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The Old Water Wheel







POEMS

BY

JOHN RUSKIN.

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY

JAMES OSBORNE WRIGHT.

7



NEW YORK :

JOHN WILEY & SONS.

1884.

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A.17 287.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE poems collected in the following pages have been printed from the original published copies, great care having been taken to follow the author's text, with the exception of certain needed changes in the orthography.

It must be remembered that all of Ruskin's verse-making was confined to his youthful days, and was for the most part dated from Christ Church, Oxford, over the initials J. R. The first poem, "Saltzburg," was written in the author's sixteenth year, the last "The Glacier" but eleven years later. "The Broken Chain" was appropriately published at intervals—the first two parts appearing in 1840, the third in 1841, the fourth in 1842, and the fifth and last part in the year following.

All of these poems, with the exception of "Salsette and Elephanta," were published in the Annuals so popular during England's golden-age of steel engraving, but no collection was made until 1850, when the author issued a privately

printed edition, of such limited number, that copies have become virtually inaccessible except to the most rabid bibliomaniac, whose heavy purse enables him to successfully outbid competitors in the auction room and bookstore.\*

To those who appreciate the intense personality of the author, these verses will afford much insight into his character. The weird and somewhat melancholy train of thought which pervades all of his poetry is certainly remarkable, when we consider that it was written at an age that is popularly supposed to be under the influence of rose-colored visions rather than the grim churchyard aspect which pervades every line of these metrical effusions of the autocratic art-critic.

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\* Two years ago a copy sold by auction, in London, for 41 guineas.

## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
SALTZBURG.....	1
FRAGMENTS.—Andernacht.—St. Goar.....	4
THE MONTHS.....	7
THE LAST SMILE.....	9
SONG.....	10
SPRING.....	11
THE SCYTHIAN GRAVE.....	13
REMEMBRANCE.....	17
CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.....	19
ARISTODEMUS AT PLATÆA.....	21
SALSETTE AND ELEPHANTA.—A Prize Poem.....	24
A SCYTHIAN BANQUET SONG.....	41
THE SCYTHIAN GUEST.....	62
THE BROKEN CHAIN.....	75
THE TEARS OF PSAMMENITUS.....	169
THE TWO PATHS.....	181

	PAGE
THE OLD WATER-WHEEL.....	184
THE DEPARTED LIGHTS.....	186
AOONIA.....	188
THE LAST SONG OF ARION.....	190
THE HILLS OF CARRARA.....	203
THE BATTLE OF MONTENOTTE.....	206
A WALK IN CHAMOUNI.....	220
THE OLD SEAMAN.....	226
THE ALPS.....	230
THE BASSES ALPS.....	232
THE GLACIER.....	234
THE RECREANT.....	235
THE WRECK.....	238



## SALTZBURG.

ON Salza's quiet tide the westering sun  
Gleams mildly ; and the lengthening shadows dun,  
Chequered with ruddy streaks from spire and roof,  
Begin to weave fair twilight's mystic woof,  
Till the dim tissue, like a gorgeous veil,  
Wraps the proud city, in her beauty pale.  
A minute since, and in the rosy light  
Dome, casement, spire, were glowing warm and bright ;  
A minute since, St. Rupert's stately shrine,  
Rich with the spoils of many a Hartzwald mine,\*  
Flung back the golden glow ; now, broad and vast,  
The shadows from yon ancient fortress cast,

---

\* The dome of the Cathedral of St. Hubert is covered with copper ; and there are many altars and shrines in the interior constructed of different sorts of marble, brought from quarries in the vicinity. St. Hubert, to whom the Cathedral is dedicated, was by birth a Scotchman.

Like the dark grasp of some barbaric power,  
Their leaden empire stretch o'er roof and tower.

Sweet is the twilight hour by Salza's strand,  
Though no Arcadian visions grace the land :  
Wakes not a sound that floats not sweetly by,  
While day's last beams upon the landscape die ;  
Low chants the fisher where the waters pour,  
And murmuring voices melt along the shore ;  
The splash of waves comes softly from the side  
Of passing barge slow gliding o'er the tide ;  
And there are sounds from city, field, and hill,  
Shore, forest, flood ; yet mellow all and still.

But change we now the scene, ere night descend,  
And through St. Rupert's massive portal wend.  
Full many a shrine, bedeckt with sculpture quaint  
Of steel-clad knight and legendary saint ;  
Full many an altar, where the incense-cloud  
Rose with the pealing anthem, deep and loud ;

And pavements worn before each marble fane  
By knees devout—(ah ! bent not all in vain !)  
There greet the gaze ; with statues, richly wrought,  
And noble paintings, from Ausonia brought,—  
Planned by those master minds whose memory stands  
The grace, the glory, of their native lands.  
As the hard granite, 'midst some softer stone,  
Starts from the mass, unbuttressed and alone,  
And proudly rears its iron strength for aye,  
While crumbling crags around it melt away ;  
So midst the ruins of long eras gone,  
Creative Genius holds his silent throne,—  
While lesser lights grow dim,—august, sublime,  
Gigantic looming o'er the gulfs of Time !

## FRAGMENTS

FROM A METRICAL JOURNAL.

### *Andernacht.*

TWILIGHT's mists are gathering grey  
Round us on our winding way ;  
Yet the mountain's purple crest  
Reflects the glories of the west.  
Rushing on with giant force,  
Rolls the Rhine his glorious course ;  
Flashing, now, with flamy red,  
O'er his jagg'd basaltic bed ;  
Now, with current calm and wide,  
Sweeping round the mountain's side ;  
Ever noble, proud, and free,  
Flowing in his majesty.  
Soon upon the evening skies  
Andernacht's grim ruins rise ;

Buttress, battlement and tower,  
Remnants hoar of Roman power.  
Monuments of Cæsar's sway,  
Piecemeal mouldering away.  
Lo, together loosely thrown,  
Sculptured head and lettered stone ;  
Guardless now the arch-way steep  
To rampart huge and frowning keep ;  
The empty moat is gay with flowers,  
The night-wind whistles through the towers,  
And, flapping in the silent air,  
The owl and bat are tenants there.

*St. Goar.*

Past a rock with frowning front,  
Wrinkled by the tempest's brunt,  
By the Rhine we downward bore  
Upon the village of St. Goar.  
Bosomed deep among the hills,  
Here old Rhine his current stills.

Loitering the banks between,  
As if, enamored of the scene,  
He had forgot his onward way  
For a live-long summer day.  
Grim the crags through whose dark cleft,  
Behind, he hath a passage reft ;  
While, gaunt as gorge of hunted boar,  
Dark yawns the foaming pass before,  
Where the tormented waters rage,  
Like demons in their Stygian cage,  
In giddy eddies whirling round  
With a sullen choking sound ;  
Or flinging far the scattering spray,  
O'er the peaked rocks that bar his way.  
—No marvel that the spell-bound Rhine,  
Like giant overcome with wine,  
Should *here* relax his angry frown,  
And, soothed to slumber, lay him down  
Amid the vine-clad banks that lave,  
Their tresses in his placid wave.

## THE MONTHS.

### I.

FROM your high dwellings in the realms of snow  
And cloud, where many an avalanche's fall  
Is heard resounding from the mountain's brow,  
Come, ye cold winds, at January's call,  
On whistling wings, and with white flakes bestrew  
The earth, till February's reign restore  
The race of torrents to their wonted flow,  
Whose waves shall stand in silent ice no more ;  
But, lashed by March's maddened winds, shall roar  
With voice of ire, and beat the rocks on every shore.

### II.

Bow down your heads, ye flowers in gentle guise,  
Before the dewy rain that April sheds,  
Whose sun shines through her clouds with quick surprise,  
Shedding soft influences on your heads ;

And wreath ye round the rosy month that flies  
To scatter perfumes in the path of June ;  
Till July's sun upon the mountains rise  
Triumphant, and the wan and weary moon  
Mingle her cold beams with the burning lume  
That Sirius shoots through all the dreary midnight gloom.

## III.

Rejoice ! ye fields, rejoice ! and wave with gold,  
When August round her precious gifts is flinging;  
Lo ! the crushed wain is slowly homeward rolled:  
The sunburnt reapers jocund lays are singing;  
September's steps her juicy stores unfold,  
If the Spring blossoms have not blushed in vain:  
October's foliage yellows with his cold:  
In rattling showers dark November's rain,  
From every stormy cloud, descends amain,  
Till keen December's snows close up the year again



## THE LAST SMILE.

SHE sat beside me yesternight,  
    With lip, and eye, so blandly smiling  
So full of soul, of life, of light,  
    So sweetly my lorn heart beguiling,  
That she had almost made me gay—  
    Had almost charmed the thought away—  
(Which, like the poisoned desert wind,  
    Came sick and heavy o'er my mind)—  
That memory soon mine all would be,  
And she would smile no more for me.

## SONG.

[From *Leoni*, a Romance of Italy.]

FULL, broad, and bright, is the silver light

Of moon and stars on flood and fell ;

But in my breast is starless night,

For I am come to say farewell.

How glad, how swift, was wont to be

The step that bore me back to thee ;

Now coldly comes upon my heart

The meeting that is but to part.

I do not ask a tear, but while

I linger where I must not stay,

Oh, give me but a parting smile,

To light me on my lonely way.

To shine a brilliant beacon star,

To my reverted glance, afar,

Through midnight, which can have no morrow,

O'er the deep, silent, surge of sorrow.

•

SPRING.

INFANT Spirit of the Spring !  
On thy fresh-plumed pinion, bring  
Snow-drops like thy stainless brow—  
Violet, primrose—cull them now,  
With the cup of daffodil,  
Which the fairies love to fill,  
Ere each moon-dance they renew,  
With the fragrant honey dew ;  
Bring them, Spirit !—bring them hither  
Ere the wind have time to wither ;  
Or the sun to steal their dyes,  
To paint, at eve, the western skies.  
Bring them for the wreath of one—  
Fairest, best, that Time hath known.

Infant Spirit ! dreams have told  
Of thy golden hours of old,

When the amaranth was flung  
O'er creation bright and young ;  
When the wind had sweeter sound  
Than holiest lute-string since hath found ;

When the sigh of angels sent  
Fragrance through the firmament :  
Then thy glorious gifts were shed  
O'er full many a virgin head :  
Of those forms of beauty, none  
Gladden now this earth, save one !  
Hither, then, thy blossoms bring,  
Infant Spirit of the Spring !

## THE SCYTHIAN GRAVE.

THE following stanzas refer to some peculiar and affecting customs of the Scythians, as avouched by Herodotus (Melpomone 71), relative to the burial of their kings,\* round whose tombs they were wont to set up a troop of fifty skeleton scarecrows—armed corpses—in a manner very horrible, barbarous and indecorous ; besides sending out of the world to keep the king company, numerous cup-bearers, grooms, lackeys, coachmen, and cooks ; all which singular, and, to the individuals concerned, somewhat objectionable proceedings appear to have been the result of a feeling, pervading the whole nation, of the poetical and picturesque.

### I.

THEY laid the lord  
Of all the land  
Within his grave of pride ;  
They set the sword  
Beside the hand  
That could not grasp nor guide ;

---

\* These are the kings to whom the prophecies in the Old Testament refer :—“They shall go down to the grave with their weapons of war, though they were a terror to the mighty in the land of the living.”

They left to soothe and share his rest  
    Beneath the moveless mould,  
A lady, bright as those that live,  
    But oh ! how calm and cold !  
They left to keep due watch and ward,  
Thick vassals round their slumbering lord—  
Ranged in menial order all—  
*They* may hear, when *he* can call.

## II.

They built a mound  
Above the breast  
Whose haughty heart was still ;  
    Each stormy sound  
    That wakes the west,  
Howls o'er that lonely hill.  
Underneath an armed troop  
    In stalwart order stay ;  
Flank to flank they stand, nor stoop  
    Their lances, day by day,

Round the dim sepulchral cliff  
Horsemen fifty, fixed and stiff—  
Each with his bow, and each with his brand,  
With his bridle grasped in his steadfast hand.

## III.

The soul of sleep  
May dim the brow,  
And check the soldier's tread,  
But who can keep  
A guard so true,  
As do the dark-eyed dead ?  
The foul hyena's howl and haunt  
About their charnel lair ;  
The flickering rags of flesh they flaunt  
Within the plague-struck air.  
But still the skulls do gaze and grin,  
Though the worms have gnawed the nerves within,  
And the jointed toes, and the fleshless heel  
Clatter and clank in their stirrup of steel.

## IV.

The snows are swift,  
That glide so pale  
Along the mountain dim ;  
Beneath their drift  
Shall rust the mail,  
And blanch the nerveless limb :  
While shower on shower, and wreath on wreath,  
From vapours thunder-scarred,\*  
Surround the misty mound of death  
And whelm its ghastly guard ;  
Till those who held the earth in fear,  
Lie meek, and mild, and powerless here,  
Without a single sworded slave  
To keep their name, or guard their grave.

---

\* It is one of the peculiarities of the climate, according to Herodotus, that it thunders in the winter, not in the summer.



## REMEMBRANCE.

I OUGHT to be joyful, the jest and the song  
And the light tones of music resound through the throng ;  
But its cadence falls dully and dead on my ear,  
And the laughter I mimic is quenched in a tear.

For here is no longer, to bid me rejoice,  
The light of thy smile, or the tone of thy voice,  
And, gay though the crowd that's around me may be,  
I am alone, when I'm parted from thee.

Alone, said I, dearest ? O, never we part,—  
For ever, for ever, thou'rt here in my heart :  
Sleeping or waking, where'er I may be,  
I have but one thought, and that thought is of thee.

When the planets roll red through the darkness of night,  
When the morning bedews all the landscape with light,  
When the high sun of noon-day is warm on the hill,  
And the breezes are quiet, the green leafage still ;

I love to look out o'er the earth and the sky,  
For nature is kind, and seems lonely as I ;  
Whatever in nature most lovely I see,  
Has a voice that recalls the remembrance of thee.

Remember—remember. Those only can know  
How dear is remembrance, whose hope is laid low ;  
'Tis likè clouds in the west, that are gorgeous still,  
When the dank dews of evening fall deadly and chill.

Like the bow in the cloud that is painted so bright,—  
Like the voice of the nightingale, heard through the night,  
Oh, sweet is remembrance, most sad though it be,  
For remembrance is all that remaineth for me.

## CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

NIGHT.

FAINT from the bell the ghastly echoes fall,  
That grates within the gray cathedral tower;  
Let me not enter through the portal tall,  
Lest the strange spirit of the moonless hour  
Should give a life to those pale people, who  
Lie in their fretted niches, two and two,  
Each with his head on pillowy stone reposed,  
And his hands lifted, and his eyelids closed.

From many a mouldering oriel, as to flout,  
Its pale, grave brow of ivy-tressed stone,  
Comes the incongruous laugh, and revel shout—  
Above, some solitary casement, thrown  
Wide open to the wavering night wind,  
Admits its chill, so deathful, yet so kind,

Unto the fevered brow and fiery eye  
Of one, whose night hour passeth sleeplessly.

Ye melancholy chambers ! I could shun  
The darkness of your silence, with such fear,  
As places where slow murder had been done.  
How many noble spirits have died here,  
Withering away in yearnings to aspire,  
Gnawed by mocked hope—devoured by their own fire  
Methinks the grave must feel a colder bed  
To spirits such as these, than unto common dead.

## ARISTODEMUS AT PLATÆA.

[Of two Spartans who were prevented by illness from taking part in the battle of Thermopylæ, and who were, in consequence, degraded to the level of helots, one, unable to endure the scorn of his countrymen, killed himself; the other, by name Aristodemus, waited, and when, at the battle of Platæa, thirty-three thousand allied Greeks stood to receive the final and desperate attack of three hundred thousand chosen Asiatics, and the Spartans, unused to Persian arms, hung slightly back, he charged alone, and, calling to his countrymen to "follow the coward," broke the enemy's mass, and was found, when the victorious Greeks who followed him had laid two hundred thousand of their enemy dead on the field, lying on a low hillock, with his face turned up to heaven, a group of the Persian nobles lying slaughtered around him. He was refused the honors of burial, because, it was said, he was only courageous in despair.]

YE have darkened mine honor and branded my name,  
Ye have quenched its remembrance in silence and shame.  
Yet the heart ye call craven, unbroken, hath borne  
The voice of your anger, the glance of your scorn.

But the life that hath lingered is now in mine hand,\*  
My waiting was but for a lot of the land,

---

\* I Sam. xxviii. 21, Job xiii. 14.

Which his measure, who ruleth the battle array,  
May mete for your best and your bravest to-day.

My kinsmen, my brothers, your phalanx is fair,  
There's a shield, as I think, that should surely be there ;  
Ye have darkened its disk, and its hour hath drawn near  
To be reared as a trophy or borne as a bier.\*

What said I ? Alas, though the foe in his flight,  
Should quit me unspoiled on the field of the fight,  
Ye would leave me to lie, with no hand to inurn,  
For the dog to devour, or the stranger to spurn !

What matter ? Attendants my slumber shall grace,  
With blood on the breast, and with fear on the face ;  
And Sparta may own that the death hath atoned  
For the crime of the cursed, whose life she disowned.

---

\*[If his body were obtained by the enemy it would be reared as a trophy. If recovered by his friends, borne as a bier, unless, as he immediately called to mind, they should deny him funeral honors.]

By the banks of Eurotas her maidens shall meet,  
And her mountains rejoice in the fall of your feet ;  
And the cry of your conquest be lofty and loud,  
O'er the lengthened array of the shield or the shroud.

And the fires of the grave shall empurple the air,  
When they lick the white dust of the bones ye shall bear ;  
The priest and the people, at altar and shrine,  
Shall worship their manes, disdainful of mine.

Yet say that they fought for the hopes of their breast,  
For the hearts that had loved them, the lips that had blessed ;  
For the roofs that had covered, the country that claimed,  
The sires that had named them, the sons they had named.

And say that I fought for the land of the free,  
Though its bosom of blessing beat coldly for me ;  
For the lips that had cursed me, the hearts that had scorned,  
And the desolate hope of the death unadorned.

SALSETTE AND ELEPHANTA.

A PRIZE POEM.

---

“Religio . . . pedibus subjecta vicissim  
Obteritur. Nos exæquat victoria cælo.”

—LUCRETIVS.

'Tis eve—and o'er the face of parting day  
Quick smiles of summer lightning flit and play ;  
In pulses of broad light, less seen than felt,  
They mix in heaven, and on the mountains melt ;  
Their silent transport fills the exulting air—  
'Tis eve, and where is evening half so fair ?  
Oh ! deeply, softly sobs the Indian sea  
O'er thy dark sands, majestic Dharavee,\*  
When, from each purple hill and polished lake,  
The answering voices of the night awake  
The fitful note of many a brilliant bird,—  
The lizard's plunge, o'er distant waters heard,—

---

\* The southern promontory of the island of Salsette.



The thrill of forest leaves—how soft, how swift  
 That floats and follows where the night-winds drift ;  
 Or, piercing through the calmness of the sky,  
 The jungle tiger's sharp and sudden cry.  
 Yet all is peace, for these weak voices tell  
 How deep the calm they break but not dispel.  
 The twilight heaven rolls on, like some deep stream  
 When breezes break not on its moving dream ;  
 Its trembling stars continual watches keep  
 And pause above Canarah's haunted steep ;\*  
 Each in its path of first ascension hid  
 Behind the height of that pale pyramid,—  
 (The strength of nations hewed the basalt spire, †  
 And barbed its rocks like sacrificial fire.)  
 Know they the hour's approach, whose fateful flight  
 Was watched of yore from yonder cloudless height ?  
 Lone on its utmost peak, the Prophet Priest  
 Beheld the night unfolded from the East ;

---

\* The central peak of Salsette.

† M. Anguetil du Perron, in his accounts of Canarah, says that its peak appears to have been hewn to a point by human art as an emblem of the solar ray.

In presei<sup>nt</sup> awe perused its blazing scroll,  
And read the records stretched from Pole to Pole ;  
And though their eyes are dark, their lips are still,  
Who watched and worshipped on Canarah's hill,  
Wild superstition's visionary power  
Still rules and fills the spirit of the hour :  
The Indian maiden, through the scented grove,  
Seeks the dim shore, and lights the lamp of love ;  
The pious peasant, awe-struck and alone,  
With radiant garland crowns the purple stone,\*  
And shrinks, returning through the star-lit glade,  
When breezes stir the peepul's sacred shade ; †  
For well his spirit knows the deep appeal  
That love must mourn to miss, yet fear to feel ;  
Low sounds, faint rays, upon the senses shed—  
The voices of the lost, the dark eyes of the dead.

---

\* "A stone painted with red, and placed at the foot of their favorite tree, is sufficient to call forth the devotion of the poor, who bring to it flowers and simple offerings."—J. S. BUCKINGHAM.

† The superstitious feeling of the Indian with respect to the peepul-tree is well known. Its shade is supposed to be loved and haunted by the dead.

How awful now, when night and silence brood  
O'er Earth's repose and Ocean's solitude,  
To trace the dim and devious paths that guide  
Along Canarah's steep and craggy side,  
Where, girt with gloom—inhabited by fear,—  
The mountain homes of India's gods appear !  
Range above range they rise, each hollow cave  
Darkling as death, and voiceless as the grave ;  
Save that the waving weeds in each recess  
With rustling music mock its loneliness ;  
And beasts of blood disturb, with stealthy tread,  
The chambers of the breathless and the dead.  
All else of life, of worship, past away,  
The ghastly idols fall not, nor decay ;  
Retain the lip of scorn, the rugged frown ;  
And grasp the blunted sword and useless crown ;  
Their altars desecrate, their names untold,  
The hands that formed, the hearts that feared—how  
    cold !  
Thou too—dark Isle ! whose shadow on the sea  
Lies like the gloom that mocks our memory

When one bright instant of our former lot  
Were grief, remembered, but were guilt, forgot.  
Rock of the lonely crest ! how oft renewed  
Have beamed the summers of thy solitude,  
Since first the myriad steps that shook thy shore  
Grew frail and few—then paused for evermore !  
Answer—ye long-lulled echoes ! Where are they  
Who clove your mountains with the shafts of day ;  
Bade the swift life along their marble fly,  
And struck their darkness into deity,  
Nor claimed from thee—pale temple of the wave—  
Record or rest, a glory or a grave ?  
Now all are cold—the votary as his god,—  
And by the shrine he feared, the courts he trod,<sup>o</sup>  
The livid snake extends his glancing trail,  
And lifeless murmurs mingle on the gale.

Yet glorious still, though void, though desolate,  
Proud Dharapori ! \* gleams thy mountain gate,

---

\* The Indian name for Elephanta.

What time, emergent from the eastern wave,  
 The keen moon's crescent lights thy sacred cave ;  
 And moving beams confuse, with shadowy change,  
 Thy columns' massive might and endless range.  
 Far, far beneath, where sable waters sleep,  
 Those radiant pillars pierce the crystal deep,  
 And mocking waves reflect, with quivering smile,  
 Their long recession of refulgent aisle ;\*  
 As, where Atlantis hath her lonely home,  
 Her grave of guilt, beneath the ocean's foam ;  
 Above the lifeless hearth and guardless gate,  
 The wildly-walking surges penetrate,  
 And sapphire tints of phosphor lightning fall  
 O'er the broad pillar, and the sculptured wall.—  
 So, Dharapori ! through thy cold repose  
 The flooding lustre of the moonlight flows ;  
 New forms of fear, † by every touch displayed,  
 Gleam, pale and passioned, through the dreadful shade,

---

\* The interior of Elephanta is usually damp, and its floor covered with water two or three feet deep. By moonlight its shallowness would be unperceived.

† The sculptures of Elephanta have such "horrible and fearful formes that they make a man's hayre stande upright."—LINSCHOTEN.

In wreathed groups of dim, distorted life,  
 In ghastly calmness, or tremendous strife ;  
 While glaring eye and grasping hand attest  
 The mocked emotion of the marble breast.  
 Thus in the fevered dream of restless pain,  
 Incumbent horror broods upon the brain,  
 Through mists of blood colossal shapes arise,  
 Stretch their stiff limbs, and roll their rayless eyes.  
 Yet knew not here the chisel's touch to trace  
 The finer lineaments of form and face ;  
 No studious art of delicate design  
 Conceived the shape, or lingered on the line.  
 The sculptor learned, on Indus' plains afar,  
 The various pomp of worship and of war ;  
 Impetuous ardor in his bosom woke,  
 And smote the animation from the rock.  
 In close battalions kingly forms advance,\*  
 Wave the broad shield, and shake the soundless lance ;

---

\* "Some of these figures have helmets of pyramidal form ; others wear crowns richly decorated with jewels ; others display large bushy ringlets of curled or flowing hair. In their hands they grasp sceptres and shields, the symbols of justice and the ensigns of religion, the wea-

Loose o'er their shoulders falls their flowing hair  
 With wanton wave, and mocks the unmoving air ;  
 Broad o'er their breasts extend the guardian zones  
 Broidered with flowers, and bright with mystic stones ;  
 Poised in ætherial march they seem to swim,  
 Majestic motion marked in every limb ;  
 In changeful guise they pass—a lordly train,  
 Mighty in passion, unsubdued in pain ;\*  
 Revered as monarchs, or as gods adored,  
 Alternately they rear the sceptre and the sword.  
 Such were their forms and such their martial mien,  
 Who met by Indus' shores the Assyrian queen, †  
 When, with reverted force, the Indian dyed  
 His javelin in the pulses of her pride,

---

pons of war and the trophies of peace."—MAURICE, *Antiq. of Indi*  
 vol. ii., p. 145.

\* Many of them have countenances expressive of mental suffering.

† Semiramis. M. D'Ancarville supposes the cave to have been e  
 cavated by her army ; and insists on the similarity between the costur  
 of the sculptured figures and that of her Indian adversaries.—S  
*D'Ancarville*, vol. i., p. 121.

And cast in death-heaps, by the purple flood,  
Her strength of Babylonian multitude.

And mightier ones are there—apart—divine,  
Presiding genii of the mountain shrine :  
Behold, the giant group, the united three,  
Faint symbol of an unknown Deity !  
Here, frozen into everlasting trance,  
Stern Siva's quivering lip and hooded glance ;  
There, in eternal majesty serene,  
Proud Brahma's painless brow and constant mien ;  
There glows the light of Veeshnu's guardian smile,  
But on the crags that shade yon inmost aisle  
Shine not, ye stars ! Annihilation's lord \*  
There waves, with many an arm, the unsated sword.  
Relentless holds the cup of mortal pain,  
And shakes the spectral links that wreath his ghast  
chain.

Oh, could these lifeless lips be taught to tell  
(Touched by Chaldean art, or Arab spell)

---

\* Alluding to a sculpture representing the evil principle of India he seems engaged in human sacrifice, and wears a necklace of skulls.



What votaries here have knelt, what victims died,  
 In pangs, their gladness, or in crimes, their pride,  
 How should we shun the awful solitude,  
 And deem the intruding footsteps dashed in blood !  
 How might the altar-hearths grow warm and red,  
 And the air shadowy with avenging dead !  
 Behold !—he stirs—that cold, colossal king !—  
 'Tis but the uncertain shade the moonbeams fling ;  
 Hark ! a stern voice awakes with sudden thrill !—  
 'Twas but the wandering wind's precarious will :  
 The distant echo dies, and all the cave is still.

Yet Fancy, floating on the uncertain light,  
 Fills with her crowded dreams the course of night ;  
 At her wild will æthereal forms appear,  
 And sounds, long silent, strike the startled ear :  
 Behold the dread Mithratic rite reclaim \*  
 Its pride of ministers, its pomp of flame !

---

\* Throughout the description of the rites of Mithra, I have followed Maurice, whose indefatigable research seems almost to have demonstrated the extreme antiquity, at least, of the Elephanta cavern, as well as its application to the worship of the solar orb, and of fire. For a detailed account of this worship, see MAURICE, *Indian Antiq.*, vol. ii., sec. 7.

Along the winding walls, in ordered row,  
Flash myriad fires—the fretted columns glow ;  
Beaming above the imitative sky  
Extends the azure of its canopy,  
Fairest where imaged star and airy sprite  
Move in swift beauty and entrancing light ;  
A golden sun reflected lustre flings,  
And wandering Dewtahs\* wave their crimson wings ;  
Beneath, fed richly from the Arabian urn,  
Undying lamps before the altar burn ;  
And sleepless eyes the sacred sign behold,  
The spiral orb of radiated gold ;  
On this the crowds of deep voiced priests attend,  
To this they loudly cry, they lowly bend ;  
O'er their wan brows the keen emotions rise,  
And pious phrenzy flashes from their eyes ;  
Phrenzy in mercy sent, in torture tried,  
Through paths of death their only guard and guide,

---

\* Inferior spirits of various power and disposition, holding in the Hindoo mythology the place of angels. They appear in multitudes on the roof of the Elephanta cavern.

And rushed the wintry billow's wildest wreck,—  
Their God hath called them, and shall danger check ?  
On—on—for ever on, though roused in wrath  
Glare the grim lion on their lonely path ;  
Though, starting from his coiled malignant rest,  
The deadly dragon lift his crimson crest ;  
Though corpse-like shadows round their footsteps flock,  
And shafts of lightning cleave the incumbent rock ;  
On, for behold, enduring honors wait  
To grace their passage through the golden gate ; †  
Glorious estate, and more than mortal power,  
Succeed the dreadful expiating hour ;

---

\* Alluding to the dreadful ceremonies of initiation which the priests of Mithra were compelled to undergo, and which seem to have had a close correspondence with the Elensinian mysteries. See MAURICE, *Antiq. of India*, vol. v. p. 620.

† The sidereal metempsychosis was represented in the Mithratic rites by the ascent of a ladder, on which there were seven gates : the first of lead, representing Saturn ; the second of tin, Venus ; the third brass, Jupiter ; the fourth iron, Mercury ; the fifth mixed, Mars ; the sixth silver, the Moon ; the seventh of gold, the Sun.

Impurpled robes their weary limbs enfold  
With stars enwoven, and stiff with heavenly gold ;  
The mitra\* veils their foreheads, rainbow-dyed,  
The measured steps imperial sceptres guide ;  
Glorious they move, and pour upon the air  
The cloud of incense and the voice of prayer ;  
While through the hollow vault, around them rise  
Deep echoes from the couch of sacrifice,  
In passionate gusts of sound,—now loud, now low,  
With billowy pause, the mystic murmurs flow  
Far dwindling on the breeze. Ere yet they die  
Canarah hears, and all his peaks reply ;  
His crested chasms the vocal winds explore,  
Waste on the deep, and wander on the shore.  
Above, the starry gloom is thrilled with fear,  
The forests shake, the circling hamlets hear,  
And wake to worship. Many an isle around,  
Assembling votaries swell the sacred sound,

---

\* The attire of Mithra's priests was splendid : the robes of purple, with the heavenly constellations embroidered on them in gold. They wore girdles representative of the zodiacal circle, and carried a golden sceptre in the form of a serpent. Ezekiel speaks of them as "exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads" (xxiii. 15).

And, troop by troop, along the woodland ways,  
In equal measures pour responsive praise :  
To Mithra first their kindling songs addressed,  
Lull his long slumbers in the watery west ;  
Next to the strength of each celestial sign  
They raise the choral chaunt, the breathing line ;  
Keen through the arch of heaven their hymns arise,  
Auspicious splendors deck the answering skies.  
The sacred cohorts, maddening as they sing,  
Far through the air their flashing torches fling ;  
From rock to rock the rushing glories leap,  
Climb the wide hills, and clothe the central steep,  
Till through the endless night a living line  
Of lustre opens on the bounding brine ;  
Ocean rejoices, and his isles prolong,  
With answering zeal, those bursts of flame and song,  
Till the strong vulture on Colombo's peak  
Awakes with ruffled plume and startled shriek,  
And the roused panther of Almorah's wood  
Howls through his violated solitude.

'Tis past,—the mingled dream,—though slow and grey  
On mead and mountain break the dawning day ;  
Though stormy wreaths of lingering cloud oppress  
Long time the winds that breathe—the rays that bless,—  
They come, they come. Night's fitful visions fly  
Like autumn leaves, and fade from fancy's eye ;  
So shall the God of might and mercy dart  
His day-beams through the caverns of the heart ;  
Strike the weak idol from its ancient throne,  
And vindicate the temple for His own.  
Nor will He long delay. A purer light  
Than Mithra cast, shall claim a holier rite ;  
A mightier voice than Mithra's priests could pour  
Resistless soon shall sound along the shore ;  
Its strength of thunder vanquished fiends shall own,  
And idols tremble through their limbs of stone.

Vain now the lofty light—the marble gleam—  
Of the keen shaft that rose by Gunga's stream !  
When round its base the hostile lightnings glowed,  
And mortal insult mocked a god's abode,

Low in the dust, its rocky sculptures rent,  
Thine own memorial proves thee impotent.  
Thy votaries mourn thy cold unheeding sleep,  
Chide where they praised, and where they worshipped weep.

Yes—he shall fall, though once his throne was set  
Where the high heaven and crested mountains met ;  
Though distant shone with many an azure gem  
The glacier glory of his diadem ;  
Though sheets of sulphurous cloud and wreathed storm  
Cast veil of terror round his shadowy form.  
All, all are vain ! It comes, the hallowed day,  
Whose dawn shall rend that robe of fear away ;

---

\* Siva. This column was dedicated to him at Benares; and a tradition prevailed among his worshippers, that as soon as it should fall, on universal religion would extend over India, and Bramah be no more worshipped. It was lately thrown down in a quarrel between the Hindoos and Mussulmans. (See *Heber's Journal*.) Siva is spoken of in the following lines, as representative of Hindoo deities in general His worship seems to have arisen in the fastnesses of the Himalayas accompanied by all the gloomy features characteristic of the superstitions of hill countries.

Then shall the torturing spells that midnight knew  
Far in the cloven dells of Mount Meru,  
Then shall the moan of frenzied hymns, that sighed  
Down the dark vale where Gunga's waters glide,  
Then shall the idol chariot's thunder cease  
Before the steps of them that publish peace.  
Already are they heard,—how fair, how fleet,  
Along the mountains flash their bounding feet !  
Disease and death before their presence fly ;  
Truth calls, and gladdened India hears the cry,  
Deserts the darkened path her fathers trod,  
And seeks redemption from the Incarnate God.



## A SCYTHIAN BANQUET SONG.

[THE Scythians, according to Herodotus, made use of part of their enemies' bodies after death, for many domestic purposes ; particularly of the skull, which they scalped, wrapped in bull's hide, and filled up the cracks with gold ; and having gilded the hide and parts of the bone, used the vessel as a drinking-cup, wreathing it with flowers at feasts.]

### I.

I THINK my soul was childish yet,  
When first it knew my manhood's foe ;  
But what I was, or where we met,  
I know not—and I shall not know.  
But I remember, now, the bed  
On which I waked from such sick slumber  
As after pangs of powerless dread,  
Is left upon the limbs like lead,  
Amidst a calm and quiet number  
Of corpses, from whose cold decay  
Mine infant fingers shrank away ;

My brain was wild, my limbs were weak,  
 And silence swallowed up my shriek—

Eleleu.

II.

Alas ! my kindred, dark and dead  
 Were those from whom I held aloof ;  
 I lay beneath the ruins red  
 Of what had been my childhood's roof ;  
 And those who quenched its wasted wood,  
 As morning broke on me, and mine,  
 Preserved a babe baptized in blood,  
 And human grief hath been its food,  
 And human life its wine.

What matter ?—Those who left me there  
 Well nerved mine infant limbs to bear  
 What, heaped upon my haughty head,  
 I might endure—but did not dread.

Eleleu.

III.

A stranger's hand, a stranger's love,  
 Saved my life and soothed my woe,

And taught my youth its strength to prove,  
To wield the lance, and bend the bow.  
I slew the wolf by Tyres' \* shore,  
I tracked the pard by chasm and cliff ;  
Rich were the warrior spoils I wore ;  
Ye know me well, though now no more  
The lance obeys these fingers stiff ;  
My hand was strong, my hope was high,  
All for the glance of one dark eye ;  
The hand is weak, the heart is chill—  
The glance that kindled, colder still.

Eleleu.

IV.

By Tyres' bank, like Tyres' wave,  
The hours of youth went softly by.  
Alas ! their silence could not save  
My being from an evil eye :  
It watched me—little though I knew  
The wrath around me rising slow,

---

\* Tyres, a river of Scythia, now the Dneister.

.

Nor deemed my love like Upas dew,  
A plague, that where it settled, slew.

My time approached ; I met my foe :  
Down with a troop he came by night,\*  
We fought them by their lances' light.  
On lifeless hearth, and guardless gate,  
The dawn of day came desolate.

Eleleu.

V.

Away, away—a Persian's slave,  
I saw my bird of beauty borne,  
In wild despair, too weak to save,  
Too maddening to mourn.  
There dwells a sound within my brain  
Of horses hoofs' beat swift and hollow,  
Heard, when across the distant plain.  
Elaira stretched her arms in vain,  
To him whose limbs were faint to follow ;

---

\* There were frequent incursions made by the Persians upon the Seythians before the grand invasion of Darius.

The spoiler knew not, when he fled,  
The power impending o'er his head ;  
The strength so few have tameless tried,  
That love can give for grief to guide.

Eleleu.

VI.

I flung my bow behind my back,  
And took a javelin in my hand,  
And followed on the fiery track  
Their rapine left upon the land.  
The desert sun in silence set,  
The desert darkness climbed the sky ;  
I knew that one was waking yet,  
Whose heart was wild, whose eye was wet,  
For me and for my misery.  
One who had left her glance of grief,  
Of earthly guides my chosen and chief ;  
Through thirst and fear, by wave and hill,  
That dark eye watched and wooed me still.

Eleleu.

## VII.

Weary and weak their traces lost,  
     I roved the brazen cities through ;  
 That Helle's undulating coast  
     Doth lift beside its billows blue.  
 Till in a palace-bordered street,  
     In the dusk starlight of the day,  
 A stalkless flower fell near my feet,  
 Withered and worn, yet passing sweet ;  
     Its root was left,—how far away ?  
 Its leaves were wet, though not with dew ;  
 The breast that kept, the hand that threw,  
 Were those of one who sickened more,  
 For the sweet breeze of Tyres' shore.  
Eleleu.

## VIII.

My tale is long. Though bolts of brass  
     Held not their captive's faint upbraiding,  
 They melt like wax, they bend like grass,  
     At sorrow's touch, when love is aiding ;

The night was dim, the stars were dead,  
The drifting clouds were grey and wide ;  
The captive joined me and we fled,  
Quivering with joy, though cold with dread,  
She shuddered at my side.

We passed the streets, we gained the gate,  
Where round the wall its watchers wait ;  
Our steps beneath were hushed and slow,  
For the third time—I met my foe.

Eleleu.

IX.

Swift answering as his anger cried,  
Came down the sworded sentinels ;  
I dashed their closing spears aside ;  
They thicken, as a torrent swells,  
When tempests feed its mountain source,  
O'er-matched, borne down, with javelins rent,  
I backed them still with fainting force,  
Till the life curdled in its course,  
And left my madness innocent.

The echo of a maiden's shriek,  
 Mixed with my dreaming long and weak,  
 And when I woke the daybreak fell  
 Into a dark and silent cell.

Eleleu.

x.

Know ye the price that must atone,  
 When power is mocked at by its slave ?  
 Know ye the kind of mercy shown,  
 When pride condemns, though love would save ?  
 A sullen splash was heard that night  
 To check the calm of Helle's flow ;  
 And there was much of love and light,  
 Quenched, where the foam-globes moved most white,  
 With none to save and few to know,  
 Me they led forth, at dawn of day,  
 To mock, to torture, and to slay ;  
 They found my courage calm and mild,  
 Until my foe came near and smiled.

Eleleu.



## XI.

He told me how the midnight chasm  
Of ocean had been sweetly fed :  
He paled—recoiling, for a spasm  
Came o'er the limbs they dreamed were dead :  
The earth grew hot—the sky grew black—  
The twisted cords gave way like tow ;  
I felt the branding fetters crack,  
And saw the torturers starting back,  
And more I do not know,  
Until my stretched limbs dashed their way  
Through the cold sea's resulting spray,  
And left me where its surges bore  
Their voices to a lifeless shore.

Elelen.

## XII.

Mine aged eyes are dim and dry ;  
They have not much to see or mourn,  
Save when in sleep, pale thoughts pass by—  
My heart is with their footsteps worn

Into a pathway. Swift and steep  
 Their troops pass down it—and I feel not—  
 Though they have words would make me weep  
 If I could tell their meaning deep—  
 But *I* forget—and *they* reveal not :  
 Oh, lost Elaira !—when I go  
 Where cold hands hold the soundless bow,  
 Shall the black earth, all pitiless,  
 Forget the early grave  
 Of her, whom beauty did not bless,  
 Affection could not save ?  
Eleleu.

## XIII.

Oh, lost Elaira ! long for thee  
 Sweet Tyres' banks have blushed in vain ;  
 And blight to them and death to me  
 Shall break the link of memory's chain.  
 My spirit keeps its lonely lair  
 In mouldering life to burn and blacken ;  
 The throbs that moved it once are there  
 Like winds that stir a dead man's hair,  
 Unable to awaken.

Thy soul on earth supremely smiled,  
In beauty bright, in mercy mild,  
It looked to love, it breathed to bless—  
It died, and left me—mereiless.

Eleleu.

XIV.

And men shrink from me, with no sense  
That the fierce heart they fear and fly,  
Is one, whose only evidenee  
Of beating is in agony.  
They know, with me, to match or melt,  
The sword or prayer alike are vain ;  
The spirit's presence, half unfelt,  
Hath left,—slow withering where it dwelt,  
One precedenee of pain.  
All that my vietims feel or fear  
Is well avenged by something here ;  
And every curse they breathe on me  
Joins in the deep voice of the sea.

Eleleu.

## XV.

It rolls—it coils—it foams—it flashes,  
Pale and putrid—ghastly green ;  
Lit with light of dead men's ashes  
Flickering through the black weed's screen.  
Oh ! there along the breathless land,  
Elaira keeps the couch allotted ;  
The waters wave her weary hand,  
And toss pale shells and ropy sand  
About her dark hair, clasped and clotted.  
The purple isles are bright above  
The frail and moon-blanch'd bones of love ;  
Their citron breeze is full of bliss,  
Her lips are cool without its kiss.  
Eleleu.

## XVI.

My thoughts are wandering and weak ;  
Forgive an old man's dotard dreaming ;  
I know not sometimes when I speak  
Such visions as have quiet seeming.

I told you how my madness bore  
My limbs from torture. When I woke,  
I do remember something more  
Of wandering on the wet sea-shore,  
By waving weed and withered rock,  
Calling Elaira, till the name  
Crossed o'er the waters as they came—  
Mildly—to hallow and to bless  
Even what had made it meaningless—  
Eleleu.

## XVII.

The waves in answering murmurs mixed,  
Tossed a frail fetter on the sand ;  
Too well I knew whose fingers fixed,  
Whose arm had lost the golden band ;  
For such it was, as still confines  
Faint Beauty's arm who will not listen,  
The words of love that mockery twines  
To soothe the soul that pants and pines  
Within its rose-encumbered prison.

The waters freed her ; she who wore  
 Fetter or armlet needs no more ;  
 Could the waves tell, who saw me lift,  
 For whom I kept, their glittering gift,  
Eleleu.

## XVIII.

Slow drifts the hour when Patience waits  
 Revenge's answering orison ;  
 But—one by one the darkening Fates  
 Will draw the balanced axle on,  
 Till torture pays the price of pride,  
 And watches wave with sullen shine,  
 The sword of sorrow justified.  
 The long years kept their quiet glide,  
 His hour was past : they brought me mine.  
 When steed to steed, and rank to rank,  
 With matched numbers fierce and frank,  
 (The war-wolves waiting near to see  
 Our battle bright) my Foe met Me.  
Ha—Hurra !

## XIX.

As the tiger tears through the jungle reeds,  
As the west wind breaks through the sharp corn ears,  
As the quick death follows where the lightning leads,  
Did my dark horse bear through the bended spears ;  
And the blood came up to my brain like a mist,  
With a dark delight and a fiery feel ;  
For the black darts hailed, and the javelins hissed,  
To the corpses clasped in their tortured twist,  
From mine arms like rain from the red-hot steel.  
Well went the wild horses—well rode their lords—  
Wide waved the sea of their circling swords ;  
But down went the wild steeds—down went the sea—  
Down went the dark banners—down went He.  
Ha—Hurra !

## XX.

For, forward fixed, my frenzy rushed,  
To one pale plume of fitful wave ;  
With failing strength, o'er corpses crushed,  
My horse obeyed the spurs I gave.

Slow rolled the tide of battle by,  
And left me on the field alone  
Save that a goodly company  
Lay gazing on the bright blue sky,  
All as stiff as stone.  
And the howling wolves came, merry and thick,  
The flesh to tear and the bones to pick.  
I left his carcass, a headless prize,  
To these priests of mine anger's sacrifice.  
Ha—Hurra!

## XXI.

Hungry they came, though at first they fled  
From the grizzly look of a stranger guest—  
From a horse with its hoof on a dead man's head,  
And a soldier who leaned on a lance in his breast.  
The night wind's voice was hoarse and deep,  
But there were thoughts within me rougher,  
When my foiled passion could not keep  
His eyes from settling into sleep  
That could not see, nor suffer.



He knew his spirit was delivered  
By the last nerve my sword had severed,  
And lay—his death pang scarcely done,  
Stretched at my mercy—asking none.

Eleleu.

XXII.

His lips were pale. They once had worn  
A fiercer paleness. For awhile  
Their gashes kept the curl of scorn,  
But now—they always smile.  
A life like that of smouldering ashes,  
Had kept his shadowy eyeballs burning.  
Full through the neck my sabre crashes—  
The black blood burst beneath their lashes  
In the strained sickness of their turning.  
By my bridle-rein did I hang the head,  
And I spurred my horse through the quick and dead,  
Till his hoofs and his hair dropped thick and fresh,  
From the black morass of gore and flesh.

Ha—Hurra !

## XXIII.

My foe had left me little gold ~  
To mock the stolen food of the grave,  
Except one circlet : I have told  
The arm that lost, the surge that gave,  
Flexile it was, of fairest twist :  
Pressing its sunlike, woven line,  
A careless counter had not missed  
One pulse along a maiden's wrist,  
So softly did the clasp confine.  
This—molten till it flowed as free  
As daybreak on the Egean sea,  
He who once clasped—for Love to sever  
And death to lose, received—for ever.

## XXIV.

I poured it round the wrinkled brow,  
Till hissed its cold, corrupted skin ;  
Through sinuous nerves the fiery flow  
Sucked and seared the brain within.

The brittle bones were well annealed,  
A bull's hide bound the goblet grim,  
Which backwards bended, and revealed  
The dark eye sealed, the set lips peeled :  
Look here ! how I have pardoned him.  
They call it glorious to forgive ;  
'Tis dangerous, among those that live,  
But the dead are daggerless and mild,  
And my foe smiles on me—like a child.

## XXV.

Fill me the wine ! for daylight fades,  
The evening mists fall cold and blue ;  
My soul is crossed with lonelier shades,  
My brow is damp with darker dew ;  
The earth hath nothing but its bed  
Left more for me to seek, or shun ;  
My rage is passed—my vengeance fed—  
The grass is wet with what I've shed,  
The air is dark with what I've done ;

And the gray mound, that I have built  
Of intermingled grief and guilt,  
Sits on my breast with sterner seat  
Than my old heart can bear, and beat.

Eleleu.

XXVI.

Fill wine ! These fleshless jaws are dry,  
And gurgle with the crimson breath ;  
Fill me the wine ! for such as I  
Are meet, methinks, to drink with death.  
Give me the roses ! They shall weave  
One crown for me, and one for him,  
Fresher than his compeers receive,  
Who slumber where the white worms leave  
Their tracks of slime on cheek and limb.  
Kiss me, mine enemy ! Lo ! how it slips,  
The rich red wine through his skeleton lips ;  
His eye-holes glitter, his loose teeth shake,  
But their words are all drowsy and will not wake.

## XXVII.

That lifeless gaze is fixed on me ;

Those lips would hail a bounden brother ;

We sit in love, and smile to see

The things that we have made each other.

The wreaking of our wrath has reft

Our souls of all that loved or lightened :

*He* knows the heart his hand has left,

He sees its calm and closeless cleft,

And *I*—the bones my vengeance whitened.

Kiss me, mine enemy ! Fill thee with wine !

Be the flush of thy revelling mingled with mine ;

Since the hate and the horror we drew with our breath

Are lost in forgiveness, and darkened in death.

## THE SCYTHIAN GUEST.

WHEN the master of a Scythian family died he was placed in his state chariot, and carried to visit every one of his blood relations. Each of them gave him and his attendants a splendid feast at which the dead man sat at the head of the table, and a piece of everything was put on his plate. In the morning he continued his circuit. This round of visits generally occupied nearly forty days, and he was never buried till the whole number had elapsed. I have taken him at about six days old when a little phosphoric light might play about his skin in the dark, and yet the corruption would not, in a cool country, have made anything shapeless or decidedly unpleasant.—See *Herodotus, Melpomene, 73.*

### I.

THE feast is full, the guests are gay,  
    Though at his lance-illumined door  
Still must the anxious master stay,  
    For, by the echoing river shore,  
He hears the hot and hurrying beat  
Of harnessed horse's flying feet,  
And waits to watch and yearns to greet  
    The coming of the brave.

Behold—like showers of silver sleet,  
His lines of lances wind and wave :  
He comes as he was wont to ride  
By Hypanis' war troubled tide,  
When, like the west wind's sternest stoop,  
Was the strength of his tempestuous troop,  
And when their dark steed's shadows swift  
Had crossed the current's foamless drift,  
The light of the river grew dazzled and dim,  
With the flash of the hair and the flight of the limb.

## II. •

He comes—urged on by shout and lash,  
His favorite courser flies ;  
There's frenzy in its drooping dash,  
And sorrow in its eyes. •  
Close on its hoofs the chariots crash,  
Their shook reins ring—their axles flash—  
The charioteers are wild and rash ;  
Panting and cloven the swift air feels  
The red breath of the whirling wheels,

Hissing with heat, and drunk with speed  
Of wild delight, that seems to feed  
Upon the fire of its own flying ;  
Yet he for whom they race is lying  
Motionless in his chariot, and still  
Like one of weak desire or fettered will,  
Is it the sun-lulled sleep of weariness  
That weighs upon him ? Lo ! there is no stress  
Of slumber on his eyelids—some slow trance,  
Seems dwelling on the darkness of his glance ;  
Its depth is quiet, and its keenness cold  
As an eagle's quenched with lightning, the close fold  
Of his strong arms is listless, like the twine  
Of withered weeds along the waving line  
Of flowing streams ; and o'er his face a strange  
Deep shadow is cast, which doth not move nor change.

## III.

At the known gate the coursers check,  
With panting breast and lowly neck ;



From kingly group, from menial crowd,  
The cry of welcome rings aloud :  
It was not wont to be so weak,—  
Half a shout and half a shriek,  
Mixed with the low yet penetrating quiver  
Of constrained voices, such as creep  
Into cold words, when, dim and deep,  
Beneath the wild heart's death-like shiver  
Mocks at the message that the lips deliver.

## IV.

Doth he not hear ? Will he not wake ?  
That shout of welcome did not break,  
Even for an instant on the trace  
Of the dark shadow o'er his face.  
Behold, his slaves in silence lift  
That frame so strong, those limbs so swift,  
Like a sick child's ; though half erect  
He rose when first his chariot checked,  
He fell—as leaves fall on the spot  
Where summer sun shall waken not

The mingling of their veined sensation,  
With the black earth's wormy desolation.  
With stealthy tread, like those that dread  
To break the peace of sorrow's slumber,  
    They move, whose martial force he led,  
Whose arms his passive limbs encumber :  
    Through passage and port, through corridor and court,  
They hold their dark, slow-trodden track ;  
    Beneath that crouching figure's scowl  
The household dogs hang wildly back,  
    With wrinkled lip and hollow howl ;  
And on the mien of those they meet,  
    Their presence passes like the shadow  
Of the gray storm-cloud's swirling sheet,  
    Along some soft sun-lighted meadow ;  
For those who smiled before they met,  
    Have turned away to smile no more ;  
Even as they pass, their lips forget  
    The words they wove—the hues they wore ;  
Even as they look, the eyes grow wet  
    That glanced most bright before !

## V.

The feast is ranged, the guests are met ;  
    High on the central throne,  
That dark and voiceless Lord is set,  
    And left alone ;  
And the revel is loud among the crowd,  
    As the laugh on surges free,  
Of their merry and multitudinous lips,  
When the fiery foamlight skims and skips,  
    Along the sounding sea.  
The wine is red and wildly shed,  
The wreathed jest is gaily sped.  
And the rush of their merriment rises aloof  
Into the shade of the ringing roof ;  
And yet their cheeks look faint and dead,  
    And their lips look pale and dry ;  
In every heart there dwells a dread,  
    And a trouble in every eye.

## VI.

For sternly charmed, or strangely chill,  
That lonely Lord sits stiff and still,

Far in the chamber gathered back  
Where the lamps are few, and the shadows black ;  
So that the strained eye scarce can guess  
At the fearful form of his quietness,  
And shrinks from what it cannot trace,  
    Yet feels, is worse than even the error  
That veils, within that ghastly space,  
The shrouded form and shadowed face  
    Of indistinct, unmoving terror.  
And the life and light of the atmosphere  
Are choked with mingled mist and fear,  
Something half substance and half thought,—  
A feeling, visibly inwrought  
Into the texture of the air ;  
And though the fanned lamps flash and flare  
Among the other guests—by Him,  
They have grown narrow, and blue and dim,  
And steady in their fire, as if  
Some frigid horror made them stiff.  
Nor eye hath marked, nor ear hath heard  
That form, if once it breathed or stirred ;

Though the dark revel's forced fits  
Penetrate where it sleeps and sits ;  
But this, their fevered glances mark  
Ever, for ever, calm and dark ;  
With lifeless hue, and changeless trace,  
That shadow dwells upon his face.

## VII.

It is not pain, nor passion, but a deep  
Incorporated darkness, like the sleep  
Of the lead-coloured anger of the ocean,  
When the heaven is fed with death, and its gray motion  
Over the waves, invisible—it seems  
Entangled with the flesh, till the faint gleams  
Of natural flush have withered like the light  
Of the keen morning, quenched with the close flight  
Of thunder ; and beneath that deadly veil,  
The coldness of the under-skin is pale  
And ghastly, and transparent as beneath  
Some midnight vapour's intertwined wreath  
Glares the green moonlight ; and a veined fire  
Seems throbbing through it, like a dim desire

Felt through inanimation, of charmed life  
Struggling with strong sick pants of beaming strife,  
That wither and yet warm not :—through its veins,  
The quenched blood beats not, burns not, but dark  
    stains  
Of congealed blackness, on the cheek and brow,  
    Lie indistinct amidst their frightful shade ;  
The breathless lips, like two thin flakes of snow,  
    Gleam with wan lines, by some past agony made  
To set into the semblance of a smile,  
Such as strong-hearted men wear wildly, while  
Their souls are twined with torture ; calm and fixed,  
    And yet distorted, as it could not be,  
Had not the chill with which it froze been mixed  
    With twitching cords of some strong agony.  
And the white teeth gleam through the ghastly chasm  
Of that strange smile ; close clenched, as the last spasm  
Of the wrung nerves has knit them ; could they move,  
They would gnash themselves to pieces ; from above  
The veiling shadow of the forehead falls,  
Yet with an under-glare the fixed balls

Of the dark eyes gleam steadily, though not  
With any inward light, or under-thought,  
But casting back from their forgetful trance,  
To each who looks, the flash of his own glance ;  
So that each feels, of all assembled there,  
Fixed on himself, that strange and meaning glare  
Of eyes most motionless ; the long dark hair  
Hangs tangled o'er the faded feature's gloom,  
Like withered weeds above a mouldering tomb,  
Matted in black decay ; the cold night air  
Hath stirred them once or twice, even as despair  
Plays with the heart's worn chords, that last retain  
Their sense of sorrow, and their pulse of pain.

## VIII.

Yet strike, oh ! strike the chorded shell,  
And let the notes be low and skilled ;  
Perchance the words he loved so well  
May thrill as once they thrilled.  
That deadened ear may still be true  
To the soft voice that once it knew ;

And the throbs that beat below the heart,  
    And the joys that burn above,  
Shall bid the light of laughter dart  
    Along the lips of love.  
Alas! those tones are all untold  
On ear and heart so closed and cold;  
The slumber shall be sound,—the night,—how long!  
That will not own the power of smile or song;  
Those lips of love may burn, his eyes are dim;  
That voice of joy may wake, but not for him.

## IX.

The rushing wine, the rose's flush,  
    Have crowned the goblet's glancing brim;  
But who shall call the blossom's blush,  
    Or bid the goblet flow for him?  
For how shall thirst or hunger's heat  
    Attend the sunless track,  
Towards the cool and calm retreat,  
From which his courser's flashing feet  
    Can never bear him back?



There, by the cold corpse-guarded hill,  
The shadows fall both broad and still ;  
There shall they fall at night,—at noon,  
    Nor own the day star's warning,  
Grey shades, that move not with the moon,  
    And perish not with morning.

## X.

Farewell, farewell, thou presence pale !  
    The bed is stretched where thou shouldst be ;  
The dawn may lift its crimson veil,  
    It doth not breathe, nor burn for thee.  
The mien of might, the glance of light,  
    That checked or cheered the war's career,  
Are dreadless in the fiery fight,  
    Are dreadful only here.  
Exulting hatred, red and rife,  
    May smile to mark thine altered brow ;  
There are but those who loved in life,  
    Who fear thee, now.

Farewell, farewell, thou Presence pale !

    The couch is near where thou shouldst be ;  
Thy troops of Death have donned their mail,  
    And wait and watch for thee.

## THE BROKEN CHAIN.

### *PART FIRST.*

#### I.

It is most sad to see—to know  
This world so full of war and woe,  
E'er since our parents failing duty.  
Bequeathed the curse to all below,  
And left the burning breach of beauty.  
Where the flower hath fairest hue,  
Where the breeze hath balmiest breath,  
Where the dawn hath softest dew,  
Where the heaven hath deepest blue,  
There is death.  
Where the gentle streams of thinking,  
Through our hearts that flow so free,  
Have the deepest, softest sinking  
And the fullest melody;  
Where the crown of hope is nearest,  
Where the voice of joy is clearest,

Where the heart of youth is lightest,  
Where the light of love is brightest,  
There is death.

## II.

It is the hour when day's delight  
Fadeth in the dewy sorrow  
Of the star inwoven night ;  
And the red lips of the west  
Are in smiles of lightning drest,  
Speaking of a lovely morrow :  
But there's an eye in which, from far,  
The chill beams of the evening star  
Do softly move, and mildly quiver ;  
Which, ere the purple mountains meet  
The light of morning's misty feet,  
Will be dark—and dark for ever.

## III.

It was within a convent old,  
Through her lips the low breath sighing,

Which the quick pains did unfold  
With a paleness calm, but cold,  
Lay a lovely lady dying.  
As meteors from the sunless north  
Through long low clouds illumine the air,  
So brightly shone her features forth  
Amidst her darkly tangled hair ;  
And, like a spirit, still and slow,  
A light beneath that raven veil  
Moved,—where the blood forgot to glow,  
As moonbeams shine on midnight snow,  
So dim,—so sad,—so pale.  
And, ever as the death came nearer,  
That melancholy light waxed clearer :  
It rose, it shone, it never dwindled,  
As if in death it could not die ;  
The air was filled with it, and kindled  
As souls are by sweet agony.  
Where once the life was rich and red,  
The burning lip was dull and dead,  
As crimson cloud-streaks melt away,  
Before a ghastly darkened day.

Faint and low the pulses faded,  
One by one, from brow and limb ;  
There she lay—her dark eyes shaded  
By her fingers dim ;  
And through their paly brightness burning  
With a wild inconstant motion,  
As reflected stars of morning  
Through the crystal foam of ocean.  
There she lay—like something holy,  
Moveless—voiceless, breathing slowly,  
Passing, withering, fainting, failing,  
Lulled and lost and unbewailing.

## IV.

The abbess knelt beside, to bless  
Her parting hour with tenderness,  
And watched the light of life depart,  
With tearful eye and weary heart ;  
And, ever and anon, would dip  
Her fingers in the hallowed water,  
And lay it on her parching lip,  
Or cross her death damped brow ;

And softly whisper,—Peace,—my daughter,  
For thou shalt slumber softly now.  
And upward held, with pointing finger,  
The cross before her darkening eye ;  
Its glance was changing, nor did linger  
Upon the ebon and ivory ;  
Her lips moved feebly, and the air  
Between them whispered—not with prayer !  
Oh ! who shall know what wild and deep  
Imaginations rouse from sleep,  
Within that heart, whose quick decay  
So soon shall sweep them all away.  
Oh ! who shall know what things they be  
That tongue would tell—that glance doth see ;  
Which rouse the voice, the vision fill,  
Ere eye be dark, and tongue be still.

## V.

It is most fearful when the light  
Of thoughts, all beautiful and bright,

That through the heart's illumination  
Darts burning beams and fiery flashes,  
Fades into weak wan animation,  
And darkens into dust and ashes ;  
And hopes, that to the heart have been  
As to the forest is its green,  
(Or as the gentle passing by  
Of its spirits' azure wings  
Is to the broad, wind-wearied sky) ;  
Do pale themselves like fainting things,  
And wither, one by one, away,  
Leaving a ghastly silence where  
Their voice was wont to move and play  
Amidst the fibres of our feeling,  
Like the low and unseen stealing,  
Of the soft and sultry air ;  
That, with its fingers weak unweaves  
The dark and intertangled hair,  
Of many moving forest leaves ;  
And, though their life be lost do float,  
Around us still, yet far remote,



And come at the same call arranged,  
By the same thoughts, but oh, how changed !  
Alas ! dead hopes are fearful things,

To dwell around us, for their eyes  
Pierce through our souls like adder stings ;

Vampyre-like their troops arise,  
Each in his own death entranced,  
Frozen and corpse-countenanced ;  
Filling memory's maddened eye  
With a shadowed mockery.

And a wan and fevered vision,  
Of her loved and lost Elysian ;

Until we hail, and love, and bless  
The last strange joy, where joy hath fled,  
The last one hope, where hope is dead,

The finger of forgetfulness ;  
Which, dark as night, and dull as lead,  
Comes across the spirit passing,

Like a coldness through night air,  
With its withering wings effacing  
Thoughts that lived or lingered there ;

Light, and life, and joy, and pain,  
Till the frozen heart rejoices,  
As the echoes of lost voices  
Die and do not rise again ;  
And shadowy memories wake no more  
Along the hearts' deserted shore ;  
But fall and faint away and sicken,  
Like a nation fever-stricken,  
And see not from the bosom reft  
The desolation they have left.

## VI.

Yet, though that trance be still and deep,  
It will be broken ere its sleep  
Be dark and unawaked—forever ;  
And from the soul quick thoughts will leap  
Forth like a sad, sweet-singing river,  
Whose gentle waves flow softly o'er  
That broken heart,—that desert shore ;  
The lamp of life leaps up before

Its light be lost to live no more ;  
Ere yet its shell of clay be shattered,  
And all the beams at once could pour,  
In dust of death be darkly scattered.

## VII.

Alas ! the stander-by might tell  
That lady's racking thoughts too well ;  
The work within he might descry  
By trembling brow, and troubled eye,  
That as the lightning fiery, fierce,  
Strikes chasms along the keen ice plain ;  
The barbed and burning memories pierce  
Her dark and dying brain.  
And many mingled visions swim  
Within the convent chamber dim ;  
The sad twilight whose lingering lines  
Fall faintly through the forest pines,  
And with their dusky radiance lume  
That lowly bed and lonely room,  
Are filled, before her earnest gaze,  
With dazzling dreams of by-gone days.

They come, they come, a countless host,  
Forms long unseen, and looks long lost,  
And voices loved,—not well forgot,  
    Awake and seem, with accents dim,  
Along the convent air to float ;  
That innocent air that knoweth not,  
    A sound except the vesper hymn.

## VIII.

'Tis past, that rush of hurried thought,  
The light within her deep dark eye  
Was quenched by a wan tear mistily,  
Which trembled though it lightened not,  
As the cold peace, which all may share,  
Soothed the last sorrow life could bear.  
What grief was that, the broken heart  
Loved to the last, and would not part ?  
What grief was that, whose calmness cold  
By death alone could be consoled ?  
As the soft hand of coming rest  
Bowed her fair head upon her breast,

As the last pulse decayed, to keep  
Her heart from heaving in its sleep,  
The silence of her voice was broken,  
    As by a gasp of mental pain ;  
“ May the faith thou hast forgotten  
    Bind thee with its broken chain.”  
The Abbess raised her, but in vain ;  
    For, as the last faint word was spoken,  
The silver cord was burst in twain,  
    The golden bowl was broken.

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*PART SECOND.*

I.

The bell from Saint Cecilia's shrine  
    Had tolled the evening hour of prayer ;  
With tremulation, far and fine,  
    It waked the purple air :  
The peasant heard its distant beat,  
And crossed his brow with reverence meet :  
The maiden heard it sinking sweet

Within her jasmine bower,  
And treading down, with silver feet,  
Each pale and passioned flower :  
The weary pilgrim, lowly lying  
By Saint Cecilia's fountain grey,  
Smiled to hear that curfew dying  
Down the darkening day :  
And where the white waves move and glisten  
Along the river's reedy shore,  
The lonely boatman stood to listen,  
Leaning on his lazy oar.

## II.

On Saint Cecilia's vocal spire  
The sun had cast his latest fire,  
And flecked the west with many a fold  
Of purple clouds o'er bars of gold.  
That vocal spire is all alone,  
Albeit its many winding tone  
Floats waste away—oh ! far away,  
Where bowers are bright and fields are gay ;

That vocal spire is all alone,  
Amidst a secret wilderness,  
With deep free forest overgrown ;  
And purple mountains, which the kiss  
Of pale-lipped clouds doth fill with love  
Of the bright heaven that burns above,  
The woods around are wild and wide,  
And interwove with breezy motion ;  
Their bend before the tempest tide  
Is like the surge of shoreless ocean ;  
Their summer voice is like the tread  
Of trooping steeds to battle bred ;  
Their autumn voice is like the cry  
Of a nation clothed with misery ;  
And the stillness of the winter's wood  
Is as the hush of a multitude.

## III.

The banks beneath are flecked with light,  
All through the clear and crystal night,  
For as the blue heaven, rolling on,  
Doth lift the stars up one by one ;

Each, like a bright eye through its gates  
Of silken lashes dark and long,  
With lustre fills, and penetrates  
Those branches close and strong ;  
And nets of tangled radiance weaves  
Between the many twinkling leaves,  
And through each small and verdant chasm  
Lets fall a flake of fire,  
Till every leaf, with voiceful spasm,  
Wakes like a golden lyre.  
Swift, though still, the fiery thrill  
Creeps along from spray to spray,  
Light and music, mingled, fill  
Every pulse of passioned breath ;  
Which, o'er the incense—sickened death  
Of the faint flowers, that live by day,  
Floats like a soul above the clay,  
Whose beauty hath not passed away.

## IV.

Hark ! hark ! along the twisted roof  
Of bough and leafage, tempest-proof,



There whispers, hushed and hollow,  
The beating of a horse's hoof,  
Which low, faint echoes follow,  
Down the deeply-swarded floor  
Of a forest aisle, the muffled tread,  
Hissing where the leaves are dead,  
Increases more and more ;  
And lo ! between the leaves and light,  
Up the avenue's narrow span,  
There moves a blackness, shaped like  
The shadow of a man.  
Nearer now, where through the maze  
Cleave close the horizontal rays :  
It moves—a solitary knight,  
Borne with undulation light  
As is the windless walk of ocean,  
On a black steed's Arabian grace,  
Mighty of mien, and proud of pace,  
But modulate of motion.  
O'er breast and limb, from head to heel,  
Fall flexile folds of sable steel ;

Little the lightning of war could avail,  
If it glanced on the strength of the folded mail.  
The beaver bars his vizage mask,  
By outward bearings unrevealed :  
He bears no crest upon his casque,  
No symbol on his shield.  
Slowly and with slackened rein,  
Either in sorrow, or in pain,  
Through the forest he paces on,  
As our life does in a desolate dream,  
When the heart and the limbs are as heavy as stone,  
And the remembered tone and moony gleam  
Of hushed voices and dead eyes  
Draw us on the dim path of shadowy destinies.

## V.

The vesper chime hath ceased to beat,  
And the hill echoes to repeat  
The trembling of the argent bell.  
What second sounding—dead and deep,  
And cold of cadence, stirs the sleep  
Of twilight with its sullen swell ?

The knight drew bridle, as he heard  
Its voice creep through his beaver barred,  
Just where a cross of marble stood,  
Grey in the shadow of the wood.  
Whose youngest coppice, twined and torn,  
Concealed its access worship-worn :  
It might be chance—it might be art,  
Or opportune, or unconfessed,  
But from this cross there did depart  
A pathway to the west ;  
By which a narrow glance was given,  
To the high hills and highest heaven,  
To the blue river's bended line,  
And Saint Cecilia's lonely shrine.

## VI.

Blue, and baseless, and beautiful  
Did the boundless mountains bear  
Their folded shadows into the golden air.  
The comfortlessness of their chasms was full  
Of orient cloud and undulating mist,  
Which, where their silver cataracts hissed,

Quivered with panting colour. Far above  
A lightning pulse of soundless fire did move  
In the blue heaven itself, and, snake-like slid  
Round peak and precipice, and pyramid ;  
White lines of light along their crags alit,  
And the cold lips of their chasms were wreathed  
with it,

Until they smiled with passionate fire ; the sky  
Hung over them with answering ecstasy ;  
Through its pale veins of cloud, like blushing blood,  
From south to north the swift pulsation glowed  
With infinite emotion ; but it ceased

In the far chambers of the dewy west.  
There the weak day stood withering, like a spirit  
Which, in its dim departure, turns to bless  
Their sorrow whom it leaveth, to inherit  
Their lonely lot of night and nothingness.

Keen in its edge, against the farthest light,  
The cold calm earth its black horizon lifted,  
Though a faint vapour, which the winds had sifted  
Like thin sea-sand, in undulations white

And multitudinous, veiled the lower stars.  
And over this there hung successive bars  
Of crimson mist, which had no visible ending  
    But in the eastern gloom; voiceless and still,  
Illimitable in their arched extending,  
    They kept their dwelling place in heaven; the chill  
Of the passing night-wind stirred them not; the ascending  
    Of the keen summer moon was marked by them  
Into successive steps; the plenitude  
Of pensive light was kindled and subdued  
    Alternate, as her crescent keel did stem  
Those waves of currentless cloud, the diadem  
    Of her companion planet near her, shed  
Keen quenchless splendor down the drowsy air;  
    Glowed as she glowed, and followed where she led,  
High up the hill of the night heaven, where  
Thin threads of darkness, braided like black hair,  
    Where in long trembling tresses interwoven,  
The soft blue eyes of the superior deep  
Looked through them, with the glance of those who  
    cannot weep .  
For sorrow. Here and there the veil was cloven,

By crossing of faint winds, whose wings did keep  
Such cadence as the breath of dreamless sleep  
Among the stars, and soothed with strange delight  
The vain vacuity of the Infinite.

## VII.

Stiff as stone, and still as death,  
    Stood the knight like one amazed,  
And dropped his rein, and held his breath,  
    So anxiously he gazed.  
Oh ! well might such a scene and sun  
    Surprise the sudden sight,  
And yet his mien was more of one  
    In dread than in delight.  
His glance was not on heaven or hill,  
    On cloud or lightning, swift or still,  
    azure earth or orient air ;  
But long his fixèd look did lie  
On one bright line of western sky,—  
    What saw he there ?

## VIII.

On the brow of a lordly line

Of chasm-divided crag, there stood  
The walls of Saint Cecilia's shrine.

Above the undulating wood  
Broad basalt bulwarks, stern and stiff,  
Ribbed, like black bones, the grisly cliff.  
On the torn summit stretched away  
The convent walls, tall, old, and grey ;  
So strong their ancient size did seem,

So stern their mountain seat,  
Well might the passing pilgrim deem

Such desperate dwelling place more meet  
For soldier true, or baron bold,  
For army's guard or bandit's hold,  
Than for the rest, deep, calm, and cold,  
Of those whose tale of troublous life is told.

## IX.

The topmost tower rose, narrow and tall,  
O'er the broad mass of crag and wall ;

Against the streak of western light  
It raised its solitary height.  
Just above, nor far aloof,  
From the cross upon its roof,  
Sat a silver star.  
The low clouds drifting fast and far,  
Gave, by their own mocking loss,  
Motion to the star and cross.  
Even the black tower was stirred below  
    To join the dim, mysterious march,  
The march so strangely slow.  
    Near its top an opening arch  
Let through a passage of pale sky  
Enclosed with stern captivity;  
And in its hollow height there hung,  
From a black bar, a brazen bell :  
Its hugeness was traced clear and well  
The slanting rays among.  
Ever and anon it swung  
Halfway round its whirling wheel ;  
Back again, with rocking reel,



Lazily its length was flung,  
Till brazen lip and beating tongue.  
Met once, with unrepeated peal,  
Then paused ;—until the winds could feel  
    The weight of the wide sound that clung  
To their inmost spirit, like the appeal  
    Of startling memories, strangely strung,  
That point to pain, and yet conceal.  
    Again with single sway it rung,  
And the black tower beneath could feel  
The undulating tremor steal  
Through its old stones, with long shiver,  
The wild woods felt it creep and quiver  
Through their thick leaves and hushed air,  
As fear creeps through a murderer's hair.  
And the gray reeds beside the river,  
In the moonlight meek and mild,  
Moved like spears when war is wild.

## X.

And still the knight like statue stood,  
In the arched opening of the wood.

Slowly still the brazen bell  
Marked its modulated knell ;  
Heavily, heavily, one by one,  
The dull strokes gave their thunder tone.  
So long the pause between was led,  
Ere one rose the last was dead—  
Dead and lost by hollow and hill.  
Again, again, it gathered still ;  
Ye who hear, peasant or peer,  
By all you hope and all you fear,  
    Lowly now be heart and knee,  
Meekly be your orison said  
    For the body in its agony,  
And the spirit in its dread.

## XI.

Reverent as a cowl'd monk  
The knight before the cross had sunk ;  
Just as he bowed his helmless head,  
Twice the bell struck faint and dead,  
And ceased. Hill, valley, and winding shore  
The rising roll received no more.

His lips were weak, his words were low,  
A paleness came across his brow ;  
He started to his feet, in fear  
Of something that he seemed to hear.  
Was it the west wind that did feign  
Articulation strange and vain ?  
Vainly with thine ear thou warrest :  
Lo ! it comes, it comes again !  
Through the dimly woven forest  
Comes the cry of one in pain—  
“ May the faith thou hast forgotten  
Bind thee with its broken chain.”

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*PART THIRD.*

I.

On grey Amboise's rocks and keep  
The early shades of evening sleep,  
And veils of mist, white-folded, fall  
Round his long range of iron wall ;  
O'er the last line of withering light  
The quick bats cut with angled flight,

And the low breathing fawns that rest  
The twilight forest through,  
Each on his starry flank and stainless breast  
Can feel the coolness of the dew  
Soothing his sleep with heavenly weight :  
Who are these who tread so late  
Beyond Amboise's castle gate,  
And seek the garden shade ?  
The flowers are closed, the paths are dark,  
Their marble guards look stern and stark,  
The birds are still, the leaves are stayed,  
On windless bough, and sunless glade.  
Ah ! who are these that walk so late,  
Beyond Amboise's castle gate ?

## II.

Steep down the river's margin sink  
The gardens of Amboise,  
And all their inmost thickets drink  
The wide, low water-voice.  
By many a bank whose blossoms shrink

Amidst sweet herbage young and cold,  
Through many an arch and avenue,  
That noontide roofs with checkered blue,  
And paves with fluctuating gold,  
Pierced by a thousand paths that guide  
Grey echo-haunted rocks beside,  
And into caves of cool recess,  
Which ever-falling fountains dress  
With emerald veils, dashed deep in dew,  
And through dim thickets that subdue  
The crimson light of flowers afar,  
As sweet rain doth the sunset, decked  
Themselves with many a living star,  
Which music winged bees detect  
By the white rays and ceaseless odor shed  
Over the scattered leaves that every day lays dead.

## III.

But who are these that pass so late  
Beneath Amboise's echoing gate,

And seek the sweet path, poplar-shaded,  
By breeze and moonbeam uninvaded ?  
They are two forms, that move like one,  
    Each to the music of the other's lips,  
The cold night thrilling with the tone  
    Of their low words—the grey eclipse,  
Cast from the tangled boughs above.  
Their dark eyes penetrate with love ;  
    Two forms, one crested, calm, and proud,  
Yet with bowed head, and gentle ear inclining  
    To her who moves as in a sable cloud  
Of her own waving hair—the star-flowers shining  
    Through its soft waves, like planets when they keep  
Reflected watch beneath the sunless deep.

## IV.

Her brow is pure and pale, her eyes  
    Deep as the unfathomed sky,  
Her lips, from which the sweet words rise  
Like flames from incensed sacrifice,  
    Quiver with untold thoughts, that lie

Burning beneath their crimson glow,  
As mute and deathless lightnings sleep  
At sunset, where the dyes are deep

On Rosa's purple snow ;

She moves all beautiful and bright,  
With little in that form of light  
To set the seal of mortal birth,  
Or own her earthy—of the earth,  
Unless it be one strange quick trace  
That checks the glory of her face,  
A wayward meaning, dimly shed,  
A shadow, scarcely felt, ere fled ;  
A spot upon the brow, a spark  
Under those eyes subdued and dark ;  
A low short discord in the tone  
Of music round her being thrown ;  
A mystery more conceived than seen ;  
A wildness of the word and mien ;  
The sign of wilder work within,  
Which may be sorrow—must be sin.

## V.

Slowly they moved that knight and dame,  
Where hanging thickets quench and tame  
    The rivers flash and cry ;  
Mellowed among the leafage came  
Its thunder voice—its flakes of flame  
    Drifted undisturbing by,  
    Sunk to a twilight and a sigh.  
Their path was o'er the entangled rest  
    Of dark night flowers that underneath  
Their feet as their dim bells were pressed,  
    Sent up warm pulses of soft breath.  
Ranged in sepulchral ranks above,  
Grey spires of shadowy cypress clove,  
With many a shaft of sacred gloom,  
The evening heaven's mysterious dome ;  
Slowly above their columns keen  
Rolled on its path that starred serene ;  
A thousand fountains soundless flow  
With imaged azure moved below ;



And, through the grove and o'er the tide  
Pale forms appeared to watch, to glide,  
O'er whose faint limbs the evening sky  
Had cast like life its crimson dye ;  
Was it not life—so bright—so weak—  
That flushed the bloodless brow and cheek,  
And bade the lips of wreathed stone  
Kindle to all but breath and tone ?  
It moved—it heaved—that stainless breast !  
Ah ! what can break such marble rest ?  
It was a shade that passed—a shade,  
It was not bird nor bough that made,  
Nor dancing leaf, nor falling fruit,  
For where it moves—that shadow, gray and chill,  
The birds are lulled—the leaves are mute—  
The air is cold and still.

## VI.

Slowly they moved, that dame and knight,  
As one by one the stars grew bright ;  
Fondly they moved—they did not mark  
They had a follower strange and dark.

Just where the leaves their feet disturbed  
Sunk from their whispering tune,  
(It seemed beneath a fear that curbed  
Their motion very soon),  
A shadow fell upon them, cast  
By a less visible form that passed  
Between them and the moon.  
Was it a fountain's falling shiver ?  
It moveth on—it will not stay—  
Was it a mist wreath of the river ?  
The mist hath melted all away,  
And the risen moon is full and clear,  
And the moving shadow is marked and near.  
See ! where the dead leaves felt it pass,  
There are footsteps left on the bended grass—  
Footsteps as of an armed heel,  
Heavy with links of burning steel.

## VII.

Fondly they moved, that dame and knight,  
By the gliding river's billow light,

Their lips were mute, their hands were given,  
    Their hearts did hardly stir,  
The maid had raised her eyes to heaven,  
    But his were fallen on her.  
They did not heed, they did not fear  
That follower strange that trod so near,  
An armed form whose cloudy mail  
Flashed as it moved with radiance pale ;  
So gleams the moonlit torrent through  
Its glacier's deep transparent blue ;  
Quivering and keen its steps of pride  
Shook the sheathed lightning at its side,  
And waved its dark and drifted plume,  
Like fires that haunt the unholy tomb  
Where cursed with crime the mouldering dead,  
Lie restless in their robes of lead.  
What eye shall seek, what soul can trace  
The deep death-horror of its face ?  
The trackless, livid smile that played  
Beneath the casque's concealing shade ;  
The angered eye's unfathomed glare,  
(So sleep the fountains of despair,

Beneath the soul whose sins unseal,  
The wells of all it fears to feel.)  
The sunk, unseen, all-seeing gloom,  
Scarred with the ravage of the tomb,  
The passions that made life their prey,  
Fixed on the feature's last decay,  
The pangs that made the human heart their slave,  
Frozen on the changeless aspect of the grave.

## VIII.

And still it followed where they went,  
That unregarding pair ;  
It kept on them its eyes intent,  
And from their glance the sickened air  
Shrank, as if tortured. Slow, how slow,  
The knight and lady trod ;  
You had heard their hearts beat just as loud  
As their footsteps on the sod.  
They paused at length in a leafless place,  
Where the moonlight shone on the maiden's face ;

Still as an image of stone she stood,  
Though the heave of her breath, and the beat of her  
    blood

Murmured and mantled to and fro,  
Like the billows that heave on a hill of snow,  
When the midnight winds are short and low.  
The words of her lover came burning and deep,

    And his hand was raised to the holy sky ;  
Can the lamps of the universe bear or keep,  
    False witness or record on high ?

He starts to his feet from the spot where he knelt,  
What voice hath he heard, what fear hath he felt ?  
His lips in their silence are bloodless and dry,  
And the love-light fails from his glazed eye.

## IX.

Well might he quail, for full displayed  
Before him rose that dreadful shade,  
And o'er his mute and trembling trance  
    Waved its pale crest and quivering lance ;  
And traced, with pangs of sudden pain,  
The form of words upon his brain ;

“ Thy vows are deep, but still thou bears't the chain,  
Cast on thee by a deeper—vowed in vain ;  
Thy love is fair, but fairer forms are laid,  
Cold and forgotten, in the cypress shade ;  
Thy arm is strong, but arms of stronger trust,  
Repose unnerved, undreaded in the dust ;  
Around thy lance shall bend the living brave,  
Then arm thee for the challenge of the grave.”

## X.

The sound had ceased, the shape had passed away,  
Silent the air and pure the planet's ray.  
They stood beneath the lonely breathing night,  
The lovely lady and the lofty knight ;  
He moved in shuddering silence by her side,  
Or wild and wandering to her words replied,  
Shunning her anxious eyes on his that bent :  
“ Thou didst not see it, 'twas to me 'twas sent.  
To me,—but why to me ?—I knew it not,  
It was no dream, it stood upon the spot,

Where"— Then with lighter tone and bitter smile,  
"Nothing, beloved,—a pang that did beguile  
My spirit of its strength, a dream, a thought,  
A fancy of the night." And though she sought  
More reason of his dread, he heard her not,  
For, mingling with those words of phantom fear,  
There was another echo in his ear,  
An under murmur deep and clear,  
The faint low sob of one in pain,  
"May the faith thou hast forgotten  
Bind thee with its broken chain."

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*PART FOURTH.*

I.

'Tis morn !—in clustered rays increased—  
Exulting rays, that deeply drink  
The starlight of the East,  
And strew with crocus dyes the brink  
Of those blue streams that pause and sink

Far underneath their heavenly strand—  
Soft capes of vapour, ribbed like sand.  
Along the Loire white sails are flashing,  
Through stars of spray their dark oars dashing ;  
The rocks are reddening one by one,  
The purple sandbanks flushed with sun,  
And crowned with fire on crags and keep,  
Amboise ! above thy lifted steep,  
Far lightning o'er the subject vale,  
Blaze thy broad range of ramparts pale !  
Through distance azure as the sky,  
That vale sends up its morning cry.  
From countless leaves, that shaking shade  
Its tangled paths of pillared glade,  
And ceaseless fan, with quivering cool,  
Each gentle stream and slumbrous pool,  
That catch the leaf-song as they flow,  
In tinkling echo pure and low,  
Clear, deep, and moving, as the night,  
And starred with orbs of lily light.



Nor are they leaves alone that sing,  
Nor waves alone that flow ;  
The leaves are lifted on the wing  
Of voices from below ;  
The waters keep, with shade subdued,  
The image of a multitude—  
A merry crowd promiscuous met,  
Of every age and heart united—  
Gray hairs with golden twined, and yet  
With equal mien and eyes delighted,  
With thoughts that mix, and hands that lock,  
Behold they tread, with hurrying feet,  
Along the thousand paths that meet  
Beneath Amboise's rock ;  
For there upon the meadows wide,  
That couch along the river-side,  
Are pitched a snowy flock  
Of warrior tents, like clouds that rest,  
Through champaigns of the quiet west,  
When, far in distance, stretched serene,  
The evening sky lies calm and green.

Amboise's lord must bear to-day  
His love-gage through the rival fray ;  
Through all the coasts of fiery France  
    His challenge shook the air,  
That none could break so true a lance,  
    Nor for a dame so fair.

## II.

The lists are circled round with shields,  
    Like lily-leaves that lie  
On forest pools in clustered fields  
    Of countless company.  
But every buckler's bosses black  
Dash the full beams of morning back,  
In orbèd wave of welded lines,  
With mingled blaze of crimson signs,  
    And light of lineage high :  
As sounds that gush when thoughts are strong,  
    But words are weak with tears,  
Awoke, above the warrior throng,  
    The wind among the spears ;

Afar in hollow surge they shook,  
As reeds along some summer brook,  
Glancing beneath the July moon,  
All bowed and touched in pleasant tune ;  
Their steely lightning passed and played  
Alternate with the cloudy shade  
Of crested casques, and flying flakes  
Of horse-manes, twined like sable snakes,  
And misty plumes in darkness drifted,  
And chargèd banners broadly lifted,  
Purpling the air with storm-tints cast  
Down through their undulation vast,  
Wide the billowy army strewing,  
    Like to flags of victory  
From some wretched Armada's ruin,  
    Left to robe the sea.

## III.

As the morning star new risen  
    In a circle of calm sky,  
Where the white clouds stand to listen  
    For the spherèd melody

Of her planetary path,  
And her soft rays pierce the wrath  
Of the night storms stretched below,  
Till they sink like wreaths of snow,  
(Lighting heaven with their decay)  
    Into sudden silentness—  
    Throned above the stormy stress  
Of that knightly host's array,  
    Goddess-formed, as one whom mortals  
Need but gaze on to obey,  
    Distant seen, as through the portals  
Of some temple gray ;  
    The glory of a marble dream,  
Kindling the eyes that gaze, the lips that pray—  
    One gentle lady sat, retiring but supreme.

## IV.

Upon her brow there was no crown,  
    Upon her robe no gem ;  
Yet few were there who would not own  
    Her queen of earth, and them,

Because that brow was crowned with light  
As with a diadem,  
And her quick thoughts, as they did rise,  
Were in the deep change of her eyes,  
Traced one by one, as stars that start  
Out of the orbèd peace of night,  
Still drooping as they dart,  
And her sweet limbs shone heavenly bright,  
Following with undulation white,  
The heaving of her heart.  
High she sat, and all apart,  
Meek of mien, with eyes declined,  
Less like one of mortal mind,  
Than some changeless spirit shrined  
In the memories of men,  
Whom the passions of its kind  
Cannot hurt nor move again.

## v.

High she sat in meekness shaming,  
All of best and brightest there,  
Till the herald's voice, proclaiming

Her the fairest of the fair,  
Rang along the morning air ;  
And then she started, and that shade,  
Which in the moonlit garden glade  
Had marked her with its mortal stain,  
Did pass upon her face again,  
And in her eye a sudden flash  
Came and was gone ; but it were rash  
To say if it were pride or pain ;  
And on her lips a smile, scarce worn,  
Less, as it seemed, of joy than scorn,  
Was with a strange quick quivering mixed,  
Which passed away, and left them fixed  
In calm, persisting, colorless,  
Perchance too perfect to be peace  
A moment more, and still serene  
Returned, yet changed—her mood and mien ;  
What eye that traceless change could tell,  
Slight, transient,—but unspeakable !  
She sat, divine of soul and brow ;  
It passed,—and all is human now

## VI.

The multitude, with loud acclaim,  
Caught up the lovely lady's name ;  
Thrice round the lists arose the cry ;  
But when it sunk, and all the sky  
Grew doubly silent by its loss,  
A slow strange murmur came across  
The waves of the reposing air,  
A deep, soft voice that everywhere  
Arose at once, so lowly clear,  
That each seemed in himself to hear  
Alone, and fixed with sweet surprise,  
Did ask around him, with his eyes,  
If t'were not some dream-music dim  
And false, that only rose for him.

## VII.

“ Oh, lady Queen,—Oh, lady Queen !  
    Fairest of all who tread  
The soft earth carpet green,  
    Or breathe the blessings shed

By the stars and tempest free ;  
Know thou, oh, lady Queen,  
Earth hath borne, sun hath seen,  
Fairer than thee.

“ The flush of beauty burneth  
In the palaces of earth,  
But thy lifted spirit scorneth  
All match of mortal birth :  
And the nymph of the hill,  
And the naiad of the sea,  
Were of beauty quenched and chill,  
Beside thee !

“ Where the gray cypress shadows  
Move onward with the moon,  
Round the low mounded meadows,  
And the grave-stones, whitely hewn,  
Gleam like camp-fires through the night,  
There, in silence of long swoon,  
In the horror of decay ;  
With the worm for their delight,  
And the shroud for their array,



With the garland on their brow,  
And the black cross by their side,  
With the darkness for their beauty,  
And the dust for their pride,  
With the smile of baffled pain  
On the cold lips half apart,  
With the dimness on the brain,  
And the peace upon the heart ;  
Even sunk in solemn shade,  
Underneath the cypress tree,  
Lady Queen, there are laid  
Fairer than thee !”

## VIII.

It passed away, that melodie,  
But none the minstrel there could see ;  
The lady sat still calm of thought,  
Save that there rose a narrow spot  
Of crimson on her chéek ;  
But then, the words were far and weak,  
Perchance she heard them not.  
The crowd still listening, feared to speak,

And only mixed in sympathy  
Of pressing hand and wondering eye,  
    And left the lists all hushed and mute,  
For every wind of heaven had sunk  
    To that aerial lute.  
The ponderous banners, closed and shrunk,  
Down from their listless lances hung,  
The windless plumes were feebly flung.  
With lifted foot, the listening steed,  
    Did scarcely fret the fern,  
And the challenger on his charmed steed  
    Sat statue-like and stern,  
Till mixed with martial trumpet-strain,  
The herald's voice arose again,  
Proclaiming that Amboise's lord  
Dared by the trial of the sword,  
The bravest knights of France, to prove  
Their fairer dame or truer love,—  
And ere the brazen blast had died,  
That strange sweet singing voice replied,  
So wild that every heart did keep  
Its pulse to time the cadence deep :

## IX.

“ Where the purple swords are swiftest,  
And the rage of death unreigned.  
Lord of battle, though thou liftest  
Crest unstooped, and shield unstained,  
Vain before thy footsteps fail,  
Useless spear and rended mail,  
Shuddering from thy glance and blow,  
Earth’s best armies sink like snow ;  
Know thou this ; unmatched, unmet,  
Might hath children mightier yet.

The chapel vaults are deadly damp,  
Their air is breathless all,  
The downy bats they clasp and cramp  
Their cold wings to the wall ;  
The bright-eyed eft, from cranny and cleft,  
Doth noiselessly pursue  
The twining light of the death-worms white,  
In the pools of the earth dew ;

The downy bat,—the death-worm white,  
And the eft with its sable coil—  
They are company good for a sworded knight.  
In his rest from the battle toil ;  
The sworded knight is sunk in rest,  
With the cross-hilt in his hand ;  
But his arms are folded o'er his breast  
As weak as ropes of sand.  
His eyes are dark, his sword of wrath  
Is impotent and dim ;  
Dark lord, in this thy victor path,  
Remember him."

## X.

The sounds sunk deeply,—and were gone,  
And for a time the quiet crowd  
Hung on the long departing tone,  
Of wailing in the morning cloud,  
In spirit wondering and beguiled ;  
Then turned with steadfast gaze to learn  
What recked he, of such warning wild—  
Amboise's champion stern.

But little to their sight betrayed  
The visor bars and plumage shade ;  
The nearest thought he smiled ;  
Yet more in bitterness than mirth,  
And held his eyes upon the earth  
With thoughtful gaze, half sad, half keen,  
As they would seek beneath the screen  
Of living turf and golden bloom,  
The secrets of its under tomb.

## XI.

A moment more, with burning look,  
High in the air his plume he shook,  
And waved his lance as in disdain,  
And struck his charger with the rein,  
And loosed the sword-hilt to his grasp,  
And closed the visor's grisly clasp,  
And all expectant sate and still ;  
The herald blew his summons shrill,  
Keen answer rose from list and tent,  
For France had there her bravest sent,

With hearts of steel, and eyes of flame,  
Full armed the knightly concourse came ;  
They came like storms of heaven set free,  
They came like surges of the sea,  
    Resistless, dark and dense,  
Like surges on a sable rock,  
They fell with their own fiery shock,  
    Dashed into impotence.  
O'er each encounter's rush and gloom,  
Like meteor rose Amboise's plume,  
As stubble to his calm career ;  
Crashed from his breast the splintered spear,  
Before his charge the war-horse reeled,  
And bowed the helm, and sunk the shield,  
And checked the heart, and failed the arm ;  
And still the herald's loud alarm  
    Disturbed the short delay—  
On, chevaliers ! for fame, for love,—  
For these dark eyes that burn above  
    The field of your affray !

## XII.

Six knights had fallen, the last in death,—  
Deeply the challenger drew his breath.  
The field was hushed,—the wind that rocked  
    His standard staff grew light and low.  
A seventh came not. He unlocked  
    His visor clasp, and raised his brow  
To catch its coolness. Marvel not  
If it were pale with weariness,  
For fast that day his hand had wrought  
    Its warrior work of victory ;  
Yet, one who loved him might have thought  
    There was a trouble in his eye,  
And that it turned in some distress  
    Unto the quiet sky.  
Indeed that sky was strangely still,  
And through the air unwonted chill  
    Hung on the heat of noon ;  
Men spoke in whispers, and their words  
Came brokenly, as if the chords  
    Of their hearts were out of tune ; •

And deeper still, and yet more deep  
The coldness of that heavy sleep  
Came on the lulled air. And men saw  
In every glance, an answering awe  
Meeting their own with doubtful change  
Of expectation wild and strange.  
Dread marvel was it thus to feel  
The echoing earth, the trumpet-peal,  
The thundering hoof, the crashing steel,  
Cease to a pause so dead,  
They heard the aspens moaning shiver,  
And the low tinkling of the river  
Upon its pebble bed.  
The challenger's trump rang long and loud,  
And the light upon his standard proud  
Grew indistinct and dun ;  
The challenger's trump rang long and loud,  
And the shadow of a narrow cloud  
Came suddenly o'er the sun.

•



## XIII.

A narrow cloud of outline quaint,  
    Much like a human hand ;  
And after it, with following faint,  
    Came up a dull grey lengthening band  
    Of small cloud billows, like sea sand,  
And then out of the gaps of blue,  
Left moveless in the sky, there grew  
Long snaky knots of sable mist,  
Which counter winds did vex and twist,  
Knitted and loosed, and tossed and tore,  
Like passive weeds on that sandy shore ;  
And these seemed with their touch to infect  
The sweet white upper clouds, and checked  
Their pacing on the heavenly floor,  
    And quenched the light which was to them  
As blood and life, singing the while  
    A fitful requiem,  
Until the hues of each cloud isle  
    Sank into one vast veil of dread,  
    Coping the heaven as if with lead,

With drag'd pale edges here and there,  
Through which the noon's transparent glare  
Fell with a dusky red.  
And all the summer voices sank  
To let that darkness pass ;  
The weeds were quiet on the bank,  
The cricket in the grass ;  
The merry birds the buzzing flies,  
The leaves of many lips,  
Did make their songs a sacrifice  
Unto the noon eclipse.

## XIV.

The challenger's trump rang long and loud—  
Hark ! as its notes decay !  
Was it out of the earth—or up in the cloud ?—  
Or an echo far away ?  
Soft it came and none knew whence—  
Deep, melodious and intense,  
So lightly breathed, so wildly blown,  
Distant it seemed—yet everywhere  
Possessing all the infinite air—  
One quivering trumpet tone !

With slow increase of gathering sway,  
Louder along the wind it lay ;  
It shook the woods, it pressed the wave,  
The guarding rocks through chasm and cave  
    Roared in their fierce reply.  
It rose, and o'er the lists at length  
Crashed into full tempestuous strength,  
Shook through its storm-tried turrets high  
    Amboise's mountain home,  
And the broad thunder-vaulted sky  
    Clanged like a brazen dome.

## XV.

Unchanged, unchilled in heart and eye ;  
The challenger heard that dread reply ;  
His head was bowed upon his breast,  
And on the darkness in the west  
His glance dwelt patiently ;  
Out of that western gloom there came  
A small white vapor, shaped like flame,  
Unscattering, and on constant wing ;  
Rode lonely, like a living thing,

Upon its stormy path ; it grew,  
And gathered as it onward drew—  
It paused above the lists, a roof  
Inwoven with a lightning woof  
Of undulating fire, whose trace,  
Like corpse-fire on a human face,  
Was mixed of light and death ; it sank  
Slowly ; the wild war-horses shrank  
Tame from the nearing flash ; their eyes  
Glared the blue terror back, it shone  
On the broad spears, like wavering wan  
Of unaccepted sacrifice.  
Down to the earth the smoke-cloud rolled—  
Pale shadowed through sulphurous fold,  
Banner and armor, spear and plume  
Gleamed like a vision of the tomb.  
One form alone was all of gloom—  
In deep and dusky arms arrayed,  
Changeless alike through flash and shade,  
Sudden within the barrier gate  
Behold, the Seventh champion sate !

He waved his hand—he stooped his lance—  
The challenger started from his trance ;  
    He plunged his spur—he loosed his rein—  
A flash—a groan—a woman's cry—  
And up to the receiving sky  
    The white cloud rose again !

## XVI.

The white cloud rose—the white cloud fled—  
    The peace of heaven returned in dew,  
And soft and far the noontide shed  
    Its holiness of blue.  
The rock, the earth, the wave, the brake  
    Rejoiced beneath that sweet succeeding ;  
No sun nor sound can warm or wake  
    One human heart's unheeding.  
Stretched on the dark earth's bosom, chill,  
Amboise's lord lay stark and still.  
The heralds raise him, but to mark  
The last light leave his eyeballs dark—

The last blood dwindle on his cheek—  
They turned ; a murmur wild and weak  
    Passed on the air, in passion broken,  
The faint low sob of one in pain—  
    “ Lo ! the faith thou hast forgotten  
Binds thee with its broken chain ! ”

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*PART FIFTH.*

I.

The mists, that mark the day's decline,  
    Have cooled and lulled the purple air ;  
The bell, from Saint Cecilia's shrine,  
    Hath tolled the evening hour of prayer ;  
With folded veil, and eyes that shed  
Faint rays along the stones they tread,  
And bosom stooped, and step subdud,  
Came forth that ancient sisterhood ;  
Each bearing on her lips along  
Part of the surge of a low song,—  
A wailing requiem, wildly mixed  
    With suppliant cry, how weak to win,

From home so far—from fate so fixed,  
A Spirit dead in sin !  
Yet yearly must they meet, and pray  
For her who died—how long ago ?  
How long—'twere only Love could know ;  
And she, ere her departing day,  
Had watched the last of Love's decay ;  
Had felt upon her fading cheek  
None but a stranger's sighs ;  
Had none but stranger souls to seek  
Her death-thoughts in her eyes ;  
Had none to guard her couch of clay,  
Or trim her funeral stone,  
Save those, who, when she passed away,  
Felt not the more alone.

## II.

And years had seen that narrow spot  
Of death-sod levelled and forgot,  
Ere question came of record kept,  
Or how she died—or where she slept.

The night was wild, the moon was late—  
A lady sought the convent gate ;  
The midnight chill was on her breast,  
    The dew was on her hair,  
And in her eye there was unrest,  
    And on her brow despair ;  
She came to seek the face, she said,  
    Of one deep injured. One by one  
The gentle sisters came, and shed  
    The meekness of their looks upon  
Her troubled watch. “ I know them not,  
    I know them not,” she murmured still :  
“ Are then her face—her form forgot ? ”  
    “ Alas ! we lose not when we will  
The thoughts of an accomplished ill ;  
The image of our love may fade,  
But what can quench a victim’s shade ?

## III.

“ She comes not yet. She will not come.  
I seek her chamber ; ” and she rose



With a quick start of grief, which some  
Would have restrained ; but the repose  
Of her pale brow rebuked them. “ Back,”

She cried, “ the path,—the place,—I know,—  
Follow me not—though broad and black  
The night lies on that lonely track.  
There moves forever by my side  
A darker spirit for my guide ;  
A broader curse—a wilder woe,  
Must gird my footsteps as I go.”

## IV.

Sternly she spoke, and, shuddering, sought  
The cloister arches, marble-wrought,  
That send, through many a trembling shaft  
The deep wind's full, melodious draught,  
Round the low space of billowy turf  
Where funeral roses flash like surf,  
O'er those who share the convent grave,  
Laid each beneath her own green wave.

## V.

From stone to stone she passed, and spelt  
The letters with her fingers felt ;  
The stains of time are drooped across  
Those mouldering names, obscure with moss ;  
The hearts where once they deeply dwelt,  
With music's power to move and melt,  
Are stampless too—the fondest few  
Have scarcely kept a trace more true.

## VI.

She paused at length beside a girth  
Of osiers overgrown and old ;  
And with her eyes fixed on the earth,  
Spoke slowly and from lips as cold  
As ever met the burial mould.

## VII.

“I have not come to ask for peace  
From thee, thou unforgiving clay !  
The pangs that pass—the throbs that cease  
From such as thou, in their decay,

Bequeath them that repose of wrath

So dark of heart, so dull of ear,

That bloodless strength of sworded sloth,

That shows not mercy, knows not fear,  
And keeps its death-smile of disdain

Alike for pity, as for pain.

But, galled by many a ghastly link,

That bound and brought my soul to thee,  
I come to bid thy vengeance drink

The wine of this my misery.

Look on me as perchance the dead

Can look ; through soul and spirit spread

Before thee ; go thou forth, and tread

The lone fields of my life, and see

Those dark large flocks of restless pangs  
They pasture, and the thoughts of thee,

That shepherd them, and teach their fangs  
To eat the green, and guide their feet  
To trample where the banks are sweet  
And judge betwixt us, which is best,  
My sleepless torture, or thy rest ;

And which the worthier to be wept,  
The fate I caused, or that I kept,  
I tell thee, that my steps must stain  
With more than blood, their path of pain ;  
And I would fold my weary feet  
More gladly in thy winding sheet,  
And wrap my bosom in thy shroud,  
And dash thy darkness on the crowd  
Of terrors in my sight, and sheathe  
Mine ears from their confusion loud,  
And cool my brain with cypress wreath  
More gladly from its pulse of blood,  
Than ever bride with orange bud  
Clouded her moony brow. Alas !  
This osier fence I must not pass.  
Wilt thou not thank me—that I dare  
To feel the beams and drink the breath  
That curse me out of Heaven, nor share  
The cup that quenches human care,  
The sacrament of death ;  
But yield thee this, thy living prey  
Of erring soul and tortured clay,

To feed thee, when thou com'st to keep  
Thy watch of wrath around my sleep,  
Or turn the shafts of daylight dim,  
With faded breast and frozen limb ?

## VIII.

“ Yet come, and be, as thou hast been,  
Companion ceaseless—not unseen,  
Though gloomed the veil of flesh between  
Mine eyes and thine, and fast and rife  
Around me flashed the forms of life :  
I knew them by their change—for one  
I did not lose, I could not shun,  
Through laughing crowd, and lighted room,  
Through listed field, and battle's gloom,  
Through all the shapes and sounds that press  
The Path, or wake the Wilderness ;  
E'en when He came, mine eyes to fill,  
Whom Love saw solitary still,  
For ever, shadowy by my side,  
I heard thee murmur, watched thee glide ;  
But what shall now thy purpose bar ?  
The laughing crowd is scattered far,

The lighted ball is left forlorn,  
The listed field is white with corn,  
And he, beneath whose voice and brow  
I could forget thee—is—as thou.”

## IX.

She spoke, she rose, and from that hour,  
The peasant groups that pause beside  
The chapel walls at eventide,  
To catch the notes of chord and song  
That unseen fingers form, and lips prolong,  
Have heard a voice of deeper power,  
Of wilder swell, and purer fall,  
More sad, more modulate, than all.  
It is not keen, it is not loud,  
But ever heard alone,  
As winds that touch on chords of cloud  
Across the heavenly zone,  
Then chiefly heard, when drooped and drowned  
In strength of sorrow, more than sound ;  
That low articulated rush  
Of swift. but secret passion, breaking

From sob to song, from gasp to gush ;  
Then failing to that deadly hush,  
That only knows the wilder waking—  
That deep, prolonged, and dream-like swell,  
So full that rose—so faint that fell,  
So sad—so tremulously clear—  
So checked with something worse than fear.  
Whose can they be ?  
Go, ask the midnight stars, that see  
The secrets of her sleepless cell,  
For none but God and they can tell  
What thoughts and deeds of darkened choice  
Gave horror to that burning voice—  
That voice, unheard save thus, untaught  
The words of penitence or prayer ;  
The grey confessor knows it not ;  
The chapel echoes only bear  
Its burst and burthen of despair ;  
And pity's voice hath rude reply,  
From darkened brow and downcast eye,  
That quench the question, kind or rash,  
With rapid shade, and reddening flash ;

.

Or, worse, with the regardless trance  
 Of sealèd ear, and sightless glance,  
 That fearful glance, so large and bright,  
 That dwells so long, with heed so light,  
 When far within, its fancy lies,  
 Nor movement marks, nor ray replies,  
 Nor kindling dawn, nor holy dew  
 Reward the words that soothe or sue.

## X.

Restless she moves ; beneath her veil  
 That writhing brow is sunk and shaded ;  
 Its touch is cold—its veins are pale—  
 Its crown is lost—its lustre faded ;  
 Yet lofty still, though scarcely bright,  
 Its glory burns beneath the blight  
 Of wasting thought, and withering crime,  
 And curse of torture and of time ;  
 Of pangs—of pride, endured—degraded—  
 Of guilt unchecked, and grief unaided :  
 Her sable hair is slightly braided,



Warm, like south wind, its foldings float  
Round her soft hands and marble throat ;  
How passive these, how pulseless this,  
    That love should lift, and life should warm !  
Ah ! where the kindness, or the kiss,  
    Can break their dead and drooping charm !  
Perchance they were not always so :  
    That breast hath sometimes movement deep,  
Timed like the sea that surges slow  
Where storms have trodden long ago ;  
    And sometimes, from their listless sleep,  
Those hands are harshly writhed and knit,  
As grasping what their frenzied fit  
Deemed peace to crush, or death to quit.  
And then the sisters shrink aside ;  
    They know the words that others hear  
Of grace, or gloom—to charm or chide,  
    Fall on her inattentive ear,  
As falls the snowflake on the rock,  
That feels no chill, and knows no shock ;

Nor dare they mingle in her mood,  
So dark, and dimly understood ;  
    And better so, if, as they say,  
'Tis something worse than solitude :  
    For some have marked, when that dismay  
    Had seemed to snatch her soul away,  
That in her eye's unquietness  
There shone more terror than distress ;  
And deemed they heard, when soft and dead,  
By night they watched her sleepless tread,  
Strange words addressed, beneath her breath,  
As if to one who heard in death,  
And, in the night wind's sound and sigh,  
Imagined accents of reply.

\*           \*           \*           \*           \*

## XI.

The sun is on his western march,  
His rays are red on shaft and arch ;  
With hues of hope their softness dyes  
The image with the lifted eyes,

Where, listening still, with trancèd smile,  
Cecilia lights the glimmering aisle ;  
So calm the beams that flushed her rest  
Of ardent brow, and virgin breast  
Whose chill they pierced, but not profaned,  
And seemed to stir, what scarce they stained,  
So warm the life, so pure the ray :  
Such she had stood, ere snatched from clay,  
When sank the tones of sun and sphere,  
Deep melting on her mortal ear ;  
And angels stooped, with fond control,  
• To write the rapture on her soul.

## XII.

Two sisters, at the statue's feet,  
Paused in the altar's arched retreat,  
As risen but now from earnest prayer—  
One aged and grey—one passing fair ;  
In changeful gush of breath and blood,  
Mute for a time the younger stood ;  
Then raised her head and spoke : the flow  
Of sound was measured, stern, and slow ;

## XIII.

"Mother ! thou sayest she died in strife  
 Of heavenly wrath, and human woe ;  
 For me, there is not that in life  
 Whose loss could ask, or love could owe  
 As much of pang as now I show ;  
 But that the book which angels write  
 Within men's spirits day by day  
 That diary of judgment-light  
 That cannot pass away,  
 Which, with cold ear and glazing eye,  
 Men hear and read before they die,  
 Is open now before me set ;  
 Its drifting leaves are red and wet  
 With blood and fire, and yet, methought,  
 Its words were music, were they not  
 Written in darkness.

.     *I confess !*

Say'st thou ? The sea shall yield its dead,  
 Perchance my spirit its distress ;  
 Yet there are paths of human dread  
 That none but God should trace or tread ;

Men judge by a degraded law ;  
    With Him I fear not : He who gave  
The sceptre to the passion, saw  
    The sorrow of the slave.  
He made me, not as others are,  
    Who dwell, like willows by a brook,  
That see the shadow of one star  
    Forever with serenest look  
Lighting their leaves,—that only hear  
Their sun-stirred boughs sing soft and clear,  
And only live, by consciousness  
Of waves that feed, and winds that bless.  
Me—rooted on a lonely rock,  
    Amidst the rush of mountain rivers,  
He, doomed to bear the sound and shock  
Of shafts that rend and storms that rock,  
    The frost that blasts, and flash that shivers ;  
And I am desolate and sunk.  
A lifeless wreck—a leafless trunk,  
Smitten with plagues, and seared with sin,  
And black with rottenness within,

But conscious of the holier will  
That saved me long, and strengthens still.

## XIV.

Mine eyes are dim, they scarce can trace  
The rays that pierce this lonely place ;  
But deep within their darkness dwell  
A thousand thoughts they knew—too well.  
Those orbéd towers obscure and vast,\*  
That light the Loire with sunset last ;  
Those fretted groups of shaft and spire  
That crest Amboise's cliff with fire,  
When, far beneath, in moonlight fail  
The winds that shook the pausing sail ;  
The panes that tint with dyes divine  
The altar of St. Hubert's shrine ;  
The very stone on which I knelt ;  
When youth was pure upon my brow,  
Though word I prayed, or wish I felt  
I scarce remember now.

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\* Note, page 167.

Methought that there I bowed to bless  
A warrior's sword—a wanderer's way :  
Ah ! nearer now, the knee would press  
The heart for which the lips would pray.  
The thoughts were meek, the words were low—  
I deemed them free from sinful stain ;  
It might be so. I only know  
These were unheard, and those were vain.

## XV.

“ That stone is raised ;—where once it lay  
Is built a tomb of marble grey :\*  
Asleep within the sculptured veil  
Seems laid a knight in linkèd mail ;  
Obscurely laid in powerless rest,  
The latest of his line,  
Upon his casque he bears no crest,  
Upon his shield no sign.  
I've seen the day when through the blue  
Of broadest heaven his banner flew,

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\* Note, page 167.

And armies watched through farthest fight,

The stainless symbol's stormy light

Wave like an angel's wing.

Ah ! now a scorned and scathèd thing,

It's silken folds the worm shall fret,

The clay shall soil, the dew shall wet,

Where sleeps the sword that once could save,

And droops the arm that bore ;

Its hues must gird a nameless grave ;

Nor wind shall wake, nor lance shall wave,

Nor glory gild it more :

For he is fallen—oh ! ask not how,

Or ask the angels that unlock

The inmost grave's sepulchral rock ;

I could have told thee once, but now

'Tis madness in me all, and thou

Wouldst deem it so, if I should speak.

And I am glad my brain is weak ;—

Ah, this is yet its only wrong,

To know too well—to feel too long.



## XVI.

“ But I remember how he lay  
When the rushing crowd were all away ;  
And how I called, with that low cry  
He never heard without reply ;  
And how there came no sound, nor sign,  
And the feel of his dead lips on mine ;  
And when they came to comfort me,  
I laughed, because they could not see  
The stain of blood, or print of lance,  
To write the tomb upon the trance.  
I saw, what they had heeded not,  
Above his heart a small black spot ;  
Ah, woe ! I knew how deep within  
That stamp of death, that seal of sin  
Had struck with mortal agony  
The heart so false—to all but me.

## XVII.

“ Mother, methinks my soul can say  
It loved as well as woman’s may ;

And what I would have given, to gain  
The answering love, to count were vain ;  
I know not—what I gave I know—  
My hope on high, my all below.  
But hope and height of earth and heaven,  
Or highest sphere to angels given,  
Would I surrender, and take up  
The horror of this cross and cup  
I bear and drink, to win the thought  
That I had failed in what I sought.  
Alas ! I won—rejoiced to win  
The love whose every look was sin,  
Whose every dimly worded breath  
Was but the distant bell of death  
For her who heard, for him who spoke.

Ah ! though those hours were swift and few,  
The guilt they bore, the vow they broke,  
Time cannot punish—nor renew.

## XVIII.

“ They told me long ago that thou  
Hadst seen, beneath this very shade

Of mouldering stone that wraps us now,  
The death of her whom he betrayed.  
Thine eyes are wet with memory,—  
In truth 'tis fearful sight to see  
E'en the last sands of sorrow run,  
Though the fierce work of death be done,  
And the worst woe that fate can will  
Bids but its victim to be still.  
But I beheld the darker years  
That first oppressed her beauty's bloom ;  
The sickening heart and silent tears  
That asked and eyed her early tomb ;  
I watched the deepening of her doom,  
As, pulse by pulse, and day by day,  
The crimson life-tint waned away  
And timed her bosom's quickening beat,  
That hastened only to be mute,  
And the short tones, each day more sweet,  
That made her lips like an Eolian lute,  
When winds are saddest ; and I saw  
The kindling of the unearthly awe

That touched those lips with frozen light,  
The smile, so bitter, yet so bright,  
Which grief, that sculptured, seals its own,  
Which looks like life, but stays like stone ;  
Which checks with fear the charm it gives,  
And loveliest burns, when least it lives,—  
All this I saw. Thou canst not guess  
How woman may be merciless.  
One word from me had rent apart  
The chains that chafed her dying heart :  
Closer I clasped the links of care,  
And learned to pity—not to spare.

## XIX.

She might have been avenged ; for, when  
Her woe was aidless among men,  
And tooth of scorn and brand of shame  
Had seared her spirit, soiled her name,  
There came a stranger to her side,  
Or—if a friend, forgotten long,  
For hearts are frail, when hands divide.  
There were who said her early pride

Had cast his love away with wrong ;  
But that might be a dreamer's song.  
He looked like one whom power or pain  
Had hardened, or had hewn, to rock  
That could not melt nor rend again,  
Unless the staff of God might shock,  
And burst the sacred waves to birth  
That deck with bloom the Desert's dearth—  
That dearth, that knows nor breeze, nor balm,  
Nor feet that print, nor sounds that thrill,  
Though cloudless was his soul, and calm,  
It was the Desert still ;  
And blest the wildest cloud had been  
That broke the desolate serene,  
And kind the storm, that farthest strewed  
Those burning sands of solitude.

## XX.

“ Darkly he came, and in the dust  
Had writ, perchance, Amboise's shame :  
I knew the sword he drew was just,  
And in my fear a fiend there came ;

It deepened first, and then derided  
The madness of my youth ;  
I deemed not that the God, who guided  
The battle blades in truth,  
Could gather from the earth the guilt  
Of holy blood in secret spilt.

## XXI.

“I watched at night the feast flow high ;  
I kissed the cup he drank to die ;  
I heard at morn the trumpet call  
Leap cheerily round the guarded wall ;  
And laughed to think how long and clear  
The blast must be, for him to hear.  
He lies within the chambers deep,  
Beneath Amboise’s chapel floor,  
Where slope the rocks in ridges steep,  
Far to the river shore ;  
Where thick the summer flowers are sown,  
And, even within the deadening stone,  
A living ear can catch the close  
Of gentle waves forever sent,

To soothe, with lull and long lament,  
That murdered knight's repose :  
And yet he sleeps not well ;—but I  
Am wild, and know not what I say ;—  
My guilt thou knowest—the penalty  
Which I have paid, and yet must pay,  
Thou canst not measure. O'er the day  
I see the shades of twilight float—  
My time is short. Believest thou not ?  
I know my pulse is true and light,  
My step is firm, mine eyes are bright ;  
Yet see they—what thou canst not see,  
The open grave, deep dug for me ;  
The vespers we shall sing to-night  
My burial hymn shall be :  
But what the path by which I go,  
My heart desires yet dreads to know.  
But this remember, (these the last  
Of words I speak for earthly ear ;  
Nor sign nor sound my soul shall cast,  
Wrapt in its final fear) :

For him, forgiving, brave and true,  
 Whom timeless and unshrived I slew,  
 For him be holiest masses said,  
 And rites that sanctify the dead,  
 With yearly honor paid.  
 For her, by whom he was betrayed,  
 Nor blood be shed, nor prayer be made,—  
 The cup were death — the words were sin,  
 To judge the soul they could not win,  
 And fall in torture o'er the grave  
 Of one they could not wash, nor save.”

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

XXII.

The vesper beads are told and slipped,  
 The chant has sunk by choir and crypt.  
 That circle dark—they rise not yet ;  
 With downcast eyes, and lashes wet,  
     They linger, bowed and low ;  
 They must not part before they pray  
 For her who left them on this day  
     How many years ago !



## XXIII.

They knelt within the marble screen,  
Black-robed and moveless, hardly seen,  
Save by their shades that sometimes shook  
    Along the quiet floor,  
Like leaf-shades on a waveless brook  
    When the wind walks by the shore.  
The altar lights that burned between,  
Were seven small fire-shafts, white and keen,  
    Intense and motionless.  
They did not shake for breeze nor breath,  
    They did not change, nor sink, nor shiver ;  
They burned as burn the barbs of death  
    At rest within their angel's quiver.  
From lip to lip, in chorus kept,  
The sad sepulchral music swept,  
While *one* sweet voice unceasing led :  
Were there but mercy for the dead,  
Such prayer had power to soothe—to save—  
Ay, even beneath the binding grave ;

So pure the springs of faith that fill  
The spirit's fount, at last unsealed.  
A corpse's ear, an angel's will,  
That voice might wake, or wield.  
Keener it rose, and wilder yet,  
The lifeless flowers that wreath and fret  
Column and arch with garlands white,  
Drank the deep fall of its delight,  
Like purple rain at evening shed  
On Sestri's cedar-darkened shore,  
When all her sunlit waves lie dead,  
And far along the mountains fled,  
Her clouds forget the gloom they wore,  
Till winding vale and pasture low  
Pant underneath their gush and glow ;  
So sank, so swept, on earth and air,  
That single voice of passioned prayer.  
The hollow tombs gave back the tone,  
The roof's grey shafts of stalwart stone  
Quivered like chords, the keen night blast  
Grew tame beneath the sound. Tis past :

That failing cry—how feebly flung !  
What charm is laid on her who sung ?  
    Slowly she rose—her eyes were fixed  
On the void, penetrable air ;  
    And in their glance was gladness mixed  
With terror, and an under glare :  
What human soul shall seize or share  
    The thoughts it might avow ?  
It might have been—ah ! is it now—  
    Devotion ?—or despair ?

## XXIV.

With steps whose short white flashes keep  
    Beneath the shade of her loose hair,  
With measured pace, as one in sleep  
    Who heareth music in the air,  
She left the sister's circle deep  
Their anxious eyes of troubled thought  
Dwelt on her but she heeded not ;  
Fear struck and breathless as they gazed,  
    Before her steps their ranks divided ;  
Her hand was given—her face was raised

As if to one who watched and guided—  
Her form emerges from the shade ;  
Lo ! she will cross, where full displayed  
Against the altar light 'tis thrown ;  
She crosses now—but not alone.  
Who leads her ? Lo ! the sisters shrink  
Back from that guide with limbs that sink,  
And eyes that glaze, and lips that blench ;  
For, seen where broad the beams were cast  
By what it dimmed, but did not quench,  
A dark, veiled form there passed—  
Veiled with the nun's black robe, that shed  
Faint shade around its soundless tread ;  
Moveless and mute the folds that fell,  
Nor touch can change, nor breeze repel.  
Deep to the earth its head was bowed,  
Its face was bound with the white shroud ;  
One hand upon its bosom pressed—  
One seemed to lead its mortal guest ;  
The hand it held lay bright and bare,  
Cold as itself, and deadly fair.

What oath had bound the fatal troth  
Whose horror seems to seal them both ?  
Each powerless in the grasp they give,  
This to release, and that to live.

## XXV.

Like sister sails, that drift by night  
Together on the deep,  
Seen only where they cross the light  
That pathless waves must pathlike keep  
From fisher's signal fire, or pharos steep.

## XXVI.

Like two thin wreaths that autumn dew  
Hath framed of equal paced cloud,  
Whose shapes the hollow night can shroud,  
Until they cross some caverned place  
Of moon illumined blue,  
That live an instant, but must trace  
Their onward way, to waste and wane  
Within the sightless gloom again,

Where, scattered from their heavenly pride  
Nor star nor storm shall gild or guide,—  
So shape and shadow, side by side  
The consecrated light had crossed.  
Beneath the aisle an instant lost,  
Behold ! again they glide  
Where yonder moonlit arch is bent  
Above the marble steps' descent,—  
Those ancient steps, so steep and worn,  
Though none descend, unless it be  
Bearing, or borne, to sleep, or mourn,  
The faithful or the free.  
The shade yon bending cypress cast,  
Stirred by the weak and tremulous air,  
Kept back the moonlight as they passed.  
The rays returned : they were not there.  
Who follows ? Watching still, to mark  
If ought returned—(but all was dark)  
Down to the gate, by two and three,  
The sisters crept, how fearfully !

•

They only saw, when there they came,  
Two wandering tongues of waving flame,  
O'er the white stones, confusedly strewed  
Across the field of solitude.

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## NOTES.

## Stanza II. Line 4.

“The image with the lifted eyes.”—I was thinking of the St. Cecilia of Raphael at Bologna, turned into marble—were it possible—where so much depends on the entranced darkness of the eyes. The shrine of St. Cecilia is altogether imaginary; she is not a favorite saint in matters of dedication. I don't know why.

## Stanza XIV. Line 5.

“Those orbèd towers, obscure and vast.”—The circular tower, in Amboise, is so large as to admit of a spiral ascent in its interior, which two horsemen may ride up abreast. The chapel, which crowns the precipice, though small, is one of the loveliest bits of rich detail in France. It is terminated by a wooden spire. It is dedicated to St. Hubert, a grotesque piece of carving above the entrance representing his rencontre with the sacred stag.

## Stanza XV. Line 2.

“Is built a tomb of marble grey.”—There is no such tomb now in existence, the chapel being circular, and unbroken in design; in fact, I

have my doubts whether there ever was anything of the kind, the lady being slightly too vague in her assertions to deserve unqualified credit.

Stanza XXI. Line 42.

“Nor blood be shed.”—In the sacrifices of masses the priest is said to offer Christ for the quick and dead.

Stanza XXIII. Line 26.

“Like purple rain.”—I never saw such a thing but once, on the mountains of Sestri, in the gulf of Genoa. The whole western half of the sky was one intense amber color, the air crystalline and cloudless, the other half, grey with drifting showers. At the instant of sunset, the whole mass of rain turned of a deep rose-color, the consequent rainbow being not varied with the seven colors, but one broad belt of paler rose; the other tints being so delicate as to be overwhelmed by the crimson of the rain.



## THE TEARS OF PSAMMENITUS.

[CAMBYSES, the son of Cyrus, made war on Psammenitus of Egypt, and deposed him. His sons were sentenced to death, his daughters to slavery. He saw his children pass to death and to dishonor without apparent emotion, but *wept* on observing a noble, who had been his companion, ask alms of the Persians. Cambyses sent to inquire the reason of his conduct. The substance of his reply was as follows :—]

SAY ye I wept ? I do not know :—

There came a sound across my brain,

Which was familiar long ago ;

And through the hot and crimson stain

That floods the earth and chokes the air,

I saw the waving of white hair—

The palsy of an aged brow ;

I should have known it once, but now

One desperate hour hath dashed away

The memory of my kingly day.

Mute, weak, unable to deliver

That bowed distress of passion pale,

I saw that forehead's tortured quiver,

And watched the weary footstep fail,

With just as much of sickening thrill

As marked my heart was human still ;

Yes, though my breast is bound and barred

With pain, and though that heart is hard,

And though the grief that should have bent

Hath made me, what ye dare not mock,

The being of untamed intent,

Between the tiger and the rock,

There's that of pity's outward glow

May bid the tear atone,

In mercy to another's woe

For mockery of its own ;

It is not cold,—it is not less,

Though yielded in unconsciousness.

And it is well that I can weep,

For in the shadow, not of sleep,

Through which, as with a vain endeavor,

These aged eyes must gaze forever,

Their tears can cast the only light  
That mellows down the mass of night ;  
For they have seen the curse of sight  
My spirit guards the dread detail  
And wears their vision like a veil.  
They saw the low Pelusian shore  
Grow warm with death and dark with gore,  
    When on those widely watered fields,  
Shivered and sunk, betrayed, oppressed,  
Ionian sword and Carian crest,\*  
    And Egypt's shade of shields :  
They saw, oh God ! they still must see  
That dream of long dark agony,  
A vision passing, never past,  
A troop of kingly forms, that cast  
Cold quivering shadows of keen pain  
In bars of darkness o'er my brain :  
I see them move,—I hear them tread,  
    Each his untroubled eyes declining,

---

\* The Ionians and Carians were faithful auxiliaries of the Egyptian kings, from the beginning of the reign of Psammenitus. The helmet crest was invented by the Carians.

Though fierce in front, and swift and red  
     The Eastern sword is sheathless shining.  
 I hear them tread,—the earth doth not !  
 Alas ! its echoes have forgot  
 The fiery steps that shook the shore  
 With their swift pride in days of yore.  
     In vain, in vain, in wrath arrayed,  
 Shall Egypt wave her battle blade ;  
 It cannot cleave the dull death shade,  
 Where, sternly checked and lowly laid,  
 Despised, dishonored, and betrayed,  
 That pride is past, those steps are stayed.  
 Oh ! would I were as those who sleep  
     In yonder island lone and low.\*  
 Beside whose shore, obscure and deep,  
     Sepulchral waters flow,  
 And wake, with beating pause, like breath,  
 Their pyramidal place of death ;

---

\* Under the hill, on which the pyramids of Cheops were erected, were excavated vaults, around which a stream from the Nile was carried by a subterraneous passage. These were sepulchres for the kings, and Cheops was buried there himself.—HEROD., II., 187.

For it is cool and quiet there,  
And on the calm frankincensed clay  
Passes no change, and this despair  
Shrinks like the baffled worm, their prey  
Alike impassive. I forget  
The thoughts of him who sent ye here :  
Bear back these words, and say, though yet  
The shade of this unkingly fear  
Hath power upon my brow, no tear  
Hath quenched the curse within mine eyes,  
And by that curse's fire,  
I see the doom that shall possess  
His hope, his passion, his desire,  
His life, his strength, his nothingness.  
I see across the desert led,\*  
A plumèd host, on whom distress  
Of fear and famine hath been shed ;

---

\* Cambyses, after subduing Egypt, led an army against the Ethiopians. He was checked by famine. Persisting in his intention, until the troops were obliged to kill every tenth man for food, he lost the greater part of his army.

Before them lies the wilderness,  
Behind, along the path they tread,  
If death make desolation less,  
There lie a company of dead  
Who eover the sand's hot nakedness  
With a cool moist bed of human clay,  
A soil and a surface of slow decay :  
Through the dense and lifeless heap  
Irregularly rise  
Short shuddering waves that heave and creep,  
Like spasms that plague the guilty sleep,  
And where the motion dies,  
A moaning mixes with the purple air,  
They have not fallen in fight ; the trace  
Of war hath not passed by ;  
There is no fear on any face,  
No wrath in any eye.  
They have laid them down with bows unbent,  
With swords unfleshed and innocent,  
In the grasp of that famine whose gradual thrill  
Is fiercest to torture and longest to kill :

Stretched in one grave on the burning plain  
Coiled together in knots of pain,  
Where the dead are twisted in skeleton writhe,  
With the mortal pangs of the living and lithe ;  
Soaking into the sand below,  
With the drip of the death-dew, heavy and slow,  
Mocking the heaven that heard no prayer,  
With the lifted hand and the lifeless stare—  
With the lifted hand, whose tremorless clay,  
Though powerless to combat, is patient to pray.  
And the glance that reflects, in its vain address,  
Heaven's blue from its own white lifelessness ;  
Heaped for a feast on the venomous ground,  
For the howling jackal and herded hound ;  
With none that can watch and with few that will weep  
By the home they have left, or the home they must  
    keep,  
The strength hath been lost from the desolate land,  
Once fierce as the simoon, now frail as the sand.  
Not unavenged : their gathered wrath  
Is dark along its desert path,

Nor strength shall bide, nor madness fly  
The anger of their agony,  
    For every eye, though sunk and dim,  
And every lip, in its last need,  
    Hath looked and breathed a plague on him  
Whose pride they fell to feed.  
The dead remember well and long,  
And they are cold of heart and strong,  
They died, they cursed thee ; not in vain !  
Along the river's reedy plain  
Behold a troop,—a shadowy crowd—  
Of godlike spectres, pale and proud ;  
In concourse calm they move and meet,  
The desert billows at their feet,  
Heave like the sea when, deep distressed,  
The waters pant in their unrest.  
Robed in a whirl of pillared sand  
    Avenging Ammon glides supreme ;\*

---

\* Cambyses sent 50,000 men to burn the temple of the Egyptian J. or Ammon. They plunged into the desert and were never heard more. It was reported they were overwhelmed with sand.



The red sun smoulders in his hand  
 And round about his brows, the gleam,  
 As of a broad and burning fold  
 Of purple wind, is wrapt and rolled.\*  
 With failing frame and lingering tread,  
 Stern Apis follows, wild and worn ; †  
 The blood by mortal madness shed,  
 Frozen on his white limbs anguish-torn.  
 What soul can bear, what strength can brook  
 The God-distress that fills his look ?  
 The dreadful light of fixed disdain,  
 The fainting wrath, the flashing pain  
 Bright to decree or to confess  
 Another's fate—its own distress—

---

\* The simoon is rendered visible by its purple tone of color.

† The god Apis occasionally appeared in Egypt under the form of a handsome bull. He imprudently visited his worshippers immediately after Cambyses had returned from Ethiopia with the loss of his army and reason. Cambyses heard of his appearance, and insisted on seeing him. The officiating priests introduced Cambyses to the bull. The king looked with little respect on a deity whose divinity depended on the number of hairs in his tail, drew his dagger, wounded Apis in the thigh, and scourged all the priests. Apis died. From that time the insanity of Cambyses became evident, and he was subject to the violent and torturing passions described in the succeeding lines.

A mingled passion and appeal,  
Dark to inflict and deep to feel.

• Who are these that fitting follow  
Indistinct and numberless ?

As through the darkness, cold and hollow,  
Of some hopeless dream, there press  
Dim, delirious shapes that dress  
Their white limbs with folds of pain ;  
See the swift mysterious train—

Forms of fixed, embodied feeling,  
Fixed, but in a fiery trance,  
Of wildering mien and lightning glance,  
Each its inward power revealing  
Through its quivering countenance ;  
Visible living agonies,

Wild with everlasting motion,  
Memory with her dark dead eyes,  
Tortured thoughts that useless rise,

Late remorse and vain devotion,  
Dreams of cruelty and crime,  
Unmoved by rage, untamed by time,

Of fierce design, and fell delaying,  
    Quenched affection, strong despair  
Wan disease, and madness playing  
    With her own pale hair.  
The last, how woeful and how wild !  
    Enrobed with no diviner dread  
Than that one smile, so sad, so mild,  
    Worn by the human dead ;  
A spectre thing, whose pride of power  
    Is vested in its pain  
Becoming dreadful in the hour  
    When what it seems was slain.  
Bound with the chill that checks the sense,  
    It moves in spasm-like spell :  
It walks in that dead impotence,  
    How weak, how terrible !  
Cambyses, when thy summoned hour  
Shall pause on Ecbatana's Tower,  
Though barbed with guilt, and swift, and fierce,  
Unnumbered pangs thy soul shall pierce

The last, the worst thy heart can prove,  
     Must be that brother's look of love ;\*  
 That look that once shone but to bless,  
 Then changed, how mute, how merciless !  
 His blood shall bathe thy brow, his pain  
 Shall bind thee with a burning chain,  
 His arms shall drag, his wrath shall thrust  
 Thy soul to death, thy throne to dust ;  
 Thy memory darkened with disgrace,  
 Thy kingdom wrested from thy race, †  
 Condemned of God, accursed of men,  
 Lord of my grief, remember then,  
 The tears of him—who will not weep again.

\* Cambyses caused his brother Smerdis to be slain ; suspecting him of designs on the throne. This deed he bitterly repented of on his death bed, being convinced of the innocence of his brother.

† Treacherously seized by Smerdis the Magus, afterwards attained by Darius Hystaspes, through the instrumentality of his groom Cambyses died in the Syrian Ecbatana, of a wound accidentally received in the part of the thigh where he had wounded Apis.

## THE TWO PATHS.

### I.

THE paths of life are rudely laid  
    Beneath the blaze of burning skies ;  
Level and cool, in cloistered shade,  
    The church's pavement lies.  
Along the sunless forest glade  
    Its gnarlèd roots are coiled like crime,  
Where glows the grass with freshening blade,  
    Thine eyes may track the serpent slime ;  
But there thy steps are unbetrayed,  
    The serpent waits a surer time.

### II.

The fires of earth are fiercely blent,  
    Its suns arise with scorching glow ;  
The church's light hath soft descent,  
    And hues like God's own bow.

The brows of men are darkly bent,  
Their lips are wreathed with scorn and guile ;  
But pure, and pale, and innocent  
The looks that light the marble aisle—  
From angel eyes, in love intent,  
And lips of everlasting smile.

## III.

Lady, the fields of earth are wide,  
And tempt an infant's foot to stray :  
Oh ! lead thy loved one's steps aside,  
Where the white altar lights his way.  
Around his path shall glance and glide,  
A thousand shadows false and wild ;  
Oh ! lead him to that surer Guide,  
Than sire, serene, or mother mild,  
Whose childhood quelled the age of pride,  
Whose Godhead called the little child.

## IV.

So when thy breast of love untold,  
That warmed his sleep of infancy,

Shall only make the marble cold,  
    Beneath his aged knee ;  
From its steep throne of heavenly gold  
    Thy soul shall stoop to see  
His grief, that cannot be controlled,  
    Turning to God from thee—  
Cleaving with prayer the cloudy fold,  
    That veils the sanctuary.

## THE OLD WATER-WHEEL.

It lies beside the river ; where its marge  
Is black with many an old and oarless barge,  
And yeasty filth, and leafage wild and rank  
Stagnate and batten by the crumbling bank.

Once, slow revolving by the industrious mill,  
It murmured, only on the Sabbath still ;  
And evening winds its pulse-like beating bore  
Down the soft vale, and by the winding shore.

Sparkling around its orbèd motion flew,  
With quick, fresh fall, the drops of dashing dew,  
Through noon-tide heat that gentle rain was flung  
And verdant round the summer herbage sprung.

Now dancing light and sounding motion cease,  
In these dark hours of cold continual peace ;



Through its black bars the unbroken moonlight flows,  
And dry winds howl about its long repose ;

And mouldering lichens creep, and mosses grey  
Cling round its arms, in gradual decay,  
Amidst the hum of men—which doth not suit  
That shadowy circle, motionless and mute.

So, by the sleep of many a human heart,  
The crowd of men may bear their busy part,  
Where withered, or forgotten, or subdued,  
Its noisy passions have left solitude.

Ah, little can they trace the hidden truth !  
What waves have moved it in the vale of youth !  
And little can its broken chords avow  
How they once sounded. All is silent now.

## THE DEPARTED LIGHT.

THOU know'st the place where purple rocks receive

The deepened silence of the pausing stream ;

And myrtles and white olives interweave

Their cool grey shadows with the azure gleam .

Of noontide ; and pale temple columns cleave

Those waves with shafts of light (as through a dream

Of sorrow, pierced the memories of loved hours—

Cold and fixed thoughts that will not pass away)

All chapleted with wreaths of marble flowers,

Too calm to live,—too lovely to decay.

And hills rise round, pyramidal and vast,

Like tombs built of blue heaven, above the clay

Of those who worshipped here, whose steps have past

To silence—leaving o'er the waters cast

The light of their religion. There, at eve,

That gentle dame would walk, when night-birds make

The starry myrtle blossoms pant and heave  
With waves of ceaseless song ; she would awake  
The lulled air with her kindling thoughts, and leave  
Her voice's echo on the listening lake ;  
The quenched rays of her beauty would deceive  
Its depths into quick joy. Hill, wave, and brake  
Grew living as she moved : I did believe  
That they were lovely, only for her sake ;  
But now—she is not there—at least, the chill  
Hath passed upon her which no sun shall break.  
Stranger, my feet must shun the lake-and hill :—  
Seek them,—but dream not they are lovely still.

## AGONIA.

WHEN our delight is desolate,  
And hope is overthrown ;  
And when the heart must bear the weight  
Of its own love alone ;

And when the soul, whose thoughts are deep,  
Must guard them unrevealed,  
And feel that it is full, but keep  
That fullness calm and sealed ;

When love's long glance is dark with pain—  
With none to meet or cheer ;  
And words of woe are wild in vain  
For those who cannot hear ;

When earth is dark and memory  
Pale in the heaven above,—  
The heart can bear to lose its joy,  
But not to cease to love.

But what shall guide the choice within,  
Of guilt or agony,—  
When to remember is to sin,  
And to forget—to die !

## THE LAST SONG OF ARION.

*ἰὼ λιγείας μορον ἀηδόνος*

*\* \* \* κύκνου δίκην*

*τόν ὕδατον μέλψαβα θανασίμον γόον.*

THE circumstances which led to the introduction of Arion to his Dolphin are differently related by Herodotus and Lucian. Both agree that he was a musician of the highest order, born at Methymna, in the island of Lesbos, and that he acquired fame and fortune at the court of Periander of Corinth. Herodotus affirms that he became desirous of seeing Italy and Sicily, and having made a considerable fortune in those countries, hired a Corinthian vessel to take him back to Corinth. When halfway over the gulf the mariners conceived the idea of seizing the money and throwing the musician into the sea.

Arion started several objections, but finding that they were overruled, requested that he might be permitted to sing them a song.

Permission being granted he wreathed himself and his harp with flowers, sang, says Lucian, in the sweetest way in the world, and leaped into the sea.

The historian proceeds with less confidence to state that a dolphin carried him safe ashore. Lucian agrees with this account except in one particular: he makes no mention of the journey to Sicily, and supposes Arion to have been returning from Corinth to his native Lesbos when the attack was made on him. I have taken him to Sicily with

Herodotus, but prefer sending him straight home. He is more interesting returning to his country than paying his respects at the court of Corinth.

## I.

Look not upon me thus impatiently,  
 Ye children of the deep ;  
 My fingers fail, and tremble as they try  
 To stir the silver sleep with song,  
 Which underneath the surge ye sweep,  
 These lulled and listless chords must keep—  
 Alas—how long !

## II.

The salt sea wind has touched my harp ; its thrill  
 Follows the passing plectrum, low and chill,  
 Woe for the wakened pulse of Ocean's breath,  
 That injures these with silence—me with death.  
 Oh wherefore stirred the wind on Pindu's chain,  
 When joyful morning called me to the main ?  
 Flashed the keen oars—our canvas filled and free,  
 Shook like white fire along the purple sea,

Fast from the helm the shattering surges flew,  
Pale gleamed our path along their cloven blue ;  
And orient path, wild wind and purple wave,  
Pointed and urged and guided to the grave.

## III.

Ye winds ! by far Methymna's steep,  
I loved your voices long,  
And gave your spirits power to keep  
Wild syllables of song,  
When, folded in the crimson shade  
That veils Olympus' cloud-like whiteness,  
The slumber of your life was laid  
In the lull of its own lightness,  
Poised on the voiceless ebb and flow  
Of the beamy-billowed summer snow,  
Still at my call ye came—  
Through the thin wreaths of undulating flame  
That panting in their heavenly home,  
With crimson shadows flush the foam  
Of Adramyttium, round the ravined hill,  
Awakened with one deep and living thrill,



Ye came and with your steep descent,  
The hollow forests waved and bent,  
    Their leaf-lulled echoes caught the winding call.  
Through incensed glade and rosy dell,  
Mixed with the breath-like pause and swell  
    Of waters following in eternal fall,  
In azure waves, that just betray  
The music quivering in their spray  
Beneath its silent seven-fold arch of day  
    High in pale precipices hung  
    The lifeless rocks of rigid marble rung,  
Waving the cedar crests along their brows sublime,  
    Swift ocean heard beneath, and flung  
His tranced and trembling waves in measured time  
Along his golden sands with faintly falling chime.

## IV.

Alas ! had ye forgot the joy I gave,  
    That ye did hearken to my call this day ?  
Oh ! had ye slumbered—when your sleep could save,  
    I would have fed you with sweet sound for aye,  
Now ye have risen to bear my silent soul away.

## V.

I heard ye murmur through the Etnæn caves,  
When joyful dawn had touched the topmost dome,  
I saw ye light along the mountain waves  
Far to the east, your beacon fires of foam,  
And deemed ye rose to bear your weary minstrel home.  
Home ? it shall be that home indeed,  
Where tears attend and shadows lead  
The steps of man's return ;  
Home ! woe is me, no home I need,  
Except the urn.  
Behold—beyond these billows' flow,  
I see Methymna's mountains glow ;  
Long, long desired, their peaks of light  
Flash on my sickened soul and sight,  
And heart and eye almost possess  
Their vales of long lost pleasantness ;  
But eye and heart, before they greet  
That land, shall cease to burn and beat.  
I see, between the sea and land,  
The winding belt of golden sand ;

But never may my footsteps reach  
The brightness of that Lesbian beach,  
Unless, with pale and listless limb,  
Stretched by the water's utmost brim,  
Naked, beneath my native sky,  
With bloodless brow, and darkened eye,  
An unregarded ghastly heap,  
For bird to tear and surge to sweep,  
Too deadly calm—too coldly weak  
To reckon of billow, or of beak.

## VI.

My native isle ! When I have been  
Reft of my love, and far from thee  
My dreams have traced, my soul hath seen  
Thy shadow on the sea,  
And waked in joy, but not to seek  
Thy winding strand, or purple peak.  
For strand and peak had waned away  
Before the desolating day,  
On Acro-Corinth redly risen,

That burned above Ægina's bay,  
And laughed upon my palace prison.  
How soft on other eyes it shone,  
When light, and land, were all their own,  
I looked across the eastern brine,  
I knew *that* morning was not mine.

## VII.

But thou art near me now, dear isle !  
And I can see the lightning smile  
By thy broad beach, that flashes free  
Along the pale lips of the sea.  
Near, nearer, louder, breaking, beating,  
The billows fall with ceaseless shower ;  
It comes,—dear isle !—our hour of meeting—  
Oh God ! across the soft eyes of the hour  
Is thrown a black and blinding veil ;  
Its steps are swift, its brow is pale,  
Before its face, behold—there stoop,  
From their keen wings, a darkening troop  
Of forms like unto it—that fade  
Far in unfathomable shade,

Confused, and limitless, and hollow,  
It comes, but there are none that follow,—  
It pauses, as they paused, but not  
    Like them to pass away,  
For I must share its shadowy lot,  
    And walk with it, where wide and grey,  
    That caverned twilight chokes the day,  
And, underneath the horizon's starless line,  
Shall drink, like feeble dew, its life and mine.

## VIII.

Farewell, sweet harp ! for lost and quenched  
    Thy swift and sounding fire shall be ;  
And these faint lips be mute and blenched,  
    That once so fondly followed thee.  
Oh ! deep within the winding shell  
The slumbering passions haunt and dwell,  
As memories of its ocean tomb  
Still gush within its murmuring gloom ;  
But closed the lips and faint the fingers  
    Of fiery touch, and woven words,

To rouse the flame that clings and lingers  
    Along the loosened chords.  
Farewell ! thou silver-sounding lute,  
    I must not wake thy wildness more,  
When I and thou lie dead, and mute,  
    Upon the hissing shore.

## IX.

The sounds I summon fall and roll  
In waves of memory o'er my soul ;  
And there are words I should not hear,  
That murmur in my dying ear,  
Distant all, but full and clear,  
Like a child's footstep in its fear,  
    Falling in Colono's wood  
When the leaves are sere ;  
    And waves of black, tumultuous blood  
Heave and gush about my heart,  
    Each a deep and dismal mirror  
Flashing back its broken part  
    Of visible, and changeless terror ;

And fiery foam-globes leap and shiver  
Along that crimson, living river ;  
    Its surge is hot, its banks are black,  
And weak, wild thoughts that once were bright,  
And dreams, and hopes of dead delight,  
    Drift on its desolating track,  
And lie along its shore :  
    Oh ! who shall give that brightness back,  
Or those lost hopes restore ?  
    Or bid that light of dreams be shed  
    On the glazed eye-balls of the dead ?

## x.

That light of dreams ! my soul hath cherished  
    One dream too fondly, and too long,  
Hope—dread—desire—delight have perished,  
    And every thought whose voice was strong  
    To curb the heart to good or wrong ;  
But that sweet dream is with me still  
Like the shade of an eternal hill,  
    Cast on a calm and narrow lake,

That hath no room except for it—and heaven :

It doth not leave me, nor forsake ;  
And often with my soul hath striven  
To quench or calm its worst distress,  
Its silent sense of loneliness.

And must it leave me now ?

Alas ! dear lady, where my steps must tread,

What veils the echo or the glow  
That word can leave, or smile can shed,  
Among the soundless, lifeless dead ?  
Soft o'er my brain the lulling dew shall fall,  
While I sleep on, beneath the heavy sea,  
Coldly,—I shall not hear though thou shouldst call.  
Deeply,—I shall not dream,—not e'en of thee.

XI.

And when my thoughts to peace depart

Beneath the unpeaceful foam,

Wilt thou remember him, whose heart

Hath ceased to be thy home ?

Nor bid thy breast its love subdue

For one no longer fond nor true ;



Thine ears have heard a treacherous tale,  
My words were false,—my faith was frail.

I feel the grasp of death's white hand

Laid heavy on my brow,

And from the brain those fingers brand,

The chords of memory drop like sand,

And faint in muffled murmurs die,

The passionate word, the fond reply,

The deep redoubled vow.

Oh ! dear Ismene flushed and bright,

Although thy beauty burn,

It cannot wake to love's delight

The crumbling ashes quenched and white,

Nor pierce the apathy of night

Within the marble urn :

Let others wear the chains I wore,

And worship at the unhonored shrine—

For me, the chain is strong no more,

No more the voice divine :

Go forth, and look on those that live,

And robe thee with the love they give,

But think no more of mine ;

Or think of all that pass thee by,  
With heedless heart and unveiled eye,  
That none can love thee *less* than I.

## XII.

Farewell ; but do not grieve ; thy pain  
Would seek me where I sleep,  
Thy tears would pierce like rushing rain,  
The stillness of the deep.

Remember, if thou wilt, but do not weep.  
Farewell, beloved hills, and native isle.  
Farewell to earth's delight to heaven's smile ;  
Farewell to sounding air, to purple sea ;  
Farewell to light,—to life,—to love,—to thee.

## THE HILLS OF CARRARA.\*

### I.

AMIDST a vale of springing leaves,  
Where spreads the vine its wandering root,  
And cumbrous fall the autumnal sheaves,  
And olives shed their sable fruit,  
And gentle winds, and waters never mute,  
Make of young boughs and pebbles pure  
One universal lute,  
And bright birds, through the myrtle copse obscure,  
Pierce with quick notes, and plumage dipped in dew,  
The silence and the shade of each lulled avenue.

### II.

Far in the depths of voiceless skies,  
Where calm and cold the stars are strewed,

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\* The mountains of Carrara, from which nearly all the marble now used in sculpture is derived, form by far the finest piece of hill scenery I know in Italy. They rise out of valleys of exquisite richness, being themselves singularly desolate, magnificent in form and noble in elevation, but without forests on their flanks and without one blade of grass on their summits.

The peaks of pale Carrara rise.

Nor sound of storm, nor whirlwind rude,  
Can break their chill of marble solitude ;

The crimson lightnings round their crest  
May hold their fiery feud—

They hear not, nor reply ; their chasmed rest  
No flowret decks, nor herbage green, nor breath  
Of moving thing can change their atmosphere of death.

### III.

But far beneath, in folded sleep,  
Faint forms of heavenly life are laid,

With pale brows and soft eyes, that keep  
Sweet peace of unawakened shade,

Whose wreathed limbs, in robes of rock arrayed,  
Fall like white waves on human thought,

In fitful dreams displayed ;  
Deep through their secret homes of slumber sought,  
They rise immortal, children of the day,  
Gleaming with godlike forms on earth, and her decay.

## IV.

Yes, where the bud hath brightest germ,  
And broad the golden blossoms glow,  
There glides the snake and works the worm  
And black the earth is laid below.  
Ah ! think not thou the souls of men to know ;  
By outward smiles in wildness worn ;  
The words that jest at woe  
Spring not less lightly, though the heart be torn,  
The mocking heart, that scarcely dares confess  
Even to itself, the strength of its own bitterness.  
Nor deem that they whose words are cold,  
Whose brows are dark, have hearts of steel,  
The couchant strength, untraced, untold,  
Of thoughts they keep and throbs they feel,  
May need an answering music to unseal,  
Who knows what waves may stir the silent sea,  
Beneath the low appeal  
From distant shores, of winds unfelt by thee ?  
What sounds may wake within the winding shell,  
Responsive to the charm of those who touch it well !

## THE BATTLE OF MONTENOTTE.

“My patent of nobility” (said Napoleon) “dates from the Battle of Montenotte.”

### I.

Slow lifts the night her starry host  
Above the mountain chain  
That guards the grey Ligurian coast,  
And lights the Lombard plain ;  
That plain, that softening on the sight  
Lies blue beneath the balm of night,  
With lapse of rivers lulled, that glide  
In lustre broad of living tide,  
Or pause for hours of peace beside  
The shores they double, and divide,  
To feed with heaven's reverted hue  
The clustered vine's expanding blue :

With crystal flow, for evermore,  
They lave a blood-polluted shore ;  
Ah ! not the snows, whose wreaths renew  
Their radiant depth with stainless dew,  
Can bid their banks be pure, or bless  
The guilty land with holiness.

## II.

In stormy waves, whose wrath can reach  
The rocks that back the topmost beach,  
The midnight sea falls wild and deep  
Around Savona's marble steep,  
    And Voltri's crescent bay.  
What fiery lines are these, that flash  
Where fierce the breakers curl and crash,  
    And fastest flies the spray ?  
No moon has risen to mark the night,  
Nor such the flakes of phosphor light  
That wake along the southern wave,  
By Baiæ's cliff and Capri's cave,  
    Until the dawn of day :

The phosphor flame is soft and green  
Beneath the hollow surges seen ;  
But these are dyed with dusky red  
Far on the fitful surface shed ;  
And evermore, their glance between,  
The mountain gust is deeply stirred  
With low vibration, felt, and heard,  
Which winds and leaves confuse, in vain,  
It gathers through their maze again,  
Redoubling round the rocks it smote,  
Till falls in fear the night-bird's note,  
And every sound beside is still,  
But plash of torrent from the hill,  
And murmur by the branches made  
That bend above its bright cascade.

## III.

Hark, hark ! the hollow Apennine  
Laughs in his heart afar ;  
Through all his vales he drinks like wine  
The deepening draught of war ;



For not with doubtful burst, or slow,  
That thunder shakes his breathless snow,  
But ceaseless rends, with rattling stroke,  
The veils of white volcano-smoke  
That o'er Legino's ridges rest,  
And writhe in Merla's vale :  
There lifts the Frank his triple crest,  
Crowned with its plumage pale,  
Though, clogged and dyed with stains of  
death,  
It scarce obeys the tempest's breath,  
And darker still, and deadlier press  
The war-clouds on its weariness.  
Far by the bright Bormida's banks  
The Austrian cheers his chosen ranks,  
In ponderous waves, that, where they check  
Rise o'er their own tumultuous wreck,  
Recoiling—crashing—gathering still  
In rage around that Island hill,  
Where stand the moveless Few—  
Few—fewer as the moments flit ;

Though shaft and shell their columns split  
As morning melts the dew,  
Though narrower yet their guarding grows,  
And hot the heaps of carnage close,  
In death's faint shade and fiery shock,  
They stand, one ridge of living rock,  
Which steel may rend, and wave may wear,  
And bolt may crush, and blast may tear,  
But none can strike from its abiding.  
The flood, the flash, the steel, may bear  
Perchance destruction—not despair,  
And death—but not dividing.  
What matter ? while their ground they keep,  
Though here a column—there an heap—  
Though these in wrath—and those in sleep,  
If all are *there*.

## IV.

Charge, D'Argenteau ! Fast flies the night,  
The snows look wan with inward light :  
Charge, D'Argenteau ! Thy kingdom's power  
Wins not again this hope, nor hour :

The force—the fate of France is thrown  
    Behind those feeble shields,  
That ridge of death-defended stone  
    Were worth a thousand fields !  
In vain—in vain ! Thy broad array  
Breaks on their front of spears like spray  
Thine hour hath struck—the dawning red  
Is o'er thy wavering standards shed ;  
    A darker dye thy folds shall take  
Before its utmost beams can break.

## v.

Out of its Eastern fountains  
    The river of day is drawn,  
And the shadows of the mountains  
    March downward from the dawn,—  
The shadows of the ancient hills  
    Shortening as they go,  
Down beside the dancing rills  
    Wearily and slow.

The morning wind the mead hath kissed ;  
    It leads in narrow lines  
The shadows of the silver mist,  
    To pause among the pines.  
But where the sun is calm and hot,  
    And where the wind hath peace,  
There is a shade that pauseth not,  
    And a sound that doth not cease.  
The shade is like a sable river  
    Broken with sparkles bright ;  
The sound is like dead leaves that shiver  
    In the decay of night.

## VI.

Together came with pulse-like beat  
    The darkness, and the tread ;  
A motion calm—a murmur sweet,  
    Yet deathful both, and dread ;  
Poised on the hill, a fringed shroud,  
    It wavered like the sea,  
Then clove itself, as doth a cloud,  
    In sable column three.

They fired no shot—they gave no sign,—  
They blew no battle peal,  
But down they came, in deadly line,  
Like whirling bars of steel.  
As fades the forest from its place,  
Beneath the lava flood,  
The Austrian host, before their face,  
Was melted into blood :  
They moved, as moves the solemn night,  
With lulling, and release,  
Before them, all was fear and flight,  
Behind them, all was peace :  
Before them flashed the roaring glen  
With bayonet and brand ;  
Behind them lay the wrecks of men,  
Like sea-weed on the sand.

## VII.

But still, along the cumbered heath,  
A vision strange and fair  
Did fill the eyes that failed in death,  
And darkened in despair ;

Where blazed the battle wild and hot  
 A youth, deep-eyed and pale,  
 Did move amidst the storm of shot,  
 As the fire of God through hail,  
 He moved, serene as spirits are,  
 And dying eyes might see  
 Above his head a crimson star  
 Burning continually.

\* \* \* \* \*

VIII.

With bended head, and breathless tread,  
 The traveller tracks that silent shore,  
 Oppressed with thoughts that seek the dead,  
 And visions that restore,  
 Or lightly trims his pausing bark,  
 Where lies the ocean lulled and dark,  
 Beneath the marble mounds that stay  
 The strength of many a bending bay,  
 And lace with silver lines the flow  
 Of tideless waters to and fro,  
 As drifts the breeze, or dies.

That scarce recalls its lightness, left  
In many a purple-curtained cleft,  
Whence to the softly lighted skies  
Low flowers lift up their dark blue eyes,  
To bring by fits the deep perfume  
Alternate, as the bending bloom

Diffuses or denies.

Above, the slopes of mountain shine,  
Where glows the citron, glides the vine,  
And breathes the myrtle wildly bright,  
And aloes lift their lamps of light,  
And ceaseless sunbeams clothe the calm  
Of orbèd pine and vaulted palm,  
Dark trees, that sacred order keep,  
And rise in temples o'er the steep—  
Eternal shrines, whose columned shade  
Though winds may shake, and frosts may fade,  
And dateless years subdue,  
Is softly builded, ever new,

By angel hands, and wears the dread  
And stillness of a sacred place,

A sadness of celestial grace,

A shadow, God-inhabited.

IX.

And all is peace, around, above,  
The air all balm—the light all love,  
Enduring love, that burns and broods  
Serenely o'er these solitudes,  
Or pours at intervals a part  
Of Heaven upon the wanderer's heart,  
Whose subject soul and quiet thought  
Are open to be touched or taught,  
By mute address of bud and beam  
Of purple peak and silver stream—  
By sounds that fall at nature's choice,  
And things whose being is their voice,  
Innumerable tongues that teach  
The will and ways of God to men,  
In waves that beat the lonely beach,  
And winds that haunt the homeless glen,  
Where they, who ruled the rushing deep,  
The restless and the brave,



Have left along their native steep  
The ruin, and the grave.

## X.

And he who gazes while the day  
Departs along the boundless bay,  
May find against its fading streak  
The shadow of a single peak,  
    Seen only when the surges smile,  
And all the heaven is clear,  
    That sad and solitary isle.\*  
Where, captive, from his red career,  
He sank—who shook the hemisphere,  
    Then, turning from the hollow sea,  
May trace, across the crimsoned height  
    That saw his earliest victory,  
The purple rainbow's resting light,  
And the last lines of storm that fade  
Within the peaceful evening-shade.

---

\* Elba.

## NOTES.

## STANZA 3.—Line 9.

*That o'er Legino's ridges rest.*

The Austrian centre, 10,000 strong, had been advanced to Montenotte in order, if possible, to cut asunder the French force which was following the route of the Corniche. It encountered at Montenotte, only Colonel Rampon, at the head of 1,200 men, who, retiring to the redoubt at Monte Legino, defended it against the repeated attacks of the Austrians until nightfall—making his soldiers swear to conquer or die. The Austrian General Rocavina was severely wounded, and his successor, D'Argenteau, refused to continue the attack. Napoleon was lying at Savona, but set out after sunset with the divisions of Massena and Serrurier, and occupied the heights at Montenotte. At daybreak the Imperialists found themselves surrounded on all sides, and were totally defeated, with the loss of two thousand prisoners, and above one thousand killed and wounded. [April 12, 1796.]

This victory, the first gained by Napoleon, was the foundation of the success of the Italian campaign. Had Colonel Rampon been compelled to retire from Monte Legino, the fate of the world would probably have been changed.—*Vide Alison*, ch. 20.

## STANZA 7.—Line 6.

*Where lies the ocean lulled and dark.*

The view given in the engraving, though not near the scene of the battle, is very characteristic of the general features of the coast. The ruins in the centre are the Chateau de Cornolet, near Mentoni; the sharp dark promontory running out beyond, to the left, is the Capo St. Martin; that beyond it is the promontory of Monaco. Behind the

hills, on the right, lies the Bay of Nice and the point of Antibes. The dark hills in the extreme distance rise immediately above Frejus. Among them winds the magnificent Pass de L'Esterelle, which, for richness of southern forest scenery, and for general grace of mountain outline, surpasses anything on the Corniche itself.

STANZA 9.—Line 7.

*That solitary isle.*

Elba is said to be visible from most of the elevated points of this coast. From the citadel of Genoa I have seen what was asserted to be Elba. I believe it to have been Corsica.

## A WALK IN CHAMOUNI.

TOGETHER on the valley, white and sweet,

The dew and silence of the morning lay :

Only the tread of my disturbing feet

Did break with printed shade and patient beat

The crispèd stillness of the meadow way ;

And frequent mountain waters, welling up

In crystal gloom beneath some mouldering stone,

Curdled in many a flower-enamelled cup

Whose soft and purple border, scarcely blown,

Budded beneath their touch, and trembled to their tone.

The fringed branches of the swinging pines

Closed o'er my path ; a darkness in the sky,

That barred its dappled vault with rugged lines,

And silver network,\*—interwoven signs

---

\* The white mosses on the meleze, when the tree is very old, are singularly beautiful, resembling frost-work of silver.

Of dateless age and deathless infancy ;  
Then through their aisles a motion and a brightness  
Kindled and shook—the weight of shade they bore  
On their broad arms, was lifted by the lightness  
Of a soft, shuddering wind, and what they wore  
Of jewelled dew, was strewed about the forest floor.  
That thrill of gushing wind and glittering rain  
Onward amid the woodland hollows went,  
And bade by turns the drooping boughs complain  
O'er the brown earth, that drank in lightless stain  
The beauty of their burning ornament ;  
And then the roar of an enormous river  
Came on the intermittent air uplifted,  
Broken with haste, I saw its sharp waves shiver,  
And its wild weight in white disorder drifted,  
Where by its beaten shore the rocks lay heaped and rifted.

But yet unshattered, from an azure arch\*  
Came forth the nodding waters, wave by wave,

---

\* Source of the Arveron.

In silver lines of modulated march,  
 Through a broad desert, which the frost-winds parch  
     Like fire, and the resounding ice-falls pave  
 With pallid ruin—wastes of rock—that share  
     Earth's calm and ocean's fruitlessness.\*—Undone  
 The work of ages lies,—through whose despair  
     Their swift procession dancing in the sun,  
 The white and whirling waves pass mocking one by one.

And with their voice—unquiet melody—  
     Is filled the hollow of their mighty portal,  
 As shells are with remembrance of the sea ;  
 So might the eternal arch of Eden be  
     With angels' wail for those whose crowns immortal  
 The grave-dust dimmed in passing. There are here,  
     With azure wings, and scymitars of fire,  
 Forms as of Heaven, to guard the gate, and rear  
     Their burning arms afar,—a boundless choir  
 Beneath the sacred shafts of many a mountain spire.

---

\* *παρὰ θῆν' ἄλως ἀτρυγέτοιο.—ΙΛΙΑΔ. Α'*

Countless as clouds, dome, prism, and pyramid

Pierced through the mist of morning scarce withdrawn,  
Signing the gloom like beacon fires, half hid  
By storm—part quenched in billows—or forbid

Their function by the fullness of the dawn :  
And melting mists and threads of purple rain

Fretted the fair sky where the east was red,  
Gliding like ghosts along the voiceless plain,  
In rainbow hues around its coldness shed,  
Like thoughts of loving hearts that haunt about the dead.

And over these, as pure as if the breath

Of God had called them newly into light,  
Free from all stamp of sin, or shade of death,  
With which the old creation travaileth,

Rose the white mountains, through the infinite  
Of the calm, concave heaven ; inly bright

With lustre everlasting and intense,

Serene and universal as the night,  
But yet more solemn with pervading sense  
Of the deep stillness of omnipotence.

Deep stillness ! for the throbs of human thought,  
Count not the lonely night that pauses here,  
And the white arch of morning findeth not  
By chasm or alp, a spirit, or a spot,  
Its call can waken, or its beams can cheer :  
There are no eyes to watch, no lips to meet  
Its messages with prayer—no matin bell  
Touches the delicate air with summons sweet ;—  
That smoke was of the avalanche ;\* that knell  
Came from a tower of ice that into fragments fell.

Ah ! why should that be comfortless—why cold,  
Which is so near to Heaven ? The lowly earth  
Out of the blackness of its charnel mould  
Feeds its fresh life, and lights its banks with gold ;  
But these proud summits, in eternal dearth,  
Whose solitudes nor mourning know, nor mirth,

---

\* The vapor or dust of dry snow which rises after the fall of a large avalanche, sometimes looks in the distance not unlike the smoke of a village.



Rise passionless and pure, but all unblest :

Corruption—must it root the brightest birth ?

And is the life that bears its fruitage best,

One neither of supremacy nor rest ?

THE OLD SEAMAN.

I.

You ask me why mine eyes are bent  
So darkly on the sea,  
While others watch the azure hills  
That lengthen on the lee.

II.

The azure hills—they soothe the sight  
That fails along the foam ;  
And those may hail their nearing height  
Who there have hope, or home.

III.

But I a loveless path have trod—  
A beaconless career ;  
My hope hath long been all with God,  
And all my home is—here.

## IV.

The deep by day, the heaven by night,  
Roll onward swift and dark ;  
Nor leave my soul the dove's delight,  
Of olive branch, or ark.

## V.

For more than gale, or gulf, or sand,  
I've proved that there may be  
Worse treachery on the steadfast land,  
Than variable sea.

## VI.

A danger worse than bay or beach—  
A falsehood more unkind—  
The treachery of a governed speech,  
And an ungoverned mind.

## VII.

The treachery of the deadly mart  
Where human souls are sold ;  
The treachery of the hollow heart  
That crumbles as we hold.

## VIII.

Those holy hills and quiet lakes—  
Ah ! wherefore should I find  
This weary fever-fit, that shakes  
Their image in my mind.

## IX.

The memory of a streamlet's din,  
Through meadows daisy-drest—  
Another might be glad therein,  
And yet I cannot rest.

## X.

I cannot rest unless it be  
Beneath the churchyard yew ;  
But God, I think, hath yet for me  
More earthly work to do.

## XI.

And therefore with a quiet will,  
I breathe the ocean air,  
And bless the voice that calls me still  
To wander and to bear.

XII.

Let others seek their native sod,  
Who there have hearts to cheer ;  
My soul hath long been given to God,  
And all my home is—here.

## THE ALPS.

SEEN FROM MARENGO.

THE glory of a cloud—without its wane ;  
The stillness of the earth—but not its gloom ;  
The loveliness of life—without its pain ;  
The peace—but not the hunger of the tomb !  
Ye Pyramids of God ! around whose bases  
The sea foams noteless in his narrow cup ;  
And the unseen movements of the earth send up  
A murmur which your lulling snow effaces  
Like the deer's footsteps. Thrones imperishable !  
About whose adamantine steps the breath  
Of dying generations vanisheth,  
Less cognizable than clouds ; and dynasties,  
Less glorious and more feeble than the array  
Of your frail glaciers, unregarded rise,  
Totter and vanish. In the uncounted day,

When earth shall tremble as the trump unwraps  
Their sheets of slumber from the crumbling dead,  
And the quick, thirsty fire of judgment laps  
The loud sea from the hollow of his bed—  
Shall not your God spare *you*, to whom He gave  
No share nor shadow of man's crime, or fate ;  
Nothing to render, nor to expiate ;  
Untainted by his life—untrusted with his grave ?

## WRITTEN AMONG THE BASSES ALPS.

[It is not among mountain scenery that human intellect usually takes its finest temper, or receives its highest development; but it is at least there that we find a consistent energy of mind and body, compelled by severer character of agencies to be resisted and hardships to be endured; and it is there that we must seek for the last remnants of patriarchal simplicity and patriotic affection—the few rock fragments of manly character that are yet free from the lichenous stain of over-civilization. It must always, therefore, be with peculiar pain that we find, as in the district to which the following verses allude, the savageness and seclusion of mountain life, without its force and faithfulness; and all the indolence and sensuality of the most debased cities of Europe, without the polish to disguise, the temptation to excuse, or the softness of natural scenery to harmonize with them.]

“Why stand ye here all the day idle?”

HAVE you in heaven no hope—on earth no care—  
No foe in hell—ye things of sty and stall,  
That congregate like flies, and make the air  
Rank with your fevered sloth—that hourly call  
The sun, which should your servant be, to bear  
Dread witness on you, with uncounted wane



And unregarded rays, from peak to peak  
Of piny-gnomoned mountain moved in vain ?  
Behold, the very shadows that ye seek  
For slumber, write along the wasted wall  
Your condemnation. They forget not, they,  
Their ordered function and determined fall,  
Nor useless perish. But *you* count your day  
By sins, and write your difference from clay  
In bonds you break and laws you disobey.  
God ! who hast given the rocks their fortitude,  
The sap unto the forests, and their food  
And vigor to the busy tenantry  
Of happy soulless things that wait on Thee,  
Hast Thou no blessing where Thou gav'st Thy blood?  
Wilt Thou not make Thy fair creation whole ?  
Behold and visit this Thy vine for good—  
Breathe in this human dust its living soul.

.

## THE GLACIER.

THE mountains have a peace which none disturb—

The stars and clouds a course which none restrain—

The wild sea-waves rejoice without a curb,

And rest without a passion ; but the chain

Of Death, upon this ghastly cliff and chasm

Is broken evermore, to bind again,

Nor lulls nor looses. Hark ! a voice of pain,

Suddenly silenced ;—a quick passing spasm,

That startles rest, but grants not liberty,—

A shudder, or a struggle, or a cry—

And then sepulchral stillness. Look on us,

God ! who hast given these hills their place of pride,

If Death's captivity be sleepless thus,

For those who sink to it unsanctified.

## THE RECREANT.

In an attack of the Athenians upon the Æginetæ, the former were cut off, with the exception of one man, who went home to tell the tale. He was met in the street of the city by a group of Athenian women, each of whom, inquiring where he had left her husband, wounded him with the clasp of her robe, until he died.—*Herod. Terpsichore*, chap. 87.

WITH the hills of their fathers around them—

The heaven of their country above,—

They stood, in the strength of their manhood ;

They went in the light of our love.

In the pride of their power they departed,

Down by the path of the sea :

Dark eyes of the desolate-hearted

Were watching for them—and for thee !

Who comes from the banquet of blood,

Where the guests are as still as a stone ?

Who dares to return by the road

Where the steps of his joy are *alone* ?

They were bound by the oath of the free,—  
They were true as the steel that they bare,—  
They were true to themselves, and to thee !  
Behold ! *thou* hast left them—and where !

Oh ! well has their triumph been told,  
In the time of its terrible crowning ;  
Poor recreant !—kingly, though cold,  
Is the sleep that thou durst not lie down in !  
The swords of the restless are rusted  
In the rest that thou shrankest to share :  
False helot !—to whom hast thou trusted  
The pride of the peaceful—and where ?

For thee,—who wast not of the number  
That sank in the red battle shade,—  
Thy name shall be cursed in the slumber  
Of the life that thy baseness betrayed !  
The strength of the tremorless tread  
Of our bravest, our love can resign,—

But tears, as of blood, shall be shed  
For the dastard returning of thine.

But, what ! when thy soul hath not hearkened  
To the charge of our love, or our fear,  
Shall the soft eyes of Hellas be darkened  
By the thought of thy birth, or thy bier ?  
The strength of thy shame shall requite thee,—  
The souls of the lost shall not see,—  
Mother nor maid of the mighty  
Shed tear for a dastard like thee !

J. R.

## THE WRECK.

ITS masts of might—its sails so free—

Had borne the scatheless keel

Through many a day of darkened sea,

And many a storm of steel ;

When all the winds were calm, it met

(With home-returning prore)

With the lull

Of the waves

On a low lee shore.

The crest of the conqueror

On many a brow was bright ;

The dew of many an exile's eye

Had dimmed the dancing sight ;

And for love and for victory,

One welcome was in store—  
In the lull  
Of the waves  
On a low lee shore.

The voices of the night are mute  
Beneath the moon's eclipse ;  
The silence of the fitful flute  
Is in the dying lips !—  
The silence of my lonely heart  
Is kept for evermore—  
In the lull  
Of the waves  
On a low lee shore !





MORNINGS IN FLORENCE:

BEING

SIMPLE STUDIES

OF

CHRISTIAN ART,

FOR ENGLISH TRAVELLERS.

BY

JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.,

HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, AND SLADE PROFESSOR OF  
FINE ART, OXFORD.

I.—SANTA CROCE.

II.—THE GOLDEN GATE.

III.—BEFORE THE SOLDAN.

IV.—THE VAULTED BOOK.

V.—THE STRAIT GATE.

VI.—THE SHEPHERD'S TOWER.

NEW YORK:  
JOHN WILEY & SONS,  
15 ASTOR PLACE.

1877.

R



## P R E F A C E.

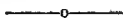
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IT seems to me that the real duty involved in my Oxford professorship cannot be completely done by giving lectures in Oxford only, but that I ought also to give what guidance I may to travellers in Italy.

The following letters are written as I would write to any of my friends who asked me what they ought preferably to study in limited time; and I hope they may be found of use if read in the places which they describe, or before the pictures to which they refer. But in the outset let me give my readers one piece of practical advice. If you can afford it, pay your custode or sacristan well. You may think it an injustice to the next comer; but your paying him ill is an injustice to all comers, for the necessary result of your doing so is that he will lock up or cover whatever he can, that he may get his penny fee for showing it; and that, thus exacting a small tax from everybody, he is thankful to none, and gets into a sullen passion if you stay more than a quarter of a minute to look at the object after it is uncovered. And you will not find it possible to examine anything properly under these circumstances. Pay your sacristan well, and make friends with him: in nine cases out of ten an Italian is really grateful for the money, and more than grateful for human courtesy; and

will give you some true zeal and kindly feeling in return for a franc and a pleasant look. How very horrid of him to be grateful for money, you think! Well, I can only tell you that I know fifty people who will write me letters full of tender sentiment, for one who will give me tenpence; and I shall be very much obliged to you if you will give me tenpence for each of these letters of mine, though I have done more work than you know of, to make them good ten-pennyworths to you.

# MORNINGS IN FLORENCE.



## THE FIRST MORNING.

### SANTA CROCE.

IF there is one artist, more than another, whose work it is desirable that you should examine in Florence, supposing that you care for old art at all, it is Giotto. You can, indeed, also see work of his at Assisi; but it is not likely you will stop there, to any purpose. At Padua there is much;—but only of one period. At Florence, which is his birthplace, you can see pictures by him of every date, and every kind. But you had surely better see, first, what is of his best time and of the best kind. He painted very small pictures and very large—painted from the age of twelve to sixty—painted some subjects carelessly which he had little interest in—some carefully with all his heart. You would surely like, and it would certainly be wise, to see him first in his strong and earnest work,—to see a painting by him, if possible, of large size, and wrought with his full strength, and of a subject pleasing to him. And if it were, also, a subject interesting to you yourself,—better still.

Now, if indeed you are interested in old art, you cannot but know the power of the thirteenth century. You know

that the character of it was concentrated in, and to the full expressed by, its best king, St. Louis. You know St. Louis was a Franciscan, and that the Franciscans, for whom Giotto was continually painting under Dante's advice, were prouder of him than of any other of their royal brethren or sisters. If Giotto ever would imagine anybody with care and delight, it would be St. Louis, if it chanced that anywhere he had St. Louis to paint.

Also, you know that he was appointed to build the Campanile of the Duomo, because he was then the best master of sculpture, painting, and architecture in Florence, and supposed to be without superior in the world.\* And that this commission was given him late in life, (of course he could not have designed the Campanile when he was a boy;) so therefore, if you find any of his figures painted under pure campanile architecture, and the architecture by his hand, you know, without other evidence, that the painting must be of his strongest time.

So if one wanted to find anything of his to begin with, especially, and could choose what it should be, one would say, "A fresco, life size, with campanile architecture behind it, painted in an important place; and if one might choose one's subject, perhaps the most interesting saint of all saints—for *him* to do for us—would be St. Louis."

\* "Cum in universo orbe non reperiri dicatur quenquam qui sufficientior sit in his et aliis multis artibus magistro Giotto Bondonis de Florentia, pictore, et accipiendus sit in patriâ, velut magnus magister."—(Decree of his appointment, quoted by Lord Lindsay, vol. ii., p. 247.)

Wait then for an entirely bright morning; rise with the sun, and go to Santa Croce, with a good opera-glass in your pocket, with which you shall for once, at any rate, see an opus; and, if you have time, several opera. Walk straight to the chapel on the right of the choir ("k" in your Murray's guide). When you first get into it, you will see nothing but a modern window of glaring glass, with a red-hot cardinal in one pane—which piece of modern manufacture takes away at least seven-eighths of the light (little enough before) by which you might have seen what is worth sight. Wait patiently till you get used to the gloom. Then, guarding your eyes from the accursed modern window as best you may, take your opera-glass and look to the right, at the uppermost of the two figures beside it. It is St. Louis, under campanile architecture, painted by—Giotto? or the last Florentine painter who wanted a job—over Giotto? That is the first question you have to determine; as you will have henceforward, in every case in which you look at a fresco.

Sometimes there will be no question at all. These two grey frescos at the bottom of the walls on the right and left, for instance, have been entirely got up for your better satisfaction, in the last year or two—over Giotto's half-effaced lines. But that St. Louis? Re-painted or not, it is a lovely thing,—there can be no question about that; and we must look at it, after some preliminary knowledge gained, not inattentively.

Your Murray's Guide tells you that this chapel of the Bardi della Libertà, in which you stand, is covered with

frescos by Giotto; that they were whitewashed, and only laid bare in 1853; that they were painted between 1296 and 1304; that they represent scenes in the life of St. Francis; and that on each side of the window are paintings of St. Louis of Toulouse, St. Louis king of France, St. Elizabeth, of Hungary, and St. Claire,—“all much restored and repainted.” Under such recommendation, the frescos are not likely to be much sought after; and accordingly, as I was at work in the chapel this morning, Sunday, 6th September, 1874, two nice-looking Englishmen, under guard of their valet de place, passed the chapel without so much as looking in.

You will perhaps stay a little longer in it with me, good reader, and find out gradually where you are. Namely, in the most interesting and perfect little Gothic chapel in all Italy—so far as I know or can hear. There is no other of the great time which has all its frescos in their place. The Arena, though far larger, is of earlier date—not pure Gothic, nor showing Giotto’s full force. The lower chapel at Assisi is not Gothic at all, and is still only of Giotto’s middle time. You have here, developed Gothic, with Giotto in his consummated strength, and nothing lost, in form, of the complete design.

By restoration—judicious restoration, as Mr. Murray usually calls it—there is no saying how much you have lost. Putting the question of restoration out of your mind, however, for a while, think where you are, and what you have got to look at.



You are in the chapel next the high altar of the great Franciscan church of Florence. A few hundred yards west of you, within ten minutes' walk, is the Baptistery of Florence. And five minutes' walk west of that is the great Dominican church of Florence, Santa Maria Novella.

Get this little bit of geography, and architectural fact, well into your mind. There is the little octagon Baptistery in the middle; here, ten minutes' walk east of it, the Franciscan church of the Holy Cross; there, five minutes' walk west of it, the Dominican church of St. Mary.

Now, that little octagon Baptistery stood where it now stands (and was finished, though the roof has been altered since) in the eighth century. It is the central building of Etrurian Christianity,—of European Christianity.

From the day it was finished, Christianity went on doing her best, in Etruria and elsewhere, for four hundred years,—and her best seemed to have come to very little,—when there rose up two men who vowed to God it should come to more. And they made it come to more, forthwith; of which the immediate sign in Florence was that she resolved to have a fine new cross-shaped cathedral instead of her quaint old little octagon one; and a tower beside it that should beat Babel:—which two buildings you have also within sight.

But your business is not at present with them; but with these two earlier churches of Holy Cross and St. Mary. The two men who were the effectual builders of these were the two great religious Powers and Reformers of the thirteenth century;—St. Francis, who taught

Christian men how they should behave, and St. Dominic, who taught Christian men what they should think. In brief, one the Apostle of Works; the other of Faith. Each sent his little company of disciples to teach and to preach in Florence: St. Francis in 1212; St. Dominic in 1220.

The little companies were settled—one, ten minutes' walk east of the old Baptistery; the other five minutes' walk west of it. And after they had stayed quietly in such lodgings as were given them, preaching and teaching through most of the century; and had got Florence, as it were, heated through, she burst out into Christian poetry and architecture, of which you have heard much talk:—burst into bloom of Arnolfo, Giotto, Dante, Orcagna, and the like persons, whose works you profess to have come to Florence that you may see and understand.

Florence then, thus heated through, first helped her teachers to build finer churches. The Dominicans, or White Friars, the Teachers of Faith, began their church of St. Mary's in 1279. The Franciscans, or Black Friars, the Teachers of Works, laid the first stone of this church of the Holy Cross in 1294. And the whole city laid the foundations of its new cathedral in 1298. The Dominicans designed their own building; but for the Franciscans and the town worked the first great master of Gothic art, Arnolfo; with Giotto at his side, and Dante looking on, and whispering sometimes a word to both.

And here you stand beside the high altar of the Franciscans' church, under a vault of Arnolfo's building, with

at least some of Giotto's colour on it still fresh; and in front of you, over the little altar, is the only reportedly authentic portrait of St. Francis, taken from life by Giotto's master. Yet I can hardly blame my two English friends for never looking in. Except in the early morning light, not one touch of all this art can be seen. And in any light, unless you understand the relations of Giotto to St. Francis, and of St. Francis to humanity, it will be of little interest.

Observe, then, the special character of Giotto among the great painters of Italy is his being a practical person. Whatever other men dreamed of, he did. He could work in mosaic; he could work in marble; he could paint; and he could build; and all thoroughly: a man of supreme faculty, supreme common sense. Accordingly, he ranges himself at once among the disciples of the Apostle of Works, and spends most of his time in the same apostleship.

Now the gospel of Works, according to St. Francis, lay in three things. You must work without money, and be poor. You must work without pleasure, and be chaste. You must work according to orders, and be obedient.

Those are St. Francis's three articles of Italian opera. By which grew the many pretty things you have come to see here.

And now if you will take your opera-glass and look up to the roof above Arnolfo's building, you will see it is a pretty Gothic cross vault, in four quarters, each with a circular medallion, painted by Giotto. That over the

altar has the picture of St. Francis himself. The three others, of his Commanding Angels. In front of him, over the entrance arch, Poverty. On his right hand, Obedience. On his left, Chastity.

Poverty, in a red patched dress, with grey wings, and a square nimbus of glory above her head, is flying from a black hound, whose head is seen at the corner of the medallion.

Chastity, veiled, is imprisoned in a tower, while angels watch her.

Obedience bears a yoke on her shoulders, and lays her hand on a book.

Now, this same quatrefoil, of St. Francis and his three Commanding Angels, was also painted, but much more elaborately, by Giotto, on the cross vault of the lower church of Assisi, and it is a question of interest which of the two roofs was painted first.

Your Murray's Guide tells you the frescos in this chapel were painted between 1296 and 1304. But as they represent, among other personages, St. Louis of Toulouse, who was not canonized till 1317, that statement is not altogether tenable. Also, as the first stone of the church was only laid in 1294, when Giotto was a youth of eighteen, it is little likely that either it would have been ready to be painted, or he ready with his scheme of practical divinity, two years later.

Farther, Arnolfo, the builder of the main body of the church, died in 1310. And as St. Louis of Toulouse was not a saint till seven years afterwards, and the frescos

therefore beside the window not painted in Arnolfo's day, it becomes another question whether Arnolfo left the chapels or the church at all, in their present form.

On which point—now that I have shown you where Giotto's St. Louis is—I will ask you to think awhile, until you are interested; and then I will try to satisfy your curiosity. Therefore, please leave the little chapel for the moment, and walk down the nave, till you come to two sepulchral slabs near the west end, and then look about you and see what sort of a church Santa Croce is.

Without looking about you at all, you may find, in your Murray, the useful information that it is a church which “consists of a very wide nave and lateral aisles, separated by seven fine pointed arches.” And as you will be—under ordinary conditions of tourist hurry—glad to learn so much, *without* looking, it is little likely to occur to you that this nave and two rich aisles required also, for your complete present comfort, walls at both ends, and a roof on the top. It is just possible, indeed, you may have been struck, on entering, by the curious disposition of painted glass at the east end;—more remotely possible that, in returning down the nave, you may this moment have noticed the extremely small circular window at the west end; but the chances are a thousand to one that, after being pulled from tomb to tomb round the aisles and chapels, you should take so extraordinary an additional amount of pains as to look up at the roof,—unless you do it now, quietly. It will have had its effect upon you, even if you don't, without your knowledge. You will

return home with a general impression that Santa Croce is, somehow, the ugliest Gothic church you ever were in. Well, that is really so; and now, will you take the pains to see why?

There are two features, on which, more than on any others, the grace and delight of a fine Gothic building depends; one is the springing of its vaultings, the other the proportion and fantasy of its traceries. *This* church of Santa Croce has no vaultings at all, but the roof of a farm-house barn. And its windows are all of the same pattern,—the exceedingly prosaic one of two pointed arches, with a round hole above, between them.

And to make the simplicity of the roof more conspicuous, the aisles are successive sheds, built at every arch. In the aisles of the Campo Santo of Piseo, the unbroken flat roof leaves the eye free to look to the traceries; but here, a succession of up-and-down sloping beam and lath gives the impression of a line of stabling rather than a church aisle. And lastly, while, in fine Gothic buildings, the entire perspective concludes itself gloriously in the high and distant apse, here the nave is cut across sharply by a line of ten chapels, the apse being only a tall recess in the midst of them, so that, strictly speaking, the church is not of the form of a cross, but of a letter **T**.

Can this clumsy and ungraceful arrangement be indeed the design of the renowned Arnolfo?

Yes, this is purest Arnolfo-Gothic; not beautiful by any means; but deserving, nevertheless, our thoughtfullest examination. We will trace its complete character

another day: just now we are only concerned with this pre-Christian form of the letter T, insisted upon in the lines of chapels.

Respecting which you are to observe, that the first Christian churches in the catacombs took the form of a blunt cross naturally; a square chamber having a vaulted recess on each side; then the Byzantine churches were structurally built in the form of an equal cross; while the heraldic and other ornamental equal-armed crosses are partly signs of glory and victory, partly of light, and divine spiritual presence.\*

But the Franciscans and Dominicans saw in the cross no sign of triumph, but of trial.† The wounds of their

\*See, on this subject generally, Mr. R. St. J. Tyrwhitt's "Art-Teaching of the Primitive Church." S. P. B. K., 1874.

† I have never obtained time for any right study of early Christian church-discipline,—nor am I sure to how many other causes, the choice of the form of the basilica may be occasionally attributed, or by what other communities it may be made. Symbolism, for instance, has most power with the Franciscans, and convenience for preaching with the Dominicans; but in all cases, and in all places, the transition from the close tribune to the brightly-lighted apse, indicates the change in Christian feeling between regarding a church as a place for public judgment or teaching, or a place for private prayer and congregational praise. The following passage from the Dean of Westminster's perfect history of his Abbey ought to be read also in the Florentine church:—"The nearest approach to Westminster Abbey in this aspect is the church of Santa Croce at Florence. There, as here, the present destination of the building was no part of the original design, but was the result of various converging causes. As the church of one of the two great preaching orders, it had a nave large beyond all proportion to its choir. That order being the Franciscan, bound by vows of poverty, the simplicity of the worship preserved the whole space clear from any adventitious ornaments. The popularity of the Francis

Master were to be their inheritance. So their first aim was to make what image to the cross their church might present, distinctly that of the actual instrument of death.

And they did this most effectually by using the form of the letter **T**, that of the Furca or Gibbet,—not the sign of peace.

Also, their churches were meant for use; not show, nor self-glorification, nor town-glorification. They wanted places for preaching, prayer, sacrifice, burial; and had no intention of showing how high they could build towers, or how widely they could arch vaults. Strong walls, and the roof of a barn,—these your Franciscan asks of his Arnolfo. These Arnolfo gives,—thoroughly and wisely built; the successions of gable roof being a new device for strength, much praised in its day.

This stern humor did not last long. Arnolfo himself had other notions; much more Cimabue and Giotto; most of all, Nature and Heaven. Something else had to be taught about Christ than that He was wounded to death.

cans, especially in a convent hallowed by a visit from St. Francis himself, drew to it not only the chief civic festivals, but also the numerous families who gave alms to the friars, and whose connection with their church was, for this reason, in turn encouraged by them. In those graves, piled with standards and achievements of the noble families of Florence, were successively interred—not because of their eminence, but as members or friends of those families—some of the most illustrious personages of the fifteenth century. Thus it came to pass, as if by accident, that in the vault of the Buonarrotti was laid Michael Angelo; in the vault of the Viviani the preceptor of one of their house, Galileo. From those two burials the church gradually became the recognized shrine of Italian genius.”



Nevertheless, look how grand this stern form would be, restored to its simplicity. It is not the old church which is in itself unimpressive. It is the old church defaced by Vasari, by Michael Angelo, and by modern Florence. See those huge tombs on your right hand and left, at the sides of the aisles, with their alternate gable and round tops, and their paltriest of all possible sculpture, trying to be grand by bigness, and pathetic by expense. Tear them all down in your imagination; fancy the vast hall with its massive pillars,—not painted calomel-pill colour, as now, but of their native stone, with the rough, true wood for roof,—and a people praying beneath them, strong in abiding; and pure in life, as their rocks and olive forests. That was Arnolfo's Santa Croce. Nor did his work remain long without grace.

That very line of chapels in which we found our St. Louis shows signs of change in temper. *They* have no pent-house roofs, but true Gothic vaults: we found our four-square type of Franciscan Law on one of them.

It is probable, then, that these chapels may be later than the rest—even in their stonework. In their decoration, they are so, assuredly; belonging already to the time when the story of St. Francis was becoming a passionate tradition, told and painted everywhere with delight.

And that high recess, taking the place of apse, in the centre,—see how noble it is in the coloured shade surrounding and joining the glow of its windows, though their form be so simple. You are not to be amused here by patterns in balanced stone, as a French or English

architect would amuse you, says Arnolfo. "You are to read and think, under these severe walls of mine; immortal hands will write upon them." We will go back, therefore, into this line of manuscript chapels presently; but first, look at the two sepulchral slabs by which you are standing. That farther of the two from the west end is one of the most beautiful pieces of fourteenth century sculpture in this world; and it contains simple elements of excellence, by your understanding of which you may test your power of understanding the more difficult ones you will have to deal with presently.

It represents an old man, in the high deeply-folded cap worn by scholars and gentlemen in Florence from 1300—1500, lying dead, with a book in his breast, over which his hands are folded. At his feet is this inscription: "Temporibus hic suis phylosophye atq. medicine culmen fuit Galileus de Galileis olim Bonajutis qui etiam summo in magistratu miro quodam modo rempublicam dilexit, cujus sancte memorie bene acte vite pie benedictus filius hunc tumulum patri sibi suisq. posteris edidit."

Mr. Murray tells you that the effigies "in low relief" (alas, yes, low enough now—worn mostly into flat stones, with a trace only of the deeper lines left, but originally in very bold relief,) with which the floor of Santa Croce is inlaid, of which this by which you stand is characteristic, are "interesting from the costume," but that, "except in the case of John Ketterick, Bishop of St. David's, few of the other names have any interest beyond the walls of Florence." As, however, you are at present within the

walls of Florence, you may perhaps condescend to take some interest in this ancestor or relation of the Galileo whom Florence indeed left to be externally interesting, and would not allow to enter in her walls.\*

I am not sure if I rightly place or construe the phrase in the above inscription, "cujus sancte memorie bene acte;" but, in main purport, the legend runs thus: "This Galileo of the Galilei was, in his times, the head of philosophy and medicine; who also in the highest magistracy loved the republic marvellously; whose son, blessed in inheritance of his holy memory and well-passed and pious life, appointed this tomb for his father, for himself, and for his posterity."

There is no date; but the slab immediately behind it, nearer the western door, is of the same style, but of later and inferior work, and bears date—I forget now of what early year in the fifteenth century.

But Florence was still in her pride; and you may observe, in this epitaph, on what it was based. That her philosophy was studied *together with useful arts*, and as a part of them; that the masters in these became naturally the masters in public affairs; that in such magistracy, they loved the State, and neither cringed to it nor robbed it; that the sons honoured their fathers, and received their fathers' honour as the most blessed inheritance. Remember the phrase "vite pie benedictus filius," to be compared

\* "Seven years a prisoner at the city gate,  
Let in but his grave-clothes "

Rogers' "Italy."

with the "nos nequiores" of the declining days of all states,—chiefly now in Florence, France and England.

Thus much for the local interest of name. Next for the universal interest of the art of this tomb.

It is the crowning virtue of all great art that, however little is left of it by the injuries of time, that little will be lovely. As long as you can see anything, you can see—almost all;—so much the hand of the master will suggest of his soul.

And here you are well quit, for once, of restoration. No one cares for this sculpture; and if Florence would only thus put all her old sculpture and painting under her feet, and simply use them for gravestones and oilcloth, she would be more merciful to them than she is now. Here, at least, what little is left is true.

And, if you look long, you will find it is not so little. That worn face is still a perfect portrait of the old man, though like one struck out at a venture, with a few rough touches of a master's chisel. And that falling drapery of his cap is, in its few lines, faultless, and subtle beyond description.

And now, here is a simple but most useful test of your capacity for understanding Florentine sculpture or painting. If you can see that the lines of that cap are both right, and lovely; that the choice of the folds is exquisite in its ornamental relations of line; and that the softness and ease of them is complete,—though only sketched with a few dark touches,—then you can understand Giotto's drawing, and Botticelli's;—Donatello's carving and Luca's.

But if you see nothing in *this* sculpture, you will see nothing in theirs, *of* theirs. Where they choose to imitate flesh, or silk, or to play any vulgar modern trick with marble—(and they often do)—whatever, in a word, is French, or American, or Cockney, in their work, you can see; but what is Florentine, and for ever great—unless you can see also the beauty of this old man in his citizen's cap,—you will see never.

There is more in this sculpture, however, than its simple portraiture and noble drapery. The old man lies on a piece of embroidered carpet; and, protected by the higher relief, many of the finer lines of this are almost uninjured; in particular, its exquisitely-wrought fringe and tassels are nearly perfect. And if you will kneel down and look long at the tassels of the cushion under the head, and the way they fill the angles of the stone, you will,—or may—know, from this example alone, what noble decorative sculpture is, and was, and must be, from the days of earliest Greece to those of latest Italy.

“Exquisitely sculptured fringe!” and you have just been abusing sculptors who play tricks with marble! Yes, and you cannot find a better example, in all the museums of Europe, of the work of a man who does *not* play tricks with it—than this tomb. Try to understand the difference: it is a point of quite cardinal importance to all your future study of sculpture.

I *told* you, observe, that the old Galileo was lying on a piece of embroidered carpet. I don't think, if I had not

told you, that you would have found it out for yourself. It is not so like a carpet as all that comes to.

But had it been a modern trick-sculpture, the moment you came to the tomb you would have said, "Dear me! how wonderfully that carpet is done,—it doesn't look like stone in the least—one longs to take it up and beat it, to get the dust off."

Now whenever you feel inclined to speak so of a sculptured drapery, be assured, without more ado, the sculpture is base, and bad. You will merely waste your time and corrupt your taste by looking at it. Nothing is so easy as to imitate drapery in marble. You may cast a piece any day; and carve it with such subtlety that the marble shall be an absolute image of the folds. But that is not sculpture. That is mechanical manufacture.

No great sculptor, from the beginning of art to the end of it, has ever carved, or ever will, a deceptive drapery. He has neither time nor will to do it. His mason's lad may do that if he likes. A man who can carve a limb or a face never finishes inferior parts, but either with a hasty and scornful chisel, or with such grave and strict selection of their lines as you know at once to be imaginative, not imitative.

But if, as in this case, he wants to oppose the simplicity of his central subject with a rich background,—a labyrinth of ornamental lines to relieve the severity of expressive ones,—he will carve you a carpet, or a tree, or a rose thicket, with their fringes and leaves and thorns, elaborated as richly as natural ones; but always for the sake of

the arnamental form, never of the imitation; yet, seizing the natural character in the lines he gives, with twenty times the precision and clearness of sight that the mere imitator has. Examine the tassels of the cushion, and the way they blend with the fringe, thoroughly; you cannot possibly see finer ornamental sculpture. Then, look at the same tassels in the same place of the slab next the west end of the church, and you will see a scholar's rude imitation of a master's hand, though in a fine school. (Notice, however, the folds of the drapery at the feet of this figure: they are cut so as to show the hem of the robe within as well as without, and are fine.) Then, as you go back to Giotto's chapel, keep to the left, and just beyond the north door in the aisle is the much celebrated tomb of C. Marsuppini, by Desiderio of Settignano. It is very fine of its kind; but there the drapery is chiefly done to cheat you, and chased delicately to show how finely the sculptor could chisel it. It is wholly vulgar and mean in cast of fold. Under your feet, as you look at it, you will tread another tomb of the fine time, which, looking last at, you will recognize the difference between the false and true art, as far as there is capacity in you at present to do so. And if you really and honestly like the low-lying stones, and see more beauty in them, you have also the power of enjoying Giotto, into whose chapel we will return to-morrow;—not to-day, for the light must have left it by this time; and now that you have been looking at these sculptures on the floor you had better traverse nave and aisle across and across; and get some idea of that sacred

field of stone. In the north transept you will find a beautiful knight, the finest in chiseling of all these tombs, except one by the same hand in the south aisle just where it enters the south transept. Examine the lines of the Gothic niches traced above them; and what is left of arabesque on their armour. They are far more beautiful and tender in chivalric conception than Donatello's St. George, which is merely a piece of vigorous naturalism founded on these older tombs. If you will drive in the evening to the Chartreuse in Val d'Ema, you may see there an uninjured example of this slab-tomb by Donatello himself: very beautiful; but not so perfect as the earlier ones on which it is founded. And you may see some fading light and shade of monastic life, among which if you stay till the fireflies come out in the twilight, and thus get to sleep when you come home, you will be better prepared for to-morrow morning's walk—if you will take another with me—than if you go to a party, to talk sentiment about Italy, and hear the last news from London and New York.



## THE SECOND MORNING.

### THE GOLDEN GATE.

**T**O-DAY, as early as you please, and at all events before doing anything else, let us go to Giotto's own parish-church, Santa Maria Novella. If, walking from the Strozzi Palace, you look on your right for the "Way of the Beautiful Ladies," it will take you quickly there.

Do not let anything in the way of acquaintance, sacristan, or chance sight, stop you in doing what I tell you. Walk straight up the church, into the apse of it;—(you may let your eyes rest, as you walk, on the glow of its glass, only mind the step, half way;)—and lift the curtain; and go in behind the grand marble altar, giving anybody who follows you anything they want, to hold their tongues, or go away.

You know, most probably, already, that the frescos on each side of you are Ghirlandajo's. You have been told they are very fine, and if you know anything of painting, you know the portraits in them are so. Nevertheless, somehow, you don't really enjoy these frescos, nor come often here, do you?

The reason of which is, that if you are a nice person, they are not nice enough for you; and if a vulgar person, not vulgar enough. But if you are a nice person, I want you to look carefully, to-day, at the two lowest, next the

windows, for a few minutes, that you may better feel the art you are really to study, by its contrast with these.

On your left hand is represented the birth of the Virgin. On your right, her meeting with Elizabeth.

You can't easily see better pieces—(nowhere more pompous pieces)—of flat goldsmiths' work. Ghirlandajo was to the end of his life a mere goldsmith, with a gift of portraiture. And here he has done his best, and has put a long wall in wonderful perspective, and the whole city of Florence behind Elizabeth's house in the hill country; and a splendid bas-relief, in the style of Luca della Robbia, in St. Anne's bedroom; and he has carved all the pilasters, and embroidered all the dresses, and flourished and trumpeted into every corner; and it is all done, within just a point, as well as it can be done; and quite as well as Ghirlandajo could do it. But the point in which it *just* misses being as well as it can be done, is the vital point. And it is all simply—good for nothing.

Extricate yourself from the goldsmiths' rubbish of it, and look full at the Salutation. You will say, perhaps, at first, "What grand and graceful figures!" Are you sure they are graceful? Look again and you will see their draperies hang from them exactly as they would from two clothes-pegs. Now, fine drapery, really well drawn, as it hangs from a clothes-peg, is always rather impressive, especially if it be disposed in large breadths and deep folds; but that is the only grace of their figures.

Secondly. Look at the Madonna, carefully. You will

find she is not the least meek—only stupid,—as all the other women in the picture are.

“St. Elizabeth, you think, is nice”? Yes; “and she says, ‘Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?’ really with a great deal of serious feeling?” Yes, with a great deal. Well, you have looked enough at those two. Now—just for another minute—look at the birth of the Virgin. “A most graceful group, (your Murray’s Guide tells you,) in the attendant servants.” Extremely so. Also, the one holding the child is rather pretty. Also, the servant pouring out the water does it from a great height, without splashing, most cleverly. Also, the lady coming to ask for St. Anne, and see the baby, walks majestically and is very finely dressed. And as for that bas-relief in the style of Luca della Robbia, you might really almost think it *was* Luca! The very best plated goods, Master Ghirlandajo, no doubt—always on hand at your shop.

Well, now you must ask for the Sacristan, who is civil and nice enough, and get him to let you into the green cloister, and then go into the less cloister opening out of it on the right, as you go down the steps; and you must ask for the tomb of the Marchesa Stiozzi Ridolfi; and in the recess behind the Marchesa’s tomb—very close to the ground, and in excellent light, if the day is fine—you will see two small frescos, only about four feet wide each, in odd-shaped bits of wall—quarters of circles; representing—that on the left, the Meeting of Joachim and Anna

at the Golden Gate; and that on the right, the Birth of the Virgin.

No flourish of trumpets here, at any rate, you think! No gold on the gate; and, for the birth of the Virgin—is this all! Goodness!—nothing to be seen, whatever, of bas-reliefs, nor fine dresses, nor graceful pourings out of water, nor processions of visitors?

No. There's but one thing you can see, here, which you didn't in Ghirlandajo's fresco, unless you were very clever and looked hard for it—the Baby! And you are never likely to see a more true piece of Giotto's work in this world.

A round-faced, small-eyed little thing, tied up in a bundle!

Yes, Giotto was of opinion she must have appeared really not much else than that. But look at the servant who has just finished dressing her;—awe-struck, full of love and wonder, putting her hand softly on the child's head, who has never cried. The nurse, who has just taken her, is—the nurse, and no more: tidy in the extreme, and greatly proud and pleased; but would be as much so with any other child.

Ghirlandajo's St. Anne (I ought to have told you to notice that,—you can afterwards) is sitting strongly up in bed, watching, if not directing, all that is going on. Giotto's, lying down on the pillow, leans her face on her hand; partly exhausted, partly in deep thought. She knows all that will be well done for the child, either by the servants, or God; she need not look after anything.

At the foot of the bed is the midwife, and a servant who has brought drink for St. Anne. The servant stops, seeing her so quiet; asking the midwife, Shall I give it her now? The midwife, her hands lifted under her robe, in the attitude of thanksgiving, with Giotto distinguishable always, though one doesn't know how, from that of prayer,) answers, with her look, "Let be—she does not want anything."

At the door a single acquaintance is coming in, to see the child. Of ornament, there is only the entirely simple outline of the vase which the servant carries; of colour, two or three masses of sober red, and pure white, with brown and grey.

That is all. And if you can be pleased with this, you can see Florence. But if not, by all means amuse yourself there, if you find it amusing, as long as you like; you can never see it.

But if indeed you are pleased, ever so little, with this fresco, think what that pleasure means. I brought you, on purpose, round, through the richest overture, and farrago of tweedledum and tweedledee, I could find in Florence; and here is a tune of four notes, on a shepherd's pipe, played by the picture of nobody; and yet you like it! You know what music is, then. Here is another little tune, by the same player, and sweeter. I let you hear the simplest first.

The fresco on the left hand, with the bright blue sky, and the rosy figures! Why, anybody might like that!

Yes; but, alas, all the blue sky is repainted. It *was* blue always, however, and bright too; and I dare say, when the fresco was first done, anybody *did* like it.

You know the story of Joachim and Anna, I hope? Not that I do, myself, quite in the ins and outs; and if you don't I'm not going to keep you waiting while I tell it. All you need know, and you scarcely, before this fresco, need know so much, is, that here are an old husband and old wife, meeting again by surprise, after losing each other, and being each in great fear;—meeting at the place where they were told by God each to go, without knowing what was to happen there.

“So they rushed into one another's arms, and kissed each other.”

No, says Giotto,—not that.

“They advanced to meet, in a manner conformable to the strictest laws of composition; and with their draperies cast into folds which no one until Raphael could have arranged better.”

No, says Giotto,—not that.

St. Anne has moved quickest; her dress just falls into folds sloping backwards enough to tell you so much. She has caught St. Joachim by his mantle, and draws him to her, softly, by that. St. Joachim lays his hand under her arm, seeing she is like to faint, and holds her up. They do not kiss each other—only look into each other's eyes. And God's angel lays his hand on their heads.

Behind them, there are two rough figures, busied with their own affairs,—two of Joachim's shepherds; one, bare.

headed, the other wearing the wide Florentine cap with the falling point behind, which is exactly like the tube of a larkspur or violet; both carrying game, and talking to each other about—Greasy Joan and her pot, or the like. Not at all the sort of persons whom you would have thought in harmony with the scene;—by the laws of the drama, according to Racine or Voltaire.

No, but according to Shakespeare, or Giotto, these are just the kind of persons likely to be there: as much as the angel is likely to be there also, though you will be told nowadays that Giotto was absurd for putting *him* into the sky, of which an apothecary can always produce the similar blue, in a bottle. And now that you have had Shakespeare, and sundry other men of head and heart, following the track of this shepherd lad, *you* can forgive him his grotesques in the corner. But that he should have forgiven them to himself, after the training he had had, this is the wonder! *We* have seen simple pictures enough in our day; and therefore we think that of course shepherd boys will sketch shepherds: what wonder is there in that?

I can show you how in *this* shepherd boy it was very wonderful indeed, if you will walk for five minutes back into the church with me, and up into the chapel at the end of the south transept,—at least if the day is bright, and you get the Sacristan to undraw the window-curtain in the transept itself. For then the light of it will be enough to show you the entirely authentic and most renowned work of Giotto's master; and you will see through what schooling the lad had gone.

A good and brave master he was, if ever boy had one, and, as you will find when you know really who the great men are, the master is half their life; and well they know it—always naming themselves from their master, rather than their families. See then what kind of work Giotto had been first put to. There is, literally, not a square inch of all that panel—some ten feet high by six or seven wide—which is not wrought in gold and colour with the fineness of a Greek manuscript. There is not such an elaborate piece of ornamentation in the first page of any Gothic king's missal, as you will find in that Madonna's throne;—the Madonna herself is meant to be grave and noble only; and to be attended only by angels.

And here is this saucy imp of a lad declares his people must do without gold, and without thrones; nay, that the Golden Gate itself shall have no gilding, that St. Joachim and St. Anne shall have only one angel between them: and their servants shall have their joke, and nobody say them nay!

It is most wonderful; and would have been impossible, had Cimabue been a common man, though ever so great in his own way. Nor could I in any of my former thinking understand how it was, till I saw Cimabue's own work at Assisi; in which he shows himself, at heart, as independent of his gold as Giotto,—even more intense, capable of higher things than Giotto, though of none, perhaps, so keen or sweet. But to this day, among all the Mater Dolorosas of Christianity, Cimabue's at Assisi is the noblest; nor did any painter after him add one link to the



chain of thought with which he summed the creation of the earth, and preached its redemption.

He evidently never checked the boy, from the first day he found him. Showed him all he knew: talked with him of many things he felt himself unable to paint: made him a workman and a gentleman,—above all, a Christian,—yet left him—a shepherd. And Heaven had made him such a painter, that, at his height, the words of his epitaph are in nowise overwrought: “Ille ego sum, per quem pictura extincta revixit.”

A word or two, now, about the repainting by which *this* pictura extincta has been revived to meet existing taste. The sky is entirely daubed over with fresh blue; yet it leaves with unusual care the original outline of the descending angel, and of the white clouds about his body. This idea of the angel laying his hands on the two heads—(as a bishop at Confirmation does, in a hurry; and I’ve seen one sweep four together, like Arnold de Winkelied),—partly in blessing, partly as a symbol of their being brought together to the same place by God,—was afterwards repeated again and again: there is one beautiful little echo of it among the old pictures in the schools of Oxford. This is the first occurrence of it that I know in pure Italian painting; but the idea is Etruscan-Greek, and is used by the Etruscan sculptors of the door of the Baptistery of Pisa, of the *evil* angel, who “lays the heads together” of two very different persons from these—Herodias and her daughter.

Joachim, and the shepherd with the larkspur cap, are both quite safe; the other shepherd a little reinforced the black bunches of grass, hanging about are retouches. They were once bunches of plants drawn with perfect delicacy and care;—you may see one left, faint, with heart-shaped leaves, on the highest ridge of rock above the shepherds. The whole landscape is, however, quite undecipherably changed and spoiled.

You will be apt to think at first, that if anything has been restored, surely the ugly shepherd's uglier feet have. No, not at all. Restored feet are always drawn with entirely orthodox and academical toes, like the Apollo Belvidere's. You would have admired them very much. These are Giotto's own doing, every bit; and a precious business he has had of it, trying again and again—in vain. Even hands were difficult enough to him, at this time; but feet, and bare legs! Well, he'll have a try, he thinks, and gets really a fair line at last, when you are close to it; but, laying the light on the ground afterwards, he dare not touch this precious and dear-bought outline. Stops all round it, a quarter of an inch off,\* with such effect as you see. But if you want to know what sort of legs and feet he *can* draw, look at our *lambs*, in the corner of the fresco under the arch on your left!

And there is one on your right, though more repainted—the little Virgin presenting herself at the Temple,—

\* Perhaps it is only the restorer's white on the ground that stops; but I think a restorer would never have been so wise, but have gone right up to the outline, and spoiled all.

about which I could also say much. The stooping figure, kissing the hem of her robe without her knowing, is, as far as I remember, first in this fresco; the origin, itself, of the main design in all the others you know so well; (and with its steps, by the way, in better perspective already than most of them).

“*This* the original one!” you will be inclined to exclaim, if you have any general knowledge of the subsequent art. “*This* Giotto! why it’s a cheap rechauffé of Titian!” No, my friend. The boy who tried so hard to draw those steps in perspective had been carried down others, to his grave, two hundred years before Titian ran alone at Cadore. But, as surely as Venice looks on the sea, Titian looked upon this, and caught the reflected light of it forever.

What kind of boy is this, think you, who can make Titian his copyist,—Dante his friend? What new power is here which is to change the heart of Italy?—can you see it, feel it, writing before you these words on the faded wall?

“You shall see things—as they Are.”

“And the least with the greatest, because God made them.”

“And the greatest with the least, because God made you, and gave you eyes and a heart.”

I. You shall see things—as they are. So easy a matter that, you think? So much more difficult and sublime to paint grand processions and golden thrones, than St. Anne faint on her pillow, and her servant at pause?

Easy or not, it is all the sight that is required of you in this world,—to see things, and men, and yourself,—as they are.

II. And the least with the greatest, because God made them,—shepherd, and flock, and grass of the field, no less than the Golden Gate.

III. But also the golden gate of Heaven itself, open, and the angels of God coming down from it.

These three things Giotto taught, and men believed, in his day. Of which Faith you shall next see brighter work; only, before we leave the cloister, I want to sum for you one or two of the instant and evident technical changes produced in the school of Florence by this teaching.

One of quite the first results of Giotto's simply looking at things as they were, was his finding out that a red thing was red, and a brown thing brown, and a white thing white—all over.

The Greeks had painted anything anyhow,—gods black, horses red, lips and cheeks white; and when the Etruscan vase expanded into a Cimabue picture, or a Tafi mosaic, still,—except that the Madonna was to have a blue dress, and everything else as much gold on it as could be managed,—there was very little advance in notions of colour. Suddenly, Giotto threw aside all the glitter, and all the conventionalism; and declared that he saw the sky blue, the tablecloth white, and angels, when he dreamed of them, rosy. And he simply founded the schools of colour in Italy—Venetian and all, as I will show you to-

inorrow morning, if it is fine. And what is more, nobody discovered much about colour after him.

But a deeper result of his resolve to look at things as they were, was his getting so heartily interested in them that he couldn't miss their decisive *moment*. There is a decisive instant in all matters; and if you look languidly, you are sure to miss it. Nature seems always, somehow, trying to make you miss it. "I will see that through," you must say, "without turning my head"; or you won't see the trick of it at all. And the most significant thing in all his work, you will find hereafter, is his choice of moments. I will give you at once two instances in a picture which, for other reasons, you should quickly compare with these frescos. Return by the Via delle Belle Donne; keep the Casa Strozzi on your right; and go straight on, through the market. The Florentines think themselves so civilized, forsooth, for building a nuove Lung-Arno, and three manufactory chimneys opposite it; and yet sell butchers' meat, dripping red, peaches, and anchovies, side by side: it is a sight to be seen. Much more, Luca della Robbia's Madonna in the circle above the chapel door. Never pass near the market without looking at it; and glance from the vegetables underneath to Luca's leaves and lilies, that you may see how honestly he was trying to make his clay like the garden-stuff. But to-day, you may pass quickly on to the Uffizii, which will be just open; and when you enter the great gallery, turn to the right, and there, the first picture you come at will be No. 6, Giotto's "Agony in the garden."

I used to think it so dull that I could not believe it was Giotto's. That is partly from its dead colour, which is the boy's way of telling you it is night:—more from the subject being one quite beyond his age, and which he felt no pleasure in trying at. You may see he was still a boy, for he not only cannot draw feet yet, in the least, and scrupulously hides them therefore; but is very hard put to it for the hands, being obliged to draw them mostly in the same position,—all the four fingers together. But in the careful bunches of grass and weeds you will see what the fresco foregrounds were before they got spoiled; and there are some things he can understand already, even about that Agony, thinking of it in his own fixed way. Some things,—not altogether to be explained by the old symbol of the angel with the cup. He will try if he cannot explain them better in those two little pictures below; which nobody ever looks at; the great Roman sarcophagus being put in front of them, and the light glancing on the new varnish so that you must twist about like a lizard to see anything. Nevertheless, you may make out what Giotto meant.

“The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” In what was its bitterness?—thought the boy. “Crucifixion?—Well, it hurts, doubtless; but the thieves had to bear it too, and many poor human wretches have to bear worse on our battlefields. But”—and he thinks, and thinks, and then he paints his two little pictures for the predella.

They represent, of course, the sequence of the time in Gethsemane; but see what choice the youth made of his moments, having two panels to fill. Plenty of choice for him—in pain. The Flagellation—the Mocking—the Bearing of the Cross;—all habitually given by the Margheritones, and their school, as extremes of pain.

“No,” thinks Giotto. “There was worse than all that. Many a good man has been mocked, spitefully entreated, spitted on, slain. But who was ever so betrayed? Who ever saw such a sword thrust in his mother’s heart?”

He paints, first, the laying hands on Him in the garden, but with only two principal figures,—Judas and Peter, of course; Judas and Peter were always principal in the old Byzantine composition,—Judas giving the kiss—Peter cutting off the servant’s ear. But the two are here, not merely principal, but almost alone in sight, all the other figures thrown back; and Peter is not at all concerned about the servant, or his struggle with him. He has got him down,—but looks back suddenly at Judas giving the kiss. What!—*you* are the traitor, then—you!

“Yes,” says Giotto; “and you, also, in an hour more.”

The other picture is more deeply felt, still. It is of Christ brought to the foot of the cross. There is no wringing of hands or lamenting crowd—no haggard signs of fainting or pain in His body. Scourging or fainting, feeble knee and torn wound,—he thinks scorn of all that, this shepherd-boy. One executioner is hammering the wedges of the cross harder down. The other—not ungently—is taking Christ’s red robe off His shoulders.

And St. John, a few yards off, is keeping his mother from coming nearer. She looks *down*, not at Christ; but tries to come.

And now you may go on for your day's seeings through the rest of the gallery, if you will—Fornarina, and the wonderful cobbler, and all the rest of it. I don't want you any more till to-morrow morning.

But if, meantime, you will sit down,—say, before Sandro Botticelli's "Fortitude," which I shall want you to look at, one of these days; (No. 1299, innermost room from the Tribune,) and there read this following piece of one of my Oxford lectures on the relation of Cimabue to Giotto, you will be better prepared for our work to-morrow morning in Santa Croce; and may find something to consider of, in the room you are in. Where, by the way, observe that No. 1288 is a most true early Lionardo, of extreme interest: and the savants who doubt it are—never mind what; but sit down at present at the feet of Fortitude, and read.

Those of my readers who have been unfortunate enough to interest themselves in that most profitless of studies—the philosophy of art—have been at various times teased or amused by disputes respecting the relative dignity of the contemplative and dramatic schools.

Contemplative, of course, being the term attached to the system of painting things only for the sake of their own niceness—a lady because she is pretty, or a lion because he is strong: and the dramatic school being that which cannot be satisfied unless it sees something going



on; which can't paint a pretty lady unless she is being made love to, or being murdered; and can't paint a stag or a lion unless they are being hunted, or shot, or the one eating the other.

You have always heard me—or, if not, will expect by the very tone of this sentence to hear me, now, on the whole recommend you to prefer the Contemplative school. But the comparison is always an imperfect and unjust one, unless quite other terms are introduced.

The real greatness or smallness of schools is not in their preference of inactivity to action, nor of action to inactivity. It is in their preference of worthy things to unworthy, in rest; and of kind action to unkind, in business.

A Dutchman can be just as solemnly and entirely contemplative of a lemon pip and a cheese paring, as an Italian of the Virgin in Glory. An English squire has pictures, purely contemplative, of his favorite horse—and a Parisian lady, pictures, purely contemplative, of the back and front of the last dress proposed to her in *La Mode Artistique*. All these works belong to the same school of silent admiration;—the vital question concerning them is, "What do you admire?"

Now therefore, when you hear me so often saying that the Northern races—Norman and Lombard,—are active, or dramatic, in their art; and that the Southern races—Greek and Arabian,—are contemplative, you ought instantly to ask farther, Active in what? Contemplative of what? And the answer is, The active art—Lombardic,

—rejoices in hunting and fighting; the contemplative art—Byzantine,—contemplates the mysteries of the Christian faith.

And at first, on such answer, one would be apt at once to conclude—All grossness must be in the Lombard; all good in the Byzantine. But again we should be wrong,—and extremely wrong. For the hunting and fighting did practically produce strong, and often virtuous, men; while the perpetual and inactive contemplation of what it was impossible to understand, did not on the whole render the contemplative persons, stronger, wiser, or even more amiable. So that, in the twelfth century, while the Northern art was only in need of direction, the Southern was in need of life. The North was indeed spending its valour and virtue on ignoble objects; but the South disgracing the noblest objects by its want of valour and virtue.

Central stood Etruscan Florence—her root in the earth, bound with iron and brass—wet with the dew of heaven. Agriculture in occupation, religious in thought, she accepted, like good ground, the good; refused, like the Rock of Fesole, the evil; directed the industry of the Northman into the arts of peace; kindled the dreams of the Byzantine with the fire of charity. Child of her peace; and exponent of her passion, her Cimabue became the interpreter to mankind of the meaning of the Birth of Christ.

We hear constantly, and think naturally, of him as of a man whose peculiar genius in painting suddenly reformed its principles; who suddenly painted, out of his own gifted

imagination, beautiful instead of rude pictures; and taught his scholar Giotto to carry on the impulse; which we suppose thenceforward to have enlarged the resources and bettered the achievements of painting continually, up to our own time,—when the triumphs of art having been completed, and its uses ended, something higher is offered to the ambition of mankind; and Watt and Faraday initiate the Age of Manufacture and Science, as Cimabuc and Giotto instituted that of Art and Imagination.

In this conception of the History of Mental and Physical culture, we much overrate the influence, though we cannot overrate the power, of the men by whom the change seems to have been effected. We cannot overrate their power,—for the greatest men of any age, those who become its leaders when there is a great march to be begun, are indeed separated from the average intellects of their day by a distance which is immeasurable in any ordinary terms of wonder.

But we far overrate their influence; because the apparently sudden result of their labour or invention is only the manifested fruit of the toil and thought of many who preceded them, and of whose names we have never heard. The skill of Cimabue cannot be extolled too highly; but no Madonna by his hand could ever have rejoiced the soul of Italy, unless for a thousand years before, many a nameless Greek and nameless Goth had adorned the traditions, and lived in the love, of the Virgin.

In like manner, it is impossible to overrate the sagacity, patience, or precision, of the masters in modern mechani

cal and scientific discovery. But their sudden triumph, and the unbalancing of all the world by their words, may not in any wise be attributed to their own power, or even to that of the facts they have ascertained. They owe their habits and methods of industry to the paternal example, no less than the inherited energy, of men who long ago prosecuted the truths of nature, through the rage of war, and the adversity of superstition; and the universal and overwhelming consequences of the facts which their followers have now proclaimed, indicate only the crisis of a rapture produced by the offering of new objects of curiosity to nations who had nothing to look at; and of the amusement of novel motion and action to nations who had nothing to do.

Nothing to look at! That is indeed—you will find, if you consider of it—our sorrowful case. The vast extent of the advertising frescos of London, daily refreshed into brighter and larger frescos by its billstickers, cannot somehow sufficiently entertain the popular eyes. The great Mrs. Allen, with her flowing hair, and equally flowing promises, palls upon repetition, and that Madonna of the nineteenth century smiles in vain above many a borgo unrejoiced; even the excitement of the shop-window, with its unattainable splendours, or too easily attainable impostures, cannot maintain itself in the wearying mind of the populace, and I find my charitable friends inviting the children, whom the streets educate only into vicious misery, to entertainments of scientific vision, in microscope or magic lantern; thus giving them something to look at,

such as it is;—fleas mostly; and the stomachs of various vermin; and people with their heads cut off and set on again;—still *something*, to look at.

The fame of Cimabue rests, and justly, on a similar charity. He gave the populace of his day something to look at; and satisfied their curiosity with science of something they had long desired to know. We have continually imagined in our carelessness, that his triumph consisted only in a new pictorial skill; recent critical writers, unable to comprehend how any street populace could take pleasure in painting, have ended by denying his triumph altogether, and insisted that he gave no joy to Florence; and that the "Joyful quarter" was accidentally so named—or at least from no other festivity than that of the procession attending Charles of Anjou. I proved to you, in a former lecture, that the old tradition was true, and the delight of the people unquestionable. But that delight was not merely in the revelation of an art they had not known how to practise; it was delight in the revelation of a Madonna whom they had not known how to love.

Again; what was revelation to *them*—we suppose farther and as unwisely, to have been only art in *him*; that in better laying of colours,—in better tracing of perspectives—in recovery of principles of classic composition—he had manufactured, as our Gothic Firms now manufacture to order, a Madonna—in whom he believed no more than they.

Not so. First of the Florentines, first of European men—he attained in thought, and saw with spiritual eyes,

exercised to discern good from evil,—the face of her who was blessed among women; and with his following hand, made visible the Magnificat of his heart.

He magnified the Maid; and Florence rejoiced in her Queen. But it was left for Giotto to make the queenship better beloved, in its sweet humiliation.

You had the Etruscan stock in Florence—Christian, or at least semi-Christian; the statue of Mars still in its streets, but with its central temple built for Baptism in the name of Christ. It was a race living by agriculture; gentle, thoughtful, and exquisitely fine in handiwork. The straw bonnet of Tuscany—the Leghorn—is pure Etruscan art, young ladies:—only plaited gold of God's harvest, instead of the plaited gold of His earth.

You had then the Norman and Lombard races coming down on this: kings, and hunters—splendid in war—insatiable of action. You had the Greek and Arabian races flowing from the east, bringing with them the law of the City, and the dream of the Desert.

Cimabue—Etruscan born, gave, we saw, the life of the Norman to the tradition of the Greek: eager action to holy contemplation. And what more is left for his favourite shepherd boy Giotto to do, than this, except to paint with ever-increasing skill? We fancy he only surpassed Cimabue—eclipsed by greater brightness.

Not so. The sudden and new applause of Italy would never have been won by mere increase of the already-kindled light. Giotto had wholly another work to do. The meeting of the Norman race with the Byzantine is

not merely that of action with repose—not merely that of war with religion,—it is the meeting of *domestic* life with *monastic*, and of practical household sense with unpractical Desert insanity.

I have no other word to use than this last. I use it reverently, meaning a very noble thing; I do not know how far I ought to say—even a divine thing. Decide that for yourselves. Compare the Northern farmer with St. Francis; the palm hardened by stubbing Thornaby waste, with the palm softened by the imagination of the wounds of Christ. To my own thoughts, both are divine; decide that for yourselves; but assuredly, and without possibility of other decision, one is, humanly speaking, healthy; the other *unhealthy*; one sane, the other—insane.

To reconcile Drama with Dream, Cimabue's task was comparatively an easy one. But to reconcile Sense with—I still use even this following word reverently—Nonsense, is not so easy; and he who did it first,—no wonder he has a name in the world.

I must lean, however, still more distinctly on the word "domestic." For it is not Rationalism and commercial competition—Mr. Stuart Mill's "other career for woman than that of wife and mother"—which are reconcileable, by Giotto, or by anybody else, with divine vision. But household wisdom, labour of love, toil upon earth according to the law of Heaven—*these* are reconcileable, in one code of glory, with revelation in cave or island, with the endurance of desolate and loveless days, with the repose of folded hands that wait Heaven's time.

Domestic and monastic. He was the first of Italians—the first of Christians—who *equally* knew the virtue of both lives; and who was able to show it in the sight of men of all ranks,—from the prince to the shepherd; and of all powers,—from the wisest philosopher to the simplest child.

For, note the way in which the new gift of painting, bequeathed to him by his great master, strengthened his hands. Before Cimabue, no beautiful rendering of human form was possible; and the rude or formal types of the Lombard and Byzantine, though they would serve in the tumult of the chase, or as the recognized symbols of creed, could not represent personal and domestic character. Faces with goggling eyes and rigid lips might be endured with ready help of imagination, for gods, angels, saints, or hunters—or for anybody else in scenes of recognized legend, but would not serve for pleasant portraiture of one's own self—or of the incidents of gentle, actual life. And even Cimabue did not venture to leave the sphere of conventionally revered dignity. He still painted—though beautifully—only the Madonna, and the St. Joseph, and the Christ. These he made living,—Florence asked no more: and “Credette Cimabue nella pittura tener lo campo.”

But Giotto came from the field, and saw with his simple eyes a lowlier worth. And he painted—the Madonna, and St. Joseph, and the Christ,—yes, by all means if you choose to call them so, but essentially,—Mamma, Papa,



and the Baby. And all Italy threw up its cap,— *Ora ha Giotto il grido.*"

For he defines, explains, and exalts, every sweet incident of human nature; and makes dear to daily life every mystic imagination of natures greater than our own. He reconciles, while he intensifies, every virtue of domestic and monastic thought. He makes the simplest household duties sacred, and the highest religious passions serviceable and just.

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## THE THIRD MORNING.

### BEFORE THE SOLDAN.

I PROMISED some note of Sandro's Fortitude, before whom I asked you to sit and read the end of my last letter; and I've lost my own notes about her, and forget, now, whether she has a sword, or a mace;—it does not matter. What is chiefly notable in her is—that you would not, if you had to guess who she was, take her for Fortitude at all. Everybody else's Fortitudes announce themselves clearly and prondly. They have tower-like shields, and lion-like helmets—and stand firm astride on their legs,—and are confidently ready for all comers.

Yes;—that is your common Fortitude. Very grand, though common. But not the highest, by any means.

Ready for all comers, and a match for them,—thinks the universal Fortitude;—no thanks to her for standing so steady, then!

But Botticelli's Fortitude is no match, it may be, for any that are coming. Worn, somewhat; and not a little weary, instead of standing ready for all comers, she is sitting,—apparently in reverie, her fingers playing restlessly and idly—nay, I think—even nervously, about the hilt of her sword.

For her battle is not to begin to-day; nor did it begin

yesterday. Many a morn and eve have passed since it began—and now—is this to be the ending day of it? And if this—by what manner of end?

That is what Sandro's Fortitude is thinking. And the playing fingers about the sword-hilt would fain let it fall, if it might be: and yet, how swiftly and gladly will they close on it, when the far-off trumpet blows, which she will hear through all her reverie!

There is yet another picture of Sandro's here, which you must look at before going back to Giotto: the small Judith in the room next the Tribune, as you return from this outer one. It is just under Lionardo's Medusa. She is returning to the camp of her Israel, followed by her maid carrying the head of Holofernes. And she walks in one of Botticelli's light dancing actions; her drapery all on flutter, and her hand, like Fortitude's, light on the sword-hilt, but daintily—not nervously, the little finger laid over the cross of it.

And at the first glance—you will think the figure merely a piece of fifteenth-century affectation. 'Judith, indeed!—say rather the daughter of Herodias, at her mincingest.'

Well, yes—Botticelli *is* affected, in the way that all men in that century necessarily were. Much euphuism, much studied grace of manner, much formal assertion of scholarship, mingling with his force of imagination. And he likes twisting the fingers of hands about, just as Correggio does. But he never does it like Correggio, without cause.

Look at Judith again,—at her face, not her drapery,—and remember that when a man is base at the heart, he blights his virtues into weaknesses; but when he is true at the heart, he sanctifies his weaknesses into virtues. It is a weakness of Botticelli's, this love of dancing motion and waved drapery; but why has he given it full flight here?

Do you happen to know anything about Judith yourself, except that she cut off Holofernes' head; and has been made the high light of about a million of vile pictures ever since, in which the painters thought they could surely attract the public to the double show of an execution, and a pretty woman,—especially with the added pleasure of hinting at previously ignoble sin?

When you go home to-day, take the pains to write out for yourself, in the connection I here place them, the verses underneath numbered from the book of Judith; you will probably think of their meaning more carefully as you write.

Begin thus:

“Now at that time, Judith heard thereof, which was the daughter of Merari, \* \* \* the son of Simeon, the son of Israel.” And then write out, consecutively, these pieces—

Chapter viii., verses 2 to 8. (Always inclusive,) and read the whole chapter.

Chapter ix., verses 1 and 5 to 7, beginning this piece with the previous sentence, “Oh God, oh my God, hear me also, a widow.”

Chapter ix.,	verses	11 to 14.
”	x.,	” 1 to 5.
”	xiii.,	” 6 to 10.
”	xv.,	” 11 to 13.
”	xvi.,	” 1 to 6.
”	xvi.,	” 11 to 15.
”	xvi.,	” 18 and 19.
”	xvi.,	” 23 to 25.

Now, as in many other cases of noble history, apocryphal and other, I do not in the least care how far the literal facts are true. The conception of facts, and the idea of Jewish womanhood, are there, grand and real as a marble statue,—possession for all ages. And you will feel, after you have read this piece of history, or epic poetry, with honourable care, that there is somewhat more to be thought of and pictured in Judith, than painters have mostly found it in them to show you; that she is not merely the Jewish Dalilah to the Assyrian Samson; but the mightiest, purest, brightest type of high passion in severe womanhood offered to our human memory. Sandro's picture is but slight; but it is true to her, and the only one I know that is; and after writing out these verses, you will see why he gives her that swift, peaceful motion, while you read in her face, only sweet solemnity of dreaming thought. “My people delivered, and by my hand; and God has been gracious to His handmaid!” The triumph of Miriam over a fallen host, the fire of exulting mortal life in an immortal hour, the purity and severity of a guardian angel—all are here; and as her

servant follows, carrying indeed the head, but invisible—(a mere thing to be carried—no more to be so much as thought of)—she looks only at her mistress, with intense, servile, watchful love. Faithful, not in these days of fear only, but hitherto in all her life, and afterwards for ever.

After you have seen it enough, look also for a little while at Angelico's Marriage and Death of the Virgin, in the same room; you may afterwards associate the three pictures always together in your mind. And, looking at nothing else to-day in the Uffizii, let us go back to Giotto's chapel.

We must begin with this work on our left hand, the Death of St. Francis; for it is the key to all the rest. Let us hear first what Mr. Crowe directs us to think of it. "In the composition of this scene, Giotto produced a masterpiece, which served as a model but too often feebly imitated by his successors. Good arrangement, variety of character and expression in the heads, unity and harmony in the whole, make this an exceptional work of its kind. As a composition, worthy of the fourteenth century, Ghirlandajo and Benedetto da Majano both imitated, without being able to improve it. No painter ever produced its equal except Raphael; nor could a better be created except in so far as regards improvement in the mere rendering of form."

To these inspiring observations by the rapturous Crowe, more cautious Cavalcasella \* appends a refrigerating note,

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\* I venture to attribute the wiser note to Signor Cavalcasella because I have every reason to put real confidence in his judgment. But it was

saying "The St. Francis in the glory is new, but the angels are in part preserved. The rest has all been more or less retouched; and no judgment can be given as to the colour of this—or any other (!)—of these works."

You are, therefore—instructed reader—called upon to admire a piece of art which no painter ever produced the equal of except Raphael; but it is unhappily deficient, according to Crowe, in the "mere rendering of form"; and, according to Signor Cavalcasella, "no opinion can be given as to its colour."

Warned thus of the extensive places where the ice is dangerous, and forbidden to look here either for form or colour, you are to admire "the variety of character and expression in the heads." I do not myself know how these are to be given without form or colour; but there appears to me, in my innocence, to be only one head in the whole picture, drawn up and down in different positions.

The "unity and harmony" of the whole—which make this an exceptional work of its kind—mean, I suppose, its general look of having been painted out of a scavenger's cart; and so we are reduced to the last article of our creed according to Crowe,—

"In the composition of this scene Giotto produced a masterpiece."

Well, possibly. The question is, What you mean by 'composition.' Which, putting modern criticism now out

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impossible for any man engaged as he is, to go over all the ground covered by so extensive a piece of critical work as these three volumes contain, with effective attention.



of our way, I will ask the reader to think, in front of this wreck of Giotto, with some care.

Was it, in the first place, to Giotto, think you, the "composition of a scene," or the conception of a fact? You probably, if a fashionable person, have seen the apotheosis of Margaret in Faust? You know what care is taken, nightly, in the composition of that scene,—how the draperies are arranged for it; the lights turned off, and on; the fiddlestrings taxed for their utmost tenderness; the bassoons exhorted to a grievous solemnity.

You don't believe, however, that any real soul of a Margaret ever appeared to any mortal in that manner?

*Here* is an apotheosis also. Composed!—yes; figures high on the right and left, low in the middle, etc., etc., etc.

But the important questions seem to me, Was there ever a St. Francis?—*did* he ever receive stigmata?—*did* his soul go up to heaven—did any monk see it rising—and did Giotto mean to tell us so? If you will be good enough to settle these few small points in your mind first, the "composition" will take a wholly different aspect to you, according to your answer.

Nor does it seem doubtful to me what your answer, after investigation made, must be.

There assuredly was a St. Francis, whose life and works you had better study than either to-day's Galignani, or whatever, this year, may supply the place of the Tichborne case, in public interest.

His reception of the stigmata is, perhaps, a marvellous instance of the power of imagination over physical con-

ditions ; perhaps an equally marvellous instance of the swift change of metaphor into tradition ; but assuredly, and beyond dispute, one of the most influential, significant, and instructive traditions possessed by the Church of Christ. And, that, if ever soul rose to heaven from the dead body, his soul did so rise, is equally sure.

And, finally, Giotto believed that all he was called on to represent, concerning St. Francis, really had taken place, just as surely as you, if you are a Christian, believe that Christ died and rose again ; and he represents it with all fidelity and passion : but, as I just now said, he is a man of supreme common sense ;—has as much humour and clearness of sight as Chancer, and as much dislike of falsehood in clergy, or in professedly pious people : and in his gravest moments he will still see and say truly that what is fat, is fat—and what is lean, lean—and what is hollow, empty.

His great point, however, in this fresco, is the assertion of the reality of the stigmata against all question. There is not only one St. Thomas to be convinced ; there are five ;—one to each wound. Of these, four are intent only on satisfying their curiosity, and are peering or probing ; one only kisses the hand he has lifted. The rest of the picture never was much more than a grey drawing of a noble burial service ; of all concerned in which, one monk, only, is worthy to see the soul taken up to heaven ; and he is evidently just the monk whom nobody in the convent thought anything of. (His face is all repainted ; but one can gather this much, or little, out of it, yet.)

Of the composition, or "unity and harmony of the whole," as a burial service, we may better judge after we have looked at the brighter picture of St. Francis's Birth—birth spiritual, that is to say, to his native heaven; the uppermost, namely, of the three subjects on this side of the chapel. It is entirely characteristic of Giotto; much of it by his hand—all of it beautiful. All important matters to be known of Giotto you may know from this fresco.

'But we can't see it, even with our opera-glasses, but all foreshortened and spoiled. What is the use of lecturing us on this?'

That is precisely the first point which is essentially Giottesque in it; its being so out of the way! It is this which makes it a perfect specimen of the master. I will tell you next something about a work of his which you can see perfectly, just behind you on the opposite side of the wall; but that you have half to break your neck to look at this one, is the very first thing I want you to feel.

It is a characteristic—(as far as I know, quite a universal one)—of the greatest masters, that they never expect you to look at them;—seen always rather surprised if you want to; and not overpleased. Tell them you are going to hang their picture at the upper end of the table at the next great City dinner, and that Mr. So and So will make a speech about it; you produce no impression upon them whatever, or an unfavourable one. The chances are ten to one they send you the most rubbishy thing they can

find in their lumber-room. But send for one of them in a hurry, and tell him the rats have gnawed a nasty hole behind the parlour door, and you want it plastered and painted over;—and he does you a masterpiece which the world will peep behind your door to look at for ever.

I have no time to tell you why this is so; nor do I know why, altogether; but so it is.

Giotto, then, is sent for, to paint this high chapel: I am not sure if he chose his own subjects from the life of St. Francis: I think so,—but of course can't reason on the guess securely. At all events, he would have much of his own way in the matter.

Now you must observe that painting a Gothic chapel rightly is just the same thing as painting a Greek vase rightly. The chapel is merely the vase turned upside-down, and outside-in. The principles of decoration are exactly the same. Your decoration is to be proportioned to the size of your vase; to be together delightful when you look at the cup, or chapel, as a whole; to be various and entertaining when you turn the cup round; (you turn *yourself* round in the chapel;) and to bend its heads and necks of figures about, as it best can, over the hollows, and ins and outs, so that anyhow, whether too long or too short—possible or impossible—they may be living, and full of grace. You will also please take it on my word to-day—in another morning walk you shall have proof of it—that Giotto was a pure Etruscan-Greek of the thirteenth century: converted indeed to worship St. Francis instead of Heracles; but as far as vase-painting goes, pre-

cisely the Etruscan he was before. This is nothing else than a large, beautiful, coloured Etruscan vase you have got, inverted over your heads like a diving-bell.\*

Accordingly, after the quatrefoil ornamentation of the top of the bell, you get two spaces at the sides under arches, very difficult to cramp one's picture into, if it is to be a picture only; but entirely provocative of our old Etruscan instinct of ornament. And, spurred by the difficulty, and pleased by the national character of it, we put our best work into these arches, utterly neglectful of the public below,—who will see the white and red and blue spaces, at any rate, which is all they will want to see, thinks Giotto, if he ever looks down from his scaffold.

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\* I observe that recent criticism is engaged in proving all Etruscan vases to be of late manufacture, in imitation of archaic Greek. And I therefore must briefly anticipate a statement which I shall have to enforce in following letters. Etruscan art remains in its own Italian valleys, of the Arno and upper Tiber, in one unbroken series of work, from the seventh century before Christ, to this hour, when the country white-washer still scratches his plaster in Etruscan patterns. All Florentine work of the finest kind—Luca della Robbia's, Ghiberti's, Donatello's, Filippo Lippi's, Botticelli's, Fra Angelico's—is absolutely pure Etruscan, merely changing its subjects, and representing the Virgin instead of Athena, and Christ instead of Jupiter. Every line of the Florentine chisel in the fifteenth century is based on national principles of art which existed in the seventh century before Christ; and Angelico, in his convent of St. Dominic, at the root of the hill of Féssole, is as true an Etruscan as the builder who laid the rude stones of the wall along its crest—of which modern civilization has used the only arch that remained for cheap building stone. Luckily, I sketched it in 1845: but alas, too carelessly,—never conceiving of the brutalities of modern Italy as possible.

Take the highest compartment, then, on the left, looking towards the window. It was wholly impossible to get the arch filled with figures, unless they stood on each other's heads; so Giotto ekes it out with a piece of fine architecture. Raphael, in the *Sposalizio*, does the same, for pleasure.

Then he puts two dainty little white figures, bending, on each flank, to stop up his corners. But he puts the taller inside on the right, and outside on the left. And he puts his Greek chorus of observant and moralizing persons on each side of his main action.

Then he puts one Choragus—or leader of chorus, supporting the main action—on each side. Then he puts the main action in the middle—which is a quarrel about that white bone of contention in the centre. Choragus on the right, who sees that the bishop is going to have the best of it, backs him serenely. Choragus on the left, who sees that his impetuous friend is going to get the worst of it, is pulling him back, and trying to keep him quiet. The subject of the picture, which, after you are quite sure it is good as a decoration, but not till then, you may be allowed to understand, is the following. One of St. Francis's three great virtues being Obedience, he begins his spiritual life by quarrelling with his father. He, I suppose in modern terms I should say, 'commercially invests' some of his father's goods in charity. His father objects to that investment; on which St. Francis runs away, taking what he can find about the house along with him. His father follows to claim his property, but finds

it is all gone, already; and that St. Francis has made friends with the Bishop of Assisi. His father flies into an indecent passion, and declares he will disinherit him; on which St. Francis then and there takes all his clothes off, throws them frantically in his father's face, and says he has nothing more to do with clothes or father. The good Bishop, in tears of admiration, embraces St. Francis, and covers him with his own mantle.

I have read the picture to you as, if Mr. Spurgeon knew anything about art, Mr. Spurgeon would read it,—that is to say, from the plain, common sense, Protestant side. If you are content with that view of it, you may leave the chapel, and, as far as any study of history is concerned, Florence also; for you can never know anything either about Giotto, or her.

Yet do not be afraid of my re-reading it to you from the mystic, nonsensical, and Papistical side. I am going to read it to you—if after many and many a year of thought, I am able—as Giotto meant it; Giotto being, as far as we know, then the man of strongest brain and hand in Florence; the best friend of the best religious poet of the world; and widely differing, as his friend did also, in his views of the world, from either Mr. Spurgeon, or Pius IX.

The first duty of a child is to obey its father and mother; as the first duty of a citizen to obey the laws of his state. And this duty is so strict that I believe the only limits to it are those fixed by Isaac and Iphigenia. On the other hand, the father and mother have also a

fixed duty to the child—not to provoke it to wrath. I have never heard this text explained to fathers and mothers from the pulpit, which is curious. For it appears to me that God will expect the parents to understand their duty to their children, better even than children can be expected to know their duty to their parents.

But farther. A *child's* duty is to obey its parents. It is never said anywhere in the Bible, and never was yet said in any good or wise book, that a man's, or woman's, is. *When*, precisely, a child becomes a man or a woman, it can no more be said, than when it should first stand on its legs. But a time assuredly comes when it should. In great states, children are always trying to remain children, and the parents wanting to make men and women of them. In vile states, the children are always wanting to be men and women, and the parents to keep them children. It may be—and happy the house in which it is so—that the father's at least equal intellect, and older experience, may remain to the end of his life a law to his children, not of force, but of perfect guidance, with perfect love. Rarely it is so; not often possible. It is as natural for the old to be prejudiced as for the young to be presumptuous; and, in the change of centuries, each generation has something to judge of for itself.

But this scene; on which Giotto has dwelt with so great force, represents, not the child's assertion of his independence, but his adoption of another Father.

You must not confuse the desire of this boy of Assisi to obey God rather than man, with the desire of your young



cockney Hopeful to have a latch-key, and a separate allowance. No point of duty has been more miserably warped and perverted by false priests, in all churches, than this duty of the young to choose whom they will serve. But the duty itself does not the less exist; and if there be any truth in Christianity at all, there will come, for all true disciples, a time when they have to take that saying to heart, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me."

'*Loveth*'—observe. There is no talk of disobeying fathers or mothers whom you do *not* love, or of running away from a home where you would rather not stay. But to leave the home which is your peace, and to be at enmity with those who are most dear to you,—this, if there be meaning in Christ's words, one day or other will be demanded of His true followers.

And there *is* meaning in Christ's words. Whatever misuse may have been made of them,—whatever false prophets—and Heaven knows there have been many—have called the young children to them, not to bless, but to curse, the assured fact remains, that if you will obey God, there will come a moment when the voice of man will be raised, with all its holiest natural authority, against you. The friend and the wise adviser—the brother and the sister—the father and the master—the entire voice of your prudent and keen-sighted acquaintance—the entire weight of the scornful stupidity of the vulgar world—for *once*, they will be against you, all at one. You have to obey God rather than man. The human race, with

all its wisdom and love, all its indignation and folly, on one side,—God alone on the other. You have to choose.

That is the meaning of St. Francis's renouncing his inheritance; and it is the beginning of Giotto's gospel of Works. Unless this hardest of deeds be done first,—this inheritance of mammon and the world cast away,—all other deeds are useless. You cannot serve, cannot obey, God and mammon. No charities, no obediences, no self-denials, are of any use, while you are still at heart in conformity with the world. You go to church, because the world goes. You keep Sunday, because your neighbours keep it. But you dress ridiculously, because your neighbours ask it; and you dare not do a rough piece of work, because your neighbours despise it. You must renounce your neighbour, in his riches and pride, and remember him in his distress. That is St. Francis's 'disobedience.'

And now you can understand the relation of subjects throughout the chapel, and Giotto's choice of them.

The roof has the symbols of the three virtues of labour—Poverty, Chastity, Obedience.

A. Highest on the left side, looking to the window. The life of St. Francis begins in his renunciation of the world.

B. Highest on the right side. His new life is approved and ordained by the authority of the church.

C. Central on the left side. He preaches to his own disciples.

D. Central on the right side. He preaches to the heathen.

E. Lowest on the left side. His burial.

F. Lowest on the right side. His power after death.

Besides these six subjects, there are, on the sides of the window, the four great Franciscan saints, St. Louis of France, St. Louis of Toulouse, St. Clare, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

So that you have in the whole series this much given you to think of: first, the law of St. Francis's conscience; then, his own adoption of it; then, the ratification of it by the Christian Church; then, his preaching it in life; then, his preaching it in death; and then, the fruits of it in his disciples.

I have only been able myself to examine, or in any right sense to see, of this code of subjects, the first, second, fourth, and the St. Louis and Elizabeth. I will ask *you* only to look at two more of them, namely, St. Francis before the Soldan, midmost on your right, and St. Louis.

The Soldan, with an ordinary opera-glass, you may see clearly enough; and I think it will be first well to notice some technical points in it.

If the little virgin on the stairs of the temple reminded you of one composition of Titian's, this Soldan should, I think, remind you of all that is greatest in Titian; so forcibly, indeed, that for my own part, if I had been told that a careful early fresco by Titian had been recovered in Santa Croce, I could have believed both report and my own eyes, more quickly than I have been able to admit that this is

indeed by Giotto. It is so great that—had its principles been understood—there was in reality nothing more to be taught of art in Italy; nothing to be invented afterwards, except Dutch effects of light.

That there is no ‘effect of light’ here arrived at, I beg you at once to observe as a most important lesson. The subject is St. Francis challenging the Soldan’s Magi,—fire-worshippers—to pass with him through the fire, which is blazing red at his feet. It is so hot that the two Magi on the other side of the throne shield their faces. But it is represented simply as a red mass of writhing forms of flame; and casts no firelight whatever. There is no ruby colour on anybody’s nose; there are no black shadows under anybody’s chin; there are no Rembrandtesque gradations of gloom, or glitterings of sword-hilt and armour.

Is this ignorance, think you, in Giotto, and pure artlessness? He was now a man in middle life, having passed all his days in painting, and professedly, and almost contentiously, painting things as he saw them. Do you suppose he never saw fire cast firelight?—and he the friend of Dante! who of all poets is the most subtle in his sense of every kind of effect of light—though he has been thought by the public to know that of fire only. Again and again, his ghosts wonder that there is no shadow cast by Dante’s body; and is the poet’s friend, *because* a painter, likely, therefore, not to have known that mortal substance casts shadow, and terrestrial flame, light? Nay, the passage in the ‘Purgatorio’ where the shadows from the morning sunshine make the flames redder, reaches the

accuracy of Newtonian science ; and does Giotto, think you, all the while, see nothing of the sort ?

The fact was, he saw light so intensely that he never for an instant thought of painting it. He knew that to paint the sun was as impossible as to stop it ; and he was no trickster, trying to find out ways of seeming to do what he did not. I can paint a rose,—yes ; and I will. I can't paint a red-hot coal ; and I won't try to, nor seem to. This was just as natural and certain a process of thinking with *him*, as the honesty of it, and true science, were impossible to the false painters of the sixteenth century.

Nevertheless, what his art can honestly do to make you feel as much as he wants you to feel, about this fire, he will do ; and that studiously. That the fire be *luminous* or not, is no matter just now. But that the fire is *hot*, he would have you to know. Now, will you notice what colours he has used in the whole picture. First, the blue background, necessary to unite it with the other three subjects, is reduced to the smallest possible space. St. Francis must be in grey, for that is his dress ; also the attendant of one of the Magi is in grey ; but so warm, that, if you saw it by itself, you would call it brown. The shadow behind the throne, which Giotto knows he *can* paint, and therefore does, is grey also. The rest of the picture\* in at least six-sevenths of its area—is either crimson, gold, orange, purple, or white, all as warm as Giotto could paint them ; and set off by minute spaces

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\* The floor has been repainted ; but though its grey is now heavy and cold, it cannot kill the splendour of the rest.

only of intense black,—the Soldan's fillet at the shoulders, his eyes, beard, and the points necessary in the golden pattern behind. And the whole picture is one glow.

A single glance round at the other subjects will convince you of the special character in this; but you will recognize also that the four upper subjects, in which St Francis's life and zeal are shown, are all in comparatively warm colours, while the two lower ones—of the death, and the visions after it—have been kept as definitely sad and cold.

Necessarily, you might think, being full of monks' dresses. Not so. Was there any need for Giotto to have put the priest at the foot of the dead body, with the black banner stooped over it in the shape of a grave? Might he not, had he chosen, in either fresco, have made the celestial visions brighter? Might not St. Francis have appeared in the centre of a celestial glory to the dreaming Pope, or his soul been seen of the poor monk, rising through more radiant clouds? Look, however, how radiant, in the small space allowed out of the blue, they are in reality. You cannot anywhere see a lovelier piece of Giottesque colour, though here, you have to mourn over the smallness of the piece, and its isolation. For the face of St. Francis himself is repainted, and all the blue sky; but the clouds and four sustaining angels are hardly retouched at all, and their iridescent and exquisitely graceful wings are left with really very tender and delicate care by the restorer of the sky. And no one but Giotto or Turner could have painted them.

For in all his use of opalescent and warm colour, Giotto is exactly like Turner, as, in his swift expressional power, he is like Gainsborough. All the other Italian religious painters work out their expression with toil; he only can give it with a touch. All the other great Italian colourists see only the beauty of colour, but Giotto also its brightness. And none of the others, except Tintoret, understood to the full its symbolic power; but with those—Giotto and Tintoret—there is always, not only a colour harmony, but a colour secret. It is not merely to make the picture glow, but to remind you that St. Francis preaches to a fire-worshipping king, that Giotto covers the wall with purple and scarlet;—and above, in the dispute at Assisi, the angry father is dressed in red, varying like passion; and the robe with which his protector embraces St. Francis, blue, symbolizing the peace of Heaven. Of course certain conventional colours were traditionally employed by all painters; but only Giotto and Tintoret invent a symbolism of their own for every picture. Thus in Tintoret's picture of the fall of the manna, the figure of God the Father is entirely robed in white, contrary to all received custom: in that of Moses striking the rock, it is surrounded by a rainbow. Of Giotto's symbolism in colour at Assisi, I have given account elsewhere.\*

You are not to think, therefore, the difference between the colour of the upper and lower frescoes unintentional. The life of St. Francis was always full of joy and triumph. His death, in great suffering, weariness, and extreme

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\* 'Fors Clavigera' for September, 1874.

humility. The tradition of him reverses that of Elijah, living, he is seen in the chariot of fire; dying, he submits to more than the common sorrow of death.

There is, however, much more than a difference in colour between the upper and lower frescos. There is a difference in manner which I cannot account for; and above all, a very singular difference in skill,—indicating, it seems to me, that the two lower were done long before the others, and afterwards united and harmonized with them. It is of no interest to the general reader to pursue this question; but one point he can notice quickly, that the lower frescos depend much on a mere black or brown outline of the features, while the faces above are evenly and completely painted in the most accomplished Venetian manner:—and another, respecting the management of the draperies, contains much interest for us.

Giotto never succeeded, to the very end of his days, in representing a figure lying down, and at ease. It is one of the most curious points in all his character. Just the thing which he could study from nature without the smallest hindrance, is the thing he never can paint; while subtleties of form and gesture, which depend absolutely on their momentariness, and actions in which no model can stay for an instant, he seizes with infallible accuracy.

Not only has the sleeping Pope, in the right hand lower fresco, his head laid uncomfortably on his pillow, but all the clothes on him are in awkward angles, even Giotto's instinct for lines of drapery failing him altogether when he has to lay it on a reposing figure. But look at the



folds of the Soldan's robe over his knees. None could be more beautiful or right; and it is to me wholly inconceivable that the two paintings should be within even twenty years of each other in date—the skill in the upper one is so supremely greater. We shall find, however, more than mere truth in its casts of drapery, if we examine them.

They are so simply right, in the figure of the Soldan, that we do not think of them;—we see him only, not his dress. But we see dress first, in the figures of the discomfited Magi. Very fully draped personages these, indeed,—with trains, it appears, four yards long, and bearers of them.

The one nearest the Soldan has done his devoir as bravely as he could; would fain go up to the fire, but cannot; is forced to shield his face, though he has not turned back. Giotto gives him full sweeping breadth of fold; what dignity he can;—a man faithful to his profession, at all events.

The next one has no such courage. Collapsed altogether, he has nothing more to say for himself or his creed. Giotto hangs the cloak upon him, in Ghirlandajo's fashion, as from a peg, but with ludicrous narrowness of fold. Literally, he is a 'shut-up' Magnus—closed like a fan. He turns his head away, hopelessly. And the last Magnus shows nothing but his back, disappearing through the door.

Opposed to them, in a modern work, you would have had a St. Francis standing as high as he could in his sandals,

contemptuous, denunciatory; magnificently showing the Magi the door. No such thing, says Giotto. A somewhat mean man; disappointing enough in presence—even in feature; I do not understand his gesture, pointing to his forehead—perhaps meaning, ‘my life, or my head, upon the truth of this.’ The attendant monk behind him is terror-struck; but will follow his master. The dark Moorish servants of the Magi show no emotion—will arrange their masters’ trains as usual, and decorously sustain their retreat.

Lastly, for the Soldan himself. In a modern work, you would assuredly have had him staring at St. Francis with his eyebrows up, or frowning thundrously at his Magi, with them bent as far down as they would go. Neither of these aspects does he bear, according to Giotto. A perfect gentleman and king, he looks on his Magi with quiet eyes of decision; he is much the noblest person in the room—though an infidel, the true hero of the scene, far more than St. Francis. It is evidently the Soldan whom Giotto wants you to think of mainly, in this picture of Christian missionary work.

He does not altogether take the view of the Heathen which you would get in an Exeter Hall meeting. Does not expatiate on their ignorance, their blackness, or their nakedness. Does not at all think of the Florentine Islington and Pentonville, as inhabited by persons in every respect superior to the kings of the East; nor does he imagine every other religion but his own to be log-worship. Probably the people who really worship logs—

whether in Persia or Pentonville—will be left to worship logs to their hearts' content, thinks Giotto. But to those who worship *God*, and who have obeyed the laws of heaven written in their hearts, and numbered the stars of it visible to them,—to these, a nearer star may rise; and a higher God be revealed.

You are to note, therefore, that Giotto's Soldan is the type of all noblest religion and law, in countries where the name of Christ has not been preached. There was no doubt what king or people should be chosen: the country of the three Magi had already been indicated by the miracle of Bethlehem; and the religion and morality of Zoroaster were the purest, and in spirit the oldest, in the heathen world. Therefore, when Dante, in the nineteenth and twentieth books of the *Paradise*, gives his final interpretation of the law of human and divine justice in relation to the gospel of Christ—the lower and enslaved body of the heathen being represented by St. Philip's convert, ("Christians like these the Ethiop shall condemn")—the noblest state of heathenism is at once chosen, as by Giotto: "What may the *Persians* say unto *your* kings?" Compare also Milton,—

"At the Soldan's chair,  
Defied the best of Paynim chivalry."

And now, the time is come for you to look at Giotto's St. Louis, who is the type of a Christian king.

You would, I suppose, never have seen it at all, unless I had dragged you here on purpose. It was enough in the dark originally—is trebly darkened by the modern

painted glass—and dismissed to its oblivion contentedly by Mr. Murray's "Four saints, all much restored and repainted," and Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcasella's serene "The St. Louis is quite new."

Now, I am the last person to call any restoration whatever, judicious. Of all destructive manias, that of restoration is the frightfullest and foolishhest. Nevertheless, what good, in its miserable way, it can bring, the poor art scholar must now apply his common sense to take; there is no use, because a great work has been restored, in now passing it by altogether, not even looking for what instruction we still may find in its design, which will be more intelligible, if the restorer has had any conscience at all, to the ordinary spectator, than it would have been in the faded work. When, indeed, Mr. Murray's Guide tells you that a *building* has been 'magnificently restored,' you may pass the building by in resigned despair; for *that* means that every bit of the old sculpture has been destroyed, and modern vulgar copies put up in its place. But a restored picture or fresco will often be, to *you*, more useful than a pure one; and in all probability—if an important piece of art—it will have been spared in many places, cautiously completed in others, and still assert itself in a mysterious way—as Leonardo's Cenacolo does—through every phase of reproduction.\*

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\* For a test of your feeling in the matter, having looked well at these two lower frescoes in this chapel, walk round into the next, and examine the lower one on your left hand as you enter that. You will find in your Murray that the frescoes in this chapel "were also, till lately,

But I can assure you, in the first place, that St. Louis is by no means altogether new. I have been up at it, and found most lovely and true colour left in many parts: the crown, which you will find, after our mornings at the

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(1862) covered with whitewash"; but I happen to have a long critique of this particular picture written in the year 1845, and I see no change in it since then. Mr. Murray's critic also tells you to observe in it that "the daughter of Herodias playing on a violin is not unlike Perugino's treatment of similar subjects." By which Mr. Murray's critic means that the male musician playing on a violin, whom, without looking either at his dress, or at the rest of the fresco, he took for the daughter of Herodias, has a broad face. Allowing you the full benefit of this criticism—there is still a point or two more to be observed. This is the only fresco near the ground in which Giotto's work is untouched, at least, by the modern restorer. So felicitously safe it is, that you may learn from it at once and for ever, what good fresco painting is—how quiet—how delicately clear—how little coarsely or vulgarly attractive—how capable of the most tender light and shade, and of the most exquisite and enduring colour.

In this latter respect, this fresco stands almost alone among the works of Giotto; the striped curtain behind the table being wrought with a variety and fantasy of playing colour which Paul Veronese could not better at his best.

You will find, without difficulty, in spite of the faint tints, the daughter of Herodias in the middle of the picture—slowly *moving*, not dancing, to the violin music—she herself playing on a lyre. In the farther corner of the picture, she gives St. John's head to her mother; the face of Herodias is almost entirely faded, which may be a farther guarantee to you of the safety of the rest. The subject of the Apocalypse, highest on the right, is one of the most interesting mythic pictures in Florence; nor do I know any other so completely rendering the meaning of the scene between the woman in the wilderness, and the Dragon enemy. But it cannot be seen from the floor level: and I have no power of showing its beauty in words.

Spanish chapel, is of importance, nearly untouched ; the lines of the features and hair, though all more or less reproduced, still of definite and notable character ; and the junction throughout of added colour so careful, that the harmony of the whole, if not delicate with its old tenderness, is at least, in its coarser way, solemn and unbroken. Such as the figure remains, it still possesses extreme beauty—profoundest interest. And, as you can see it from below with your glass, it leaves little to be desired, and may be dwelt upon with more profit than nine out of ten of the renowned pictures of the Tribune or the Pitti. You will enter into the spirit of it better if I first translate for you a little piece from the *Fioretti di San Francesco*.

*“How St. Louis, King of France, went personally in the guise of a pilgrim, to Perugia, to visit the holy Brother Giles.—St. Louis, King of France, went on pilgrimage to visit the sanctuaries of the world ; and hearing the most great fame of the holiness of Brother Giles, who had been among the first companions of St. Francis, put it in his heart, and determined assuredly that he would visit him personally ; wherefore he came to Perugia, where was then staying the said brother. And coming to the gate of the place of the Brothers, with few companions, and being unknown, he asked with great earnestness for Brother Giles, telling nothing to the porter who he was that asked. The porter, therefore, goes to Brother Giles, and says that there is a pilgrim asking for him at the gate. And by God it was inspired in him and revealed that it was the*

King of France; whereupon quickly with great fervour he left his cell and ran to the gate, and without any question asked, or ever having seen each other before, kneeling down together with greatest devotion, they embraced and kissed each other with as much familiarity as if for a long time they had held great friendship; but all the while neither the one nor the other spoke, but stayed, so embraced, with such signs of charitable love, in silence. And so having remained for a great while, they parted from one another, and St. Louis went on his way, and Brother Giles returned to his cell. And the King being gone, one of the brethren asked of his companion who he was, who answered that he was the King of France. Of which the other brothers being told, were in the greatest melancholy because Brother Giles had never said a word to him; and murmuring at it, they said, ‘Oh, Brother Giles, wherefore hadst thou so country manners that to so holy a king, who had come from France to see thee and hear from thee some good word, thou hast spoken nothing?’

“Answered Brother Giles: ‘Dearest brothers, wonder not ye at this, that neither I to him, nor he to me, could speak a word; for so soon as we had embraced, the light of the divine wisdom revealed and manifested, to me, his heart, and to him, mine; and so by divine operation we looked each in the other’s heart on what we would have said to one another, and knew it better far than if we had spoken with the mouth, and with more consolation, because of the defect of the human tongue, which cannot

clearly express the secrets of God, and would have been for discomfort rather than comfort. And know, therefore, that the King parted from me marvellously content, and comforted in his mind."

Of all which story, not a word, of course, is credible by any rational person.

Certainly not: the spirit, nevertheless, which created the story, is an entirely indisputable fact in the history of Italy and of mankind. Whether St. Louis and Brother Giles ever knelt together in the street of Perugia matters not a whit. That a king and a poor monk could be conceived to have thoughts of each other which no words could speak; and that indeed the King's tenderness and humility made such a tale credible to the people,—this is what you have to meditate on here.

Nor is there any better spot in the world,—whencesoever your pilgrim feet may have journeyed to it, wherein to make up so much mind as you have in you for the making, concerning the nature of Kinghood and Princesdom generally; and of the forgeries and mockeries of both which are too often manifested in their room. For it happens that this Christian and this Persian King are better painted here by Giotto than elsewhere by any one, so as to give you the best attainable conception of the Christian and Heathen powers which have both received, in the book which Christians profess to reverence, the same epithet as the King of the Jews Himself; anointed, or Christos:—and as the most perfect Christian Kinghood was exhibited in the life, partly real, partly traditional, of



St. Louis, so the most perfect Heathen Kinghood was exemplified in the life, partly real, partly traditional, of Cyrus of Persia, and in the laws for human government and education which had chief force in his dynasty. And before the images of these two Kings I think therefore it will be well that you should read the charge to Cyrus, written by Isaiah. The second clause of it, if not all, will here become memorable to you—literally illustrating, as it does, the very manner of the defeat of the Zoroastrian Magi, on which Giotto founds his Triumph of Faith. I write the leading sentences continuously; what I omit is only their amplification, which you can easily refer to at home. (Isaiah xlv. 24, to xlv. 13.)

“Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb. I the Lord that maketh all; that stretcheth forth the heavens, alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth, alone; *that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge, foolish; that confirmeth the word of his Servant, and fulfilleth the counsel of his messengers*: that saith of Cyrus, He is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, ‘thou shalt be built,’ and to the temple, ‘thy foundations shall be laid.’

“Thus saith the Lord to his Christ;—to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of Kings.

“I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron; and I will give thee the treas-

ures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

“For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

“I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me. I girded thee, though thou hast not known me. That they may know, from the *rising of the sun*, and from the west, that there is none beside me; I am the Lord and there is none else. *I form the light*, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things.

“I have raised him up in Righteousness, and will direct all his ways; he shall build my city, and let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of Nations.”

To this last verse, add the ordinance of Cyrus in fulfilling it, that you may understand what is meant by a King’s being “raised up in Righteousness,” and notice, with respect to the picture under which you stand, the Persian King’s thought of the Jewish temple.

“In the first year of the reign of Cyrus,\* King Cyrus commanded that the house of the Lord at Jerusalem should be built again, *where they do service with perpetual fire*; (the italicized sentence is Darius’s, quoting Cyrus’s decree—the decree itself worded thus,) Thus saith Cyrus,

\* 1st Esdras vi. 24.

King of Persia: \* The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem.

“Who is there among you of all his people?—his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and let the men of his place help him with silver and with gold, and with goods and with beasts.”

Between which “bringing the prisoners out of captivity” and modern liberty, free trade, and anti-slavery eloquence, there is no small interval.

To these two ideals of Kinghood, then, the boy has reached, since the day he was drawing the lamb on the stone, as Cimabue passed by. You will not find two other such, that I know of, in the west of Europe; and yet there has been many a try at the painting of crowned heads,—and King George III. and Queen Charlotte, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, are very fine, no doubt. Also your black-muzzled kings of Velasquez, and Vandyke’s long-haired and white-handed ones; and Rubens’ riders—in those handsome boots. Pass such shadows of them as you can summon, rapidly before your memory—then look at this St. Louis.

His face—gentle, resolute, glacial-pure, thin-cheeked; so sharp at the chin that the entire head is almost of the form of a knight’s shield—the hair short on the forehead, falling on each side in the old Greek-Etrusean curves of simplest line, to the neck; I don’t know if you can see

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\* Ezra i. 3, and 2nd Esdras ii. 3.

without being nearer, the difference in the arrangement of it on the two sides—the mass of it on the right shoulder bending inwards, while that on the left falls straight. It is one of the pretty changes which a modern workman would never dream of—and which assures me the restorer has followed the old lines rightly.

He wears a crown formed by an hexagonal pyramid, beaded with pearls on the edges; and walled round, above the brow, with a vertical fortress-parapet, as it were, rising into sharp pointed spines at the angles: it is chasing of gold with pearl—beautiful in the remaining work of it; the Soldan wears a crown of the same general form; the hexagonal outline signifying all order, strength, and royal economy. We shall see farther symbolism of this kind, soon, by Simon Memmi, in the Spanish chapel.

I cannot tell you anything definite of the two other frescoes—for I can only examine one or two pictures in a day; and never begin with one till I have done with another; and I had to leave Florence without looking at these—even so far as to be quite sure of their subjects. The central one on the left is either the twelfth subject of Assisi—St. Francis in Ecstasy;\* or the eighteenth; the Apparition of St. Francis at Arles;† while the lowest on

\* “Represented” (next to St. Francis before the Soldan, at Assisi) “as seen one night by the brethren, praying, elevated from the ground, his hands extended like the cross, and surrounded by a shining cloud.”—*Lord Lindsay*.

† “St. Anthony of Padua was preaching at a general chapter of the order, held at Arles, in 1224, when St. Francis appeared in the

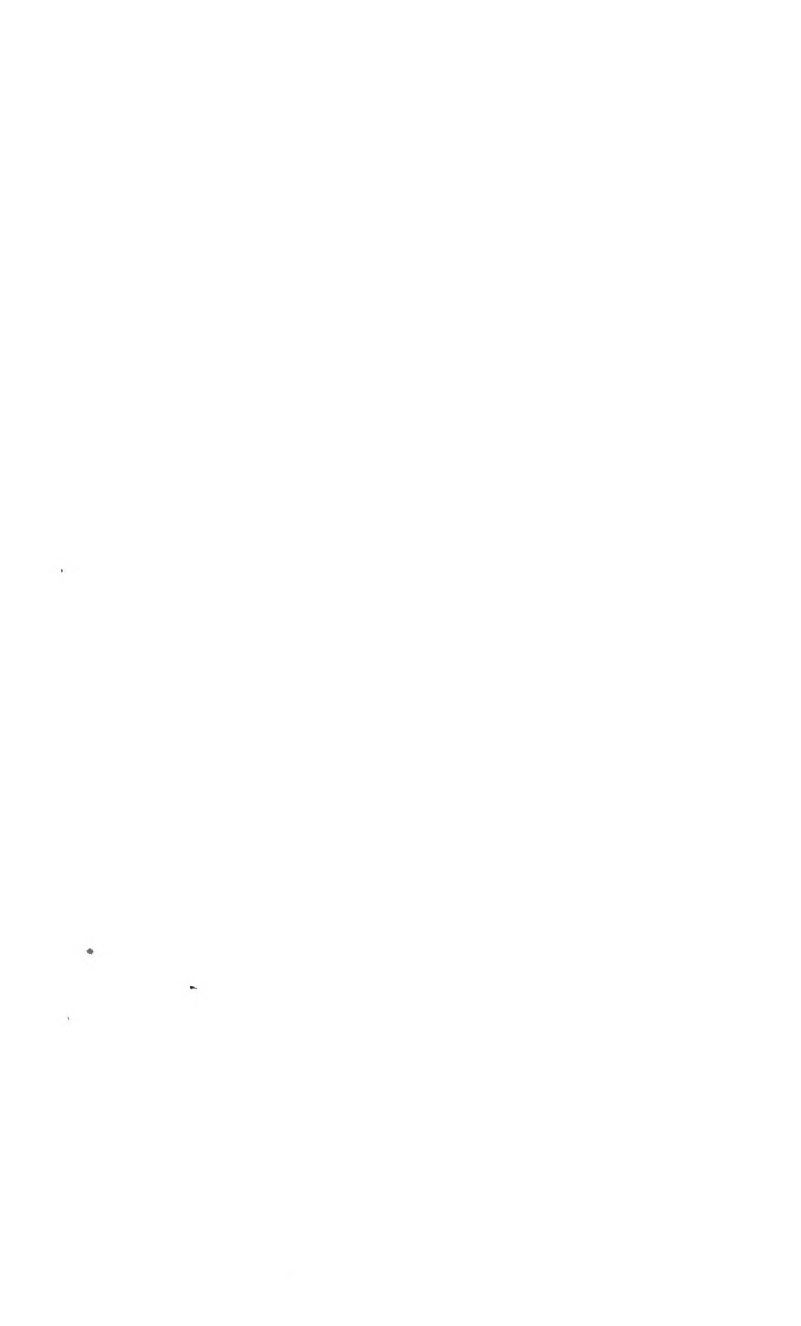
the right may admit choice between two subjects in each half of it: my own reading of them would be—that they are the twenty-first and twenty-fifth subjects of Assisi, the Dying Friar\* and Vision of Pope Gregory IX.; † but Crowe and Cavalcasella may be right in their different interpretation; ‡ in any case, the meaning of the entire system of work remains unchanged, as I have given it above.

midst, his arms extended, and in an attitude of benediction:”—*Lord Lindsay*.

\* “A brother of the order, lying on his deathbed, saw the spirit of St. Francis rising to heaven, and springing forward, cried, ‘Tarry, Father, I come with thee!’ and fell back dead.”—*Lord Lindsay*.

† “He hesitated, before canonizing St. Francis; doubting the celestial infliction of the stigmata. St. Francis appeared to him in a vision, and with a severe countenance reproving his unbelief, opened his robe, and, exposing the wound in his side, filled a vial with the blood that flowed from it, and gave it to the Pope, who awoke and found it in his hand.”—*Lord Lindsay*.

‡ “As St. Francis was carried on his bed of sickness to St. Maria degli Angeli, he stopped at an hospital on the roadside, and ordering his attendants to turn his head in the direction of Assisi, he rose in his litter and said, ‘Blessed be thou amongst cities! may the blessing of God cling to thee, oh holy place, for by thee shall many souls be saved;’ and, having said this, he lay down and was carried on to St. Maria degli Angeli. On the evening of the 4th of October his death was revealed at the very hour to the bishop of Assisi on Mount Sarzana.”—*Crowe and Cavalcasella*.



## THE FOURTH MORNING.

## THE VAULTED BOOK.

As early as may be this morning, let us look for a minute or two into the cathedral:—I was going to say, entering by one of the side doors of the aisles;—but we can't do anything else, which perhaps might not strike you unless you were thinking specially of it. There are no transept doors; and one never wanders round to the desolate front.

From either of the side doors, a few paces will bring you to the middle of the nave, and to the point opposite the middle of the third arch from the west end; where you will find yourself—if well in the mid-nave—standing on a circular slab of green porphyry, which marks the former place of the grave of the bishop Zenobius. The larger inscription, on the wide circle of the floor outside of you, records the translation of his body; the smaller one round the stone at your feet—“*quiescimus, domum hanc quum adimus ultimam*”—is a painful truth, I suppose, to travellers like us, who never rest anywhere now, if we can help it.

Resting here, at any rate, for a few minutes, look up to the whitewashed vaulting of the compartment of the roof next the west end.

You will see nothing whatever in it worth looking at. Nevertheless, look a little longer.

But the longer you look, the less you will understand why I tell you to look. It is nothing but a whitewashed ceiling: vaulted indeed,—but so is many a tailor's garret window, for that matter. Indeed, now that you have looked steadily for a minute or so, and are used to the form of the arch, it seems to become so small that you can almost fancy it the ceiling of a good-sized lumber-room in an attic.

Having attained to this modest conception of it, carry your eyes back to the similar vault of the second compartment, nearer you. Very little further contemplation will reduce that also to the similitude of a moderately-sized attic. And then, resolving to bear, if possible—for it is worth while,—the cramp in your neck for another quarter of a minute, look right up to the third vault, over your head; which, if not, in the said quarter of a minute, reducible in imagination to a tailor's garret, will at least sink, like the two others, into the semblance of a common arched ceiling, of no serious magnitude or majesty.

Then, glance quickly down from it to the floor, and round at the space, (included between the four pillars), which that vault covers.

It is sixty feet square,\*—four hundred square yards of

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\* Approximately. Thinking I could find the dimensions of the duomo anywhere, I only paced it myself.—and cannot, at this moment, lay my hand on English measurements of it.



pavement,—and I believe you will have to look up again more than once or twice, before you can convince yourself that the mean-looking roof is swept indeed over all that twelfth part of an acre. And still less, if I mistake not, will you, without slow proof, believe, when you turn yourself round towards the east end, that the narrow niche (it really looks scarcely more than a niche) which occupies, beyond the dome, the position of our northern choirs, is indeed the unwarped elongation of the nave, whose breadth extends round you like a frozen lake. From which experiments and comparisons, your conclusion, I think, will be, and I am sure it ought to be, that the most studious ingenuity could not produce a design for the interior of a building which should more completely hide its extent, and throw away every common advantage of its magnitude, than this of the Duomo of Florence.

Having arrived at this, I assure you, quite securely tenable conclusion, we will quit the cathedral by the western door, for once; and, as quickly as we can walk, return to the Green cloister of Sta. Maria Novella; and place ourselves on the south side of it, so as to see as much as we can of the entrance, on the opposite side, to the so-called ‘Spanish Chapel.’

There is, indeed, within the opposite cloister, an arch of entrance, plain enough. But no chapel, whatever, externally manifesting itself as worth entering. No walls, or gable, or dome, raised above the rest of the outbuildings—only two windows with traceries opening into the cloister; and one story of inconspicuous building above. You

can't conceive there should be any effect of *magnitude* produced in the interior, however it has been vaulted or decorated. It may be pretty, but it cannot possibly look large.

Entering it, nevertheless, you will be surprised at the effect of height, and disposed to fancy that the circular window cannot surely be the same you saw outside, looking so low. I had to go out again, myself, to make sure that it was.

And gradually, as you let the eye follow the sweep of the vaulting arches, from the small central keystone-boss, with the Lamp carved on it, to the broad capitals of the hexagonal pillars at the angles,—there will form itself in your mind, I think, some impression not only of vastness in the building, but of great daring in the builder; and at last, after closely following out the lines of a fresco or two, and looking up and up again to the coloured vaults, it will become to you literally one of the grandest places you ever entered, roofed without a central pillar. You will begin to wonder that human daring ever achieved anything so magnificent.

But just go out again into the cloister, and recover knowledge of the facts. It is nothing like so large as the blank arch which at home we filled with brickbats or leased for a gin-shop under the last railway we made to carry coals to Newcastle. And if you pace the floor it covers, you will find it is three feet less one way, and thirty feet less the other, than that single square of the cathedral which was roofed like a tailor's loft,—accurately, for

I did measure here, myself, the floor of the Spanish chapel is fifty-seven feet by thirty-two.

I hope, after this experience, that you will need no farther conviction of the first law of noble building, that grandeur depends on proportion and design—not, except in a quite secondary degree, on magnitude. Mere size has, indeed, under all disadvantage, some definite value; and so has mere splendour. Disappointed as you may be, or at least ought to be, at first, by St. Peter's, in the end you will feel its size,—and its brightness. These are all you *can* feel in it—it is nothing more than the pump-room at Leamington built bigger;—but the bigness tells at last: and Corinthian pillars whose capitals alone are ten feet high, and their acanthus leaves, three feet six long, give you a serious conviction of the infallibility of the Pope, and the fallibility of the wretched Corinthians, who invented the style indeed, but built with capitals no bigger than hand-baskets.

Vastness *has* thus its value. But the glory of architecture is to be—whatever you wish it to be,—lovely, or grand, or comfortable,—on such terms as it can easily obtain. Grand, by proportion—lovely, by imagination—comfortable, by ingenuity—secure, by honesty: with such materials and in such space as you have got to give it.

Grand—by proportion, I said; but ought to have said by *dis*proportion. Beauty is given by the relation of parts—size, by their comparison. The first secret in getting the impression of size in this chapel is the *dis*proportion between pillar and arch. You take the pillar for granted,

—it is thick, strong, and fairly high above your head. You look to the vault springing from it—and it soars away, nobody knows where.

Another great, but more subtle secret is in the *inequality* and immeasurability of the curved lines; and the hiding of the form by the colour.

To begin, the room, I said, is fifty-seven feet wide, and only thirty-two deep. It is thus nearly one-third larger in the direction across the line of entrance, which gives to every arch, pointed and round, throughout the roof, a different spring from its neighbours.

The vaulting ribs have the simplest of all profiles—that of a chamfered beam. I call it simpler than even that of a square beam; for in barking a log you cheaply get your chamfer, and nobody cares whether the level is alike on each side: but you must take a larger tree, and use much more work to get a square. And it is the same with stone.

And this profile is—fix the conditions of it, therefore, in your mind,—venerable in the history of mankind as the origin of all Gothic tracery-mouldings; venerable in the history of the Christian Church as that of the roof ribs, both of the lower church of Assisi, bearing the scroll of the precepts of St. Francis, and here at Florence, bearing the scroll of the faith of St. Dominic. If you cut it out in paper, and cut the corners off farther and farther, at every cut, you will produce a sharper profile of rib, connected in architectural use with differently treated styles. But the entirely venerable form is the massive one in which the angle of the beam is merely, as it were, se-

cured and completed in stability by removing its too sharp edge.

Well, the vaulting ribs, as in Giotto's vault, then, have here, under their painting, this rude profile: but do not suppose the vaults are simply the shells cast over them; Look how the ornamental borders fall on the capitals! The plaster receives all sorts of indescribably accommodating shapes—the painter contracting and stopping his design upon it as it happens to be convenient. You can't measure anything; you can't exhaust; you can't grasp,—except one simple ruling idea, which a child can grasp, if it is interested and intelligent: namely, that the room has four sides with four tales told upon them; and the roof four quarters, with another four tales told on those. And each history in the sides has its correspondent history in the roof. Generally, in good Italian decoration, the roof represents constant, or essential facts; the walls, consecutive histories arising out of them, or leading up to them. Thus here, the roof represents in front of you, in its main quarter, the Resurrection—the cardinal fact of Christianity; opposite (above, behind you), the Ascension; on your left hand, the descent of the Holy Spirit; on your right, Christ's perpetual presence with His Church, symbolized by His appearance on the Sea of Galilee to the disciples in the storm.

The correspondent walls represent: under the first quarter, (the Resurrection), the story of the Crucifixion; under the second quarter, (the Ascension), the preaching after that departure, that Christ will return—symbolized here

in the Dominican church by the consecration of St. Dominic ; under the third quarter, (the descent of the Holy Spirit), the disciplining power of human virtue and wisdom ; under the fourth quarter, (St. Peter's Ship), the authority and government of the State and Church.

The order of these subjects, chosen by the Dominican monks themselves, was sufficiently comprehensive to leave boundless room for the invention of the painter. The execution of it was first entrusted to Taddeo Gaddi, the best architectural master of Giotto's school, who painted the four quarters of the roof entirely, but with no great brilliancy of invention, and was beginning to go down one of the sides, when, luckily, a man of stronger brain, his friend, came from Siena. Taddeo thankfully yielded the room to him ; he joined his own work to that of his less able friend in an exquisitely pretty and complimentary way ; throwing his own greater strength into it, not competitively, but gradually and helpfully. When, however, he had once got himself well joined, and softly, to the more simple work, he put his own force on with a will ; and produced the most noble piece of pictorial philosophy \* and divinity existing in Italy.

This pretty, and, according to all evidence by me attainable, entirely true, tradition has been all but lost, among

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\* There is no philosophy *taught* either by the school of Athens or Michael Angelo's 'Last Judgment,' and the 'Disputa' is merely a graceful assemblage of authorities, the effects of such authority not being shown.

the ruins of fair old Florence, by the industry of modern mason-critics—who, without exception, labouring under the primal (and necessarily unconscious) disadvantage of not knowing good work from bad, and never, therefore, knowing a man by his hand or his thoughts, would be in any case sorrowfully at the mercy of mistakes in a document; but are tenfold more deceived by their own vanity, and delight in overthrowing a received idea, if they can.

Farther: as every fresco of this early date has been retouched again and again, and often painted half over,—and as, if there has been the least care or respect for the old work in the restorer, he will now and then follow the old lines and match the old colours carefully in some places, while he puts in clearly recognizable work of his own in others,—two critics, of whom one knows the first man's work well, and the other the last's, will contradict each other to almost any extent on the surest grounds. And there is then no safe refuge for an uninitiated person but in the old tradition, which, if not literally true, is founded assuredly on some root of fact which you are likely to get at, if ever, through it only. So that my general directions to all young people going to Florence or Rome would be very short: "Know your first volume of Vasari, and your two first books of Livy; look about you, and don't talk, nor listen to talking."

On those terms, you may know, entering this chapel, that in Michael Angelo's time, all Florence attributed these frescoes to Taddeo Gaddi and Simon Memmi.

I have studied neither of these artists myself with any

speciality of care, and cannot tell you, positively, anything about them or their works. But I know good work from bad, as a cobbler knows leather, and I can tell you positively the quality of these frescoes, and their relation to contemporary panel pictures; whether authentically ascribed to Gaddi, Memmi, or any one else, it is for the Florentine Academy to decide.

The roof, and the north side, down to the feet of the horizontal line of sitting figures, were originally third-rate work of the school of Giotto; the rest of the chapel was originally, and most of it is still, magnificent work of the school of Siena. The roof and north side have been heavily repainted in many places; the rest is faded and injured, but not destroyed in its most essential qualities. And now, farther, you must bear with just a little bit of tormenting history of painters.

There were two Gaddis, father and son,—Taddeo and Angelo. And there were two Memmis, brothers,—Simon and Philip.

I daresay you will find, in the modern books, that Simon's real name was Peter, and Philip's real name was Bartholomew; and Angelo's real name was Taddeo, and Taddeo's real name was Angelo; and Memmi's real name was Gaddi, and Gaddi's real name was Memmi. You may find out all that at your leisure, afterwards, if you like. What it is important for you to know here, in the Spanish Chapel, is only this much that follows:—There were certainly two persons once called Gaddi, both rather stupid in religious matters and high art; but one of them, I don't



know or care which, a true decorative painter of the most exquisite skill, a perfect architect, an amiable person, and a great lover of pretty domestic life. Vasari says this was the father, Taddeo. He built the Ponte Vecchio; and the old stones of it—which if you ever look at anything on the Ponte Vecchio but the shops, you may still see (above those wooden pent-houses) with the Florentine shield—were so laid by him that they are unshaken to this day.

He painted an exquisite series of frescoes at Assisi from the Life of Christ; in which,—just to show you what the man's nature is,—when the Madonna has given Christ into Simeon's arms, she can't help holding out her own arms to him, and saying, (visibly,) "Won't you come back to mamma?" The child laughs his answer—"I love *you*, mamma; but I'm quite happy just now."

Well; he, or he and his son together, painted these four quarters of the roof of the Spanish Chapel. They were very probably much retouched afterwards by Antonio Veneziano, or whomsoever Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcasella please; but that architecture in the descent of the Holy Ghost *is* by the man who painted the north transept of Assisi, and there need be no more talk about the matter,—for you never catch a restorer doing his old architecture right again. And farther, the ornamentation of the vaulting ribs *is* by the man who painted the Entombment, No. 31 in the Galerie des Grands Tableaux, in the catalogue of the Academy for 1874. Whether that picture is Taddeo Gaddi's or not, as stated in the catalogue, I do not

know ; but I know the vaulting ribs of the Spanish Chapel are painted by the same hand.

Again : of the two brothers Memmi, one or other, I don't know or care which, had an ugly way of turning the eyes of his figures up and their mouths down ; of which you may see an entirely disgusting example in the four saints attributed to Filippo Memmi on the cross wall of the north (called always in Murray's guide the south, because he didn't notice the way the church was built) transept of Assisi. You may, however, also see the way the mouth goes down in the much repainted, but still characteristic No. 9 in the Uffizii.\*

Now I catch the wring and verjuice of this brother again and again, among the minor heads of the lower frescoes in this Spanish Chapel. The head of the Queen beneath Noah, in the Limbo,—(see below) is unmistakable.

Farther : one of the two brothers, I don't care which, had a way of painting leaves ; of which you may see a notable example in the rod in the hand of Gabriel in that same picture of the Annunciation in the Uffizii. No Florentine painter, or any other, ever painted leaves as well as that, till you get down to Sandro Botticelli, who did them much better. But the man who painted that rod in the

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\* This picture bears the inscription (I quote from the French catalogue, not having verified it myself), "Simon Martini, et Lippus Memmi de Senis me pinxerunt." I have no doubt whatever, myself, that the two brothers worked together on these frescoes of the Spanish Chapel : but that most of the Limbo is Philip's, and the Paradise, scarcely with his interference, Simon's.

hand of Gabriel, painted the rod in the right hand of Logic in the Spanish Chapel,—and nobody else in Florence, or the world, *could*.

Farther (and this is the last of the antiquarian business): you see that the frescoes on the roof are, on the whole, dark, with much blue and red in them, the white spaces coming out strongly. This is the characteristic colouring of the partially defunct school of Giotto, becoming merely decorative, and passing into a colourist school which connected itself afterwards with the Venetians. There is an exquisite example of all its specialities in the little Annunciation in the Uffizii, No. 14, attributed to Angelo Gaddi, in which you see the Madonna is stupid, and the angel stupid, but the colour of the whole, as a piece of painted glass, lovely; and the execution exquisite,—at once a painter's and jeweller's; with subtle sense of chiaroscuro underneath; (note the delicate shadow of the Madonna's arm across her breast).

The head of this school was (according to Vasari) Taddeo Gaddi; and henceforward, without further discussion, I shall speak of him as the painter of the roof of the Spanish Chapel,—not without suspicion, however, that his son Angelo may hereafter turn out to have been the better decorator, and the painter of the frescoes from the life of Christ in the north transept of Assisi,—with such assistance as his son or scholars might give—and such change or destruction as time, Antonio Veneziano, or the last operations of the Tuscan railroad company, may have effected on them.

On the other hand, you see that the frescoes on the walls are of paler colours, the blacks coming out of these clearly, rather than the whites; but the pale colours, especially, for instance, the whole of the Duomo of Florence in that on your right, very tender and lovely. Also, you may feel a tendency to express much with outline, and draw, more than paint, in the most interesting parts; while in the duller ones, nasty green and yellow tones come out, which prevent the effect of the whole from being very pleasant. These characteristics belong, on the whole, to the school of Siena; and they indicate here the work *assuredly* of a man of vast power and most refined education, whom I shall call without further discussion, during the rest of this and the following morning's study, Simon Memmi.

And of the grace and subtlety with which he joined his work to that of the Gaddis, you may judge at once by comparing the Christ standing on the fallen gate of the Limbo, with the Christ in the Resurrection above. Memmi has retained the dress and imitated the general effect of the figure in the roof so faithfully that you suspect no difference of mastership—nay, he has even raised the foot in the same awkward way: but you will find Memmi's foot delicately drawn—Taddeo's, hard and rude: and all the folds of Memmi's drapery cast with unbroken grace and complete gradations of shade, while Taddeo's are rigid and meagre; also in the heads, generally Taddeo's type of face is square in feature, with massive and inelegant clusters or volutes of hair and beard; but Memmi's delicate and long in feature, with much divided and flowing hair,

often arranged with exquisite precision, as in the finest Greek coins. Examine successively in this respect only the heads of Adam, Abel, Methuselah, and Abraham, in the Limbo, and you will not confuse the two designers any more. I have not had time to make out more than the principal figures in the Limbo, of which indeed the entire dramatic power is centred in the Adam and Eve. The latter dressed as a nun, in her fixed gaze on Christ, with her hands clasped, is of extreme beauty: and however feeble the work of any early painter may be, in its decent and grave inoffensiveness it guides the imagination unerringly to a certain point. How far you are yourself capable of filling up what is left untold, and conceiving, as a reality, Eve's first look on this her child, depends on no painter's skill, but on your own understanding. Just above Eve is Abel, bearing the lamb: and behind him, Noah, between his wife and Shem: behind them, Abraham, between Isaac and Ishmael; (turning from Ishmael to Isaac); behind these, Moses, between Aaron and David. I have not identified the others, though I find the white-bearded figure behind Eve called Methuselah in my notes: I know not on what authority. Looking up from these groups, however, to the roof painting, you will at once feel the imperfect grouping and ruder features of all the figures; and the greater depth of colour. We will dismiss these comparatively inferior paintings at once.

The roof and walls must be read together, each segment of the roof forming an introduction to, or portion of, the subject on the wall below. But the roof must first be

looked at alone, as the work of Taddeo Gaddi, for the artistic qualities and failures of it.

I. In front, as you enter, is the compartment with the subject of the Resurrection. It is the traditional Byzantine composition: the guards sleeping, and the two angels in white saying to the women, "He is not here," while Christ is seen rising with the flag of the Cross.

But it would be difficult to find another example of the subject, so coldly treated—so entirely without passion or action. The faces are expressionless; the gestures powerless. Evidently the painter is not making the slightest effort to conceive what really happened, but merely repeating and spoiling what he could remember of old design, or himself supply of commonplace for immediate need. The "Noli me tangere," on the right, is spoiled from Giotto, and others before him; a peacock, woefully plumeless and colourless, a fountain, an ill-drawn toy-horse, and two toy-children gathering flowers, are emaciated remains of Greek symbols. He has taken pains with the vegetation, but in vain. Yet Taddeo Gaddi was a true painter, a very beautiful designer, and a very amiable person. How comes he to do that Resurrection so badly?

In the first place, he was probably tired of a subject which was a great strain to his feeble imagination; and gave it up as impossible: doing simply the required figures in the required positions. In the second, he was probably at the time despondent and feeble because of his master's death. See Lord Lindsay, II. 273, where also it is pointed out that in the effect of the light proceeding

from the figure of Christ, Taddeo Gaddi indeed was the first of the Giottisti who showed true sense of light and shade. But until Lionardo's time the innovation did not materially affect Florentine art.

II. The Ascension (opposite the Resurrection, and not worth looking at, except for the sake of making more sure our conclusions from the first fresco). The Madonna is fixed in Byzantine stiffness, without Byzantine dignity.

III. The Descent of the Holy Ghost, on the left hand. The Madonna and disciples are gathered in an upper chamber: underneath are the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, etc., who hear them speak in their own tongues.

Three dogs are in the foreground—their mythic purpose the same as that of the two verses which affirm the fellowship of the dog in the journey and return of Tobias: namely, to mark the share of the lower animals in the gentleness given by the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ.

IV. The Church sailing on the Sea of the World. St. Peter coming to Christ on the water.

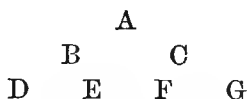
I was too little interested in the vague symbolism of this fresco to examine it with care,—the rather that the subject beneath, the literal contest of the Church with the world, needed more time for study in itself alone than I had for all Florence.

On this, and the opposite side of the chapel, are represented, by Simon Memmi's hand, the teaching power of the Spirit of God, and the saving power of the Christ of God, in the world, according to the understanding of Florence in his time.

We will take the side of Intellect first, beneath the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit.

In the point of the arch beneath, are the three Evangelical Virtues. Without these, says Florence, you can have no science. Without Love, Faith, and Hope—no intelligence.

Under these are the four Cardinal Virtues, the entire group being thus arranged:—



A, Charity ; flames issuing from her head and hands.

B, Faith ; holds cross and shield, quenching fiery darts. This symbol, so frequent in modern adaptation from St. Paul's address to personal faith, is rare in older art.

C, Hope, with a branch of lilies.

D, Temperance ; bridles a black fish, on which she stands.

E, Prudence, with a book.

F, Justice, with crown and baton.

G, Fortitude, with tower and sword.

Under these are the great prophets and apostles ; on the left,\* David, St. Paul, St. Mark, St. John ; on the right, St. Matthew, St. Luke, Moses, Isaiah, Solomon. In the

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\* I can't find my note of the first one on the left ; answering to Solomon, opposite.



midst of the Evangelists, St. Thomas Aquinas, seated on a Gothic throne.

Now observe, this throne, with all the canopies below it, and the complete representation of the Duomo of Florence opposite, are of finished Gothic of Orcagna's school—later than Giotto's Gothic. But the building in which the apostles are gathered at the Pentecost is of the early Romanesque mosaic school, with a wheel window from the duomo of Assisi, and square windows from the Baptistry of Florence. And this is always the type of architecture used by Taddeo Gaddi: while the finished Gothic could not possibly have been drawn by him, but is absolute evidence of the later hand.

Under the line of prophets, as powers summoned by their voices, are the mythic figures of the seven theological or spiritual, and the seven geological or natural sciences: and under the feet of each of them, the figure of its Captain-teacher to the world.

I had better perhaps give you the names of this entire series of figures from left to right at once. You will see presently why they are numbered in a reverse order:

	Beneath whom
8. Civil Law.	The Emperor Justinian.
9. Canon Law.	Pope Clement V.
10. Practical Theology.	Peter Lombard.
11. Contemplative Theology.	Dionysius the Areopagite.
12. Dogmatic Theology.	Boethius.
13. Mystic Theology.	St. John Damascene.
14. Polemic Theology.	St. Augustine.
7. Arithmetic.	Pythagoras.

6. Geometry.	Beneath whom Euclid.
5. Astronomy.	Zoroaster.
4. Music.	Tubalcain.
3. Logic.	Aristotle.
2. Rhetoric.	Cicero.
1. Grammar.	Priscian.

Here, then, you have pictorially represented, the system of manly education, supposed in old Florence to be that necessarily instituted in great earthly kingdoms or republics, animated by the Spirit shed down upon the world at Pentecost. How long do you think it will take you, or ought to take, to see such a picture? We were to get to work this morning, as early as might be: you have probably allowed half an hour for Santa Maria Novella; half an hour for San Lorenzo; an hour for the museum of sculpture at the Bargello; an hour for shopping; and then it will be lunch time, and you mustn't be late, because you are to leave by the afternoon train, and must positively be in Rome to-morrow morning. Well, of your half-hour for Santa Maria Novella,—after Ghirlandajo's choir, Orcagna's transept, and Cimabue's Madonna, and the painted windows, have been seen properly, there will remain, suppose, at the utmost, a quarter of an hour for the Spanish Chapel. That will give you two minutes and a half for each side, two for the ceiling, and three for studying Murray's explanations or mine. Two minutes and a half you have got, then—(and I observed, during my five weeks' work in the chapel, that English visitors

seldom gave so much)—to read this scheme given you by Simon Memmi of human spiritual education. In order to understand the purport of it, in any the smallest degree, you must summon to your memory, in the course of these two minutes and a half, what you happen to be acquainted with of the doctrines and characters of Pythagoras, Zoroaster, Aristotle, Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Augustine, and the emperor Justinian, and having further observed the expressions and actions attributed by the painter to these personages, judge how far he has succeeded in reaching a true and worthy ideal of them, and how large or how subordinate a part in his general scheme of human learning he supposes their peculiar doctrines properly to occupy. For myself, being, to my much sorrow, now an old person; and, to my much pride, an old-fashioned one, I have not found my powers either of reading or memory in the least increased by any of Mr. Stephenson's or Mr. Wheatstone's inventions; and though indeed I came here from Lucca in three hours instead of a day, which it used to take, I do not think myself able, on that account, to see any picture in Florence in less time than it took formerly, or even obliged to hurry myself in any investigations connected with it.

Accordingly, I have myself taken five weeks to see the quarter of this picture of Simon Memmi's: and can give you a fairly good account of that quarter, and some partial account of a fragment or two of those on the other walls: but, alas! only of their pictorial qualities in either case; for I don't myself know anything whatever, worth

trusting to, about Pythagoras, or Dionysius the Areopagite; and have not had, and never shall have, probably, any time to learn much of them; while in the very feeblest light only,—in what the French would express by their excellent word ‘lueur,’—I am able to understand something of the characters of Zoroaster, Aristotle, and Justinian. But this only increases in me the reverence with which I ought to stand before the work of a painter, who was not only a master of his own craft, but so profound a scholar and theologian as to be able to conceive this scheme of picture, and write the divine law by which Florence was to live. Which Law, written in the northern page of this Vaulted Book, we will begin quiet interpretation of, if you care to return hither, to-morrow morning.

## THE FIFTH MORNING.

## THE STRAIT GATE.

As you return this morning to St. Mary's, you may as well observe—the matter before us being concerning gates,—that the western façade of the church is of two periods. Your Murray refers it all to the latest of these;—I forget when, and do not care;—in which the largest flanking columns, and the entire effective mass of the walls, with their riband mosaics and high pediment, were built in front of, and above, what the barbarian renaissance designer chose to leave of the pure old Dominican church. You may see his ungainly jointings at the pedestals of the great columns, running through the pretty, parti-coloured base, which, with the 'Strait' Gothic doors, and the entire lines of the fronting and flanking tombs (where not restored by the Devil-begotten brood of modern Florence), is of pure, and exquisitely severe and refined, fourteenth century Gothic, with superbly earved bearings on its shields. The small detached line of tombs on the left, untouched in its sweet colour and living weed ornament, I would fain have painted, stone by stone: but one can never draw in front of a church in these republican days; for all the blackguard children of the neighbourhood come to howl, and throw stones, on the steps, and

the ball or stone play against these sculptured tombs, as a dead wall adapted for that purpose only, is incessant in the fine days when I could have worked.

If you enter by the door most to the left, or north, and turn immediately to the right, on the interior of the wall of the façade is an Annunciation, visible enough because well preserved, though in the dark, and extremely pretty in its way,—of the decorated and ornamental school following Giotto:—I can't guess by whom, nor does it much matter; but it is well to look at it by way of contrast with the delicate, intense, slightly decorated design of Memmi, —in which, when you return into the Spanish chapel, you will feel the dependence for its effect on broad masses of white and pale amber, where the decorative school would have had mosaic of red, blue, and gold.

Our first business this morning must be to read and understand the writing on the book held open by St. Thomas Aquinas, for that informs us of the meaning of the whole picture.

It is this text from the Book of Wisdom vii. 6.

“Optavi, et datus est mihi sensus.  
Invocavi, et venit in me Spiritus Sapientiæ,  
Et preposui illam regnis et sedibus.”

“I willed, and Sense was given me.  
I prayed, and the Spirit of Wisdom came upon me.  
And I set her before, (preferred her to,) kingdoms  
and thrones.”

The common translation in our English Apocrypha loses the entire meaning of this passage, which—not only as the statement of the experience of Florence in her own education, but as universally descriptive of the process of noble education whatever—we had better take pains to understand.

First, says Florence “ I willed, (in sense of resolutely desiring,) and Sense was given me.” You must begin your education with the distinct resolution to know what is true, and choice of the strait and rough road to such knowledge. This choice is offered to every youth and maid at some moment of their life ;—choice between the easy downward road, so broad that we can dance down it in companies, and the steep narrow way, which we must enter alone. Then, and for many a day afterwards, they need that form of persistent Option, and Will : but day by day, the ‘ Sense ’ of the rightness of what they have done, deepens on them, not in consequence of the effort, but by gift granted in reward of it. And the Sense of difference between right and wrong, and between beautiful and unbeautiful things, is confirmed in the heroic, and fulfilled in the industrious, soul.

That is the process of education in the earthly sciences, and the morality connected with them. Reward given to faithful Volition.

Next, when Moral and Physical senses are perfect, comes the desire for education in the higher world, where the senses are no more our Teachers ; but the Maker of

the senses. And that teaching, we cannot get by labour; but only by petition.

“Invocavi, et venit in me Spiritus Sapientiæ”—“I prayed, and the Spirit of Wisdom,” (not, you observe, *was given*,\* but,) “*came upon me.*” The *personal* power of Wisdom: the “*σοφία*” or Santa Sophia, to whom the first great Christian temple was dedicated. This higher wisdom, governing by her presence, all earthly conduct, and by her teaching, all earthly art, Florence tells you, she obtained only by prayer.

And these two Earthly and Divine sciences are expressed beneath in the symbols of their divided powers;—Seven terrestrial, Seven celestial, whose names have been already indicated to you:—in which figures I must point out one or two technical matters before touching their interpretation. They are all by Simon Memmi originally; but repainted, many of them all over, some hundred years later,—(certainly after the discovery of America, as you will see)—by an artist of considerable power, and some feeling for the general action of the figures; but of no refinement or carelessness. He dashes massive paint in huge spaces over the subtle old work, puts in his own *chiaro-oscuro* where all had been shadeless, and his own violent colour where all had been pale, and repaints the faces so as to make them, to his notion, prettier and more human: some of this upper work has, however, come away since, and the original outline, at least, is traceable; while

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\* I in careless error, wrote “was given” in ‘*Fors Clavigera.*’



in the face of the Logic, the Music, and one or two others, the original work is very pure. Being most interested myself in the earthly sciences, I had a scaffolding put up, made on a level with them, and examined them inch by inch, and the following report will be found accurate until next repainting.

For interpretation of them, you must always take the central figure of the Science, with the little medallion above it, and the figure below, all together. Which I proceed to do, reading first from left to right for the earthly sciences, and then from right to left the heavenly ones, to the centre, where their two highest powers sit, side by side.

We begin, then, with the first in the list given above, (Vaulted Book, page 118):—Grammar, in the corner farthest from the window.

1. GRAMMAR: more properly Grammaticö, “Grammaticæ Aët” the Art of *Letters* or “Literature,” or—using the word which to some English ears will carry most weight with it,—“Scripture,” and its use. The Art of faithfully reading what has been written for our learning; and of clearly writing what we would make immortal of our thoughts. Power which consists first in recognizing letters; secondly, in forming them; thirdly, in the understanding and choice of words which errorless shall express our thought. Severe exercises all, reaching—very few living persons know, how far: beginning properly in childhood, then only to be truly acquired. It is wholly

impossible—this I say from too sorrowful experience—to conquer by any effort or time, habits of the hand (much more of head and soul) with which the vase of flesh has been formed and filled in youth,—the law of God being that parents shall compel the child in the day of its obedience into habits of hand, and eye, and soul, which, when it is old, shall not, by any strength, or any weakness, be departed from.

“Enter ye in,” therefore, says Grammaticë, “at the trait Gate.” She points through it with her rod, holding fruit (?) for reward, in her left hand. The gate is very trait indeed—her own waist no less so, her hair fastened loose. She had once a white veil binding it, which is lost. Not a gushing form of literature, this,—or in any wise disposed to subscribe to Mudie’s, my English friends—or even patronize Tanchnitz editions of—what is the last novel you see ticketed up to-day in Mr. Goodban’s window? She looks kindly down, nevertheless, to the three children whom she is teaching—two boys and a girl: (Qy. does this mean that one girl out of every two should not be able to read or write? I am quite willing to accept that inference, for my own part,—should perhaps even say, two girls out of three). This girl is of the highest asses, crowned, her golden hair falling behind her, the lorentine girdle round her hips—(not waist, the object being to leave the lungs full play; but to keep the dress ways well down in dancing or running). The boys are of good birth also, the nearest one with luxuriant curly hair—only the profile of the farther one seen. All rever-

ent and eager. Above, the medallion is of a figure looking at a fountain. Underneath, Lord Lindsay says, Priscian, and is, I doubt not, right.

*Technical Points.*—The figure is said by Crowe to be entirely repainted. The dress is so throughout—both the hands also, and the fruit, and rod. But the eyes, mouth, hair above the forehead, and outline of the rest, with the faded veil, and happily, the traces left of the children, are genuine; the strait gate perfectly so, in the colour underneath, though reinforced; and the action of the entire figure is well preserved: but there is a curious question about both the rod and fruit. Seen close, the former perfectly assumes the shape of folds of dress gathered up over the raised right arm, and I am not absolutely sure that the restorer has not mistaken the folds—at the same time changing a pen or style into a rod. The fruit also I have doubts of, as fruit is not so rare at Florence that it should be made a reward. It is entirely and roughly repainted, and is oval in shape. In Giotto's Charity, luckily not restored, at Assisi, the guide-books have always mistaken the heart she holds for an apple:—and my own belief is that originally, the Grammaticè of Simon Memmi made with her right hand the sign which said, “Enter ye in at the Strait Gate,” and with her left, the sign which said, “My son, give me thine Heart.”

II. RHETORIC. Next to learning how to read and write, you are to learn to speak; and, young ladies and gentle-

en, observe,—to speak as little as possible, it is farther plied, till you *have* learned.

In the streets of Florence at this day you may hear much of what some people call “rhetoric”—very passionate speaking indeed, and quite “from the heart”—such arts as the people have got. That is to say, you never hear a word uttered but in a rage, either just ready to burst, or for the most part, explosive instantly: everybody—man, woman, man, or child—roaring out their incontinent, foolish, infinitely contemptible opinions and wills, on every smallest occasion, with flashing eyes, hoarsely shrieking and hoarsest voices,—insane hope to drag by vociferation whatever they would have, out of man and God.

Now consider Simon Memmi’s Rhetoric. The science of Speaking, primarily; of making oneself *heard* therefore: which is not to be done by shouting. She alone, of all the sciences, carries a scroll: and being a speaker gives you something to read. It is not thrust forward at you at all, but held quietly down with her beautiful dejected right hand; her left hand set coolly and strongly on her side.

And you will find that, thus, she alone of all the sciences *needs no use of her hands*. All the others have some important business for them. She none. She can do all with her lips, holding scroll, or bridle, or what you will, with her right hand, her left on her side.

Again, look at the talkers in the streets of Florence, and how, being essentially *unable* to talk, they try to make use of their fingers! How they poke, wave, flourish,

point, jerk, shake finger and fist at their antagonists—dumb essentially, all the while, if they knew it; unper-  
suasive and ineffectual, as the shaking of tree branches  
in the wind.

You will at first think her figure ungainly and stiff. It  
is so, partly, the dress being more coarsely repainted than  
in any other of the series. But she is meant to be both  
stout and strong. What she has to say is indeed to per-  
suade you, if possible; but assuredly to overpower you.  
And *she* has not the Florentine girdle, for she does not  
want to move. She has her girdle broad at the waist—  
of all the sciences, you would at first have thought, the  
one that most needed breath! No, says Simon Memmi.  
You want breath to run, or dance, or fight with. But to  
speak!—If you know *how*, you can do your work with  
few words; very little of this pure Florentine air will be  
enough, if you shape it rightly.

Note, also, that calm setting of her hand against her  
side. You think Rhetoric should be glowing, fervid, im-  
petuous? No, says Simon Memmi. Above all things,—  
*cool*.

And now let us read what is written on her scroll:—  
Mulceo, dum loquor, varios induta colores.

Her chief function, to melt; make soft, thaw the hearts  
of men with kind fire; to overpower with peace; and  
bring rest, with rainbow colours. The chief mission of all  
words that they should be of comfort.

You think the function of words is to excite? Why, a  
red rag will do that, or a blast through a brass pipe. But

to give calm and gentle heat; to be as the scuth wind, and the iridescent rain, to all bitterness of frost; and bring at once strength, and healing. This is the work of human ps, taught of God.

One farther and final lesson is given in the medallion above. Aristotle, and too many modern rhetoricians of his school, thought there could be good speaking in a false cause. But above Simon Memmi's Rhetoric is *Truth*, with her mirror.

There is a curious feeling, almost innate in men, that though they are bound to speak truth, in speaking to a single person, they may lie as much as they please, provided they lie to two or more people at once. There is the same feeling about killing: most people would shrink from shooting one innocent man; but will fire a mitrail-use contentedly into an innocent regiment.

When you look down from the figure of the Science, to that of Cicero, beneath, you will at first think it entirely overthrows my conclusion that Rhetoric has no need of her hands. For Cicero, it appears, has three instead of two.

The uppermost, at his chin, is the only genuine one. That raised, with the finger up, is entirely false. That on the book, is repainted so as to defy conjecture of its original action.

But observe how the gesture of the true one confirms instead of overthrowing what I have said above. Cicero is not speaking at all, but profoundly thinking *before* he speaks. It is the most abstractedly thoughtful face to be

found among all the philosophers; and very beautiful. The whole is under Solomon, in the line of Prophets.

*Technical Points.*—These two figures have suffered from restoration more than any others, but the right hand of Rhetoric is still entirely genuine, and the left, except the ends of the fingers. The ear, and hair just above it, are quite safe, the head well set on its original line, but the crown of leaves rudely retouched, and then faded. All the lower part of the figure of Cicero has been not only repainted but changed; the face is genuine—I believe retouched, but so cautiously and skilfully, that it is probably now more beautiful than at first.

III. LOGIC. The science of reasoning, or more accurately Reason herself, or pure intelligence.

Science to be gained after that of Expression, says Simon Memmi; so, young people, it appears, that though you must not speak before you have been taught how to speak, you may yet properly speak before you have been taught how to think.

For indeed, it is only by frank speaking that you *can* learn how to think. And it is no matter how wrong the first thoughts you have may be, provided you you express them clearly;—and are willing to have them put right.

Fortunately, nearly all of this beautiful figure is practically safe, the outlines pure everywhere, and the face perfect: the *prettiest*, as far as I know, which exists in Italian art of this early date. It is subtle to the extreme

1 gradations of colour: the eyebrows drawn, not with a weep of the brush, but with separate cross touches in the line of their growth—exquisitively pure in arch; the nose straight and fine; the lips—playful slightly, proud, unerringly cut; the hair flowing in sequent waves, ordered as if in musical time; head perfectly upright on the shoulders; the height of the brow completed by a crimson frontlet set with pearls, surmounted by a *fleur-de-lys*.

Her shoulders were exquisitively drawn, her white ricket fitting close to soft, yet scarcely rising breasts; her arms singularly strong, at perfect rest; her hands, exquisitely delicate. In her right, she holds a branching and staff-bearing rod, (the syllogism); in her left, a scorpion with double sting, (the dilemma)—more generally, the powers of rational construction and dissolution.

Beneath her, Aristotle,—intense keenness of search in his half-closed eyes.

Medallion above, (less expressive than usual) a man sitting, with his head stooped.

The whole under Isaiah, in the line of Prophets.

*Technical Points.*—The only parts of this figure which have suffered seriously in repainting are the leaves of the rod, and the scorpion. I have no idea, as I said above, what the background once was; it is now a mere mess of rabbled grey, carried over the vestiges, still with care much redeemable, of the richly ornamental extremity of the rod, which was a cluster of green leaves on a black ground. But the scorpion is indecipherably injured, most



of it confused repainting, mixed with the white of the dress, the double sting emphatic enough still, but not on the first lines.

The Aristotle is very genuine throughout, except his hat, and I think that must be pretty nearly on the old lines, though I cannot trace them. They are good lines, new or old.

IV. MUSIC. After you have learned to reason, young people, of course you will be very grave, if not dull, you think. No, says Simon Memmi. By no means anything of the kind. After learning to reason, you will learn to sing; for you will want to. There is so much reason for singing in the sweet world, when one thinks rightly of it. None for grunbling, provided always you *have* entered in at the strait gate. You will sing all along the road then, in a little while, in a manner pleasant for other people to hear.

This figure has been one of the loveliest in the series, an extreme refinement and tender severity being aimed at throughout. She is crowned, not with laurel, but with small leaves,—I am not sure what they are, being too much injured: the face thin, abstracted, wistful; the lips not far open in their low singing; the hair rippling softly on the shoulders. She plays on a small organ, richly ornamented with Gothic tracery, the down slope of it set with rockets like those of Santa Maria del Fiore. Simon Memmi means that *all* music must be “sacred.” Not that men are never to sing anything but hymns, but that what-

ever is rightly called music, or work of the Muses, is divine in help and healing.

The actions of both hands are singularly sweet. The sight is one of the loveliest things I ever saw done in painting. She is keeping down one note only, with her third finger, seen under the raised fourth: the thumb, just passing under; all the curves of the fingers exquisite, and the pale light and shade of the rosy flesh relieved against the ivory white and brown of the notes. Only the thumb and end of the forefinger are seen of the left hand, but they indicate enough its light pressure on the bellows. Fortunately, all these portions of the fresco are absolutely intact.

Underneath, Tubal-Cain. Not Jubal, as you would expect. Jubal is the inventor of musical instruments. Tubal-Cain, thought the old Florentines, invented harmony. They, the best smiths in the world, knew the differences in tones of hammer strokes on anvil. Curiously enough, the only piece of true part-singing, done beautifully and joyfully, which I have heard this year in Italy, (being south of Alps exactly six months, and ranging from Genoa to Palermo) was out of a busy smithy at Perugia. Of bestial howling, and entirely frantic vomiting up of hopelessly damned souls through their still carnal throats, I have heard more than, please God, I will ever endure the hearing of again in one of His summers.

You think Tubal-Cain very ugly? Yes. Much like a baggy baboon: not accidentally, but with most scientific understanding of baboon character. Men must have

looked like that, before they had invented harmony, or felt that one note differed from another, says, and knows Simon Memmi. Darwinism, like all widely popular and widely mischievous fallacies, has many a curious gleam and grain of truth in its tissue.

Under Moses.

Medallion, a youth drinking. Otherwise, you might have thought only church music meant, and not feast music also.

*Technical Points.*—The Tubal-Cain, one of the most entirely pure and precious remnants of the old painting, nothing lost: nothing but the redder ends of his beard retouched. Green dress of Music, in the body and over limbs entirely repainted: it was once beautifully embroidered; sleeves, partly genuine, hands perfect, face and hair nearly so. Leaf crown faded and broken away, but not retouched.

V. ASTRONOMY. Properly Astro-logy, as (Theology) the knowledge of so much of the stars as we can know wisely; not the attempt to define their laws for them. Not that it is unbecoming of us to find out, if we can, that they move in ellipses, and so on; but it is no business of ours. What effects their rising and setting have on man, and beast, and leaf; what their times and changes are, seen and felt in this world, it is our business to know, passing, our nights, if wakefully, by that divine candlelight, and no other.

She wears a dark purple robe ; holds in her left hand the hollow globe with golden zodiacs and meridians : lifts her right hand in noble awe.

“ When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained.”

Crowned with gold, her dark hair in elliptic waves, bound with glittering chains of pearl. Her eyes dark, lifted.

Beneath her, Zoroaster,\* entirely noble and beautiful, the delicate Persian head made softer still by the elaborately wreathed silken hair, twisted into the pointed beard, and into tapering plaits, falling on his shoulders. The head entirely thrown back, he looks up with no distortion of the delicately arched brow : writing, as he gazes.

For the association of the religion of the Magi with their own in the mind of the Florentines of this time, see “ Before the Soldan.”

The dress must always have been white, because of its beautiful opposition to the purple above and that of Tubal-Cain beside it. But it has been too much repainted to be trusted anywhere, nothing left but a fold or two in the sleeves. The cast of it from the knees down is entirely beautiful, and I suppose on the old lines ; but the restorer could throw a fold well when he chose. The warm light which relieves the purple of Zoroaster above, is laid in by him. I don't know if I should have liked it better, flat,

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\* Atlas ! according to poor Vasari, and sundry modern guides. I find Vasari's mistakes usually of this *brightly* blundering kind. In matters needing research, after a while, I find *he* is right, usually.

as it was, against the dark purple; it seems to me quite beautiful now. The full red flush on the face of the Astronomy is the restorer's doing also. She was much paler, if not quite pale.

Under St. Luke.

Medallion, a stern man, with sickle and spade. For the flowers, and for us, when stars have risen and set such and such times;—remember.

*Technical Points.*—Left hand, globe, most of the important folds of the purple dress, eyes, mouth, hair in great part, and crown, genuine. Golden tracery on border of dress lost; extremity of falling folds from left sleeve altered and confused, but the confusion prettily got out of. Right hand and much of face and body of dress repainted.

Zoroaster's head quite pure. dress repainted, but carefully, leaving the hair untouched. Right hand and pen, now a common feathered quill, entirely repainted, but dexterously and with feeling. The hand was once slightly different in position, and held, most probably, a reed.

VI. GEOMETRY. You have now learned, young ladies and gentlemen, to read, to speak, to think, to sing, and to see. You are getting old, and will have soon to think of being married; you must learn to build your house, therefore. Here is your carpenter's square for you, and you may safely and wisely contemplate the ground a little, and the measures and laws relating to that, seeing you have got to abide upon it:—and that you have properly looked

at the stars; not before then, lest, had you studied the ground first, you might perchance never have raised your heads from it.

This is properly the science of all laws of practical labour, issuing in beauty.

She looks down, a little puzzled, greatly interested, holding her carpenter's square in her left hand, not wanting that but for practical work; following a diagram with her right.

Her beauty, altogether soft and in curves, I commend to your notice, as the exact opposite of what a vulgar designer would have imagined for her. Note the wreath of hair at the back of her head, which, though fastened by a *spiral* fillet, escapes at last, and flies off loose in a sweeping curve. Contemplative Theology is the only other of the sciences who has such wavy hair.

Beneath her, Euclid, in white turban. Very fine and original work throughout; but nothing of special interest in him.

Under St. Matthew.

Medallion, a soldier with a straight sword (best for science of defence), octagon shield, helmet like the beehive of Canton Vaud. As the secondary use of music in feasting, so the secondary use of geometry in war—her noble art being all in sweetest peace—is shown in the medallion.

*Technical Points.*—It is more than fortunate that in nearly every figure, the original outline of the hair is safe. Geometry's has scarcely been retouched at all, except at

the ends, once in single knots, now in confused double ones. The hands, girdle, most of the dress, and her black carpenter's square are original. Face and breast repainted.

VII. ARITHMETIC. Having built your house, young people, and understanding the light of heaven, and the measures of earth, you may marry—and can't do better. And here is now your conclusive science, which you will have to apply, all your days, to all your affairs.

The Science of Number. Infinite in solemnity of use in Italy at this time; including, of course, whatever was known of the higher abstract mathematics and mysteries of numbers, but revered especially in its vital necessity to the prosperity of families and kingdoms, and first fully so understood here in commercial Florence.

Her hand lifted, with two fingers bent, two straight, solemnly enforcing on your attention her primal law—Two and two are—four, you observe,—not five, as those accursed usurers think.

Under her, Pythagoras.

Above, medallion of king, with sceptre and globe, counting money. Have you ever chanced to read carefully Carlyle's account of the foundation of the existing Prussian empire, in economy?

You can, at all events, consider with yourself a little, what empire this queen of the terrestrial sciences must hold over the rest, if they are to be put to good use; or what depth and breadth of application there is in the brief parables of the counted cost of Power, and number of Armies.

To give a very minor, but characteristic, instance. I have always felt that with my intense love of the Alps, I ought to have been able to make a drawing of Chamouni, or the vale of Cluse, which should give people more pleasure than a photograph; but I always wanted to do it as I saw it, and engrave pine for pine, and crag for crag, like Albert Durer. I broke my strength down for many a year, always tiring of my work, or finding the leaves drop off, or the snow come on, before I had well begun what I meant to do. If I had only *counted* my pines first, and calculated the number of hours necessary to do them in the manner of Durer, I should have saved the available drawing time of some five years, spent in vain effort.

But Turner counted his pines, and did all that could be done for them, and rested content with that.

So in all the affairs of life, the arithmetical part of the business is the dominant one. How many and how much have we? How many and how much do we want? How constantly does noble Arithmetic of the finite lose self in base Avarice of the Infinite, and in blind magnification of it! In counting of minutes, is our arithmetic ever solicitous enough? In counting our days, is she ever severe enough? How we shrink from putting, in their decades, the diminished store of them! And if we ever pray the solemn prayer that we may be taught to number them, do we even try to do it after praying?

*Technical Points.*—The Pythagoras almost entirely genuine. The upper figures, from this inclusive to the



outer wall, I have not been able to examine thoroughly, my scaffolding not extending beyond the Geometry.

Here then we have the sum of sciences,—seven, according to the Florentine mind—necessary to the secular education of man and woman. Of these the modern average respectable English gentleman and gentlewoman know usually only a little of the last, and entirely hate the prudent applications of that: being unacquainted, except as they chance here and there to pick up a broken piece of information, with either grammar, rhetoric, music,\* astronomy, or geometry; and are not only unacquainted with logic, or the use of reason, themselves, but instinctively antagonistic to its use by anybody else.

We are now to read the series of the Divine sciences, beginning at the opposite side, next the window.

VIII. CIVIL LAW. Civil, or ‘of citizens,’ not only as distinguished from Ecclesiastical, but from Local law. She is the universal Justice of the peaceful relations of men throughout the world, therefore holds the globe, with its *three* quarters, white, as being justly governed, in her left hand.

She is also the law of eternal equity, not erring statute; therefore holds her sword *level* across her breast.

She is the foundation of all other divine science. To.

\* Being able to play the piano and admire Mendelssohn is not knowing music.

know anything whatever about God, you must begin by being Just.

Dressed in red, which in these frescos is always a sign of power, or zeal ; but her face very calm, gentle and beautiful. Her hair bound close, and crowned by the royal circlet of gold, with pure thirteenth century strawberry leaf ornament.

Under her, the Emperor Justinian, in blue, with conical mitre of white and gold ; the face in profile, very beautiful. The imperial staff in his right hand, the Institutes in his left.

Medallion, a figure, apparently in distress, appealing for justice. (Trajan's suppliant widow ?)

*Technical Points.*—The three divisions of the globe in her hand were originally inscribed ASIA, AFRICA, EUROPE. The restorer has ingeniously changed AF into AME—RICA. Faces, both of the science and emperor, little retouched, nor any of the rest altered.

IX. CHRISTIAN LAW. After the justice which rules men, comes that which rules the Church of Christ. The distinction is not between secular law, and ecclesiastical authority, but between the equity of humanity, and the law of Christian discipline.

In full, straight-falling, golden robe, with white mantle over it ; a church in her left hand ; her right raised, with the forefinger lifted ; (indicating heavenly source of all Christian law ? or warning ?)

Head-dress, a white veil floating into folds in the air. You will find nothing in these frescos without significance; and as the escaping hair of Geometry indicates the infinite conditions of lines of the higher orders, so the floating veil here indicates that the higher relations of Christian justice are indefinable. So her golden mantle indicates that it is a glorious and excellent justice beyond that which unchristian men conceive; while the severely falling lines of the folds, which form a kind of gabled niche for the head of the Pope beneath, correspond with the strictness of true Church discipline, firmer as well as more luminous statute.

Beneath, Pope Clement V., in red, lifting his hand, not in the position of benediction, but, I suppose, of injunction,—only the forefinger straight, the second a little bent, the two last quite. Note the strict level of the book; and the vertical directness of the key.

The medallion puzzles me. It looks like a figure counting money.

*Technical Points.*—Fairly well preserved; but the face of the scene retouched: the grotesquely false perspective of the Pope's tiara, one of the most curiously naïve examples of the entirely ignorant feeling after merely scientific truth of form which still characterized Italian art.

Type of church interesting in its extreme simplicity; no idea of transept, campanile, or dome.

X. PRACTICAL THEOLOGY. The beginning of the knowl-

edge of God being Human Justice, and its elements defined by Christian Law, the application of the law so defined follows, first with respect to man, then with respect to God.

“Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s—and to God the things that are God’s.”

We have therefore now two sciences, one of our duty to men, the other to their Maker.

This is the first: duty to men. She holds a circular medallion, representing Christ preaching on the Mount, and points with her right hand to the earth.

The sermon on the Mount is perfectly expressed by the craggy pinnacle in front of Christ, and the high dark horizon. There is curious evidence throughout all these frescos of Simon Memmi’s having read the Gospels with a quite clear understanding of their innermost meaning.

I have called this science, Practical Theology:—the instructive knowledge, that is to say, of what God would have us do, personally, in any given human relation: and He speaking His Gospel therefore by act. “Let your light so shine before men.”

She wears a green dress, like Music her hair in the Arabian arch, with jewelled diadem.

Under David.

Medallion, Almsgiving.

Beneath her, Peter Lombard.

*Technical Points.*—It is curious that while the instinct

of perspective was not strong enough to enable any painter at this time to foreshorten a foot, it yet suggested to them the expression of elevation by raising the horizon.

I have not examined the retouching. The hair and diadem at least are genuine, the face is dignified and compassionate, and much on the old lines.

XI. DEVOTIONAL THEOLOGY.—Giving glory to God, or, more accurately, whatever feelings He desires us to have towards Him, whether of affection or awe.

This is the science or method of *devotion* for Christians universally, just as the Practical Theology is their science or method of *action*.

In blue and red : a narrow black rod still traceable in the left hand ; I am not sure of its meaning. (" Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me ? ") The other hand open in admiration, like Astronomy's ; but Devotion's is held at her breast. Her head very characteristic of Memmi, with upturned eyes, and Arab arch in hair. Under her, Dionysius the Areopagite—mending his pen ! But I am doubtful of Lord Lindsay's identification of this figure, and the action is curiously common and meaningless. It may have meant that meditative theology is essentially a writer, not a preacher.

The medallion, on the other hand, is as ingenious. A mother lifting her hands in delight at her child's beginning to take notice.

Under St. Paul.

*Technical Points.*—Both figures very genuine, the lower one almost entirely so. The painting of the red book is quite exemplary in fresco style.

XII. DOGMATIC THEOLOGY. After action and worship, thought becoming too wide and difficult, the need of dogma becomes felt; the assertion, that is, within limited range, of the things that are to be believed.

Since whatever pride and folly pollute Christian scholarship naturally delight in dogma, the science itself cannot but be in a kind of disgrace among sensible men: nevertheless it would be difficult to overvalue the peace and security which have been given to humble persons by forms of creed; and it is evident that either there is no such thing as theology, or some of its knowledge must be thus, if not expressible, at least reducible within certain limits of expression, so as to be protected from misinterpretation.

In red,—again the sign of power,—crowned with a black (once golden?) triple crown, emblematic of the Trinity. The left hand holding a scoop for winnowing corn; the other points upwards. “Prove all things—hold fast that which is good, or of God.”

Beneath her, Boethius.

Under St. Mark.

Medallion, female figure, laying hands on breast.

*Technical Points.*—The Boethius entirely genuine, and the painting of his black book, as of the red one beside it,

again worth notice, showing now pleasant and interesting the commonest things become, when well painted.

I have not examined the upper figure.

XIII. MYSTIC THEOLOGY.\* Monastic science, above dogma, and attaining to new revelation by reaching higher spiritual states.

In white robes, her left hand gloved (I don't know why) —holding chalice. She wears a nun's veil fastened under her chin, her hair fastened close, like Grammar's, showing her necessary monastic life: all states of mystic spiritual life involving retreat from much that is allowable in the material and practical world.

There is no possibility of denying this fact, infinite as the evils are which have arisen from misuse of it. They have been chiefly induced by persons who falsely pretended to lead monastic life, and led it without having natural faculty for it. But many more lamentable errors have arisen from the pride of really noble persons, who have thought it would be a more pleasing thing to God to be a sibyl or a witch, than a useful housewife. Pride is always somewhat involved even in the true effort: the scarlet head-dress in the form of a horn on the forehead in the fresco indicates this, both here, and in the Contemplative Theology.

Under St. John.

\* Blunderingly in the guide-books called 'Faith'!

Medallion unintelligible, to me. A woman laying hands on the shoulders of two small figures.

*Technical Points.*—More of the minute folds of the white dress left than in any other of the repainted draperies. It is curious that minute division has always in drapery, more or less, been understood as an expression of spiritual life, from the delicate folds of Athena's peplus down to the rippled edges of modern priests' white robes; Titian's breadth of fold, on the other hand, meaning for the most part bodily power. The relation of the two modes of composition was lost by Michael Angelo, who thought to express spirit by making flesh colossal.

For the rest, the figure is not of any interest, Memmi's own mind being intellectual rather than mystic.

#### XIV. POLEMIC THEOLOGY.\*

“Who goes forth, conquering and to conquer?”

“For we war, not with flesh and blood,” etc.

In red, as sign of power, but not in armour, because she is herself invulnerable. A close red cap, with cross for crest, instead of helmet. Bow in left hand; long arrow in right.

She partly means Aggressive Logic: compare the set of her shoulders and arms with Logic's.

She is placed the last of the Divine sciences, not as

\* Blunderingly called ‘Charity’ in the guide-books.



their culminating power, but as the last which can be rightly learned. You must know all the others, before you go out to battle. Whereas the general principle of modern Christendom is to go out to battle without knowing *any one* of the others: one of the reasons for this error, the prince of errors, being the vulgar notion that truth may be ascertained by debate! Truth is never earned, in any department of industry, by arguing, but by working, and observing. And when you have got good hold of one truth, for certain, two others will grow out of it, in a beautifully dicotyledonous fashion, (which, as before noticed, is the meaning of the branch in Logic's right hand). Then, when you have got so much true knowledge as is worth fighting for, you are bound to fight for it. But not to debate about it, any more.

There is, however, one further reason for Polemic Theology being put beside Mystic. It is only in some approach to mystic science that any man becomes aware of what St. Paul means by "spiritual wickedness in heavenly\* places;" or, in any true sense, knows the enemies of God and of man.

Beneath St. Augustine. Showing you the proper method of controversy;—perfectly firm; perfectly gentle.

You are to distinguish, of course, controversy from rebuke. The assertion of truth is to be always gentle: the chastisement of wilful falsehood may be—very much

\* With cowardly intentional fallacy, translated 'high' in the English Bible.

the contrary indeed. Christ's sermon on the Mount is full of polemic theology, yet perfectly gentle:—"Ye have heard that it hath been said—but *I* say unto you";—"And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?" and the like. But His "Ye fools and blind, for whiether is greater," is not merely the exposure of error, but rebuke of the avarice which made that error possible.

Under the throne of St. Thomas; and next to Arithmetic, of the terrestrial sciences.

Medallion, a soldier, but not interesting.

*Technical Points.*—Very genuine and beautiful throughout. Note the use of St. Augustine's red bands, to connect him with the full red of the upper figures; and compare the niche formed by the dress of Canon Law, above the Pope, for different artistic methods of attaining the same object,—unity of composition.

But lunch time is near, my friends, and you have that shopping to do, you know.

## THE SIXTH MORNING.

## THE SHEPHERD'S TOWER.

I AM obliged to interrupt my account of the Spanish chapel by the following notes on the sculptures of Giotto's Campanile: first because I find that inaccurate accounts of those sculptures are in course of publication; and chiefly because I cannot finish my work in the Spanish chapel until one of my good Oxford helpers, Mr. Caird, has completed some investigations he has undertaken for me upon the history connected with it. I had written my own analysis of the fourth side, believing that in every scene of it the figure of St. Dominic was repeated. Mr. Caird first suggested, and has shown me already good grounds for his belief,\* that the preaching monks represented are in each scene intended for a different person. I am informed also of several careless mistakes which have got into my description of the fresco of the Sciences; and finally, another of my young helpers, Mr. Charles F.

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\* He wrote thus to me on 11th November last: "The three preachers are certainly different. The first is Dominic; the second, Peter Martyr, whom I have identified from his martyrdom on the other wall; and the third, Aquinas."

Murray,—one, however, whose help is given much in the form of antagonism,—informs me of various critical discoveries lately made, both by himself, and by industrious Germans, of points respecting the authenticity of this and that, which will require notice from me: more especially he tells me of certification that the picture in the Uffizii, of which I accepted the ordinary attribution to Giotto, is by Lorenzo Monaco,—which indeed may well be, without in the least diminishing the use to you of what I have written of its predella, and without in the least, if you think rightly of the matter, diminishing your confidence in what I tell you of Giotto generally. There is one kind of knowledge of pictures which is the artist's, and another which is the antiquary's and the picture-dealer's; the latter especially acute, and founded on very secure and wide knowledge of canvas, pigment, and tricks of touch, without, necessarily, involving any knowledge whatever of the qualities of art itself. There are few practised dealers in the great cities of Europe whose opinion would not be more trustworthy than mine, (if you could *get it*, mind you,) on points of actual authenticity. But they could only tell you whether the picture was by such and such a master, and not at all what either the master or his work were good for. Thus, I have, before now, taken drawings by Varley and by Cousins for early studies by Turner, and have been convinced by the dealers that they knew better than I, as far as regarded the authenticity of those drawings; but the dealers don't know Turner, or the

worth of him, so well as I, for all that. So also, you may find me again and again mistaken among the much more confused work of the early Giottesque schools, as to the authenticity of this work or the other; but you will find (and I say it with far more sorrow than pride) that I am simply the only person who can at present tell you the real worth of *any*; you will find that whenever I tell you to look at a picture, it is worth your pains; and whenever I tell you the character of a painter, that it *is* his character, discerned by me faithfully in spite of all confusion of work falsely attributed to him in which similar character may exist. Thus, when I mistook Cousins for Turner, I was looking at a piece of subtlety in the sky of which the dealer had no consciousness whatever, which was essentially Turneresque, but which another man might sometimes equal; whereas the dealer might be only looking at the quality of Whatman's paper, which Cousins used, and Turner did not.

Not, in the meanwhile, to leave you quite guideless as to the main subject of the fourth fresco in the Spanish chapel,—the Pilgrim's Progress of Florence,—here is a brief map of it.

On the right, in lowest angle, St. Dominic preaches to the group of Infidels; in the next group towards the left, he (or some one very like him) preaches to the Heretics; the Heretics proving obstinate, he sets his dogs at them, as at the fattest of wolves, who being driven away, the rescued lambs are gathered at the feet of the Pope. I

have copied the head of the very pious, but slightly weak-minded, little lamb in the centre, to compare with my rough Cumberland ones, who have had no such grave experiences. The whole group, with the Pope above, (the niche of the Duomo joining with and enriching the decorative power of his mitre,) is a quite delicious piece of design.

The Church being thus pacified, is seen in worldly honour under the powers of the Spiritual and Temporal Rulers. The Pope, with Cardinal and Bishop descending in order on his right; the Emperor, with King and Baron descending in order on his left; the ecclesiastical body of the whole Church on the right side, and the laity,—chiefly poets and artists, on the left.

Then, the redeemed Church nevertheless giving itself up to the vanities and temptations of the world, its forgetful saints are seen feasting, with their children dancing before them, (the Seven Mortal Sins, say some commentators). But the wise-hearted of them confess their sins to another ghost of St. Dominic; and confessed, becoming as little children, enter hand in hand the gate of the Eternal Paradise, crowned with flowers by the waiting angels, and admitted by St. Peter among the serenely joyful crowd of all the saints, above whom the white Madonna stands reverently before the throne. There is, so far as I know, throughout all the schools of Christian art, no other so perfect statement of the noble policy and religion of men.

I had intended to give the best account of it in my power; but, when at Florence, lost all time for writing that I might copy the group of the Pope and Emperor for the schools of Oxford; and the work since done by Mr. Caird has informed me of so much, and given me, in some of its suggestions, so much to think of, that I believe it will be best and most just to print at once his account of the fresco as a supplement to these essays of mine, merely indicating any points on which I have objections to raise, and so leave matters till Fors lets me see Florence once more.

Perhaps she may, in kindness, forbid my ever seeing it more, the wreck of it being now too ghastly and heart-breaking to any human soul that remembers the days of old. Forty years ago, there was assuredly no spot of ground, out of Palestine, in all the round world, on which, if you knew, even but a little, the true course of that world's history, you saw with so much joyful reverence the dawn of morning, as at the foot of the Tower of Giotto. For there the traditions of faith and hope, of both the Gentile and Jewish races, met for their beautiful labour: the Baptistery of Florence is the last building raised on the earth by the descendants of the workmen taught by Dædalus: and the Tower of Giotto is the loveliest of those raised on earth under the inspiration of the men who lifted up the tabernacle in the wilderness. Of living Greek work there is none after the Florentine Baptistery; of living Christian work, none so perfect as

the Tower of Giotto ; and, under the gleam and shadow of their marbles, the morning light was haunted by the ghosts of the Father of Natural Science, Galileo ; of Sacred Art, Angelico, and of the Master of Sacred Song. Which spot of ground the modern Florentine has made his principal hackney-coach stand and omnibus station. The hackney coaches, with their more or less farmyard-like litter of occasional hay, and smell of variously mixed horse-manure, are yet in more permissible harmony with the place than the ordinary populace of a fashionable promenade would be, with its cigars, spitting, and harlot-planned fineries : but the omnibus place of call being in front of the door of the tower, renders it impossible to stand for a moment near it, to look at the sculptures either of the eastern or southern side ; while the north side is enclosed with an iron railing, and usually encumbered with lumber as well : not a soul in Florence ever caring now for sight of any piece of its old artists' work ; and the mass of strangers being on the whole intent on nothing but getting the omnibus to go by steam ; and so seeing the cathedral in one swift circuit, by glimpses between the puffs of it.

The front of Notre Dame of Paris was similarly turned into a coach-office when I last saw it—1872.\* Within fifty yards of me as I write, the Oratory of the Holy Ghost is used for a tobacco-store, and in fine, over

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\* See Fors Clavigera in that year.



all Europe, mere Caliban bestiality and Satyric ravage staggering, drunk and desperate, into every once enchanted cell where the prosperity of kingdoms ruled and the miraculousness of beauty was shrined in peace.

Deluge of profanity, drowning dome and tower in Stygian pool of vilest thought,—nothing now left sacred, in the places where once—nothing was profane.

For *that* is indeed the teaching, if you could receive it, of the Tower of Giotto ; as of all Christian art in its day. Next to declaration of the facts of the Gospel, its purpose, (often in actual work the eagerest,) was to show the *power* of the Gospel. History of Christ in due place ; yes, history of all He did, and how He died : but then, and often, as I say, with more animated imagination, the showing of His risen presence in granting the harvests and guiding the labour of the year. All sun and rain, and length or decline of days received from His hand ; all joy, and grief, and strength, or cessation of labour, indulged or endured, as in His sight and to His glory. And the familiar employments of the seasons, the homely toils of the peasant, the lowliest skills of the craftsman, are signed always on the stones of the Church, as the first and truest condition of sacrifice and offering.

Of these representations of human art under heavenly guidance, the series of bas-reliefs which stud the base of this tower of Giotto's must be held certainly the chief in

Europe.\* At first you may be surprised at the smallness of their scale in proportion to their masonry; but this smallness of scale enabled the master workmen of the tower to execute them with their own hands; and for the rest, in the very finest architecture, the decoration of most precious kind is usually thought of as a jewel, and set with space round it,—as the jewels of a crown, or the clasp of a girdle. It is in general not possible for a great workman to carve, himself, a greatly conspicuous series of ornament; nay, even his energy fails him in design, when the bas-relief extends itself into incrustation, or involves the treatment of great masses of stone. If his own does not, the spectator's will. It would be the work of a long summer's day to examine the over-loaded sculptures of the Certosa of Pavia; and yet in the tired last hour, you would be empty-hearted. Read but these inlaid jewels of Giotto's once with patient following; and your hour's study will give you strength for all your life. So far as you can, examine them of course on the spot; but to know them thoroughly you must have their photographs: the subdued colour of the old marble fortunately keeps the lights subdued, so that the photograph may be made more tender in the shadows than is usual in its renderings of sculpture, and there are few pieces of art which may now be so well known as these, in quiet homes far away.

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\* For account of the series on the main archivolt of St. Mark's, see my sketch of the schools of Venetian sculpture in third forthcoming number of 'St. Mark's Rest.'

We begin on the western side. There are seven sculptures on the western, southern, and northern sides: six on the eastern; counting the Lamb over the entrance door of the tower, which divides the complete series into two groups of eighteen and eight. Itself, between them, being the introduction to the following eight, you must count it as the first of the terminal group; you then have the whole twenty-seven sculptures divided into eighteen and nine.

Thus lettering the groups on each side for West, South, East, and North, we have:—

$$\begin{array}{cccc} \text{W.} & \text{S.} & \text{E.} & \text{N.} \\ 7 & + & 7 & + & 6 & + & 7 & = & 27; \text{ or,} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{cccc} \text{W.} & \text{S.} & \text{E.} & & & & & & \\ 7 & + & 7 & + & 4 & & = & 18; \text{ and,} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{cccc} & & \text{E.} & \text{N.} \\ & & 2 & + & 7 & = & 9. \end{array}$$

There is a very special reason for this division by nines; but, for convenience' sake, I shall number the whole from 1 to 27, straightforwardly. And if you will have patience with me, I should like to go round the tower once and again; first observing the general meaning and connection of the subjects, and then going back to examine the technical points in each, and such minor specialties as it may be well, at the first time, to pass over.

1. The series begins, then, on the west side, with the Creation of Man. It is not the beginning of the story of

Genesis; but the simple assertion that God made us, and breathed, and still breathes, into our nostrils the breath of life.

This, Giotto tells you to believe as the beginning of all knowledge and all power.\* This he tells you to believe, as a thing which he himself knows.

He will tell you nothing but what he *does* know.

2. Therefore, though Giovanni Pisano and his fellow-sculptors had given, literally, the taking of the rib out of Adam's side, Giotto merely gives the mythic expression of the truth he knows,—“they two shall be one flesh.”

3. And though all the theologians and poets of his time would have expected, if not demanded, that his next assertion, after that of the Creation of Man, should be of the Fall of Man, he asserts nothing of the kind. He knows nothing of what man was. What he is, he knows best of living men at that hour, and proceeds to say. The next sculpture is of Eve spinning and Adam hewing the ground into clods. Not *digging*: you cannot, usually, dig but in ground already dug. The native earth you must hew.

They are not clothed in skins. What would have been the use of Eve spinning if she could not weave? They wear, each, one simple piece of drapery, Adam's knotted behind him, Eve's fastened round her neck with a rude brooch.

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\* So also the Master-builder of the Ducal Palace of Venice. See Fors Clavigera for June of this year.

Above them are an oak and an apple-tree. Into the apple-tree a little bear is trying to climb.

The meaning of which entire myth is, as I read it, that men and women must both eat their bread with toil. That the first duty of man is to feed his family, and the first duty of the woman to clothe it. That the trees of the field are given us for strength and for delight, and that the wild beasts of the field must have their share with us.\*

4. The fourth sculpture, forming the centre-piece of the series on the west side, is nomad pastoral life.

Jabal, the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle, lifts the curtain of his tent to look out upon his flock. His dog watches it.

5. Jubal, the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

That is to say, stringed and wind instruments;—the lyre and reed. The first arts (with the Jew and Greek) of the shepherd David, and shepherd Apollo.

Giotto has given him the long level trumpet, afterwards adopted so grandly in the sculptures of La Robbia and Donatello. It is, I think, intended to be of wood, as now the long Swiss horn, and a long and shorter tube are bound together.

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\* The oak and apple boughs are placed, with the same meaning, by Sandro Botticelli, in the lap of Zipporah. The figure of the bear is again represented by Jacopo della Quercia, on the north door of the Cathedral of Florence. I am not sure of its complete meaning.

6. Tubal Cain, the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.

Giotto represents him as sitting, *fully robed*, turning a wedge of bronze on the anvil with extreme watchfulness.

These last three sculptures, observe, represent the life of the race of Cain; of those who are wanderers, and have no home. *Nomad* pastoral life; *Nomad* artistic life, Wandering Willie; yonder organ man, whom you want to send the policeman after, and the gipsy who is mending the old schoolmistress's kettle on the grass, which the squire has wanted so long to take into his park from the roadside.

7. Then the last sculpture of the seven begins the story of the race of Seth, and of home life. The father of it lying drunk under his trellised vine; such the general image of civilized society, in the abstract, thinks Giotto.

With several other meanings, universally known to the Catholic world of that day,—too many to be spoken of here.

The second side of the tower represents, after this introduction, the sciences and arts of civilized or home life.

8. Astronomy. In nomad life you may serve yourself of the guidance of the stars; but to know the laws of *their* nomadic life, your own must be fixed.

The astronomer, with his sextant revolving on a fixed pivot, looks up to the vault of the heavens and beholds their zodiac; prescient of what else with optic glass the Tuscan artist viewed, at evening, from the top of Fésòle.

Above the dome of heaven, as yet unseen, are the Lord of the worlds and His angels. To-day, the Dawn and the Daystar: to-morrow, the Daystar arising in the heart.

9. Defensive architecture. The building of the watch-tower. The beginning of security in possession.

10. Pottery. The making of pot, cup, and platter. The first civilized furniture; the means of heating liquid, and serving drink and meat with decency and economy.

11. Riding. The subduing of animals to domestic service.

12. Weaving. The making of clothes with swiftness, and in precision of structure, by help of the loom.

13. Law, revealed as directly from heaven.

14. Dædalus (not Icarus, but the father trying the wings). The conquest of the element of air.

As the seventh subject of the first group introduced the arts of home after those of the savage wanderer, this seventh of the second group introduces the arts of the missionary, or civilized and gift-bringing wanderer.

15. The Conquest of the Sea. The helmsman, and two rowers, rowing as Venetians, face to bow.

16. The Conquest of the Earth. Hercules victor over Antæus. Beneficent strength of civilization crushing the savageness of inhumanity.

17. Agriculture. The oxen and plough.

18. Trade. The cart and horses.

19. And now the sculpture over the door of the tower, The Lamb of God, expresses the Law of Sacrifice, and

door of ascent to heaven. And then follow the fraternal arts of the Christian world.

20. Geometry. Again the angle sculpture, introductory to the following series. We shall see presently why this science must be the foundation of the rest.

21. Sculpture.

22. Painting.

23. Grammar.

24. Arithmetic. The laws of number, weight, and measures of capacity.

25. Music. The laws of number, weight (or force), and measure, applied to sound.

26. Logic. The laws of number and measure applied to thought.

27. The Invention of Harmony.

You see now—by taking first the great division of pre-Christian and Christian arts, marked by the door of the Tower; and then the divisions into four successive historical periods, marked by its angles—that you have a perfect plan of human civilization. The first side is of the nomad life, learning how to assert its supremacy over other wandering creatures, herbs, and beasts. Then the second side is the fixed home life, developing race and country; then the third side, the human intercourse between stranger races; then the fourth side, the harmonious arts of all who are gathered into the fold of Christ.

Now let us return to the first angle, and examine piece by piece with care.



### 1. *Creation of Man.*

Scarcely disengaged from the clods of the earth, he opens his eyes to the face of Christ. Like all the rest of the sculptures, it is less the representation of a past fact than of a constant one. It is the continual state of man, 'of the earth,' yet seeing God.

Christ holds the book of His Law—the 'Law of life'—in His left hand.

The trees of the garden above are,—central above Christ, palm (immortal life); above Adam, oak (human life). Pear, and fig, and a large-leaved ground fruit (what?) complete the myth of the Food of Life.

As decorative sculpture, these trees are especially to be noticed, with those in the two next subjects, and the Noah's vine as differing in treatment from Giotto's foliage, of which perfect examples are seen in 16 and 17. Giotto's branches are set in close sheaf-like clusters; and every mass disposed with extreme formality of radiation. The leaves of these first, on the contrary, are arranged with careful concealment of their ornamental system, so as to look inartificial. This is done so studiously as to become, by excess, a little unnatural!—Nature herself is more decorative and formal in grouping. But the occult design is very noble, and every leaf modulated with loving, dignified, exactly right and sufficient finish; not done to show skill, nor with mean forgetfulness of main subject, but in tender completion and harmony with it.

Look at the subdivisions of the palm-leaves with your

magnifying glass. The others are less finished in this than in the next subject. Man himself incomplete, the leaves that are created with him, for his life, must not be so.

(Are not his fingers yet short ; growing ?)

## 2. *Creation of Woman.*

Far, in its essential qualities, the transcendent sculpture of this subject, Ghiberti's is only a dainty elaboration and beautification of it, losing its solemnity and simplicity in a flutter of feminine grace. The older sculptor thinks of the Uses of Womanhood, and of its dangers and sins, before he thinks of its beauty ; but, were the arm not lost, the quiet naturalness of this head and breast of Eve, and the bending grace of the submissive rendering of soul and body to perpetual guidance by the hand of Christ—(*grasping* the arm, note, for full support)—would be felt to be far beyond Ghiberti's in beauty, as in mythic truth.

The line of her body joins with that of the serpent-ivy round the tree trunk above her : a double myth—of her fall, and her support afterwards by her husband's strength. "Thy desire shall be to thy husband." The fruit of the tree—double-set filbert, telling nevertheless the happy equality.

The leaves in this piece are finished with consummate poetical care and precision. Above Adam, laurel (a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband) ; the filbert for the two together ; the fig, for fruitful household joy

(under thy vine and fig-tree \*—but vine properly the masculine joy); and the fruit taken by Christ for type of all naturally growing food, in his own hunger.

Examine with lens the ribbing of these leaves, and the insertion on their stem of the three laurel leaves on extreme right: and observe that in all cases the sculptor works the moulding *with* his own part of the design; look how he breaks variously deeper into it, beginning from the foot of Christ, and going up to the left into full depth above the shoulder.

3. *Original labour.* Much poorer, and intentionally so. For the myth of the creation of humanity, the sculptor uses his best strength, and shows supremely the grace of womanhood; but in representing the first peasant state of life, makes the grace of woman by no means her conspicuous quality. She even walks awkwardly; some feebleness in foreshortening the foot also embarrassing the sculptor. He knows its form perfectly—but its perspective, not quite yet.

The trees stiff and stunted—they also needing culture. Their fruit dropping at present only into beasts' mouths.

#### 4. *Jabal.*

If you have looked long enough, and carefully enough, at the three previous sculptures, you cannot but feel that the hand here is utterly changed. The drapery sweeps in

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\* Compare Fors Clavigera, February, 1877.

broader, softer, but less true folds; the handling is far more delicate; exquisitely sensitive to gradation over broad surfaces—scarcely using an incision of any depth but in outline; studiously reserved in appliance of shadow, as a thing precious and local—look at it above the puppy's head, and under the tent. This is assuredly painter's work, not mere sculptor's. I have no doubt whatever it is by the own hand of the shepherd-boy of Fésolé. Cimabue had found him drawing, (more probably *scratching* with Etrurian point,) one of his sheep upon a stone. These, on the central foundation-stone of his tower he engraves, looking back on the fields of life: the time soon near for him to draw the curtains of his tent.

I know no dog like this in method of drawing, and in skill of giving the living form without one touch of chisel for hair, or incision for eye, except the dog barking at Poverty in the great fresco of Assisi.

Take the lens and look at every piece of the work from corner to corner—note especially as a thing which would only have been enjoyed by a painter, and which all great painters do intensely enjoy—the *fringe* of the tent,\* and precise insertion of its point in the angle of the hexagon, prepared for by the archaic masonry indicated in the

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\* "I think Jabal's tent is made of leather; the relaxed intervals between the tent-pegs show a curved ragged edge like leather near the ground" (Mr. Caird). The edge of the opening is still more characteristic, I think.

oblique joint above; \* architect and painter thinking at once, and *doing* as they thought.

I gave a lecture to the Eton boys a year or two ago, on little more than the shepherd's dog, which is yet more wonderful in magnified scale of photograph. The lecture is partly published—somewhere, but I can't refer to it.

### 5. *Jubal.*

Still Giotto's, though a little less delighted in; but with exquisite introduction of the Gothic of his own tower. See the light surface sculpture of a mosaic design in the horizontal moulding.

Note also the painter's freehand working of the complex mouldings of the table—also resolutely oblong, not square; see central flower.

### 6. *Tubal Cain.*

Still Giotto's, and entirely exquisite; finished with no less care than the shepherd, to mark the vitality of this art to humanity; the spade and hoe—its heraldic bearing—hung on the hinged door.† For subtlety of execution,

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\* Prints of these photographs which do not show the masonry all round the hexagon are quite valueless for study.

† Pointed out to me by Mr. Caird, who adds farther, "I saw a forge identical with this one at Pelago the other day,—the anvil resting on a tree-stump: the same fire, bellows, and implements; the door in two parts, the upper part like a shutter, and used for the exposition of finished work as a sign of the craft; and I saw upon it the same finished work of the same shape as in the bas-relief—a spade and a hoe.

note the texture of wooden block under anvil, and of its iron hoop.

The workman's face is the best sermon on the dignity of labour yet spoken by thoughtful man. Liberal Parliaments and fraternal Reformers have nothing essential to say more.

7. *Noah.*

Andrea Pisano's again, more or less imitative of Giotto's work.

8. *Astronomy.*

We have a new hand here altogether. The hair and drapery bad; the face expressive, but blunt in cutting; the small upper heads, necessarily little more than blocked out, on the small scale; but not suggestive of grace in completion: the minor detail worked with great mechanical precision, but little feeling; the lion's head, with leaves in its ears, is quite ugly; and by comparing the work of the small cusped arch at the bottom with Giotto's soft handling of the mouldings of his, in 5, you may for ever know common mason's work from fine Gothic. The zodiacal signs are quite hard and common in the method of bas-relief, but quaint enough in design: Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces, on the broad heavenly belt; Taurus upside down, Gemini, and Cancer, on the small globe.

I think the whole a restoration of the original panel, or else an inferior workman's rendering of Giotto's design, which the next piece is, with less question.

9. *Building.*

The larger figure, I am disposed finally to think, represents civic power, as in Lorenzetti's fresco at Siena. The extreme rudeness of the minor figures may be guarantee of their originality; it is the smoothness of mass and hard edge work that make me suspect the 8th for a restoration.

10. *Pottery.*

Very grand; with much painter's feeling, and fine mouldings again. The *tiled* roof projecting in the shadow above, protects the first Ceramicus-home. I think the women are meant to be carrying some kind of wicker or reed-bound water-vessel. The Potter's servant explains to them the extreme advantages of the new invention. I can't make any conjecture about the author of this piece.

11. *Riding.*

Again Andrea Pisano's, it seems to me. Compare the tossing up of the dress behind the shoulders, in 3 and 2. The head is grand, having nearly an Athenian profile: the loss of the horse's fore-leg prevents me from rightly judging of the entire action. I must leave riders to say.

12. *Weaving.*

Andrea's again, and of extreme loveliness; the stooping face of the woman at the loom is more like a Leonardo drawing than sculpture. The action of throwing the large shuttle, and all the structure of the loom and its

threads, distinguishing rude or smooth surface, are quite wonderful. The figure on the right shows the use and grace of finely woven tissue, under and upper—that over the bosom so delicate that the line of separation from the flesh of the neck is unseen.

If you hide with your hand the carved masonry at the bottom, the composition separates itself into two pieces, one disagreeably rectangular. The still more severely rectangular masonry throws out by contrast all that is curved and rounded in the loom, and unites the whole composition; that is its æsthetic function; its historical one is to show that weaving is queen's work, not peasant's; for this is palace masonry.

13. *The Giving of Law.* More strictly, of *the* Book of God's Law: the only one which *can* ultimately be obeyed.\*

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\* Mr. Caird convinced me of the real meaning of this sculpture. I had taken it for the giving of a book, writing further of it as follows:—

All books, rightly so called, are Books of Law, and all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. (What *we* now mostly call a book, the infinite reduplication and vibratory echo of a lie, is not given but belched up out of volcanic clay by the inspiration of the devil.) On the Book-giver's right hand the students in cell, restrained by the lifted right hand:

“Silent, you,—till you know”; then, perhaps, you also.

On the left, the men of the world, kneeling, receive the gift.

Recommendable seal, this, for Mr. Mudie!

Mr. Caird says: “The book is written law, which is given by Justice to the inferiors, that they may know the laws regulating their relations



The authorship of this is very embarrassing to me. The face of the central figure is most noble, and all the work good, but not delicate; it is like original work of the master whose design No. 8 might be a restoration.

14. *Dædalus.*

Andrea Pisano again; the head superb, founded on Greek models, feathers of wings wrought with extreme care; but with no precision of arrangement or feeling. How far intentional in awkwardness, I cannot say; but note the good mechanism of the whole plan, with strong standing board for the feet.

15. *Navigation.*

An intensely puzzling one; coarse (perhaps unfinished) in work, and done by a man who could not row; the plaited bands used for rowlocks being pulled the wrong way. Right, had the rowers been rowing English-wise; but the water at the boat's head shows its motion forwards, the way the oarsmen look. I cannot make out the action of the figure at the stern; it ought to be steering with the stern oar.

The water seems quite unfinished. Meant, I suppose, for surface and section of sea, with slimy rock at the bottom; but all stupid and inefficient.

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to their superiors—who are also under the hand of law. The vassal is protected by the accessibility of formularized law. The superior is restrained by the right hand of power.”

16. *Hercules and Antæus.*

The Earth power, half hidden by the earth, its hair and hand becoming roots, the strength of its life passing through the ground into the oak tree. With Cercyon, but first named, (Plato, *Laws*, book VII., 796,) Antæus is the master of contest without use ;—*φιλονεικίας ἀχρήστου*—and is generally the power of pure selfishness and its various inflation to insolence and degradation to cowardice ;—finding its strength only in fall back to its Earth,—he is the master, in a word, of all such kind of persons as have been writing lately about the “interests of England.” He is, therefore, the Power invoked by Dante to place Virgil and him in the lowest circle of Hell ;—“Alcides whilom felt,—that grapple, straitened sore,” etc. The Antæus in the sculpture is very grand ; but the authorship puzzles me, as of the next piece, by the same hand. I believe both Giotto’s design.

17. *Ploughing.*

The sword in its Christian form. Magnificent : the grandest expression of the power of man over the earth and its strongest creatures that I remember in early sculpture,—(or for that matter, in late.) It is the subduing of the bull which the sculptor thinks most of ; the plough, though large, is of wood, and the handle slight. But the pawing and bellowing labourer he has bound to it !—here is victory.

18. *The Chariot.*

The horse also subdued to draught—Achilles' chariot in its first, and to be its last, simplicity. The face has probably been grand—the figure is so still. Andrea's, I think by the flying drapery.

19. *The Lamb, with the symbol of Resurrection.*

Over the door: 'I am the door;—by me, if any man enter in,' etc. Put to the right of the tower, you see, fearlessly, for the convenience of staircase ascent; all external symmetry being subject with the great builders to interior use; and then, out of the rightly ordained infraction of formal law, comes perfect beauty; and when, as here, the Spirit of Heaven is working with the designer, his thoughts are suggested in truer order, by the concession to use. After this sculpture comes the Christian arts,—those which necessarily imply the conviction of immortality. Astronomy without Christianity only reaches as far as—'Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels—and put all *things* under His feet':—Christianity says beyond this,—'Know ye not that we shall judge angels (as also the lower creatures shall judge us!)\*' The series of sculptures now beginning, therefore, show the arts which *can* only be accomplished through belief in Christ.

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\* In the deep sense of this truth, which underlies all the bright fantasy and humour of Mr. Courthope's "Paradise of Birds," that rhyme of the risen spirit of Aristophanes may well be read under the tower of Giotto, beside his watch-dog of the fold.

20. *Geometry.*

Not 'mathematics': *they* have been implied long ago in astronomy and architecture; but the due Measuring of the Earth and all that is on it. Actually done only by Christian faith—first inspiration of the great Earth-measurers. Your Prince Henry of Spain, your Columbus, your Captain Cook, (whose tomb, with the bright artistic invention and religious tenderness which are so peculiarly the gifts of the nineteenth century, we have just provided a fence for, of old cannon open-mouthed, straight up towards Heaven—your modern method of symbolizing the only appeal to Heaven of which the nineteenth century has left itself capable—'The voice of thy Brother's blood crieth to me'—your outworn cannon, now silently agape, but sonorous in the ears of angels with that appeal)—first inspiration, I say, of these; constant inspiration of all who set true landmarks and hold to them, knowing their measure; the devil interfering, I observe, lately in his own way, with the Geometry of Yorkshire, where the landed proprietors,\* when the neglected walls by the roadside

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\* I mean no accusation against any class; probably the one-fielded statesman is more eager for his little gain of fifty yards of grass than the squire for his bite and sup out of the gipsy's part of the roadside. But it is notable enough to the passing traveller, to find himself shut into a narrow road between high stone dykes which he can neither see over nor climb over, (I always deliberately pitch them down myself, wherever I need a gap,) instead of on a broad road between low grey walls with all the moor beyond—and the power of leaping over when

tumble down, benevolently repair the same, with better stonework, *outside* always of the fallen heaps;—which, the wall being thus built *on* what was the public road, absorb themselves, with help of moss and time, into the heaving swells of the rocky field—and behold, gain of a couple of feet—along so much of the road as needs repairing operations.

This, then, is the first of the Christian sciences: division of land rightly, and the general law of measuring between wisely-held compass points. The type of mensuration, circle in square, on his desk, I use for my first exercise in the laws of Fésolé.

### 21. *Sculpture.*

The first piece of the closing series on the north side of the Campanile, of which some general points must be first noted, before any special examination.

The two initial ones, Sculpture and Painting, are by tradition the only ones attributed to Giotto's own hand. The fifth, Song, is known, and recognizable in its magnificence, to be by Luca della Robbia. The remaining four are all of Luca's school,—later work therefore, all these five, than any we have been hitherto examining, entirely different in manner, and with late flower-work beneath them instead of our hitherto severe Gothic arches. And it becomes of course instantly a vital question—Did Giotto

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he chooses, in innocent trespass for herb, or view, or splinter of grey rock.

die leaving the series incomplete, only its subjects chosen, and are these two bas-reliefs of Sculpture and Painting among his last works? or was the series ever completed, and these later bas-reliefs substituted for the earlier ones, under Luca's influence, by way of conducting the whole to a grander close, and making their order more representative of Florentine art in its fulness of power?

I must repeat, once more, and with greater insistence respecting Sculpture than Painting, that I do not in the least set myself up for a critic of authenticity,—but only of absolute goodness. My readers may trust me to tell them what is well done or ill; but by whom, is quite a separate question, needing for any certainty, in this school of much-associated masters and pupils, extremest attention to minute particulars not at all bearing on my objects in teaching.

Of this closing group of sculptures, then, all I can tell you is that the fifth is a quite magnificent piece of work, and recognizably, to my extreme conviction, Luca della Robbia's; that the last, *Harmonia*, is also fine work; that those attributed to Giotto are fine in a different way,—and the other three in reality the poorest pieces in the series, though done with much more advanced sculptural dexterity.

But I am chiefly puzzled by the two attributed to Giotto, because they are much coarser than those which seem to me so plainly his on the west side, and slightly different in workmanship—with much that is common to

both, however, in the casting of drapery and mode of introduction of details. The difference may be accounted for partly by haste or failing power, partly by the artist's less deep feeling of the importance of these merely symbolic figures, as compared with those of the Fathers of the Arts; but it is very notable and embarrassing notwithstanding, complicated as it is with extreme resemblance in other particulars.

You cannot compare the subjects on the tower itself; but of my series of photographs take 6 and 21, and put them side by side.

I need not dwell on the conditions of resemblance, which are instantly visible; but the *difference* in the treatment of the heads is incomprehensible. That of the Tubal Cain is exquisitely finished, and with a painter's touch; every lock of the hair laid with studied flow, as in the most beautiful drawing. In the 'Sculpture,' it is struck out with ordinary tricks of rapid sculptor trade, entirely unfinished, and with offensively frank use of the drill hole to give picturesque rustication to the beard.

Next, put 22 and 5 back to back. You see again the resemblance in the earnestness of both figures, in the unbroken arcs of their backs, in the breaking of the octagon moulding by the pointed angles; and here, even also in the general conception of the heads. But again, in the one of Painting, the hair is struck with more vulgar indenting and drilling, and the Gothic of the picture frame is less precise in touch and later in style. Ob-

serve, however,—and this may perhaps give us some definite hint for clearing the question,—a picture frame *would be* less precise in making, and later in style, properly, than cusped arches to be put under the feet of the inventor of all musical sound by breath of man. And if you will now compare finally the eager tilting of the workman's seat in 22 and 6, and the working of the wood in the painter's low table for his pots of colour, and his three-legged stool, with that of Tubal Cain's anvil block; and the way in which the lines of the forge and upper triptych are in each composition used to set off the rounding of the head, I believe you will have little hesitation in accepting my own view of the matter—namely, that the three pieces of the Fathers of the Arts were wrought with Giotto's extremest care for the most precious stones of his tower; that also, being a sculptor and painter, he did the other two, but with quite definite and wilful resolve that they *should be*, as mere symbols of his own two trades, wholly inferior to the other subjects of the patriarchs; that he made the Sculpture picturesque and bold as you see it is, and showed all a sculptor's tricks in the work of it; and a sculptor's Greek subject, Bacchus, for the model of it; that he wrought the Painting, as the higher art, with more care, still keeping it subordinate to the primal subjects, but showed, for a lesson to all the generations of painters for evermore,—this one lesson, like his circle of pure line containing all others,—‘Your soul and body must be all in every touch.’



I can't resist the expression of a little piece of personal exultation, in noticing that he holds his pencil as I do myself: no writing master, and no effort (at one time very steady for many months), having ever cured me of that way of holding both pen and pencil between my fore and second finger; the third and fourth resting the backs of them on my paper.

As I finally arrange these notes for press, I am further confirmed in my opinion by discovering little finishings in the two later pieces which I was not before aware of. I beg the masters of High Art, and sublime generalization, to take a good magnifying glass to the 'Sculpture' and look at the way Giotto has cut the compasses, the edges of the chisels, and the *keyhole of the lock* of the toolbox.

For the rest, nothing could be more probable, in the confused and perpetually false mass of Florentine tradition, than the preservation of the memory of Giotto's carving his own two trades, and the forgetfulness, or quite as likely ignorance, of the part he took with Andrea Pisano in the initial sculptures.

I now take up the series of subjects at the point where we broke off, to trace their chain of philosophy to its close.

To Geometry, which gives to every man his possession of house and land, succeed 21, Sculpture, and 22, Painting, the adornments of permanent habitation. And then, the great arts of education in a Christian home. First—

23. *Grammar*, or more properly Literature altogether, of which we have already seen the ancient power in the Spanish Chapel series ; then,

24. *Arithmetic*,

central here as also in the Spanish Chapel, for the same reasons ; here, more impatiently asserting, with both hands, that two, on the right, you observe—and two on the left—do indeed and for ever make Four. Keep your accounts, you, with your book of double entry, on that principle ; and you will be safe in this world and the next, in your steward's office. But by no means so, if you ever admit the usurers' Gospel of Arithmetic, that two and two make Five.

You see by the rich hem of his robe that the assertor of this economical first principle is a man well to do in the world.

25. *Logic*.

The art of Demonstration. Vulgarest of the whole series ; far too expressive of the mode in which argument is conducted by those who are not masters of its reins.

26. *Song*.

The essential power of music in animal life. Orpheus, the symbol of it all, the inventor properly of Music, the Law of Kindness, as Dædalus of Music, the Law of Construction. Hence the "Orphic life" is one of ideal mercy, (vegetarian,)—Plato, *Laws*, Book VI., 782,—and

he is named first after Dædalus, and in balance to him as head of the school of harmonists, in Book III., 677, (Steph.) Look for the two singing birds clapping their wings in the tree above him : then the five mystic beasts, —closest to his feet the irredeemable boar ; then lion and bear, tiger, unicorn, and fiery dragon closest to his head, the flames of its mouth mingling with his breath as he sings. The audient eagle, alas ! has lost the beak, and is only recognizable by his proud holding of himself ; the duck, sleepily delighted after muddy dinner, close to his shoulder, is a true conquest. Hoopoe, or indefinite bird of crested race, behind ; of the other three no clear certainty. The leafage throughout such as only Luca could do, and the whole consummate in skill and understanding.

27. *Harmony.*

Music of Song, in the full power of it, meaning perfect education in all art of the Muses and of civilized life : the mystery of its concord is taken for the symbol of that of a perfect state ; one day, doubtless, of the perfect world. So prophesies the last corner stone of the Shepherd's Tower.















