and try  
 Your wisdom then, at urging their retreat !



No, no ; learn better and look deeper, Festus !  
 If you knew how a devil sneers within me  
 While you are talking now of this, now that,  
 As though we differed scarcely save in trifles !

*Fest.* Do we so differ? True, change must proceed,  
 Whether for good or ill ; keep from me, which !  
 God made you and knows what you may become—  
 Do not confide all secrets : I was born  
 To hope, and you . . .

*Par.* To trust : you know the fruits

*Fest.* Listen : I do believe, what you call trust  
 Was self-reliance at the best : for, see !  
 So long as God would kindly pioneer  
 A path for you, and screen you from the world,  
 Procure you full exemption from man's lot,  
 Man's common hopes and fears, on the mere pretext  
 Of your engagement in his service—yield you  
 A limitless license, make you God, in fact,  
 And turn your slave—you were content to say  
 Most courtly praises ! What is it, at last,  
 But selfishness without example ? None  
 Could trace God's will so plain as you, while yours  
 Remained implied in it ; but now you fail,  
 And we, who prate about that will, are fools !  
 In short, God's service is established here  
 As He determines fit, and not your way,  
 And this you cannot brook ! Such discontent  
 Is weak. Renounce all creatureship at once !  
 Affirm an absolute right to have and use

Your energies ; as though the rivers should say—  
 “ We rush to the ocean ; what have we to do  
 “ With feeding streamlets, lingering in the marshes,  
 “ Sleeping in lazy pools ? ” Set up that plea,  
 That will be bold at least !

*Par.* Perhaps, perhaps !

Your only serviceable spirits are those  
 The east produces :—lo, the master nods,  
 And they raise terraces, spread garden-grounds  
 In one night’s space ; and, this done, straight begin  
 Another century’s sleep, to the great praise  
 Of him that framed them wise and beautiful,  
 Till a lamp’s rubbing, or some chance akin,  
 Wake them again. I am of different mould.  
 I would have soothed my lord, and slaved for him,  
 And done him service past my narrow bond,  
 And thus I get rewarded for my pains !  
 Beside ’tis vain to talk of forwarding  
 God’s glory otherwise ; this is alone  
 The sphere of its increase, as far as men  
 Increase it ; why, then, look beyond this sphere ?  
 We are His glory ; and if we be glorious,  
 Is not the thing achieved ?

*Fest.* Shall one like me  
 Judge hearts like yours ? Though years have changed  
 you much,

And you have left your first love, and retain  
 Its empty shade to veil your crooked ways,  
 Yet I still hold that you have honoured God ;

And who shall call your course without reward ?  
 For, wherefore this repining at defeat,  
 Had triumph ne'er inured you to high hopes ?  
 I urge you to forsake the life you curse,  
 And what success attends me ?—simply talk  
 Of passion, weakness, and remorse ; in short,  
 Any thing but the naked truth : you choose  
 This so-despised career, and rather praise  
 Than take my happiness, or other men's.  
 Once more, return !

*Par.*                      And soon. Oporinus  
 Has pilfered half my secrets by this time :  
 And we depart by daybreak. I am weary,  
 I know not how ; not even the wine-cup soothes  
 My brain to-night . . .  
 Do you not thoroughly despise me, Festus ?  
 No flattery ! One like you, needs not be told  
 We live and breathe deceiving and deceived.  
 Do you not scorn me from your heart of hearts ?  
 Me and my cant—my petty subterfuges—  
 My rhymes, and all this frothy shower of words—  
 My glozing self-deceit—my outward crust  
 Of lies, which wrap, as tetter, morphew, fuffair  
 Wrap the sound flesh ?—so, see you flatter not !  
 Why, even God flatters ! but my friend, at least,  
 Is true. I would depart, secure henceforth  
 Against all further insult, hate, and wrong  
 From puny foes : my one friend's scorn shall brand me—  
 No fear of sinking deeper !

*Fest.* No, dear Aureole!  
 No, no; I came to counsel faithfully:  
 There are old rules, made long ere we were born,  
 By which I judge you. I, so fallible,  
 So infinitely low beside your spirit  
 Mighty, majestic!—even I can see  
 You own some higher law than ours which call  
 Sin, what is no sin—weakness, what is strength;  
 But I have only these, such as they are,  
 To guide me! and I blame you where they blame,  
 Only so long as blaming promises  
 To win peace for your soul; the more, that sorrow  
 Has fallen on me of late, and they have helped me  
 So that I faint not under my distress.  
 But wherefore should I scruple to avow  
 In spite of all, as brother judging brother,  
 Your fate to me is most inexplicable:  
 And should you perish without recompense  
 And satisfaction yet—too hastily  
 I have relied on love: you may have sinned,  
 But you have loved. As a mere human matter—  
 As I would have God deal with fragile men  
 In the end—I say that you will triumph yet!

*Par.* Have you felt sorrow, Festus?—'tis because  
 You love me. Sorrow, and sweet Michal yours!  
 Well thought on; never let her know this last  
 Dull winding-up of all: these miscreants dared  
 Insult me—me she loved; so grieve her not.

*Fest.* Your ill success can little grieve her now.

*Par.* Michal is dead! pray Christ we do not craze!

*Fest.* Aureole, dear Aureole, look not on me thus!

Fool, fool! this is the heart grown sorrow-proof—  
I cannot bear those eyes.

*Par.* Nay, really dead?

*Fest.* 'Tis scarce a month . . .

*Par.* Stone dead!—then you have laid her  
Among the flowers ere this. Now, do you know,  
I can reveal a secret which shall comfort  
Even you. I have no julep, as men think;  
To cheat the grave; but a far better secret.  
Know then, you did not ill to trust your love  
To the cold earth: I have thought much of it:  
For I believe we do not wholly die.

*Fest.* Aureole . . .

*Par.* Nay, do not laugh; there is a reason  
For what I say: I think the soul can never  
Taste death. I am, just now, as you may see,  
Very unfit to put so strange a thought  
In an intelligible dress of words;  
But take it as my trust, she is not dead.

*Fest.* But not on this account alone? you surely,  
—Aureole, you have believed this all along?

*Par.* And Michal sleeps among the roots and dews,  
While I am moved at Basil, and full of schemes  
For Nuremburg, and hoping and despairing,  
As though it mattered how the farce plays out,  
So it be quickly played. Away, away!  
Have your will, rabble! while we fight the prize,

Troop you in safety to the snug back-seats,  
 And leave a clear arena for the brave  
 About to perish for your sport!—Behold!

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V.—PARACELSUS ATTAINS.

SCENE.—*A cell in the Hospital of St. Sebastian, at Salzburg.* 1541

FESTUS, PARACELSUS.

*Fest.* No change! The weary night is wellnigh spent  
 The lamp burns low, and through the casement-bars  
 Gray morning glimmers feebly—yet no change!  
 Another night, and still no sigh has stirred  
 That fallen discoloured mouth, no pang relit  
 Those fixed eyes, quenched by the decaying body,  
 Like torch-flame choked in dust: while all beside  
 Was breaking, to the last they held out bright,  
 As a strong-hold where life intrenched itself;  
 But they are dead now—very blind and dead.  
 He will drowse into death without a groan!

My Aureole—my forgotten, ruined Aureole!  
 The days are gone, are gone! How grand thou wert!  
 And now not one of those who struck thee down—  
 Poor, glorious spirit—concerns him even to stay  
 And satisfy himself his little hand  
 Could turn God's image to a livid thing.

Another night, and yet no change! 'Tis much  
 That I should sit by him, and bathe his brow,  
 And chafe his hands—'tis much; but he will sure  
 Know me, and look on me, and speak to me  
 Once more—but only once! His hollow cheek  
 Looked all night long as though a creeping laugh  
 At his own state were just about to break  
 From the dying man: my brain swam, my throat swelled,  
 And yet I could not turn away. In truth,  
 They told me how, when first brought here, he seemed  
 Resolved to live—to lose no faculty;  
 Thus striving to keep up his shattered strength,  
 Until they bore him to this stifling cell:  
 When straight his features fell—an hour made white  
 The flushed face and relaxed the quivering limb.  
 Only the eye remained intense awhile,  
 As though it recognized the tomb-like place;  
 And then he lay as here he lies.

Ay, here!

Here is earth's noblest, nobly garlanded—  
 Her bravest champion, with his well-won meed—  
 Her best achievement, her sublime amends  
 For countless generations, fleeting fast  
 And followed by no trace;—the creature-god  
 She instances when angels would dispute  
 The title of her brood to rank with them—  
 Angels, this is our angel!—those bright forms  
 We clothe with purple, crown and call to thrones,  
 Are human, but not his: those are but men

Whom other men press round and kneel before—  
 Those palaces are dwelt in by mankind ;  
 Higher provision is for him you seek  
 Amid our pomps and glories : see it here !  
 Behold earth's paragon ! Now, raise thee, clay !

God ! Thou art Love ! I build my faith on that  
 Even as I watch beside thy tortured child,  
 Unconscious whose hot tears fall fast by him,  
 So doth thy right hand guide us through the world  
 Wherein we stumble. God ! what shall we say ?  
 How has he sinned ? How else should he have done ?  
 Surely he sought thy praise—thy praise, for all  
 He might be busied by the task so much  
 As to forget awhile its proper end.  
 Dost thou well, Lord ? Thou canst not but prefer  
 That I should range myself upon his side—  
 How could he stop at every step to set  
 Thy glory forth ? Hadst Thou but granted him  
 Success, thy honour would have crowned success,  
 A halo round a star. Or, say he erred,—  
 Save him, dear God ; it will be like thee : bathe him  
 In light and life ! Thou art not made like us ;  
 We should be wroth in such a case ; but Thou  
 Forgivest—so, forgive these passionate thoughts,  
 Which come unsought, and will not pass away !  
 I know thee, who hast kept my path, and made  
 Light for me in the darkness—tempering sorrow,  
 So that it reached me like a solemn joy ;



It were too strange that I should doubt thy love.  
 But what am I? Thou madest him, and knowest  
 How he was fashioned. I could never err  
 That way: the quiet place beside thy feet,  
 Reserved for me, was ever in my thoughts;  
 But he—Thou shouldst have favoured him as well!

Ah! he wakes! Aureole, I am here—'tis Festus!  
 I cast away all wishes save one wish—  
 Let him but know me—only speak to me!  
 He mutters—louder and louder; any other  
 Than I, with brain less laden, could collect  
 What he pours forth. Dear Aureole, do but look!  
 Is it talking or singing this he utters fast?  
 Misery, that he should fix me with his eye—  
 Quick talking to some other all the while!  
 If he would husband this wild vehemence,  
 Which frustrates its intent!—I heard, I know  
 I heard my name amid those rapid words:  
 O he will know me yet! Could I divert  
 This current—lead it somehow gently back  
 Into the channels of the past!—His eye,  
 Brighter than ever! It must recognize!

Let me speak to him in another's name.  
 I am Erasmus: I am here to pray  
 That Paracelsus use his skill for me.  
 The schools of Paris and of Padua send  
 These questions for your learning to resolve.

We are your students, noble master : leave  
 This wretched cell ; what business have you here ?  
 Our class awaits you ; come to us once more  
 (O agony ! the utmost I can do  
 Touches him not ; how else arrest his ear ?)  
 I am commissioned . . . I shall craze like him—  
 Better be mute, and see what God shall send.

*Par.* Stay, stay with me !

*Fest.* I will ; I am come here  
 To stay with you—Festus, you loved of old ;  
 Festus, you know, you must know !

*Par.* Festus ! Where's  
 Aprile, then ? Has he not chanted softly  
 The melodies I heard all night ? I could not  
 Get to him for a cold hand on my breast,  
 But I made out his music well enough,  
 O, well enough ! If they have filled him full  
 With magical music, as they freight a star  
 With light, and have remitted all his sin,  
 They will forgive me too, I too shall know !

*Fest.* Festus, your Festus !

*Par.* Ask him if Aprile  
 Knows as he loves—if I shall Love and Know ?  
 I try ; but that cold hand, like lead—so cold !

*Fest.* My hand, see !

*Par.* Ah, the curse, Aprile, Aprile  
 We get so near—so very, very near !  
 'Tis an old tale : Jove strikes the Titans down  
 Not when they set about their mountain-piling,

But when another rock would crown their work !  
 And Phaeton—doubtless his first radiant plunge  
 Astonished mortals ; though the gods were calm,  
 And Jove prepared his thunder : all old tales !

*Fest.* And what are these to you ?

*Par.* Ay, fiends must laugh

So craelly, so well ; most like I never  
 Could tread a single pleasure under foot,  
 But they were grinning by my side, were chuckling  
 To see me toil, and drop away by flakes !  
 Hell-spawn ! I am glad, most glad, that thus I fail !  
 You that hate men and all who wish their good—  
 Your cunning has o'ershot its aim. One year,  
 One month, perhaps, and I had served your turn !  
 You should have curbed your spite awhile. But now,  
 Who will believe 'twas you that held me back ?  
 Listen : there's shame, and hissing, and contempt,  
 And none but laughs who names me—none but spits  
 Measureless scorn upon me—me alone,  
 The quack, the cheat, the liar,—all on me !  
 And thus your famous plan to sink mankind  
 In silence and despair, by teaching them  
 One of their race had probed the immost truth,  
 Had done all man could do, yet failed no less—  
 Your wise plan proves abortive. Men despair ?  
 Ha, ha ! why they are hooting the empiric,  
 The ignorant and incapable fool who rushed  
 Madly upon a work beyond his wits ;  
 Nor doubt they but the simplest of themselves

Could bring the matter to triumphant issue!  
 So pick and choose among them all, Accursed!  
 Try now, persuade some other to slave for you,  
 To ruin body and soul to work your ends:  
 No, no; I am the first and last, I think!

*Fest.* Dear friend; who are accursed? who has done..

*Par.* What have I done? Fiends dare ask that? or you  
 Brave men? Oh, you can chime in boldly, backed  
 By the others! What had you to do, sage peers?  
 Here stand my rivals, truly—Arab, Jew,  
 Greek, join dead hands against me: all I ask  
 Is, that the world enroll my name with theirs,  
 And even this poor privilege, it seems,  
 They range themselves, prepared to disallow!  
 Only observe: why fiends may learn from them!  
 How they talk calmly of my throes—my fierce  
 Aspirings, terrible watchings—each one claiming  
 Its price of blood and brain; how they dissect  
 And sneeringly disparage the few truths  
 Got at a life's cost; they too hanging the while  
 About my neck, their lies misleading me.  
 And their dead names browbeating me! Gray crew,  
 Yet steeped in fresh malevolence from hell,  
 Is there a reason for your hate? My truths  
 Have shaken a little the palm about each head?  
 Just think, Aprile, all these leering dotards  
 Were bent on nothing less than being crowned  
 As we! That yellow blear-eyed wretch in chief,  
 To whom the rest cringe low with feigned respect—

Galen, of Pergamos and hell ; nay speak  
 The tale, old man ! We met there face to face :  
 I said the crown should fall from thee : once more  
 We meet as in that ghastly vestibule :  
 Look to my brow ! Have I redeemed my pledge ?

*Fest.* Peace, peace ; ah, see !

*Par.* Oh, emptiness of fame

Oh Persic Zoroaster, lord of stars !

—Who said these old renowns, dead long ago,  
 Could make me overlook the living world  
 To gaze through gloom at where they stood, indeed,  
 But stand no longer ? What a warm light life  
 After the shade ! In truth, my delicate witch,  
 My serpent-queen, you did but well to hide  
 The juggles I had else detected. Fire  
 May well run harmless o'er a breast like yours !  
 The cave was not so darkened by the smoke  
 But that your white limbs dazzled me : Oh, white,  
 And panting as they twinkled, wildly dancing !  
 I cared not for your passionate gestures then,  
 But now I have forgotten the charm of charms,  
 The foolish knowledge which I came to seek,  
 While I remember that quaint dance, and thus  
 I am come back, not for those mummeries,  
 But to love you, and to kiss your little feet,  
 Soft as an ermine's winter coat !

*Fest.* A sense

Will struggle through these thronging words at last,  
 As in the angry and tumultuous west

A soft star trembles through the drifting clouds.  
 These are the strivings of a spirit which hates  
 So sad a vault should coop it, and calls up  
 The past to stand between it and its fate :  
 Were he at Einsiedeln—or Michal here !

- Par.* Cruel ! I seek her now—I kneel—I shriek—  
 • I clasp her vesture—but she fades, still fades ;  
 And she is gone ; sweet human love is gone !  
 'Tis only when they spring to heaven that angels  
 Reveal themselves to you ; they sit all day  
 Beside you, and lie down at night by you,  
 Who care not for their presence—muse or sleep—  
 And all at once they leave you and you know them !  
 We are so fooled, so cheated ! Why, even now  
 I am not too secure against foul play :  
 The shadows deepen, and the walls contract—  
 No doubt some treachery is going on !  
 'Tis very dusk. Where are we put, Aprile ?  
 Have they left us in the lurch ? This murky, loathsome  
 Death-trap—this slaughter-house—is not the hall  
 In the golden city ! Keep by me, Aprile !  
 • There is a hand groping amid the blackness  
 To catch us. Have the spider-fingers got you,  
 Poet ? Hold on me for your life ; if once  
 They pull you !—Hold !

'Tis but a dream—no more.

I have you still—the sun comes out again ;  
 Let us be happy—all will yet go well !  
 Let us confer : is it not like, Aprile,

That spite of trouble, this ordeal passed,  
 The value of my labours ascertained,  
 Just as some stream foams long among the rocks  
 But after glideth glassy to the sea,  
 So, full content shall henceforth be my lot?  
 What think you, poet? Louder! Your clear voice  
 Vibrates too like a harp-string. Do you ask  
 How could I still remain on earth, should God  
 Grant me the great approval which I seek?  
 I, you, and God can comprehend each other,  
 But men would murmur, and with cause enough;  
 For when they saw me, stainless of all sin,  
 Preserved and sanctified by inward light,  
 They would complain that comfort, shut from them,  
 I drank thus unespied; that they live on,  
 Nor taste the quiet of a constant joy,  
 For ache, and care, and doubt, and weariness,  
 While I am calm; help being vouchsafed to me,  
 And hid from them!—'Twere best consider that!  
 You reason well, Aprile; but at least  
 Let me know this, and die! Is this too much?  
 I will learn this, if God so please, and die!

If thou shalt please, dear God, if thou shalt please!  
 We are so weak, we know our motives least  
 In their confused beginning: if at first  
 I sought . . . But wherefore bare my heart to thee?  
 I know thy mercy; and already thoughts  
 Flock fast about my soul to comfort it,

And intimate I cannot wholly fail,  
 For love and praise would clasp me willingly  
 Could I resolve to seek them: Thou art good,  
 And I should be content; yet—yet first show  
 I have done wrong in daring! Rather give  
 The supernatural consciousness of strength  
 That fed my youth—one only hour of that  
 With thee to help—O what should bar me then

Lost, lost! Thus things are ordered here! God's creature,  
 And yet he takes no pride in us!—none, none!  
 Truly there needs another life to come!  
 If this be all—(I must tell Festus that)  
 And other life await us not—for one,  
 I say 'tis a poor cheat, a stupid bungle,  
 A wretched failure. I, for one, protest  
 Against it—and I hurl it back with scorn!

Well, onward though alone: small time remains,  
 And much to do: I must have fruit, must reap  
 Some profit from my toils. I doubt my body  
 Will hardly serve me through: while I have laboured  
 It has decayed; and now that I demand  
 Its best assistance, it will crumble fast:  
 A sad thought—a sad fate! How very full  
 Of wormwood 'tis, that just at altar-service,  
 The rapt hymn rising with the rolling smoke,  
 When glory dawns, and all is at the best—  
 The sacred fire may flicker, and grow faint,



And die, for want of a wood-piler's help !  
 Thus fades the flagging body, and the soul  
 Is pulled down in the overthrow : well, well—  
 Let men catch every word—let them lose nought  
 Of what I say ; something may yet be done.

They are ruins ! Trust me who am one of you !  
 All ruins—glorious once, but lonely now.  
 It makes my heart sick to behold you crouch  
 Beside your desolate fane ; the arches dim,  
 The crumbling columns grand against the moon :  
 Could I but rear them up once more—but that  
 May never be, so leave them ! Trust me, friends,  
 Why should you linger here when I have built  
 A far resplendent temple, all your own ?  
 Trust me, they are but ruins ! See, Aprile,  
 Men will not heed ! Yet were I not prepared  
 With better refuge for them, tongue of mine  
 Should ne'er reveal how blank their dwelling is ;  
 I would sit down in silence with the rest.

Ha, what ? you spit at me, you grin and shriek  
 Contempt into my ear—my ear which drank  
 God's accents once ? you curse me ? Why men, men  
 I am not formed for it ! Those hideous eyes  
 Follow me sleeping, waking, praying God,  
 And will not let me even die : spare, spare me.  
 Sinner or no, forget that, only spare me  
 That horrible scorn ; you thought I could support it

But now you see what silly fragile creature  
 Cowers thus. I am not good nor bad enough,  
 Not Christ, nor Cain, yet even Cain was saved  
 From hate like this: let me but totter back,  
 Perhaps I shall elude those jeers which creep  
 Into my very brain, and shut these scorched  
 Eyelids, and keep those mocking faces out.

Listen, Aprile! I am very calm:  
 Be not deceived, there is no passion here,  
 Where the blood leaps like an imprisoned thing.  
 I am calm: I will exterminate the race!  
 Enough of that: 'tis said and it shall be.  
 And now be merry—safe and sound am I,  
 Who broke through their best ranks to get at you  
 And such a havoc, such a rout, Aprile!

*Fest.* Have you no thought, no memory for me,  
 Aureole? I am so wretched—my pure Michal  
 Is gone, and you alone are left to me,  
 And even you forget me: take my hand—  
 Lean on me, thus. Do you not know me, Aureole?

*Par.* Festus, my own friend, you are come at last!  
 As you say, 'tis an awful enterprise—  
 But you believe I shall go through with it:  
 'Tis like you, and I thank you; thank him for me,  
 Dear Michal! See how bright St. Saviour's spire  
 Flames in the sunset; all its figures quaint  
 Gay in the glancing light: you might conceive them  
 A troop of yellow-vested, white-haired Jews,  
 Bound for their own land where redemption dawns!

*Fest.* Not that blest time—not our youth's time, dear  
God!

*Par.* Ha—stay! true, I forget—all is done since i  
And he is come to judge me: how he speaks,  
How calm, how well! yes, it is true, all true;  
All quackery; all deceit! myself can laugh  
The first at it, if you desire: but still  
You know the obstacles which taught me tricks  
So foreign to my nature—envy, and hate—  
Blind opposition—brutal prejudice—  
Bald ignorance—what wonder if I sunk  
To humour men the way they most approved?  
My cheats were never palmed on such as you,  
Dear Festus! I will kneel if you require me,  
Impart the meagre knowledge I possess,  
Explain its bounded nature, and avow  
My insufficiency—whate'er you will:  
I give the fight up! let there be an end,  
A privacy, an obscure nook for me.  
I want to be forgotten even by God!  
But if that cannot be, dear Festus, lay me,  
When I shall die, within some narrow grave,  
Not by itself—for that would be too proud—  
But where such graves are thickest; let it look  
Nowise distinguished from the hillocks round,  
So that the peasant at his brother's bed  
May tread upon my own and know it not;  
And we shall all be equal at the last,  
Or classed according to life's natural ranks,

Fathers, sons, brothers, friends—not rich, nor wise,  
Nor gifted: lay me thus, then say “He lived

“Too much advanced before his brother men:

• “They kept him still in front; ’twas for their good,

“But yet a dangerous station. It were strange

“That he should tell God he had never ranked

“With men: so, here at least he is a man!”

*Fest.* That God shall take thee to his breast, dear Spirit

Unto his breast, be sure! and here on earth

Shall splendour sit upon thy name forever!

Sun! all the heaven is glad for thee: what care

If lower mountains light their snowy phares

At thine effulgence, yet acknowledge not

The source of day? Men look up to the sun •

For after-ages shall retrack thy beams,

And put aside the crowd of busy ones,

And worship thee alone—the master-mind,

The thinker, the explorer, the creator!

Then, who should sneer at the convulsive throes

With which thy deeds were born, would scorn as well

The winding sheet of subterraneous fire

Which, pent and writhing, sends no less at last

Huge islands up amid the simmering sea!

Behold thy might in me! thou hast infused

Thy soul in mine; and I am grand as thou,

Seeing I comprehend thee—I so simple,

Thou so august! I recognize thee first;

I saw thee rise, I watched thee early and late,

And though no glance reveal thou dost accept

My homage—thus no less I proffer it,  
And bid thee enter gloriously thy rest!

*Par.* Festus!

*Fest.* I am for noble Aureole, God!  
I am upon his side, come weal or woe!  
His portion shall be mine! He has done well!  
I would have sinned, had I been strong enough,  
As he has sinned! Reward him or I waive  
Reward! If thou canst find no place for him  
He shall be king elsewhere, and I will be  
His slave forever! There are two of us!

*Par.* Dear Festus!

*Fest.* Here, dear Aureole! ever by you

*Par.* Nay, speak on, or I dream again. Speak on!  
Some story, any thing—only your voice.  
I shall dream else. Speak on! ay, leaning so!

*Fest.* Softly the Mayne river glideth  
Close by where my love abideth;  
Sleep's no softer: it proceeds  
On through lawns, on through meads,  
On and on, whate'er befall,  
Meandering and musical,  
Though the niggard pasture's edge  
Bears not on its shaven ledge  
Aught but weeds and waving grasses  
To view the river as it passes,  
Save here and there a scanty patch  
Of primroses, too faint to catch  
A weary bee . .

*Par.* More, more; say on!

*Fest.* The river pushes

Its gentle way through strangling rushes,

Where the glossy kingfisher

Flutters when noon-heats are near,

Glad the shelving banks to shun,

Red and steaming in the sun,

Where the shrew-mouse with pale throat

Burrows, and the speckled stoat,

Where the quick sand-pipers flit

In and out the marl and grit

That seems to breed them, brown as they.

• Nought disturbs the river's way,

Save some lazy stork that springs,

Trailing it with legs and wings,

Whom the shy fox from the hill

Rouses, creep he ne'er so still.

*Par.* My heart, they loose my heart, those simple words

Its darkness passes, which nought else could touch;

Like some dark snake that force may not expel,

Which glideth out to music sweet and low.

What were you doing when your voice broke through

A chaos of ugly images? You, indeed!

Are you alone here?

*Fest.* All alone: you know me?

This cell?

*Par.* An unexceptionable vault—

Good brick and stone—the bats kept out, the rats

Kept in—a snug nook: how should I mistake it?

*Fest.* But wherefore am I here?

*Par.* Ah! well remembered

Why, for a purpose—for a purpose, Festus!

'Tis like me: here I trifle while time fleets,

And this occasion, lost, will ne'er return!

You are here to be instructed. I will tell

God's message; but I have so much to say,

I fear to leave half out: all is confused

No doubt; but doubtless you will learn in time.

He would not else have brought you here: no doubt

I shall see clearer soon.

*Fest.* Tell me but this—

You are not in despair?

*Par.* I? and for what?

*Fest.* Alas, alas! he knows not, as I feared!

*Par.* What is it you would ask me with that earnest,  
Dear, searching face?

*Fest.* How feel you, Aureole?

*Par.* Well!

Well: 'tis a strange thing. I am dying, Festus,

And now that fast the storm of life subsides,

I first perceive how great the whirl has been:

I was calm then, who am so dizzy now—

Calm in the thick of the tempest, but no less

A partner of its motion, and mixed up

With its career. The hurricane is spent,

And the good boat speeds through the brightening weather;

But is it earth or sea that heaves below?

For the gulf rolls like a meadow, overstrewn

With ravaged boughs and remnants of the shore ;  
And now some islet, loosened from the land,  
Swims past with all its trees, sailing to ocean ;  
And now the air is full of up-torn canes,  
Light strippings from the fan-trees, tamarisks  
Unrooted, with their birds still clinging to them,  
All high in the wind. Even so my varied life  
Drifts by me. I am young, old, happy, sad,  
Hoping, desponding, acting, taking rest,  
And all at once : that is, those past conditions  
Float back at once on me. If I select  
Some special epoch from the crowd, 'tis but  
To will, and straight the rest dissolve away,  
And only that particular state is present,  
With all its long-forgotten circumstance,  
Distinct and vivid as at first—myself  
A careless looker-on, and nothing more !  
Indifferent and amused, but nothing more !  
And this is death : I understand it all.  
New being waits me ; new perceptions must  
Be born in me before I plunge therein ;  
Which last is Death's affair ; and while I speak,  
Minute by minute he is filling me  
With power ; and while my foot is on the threshold  
Of boundless life—the doors unopened yet,  
All preparations not complete within—  
I turn new knowledge upon old events,  
And the effect is . . . But I must not tell ;  
It is not lawful. Your own turn will come  
One day. Wait, Festus ! You will die like me !



*Fest.* 'Tis of that past life that I burn to hear!

*Par.* You wonder it engages me just now?

In truth, I wonder too. What's life to me?

Where'er I look is fire, where'er I listen

Music, and where I tend bliss evermore.

Yet how can I refrain? 'Tis a refined

Delight to view those chances,—one last view.

I am so near the perils I escape,

That I must play with them and turn them over,

To feel how fully they are past and gone.

Still it is like some further cause exists

For this peculiar mood—some hidden purpose;

Did I not tell you something of it, Festus?

I had it fast, but it has somehow slipt

Away from me; it will return anon.

*Fest.* (Indeed his cheek seems young again, his voice

Complete with its old tones: that little laugh

Concluding every phrase, with up-turned eye,

As though one stooped above his head, to whom

He looked for confirmation and applause,—

Where was it gone so long, being kept so well?

Then the fore-finger pointing as he speaks,

Like one who traces in an open book

The matter he declares; 'tis many a year

Since I remarked it last: and this in him,

But now a ghastly wreck!)

And can it be,

Dear Aureole, you have then found out at last

That worldly things are utter vanity?

That man is made for weakness, and should wait  
In patient ignorance till God appoint . . .

*Par.* Ha, the purpose ; the true purpose : that is it !  
How could I fail to apprehend ! You here,  
I thus ! But no more trifling ; I see all,  
I know all : my last mission shall be done  
If strength suffice. No trifling ! Stay ; this posture  
Hardly befits one thus about to speak :  
I will arise.

*Fest.* Nay, Aureole, are you wild ?  
You cannot leave your couch.

*Par.* No help ; no help ;  
Not even your hand. So ! there, I stand once more !  
Speak from a couch ? I never lectured thus.  
My gown—the scarlet, lined with fur ; now put  
The chain about my neck ; my signet-ring  
Is still upon my hand, I think—even so ;  
Last, my good sword ; ha, trusty Azoth, leapest  
Beneath thy master's grasp for the last time ?  
This couch shall be my throne : I bid these walls  
Be consecrate ; this wretched cell become  
A shrine ; for here God speaks to men through me !  
Now, Festus, I am ready to begin.

*Fest.* I am dumb with wonder.

*Par.* Listen, therefore, Festus  
There will be time enough, but none to spare.  
I must content myself with telling only  
The most important points. You doubtless feel  
That I am happy, Festus ; very happy.

*Fest.* 'Tis no delusion which uplifts him thus!  
When you are pardoned, Aureole, all your sin?

*Par.* Ay, pardoned! yet why pardoned?

*Fest.* 'Tis God's praise  
That man is bound to seek, and you . . .

*Par.* Have lived!  
We have to live alone to set forth well

God's praise. 'Tis true, I sinned much, as I thought,

And in effect need mercy, for I strove

To do that very thing; but, do your best

Or worst, praise rises, and will rise forever.

Pardon from Him, because of praise denied—

Who calls me to Himself to exalt Himself?

He might laugh as I laugh!

*Fest.* 'Then all comes

To the same thing. 'Tis fruitless for mankind

To fret themselves with what concerns them not;

They are no use that way: they should lie down

Content as God has made them, nor go mad

In thriveless cares to better what is ill.

*Par.* No, no; mistake me not; let me not work

More harm than I have done! This is my case:

If I go joyous back to God, yet bring

No offering, if I render up my soul

Without the fruits it was ordained to bear,

If I appear the better to love God

For sin, as one who has no claim on him,—

Be not deceived: it may be surely thus

With me, while higher prizes still await

The mortal persevering to the end.  
 For I too have been something, though too soon  
 I left the instincts of that happy time !

*Fest.* What happy time ? For God's sake, for man's sake  
 What time was happy ? All I hope to know  
 That answer will decide. What happy time ?

*Par.* When, but the time I vowed my help to man ?

*Fest.* Great God, thy judgments are inscrutable !

*Par.* Yes, it was in me ; I was born for it—  
 I, Paracelsus : It was mine by right.  
 Doubtless a searching and impetuous soul  
 Might learn from its own motions that some task  
 Like this awaited it about the world ;  
 Might seek somewhere in this blank life of ours  
 For fit delights to stay its longings vast ;  
 And, grappling Nature, so prevail on her  
 To fill the creature full she dared to frame  
 Hungry for joy ; and, bravely tyrannous,  
 Grow in demand, still craving more and more,  
 And make each joy conceded prove a pledge  
 Of other joy to follow—bating nought  
 Of its desires, still seizing fresh pretence  
 To turn the knowledge and the rapture wrung  
 As an extreme, last boon, from Destiny,  
 Into occasion for new covetings,  
 New strifes, new triumphs :—doubtless a strong soul  
 Alone, unaided might attain to this,  
 So glorious is our nature, so august  
 Man's inborn uninstructed impulses,

His naked spirit so majestic !  
But this was born in me ; I was made so ;  
Thus much time saved : the feverish appetites,  
The tumult of unproved desire, the unaimed  
Uncertain yearnings, aspirations blind,  
Distrust, mistake, and all that ends in tears  
Were saved me ; thus I entered on my course !  
You may be sure I was not all exempt  
From human trouble ; just so much of doubt  
As bade me plant a surer foot upon  
The sun-road—kept my eye unruined mid  
The fierce and flashing splendour—set my heart  
Trembling so much as warned me I stood there  
On sufferance—not to idly gaze, but cast  
Light on a darkling race ; save for that doubt,  
I stood at first where all aspire at last  
To stand : the secret of the world was mine.  
I knew, I felt, (perception unexpressed,  
Uncomprehended by our narrow thought,  
But somehow felt and known in every shift  
And change in the spirit,—nay, in every pore  
Of the body, even,)—what God is, what we are,  
What life is—how God tastes an infinite joy  
In infinite ways—one everlasting bliss,  
From whom all being emanates, all power  
Proceeds ; in whom is life for evermore,  
Yet whom existence in its lowest form  
Includes ; where dwells enjoyment there is He  
With still a flying point of bliss remote,

A happiness in store afar, a sphere  
Of distant glory in full view ; thus climbs  
Pleasure its heights forever and forever !  
The centre-fire heaves underneath the earth,  
And the earth changes like a human face ;  
The molten ore bursts up among the rocks,  
Winds into the stone's heart, outbranches bright  
In hidden mines, spots barren river-beds,  
Crumbles into fine sand where sunbeams bask—  
God joys therein ! The wroth sea's waves are edged  
With foam, white as the bitten lip of Hate,  
When, in the solitary waste, strange groups  
Of young volcanoes come up, cyclops-like,  
Staring together with their eyes on flame ;—  
God tastes a pleasure in their uncouth pride !  
Then all is still : earth is a wintry clod ;  
But spring-wind, like a dancing psaltress, passes  
Over its breast to waken it ; rare verdure  
Buds tenderly upon rough banks, between  
The withered tree-roots and the cracks of frost,  
Like a smile striving with a wrinkled face ;  
The grass grows bright, the boughs are swoln with blooms .  
Like chrysalids impatient for the air ;  
The shining dorrs are busy ; beetles run  
Along the furrows, ants make their ado ;  
Above, birds fly in merry flocks—the lark  
Soars up and up, shivering for very joy ;  
Afar the ocean sleeps ; white fishing-gulls  
Flit where the strand is purple with its tribe

Of nested limpets ; savage creatures seek  
 Their loves in wood and plain ; and God renews  
 His ancient rapture ! Thus he dwells in all,  
 From life's minute beginnings, up at last  
 To man—the consummation of this scheme  
 Of being, the completion of this sphere  
 Of life : whose attributes had here and there  
 Been scattered o'er the visible world before,  
 Asking to be combined—dim fragments meant  
 To be united in some wondrous whole—  
 Imperfect qualities throughout creation,  
 Suggesting some one creature yet to make—  
 Some point where all those scattered rays should meet  
 Convergent in the faculties of man.  
 Power ; neither put forth blindly, nor controlled  
 Calmly by perfect knowledge ; to be used  
 At risk, inspired or checked by hope and fear ·  
 Knowledge ; not intuition, but the slow  
 Uncertain fruit of an enhancing toil,  
 Strengthened by love : love ; not serenely pure,  
 But strong from weakness, like a chance-sown plant  
 Which, cast on stubborn soil, puts forth changed buds,  
 And softer stains, unknown in happier climes ;  
 Love which endures, and doubts, and is oppressed,  
 And cherished, suffering much, and much sustained,  
 A blind, oft-failing, yet believing love,  
 A half-enlightened, often-checked trust : —  
 Hints and previsions of which faculties,  
 Are strewn confusedly everywhere about

The inferior natures ; and all lead up higher,  
All shape out dimly the superior race,  
The heir of hopes too fair to turn out false,  
And Man appears at last : so far the seal  
Is put on life ; one stage of being complete,  
One scheme wound up ; and from the grand result  
A supplementary reflux of light,  
Illustrates all the inferior grades, explains  
Each back step in the circle. Not alone  
For their possessor dawn those qualities,  
But the new glory mixes with the heaven  
And earth : Man, once descried, imprints forever  
His presence on all lifeless things ; the winds  
Are henceforth voices, in a wail or shout,  
A querulous mutter, or a quick gay laugh—  
Never a senseless gust now man is born !  
The herded pines commune, and have deep thoughts  
A secret they assemble to discuss,  
When the sun drops behind their trunks which glare  
Like grates of hell : the peerless cup afloat  
Of the lake-lily is an urn, some nymph  
Swims bearing high above her head : no bird  
Whistles unseen, but through the gaps above  
That let light in upon the gloomy woods,  
A shape peeps from the breezy forest-top,  
Arch with small puckered mouth and mocking eye,  
The morn has enterprise,—deep quiet droops  
With evening ; triumph takes the sunset hour,  
Voluptuous transport ripens with the corn  
Beneath a warm moon like a happy face :



-And this to fill us with regard for man,  
With apprehension of his passing worth,  
Desire to work his proper nature out,  
And ascertain his rank and final place ;  
For these things tend still upward—progress is  
The law of life—man's self is not yet Man !  
Nor shall I deem his object served, his end  
Attained, his genuine strength put fairly forth,  
While only here and there a star dispels  
The darkness, here and there a towering mind  
O'erlooks its prostrate fellows : when the host  
Is out at once to the despair of night,  
When all mankind alike is perfected,  
Equal in full-blown powers—then, not till then,  
I say, begins man's general infancy !  
For wherefore make account of feverish starts  
Of restless members of a dormant whole—  
Impatient nerves which quiver while the body  
Slumbers as in a grave ? O, long ago  
The brow was twitched, the tremulous lids astir,  
The peaceful mouth disturbed ; half-uttered speech  
Ruffled the lip, and then the teeth were set,  
The breath drawn sharp, the strong right-hand clenched  
stronger,  
As it would pluck a lion by the jaw ;  
The glorious creature laughed out even in sleep !  
But when full roused, each giant-limb awake,  
Each sinew strung, the great heart pulsing fast,  
He shall start up, and stand on his own earth,

And so begin his long triumphant march,  
And date his being thence,—thus wholly roused,  
What he achieves shall be set down to him !  
When all the race is perfected alike  
As Man, that is : all tended to mankind,  
And, man produced, all has its end thus far ;  
But in completed man begins anew  
A tendency to God. Prognostics told  
Man's near approach ; so in man's self arise  
August anticipations, symbols, types  
Of a dim splendour ever on before,  
In that eternal circle run by life :  
For men begin to pass their nature's bound,  
And find new hopes and cares which fast supplant  
Their proper joys and griefs ; and outgrow all  
The narrow creeds of right and wrong, which fade  
Before the unmeasured thirst for good ; while peace  
Rises within them ever more and more.  
Such men are even now upon the earth,  
Serene amid the half-formed creatures round,  
Who should be saved by them and joined with them  
Such was my task, and I was born to it—  
Free, as I said but now, from much that chains  
Spirits, high-dowered, but limited and vexed  
By a divided and delusive aim,  
A shadow mocking a reality  
Whose truth avails not wholly to disperse  
The fitting mimic called up by itself,  
And so remains perplexed and nigh put out  
By its fantastic fellow's wavering gleam.

I, from the first, was never cheated so ;  
I never fashioned out a fancied good  
Distinct from man's ; a service to be done,  
A glory to be ministered unto,  
With powers put forth at man's expense, withdrawn  
From labouring in his behalf ; a strength  
Denied that might avail him ! I cared not  
Lest his success ran counter to success  
Elsewhere : for God is glorified in man,  
And to man's glory, vowed I soul and limb.  
Yet, constituted thus, and thus endowed,  
I failed : I gazed on power till I grew blind—  
On power ; I could not take my eyes from that—  
That only, I thought, should be preserved, increased  
At any risk, displayed, struck out at once—  
The sign, and note, and character of man.  
I saw no use in the past : only a scene  
Of degradation, imbecility—  
The record of disgraces best forgotten,  
A sullen page in human chronicles  
Fit to erase : I saw no cause why man  
Should not be all-sufficient even now ;  
Or why his annals should be forced to tell  
That once the tide of light, about to break  
Upon the world, was sealed within its spring ;  
I would have had one day, one moment's space,  
Change man's condition, push each slumbering claim  
To mastery o'er the elemental world  
At once to full maturity, then roll

Oblivion o'er the tools, and hide from man  
What night had ushered morn. Not so, dear child  
Of after-days, wilt thou reject the Past,  
Big with deep warnings of the proper tenure  
By which thou hast the earth: the Present for thee  
Shall have distinct and trembling beauty, seen  
Beside that Past's own shade, whence, in relief,  
Its brightness shall stand out: nor on thee yet  
Shall burst the Future, as successive zones  
Of several wonder open on some spirit  
Flying secure and glad from heaven to heaven;  
But thou shalt painfully attain to joy,  
While hope, and fear, and love, shall keep thee man!  
All this was hid from me: as one by one  
My dreams grew dim, my wide aims circumscribed.  
As actual good within my reach decreased,  
While obstacles sprung up this way and that,  
To keep me from effecting half the sum,  
Small as it proved; as objects, mean within  
The primal aggregate, seemed, even the least,  
Itself a match for my concentrated strength—  
What wonder if I saw no way to shun  
Despair? The power I sought for man, seemed God's  
In this conjuncture, as I prayed to die,  
A strange adventure made me know One Sin  
Had spotted my career from its uprise;  
I saw Aprile—my Aprile there!  
And as the poor melodious wretch disburdened  
His heart, and moaned his weakness in my ear,

I learned my own deep error ; love's undoing  
Taught me the worth of love in man's estate,  
And what proportion love should hold with power  
In his right constitution ; love preceding  
Power, and with much power, always much more love  
Love still too straitened in its present means,  
And earnest for new power to set it free.  
I learned this, and supposed the whole was learned :  
And thus, when men received with stupid wonder  
My first revealings, would have worshipped me,  
And I despised and loathed their proffered praise—  
When, with awakened eyes, they took revenge  
For past credulity in casting shame  
On my real knowledge, and I hated them—  
It was not strange I saw no good in man,  
To overbalance all the wear and waste  
Of faculties, displayed in vain, but born  
To prosper in some better sphere : and why ?  
In my own heart love had not been made wise  
To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,  
To know even hate is but a mask of love's,  
To see a good in evil, and a hope  
In ill-success, to sympathize, be proud  
Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim  
Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,  
Their prejudice, and fears, and cares, and doubts  
Which all to reach upon nobleness, despite  
Their error, all tend upwardly though weak,  
Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,

But dream of him, and guess where he may be,  
 And do their best to climb and get to him.  
 All this I knew not, and I failed. Let men  
 Regard me, and the poet dead long ago  
 Who once loved rashly ; and shape forth a third,  
 And better tempered spirit, warned by both :  
 As from the over-radiant star too mad  
 To drink the light-springs, beamless thence itself—  
 And the dark orb which borders the abyss,  
 Ingulfed in icy night,—might have its course  
 A temperate and equidistant world.  
 Meanwhile, I have done well, though not all well.  
 As yet men cannot do without contempt—  
 'Tis for their good, and therefore fit awhile  
 That they reject the weak, and scorn the false,  
 Rather than praise the strong and true, in me.  
 But after, they will know me ! If I stoop  
 Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,  
 It is but for a time ; I press God's lamp  
 Close to my breast—its splendour, soon or late,  
 Will pierce the gloom : I shall emerge one day !  
 You understand me ? I have said enough ?

*Fest.* Now die, dear Aureole !

*Par.*

Festus, let my hand—

This hand, lie in your own—my own true friend !  
 Aprile ! Hand in hand with you, Aprile !

*Fest.* And this was Paracelsus

## NOTE.

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THE liberties I have taken with my subject are very trifling; and the reader may slip the foregoing scenes between the leaves of any memoir of Paracelsus he pleases, by way of commentary. To prove this, I subjoin a popular account, translated from the "*Biographie Universelle, Paris, 1822*," which I select, not as the best, certainly, but as being at hand, and sufficiently concise for my purpose. I also append a few notes, in order to correct those parts which do not bear out my own view of the character of Paracelsus; and have incorporated with them a notice or two, illustrative of the poem itself.

"PARACELSUS (*Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombostus ab Hohenheim*) was born in 1493 at Einsiedeln, (1) a little town in the canton of Schwitz, some leagues distant from Zurich. His father, who exercised the profession of medicine at Villach, in Carinthia, was nearly related to George Bombast de Hohenheim, who became afterwards Grand Prior of the Order of Malta; consequently Paracelsus could not spring from the dregs of the people, as Thomas Erastus, his sworn enemy, pretends.\* It appears that his elementary education was much neglected, and that he spent part of his youth in pursuing the

\* I shall disguise M. Renauldin's next sentence a little. "Hic (Erastus sc.) Paracelsum trimum a milite quodam, alii a sue excetum ferunt: constat imberbem illum fuisse." A standing High-Dutch joke in those days at the expense of a number of learned men, as may be seen by referring to such rubbish as Melander's *Jocoseria*, &c. &c. In the prints from his portrait by Tintoretto, painted a year before his death, Paracelsus is *barbatulus*, at all events. But Erastus was never without a good reason for his faith—e. g. "Helvetium fuisse Paracelsum) vix credo, vix enim ea regio tale monstrum ediderit."—*De Med Nova*

life common to the travelling *literati* of the age; that is to say, in wandering from country to country, predicting the future by astrology and cheiromancy, evoking apparitions, and practising the different operations of magic and alchemy, in which he had been initiated whether by his father or by various ecclesiastics, among the number of whom he particularizes the Abbot Trithem, (2) and many German bishops.

“As Paracelsus displays everywhere an ignorance of the rudiments of the most ordinary knowledge, it is not probable that he ever studied seriously in the schools; he contented himself with visiting the Universities of Germany, France, and Italy; and in spite of his boasting himself to have been the ornament of those institutions, there is no proof of his having legally acquired the title of Doctor, which he assumes. It is only known that he applied himself long, under the direction of the wealthy Sigismund Fugger, of Schwatz, to the discovery of the Magnum Opus.

“Paracelsus travelled among the mountains of Bohemia, in the East. and in Sweden, in order to inspect the labours of the miners, to be initiated in the mysteries of the oriental adepts, and to observe the secrets of nature and the famous mountain of loadstone.(3) He professes also to have visited Spain, Portugal, Prussia, Poland, and Transylvania; everywhere communicating freely, not merely with the physicians, but the old women, charlatans, and conjurers, of these several lands. It is even believed that he extended his journeyings as far as Egypt and Tartary, and that he accompanied the son of the Khan of the Tartars to Constantinople, for the purpose of obtaining the secret of the tincture of Trismegistus, from a Greek who inhabited that capital.

“The period of his return to Germany is unknown: it is only certain that, at about the age of thirty-three, many astonishing cures which he wrought on eminent personages procured him such a celebrity, that he was called in 1526, on the recommendation of (Æcolampadius,(4) to fill a chair of physic and surgery at the University of Basil. There Paracelsus began by burning publicly in the amphitheatre the works of Avicenna and Galen, assuring his auditors that the latchets of his shoes were more instructed than those two physicians that all Universities, all writers put together, were less gifted than the



hairs of his beard and of the crown of his head; and that, in a word, he was to be regarded as the legitimate monarch of medicine. 'You shall follow me,' cried he, 'you, Avicenna, Galen, Rhasis, Montaguana, Mesues, you, Gentlemen of Paris, Montpellier, Germany, Cologne, Vienna,\* and whomsoever the Rhine and the Danube nourish; you who inhabit the isles of the sea; you, likewise, Dalmatians, Athenians; thou, Arab; thou, Greek; thou, Jew; all shall follow me, and the monarchy shall be mine.†

"But at Basil it was speedily perceived that the new Professor was no better than an egregious quack. Scarcely a year elapsed before his lectures had fairly driven away an audience incapable of comprehending their emphatic jargon. That which above all contributed to sully his reputation was the debauched life he led. According to the testimony of Oporinus, who lived two years in his intimacy, Paracelsus scarcely ever ascended the lecture-desk unless half drunk, and only dictated to his secretaries when in a state of intoxication: if summoned to attend the sick, he rarely proceeded thither without previously drenching himself with wine. He was accustomed to retire to bed without changing his clothes; sometimes he spent the night in pot-houses with the peasants, and in the morning knew no longer what he was about; and, nevertheless, up to the age of twenty-five his only drink had been water.(5)

"At length, fearful of being punished for a serious outrage on a magistrate,(6) he fled from Basil towards the end of the year '27, and took refuge in Alsatia, whither he caused Oporinus to follow with his chemical apparatus.

"He then entered once more upon the career of ambulatory theos

\* Erastus, who relates this, here oddly remarks, "mirum quod non et Garamantos, Indos et Anglos adjunxit." Not so wonderful neither, if we believe what another adversary "had heard somewhere,"—that all Paracelsus' system came of his pillaging "Anglum quendam, Rogerium Baccenonem."

† See his works *passim*. I must give one specimen: Somebody had been styling him "Luther alter;" "and why not?" (he asks, as he well might,) Luther is abundantly learned, therefore you hate him and me; but we are at least a match for you.—Nam et contra vos et vestros universos principes Avicennam, Galenum, Aristotelem, &c. me satis superque munitum esse novi. Et vertex iste meus calvus ac depilis multo plura et sublimiora novit quam vester vel Avicenna vel universa academia. Prodate, et signum date, qui viri sitis, quid roboris habeatis? quid autem sitis? Doctores et magistri, redicidos pœcilentæ et fricantes podicem."—*Frag. Me I*

ophist.\* Accordingly we find him at Colmar in 1528; at Nuremberg in 1529; at St. Gall in 1531; at Pfeffers in 1535; and at Augsburg in 1536: he next made some stay in Moravia, where he still further compromised his reputation by the loss of many distinguished patients, which compelled him to betake himself to Vienna; from thence he passed into Hungary; and in 1538 was at Villach, where he dedicated his 'Chronicle' to the States of Carinthia, in gratitude for the many kindnesses with which they had honoured his father. Finally, from Mindelheim, which he visited in 1540, Paracelsus proceeded to Salzburg, where he died in the Hospital of St. Stephen (*Sebastian*, is meant), Sept. 24, 1541."—(Here follows a criticism on his writings, which I omit.)

(1) *Paracelsus* would seem to be a fantastic version of *Von Hohenheim*; Einsiedeln is the Latin Eremus, whence Paracelsus is sometimes called, as in the correspondence of Erasmus, Eremita: Bombast, his proper name, originally acquired from the characteristic phraseology of his lectures, that unlucky signification which it has ever since retained.

(2) Then Bishop of Spanheim, and residing at Würzburg in Franconia; a town situated in a grassy fertile country, whence its name, Herbipolis. He was much visited there by learned men, as may be seen by his *Epistolæ Familiares. Hag. 1536*. Among others, by his staunch friend Cornelius Agrippa, to whom he dates thence, in 1510, a letter in answer to the dedicatory epistle prefixed to the treatise *de Occult. Philosophiæ*, which last contains the following ominous allusion to Agrippa's sojourn: "Quum nuper tecum, R. P. in cœnobio tuo apud Herbipolim aliquamdiu conversatus, multa de chymicis, multa de magicis, multa de cabalisticis, cæterisque quæ adhuc in occulto delitescunt, arcanis scientiis atque artibus unâ contulissemus," &c. &c.

\* "So migratory a life could afford Paracelsus but little leisure for application to books, and accordingly he informs us that for the space of ten years he never opened a single volume, and that his whole medical library was not composed of six sheets; in effect, the inventory drawn up after his death states that the only books which he left were the Bible, the New Testament, the Commentaries of St. Jerome on the Gospels, a printed volume on Medicine, and seven manuscripts."

(3) "Inexplebilis illa aviditas naturæ perscrutandi secreta et reconditarum supellectile scientiarum animum locupletandi, uno eodemque loco, diu persistere non patiebatur, sed mercurii instar, omnes terras, nationes et urbes perlustrandi igniculos supponebat et cum viris naturæ scrutatoribus, chymicis præsertim, ore tenus conferret, et quæ diuturnis laboribus nocturnisque vigiliis invenerant unâ vel alterâ communicatione obtineret."—*Bitiskius in Prefat.* "Patris auxilio primùm, deinle propriâ industriâ doctissimos viros in Germaniâ, Italiâ, Galliâ, Hispaniâ, aliisque Europæ regionibus, nactus est præceptores; quorum liberali doctrinâ, et potissimùm propriâ inquisitione ut qui esset ingenio acutissimo ac fere divino, tantum profecit, et multi testati sint, in universâ philosophiâ, tam ardua, tam arcana et abilita cruisse mortalium neminem."—*Melch. Adam. in Vit. Germ. Medic.* "Paracelsus qui in intima naturæ viscera sic penitus introierit, metallorum stirpiumque vires et facultates tam incredibili ingenii acumine exploraverit ac perviderit; ad morbos omnes vel desperatos et opinione hominum insanabiles percurandum; ut cum Theophrasto nata primùm medicina perfecta que videtur."—*Petri Rami Orat. de Basileâ.* His passion for wandering is best described in his own words: "Ecce amatorem adolescentem difficillimi itineris haud piget, ut venustam saltem puellam vel fœminam aspiciat: quanto minus nobilissimarum artium amore laboris ac cujuslibet tædii pigebit?" &c.—*Defensiones Septem adversus Æmulos suos.* 1573. *Def. 4to.* "De peregrinationibus et exilio."

(4) The reader may remember that it was in conjunction with Œcolampadius, then Divinity-Professor at Basil, that Zuinglius published, in 1528, an answer to Luther's Confession of Faith; and that both proceeded in company to the subsequent conference with Luther and Melancthon at Marpurg. Their letters fill a large volume.—*D. D. Johannis Œcolampadii et Huldrici Zuinglii Epistolarum lib. quatuor.* Bas. 1536. It must be also observed, that Zuinglius began to preach in 1516, and at Zurich in 1519, and that in 1525 the mass was abolished in the cantons. The tenets of Œcolampadius were supposed to be more evangelical than those up to that period maintained by the glorious German, and our brave Bishop Fisher attacked them as the fouler heresy: "About this time arose out of Luther's school one

Æcolampadius, like a mighty and fierce giant who, as his master had gone beyond the Church, went beyond his master (or else it had been impossible he could have been reputed the better scholar) who denied the real presence: him, this worthy champion (the Bishop) sets upon, and with five books (like so many smooth stones taken out of the river that doth always run with living water) slays the Philistine; which five books were written in the year of our Lord 1526, at which time he had governed the See of Rochester 20 years."—*Life of Bp. Fisher*. 1655. Now, there is no doubt of the Protestantism of Paracelsus, Erasmus, Agrippa, &c., but the non-conformity of Paracelsus was always scandalous. L. Crasso (*Elogj d' Huomini Letterati. Ven.* 1666) informs us that his books were excommunicated by the Church. Quensledt (*de Patr. Doct.*) affirms "nec tantum novæ medicinæ, verum etiam novæ theologiæ autor est." Delrio in his *Disquisit. Magicar.* classes him among those "partim atheos, partim hæreticos," (*lib. 1. cap. 3.*) "Omnino tamen multa theologica in ejusdem scriptis planè atheismum olent, ac duriusculè sonant in auribus vere Christi ani."—*D. Gabrielis Claudi Schediasma de Tinct. Univ. Norimb.* 1736. I shall only add one more authority—"Oporinus dicit se (Paracelsum) aliquando Lutherum et Papam, non minùs quam nunc Galenum et Hippocratem redacturum in ordinem minabatur, neque enim eorum qui hactenus in scripturam sacram scripsissent, sive veteres, sive recentiores, quenkam scripturæ nucleum rectè eruisse, sed circa corticem et quasi membranam tantum hæreret."—*Th. Erastus. Disputat. de Med. Nová.* These and similar notions had their due effect on Oporinus, who, says Zuingerus, in his *Theatrum*, "longum vale dixit ei (Paracelso) ne ob præceptoris, alioqui amicissimi, horrendas blasphemias ipse quoque aliquando pœnas Deo. Opt. Max. lueret."

(5) His defenders allow the drunkenness. Take a sample of their excuses: "Gentis hoc, non viri vitium est, a Taciti seculo ad nostrum usque non interrupto filo devolutum, sinceritati forte Germanæ coævum, et nescio an aliquo consanguinitatis vinculo junctum."—*Bitiskius* The other charges were chiefly trumped up by Oporinus: 'Domi, quod Oporinus amanuensis ejus sæpè narravit, nunquam nisi potus ad explicanda sua accessit, atque in medio conclavi ad columnam *ρευφωμένος* adsistens, apprehenso manibus capulo ensis, cæjus *κόιλωια*

ospitum præbuit ut aiunt spiritui familiari, imaginationes aut concepta sua profudit:—alii illud quod in capulo habuit, ad ipso Azoth appellatum Medicinam fuisse præstantissimam aut lapidem Philosophicum putant.”—*Melch. Adam.* This famous sword was no laughing matter in those days, and is now a material feature in the popular idea of Paracelsus. I recollect a couple of allusions to it in our own literature, at the moment.

Ne had been known the Danish Gonswart,  
Or Paracelsus with his long sword. *Volpone. Act ii sc. 2*

Bumbastus kept a Devil's bird  
Shut in the pommel of his sword,  
That taught him all the cunning pranks,  
Of past and future mountebanks. *Hulibras. Part ii. Cant 3*

This Azoth was simply “*ludanum suum.*” But in his time he was commonly believed to possess the double tincture—the power of curing diseases, and transmuting metals. Oporinus often witnessed, as he declares, both these effects, as did also Francisus, the servant of Paracelsus, who describes in a letter to Neander, a successful projection at which he was present, and the results of which, good golden ingots, were confided to his keeping. For the other quality, let the following notice vouch among many others: “Degebat Theophrastus Norimbergæ præciseus à Medentibus illius urbis, et vaniloquus deceptorque proclamatus, qui, ut laboranti famæ subveniat, viros quosdam auctoritatis summæ in Republicâ illâ adit, et infamiae amoliendæ, artique suæ asserendæ, specimen ejus pollicetur editurum, nullo stipendio vel accepto pretio, horum faciles præbentium aures jussu elephantiacos aliquot, à communione hominum cæterorum segregatos, et in valetudinarium detrusos, alieno arbitrio eliguntur, quos virtute singulari remediorum suorum Theophrastus à fœdâ Græcorum leprâ mundat, pristinaque sanitati restituit; conservat illastre harum curationum urbs in archivis suis testimonium.”—*Biliskius.* It is to be remarked

\* The premature death of Paracelsus casts no manner of doubt on the fact of his having possessed the Elixir Vitæ: the alchemists have abundant reasons to adduce, from which I select the following, as explanatory of a property of the Tincture not calculated on by its votaries: “Objectionem illam, quod Paracelsus non fuerit longævus, nonnulli quoque solvunt per rationes physicas: vitæ nimirum abbreviationem fortasse alibus accidere posse, ob Tincturam frequentiore ac largiore dosi sumtam, dum a summe efficaci et penetrabili hujus virtute calor innatus quasi suffocatur.”—*Gabriels. Clauderi Schediasma.*

that Oporinus afterwards repented of his treachery: "Sed resipuit tandem, et quem vivum convitiis insectatus fuerat defunctum veneratione prosequutus, infames famæ præceptoris morsus in remorsus conscientiæ conversi pœnitentiâ, heu nimis tardâ vulnera clausêre exanimi quæ spiranti inflixerant." For these "bites" of Oporinus, see "*Disputat. Erasli*," and Andreas Jociscus "*Oratio de vit. et ob. Opori*;" for the "remorse" Mic. Toxita *in præf. Testamenti*, and Conringius, (otherwise an enemy of Paracelsus,) who says it was contained in a letter from Oporinus to Doctor Vegerus.\*

Whatever the moderns may think of these marvellous attributes, the title of Paracelsus to be considered the father of modern chemistry is indisputable. Gerardus Vossius "*De Philos. et Philos. sectis*," thus prefaces the ninth section of *Cap. 9*, "*De Chymiâ*"—"Nobilem hanc medicinæ partem, diu sepultam avorum ætate quasi ab orco revocavit Th. Paracelsus." I suppose many hints lie scattered in his neglected books, which clever appropriators have since developed with applause. Thus, it appears from his treatise "*De Phlebotomiâ*," and elsewhere, that he had discovered the circulation of the blood and the sanguification of the heart; as did after him Realdo Colombo, and still more perfectly Andrea Cesalpino of Arezzo, as Bayle and Bartol. observe. Even Lavater quotes a passage from his work, "*Denaturâ Rerum*," on practical Physiognomy, in which the definitions and axioms are precise enough: he adds, "though an astrological enthusiast, a man of prodigious genius." See Holcroft's Translation, vol. iii. p. 179—"The Eyes." While on the subject of the writings of Paracelsus, I may explain a passage in the third part of the Poem. He was, as I have said, unwilling to publish his works, but in effect did publish a vast number. Valentius (*in Præfat. in Paramyr.*) declares "quod ad librorum Paracelsi copiam attinet, audio à Germanis prope trecentos recenseri." "O fœcunditas ingenii!" adds he, appositely. Many of these were, however, spurious; and Fred. Bitiskius gives his good edition (3 vols. fol. Gen. 1658) "rejectis suppositis solo ipsius nomine superbientibus quorum ingens circumfertur numerus." The rest

\* For a good defence of Paracelsus I refer the reader to Olaus Borrichius's treatise—"Hermetis &c., sapientia vindicata. 1674." Or, if he is no more learned than myself in such matters, I had better mention simply that Paracelsus introduced the use of Mercury as a Laudanum.

were "charissimum et pretiosissimum authoris pignus, extorsum potius ab illō quàm obtentum." "Jam minime eo volente atque jubente hæc ipsius scripta in lucem prodiiisse videntur: quippe quæ muro inclusa ipso absente servi ejusdem indicio, furto surrepta atque sublata sunt," says Valentius. These have been the study of a host of commentators, among whose labours are most notable, Petri Severini, *Idea Medicinæ Philosophiæ. Pas.* 1571; Mic. Toxetis, *Onomastica. Arg.* 1574; Dornei, *Dict. Parac. Franc.* 1584; and *Pi Philosoph. Compendium cum scholiis auctore Leone Suavio Paris.* (This last, a good book.)

(6.) A disgraceful affair. One Liechtenfels, a canon, having been rescued in *extremis* by the "lawlanum" of Paracelsus, refused the stipulated fee, and was supported in his meanness by the authorities, whose interference Paracelsus would not brook. His own liberality was allowed by his bitterest foes, who found a ready solution of his indifference to profit, in the aforesaid sword handle and its guest. His freedom from the besetting sin of a profession he abhorred—as he curiously says somewhere, "Quis quæso æinceps honorem deferat professione tali, quæ à tam facinorosis nebulonibus obitur et administratur?"—is recorded in his epitaph, which affirms—"Bona sua in pauperes distribuenda collocandaque erogavit," honoravit, or ordinavit—for accounts differ.





PIPPA PASSES.

A Drama.

I DEDICATE

MY BEST INTENTIONS, IN THIS POEM, MOST ADMIRINGLY TO THE  
AUTHOR OF "ION,"—

MOST AFFECTIONATELY TO

MR. SERGEANT TALFOURD.

R. B

## PIPPA PASSES.



NEW YEAR'S DAY AT ASOLO IN THE TREVISAN.—*A large, mean, airy chamber. A girl. PIPPA. from the silk-mills, springing out of bed.*

DAY!

Fastcr and more fast,  
O'er night's brim, day boils at last;  
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim  
Where spurting and supprest it lay—  
For not a froth-flake touched the rim  
Of yonder gap in the solid gray  
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;  
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,  
Till the whole sunrise, not to be supprest,  
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast  
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the  
world.

Oh, Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,  
A mite of my twelve hours' treasure,  
The least of thy gazes or glances,

(Be they grants thou art bound to, or gifts above measure;  
 One of thy choices, or one of thy chances,  
 (Be they tasks God imposed thee, or freaks at thy  
     pleasure)

—My Day, if I squander such labour or leisure,  
 Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!

Thy long blue solemn hours serenely flowing,  
 Whence earth, we feel, gets steady help and good—  
 Thy fitful sunshine minutes, coming, going,  
 In which, earth turns from work in gamesome mood—  
 All shall be mine! But thou must treat me not  
 As the prosperous are treated, those who live  
 At hand here, and enjoy the higher lot,  
 In readiness to take what thou wilt give,  
 And free to let alone what thou refuseth;  
 For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest  
 Me, who am only Pippa—old-year's sorrow,  
 Cast off last night, will come again to-morrow—  
 Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I shall borrow  
 Sufficient strength of thee for new-year's sorrow.  
 All other men and women that this earth  
 Belongs to, who all days alike possess,  
 Make general plenty cure particular dearth,  
 Get more joy, one way, if another, less:  
 Thou art my single day, God lends to leaven  
 What were all earth else, with a feel of heaven;  
 Sole light that helps me through the year, thy sun's!  
 Try, now! Take Asolo's Four Happiest Ones

And let thy morning rain on that superb  
Great haughty Ottima; can rain disturb  
Her Sebald's homage? All the while thy rain  
Beats fiercest on her shrub-house window-pane,  
He will but press the closer, breathe more warm  
Against her cheek; how should she mind the storm?  
And, morning past, if mid-day shed a gloom  
O'er Jules and Phene,—what care bride and groom  
Save for their dear selves? 'Tis their marriage-day;  
And while they leave church, and go home their way  
Hand clasping hand,—within each breast would be  
Sunbeams and pleasant weather spite of thee!  
Then, for another trial, obscure thy eye  
With mist,—will Luigi and his mother grieve—  
The Lady and her child, unmatched, forsooth,  
She in her age, as Luigi in his youth,  
For true content? The cheerful town, warm, close,  
And safe, the sooner that thou art morose  
Receives them! And yet once again, outbreak  
In storm at night on Monsignor, they make  
Such stir about,—whom they expect from Rome  
To visit Asolo, his brothers' home,  
And say here masses proper to release  
A soul from pain,—what storm dares hurt his peace?  
Calm would he pray, with his own thoughts to ward  
Thy thunder off, nor want the angels' guard!  
But Pippa—just one such mischance would spoil  
Her day that lightens the next twelvemonth's toil  
At wearisome silk-winding, coil on coil!

And here I let time slip for nought!  
 Aha, you foolhardy sunbeam—caught  
 With a single splash from my ewer!  
 You that would mock the best pursuer,  
 Was my basin overdeep?  
 One splash of water ruins you asleep,  
 And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits  
 Wheeling and counterwheeling,  
 Reeling, broken beyond healing—  
 Now grow together on the ceiling!  
 That will task your wits!  
 Whoever quenched fire first, hoped to see  
 Morsel after morsel flee  
 As merrily, as giddily . . .  
 Meantime, what lights my sunbeam on,  
 Where settles by degrees the radiant cripple?  
 Oh, is it surely blown, my martagon?  
 New-blown and ruddy as St. Agnes' nipple,  
 Plump as the flesh-bunch on some Turk bird's poll!  
 Be sure if corals, branching 'neath the ripple  
 Of ocean, bud there,—fairies watch unroll  
 Such turban-flowers; I say, such lamps disperse  
 Thick red flame through that dusk green universe!  
     I am queen of thee, floweret;  
     And each fleshy blossom  
     Preserve I not—(safer  
     Than leaves that embower it,  
     Or shells that embosom)  
     —From weevil and chafer?

Laugh through my pane, then; solicit the bee;  
 Gibe him, be sure; and, in midst of thy glee,  
 Love thy queen, worship me!

—Worship whom else? For am I not, this day,  
 Whate'er I please? What shall I please to-day?  
 My morning, noon, eve, night—how spend my day?  
 To-morrow I must be Pippa who winds silk,  
 The whole year round, to earn just bread and milk:  
     But, this one day, I have leave to go,  
     And play out my fancy's fullest games;  
     I may fancy all day—and it shall be so—  
     That I taste of the pleasures, am called by the name  
     Of the Happiest Four in our Asolo!

See! Up the Hill-side yonder, through the morning,  
 Some one shall love me, as the world calls love:  
 I am no less than Ottima, take warning!  
 The gardens, and the great stone house above,  
 And other house for shrubs, all glass in front,  
 Are mine; where Sebald steals, as he is wont,  
 To court me, while old Luca yet reposes;  
 And therefore, till the shrub-house door uncloses,  
 I . . . what, now?—give abundant cause for prate  
 About me—Ottima, I mean—of late,  
 Too bold, too confident she'll still face down  
 The spitefullest of talkers in our town—  
 How we talk in the little town below!  
 But love, love, love—there's better love, I know!

This foolish love was only day's first offer ;  
 I choose my next love to defy the scoffer :  
 For do not our Bride and Bridegroom sally  
 Out of Possagno church at noon ?  
 Their house looks over Orcana valley—  
 Why should I not be the bride as soon  
 As Ottima ? For I saw, beside,  
 Arrive last night that little bride—  
 Saw, if you call it seeing her, one flash  
 Of the pale, snow-pure cheek and black bright tresses,  
 Blacker than all except the black eyelash ;  
 I wonder she contrives those lids no dresses !  
 —So strict was she, the veil  
 Should cover close her pale  
 Pure cheeks—a bride to look at and scarce touch,  
 Scarce touch, remember, Jules !—for are not such  
 Used to be tended, flower-like, every feature,  
 As if one's breath would fray the lily of a creature ?  
 A soft and easy life these ladies lead !  
 Whiteness in us were wonderful indeed—  
     Oh, save that brow its virgin dimness,  
     Keep that foot its lady primness,  
     Let those ankles never swerve  
     From their exquisite reserve,  
     Yet have to trip along the streets like me,  
     All but naked to the knee !  
     How will she ever grant her Jules a bliss  
     So startling as her real first infant kiss ?  
     Oh, no—not envy, this !



—Not envy, sare!—for if you gave me  
 Leave to take or to refuse,  
 In earnest, do you think I'd choose  
 That sort of new love to enslave me?  
 Mine should have lapped me round from the beginning;  
 As little fear of losing it as winning!  
 Lovers grow cold, men learn to hate their wives,  
 And only parents' love can last our lives:  
 At eve the son and mother, gentle pair,  
 Commune inside our Turret; what prevents  
 My being Luigi? while that mossy lair  
 Of lizards through the winter-time, is stirred  
 With each to each imparting sweet intents  
 For this new-year, as brooding bird to bird—  
 (For I observe of late, the evening walk  
 Of Luigi and his mother, always ends  
 Inside our ruined turret, where they talk,  
 Calmer than lovers, yet more kind than friends)  
 Let me be cared about, kept out of harm,  
 And schemed for, safe in love as with a charm;  
 Let me be Luigi! . . . If I only knew  
 What was my mother's face—my father, too!

Nay, if you come to that, best love of all  
 Is God's; then why not have God's love befall  
 Myself as, in the Palace by the Dome,  
 Monsignor?—who to-night will bless the home  
 Of his dead brother; and God will bless in turn  
 That heart which beats, those eyes which mildly burn

With love for all men : I, to-night at least,  
Would be that holy and beloved priest !

Now wait !—even I already seem to share  
In God's love : what does New-year's hymn declare ?  
What other meaning do these verses bear ?

*All service ranks the same with God .  
If now, as formerly He trod  
Paradise, His presence fills  
Our earth, each only as God wills .  
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,  
Are we ; there is no last nor first.*

*Say not " a small event ! " Why " small ? " .  
Costs it more pain than this, ye call  
A " great event," should come to pass,  
Than that ? Untwine me from the mass  
Of deeds which make up life, one deed  
Power shall fall short in, or exceed !*

And more of it and more of it !—oh, yes—  
I will pass by, and see their happiness,  
And envy none—being just as great, no doubt,  
Useful to men, and dear to God, as they !  
A pretty thing to care about  
So mightily, this single holiday !  
But let the sun shine ! Wherefore repine  
—With thee to lead me, O Day of mine,

Down the grass-path gray with dew,  
 Under the pine-wood, blind with boughs,  
 Where the swallow never flew  
 As yet, nor cicale dared carouse—  
 Dared carouse! [She enters the street.

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I.—MORNING. *Up the Hill-side, inside the Shrub-house.* LUCA'S  
 Wife, OTTIMA, and her Paramour, the German SEBALD

*Seb. (sings.) Let the watching lids wink!*  
*Day's a-blaze with eyes, think—*  
*Deep into the night, drink!*

*Otti.* Night? Such may be your Rhine-land nights,  
 perhaps;

But this blood-red beam through the shutter's chink,  
 —We call such light, the morning's: let us see!  
 Mind how you grope your way, though! How these tall  
 Naked geraniums straggle! Push the lattice—  
 Behind that frame!—Nay, do I bid you?—Sebald,  
 It shakes the dust down on me! Why, of course  
 The slide-bolt catches.—Well, are you content,  
 Or must I find you something else to spoil?  
 Kiss and be friends, my Sebald! Is it full morning?  
 Oh, don't speak then!

*Seb.* Ay, thus it used to be!

Ever your house was, I remember, shut  
 Till mid-day—I observed that, as I strolled  
 On mornings thro' the vale here: country girls  
 Were noisy, washing garments in the brook—  
 Hinds drove the slow white oxen up the hills—

But no, your house was mute, would ope no eye—  
 And wisely—you were plotting one thing there,  
 Nature, another outside: I looked up—  
 Rough white wood shutters, rusty iron bars,  
 Silent as death, blind in a flood of light;  
 Oh, I remember!—and the peasants laughed  
 And said, “The old man sleeps with the young wife!”  
 This house was his, this chair, this window—his!

*Otti.* Ah, the clear morning! I can see St. Mark’s:  
 That black streak is the belfry. Stop: Vicenza  
 Should lie . . . There’s Padua, plain enough, that blue!  
 Look o’er my shoulder—follow my finger—

*Seb.*

Morning?

It seems to me a night with the sun added:  
 Where’s dew? where’s freshness? That bruised plant,  
 I bruised

In getting thro’ the lattice yestereve,  
 Droops as it did. See, here’s my elbow’s mark  
 In the dust on the sill.

*Otti.*

Oh shut the lattice, pray!

*Seb.* Let me lean out. I cannot scent blood here,  
 Foul as the morn may be—

There, shut the world out

How do you feel now, *Ottima*? There—curse  
 The world, and all outside! Let us throw off  
 This mask: how do you bear yourself? Let’s out  
 With all of it!

*Otti.*

Best never speak of it.

*Seb.* Best speak again and yet again of it,

Till words cease to be more than words. "His blood,"  
 For instance—let those two words mean "His blood"  
 And nothing more. Notice—I'll say them now,  
 "His blood."

*Otti.* Assuredly if I repented  
 The deed—

*Seb.* Repent? who should repent, or why?  
 What puts that in your head? Did I once say  
 What I repented?

*Otti.* No—I said the deed—

*Seb.* "The deed," and "the event"—just now it was  
 "Our passion's fruit"—the devil take such cant!  
 Say, once and always, Luca was a wittol,  
 I am his cut-throat, you are--

*Otti.* Here is the wine—  
 I brought it when we left the house above—  
 And glasses too—wine of both sorts. Black? white, then?

*Seb.* But am not I his cut-throat? What are you?

*Otti.* There, trudges on his business from the Duomo  
 Benet the Capuchin, with his brown hood  
 And bare feet—always in one place at church,  
 Close under the stone wall by the south entry;  
 I used to take him for a brown cold piece  
 Of the wall's self, as out of it he rose  
 To let me pass—at first, I say, I used—  
 Now—so has that dumb figure fastened on me—  
 I rather should account the plastered wall  
 A piece of him, so chilly does it strike.  
 This, Sebald?

*Seb.* No—the white wine—the white wine!  
Well, Ottima, I promised no new year  
Should rise on us the ancient shameful way,  
Nor does it rise : pour on! To your black eyes!  
Do you remember last damned New Year's day?

*Otti.* You brought those foreign prints. We looked  
at them  
Over the wine and fruit. I had to scheme  
To get him from the fire. Nothing but saying  
His own set wants the proof-mark, roused him up  
To hunt them out.

*Seb.* 'Faith, he is not alive  
To fondle you before my face!

*Otti.* Do you  
Fondle me, then! who means to take your life  
For that, my Sebald?

*Seb.* Hark you, Ottima,  
One thing's to guard against. We'll not make **much**  
One of the other—that is, not make more  
Parade of warmth, childish officious coil,  
Than yesterday—as if, sweet, I supposed  
Proof upon proof was needed now, now first,  
To show I love you—yes, still love you—love you  
In spite of Luca and what's come to him  
—Sure sign we had him ever in our thoughts,  
White sneering old reproachful face and all!  
We'll even quarrel, love, at times, as if  
We still could lose each other—were not tied  
By this—conceive you?

*Otti.* Love—

*Seb.* Not tied so sure—

Because tho' I was wrought upon—have struck  
His insolence back into him—am I  
So surely yours?—therefore, forever yours?

*Otti.* Love, to be wise, (one counsel pays another)  
Should we have—months ago—when first we loved,  
For instance that May morning we two stole  
Under the green ascent of sycamores—  
If we had come upon a thing like that  
Suddenly—

*Seb.* “A thing” . . . there again—“a thing!”

*Otti.* Then, Venus' body, had we come upon  
My husband Luca Gaddi's murdered corpse  
Within there, at his couch-foot, covered close—  
Would you have pored upon it? Why persist  
In poring now upon it? For 'tis here—  
As much as there in the deserted house—  
You cannot rid your eyes of it: for me,  
Now he is dead I hate him worse—I hate—  
Dare you stay here? I would go back and hold  
His two dead hands, and say, I hate you worse  
Luca, than—

*Seb.* Off, off; take your hands off mine!  
'Tis the hot evening—off! oh, morning, is it?

*Otti.* There's one thing must be done—you **know**  
what thing.

Come in and help to carry. We may sleep  
Anywhere in the whole wide house to-night.

*Seb.* What would come, think you, if we let him lie  
Just as he is? Let him lie there until  
The angels take him: he is turned by this  
Off from his face, beside, as you will see.

*Otti* This dusty pane might serve for looking-glass  
Three, four—four gray hairs! Is it so you said  
A plait of hair should wave across my neck?  
No—this way!

*Seb.* Ottima, I would give your neck,  
Each splendid shoulder, both those breasts of yours,  
That this were undone! Killing?—Kill the world  
So Luca lives again!—Ay, lives to sputter  
His fulsome dotage on you—yes, and feign  
Surprise that I returned at eve to sup,  
When all the morning I was loitering here—  
Bid me dispatch my business and begone.  
I would—

*Otti.* See!

*Seb.* No, I'll finish! Do you think  
I fear to speak the bare truth once for all?  
All we have talked of is, at bottom, fine  
To suffer—there's a recompense in guilt;  
One must be venturous and fortunate—  
What is one young for, else? In age we'll sigh  
O'er the wild, reckless, wicked days flown over;  
Still we have lived! The vice was in its place.  
But to have eaten Luca's bread, have worn  
His clothes, have felt his money swell my purse—  
Do lovers in romances sin that way?



Why, I was starving when I used to call  
 And teach you music—starving while you plucked me  
 These flowers to smell!

*Otti.* My poor lost friend!

*Seb.* He gave me

Life—nothing less. what if he did reproach  
 My perfidy, and threaten, and do more—  
 Had he no right? What was to wonder at?  
 He sate by us at table quietly—  
 Why must you lean across till our cheeks touch'd?  
 Could he do less than make pretence to strike me?  
 'Tis not for the crime's sake—I'd commit ten crimes  
 Greater, to have this crime wiped out—undone!  
 And you—O, how feel you? feel you for me?

*Otti.* Well, then—I love you better now than ever—  
 And best (look at me while I speak to you)—  
 Best for the crime—nor do I grieve, in truth,  
 This mask, this simulated ignorance,  
 This affectation of simplicity,  
 Falls off our crime; this naked crime of ours  
 May not, now, be looked over—look it down, then!  
 Great? let it be great—but the joys it brought,  
 Pay they or no its price? Come—they or it!  
 Speak not! The past, would you give up the past  
 Such as it is, pleasure and crime together?  
 Give up that noon I owned my love for you—  
 The garden's silence—even the single bee  
 Persisting in his toil, suddenly stopt  
 And where he hid you only could surmise

By some campanula's chalice set a-swing  
As he clung there—"Yes, I love you!"

*Seb.* And I drew  
Back; put far back your face with both my hands  
Lest you should grow too full of me—your face  
So seemed athirst for my whole soul and body!

*Otti.* And when I ventured to receive you here,  
Made you steal hither in the mornings—

*Seb.* When  
I used to look up 'neath the shrub-house here,  
Till the red fire on its glazed windows spread  
To a yellow haze?

*Otti.* Ah—my sign was, the sun  
Inflamed the sere side of yon chestnut-tree  
Nipt by the first frost.

*Seb.* You would always laugh  
At my wet boots—I had to stride thro' grass  
Over my ankles.

*Otti.* Then our crowning night—

*Seb.* The July night?

*Otti.* The day of it too, Sebald!  
When the heaven's pillars seemed o'erbowed with heat,  
Its black-blue canopy seemed let descend  
Close on us both, to weigh down each to each,  
And smother up all life except our life.  
So lay we till the storm came.

*Seb.* How it came!

*Otti.* Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;  
Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;

And ever and anon some bright white shaft  
 Burnt thro' the pine-tree roof—here burnt and there,  
 As if God's messenger thro' the close wood screen  
 Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,  
 Feeling for guilty thee and me: then broke  
 The thunder like a whole sea overhead—

*Seb.* Yes!

*Otti.* —While I stretched myself upon you, hands  
 To hands, my mouth to your hot mouth, and shook  
 All my locks loose and covered you with them—  
 You, Sebald, the same you—

*Seb.* Slower, Ottima—

*Otti.* And as we lay—

*Seb.* Less vehemently! Love me—

Forgive me—take not words—mere words—to heart—  
 Your breath is worse than wine! Breathe slow, speak  
 slow—

Do not lean on me—

*Otti.* Sebald, as we lay,  
 Rising and falling only with our pants,  
 Who said, "Let death come now—'tis right to die!  
 Right to be punished—nought completes such bliss  
 But woe!" Who said that?

*Seb.* How did we ever rise?

Was't that we slept? Why did it end?

*Otti.*

I felt you,

Fresh tapering to a point the ruffled ends  
 Of my loose locks 'twixt both your humid lips—  
 (My hair is fallen now—knot it again!)

*Seb.* I kiss you now, dear Ottima, now, and now !  
This way ? Will you forgive me—be once more  
My great queen ?

*Otti.* Bind it thrice about my brow ;  
Crown me your queen, your spirit's arbitress,  
Magnificent in sin. Say that !

*Seb.* I crown you  
My great white queen, my spirit's arbitress,  
Magnificent—

*(From without is heard the voice of PIPPA singing—)*

*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 !*

*(PIPPA passes.)*

*Seb.* God's in his heaven ! Do you hear that ? Who  
spoke ?

You, you spoke !

*Otti.* Oh—that little ragged girl !  
She must have rested on the step—we give them  
But this one holiday the whole year round.  
Did you ever see our silk-mills—their inside ?  
There are ten silk-mills now belong to you.

She stoops to pick my double heartsease . . . Sh!  
 She does not hear—you call out louder!

*Seb.* Leave me!

Go, get your clothes on—dress those shoulders!

*Otti.* Sebald!

*Seb.* Wipe off that paint. I hate you!

*Otti.* Miserable!

*Seb.* My God! and she is emptied of it now!

Outright now!—how miraculously gone  
 All of the grace—had she not strange grace once?  
 Why, the blank cheek hangs listless as it likes,  
 No purpose holds the features up together,  
 Only the cloven brow and puckered chin  
 Stay in their places—and the very hair,  
 That seemed to have a sort of life in it,  
 Drops, a dead web!

*Otti.* Speak to me—speak not of me!

*Seb.* —That round great full-orbed face, where not an  
 angle

Broke the delicious indolence—all broken!

*Otti.* To me—not of me!—ungrateful, perjured cheat—  
 A coward, too—but ingrate's worse than all!  
 Beggar—my slave—a fawning, cringing lie!  
 Leave me!—betray me!—I can see your drift—  
 A lie that walks, and eats, and drinks!

*Seb.* My God!

Those morbid, olive, faultless shoulder-blades—  
 I should have known there was no blood beneath!

*Otti.* You hate me, then? You hate me, then?

*Seb.*

To think

She would succeed in her absurd attempt,  
 And fascinate by sinning ; and show herself  
 Superior—Guilt from its excess, superior  
 To Innocence. That little peasant's voice  
 Has righted all again. Though I be lost,  
 I know which is the better, never fear,  
 Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,  
 Nature, or trick—I see what I have done,  
 Entirely now ! Oh, I am proud to feel  
 Such torments—let the world take credit thence—  
 I, having done my deed, pay too its price !  
 I hate, hate—curse you ! God's in his heaven !

*Otti.*

—Me

Me ! no, no, Sebald—not yourself—kill me !  
 Mine is the whole crime—do but kill me—then  
 Yourself—then—presently—first hear me speak—  
 I always meant to kill myself—wait, you !  
 Lean on my breast—not as a breast ; don't love me  
 The more because you lean on me, my own  
 Heart's Sebald ! There—there—both deaths presently

*Seb.* My brain is drowned now—quite drowned : all I  
 feel

Is . . . is at swift-recurring intervals,  
 A hurrying down within me, as of waters  
 Loosened to smother up some ghastly pit—  
 There they go—whirls from a black, fiery sea !

*Otti.* Not to me, God—to him be merciful !

*Talk by the way, while PIPPA is passing from the Hill-side to Orcana. Foreign Students of Painting and Sculpture, from Venice, assembled opposite the House of JULES, a young French Statuary.*

*1st Student.* Attention! my own post is beneath this window, but the pomegranate clump yonder will hide three or four of you with a little squeezing, and Schramm and his pipe must lie flat in the balcony. Four, five—who's a defaulter? We want everybody, for Jules must not be suffered to hurt his bride when the jest's found out.

*2d Stud.* All here! Only our poet's away—never having much meant to be present, moonstrike him! The airs of that fellow, that Giovaechino! He was in violent love with himself, and had a fair prospect of thriving in his suit, so unmolested was it,—when suddenly a woman falls in love with him, too; and out of pure jealousy he takes himself off to Trieste, immortal poem and all—whereto is this prophetic epitaph appended already, as Bluphocks assures me—“*Here a mammoth-poem lies,—Fouled to death by butterflies.*” His own fault, the simpleton! Instead of cramp sonnets, each like a knife in your entrails, he should write, says Bluphocks, both classically and intelligibly. —*Æsculapius, an Epic. Catalogue of the drugs: Hebe's plaister—One strip Cools your lip. Phabus' emulsion—*

*One bottle Clears your throttle. Mercury's bolus—One box Cures . . .*

*3d Stud.* Subside, my fine fellow! If the marriage was over by ten o'clock, Jules will certainly be here in a minute with his bride.

*2d Stud.* Good!—Only, so should the poet's muse have been universally acceptable, says Bluphocks, *et canibus nostris . . .* and Delia not better known to our literary dogs than the boy—Giovacchino!

*1st Stud.* To the point, now. Where's Gottlieb, the new-comer? Oh,—listen, Gottlieb, to what has called down this piece of friendly vengeance on Jules, of which we now assemble to witness the winding-up. We are all agreed, all in a tale, observe, when Jules shall burst out on us in a fury by and by: I am spokesman—the verses that are to undeceive Jules bear my name of Lutwyche—but each professes himself alike insulted by this strutting stone-squarer, who came singly from Paris to Munich, and thence with a crowd of us to Venice and Possagno here, but proceeds in a day or two alone again—oh, alone, indubitably!—to Rome and Florence. He, forsooth, take up his portion with these dissolute, brutalized, heartless bunglers!—So he was heard to call us all: now, is Schramm brutalized, I should like to know? Am I heartless?

*Gott.* Why, somewhat heartless; for, suppose Jules a coxcomb as much as you choose, still, for this mere coxcombry, you will have brushed off—what do folks style it?—the bloom of his life. Is it too late to alter



These love-letters, now, you call his . . . I can't laugh at them.

*4th Stud.* Because you never read the sham letters of our inditing which drew forth these.

*Gott.* His discovery of the truth will be frightful.

*4th Stud.* That's the joke. But you should have joined us at the beginning: there's no doubt he loves the girl—loves a model he might hire by the hour!

*Gott.* See here! "He has been accustomed," he writes, "to have Canova's women about him, in stone, and the world's women beside him, in flesh; these being as much below, as those, above—his soul's aspiration: but now he is to have the real." . . . There you laugh again! I say, you wipe off the very dew of his youth.

*1st Stud.* Schramm! (Take the pipe out of his mouth, somebody)—will Jules lose the bloom of his youth?

*Schramm.* Nothing worth keeping is ever lost in this world: look at a blossom—it drops presently, having done its service and lasted its time; but fruits succeed, and where would be the blossom's place could it continue? As well affirm that your eye is no longer in your body, because its earliest favourite, whatever it may have first loved to look on, is dead and done with—as that any affection is lost to the soul when its first object, whatever happened first to satisfy it, is superseded in due course. Keep but ever looking, whether with the body's eye or the mind's, and you will soon find something to look on! Has a man done wondering at women?—There follow men, dead and alive, to wonder

at. Has he done wondering at men?—There's God to wonder at: and the faculty of wonder may be, at the same time, old and tired enough with respect to its first object, and yet young and fresh sufficiently, so far as concerns its novel one. Thus . . .

*1st Stud.* Put Schramm's pipe into his mouth again! There, you see! Well, this—Jules . . . a wretched fribble—oh, I watched his disportings at Possagno, the other day! Canova's gallery—you know: there he marches first resolutely past great works by the dozen without vouchsafing an eye: all at once he stops full at the *Psiche-fanciulla*—cannot pass that old acquaintance without a nod of encouragement—"In your new place, beauty? Then behave yourself as well here as at Munich—I see you!" Next he posts himself deliberately before the unfinished *Pietà* for half an hour without moving, till up he starts of a sudden, and thrusts his very nose into—I say, into—the group; by which gesture you are informed that precisely the sole point he had not fully mastered in Canova's practice was a certain method of using the drill in the articulation of the knee-joint—and that, likewise, has he mastered at length! Good bye, therefore, to poor Canova—whose gallery no longer need detain his successor Jules, the predestinated novel thinker in marble!

*5th Stud.* Tell him about the women—go on to the women!

*1st Stud.* Why, on that matter he could never be supercilious enough. How should we be other (he said)

than the poor devils you see, with those debasing habits we cherish? He was not to wallow in that mire, at least: he would wait, and love only at the proper time, and meanwhile put up with the *Psiche-fanciulla*. Now I happened to hear of a young Greek—real Greek—girl at Malamocco; a true Islander, do you see, with Aleiphron's "hair like sea-moss"—Schramm knows!—white and quiet as an apparition, and fourteen years old at furthest,—a daughter of Natalia, so she swears—that hag Natalia, who helps us to models at three *lire* an hour. We selected this girl for the heroine of our jest. So, first, Jules received a scented letter—somebody had seen his Tydens at the academy, and my picture was nothing to it—a profound admirer bade him persevere—would make herself known to him ere long—(Paolina my little friend of the *Venice*, transcribes divinely.) And in due time, the mysterious correspondent gave certain hints of her peculiar charms—the pale cheeks, the black hair—whatever, in short, had struck us in our Malamocco model: we retained her name, too—Phene, which is by interpretation, sea-eagle. Now, think of Jules finding himself distinguished from the herd of us by such a creature! In his very first answer he proposed marrying his mistress: and fancy us over these letters, two, three times a day, to receive and dispatch! I concocted the main of it: relations were in the way—secrecy must be observed—in fine, would he wed her on trust, and only speak to her when they were indissolubly united? St—st—Here they come!

*6th Stud.* Both of them! Heaven's love, speak softly! speak within yourselves!

*5th Stud.* Look at the bridegroom! Half his hair in storm, and half in calm,—patted down over the left temple,—like a frothy cup one blows on to cool it! and the same old blouse that he murders the marble in!

*2d Stud.* Not a rich vest like yours, Hannibal Scratchy!—rich, that your face may the better set it off!

*6th Stud.* And the bride! Yes, sure enough, our Phene! Should you have known her in her clothes? How magnificently pale!

*Gott.* She does not also take it for earnest, I hope?

*1st Stud.* Oh, Natalia's concern, that is! We settle with Natalia.

*6th Stud.* She does not speak—has evidently let out no word. The only thing is, will she equally remember the rest of her lesson, and repeat correctly all those verses which are to break the secret to Jules?

*Gott.* How he gazes on her! Pity—pity!

*1st Stud.* They go in—now, silence! You three,—not nearer the window, mind, than that pomegranate—just where the little girl, who a few minutes ago passed is singing, is seated!

II.—Noon. *Over Orcana. The House of JULES, who crosses its threshold with PHENE—she is silent, on which JULES begins—*

Do not die, Phene—I am yours now—you  
 Are mine now—let fate reach me how she likes,  
 If you'll not die—so, never die! Sit here—  
 My work-room's single seat: I over-lean  
 This length of hair and lustrous front—they turn  
 Like an entire flower upward—eyes—lips—last  
 Your chin—no, last your throat turns—'tis their scent  
 Pulls down my face upon you! Nay, look ever  
 This one way till I change, grow you—I could  
 Change into you, beloved!

You by me,

And I by you—this is your hand in mine—  
 And side by side we sit: all's true. Thank God!  
 I have spoken—speak, you!

—O, my life to come!

My 'Tydeus must be carved, that's there in clay;  
 Yet how be carved, with you about the chamber?  
 Where must I place you? When I think that once  
 This room-full of rough block-work seemed my heaven  
 Without you! Shall I ever work again—  
 Get fairly into my old ways again—  
 Bid each conception stand while, trait by trait,  
 My hand transfers its lineaments to stone?

Will my mere fancies live near you, my truth—  
 The live truth—passing and repassing me—  
 Sitting beside me?

Now speak!

Only, first,  
 See, all your letters! Was't not well contrived?  
 Their hiding-place is Psyche's robe; she keeps  
 Your letters next her skin: which drops out foremost!  
 Ah,—this that swam down like a first moonbeam  
 Into my world!

Again those eyes complete  
 Their melancholy survey, sweet and slow,  
 Of all my room holds; to return and rest  
 On me, with pity, yet some wonder too—  
 As if God bade some spirit plague a world,  
 And this were the one moment of surprise  
 And sorrow while she took her station, pausing  
 O'er what she sees, finds good, and must destroy!  
 What gaze you at? Those? Books, I told you of;  
 Let your first word to me rejoice them, too:  
 This minion, a Coluthus, writ in red  
 Bistre and azure by Bessarion's scribe—  
 Read this line . . . no, shame—Homer's be the Greek  
 First breathed me from the lips of my Greek girl!  
 My Odyssey in coarse black vivid type  
 With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt page and page,  
 To mark great places with due gratitude;  
 "He said, and on Antinous directed  
 "A bitter shaft" . . . a flower blots out the rest!

Again upon your search? My statues, then!  
 —Ah, do not mind that—better that will look  
 When cast in bronze—an Almaign Kaiser, that,  
 Swart-green and gold, with truncheon based on hip.  
 This, rather, turn to! What, unrecognized?  
 I thought you would have seen that here you sit  
 As I imagined you,—Hippolyta,  
 Naked upon her bright Numidian horse!  
 Recall you this, then? “Carve in bold relief”—  
 So you commanded—“carve, against I come,  
 “A Greek, in Athens, as our fashion was,  
 “Feasting, bay-filleted and thunder-free,  
 “Who rises ’neath the lifted myrtle-branch:  
 “‘Praise those who slew Hipparchus,’ cry the guests,  
 “‘While o’er thy head the singer’s myrtle waves  
 “‘As erst above our champions’: stand up, all!’”  
 See, I have laboured to express your thought!  
 Quite round, a cluster of mere hands and arms,  
 (Thrust in all senses, all ways, from all sides,  
 Only consenting at the branches’ end  
 They strain toward) serves for frame to a sole face—  
 The Praiser’s—in the centre—who with eyes  
 Sightless, so bend they back to light inside  
 His brain where visionary forms throng up,  
 Sings, minding not that palpitating arch  
 Of hands and arms, nor the quick drip of wine  
 From the drenched leaves o’erhead, nor crowns cast off,  
 Violet and parsley crowns to trample on—  
 Sings, pausing as the patron-ghosts approve,

Devotly their unconquerable hymn !  
But you must say a "well" to that—say, "well!"  
Because you gaze—am I fantastic, sweet?  
Gaze like my very life's-stuff, marble—marbly  
Even to the silence! why before I found  
The real flesh Phene, I inured myself  
To see, throughout all nature, varied stuff  
For better nature's birth by means of art:  
With me, each substance tended to one form  
Of beauty—to the human Archetype—  
On every side occurred suggestive germs  
Of that—the tree, the flower—or take the fruit,—  
Some rosy shape, continuing the peach,  
Curved beewise o'er its bough; as rosy limbs,  
Depending, nestled in the leaves—and just  
From a cleft rose-peach the whole Dryad sprang!  
But of the stuffs one can be master of,  
How I divined their capabilities!  
From the soft-rinded smoothening facile chalk  
That yields your outline to the air's embrace,  
Half-softened by a halo's pearly gloom;  
Down to the crisp imperious steel, so sure  
To cut its one confided thought clean out  
Of all the world: but marble!—'neath my tools  
More pliable than jelly—as it were  
Some clear primordial creature dug from depths  
In the Earth's heart, where itself breeds itself,  
And whence all baser substance may be worked;  
Refine it off to air, you may—condense it



Down to the diamond ;—is not metal there,  
 When o'er the sudden specks my chisel trips ?  
 —Not flesh—as flake off flake I scale, approach,  
 Lay bare those bluish veins of blood asleep ?  
 Lurks flame in no strange windings where, surprised  
 By the swift implement sent home at once,  
 Flushes and glowings radiate and hover  
 About its track ?—

Phene ? what—why is this ?

That whitening cheek those still-dilating eyes !  
 Ah, you will die—I knew that you would die !

*PHENE begins, on his having long remained silent.*

Now the end's coming—to be sure, it must  
 Have ended sometime ! Tush—why need I speak  
 Their foolish speech ? I cannot bring to mind  
 One half of it, besides ; and do not care  
 For old Natalia now, nor any of them.  
 Oh, you—what are you ?—if I do not try  
 To say the words Natalia made me learn,  
 To please your friends,—it is to keep myself  
 Where your voice lifted me, by letting it  
 Proceed—but can it ? Even you, perhaps,  
 Cannot take up, now you have once let fall,  
 The music's life, and me along with that—  
 No, or you would ! We'll stay, then, as we are  
 —Above the world.

You creature with the eyes !

If I could look forever up to them,  
 As now you let me,—I believe, all sin,

All memory of wrong done or suffering borne,  
 Would drop down, low and lower, to the earth  
 Whence all that's low comes, and there touch and stay  
 —Never to overtake the rest of me,  
 All that, unspotted, reaches up to you,  
 Drawn by those eyes! What rises is myself,  
 Not so the shame and suffering; but they sink,  
 Are left, I rise above them—Keep me so  
 Above the world!

But you sink, for your eyes  
 Are altering—altered! Stay—"I love you, love you"  
 I could prevent it if I understood  
 More of your words to me—was't in the tone  
 Or the words, your power?

Or stay—I will repeat  
 Their speech, if that contents you! Only, change  
 No more, and I shall find it presently  
 —Far back here, in the brain yourself filled up.  
 Natalia threatened me that harm would follow  
 Unless I spoke their lesson to the end,  
 But harm to me, I thought she meant, not you.  
 Your friends,—Natalia said they were your friends  
 And meant you well,—because, I doubted it,  
 Observing (what was very strange to see)  
 On every race, so different in all else,  
 The same smile girls like us are used to bear,  
 But never men, men cannot stoop so low;  
 Yet your friends, speaking of you, used that smile,  
 That hateful smirk of boundless self-conceit

Which seems to take possession of this world  
 And make of God their tame confederate,  
 Purveyor to their appetites . . . you know !  
 But no—Natalia said they were your friends,  
 And they assented while they smiled the more,  
 And all came round me,—that thin Englishman  
 With light, lank hair seemed leader of the rest ;  
 He held a paper—“ What we want,” said he,  
 Ending some explanation to his friends—  
 “ Is something slow, involved and mystical,  
 “ To hold Jules long in doubt, yet take his taste  
 “ And lure him on, so that, at innermost  
 “ Where he seeks sweetness’ soul, he may find—this !  
 ‘ —As in the apple’s core, the noisome fly :  
 “ For insects on the rind are seen at once,  
 “ And brushed aside as soon, but this is found  
 “ Only when on the lips or loathing tongue.”  
 And so he read what I have got by heart—  
 I’ll speak it,—“ Do not die, love ! I am yours ” . . .  
 Stop—is not that, or like that, part of words  
 Yourself began by speaking ? Strange to lose  
 What cost much pains to learn ! Is this more right ?

*I am a painter who cannot paint ;  
 In my life, a devil rather than saint,  
 In my brain, as poor a creature too—  
 No end to all I cannot do !  
 Yet do one thing at least I can—  
 Love a man, or hate a man  
 Supremely: thus my love began.*

*Through the Valley of Love I went,  
 In its lovinest spot to abide,  
 And just on the verge where I pitched my tent,  
 I found Hate dwelling beside.  
 (Let the Bridegroom ask what the painter meant,  
 Of his Bride, of the peerless Bride!)  
 And further, I traversed Hate's grove,  
 In its hatefullest nook to dwell;  
 But lo, where I flung myself prone, couched Love  
 Where the deepest shadow fell.  
 (The meaning—those black bride's-eyes above,  
 Not the painter's lip should tell!)*

‘And here,’ said he, ‘Jules probably will ask,  
 ‘You have black eyes, love—you are, sure enough,  
 ‘My peerless bride,—so do you tell, indeed,  
 ‘What needs some explanation—what means this?’”

—And I am to go on, without a word—

*So I grew wiser in Love and Hate,  
 From simple, that I was of late.  
 For once, when I loved, I would enlase  
 Breast, eyelids, hands, feet, form and face  
 Of her I loved, in one embrace—  
 As if by mere love I could love immensely!  
 And when I hated, I would plunge  
 My sword, and wipe with the first lunge  
 My foe's whole life out, like a sponge—  
 As if by mere hate I could hate intensely!  
 But now I am wiser, know better the fashion*

*How passion seeks aid from its opposite passion,  
 And if I see cause to love more, or hate more  
 Than ever man loved, ever hated, before—  
 And seek in the Valley of Love,  
 The spot, or the spot in Hate's Grove,  
 Where my soul may the sureliest reach  
 The essence, nought less, of each,  
 The Hate of all Hates, or the Love  
 Of all Loves, in its Valley or Grove,—  
 I find them the very warders  
 Each of the other's borders.  
 I love most, when Love is disguised  
 In Hate; and when Hate is surprised  
 In Love, then I hate most: ask  
 How Love smiles through Hate's iron casque,  
 Hate grins through Love's rose-braided mask,—  
 And how, having hated thee,  
 I sought long and painfully  
 To wound thee, and not prick  
 The skin, but pierce to the quick—  
 Ask this, my Jules, and be answered straight  
 By thy bride—how the painter Lutwyche can hate!*

JULES *interpos.*

Lutwyche—who else? But all of them, no doubt,  
 Hated me: they at Venice—presently  
 Their turn, however! You I shall not meet:  
 If I dreamed, saying this would wake me!

Keep

What's here, this gold—we cannot meet again,  
 Consider—and the money was but meant  
 For two years' travel, which is over now,  
 All chance, or hope, or care, or need of it!  
 This—and what comes from selling these, my casts  
 And books, and medals, except . . . let them go  
 Together, so the produce keeps you safe,  
 Out of Natalia's clutches!—If by chance  
 (For all's chance here) I should survive the gang  
 At Venice, root out all fifteen of them,  
 We might meet somewhere, since the world is wide—

*(From without is heard the voice of PIPPA, singing—)*

*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 unseen*

*“Crumbling your hounds their messes!”)*

*Is she wronged?—To the rescue of her honour,  
 My heart!*

*Is she poor?—What costs it to be styled a donour?*

*Merely an earth's to cleave, a sea's 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 unseen  
 " *Fitting your hawks their jesses !* ")

(PIPPA passes.)

JULES resumes.

What name was that the little girl sang forth ?  
 Kate ? The Cornaro, doubtless, who renounced  
 The crown of Cyprus to be lady here  
 At Asolo, where still the peasants keep  
 Her memory ; and songs tell how many a page  
 Pined for the grace of one so far above  
 His power of doing good to, as a queen—  
 " She never could be wronged, be poor," he sighed  
 " For him to help her ! "

Yes, a bitter thing

To see our lady above all need of us ;  
 Yet so we look ere we will love ; not I,  
 But the world looks so. If whoever loves  
 Must be, in some sort, god or worshipper,  
 The blessing or the blest one, queen or page,  
 Why should we always choose the page's part ?  
 Here is a woman with utter need of me,—  
 I find myself queen here, it seems !

How strange !

Look at the woman here with the new soul,  
 Like my own Psyche's,—fresh upon her lips  
 Alit, the visionary butterfly,  
 Waiting my word to enter and make bright,  
 Or flutter off and leave all blank as first.  
 This body had no soul before, but slept

Or stirred, was beauteous or ungainly, free  
 From taint or foul with stain, as outward things  
 Fastened their image on its passiveness :  
 Now, it will wake, feel, live—or die again !  
 Shall to produce form out of unshaped stuff  
 Be art—and, further, to evoke a soul  
 From form, be nothing ? This new soul is mine !

Now, to kill Lutwyche, what would that do ?—save  
 A wretched dauber, men will hoot to death  
 Without me, from their laughter !—Oh, to hear  
 God's voice plain as I heard it first, before  
 They broke in with that laughter ! I heard them  
 Henceforth, not God !

To Ancona—Greece—some isle

I wanted silence only—there is clay  
 Everywhere. One may do whate'er one likes  
 In Art—the only thing is, to make sure  
 That one does like it—which takes pains to know.

Scatter all this, my Phene—this mad dream !  
 Who—what is Lutwyche—what Natalia's friends,  
 What the whole world except our love—my own,  
 Own Phene ? But I told you, did I not,  
 Ere night we travel for your land—some isle  
 With the sea's silence on it ? Stand aside—  
 I do but break these paltry models up  
 To begin art afresh. Shall I meet Lutwyche,  
 And save him from my statue's meeting him ?  
 Some unsuspected isle in the far seas !



Like a god going thro' his world there stands  
 One mountain for a moment in the dusk,  
 Whole brotherhoods of cedars on its brow—  
 And you are ever by me while I gaze  
 —Are in my arms as now—as now—as now!  
 Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!  
 Some unsuspected isle in far off seas!

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*Talk by the way, while PIPPA is passing from Orcana to the Turrit  
 Two or three of the Austrian Police loitering with BLUPHOCKS  
 an English vagabond, just in view of the Turrit.*

*Bluphocks.\** So, that is your Pippa, the little girl who passed us singing? Well, your Bishop's Intendant's money shall be honestly earned:—now, don't make me that sour face because I bring the Bishop's name into the business—we know he can have nothing to do with such horrors—we know that he is a saint and all that a Bishop should be, who is a great man besides. *Oh! were but every worm a maggot, Every fly a grig, Every bough a christmas faggot, Every tune a jig!* In fact, I have abjured all religions; but the last I inclined to, was the Armenian—for I have travelled, do you see, and at Königsberg, Prussia Improper (so styled because there's a sort of bleak hungry sun there.) you might remark over a venerable house-porch, a certain Chaldee inscription; and brief

\* "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

as it is, a mere glance at it used absolutely to change the mood of every bearded passenger. In they turned, one and all; the young and lightsome, with no irreverent pause, the aged and decrepit, with a sensible alacrity,—’twas the Grand Rabbi’s abode, in short. Struck with curiosity, I lost no time in learning Syriac—(these are vowels, you dogs,—follow my stick’s end in the mud—*Celarent, Darii, Ferio!*) and one morning presented myself spelling-book in hand, a, b, c,—I picked it out letter by letter, and what was the purport of this miraculous posy? Some cherished legend of the past you’ll say,—“*How Moses locus-pocust Egypt’s land with fly and locust,*”—or “*How to Jonah sounded harshish, Get thee up and go to Tarshish,*”—or, “*How the angel meeting Balaam, Straight his ass returned a salaam;*”—in no wise! “*Shackabrach—Boach—somebody or other—Isaach, Re-ceiver, Pur-cha-ser, and Ex-chan-ger of—Stolen goods!*” So talk to me of the religion of a bishop! I have renounced all bishops save Bishop Beveridge—mean to live so—and die—*As some Greek dog-sage, dead and merry, Hellward bound in Charon’s wherry—With food for both worlds, under and upper, Lupine-seed and Hecate’s supper, and never an obolus . . .* (Though, thanks to you, or this Intendant thro’ you, or this Bishop thro’ his Intendant—I possess a burning pocket-full of *zwanziyers*) . . . *To pay the Stygian ferry!*

1st *Pol.* There is the girl, then; go and deserve them the moment you have pointed out to us Signor Luigi and his mother. (*To the rest*) I have been noticing &

nouse yonder, this long while—not a shutter unclosed since morning!

*2d Pol.* Old Luca Gaddi's, that owns the silk-mills here: he dozes by the hour—wakes up, sighs deeply, says he should like to be Prince Metternich, and then dozes again, after having bidden young Sebald, the foreigner, set his wife to playing draughts: never molest such a household, they mean well.

*Blup.* Only, cannot you tell me something of this little Pippa, I must have to do with?—one could make something of that name. Pippa—that is, short for Felippa—rhyming to—*Panurge consults Hertrippa—Believ'st thou, King Agrippa?* Something might be done with that name.

*2d Pol.* Put into rhyme that your head and a ripe musk-melon would not be dear at half a *zwanziger!* Leave this fooling, and look out—the afternoon's over or nearly so.

*3d Pol.* Where in this passport of Signor Luigi does our principal instruct you to watch him so narrowly? 'There? what's there beside a simple signature? (That English fool's busy watching.)

*2d Pol.* Flourish all round—"put all possible obstacles in his way;" oblong dot at the end—"Detain him till further advices reach you;" scratch at bottom—"send him back on pretence of some informality in the above;" ink-spirit on right-hand side, (which is the case here)—"Arrest him at once," why and wherefore, I don't concern myself, but my instructions amount to this: if

Signor Luigi leaves home to-night for Vienna, well and good—the passport deposed with us for our *visa* is really for his own use, they have misinformed the Office, and he means well; but let him stay over to-night—there has been the pretence we suspect—the accounts of his corresponding and holding intelligence with the Carbonari are correct—we arrest him at once—to-morrow comes Venice—and presently, Spielberg. Bluphocks makes the signal sure enough! That is he, entering the turret with his mother, no doubt.

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III.—*Evening. Inside the Turret. LUIGI and his Mother entering.*

*Mother.* If there blew wind, you'd hear a long sigh,  
easing

The utmost heaviness of music's heart.

*Luigi.* Here in the archway?

*Mother.* Oh no, no—in further,

Where the echo is made—on the ridge.

*Luigi.* Here surely, then

How plain the tap of my heel as I leaped up!

Hark—"Lucius Junius!" The very ghost of a voice,

Whose body is caught and kept by . . . what are those?

Mere withered wall-flowers, waving overhead?

They seem an elvish group with thin bleached hair

Who lean out of their topmost fortress—looking

And listening, mountain men, to what we say.

Hands under chin of each grave earthy face

Up and show faces all of you!—"All of you!"  
That's the king's dwarf with the scarlet comb; now  
hark—

Come down and meet your fate! Hark—"Meet your  
fate!"

*Mother.* Let him not meet it, my Luigi—do not  
Go to his City! putting crime aside,  
Half of these ills of Italy are feigned—  
Your Pellicos and writers for effect,  
Write for effect.

*Luigi.* Hush! say A. writes, and B.

*Mother.* These A's and B's write for effect, I say.  
Then, evil is in its nature loud, while good  
Is silent—you hear each petty injury—  
None of his daily virtues; he is old,  
Quiet, and kind, and densely stupid—why  
Do A. and B. not kill him themselves?

*Luigi.* They teach  
Others to kill him—me—and, if I fail,  
Others to succeed; now, if A. tried and failed  
I could not teach that: mine's the lesser task.  
Mother, they visit by night . . .

*Mother.* —You, Luigi?  
Ah, will you let me tell you what you are?

*Luigi.* Why not? Oh, the one thing you fear to hint,  
You may assure yourself I say and say  
Ever to myself; at times—nay, even as now  
We sit, I think my mind is touched—suspect  
All is not sound: but is not knowing that.

What constitutes one sane or otherwise?  
 I know I am thus—so all is right again!  
 I laugh at myself as through the town I walk,  
 And see men merry as if no Italy  
 Were suffering; then I ponder—"I am rich,  
 "Young, healthy; why should this fact trouble me,  
 "More than it troubles these?" But it does trouble me  
 No—trouble's a bad word—for as I walk  
 There's springing and melody and giddiness,  
 And old quaint turns and passages of my youth—  
 Dreams long forgotten, little in themselves—  
 Return to me—whatever may amuse me,  
 And earth seems in a truce with me, and heaven  
 Accords with me, all things suspend their strife,  
 The very cicadas laugh "There goes he, and there!  
 "Feast him, the time is short—he is on his way  
 "For the world's sake—feast him this once our friend!  
 And in return for all this, I can trip  
 Cheerfully up the scaffold-steps: I go  
 This evening, mother!

*Mother.*

But mistrust yourself—

Mistrust the judgment you pronounce on him.

*Luigi.* Oh, there I feel—am sure that I am right!

*Mother.* Mistrust your judgment, then, of the mere  
means

Of this wild enterprise: say you are right,—  
 How should one in your state e'er bring to pass  
 What would require a cool head, a cold heart,  
 And a calm hand? You never will escape.

*Luigi.* Escape—to even wish that, would spoil all!  
 The dying is best part of it. Too much  
 Have I enjoyed these fifteen years of mine,  
 To leave myself excuse for longer life—  
 Was not life pressed down, running o'er with joy,  
 That I might finish with it ere my fellows  
 Who, sparelier feasted, make a longer stay?  
 I was put at the board-head, helped to all  
 At first; I rise up happy and content.  
 God must be glad one loves his world so much—  
 I can give news of earth to all the dead  
 Who ask me:—last year's sunsets, and great stars  
 That had a right to come first and see ebb  
 The crimson wave that drifts the sun away—  
 Those crescent moons with notched and burning rims  
 That strengthened into sharp fire, and there stood,  
 Impatient of the azure—and that day  
 In March, a double rainbow stopped the storm—  
 May's warm, slow, yellow moonlit summer nights—  
 Gone are they, but I have them in my soul!

*Mother.* (He will not go!)

*Luigi.* You smile at me! 'Tis true,—  
 Voluptuousness, grotesqueness, ghastliness,  
 Environ my devotedness as quaintly  
 As round about some antique altar wreath  
 The rose festoons, goats' horns, and oxen's skulls.

*Mother.* See now: you reach the city—you must cross  
 His threshold—how?

*Luigi.* Oh, that's if we conspired!

Then would come pains in plenty, as you guess—  
But guess not how the qualities required  
For such an office—qualities I have—  
Would little stead me otherwise employed,  
Yet prove of rarest merit here—here only.  
Every one knows for what his excellence  
Will serve, but no one ever will consider  
For what his worst defect might serve; and yet  
Have you not seen me range our coppice yonder  
In search of a distorted ash?—it happens  
The wry spoilt branch's a natural perfect bow!  
Fancy the thrice-sage, thrice-precautioned man  
Arriving at the palace on my errand!  
No, no—I have a handsome dress packed up—  
White satin here, to set off my black hair—  
In I shall march—for you may watch your life out  
Behind thick walls—make friends there to betray you;  
More than one man spoils every thing. March straight—  
Only no clumsy knife to fumble for—  
Take the great gate, and walk (not saunter) on  
Thro' guards and guards—I have rehearsed it all  
Inside the Turret here a hundred times—  
Don't ask the way of whom you meet, observe,  
But where they cluster thickest is the door  
Of doors; they'll let you pass—they'll never blab  
Each to the other, he knows not the favourite,  
Whence he is bound and what's his business now—  
Walk in—straight up to him—you have no knife—  
Be prompt, how should he scream? Then, out with you



Italy, Italy, my Italy!

You're free, you're free! Oh mother, I could dream  
They got about me—Andrea from his exile,  
Pier from his dungeon, Gualtier from his grave!

*Mother.* Well, you shall go. Yet seems this patriotism  
The easiest virtue for a selfish man  
To acquire! He loves himself—and next, the world—  
If he must love beyond,—but nought between:  
As a short-sighted man sees nought midway  
His body and the sun above. But you  
Are my adored Luigi—ever obedient  
To my least wish, and running o'er with love—  
I could not call you cruel or unkind!  
Once more, your ground for killing him!—then go!

*Luigi.* Now do you ask me, or make sport of me?  
How first the Austrians got these provinces—  
(If that is all, I'll satisfy you soon)  
. . . Never by conquest but by cunning, for  
That treaty whereby . . .

*Mother.* Well?

*Luigi.* (Sure he's arrived,  
The tell-tale cuckoo—spring's his confidant,  
And he lets out her April purposes!)  
Or . . . better go at once to modern times—  
He has . . . they have . . . in fact, I understand  
But can't restate the matter; that's my boast;  
Others could reason it out to you, and prove  
Things they have made me feel.

*Mother.* Why go to-night?

Morn's for adventure. Jupiter is now  
A morning star. I cannot hear you, Luigi!

*Luigi.* "I am the bright and morning-star," God saith—  
And, "to such an one I give the morning-star!"  
The gift of the morning-star—have I God's gift  
Of the morning-star?

*Mother.* Chiara will love to see  
That Jupiter an evening-star next June.

*Luigi.* True, mother. Well for those who live through  
June!

Great noontides, thunder storms, all glaring pomps  
Which triumph at the heels of sovereign June  
Leading his glorious revel thro' our world.  
Yes, Chiara will be here—

*Mother.* In June—remember,  
Yourself appointed that month for her coming—

*Luigi.* Was that low noise the echo?

*Mother.* The night-wind.  
She must be grown—with her blue eyes upturned  
As if life were one long and sweet surprise:  
In June she comes.

*Luigi.* We were to see together  
The Titian at Treviso—there, again!

*(From without is heard the voice of PIPPA singing—)*  
*A king lived long ago,*  
*In the morning of the world,*  
*When earth was nigher heaven than now:*  
*And the king's locks curled*  
*Disparting o'er a forehead full*

*As the milk-white space 'twixt horn and horn  
 Of some sacrificial bull—  
 Only calm as a babe new-born :  
 For he was got to a sleepy mood,  
 So safe from all decrepitude,  
 From age with its bane, so sure gone by,  
 (The Gods so loved him while he dreamed,)  
 That, having lived thus long, there seemed  
 No need the king should ever die.*

**Luigi.** No need that sort of king should ever die !

*[From without.] Among the rocks his city was  
 Before his palace, in the sun,  
 He sate to see his people pass,  
 And judge them every one  
 From its threshold of smooth stone.  
 They hated him many a valley-thief  
 Caught in the sheep-pens—robber-chief,  
 Swarthy and shameless—beggar-cheat—  
 Spy-prowler—or rough pirate found  
 On the sea-sand left aground ;  
 And sometimes clung about his feet,  
 With bleeding lip and burning cheek,  
 A woman, bitterest wrong to speak  
 Of one with sullen thickset brows :  
 And sometimes from the prison-house  
 The angry priests a pale wretch brought,  
 Who through some chink had pushed and pressed,  
 On knees and elbows, belly and breast,  
 Worm-like into the temple,—caught*

*At last there by the very God,  
Who ever in the darkness strode  
Backward and forward, keeping watch  
O'er his brazen bowls, such rogues to catch!  
And these, all and every one,  
The king judged, sitting in the sun.*

*Luigi.* That king should still judge sitting in the sun

*[From without.] His councillors, on left and right  
Looked anxious up,—but no surprise  
Disturbed the king's old smiling eyes,  
Where the very blue had turned to white.  
'Tis said, a Python scared one day  
The breathless city, till he came,  
With forky tongue and eyes on flame,  
Where the old king sate to judge alway;  
But when he saw the sweepy hair,  
Girt with a crown of berries rare  
Which the God will hardly give to wear  
To the maiden who singeth, dancing bare  
In the altar-smoke by the pine-torch lights,  
At his wondrous forest rites,—  
Beholding this, he did not dare,  
Approach that threshold in the sun,  
Assault the old king smiling there.  
Such grace had kings when the world begun!*

*(PIPPA passes.)*

*Luigi.* And such grace have they, now that the world  
ends!

The Python in the city, on the throne,

And brave men, God would crown for slaying him,  
 Lurk in bye-corners lest they fall his prey.  
 Are crowns yet to be won, in this late trial,  
 Which weakness makes me hesitate to reach?  
 'Tis God's voice calls, how could I stay? Farewell!

---

*Talk by the way, while PIPPA is passing from the Turret to the  
 Bishop's brother's House, close to the Duomo S. Maria. Poor  
 Girls sitting on the steps.*

*1st Girl.* There goes a swallow to Venice—the stout  
 sea-farer!

Seeing those birds fly, makes one wish for wings.  
 Let us all wish; you, wish first!

*2d Girl.* I? This sunset  
 To finish.

*3d Girl.* That old . . . somebody I know,  
 Grayer and older than my grandfather,  
 To give me the same treat he gave last week—  
 Feeding me on his knee with fig-peckers,  
 Lampreys, and red Breganze-wine, and mumbling  
 The while some folly about how well I fare,  
 To be let eat my supper quietly—  
 Since had he not himself been late this morning  
 Detained at—never mind where,—had he not . . .  
 'Eh, baggage, had I not!'—

*2d Girl.* — How she can lie!

*3d Girl.* Look there—by the nails—

*2d Girl.* What makes your fingers red?

*3d Girl.* Dipping them into wine to write bad words with  
On the bright table—how he laughed!

*1st Girl.* My turn :  
Spring's come and summer's coming : I would wear  
A long loose gown—down to the feet and hands—  
With plaits here, close about the throat, all day :  
And all night lie, the cool long nights, in bed—  
And have new milk to drink—apples to eat,  
Deuzans and junetings, leather-coats . . ah, I should say  
This is away in the fields—miles !

*3d Girl.* Say at once  
You'd be at home—she'd always be at home !  
Now comes the story of the farm among  
The cherry orchards, and how April snowed  
White blossoms on her as she ran : why, fool,  
They've rubbed out the chalk-mark of how tall you were,  
Twisted your starling's neck, broken his cage,  
Made a dunghill of your garden—

*1st Girl.* They, destroy  
My garden since I left them? well—perhaps!  
I would have done so—so I hope they have!  
A fig-tree curled out of our cottage wall—  
They called it mine, I have forgotten why,  
It must have been there long ere I was born ;  
Cric—cric—I think I hear the wasps o'erhead  
Pricking the papers strung to flutter there  
And keep off birds in fruit-time—coarse long papers,  
And the wasps eat them, prick them through and through.

*3d Girl.* How her mouth twitches! Where was I?—  
before

She broke in with her wishes and long gowns  
And wasps—would I be such a fool!—Oh, here!  
This is my way—I answer every one  
Who asks me why I make so much of him—  
If you say, you love him—straight “he’ll not be gulled”)  
He that seduced me when I was a girl  
Thus high— had eyes like yours, or hair like yours,  
Brown, red, white,”—as the case may be—that pleases!  
(See how that beetle burnishes in the path—  
There sparkles he along the dust! and, there—  
Your journey to that maize-tuft’s spoilt at least!)

*1st Girl.* When I was young, they said if you killed one  
Of those sunshiny beetles, that his friend  
Up there, would shine no more that day nor next.

*2d Girl.* When you were young? Nor are you young  
that’s true!

How your plump arms, that were, have dropped away!  
Why, I can span them! Cecco beats you still?  
No matter, so you keep your curious hair.

I wish they’d find a way to dye our hair  
Your colour—any lighter tint, indeed,  
Than black—the men say they are sick of black,  
Black eyes, black hair

*4th Girl.* Sick of yours, like enough!  
Do you pretend you ever tasted lampreys  
And ortolans? Giovita, of the palace,  
Engaged (but there’s no trusting him) to slice me

Polenta with a knife that has cut up  
An ortolan.

*2d Girl.* Why, there! is not that Pippa,  
We are to talk to, under the window,—quick,—  
Where the lights are?

*1st Girl.* No—or she would sing,  
—For the Intendant said . .

*3d Girl.* Oh, you sing first—  
Then, if she listens and comes close . . I'll tell you,  
Sing that song the young English noble made,  
Who took you for the purest of the pure,  
And meant to leave the world for you—what fun!

*2d Girl.* [*Sings.*]

You'll love me yet!—and I can tarry  
Your love's protracted growing:  
June reared that bunch of flowers you carry  
From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartfelt now—some seed  
At least is sure to strike  
And yield—what you'll not pluck indeed,  
Not love, but, may be, like!

You'll look at least on love's remains,  
A grave's one violet:  
Your look?—that pays a thousand pains.  
What's death?—you'll love me yet!

*3d Girl.* [*To PIPPA, who approaches.*] Oh, you may  
come closer—we shall not eat you! Why, you seem the  
very person that the great rich handsome Englishman I  
fallen so violently in love with! I'll tell you all about . .



V.—*Night. The Palace by the Duomo.* MONSIGNOR, dismissing his Attendants.

*Mon.* Thanks, friends, many thanks. I chiefly desire life now, that I may recompense every one of you. Most I know something of already. What, a r epast prepared? *Benedicto benedicatur* . . . ugh . . . ugh! Where was I? Oh, as you were remarking, Ugo, the weather is mild, very unlike winter-weather,—but I am a Sicilian, you know, and shiver in your Julys here: To be sure, when 'twas full summer at Messina, as we priests used to cross in procession the great square on Assumption Day, you might see our thickest yellow tapers twist suddenly in two, each like a falling star, or sink down on themselves in a gore of wax. But go, my friends, but go! [*To the Intendant*] Not you, Ugo! [*The others leave the apartment*] I have long wanted to converse with you, Ugo!

*Inten.* Uguccio—

*Mon.* . . . 'guccio Stefani, man! of Ascoli, Fermo, and Fossombruno;—what I do need instructing about, are these accounts of your administration of my poor brother's affairs. Ugh! I shall never get through a third part of your accounts: take some of these dainties before we attempt it, however: are you bashful to that degree? For me, a crust and water suffice.

*Inten.* Do you choose this especial night to question me?

*Mon.* This night, Ugo. You have managed my late brother's affairs since the death of our elder brother—fourteen years and a month, all but three days. On the 3d of December, I find him . . .

*Inten.* If you have so intimate an acquaintance with your brother's affairs, you will be tender of turning so far back—they will hardly bear looking into, so far back.

*Mon.* Ay, ay, ugh, ugh,—nothing but disappointments here below! I remark a considerable payment made to yourself on this 3d of December. Talk of disappointments! There was a young fellow here, Jules, a foreign sculptor, I did my utmost to advance, that the church might be a gainer by us both: he was going on hopefully enough, and of a sudden he notifies to me some marvellous change that has happened in his notions of art, here's his letter,—“He never had a clearly conceived Ideal within his brain till to-day. Yet since his hand could manage a chisel, he has practised expressing other men's Ideals—and, in the very perfection he has attained to, he foresees an ultimate failure—his unconscious hand will pursue its prescribed course of old years, and will reproduce with a fatal expertness the ancient types, let the novel one appear never so palpably to his spirit: there is but one method of escape—confiding the virgin type to as chaste a hand, he will turn painter instead of sculptor, and paint, not carve, its characteristics,”—strike out, I dare say a school like Correggio: how think you, Ugo?

*Inten.* Is Correggio a painter?

*Mon.* Foolish Jules! and yet, after all, why foolish? He may—probably will, fail egregiously; but if there should arise a new painter, will it not be in some such way by a poet, now, or a musician, (spirits who have conceived and perfected an Ideal through some other channel) transferring it to this, and escaping our conventional roads by pure ignorance of them; eh, Ugo? If you have no appetite, talk at least, Ugo!

*Inten.* Sir, I can submit no longer to this course of yours: first, you select the group of which I formed one,—next you thin it gradually,—always retaining me with your smile,—and so do you proceed till you have fairly got me alone with you between four stone walls: and now then? Let this farce, this chatter end now—what is it you want with me?

*Mon.* Ugo . . .

*Inten.* From the instant you arrived, I felt your smile on me as you questioned me about this and the other article in those papers—why your brother should have given me this villa, that *podere*,—and your nod at the end meant,—what?

*Mon.* Possibly that I wished for no loud talk here: if once you set me coughing, Ugo!—

*Inten.* I have your brother's hand and seal to all I possess: now ask me what for! what service I did him—ask me!

*Mon.* I had better not—I should rip up old disgraces—let out my poor brother's weaknesses. By the way, Maffeo of Forli, (which, I forgot to observe, is your true

name) was the interdict ever taken off you, for robbing that church at Cesena?

*Inten.* No, nor needs be—for when I murdered your brother's friend, Pasquale, for him . . .

*Mon.* Ah, he employed you in that business, did he? Well, I must let you keep, as you say, this villa and that *podere*, for fear the world should find out my relations were of so indifferent a stamp! Maffeo, my family is the oldest in Messina, and century after century have my progenitors gone on polluting themselves with every wickedness under heaven: my own father . . . rest his soul!—I have, I know, a chapel to support that it may rest: my dear two dead brothers were,—what you know tolerably well; I, the youngest, might have rivalled them in vice, if not in wealth, but from my boyhood I came out from among them, and so am not partaker of their plagues. My glory springs from another source; or if from this, by contrast only,—for I, the bishop, am the brother of your employers, Ugo. I hope to repair some of their wrong, however; so far as my brother's ill-gotten treasure reverts to me, I can stop the consequences of his crime; and not one *soldo* shall escape me. Maffeo, the sword we quiet men spurn away, you shrewd knaves pick up and commit murders with; what opportunities the virtuous forego, the villanous seize. Because, to pleasure myself, apart from other considerations, my food would be millet-cake, my dress sackcloth, and my couch straw,—am I therefore to let you, the off-scouring of the earth, seduce the poor and

ignorant, by appropriating a pomp these will be sure to think lessens the abominations so unaccountably and exclusively associated with it? Must I let villas and *poderes* go to you, a murderer and thief, that you may beget by means of them other murderers and thieves? No . . . if my cough would but allow me to speak!

*Inten.* What am I to expect? you are going to punish me?

*Mon.* Must punish you, Maffeo. I cannot afford to cast away a chance. I have whole centuries of sin to redeem, and only a month or two of life to do it in! How should I dare to say . . .

*Inten.* "Forgive us our trespasses"—

*Mon.* My friend, it is because I avow myself a very worm, sinful beyond measure, that I reject a line of conduct you would applaud, perhaps: shall I proceed, as it were, a-pardoning?—I?—who have no symptom of reason to assume that aught less than my strenuous efforts will keep myself out of mortal sin, much less, keep others out. No—I do trespass, but will not double that by allowing you to trespass.

*Inten.* And suppose the villas are not your brother's to give, nor yours to take? Oh, you are hasty enough just now!

*Mon.* 1, 2—N<sup>o</sup>. 3!—ay, can you read the substance of a letter, N<sup>o</sup>. 3, I have received from Rome? It is precisely on the ground there mentioned, of the suspicion I have that a certain child of my late elder brother, who would have succeeded to his estates, was murdered in

infancy by you, Maffeo, at the instigation of my late brother—that the Pontiff enjoins on me not merely the bringing that Maffeo to condign punishment, but the taking all pains, as guardian of that infant's heritage for the church, to recover it parcel by parcel, howsoever whensoever, and wheresoever. While you are now gnawing those fingers, the police are engaged in sealing up your papers, Maffeo, and the mere raising my voice brings my people from the next room to dispose of yourself. But I want you to confess quietly, and save me raising my voice. Why, man, do I not know the old story? The heir between the succeeding heir, and that heir's ruffianly instrument, and their complot's effect, and the life of fear and bribes, and ominous smiling silence? Did you throttle or stab my brother's infant? Come, now!

*Inten.* So old a story, and tell it no better? When did such an instrument ever produce such an effect? Either the child smiles in his face, or, most likely, he is not fool enough to put himself in the employer's power so thoroughly—the child is always ready to produce—as you say—howsoever, wheresoever, and whensoever.

*Mon.* Liar!

*Inten.* Strike me? Ah, so might a father chastise! I shall sleep soundly to-night at least, though the gallows await me to-morrow; for what a life did I lead! Carlo of Cesena reminds me of his connivance, every time I pay his annuity (which happens commonly thrice

a year.) If I remonstrate, he will confess all to the good bishop—you!

*Mon.* I see thro' the trick, caitiff! I would you spoke truth for once; all shall be sifted, however—seven times sifted.

*Inten.* And how my absurd riches encumbered me! I dared not lay claim to about half my possessions. Let me but once unbosom myself, glorify Heaven, and die!

Sir, you are no brutal, dastardly idiot like your brother I frightened to death—let us understand one another. Sir, I will make away with her for you—the girl—here close at hand; not the stupid obvious kind of killing; do not speak—know nothing of her or me! I see her every day—saw her this morning: of course there is to be no killing; but at Rome the courtesans perish off every three years, and I can entice her thither—have, indeed, begun operations already. There's a certain lusty, blue-eyed, florid-complexioned, English knave I and the Police employ occasionally.—You assent, I perceive—no, that's not it—assent I do not say—but you will let me convert my present havings and holdings into cash, and give me time to cross the Alps? 'Tis but a little black-eyed, pretty singing Felippa, gay silk-winding girl. I have kept her out of harm's way up to this present; for I always intended to make your life a plague to you with her! 'Tis as well settled once and forever: some women I have procured will pass Bluphocks, my handsome scoundrel, off for

somebody; and once Pippa entangled!—you conceive  
Through her singing? Is it a bargain?

*(From without is heard the voice of PIPPA singing—*

*Over-head the tree-tops meet—*

*Flowers and grass spring 'neath one's feet—*

*There was nought above me, and nought below,*

*My childhood had not learned to know!*

*For, what are the voices of birds*

*—Ay, and of beasts,—but words—our words,*

*Only so much more sweet?*

*The knowledge of that with my life begun!*

*But I had so near made out the sun,*

*And counted your stars, the Seven and One,*

*Like the fingers of my hand:*

*Nay, I could all but understand*

*Wherefore through heaven the white moon ranges;*

*And just when out of her soft fifty changes*

*No unfamiliar face might overlook me—*

*Suddenly God took me!*

*(PIPPA passes.)*

*Mon.* [*Springing up.*] My people—one and all—  
all—within there! Gag this villain—tie him hand and  
foot! He dares—I know not half he dares—but  
remove him—quick! *Miserere mei, Domine!* quick,  
I say!

*PIPPA'S Chamber. She enters it.*

The bee with his comb,

The mouse at her dray,



The grub in its tomb,  
 Wile winter away ;  
 But the fire-fly and hedge-shrew and lob-worm, I pray,  
 How fare they ?  
 Ha, ha, best thanks for your counsel, my Zanze—  
 “ Feast upon lampreys, quaff the Breganze ”—  
 The summer of life’s so easy to spend,  
 And care for to-morrow so soon put away !  
 But winter hastens at summer’s end,  
 And fire-fly, hedge-shrew, lob-worm, pray,  
 How fare they ?  
 No bidding me then to . . . what did she say ?  
 “ Pare your nails pearlwise, get your small feet shoes  
 “ More like . . . (what said she ?)—and less like canoes—”  
 How pert that girl was !—would I be those pert  
 Impudent staring women ! it had done me,  
 However, surely no such mighty hurt  
 ’T’o learn his name who passed that jest upon me :  
 No foreigner, that I can recollect,  
 Came, as she says, a month since, to inspect  
 Our silk-mills—none with blue eyes and thick rings  
 Of English-coloured hair, at all events.  
 Well—if old Luca keeps his good intents,  
 We shall do better : see what next year brings !  
 I may buy shoes, my Zanze, not appear  
 More destitute than you, perhaps, next year !  
 Bluph. . . something ! I had caught the uncouth name  
 But for Monsignor’s people’s sudden clatter  
 Above us—bound to spoil such idle chatter

As ours ; it were, indeed, a serious matter  
 If silly talk like ours should put to shame  
 The pious man, the man devoid of blame,  
 The . . . ah, but—ah, but, all the same,  
 No mere mortal has a right  
 To carry that exalted air ;  
 Best people are not angels quite—  
 While—not the worst of people's doings scare  
 The devils ; so there's that proud look to spare ?  
 Which is mere counsel to myself, mind ! for  
 I have just been the holy Monsignor !  
 And I was you too, Luigi's gentle mother,  
 And you too, Luigi !—how that Luigi started  
 Out of the Turret—doubtlessly departed  
 On some good errand or another,  
 For he past just now in a traveller's trim,  
 And the sullen company that prowled  
 About his path, I noticed, scowled  
 As if they had lost a prey in him.  
 And I was Jules the sculptor's bride,  
 And I was Ottima beside,  
 And now what am I ?—tired of fooling !  
 Day for folly, night for schooling !  
 New year's day is over and spent,  
 Ill or well, I must be content !  
 Even my lily's asleep, I vow :  
 Wake up—here's a friend I've pluckt you ?  
 See—call this flower a heart's-ease now !  
 And something rare. let me instruct you,

Is this—with petals triply swollen,  
 Three times spotted, thrice the pollen,  
 While the leaves and parts that witness  
 The old proportions and their fitness  
 Here remain, unchanged unmoved now—  
 So call this pampered thing improved now ?  
 Suppose there's a king of the flowers  
 And a girl-show held in his bowers—  
 "Look ye, buds, this growth of ours,"  
 Says he, "Zanze from the Brenta,  
 I have made her gorge polenta  
 Till both cheeks are near as bouncing  
 As her . . . name there's no pronouncing !  
 See this heightened colour too—  
 For she swilled Breganze wine  
 Till her nose turned deep carmine—  
 'Twas but white when wild she grew !  
 And only by this Zanze's eyes  
 Of which we could not change the size,  
 The magnitude of what's achieved  
 Otherwise, may be perceived !"

Oh what a drear, dark close to my poor day !  
 How could that red sun drop in that black cloud .  
 Ah, Pippa, morning's rule is moved away,  
 Dispensed with, never more to be allowed,  
 Day's turn is over—now arrives the night's—  
 Oh, Lark, be day's apostle  
 To mavis, merle and throstle,

Bid them their betters jostle  
 From day and its delights!  
 But at night, brother Howlet, far over the woods,  
 Toll the world to thy chantry—  
 Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods  
 Full complines with gallantry—  
 Then, owls and bats, cowls and twats,  
 Monks and nuns, in a cloister's moods,  
 Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry!

[*After she has begun to undress herself*

Now, one thing I should like really to know:  
 How near I ever might approach all these  
 I only fancied being, this long day—  
 —Approach, I mean, so as to touch them—so  
 As to . . . in some way . . . move them—if you please,  
 Do good or evil to them some slight way.  
 For instance, if I wind  
 Silk to-morrow, my silk may bind

[*Sitting on the bedside*

And broider Ottima's cloak's hem—  
 Ah, me and my important part with them,  
 This morning's hymn half promised when I rose!  
 True in some sense or other, I suppose,  
 Though I passed by them all, and felt no sign.

[*As she lies down*

God bless me! I can pray no more to-night.  
 No doubt, some way or other, hymns say right.  
*All service is the same with God—  
 With God, whose puppets, best and worst,  
 Are we: there is no last nor first—*

[*She sleeps*

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES.

A Tragedy.

So far as I know, this Tragedy is the first artistical consequence of what Voltaire termed "a terrible event without consequences; ' and although it professes to be historical, I have taken more pains to arrive at the history than most readers would thank me for particularizing: since acquainted, as I will hope them to be, with the chief circumstances of Victor's remarkable European career—nor quite ignorant of the sad and surprising facts I am about to reproduce (tolerable accounts of which are to be found, for instance, in Abbé Loman's *Récit*, or even the fifth of Lord Orrery's Letters from Italy) —I cannot expect them to be versed, nor desirous of becoming so, in all the details of the memoirs, correspondence, and relations of the time. From these only may be obtained a knowledge of the fiery and audacious temper, unscrupulous selfishness, profound dissimulation, and singular fertility in resources, of Victor—the extreme and painful sensibility, prolonged immaturity of powers, earnest good purpose and vacillating will, of Charles—the noble and right woman's-manliness of his wife—and the ill-considered rascality and subsequent better-advised rectitude of D'Ornea. When I say, therefore, that I cannot but believe my statement (combining as it does what appears correct in Voltaire and plausible in Condorcet) more true to person and thing than any it has hitherto been my fortune to meet with, no doubt my word will be taken, and my evidence spared as readily.

# KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES

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## PERSONS.

VICTOR AMADEUS, First King of Sardinia.

CHARLES EMANUEL, his Son, Prince of Piedmont.

POLYXENA, Wife of Charles.

D'ORMEA, Minister.

SCENE—The Council Chamber of Rivoli Palace, near Turin communicating with a Hall at the back, an Apartment to the left and another to the right of the stage.

TIME, 1730-1.

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FIRST YEAR 1730.—KING VICTOR.

PART I.

CHARLES, POLYXENA.

*Cha.* You think so? Well, I do not.

*Pol.*

My beloved,

All must clear up—we shall be happy yet :

This cannot last forever . . oh, may change

To-day, or any day !

*Cha.*

—May change? Ah yes—

May change !

*Pol.* Endure it, then.

*Cha.* No doubt, a life  
Like this drags on. now better and now worse ;  
My father may . . . may take to loving me ;  
And he may take, too, D'Ormea closer yet  
To counsel him ;—may even cast off her  
—That bad Sebastian ; but he also may  
. . Or, no, Polyxena, my only friend,  
He may not force you from me ?

*Pol.* Now, force me  
From you !—me, close by you as if there gloomed  
No D'Ormeas, no Sebastians on our path—  
At Rivoli or Turin, still at hand,  
Arch-counsellor, prime confidant . . . force me !

*Cha.* Because I felt as sure, as I feel sure  
We clasp hands now, of being happy once.  
Young was I, quite neglected, nor concerned  
By the world's business that engrossed so much  
My father and my brother : if I peered  
From out my privacy,—amid the crash  
And blaze of nations, domineered those two ;  
'Twas war, peace—France our foe, now—England  
friend—  
In love with Spain—at feud with Austria !—Well—  
I wondered—laughed a moment's laugh for pride  
In the chivalrous couple—then let drop  
My curtain—"I am out of it," I said—  
When . . .

*Pol.* You have told me, Charles.



*Cha.*

Polyxena—

When suddenly,—a warm March day, just that !  
 Just so much sunshine as the cottager's child  
 Basks in delighted, while the cottager  
 Takes off his bonnet, as he ceases work,  
 To catch the more of it—and it must fall  
 Heavily on my brother . . . had you seen  
 Philip—the lion-featured !—not like me !

*Pol.* I know—

*Cha.* And Philip's mouth yet fast to mine,  
 His dead cheek on my cheek, his arm still round  
 My neck,—they bade me rise, “for I was heir  
 To the Duke,” they said, “the right hand of the Duke ;”  
 Till then he was my father, not the Duke !  
 So . . . let me finish . . . the whole intricate  
 World's business their dead boy was born to, I  
 Must conquer,—ay, the brilliant thing he was,  
 I, of a sudden, must be : my faults, my follies,  
 —All bitter truths were told me, all at once  
 To end the sooner. What I simply styled  
 Their overlooking me, had been contempt :  
 How should the Duke employ himself, forsooth,  
 With such an one while lordly Philip rode  
 By him their Turin through ? But he was punished,  
 And must put up with—me ! ’Twas sad enough  
 To learn my future portion and submit—  
 And then the wear and worry, blame on blame .  
 —For, spring-sounds in my ears, spring-smells about,  
 How could I but grow dizzy in their pent

Dim palace-rooms at first? My mother's look  
 As they discussed my insignificance—  
 (She and my father, and I sitting by.)—  
 I bore:—I knew how brave a son they missed:  
 Philip had gayly passed state-papers o'er,  
 While Charles was spelling at them painfully!  
 But Victor was my father spite of that.  
 "Duke Victor's entire life has been," I said,  
 "Innumerable efforts to one end;  
 "And, on the point now of that end's success,  
 "Our Ducal turning to a Kingly crown,  
 "Where's time to be reminded 'tis his child  
 "He spurns?" And so I suffered . . . yet scarce suffered,  
 Since I had you at length!

*Pol.* To serve in place  
 Of monarch, minister and mistress, Charles.

*Cha.* But, once that crown obtained, then was't not like  
 Our lot would alter?—"When he rests, takes breath,  
 "Glances around, and sees who's left to love—  
 "Now that my mother's dead, sees I am left—  
 "Is it not like he'll love me at the last?"  
 Well: Savoy turns Sardinia—the Duke's King!  
 Could I—precisely then—could you expect  
 His harshness to redouble? These few months  
 Have been . . . have been . . . Polixena, do you  
 And God conduct me, or I lose myself!  
 What would he have? What is't they want with me?  
 Him with this mistress and this minister,  
 —You see me and you hear me; judge us both!  
 Pronounce what I should do, Polixena!

*Pol.* Endure, endure, beloved! Say you not  
That he's your Father? All's so incident  
To novel sway! Beside, our life must change:  
Or you'll acquire his kingcraft, or he'll find  
Harshness a sorry way of teaching it.  
I bear this—not that there's so much to bear—

*Cha.* You bear it? don't I know that you, tho' bound  
To silence for my sake, are perishing  
Piecemeal beside me? and how otherwise?  
—When every creep-hole from the hideous Court  
Is stopt; the Minister to dog me, here—  
The Mistress posted to entrap you, there!  
And thus shall we grow old in such a life—  
Not careless,—never estranged,—but old: to alter  
Our life, there is so much to alter!

*Pol.* Come—

Is it agreed that we forego complaints  
Even at Turin, yet complain we here  
At Rivoli? 'Twere wiser you announced  
Our presence to the king. What's now a-foot,  
I wonder?—Not that any more's to dread  
Than every day's embarrassment—but guess,  
For me, why train so fast succeeded train  
On the high-road, each gayer still than each;  
I noticed your Archbishop's pursuivant.  
The sable cloak and silver cross; such pomp  
Bodes . . . what now, Charles? Can you conceive?

*Cha.* Not I

*Pol.* A matter of some moment—

*Cha.* There's our life !  
 Which of the group of loiterers that stared  
 From the lime-avenue, divines that I—  
 About to figure presently, he thinks,  
 In face of all assembled—am the one  
 Who knows precisely least about it ?

*Pol.* Tush !  
 D'Ormea's contrivance !

*Cha.* Ay—how otherwise  
 Should the young Prince serve for the old King's foil ?  
 —So that the simplest courtier may remark,  
 'Twere idle raising parties for a Prince  
 Content to linger D'Ormea's laughing-stock !  
 Something, 'tis like, about that weary business

[*Pointing to papers he has laid down, and which POLYXENA examines.*]

—Not that I comprehend three words, of course,  
 After all last night's study.

*Pol.* The faint heart !  
 Why, as we rode and you rehearsed just now  
 Its substance . . . (that's the folded speech I mean,  
 Concerning the Reduction of the Fiefs . . .)  
 —What would you have ?—I fancied while you spoke,  
 Some tones were just your father's.

*Cha.* Flattery !  
*Pol.* I fancied so :—and here lurks, sure enough,  
 My note upon the Spanish Claims ! You've mastered  
 The fief-speech thoroughly—this other, mind,  
 Is an opinion you deliver,—stay,  
 Best read it slowly over once to me ;

Read—there's bare time; you read it firmly—loud  
 —Rather loud—looking in his face,—don't sink  
 Your eye once—ay, thus! “If Spain claims . . .” begin  
 —Just as you look at me!

*Cha.* At you! Oh, truly,  
 You have I seen, say, marshalling your troops—  
 Dismissing councils—or, through doors ajar,  
 Head sunk on hand, devoured by slow chagrins  
 —Then radiant, for a crown had all at once  
 Seemed possible again! I can behold  
 Him, whose least whisper ties my spirit fast,  
 In this sweet brow, nought could divert me from,  
 Save objects like Sebastian's shameless lip,  
 Or, worse, the elipt gray hair and dead white face,  
 And dwindling eye as if it ached with guile,  
 Which D'Ormea wears . . .

[*As he kisses her, enter from the KING's apartment D'ORMEA.*]

. . . I said he would divert

My kisses from your brow!

*D'O.* [*Aside.*] Here! So King Victor  
 Spoke truth for once; and who's ordained, but I,  
 To make that memorable? Both in call,  
 As he declared! Were't better gnash the teeth,  
 Or laugh outright now?

*Cha.* [*to Pol.*] What's his visit for?

*D'O.* [*Aside.*] I question if they'll even speak to me.

*Pol.* [*to Cha.*] Face D'Ormea, he'll suppose you fear  
 him, else.

[*Aloud.*] The Marquis bears the King's command, no  
 doubt.

*D' O.* [*Aside.*] Precisely!—If I threatened him, perhaps?

Well, this at least is punishment enough!

Men used to promise punishment would come.

*Cha.* Deliver the King's message, Marquis!

*D' O.* [*Aside.*]

Ah—

So anxious for his fate? [*Aloud.*] A word, my Prince,  
Before you see your father—just one word  
Of counsel!

*Cha.* Oh, your counsel certainly—  
Polyxena, the Marquis counsels us!

Well, sir? Be brief, however!

*D' O.*

What? you know

As much as I?—preceded me, most like,

In knowledge? So! ('Tis in his eye, beside—

His voice—he knows it and his heart's on flame

Already!) You surmise why you, myself,

Del Borgo, Spava, fifty nobles more,

Are summoned thus?

*Cha.*

Is the Prince used to know,

At any time, the pleasure of the King,

Before his minister?—Polyxena,

Stay here till I conclude my task—I feel

Your presence—(smile not)—thro' the walls, and take

Fresh heart. The King's within that chamber?

*D' O.* [*Passing the table whereon a paper lies, exclaims, as he glances at it,* “Spain!”

*Pol.* [*Aside to Cha.*] Tarry awhile: what ails the minister?

*D' O.* Madam, I do not often trouble you.  
The Prince loathes, and you loathe me—let that pass;  
But since it touches him and you, not me,  
Bid the Prince listen!

*Pol.* [to *CHA.*] Surely you will listen!  
—Deceit?—Those fingers crumpling up his vest?

*Cha.* Deceitful to the very fingers' ends!

*D' O.* [*who has approached them, overlooks the other papers*  
*CHARLES continues to hold*]

My project for the Fiefs! As I supposed!  
Sir, I must give you light upon those measures  
—For this is mine, and that I spied of Spain,  
Mine too!

*Cha.* Release me! Do you gloze on me  
Who bear in the world's face (that is, the world  
You've made for me at Turin) your contempt?  
—Your measures?—When was any hateful task  
Not D'Ormea's imposition? Leave my robe!  
What post can I bestow, what grant concede?  
Or do you take me for the King?

*D' O.* Not I!

Not yet for King,—not for, as yet, thank God,  
One, who in . . shall I say a year—a month?  
Ay!—shall be wretcheder than e'er was slave  
In his Sardinia,—Europe's spectacle,  
And the world's byword! What? The Prince aggrieved  
That I've excluded him our counsels? Here

[*Touching the paper in CHARLES's hand.*]

Accept a method of extorting gold

From Savoy's nobles, who must wring its worth  
 In silver first from tillers of the soil,  
 Whose hinds again have to contribute brass  
 To make up the amount—there's counsel, sir!  
 My counsel, one year old; and the fruit, this—  
 Savoy's become a mass of misery  
 And wrath, which one man has to meet—the King:  
 You're not the King! Another counsel, sir!  
 Spain entertains a project (here it lies)  
 Which, guessed, makes Austria offer that same King  
 Thus much to baffle Spain; he promises;  
 Then comes Spain, breathless lest she be forestalled,  
 Her offer follows; and he promises . . .

*Cha.* —Promises, sir, when he before agreed  
 To Austria's offer?

*D'O.*                               That's a counsel, Prince!  
 But past our foresight, Spain and Austria (choosing  
 To make their quarrel up between themselves  
 Without the intervention of a friend)  
 Produce both treaties, and both promises . . .

*Cha.* How?

*D'O.*                       Prince, a counsel!—And the fruit of that!  
 Both parties covenant afresh, to fall  
 Together on their friend, blot out his name,  
 Abolish him from Europe. So take note,  
 Here's Austria and here's Spain to fight against,  
 And what sustains the King but Savoy here,  
 A miserable people mad with wrongs?  
 You're not the King!



*Cha.* Polyxena, you said

All would clear up—all does clear up to me!

*D'O.* Clears up? 'Tis no such thing to envy, then?

You see the King's state in its length and breadth?

You blame me, now, for keeping you aloof

From counsels and the fruit of counsels?—Wait

Till I've explained this morning's business!

*Cha.* [*Aside.*] No—

Stoop to my father, yes,—to D'Ormea, no;

—The King's son, not to the King's counsellor!

I will do something,—but at least retain

The credit of my deed! [*Aloud.*] Then, D'Ormea, tell

You now expressly come to tell me?

*D'O.* This

To tell! You apprehend me?

*Cha.* Perfectly.

And further, D'Ormea, you have shown yourself,

For the first time these many weeks and months,

Disposed to do my bidding?

*D'O.* From the heart!

*Cha.* Acquaint my father, first, I wait his pleasure:

Next . . . or, I'll tell you at a fitter time.

Acquaint the King!

*D'O.* [*Aside.*] If I scape Victor yet!

First, to prevent this stroke at me—if not,—

Then, to avenge it! [*To CHA.*] Gracious sir, I go. [*Exit.*]

*Cha.* God, I forbore! Which more offends—that man  
Or that man's master? Is it come to this?

Have they supposed (the sharpest insult yet)

I needed e'en his intervention? No!  
 No—dull am I, conceded,—but so dull,  
 Scarcely! Their step decides me.

*Pol.* How decides?

*Cha.* You would be free from D'Ormea's eye and hers?  
 —Could fly the court with me and live content?  
 So—this it is for which the knights assemble!  
 The whispers and the closeting of late,  
 The savageness and insolence of old,  
 —For this!

*Pol.* What mean you?

*Cha.* How? you fail to catch  
 Their clever plot? I missed it—but could you?  
 These last two months of care to inculcate  
 How dull I am,—with D'Ormea's present visit  
 To prove that, being dull, I might be worse  
 Were I a king—as wretched as now dull—  
 You recognize in it no winding up  
 Of a long plot?

*Pol.* Why should there be a plot?

*Cha.* The crown's secure now; I should shame the  
 crown—

An old complaint; the point is, how to gain  
 My place for one more fit in Victor's eyes,  
 His mistress', the Sebastian's child.

*Pol.* In truth?

*Cha.* They dare not quite dethrone Sardinia's Prince  
 But they may descant on my dulness till  
 They sting me into even praying them

For leave to hide my head, resign my state,  
 And end the coil. Not see now? In a word,  
 They'd have me tender them myself my rights  
 As one incapable:—some cause for that,  
 Since I delayed thus long to see their drift!  
 I shall apprise the King he may resume  
 My rights this moment.

*Pol.* Pause—I dare not think  
 So ill of Victor.

*Cha.* Think no ill of him!

*Pol.*—Nor think him, then, so shallow as to suffer  
 His purpose be divined thus easily.  
 And yet—you are the last of a great line;  
 There's a great heritage at stake; new days  
 Seemed to await this newest of the realms  
 Of Europe:—Charles, you must withstand this!

*Cha.* Ah!—

You dare not then renounce the splendid court  
 For one whom all the world despises? Speak!

*Pol.* My gentle husband, speak I will, and truth.  
 Were this as you believe, and I once sure  
 Your duty lay in so renouncing rule,  
 I could . . . could? Oh, what happiness it were—  
 To live, my Charles, and die alone with you!

*Cha.* I grieve I asked you. To the Presence, then!  
 D'Ormea acquaints the King by this, no doubt.  
 He fears I am too simple for mere hints,  
 And that no less will serve than Victor's mouth  
 Teaching me in full council what I am.  
 —I have not breathed, I think, these many years!

*Pol.* Why—it may be!—if he desires to wed  
That woman and legitimate her child—

*Cha.* You see as much? Oh, let his will have way!  
You'll not repent confiding in me, love?  
There's many a brighter spot in Piedmont, far,  
Than Rivoli. I'll seek him—or, suppose  
You hear first how I mean to speak my mind?  
—Loudly and firmly both, this time, be sure!  
I yet may see your Rhine-land—who can tell?  
Once away, ever then away! I breathe.

*Pol.* And I too breathe!

*Cha.* Come, my Polyxena!

#### KING VICTOR: PART II.

*Enter KING VICTOR, bearing the regalia on a cushion from his apartment. He calls loudly.*

D'Ormea!—for patience fails me, treading thus  
Among the trains that I have laid,—my knights,  
Safe in the hall here—in that anteroom,  
My son,—and D'Ormea where? Of this, one touch—  
[*Laying down the crown.*]  
This fire-ball to these mute, black, cold trains—then!  
Outbreak enough!

[*Contemplating it.*] To lose all, after all!  
This—glancing o'er my house for ages—shaped,  
Brave meteor, like the Crown of Cyprus now—  
Jerusalem, Spain. England—every change  
The braver,—and when I have clutched a prize

My ancestry died wan with watching for,  
 To lose it!—by a slip—a fault—a trick  
 Learnt to advantage once, and not unlearnt  
 When past the use,—“just this once more” (I thought,  
 “Use it with Spain and Austria happily,  
 “And then away with trick!”—An oversight  
 I’d have repaired thrice over, any time  
 These fifty years, must happen now! There’s peace  
 At length; and I, to make the most of peace,  
 Ventured my project on our people here,  
 As needing not their help—which Europe knows,  
 And means, cold-blooded, to dispose herself  
 (Apart from plausibilities of war)  
 To crush the new-made King—who ne’er till now  
 Feared her. As Duke, I lost each foot of earth  
 And laughed at her: my name was left, my sword  
 Left, all was left! But she can take, she knows,  
 This crown, herself conceded . . .

That’s to try,

Kind Europe! My career’s not closed as yet!  
 This boy was ever subject to my will—  
 Timid and tame—the fitter! D’Ormea, too—  
 What if the sovereign’s also rid of thee  
 His prime of parasites?—Yet I delay!  
 D’Ormea! [*As D’Ormea enters, the King seats himself.*]  
 My son, the Prince—attends he?

D’O.

Sire,

He does attend. The crown prepared!—it seems  
 That you persist in your resolve.

*Vic.* Who's come?  
The chancellor and the chamberlain? My knights?

*D'O.* The whole Annunciata.—If, my liege,  
Your fortunes had not tottered worse than now . . .

*Vic.* Del Borgo has drawn up the schedules? mine—  
My son's too? Excellent! Only, beware  
Of the least blunder, or we look but fools.  
First, you read the Annulment of the Oaths;  
Del Borgo follows . . . no, the Prince shall sign;  
Then let Del Borgo read the Instrument—  
On which, I enter.—

*D'O.* Sire, this may be truth;  
You, sire, may do as you affect—may break  
Your engine, me, to pieces: try at least  
If not a spring remains worth saving! Take  
My counsel as I've counselled many times!  
What if the Spaniard and the Austrian threat?  
There's England, Holland, Venice—which ally  
Select you?

*Vic.* Aha! Come, my D'Ormea,—“truth”  
Was on your lip a minute since. Allies?  
I've broken faith with Venice, Holland, England.  
—As who knows if not you?

*D'O.* But why with me  
Break faith—with one ally, your best, break faith?

*Vic.* When first I stumbled on you, Marquis—('twas  
At Mondovi—a little lawyer's clerk . . .)

*D'O.* . . . Therefore your soul's ally!—who brought  
you through

Your quarrel with the Pope, at pains enough—  
 Who've simply echoed you in these affairs—  
 On whom you cannot, therefore, visit these  
 Affairs' ill fortune—whom you'll trust to guide  
 You safe (yes, on my soul) in these affairs!

*Vic.* I was about to notice, had you not  
 Prevented me, that since that great town kept  
 With its chicane my D'Ormea's satchel stuffed,  
 And D'Ormea's self sufficiently recluse,  
 He missed a sight,—my naval armament  
 When I burnt Toulon. How the skiff exults  
 Upon the galliot's wave!—rises its height,  
 O'ertops it even; but the great wave bursts—  
 And hell-deep in the horrible profound  
 Buries itself the galliot:—shall the skiff  
 Think to escape the sea's black trough in turn?  
 Apply this: you have been my minister  
 —Next me—above me, possibly;—sad post,  
 Huge care, abundant lack of peace of mind;  
 Who would desiderate the eminence?  
 You gave your soul to get it—you'd yet give  
 Your soul to keep it, as I mean you shall,  
 My D'Ormea! What if the wave ebb'd with me?  
 Whereas it cants you to another's crest—  
 I toss you to my son; ride out your ride!

*D'O.* Ah, you so much despise me then?

*Vic.*

You, D'Ormea!

Nowise: and I'll inform you why. A king  
 Must in his time have many ministers,

And I've been rash enough to part with mine  
 When I thought proper. Of the tribe, not one  
 (. . . Or wait, did Pianezze? . . . ah, just the same :)  
 Not one of them, ere his remonstrance reached  
 The length of yours, but has assured me (commonly,  
 Standing much as you stand,—or nearer, say,  
 The door to make his exit on his speech)  
 —I should repent of what I did : now, D'Ormea,  
 (Be candid—you approached it when I bade you  
 Prepare the schedules ! But you stopped in time)  
 —You have not so assured me : how should I  
 Despise you, then ?

*Enter CHARLES.*

*Vic.* [*changing his tone.*] Are you instructed ? Do  
 My order, point by point ! About it, sir !

*D'O.* You so despise me ? [*Aside.*] One last stay  
 remains—

The boy's discretion there. [*to CHARLES.*]

For your sake, Prince,

I pleaded—wholly in your interest—

To save you from this fate !

*Cha.* [*Aside.*] Must I be told

The Prince was supplicated for—by him ?

*Vic.* [*to D'O.*] Apprise Del Borgo, Spava, and the rest,  
 Our son attends them ; then return.

*D'O.*

One word.

*Cha.* [*Aside.*] A moment's pause and they would  
 drive me hence,

I do believe !



*D'O.* [*Aside.*] Let but the boy be firm!

*Vic.* You disobey?

*Cha.* [*to D'O.*] You do not disobey

Me, D'Ormea? Did you promise that or no?

*D'O.* Sir, I am yours—what would you? Yours  
am I!

*Cha.* When I have said what I shall say, 'tis like  
Your face will ne'er again disgust me. Go!  
Through you, as through a breast of glass, I see.  
And for your conduct, from my youth till now,  
Take my contempt! You might have spared me much,  
Secured me somewhat, nor so harmed yourself—  
That's over now. Go—ne'er to come again!

*D'O.* As son, the father—father as, the son!  
My wits! My wits! [*Goes.*]

*Vic.* [*Seated.*] And you, what meant you, pray,  
By speaking thus to D'Ormea?

*Cha.* Let us not  
Weary ourselves with D'Ormea! Those few words  
Have half unsettled what I came to say.  
His presence vexes to my very soul

*Vic.* One called to manage kingdoms, Charles, needs  
heart  
To bear up under worse annoyances  
Than D'Ormea seems—to me, at least.

*Cha.* [*Aside.*] Ah, good!  
He keeps me to the point! Then be it so.

[*Aloud.*] Last night, Sire, brought me certain papers—  
these—

To be reported on,—your way of late.

Is it last night's result that you demand?

*Vic.* For God's sake, what has night brought forth?

Pronounce

The . . what's your word?—result!

*Cha.*

Sire, that had proved,

Quite worthy of your sneers, no doubt:—a few

Lame thoughts, regard for you alone could wring,

Lame as they are, from brains, like mine, believe!

As 'tis, sire, I am spared both toil and sneer.

There are the papers.

*Vic.*

Well, sir? I suppose

You hardly burned them. Now for your result!

*Cha.* I never should have done great things of course.

But . . oh, my father, had you loved me more . .

*Vic.* Loved you? [*Aside.*] Has D'Ormea played me false, I wonder?

[*Aloud.*] Why, Charles, a king's love is diffused—yourself  
May overlook, perchance, your part in it.

Our monarchy is absolutest now

In Europe, or my trouble's thrown away:

I love, my mode, that subjects each and all

May have the power of loving, all and each,

Their mode: I doubt not, many have their sons

To trifle with, talk soft to, all day long—

I have that crown, this chair, and D'Ormea, Charles!

*Cha.* 'Tis well I am a subject then, not you.

*Vic.* [*Aside.*] D'Ormea has told him every thing.

[*Aloud.*] *Abso*

I apprehend you : when all's said, you take  
Your private station to be prized beyond  
My own, for instance ?

*Cha.* —Do and ever did  
So take it : 'tis the method you pursue  
That grieves . . .

*Vic.* These words ! Let me express, my friend,  
Your thought. You penetrate what I supposed  
A secret. D'Ormea plies his trade betimes !  
I purpose to resign my crown to you.

*Cha.* To me ?

*Vic.* Now—in that chamber.

*Vic.* You resign  
The crown to me ?

*Vic.* And time enough, Charles, sure ?  
Confess with me, at four-and-sixty years  
A crown's a load. I covet quiet once  
Before I die, and summoned you for that.

*Cha.* 'Tis I will speak : you ever hated me,  
I bore it,—have insulted me, borne too—  
Now you insult yourself, and I remember  
What I believed you, what you really are,  
And cannot bear it. What ! My life has passed  
Under your eye, tormented as you know,—  
Your whole sagacities, one after one,  
At leisure brought to play on me—to prove me  
A fool, I thought, and I submitted ; now  
You'd prove . . . what would you prove me ?

*Vic.* This to me ?  
I hardly know you !

*Cha.* Know me? Oh, indeed  
 You do not! Wait till I complain next time  
 Of my simplicity!—for here's a sage—  
 Knows the world well—is not to be deceived—  
 And his experience, and his Macchiavels,  
 His D'Ormeas, teach him—what?—that I, this while,  
 Have envied him his crown! He has not smiled,  
 I warrant,—has not eaten, drunk, nor slept,  
 For I was plotting with my Princess yonder!  
 Who knows what we might do, or might not do?  
 Go, now—be politic—astound the world!—  
 That sentry in the antechamber . . . nay,  
 The varlet who disposed this precious trap

*[Pointing to the crown]*

That was to take me—ask them if they think  
 Their own sons envy them their posts!—Know me!

*Vic.* But you know me, it seems; so learn in brief  
 My pleasure. This assembly is convened . . .

*Cha.* Tell me, that women put it in your head—  
 You were not sole contriver of the scheme,  
 My father!

*Vic.* Now observe me, sir! I jest  
 Seldom—on these points, never. Here, I say,  
 The Knights assemble to see me concede,  
 And you accept, Sardinia's crown.

*Cha.* Farewell!  
 'Twere vain to hope to change this—I can end it.  
 Not that I cease from being yours, when sunk  
 Into obscurity. I'll die for you,

But not annoy you with my presence—Sire,  
Farewell! Farewell!

*Enter D'ORMEA.*

*D'O.* [*aside.*] Ha, sure he's changed again—  
Means not to fall into the cunning trap—  
Then, Victor, I shall yet escape you, Victor!

*Vic.* [*suddenly placing the crown upon the head of*

CHARLES.]

D'Ormea, your King!

[*To CHARLES.*] My son, obey me! Charles,  
Your father, clearer-sighted than yourself,  
Decides it must be so. 'Faith, this looks real!  
My reasons after—reason upon reason  
After—but now, obey me! Trust in me!  
By this, you save Sardinia, you save me!  
Why the boy swoons! [*To D'O.*] Come this side!

*D'O.* [*as CHARLES turns from him to VICTOR.*]

You persist?

*Vic.* Yes—I conceive the gesture's meaning. 'Faith,  
He almost seems to hate you—how is that?  
Be reassured, my Charles! Is't over now?  
Then, Marquis, tell the new King what remains  
To do! A moment's work. Del Borgo reads  
The Act of Abdication out, you sign it,  
Then I sign; after that, come back to me.

*D'O.* Sire, for the last time, pause!

*Vic.* . . . . . Five minutes longer  
I am your sovereign, Marquis. Hesitate—

And I'll so turn those minutes to account  
That . . . Ay, you recollect me !

[*Aside.*] Could I bring  
My foolish mind to undergo the reading  
That Act of Abdication !

[*As CHARLES motions D'ORMEA to precede him*  
Thanks, dear Charles !

[*CHARLES and D'ORMEA retire*

*Vic.* A novel feature in the boy,—indeed  
Just what I feared he wanted most. Quite right,  
This earnest tone—your truth, now, for effect !  
It answers every purpose : with that look,  
That voice,—I hear him : “ I began no treaty,”  
(He speaks to Spain,) “ Nor ever dreamed of this  
“ You show me ; this I from my soul regret ;  
“ But if my father signed it, bid not me  
“ Dishonour him—who gave me all, beside.”  
And, “ truth,” says Spain, “ ’twere harsh to visit that  
“ Upon the Prince.” Then come the nobles trooping.  
“ I grieve at these exactions—I had cut  
“ This hand off ere impose them ; but shall I  
“ Undo my father’s deed ?”—And they confer :  
“ Doubtless he was no party, after all ;  
“ Give the Prince time !”—

Ay, give us time—but **time**

Only, he must not, when the dark day comes,  
Refer our friends to me and frustrate all.  
We'll have no child's play, no desponding-fits,  
No Charles at each cross turn entreating Victor  
To take his crown again. Guard against that !

*Enter D'ORMEA.*

Long live King Charles!—

No—Charles's counsellor!

Well, is it over, Marquis? Did I jest?

*D'O.* “King Charles!” What then may you be?

*Vic.* Any thing!

A country gentleman that's cured of bustle,  
And beats a quick retreat toward Chambery  
To hunt and hawk, and leave you noisy folk  
To drive your trade without him. I'm Count Remo-  
Count Tende—any little place's Count!

*D'O.* Then, Victor, Captain against Catinat,  
At Staffarde, where the French beat you; and Duke  
At Turin, where you beat the French; King, late,  
Of Savoy, Piedmont, Montferrat, Sardinia,  
—Now, “any little place's Count”—

*Vic.* Proceed!

*D'O.* Breaker of vows to God, who crowned you first;  
Breaker of vows to Man, who kept you since;  
Most profligate to me, who outraged God  
And Man to serve you, and am made pay crimes  
I was but privy to, by passing thus  
To your imbecile son—who, well you know,  
Must, (when the people here, and nations there,  
Clamour for you, the main delirquent, slipt  
From King to—Count of any little place)  
—Surrender me, all left within his reach,—  
I, sir, forgive you: for I see the end—

See you on your return (you will return)  
To him you trust in for the moment . . .

*Vic.*

How?

Trust in him? (merely a prime-minister  
This D'Ormea!) How trust in him?

*D'O.*

In his fear—

His love,—but pray discover for yourself  
What you are weakest, trusting in!

*Vic.*

Aha,

My D'Ormea, not a shrewder scheme than this  
In your repertory? You know old Victor—  
Vain, choleric, inconstant, rash—(I've heard  
Talkers who little thought the King so close)  
Felicitous, now, were't not, to provoke him  
To clean forget, one minute afterward,  
His solemn act—to call the nobles back  
And pray them give again the very power  
He has abjured!—for the dear sake of—what?  
Vengeance on you! No, D'Ormea: such am I,  
Count Tende or Count any thing you please,  
—Only, the same that did the things you say,  
And, among other things you say not, used  
Your finest fibre, meanest muscle,—you  
I used, and now, since you will have it so,  
Leave to your fate—mere lumber in the midst,  
You and your works—Why, what on earth beside  
Are you made for, you sort of ministers?

*D'O.*—Not left, though, to my fate! Your witless

son



Has more wit than to load himself with lumber :  
He foils you that way, and I follow you.

*Vic.* Stay with my son—protect the weaker side!

*D'O.* Ay, be tossed to the people like a rag,  
And flung by them to Spain and Austria—so  
Abolishing the record of your part  
In all this perfidy!

*Vic.* Prevent, beside,  
My own return!

*D'O.* That's half prevented now!  
'Twill go hard but you'll find a wondrous charm  
In exile to discredit me. The Alps—  
Silk-mills to watch—vines asking vigilance—  
Hounds open for the stag—your hawk's a-wing—  
Brave days that wait the Louis of the South,  
Italy's Janus!

*Vic.* So, the lawyer's clerk  
Won't tell me that I shall repent!

*D'O.* You give me  
Full leave to ask if you repent?

*Vic.* Whene'er,  
Sufficient time's elapsed for that, you judge!

[*Shouts inside, "KING CHARLES."*]

*D'O.* Do you repent?

*Vic.* [*after a slight pause.*] . . . I've kept them wait-  
ing? Yes!

Come in—complete the Abdication, sir! [*They go out.*]

*Enter POLYXENA.*

*Pol.* A shout? The sycophants are free of Charles!

Oh, is not this like Italy? No fruit  
 Of his or my distempered fancy, this—  
 But just an ordinary fact! Beside,  
 Here they've set forms for such proceedings—Victor  
 Imprisoned his own mother—he should know,  
 If any, how a son's to be deprived  
 Of a son's right. Our duty's palpable.  
 Ne'er was my husband for the wily king  
 And the unworthy subjects—be it so!  
 Come you safe out of them, my Charles! Our life  
 Grows not the broad and dazzling life, I dreamed  
 Might prove your lot—for strength was shut in you  
 None guessed but I—strength which, untrammelled once  
 Had little shamed your vaunted ancestry—  
 Patience and self-devotion, fortitude,  
 Simplicity and utter truthfulness  
 —All which, they shout to lose!

So, now my work

Begins—to save him from regret. Save Charles  
 Regret?—the noble nature! He's not made  
 Like the Italians: 'tis a German soul.

*CHARLES enters crowned.*

Oh, where's the King's heir? Gone:—the Crown-  
 prince? Gone—  
 Where's Savoy? Gone:—Sardinia? Gone!—But Charles  
 Is left! And when my Rhine-land bowers arrive,  
 If he looked almost handsome yester-twilight  
 As his gray eyes seemed widening into black



*Pol.* The only cause?

*Cha.* Some new perplexities.

*Pol.* Which you can solve,  
Although he cannot?

*Cha.* He assures me so.

*Pol.* And this he means shall last—how long?

*Cha.* How long?

Think you I fear the perils I confront?

He's praising me before the people's face—

My people!

*Pol.* Then he's changed—grown kind, the King?  
(Where can the trap be?)

*Cha.* Heart and soul I pledge!  
My father, could I guard the Crown you gained,  
Transmit as I received it,—all good else  
Would I surrender!

*Pol.* Ah, it opens then  
Before you—all you dreaded formerly?  
You are rejoiced to be a king, my Charles?

*Cha.* So much to dare? The better;—much to dread?  
The better. I'll adventure tho' alone.  
Triumph or die, there's Victor still to witness  
Who dies or triumphs—either way, alone!

*Pol.* Once I had found my share in triumph, Charles,  
Or death.

*Cha.* But you are I! But you I call  
To take, Heaven's proxy, vows I tendered Heaven  
A moment since. I will deserve the crown!

*Pol.* You will. [*Aside.*] No doubt it were a glorious  
thing

For any people, if a heart like his  
Ruled over it. I would I saw the trap!

*Enter VICTOR.*

'Tis he must show me.

*Vic.*

So the mask falls off

An old man's foolish love at last! Spare thanks—

I know you, and Polyxena I know.

Here's Charles—I am his guest now—does he bid me

Be seated? And my light-haired, blue-eyed child

Must not forget the old man far away

At Chambery, who dozes while she reigns.

*Pol.* Most grateful shall we now be, talking least.

Of gratitude—indeed of any thing

That hinders what yourself must have to say

To Charles.

*Cha.*

Pray speak, Sire!

*Vic.*

'Faith, not much to say—

Only what shows itself, once in the point

Of sight. You are now the King: you'll comprehend

Much you may oft have wondered at—the shifts,

Dissimulation, willingness I showed.

For what's our post? Here's Savoy and here's Pied-

mont,

Here's Montferrat—a breadth here, a space there—

To o'ersweep all these, what's one weapon worth?

I often think of how they fought in Greece

(Or Rome, which was it? You're the scholar, Charles!)

You made a front-thrust? But if your shield, too,

Were not adroitly planted—some shrewd knave  
 Reached you behind ; and, him foiled, straight if thong  
 And handle of that shield were not cast loose,  
 And you enabled to outstrip the wind,  
 Fresh foes assailed you, either side ; 'scape these,  
 And reach your place of refuge—e'en then, odds  
 If the gate opened unless breath enough  
 Was left in you to make its lord a speech.  
 Oh, you will see !

*Cha.* . . . No : straight on shall I go,  
 Truth helping ; win with it or die with it.

*Vic.* 'Faith, Charles, you're not made Europe's  
 fighting-man !

Its barrier-guarder, if you please. You hold,  
 Not take—consolidate, with envious French  
 This side, with Austrians that, these territories  
 I held—ay, and will hold . . . which *you* shall hold  
 Despite the couple ! But I've surely earned  
 Exemption from these weary politics,  
 —The privilege to prattle with my son  
 And daughter here, tho' Europe waits the while.

*Pol.* Nay, Sire,—at Chambéry, away forever,  
 As soon you'll be, 'tis a farewell we bid you !  
 Turn these few fleeting moments to account !  
 'Tis just as though it were a death.

*Vic.* . . . . . Indeed !

*Pol.* [*Aside.*] Is the trap there ?

*Cha.* . . . . . Ay, call this parting—death  
 The sacreder your memory becomes.

If I misrule Sardinia, how bring back  
My father? No—that thought shall ever urge me

*Vic.* I do not mean . . .

*Pol.* [*who watches VICTOR narrowly this while.*]

Your father does not mean

That you are ruling for your father's sake:  
It is your people must concern you wholly  
Instead of him. You meant this, Sire? (He drops  
My hand!)

*Cha.* That People is now part of me.

*Vic.* About the People! I took certain measures  
Some short time since . . . Oh, I'm aware you know  
But little of my measures—these affect  
The nobles—we've resumed some grants, imposed  
A tax or two; prepare yourself, in short,  
For clamours on that score: mark me: you yield  
No jot of what's intrusted you!

*Pol.* No jot

You yield!

*Cha.* My father, when I took the oath,  
Although my eye might stray in search of yours,  
I heard it, understood it, promised God  
What you require. Till from this eminence  
He moves me, here I keep, nor shall concede  
The meanest of my rights.

*Vic.* [*Aside.*] The boy's a fool!

—Or rather, I'm a fool: for, what's wrong here?

To-day the sweets of reigning—let to-morrow

Be ready with its bitters.

*Enter D'ORMEA.*

There's beside  
Somewhat to press upon your notice first.

*Cha.* Then why delay it for an instant, Sire?  
That Spanish claim, perchance? And, now you speak  
—This morning, my opinion was mature—  
Which, boy-like, I was bashful in producing  
To one, I ne'er am like to fear, in future!  
My thought is formed upon that Spanish claim.

*Vic.* (Betimes, indeed.) Not now, Charles. You  
require  
A host of papers on it—

*D'O.* [*coming forward.*] Here they are.  
[*To CHA.*] I was the minister and much beside—  
Of the late monarch: to say little, him  
I served; on you I have, to say e'en less,  
No claim. This case contains those papers: with them  
I tender you my office.

*Vic.* [*hastily.*] Keep him, Charles!  
There's reason for it—many reasons: you  
Distrust him, nor are so far wrong there,—but  
He's mixed up in this matter—he'll desire  
To quit you, for occasions known to me:  
Do not accept those reasons—have him stay!

*Pol.* [*Aside.*] His minister thrust on us!

*Cha.* [*to D'ORMEA.*] Sir, believe  
In justice to myself, you do not need  
E'en this commending: whatso'er might be



My feelings toward you as a private man,  
 They quit me in this vast and untried field  
 Of action. Though I shall, myself, (as late  
 In your own hearing I engaged to do)  
 Preside o'er my Sardinia, yet your help  
 Is necessary. Think the past forgotten,  
 — And serve me now!

*D'O.* I did not offer you  
 My services—would I could serve you, Sire!  
 As for the Spanish matter . . .

*Vic.* But despatch  
 At least the dead, in my good daughter's phrase,  
 Before the living! Help to house me safe  
 Ere you and D'Ormea set the world a-gape!  
 Here is a paper—will you overlook  
 What I propose reserving for my needs?  
 I get as far from you as possible.  
 There's what I reckon my expenditure.

*Cha.* [*reading.*] A miserable fifty thousand crowns!

*Vic.* Oh, quite enough for country gentlemen!  
 Beside the exchequer happens . . . but find out  
 All that, yourself!

*Cha.* [*still reading.*] "Count Tende"—what mean  
 this?

*Vic.* Me: you were but an infant when I burst  
 Through the defile of Tende upon France.  
 Had only my allies kept true to me!  
 No matter. Tende's then, a name I take  
 Just as . . .

*D'O.* —The Marchioness Sebastian takes  
The name of Spigno.

*Cha.* How, sir?

*Vic.* [*to D'ORMEA.*] Fool! All that  
Was for my own detailing. [*To CHARLES.*] That anon!

*Cha.* [*to D'ORMEA.*] Explain what you have said, sir!

*D'O.* I supposed  
The marriage of the King to her I named,  
Profoundly kept a secret these few weeks,  
Was not to be one, now he's Count.

*Pol.* [*Aside.*] With us  
The minister—with him the mistress!

*Cha.* [*to VICTOR.*] No—  
Tell me you have not taken her—that woman  
To live with, past recall!

*Vic.* And where's the crime . . .

*Pol.* [*to CHARLES.*] True, sir, this is a matter past  
recall,

And past your cognizance. A day before,  
And you had been compelled to note this—now  
Why note it? The King saved his House from shame  
What the Count does, is no concern of yours.

*Cha.* [*after a pause.*] The Spanish business, D'Ormea

*Vic.* Why, my son,  
I took some ill-advised . . . one's age, in fact,  
Spoils every thing: though I was overreached,  
A younger brain, we'll trust, may extricate  
Sardinia readily. To-morrow, D'Ormea,  
Inform the King!

*D' O.* [*without regarding VICTOR, and leisurely.*] Thus stands the case with Spain :

When first the Infant Carlos claimed his proper  
Succession to the throne of Tuscany . . .

*Vic.* I tell you, that stands over ! Let that rest '  
There is the policy !

*Cha.* [*to D'ORMEA.*] Thus much I know,  
And more—too much : the remedy ?

*D' O.* Of course !

No glimpse of one—

*Vic.* No remedy at all !

It makes the remedy itself—time makes it.

*D' O.* [*to CHARLES.*] But if . . .

*Vic.* [*still more hastily.*] In fine, I shall take care of that—  
And, with another project that I have . . .

*D' O.* [*turning on him.*] Oh, since Count Tende means  
to take again

King Victor's crown !—

*Pol.* [*throwing herself at VICTOR'S feet.*] E'en now  
retake it, Sire !

Oh, speak ! We are your subjects both, once more !

Say it—a word effects it ! You meant not,  
Nor do mean now, to take it—but you must !

'Tis in you—in your nature—and the shame's  
Not half the shame 'twould grow to afterward !

*Cha.* Polyxena !

*Pol.* A word recalls the Knights—

Say it !—What's promising and what's the past ?

Say you are still King Victor !

*D' O.* Better say  
The Count repents, in brief! [VICTOR rises  
*Cha.* With such a crime  
I have not charged you, Sire!  
*Pol.* Charles turns from me

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## SECOND YEAR 1731.—KING CHARLES.

## PART I.

*Enter QUEEN POLYXENA and D'ORMEA—A pause.*

*Pol.* And now, sir, what have you to say?  
*D' O.* Count Tende  
*Pol.* Affirm not I betrayed you ; you resolve  
On uttering this strange intelligence  
—Nay, post yourself to find me ere I reach  
The capital, because you know King Charles  
Tarries a day or two at Evian baths  
Behind me:—but take warning,—here and thus  
[Seating herself in the royal seat  
I listen, if I listen—not your friend.  
Explicitly the statement, if you still  
Persist to urge it on me, must proceed :  
I am not made for aught else.  
*D' O.* Good ! Count Tende . .  
*Pol.* I, who mistrust you, shall acquaint King Charles  
Who even more mistrusts you.  
*D' O.* Does he so ?

*Pol.* Why should he not?

*D'O.* Ay, why not? Motives, seek  
 You virtuous people, motives! Say, I serve  
 God at the devil's bidding—will that do?  
 I'm proud: our People have been pacified  
 (Really I know not how)—

*Pol.* By truthfulness.

*D'O.* Exactly; that shows I had nought to do  
 With pacifying them: our foreign perils  
 Also exceed my means to stay: but here  
 'Tis otherwise, and my pride's piqued. Count Tende  
 Completes a full year's absence: would you, madam,  
 Have the old monarch back, his mistress back,  
 His measures back? I pray you, act upon  
 My counsel, or they will be.

*Pol.* When?

*D'O.* Let's think.

Home-matters settled—Victor's coming now;  
 Let foreign matters settle—Victor's here:  
 Unless I stop him; as I will, this way.

*Pol.* [*reading the papers he presents.*] If this should  
 prove a plot 'twixt you and Victor?  
 You seek annoyances to give him pretext  
 For what you say you fear!

*D'O.* Oh, possibly!  
 I go for nothing. Only show King Charles  
 That thus Count Tende purposes return,  
 And style me his inviter, if you please.

*Pol.* Half of your tale is true; most like, the Count

Seeks to return : but why stay you with us ?  
To aid in such emergencies.

*D'O.* Keep safe  
Those papers : or, to serve me, leave no proof  
I thus have counselled : when the Count returns,  
And the King abdicates, 'twill stead me little  
To have thus counselled.

*Pol.* The King abdicate !

*D'O.* He's good, we knew long since—wise, we discover—

Firm, let us hope :—but I'd have gone to work  
With him away. Well !

[*CHARLES without.*] In the Council Chamber ?

*D'O.* All's lost !

*Pol.* Oh, surely, not King Charles ! He's  
changed—

That's not this year's care-burdened voice and step :  
'Tis last year's step—the Prince's voice !

*D'O.* I know !

*Enter CHARLES—D'ORMEA retiring a little.*

*Cha.* Now wish me joy, Polyxena ! Wish it me  
The old way ! [She embraces him]

There was too much cause for that !  
But I have found myself again ! What's news  
At Turin ? Oh, if you but felt the load  
I'm free of—free ! I said this year would end  
Or it, or me—but I am free, thank God !

*Pol.* How, Charles ?

*Cha*                 You do not guess? The day I found  
Sardinia's hideous coil, at home, abroad,  
And how my father was involved in it,—  
Of course, I vowed to rest or smile no more  
Until I freed his name from obloquy.  
We did the people right—'twas much to gain  
That point, redress our nobles' grievance, too—  
But that took place here, was no crying shame:  
All must be done abroad,—if I abroad  
Appeased the justly angered Powers, destroyed  
The scandal, took down Victor's name at last  
From a bad eminence, I then might breathe  
And rest! No moment was to lose. Behold  
The proud result—a Treaty, Austria, Spain  
Agree to—

*D' O.* [*Aside.*] I shall merely stipulate  
For an experienced headsman.

*Cha.*                                 Not a soul  
Is compromised: the blotted Past's a blank:  
Even D'Ormea will escape unquestioned. See!  
It reached me from Vienna; I remained  
At Evian to despatch the Count his news;  
'Tis gone to Chambéry a week ago—  
And here am I: do I deserve to feel  
Your warm white arms around me?

*D' O.* [*coming forward.*]                 He knows that?

*Cha.* What, in Heaven's name, means this?

*D' O.*   He knows that matters

Are settled at Vienna? Not too late!

Plainly, unless you post this very hour  
 Some man you trust (say, me) to Chambery,  
 And take precautions I'll acquaint you with,  
 Your father will return here.

*Cha.* Is he crazed,  
 This D'Ormea? Here? For what? As well return  
 To take his crown!

*D'O.* He will return for that.

*Cha.* [to POLYXENA.] You have not listened to this  
 man?

*Pol.* He spoke  
 About your safety—and I listened.

[*He disengages himself from her arms.*]

*Cha.* [to D'ORMEA.] What  
 Apprised you of the Count's intentions?

*D'O.* Me?  
 His heart, Sire; you may not be used to read  
 Such evidence, however; therefore read

[*Pointing to POLYXENA's papers*]

My evidence.

*Cha.* [to POLYXENA.] Oh, worthy this of you!  
 And of your speech I never have forgotten,  
 Tho' I professed forgetfulness; which haunts me  
 As if I did not know how false it was;  
 Which made me toil unconsciously thus long  
 That there might be no least occasion left  
 For aught of its prediction coming true!  
 And now, when there is left no least occasion  
 To instigate my father to such crime;



When I might venture to forget (I hoped)  
That speech and recognize Polyxena—  
Oh, worthy, to revive, and tenfold worse,  
That plague now! D'Ormea at your ear, his slanders  
Still in your hand! Silent?

*Pol.* As the wronged are.

*Cha.* And, D'Ormea, pray, since when have you  
presumed

To spy upon my father? (I conceive  
What that wise paper shows, and easily.)  
Since when?

*D'O.* The when, and where, and how, belong  
To me. 'Tis sad work, but I deal in such.  
You oftentimes serve yourself—I'd serve you here:  
Use makes me not so squeamish. In a word,  
Since the first hour he went to Chambery,  
Of his seven servants, five have I suborned.

*Cha.* You hate my father?

*D'O.* Oh, just as you will!

[*Looking at POLYXENA.*]

A minute since, I loved him—hate him, now!  
What matters?—If you'll ponder just one thing:  
Has he that Treaty?—He is setting forward  
Already. Are your guards here?

*Cha.* Well for you  
They are not! [*To POL.*] Him I knew of old, but you—  
To hear that pickthank further his designs! [*To D'O.*  
Guards?—were they here, I'd bid them, for your trouble.  
Arrest you.

*D'O.* Guards you shall not want. I live!

The servant of your choice, not of your need.

You never greatly needed me till now

That you discard me. This is my arrest.

Again I tender you my charge—its duty

Would bid me press you read those documents.

Here, Sir!

[Offering his badge of office]

*Cha.* [taking it.] The papers also! Do you think  
I dare not read them?

*Pol.* Read them, sir!

*Cha.* They prove,

My father, still a month within the year

Since he so solemnly consigned it me,

Means to resume his crown? They shall prove that,

Or my best dungeon . . .

*D'O.* Even say, Chambery!

'Tis vacant, I surmise, by this.

*Cha.* You prove

Your words or pay their forfeit, sir. Go there!

Polyxena, one chance to rend the veil

Thickening and blackening 'twixt us two! Do say,

You'll see the falsehood of the charges proved!

Do say, at least, you wish to see them proved

False charges—my heart's love of other times!

*Pol.* Ah, Charles!

*Cha.* [to D'ORMEA.] Precede me, sir!

*D'O.* And I'm at length

A martyr for the truth! No end, they say,

Of miracles. My conscious innocence!

[As they go out, enter—by the middle door—at which he  
pauses—VICTOR.]

V. Sure I heard voices? No! Well, I do best  
 To make at once for this, the heart o' the place.  
 The old room! Nothing changed!—So near my seat,  
 D'Ormea! [*Pushing away the stool which is by the*  
 KING'S chair.

I want that meeting over first,  
 I know not why. Tush, D'Ormea won't be slow  
 To hearten me, the supple knave! That burst  
 Of spite so eased him! He'll inform me . . .

What?

Why come I hither? All's in rough—let all  
 Remain rough; there's full time to draw back—nay,  
 There's nought to draw back from, as yet; whereas,  
 If reason should be, to arrest a course  
 Of error—reason good, to interpose  
 And save, as I have saved so many times,  
 Our House, admonish my son's giddy youth,  
 Relieve him of a weight that proves too much—  
 Now is the time,—or now, or never. 'Faith,  
 This kind of step is pitiful—not due  
 To Charles, this stealing back—hither, because  
 He's from his Capital! Oh, Victor! Victor!  
 But thus it is: the age of crafty men  
 Is loathsome; youth contrives to carry off  
 Dissimulation; we may intersperse  
 Extenuating passages of strength,  
 Ardour, vivacity, and wit—may turn  
 E'en guile into a voluntary grace,—  
 But one's old age, when graces drop away

And leave guile the pure staple of our lives—  
Ah, loathsome!

Not so—or why pause I? Turin  
Is mine to have, were I so minded, for  
The asking; all the Army's mine—I've witnessed  
Each private fight beneath me; all the Court's  
Mine too; and, best of all, my D'Ormea's still  
His D'Ormea; no! There's some grace clinging yet.  
Had I decided on this step, ere midnight  
I'd take the crown.

No! Just this step to rise  
Exhausts me! Here am I arrived: the rest  
Must be done for me. Would I could sit here  
And let things right themselves, the masque unmasque  
—Of the King, crownless, gray hairs and hot blood,—  
The young King, crowned, but calm before his time,  
They say,—the eager woman with her taunts,—  
And the sad earnest wife who motions me  
Away—ay, there she knelt to me! E'en yet  
I can return and sleep at Chambery  
A dream out. Rather shake it off at Turin,  
King Victor! Is't to Turin—yes, or no?  
'Tis this relentless noonday-lighted chamber,  
Lighted like life, but silent as the grave,  
That disconcerts me! There must be the change—  
No silence last year: some one flung doors wide  
(Those two great doors which scrutinize me now)  
And out I went 'mid crowds of men—men talking,  
Men watching if my lip fell or brow changed;

Men saw me safe forth—put me on my road :  
That makes the misery of this return !  
Oh, had a battle done it ! Had I dropped  
—Haling some battle, three entire days old,  
Hither and thither by the forehead—dropped  
In Spain, in Austria, best of all, in France—  
Spurned on its horns or underneath its hooves,  
When the spent monster goes upon its knees  
To pad and pash the prostrate wretch—I, Victor,  
Sole to have stood up against France—beat down  
By inches, brayed to pieces finally  
By some vast unimaginable charge,  
A flying hell of horse and foot and guns  
Over me, and all's lost, forever lost,  
There's no more Victor when the world wakes up !  
'Then silence, as of a raw battle-field,  
Throughout the world. Then after (as whole days  
After, you catch at intervals faint noise  
Thro' the stiff crust of frozen blood)—there creeps  
A rumour forth, so faint, no noise at all,  
That a strange old man, with face outworn for wounds,  
Is stumbling on from frontier town to town,  
Begging a pittance that may help him find  
His Turin out ; what scorn and laughter follow  
The coin you fling into his cap : and last,  
Some bright morn, how men crowd about the midst  
Of the market-place, where takes the old king breath  
Ere with his crutch he strike the palace-gate  
Wide ope !

To 'Turin, yes or no—or no ?

*Re-enter CHARLES with papers.*

*Cha.* Just as I thought! A miserable falsehood  
Of hirelings discontented with their pay  
And longing for enfranchisement! A few  
Testy expressions of old age that thinks  
To keep alive its dignity o'er slaves  
By means that suit their natures!

[*Tearing them.*] Thus they shake  
My faith in Victor!

[*Turning, he discovers VICTOR.*

*Vic.* [*after a pause.*] Not at Evian, Charles?  
What's this? Why do you run to close the doors?  
No welcome for your father?

*Cha.* [*Aside.*] Not his voice!  
What would I give for one imperious tone  
Of the old sort! That's gone forever.

*Vic.* Must  
I ask once more . . .

*Cha.* No—I concede it, sir!  
You are returned for . . . true, your health declines—  
True, Chambery's a bleak unkindly spot;  
You'd choose one fitter for your final lodge—  
Veneria—or Moncagliè—ay, that's close,  
And I concede it.

*Vic.* I received advices  
Of the conclusion of the Spanish matter  
Dated from Evian baths . . .

*Cha.* And you forbore  
To visit me at Evian, satisfied  
The work I had to do would fully task

The little wit I have, and that your presence  
Would only disconcert me—

*Vic.* Charles ?

*Cha.* —Me—set

Forever in a foreign course to yours,  
And . . .

Sir, this way of wile were good to catch,  
But I have not the sleight of it. The truth !  
Though I sink under it ! What brings you here ?

*Vic.* Not hope of this reception, certainly,  
From one who'd scarce assume a stranger mode  
Of speech, did I return to bring about  
Some awfullest calamity !

*Cha.* —You mean,

Did you require your crown again ! Oh yes,  
I should speak otherwise ! But turn not that  
To jesting ! Sir, the truth ! Your health declines ?  
Is aught deficient in your equipage ?  
Wisely you seek myself to make complaint,  
And foil the malice of the world which laughs  
At petty discontents ; but I shall care  
That not a soul knows of this visit. Speak !

*Vic.* [*Aside.*] Here is the grateful, much-professing son  
Who was to worship me, and for whose sake  
I think to waive my plans of public good !  
[*Aloud.*] Nay, Charles, if I did seek to take once more  
My crown, were so disposed to plague myself—  
What would be warrant for this bitterness ?  
I gave it—grant, I would resume it—well ?

*Cha.* I should say simply—leaving out the why  
And how—you made me swear to keep that crown :  
And as you then intended . . .

*Vic.* Fool ! What way  
Could I intend or not intend ? As man,  
With a man's life, when I say " I intend,"  
I can intend up to a certain point,  
No further. I intended to preserve  
The Crown of Savoy and Sardinia whole.  
And if events arise demonstrating  
The way I took to keep it, rather's like  
To lose it . . .

*Cha.* Keep within your sphere and mine !  
It is God's province we usurp on, else.  
Here, blindfold thro' the maze of things we walk  
By a slight thread of false, true, right and wrong ;  
All else is rambling and presumption. I  
Have sworn to keep this kingdom : there's my truth.

*Vic.* Truth, boy, is here—within my breast ; and in  
Your recognition of it, truth is, too ;  
And in the effect of all this tortuous dealing  
With falsehood, used to carry out the truth,  
—In its success, this falsehood turns, again,  
Truth for the world ! But you are right : these themes  
Are over-subtle. I should rather say  
In such a case, frankly,—it fails, my scheme :  
I hoped to see you bring about, yourself,  
What I must bring about : I interpose  
On your behalf—with my son's good in sight—



To hold what he is nearly letting go—  
 Confirm his title—add a grace, perhaps—  
 There's Sicily. *For instance*,—granted me  
 And taken back, some years since—till I give  
 That island with the rest, my work's half done.  
 For his sake, therefore, as of those he rules . . .

*Cha.* Our stakes are one—and that, you could not say  
 Because my answer would present itself  
 Forthwith ;—a year has wrought an age's change :  
 This people's not the people now, you once  
 Could benefit ; nor is my policy  
 Your policy.

*Vic.* [*with an outburst.*] I know it ! You undo  
 All I have done—my life of toil and care !  
 I left you this the absolutest rule  
 In Europe—do you think I will sit still  
 And see you throw all power off to the people—  
 See my Sardinia, that has stood apart,  
 Join in the mad and democratic whirl,  
 Whereto I see all Europe haste full-tide ?  
 England casts off her kings—France mimics England—  
 This realm I hoped was safe ! Yet here I talk,  
 When I can save it, not by force alone,  
 But bidding plagues, which follow sons like you,  
 Fasten upon my disobedient . . .

[*Recollecting himself.*] Surely  
 I could say this—if minded so—my son ?

*Cha.* You could not ! Bitterer curses than your curse  
 Have I long since denounced upon myself

If I misused my power. In fear of these  
 I entered on those measures—will abide  
 By them : so, I should say, Count Tende . . .

*Vic.*

No!

But no ! But if, my Charles, your—more than old—  
 Half-foolish father urged these arguments,  
 And then confessed them futile, but said plainly  
 That he forgot his promise, found his strength  
 Fail him, had thought at savage Chambery  
 Too much of brilliant Turin, Rivoli here,  
 And Susa, and Veneria, and Superga—  
 Pined for the pleasant places he had built  
 When he was fortunate and young—

*Cha.*

My father !

*Vic.* Stay yet—and if he said he could not die  
 Deprived of baubles he had put aside,  
 He deemed, forever—of the Crown that binds  
 Your brain up, whole, sound, and impregnable,  
 Creating kingliness—the Sceptre, too,  
 Whose mere wind, should you wave it, back would bear  
 Invaders—and the golden Ball which throbs  
 As if you grasped the palpitating heart  
 Indeed o' the realm, to mould as you may choose !  
 —If I must totter up and down the streets  
 My sires built, where myself have introduced  
 And fostered laws and letters, sciences,  
 The civil and the military arts—  
 Stay, Charles—I see you letting me pretend  
 To live my former self once more—King Victor,

The venturous yet politic—they style me  
 Again, the Father of the Prince—friends wink  
 Good-humouredly at the delusion you  
 So sedulously guard from all rough truths  
 That else would break upon the dotage!—You—  
 Whom now I see preventing my old shame—  
 I tell not, point by cruel point, my tale—  
 For is't not in your breast my brow is hid?  
 Is not your hand extended? Say you not . . .

*Enter D'ORMEA, leading in POLYXENA.*

*Pol. [advancing and withdrawing CHARLES—to  
 VICTOR.]*

In this conjuncture, even, he would say—  
 (Tho' with a moistened eye and quivering lip)  
 The suppliant is my father—I must save  
 A great man from himself, nor see him fling  
 His well-earned fame away: there must not follow  
 Ruin so utter, a break-down of worth  
 So absolute: no enemy shall learn,  
 He thrust his child 'twixt danger and himself,  
 And, when that child somehow stood danger out,  
 Stole back with serpent wiles to ruin Charles  
 --Body, that's much,—and soul, that's more—and  
 realm,

That's most of all! No enemy shall say . .

*D'O.* Do you repent, sir?

*Vic. [resuming himself.]* D'Ormea? This is well!  
 Worthily done, King Charles, craftily done!

Judiciously you post these, to o'erhear  
 The little your importunate father thrusts  
 Himself on you to say! Ay, they'll correct  
 The amiable blind facility  
 You showed in answering his peevish suit:  
 What can he need to sue for? Bravely, D'Ormea,  
 Have you fulfilled your office: but for you,  
 The old Count might have drawn some few more livres  
 To swell his income! Had you, Lady, missed  
 The moment, a permission had been granted  
 To build afresh my ruinous old pile—  
 But you remembered properly the list  
 Of wise precautions I took when I gave  
 Nearly as much away—to reap the fruits  
 I should have looked for!

*Cha.* Thanks, sir: degrade me,  
 So you remain yourself. Adieu!

*Vic.* I'll not  
 Forget it for the future, nor presume  
 Next time to slight such potent mediators!  
 Had I first moved them both to intercede,  
 I might have had a chamber in Moncaglièr  
 —Who knows?

*Cha.* Adieu!

*Vic.* You bid me this adieu  
 With the old spirit?

*Cha.* Adieu!

*Vic.* Charles—Charles—

*Cha.* Adieu!

[VICTOR goes

*Cha.* You were mistaken, Marquis, as you hear!  
 'Twas for another purpose the Count came.  
 The Count desires Moncaglier. Give the order!

*D' O.* [*leisurely.*] Your minister has lost your confidence,  
 Asserting late, for his own purposes,  
 Count Tende would . . .

*Cha.* [*flinging his badge back.*] Be still our minister  
 And give a loose to your insulting joy—  
 It irks me more thus stifled than expressed.  
 Loose it!

*D' O.* There's none to loose, alas!—I see  
 I never am to die a martyr!

*Pol.* Charles!

*Cha.* No praise, at least, Polyxena—no praise!

## KING CHARLES: PART II.

Night.—D'ORMEA *seated, folding papers he has been examining*

This at the last effects it: now, King Charles  
 Or else King Victor—that's a balance: now  
 For D'Ormea the arch-culprit, either turn  
 O' the scale,—that's sure enough. A point to solve,  
 My masters—moralists—whate'er's your style!  
 When you discover why I push myself  
 Into a pitfall you'd pass safely by,  
 Impart to me among the rest! No matter.  
 Prompt are the righteous ever with their rede

To us the wicked—lesson them this once !  
 For safe among the wicked are you set,  
 Old D'Ormea. We lament life's brevity,  
 Yet quarter e'en the threescore years and ten,  
 Nor stick to call the quarter roundly " life."  
 D'Ormea was wicked, say, some twenty years ;  
 A tree so long was stunted ; afterward,  
 What if it grew, continued growing, till  
 No fellow of the forest equalled it ?  
 'Twas a shrub then—a shrub it still must be :  
 While forward saplings, at the outset checked,  
 In virtue of that first sprout keep their style  
 Amid the forest's green fraternity.  
 Thus I shoot up—to surely get lopped down,  
 And bound up for the burning. Now for it !

*Enter CHARLES and POLYXENA with Attendants.*

*D' O.* [*rises.*] Sire, in the due discharge of this **my**  
 office—

This enforced summons of yourself from Turin,  
 And the disclosure I am bound to make  
 To night,—there must already be, I feel,  
 So much that wounds . . .

*Cha.* Well, sir ?

*D' O.* —That I, perchance  
 May utter, also, what, another time,  
 Would irk much,—it may prove less irksome now.

*Cha.* What would you utter ?

*D' O.* That I from my sou!

Grieve at to-night's event: for you I grieve—  
E'en grieve for . . .

*Cha.* Tush, another time for talk!

My kingdom is in imminent danger?

*D'O.* Let

The Count communicate with France—its King,  
His grandson, will have Fleury's aid for this,  
Though for no other war.

*Cha.* First for the levies:

What forces can I muster presently?

[D'ORMEA delivers papers which CHARLES inspects

*Cha.* Good—very good. Montorio . . how is this?  
—Equips me double the old complement  
Of soldiers?

*D'O.* Since his land has been relieved  
From double impost, this he manages:  
But under the late monarch . .

*Cha.* Peace. I know.

Count Spava has omitted mentioning  
What proxy is to head these troops of his.

*D'O.* Count Spava means to head his troops himself.  
Something's to fight for now; "whereas," says he,  
"Under the Sovereign's father" . . .

*Cha.* It would seem  
That all my people love me.

*D'O.* Yes.

[To POLYXENA while CHARLES continues to inspect the papers

A temper

Like Victor's may avail to keep a state;

He terrifies men and they fall not off;  
 Good to restrain; best, if restraint were all:  
 But, with the silent circle round him, ends  
 Such sway. Our King's begins precisely there.  
 For to suggest, impel, and set at work,  
 Is quite another function. Men may slight,  
 In time of peace, the King who brought them peace  
 In war,—his voice, his eyes, help more than fear.  
 They love you, Sire!

*Cha.* [*to Attendants.*] Bring the Regalia forth.  
 Quit the room. And now, Marquis, answer me—  
 Why should the King of France invade my realm?

*D' O.* Why? Did I not acquaint your Majesty  
 An hour ago?

*Cha.* I choose to hear again  
 What then I heard.

*D' O.* Because, Sire, as I said,  
 Your father is resolved to have the crown  
 At any risk; and, as I judge, calls in  
 These foreigners to aid him.

*Cha.* And your reason  
 For saying this?

*D' O.* [*Aside.*] Ay, just his father's way!  
 [*To CH.*] The Count wrote yesterday to your Forces  
 Chief,

Rhebinder,—made demand of help—

*Cha.* To try  
 Rhebinder—he's of alien blood: aught else?

*D' O.* Receiving a refusal,—some hours after.  
 The Count called on Del Borgo to deliver



The Act of Abdication : he refusing,  
Or hesitating, rather—

*Cha.* What ensued ?

*D' O.* At midnight, only two hours since, at Turin.  
He rode in person to the citadel  
With one attendant, to the Soccorso gate,  
And bade the governor, San Remi, open—  
Admit him,

*Cha.* For a purpose I divine,  
These three were faithful, then ?

*D' O.* They told it me :

And I—

*Cha.* Most faithful—

*D' O.* Tell it you—with this,

Moreover, of my own : if, an hour hence,  
You have not interposed, the Count will be  
Upon his road to France for succour.

*Cha.* Good !

You do your duty, now, to me your monarch  
Fully, I warrant ?—have, that is, your project  
For saving both of us disgrace, past doubt ?

*D' O.* I have my counsel,—and the only one.  
A month since, I besought you to employ  
Restraints which had prevented many a pang :  
But now the harsher course must be pursued.  
These papers, made for the emergency,  
Will pain you to subscribe : this is a list  
Of those suspected merely—men to watch ;  
This—of the few of the Count's very household,

You must, however reluctantly, arrest ;  
 While here's a method of remonstrance (sure  
 Not stronger than the case demands) to take  
 With the Count's self.

*Cha.* Deliver those three papers.

*Pol.* [*while CHARLES inspects them—to D'ORMEA.*]  
 Your measures are not over-harsh, sir : France  
 Will hardly be deterred from coming hither  
 By these.

*D'O.* What good of my proposing measures  
 Without a chance of their success ? E'en these,  
 Hear what he'll say at my presenting.

*Cha.* [*who has signed them.*] There !  
 About the warrants ! You've my signature.  
 What turns you pale ? I do my duty by you  
 In acting boldly thus on your advice.

*D'O.* [*reading them separately.*] Arrest the people I  
 suspected merely ?

*Cha.* Did you suspect them ?

*D'O.* Doubtless : but—but—Sire  
 This Forquieri's governor of Turin ;  
 And Rivarol and he have influence over  
 Half of the capital.—Rabella, too ?  
 Wof, Sire—

*Cha.* Oh, leave the fear to me.

*D'O.* [*still reading.*] You bid me  
 Incarcerate the people on this list ?  
 Sire—

*Cha.* Why, you never bade arrest those men,

So close related to my father too,  
On trifling grounds?

*D' O.* Oh, as for that, St. George,  
President of Chambery's senators,  
Is hatching treason—but—

[*Still more troubled.*] Sire, Count Cumiane  
Is brother to your father's wife! What's here?  
Arrest the wife herself?

*Cha.* You seem to think it  
A venial crime to plot against me. Well?

*D' O.* [*who has read the last paper.*] Wherefore am I  
thus ruined? Why not take

My life at once? This poor formality  
Is, let me say, unworthy you! Prevent it,  
You, madam! I have served you, am prepared  
For all disgraces—only, let disgrace  
Be plain, be proper—proper for the world  
To pass its judgment on 'twixt you and me!  
Take back your warrant—I will none of it.

*Cha.* Here is a man to talk of fickleness!  
He stakes his life upon my father's falsehood;  
I bid him—

*D' O.* Not you! Were he trebly false,  
You do not bid me—

*Cha.* Is't not written there?  
I thought so; give—I'll set it right.

*D' O.* Is it there?  
Oh, yes—and plain—arrest him—now—drag here  
Your father! And were all six times as plain,  
Do you suppose I'd trust it?

*Cha.* Just one word!  
 You bring him, taken in the act of flight,  
 Or else your life is forfeit.

*D'O.* Ay, to Turin  
 I bring him? And to-morrow?

*Cha.* Here and now?  
 The whole thing is a lie—a hateful lie—  
 As I believed and as my father said.  
 I knew it from the first, but was compelled  
 To circumvent you; and the crafty D'Ormea,  
 That baffled Alberoni and tricked Coscia,  
 The miserable sower of such discord  
 'Twixt sire and son, is in the toils at last!  
 Oh, I see! you arrive—this plan of yours,  
 Weak as it is, torments sufficiently  
 A sick, old, peevish man—wrings hasty speech  
 And ill-considered threats from him; that's noted;  
 Then out you ferret papers, his amusement  
 In lonely hours of lassitude—examine  
 The day-by-day report of your paid creatures—  
 And back you come—all was not ripe, you find,  
 And, as you hope, may keep from ripening yet—  
 But you were in bare time! Only, 'twere best  
 I never saw my father—these old men  
 Are potent in excuses—and, meantime,  
 D'Ormea's the man I cannot do without.

*Pol.* Charles—

*Cha.* Ah, no question! You're for D'Ormea to  
 You'd have me eat and drink, and sleep, live, die  
 With this lie coil'd about me, choking me!

No, no—he's caught! [*to D'ORMEA.*] You venture life,  
you say,

Upon my father's perfidy; and I  
Have, on the whole, no right to disregard  
The chains of testimony you thus wind  
About me; though I do—do from my soul  
Discredit them: still, I must authorize  
These measures—and I will. Perugia!

[*Many Officers enter.*] Count—

You and Solar, with all the force you have,  
Are at the Marquis' orders: what he bids,  
Implicitly perform! You are to bring  
A traitor here; the man that's likest one  
At present, fronts me; you are at his beck  
For a full hour; he undertakes to show you  
A fouler than himself,—but, failing that,  
Return with him, and, as my father lives,  
He dies this night! The clemency you've blamed  
So oft, shall be revoked—rights exercised  
That I've abjured.

[*To D'ORMEA.*] Now, Sir, about the work!  
To save your king and country! Take the warrant!

*D'O.* [*boldly to PERUGIA.*] You hear the Sovereign's  
mandate, Count Perugia?

Obeys me! As your diligence, expect  
Reward! All follow to Montecagliè!

*Cha.* [*in great anguish.*] D'Ormea! [*D'ORMEA goes.*  
He goes, lit up with that appalling smile!

[*To POLYXENA after a pause*

At least you understand all this?

*Pol.* These means  
Of our defence—these measures of precaution?

*Cha.* It must be the best way. I should have else  
Withered beneath his scorn.

*Pol.* What would you say?

*Cha.* Why, you don't think I mean to keep the crown  
Polyxena?

*Pol.* You then believe the story  
In spite of all—That Victor's coming?

*Cha.* Believe it?

I know that he is coming—feel the strength  
That has upheld me leave me at his coming!  
'Twas mine, and now he takes his own again.  
Some kinds of strength are well enough to have;  
But who's to have that strength? Let my crown go!  
I meant to keep it—but I cannot—cannot!  
Only, he shall not taunt me—he, the first—  
See if he would not be the first to taunt me  
With having left his kingdom at a word—  
With letting it be conquered without stroke—  
With . . . no—no—'tis no worse than when he left it.  
I've just to bid him take it, and, that over,  
We'll fly away—fly—for I loathe this Turin,  
This Rivoli, all titles loathe, and state.  
We'd best go to your country—unless God  
Send I die now!

*Pol.* Charles, hear me!

*Cha.* —And again  
Shall you be my Polyxena—you'll take me

Out of this woe! Yes, do speak—and keep speaking!  
 I would not let you speak just now, for fear  
 You'd counsel me against him: but talk, now,  
 As we two used to talk in blessed times:  
 Bid me endure all his caprices; take me  
 From this mad post above him!

*Pol.*

I believe

We are undone, but from a different cause.  
 All your resources, down to the least guard,  
 Are now at D'Ormea's beck. What if, this while,  
 He acts in concert with your father? We  
 Indeed were lost. This lonely Rivoli—  
 Where find a better place for them?

*Cha.* [ *pacing the room.*]

And why

Does Victor come? To undo all that's done!  
 Restore the past—prevent the future! Seat  
 His mistress in your seat, and place in mine  
 . . . Oh, my own people, whom will you find there,  
 To ask of, to consult with, to care for,  
 To hold up with your hands? Whom? One that's false—  
 False—from the head's crown to the foot's sole, false!  
 The best is, that I knew it in my heart  
 From the beginning, and expected this,  
 And hated you, Polyxena, because  
 You saw thro' him, though I too saw thro' him.  
 Saw that he meant this while he crowned me, while  
 He prayed for me,—nay, while he kissed my brow,  
 I saw—

*Pol.* But if your measures take effect

And D'Ormea's true to you?

*Cha.* Then worst of all  
 I shall have loosed that callous wretch on him!  
 Well may the woman taunt him with his child--  
 I, eating here his bread, clothed in his clothes,  
 Seated upon his seat, give D'Ormea leave  
 To outrage him! We talk—perchance they tear  
 My father from his bed—the old hands feel  
 For one who is not, but who should be there—  
 And he finds D'Ormea! D'Ormea, too, finds him  
 —The crowded chamber when the lights go out—  
 Closed doors—the horrid scuffle in the dark—  
 The accursed promptings of the minute! My guards,  
 To horse—and after, with me—and prevent!

*Pol.* [*seizing his hand.*] King Charles! Pause here  
 upon this strip of time  
 Ahotted you out of eternity!  
 Crowns are from God—in his name you hold yours.  
 Your life's no least thing, were it fit your life  
 Should be abjured along with rule; but now,  
 Keep both! Your duty is to live and rule—  
 You, who would vulgarly look fine enough  
 In the world's eye, deserting your soul's charge,—  
 Ay, you would have men's praise—this Rivoli  
 Would be illumined: while, as 'tis, no doubt,  
 Something of stain will ever rest on you;  
 No one will rightly know why you refused  
 To abdicate; they'll talk of deeds you could  
 Have done, no doubt,—nor do I much expect  
 Future achievements will blot out the past,



Envelop it in haze—nor shall we two  
 Be happy any more; 'twill be, I feel,  
 Only in moments that the duty's seen  
 As palpably as now—the months, the years  
 Of painful indistinctness are to come,  
 While daily must we tread these palace rooms  
 Pregnant with memories of the past: your eye  
 May turn to mine and find no comfort there,  
 Through fancies that beset me, as yourself,  
 Of other courses, with far other issues,  
 We might have taken this great night—such bear,  
 As I will bear! What matters happiness?  
 Duty! There's man's one moment—this is yours!

*[Putting the crown on his head, and the sceptre in his hand,  
 she places him on his seat: a long pause and silence.]*

*Enter D'ORMEA and VICTOR.*

*Vic.* At last I speak; but once—that once, to you!  
 'Tis you I ask, not these your varletry,  
 Who's King of us?

*Cha.* [*from his seat.*] Count Tende . .

*Vic.* What your spies

Assert I ponder in my soul, I say—  
 Here to your face, amid your guards! I choose  
 To take again the crown whose shadow I gave—  
 For still its potency surrounds the weak  
 White locks their felon hands have discomposed.  
 Or, I'll not ask who's King, but simply, who  
 Withholds the crown I claim? Deliver it!

I have no friend in the wide world : nor France  
Nor England cares for me : you see the sum  
Of what I can avail. Deliver it !

*Cha.* Take it, my father !

And now say in turn,  
Was it done well, my father—sure not well,  
To try me thus ! I might have seen much cause  
For keeping it—too easily seen cause !  
But, from that moment, e'en more woefully  
My life had pined away, than pine it will.  
Already you have much to answer for.  
My life to pine is nothing,—her sunk eyes  
Were happy once ! No doubt my people think  
'That I'm their King still . . . but I cannot strive !  
Take it !

*Vic.* [*one hand on the crown CHARLES offers, the  
other on his neck.*] So few years give it quietly,  
My son : It will drop from me. See you not ?  
A crown's unlike a sword to give away—  
That, let a strong hand to a weak hand give !  
But crowns should slip from palsied brows to heads  
Young as this head—yet mine is weak enough,  
E'en weaker than I knew. I seek for phrases  
To vindicate my right. 'Tis of a piece !  
All is alike gone by with me—who beat  
Once D'Orleans in his lines—his very lines !  
To have been Eugene's comrade, Louis's rival,  
And now . . .

*Cha.* [*putting the crown on him, to the rest.*] The  
King speaks, yet none kneels, I think !

*Vic.* I am then King! As I became a King  
 Despite the nations—kept myself a King—  
 So I die King, with Kingship dying too  
 Around me! I have lasted Europe's time!  
 What wants my story of completion? Where  
 Must needs the damning break show! Who mistrusts  
 My children here—tell they of any break  
 'Twixt my day's sunrise and its fiery fall?  
 And who were by me when I died but they?  
 Who?—D'Ormea there!

*Cha.* What means he?

*Vic.* Ever there!

Charles—how to save your story? Mine must go!  
 Say—say that you refused the crown to me—  
 Charles, yours shall be my story! You immured  
 Me, say, at Rivoli. A single year  
 I spend without a sight of you, then die—  
 That will serve every purpose—tell that tale  
 The world!

*Cha.* Mistrust me? Help!

*Vic.* Past help, past reach

'Tis in the heart—you cannot reach the heart:  
 This broke mine, that I did believe, you, Charles,  
 Would have denied and so disgraced me.

*Pol.* Charles

Has never ceased to be your subject, Sire:  
 He reigned at first through setting up yourself  
 As pattern: if he e'er seemed harsh to you,  
 'Twas from a too intense appreciation

Of your own character : he acted you—  
 Ne'er for an instant did I think it real,  
 Or look for any other than this end.  
 I hold him worlds the worse on that account ;  
 But so it was.

*Cha.* [to POLYX.] I love you, now, indeed !

[To VICTOR.] You never knew me !

*Vic.*

Hardly till this moment

When I seem learning many other things,  
 Because the time for using them is past.  
 If 'twere to do again ! That's idly wished.  
 Truthfulness might prove policy as good  
 As guile. Is this my daughter's forehead ?—Yes—  
 I've made it fitter now to be a Queen's  
 Than formerly—I've ploughed the deep lines there  
 Which keep too well a crown from slipping off !  
 No matter. Guile has made me King again.  
*Louis—'twas in King Victor's time—long since,*  
*When Louis reign'd—and, also, Victor reign'd—*  
 How the world talks already of us two !  
 God of eclipse and each discolour'd star,  
 Why do I linger then ?

Ha ! Where lurks he ?

D'Ormea ! Come nearer to your King ! Now stand !

[Collecting his strength as D'ORMEA approaches

But you lied, D'Ormea ! I do not repent.

[Dies

# COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY.

A Play.

---

"Ivy and violet, what do ye here.

"With lesson and shoot in the warm spring-weather,

"Hiding the arms of Monchenci and Vere?"

HANMER

---

**Dedication.**



NO ONE LOVES AND HONOURS BARRY CORNWALL MORE THAN  
ROBERT BROWNING DOES;

WHO, HAVING NOTHING BETTER THAN THIS PLAY TO  
GIVE HIM IN PROOF OF IT

MUST SAY SO.

## COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY.

---

### PERSONS.

COLOMBE OF RAVESTEIN, Duchess of Juliers and Cleves

SABYNE }  
ADOLF } Her Attendants.

GUIBERT }  
GAUCELME } Courtiers.  
MAUFROY }  
CLUGNET }

VALENCE, Advocate of Cleves.

PRINCE BERTHOLD, Claimant of the Duchy.

MELCHIOR, his Confidant.

PLACE, *The Palace at Juliers.*

TIME, 16—.

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### ACT I.

*Morning.* SCENE.—*A corridor leading to the Audience-Chamber.*

GAUCELME, CLUGNET, MAUFROY, and other Courtiers round GUIBERT, who is silently reading a paper: as he drops it at the end—

*Gui.* That this should be her birthday; and the day  
We all invested her, twelve months ago,  
As the late Duke's true heiress and our liege;  
And that this also must become the day . . .  
Oh, miserable lady!

*1st Court.* Ay, indeed?

*2d Court.* Well, Guibert?

*3d Court.* Put your news, my friend, your news!  
The sooner, friend, one learns Prince Berthold's pleasure  
The better for us all: how writes the Prince?  
Give me—I'll read it for the common good—

*Gui.* In time, sir—but, till time comes, pardon me!  
Our old Duke just disclosed his child's retreat,  
Declared her true succession to his rule,  
And died: this birthday was the day, last year,  
We convoyed her from Castle Ravestein—  
That sleeps out trustfully its extreme age  
On the Meuse's quiet bank, where she lived queen  
Over the water-buds,—to Juliers' Court  
With joy and bustle: here again we stand;  
Sir Gaucelme's buckle's constant to his cap—  
To-day's much such another sunny day!

*Gau.* Come, Guibert—this outgrows a jest, I think  
You're hardly such a novice as to need  
The lesson, you pretend.

*Gui.* What lesson, sir?  
That everybody, if he'd thrive at court,  
Should, first and last of all, look to himself?  
Why, no: and therefore, with your good example,  
(—Ho, Master Adolf!)—to myself I'll look.

*Enter ADOLF.*

*Gui.* The Prince's letter; why, of all men else,  
Comes it to me?



*Adolf.* By virtue of your place,  
 Sir Guibert! 'Twas the Prince's express charge,  
 His envoy told us, that the missive there  
 Should only reach our lady by the hand  
 Of whosoever held your place.

*Gui.* Enough! [*ADOLF retires*]  
 Then, gentles, who'll accept a certain poor  
 Indifferently honourable place,  
 My friends, I make no doubt, have gnashed their teeth  
 At leisure minutes these half-dozen years,  
 To find me never in the mood to quit?  
 —Who asks may have it, with my blessing, and—  
*This* to present our lady. Who'll accept?  
 You,—you,—you? There it lies, and may, for me!

*Mau.* [*a youth picking up the paper, reads aloud.*]  
 “Prince Berthold, proved by titles following  
 “Undoubted Lord of Juliers, comes this day  
 “To claim his own, with license from the Pope,  
 “The Emperor, the kings of Spain and France” . .

*Gau.* Sufficient “titles following.” I judge!  
 Don't read another! Well,—“to claim his own?”

*Mau.* “And take possession of the Duchy held  
 “Since twelve months, to the true heir's prejudice,  
 “By” . . . Colombe, Juliers' Mistress, so she thinks,  
 And Ravestein's mere lady, as we find!  
 Who wants the place and paper? Guibert's right!  
 I hope to climb a little in the world,—  
 I'd push my fortunes,—but, no more than he,  
 Could tell her on this happy day of days,

That, save the nosegay in her hand, perhaps,  
 There's nothing left to call her own! Sir Clugnet,  
 You famish for promotion; what say you?

*Clug.* [*an old man.*] To give this letter were a sort, I  
 take it,

Of service: services ask recompense:  
 What kind of corner may be Ravestein?

*Gui.* The castle?—Oh, you'd share her fortunes?  
 Good!

Three walls stand upright, full as good as four,  
 With no such bad remainder of a roof.

*Clug.* Oh,—but the Town?

*Gui.* Five houses, fifteen huts;

A church whereto was once a spire, 'tis judged:  
 And half a dyke, except in time of thaw.

*Clug.* Still, there's some revenue?

*Gui.* Else Heaven forefend!

You hang a beacon out, should fogs increase;  
 So when the autumn floats of pine-wood steer  
 Safe 'mid the white confusion, thanks to you,  
 Their grateful raftsmen fling a guilder in;  
 —That's if he means to pass your way next time.

*Clug.* If not?

*Gui.* Hang, guilders, then—he blesses you!

*Clug.* What man do you suppose me? Keep your paper  
 And let me say, it shows no handsome spirit  
 To dally with misfortune: keep your place!

*Gau.* Some one must tell her.

*Gui.* Some one may: you may

*Gau.* Sir Guibert, 'tis no trifle turns me sick  
 Of court-hypocrisy at years like mine,  
 But this goes near it. Where's there news at all?  
 Who'll have the face, for instance, to affirm  
 He never heard, e'en while we crown the girl,  
 That Juliers' tenure was by Salic law;  
 That one, confessed her father's cousin's child,  
 And, she away, indisputable heir,  
 Against our choice protesting and the Duke's,  
 Claimed Juliers?—nor, as he preferred his claim,  
 That first this, then another potentate,  
 Inclined to its allowance?—I, or you,  
 Or any one except the lady's self?  
 Oh, it had been the direst cruelty  
 To break the business to her! Things might change—  
 At all events, we'd see next masque at end,  
 Next mummerly over first: and so the edge  
 Was taken off sharp tidings as they came,  
 Till here's the Prince upon us, and there's she  
 —Wreathing her hair, a song between her lips,  
 With just the faintest notion possible  
 That some such claimant earns a livelihood  
 About the world, by feigning grievances  
 Few pay the story of, but grudge its price,  
 And fewer listen to, a second time.  
 Your method proves a failure; now try mine—  
 And, since this must be carried . . .

*Gui.* [*snatching the paper from him.*] By your leave  
 Your zeal transports you! 'Twill not serve the Prince

So much as you expect, this course you'd take ;  
 If she leaves quietly her palace,—well :  
 But if she died upon its threshold,—no :  
 He'd have the trouble of removing her !  
 Come, gentles, we're all—what the devil knows !  
 You, Gauceline, won't lose character, beside—  
 You broke your father's heart superiorly  
 'To gather his succession—never blush !  
 You're from my province, and, be comforted,  
 They tell of it with wonder to this day—  
 You can afford to let your talent sleep !  
 We'll take the very worst supposed, as true—  
 There, the old Duke knew, when he hid his child  
 Among the river flowers at Ravestein,  
 With whom the right lay ! Call the Prince our Duke  
 There, she's no Duchess, she's no any thing  
 More than a young maid with the bluest eyes—  
 And now, sirs, we'll not break this young maid's heart  
 Coolly as Gaucelme could and would ! No haste !  
 His talent's full-blown, ours but in the bud—  
 We'll not advance to his perfection yet—  
 Will we, Sir Maufroy ? See, I've ruined Maufroy  
 Forever as a courtier !

*Gau.* Here's a coil—

And, count us, will you ? Count its residue,  
 This boasted convoy, this day last year's crowd !  
 A birthday, too—a gratulation-day !  
 I'm dumb : bid *that* keep silence :

*Mau. and others.*

Eh, Sir Guibert ?

He's right : that does say something : that's bare truth.

Ten—twelve, I make : a perilous dropping-off !

*Gui.* Pooh—is it audience-hour ? The vestibule  
Swarms too, I wager, with the common sort  
That want our privilege of entry here.

*Gau.* Adolf ! [*Re-enter ADOLF.*] Who's outside ?

*Gui.* Oh, your looks suffice !

Nobody waiting ?

*Mau.* [*Looking through the door-folds.*] Scarce our  
number !

*Gui.* 'Sdeath !

Nothing to beg for, to complain about ?

It can't be ! Ill news spreads, but not so fast  
As thus to frighten all the world !

*Gau.* The world

Lives out of doors, sir—not with you and me  
By presence-chamber porches, state-room stairs,  
Wherever warmth's perpetual : outside's free  
To every wind from every compass-point,  
And who may get nipped needs be weather-wise.  
The Prince comes and the lady's People go ;  
The snow-goose settles down, the swallows flee—  
Why should they wait for winter-time ? 'Tis instinct ;  
Don't you feel somewhat chilly ?

*Gui.* That's their craft ?

And last year's crowd-ers-round and eriers-forth,  
That strewed the garlands, overarched the roads,  
Lit up the bonfires, sang the loyal songs !  
Well, 'tis my comfort, you could never call me

The People's Friend! The People keep their word—  
I keep my place: don't doubt I'll entertain  
The People when the Prince comes, and the People  
Are talked of!—Then, their speeches—no one tongue  
Found respite, not a pen had holiday  
—For they wrote, too, as well as spoke, these knaves!  
Now see: we tax and tithe them, pill and poll,  
They wince and fret enough, but pay they must  
—We manage that,—so pay with a good grace  
They might as well, it costs so little more.  
But when we've done with taxes, meet folk next  
Outside the toll-booth and the rating-place,  
In public—there they have us if they will,  
We're at their mercy after that, you see—  
For one tax not ten devils could extort;  
Over and above necessity, a grace;  
This prompt disbosoming of love, to wit—  
Their vine-leaf-wrappage of our tribute-penny,  
And crowning attestation, all works well—  
Yet this precisely do they thrust on us!  
These cappings quick, and crook-and-cringings low,  
Hand to the heart, and forehead to the knee,  
With grin that shuts the eyes and opes the mouth—  
So tender they their love; and tender made,  
Go home to curse you, the first doit you ask;  
As if their souls were any longer theirs!  
As if they had not given ample warrant  
To who should clap a collar on their neck,  
Rings in their nose, a goad to either flank,

And take them for the brute they boast themselves!

—Stay—there's a bustle at the outer door—

And somebody entreating . . . that's my name!

Adolf,—I heard my name!

*Adolf.* 'Twas probably

The Suitor.

*Gui.* Oh, there is one?

*Adolf.* With a suit

He'd fain enforce in person.

*Gui.* The good heart

—And the great fool. Just ope the mid-door's fold—

Is that a lappet of his cloak, I see?

*Adolf.* If it bear plenteous signs of travel . . . ay,  
The very cloak my comrades tore!

*Gui.* Why tore!

*Adolf.* He seeks the Duchess' presence in that trim:  
Since daybreak, was he posted hereabouts  
Lest he should miss the moment.

*Gui.* Where's he now?

*Adolf.* Gone for a minute possibly, not more.

They have ado enough to thrust him back.

*Gui.* Ay—but my name, I caught?

*Adolf.* Oh, sir—he said

—What was it?—You had known him formerly,

And, he believed, would help him; did you guess

He waited now—you promised him as much—

The old plea!—'Faith, he's back.—renews the charge!

[*Speaking at the door.*] So long as the man parleys,  
peace outside!

Nor be too ready with your halberts, there!





To take me fuller of what news I bring  
 As I return—for I must needs return!  
 —Can I? 'Twere hard, no listener for their wrongs,  
 To turn them back upon the old despair—  
 Harder, Sir Guibert, than imploring thus—  
 So I do—any way you please—implore!  
 If you . . . but how should you remember Cleves?  
 Yet they of Cleves remember you so well!  
 —Ay, comment on each trait of you they keep,  
 Your words and deeds caught up at second hand,—  
 Proud, I believe, at bottom of their hearts.  
 Of the very levity and recklessness  
 Which only prove that you forget their wrongs.  
 Cleves, the grand town, whose men and women starve.  
 Is Cleves forgotten?—Then remember me!  
 You promised me that you would help me once  
 For other purpose: will you keep your word?

*Gui.* And who may you be, friend?

*Val.* Valence of Cleves

*Gui.* Valence of . . . not the Advocate of Cleves  
 I owed my whole estate to, three years back?  
 Ay, well may you keep silence! Why my lords,  
 You've heard, I'm sure, how, Pentecost three years,  
 I was so nearly ousted of my land  
 By some knaves' pretext,—(eh? when you refused me  
 Your ugly daughter, Clugnet.)—and you've heard  
 How I recovered it by miracle  
 —(When I refused her)! Here's the very friend,  
 —Valence of Cleves, all parties have to thank!

Nay, Valence, this procedure's vile in you—  
 I'm no more grateful than a courtier should,  
 But politic am I—I bear a brain,  
 Can cast about a little, might require  
 Your services a second time! I tried  
 To tempt you with advancement here to court  
 —“No!”—well, for curiosity at least  
 To view our life here—“No!”—our Duchess, then,—  
 —A pretty woman's worth some pains to see,  
 Nor is she spoiled, I take it, if a crown  
 Completes the forehead pale and tresses pure. . .

*Val.* Our city trusted me its miseries,  
 And I am come.

*Gui.* So much for taste! But “come,”—  
 So may you be, for any thing I know,  
 To beg the Pope's cross, or Sir Clugnet's daughter,  
 And with an equal chance you get all three!  
 If it was ever worth your while to come,  
 Was not the proper way worth finding too?

*Val.* Straight to the palace-portal, sir, I came—

*Gui.* —And said?—

*Val.* —That I had brought the miseries  
 Of a whole city to relieve.

*Gui.* —Which saying  
 Won your admittance? You saw me, indeed,  
 And here, no doubt, you stand: as certainly,  
 My intervention, I shall not dispute,  
 Procures you audience; which, if I procure,  
 That paper's closely written—by Saint Paul,

Here flock the Wrongs, follow the Remedies,  
 Chapter and verse, One, Two, A, B, and C—  
 Perhaps you'd enter, make a reverence,  
 And launch these "miserics" from first to last?

*Val.* How should they let me pause or turn aside?

*Gau.* [to VALENCE.] My worthy sir, one question:  
 you've come straight

From Cleves, you tell us: heard you any talk  
 At Cleves about our lady?

*Val.* Much.

*Gau.* And what?

*Val.* Her wish was to redress all wrongs she knew.

*Gau.* That, you believed?

*Val.* You see me, sir!

*Gau.* —Nor stopped

Upon the road from Cleves to Juliers here,  
 For any—rumours you might find afloat?

*Val.* I had my townsmen's wrongs to busy me.

*Gau.* This is the Lady's birthday, do you know?  
 —Her day of pleasure?

*Val.* —I know that the Great,

For Pleasure born, should still be on the watch  
 To exclude Pleasure when a Duty offers:  
 Even as, the Lowly too, for Duty born,  
 May ever snatch a pleasure if in reach:  
 Both will have plenty of their birthright, sir!

*Gau.* [Aside to GUIBERT.] Sir Guibert, here's your  
 man! No scruples now—

You'll never find his like! Time presses hard.

I've seen your drift and Adolf's too, this while,  
 But you can't keep the hour of audience back  
 Much longer, and at noon the Prince arrives.

[*Pointing to VALENCE.*] Entrust *him* with it—fool no  
 chance away!

*Gui.* —Him?

*Gau.* —With the missive! What's the  
 man to her?

*Gui.* No bad thought!—Yet, 'tis yours—who ever  
 played

The tempting serpent—else, 'twere no bad thought '  
 I should—and do—mistrust it for your sake,  
 Or else . . .

*Enter an Official who communicates with ADOLF.*

*Adolf.* The Duchess will receive the Court!

*Gui.* Give us a moment, Adolf! Valence, friend,  
 I'll help you: we of the service, you're to mark,  
 Have special entry, while the herd . . . the folks  
 Outside, get access through our help alone  
 —Well, it is so, was so, and I suppose  
 So ever will be—your natural lot is, therefore,  
 To wait your turn and opportunity,  
 And probably miss both. Now, I engage  
 To set you, here and in a minute's space,  
 Before the lady with full leave to plead  
 Chapter and verse, and A, and B, and C,  
 To heart's content.

*Val.* I grieve that I must ask.

This being, yourself admit, the custom here,  
To what the price of such a favour mounts?

*Gui.* Just so! You're not without a courtier's tact!  
Little at court, as your quick instinct prompts,  
Do such as we without a recompense.

*Val.* Yours is?—

*Gui.* A trifle: here's a document  
'Tis some one's duty to present her Grace —  
I say, not mine—these say, not theirs—such points  
Have weight at court. Will you relieve us all  
And take it?—Just say, “I am bidden lay  
“This paper at the Duchess' feet.”

*Val.* No more?

I thank you, sir!

*Adolf.* Her Grace receives the Court!

*Gui.* [*Aside.*] Now, *sursum corda*, quoth the mass-  
priest! Do—

Whoever's my kind saint, do let alone  
These pushings to and fro, and pullings back;  
Peaceably let me hang o'the devil's arm  
The downward path, if you can't pluck me off  
Completely! Let me live quite his, or yours!

[*The Courtiers begin to range themselves, and move towards  
the door.*]

After me, Valence! So our famous Cleves  
Lacks bread? Yet don't we gallants buy their lace?  
And dear enough—it beggars me, I know,  
To keep my very gloves fringed properly!  
This, Valence, is our Great State Hall you cross:

Yon gray urn's veritable marcasite,  
 The Pope's gift ; and those salvers testify  
 The Emperor. Presently you'll set your foot  
 . . . But you don't speak, friend Valence !

*Val.*

I shall speak.

*Gau.* [*Aside to GUIBERT.*] Guibert—it were no such  
 ungraceful thing

If you and I, at first, seemed horrorstruck  
 With the bad news. Look here, what you shall do !  
 Suppose you, first, clap hand to sword and cry  
 "Yield strangers our allegiance ? First I'll perish  
 "Beside your Grace !"—and so give me the cue  
 To . . .

*Gui.* Clap your hand to note-book and jot down  
 That to regale the Prince with ? I conceive !  
 [*To VALENCE.*] Do, Valence, speak, or I shall half suspect  
 You're plotting to supplant us, me the first,  
 If the Lady's favour : is't the grand harangue  
 You mean to make, that thus engrosses you ?  
 —Which of her virtues you'll apostrophize ?  
 Or is't the fashion you aspire to start,  
 Of that close-curl'd, not unbecoming hair ?  
 —Or what else ponder you ?

*Val.*

My townsmen's wrongs !

## ACT II.

Noon. SCENE.—*The Presence-chamber.*

*The DUCHESS and SABYNE.*

*The D.* Announce that I am ready for the Court!

*Sab.* 'Tis scarcely audience-hour, I think—your Grace  
May best consult your own relief, no doubt,  
And shun the crowd; but few can have arrived . .

*The D.* Let those not yet arrived, then, keep away  
'Twas *me*, this day, last year at Ravestein,  
You hurried. It has been full time, beside,  
This half-hour. Do you hesitate?

*Sab.*

Forgive me!

*The D.* Stay, Sabyne; let me hasten to make sure  
Of one true thanker: here with you begins  
My audience, claim you first its privilege!  
It is my birth's event they celebrate—  
You need not wish me more such happy days,  
But—ask some favour! Have you none to ask?  
Has Adolf none, then? this was far from least  
Of much I waited for impatiently,  
Assure yourself! It seemed so natural  
Your gift, beside this bunch of river-bells,  
Should be the power and leave of doing good  
To you, and greater pleasure to myself:  
You ask my leave to-day to marry Adolf?  
The rest is my concern.

*Sab.* Your grace is ever  
Our Lady of dear Ravestein,—but, for Adolf . . .

*The D.* “But”? You have not, sure, changed in  
your regard

And purpose towards him?

*Sab.* We change!

*The D.* Well, then? Well?

*Sab.* How could we two be happy, and, most like,  
Leave Juliers, when . . . when . . . But 'tis audience-time!

*The D.* “When, if you left me, I were left indeed”—  
Would you subjoin that?—Bid the Court approach!  
—Why should we play thus with each other, Sabyne?

Do I not know, if courtiers prove remiss,  
If friends detain me, and get blame for it,  
There is a cause? Of last year's fervid throng  
Scarce one half comes now!

*Sab.* [*Aside.*] One half? No, alas!

*The D.* So can the mere suspicion of a cloud  
Over my fortunes strike each loyal heart.  
They've heard of this Prince Berthold; and, forsooth,  
Each foolish arrogant pretence he makes,  
May grow more foolish and more arrogant,  
They please to apprehend! I thank their love!  
Admit them!

*Sab.* [*Aside.*] How much has she really learned?

*The D.* Surely, whoever's absent, Tristan waits?  
—Or at least Romuald, whom my father raised  
From nothing—come, he's faithful to me, come!  
(Sabyne, I should but be the prouder—yes,



And fitter to comport myself aright)  
 Not Romuald? Xavier—what said he to that?  
 For Xavier hates a parasite, I know!

[SABYNE goes out

*The D.* Well, sunshine's everywhere, and summer too;  
 Next year 'tis the old place again, perhaps—  
 The water-breeze again, the birds again  
 . . . It cannot be! It is too late to be!  
 What part had I, or choice in all of it?  
 Hither they brought me; I had not to think  
 Nor care, concern myself with doing good  
 Or ill, my task was just—to live—to live,  
 And, answering ends there was no need explain,  
 To render Juliers happy—so they said.  
 All could not have been falsehood! Some was love,  
 And wonder and obedience—I did all  
 They looked for! Why then cease to do it now?  
 Yet this is to be calmly set aside,  
 And—ere next birthday's dawn, for aught I know,  
 Things change, a claimant may arrive, and I . . .  
 It cannot nor it shall not be! His right?  
 Well then, he has the right, and I have not,  
 —But who bade all of you surround my life  
 And close its growth up with your Ducal crown  
 Which, plucked off rudely, leaves me perishing?  
 I could have been like one of you,—loved, hoped,  
 Feared, lived and died like one of you—but you  
 Would take that life away and give me this,  
 And I will keep this! I will face you—Come!

*Enter the Courtiers and VALENCE.*

*The Courtiers.* Many such happy mornings to your Grace!

*The D.* [*Aside, as they pay their devoir.*] The same words—the same faces,—the same love!

I have been over-fearful. These are few—  
But these, at least, stand firmly—these are mine!  
As many come as may, and if no more,  
'Tis that these few suffice—they do suffice!  
What succour may not next year bring me! Plainly  
I feared too soon! [*to the Court.*] I thank you, sirs.  
all thanks!

*Val.* [*Aside, as the DUCHESS passes from one group to another, conversing.*]

'Tis she—the vision this day last year brought,  
When for a golden moment at our Cleves  
She tarried in her progress hither. Cleves  
Chose me to speak its welcome, and I spoke  
—Not that she could have noted the recluse  
—Ungainly, old before his time—who gazed—  
. . . Well, Heaven's gifts are not wasted, and that gaze  
Kept, and shall keep me to the end, her own!  
She was above it—but so would not sink  
My gaze to earth! The People caught it, hers—  
Thenceforward, mine; but thus entirely mine,  
Who shall affirm, had she not raised my soul  
Ere she retired and left me—them?—She turns—  
There's all her wondrous face at once! The ground

Reels and . . . [*suddenly occupying himself with his paper.*] These wrongs of theirs I have to plead!

*The D.* [*to the Court.*] Nay, compliment enough! And kindness' self

Should pause before it wish me more such years.

'Twas fortunate that thus, ere youth escaped,

I tasted life's pure pleasure—one such, pure,

Is worth a thousand, mixed—and youth's for pleasure :

Mine is received ; let my age pay for it.

*Gau.* So, pay, and pleasure paid for, thinks your Grace,  
Should never go together ?

*Gui.*

How, Sir Gaucelme ?

Hurry one's feast down unenjoyingly

At the snatched breathing-intervals of work ?

As good you saved it till the dull day's-end

When, stiff and sleepy, appetite is gone !

Eat first, then work upon the strength of it !

*The D.* True : you enable me to risk my Future.

By giving me a Past beyond recall.

I lived, a girl, one happy leisure year :

Let me endeavour to be the Duchess now !

And so,—what news, Sir Guibert, spoke you of ?

[*As they advance a little, and GUIBERT speaks—*

—That gentleman ?

*Val.* [*Aside.*] I feel her eyes on me !

*Gui.* [*to VALENCE.*] The Duchess, sir, inclines to hear  
your suit !

Advance ! He is from Cleves.

*Val.* [*coming forward.* [*Aside.*] Their wrongs—their  
wrongs !

*The D.* And you, sir, are from Cleves? How fresh in  
mind,

The hour or two I passed at queenly Cleves!

She entertained me bravely, but the best

Of her good pageant seemed its standers-by,

With insuppressive joy on every face!

What says my ancient, famous, happy Cleves?

*Val.* Take the truth, lady—you are made for truth!

So think my friends: nor do they less deserve

The having you to take it, you shall think,

When you know all—nay, when you only know

How, on that day you recollect at Cleves,

When the poor acquiescing multitude

Who thrust themselves with all their woes apart

Into unnoticed corners, that the few

Their means sufficed to muster trappings for,

Might fill the foreground, occupy your sight

With joyous faces fit to bear away

And boast of as a sample of all Cleves

—How, when to daylight these crept out once more,

Clutching, unconscious, each his empty rags

Whence the scant coin, which had not half bought bread,

That morn he shook forth, counted piece by piece,

And, well-advisedly, on perfumes spent them

To burn, or flowers to strew, before your path

—How, when the golden flood of music and bliss

Ebbed, as their moon retreated, and again

Left the sharp black-point rocks of misery bare

—Then I, their friend, had only to suggest

“Saw she the horror as she saw the pomp!”—  
 And as one man they cried “He speaks the truth—  
 “Show her the horror! Take from our own mouths  
 “Our wrongs and show them, she will see them too!”  
 —This they cried, lady! I have brought the wrongs.

*The D.* Wrongs? Cleves has wrongs—apparent now  
 and thus?

I thank you—in that paper?—Give it me!

*Val.* (There, Cleves!) In this! (What did I promise,  
 Cleves?)

Our weavers, clothiers, spinners are reduced  
 Since . . . Oh, I crave your pardon—I forget  
 I buy the privilege of this approach,  
 And promptly would discharge my debt. I lay  
 This paper humbly at the Duchess’ feet!

[Presenting GUBERT’S paper

*Gui.* Stay—for the present . . .

*The D.* Stay, sir? I take aught

That teaches me their wrongs with greater pride  
 Than this your Ducal circlet. Thank you, sir!

[*The DUCHESS reads hastily; then, turning to the Courtiers—*

What have I done to you? Your deed or mine  
 Was it, this crowning me? I gave myself  
 No more a title to your homage, no,  
 Than church-flowers, born this season, wrote the words  
 In the saint’s-book that sanctified them first.  
 For such a flower, you plucked me—well, you erred—  
 Well, ’twas a weed—remove the eyesore quick!  
 But should you not remember it has lain

Steeped in the candles' glory, palely shrined,  
 Nearer God's Mother than most earthly things?  
 —That if't be faded 'tis with prayer's sole breath—  
 That the one day it boasted was God's day?  
 Still, I do thank you—had you used respect  
 Here might I dwindle to my last white leaf,  
 Here lose life's latest freshness, which even yet  
 May yield some wandering insect rest and food:  
 So, fling me forth, and—all is best for all!

[*After a pause.*] Prince Berthold, who art Juliers' Duke,  
 it seems—

The King's choice, and the Emperor's, and the Pope's—  
 Be mine, too! Take this people! Tell not me  
 Of rescripts, precedents, authorities,  
 —But take them, from a heart that yearns to give!  
 Find out their love,—I could not; find their fear,—  
 I would not; find their like,—I never shall,  
 Among the flowers! [*Taking off her coronet.*]

Colombe of Ravestein

Thanks God she is no longer Duchess here!

*Val.* [*advancing to GUBERT.*] Sir Guibert,—knight,  
 they call you—this of mine  
 Is the first step I ever set at court.  
 You dared make me your instrument, I find;  
 For that, so sure as you and I are men,  
 We reckon to the utmost presently:  
 But as you are a courtier and I none,  
 Your knowledge may instruct me. I, already,  
 Have too far outraged, by my ignorance

Of courtier-ways, this lady, to proceed  
 A second step and risk addressing her  
 —I am degraded—you, let me address!  
 Out of her presence, all is plain enough  
 What I shall do—but in her presence, too,  
 Surely there's something proper to be done!  
 [*To the others.*] You, gentles, tell me if I guess aright—  
 May I not strike this man to earth?

*The Courtiers.* [*as GUIBERT springs forward, with-  
 holding him.*] Let go!

—The Clothiers' spokesman, Guibert? Grace a churl?

*The D.* [*to VALENCE.*] Oh, be acquainted with your  
 party, sir!

He's of the oldest lineage Juliers boasts;  
 A lion crests him for a cognizance;  
 "Scorning to waver"—that's his 'scutecheon's word;  
 His office with the new Duke—probably  
 The same in honour as with me; or more,  
 By so much as this gallant turn deserves;  
 He's now, I dare say, of a thousand times  
 The rank and influence that remain with her  
 Whose part you take! So, lest for taking it  
 You suffer . . .

*Val.* I may strike him then to earth?

*Gui.* [*falling on his knee.*] Great and dear lady,  
 pardon me! Hear once!

Believe me and be merciful—be just!

I could not bring myself to give that paper

Without a keener pang than I dared meet

—And so felt Clugnet here, and Maufroy here  
 —No one dared meet it. Protestation's cheap,—  
 But, if to die for you did any good,  
 [*To GAUCELME.*] Would not I die, sir? Say your worst  
 of me!

But it does no good, that's the mournful truth.  
 And since the hint of a resistance, even,  
 Would just precipitate, on you the first,  
 A speedier ruin—I shall not deny,  
 Saving myself indubitable pain,  
 I thought to give you pleasure (who might say?)  
 By showing that your only subject found  
 To carry the sad notice, was the man  
 Precisely ignorant of its contents;  
 A nameless, mere provincial advocate;  
 One whom 'twas like you never saw before,  
 Never would see again. All has gone wrong;  
 But I meant right, God knows, and you, I trust!

*The D.* A nameless advocate, this gentleman?—  
 —(I pardon you, Sir Guibert!)

*Gui.* [*rising, to VALENCE.*]—Sir, and you?—

*Val.* —Rejoice that you are lightened of a load.  
 Now, you have only me to reckon with!

*The D.* One I have never seen, much less obliged?—

*Val.* Dare I speak, lady?

*The D.* Dare you! Heard you not  
 I rule no longer?

*Val.* Lady, if your rule  
 Were based alone on such a ground as these

[*Pointing to the Courtiers.*]



Could furnish you,—abjure it! They have hidden  
A source of true dominion from your sight.

*The D.* You hear them—no such source is left . . .

*Val.* Hear Cleves!

Whose haggard craftsmen rose to starve this day,  
Starve now, and will lie down at night to starve,  
Sure of a like to-morrow—but as sure  
Of a most unlike morrow-after-that,  
Since end things must, end howsoe'er things may.  
What curbs the brute-force instinct in its hour?  
What makes, instead of rising, all as one,  
And teaching fingers, so expert to wield  
Their tool, the broadsword's play or carbine's trick,  
—What makes that there's an easier help, they think,  
For you whose name so few of them can spell,  
Whose face scarce one in every hundred saw,  
You simply have to understand their wrongs,  
And wrongs will vanish—so, still trades are plied,  
And swords lie rusting, and myself stand here?  
There is a vision in the heart of each  
Of justice, mercy, wisdom; tenderness  
To wrong and pain, and knowledge of its cure—  
And these, embodied in a woman's form  
That best transmits them pure as first received,  
From God above her, to mankind below.  
Will you derive your rule from such a ground,  
Or rather hold it by the suffrage, say,  
Of this man—this—and this?

*The D.* [*after a pause.*] You come from Cleves—  
How many are at Cleves of such a mind?

*Val.* [*from his paper.*] "We, all the manufacturers of Cleves"—

*The D.* Or stay, sir—lest I seem too covetous—  
Are you my subject? such as you describe  
Am I to you—though to no other man?

*Val.* [*from his paper.*]—"Valence ordained your Advocate at Cleves"—

*The D.* [*replacing the coronet.*] Then I remain Cleves  
Duchess! Take you note,  
While Cleves but yields one subject of this stamp,  
I stand her lady till she waves me off!  
For her sake, all the Prince claims I withhold;  
Laugh at each menace; and, his power defying,  
Return his missive with its due contempt!

[*Casting it away.*]

*Gui.* [*picking it up.*]—Which to the Prince I will  
deliver, Lady,

[*Note it down, Gancelme.*]—with your message too!

*The D.* I think the office is a subject's, sir!  
—Either . . . how style you him?—my special guarder  
The Marshal's—for who knows but violence  
May follow the delivery!—Or, perhaps,  
My Chancellor's—for law may be to urge  
On its receipt!—Or, even my Chamberlain's—  
For I may violate established form!

[*To VALENCE.*] Sir,—for the half-hour till this service  
ends,

Will you become all these to me?

*Val.* [*falling on his knee.*] My liege?

*The D.* Give me!

[*The Courtiers present their badges of office*

[*Putting them by.*]—Whatever was their virtue once,  
They need new consecration! [*raising VALENCE.*] Are  
you mine?

—I will be Duchess yet! [*She retires*

*The Courtiers.* Our Duchess yet!

A glorious lady! Worthy love and dread!  
I'll stand by her,—and I, whate'er betide!

*Gui.* [*to VALENCE.*] Well done, well done, sir! I care  
not who knows,

You have done nobly, and I envy you—

Tho' I am but unfairly used, I think:

For when one gets a place like this I hold,

One gets too the remark that its mere wages,

The pay and the preferment, make our prize—

Talk about zeal and faith apart from these,

We're laughed at—much would zeal and faith subsist

Without these also! Yet, let these be stopped,

Dur wages discontinue,—then, indeed,

Our zeal and faith, we hear on every side,

Are not released—having been pledged away

I wonder with what zeal and faith in turn?

Hard money purchased me my place! No, no—

I'm right, sir—but your wrong is better still,

If I had time and skill to argue it.

Therefore, I say, I'll serve you, how you please—

If you like,—fight you, as you seem to wish—

'The kinder of me that, in sober truth,

[never dreamed I did you any harm)—

*Gau.* Or, kinder still, you'll introduce, no doubt,  
His merits to the prince who's just at hand,  
And let no hint drop he's made Chancellor,  
And Chamberlain, and Heaven knows what beside!

*Clug.* [to VALENCE.] You stare, young sir, and threaten!

Let me say,  
That at your age, when first I came to court,  
I was not much above a gentleman;  
While now . . .

*Val.* —You are Head-Lackey? With your office  
I have not yet been graced, sir!

*Other Courtiers to Clug.* Let him talk!  
Fidelity—disinterestedness—  
Excuse so much! Men claimed my worship ever  
Who, stanch and steadfastly . . .

*Enter ADOLF.*

*Adolf.* The Prince arrives!

*Courtiers.* Ha? How?

*Adolf.* He leaves his guard a stage behind  
At Aix, and enters almost by himself.

*1st Court.* The Prince! This foolish business puts  
all out!

*2d Court.* Let Gaucelme speak first!

*3d Court.* Better I began  
About the state of Juliers—should one say  
All's prosperous and inviting him?

*4th Court.* —Or rather  
All's prostrate and imploring him!

*5th Court.* That's best!  
 Where's the Cleves' paper, by the way?  
*4th Court.* [to VALENCE.] Sir—sir—  
 If you'll but give that paper—trust it me,  
 I'll warrant . . .  
*5th Court.* Softly, sir—the Marshal's duty!  
*Clug.* Has not the Chamberlain a hearing first  
 By virtue of his patent?  
*Gau.* Patents?—Duties?  
 All that, my masters, must begin again!  
 One word composes the whole controversy—  
 We're simply—now the Prince's!  
*The Others.* Ay—the Prince's!

*Enter SABYNE.*

*Sab.* Adolf! Bid . . . Oh, no time for ceremony!  
 Where's whom our lady calls her only subject?  
 She needs him! Who is here the Duchess's?  
*Val.* [starting from his reverie.] Most gratefully I fol-  
 low to her feet!

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### ACT III.

*Afternoon.* SCENE.—*The Vestibule.*

*Enter PRINCE BERTHOLD and MELCHIOR.*

*Berth.* A thriving little burgh this Juliers looks.  
 [Half-apart.] Keep Juliers, and as good you kept Cologne:  
 Better try Aix, though!—

*Mel.* Please 't your Highness speak?

*Berth.* [*as before.*] Aix, Cologne, Frankfort,—  
Milan ;—Rome !—

*Mel.* —The Grave.

—More weary seems your Highness, I remark,  
Than sundry conquerors whose path I've watched  
Through fire and blood to any prize they gain.  
I could well wish you, for your proper sake,  
Had met some shade of opposition here  
—Found a blunt seneschal refuse unlock,  
Or a scared usher lead your steps astray.  
You must not look for next achievement's palm  
So easy : this will hurt your conquering !

*Berth.* My next? Ay—as you say, my next and next  
Well, I am tired, that's truth, and moody too,  
This quiet entrance-morning ; listen why !  
Our little burgh, now, Juliers—'tis indeed  
One link, however insignificant,  
Of the great chain by which I reach my hope—  
—A link I must secure ; but otherwise,  
You'd wonder I esteemed it worth my grasp.  
Just see what life is, with its shifts and turns !  
It happens now—this very nook—to be  
A place that once . . . but a short while since, neither—  
When I lived an ambiguous hanger-on  
Of foreign courts, and bore my claims about,  
Discarded by one kinsman, and the other  
A poor priest merely,—then, I say, this place  
Shone my ambition's object ; to be Duke—  
Seemed then what to be Emperor seems now.

My rights were far from being judged as plain,  
 In those days as of late, I promise you—  
 And 'twas my day-dream, Lady Colombe here  
 Might e'en compound the matter, pity me,  
 Be struck, say, with my chivalry and grace  
 (I was a boy!)—bestow her hand at length,  
 And make me Duke, in her right if not mine.  
 Here am I, Duke confessed, at Juliers now!  
 Hearken: if ever I be Emperor,  
 Remind me what I felt and said to-day!

*Mel.* All this consoles a bookish man like me!  
 —And so will weariness cling to you! Wrong--  
 Wrong! Had you sought the Lady's court yourself,—  
 Faced the redoubtables composing it,  
 Flattered this, threatened that man, bribed the other,—  
 Pledged, by writ and word and deed, your cause,—  
 Conquered a footing inch by painful inch,—  
 And, after long years' struggle, pounced at last  
 On her for prize,—the right life had been lived,  
 And justice done to divers faculties  
 Shut in that brow: yourself were visible  
 As you stood victor, then! whom now—(your pardon!)  
 I am forced narrowly to search and see—  
 So are you hid by helps—this Pope, your uncle—  
 Your cousin, the other King! You are a Mind,—  
 They, Body: too much of mere legs-and-arms  
 Obstructs the mind so! Match these with their like—  
 Match mind with mind!

*Berth.*

And where's your mind to match?

They show me legs-and-arms to cope withal!  
I'd subjugate this city—where's its mind?

[*The Courtiers enter slowly*

*Mel.* Got out of sight when you came troops and all  
And in its stead, here greets you flesh-and-blood—  
A smug œconomy of both, this first!

[*As CLUGNET bows obsequiously*

Well done, gout, all considered!—I may go?

*Berth.* Help me receive them!

*Mel.* Oh, they just will say

What yesterday at Aix their fellows said,—  
At Treves, the day before!—Sir Prince, my friend,  
Why do you let your life slip thus?—Meantime,  
I have my little Juliers to achieve—  
The understanding this tough Platonist,  
Your holy uncle disinters, Amelius—  
Lend me a company of horse and foot,  
To help me through his tractate—gain my Duchy!

*Berth.* And Empire, after that is gained, will be—?

*Mel.* To help me through your uncle's comment  
Prince! [ *Goes*

*Berth.* Ah? Well! he o'er-refines—the scholar's fault  
How do I let my life slip? Say, this life,  
I lead now, differs from the common life  
Of other men in mere degree, not kind,  
Of joys and griefs,—still there is such degree—  
Mere largeness in a life is something, sure,—  
Enough to care about and struggle for,  
In this world: for this world, the Size of things;



The Sort of things, for that to come, no doubt!

A great is better than a little aim—

And when I wooed Priscilla's rosy mouth

And failed so, under that gray convent-wall,

Was I more happy than I should be now

[*By this time the Courtiers are ranged before him*

If failing of my Empire? Not a whit!

—Here comes the Mind, it once had tasked me sore

To baffle, but for my advantages!

All's best as 'tis—these scholars talk and talk!

[*Seats himself.*

*The Courtiers.* Welcome our Prince to Juliers!— to  
his Heritage!

Our dutifullest service proffer we!

*Clug.* I, please your Highness, having exercised  
The function of Grand Chamberlain at Court,  
With much acceptance, as men testify . . .

*Berth.* I cannot greatly thank you, gentlemen!  
The Pope declares my claim to the Duchy founued  
On strictest justice; if you concede it, therefore.

I do not wonder—and the kings my friends  
Protesting they will see such claim enforced.

You easily may offer to assist us.

But there's a slight discretionary power

To serve me in the matter, you've had long,

Though late you use it. This is well to say—

But could you not have said it months ago?

I'm not denied my own Duke's truncheon, true—

'Tis fling me—I stoop down, and from the ground

Pick it, with all you placid standers-by—  
 And now I have it, gems and mire at once,  
 Grace go with it to my soiled hands, you say!

*Gui.* (By Paul, the Advocate our doughty friend  
 Cuts the best figure !)

*Gau.* If our ignorance  
 May have offended, sure our loyalty . . .

*Berth.* Loyalty? Yours?—Oh—of yourselves you  
 speak!

--I mean the Duchess all this time, I hope!  
 And since I have been forced repeat my claims  
 As if they never had been made before,  
 As I began, so must I end, it seems.  
 The formal answer to the grave demand—  
 What says the lady?

*Courtiers.* [one to another.] 1st Court. Marshal!  
 2d Court. Orator!

*Gui.* A variation of our mistress' way!  
 Wipe off his boots' dust, Clugnet?—that, he waits!

1st Court. Your place!

2d Court. Just now it was your own!

*Gui.* The devil's!

*Berth.* [to GUIBERT.] Come forward, friend—you with  
 the paper, there!

Is Juliers the first city I've obtained?  
 By this time, I may boast proficiency  
 In each decorum of the circumstance!  
 Give it me as she gave it—the petition  
 (Demand, you style it)—what's required, in brief?

What title's reservation, appanage's  
Allowance?—I heard all at Treves, last week!

*Gau.* [to GUIBERT.] "Give it him as she gave it!"

*Gui.* And why not?

[To BERTHOLD.] The lady crushed your summons thus  
together,

And bade me, with the very greatest scorn  
So fair a frame could hold, inform you . .

*Courtiers.* Stop—

Idiot!—

*Gui.* —Inform you she denied your claim,  
Defied yourself! (I tread upon his heel,  
The blustering Advocate!)

*Berth.* By heaven and earth!

Dare you jest, sir?

*Gui.* Did they at Treves, last week?

*Berth.* [starting up.] Why then, I look much bolder  
than I knew,

And you prove better actors than I thought—

Since, as I live, I took you as you entered

For just so many dearest friends of mine,

Fled from the sinking to the rising power

—The sneaking'st crew, in short, I e'er despised!

Whereas, I am alone here for the moment—

With every soldier left behind at Aix!

Silence? That means the worst—I thought as much!

What follows next then?

*Courtiers.* Gracious Prince—his raves!

*Gui.* He asked the truth and why not get the truth?

*Berth.* Am I a prisoner? Speak, will somebody?  
—But why stand paltering with imbeciles?  
Let me see her, or . . .

*Gui.* Her, without her leave,  
Shall no one see—she's Duchess yet!

*Courtiers.* [*Footsteps without, as they are disputing.*]

Good chance!

She's here—the Lady Colombe's self!

*Berth.* 'Tis well!

[*Aside.*] Array a handful thus against my world?  
Not ill done, truly! Were not this a mind  
To match one's mind with? Colombe!—Let us wait!  
I failed so, under that gray convent-wall!  
She comes!

*Gui.* The Duchess! Strangers, range yourselves

[*As the DUCHESS enters, in conversation with VALENCER  
BERTHOLD and the Courtiers fall back a little.*]

*The D.* Presagefully it beats, presagefully,  
My heart—the right is Berthold's and not mine!

*Val.* Grant that he has the right, dare I mistrust  
Your power to acquiesce so patiently  
As you believe, in such a dream-like change  
Of fortune—change abrupt, profound, complete?

*The D.* Ah, the first bitterness is over now!  
Bitter I may have felt it to confront  
The truth, and ascertain those natures' value  
I had so counted on—that was a pang—  
But I did bear it, and the worst is over:  
Let the Prince take them!

*Val.* —And take Juliers too?

—Your People without crosses, wands, and chains—  
Only with hearts?

*The D.* There I feel guilty, sir!

I cannot give up what I never had:  
For these I ruled, not them—these stood between.  
Shall I confess, sir? I have heard by stealth  
Of Berthold from the first: more news and more;  
Closer and closer swam the thunder-cloud,  
But I was safely housed with these, I knew!  
At times, when to the casement I would turn,  
At a bird's passage or a flower-trail's play,  
I caught the storm's red glimpses on its edge—  
Yet I was sure some one of all these friends  
Would interpose—I followed the bird's flight,  
Or plucked the flower—some one would interpose!

*Val.* Not one thought on the People—and Cleves there

*The D.* So, sadly conscious my real sway was missed,  
Its shadow goes without so much regret:  
Else could I not again thus calmly bid you,  
Answer Prince Berthold!

*Val.* Then you acquiesce?

*The D.* Remember over whom it was I ruled!

*Gui.* [*stepping forward.*] Prince Berthold, yonder,  
craves an audience, Lady!

*The D.* [*to VALENCE.*] I only have to turn, and I  
shall face

Prince Berthold! Oh, my very heart is sick!  
It is the daughter of a line of dukes,

This scornful insolent adventurer  
 Will bid depart from my dead father's halls  
 I shall not answer him—dispute with him—  
 But, as he bids, depart! Prevent it, sir!  
 Sir—but a mere day's respite! Urge for me  
 —What I shall call to mind I should have urged  
 When time's gone by—'twill all be mine, you urge!  
 A day—an hour—that I myself may lay  
 My rule down! 'Tis too sudden—must not be!  
 The world's to hear of it! Once done—forever!  
 How will it read, sir? How be sung about?  
 Prevent it!

*Berth.* [*approaching.*] Your frank indignation, Lady  
 Cannot escape me! Overbold I seem—  
 But somewhat should be pardoned my surprise,  
 At this reception,—this defiance, rather.  
 And if, for their and your sakes, I rejoice  
 Your virtues could inspire a trusty few  
 To make such gallant stand in your behalf,  
 I cannot but be sorry, for my own,  
 Your friends should force me to retrace my steps,  
 Since I no longer am permitted speak  
 After the pleasant peaceful course prescribed  
 No less by courtesy than relationship,  
 Which, if you once forgot, I still remember:  
 But never must attack pass unrepelled.  
 Suffer, that through you, I demand of these,  
 Who controverts my claim to Juliers?

*The D.*

—Me

You say, you do not speak to—

*Berth.* Of your subjects  
 I ask, then : whom do you accredit ? Where  
 Stand those should answer ?

*Val.* [*advancing.*] The Lady is alone !

*Berth.* Alone, and thus ? So weak and yet so bold ?

*Val.* I said she was alone—

*Berth.* —And weak, I said.

*Val.* When is man strong until he feels alone ?

It was some lonely strength at first, be sure,  
 Created organs, such as those you seek,  
 By which to give its varied purpose shape—  
 And, naming the selected ministrants,  
 Took sword, and shield, and sceptre,—each, a man !  
 That strength performed its work and passed its way :  
 You see our Lady : there, the old shapes stand !  
 —A Marshal, Chamberlain, and Chancellor—  
 “ Be helped their way, into their death put life  
 “ And find advantage ! ”—so you counsel us :  
 But let strength feel alone, seek help itself,—  
 And, as the inland-hatched sea-creature hunts  
 The sea's breast out,—as, littered 'mid the waves,  
 The desert-brute makes for the desert's joy,  
 So turns our lady to her true resource,  
 Passing o'er hollow fictions, worn-out types,  
 —So, I am first her instinct fastens on !  
 And prompt I say, so clear as heart can speak,  
 The People will not have you ; nor shall have !  
 It is not merely I shall go bring Cleves  
 And fight you to the last,—though that does **much**,

And men and children,—ay, and women too,  
 Fighting for home, are rather to be feared  
 Than mercenaries fighting for their pay—  
 But, say you beat us, since such things have been,  
 And, where this Juliers laughed, you set your foot  
 Upon a streaming bloody plash—what then?  
 Stand you the more our Lord that there you stand?  
 Lord it o'er troops whose force you concentrate,  
 A pillared flame whereto all arduours tend—  
 Lord it 'mid priests whose schemes you amplify,  
 A cloud of smoke 'neath which all shadows brood—  
 But never, in this gentle spot of earth,  
 Can you become our Colombe, our play-queen,  
 For whom, to furnish lilies for her hair,  
 We'd pour our veins forth to enrich the soil!  
 —Our conqueror? Yes!—Our despot? Yes!—Our  
 Duke?

Know yourself, know us!

*Berth.* [*who has been in thought.*] Know your lady, also!  
 [*Very deferentially.*]—To whom I needs must exculpate  
 myself

From having made a rash demand, at least.  
 Wherefore to you, sir, who appear to be  
 Her chief adviser, I submit my claims, [*Giving papers.*  
 But, this step taken, take no further step,  
 Until the Duchess shall pronounce their worth.  
 Here be our meeting-place; at night, its time:  
 Till when I humbly take the Lady's leave!

*He withdraws.* As the DUCHESS turns to VALENCE, the  
 Courtiers interchange glances and come forward a little.



*1st Court.* So, this was their device!

*2d Court.* No bad device!

*3d Court.* You'd say they love each other, Guibert's friend

From Cleves, and she, the Duchess!

*4th Court.* —And moreover,

That all Prince Berthold comes for, is to help

Their loves!

*5th Court.* Pray, Guibert, what is next to do?

*Gui.* [*advancing.*] I laid my office at the Duchess' foot—

*Others.* And I—and I—and I!

*The D.* I took them, sirs!

*Gui.* [*Apart to VALENCE.*] And now, sir, I am simple knight again—

Guibert, of the great ancient house, as yet

That never bore affront: whate'er your birth,—

As things stand now, I recognize yourself

(If you'll accept experience of some date)

As like to be the leading man c' the time,

Therefore as much above me now, as I

Seemed above you this morning. Then, I offered

To fight you: will you be as generous

And now fight me?

*Val.* Ask when my life is mine!

*Gui.* ('Tis hers now!)

*Clug.* [*Apart to VALENCE, as Guibert turns from him.*]

You, sir, have insulted me

Grossly,—will grant me, too, the selfsame favour

You've granted him, just now, I make no question?

*Val.* I promise you, as him, sir!

*Clug.*

Do you so?

Handsomely said! I hold you to it, sir!

You'll get me reinstated in my office

As you will Guibert!

*The D.*

I would be alone!

[*They begin to retire slowly: as VALENCE is about to follow--*

Alone, sir—only with my heart,—you stay!

*Gau.* You hear that? Ah, light breaks upon me  
Cleves—

It was at Cleves some man harangued us all—

With great effect,—so those who listened said,

My thoughts being busy elsewhere: was this he?

Guibert,—your strange, disinterested man!

Your uncorrupted, if uncourtly friend!

The modest worth you mean to patronize!

He cares about no Duchesses, not he—

His sole contest is with the wrongs of Cleves!

What, Guibert? What, it breaks on you at last?

*Gui.* Would this hall's floor were a mine's roof!—I'd  
back

And in her very face . . .

*Gau.*

Apply the match

That fired the train,—and where would you be, pray?

*Gui.* With him!

*Gau.*

Stand, rather, safe outside with me

The mine's charged—shall I furnish you the match

And place you properly?—To the ante-chamber!

*Gui.* Can you?

*Gau.* Try me!—Your friend's in fortune.

*Gui.* Quick—

To the ante-chamber!—He is pale with bliss!

*Gau.* No wonder! Mark her eyes!

*Gui.* To the ante-chamber!

[*The Courtiers retire.*]

*The D.* Sir, could you know all you have done for me  
You were content! You spoke, and I am saved!

*Val.* Be not too sanguine, Lady! Ere you dream,  
That transient flush of generosity  
Fades off, perchance! The man, beside, is gone,—  
Whom we might bend; but see the papers here—  
Inalterably his requirement stays.

And cold hard words have we to deal with now.

In that large eye there seemed a latent pride,

To self-denial not incompetent,

But very like to hold itself dispensed

From such a grace—however, let us hope!

He is a noble spirit in noble form!

I wish he less had bent that brow to smile

As with the fancy how he could subject

Himself upon occasion to—himself!

From rudeness, violence, you rest secure;

But do not think your Duchy rescued yet!

*The D.* You,—who have opened a new world to me,

Will never take the faded language up

Of that I leave? My Duchy—keeping it,

Or losing it—is that my sole world now?

*Val* Ill have I spoken if you thence despise

Juliers; although the lowest, on true grounds,  
 Be worth more than the highest rule, on false:  
 Aspire to rule, on the true grounds!

*The D.*

Nay, hear—

False, I will never—rash, I would not be!  
 This is indeed my Birthday—soul and body,  
 Its hours have done on me the work of years.  
 You hold the Requisition; ponder it!  
 If I have right—my duty's plain: If He—  
 Say so—nor ever change a tone of voice!  
 At night you meet the Prince—meet me at eve,  
 Till when, farewell! This discomposes you?  
 Believe in your own nature, and its force  
 Of renovating mine. I take my stand  
 Only as under me the earth is firm—  
 So, prove the first step stable, all will be!  
 That first, I choose—[*laying her hand on his.*]  
 —the next  
 to take, choose you! [She withdraws.]

*Val.* [after a pause.] What drew down this on me!  
 On me—dead once—

She thus bids live,—since all I hitherto  
 Thought dead in me, youth's ardours and emprise,  
 Burst into life before her, as she bids  
 Who needs them!—Whither will this reach, where end?  
 Her hand's print burns on mine . . . Yet she's above—  
 So very far above me! All's too plain—  
 I served her when the others sank away,  
 And she rewards me as such souls reward—  
 The changed voice, the suffusion of the cheek.

The eye's acceptance, the expressive hand—  
—Reward, that's little, in her generous thought,  
Though all to me . . .

I cannot so disclaim  
Heaven's gift, nor call it other than it is!  
She loves me!

[*Looking at the Prince's papers.*—Which love, these,  
perchance, forbid!

Can I decide against myself—pronounce  
She is the Duchess and no mate for me?  
—Cleves, help me! Teach me,—every haggard face,—  
To sorrow and endure! I will do right  
Whatever be the issue—help me, Cleves!

## ACT IV.

*Evening.* SCENE.—*An Ante-Chamber*

*Enter the Courtiers.*

*Mau.* Now then, that we may speak—how spring this  
mine?

*Gau.* Is Guibert ready for its match? He cools!  
Not so friend Valence with the Duchess there!  
"Stay, Valence—are not you my better self?"  
And her cheek mantled—

*Gui.* Well, she loves him, sir—  
And more,—since you will have it I grow cool.—  
She's right: he's worth it.

*Gau.* For his deeds to-day?  
Say so!

*Gui.* What should I say beside?

*Gau.* Not this—  
For friendship's sake leave this for me to say—  
That we're the dupes of an egregious cheat!  
This plain, unpractised suitor, who found way  
To the Duchess thro' the merest die's turn-up—  
A year ago, had seen her and been seen,  
Loved and been loved—

*Gui.* Impossible!

*Gau.* —Nor say,  
How sly and exquisite a trick, moreover,  
Was this which—taking not their stand on facts  
Boldly, for that had been endurable,  
But, worming in their way by craft, they choose  
Resort to, rather,—and which you and we,  
Sheep-like, assist them in the playing off!  
The Duchess thus parades him as preferred,  
Not on the honest ground of preference,  
Seeing first, liking more, and there an end—  
But as we all had started equally,  
And at the close of a fair race he proved  
The only valiant, sage, and loyal man.  
And she, too, with the pretty fits and starts,—  
The careless, winning, candid ignorance  
Of what the Prince might challenge or forego—  
She had a hero in reserve! What risk  
Ran she? This deferential easy Prince

Who brings his claims for her to ratify  
 —He's just her puppet for the nonce ! You'll see,—  
 Valence pronounces, as is equitable,  
 Against him : off goes the confederate :  
 As equitably, Valence takes her hand !

*The Chancellor.* You run too fast—her hand, no  
 subject takes !

Do not our Archives hold her father's Will ?  
 That will provides against such accident,  
 And gives next heir, Prince Berthold, the reversion  
 Of Juliers, which she forfeits, wedding so.

*Gau.* I know that, well as you,—but does the Prince ?  
 Knows Berthold, think you, that this plan, he helps,  
 For Valence's ennoblement,—would end,  
 If crowned with the success which seems its due,  
 In making him the very thing he plays,  
 The actual Duke of Juliers ? All agree  
 That Colombe's title waived or set aside,  
 He is next heir.

*The Chan.* Incontrovertibly !

*Gau.* Guibert, your match, now, to the train !

*Gui.* Enough

I'm with you—selfishness is best again !  
 I thought of turning honest—what a dream !  
 Let's wake now !

*Gau.* Selfish, friend, you never were—  
 'Twas but a series of revenges taken  
 On your unselfishness for prospering ill.  
 But now that you're grown wiser, what's our course ?

*Gui.* —Wait, I suppose, till Valence weds our Lady  
And then, if we must needs revenge ourselves,  
Apprise the Prince—

*Gau.* —The Prince, ere then dismissed  
With thanks for playing his mock part so well?  
Tell the Prince now, sir! Ay, this very night—  
Ere he accepts his dole and goes his way,  
Explain how such a marriage makes him Duke,  
Then trust his gratitude for the surprise!

*Gui.* —Our Lady wedding Valence all the same  
As if the penalty were undisclosed!  
Good! If she loves, she'll not disown her love,  
Throw Valence up—I wonder you see that!

*Gau.* The shame of it—the suddenness and shame!  
Within her, the inclining heart—without,  
A terrible array of witnesses—  
With Valence by, to keep her to her word,  
And Berthold's indignation or disgust—  
We'll try it!—Not that we can venture much:  
Her confidence we've lost forever—Berthold's  
Is all to gain!

*Gui.* To night, then, venture we!  
Yet—if lost confidence might be renewed?

*Gau.* Never in noble natures! With the base ones,—  
'Twist off the crab's claw, wait a smarting-while,  
And something grows and grows and gets to be  
A mimic of the lost joint, just so like  
As keeps in mind it never, never will  
Replace its predecessor! Crabs do that:  
But lop the Lion's foot—and



*Gui.* To the Prince !

*Gau.* [*Aside.*] And come what will to the lion's foot,  
I pay you

My cat's-paw, as I long have yearned to pay !

*Aloud.*] Footsteps . . . Himself ! 'Tis Valence breaks  
on us !

Exulting that their scheme succeeds !—We'll hence—

And perfect ours ! Consult the Archives, first—

Then, fortified with knowledge, seek the Hall !

*Clug.* [*to GAUCELME as they retire.*] You have not  
smiled so since your father died !

*As they retire, enter VALENCE with papers.*

*Val.* So must it be ! I have examined these

With scarce a palpitating heart—so calm,

Keeping her image almost wholly off,

Setting upon myself determined watch,

Repelling to the uttermost his claims,

And the result is . . . all men would pronounce

And not I, only, the result to be—

Berthold is Heir ; she has no shade of right

To the distinction which divided us,

But, suffered to rule first I know not why,

Her rule connived at by those Kings and Popes,

To serve some devil's-purpose,—now 'tis gained,

Whate'er it was, the rule expires as well.

—Valence, this rapture . . . selfish can it be ?

Eject it from your heart. her home !—It stays !

Ah, the brave world that opens on us both !

. . . Do my poor townsmen so esteem it ? Cleves,—

I need not your pale faces ! This, reward  
 For service done to you ? Too horrible !  
 I never served you—'twas myself I served !  
 Nay—served not—rather saved from punishment  
 Which, had I failed you then, would plague me now !  
 My life continues yours, and your life, mine—  
 But if, to take God's gift, I swerve no step—  
 Cleves !—if I breathe no prayer for it—if she,

*[Footsteps without*

Colombe, that comes now, freely gives herself—  
 Will Cleves require, that, turning thus to her,  
 I . . .

*Enter* PRINCE BERTHOLD.

—Pardon, sir—I did not look for you  
 Till night, in the Hall ; nor have as yet declared  
 My judgment to the Lady !

*Berth.* So I hoped.

*Val.* And yet I scarcely know why that should check  
 The frank disclosure of it first to you—  
 What her right seems, and what, in consequence,  
 She will decide on—

*Berth.* That I need not ask.

*Val.* You need not : I have proved the Lady's mind—  
 And, justice being to do, dare act for her.

*Berth.* Doubtless she has a very noble mind !

*Val.* Oh, never fear but she'll in each conjuncture  
 Bear herself bravely ; she no whit depends  
 On circumstance ; as she adorns a throne,  
 She had adorned . .

*Berth.* . . . A cottage—in what book  
Have I read that, of every queen that lived?  
A throne? You have not been instructed, sure,  
To forestall my request?

*Val.* 'Tis granted, sir—  
My heart instructs me. I have scrutinized  
Your claims . . .

*Berth.* Ah—claims, you mean, at first preferred!  
I come, before the hour appointed me,  
To pray you let those claims at present rest—  
In favour of a new and stronger one.

*Val.* You shall not need a stronger: on the part  
Of the lady, all you offer I accept,  
Since one clear right suffices: yours is clear.  
Propose!

*Berth.* I offer her my hand.

*Val.* Your hand?

*Berth.* A Duke's, yourself say; and, at no far time,  
Something here whispers me—the Emperor's.  
The Lady's mind is noble; which induced  
This seizure of occasion ere my claims  
Were—settled, let us amicably say!

*Val.* Your hand!

*Berth.* (He will fall down and kiss it next!)  
Sir, this astonishment's too flattering—  
Nor must you hold your mistress' worth so cheap!  
Enhance it, rather,—urge that blood is blood—  
The daughter of the Burgraves, Landgraves, Markgraves,  
Remains their daughter; I shall scarce gainsay!

Elsewhere or here, the Lady needs must rule :  
 Like the Imperial crown's great chrysoprase,  
 They talk of—somewhat out of keeping there,  
 And yet no jewel for a meaner cap !

*Val.* You wed the Duchess ?

*Berth.*

Cry you mercy, friend

Will the match influence many fortunes here ?

A natural solicitude enough !

Be certain, no bad chance it proves for you !

However high you take your present stand,

There's prospect of a higher still remove—

For Juliers will not be my resting-place,

And, when I have to choose a substitute

To rule the little burgh, I'll think of you.

You need not give your mates a character !

And yet I doubt your fitness to supplant

The gray smooth Chamberlain—he'd hesitate

A doubt his lady could demean herself

So low as to accept me. Courage, sir !

I like your method better—feeling's play

Is franker much, and flatters me beside.

*Val.* I am to say, you love her ?

*Berth.*

Say that too !

Love has no great concernment, thinks the world,

With a Duke's marriage—How go precedents

In Juliers' story—how use Juliers' Dukes ?

(I see you have them here in goodly row ;

Yon must be Luitpold,—ay, a stalwart sire !)

—Say, I have been arrested suddenly

In my ambition's course, its rocky course,  
 By this sweet flower—I fain would gather it  
 And then proceed—so say and speedily—  
 —(Nor stand there like Duke Luitpold's brazen self!)  
 Enough, sir: you possess my mind, I think.  
 This is my claim, the others being withdrawn,  
 And to this, be it that, in the Hall to-night,  
 Our Lady's answer comes; till when, farewell!

[*He retires*]

*Val.* [after a pause.] The heavens and earth stay as  
 they were—my heart

Beats as it beat—the truth remains the truth!  
 What falls away, then, if not faith in her?  
 Was it my faith, that she could estimate  
 Love's value,—and, such faith still guiding me,  
 Dare I now test her?—or grew faith so strong  
 Solely because no power of test was mine?

*Enter the DUCHESS.*

*The D.* My fate, sir! Ah, you turn away—all's over!  
 But you are sorry for me—be not so!  
 What I might have become, and never was,  
 Regret with me; what I have merely been,  
 Rejoice I am no longer; what I seem  
 Beginning now, in my new state, to be,  
 Hope that I am,—for, once my rights proved void,  
 This heavy roof seems easy to exchange  
 For the blue sky outside—my lot henceforth!

*Val.* And what a lot, is Bertbold's!

*The D.*

How of him?

*Val.* He gathers earth's whole good into his arms,  
 Standing, as man, now, stately, strong and wise—  
 Marching to fortune, not surprised by her :  
 One great aim, like a guiding-star, above—  
 Which tasks strength, wisdom, stateliness, to lift  
 His manhood to the height that takes the prize ;  
 A prize not near—lest overlooking earth  
 He rashly spring to seize it—nor remote,  
 So that he rests upon his path content :  
 But day by day, while shimmering grows shine,  
 And the faint circlet prophesies the orb,  
 He sees so much as, just evolving these,  
 The stateliness, the wisdom and the strength,  
 To due completion, will suffice this life,  
 And lead him at his grandest to the grave.  
 After this star, out of a night he springs ;  
 A beggar's cradle for the throne of thrones  
 He quits, so, mounting, feels each step he mounts.  
 Nor, as from each to each exultingly  
 He passes, overleaps one grade of joy.  
 This, for his own good :—with the world, each gift  
 Of God and man,—Reality, Tradition,  
 Fancy and Fact—so well environ him,  
 That as a mystic panoply they serve—  
 Of force, untenanted, to awe mankind,  
 And work his purpose out with half the world,  
 While he, their master, dexterously slipt  
 From such encumbrance, is meantime employed

With his own prowess on the other half.  
 Thus shall he prosper, every day's success  
 Adding, to what is He, a solid strength—  
 An æry might to what encircles him,  
 Till at the last, so life's routine lends help,  
 That as the Emperor only breathes and moves,  
 His shadow shall be watched, his step or stalk  
 Become a comfort or a portent ; how  
 He trails his ermine take significance,—  
 Till even his power shall cease to be most power,  
 And men shall dread his weakness more, nor dare  
 Peril their earth its bravest, first and best,  
 Its typified invincibility.

So shall he go on, greatening, till he ends  
 The man of men, the spirit of all flesh,  
 The fiery centre of an earthy world !

*The D.* Some such a fortune I had dreamed should rise  
 Out of my own—that is, above my power  
 Seemed other, greater potencies to stretch—

*Val.* For you ?

*The D.* It was not I moved there. I think  
 But one I could,—though constantly beside,  
 And aye approaching,—still keep distant from,  
 And so adore. 'Twas a man moved there !

*Val.* Who ?

*The D.* I felt the spirit, never saw the face !

*Val.* See it ! 'Tis Berthold's ! He enab'les you  
 To realize your vision !

*The D.* Berthold ?

- Val.* Duke—  
Emperor to be: he proffers you his hand.
- The D.* Generous and princely!
- Val.* He is all of this.
- The D.* Thanks, Berthold, for my father's sake—no  
hand  
Degrades me!
- Val.* You accept the proffered hand?
- The D.* That he should love me!
- Val.* “Loved” I did not say  
Had that been—love might so incline the Prince  
To the world's good, the world that's at his foot,—  
I do not know, this moment, I should dare  
Desire that you refused the world—and Cleves—  
The sacrifice he asks!
- The D.* Not love me, sir?
- Val.* He scarce affirmed it.
- The D.* May not deeds affirm?
- Val.* What does he? . . . Yes—yes—very much he  
does!
- All the shame saved, he thinks, and sorrow saved—  
Immitigable sorrow, so he thinks,—  
Sorrow that's deeper than we dream, perchance!
- The D.* Is not this love?
- Val.* So very much he does!  
For look, you can descend now gracefully—  
All doubts are banished, that the world might have,  
Or worst, the doubts yourself, in after-time,  
May call up of your heart's sincereness now:



To such, reply, "I could have kept my rule—  
 "Increased it to the utmost of my dreams—  
 "Yet I abjured it!" This, he does for you:  
 It is munificently much!

*The D.* Still "much!"

But why is it not love, sir? Answer me!

*Val.* Because not one of Berthold's words and looks  
 Had gone with love's presentment of a flower  
 To the beloved: because bold confidence,  
 Open superiority, free pride—  
 Love owns not, yet were all that Berthold owned:  
 Because where reason, even, finds no flaw,  
 Unerringly a lover's instinct may.

*The D.* You reason, then, and doubt?

*Val.* I love, and know

*The D.* You love?—How strange! I never cast a  
 thought

On that! Just see our selfishness—you seemed  
 So much my own . . . I had no ground—and yet,  
 I never dreamed another might divide  
 My power with you, much less exceed it!

*Val.* Lady,

I am yours wholly!

*The D.* Oh, no, no, not mine!

'Tis not the same now, never more can be!  
 —Your first love, doubtless! Well, what's gone from me?  
 What have I lost in you?

*Val.* My heart replies—

No loss there! . . . So to Berthold back again!

This offer of his hand, he bids me make—  
Its obvious magnitude is well to weigh!

*The D.* She's . . . yes, she must be very fair for you!

*Val.* I am a simple Advocate of Cleves.

*The D.* You! With the heart and brain that so helped  
me,

I fancied them exclusively my own,  
Yet find are subject to a stronger sway!  
She must be . . . tell me, is she very fair?

*Val.* Most fair, beyond conception or belief!

*The D.* Black eyes?—no matter! Colombe, the world  
leads

Its life without you, whom your friends professed  
The only woman—see how true they spoke!  
One lived this while, who never saw your face,  
Nor heard your voice—unless . . . Is she from Cleves?

*Val.* Cleves knows her well!

*The D.* Ah—just a fancy, now,  
When you poured forth the wrongs of Cleves,—I said,  
—Thought, that is, afterward . . .

*Val.* You thought of me

*The D.* Of what else? Only such great cause, I  
thought,

For such effect—see what true love can do!

Cleves is his love!—I almost fear to ask

. . . Nor will not! This is idling—to our work!

Admit before the Prince, without reserve,

My claims misgrounded; then may follow better

. . . When you poured out Cleves's wrongs impetuously  
Was she in your mind?

*Val.* All done was done for her—

—To humble me!

*The D.* She will be proud at least!

*Val.* She?

*The D.* When you tell her!

*Val.* That will never be!

*The D.* How—are there sweeter things you hope to tell?

No, sir! You counselled me,—I counsel you

In the one point I—any woman—can!

Your worth, the first thing; let her own come next—

Say what you did through her, and she through you—

The praises of her beauty afterward!

Will you?

*Val.* I dare not!

*The D.* Dare not?

*Val.* She I love

Suspects not such a love in me.

*The D.* You jest!

*Val.* The lady is above me and away!

Not only the brave form, and the bright mind,

And the great heart, combine to press me low—

But all the world calls rank divides us.

*The D.* Rank?

Now grant me patience! Here's a man declares  
Oracularly in another's case—

Sees the true value and the false, for them—

Nay, bids them see it, and they straight do see!

You called my court's love worthless—so it turned:

I threw away as dross my heap of wealth,  
 And here you stickle for a piece or two!  
 First—has she seen you?

*Val.* Yes!

*The D.* She loves you, then.

*Val.* One flash of hope burst—then succeeded night—  
 And all's at darkest now. Impossible!

*The D.* We'll try: you are—so to speak—my subject yet?

*Val.* As ever—to the death!

*The D.* Obey me, then!

*Val.* I must!

*The D.* Approach her, and . . . No! First of all get more assurance; "my instructress," say  
 "Was great, descended from a line of kings,  
 "And even fair"—(wait why I say this folly)—  
 "She said, of all men, none for eloquence,  
 "Courage, and (what cast even these to shade)  
 "'The heart they sprung from,—none deserved like **him**  
 "Who saved her at her need—if she said this,  
 "What should not one I love, say?"

*Val.* Heaven—this hope—  
 Oh, lady, you are filling me with fire!

*The D.* Say this!—nor think I bid you cast aside  
 One touch of all that awe and reverence!  
 Nay—make her proud for once to heart's content  
 That all this wealth of heart and soul's her own!  
 Think you are all of this,—and, thinking it,  
 (Obey!)

*Val.* I cannot choose!

*The D.* Then, kneel to her!

[*VALENCE sinks on his knees.*]

I dream!

*Val.* Have mercy! Yours, unto the death,—  
I have obeyed. Despise, and let me die.

*The D.* Alas, sir, is it to be ever thus?

Even with you as with the world? I know

This morning's service was no vulgar deed

Whose motive, once it dares avow itself,

Explains all done and infinitely more,

So takes the shelter of a nobler cause.

Your service named its true source,—loyalty!

The rest's unsaid again. The Duchess bids you,

Rise, sir! The Prince's words were in debate.

*Val.* [*rising.*] Rise! Truth, as ever, Lady, comes  
from you!

I should rise—I that spoke for Cleves, can speak

For Man—yet tremble now, that stood firm then!

I laughed—for 'twas past tears—that Cleves should starve

With all hearts beating loud the infamy,

And no tongue daring trust as much to air!

Yet here, where all hearts speak, shall I be mute?

Oh lady, for your own sake look on me!

On all I am, and have, and do—heart, brain,

Body and soul,—this Valence and his gifts!

I was proud once—I saw you—and they sank,

So that each magnified a thousand times

Were nothing to you—but such nothingness

Would a crown gild it, or a sceptre prop,  
 A treasure speed, a laurel-wreath enhance?  
 What is my own desert? But should your love  
 Have . . . there's no language helps here . . . singled me,  
 Then—Oh, that wild word “then!”—be just to love,  
 In generosity its attribute!  
 Love, since you pleased to love! All's cleared—a stage  
 For trial of the question kept so long  
 For you—is Love or Vanity the best?  
 You, solve it for the world's sake—you, speak first  
 What all will shout one day—you, vindicate  
 Our earth and be its angel! All is said.  
 Lady, I offer nothing—I am yours,  
 But for the cause' sake, look on me and him  
 And speak!

*The D.* I have received the Prince's message:  
 Say, I prepare my answer!

*Val.* Take me, Cleves!

[*He withdraws*]

*The D.* Mournful—that nothing's what it calls itself!  
 Devotion, zeal, faith, loyalty—mere love!  
 And, love in question, what may Berthold's be?  
 I did ill to mistrust the world so soon—  
 Already was this Berthold at my side!  
 The valley-level has its hawks, no doubt:  
 May not the rock-top have its eagles, too?  
 Yet Valence . . . let me see his Rival then!

## ACT V.

*Night. SCENE.—The Hall.**Enter BERTHOLD and MELCHIOR.**Mel.* And here you wait the matter's issue?*Berth.*

Here.

*Mel.* I don't regret I shut Amelius, then!  
But tell me, on this grand disclosure,—how  
Behaved our spokesman with the forehead?*Berth.*

Oh,

Turned out no better than the foreheadless—  
Was dazzled not so very soon—that's all!  
For my part, this is scarce the hasty, showy,  
Chivalrous measure you give me credit of!  
Perhaps I had the fancy,—but 'tis gone—  
—Let her commence the unfriended innocent,  
And carry wrongs about from court to court?  
No, truly! The least shake of Fortune's sand,  
—My uncle-Pope chokes in a coughing-fit,  
King Philip takes a fancy' to blue eyes,—  
And wondrously her claims would brighten up!  
Forth comes a new gloss on the ancient law,  
O'er-looked provisoes, past o'er premises,  
Follow in plenty—No—'tis the safer step.  
The hour beneath the convent-wall is lost—  
Juliers and she, once mine, are ever mine.

*Mel.* Which is to say, you, losing heart **already**,  
Elude the adventure!

*Berth.* Not so—or, if so—  
 Why not confess at once, that I advise  
 None of our kingly craft and guild just now  
 To lay, one moment, down their privilege  
 With the notion they can any time at pleasure  
 Retake it—that may turn out hazardous !  
 We seem, in Europe, pretty well at end  
 O' the night, with our great masque : those favoured few  
 Who keep the chamber's top, and honour's chance  
 Of the early evening, may retain their place  
 And figure as they list till out of breath.  
 But it is growing late ; and I observe  
 A dim grim kind of tipstaves at the doorway  
 Not only bar new-comers entering now,  
 But caution those who left, for any cause,  
 And would return, that morning draws too near ;  
 The ball must die off, shut itself up. We—  
 I think, may dance lights out and sunshine in.  
 And sleep off headache on our frippery—  
 But friend the other, who cunningly stole out,  
 And, after breathing the fresh air outside,  
 Means to re-enter with a new costume,  
 Will be advised go back to bed, I fear.  
 I stick to privilege, on second thoughts !

*Mel.* Yes—you evade the adventure !—And, beside,  
 Give yourself out for colder than you are.  
 —King Philip, only, notes the lady's eyes ?  
 Don't they come in for somewhat of the motive  
 With you too ?

*Berth.* Yes—no : I am past that now !



Gone 'tis—I cannot shut my eyes to fact.  
 Of course, I might by forethought and contrivance  
 Reason myself into a rapture. Gone!  
 And something better's come instead, no doubt.

*Mel.* So be it! Yet, all the same, proceed my way,  
 Though to your end; so shall you prosper best.  
 The lady,—to be won for selfish ends,—  
 Will be won easier my unselfish . . . call it,  
 Romantic way.

*Berth.* Won easier?

*Mel.* Will not she?

*Berth.* There I profess humility without bound!  
 Ill cannot speed—not I—the Emperor!

*Mel.* And I should think the Emperor best waived,  
 From your description of her mood and way!  
 You could look, if it pleased you, into hearts;  
 But are too indolent and fond of watching  
 Your own—you know that, for you study it!

*Berth.* Had you but seen the orator her friend,  
 So bold and voluble an hour before,  
 Abashed to earth at aspect of the change!  
 Make her an Empress? Ah, that changed the case  
 . . . Oh, I read hearts! And for my own behoof,  
 I court her with my true worth—see the event!  
 I learned my final lesson on that head  
 When years ago,—my first and last essay!  
 Before my uncle could obtain the ear  
 Of his superior, help me from the dirt—  
 Priscilla left me for a Brabant Duke

Whose cheek was like the topaz on his thumb.

I am past illusion on that score.

*Mel.*

Here comes

The lady—

*Berth.*—And there you go! But do not! Give me  
Another chance to please you. Hear me plead!

*Mel.* You'll keep, then, to the lover, to the man?

*Enter the DUCHESS—followed by ADOLF and SARYNE, and after an interval, by the Courtiers.*

*Berth.* Good auspice to our meeting!

*The D.*

May it prove!

—And you, sir, will be Emperor one day?

*Berth.* (Ay—that's the point!) I may be Emperor.

*The D.* 'Tis not for my sake only, I am proud

Of this you offer: I am prouder far

That from the highest state should duly spring

The highest, since most generous, of deeds.

*Berth.* (Generous—still that!) You underrate yourself,

You are, what I, to be complete, must have—

Find now, and may not find, another time.

While I career on all the world for stage,

There needs at home my representative—

*The D.*—Such, rather, would some warrior-woman  
be—

One dowered with lands and gold, or rich in friends—

One like yourself!

*Berth.*

Lady, I am myself,

And have all these: I want what's not myself,

Nor has all these. Why give one hand two swords?

Here's one already: be a friend's next gift

A silk glove, if you will—I have a sword!

*The D.* You love me, then?

*Berth.* Your lineage I revere—

Honour your virtue, in your truth believe,

Do homage to your intellect, and bow

Before your peerless beauty.

*The D.* But, for love—

*Berth.* A further love I do not understand.

Our best course is to say these hideous truths,

And see them, once said, grow endurable.

Like waters shuddering from their central bed,

Black with the midnight bowels of the earth,

That, once up-spouted by an earthquake's throe,

A portent and a terror—soon subside,

Freshen apace, take gold and rainbow hues

In sunshine, sleep in shadow,—and, at last,

Grow common to the earth as hills or trees—

Accepted by all things they came to scare.

*The D.* You cannot love, then?

*Berth.* —Charlemagne, perhaps!

Are you not over-curious in love-lore?

*The D.* I have become so, very recently.

It seems, then, I shall best deserve esteem,

Respect, and all your candour promises,

By putting on a calculating mood—

Asking the terms of my becoming yours?

*Berth.* Let me not do myself injustice, neither!  
Because I will not condescend to fictions

That promise what my soul can ne'er acquit.  
 It does not follow that my guarded phrase  
 May not include far more of what you seek,  
 Than wide professions of less scrupulous men.  
 You will be Empress, once for all—with me  
 The Pope disputes supremacy—you stand  
 And none gainsays, the Earth's first woman!

*The D.*

That—

Or simple Lady of Ravestein again?

*Berth.* The matter's not in my arbitrement!  
 Now I have made my claims—which I regret—  
 Cede one, cede all!

*The D.*

This claim then, you enforce?

*Berth.* The world looks on.

*The D.*

And when must I decide

*Berth.* "When," Lady? Have I said thus much so  
 promptly

For nothing? Poured out, with such pains, at once  
 What I might else have suffered to ooze forth  
 Droplet by droplet in a lifetime long,  
 For aught less than as prompt an answer, too?  
 All's fairly told now—who can teach you more?

*The D.* I do not see him!

*Berth.*

I shall ne'er deceive!

This offer had been made besittingly  
 Would time allow the better setting forth  
 The good of it with what is not so good,  
 Advantage, and disparagement as well—  
 But as it is, the sum of both must serve.  
 I am already weary of this place—

My thoughts are next stage on to Rome. Decide !  
 The Empire—or,—not even Juliers now !  
 Hail to the Empress—farewell to the Duchess !

[*The Courtiers, who have been drawing nearer and nearer,*  
*interpose*

*Courtiers.* . . . “Farewell,” Prince ? when we break  
 in at our risk—

*Clug.* (Almost upon Court-license trespassing)—

*Courtiers.* —To point out how your claims are valid  
 yet !

You know not, by the Duke her Father's will,  
 The lady, if she weds beneath her rank,  
 Forfeits her Duchy in the next heir's favour—  
 So 'tis expressly stipulate. And if  
 It can be shown 'tis her intent to wed  
 A subject, then yourself, next heir, by right  
 Succeed to Juliers.

*Berth.* What insanity ? . . .

*Gui.* Sir, there's one Valence—the pale fiery man  
 You saw and heard, this morning—thought, no doubt,  
 Was of considerable standing here—  
 I put it to your penetration, Prince,  
 If aught save love, the truest love for her,  
 Had made him serve the lady as he did !  
 He's simply a poor advocate of Cleves  
 —Creeps here with difficulty, finds a place  
 With danger, gets in by a miracle,  
 And for the first time meets the Lady's face—  
 So runs the story—is that credible ?  
 For, first—no sooner in, than he's apprised

Fortunes have changed ; you are all-powerful here,  
The Lady as powerless : he stands fast by her !

*The D.* [*Aside.*] (And do such deeds spring up from  
love alone?)

*Gui.* But here occurs the question, does the Lady  
Love him again? I say, How else can she?  
Can she forget how he stood singly forth  
In her defence, dared outrage all of us,  
Insult yourself—for what save love's reward?

*The D.* (And is love then the sole reward of love?)

*Gui.* But, love him as she may and must—you ask,  
Means she to wed him? "Yes," both natures answer!  
Both, in their pride, point out the sole result—  
Nought less would he accept nor she propose!  
For each conjuncture was she great enough—  
—Will be, for this!

*Clug.*                             Though, now that this is known,  
Policy, doubtless, urges she deny . . .

*The D.* —What, sir, and wherefore?—since I am not  
sure

That all is any other than you say?

You take this Valence, hold him close to me,  
Him with his actions : can I choose but look?

I am not sure, love trulier shows itself

Than in this man, you hate and would degrade,

Yet with your worst abatement, show me thus :

Nor am I—(thus made look within myself,

Ere I had dared,)—now that the look is dared—

Sure that I do not love him!

*Gui.*

Hear you, Prince?

*Berth.* And what, sirs, please you, may this prattle mean?

—Unless to prove with what alacrity  
You give your Lady's secrets to the world—

—How much indebted, for discovering  
That quality, you make me, will be found  
When next a keeper for my own's to seek!

*Courtiers.* "Our Lady?"

*Berth.* —She assuredly remains!

*The D.* Ah, Prince—and you too can be generous?

You could renounce your power, if this were so,  
And let me, as these phrase it, wed my love  
Yet keep my Duchy? You perhaps exceed  
Him, even, in disinterestedness!

*Berth.* How, Lady, should all this affect my purpose?  
Your will and choice are still as ever, free!

Say, you have known a worthier than myself  
In mind and heart, of happier form and face;  
Others must have their birthright! I have gifts,  
To balance theirs, not blot them out of sight!  
Against a hundred other qualities,

I lay the prize I offer. I am nothing—  
Wed you the Empire?

*The D.* And my heart away?

*Berth.* When have I made pretension to your  
heart?

I give none. I shall keep your honour safe—  
With mine I trust you, as the sculptor trusts  
Yon marble woman with the marble rose,  
Loose on her hand, she never will let fall.

In graceful, slight, silent security.  
 You will be proud of my world-wide career.  
 And I content in you the fair and good.  
 What were the use of planting a few seeds,  
 The thankless climate never would mature—  
 Affections all repelled by circumstance?  
 Enough : to these no credit I attach,—  
 To what you own, find nothing to object.  
 Write simply on my Requisition's face  
 What shall content my friends—that you admit,  
 As Colombe of Ravestein, the claims therein,  
 Or never need admit them, as my wife—  
 And either way, all's ended.

*The D.* Let all end !

*Berth.* The Requisition !

*Courtiers.* —Valence holds, of course !

*Berth.* Desire his presence ! [ADOLF goes out.]

*Courtiers.* [to each other.] Out it all comes yet !

He'll have his word against the bargain still !

He's not the man to tamely acquiesce !

One passionate appeal—upbraiding even,

Might turn the tide again ! Despair not yet !

[*They retire a little.*]

*Berth.* [to MELCHIOR.] The Empire has its old success,  
 my friend !

*Mel.* You've had your way : before the spokesman  
 comes,

Let me, but this once, work a problem out,

And ever more be dumb ! The Empire wins ?

To better purpose I have read my books !



*Enter VALENCE.*

*Mel.* [*to the Courtiers.*] Apart, my masters!

[*To VALENCE.*] Sir, one word with you

I am a poor dependent of the Prince's—  
 Pitched on to speak, as of slight consequence :  
 You are no higher, I find—in other words,  
 We two, as probably the wisest here,  
 Need not hold diplomatic talk like fools :  
 Suppose I speak, divesting the plain fact  
 Of all their tortuous phrases, fit for them—  
 Do you reply so, and what trouble's saved !  
 The Prince, then—an embroiled strange heap of news  
 This moment reaches him—if true or false,  
 All dignity forbids he should inquire  
 In person, or by worthier deputy ;  
 Yet somehow must inquire, lest slander come :  
 And so 'tis I am pitched on. You have heard  
 His offer to your Lady ?

*Val.* Yes.

*Mel.* —Conceive

Her joy thereat?—

*Val.* I cannot.

*Mel.* No one can :

All draws to a conclusion, therefore.

*Val.* [*Aside.*] So !

No after-judgment—no first thought revised—  
 Her first and last decision!—me, she leaves—  
 Takes him—a simple heart is flung aside,  
 The ermine o'er a heartless breast embraced !

Oh Heaven, this mockery has been played too oft :  
 Once, to surprise the angels—twice, that fiends  
 Recording, might be proud they chose not so—  
 Thrice, many thousand times, to teach the world  
 All men should pause, misdoubt their strength, since men  
 Could have such chance yet fail so signally,  
 —But ever—ever—this farewell to heaven,  
 Welcome to earth—this taking death for life—  
 This spurning love and kneeling to the world—  
 Oh Heaven, it is too often and too old !

*Mel.* Well, on this point—what but an absurd rumour  
 Arises—these, its source—its subject, you !  
 Your faith and loyalty misconstruing,  
 They say, your service claims the lady's hand !  
 Of course, nor Prince nor Lady can respond—  
 Yet something must be said—for, were it true  
 You made such claim, the Prince would . . .

*Val.*

Well, sir, would ?

*Mel.*—Not only probably withdraw his suit,  
 But, very like, the lady might be forced  
 Accept your own.—Oh, there are reasons why !  
 But you'll excuse at present all save this,—  
 I think so. What we want is, your own witness,  
 For, or against—her good, or yours : decide !

*Val.* [*Aside.*] Be it her good if she accounts it so !

*After a contest.* For what am I but hers, to choose as  
 she ?

Who knows how far, beside, the light from her  
 May reach and dwell with, what she looks upon ?

*Mel.* [*to the Prince.*] Now to him, you !

*Berth.* [to VALENCE.] My friend acquaints you, sir  
The noise runs . . .

*Val.* . . . Princee, how fortunate are you,  
Wedding her as you will, in spite of it,  
To show belief in love! Let her but love you,  
All else you disregard! What else can be?  
You know how love is incompatible  
With falsehood—purifies, assimilates  
All other passions to itself.

*Mel.* Ay, sir:  
But softly! Where in the object we select,  
Such love is, perchance, wanting?

*Val.* Then, indeed,  
What is it you can take?

*Mel.* Nay—ask the world!  
Youth, beauty, virtue, an illustrious name,  
An influence o'er mankind!

*Val.* When man perceives . . .  
—Ah, I can only speak as for myself!

*The D.* Speak for yourself!

*Val.* May I?—no, I have spoken,  
And time's gone by!—Had I seen such an one—  
As I loved her—weighing thoroughly that word—  
So should my task be to evolve her love—  
If for myself!—if for another—well!

*Berth.* Heroic truly! And your sole reward,—  
The secret pride in yielding up your own?

*Val.* Who thought upon reward? And yet how much  
Comes after—Oh what amplest recompense!  
Is the knowledge of her, nought? the memory, nought?

—Lady, should such an one have looked on you,  
 Ne'er wrong yourself so far as quote the world,  
 And say, love can go unrequited here !  
 You will have blessed him to his whole life's end—  
 Low passions hindered, baser cares kept back,  
 All goodness cherished where you dwelt—and dwell.  
 What would he have ? He holds you—you, both form  
 And mind, in his,—where self-love makes such room  
 For love of you, he would not serve you now  
 The vulgar way,—repulse your enemies,  
 Win you new realms, or best, in saving you  
 Die blissfully—that's past so long ago !  
 He wishes you no need, thought, care of him—  
 Your good, by any means, himself unseen,  
 Away, forgotten !—He gives that life's task up,  
 As it were . . . but this charge which I return—

[Offers the Requisition, which she takes

Wishing your good !

*The D.* [having subscribed it.] And opportunely, sir—  
 Since at a birthday's close, like this of mine,  
 Good wishes gentle deeds reciprocate.  
 Most on a wedding day, as mine is too,  
 Should gifts be thought of: yours comes first by right.  
 Ask of me !

*Berth.* He shall have whate'er he asks,  
 For your sake and his own !

*Val.* [Aside.] If I should ask—  
 The withered bunch of flowers she wears—perhaps,  
 One last touch of her hand, I never more  
 Shall see !

[After a pause, presenting his paper to the Prince.

Cleves' Prince, redress the wrongs of Cleves !

*Berth.* I will, sir !

*The D.* [as VALENCE prepares to retire.]—Nay, do  
out your duty, first !

You bore this paper : I have registered

My answer to it : read it and have done !

[VALENCE reads it

—I take him—give up Juliers and the world !

This is my birthday.

*Mel.* Berthold, my one hero

Of the world she gives up, one friend worth my books,

Sole man I think it pays the pains to watch,—

Speak, for I know you through your Popes and Kings !

*Berth.* [after a pause.] Lady, well rewarded ! Sir, as  
well deserved !

I could not imitate—I hardly envy—

I do admire you ! All is for the best !

Too costly a flower were you, I see it now,

To pluck and set upon my barren helm

To wither—any garish plume will do !

I'll not insult you and refuse your Duchy—

You can so well afford to yield it me,

And I were left, without it, sadly off !

As it is—for me—if that will flatter you,

A somewhat wearier life seems to remain

Than I thought possible where . . . 'faith, their life

Begins already—they're too occupied

To listen—and few words content me best !

[*Abruptly to the Courtiers.*] I am your Duke, though!

Who obey me here?

*The D.* Adolf and Sabyne follow us—

*Gui.* [*starting from the Courtiers.*]—And I?

Do I not follow them, if I mayn't you?

Shall not I get some little duties up

At Ravestein and emulate the rest?

God save you, Gaucelme! 'Tis my birthday, too!

*Berth.* You happy handful that remain with me

. . . That is, with Dietrich the black Barnabite

I shall leave over you—will earn your wages,

Or Dietrich has forgot to ply his trade!

Meantime,—go copy me the precedents

Of every installation, proper styles,

And pedigrees of all your Juliers' Dukes—

While I prepare to go on my old way,

And somewhat wearily, I must confess!

*The D.* [*with a light joyous laugh as she turns from*

*them.*] Come, Valence, to our friends—God's

earth - - -

*Val.* [*As she falls into his arms.*]—And thee!

DRAMAS

BY

ROBERT BROWNING.

VOL. II.





A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON.

A Tragedy



## A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON

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### PERSONS.

MILDRED TRESHAM.  
GUENDOLEN TRESHAM.  
THOROLD, Lord Tresham.  
AUSTIN TRESHAM.  
HENRY, Earl Mertoun.  
GERARD.  
Other Retainers of Lord Tresham.

TIME, 17—.

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### ACT I.

**SCENE I.**—*The interior of a Lodge in LORD TRESHAM'S Park. Many Retainers crowded at the window, supposed to command a view of the entrance to his Mansion. GERARD, the Warrener, sitting alone, his back to a table on which are flagons, &c.*

*1st Ret.* Ay—do—push, friends, and then you'll push down me.

—What for? Does any bear a runner's foot,  
Or a steed's trample, or a coach-wheel's cry?  
Is the Earl come or his least poursuivant?

But there's no breeding in a man of you  
 Save Gerard yonder: here's a half-place yet,  
 Old Gerard!

*Ger.* Save your courtesies, my friend.  
 Here is my place.

*2d Ret.* Now, Gerard, out with it!  
 What makes you sullen, this of all the days  
 I' the year? To-day that, young, rich, bountiful,  
 Handsome Earl Mertoun, whom alone they match  
 With our Lord Tresham thro' the country-side,  
 Is coming here in utmost bravery  
 To ask our Master's Sister's hand?

*Ger.* What then?

*2d Ret.* What then? Why, you she speaks to, if  
 she meets

Your worship, smiles on as you hold apart  
 The boughs to let her thro' her forest walks,  
 You, always favourite for your no-deserts,  
 You've heard, these three days, how Earl Mertoun **sues**  
 To lay his heart, and house, and broad lands too,  
 At Lady Mildred's feet—and while we squeeze  
 Ourselves into a mousehole lest we miss  
 One congee of the least page in his train,  
 You sit o' one side—"there's the Earl," say I—  
 "What then," say you!

*3d Ret.* I'll wager he has let  
 Both swans he tamed for Lady Mildred, swim  
 Over the falls and gain the river!

*Ger.* Ralph,

Is not to-morrow my inspecting day  
For you and for your hawks?

*4th Ret.*

Let Gerard be!

He's coarse-grained, like his carved black cross-bow  
stock.

Ha, look now, while we squabble with him, look!  
Well done, now—is not this beginning, now,  
'To purpose?

*1st Ret.* Our retainers look as fine—

That's comfort! Lord, how Richard holds himself  
With his white staff! Will not a knave behind  
Prick him upright?

*4th Ret.* He's only bowing, fool!

The Earl's man bent us lower by this much.

*1st Ret.* That's comfort. Here's a very cavalcade!

*3d Ret.* I don't see wherefore Richard, and his troop  
Of silk and silver varlets there, should find  
Their perfumed selves so indispensable  
On high days, holy-days! Would it so disgrace  
Our Family, if I, for instance, stood—  
In my right hand a cast of Swedish hawks,  
A leash of greyhounds in my left?—

*Ger.*

—With Hugh

The logman for supporter—in his right  
The bill-hook—in his left the brushwood-shears!

*3d Ret.* Out on you, crab! What next, what next?  
The Earl!

*1st Ret.* Oh, Walter, groom, our horses, do they  
match

The Earl's? Alas, that first pair of the six—  
They paw the ground—Ah, Walter! and that brute  
Just on his haunches by the wheel!

*6th Ret.* Ay—Ay!

You, Philip, are a special hand, I hear,  
At soups and sauces—what's a horse to you?  
D'ye mark that beast they've slid into the midst  
So cunningly?—then, Philip, mark this further;  
No leg has he to stand on!

*1st Ret.* No? That's comfort.

*2d Ret.* Peace, Cook! The Earl descends.—Well  
Gerard, see

The Earl at least! Come, there's a proper man,  
I hope! Why, Ralph, no falcon, Pole or Swede,  
Has got a starrier eye—

*3d Ret.* His eyes are blue—

But leave my hawks alone!

*4th Ret.* So young, and yet

So tall and shapely!

*5th Ret.* Here's Lord Tresham's self!

There now—there's what a nobleman should be!  
He's older, graver, loftier, he's more like  
A House's Head!

*2d Ret.* But you'd not have a boy  
—And what's the Earl beside?—possess too soon  
That stateliness?

*1st Ret.* Our Master takes his hand—  
Richard and his white staff are on the move—  
Back fall our people—(tsh!—there's Timothy

Sure to get tangled in his ribbon-ties—  
 And Peter's cursed rosette's a-coming off!)  
 —At last I see our Lord's back and his friend's—  
 And the whole beautiful bright company  
 Close round them—in they go! [*Jumping down from  
 the window-bench, and making for the table and  
 its jugs, &c.*] Good health, long life,  
 Great joy to our Lord Tresham and his House!

*6th Ret.* My father drove his father first to court,  
 After his marriage-day—ay, did he!

*2d Ret.* God bless  
 Lord Tresham, Lady Mildred, and the Earl!  
 Here, Gerard, reach your beaker!

*Ger.* Drink, my boys:  
 Don't mind me—all's not right about me—drink!

*2d Ret.* [*Aside.*] He's vexed, now, that he let the  
 show escape!

[*To GER.*] Remember that the Earl returns this way—

*Ger.* That way?

*2d Ret.* Just so.

*Ger.* Then my way's here. [*Goes*

*2d Ret.* Old Gerard

Will die soon—mind, I said it! He was used  
 To care about the pitifullest thing  
 That touched the House's honour, not an eye  
 But his could see wherein—and on a cause  
 Of scarce a quarter this importance, Gerard  
 Fairly had fretted flesh and bone away  
 In cares that this was right, nor that was wrong,

Such a point decorous, and such by rule—  
 (He knew such niceties, no herald more)  
 And now—you see his humour: die he will!

*2d Ret.* God help him! Who's for the great ser-  
 vants'-hall

To hear what's going on inside? They'd follow  
 Lord Tresham into the saloon.

*3d Ret.* I!—

*4th Ret.* I!—

Leave Frank alone for catching, at the door,  
 Some hint of how the parley goes inside!  
 Prosperity to the great House once more—  
 Here's the last drop!

*1st Ret.* Have at you! Boys, hurrah!

SCENE II.—*A Saloon in the Mansion.*

*Enter* LORD TRESHAM, LORD MERTOUN; AUSTIN and GUEN  
 DOLEN.

*Tresh.* I welcome you, Lord Mertoun, yet once more,  
 To this ancestral roof of mine. Your name  
 —Noble among the noblest in itself,  
 Yet taking in your person, fame avers.  
 New price and lustre,—(as that gem you wear,  
 Transmitted from a hundred knightly breasts,  
 Fresh chased and set and fixed by its last lord,  
 Seems to rekindle at the core)—your name  
 Would win you welcome!—

*Mer.*

Thanks!



*Tresh.*

—But add to that

The worthiness and grace and dignity  
 Of your proposal for uniting both  
 Our Houses even closer than respect  
 Unites them now—add these, and you must grant  
 One favor more, nor that the least,—to think  
 The welcome I should give;—'tis given! My lord,  
 My only brother, Austin—he's the King's.  
 Our cousin, Lady Guendolen—betrothed  
 To Austin: all are yours.

*Mer.*

I thank you—less

For the expressed commendings which your seal,  
 And only that, authenticates—forbids  
 My putting from me . . . to my heart I take  
 Your praise . . . but praise less claims my gratitude,  
 Than the indulgent insight it implies  
 Of what must needs be uppermost with one  
 Who comes, like me, with the bare leave to ask,  
 In weighed and measured unimpassioned words,  
 A gift, which, if as calmly 'tis denied,  
 He must withdraw, content upon his cheek,  
 Despair within his soul:—that I dare ask  
 Firmly, near boldly, near with confidence  
 That gift, I have to thank you.—Yes, Lord Tresham,  
 I love your sister—as you'd have one love  
 That lady . . . oh more, more I love her! Wealth,  
 Rank, all the world thinks *me*, they're yours, you know,  
 To hold or part with, at your choice—but grant  
 My true self, *me* without a rood of land,

A piece of gold, a name of yesterday,  
Grant me that lady, and you . . . Death or life?

*Guen.* [*apart to Aus.*] Why, this *is* loving, Austin!

*Aus.* He's so young!

*Guen.* Young? Old enough, I think, to half surmise  
He never had obtained an entrance here,  
Were all this fear and trembling needed.

*Aus.* Hush!

He reddens.

*Guen.* Mark him, Austin; that's true love!  
Ours must begin again.

*Tresh.* We'll sit, my lord.  
Ever with best desert goes diffidence.  
I may speak plainly nor be misconceived.  
That I am wholly satisfied with you  
On this occasion, when a falcon's eye  
Were dull compared with mine to search out faults,  
Is somewhat. Mildred's hand is hers to give  
Or to refuse.

*Mer.* But you, you grant my suit?  
I have your word if hers?

*Tresh.* My best of words  
If hers encourage you. I trust it will.  
Have you seen Lady Mildred, by the way?

*Mer.* I . . . I . . . our two demesnes, remember, touch—  
I have been used to wander carelessly  
After my stricken game—the heron roused  
Deep in my woods, has trailed its broken wing  
Thro' thicks and glades a mile in yours,—or else

Some eyass ill-reclaimed has taken flight  
 And lured me after her from tree to tree,  
 I marked not whither . . . I have come upon  
 The Lady's wondrous beauty unaware,  
 And—and then . . . I have seen her.

*Guen.* [*aside to Aus.*]                      Note that mode  
 Of faltering out that when a lady passed  
 He, having eyes, did see her! You had said—  
 "On such a day I scanned her, head to foot ;  
 "Observed a red, where red should not have been,  
 "Outside her elbow ; but was pleased enough  
 "Upon the whole." Let such irreverent talk  
 Be lessoned for the future!

*Tresh.*                                      What's to say  
 May be said briefly. She has never known  
 A mother's care ; I stand for father too.  
 Her beauty is not strange to you, it seems—  
 You cannot know the good and tender heart,  
 Its girl's trust, and its woman's constancy,  
 How pure yet passionate, how calm yet kind,  
 How grave yet joyous, how reserved yet free  
 As light where friends are—how embued with lore  
 The world most prizes, yet the simplest, yet  
 The . . . one might know I talked of Mildred—thus  
 We brothers talk!

*Mer.*                                      I thank you.

*Tresh.*                                      In a word,  
 Control's not for this lady ; but her wish  
 To please me outstrips in its subtlety

My power of being pleased—herself creates  
 The want she means to satisfy. My heart  
 Prefers your suit to her as 'twere its own.  
 Can I say more?

*Mer.* No more—thanks, thanks—no more

*Tresh.* This matter then discussed . . .

*Mer.* . . . We'll waste no breath

On aught less precious—I'm beneath the roof  
 That holds her: while I thought of that, my speech  
 To you would wander—as it must not do,  
 Since as you favour me I stand or fall.  
 I pray you suffer that I take my leave!

*Tresh.* With less regret 'tis suffered, that again  
 We meet, I hope, so shortly.

*Mer.* We? again?—

Ah yes, forgive me—when shall . . . you will crown  
 Your goodness by forthwith apprising me  
 When . . . if . . . the Lady will appoint a day  
 For me to wait on you—and her.

*Tresh.* So soon

As I am made acquainted with her thoughts  
 On your proposal—howsoe'er they lean—  
 A messenger shall bring you the result.

*Mer.* You cannot bind me more to you, my lord.  
 Farewell till we renew . . . I trust, renew  
 A converse ne'er to disunite again.

*Tresh.* So may it prove!

*Mer.* You, Lady, you, Sir, take

My humble salutation!

*Guen. & Aus.* Thanks!

*Tresh.* Within there!

Servants *enter.* TRESHAM conducts MERTOUN to the door. *Main  
time AUSTIN remarks,*

Well,

Here I have an advantage of the Earl,  
Confess now! I'd not think that all was safe  
Because my lady's brother stood my friend.  
Why, he makes sure of her—"do you say, yes—  
'She'll not say, no"—what comes it to beside?  
I should have prayed the brother, "speak this speech,  
"For Heaven's sake urge this on her—put in this—  
"Forget not, as you'd save me, t'other thing,—  
"Then set down what she says, and how she looks,  
"And if she smiles," and (in an under breath)  
"Only let her accept me, and do you  
"And all the world refuse me, if you dare!"

*Guen.* That way you'd take, friend Austin? What  
a shame

I was your cousin, tamely from the first  
Your bride, and all this fervour's run to waste!  
Do you know you speak sensibly to-day?  
The Earl's a fool.

*Aus.* Here's Thorold. Tell him so!

*Tresh. (returning.)* Now, voices, voices! 'St! The  
lady's first!

How seems he?—seems he not . . . come, faith give fraud  
The mercy-stroke whenever they engage!  
Down with fraud—up with faith! How seems the Earl?

A name! a blazon! if you knew their worth,  
As you will never! come—the Earl?

*Guen.* He's young.

*Tresh.* What's she? an infant save in heart and brain  
Young! Mildred is fourteen, remark! And you . .  
Austin, how old is she?

*Guen.* There's tact for you!  
I meant that being young was good excuse  
If one should tax him . .

*Tresh.* Well?

*Guen.* —With lacking wit.

*Tresh.* He lacked wit? Where might he lack wit, so  
please you?

*Guen.* In standing straiter than the steward's rod  
And making you the tiresomest harangues,  
Instead of slipping over to my side  
And softly whispering in my ear, "Sweet lady,  
"Your cousin there will do me detriment  
"He little dreams of—he's absorbed, I see,  
"In my old name and fame—be sure he'll leave  
"My Mildred, when his best account of me  
"Is ended, in full confidence I wear  
"My grandsire's periwig down either cheek.  
"I'm lost unless your gentleness vouchsafes" . .

*Tresh.* . . "To give a best of best accounts, yourself,  
"Of me and my demerits." You are right!  
He should have said what now I say for him.  
You golden creature, will you help us all?  
Here's Austin means to vouch for much, but you

—You are . . . what Austin only knows ! Come up,  
 All three of us—she's in the Library  
 No doubt, for the day's wearing fast. Precede !

*Guen.* Austin, how we must—!

*Tresh.* Must what ? Must speak truth,  
 Malignant tongue ! Detect one fault in him !  
 I challenge you !

*Guen.* Witchcraft's a fault in him,  
 For you're bewitched.

*Tresh.* What's urgent we obtain  
 Is, that she soon receive him—say, to-morrow—  
 Next day at farthest.

*Guen.* Ne'er instruct me !

*Tresh.* Come !

—He's out of your good graces since, forsooth,  
 He stood not as he'd carry us by storm  
 With his perfections ! You're for the composed,  
 Manly, assured, becoming confidence !  
 —Get her to say, “to-morrow,” and I'll give you . . .  
 I'll give you black Urganda, to be spoiled  
 With petting and snail-paces. Will you ? Come !

SCENE III.—MILDRED'S Chamber. *A painted window overlooks  
 the park.* MILDRED and GUENDOLEN.

*Guen.* Now, Mildred, spare those pains. I have not left  
 Our talkers in the Library, and climbed  
 The wearisome ascent to this your bower

In company with you,—I have not dared . .  
 Nay, worked such prodigies as sparing you  
 Lord Mertoun's pedigree before the flood,  
 Which Thorold seemed in very act to tell—  
 —Or bringing Austin to pluck up that most  
 Firm-rooted heresy—your suitor's eyes,  
 He would maintain, were gray instead of blue—  
 I think I brought him to contrition!—Well,  
 I have not done such things, (all to deserve  
 A minute's quiet cousin's-talk with you,  
 To be dismissed so coolly!

*Mil.*

Guendolen,

What have I done . . what could suggest . .

*Guen.*

There, there

Do I not comprehend you'd be alone  
 To throw those testimonies in a heap,  
 Thorold's enlargings, Austin's brevities,  
 With that poor, silly, heartless Guendolen's  
 Ill-timed, misplaced, attempted smartnesses—  
 And sift there sense out? now, I come to spare you  
 Nearly a whole night's labour. Ask and have!  
 Demand, be answered! Lack I ears and eyes?  
 Am I perplexed which side of the rock-table  
 The Conqueror dined on when he landed first,  
 Lord Mertoun's ancestor was bidden take—  
 The bow-hand or the arrow-hand's great meed?  
 Mildred, the Earl has soft blue eyes!

*Mil.*

My brother—

Did he . . you said that he received him well?



*Guen.* If I said only "well" I said not much—  
Oh, stay—which brother?

*Mil.* Thorold! who—who else?

*Guen.* Thorold (a secret) is too proud by half,—  
Nay, hear me out—with us he's even gentler  
Than we are with our birds. Of this great House  
The least retainer that e'er caught his glance  
Would die for him, real dying—no mere talk:  
And in the world, the court, if men would cite  
The perfect spirit of honour, Thorold's name  
Rises of its clear nature to their lips:  
But he should take men's homage, trust in it,  
And care no more about what drew it down.  
He has desert, and that, acknowledgment;  
Is he content?

*Mil.* You wrong him, Guendolen.

*Guen.* He's proud, confess; so proud with brooding o'er  
The light of his interminable line,  
An ancestry with men all paladins,  
And women all . . .

*Mil.* Dear Guendolen, 'tis late!  
When yonder purple pane the climbing moon  
Pierces, I know 'tis midnight.

*Guen.* Well, that Thorold  
Should rise up from such musings, and receive  
One come audaciously to graft himself  
Into this peerless stock, yet find no flaw,  
No slightest spot in such an one . . .

*Mil.* Who finds  
A spot in Mertoun?

*Guen.* Not your brother; therefore,  
Not the whole world.

*Mil.* I'm weary, Guendolen.—  
Bear with me!

*Guen.* I am foolish.

*Mil.* Oh, no, kind—  
But I would rest.

*Guen.* Good night and rest to you.  
I said how gracefully his mantle lay  
Beneath the rings of his light hair?

*Mil.* Brown hair!

*Guen.* Brown? why it is brown—how could you know  
that?

*Mil.* How? did not you—Oh Austin 'twas, declared  
His hair was light, not brown—my head!—and, look,  
The moonbeam purpling the dark chamber! Sweet,  
Good night!

*Guen.* Forgive me—sleep the soundlier for me!

[*Going, she turns suddenly*]

Mildred

Perdition! all's discovered.—Thorold finds  
—That the Earl's greatest of all grandmothers  
Was grander daughter still—to that fair dame  
Whose garter slipped down at the famous dance. [*Goes*]

*Mil.* Is she—can she be really gone at last?  
My heart—I shall not reach the window! Needs

Must I have sinned much, so to suffer!

[*She lifts the small lamp which is suspended before the Virgin's image in the window, and places it by the purple pane.*]  
There!

[*She returns to the seat in front.*]

Mildred and Mertoun! Mildred, with consent  
Of all the world and Thorold,—Mertoun's bride!  
Too late! 'Tis sweet to think of, sweeter still  
To hope for, that this blessed end soothes up  
The curse of the beginning; but I know  
It comes too late—'twill sweetest be of all  
To dream my soul away and die upon! [*A noise without.*]  
The voice! Oh, why, why glided sin the snake  
Into the Paradise Heaven meant us both?

[*The window opens softly.—A low voice sings.*]

There's a woman like a dew-drop, she's so purer than the purest;  
And her noble heart's the noblest, yes, and her sure faith's the surest:  
And her eyes are dark and humid, like the depth on depth of lustre  
Hid i' the harebell, while her tresses, sunnier than the wild-grape cluster,  
Gush in golden-tinted plenty down her neck's rose-misted marble:  
Then her voice's music . . . call it the well's bubbling, the bird's warble!

[*A figure wrapped in a mantle appears at the window.*]

And this woman says, "My days were sunless and my nights were  
moonless,  
"Parched the pleasant April herbage, and the lark's heart's outbreak  
tuneless,  
"If you love'd me not!" And I who—(ah, for words of flame!) adore  
her!

Who am mad to lay my spirit prostrate palpably before her—

[*He enters—approaches her seat, and bends over her*

may enter at her portal soon, as now her lattice takes me,

And by no side as by midnight make her mine, as hers she makes me!

[*The Earl throws off his soiled hat and long cloak*

My very heart sings, so I sing, beloved!

*Mil.* Sit, Henry—do not take my hand.

*Mer.*

'Tis mine

The meeting that appalled us both so much  
Is ended.

*Mil.* What begins now?

*Mer.*

Happiness

Such as the world contains not.

*Mil.*

That is it.

Our happiness would, as you say, exceed  
The whole world's best of blisses: we—do we  
Deserve that? Utter to your soul, what mine  
Long since, beloved, has grown used to hear,  
Like a death-knell, so much regarded once,  
And so familiar now; this will not be!

*Mer.* Oh, Mildred, have I met your brother's face,  
Compelled myself—if not to speak untruth,  
Yet to disguise, to shun, to put aside  
The truth, as what had e'er prevailed on me  
Save you, to venture? Have I gained at last  
Your brother, the one scarer of your dreams,  
And waking thoughts' sole apprehension too?  
Does a new life, like a young sunrise, break  
On the strange unrest of our night, confused  
With rain and stormy flaw—and will you see  
No dripping blossoms, no fire-tinted drops  
On each live spray, no vapour steaming up,  
And no expressless glory in the east?  
When I am by you, to be ever by you.

When I have won you and may worship you,  
Oh, Mildred, can you say "this will not be?"

*Mil.* Sin has surprised us; so will punishment.

*Mer.* No—me alone, who sinned alone!

*Mil.*

The night

You likened our past life to—was it storm  
Throughout to you then, Henry?

*Mer.*

Of your life

I spoke—what am I, what my life, to waste  
A thought about when you are by me?—you  
It was, I said my folly called the storm  
And pulled the night upon.—'Twas day with me—  
Perpetual dawn with me.

*Mil.*

Come what, come will,

You have been happy—take my hand!

*Mer.* [*after a pause.*]

How good

Your brother is! I figured him a cold—  
Shall I say, haughty man?

*Mil.*

They told me all.

I know all.

*Mer.*

It will soon be over.

*Mil.*

Over?

Oh, what is over? what must I live thro'  
And say, "'tis over?" Is our meeting over?  
Have I received in presence of them all  
The partner of my guilty love,—with brow  
Trying to seem a maiden's brow—with lips  
Which make believe that when they strive to form  
Replies to you and tremble as they strive,

It is the nearest ever they approached  
 A stranger's . . . Henry, yours that stranger's . . . lip—  
 With cheek that looks a virgin's, and that *is* . . .  
 Ah, God! some prodigy of thine will stop  
 This planned piece of deliberate wickedness  
 In its birth even—some fierce leprous spot  
 Will mar the brow's dissimulating—I  
 Shall murmur no smooth speeches got by heart,  
 But, frenzied, pour forth all our woeful story,  
 The love, the shame, and the despair—with them  
 Round me aghast as men round some cursed fount  
 That should spirt water, and spouts blood. I'll not  
 . . . Henry, you do not wish that I should draw  
 This vengeance down? I'll not affect a grace  
 That's gone from me—gone once, and gone forever!

*Mer.* Mildred, my honour is your own. I'll share  
 Disgrace I cannot suffer by myself.

A word informs your brother I retract  
 This morning's offer; time will yet bring forth  
 Some better way of saving both of us.

*Mil.* I'll meet their faces, Mertoun!

*Mer.* When? to-morrow  
 Get done with it!

*Mil.* Oh, Henry, not to-morrow!  
 Next day! I never shall prepare my words  
 And looks and gestures sooner!—How you must  
 Despise me!

*Mer.* Mildred, break it if you choose,  
 A heart the love of you uplifted—still

Uplifts, thro' this protracted agony,  
 To Heaven! but, Mildred, answer me,—first pace  
 The chamber with me—once again—now, say  
 Calmly the part, the . . . what it is of me  
 You see contempt (for you did say contempt)  
 —Contempt for you in! I would pluck it off  
 And cast it from me!—but no—no, you'll not  
 Repeat that?—will you, Mildred, repeat that?

*Mil.* Dear Henry—

*Mer.* I was scarce a boy—e'en now  
 What am I more? And you were infantine  
 When first I met you—why, your hair fell loose  
 On either side!—my fool's cheek reddens now  
 Only in the recalling how it burned  
 That morn to see the shape of many a dream  
 —You know we boys are prodigal of charms  
 To her we dream of—I had heard of one,  
 Had dreamed of her, and I was close to her,  
 Might speak to her, might live and die her own,  
 Who knew?—I spoke—Oh, Mildred, feel you not  
 That now, while I remember every glance  
 Of yours, each word of yours, with power to test  
 And weigh them in the diamond scales of Pride,  
 Resolved the treasure of a first and last  
 Heart's love shall have been bartered at its worth,  
 —That now I think upon your purity  
 And utter ignorance of guilt—your own  
 Or other's guilt—the girlish undisguised  
 Delight at a strange novel prize—(I talk

A silly language, but interpret, you!)  
 If I, with fancy at its full, and reason  
 Scarce in its germ, enjoined you secrecy,  
 If you had pity on my passion, pity  
 On my protested sickness of the soul  
 To sit beside you, hear you breathe, and watch  
 Your eyelids and the eyes beneath—if you  
 Accorded gifts and knew not they were gifts—  
 If I grew mad at last with enterprise  
 And must behold my beauty in her bower  
 Or perish—(I was ignorant of even  
 My own desires—what then were you?) if sorrow—  
 Sin—if the end came—must I now renounce  
 My reason, blind myself to light, say truth—  
 Is false and lie to God and my own soul?  
 Contempt were all of this!

*Mil.*

Do you believe . . .

Or, Henry, I'll not wrong you—you believe  
 That I was ignorant. I scarce grieve o'er  
 The past! We'll love on—you will love me still!

*Mer.* Oh, to love less what one has injured! Dove,  
 Whose pinion I have rashly hurt, my breast—  
 Shall my heart's warmth not nurse thee into strength?  
 Flower I have crushed, shall I not care for thee?  
 Bloom o'er my crest my fight-mark and device!  
 Mildred, I love you and you love me!

*Mil.*

Go!

Be that your last word. I shall sleep to-night.

*Mer.* This is not our last meeting?



*Mil.* One night more.

*Mer.* And then—think, then!

*Mil.* Then, no sweet courtship days,  
No dawning consciousness of love for us,  
No strange and palpitating births of sense  
From words and looks, no innocent fears and hopes,  
Reserves and confidences: morning's over!

*Mer.* How else should love's perfected noontide  
follow?

All the dawn promised shall the day perform.

*Mil.* So may it be! but——

You are cautious, love?

Are sure that unobserved you sealed the walls?

*Mer.* Oh, trust me! Then our final meeting's fixed?  
To-morrow night?

*Mil.* Farewell! Stay, Henry . . wherefore?  
His foot is on the yew-tree bough—the turf  
Receives him—now the moonlight as he runs  
Embraces him—but he must go—is gone—  
Ah, once again he turns—thanks, thanks, my love!  
He's gone—Oh I'll believe him every word!  
I was so young—I loved him so—I had  
No mother—God forgot me—and I fell.  
There may be pardon yet—all's doubt beyond.  
Surely the bitterness of death is past!

## ACT II.

SCENE.—*The Library.**Enter LORD TRESHAM hastily.*

This way—In, Gerard, quick!

*[As GERARD enters, TRESHAM secures the door.*

Now speak! or, wait—

I'll bid you speak directly.

*[Seats himself.*

Now repeat

Firmly and circumstantially the tale

You've just now told me; it eludes me; either

I did not listen, or the half is gone

Away from me—How long have you lived here?

Here in my house, your father kept our woods

Before you?

*Ger.* —As his father did, my lord.

I have been eating sixty years, almost,

Your bread.

*Tresh.* Yes, yes—You ever were of all

The servants in my father's house, I know,

The trusted one. You'll speak the truth.

*Ger.*

I'll speak

God's truth: night after night . . .

*Tresh.*

Since when?

*Ger.*

At least

A month—each midnight has some man access  
To Lady Mildred's chamber.

*Tresh.* Tush, "access"—

No wide words like "access" to me!

*Ger.* He runs

Along the woodside, crosses to the south,  
Takes the left tree that ends the avenue . . .

*Tresh.* The last great yew-tree?

*Ger.* You might stand upon

The main boughs like a platform . . . Then he . . .

*Tresh.* Quick!

*Ger.* . . . Climbs up, and, where they lessen at the top,  
—I cannot see distinctly, but he throws,  
I think—for this I do not vouch—a line  
That reaches to the Lady's casement—

*Tresh.* —Which

He enters not! Gerard—some wretched fool  
Dares pry into my sister's privacy!  
When such are young, it seems a precious thing  
To have approached,—to merely have approached,  
Got sight of, the abode of her they set  
Their frantic thoughts upon! He does not enter?  
Gerard?

*Ger.* There is a lamp that's full in the midst,  
Under a red square in the painted glass  
Of Lady Mildred's . . .

*Tresh.* Leave that name out! Well?

That lamp?

*Ger.* —Is moved at midnight higher up

To one pane—a small dark-blue pane—he waits  
 For that among the boughs ; at sight of that,  
 I see him, plain as I see you, my lord,  
 Open the Lady's casement, enter there . . .

*Tresh.*—And stay?

*Ger.* An hour, two hours.

*Tresh.* And this you saw

Once?—twice?—quick!

*Ger.* Twenty times.

*Tresh.* And what brings you

Under the yew-trees?

*Ger.* The first night I left

My range so far, to track the stranger stag

That broke the pale, I saw the man.

*Tresh.* Yet sent

No cross-bow shaft thro' the marauder?

*Ger.* But

He came, my lord, the first time he was seen,

In a great moonlight, light as any day,

*From* Lady Mildred's chamber.

*Tresh.* [*after a pause.*] You have no cause—  
 —Who could have cause to do my sister wrong?

*Ger.* Oh, my lord, only once—let me this once  
 Speak what is on my mind! Since first I noted  
 All this, I've groaned as if a fiery net  
 Plucked me this way and that—fire, if I turned  
 To her, fire if I turned to you, and fire,  
 If down I flung myself and strove to die.  
 The lady could not have been seven years old

When I was trusted to conduct her safe  
 Thro' the deer-herd to stroke the snow-white fawn  
 I brought to eat bread from her tiny hand  
 Within a month. She ever had a smile  
 To greet me with—she . . . if it could undo  
 What's done to lop each limb from off' this trunk . . .  
 All that is foolish talk, not fit for you—  
 I mean, I could not speak and bring her hurt  
 For Heaven's compelling: but when I was fixed  
 To hold my peace, each morsel of your food  
 Eaten beneath your roof, my birth-place too,  
 Choked me. I wish I had grown mad in doubts  
 What it behooved me do. This morn it seemed  
 Either I must confess to you, or die:  
 Now it is done, I seem the vilest worm  
 That crawls, to have betrayed my Lady!

*Tresh.*

No—

No—Gerard!

*Ger.*

Let me go!

*Tresh.*

A man, you say—

What man? Young? Not a vulgar hind? What dress?

*Ger.* A slouched hat and a large dark foreign cloak

Wraps his whole form: even his face is hid;

But I should judge him young; no hind, be sure!

*Tresh.* Why?

*Ger.*

He is ever armed: his sword projects

Beneath the cloak.

*Tresh.*

Gerard,—I will not say

No word, no breath of this!

*Ger.* Thanks, thanks, my lord. [*Goes*

*TRESHAM paces the room. After a pause,*

Oh, thoughts absurd!—as with some monstrous fact  
That, when ill thoughts beset us, seems to give  
Merciful God that made the sun and stars  
The waters and the green delights of earth,  
The lie! I apprehend the monstrous fact—  
Yet know the Maker of all worlds is good,  
And yield my reason up, inadequate  
To reconcile what yet I do behold—  
Blasting my sense! There's cheerful day outside—  
This is my library—and this the chair  
My father used to sit in carelessly,  
After his soldier-fashion, while I stood  
Between his knees to question him—and here,  
Gerard our gray retainer,—as he says,  
Fed with our food from sire to son an age,—  
Has told a story—I am to believe!  
That Mildred . . . oh no, no! both tales are true,  
Her pure cheek's story and the forester's!  
Would she, or could she, err—much less, confound  
All guilts of treachery, of craft, of . . . Heaven  
Keep me within its hand!—I will sit here  
Until thought settles and I see my course.  
Avert, oh God, only this woe from me!

[*As he sinks his head between his arms on the table*

*GUENDOLEN'S voice is heard at the door.*

Lord Tresham! [*She knocks.*] Is Lord Tresham there

[*TRESHAM, hastily turning, pulls down the first book above  
him and opens it.*

*Tresh.* Come in! [*She enters.*]

Ah, Guendolen—good morning.

*Guen.* Nothing more?

*Tresh.* What should I say more?

*Guen.* Pleasant question! more?

This more! Did I besiege poor Mildred's brain  
Last night till close on morning with "the Earl"—  
"The Earl"—whose worth did I asseverate  
Till I am very fain to hope that . . . Thorold,  
What is all this? You are not well!

*Tresh.* Who, I?

You laugh at me.

*Guen.* Has what I'm fain to hope  
Arrived, then? Does that huge tome show some blot  
In the Earl's 'scutcheon come no longer back  
Than Arthur's time?

*Tresh.* When left you Mildred's chamber?

*Guen.* Oh late enough, I told you! The main thing  
To ask is, how I left her chamber,—sure,  
Content yourself, she'll grant this paragon  
Of Earls no such ungracious . . .

*Tresh.* Send her here!

*Guen.* Thorold?

*Tresh.* I mean—acquaint her, Guendolen.—  
—But mildly!

*Guen.* Mildly?

*Tresh.* Ah, you guess'd aright  
I am not well—there is no hiding it.  
But tell her I would see her at her leisure—

That is, at once! here in the Library!  
 The passage in that old Italian book  
 We hunted for so long is found, say,—found—  
 And if I let it slip again . . . you see,  
 That she must come—and instantly!

*Guen.* I'll die  
 Piecemeal, record that, if there have not gloomed  
 Some blot i' the 'scutcheon!

*Tresh.* Go! or, Guendolen,  
 Be you at call,—with Austin, if you choose,—  
 In the adjoining gallery—There, go! [*GUENDOLEN goes*]  
 Another lesson to me! you might bid  
 A child disguise his heart's sore, and conduct  
 Some sly investigation point by point  
 With a smooth brow, as well as bid me catch  
 The inquisitorial cleverness some praise!  
 If you had told me yesterday, "There's one  
 "You needs must circumvent and practise with,  
 "Entrap by policies, if you would worm  
 "The truth out—and that one is—Mildred!" There—  
 There—reasoning is thrown away on it!  
 Prove she's unchaste . . . why you may after prove  
 That she's a poisoner, traitress, what you will!  
 Where I can comprehend nought, nought's to say,  
 Or do, or think! Force on me but the first  
 Abomination,—then outpour all plagues,  
 And I shall ne'er make count of them!

*Enter MILDRED.*

*Mil.*

What book



Is it I wanted, Thorold? Guendolen  
Thought you were pale—you are not pale! That book?  
That's Latin surely!

*Tresh.* Mildred—here's a line—  
(Don't lean on me—I'll English it for you)  
"Love conquers all things." What love conquers them?  
What love should you esteem—best love?

*Mil.* True love.

*Tresh.* I mean, and should have said, whose love is  
best  
Of all that love or that profess to love?

*Mil.* The list's so long—there's father's, mother's,  
husband's . . .

*Tresh.* Mildred, I do believe a brother's love  
For a sole sister must exceed them all!  
For see now, only see! there's no alloy  
Of earth that creeps into the perfect'st gold  
Of other loves—no gratitude to claim;  
You never gave her life—not even aught  
That keeps life—never tended her, instructed,  
Enriched her—so your love can claim no right  
O'er hers save pure love's claim—that's what I call  
Freedom from earthliness. You'll never hope  
To be such friends, for instance, she and you,  
As when you hunted cowslips in the woods,  
Or played together in the meadow hay.  
Oh yes—with age, respect comes, and your worth  
Is felt, there's growing sympathy of tastes,  
There's ripened friendship, there's confirmed esteem,

—Much head these make against the new-comer  
 The startling apparition—the strange youth—  
 Whom one half-hour's conversing with, or, say,  
 Mere gazing at, shall change (beyond all change  
 This Ovid ever sang about!) your soul  
 . . . *Her* soul, that is,—the sister's soul! With her  
 Twas winter yesterday; now, all is warmth,  
 The green leaf's springing and the turtle's voice,  
 "Arise and come away!" Come whither?—far  
 Enough from the esteem, respect, and all  
 The brother's somewhat insignificant  
 Array of rights! all which he knows before—  
 Has calculated on so long ago!  
 I think such love, (apart from yours and mine,)  
 Contented with its little term of life,  
 Intending to retire betimes, aware  
 How soon the back-ground must be place for it,  
 I think, am sure, a brother's love exceeds  
 All the world's loves in its unworldliness.

*Mil.* What is this for?

*Tresh.* This, Mildred, is it for!

Oh, no, I cannot go to it so soon!  
 That's one of many points my haste left out—  
 Each day, each hour throws forth its silk-slight film  
 Between the being tied to you by birth,  
 And you, until those slender threads compose  
 A web that shrouds her daily life of hopes  
 And fears and fancies, all her life, from yours—  
 So close you live and yet so far apart!

And must I rend this web, tear up, break down  
The sweet and palpitating mystery  
That makes her sacred? You—for you I mean,  
Shall I speak—shall I not speak?

*Mil.*

Speak!

*Tresh.*

I will.

Is there a story men could—any man  
Could tell of you, you would conceal from me?  
I'll never think there's falsehood on that lip!  
Say "There is no such story men could tell,"  
And I'll believe you, tho' I disbelieve  
The world . . . the world of better men than I,  
And women such as I suppose you—Speak!  
[*After a pause.*] Not speak? Explain then! clear it up,  
then! Move

Some of the miserable weight away  
That presses lower than the grave! Not speak?  
Some of the dead weight, Mildred! Ah, if I  
Could bring myself to plainly make their charge  
Against you! Must I, Mildred? Silent still?

[*After a pause.*] Is there a gallant that has night by night  
Admittance to your chamber?

[*After a pause.*] . . . Then, his name!

Till now, I only had a thought for you—  
But now,—his name!

*Mil.*

Thorold, do you devise

Fit expiation for my guilt, if fit  
There be! 'tis nought to say that I'll endure  
And bless you,—that my spirit yearns to purge

Her stains off in the fierce renewing fire—

But do not plunge me into other guilt!

Oh, guilt enough! I cannot tell his name.

*Tresh.* Then judge yourself! How should I act  
Pronounce!

*Mil.* Oh, Thorold, you must never tempt me thus!

To die here in this chamber by that sword

Would seem like punishment—so should I glide,

Like an arch-cheat, into extremest bliss!

'Twere easily arranged for me! but you—

What would become of you?

*Tresh.* And what will now

Become of me? I'll hide your shame and mine

From every eye; the dead must heave their hearts

Under the marble of our chapel-floor;

They cannot rise and blast you! You may wed

Your paramour above our mother's tomb;

Our mother cannot move from 'neath your foot.

We two will somehow wear this one day out:

But with to-morrow hastens here—the Earl!

The youth without suspicion that faces come

From Heaven, and hearts from . . . whence proceed such  
hearts?

I have despatched last night at your command

A missive bidding him present himself

To-morrow here—thus much is said—the rest

Is understood as if 'twere written down—

“His suit finds favor in your eyes,”—now dictate

This morning's letter that shall countermand

Last night's—do dictate that!

*Mil.* But, Thorold—if  
I will receive him as I said?  
*Tresh.* *The Earl?*  
*Mil.* I will receive him!  
*Tresh.* [*Starting up.*] Ho there! Guendolen!

GUENDOLEN and AUSTIN enter.

And, Austin, you are welcome too! Look there!  
The woman there!

*Aus. & Guen.* How? Mildred?

*Tresh.* Mildred once!

Now the receiver night by night, when sleep  
Blesses the inmates of her father's house,  
—I say, the soft sly wanton that receives  
Her guilt's accomplice 'neath this roof which holds  
You, Guendolen, you, Austin, and has held  
A thousand Treshams—never one like her!  
No lighter of the signal lamp her quick  
Foul breath near quenches in hot eagerness  
To mix with breath as foul! no loosener  
Of the lattice, practised in the stealthy tread,  
The low voice and the noiseless come-and-go!  
Not one composer of the Bacchant's mien  
Into—what you thought Mildred's, in a word!  
Know her!

*Guen.* Oh, Mildred look to me, at least!  
Thorold—she's dead, I'd say, but that she stands  
Rigid as stone and whiter!

*Tresh.* You have heard . . .

*Guen.* Too much! you must proceed no further!

*Mil.*

Yes—

Proceed—All's truth! Go from me!

*Tresh.*

All is truth,

She tells you! Well, you know, or ought to know,

All this I would forgive in her. I'd con

Each precept the harsh world enjoins, I'd take

Our ancestors' stern verdicts one by one,

I'd bind myself before them to exact

The prescribed vengeance—and one word of hers,

The sight of her, the bare least memory

Of Mildred, my one sister, my heart's pride

Above all prides, my all in all so long,

Had scattered every trace of my resolve!

What were it silently to waste away

And see her waste away from this day forth,

Two scathed things with leisure to repent,

And grow acquainted with the grave, and die,

Tired out if not at peace, and be forgotten?

It were not so impossible to bear!

But this—that, fresh from last night's pledge renewed

Of love with the successful gallant there,

She'll calmly bid me help her to entice,

Inveigle an unconscious trusting youth

Who thinks her all that's chaste, and good, and pure,

—Invite me to betray him . . . who so fit

As honour's self to cover shame's arch-deed?

—That she'll receive Lord Mertoun—(her own phrase)—

This, who could bear? Why, you have heard of 'hieves

Stabbers, the earth's disgrace—who yet have laughed,  
 “Talk not of tortures to me—I'll betray  
 “No comrade I've pledged faith too!”—you have heard  
 Of wretched women—all but Mildreds—tied  
 By wild illicit ties to losels vile  
 You'd tempt them to forsake; and they'll reply  
 “Gold, friends, repute, I left for him, I have  
 “In him, why should I leave him then for gold,  
 “Repute, or friends?”—and you have felt your heart  
 Respond to such poor outcasts of the world  
 As to so many friends; bad as you please,  
 You've felt they were God's men and women still,  
 So not to be disowned by you! but she,  
 That stands there, calmly gives her lover up  
 As means to wed the Earl, that she may hide  
 Their intercourse the surelier! and, for this,  
 I curse her to her face before you all!  
 Shame hunt her from the earth! Then Heaven do right  
 To both! It hears me now—shall judge her then!

[As MILDRED faints and falls, TRESHAM rushes out.

*Aus.* Stay, Tresham, we'll accompany you!

*Guen.*

We?

What, and leave Mildred? We? why, where's my place  
 But by her side, and where's yours but by mine?  
 Mildred—one word—only look at me, then!

*Aus.* No, Guendolen! I echo Thorold's voice!

She is unworthy to behold . . .

*Guen.*

Us two?

If you spoke on reflection, and if I

Approved your speech—if you (to put the thing  
At lowest) you, the soldier, bound to make  
The King's cause yours, and fight for it, and throw  
Regard to others of its right or wrong,  
—If with a death-white woman you can help,  
Let alone sister, let alone a Mildred,  
You left her—or if I, her cousin, friend  
This morning, playfellow but yesterday,  
Who've said, or thought at least a thousand times,  
“I'd serve you if I could,” should now face round  
And say “Ah, that's to only signify  
“I'd serve you while you're fit to serve yourself—  
“So long as fifty eyes await the turn  
“Of yours to fore-stall its yet half-formed wish,  
“I'll proffer my assistance you'll not need—  
“When every tongue is praising you, I'll join  
“The praisers' chorus—when you're hemmed about  
“With lives between you and detraction—lives  
“To be laid down if a rude voice, rash eye,  
“Rough hand should violate the sacred ring  
“Their worship throws about you,—then indeed,  
“Who'll stand up for you stout as I?” If so  
We said and so we did,—not Mildred there  
Would be unworthy to behold us both,  
But we should be unworthy, both of us,  
To be beheld by—by—your meanest dog,  
Which, if that sword were broken in your face  
Before a crowd, that badge torn off your breast,  
**And** you cast out with hootings and contempt,



—Would push his way thro' all the hooters, gain  
 Your side, go off with you and all your shame  
 To the next ditch you chose to die in! Austin,  
 Do you love me? Here's Austin, Mildred,—here's  
 Your brother says he does not believe half—  
 No, nor half that—of all he heard! He says,  
 Look up and take his hand!

*Aus.* Look up and take  
 My hand, dear Mildred!

*Mil.* I—I was so young!  
 Beside, I loved him, Thorold—and I had  
 No mother—God forgot me—so I fell!

*Guen.* Mildred!

*Mil.* Require no further! Did I dream  
 That I could palliate what is done? All's true  
 Now, punish me! A woman takes my hand!  
 Let go my hand! You do not know, I see—  
 I thought that Thorold told you.

*Guen.* What is this?

Where start you to?

*Mil.* Oh Austin, loosen me!  
 You heard the whole of it—your eyes were worse,  
 In their surprise, than Thorold's! Oh, unless  
 You stay to execute his sentence, loose  
 My hand! Has Thorold gone, and are you here?

*Guen.* Here, Mildred, we two friends of yours will wait  
 Your bidding; be you silent, sleep or muse!  
 Only, when you shall want your bidding done,  
 How can we do it if we are not by?

Here's Austin waiting patiently your will!  
 One spirit to command, and one to love  
 And to believe in it and do its best,  
 Poor as that is, to help it—why, the world  
 Has been won many a time, its length and breadth,  
 By just such a beginning!

*Mil.* I believe  
 If once I threw my arms about your neck  
 And sunk my head upon your breast, that I  
 Should weep again!

*Guen.* Let go her hand now, Austin.  
 Wait for me.—Pace the gallery and think  
 On the world's seemings and realities  
 Until I call you. [AUSTIN goes

*Mil.* No—I cannot weep!  
 No more tears from this brain—no sleep—no tears!  
 O Guendolen, I love you!

*Guen.* Yes: and “love”  
 Is a short word that says so very much!  
 It says that you confide in me.

*Mil.* Confide!

*Guen.* Your lover's name, then! I've so much to learn,  
 Ere I can work in your behalf!

*Mil.* My friend,  
 You know I cannot tell his name.

*Guen.* At least  
 He is your lover? and you love him too?

*Mil.* Ah, do you ask me that?—but I am fallen  
 So low!

*Guen.* You love him still, then?

*Mil.* My sole prop

Against the guilt that crushes me! I say,  
Each night ere I lie down, "I was so young—  
"I had no mother—and I loved him so!"  
And then God seems indulgent, and I dare  
Trust him my soul in sleep.

*Guen.* How could you let us  
E'en talk to you about Lord Mertoun then?

*Mil.* There is a cloud around me.

*Guen.* But you said  
You would receive his suit in spite of this?

*Mil.* I say there is a cloud . .

*Guen.* No cloud to me!  
Lord Mertoun and your lover are the same!

*Mil.* What maddest fancy . . .

*Guen.* [*calling aloud.*] Austin! (Spare your pains—  
When I have got a truth, that truth I keep)—

*Mil.* By all you love, sweet Guendolen, forbear!  
Have I confided in you . .

*Guen.* Just for this!  
Austin!—Oh, not to guess it at the first!  
But I *did* guess it—that is, I divined—  
Felt by an instinct how it was—why else  
Should I pronounce you free from all that heap  
Of sins which had been irredeemable?  
I felt they were not yours—what other way  
Than this, not yours? The secret's wholly mine!

*Mil.* If you would see me die before his face . .

*Guen.* I'd hold my peace! And if the Earl returns  
To-night?

*Mil.* Ah, Heaven, he's lost!

*Guen.* I thought so! Austin!

*Enter AUSTIN.*

Oh where have you been hiding?

*Aus.* Thorold's gone,  
I know not how, across the meadow-land.  
I watched him till I lost him in the skirts  
Of the beech-wood.

*Guen.* Gone? All thwarts us!

*Mil.* Thorold too?

*Guen.* I have thought. First lead this Mildred to her  
room.

Go on the other side: and then we'll seek  
Your brother; and I'll tell you, by the way,  
The greatest comfort in the world. You said  
There was a clew to all. Remember, sweet,  
He said there was a clew! I hold it. Come!

### ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The end of the Yew-tree Avenue under MILDRED'S  
window. A light seen through a central red pane.*

*Enter TRESHAM through the trees.*

Again here! But I cannot lose myself.  
The heath—the orchard—I have traversed glades  
And dells and bosky paths which used to lead

Into green wildwood depths, bewildering  
 My boy's adventurous step; and now they tend  
 Hither or soon or late; the blackest shade  
 Breaks up, the thronged trunks of the trees ope wide,  
 And the dim turret I have fled from fronts  
 Again my step; the very river put  
 Its arm about me and conduced me  
 To this detested spot. Why then, I'll shun  
 Their will no longer—do your will with me!  
 Oh, bitter! To have reared a towering scheme  
 Of happiness and to behold it razed,  
 Were nothing: all men hope, and see their hopes  
 Frustrate, and grieve awhile, and hope anew:  
 But I . . . to hope that from a line like ours  
 No horrid prodigy like this would spring,  
 Were just as though I hoped that from these old  
 Confederates against the sovereign day,  
 Children of older and yet older sires  
 (Whose living coral berries dropped, as now  
 On me, on many a baron's surcoat once,  
 On many a beauty's wimple) would proceed  
 No poison-tree, to thrust, from Hell its root,  
 Hither and thither its strange snaky arms.  
 Why came I here? What must I do?—[*a bell strikes.*]—

A bell?

Midnight! and 'tis at midnight . . . Ah, I catch  
 --Woods, river, plains, I catch your meaning now,  
 And I obey you! Hist! This 'tree will serve!

*He retires behind one of the trees. After a pause, enters*

*MERTOUN cloaked as before.*

*Mer.* Not time! Beat out thy last voluptuous beat  
 Of hope and fear, my heart! I thought the clock  
 In the chapel struck as I was pushing thro'  
 The ferns. And so I shall no more see rise  
 My love-star! Oh, no matter for the past!  
 So much the more delicious task to see  
 Mildred revive: to pluck out, thorn by thorn,  
 All traces of the rough forbidden path  
 My rash love lured her too! Each day must see  
 Some fear of hers effaced, some hope renewed!  
 Then there will be surprises, unforeseen  
 Delights in store. I'll not regret the past!

[*The light is placed above in the purple pane*

And see, my signal rises! Mildred's star!  
 I never saw it lovelier than now  
 It rises for the last time! If it sets,  
 'Tis that the reassuring sun may dawn!

[*As he prepares to ascend the last tree of the avenue*

TRESHAM arrests his arm.

Unhand me—peasant, by your grasp! Here's gold.  
 'Twas a mad freak of mine. I said I'd pluck  
 A branch from the white-blossom'd shrub beneath  
 The casement there! Take this, and hold your peace.

*Tresh.* Into the moonlight yonder, come with me!  
 —Out of the shadow!

*Mer.* I am armed, fool!

*Tresh.* Yes,

Or no?—You'll come into the light, or no?  
 My hand is on your throat—refuse!—

*Mer.*

That voice!

Where have I heard . . . no—that was mild and slow.

I'll come with you!

[*They advance.*]*Tresh.*

You're armed—that's well.

Your name—who are you?

*Mer.*

(Tresham!—she is lost!)

*Tresh.* Oh, silent? Do you know, you bear yourself

Exactly as, in curious dreams I've had

How felons, this wild earth is full of, look

When they're detected, still your kind has looked!

The bravo holds an assured countenance,

The thief is voluble and plausible,

But silently the slave of lust has crouched

When I have fancied it before a man!

Your name?

*Mer.*

I do conjure Lord Tresham—ay,

Kissing his foot, if so I might prevail—

That he for his own sake forbear to ask

My name! As Heaven's above, his future weal

Or woe depends upon my silence! Vain!

I read your white inexorable face!

Know me, Lord Tresham! [*He throws off his disguises.*]*Tresh.*

Mertoun!

[*After a pause.*]

Draw now.

*Mer.*

Hear me

But speak first!

*Tresh.*

Not one least word on your life!

Be sure that I will strangle in your throat

The least word that informs me how you live

And yet seem what you seem! No doubt 'twas **you**  
 Taught Mildred still to keep that face and sin!  
 We should join hands in frantic sympathy  
 If you once taught me the unteachable,  
 Explained how you can live so, and so lie!  
 With God's help I retain, despite my sense,  
 The old belief—a life like yours is still  
 Impossible! Now draw!

*Mer.* Not for my sake,  
 Do I entreat a hearing—for your sake,  
 And most, for her sake!

*Tresh.* Ha, ha, what should I  
 Know of your ways? A miscreant like yourself,  
 How must one rouse his ire?—A blow?—that's pride  
 No doubt, to him! one spurns him, does one not?  
 Or sets the foot upon his mouth—or spits  
 Into his face! Come—which, or all of these?

*Mer.* 'Twi'x't him, and me, and Mildred, Heaven be  
 judge!

Can I avoid this? Have your will, my Lord!

*[He draws, and, after a few passes, falls]*

*Tresh.* You are not hurt?

*Mer.* You'll hear me now!

*Tresh.* But rise!

*Mer.* Ah, Tresham, say I not "you'll hear me now!"  
 And what procures a man the right to speak  
 In his defence before his fellow-man,  
 But—I suppose—the thought that presently  
 He may have leave to speak before his God  
 His whole defence?



*Tresh.* Not hurt? It cannot be!  
 You made no effort to resist me. Where  
 Did my sword reach you? Why not have returned  
 My thrusts? Hurt where?

*Mer.* My lord—

*Tresh.* How young he is

*Mer.* Lord Tresham, I am very young, and yet  
 I have entangled other lives with mine.  
 Do let me speak—and do believe my speech,  
 That when I die before you presently,—

*Tresh.* Can you stay here till I return with help?

*Mer.* Oh, stay by me! When I was less than boy  
 I did you grievous wrong, and knew it not—  
 Upon my honor, knew it not! Once known,  
 I could not find what seemed a better way  
 To right you than I took: my life—you feel  
 How less than nothing had been giving you  
 The life you've taken! But I thought my way  
 The better—only for your sake and hers.  
 And as you have decided otherwise,  
 Would I had an infinity of lives  
 To offer you!—now say—instruct me—think!  
 Can you from out the minutes I have left  
 Eke out my reparation? Oh—think—think!  
 For I must wring a partial—dare I say,  
 Forgiveness from you, ere I die!

*Tresh.* I do

Forgive you.

*Mer.* Wait and ponder that great word

Because, if you forgive me, I shall hope  
To speak to you of—Mildred!

*Tresh.* Mertoun,—haste  
And anger have undone us. 'Tis not you  
Should tell me for a novelty you're young—  
Thoughtless—unable to recall the past!  
Be but your pardon ample as my own!

*Mer.* Ah, Tresham, that a sword-stroke and a drop  
Of blood or two, should bring all this about!  
Why, 'twas my very fear of you—my love  
Of you—(what passion's like a boy's for one  
Like you?)—that ruined me! I dreamed of you—  
You, all accomplished, courted every where,  
The scholar and the gentleman. I burned  
To knit myself to you—but I was young,  
And your surpassing reputation kept me  
So far aloof—oh, wherefore all that love?  
With less of love, my glorious yesterday  
Of praise and gentle words and kindest looks,  
Had taken place perchance six months ago!  
Even now—how happy we had been! And yet  
I know the thought of this escaped you, Tresham!  
Let me look up into your face—I feel  
'Tis changed above me—yet my eyes are glazed.  
Where? where?

*[As he endeavors to raise himself, his eye catches the lamp]*

Ah, Mildred! What will Mildred do  
Tresham, her life is bound up in the life  
That's bleeding fast away!—I'll live—must live,

There ! if you'll only turn me I shall live  
 And save her ! Tresham—oh, had you but heard !  
 Had you but heard ! What right have you to set  
 The thoughtless foot upon her life and mine,  
 And then say, as we perish, " Had I thought,  
 " All had gone otherwise." We've sinned and die  
 Never you sin, Lord Tresham !—for you'll die,  
 And God will judge you.

*Tresh.* Yes, be satisfied—  
 That process is begun.

*Mer.* And she sits there  
 Waiting for me. Now, say you this to her—  
 You—not another—say, I saw him die  
 As he breathed this—" I love her"—(you don't know  
 What those three small words mean) say, loving her  
 Lowers me down the bloody slope to death  
 With memories . . . I speak to her—not you,  
 Who had no pity—will have no remorse,  
 Perchance intend her . . . Die along with me,  
 Dear Mildred !—'tis so easy—and you'll 'scape  
 So much unkindness ! Can I lie at rest,  
 With rude speech spoken to you, ruder deeds  
 Done to you—heartless men to have my heart,  
 And I tied down with grave-clothes and the worm,  
 Aware, perhaps, of every blow—Oh God !—  
 Upon those lips—yet of no power to tear  
 The felon stripe by stripe ? Die, Mildred ! Leave  
 Their honourable world to them—for God  
 We're good enough, tho' the world casts us out !

[A whistle is heard

*Tresh.* Ho, Gerard!

*Enter GERARD, AUSTIN, and GUENDOLEN, with lights.*

No one speak! you see what's done  
I cannot bear another voice!

*Mer.* There's light—  
Light all about me and I move to it.  
*Tresh.* did I not tell you—did you not  
Just promise to deliver words of mine  
To Mildred?

*Tresh.* I will bear those words to her.

*Mer.* Now?

*Tresh.* Now! Lift you the body, Gerard, and leave me  
The head.

*[As they have half raised MERTOUN, he turns suddenly*

*Mer.* I knew they turned me—turn me not from her  
There! stay you! there! *[Dics.*

*Guen.* *[after a pause.]* Austin, remain you here  
With Thorold until Gerard comes with help—  
Then lead him to his chamber. I must go  
To Mildred.

*Tresh.* Guendolen, I hear each word  
You utter—did you hear him bid me give  
His message? Did you hear my promise? I,  
And only I, see Mildred!

*Guen.* She will die.

*Tresh.* Oh no, she will not die! I dare not hope  
She'll die. What ground have you to think she'll die?  
Why, Austin's with you!

*Aus.* Had we but arrived  
Before you fought!

*Tresh.* There was no fight at all!  
He let me slaughter him—the boy!—I'll trust  
The body there to you and Gerard—thus!  
Now bear him on before me.

*Aus.* Whither bear him?

*Tresh.* Oh, to my chamber. When we meet there  
next,  
We shall be friends.

[*They bear out the body of MERTOUN*  
Will she die, Guendolen?

*Guen.* Where are you taking me?

*Tresh.* He fell just here!  
Now answer me. Shall you in your whole life  
—You who have nought to do with Mertoun's fate,  
Now you have seen his breast upon the turf,  
Shall you e'er walk this way if you can help?  
When you and Austin wander arm in arm  
Thro' our ancestral grounds, will not a shade  
Be ever on the meadow and the waste—  
Another kind of shade than when the night  
Shuts the woodside with all its whispers up!  
But will you ever so forget his breast  
As willingly to cross this bloody turf  
Under the black yew avenue? That's well!  
You turn your head! and I then?—

*Guen.* What is done  
Is done! My care is for the living. Thorold,

Bear up against this burden—more remains  
To set the neck to!

*Tresh.*                      Dear and ancient trees  
My fathers planted, and I loved so well!  
What have I done that, like some fabled crime  
Of yore, lets loose a fury leading thus  
Her miserable dance amidst you all?  
Oh, never more for me shall winds intone  
With all your tops a vast antiphony,  
Demanding and responding in God's praise!  
Hers ye are now—not mine! Farewell—farewell!

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SCENE II—MILDRED'S Chamber. MILDRED *alone.*

He comes not! I have heard of those who seemed  
Resourceless in prosperity,—you thought  
Sorrow might slay them when she listed—yet  
Did they so gather up their diffused strength  
At her first menace, that they bade her strike,  
And stood and laughed her subtlest skill to scorn.  
Oh, 'tis not so with me! the first woe fell,  
And the rest fall upon it, not on me:  
Else should I bear that Henry comes not?—*fails*  
Just this first night out of so many nights?  
Loving is done with! Were he sitting now,  
As so few hours since, on that seat, we'd love  
No more—contrive no thousand happy ways  
To hide love from the loveless, any more!  
I think I might have urged some little point

In my defence, to Thorold; he was breathless  
 For the least hint of a defence; but no!  
 The first shame over, all that would might fall.  
 No Henry! Yet I merely sit and think  
 The morn's deed o'er and o'er. I must have crept  
 Out of myself. A Mildred that has lost  
 Her lover—oh, I dare not look upon  
 Such woe! I crouch away from it! 'Tis she,  
 Mildred, will break her heart, not I! The world  
 Forsakes me—only Henry's left me—left?  
 When I have lost him, for he does not come,  
 And I sit stupidly . . . Oh Heaven, break up  
 This worse than anguish, this mad apathy,  
 By any means or any messenger!

*Tresh.* [*without.*] Mildred!

*Mil.* Come in! Heaven hears me.

[*TRESHAM enters.*] You? alone?

Oh, no more cursing!

*Tresh.* Mildred, I must sit,

There—you sit!

*Mil.* Say it, Thorold—do not look

The curse—deliver all you come to say!

What must become of me? Oh speak that thought

Which makes your brow and cheek so pale!

*Tresh.* My thought?

*Mil.* All of it!

*Tresh.* How we waded—years ago—

After those water-lilies, till the plash.

I know not how, surprised us; and you dared

Neither advance nor turn back, so we stood  
 Laughing and crying until Gerard came—  
 Once safe upon the turf, the loudest, too,  
 For once more reaching the relinquish'd prize!  
 How idle thoughts are—some men's—dying men's!  
 Mildred,—

*Mil.* You call me kindlier by my name  
 Than even yesterday—what is in that?

*Tresh.* It weighs so much upon my mind that }  
 This morning took an office not my own!  
 I might . . . of course, I must be glad or grieved,  
 Content or not, at every little thing  
 That touches you—I may with a wrung heart  
 Even reprove you, Mildred; I did more—  
 Will you forgive me?

*Mil.* Thorold? do you mock?  
 Or no . . . and yet you bid me . . . say that word!

*Tresh.* Forgive me, Mildred!—are you silent sweet

*Mil.* [*starting up.*] Why does not Henry Mertoun  
 come to night?

Are *you*, too, silent?

[*Dashing his mantle aside, and pointing to his scabbard  
 which is empty.*]

Ah, this speaks for you!  
 You've murdered Henry Mertoun! now proceed!  
 What is it I must pardon? This and all?  
 Well, I do pardon you—I think I do.  
 Thorold, how very wretched you must be!

*Tresh.* He bade me tell you . . .



*Mil.*

What I do forbid

Your utterance of! so much that you may tell  
 And will not—how you murdered him . . . but, no!  
 You'll tell me that he loved me, never more  
 Than bleeding out his life there—must I say  
 "Indeed," to that? Enough! I pardon you!

*Tresh.* You cannot, Mildred! for the harsh words, yes  
 Of this last deed Another's Judge—whose doom  
 I wait in doubt, despondency, and fear.

*Mil.* Oh true! there's nought for me to pardon! True  
 You loosed my soul of all its cares at once—  
 Death makes me sure of him forever! *You*  
 Tell me his last words? *He* shall tell me them,  
 And take my answer—not in words, but reading  
 Himself the heart I had to read him late,  
 Which death . . .

*Tresh.* Death? you are dying too? Well said  
 Of Guendolen! I dared not hope you'd die—  
 But she was sure of it.

*Mil.*

Tell Guendolen

I loved her, and tell Austin . . .

*Tresh.*

. . . Him you loved—

And me?

*Mil.* Ah, Thorold! was't not rashly done  
 To quench that blood, on fire with youth and hope  
 And love of me, whom you loved too, and yet  
 Suffered to sit here waiting his approach  
 While you were slaying him? Oh, doubtlessly  
 You let him speak his poor confused boy's-speech

—Do his poor utmost to disarm your wrath  
 And respite me!—you let him try to give  
 The story of our loves, and ignorance,  
 And the brief madness, and the long despair—  
 You let him plead all this, because your code  
 Of honour bids you hear before you strike:  
 But at the end, as he looked up for life  
 Into your eyes—you struck him down!

*Tresh.*

No! no!

Had I but heard him—had I let him speak  
 Half the truth—less—had I looked long on him,  
 I had desisted! Why, as he lay there,  
 The moon on his flushed cheek, I gathered all  
 The story ere he told it! I saw thro'  
 The troubled surface of his crime and yours  
 A depth of purity immovable!  
 Had I but glanced, where all seemed turbidest  
 Had gleamed some inlet to the calm beneath!  
 I would not glance—my punishment's at hand.  
 There, Mildred, is the truth! and you—say on—  
 You curse me?

*Mil.*

As I dare approach that Heaven  
 Which has not bade a living thing despair,  
 Which needs no code to keep its grace from stain,  
 But bids the vilest worm that turns on it  
 Desist and be forgiven,—I—forgive not,  
 But bless you, Thorold, from my soul of souls!

[*Falls on his neck*]

There! do not think too much upon the past!

The cloud that's broke was all the same a cloud  
 While it stood up between my friend and you!  
 You hurt him 'neath its shadow—but is that  
 So past retrieve? I have his heart, you know—  
 I may dispose of it—I give it you!  
 It loves you as mine loves! Confirm me, Henry!

[Dies

*Tresh.* I wish thee joy, beloved! I am glad  
 In thy full gladness!

*Guen.* [without.] Mildred! Tresham!  
 [Entering with AUSTIN.] Thorold,  
 I could desist no longer. Ah, she swoons!  
 That's well—

*Tresh.* Oh! better far than that!

*Guen.* She's dead  
 Let me unlock her arms!

*Tresh.* She threw them thus  
 About my neck, and blessed me, and then died.  
 —You'll let them stay now, Guendolen!

*Aus.* Leave her  
 And look to him! What ails you, Thorold?

*Guen.* White  
 As she—and whiter! Austin—quick—this side!

*Aus.* A froth is oozing thro' his clenched teeth—  
 Both lips, where they're not bitten thro', are black!  
 Speak, dearest Thorold!

*Tresh.* Something does weigh down  
 My neck beside her weight: thanks: I should fall  
 But for you, Austin, I believe!—there, there—

'Twill pass away soon!—ah,—I had forgotten—  
I am dying.

*Guen.* Thorold—Thorold—why was this?

*Tresh.* I said, just as I drank the poison off,  
The earth would be no longer earth to me,  
The life out of all life was gone from me!  
There are blind ways provided, the foredone  
Heart-weary player in this pageant world  
Drops out by, letting the main masque defile  
By the conspicuous portal:—I am through—  
Just through!—

*Guen.* Don't leave him, Austin! death is close.

*Tresh.* Already Mildred's face is peacefuller!  
I see you, Austin—feel you—here's my hand,  
Put yours in it—You, Guendolen, yours too!  
You're Lord and Lady now—Your're Treshams—Name  
And fame are yours—You hold our 'Scutcheon up.  
Austin, no Blot on it! You see how blood  
Must wash one blot away: the first blot came  
And the first blood came. To the vain world's eye  
All's gules again—no care to the vain world,  
From whence the red was drawn!

*Aus.* No blot shall come

*Tresh.* I said that—yet it did come. Should it come,  
Vengeance is God's not man's. Remember me!

[Dies

*Guen.* [letting fall the pulseless arm.] Ah, Thorold,  
we can but—remember you!

THE  
RETURN OF THE DRUSES.  
A Tragedy.



**THE**  
**RETURN OF THE DRUSES.**

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PERSONS.

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>The Grand-Master's Prefect.<br/>         The Patriarch's Nuncio.<br/>         The Republic's Admiral.<br/>         LOYS DE DREUX, Knight-Novice.<br/>         Initiated Druses—DJABAL.<br/>           "      "      KHALIL.<br/>           "      "      ANAEL.</p> |  | <p>Initiated Druses—MAANI.<br/>           "      "      KARSHOOK,<br/>                   RAGHIB, AYOOB, and<br/>                   others.<br/>         Uninitiated Druses.<br/>         Prefect's Guard, Nuncio's At-<br/>                   tendants, Admiral's Force.</p> |
|--|--|--|

TIME 14—.

PLACE, An Islet of the Southern Sporades, colonized by Druses of  
 Lebanon, and garrisoned by the Knights-Hospitallers of Rhodes.

SCENE, A Hall in the Prefect's Palace.

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ACT I.

*Enter stealthily KARSHOOK, RAGHIB, AYOOB, and other initiated Druses, each as he enters casting off a robe that conceals his distinctive black vest and white turban; then, as giving a loose to exultation,—*

*Kar.* The moon is carried off in purple fire:  
 Day breaks at last! Break glory with the day,  
 On Djabal's dread incarnate mystery

Now ready to resume its pristine shape  
 Of Hakeem, as the Khalib vanished erst  
 In what seemed death to uninstructed eyes,  
 On red Mokattam's verge—our Founder's flesh,  
 As he resumes our Founder's function !

*Ragh.* — Death

Sweep to the Christian Prefect that enslaved  
 So long us sad Druse exiles o'er the sea !

*Ay.* — Most joy be thine, O Mother-mountain ! Thy brood  
 Returns to thee, no outcasts as we left ;  
 But thus—but thus ! Behind, our Prefect's corse ;  
 Before, a presence like the morning—thine,  
 Absolute Djabal late,—God Hakeem now  
 That day breaks !

*Kar.* Off then, with disguise at last !  
 As from our forms this hateful garb we strip,  
 Lose every tongue its glozing accent too,  
 Discard each limb the ignoble gesture ! Cry,  
 'Tis the Druse Nation, warders on our mount  
 Of the world's secret, since the birth of time,  
 —No kindred slips, no offsets from thy stock,  
 No spawn of Christians are we, Prefect, we  
 Who rise . . .

*Ay.* Who shout . . .

*Ragh.* Who seize, a first-fruits, ha—  
 Spoil of the spoiler ! Brave !

[*They begin to tear down, and to dispute for, the decorations  
 of the Hall.*]

*Kar.*

Hold !



*Ay.* —Mine, I say ;  
And mine shall it continue !

*Kar.* Just this fringe !  
Take anything beside ! Lo, spire on spire,  
Curl serpentwise wreathed columns to the top  
Of the roof, and hide themselves mysteriously  
Among the twinkling lights and darks that haunt  
Yon cornice ! Where the huge veil, they suspend  
Before the Prefect's Chamber of delight,  
Floats wide, then falls again (as if its slave,  
The scented air, took heart now, and anon  
Lost heart, to buoy its breadths of gorgeousness  
Above the gloom they droop in)—all the porch  
Is jewelled o'er with frost-work charactery ;  
And see yon eight-point cross of white flame, winking  
Hoar-silvery like some fresh-broke marble-stone :  
Raze out the Rhodian's Cross there, so thou leav'st me  
This single fringe !

*Ay.* Ha, wouldst thou, dog-fox ? Help  
—Three handbreadths of gold fringe, my son was set  
To twist, the night he died !

*Kar.* Nay, hear the knave !  
And I could witness my one daughter borne,  
A week since, to the Prefect's couch, yet fold  
These arms, be mute, lest word of mine should mar  
Our Master's work, delay the Prefect here  
A day, prevent his sailing hence for Rhodes—  
How know I else ?—Hear me denied my right  
By such a knave !



Challenge his prime regard : but we may crave  
 (Such nothings as we be) a portion too  
 Of Djabal's favor ; in him we believed,  
 His bound ourselves, him moon by moon obeyed,  
 Kept silence till this daybreak—so may claim  
 Reward : who grudges me my claim ?

*Ay.* To-day

Is not as yesterday !

*Ragh.* Stand off !

*Kha.* Rebel you ?

Must I, the delegate of Djabal, draw  
 His wrath on you, the day of our Return ?

*Other Druses.* Wrench from their grasp the fringe  
 Hound ! must the earth

Vomit her plagues on us thro' thee ?—and thee ?  
 Plague me not, Khalil, for their fault !

*Kha.* Oh, shame !

Thus breaks to-day on you, the mystic tribe  
 Who, flying the approach of Osman, bore  
 Our faith, a merest spark, from Syria's Ridge  
 Its birthplace, hither ! Let the sea divide  
 These hunters from their prey, you said, and safe  
 In this dim islet's virgin solitude  
 Tend we our faith, the spark, till happier time  
 Fan it to fire ; till Hakeem rise again,  
 According to his word that, in the flesh  
 Which faded on Mokattam ages since,  
 He, at our extreme need, would interpose,  
 And, reinstating all its power and bliss,

Lead us himself to Lebanon once more.  
 Was't not thus you departed years ago,  
 Ere I was born?

*Druses.* 'Twas even thus, years ago.

*Kha.* And did you call—(according to old laws  
 Which bid us, lest the Sacred grow Profane,  
 Assimilate ourselves in outward rites  
 With strangers fortune makes our lords, and live  
 As Christian with the Christian, Jew with Jew,  
 Druse only with the Druses)—did you call  
 Or no, to stand 'twixt you and Osman's rage,  
 (Mad to pursue e'en hither thro' the sea  
 The remnant of your tribe) a race self-vowed  
 To endless warfare with his hordes and him,  
 The White-cross Knights of the adjacent Isle?

*Kar.* And why else rend we down, wrench up, raze out?  
 These Knights of Rhodes we thus solicited  
 For help, bestowed on us a fiercer pest  
 Than aught we fled—their Prefect; who began  
 His promised mere paternal governance,  
 By a prompt massacre of all our Sheikhs  
 Able to thwart the Order in its scheme  
 Of crushing, with our nationalities,  
 Each chance of our return, and taming us  
 Bond slaves to Rhodes forever—all, he thinks  
 To end by this day's treason.

*Kha.* Say I not?

You, fitted to the Order's purposes,  
 Your Sheikhs cut off, your very garb proscribed,

Must yet receive one degradation more ;  
 The Knights at last throw off the mask—transfer,  
 As tributary now, and appanage,  
 This islet they are but protectors of,  
 To their own ever-craving lord, the Church,  
 Which licenses all crimes that pay it thus—  
 You, from their Prefect, were to be consigned  
 Pursuant to I know not what vile pact,  
 To the Knights' Patriarch, ardent to outvie  
 His predecessor in all wickedness ;  
 When suddenly rose Djabal in the midst,  
 Djabal, the man, in semblance, but our God  
 Confessed by signs and portents. Ye saw fire  
 Bicker round Djabal, heard strange music flit  
 Bird-like about his brow ?

*Druses.*

We saw—we heard !

Djabal is Hakeem, the incarnate Dread,  
 The phantasm Khalif, King of Prodigies !

*Kha.* And as he said hath not our Khalif done,  
 And so disposed events (from land to land  
 Passing invisibly)—that when, this morn,  
 The pact of villany complete, there comes  
 This Patriarch's Nuncio with this Master's Prefect  
 Their treason to consummate,—each will face  
 For a crouching handful, an uplifted nation ;  
 For simulated Christians, confessed Druses ;  
 And, for slaves past hope of the Mother-mount,  
 Freedmen returning there 'neath Venice' flag ;  
 That Venice, which, the Hospitallers' foe,

Grants us from Candia escort home at price  
 Of our relinquished isle—Rhodes counts her own—  
 Venice, whose promised argosies should stand  
 Toward the harbour : is it now that you, and you,  
 And you, selected from the rest to bear  
 The burden of the Khalif's secret, further  
 To-day's event, entitled by your wrongs,  
 And witness in the Prefect's hall his fate—  
 That you dare clutch these gauds? Ay, drop them!

*Kar.*

True,

Most true, all this; and yet, may one dare hint,  
 Thou art the youngest of us?—tho' employed  
 Abundantly as Djabal's confidant,  
 Transmitter of his mandates, even now :  
 Much less, whene'er beside him Anael graces  
 The cedar throne, his Queen-bride, art thou like  
 To occupy its lowest step that day!  
 Now, Khalil, wert thou checked as thou aspirest,  
 Forbidden such or such an honour,—say,  
 Would silence serve so amply?

*Kha.*

Karshook thinks

I covet honours? Well, nor idly thinks!  
 Honours? I have demanded of them all  
 The greatest!

*Kar.*

I supposed so.

*Kha.*

Judge yourselves!

Turn—thus: 'tis in the alcove at the back  
 Of yonder columned porch, whose entrance now  
 The veil hides, that our Prefect holds his state;

Receives the Nuncio, when the one, from Rhodes,  
The other lands from Syria; there they meet.

Now, I have sued with earnest prayers . . .

*Kar.*

For what

Shall the Bride's brother vainly sue?

*Kha.*

That mine—

Avenging in one blow a myriad wrongs,

—Might be the hand to slay the Prefect there!

Djabal reserves that office for himself.

[*A silence*

Thus far, as youngest of you all, I speak

—Scarce more enlightened than yourselves: since, near

As I approach him, nearer as I trust

Soon to approach our Master, he reveals

Only the God's power, not the glory yet:

Therefore I reasoned with you: now, as servant

To Djabal, bearing his authority,

Hear me appoint your several posts! Till noon

None sees him save myself and Anael—once

The deed achieved, our Khalif, casting off

The embodied Awe's tremendous mystery,

The weakness of the flesh disguise, resumes

His proper glory, ne'er to fade again.

*Enter a Druse.*

*The Druse.* Our Prefect lands from Rhodes!—With  
out a sign

That he suspects aught since he left our Isle;

Nor in his train a single guard beyond

The few he sailed with hence: so have we learned

From Loys . . .

*Kar.* Loys? Is not Loys gone  
For ever?

*Ayoob.* Loys, the Frank Knight, returned?

*The Druse.* Loys, the boy, stood on the leading prow  
Conspicuous in his gay attire,—and leapt  
Into the surf the foremost: since day-dawn  
I kept watch to the Northward; take but note  
Of my poor vigilance to Djabal!

*Kha.* Peace!

Thou, Karshook, with thy company, receive  
The Prefect as appointed: see, all keep  
The wonted show of servitude: announce  
His entry here by the accustomed peal  
Of trumpets, then await the further pleasure  
Of Djabal! (Loys back, whom Djabal sent  
To Rhodes that we might spare the single Knight  
Worth sparing!)

*Enter a second Druse.*

*The Druse.* I espied it first! Say, I  
First spied the Nuncio's galley from the South!  
Saidst thou a Crossed-keys' Flag would flap the mast?  
It nears apace! One galley and no more—  
If Djabal chance to ask who spied the flag,  
Forget not, I it was!

*Kha.* Thou, Ayoob, bring  
The Nuncio and his followers hither! Break  
One rule prescribed, ye wither in your blood,  
Die at your fault!



*Enter a third Druse.*

*The Druse.* I shall see home, see home!  
—Shall banquet in the sombre groves again!  
Hail to thee, Khalil! Venice looms afar;  
The argosies of Venice, like a cloud,  
Bear up from Candia in the distance!

*Kha.* Joy!  
Summon our people, Raghil! Bid all forth!  
Tell them the long-kept secret, old and young!  
Set free the captives, let the trampled raise  
Their faces from the dust, because at length  
The cycle is complete, God Hakeem's reign  
Begins anew! Say, Venice for our guard,  
Ere night we steer for Syria! Hear you, Druses?  
Hear you this crowning witness to the claims  
Of Djabal? Oh, I spoke of hope and fear,  
Reward and punishment, because he bade  
Who has the right; for me, what should I say  
But, mar not those imperial lineaments,  
No majesty of all that rapt regard  
Vex by the least omission! Let him rise  
Without a check from you!

*Druses.* Let Djabal rise!

*Enter Loys.—The Druses are silent.*

*Loys.* Who speaks of Djabal?—for I seek him, friends  
[*Aside.*] *Tu Dieu!* 'Tis as our Isle broke out in song  
For joy, its Prefect-incubus drops off

To-day, and I succeed him in his rule!

But no—they cannot dream of their good fortune.

[*Aloud.*] Peace to you, Druses! I have tidings for *yea*,  
But first for Djabal: where's your tall bewitcher,  
With that small Arab thin-lipped silver mouth?

*Kha.* [*Aside to KAR.*] Loys, in truth! Yet Djabal  
cannot err!

*Kar.* [*to KHA.*] And who takes charge of Loys?  
That's forgotten,

Despite thy wariness! Will Loys stand  
And see his comrade slaughtered?

*Loys.* [*Aside.*] How they shrink  
And whisper; with those rapid faces! What?  
The sight of me in their oppressors' garb  
Strikes terror to the simple tribe? God's shame  
On those that bring our Order ill repute!  
But all's at end now; better days begin  
For these mild mountaineers from over-sea;  
The timidest shall have in me no Prefect  
To cower at thus! [*Aloud.*] I asked for Djabal—

*Kar.* [*Aside.*] Better  
One lured him, ere he can suspect, inside  
The corridor; 'twere easy to despatch  
A youngster. [*to LOYS.*] Djabal passed some minutes  
since

Thro' yonder porch, and . . .

*Kha.* [*Aside.*] Hold! What, him despatch?  
The only Christian of them all we charge  
No tyranny upon? Who,—noblest Knight

Of all that learned from time to time their trade  
 Of lust and cruelty among us,—heir  
 To Europe's pomps, a truest child of pride,—  
 Yet stood between the Prefect and ourselves  
 From the beginning? Loys, Djabal makes  
 Account of, and precisely sent to Rhodes  
 For safety?—I take charge of him!

[To LOYS.]

Sir Loys,—

*Loys.* There, cousins! Does Sir Loys strike you dead?

*Kha.* [*advancing.*] Djabal has intercourse with few or  
 none

Till noontide: but, your pleasure?

*Loys.*

“Intercourse

“With few or none?”—(Ah, Khalil, when you spoke  
 I saw not your smooth face! All health!—and health  
 To Anael! How fares Anael?)—“Intercourse  
 “With few or none?” Forget you, I've been friendly  
 With Djabal long ere you or any Druse?

—Enough of him at Rennes, I think, beneath  
 The Duke my father's roof! He'd tell by the hour,  
 With fixed white eyes beneath his swarthy brow,  
 Plausiblest stories . . .

*Kha.*

Stories, say you?—Ah,

The quaint attire!

*Loys.*

My dress for the last time!

How sad I cannot make you understand,  
 This ermine, o'er a shield, betokens me  
 Of Bretagne, ancientest of provinces  
 And noblest; and, what's best and oldest there,

See, Dreux', our house's blazon, which the Nuncio  
Tacks to an Hospitallers' vest to-day!

*Kha.* The Nuncio we await? What brings you back  
From Rhodes, Sir Loys?

*Loys.* How you island tribe  
Forget, the world's awake while here you drowse!  
What brings me back? What should not bring me,  
rather?

Our Patriarch's Nuncio visits you to-day—  
Is not my year's probation out? I come  
To take the knightly vows.

*Kha.* What's that you wear?

*Loys.* This Rhodian cross? The cross your Prefect  
wore.

You should have seen, as I saw, the full Chapter  
Rise, to a man, while they transferred this cross  
From that unworthy Prefect's neck to . . . (fool—  
My secret will escape me!) in a word,  
My year's probation's passed, and Knight ere eve  
Am I; bound, like the rest, to yield my wealth  
To the common stock, to live in chastity,  
(We Knights espouse alone our Order's fame)  
—Change this gay weed for the black white-crossed gown  
And fight to death against the Infidel  
—Not, therefore, against you, you Christians with  
Such partial difference only as befits  
The peaceullest of tribes! But Khalil, prithee,  
Is not the Isle brighter than wont to-day?

*Kha.* Ah, the new sword!

*Loys.* See now! You handle sword  
As 'twere a camel-staff! Pull! That's my motto,  
Annealed, "*Pro fide*," on the blade in blue.

*Kha.* No curve in it? Surely a blade should curve!

*Loys.* Straight from the wrist! Loose—it should  
poise itself!

*Kha.* [*waving with irrepressible exultation the sword.*]

We are a nation, *Loys*, of old fame  
Among the mountains! Rights have we to keep  
With the sword too!

[*Remembering himself.*] But I forget—you bid me  
Seek *Djabal*?

*Loys.* What! A sword's sight scares you not?  
(The people I will make of him and them!  
Oh, let my Prefect-sway begin at once!)  
Bring *Djabal*—say, indeed, that come he must!

*Kha.* At noon seek *Djabal* in the Prefect's Chamber,  
And find—[*Aside.*] Nay, 'tis thy cursed race's token,  
Frank pride, no special insolence of thine!

[*Aloud.*] Tarry and I will do your bidding, *Loys*.

[*To the rest aside.*] Now, forth you! I proceed to *Djabal*  
straight.

Leave this poor boy, who knows not what he says.

Oh, will it not add joy to even thy joy,

*Djabal*, that I report all friends were true?

*KHALIL goes, followed by the Druses.*

*Loys.* *Tu Dieu!* How happy I shall make these  
Druses!

Was't not surpassingly contrived of me

To get the long list of their wrongs by heart,  
 Then take the first pretence for stealing off  
 From these poor islanders, present myself  
 Sudden at Rhodes before the noble Chapter,  
 And (as best proof of ardour in its cause  
 Which ere to-night will have become, too, mine)  
 Acquaint it with this plague-sore in its body,  
 This Prefect and his villanous career?  
 The princely Synod! All I dared request  
 Was his dismissal; and they graciously  
 Consigned his very office to myself—  
 Myself may heal whate'er's diseased!

And good

For them, they did so! Since I never felt  
 How lone a lot, tho' brilliant, I embrace,  
 Till now that, past retrieval, it is mine—  
 To live thus, and thus die! Yet, as I leapt  
 On shore, so home a feeling greeted me  
 That I could half believe in Djabal's story,  
 He used to tempt my father with, at Rennes—  
 And me, too, since the story brought me here—  
 Of some Count Dreux and ancestor of ours,  
 Who, sick of wandering from Bouillon's war,  
 Left his old name in Lebanon.

Long days

At least to spend in the Isle! and, my news known  
 An hour hence, what if Anael turns on me  
 The great black eyes I must forget?

Why, fool,

Recall them, then? My business is with Djabal,  
 Not Anael! Djabal carries: if I seek him?—  
 The Isle is brighter than its wont to-day!

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ACT II.

*Enter DJABAL.*

*Dja.* That a strong man should think himself a God!  
 I—Hakeem? To have wandered thro' the world,  
 Sown falsehood, and thence reaped now scorn, now faith,  
 For my one chant with many a change, my tale  
 Of outrage, and my prayer for vengeance—this  
 Required, forsooth, no mere man's faculty,  
 Nor less than Hakeem's? The persuading Loys  
 To pass probation here; the getting access  
 By Loys to the Prefect; worst of all,  
 The gaining my tribe's confidence by fraud  
 That would disgrace the very Franks,—a few  
 Of Europe's secrets that subdue the flame,  
 The wave,—to ply a simple tribe with these,  
 Took Hakeem?

And I feel this first to-day!

Does the day break, is the hour imminent  
 When one deed, when my whole life's deed, my deed  
 Must be accomplished? Hakeem? Why the God?  
 Shout, rather, "Djabal, Youssof's child, thought slain  
 \* With his whole race, the Druses' Sheikhs, this Prefect  
 \* Endeavoured to extirpate—saved, a child,

"Returns from traversing the world, a man,  
 "Able to take revenge, lead back the march  
 "To Lebanon"—so shout, and who gainsays?  
 But now, because delusion mixed itself  
 Insensibly with this career, all's changed!  
 Have I brought Venice to afford us convoy?  
 'True—but my jugglings wrought that!" Put I heart  
 Into our people where no heart lurked?"—“Ah,  
 “What cannot an impostor do!”

Not this!

Not do this which I do! Not bid, avaunt  
 Falsehood! Thou shalt not keep thy hold on me!  
 —Nor even get a hold on me! 'Tis now—  
 This day—hour—minute—'tis as here I stand  
 On the accursed threshold of the Prefect,  
 That I am found deceiving and deceived!  
 And now what do I?—Hasten to the few  
 Deceived, ere they deceive the many—shout,  
 As I professed, I did believe myself!  
 Say, Druses, had you seen a butchery—  
 If Ayoob, Karshook saw——Maani there  
 Must tell you how I saw my father sink;  
 My mother's arms twine still about my neck;  
 I hear my brother's shriek, here's yet the scar  
 Of what was meant for my own death-blow—say,  
 If you had woke like me, grown year by year  
 Out of the tumult in a far-off clime,  
 Would it be wondrous such delusion grew?  
 I walked the world, asked help at every hand;



Came help or no? Not this and this? Which helps  
 When I returned with, found the Prefect here,  
 The Druses here, all here but Hakeem's self,  
 The Khalif of a thousand prophecies,  
 Reserved for such a juncture,—could I call  
 My mission aught but Hakeem's? Promised Hakeem  
 More than performs the Djabal—you absolve?  
 —Me, you will never shame before the crowd  
 Yet happily ignorant?—Me, both throngs surround  
 The few deceived, the many unabused,  
 —Who, thus surrounded, slay for you and them  
 The Prefect, lead to Lebanon! No Khalif,  
 But Sheikh once more! Mere Djabal not . . .

*Enter KHALIL hastily.*

*Kha.* —God Hakeem!  
 'Tis told! The whole Druse nation knows thee, Hakeem,  
 As we! and mothers lift on high their babes  
 Who seem aware, so glisten their great eyes,  
 Thou hast not failed us; ancient brows are proud!  
 Our Elders could not earlier die, it seems,  
 Than at thy coming! The Druse heart is thine!  
 Take it! my Lord and theirs, be thou adored!

*Dja.* [*Aside.*] Adored!—but I renounce it utterly!

*Kha.* Already are they instituting choirs  
 And dances to the Khalif, as of old  
 'Tis chronicled thou bad'st them.

*Dja.* [*Aside.*] I abjure it!

'Tis not mine—not for me!

*Kha.* Why pour they wine

Flavoured like honey and bruised mountain herbs ?  
 Or wear those strings of sun-dried cedar-fruit ?  
 Oh—let me tell thee—Esaad, we supposed  
 Doting, is carried forth, eager to see  
 The last sun rise on the Isle—he can see now !  
 The shamed Druse women never wept before :  
 They can look up when we reach home, they say.  
 Smell !—Sweet cane, saved in Lilith's breast thus long—  
 Sweet !—it grows wild in Lebanon. And I  
 Alone do nothing for thee ! 'Tis my office  
 Just to announce what well thou know'st—but thus  
 Thou bidst me. At this selfsame moment tend  
 The Prefect, Nuncio, and the Admiral  
 Hither, by their three sea-paths—nor forget  
 Who were the trusty watchers !—Thou forget ?  
 Like me, who do forget that Anael bade . . .

*Dja.* [*Aside.*] Ay, Anael, Anael—is that said at last ?  
 Louder than all, that would be said, I knew !  
 What does abjuring mean, confessing mean,  
 To the people ? Till that woman crossed my path,  
 On went I, solely for my people's sake :  
 I saw her, and I first saw too myself,  
 And slackened pace : “if I should prove indeed  
 Hakeem—with Anael by !”

*Kha.* [*Aside.*] Ah, he is rapt !  
 Dare I at such a moment break on him  
 Even to do my sister's bidding ? Yes !  
 The eyes are Djabal's, and not Hakeem's yet !  
 Though but till I have spoken this, perchance.

*Dja.* [*Aside.*] To yearn to tell her, and yet have no one  
Great heart's-word that will tell her! I could gasp  
Doubtless one such word out, and die!

[*Aloud.*]                    You said  
That Anael . . .

*Kha.*                    . . . Fain would see thee, speak with thee,  
Before thou change, discard this Djabal's shape  
She knows, for Hakeem's shape she is to know:  
Something's to say that will not from her mind:  
I know not what—"Let him but come!" she said.

*Dja.* [*Half-apart.*] My nation—all my Druses—how  
fare they?

Those I must save, and suffer thus to save,  
Hold they their posts? Wait they their Khalif too?

*Kha.* All at the signal pant to flock around  
That banner of a brow!

*Dja.* [*Aside.*]                    And when they flock,  
Confess them this—and after, for reward,  
Be chased with howlings to her feet perchance?  
—Have the poor outraged Druses, deaf and blind,  
Precede me there—forestall my story, there—  
Tell it in mocks and jeers—

I lose myself!

Who needs a Hakeem to direct him now?  
I need the veriest child—why not this child?

[*Turning abruptly to KHALIF*

You are a Druse too, Khulil; you were nourished  
Like Anael with our mysteries: if she  
Could vow, so nourished, to love only one

Who should revenge the Druses, whence proceeds  
 Your silence? Wherefore made you no essay,  
 Who thus implicitly can execute  
 My bidding? What have I done, you could not?  
 Who, knowing more than Anael the prostration  
 Of our once lofty tribe, the daily life  
 Of this detested . . .

Does he come, you say,  
 This Prefect? All's in readiness?

*Kha.* The sword,  
 The sacred robe, the Khalif's mystic tiar,  
 Laid up so long, are all disposed beside  
 The Prefect's chamber.

*Dja.* —Why did you despair?

*Kha.* I know our Nation's state? Too surely know,  
 As thou, who speak'st to prove me! Wrongs like ours  
 Should wake revenge: but when I sought the wronged  
 And spoke,—“The Prefect stabbed your son—arise!  
 “Your daughter, while you starve, eats shameless bread  
 “In his pavilion—then arise!”—my speech  
 Fell idly—'twas, “Be silent, or worse fare!  
 “Endure, till time's slow cycle prove complete!  
 “Who may'st thou be that takest on thee to thrust  
 “Into this peril—art thou Hakeem?” No!  
 Only a mission like thy mission renders  
 All these obedient at a breath, subdues  
 Their private passions, brings their wills to one!

*Dja.* You think so?

*Kha.* Even now—when they have witnessed

Thy miracles—had I not threatened them  
 With Hakeem's vengeance, they would mar the whole,  
 And lie ere this, each with his special prize,  
 Safe in his dwelling, leaving our main hope  
 To perish! No! When these have kissed thy feet  
 At Lebanon, the Past purged off, the Present  
 Clear,—for the Future, even Hakeem's mission  
 May end, and I perchance, or any youth,  
 Can rule them thus renewed.—I talk to thee!

*Dja.* And wisely. (He is Anael's brother, pure  
 As Anael's self.) Go say, I come to her.

Haste! I will follow you. [KHALIL goes

Oh, not confess

To these—the blinded multitude—confess,  
 Before at least the fortune of my deed  
 Half authorize its means! Only to her  
 Let me confess my fault, who in my path  
 Curled up like incense from a mage-king's tomb  
 When he would have the wayfarer descend  
 Thro' the earth's rift and take hid treasure up.  
 When should my first child's-carelessness have stopped  
 If not when I, whose lone youth hurried past  
 Letting each joy 'scape for the Druses' sake,  
 At length recovered in one Druse all joys?  
 Were her brow brighter, her eyes richer, still  
 Would I confess! On the gulf's verge I pause.  
 How could I slay the Prefect, thus and thus?  
 Anael, be mine to guard me, not destroy! [Goes

*Enter ANAEL, and MAANI, who is assisting to array her in the ancient dress of the Druses.*

*An.* Those saffron-vestures of the tabret-girls!  
Comes Djabal, think you?

*Maa.* Doubtless Djabal comes.

*An.* Dost thou snow-swathe thee kinglier, Lebanon,  
Than in my dreams?—Nay, all the tresses off  
My forehead—look I lovely so? He says  
That I am lovely.

*Maa.* Lovely! nay, that hangs  
Awry.

*An.* You tell me how a khandjar hangs?  
The sharp side, thus, along the heart, see, marks  
The maiden of our class. Are you content  
For Djabal as for me?

*Maa.* Content, my child.

*An.* Oh, mother, tell me more of him. He comes  
Even now—tell more, fill up my soul with him!

*Maa.* And did I not . . . yes, surely . . . tell you all?

*An.* What will be changed in Djabal when the Change  
Arrives? Which feature? Not his eyes!

*Maa.* 'Tis writ,  
Our Hakeem's eyes rolled fire and clove the dark  
Superbly.

*An.* Not his eyes! His voice perhaps?  
Yet that's no change; for a grave current lived  
—Grandly beneath the surface ever lived,  
That, scattering, broke as in live silver spray

While . . . ah, the bliss . . . he would di-course to me  
 In that enforced, still fashion, word on word!  
 'Tis the old current which must swell thro' that,  
 For what least tone, Maani, could I lose?  
 'Tis surely not his voice will change!

—If Hakeem

Only stood by! If Djabal, somehow, passed  
 Out of the radiance as from out a robe;  
 Possessed, but was not it

He lived with you?

Well—and that morning Djabal saw me first  
 And heard my vow never to wed but one  
 Who saved my People—on that day . . . proceed!

*Maa.* Once more, then: from the time of his return  
 In secret, changed so since he left the Isle  
 That I, who screened our Emir's last of sons,  
 This Djabal, from the Prefect's massacre  
 —Who bade him ne'er forget the child he was,  
 —Who dreamed so long the youth he might become—  
 I knew not in the man that child; the man  
 Who spoke alone of hopes to save our tribe,  
 How he had gone from land to land to save  
 Our tribe—allies were sure, nor foes to dread;  
 And much he mused, days, nights, alone he mused,  
 But never till that day when, pale and worn  
 As by a persevering woe, he cried  
 "Is there not one Druse left me?"—And I showed  
 The way to Khalil's and your hiding-place  
 From the abhorred eye of the Prefect here

So that he saw you, heard you speak—till then,  
 Never did he announce—(how the moon seemed  
 To ope and shut, the while, above us both!)  
 —His mission was the mission promised us—  
 The cycle had revolved—all things renewing,  
 He was lost Hakeem clothed in flesh to lead  
 His children home anon, now veiled to work  
 Great purposes—the Druses now would change.

*An.* And they have changed! And obstacles did sink,  
 And furtherances rose! And round his form  
 Played fire, and music beat her angel wings!  
 My people, let me more rejoice, oh, more  
 For you than for myself! Did I but watch  
 After the pageant, feel our Khalif pass,  
 One of the throng, how proud were I—tho' ne'er  
 Singled by Djabal's glance! But to be chosen  
 His own from all, the most his own of all,  
 To be exalted with him, side by side.  
 Lead the exulting Druses, meet . . . ah, how  
 Worthily meet the maidens who await  
 Ever beneath the cedars—how deserve  
 This honour, in their eyes? So bright are they  
 That saffron-vestured sound the tabrets there—  
 'The girls who throng there in my dreams! One hour  
 And all is over: how shall I do aught  
 That may deserve next hour's exalting?—How?—

[*Suddenly to MAANI*

Mother, I am not worthy of him! I read it  
 Still in his eyes! He stands as if to tell me



I am not, yet forbears! Why else revert  
 To one theme ever?—how mere human gifts  
 Suffice him in myself—whose worship fades,  
 Whose awe goes ever off at his approach,  
 As now, that when he comes . . .

[*As DJABAL enters.*] Oh, why is it  
 I cannot kneel to you?

*Dja.* Rather, 'tis I  
 Should kneel to you, my Anael!

*An.* Even so!  
 For never seem you—shall I speak the truth?—  
 Never a God to me! 'Tis the Man's hand,  
 Eye, voice! Oh, do you veil these to our people,  
 Or but to me? To them, I think, to them!  
 And brightness is their veil, shadow—my truth!  
 You mean that I should never kneel to you  
 —So I will kneel!

*Dja.* [*preventing her.*] No—no!

[*Feeling the khandjar as he raises her*

Ha, have you chosen . . .

*An.* The khandjar with our ancient garb. But, Djabal,  
 Change not, be not exalted yet! give time  
 That I may plan more, perfect more. My blood  
 Beats—beats!

[*Aside.*] O must I then—since Loys leaves us  
 Never to come again, renew in me  
 Those doubts so near effaced already—must  
 I needs confess them now to Djabel?—Own  
 That when I saw that stranger—heard his voice,

My faith fell, and the woeful thought flashed first  
 That each effect of Djabal's presence, taken  
 For proof of more than human attributes  
 In him, by me whose heart at his approach  
 Beat fast, whose brain while he was by swam round,  
 Whose soul at his departure died away,  
 —That every such effect might have been wrought  
 In others' frames, tho' not in mine, by Loys  
 Or any merely mortal presence? Doubt  
 Is fading fast; shall I reveal it now?  
 How can I be rewarded presently,  
 With doubt unexpiated, undisclosed?

*Dja.* [*Aside.*] Avow the truth? I cannot! In what  
 words

Avow that all she loves in me is false?  
 —Which yet has served that flower-like love of hers  
 To climb by, like the clinging gourd, and clasp  
 With its divinest wealth of leaf and bloom.  
 Could I take down the prop-work, in itself  
 So vile, yet interlaced and overlaid  
 With painted cups and fruitage—might these still  
 Bask in the sun, unconscious their own strength  
 Of matted stalk and tendril had replaced  
 The old support thus silently withdrawn!  
 But no; the beauteous fabric crushes too.  
 'Tis not for my sake but for Anael's sake  
 I leave her soul this Hakeem where it leans!  
 Oh, could I vanish from them—quit the Isle!  
 And yet—a thought comes: here my work is done

At every point ; the Druses must return—  
 Have convoy to their birthplace back, who'er  
 The leader be, myself or any Druse—  
 Venice is pledged to that: 'tis for myself,  
 For my own vengeance in the Prefect's death,  
 I stay now, not for them—to slay or spare  
 The Prefect, whom imports it save myself?  
 He cannot bar their passage from the Isle ;  
 What would his death be but my own reward ?  
 Then, mine I will forego. It is forgone !  
 Let him escape with all my House's blood !  
 Ere he can reach land, Djabal disappears,  
 And Hakeem, Anael loved, shall, fresh as first,  
 Live in her memory, keeping her sublime  
 Above the world. She cannot touch that world  
 By ever knowing what I truly am,  
 Since Loys,—of mankind the only one  
 Able to link my present with my past,  
 My life in Europe with my Island life,  
 Thence, able to unmask me,—I've disposed  
 Safely at last at Rhodes, and . . .

*Enter KHALIL.*

*Kha.* Loys greets thee !

*Dja.* Loys ? To drag me back ? It cannot be !

*An.* [*Aside.*] Loys ! Ah, doubt may not be stifled so

*Kha.* Can I have erred that thou so gazest ? Yes,  
 I told thee not, in the glad press of tidings  
 Of higher import, Loys is returned

Before the Prefect, with, if possible,  
 Twice the light-heartedness of old. As though  
 On some inauguration he expects,  
 To-day, the world's fate hung!

*Dja.* —And asks for me?

*Kha.* Thou knowest all things! Thee in chief' he  
 greets,

But every Druse of us is to be happy  
 At his arrival, he declares: were Loys  
 Thou, Master, he could have no wider soul  
 To take us in with. How I love that Loys!

*Dja.* [*Aside.*] Shame winds me with her tether round  
 and round!

*An.* [*Aside.*] Loys? I take the trial! it is meet,  
 The little I can do, be done; that faith,  
 All I can offer, want no perfecting  
 Which my own act may compass. Ay, this way  
 All may go well, nor that ignoble doubt  
 Be chased by other aid than mine. Advance  
 Close to my fear, weigh Loys with my Lord,  
 The mortal's with the more than mortal's gifts!

*Dja.* [*Aside.*] Before, there were so few deceived  
 and now

There's doubtless not one least Druse in the Isle  
 But (having learned my superhuman claims,  
 And calling me his Khalif-God) will clash  
 The whole truth out from Loys at first word!  
 While Loys, for his part, will hold me up,  
 With ε Frank's unimaginable scorn

Of such imposture, to my people's eyes!  
 Could I but hold him longer yet awhile  
 From them, amuse him here until I plan  
 How he and I at once may leave the Isle?  
 Khalil I cannot part with from my side—  
 My only help in this emergency:  
 There's Anael!

*An.* Please you?

*Dja.* (Anael—none but she!)

[*To ANAEL.*] I pass some minutes in the chamber there  
 Ere I see Loys: you shall speak with him  
 Until I join you. Khalil follows me.

*An.* [*Aside.*] As I divined: he bids me save myself,  
 Offers me a probation—I accept!  
 Let me see Loys!

*Loys.* [*without.*] Djabal!

*An.* [*Aside.*] 'Tis his voice.

The smooth Frank trifler with our people's wrongs,  
 The self-complacent boy-enquirer, loud  
 On this and that inflicted tyranny,  
 —Aught serving to parade an ignorance  
 Of how wrong feels, inflicted! Let me close  
 With what I viewed at distance; let myself  
 Probe this delusion to the core!

*Dja.* He comes!

Khalil, along with me! while Anael waits  
 Till I return once more—and but once more!

## ACT III.

ANAEL *and* LOYS.

*An.* Here leave me! Here I wait another. 'Twas  
For no mad protestation of a love  
Like this you say possesses you, I came.

*Loys.* Love—how protest a love I dare not feel?  
Mad words may doubtless have escaped me—you  
Are here—I only feel you here!

*An.* No more!

*Loys.* But once again, whom could you love? I dare,  
Alas, say nothing of myself, who am  
A Knight now, for when Knighthood we embrace,  
Love we abjure: so speak on safely—speak,  
Lest I speak, and betray my faith so! Sure  
To say your breathing passes thro' me, changes  
My blood to spirit, and my spirit to you,  
As Heaven the sacrificer's wine to it—  
This is not to protest my love? You said  
You could love one . . .

*An.* One only! We are bent  
To earth—who raises up my tribe, I love;  
The Prefect bows us—who removes him; we  
Have ancient rights—who gives them back to us,  
I love.—Forbear me! Let my hand go!

*Loys.* Him  
You could love only? Where is Djabal? Stay!

[*Aside.*] Yet wherefore stay? Who does this but myself?  
 Had I apprised her that I come to do  
 Just this, what more could she acknowledge? No!  
 She sees into my heart's core: what is it  
 Feeds either cheek with red, as June some rose?  
 Why turns she from me? Ah fool, over fond  
 To dream I could call up . . .

. . . What never dream  
 Yet feigned! 'Tis love! Oh Anael, speak to me!  
 Djabal!

*An.* Seek Djabal by the Prefect's chamber  
 At noon! [*She paces the room*]

*Loys.* [*Aside.*] And am I not the Prefect now?  
 Is it my fate to be the only one  
 Able to win her love, the only one  
 Unable to accept her love? The Past  
 Breaks up beneath my footing; came I here  
 This morn'g as to a slave, to set her free  
 And take her thanks, and then spend day by day  
 Content beside her in the Isle? What works  
 This knowledge in me now! Her eye has broken  
 The faint disguise away; for Anael's sake  
 I left the Isle, for her espoused the cause  
 Of the Druses, all for her I thought, till now,  
 To live without!

—As I must live! To day  
 Ordains me Knight, forbids me—never shall  
 Forbid me to profess myself, heart, arm,  
 Thy soldier!

*An.* Djabal you demanded, comes!

*Loys.* [*Aside.*] What wouldst thou, Loys? See him?  
Nought beside

Is wanting: I have felt his voice a spell  
From first to last. He brought me here, made known  
The Druses to me, drove me hence to seek  
Redress for them; and shall I meet him now,  
When nought is wanting but a word of his,  
To—what?—induce me to spurn hope, faith, pride,  
Honour away,—to cast my lot among  
His tribe, become a proverb in men's mouths,  
Breaking my high pact of companionship  
With those who graciously bestowed on me  
The very opportunities I turn  
Against them.

Let me not see Djabal now!

*An.* The Prefect also comes!

*Loys.* [*Aside.*] Him let me see,  
Not Djabal! Him, degraded at a word,  
To please me,—to attest belief in me—  
And, after, Djabal! Yes, ere I return  
To her, the Nuncio's vow shall have destroyed  
This heart's rebellion, and coerced this will  
Forever.

Anael, not before the vows  
Irrevocably fix me . . .

Let me fly!

The Prefect, or I lose myself forever! [*Goes*

*An.* Yes I am calm now; just one way remains—



One, to attest my faith in him : for, see,  
 I were quite lost else : Loys, Djabal, stand  
 On either side—two men ! I balance looks  
 And words, give Djabal a man's preference,  
 No more. In Djabal, Hakeem is absorbed !  
 And for a love like this, the God who saves  
 My race, selects me for his bride ! One way !—

*Enter DJABAL.*

*Dja.* [*to himself.*] No moment is to waste, then ; 'tis  
 resolved !

If Khalil may be trusted to lead back  
 The Druses, and if Loys can be lured  
 Out of the Isle—if I procure his silence,  
 Or promise never to return at least,—  
 All's over ! Even now my bark awaits—  
 I reach the next wild islet and the next,  
 And lose myself beneath the sun forever !  
 And now, to Anael !

*An.* Djabal, I am thine !

*Dja.* Mine ? Djabal's ?—As if Hakeem had not been ?

*An.* Not Djabal's ? Say first, do you read my thoughts ?  
 Why need I speak, if you can read my thoughts ?

*Dja.* I do not, I have said a thousand times.

*An.* (My secret's safe, I shall surprise him yet !)

Djabal, I knew your secret from the first—  
 Djabal, when first I saw you . . . (by our porch  
 You leant, and pressed the tinkling veil away,  
 And one fringe fell behind your neck—I see !)

. . . I knew you were not human, for I said  
 " This dim secluded house where the sea beats  
 Is Heaven to me—my people's huts are Hell  
 To them ; this august form will follow me,  
 Mix with the waves his voice will,—I have him ;  
 And they, the Prefect ; Oh, my happiness  
 Rounds to the full whether I choose or no !  
 His eyes met mine, he was about to speak,  
 His hand grew damp—surely he meant to say  
 He let me love him : in that moment's bliss  
 I shall forget my people pine for home—  
 They pass and they repass with pallid eyes !"

vowed at once a certain vow ; this vow—  
 Not to embrace you till my tribe was saved.  
 Embrace me !

*Dja.* [*Apart.*] And she loved me ! Nought remained  
 But that ! Nay, Anael, is the Prefect dead ?

*An.* Ah, you reproach me ! True, his death crowns  
 all,

I know—or should know—and I would do much,  
 Believe ! but, death—Oh, you, who have known death,  
 Would never doom the Prefect, were death fearful  
 As we report !

Death !—a fire curls within us  
 From the foot's palm, and fills up to the brain.  
 Up, out, then shatters the whole bubble-shell  
 Of flesh, perchance !

Death !—witness, I would die,  
 Whate'er death be, would venture now to die

For Khalil—for Maani—what for thee?  
 Nay but embrace me, Djabal, in assurance  
 My vow will not be broken, for I must  
 Do something to attest my faith in you,  
 Be worthy of you!

*Dja.* [*avoiding her.*] I come for that—to say  
 Such an occasion is at hand: 'tis like  
 I leave you—that we part, my Anael,—part  
 Forever!

*An.* We part? Just so! I have succumbed,—  
 I am, he thinks, unworthy—and nought less  
 Will serve than such approval of my faith!  
 Then, we part not! Remains there no way short  
 Of that? Oh, not that!

Death!—Yet a hurt bird  
 Died in my hands—its eyes filmed—“Nay it sleeps,”  
 I said, “will wake to-morrow well”—twas dead!

*Dja.* I stand here and time fleets. Anael—I come  
 To bid a last farewell to you: perhaps  
 We never meet again—but, ere the Prefect  
 Arrive . . .

*Enter KHALIL breathlessly.*

*Kha.* He's here! The Prefect! Twenty guards,  
 No more—no sign he dreams of danger—all  
 Awaits thee only—Ayoob, Karshook, keep  
 Their posts—wait but the deed's accomplishment  
 To join us with thy Druses to a man!  
 Still holds his course the Nuncio—near and near  
 The fleet from Candia's steering!

*Dja.* [*Aside.*] All is lost!  
—Or won?

*Kha.* And I have laid the sacred robes,  
The sword, the head-tiar, at the porch—the place  
Commanded—Thou wilt hear the Prefect's trumpet.

*Dja.* Then I keep Anael,—him then, past recall,  
I slay—'tis forced on me! As I began  
I must conclude—so be it!

*Kha.* For the rest  
(Save Loys, our foe's solitary sword)  
All is so safe that . . . I will ne'er entreat  
Thy post again of thee—tho' danger's none,  
There must be glory only meet for thee  
In slaying the Prefect!

*An.* [*Aside.*] And 'tis now that Djabal  
Would leave me!—in the glory meet for him!

*Dja.* As glory, I would yield the deed to you,  
Or any one; what peril there may be,  
I keep. [*Aside.*] All things conspire to hound me on  
Not now, my soul, draw back, at least! Not now!  
The course is plain, how'er obscure all else—  
Once offer this tremendous sacrifice,  
Prevent what else will be irreparable,  
Secure these transcendental helps, regain  
The Cedars—then let all dark clear itself!  
I slay him!

*Kha.* Anael, and no part for us!  
[*To DJA.*] Hast thou possessed her with . . .

*Dja.* [*to AN.*] Whom speak you to?

What is it you behold there? Nay, this smile  
 Turus stranger—shudder you? The man must die,  
 As thousands of our race have died thro' him.  
 One blow, and I discharge his weary soul  
 From the flesh that pollutes it—let him fill  
 Straight some new expiatory form, of earth  
 Or sea, the reptile, or some aëry thing—  
 What is there in his death?

*An.* My brother said,  
 Is there no part in it for us?

*Dja.* For Khalil,—  
 The trumpet will announce the Nuncio's entry ;  
 Here, I shall find the Prefect hastening  
 In the Pavilion to receive him—here,  
 I slay the Prefect; meanwhile Ayooob leads  
 The Nuncio with his guards within—once these  
 Secured in the outer hall, bid Ayooob bar  
 Entry or egress till I give the sign  
 Which waits the landing of the argosies  
 You will announce to me ; this double sign  
 That justice is performed and help arrived,  
 When Ayooob shall receive, but not before,  
 Let him throw ope the palace doors, admit  
 The Druses to behold their tyrant, ere  
 We leave forever this detested spot.  
 Go, Khalil, hurry all—no pause—no pause !  
 Whirl on the dream, secure to wake anon !

*Kha.* What sign? and who the bearer?

*Dja.* Who shall show

My ring, admit to Ayoob—How she stands!  
 Have I not . . . I must have some task for her.  
 Anael! not that way! 'Tis the Prefect's chamber!  
 Anael, keep you the ring—give you the sign!  
 (It holds her safe amid the stir)—You will  
 Be faithful?

*An.* [*taking the ring.*] I would fain be worthy of you  
[*Trumpet without*

*Kha.* He comes!

*Dja.* And I too come!

*An.* One word, but one

Say, shall you be exalted at the deed?

Then? On the instant?

*Dja.* I exalted? What?

He, there—we, thus—our wrongs revenged—our tribe  
 Set free—Oh, then shall I, assure yourself,  
 Shall you, shall each of us, be in his death  
 Exalted!

*Kha.* He is here!

*Dja.* Away—away! [*They go.*

*Enter the PREFECT with Guards, and LOYS.*

*The Prefect.* [*to Guards.*] Back, I say, to the galley  
 every guard!

That's my sole care now; see each bench retains

Its complement of rowers; I embark

D' the instant, since this Knight will have it so,

Alas me! Could you have the heart, my Loys?

*To a Guard who whispers.*] Oh, bring the holy Nuncic  
 here forthwith! [*The Guards go*

Loys, a rueful sight, confess, to see  
 The gray discarded Prefect leave his post,  
 With tears i' the eye! So you are Prefect now?  
 You depose me—you succeed me? Ha, ha!

*Loys.* And dare you laugh, whom laughter less  
 becomes

Than yesterday's forced meekness we beheld . . .

*Pref.* . . . When you so eloquently pleaded, Loys,  
 For my dismissal from the post?—Ah, meek  
 With cause enough, consult the Nuncio else!  
 And wish him the like meekness—for so stanch  
 A servant of the church can scarce have bought  
 His share in the Isle, and paid for it, hard pieces!  
 You've my successor to condole with, Nuncio!  
 I shall be safe by then i' the galley, Loys!

*Loys.* You make as you would tell me you rejoice  
 To leave your scene of . . .

*Pref.* Trade in the dear Druses?  
 Blood and sweat traffic? Spare what yesterday  
 We had enough of! Drove I in the Isle  
 A profitable game? Learn wit, my son,  
 Which you'll need shortly! Did it never breed  
 Suspicion in you, all was not pure profit,  
 When I, the insatiate . . . and so forth . . . was bent  
 On having a partaker in my rule?  
 Why did I yield this Nuncio half the gain,  
 If not that I might also shift . . . what on him?  
 Half of the peril, Loys!

*Loys.* Peril?

*Pref.* Hark you!  
 I'd love you if you'd let me—this for reason,  
 You save my life at price of . . . well, say risk  
 At least, of yours. I came a long time since  
 To the Isle; our Hospitallers bade me tame  
 These savage wizards, and reward myself—

*Loys.* The Knights who so repudiate your crime?

*Pref.* Loys, the Knights! we doubtless understood  
 Each other; as for trusting to reward  
 From any friend beside myself . . . No, no!  
 I clutched mine on the spot, when it was sweet,  
 And I had taste for it. I felt these wizards  
 Alive—was sure they were not on me, only  
 When I was on them: but with age comes caution.  
 And stinging pleasures please less and sting more.  
 Year by year, fear by fear! The girls were brighter,  
 Than ever ('faith, there's yet one Anael left,  
 I set my heart upon—Oh, prithee, let  
 That brave new sword lie still!—These joys look  
 brighter,  
 But silenter the town, too, as I passed.  
 With this alcove's delicious memories  
 Began to mingle visions of gaunt fathers,  
 Quick-eyed sons, fugitives from the mine, the oar,  
 Stealing to catch me: brief, when I began  
 To quake with fear—(I think I hear the Chapter  
 Solicited to let me leave, now all  
 Worth staying for was gained and gone!)—I say,  
 Just when for the remainder of my life



All methods of escape seemed lost—that then  
 Up should a young hot-headed Loys spring,  
 Talk very long and loud, in fine, compel  
 The Knights to break their whole arrangement, have me  
 Home for pure shame—from this safehold of mine  
 Where but ten thousand Druses seek my life,  
 To my wild place of banishment, San Gines  
 By Murcia, where my three fat manors lying,  
 Purchased by gains here and the Nuncio's gold,  
 Are all I have to guard me,—that such fortune  
 Should fall to me, I hardly could expect !  
 Therefore, I say, I'd love you !

*Loys.*

Can it be ?

I play into your hands then ? Oh, no, no !  
 The Venerable Chapter, the Great Order  
 Sunk o' the sudden into fiends of the pit ?  
 But I will back—will yet unveil you !

*Pref.*

Me ?

To whom ?—perhaps Sir Galeas, who in Chapter  
 Shook his white head thrice—and some dozen times  
 My hand this morning shook, for value paid  
 To that Italian Saint, Sir Cosimo ?—  
 Indignant at my wringing year by year  
 A thousand bezants from the coral-divers,  
 As you recounted ; felt he not aggrieved ?  
 Well might he—I allowed for his half-share  
 Merely one hundred ! To Sir . . .

*Loys.*

See ! you dare

Unculpate the whole Order ; yet should I,

A youth, a sole voice, have the power to change  
 Their evil way, had they been firm in it?  
 Answer me!

*Pref.* Oh, the son of Bretagne's Duke,  
 And that son's wealth, the father's influence, too,  
 And the young arm, we'll even say, my Loys,  
 —The fear of losing or diverting these  
 Into another channel, by gainsaying  
 A novice too abruptly, could not influence  
 The Order! You might join, for aught they cared,  
 Their red-cross rivals of the Temple! Well,  
 I thank you for my part, at all events!  
 Stay here till they withdraw you! You'll inhabit  
 This palace—sleep, perchance, in this alcove,  
 Where now I go to meet our holy friend:  
 Good! and now disbelieve me if you can:  
 This is the first time for long years I enter  
 Thus [*lifts the arras*] without feeling just as if I lifted  
 The lid up of my tomb!

*Loys.* They share his crime!  
 God's punishment will overtake you yet!

*Pref.* Thank you it does not! Pardon this last flash  
 I bear a sober visage presently  
 With the disinterested Nuncio here—  
 His purchase-money safe at Murcia too!  
 Let me repeat—for the first time, no draught  
 Coming as from a sepulchre salutes me.  
 When we next meet, this folly may have passed,  
 We'll hope—Ha, ha! [*Goes thro' the arras*]

*Loys.* Assure me but . . . he's gone  
 He could not lie! Then what have I escaped!  
 I, who have so nigh given up happiness  
 Forever, to be linked with him and them!  
 Oh, opportunist of discoveries! I  
 Their Knight? I utterly renounce them all!  
 Hark! What, he meets by this the Nuncio? yes  
 The same hyæna groan-like laughter! Quick—  
 To Djabal! I am one of them at last,  
 Those simple-hearted Druses—Anael's tribe!  
 Djabal! She's mine at last—Djabal, I say!— [Goes.]

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 ACT IV.

*Enter DJABAL.*

*Dja.* Let me but slay the Prefect—'The end now!  
 To-morrow will be time enough to pry  
 Into the means I took: suffice, they served,  
 Ignoble as they were, to hurl revenge  
 True to its object. [Seeing the robes, &c. disposed  
 . . . Mine should never so  
 Have hurried to accomplishment! Thee, Djabal,  
 Far other modes befitted! Calm the Robe  
 Should clothe this doom's awarder!  
 [Taking the robe.] Shall I dare  
 Assume my nation's Robe? I am at least  
 A Druse again, chill Europe's policy  
 Drops from me—I dare take the Robe. Why not

The Tiar? I rule the Druses, and what more  
Betokens it than rule?—yet—yet—

[Lays down the Tiar

[Footsteps in the alcove.] He comes! [Taking the sword.  
If the sword serves, let the Tiar lie! So, feet  
Clogged with the blood of twenty years can fall  
Thus lightly! Round me, all ye ghosts! He'll lift . . .  
Which arm to push the arras wide?—or both?  
Stab from the neck down to the heart—there stay!  
Near he comes—nearer—the next footstep! Now!

[As he dashes aside the arras, ANAEL is discovered.

Ha! Anael! Nay, my Anael, can it be?  
Heard you the trumpet? I must slay him here,  
And here you ruin all. Why speak you not?  
Anael, the Prefect comes! [ANAEL screams.] So late  
to feel

'Tis not a sight for you to look upon?  
A moment's work—but such work! 'Till you go,  
I must be idle—idle, I risk all!

[Pointing to her hair

Those locks are well, and you are beauteous thus,  
But with the dagger 'tis, I have to do!

An. With mine!

Dja. Blood—Anael?

An. Djabal—'tis thy deed

It must be—I had hoped to claim it mine—  
Be worthy thee—but I must needs confess  
'Twas not I, but thyself . . . not I have . . . Djabal!  
Speak to me!

*Dja.* Oh my punishment !

*An.* Speak to me !

While I can speak—touch me—despite the blood !  
 When the command passed from thy soul to mine,  
 I went, fire leading me, muttering of thee,  
 And the approaching exaltation,—make  
 One sacrifice ! I said,—and he sate there,  
 Bade me approach ; and, as I did approach,  
 Thy fire with music burst into my brain—  
 'Twas but a moment's work, thou saidst—perchance  
 It may have been so ! well, it is thy deed !

*Dja.* It is my deed !

*An.* His blood, all this !—this ! And .

And more—sustain me, Djabal—wait not—now  
 Let flash thy glory ! Change thyself and me !  
 It must be ! Ere the Druses flock to us !  
 At least confirm me ! Djabal—blood gushed forth—  
 He was our tyrant—but I looked he'd fall  
 Prone as asleep—why else is Death called sleep ?  
 Sleep ? He bent o'er his breast—'Tis sin, I know,  
 Punish me, Djabal, but wilt thou let him ?  
 Be it thou that punishest, not he—who creeps  
 On his red breast—is here—'tis the small groan  
 Of a child—no worse ! Bestow the new life, then !  
 Too swift it cannot be, too strange, surpassing !

[*Following him up and down*

Now ! Change us both ! Change me and change thou

*Dja.* [*sinks on his knees.*] Thus

Behold my change ! You have done nobly ! I !—

*An.* Can Hakeem kneel?

*Dja.* No Hakeem, but mere Djabal'  
I have spoken falsely, and this woe is come.  
No—hear me ere scorn blasts me! Once and ever,  
The deed is mine . . . Oh think upon the Past!

*An.* [*to herself.*] Did I strike once, or twice, or many  
times?

*Dja.* . . . I came to lead my tribe where, bathed in  
glooms  
Doth Bahumid the Renovator sleep—  
Anael, I saw my tribe—I said, “Without  
A miracle this cannot be”—I said  
“Be there a miracle!”—for I saw you!

*An.* His head lies south the portal!

*Dja.* —Weighed with this  
The general good, how could I choose my own,  
What matter was my purity of soul?  
Little by little I engaged myself—  
Heaven would accept me for its instrument,  
I hoped—I said, Heaven had accepted me!

*An.* Is it this blood breeds dreams in me?—Who said  
You were not Hakeem? and your miracles—  
The fire that plays innocuous round your form?

[*Again changing her whole manner*

Ah, thou wouldst try me—thou art Hakeem still!

*Dja.* Woe—woe! As if the Druses of the Mount  
(Scarce Arabs even there—but here, in the Isle,  
Beneath their former selves) should comprehend  
The subtle lore of Europe! A few secrets

That would not easily affect the meanest  
Of the crowd there, could wholly subjugate  
The best of our poor tribe! Again that eye!

*An.* [*after a pause springs to his neck.*] Djabal, in  
this there can be no deceit!

Why, Djabal, were you human only,—think,  
Maani is but human, Khalil human,  
Loys is human even—did their words  
Haunt me, their looks pursue me? Shame on you  
So to have tried me! Rather, shame on me  
So to need trying! Could I, with the Prefect  
And the blood, there—could I see only you?  
—Hang by your neck over this gulf of blood?  
Speak, I am saved! Speak, Djabal! Am I saved?

[*As DJABAL slowly unclasps her arms, and puts her silently  
from him.*

Hakeem would save me! Thou art Djabal! Crouch!  
Bow to the dust, thou basest of our kind!  
The pile of thee, I reared up to the cloud—  
Full, midway, of our Fathers' trophied tombs,  
Based on the living rock, devoured not by  
The unstable desert's jaws of sand,—falls prone!  
Fire, music, quenched: and now thou liest there  
A ruin, obscene creatures will moan thro'!  
—Let us come, Djabal!

*Dja.* Whither come?

*An.* At once—

Lest so it grow intolerable. Come!  
Will I not share it with thee? Best at once!

So feel less pain ! Let them deride—thy tribe  
 Now trusting in thee,—Loys shall deride !  
 Come to them, hand in hand, with me !

*Dja.* Where come ?

*An.* Where?—to the Druses thou hast wronged  
 Confess,

Now that the end is gained—(I love thee now)  
 That thou hast so deceived them—(perchance love thee  
 Better than ever !) Come, receive their doom  
 Of infamy—(Oh, best of all I love thee !  
 Shame with the man, no triumph with the God,  
 Be mine !) Come !

*Dja.* Never ! more shame yet ? and why  
 Why ? You have called this deed mine—it is mine !  
 And with it I accept its circumstance.

How can I longer strive with Fate ? The Past  
 Is past—my false life shall henceforth show true—  
 Hear me : the argosies touch land by this ;  
 They bear us to fresh scenes and happier skies ;  
 What if we reign together ?—if we keep  
 Our secret for the Druses' good ?—by means  
 Of even their superstition, plant in them  
 New life ? I learn from Europe : all who seek  
 Man's good must awe man, by such means as these.  
 We too will be divine to them—we are !  
 All great works in this world spring from the ruins  
 Of greater projects—ever, on our earth,  
 Men block out Babels, to build Babylons.  
 I wrest the weapon from your hand ! I claim



The deed! Retire! You have my ring—you bar  
All access to the Nuncio till the forces  
From Venice land!

*An.* Thou wilt feign Haakeem then?

*Dja.* [*putting the Tiar of Haakeem on his head.*] And  
from this moment that I dare ope wide  
Eyes that till now refused to see, begins  
My true dominion! for I know myself,  
And what I am to personate. No word?

[ANAEEL goes

'Tis come on me at last! His blood on her——  
What memories will follow that! Her eye,  
Her fierce distorted lip and ploughed black brow——  
Ah, fool! Has Europe then so poorly tamed  
The Syrian blood from out thee? Thou, presume  
To work in this foul earth by means not foul?  
Scheme, as for Heaven,—but, on the earth, be glad  
If a least ray like Heaven's be left thee!

Thus

I shall be calm—in readiness—no way  
Surprised.

[*A noise without.*

This should be Khalil and my Druses!  
Venice is come then! Thus I grasp thee, sword!  
Druses, 'tis Haakeem saves you! In! Behold  
Your Prefect!

*Enter LOYS.* DJABAL *hides the khandjar in his robe.*

*Loys.* Oh, well found, Djabal!—but no time for words.  
You know who waits there? [*Pointing to the alcove*

Well!—and that 'tis there

He meets the Nuncio? Well! Now, a surprise—  
He there—

*Dja*            I know—

*Loys.*                            —is now no mortal's lord

Is absolutely powerless—call him, dead—  
He is no longer Prefect—you are Prefect!  
Oh, shrink not! I do nothing in the dark,  
Nothing unworthy Breton blood, believe!  
I understood at once your urgency  
That I should leave this isle for Rhodes; I felt  
What you were loath to speak—your need of help  
I have fulfilled the task, that earnestness  
Imposed on me; have, face to face, confronted  
The Prefect in full Chapter, charged on him  
The enormities of his long rule; he stood  
Mute, offered no defence, no crime denied;  
On which I spoke of you, and of your tribe,  
Your faith so like our own, and all you've urged  
So oft to me—I spoke, too, of your goodness,  
Your patience—brief, I hold henceforth the Isle  
In charge, am nominally Prefect,—but you,  
You are associated in my rule—  
Are the true Prefect! Ay, such faith had they  
In my assurance of your loyalty  
(For who insults an imbecile old man?)  
That we assume the Prefecture this hour!  
You gaze at me! Hear greater wonders yet—  
I throw down all this fabric I have built!  
These Knights, I was prepared to worship . . . but

Of that, another time ; what's now to say,  
 Is—I shall never be a Knight ! Oh, Djabal,  
 Here first I throw all prejudice aside,  
 And call you brother ! I am Druse like you !  
 My wealth, my friends, my power, are wholly yours,  
 Your people's, which is now my people—for  
 There is a maiden of your tribe, I love—  
 She loves me—Khalil's sister——

*Dja.* Anael ?

*Loys.* Start you ?

Seems what I say, unknighly ? Thus it chanced :  
 When first I came, a novice, to the Isle . . .

*Enter one of the NUNCIO'S Guards from the alcove.*

*Guard.* Oh, horrible ! Sir Loys ! Here is Loys !  
 And here— [ *Others enter from the alcove.*  
 [ *Pointing to DJABAL* ] Secure him, bind him—this is he.  
[ *They surround DJABAL.*

*Loys.* Madmen—what is't you do ? Stand from my  
 friend,

And tell me !

*Guard.* Thou canst have no part in this—  
 Surely no part—but slay him not ! The Nuncio  
 Commanded, Slay him not !

*Loys.* Speak, or . . .

*Guard.* The Prefect,  
 Lies murdered there by him thou dost embrace.

*Loys.* By Djabal ? miserable fools ! How Djabal ?

[ *A Guard lifts DJABAL'S robe ; DJABAL flings down the  
 khandjar.*

*Loys.* [*after a pause.*] Thou hast received some insult  
worse than all—

Some outrage not to be endured—

[*To the Guards.*] Stand back!

He is my friend—more than my friend! Thou hast  
Slain him upon that provocation!

*Guard.*

No!

No provocation! 'Tis a long devised  
Conspiracy: the whole tribe is involved:  
He is their Khalif—'tis on that pretence—  
Their mighty Khalif who died long ago,  
And now is come to life and light again—  
All is just now revealed, I know not how,  
By one of his confederates—who, struck  
With horror at this murder, first apprised  
The Nuncio. As 'twas said, we find this Djabal  
Here where we take him.

*Dja.* [*Aside.*] Who broke faith with me?

*Loys.* [*to DJABAL.*] Hear'st thou? Speak! Till thou  
speak, I keep off these,

Or die with thee. Deny this story! Thou  
A Khalif, an impostor? Thou, my friend,  
Whose tale was of an inoffensive race,  
With . . . but thou know'st—on that tale's truth I pledged  
My faith before the Chapter: what art thou?

*Dja.* Loys, I am as thou hast heard. All's true!  
No more concealment! As these tell thee, all  
Was long since planned. Our Druses are enough  
To crush this handful: the Venetians land

Even now in our behalf. Loys, we part here!  
 Thou, serving much, would'st fain have served me more  
 It might not be. I thank thee. As thou hearest,  
 We are a separated tribe: farewell!

*Loys.* Oh, where will truth be found now? Canst  
 thou so

Belie the Druses? Do they share thy crime?  
 Those thou professedst of our Breton stock,  
 Are partners with thee? Why, I saw but now  
 Khalil, my friend—he spoke with me—no word  
 Of this! and Anael—whom I love, and who  
 Loves me—she spoke no word of this!

*Dja.*

Poor Boy!

Anael, who loves thee? Khalil, fast thy friend?  
 We, offsets from a wandering Count of Dreux?  
 No—older than the oldest—princelier  
 Than Europe's princeliest tribe are we.—Enough  
 For thee, that on our simple faith we found  
 A monarchy to shame your monarchies  
 At their own trick and secret of success.  
 The child of this our tribe shall laugh upon  
 The palace-step of him whose life ere night  
 Is forfeit, as that child shall know, and yet  
 Shall laugh there! What, we Druses wait forsooth  
 The kind interposition of a boy?  
 —Can only save ourselves when thou concedest?  
 —Khalil admire thee? He is my right hand,  
 My delegate!—Anael accept thy love?  
 She is my Bride!

*Loys.* Thy Bride? She one of them?

*Dja.* My Bride!

*Loys.* And she retains her glorious eyes  
She, with those eyes, has shared this miscreant's guilt!

Ah—who but she directed me to find

Djabal within the Prefect's chamber? Khalil

Bade me seek Djabal there, too! All is true!

What spoke the Prefect worse of them than this?

Did the Church ill to institute long since

Perpetual warfare with such serpentry

As these? Have I desired to shift my part,

Evade my share in her design? 'Tis well!

*Dja.* Loys, I have wronged thee—but unwittingly:

I never thought there was in thee a virtue

That could attach itself to what thou deemest

A race below thine own. I wronged thee, Loys,

But that is over: all is over now,

Save the protection I ensure against

My people's anger—by their Khalif's side,

'Thou art secure and may'st depart: so, come!

*Loys.* Thy side?—I take protection at thy hand?

*Enter other Guards.*

*Guards.* Fly with him! fly, Sir Loys! 'tis too true!

And only by his side thou may'st escape!

The whole tribe is in full revolt—they flock

About the palace—will be here—on thee—

And there are twenty of us, we, the Guards

Of the Nuncio, to withstand them! Even we

Had stayed to meet our death in ignorance,  
 But that one Druse, a single faithful Druse,  
 Made known the horror to the Nuncio! Fly!  
 The Nuncio stands aghast. At least let us  
 Escape their wrath, O Hakeem! We are nought  
 In thy tribe's persecution! [*to Loys.*] Keep by him!  
 They hail him Hakeem, their dead Prince, returned—  
 He is their God, they shout, and at his beck  
 Are life and death!

*Loys.* [*springing at the khandjar DJABAL had thrown  
 down, seizes him by the throat.*]

Thus by his side am I!

Thus I resume my knighthood and its warfare!  
 Thus end thee, miscreant, in thy pride of place!  
 Thus art thou caught! Without, thy dupes may cluster,  
 Friends aid thee, foes avoid thee,—thou art Hakeem,  
 How say they?—God art thou! but also here  
 Is the least, meanest, youngest the Church calls  
 Her servant, and his single arm avails  
 To aid her as she lists. I rise, and thou  
 Art crushed! Hordes of thy Druses flock without:  
 Here thou hast me, who represent the Cross,  
 Honour and Faith, 'gainst Hell, Mahound, and thee!  
 Die! [*DJABAL remains calm.*] Implore my mercy,  
 Hakeem, that my scorn  
 May help me! Nay—I cannot ply thy trade—  
 I am no Druse—no stabber—and thine eye,  
 Thy form, are too much as they were—my friend  
 Had such! Speak! Beg for mercy at my foot!

[*DJABAL still silent*]

Heaven could not ask so much of me—not, sure,  
So much! I cannot kill him so!

Thou art  
Strong in thy cause, then! Dost outbrave us, then!  
Heard'st thou that one of thine accomplices,  
Thy very people, has accused thee? Meet  
His charge! Thou hast not even slain the Prefect  
As thy own vile creed warrants. Meet that Druse—  
Come with me and disprove him—be thou tried  
By him, nor seek appeal—promise me this—  
Or I will do God's office! What, shalt thou  
Boast of assassins at thy beck, yet Truth  
Want even an executioner? Consent,  
Or I will strike—look in my face—I will!

*Dja.* Give me again my khandjar, if thou darest!

[*Loys gives it*

Let but one Druse accuse me, and I plunge  
This home. A Druse betray me? Let us go!  
[*Aside.*] Who has betrayed me? [*Shouts without.*  
Hearest thou? I hear  
No plainer now than years ago I heard  
That shout—but in no dream now! They return!  
Wilt thou be leader with me, Loys? Well!



## ACT V.

*The Uninitiated Druses, covering the stage tumultuously, and speaking together.*

Here flock we, obeying the summons. Lo, Hakeem hath appeared, and the Prefect is dead, and we return to Lebanon! My manufacture of goats' fleece must, I doubt, soon fall away there—Come, old Nasif—link thine arm in mine—we fight, if needs be—Come, what is a great fight-word? “Lebanon?” (My daughter—my daughter!)—But is Khalil to have the office of Hamza?—Nay, rather, if he be wise, the monopoly of henna and gloves—Where is Hakeem?—The only prophet I ever saw, prophesied at Cairo once, in my youth—a little black Copht, dressed all in black too, with a great stripe of yellow cloth flapping down behind him like the back-fin of a water-serpent—Is this he? Biamrallah! Biamreh! HAKEEM!

*Enter the Nuncio with Guards.*

*Nuncio.* [to his Attendants.] Hold both, the sorcerer and this accomplice

Ye talk of, that accuseth him! And tell  
Sir Loys he is mine, the Church's hope:  
Bid him approve himself our Knight indeed!  
Lo, this black disemboguing of the Isle!

[to the Druses.] Ah, children, what a sight for these  
old eyes

That kept themselves alive this voyage through  
 To smile their very last on you! I came  
 To gather one and all you wandering sheep  
 Into my fold, as tho' a father came . . .  
 As tho', in coming, a father should . . .

[*To his Guards.*] (Ten, twelve,  
 —Twelve guards of you, and not an outlet? None?

The wizards stop each avenue? Keep close!)

[*To the Druses.*] As if one came to a son's house, I say,  
 So did I come—no guard with me—to find . . .

Alas—Alas!

*A Druse.* Who is the old man?

*Another.*

Oh, ye are to shout!

Children, he styles you.

*Druses.*

Ay, the Prefect's slain!

Glory to the Khalif, our Father!

*Nuncio.*

Even so!

I find, (ye prompt aright) your Father slain;  
 While most he plotted for your good, that father  
 (Alas! how kind, ye never knew)—lies slain!

[*Aside.*] (And Hell's worm gnaw the glozing knave—  
 with me,

For being duped by his cajoleries!

Are these the Christians? These the docile crew

My bezants went to make me Bishop o'er?)

[*To his Attendants, who whisper.*] What say ye does this  
 wizard style himself?

Hakeem? Biamrallah? The third Fatemite?

What is this jargon? He—the insane Khalif,

Dead near three hundred years ago, come back  
In flesh and blood again?

*Druses.* He mutters! Hear ye?

He is blaspheming Hakeem. The old man  
Is our dead Prefect's friend! Tear him!

*Nuncio.* Ye dare not

I stand here with my five-and-seventy years,  
The Patriarch's power behind, and God's above me!  
Those years have witnessed sin enough; ere now

Misguided men arose against their lords,  
And found excuse; but ye, to be enslaved  
By sorceries—cheats;—alas! the same tricks, tried

On my poor children in this nook of the earth,  
Could triumph,—that have been successively  
Exploded, laughed to scorn, all nations thro'—

"*Romaioi, Ioudaioi te kai proselutoi,*

"Cretes and Arabians"—you are duped the last!

Said I, refrain from tearing me? I pray ye

Tear me! Shall I return to tell the Patriarch

That so much love was wasted—every gift

Rejected, from his benison I brought,

Down to the galley-full of bezants, sunk

An hour since at the harbour's mouth, by that . . .

That . . . never will I speak his hated name!

[*To his Servants.*] What was the name his fellow slip-  
fetter

Called their arch-wizard by? [*they whisper.*] Oh, Djabal  
was't?

*Druses.* But how a sorcerer? false wherein?

*Nuncio.*

(Ay, Djabal!)

How false? Ye know not, Djabal has confessed . . .

Nay, that by tokens found on him we learn . . .

What I sailed hither solely to divulge—

How by his spells the demons were allured

To seize you—not that these be aught save lies

And mere illusions. Is this clear? I say,

By measures such as these, he would have led you

Into a monstrous ruin: follow ye?

Say, shall ye perish for his sake, my sons?

*Druses.* Hark ye!

*Nuncio.* —Be of one privilege amerced?

No! Infinite the Patriarch's mercies be!

No! With the Patriarch's license, stil! I bid ye

Tear him to pieces who misled you! Waste;

*Druses.* The old man's beard shakés, and his eyes are white fire! After all, I know nothing of Djabal beyond what Karshook says; he knows but what Khalil says; who knows just what Djabal says himself—Now, the little Copt Prophet, I saw at Cairo in my youth, began by promising each bystander three full measures of wheat. . .

*Enter KHALIL and the Initiated Druses.*

*Kha.* Venice and her deliverance are at hand!

Their fleet stands thro' the harbour! Hath he slain

The Prefect yet? Is Djabal's change come yet?

*Nuncio.* [to Attendants.] What's this of Venice

Who's this boy?

[Attendants *whisper.*] One Khalil?

Djabal's accomplice, Loys called, but now,  
 The only Druse, save Djabal's self, to fear?  
 [*To the Druses.*] I cannot hear ye with these aged ears.  
 Is it so? Ye would have my troops assist?  
 Doth he abet him in his sorceries?  
 Down with the cheat, guards, as my children bid!

[*They spring at KHALIL: as he beats them back.*]

Stay—no more bloodshed—spare deluded youth!  
 Whom seek'st thou? (I will teach him)—Whom, my  
 child?

Thou knowest not what these know, have just told me.  
 I am an old man, as thou seest—have done  
 With earth, and what should move me but the truth?  
 Art thou the only fond one of thy tribe?  
 'Tis I interpret for thy tribe!—

*Kha.*

Oh, this

Is the expected Nuncio! Druses, hear—  
 Endure ye this? Unworthy to partake  
 The glory Hakeem gains you! While I speak,  
 The ships touch land: who makes for Lebanon?  
 They'll plant the winged lion in these halls!

*Nuncio.* [*Aside.*] If it be true! Venice?—Oh, never  
 true!

Yet, Venice would so gladly thwart our Knights,  
 And fain get footing here, so close by Rhodes!  
 Oh, to be duped this way!

*Kha.*

Ere he appears

To lead you gloriously, repent, I say!

*Nuncio.* [*Aside.*] Oh, any way to stretch the arch  
 wizard stark

Ere the Venetians come! Were he cut off,  
 The rest were easily tamed. [*to the Druses.*] He  
     Bring him forth!

Since so you needs will have it, I assent!  
 You'd judge him, say you, on the spot? Confound  
 The sorcerer in his very circle? Where's  
 Our short black-bearded sallow friend who said  
 He'd earn the Patriarch's guerdon by one stab?  
 Bring Djabal forth at once!

*Druses.*

Ay, bring him forth!

The Patriarch drives a trade in oil and silk—  
 And we're the Patriarch's children—true men, we!  
 Where is the glory? Show us all the glory!

*Kha.* You dare not so insult him! What, not see . .  
 (I tell thee, Nuncio, these are uninstructed,  
 Untrusted—they know nothing of our Khalif!)  
 —Not see that if he lets a doubt arise  
 'Tis but to give yourselves the chance of seeming  
 To have some influence in your own Return!  
 That all may say they would have trusted him  
 Without the all-convincing glory—ay,  
 And did! Embrace the occasion, friends! For, think—  
 What merit when his change takes place? But now,  
 For your sakes, he should not reveal himself!  
 No—could I ask and have, I would not ask  
 The change yet!

*Enter DJABAL and LOYS.*

Spite of all, reveal thyself!

I had said, pardon them from me—for Anael—

For our sakes pardon these besotted men—  
 Ay—for thine own—they hurt not thee! Yet now  
 One thought swells in me and keeps down all else!  
 This Nuncio couples shame with thee, has called  
 Imposture thy whole course, all bitter things  
 Has said—he is but an old fretful man!  
 Hakeem—nay, I must call thee Hakeem now—  
 Reveal thyself! See! Where is Anael?—See!

*Loys.* [to *DJA.*] Here are thy people! Keep thy word  
 to me!

*Dja.* Who of my people hath accused me?

*Nuncio.*

So!

So, this is Djabal, Hakeem, and what not?  
 A fit deed, Loys, for thy first Knight's day!  
 May it be augury of thy after life!  
 Ever be truncheon of the Church as now  
 That, Nuncio of the Patriarch, having charge  
 Of the Isle here, I claim thee [*turning to DJA.*] as these  
 bid me,  
 Forfeit for murder on thy lawful prince,  
 Thou conjurer that peep'st and mutterest!  
 Why should I hold thee from their hands? (Spells  
 children?)

But hear how I dispose of all his spells!  
 Thou art a Prophet?—would'st entice thy tribe  
 Away?—thou workest miracles? (Attend!  
 Let him but move me with his spells!) I, Nuncio.

*Dja.* Which how thou can'st to be, I say not now  
 Though I have also been at Stamboul, Luke!

—Ply thee with spells, forsooth! What need of spells  
 If Venice, in her Admiral's person, stoop  
 To ratify thy compact with her foes,  
 The Hospitallers, for this Isle—withdraw  
 Her warrant of the deed which reinstates  
 My people in their freedom, tricked away  
 By him I slew,—refuse to convoy us  
 To Lebanon and keep the Isle we leave—  
 —Then will be time to try what spells can do!  
 Dost thou dispute the Republic's power?

*Nuncio.*

Lo ye!

He tempts me, too, the wily exorcist!  
 No! The renowned Republic was and is  
 The Patriarch's friend: 'tis not for courting Venice  
 That I—that these implore thy blood of me!  
 Lo ye, the subtle miscreant! Ha, so subtle!  
 Ye, Druses, hear him! Will ye be deceived?  
 How he evades me! Where's the miracle  
 He works? I bid him to the proof—fish up  
 Your galley-full of bezants that he sunk!  
 That were a miracle! One miracle!  
 Enough of trifling, for it chafes my age—  
 I am the Nuncio, Druses! I stand forth  
 To save you from the good Republic's rage  
 When she shall find her fleet was summoned here  
 To aid the mummeries of this crafty knave!

[*As the Druses hesitate, his Attendants whisper*

Ah, well suggested! Why, we hold this while  
 One, who, his close confederate till now,



Confesses Djabal at the last a cheat,  
 And every miracle a cheat! Who throws me  
 His head? I make three offers, once I offer,—  
 And twice . . .

*Dja.* Let who moves perish at my foot!

*Kha.* Thanks, Hakeem, thanks! Oh, Anael, Maani,  
 Why tarry they?

*Druses* [*to each other.*] He can! He can! Live fire—  
 [*To the Nuncio.*] (I say he can, old man! Thou know'st  
 him not—)

Live fire like that thou seest now in his eyes,  
 Plays fawning round him—See! The change begins!  
 All the brow lightens as he lifts his arm!  
 Look not at me! It was not I!

*Dja.* What Druse  
 Accused me, as he saith? I bid each bone  
 Crumble within that Druse! None, Loys, none  
 Of my own people, as thou saidst, have raised  
 A voice against me.

*Nuncio.* [*Aside.*] Venice to coine! Death!

*Dja.* [*continuing.*] Confess and go unscathed, however  
 false!

Seest thou my Druses, Luke? I would submit  
 To thy pure malice did one Druse confess!  
 How said I, Loys?

*Nuncio* [*to his Attendants, who whisper.*] Ah, ye  
 counsel so?

[*Aloud.*] Bring in the witness, then, who, first of all,  
 Disclosed the treason! Now I have thee, wizard!

Ye hear that? If one speaks, he bids you tear him  
 Joint after joint—well then, one does speak! One,  
 Befooled by Djabal, even as yourselves,  
 But who hath voluntarily proposed  
 To expiate, by confessing thus, the fault  
 Of having trusted him.

[*They bring in a veiled Druse*

*Loys.* Now Djabal, now!

*Nuncio.* Friend, Djabal fronts you! (Make a ring,  
 sons!)—Speak!

Expose this Djabal; what he was, and how;  
 The wiles he used, the aims he cherished; all,  
 Explicitly as late you spoke to these  
 My servants—I absolve and pardon you.

*Loys.* Thou hast the dagger ready, Djabal?

*Dja.* Speak,

Recreant!

*Druses.* Stand back, fool! further! Suddenly  
 You shall see some huge serpent glide from under  
 The empty vest—or down will thunder crash!  
 Back, Khalil!

*Kha.* I go back? Thus go I back!

[*To AN.*] Unveil! Nay, thou shalt face the Khalif! Thus!

[*He tears away ANAEL'S veil: DJABAL folds his arms and bows his head: the Druses fall back: LOYS springs from the side of DJABAL and the NUNCIO.*

*Loys.* Then she was true—she only of them all!  
 True to her eyes—may keep those glorious eyes,  
 And now be mine, once again mine! Oh, Anael!  
 Dared I think thee a partner in his crime—



[*To Dja.*] Now speak—now, quick on this that I have said,—

Thou with the blood, speak if thou art a man!

*Dja.* [*to AN.*] And was it thou betrayedst me? 'Tis well!

I have deserved this of thee, and submit:  
 Nor 'tis much evil thou inflictest: life  
 Ends here. The cedars shall not wave for us—  
 For there was crime, and must be punishment.  
 See fate! By thee I was seduced—by thee  
 I perish—yet do I, can I repent?  
 I, with my Arab instinct, thwarted ever  
 By my Frank policy,—and, within turn,  
 My Frank brain, thwarted by my Arab heart—  
 While these remained in equipoise, I lived  
 —Nothing; had either been predominant,  
 As a Frank schemer or an Arab mystic,  
 I had been something;—now, each has destroyed  
 The other—and behold, from out their crash,  
 A third and better nature rises up—  
 My mere Man's-nature! And I yield to it—  
 I love thee—I—who did not love before!

*An.* Djabal—

*Dja.* It seemed love, but true love it was not—  
 How could I love while thou adoredst me?  
 Now thou despisest, art above me so  
 Immeasurably—thou, no other, doomest  
 My death now—this my steel shall execute  
 Thy judgment—I shall feel thy hand in it!

Oh, luxury to worship, to submit,  
Transcended, doomed to death by thee!

*An.* My Djabal!

*Dja.* Dost hesitate? I force thee then! Approach,  
Druses! for I am out of reach of fate;  
No further evil waits me—Speak the truth!  
Hear, Druses, and hear, Nuncio, and hear, Loys!

*An.* HAKEEM! [*She falls dead.*

[*The Druses scream, grovelling before him.*

Ah, Hakeem!—not on me thy wrath!

Biamrallah, pardon—never doubted I!

Ah, dog, how sayest thou?

[*They surround and seize the NUNCIO and his Guards. LOYS  
flings himself upon the body of ANAEL, on which DJABAL  
continues to gaze as stupefied.*

*Nuncio.* Caitives! Have ye eyes?

Whips, racks, should teach you! What, his fools? his  
dupes?

Leave me! unhand me!

*Kha.* [*approaching DJABAL timidly.*] Save her for  
my sake!

She was already thine—she would have shared

To-day thine exaltation—think! this day

Her hair was plaited thus because of thee—

Yes, feel the soft bright hair—feel!

*Nuncio.* [*struggling with those who have seized him.*]

What, because

His leman dies for him? You think it hard

To die? Oh, would you were at Rhodes, and choice

Of deaths should suit you!

*Kha.* [*bending over ANAEL'S body.*] Just restore her  
life !

So little does it—there—the eyelids tremble !  
'Twas not my breath that made them—and the lips  
Move of themselves—I could restore her life !  
Hakeem, we have forgotten—have presumed  
On our free converse—we are better taught.  
See, I kiss—how I kiss thy garment's hem  
For her ! She kisses it—Oh, take her deed  
In mine—Thou dost believe now, Anael ?—See  
She smiles ! Were her lips open o'er the teeth  
So, when I spoke first ? She believes in thee !  
Go not without her to the Cedars, Lord !  
Or leave us both—I cannot go alone !  
I have obeyed thee, if I dare say so—  
Hath Hakeem thus forgot all Djabal knew ?  
Thou feelest then my tears fall hot and fast  
Upon thy hand—and yet thou speakest not !  
Ere the Venetian trumpet sound—ere thou  
Exalt thyself, O Hakeem ! save her—save her !

*Nuncio.* And the accursed Republic will arrive  
And find me in their toils—dead, very like,  
Under their feet !

What way—not one way yet  
To foil them ? None ? [*Observing DJABAL'S face.*  
What ails the Khalif ? Ah,  
That ghastly face—a way to foil them yet !  
[*To the Druses.*] Look to your Khalif, Druses ! Is that  
face

God Hakeem's? Where is triumph—where is . . . what  
 Said he of exaltation—hath he promised  
 So much to-day? Why then, exalt thyself!  
 Cast off that husk, thy form, set free thy soul  
 In splendour! Now, bear witness—here I stand—  
 I challenge him exalt himself, and I  
 Become, for that, a Druse like all of you!

*The Druses.* Exalt thyself—exalt thyself—O Hakeem!

*Dja.* [*advances.*] I can confess now all from first to  
 last.

There is no longer shame for me! I am . . .

[*Here the Venetian trumpet sounds—the Druses shout: his  
 eye catches the expression of those about him, and, as the  
 old dream comes back, he is again confident and inspired.*

. . . Am I not Hakeem? And ye would have crawled  
 But yesterday within these impure courts  
 Where now ye stand erect!—Not grand enough?  
 —What more could be conceded to such beasts  
 As all of you, so sunk and base as you,  
 But a mere man?—A man among such beasts  
 Was miracle enough—yet him you doubt,  
 Him you forsake, him fain would you destroy—  
 With the Venetians at your gate, the Nuncio  
 Thus—(see the baffled hypocrite!) and best  
 The Prefect there!

*Druses.* No, Hakeem, ever thine!

*Nuncio.* He lies—and twice he lies—and thrice he lies  
 Exalt thyself, Mahound! Exalt thyself!

*Dja.* Druses! we shall henceforth be far away!

Out of mere mortal ken—above the Cedars—  
 But we shall see ye go, hear ye return,  
 Repeopling the old solitudes,—thro' thee,  
 My Khalil! Thou art full of me—J fill  
 Thee full—my hands thus fill thee! Yester' eve,  
 —Nay, but this morn—I deemed thee ignorant  
 Of all to do, requiring words of mine  
 To teach it—now, thou hast all gifts in one,  
 With truth and purity go other gifts!  
 All gifts come clustering to that—go, lead  
 My People home whate'er betide!

[*Turning to the Druses.*] Ye take  
 This Khalil for my delegate? To him  
 Bow as to me? He leads to Lebanon—  
 Ye follow?

*Druses.* We follow! Now exalt thyself!

*Dja.* [*raises Loys.*] Then to thee, Loys! How I  
 wronged thee, Loys!

—Yet, wronged, no less thou shalt have full revenge.  
 Fit for thy noble self, revenge—and thus:  
 Thou, loaded with these wrongs, the princely soul  
 The first sword of Christ's sepulchre—thou shalt  
 Guard Khalil and my Druses home again!  
 Justice, no less—God's justice and no more,  
 For those I leave!—to seeking this, devote  
 Some few days out of thy Knight's brilliant life,  
 And, this obtained them, leave their Lebanon,  
 My Druses' blessing in thine ears—(they shall  
 Bless thee with blessing sure to have its way)



—One cedar-blossom in thy Ducal cap,  
 One thought of Anael in thy heart—perchance,  
 One thought of him who thus, to bid thee speed,  
 His last word to the living speaks! This done,  
 Resume thy course, and, first amid the first  
 In Europe, take my heart along with thee!  
 Go boldly, go serenely, go augustly—  
 What can withstand thee then?

[*He bends over ANAEL.*] And last to thee!  
 Ah, did I dream I was to have this day  
 Exalted thee? A vain dream—hast thou not  
 Won greater exaltation? What remains  
 But press to thee, exalt myself to thee?  
 Thus I exalt myself, set free my soul!

[*He stabs himself—as he falls, supported by KHALIL and  
 LOYS, the VENETIANS enter: the ADMIRAL advances.*

*Admiral.* God and St. Mark for Venice! Plant the  
 Lion!

[*At the clash of the planted standard, the Druses shout, and  
 move tumultuously forward, LOYS drawing his sword.*

*Dja.* [*leading them a few steps between KHALIL and  
 LOYS.*]

On to the Mountain. At the Mountain, Druses!

[*Dies*



L U R I A :

• Tragedy.

I DEDICATE

THIS LAST ATTEMPT FOR THE PRESENT AT DRAMATIC POETRY

To a Great Dramatic Poet;

“WISHING WHAT I WRITE MAY BE READ BY HIS LIGHT:”

—IF A PHRASE ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED, BY NOT THE LEAST  
WORTHY OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES,

TO SHAKESPEARE,

MAY BE APPLIED HERE, BY ONE WHOSE SOLE PRIVILEGE IS IN A  
GRATEFUL ADMIRATION,

TO WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

# LURIA.

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## PERSONS.

LURIA, a Moor, Commander of the Florentine Forces.  
HUSAIN, a Moor, his friend.  
PUCCIO, the old Florentine Commander, now LURIA'S Chief Officer.  
BRACCIO, Commissary of the Republic of Florence.  
JACOPO (LAPO), his Secretary.  
TIBURZIO, Commander of the Pisans.  
DOMIZIA, a noble Florentine Lady.

Time, 14—.

SCENE.—LURIA'S *Camp between Florence and Pisa.*

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## ACT I.

### MORNING.

BRACCIO, *as dictating to his Secretary; PUCCIO standing by.*

*Brac.* [*to Puc.*] Then, you join battle in an hour?

*Puc.* Not I;

Luria, the Captain.

*Brac.* [*to the Sec.*] "In an hour, the battle."

[*To Puc.*] Sir, let your eye run o'er this loose digest,  
And see if very much of your report  
Have slipped away through my civilian phrase.

Does this instruct the Signory aright  
How army stands with army?

*Puc.* [*taking the paper.*] All seems here :  
—That Luria, seizing with our City's force  
The several points of vantage, hill and plain,  
Shuts Pisa safe from help on every side,  
And baffling the Lucchese arrived too late,  
Must, in the battle he delivers now,  
Beat her best troops and first of chiefs.

*Brac.* So sure?  
Tiburzio's a consummate captain too!

*Puc.* Luria holds Pisa's fortune in his hand.

*Brac.* [*to the Sec.*] "The Signory hold Pisa in their  
hand!"

Your own proved soldiership's our warrant, sir :  
So, while my secretary ends his task,  
Have out two horsemen, by the open roads,  
To post with it to Florence!

*Puc.* [*returning the paper.*] All seems here ;  
Unless . . . Ser Braccio, 'tis my last report !  
Since Pisa's outbreak, and my overthrow,  
And Luria's hastening at the city's call  
To save her, as he only could, no doubt ;  
Till now that she is saved or sure to be,—  
Whatever you tell Florence, I tell you :  
Each day's note you, her Commissary, make  
Of Luria's movements, I myself supply.  
No youngster am I longer, to my cost ;  
Therefore while Florence gloried in her choice

And vaunted Luria, whom but Luria, still,  
 As if zeal, courage, prudence, conduct, faith,  
 Had never met in any man before,  
 I saw no pressing need to swell the cry.  
 But now, this last report and I have done—  
 So, ere to-night comes with its roar of praise,  
 'Twere not amiss if some one old i' the trade  
 Subscribed with, " True, for once rash counsel's best ;  
 " This Moor of the bad faith and doubtful race,  
 " This boy to whose untried sagacity,  
 " Raw valour, Florence trusts without reserve  
 " The charge to save her, justifies her choice ;  
 " In no point has this stranger failed his friends ;  
 " Now praise ! " I say this, and it is not here.

*Brac.* [*to the Sec.*] Write, " Puccio, superseded in the  
 charge

" By Luria, bears full witness to his worth,  
 " And no reward our Signory can give  
 " Their champion but he'll back it cheerfully."  
 Aught more? Five minutes hence, both messengers!

{PUCCIO goes

*Brac.* [*after a pause, and while he slowly tears the  
 paper into shreds.*]

I think . . . pray God, I hold in fit contempt  
 This warfare's noble art and ordering,  
 And,—once the brace of prizers fairly matched,  
 Poleaxe with poleaxe, knife with knife as good,—  
 Spit properly at what men term their skill . . .  
 Yet here I think our fighter has the odds ;

With Pisa's strength diminished thus and thus,  
 Such points of vantage in our hands and such,  
 With Lucca off the stage, too,—all's assured:  
 Luria must win this battle. Write the Court,  
 That Luria's trial end and sentence pass!

*Sec.* Patron,—

*Brac.* Ay, Lapo?

*Sec.* If you trip, I fall

'Tis in self-interest I speak—

*Brac.* Nay, nay,

You overshoot the mark, my Lapo! Nay!

When did I say pure love's impossible?

I make you daily write those red cheeks thin,

Load your young brow with what concerns it *least*,

And, when we visit Florence, let you pace

The Piazza by my side as if we talked,

Where all your old acquaintances may see

You'd die for me, I should not be surprised!

Now then!

*Sec.* Sir, look about and love yourself!

Step after step the Signory and you

Tread gay till this tremendous point's to pass;

Which, pass not, pass not, ere you ask yourself,

Bears the brain steadily such draughts of fire,

Or too delicious may not prove the pride

Of this long secret Trial you dared plan,

Dare execute, you solitary here,

With the gray-headed toothless fools at home,

Who think themselves your lords, they are such slaves?



If they pronounce this sentence as you bid,  
 Declare the treason, claim its penalty,—  
 And sudden out of all the blaze of life,  
 On the best minute of his brightest day,  
 From that adoring army at his back,  
 Thro' Florence' joyous crowds before his face,  
 Into the dark you beckon Luria . . .

*Brac.* . . . . . Then—

Why, Lapo, when the fighting-people vaunt,  
 We of the other craft and mystery,  
 May we not smile demure, the danger past?

*Sec.* Sir, no, no, no,—the danger, and your spirit  
 At watch and ward? Where's danger on your part,  
 With that thin flitting instantaneous steel,  
 'Gainst the blind bull-front of a brute-force world?  
 If Luria, that's to perish sure as fate,  
 Should have been really guiltless after all?

*Brac.* Ah, you have thought that?

*Sec.* . . . . . Here I sit, your scribe

And in and out goes Luria, days and nights;  
 This Puccio comes; the Moor his other friend,  
 Husain; they talk—all that's feigned easily;  
 He speaks (I would not listen if I could)  
 Reads, orders, counsels;—but he rests sometimes,—  
 I see him stand and eat, sleep stretched an hour  
 On the lynx-skins, yonder; hold his bared black arms  
 Into the sun from the tent-opening; laugh  
 When his horse drops the forage from his teeth  
 And neighs to hear him hum his Moorish songs,

That man believes in Florence, as the Saint  
Tied to the wheel believes in God!

*Brac.* How strange—  
You too have thought that!

*Sec.* Do but you think too,  
And all is saved! I only have to write,  
The man seemed false awhile, proves true at last;  
Bury it . . . so I write to the Signory . . .  
Bury this Trial in your breasts forever,  
Blot it from things or done or dreamed about,  
So Luria shall receive his meed to-day  
With no suspicion what reverse was near,—  
As if no meteoric finger hushed  
The doom-word just on the destroyer's lip.  
Motioned him off, and let life's sun fall straight.

*Brac.* [*looks to the wall of the tent.*] Did he draw that?

*Sec.* With charcoal, when the watch  
Made the report at midnight; Lady Domizia  
Spoke of the unfinished Duomo, you remember,  
That is his fancy how a Moorish front  
Might join to, and complete, the body,—a sketch,—  
And again where the cloak hangs, yonder in the shadow

*Brac.* He loves that woman.

*Sec.* She is sent the spy  
Of Florence,—spies on you as you on him:  
Florence, if only for Domizia's sake,  
Is surely safe. What shall I write?

*Brac.* I see—  
A Moorish front, nor of such ill design!

Lapo, there's one thing plain and positive ;  
Man seeks his own good at the whole world's cost.  
What? If to lead our troops, stand forth our chiefs,  
And hold our fate, and see us at their beck,  
Yet render up the charge when peace returned,  
Have ever proved too much for Florentines,  
Even for the best and bravest of ourselves—  
If in the struggle when the soldier's sword  
Should sink its point before the statist's pen,  
And the calm head replace the violent hand,  
Virtue on virtue still have fallen away  
Before ambition with unvarying fate,  
Till Florence' self at last in bitterness  
Be forced to own such falls the natural end,  
And, sparing further to expose her sons  
To a vain strife and profitless disgrace,  
Declare "The Foreigner, one not my child,  
"Shall henceforth lead my troops, reach height by height  
"The glory, then descend into the shame ;  
"So shall rebellion be less guilt in him,  
"And punishment the easier task for me"  
—If on the best of us this brand she set,  
Can I suppose an utter alien here,  
This Luria, our inevitable foe,  
Confessed a mercenary and a Moor,  
Born free from any ties that bind the rest  
Of common faith in Heaven or hope on Earth.  
No Past with us, no Future,—such a Spirit  
Shall hold the path from which our stanchest broke.

Stand firm where every famed precursor fell ?  
 My Lapo, I will frankly say, these proofs  
 So duly noted of the man's intent,  
 Are for the doting fools at home, not me ;  
 The charges here, they may be true or false,  
 —What is set down ? Errors and oversights,  
 This dallying interchange of courtesies  
 With Pisa's General,—all that, hour by hour,  
 Puccio's pale discontent has furnished us,  
 Of petulant speeches, inconsiderate acts,  
 Now overhazard, overcaution now ;  
 Even that he loves this Lady who believes  
 She outwits Florence, and whom Florence posted  
 By my procurement here, to spy on me,  
 Lest I one minute lose her from my sight—  
 She who remembering her whole House's fall,  
 That nest of traitors strangled in the birth,  
 Now labours to make Luria . . . poor device  
 As plain . . . the instrument of her revenge !  
 —That she is ever at his ear to prompt  
 Inordinate conceptions of his worth,  
 Exorbitant belief in its reward,  
 And after, when sure disappointment follows,  
 Proportionable rage at such a wrong—  
 Why, all these reasons, while I urge them most,  
 Weigh with me less than least ; as nothing weigh !  
 Upon that broad Man's heart of his, I go !  
 On what I know must be, yet while I live  
 Will never be, because I live and know !

Brute-force shall not rule Florence! Intellect  
 May rule her, bad or good as chance supplies,—  
 But Intellect it shall be, pure if bad,  
 And Intellect's tradition so kept up  
 Till the good comes—'twas Intellect that ruled,  
 Not Brute-force bringing from the battle-field  
 The attributes of wisdom, foresight's graces  
 We lent it there to lure its grossness on;  
 All which it took for earnest and kept safe  
 To show against us in our market-place,  
 Just as the plumes and tags and swordsman's-gear  
 (Fetched from the camp where at their foolish best  
 When all was done they frightened nobody)  
 Perk in our faces in the street, forsooth,  
 With our own warrant and allowance. No!  
 The whole procedure is overcharged,—its end  
 In too strict keeping with the bad first step.  
 To conquer Pisa was sheer inspiration?  
 Well then, to perish for a single fault,  
 Let that be simple justice!—There, my Lapo!  
 A Moorish front ill suits our Duomo's body—  
 Blot it out—and bid Luria's sentence come!

[LURIA *who, with DOMIZIA, has entered unobserved at the  
 close of the last phrase, now advancing.*

And Luria, Luria, what of Luria now?

*Brac.* Ah, you so close, Sir? Lady Domizia too?

I said it needs must be a busy moment

For one like you—that you were now i' the thick  
 Of your duties, doubtless, while we idlers sate . . .

*Lur.* No—in that paper,—it was in that paper  
What you were saying!

*Brac.* Oh—my day's dispatch!  
I censure you to Florence: will you see?

*Lur.* See your dispatch, your last, for the first time?  
Well, if I should, now? For in truth, Domizia,  
He would be forced to set about another,  
In his sly cool way, the true Florentine,  
To mention that important circumstance;  
So while he wrote I should gain time, such time!  
Do not send this!

*Brac.* And wherefore?

*Lur.* These Lucchese  
Are not arrived—they never will arrive!  
And I must fight to-day, arrived or not;  
And I shall beat Tiburzio, that is sure:  
And then will be arriving my Lucchese,  
But slowly, oh so slowly, just in time  
To look upon my battle from the hills,  
Like a late moon, of use to nobody!  
And I must break my battle up, send forth,  
Surround on this side, hold in check on that—  
'Then comes to-morrow, we negotiate,  
You make me send for fresh instructions home,  
—Incompleteness, incompleteness!

*Brac.* Ah, we scribes  
Why, I had registered that very point,  
The non-appearance of our foes' ally,  
As a most happy fortune; both at once  
Were formidable—singly faced, each falls.

*Lur.* So no great battle for my Florentines !  
 No crowning deed, decisive and complete,  
 For all of them, the simple as the wise,  
 Old, young, alike, that do not understand  
 Our wearisome pedantic art of war,  
 By which we prove retreat may be success,  
 Delay—best speed,—half loss, at times,—whole gain  
 They want results—as if it were their fault !  
 And you, with warmest wish to be my friend,  
 Will not be able now to simply say  
 “Your servant has performed his task—enough !  
 “You ordered, he has executed : good !  
 “Now walk the streets in holiday attire,  
 “Congratulate your friends, till noon strikes fierce,  
 “Then form bright groups beneath the Duomo’s shade !”  
 No ! you will have to argue and explain,  
 Persuade them all is not so ill in the end,  
 Tease, tire them out ! Arrive, arrive, Lucchese !

*Dom.* Well, you will triumph for the Past enough,  
 Whatever be the Present’s chance—no service  
 Falls to the ground with Florence ; she awaits  
 Her saviour, will receive him fittingly.

*Lur.* Ah, Braccio, you know Florence . . . will she  
 think you,  
 Receive one . . . what means “fittingly receive ?”  
 —Receive compatriots, doubtless—I am none :  
 And yet Domizia promises so much !

*Brac.* Kind women still give men a woman’s prize  
 I know not o’er which gate most boughs will arch,

Nor if the Square will wave red flags or blue—  
 I should have judged, the fullest of rewards  
 Our State gave Luria, when she made him chief  
 Of her whole force, in her best Captain's place.

*Lur.* That my reward? Florence on my account  
 Relieved Ser Puccio?—mark you, my reward!  
 And Puccio's having all the fight's true joy—  
 Goes here and there, directs, may fight himself,  
 While I must order, stand aloof, o'ersee!  
 That was my calling—there was my true place!  
 I should have felt, in some one over me,  
 Florence impersonate, my visible Head,  
 As I am over Puccio,—taking life  
 Directly from her eye!—They give me you!  
 But do you cross me, set me half to work?  
 I enjoy nothing—but I will, for once!  
 Decide, shall we join battle? may I wait?

*Brac.* Let us compound the matter; wait till noon;  
 Then, no arrival,—

*Lur.* Ah, noon comes too fast!  
 I wonder, do you guess why I delay  
 Involuntarily the final blow  
 As long as possible? Peace follows it!  
 Florence at peace, and the calm studious heads  
 Come out again, the penetrating eyes;  
 As if a spell broke, all's resumed, each art  
 You boast, more vivid than it slept awhile!  
 Gainst the glad heaven, o'er the white palace-front  
 The interrupted scaffold climbs anew;



The walls are peopled by the Painter's brush ;  
 The Statue to its niche ascends to dwell ;  
 The Present's noise and trouble have retired  
 And left the eternal Past to rule once more.—  
 You speak its speech and read its records plain,  
 Greece lives with you, each Roman breathes your friend.  
 —But Luria—where will then be Luria's place ?

*Dom.* Highest in honour, for that Past's own sake,  
 Of which his actions, sealing up the sum  
 By saving all that went before from wreck,  
 Will range as part, with which be worshipped too.

*Lur.* Then I may walk and watch you in your streets  
 Leading the life my rough life helps no more,  
 So different, so new, so beautiful—  
 Nor fear that you will tire to see parade  
 The club that slew the lion, now that crooks  
 And shepherd-pipes come into use again ?  
 For very lone and silent seems my East  
 In its drear vastness—still it spreads, and still  
 No Braccios, no Domizias anywhere—  
 Not ever more !—Well, well, to-day is ours !

*Dom.* [*to BRAC.*] Should he not have been one of us ?

*Lur.* Oh, no

Not one of you, and so escape the thrill  
 Of coming into you, and changing thus,—  
 Feeling a soul grow on me that restricts  
 The boundless unrest of the savage heart !  
 The sea heaves up, hangs loaded o'er the land,  
 Breaks there and buries its tumultuous strength ;

Horror, and silence, and a pause awhile ;  
 Lo, inland glides the gulf-stream, miles away,  
 In rapture of assent, subdued and still,  
 'Neath those strange banks, those unimagined skies !  
 Well, 'tis not sure the quiet lasts forever !  
 Your placid heads still find our hands new work ;  
 Some minutes' chance—there comes the need of mine—  
 And, all resolved on, I too hear at last.  
 Oh, you must find some use for me, Ser Braccio !  
 You hold my strength ; 'twere best dispose of it !  
 What you created, see that you find food for—  
 I shall be dangerous else !

*Brac.* How dangerous, Sir ?

*Lur.* Oh, there are many ways, Domizia warns me,  
 And one with half the power that I possess,  
 Grows very formidable ! Do you doubt ?  
 Why, first, who holds the army . . .

*Dom.* While we talk  
 Morn wears, we keep you from your proper place  
 In the field !—

*Lur.* Nay, to the field I move no more !  
 My part is done, and Puccio's may begin !  
 I cannot trench upon his province longer  
 With any face.—You think yourselves so safe ?  
 Why see—in concert with Tiburzio, now—  
 One could . . .

*Dom.* A trumpet !

*Lur.* My Luccese at last !  
 Arrived, as sure as Florence stands ! your leave !

[Sings out

*Dom.* How plainly is true greatness characterized  
 By such unconsciousness as Luria's here,  
 And sharing least the secret of itself!  
 Be it with head that schemes or hand that acts,  
 Such save the world which none but they could save,  
 Yet think whate'er they did, that world could do.

*Brac.* Yes: and how worthy note, that those same  
 great ones

In hand or head, with such unconsciousness  
 And all its due entailed humility,  
 Should never shrink, so far as I perceive,  
 From taking up whatever offices  
 Involve the whole world's safety or mishap,  
 Into their mild hands as a thing of course!  
 The Statist finds it natural to lead  
 The mob who might as easily lead him—  
 The Soldier marshals men who know as much—  
 Statist and Soldier verily believe!  
 While we poor scribes . . . you catch me thinking, now,  
 That I shall in this very letter write  
 What none of you are able! To it, Lapo!

[DOMIZIA goes

This last, worst, all affected childish fit  
 Of Luria's, this be-praised unconsciousness,  
 Convinces me: the Past was no child's play;  
 It was a man beat Pisa,—not a child.  
 All's mere dissimulation—to remove  
 The fear, he best knows we should entertain.  
 The utmost danger was at hand. Is't written?

Now make a duplicate, lest this should fail,  
And speak your fullest on the other side.

*Sec.* I noticed he was busily repairing  
My half-effacement of his Duomo sketch,  
And, while he spoke of Florence, turned to it,  
As the Mage Negro King to Christ the Babe.—  
I judge his childishness the true relapse  
To boyhood of a man who has worked lately,  
And presently will work, so, meantime, plays:  
Whence more than ever I believe in him.

*Brac.* [*after a pause.*] The sword! At best, the  
soldier, as he says,  
In Florence—the black face, the barbarous name,  
For Italy to boast her show of the age,  
Her man of men!—to Florence with each letter!

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## ACT II.

NOON.

*Dom.* Well, Florence, shall I reach thee, pierce thy  
heart  
Thro' all its safeguards? Hate is said to help—  
Quicken the eye, invigorate the arm,  
And this my hate, made up of many hates,  
Might stand in scorn of visible instrument,  
And will thee dead:—yet do I trust it not.  
Nor Man's devices, nor Heaven's memory

Of wickedness forgot on Earth so soon,  
But thy own nature,—Hell and thee I trust,  
To keep thee constant in that wickedness,  
Where my revenge may meet thee: turn aside  
A single step, for gratitude, or shame,—  
Grace but this Luria, this wild mass of rage  
That I prepare to launch against thee now,  
With other payment than thy noblest found,—  
Give his desert for once its due reward,—  
And past thee would my sure destruction roll.  
But thou who mad'st our House thy sacrifice,  
It cannot be thou wilt except this Moor  
From the accustomed fate of zeal and truth;  
Thou wilt deny his looked-for recompense,  
And then—I reach thee! Old and trained, my sire  
Could bow down on his quiet broken heart,  
Die awe-struck and submissive, when at last  
The strange blow came for the expected wreath;  
And Porzio passed in blind bewilderment  
To exile, never to return,—they say,  
Perplexed in his frank simple honest soul,  
As if some natural law had changed,—how else  
Could Florence, on plain fact pronouncing thus,  
Judge Porzio's actions worthy such an end?  
But Berto, with the ever-passionate pulse,  
—Oh that long night, its dreadful hour on hour,  
In which no way of getting his fair fame  
From their inexplicable charges free,  
Was found, save pouring forth the impatient blood

To show its colour whether false or no!  
 My brothers never had a friend like me  
 Close in their need to watch the time, then speak,  
 —Burst with a wakening laughter on their dream,  
 Say, Florence was all falseness, so false here,—  
 And show them what a simple task remained—  
 To leave dreams, rise, and punish in God's name  
 The City wedded to its wickedness—  
 None stood by them as I by Luria stand!  
 So, when the stranger cheated of his due  
 Turns on thee as his rapid nature bids,  
 Then, Florence, think, a hireling at thy throat  
 For the first outrage, think who bore thy last,  
 Yet mutely in forlorn obedience died!  
 He comes . . . his friend . . . black faces in the camp  
 Where moved those peerless brows and eyes of old!

*Enter LURIA and HUSAIN.*

*Dom.* Well, and the movement—is it as you hope?  
 'Tis Lucca?

*Lur.* Ah, the Pisan trumpet merely!  
 Tiburzio's envoy, I must needs receive—

*Dom.* Whom I withdraw before; yet if I lingered  
 You could not wonder, for my time fleets fast;  
 The overtaking night brings such reward!—  
 And where will then be room for me? Yet still  
 Remember who was first to promise it,  
 And envies those who also can perform! [ *Goes*

*Lur* This trumpet from the Pisans?—

*Hus.*

In the camp

A very noble presence—Braccio's visage  
 On Puccio's body—calm and fixed and good ;  
 A man I seem as I had seen before—  
 Most like, it was some statue had the face.

*Lur.* Admit him ! This will prove the last delay !

*Hus.* Ay, friend, go on, and die thou going on !  
 Thou heard'st what the grave woman said but now :  
 To-night rewards thee ! That is well to hear !  
 But stop not therefore ; hear it, and go on !

*Lur.* Oh, their reward and triumph and the rest  
 They round me in the ears with, all day long ?  
 All that, I never take for earnest, friend !  
 Well would it suit us,—their triumphal arch  
 Or storied pillar,—thee and me, the Moors !  
 But gratitude in those Italian eyes—  
 That, we shall get ?

*Hus.*

It is too cold an air—

Our sun rose out of yonder mound of mist—  
 Where is he now ? So I trust none of them !

*Lur.* Truly ?*Hus.*

I doubt and fear. There stands a wall

'Twixt our expansive and explosive race  
 And those absorbing, concentrating men !  
 They use thee !

*Lur.*

And I feel it, Husain ; yes,

And care not—yes, an alien force like mine  
 Is only called to play its part outside  
 Their different nature ; where its sole use seems

To fight with and keep off an adverse force  
 As alien,—which repelled, mine too withdraws ;  
 Inside, they know not what to do with me ;  
 So I have told them laughingly and oft,  
 But long since I prepared to learn the worst.

*Hus.* What is the worst ?

*Lur.* I will forestall them, Husain

And speak my destiny, they dare not speak—

Banish myself before they find the heart !

I will be first to say, “The work rewards !

“I know, for all your praise, my use is over,

“So may it be !—meanwhile 'tis best I go,

“And carry safe my memories of you all

“To other scenes of action, newer lands,”—

Thus leaving them confirmed in their belief

They would not easily have tired of me !

You think this hard to say ?

*Hus.* Say it or not,

So thou but go, so they but let thee go !

This hating people, that hate each the other,

And in one blandness to us Moors unite—

Locked each to each like slippery snakes, I say,

Which still in all their tangles, hissing tongue

And threatening tail, ne'er do each other harm ;

While any creature of a better blood,

They seem to fight for, while they circle safe

And never touch it,—pines without a wound,

Withers away before their eyes and breath.

See, thou, if Puccio come not safely out



Of Braccio's grasp, this Braccio sworn his foe,  
 As Braccio safely from Domizia's toils  
 Who hates him most!—But thou, the friend of all,  
 . Come out of them!

*Lur.* The Pisan trumpet now!

*Hus.* Breathe free—it is an enemy, no friend! [*Goes*

*Lur.* He keeps his instincts, no new culture mars  
 Their perfect use in him; just so the brutes  
 Rest not, are anxious without visible cause,  
 When change is in the elements at work,  
 Which man's trained senses fail to apprehend.  
 But here,—he takes the distant chariot-wheels  
 For thunder, festal fire for lightning's flash,  
 The finer traits of cultivated life  
 For treachery and malevolence: I see!

*Enter TIBURZIO.*

*Lur.* Quick, sir, your message. I but wait your message  
 To sound the charge. You bring not overtures  
 For truce?—I would not, for your General's sake,  
 You spoke of truce—a time to fight is come,  
 And whatsoever the fight's event, he keeps  
 His honest soldier's name to beat me with,  
 Or leaves me all himself to beat, I trust!

*Tib.* I am Tiburzio.

*Lur.* . You? 'Tis—yes . . Tiburzio .  
 You were the last to keep the ford i' the valley  
 From Puccio, when I threw in succurs there!  
 Why, I was on the heights—thro' the defile

Ten minutes after, when the prey was lost ;  
 You wore an open scull-cap with a twist  
 Of water-reeds—the plume being hewn away ;  
 While I drove down my battle from the heights,  
 —I saw with my own eyes !

*Tib.*

And you are Luria

Who sent my cohort, that laid down its arms  
 In error of the battle-signal's sense,  
 Back safely to me at the critical time—  
 One of a hundred deeds—I know you ! Therefore  
 To none but you could I . . .

*Lur.*

No truce, Tiburzio !

*Tib.* Luria, you know the peril's imminent  
 On Pisa,—that you have us in the toils,  
 Us her last safeguard, all that intercepts  
 The rage of her implacablest of foes  
 From Pisa,—if we fall to-day, she falls.  
 Tho' Lucca will arrive, yet, 'tis too late.  
 You have so plainly here the best of it,  
 That you must feel, brave soldier as you are,  
 How dangerous we grow in this extreme,  
 How truly formidable by despair.  
 Still, probabilities should have their weight—  
 The extremest chance is ours, but, that chance failing,  
 You win this battle. Wherefore say I this ?  
 To be well apprehended when I add,  
 This danger absolutely comes from you.  
 Were you, who threaten thus, a Florentine . . .

*Lur.* Sir, I am nearer Florence than her sons.

I can, and have perhaps obliged the State,  
Nor paid a mere son's duty.

*Tib.* Even so!

Were you the son of Florence, yet endued  
With all your pre-ent nobleness of soul,  
No question, what I must communicate  
Would not detach you from her.

*Lur.* Me, detach?

*Tib.* Time urges: you will ruin presently  
Pisa, you never knew, for Florence' sake  
You think you know. I have from time to time  
Made prize of certain secret missives sent  
From Braccio here, the Commissary, home—  
And knowing Florence otherwise, I piece  
The entire chain out, from these its scattered links.  
Your trial occupies the Signory;  
They sit in judgment on your conduct now!  
When men at home inquire into the acts  
Which in the field e'en foes appreciate . .  
Brief, they are Florentines! You, saving them,  
Will seek the sure destruction saviours find.

*Lur.* Tiburzio—

*Tib.* All the wonder is of course!

I am not here to teach you, nor direct,  
Only to loyally apprise—scaree that.  
This is the latest letter, sealed and safe,  
As it left here an hour ago. One way  
Of two thought free to Florence, I command.

The duplicate is on its road : but this,—  
Read it, and then I shall have more to say.

*Lur.* Florence!

*Tib.* Now, were yourself a Florentine,  
This letter, let it hold the worst it can,  
Would be no reason you should fall away—  
The Mother city is the mother still,  
And recognition of the children's service  
Her own affair ; reward—there's no reward !  
But you are bound by quite another tie ;  
Nor Nature shows, nor Reason, why at first  
A foreigner, born friend to all alike,  
Should give himself to any special State  
More than another, stand by Florence' side  
Rather than Pisa's—'tis as fair a city  
You war against, as that you fight for—famed  
As well as she in story, graced no less  
With noble heads and patriotic hearts,—  
Nor to a stranger's eye would either cause,  
Stripped of the cumulative loves and hates  
Which take importance from familiar view,  
Stand as the Right, and Sole to be upheld.  
Therefore, should the preponderating gift  
Of love and trust, Florence was first to throw,  
Which made you hers not Pisa's, void the scale,—  
Old ties dissolving, things resume their place  
And all begins again. Break seal and read !  
At least let Pisa offer for you now !  
And I, as a good Pisan, shall rejoice—

Tho' for myself I lose, in gaining you,  
 This last fight and its opportunity ;  
 The chance it brings of saving Pisa yet,  
 Or in the turn of battle dying so  
 That shame should want its extreme bitterness.

*Lur.* Tiburzio, you that fight for Pisa now  
 As I for Florence . . say my chance were yours !  
 You read this letter, and you find . . no, no !  
 Too mad !

*Tib.* I read the letter, find they purpose  
 When I have crushed their foe, to crush me : well ?

*Lur.* You, being their captain, what is it you do ?

*Tib.* Why as it is, all cities are alike—  
 Pisa will pay me much as Florence you ;  
 I shall be as belied, whate'er the event,  
 As you, or more : my weak head, they will say,  
 Prompted this last expedient, my faint heart  
 Entailed on them indelible disgrace,  
 Both which defects ask proper punishment.  
 Another tenure of obedience, mine !  
 You are no son of Pisa's : break and read !

*Lur.* And act on what I read ? What act were fit ?  
 If the firm-fixed foundation of my faith  
 In Florence, which to me stands for Mankind,  
 —If that breaks up and, disemprisoning  
 From the Abyss . . . Ah friend, it cannot be :  
 You may be very sage, yet . . all the world  
 Having to fail, or your sagacity,  
 You do not wish to find yourself alone.

What would the world be worth? Whose love be sure?  
The world remains—you are deceived!

*Tib.*

Your hand!

I lead the vanguard.—If you fall, beside,  
The better—I am left to speak! For me,  
This was my duty, nor would I rejoice  
If I could help, it misses its effect:  
And after all you will look gallantly  
Found dead here with that letter in your breast!

*Lur.* Tiburzio—I would see these people once  
And test them ere I answer finally!  
At your arrival let the trumpet sound:  
If mine returns not then the wonted cry,  
It means that I believe—am Pisa's!

*Tib.*

Well! [*Goes*

*Lur.* My heart will have it he speaks true! My blood  
Beats close to this Tiburzio as a friend.  
If he had stept into my watch-tent, night  
And the wild desert full of foes around,  
I should have broke the bread and given the salt  
Secure, and, when my hour of watch was done,  
Taken my turn to sleep between his knees,  
Safe in the untroubled brow and honest cheek.  
Oh, world, where all things pass and nought abides,  
Oh, life the long mutation—is it so?  
Is it with life as with the body's change?  
—Where, e'en tho' better follow, good must pass,  
Nor manhood's strength can mate with boyhood's grace  
Nor age's wisdom, in its turn, find strength,

But silently the first gift dies away,  
 And tho' the new stays, never both at once!  
 Life's time of savage instinct's o'er with me,  
 It fades and dies away, past trusting more,  
 As if to punish the ingratitude  
 With which I turned to grow in there new lights,  
 And learned to look with European eyes.  
 Yet it is better, this cold certain way,  
 Where Braccio's brow tells nothing,—Puccio's mouth.  
 Domizia's eyes reject the searcher—yes—  
 For on their calm sagacity I lean,  
 Their sense of right, deliberate choice of good,  
 Sure, as they know my deeds, they deal with me.  
 Yes, that is better—that is oest of all!  
 Such faith stays when mere wild belief would go!  
 Yes—when the desert creature's heart, at fault  
 Amid the scattering tempest's pillared sands,  
 Betrays its steps into the pathless drift—  
 The calm instructed eye of man holds fast  
 By the sole bearing of the visible star,  
 Sure that when slow the whirling wreck subsides,  
 The boundaries, lost now, shall be found again,—  
 The palm-trees and the pyramid over all.  
 Yes: I trust Florence—Pisa is deceived!

*Enter BRACCIO, PUCCIO, and DOMIZIA.*

*Brac.* Noon's at an end: no Lucca? You must fight

*Lur.* Do you remember ever, gentle friends,

I am no Florentine?

*Dom.*

It is yourself

Who still are forcing us importunately,  
To bear in mind what else we should forget.

*Lur.* For loss!—For what I lose in being none!  
No shrewd man, such as you yourselves respect,  
But would remind you of the stranger's loss  
In natural friends and advocates at home,  
Hereditary loves, even rivalships,  
With precedents for honor and reward.  
Still, there's a gain, too! If you take it so,  
The stranger's lot has special gain as well!  
Do you forget there was my own far East  
I might have given away myself to, once,  
As now to Florence, and for such a gift,  
Stood there like a descended Deity?  
There, worship greets us! what do I get here?

[Shows the letter

See! Chance has put into my hand the means  
Of knowing what I earn, before I work!  
Should I fight better, should I fight the worse,  
With your crown palpably before me? see!  
Here lies my whole reward! Best know it now,  
Or keep it for the end's entire delight?

*Brac.* If you serve Florence as the vulgar serve,  
For swordsman's pay alone,—break seal and read!  
In that case, you will find your full desert!

*Lur.* Give me my one last happy moment, friends!  
You need me now, and all the gratitude  
This letter can contain will never balance  
The after-feeling that your need's at end!



This moment . . . Oh, the East has use with you !  
 Its sword still flashes—is not flung aside  
 With the past praise, in a dark corner yet !  
 How say you ? 'Tis not so with Florentines—  
 Captains of yours—for them, the ended war  
 Is but a first step to the peace begun  
 —He who did well in war, just earns the right  
 To begin doing well in peace, you know !  
 And certain my precursors,—would not such  
 Look to themselves in such a chance as this,  
 Secure the ground they trod upon, perhaps ?  
 For I have heard, by fits, or seemed to hear,  
 Of strange occurrences, ingratitude,  
 Treachery even,—say that one of you  
 Surmised this letter carried what might turn  
 To harm hereafter, cause him prejudice—  
 What would he do ?

*Dom.* [*hastily.*] Thank God and take revenge !  
 Turn her own force against the city straight,  
 And even at the moment when the foe  
 Sounded defiance . . .

[TIBURZIO'S trumpet sounds in the distance]

*Lur.* Ah, you Florentines !  
 So would you do ? Wisely for you, no doubt !  
 My simple Moorish instinct bids me sink  
 The obligation you relieve me from.  
 Still deeper ! [*to Ptc.*] Sound our answer, I should say !  
 And thus :—[*tearing the paper.*]—The battle ! That  
 solves every doubt !

## ACT III.

AFTERNOON.

*LUCCIO, as making a report to JACOPO.*

*Puc.* And here, your Captain must report the rest  
 For, as I say, the main engagement over,  
 And Luria's special part in it performed,  
 How could subalterns-like myself expect  
 Leisure or leave to occupy the field  
 And glean what dropped from his wide harvesting?  
 I thought, when Lucca at the battle's end  
 Came up, just as the Pisan centre broke,  
 That Luria would detach me and prevent  
 The flying Pisans seeking what they found,  
 Friends in the rear, a point to rally by :  
 But no—more honourable proved my post !  
 I had the august captive to escort  
 Safe to our camp—some other could pursue,  
 Fight, and be famous ; gentler chance was mine—  
 Tiburzio's wounded spirit must be soothed !  
 He's in the tent there.

*Jac.* Is the substance down ?  
 I write—"The vanguard beaten, and both wings  
 In full retreat—Tiburzio prisoner"—  
 And now,—“That they fell back and formed again  
 On Lucca's coming.”—Why then, after all,  
 'Tis half a victory, no conclusive one ?

*Puc.* Two operations where a sole had served.

*Jac.* And Luria's fault was—?

*Puc.* Oh, for fault . . . not much !

He led the attack, a thought impetuously,  
—There's commonly more prudence ; now, he seemed  
To hurry measures, otherwise well-judged ;  
By over concentrating strength, at first,  
Against the enemy's van, both sides escaped  
That's reparable—yet it is a fault.

*Enter BRACCIO.*

*Jac.* As good as a full victory to Florence.  
With the advantage of a fault beside—  
What is it, Puccio ?—that by pressing forward  
With too impetuous . . .

*Brac.* The report anon !

Thanks, Sir—you have elsewhere a charge, I know.

[PUCCIO goes

There's nothing done but I would do again ;  
Yet, Lapo, it may be the Past proves nothing.  
And Luria has kept faithful to the end !

*Jac.* I was for waiting.

*Brac.* Yes : so was not I !

He could not choose but tear that letter—true !  
Still, certain of his tones, I mind, and looks—  
You saw, too, with a fresher soul than I.  
So, Porzio seemed an injured man, they say !  
Well. I have gone upon the broad, sure ground.

*Enter LURIA, PUCCIO, and DOMIZIA.*

*Lur.* [to PUC.] Say, at his pleasure I will see Tiburzio  
All's at his pleasure.

*Dom.* [to LUR.] Were I not so sure  
You would reject, as you do constantly,  
Praise,—I might tell you what you have deserved  
Of Florence by this last and crowning feat :  
But words are vain !

*Lur.* Nay, you may praise me now !  
I want instruction every hour, I find,  
On points where once I saw least need of it ;  
And praise, I have been used to do without,  
Seems not so easy to dispense with now,  
After a battle half one's strength is gone—  
And glorious passion in us once appeased,  
Our reason's calm cold dreadful voice begins.  
All justice, power and beauty scarce appear  
Monopolized by Florence, as of late,  
To me, the stranger ; you, no doubt, may know  
Why Pisa needs must give her rival place ;  
And I am growing nearer you, perhaps,  
For I, too, want to know and be assured,  
When a cause ceases to reward itself,  
Its friend needs fresh sustainments ; praise is one,  
And here stand you—you, Lady, praise me well !  
But yours—(your pardon)—is unlearned praise :  
To the motive, the endeavour, the heart's self,  
Your quick sense looks ; you crown and call aright

The soul of the purpose, ere 'tis shaped as act,  
 Takes flesh i' the world, and clothes itself a king;  
 But when the act comes, stands for what 'tis worth,  
 —Here's Puccio, the skilled soldier; he's my judge!  
 Was all well, Puccio?

*Puc.* All was . . . must be well:  
 If we beat Lucca presently, as doubtless . . .  
 —No, there's no doubt, we must—All was well done.

*Lur.* In truth? But you are of the trade, my Puccio  
 You have the fellow-craftsman's sympathy!  
 There's none knows like a fellow of the craft,  
 The all unestimated sum of pains  
 That go to a success the world can see;  
 'They praise then, but the best they never know:  
 —But you know!—Oh, if envy mix with it,  
 Hate even, still the bottom praise of all,  
 Whatever be the dregs, that drop's pure gold!  
 —For nothing's like it; nothing else records  
 Those daily, nightly drippings in the dark  
 Of the heart's blood, the world lets drop away  
 Forever . . . So, pure gold that praise must be!  
 And I have yours, my soldier: yet the best  
 Is still to come—there's one looks on apart  
 Whom all refers to, failure or success;  
 What's done might be our best, our utmost work,  
 And yet inadequate to serve his need:  
 Here's Braccio, now, for Florenc—here's our service—  
 Well done for us, is it well done for him?  
 His chosen engine, tasked to its full strength

Answers his end?—Should he have chosen higher?  
Do we help Florence, now our best is done?

*Brac.* This battle with the foregone services,  
Saves Florence.

*Lur.* Why then, all is very well!  
Here am I in the middle of my friends,  
Who know me and who love me, one and all!  
And yet . . . 'tis like . . . this instant while I speak  
Is like the turning moment of a dream  
When . . . Ah, you are not foreigners like me!  
Well then, one always dreams of friends at home,  
And always comes, I say, the turning point  
When something changes in the friendly eyes  
That love and look on you . . . so slight, so slight . . .  
And yet it tells you they are dead and gone,  
Or changed and enemies, for all their words,  
And all is mockery, and a maddening show!  
You, now, so kind here, all you Florentines,  
What is it in your eyes . . . those lips, those brows . . .  
Nobody spoke it . . . yet I know it well!—  
Come now—this battle saves you, all's at end,  
Your use of me is o'er, for good, for evil,—  
Come now, what's done against me, while I speak,  
In Florence? Come! I feel it in my blood,  
My eyes, my hair, a voice is in my ear  
That spite of all this smiling and kind speech  
You are betraying me! What is it you do?  
Have it your way, and think my use is over;  
That you are saved and may throw off the mask—

Have it my way, and think more work remains  
 Which I could do,—so show you fear me not,  
 Or prudent be, or generous, as you choose,  
 But tell me—tell me what I refused to know  
 At noon, lest heart should fail me! Well? That letter!  
 My fate is known at Florence! What is it?

*Brac.* Sir, I shall not conceal what you divine:

It is no novelty for innocence  
 To be suspected, but a privilege:  
 The after certain compensation comes.  
 Charges, I say not whether false or true,  
 Have been preferred against you some time since,  
 Which Florence was bound, plainly, to receive,  
 And which are therefore undergoing now  
 The due investigation. That is all.  
 I doubt not but your innocence will shine  
 Apparent and illustrious, as to me,  
 To them this evening, when the trial ends.

*Lur.* My trial?

*Dom.* Florence, Florence to the end,  
 My whole heart thanks thee!

*Puc.* [to BRAC.] What is "Trial," Sir?  
 It was not for a trial—surely, no—  
 I furnished you those notes from time to time?  
 I hold myself aggrieved—I am a man—  
 And I might speak,—ay, and speak mere truth, too,  
 And yet not mean at bottom of my heart  
 What should assist a—Trial, do you say?  
 You should have told me!

*Dom.* Nay, go on, go on!  
His sentence! Do they sentence him? What is it?  
The block? Wheel?

*Brac.* Sentence there is none as yet,  
Nor shall I give my own opinion here  
Of what it should be, or is like to be,  
• When it is passed, applaud or disapprove!  
Up to that point, what is there to impugn?

*Lur.* They are right, then, to try me?

*Brac.* I assert,  
Maintain, and justify the absolute right  
Of Florence to do all she can have done  
In this procedure,—standing on her guard,  
Receiving even services like yours  
With utmost fit suspicious wariness.  
In other matters—keep the mummery up!  
Take all the experiences of the whole world,  
Each knowledge that broke thro' a heart to life,  
Each reasoning which, to work out, cost a brain,  
—In other cases, know these, warrant these,  
And then dispense with them—'tis very well!  
Let friend trust friend, and love demand its like,  
And gratitude be claimed for benefits,—  
There's grace in that—and when the fresh her *4. 1. 1. 1. 1.*  
The new brain proves a martyr, what of it?  
Where is the matter of one moth the more  
Singed in the candle, at a summer's end?  
• But Florence is no simple John or James  
To have his toy, his fancy, his conceit,



That he's the one excepted man by fate,  
And, when fate shows him he's mistaken there,  
Die with all good men's praise, and yield his place  
To Paul and George intent to try their chance :  
Florence exists because these pass away ;  
She's a contrivance to supply a type  
Of Man, which men's deficiencies refuse ;  
She binds so many, that she grows out of them—  
Stands steady o'er their numbers, tho' they change  
And pass away—there's always what upholds,  
Always enough to fashion the great show !  
As, see, yon hanging city, in the sun,  
Of shapely cloud substantially the same !  
A thousand vapours rise and sink again,  
Are interfused, and live their life and die,—  
Yet ever hangs the steady show i' the air  
Under the sun's straight influence : that is well !  
That is worth Heaven to hold, and God to bless !  
And so is Florence,—the unseen sun above,  
Which draws and holds suspended all of us—  
Binds transient mists and vapours into one,  
Differing from each and better than they all.  
And shall she dare to stake this permanence  
On any one man's faith? Man's heart is weak,  
And its temptations many : let her prove  
Each servant to the very uttermost  
Before she grant him her reward, I say !

*Dom.* And as for hearts she chances to mistake,  
That are not destined to receive reward,

Tho' they deserve it, did she only know!

—What should she do for these?

*Brac.*

What does she not

Say, that she gives them but herself to serve!

Here's Luria—what had profited his strength,

When half an hour of sober fancying

Had shown him step by step the uselessness

Of strength exerted for its proper sake?

But the truth is, she did create that strength,

Drew to the end the corresponding means.

The world is wide—are we the only men?

Oh, for the time, the social purpose' sake,

Use words agreed on, bandy epithets,

Call any man, sole Great and Wise and Good!

But shall we, therefore, standing by ourselves,

Insult our souls and God with the same speech?

There, swarm the ignoble thousands under Him—

What marks us from the hundreds and the tens?

Florence took up, turned all one way the soul

Of Luria with its fires, and here he stands!

She takes me out of all the world as him,

Fixing my coldness till like ice it stays

The fire! So, Braccio, Luria, which is best?

*Lur.* Ah, brave me? And is this indeed the way

To gain your good word and sincere esteem?

Am I the baited tiger that must turn

And fight his baiters to deserve their praise?

Obedience has no fruit then?—Be it so!

Do you indeed remember I stand here

The Captain of the conquering army,—mine—  
 With all your tokens, praise and promise, ready  
 To show for what their names were when you gave,  
 Not what you style them now you take away?  
 If I call in my troops to arbitrate,  
 And in their first enthusiastic thrill  
 Of victory, tell them how you menace me—  
 Commending to their plain instinctive sense,  
 My story first, your comment afterward,—  
 Will they take, think you, part with you or me?  
 When I say simply, I, the man they know,  
 Ending my work, ask payment, and find Florence  
 Has all this while provided silently  
 Against the day of pay and proving words,  
 By what you call my sentence that's to come—  
 Will they sit waiting it complacently?  
 When I resist that sentence at their head  
 What will you do, my mild antagonist?

*Brae.* I will rise up like fire, proud and triumphant  
 That Florence knew you thoroughly and by me,  
 And so was saved: "See, Italy," I'll say,  
 "The need of our precautions—here's a man  
 " Was far advanced, just touched on the reward  
 " Less subtle cities had accorded him—  
 " But we were wiser; at the end comes this!"  
 And from that minute all your strength will go—  
 The very stones of Florence cry against  
 The alt-exacting, mending Luria,  
 Resenting her first slight probation thus,

As if he, only, shone and cast no shade,  
 He, only, walked the earth with privilege  
 Against suspicion, free from causing fear—  
 So, for the first inquisitive mother's-word,  
 He turned, and stood on his defence, forsooth!  
 Reward? You will not be worth punishment!

*Lur.* And Florence knew me thus! Thus I have  
 lived,—

And thus you, with the clear fine intellect,  
 Braccio, the cold acute instructed mind,  
 Out of the stir, so calm and unconfused,  
 Reported me—how could you otherwise!  
 Ay?—and what dropped from *you*, just now, more *ver*?  
 Your information, Puccio?—Did your skill  
 And understanding sympathy approve  
 Such a report of me? Was this the end?  
 Or is even this the end? Can I stop here—  
 You, Lady, with the woman's stand apart,  
 The heart to see with, not those learned eyes.  
 . . I cannot fathom why you should destroy  
 The unoffending man, you call your friend—  
 So, looking at the good examples here  
 Of friendship, 'tis but natural I ask  
 Had you a further end, in all you spoke,  
 Than profit to me, in those instances  
 Of perfidy from Florence to her chiefs—  
 All I remember now for the first time?

*Dom.* I am a daughter of the Traversa,  
 Sister of Porzio and of Berto both.

I have foreseen all that has come to pass.  
 I knew the Florence that could doubt their faith,  
 Must needs mistrust a stranger's—holding back  
 Reward from them, must hold back his reward.  
 And I believed, the shame they bore and died,  
 He would not bear, but live and fight against—  
 Seeing he was of other stuff than they.

*Lur.* Hear them! All these against one Foreigner!  
 And all this while, where is in the whole world  
 To his good faith a single witness?

*Tiburzio* [*who has entered during the preceding  
 dialogue.*] Here!

Thus I bear witness to it, not in word  
 But deed. I live for Pisa; she's not lost  
 By many chances—much prevents from that!  
 Her army has been beaten, I am here,  
 But Lucca comes at last, one chance exists.  
 I rather had see Pisa three times lost  
 Than saved by any traitor, even by you.  
 The example of a traitor's happy fortune  
 Would bring more evil in the end than good  
 Lucca rejects such; save yourself and her!  
 In her name, resign forthwith to you  
 My charge,—the highest of her offices.  
 You shall not, by my counsel, turn on Florence  
 Her army, give her calumny that ground—  
 Nor bring it with you: be you all we gam,  
 And all she'll lose, a head to deck some bridge,  
 And save the crown's cost that should deck the head

Leave her to perish in her perfidy,  
 Plague-stricken and stripped naked to all eyes,  
 A proverb and a by-word in all mouths !  
 Go you to Pisa—Florence is my place—  
 Leave me to tell her of the rectitude,  
 I, from the first, told Pisa, knowing it.  
 To Pisa !

*Dom.* Ah, my Braccio, are you caught ?

*Brac.* Puccio, good soldier and selected man,  
 Whom I have ever kept beneath my eye,  
 Ready, as fit, to serve in this event  
 Florence, who clear foretold it from the first—  
 Thro' me, she gives you the command and charge  
 She takes, thro' me, from him who held it late !  
 A painful trial, very sore, was yours :  
 All that could draw out, marshal in array  
 The selfish passions 'gainst the public good—  
 Sights, scorns, neglects, were heaped on you to bear :  
 And ever you did bear and bow the head !  
 It had been sorry trial, to precede  
 Your feet, hold up the promise of reward  
 For luring gleam ; your footsteps kept the track  
 Thro' dark and doubt : take all the light at once !  
 Trial is over, consummation shines ;  
 Well have you served, as well henceforth command !

*Puc.* No, no . . . I dare not . . . I am grateful, glad ;  
 But Luria—you shall understand he's wronged—  
 And he's my Captain—this is not the way  
 We soldiers climb to fortune : think again !

The sentence is not even passed, beside!

I dare not . . . where's the soldier could?

*Lur.*

Now, Florence—

Is it to be?—You will know all the strength  
 Of the savage—to your neck the proof must go?  
 You will prove the bruto nature? Ah, I see!  
 The savage plainly is impassible—  
 He keeps his calm way thro' insulting words,  
 Sarcastic looks, sharp gestures—~~one of~~ which  
 Would stop you, fatal to your finer sense:  
 But if he steadily advances, still  
 Without a mark upon his callous hide,  
 Thro' the mere brushwood you grow angry with,  
 And leave the tatters of your flesh upon,  
 —You have to learn that when the true bar comes,  
 The thick mid forest, the real obstacle,  
 Which when you reach, you give the labour up,  
 Nor dash on, but lie down composed before,  
 —He goes against it, like the brute he is!  
 It falls before him, or he dies in his course!  
 I kept my course thro' past ingratitude—  
 I saw—it does seem, now, as if I saw,  
 Could not but see, those insults as they fell,  
 —Ay, let them glance from off me, very like,  
 Laughing, perhaps, to think the qualiv  
 You grew so bold on, while you so despised  
 The Moor's dull mute inapprehensive mood,  
 Was saving you; I bore and kept my course:

Now real wrong fronts me—see if I succumb!  
 Florence withstands me?—I will punish her!

At night my sentence will arrive, you say!  
 Till then I cannot, if I would, rebel—  
 —Unauthorized to lay my office down,  
 Retaining my full power to will and do:  
 After—it is to see. Tiburzio, thanks!  
 Go—you are free—join Lucca. I suspend  
 All further operations till to-night.  
 Thank you, and for the silence most of all!  
 [*To Brac.*] Let my complacent bland accuser go,  
 And carry his self-approving head and heart  
 Safe thro' the army which would trample him  
 Dead in a moment at my word or sign!  
 Go, Sir, to Florence; tell friends what I say—  
 That while I wait their sentence, theirs waits them!  
 [*To Dom.*] You, Lady,—you have black Italian eyes  
 I would be generous if I might . . . Oh, yes—  
 For I remember how so oft you seemed  
 Inclined at heart to break the barrier down  
 Which Florence makes God build between us both.  
 Alas, for generosity! this hour  
 Demands strict justice—bear it as you may!  
 I must—the Moor,—the Savage,—pardon you!  
 [*To Puc.*] Puccio, my trusty soldier, see them forth!—



## ACT IV.

## EVENING.

*Enter PUCCIO and JACOPO.*

*Puc.* What Luria *will* do? Ah, 'tis yours, fair Sir,  
Your and your subtle-witted master's part,  
To tell me that; I tell you what he can.

*Jac.* Friend, you mistake my station! I observe  
The game, watch how my betters play, no more.

*Puc.* But mankind are not pieces—there's your fault!  
You cannot push them, and, the first move made,  
Lean back to study what the next should be,  
In confidence that when 'tis fixed upon,  
You'll find just where you left them, blacks and whites:  
Men go on moving when your hand's away.  
You build, I notice, firm on Luria's faith  
This whole time,—firmlier than I choose to build,  
Who never doubted it—of old, that is—  
With Luria in his ordinary mind:  
But now, oppression makes the wise man mad—  
How do I know he will not turn and stand  
And hold his own against you, as he may?  
Suppose that he withdraws to Pisa—well,—  
Then, even if all happens to your wish,  
Which is a chance . . .

*Jac.* Nay—'twas an oversight,

Not waiting till the proper warrant came :  
 You could not take what was not ours to give.  
 But when at night the sentence really comes,  
 And Florence authorizes past dispute  
 Luria's removal and your own advance,  
 You will perceive your duty and accept ?

*Puc.* Accept what ? muster-rolls of soldiers' names ?  
 An army upon paper ?—I want men,  
 Their hearts as well as hands—and where's a heart  
 That's not with Luria, in the multitude  
 I come from walking thro' by Luria's side ?  
 You gave him to them, set him on to grow,  
 Head-like, upon their trunk, one blood feeds both,  
 They feel him there, and live, and well know why !  
 —For they do know, if you are ignorant,  
 Who kept his own place and respected theirs,  
 Managed their ease, yet never spared his own.  
 All was your deed : another might have served—  
 There's peradventure no such dearth of men—  
 But you chose Luria—so they grew to him :  
 And now, for nothing they can understand,  
 Luria's removed, off is to roll the head—  
 The body's mine—much I shall do with it !

*Jac.* That's at the worst !

*Puc.* No—at the best, it is !  
 Best, do you hear ? I saw them by his side ;  
 Only we two with Luria in the camp  
 Are left that know the secret ? You think that ?  
 Hear what I saw : from rear to van, no heart

But felt the quiet patient hero there  
 Was wronged, nor in the moveless ranks an eye  
 But glancing told its fellow the whole story  
 Of that convicted silent knot of spies  
 Who passed thro' them to Florence ; they might pass -  
 No breast but gladlier beat when free of them !  
 Our troops will catch up Luria, close him round,  
 Lead him to Florence as their natural lord,  
 Partake his fortunes, live or die with him !

*Jac.* And by mistake catch up along with him  
 Puccio, no doubt, compelled in self-despite  
 To still continue Second in Command !

*Puc.* No, Sir, no second nor so fortunate !  
 Your tricks succeed with me too well for that !  
 I am as you have made me, and shall die  
 A mere trained fighting hack to serve your end ;  
 With words, you laugh at while they leave your mouth,  
 For my life's rules and ordinance of God !  
 I have to do my duty, keep my faith,  
 And earn my praise, and guard against my blame,  
 As I was trained. I shall accept your charge,  
 And fight against one better than myself,  
 And my own heart's conviction of his worth—  
 That, you may count on !—just as hitherto  
 I have gone on, persuaded I was wronged,  
 Slighted, and all the terms we learn by rote,—  
 All because Luria superseded me—  
 Because the better nature, fresh-inspired,  
 Mounted above me to its proper place !

What mattered all the kindly graciousness,  
 And cordial brother's bearing? This was clear—  
 I, once the captain, was subaltern now,  
 And so must keep complaining like a fool!  
 Go, take the curse of a lost man, I say!  
 You neither play your puppets to the end,  
 Nor treat the real man,—for his realness' sake  
 Thrust rudely in their place,—with such regard  
 As might console them for their altered rank.  
 Me, the mere steady soldier, you depose  
 For Luria, and here's all that he deserves!  
 Of what account, then, are my services?  
 One word for all: whatever Luria does  
 —If backed by his indignant troops he turns  
 In self-defence and Florence goes to ground,—  
 Or for a signal, everlasting shame,  
 He pardons you, and simply seeks his friends  
 And heads the Pisan and the Lucchese troops  
 —And if I, for you ingrates past belief,  
 Resolve to fight against a man called false,  
 Who, inasmuch as he is true, fights there—  
 Whichever way he wins, he wins for me,  
 For every soldier, for the common good!  
 Sir, chronicling the rest, omit not this!

*As they go, enter LURIA and HUSAIN.*

*Hus.* Saw'st thou?—For they are gone! The world  
 lies bare

Before thee, to be tasted, felt and seen  
 Like what it is, now Florence goes away!

Thou livest now, with men art man again!  
 Those Florentines were eyes to thee of old;  
 But Braccio, but Domizia, gone is each—  
 There lie beneath thee thine own multitudes—  
 Sawest thou?

*Lur.* I saw.

*Hus.* Then, hold thy course, my King  
 The years return. Let thy heart have its way!  
 Ah, they would play with thee as with all else?  
 Turn thee to use, and fashion thee anew,  
 Find out God's fault in thee as in the rest?  
 Oh, watch but, listen only to these men  
 Once at their occupation! Ere ye know,  
 The free great heaven is shut, their stifling pall  
 Drops till it frets the very tingling hair—  
 So weighs it on our head,—and, for the earth,  
 Our common earth is tethered up and down,  
 Over and across—here shalt thou move, they say!

*Lur.* Ay, Husain?

*Hus.* So have they spoiled all beside!  
 So stands a man girt round with Florentines,  
 Priests, graybeards, Braccios, women, boys and spies,  
 All in one tale, each singing the same song,  
 How thou must house, and live at bed and board,  
 Take pledge and give it, go their every way,  
 Breathe to their measure, make thy blood beat time  
 With theirs—or—all is nothing—thou art lost—  
 A savage . . . how shouldst thou perceive as they?  
 Feel glad to stand 'neath God's close naked hand!

Look up to it! Why, down they pull thy neck,  
 Lest it crush thee, who feel'st it and wouldst kiss,  
 Without their priests that needs must glove it first,  
 Lest peradventure it should wound thy lip!  
 Love Woman! Why, a very beast thou art!  
 Thou must . . .

*Lur.* Peace, Husain!

*Hus.* Ay, but, spoiling all  
 For all, else true, things substituting false,  
 That they should dare spoil, of all instincts, thine!  
 Should dare to take thee with thine instincts up,  
 Thy battle-ardours, like a ball of fire,  
 And class them and allow them place and play  
 So far, no further—unabashed the while!  
 Thou with the soul that never can take rest—  
 Thou born to do, undo, and do again,  
 But never to be still,—wouldst thou make war?  
 Oh, that is commendable, just and right!  
 Come over, say they, have the honour due  
 In living out thy nature! Fight thy best—  
 It is to be for Florence not thyself!  
 For thee, it were a horror and a plague—  
 For us, when war is made for Florence, see,  
 How all is changed—the fire that fed on earth  
 Now towers to heaven!—

*Lur.* And what sealed up so long  
 My Husain's mouth?

*Hus.* Oh, friend, oh, lord—for me,  
 What am I?—I was silent at thy side,

That am a part of thee—It is thy hand,  
 Thy foot that glows when in the heart fresh blood  
 Boils up, thou heart of me! Now live again!  
 Again love as thou likest, hate as free!  
 Turn to no Braccios nor Domizias now,  
 To ask, before thy very limbs dare move,  
 If Florence' welfare be concerned thereby!

*Lur.* So clear what Florence must expect of me?

*Hus.* Both armies against Florence! Take revenge  
 Wide, deep—to live upon, in feeling now,—  
 And after, in remembrance, year by year—  
 And, with the dear conviction, die at last!  
 She lies now at thy pleasure—pleasure have!  
 Their vaunted intellect that gilds our sense,  
 And blends with life, to show it better by,  
 —How think'st thou?—I have turned that light on them  
 They called our thirst of war a transient thing;  
 The battle-element must pass away  
 From life, they said, and leave a tranquil world  
 —Master, I took their light and turned it full  
 On that dull turgid vein they said would burst  
 And pass away; and as I looked on Life,  
 Still everywhere I tracked this, though it hid  
 And shifted, lay so silent as it thought,  
 Changed off the hue yet ever was the same.  
 Why, 'twas all fighting, all their nobler life!  
 All work was fighting, every harm—defeat,  
 And every joy obtained—*a victory!*  
 Be not their dupe!

—Their dupe? That hour is past!  
 Here stand'st thou in the glory and the calm!  
 All is determined! Silence for me now!

[HUSAIN goes

*Lur.* Have I heard all?

*Dom.* [*advancing from the background.*] No, Luria,  
 I am here!

Not from the motives these have urged on thee,  
 Ignoble, insufficient, incomplete,  
 And pregnant each with sure seeds of decay,  
 As failing of sustainment from thyself,  
 —Neither from low revenge, nor selfishness,  
 Nor savage lust of power, nor one, nor all,  
 Shalt thou abolish Florence! I proclaim  
 The angel in thee, and reject the spirits  
 Which ineffectual crowd about his strength,  
 And mingle with his work and claim a share!  
 —Inconsciously to the augustest end  
 Thou hast arisen: second not in rank  
 So much as time, to him who first ordained  
 That Florence, thou art to destroy, should be—  
 Yet him a star, too, guided, who broke first  
 The pride of lonely power, the life apart,  
 And made the eminences, each to each,  
 Lean o'er the level world and let it lie  
 Safe from the thunder henceforth 'neath their arms—  
 So the few famous men of old combined,  
 And let the multitude rise underneath,  
 And reach them, and unite—so Florence grew!



Braccio speaks well, it was well worth the price.  
 But when the sheltered Many grew in pride  
 And grudged the station of the glorious ones,  
 Who, greater than their kind, are truly great  
 Only in voluntary servitude—  
 'Time was for thee to rise, and thou art here.  
 Such plague possessed this Florence—who can tell  
 The mighty girth and greatness at the heart  
 Of those so noble pillars of the grove  
 She pulled down in her envy? Who as I,  
 The light weak parasite born but to twine  
 Round each of them, and, measuring them, so live?  
 My light love keeps the matchless circle safe,  
 My slender life proves what has passed away!  
 I lived when they departed; lived to cling  
 To thee, the mighty stranger; thou would'st rise  
 And burst the thralldom, and avenge, I knew.  
 I have done nothing; all was thy strong heart:  
 But a bird's weight can break the infant tree  
 Which after holds an aery in its arms,  
 And 'twas my care that nought should warp thy spire  
 From rising to the height; the roof is reached—  
 Break through and there is all the sky above!  
 Go on to Florence, Luria! 'Tis man's cause!  
 Fail thou, and thine own fall is least to dread!  
 Thou keepest Florence in her evil way,  
 Encouragest her sin so much the more—  
 And while the bloody past is justified,  
 Thou all the surelier dost work against

The men to come, the Lurias yet unborn,  
 Who, greater than thyself, are reached o'er thee  
 That giv'st the vantage-ground their foes require,  
 As o'er my prostrate House thyself was't reached!  
 Man calls thee—God shall judge thee: all is said,  
 The mission of my House fulfilled at last!  
 And the mere woman, speaking for herself,  
 Reserves speech; it is now no woman's time.

[DOMIZIA goes

*Lur.* So at the last must figure Luria, then!  
 Doing the various work of all his friends,  
 And answering every purpose save his own.  
 No doubt, 'tis well for them to wish; for him—  
 After the exploit what is left? Perchance  
 A little pride upon the swarthy brow,  
 At having brought successfully to bear  
 'Gainst Florence' self her own especial arms,—  
 Her craftiness, impelled by fiercer strength  
 From Moorish blood than feeds the northern wit—  
 But after!—once the easy vengeance willed,  
 Beautiful Florence at a word laid low  
 —(Not in her Domes and Towers and Palaces,  
 Not even in a dream, that outrage!)—low,  
 As shamed in her own eyes henceforth forever,  
 Low, for the rival cities round to see,  
 Conquered and pardoned by a hireling Moor!  
 —For him, who did the irreparable wrong,  
 What would be left, his life's illusion fled,—  
 What hope or trust in the forlorn wide world?

How strange that Florence should mistake me so!  
How grew this? What withdrew her faith from me?  
Some cause! These fretful-blooded children talk  
Against their mother,—they are wronged, they say—  
Notable wrongs a smile makes up again!  
So, taking fire at each supposed offence,  
They may speak rashly, suffer for rash speech—  
But what could it have been in a word or deed  
That injured me? Some one word spoken more  
Out of my heart, and all had changed perhaps!  
My fault, it must have been,—for what gain they?  
Why risk the danger? See, what I could do!  
And my fault, wherefore visit upon them,  
My Florentines? The generous revenge,  
I meditate! To stay here passively,  
Go at their summons, be as they dispose—  
Why, if my very soldiers keep their ranks,  
And if I pacify my chiefs, what then?  
I ruin Florence—teach her friends mistrust—  
Confirm her enemies in harsh belief—  
And when she finds one day, as she must find,  
The strange mistake, and how my heart was hers,  
Shall it console me, that my Florentines  
Walk with a sadder step, a graver face,  
Who took me with such frankness, praised me so,  
At the glad outset! Had they loved me less,  
They had less feared what seemed a change in me.  
And after all, who did the harm? Not they!  
How could they interpose with those old fools

In the council? Suffer for those old fools' sakes—  
 They, who made pictures of me, sang the songs  
 About my battles? Ah, we Moors get blind  
 Out of our proper world where we can see!  
 The sun that guides is closer to us! There—  
 There, my own orb! He sinks from out the sky!  
 Why, there! a whole day has he blessed the land,  
 My land, our Florence all about the hills,  
 The fields and gardens, vineyards, olive-grounds,  
 All have been blest—and yet we Florentines  
 With minds intent upon our battle here,  
 Found that he rose too soon, or else too late,  
 Gave us no vantage, or gave Pisa more—  
 And so we wronged him! Does he turn in ire  
 To burn the earth, that cannot understand?  
 Or drop out quietly, and leave the sky,  
 His task once ended? Night wipes blame away:  
 Another morning from my East shall rise  
 And find all eyes at leisure, more disposed  
 To watch it and approve its work, no doubt.  
 So, praise the new sun, the successor praise!  
 Praise the new Luria, and forget the old!

*[Taking a phial from his breast]*

—Strange! This is all I brought from my own Land  
 To help me—Europe would supply the rest,  
 All needs beside, all other helps save this!  
 I thought of adverse fortune, battles lost,  
 The natural upbraidings of the loser,  
 And then this quiet remedy to seek

At end of the disastrous day— [He drinks.

'Tis sought!

This was my happy triumph-morning: Florence  
Is saved: I drink this, and ere night,—die!—Strange!

## ACT V.

### NIGHT.

LURIA. PUCCIO.

*Lur.* I thought to do this, not to talk this: well!  
Such were my projects for the City's good,  
To save her from attack or by defence.  
Time, here as elsewhere, soon or late may take  
Our foresight by surprise with chance and change;  
But not a little we provide against  
—If you see clear on every point.

*Puc.* Most clear.

*Lur.* Then all is said—not much, if you count words  
Yet for an understanding ear enough,  
And all that my brief stay permits, beside.  
Nor must you blame me, as I sought to teach  
My elder in command, or threw a doubt  
Upon the very skill, it comforts me  
To know I leave,—your steady soldiership  
That never failed me: yet, because it seemed  
A stranger's eye might haply note defect,

Which skill, thro' use and custom, overlooks  
 I have gone into the old cares once more,  
 As if I had to come and save again  
 Florence—that May—that morning! 'Tis night now—  
 Well—I broke off with? . . .

*Puc.* Of the past campaign  
 You spoke—of measures to be kept in mind  
 For future use.

*Lur.* True, so . . . but, time—no time!  
 As well end here: remember this, and me!  
 Farewell now!

*Puc.* Dare I speak?

*Lur.* —The south o' the river—  
 How is the second stream called . . . no,—the third?

*Puc.* Pesa.

*Lur.* And a stone's cast from the fording place,  
 To the East,—the little mount's name?

*Puc.* Lupo.

*Lur.* Ay!

Ay—there the tower, and all that side is safe!  
 With San Romano, west of Evola,  
 San Miniato, Scala, Empoli,  
 Five towers in all,—forget not!

*Puc.* Fear not me!

*Lur.* —Nor to memorialize the Council now,  
 I' the easy hour, on those battalions' claim  
 On the other side, by Staggia on the hills,  
 That kept the Siennese at check!

*Puc.* One word—

Sir, I must speak ! That you submit yourself  
 To Florence' bidding, howsoe'er it prove,  
 And give up the command to me—is much,  
 Too much, perhaps : but what you tell me now,  
 Even will affect the other course you choose—  
 Poor as it may be, peril even that !  
 Refuge you seek at Pisa—yet these plans  
 All militate for Florence, all conclude  
 Your formidable work to make her queen  
 Of the country,—which her rivals rose against  
 When you began it,—which to interrupt,  
 Pisa would buy you off at any price !  
 You cannot mean to sue for Pisa's help,  
 With this made perfect and on record ?

*Lur.*

I—

At Pisa, and for refuge, do you say ?

*Puc.* Where are you going, then ? You must decide  
 On leaving us, a silent fugitive,  
 Alone at night—you, stealing thro' our lines,  
 Who were this morning's Luria,—you escape  
 To painfully begin the world once more,  
 With such a Past, as it had never been !  
 Where are you going ?

*Lur.*

Not so far, my Puccio,  
 But that I hope to hear, and know, and praise  
 (If you mind praise from your old captain yet)  
 Each happy blow you strike for Florence !

*Puc.*

—Ay,

But ere you gain your shelter, what may come ?

For see—tho' nothing's surely known as yet,  
 Still . . . truth must out . . . I apprehend the worst.  
 If mere suspicion stood for certainty  
 Before, there's nothing can arrest the steps  
 Of Florence toward your ruin, once on foot.  
 Forgive her fifty times, it matters not!  
 And having disbelieved your innocence,  
 How can she trust your magnanimity?  
 You may do harm to her—why then, you will!  
 And Florence is sagacious in pursuit.  
 Have you a friend to count on?

*Lur.* One sure friend.

*Puc.* Potent?

*Lur.* All potent.

*Puc.* And he is apprised?

*Lur.* He waits me.

*Puc.* So!—Then I, put in your place,  
 Making my profit of all done by you,  
 Calling your labours mine, reaping their fruit,  
 To these, the State's gift, now add this of yours—  
 That I may take to my peculiar store  
 All your instructions to do Florence good;  
 And if, by putting some few happily  
 In practice, I should both advantage her  
 And draw down honour on myself,—what then?

*Lur.* Do it, my Puccio! I shall know and praise!

*Puc.* Though, so, men say, "mark what we gain by  
 change

"—A Puccio for a Luria!"



*Lur.* Even so!

*Puc.* Then, not for fifty hundred Florences,

Would I accept one office save my own,  
 Fill any other than my rightful post  
 Here at your feet, my Captain and my Lord!  
 That such a cloud should break, such trouble be,  
 Ere a man settle soul and body down  
 Into his true place and take rest forever!  
 Here were my wise eyes fixed on your right hand,  
 And so the bad thoughts came and the worse words,  
 And all went wrong and painfully enough,—  
 No wonder,—till, the right spot stumbled on,  
 All the jar stops, and there is peace at once!  
 I am yours now,—a tool your right hand wields!  
 God's love, that I should live, the man I am,  
 On orders, warrants, patents and the like,  
 As if there were no glowing eye i' the world,  
 To glance straight inspiration to my brain,  
 No glorious heart to give mine twice the beats!  
 For, see—my doubt, where is it?—Fear? 'tis flown!  
 And Florence and her anger are a tale  
 To scare a child! Why, half a dozen words  
 Will tell her, spoken as I now can speak,  
 Her error, my past folly—and all's right,  
 And you are Luria, our great chief again!  
 Or at the worst—which worst were best of all—  
 To exile or to death I follow you!

*Lur.* Thanks, Puccio! Let me use the privilege  
 You grant me: if I still command you,—stay!

Remain here—my vicegerent, it shall be,  
 And not successor: let me, as of old,  
 Still serve the State, my spirit prompting yours;  
 Still triumph, one for both—There! Leave me now!  
 You cannot disobey my first command?  
 Remember what I spoke of Jacopo,  
 And what you promised to observe with him!  
 Send him to speak with me—nay, no farewell—  
 You shall be by me when the sentence comes.

[PUCCIO goes.]

So, there's one Florentine returns again!  
 Out of the genial morning company,  
 One face is left to take into the night.

*Enter JACOPO.*

*Jac.* I wait for your commands, Sir.

*Lur.*

What, so soon?

I thank your ready presence and fair word.  
 I used to notice you in early days  
 As of the other species, so to speak,  
 Those watchers of the lives of us who act—  
 That weigh our motives, scrutinize our thoughts;  
 So, I propound this to your faculty  
 As you would tell me, were a town to take  
 . . . That is, of old. I am departing hence  
 Under these imputations: that is nought—  
 I leave no friend on whom they may rebound,  
 Hardly a name behind me in the land,  
 Being a stranger; all the more behoves

That I regard how altered were the ease  
 With natives of the country, Florentines,  
 On whom the like mischance should fall; the roots  
 O' the tree survive the ruin of the trunk—  
 No root of mine will throb—you understand.  
 But I had predecessors, Florentines,  
 Accused as I am now, and punished so—  
 The Traversari—you know more than I  
 How stigmatized they are, and lost in shame.  
 Now, Puccio, who succeeds me in command,  
 Both served them and succeeded, in due time;  
 He knows the way, holds proper documents,  
 And has the power to lay the simple truth  
 Before an active spirit, as I know yours:  
 And also there's Tiburzio, my new friend,  
 Will, at a word, confirm such evidence,  
 He being the chivalric soul we know.  
 I put it to your instinct—were't not well,  
 —A grace, though but for contrast's sake, no more,—  
 If you who witness, and have borne a share  
 Involuntary, in my mischance,  
 Should, of your proper motion, set your skill  
 To indicate . . . that is, investigate  
 The reason or the wrong of what befell  
 Those famous citizens, your countrymen?  
 Nay—you shall promise nothing—but reflect,  
 And if your sense of justice prompt you—good!  
*Jac.* And if, the trial past, their fame stand clear  
 To all men's eyes, as yours; my lord, to mine—

Their ghosts may sleep in quiet satisfied !  
 For me, a straw thrown up into the air,  
 My testimony goes for a straw's worth.  
 I used to hold by the instructed brain,  
 And move with Braccio as the master-wind ;  
 The heart leads surelier : I must move with you—  
 As greatest now, who ever were the best.  
 So, let the last and humblest of your servants  
 Accept your charge, as Braccio's heretofore,  
 And offer homage, by obeying you !      [*JACOPO goes*  
*Lur.* Another !—Luria goes not poorly forth !  
 If we could wait ! The only fault's with Time :  
 All men become good creatures—but so slow !

*Enter DOMIZIA.*

*Lur.* Ah, you once more ?

*Dom.* Domizia, that you knew  
 Performed her task, and died with it—'Tis I !  
 Another woman, you have never known.  
 Let the Past sleep now.

*Lur.* I have done with it.

*Dom.* How inexhaustibly the spirit grows !  
 One object, she seemed erewhile born to reach  
 With her whole energies and die content,  
 So like a wall at the world's end it stood,  
 With nought beyond to live for,—is it reached ?  
 Already are new undreamed energies  
 Outgrowing under, and extending further  
 To a new object ;—there's another world !

See! I have told the purpose of my life,—  
 'Tis gained—you are decided, well or ill—  
 You march on Florence, or submit to her—  
 My work is done with you, your brow declares :  
 But—leave you? More of you seems yet to reach!  
 I stay for what I just begin to see.

*Lur.* So that you turn not to the Past!

*Dom.*

You trace

Nothing but ill in it—my selfish impulse,  
 Which sought its ends and disregarded yours?

*Lur.* Speak not against your nature : best, each keep  
 His own—you, yours—most, now, when I keep mine,  
 —At least, fall by it, having too weakly stood.  
 God's finger marks distinctions, all so fine,  
 We would confound—the Lesser has its use,  
 Which, when it apes the Greater, is foregone.  
 I, born a Moor, lived half a Florentine ;  
 But, punished properly, can die a Moor.  
 Beside, there is what makes me understand  
 Your nature . . . I have seen it—

*Dom.*

One like mine?

*Lur.* In my own East . . . if you would stoop and help  
 My barbarous illustration . . . it sounds ill—  
 Yet there's no wrong at bottom—rather, praise—

*Dom.* Well?

*Lur.* We have creatures there, which if you saw  
 The first time, you would doubtless marvel at,  
 For their surpassing beauty, craft and strength.  
 And tho' it were a lively moment's shock

Wherein you found the purpose of those tongues  
 That seemed innocuous in their lambent play,  
 Yet, once made know such grace required such guard,  
 Your reason soon would acquiesce, I think,  
 In the Wisdom which made all things for the best ;  
 So take them, good with ill, contentedly—  
 The prominent beauty with the secret sting.  
 I am glad to have seen you wondrous Florentines,  
 Yet . .

*Dom.* I am here to listen.

*Lur.*

My own East !

How nearer God we were ! He glows above  
 With scarce an intervention, presses close  
 And palpitatingly, His soul o'er ours !  
 We feel Him, nor by painful reason know !  
 The everlasting minute of creation  
 Is felt there ; *Now* it is, as it was *Then* ;  
 All changes at His instantaneous will,  
 Not by the operation of a law  
 Whose maker is elsewhere at other work !  
 His soul is still engaged upon his world—  
 Man's praise can forward it, Man's prayer suspend,  
 For is not God all-mighty ?—To recast  
 The world, erase old things and make them new,  
 What costs it Him ? So, man breathes nobly there !  
 And inasmuch as Feeling, the East's gift,  
 Is quick and transient—comes, and lo, is gone—  
 While Northern Thought is slow and durable,  
 Oh, what a mission was reserved for me,

Who, born with a perception of the power  
 And use of the North's thought for us of the East,  
 Should have stayed there and turned it to account,  
 Giving Thought's character and permanence  
 To the too-transitory Feelings there—  
 Writing God's messages in mortal words !  
 Instead of which, I leave my fated field  
 For this where such a task is needed least,  
 Where all are born consummate in the art  
 I just perceive a chance of making mine,—  
 And then, deserting thus my early post,  
 I wonder that the men I come among  
 Mistake me ! There, how all had understood,  
 Still brought fresh stuff for me to stamp and keep,  
 Fresh instinct to translate them into law !  
 Me, who . . .

*Dom.*       Who here the greater task achieve,  
 More needful even : who have brought fresh stuff  
 For us to mould, interpret and prove right,—  
 New feelings fresh from God, which, could we know  
 O' the instant, where had been our need of them ?  
 —Whose life re-teaches us what life should be,  
 What faith is, loyalty and simpleness,  
 All, their revelation taught us so long since  
 That, having mere tradition of the fact,  
 Truth copied falteringly from copies faint,  
 The early traits all dropped away,—we said  
 On sight of faith of yours, “so looks not faith  
 “We understand, described and taught before.”

But still, the truth was shown; and tho' at first  
 It suffer from our haste, yet trace by trace  
 Old memories reappear, the likeness grows,  
 Our slow Thought does its work, and all's re-known.  
 Oh, noble Luria! what you have decreed  
 I see not, but no animal revenge,  
 No brute-like punishment of bad by worse—  
 It cannot be, the gross and vulgar way  
 Traced for me by convention and mistake,  
 Has gained that calm approving eye and brow!  
 Spare Florence after all! Let Luria trust  
 To his own soul, and I will trust to him!

*Lur.* In time!

*Dom.* How, Luria?

*Lur.* It is midnight now—  
 And they arrive from Florence with my fate.

*Dom.* I hear no step . .

*Lur.* I feel it, as you say!

*Enter HUSAIN.*

*Hus.* The man returned from Florence!

*Lur.* As I knew

*Hus.* He seeks thee.

*Lur.* And I only wait for him.  
 Aught else?

*Hus.* A movement of the Lucchese troops  
 Southward—

*Lur.* . . . Toward Florence? I have out instantly .  
 Ah, old use clings! Puccio must care henceforth!  
 In—quick—'tis nearly midnight! Bid him come!



*Enter* TIBURZIO, BRACCIO, and PECCIO.

*Lur.* Tiburzio?—not at Pisa?

*Tib.*

I return

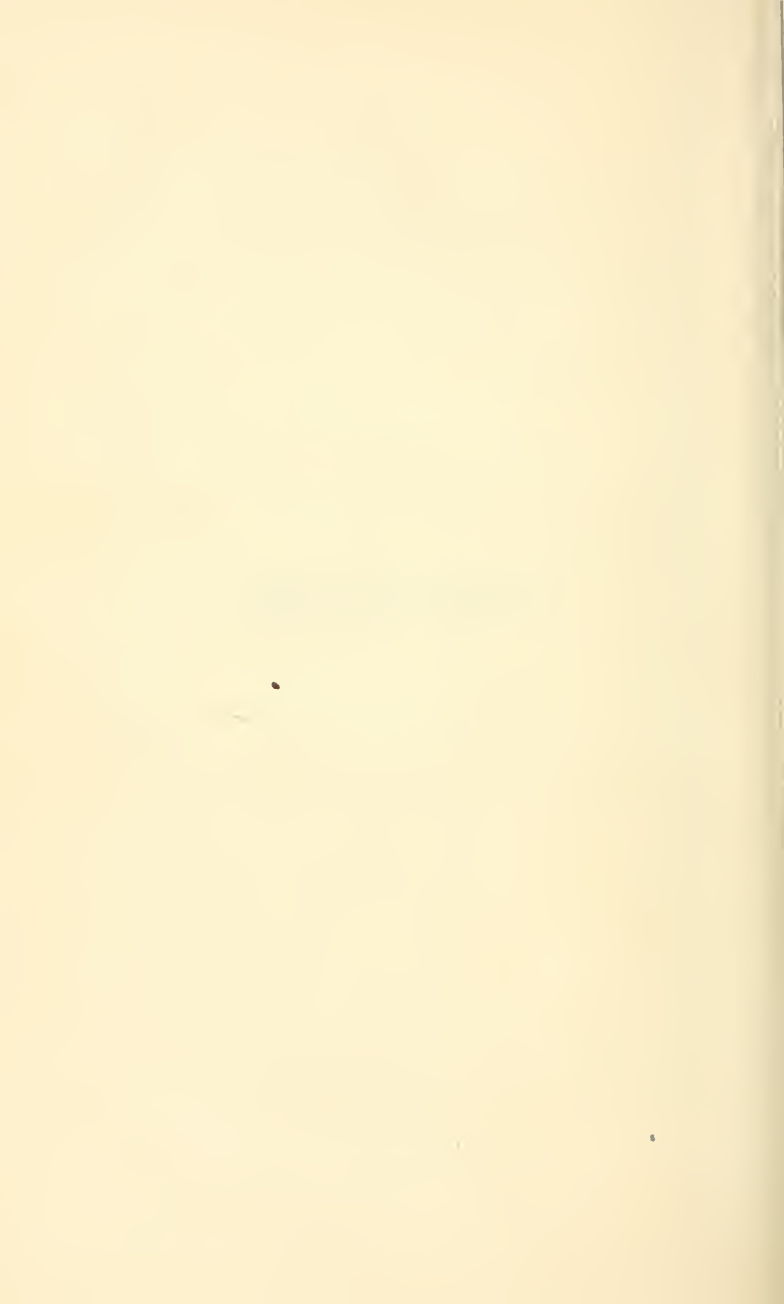
From Florence: I serve Pisa, and must think  
 By such procedure I have served her best.  
 A people is but the attempt of many  
 To rise to the completer life of one—  
 And those who live as models for the mass  
 Are singly of more value than they all.  
 Such man are you, and such a time is this  
 That your sole fate concerns a nation more  
 Than its apparent welfare; and to prove  
 Your rectitude, and duly crown the same,  
 Imports it far beyond the day's event,  
 Its battle's loss or gain—the mass remains,  
 Keep but the model safe, new men will rise  
 To study it, and other days to prove  
 How great a good was Luria's having lived.  
 I might go try my fortune as you bade,  
 And joining Lucca, helped by your disgrace,  
 Repair our harm—so were to-day's work done;  
 But where were Luria for our sons to see?  
 No, I look further. I have testified  
 (Declaring my submission to your arms)  
 Your full success to Florence, making clear  
 Your probity, as none else could: I spoke—  
 And it shone clearly!

*Lur.*

Ah—till Braccio spoke!

*Brac.* Till Braccio told in just a word the whole--  
 His old great error, and return to knowledge—  
 Which told . . . Nay, Luria, I should droop the head,  
 I, whom shame rests with, yet I dare look up,  
 Sure of your pardon now I sue for it,  
 Knowing you wholly—so let midnight end!  
 Sunrise will come next! Still you answer not?  
 The shadow of the night is past away:  
 Our circling faces here 'mid which it rose  
 Are all that felt it,—they close round you now  
 To witness its completest vanishing.  
 Speak, Luria! Here begins your true career—  
 Look up to it!—All now is possible—  
 The glory and the grandeur of each dream—  
 And every prophecy shall be fulfilled  
 Save one . . . (nay, now your word must come at last  
 —That you would punish Florence!  
*Hus.* (*pointing to LURIA'S dead body.*) That is done!—

A SOUL'S TRAGEDY.



## A SOUL'S TRAGEDY.

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PART FIRST, BEING WHAT WAS CALLED THE POETRY OF  
CHIAPPINO'S LIFE: AND PART SECOND, ITS PROSE.

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### PART I.

*Inside LUITOLFO'S house at Faenza. CHIAPPINO, EULALIA.*

*Eu.* What is it keeps Luitolfo? Night's fast falling,  
-And 'twas scarce sunset . . . had the Ave-bell  
Sounded before he sought the Provost's House?  
I think not: all he had to say would take  
Few minutes, such a very few, to say!  
How do you think, Chiappino? If our lord  
The Provost were less friendly to your friend  
Than everybody here professes him,  
I should begin to tremble—should not you?  
Why are you silent when so many times  
I turn and speak to you?

*Ch.* That's good!

*Eu.* You laugh!

*Ch.* Yes. I had fancied nothing that bears price  
In the whole world was left to call my own,  
And, may be, felt a little pride thereat:  
Up to a single man's or woman's love,

Down to the right in my own flesh and blood,  
 There's nothing mine, I fancied,—till you spoke!  
 —Counting, you see, as “nothing” the permission  
 To study this peculiar lot of mine  
 In silence: well, go silence with the rest  
 Of the world's good! What can I say, shall serve?

*Eu.* This,—lest you, even more than needs, imbitter  
 Our parting: say your wrongs have cast, for once,  
 A cloud across your spirit!

*Ch.* How a cloud?

*Eu.* No man nor woman loves you, did you say?

*Ch.* My God, were't not for thee!

*Eu.* Ay, God remains,  
 Even did Men forsake you.

*Ch.* Oh, not so!

Were't not for God, I mean, what hope of truth—  
 Speaking truth, hearing truth, would stay with Man?  
 I, now—the homeless, friendless, penniless,  
 Proscribed and exiled wretch who speak to you,  
 Ought to speak truth, yet could not, for my death,  
 (The thing that tempts me most) help speaking lies  
 About your friendship, and Luitolfo's courage,  
 And all our townfolk's equanimity,—  
 Through sheer incompetence to rid myself  
 Of the old miserable lying trick  
 Caught from the liars I have lived with,—God,  
 Did I not turn to thee! it is thy prompting  
 I dare to be ashamed of, and thy counsel  
 Would die along my coward lip, I know—

But I do turn to thee ! This craven tongue,  
 These features which refuse the soul its way,  
 Reclaim 'Thou ! Give me truth—truth, power to speak  
 —And after be sole present to approve  
 The spoken truth!—or, stay, that spoken truth,  
 Who knows but you, too, might approve ?

*Eu.*

Ah, well—

Keep silence, then, Chiappino !

*Ch.*

You would hear,

And shall now,—why the thing we're pleased to style  
 My gratitude to you and all your friends  
 For service done me, is just gratitude  
 So much as yours was service—and no more.  
 I was born here, so was Luitolfo,—both  
 At one time, much with the same circumstance  
 Of rank and wealth ; and both, up to this night  
 Of parting company, have side by side  
 Still fared, he in the sunshine—I, the shadow :  
 “ Why ? ” asks the world : “ Because,” replies the world  
 To its complacent self, “ these playfellows,  
 Who took at church the holy-water drop  
 One from the other's finger, and so forth,—  
 Were of two moods : Luitolfo was the proper  
 Friend-making, everywhere friend-finding soul,  
 Fit for the sunshine, so it followed him ;  
 A happy-tempered bringer of the best  
 Out of the worst ; who bears with what's past cure,  
 And puts so good a face on't—wisely passive  
 Where action's fruitless, while he remedies

In silence what the foolish rail against ;  
 A man to smooth such natures as parade  
 Of opposition must exasperate—  
 No general gauntlet-gatherer for the weak  
 Against the strong, yet over-scrupulous  
 At lucky junctures ; one who won't forego  
 The after-battle work of binding wounds,  
 Because, forsooth, he'd have to bring himself  
 To side with their inflictors for their leave ! ”  
 —Why do you gaze, nor help me to repeat  
 What comes so glibly from the common mouth,  
 About Luitolfo and his so-styled friend ?

*Eu.* Because, that friend's sense is obscured . . .

*Ch.*

I thought

You would be readier with the other half  
 Of the world's story,—my half !—Yet, 'tis true.  
 For all the world does say it ! Say your worst !  
 True, I thank God, I ever said “you sin,”  
 When a man did sin : if I could not say it,  
 I glared it at him,—if I could not glare it,  
 I prayed against him,—then my part seemed **over** ;  
 God's may begin yet—so it will, I trust !

*Eu.* If the world outraged you, did we ?

*Ch.*

What's “me”

That you use well or ill ? It's Man, in me,  
 All your successes are an outrage to,  
 You all, whom sunshine follows, as you say !  
 Here's our Faenza birthplace—they send here  
 A Provost from Ravenna—how he rules,



You can at times be eloquent about—  
 ‘Then, end his rule!’ ah yes, one stroke does that!  
 But patience under wrong works slow and sure:  
 Must violence still bring peace forth? He, beside,  
 Returns so blandly one’s obeisance—ah—  
 Some latent virtue may be lingering yet,  
 Some human sympathy which, once excite,  
 And all the lump were leavened quietly—  
 So, no more talk of striking, for this time!  
 But I, as one of those he rules, won’t bear  
 These pretty takings-up and layings down  
 Our cause, just as you think occasion suits!  
 Enough of earnest, is there? You’ll play, will you?  
 Diversify your tactics,—give submission,  
 Obsequiousness and flattery a turn,  
 While we die in our misery patient deaths?  
 We all are outraged then, and I the first!  
 I, for Mankind, resent each shrug and smirk,  
 Each beek and bend, each . . . all you do and are,  
 I hate!

*Eu.* We share a common censure, then!  
 ’Tis well you have not poor Luitolfo’s part  
 Or mine to point out in the wide offence.

*Ch.* Oh, shall I let you so escape me, Lady?  
 Come, on your own ground, Lady,—from yourself,  
 (Leaving the people’s wrong, which most is mine,)  
 What have I got to be so grateful for?  
 These three last fines, no doubt, one on the other  
 Paid by Luitolfo?

*Eu.* Shame, Chiappino!

*Ch.* Shame

Fall presently on who deserves it most!  
Which is to see. He paid my fines—my friend,  
Your prosperous smooth husband presently,  
Then, scarce your wooer,—now your lover: well—  
I loved you!

*Eu.* Hold!

*Ch.* You knew it, years ago;  
When my voice faltered and my eyes grew dim  
Because you gave me your silk mask to hold—  
My voice that greatens when there's need to curse  
The people's Provost to their heart's content,  
—My eyes, the Provost, who bears all men's eyes,  
Banishes now because he cannot bear!  
You knew . . . but you do your parts—my part, I!  
So be it! you flourish—I decay! All's well!

*Eu.* I hear this for the first time!

*Ch.* The fault's there  
Then, my days spoke not, and my nights of fire  
Were voiceless? Then, the very heart may burst  
Yet all prove nought, because no mincing speech  
Tells leisurely that thus it is and thus?  
Eulalia—truce with toying for this once—  
A banished fool, who troubles you to-night  
For the last time—Oh, what's to fear from me?  
You knew I loved you!

*Eu.* Not so, on my faith!  
You were my now-affianced lover's friend—

Came in, went out with him, could speak as he ;  
 All praise your ready parts and pregnant wit ;  
 See how your words come from you in a crowd !  
 Luitolfo's first to place you o'er himself  
 In all that challenges respect and love—  
 Yet you were silent then, who blame me now !  
 I say all this by fascination, sure--  
 I am all but wed to one I love, yet listen—  
 It must be, you are wronged, and that the wrongs  
 Luitolfo pities . . .

*Ch.* —You too pity? Do!

But hear first what my wrongs are ; so began  
 This talk and so shall end this talk. I say,  
 Was't not enough that I must strive, I saw,  
 To grow so far familiar with your charms  
 As to contrive some way to win them—which  
 To do, an age seemed far too little—for, see !  
 We all aspire to Heaven—and there is Heaven  
 Above us—go there ! Dare we go? no, surely !  
 How dare we go without a reverent pause,  
 A growing less unfit for Heaven?—Even so,  
 I dared not speak—the greater fool, it seems !  
 Was't not enough to struggle with such folly,  
 But I must have, beside, the very man  
 Whose slight, free, loose and incapacious soul  
 Gave his tongue scope to say whate'er he would  
 —Must have him load me with his benefits  
 For fortune's fiercest stroke !

*Eu.*

Justice to him

That's now entreating, at his risk perhaps,  
Justice for you! Did he once call those acts  
Of simple friendship—bounties, benefits?

*Ch.* No—the straight course had been to call them  
so—

Then, I had flung them back, and kept myself  
Unhampered, free as he to win the prize  
We both sought—but “the gold was dross,” he said,  
“He loved me, and I loved him not—to spurn  
‘A trifle out of superfluity :  
“He had forgotten he had done as much !”  
so had not I!—Henceforth, try as I could  
To take him at his word, there stood by you  
My benefactor—who might speak and laugh  
And urge his nothings—even banter me  
Before you—but my tongue was tied. A dream!  
Let's wake: your husband . . . how you shake at that!  
Good—my revenge!

*Eu.* Why should I shake? What forced  
Or forces me to be Luitoifo's bride?

*Ch.* There's my revenge, that nothing forces you!  
No gratitude, no liking of the eye,  
Nor longing of the heart, but the poor bond  
Of habit—here so many times he came,  
So much he spoke,—all these compose the tie  
That pulls you from me! Well, he paid my fines,  
Nor missed a cloak from wardrobe, dish from table—  
—He spoke a good word to the Provost here—  
Held me up when my fortunes fell away

—It had not looked so well to let me drop—  
Men take pains to preserve a tree-stump, even,  
Whose boughs they played beneath—much more a friend  
But one grows tired of seeing, after the first,  
Pains spent upon impracticable stuff  
Like me: I could not change—you know the rest.  
I've spoke my mind too fully out, for once,  
This morning to our Provost; so ere night  
I leave the city on pain of death—and now  
On my account there's gallant intercession  
Goes forward—that's so graceful!—and anon  
He'll noisily come back: the intercession  
Was made and fails—all's over for us both—  
'Tis vain contending—I had better go:  
And I do go—and so to you he turns  
Light of a load, and ease of that permits  
His visage to repair its natural bland  
Economy, sore broken late to suit  
My discontent: so, all are pleased—you, with him,  
He with himself, and all of you with me  
—Who, say the citizens, had done far better  
In letting people sleep upon their woes,  
If not possessed with talent to relieve them  
When once they woke;—but then I had, they'll say  
Doubtless some unknown compensating pride  
In what I did—and as I seem content  
With ruining myself, why so should they be,  
And so they are, and so be with his prize  
The dev'l, when he gets them speedily!

Why does not your Luitolfo come? I long  
To don this cloak and take the Lugo path.

It seems you never loved me, then?

*Eu.* Chiappino!

*Ch.* Never?

*Eu.* Never.

*Ch.* That's sad—say what I might,  
There was no helping being sure this while  
You loved me—love like mine must have return,  
I thought—no river starts but to some sea!  
And had you loved me, I could soon devise  
Some specious reason why you stifled love,  
Some fancied self-denial on your part,  
Which made you choose Luitolfo; so, excepting  
From the wide condemnation of all here,  
One woman! Well, the other dream may break!  
If I knew any heart, as mine loved you,  
Loved me, tho' in the vilest breast 'twere lodged,  
I should, I think, be forced to love again—  
Else there's no right nor reason in the world!

*Eu.* "If you knew," say you,—but I did not know—  
That's where you're blind, Chiappino!—a disease  
Which if I may remove, I'll not repent  
The listening to: you cannot, will not, see  
How, place you but in every circumstance  
Of us, you are just now indignant at,  
You'd be as we.

*Ch.* I should be? . . . that, again!  
I, to my Friend, my Country and my Love,  
Be as Luitolfo and these Faentines?

*Eu.* As we.

*Ch.* Now, I'll say something to remember!

I trust in Nature for the stable laws  
 Of Beauty and Utility—Spring shall plant,  
 And Autumn garner to the end of time :  
 I trust in God—the Right shall be the Right  
 And other than the Wrong, while He endures—  
 I trust in my own soul, that can perceive  
 The outward and the inward, nature's good  
 And God's—So—seeing these men and myself,  
 Having a right to speak, thus do I speak :  
 I'll not curse . . . God bears with them—well may I—  
 But I—protest against their claiming me !  
 I simply say, if that's allowable,  
 I would not . . . broadly . . . do as they have done—  
 —God curse this townful of born slaves, bred slaves,  
 Branded into the blood and bone, slaves ! Curse  
 Whoever loved, above his liberty,  
 House, land or life ! and . . . [A knocking without  
 . . . Bless my hero-friend,  
 Luitolfo !

*Eu.* How he knocks

*Ch.* The peril, Lady !

“ Chiappino, I have run a risk ! My God !

“ How when I prayed the Provost—(he's my friend)—

“ To grant you a week's respite of his sentence

“ That confiscates your goods, and exiles you,

“ He shrugged his shoulder . I say, shrugged it ! Yes

“ And fright of that drove all else from my head.

"Here's a good purse of *scudi*—off with you!

"Lest of that shrug come—what God only knows!

"The *scudi*—friend, they're trash—no thanks, I beg—

"Take the North gate,—for San Vitale's suburb

"Whose double taxes you appealed against,

"In discomposure at your ill-success

"Is apt to stone you: there, there—only go!

"Beside, Eulalia here looks sleepily—

"Shake . . . oh, you hurt me, so you squeeze my wrist!"

—Is it not thus you'll speak, adventurous friend?

[As he opens the door, LUITOLFO rushes in, his garments  
disordered.]

*Eu.* Luitolfo! Blood?

*Luit.* There's more—and more of it!

Eulalia—take the garment . . . no . . . you, friend!

You take it and the blood from me—you dare!

*Eu.* Oh, who has hurt you? where's the wound?

*Ch.* "Who," say you?

The man with many a touch of virtue yet!

The Provost's friend has proved too frank of speech

And this comes of it. Miserable hound!

This comes of temporizing, as I said!

Here's fruit of your smooth speeches and fair looks!

Now see my way! As God lives, I go straight

To the palace and do justice, once for all!

*Luit.* What says he?

*Ch.* I'll do justice on him!

*Luit.*

*Him*

*Ch.* The Provost.



*Luit.* I've just killed him !

*Eu.* Oh, my God !

*Luit.* My friend, they're on my trace—they'll have me—now !

They're round him, busy with him : soon they'll find

He's past their help, and then they'll be on me !

Chiappino ! save Eulalia . . I forget . . .

Were you not bound . . for . . .

*Ch.* Lugo !

*Luit.* Ah—yes—yes—

That was the point I prayed of him to change.

Well—go—be happy . . is Eulalia safe ?

They're on me !

*Ch.* 'Tis through me they reach you, then !

Friend, seem the man you are ! Lock arms—that's right.

Now tell me what you've done ; explain how you

That still professed forbearance, still preached peace,

Could bring yourself . . .

*Luit.* What was peace for, Chiappino ?

I tried peace—did that say that when peace failed

Strife should not follow ? All my peaceful days

Were just the prelude to a day like this.

I cried " You call me ' friend '—save my true friend !

" Save him, or lose me ! "

*Ch.* But you never said

You meant to tell the Provost thus and thus !

*Luit.* Why should I say it ? What else did I mean ?

*Ch.* Well ? He persisted ?

*Luit.* . . Would so order it

You should not trouble him too soon again—  
 I saw a meaning in his eye and lip—  
 I poured my heart's store of indignant words  
 Out on him—then—I know not.—He retorted—  
 And I . . . some staff lay there to hand—I think  
 He bade his servants thrust me out—I struck—  
 . Ah, they come! Fly you, save yourselves, you two  
 The dead back-weight of the beheading axe!  
 The glowing trip-hook, thumbscrews and the gadge!

*Eu.* They do come! Torches in the Place! Farewell—  
 Chiappino! You can work no good to us—  
 Much to yourself; believe not, all the world  
 Must needs be cursed henceforth!

*Ch.* And you?

*Eu.* I stay.

*Ch.* Ha, ha! Now, listen! I am master here!  
 This was my coarse disguise—this paper shows  
 My path of flight and place of refuge—see—  
 Lugo—Argenta—past San Nicolo—  
 Ferrara, then to Venice and all's safe!  
 Put on the cloak! His people have to fetch  
 A compass round about.—There's time enough  
 Ere they can reach us—so you straightway make  
 For Lugo . . . Nay, he hears not! On with it—  
 The cloak, Luitolò, do you hear me? See—  
 He obeys he knows not how.—Then, if I must . . .  
 Answer me! Do you know the Lugo gate?

*Eu.* The northwest gate, over the bridge!

*Luit.*

I know.

*Ch.* Well, there—you are not frightened? All my route  
Is traced in that—at Venice you'll escape  
Their power! Eulalia—I am master here!

[*Shouts from without. He pushes out LUITOLFO, who  
complies mechanically.*

In time! nay, help me with him—So!—he's gone.

*Eu.* What have you done? On you, perchance, all know  
The Provost's hated, will men's vengeance fall  
As our accomplice . . .

*Ch.* Mere accomplice? See!

[*Putting on LUITOLFO'S vest.*

Now, Lady, am I true to my profession,  
Or one of these?

*Eu.* You take Luitolfo's place?

*Ch.* Die for him!

*Eu.* Well done! — [*Shouts increase.*

*Ch.* How the people tarry.

I can't be silent . . . I must speak . . . or sing—  
How natural to sing now!

*Eu.* Hush and pray!

We are to die—but even I perceive  
'Tis not a very hard thing so to die—  
My cousin of the pale-blue tearful eyes,  
Poor Cesca, suffers more from one day's life  
With the stern husband; Tisbe's heart goes forth  
Each evening after that wild son of hers,  
To track his thoughtless footstep thro' the streets—  
How easy for them both to die like this!  
I am not sure that I could live as they.

*Ch.* Here they come, crowds! They pass the gate?  
Yes!—No!—

One torch is in the court-yard. Here flock all!

*Eu.* At least Luitolfo has escaped!—What cries!

*Ch.* If they would drag one to the market-place,  
One might speak there!

*Eu.* List, list!

*Ch.* They mount the steps

*Enter the Populace.*

*Ch.* I killed the Provost!

[*The Populace, speaking together.*] 'Twas Chiappino,  
friends!

Our saviour.—The best man at last as first!

He who first made us see what chains we wore,

He also strikes the blow that shatters them,

He at last saves us—our best citizen!

—Oh, have you only courage to speak now?

My eldest son was christened a year since

“Cino” to keep Chiappino’s name in mind—

Cino, for shortness merely, you observe!

The City’s in our hands.—The guards are fled—

Do you, the cause of all, come down—come down—

Come forth to counsel us, our chief, our king,

Whate’er rewards you! Choose your own reward.

The peril over, its reward begins!

Come and harangue us in the market-place!

*Eu.* Chiappino!

*Ch.* Yes . . . I understand your eyes!

You think I should have promptlier disowned

This deed with its strange unforeseen success  
 In favour of Luitolfo—but the peril,  
 So far from ended, hardly seems begun !  
 To-morrow, rather, when a calm succeeds,  
 We easily shall make him full amends :  
 And meantime . . if we save them as they pray,  
 And justify the deed by its effects ?

*Eu.* You would, for worlds, you had denied at once !

*Ch.* I know my own intention, be assured !

All's well ! Precede us, fellow-citizens !

## PART II.

*The Market-place. LUITOLFO in disguise mingling with the Populace assembled opposite the Provost's Palace.*

*1st Bystander (To LUIT.)* You, a friend of Luitolfo's !  
 Then, your friend is vanished,—in all probability killed  
 on the night that his patron the tyrannical Provost was  
 loyally suppressed here, exactly a month ago, by our  
 illustrious fellow-citizen, thrice-noble saviour, and new  
 Provost that is like to be, this very morning,—Chiappino !

*Luit.* He the new Provost ?

*2d.* Up those steps will he go, and beneath yonder  
 pillar stand, while Ogniben, the Pope's Legate from  
 Ravenna, reads the new dignitary's title to the people,  
 according to established usage.—For which reason, there  
 is the assemblage you inquire about.

*Luit.* Chiappino—the old Provost's successor ? Impos-

sible! But tell me of that presently—What I would know first of all is, wherefore Luitolfo must so necessarily have been killed on that memorable night?

3*d.* You were Luitolfo's friend? So was I—Never if you will credit me, did there exist so poor-spirited a milk-sop! He, with all the opportunities in the world, furnished by daily converse with our oppressor, would not stir a finger to help us: so when Chiappino rose in solitary majesty and . . . . how does one go on saying? . . . dealt the godlike blow,—this Luitolfo, not unreasonably fearing the indignation of an aroused and liberated people, fled precipitately: he may have got trodden to death in the press at the southeast gate, when the Provost's guards fled thro' it to Ravenna, with their wounded master,—if he did not rather hang himself under some hedge.

*Luit.* Or why not simply have lain perdue in some quiet corner,—such as San Cassiano, where his estate was,—receiving daily intelligence from some sure friend, meanwhile, as to the turn matters were taking here . . . how, for instance, the Provost was not dead after all, only wounded . . . or, as to-day's news would seem to prove, how Chiappino was not Brutus the Elder, after all, only the new Provost . . . and thus Luitolfo be enabled to watch a favourable opportunity for returning—might it not have been so?

3*d.* Why, he may have taken that care of himself, certainly, for he came of a cautious stock.—I'll tell you how his uncle, just such another gingerly treacher or

tiptoes with finger on lip,—how he met his death in the great plague-year: *dico vobis!* Hearing that the seventeenth house in a certain street was affected, he calculates to pass it in safety by taking plentiful breath, say, when he shall arrive at the eleventh house; then scouring by, holding that breath, till he be got so far on the other side as number twenty-three, and thus elude the danger.—And so did he begin—but, as he arrived at thirteen, we will say,—thinking to improve on his precaution by putting up a little prayer to St. Nepomucene of Prague, this exhausted so much of his lungs' reserve, that at sixteen it was clean spent.—consequently at the fatal seventeen he inhaled with a vigour and persistence enough to suck you any latent venom out of the heart of a stone—Ha, ha!

*Luit.* [*Aside.*] (If I had not lent that man the money he wanted last spring, I should fear this bitterness was attributable to me.) Luitolfo is dead then, one may conclude!

*3d.* Why, he had a house here, and a woman to whom he was affianced; and as they both pass naturally to the new Provost, his friend and heir . . .

*Luit.* Ah, I suspected you of imposing on me with your pleasantry—I know Chiappino better!

*1st.* (Our friend has the bile! after all, I do not dislike finding somebody vary a little this general gape of admiration at Chiappino's glorious qualities—.) Pray, how much may you know of what has taken place in Faenza since that memorable night?

*Luit.* It is most to the purpose, that I know Chiappino to have been by profession a hater of that very office of Provost, you now charge him with proposing to accept.

*1st.* Sir, I'll tell you. That night was indeed memorable—up we rose, a mass of us, men, women, children—out fled the guards with the body of the tyrant—we were to defy the world: but, next gray morning, “What will Rome say,” began everybody—(you know we are governed by Ravenna, which is governed by Rome.) And quietly into the town by the Ravenna road, comes on mule-back a portly personage, Ogniben by name, with the quality of Pontifical Legate—trots briskly thro' the streets humming a “*Cur fremuère gentes,*” and makes directly for the Provost's Palace—there it faces you—“One Messer Chiappino is your leader? I have known three-and-twenty leaders of revolts!” (laughing gently to himself)—“Give me the help of your arm from my mule to yonder steps under the pillar—so! And now, my revolters and good friends, what do you want? The guards burst into Ravenna last night bearing your weanded Provost—and, having had a little talk with him, I take on myself to come and try appease the disorderliness, before Rome, hearing of it, resort to another method; 'tis I come, and not another, from a certain love I confess to, of composing differences. So, do you understand, you are about to experience this unheard-of tyranny from me, that there shall be no heading nor hanging, no confiscation nor exile,—I insist



on your simply pleasing yourselves,—and now, pray, what does please you? To live without any government at all? Or having decided for one, to see its minister murdered by the first of your body that chooses to find himself wronged, or disposed for reverting to first principles and a Justice anterior to all institutions—and so will you carry matters, that the rest of the world must at length unite and put down such a den of wild beasts? As for vengeance on what has just taken place,—once for all, the wounded man assures me he cannot conjecture who struck him—and this so earnestly, that one may be sure he knows perfectly well what intimate acquaintance could find admission to speak with him so late that evening—I come not for vengeance therefore, but from pure curiosity to hear what you will do next.”—And thus he ran on, easily and volubly, till he seemed to arrive quite naturally at the praise of Law, Order, and Paternal Government by somebody from rather a distance: all our citizens were in the snare, and about to be friends with so congenial an adviser; but that Chiappino suddenly stood forth, spoke out indignantly, and set things right again . . .

*Luit.* Do you see?—I recognize him there!

*3d.* Ay, but mark you, at the end of Chiappino's longest period in praise of a pure Republic. “And by whom do I desire such a government should be administered, perhaps, but by one like yourself?”—returns the Legate—thereupon speaking, for a quarter of an hour together, on the natural and only legitimate

government by the Best and Wisest—and it should seem there was soon discovered to be no such vast discrepancy at bottom between this and Chiappino's theory, place but each in its proper light—"Oh, are you there?" quoth Chiappino :—"In that, I agree," returns Chiappino, and so on.

*Luit.* But did Chiappino cede at once to this?

*Ist.* Why, not altogether at once—for instance, he said that the difference between him and all his fellows was, that they seemed all wishing to be kings in one or another way,—whereas what right, asked he, has any man to wish to be superior to another?—whereat, "Ah Sir," answers the Legate, "this is the death of me, so often as I expect something is really going to be revealed to us by you clearer-seers, deeper-thinkers—this—that your right-hand (to speak by a figure) should be found taking up the weapon it displayed so ostentatiously, not to destroy any dragon in our path, as was prophesied, but simply to cut off its own fellow left-hand—yourself set about attacking yourself—for see now! Here are you who, I make sure, glory exceedingly in knowing the noble nature of the soul, its divine impulses, and so forth; and with such a knowledge you stand, as it were, armed to encounter the natural doubts and fears as to what same inherent nobility, that are apt to waylay us, the weaker ones, in the road of Life,—and when we look eagerly to see them fall before you, lo, round you wheel, only the left hand gets the blow; one proof of the soul's nobility destroys simply another proof, quite

as good, of the same,—you are found delivering an opinion like this! Why, what is this perpetual yearning to exceed, to subdue, to be better than, and a king over, one's fellows,—all that you so disclaim,—but the very tendency yourself are most proud of, and under another form, would oppose to it,—only in a lower stage of manifestation? You don't want to be vulgarly superiour to your fellows after their poor fashion—to have me hold solemnly up your gown's tail, or hand you an express of the last importance from the Pope, with all these bystanders noticing how unconcerned you look the while—but neither does our gaping friend, the burghess yonder, want the other kind of kingship, that consists in understanding better than his fellows this and similar points of human nature, nor to roll under the tongue this sweeter morsel still, the feeling that, thro' immense philosophy, he does *not* feel, he rather thinks, above you and me!"—And so chatting, they glided off arm in arm.

*Luit.* And the result is . .

*Ist.* Why, that a month having gone by, the indomitable Chiappino, marrying as he will Luitolfo's love—at all events succeeding to Luitolfo's goods,—becomes the first inhabitant of Faenza, and a proper aspirant to the Provostship—which we assemble here to see conferred on him this morning. The Legate's Guard to clear the way! He will follow presently!

*Luit.* (*withdrawing a little.*) I understand the drift of Eulalia's communications less than ever—yet she surely

said, in so many words, that Chiappino was in urgent danger,—wherefore, disregarding her injunctions to continue in my retreat and wait the result of, what she called some experiment yet in process—I hastened here without her leave or knowledge—what could I else?—Yet if what they say be true . . . if it were for such a purpose, she and Chiappino kept me away . . . Oh, no, no! I must confront him and her before I believe this of them—and at the word, see!

*Enter CHIAPPINO and EULALIA.*

*Eu.* We part here, then? The change in your principles would seem to be complete!

*Ch.* Now, why refuse to see that in my present course I change no principles, only re-adapt them and more adroitly? I had despaired of what you may call the material instrumentality of Life; of ever being able to rightly operate on mankind thro' such a deranged machinery as the existing modes of government—but now, if I suddenly discover how to inform these perverted institutions with fresh purpose, bring the functionary limbs once more into immediate communication with, and subjection to the soul I am about to bestow on them . . . do you see? Why should one desire to invent, so long as it remains possible to renew and transform? When all further hope of the old organization shall be extinct, then, I grant you, it will be time to try and create another.

*Eu.* And there being discoverable some hope yet in

the hitherto much-abused old system of absolute government by a Provost here, you mean to take your time about endeavouring to realize those visions of a perfect State, we once heard of?

*Ch.* Say, I would fain realize my conception of a Palace, for instance, and that there is, abstractedly, but a single way of erecting one perfectly; here, in the market-place, is my allotted building-ground; here I stand without a stone to lay, or a labourer to help me,—stand, too, during a short day of life, close on which the night comes. On the other hand, circumstances suddenly offer me . . . turn and see it . . . the old Provost's House to experiment upon—ruinous, if you please, wrongly constructed at the beginning, and ready to tumble now—but materials abound, a crowd of workmen offer their services; here, exists yet a Hall of Audience of originally noble proportions, there, a Guest-chamber of symmetrical design enough; and I may restore, enlarge, abolish or unite these to heart's content—ought I not rather make the best of such an opportunity, than continue to gaze disconsolately with folded arms on the flat pavement here, while the sun goes slowly down, never to rise again? But you cannot understand this nor me: it is better we should part as you desire.

*Em.* So the love breaks away too!

*Ch.* No, rather my soul's capacity for love widens—needs more than one object to content it,—and, being better instructed, will not persist in seeing all the component parts of love in what is only a single part,—nor

in finding the so many and so various loves, united in the love of a woman,—finding all uses in one instrument, as the savage has his sword, sceptre, and idol, all in one club-stick. Love is a very compound thing. I shall give the intellectual part of my love to Men, the mighty dead, or illustrious living; and determine to call a mere sensual instinct by as few fine names as possible. What do I lose?

*Eu.* Nay, I only think, what do I lose! and, one more word—which shall complete my instruction—does Friendship go too?—What of Luitolfo—the author of your present prosperity?

*Ch.* How the author?—

*Eu.* That blow now called yours . . .

*Ch.* Struck without principle or purpose, as by a blind natural operation—and to which all my thoughts and life directly and advisedly tended. I would have struck it, and could not. He would have done his utmost to avoid striking it, yet did so. I dispute his right to that deed of mine—a final action with him, from the first effect of which he fled away—a mere first step with me, on which I base a whole mighty superstructure of good to follow. Could he get good from it?

*Eu.* So we profess, so we perform!

*Enter OGNIBEN. EULALIA stands apart.*

*Ogni.* I have seen three-and-twenty leaders of revolts!—By your leave, Sir! Perform? What does the lady say of Performing?

*M.* Only the trite saying, that we must not trust Profession, only Performance.

*Ogni.* She'll not say that, Sir, when she knows you longer ; you'll instruct her better. Ever judge of men by their professions ! For tho' the bright moment of promising is but a moment and cannot be prolonged, yet, if sincere in its moment's extravagant goodness, why, trust it and know the man by it, I say—not by his performance—which is half the world's work, interfere as the world needs must with its accidents and circumstances,—the profession was purely the man's own ! I judge people by what they might be,—not are, nor will be.

*Ch.* But have there not been found, too, performing natures, not merely promising ?

*Ogni.* Plenty : Little Bindo of our town, for instance, promised his friend, great ugly Masaccio, once, “ I will repay you ! ”—for a favour done him : so when his father came to die, and Bindo succeeded to the inheritance, he sends straightway for Masaccio and shares all with him ; gives him half the land, half the money, half the kegs of wine in the cellar. “ Good,” say you—and it is good : but had little Bindo found himself possessor of all this wealth some five years before—on the happy night when Masaccio procured him that interview in the garden with his pretty cousin Lisa—instead of being the beggar he then was,—I am bound to believe that in the warm moment of promise he would have given away all the wine-kegs, and all the money, and

all the land, and only reserved to himself some hut on a hill-top hard by, whence he might spend his life in looking and seeing his friend enjoy himself: he meant fully that much, but the world interfered!—To our business—did I understand you just now within doors? You are not going to marry your old friend's love after all?

*Ch.* I must have a woman that can sympathize with, and appreciate me, I told you.

*Ogni.* Oh, I remember! you the greater nature, needs must have a lesser one (—avowedly lesser—contest with you on that score would never do!)—such a nature must comprehend you; as the phrase is, accompany and testify of your greatness from point to point onward: why, that were being not merely as great as yourself, but greater considerably! Meantime, might not the more bounded nature as reasonably count on your appreciation of it, rather?—on your keeping close by it, so far as you both go together, and then going on by yourself as far as you please? So God serves us!

*Ch.* And yet a woman that could understand the whole of me, to whom I could reveal alike the strength and the weakness—

*Ogni.* Ah, my friend, wish for nothing so foolish! Worship your love, give her the best of you to see; be to her like the Western lands (they bring us such strange news of) to the Spanish Court—send her only your lumps of gold, fans of feathers, your spirit-like birds and fruits and gems—so shall you, what is unseen of



you, be supposed altogether a Paradise by her,—as these Western lands by Spain—tho' I warrant there is filth, red baboons, ugly reptiles, and squalor enough, which they bring Spain as few samples of as possible. Do you want your mistress to respect your body generally? Offer her your mouth to kiss—don't strip off your boot and put your foot to her lips! You understand my humour by this time? I help men to carry out their own principle: if they please to say two and two make five, I assent, if they will but go on and say, four and four make ten!

*Ch.* But these are my private affairs—what I desire you to occupy yourself about, is my public appearance presently: for when the people hear that I am appointed Provost, tho' you and I may thoroughly discern—and easily, too—the right principle at bottom of such a movement, and how my republicanism remains thoroughly unaltered, only takes a form of expression hitherto commonly judged . . . and heretofore by myself . . . incompatible with its existence . . . when thus I reconcile myself to an old form of government instead of proposing a new one . . .

*Ogni.* Why, you must deal with people broadly. Begin at a distance from this matter and say,—new truths, old truths! why, there is nothing new possible to be revealed to us in the moral world—we know all we shall ever know, and it is for simply reminding us, by their various respective expedients, how we *do* know this and the other matter, that men get called prophes-

poets, and the like. A philosopher's life is spent in discovering that, of the half-dozen truths he knew when a child, such an one is a lie, as the world states it in set terms; and then, after a weary lapse of years, and plenty of hard thinking, it becomes a truth again after all, as he happens to newly consider it and view it in a different relation with the others—and so he restates it, to the confusion of somebody else in good time.—As for adding to the original stock of truths,—impossible!—So you see the expression of them is the grand business:—you have got a truth in your head about the right way of governing people, and you took a mode of expressing it—which now you confess to be imperfect—but what then? There is Truth in Falsehood, Falsehood in Truth.—No man ever told one great truth, that I know, without the help of a good dozen of lies at least, generally unconscious ones: and as when a child comes in breathlessly and relates a strange story, you try to conjecture from the very falsities in it, what the reality was,—do not conclude that he saw nothing in the sky, because he assuredly did not see a flying horse there as he says,—so, thro' the contradictory expression, do you see, men should look painfully for, and trust to arrive eventually at, what you call the true principle at bottom. Ah, what an answer is there! to what will it not prove applicable!—“Contradictions?”—Of course there were, say you!

*Ch.* Still, the world at large may call it inconsistency, and what shall I say in reply?

*Ogni.* Why look you, when they tax you with tergiver

sation or duplicity, you may answer—you begin to perceive that, when all's done and said, both great parties in the state, the advocates of change in the present system of things, and the opponents of it, patriot and anti-patriot, are found working together for the common good, and that in the midst of their efforts for and against its progress, the world somehow or other still advances—to which result they contribute in equal proportions, those who spent their life in pushing it onward as those who gave theirs to the business of pulling it back—now, if you found the world stand still between the opposite forces, and were glad, I should conceive you—but it steadily advances, you rejoice to see! By the side of such a rejoicer, the man who only winks as he keeps cunning and quiet, and says, “Let yonder hot-headed fellow fight out my battle; I, for one, shall win in the end by the blows he gives, and which I ought to be giving”—even he seems graceful in his avowal, when one considers that he might say, “I shall win quite as much by the blows our antagonist gives him, and from which he saves me—I thank the antagonist equally!” Moreover, you must enlarge on the loss of the edge of party-animosity with age and experience—

*Ch.* And naturally time must wear off such asperities—the bitterest adversaries get to discover certain points of similarity between each other; common sympathies—do they not?

*Ogni.* Ay, had the young David but sate first to dine on his cheeses with the Philistine, he had soon discovered

an abundance of such common sympathies—He of Gath, it is recorded, was born of a father and mother, had brothers and sisters like another man,—they, no more than the sons of Jesse, were used to eat each other; but, for the sake of one broad antipathy that had existed from the beginning, David slung the stone, cut off the giant's head, made a spoil of it, and after ate his cheese alone, with the better appetite, for all I can learn. My friend, as you, with a quickened eyesight, go on discovering much good on the worse side, remember that the same process should proportionably magnify and demonstrate to you the much more good on the better side—and when I profess no sympathy for the Goliaths of our time, and you object that a large nature should sympathize with every form of intelligence, and see the good in it, however limited—I answer, so I do—but preserve the proportions of my sympathy, however fineliter or wideliter I may extend its action. I desire to be able, with a quickened eyesight, to descry beauty in corruption where others see foulness only,—but I hope I shall also continue to see a redoubled beauty in the higher forms of matter, where already everybody sees no foulness at all. I must retain, too, my old power of selection, and choice of appropriation, to apply to such new gifts . . . else they only dazzle instead of enlightening me. God has his Archangels and consorts with them—tho' he made too, and intimately sees what is good in, the worm. Observe, I speak only as you profess to think and so ought to speak—I do justice to your own principles, that is all

*Ch.* But you very well know that the two parties do, on occasion, assume each other's characteristics: what more disgusting, for instance, than to see how promptly the newly emancipated slave will adopt, in his own favour, the very measures of precaution, which pressed soreliest on himself as institutions of the tyranny he has just escaped from.—Do the classes, hitherto without opinion, get leave to express it? there is a confederacy immediately, from which—exercise your individual right and dissent, and woe be to you!

*Ogni.* And a journey over the sea to you!—That is the generous way. Say—emancipated slaves, the first excess, and off I go! The first time a poor devil, who has been bastinadoed steadily his whole life long, finds himself let alone and able to legislate, so begins pettishly, while he rubs his soles, “Woe be to whoever brings any thing in the shape of a stick this way,”—you, rather than give up the very innocent pleasure of carrying one to switch flies with,—you, go away to everybody's sorrow! Yet you were quite reconciled to staying at home while the governors used to pass, every now and then, some such edict as “Let no man indulge in owning a stick which is not thick enough to chastise our slaves, if need require.” Well—there are pre-ordained hierarchies among us, and a profane vulgar subjected to a different law altogether—yet I am rather sorry you should see it so clearly.—for, do you know what is to . . . all but save you at the Day of Judgment, all you Men of Genius? It is this—that, while you generally began by pulling

down God, and went on to the end of your life, in one effort at setting up your own Genius in his place,—still, the last, bitterest concession wrung with the utmost unwillingness from the experience of the very loftiest of you, was invariably—would one think it?—that the rest of mankind, down to the lowest of the mass, stood not, nor ever could stand, just on a level and equality with yourselves.—That will be a point in the favour of all such, I hope and believe!

*Ch.* Why men of genius are usually charged, I think, with doing just the reverse; and at once acknowledging the natural inequality of mankind, by themselves participating in the universal craving after, and deference to, the civil distinctions which represent it. You wonder they pay such undue respect to titles and badges of superior rank!

*Ogni.* Not I! (always on your own ground and showing, be it noted!) Who doubts that, with a weapon to brandish, a man is the more formidable? Titles and badges are exercised as such a weapon, to which you and I look up wistfully.—We could pin lions with it moreover, while in its present owner's hands it hardly prods rats. Nay, better than a mere weapon of easy mastery and obvious use, it is a mysterious divining rod that may serve you in undreamed-of ways.—Beauty Strength, Intellect—men often have none of these and yet conceive pretty accurately what kind of advantages they would bestow on the possessor.—You know at least what it is you make up your mind to forego and so can

apply the fittest substitute in your power ; wanting Beauty, you cultivate Good Humour, missing Wit, you get Riches ; but the mystic unimaginable operation of that gold collar and string of Latin names which suddenly turned poor stupid little peevish Cecco of our town into natural Lord of the best of us—a Duke, he is now ! there indeed is a Virtue to be revered !

*Ch.* Ay, by the vulgar—not by Messere Stiatto the poet, who pays more assiduous court to him than anybody.

*Ogni.* What else should Stiatto pay court to ? He has talent, not honour and riches—men naturally covet what they have not.

*Ch.* No—or Cecco would covet talent, which he has not, whereas he covets more riches, of which he has plenty already.

*Ogni.* Because a purse added to a purse makes the holder twice as rich—but just such another talent as Stiatto's, added to what he now possesses, what would that profit him ? Give the talent a purse indeed, to do something with ! But lo, how we keep the good people waiting. I only desired to do justice to the noble sentiments which animate you, and which you are too modest to duly enforce. Come, to our main business : shall we ascend the steps ? I am going to propose you for Provost to the people ; they know your antecedents, and will accept you with a joyful unanimity ; whereon I confirm their choice. Rouse up ! you are nerving yourself to an effort ? Beware the disaster of Messere Stiatto we

were talking of—who determining to keep an equal mind and constant face on whatever might be the fortune of his last new poem with our townsmen,—heard too plainly “hiss, hiss, hiss,” increase every moment, till at last the man fell senseless—not perceiving that the portentous sounds had all the while been issuing from between his own nobly clenched teeth, and nostrils narrowed by resolve !

*Ch.* Do you begin to throw off the mask? to jest with me, having got me effectually into your trap?

*Ogni.* Where is the trap, my friend? You hear what I engage to do, for my part—you, for yours, have only to fulfil your promise made just now within doors, of professing unlimited obedience to Rome’s authority in my person—and I shall authorize no more than the simple re-establishment of the Provostship and the conferment of its privileges upon yourself—the only novel stipulation being a birth of the peculiar circumstances of the time.

*Ch.* And that stipulation?

*Ogni.* Oh, the obvious one—that in the event of the discovery of the actual assailant of the late Provost . . .

*Ch.* Ha!

*Ogni.* Why, he shall suffer the proper penalty, of course; what did you expect?

*Ch.* Who heard of this?

*Ogni.* Rather, who needed to hear of this?

*Ch.* Can it be, the popular rumour never reached you . . .



*Ogni.* Many more such rumours reach me, friend, than I choose to receive: those which wait longest have best chance—has the present one sufficiently waited? Now is its time for entry with effect. See the good people crowding about yonder palace-steps—which we may not have to ascend after all!—my good friends—(nay, two or three of you will answer every purpose)—who was it fell upon and proved nearly the death of your late Provost?—his successor desires to hear, that his day of inauguration may be graced by the act of prompt, bare justice we all anticipate? Who dealt the blow that night, does anybody know?

*Luitolfo.* [*coming forward.*] I!

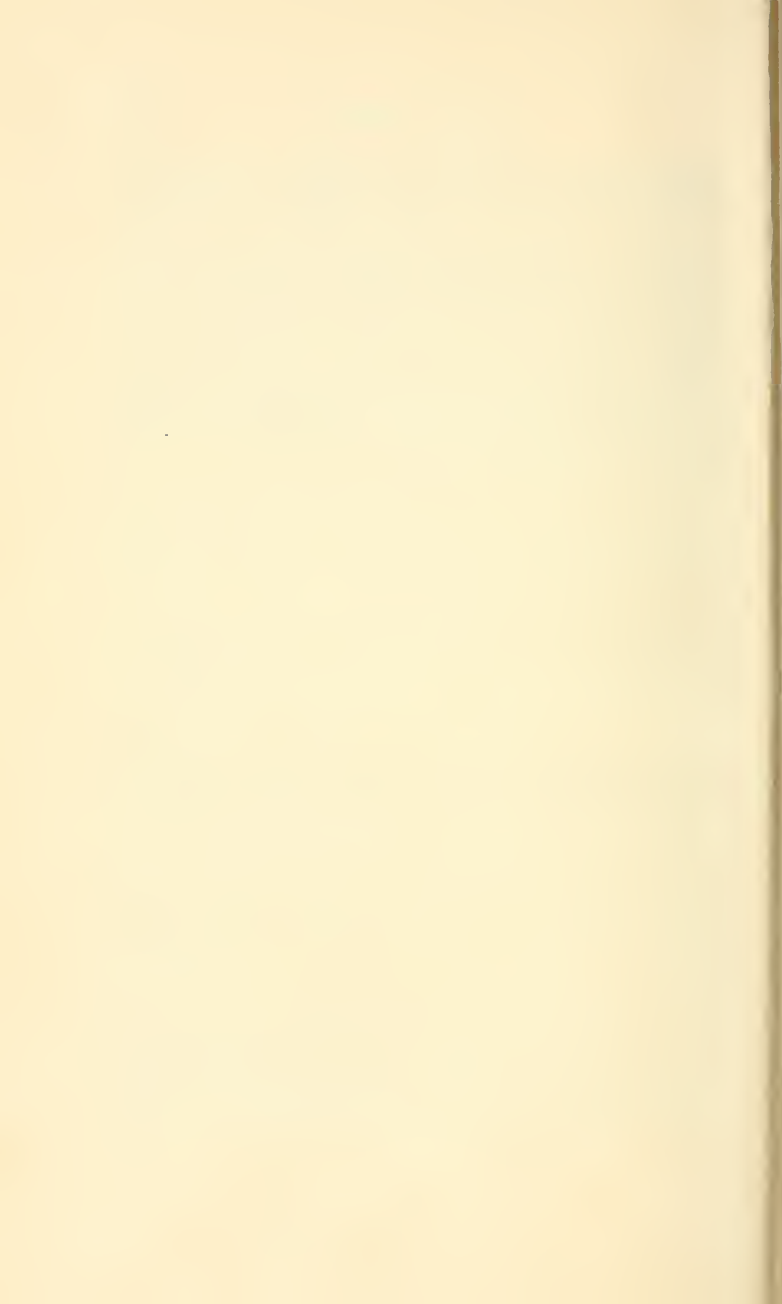
*All.* Luitolfo!

*Luit.* I avow the deed, justify and approve it, and stand forth now, to relieve my friend of an unearned responsibility.—Having taken thought, I am grown stronger—I shall shrink from nothing that awaits me. Nay, Chiappino—we are friends still—I dare say there is some proof of your superior nature in this starting aside, strange as it seems at first. So, they tell me, my horse is of the right stock, because a shadow in the path frightens him into a frenzy, makes him dash my brains out. I understand only the dull mule's way of standing stockishly, plodding soberly, suffering on occasion a blow or two with due patience.

*Eu.* I was determined to justify my choice, Chiappino; let Luitolfo's nature vindicate itself. Henceforth we are undivided, whatever be our fortune.

*Ogni.* Now, in these last ten minutes of silence, what have I been doing, deem you? Putting the finishing stroke to a homily of mine, I have long taken thought to perfect, on the text "Let whoso thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." To your house, Luitolfo!—Still silent, my patriotic friend? Well, that is a good sign, however! And you will go aside for a time? That is better still. I understand—it would be easy for you to die of remorse here on the spot, and shock us all, but you will live and grow worthy of coming back to us one day. There, I will tell everybody; and you only do right to believe you will get better as you get older! All men do so,—they are worst in childhood, improve in manhood, and get ready in old age for another world. Youth, with its Beauty and Grace, would seem bestowed on us for some such reason as to make us partly endurable till we have time for really becoming so of ourselves, without their aid, when they leave us. The sweetest child we all smile on for his pleasant want of the whole world to break up, or suck in his mouth, seeing no other good in it—would be rudely handled by that world's inhabitants, if he retained those angelic infantine desires when he has grown six feet high, black and bearded: but, little by little, he sees fit to forego claim after claim on the world, puts up with a less and less share of its good as his proper portion,—and when the octogenarian asks barely a sup of gruel and a fire of dry sticks, and thanks you as for his full allowance and right in the common good of life,—hoping nobody may

murder him,—he who began by asking and expecting the whole of us to bow down in worship to him,—why I say he is advanced, far onward, very far, nearly out of sight like our friend Chiappino yonder! And now—(Ay, good-bye to you! He turns round the Northwest gate—going to Lugo again? Good-bye!)—And now give thanks to God, the keys of the Provost's Palace to me, and yourselves to profitable meditation at home. I have known *Four-and-twenty* leaders of revolts!—















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