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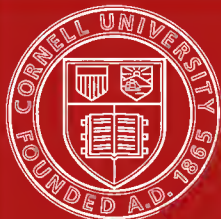
Autograph Poets

THE POETIC AND
DRAMATIC WORKS OF ALFRED
LORD TENNYSON



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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The poetic and dramatic works of Alfred,



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

ALFRED TENNYSON was born August 6, 1809, at Somersby, a little village in Lincolnshire, England. His father was the rector of the parish ; his mother, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Fytche, and whose character he touched in his poem 'Isabel,' was the daughter of a clergyman ; and one of his brothers, who later took the name of Charles Turner, was also a clergyman. The religious nature in the poet was a constant element in his poetry, and with it may be named an abiding love of the natural world, which yielded its secrets to an observation which was singularly keen, and a philosophic reflection which made Tennyson reveal in his poetry an apprehension of the laws of life, akin to what Darwin was disclosing in his contemporaneous career.

In his early 'Ode to Memory,' Tennyson has translated into verse the consciousness which woke in him in the secluded fields of his Lincolnshire birthplace. For companionship he had the large circle of his own home, for he was one of eight brothers and four sisters ; and in that little society there was not only the miniature world of sport and study, but a very close companionship with the large world of imagination. They had their jousts and tournaments, their revivification of knightly deeds in their sports, and Alfred was the improvisatore who gathered the other children about him and regaled them with tales of wonder, drawn partly from his reading, partly from his own fertile fancy.

He had, moreover, the favoring poetic sympathy of two at any rate in the circle. From very childhood he lisped in numbers, for the numbers came on every wind, and his brothers Frederick and Charles, the one two years, the other one year his senior, were also given to poetic composition, so that after Charles and Alfred had been at school in Louth a short time, the brothers put their verses together and induced the local book-sellers and printers, Messrs. Jackson, to publish the book under the title *Poems by Two Brothers*. Frederick Tennyson indeed contributed four poems ; the rest were divided between Charles and Alfred, but in the absence of exact data, the present Lord Tennyson, though he had memoranda as well as the memory of his uncles to rely upon, was unable, when he reprinted the volume sixty years after its first publication, to determine exactly the authorship of all the poems. The verses are interesting as indicating the careful scholarship of the boys and the impression made on them by Byron, rather than for any marked poetic quality.

Frederick Tennyson was already at Cambridge when Charles and Alfred went up to that University in 1828, and were matriculated at Trinity College. Alfred Tennyson acquired there, like so many other notable Englishmen, not only intellectual discipline, but that close companionship with picked men which is engendered by the half monastic seclusion of the English university. There was a company which from its number was dubbed the Apostles, to which he found entrance, and here he met men who influenced his early life and in a few instances were close companions during his whole career. Chief among these was the brilliant Sterling, and others were James Spedding, the expositor of Bacon, Trench, afterward Archbishop of Dublin, Richard Monckton Milnes, better known

as Lord Houghton, Dean Alford, W. H. Brookfield, the intimate friend of Thackeray, J. M. Kemble, and Kinglake, the author of *Eothen* and historian of the Crimean War. Among these men, growing into manhood during the stirring times of Reform, Tennyson drew in the long breaths of political freedom and loyalty to the highest ideals of English life, which were later to find expression in *Maud* and the historical dramas. He was under the influence also of Maurice, whose friendship was a lifelong inspiration to him; and perhaps more potent than all other influences was that which sprang from his intimacy with Arthur Hallam.

This young collegian, a son of the historian, was looked upon as a man of great promise who had already indeed demonstrated his power by writings of a mature order. His friendship with Tennyson brought him to the poet's home, and he became engaged to Tennyson's sister Emily. The two men shared their studies and hopes and dreams, and when in 1830 Tennyson published *Poems chiefly Lyrical*, Hallam came forward with a review of the volume in *The Englishman's Magazine*. In 1832 the volume was followed by *Poems, by Alfred Tennyson*, and then there was a silence of ten years. Hallam died in 1833, and his death seems to have so stirred the depths of the poet's nature that he retired into a life almost of seclusion, in which he confronted the problems of life and eternity much as many a reformer or preacher has girded up his loins in the wilderness.

It must not be supposed that this decade was one of brooding alone. At first indeed, in the privacy of the Somersby rectory he devoted himself with systematic industry to study rather than to composition. Once in a while he used his little hoard of savings in a visit to London to see his college friends living there, and he made a journey also into the Lake country. Yet he could not long withhold himself from his vocation, and little by little he showed poems to his friends and received their criticism. In 1842 appeared a fuller volume of *Poems*, in 1847 *The Princess* was published, and in 1850 appeared the great elegy *In Memoriam A. H. H.*, which set the seal upon his poetic reputation.

His livelihood, during these years, had been mainly a small sum which had come from his grandfather, his father having died in 1831, but now there was sufficient security in the income from his writings to enable him to renew an engagement with Emily Sellwood, whose younger sister had married Charles Tennyson, and who herself on that occasion was bridesmaid, with Alfred Tennyson as groomsman. The marriage took place in the same month that *In Memoriam* was published, and the wedded life which followed was the great anchorage of the poet's soul. In after life he said: 'The peace of God came into my life before the altar when I wedded her.' He testified of his affection when he published the lyrical dedication to the *Enoch Arden* volume, beginning:

'Dear, near and true, — no truer Time himself,'

and also the lines 'June bracken and heather' which introduce the *Enone* volume. The same year Tennyson was made Poet Laureate in successorship to Wordsworth.

Tennyson regarded his post as Poet Laureate in the light of a high poetic and patriotic ardor. When he was meditating his first laureate poem 'To the Queen,' he was thinking especially of a stanza in which 'the empire of Wordsworth should be asserted: for he was a representative Poet Laureate, such a poet as kings should honor, and such an one as would do honor to kings; — making the period of a reign famous by the utterance of memorable words concerning that period.' The laurel 'greener from the brows of him that utter'd nothing base,' was indeed worn with dignity and grace, and in the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, and the spirited 'Britons, guard your own,' 'The Third of February,' 'Hands all round,' and 'The Charge of the Light Brigade,' Tennyson

showed the passion of the English patriot in a manner which has been neither echoed nor eclipsed in the verses which in a similar spirit have been contributed by Rudyard Kipling in recent years to *The Times*. But it was in *Maud* that Tennyson concentrated the feeling which was roused in his nature by the compromise which he believed the commercial spirit of his day was seeking to effect between national honor and national prosperity; and it is not strange that this poem, with its almost incoherent cries, should have seemed to many of his countrymen as almost the utterance of an insane man.

The record of Tennyson's career from this time forward is marked by the successive publication of his works. He changed his home more than once, partly in obedience to an almost morbid fear of intrusion; but a family grew up about him, and his domestic life was one of great serenity and beauty. He travelled little out of his own country, and he was not greatly given to letter writing; but he numbered amongst devoted friends some of the greatest Englishmen of his time. His son has printed the letters which passed between him and the Queen, showing how genuine and deep was the emotion which each excited in the other. He was warmly attached to Robert Browning; the Duke of Argyll was an intimate companion, and Edward FitzGerald, with his whimsical hero worship, laid his tribute with affectionate constancy at Tennyson's feet.

When in later life he was now and then a figure in London society, he cared most for the companionship which, in the Metaphysical Society, brought him in close contact with Dean Stanley, Cardinal Manning, James Martineau, Edmund Lushington, and many others among ecclesiastics, Carpenter, Huxley, Tyndall and other scientists, and Froude, Bagehot, Pattison, Harrison, Hutton, men of letters and learning.

The *Idylls of the King*, published in 1859, a less complete group than that now included under the title, continued his great poetic line, which was also in its purpose an epitome of the greater England of his soul's allegiance, but the most notable turn in his poetic career was when, in 1875, nearly fifty years after his earliest venture in verse, he published his drama of *Queen Mary*. He had no thought of writing what are known as closet dramas. The dramatic instinct in him was powerful, even though it had thus far shown itself mainly in lyric form, and from this time forward he gave the best of his power to writing for the stage. With slight exceptions, these dramas are interpretations of English history. They are serious studies, and a serious attempt was made to give them proper stage presentation; but the conditions of the theatre in England, and it may be said also Tennyson's too archaic conception of treatment, seemed to stand in the way of anything like popular recognition.

In 1884 the Queen raised him to the peerage, to which twice before he had been invited, and he became Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Farringford. The elevation was in the direct line of English tradition, and the nobility of the kingdom was enriched by his succession. He continued to publish until his death. Indeed, the final volume of his poems was in press at the time of his death, which occurred October 7, 1892. He was buried in the 'Poet's Corner' of Westminster Abbey, on the 12th of the same month.

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TO THE QUEEN

*Revered, beloved — O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria, — since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;*

*And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there ;*

*Then — while a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throistle calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes —*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;
For tho' the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,*

*And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day !
May children of our children say,
' She wrought her people lasting good ;*

*' Her court was pure ; her life serene ;
God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;*

*' And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet*

*' By shaping some august decree
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad-based upon her people's will,
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.'*

March, 1851.

JUVENILIA

CLARIBEL

A MELODY

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall;
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone;
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the moss'd headstone;
At midnight the moon cometh,
And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The callow throstle lispeth,
The slumbrons wave outwelleth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth.

NOTHING WILL DIE

WHEN will the stream be aweary of flow-
ing
Under my eye ?

When will the wind be aweary of blowing
Over the sky ?
When will the clouds be aweary of fleeting ?
When will the heart be aweary of beating ?
And nature die ?
Never, O, never, nothing will die;
The stream flows,
The wind blows,
The cloud fleets,
The heart beats,
Nothing will die.

Nothing will die;
All things will change
Thro' eternity.
'T is the world's winter;
Autumn and summer
Are gone long ago;
Earth is dry to the centre,
But spring, a new comer,
A spring rich and strange,
Shall make the winds blow
Round and round,
Thro' and thro',
Here and there,
Till the air
And the ground
Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made;
It will change, but it will not fade.
So let the wind range;
For even and morn
Ever will be
Thro' eternity.
Nothing was born;
Nothing will die;
All things will change.

ALL THINGS WILL DIE

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its flowing

Under my eye;

Warmly and broadly the south winds are blowing

Over the sky.

One after another the white clouds are fleeting;

Every heart this May morning in joyance is beating

Full merrily;

Yet all things must die.

The stream will cease to flow;

The wind will cease to blow;

The clouds will cease to fleet;

The heart will cease to beat;

For all things must die.

All things must die.

Spring will come never more.

O, vanity!

Death waits at the door.

See! our friends are all forsaking

The wine and the merrymaking.

We are call'd — we must go.

Laid low, very low,

In the dark we must lie.

The merry glees are still;

The voice of the birds

Shall no more be heard,

Nor the wind on the hill.

O, misery!

Hark! death is calling

While I speak to ye,

The jaw is falling,

The red cheek paling,

The strong limbs failing;

Ice with the warm blood-mixing;

The eyeballs fixing.

Nine times goes the passing bell:

Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth

Had a birth,

As all men know,

Long ago.

And the old earth must die.

So let the warm winds range,

And the blue wave beat the shore;

For even and morn

Ye will never see

Thro' eternity.

All things were born.

Ye will come never more,

For all things must die.

LEONINE ELEGIACS

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming the broad valley dimm'd in the gloaming;

Thoro' the black-stemm'd pines' only the far river shines.

Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and bowers of rose-blowing bushes,

Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble and fall.

Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly; the grasshopper carollethe clearly;

Deeply the wood-dove coos; shrilly the owl hallooos;

Winds creep; dews fall chilly: in her first sleep earth breathes stilly:

Over the pools in the burn water-gnats murmur and mourn.

Sadly the far kine loweth; the glimmering water outfloweth;

Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope to the dark hyaline.

Low-throned Hesper is stayed between the two peaks; but the Naiad

Throbbing in mild unrest holds him beneath in her breast.

The ancient poetess singeth that Hesperus all things bringeth,

Smoothing the wearied mind: bring me my love, Rosalind.

Thou comest morning or even; she cometh not morning or even.

False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my sweet Rosalind?

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND

O GOD! my God! have mercy now.

I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou

Didst die for me, for such as *me*,

Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,

And that my sin was as a thorn.

Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,

Wounding Thy soul. — That even now,

In this extremest misery
 Of ignorance, I should require
 A sign ! and if a bolt of fire 10
 Would rive the slumbrous summer noon
 While I do pray to Thee alone,
 Think my belief would stronger grow !
 Is not my human pride brought low ?
 The boastings of my spirit still ?
 The joy I had in my free-will
 All cold, and dead, and corpse-like grown ?
 And what is left to me but Thou,
 And faith in Thee ? Men pass me by ;
 Christians with happy countenances — 20
 And children all seem full of Thee !
 And women smile with saint-like glances
 Like Thine own mother's when she bow'd
 Above Thee, on that happy morn
 When angels spake to men aloud,
 And Thou and peace to earth were born.
 Good-will to me as well as all —
 I one of them ; my brothers they ;
 Brothers in Christ — a world of peace
 And confidence, day after day ; 30
 And trust and hope till things should cease,
 And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith !
 To hold a common scorn of death !
 And at a burial to hear
 The creaking cords which wound and eat
 Into my human heart, whene'er
 Earth goes to earth, with grief, not fear,
 With hopeful grief, were passing sweet !

Thrice happy state again to be 40
 The trustful infant on the knee,
 Who lets his rosy fingers play
 About his mother's neck, and knows
 Nothing beyond his mother's eyes !
 They comfort him by night and day ;
 They light his little life alway ;
 He hath no thought of coming woes ;
 He hath no care of life or death ;
 Scarce outward signs of joy arise,
 Because the Spirit of happiness 50
 And perfect rest so inward is ;
 And loveth so his innocent heart,
 Her temple and her place of birth,
 Where she would ever wish to dwell,
 Life of the fountain there, beneath
 Its salient springs, and far apart,
 Hating to wander out on earth,
 Or breathe into the hollow air,

Whose chillness would make visible
 Her subtil, warm, and golden breath, 60
 Which mixing with the infant's blood,
 Fulfils him with beatitude.
 O, sure it is a special care
 Of God, to fortify from doubt,
 To arm in proof, and guard about
 With triple-mailed trust, and clear
 Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were
 As thine, my mother, when with brows
 Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld 70
 In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,
 For me outpour'd in holiest prayer —
 For me unworthy ! — and beheld
 Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew
 The beauty and repose of faith,
 And the clear spirit shining thro' .
 O, wherefore do we grow awry
 From roots which strike so deep ? why dare
 Paths in the desert ? Could not I
 Bow myself down, where thou hast knelt,
 To the earth — until the ice would melt 81
 Here, and I feel as thou hast felt ?
 What devil had the heart to scathe
 Flowers thou hadst rear'd — to brush the
 dew

From thine own lily, when thy grave
 Was deep, my mother, in the clay ?
 Myself ? Is it thus ? Myself ? Had I
 So little love for thee ? But why
 Prevail'd not thy pure prayers ? Why
 pray

To one who heeds not, who can save 90
 But will not ? Great in faith, and strong
 Against the grief of circumstance
 Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if
 Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive
 Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,
 Unpiloted i' the echoing dance
 Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low
 Unto the death, not sunk ! I know
 At matins and at evensong,
 That thou, if thou wert yet alive, 100
 In deep and daily prayers wouldst strive
 To reconcile me with thy God.
 Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold
 At heart, thou wouldst murmur still —
 ' Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,
 My Lord, if so it be Thy will.'
 Wouldst tell me I must brook the rod
 And chastisement of human pride ;

That pride, the sin of devils, stood
 Betwixt me and the light of God ; 110
 That hitherto I had defied
 And had rejected God — that grace
 Would drop from His o'er-brimming love,
 As manna on my wilderness,
 If I would pray — that God would move
 And strike the hard, hard rock, and thence,
 Sweet in their utmost bitterness,
 Would issue tears of penitence
 Which would keep green hope's life. Alas !
 I think that pride hath now no place 120
 Nor sojourn in me. I am void,
 Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then ? Why not yet
 Anchor thy frailty there, where man
 Hath moor'd and rested ? Ask the sea
 At midnight, when the crisp slope waves
 After a tempest rib and fret
 The broad-imbased beach, why he
 Slumbers not like a mountain tarn ?
 Wherefore his ridges are not curls 130
 And ripples of an inland mere ?
 Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can
 Draw down into his vexed pools
 All that blue heaven which hucs and paves
 The other ? I am too forlorn,
 Too shaken: my own weakness fools
 My judgment, and my spirit whirls,
 Moved from beneath with doubt and fear.

' Yet,' said I, in my morn of youth,
 The unsunn'd freshness of my strength, 140
 When I went forth in quest of truth,
 ' It is man's privilege to doubt,
 If so be that from doubt at length
 Truth may stand forth unremoved of change,
 An image with profnlgent brows
 And perfect limbs, as from the storm
 Of running fires and fluid range
 Of lawless airs, at last stood out
 This excellence and solid form
 Of constant beauty. For the ox 150
 Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills
 The horned valleys all about,
 And hollows of the fringed hills
 In summer heats, with placid lows
 Unfearing, till his own blood flows
 About his hoof. And in the flocks
 The lamb rejoiceth in the year,
 And raceth freely with his fere,
 And answers to his mother's calls
 From the flower'd furrow. In a time 160

Of which he wots not, run short pains
 Thro' his warm heart; and then, from
 whence

He knows not, on his light there falls
 A shadow; and his native slope,
 Where he was wont to leap and climb,
 Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,
 And something in the darkness draws
 His forehead earthward, and he dies.
 Shall man live thus, in joy and hope
 As a young lamb, who cannot dream, 170
 Living, but that he shall live on ?
 Shall we not look into the laws
 Of life and death, and things that seem,
 And things that be, and analyze
 Our double nature, and compare
 All creeds till we have found the one,
 If one there be ? ' Ay me ! I fear
 All may not doubt, but everywhere
 Some must clasp idols. Yet, my God,
 Whom call I idol ? Let Thy dove 180
 Shadow me over, and my sins
 Be unremember'd, and Thy love
 Enlighten me. O, teach me yet
 Somewhat before the heavy clod
 Weighs on me, and the busy fret
 Of that sharp-headed worm begins
 In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life ! O weary death !
 O spirit and heart made desolate !
 O damned vacillating state ! 190

THE KRAKEN

BELOW the thunders of the upper deep,
 Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
 His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
 The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights
 flee
 About his shadowy sides; above him swell
 Huge sponges of millennial growth and
 height;
 And far away into the sickly light,
 From many a wondrous grot and secret
 cell
 Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
 Winnow with giant arms the slumbering
 green.
 There hath he lain for ages, and will lie
 Battening upon huge sea-worms in his
 sleep,

Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;
Then once by man and angels to be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface
die.

SONG

THE winds, as at their hour of hirth,
Leaning upon the ridged sea,
Breathed low around the rolling earth
With mellow preludes, 'We are free.'

The streams, through many a liliated row
Down-carolling to the crisped sea,
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
Atween the blossoms, 'We are free.'

LILIAN

I

AIRY, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me,
Claps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can;
She 'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

II

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs,
She, looking thro' and thro' me
Thoroughly to undo me,
Smiling, never speaks:
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
From beneath her gathered wimple
Glancing with black-headed eyes,
Till the lightning laughs dimple
The baby-roses in her cheeks;
Then away she flies.

III

Prythee weep, May Lilian!
Gaiety without eclipse
Wearieth me, May Lilian;
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth
When from crimson-threaded lips
Silver-treble laughter trilleth:
Prythee weep, May Lilian!

IV

Praying all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lilian,
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
Fairy Lilian.

ISABEL

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright, but
fed

With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent
fane

Of her still spirit; locks not wide-dispread,
Madonna-wise on either side her head;
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did
reign

The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowli-
head.

The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part
Error from crime; a prudence to with-
hold;
The laws of marriage character'd in
gold

Upon the blanched tablets of her heart;
A love still burning upward, giving light
To read those laws; an accent very low
In blandishment, but a most silver flow
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
Right to the heart and brain, tho' unde-
seried,

Winning its way with extreme gentle-
ness
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride;
A courage to endure and to obey;
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most perfect
wife.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon;
A clear stream flowing with a muddy
one,

Till in its onward current it absorbs
 With swifter movement and in purer
 light
 The vexed eddies of its wayward bro-
 ther;
 A leaning and upbearing parasite,
 Clothing the stem, which else had
 fallen quite
 With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial
 orbs
 Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each
 other —
 Shadow forth thee:—the world hath
 not another
 (Tho' all her fairest forms are types of
 thee,
 And thou of God in thy great charity)
 Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

MARIANA

'Mariana in the moated grange.'
Measure for Measure.

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots
 Were thickly crusted, one and all;
 The rusted nails fell from the knots
 That held the pear to the gable-wall.
 The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
 Unlifted was the clinking latch;
 Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
 Upon the lonely moated grange.
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said; 10
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!'

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
 Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
 She could not look on the sweet heaven,
 Either at morn or eventide.
 After the fitting of the bats,
 When thickest dark did trance the sky,
 She drew her casement-curtain by,
 And glanced athwart the glooming flats. 20
 She only said, 'The night is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!'

Upon the middle of the night,
 Waking she heard the night-fowl crow;
 The cock sung out an hour ere light;
 From the dark fen the oxen's low

Came to her; without hope of change,
 In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn, 30
 Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed moru
 About the lonely moated grange.
 She only said, 'The day is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!'

About a stone-cast from the wall
 A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
 And o'er it many, round and small,
 The cluster'd marsh-mosses crept. 40
 Hard by a poplar shook away,
 All silver-green with gnarled bark:
 For leagues no other tree did mark
 The level waste, the rounding gray.
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!'

And ever when the moon was low,
 And the shrill winds were up and away,
 In the white curtain, to and fro, 51
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.
 But when the moon was very low,
 And wild winds bound within their cell,
 The shadow of the poplar fell
 Upon her bed, across her brow.
 She only said, 'The night is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!'

All day within the dreamy house,
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
 The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
 Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
 Or from the crevice peer'd about.
 Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
 Old voices called her from without.
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said; 70
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound
 Which to the wooing wind aloof
 The poplar made, did all confound
 Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
 When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
 Athwart the chambers, and the day

Was sloping toward his western bower. 80
 Then said she, 'I am very dreary,
 He will not come,' she said;
 She wept, 'I am weary, weary,
 O God, that I were dead !'

TO —

I

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful scorn,
 Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain
 The knots that tangle human creeds,
 The wounding cords that bind and strain
 The heart until it bleeds,
 Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
 Roof not a glance so keen as thine;
 If aught of prophecy be mine,
 Thou wilt not live in vain.

II

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit;
 Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow;
 Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now
 With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.
 Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant swords
 Can do away that ancient lie;
 A gentler death shall Falsehood die,
 Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words.

III

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,
 Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,
 Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
 Until she be an athlete bold,
 And weary with a finger's touch
 Those writhed limbs of lightning speed;
 Like that strange angel which of old,
 Until the breaking of the light,
 Wrestled with wandering Israel,
 Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,
 And heaven's mazed signs stood still
 In the dim tract of Penuel.

MADELINE

I

THOU art not steep'd in golden languors,
 No tranced summer calm is thine,
 Ever varying Madeline.
 Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,
 Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
 Delicious spites and darling angers,
 And airy forms of flitting change.

II

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
 Thou art perfect in love-lore.
 Revealings deep and clear are thine
 Of wealthy smiles; but who may know
 Whether smile or frown be fleetest?
 Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
 Who may know?
 Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
 Light-glooming over eyes divine,
 Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,
 Ever varying Madeline.
 Thy smile and frown are not aloof
 From one another,
 Each to each is dearest brother;
 Hues of the silken sheeny woof
 Momently shot into each other.
 All the mystery is thine;
 Smiling, frowning, evermore,
 Thou art perfect in love-lore,
 Ever varying Madeline.

III

A subtle, sudden flame,
 By veering passion fann'd,
 About thee breaks and dances:
 When I would kiss thy hand,
 The flush of anger'd shame
 O'erflows thy calmer glances,
 And o'er black brows drops down
 A sudden-curved frown:
 But when I turn away,
 Thou, willing me to stay,
 Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest,
 But, looking fixedly the while,
 All my bounding heart entanglest
 In a golden-netted smile;
 Then in madness and in bliss,
 If my lips should dare to kiss
 Thy taper fingers amorously,
 Again thou blushest angrily;
 And o'er black brows drops down
 A sudden-curved frown.

SONG — THE OWL

I

WHEN cats run home and light is come,
 And dew is cold upon the ground,
 And the far-off stream is dumb,
 And the whirring sail goes round,
 And the whirring sail goes round;
 Alone and warming his five wits,
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

II

When merry milkmaids clik the latch,
 And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
 And the cock bath sung beneath the thatch
 Twice or thrice his roundelay,
 Twice or thrice his roundelay;
 Alone and warming his five wits,
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG

TO THE SAME

I

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,
 Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
 Which upon the dark afloat,
 So took echo with delight,
 So took echo with delight,
 That her voice, untuneful grown,
 Wears all day a fainter tone.

II

I would mock thy chaunt anew;
 But I cannot mimic it;
 Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
 With a lengthen'd loud halloo,
 Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o!

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE
ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew
 free
 In the silken sail of infancy,
 The tide of time flow'd back with me,
 The forward-flowing tide of time;
 And many a sheeny summer-morn,
 Adown the Tigris I was borne,
 By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
 High-walled gardens green and old;
 True Mussulman was I and sworn,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
 The low and bloomed foliage, drove
 The fragrant, glistening deeps, and cleve
 The citron-shadows in the blue;

By garden porches on the brim,
 The costly doors flung open wide,
 Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
 And broider'd sofas on each side.

In sooth it was a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard
 The outlet, did I turn away
 The boat-head down a broad canal
 From the main river sluiced, where all
 The sloping of the moonlit sward
 Was damask-work, and deep inlay
 Of braided blooms unmown, which crept
 Adown to where the water slept.

A goodly place, a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motiou from the river won
 Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
 My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,
 Until another night in night
 I enter'd, from the clearer light,
 Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
 Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb
 Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome
 Of hollow boughs. A goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal
 Is rounded to as clear a lake.
 From the green rivage many a fall
 Of diamond rillets musical,
 Thro' little crystal arches low
 Down from the central fountain's flow
 Fallen silver-chiming, seemed to shake
 The sparkling flints beneath the prow.
 A goodly place, a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn
 A walk with vari-colored shells
 Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
 All round about the fragrant marge
 From fluted vase, and brazen urn
 In order, eastern flowers large,
 Some dropping low their crimson bells
 Half-closed, and others studded wide
 With disks and tiars, fed the time
 With oder in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove
 In closest coverture upsprung,
 The living airs of middle night
 Died round the bulbul as he sung; 70
 Not he, hut something which possess'd
 The darkness of the world, delight,
 Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
 Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,
 Apart from place, withholding time,
 But flattering the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
 Slumber'd; the solemn palms were ranged
 Above, unwoo'd of summer wind; 80
 A sudden splendor from behind
 Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,
 And, flowing rapidly between
 Their interspaces, counterchanged
 The level lake with diamond-plots
 Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
 Distinct with vivid stars inlaid, 90
 Grew darker from that under-flame;
 So, leaping lightly from the boat,
 With silver anchor left afloat,
 In marvel whence that glory came
 Upon me, as in sleep I sank
 In cool soft turf upon the bank,
 Entranced with that place and time,
 So worthy of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn —
 A realm of pleasance, many a mound, 101
 And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
 Full of the city's stilly sound,
 And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round
 The stately cedar, tamarisks,
 Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
 Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
 Graven with emblems of the time,
 In honor of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid. 110

With dazed vision unawares
 From the long alley's latticed shade
 Emerged, I came upon the great
 Pavilion of the Caliphat.
 Right to the carven cedarn doors,
 Flung inward over spangled floors,
 Broad-based flights of marble stairs

Ran up with golden balustrade,
 After the fashion of the time,
 And humor of the golden prime 120
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
 As with the quintessence of flame,
 A million tapers flaring bright
 From twisted silvers look'd to shame
 The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd
 Upon the mooned domes aloof
 In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
 Hundreds of crescents on the roof
 Of night new-risen, that marvellous time
 To celebrate the golden prime 131
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
 Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
 Serene with argent-lidded eyes
 Amorous, and lashes like to rays
 Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
 Tressed with redolent ebony,
 In many a dark delicious curl,
 Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone; 140
 The sweetest lady of the time,
 Well worthy of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
 Pure silver, underpropt a rich
 Throne of the massive ore, from which
 Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,
 Engarlanded and diaper'd
 With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.
 Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd 150
 With merriment of kingly pride,
 Sole star of all that place and time,
 I saw him — in his golden prime,
 THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

ODE TO MEMORY

ADDRESSED TO —

I

THOU who stealest fire,
 From the fountains of the past,
 To glorify the present, O, haste,
 Visit my low desire!
 Strengthen me, enlighten me!
 I faint in this obscurity,
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II

Come not as thou camest of late,
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight
 On the white day, but robed in soften'd
 light 10

Of orient state.
 Whilome thou camest with the morning
 mist,

Even as a maid, whose stately brow
 The dew-pearled winds of dawn have
 kiss'd,

When she, as thou,
 Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight
 Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots
 Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,
 Which in wintertide shall star
 The black earth with brilliance rare. 20

III

Whilome thou camest with the morning
 mist,

And with the evening cloud,
 Showering thy gleaned wealth into my
 open breast;

Those peerless flowers which in the rudest
 wind

Never grow sere,
 When rooted in the garden of the mind,
 Because they are the earliest of the year.

Nor was the night thy shroud.
 In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest
 Thou leddest by the hand thine infant
 Hope. 30

The eddying of her garments caught from
 thee

The light of thy great presence; and the
 cope

Of the half-attain'd futurity,
 Tho' deep not fathomless,
 Was cloven with the million stars which
 tremble

O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.
 Small thought was there of life's distress;
 For sure she deem'd no mist of earth could
 dull

Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and
 beautiful;

Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres, 40
 Listening the lordly music flowing from
 The illimitable years.

O, strengthen me, enlighten me!
 I faint in this obscurity,
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,
 Thou of the many tongues, the myriad
 eyes!

Thou comest not with shows of flaunting
 viues

Unto mine inner eye,
 Divinest Memory! 50

Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall
 Which ever sounds and shines

A pillar of white light upon the wall
 Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:
 Come from the woods that belt the gray
 hillside,

The seven elms, the poplars four
 That stand beside my father's door,
 And chiefly from the brook that loves
 To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,
 Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves, 60
 Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,

In every elbow and turn,
 The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland;
 O, hither lead thy feet!

Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat
 Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled
 folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,
 When the first matin-song hath waken'd
 loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
 What time the amber morn 70
 Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung
 cloud.

V

Large dowries doth the raptured eye
 To the young spirit present

When first she is wed,
 And like a bride of old

In triumph led,
 With music and sweet showers
 Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway.
 Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,
 In setting round thy first experiment 81

With royal framework of wrought
 gold;

Needs must thou dearly love thy first
 essay,

And foremost in thy various gallery
 Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls
 Upon the storied walls;

For the discovery

And newness of thine art so pleased thee
 That all which thou hast drawn of fairest
 Or boldest since but lightly weighs ⁹⁰
 With thee unto the love thou hearest
 The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,
 Ever retiring thou dost gaze
 On the prime labor of thine early days,
 No matter what the sketch might be:
 Whether the high field on the bushless
 pike,

Or even a sand-built ridge
 Of heaped hills that mound the sea,
 Overblown with murmurs harsh,
 Or even a lowly cottage whence we see ¹⁰⁰
 Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous
 marsh,

Where from the frequent bridge,
 Like emblems of infinity,
 The trenched waters run from sky to sky;
 Or a garden bower'd close
 With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,
 Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,
 Or opening upon level plots
 Of crowned lilies, standing near
 Purple-spiked lavender: ¹¹⁰

Whither in after life retired
 From brawling storms,
 From weary wind,
 With youthful fancy re-inspired,
 We may hold converse with all forms
 Of the many-sided mind,
 And those whom passion hath not blinded,
 Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone ¹²⁰
 Were how much better than to own
 A crown, a sceptre, and a throne!

O, strengthen me, enlighten me!
 I faint in this obscurity,
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

SONG

I

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours
 Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers.
 To himself he talks;
 For at eventide, listening earnestly,
 At his work you may hear him sob and
 sigh
 In the walks;
 Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
 Of the mouldering flowers.

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
 As a sick man's room when he taketh
 repose

An hour before death;
 My very heart faints and my whole soul
 grieves

At the moist rich smell of the rotting
 leaves,
 And the breath

Of the fading edges of box beneath,
 And the year's last rose.

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

A CHARACTER

WITH a half-glance upon the sky
 At night he said, 'The wanderings
 Of this most intricate Universe
 Teach me the nothingness of things;'
 Yet could not all creation pierce
 Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty: that the dull
 Saw no divinity in grass,
 Life in dead stones, or spirit in air;
 Then looking as 't were in a glass,
 He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,
 And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtne: not the gods
 More purely when they wish to charm
 Pallas and Juno sitting by;
 And with a sweeping of the arm,
 And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
 Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
 He canvass'd human mysteries,
 And trod on silk, as if the winds
 Blew his own praises in his eyes,
 And stood aloof from other minds
 In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
 Himself unto himself he sold:

Upon himself himself did feed;
 Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
 And other than his form of creed,
 With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

THE POET

THE poet in a golden clime was born,
 With golden stars above;
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn
 of scorn,
 The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and
 ill,
 He saw thro' his own soul.
 The marvel of the everlasting will,
 An open scroll,

Before him lay; with echoing feet he
 threaded
 The secretest walks of fame:
 The viewless arrows of his thoughts were
 headed
 And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver
 tongue,
 And of so fierce a flight,
 From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
 Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
 Them earthward till they lit;
 Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field
 flower,
 The fruitful wit

Cleaving took root, and springing forth
 anew
 Where'er they fell, behold,
 Like to the mother plant in semblance,
 grew
 A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling
 The winged shafts of truth,
 To throng with stately blooms the breath-
 ing spring
 Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with
 beams,
 Tho' one did fling the fire;

Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many
 dreams
 Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the
 world
 Like one great garden show'd,
 And thro' the wreaths of floating dark up-
 curl'd,
 Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
 Her beautiful bold brow,
 When rites and forms before his burning
 eyes
 Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
 Sunn'd by those orient skies;
 But round about the circles of the globes
 Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in
 flame
 WISDOM, a name to shake
 All evil dreams of power — a sacred name.
 And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
 And as the lightning to the thunder
 Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
 Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No
 sword
 Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
 But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his*
 word
 She shook the world.

THE POET'S MIND

I

VEX not thou the poet's mind
 With thy shallow wit;
 Vex not thou the poet's mind,
 For thou canst not fathom it.
 Clear and bright it should be ever,
 Flowing like a crystal river,
 Bright as light, and clear as wind.

II

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear;
 All the place is holy ground;

Hollow smile and frozen sneer
 Come not here.
 Holy water will I pour
 Into every spicy flower
 Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.
 The flowers would faint at your cruel
 cheer.

In your eye there is death,
 There is frost in your breath
 Which would blight the plants.
 Where you stand you cannot hear
 From the groves within
 The wild-bird's din.
 In the heart of the garden the merry bird
 chants.

It would fall to the ground if you came in.
 In the middle leaps a fountain
 Like sheet lightning,
 Ever brightening

With a low melodious thunder;
 All day and all night it is ever drawn
 From the brain of the purple mountain
 Which stands in the distance yonder.

It springs on a level of bowery lawn,
 And the mountain draws it from heaven
 above,

And it sings a song of undying love;
 And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and
 full,

You never would hear it, your ears are so
 dull;

So keep where you are ; you are foul with
 sin;

It would shrink to the earth if you came
 in.

THE SEA-FAIRIES

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and saw,
 Betwixt the green brink and the running
 foam,

Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms
 prest

To little harps of gold; and while they
 mused,

Whispering to each other half in fear,
 Shrill music reach'd them on the middle
 sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither
 away? fly no more.

Whither away from the high green field,
 and the happy blossoming shore?

Day and night to the billow the fountain
 calls;

Down shower the gambolling waterfalls 10
 From wandering over the lea;

Out of the live-green heart of the dells
 They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,
 And tick with white bells the clover-hill
 swells

High over the full-toned sea.
 O, hither, come hither and furl your sails,
 Come hither to me and to me;
 Hither, come hither and frolic and play;
 Here it is only the mew that wails;
 We will sing to you all the day. 20

Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
 For here are the blissful dows and dales,
 And merrily, merrily carol the gales,
 And the spangle dances in bight and bay,
 And the rainbow forms and flies on the
 land

Over the islands free;
 And the rainbow lives in the curve of the
 sand;

Hither, come hither and see;
 And the rainbow hangs on the poisoning
 wave,

And sweet is the color of cove and cave, 30
 And sweet shall your welcome be.

O hither, come hither, and be our lords,
 For merry brides are we.

We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet
 words;

O, listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 With pleasure and love and jubilee.

O, listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 When the sharp clear twang of the golden
 chords

Runs up the ridged sea.
 Who can light on as happy a shore 40

All the world o'er, all the world o'er?
 Whither away? listen and stay; mariner,
 mariner, fly no more.

THE DESERTED HOUSE

I

LIFE and Thought have gone away
 Side by side,
 Leaving door and windows wide;
 Careless tenants they!

II

All within is dark as night:
In the windows is no light;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

III

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or thro' the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

IV

Come away; no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

V

Come away; for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell,
But in a city glorious —
A great and distant city — have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us !

THE DYING SWAN

I

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went. 10

II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky
Shone out their crowning snows.
One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far thro' the marish green and
still
The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and
yellow. 20

III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow. At first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and clear;
And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold; 30
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps
of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening
star.
And the creeping mosses and clambering
weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the sighing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing
bank,
And the silvery marish - flowers that
throng 40
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE

I

Now is done thy long day's work;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.
Let them rave.
Shadows of the silver bird
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

II

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.
Let them rave.
Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

III

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;
Chaunteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny ?
Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

IV

Crocodiles wept tears for thee;
The woodbine and eglatere
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.

Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

V

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,
Bramble roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.

Let them rave.

These in every shower creep
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

VI

The gold-eyed kingcups fine,
The frail bluebell peereth over
Rare broidery of the purple clover.

Let them rave.

Kings have no such couch as thine,
As the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

VII

Wild words wander here and there;
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused;

But let them rave.

The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

LOVE AND DEATH

WHAT time the mighty moon was gather-
ing light

Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,
And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes;
When, turning round a cassia, full in view,
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,
And talking to himself, first met his sight.
'You must begone,' said Death, 'these
walks are mine.'

Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for
flight;

Yet ere he parted said, 'This hour is thine;

Thou art the shadow of life, and as the
tree

Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,
So in the light of great eternity
Life eminent creates the shade of death.
The shadow passeth when the tree shall
fall,

But I shall reign for ever over all.'

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

MY heart is wasted with my woe,

Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,

Oriana.

When the long dunn wolds are ribb'd with
snow,

And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,

Oriana,

Alone I wander to and fro,

Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,

Oriana,

At midnight the cock was crowing,

Oriana;

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,

We heard the steeds to battle going,

Oriana,

Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,

Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,

Oriana,

Ere I rode into the fight,

Oriana,

While blissful tears blinded my sight

By star-shine and by moonlight,

Oriana,

I to thee my troth did plight,

Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,

Oriana;

She watch'd my crest among them all,

Oriana;

She saw me fight, she heard me call,

When forth there stept a foeman tall,

Oriana,

Atween me and the castle wall,

Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,

Oriana;

The false, false arrow went aside,
 Oriana; 40

The damned arrow glanced aside,
 And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,
 Oriana!

Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
 Oriana!

O, narrow, narrow was the space,
 Oriana!

Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,
 Oriana.

O, deathful stabs were dealt apace, 50
 The battle deepen'd in its place,
 Oriana;

But I was down upon my face,
 Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,
 Oriana!

How could I rise and come away,
 Oriana?

How could I look upon the day?
 They should have stabb'd me where I lay,
 Oriana — 61

They should have trod me into clay,
 Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,
 Oriana!

O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
 Oriana!

Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,
 And then the tears run down my cheek,
 Oriana. 70

What warest thou? whom dost thou seek,
 Oriana?

I cry aloud; none hear my cries,
 Oriana.

Thou comest between me and the skies,
 Oriana.

I feel the tears of blood arise
 Up from my heart unto my eyes,
 Oriana.

Within thy heart my arrow lies, 80
 Oriana.

O cursed hand! O cursed blow!
 Oriana!

O happy thou that liest low,
 Oriana!

All night the silence seems to flow
 Beside me in my utter woe,
 Oriana.

A weary, weary way I go,
 Oriana! 90

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,
 Oriana,

I walk, I dare not think of thee,
 Oriana.

Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,
 I dare not die and come to thee,
 Oriana.

I hear the roaring of the sea,
 Oriana.

CIRCUMSTANCE

Two children in two neighbor villages
 Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas;
 Two strangers meeting at a festival;
 Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall;
 Two lives bound fast in one with golden
 ease;

Two graves grass-green beside a gray
 church-tower,
 Wash'd with still rains and daisy-blos-
 somed;

Two children in one hamlet born and bred:
 So runs the round of life from hour to
 hour.

THE MERMAN

I

WHO would be
 A merman bold,
 Sitting alone,
 Singing alone
 Under the sea,
 With a crown of gold,
 On a throne?

II

I would be a merman bold,
 I would sit and sing the whole of the day;
 I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of
 power;
 But at night I would roam abroad and
 play
 With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,
 Dressing their hair with the white sea-
 flower;
 And holding them back by their flowing
 locks
 I would kiss them often under the sea,

And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
 Laughingly, laughingly;
 And then we would wander away, away,
 To the pale-green sea-groves straight and
 high,
 Chasing each other merrily.

III

There would be neither moon nor star;
 But the wave would make music above us
 afar —
 Low thunder and light in the magic night —
 Neither moon nor star.
 We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,
 Call to each other and whoop and cry
 All night, merrily, merrily.
 They would pelt me with starry spangles
 and shells,
 Laughing and clapping their hands be-
 tween,
 All night, merrily, merrily,
 But I would throw to them back in mine
 Turkis and agate and almondine;
 Then leaping out upon them unseen
 I would kiss them often under the sea,
 And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
 Laughingly, laughingly.
 O, what a happy life were mine
 Under the hollow-hung ocean green!
 Soft are the moss-beds under the sea;
 We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID

I

WHO would be
 A mermaid fair,
 Singing alone,
 Combing her hair
 Under the sea,
 In a golden curl
 With a comb of pearl,
 On a throne?

II

I would be a mermaid fair;
 I would sing to myself the whole of the day;
 With a comb of pearl I would comb my
 hair;
 And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,
 'Who is it loves me? who loves not me?'
 I would comb my hair till my ringlets
 would fall
 Low adown, low adown,

From under my starry sea-bud crown
 Low adown and around,
 And I should look like a fountain of gold
 Springing alone
 With a shrill inner sound,
 Over the throne
 In the midst of the hall;
 Till that great sea-snake under the sea
 From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps
 Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
 Round the hall where I sat, and look in at
 the gate
 With his large calm eyes for the love of
 me.
 And all the mermen under the sea
 Would feel their immortality
 Die in their hearts for the love of me.

III

But at night I would wander away, away,
 I would fling on each side my low-flow-
 ing locks,
 And lightly vault from the throne and play
 With the mermen in and out of the
 rocks;
 We would run to and fro, and hide and
 seek,
 On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson
 shells,
 Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.
 But if any came near I would call, and
 shriek,
 And adown the steep like a wave I would
 leap
 From the diamond-ledges that jut from
 the dells;
 For I would not be kiss'd by all who would
 list
 Of the bold merry mermen under the sea.
 They would sue me, and woo me, and flat-
 ter me,
 In the purple twilights under the sea;
 But the king of them all would carry me,
 Woo me, and win me, and marry me,
 In the branching jaspers under the sea.
 Then all the dry pied things that be
 In the hueless mosses under the sea
 Would curl round my silver feet silently,
 All looking up for the love of me.
 And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
 All things that are forked, and horned, and
 soft
 Would lean out from the hollow sphere of
 the sea,
 All looking down for the love of me.

ADELINE

I

MYSTERY of mysteries,
Faintly smiling Adeline,
Scarce of earth nor all divine,
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
But beyond expression fair
With thy floating flaxen hair;
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
Take the heart from out my breast.
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

II

Whence that aery bloom of thine,
Like a lily which the sun
Looks thro' in his sad decline,
And a rose-bush leans upon,
Thou that faintly smilest still,
As a Naiad in a well,
Looking at the set of day,
Or a phantom two hours old
Of a maiden past away,
Ere the placid lips be cold ?
Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,
Spiritual Adeline ?

III

What hope or fear or joy is thine ?
Who talketh with thee, Adeline ?
For sure thou art not all alone.
Do heating hearts of salient springs
Keep measure with thine own ?
Hast thou heard the butterflies
What they say betwixt their wings ?
Or in stillest evenings
With what voice the violet woos
To his heart the silver dews ?
Or when little airs arise,
How the merry bluebell rings
To the mosses underneath ?
Hast thou look'd upon the breath
Of the lilies at sunrise ?
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

IV

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,
Some spirit of a crimson rose
In love with thee forgets to close
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs
All night long on darkness blind.
What aileth thee ? whom waitest thou

With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,
Thou faint smiler, Adeline ?

V

Lovest thou the doleful wind
When thou gazest at the skies ?
Doth the low-tongued Orient
Wander from the side of the morn,
Dripping with Sabæan spice
On thy pillow, lowly bent
With melodious airs lovelorn,
Breathing Light against thy face,
While his locks a-drooping twined
Round thy neck in subtle ring
Make a carcanet of rays,
And ye talk together still,
In the language wherewith Spring
Letters cowslips on the hill ?
Hence that look and smile of thine,
Spiritual Adeline.

MARGARET

I

O SWEET pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
What lit your eyes with tearful power,
Like moonlight on a falling shower ?
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower
Of pensive thought and aspect pale,
Your melancholy sweet and frail
As perfume of the cuckoo flower ?
From the westward-winding flood,
From the evening-lighted wood,
From all things outward you have
won
A tearful grace, as tho' you stood
Between the rainbow and the sun.
The very smile before you speak,
That dimpls your transparent cheek,
Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
The senses with a still delight
Of dainty sorrow without sound,
Like the tender amber round
Which the moon about her spreadeth,
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

II

You love, remaining peacefully,
To hear the murmur of the strife,

But enter not the toil of life.
 Your spirit is the calmed sea,
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.
 You are the evening star, alway
 Remaining betwixt dark and bright;
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day
 Come to you, gleams of mellow light
 Float by you on the verge of night.

III

What can it matter, Margaret,
 What songs below the waning stars
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,
 Sang looking thro' his prison bars?
 Exquisite Margaret, who can tell
 The last wild thought of Chatelet,
 Just ere the falling axe did part
 The burning brain from the true heart,
 Even in her sight he loved so well?

IV

A fairy shield your Genins made
 And gave you on your natal day.
 Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
 Keeps real sorrow far away.
 You move not in such solitudes,
 You are not less divine,
 But more human in your moods,
 Than your twin-sister, Adeline.
 Your hair is darker, and your eyes
 Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,
 And less acrially blue,
 But ever trembling thro' the dew
 Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

V

O sweet pale Margaret,
 O rare pale Margaret,
 Come down, come down, and hear me
 speak.
 Tie up the ringlets on your cheek.
 The sun is just about to set,
 The arching limes are tall and shady,
 And faint, rainy lights are seen,
 Moving in the leavy heech.
 Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,
 Where all day long you sit between
 Joy and woe, and whisper each.
 Or only look across the lawn,
 Look out below your hower-eaves,
 Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn
 Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

ROSALIND

I

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
 My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,
 Whose free delight, from any height of
 rapid flight,
 Stoops at all game that wing the skies,
 My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
 My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, whither,
 Careless both of wind and weather,
 Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,
 Up or down the streaming wind?

II

The quick lark's closest-carroll'd strains,
 The shadow rushing up the sea,
 The lightning flash atween the rains,
 The sunlight driving down the lea,
 The leaping stream, the very wind,
 That will not stay, upon his way,
 To stoop the cowslip to the plains,
 Is not so clear and bold and free
 As you, my falcon Rosalind.
 You care not for another's pains,
 Because you are the soul of joy,
 Bright metal all without alloy.
 Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,
 And flashes off a thousand ways,
 Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays.
 Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,
 Keen with triumph, watching still
 To pierce me thro' with pointed light;
 But oftentimes they flash and glitter
 Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
 And your words are seeming-bitter,
 Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
 From excess of swift delight.

III

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,
 My gay young hawk, my Rosalind.
 Too long you keep the upper skies;
 Too long you roam and wheel at will;
 But we must hood your random eyes,
 That care not whom they kill,
 And your cheek, whose brilliant hue
 Is so sparkling-fresh to view,
 Some red heath-flower in the dew,
 Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind
 And keep you fast, my Rosalind,
 Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,

And clip your wings, and make you love.
 When we have lured you from above,
 And that delight of frolic flight, by day or
 night,
 From North to South,
 We 'll bind you fast in silken cords,
 And kiss away the bitter words
 From off your rosy mouth.

ELEÄNORE

I

THY dark eyes open'd not,
 Nor first reveal'd themselves to English
 air,
 For there is nothing here
 Which, from the outward to the inward
 brought,
 Moulded thy baby thought.
 Far off from human neighborhood
 Thou wert born, on a summer morn,
 A mile beneath the cedar-wood.
 Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd
 With breezes from our oaken glades, 10
 But thou wert nursed in some delicious
 land
 Of lavish lights, and floating shades;
 And flattering thy childish thought
 The oriental fairy brought,
 At the moment of thy birth,
 From old well-heads of haunted rills,
 And the hearts of purple hills,
 And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,
 The choicest wealth of all the earth, 20
 Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
 To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

II

Or the yellow-banded bees,
 Thro' half-open lattices
 Coming in the scented breeze,
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
 With whitest honey in fairy gardens
 cull'd —
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,
 With the hum of swarming bees
 Into dreamful slumber lull'd. 30

III

Who may minister to thee ?
 Summer herself should minister

To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded
 On golden salvers, or it may be,
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower
 Grape-thicken'd from the light, and blinded
 With many a deep-hued bell-like flower
 Of fragrant trailers, when the air
 Sleepeth over all the heaven,
 And the crag that fronts the even, 40
 All along the shadowing shore,
 Crimsons over an inland mere,
 Eleänore !

IV

How may full-sail'd verse express,
 How may measured words adore
 The full-flowing harmony
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,
 Eleänore ?
 The luxuriant symmetry
 Of thy floating gracefulness, 50
 Eleänore ?
 Every turn and glance of thine,
 Every lineament divine,
 Eleänore,
 And the steady sunset glow
 That stays upon thee ? For in thee
 Is nothing sudden, nothing single;
 Like two streams of incense free
 From one censer in one shrine,
 Thought and motion mingle, 60
 Mingle ever. Motions flow
 To one another, even as tho'
 They were modulated so
 To an unheard melody,
 Which lives about thee, and a sweep
 Of richest pauses, evermore
 Drawn from each other mellow-deep;
 Who may express thee, Eleänore ?

V

I stand before thee, Eleänore;
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold, 70
 Daily and hourly, more and more.
 I muse, as in a trance, the while
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.
 I muse, as in a trance, when'er
 The languors of thy love-deep eyes
 Float on to me. I would I were
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
 To stand apart, and to adore,
 Gazing on thee for evermore, 80
 Serene, imperial Eleänore !

VI

Sometimes, with most intensity
 Gazing, I seem to see
 Thought folded over thought, smiling
 asleep,
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep
 In thy large eyes that, overpower'd quite,
 I cannot veil or droop my sight,
 But am as nothing in its light.
 As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,
 Even while we gaze on it,
 Should slowly round his orb, and slowly
 grow
 To a full face, there like a sun remain
 Fix'd — then as slowly fade again,
 And draw itself to what it was before;
 So full, so deep, so slow,
 Thought seems to come and go
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleånore.

VII

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
 Roof'd the world with doubt and fear,
 Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,
 Grow golden all about the sky;
 In thee all passion becomes passionless,
 Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,
 Losing his fire and active might
 In a silent meditation,
 Falling into a still delight,
 And luxury of contemplation.
 As waves that up a quiet cove
 Rolling slide, and lying still
 Shadow forth the banks at will,
 Or sometimes they swell and move,
 Pressing up against the land
 With motions of the outer sea;
 And the self-same influence
 Controlleth all the soul and sense
 Of Passiou gazing upon thee.
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
 Droops both his wings, regarding thee,
 And so would languish evermore,
 Serene, imperial Eleånore.

VIII

But when I see thee roam, with tresses un-
 confined,
 While the amorous odorous wiud
 Breathes low between the sunset and the
 moon;
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,

On silken cushions half reclined;
 I watch thy grace, and in its place
 My heart a charmed slumber keeps,
 While I muse upon thy face;
 And a languid fire creeps
 Thro' my veins to all my frame,
 Dissolvingly and slowly. Soon
 From thy rose-red lips my name
 Floweth; and then, as in a swoon,
 With dinning sound my ears are rife,
 My tremulous tongue faltereth,
 I lose my color, I lose my breath,
 I drink the cup of a costly death,
 Brimm'd with delirious draughts of warm-
 est life.
 I die with my delight before
 I hear what I would hear from
 thee;
 Yet tell my name again to me,
 I would be dying evermore,
 So dying ever, Eleånore.

KATE

I KNOW her by her angry air,
 Her bright black eyes, her bright black
 hair,
 Her rapid laughters wild and shrill,
 As laughters of the woodpecker
 From the bosom of a hill.
 'T is Kate — she sayeth what she will,
 For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,
 Clear as the twanging of a harp.
 Her heart is like a throbbing star.
 Kate hath a spirit ever strung
 Like a new bow, and bright and sharp
 As edges of the scimitar.
 Whence shall she take a fitting mate?
 For Kate no common love will feel;
 My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,
 As pure and true as blades of steel.

Kate saith 'the world is void of might.'
 Kate saith 'the men are gilded flies.'
 Kate snaps her fingers at my vows;
 Kate will not hear of lovers' sighs.
 I would I were an armed knight,
 Far-famed for well-won enterprise,
 And wearing on my swarthy brows
 The garland of new-wreathed emprise;
 For in a moment I would pierce
 The blackest files of clanging fight,
 And strongly strike to left and right,

In dreaming of my lady's eyes.

O, Kate loves well the bold and fierce;
But none are bold enough for Kate,
She cannot find a fitting mate.

'MY LIFE IS FULL OF WEARY
DAYS'

I

My life is full of weary days,
But good things have not kept aloof,
Nor wander'd into other ways;
I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,
Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink
Of that deep grave to which I go,
Shake hands once more; I cannot sink
So far — far down, but I shall know
Thy voice, and answer from below.

II

When in the darkness over me
The four-handed mole shall scrape,
Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,
Nor wreath thy cap with doleful crape,
But pledge me in the flowing grape.

And when the sappy field and wood
Grow green beneath the showery gray,
And rugged barks begin to bud,
And thro' damp bolts new-flush'd with
may,
Ring sudden scratches of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,
And on my clay her darnel grow;
Come only, when the days are still,
And at my headstone whisper low,
And tell me if the woodbines blow.

EARLY SONNETS

I

TO —

As when with downcast eyes we muse and
brood,
And ebb into a former life, or seem

To lapse far back in some confused dream
To states of mystical similitude,
If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,
Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,
So that we say, 'All this hath been before,
All this hath been, I know not when or
where;'

So, friend, when first I look'd upon your
face,
Our thought gave answer each to each, so
true —

Opposed mirrors each reflecting each —
That, tho' I knew not in what time or
place,

Methought that I had often met with you,
And either lived in either's heart and
speech.

II

TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee — thou wilt
be

A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
To scare church-barpies from the master's
feast;

Our dusted velvets have much need of
thee:

Thou art no Sabbath-drawler of old saws,
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd hom-
ily;

But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy
To embattail and to wall about thy cause
With iron-worded proof, hating to lark
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone
Half God's good Sabbath, while the worn-
out clerk

Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a
throne

Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and
mark.

III

MINE be the strength of spirit, full and
free,

Like some broad river rushing down alone,
With the selfsame impulse wherewith he
was thrown

From his loud fount upon the echoing
lea; —

Which with increasing might doth forward
flee

By town, and tower, and hill, and cape, and
isle,
And in the middle of the green salt sea
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a
mile.

Mine be the power which ever to its sway
Will win the wise at once, and by degrees
May into uncongenial spirits flow;
Even as the warm gulf-stream of Florida
Floats far away into the Northern seas
The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

IV

ALEXANDER

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right arm
debased
The throne of Persia, when her Satrap
bled

At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled
Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits, dis-
graced

For ever — thee (thy pathway sand-erased)
Gliding with equal crowns two serpents led
Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-fed
Ammonian Oasis in the waste.

There in a silent shade of laurel brown
Apart the Chamian Oracle divine
Shelter'd his unapproached mysteries:
High things were spoken there, unhandled
down;

Only they saw thee from the secret shrine
Returning with hot cheek and kindled eyes.

v

BUONAPARTE

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts of
oak,

Madman! — to chain with chains, and bind
with bands

That island queen who sways the floods and
lands

From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight
woke,

When from her wooden walls, — lit by sure
hands, —

With thunders, and with lightning, and
with smoke, —

Peal after peal, the British battle broke,
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.
We taught him lowlier moods, when Elsi-
nore

Heard the war moan along the distant sea,
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with sudden
fires

Flamed over; at Trafalgar yet once more
We taught him; late he learned humility
Perforce, like those whom Gideon school'd
with briers.

VI

POLAND

How long, O God, shall men be ridden
down,

And trampled under by the last and least
Of men? The heart of Poland hath not
ceased

To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth
drown

The fields, and out of every smouldering
town

Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be in-
creased,

Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East
Transgress his ample bound to some new
crown, —

Cries to Thee, 'Lord, how long shall these
things be?

How long this icy-hearted Muscovite
Oppress the 'region?' Us, O Just and
Good,

Forgive, who smiled when she was torn in
three;

Us, who stand now, when we should aid the
right —

A matter to be wept with tears of blood!

VII

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender hand,
And singing airy trifles this or that,
Light Hope at Beauty's call would perch
and stand,

And run thro' every change of sharp and
flat;

And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy
band,

And chased away the still-recurring gnat,
And woke her with a lay from fairy land.
But now they live with Beauty less and
less,

For Hope is other Hope and wanders far,
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious creeds;
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

VIII

THE form, the form alone is eloquent!
A nobler yearning never broke her rest
Than but to dance and sing, he gaily drest,
And win all eyes with all accomplishment;
Yet in the whirling dances as we went,
My fancy made me for a moment blest
To find my heart so near the beauteous
breast

That one had power to rob it of content.
A moment came the tenderness of tears,
The phantom of a wish that once could
move,

A ghost of passion that no smiles re-
store—

For ah! the slight coquette, she cannot
love,

And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand
years,

She still would take the praise, and care no
more.

IX

WAN Sculptor, weepst thou to take the
cast

Of those dead lineaments that near thee lie?
O, sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the
past,

In painting some dead friend from mem-
ory?

Weep on; beyond his object Love can
last.

His object lives; more cause to weep
have I:

My tears, no tears of love, are flowing fast,
No tears of love, but tears that Love can
die.

I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,
Nor care to sit beside her where she sits—

Ah! pity—hint it not in human tones,
But breathe it into earth and close it up

With secret death for ever, in the pits
Which some green Christmas crams with
weary bones.

X

IF I were loved, as I desire to be,
What is there in the great sphere of the
earth,

And range of evil between death and birth,
That I should fear,—if I were loved by
thee?

All the inner, all the outer world of pain
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou
wert mine,

As I have heard that, somewhere in the
main,

Fresh-water springs come up through bitter
brine.

'T were joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-hand
with thee,

To wait for death—mute—careless of all
ills,

Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the
gorge

Below us, as far on as eye could see.

XI

THE BRIDESMAID

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot was
tied,

Thine eyes so wept that they could hardly
see;

Thy sister smiled and said, 'No tears for
me!

A happy bridesmaid makes a happy bride.'
And then, the couple standing side by
side,

Love lighted down between them full of
glee,

And over his left shoulder laugh'd at
thee,

'O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride.'
And all at once a pleasant truth I learn'd,

For while the tender service made thee
weep,

I loved thee for the tear thou couldst not
hide,

And prest thy hand, and knew the press
return'd,

And thought, 'My life is sick of single
sleep:

O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride!'

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

AND OTHER POEMS

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

ON either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
 10 Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
 20 The shallop fitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
 30 From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot;
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers 'T is the fairy
 Lady of Shalott.'

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
 40 To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
 50 Winding down to Camelot;
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
 60 Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
 20 The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
 And music, went to Camelot;
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed:
 70 'I am half sick of shadows,' said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,

The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of hold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot;
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot;
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;

Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

80 And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance —
With a glassy countenance 130
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right —
The leaves upon her falling light —
Thro' the noises of the night 140
She floated down to Camelot;
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide 150
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame, 160
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

With one black shadow at its feet,
 The house thro' all the level shines,
 Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
 And silent in its dusty vines;
 A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
 An empty river-bed before,
 And shallows on a distant shore,
 In glaring sand and inlets bright.
 But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan, 9
 And 'Ave Mary,' night and morn,
 And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,
 From brow and bosom slowly down
 Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
 Her streaming curls of deepest brown
 To left and right, and made appear
 Still-lighted in a secret shrine
 Her melancholy eyes divine,
 The home of woe without a tear. 20
 And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,
 'Madonna, sad is night and morn,'
 And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

Till all the crimson changed, and past
 Into deep orange o'er the sea,
 Low on her knees herself she cast,
 Before Our Lady murmur'd she;
 Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace
 To help me of my weary load.' 30
 And on the liquid mirror glow'd
 The clear perfection of her face.
 'Is this the form,' she made her moan,
 'That won his praises night and
 morn?'
 And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake alone,
 I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn.'

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
 Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
 But day increased from heat to heat,
 On stony drought and steaming salt; 40
 Till now at noon she slept again,
 And seem'd knee-deep in mountain
 grass,
 And heard her native breezes pass,
 And runlets babbling down the glen.

She breathed in sleep a lower moan,
 And murmuring, as at night and
 morn,
 She thought, 'My spirit is here alone,
 Walks forgotten, and is forlorn.'

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream;
 She felt he was and was not there. 50
 She woke; the babble of the stream
 Fell, and, without, the steady glare
 Shrank one sick willow sere and small.
 The river-bed was dusty-white;
 And all the furnace of the light
 Struck up against the blinding wall.
 She whisper'd, with a stifled moan
 More inward than at night or morn,
 'Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
 Live forgotten and die forlorn.' 60

And, rising, from her bosom drew
 Old letters, breathing of her worth,
 For 'Love,' they said, 'must needs be true,
 To what is loveliest upon earth.'
 An image seem'd to pass the door,
 To look at her with slight, and say
 'But now thy beauty flows away,
 So be alone for evermore.'
 'O cruel heart,' she changed her tone,
 'And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
 Is this the end, to be left alone, 71
 To live forgotten, and die forlorn?'

But sometimes in the falling day
 An image seem'd to pass the door,
 To look into her eyes and say,
 'But thou shalt be alone no more.'
 And flaming downward over all
 From heat to heat the day decreased,
 And slowly rounded to the east
 The one black shadow from the wall. 80
 'The day to night,' she made her
 moan,
 'The day to night, the night to
 morn,
 And day and night I am left alone
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

At eve a dry cicala sung,
 There came a sound as of the sea;
 Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
 And lean'd upon the balcony.
 There all in spaces rosy-bright
 Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears, 90
 And deepening thro' the silent spheres
 Heaven over heaven rose the night.

And weeping then she made her
moan,
'The night comes on that knows not
morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forloru.'

THE TWO VOICES

A STILL small voice spake unto me,
'Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I said:
'Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply:
'To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil 10
Of his old husk; from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

'He dried his wings; like gauze they grew;
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew.'

I said: 'When first the world began,
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest 20
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast.'

Thereto the silent voice replied:
'Self-blinded are you by your pride;
Look up thro' night; the world is wide.

'This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

'Think you this mould of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres?' 30

It spake, moreover, in my mind:
'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall:
'No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly:
'Good soul! suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?

'Or will one beam be less intense, 40
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancel'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst not know,'
But my full heart, that work'd below,
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:
'Thou art so steep'd in misery,
Surely 't were better not to be.

'Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep; 50
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep.'

I said: 'The years with change advance;
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

'Some turn this sickness yet might take,
Even yet.' But he: 'What drug can make
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept: 'Tho' I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow; 60

'And men, thro' novel spheres of thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not.'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

'Not less swift souls that yearn for light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

'Not less the bee would range her cells, 70
The furzy prickle fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.'

I said that 'all the years invent;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

'Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower
How grows the day of human power?'

'The highest-mounted mind,' he said,
'Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.' 80

'Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?

'Or make that morn, from his cold crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?

'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.' 90

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

'T were better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

I said: 'When I am gone away, 100
"He dared not tarry," men will say,
Doing dishonor to my clay.'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,
'To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die.

'Sick art thou — a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

'Do men love thee? Art thou so bound
To men that how thy name may sound 110
Will vex thee lying underground?

'The memory of the wither'd leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garner'd autumn-sheaf.

'Go, vexed spirit, sleep in trust;
The right ear that is fill'd with dust
Hears little of the false or just.'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I cried,
'From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!' 120

'Nay — rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warm'd me in the days
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

'When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

'I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear —

'Waiting to strive a happy strife, 130
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life —

'Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and love —

'As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb about —

'To search thro' all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe, 140
And reach the law within the law;

'At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

'To pass, when Life her light withdraws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause —

'In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honor'd, known,
And like a warrior overthrown;' 150

'Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears:

'Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke,
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.'

'Yea!' said the voice, 'thy dream was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.'

- 'If Nature put not forth her power 160
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour ?
- 'Then comes the check, the change, the fall,
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.
- 'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,
Link'd month to month with such a chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.
- 'Thou hadst not between death and birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth. 170
So were thy labor little worth.
- 'That men with knowledge merely play'd,
I told thee — hardly nigher made,
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade;
- 'Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to find,
That hears relation to the mind.
- 'For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon. 180
- 'Cry, faint not: either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.
- 'Cry, faint not, climb: the summits slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrap in dense cloud from base to cope.
- 'Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.
- 'I will go forward, sayest thou, 190
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.
- 'If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost
 strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like;
- 'And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower
- 'Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl!
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl? 200
There is one remedy for all.'
- 'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die ?
- 'I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.
- 'I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven; 210
- 'Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream;
- 'But heard, by secret transport led,
Even in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head —
- 'Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.
- 'He heeded not reviling tones, 220
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised with
 stones;
- 'But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face.'
- The sullen answer slid betwixt:
'Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,
The elements were kindlier mix'd.'
- I said: 'I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe, 230
I fear to slide from bad to worse;
- 'And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new;
- 'Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unannacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix'd and frozen to permanence:
- 'For I go, weak from suffering here;
Naked I go, and void of cheer:
What is it that I may not fear?' 240
- 'Consider well,' the voice replied,
'His face, that two hours since hath died;
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

'Will he obey when one commands?
Or answer should one press his hands?
He answers not, nor understands.

'His palms are folded on his breast;
There is no other thing express'd
But long disquiet merged in rest.

'His lips are very mild and meek; 250
Tho' one should smite him on the cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

'His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonor to her race —

'His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honor, some to shame, —
But he is chill to praise or blame.

'He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave 260
From winter rains that heat his grave.

'High up the vapors fold and swim;
About him broods the twilight dim;
The place he knew forgetteth him.'

'If all be dark, vague voice,' I said,
'These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

'The sap dries up: the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not death? the outward signs? 270

'I found him when my years were few;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

'From grave to grave the shadow crept;
In her still place the morning wept;
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

'The simple senses crown'd his head:
"Omega! thou art Lord," they said,
"We find no motion in the dead!"

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease, 280
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,
Not make him sure that he shall cease?

'Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense?

'He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly;
His heart forebodes a mystery; 290
He names the name Eternity.

'That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.

'He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
And thro' thick veils to apprehend
A labor working to an end.

'The end and the beginning vex
His reason: many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counterchecks.

'He knows a baseness in his blood 300
At such strange war with something good,
He may not do the thing he would.

'Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

'Ah! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt,

'But thou canst answer not again. 310
With thine own weapon art thou slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

'The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve.'

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced:

'Where wert thou when thy father play'd
In his free field, and pastime made, 320
A merry boy in sun and shade?

'A merry boy they call'd him then,
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again;

'Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man:

' Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,
Whose troubles number with his days; 330

' A life of nothings, nothing worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth !'

' These words,' I said, ' are like the rest;
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast:

' But if I grant, thou mightst defend
The thesis which thy words intend —
That to begin implies to end;

' Yet how should I for certain hold, 340
Because my memory is so cold,
' That I first was in human mould ?

' I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

' It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

' As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await 350
The slipping thro' from state to state;

' As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again;

' So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch.

' But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace; 360

' Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of night;

' Or if thro' lower lives I came —
Tho' all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame —

' I might forget my weaker lot;
For is not our first year forgot ?
The haunts of memory echo not.

' And men, whose reason long was blind,
From cells of madness unconfined, 371
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

' Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory;

' For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime ?

' Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams, 380
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams —

' Of something felt, like something here;
Of something done, I know not where;
Such as no language may declare.'

The still voice laugh'd. ' I talk,' said he,
' Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality.'

' But thou,' said I, ' hast missed thy mark,
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,
By making all the horizon dark. 390

' Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might ensue
With this old soul in organs new ?

' Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly long'd for death.

' 'T is life, whereof our nerves are scant,
O, life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want.'

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn. 400
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
' Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest;
Passing the place where each must rest,
Each enter'd like a welcome guest. 411

One walk'd between his wife and child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walk'd demure,
Facing with downward eyelids pure. 420

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on;
I spoke, but answer came there none;
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighborhood, 430
A notice faintly understood,
'I see the end, and know the good.'

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
'I may not speak of what I know.'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes;

Such seem'd the whisper at my side:
'What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?'
I cried. 440

'A hidden hope,' the voice replied;

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent. 450

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers;
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along;
The woods were fill'd so full with song,
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong;

And all so variously wrought,
I marvell'd how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice 460
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, 'Rejoice! Rejoice!'

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,
Seem'd half-within and half-without,
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit, 9
Three fingers round the old silver cup —
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest — gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass; give me one kiss:
My own sweet Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by and by. 20
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?
I least should breathe a thought of pain.
Would God renew me from my birth,
I'd almost live my life again;

So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
And once again to woo thee mine — 30
It seems in after-dinner talk
Across the walnuts and the wine —

To be the long and listless hoy
Late-left an orphan of the squire,
Where this old mansion mounted high
Looks down upon the village spire;
For even here, where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so long,
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'
By some wild skylark's matin song. 40

And oft I heard the tender dove
In firry woodlands making moan;
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
I had no motion of my own.
For scarce my life with fancy play'd
Before I dream'd that pleasant dream —
Still hither thither idly sway'd
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
The milldam rushing down with noise, 50
And see the minnows everywhere
In crystal eddies glance and poise,
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
Below the range of stepping-stones,
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
When after roving in the woods
('T was April then), I came and sat
Below the chestnuts, when their buds 60
Were glistening to the breezy blue;
And on the slope, an absent fool,
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain,
Beat time to nothing in my head
From some odd corner of the brain.
It haunted me, the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes, 70
The phantom of a silent song,
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
I watch'd the little circles die;
They past into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye;

The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled beck. 84

For you remember, you had set,
That morning, on the casement-edge
A long green box of mignonette,
And you were leaning from the ledge;
And when I raised my eyes, above
They met with two so full and bright —
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,
That these have never lost their light. 40

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear
That I should die an early death; 90
For love possess'd the atmosphere,
And fill'd the breast with purer breath.
My mother thought, What ails the boy?
For I was alter'd, and began
To move about the house with joy,
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still, 100
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
When April nights began to blow,
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,
I saw the village lights below;
I knew your taper far away,
And full at heart of trembling hope, 110
From off the wold I came, and lay
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill;
And 'by that lamp,' I thought, 'she sits!'
The white chalk-quarry from the hill
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.
'O, that I were beside her now!
O, will she answer if I call?
O, would she give me vow for vow,
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?' 120

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;
And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within;
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the
blind.

At last you rose and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white with
 may; 130

Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek
 Flush'd like the coming of the day;
And so it was — half-sly, half-shy,
 You would, and would not, little one !
Although I pleaded tenderly,
 And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
 To yield consent to my desire:
She wish'd me happy, but she thought
 I might have look'd a little higher; 140
And I was young — too young to wed:
 ' Yet must I love her for your sake;
Go fetch your Alice here,' she said:
 Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:
 But, Alice, you were ill at ease;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
 Too fearful that you should not please.
I loved you better for your fears,
 I knew you could not look but well; 150
And dews, that would have fallen in tears,
 I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,
 The doubt my mother would not see;
She spoke at large of many things,
 And at the last she spoke of me;
And turning look'd upon your face,
 As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace 159
 Approaching, press'd you heart to heart.

Ah, well — but sing the foolish song
 I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
 A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers — that I may seem,
 As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
 While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,
 And she is grown so dear, so dear, 170
That I would be the jewel
 That trembles in her ear;

For hid in ringlets day and night,
 I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
 About her dainty dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me,
 In sorrow and in rest;
And I should know if it beat right, 180
 I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
 And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
 With her laughter or her sighs;
And I would lie so light, so light,
 I scarce should he unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet ! which true love spells —
 True love interprets — right alone.
His light upon the letter dwells,
 For all the spirit is his own. 190
So, if I waste words now, in truth
 You must blame Love. His early rage
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,
 And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,
 Like mine own life to me thou art,
Where Past and Present, wound in one,
 Do make a garland for the heart;
So sing that other song I made,
 Half-anger'd with my happy lot, 200
The day, when in the chestnut shade
 I found the blue forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,
 Can he pass, and we forget ?
Many suns arise and set;
 Many a chance the years heget;
Love the gift is Love the debt.
 Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret;
 Love is made a vague regret; 210
Eyes with idle tears are wet;
 Idle habit links us yet.
What is love ? for we forget:
 Ah, no ! no !

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True
 wife,
 Round my true heart thine arms entwine;
My other dearer life in life,
 Look thro' my very soul with thine !
Untouch'd with any shade of years,
 May those kind eyes for ever dwell ! 220
They have not shed a many tears,
 Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed; they had their part
Of sorrow; for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness past again,
And left a want unknown before;
Although the loss had brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the more, 230

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee;
But that God bless thee, dear — who
wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind —
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth
To yon old mill across the wolds; 240
For look, the sunset, south and north,
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casement glass,
Touching the sullen pool below;
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA

Φαίνεται μοι κήνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν
Ἔμμεν ἀνθρ. — ΣΑΡΡΗΘ.

O LOVE, Love, Love! O withering
might!

O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,
Lo, falling from my constant mind,
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers;
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers;
I roll'd among the tender flowers;
I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth;
I look'd athwart the burning drouth
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,
From my swift blood that went and came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.

O Love, O fire! once he drew
With one long kiss my whole soul thro'
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
He cometh quickly; from below
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow
Before him, striking on my brow.
In my dry brain my spirit soon,
Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the noon a fire
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire;
And, isled in sudden seas of light,
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce de-
light,
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eye;
I will possess him or will die.
I will grow round him in his place,
Grow, live, die looking on his face,
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

GENONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the
glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to
pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either
hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway
down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them
roars
The long brook falling thro' the cloven
ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus 10
Stands up and takes the morning; but in
front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful CEnone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her
neck
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with
vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-
shade²⁰
Sloped downward to her seat from the
upper cliff.

' O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill;
The grasshopper is silent in the grass;
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are
dead.
The purple flower droops, the golden bee
Is lily-cradled; I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of
love,³⁰
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

' O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O earth, hear me, O hills, O caves
That house the cold crown'd snake ! O
mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,⁴⁰
A cloud that gather'd shape; for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

' O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills;
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine.
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet - black goat white - horn'd,
white-hooved,⁵⁰
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

' O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft;
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-
dropt eyes

I sat alone; white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard
skin
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny
hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's;
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow
brightens⁶⁰
When the wind blows the foam, and all my
heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he
came.

' Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white
palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of
speech
Came down upon my heart:
" My own CEnone,
Beautiful-brow'd CEnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind
ingraves⁷⁰
' For the most fair,' would seem to award
it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married
brows."

' Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added, "This was cast upon the
board,
When all the full - faced presence of the
Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 't were
due;⁸⁰
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eye,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the
cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods."

' Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnight; one silvery
cloud⁹⁰
Had lost his way between the piny sides

Of this long glen. Then to the bower they
came,
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded
bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaranthus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies; and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild fes-
toon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and
thro'. 100

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and
lean'd
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her to
whom
Coming thro' heaven, like a light that
grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue 110
Wherewith to embellish state, "from many
a vale
And river-sunder'd champagne clothed with
corn,
Or labor'd mine undrainable of ore.
Honor," she said, "and homage, tax and
toll,
From many an inland town and haven
large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing cita-
del
In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of
power,
"Which in all action is the end of all; 120
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom — from all neigh-
bor crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon
from me,
From me, heaven's queen, Paris, to thee
king-born,
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in
power

Only, are likest Gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss 130
In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought
of power
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she
stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry
cheek 140
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply:

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-
control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign
power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by
law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: "I woo thee not with
gifts. 150
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbias'd by self-profit, O, rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to
thee,
So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a
God's, 159
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and decds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown
will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom."

'Here she ceas'd,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Idalian Aphrodite beautiful, ¹⁷⁰
 Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian
 wells,
 With rosy slender fingers backward drew
 From her warm brows and bosom her deep
 hair
 Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
 And shoulder; from the violets her light
 foot
 Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded
 form
 Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
 Floated the glowing sunlights, as she
 moved.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes, ¹⁸⁰
 The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
 Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise thee
 The fairest and most loving wife in
 Greece."
 She spoke and laugh'd; I shut my sight for
 fear;
 But when I look'd, Paris had raised his
 arm,
 And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
 And I was left alone within the bower;
 And from that time to this I am alone,
 And I shall be alone until I die. ¹⁹⁰

'Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Fairest — why fairest wife? am I not fair?
 My love hath told me so a thousand times.
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
 When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
 Eyed like the evening star, with playful
 tail
 Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most lov-
 ing is she?
 Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my
 arms
 Were wound about thee, and my hot lips
 prest
 Close, close to thine in that quick-falling
 dew ²⁰⁰
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as autumn rains
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
 My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy
 ledge

High over the blue gorge, and all between
 The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
 Foster'd the callow eaglet — from beneath
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark
 morn
 The panther's roar came muffled, while I
 sat ²¹⁰
 Low in the valley. Never, never more
 Shall lone Cenone see the morning mist
 Sweep thro' them; never see them over-
 laid
 With narrow moonlit slips of silver cloud,
 Between the loud stream and the trembling
 stars.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
 Among the fragments tumbled from the
 glens,
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her
 The Abominable, that uninvited came ²²⁰
 Into the fair Peleian banquet-hall,
 And cast the golden fruit upon the hoard,
 And bred this change; that I might speak
 my mind,
 And tell her to her face how much I hate
 Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 Hath he not sworn his love a thousand
 times,
 In this green valley, under this green hill,
 Even on this hand, and sitting on this
 stone?
 Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with
 tears? ²³⁰
 O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
 O happy heaven, how canst thou see my
 face?
 O happy earth, how canst thou bear my
 weight?
 O death, death, death, thou ever-floating
 cloud,
 There are enough unhappy on this earth,
 Pass by the happy souls, that love to live;
 I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
 And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
 Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids; let me die. ²⁴⁰

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
 Do shape themselves within me, more and
 more,
 Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear

Dead sounds at night come from the in-
most hills,

Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born. Her child!—a shudder
comes

Across me: never child be born of me, ²⁵⁰
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to
me

Walking the cold and starless road of
death

Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come
forth

Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she
says

A fire dances before her, and a sound ²⁶⁰
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.

What this may be I know not, but I
know

That, whereso'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire.'

THE SISTERS

WE were two daughters of one race;
She was the fairest in the face.

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
They were together, and she fell;
Therefore revenge became me well.

O, the earl was fair to see!

She died; she went to burning flame;
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.

The wind is howling in turret and tree.
Whole weeks and months, and early and
late,

To win his love I lay in wait.

O, the earl was fair to see!

I made a feast; I bade him come;
I won his love, I brought him home.

The wind is roaring in turret and tree.
And after supper, on a bed,
Upon my lap he laid his head.

O, the earl was fair to see!

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest,
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.

The wind is raging in turret and tree.
I hated him with the hate of hell,
But I loved his beauty passing well.
O, the earl was fair to see!

I rose up in the silent night;
I made my dagger sharp and bright.

The wind is raving in turret and tree.
As half-asleep his breath he drew,
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.
O, the earl was fair to see!

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,
He look'd so grand when he was dead.

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
I wrapt his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's feet.
O, the earl was fair to see!

TO —

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I SEND you here a sort of allegory —
For you will understand it — of a soul,
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering
weeds,
A glorious devil, large in heart and
brain,
That did love beauty only — beauty
seen
In all varieties of mould and miud —
And knowledge for its beauty; or if good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge are
three sisters
That doat upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sunder'd without tears.
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall
be
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold
lie
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the common
earth
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the
tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

THE PALACE OF ART

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.

I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd
brass,

I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair. 10
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and
round,' I said,

'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast
shade

Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer readily:
'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for
me,
So royal-rich and wide.' 20

Four courts I made, East, West and South
and North,

In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran
a row

Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
Of spouted fountain-floods;

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge to distant lands, 30
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the
sky
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one
swell

Across the mountain stream'd below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up.
A cloud of incense of all odor steam'd
From out a golden cup. 40

So that she thought, 'And who shall gaze
upon

My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the
sun,
And that sweet incense rise?'

For that sweet incense rose and never
fail'd,

And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and
trae'd,

Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires 50
From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced,
And tipt with frost-like spires.

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Thro' which the liveloug day my soul did
pass,
Well-pleas'd, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace
stood,

All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul. 60

For some were hung with arras green and
blue,

Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter
blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red — a tract of
sand,

And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
You seem'd to hear them climb and
fall

And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing
caves, 74
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged ruins of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind

Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind. 80

And one a foreground black with stones
and slags;

Beyond, a line of heights; and higher
All barr'd with long white cloud the scorn-
ful crags;
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home — gray twilight
pour'd

On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order
stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind, 90
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was
there,
Not less than truth design'd.

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept Saint Cecily;
An angel look'd at her. 100

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
A group of Houris bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw 110

The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king
to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,
From off her shoulder backward borne;
From one hand droop'd a crocus; one hand
grasp'd
The mild bull's golden horn. 120

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone; but every legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself was there,
Not less than life design'd.

Then in the towers I placed great bells
that swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver sound;
And with choice paintings of wise men I
hung 131
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd
his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;
A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin. 140

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every
land
So wrought they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and
stings; 150
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or
bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man
declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod; and those great
bells
Began to chime. She took her throne;
She sat betwixt the shining oriels,
To sing her songs alone. 160

And thro' the topmost oriels' colored flame
Two godlike faces gazed below;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names that in their motion
were
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair
In diverse raiment strange;

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, em-
erald, blue,
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes, 170
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon,
drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echo'd
song
Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful
mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five; 180

Communing with herself: 'All these are
mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'Tis one to me.' She — when young night
divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils —
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and
cried,
'I marvel if my still delight 190
In this great house so royal-rich and wide
Be flatter'd to the height.

'O all things fair to sate my various eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me well!
O silent faces of the Great and Wise;
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

'O Godlike isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves
of swine
That range on yonder plain. 200

'In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient
skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would she prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate;
And at the last she said:

'I take possession of man's mind and deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl. 210
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all.'

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd; so three
years
She prosper'd; on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his
ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell. 220

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abyssal deeps of personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd
her sight

The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote, 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself; again, from out that
mood 231

Laughter at her self-scorn.

'What! is not this my place of strength,'
she said,
'My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were
laid
Since my first memory?'

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of
blood,
And horrible nightmares, 240

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of
flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon she
came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,
Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal;

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of
sand,
Left on the shore, that bears all night 250
The plunging seas draw backward from
the land
Their moon-led waters white;

A star that with the choral starry dance
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had
curl'd.

'No voice,' she shriek'd in that lone hall,
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this
world;
One deep, deep silence all!' 260

She, mouldering with the dull earth's
mouldering sod,
Inwraught tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
And ever worse with growing time, 270
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime.

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall:

As in strange lands a traveller walking
slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moonrise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea; 280

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, 'I
have found
A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly finished,
She threw her royal robes away. 290
'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,
'Where I may mourn and pray.

'Yet pull not down my palace towers, that
are
So lightly, beautifully built;
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt.'

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown:

You thought to break a country heart
 For pastime, ere you went to town.
 At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
 I saw the snare, and I retired;
 The daughter of a hundred earls,
 You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 I know you proud to bear your name,
 Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
 Too proud to care from whence I came.
 Nor would I break for your sweet sake
 A heart that dotes on truer charms.
 A simple maiden in her flower
 Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 Some meeker pupil you must find,
 For, were you queen of all that is,
 I could not stoop to such a mind.
 You sought to prove how I could love,
 And my disdain is my reply.
 The lion on your old stone gates
 Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 You put strange memories in my head.
 Not thrice your branching limes have
 blown
 Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
 O, your sweet eyes, your low replies!
 A great enchantress you may be;
 But there was that across his throat
 Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 When thus he met his mother's view,
 She had the passions of her kind,
 She spake some certain truths of you.
 Indeed I heard one bitter word
 That scarce is fit for you to hear;
 Her manners had not that repose
 Which stamps the caste of Vere de
 Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
 There stands a spectre in your hall;
 The guilt of blood is at your door;
 You changed a wholesome heart to
 gall.
 You held your course without remorse,
 To make him trust his modest worth,
 And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
 And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
 From yon blue heavens above us bent
 The gardener Adam and his wife
 Smile at the claims of long descent.
 Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
 'T is only noble to be good.
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,
 And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,
 You pine among your halls and towers;
 The languid light of your proud eyes
 Is wearied of the rolling hours.
 In glowing health, with boundless wealth,
 But sickening of a vague disease,
 You know so ill to deal with time,
 You needs must play such pranks as
 these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
 If time be heavy on your hands,
 Are there no beggars at your gate,
 Nor any poor about your lands?
 O, teach the orphan-boy to read,
 Or teach the orphan-girl to sew;
 Pray Heaven for a human heart,
 And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE MAY QUEEN

You must wake and call me early, call me
 early, mother dear;
 To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all
 the glad New-year;
 Of all the glad New-year, mother, the mad-
 dest merriest day,
 For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
 I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

There 's many a black, black eye, they say,
 but none so bright as mine;
 There 's Margaret and Mary, there 's Kate
 and Caroline;
 But none so fair as little Alice in all the
 land they say,
 So I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
 I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I
 shall never wake,
 If you do not call me loud when the day
 begins to break;

But I must gather knots of flowers, and
buds and garlands gay,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye
should I see
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath
the hazel-tree ?
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I
gave him yesterday,
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I
was all in white,
And I ran by him without speaking, like a
flash of light.
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not
what they say,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May. 20

They say he's dying all for love, but that
can never be;
They say his heart is breaking, mother —
what is that to me ?
There's many a holder lad 'ill woo me any
summer day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to
the green,
And you 'll be there, too, mother, to see
me made the Queen;
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come
from far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has
woven its wavy bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint
sweet cuckoo-flowers; 30
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like
fire in swamps and hollows gray,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon
the meadow-grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to
brighten as they pass;

There will not be a drop of rain the whole
of the livelong day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and
green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over
all the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill mer-
rily glance and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May. 40

So you must wake and call me early, call
me early, mother dear,
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all
the glad New-year;
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the mad-
dest merriest day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

NEW-YEAR'S EVE

If you're waking call me early, call me
early, mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad
New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall ever
see,
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and
think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set; he set and left
behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and
all my peace of mind;
And the New-year's coming up, mother,
but I shall never see
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf
upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers; we
had a merry day;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they
made me Queen of May; 10
And we danced about the may-pole and in
the hazel copse,
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall
white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills; the
frost is on the pane.

I only wish to live till the snowdrops come
again;

I wish the snow would melt and the sun
come out on high;

I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'll caw from the windy
tall elm-tree,

And the tufted plover pipe along the fal-
low lea,

And the swallow 'ill come back again with
summer o'er the wave,

But I shall lie alone, mother, within the
mouldering grave. 20

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that
grave of mine,

In the early early morning the summer sun
'ill shine,

Before the red cock crows from the farm
upon the hill,

When you are warm-asleep, mother, and
all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, be-
neath the waning light

You 'll never see me more in the long gray
fields at night;

When from the dry dark wold the summer
airs blow cool

On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and
the bulrush in the pool.

You 'll bury me, my mother, just beneath
the hawthorn shade,

And you 'll come sometimes and see me
where I am lowly laid. 30

I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear
you when you pass,

With your feet above my head in the long
and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you 'll
forgive me now;

You 'll kiss me, my own mother, and for-
give me ere I go;

Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your
grief be wild;

You should not fret for me, mother, you
have another child.

If I can I 'll come again, mother, from out
my resting-place;

Tho' you 'll not see me, mother, I shall look
upon your face;

Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken
what you say,

And be often, often with you when you
think I 'm far away. 40

Good-night, good-night, when I have said
good-night for evermore,

And you see me carried out from the
threshold of the door,

Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave
be growing green.

She 'll be a better child to you than ever I
have been.

She 'll find my garden-tools upon the gran-
ary floor.

Let her take 'em, they are hers; I shall
never garden more;

But tell her, when I 'm gone, to train the
rosebush that I set

About the parlor-window and the box of
mignonette.

Good-night, sweet mother; call me before
the day is born.

All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at
morn; 50

But I would see the sun rise upon the glad
New-year,

So, if you 're wakiog, call me, call me
early, mother dear.

CONCLUSION

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet
alive I am;

And in the fields all round I hear the bleat-
ing of the lamb.

How sadly, I remember, rose the morning
of the year!

To die before the snowdrop came, and now
the violet 's here.

O, sweet is the new violet, that comes be-
neath the skies,

And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to
me that cannot rise,

And sweet is all the land about, and all the
flowers that blow,

And sweeter far is death than life to me
that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave
the blessed sun,

And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet
 His will be done !
 But still I think it can't be long before I
 find release;
 And that good man, the clergyman, has
 told me words of peace.

O, blessings on his kindly voice and on his
 silver hair !
 And blessings on his whole life long, until
 he meet me there !
 O, blessings on his kindly heart and on his
 silver head !
 A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt
 beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd
 me all the sin.
 Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's
 One will let me in;
 Nor would I now be well, mother, again, if
 that could be,
 For my desire is but to pass to Him that
 died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the
 death-watch beat,
 There came a sweeter token when the night
 and morning meet;
 But sit beside my bed, mother, and put
 your hand in mine,
 And Effie on the other side, and I will tell
 the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the
 angels call;
 It was when the moon was setting, and the
 dark was over all;
 The trees began to whisper, and the wind
 began to roll,
 And in the wild March-morning I heard
 them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you
 and Effie dear;
 I saw you sitting in the house, and I no
 longer here;
 With all my strength I pray'd for both,
 and so I felt resign'd,
 And up the valley came a swell of music
 on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd
 in my bed,

And then did something speak to me — I
 know not what was said;
 For great delight and shuddering took hold
 of all my mind,
 And up the valley came again the music on
 the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, 'It's
 not for them, it's mine.'
 And if it come three times, I thought, I
 take it for a sign.
 And once again it came, and close beside
 the window-bars,
 Then seem'd to go right up to heaven and
 die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it
 is. I know
 The blessed music went that way my soul
 will have to go.
 And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go
 to-day;
 But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I
 am past away.

And say to Rohin a kind word, and tell him
 not to fret;
 There's many a worthier than I, would
 make him happy yet.
 If I had lived — I cannot tell — I might
 have been his wife;
 But all these things have ceased to be, with
 my desire of life.

O, look ! the sun begins to rise, the heavens
 are in a glow;
 He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of
 them I know.
 And there I move no longer now, and there
 his light may shine —
 Wild flowers in the valley for other hands
 than mine.

O, sweet and strange it seems to me, that
 ere this day is done
 The voice, that now is speaking, may be
 beyond the sun —
 For ever and for ever with those just souls
 and true —
 And what is life, that we should moan ?
 why make we such ado ?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed
 home —

And there to wait a little while till you
and Effie come —
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon
your breast —
And the wicked cease from troubling, and
the weary are at rest. 60

THE LOTOS-EATERS

‘COURAGE!’ he said, and pointed toward
the land,
‘This mounting wave will roll us shore-
ward soon.’

In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did
swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary
dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the
moon;

And, like a downward smoke, the slender
stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall
did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward
smoke,

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did
go;

And some thro’ wavering lights and
shadows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow

From the inner land; far off, three moun-
tain-tops,

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush’d; and, dew’d with
showery drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the
woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger’d low adown
In the red West; thro’ mountain clefts the
dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border’d with palm, and many a winding
vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem’d the
same!

And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,

The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters
came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they
gave

To each, but whoso did receive of them
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the
grave;

And deep-asleep he seem’d, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did
make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but ever-
more

Most weary seem’d the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren
foam.

Then some one said, ‘We will return no
more;’

And all at once they sang, ‘Our island
home

Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer
roam.’

CHORIC SONG

I

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from
the blissful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro’ the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers
weep, 10
And from the craggy ledge the poppy
hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh’d upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,

While all things else have rest from weariness ?

All things have rest: why should we toil alone,

We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown;
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;

Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
'There is no joy but calm!' —
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things ?

III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the brauch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air. 30
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no
toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea. 40
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labor be ?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last ?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil ? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave ? 50
All things have rest, and ripen toward the
grave

In silence — ripen, fall, and cease :
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or
dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward
stream,

With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream !
To dream and dream, like yonder amber
light,

Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on
the height;

To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day, 60
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melan-
choly;

To muse and brood and live again in mem-
ory,

With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn
of brass !

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears; but all hath suffer'd
change; 71

For surely now our household hearths are
cold,

Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,
And we should come like ghosts to trouble
joy.

Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel
sings

Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten
things.

Is there confusion in the little isle ?
Let what is broken so remain. 80

The Gods are hard to reconcile;
'T is hard to settle order once again.
There is confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the
pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet — while warm airs lull us, blow-
ing lowly —

With half-dropt eyelid still, 90
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing
slowly

His waters from the purple hill —
 To hear the dewy echoes calling
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined
 vine —
 To watch the emerald-color'd water fall-
 ing
 Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath di-
 vine !
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling
 brine,
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out be-
 neath the pine. 99

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak,
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek;
 All day the wind breathes low with mel-
 lower tone;
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
 Round and round the spicy downs the yel-
 low Lotos-dust is blown.
 We have had enough of action, and of
 motion we,
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when
 the surge was seething free,
 Where the wallowing monster spouted his
 foam-fountains in the sea.
 Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an
 equal mind,
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie re-
 clined
 On the hills like Gods together, careless of
 mankind. 110
 For they lie beside their nectar, and the
 bolts are hurl'd
 Far below them in the valleys, and the
 clouds are lightly curl'd
 Round their golden houses, girdled with
 the gleaming world;
 Where they smile in secret, looking over
 wasted lands,
 Blight and famine, plague and earthquake,
 roaring deeps and fiery sands,
 Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and
 sinking ships, and praying hands.
 But they smile, they find a music centred
 in a doleful song
 Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient
 tale of wrong,
 Like a tale of little meaning tho' the
 words are strong;
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men that
 cleave the soil, 120

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with
 enduring toil,
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and
 wine and oil;
 Till they perish and they suffer — some, 'tis
 whisper'd — down in hell
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian
 valleys dwell,
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of
 asphodel.
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than
 toil, the shore
 Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and
 wave and oar;
 O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not
 wander more.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their
 shade,
 'The Legend of Good Women,' long ago
 Sung by the morning star of song, who
 made
 His music heard below;
 Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose
 sweet breath
 Preluded those melodious bursts that
 fill
 The spacious times of great Elizabeth
 With sounds that echo still.
 And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
 Held me above the subject, as strong
 gales 10
 Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my
 heart,
 Brimful of those wild tales,
 Charged both mine eyes with tears. In
 every land
 I saw, wherever light illumineth,
 Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
 The downward slope to death.
 Those far-renowned brides of ancient song
 Peopled the hollow dark, like burning
 stars,
 And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and
 wrong,
 And trumpets blown for wars; 20

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging
hoofs;
And I saw crowds in column'd sanctu-
aries,
And forms that pass'd at windows and on
roofs
Of marble palaces;

Corpses across the threshold, heroes tall
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall,
Lances in ambush set;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with
heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of
fire; ³⁰
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and
masts,
And ever climbing higher;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen
plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers
woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron
grates,
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to
land
Bluster the winds and tides the selfsame
way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray. ⁴⁰

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to
speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the
brain
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town;
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing
thought
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and
did creep ⁵⁰
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd,
and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far
In an old wood; fresh-wash'd in coolest
dew
The maiden splendors of the morning star
Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
Their broad curved branches, fledged with
clearest green,
New from its silken sheath. ⁶⁰

The dim red Morn had died, her journey
done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight
plain,
Half-fallen across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
Not any song of bird or sound of rill;
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine
turn'd
Their humid arms festooning tree to
tree, ⁷⁰
And at the root thro' lush green grasses
burn'd
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I
knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
Ou those long, rank, dark wood-walks
drench'd in dew,
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
Pour'd back into my empty soul and
frame
The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame. ⁸⁰

And from within me a clear undertone
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unbliss-
ful clime,
'Pass freely thro'; the wood is all thine
own
Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call,
Stillier than chisell'd marble, standing
there;

A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with sur-
prise

Froze my swift speech; she turning on
my face

The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place:

'I had great beauty; ask thou not my
name:

No one can be more wise than destiny.
Many drew swords and died. Where'er
I came

I brought calamity.'

'No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair field
Myself for such a face had boldly died,'

I answer'd free; and turning I appeal'd
To one that stood beside. 100

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
To her full height her stately stature
draws;

'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted with
a curse:

This woman was the cause.

'I was cut off from hope in that sad place
Which men call'd Aulis in those iron
years:

My father held his hand upon his face;
I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak: my voice was thick
with sighs 109

As in a dream. Dimly I could desery
The stern black-bearded kings with wolf-
ish eyes,

Waiting to see me die.

'The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat;
The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and
the shore;

The bright death quiver'd at the victim's
throat —

Touch'd — and I knew no more.'

Whereto the other with a downward brow:
'I would the white cold heavy-plunging
foam,

Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep
below,

Then when I left my home.' 120

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence
drear,

As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea:
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, 'Come
here,

That I may look on thee.'

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd;
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold
black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began:
'I govern'd men by change, and so I
sway'd 120

All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen
a man.

Once, like the moon, I made

The ever-shifting currents of the blood
According to my humor ebb and flow.

I have no men to govern in this wood:
That makes my only woe.

'Nay — yet it chafes me that I could not
hend

One will; nor tame and tutor with mine
eye

That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee,
friend,

Where is Mark Antony? 140

'The man, my lover, with whom I rode sub-
lime

On Fortune's neck; we sat as God by
God:

The Nilus would have risen before his time
And flooded at our nod.

'We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and
lit

Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus. O,
my life

In Egypt! O, the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

'And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's
alarms,

My Hercules, my Roman Antony, 150
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,
Contented there to die!

'And there he died: and when I heard my
name

Sigh'd forth with life I would not brook
my fear
Of the other; with a worm I balk'd his
fame.

What else was left? look here! —

With that she tore her robe apart, and
half

The polish'd argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a
languish,
Showing the aspick's bite. — 160

'I died a Queen. The Roman soldier
found
Me lying dead, my crown about my
brows,
A name for ever! — lying robed and
crown'd,
Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range
Struck by all passion, did fall down and
glance
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all
change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for de-
light;
Because with sudden motion from the
ground 170
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd with
light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest
darts;
As once they drew into two burning rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty
hearts
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
A noise of some one coming thro' the
lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested bird
That claps his wings at dawn: 180

'The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late and
soon,
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the
dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with
beams divine;
All night the splinter'd crags that wall
the dell
With spires of silver shine.'

As one that museth where broad sunshine
laves
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the
door 190
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and
tied
To where he stands, — so stood I, when
that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure; as when she went along
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome
light,
With timbrel and with song. 200

My words leapt forth: 'Heaven heads the
count of crimes
With that wild oath.' She render'd
answer high:
'Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

'Single I grew, like some green plant,
whose root
Creeps to the garden water-pipes be-
neath,
Feeding the flower; but ere my flower to
fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

'My God, my land, my father — these did
move
Me from my bliss of life that Nature
gave, 210
Lower'd softly with a threelfold cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

'And I went mourning, "No fair Hebrew
boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame
among
The Hebrew mothers" — emptied of all joy,
Leaving the dance and song,

'Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that
glow
Beneath the battled tower. 220

'The light white cloud swam over us.
Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his den;
We saw the large white stars rise one by
one,
Or, from the darken'd glen,

'Saw God divide the night with flying
flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief be-
came
A solemn scorn of ills.

'When the next moon was roll'd into the
sky,
Strength came to me that equall'd my
desire. 230
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire !

'It comforts me in this one thought to
dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's will;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

'Moreover it is written that my race
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from
Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth.' Here her face
Glow'd, as I look'd at her. 240

She lock'd her lips; she left me where I
stood:
'Glory to God,' she sang, and past afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans his
head,
When midnight bells cease ringing sud-
denly,
And the old year is dead.

'Alas ! alas !' a low voice, full of care,
Murmur'd beside me: 'Turn and look
on me; 250

I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be.

'Would I had been some maiden coarse
and poor !
O me, that I should ever see the light !
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night.'

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and
trust;
To whom the Egyptian: 'O, you tamely
died !
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist,
and thrust
The dagger thro' her side.' 260

With that sharp sound the white dawn's
creeping beams,
Stolen to my brain, dissolved the mys-
tery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark
Ere I saw her who clasp'd in her last
trance
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of
Arc,
A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish
Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her
king, 270
Drew forth the poison with her balmy
breath,
Sweet as new buds in spring.

No memory labors longer from the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden
ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from
sleep
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what
dull pain
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to
strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again !
But no two dreams are like. 280

As when a soul laments, which hath been
blest,

Desiring what is mingled with past
years,
In yearnings that can never be express
By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest
art,

Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something well:
While all the neighbors shoot thee round,
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou mayst warble, eat, and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine; the range of lawn and park;
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
Cold February loved, is dry;
Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once when young;

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute-notes are changed to
coarse,

I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawkker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing;
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,

For the old year lies a-dying.
Old year, you must not die;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still, he doth not move;
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,
And the New-year will take 'em away.
Old year, you must not go;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim;
A jollier year we shall not see.
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.
Old year, you shall not die;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he'll be dead before.
Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my
friend,
And the New-year blithe and bold,
my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro;
The cricket chirps; the light burns low;
'T is nearly twelve o'clock.
Shake hands, before you die.
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you.
What is it we can do for you?
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack! our friend is gone.
Close up his eyes; tie up his chin;
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,

And waiteth at the door.
There's a new foot on the floor, my
friend,
And a new face at the door, my friend,
A new face at the door.

TO J. S.

THE wind that beats the mountain
blows

More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'T is strange that those we lean on most,
Those in whose laps our limbs are
nursed,

Fall into shadow, soonest lost;
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us; but, when love is grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas!
In grief I am not all unlearn'd;
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass;
One went who never hath return'd.

He will not smile — not speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair is
seen

Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer; for this star
Rose with you thro' a little arc
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother; his mute dust
I honor and his living worth;
A man more pure and bold and just
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh
Since that dear soul hath fallen asleep.

Great Nature is more wise than I;
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,
I will not even preach to you,
'Weep, weeping dulls the inward
pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her will
Be done — to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, 'God's ordinance
Of death is blown in every wind;'
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How *should* I soothe you any way,
Who miss the brother of your youth?
Yet something I did wish to say;

For he too was a friend to me.
Both are my friends, and my true
breast

Bleedeth for both; yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make
Grief more. 'T were better I should
cease

Although myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace;
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or strange
Sleep full of rest from head to feet;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

ON A MOURNER

I

NATURE, so far as in her lies,
Imitates God, and turns her face
To every land beneath the skies,
Counts nothing that she meets with
base,
But lives and loves in every place;

II

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,
And makes the purple lilac ripe,
Steps from her airy hill, and greens
The swamp, where humm'd the dropping
snipe,
With moss and braided marsh-pipe;

III

And on thy heart a finger lays,
Saying, ' Beat quicker, for the time
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways
Are pleasant, and the beech and lime
Put forth and feel a gladder clime."

IV

And murmurs of a deeper voice,
Going before to some far shrine,
Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,
Till all thy life one way incline
With one wide Will that closes thine.

V

And when the zoning eve has died
Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and bride,
From out the borders of the morn,
With that fair child betwixt them born.

VI

And when no mortal motion jars
The blackness round the tombing sod,
Thro' silence and the trembling stars
Comes Faith from tracts no feet have
trod,
And Virtue, like a household god

VII

Promising empire; such as those
Once heard at dead of night to greet
Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose
With sacrifice, while all the fleet
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist;
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or
foes
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent;

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But, by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom faint,

Tho' power should make from land to
land

The name of Britain trebly great —
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand —

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet;
Above her shook the starry lights;
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then step she down thro' town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fullness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, Godlike, grasps the triple forks,
And, king-like, wears the crown.

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our
dreams,

Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes!

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-brought
From out the storied past, and used
Within the present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought;

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings 10
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait for
day,
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of minds. 20

Watch what main-currents draw the years;
Cut Prejudice against the grain.
But gentle words are always gain;
Regard the weakness of thy peers.

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
Of pension, neither count on praise —
It grows to guerdon after-days.
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch;

Not clinging to some ancient saw,
Not master'd by some modern term, 30

Not swift nor slow to change, but firm;
And in its season bring the law,

That from Discussion's lip may fall
With Life that, working strongly, binds —
Set in all lights by many minds,
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Thro' many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form. 40

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that which flies,
And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying hard to shape in act;
For all the past of Time reveals 50
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Even now we hear with inward strife
A motion toiling in the gloom —
The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
Completion in a painful school;
Phantoms of other forms of rule,
New Majesties of mighty States — 60

The warders of the growing hour,
But vague in vapor, hard to mark;
And round them sea and air are dark
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
Is bodied forth the second whole.
Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
And heap their ashes on the head; 70
To shame the boast so often made,
That we are wiser than our sires.

O, yet, if Nature's evil star
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,

To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war —

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock, like armed foes,
And this be true, till Time shall close,
That Principles are rain'd in blood; 80

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,
But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
Would serve his kind in deed and word,
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away —

Would love the gleams of good that broke
From either side, nor veil his eyes; 90
And if some dreadful need should rise
Would strike, and firmly, and oue stroke.

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
As we bear blossom of the dead;
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782

O THOU that sendest out the man
To rule by land and sea,
Strong mother of a Lion-line,
Be proud of those strong sons of thine
Who wrench'd their rights from
thee!

What wonder if in noble heat
Those men thine arms withstood,
Retought the lesson thou hadst taught,
And in thy spirit with thee fought —
Who sprang from English blood!

But thou rejoice with liberal joy,
Lift up thy rocky face,
And shatter, when the storms are black,
In many a streaming torrent back,
The seas that shock thy base!

Whatever harmonies of law
The growing world assume,

Thy work is thine — the single note
From that deep chord which Hampden
smote
Will vibrate to the doom.

THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,
Her rags scarce held together;
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,
He utter'd rhyme and reason:
'Here, take the goose, and keep you
warm,
It is a stormy season.'

She caught the white goose by the leg,
A goose — 't was no great matter.
The goose let fall a golden egg
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,
And ran to tell her neighbors,
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,
And rested from her labors;

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able-bodied,
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder;
But ah! the more the white goose laid
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chucked there,
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle;
She shifted in her elbow-chair,
And hur'd the pan and kettle.

'A quinsy choke thy cursed note!'
Then wax'd her anger stronger.
'Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,
I will not bear it longer.'

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat,
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
The goose flew this way and flew that,
And fill'd the house with clamor.

As head and heels upon the floor
They flounder'd all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather.

He took the goose upon his arm,
He utter'd words of scorning:
'So keep you cold, or keep you warm,
It is a stormy morning.'

The wild wind rang from park and plain,
And round the attics rumbled,

Till all the tables danced again,
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
The blast was hard and harder.
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder;

And while on all sides breaking loose
Her household fled the danger,
Quoth she, 'The devil take the goose,
And God forget the stranger!'

ENGLISH IDYLS

AND OTHER POEMS

THE EPIC

First published in 1842, but written as early as 1835.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-
eve, —

The game of forfeits done — the girls all
kiss'd

Beneath the sacred bush and past away —
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard
Hall,

The host, and I sat round the wassail-
bowl,

Then half-way ebb'd; and there we held
a talk,

How all the old honor had from Christmas
gone,

Or gone or dwindled down to some odd
games

In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired
out

With cutting eights that day upon the
pond,

Where, three times slipping from the outer
edge,

I hump'd the ice into three several stars,
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commissioners,
Now hawking at geology and schism;
Until I woke, and found him settled down
Upon the general decay of faith

Right thro' the world: 'at home was little
left,

And none abroad; there was no anchor,
none,

To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt his
hand

On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by
him.'

'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-
bowl.'

'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift that
way

At college; but another which you had —
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),

What came of that?' 'You know,' said
Frank, 'he burnt

His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve
books' —

And then to me demanding why: 'O, sir,
He thought that nothing new was said, or
else

Something so said 't was nothing — that
a truth

Looks freshest in the fashion of the day;
God knows; he has a mint of reasons; ask.

It pleased me well enough.' 'Nay, nay,'
said Hall,

'Why take the style of those heroic times?
For nature brings not back the mastodon,

Nor we those times; and why should any
man

Remodel models? these twelve books of
mine

Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.
'But I,' 40

Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from
this hearth,

And have it; keep a thing, its use will
come.

I heard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.
He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my
ears;

For I remember'd Everard's college fame
When we were Freshmen. Then at my
request

He brought it; and the poet, little urged,
But with some prelude of disparagement,
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,
Deep-chested music, and to this result. 51

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea,
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonness about their lord,
King Arthur; then, because his wound was
deep,

The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross, 60
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-
vere:

'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a
sleep

They sleep — the men I loved. I think
that we

Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly
deeds, 70

Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.

I perish by this people which I made, —
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come
again

To rule once more — but let what will be
be,

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.

Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride; for thou remember-
est how

In those old days, one summer noon, an
arm 80

Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword — and how I row'd
across

And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known.

But now delay not; take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere;
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring
me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere: 90
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee
thus,

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy best will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee
word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he
stept

And in the moon athwart the place of
tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of ancient
men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-wind
sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, step-
ping down 100

By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excali-
bur,

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran
forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the
hilt;

For all the haft twinkled with diamond
sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long

That both his eyes were dazzled, as he
stood, 110

This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw; but at the last it seem'd

Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted water-flags,

That whistled stiff and dry about the
margin.

So strode he back slow to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave ?

What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere: 120

'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:

'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;

For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.

This is a shameful thing for men to lie. 129
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again

As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud:

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note, 140
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.

What good should follow this, if this were done ?

What harm, undone ? deep harm to disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand

An act unprofitable, against himself ?

The king is sick, and knows not what he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath 150
And rumors of a doubt ? but were this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,

Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,

Wrought by the lonely maiden of the lake;
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the after-time

To all the people, winning reverence;
But now much honor and much fame were lost.' 160

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded king.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:

'What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue, 170
Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !

Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice, 180
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence;

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock 190

By night, with noises of the northern sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur;
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Cloth'd in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd
him

Three times, and drew him under in the
mere.

And lightly went the other to the king.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker
breath:

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is
done. 200

Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or
seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the
gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheel-
ing him;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-
ful, 210

That caught him by the hilt, and brand-
ish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the
mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breath-
ing hard:

'My end draws nigh; 't is time that I were
gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my
weight,

And bear me to the margiu; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half
rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue
eyes 220

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not
words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on one
knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid
hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of
tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted
bard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd
the king,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear,
'Quick, quick! 230

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to
ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he
walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a
goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and
right

The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as
he based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that
rang 240

Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed
heels—

And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky
barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were
ware

That all the decks were dense with stately
forms

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—
by these

Three queens with crowns of gold—and
from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars, 250
And, as it were one voice, an agony

Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one
comes,

Or hath come, since the making of the
world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the
barge.'

And to the barge they came. There those
three queens

Put forth their hands, and took the king,
and wept.

But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest laid his head upon her lap,

And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed
his hands, 260

And call'd him by his name, complaining
loud,

And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood; for all his face
was white

And colorless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing
east;

And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with
drops

Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne — were parch'd
with dust;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed
his lips. 271

So like a shatter'd column lay the king;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in
rest,

From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my
eyes?

For now I see the true old times are
dead, 280

When every morning brought a noble
chance,

And every chance brought out a noble
knight.

Such times have been not since the light
that led

The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dis-
solved

Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the
years,

Among new men, strange faces, other
minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the
barge: 290

'The old order changeth, yielding place to
new,

And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the
world.

Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have
done

May He within himself make pure! but
thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face again,

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought
by prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore,
let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and
day. 300

For what are men better than sheep or
goats

That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of
prayer

Both for themselves and those who call
them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go —

For all my mind is clouded with a doubt —
To the island-valley of Avilion; 310

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard
lawns

And bowery hollows crown'd with summer
sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous
wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and
sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-
breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the
flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedi-
vere 320

Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of
dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that
long

Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared
and fell;

At which the parson, sent to sleep with
sound,

And waked with silence, grunted 'Good!'
but we

Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he
read —

Perhaps some modern touches here and
there

Redeem'd it from the charge of nothing-
ness — 330

Or else we loved the man, and prized his
work;

I know not; but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud, as at that time of
year

The Insty bird takes every hour for dawn.
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-
used,

'There now — that's nothing!' drew a lit-
tle back,

And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue.

And so to bed, where yet in sleep I seem'd
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,
Point after point; till on to dawn, when
dreams 341

Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
To me, methought, who waited with the
crowd,

There came a bark that, blowing forward,
bore

King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
'Arthur is come again: he cannot die.'
Then those that stood upon the hills be-
hind

Repeated — 'Come again, and thrice as
fair;'
And, further inland, voices echoed —
'Come 350

With all good things, and war shall be no
more.'

At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard in-
deed

The clear church-bells ring in the Christ-
mas morn.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER

OR, THE PICTURES

THIS morning is the morning of the day,
When I and Eustace from the city went
To see the Gardener's daughter; I and
he,

Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete
Portion'd in halves between us, that we
grew

The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Her-
cules;

So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.

He, by some law that holds in love, and
draws

The greater to the lesser, long desired 10
A certain miracle of symmetry,
A miniature of loveliness, all grace
Summ'd up and closed in little; — Juliet,
she

So light of foot, so light of spirit — O, she
To me myself, for some three careless
moods,

The summer pilot of an empty heart
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you
not

Such touches are but embassies of Love,
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,
And said to me, she sitting with us then, 21
'When will you paint like this?' and I
replied —

My words were half in earnest, half in jest:
'Tis not your work, but Love's. Love,
unperceived,

A more ideal artist he than all,
Came, drew your pencil from you, made
those eyes

Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
More black than ashbuds in the front of
March.'

And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go and see
The Gardener's daughter; trust me, after
that, 30

You scarce can fail to match his master-
piece.'

And up we rose, and on the spur we went.
Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
News from the humming city comes to it
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you
hear

The windy clanging of the minster clock;
Altho' between it and the garden lies
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad
stream, 40

That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd
kine,
And all about the large lime feathers
low —

The lime a summer home of murmurous
wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,
Grew, seldom seen; not less among us lived
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not
heard

Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where
was he,

So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
At such a distance from his youth in grief,
That, having seen, forgot? The common
mouth,

So gross to express delight, in praise of her
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,
Would play with flying forms and images,
Yet this is also true, that, long before

I look'd upon her, when I heard her name
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,
And told me I should love. A crowd of
hopes,

That sought to sow themselves like winged
seeds,

Born out of everything I heard and saw,
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of
balm

To one that travels quickly, made the air
Of life delicious, and all kinds of thought,
That verged upon them, sweeter than the
dream

Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark
East,

Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds
For ever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery
squares,

Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large
cloud

Drew downward; but all else of heaven was
pure

Up to the sun, and May from verge to
verge,

And May with me from head to heel. And
now,

As tho' 't were yesterday, as tho' it were
The hour just flown, that morn with all its
sound —

For those old Mays had thrice the life of
these —

Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to
graze,

And, where the hedge-row cuts the path-
way, stood,

Leaning his horns into the neighbor field
And lowing to his fellows. From the
woods

Came voices of the well-contented doves.
The lark could scarce get out his notes for
joy,

But shook his song together as he near'd
His happy home, the ground. To left and
right,

The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
The redcap whistled; and the nightingale
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of
day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to
me:

'Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think
you they sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song? Or
have they any sense of why they sing?
And would they praise the heavens for
what they have?'

And I made answer: 'Were there nothing
else

For which to praise the heavens but only
love,
That only love were cause enough for
praise.'

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my
thought,

And on we went; but ere an hour had
pass'd,

We reach'd a meadow slanting to the
North,

Down which a well-worn pathway courted
us

To one green wicket in a privet hedge.
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume,
blew

Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
The garden stretches southward. In the
midst

A cedar spread his dark-green layers of
shade.

The garden-glasses shone, and momentarily
The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.

'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder keeps
the house.'

He nodded, but a moment afterwards
He cried, 'Look! look!' Before he ceased

I turn'd,
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern
 rose,
 That, flowering high, the last night's gale
 had caught
 And blown across the walk. One arm
 aloft —
 Gown'd in pure white that fitted to the
 shape —
 Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,
 A single stream of all her soft brown
 hair
 Pour'd on one side; the shadow of the flow-
 ers
 Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering
 Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist — 130
 Ah, happy shade! — and still went wavering
 down,
 But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have
 danced
 The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
 And mix'd with shadows of the common
 ground,
 But the full day dwelt on her brows, and
 sunn'd
 Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,
 And doubled his own warmth against her
 lips,
 And on the bounteous wave of such a
 breast
 As never pencil drew. Half light, half
 shade,
 She stood, a sight to make an old man
 young. 140
 So rapt, we near'd the house; but she, a
 Rose
 In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,
 Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance
 turn'd
 Into the world without; till close at hand,
 And almost ere I knew mine own intent,
 This murmur broke the stillness of that
 air
 Which brooded round about her :
 ' Ah, one rose,
 One rose, but one, by those fair fingers
 cull'd,
 Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on
 lips
 Less exquisite than thine.'
 She look'd; but all
 Suffused with blushes — neither self-pos-
 sess'd 151
 Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and
 that,
 Divided in a graceful quiet — paused,

And dropt the branch she held, and turn-
 ing wound
 Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her
 lips
 For some sweet answer, tho' no answer
 came,
 Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,
 And moved away, and left me, statue-like,
 In act to render thanks.
 I, that whole day,
 Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there 160
 Till every daisy slept, and Love's white
 star
 Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the
 dusk.
 So home we went, and all the livelong
 way
 With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.
 ' Now,' said he, ' will you climb the top of
 art.
 You cannot fail but work in hues to dim
 The Titianic Flora. Will you match
 My Juliet? you, not you, — the master,
 Love,
 A more ideal artist he than all.'
 So home I went, but could not sleep for
 joy, 170
 Reading her perfect features in the gloom,
 Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,
 And shaping faithful record of the glance
 That graced the giving — such a noise of
 life
 Swarm'd in the golden present, such a
 voice
 Call'd to me from the years to come, and
 such
 A length of bright horizon rimm'd the
 dark.
 And all that night I heard the watchman
 peal
 The sliding season; all that night I heard
 The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy
 hours. 180
 The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,
 O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,
 Distilling odors on me as they went
 To greet their fairer sisters of the East.
 Love at first sight, first-born, and heir
 to all,
 Made this night thus. Henceforward squall
 nor storm
 Could keep me from that Eden where she
 dwelt.
 Light pretexs drew me: sometimes a
 Dutch love

For tulips; then for roses, moss or musk,
To grace my city rooms; or fruits and
cream ¹⁹⁰

Served in the weeping elm; and more and
more

A word could bring the color to my cheek;
A thought would fill my eyes with happy
dew;

Love trebled life within me, and with each
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,
One after one, thro' that still garden
pass'd;

Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade;
And each in passing touch'd with some
new grace

Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by
day, ²⁰⁰

Like one that never can be wholly known,
Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought an
hour

For Eustace, when I heard his deep 'I
will,'

Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to
hold

From thence thro' all the worlds; but I
rose up

Full of his bliss, and following her dark
eyes

Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd
The wicket-gate, and found her standing
there.

There sat we down upon a garden
mound,

Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third, ²¹⁰
Between us, in the circle of his arms

Enwound us both; and over many a range
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,

Across a hazy glimmer of the west,
Reveal'd their shining windows. From them
clash'd

The bells; we listen'd; with the time we
play'd,

We spoke of other things; we coursed
about

The subject most at heart, more near and
near,

Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling
round

The central wish, until we settled there. ²²⁰
Then, in that time and place, I spoke to
her,

Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,

Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;
And in that time and place she answer'd me,
And in the compass of three little words,
More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken voice,
Made me most happy, faltering, 'I am
thine.' ²³⁰

Shall I cease here? Is this enough to
say

That my desire, like all strongest hopes,
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,
Merged in completion? Would you learn
at full

How passion rose thro' circumstantial
grades

Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed
I had not staid so long to tell you all,
But while I mused came Memory with sad
eyes,

Holding the folded annals of my youth;
And while I mused, Love with knit brows
went by, ²⁴⁰

And with a flying finger swept my lips,
And spake, 'Be wise: not easily forgiven
Are those who, setting wide the doors that
bar

The secret bridal chambers of the heart,
Let in the day.' Here, then, my words
have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of fare-
wells—

Of that which came between, more sweet
than each,

In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves
That tremble round a nightingale—in
sighs

Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utter-
ance, ²⁵⁰

Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not
tell

Of difference, reconciliation, pledges given,
And vows, where there was never need of
vows,

And kisses, where the heart on one wild
leap

Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above
The heavens between their fairy fleeces
pale

Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting
stars;

Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,
Spread the light haze along the river-
shores,

And in the hollows; or as once we met ²⁶⁰

Unheeded, tho' beneath a whispering rain
Night slid down one long stream of sighing
wind,

And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep?

But this whole hour your eyes have been
intent

On that veil'd picture — veil'd, for what it
holds

May not be dwelt on by the common
day.

This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy
soul,

Make thine heart ready with thine eyes;
the time

Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,

As I beheld her ere she knew my heart, ²⁷⁰

My first, last love; the idol of my youth,

The darling of my manhood, and, alas!

Now the most blessed memory of mine
age.

DORA

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often look'd at
them,

And often thought, 'I'll make them man
and wife.'

Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd toward William; but the
youth, because

He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day

When Allan call'd his son, and said: 'My
son,

I married late, but I would wish to see ¹⁰

My grandchild on my knees before I die;

And I have set my heart upon a match.

Now therefore look to Dora; she is well

To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.

She is my brother's daughter; he and I

Had once hard words, and parted, and he
died

In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora. Take her for your
wife;

For I have wish'd this marriage, night and
day,

For many years.' But William answer'd
short: ²⁰

'I cannot marry Dora; by my life,

I will not marry Dora!' Then the old
man

Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and
said:

'You will not, boy! you dare to answer
thus!

But in my time a father's word was law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look to
it;

Consider, William, take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish,

Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall
pack, ²⁹

And never more darken my doors again.'

But William answer'd madly, bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he look'd at
her

The less he liked her; and his ways were
harsh;

But Dora bore them meekly. Then be-
fore

The month was out he left his father's
house,

And hired himself to work within the
fields;

And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and
wed

A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan
call'd

His niece and said: 'My girl, I love you
well; ⁴⁰

But if you speak with him that was my
son,

Or change a word with her he calls his
wife,

My home is none of yours. My will is
law.'

And Dora promised, being meek. She
thought,

'It cannot be; my uncle's mind will
change!'

And days went on, and there was born
a boy

To William; then distresses came on him,
And day by day he pass'd his father's

gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him
not.

But Dora stored what little she could
save, ⁵⁰

And sent it them by stealth, nor did they
know

Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
 And look'd with tears upon her boy, and
 thought
 Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:
 'I have obey'd my uncle until now,
 And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me
 This evil came on William at the first.
 But, Mary, for the sake of him that's
 gone,⁶⁰
 And for your sake, the woman that he
 chose,
 And for this orphan, I am come to you.
 You know there has not been for these five
 years
 So full a harvest. Let me take the boy,
 And I will set him in my uncle's eye
 Among the wheat; that when his heart is
 glad
 Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
 And bless him for the sake of him that's
 gone.'
 And Dora took the child, and went her
 way
 Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound⁷⁰
 That was unown, where many poppies
 grew.
 Far off the farmer came into the field
 And spied her not, for none of all his
 men
 Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
 And Dora would have risen and gone to
 him,
 But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers
 reap'd,
 And the sun fell, and all the land was
 dark.
 But when the morrow came, she rose
 and took
 The child once more, and sat upon the
 mound;⁷⁹
 And made a little wreath of all the flowers
 That grew about, and tied it round his hat
 To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
 Then when the farmer pass'd into the
 field
 He spied her, and he left his men at work,
 And came and said: 'Where were you
 yesterday?
 Whose child is that? What are you doing
 here?'
 So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
 And answer'd softly, 'This is William's
 child!'
 'And did I not,' said Allan, 'did I not
 Forbid you, Dora?' Dora said again: ⁹⁰

'Do with me as you will, but take the
 child,
 And bless him for the sake of him that's
 gone!'
 And Allan said: 'I see it is a trick
 Got up hetwixt you and the woman there.
 I must be taught my duty, and hy you!
 You knew my word was law, and yet you
 dared
 To slight it. Well—for I will take the
 boy;
 But go you hence, and never see me more.'
 So saying, he took the boy that cried
 aloud
 And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers
 fell¹⁰⁰
 At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
 And the boy's cry came to her from the
 field
 More and more distant. She bow'd down
 her head,
 Remembering the day when first she came,
 And all the things that had been. She
 bow'd down
 And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,
 And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
 Then Dora went to Mary's house, and
 stood
 Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
 Was not with Dora. She broke out in
 praise¹¹⁰
 To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
 And Dora said: 'My uncle took the boy;
 But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
 He says that he will never see me more.'
 Then answer'd Mary: 'This shall never be,
 That thou shouldst take my trouble on thy-
 self;
 And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
 For he will teach him hardness, and to
 slight
 His mother. Therefore thou and I will go,
 And I will have my boy, and bring him
 home;¹²⁰
 And I will heg of him to take thee back.
 But if he will not take thee back again,
 Then thou and I will live within one house,
 And work for William's child, until he
 grows
 Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd
 Each other, and set out, and reach'd the
 farm.
 The door was off the latch; they peep'd,
 and saw

The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's
knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on the
cheeks, ¹³⁰
Like one that loved him; and the lad
stretch'd out
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch and sparkled by the
fire.
Then they came in; but when the boy be-
held
His mother, he cried out to come to her;
And Allan set him down, and Mary said:
'O father! — if you will let me call you
so —
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child; but now I come
For Dora; take her back, she loves you
well. ¹⁴⁰
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying me —
I had been a patient wife; but, Sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus.
"God bless him!" he said, "and may he
never know
The troubles I have gone thro'!" Then
he turn'd
His face and pass'd — unhappy that I am!
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for
you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to
slight ¹⁵⁰
His father's memory; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before.'
So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs:
'I have been to blame — to blame. I
have kill'd my son.
I have kill'd him — but I loved him — my
dear son.
May God forgive me! — I have been to
blame.
Kiss me, my children.'
Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many
times. ¹⁶⁰
And all the man was broken with remorse;
And all his love came back a hundred-fold;
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er Wil-
liam's child
Thinking of William.

So those four ahode

Within one house together, and as years
Went forward Mary took another mate;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

AUDLEY COURT

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and not
a room
For love or money. Let us picnic there
At Audley Court.'
I spoke, while Audley feast
Hum'd like a hive all round the narrow
quay,
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
To Francis just alighted from the boat
And breathing of the sea. 'With all my
heart,'
Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro'
the swarm,
And rounded by the stillness of the beach
To where the bay runs up its latest horn. ¹⁰
We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd
The flat red granite; so by many a sweep
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we
reach'd
The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro'
all
The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,
And cross'd the garden to the gardener's
lodge,
With all its casements bedded, and its
walls
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.
There, on a slope of orchard, Francis
laid
A damask napkin wrought with horse and
hound, ²⁰
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of
home,
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret
lay,
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks
Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,
A flask of cider from his father's vats,
Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and
eat
And talk'd old matters over, — who was
dead,
Who married, who was like to be, and
how
The races went, and who would rent the
hall; ³⁰

Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was
 This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,
 The four-field system, and the price of grain;
 And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,
 And came again together on the king
 With heated faces; till he laugh'd aloud,
 And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung
 To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang:
 'O, who would fight and march and counter-march,
 Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field, ⁴⁰
 And shovell'd up into some bloody trench
 Where no one knows? but let me live my life.
 'O, who would cast and balance at a desk,
 Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,
 Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints
 Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.
 'Who'd serve the state? for if I carved my name
 Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,
 I might as well have traced it in the sands;
 The sea wastes all; but let me live my life.
 'O, who would love? I woo'd a woman once, ⁵¹
 But she was sharper than an eastern wind,
 And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn
 Turns from the sea; but let me live my life.'
 He sang his song, and I replied with mine.
 I found it in a volume, all of songs,
 Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,
 His books—the more the pity, so I said—
 Came to the hammer here in March—and this—
 I set the words, and added names I knew:
 'Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me: ⁶¹
 Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,
 And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.
 'Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;
 Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,
 For thou art fairer than all else that is.

'Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast;
 Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip.
 I go to-night; I come to-morrow morn.
 'I go, but I return; I would I were ⁷⁰
 The pilot of the darkness and the dream.
 Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me.'
 So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,
 The farmer's son, who lived across the bay,
 My friend; and I, that having where-withal,
 And in the fallow leisure of my life
 A rolling stone of here and everywhere,
 Did what I would. But ere the night we rose
 And saunter'd home beneath a moon that, just
 In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf ⁸⁰
 Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd
 The limit of the hills; and as we sank
 From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,
 The town was hush'd beneath us; lower down
 The bay was oily calm; the harbor-buoy,
 Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm,
 With one green sparkle ever and anon
 Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

WALKING TO THE MAIL

John. I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows look
 Above the river, and, but a month ago,
 The whole hillside was redder than a fox!
 Is yon plantation where this byway joins
 The turnpike?
James. Yes.
John. And when does this come by?
James. The mail? At one o'clock.
John. What is it now?
James. A quarter to.
John. Whose house is that I see?
 No, not the County Member's with the vane. ⁸
 Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and half
 A score of gables.
James. That? Sir Edward Head's.
 But he's abroad; the place is to be sold.
John. O, his! He was not broken.

James. No, sir, he,
Vext with a morbid devil in his blood
That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid his
face
From all men, and commercing with him-
self,
He lost the sense that handles daily life —
That keeps us all in order more or less —
And sick of home went overseas for
change.

John. And whither ?

James. Nay, who knows ? he 's here and
there.

But let him go; his devil goes with him, 20
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

John. What 's that ?

James. You saw the man — on Monday,
was it ? —

There by the humpback'd willow; half
stands up
And bristles, half has fallen and made a
bridge;
And there he caught the younker tickling
trout —
Caught in *flagrante* — what 's the Latin
word ? —

Delicto ; but his house, for so they say,
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook
The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at
doors,
And rummaged like a rat; no servant
stay'd. 30

The farmer vext packs up his beds and
chairs,
And all his household stuff; and with his boy
Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,
Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him,
'What !

You 're fitting !' 'Yes, we 're fitting,'
says the ghost —
For they had pack'd the thing among the
beds.

'O, well,' says he, 'you fitting with us
too ! —
Jack, turn the horses' heads and home
again.'

John. He left his wife behind; for so I
heard.

James. He left her, yes. I met my
lady once; 40
A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

John. O, yet but I remember, ten years
back —
T is now at least ten years — and then she
was —

You could not light upon a sweeter thing;
A body slight and round, and like a pear
In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin
As clean and white as privet when it flow-
ers.

James. Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and
they that loved

At first like dove and dove were cat and
dog. 50

She was the daughter of a cottager,
Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame
and pride,

New things and old, himself and her, she
sour'd

To what she is; a nature never kind !
Like men, like manners; like breeds like,
they say.

Kind nature is the best; those manners next
That fit us like a nature second-hand —
Which are indeed the manners of the great.

John. But I had heard it was this bill
that past,
And fear of change at home, that drove
him hence. 60

James. That was the last drop in the
cup of gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff
brought
A Chartist pike. You should have seen him
wine

As from a venomous thing; he thought
himself

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry
Should break his sleep by night, and his
nice eyes

Should see the raw mechanic's bloody
thumbs

Sweat on his blazon'd chairs. But, sir, you
know

That these two parties still divide the
world —

Of those that want, and those that have;
and still 70

The same old sore breaks out from age to
age

With much the same result. Now I my-
self,

A Tory to the quick, was as a boy
Destructive, when I had not what I would.

I was at school, — a college in the South.
There lived a flayflint near; we stole his
fruit,

His hens, his eggs; but there was law for
us ;

We paid in person. He had a sow, sir.
 She,
 With meditative grunts of much content,
 Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and
 mud.
 By night we dragg'd her to the college
 tower
 From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew
 stair
 With hand and rope we haled the groaning
 sow,
 And on the leads we kept her till she
 pigg'd.
 Large range of prospect had the mother
 sow,
 And but for daily loss of one she loved
 As one by one we took them — but for
 this —
 As never sow was higher in this world —
 Might have been happy; but what lot is
 pure?
 We took them all, till she was left alone
 90
 Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
 And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.
John. They found you out?
James. Not they.
John. Well — after all —
 What know we of the secret of a man?
 His nerves were wrong. What ails us who
 are sound,
 That we should mimic this raw fool the
 world,
 Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or
 whites,
 As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
 As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows
 99
 To pity — more from ignorance than will.
 But put your best foot forward, or I
 fear
 That we shall miss the mail; and here it
 comes
 With five at top, as quaint a four-in-hand
 As you shall see, — three pyebalds and a
 roan.

EDWIN MORRIS

OR, THE LAKE

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,
 My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a
 year,
 My one oasis in the dust and drouth

Of city life! I was a sketcher then.
 See here, my doing: curves of mountain,
 bridge,
 Boat, island, ruins of a castle, huilt
 When men knew how to build, upon a
 rock
 With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock;
 And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,
 New-comers from the Mersey, million-
 aires,
 Here lived the Hills — a Tudor-chimney'd
 bulk
 Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.
 O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake
 With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull
 The curate — he was fatter than his cure!
 But Edwin Morris, he that knew the
 names,
 Long learned names of agaric, moss, and
 fern,
 Who forged a thousand theories of the
 rocks,
 Who taught me how to skate, to row, to
 swim,
 Who read me rhymes elaborately good, 20
 His own — I call'd him Crichton, for he
 seem'd
 All-perfect, finish'd to the finger-nail.
 And once I ask'd him of his early life,
 And his first passion; and he answer'd me,
 And well his words became him — was he
 not
 A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence
 Stored from all flowers? Poet-like he
 spoke:
 'My love for Nature is as old as I;
 But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,
 And three rich sennights more, my love for
 her.
 30
 My love for Nature and my love for her,
 Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,
 Twin-sisters differently beautiful.
 To some full music rose and sank the sun,
 And some full music seem'd to move and
 change
 With all the varied changes of the dark,
 And either twilight and the day between;
 For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again
 Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet
 To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to
 breathe.'
 Or this or something like to this he
 spoke.
 Then said the fat-faced curate Edward
 Bull:

'I take it, God made the woman for the man,
And for the good and increase of the world.
A pretty face is well, and this is well,
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,
And keeps us tight; but these unreal ways
Seem but the theme of writers, and indeed
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid
stuff.

I say, God made the woman for the man, 50
And for the good and increase of the
world.'

'Parson,' said I, 'you pitch the pipe too
low.

But I have sudden touches, and can run
My faith beyond my practice into his;
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
I scarce have other music — yet say on.
What should one give to light on such a
dream?'

I ask'd him half-sardonically.

'Give? 59
Give all thou art,' he answer'd, and a light
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek;
'I would have hid her needle in my heart,
To save her little finger from a scratch
No deeper than the skin; my ears could
hear

Her lightest breath; her least remark was
worth

The experience of the wise. I went and
came;

Her voice fled always thro' the summer
land;

I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy
days!

The flower of each, those moments when
we met, 69

The crown of all, we met to part no more.'

Were not his words delicious, I a beast
To take them as I did? but something
jarr'd;

Whether he spoke too largely, that there
seem'd

A touch of something false, some self-con-
ceit,

Or over-smoothness; howsoe'er it was,
He scarcely hit my humor, and I said:

'Friend Edwin, do not think yourself
alone

Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and
left? 80

But you can talk, yours is a kindly vein;
I have, I think, — Heaven knows, — as
much within;

Have, or should have, but for a thought or
two,

That like a purple beech among the greens
Looks out of place. 'Tis from no want in
her;

It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,
Or something of a wayward modern mind
Dissecting passion. Time will set me
right.'

So spoke I, knowing not the things that
were.

Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward
Bull: 90

'God made the woman for the use of
man,

And for the good and increase of the
world.'

And I and Edwin laughed; and now we
paused

About the windings of the marge to hear
The soft wind blowing over meadowy
holms

And alders, garden-isles; and now we left
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran
By ripply shallows of the lispng lake,
Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But when the bracken rusted on their
crags, 100

My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him
That was a god, and is a lawyer's clerk,
The rent-roll Cupid of our rainy isles.

'T is true, we met; one hour I had, no
more:

She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,
The close, 'Your Letty, only yours;' and
this

Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of
morn

Clung to the lake. I hoated over, ran
My craft aground, and heard with beating
heart

The sweet-gale rustle round the shelving
keel; 110

And out I lept, and up I crept. She moved,
Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flow-
ers.

Then low and sweet I whistled thrice; and
she,

She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore
faith, I breathed

In some new planet. A silent cousin stole
Upon us and departed. 'Leave,' she cried,

'O, leave me!' 'Never, dearest, never:
 here
 I brave the worst;' and while we stood like
 fools
 Embracing, all at once a score of pugs
 And poodles yell'd within, and out they
 came,¹²⁰
 Trustees and aunts and uncles. 'What,
 with him!
 Go,' shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus;
 'him!'
 I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen,
 'Him!'
 Again with hands of wild rejection, 'Go! —
 Girl, get you in!' She went — and in one
 month
 They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,
 To lands in Kent and messuages in York,
 And slight Sir Robert with his watery
 smile
 And educated whisker. But for me,
 They set an ancient creditor to work;¹³⁰
 It seems I broke a close with force and
 arms:
 There came a mystic token from the king
 To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!
 I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd;
 Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below;
 I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the
 storm;
 So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen
 Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to
 hear.
 Nor cared to hear? perhaps; yet long
 ago
 I have pardon'd little Letty; not indeed,¹⁴⁰
 It may be, for her own dear sake, but
 this, —
 She seems a part of those fresh days to
 me;
 For in the dust and drouth of London life
 She moves among my visions of the lake,
 While the prime swallow dips his wing, or
 then
 While the gold-lily blows, and overhead
 The light cloud smoulders on the summer
 crag.

SAINT SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,
 From scalp to sole one slough and crust of
 sin,

Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce
 meet
 For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
 I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
 Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn, and
 sob,
 Battering the gates of heaven with storms
 of prayer,
 Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin!
 Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty
 God,
 This not be all in vain, that thrice ten
 years,¹⁰
 Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
 In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
 In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes
 and cramps,
 A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
 Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
 Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and
 sleet, and snow;
 And I had hoped that ere this period closed
 Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy
 rest,
 Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
 The meed of saints, the white robe and the
 palm.²⁰
 O, take the meaning, Lord! I do not
 breathe,
 Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.
 Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were
 still
 Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,
 Than were those lead-like tons of sin that
 crush'd
 My spirit flat before thee.
 O Lord, Lord,
 Thou knowest I bore this better at the
 first,
 For I was strong and hale of body then;
 And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt
 away,
 Would chatter with the cold, and all my
 beard³⁰
 Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,
 I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with
 sound
 Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes
 saw
 An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
 Now am I feeble grown; my end draws
 nigh.
 I hope my end draws nigh; half deaf I am,
 So that I scarce can hear the people hum
 About the column's base, and almost blind,

And scarce can recognize the fields I know;
And both my thighs are rotted with the
dew; 40

Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary
head,

Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the
stone,

Have mercy, mercy! take away my sin!
O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
Who may he saved? who is it may be
saved?

Who may be made a saint if I fail here?
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?
For either they were stoned, or crucified, 50
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here
To-day, and whole years long, a life of
death.

Bear witness, if I could have found a way —
And heedfully I sifted all my thought —
More slowly-painful to subdue this home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,
I had not stinted practice, O my God!

For not alone this pillar-punishment,
Not this alone I bore; but while I lived 60
In the white convent down the valley there,
For many weeks about my loins I wore
The rope that haled the buckets from the
well,

Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose,
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than
this

I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.
Three winters, that my soul might grow
to thee, 70

I lived up there on yonder mountain-side.
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist,
and twice

Black'd with thy branding thunder, and
sometimes

Sucking the damps for drink, and eating
not,

Except the spare chance-gift of those that
came

To touch my body and be heal'd, and live.
And they say then that I work'd miracles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst man-
kind, 80

Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou,
O God,

Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin!

Then, that I might be more alone with
thee,

Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
Six cubits, and three years on one of
twelve;

And twice three years I crouch'd on one
that rose

Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew
Twice ten long weary, weary years to this,
That numbers forty cubits from the soil. 90

I think that I have borne as much as
this —

Or else I dream — and for so long a time,
If I may measure time by yon slow light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow
crowns —

So much — even so.

And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones come here, and say,
'Fall down, O Simeon; thou hast suffer'd
long

For ages and for ages!' then they prate
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall, 100
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are
choked.

But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the
saints

Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on
earth

House in the shade of comfortable roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome
food,

And wear warm clothes, and even beasts
have stalls,

I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the
light,

Bow down one thousand and two hundred
times,

To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the
saints; 110

Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake; the chill stars sparkle; I am wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with crack-
ling frost.

I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back;
A grazing iron collar gruids my neck;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the
cross,

And strive and wrestle with thee till I die.

O, mercy, mercy! wash away my sin! ¹¹⁸

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin.

'T is their own doing; this is none of mine;

Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,

That here come those that worship me?

Ha! ha!

They think that I am somewhat. What
am I?

The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and flow-
ers;

And I, in truth — thou wilt bear witness
here —

Have all in all endured as much, and
more

Than many just and holy men, whose
names

Are register'd and calendar'd for saints. ¹³⁰

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.

What is it I can have done to merit this?

I am a sinner viler than you all.

It may be I have wrought some miracles,
And cured some halt and maim'd; but what
of that?

It may be no one, even among the saints,
May match his pains with mine; but what
of that?

Yet do not rise; for you may look on me,
And in your looking you may kneel to
God. ¹³⁹

Speak! is there any of you halt or maim'd?

I think you know I have some power with
Heaven

From my long penance; let him speak his
wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth
from me.

They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark!
they shout

'Saint Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,

God reaps a harvest in thee! If this be,
Can I work miracles and not be saved?

This is not told of any. They were saints.

It cannot be but that I shall be saved, ¹⁵⁰

Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, 'Behold
a saint!'

And lower voices saint me from above.

Courage, Saint Simeon! This dull chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere
death

Spreads more and more and more, that
God hath now

Sponged and made blank of crimeful record
all

My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,

I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname

Stylites, among men; I, Simeon, ¹⁵⁹

The watcher on the column till the end;

I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;

I, whose bald brows in silent hours become

Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now

From my high nest of penance here pro-
claim

That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I

lay,

A vessel full of sin; all hell beneath
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my

sleeve,
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.

I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd
again. ¹⁷⁰

In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd
my chest;

They flapp'd my light out as I read; I saw
Their faces grow between me and my

book;
With coltlike whinny and with hoggish

whine
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was

left,
And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify

Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with
thorns;

Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may
be, fast

Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with
slow steps,

With slow, faint steps, and much exceed-
ing pain, ¹⁸⁰

Have scrambled past those pits of fire,
that still

Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the
praise;

God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,
Among the powers and princes of this

world,
To make me an example to mankind,

Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say
But that a time may come — yea, even

now,
Now, now, his footsteps smite the thresh-
old stairs

Of life — I say, that time is at the doors
When you may worship me without re-
proach; ¹⁹⁰

For I will leave my relics in your land,
 And you may carve a shrine about my
 dust,
 And burn a fragrant lamp before my
 bones,

When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.
 While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest
 pain

Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike
 change,

In passing, with a grosser film made thick
 These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!
 Surely the end! What's here? a shape,
 a shade,

A flash of light. Is that the angel there
 That holds a crown? Come, blessed bro-
 ther, come! 201

I know thy glittering face. I waited
 long;

My brows are ready. What! deny it now?
 Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch
 it. Christ!

'T is gone; 't is here again; the crown!
 the crown!

So now 't is fitted on and grows to me,
 And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
 Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and
 frankincense.

Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints; I
 trust

That I am whole, and clean, and meet for
 Heaven. 210

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of
 God,

Among you there, and let him presently
 Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
 And climbing up into my airy home,
 Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
 For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
 I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
 A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,
 Aid all this foolish people; let them take
 Example, pattern; lead them to thy light.

THE TALKING OAK

ONCE more the gate behind me falls;
 Once more before my face
 I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
 That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
 Beneath its drift of smoke;
 And ah! with what delighted eyes
 I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
 Ere that which in me burn'd, 10
 The love that makes me thrice a man,
 Could hope itself return'd,

To yonder oak within the field
 I spoke without restraint,
 And with a larger faith appeal'd
 Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
 And told him of my choice,
 Until he plagiarized a heart,
 And answer'd with a voice. 20

Tho' what he whisper'd under heaven
 None else could understand,
 I found him garrulously given,
 A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
 Is many a weary hour;
 'T were well to question him, and try
 If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
 Broad Oak of Summer-chace, 30
 Whose topmost branches can discern
 The roofs of Summer-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
 If ever maid or spouse,
 As fair as my Olivia, came
 To rest beneath thy boughs.

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here
 Whatever maiden grace
 The good old summers, year by year,
 Made ripe in Sumner-chace; 40

'Old summers, when the monk was fat,
 And, issuing shorn and sleek,
 Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
 The girls upon the cheek,

'Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
 And number'd bead, and shrift,
 Bluff Harry broke into the spence
 And turn'd the cowls adrift.

' And I have seen some score of those
Fresh faces that would thrive
When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five;

50

' And all that from the town would stroll,
Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork;

' The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
For puritanic stays.

60

' And I have shadow'd many a group
Of beauties that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn;

' And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leap'd and laugh'd
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

' I swear — and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall! —
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all;

70

' For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

' From when she gamboll'd on the greens
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

80

' I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain —
And hear me with thine ears —
That, tho' I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years,

' Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass;

' For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh.'

90

O, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
And overlook the chace,
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Summer-place!

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

100

' O, yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town;
Her father left his good arm-chair,
And rode his hunter down.

' And with him Albert came on his.
I look'd at him with joy;
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
So seems she to the boy.

' An hour had past — and, sitting straight
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled grays.

110

' But as for her, she staid at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you used to come,
She look'd with discontent.

' She left the novel half-uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf;
She left the new piano shut;
She could not please herself.

120

' Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice thro' all the holt
Before her, and the park.

' A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child;

' But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower she touch'd on dipt and rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

130

' And here she came, and round me play'd,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my "giant bole;"

'And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist.
Alas ! I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

140

'I wish'd myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have lock'd her hands.

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet
As woodbine's fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold.'

O, muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Summer-chace !
Long may thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Summer-place !

150

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart I came
To rest beneath thy boughs ?

'O, yes, she wander'd round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kiss'd the name she found,
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

160

'A teardrop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.

'Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,
She glanced across the plain,
But not a creature was in sight;
She kiss'd me once again.

'Her kisses were so close and kind
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr'd;

170

'And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern'd,
Like those blind motions of the spring
That show the year is turn'd.

'Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm —
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden's tender palm.

180

'I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust;

'For ah ! my friend, the days were brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that which breathes within the leaf
Could slip its bark and walk.

'But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray and branch and stem
Have suck'd and gather'd into one
The life that spreads in them,

190

'She had not found me so remiss;
But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,
With usury thereto.'

O, flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea !
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,
But leave thou mine to me.

200

O, flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well !
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

'T is little more: the day was warm;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm
And at my feet she lay.

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.
I breathed upon her eyes
Thro' all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

210

'I took the swarming sound of life —
The music from the town —
The murmurs of the drum and fife,
And lull'd them in my own.

'Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye;
A second flutter'd round her lip
Like a golden butterfly;

220

'A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine.

'Then close and dark my arms I spread,
And shadow'd all her rest —
Dropt dews upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

'But in a pet she started up,
And pluck'd it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup, 230
And flung him in the dew.

'And yet it was a graceful gift —
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

'I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O, kiss him once for me ! 240

'O, kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss !
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this.'

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further thro' the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Summer-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
That but a moment lay 250
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To riper life may magnetize
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land. 260

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint,
That art the fairest-spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

O, rock upon thy towery top
All throats that gurgle sweet !
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

All grass of silky feather grow —
And while he sinks or swells 270
The full south-breeze around thee blow
The sound of minster bells !

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes !
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes !

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep ! 280

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both 290
Than bard has honor'd beech or lime,
Or that Thessalian growth

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke;
And more than England honors that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And humm'd a surly hymn. 300

LOVE AND DUTY

Of love that never found his earthly
close,
What sequel ? Streaming eyes and break-
ing hearts ?
Or all the same as if he had not been ?
Not so. Shall Error in the round of
time
Still father Truth ? O, shall the braggart
shout

For some blind glimpse of freedom work
itself

Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law,
System, and empire? Sin itself be found
The cloudy porch oft opening on the sun?
• And only he, this wonder, dead, become¹⁰
Merc highway dust? or year by year alone
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of him-
self?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were
all,

Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless
days,

The long mechanic pascings to and fro,
The set gray life, and apathetic end.
But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?
O, three times less unworthy! likewise²⁰
thou

Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy
years,

The sun will run his orbit, and the moon
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will
bring

The drooping flower of knowledge changed
to fruit

Of wisdom. Wait; my faith is large in
Time,
And that which shapes it to some perfect
end.

Will some ooe say, Then why not ill for
good?

Why took ye not your pastime? To that
man

My work shall answer, since I knew the
right

And did it; for a man is not as God,³⁰
But then most Godlike being most a
man. —

So let me think 't is well for thee and
me —

Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart
so slow

To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to
me,

When eyes, love-languid thro' half tears
would dwell

One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,
Then not to dare to see! when thy low
voice,

Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep
My own full-tuned, — hold passion in a
leash,⁴⁰

And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,
And on thy bosom — deep desired relief! —
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that
weigh'd

Upon my brain, my senses, and my soul!
For Love himself took part against him-
self

To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love —
O, this world's curse — beloved but hated
— came

Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and
mine,

And crying, 'Who is this? behold thy
bride,'⁴⁹

She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard

To alien ears, I did not speak to these —
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me.
Hard is my doom and thine; thou knowest
it all.

Could Love part thus? was it not well to
speak,

To have spoken once? It could not but
be well.

The slow sweet hours that bring us all
things good,

The slow sad hours that bring us all things
ill,

And all good things from evil, brought the
night

In which we sat together and alone,
And to the want that hollow'd all the
heart⁶⁰

Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,
That burn'd upon its object thro' such tears
As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way

To those caresses, when a hundred times
In that last kiss, which never was the last,
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and
died.

Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the
words

That make a man feel strong in speaking
truth;

Till now the dark was worn, and over-
head

The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd
In that brief night, the summer night, that
paused⁷¹

Among her stars to hear us, stars that hung
Love-charm'd to listen; all the wheels of
Time

Spun round in station, but the end had
come.

O, then, like those who clench their
 nerves to rush
 Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
 There — closing like an individual life —
 In one blind cry of passion and of pain,
 Like bitter accusation even to death,
 Caught up the whole of love and utter'd
 it, 80
 And bade adieu for ever.

Live — yet live —

Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing
 all
 Life needs for life is possible to will? —
 Live happy; tend thy flowers; be tended
 by
 My blessing! Should my Shadow cross
 thy thoughts
 Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou
 For calmer hours to Memory's darkest
 hold,
 If not to be forgotten — not at once —
 Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy
 dreams,
 O, might it come like one that looks con-
 tent, 90
 With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,
 And point thee forward to a distant light,
 Or seem to lift a hurthen from thy heart
 And leave thee freer, till thou wake re-
 fresh'd
 Then when the first low matin-chirp hath
 grown
 Full quire, and morning driven her plow
 of pearl
 Far furrowing into light the mounded
 rack,
 Beyond the fair green field and eastern
 sea.

THE GOLDEN YEAR

WELL, you shall have that song which
 Leonard wrote:
 It was last summer on a tour in Wales.
 Old James was with me; we that day had
 been
 Up Snowdon; and I wish'd for Leonard
 there,
 And found him in Llanberis. Then we
 crost
 Between the lakes, and clamber'd half-way
 up

The counter side; and that same song of
 his
 He told me, for I banter'd him and swore
 They said he lived shut up within himself,
 A tongue-tied poet in the feverous days 10
 That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,
 Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech,
 'Give,
 Cram us with all,' but count not me the
 herd!
 To which 'They call me what they will,'
 he said:
 'But I was born too late; the fair new
 forms,
 That float about the threshold of an age,
 Like truths of Science waiting to be
 caught —
 Catch me who can, and make the catcher
 crown'd —
 Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.
 But if you care indeed to listen, hear 20
 These measured words, my work of yester-
 morn:
 'We sleep and wake and sleep, but all
 things move;
 The sun flies forward to his brother sun;
 The dark earth 'follows wheel'd in her
 ellipse;
 And human things returning on themselves
 Move onward, leading up the golden year.
 'Ah! tho' the times when some new
 thought can hud
 Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,
 Yet seas that daily gain upon the shore
 Have ebb and flow conditioning their
 march, 30
 And slow and sure comes up the golden
 year;
 'When wealth no more shall rest in
 mounded heaps,
 But smit with freer light shall slowly melt
 In many streams to fatten lower lands,
 And light shall spread, and man be liker
 man
 Thro' all the season of the golden year.
 'Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be
 wrens?
 If all the world were falcons, what of that?
 The wonder of the eagle were the less,
 But he not less the eagle. Happy days 40
 Roll onward, leading up the golden year.
 'Fly, happy, happy sails, and bear the
 Press;
 Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;
 Knit land to land, and blowing havenward

With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of
toll,

Enrich the markets of the golden year.

'But we grow old. Ah! when shall all
men's good

Be each man's rule, and universal Peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land, 49
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Thro' all the circle of the golden year?'

Thus far he flew'd, and ended; where-
upon

'Ah, folly!' in mimic cadence answer'd
James —

'Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,
Not in our time, nor in our children's time,
'Tis like the second world to us that live;
'T were all as one to fix our hopes on
heaven

As on this vision of the golden year.'

With that he struck his staff against the
rocks

And broke it, — James, — you know him,
— old, but full 60

Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,
O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis;
Then added, all in heat:

'What stuff is this!

Old writers push'd the happy season back, —
The more fools they, — we forward; dream-
ers both —

You most, that, in an age when every hour
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman,
rapt

Upon the teeming harvest, should not
plunge 70

His hand into the bag; but well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he
works,

This same grand year is ever at the doors.'
He spoke; and, high above, I heard them
blast

The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo
flap

And buffet round the hills, from bluff to
bluff.

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren
crag,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and
dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know
not me.

I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with
those

That loved me, and alone; on shore, and
when

Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades 10
Vext the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always reaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known, — cities of
men

And manners, climates, councils, govern-
ments,

Myself not least, but honor'd of them
all, —

And drunk delight of battle with my
peers,

Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.

I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose mar-
gin fades 20

For ever and for ever when I move.

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled
on life

Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains; but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard
myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human
thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the
isle, —

Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail 40
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I
mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her
sail;
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My
mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and
thought with me, —
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and op-
posed
Free hearts, free foreheads, — you and I
are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil. 50
Death closes all; but something ere the
end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with
Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs;
the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come,
my friends.
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose
holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us
down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy
Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we
knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and
tho'
We are not now that strength which in old
days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we
are, we are, —
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in
will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to
yield. 70

TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay and
fall,
The vapors weep their burthen to the
ground,

Man comes and tills the field and lies be-
neath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes; I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a
dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of
morn. 10
Alas! for this gray shadow, once a
man —
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he
seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a
smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they
give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd
their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted
me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me
maim'd 20
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with
tears
To hear me? Let me go; take back thy
gift.
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance 30
Where all should pause, as is most meet
for all?
A soft air fans the cloud apart; there
comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was
born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer
steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoul-
ders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the
gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to
mine,

Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild
team

Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke,
arise,

And shake the darkness from their loosen'd
manes,

And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy
tears,

And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?

'The Gods themselves cannot recall their
gifts.'

Ay me! ay me! with what another
heart

In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch — if I be he that watch'd —

The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt
my blood

Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd
all

Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-
warm

With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that
kiss'd

Whispering I knew not what of wild and
sweet,

Like that strange song I heard Apollo
sing,

While Iliion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East;
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled
feet

Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the
steam

Floats up from those dim fields about the
homes

Of happy men that have the power to
die,

And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground.
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my
grave;

Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn,
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as
yet 't is early morn;

Leave me here, and when you want me,
sound upon the bugle-horn.

'T is the place, and all around it, as of old,
the curlews call,

Dreary gleams about the moorland flying
over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance over-
looks the sandy tracts,

And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into
cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement,
ere I went to rest,

Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly
to the west.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising
thro' the mellow shade,

Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled in
a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nour-
ishing a youth sublime

With the fairy tales of science, and the
long result of time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruit-
ful land reposed;

When I clung to all the present for the
promise that it closed;

When I dipt into the future far as human
eye could see,

Saw the vision of the world and all the
wonder that would be. —

In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon
the robin's breast;

In the spring the wanton lapwing gets him-
self another crest;

In the spring a livelier iris changes on the
burnish'd dove;

In the spring a young man's fancy lightly
turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than
 should be for one so young,
 And her eyes on all my motions with a
 mute observance hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and
 speak the truth to me,
 Trust me, cousin, all the current of my
 being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a
 color and a light,
 As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the
 northern night.

And she turn'd — her bosom shaken with
 a sudden storm of sighs —
 All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark
 of hazel eyes —

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing
 they should do me wrong;'
 Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weep-
 ing, 'I have loved thee long.' 30

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd
 it in his glowing hands;
 Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself
 in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote
 on all the chords with might;
 Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling,
 past in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we
 hear the copses ring,
 And her whisper throng'd my pulses with
 the fulness of the spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we
 watch the stately ships,
 And our spirits rush'd together at the
 touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my
 Amy, mine no more!
 O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the
 barren, barren shore! 40

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than
 all songs have sung,
 Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to
 a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy? — having
 known me — to decline
 On a range of lower feelings and a nar-
 rower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be; thou shalt lower to his level
 day by day,
 What is fine within thee growing coarse to
 sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou art
 mated with a clown,
 And the grossness of his nature will have
 weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall
 have spent its novel force,
 Something better than his dog, a little
 dearer than his horse. 50

What is this? his eyes are heavy; think
 not they are glazed with wine.
 Go to him, it is thy duty; kiss him, take
 his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain
 is overwrought;
 Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch
 him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things
 to understand —
 Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I
 slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from
 the heart's disgrace,
 Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in
 a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against
 the strength of youth!
 Cursed be the social lies that warp us from
 the living truth! 60

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from
 honest Nature's rule!
 Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd
 forehead of the fool!

Well — 't is well that I should bluster! —
 Hadst thou less unworthy proved —
 Would to God — for I had loved thee more
 than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that
which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my
heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such
length of years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the
clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the rec-
ords of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her,
as I knew her, kind? 70

I remember one that perish'd; sweetly did
she speak and move;
Such a one do I remember, whom to look
at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her
for the love she bore?
No — she never loved me truly; love is
love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this
is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remem-
bering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest
thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the
rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou
art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and
the shadows rise and fall. 80

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing
to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the
tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whis-
per'd by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the
ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient
kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow; get
thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a
tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine, a lip to drain
thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down; my latest
rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from
the mother's breast. 90

O, the child too clothes the father with a
dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his; it will be
worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy
petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching
down a daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings
— she herself was not exempt —
Truly, she herself had suffer'd' — Perish in
thy self-contempt!

Overlive it — lower yet — be happy! where-
fore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I
wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, light-
ning upon days like these?
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens
but to golden keys. 100

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the
markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy; what is that
which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the
foeman's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapor, and
the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the
hurt that Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at
each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn
that earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou
wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt
before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the
tumult of my life; 110

Yearning for the large excitement that the
coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves
his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway
near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring
like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone
before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among
the throngs of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever
reaping something new;
That which they have done but earnest of
the things that they shall do.

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye
could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the
wonder that would be; 120

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argo-
sies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping
down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and
there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in
the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the
south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plung-
ing thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and
the battle-flags were fur'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation
of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold
a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in
universal law. 130

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping
thro' me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me
with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things
here are out of joint.
Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping
on from point to point;

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion,
creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a
slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increas-
ing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with
the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest
of his youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for
ever like a boy's? 140

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and
I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world
is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and
he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the
stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sound-
ing on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a
target for their scorn.

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such
a moulder'd string?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have
loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness!
woman's pleasure, woman's pain —
Nature made them blinder motions bounded
in a shallower brain. 150

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy
passions, match'd with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as
water unto wine —

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing.

Ah, for some retreat

Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my
life began to beat,

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my
father evil-starr'd; —

I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish
uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit — there to
wander far away,

On from island unto island at the gateways
of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow
moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster,
knots of Paradise. 160

Never comes the trader, never floats an
European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland,
swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs
the heavy-fruited tree —
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple
spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more
than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the
thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall
have scope and breathing space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall
rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive,
and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl
their lances in the sun; 170

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the
rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over mis-
erable books —

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I
know my words are wild,

But I count the gray barbarian lower than
the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of
our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a
beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage — what to me
were sun or clime?

I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost
files of time —

I that rather held it better men should per-
ish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like
Joshua's moon in Ajalon! 180

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward,
forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the
ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep
into the younger day;
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle
of Cathay.

Mother-Age, — for mine I knew not, — help
me as when life begun;
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the
lightnings, weigh the sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit
hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all
my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell
to Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for
me the roof-tree fall. 190

Comes a vapor from the margin, blacken-
ing over heath andholt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its
breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or
hail, or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring sea-
ward, and I go.

GODIVA

*I WAITED for the train at Coventry;
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
To watch the three tall spires; and there I
shaped*

The city's ancient legend into this: —

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that
prate

Of rights and wrongs, have loved the peo-
ple well,

And loathed to see them overtax'd; but
she

Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled
In Coventry; for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers
brought

Their children, clamoring, 'If we pay, we
starve!'

She sought her lord, and found him, where
he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their
tears,

And pray'd him, 'If they pay this tax, they
starve.'

Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,
'You would not let your little finger ache
For such as *these*?' — 'But I would die,'
said she.

He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by
Paul,

Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear:
'O, ay, ay, ay, you talk!' — 'Alas!' she
said,

'But prove me what it is I would not do.'
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
He answer'd, 'Ride you naked thro' the
town,

And I repeat it;' and nodding, as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides among his
dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,
As winds from all the compass shift and
blow,

Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,

And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet,
all

The hard condition, but that she would
loose

The people; therefore, as they loved her
well,

From then till noon no foot should pace
the street,

No eye look down, she passing, but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window
barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and
there

Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,
The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a breath
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipt in cloud. Anon she shook her
head,

And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her
knee;

Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair
Stole on; and like a creeping sunbeam slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd
The gateway; there she found her palfrey
trapt

In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with
chastity.

The deep air listen'd round her as she
rode,

And all the low wind hardly breathed for
fear.

The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the
spout

Had cunning eyes to see; the barking cur
Made her cheek flame; her palfrey's foot-
fall shot

Light horrors thro' her pulses; the blind
walls

Were full of chinks and holes; and over-
head

Fantastic gables, crowding, stared; but she
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the
field

Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the
wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with
chastity.

And one low churl, compact of thankless
earth,

The fatal byword of all years to come,

Boring a little auger-hole in fear,

Peep'd — but his eyes, before they had
their will,

Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,
 And dropt before him. So the Powers,
 who wait 71
 On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused;
 And she, that knew not, pass'd; and all at
 once,
 With twelve great shocks of sound, the
 shameless noon
 Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hun-
 dred towers,
 One after one; but even then she gain'd
 Her bower, whence reissuing, robed and
 crown'd,
 To meet her lord, she took the tax away
 And built herself an everlasting name.

THE DAY-DREAM

PROLOGUE

O LADY FLORA, let me speak;
 A pleasant hour has passed away
 While, dreaming on your damask cheek,
 The dewy sister-eyelids lay.
 As by the lattice you reclined,
 I went thro' many wayward moods
 To see you dreaming — and, behind,
 A summer crisp with shining woods.
 And I too dream'd, until at last
 Across my fancy, brooding warm, 10
 The reflex of a legend past,
 And loosely settled into form.
 And would you have the thought I had,
 And see the vision that I saw,
 Then take the broidery-frame, and add
 A crimson to the quaint macaw,
 And I will tell it. Turn your face,
 Nor look with that too-earnest eye —
 The rhymes are dazzled from their place
 And order'd words asunder fly. 20

THE SLEEPING PALACE

I

THE VARYING year with blade and sheaf
 Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,
 Here rests the sap within the leaf,
 Here stays the blood along the veins.
 Faint shadows, vapors lightly curl'd,
 Faint murmurs from the meadows come,

Like hints and echoes of the world
 To spirits folded in the womb.

II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
 On every slanting terrace-lawn.
 The fountain to his place returns
 Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
 Here droops the banner on the tower,
 On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
 The peacock in his laurel bower,
 The parrot in his gilded wires.

III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs;
 In these, in those the life is stay'd.
 The mantles from the golden pegs
 Droop sleepily; no sound is made, 40
 Not even of a gnat that sings.
 More like a picture seemeth all
 Than those old portraits of old kings,
 That watch the sleepers from the wall.

IV

Here sits the butler with a flask
 Between his knees, half-drain'd; and
 there
 The wrinkled steward at his task,
 The maid-of-honor blooming fair.
 The page has caught her hand in his;
 Her lips are sever'd as to speak; 50
 His own are pouted to a kiss;
 The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V

Till all the hundred summers pass,
 The beams that thro' the oriel shine
 Make prisms in every carven glass
 And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.
 Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
 Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
 His state the king reposing keeps.
 He must have been a jovial king. 60

VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
 At distance like a little wood;
 Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
 And grapes with bunches red as blood;
 All creeping plants, a wall of green
 Close-matted, bur and brake and brier,
 And glimpsing over these, just seen,
 High up, the topmost palace spire.

VII

When will the hundred summers die,
 And thought and time be born again, 70
 And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
 Bring truth that sways the soul of
 men ?
 Here all things in their place remain,
 As all were order'd, ages since.
 Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
 And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

I

YEAR after year unto her feet,
 She lying on her couch alone,
 Across the purple coverlet 79
 The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
 On either side her tranced form
 Forth streaming from a braid of pearl;
 The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
 And moves not on the rounded curl.

II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
 Unto her limbs itself doth mould
 Languidly ever; and, amid
 Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,
 Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm
 With bracelets of the diamond bright. 90
 Her constant beauty doth inform
 Stillness with love, and day with light.

III

She sleeps; her breathings are not heard
 In palace chambers far apart.
 The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
 That lie upon her charmed heart.
 She sleeps; on either hand upswells
 The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest;
 She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells 100
 A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL :

I

ALL precious things, discover'd late,
 To those that seek them issue forth;
 For love in sequel works with fate,
 And draws the veil from hidden worth.
 He travels far from other skies —
 His mantle glitters on the rocks —

A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
 And lighter-footed than the fox.

II

The bodies and the bones of those
 That strove in other days to pass 110
 Are wither'd in the thorny close,
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.
 He gazes on the silent dead:
 'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'
 This proverb flashes thro' his head,
 'The many fail, the one succeeds.'

III

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks;
 He breaks the hedge; he enters there;
 The color flies into his cheeks;
 He trusts to light on something fair; 120
 For all his life the charm did talk
 About his path, and hover near
 With words of promise in his walk,
 And whisper'd voices at his ear.

IV

More close and close his footsteps wind;
 The Magic Music in his heart,
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find
 The quiet chamber far apart.
 His spirit flutters like a lark,
 He stoops — to kiss her — on his knee.
 'Love, if thy tresses be so dark, 131
 How dark those hidden eyes must be !'

THE REVIVAL

I

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
 And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;
 A fuller light illumined all,
 A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt. 140

II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
 The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,
 The palace bang'd and buzz'd and clackt,
 And all the long-pent stream of life
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

III

And last with these the king awoke,
 And in his chair himself uprear'd, 150
 And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and
 spoke,
 'By holy rood, a royal beard!
 How say you? we have slept, my lords.
 My beard has grown into my lap.'
 The barons swore, with many words,
 'T was but an after-dinner's nap.

IV

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still
 My joints are somewhat stiff or so.
 My lord, and shall we pass the bill
 I mention'd half an hour ago?' 160
 The chancellor, sedate and vain,
 In courteous words return'd reply,
 But dallied with his golden chain,
 And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE

I

AND on her lover's arm she leant,
 And round her waist she felt it fold,
 And far across the hills they went
 In that new world which is the old;
 Across the hills, and far away
 Beyond their utmost purple rim, 170
 And deep into the dying day,
 The happy princess follow'd him.

II

'I'd sleep another hundred years,
 O love, for such another kiss;
 'O, wake for ever, love,' she hears;
 'O love, 't was such as this and this.'
 And o'er them many a sliding star
 And many a merry wind was borne,
 And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
 The twilight melted into morn. 180

III

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep!
 'O happy sleep, that lightly fled!
 'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!
 'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!
 And o'er them many a flowing range
 Of vapor buoy'd the crescent-bark,
 And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
 The twilight died into the dark.

IV

'A hundred summers! can it be?
 And whither goest thou, tell me where?
 'O, seek my father's court with me, 191
 For there are greater wonders there.'
 And o'er the hills, and far away
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,
 Beyond the night, across the day,
 Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

MORAL

I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
 And if you find no moral there,
 Go, look in any glass and say,
 What moral is in being fair. 200
 O, to what uses shall we put
 The wildweed-flower that simply blows?
 And is there any moral shut
 Within the bosom of the rose?

II

But any man that walks the mead,
 In bud or blade or bloom, may find,
 According as his humors lead,
 A meaning suited to his mind.
 And liberal applications lie
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend; 210
 So 't were to cramp its use if I
 Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOI

I

You shake your head. A random string
 Your finer female sense offends.
 Well — were it not a pleasant thing
 To fall asleep with all one's friends;
 To pass with all our social ties
 To silence from the paths of men,
 And every hundred years to rise
 And learn the world, and sleep again; 220
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
 And wake on science grown to more,
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,
 As wild as aught of fairy lore;
 And all that else the years will show,
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
 The vast Republics that may grow,
 The Federations and the Powers;

Titanic forces taking birth
 In divers seasons, divers climes ? 230
 For we are Ancients of the earth,
 And in the morning of the times.

II

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
 Thro' sunny decads new and strange,
 Or gay quinqueniads, would we reap
 The flower and quintessence of change.

III

Ah, yet would I — and would I might !
 So much your eyes my fancy take —
 Be still the first to leap to light
 That I might kiss those eyes awake ! 240
 For, am I right, or am I wrong,
 To choose your own you did not care ;
 You 'd have *my* moral from the song,
 And I will take my pleasure there ;
 And, am I right or am I wrong,
 My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',
 To search a meaning for the song,
 Perforce will still revert to you,
 Nor finds a closer truth than this
 All-graceful head, so richly curl'd, 250
 And evermore a costly kiss
 The prelude to some brighter world.

IV

For since the time when Adam first
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
 And every bird of Eden burst
 In carol, every bud to flower,
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes,
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd ?
 Where on the double rosebud droops
 The fulness of the pensive mind ; 260
 Which, all too dearly self-involved,
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me, —
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,
 That lets thee neither hear nor see :
 But break it. In the name of wife,
 And in the rights that name may give,
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
 And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
 And if you find a meaning there, 270
 O, whisper to your glass, and say,
 ' What wonder if he thinks me fair ? '
 What wonder I was all unwise,
 To shape the song for your delight

Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise
 That float thro' heaven, and cannot light ?
 Or old-world trains, upheld at court
 By Cupid-boys of blooming hue —
 But take it — earnest wed with sport,
 And either sacred unto you. 280

AMPHION

My father left a park to me,
 But it is wild and barren,
 A garden too with scarce a tree,
 And waster than a warren ;
 Yet say the neighbors when they call
 It is not bad but good land,
 And in it is the germ of all
 That grows within the woodland.

O, had I lived when song was great
 In days of old Amphion, 10
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
 Nor cared for seed or scion !
 And had I lived when song was great,
 And legs of trees were limber,
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
 And fiddled in the timber !

'T is said he had a tuneful tongue,
 Such happy intonation,
 Wherever he sat down and sung
 He left a small plantation ; 20
 Wherever in a lonely grove
 He set up his forlorn pipes,
 The gouty oak began to move,
 And flonnder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,
 And, as tradition teaches,
 Young ashes pirouetted down
 Coquetting with young beeches ;
 And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
 Ran forward to his rhyming, 30
 And from the valleys underneath
 Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent
 The woodbine wreaths that bind her,
 And down the middle, buzz ! she went
 With all her bees behind her ;
 The poplars, in long order due,
 With cypress promenaded,

The shock-head willows two and two
By rivers galloped. 40

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,
Came yews, a dismal coterie;
Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,
Poussetting with a sloe-tree;
Old elms came breaking from the vine,
The vine stream'd out to follow,
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
From many a cloudy hollow.

And was n't it a sight to see,
When, ere his song was ended, 50
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
The country-side descended;
And shepherds from the mountain-eaves
Look'd down, half-pleas'd, half-fright-
en'd,
As dash'd about the drunken leaves
The random sunshine lighten'd ?

O, Nature first was fresh to men,
And wanton without measure;
So youthful and so flexile then,
You moved her at your pleasure. 60
Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the twigs !
And make her dance attendance;
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
And scirrhous roots and tendons !

'T is vain ! in such a brassy age
I could not move a thistle;
The very sparrows in the hedge
Scarce answer to my whistle;
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
With strumming and with scraping, 70
A jackass heehaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading;
O Lord ! — 't is in my neighbor's ground,
The modern Muses reading,
They read Botanic Treatises,
And Works on Gardening thro' there,
And Methods of Transplanting Trees
To look as if they grew there. 80

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose
O'er books of travell'd seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbors clipt and cut,
And alleys, faded places,

By squares of tropic summer shut
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor sappy; 90
Half-conscions of the garden-squirt,
The spindlings look unhappy.
Better to me the meanest weed
That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,
And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil
To grow my own plantation. 100
I'll take the showers as they fall,
I will not vex my hosom;
Enough if at the end of all
A little garden blossom.

SAINT AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon;
My breath to heaven like vapor goes;
May my soul follow soon !
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord.
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;

All heaven bursts her starry floors,
 And strows her lights below,
 And deepens on and up! the gates
 Roll back, and far within
 For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
 To make me pure of sin.
 The Sabbaths of Eternity,
 One Sabbath deep and wide —
 A light upon the shining sea —
 The Bridegroom with his bride!

SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,
 My strength is as the strength of ten,
 Because my heart is pure.
 The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
 The hard brands shiver on the steel,
 The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
 The horse and rider reel;
 They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
 And when the tide of combat stands, 10
 Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
 'That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
 On whom their favors fall!
 For them I battle till the end,
 To save from shame and thrall;
 But all my heart is drawn above,
 My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine;
 I never felt the kiss of love,
 Nor maiden's hand in mine. 20
 More bounteous aspects on me beam,
 Me mightier transports move and thrill;
 So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
 A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
 A light before me swims,
 Between dark stems the forest glows,
 I hear a noise of hymns.
 Then by some secret shrine I ride;
 I hear a voice, but none are there; 30
 The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
 The tapers burning fair.
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
 And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
 I find a magic bark.
 I leap on board; no helmsman steers;
 I float till all is dark. 40
 A gentle sound, an awful light!
 Three angels bear the Holy Grail;
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,
 On sleeping wings they sail.
 Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,
 As down dark tides the glory slides,
 And starlike mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
 Thro' dreaming towns I go, 50
 The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
 The streets are dumb with snow.
 The tempest crackles on the leads,
 And, ringing, springs from brand and
 mail;
 But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
 And gilds the driving hail.
 I leave the plain, I climb the height;
 No branchy thicket shelter yields;
 But blessed forms in whistling storms 60
 Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight — to me is given
 Such hope, I know not fear;
 I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
 That often meet me here.
 I muse on joy that will not cease,
 Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
 Pure lilies of eternal peace,
 Whose odors haunt my dreams;
 And, stricken by an angel's hand, 70
 This mortal armor that I wear,
 This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
 Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
 And thro' the mountain-walls
 A rolling organ-harmony
 Swells up and shakes and falls.
 Then move the trees, the copses nod,
 Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
 'O just and faithful knight of God!
 Ride on! the prize is near.' 80
 So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
 By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
 All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
 Until I find the Holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town
 Met me walking on yonder way;
 'And have you lost your heart?' she
 said;
 'And are you married yet, Edward
 Gray?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me;
 Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:
 'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more
 Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,
 Against her father's and mother's will;
 To-day I sat for an hour and wept
 By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

'Shy she was, and I thought her cold,
 Thought her proud, and fled over the
 sea;
 Fill'd I was with folly and spite,
 When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said!
 Cruelly came they back to-day:
 "You 're too slight and fickle," I said,
 "To trouble the heart of Edward Gray."

'There I put my face in the grass —
 Whisper'd, "Listen to my despair;
 I repent me of all I did;
 Speak a little, Ellen Adair!"

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote
 On the mossy stone, as I lay,
 "Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;
 And here the heart of Edward Gray!"

'Love may come, and love may go,
 And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree;
 But I will love no more, no more,
 Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

'Bitterly wept I over the stone;
 Bitterly weeping I turn'd away.
 There lies the body of Ellen Adair!
 And there the heart of Edward Gray!'

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL
MONOLOGUE

MADE AT THE COCK

O PLUMP bead-waiter at The Cock,
 To which I most resort,
 How goes the time? 'T is five o'clock.
 Go fetch a pint of port;
 But let it not be such as that
 You set before chance-comers,
 But such whose father-grape grew fat
 On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
 But may she still be kind, 10
 And whisper lovely words, and use
 Her influence on the mind,
 To make me write my random rhymes,
 Ere they be half-forgotten;
 Nor add and alter, many times,
 Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
 Her laurel in the wine,
 And lays it thrice upon my lips,
 These favor'd lips of mine; 20
 Until the charm have power to make
 New life-blood warm the bosom,
 And barren commonplaces break
 In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;
 Her gradual fingers steal
 And touch upon the master-chord .
 Of all I felt and feel.
 Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
 And phantom hopes assemble; 30
 And that child's heart within the man's
 Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,
 By many pleasant ways,
 Against its fountain upward runs
 The current of my days.
 I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd;
 The gaslight wavers dimmer;
 And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
 My college friendships glimmer. 40

I grow in worth and wit and sense,
 Unboding critic-pen,
 Or that eternal want of pence
 Which vexes public men,
 Who hold their hands to all, and cry
 For that which all deny them —
 Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
 And all the world go by them.

Ah! yet, tho' all the world forsake,
 Tho' fortune clip my wings,
 I will not cramp my heart, nor take
 Half-views of men and things.
 Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;
 There must be stormy weather;
 But for some true result of good
 All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;
 If old things, there are new;
 Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
 Yet glimpses of the true.
 Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
 We lack not rhymes and reasons,
 As on this whirligig of Time
 We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid,
 With fair horizons bound;
 This whole wide earth of light and shade
 Comes out a perfect round.
 High over roaring Temple-bar,
 And set in heaven's third story,
 I look at all things as they are,
 But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honor'd by the guest
 Half-mused, or reeling ripe,
 The pint you brought me was the best
 That ever came from pipe.
 But tho' the port surpasses praise,
 My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
 Is there some magic in the place?
 Or do my peptics differ?

For since I came to live and learn,
 No pint of white or red
 Had ever half the power to turn
 This wheel within my head,
 Which bears a season'd brain about,
 Unsubject to confusion,
 Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,
 Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
 With many kinsmen gay,
 Where long and largely we carouse
 As who shall say me nay?
 Each month, a birthday coming on,
 We drink, defying trouble,
 Or sometimes two would meet in one,
 And then we drank it double;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
 Had relish fiery-new,
 Or elbow-deep in sawdust slept,
 As old as Waterloo,
 Or, stow'd when classic Canning died,
 In musty bins and chambers,
 Had cast upon its crusty side
 The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is!
 She answer'd to my call;
 She changes with that mood or this,
 Is all-in-all to all;
 She lit the spark within my throat,
 To make my blood run quicker,
 Used all her fiery will, and smote
 Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
 The waiter's hands, that reach
 To each his perfect pint of stout,
 His proper chop to each.
 He looks not like the common breed
 That with the napkin dally;
 I think he came, like Gaïymede,
 From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
 Than modern poultry drop,
 Stept forward on a firmer leg,
 And cramm'd a plumper crop,
 Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
 Crow'd lustier late and early,
 Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
 And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
 Till in a court he saw
 A something-pottle-bodied boy
 That knuckled at the taw.
 He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and
 good,
 Flew over roof and casement;
 His brothers of the weather stood
 Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe, and spire,
 And follow'd with acclaims,
 A sign to many a staring shire,
 Came crowing over Thames. 140
 Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
 Till, where the street grows straiter,
 One fix'd for ever at the door,
 And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go?
 How out of place she makes
 The violet of a legend blow
 Among the chops and steaks!
 'Tis but a steward of the can,
 One shade more plump than common;
 As just and mere a serving-man 151
 As any born of woman.

I ragged too high: what draws me down
 Into the common day?
 Is it the weight of that half-crown
 Which I shall have to pay?
 For, something duller than at first,
 Nor wholly comfortable,
 I sit, my empty glass reversed,
 And thrumming on the table; 160

Half fearful that, with self at strife,
 I take myself to task,
 Lest of the fulness of my life
 I leave an empty flask;
 For I had hope, by something rare,
 To prove myself a poet,
 But, while I plan and plan, my hair
 Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
 Till they be gather'd up; 170
 The truth, that flies the flowing can,
 Will haunt the vacant cup;
 And others' follies teach us not,
 Nor much their wisdom teaches;
 And most, of sterling worth, is what
 Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!
 We know not what we know.
 But for my pleasant hour, 't is gone;
 'T is gone, and let it go. 180
 'T is gone: a thousand such have slept
 Away from my embraces,
 And fallen into the dusty crypt
 Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went
 Long since, and came no more;
 With peals of genial clamor sent
 From many a tavern-door,
 With twisted quirks and happy hits,
 From misty men of letters; 190
 The tavern-hours of mighty wits, —
 Thine elders and thy betters;

Hours when the Poet's words and looks
 Had yet their native glow,
 Nor yet the fear of little books
 Had made him talk for show;
 But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,
 He flash'd his random speeches,
 Ere days that deal in ana swarm'd
 His literary leeches. 200

So mix for ever with the past,
 Like all good things on earth!
 For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,
 At half thy real worth?
 I hold it good, good things should pass;
 With time I will not quarrel;
 It is but yonder empty glass
 That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
 To which I most resort, 210
 I too must part; I hold thee dear
 For this good pint of port.
 For this, thou shalt from all things suck
 Marrow of mirth and laughter;
 And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck
 Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
 The sphere thy fate allots; 220
 Thy latter days increased with pence
 Go down among the pots;
 Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
 In haunts of hungry sinners,
 Old boxes, larded with the steam
 Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,
 Would quarrel with our lot;
 Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
 To serve the hot-and-hot;
 To come and go, and come again,
 Returning like the pewit, 230
 And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
 That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
 The thick-set hazel dies;
 Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
 The corners of thine eyes;
 Live long, nor feel in head or chest
 Our changeful equinoxes,
 Till mellow Death, like some late
 guest,
 Shall call thee from the boxes. 240

But when he calls, and thou shalt
 cease
 To pace the gritted floor,
 And, laying down an unctuous lease
 Of life, shalt earn no more,
 No carved cross-bones, the types of
 Death,
 Shall show thee past to heaven,
 But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,
 A pint-pot neatly graven.

LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,
 And clouds are highest up in air,
 Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
 To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn;
 Lovers long-betroth'd were they;
 They two will wed the morrow morn —
 God's blessing on the day!

'He does not love me for my birth,
 Nor for my lands so broad and fair; 10
 He loves me for my own true worth,
 And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
 Said, 'Who was this that went from thee?'
 'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare;
 'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O, God be thank'd,' said Alice the nurse,
 'That all comes round so just and fair!
 Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
 And you are *not* the Lady Clare.' 20

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my
 nurse,'
 Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so wild?'

'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,
 'I speak the truth: you are my child.'

'The old earl's daughter died at my breast;
 I speak the truth, as I live by bread!
 I buried her like my own sweet child,
 And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,
 O mother,' she said, 'if this be true, 30
 To keep the best man under the sun
 'So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,
 'But keep the secret for your life,
 And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,
 When you are man and wife.'

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,
 'I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
 Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,
 And fling the diamond necklace by.' 40

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,
 'But keep the secret all ye can.'
 She said, 'Not so; but I will know
 If there be any faith in man.'

'Nay now, what faith?' said Alice the
 nurse;
 'The man will cleave unto his right.'
 'And he shall have it,' the lady replied,
 'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!
 Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee!' 50

'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,
 'So strange it seems to me.'

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,
 My mother dear, if this be so,
 And lay your hand upon my head,
 And bless me, mother, ere I go.'

She clad herself in a russet gown,
 She was no longer Lady Clare;
 She went by dale, and she went by down,
 With a single rose in her hair. 60

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had
 brought
 Leapt up from where she lay,
 Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
 And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower:
 'O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!
 Why come you drest like a village maid,
 That are the flower of the earth?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,
 I am but as my fortunes are;
 I am a beggar born,' she said,
 'And not the Lady Clare.'

'Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,
 'For I am yours in word and in deed.
 Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,
 'Your riddle is hard to read.'

O, and proudly stood she up!
 Her heart within her did not fail;
 She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,
 And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn;
 He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood;
 'If you are not the heiress born,
 And I,' said he, 'the next in blood, —

'If you are not the heiress born,
 And I,' said he, 'the lawful heir,
 We two will wed to-morrow morn,
 And you shall still be Lady Clare.'

THE CAPTAIN

A LEGEND OF THE NAVY

He that only rules by terror
 Doeth grievous wrong.
 Deep as hell I count his error.
 Let him hear my song.
 Brave the Captain was; the seamen
 Made a gallant crew,
 Gallant sons of English freemen,
 Sailors bold and true.
 But they hated his oppression;
 Stern he was and rash,
 So for every light transgression
 Doom'd them to the lash.
 Day by day more harsh and cruel
 Seem'd the Captain's mood.
 Secret wrath like smother'd fuel
 Burnt in each man's blood.
 Yet he hoped to purchase glory,

Hoped to make the name
 Of his vessel great in story,
 Wheresoe'er he came.
 So they past by capes and islands,
 Many a harbor-mouth,
 Sailing under palmy highlands
 Far within the South.
 On a day when they were going
 O'er the lone expanse,
 In the north, her canvas flowing,
 Rose a ship of France.
 Then the Captain's color heighten'd,
 Joyful came his speech;
 But a cloudy gladness lighten'd
 In the eyes of each.
 'Chase,' he said; the ship flew forward,
 And the wind did blow;
 Stately, lightly, went she norward,
 Till she near'd the foe.
 Then they look'd at him they hated,
 Had what they desired;
 Mute with folded arms they waited —
 Not a gun was fired.
 But they heard the foeman's thunder
 Roaring out their doom;
 All the air was torn in sunder,
 Crashing went the boom,
 Spars were splinter'd, decks were shatter'd,
 Bullets fell like rain;
 Over mast and deck were scatter'd
 Blood and brains of men.
 Spars were splinter'd; decks were broken;
 Every mother's son —
 Down they dropt — no word was spoken —
 Each beside his gun.
 On the decks as they were lying,
 Were their faces grim.
 In their blood, as they lay dying,
 Did they smile on him.
 Those in whom he had reliance
 For his noble name
 With one smile of still defiance
 Sold him unto shame.
 Shame and wrath his heart confounded,
 Pale he turn'd and red,
 Till himself was deadly wounded
 Falling on the dead.
 Dismal error! fearful slaughter!
 Years have wander'd by;
 Side by side beneath the water
 Crew and Captain lie;
 There the sunlit ocean tosses
 O'er them mouldering,
 And the lonely seabird crosses
 With one waft of the wing.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

IN her ear he whispers gaily,
 'If my heart by signs can tell,
 Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
 And I think thou lov'st me well.'
 She replies, in accents fainter,
 'There is none I love like thee.'
 He is but a landscape-painter,
 And a village maiden she.
 He to lips that fondly falter
 Presses his without reproof,
 Leads her to the village altar,
 And they leave her father's roof.
 'I can make no marriage present;
 Little can I give my wife.
 Love will make our cottage pleasant,
 And I love thee more than life.'
 They by parks and lodges going
 See the lordly castles stand;
 Summer woods, about them blowing,
 Made a murmur in the land.
 From deep thought himself he rouses,
 Says to her that loves him well,
 'Let us see these handsome houses
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'
 So she goes by him attended,
 Hears him lovingly converse,
 Sees whatever fair and splendid
 Lay betwixt his home and hers;
 Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
 Parks and order'd gardens great,
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,
 Built for pleasure and for state.
 All he shows her makes him dearer;
 Evermore she seems to gaze
 On that cottage growing nearer,
 Where they twain will spend their days.
 O, but she will love him truly!
 He shall have a cheerful home;
 She will order all things duly,
 When beneath his roof they come.
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
 Till a gateway she discerns
 With armorial bearings stately,
 And beneath the gate she turns,
 Sees a mansion more majestic
 Than all those she saw before.
 Many a gallant gay domestic
 Bows before him at the door;

And they speak in gentle murmur,
 When they answer to his call,
 While he treads with footstep firmer,
 Leading on from hall to hall.
 And, while now she wonders blindly,
 Nor the meaning can divine,
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,
 'All of this is mine and thine.'
 Here he lives in state and bounty,
 Lord of Burleigh, fair and free;
 Not a lord in all the county
 Is so great a lord as he.
 All at once the color flushes
 Her sweet face from brow to chin;
 As it were with shame she blushes,
 And her spirit changed within.
 Then her countenance all over
 Pale again as death did prove;
 But he clasp'd her like a lover,
 And he cheer'd her soul with love.
 So she strove against her weakness,
 Tho' at times her spirit sank,
 Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
 To all duties of her rank;
 And a gentle consort made he,
 And her gentle mind was such
 That she grew a noble lady,
 And the people loved her much.
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,
 With the burthen of an honor
 Unto which she was not born.
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
 And she murmur'd, 'O, that he
 Were once more that landscape-painter
 Which did win my heart from me!'

So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
 Fading slowly from his side;
 Three fair children first she bore him,
 Then before her time she died.
 Weeping, weeping late and early,
 Walking up and pacing down,
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
 And he came to look upon her,
 And he look'd at her and said,
 'Bring the dress and put it on her,
 That she wore when she was wed.'
 Then her people, softly treading,
 Bore to earth her body, drest
 In the dress that she was wed in,
 That her spirit might have rest.

THE VOYAGE

I

WE left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbor-mouth;
And madly danced our hearts with joy,
As fast we fled to the south.
How fresh was every sight and sound
On open main or winding shore!
We knew the merry world was round,
And we might sail for evermore.

II

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail; 10
The Lady's-head upon the prow
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the
gale.
The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,
And swept behind; so quick the run,
We felt the good ship shake and reel,
We seem'd to sail into the sun!

III

How oft we saw the sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light! 20
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn!

IV

New stars all night above the brim
Of waters lighten'd into view;
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field, 30
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield.

V

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly seen;
We past long lines of Northern capes
And dewy Northern meadows green.

We came to warmer waves, and deep
Across the houndless east we drove,
Where those long swells of breaker sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove. 40

VI

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine
With ashy rains, that spreading made
Fantastic plume or sable pine;
By sands and steaming flats, and floods
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

VII

O hundred shores of happy climes,
How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark! 50
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times
With wakes of fire we tore the dark;
At times a carven craft would shoot
From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,
But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

VIII

For one fair Vision ever fled
Down the waste waters day and night,
And still we follow'd where she led,
In hope to gain upon her flight. 60
Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixt upon the far sea-line;
But each man murmur'd, 'O my Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine.'

IX

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd
Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the
sea, 70
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
She bore the blade of Liberty.

X

And only one among us — him
We pleased not — he was seldom pleased;
He saw not far, his eyes were dim,
But ours he swore were all diseased.
'A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,
'A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and wept.
And overboard one stormy night
He cast his body, and on we swept. 80

XI

And never sail of ours was furl'd,
 Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn;
 We loved the glories of the world,
 But laws of nature were our scorn.
 For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
 But whence were those that drove the
 sail
 Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
 And to and thro' the counter gale?

XII

Again to colder climes we came,
 For still we follow'd where she led; 90
 Now mate is blind and captain lame,
 And half the crew are sick or dead,
 But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
 We follow that which flies before;
 We know the merry world is round,
 And we may sail for evermore.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN
GUINEVERE

A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,
 With tears and smiles from heaven
 again

The maiden Spring upon the plain
 Came in a sunlit fall of rain.
 In crystal vapor everywhere
 Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
 And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
 The topmost elm-tree gather'd green
 From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song;
 Sometimes the throstle whistled strong;
 Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,
 Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong;
 By grassy capes with fuller sound
 In curves the yellowing river ran,
 And drooping chestnut-buds began
 To spread into the perfect fan,
 Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
 Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere

Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
 With blissful treble ringing clear.
 She seem'd a part of joyous Spring;
 A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
 Buckled with golden clasps before;
 A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
 Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
 Now by some tinkling rivulet,
 In mosses mixt with violet
 Her cream-white mule his pastern set;
 And fleetier now she skimm'd the
 plains
 Than she whose elfin prancer springs
 By night to eery warblings,
 When all the glimmering moorland rings
 With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,
 The happy winds upon her play'd,
 Blowing the ringlet from the braid.
 She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd
 The rein with dainty finger-tips,
 A man had given all other bliss,
 And all his worldly worth for this,
 To waste his whole heart in one kiss
 Upon her perfect lips.

A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
 Thy tribute wave deliver;
 No more by thee my steps shall be,
 For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
 A rivulet, then a river;
 Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,
 For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder-tree,
 And here thine aspen shiver;
 And here by thee will hum the bee,
 For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
 A thousand moons will quiver;
 But not by thee my steps shall be,
 For ever and for ever.

THE BEGGAR MAID

HER arms across her breast she laid;
 She was more fair than words can say;
 Barefooted came the beggar maid
 Before the king Cophetua.
 In robe and crown the king stepped down,
 To meet and greet her on her way;
 'It is no wonder,' said the lords,
 'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
 She in her poor attire was seen;
 One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
 One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
 So sweet a face, such angel grace,
 In all that land had never been.
 Cophetua sware a royal oath :
 'This beggar maid shall be my queen !'

THE EAGLE

FRAGMENT

HE clasps the crag with crooked hands;
 Close to the sun in lonely lands,
 Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
 He watches from his mountain walls,
 And like a thunderbolt he falls.

'MOVE EASTWARD, HAPPY
EARTH'

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and leave
 Yon orange sunset waning slow;
 From fringes of the faded eve,
 O happy planet, eastward go,
 Till over thy dark shoulder glow
 Thy silver sister-world, and rise
 To glass herself in dewy eyes
 That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,
 Dip forward under starry light,
 And move me to my marriage-morn,
 And round again to happy night.

'COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD'

COME not, when I am dead,
 To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
 To trample round my fallen head,
 And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst
 not save.
 There let the wind sweep and the plover
 cry;
 But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime
 I care no longer, being all unblest :
 Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of
 time,
 And I desire to rest.
 Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I
 lie;
 Go by, go by.

THE LETTERS

I

STILL on the tower stood the vane,
 A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air
 I peer'd athwart the chancel pane
 And saw the altar cold and bare.
 A clog of lead was round my feet,
 A hand of pain across my brow;
 'Cold altar, heaven and earth shall meet
 Before you hear my marriage vow.'

II

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song
 That mock'd the wholesome human
 heart,
 And then we met in wrath and wrong,
 We met, but only met to part.
 Full cold my greeting was and dry ;
 She faintly smiled, she hardly moved ;
 I saw with half-unconscious eye
 She wore the colors I approved.

III

She took the little ivory chest,
 With half a sigh she turn'd the key;

Then raised her head with lips comprest,
 And gave my letters back to me;
 And gave the trinkets and the rings,
 My gifts, when gifts of mine could
 please.
 As looks a father on the things
 Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

IV

She told me all her friends had said;
 I raged against the public liar;
 She talk'd as if her love were dead,
 But in my words were seeds of fire.
 'No more of love, your sex is known;
 I never will be twice deceived.
 Henceforth I trust the man alone,
 The woman cannot be believed.

V

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of hell, —
 And women's slander is the worst, —
 And you, whom once I loved so well,
 Thro' you my life will be accurst.'
 I spoke with heart and heat and force,
 I shook her breast with vague alarms —
 Like torrents from a mountain source
 We rush'd into each other's arms.

VI

We parted; sweetly gleam'd the stars,
 And sweet the vapor-braided blue;
 Low breezes faun'd the belfry bars,
 As homeward by the church I drew.
 The very graves appear'd to smile,
 So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells;
 'Dark porch,' I said, 'and silent aisle,
 There comes a sound of marriage bells.'

THE VISION OF SIN

I

I HAD a vision when the night was late;
 A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
 He rode a horse with wings, that would
 have flown,
 But that his heavy rider kept him down.

And from the palace came a child of sin,
 And took him by the curls, and led him
 in,
 Where sat a company with heated eyes,
 Expecting when a fountain should arise.
 A sleepy light upon their brows and lips —
 As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse, —
 Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and
 capes —
 Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid
 shapes,
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and
 piles of grapes.

II

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
 Gathering up from all the lower ground;
 Narrowing in to where they sat assem-
 bled,
 Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
 Woven in circles. They that heard it
 sigh'd,
 Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
 Swung themselves, and in low tones re-
 plied;
 Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
 Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail.
 Then the music touch'd the gates and
 died,
 Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,
 Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale;
 Till thronging in and in, to where they
 waited,
 As 't were a hundred-throated nightingale,
 The strong tempestuous treble throbb'd
 and palpitated;
 Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
 Caught the sparkles, and in circles, —
 Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
 Flung the torrent rainbow round.
 Then they started from their places,
 Moved with violence, changed in hue,
 Caught each other with wild grimaces,
 Half-invisible to the view,
 Wheeling with precipitate paces
 To the melody, till they flew,
 Hair and eyes and limbs and faces,
 Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
 Like to Furies, like to Graces,
 Dash'd together in blinding dew;
 Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
 The nerve-dissolving melody
 Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

III

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-
tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and
lawn.

I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded; and detaching, fold by fold, 51
From those still heights, and, slowly draw-
ing near,

A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and
year,
Unheeded; and I thought I would have
spoken,

And warn'd that madman ere it grew too
late,

But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was
broken,

When that cold vapor touch'd the palace-
gate,

And link'd again. I saw within my head
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as
death, 60

Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said:

IV

'Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!
Here is custom come your way;
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

'Bitter barmaid, waning fast!
See that sheets are on my bed.
What! the flower of life is past;
It is long before you wed. 70

'Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath!
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

'I am old, but let me drink;
Bring me spices, bring me wine;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

'Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
When a blanket wraps the day, 80

When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

'Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee;
What care I for any name?
What for order or degree?

'Let me screw thee up a peg;
Let me loose thy tongue with wine;
Callest thou that thing a leg?
Which is thinnest? thine or mine? 90

'Thou shalt not be saved by works,
Thou hast been a sinner too;
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you!

'Fill the cup and fill the can,
Have a rouse before the morn;
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

'We are men of ruin'd blood;
Therefore comes it we are wise. 100
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

'Name and fame! to fly sublime
Thro' the courts, the camps, the schools
Is to be the ball of Time,
Banded by the hands of fools.

'Friendship! — to be two in one —
Let the canting liar pack!
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back. 110

'Virtue! — to be good and just —
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

'O, we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

'Fill the cup and fill the can,
Have a rouse before the morn: 120
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

'Drink, and let the parties rave;
They are fill'd with idle spleen,

Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

'He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power,
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.' 130

'Fill the can and fill the cup;
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

'Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gaily doth she tread;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

'No, I love not what is new;
She is of an ancient house,
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.' 140

'Let her go! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

'Drink to lofty hopes that cool, —
Visions of a perfect State;
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.' 150

'Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

'Fear not thou to loose thy tongue,
Set thy hoary fancies free;
What is loathsome to the young
Savors well to thee and me.

'Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand 160
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

'Tell me tales of thy first love —
April hopes, the fools of chance —
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

'Fill the can and fill the cup;
All the windy ways of men

Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again. 170

'Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads —
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads!

'You are bones, and what of that?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modell'd on a skull.

'Death is king, and Vivat Rex!
Tread a measure on the stones, 180
Madam — if I know your sex
From the fashion of your bones.

'No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye — nor yet your lip;
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

'Lo! God's likeness — the ground-plan —
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed;
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed!' 190

'Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy Ignorance!
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

'Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near —
What! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

'Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curl'd; 200
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

'Fill the cup and fill the can;
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!
Dregs of life, and lees of man;
Yet we will not die forlorn.'

V

The voice grew faint; there came a further
change;
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-
range.
Below were men and horses pierced with
worms, 209

And slowly quickening into lower forms;
 By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of
 dross,
 Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd with
 moss.
 Then some one spake: 'Behold! it was a
 crime
 Of sense avenged by sense that wore with
 time.'
 Another said: 'The crime of sense became
 The crime of malice, and is equal blame.'
 And one: 'He had not wholly quench'd his
 power;
 A little grain of conscience made him scur.'
 At last I heard a voice upon the slope ²¹⁹
 Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?'
 To which an answer peal'd from that high
 land,
 But in a tongue no man could understand;
 And on the glimmering limit far with-
 drawn
 God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

TO —

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

'Cursed be he that moves my bones.'
Shakespeare's Epitaph.

You might have won the Poet's name,
 If such be worth the winning now,
 And gain'd a laurel for your brow
 Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,
 A life that moves to gracious ends
 Thro' troops of unrecording friends,
 A deedful life, a silent voice.

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom
 Of those that wear the Poet's crown;
 Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
 Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,
 Nor leave his music as of old,
 But round him ere he scarce be cold
 Begins the scandal and the cry:

'Proclaim the faults he would not show;
 Break lock and seal, betray the trust;
 Keep nothing sacred, 't is but just
 The many-headed beast should know.'

Ah, shameless! for he did but sing
 A song that pleased us from its worth;
 No public life was his on earth,
 No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best;
 His worst he kept, his best he gave.
 My Shakespeare's curse on clown and
 knave
 Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be
 The little life of bank and brier,
 The bird that pipes his lone desire
 And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
 And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
 For whom the carrion vulture waits
 To tear his heart before the crowd!

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN
GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls
 Of water, sheets of summer glass,
 The long divine Peneïan pass,
 The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
 With such a pencil, such a pen,
 You shadow forth to distant men,
 I read and felt that I was there.

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
 And track'd you still on classic ground,
 I grew in gladness till I found
 My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
 And glisten'd — here and there alone
 The broad-limb'd Gods at random thrown
 By fountain-urns; — and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
Of cavern pillars ; on the swell
The silver lily heaved and fell ;
And many a slope was rich in bloom,

From him that on the mountain lea
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks
To him who sat upon the rocks
And fluted to the morning sea.

BREAK, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O, well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play !
O, well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill ;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !

But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S SONG

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He pass'd by the town and out of the
street ;
A light wind blew from the gates of the
sun,
And waves of shadow went over the
wheat ;
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her
cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down on his
beak,
And stared, with his foot on the prey ;
And the nightingale thought, ' I have sung
many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away.'

THE PRINCESS ; A MEDLEY

PROLOGUE

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people ; thither flock'd at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither
half
The neighboring borough with their Insti-
tute,
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son, — the son
A Walter too, — with others of our set,
Five others ; we were seven at Vivian-
place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the
house,
Greek, set with busts. From vases in the
hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than
their names,
Grew side by side ; and on the pavement
lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the
park,
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of
Time ;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together ; celts and calumets,

Claymore and snow-shoe, toys in lava,
fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere, ²⁰
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-
clubs
From the isles of palm; and higher on the
walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and
deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armor
hung.

And 'this,' he said, 'was Hugh's at Agin-
court;
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon.
A geed knight he! we keep a chronicle
With all about him,'— which he brought,
and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with
knights ²⁹
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings
Who laid about them at their wills and
did;
And mixt with these a lady, one that
arm'd
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the
gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her
walls.

'O miracle of women,' said the book,
'O noble heart who, being strait-besieged
By this wild king to force her to his
wish,
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's
death,
But now when all was lost or seem'd as
lost—
Her stature more than mortal in the
burst ⁴⁰
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the
gate,
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,
She trampled some beneath her horses'
heels,
And some were whelm'd with missiles of
the wall,
And some were push'd with lances from
the rock,
And part were drown'd within the whirling
brook;
O miracle of noble womanhood!'

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle;
And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he
said, ⁵⁰
'To the Abbey; there is Aunt Elizabeth
And Sister Lilia with the rest.' We went—
I kept the book and had my finger in
it—
Down thro' the park. Strange was the sight
to me;
For all the sloping pasture murmur'd,
sown
With happy faces and with holiday.
There moved the multitude, a thousand
heads;
The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font
of stone
And drew, from butts of water on the
slope, ⁶⁰
The fountain of the moment, playing,
now
A twisted snake, and now a rain of
pearls,
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded
ball
Danced like a wisp; and somewhat lower
down
A man with knobs and wires and vials
fired
A cannon; Echo answer'd in her sleep
From hollow fields; and here were tele-
scopes
For azure views; and there a group of
girls
In circle waited, whom the electric shock
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter; round
the lake ⁷⁰
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied
And shook the lilies; perch'd about the
knolls
A dozen angry models jettied steam;
A petty railway ran; a fire-balloon
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves
And dropt a fairy parachute and past;
And there thro' twenty posts of tele-
graph
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro
Between the mimic stations; so that sport
Went hand in hand with science; other-
where ⁸⁰
Pure sport; a herd of boys with clamor
bowld
And stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd
about

Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men and
 maids
 Arranged a country dance, and flew thro'
 light
 And shadow, while the twangling violin
 Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and over-
 head
 The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
 Made noise with bees and breeze from end
 to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of
 the time; ⁸⁹
 And long we gazed, but satiated at length
 Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-
 claspt,
 Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,
 Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost
 they gave
 The park, the crowd, the house; but all
 within
 The sward was trim as any garden lawn.
 And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
 And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends
 From neighbor seats; and there was Ralph
 himself,
 A broken statue propt against the wall,
 As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport, ¹⁰⁰
 Half child, half woman as she was, had
 wound
 A scarf of orange round the stony helm,
 And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
 That made the old warrior from his ivied
 nook
 Glow like a sunbeam. Near his tomb a feast
 Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,
 And there we join'd them; then the maiden
 aunt
 Took this fair day for text, and from it
 preach'd
 An universal culture for the crowd,
 And all things great. But we, unworthier,
 told ¹¹⁰
 Of college: he had climb'd across the spikes,
 And he had squeezed himself betwixt the
 bars,
 And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs;
 and one
 Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,
 But honeying at the whisper of a lord;
 And one the Master, as a rogue in grain
 Vener'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads
 I saw

The feudal warrior lady-clad; which
 brought ¹¹⁹
 My book to mind, and opening this I read
 Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang
 With tilt and tourney; then the tale of her
 That drove her foes with slaughter from
 her walls,
 And much I praised her nobleness, and
 'Where,'
 Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head—she lay
 Beside him—'lives there such a woman
 now?'

Quick answer'd Lilia: 'There are thou-
 sands now
 Such women, but convention beats them
 down;
 It is but bringing up; no more than that.
 You men have done it—how I hate you
 all! ¹³⁰
 Ah, were I something great! I wish I were
 Some mighty poetess, I would shame you
 then,
 That love to keep us children! O, I wish
 That I were some great princess, I would
 build
 Far off from men a college like a man's,
 And I would teach them all that men are
 taught;
 We are twice as quick!' And here she
 shook aside
 The hand that play'd the patron with her
 curls.

And one said smiling: 'Pretty were the
 sight
 If our old halls could change their sex, and
 flaunt ¹⁴⁰
 With prudes for proctors, dowagers for
 deans,
 And sweet girl-graduates in their golden
 hair.
 I think they should not wear our rusty
 gowns,
 But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or
 Ralph
 Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,
 If there were many Lilias in the brood,
 However deep you might embower the nest,
 Some boy would spy it.'
 At this upon the sward
 She tapt her tiny silken-sandall'd foot:
 'That's your light way; but I would make
 it death ¹⁵⁰
 For any male thing but to peep at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd;
 A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
 And sweet as English air could make her, she!
 But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,
 And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful Puss,'
 And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,
 All else was well, for she-society.
 They boated and they cricketed; they talk'd
 At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics; ¹⁶⁰
 They lost their weeks; they vex't the souls
 of deans;
 They rode; they betted; made a hundred
 friends,
 And caught the blossom of the flying
 terms,
 But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,
 The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he
 spoke,
 Part banter, part affection.

'True,' she said,
 'We doubt not that. O, yes, you miss'd us
 much!
 I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did.'

She held it out; and as a parrot turns
 Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye, ¹⁷⁰
 And takes a lady's finger with all care,
 And bites it for true heart and not for
 harm,
 So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd
 And wrung it. 'Doubt my word again!' ¹⁸⁰
 he said.

'Come, listen! here is proof that you were
 miss'd:

We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read;
 And there we took one tutor as to read.
 The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and
 square

Were out of season; never man, I think,
 So moulder'd in a sinecure as he; ¹⁸⁰
 For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,
 And our long walks were stript as bare as
 brooms,

We did but talk you over, pledge you all
 In wassail; often, like as many girls —
 Sick for the hollies and the yews of home —
 As many little trifling Lilias — play'd
 Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,
 And *what's my thought and when and where*
and how,

And often told a tale from mouth to mouth
 As here at Christmas.'

She remember'd that; ¹⁹⁰
 A pleasant game, she thought. She liked it
 more
 Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
 But these — what kind of tales did men tell
 men,
 She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain
 Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips;
 And Walter nodded at me: 'He began,
 The rest would follow, each in turn; and so
 We forged a sevenfold story. Kind? what
 kind?

Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms;
 Seven-headed monsters only made to kill
 Time by the fire in winter.'

'Kill him now,
 The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,'
 Said Lilia; 'Why not now?' the maiden
 aunt. ²⁰³

'Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?
 A tale for summer as befits the time,
 And something it should be to suit the
 place,

Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
 Grave, solemn!'

Walter warp'd his mouth at this
 To something so mock-solemn, that I
 laugh'd,

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth
 An echo like a ghostly woodpecker ²¹¹
 Hid in the ruins; till the maiden aunt —
 A little sense of wrong had touch'd her
 face

With color — turn'd to me with 'As you
 will;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,
 Or be yourself your hero if you will.'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,' clamor'd
 he,

'And make her some great princess, six
 feet high,
 Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you ²¹⁹
 The prince to win her!'

'Then follow me, the prince,
 I answer'd, 'each be hero in his turn!
 Seven and yet one, like shadows in a
 dream. —

Heroic seems our princess as required —
 But something made to suit with time and
 place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
 A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
 A feudal knight in silken masquerade,

And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments

For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all —

This *were* a medley! we should have him back 230

Who told the "Winter's Tale" to do it for us.

No matter; we will say whatever comes.

And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad or a song
To give us breathing-space.'

So I began,

And the rest follow'd; and the women sang

Between the rougher voices of the men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:

And here I give the story and the songs.

I

A Prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,
Of temper amorous as the first of May,
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,
Dying, that none of all our blood should know

The shadow from the substance, and that one

Should come to fight with shadows and to fall; 10

For so, my mother said, the story ran.

And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,

An old and strange affection of the house.
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what!

On a sudden in the midst of men and day,
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,

I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.

Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,

And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd 'catalepsy.'

My mother pitying made a thousand prayers. 20

My mother was as mild as any saint,

Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,
So gracious was her tact and tenderness;
But my good father thought a king a king.
He cared not for the affection of the house;
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands

Reach'd out and pick'd offenders from the mass

For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,
While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd 31

To one, a neighboring Princess. She to me
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
At eight years old; and still from time to time

Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,

And of her brethren, youths of puissance;
And still I wore her picture by my heart,
And one dark tress; and all around them both

Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed, 40

My father sent ambassadors with furs
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her. These brought back

A present, a great labor of the loom;
And therewithal an answer vague as wind.
Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;

He said there was a compact; that was true;

But then she had a will; was he to blame?
And maiden fancies; loved to live alone
Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood 50

With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:

The first, a gentleman of broken means —
His father's fault — but given to starts and bursts

Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
And almost my half-self, for still we moved
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face

Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,

Inflamed with wrath. He started on his
feet,
Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and
rent ⁶⁰
The wonder of the loom thro' warp and
woof
From skirt to skirt; and at the last he
sware
That he would send a hundred thousand
men,
And bring her in a whirlwind; then he
chew'd
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd
his spleen,
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke: 'My father, let me go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a king ⁶⁹
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable;
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,
Whate'er my grief to find her less than
fame,
May rue the bargain made.' And Florian
said:
'I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess; she, you
know,
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence.
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land;
Thro' her this matter might be sifted
clean.'
And Cyril whisper'd; 'Take me with you
too.' ⁸⁰
Then laughing, 'What if these weird seiz-
ures come
Upon you in those lands, and no one near
To point you out the shadow from the
truth!
Take me; I'll serve you better in a strait;
I grate on rusty hinges here.' But 'No!'
Roar'd the rough king, 'you shall not; we
ourselves
Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead
In iron gauntlets; break the council up.'

But when the council broke, I rose and
past
Thro' the wild woods that hung about the
town; ⁹⁰
Found a still place, and pluck'd her like-
ness out;
Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying
bathed

In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees.
What were those fancies? wherefore break
her troth?
Proud look'd the lips; but while I medi-
tated
A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the
shrieks
Of the wild woods together, and a Voice
Went with it, 'Follow, follow, thou shalt
win.' ⁹⁹

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month
Became her golden shield, I stole from
court
With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,
Cat-footed thro' the town and half in dread
To hear my father's clamor at our backs
With 'Ho!' from some bay-window shake
the night;
But all was quiet. From the bastion'd walls
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we
dropt,
And flying reach'd the frontier; then we
crost
To a livelier land; and so by tilth and
grange,
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilder-
ness, ¹¹⁰
We gain'd the mother-city thick with
towers,
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and small
his voice,
But bland the smile that like a wrinkling
wind
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines;
A little dry old man, without a star,
Not like a king. Three days he feasted us,
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,
And my betroth'd. 'You do us, Prince,'
he said,
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem, ¹²⁰
'All honor. We remember love ourself
In our sweet youth. There did a compact
pass
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony —
I think the year in which our olives fail'd.
I would you had her, Prince, with all my
heart,
With my full heart; but there were widows
here,
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche;
They fed her theories, in and out of place

Maintaining that with equal husbandry
 The woman were an equal to the man. ¹³⁰
 They harp'd on this; with this our banquets
 rang;
 Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of
 talk;
 Nothing but this; my very ears were hot
 To hear them. Knowledge, so my daughter
 held,
 Was all in all; they had but been, she
 thought,
 As children; they must lose the child, as-
 sume
 The woman. Then, sir, awful odes she
 wrote,
 Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
 But all she is and does is awful; odes ¹³⁹
 About this losing of the child; and rhymes
 And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
 Beyond all reason. These the women sang;
 And they that know such things — I sought
 but peace;
 No critic I — would call them master-
 pieces.
 They master'd me. At last she begg'd a
 boon,
 A certain summer-palace which I have
 Hard by your father's frontier. I said no,
 Yet being an easy man, gave it; and there,
 All wild to found an University
 For maidens, on the spur she fled; and
 more ¹⁵⁰
 We know not, — only this: they see no
 men,
 Not even her brother Arac, nor the twins
 Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon
 her
 As on a kind of paragon; and I —
 Pardon me saying it — were much loth to
 breed
 Dispute betwixt myself and mine; but
 since —
 And I confess with right — you think me
 bound
 In some sort, I can give you letters to her;
 And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your
 chance ¹⁵⁹
 Almost at naked nothing.'

Thus the king;

And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur
 With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
 Our formal compact, yet, not less — all frets
 But chafing me on fire to find my bride —
 Went forth again with both my friends.
 We rode

Many a long league back to the North.
 At last
 From hills that look'd across a land of
 hope
 We dropt with evening on a rustic town
 Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,
 Close at the boundary of the liberties; ¹⁷⁰
 There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine
 host
 To council, plied bim with his richest wines,
 And show'd the late-writ letters of the
 king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared
 As blank as death in marble; then ex-
 claim'd,
 Averring it was clear against all rules
 For any man to go; but as his brain
 Began to mellow, 'If the king,' he said,
 'Had given us letters, was he bound to
 speak?
 The king would bear him out;' and at the
 last — ¹⁸⁰
 The summer of the vine in all his veins —
 'No doubt that we might make it worth
 his while.
 She once had past that way; he heard her
 speak;
 She scared him; life! he never saw the
 like;
 She look'd as grand as doomsday and as
 grave!
 And he, he revered his liege-lady there;
 He always made a point to post with
 mares;
 His daughter and his housemaid were the
 boys;
 The land, he understood, for miles about
 Was till'd by women; all the swine were
 sows, ¹⁹⁰
 And all the dogs' —
 But while he jested thus,
 A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed
 in act,
 Remembering how we three presented
 Maid,
 Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of
 feast,
 In masque or pageant at my father's court.
 We sent mine host to purchase female
 gear;
 He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake
 The midriff of despair with laughter, help
 To lace us up, till each in maiden plumes
 We rustled; him we gave a costly bribe ²⁰⁰

To guerdon silence, mounted our good
steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,
And rode till midnight, when the college
lights

Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley; then we past an arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings
From four wing'd horses dark against the
stars,

And some inscription ran along the front,
But deep in shadow. Further on we gain'd
A little street half garden and half house,
But scarce could hear each other speak for
noise 212

Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers
falling

On silver anvils, and the splash and stir
Of fountains spouted up and showering
down

In meshes of the jasmine and the rose;
And all about us peal'd the nightingale,
Rapt in her song and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven
and Earth 220

With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry. Riding in, we call'd;
A plump-arm'd ostleress and a stable wench
Came running at the call, and help'd us
down.

Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,
Full-blown, before us into rooms which
gave

Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel. Her we ask'd of that and this,
And who were tutors. 'Lady Blanche,'
she said,

'And Lady Psyche.' 'Which was pret-
tiest, 230

Best natured?' 'Lady Psyche.' 'Hers
are we,'

One voice, we cried; and I sat down and
wrote

In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East:

'Three ladies of the Northern empire
pray
Your Highness would enroll them with
your own,
As Lady Psyche's pupils.'

This I seal'd;

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,
And raised the blinding bandage from his
eyes. 240

I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;
And then to bed, where half in doze I
seem'd

To float about a glimmering night, and
watch

A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight
swell

On some dark shore just seen that it was
rich.

As thro' the land at eve we went,

And pluck'd the ripen'd ears, 1

We fell out, my wife and I,

O, we fell out, I know not why,

And kiss'd again with tears. 250

And blessings on the falling out

That all the more endears,

When we fall out with those we love

And kiss again with tears!

For when we came where lies the child

We lost in other years,

There above the little grave,

O, there above the little grave,

We kiss'd again with tears.

II

At break of day the College Portress
came;

She brought us academic silks, in hue

The lilac, with a silken hood to each,

And zoned with gold; and now when these
were on,

And we as rich as moths from dusk co-
coons,

She, curtsying her obeisance, let us know
The Princess Ida waited. Out we paced,
I first, and following thro' the porch that
sang

All round with laurel, issued in a court
Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with
lengths 10

Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of
flowers.

The Muses and the Graces, group'd in
threes,

Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst,
And here and there on lattice edges lay
Or book or lute; but hastily we past,
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper
 sat,
 With two tame leopards couch'd beside
 her throne,
 All beauty compass'd in a female form, 20
 The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
 Of some clear planet close upon the sun,
 Than our man's earth; such eyes were in
 her head,
 And so much grace and power, breathing
 down
 From over her arch'd brows, with every
 turn
 Lived thro' her to the tips of her long
 hands,
 And to her feet. She rose her height, and
 said:

'We give you welcome; not without re-
 dound
 Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,
 The first-fruits of the stranger; aftertime,
 And that full voice which circles round the
 grave, 31
 Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.
 What! are the ladies of your land so
 tall?'

'We of the court,' said Cyril. 'From the
 court,'
 She answer'd, 'then ye know the Prince?'
 and he:
 'The climax of his age! as tho' there
 were
 One rose in all the world, your Highness
 that,
 He worships your ideal.' She replied:
 'We scarcely thought in our own hall to
 hear 39
 This barren verbiage, current among men,
 Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.
 Your flight from out your bookless wilds
 would seem
 As arguing love of knowledge and of
 power;
 Your language proves you still the child.
 Indeed,
 We dream not of him; when we set our
 hand
 To this great work, we purpos'd with our-
 self
 Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
 Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling
 The tricks which make us toys of men,
 that so
 Some future time, if so indeed you will, 50

You may with those self-styled our lords
 ally
 Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with
 scale.'

At those high words, we, conscious of
 ourselves,
 Perused the matting; then an officer
 Rose up, and read the statutes, such as
 these:
 Not for three years to correspond with
 home;
 Not for three years to cross the liberties;
 Not for three years to speak with any men;
 And many more, which hastily subscribed,
 We enter'd on the hoards. And 'Now,' she
 cried, 60
 'Ye are green wood, see ye warp not.
 Look, our hall!
 Our statues! — not of those that men de-
 sire,
 Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,
 Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but
 she
 That taught the Sabine how to rule, and
 she
 The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
 The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
 The Rhodope that built the pyramid,
 Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
 That fought Aurelian, and the Roman
 brows 70
 Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose
 Convention, since to look on noble forms
 Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism.
 That which is higher. O, lift your natures
 up;
 Embrace our aims; work out your freedom.
 Girls,
 Knowledge is now no more a fountain
 seal'd!
 Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
 The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite
 And slander, die. Better not be at all
 Than not be noble. Leave us; you may
 go. 80
 To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
 The fresh arrivals of the week before;
 For they press in from all the provinces,
 And fill the hive.'

She spoke, and bowing waved
 Dismissal; back again we crost the court
 To Lady Psyche's. As we enter'd in,
 There sat along the forms, like morning
 doves

That sun their milky besoms on the thatch,
A patient range of pupils; she herself
Erect behind a desk of satiu-wood, 90
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-
eyed,

And on the hither side, or so she look'd,
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,
In shining draperies, headed like a star,
Her maiden babe, a double April old,
Aglaïa slept. We sat; the lady glanced;
Then Florian, but no livelier than the
dame

That whisper'd 'Asses' ears' among the
sedge,
'My sister.' 'Comely, too, by all that's
fair,' 99
Said Cyril. 'O, hush, hush!' and she began.

'This world was once a fluid haze of
light,

Till toward the centre set the starry tides,
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast
The planets; then the monster, then the
man;

Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,
Raw from the prime, and crushing down
his mate,

As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here
Among the lowest.'

Thereupon she took
A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious
past;

Glanced at the legendary Amazon 110
As emblematic of a nobler age;
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of
those

That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman
lines

Of empire, and the woman's state in each,
How far from just; till warming with her
theme

She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique
And little-footed China, touch'd on Ma-
homet

With much contempt, and came to chiv-
alry,

When some respect, however slight, was
paid 120

To woman, superstition all awry.
However, then commenced the dawn; a
beam

Had slanted forward, falling in a laud
Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep,
indeed,

Their debt of thanks to her who first had
dared

To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and as-
sert

None lordlier than themselves but that
which made

Woman and man. She had founded; they
must build.

Here might they learn whatever men were
taught. 130

Let them not fear, some said their heads
were less;

Some men's were small, not they the least
of men;

For often fineness compensated size.
Besides the brain was like the hand, and
grew

With using; thence the man's, if more was
more.

He took advantage of his strength to be
First in the field; some ages had been lost;
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life
Was longer; and albeit their glorious
names

Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in
truth 140

The highest is the measure of the man,
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the
glebe,

But Homer, Plato, Verulam, even so
With woman; and in arts of government
Elizabeth and others, arts of war

The peasant Joan and others, arts of grace
Sappho and others vied with any man;
And, last not least, she who had left her
place,

And bow'd her state to them, that they
might grow 150

To use and power on this oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the
blight

Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy
Dilating on the future: 'everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the
hearth,

Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummets dropt for one to sound the
abyss

Of science and the secrets of the mind; 160
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more;

And everywhere the broad and bounteous
Earth
Should bear a double growth of those rare
souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of
the world.'

She ended here, and beckon'd us; the
rest

Parted; and, glowing full-faced welcome,
she

Began to address us, and was moving on
In gratulation, till as when a boat
Tacks and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her
voice

Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she
cried,

'My brother!' 'Well, my sister.' 'O,'
she said,

'What do you here? and in this dress?
and these?

Why, who are these? a wolf within the
fold!

A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious
to me!

A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!'

'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd. 'Wretched
boy,

How saw you not the inscription on the
gate,

LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF
DEATH?'

'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who could
think

The softer Adams of your Academe, 180
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such

As chanted on the blanching bones of
men?'

'But you will find it otherwise,' she said.

'You jest; ill jesting with edge-tools! my
vow

Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,
That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,
The Princess!' 'Well then, Psyche, take
my life,

And nail me like a weasel on a grange
For warning; bury me beside the gate,

And cut this epitaph above my bones: 190
Here lies a brother by a sister slain,

All for the common good of womankind.'

'Let me die too,' said Cyril, 'having seen
And heard the Lady Psyche.'

I struck in:

'Albeit so mask'd, madam, I love the
truth;

Receive it, and in me behold the Prince
Your countryman, affianced years ago
To the Lady Ida. Here, for here she was,
And thus — what other way was left? — I
came.'

'O sir, O Prince, I have no country,
none; 200

If any, this; but none. Whate'er I was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.

Affianced, sir? love-whispers may not
breathe

Within this vestal limit, and how should I,
Who am not mine, say, live? The thun-
derbolt

Hangs silent; but prepare. I speak, it
falls.'

'Yet pause,' I said: 'for that inscription
there,

I think no more of deadly lurks therein,

Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,

To scare the fowl from fruit; if more
there be, 210

If more and acted on, what follows? war;

Your own work marr'd; for this your
Academe,

Whichever side be victor, in the halloo

Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass

With all fair theories only made to gild

A stormless summer.' 'Let the Princess
judge

Of that,' she said: 'farewell, sir — and to
you.

I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I rejoin'd,

'The fifth in line from that old Florian, 220

Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall —

The gaunt old baron with his beetle brow

Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights —

As he bestrode my grandsire, when he fell,

And all else fled? we point to it, and we
say,

The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,
But branches current yet in kindred veins.'

'Are you that Psyche,' Florian added; 'she

With whom I sang about the morning

hills,

Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple
fly, 230

And snared the squirrel of the glen? are
you

That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing
brow,

To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming
draught

Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read
My sickness down to happy dreams? are
you

That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?
You were that Psyche, but what are you
now?

'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said, 'for
whom

I would be that forever which I seem,
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet, ²⁴⁰
And glean your scatter'd sapience.'

Then once more,
'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I began,
'That on her bridal morn before she past
From all her old companions, when the king
Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that an-
cient ties

Would still be dear beyond the southern
hills;

That were there any of our people there
In want or peril, there was one to hear
And help them? look! for such are these
and I.'

'Are you that Psyche,' Florian ask'd, 'to
whom, ²⁵⁰

In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
Came flying while you sat beside the well?
The creature laid his muzzle on your lap
And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and
the blood

Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you
wept.

That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet
you wept.

O, by the bright head of my little niece,
You were that Psyche, and what are you
now?

'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said again,
'The mother of the sweetest little maid ²⁶⁰
That ever crow'd for kisses.'

'Out upon it!'
She answer'd, 'peace! and why should I
not play

The Spartan Mother with emotion, he
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
Him you call great; he for the common
weal,

The fading politics of mortal Rome,
As I might slay this child, if good need
were,

Slew both his sons; and I, shall I, on
whom

The secular emancipation turns
Of half this world, be swerved from right
to save ²⁷⁰

A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.
Best so, perchance, for us, and well for
you.

O, hard when love and duty clash! I fear
My conscience will not count me fleckless;
yet—

Hear my conditions: promise—otherwise
You perish— as you came, to slip away
To-day, to-morrow, soon. It shall be said,
These women were too barbarous, would
not learn;

They fled, who might have shamed us.
Promise, all.'

What could we else, we promised each;
and she, ²⁸⁰

Like some wild creature newly-caged, com-
menced

A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian; holding out her lily arms
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly
said:

'I knew you at the first; tho' you have
grown

You scarce have alter'd. I am sad and
glad

To see you, Florian. I give thee to death,
My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.
Our mother, is she well?'

With that she kiss'd
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd
up ²⁹²

From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the
hearth,

And far allusion, till the gracious dew
Began to glisten and to fall; and while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a
voice,

'I brought a message here from Lady
Blanche.'

Back started she, and turning round we
saw

The Lady Blanche's daughter where she
stood, ³⁰⁰

Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
That clad her like an April daffodily—
Her mother's color—with her lips apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within her
eyes,

As bottom agates seen to wave and float
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.
 Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah — Melissa — you !
 You heard us ?' and Melissa, 'O, pardon me !
 I heard, I could not help it, did not wish ;
 But, dearest lady, pray you fear me not,
 Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,
 To give three gallant gentlemen to death.'
 'I trust you,' said the other, 'for we two
 Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine ;
 But yet your mother's jealous temperament —
 Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove
 The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
 This whole foundation ruin, and I lose ³²⁰
 My honor, these their lives.' 'Ah, fear me not,'
 Replied Melissa ; 'no — I would not tell,
 No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
 No, not to answer, madam, all those hard things
 That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.'
 'Be it so,' the other, 'that we still may lead
 The new light up, and culminate in peace,
 For Solomon may come to Sheba yet.'
 Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest man
 Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls ³³⁰
 Of Lebanonian cedar ; nor should you —
 Tho', madam, *you* should answer, *we* would ask —
 Less welcome find among us, if you came
 Among us, debtors for our lives to you,
 Myself for something more.' He said not what,
 But 'Thanks,' she answer'd, 'go ; we have
 been too long
 Together ; keep your hoods about the face ;
 They do so that affect abstraction here.
 Speak little ; mix not with the rest ; and hold
 Your promise. All, I trust, may yet be well.'
³⁴⁰

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,
 And held her round the knees against his waist,
 And blew the swollen cheek of a trumpeter,
 While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the child

Push'd her flat hand against his face and laugh'd ;
 And thus our conference closed.
 And then we strolled
 For half the day thro' stately theatres
 Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard
 The grave professor. On the lecture slate
 The circle rounded under female hands ³⁵⁰
 With flawless demonstration ; follow'd then
 A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
 With scraps of thunderous epic lilted out
 By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
 And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long
 That on the stretch'd forefinger of all
 Time
 Sparkle forever. Then we dipt in all
 That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
 The total chronicles of man, the mind,
 The morals, something of the frame, the
 rock, ³⁶⁰
 The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the
 flower,
 Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
 And whatsoever can be taught and known ;
 Till like three horses that have broken
 fence,
 And glutted all night long breast-deep in
 corn,
 We issued gorged with knowledge, and I
 spoke :
 'Why, sirs, they do all this as well as we.'
 'They hunt old trails,' said Cyril, 'very
 well ;
 But when did woman ever yet invent ?'
 'Ungracious !' answer'd Florian ; 'have you
 learnt ³⁷⁰
 No more from Psyche's lecture, you that
 talk'd
 The trash that made me sick, and almost
 sad ?'
 'O, trash,' he said, 'but with a kernel in it !
 Should I not call her wise who made me
 wise ?
 And learnt ? I learnt more from her in a
 flash
 Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,
 And every Muse tumbled a science in.
 A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,
 And round these halls a thousand baby
 loves
 Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,
 Whence follows many a vacant pang ;
 but O,
³⁸¹

With me, sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,
The head of all the golden-shafted firm,
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too;
He cleft me thro' the stomacher. And now
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase
The substance or the shadow? will it
hold?

I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I
Flatter myself that always everywhere ³⁹⁰
I know the substance when I see it. Well,
Are castles shadows? Three of them?
Is she

The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,
Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd
coat?

For dear are those three castles to my wants,
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
And two dear things are one of double
worth;

And much I might have said, but that my
zone

Unmann'd me. Then the Doctors! O, to
hear

The Doctors! O, to watch the thirsty
plants ⁴⁰⁰

Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,
To break my chain, to shake my man; but
thou,

Modulate me, soul of mincing mimicry!
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my
throat;

Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet
Star-sisters answering under crescent
brows;

Abate the stride which speaks of man, and
loose

A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,
Where they like swallows coming out of
time

Will wonder why they came. But bark the
bell ⁴¹⁰

For dinner, let us go!

And in we stream'd
Among the columns, pacing staid and still
By twos and threes, till all from end to end
With beauties every shade of brown and
fair

In colors gayer than the morning mist,
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flow-
ers.

How might a man not wander from his
wits

Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept
mine own

Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,
The second-sight of some Astræan age, ⁴²⁰
Sat compass'd with professors; they, the
while,

Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro.
A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost terms
Of art and science; Lady Blanche alone
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,
With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace
Conclud'd, and we sought the gardens.

There
One walk'd reciting by herself, and one ⁴³⁰
In this hand held a volume as to read,
And smoothed a petted peacock down with
that.

Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,
Or under arches of the marble bridge
Hung, shadow'd from the heat; some hid
and sought

In the orange thickets; others tost a ball
Above the fountain-jets, and back again
With laughter; others lay about the lawns,
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their

May
Was passing — what was learning unto
them? ⁴⁴⁰

They wish'd to marry; they could rule a
house;

Men hated learned women. But we three
Sat muffled like the Fates; and often came
Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
That harm'd not. Then day droopt; the
chapel bells

Call'd us; we left the walks; we mixt with
those

Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,
Before two streams of light from wall to
wall,

While the great organ almost burst his
pipes, ⁴⁵⁰

Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the
court

A long melodious thunder to the sound
Of solemn psalms and silver litanies,
The work of Ida, to call down from heaven
A blessing on her labors for the world.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!

Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one
sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

III

Morn in the white wake of the morning
star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.
We rose, and each by other drest with
care
Descended to the court that lay three parts
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were
touch'd
Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount,
and watch'd
Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble,
approach'd
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of
sleep,
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy
eyes
The circled Iris of a night of tears;
And 'Fly,' she cried, 'O fly, while yet you
may!
My mother knows.' And when I ask'd her
'how,'
'My fault,' she wept, 'my fault! and yet
not mine;
Yet mine in part. O, hear me, pardon me!
My mother, 'tis her wont from night to
night
To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
She says the Princess should have been the
Head,
Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms; 19
And so it was agreed when first they came;
But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,
And she the left, or not or seldom used;
Hers more than half the students, all the
love.
And so last night she fell to canvass you,
Her countrywomen! she did not envy her.

"Who ever saw such wild barbarians?
Girls? — more like men!" and at these
words the snake,
My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast;
And O, sirs, could I help it, but my cheek
Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye
To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd:
"O marvellously modest maiden, you! 32
Men! girls, like men! why, if they had
been men
You need not set your thoughts in rubric
thus
For wholesale comment." Pardon, I am
shamed
That I must needs repeat for my excuse
What looks so little graceful: "men" — for
still
My mother went revolving on the word —
"And so they are, — very like men in-
deed —
And with that woman closeted for hours!"
Then came these dreadful words out one
by one, 41
"Why — these — are — men;" I shud-
der'd; "and you know it."
"O, ask me nothing," I said. "And she
knows too,
And she conceals it." So my mother
clutch'd
The truth at once, but with no word from
me;
And now thus early risen she goes to in-
form
The Princess. Lady Psyche will be crush'd;
But you may yet be saved, and therefore
fly;
But heal me with your pardon ere you go.'

'What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a
blush?' 50
Said Cyril: 'Pale one, blush again; than
wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in
heaven,'
He added, 'lest some classic angel speak
In scorn of us, "They mounted, Ganymedes,
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn."
But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us farther furlough;' and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and
thought
He scarce would prosper. 'Tell us,' Flo-
rian ask'd, 60

'How grew this feud betwixt the right and left.'

'O, long ago,' she said, 'betwixt these two Division smoulders hidden; 't is my mother, Too jealous, often fretful as the wind Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her. I never knew my father, but she says — God help her! — she was wedded to a fool; And still she rail'd against the state of things.

She had the care of Lady Ida's youth, And from the Queen's decease she brought her up. ⁷⁰

But when your sister came she won the heart

Of Ida; they were still together, grew — For so they said themselves — inoculated; Consonant chords that shiver to one note; One mind in all things. Yet my mother still Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories, And angled with them for her pupil's love; She calls her plagiarist, I know not what. But I must go; I dare not tarry,' and light, As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled. ⁸⁰

Then murmur'd Florian, gazing after her:

'An open-hearted maiden, true and pure. If I could love, why this were she. How pretty

Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,

As if to close with Cyril's random wish! Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring pride, Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow.'

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter of the crane,

The dove may murmur of the dove, but I An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere. ⁹⁰

My princess, O my princess! true she errs, But in her own grand way; being herself Three times more noble than three score of men,

She sees herself in every woman else, And so she wears her error like a crown To blind the truth and me. For her, and her,

Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix The nectar; but — ah, she — whene'er she moves

The Samian Herè rises, and she speaks ⁹⁹ A Memnon smitten with the morning sun.'

So saying from the court we paced, and gain'd

The terrace ranged along the northern front,

And leaning there on those balusters, high Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale

That blown about the foliage underneath, And sated with the innumerable rose,

Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came Cyril, and yawning, 'O hard task,' he cried:

'No fighting shadows here. I forced a way Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd.

Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump ¹¹¹

A league of street in summer solstice down, Than hammer at this reverend gentleman.

I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found her there

At point to move, and settled in her eyes The green malignant light of coming storm.

Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,

As man's could be; yet maiden-meeek I pray'd

Concealment. She demanded who we were, And why we came? I fabled nothing fair,

But, your example pilot, told her all. ¹²¹ Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.

But when I dwelt upon your old affiance, She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.

I urg'd the fierce inscription on the gate, And our three lives. True — we had limed

ourselves With open eyes, and we must take the chance.

But such extremes, I told her, well might harm

The woman's cause. "Not more than now," she said,

"So puddled as it is with favoritism." ¹³⁰ I tried the mother's heart. Shame might

befall

Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew; Her answer was, "Leave me to deal with that."

I spoke of war to come and many deaths, And she replied, her duty was to speak,

And duty duty, clear of consequences. I grew discouraged, sir; but since I knew

No rock so hard but that a little wave May beat admission in a thousand years,

I recommenced: "Decide not ere you

pause. ¹⁴⁰

I find you here but in the second place,
Some say the third—the authentic foun-
dress you.

I offer boldly; we will seat you highest.
Wink at our advent; help my prince to
gain

His rightful bride, and here I promise you
Some palace in our land, where you shall
reign

The head and heart of all our fair she-
world,

And your great name flow on with broad-
ening time

For ever." Well, she balanced this a lit-
tle, 149

And told me she would answer us to-day,
Meantime be mute; thus much, nor more I
gain'd.'

He ceasing, came a message from the
Head.

'That afternoon the Princess rode to take
The dip of certain strata to the north.

Would we go with her? we should find the
land

Worth seeing, and the river made a fall
Out yonder;' then she pointed on to where
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the
vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro'
all 160

Its range of duties to the appointed hour.
Then summon'd to the porch we went. She
stood

Among her maidens, higher by the head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one
Of those tame leopards. Kitten-like he
roll'd

And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near;
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure
came

Upon me, the weird vision of our house.
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy, 170

Her college and her maidens empty masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not. Yet I
felt

My heart beat thick with passion and with
awe;

Then from my breast the involuntary sigh
Brake, as she smote me with the light of
eyes

That lent my knee desire to kneel, and
shook

My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long retinue following up
The river as it narrow'd to the hills. 180

I rode beside her and to me she said:
'O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us
not

Too harsh to your companion yesternorn;
Unwillingly we spake.' 'No — not to her,'
I answer'd, 'but to one of whom we spake
Your Highness might have seem'd the thing
you say.'

'Again?' she cried, 'are you ambassa-
dresses

From him to me? we give you, being
strange,

A license; speak, and let the topic die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him — could
have wish'd — 190

'Our king expects — was there no precon-
tract?

There is no truer-hearted — ah, you seem
All he prefigured, and he could not see
The bird of passage flying south but long'd
To follow. Surely, if your Highness keep
Your purport, you will shock him even to
death,

Or baser courses, children of despair.'

'Poor boy,' she said, 'can he not read —
no books?

Quoit, tennis, ball — no games? nor deals
in that

Which men delight in, martial exercise?
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl, 201

Methinks he seems no better than a girl;
As girls were once, as we ourself have been.
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with
them.

We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do
it,

Being other — since we learnt our meaning
here,

To lift the woman's fallen divinity
Upon an even pedestal with man.'

She paused, and added with a haughtier
smile,

'And as to precontracts, we move, my
friend, 210

At no man's beck, but know ourself and
thee,

O Vashti, noble Vashti ! Summon'd out
 She kept her state, and left the drunken
 king
 To brawl at Shushan underneath the
 palms.'

'Alas, your Highness breathes full East,'
 I said,
 'On that which leans to you ! I know the
 Prince,
 I prize his truth. And then how vast a
 work
 To assail this gray preëminence of man !
 You grant me license; might I use it ?
 think;
 Ere half be done perchance your life may
 fail; ²²⁰
 Then comes the feebler heiress of your
 plan,
 And takes and ruins all; and thus your
 pains
 May only make that footprint upon sand
 Which old-recurring waves of prejudice
 Resmooth to nothing. Might I dread that
 you,
 With only Fame for spouse and your great
 deeds
 For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss
 Meanwhile what every woman counts her
 due,
 Love, children, happiness ?'

And she exclaim'd,
 'Peace, you young savage of the Northern
 wild ! ²³⁰
 What ! tho' your Prince's love were like a
 god's,
 Have we not made ourself the sacrifice ?
 You are bold indeed; we are not talk'd to
 thus.
 Yet will we say for children, would they
 grew
 Like field-flowers everywhere ! we like
 them well:
 But children die; and let me tell you, girl,
 Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot
 die;
 They with the sun and moon renew their
 light
 For ever, blessing those that look on them.
 Children — that men may pluck them from
 our hearts, ²⁴⁰
 Kill us with pity, break us with our-
 selves —
 O — children — there is nothing upon earth
 More miserable than she that has a son

And sees him err. Nor would we work for
 fame;
 Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause
 of Great,
 Who learns the one POU STO whence after-
 hands
 May move the world, tho' she herself
 effect
 But little; wherefore up and act, nor
 shrink
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated
 By frail successors. Would, indeed, we
 had been, ²⁵⁰
 In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
 Of giants living each a thousand years,
 That we might see our own work out, and
 watch
 The sandy footprint harden into stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself
 If that strange poet - princess with her
 grand
 Imaginations might at all be won.
 And she broke out interpreting my
 thoughts:

'No doubt we seem a kind of monster
 to you;
 We are used to that; for women, up till
 this ²⁶⁰
 Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle
 taboo,
 Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far
 In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
 How much their welfare is a passion to us.
 If we could give them surer, quicker
 proof —
 O, if our end were less achievable
 By slow approaches than by single act
 Of immolation, any phase of death,
 We were as prompt to spring against the
 pikes,
 Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it, ²⁷⁰
 To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear;
 And up we came to where the river sloped
 To plunge in cataract, shattering on black
 blocks
 A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the
 woods,
 And danced the color, and, below, stuck
 out
 The bones of some vast bulk that lived
 and roar'd

Before man was. She gazed awhile and
 said,
 'As these rude bones to us, are we to her
 That will be.' 'Dare we dream of that,'
 I ask'd, ²⁸⁰
 'Which wrought us, as the workman and
 his work,
 That practice betters?' 'How,' she cried,
 'you love
 The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,
 A golden brooch. Beneath an emerald
 plane
 Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
 Of hemlock — our device, wrought to the
 life —
 She rapt upon her subject, he on her;
 For there are schools for all.' 'And yet,'
 I said,
 'Methinks I have not found among them
 all
 One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of that,'
 She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not; in
 truth ²⁹¹
 We shudder but to dream our maids should
 ape
 Those monstrous males that carve the liv-
 ing hound,
 And cram him with the fragments of the
 grave,
 Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
 And holy secrets of this microcosm,
 Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful
 jest,
 Encarnalize their spirits. Yet we know
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter
 hange.
 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty, ³⁰⁰
 Nor willing men should come among us,
 learnt,
 For many weary moons before we came,
 This craft of healing. Were you sick, our-
 self
 Would tend upon you. To your question
 now,
 Which touches on the workman and his
 work.
 Let there be light and there was light;
 't is so,
 For was, and is, and will be, are but is,
 And all creation is one act at once,
 The birth of light; but we that are not all,
 As parts, can see but parts, now this, now
 that, ³¹⁰
 And live, perforce, from thought to
 thought, and make

One act a phantom of succession. Thus
 Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow,
 Time;
 But in the shadow will we work, and mould
 The woman to the fuller day.'

She spake

With kindled eyes: we rode a league be-
 yond,
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing,
 came
 On flowery levels underneath the crag,
 Full of all beauty. 'O, how sweet,' I said, —
 For I was half-oblivious of my mask, — ³²⁰
 'To linger here with one that loved us!'
 'Yea,'
 She answer'd, 'or with fair philosophies
 That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields
 Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,
 Where paced the demigods of old, and
 saw
 The soft white vapor streak the crowned
 towers
 Built to the Sun.' Then, turning to her
 maids,
 'Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;
 Lay out the viands.' At the word, they
 raised
 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought ³³⁰
 With fair Corinna's triumph; here she
 stood,
 Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,
 The woman-conqueror; woman-conquer'd
 there
 The bearded Victor of ten-thousand hymns,
 And all the men mourn'd at his side. But
 we
 Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril
 kept
 With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
 With mine affianced. Many a little hand
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the
 rocks,
 Many a light foot shone like a jewel set
 In the dark crag. And then we turn'd, we
 wound ³⁴¹
 About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
 Hammering and clinking, chattering stony
 names
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and
 tuff,
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the sun
 Grew broader toward his death and fell,
 and all
 The rosy heights came out above the
 lawns.

The splendor falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story;
 The long light shakes across the lakes,
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
 dying.

O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!
 O, sweet and far from elf and sear
 The horns of Elfdand faintly blowing!
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
 dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
 They faint on hill or field or river;
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
 And grow for ever and for ever.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,
 dying.

IV

'There sinks the nebulous star we call the
 sun,
 If that hypothesis of theirs be sound,'
 Said Ida; 'let us down and rest;' and we
 Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,
 By every coppice-feather'd chasm and
 cleft,
 Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to where
 below
 No bigger than a glowworm shone the
 tent
 Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean'd
 on me,
 Descending; once or twice she lent her
 hand,
 And blissful palpitations in the blood 10
 Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and
 dipt
 Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,
 There leaning deep in broider'd down we
 sank
 Our elbows; on a tripod in the midst
 A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd
 Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and
 gold.

Then she, 'Let some one sing to us;
 lightlier move

The minutes fledged with music;' and a
 maid,
 Of those beside her, smote her harp and
 sang. 20

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they
 mean,
 Tears from the depth of some divine despair
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
 In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
 And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
 That brings our friends up from the underworld,
 Sad as the last which reddens over one
 That sinks with all we love below the verge;
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more. 30

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer
 dawns
 The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
 To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
 The casement slowly grows a glimmering
 square;
 So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
 And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
 On lips that are for others; deep as love,
 Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
 O Death in Life, the days that are no more!' 40

She ended with such passion that the
 tear
 She sang of shook and fell, an erring pearl
 Lost in her bosom; but with some disdain
 Answer'd the Princess: 'If indeed there
 haunt
 About the moulder'd lodges of the past
 So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
 Well needs it we should cram our ears with
 wool
 And so pace by. But thine are fancies
 hatch'd
 In silken-folded idleness; nor is it 50
 Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,
 But trim our sails, and let old by-gones be,
 While down the streams that float us each
 and all
 To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of
 ice,
 Throne after throne, and molten on the
 waste
 Becomes a cloud; for all things serve their
 time
 Toward that great year of equal might
 and rights.

Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the
 end
 Found golden. Let the past be past, let be
 Their cancell'd Babels; tho' the rough kex
 break
 The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-blown
 goat⁶⁰
 Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig-tree
 split
 Their monstrous idols, care not while we
 hear
 A trumpet in the distance pealing news
 Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns
 Above the unrisen morrow.' Then to me,
 'Know you no song of your own land,' she
 said,
 'Not such as moans about the retrospect,
 But deals with the other distance and the
 hues
 Of promise; not a death's-head at the
 wine?'

Then I remember'd one myself had
 made,⁷⁰
 What time I watch'd the swallow winging
 south
 From mine own land, part made long since,
 and part
 Now while I sang, and maiden-like as far
 As I could ape their treble did I sing.

'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying south,
 Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
 And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

'O, tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
 That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
 And dark and true and tender is the North. 80

'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and
 light
 Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
 And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

'O, were I thou that she might take me in,
 And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
 Would rock the snowy cradle till I died!

'Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with
 love,
 Delaying as the tender ash delays
 To clothe herself, when all the woods are
 green?

'O, tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown;
 Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,⁹¹
 But in the North long since my nest is made.

'O, tell her, brief is life but love is long,
 And brief the sun of summer in the North,
 And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

'O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
 Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make
 her mine,
 And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,
 Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,¹⁰⁰
 Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with
 alien lips,
 And knew not what they meant; for still
 my voice
 Rang false. But smiling, 'Not for thee,'
 she said,
 'O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
 Shall burst her veil; marsh-divers, rather,
 maid,
 Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-
 crake
 Grate her harsh kindred in the grass — and
 this

A mere love-poem! O, for such, my friend,
 We hold them slight; they mind us of the
 time

When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves
 are men,¹¹⁰

That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,
 And dress the victim to the offering up,
 And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,
 And play the slave to gain the tyranny.
 Poor soul! I had a maid of honor once;
 She wept her true eyes blind for such a
 one,

A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
 I loved her. Peace be with her. She is
 dead.

So they blaspheme the muse! But great
 is song

Used to great ends; ourself have often
 tried¹²⁰

Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have
 dash'd

The passion of the prophetess; for song
 Is drier unto freedom, force and growth
 Of spirit, than to junketing and love.
 Love is it? Would this same mock-love,
 and this

Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,
 Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,
 Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes
 To be dandled, no, but living wills, and
 sphered.

Whole in ourselves and owed to none.
 Enough! ¹³⁰
 But now to leaven play with profit, you,
 Know you no song, the true growth of your
 soil,
 That gives the manners of your country-
 women ?'

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head
 with eyes
 Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
 Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a
 song,
 Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass
 had wrought,
 Or master'd by the sense of sport, began
 To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experi-
 ences ¹⁴⁰
 Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at
 him,
 I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and
 shook;
 The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows.
 'Forbear,' the Princess cried; 'Forbear,
 sir, I;
 And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and
 love,
 I smote him on the breast. He started up;
 There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;
 Melissa clamor'd, 'Flee the death;' 'To
 horse !'
 Said Ida, 'home ! to horse !' and fled, as
 flies
 A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk
 When some one batters at the dove-cote
 doors, ¹⁵¹
 Disorderly the women. Alone I stood
 With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart
 In the pavilion. There like parting hopes
 I heard them passing from me; hoof by
 hoof,
 And every hoof a knell to my desires,
 Clang'd on the bridge; and then another
 shriek,
 'The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the
 Head !'
 For blind with rage she miss'd the plank,
 and roll'd
 In the river. Out I sprang from glow to
 gloom; ¹⁶⁰
 There whirl'd her white robe like a blos-
 som'd branch
 Rapt to the horrible fall. A glance I gave,
 No more, but woman-vested as I was

Plunged, and the flood drew; yet I caught
 her; then
 Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left
 The weight of all the hopes of half the
 world,
 Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree
 Was half-disrooted from his place and
 stoop'd
 To drench his dark locks in the gurgling
 wave
 Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and
 caught, ¹⁷⁰
 And grasping down the boughs I gain'd
 the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly
 group'd
 In the hollow bank. One reaching forward
 drew
 My burthen from mine arms; they cried,
 'She lives.'
 They bore her back into the tent: but I,
 So much a kind of shame within me
 wrought,
 Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,
 Nor found my friends; but push'd alone on
 foot —
 For since her horse was lost I left her
 mine —
 Across the woods, and less from Indian
 craft ¹⁸⁰
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at
 length
 The garden portals. Two great statues,
 Art
 And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
 A weight of emblem, and betwixt were
 valves
 Of open-work in which the hunter rued
 His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
 Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon
 Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the
 gates.

A little space was left between the
 horns,
 Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with
 pain, ¹⁹⁰
 Dropt on the sward, and up the linden
 walks,
 And, tost on thoughts that changed from
 hue to hue,
 Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,
 I paced the terrace, till the Bear had
 wheel'd

Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.
 A step
 Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
 Than female, moving thro' the uncertain
 gloom,
 Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if this were
 she,'
 But it was Florian. 'Hist, O, hist!' he
 said,
 'They seek us; out so late is out of rules.
 Moreover, "Seize the strangers" is the
 cry.
 How came you here?' I told him. 'I,'
 said he,
 'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
 To whom none spake, half-sick at heart,
 return'd.
 Arriving all confused among the rest
 With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
 And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath
 The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.
 Girl after girl was call'd to trial; each
 Disclaim'd all knowledge of us; last of
 all,
 Melissa; trust me, sir, I pitied her.
 She, question'd if she knew us men, at first
 Was silent; closer prest, denied it not,
 And then, demanded if her mother knew,
 Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied;
 From whence the Royal mind, familiar
 with her,
 Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent
 For Psyche, but she was not there; she
 call'd
 For Psyche's child to cast it from the
 doors;
 She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to
 face;
 And I slipt out. But whither will you now?
 And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are
 fled;
 What, if together? that were not so well.
 Would rather we had never come! I dread
 His wildness, and the chances of the dark.'

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him more
 than I
 That struck him; this is proper to the
 clown,
 Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still
 the clown,
 To harm the thing that trusts him, and to
 shame
 That which he says he loves. For Cyril,
 howe'er

He deal in frolic, as to-night — the song
 Might have been worse and sinn'd in
 grosser lips
 Beyond all pardon — as it is, I hold
 These flashes on the surface are not he.
 He has a solid base of temperament;
 But as the water-lily starts and slides
 Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
 Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he.'

Scarce had I ceased when from a tama-
 risk near
 Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,
 'Names!'
 He, standing still, was clutch'd; but I be-
 gan
 To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind
 And double in and out the boles, and race
 By all the fountains. Fleet I was of foot;
 Before me shower'd the rose in flakes; be-
 hind
 I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine ear
 Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,
 And secret laughter tickled all my soul.
 At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine
 That elasp't the feet of a Mnemosyne,
 And falling on my face was caught and
 known.

They haled us to the Princess where she
 sat
 High in the hall; above her droop'd a lamp,
 And made the single jewel on her brow
 Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,
 Prophet of storm; a handmaid on each
 side
 Bow'd toward her, combing out her long
 black hair
 Damp from the river; and close behind her
 stood
 Eight daughters of the plough, stronger
 than men,
 Huge women blowzed with health, and
 wind, and rain,
 And labor. Each was like a Druid rock;
 Or like a spire of land that stands apart
 Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with
 mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing
 clove
 An advent to the throne; and therebeside,
 Half-naked as if caught at once from bed
 And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay
 The lily-shining child; and on the left,

Bow'd on her palms and folded up from
 wrong,
 Her round white shoulder shaken with her
 sobs, 270
 Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche erect
 Stood up and spake, an affluent orator:

'It was not thus, O Princess, in old days;
 You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips.
 I led you then to all the Castalies;
 I fed you with the milk of every Muse;
 I loved you like this kneeler, and you me
 Your second mother, those were gracious
 times.

Then came your new friend; you began to
 change —

I saw it and grieved — to slacken and to
 cool; 280

Till taken with her seeming openness
 You turn'd your warmer currents all to
 her,

To me you froze; this was my meed for
 all.

Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,
 And partly that I hoped to win you back,
 And partly conscious of my own deserts,
 And partly that you were my civil head,
 And chiefly you were born for something
 great,

In which I might your fellow-worker be,
 When time should serve; and thus a noble
 scheme 290

Grew up from seed we two long since had
 sown;

In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
 Up in one night and due to sudden sun.

We took this palace; but even from the
 first

You stood in your own light and darken'd
 mine.

What student came but that you planed her
 path

To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
 A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
 I your old friend and tried, she new in
 all?

But still her lists were swell'd and mine
 were lean; 300

Yet I bore up in hope she would be
 known.

Then came these wolves; *they* knew her;
they endured,

Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,
 To tell her what they were, and she to
 hear.

And me none told. Not less to an eye like
 mine,

A lidless watcher of the public weal,
 Last night, their mask was patent, and my
 foot

Was to you. But I thought again; I fear'd
 To meet a cold "We thank you, we shall
 hear of it

From Lady Psyche;" you had gone to
 her, 310

She told, perforce, and winning easy grace,
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd
 among us

In our young nursery still unknown, the
 stem

Less grain than touchwood, while my hon-
 est heat

Were all miscounted as malignant haste
 To push my rival out of place and power.

But public use required she should be
 known;

And since my oath was ta'en for public
 use,

I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them
 well, 320

Saw that they kept apart, no mischief
 done;

And yet this day — tho' you should hate me
 for it —

I came to tell you; found that you had gone,
 Ridden to the hills, she likewise. Now, I
 thought,

That surely she will speak; if not, then I.
 Did she? These monsters blazon'd what
 they were,

According to the coarseness of their kind,
 For thus I hear; and known at last — my
 work —

And full of cowardice and guilty shame —
 I grant in her some sense of shame — she
 flies; 330

And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
 I, that have lent my life to build up yours,
 I, that have wasted here health, wealth, and
 time,

And talent, I — you know it — I will not
 boast;

Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
 Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
 For every gust of chance, and men will
 say

We did not know the real light, but chased
 The wisp that flickers where no foot can
 tread.'

She ceased; the Princess answer'd coldly,
 'Good;
 Your oath is broken; we dismiss you, go.
 For this lost lamb'—she pointed to the
 child—
 'Our mind is changed; we take it to our-
 self.'

Thereat the lady stretch'd a vulture
 throat,
 And shot from crooked lips a haggard
 smile.

'The plan was mine. I built the nest,' she
 said,

'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!' and stoop'd
 to updrag

Melissa. She, half on her mother propt,
 Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face,
 and cast

A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
 350
 Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,
 A Niobean daughter, one arm out,
 Appealing to the bolts of heaven; and
 while

We gazed upon her came a little stir
 About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd
 Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,
 A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear
 Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face,
 and wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell
 Delivering seal'd dispatches which the
 Head 360

Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood
 Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
 Regarding, while she read, till over brow
 And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful
 bloom

As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
 When the wild peasant rights himself, the
 rick

Flames, and his anger reddens in the hea-
 vens;

For anger most it seem'd, while now her
 breast,

Beaten with some great passion at her
 heart, 369

Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard
 In the dead hush the papers that she held
 Rustle. At once the lost lamb at her feet
 Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam.
 The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she
 crush'd

The scrolls together, made a sudden turn
 As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,

She whirl'd them on to me, as who should
 say
 'Read,' and I read—two letters—one
 her sire's:

'Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince
 your way

We knew not your ungracious laws, which
 learnt, 380

We, conscious of what temper you are
 built,

Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but
 fell

Into his father's hand, who has this night,
 You lying close upon his territory,
 Slipt round and in the dark invested you,
 And here he keeps me hostage for his son.'

The second was my father's running
 thus:

'You have our son; touch not a hair of his
 head;

Render him up unscathed; give him your
 hand;

Cleave to your contract—tho' indeed we
 hear 390

You hold the woman is the better man;
 A rampant heresy, such as if it spread

Would make all women kick against their
 lords

Thro' all the world, and which might well
 deserve

That we this night should pluck your pal-
 ace down;

And we will do it, unless you send us back
 Our son, on the instant, whole.'

So far I read;
 And then stood up and spoke impetuously:

'O, not to pry and peer on your reserve,
 But led by golden wishes, and a hope 400

The child of regal compact, did I break
 Your precinct; not a scorner of your sex

But venerator, zealous it should be
 All that it might be. Hear me, for I bear,

Tho' man, yet human, whatso'er your
 wrongs,

From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life
 Less mine than yours. My nurse would tell

me of you;

I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,
 Vague brightness; when a boy, you stoop'd
 to me

From all high places, lived in all fair
 lights, 410

Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south
 And blown to inmost north; at eve and dawn
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;
 The leader wild-swan in among the stars
 Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glowworm light
 The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now, Because I would have reach'd you, had you been
 Sphered up with Cassiopeia, or the enthroned
 Persephone in Hades, now at length, ⁴¹⁹
 Those winters of abeyance all woru out,
 A man I came to see you; but, indeed,
 Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait
 On you, their centre. Let me say but this,
 That many a famous man and woman, town
 And landskip, have I heard of, after seen
 The dwarfs of presage; tho' when known, there grew
 Another kind of beauty in detail
 Made them worth knowing; but in you I found
 My boyish dream involved and dazzled down
 And master'd, while that after-beauty ⁴³⁰
 makes
 Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,
 Within me, that except you slay me here,
 According to your bitter statute-book,
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they say
 The seal does music; who desire you more
 Than growing boys their mauhood; dying lips,
 With many thousand matters left to do,
 The breath of life; O, more than poor men wealth,
 Than sick men health — yours, yours, not mine — but half ⁴⁴⁰
 Without you; with you, whole; and of those halves
 You worthiest; and howe'er you block and bar
 Your heart with system out from mine, I hold
 That it becomes no man to nurse despair,
 But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms
 To follow up the worthiest till he die.
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized
 Behold your father's letter.'

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dash'd
 Unopen'd at her feet. A tide of fierce ⁴⁵⁰
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,
 As waits a river level with the dam
 Ready to burst and flood the world with foam;
 And so she would have spoken, but there rose
 A hubbub in the court of half the maids
 Gather'd together; from the illumined hall
 Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a press
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
 And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,
 And gold and golden heads. They to and fro ⁴⁶⁰
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red,
 some pale,
 All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,
 Some crying there was an army in the land,
 And some that men were in the very walls,
 And some they cared not; till a clamor grew
 As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
 And worse-confounded. High above them stood
 The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head; but rising up
 Robed in the long night of her deep hair,
 so ⁴⁷⁰
 To the open window moved, remaining there
 Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
 Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
 Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
 Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms and call'd
 Across the tumult, and the tumult fell.

'What fear ye, brawlers? am not I your Head?
 On me, me, me, the storm first breaks;
 I dare
 All these male thunderbolts; what is it ye fear?
 Peace! there are those to avenge us and they come; ⁴⁸⁰
 If not, — myself were like enough, O girls,
 To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,
 And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,
 Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,

Die; yet I blame you not so much for fear;
 Six thousand years of fear have made you
 that
 From which I would redeem you. But for
 those
 That stir this hubbub — you and you — I
 know
 Your faces there in the crowd — to-morrow
 morn
 We hold a great convention; then shall
 they
 That love their voices more than duty,
 learn
 With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame
 to live
 No wiser than their mothers, household
 stuff,
 Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for the
 clown,
 The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks
 of Time,
 Whose brains are in their hands and in
 their heels,
 But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to
 thrum,
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to
 scour,
 For ever slaves at home and fools abroad.⁴⁹⁰

She, ending, waved her hands; thereat
 the crowd
 Muttering, dissolved; then with a smile,
 that look'd
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,
 When all the glens are drown'd in azure
 gloom
 Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and
 said:

'You have done well and like a gentle-
 man,
 And like a prince; you have our thanks for
 all.
 And you look well too in your woman's
 dress.
 Well have you done and like a gentleman.
 You saved our life; we owe you bitter
 thanks.
 Better have died and spilt our bones in the
 flood —
 Then men had said — but now — what
 hinders me
 To take such bloody vengeance on you
 both? —

Yet since our father — wasps in our good
 hive,
 You would-be quenchers of the light to
 be,
 Barbarians, grosser than your native
 bears —
 O, would I had his sceptre for one hour!
 You that have dared to break our bound,
 and gull'd
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and
 thwarted us —
 I wed with thee! I bound by precontract
 Your bride, your bonds slave! not tho' all
 the gold
 That veins the world were pack'd to make
 your crown,
 And every spoken tongue should lord you.
 Sir,
 Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to
 us;
 I trample on your offers and on you.
 Begone; we will not look upon you more.
 Here, push them out at gates.⁵²¹
 In wrath she spake.
 Then those eight mighty daughters of the
 plough
 Bent their broad faces toward us and ad-
 dress'd
 Their motion. Twice I sought to plead my
 cause,
 But on my shoulder hung their heavy
 hands,
 The weight of destiny; so from her face
 They push'd us, down the steps, and thro'
 the court,
 And with grim laughter thrust us out at
 gates.⁵³⁰

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty
 mound
 Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and
 heard
 The voices murmuring. While I listen'd,
 came
 On a sudden the weird seizure and the
 doubt.
 I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts;
 The Princess with her monstrous woman-
 guard,
 The jest and earnest working side by side,
 The cataract and the tumult and the kings
 Were shadows; and the long fantastic
 night
 With all its doings had and had not been,
 And all things were and were not.

This went by
 As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
 Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy —
 Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts
 And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one
 To whom the touch of all mischance but
 came 550
 As night to him that sitting on a hill
 Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun
 Set into sunrise; then we moved away.

INTERLUDE

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums
 That beat to battle where he stands;
 Thy face across his fancy comes,
 And gives the battle to his hands.
 A moment, while the trumpets blow,
 He sees his brood about thy knee;
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang. We thought her half-pos-
 sess'd,
 She struck such warbling fury thro' the
 words; 10
 And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd
 The rallery, or grotesque, or false sub-
 lime —
 Like one that wishes at a dance to change
 The music — clapt her hands and cried for
 war,
 Or some grand fight to kill and make an
 end.
 And he that next inherited the tale,
 Half turning to the broken statue, said,
 'Sir Ralph has got your colors; if I prove
 Your knight, and fight your battle, what
 for me?'
 It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb
 Lay by her like a model of her hand. 21
 She took it and she flung it. 'Fight,' she
 said,
 'And make us all we would be, great and
 good.'
 He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,
 A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,
 Arranged the favor, and assumed the
 Prince.

V

Now, scarce three paces measured from
 the mound,
 We stumbled on a stationary voice,

And 'Stand, who goes?' 'Two from the
 palace,' I.
 'The second two; they wait,' he said, 'pass
 on;
 His Highness wakes;' and one, that clash'd
 in arms,
 By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas
 led
 Threading the soldier-city, till we heard
 The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake
 From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent
 Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light
 Dazed me half-blind. I stood and seem'd
 to hear, 11
 As in a poplar grove when a light wind
 wakes
 A lisp of the innumerable leaf and dies,
 Each hissing in his neighbor's ear; and
 then
 A strangled titter, out of which there brake
 On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,
 Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old
 kings
 Began to wag their baldness up and down,
 The fresh young captains flash'd their glit-
 tering teeth,
 The huge bush-bearded barons heaved and
 blew, 20
 And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded
 squire.

At length my sire, his rough cheek wet
 with tears,
 Panted from weary sides, 'King, you are
 free!
 We did but keep yon surety for our son,
 If this be he, — or a draggled mawkin,
 thou,
 That tends her bristled grunners in the
 sludge;' 21
 For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn
 with briars,
 More crumpled than a poppy from the
 sheath,
 And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to
 heel.
 Then some one sent beneath his vaulted
 palm 30
 A whisper'd jest to some one near him.
 'Look,
 He has been among his shadows.' 'Satan
 take
 The old women and their shadows!' — thus
 the king

Roar'd — 'make yourself a man to fight
with men.
Go; Cyril told us all.'

As boys that slink
From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
Away we stole, and transient in a trice
From what was left of faded woman-slough
To sheathing splendors and the golden scale
Of harness, issued in the sun, that now ⁴⁰
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the
earth,
And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril
met us,
A little shy at first, but by and by
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and
given
For stroke and song, resolder'd peace,
whereon
Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away
Thro' the dark land, and later in the night
Had come on Psyche weeping: 'then we
fell ⁴⁸
Into your father's hand, and there she lies,
But will not speak nor stir.'

He show'd a tent
A stone-shot off; we enter'd in, and there
Among piled arms and rough accoutre-
ments,
Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,
Like some sweet sculpture draped from
head to foot,
And push'd by rude hands from its pedes-
tal,
All her fair length upon the ground she
lay;
And at her head a follower of the camp,
A charr'd and wrinkled piece of woman-
hood,
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and 'Come,' he whis-
per'd to her, ⁶⁰
'Lift up your head, sweet sister; lie not
thus.
What have you done but right? you could
not slay
Me, nor your prince; look up, be com-
forted.
Sweet is it to have done the thing one
ought,
When fallen in darker ways.' And like-
wise I:
'Be comforted; have I not lost her too,
In whose least act abides the nameless
charm

That none has else for me?' She heard,
she moved,
She moan'd, a folded voice; and up she
sat,
And raised the cloak from brows as pale
and smooth ⁷⁰
As those that mourn half-shrouded over
death
In deathless marble. 'Her,' she said, 'my
friend —
Parted from her — betray'd her cause and
mine —
Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not
your faith?
O base and bad! what comfort? none for
me!
To whom remorseful Cyril, 'Yet I pray
Take comfort; live, dear lady, for your
child!'
At which she lifted up her voice and cried:

'Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my
child,
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no
more! ⁸⁰
For now will cruel Ida keep her back;
And either she will die from want of care,
Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say
The child is hers — for every little fault,
The child is hers; and they will beat my
girl
Remembering her mother — O my flower!
Or they will take her, they will make her
hard,
And she will pass me by in after-life
With some cold reverence worse than were
she dead. ⁸⁹

Ill mother that I was to leave her there,
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,
The horror of the shame among them all.
But I will go and sit beside the doors,
And make a wild petition night and day,
Until they hate to hear me like a wind
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,
And lay my little blossom at my feet,
My babe, my sweet Aglaia, my one child;
And I will take her up and go my way,
And satisfy my soul with kissing her. ¹⁰⁰
Ah! what might that man not deserve
of me
Who gave me back my child?' 'Be com-
forted,'
Said Cyril, 'you shall have it;' but again
She veild her brows, and prone she sank,
and so,

Like tender things that being caught feign
death,

Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran
Thro' all the camp, and inward raced the
scouts

With rumor of Prince Arac hard at hand.
We left her by the woman, and without
Found the gray kings at parle; and 'Look
you,' cried ¹⁷⁰

My father, 'that our compact be fulfill'd.
You have spoilt this child; she laughs at
you and man;

She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and
him.

But red-faced war has rods of steel and
fire;

She yields, or war.'

Then Gama turn'd to me:
'We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time
With our strange girl; and yet they say
that still

You love her. Give us, then, your mind
at large:

How say you, war or not?'

'Not war, if possible,
O king,' I said, 'lest from the abuse of
war, ¹²⁰

The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,
The smouldering homestead, and the house-
hold flower

Torn from the lintel — all the common
wrong —

A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her
Three times a monster. Now she lightens
scorn

At him that mars her plan, but then would
hate —

And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,
And every face she look'd on justify it —
The general foe. More soluble is this knot
By gentleness than war. I want her love. ¹³⁰

What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd
Your cities into shards with catapults? —
She would not love — or brought her
chain'd, a slave,

The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord?
Not ever would she love, hut brooding turn
The book of scorn, till all my flitting chance
Were caught within the record of her
wrongs

And crush'd to death; and rather, Sire,
than this

I would the old god of war himself were
dead,

Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills, ¹⁴⁰
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of
wreck,

Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in
ice,

Not to be molten out.'

And roughly spako
My father: 'Tut, you know them not, the
girls.

Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think
That idiot legend credible. Look you, sir!
Man is the hunter; woman is his game.

The sleek and shining creatures of the
chase,

We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;
They love us for it, and we ride them
down. ¹⁵⁰

Wheedling and siding with them! Ont!
for shame!

Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to
them

As he that does the thing they dare not do,
Breathing and sounding beauteous battle,
comes

With the air of the trumpet round him, and
leaps in

Among the women, snares them by the
score

Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd
with death

He reddens what he kisses. Thus I won
Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,
Worth winning; but this firebrand — gen-
tleness ¹⁶⁰

To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,
To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
Were wisdom to it.'

'Yea, but, Sire,' I cried,
'Wild natures need wise curbs. The sol-
dier? No!

What dares not Ida do that she should
prize

The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose
The yesternight, and storming in extremes
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance
down

Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the
death, ¹⁷⁰

No, not the soldier's; yet I hold her, king,
True woman; but you clash them all in one,
That have as many differences as we.

The violet varies from the lily as far
As oak from elm. One loves the soldier,
one

The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,
And some unworthily; their sinless faith,
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they
need ¹⁷⁹

More breadth of culture. Is not Ida right?
They worth it? truer to the law within?
Severer in the logic of a life?

Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
Of earth and heaven? and she of whom
you speak,

My mother, looks as whole as some serene
Creation minted in the golden moods
Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a touch,
But pure as lines of green that streak the
white

Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say,
Not like the piebald miscellany, man, ¹⁹⁰
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual
mire,

But whole and one; and take them all-in-all,
Were we ourselves but half as good, as
kind,

As truthful, much that Ida claims as right
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly
theirs

As dues of Nature. To our point; not war,
Lest I lose all.'

'Nay, nay, you spake but sense,'
Said Gama. 'We remember love ourself
In our sweet youth; we did not rate him
then ¹⁹⁹

This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.
You talk almost like Ida; she can talk;
And there is something in it as you say:
But you talk kindlier; we esteem you for
it. —

He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,
I would he had our daughter. For the rest,
Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,
Fatherly fears — you used us courteously —
We would do much to gratify your Prince —
We pardon it; and for your ingress here ²⁰⁰
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,
You did but come as goblins in the night,
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's
head,

Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milk-
ing-maid,

Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream.
But let your Prince — our royal word
upon it,

He comes back safe — ride with us to our
lines,

And speak with Arac. Arac's word is thrice

As ours with Ida; something may be done —
I know not what — and ours shall see us
friends.

You, likewise, our late guests, if so you
will, ²²⁰

Follow us. Who knows? we four may build
some plan

Foursquare to opposition.'

Here he reach'd
White hands of farewell to my sire, who
growl'd

An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across
the lawns

Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of
Spring

In every bole, a song on every spray
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and
woke

Desire in me to infuse my tale of love ²³⁰
In the old king's ears, who promised help,
and oozed

All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode;
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews
Gather'd by night and peace, with each
light air

On our mail'd heads. But other thoughts
than peace

Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled
squares

And squadrons of the Prince, trampling
the flowers

With clamor; for among them rose a cry
As if to greet the king; they made a halt;
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms;
the drum ²⁴⁰

Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial
fife;

And in the blast and bray of the long horn
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
The banner. Anon to meet us lightly
pranced

Three captains out; nor ever had I seen
Such thews of men. The midmost and the
highest

Was Arac; all about his motion clung
The shadow of his sister, as the beam
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made
them glance

Like those three stars of the airy Giant's
zone, ²⁵⁰

That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,

And bickers into red and emerald, shone
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as
they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I
heard

War-music, felt the blind wild-beast of
force,

Whose home is in the sinews of a man,
Stir in me as to strike. Then took the king
His three broad sons; with now a wander-
ing hand ²⁵⁹

And now a pointed finger, told them all.
A common light of smiles at our disguise
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy
jest

Had labor'd down within his ample lungs,
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in
words:

'Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he him-
self

Your captive, yet my father wills not war!
And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I, war
or no?

But then this question of your troth re-
mains;

And there's a downright honest meaning
in her. ²⁷⁰

She flies too high, she flies too high! and
yet

She ask'd but space and fair-play for her
scheme;

She prest and prest it on me — I myself,
What know I of these things? but, life
and soul!

I thought her half-right talking of her
wrongs;

I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what of
that?

I take her for the flower of womankind,
And so I often told her, right or wrong;

And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she
loves, ²⁷⁹

And, right or wrong, I care not; this is all,
I stand upon her side; she made me swear
it —

'Sdeath! — and with solemn rites by can-
dle-light —

Swear by Saint something — I forget her
name —

Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men;
She was a princess too; and so I swore.

Come, this is all; she will not; waive your
claim.

If not, the foughten field, what else, at
once

Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's
will.'

I lagg'd in answer, loth to render up ²⁸⁹
My precontract, and loth by brainless war
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;
Till one of those two brothers, half aside
And fingering at the hair about his lip,
To prick us on to combat, 'Like to like!
The woman's garment hid the woman's
heart.'

A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a
blow!

For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the
point

Where idle boys are cowards to their
shame,

'Decide it here; why not? we are three to
three.' ³⁰⁰

Then spake the third: 'But three to
three? no more?

No more, and in our noble sister's cause?
More, more, for honor! every captain waits
Hungry for honor, angry for his king.

More, more, some fifty on a side, that each
May breathe himself, and quick! by over-
throw

Of these or those, the question settled die.'

'Yea,' answer'd I, 'for this wild wreath
of air,

This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
Foam of men's deeds — this honor, if ye
will. ³¹⁰

It needs must be for honor if at all;
Since, what decision? if we fail we fail,
And if we win we fail; she would not keep
Her compact.' 'Sdeath! but we will send
to her,'

Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why she should
Bide by this issue; let our missive thro',
And you shall have her answer by the
word.'

'Boys!' shriek'd the old king, but vain-
lier than a hen
To her false daughters in the pool; for
none

Regarded; neither seem'd there more to
say. 320
Back rode we to my father's camp, and
found
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,
Or by denial flush her babbling wells
With her own people's life; three times he
went.
The first, he blew and blew, but none ap-
pear'd;
He batter'd at the doors, none came; the
next,
An awful voice within had warn'd him
thence;
The third, and those eight daughters of the
plough
Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught
his hair, 330
And so belabor'd him on rib and cheek
They made him wild. Not less one glance
he caught
Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm
Tho' compass'd by two armies and the noise
Of arms; and standing like a stately pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and right
and left
Suck'd from the dark heart of the long hills
roll
The torrents, dash'd to the vale; and yet
her will 340
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was
pledged
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash'd
His iron palms together with a cry;
Himself would tilt it out among the lads;
But overborne by all his bearded lords
With reasons drawn from age and state,
perforce
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce de-
mur;
And many a bold knight started up in heat,
And sware to combat for my claim till
death. 350

All on this side the palace ran the field
Flat to the garden-wall; and likewise here,
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,
And great bronze valves, emboss'd with
Tomiris

And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barr'd. So here upon the flat
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd
up,
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,
With message and defiance, went and came;
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand, 361
But shaken here and there, and rolling
words
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read:

'O brother, you have known the pangs
we felt,
What heats of indignation when we heard
Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's
feet;
Of lands in which at the altar the poor
bride
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a
scourge;
Of living hearts that crack within the fire
Where smoulder their dead despots; and of
those, — 370
Mothers, — that, all prophetic pity, fling
Their pretty maids in the running flood,
and swoops
The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart
Made for all noble motion. And I saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times
With smoother men; the old leaven lea-
ven'd all;
Millions of throats would bawl for civil
rights,
No woman named; therefore I set my face
Against all men, and lived but for mine
own.
Far off from men I built a fold for them;
I stored it full of rich memorial; 381
I fenced it round with gallant institutes,
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey,
And prosper'd, till a rout of saucy boys
Brake on us at our hooks, and marr'd our
peace,
Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know
not what
Of insolence and love, some pretext held
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
Seal'd not the bond — the striplings! —
for their sport! —
I tamed my leopards; shall I not tame
these? 390
Or you? or I? for since you think me
touch'd
In honor — what! I would not aught of
false —

Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know
Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's
blood

You draw from, fight! You failing, I abide
What end soever; fail you will not. Still,
Take not his life, he risk'd it for my own;
His mother lives. Yet whatsoever you do,
Fight and fight well; strike and strike
home. O dear

Brothers, the woman's angel guards you,
you ⁴⁰⁰

The sole men to be mingled with our cause,
The sole men we shall prize in the after-
time,

Your very armor hallow'd, and your statues
Rear'd, sung to, when, this gadfly brush'd
aside,

We plant a solid foot into the Time,
And mould a generation strong to move
With claim on claim from right to right,
till she

Whose name is yoked with children's
know herself;

And Knowledge in our own land make her
free,

And, ever following those two crowned
twins, ⁴¹⁰

Commerce and Conquest, shower the fiery
grain

Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs
Between the Northern and the Southern
morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd across the
rest:

'See that there be no traitors in your camp.
We seem a nest of traitors — none to trust
Since our arms fail'd — this Egypt-plague
of men!

Almost our maids were better at their
homes,

Than thus man-girdled here. Indeed I
think

Our chiefest comfort is the little child ⁴²⁰
Of one unworthy mother, which she left.
She shall not have it back; the child shall

grow

To prize the authentic mother of her mind.
I took it for an hour in mine own bed

This morning; there the tender orphan
hands

Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from
thence

The wrath I nursed against the world.
Farewell.'

I ceased; he said, 'Stubborn, but she
may sit

Upon a king's right hand in thunder-
storms,

And breed up warriors! See now, tho'
yourself ⁴³⁰

Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs
That swallow common sense, the spindling
king,

This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.

When the man wants weight, the woman
takes it up,

And topples down the scales; but this is
fixt

As are the roots of earth and base of all, —
Man for the field and woman for the
hearth;

Man for the sword, and for the needle she;
Man with the head, and woman with the
heart;

Man to command, and woman to obey; ⁴⁴⁰
All else confusion. Look you! the gray
mare

Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills
From tile to scullery, and her small good-
man

Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of
hell

Mix with his hearth. But you — she's yet
a colt —

Take, break her; strongly groom'd and
straitly curb'd

She might not rank with those detestable
That let the hantling scald at home, and
brawl

Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the
street.

They say she's comely; there's the fairer
chance. ⁴⁵⁰

I like her none the less for rating at her!
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,
The bearing and the training of a child
Is woman's wisdom.'

Thus the hard old king.

I took my leave, for it was nearly noon;
I pored upon her letter which I held,

And on the little clause, 'take not his life;'
I mused on that wild morning in the woods,

And on the 'Follow, follow, thou shalt
win;'

I thought on all the wrathful king had said, ⁴⁶¹
And how the strange betrothment was to
end.

Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's
 curse
 That one should fight with shadows and
 should fall;
 And like a flash the weird affection came.
 King, camp, and college turn'd to hollow
 shows;
 I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
 And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,
 To dream myself the shadow of a dream;
 And ere I woke it was the point of noon,
 The lists were ready. Empanoplied and
 plumed 472
 We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
 Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared
 At the barrier like a wild horn in a land
 Of echoes, and a moment, and once more
 The trumpet, and again; at which the
 storm
 Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of
 spears
 And riders front to front, until they closed
 In conflict with the crash of shivering
 points, 480
 And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, I
 dream'd
 Of fighting. On his haunches rose the
 steed,
 And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
 And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
 Part sat like rocks; part reel'd but kept
 their seats;
 Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and
 drew;
 Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses.
 Down
 From those two bulks at Arac's side, and
 down
 From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
 The large blows rain'd, as here and every-
 where 490
 He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing
 lists,
 And all the plain — brand, mace, and
 shaft, and shield —
 Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd
 With hammers; till I thought, can this be he
 From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this be so,
 The mother makes us most — and in my
 dream
 I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front
 Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,
 And highest, among the statues, statue-like,
 Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,
 With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,

A single band of gold about her hair, 502
 Like a saint's glory up in heaven; but she,
 No saint — inexorable — no tenderness —
 Too hard, too cruel. Yet she sees me fight,
 Yea, let her see me fall. With that I drave
 Among the thickest and bore down a
 prince,
 And Cyril one. Yea, let me make my
 dream
 All that I would. But that large-moulded
 man,
 His visage all agrin as at a wake, 510
 Made at me thro' the press, and, stagger-
 ing back
 With stroke on stroke the horse and
 horseman, came
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
 Playing the roofs and sucking up the
 drains,
 And shadowing down the champaign till it
 strikes
 On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and
 cracks, and splits,
 And twists the grain with such a roar that
 Earth
 Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for every-
 thing
 Gave way before him. Only Florian, he
 That loved me closer than his own right
 eye, 520
 Thrust in between; but Arac rode him
 down.
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the
 Prince,
 With Psyche's color round his helmet,
 tough,
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that
 smote
 And threw him. Last I spurrd; I felt my
 veins
 Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to
 hand,
 And sword to sword, and horse to horse we
 hung,
 Till I struck out and shouted; the blade
 glanced,
 I did but shear a feather, and dream and
 truth 530
 Flow'd from me; darkness closed me, and
 I fell.

Home they brought her warrior dead;
 She nor swoon'd nor utter'd cry.
 All her maidens, watching; said,
 'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior sept,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee —
Like summer tempest came her tears —
'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

VI

My dream had never died or lived again;
As in some mystic middle state I lay.
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard;
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all
So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,
That all things grew more tragic and more
strange;
That when our side was vanquish'd and my
cause
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,
'The Prince is slain!' My father heard
and ran
In on the lists, and there unlaced my
casque
And grovell'd on my body, and after him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm; there on the
roofs
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she
sang.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: the
seed,
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the sun.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they
came;
The leaves were wet with women's tears; they
heard
A noise of songs they would not understand;
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fallen them-
selves.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they
came,
The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and
floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen; they
struck;
With their own blows they hurt themselves,
nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain;
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder
blade.

'Our enemies have fallen, but this shall
grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power; and
roll'd
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the
fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

'And now, O maids, behold our sanctu-
ary
Is violate, our laws broken; fear we not
To break them more in their behoof, whose
arms
Champion'd our cause and won it with a
day
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,
When dames and heroines of the golden
year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of
Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round
Their statues, borne aloft, the three; but
come,
We will be liberal, since our rights are
won.
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse
mankind,
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these
The brethren of our blood and cause, that
there
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender minis-
tries
Of female hands and hospitality.'

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her
arms,
Descending, hurst the great bronze valves,
and led
A hundred maids in train across the park.

Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on
 they came,
 Their feet in flowers, her loveliest. By
 them went
 The enamor'd air sighing, and on their
 curls
 From the high tree the blossom wavering
 fell,
 And over them the tremulous isles of light
 Slided, they moving under shade; but
 Blanche
 At distance follow'd. So they came: anon
 Thro' open field into the lists they wound
 Timorously; and as the leader of the herd
 That holds a stately fretwork to the sun, ⁷⁰
 And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,
 Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,
 The lovely, lordly creature floated on
 To where her wounded brethren lay; there
 stay'd,
 Knelt on one knee, — the child on one, —
 and prest
 Their hands, and call'd them dear deliver-
 ers,
 And happy warriors, and immortal names,
 And said, 'You shall not lie in the tents,
 but here,
 And nursed by those for whom you fought,
 and served
 With female hands and hospitality.' ⁸⁰

Then, whether moved by this, or was it
 chance,
 She past my way. Up started from my
 side
 The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,
 Silent; but when she saw me lying stark,
 Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,
 Cold even to her, she sigh'd; and when she
 saw
 The haggard father's face and reverend
 beard
 Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood
 Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead
 past ⁹⁰
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and she
 said:
 'He saved my life; my brother slew him
 for it.'
 No more; at which the king in bitter scorn
 Drew from my neck the painting and the
 tress,
 And held them up. She saw them, and a
 day

Rose from the distance on her memory,
 When the good queen, her mother, shore
 the tress
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche.
 And then once more she look'd at my pale
 face;
 Till understanding all the foolish work ¹⁰⁰
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
 Her iron will was broken in her mind;
 Her noble heart was molten in her breast;
 She bow'd, she set the child on the earth;
 she laid
 A feeling finger on my brows, and pre-
 sently
 'O Sire,' she said, 'he lives; he is not
 dead!
 O, let me have him with my brethren here
 In our own palace; we will tend on him
 Like one of these; if so, by any means,
 To lighten this great clog of thanks, that
 make ¹¹⁰
 Our progress falter to the woman's goal.'

She said; but at the happy word 'he
 lives!'
 My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my
 wounds.
 So those two foes above my fallen life,
 With brow to brow like night and evening
 mixt
 Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever
 stole
 A little nearer, till the babe that by us,
 Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden
 brede,
 Lay like a new-fallen meteor on the grass,
 Uncared for, spied its mother and began
 A blind and babbling laughter, and to
 dance ¹²¹
 Its body, and reach its fatling innocent
 arms
 And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal
 Brook'd not, but clamoring out 'Mine —
 mine — not yours!
 It is not yours, but mine; give me the
 child!'
 Ceased all on tremble; piteous was the
 cry.
 So stood the unhappy mother open-
 mouth'd,
 And turn'd each face her way. Wan was
 her cheek
 With hollow watch, her blooming mantle
 torn,
 Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,

And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and
 half ¹³¹
 The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst
 The laces toward her babe; but she nor
 cared
 Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida heard,
 Look'd up, and rising slowly from me,
 stood
 Erect and silent, striking with her glance
 The mother, me, the child. But he that lay
 Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,
 Trail'd himself up on one knee; then he
 drew
 Her robe to meet his lips, and down she
 look'd ¹⁴⁰
 At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it
 seem'd,
 Or self-involved; but when she learnt his
 face,
 Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose
 Once more thro' all her height, and o'er
 him grew
 Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
 When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he
 said:
 'O fair and strong and terrible! Lioness
 That with your long locks play the lion's
 mane!
 But Love and Nature, these are two more
 terrible
 And stronger. See, your foot is on our
 necks, ¹⁵⁰
 We vanquish'd, you the victor of your will.
 What would you more? give her the child!
 remain
 Orh'd in your isolation; he is dead,
 Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be.
 Win you the hearts of women; and beware
 Lest, where you seek the common love of
 these,
 The common hate with the revolving wheel
 Should drag you down, and some great
 Nemesis
 Break from a darken'd future, crown'd
 with fire,
 And tread you out for ever. But howso-
 e'er ¹⁶⁰
 Fixt in yourself, never in your own arms
 To hold your own, deny not hers to her,
 Give her the child! O, if, I say, you keep
 One pulse that beats true woman, if you
 loved
 The breast that fed or arm that dandled
 you,

Or own one port of sense not flint to
 prayer,
 Give her the child! or if you scorn to lay it,
 Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with
 yours,
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one
 fault
 The tenderness, not yours, that could not
 kill, ¹⁷⁰
 Give me it; I will give it her.'
 He said.
 At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd
 Dry flame, she listening; after sank and
 sank
 And, into mournful twilight mellowing,
 dwelt
 Full on the child. She took it: 'Pretty
 bud!
 Lily of the vale! half-open'd bell of the
 woods!
 Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a
 world
 Of traitorous friend and broken system
 made
 No purple in the distance, mystery, ¹⁷⁹
 Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell!
 These men are hard upon us as of old,
 We two must part; and yet how fain was I
 To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to
 think
 I might be something to thee, when I felt
 Thy helpless warmth about my barren
 breast
 In the dead prime; but may thy mother
 prove
 As true to thee as false, false, false to me!
 And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I
 wish it
 Gentle as freedom' — here she kiss'd it;
 then — ¹⁸⁹
 'All good go with thee! take it, sir,' and so
 Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed
 hands,
 Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she
 sprang
 To meet it, with an eye that swum in
 thanks;
 Then felt it sound and whole from head
 to foot,
 And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close
 enough,
 And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled
 it,
 And hid her bosom with it; after that
 Put on more calm and added suppliantly:

'We two were friends: I go to mine
own land
For ever. Find some other; as for me ²⁰⁰
I scarce am fit for your great plans: yet
speak to me,
Say one soft word and let me part fer-
given.'

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.
Then Arac: 'Ida — 'sdeath! you blame the
man;
You wrong yourselves — the woman is so
hard
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!
I am your warrior; I and mine have
fought
Your battle. Kiss her; take her hand, she
weeps.
'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er
than see it.' ²⁰⁹

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground;
And reddening in the furrows of his chin,
And moved beyond his custom, Gama said:

'I've heard that there is iron in the
blood,
And I believe it. Not one word? not
one?
Whence drew you this steel temper? not
from me,
Not from your mother, now a saint with
saints.
She said you had a heart — I heard her say
it —
"Our Ida has a heart" — just ere she
died —
"But see that some one with authority
Be near her still;" and I — I sought for
one — ²²⁰
All people said she had authority —
The Lady Blanche — much profit! Not one
word;
No! tho' your father sues. See how you
stand
Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights
maim'd,
I trust that there is no one hurt to death,
For your wild whim. And was it then for
this,
Was it for this we gave our palace up,
Where we withdrew from summer heats
and state,
And had our wine and chess beneath the
planes,

And many a pleasant hour with her that's
gone, ²³⁰
Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?
Speak to her, I say; is this not she of
whom,
When first she came, all flush'd you said to
me,
Now had you got a friend of your own age,
Now could you share your thought, now
should men see
Two women faster welded in one love
Than pairs of wedlock? she you walk'd
with, she
You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in
the tower,
Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,
And right ascension, heaven knows what;
and now ²⁴⁰
A word, but one, one little kindly word,
Not one to spare her! Out upon you, flint!
You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,
You shame your mother's judgment too.
Not one?
You will not? well — no heart have you,
or such
As fancies like the vermin in a nut
Have fretted all to dust and bitterness.'
So said the small king moved beyond his
went.

But Ida steed nor spoke, drain'd of her
force ²⁴⁹
By many a varying influence and so long.
Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor
wept;
Her head a little bent; and on her mouth
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded
moon
In a still water. Then brake out my sire,
Lifting his grim head from my wounds:
'O you,
Woman, whom we thought woman even
now,
And were half feel'd to let you tend our
son,
Because he might have wish'd it — but we
see
The accomplice of your madness unfer-
given,
And think that you might mix his draught
with death, ²⁶⁰
When your skies change again; the rougher
hand
Is safer. On to the tents; take up the
Prince.'

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd
to attend
A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd her
broke
A genial warmth and light once more, and
shone
Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.
O Psyche,' she cried out, 'embrace me,
come,
Quick while I melt; make reconciliation
sure
With one that cannot keep her mind an
hour;
Come to the hollow heart they slander
so!
Kiss and be friends, like children being
'chid!
I seem no more, I want forgiveness too;
I should have had to do with none but
maids,
That have no links with men. Ah false
but dear,
Dear traitor, too much loved, why? —
why? — yet see
Before these kings we embrace you yet
once more
With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O Sire,
Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon
him,
Like mine own brother. For my debt to
him,
This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know
it.
Taunt me no more; yourself and yours
shall have
Free adit; we will scatter all our maids
Till happier times each to her proper
hearth.
What use to keep them here — now? grant
my prayer.
Help, father, brother, help; speak to the
king;
Thaw this male nature to some touch of
that
Which kills me with myself, and drags me
down
From my fixt height to mob me up with
all
The soft and milky rabble of womankind,
Poor weakling even as they are.'

Passionate tears
Follow'd; the king replied not; Cyril said:

'Your brother, lady, — Florian, — ask for
him
Of your great Head — for he is wounded
too —
That you may tend upon him with the
Prince.'

'Ay, so,' said Ida with a bitter smile,
'Our laws are broken; let him enter too.'
Then Violet, she that sang the mournful
song,

And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
Petition'd too for him. 'Ay, so,' she
said,

'I stagger in the stream; I cannot keep
My heart an eddy from the brawling hour.
We break our laws with ease, but let it
be.'

'Ay, so?' said Blanche: 'Amazed am I to
hear

Your Highness; but your Highness breaks
with ease

The law your Highness did not make;
't was I.

I had been wedded wife, I knew man-
kind,

And block'd them out; but these men came
to woo

Your Highness, — verily I think to win.'

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye;
But Ida, with a voice that, like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling
tower,

Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn:

'Fling our doors wide! all, all, not one,
but all,

Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,
Shall enter, if he will! Let our girls flit,
Till the storm die! but had you stood by
us,

The roar that breaks the Pharos from his
base

Had left us rock. She fain would sting us
too,

But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your
likes.

We brook no further insult, but are gone.'

She turn'd; the very nape of her white
neck

Was rosed with indignation; but the Prince
Her brother came; the king her father
charm'd

Her wounded soul with words; nor did
mine own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights,
and bare
Straight to the doors; to them the doors
gave way ³²⁹
Groaning, and in the vestal entry shriek'd
The virgin marble under iron heels.
And on they moved and gain'd the hall,
and there
Rested; but great the crush was, and each
base,
To left and right, of those tall columns
drown'd

In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers. At the further end
Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats
Close by her, like supporters on a shield,
Bow-back'd with fear; but in the centre
stood

The common men with rolling eyes;
amazed ³⁴⁰

They glared upon the women, and aghast
The women stared at these, all silent, save
When armor clash'd or jingled, while the
day,
Descending, struck athwart the hall, and
shot

A flying splendor out of brass and steel,
That o'er the statues leapt from head to
head,

Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame;
And now and then an echo started up,
And shuddering fled from room to room,
and died ³⁵⁰

Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance;
And me they bore up the broad stairs, and
thro'

The long-laid galleries past a hundred
doors

To one deep chamber shut from sound, and
due

To languid limbs and sickness, left me
in it;

And others elsewhere they laid; and all
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof

And chariot, many a maiden passing home
Till happier times; but some were left of
those ³⁶⁰

Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,

From those two hosts that lay beside the
wall,
Walk'd at their will, and everything was
changed.

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take
the shape,

With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:

Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd;
I strove against the stream and all in vain;

Let the great river take me to the main.
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

VII

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turn'd to hospital,
At first with all confusion; by and by
Sweet order lived again with other laws,
A kindlier influence reign'd, and every-
where

Low voices with the ministering hand
Hung round the sick. The maidens came,
they talk'd,

They sang, they read; till she not fair be-
gan

To gather light, and she that was became
Her former beauty treble; and to and
fro ¹⁰

With books, with flowers, with angel offices,
Like creatures native unto gracious act,
And in their own clear element, they
moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
And hatred of her weakness, blent with
shame.

Old studies fail'd; seldom she spoke; but
oft

Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for
hours

On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men
Darkening her female field. Void was her
use,

And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze

O'er land and main, and sees a great black
 cloud²¹
 Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of
 night,
 Blot out the slope of sea from verge to
 shore,
 And suck the blinding splendor from the
 sand,
 And quenching lake by lake and tarn by
 tarn
 Expunge the world; so fared she gazing
 there,
 So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank
 And waste it seem'd and vain; till down
 she came,
 And found fair peace once more among the
 sick.

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by morn
 the lark³⁰
 Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres,
 but I
 Lay silent in the muffled cage of life.
 And twilight gloom'd, and broader-grown
 the bowers
 Drew the great night into themselves, and
 heaven,
 Star after star, arose and fell; but I,
 Deeper than those weird doubts could reach
 me, lay
 Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,
 Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the
 hand
 That nursed me, more than infants in their
 sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian; with her oft⁴⁰
 Melissa came, for Blanche had gone, but
 left
 Her child among us, willing she should
 keep
 Court-favor. Here and there the small
 bright head,
 A light of healing, glanced about the couch,
 Or thro' the parted silks the tender face
 Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man
 With blush and smile, a medicine in them-
 selves
 To wile the length from languorous hours,
 and draw
 The sting from pain; nor seem'd it strange
 that soon⁴⁹
 He rose up whole, and those fair charities
 Join'd at her side; nor stranger seem'd that
 hearts

So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,
 Than when two dewdrops on the petal
 shake
 To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper
 down,
 And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit ob-
 tain'd
 At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche
 had sworn
 That after that dark night among the fields
 She needs must wed him for her own good
 name;⁵⁹
 Not tho' he built upon the babe restored;
 Not tho' she liked him, yielded she, but
 fear'd
 To incense the Head once more; till on a
 day
 When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
 Seen but of Psyche; on her foot she hung
 A moment, and she heard, at which her
 face
 A little flush'd, and she past on; but each
 Assumed from thence a half-consent in-
 volved
 In stillness, plighted troth, and were at
 peace.

Nor only these; Love in the sacred halls
 Held carnival at will, and flying struck⁷⁰
 With showers of random sweet on maid and
 man.
 Nor did her father cease to press my claim,
 Nor did mine own now reconciled; nor yet
 Did those twin brothers, risen again and
 whole;
 Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat.
 Then came a change; for sometimes I
 would catch
 Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
 And fling it like a viper off, and shriek,
 'You are not Ida;' clasp it once again,⁸⁰
 And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,
 And call her sweet, as if in irony,
 And call her hard and cold, which seem'd a
 truth;
 And still she fear'd that I should lose my
 mind,
 And often she believed that I should die;
 Till out of long frustration of her care,
 And pensive tendance in the all-weary
 noons,

And watches in the dead, the dark, when
 clocks
 Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors, or
 call'd
 On flying Time from all their silver
 tongues —⁹⁰
 And out of memories of her kindlier days,
 And sidelong glances at my father's grief,
 And at the happy lovers heart in heart —
 And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
 And lonely listenings to my mutter'd
 dream,
 And often feeling of the helpless hands,
 And wordless broodings on the wasted
 cheek —
 From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
 Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to
 these,
 Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with
 tears¹⁰⁰
 By some cold morning glacier; frail at first
 And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
 But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to
 death
 For weakness. It was evening; silent light
 Slept on the painted walls, wherein were
 wrought
 Two grand designs; for on one side arose
 The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd
 At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they
 cramm'd
 The forum, and half-crush'd among the
 rest¹¹⁰
 A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other
 side
 Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,
 A train of dames. By axe and eagle sat,
 With all their foreheads drawn in Roman
 scowls,
 And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their
 veins,
 The fierce triumvirs; and before them
 paused
 Hortensia, pleading; angry was her face.

I saw the forms; I knew not where I
 was.
 They did but look like hollow shows; nor
 more¹¹⁹
 Sweet Ida. Palm to palm she sat; the dew
 Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape
 And rounder seem'd. I moved, I sigh'd;
 a touch

Came round my wrist, and tears upon my
 hand.
 Then all for languor and self-pity ran
 Mine down my face, and with what life I
 had,
 And like a flower that cannot all unfold,
 So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,
 Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on
 her
 Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisper-
 ingly:

'If you be what I think you, some sweet
 dream,¹³⁰
 I would but ask you to fulfil yourself;
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
 I ask you nothing; only, if a dream,
 Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-
 night.
 Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.'

I could no more, but lay like one in
 trance,
 That hears his burial talk'd of by his friends,
 And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one
 sign,
 But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd,
 she paused,¹³⁹
 She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt a
 cry,
 Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of
 death,
 And I believ'd that in the living world
 My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;
 Till back I fell, and from mine arms she
 rose
 Glowing all over noble shame; and all
 Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,
 And left her woman, lovelier in her mood
 Than in her mould that other, when she
 came
 From barren deeps to conquer all with love,
 And down the streaming crystal dropt; and
 she¹⁵⁰
 Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
 Naked, a double light in air and wave,
 To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her
 out

For worship without end — nor end of mine,
 Stateliest, for thee! but mute she glided
 forth,
 Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and
 slept,
 Fill'd thro' and thro' with love, a happy
 sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near me,
held
A volume of the poets of her land. 159
There to herself, all in low tones, she read:

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the
white;
Nor waxes the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font.
The fire-fly wakens; waken thou with me.

'Now droops the milk-white peacock like a
ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

'Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

'Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me. 170

'Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the hosom of the lake.
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my hosom and be lost in me.'

I heard her turn the page; she found a
small
Sweet idyl, and once more, as low, she
read:

'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain
height.
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd
sang),
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But cease to move so near the heavens, and
cease 180

To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice, 191
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors.
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-
smoke,

That like a broken purpose waste in air. 199
So waste not thou, but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth

Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned, while with shut eyes I
lay
Listening, then look'd. Pale was the per-
fect face;

The hosom with long sighs labor'd; and
meek 210
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous
eyes,

And the voice trembled and the hand. She
said

Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd
In sweet humility, had fail'd in all;
That all her labor was but as a block
Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,
She still were loth to yield herself to one
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal
rights

Against the sons of men and barbarous
laws.

She pray'd me not to judge their cause
from her 220

That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth
than power

In knowledge. Something wild within her
breast,

A greater than all knowledge, beat her
down.

And she had nursed me there from week to
week;

Much had she learnt in little time. In part
It was ill counsel had misled the girl

To vex true hearts; yet was she but a
girl —

'Ah fool, and made myself a queen of
farce!

When comes another such? never, I think,
Till the sun drop, dead, from the signs.'

Her voice
Choked, and her forehead sank upon her
hands, 231

And her great heart thro' all the faultful
past

Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not
break;

Till notice of a change in the dark world
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,
That early woke to feed her little ones,
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light.
She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

'Blame not thyself too much,' I said,
 'nor blame
 Too much the sons of men and barbarous
 laws; ²⁴⁰
 These were the rough ways of the world till
 now.
 Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that
 know
 The woman's cause is man's; they rise or
 sink
 Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free.
 For she that out of Lethe scales with man
 The shining steps of Nature, shares with
 man
 His nights, his days, moves with him to one
 goal,
 Stays all the fair young planet in her
 hands —
 If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
 How shall men grow? but work no more
 alone! ²⁵⁰
 Our place is much; as far as in us lies
 We two will serve them both in aiding
 her —
 Will clear away the parasitic forms
 That seem to keep her up but drag her
 down —
 Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
 Within her — let her make herself her
 own
 To give or keep, to live and learn and be
 All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
 For woman is not undevelop'd man,
 But diverse. Could we make her as the
 man, ²⁶⁰
 Sweet Love were slain; his dearest bond
 is this,
 Not like to like, but like in difference.
 Yet in the long years liker must they
 grow;
 The man be more of woman, she of man;
 He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw
 the world;
 She mental breadth, nor fail in childward
 care,
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
 Till at the last she set herself to man,
 Like perfect music unto noble words; ²⁷⁰
 And so these twain, upon the skirts of
 Time,
 Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their
 powers,
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the to-be,
 Self-reverent each and reverencing each,

Distinct in individualities,
 But like each other even as those who love.
 Then comes the statelier Eden back to
 men;
 Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste
 and calm;
 Then springs the crowning race of human-
 kind. ²⁷⁹
 May these things be!'

Sighing she spoke: 'I fear
 They will not.'

'Dear, but let us type them now
 In our own lives, and this proud watch-
 word rest
 Of equal; seeing either sex alone
 Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
 Nor equal, nor unequal. Each fulfils
 Defect in each, and always thought in
 thought,
 Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
 The single pure and perfect animal,
 The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full
 stroke, ²⁸⁹
 Life.'

And again sighing she spoke: 'A dream
 That once was mine! what woman taught
 you this?'

'Alone,' I said, 'from earlier than I
 know,
 Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the
 world,
 I loved the woman. He, that doth not,
 lives
 A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
 Or pines in sad experience worse than
 death,
 Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with
 crime.
 Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her,
 one
 Not learned, save in gracious household
 ways,
 Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
 No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt ³⁰¹
 In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
 Interpreter between the gods and men,
 Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
 On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
 Too gross to tread, and all male minds per-
 force
 Sway'd to her from their orbits as they
 moved,
 And girdled her with music. Happy he
 With such a mother! faith in womankind

Beats with his blood, and trust in all things
 high 310
 Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
 He shall not blind his soul with clay.
 'But I,'
 Said Ida, tremulously, 'so all unlike —
 It seems you love to cheat yourself with
 words;
 This mother is your model. I have heard
 Of your strange doubts; they well might
 be; I seem
 A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince!
 You cannot love me.'
 'Nay, but thee,' I said,
 'From yearlong poring on thy pictured
 eyes,
 Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and
 saw 320
 Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods
 That mask'd thee from men's reverence
 up, and forced
 Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood;
 now,
 Given back to life, to life indeed, thro'
 thee,
 Indeed I love. The new day comes, the
 light
 Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults
 Lived over. Lift thine eyes; my doubts are
 dead,
 My haunting sense of hollow shows; the
 change,
 This truthful change in thee has kill'd it.
 Dear,
 Look up, and let thy nature strike on
 mine, 330
 Like yonder morning on the blind half-
 world.
 Approach and fear not; breathe upon my
 brows;
 In that fine air I tremble, all the past
 Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and
 this
 Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come
 Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland
 reels
 Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. For-
 give me,
 I waste my heart in signs; let be. My
 bride,
 My wife, my life! O, we will walk this
 world,
 Yoked in all exercise of noble end, 340
 And so thro' those dark gates across the
 wild

That no man knows. Indeed I love thee;
 come,
 Yield thyself up; my hopes and thine are
 one.
 Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;
 Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to
 me.'

CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give you all
 The random scheme as wildly as it rose.
 The words are mostly mine; for when we
 ceased
 There came a minute's pause, and Walter
 said,
 'I wish she had not yielded!' then to me,
 'What if you drest it up poetically!'
 So pray'd the men, the women; I gave
 assent.
 Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of
 seven
 Together in one sheaf? What style could
 suit?
 The men required that I should give
 throughout 10
 The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
 With which we banter'd little Lilia first;
 The women — and perhaps they felt their
 power,
 For something in the ballads which they
 sang,
 Or in their silent influence as they sat,
 Had ever seem'd to wrestle with bur-
 lesque,
 And drove us, last, to quite a solemn
 close —
 They hated banter, wish'd for something
 real,
 A gallant fight, a noble princess — why 10
 Not make her true-heroic — true-sublime?
 Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?
 Which yet with such a framework scarce
 could be.
 Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,
 Betwixt the mockers and the realists;
 And I, betwixt them both, to please them
 both,
 And yet to give the story as it rose,
 I moved as in a strange diagonal,
 And maybe neither pleased myself nor
 them.
 But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part
 In our dispute; the sequel of the tale 34

Had touch'd her, and she sat, she pluck'd
 the grass,
 She flung it from her, thinking; last, she
 fixt
 A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
 'You — tell us what we are' — who might
 have told,
 For she was cramm'd with theories out of
 books,
 But that there rose a shout. The gates were
 closed
 At sunset, and the crowd were swarming
 now,
 To take their leave, about the garden rails.

'So I and some went out to these; we
 climb'd³⁹
 The slope to Vivian-place, and turning
 saw
 The happy valleys, half in light, and half
 Far-shadowing from the west, a land of
 peace;
 Gray halls alone among their massive
 groves;
 Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic
 tower
 Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of
 wheat;
 The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the
 seas;
 A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,
 Imagined more than seen, the skirts of
 France.

'Look there, a garden!' said my college
 friend,
 The Tory member's elder son, 'and there!
 God bless the narrow sea which keeps her
 off,⁵¹
 And keeps our Britain, whole within her-
 self,
 A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —
 Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
 Some reverence for the laws ourselves have
 made,
 Some patient force to change them when
 we will,
 Some civic manhood firm against the
 crowd —
 But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden
 heat,
 The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,
 The king is scared, the soldier will not
 fight,⁶⁰
 The little boys begin to shoot and stab,

A kingdom topples over with a shriek
 Like an old woman, and down rolls the
 world
 In mock heroics stranger than our own;
 Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
 No graver than a schoolboys' barring out;
 Too comic for the solemn things they are,
 Too solemn for the comic touches in them,
 Like our wild Princess with as wise a
 dream
 As some of theirs — God bless the narrow
 seas!⁷⁰
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.'

'Have patience,' I replied, 'ourselves are
 full
 Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
 Are but the needful preludes of the truth.
 For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
 The sport half-science, fill me with a faith,
 This fine old world of ours is but a child
 Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it
 time
 To learn its limbs; there is a hand that
 guides.'

In such discourse we gain'd the garden
 rails,⁸⁰
 And there we saw Sir Walter where he
 stood,
 Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
 Among six boys, head under head, and
 look'd
 No little lily-handed baronet he,
 A great broad-shoulder'd genial English-
 man,
 A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
 A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
 A patron of some thirty charities,
 A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
 A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none; ⁹⁰
 Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;
 Now shaking hands with him, now him, of
 those
 That stood the nearest — now address'd to
 speech —
 Who spoke few words and pithily, such as
 closed
 Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the
 year
 To follow. A shout rose again, and made
 The long line of the approaching rookery
 swerve
 From the elms, and shook the branches of
 the deer

From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and
 rang 99
 Beyond the bourn of sunset — O, a shout
 More joyful than the city-roar that hails
 Premier or king ! Why should not these
 great sirs
 Give up their parks some dozen times a
 year
 To let the people breathe ? So thrice they
 cried,
 I likewise, and in groups they stream'd
 away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and
 sat on,
 So much the gathering darkness charm'd;
 we sat

But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,
 Perchance upon the future man. The walls
 Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls
 whoop'd, 110
 And gradually the powers of the night,
 That range above the region of the wind,
 Deepening the courts of twilight broke
 them up
 Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,
 Beyond all thought into the heaven of hea-
 vens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
 Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir
 Ralph
 From those rich silks, and home well-
 pleased we went.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou.
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know,
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to hear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me,
What seem'd my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.
1849.

I

I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss.
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with Death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
'Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn.'

II

Old yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the underlying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O, not for thee the glow, the bloom,
 Who chagest not in any gale,
 Nor branding summer suns avail
 To touch thy thousand years of gloom;

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
 Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
 I seem to fail from out my blood
 And grow incorporate into thee.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
 O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
 O sweet and bitter in a breath,
 What whispers from thy lying lip ?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'hindly run;
 A web is woven across the sky;
 From out waste places comes a cry,
 And murmurs from the dying sun;

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands —
 With all the music in her tone,
 A hollow echo of my own, —
 A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,
 Embrace her as my natural good;
 Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
 Upon the threshold of the mind ?

IV

To Sleep I give my powers away;
 My will is hondsman to the dark;
 I sit within a helmless bark,
 And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
 That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,
 Who scarcely darest to inquire,
 'What is it makes me beat so low ?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,
 Some pleasure from thine early years.
 Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
 That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
 All night below the darken'd eyes;
 With morning wakes the will, and cries,
 'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

V

I sometimes hold it half a sin
 To put in words the grief I feel;

For words, like Nature, half reveal
 And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
 A use in measured language lies;
 The sad mechanic exercise,
 Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
 Like coarsest clothes against the cold;
 But that large grief which these en-
 fold
 Is given in outline and no more.

VI

One writes, that 'other friends remain,'
 That 'loss is common to the race' —
 And common is the commonplace,
 And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
 My own less bitter, rather more.
 Too common ! Never morning wore
 To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
 Who pledgest now thy gallant son,
 A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
 Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
 Thy sailor, — while thy head is bow'd,
 His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
 Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
 At that last hour to please him well;
 Who mused on all I had to tell,
 And something written, something thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
 And ever met him on his way
 With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'
 Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O, somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,
 That sittest ranging golden hair;
 And glad to find thyself so fair,
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

For now her father's chimney glows
 In expectation of a guest;
 And thinking 'this will please him
 best,'
 She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
 And with the thought her color burns;
 And, having left the glass, she turns
 Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
 Had fallen, and her future lord
 Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
 Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O, what to her shall be the end?
 And what to me remains of good?
 To her perpetual maidenhood,
 And unto me no second friend.

VII

Dark house, by which once more I stand
 Here in the long unlovely street,
 Doors, where my heart was used to beat
 So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more —
 Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
 And like a guilty thing I creep
 At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
 The noise of life begins again,
 And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
 On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII

A happy lover who has come
 To look on her that loves him well,
 Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
 And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light
 Dies off at once from bower and hall,
 And all the place is dark, and all
 The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot
 In which we two were wont to meet,
 The field, the chamber, and the street,
 For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
 In those deserted walks, may find
 A flower beat with rain and wind,
 Which once she foster'd up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
 O my forsaken heart, with thee

And this poor flower of poesy
 Which, little cared for, fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
 I go to plant it on his tomb,
 That if it can it there may bloom,
 Or, dying, there at least may die.

IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
 Sailest the placid ocean-plains
 With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
 In vain; a favorable speed
 Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
 Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
 As our pure love, thro' early light
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
 My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run;
 Dear as the mother to the son,
 More than my brothers are to me.

X

I hear the noise about thy keel;
 I hear the bell struck in the night;
 I see the cabin-window bright;
 I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
 And travell'd men from foreign lands;
 And letters unto trembling hands;
 And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him; we have idle dreams;
 This look of quiet flatters thus
 Our home-bred fancies. O, to us,
 The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
 That takes the sunshine and the rains,
 Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
 The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine,
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground;

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold;

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bow-
ers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main;

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall,
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair;

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To hear thro' heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go, I cannot stay;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying, 'Comes he thus, my friend?
Is this the end of all my care?'
And circle moaning in the air,
'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return

To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
A void where heart on heart reposed;
And, where warm hands have prest and
closed,
Silence, till I be silent too;

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come, Time, and teach me, many years,
I do not suffer in a dream;
For now so strange do these things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears,

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching sails,
As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day
And I went-down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine,
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had droop'd of late,
And he should sorrow o'er my state
And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

XV

To-night the winds begin to rise
 And roar from yonder dropping day;
 The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
 The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
 The cattle huddled on the lea;
 And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
 The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
 That all thy motions gently pass
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,
 I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
 And but for fear it is not so,
 The wild unrest that lives in woe
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
 And onward drags a laboring breast,
 And topples round the dreary west,
 A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI

What words are these have fallen from
 me?
 Can calm despair and wild unrest
 Be tenants of a single breast,
 Or Sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take
 The touch of change in calm or storm,
 But knows no more of transient form
 In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
 Hung in the shadow of a heaven?
 Or has the shock, so harshly given,
 Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
 And staggers blindly ere she sink?
 And stunn'd me from my power to think
 And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
 Whose fancy fuses old and new,
 And flashes into false and true,
 And mingles all without a plan?

XVII

Thou comest, much wept for; such a breeze
 Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer
 Was as the whisper of an air
 To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
 Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
 Week after week; the days go by;
 Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,
 My blessing, like a line of light,
 Is on the waters day and night,
 And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
 Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark,
 And balmy drops in summer dark
 Slide from the bosom of the stars;

So kind an office hath been done,
 Such precious relics brought by thee,
 The dust of him I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run.

XVIII

'T is well; 't is something; we may stand
 Where he in English earth is laid,
 And from his ashes may be made
 The violet of his native land.

'T is little; but it looks in truth
 As if the quiet bones were blest
 Among familiar names to rest
 And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
 That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
 And come, whatever loves to weep,
 And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, even yet, if this might be,
 I, falling on his faithful heart,
 Would breathing thro' his lips impart
 The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
 And slowly forms the firmer mind,
 Treasuring the look it cannot find,
 The words that are not heard again.

XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave
 The darken'd heart that beat no more;
 They laid him by the pleasant shore,
 And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
 The salt sea-water passes by,
 And hushes half the babbling Wye,
 And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
 And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
 When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
 I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
 Is vocal in its wooded walls;
 My deeper anguish also falls,
 And I can speak a little then.

XX

The lesser griefs that may be said,
 That breathe a thousand tender vows,
 Are but as servants in a house
 Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
 And weep the fulness from the mind.
 'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find
 Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,
 That out of words a comfort win;
 But there are other griefs within,
 And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit
 Cold in that atmosphere of death,
 And scarce endure to draw the breath,
 Or like to noiseless phantoms flit;

But open converse is there none,
 So much the vital spirits sink
 To see the vacant chair, and think,
 'How good! how kind! and he is gone.'

XXI

I sing to him that rests below,
 And, since the grasses round me wave,
 I take the grasses of the grave,
 And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
 And sometimes harshly will he speak:
 'This fellow would make weakness weak,
 And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers: 'Let him be,
 He loves to make parade of pain,
 That with his piping he may gain
 The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour
 For private sorrow's barren song,
 When more and more the people throng
 The chairs and thrones of civil power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,
 When Science reaches forth her arms
 To feel from world to world, and charms
 Her secret from the latest moon?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing;
 Ye never knew the sacred dust.
 I do but sing because I must,
 And pipe but as the linnets sing;

And one is glad; her note is gay,
 For now her little ones have rang'd;
 And one is sad; her note is chang'd,
 Because her brood is stolen away.

XXII

The path by which we twain did go,
 Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
 Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,
 From flower to flower, from snow to snow;

And we with singing cheer'd the way,
 And, crown'd with all the season lent,
 From April on to April went,
 And glad at heart from May to May.

But where the path we walk'd began
 To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
 As we descended following Hope,
 There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
 And spread his mantle dark and cold,
 And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
 And dull'd the murmur on thy lip.

And bore thee where I could not see
 Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
 And think that somewhere in the waste
 The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it
ran
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb,
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan;

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with
Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since our first sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so great?
The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far,
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not when we moved therein?

XXV

I know that this was Life, — the track
Whereon with equal feet we fared;
And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love;

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave in
twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it, for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the moulder'd tree,
And towers fallen as soon as built —

O, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see — in Him is no before —
In more of life true life no more
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods;

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
 I feel it, when I sorrow most;
 'T is better to have loved and lost
 Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ.
 The moon is hid, the night is still;
 The Christmas bells from hill to hill
 Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
 From far and near, on mead and moor,
 Swell out and fail, as if a door
 Were shut between me and the sound;

Each voice four changes on the wind,
 That now dilate, and now decrease,
 Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
 Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
 I almost wish'd no more to wake,
 And that my hold on life would break
 Before I heard those bells again;

But they my troubled spirit rule,
 For they controll'd me when a boy;
 They bring me sorrow touch'd with
 joy,
 The merry, merry bells of Yule.

XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve
 As daily vexes household peace,
 And chains regret to his decease,
 How dare we keep our Christmas-eve,

Which brings no more a welcome guest
 To enrich the threshold of the night
 With shower'd largess of delight
 In dance and song and game and jest ?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
 Entwine the cold baptismal font,
 Make one wreath more for Use and
 Wont,
 That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
 Gray nurses, loving nothing new—
 Why should they miss their yearly
 due
 Before their time ? They too will die.

XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas hearth;
 A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
 And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the ball
 We gamboll'd, making vain pretence
 Of gladness, with an awful sense
 Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech;
 We heard them sweep the winter land;
 And in a circle hand-in-hand
 Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
 We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
 A merry song we sang with him
 Last year; impetuously we sang.

We ceased; a gentler feeling crept
 Upon us: surely rest is meet.
 'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is
 sweet,'
 And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
 Once more we sang: 'They do not die
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
 Nor change to us, although they change;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail
 With gather'd power, yet the same,
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame
 From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
 Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
 O Father, touch the east, and light
 The light that shone when Hope was born.

XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
 And home to Mary's house return'd,
 Was this demanded— if he yearn'd
 To hear her weeping by his grave ?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four
 days ?'
 There lives no record of reply,
 Which telling what it is to die
 Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !
The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;
He told it not, or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful
prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure ;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer
air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays
Her early heaven, her happy views ;
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good.
O, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And even for want of such a type.

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks
In some wild poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I ?
'T were hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die ;

'T were best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house,
'The cheeks drop in, the body bows ;
Man dies, nor is there hope in dust ;'

Might I not say ? ' Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive.'
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be ;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
'The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and
more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case ? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the
grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
 Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
 We yield all blessing to the name
 Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
 Where truth in closest words shall fail,
 When truth embodied in a tale
 Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
 With human hands the creed of creeds
 In loveliness of perfect deeds,
 More strong than all poetie thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
 And those wild eyes that watch the
 wave
 In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:
 'Thou pratest here where thou art least;
 This faith has many a purer priest,
 And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,
 On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
 And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
 About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,
 A touch of shame upon her cheek:
 'I am not worthy even to speak
 Of thy prevailing mysteries;

'For I am but an earthly Muse,
 And owning but a little art
 To lull with song an aching heart,
 And render human love his dues;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,
 And all he said of things divine, —
 And dear to me as sacred wine
 To dying lips is all he said, —

'I murmur'd, as I came along,
 Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd,
 And loiter'd in the master's field,
 And darken'd sanctities with song.'

XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,
 Tho' always under alter'd skies
 The purple from the distance dies,
 My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
 The herald melodies of spring,
 But in the songs I love to sing
 A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
 Survive in spirits render'd free,
 Then are these songs I sing of thee
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,
 And answering now my random stroke
 With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
 Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,
 To thee too comes the golden hour
 When flower is feeling after flower;
 But Sorrow, — fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men, —
 What whisper'd from her lying lips?
 Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
 And passes into gloom again.

XL

Could we forget the widow'd hour
 And look on Spirits breathed away,
 As on a maiden in the day
 When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise
 To take her latest leave of home,
 And hopes and light regrets that come
 Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
 And tears are on the mother's face,
 As parting with a long embrace
 She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
 Becoming as is meet and fit
 A link among the days, to knit
 The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !
How often shall her old fireside
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
And bring her babe, and make her
boast,

Till even those that miss'd her most
Shall count new things as dear as old;

But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low;
My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

XLI

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to higher,
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,
And I have lost the links that bound
Thy changes; here upon the ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly ! yet that this could be —
That I could wing my will with might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee!

For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death,
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to thee,
Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim.
He still outstript me in the race;

It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To ripper growth the mind and will;

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves, but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows ?

XLIII

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its interval gloom
In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIV

How fares it with the happy dead ?
For here the man is more and more;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
Gives out at times — he knows not
whence —
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years —
If Death so taste Lethean springs —
May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O, turn thee round, resolve the doubt;
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV

The baby new to earth and sky,
 What time his tender palm is prest
 Against the circle of the breast,
 Has never thought that 'this is I;'

But as he grows he gathers much,
 And learns the use of 'I' and 'me,'
 And finds 'I am not what I see,
 And other than the things I touch.'

So rounds he to a separate mind
 From whence clear memory may be-
 gin,
 As thro' the frame that binds him in
 His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
 Which else were fruitless of their due,
 Had man to learn himself anew
 Beyond the second birth of death.

XLVI

We ranging down this lower track,
 The path we came by, thorn and flower,
 Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
 Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
 In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
 But clear from marge to marge shall
 bloom
 The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd,
 The fruitful hours of still increase;
 Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
 A bounded field, nor stretching far;
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII

That each, who seems a separate whole,
 Should move his rounds, and fusing
 all

The skirts of self again, should fall
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet.
 Eternal form shall still divide

The eternal soul from all beside;
 And I shall know him when we meet;

And we shall sit at endless feast,
 Enjoying each the other's good.
 What vaster dream can hit the mood
 Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
 Before the spirits fade away,
 Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
 'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light.'

XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
 Were taken to be such as closed
 Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
 Then these were such as men might scorn.

Her care is not to part and prove;
 She takes, when harsher moods remit,
 What slender shade of doubt may flit,
 And makes it vassal unto love;

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
 But better serves a wholesome law,
 And holds it sin and shame to draw
 The deepest measure from the chords;

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
 But rather loosens from the lip
 Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
 Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX

From art, from nature, from the schools,
 Let random influences glance,
 Like light in many a shiver'd lance
 That breaks about the dappled pools.

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
 The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe,
 The slightest air of song shall breathe
 To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
 But blame not thou the winds that make
 The seeming-wanton ripple break,
 The tender-pencill'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
 Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
 Whose muffled motions blindly drown
 The bases of my life in tears.

L

Be near me when my light is low,
 When the blood creeps, and the nerves
 prick
 And tingle; and the heart is sick,
 And all the wheels of being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
 Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;
 And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
 And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
 And men the flies of latter spring,
 That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
 And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
 To point the term of human strife,
 And on the low dark verge of life
 The twilight of eternal day.

LI

Do we indeed desire the dead
 Should still be near us at our side?
 Is there no baseness we would hide?
 No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
 I had such reverence for his blame,
 See with clear eye some hidden shame
 And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue.
 Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
 There must be wisdom with great Death;
 The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall;
 Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
 With larger other eyes than ours,
 To make allowance for us all.

LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,
 For love reflects the thing beloved;
 My words are only words, and moved
 Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,'
 The Spirit of true love replied;
 'Thou canst not move me from thy
 side,
 Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true
 To that ideal which he bears?
 What record? not the sinless years
 That breathed beneath the Syrian blue;

'So fret not, like an idle girl,
 That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.
 Abide; thy wealth is gather'd in,
 When Time bath sunder'd shell from
 pearl.'

LIII

How many a father have I seen,
 A sober man, among his boys,
 Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
 Who wears his manhood hale and green;

And dare we to this fancy give,
 That had the wild oat not been sown,
 The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
 The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
 For life outliving heats of youth,
 Yet who would preach it as a truth
 To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good, define it well;
 For fear divine Philosophy
 Should push beyond her mark, and be
 Procress to the Lords of Hell.

LIV

O, yet we trust that somehow good
 Will be the final goal of ill,
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
 That not one life shall be destroy'd,
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,
 When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
 That not a moth with vain desire
 Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
 Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
 I can but trust that good shall fall
 At last — far off — at last, to all,
 And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?
 An infant crying in the night;

An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry.

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams ?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life,

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI

'So careful of the type ?' but no.
From scarp'd cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone;
I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death;
The spirit does but mean the breath:
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law —
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed —

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills ?

No more ? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail !
O for thy voice to soothe and bless !
What hope of answer, or redress ?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII

Peace; come away: the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song.
Peace; come away: we do him wrong
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;
But half my life I leave behind.
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;
But I shall pass, my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead;
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,
'Adieu, adieu,' for evermore.

LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell.
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall
cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore
grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear ?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be ?

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
 Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
 And put thy harsher moods aside,
 If thou wilt have me wise and good ?

My centred passion cannot move,
 Nor will it lessen from to-day;
 But I'll have leave at times to play
 As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
 With so much hope for years to come,
 That, howsee'er I know thee, some
 Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LX

He past, a soul of nobler tone;
 My spirit loved and loves him yet,
 Like some poor girl whose heart is set
 On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
 She finds the baseness of her lot,
 Half jealous of she knows not what,
 And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
 She sighs amid her narrow days,
 Moving about the household ways,
 In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
 And tease her till the day draws by;
 At night she weeps, 'How vain am I !
 How should he love a thing so low ?'

LXI

If, in thy second state sublime,
 Thy ransom'd reason change replies
 With all the circle of the wise,
 The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
 How dimly character'd and slight,
 How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,
 How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
 Where thy first form was made a man;
 I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
 The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

LXII

The' if an eye that's downward cast
 Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,

Then be my love an idle tale
 And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
 When he was little more than boy,
 On some unworthy heart with joy,
 But lives to wed an equal mind,

And breathes a novel world, the while
 His other passion wholly dies,
 Or in the light of deeper eyes
 Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
 And love in which my hound has part,
 Can hang no weight upon my heart
 In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
 As thou, perchance, art more than I,
 And yet I spare them sympathy,
 And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
 As, unto vaster motions bound,
 The circuits of thine orbit round
 A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
 As some divinely gifted man,
 Whose life in low estate began
 And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
 And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
 And breasts the blows of circumstance,
 And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
 And lives to clutch the golden keys,
 To mould a mighty state's decrees,
 And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
 The pillar of a people's hope,
 The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
 When all his active powers are still,
 A distant dearness in the hill,
 A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He play'd at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands:
'Does my old friend remember me?'

LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
I lull a fancy trouble-tost
With 'Love's too precious to be lost,
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,
Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing;

Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee
And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI

You thought my heart too far diseased;
You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand.

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame

Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away,
From off my bed the moonlight dies;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray;

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers in the dawn.

LXVIII

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my
breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not
Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead.

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt;

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,
That Nature's ancient power was lost;
The streets were black with smoke and
frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door;

I wander'd from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny boughs;
I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown;

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary hairs:
They call'd me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns.

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child:
I found an angel of the night;

The voice was low, the look was bright;
He look'd upon my crown and smiled.

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into leaf;
The voice was not the voice of grief,
The words were hard to understand.

LXX

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to paint
The face I know; the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and palled shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning
doors,
And shoals of pucker'd faces drive;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance
And madness, thou hast forged at last
A night-long present of the past
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong,
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of change,
The days that grow to something strange,
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
The cataract flashing from the bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,

With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sicken'd every living bloom,
And blurr'd the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who mightst have heaved a windless flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd
A chequer-work of beam and shade
Along the hills, yet look'd the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,
When the dark hand struck down thro'
time,
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou mayst thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the morning
star,
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thiek noon, disastrous day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The farze is quenched that I foresaw,
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath;
I curse not Nature, no, nor Death;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds.
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out — to some one of his race;

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd.

What practice howsoe'er expert
In fitting aptest words to things,
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not in these fading days
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of
song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
The world which credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
But somewhere, out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bow-
ers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;
And what are they when these remain
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

LXXVII

What hope is here for modern rhyme
To him who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that
lie
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's locks;
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that tells
A grief, then changed to something
else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darken'd ways
Shall ring with music all the same;
To breathe my loss is more than fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
The silent snow possess'd the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve.

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic picture's breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress ?
No single tear, no mark of pain —
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ?
O grief, can grief be changed to less ?

O last regret, regret can die !
 No — mixt with all this mystic frame,
 Her deep relations are the same,
 But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXXIX

'More than my brothers are to me,' —
 Let this not vex thee, noble heart !
 I know thee of what force thou art
 To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
 As moulded like in Nature's mint;
 And hill and wood and field did print
 The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
 Thro' all his eddying coves, the same
 All winds that roam the twilight came
 In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
 One lesson from one book we learn'd,
 Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
 To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
 But he was rich where I was poor,
 And he supplied my want the more
 As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX

If any vague desire should rise,
 That holy Death ere Arthur died
 Had moved me kindly from his side,
 And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
 The grief my loss in him had wrought,
 A grief as deep as life or thought,
 But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
 I hear the sentence that he speaks;
 He bears the burthen of the weeks,
 But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
 And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
 Unused example from the grave
 Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI

Could I have said while he was here,
 'My love shall now no further range;

There cannot come a mellow change,
 For now is love mature in ear ' ?

Love, then, had hope of richer store:
 What end is here to my complaint ?
 This haunting whisper makes me faint,
 'More years had made me love thee
 more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet:
 'My sudden frost was sudden gain,
 And gave all ripeness to the grain
 It might have drawn from after-heat.'

LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death
 For changes wrought on form and face;
 No lower life that earth's embrace
 May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
 From state to state the spirit walks;
 And these are but the shatter'd stalks,
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
 The use of virtue out of earth;
 I know transplanted human worth
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
 The wrath that garners in my heart:
 He put our lives so far apart
 We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,
 O sweet new-year delaying long;
 Thou doest expectant Nature wrong;
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
 Thy sweetness from its proper place ?
 Can trouble live with April days,
 Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
 The little speedwell's darling blue,
 Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
 Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
 Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
 That longs to burst a frozen bud
 And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone
 The life that had been thine below,
 And fix my thoughts on all the glow
 To which thy crescent would have grown.

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
 A central warmth diffusing bliss
 In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
 On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
 For now the day was drawing on,
 When thou shouldst link thy life with
 one
 Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;
 But that remorseless iron hour
 Made cypress of her orange flower,
 Despair of hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
 To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
 I see their unhorn faces shine
 Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,
 Thy partner in the flowery walk
 Of letters, genial table-talk,
 Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
 The lips of men with honest praise,
 And sun by sun the happy days
 Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
 And all the train of bounteous hours
 Conduct, by paths of growing powers,
 To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
 Her lavish mission richly wrought,
 Leaving great legacies of thought,
 Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
 As link'd with thine in love and fate,
 And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
 To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
 And He that died in Holy Land

Would reach us out the shining hand,
 And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
 Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
 The old bitterness again, and break
 The low beginnings of content?

LXXXV

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
 'T is better to have loved and lost,
 Than never to have loved at all —

O true in word, and tried in deed,
 Demanding, so to bring relief
 To this which is our common grief,
 What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
 Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;
 And whether love for him have drain'd
 My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
 A faithful answer from the breast,
 Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,
 And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
 Till on mine ear this message falls,
 That in Vienna's fatal walls
 God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
 That range above our mortal state,
 In circle round the blessed gate,
 Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
 And show'd him in the fountain fresh
 All knowledge that the sons of flesh
 Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,
 Whose life, whose thoughts were little
 worth,
 To wander on a darken'd earth,
 Where all things round me breathed of
 him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
 O heart, with kindest motion warm,
 O sacred essence, other form,
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
With gifts of grace, that might express
All-comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
To works of weakness, but I find
An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
That loved to handle spiritual strife,
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
To mourn for any overmuch;
I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
Eternal, separate from fears.
The all-assuming months and years
Can take no part away from this;

But Summer on the steaming floods,
And Spring that swells the narrow
brooks,
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave.

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness, yearns to speak:
'Arise, and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free?
How is it? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall:
'T is hard for thee to fathom this;
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead;
Or so methinks the dead would say;
Or so shall grief with symbols play
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours?
First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and
Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odor streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown;
I roved at random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and last
Up that long walk of limes I past
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door.
I linger'd; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear

We lent him. Who but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo?

LXXXVIII

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,
O, tell me where the senses mix,
O, tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy;

And I — my harp would prelude woe —
I cannot all command the strings;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
And thou, with all thy breadth and
height
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town!

He brought an eye for all he saw;
He mixt in all our simple sports;
They pleased him, fresh from brawling
courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking thro' the heat!

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,

The gust that round the garden flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn!

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon.

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the livelong summer day
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
Or touch'd the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For 'ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge,' he said, 'in form and gloss
The picturesque of man and man.'
We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fallen into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

XC

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
Where nighest heaven, who first could
fling
This bitter seed among mankind:

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume their life,
They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise.

'T was well, indeed, when warm with wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,
Behold their brides in other hands;
The hard heir strides about their lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would make
Confusion worse than death, and shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah, dear, but come thou back to me!
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XCII

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush,
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe, with many roses sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of wheat
That ripple round the lowly grange,

Come; not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCIII

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year;

And tho' the months, revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

XCIII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay ?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb,
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in un conjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name,
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections hold
Should be the man whose thought would
hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest;

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

XCV

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;

And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd;
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn.

And hats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at
ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had been,
In those fallen leaves which kept their
green,
The noble letters of the dead.

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward back,
And keen thro' wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from the
past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time — the shocks of
Chance —

The blows of Death. At length my
trance
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or even for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became;

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where, couch'd at
ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field;

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said,

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and
death,
To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true;

Perplex'd in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them; thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own,
And Power was with him in the night,

Which makes the darkness and the
light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVII

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;
He finds on misty mountain-ground
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life —
I look'd on these and thought of thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,
Their meetings made December June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart;
He loves her yet, she will not weep,
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thiinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
A wither'd violet is her bliss;
She knows not what his greatness is,
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and wise,
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
'I cannot understand; I love.'

XCVIII

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,
 And those fair hills I sail'd below,
 When I was there with him; and go
 By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
 That city. All her splendor seems
 No livelier than the wisp that gleams
 On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
 Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me;
 I have not seen, I will not see
 Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
 The birth, the bridal; friend from friend
 Is oftener parted, fathers bend
 Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
 By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
 Her shadow on the blaze of kings.
 And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
 With statelier progress to and fro
 The double tides of chariots flow
 By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
 He told me, lives in any crowd,
 When all is gay with lamps, and loud
 With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
 And wheels the circled dance, and breaks
 The rocket molten into flakes
 Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
 So loud with voices of the birds,
 So thick with lowings of the herds,
 Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
 On yon swollen brook that bubbles fast
 By meadows breathing of the past,
 And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
 A song that slights the coming care,

And Autumn laying here and there
 A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
 To myriads on the genial earth,
 Memories of bridal, or of birth,
 And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,
 Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
 To-day they count as kindred souls;
 They know me not, but mourn with me.

C

I climb the hill: from end to end
 Of all the landscape underneath,
 I find no place that does not breathe
 Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
 Or low morass and whispering reed,
 Or simple stile from mead to mead,
 Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
 That bears the latest linnnet trill,
 Nor quarry trench'd along the hill
 And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
 Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
 To left and right thro' meadowy curves,
 That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
 And each reflects a kindlier day;
 And, leaving these, to pass away,
 I think once more he seems to die.

CI

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,
 The tender blossom flutter down,
 Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
 This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sunflower, shining fair,
 Ray round with flames her disk of
 seed,
 And many a rose-carnation feed
 With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
 The brook shall babble down the plain.
 At noon or when the Lesser Wain.
 Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
 And flood the haunts of hern and crake,
 Or into silver arrows break
 The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
 A fresh association blow,
 And year by year the landscape grow
 Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills
 His wonted glebe, or lops the glades,
 And year by year our memory fades
 From all the circle of the hills.

CII

We leave the well-beloved place
 Where first we gazed upon the sky;
 The roofs that heard our earliest cry
 Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
 As down the garden-walks I move,
 Two spirits of a diverse love
 Contend for lovi'g masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood sung
 Long since its matin song, and heard
 The low love-language of the bird
 In native hazels tassel-hung.'

The other answers, 'Yea, but here
 Thy feet have stray'd in after hours
 With thy lost friend among the bowers,
 And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,
 And each prefers his separate claim,
 Poor rivals in a losing game,
 That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go; my feet are set
 To leave the pleasant fields and farms;
 They mix in one another's arms
 To one pure image of regret.

CIII

On that last night before we went
 From out the doors where I was bred,
 I dream'd a vision of the dead,
 Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
 And maidens with me; distant hills

From hidden summits fed with rills
 A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
 They sang of what is wise and good
 And graceful. In the centre stood
 A statue veil'd, to which they sang;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,
 The shape of him I loved, and love
 For ever. Then flew in a dove
 And brought a summons from the sea;

And when they learnt that I must go,
 They wept and wail'd, but led the way
 To where a little shallop lay
 At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,
 And shadowing bluff that made the
 banks,
 We glided winding under ranks
 Of iris and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore
 And roll'd the floods in grander space,
 The maidens gather'd strength and grace
 And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart
 And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb;
 I felt the thews of Anakim,
 The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,
 And one would chant the history
 Of that great race which is to be,
 And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides
 Began to foam, and we to draw
 From deep to deep, to where we saw
 A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
 But thrice as large as man he bent
 To greet us. Up the side I went,
 And fell in silence on his neck;

Whereat those maidens with one mind
 Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:
 'We served thee here,' they said, 'so
 long,
 And wilt thou leave us now behind?'

So rapt I was, they could not win
 An answer from my lips, but he
 Replying, 'Enter likewise ye
 And go with us:' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
 A music out of sheet and shroud,
 We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud
 That landlike slept along the deep.

CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
 The moon is hid, the night is still;
 A single church below the hill
 Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
 That wakens at this hour of rest
 A single murmur in the breast,
 That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
 In lands where not a memory strays,
 Nor landmark breathes of other days,
 But all is new unallow'd ground.

CV

To-night ungather'd let us leave
 This laurel, let this holly stand:
 We live within the stranger's land,
 And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
 And silent under other snows:
 There in due time the woodbine blows,
 The violet comes, but we are goug.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
 The genial hour with mask and mime;
 For change of place, like growth of time,
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
 By which our lives are chiefly proved,
 A little spare the night I loved,
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
 For who would keep an ancient form
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;

No dance, no motion, save alone
 What lightens in the lucid East

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
 Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
 Run out your measured arcs, and lead
 The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
 The flying clond, the frosty light:
 The year is dying in the night;
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
 The year is going, let him go;
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
 For those that here we see no more;
 Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
 And ancient forms of party strife;
 Ring in the nobler modes of life,
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
 The faithless coldness of the times;
 Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
 The civic slander and the spite;
 Ring in the love of truth and right,
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
 Ring out the darkness of the land,
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII

It is the day when he was born,
 A bitter day that early sank
 Behind a purple-frosty bank
 Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the
wine,

Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things even as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, tho' with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
'T is held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man;

Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years;
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;
And loved them more, that they were
thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CXI

The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown, —

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
 His want in forms for fashion's sake,
 Will let his coltish nature break
 At seasons thro' the gilded pale;

For who can always act? but he,
 To whom a thousand memories call,
 Not being less but more than all
 The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd
 Each office of the social hour
 To noble manners, as the flower
 And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,
 Drew in the expression of an eye
 Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
 The grand old name of gentleman,
 Defamed by every charlatan,
 And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
 That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
 On glorious insufficiencies,
 Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
 Of all my love, art reason why
 I seem to cast a careless eye
 On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power
 Sprang up for ever at a touch,
 And hope could never hope too much,
 In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
 And tracts of calm from tempest made,
 And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
 In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXIII

'T is held that sorrow makes us wise;
 Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
 Which not alone had guided me,
 But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
 In intellect, with force and skill

To strive, to fashion, to fulfil —
 I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,
 A soul on highest mission sent,
 A potent voice of Parliament,
 A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
 Becoming, when the time has birth,
 A lever to uplift the earth
 And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,
 With agonies, with energies,
 With overthrowings, and with cries,
 And undulations to and fro.

CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall
 rail
 Against her beauty? May she mix
 With men and prosper! Who shall fix
 Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire;
 She sets her forward countenance
 And leaps into the future chance,
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain —
 She cannot fight the fear of death.
 What is she, cut from love and faith,
 But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of demons? fiery-hot to burst
 All barriers in her onward race
 For power. Let her know her place;
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
 If all be not in vain, and guide
 Her footsteps, moving side by side
 With Wisdom, like the younger child;

For she is earthly of the mind,
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
 O friend, who camest to thy goal
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
 Who grewest not alone in power
 And knowledge, but by year and hour
 In reverence and in charity.

CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
 Now burgeois every maze of quick
 About the flowering squares, and thick
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drown'd in yonder living blue
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,
 And milkier every milky sail
 On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly
 The happy birds, that change their sky
 To build and brood, that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
 Spring wakens too, and my regret
 Becomes an April violet,
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVI

Is it, then, regret for buried time
 That keener in sweet April wakes,
 And meets the year, and gives and
 takes
 The colors of the crescent prime ?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
 The life re-orient out of dust,
 Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust
 In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
 Upon me, while I muse alone,
 And that dear voice, I once have known,
 Still speak to me of me and mine.

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
 For days of happy commune dead,
 Less yearning for the friendship fled
 Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this,
 To hold me from my proper place,
 A little while from his embrace,
 For fuller gain of after bliss;

That out of distance might ensue
 Desire of nearness doubly sweet,
 And unto meeting, when we meet,
 Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
 And every span of shade that steals,
 And every kiss of toothed wheels,
 And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,
 The giant laboring in his youth;
 Nor dream of human love and truth,
 As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
 Are breathers of an ampler day
 For ever nobler ends. They say,
 The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
 And grew to seeming-random forms,
 The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
 Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to
 clime,
 The herald of a higher race,
 And of himself in higher place,
 If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
 Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
 Like glories, move his course, and show
 That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
 And heated hot with burning fears,
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
 And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
 The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
 Move upward, working out the beast,
 And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
 So quickly, not as one that weeps
 I come once more; the city sleeps;
 I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
 Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn

A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was *born* to other things.

CXXI

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done.

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light.

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink;
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

CXXII

O, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,
To bare the eternal heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law?

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dewdrop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars hath
been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true;
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghostliest doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess, —

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,
Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun.

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
I heard a voice, 'believe no more,'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep,

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,

And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd, 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamor made me wise;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would give,
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth,
She did hut look through dimmer eyes;
Or Love hut play'd with gracious lies,
Because he felt so fix'd in truth;

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song;
And if the words were sweet and strong
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI

Love is and was my lord and king,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my king and lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within the court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII

And all is well, tho' faith and form
Be sunder'd in the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those that
hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, even tho' thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags!
They tremble, the sustaining crags;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky,
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of hell;
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet he made,
And throned races may degrade;
Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like new —
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower,

Why, then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal,
O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown, human, divine;
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
 Dear heavenly friend that canst not
 die,
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
 Loved deeper, darker understood;
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,
 And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
 I hear thee where the waters run;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
 But tho' I seem in star and flower
 To feel thee some diffusive power,
 I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;
 My love is vaster passion now;
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;
 I prosper, circled with thy voice;
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock,
 Flow thro' our deeds and make them
 pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
 A voice as unto him that hears,
 A cry above the conquer'd years
 To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
 The truths that never can be proved
 Until we close with all we loved,
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,
 Demand not thou a marriage lay;
 In that it is thy marriage day
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
 Since first he told me that he loved
 A daughter of our house, nor proved
 Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
 Some thrice three years; they went and
 came,
 Remade the blood and changed the
 frame,
 And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
 In dying songs a dead regret,
 But like a statue solid-set,
 And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
 Than in the summers that are flown,
 For I myself with these have grown
 To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
 As echoes out of weaker times,
 As half but idle brawling rhymes,
 The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
 That must be made a wife ere noon?
 She enters, glowing like the moon
 Of Eden on its bridal bower.

On me she bends her blissful eyes
 And then on thee; they meet thy look
 And brighten like the star that shook
 Betwixt the palms of Paradise.

O, when her life was yet in bud,
 He too foretold the perfect rose.
 For thee she grew, for thee she grows
 For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy, full of power;
 As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
 Consistent; wearing all that weight
 Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
 And I must give away the bride;
 She fears not, or with thee beside
 And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
 That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,

That shielded all her life from harm,
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
Their pensive tablets round her head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The 'Wilt thou?' answer'd, and again
The 'Wilt thou?' ask'd, till out of twain
Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn.
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering breeze;
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them — maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I gavé.
They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased,
Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favor'd horses wait;

They rise, but linger; it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she look'd, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the
wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance; — till I retire.
Dumb is that tower which spake so
loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapor sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain head,
And o'er the friths that branch and
spread
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
And breaking let the splendor fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man that with me trod
This planet was a noble type

Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

MAUD, AND OTHER POEMS

MAUD; A MONODRAMA

PART I

I

I

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the
 little wood;
 Its lips in the field above are dabbled with
 blood-red heath,
 The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent
 horror of blood,
 And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, an-
 swers 'Death.'

II

For there in the ghastly pit long since a
 body was found,
 His who had given me life — O father! O
 God! was it well? —
 Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and
 dinted into the ground;
 There yet lies the rock that fell with him
 when he fell.

III

Did he fling himself down? who knows?
 for a vast speculation had fail'd,
 And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and
 ever wann'd with despair, 10
 And out he walk'd when the wind like a
 broken worldling wail'd,
 And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands
 drove thro' the air.

IV

I remember the time, for the roots of my
 hair were stirr'd
 By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd,
 by a whisper'd fright,
 And my pulses closed their gates with a
 shock on my heart as I heard
 The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide
 the shuddering night.

V

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says,
 we are villains all.
 Not he; his honest fame should at least by
 me be maintained;
 But that old man, now lord of the broad
 estate and the Hall,
 Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had
 left us flaccid and drain'd. 20

VI

Why do they prate of the blessings of
 peace? we have made them a curse,
 Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that
 is not its own;
 And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it
 better or worse
 Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war
 on his own hearthstone?

VII

But these are the days of advance, the
 works of the men of mind,
 When who but a fool would have faith in a
 tradesman's ware or his word?
 Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think,
 and that of a kind
 The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing
 the sword.

VIII

Sooner or later I too may passively take
 the print
 Of the golden age — why not? I have
 neither hope nor trust; 30
 May make my heart as a millstone, set my
 face as a flint,
 Cheat and be cheated, and die — who
 knows? we are ashes and dust.

IX

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring
 the days gone by,
 When the poor are hovell'd and hustled
 together, each sex, like swine,
 When only the ledger lives, and when only
 not all men lie;
 Peace in her vineyard — yes! — but a com-
 pany forges the wine.

X

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the
 ruffian's head,
 Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of
 the trampled wife,
 And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to
 the poor for bread,
 And the spirit of murder works in the very
 means of life, 40

XI

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the vil-
 laneous centre-bits
 Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the
 moonless nights,

While another is cheating the sick of a few
last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crim-
son lights.

XII

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe
for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of
children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war
by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking
a hundred thrones!

XIII

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder
round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the
three-decker out of the foam, ⁵⁰
That the smooth-faced, snub-nosed rogue
would leap from his counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his
cheating yardwand, home. —

XIV

What! am I raging alone as my father
raged in his mood?
Must I too creep to the hollow and dash
myself down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I made,
nevermore to brood
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a
wretched swindler's lie?

XV

Would there be sorrow for me? there was
love in the passionate shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had made
false haste to the grave —
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought
he would rise and speak
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as
he used to rave. ⁶⁰

XVI

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am
sick of the moor and the main.
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance
ever come to me here?
O, having the nerves of motion as well as
the nerves of pain,
Were it not wise if I fled from the place
and the pit and the fear?

XVII

Workmen up at the Hall! — they are com-
ing back from abroad;
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch
of a millionaire.
I have heard, I know not whence, of the
singular beauty of Maud;
I play'd with the girl when a child; she
promised then to be fair.

XVIII

Maud, with her venturesome climbings and
tumbles and childish escapes,
Maud, the delight of the village, the ring-
ing joy of the Hall, ⁷⁰
Maud, with her sweet purse-mouth when
my father dangled the grapes,
Maud, the beloved of my mother, the
moon-faced darling of all, —

XIX

What is she now? My dreams are bad.
She may bring me a curse.
No, there is fatter game on the moor; she
will let me alone.
Thanks; for the fiend best knows whether
woman or man be the worse.
I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil
may pipe to his own.

II

Long have I sigh'd for a calm; God grant
I may find it at last!
It will never be broken by Maud; she has
neither savor nor salt,
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found
when her carriage past,
Perfectly beautiful; let it be granted her;
where is the fault? ⁸⁰
All that I saw — for her eyes were down-
cast, not to be seen —
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly
null,
Dead perfection, no more; nothing more,
if it had not been
For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's
defect of the rose,
Or an underlip, you may call it a little too
ripe, too full,
Or the least little delicate aquiline curve
in a sensitive nose,
From which I escaped heart-free, with the
least little touch of spleen.

111

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so
cruelly meek,
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful
folly was drown'd ?
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash
dead on the cheek,
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on
a gloom profound;
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a
transient wrong
Done but in thought to your beauty, and
ever as pale as before
Growing and fading and growing upon me
without a sound,
Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike,
half the night long
Growing and fading and growing, till I
could bear it no more,
But arose, and all by myself in my own
dark garden ground,
Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung
shipwrecking roar,
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach
dragg'd down by the wave,
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly
glimmer, and found
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low
in his grave.

IV

I

A million emeralds break from the ruby-
budded lime
In the little grove where I sit — ah, where-
fore cannot I be
Like things of the season gay, like the
bountiful season bland,
When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze
of a softer clime,
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a
crescent of sea,
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring
of the land ?

II

Below me, there, is the village, and looks
how quiet and small !
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gos-
sip, scandal, and spite;
And Jack on his ale-house bench has as
many lies as a Czar;

110

And here on the landward side, by a red
rock, glimmers the Hall;
And up in the high Hall-garden I see her
pass like a light;
But sorrow seize me if ever that light be
my leading star !

III

When have I bow'd to her father, the
wrinkled head of the race ?
I met her to-day with her brother, but not
to her brother I bow'd;
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on
the moor,
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over
her beautiful face.
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it,
in being so proud;
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I
am nameless and poor.

IV

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready
to slander and steal;
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like
a stoic, or like
A wiser epicurean, and let the world have
its way.
For nature is one with rapine, a harm no
preacher can heal;
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the
sparrow spear'd by the shrike,
And the whole little wood where I sit is a
world of plunder and prey.

V

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and
Beauty fair in her flower;
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an
unseen hand at a game
That pushes us off from the board, and
others ever succeed ?
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other
here for an hour;
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and
grin at a brother's shame;
However we brave it out, we men are a
little breed.

VI

A monstrous eft was of old the lord and
master of earth,
For him did his high sun flame, and his
river billowing ran,
And he felt himself in his force to be Na-
ture's crowning race.

As nine months go to the shaping an infant
ripe for his birth,
So many a million of ages have gone to the
making of man:
He now is first, but is he the last? is he
not too base?

VII

The man of science himself is fonder of
glory, and vain,
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit
bounded and poor;
The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd
into folly and vice. ¹⁴⁰
I would not marvel at either, but keep a
temperate brain;
For not to desire or admire, if a man could
learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old
in a garden of spice.

VIII

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis
hid by the veil.
Who knows the ways of the world, how
God will bring them about?
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the
world is wide.
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek
if a Hungary fail?
Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod
or with knout?
I have not made the world, and He that
made it will guide.

IX

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet
woodland ways, ¹⁵⁰
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless
peace be my lot,
Far-off from the clamor of liars belied in
the hubbub of lies;
From the long-neck'd geese of the world
that are ever hissing dispraise
Because their natures are little, and,
whether he heed it or not,
Where each man walks with his head in a
cloud of poisonous flies.

X

And most of all would I flee from the cruel
madness of love
The honey of poison-flowers and all the
measureless ill.
Ah, Mand, you milk-white fawn, you are
all unmeet for a wife.

Your mother is mute in her grave as her
image in marble above;
Your father is ever in London, you wander
about at your will; ¹⁶⁰
You have but fed on the roses and lain in
the lilies of life.

V

I

A voice by the cedar tree
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand, ¹⁷⁰
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

II

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,
And feet like sunny gems on an English
green,
Maud in the light of her youth and her
grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honor that can-
not die,
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid
and mean,
And myself so languid and base.

III

Silence, beautiful voice! ¹⁸⁰
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a
choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI

I

Morning arises stormy and pale, ¹⁹⁰
No sun, but a wannish glare
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud;

And the budded peaks of the wood are
bow'd,
Caught, and cuff'd by the gale:
I had fancied it would be fair.

II

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burn'd
On the blossom'd gable-ends
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet? 200
And she touch'd my hand with a smile so
sweet,
She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

III

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,
Ready to burst in a color'd flame;
Till at last, when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems 210
But an ashen-gray delight.

IV

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

V

Ah, what shall I be at fifty 220
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VI

What if, tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me, 230
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian ball
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,

Who wants the finer politic seuse
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn —
What if he had told her yesternorn
How prettily for his own sweet sake 240
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd?

VII

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and
ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride 250
Is cap and bells for a fool.

VIII

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and good?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot
mouse, 260
And my own sad name in corners cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is
thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,
And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

IX

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught
By that you swore to withstand? 269
For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,
That made my tongue so stammer and
trip
When I saw the treasured splendor, her
hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

X

I have play'd with her when a child;
She remembers it now we meet.

Ah, well, well, well, I *may* he beguiled
 By some coquettish deceit.
 Yet, if she were not a cheat, 280
 If Maud were all that she seem'd,
 And her smile had all that I dream'd,
 Then the world were not so bitter
 But a smile could make it sweet.

VII

I

Did I hear it half in a doze
 Long since, I know not where ?
 Did I dream it an hour ago,
 When asleep in this arm-chair ?

II

Men were drinking together,
 Drinking and talking of me: 290
 ' Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
 Will have plenty; so let it be.'

III

Is it an echo of something
 Read with a boy's delight,
 Viziers nodding together
 In some Arabian night ?

IV

Strange, that I hear two men,
 Somewhere, talking of me:
 ' Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
 Will have plenty; so let it be.' 300

VIII

She came to the village church,
 And sat by a pillar alone;
 An angel watching an urn
 Wept over her, carved in stone;
 And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
 And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd
 To find they were met by my own;
 And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat
 stronger
 And thicker, until I heard no longer
 The snowy-handed, dilettante, 310
 Delicate-handed priest intone;
 And thought, is it pride ? and mused and
 sigh'd,
 ' No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

IX

I was walking a mile,
 More than a mile from the shore,
 The sun look'd out with a smile
 Betwixt the cloud and the moor;
 And riding at set of day
 Over the dark moor land, 320
 Rapidly riding far away,
 She waved to me with her hand.
 There were two at her side,
 Something flash'd in the sun,
 Down by the hill I saw them ride,
 In a moment they were gone;
 Like a sudden spark
 Struck vainly in the night,
 Then returns the dark
 With no more hope of light.

X

I

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread ? 330
 Was not one of the two at her side
 This new-made lord, whose splendor plucks
 The slavish hat from the villager's head ?
 Whose old grandfather has lately died,
 Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
 Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
 And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom
 Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine
 Master of half a servile shire,
 And left his coal all turn'd into gold 340
 To a grandson, first of his noble line,
 Rich in the grace all women desire,
 Strong in the power that all men adore,
 And softer and set their voices lower,
 And sinner as if to a girl, and hold
 Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
 Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
 New as his title, built last year,
 There amid perky larches and pine,
 And over the sullen-purple moor — 350
 Look at it — pricking a cockney ear.

II

What, has he found my jewel out ?
 For one of the two that rode at her side
 Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he;
 Bound for the Hall, and I think for a
 bride.
 Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.

Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,
 To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
 A bought commission, a waxen face,
 A rabbit mouth that is ever agape — 360
 Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
 And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
 A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
 At war with myself and a wretched race,
 Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

III

Last week came one to the county town,
 To preach our poor little army down,
 And play the game of the despot kings,
 Tho' the state has done it and thrice as
 well. 369

This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,
 Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton, and
 rings

Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,
 This huckster put down war! can he tell
 Whether war be a cause or a consequence?
 Put down the passions that make earth
 hell!

Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
 Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind
 The bitter springs of anger and fear!
 Down too, down at your own fireside,
 With the evil tongue and the evil ear, 380
 For each is at war with mankind!

IV

I wish I could hear again
 The chivalrous battle-song
 That she warbled alone in her joy!
 I might persuade myself then
 She would not do herself this great wrong,
 To take a wanton dissolute boy
 For a man and leader of men.

V

Ah God, for a man with heart, head,
 hand,
 Like some of the simple great ones gone
 For ever and ever by, 391
 One still strong man in a blatant land,
 Whatever they call him — what care I? —
 Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat — one
 Who can rule and dare not lie!

VI

And ah for a man to arise in me,
 That the man I am may cease to be!

XI

I

O, let the solid ground
 Not fail beneath my feet
 Before my life has found 400
 What some have found so sweet!
 Then let come what come may,
 What matter if I go mad,
 I shall have had my day.

II

Let the sweet heavens endure,
 Not close and darken above me
 Before I am quite quite sure
 That there is one to love me!
 Then let come what come may
 To a life that has been so sad, 410
 I shall have had my day.

XII

I

Birds in the high Hall-garden
 When twilight was falling,
 Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
 They were crying and calling.

II

Where was Maud? in our wood;
 And I — who else? — was with her,
 Gathering woodland lilies,
 Myriads blow together.

III

Birds in our wood sang 420
 Ringing thro' the valleys,
 Maud is here, here, here
 In among the lilies.

IV

I kiss'd her slender hand,
 She took the kiss sedately;
 Maud is not seventeen,
 But she is tall and stately.

V

I to cry out on pride
 Who have won her favor!
 O, Maud were sure of heaven 430
 If lowliness could save her!

VI

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touch'd the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

VII

Birds in the high Hall-garden
Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud ?
One is come to woo her.

VIII

Look, a horse at the door, 440
And little King Charley snarling !
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

XIII

I

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret ?
That a calamity hard to be borne ?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vex't with his pride !
I past him, I was crossing his lands;
He stood on the path a little aside; 450
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and
white,

And six feet two, as I think, he stands;
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

II

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair ?
I long'd so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I past he was humming an air, 460
Stopt, and then with a riding-whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonized me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

III

Why sits he here in his father's chair ?
That old man never comes to his place;
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen ?
For only once, in the village street, 469

Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be untrue;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet,
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side;
Her mother has been a thing complete,
However she came to be so allied. 480
And fair without, faithful within,
Maud to him is nothing akin.
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother,
And heap'd the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,
All, all upon the brother.

IV

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be !
Has not his sister smiled on me ?

XIV

I

Maud has a garden of roses
And lilies fair on a lawn; 490
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower,
And thither I climb'd at dawn
And stood by her garden-gate.
A lion ramps at the top,
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

II

Maud's own little oak-room —
Which Maud, like a precious stone
Set in the heart of the carven gloom, 500
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books
And her brother lingers late
With a roystering company — looks
Upon Maud's own garden-gate;
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as
white
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my De-
light
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost,
to glide,
Like a beam of the seventh heaven, down
to my side,
There were but a step to be made. 510

III

The fancy flatter'd my mind,
And again seem'd overbold;
Now I thought that she cared for me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

IV

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood,
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it
swell'd
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn; 520
But I look'd, and round, all round the
house I beheld
The death-white curtain drawn,
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain meant
but sleep,
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of
the sleep of death.

XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,
And I make myself such evil cheer,
That if I be dear to some one else,
Then some one else may have much to
fear; 530
But if I be dear to some one else,
Then I should be to myself more dear.
Shall I not take care of all that I think,
Yea, even of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else ?

XVI

I

This lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his weight;
And so that he find what he went to seek,
And fulsome pleasure clog him, and
drown 540
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,
He may stay for a year who has gone for a
week.
But this is the day when I must speak,
And I see my Oread coming down,
O, this is the day !

O beautiful creature, what am I
That I dare to look her way ?
Think I may hold dominion sweet,
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,
And dream of her beauty with tender
dread, 550

From the delicate Arab arch of her feet
To the grace that, bright and light as the
crest

Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
And she knows it not — O, if she knew it,
To know her beauty might half undo it !
I know it the one bright thing to save
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

II

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,
Dare I bid her abide by her word ? 561
Should I love her so well if she
Had given her word to a thing so low ?
Shall I love her as well if she
Can break her word were it even for me ?
I trust that it is not so.

III

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,
For I must tell her before we part,
I must tell her, or die. 570

XVII

Go not, happy day,
From the shining fields,
Go not, happy day,
Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.
When the happy Yes
Falters from her lips, 580
Pass and blush the news
Over glowing ships;
Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
Blush it thro' the West;
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar-tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap, beyond the sea. 590

Blush from West to East,
 Blush from East to West,
 Till the West is East,
 Blush it thro' the West.
 Rosy is the West,
 Rosy is the South,
 Roses are her cheeks,
 And a rose her mouth.

XVIII

I

I have led her home, my love, my only
 friend.
 There is none like her, none. 600
 And never yet so warmly ran my blood
 And sweetly, on and on
 Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,
 Full to the banks, close on the promised
 good.

II

None like her, none.
 Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering
 talk
 Seem'd her light foot along the garden
 walk,
 And shook my heart to think she comes
 once more.
 But even then I heard her close the door;
 The gates of heaven are closed, and she is
 gone. 610

III

There is none like her, none,
 Nor will be when our summers have de-
 ceased.
 O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
 In the long breeze that streams to thy de-
 licious East,
 Sighing for Lebanon,
 Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here in-
 creased,
 Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
 And looking to the South and fed
 With honey'd rain and delicate air,
 And haunted by the starry head 620
 Of her whose gentle will has changed my
 fate,
 And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;
 And over whom thy darkness must have
 spread
 With such delight as theirs of old, thy
 great

Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
 Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from
 whom she came?

IV

Here will I lie, while these long branches
 sway,
 And you fair stars that crown a happy day
 Go in and out as if at merry play,
 Who am no more so all forlorn 630
 As when it seem'd far better to be horn
 To labor and the mattock-harden'd hand
 Than nursed at ease and brought to under-
 stand
 A sad astrology, the boundless plan
 That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
 Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
 Cold fires, yet with power to burn and
 brand
 His nothingness into man.

V

But now shine on, and what care I,
 Who in this stormy gulf have found a
 pearl 640
 The countercharm of space and hollow
 sky,
 And do accept my madness, and would
 die
 To save from some slight shame one sim-
 ple girl? —

VI

Would die, for sullen-seeming Death may
 give
 More life to Love than is or ever was
 In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to
 live.
 Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
 It seems that I am happy, that to me
 A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
 A purer sapphire melts into the sea. 650

VII

Not die, but live a life of truest breath,
 And teach true life to fight with mortal
 wrongs.
 O, why should Love, like men in drinking-
 songs,
 Spice his fair banquet with the dust of
 death?
 Make answer, Maud my bliss,
 Maud made my Maud by that long loving
 kiss,
 Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?

'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself
more dear.'

VIII

Is that enchanted moan only the swell 660
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay ?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal
white,

And died to live, long as my pulses play;
But now by this my love has closed her
sight

And given false death her hand, and stolen
away

To dreamful wastes where footless fancies
dwell

Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace af-
fright !

Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy
spell. 670

My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own,
farewell;

It is but for a little space I go.
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night !
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the
glow

Of your soft splendors that you look so
bright ?

I have climb'd nearer out of lonely hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things be-
low,

Beat with my heart more blest than heart
can tell, 680

Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
That seems to draw — but it shall not be
so;

Let all be well, be well.

XIX

I

Her brother is coming back to-night,
Breaking up my dream of delight.

II

My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?
I have walk'd awake with Truth.
O, when did a morning shine
So rich in atonement as this
For my dark-dawning youth, 690

Darken'd watching a mother decline
And that dead man at her heart and mine;
For who was left to watch her but I ?
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

III

I trust that I did not talk
To gentle Maud in our walk —
For often in lonely wanderings
I have cursed him even to lifeless things —
But I trust that I did not talk,
Not touch on her father's sin. 700

I am sure I did but speak
Of my mother's faded cheek
When it slowly grew so thin
That I felt she was slowly dying
Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt;
For how often I caught her with eyes all
wet,

Shaking her head at her son and sighing
A world of trouble within !

IV

And Maud too, Maud was moved
To speak of the mother she loved 710
As one scarce less forlorn,
Dying abroad and it seems apart
From him who had ceased to share her
heart,

And ever mourning over the feud,
The household Fury sprinkled with blood
By which our houses are torn.
How strange was what she said,
When only Maud and the brother
Hung over her dying bed —
That Maud's dark father and mine 720

Had bound us one to the other,
Betrothed us over their wine,
On the day when Maud was born;
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath!
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death!
Mine, mine — our fathers have sworn !

V

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so sweet;
And none of us thought of a something
beyond, 730

A desire that awoke in the heart of the
child,

As it were a duty done to the tomb,
To be friends for her sake, to be recon-
ciled;

And I was cursing them and my doom,

And letting a dangerous thought run
wild

While often abroad in the fragrant gloom
Of foreign churches — I see her there,
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer
To be friends, to be reconciled!

VI

But then what a flint is he !
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome, 740
I find whenever she touch'd on me
This brother had laugh'd her down,
And at last, when each came home,
He had darken'd into a frown,
Chid her, and forbid her to speak
To me, her friend of the years before;
And this was what had redder'd her
cheek
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

VII

Yet Maud, altho' not blind 750
To the faults of his heart and mind,
I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
And wishes me to approve him,
And tells me, when she lay
Sick once, with a fear of worse,
That he left his wine and horses and
play,
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,
And tended her like a nurse.

VIII

Kind ? but the death-bed desire 760
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar —
Rough but kind ? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud ? that were not amiss
Well, rough but kind ; why, let it be so,
For shall not Maud have her will ?

IX

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I feel I shall owe you a debt 770
That I never can hope to pay;
And if ever I should forget
That I owe this debt to you
And for your sweet sake to yours,
O, then, what then shall I say ? —
If ever I should forget,
May God make me more wretched
Than ever I have been yet !

X

So now I have sworn to bury
All this dead body of hate, 780
I feel so free and so clear
By the loss of that dead weight,
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,
Fantastically merry,
But that her brother comes, like a blight
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

XX.

I

Strange, that I felt so gay,
Strange, that I tried to-day
To beguile her melancholy;
The Sultan, as we name him — 790
She did not wish to blame him —
But he vexed her and perplexed her
With his worldly talk and folly.
Was it gentle to reprove her
For stealing out of view
From a little lazy lover
Who but claims her as his due ?
Or for chilling his caresses
By the coldness of her manners,
Nay, the plainness of her dresses ? 800
Now I know her but in two,
Nor can pronounce upon it
If one should ask me whether
The habit, hat, and feather,
Or the frock and gipsy bonnet
Be the neater and completer;
For nothing can be sweeter
Than maiden Maud in either.

II

But to-morrow, if we live,
Our ponderous square will give 810
A grand political dinner
To half the squirelings near;
And Maud will wear her jewels,
And the bird of prey will hover,
And the titmouse hope to win her
With his chirrup at her ear.

III

A grand political dinner
To the men of many acres,
A gathering of the Tory,
A dinner and then a dance 820
For the maids and marriage-makers,
And every eye but mine will glance
At Maud in all her glory.

IV

For I am not invited,
 But, with the Sultan's pardon,
 I am all as well delighted,
 For I know her own rose-garden,
 And mean to linger in it
 Till the dancing will be over;
 And then, O, then, come out to me 830
 For a minute, but for a minute,
 Come out to your own true lover,
 That your true lover may see
 Your glory also, and render
 All homage to his own darling,
 Queen Maud in all her splendor.

XXI

Rivulet crossing my ground,
 And bringing me down from the Hall
 This garden-rose that I found,
 Forgetful of Maud and me, 840
 And lost in trouble and moving round
 Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
 And trying to pass to the sea;
 O rivulet, born at the Hall,
 My Maud has sent it by thee —
 If I read her sweet will right —
 On a blushing mission to me,
 Saying in odor and color, 'Ah, be
 Among the roses to-night.'

XXII

I

Come into the garden, Maud, 850
 For the black hat, night, has flown,
 Come into the garden, Maud,
 I am here at the gate alone;
 And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
 And the musk of the rose is blown.

II

For a breeze of morning moves,
 And the planet of Love is on high,
 Beginning to faint in the light that she
 loves
 On a bed of daffodil sky,
 To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
 To faint in his light, and to die. 861

III

All night have the roses heard
 The flute, violin, bassoon;

All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd
 To the dancers dancing in tune;
 Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
 And a hush with the setting moon.

IV

I said to the lily, 'There is but one,
 With whom she has heart to be gay.
 When will the dancers leave her alone? 870
 She is weary of dance and play.'
 Now half to the setting moon are gone,
 And half to the rising day;
 Low on the sand and loud on the stone
 The last wheel echoes away.

V

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
 In habble and revel and wine.
 O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
 For one that will never be thine?
 But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the
 rose, 880
 'For ever and ever, mine.'

VI

And the soul of the rose went into my
 blood,
 As the music clash'd in the hall;
 And long by the garden lake I stood,
 For I heard your rivulet fall
 From the lake to the meadow and on to the
 wood,
 Our wood, that is dearer than all;

VII

From the meadow your walks have left so
 sweet
 That whenever a March-wind sighs
 He sets the jewel-print of your feet 890
 In violets blue as your eyes,
 To the woody hollows in which we meet
 And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII

The slender acacia would not shake
 One long milk-bloom on the tree;
 The white lake-blossom fell into the
 lake
 As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
 But the rose was awake all night for your
 sake,
 Knowing your promise to me;
 The lilies and roses were all awake, 900
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
 Come hither, the dances are done,
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
 Queen lily and rose in one;
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with
 curls,
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

X

There has fallen a splendid tear
 From the passion-flower at the gate.
 She is coming, my dove, my dear; 910
 She is coming, my life, my fate.
 The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is
 near;'
 And the white rose weeps, 'She is late;'
 The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;'
 And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
 Were it ever so airy a tread,
 My heart would hear her and beat,
 Were it earth in an earthy bed;
 My dust would hear her and beat, 920
 Had I lain for a century dead,
 Would start and tremble under her feet,
 And blossom in purple and red.

PART II

I

I

'The fault was mine, the fault was mine' —
 Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,
 Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the
 hill? —

It is this guilty hand! —
 And there rises ever a passionate cry
 From underneath in the darkening land —
 What is it, that has been done?
 O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,
 The fires of hell brake out of thy rising
 sun,

The fires of hell and of hate; 10
 For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a
 word,
 When her brother ran in his rage to the
 gate,

He came with the babe-faced lord,
 Heap'd on her terms of disgrace;

And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,
 He fiercely gave me the lie,
 Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
 And he struck me, madman, over the face,
 Struck me before the languid fool,
 Who was gaping and grinning by; 20
 Struck for himself an evil stroke,
 Wrought for his house an irredeemable
 woe.

For front to front in an hour we stood,
 And a million horrible bellowing echoes
 broke
 From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the
 wood,
 And thunder'd up into heaven the Christless
 code

That must have life for a blow.
 Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.
 Was it he lay there with a fading eye?
 'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly!'
 Then glided out of the joyous wood 31
 The ghastly Wraith of one that I know,
 And there rang on a sudden a passionate
 cry,
 A cry for a brother's blood;
 It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I
 die, till I die.

II

Is it gone? my pulses beat —
 What was it? a lying trick of the brain?
 Yet I thought I saw her stand,
 A shadow there at my feet,
 High over the shadowy land. 40
 It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle
 rain,

When they should burst and drown with
 deluging storms
 The feeble vassals of wine and anger and
 lust,
 The little hearts that know not how to for-
 give.
 Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold
 Thee just,
 Strike dead the whole weak race of venom-
 ous worms,
 That sting each other here in the dust;
 We are not worthy to live.

II

I

See what a lovely shell,
 Small and pure as a pearl, 50

Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairly well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design !

II

What is it ? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

III

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill ?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world ?

IV

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand !

V

Breton, not Briton; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear —
Plagued with a fitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving eye,
Flying along the land and the main —
Why should it look like Maud ?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain ?

VI

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;

An old song vexes my ear,
But that of Lamech is mine.

VII

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, for ever, to part —
But she, she would love me still;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

VIII

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye, —
That it should, by being so overwrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been past by !
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings —
For he had many, poor worm — and
thought,
It is his mother's hair.

IX

Who knows if he be dead ?
Whether I need have fled ?
Am I guilty of blood ?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the sea !
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,
Whatever happen to me !
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
And comfort her tho' I die !

III

Courage, poor heart of stone !
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left for ever alone;
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone ! —
Or if I ask thee why,

Care not thou to reply:
She is but dead, and the time is at hand
When thou shalt more than die. 140

IV

I

O that 't were possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

II

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter, sweeter
Than anything on earth. 150

III

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee.
Ah, Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell
us
What and where they be!

IV

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels 160
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

V

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies. 170

VI

'T is a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendor falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'T is a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet.

She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet.
She is singing in the meadow, 180
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

VII

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate
cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;
For a tumult shakes the city, 190
And I wake, my dream is fled.
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold!

VIII

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about!
'T is the blot upon the brain 200
That will show itself without.

IX

Then I rise, the eave-drops fall,
And the yellow vapors choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

X

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame;
It crosses here, it crosses there, 210
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

XI

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall! 220

XII

Would the happy spirit descend
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest' ?

XIII

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me.
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

V

I

Dead, long dead,
Long dead !
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of passing
feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and clat-
ter;
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is
not so.
To have no peace in the grave, is that not
sad ?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

II

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
They cannot even bury a man;

And tho' we paid our tithes in the days
that are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read.
It is that which makes us loud in the
world of the dead;
There is none that does his work, not one.
A touch of their office might have sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill their
church,
As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

III

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress;
And another, a lord of all things, praying
To his own great self, as I guess;
And another, a statesman there, betraying
His party-secret, fool, to the press;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient — all for what ?
To tickle the maggot born in an empty
head,
And wheedle a world that loves him not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

IV

Nothing but idiot gabble !
For the prophecy given of old
And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold;
Not let any man think for the public good,
But babble, merely for babble.
For I never whisper'd a private affair
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
No, not to myself in the closet alone,
But I heard it shouted at once from the
top of the house;
Everything came to be known.
Who told *him* we were there ?

V

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not
back
From the wilderness, full of wolves, where
he used to lie;
He has gather'd the bones for his o'ergrown
whelp to crack —
Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and
die.

VI

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the rat;
I know not whether he came in the Han-
over ship,

But I know that he lies and listens mute
 In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes.
 Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it, 300
 Except that now we poison our babes, poor
 souls!

It is all used up for that.

VII

Tell him now: she is standing here at my
 head;

Not beautiful now, not even kind;
 He may take her now; for she never speaks
 her mind,

But is ever the one thing silent here.
 She is not *of* us, as I divine;
 She comes from another stiller world of the
 dead,

Stiller, not fairer than mine.

VIII

But I know where a garden grows, 310
 Fairer than aught in the world beside,
 All made up of the lily and rose
 That hlow by night, when the season is
 good,

To the sound of dancing music and flutes:
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
 And I almost fear they are not roses, but
 blood;

For the keeper was one, so full of pride,
 He linkt a dead man there to a spectral
 bride;

For he, if he had not been a Sultan of
 brutes,

Would he have that hole in his side? 320

IX

But what will the old man say?
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit
 To catch a friend of mine one stormy
 day;

Yet now I could even weep to think of
 it;

For what will the old man say
 When he comes to the second corpse in the
 pit?

X

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
 Then to strike him and lay him low,
 That were a public merit, far,
 Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin; 330
 But the red life spilt for a private blow —
 I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
 Are scarcely even akin.

XI

O me, why have they not buried me deep
 enough?

Is it kind to have made me a grave so
 rough,

Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?

Maybe still I am but half-dead;

Then I cannot be wholly dumb.

I will cry to the steps above my head

And somebody, surely, some kind heart
 will come 340

To bury me, bury me

Deeper, ever so little deeper.

PART III

I

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
 Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror
 and fear,

That I come to be grateful at last for a lit-
 tle thing.

My mood is changed, for it fell at a time
 of year

When the face of night is fair on the dewy
 downs,

And the shining daffodil dies, and the
 Charioteer

And starry Gemini hang like glorious
 crowns

Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
 That like a silent lightning under the stars
 She seem'd to divide in a dream from a
 band of the blest, 10

And spoke of a hope for the world in the
 coming wars —

'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble
 have rest,

Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to
 Mars

As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the
 Lion's breast.

II

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a
 dear delight

To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon
 eyes so fair,

That had been in a weary world my one
 thing bright;

And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd
 my despair

When I thought that a war would arise in
 defence of the right,
 That an iron tyranny now should bend or
 cease,
 The glory of manhood stand on his ancient
 height,
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the million-
 aire.
 No more shall commerce be all in all, and
 Peace
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
 And watch her harvest ripen, her herd
 increase,
 Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful
 shore,
 And the cobweb woven across the cannon's
 throat
 Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind
 no more.

III

And as months ran on and rumor of battle
 grew,
 'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,'
 said I, —
 For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be
 pure and true, —
 'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid
 eye,
 That old hysterical mock-disease should
 die.'
 And I stood on a giant deck and mixt my
 breath
 With a loyal people shouting a battle-
 cry,
 Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and
 fly
 Far into the North, and battle, and seas of
 death.

IV

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher
 aims
 Of a land that has lost for a little her lust
 of gold,
 And love of a peace that was full of wrongs
 and shames,
 Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be
 told;
 And hail once more to the banner of battle
 unroll'd !
 Tho' many a light shall darken, and many
 shall weep
 For those that are crush'd in the clash of
 jarring claims,

Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a
 giant liar,
 And many a darkness into the light shall
 leap,
 And shine in the sudden making of splen-
 did names;
 And noble thought be freer under the
 sun,
 And the heart of a people beat with one
 desire;
 For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is
 over and done,
 And now by the side of the Black and the
 Baltic deep,
 And deathful-grinning mouths of the for-
 tress, flames
 The blood-red blossom of war with a heart
 of fire.

V

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down
 like a wind,
 We have proved we have hearts in a cause,
 we are noble still,
 And myself have awaked, as it seems, to
 the better mind.
 It is better to fight for the good than to
 rail at the ill;
 I have felt with my native land, I am one
 with my kind,
 I embrace the purpose of God, and the
 doom assign'd.

THE BROOK

'HERE by this brook we parted, I to the
 East
 And he for Italy — too late — too late:
 One whom the strong sons of the world de-
 spise;
 For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and
 share,
 And mellow metres more than cent for
 cent.
 Nor could he understand how money breeds,
 Thought it a dead thing; yet himself could
 make
 The thing that is not as the thing that is.
 O, had he lived! In our schoolbooks we
 say
 Of those that held their heads above the
 crowd,
 They flourish'd then or then; but life in
 him

Could scarce be said to flourish, only
touch'd
On such a time as goes before the leaf,
When all the wood stands in a mist of
green,
And nothing perfect. Yet the brook he
loved,
For which, in branding summers of Ben-
gal,
Or even the sweet half-English Neilgherry
air,
I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,
Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy
To me that loved him; for "O brook," he
says,
"O babbling brook," says Edmuud in his
rhyme,
"Whence come you?" and the brook—
why not? — replies:

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To hicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorns, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges. 30

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn
out,
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley
bridge,
It has more ivy; there the river; and there
Stands Philip's farm where brook and river
meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles, 40
I bubble into eddying bays,
I habble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever. 50

'But Philip chatter'd more than brook
or bird,
Old Philip; all about the fields you caught
His weary daylong chirping, like the
dry
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer
grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel 60
With many a silvery water-break
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'O darling Katie Willows, his one child!
A maiden of our century, yet most meek;
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse;
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand;
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair 71
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the
shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good
turn,
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,
James Willows, of one name and heart
with her.
For here I came, twenty years back — the
week
Before I parted with poor Edmund — crost
By that old bridge which, half in ruins
then, 79
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam
Beyond it, where the waters marry — crost,
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,
And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The
gate,
Half-parted from a weak and scolding
hinge,
Stuck; and he clamor'd from a casement,
"Run,"
To Katie somewhere in the walks below,
"Run, Katie!" Katie never ran; she
moved
To meet me, winding under woodbine bow-
ers,

A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down, 89
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a noon.

'What was it? less of sentiment than
sense

Had Katie; not illiterate, nor of those
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthro-
pies,
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the
Deed.

'She told me. She and James had
quarrell'd. Why?

What cause of quarrel? None, she said,
no cause;

James had no cause: but when I prest the
cause,

I learnt that James had flickering jealousies
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James?

I said. 100

But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from
mine,

And sketching with her slender pointed
foot

Some figure like a wizard pentagram
On garden gravel, let my query pass
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd
If James were coming. "Coming every
day,"

She answer'd, "ever longing to explain,
But evermore her father came across
With some long-winded tale, and broke
him short;

And James departed vext with him and
her." 110

How could I help her? "Would I — was
it wrong?" —

Claspt hands and that petitionary grace
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she
spoke —

"O, would I take her father for one hour,
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!"

And even while she spoke, I saw where
James

Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-
sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!

For in I went, and call'd old Philip out 120
To show the farm. Full willingly he rose;

He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling
lanes

Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.

He praised his land, his horses, his ma-
chines;

He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs,
his dogs;

He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-
hens,

His pigeons, who in session on their roofs
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts.

Then from the plaintive mother's teat he
took

Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming
each, 130

And naming those, his friends, for whom
they were;

Then crost the common into Darnley chase
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and
fern

Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,

He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said,
"That was the four-year-old I sold the
Squire."

And there he told a long, long-winded tale
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at
grass,

And how it was the thing his daughter
wish'd, 140

And how he sent the bailiff to the farm
To learn the price, and what the price he
ask'd,

And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,
But he stood firm, and so the matter
hung;

He gave them line; and five days after
that

He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,
Who then and there had offer'd something
more,

But he stood firm, and so the matter hung;
He knew the man, the colt would fetch its
price;

He gave them line; and how by chance at
last — 150

It might be May or April, he forgot,
The last of April or the first of May —

He found the bailiff riding by the farm,
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,
And there he mellow'd all his heart with
ale,

Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

'Then, while I breathed in sight of haven,
he —

Poor fellow, could he help it? — recom-
menced,

And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle, 159
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tautivy, Tallyho,
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the
Jilt,

Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
And with me Philip, talking still; and so
We turn'd our foreheads from the falling
sun,

And following our own shadows thrice as
long

As when they follow'd us from Philip's
door,

Arrived, and found the sun of sweet con-
tent

Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things
well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots, 170
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars, 180
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these are
gone,

All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund,
sleeps,

Not by the well-known stream and rustic
spire,

But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
Of Brunelleschi, sleeps in peace; and he,
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of
words 191

Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb;
I scraped the lichen from it. Katie walks

By the long wash of Australasian seas
Far off, and holds her head to other
stars,

And breathes in April-autumns. All are
gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the
brook

A tonsured head in middle age forlorn, 200
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low
breath

Of tender air made tremble in the hedge
The fragile bindweed - bells and briony
rings;

And he look'd up. There stood a maiden
near,

Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair

In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the
shell

Divides threefold to show the fruit with-
in;

Then, wondering, ask'd her, 'Are you from
the farm?'

'Yes,' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little;
pardon me, 210

What do they call you?' 'Katie.' 'That
were strange.

What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!' 'That
is my name.'

'Indeed!' and here he look'd so self-
perplex't,

That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd,
till he

Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his
dream.

Then looking at her: 'Too happy, fresh
and fair,

Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best
bloom,

To be the ghost of one who bore your
name 219

About these meadows, twenty years ago.'

'Have you not heard?' said Katie, 'we
came back.

We bought the farm we tenanted be-
fore.

Am I so like her? so they said on board.
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,

My mother, as it seems you did, the
days

That most she loves to talk of, come with
me.

My brother James is in the harvest-field;
But she — you will be welcome — O, come
in!'

THE DAISY

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH

O LOVE, what hours were thine and
mine,
In lands of palm and southern pine;
In lands of palm, or orange-blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine!

What Roman strength Turbia show'd
In ruin, by the mountain road;
How like a gem, beneath, the city
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd!

How richly down the rocky dell
The torrent vineyard streaming fell 10
To meet the sun and sunny waters,
That only heaved with a summer swell!

What slender campanili grew
By hays, the peacock's neck in hue;
Where, here and there, on sandy beaches
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew!

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
Yet present in his natal grove,
Now watching high on mountain cor-
nice, 20
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;
Till, in a narrow street and dim,
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
And drank, and loyally drank to him!

Nor knew we well what pleased us most;
Not the clipt palm of which they boast,
But distant color, happy hamlet,
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green; 30
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,
Those niched shapes of noble mould,
A princely people's awful princes,
The grave, severe Genovese of old. 40

At Florence too what golden hours,
In those long galleries, were ours;
What drives about the fresh Cascinë,
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers!

In bright vignettes, and each complete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet!

But when we crost the Lombard plain
Remember what a plague of rain; 50
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma,
At Lodi rain, Piacenza rain.

And stern and sad — so rare the smiles
Of sunlight — look'd the Lombard piles;
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom, the
glory!
A mount of marble, a hundred spires! 60

I climb'd the roofs at break of day;
Sun-smitt'n Alps before me lay.
I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air!

Remember how we came at last
To Como; shower and storm and blast 70
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,
And all was flooded; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of 'Lari Maxume,' all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on the Lariano crept
To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept; 80

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake,
The moonlight touch'g o'er a terrace
One tall agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu,
And up the snowy Splügen drew;
But ere we reach'd the highest summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy. 90
O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea,

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold;
Yet here to-night in this dark city,
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
This nursling of another sky
Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by; 100

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens heaven and earth,
The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance to lull the throbs of pain,
Perchance to charm a vacant brain,
Perchance to dream you still beside
me,
My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE

COME, when no graver cares employ,
Godfather, come and see your boy;
Your presence will be sun in winter,
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few
Who give the Fiend himself his due,
Should eighty thousand college-councils
Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you,

Should all our churchmen foam in spite
At you, so careful of the right, 10
Yet one lay-hearth would give you wel-
come —
Take it and come — to the Isle of Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke of
town,
I watch the twilight falling brown
All round a careless-order'd garden
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You 'll have no scandal while you dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine,
And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine; 20

For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand,
And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep
Some ship of battle slowly creep,
And on thro' zones of light and shadow
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
Which made a selfish war begin, 30
Dispute the claims, arrange the
chances, —
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win;

Or whether war's avenging rod
Shall lash all Europe into blood;
Till you should turn to dearer matters,
Dear to the man that is dear to God, —

How best to help the slender store,
How mend the dwellings, of the poor,
How gain in life, as life advances,
Valor and charity more and more. 40

Come, Maurice, come; the lawn as yet
Is hoar with rime or spongy-wet,
But when the wreath of March has blos-
som'd, —
Crocus, anemone, violet, —

Or later, pay one visit here,
For those are few we hold as dear;
Nor pay but one, but come for many,
Many and many a happy year.

January, 1854.

WILL

I

O, WELL for him whose will is strong !
 He suffers, but he will not suffer long;
 He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong.
 For him nor moves the loud world's random
 mock,

Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,
 Who seems a promontory of rock,
 That, compass'd round with turbulent
 sound,

In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
 Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

II

But ill for him who, bettering not with
 time,
 Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended
 Will,

And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,
 Or seeming-genial venial fault,
 Recurring and suggesting still !
 He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
 Toiling in immeasurable sand,
 And o'er a weary sultry land,
 Far beneath a blazing vault,
 Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
 The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE
DUKE OF WELLINGTON

I

BURY the Great Duke
 With an empire's lamentation;
 Let us bury the Great Duke
 To the noise of the mourning of a mighty
 nation;

Mourning when their leaders fall,
 Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
 And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom we de-
 plore ?
 Here, in streaming London's central roar.

Let the sound of those he wrought for, 10
 And the feet of those he fought for,
 Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
 As fits an universal woe,
 Let the long, long procession go,
 And let the sorrowing crowd about it
 grow,
 And let the mournful martial music
 blow;
 The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
 Remembering all his greatness in the
 past. 20

No more in soldier fashion will he greet
 With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
 O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute !
 Mourn for the man of long-enduring
 blood,

The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
 Whole in himself, a common good.
 Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
 Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
 Our greatest yet with least pretence,
 Great in council and great in war, 30
 Foremost captain of his time,
 Rich in saving common-sense,
 And, as the greatest only are,
 In his simplicity sublime.

O good gray head which all men knew,
 O voice from which their omens all men
 drew,

O iron nerve to true occasion true,
 O fallen at length that tower of strength
 Which stood four-square to all the winds
 that blew !

Such was he whom we deplore. 40
 The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
 The great World-victor's victor will be
 seen no more.

V

All is over and done.
 Render thanks to the Giver,

England, for thy son.
 Let the bell be toll'd.
 Render thanks to the Giver,
 And render him to the mould.
 Under the cross of gold
 That shines over city and river, 50
 There he shall rest for ever
 Among the wise and the bold.
 Let the bell be toll'd,
 And a reverent people behold
 The towering car, the sable steeds.
 Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
 Dark in its funeral fold.
 Let the bell be toll'd,
 And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;
 And the sound of the sorrowing anthem
 roll'd 60
 Thro' the dome of the golden cross;
 And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
 He knew their voices of old.
 For many a time in many a clime
 His captain's-ear has heard them boom
 Bellowing victory, bellowing doom.
 When he with those deep voices wrought,
 Guarding realms and kings from shame,
 With those deep voices our dead captain
 taught
 The tyrant, and asserts his claim 70
 In that dread sound to the great name
 Which he has worn so pure of blame,
 In praise and in dispraise the same,
 A man of well-attemper'd frame.
 O civic muse, to such a name,
 To such a name for ages long,
 To such a name,
 Preserve a broad approach of fame,
 And ever-echoing avenues of song !

VI

' Who is he that cometh, like an honor'd
 guest, 80
 With banner and with music, with soldier
 and with priest,
 With a nation weeping, and breaking on
 my rest ? ' —
 Mighty Seaman, this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea.
 Thine island loves thee well, thou famous
 man,
 The greatest sailor since our world began.
 Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
 To thee the greatest soldier comes;
 For this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea. 90
 His foes were thine; he kept us free;

O, give him welcome, this is he
 Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
 And worthy to be laid by thee;
 For this is England's greatest son,
 He that gain'd a hundred fights,
 Nor ever lost an English gun;
 This is he that far away
 Against the myriads of Assaye
 Clash'd with his fiery few and won; 100
 And underneath another sun,
 Warring on a later day,
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew
 The treble works, the vast designs
 Of his labor'd rampart-lines,
 Where he greatly stood at bay,
 Whence he issued forth anew,
 And ever great and greater grew,
 Beating from the wasted vines
 Back to France her banded swarms, 110
 Back to France with countless blows,
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
 Follow'd up in valley and glen
 With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
 And England pouring on her foes.
 Such a war had such a close.
 Again their ravening eagle rose
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing
 wings, 120
 And barking for the thrones of kings;
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
 On that loud Sabbath shook the spoiler
 down;
 A day of onsets of despair !
 Dash'd on every rocky square,
 Their surging charges foam'd themselves
 away;
 Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
 Thro' the long-tormented air
 Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
 And down we swept and charged and over-
 threw. 130
 So great a soldier taught us there
 What long-enduring hearts could do
 In that world-earthquake, Waterloo !
 Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
 And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
 O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
 O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
 If aught of things that here befall
 Touch a spirit among things divine, 139
 If love of country move thee there at all,
 Be glad, because his bones are laid by
 thine !

And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
 In full acclaim,
 A people's voice,
 The proof and echo of all human fame,
 A people's voice, when they rejoice
 At civic revel and pomp and game,
 Attest their great commander's claim
 With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
 Eternal honor to his name. 150

VII

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.
 Tho' all men else their nobler dreams for-
 get,
 Confused by brainless mobs and lawless
 Powers,
 Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly
 set
 His Briton in blown seas and storming
 showers,
 We have a voice with which to pay the
 debt
 Of boundless love and reverence and regret
 To those great men who fought, and kept
 it ours.
 And keep it ours, O God, from brute con-
 trol !
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the
 soul 160
 Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
 And save the one true seed of freedom
 sown
 Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
 That sober freedom out of which there
 springs
 Our loyal passion for our temperate kings !
 For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
 Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
 And drill the raw world for the march of
 mind,
 Till crowds at length be sane and crowns
 be just.
 But wink no more in slothful overtrust. 170
 Remember him who led your hosts;
 He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward
 wall;
 His voice is silent in your council-hall
 For ever; and whatever tempests lour
 For ever silent; even if they broke
 In thunder, silent; yet remember all
 He spoke among you, and the Man who
 spoke;
 Who never sold the truth to serve the
 hour, 179

Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;
 Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow
 Thro' either babbling world of high and
 low;
 Whose life was work, whose language
 rife
 With rugged maxims bewn from life;
 Who never spoke against a foe;
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one
 rehuke
 All great self-seekers trampling on the
 right.
 Truth-teller was our England's Alfred
 named;
 Truth-lover was our English Duke;
 Whatever record leap to light 190
 He never shall be shamed.

VIII

Lo ! the leader in these glorious wars
 Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
 Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
 He, ou whom from both her open hands
 Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,
 And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
 Yea, let all good things await
 Him who cares not to be great
 But as he saves or serves the state. 200
 Not once or twice in our rough island-
 story
 The path of duty was the way to glory.
 He that walks it, only thirsting
 For the right, and learns to deaden
 Love of self, before his journey closes,
 He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
 Into glossy purples, which outredden
 All voluptuous garden-roses.
 Not once or twice in our fair island-story
 The path of duty was the way to glory. 210
 He, that ever following her commands,
 On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
 Thro' the long gorge to the far light has
 won
 His path upward, and prevail'd,
 Shall find the toppling crags of Duty
 scaled
 Are close upon the shining table-lands
 To which our God Himself is moon and
 sun.
 Such was he: his work is done.
 But while the races of mankind endure
 Let his great example stand 220
 Colossal, seen of every land,
 And keep the soldier firm, the statesman
 pure;

Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory.
And let the land whose hearths he saved
from shame

For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illuminated cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name. 231

IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet un moulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see.
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung.
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one upon whose hand and heart and
brain

Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain ! 241
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane: 250

We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore 260
Make and break, and work their will,
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads
roll

Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul ?
On God and Godlike men we build our
trust.

Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's
ears;
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs
and tears;

The black earth yawns; the mortal disap-
pears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust; 270
He is gone who seem'd so great. —
Gone, but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave
him.

Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him, 280
God accept him, Christ receive him !
1852.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT
BRIGADE

I

HALF a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
'Forward the Light Brigade !
Charge for the guns !' he said.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II

'Forward, the Light Brigade !'
Was there a man dismay'd ?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd.
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of hell
Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
 All the world wonder'd.
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
 Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not,
 Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,

Cannon behind them
 Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of hell,
All that was left of them,
 Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade ?
O the wild charge they made !
 All the world wonder'd.
Honor the charge they made !
Honor the Light Brigade,
 Noble six hundred !

ENOCH ARDEN, AND OTHER POEMS

ENOCH ARDEN

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm;

And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster; then a moulder'd church; and
higher

A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
And high in heaven behind it a gray down
With Danish barrows; and a hazel-wood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago, 10
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray, the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats updrawn;
And built their castles of dissolving sand
To watch them overflow'd, or following up
And flying the white breaker, daily left 21
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff;
In this the children play'd at keeping house.
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,
While Annie still was mistress; but at times
Enoch would hold possession for a week:
'This is my house and this my little wife.'
'Mine too,' said Philip; 'turn and turn
about;'

When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-
made 30
Was master. Then would Philip, his blue
eyes

All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,
Shriek out, 'I hate you, Enoch,' and at this
The little wife would weep for company,
And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,
And the new warmth of life's ascending sun
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,
But Philip loved in silence; and the girl 41
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;
But she loved Enoch, tho' she knew it not,

And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set
A purpose evermore before his eyes,
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
To purchase his own boat, and make a home
For Annie; and so prosper'd that at last
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe 50
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast
Than Enoch. Like wise had he served a year
On hoard a merchantman, and made himself
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd a life
From the dread sweep of the down-stream-
ing seas,

And all men look'd upon him favorably.
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth
May

He purchased his own boat, and made a home
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up
The narrow street that clamber'd toward
the mill. 60

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,
The younger people making holiday,
With bag and sack and basket, great and
small,

Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd —
His father lying sick and needing him —
An hour behind; but as he climb'd the hill,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,
His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire, 71
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,
And in their eyes and faces read his doom;
Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,
And slipt aside, and like a wounded life
Crept down into the hollows of the wood;
There, while the rest were loud in merry-
making,

Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the
bells, 80
And merrily ran the years, seven happy
years,

Seven happy years of health and competence,
And mutual love and honorable toil,
With children, first a daughter. In him woke,
With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish
To save all earnings to the uttermost,

And give his child a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or hers; a wish renew'd,
When two years after came a boy to be
The rosy idol of her solitudes, ⁹⁰
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,
Or often journeying landward; for in truth
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-spoil
In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter
gales,

Not only to the market-cross were known,
But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp
And peacock yew-tree of the lonely Hall,
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's minister-
ing. ¹⁰⁰

Then came a change, as all things human
change.

Ten miles to northward of the narrow port
Open'd a larger haven. Thither used
Enoch at times to go by land or sea;
And once when there, and clambering on a
mast

In harbor, by mischance he slept and fell.
A limb was broken when they lifted him;
And while he lay recovering there, his wife
Bore him another son, a sickly one.

Another hand crept too across his trade ¹¹⁰
Taking her bread and theirs; and on him fell,
Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,
To see his children leading evermore
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
And her he loved a beggar. Then he pray'd,
'Save them from this, whatever comes
to me.'

And while he pray'd, the master of that ship
Enoch had served in, hearing his mis-
chance, ¹²⁰

Came, for he knew the man and valued him,
Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go ?
There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have
the place ?

And Enoch all at once assented to it,
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance ap-
pear'd

No graver than as when some little cloud
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun, ¹³⁰
And isles a light in the offing. Yet the wife —

When he was gone — the children — what
to do ?

Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his
plans:

To sell the boat — and yet he loved her
well —

How many a rough sea had he weather'd
in her !

He knew her, as a horseman knows his
horse —

And yet to sell her — then with what she
brought

Buy goods and stores — set Annie forth in
trade

With all that seamen needed or their
wives —

So might she keep the house while he was
gone. ¹⁴⁰

Should he not trade himself out yonder ? go
This voyage more than once ? yea, twice
or thrice —

As oft as needed — last, returning rich,
Become the master of a larger craft,
With fuller profits lead an easier life,
Have all his pretty young ones educated,
And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all;
Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,
Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born. ¹⁵⁰
Forward she started with a happy cry,
And laid the feeble infant in his arms;
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his
limbs,

Appraised his weight and fondled father-
like,

But had no heart to break his purposes
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had
girt

Her finger, Annie fought against his will;
Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear, ¹⁶⁰
Many a sad kiss by day, by night, renew'd —
Sure that all evil would come out of it —
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring, but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in vain;
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-friend,
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his
hand

To fit their little streetward sitting-room
With shelf and corner for the goods and
stores. 171

So all day long till Enoch's last at home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and
axe,

Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to
hear

Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd and
rang,

Till this was ended, and his careful hand, —
The space was narrow, — having order'd
all

Almost as neat and close as Nature packs
Her blossom or her seedling, paused; and
he,

Who needs would work for Annie to the
last, 180

Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of fare-
well

Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,
Save as his Annie's, were a laughter to
him.

Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-
God,

Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes,
Whatever came to him; and then he said:
'Annie, this voyage by the grace of God
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us. 191
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,
For I'll be back, my girl, before you
know it;'

Then lightly rocking baby's cradle, 'and
he,

This pretty, puny, weakly little one, —
Nay—for I love him all the better for
it—

God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,
And make him merry, when I come home
again. 199

Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go.'

Him running on thus hopefully she
heard,
And almost hoped herself; but when he
turn'd

The current of his talk to graver things
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing
On providence and trust in heaven, she
heard,

Heard and not heard him; as the village
girl,

Who sets her pitcher underneath the
spring,

Musing on him that used to fill it for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke: 'O Enoch, you are
wise; 210
And yet for all your wisdom well know I
That I shall look upon your face no more.'

'Well, then,' said Enoch, 'I shall look
on yours.

Annie, my girl, I sail in passes here' —
He named the day; — 'get you a seaman's
glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your
fears.'

But when the last of those last moments
came:

'Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,
Look to the babes, and till I come again
Keep everything shipshape, for I must
go. 220

And fear no more for me; or if you fear,
Cast all your cares on God; that anchor
holds.

Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these,
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,
The sea is His; He made it.'

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his drooping
wife,

And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones;
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept
After a night of feverous wakefulness, 230
When Annie would have raised him Enoch
said,

'Wake him not, let him sleep; how should
the child

Remember this?' and kiss'd him in his
cot.

But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt
A tiny curl, and gave it; this he kept
Thro' all his future, but now hastily caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his
way.

She, when the day that Enoch mention'd
came,
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain. Perhaps

She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;
She saw him not, and while he stood on
deck ²⁴²
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Even to the last dip of the vanishing sail
She watch'd it, and departed weeping for
him;
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his
grave,
Set her sad will no less to chime with his,
But thro' not in her trade, not being bred
To barter, nor compensating the want
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies, ²⁵⁰
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,
And still foreboding 'what would Enoch
say?'
For more than once, in days of difficulty
And pressure, had she sold her wares for
less
Than what she gave in buying what she
sold.
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it; and
thus,
Expectant of that news which never came,
Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born and
grew ²⁶⁰
Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it
With all a mother's care; nevertheless,
Whether her business often call'd her
from it,
Or thro' the want of what it needed most,
Or means to pay the voice who best could
tell
What most it needed — howso'er it was,
After a lingering, — ere she was aware, —
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
The little innocent soul fitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried
it, ²⁷⁰
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her
peace, —
Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon
her, —
Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.
'Surely,' said Philip, 'I may see her now,
May be some little comfort;' therefore
went,
Past thro' the solitary room in front,
Paused for a moment at an inner door,

Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,
Enter'd, but Annie, seated with her grief,
Fresh from the burial of her little one, ²⁸⁰
Cared not to look on any human face,
But turn'd her own toward the wall and
wept.

Then Philip standing up said falteringly,
'Annie, I came to ask a favor of you.'

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd re-
ply,
'Favor from one so sad and so forlorn
As I am!' half abash'd him; yet unask'd,
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
He set himself beside her, saying to her:

'I came to speak to you of what he
wish'd, ²⁹⁰
Enoch, your husband. I have ever said
You chose the best among us — a strong
man;
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.
And wherefore did he go this weary way?
And leave you lonely? not to see the
world —
For pleasure? — nay, but for the where-
withal
To give his babes a better bringing up
Than his had been, or yours; that was his
wish.
And if he come again, vext will he be ³⁰⁰
To find the precious morning hours were
lost.
And it would vex him even in his grave,
If he could know his babes were running
wild
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie,
now —
Have we not known each other all our
lives?
I do beseech you by the love you bear
Him and his children not to say me nay —
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again
Why then he shall repay me — if you will,
Annie — for I am rich and well-to-do. ³¹⁰
Now let me put the boy and girl to school;
This is the favor that I came to ask.'

Then Annie with her brows against the
wall
Answer'd, 'I cannot look you in the face;
I seem so foolish and so broken down.
When you came in my sorrow broke me
down;

And now I think your kindness breaks me
down.

But Enoch lives; that is borne in on me;
He will repay you. Money can be repaid,
Not kindness such as yours.'

And Philip ask'd,
'Then you will let me, Annie?'

There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon
him, ³²²

And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,
Then calling down a blessing on his head
Caught at his hand, and wrung it passion-
ately,

And past into the little garth beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to
school,

And bought them needful books, and every
way,

Like one who does his duty by his own, ³³⁰
Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's
sake,

Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he
sent

Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and
fruit,

The late and early roses from his wall,
Or conies from the down, and now and
then,

With some pretext of fineness in the meal
To save the offence of charitable, flour
From his tall mill that whistled on the
waste. ³⁴⁰

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind;
Scarce could the woman, when he came
upon her,

Ont of full heart and boundless gratitude
Light on a broken word to thank him with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;
From distant corners of the street they ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily;
Lords of his house and of his mill were
they,

Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with
him ³⁵⁰

And call'd him Father Philip. Philip
gain'd

As Enoch lost, for Enoch seem'd to them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where; and so ten
years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children
long'd

To go with others nutting to the wood, ³⁶⁰
And Annie would go with them; then they
begg'd

For Father Philip, as they call'd him, too.
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and
saying to him,

'Come with us, Father Philip,' he denied;
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their
wish,

For was not Annie with them? and they
went.

But after scaling half the weary down,
Just where the prone edge of the wood
began ³⁷⁰

To feather toward the hollow, all her force
Fail'd her; and sighing, 'Let me rest,' she
said.

So Philip rested with her well-content;
While all the younger ones with jubilant
cries

Broke from their elders, and tumultuously
Down thro' the whitening hazels made a
plunge

To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or
broke

The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
And calling, here and there, about the
wood. ³⁸⁰

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one dark
hour

Here in this wood, when like a wounded
life

He crept into the shadow. At last he said,
Lifting his honest forehead, 'Listen, Annie,
How merry they are down yonder in the
wood.

Tired, Annie?' for she did not speak a
word.

'Tired?' but her face had fallen upon her hands;
 At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
 'The ship was lost,' he said, 'the ship was lost!
 No more of that! why should you kill yourself
 And make them orphans quite?' And Annie said,
 'I thought not of it; but — I know not why —
 Their voices make me feel so solitary.'

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke:
 'Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,
 And it has been upon my mind so long
 That, tho' I know not when it first came there,
 I know that it will out at last. O Annie,
 It is beyond all hope, against all chance,
 That he who left you ten long years ago
 Should still be living; well, then — let me speak.
 I grieve to see you poor and wanting help;
 I cannot help you as I wish to do
 Unless — they say that women are so quick —
 Perhaps you know what I would have you know —
 I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
 A father to your children; I do think
 They love me as a father; I am sure
 That I love them as if they were mine own;
 And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
 That after all these sad uncertain years
 We might be still as happy as God grants
 To any of his creatures. Think upon it;
 For I am well-to-do — no kin, no care,
 No burthen, save my care for you and yours,
 And we have known each other all our lives,
 And I have loved you longer than you know.'

Then answer'd Annie — tenderly she spoke:
 'You have been as God's good angel in our house.
 God bless you for it, God reward you for it,
 Philip, with something happier than myself.
 Can one love twice? can you be ever loved

As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?'
 'I am content,' he answer'd, 'to be loved
 A little after Enoch.' 'O,' she cried,
 Scared as it were, 'dear Philip, wait a while.
 If Enoch comes — but Enoch will not come —
 Yet wait a year, a year is not so long.
 Surely I shall be wiser in a year.
 O, wait a little!' Philip sadly said,
 'Annie, as I have waited all my life
 I well may wait a little.' 'Nay,' she cried,
 'I am bound: you have my promise — in a year.
 Will you not bide your year as I bide mine?'
 And Philip answer'd, 'I will bide my year.'

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up
 Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day
 Pass from the Danish barrow overhead;
 Then, fearing night and chill for Annie,
 Aud sent his voice beneath him thro' the wood.
 Up came the children laden with their spoil;
 Then all descended to the port, and there
 At Annie's door he paused and gave his hand,
 Saying gently, 'Annie, when I spoke to you,
 That was your hour of weakness. I was wrong,
 I am always bound to you, but you are free.'
 Then Annie weeping answer'd, 'I am bound.'

She spoke; and in one moment as it were,
 While yet she went about her household ways,
 Even as she dwelt upon his latest words,
 That he had loved her longer than she knew,
 That autumn into autumn flash'd again,
 And there he stood once more before her face,
 Claiming her promise. 'Is it a year?' she ask'd.
 'Yes, if the nuts,' he said, 'be ripe again;
 Come out and see.' But she — she put him off —
 So much to look to — such a change — a month —

Give her a month — she knew that she was bound —

A month — no more. Then Philip with his eyes ⁴⁶⁰

Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice
Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,
'Take your own time, Annie, take your own time.'

And Annie could have wept for pity of him;
And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable excuse,
Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,
Till half another year had slept away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost, ⁴⁷⁰
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but trifle
with her;

Some that she but held off to draw him on;
And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,
As simple folk that knew not their own
minds;

And one, in whom all evil fancies clung
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly
Would hint at worse in either. Her own son
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish;
But evermore the daughter prest upon her
To wed the man so dear to all of them ⁴⁸¹
And lift the household out of poverty;
And Philip's rosy face contracting grew
Careworn and wan; and all these things
fell on her
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly
Pray'd for a sign, 'My Enoch, is he gone?'
Then compass'd round by the blind wall of
night

Brook'd not the expectant terror of her
heart,
Started from bed, and struck herself a
light, ⁴⁹⁰

Then desperately seized the holy Book,
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
Suddenly put her finger on the text,
'Under the palm-tree.' That was nothing
to her,

No meaning there; she closed the Book and
slept.

When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height,
Under a palm-tree, over him the sun.
'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is happy, he
is singing

Hosanna in the highest; yonder shines
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be
palms ⁵⁰⁰

Whereof the happy people strowing cried
"Hosanna in the highest!" Here she
woke,

Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to
him,

'There is no reason why we should not wed.'
'Then for God's sake,' he answer'd, 'both
our sakes,

So you will wed me, let it be at once.'

So these were wed, and merrily rang the
bells,

Merrily rang the bells, and they were wed.
But never merrily beat Annie's heart. ⁵⁰⁹
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,
She knew not whence; a whisper on her ear,
She knew not what; nor loved she to be
left

Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.
What ail'd her then that, ere she enter'd,
often

Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,
Fearing to enter? Philip thought he knew:
Such doubts and fears were common to her
state,

Being with child; but when her child was
born,

Then her new child was as herself renew'd,
Then the new mother came about her heart,
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all, ⁵²¹
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch? Prosperously
sail'd

The ship 'Good Fortune,' tho' at setting
forth

The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,
shook

And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvest
She slept across the summer of the world,
Then after a long tumble about the Cape
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,
She passing thro' the summer world again,
The breath of heaven came continually ⁵³¹
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and
bought

Quaint monsters for the market of those
times,

A gilded dragon also for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at first
indeed
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her
bows: ⁵⁴⁰
Then follow'd calms, and then winds vari-
able,
Then baffling, a long course of them; and
last
Storm, such as drove her under moonless
heavens
Till hard upon the cry of 'breakers' came
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
But Enoch and two others. Half the
night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken
spars,
These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human suste-
nance, ⁵⁵⁰
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing
roots;
Nor save for pity was it hard to take
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of
palm, a hut,
Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.
For one, the youngest, hardly more than
boy,
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and
wreck, ⁵⁶⁰
Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-
life.
They could not leave him. After he was
gone,
The two remaining found a fallen stem;
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.
In those two deaths he read God's warning
'wait.'

The mountain wooded to the peak, the
lawns
And winding glades high up like ways to
heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown of
plumes, ⁵⁷⁰
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,

The lustre of the long convolvuluses
That coil'd around the stately stems, and
ran
Even to the limit of the land, the glows
And glories of the broad belt of the
world, —
All these he saw; but what he fain had
seen
He could not see, the kindly human face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the
reef, ⁵⁸⁰
The moving whisper of huge trees that
branch'd
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all day
long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail.
No sail from day to day, but every day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices;
The blaze upon the waters to the east; ⁵⁹⁰
The blaze upon his island overhead;
The blaze upon the waters to the west;
Then the great stars that globed them-
selves in heaven,
The hollow-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise — but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to
watch,
So still the golden lizard on him paused,
A phantom made of many phantoms moved
Before him haunting him, or he himself
Moved haunting people, things, and places,
known ⁶⁰⁰
Far in a darker isle beyond the line;
The babes, their habble, Annie, the small
house,
The climbing street, the mill, the leafy
lanes,
The peacock yew-tree and the lonely Hall,
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the
chill
November dawns and dewy-glooming
downs,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying
leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-color'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily — far and far away —

He heard the pealing of his parish bells; ⁶¹¹
 Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started
 up
 Shuddering, and when the beauteous hate-
 ful isle
 Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart
 Spoken with That which being everywhere
 Lets none who speaks with Him seem all
 alone,
 Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head
 The sunny and rainy seasons came and
 went

Year after year. His hopes to see his
 own, ⁶²⁰

And pace the sacred old familiar fields,
 Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom
 Came suddenly to an end. Another ship—
 She wanted water—blown by baffling
 winds,

Like the 'Good Fortune,' from her destined
 course,

Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she
 lay;

For since the mate had seen at early dawn
 Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle
 The silent water slipping from the bills, ⁶²⁹
 They sent a crew that landing burst away
 In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the
 shores

With clamor. Downward from his moun-
 tain gorge

Stept the long-hair'd, long-bearded soli-
 tary,

Brown, looking hardly human, strangely
 clad,

Muttering and mumbling, idiot-like it
 seem'd,

With inarticulate rage, and making signs
 They knew not what; and yet he led the
 way

To where the rivulets of sweet water ran,
 And ever as he mingled with the crew,
 And heard them talking, his long-bonnden
 tongue ⁶⁴⁰

Was loosen'd, till he made them under-
 stand;

Whom, when their casks were fill'd, they
 took aboard.

And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,
 Scarce-credited at first but more and more,
 Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it;
 And clothes they gave him and free passage
 home,

But oft he work'd among the rest and
 shook

His isolation from him. None of these
 Came from his country, or could answer
 him,

If question'd, aught of what he cared to
 know. ⁶⁵⁰

And dull the voyage was with long de-
 lays,

The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but ever-
 more

His fancy fled before the lazy wind
 Returning, till beneath a clouded moon

He like a lover down thro' all his blood
 Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-breath

Of England, blown across her ghostly wall.
 And that same morning officers and men

Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,
 Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it;

Then moving up the coast they landed
 him, ⁶⁶¹

Even in that harbor whence he sail'd be-
 fore.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,
 But homeward—home—what home? had
 he a home?—

His home, he walk'd. Bright was that af-
 ternoon,

Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either
 chasm,

Where either haven open'd on the deeps,
 Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world
 in gray,

Cut off the length of highway on before,
 And left but narrow breadth to left and
 right ⁶⁷⁰

Of wither'dholt or tilth or pasturage.
 On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped

Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze
 The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it
 down.

Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom;
 Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted
 light

Flared on him, and he came upon the
 place.

Then down the long street having slowly
 stolen,

His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
 His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the
 home ⁶⁸⁰

Where Annie lived and loved him, and his
 babes

In those far-off seven happy years were
 born;
 But finding neither light nor murmur
 there —
 A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle —
 crept
 Still downward thinking, 'dead or dead to
 me!'

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he
 went,
 Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
 A front of timber-crost antiquity,
 So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
 He thought it must have gone; but he was
 gone ⁶⁹⁰
 Who kept it, and his widow Miriam Lane,
 With daily-dwindling profits held the
 house;
 A haunt of brawling seamen once, but
 now
 Still, with yet a bed for wandering men.
 There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garru-
 lous,
 Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
 Told him, with other annals of the port,
 Not knowing — Enoch was so brown, so
 bow'd,
 So broken — all the story of his house: ⁷⁰⁰
 His baby's death, her growing poverty,
 How Philip put her little ones to school,
 And kept them in it, his long wooing her,
 Her slow consent and marriage, and the
 birth
 Of Philip's child; and o'er his countenance
 No shadow past, nor motion. Any one,
 Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the
 tale
 Less than the teller; only when she closed,
 'Enoch, poor man, was cast away and
 lost.'
 He, shaking his gray head pathetically, ⁷¹⁰
 Repeated muttering, 'cast away and lost;'
 Again in deeper inward whispers, 'lost!'

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again:
 'If I might look on her sweet face again,
 And know that she is happy.' So the
 thought
 Haunted and harass'd him, and drove him
 forth,
 At evening when the dull November day
 Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.

There he sat down gazing on all below;
 There did a thousand memories roll upon
 him, ⁷²⁰
 Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
 The ruddy square of comfortable light,
 Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,
 Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures
 The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
 Against it and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the
 street,
 The latest house to landward; but behind,
 With one small gate that open'd on the
 waste,
 Flourish'd a little garden square and
 wall'd, ⁷³⁰
 And in it thrrove an ancient evergreen,
 A yew-tree, and all round it ran a walk
 Of shingle, and a walk divided it.
 But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and
 stole
 Up by the wall, behind the yew; and
 thence
 That which he better might have shunn'd,
 if griefs
 Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd
 board
 Sparkled and shone; so genial was the
 hearth;
 And on the right hand of the hearth he
 saw ⁷⁴⁰
 Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
 Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees;
 And o'er her second father stoopt a girl,
 A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
 Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted
 hand
 Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
 To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy
 arms,
 Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they
 laugh'd;
 And on the left hand of the hearth he
 saw
 The mother glancing often toward her
 babe, ⁷⁵⁰
 But turning now and then to speak with
 him,
 Her son, who stood beside her tall and
 strong,
 And saying that which pleased him, for he
 smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life be-
held
His wife his wife no more, and saw the babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the happi-
ness,
And his own children tall and beautiful,
And him, that other, reigning in his place,
Lord of his rights and of his children's
love — ⁷⁶⁰
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him
all,
Because things seen are mightier than things
heard,
Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch,
and fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,
Which in one moment, like the blast of
doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the
hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should grate under-
foot,
And feeling all along the garden-wall,
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be
found, ⁷⁷⁰
Crept to the gate, and open'd it and
closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that
his knees
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd:

'Too hard to bear! why did they take
me thence?
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness ⁷⁸⁰
A little longer! aid me, give me strength
Not to tell her, never to let her know.
Help me not to break in upon her peace.
My children too! must I not speak to
these?
They know me not. I should betray my-
self.
Never! no father's kiss for me — the girl
So like her mother, and the boy, my son.'

There speech and thought and nature
fail'd a little,

And he lay tranced; but when he rose and
paced
Back toward his solitary home again, ⁷⁹⁰
All down the long and narrow street he
went
Beating it in upon his weary brain,
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
'Not to tell her, never to let her know.'

He was not all unhappy. His resolve
Uphore him, and firm faith, and evermore
Prayer from a living source within the
will,
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,
Kept him a living soul. 'This miller's
wife,' ⁸⁰⁰
He said to Miriam, 'that you spoke about,
Has she no fear that her first husband
lives?'

'Ay, ay, poor soul,' said Miriam, 'fear
enow!
If you could tell her you had seen him
dead,
Why, that would be her comfort;' and he
thought,
'After the Lord has call'd me she shall
know,
I wait His time;' and Enoch set himself,
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.
Almost to all things could he turn his
hand.

Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or
help'd ⁸¹¹

At lading and unlading the tall barks
That brought the stinted commerce of
those days,

Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself.
Yet since he did but labor for himself,
Work without hope, there was not life in
it

Whereby the man could live; and as the
year

Roll'd itself round again to meet the day
When Enoch had return'd, a languor came
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually ⁸²⁰
Weakening the man, till he could do no
more,

But kept the house, his chair, and last his
bed.

And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.
For sure no gladlier does the stranded
wreck

See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall

The boat that bears the hope of life approach
To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
Death dawning on him, and the close of
all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kinder hope
On Enoch thinking, 'after I am gone, ⁸³⁰
Then may she learn I loved her to the last.'
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said:
'Woman, I have a secret — only swear,
Before I tell you — swear upon the book
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead.'
'Dead,' clamor'd the good woman, 'hear
him talk!
I warrant, man, that we shall bring you
round.'
'Swear,' added Enoch sternly, 'on the
book;'
And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam
swore.
Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon
her, ⁸⁴⁰
'Did you know Enoch Arden of this
town?'
'Know him?' she said, 'I knew him far
away.
Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the
street;
Held his head high, and cared for no man,
he.'
Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her:
'His head is low, and no man cares for
him.
I think I have not three days more to live;
I am the man.' At which the woman gave
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry:
'You Arden, you! nay, — sure he was a
foot ⁸⁵⁰
Higher than you be.' Enoch said again:
'My God has bow'd me down to what I
am;
My grief and solitude have broken me;
Nevertheless, know you that I am he
Who married — but that name has twice
been changed —
I married her who married Philip Ray.
Sit, listen.' Then he told her of his voy-
age,
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve, ⁸⁵⁹
And how he kept it. As the woman heard,
Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,
While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly

To rush abroad all round the little haven,
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;
But awed and promise-bounden she for-
bore,
Saying only, 'See your bairns before you
go!
Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and arose
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch
hung
A moment on her words, but then replied:

'Woman, disturb me not now at the
last, ⁸⁷⁰
But let me hold my purpose till I die.
Sit down again; mark me and understand,
While I have power to speak. I charge
you now,
When you shall see her, tell her that I
died
Blessing her, praying for her, loving her;
Save for the bar between us, loving her
As when she laid her head beside my own.
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw
So like her mother, that my latest breath
Was spent in blessing her and praying for
her. ⁸⁸⁰
And tell my son that I died blessing him.
And say to Philip that I blest him too;
He never meant us anything but good.
But if my children care to see me dead,
Who hardly knew me living, let them
come,
I am their father; but she must not come,
For my dead face would vex her after-life.
And now there is but one of all my blood
Who will embrace me in the world-to-be.
This hair is his, she cut it off and gave it,
And I have borne it with me all these
years, ⁸⁹¹
And thought to bear it with me to my
grave;
But now my mind is changed, for I shall
see him,
My babe in bliss. Wherefore when I am
gone,
Take, give her this, for it may comfort
her;
It will moreover be a token to her
That I am he.'

He ceased; and Miriam Lane
Made such a voluble answer promising all,
That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her
Repeating all he wish'd, and once again ⁹⁰⁰
She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless and
pale,
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,
There came so loud a calling of the sea
That all the houses in the haven rang.
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad,

Crying with a loud voice, 'A sail! a sail!
I am saved;' and so fell back and spoke no
more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral. 911

AYLMER'S FIELD

1793

DUST are our frames ; and, gilded dust,
 our pride
 Looks only for a moment whole and sound,
 Like that long-buried body of the king,
 Found lying with his urns and ornaments,
 Which at a touch of light, an air of heaven,
 Slipt into ashes, and was found no more.

Here is a story which in rougher shape
 Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I saw
 Sunning himself in a waste field alone —
 Old, and a mine of memories — who had
 served, ¹⁰
 Long since, a bygone rector of the place,
 And been himself a part of what he told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER, that almighty man,
 The county God — in whose capacious hall,
 Hung with a hundred shields, the family
 tree
 Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate
 king —
 Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd the
 spire,
 Stood from his walls and wing'd his entry-
 gates,
 And swang besides on many a windy sign —
 Whose eyes from under a pyramidal head
 Saw from his windows nothing save his
 own — ²¹
 What lovelier of his own had he than her,
 His only child, his Edith, whom he loved
 As heiress and not heir regretfully ?
 But ' he that marries her marries her name.'
 This fiat somewhat soothed himself and wife,
 His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,
 Insipid as the queen upon a card ;
 Her all of thought and bearing hardly more
 Than his own shadow in a sickly sun. ³⁰

A land of hops and poppy-mingled corn,
 Little about it stirring save a brook !
 A sleepy land, where under the same wheel
 The same old rut would deepen year by
 year ;
 Where almost all the village had one name ;
 Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at the
 Hall

And Averill Averill at the Rectory
 Thrice over; so that Rectory and Hall,
 Bound in an immemorial intimacy,
 Were open to each other; tho' to dream ⁴⁰
 That Love could bind them closer well had
 made
 The hoar hair of the baronet bristle up
 With horror, worse than had he heard his
 priest
 Preach an inverted scripture, sons of men,
 Daughters of God; so sleepy was the land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd it so,
 Somewhere beneath his own low range of
 roofs,
 Have also set his many-shielded tree ?
 There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage
 once,
 When the red rose was redder than itself, ⁵⁰
 And York's white rose as red as Lancaster's,
 With wounded peace which each had prick'd
 to death.
 'Not proven,' Averill said, or laughingly,
 'Some other race of Averills' — proven or
 no,
 What cared he ? what, if other or the same ?
 He lean'd not on his fathers but himself.
 But Leolin, his brother, living oft
 With Averill, and a year or two before
 Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away ⁵⁹
 By one low voice to one dear neighborhood,
 Would often, in his walks with Edith, claim
 A distant kinship to the gracious blood
 That shook the heart of Edith hearing him.

Sanguine he was ; a but less vivid hue
 Than of that islet in the chestnut-bloom
 Flamed in his cheek; and eager eyes, that
 still
 Took joyful note of all things joyful,
 beam'd,
 Beneath a mane-like mass of rolling gold,
 Their best and brightest when they dwelt
 on hers,
 Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect else,
 But subject to the season or the mood, ⁷¹
 Shone like a mystic star between the less
 And greater glory varying to and fro,

We know not wherefore; bounteously made,
 And yet so finely, that a troublous touch
 Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in a day,
 A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.
 And these had been together from the first.
 Leolin's first nurse was, five years after,
 hers.

So much the boy foreran; but when his
 date 80

Doubled her own, for want of playmates,
 he —

Since Averill was a decad and a half
 His elder, and their parents underground —
 Had tost his ball and flown his kite, and
 roll'd

His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her dipt
 Against the rush of the air in the prone
 swing,

Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, arranged
 Her garden, sow'd her name and kept it
 green

In living letters, told her fairy-tales,
 Show'd her the fairy footings on the grass,
 The little dell's of cowslip, fairy palms, 91

The petty mare's-tail forest, fairy pines,
 Or from the tiny pitted target blew
 What look'd a flight of fairy arrows aim'd
 All at one mark, all hitting, make-believes
 For Edith and himself; or else he forged,
 But that was later, boyish histories
 Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon, wreck,
 Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and true
 love

Crown'd after trial; sketches rude and
 faint, 100

But where a passion yet unborn perhaps
 Lay hidden as the music of the moon
 Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale.
 And thus together, save for college-times
 Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair
 As ever painter painted, poet sang,
 Or heaven in lavish bounty moulded, grew.
 And more and more, the maiden woman-
 grown,

He wasted hours with Averill; there, when
 first

The tented winter-field was broken up 110
 Into that phalanx of the summer spears
 That soon should wear the garland; there
 again

When burr and bine were gather'd; lastly
 there

At Christmas; ever welcome at the Hall,
 On whose dull sameness his full tide of
 youth

Broke with a phosphorescence charming
 even

My lady, and the baronet yet had laid
 No bar between them. Dull and self-in-
 volved,

Tall and erect, but bending from his height
 With half-allowing smiles for all the world,
 And mighty courteous in the main — his
 pride 121

Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring —
 He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,
 Would care no more for Leolin's walking
 with her

Than for his old Newfoundland's, when they
 ran

To loose him at the stables, for he rose
 Two-footed at the limit of his chain,
 Roaring to make a third; and how should
 Love,

Whom the cross-lightnings of four chance-
 met eyes

Flash into fiery life from nothing, follow.
 Such dear familiarities of dawn? 131
 Seldom, but when he does, master of all.

So these young hearts, not knowing that
 they loved,

Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar
 Between them, nor by plight or broken
 ring

Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,
 Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied
 By Averill; his, a brother's love, that hung
 With wings of brooding shelter o'er her
 peace,

Might have been other, save for Leolin's —
 Who knows? but so they wander'd, hour
 by hour 141

Gather'd the blossom that re-bloom'd, and
 drank

The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to herself.
 For out beyond her lodges, where the brook
 Vocal, with here and there a silence, ran
 By sallow rims, arose the laborers' homes,
 A frequent haunt of Edith, on low knolls
 That dimpling died into each other, huts
 At random scatter'd, each a nest in bloom.
 Her art, her hand, her counsel, all had
 wrought 151

About them. Here was one that, summer-
 blanch'd,

Was parcel-bearded with the traveller's-
 joy

In autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here
The warm-blue breathings of a hidden
hearth

Broke from a bower of vine and honey-
suckle.

One look'd all rose-tree, and another wore
A close-set robe of jasmine sown with stars.
This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers
About it; this, a milky-way on earth, ¹⁶⁰
Like visions in the Northern dreamer's
heavens,

A lily-avenue climbing to the doors;
One, almost to the martin-haunted eaves
A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;
Each, its own charm; and Edith's every-
where;

And Edith ever visitant with him,
He but less loved than Edith, of her poor.
For she — so lowly-lovely and so loving,
Queenly responsive when the loyal hand
Rose from the clay it work'd in as she
past, ¹⁷⁰

Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing by,
Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height
That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice
Of comfort and an open hand of help,
A splendid presence flattering the poor
roofs

Revered as theirs, but kindlier than them-
selves

To ailing wife or wailing infancy
Or old bedridden palsy, — was adored;
He, loved for her and for himself. A grasp
Having the warmth and muscle of the
heart, ¹⁸⁰

A childly way with children, and a laugh
Ringing like proven golden coinage true,
Were no false passport to that easy realm,
Where once with Leolin at her side the girl,
Nursing a child, and turning to the warmth
The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,
Heard the good mother softly whisper,

'Bless,
God bless 'em! marriages are made in
heaven.'

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to her.
My lady's Indian kinsman unannounced ¹⁹⁰
With half a score of swarthy faces came.
His own, tho' keen and hold and soldierly,
Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair;
Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the
hour,
Tho' seeming boastful. So when first he
dash'd

Into the chronicle of a deedful day,
Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile
Of patron, 'Good! my lady's kinsman!
good!'

My lady with her fingers interlock'd,
And rotatory thumbs on silken knees, ²⁰⁰
Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear
To listen; unawares they fitted off,
Busying themselves about the flowerage
That stood from out a stiff brocade in
which,

The meteor of a splendid season, she,
Once with this kinsman, ah! so long ago,
Stept thro' the stately minuet of those
days.

But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him
Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his life;
Till Leolin, ever watchful of her eye, ²¹⁰
Hated him with a momentary hate.
Wife-hunting, as the rumor ran, was he.
I know not, for he spoke not, only show-
er'd

His oriental gifts on every one
And most on Edith. Like a storm he came,
And shook the house, and like a storm he
went.

Among the gifts he left her — possibly
He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return
When others had been tested — there was
one, ²¹⁹

A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it
Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd itself
Fine as ice-ferns on January panes
Made by a breath. I know not whence at
first,

Nor of what race, the work; but as he told
The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves
He got it; for their captain after fight,
His comrades having fought their last be-
low,
Was climbing up the valley, at whom he
shot.

Down from the beetling crag to which he
clung
Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet, ²³⁰
This dagger with him, which, when now
admired

By Edith whom his pleasure was to please,
At once the costly Sahib yielded to her.

And Leolin, coming after he was gone,
Tost over all her presents petulantly;
And when she show'd the wealthy scabbard,
saying,

'Look what a lovely piece of workmanship !'
 Slight was his answer, 'Well — I care not for it.'
 Then playing with the blade he prick'd his hand,
 'A gracious gift to give a lady, this !' 240
 'But would it be more gracious,' ask'd the girl,
 'Were I to give this gift of his to one That is no lady ?' 'Gracious ? No,' said he.
 'Me ? — bnt I cared not for it. O, pardon me,
 I seem to be ungraciousness itself.'
 'Take it,' she added sweetly, 'tho' his gift;
 For I am more ungracious even than you, I care not for it either;' and he said,
 'Why, then I love it;' bnt Sir Aylmer past,
 And neither loved nor liked the thing he heard. 250

The next day came a neighbor. Blues and reds
 They talk'd of; blues were sure of it, he thought;
 Then of the latest fox — where started — kill'd
 In such a bottom. 'Peter had the brush, My Peter, first;' and did Sir Aylmer know That great pock-pitten fellow had been caught ?
 Then made his pleasure echo, hand to hand, And rolling as it were the substance of it Between his palms a moment up and down —
 'The birds were warm, the birds were warm upon him;' 260
 We have him now;' and had Sir Aylmer heard —
 Nay, but he must — the land was ringing of it —
 This blacksmith border-marriage — one they knew —
 Raw from the nursery — who could trust a child ?
 That cursed France with her egalities !
 And did Sir Aylmer — deferentially
 With nearing chair and lower'd accent — think —
 For people talk'd — that it was wholly wise
 To let that handsome fellow Averill walk
 So freely with his daughter ? people talk'd — 270

The hoy might get a notion into him;
 The girl might be entangled ere she knew.
 Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening spoke:
 'The girl and boy, sir, know their differences !'
 'Good,' said his friend, 'but watch !' and he, 'Enough,
 More than enough, sir ! I can guard my own.'
 They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the house
 Had fallen first, was Edith that same night;
 Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a rough piece 280
 Of early rigid color, under which
 Withdrawing by the counter door to that
 Which Leolin open'd, she cast back upon him
 A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He, as one
 Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,
 And pelted with outrageous epithets,
 Turning beheld the Powers of the House
 On either side the hearth, indignant; her,
 Cooling her false cheek with a feather fan,
 Him, glaring, by his own stale devil spurr'd, 290
 And, like a beast hard-ridden, breathing hard.
 'Ungenerous, dishonorable, base,
 Presumptuous ! trusted as he was with her,
 The sole succeder to their wealth, their lands,
 The last remaining pillar of their house,
 The one transmitter of their ancient name,
 Their child.' 'Our child !' 'Our heiress !'
 'Ours !' for still,
 Like echoes from beyond a hollow, came
 Her sicklier iteration. Last he said:
 'Boy, mark me ! for your fortunes are to make. 300
 I swear you shall not make them out of mine.
 Now inasmuch as you have practised on her,
 Perplex her, made her half forget herself,
 Swerve from her duty to herself and us —
 Things in an Aylmer deem'd impossible,
 Far as we track ourselves — I say that this —
 Else I withdraw favor and countenance
 From you and yours for ever — shall you do
 Sir, when you see her — but you shall not see her —

No, you shall write, and not to her, hut
me; ³¹⁰
And you shall say that having spoken with
me,
And after look'd into yourself, you find
That you meant nothing — as indeed you
know
That you meant nothing. Such a match as
this!
Impossible, prodigious!' These were
words,
As meted by his measure of himself,
Arguing boundless forbearance: after
which,
And Leolin's horror-stricken answer, 'I
So foul a traitor to myself and her!
Never, O, never!' for about as long ³²⁰
As the wind-hover hangs in balance,
paused
Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm
within,
Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and cry-
ing,
'Boy, should I find you by my doors again,
My men shall lash you from them like a
dog;
Hence!' with a sudden execration drove
The footstool from before him, and arose;
So, stammering 'scoundrel' out of teeth
that ground ³²⁸
As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin still
Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old man
Follow'd, and under his own lintel stood
Storming with lifted hands, a hoary face
Meet for the reverence of the hearth, hut
now,
Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd moon,
Vext with unworthy madness, and de-
form'd.

Slowly and conscions of the rageful eye
That watch'd him, till he heard the pon-
derous door
Close, crashing with long echoes thro' the
land,
Went Leolin; then, his passions all in flood
And masters of his motion, furiously ³⁴⁰
Down thro' the bright lawns to his bro-
ther's ran,
And foam'd away his heart at Averill's
ear;
Whom Averill solaced as he might,
amazed:
The man was his, had been his father's,
friend;

He must have seen, himself had seen it
long;
He must have known, himself had known;
besides,
He never yet had set his daughter forth
Here in the woman-markets of the west,
Where our Caucasians let themselves be
sold.
Some one, he thought, had slander'd Leo-
lin to him. ³⁵⁰
'Brother, for I have loved you more as
son
Than brother, let me tell you: I myself —
What is their pretty saying? jilted, is it?
Jilted I was; I say it for your peace.
Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the
shame
The woman should have borne, humiliated,
I lived for years a stunted sunless life;
Till after our good parents past away
Watching your growth, I seem'd again to
grow.
Leolin, I almost sin in envying you. ³⁶⁰
The very whitest lamh in all my fold
Loves you; I know her; the worst thought
she has
Is whiter even than her pretty hand.
She must prove true; for, brother, where
two fight
The strongest wins, and truth and love are
strength,
And you are happy; let her parents be.'

But Leolin cried out the more upon
them —
Insolent, brainless, heartless! heiress,
wealth,
Their wealth, their heiress! wealth enough
was theirs
For twenty matches. Were he lord of
this, ³⁷⁰
Why, twenty boys and girls should marry
on it,
And forty blest ones bless him, and him-
self
Be wealthy still, ay, wealthier. He be-
lieved
This filthy marriage-hindering Mammon
made
The harlot of the cities; Nature crost
Was mother of the foul adulteries
That saturate soul with body. Name, too!
name,
Their ancient name! they *might* be proud;
its worth

Was being Edith's. Ah, how pale she had
look'd

Darling, to-night! they must have rated
her 380

Beyond all tolerance. These old pheasant-
lords,

These partridge-breeders of a thousand
years,

Who had mildew'd in their thousands, do-
ing nothing

Since Egbert — why, the greater their dis-
grace!

Fall back upon a name! rest, rot in that!
Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler? fools,
With such a vantage-ground for noble-
ness!

He had known a man, a quintessence of
man,

The life of all — who madly loved — and
he, 389

Thwarted by one of these old father-fools,
Had rioted his life out, and made an end.

He would not do it! her sweet face and
faith

Held him from that; but he had powers,
he knew it.

Back would he to his studies, make a
name,

Name, fortune too; the world should ring
of him,

To shame these mouldy Aylmers in their
graves.

Chancellor, or what is greatest would he
be —

'O brother, I am grieved to learn your
grief —

Give me my fling, and let me say my say.'

At which, like one that sees his own ex-
cess, 400

And easily forgives it as his own,
He laugh'd, and then was mute, but pre-
sently

Wept like a storm; and honest Averill,
seeing

How low his brother's mood had fallen,
fetch'd

His richest bee's-wing from a binn reserved
For banquets, praised the waning red, and
told

The vintage — when *this* Aylmer came of
age —

Then drank and past it; till at length the
two,

Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again, agreed

That much allowance must be made for
men. 410

After an angry dream this kindlier glow
Faded with morning, but his purpose held.

Yet once by night again the lovers met,
A perilous meeting under the tall pines
That darken'd all the northward of her
Hall.

Him, to her meek and modest bosom prest
In agony, she promised that no force,
Persuasion, no, nor death could alter her;

He, passionately hopefuller, would go,
Labor for his own Edith, and return 420

In such a sunlight of prosperity
He should not be rejected. 'Write to me!

They loved me, and because I love their
child

They hate me. There is war between us,
dear,

Which breaks all bonds but ours; we must
remain

Sacred to one another.' So they talk'd,
Poor children, for their comfort. The wind

blew,
The rain of heaven and their own bitter

tears,
Tears and the careless rain of heaven,

mixt 429

Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each other
In darkness, and above them roar'd the
pine.

So Leolin went; and as we task our-
selves

To learn a language known but smatter-
ingly

In phrases here and there at random, toil'd
Mastering the lawless science of our law,

That codeless myriad of precedent,
That wilderness of single instances,

Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune led,
May beat a pathway out to wealth and
fame.

The jests, that flash'd about the pleader's
room, 440

Lightning of the hour, the pun, the scurri-
lous tale, —

Old scandals buried now seven decads deep
In other scandals that have lived and died,
And left the living scandal that shall die —

Were dead to him already; bent as he was
To make disproof of scorn, and strong in
hopes,

And prodigal of all brain-labor he,

Charier of sleep, and wine, and exercise,
 Except when for a breathing-while at eve,
 Some niggard fraction of an hour, he ran
 Beside the river-bank. And then indeed ⁴⁵¹
 Harder the times were, and the hands of

power
 Were bloodier, and the according hearts of
 men

Seem'd harder too; but the soft river-
 breeze,

Which fann'd the gardens of that rival
 rose

Yet fragrant in a heart remembering
 His former talks with Edith, on him
 breathed

Far purer in his rushings to and fro,
 After his books, to flush his blood with air,
 Then to his books again. My lady's
 cousin, ⁴⁶⁰

Half-sickening of his pension'd afternoon,
 Drove in upon the student once or twice,
 Ran a Malayan amuck against the times,
 Had golden hopes for France and all man-
 kind,

Answer'd all queries touching those at
 home

With a heaved shoulder and a saucy smile,
 And fain had haled him out into the world,
 And air'd him there. His nearer friend
 would say,

'Screw not the chord too sharply lest it
 snap.'

Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger
 forth ⁴⁷⁰

From where his worldless heart had kept
 it warm,

Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.
 And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of him
 Approvingly, and prophesied his rise;
 For heart, I think, help'd head. Her let-
 ters too,

Tho' far between, and coming fitfully
 Like broken music, written as she found
 Or made occasion, being strictly watch'd,
 Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till he
 saw

An end, a hope, a light breaking upon
 him. ⁴⁸⁰

But they that cast her spirit into flesh,
 Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued them-
 selves

To sell her, those good parents, for her
 good.

Whatever eldest-born of rank or wealth

Might lie within their compass, him they
 lured

Into their net made pleasant by the baits
 Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo.
 So month by month the noise about their
 doors,

And distant blaze of those dull banquets,
 made ⁴⁸⁹

The nightly wirer of their innocent hare
 Falter before he took it. All in vain,
 Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, return'd
 Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit
 So often, that the folly taking wings
 Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the wind
 With rumor, and became in other fields
 A mockery to the yeomen over ale,
 And laughter to their lords. But those at
 home,

As hunters round a hunted creature draw
 The cordon close and closer toward the
 death, ⁵⁰⁰

Narrow'd her goings out and comings in;
 Forbade her first the house of Averill,
 Then closed her access to the wealthier
 farms,

Last from her own home-circle of the poor
 They barr'd her. Yet she bore it, yet her
 cheek

Kept color — wondrous! but, O mystery!
 What amulet drew her down to that old
 oak,

So old, that twenty years before, a part
 Falling had let appear the brand of John —
 Once grove-like, each huge arm a tree, but
 now ⁵¹⁰

The broken base of a black tower, a cave
 Of touchwood, with a single flourishing
 spray.

There the manorial lord too curiously
 Raking in that millennial touchwood-dust
 Found for himself a bitter treasure-trove;
 Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and read
 Writhing a letter from his child, for which
 Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,
 A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to fly,
 But scared with threats of jail and halter
 gave ⁵²⁰

To him that fluster'd his poor parish wits
 The letter which he brought, and swore
 besides

To play the go-between as heretofore
 Nor let them know themselves betray'd;
 and then,

Soul-stricken at their kindness to him, went
 Hating his own lean heart and miserable.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot
 dream
 The father panting woke, and oft, as dawn
 Aroused the black republic on his elms,
 Sweeping the froth-fly from the fescue
 brush'd 530
 Thro' the dim meadow toward his treasure-
 trove,
 Seized it, took home, and to my lady, —
 who made
 A downward crescent of her minion mouth,
 Listless in all despondence, — read; and
 tore,
 As if the living passion symbol'd there
 Were living nerves to feel the rent; and
 burnt,
 Now chafing at his own great self defied,
 Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks of
 scorn
 In babyisms and dear diminutives
 Scatter'd all over the vocabulary 540
 Of such a love as like a chidden child,
 After much wailing, hush'd itself at last
 Hopeless of answer. Then tho' Averill
 wrote
 And bade him with good heart sustain him-
 self —
 All would be well — the lover heeded not,
 But passionately restless came and went,
 And rustling once at night about the place,
 There by a keeper shot at, slightly hurt,
 Raging return'd. Nor was it well for her
 Kept to the garden now, and grove of
 pines, 550
 Watch'd even there; and one was set to
 watch
 The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd them
 all,
 Yet bitterer from his readings. Once in-
 deed,
 Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride in
 her,
 She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her tenderly,
 Not knowing what possess'd him. That one
 kiss
 Was Leolin's one strong rival upon earth;
 Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,
 Seem'd hope's returning rose; and then en-
 sued
 A Martin's summer of his faded love, 560
 Or ordeal by kindness. After this
 He seldom crost his child without a sneer;
 The mother flow'd in shallower acrimonies,
 Never one kindly smile, one kindly word;
 So that the gentle creature shut from all

Her charitable use, and face to face
 With twenty months of silence, slowly lost,
 Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on life.
 Last some low fever ranging round to spy
 The weakness of a people or a house, 570
 Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer, or
 men,
 Or almost all that is, hurting the hurt —
 Save Christ as we believe him — found the
 girl
 And flung her down upon a couch of fire,
 Where careless of the household faces
 near,
 And crying upon the name of Leolin,
 She, and with her the race of Aylmer,
 past.

Star to star vibrates light; may soul to
 soul
 Strike thro' a finer element of her own?
 So, — from afar, — touch as at once? or
 why 580
 That night, that moment, when she named
 his name,
 Did the keen shriek, 'Yes, love, yes, Edith,
 yes,'
 Shri11, till the comrade of his chambers
 woke,
 And came upon him half-arisen from sleep,
 With a weird bright eye, sweating and
 trembling,
 His hair as it were crackling into flames,
 His body half flung forward in pursuit,
 And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp a
 flyer.
 Nor knew he wherefore he had made the
 cry;
 And being much befool'd and idioted 590
 By the rough amity of the other, sank
 As into sleep again. The second day,
 My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,
 A breaker of the bitter news from home,
 Found a dead man, a letter edged with
 death
 Beside him, and the dagger which himself
 Gave Edith, redden'd with no bandit's
 blood;
 'From Edith' was engraven on the blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon his
 death.
 And when he came again, his flock be-
 lieved — 600
 Beholding how the years which are not
 Time's

Had blasted him — that many thousand
 days
 Were clipt by horror from his term of life.
 Yet the sad mother, for the second death
 Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness of
 the first,
 And being used to find her pastor texts,
 Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying him
 To speak before the people of her child,
 And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that day
 rose.
 Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded
 woods 610
 Was all the life of it; for hard on these,
 A breathless burthen of low - folded hea-
 vens
 Stifed and chill'd at once; but every roof
 Sent out a listener. Many too had knowu
 Edith among the hamlets round, and since
 The parents' harshness and the hapless
 loves
 And double death were widely murmur'd,
 left
 Their own gray tower, or plain-faced tab-
 ernacle,
 To hear him; all in mourning these, and
 those 619
 With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove,
 Or kerchief; while the church, — one night,
 except
 For greenish glimmerings thro' the lancets,
 — made
 Still paler the pale head of him, who tow-
 er'd
 Above them, with his hopes in either grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd Aver-
 ill,
 His face magnetic to the hand from which
 Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labor'd thro'
 His brief prayer-prelude, gave the verse,
 'Behold,
 Your house is left unto you desolate !'
 But lapsed into so long a pause again 630
 As half amazed, half frightened, all his flock;
 Then from his height and loneliness of
 grief
 Bore down in flood, and dash'd his angry
 heart
 Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became one
 sea,
 Which rolling o'er the palaces of the
 proud,

And all but those who knew the living
 God —
 Eight that were left to make a purer
 world —
 When since had flood, fire, earthquake,
 thunder, wrought
 Such waste and havoc as the idolatries 640
 Which from the low light of mortality
 Shot up their shadows to the heaven of
 heavens,
 And worshipt their own darkness in the
 Highest ?
 'Gash thyself, priest, and honor thy brute
 Baäl,
 And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,
 For with thy worst self hast thou clothed
 thy God.
 Then came a Lord in no wise like to Baäl.
 The babe shall lead the lion. Surely now
 The wilderness shall blossom as the rose.
 Crown thyself, worm, and worship thine
 own lusts ! — 650
 No coarse and blockish God of acreage
 Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel to —
 Thy God is far diffused in noble groves
 And princely halls, and farms, and flowing
 lawns,
 And heaps of living gold that daily grow,
 And title-scrolls and gorgeous heraldries.
 In such a shape dost thou behold thy God.
 Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him*; for
 thine
 Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair
 Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while 660
 The deathless ruler of thy dying house
 Is wounded to the death that cannot die;
 And tho' thou numberest with the follow-
 ers
 Of One who cried, "Leave all and follow
 me."
 Thee therefore with His light about thy
 feet,
 Thee with His message ringing in thine
 ears,
 Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord from
 heaven,
 Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,
 Wonderful, Prince of Peace, the Mighty
 God,
 Count the more base idolater of the two; 670
 Crueller, as not passing thro' the fire
 Bodies, but souls — thy children's — thro'
 the smoke,
 The blight of low desires — darkening thine
 own

To thine own likeness; or if one of these,
Thy better born unhappily from thee,
Should, as by miracle, grow straight and
fair —

Friends, I was bid to speak of such a one
By those who most have cause to sorrow
for her —

Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well, ⁶⁷⁹
Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,
Fair as the Angel that said "Hail!" she
seem'd,

Who entering fill'd the house with sudden
light.

For so mine own was brighten'd — where
indeed

The roof so lowly but that beam of heaven
Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway?
whose the babe

Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,
Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child of
shame,

The common care whom no one cared for,
leapt

To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,
As with the mother he had never known, ⁶⁹⁰
In gambols; for her fresh and innocent eyes
Had such a star of morning in their blue,
That all neglected places of the field
Broke into nature's music when they saw
her.

Low was her voice, but won mysterious
way

Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder one
Was all but silence — free of alms her
hand —

The hand that robed your cottage-walls
with flowers

Has often toil'd to clothe your little ones;
How often placed upon the sick man's
brow ⁷⁰⁰

Cool'd it, or laid his feverish pillow smooth!
Had you one sorrow and she shared it not?
One burthen and she would not lighten it?
One spiritual doubt she did not soothe?
Or when some heat of difference sparkled

out,

How sweetly would she glide between your
wraths,

And steal you from each other! for she
walk'd

Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of love
Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee!

And one — of him I was not bid to speak —
Was always with her, whom you also
knew. ⁷¹¹

Him too you loved, for he was worthy
love.

And these had been together from the
first;

They might have been together till the last.
Friends, this frail bark of ours, when sorely
tried,

May wreck itself without the pilot's guilt,
Without the captain's knowledge; hope
with me.

Whose shame is that, if he went hence with
shame?

Nor mine the fault, if losing both of these
I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd walls,
"My house is left unto me desolate." ⁷²¹

While thus he spoke, his hearers wept;
but some,

Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than
those

That knit themselves for summer shadow,
scowl'd

At their great lord. He, when it seem'd
he saw

No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but
fork'd

Of the near storm, and aiming at his head,
Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldier-
like,

Erect; but when the preacher's cadence
flow'd

Softening thro' all the gentle attributes ⁷³⁰
Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd his
face,

Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron mouth;
And 'O, pray God that he hold up!' she
thought,

'Or surely I shall shame myself and him.'

'Nor yours the blame — for who beside
your hearths

Can take her place — if echoing me you
cry

"Our house is left unto us desolate"?

But thou, O thou that killest, hadst thou
known,

O thou that stonest, hadst thou understood
The things belonging to thy peace and
ours! ⁷⁴⁰

Is there no prophet but the voice that calls
Doom upon kings, or in the waste "Re-
pent"?

Is not our own child on the narrow way,
Who down to those that saunter in the
broad

Cries, "Come up hither," as a prophet to us ?
 Is there no stoning save with flint and rock ?
 Yes, as the dead we weep for testify —
 No desolation but by sword and fire ? ⁷⁴⁸
 Yes, as your moanings witness, and myself
 Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my loss.
 Give me your prayers, for he is past your prayers,
 Not past the living fount of pity in heaven.
 But I that thought myself long-suffering,
 meek,
 Exceeding "poor in spirit" — how the words
 Have twisted back upon themselves, and mean
 Vileness, we are grown so proud — I wish'd
 my voice
 A rushing tempest of the wrath of God
 To blow these sacrifices thro' the world —
 Sent like the twelve-divided concubine
 To inflame the tribes; but there — out
 yonder — earth ⁷⁶⁰
 Lightens from her own central hell — O,
 there
 The red fruit of an old idolatry —
 The heads of chiefs and princes fall so fast,
 They cling together in the ghastly sack —
 The land all shambles — naked marriages
 Flash from the bridge, and ever-murder'd
 France,
 By shores that darken with the gathering
 wolf,
 Runs in a river of blood to the sick sea.
 Is this a time to madden madness then ?
 Was this a time for these to flaunt their
 pride ? ⁷⁷⁰
 May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as dense as
 those
 Which hid the Holiest from the people's
 eyes
 Ere the great death, shroud this great sin
 from all !
 Doubtless our narrow world must canvass
 it.
 O, rather pray for those and pity them,
 Who, thro' their own desire accomplish'd,
 bring
 Their own gray hairs with sorrow to the
 grave —
 Who broke the bond which they desired to
 break,
 Which else had link'd their race with times
 to come — ⁷⁷⁹

Who wove coarse webs to snare her purity,
 Grossly contriving their dear daughter's
 good —
 Poor souls, and knew not what they did,
 but sat
 Ignorant, devising their own daughter's
 death !
 May not that earthly chastisement suffice ?
 Have not our love and reverence left them
 bare ?
 Will not another take their heritage ?
 Will there be children's laughter in their
 hall
 For ever and for ever, or one stone
 Left on another, or is it a light thing
 That I, their guest, their host, their ancient
 friend, ⁷⁹⁰
 I made by these the last of all my race,
 Must cry to these the last of theirs, as cried
 Christ ere His agony to those that swore
 Not by the temple but the gold, and made
 Their own traditional God, and slew the
 Lord,
 And left their memories a world's curse —
 "Behold,
 Your house is left unto you desolate" ?
 Ended he had not, but she brook'd no
 more;
 Long since her heart had beat remorse-
 lessly,
 Her cramp'd-up sorrow pain'd her, and a
 sense ⁸⁰⁰
 Of meanness in her unresisting life.
 Then their eyes vex't her; for on entering
 He had cast the curtains of their seat
 aside —
 Black velvet of the costliest — she herself
 Had seen to that. Fain had she closed them
 now,
 Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd
 Her husband inch by inch, but when she laid,
 Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he veil'd
 His face with the other, and at once, as
 falls
 A creeper when the prop is broken, fell ⁸¹⁰
 The woman shrieking at his feet, and
 swoon'd.
 Then her own people bore along the nave
 Her pendent hands, and narrow meagre
 face
 Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty
 years.
 And her the lord of all the landscape
 round

Even to its last horizon, and of all
 Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd out
 Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle
 Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded ways
 Stumbling across the market to his death,
 Unpitied; for he groped as blind, and
 seem'd

Always about to fall, grasping the pews⁸²¹
 And oaken finials till he touch'd the door;
 Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot
 stood,
 Strode from the porch, tall and erect
 again.

But nevermore did either pass the gate
 Save under pall with bearers. In one
 month,

Thro' weary and yet ever wearier hours,
 The childless mother went to seek her
 child;

And when he felt the silence of his house
 About him, and the change and not the
 change,

And those fixt eyes of painted ancestors⁸³¹
 Staring for ever from their gilded walls
 On him their last descendant, his own head
 Began to droop, to fall. The man became
 Imbecile; his one word was 'desolate.'
 Dead for two years before his death was
 he;

But when the second Christmas came, es-
 caped

His keepers, and the silence which he felt,
 To find a deeper in the narrow gloom⁸⁴⁰
 By wife and child; nor wanted at his end
 The dark retinue reverencing death
 At golden thresholds; nor from tender
 hearts,

And those who sorrow'd o'er a vanish'd
 race,

Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.
 Then the great Hall was wholly broken
 down,

And the broad woodland parcell'd into
 farms;

And where the two contrived their daugh-
 ter's good,

Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made his
 run,

The hedgehog underneath the plantain
 bores,

The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,⁸⁵⁰

The slow-worm creeps, and the thin weasel
 there
 Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

SEA DREAMS

A CITY clerk, but gently born and bred;
 His wife, an unknown artist's orphan
 child—

One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three
 years old.

They, thinking that her clear germander
 eye

Droopt in the giant-factoried city-gloom,
 Came, with a month's leave given them, to
 the sea;

For which his gains were dock'd, however
 small.

Small were his gains, and hard his work;
 besides,

Their slender household fortunes — for the
 man

Had risk'd his little — like the little thrift,⁹
 Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep.

And oft, when sitting all alone, his face
 Would darken, as he cursed his credulous-
 ness,

And that one unctuous mouth which lured
 him, rogue,

To buy strange shares in some Peruvian
 mine.

Now seaward-bound for health they gain'd
 a coast,

All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning cave,
 At close of day; slept, woke, and went the
 next,

The Sabbath, pious variers from the church,
 To chapel; where a heated pulpiter,²⁰
 Not preaching simple Christ to simple

men,
 Announced the coming doom, and fulmi-
 nated

Against the Scarlet Woman and her creed.
 For sideways up he swung his arms, and
 shriek'd

'Thus, thus with violence,' even as if he
 held

The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself
 Were that great angel; 'Thus with vio-
 lence

Shall Babylon be cast into the sea;

Then comes the close.' The gentle-hearted
 wife
 Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world, 30
 He at his own; but when the wordy storm
 Had ended, forth they came and paced the
 shore,
 Ran in and out the long sea-framing caves,
 Drank the large air, and saw, but scarce
 believed —
 The soot-flake of so many a summer still
 Clung to their fancies — that they saw, the
 sea.
 So now on sand they walk'd, and now on
 cliff,
 Lingering about the thymy promontories,
 Till all the sails were darken'd in the west,
 And rosed in the east, then homeward and
 to bed; 40
 Where she, who kept a tender Christian
 hope,
 Haunting a holy text, and still to that
 Returning, as the bird returns, at night,
 'Let not the sun go down upon your
 wrath,'
 Said, 'Love, forgive him.' But he did not
 speak;
 And silenced by that silence lay the wife,
 Remembering her dear Lord who died for
 all,
 And musing on the little lives of men,
 And how they mar this little by their
 feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a full
 tide 50
 Rose with ground-swell, which, on the
 foremost rocks
 Touching, upjetted in spirts of wild sea-
 smoke,
 And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam, and
 fell
 In vast sea-cataracts — ever and anon
 Dead claps of thunder from within the
 cliffs
 Heard thro' the living roar. At this the
 babe,
 Their Margaret cradled near them, wail'd
 and woke
 The mother, and the father suddenly cried,
 'A wreck, a wreck!' then turn'd and
 groaning said:

'Forgive! How many will say, "for-
 give," and find 60
 A sort of absolution in the sound

To hate a little longer! No; the sin
 That neither God nor man can well for
 give,
 Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.
 Is it so true that second thoughts are best?
 Not first, and third, which are a riper
 first?
 Too ripe, too late! they come too late for
 use.
 Ah, love, there surely lives in man and
 beast
 Something divine to warn them of their
 foes;
 And such a sense, when first I fronted him,
 Said, "Trust him not;" but after, when I
 came 71
 To know him more, I lost it, knew him
 less,
 Fought with what seem'd my own un-
 charity,
 Sat at his table, drank his costly wines,
 Made more and more allowance for his
 talk;
 Went further, fool! and trusted him with
 all,
 All my poor scrapings from a dozen years
 Of dust and desk-work. There is no such
 mine,
 None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing gold,
 Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the sea
 roars 80
 Ruin — a fearful night!'

'Not fearful; fair,'
 Said the good wife, 'if every star in heaven
 Can make it fair; you do but bear the tide.
 Had you ill dreams?'

'O, yes,' he said, 'I dream'd
 Of such a tide swelling toward the land,
 And I from out the boundless outer deep
 Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd one
 Of those dark caves that run beneath the
 cliffs.
 I thought the motion of the boundless deep
 Bore thro' the cave, and I was heaved upon
 it 90
 In darkness; then I saw one lovely star
 Larger and larger. "What a world," I
 thought,
 "To live in!" but in moving on I found
 Only the landward exit of the cave,
 Bright with the sun upon the stream be-
 yond;
 And near the light a giant woman sat,

All over earthy, like a piece of earth,
 A pickaxe in her hand. Then out I split
 Into a land all sun and blossom, trees
 As high as heaven, and every bird that
 sings;
 And here the night-light flickering in my
 eyes
 Awoke me.'

'That was then your dream,' she said,
 'Not sad, but sweet.'

'So sweet, I lay,' said he,
 'And mused upon it, drifting up the stream
 In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced
 The broken vision; for I dream'd that
 still

The motion of the great deep bore me
 on,
 And that the woman walk'd upon the
 brink.

I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd her
 of it.

"It came," she said, "by working in the
 mines."

O, then to ask her of my shares, I thought;
 And ask'd; but not a word; she shook her
 head.

And then the motion of the current ceased,
 And there was rolling thunder; and we
 reach'd

A mountain, like a wall of burs and thorns;
 But she with her strong feet up the steep
 hill

Trod out a path. I follow'd, and at top
 She pointed seaward; there a fleet of glass,
 That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,
 Sailing along before a gloomy cloud

That not one moment ceased to thunder,
 past

In sunshine. Right across its track there
 lay,

Down in the water, a long reef of gold,
 Or what seem'd gold; and I was glad at
 first

To think that in our often-ransack'd world
 Still so much gold was left; and then I
 fear'd

Lest the gay navy there should splinter
 on it,

And fearing waved my arm to warn them
 off;

An idle signal, for the brittle fleet —
 I thought I could have died to save it —
 near'd,

Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and vanish'd,
 and I woke,
 I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see
 My dream was Life, the woman honest
 Work,
 And my poor venture but a fleet of glass
 Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold.'

'Nay,' said the kindly wife to comfort
 him,
 'You raised your arm, you tumbled down
 and broke

The glass with little Margaret's medicine
 in it;

And, breaking that, you made and broke
 your dream.

A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks.' 140

'No trifle,' groan'd the husband; 'yester-
 day

I met him suddenly in the street, and ask'd
 That which I ask'd the woman in my dream.
 Like her, he shook his head. "Show me
 the books!"

He dodged me with a long and loose ac-
 count.

"The books, the books!" but he, he could
 not wait,

Bound on a matter he of life and death;
 When the great Books — see Daniel seven
 and ten —

Were open'd, I should find he meant me
 well;

And then began to bloat himself, and ooze
 All over with the fat affectionate smile

That makes the widow lean. "My dearest
 friend,

Have faith, have faith! We live by faith,"
 said he;

"And all things work together for the
 good

Of those" — it makes me sick to quote
 him — last

Gript my hand hard, and with God-bless-
 you went.

I stood like one that had received a blow.
 I found a hard friend in his loose accounts,

A loose one in the hard grip of his hand,
 A curse in his God-bless-you; then my
 eyes

Pursued him down the street, and far
 away,

Among the honest shoulders of the crowd,
 Read rascal in the motions of his back,

And scoundrel in the supple-sliding knee.'

'Was he so bound, poor soul?' said the good wife;
 'So are we all; but do not call him, love, Before you prove him, rogue, and proved, forgive.
 His gain is loss; for he that wrongs his friend
 Wrongs himself more, and ever bears about
 A silent court of justice in his breast, 170
 Himself the judge and jury, and himself The prisoner at the bar, ever condemn'd.
 And that drags down his life; then comes what comes
 Hereafter; and he meant, he said he meant, Perhaps he meant, or partly meant, you well.'

'With all his conscience and one eye askew' —
 Love, let me quote these lines, that you may learn
 A man is likewise counsel for himself, Too often, in that silent court of yours —
 With all his conscience and one eye askew, 180
 So false, he partly took himself for true; Whose pious talk, when most his heart was dry,
 Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his eye; Who, never naming God except for gain,
 So never took that useful name in vain, Made Him his catspaw and the Cross his tool,
 And Christ the bait to trap his dupe and fool;
 Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace he forged,
 And snake-like slimed his victim ere he gorged;
 And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the rest 190
 Arising, did his holy oily best, Dropping the too rough H in Hell and Heaven,
 To spread the Word by which himself had thriven."
 How like you this old satire?'

'Nay,' she said,

'I loathe it; he had never kindly heart, Nor ever cared to better his own kind,
 Who first wrote satire, with no pity in it. But will you hear *my* dream, for I had one
 That altogether went to music? Still It awed me.'

Then she told it, having dream'd 200
 Of that same coast. —

But round the North, a light,
 A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapor, lay,
 And ever in it a low musical note
 Swell'd up and died; and, as it swell'd, a ridge
 Of breaker issued from the belt, and still
 Grew with the growing note, and when the note
 Had reach'd a thunderous fullness, on those cliffs
 Broke, mixt with awful light — the same as that
 Living within the belt — whereby she saw
 That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs no more, 210
 But huge cathedral fronts of every age,
 Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,
 One after one; and then the great ridge drew,
 Lessening to the lessening music, back,
 And past into the helt and swell'd again
 Slowly to music. Ever when it broke
 The statues, king, or saint, or founder fell;
 Then from the gaps and chasms of ruin left
 Came men and women in dark clusters round,
 Some crying, 'Set them up! they shall not fall!' 220
 And others, 'Let them lie, for they have fallen.'
 And still they strove and wrangled; and she grieved
 In her strange dream, she knew not why, to find
 Their wildest wailings never out of tune
 With that sweet note; and ever as their shrieks
 Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave
 Returning, while none mark'd it, on the crowd
 Broke, mixt with awful light, and show'd their eyes
 Glaring, and passionate looks, and swept away
 The men of flesh and blood, and men of stone, 230
 To the waste deeps together.

'Then I fixt
 My wistful eyes on two fair images,

Both crown'd with stars and high among
the stars, —
The Virgin Mother standing with her child
High up on one of those dark minster-
fronts —
Till she began to totter, and the child
Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry
Which mixt with little Margaret's, and I
woke,
And my dream awed me; — well — but
what are dreams?
Yours came but from the breaking of a
glass, ²⁴⁰
And mine but from the crying of a child.'

'Child? No!' said he, 'but this tide's
roar, and his,
Our Boanerges with his threats of doom
And loud-lung'd Antihabyloniaisms —
Altho' I grant but little music there —
Went both to make your dream; but if
there were
A music harmonizing our wild cries,
Sphere-music such as that you dream'd
about,
Why, that would make our passions far too
like
The discords dear to the musician. No —
One shriek of hate would jar all the hymns
of heaven. ²⁵¹
True devils with no ear, they howl in tune
With nothing but the devil!'

"True" indeed!
One of our town, but later by an hour
Here than ourselves, spoke with me on the
shore;
While you were running down the sands,
and made
The dimpled frounce of the sea-furbelow
flap,
Good man, to please the child. She brought
strange news.
Why were you silent when I spoke to-
night? ²⁵⁹
I had set my heart on your forgiving him
Before you knew. We *must* forgive the
dead.'

'Dead! who is dead?'

'The man your eye pursued.
A little after you had parted with him,
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-disease.'

'Dead? he? of heart-disease? what
heart had he
To die of? dead!'

'Ah, dearest, if there be
A devil in man, there is an angel too,
And if he did that wrong you charge him
with,
His angel broke his heart. But your rough
voice —
You spoke so loud — has roused the child
again. ²⁷⁰
Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not
sleep
Without her "little birdie"? well, then,
sleep,
And I will sing you "birdie."'

Saying this,
The woman half turn'd round from him
she loved,
Left him one hand, and reaching thro' the
night
Her other, found — for it was close beside —
And half-embraced the basket cradle-
head
With one soft arm, which, like the pliant
bough
That moving moves the nest and nestling,
sway'd ²⁷⁹
The cradle, while she sang this baby-song:

What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger,
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day? ²⁹⁰
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger;
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby too shall fly away.

'She sleeps; let us too, let all evil, sleep.
He also sleeps — another sleep than ours.
He can do no more wrong; forgive him,
dear,
And I shall sleep the sounder!'

Then the man,
 'His deeds yet live, the worst is yet to
 come.
 Yet let your sleep for this one night be
 sound;
 I do forgive him!'

'Thanks, my love,' she said,
 'Your own will be the sweeter,' and they
 slept.

ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EX- HIBITION

I

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and sweet,
 In this wide hall with earth's invention
 stored,
 And praise the invisible universal Lord,
 Who lets once more in peace the nations
 meet,
 Where Science, Art, and Labor have out-
 pour'd
 Their myriad horns of plenty at our feet.

II

O silent father of our Kings to be,
 Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,
 For this, for all, we weep our thanks to
 thee!

III

The world-compelling plan was thine, —
 And, lo! the long laborious miles
 Of Palace; lo! the giant aisles,
 Rich in model and design;
 Harvest-tool and husbandry,
 Loom and wheel and enginery,
 Secrets of the sullen mine,
 Steel and gold, and corn and wine,
 Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,
 Sunny tokens of the Line,
 Polar marvels, and a feast
 Of wonder, out of West and East,
 And shapes and hues of Art divine!
 All of beauty, all of use,
 That one fair planet can produce,
 Brought from under every star,

Blown from over every main,
 And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,
 The works of peace with works of war.

IV

Is the goal so far away?
 Far, how far no tongue can say,
 Let us dream our dream to-day.

V

O ye, the wise who think, the wise who
 reign,
 From growing Commerce loose her latest
 chain,
 And let the fair white-wing'd peacemaker
 fly
 To happy havens under all the sky,
 And mix the seasons and the golden
 hours;
 Till each man find his own in all men's
 good,
 And all men work in noble brotherhood,
 Breaking their mailed fleets and armed
 towers,
 And ruling by obeying Nature's powers,
 And gathering all the fruits of earth and
 crown'd with all her flowers.

A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA

MARCH 7, 1863

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the sea,
 Alexandra!
 Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,
 But all of us Danes in our welcome of
 thee,
 Alexandra!
 Welcome her, thunders of fort and of fleet!
 Welcome her, thundering cheer of the
 street!
 Welcome her, all things youthful and
 sweet,
 Scatter the blossom under her feet!
 Break, happy land, into earlier flowers!
 Make music, O bird, in the new-budded
 bowers!
 Blazon your mottoes of blessing and prayer!
 Welcome her, welcome her, all that is
 ours!

Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare !
 Flags, flutter out upon turrets and towers !
 Flames, on the windy headland flare !
 Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire !
 Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air !
 Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire !
 Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and
 higher

Melt into stars for the land's desire !
 Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,
 Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the
 strand,

Roar as the sea when he welcomes the
 land,

And welcome her, welcome the land's de-
 sire,

The sea-kings' daughter as happy as fair,
 Blissful bride of a blissful heir,
 Bride of the heir of the kings of the sea —
 O joy to the people and joy to the throne,
 Come to us, love us and make us your
 own;

For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,
 Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,
 We are each all Dane in our welcome of
 thee,

Alexandra !

THE GRANDMOTHER

I

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you
 say, little Anne ?

Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs,
 he looks like a man.

And Willy's wife has written; she never
 was over-wise,

Never the wife for Willy; he would n't
 take my advice.

II

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the
 man to save,

Had n't a head to manage, and drank him-
 self into his grave.

Pretty enough, very pretty ! but I was
 against it for one.

Eh ! — but he would n't hear me — and
 Willy, you say, is gone.

III

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the
 flower of the flock;
 Never a man could fling him, for Willy
 stood like a rock.

'Here 's a leg for a babe of a week !' says
 Doctor; and he would be bound
 There was' not his like that year in twenty
 parishes round.

IV

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs,
 but still of his tongue !

I ought to have gone before him; I wonder
 he went so young.

I cannot cry for him, Annie; I have not
 long to stay.

Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he
 lived far away.

V

Why do you look at me, Annie ? you think
 I am hard and cold;

But all my children have gone before me,
 I am so old.

I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep
 for the rest;

Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept
 with the best.

VI

For I remember a quarrel I had with your
 father, my dear,

All for a slanderous story, that cost me
 many a tear.

I mean your grandfather, Annie; it cost
 me a world of woe,

Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy
 years ago.

VII

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the
 place, and I knew right well

That Jenny had tript in her time; I knew,
 but I would not tell.

And she to be coming and slandering me,
 the base little liar !

But the tongue is a fire, as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.

VIII

And the parson made it his text that week,
and he said likewise
That a lie which is half a truth is ever the
blackest of lies, ³⁰
That a lie which is all a lie may be met and
fought with outright,
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder
matter to fight.

IX

And Willy had not been down to the farm
for a week and a day;
And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was
the middle of May.
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what
Jenny had been!
But soiling another, Annie, will never
make oneself clean.

X

And I cried myself well-nigh blind, and all
of an evening late
I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood
by the road at the gate.
The moon like a rick on fire was rising
over the dale,
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside
me chirrup the nightingale. ⁴⁰

XI

All of a sudden he stopt; there past by the
gate of the farm
Willy, — he did n't see me, — and Jenny
hung on his arm.
Out into the road I started, and spoke I
scarce knew how;
Ah, there's no fool like the old one — it
makes me angry now.

XII

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the
thing that he meant;
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking curt-
sey and went.

And I said, 'Let us part; in a hundred
years it 'll all be the same.
You cannot love me at all, if you love not
my good name.'

XIII

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet,
in the sweet moonshine:
'Sweetheart, I love you so well that your
good name is mine. ⁵⁰
And what do I care for Jane, let her speak
of you well or ill;
But marry me out of hand; we two shall be
happy still.'

XIV

'Marry you, Willy!' said I, 'but I needs
must speak my mind,
And I fear you 'll listen to tales, be jealous
and hard and unkind.'
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms,
and answer'd, 'No, love, no;'
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy
years ago.

XV

So Willy and I were wedded. I wore a
lilac gown;
And the ringers rang with a will, and he
gave the ringers a crown.
But the first that ever I bare was dead be-
fore he was born;
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie,
flower and thorn. ⁶⁰

XVI

That was the first time, too, that ever I
thought of death.
There lay the sweet little body that never
had drawn a breath.
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had
been a wife;
But I wept like a child that day, for the
babe had fought for his life.

XVII

His dear little face was troubled, as if with
anger or pain;

I look'd at the still little body — his trouble
had all been in vain.
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him
another morn;
But I wept like a child for the child that
was dead before he was born.

XVIII

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he
seldom said me nay.
Kind, like a man, was he; like a man, too,
would have his way;
Never jealous — not he. We had many a
happy year;
And he died, and I could not weep — my
own time seem'd so near.

XIX

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I,
too, then could have died;
I began to be tired a little, and fain had
slept at his side.
And that was ten years back, or more, if I
don't forget;
But as to the children, Annie, they 're all
about me yet.

XX

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who
left me at two,
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an
Annie like you;
Pattering over the boards, she comes and
goes at her will,
While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie
ploughing the hill.

XXI

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too
— they sing to their team;
Often they come to the door in a pleasant
kind of a dream.
They come and sit by my chair, they hover
about my bed —
I am not always certain if they be alive or
dead.

XXII

And yet I know for a truth there's none of
them left alive,
For Harry went at sixty, your father at
sixty-five;

And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh three-
score and ten.
I knew them all as babies, and now they 're
elderly men.

XXIII

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often
I grieve;
I am oftener sitting at home in my father's
farm at eve;
And the neighbors come and laugh and
gossip, and so do I;
I find myself often laughing at things that
have long gone by.

XXIV

To be sure the preacher says, our sins
should make us sad;
But mine is a time of peace, and there is
Grace to be had;
And God, not man, is the Judge of us all
when life shall cease;
And in this Book, little Annie, the message
is one of peace.

XXV

And age is a time of peace, so it be free
from pain,
And happy has been my life; but I would
not live it again.
I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and
long for rest;
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept
with the best.

XXVI

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-
born, my flower;
But how can I weep for Willy, he has but
gone for an hour, —
Gone for a minute, my son, from this room
into the next;
I, too, shall go in a minute. What time
have I to be vex't?

XXVII

And Willy's wife has written, she never
was over-wise.
Get me my glasses, Annie; thank God that
I keep my eyes.
There is but a trifle left you, when I shall
have past away.
But stay with the old woman now; you can-
not have long to stay.

NORTHERN FARMER

OLD STYLE

I

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin'
'ere aloän?

Noorse ? thoort nowt o' a noorse; whoy,
Doctor 's abeän an' agoän;
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle, but I
beänt a fool;

Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to
break my rule.

II.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what 's
nawways true;
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things
that a do.

I 've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I
beän 'ere.

An' I 've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight
for foorty year.

III

Parson 's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin' ere
o' my bed.

'The Amoighty 's a taäkin o' you¹ to 'issén,
my friend,' a said,

An' a towd ma my sins, an' 's toithe were
due, an' I gied it in hond;

I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy
the lond.

IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa
mooch to larn.

But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy
Marris's barne.

Thaw a knaws I hallus voätet wi' Squire
an' choorch an' staäte,

An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin
the raäte.

V

An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor moy
Sally wur deäd,

An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a
buzzard-clock² ower my 'eäd,

An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I
thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,

¹ ou as in hour.

² Cockchafer.

An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said,
an' I coom'd awaäy.

VI

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she läiid
it to meä.

Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad
un, sheä.

'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha
mun understand;

I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy
the lond.

VII

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says
it eäsy an' freeä:

'The Amoighty 's a taäkin o' you to 'issén,
my friend,' says 'eä.

I weänt saäy men be loiers, thaw summun
said it in 'aäste;

But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a
stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

VIII

D' ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw,
naw, tha was not born then;

Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um
mysén;

Moäst loike a butter-bump,¹ fur I 'eärd 'um
about an' about,

But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved
an' rembled 'um out.

IX

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer
a-läiid of 'is faäce

Down i' the woild 'enemies² afoor I coom'd
to the plaäce.

Noäks or Thimbleby — toäner³ 'ed shot
'um as deäd as a naäil.

Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize — but
git ma my aäle.

X

Dubbut looök at the waäste; theer warn't
not feeäd for a cow;

Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök
at it now —

Warn't worth nowt a haäcre, an' now
theer 's lots o' feeäd,

Fourscore⁴ yows upon it, an' some on it
down i' seeäd.⁵

¹ Bittern. ² Anemones. ³ One or other.

⁴ ou as in hour.

⁵ Clover.

XI

Nobbut a bit on it 's left, an' I meän'd to 'a
stubb'd it at fall,
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow
thruff it an' all,
If Godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let
ma aloän, —
Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squire's,
an' lond o' my oän.

XII

Do Godamoighty know what a 's doing
a-taäkin' o' meä ?
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yon-
der a peä;
An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all — a' dear,
a' dear !
And I 'a managed for Squire coom
Michaelmas thutty year.

XIII

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant not a
'aäpoth o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins — a niver
mended a fence;
But Godamoighty a moost taäke meä an'
taäke ma now,
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby
hoälms to plow !

XIV

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs
ma a passin' boy,
Says to thessén, naw doubt, 'What a man
a beä sewer-loy !'
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squire sin'
fust a coom'd to the 'All;
I done moy duty by Squire an' I done
moy duty boy hall.

XV

Squire 's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons
'ull 'a to wroite,
For whoä 's to howd the lond ater meä that
muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I beä that a weänt niver give
it to Joänes,

Naw, nor a moänt to Robins — a niver rem-
bles the stoäns.

XVI

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap
wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi'
the divil's oän teäm.
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they
says is sweet,
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn
abeär to see it.

XVII

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn
bring ma the aäle ?
Doctor 's a 'toättler, lass, an a 's hallus i'
the owd taäle;
I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knaws
naw moor nor a floy;
Git ma my aäle, I tell tha, an' if I mun doy
I mun doy.

NORTHERN FARMER

NEW STYLE

I

DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they
canters awaäy ?
Proputty, proputty, proputty — that 's what
I 'ears 'em saäy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty — Sam, thou 's
an ass for thy päins;
Theer 's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs, nor in
all thy braäns.

II

Woä — theer 's a craw to pluck wi' tha,
Sam: yon 's parson's 'ouse —
Doesn't thou know that a man mun be
eäther a man or a mouse ?
Time to think on it then; for thou 'll be
twenty to weeä.¹
Proputty, proputty — woä then, woä — let
ma 'ear mysén speak.

¹ This week.

III

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän
a-talkin' o' thee;
Thou 's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän
a-tellin' it me.
Thou 'll not marry for munny — thou 's
sweet upo' parson's lass —
Noä — thou 'll marry for luvv — an' we
boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

IV

Secä'd her to-daäy goä by — Saäint's-daäy
— they was ringin' the bells.
She 's a beauty, thou thinks — an' soä is
scoors o' gells,
Them as 'as munny an' all — wot's a
beauty? — the flower as blaws.
But proputtly, proputtly stieks, an' pro-
puttly, proputtly graws.

V

Do'ant be stunt;¹ taäke time. I knaws
what maäkes tha sa mad.
Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén
when I wur a lad?
But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as
towd ma this:
'Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä
wheer munny is!'

VI

An' I went wheer munny war; an' thy
muther coom to 'and,
Wi' lots o' munny laaid by, an' a nicetish
bit o' land.
Maäybe she warn't a beauty — I niver giv
it a thowt —
But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss
as a lass as 'ant nowt?

VII

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a
nowt when 'e 's deäd,
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and ad-
dle² her breäd.

¹ Obstinate.² Earn.

Why? fur 'e 's nobbut a curate, an' weänt
niver get hissén clear,
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e
coom'd to the shere.

VIII

An' thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o'
Varsity deb,
Stook to his taafil they did, an' 'e 'ant got
shut on 'em yet.
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän
to lend 'im a shove,
Woorse nor a far-welter'd¹ yowe; fur,
Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

IX

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy
lass an' 'er munny too,
Maäkin' 'em goä together, as they 've good
right to do.
Couldn I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er
munny laaid by?
Naäy — fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor
fur it; reäson why.

X

Ay, an' thy muther says thou wants to
marry the lass,
Cooms of a gentleman burn; an' we boäth
on us thinks tha an ass.
Woä then, proputtly, wiltha? — an ass as
near as mays uowt² —
Woä then, wiltha? dangtha! — the bees is
as fell as owt.³

XI

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad,
out o' the fence!
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn?
is it shillins an' pence?
Proputtly, proputtly 's ivrything 'ere, an',
Sammy, I 'm blest
If it is n't the saäme oop yonder, fur them
as 'as it 's the best.

¹ Or, fow-welter'd, — said of a sheep lying
on its back in the furrow.² Makes nothing.³ The flies are as fierce as anything.

XII

Tis 'n them as 'as munny as breaks into
 'ouses an' steäls,
 Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes
 their regular meäls.
 Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a
 meäl's to be 'ad.
 Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in
 a loomp is bad.

XIII

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a
 beän a laäzy lot,
 Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whin-
 iver munny was got.
 Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästways 'is
 munny was 'id.
 But 'e tued an' moil'd issen deäd, an' 'e died
 a good un, 'e did.

XIV

Looök thou theer wheer Wrigglesby beck
 cooms out by the 'ill!
 Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs
 oop to the mill;
 An' I 'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou 'll
 live to see;
 And if thou marries a good un I 'll leäve
 the land to thee.

XV

Thim 's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I
 meäns to stick;
 But if thou marries a bad un, I 'll leäve
 the land to Dick. —
 Coom oop, proputtu, proputtu — that's
 what I 'ears 'im saäy —
 Proputtu, proputtu, proputtu — canter an'
 canter awaäy.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest
 white,
 Deepening thy voice with the deepening of
 the night,

All along the valley, where thy waters
 flow,
 I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty
 years ago.
 All along the valley, while I walk'd to-
 day,
 The two and thirty years were a mist that
 rolls away;
 For all along the valley, down thy rocky
 bed,
 Thy living voice to me was as the voice of
 the dead,
 And all along the valley, by rock and cave
 and tree,
 The voice of the dead was a living voice to
 me.

THE FLOWER

ONCE in a golden hour
 I cast to earth a seed.
 Up there came a flower,
 The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
 Thro' my garden-bower,
 And muttering discontent
 Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
 It wore a crown of light,
 But thieves from o'er the wall
 Stole the seed by night;

Sow'd it far and wide
 By every town and tower,
 Till all the people cried,
 'Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable:
 He that runs may read.
 Most can raise the flowers now
 For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
 And some are poor indeed;
 And now again the people
 Call it but a weed.

REQUIESCAT

FAIR is her cottage in its place,
Where yon broad water sweetly, slowly
glides.

It sees itself from thatch to base
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah, how soon to die !
Her quiet dream of life this hour may
cease.

Her peaceful being slowly passes by
To some more perfect peace.

THE SAILOR BOY

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,
And reach'd the ship and caught the rope,
And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud
He heard a fierce mermaid cry,
'O boy, tho' thou art young and proud,
I see the place where thou wilt lie.

'The sands and yeasty surges mix
In caves about the dreary bay,
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
And in thy heart the scrawl shall play.'

'Fool,' he answer'd, 'death is sure
To those that stay and those that roam,
But I will nevermore endure
To sit with empty hands at home.

'My mother clings about my neck,
My sisters crying, "Stay for shame;"
My father raves of death and wreck, —
They are all to blame, they are all to
blame.

'God help me ! save I take my part
Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
Far worse than any death to me.'

THE ISLET

'WHITHER, O whither, love, shall we go,
For a score of sweet little summers or
so ?'

The sweet little wife of the singer said,
On the day that follow'd the day she was
wed,

'Whither, O whither, love, shall we go ?'
And the singer shaking his curly head
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys
There at his right with a sudden crash,
Singing, 'And shall it be over the seas
With a crew that is neither rude nor
rash,

But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,
In a shallow of crystal ivory-beak'd ?
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I
know,

A mountain islet pointed and peak'd;
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,
Fairly-delicate palaces shine
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd
With many a rivulet high against the sun
The facets of the glorious mountain flash
Above the valleys of palm and pine.'

'Thither, O thither, love, let us go.'

'No, no, no !
For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,
There is but one bird with a musical
throat,
And his compass is but of a single note,
That it makes one weary to hear.'

'Mock me not ! mock me not ! love, let us
go.'

'No, love, no.
For the bud ever breaks into bloom on the
tree,
And a storm never wakes on the lonely
sea,
And a worm is there in the lonely wood,
That pierces the liver and blackens the
blood,
And makes it a sorrow to be.'

A DEDICATION

DEAR, near and true,—no truer Time
 himself
 Can prove you, tho' he make you evermore
 Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life
 Shoots to the fall,—take this and pray
 that he
 Who wrote it, honoring your sweet faith in
 him,
 May trust himself; and after praise and
 scorn,
 As one who feels the immeasurable world,
 Attain the wise indifference of the wise;
 And after autumn past — if left to pass
 His autumn into seeming-leafless days —
 Draw toward the long frost and longest
 night,
 Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the fruit
 Which in our winter woodland looks a
 flower.¹

EXPERIMENTS

BOÄDICÉA

WHILE about the shore of Mona those Ne-
 ronian legionaries
 Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the
 Druid and Druidess,
 Far in the East Boädicéa, standing loftily
 charioted,
 Mad and maddening all that heard her in
 her fierce volubility,
 Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the
 colony Cámulodúne,
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters
 o'er a wild confederacy.

'They that scorn the tribes and call us
 Britain's barbarous populaces,
 Did they hear me, would they listen, did
 they pity me supplicating?
 Shall I heed them in their anguish? shall
 I brook to be supplicated?
 Hear, Icenian, Catiuechlanian, hear, Cori-
 tianian, Trinobant!
 Must their ever-ravening eagle's beak and
 talon annihilate us?

¹ The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europæus*).

Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it
 gorily quivering?
 Bark an answer, Britain's raven! bark and
 blacken innumerable,
 Blacken round the Roman carrion, make
 the carcass a skeleton,
 Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin, from
 the wilderness, wallow in it,
 Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Taranis
 be propitiated.
 Lo their colony half-defended! lo their
 colony, Cámulodúne!
 There the horde of Roman robbers mock
 at a barbarous adversary.
 There the hive of Roman liars worship an
 emperor-idiot.
 Such is Rome, and this her deity; hear it,
 Spirit of Cássivelaúin!

'Hear it, Gods! the Gods have heard it,
 O Icenian, O Coritanian!
 Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd,
 Catiuechlanian, Trinobant.
 These have told us all their anger in mi-
 raculous utterances,
 Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur
 heard aërially,
 Phantom sound of blows descending, moan
 of an enemy massacred,
 Phantom wail of women and children, mul-
 titudinous agonies.
 Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phan-
 tom bodies of horses and men;
 Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the
 reflux estuary;
 Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily
 tottering —
 There was one who watch'd and told me —
 down their statue of Victory fell.
 Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo the
 colony Cámulodúne,
 Shall we teach it a Roman lesson? shall
 we care to be pitiful?
 Shall we deal with it as an infant? shall
 we dandle it amorously?

'Hear, Icenian, Catiuechlanian, hear,
 Coritanian, Trinobant!
 While I roved about the forest, long and
 bitterly meditating,
 There I heard them in the darkness, at the
 mystical ceremony;

Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the
terrible prophetesses:
"Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle
of silvery parapets!
Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho'
the gathering enemy narrow thee,
Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou
shalt be the mighty one yet!
Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the
deeds to be celebrated,
Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and
shadow illimitable,
Thine the lauds of lasting summer, many-
blossoming Paradises,
Thine the North and thine the South and
thine the battle-thunder of God."
So they chanted: how shall Britain light
upon anguries happier?
So they chanted in the darkness, and there
cometh a victory now.

'Hear, Icenian, Catiuechlanian, hear,
Coritanian, Trinobant!
Me the wife of rich Prasútagus, me the
lover of liberty,
Me they seized and me they tortured, me
they lash'd and humiliated,
Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of
ruffian violators!
See, they sit, they hide their faces, miser-
able in ignominy!
Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by
blood to be satiated.
Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the col-
ony Cámulodúne!
There they ruled, and thence they wasted
all the flourishing territory,
Thither at their will they haled the yellow-
ringleted Britoness —
Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe, unex-
hausted, inexorable.
Shout, Icenian, Catiuechlanian, shout, Cori-
tanian, Trinobant,
Till the victim hear within and yearn to
hurry precipitously,
Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like
the smoke in a hurricane whirl'd.
Lo the colony, there they rioted in the city
of Cúnobélne!
There they drank in cups of emerald, there
at tables of ebony lay,

Rolling on their purple couches in their
tender effeminacy.
There they dwelt and there they rioted;
there — there — they dwell no more.
Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break
the works of the statuary,
Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it,
hold it abominable,
Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust
and voluptuousness,
Lash the maiden into swooning, me they
lash'd and humiliated,
Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash
the brains of the little one out,
Up, my Britons! on, my chariot! on, my
chargers, trample them under us!

So the Queen Boädicéa, standing loftily
charioted,
Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling
glances lioness-like,
Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters
in her fierce volubility.
Till her people all around the royal chariot
agitated,
Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing
barbarous lineaments,
Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when
they shiver in January,
Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom
and blanch on the precipices,
Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an
oak on a promontory.
So the silent colony, hearing her tumultuous
adversaries
Clash the darts and on the buckler beat
with rapid unanimous hand,
Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her
pitiless avarice,
Till she felt the heart within her fall and
flutter tremulously,
Then her pulses at the clamoring of her
enemy fainted away.
Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny
tyranny buds.
Ran the land with Roman slaughter, mul-
titudinous agonies.
Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a
valorous legionary,
Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London,
Verulam, Cámulodúne.

IN QUANTITY

ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

(HEXAMETERS AND PENTAMETERS)

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd
music of Homer!

No — but a most burlesque barbarous
experiment.

When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye
Muses, in England?

When did a frog coarser croak upon our
Helicon?

Hexameters no worse than daring Germany
gave us,

Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexa-
meters.

MILTON

(ALCAICS)

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmo-
nies,

O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages;

Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,

Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean
Rings to the roar of an angel onset!

Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,

And bloom profuse and cedar arches
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,

Where some refulgent sunset of India
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,

And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods
Whisper in odorous heights of even.

(HENDECASYLLABICS)

O YOU chorus of indolent reviewers,
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
All composed in a metre of Catullus,
All in quantity, careful of my motion,
Like the skater on ice that hardly bears
him,

Lest I fall unawares before the people,
Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.
Should I flounder awhile without a tumble
Thro' this metrification of Catullus,
They should speak to me not without a
welcome,

All that chorus of indolent reviewers.
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,
So fantastical is the dainty metre.

Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor be-
lieve me

Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.
O blatant Magazines, regard me rather —
Since I blush to belaud myself a mo-
ment —

As some rare little rose, a piece of in-
most

Horticultural art, or half coquette-like
Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION
OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK
VERSE

[ILIAD, VIII. 542-561]

So Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd ap-
plause;

Then loosed their sweating horses from the
yoke,

And each beside his chariot bound his
own;

And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep
In haste they drove, and honey-hearted

wine
And bread from out the houses brought,

and heap'd
Their firewood, and the winds from off the

plain
Roll'd the rich vapor far into the heaven.

And these all night upon the bridge¹ of
war

Sat glorying; many a fire before them
blazed.

As when in heaven the stars about the
moon

Look beautiful, when all the winds are
laid,

And every height comes out, and jutting
peak

¹ Or, ridge.

And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
 Break open to their highest, and all the stars
 Shine, and the shepherd gladdens in his heart;
 So many a fire between the ships and stream
 Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy,
 A thousand on the plain; and close by each
 Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;
 And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds,
 Fixt by their cars, waited the golden dawn.

THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY, 1852

My Lords, we heard you speak: you told us all

That England's honest censure went too far,
 That our free press should cease to brawl,
 Not sting the fiery Frenchman into war.

It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,
 To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing, into words.

We love not this French God, the child of hell,

Wild War, who breaks the converse of the wise;
 But though we love kind Peace so well,
 We dare not even by silence sanction lies.

It might be safe our censures to withdraw,
 And yet, my Lords, not well; there is a higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak free,

Tho' all the storm of Europe on us break.
 No little German state are we,
 But the one voice in Europe; we *must* speak,

That if to-night our greatness were struck dead,
 There might be left some record of the things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be bold.
 Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant o'er.
 Better the waste Atlantic roll'd
 On her and us and ours for evermore.
 What! have we fought for freedom from our prime,
 At last to dodge and palter with a public crime?

Shall we fear *him*? our own we never fear'd.

From our first Charles by force we wrung our claims.
 Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,
 We flung the burthen of the second James.

I say, we *never* fear'd! and as for these,
 We broke them on the land, we drove them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the people muse

In doubt if you be of our Barons' breed —
 Were those your sires who fought at Lewes?

Is this the manly strain of Runnymede?
 O fallen nobility that, overawed,
 Would lisp in honey'd whispers of this monstrous fraud!

We feel, at least, that silence here were sin,

Not ours the fault if we have feeble hosts —

If easy patrons of their kin
 Have left the last free race with naked coasts!

They knew the precious things they had to guard;

For us, we will not spare the tyrant one hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester may bawl,

What England was, shall her true sons forget?

We are not cotton-spinners all,
 But some love England and her honor
 yet.
 And these in our Thermopylæ shall stand,
 And hold against the world this honor of
 the land.

A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL
 HIGHNESS MARIE ALEXAN-
 DROVNA, DUCHESS OF EDIN-
 BURG

MARCH 7, 1874

I

THE Son of him with whom we strove for
 power —
 Whose will is lord thro' all his world-
 domain —

Who made the serf a man, and burst his
 chain —
 Has given our Prince his own imperial
 Flower,

Alexandrovna.

And welcome, Russian flower, a people's
 pride,
 To Britain, when her flowers begin to
 blow !

From love to love, from home to home
 you go,
 From mother unto mother, stately bride,
 Marie Alexandrovna !

II

The golden news along the steppes is
 blown,
 And at thy name the Tartar tents are
 stirr'd;

Elburz and all the Caucasus have
 heard;
 And all the sultry palms of India known,
 Alexandrovna.

The voices of our universal sea
 On capes of Afric as on cliffs of Kent,
 The Maoris and that Isle of Conti-
 nent,
 And loyal pines of Canada murmur thee,
 Marie Alexandrovna !

III

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty
 life ! —

Yet Harold's England fell to Norman
 swords;

Yet thine own land has bow'd to Tartar
 hordes

Since English Harold gave its throne a
 wife,

Alexandrovna !

For thrones and peoples are as waifs that
 swing,

And float or fall, in endless ebb and
 flow;

But who love best have best the grace to
 know

That Love by right divine is deathless
 king,

Marie Alexandrovna !

IV

And Love has led thee to the stranger
 land,

Where men are bold and strongly say
 their say; —

See, empire upon empire smiles to-day,
 As thou with thy young lover hand in
 hand,

Alexandrovna !

So now thy fuller life is in the west,
 Whose hand at home was gracious to thy
 poor;

Thy name was blest within the narrow
 door;

Here also, Marie, shall thy name be blest,
 Marie Alexandrovna !

V

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame again ?
 Or at thy coming, Princess, everywhere,

The blue heaven break, and some diviner
 air

Breathe thro' the world and change the
 hearts of men,

Alexandrovna ?

But hearts that change not, love that can-
 not cease,

And peace be yours, the peace of soul in
 soul !

And howsoever this wild world may roll,
Between your peoples truth and manful
peace,

Alfred — Alexandrovna !

IN THE GARDEN AT SWAINSTON

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,
Within was weeping for thee;
Shadows of three dead men
Walk'd in the walks with me,
Shadows of three dead men, and thou
wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods,
The Master was far away;
Nightingales warbled and sang
Of a passion that lasts but a day;
Still in the house in his coffin the Prince
of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known
In courtesy like to thee;
Two dead men have I loved
With a love that ever will be;
Three dead men have I loved, and thou
art last of the three.

CHILD SONGS

I

THE CITY CHILD

DAINTY little maiden, whither would you
wander ?

Whither from this pretty home, the home
where mother dwells ?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty little
maiden,

'All among the gardens, auriculas, anem-
ones,

Roses and lilies and Canterbury bells.'

Dainty little maiden, whither would you
wander ?

Whither from this pretty house, this city-
house of ours ?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty little
maiden,

'All among the meadows, the clover and
the clematis,

Daisies and kingcups and honeysuckle-
flowers.'

II

MINNIE AND WINNIE

MINNIE and Winnie
Slept in a shell.
Sleep, little ladies !
And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,
Silver without;
Sounds of the great sea
Wander'd about.

Sleep, little ladies !
Wake not soon !
Echo on echo
Dies to the moon.

Two bright stars
Peep'd into the shell.
'What are they dreaming of ?
Who can tell ?'

Started a green linnet
Out of the croft;
Wake, little ladies !
The sun is aloft !

THE SPITEFUL LETTER

HERE, it is here, the close of the
year,

And with it a spiteful letter.

My name in song has done him much
wrong,

For himself has done much better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,
If men neglect your pages ?

I think not much of yours or of mine,
I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of the times!

Are mine for the moment stronger?
Yet hate me not, but abide your lot;
I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are as brief;
What room is left for a hater?
Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener leaf,
For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I — is that your cry?
And men will live to see it.
Well — if it be so — so it is, you know;
And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a summer leaf,
But this is the time of hollies.
O hollies and ivies and evergreens,
How I hate the spites and the follies!

LITERARY SQUABBLES

AN God! the petty fools of rhyme
That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars
Before the stony face of Time,
And look'd at by the silent stars;

Who hate each other for a song,
And do their little best to bite
And pinch their brethren in the throng,
And scratch the very dead for spite;

And strain to make an inch of room
For their sweet selves, and cannot hear
The sullen Lethe rolling doom
On them and theirs and all things
here;

When one small touch of Charity
Could lift them nearer Godlike state
Than if the crowded Orb should cry
Like those who cried Diana great.

And I too talk, and lose the touch
I talk of. Surely, after all,

The noblest answer unto such
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

THE VICTIM

I

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,
A famine after laid them low;
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,
For on them brake the sudden foe;
So thick they died the people cried,
'The Gods are moved against the land.'
The Priest in horror about his altar
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand:
'Help us from famine
And plague and strife!
What would you have of us?
Human life?
Were it our nearest,
Were it our dearest, —
Answer, O answer! —
We give you his life.'

II

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,
And cattle died, and deer in wood,
And bird in air, and fishes turn'd
And whiten'd all the rolling flood;
And dead men lay all over the way,
Or down in a furrow scathed with
flame;
And ever and aye the Priesthood moan'd,
Till at last it seem'd that an answer
came:
'The King is happy
In child and wife;
Take you his dearest,
Give us a life.'

III

The Priest went out by heath and hill;
The King was hunting in the wild;
They found the mother sitting still;
She cast her arms about the child.
The child was only eight summers old,
His beauty still with his years increased,
His face was ruddy, his hair was gold;
He seem'd a victim due to the priest.

The Priest beheld him,
And cried with joy,
'The Gods have answer'd;
We give them the boy.'

IV

The King return'd from out the wild,
He bore but little game in hand;
The mother said, 'They have taken the
child
To spill his blood and heal the land.
The land is sick, the people diseased,
And blight and famine on all the lea;
The holy Gods, they must be appeased,
So I pray you tell the truth to me.
They have taken our son,
They will have his life.
Is *he* your dearest?
Or I, the wife?'

V

The King bent low, with hand on brow,
He stay'd his arms upon his knee:
'O wife, what use to answer now?
For now the Priest has judged for me.'
The King was shaken with holy fear;
'The Gods,' he said, 'would have chosen
well;
Yet both are near, and both are dear,
And which the dearest I cannot tell!'
But the Priest was happy,
His victim won:
'We have his dearest,
His only son!'

VI

The rites prepared, the victim bared,
The knife uprising toward the blow,
To the altar-stone she sprang alone:
'Me, not my darling, no!
He caught her away with a sudden cry;
Suddenly from him brake his wife,
And shrieking, 'I am his dearest, I —
I am his dearest!' rush'd on the knife.
And the Priest was happy:
'O Father Odin,
We give you a life.
Which was his nearest?
Who was his dearest?
The Gods have answer'd;
We give them the wife!'

WAGES

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of
song,
Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on
an endless sea —
Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to
right the wrong —
Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover
of glory she;
Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.
The wages of sin is death: if the wages of
Virtue be dust,
Would she have heart to endure for the
life of the worm and the fly?
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet
seats of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in
a summer sky;
Give her the wages of going on, and not to
die.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the
hills and the plains, —
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him
who reigns?
Is not the Vision He, tho' He be not that
which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we
not live in dreams?
Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body
and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy divi-
sion from Him?
Dark is the world to thee; thyself art the
reason why,
For is He not all but thou, that hast power
to feel 'I am I'?
Glory about thee, without thee; and thou
fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams and a stifled
splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and
 Spirit with Spirit can meet —
 Closer is He than breathing, and nearer
 than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let
 us rejoice,
 For if He thunder by law the thunder is
 yet His voice.

Law is God, say some; no God at all, says
 the fool,
 For all we have power to see is a straight
 staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the
 eye of man cannot see;
 But if we could see and hear, this Vision —
 were it not He ?

THE VOICE AND THE PEAK

I

THE voice and the Peak
 Far over summit and lawn,
 The lone glow and long roar
 Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of
 dawn !

II

All night have I heard the voice
 Rave over the rocky bar,
 But thou wert silent in heaven,
 Above thee glided the star.

III

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,
 That standest high above all ?
 ' I am the voice of the Peak,
 I roar and rave, for I fall.

IV

' A thousand voices go
 To North, South, East, and West;
 They leave the heights and are troubled,
 And moan and sink to their rest.

V

' The fields are fair beside them,
 The chestnut towers in his bloom;

But they — they feel the desire of the
 deep —
 Fall, and follow their doom.

VI

' The deep has power on the height,
 And the height has power on the deep;
 They are raised for ever and ever,
 And sink again into sleep.'

VII

Not raised for ever and ever,
 But when their cycle is o'er,
 The valley, the voice, the peak, the star
 Pass, and are found no more.

VIII

The Peak is high and flush'd
 At his highest with sunrise fire;
 The Peak is high, and the stars are high,
 And the thought of a man is higher.

IX

A deep below the deep,
 And a height beyond the height !
 Our hearing is not hearing,
 And our seeing is not sight.

X

The voice and the Peak
 Far into heaven withdrawn,
 The lone glow and long roar
 Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of
 dawn !

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
 I pluck you out of the crannies,
 I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
 Little flower — but *if* I could understand
 What you are, root and all, and all in
 all,
 I should know what God and man is.

LUCRETIUS

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found
 Her master cold; for when the morning
 flush

Of passion and the first embrace had died
Between them, tho' he loved her none the
less,

Yet often when the woman heard his foot
Return from pæcings in the field, and ran
To greet him with a kiss, the master took
Small notice, or austerely, for — his mind
Half buried in some weightier argument,
Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise ¹⁰
And long roll of the hexameter — he past
To turn and ponder those three hundred
scrolls

Left by the Teacher, whom he held divine.
She brook'd it not, but wrathful, petulant,
Dreaming some rival, sought and found a
witch

Who brew'd the philtre which had power,
they said,
To lead an errant passion home again.

And this, at times, she mingled with his
drink,
And this destroy'd him; for the wicked
broth

Confused the chemic labor of the blood, ²⁰
And tickling the brute brain within the
man's

Made havoc among those tender cells, and
check'd

His power to shape. He loathed himself,
and once

After a tempest woke upon a morn
That mock'd him with returning calm, and
cried:

'Storm in the night! for thrice I heard
the rain

Rushing; and once the flash of a thunder-
bolt —

Methought I never saw so fierce a fork —
Struck out the streaming mountain-side,
and show'd

A riotous confluence of watercourses ³⁰
Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

'Storm, and what dreams, ye holy Gods,
what dreams!

For thrice I waken'd after dreams. Per-
chance

We do but recollect the dreams that come
Just ere the waking. Terrible: for it seem'd
A void was made in Nature; all her bonds
Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-streams
And torrents of her myriad universe,
Ruining along the illimitable inane, ⁴⁰

Fly on to clash together again, and make
Another and another frame of things
For ever. That was mine, my dream, I
knew it —

Of and belonging to me, as the dog
With inward yelp and restless forefoot
plies

His function of the woodland; but the
next!

I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed
Came driving rainlike down again on earth,
And where it dash'd the reddening meadow,
sprang ⁴⁹

No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth,
For these I thought my dream would show
to me,

But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,
Hired animalisms, vile as those that made
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies worse
Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods.
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and round
me drove

In narrowing circles till I yell'd again
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw —
Was it the first beam of my latest day?

'Then, then, from utter gloom stood out
the breasts, ⁶⁰

The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a
sword

Now over and now under, now direct,
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down
shamed

At all that beauty; and as I stared, a
fire,

The fire that left a roofless Iliion,
Shot out of them, and scorch'd me that I
woke.

'Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus,
thine,

Because I would not one of thine own
doves,

Not even a rose, were offer'd to thee?
thine,

Forgetful how my rich præmion makes ⁷⁰
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,
In lays that will outlast thy deity?

'Deity? nay, thy worshippers. My
tongue

Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of
these

Angers thee most, or angers thee at all?
Not if thou be'st of those who, far aloof

From envy, hate and pity, and spite and
scorn,
Live the great life which all our greatest fain
Would follow, centred in eternal calm.

‘Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like our-
selves ⁸⁰
Touch, and be touch’d, then would I cry to
thee
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender arms
Round him, and keep him from the lust of
blood
That makes a steaming slaughter-house of
Rome.

‘Ay, but I meant not thee; I meant not
her

Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and
tempt
The Trojan, while his neatherds were
abroad;

Nor her that o’er her wounded hunter wept
Her deity false in human-amorous tears; ⁹⁰
Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called
Calliope to grace his golden verse —
Ay, and this Kypris also — did I take
That popular name of thine to shadow
forth

The all-generating powers and genial heat
Of Nature, when she strikes thro’ the
thick blood

Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs are
glad ⁹⁹

Nosing the mother’s udder, and the bird
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of
flowers;

Which things appear the work of mighty
Gods.

‘The Gods! and if I go my work is left
Unfinish’d — *if* I go. The Gods, who haunt
The lucid interspace of world and world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a
wind,

Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar
Their sacred everlasting calm! and such,
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm, ¹¹¹
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain
Letting his own life go. The Gods, the
Gods!

If all be atoms, how then should the Gods
Being atomic not be dissoluble,
Not follow the great law? My master
held

That Gods there are, for all men so believe.
I prest my footsteps into his, and meant
Surely to lead my Memmins in a train
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof ¹²⁰
That Gods there are, and deathless.
Meant? I meant?

I have forgotten what I meant; my mind
Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.

‘Look where another of our Gods, the
Sun,

Apollo, Delius, or of older use
All-seeing Hyperion — what you will —
Has mounted yonder; since he never sware,
Except his wrath were wreak’d on wretched
man,

That he would only shine among the dead
Hereafter — tales! for never yet on earth
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roasting
ox ¹³¹

Moan round the spit — nor knows he what
he sees;

King of the East altho’ he seem, and girt
With song and flame and fragrance, slowly
lifts

His golden feet on those empurpled stairs
That climb into the windy halls of heaven.
And here he glances on an eye new-born,
And gets for greeting but a wail of pain;
And here he stays upon a freezing orb
That fain would gaze upon him to the last;
And here upon a yellow eyelid fallen ¹⁴¹
And closed by those who mourn a friend
in vain,

Not thankful that his troubles are no more.
And me, altho’ his fire is on my face
Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell
Whether I mean this day to end myself,
Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,
That men like soldiers may not quit the
post

Allotted by the Gods. But he that holds
The Gods are careless, wherefore need he
care ¹⁵⁰

Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at
once,
Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and
sink

Past earthquake — ay, and gout and stone,
that break
Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-life,

And wretched age — and worst disease of
all,

These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,
Abominable, strangers at my hearth
Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,
The phantom husks of something foully
done,

And fleeting thro' the boundless universe,¹⁶⁰
And blasting the long quiet of my breast
With animal heat and dire insanity ?

'How should the mind, except it loved
them, clasp
These idols to herself ? or do they fly
Now thinner, and now thicker, like the
flakes

In a fall of snow, and so press in, perforce
Of multitude, as crowds that in an hour
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and bear
The keepers down, and throng, their rags
and they¹⁷⁰

The basest, far into that council-hall
Where sit the best and stateliest of the
land ?

'Can I not fling this horror off me again,
Seeing with how great ease Nature can
smile,

Balmier and nobler from her bath of storm,
At random ravage ? and how easily
The mountain there has cast his cloudy
slough,

Now towering o'er him in serenest air,
A mountain o'er a mountain, — ay, and
within¹⁷⁹

All hollow as the hopes and fears of men ?

'But who was he that in the garden
snared

Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods ? a tale
To laugh at — more to laugh at in my-
self —

For look ! what is it ? there ? yon arbutus
Totters ; a noiseless riot underneath
Strikes through the wood, sets all the tops
quivering —

The mountain quickens into Nymph and
Faun ;

And here an Oread — how the sun delights
To glance and shift about her slippery
sides,

And rosy knees and supple roundedness,¹⁹⁰
And budded bosom-peaks — who this way
runs

Before the rest ! — A satyr, a satyr, see,
Follows ; but him I proved impossible ;
Twy-natured is no nature. Yet he draws
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him now
Beastlier than any phantom of his kind
That ever butted his rough brother-brute
For lust or lusty blood or provender.

I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him ; and she
Loathes him as well ; such a precipitate
heel,²⁰⁰

Fledged as it were with Mercury's ankle-
wing,

Whirls her to me — but will she fling herself
Shameless upon me ? Catch her, goat-
foot ! nay,

Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wilder-
ness,

And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide ! do I
wish —

What ? — that the bush were leafless ? or
to whelm

All of them in one massacre ? O ye Gods,
I know you careless, yet, behold, to you
From childly wont and ancient use I call —
I thought I lived securely as yourselves —
No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-
spite,²¹¹

No madness of ambition, avarice, none ;
No larger feast than under plane or pine
With neighbors laid along the grass, to
take

Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,
Affirming each his own philosophy —
Nothing to mar the sober majesties
Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.

But now it seems some unseen monster
lays

His vast and filthy hands upon my will,²²⁰
Wrenching it backward into his, and spoils
My bliss in being ; and it was not great,
For save when shutting reasons up in
rhythm,

Or Heliconian honey in living words,
To make a truth less harsh, I often grew
Tired of so much within our little life,
Or of so little in our little life —
Poor little life that toddles half an hour
Crown'd with a flower or two, and there an
end —²²⁹

And since the nobler pleasure seems to fade,
Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,
Not manlike end myself ? — our privi-
lege —

What beast has heart to do it ? And what
man,

What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph
thus ?

Not I; not he, who bears one name with
her

Whose death-blow struck the dateless doom
of kings,

When, brooking not the Tarquin in her
veins,

She made her blood in sight of Collatine
And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,
Spout from the maiden fountain in her
heart. ²⁴⁰

And from it sprang the Commonwealth,
which breaks

As I am breaking now !

‘ And therefore now

Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,
Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart
Those blind beginnings that have made me
man,

Dash them anew together at her will
Thro' all her cycles — into man once more,
Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower.

But till this cosmic order everywhere
Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day
Cracks all to pieces, — and that hour per-
haps ²⁵¹

Is not so far when momentary man
Shall seem no more a something to himself,
But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and
fanés,

And even his bones long laid within the
grave,

The very sides of the grave itself shall
pass,

Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,
Into the unseen for ever, — till that hour,
My golden work in which I told a truth
That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel, ²⁶⁰
And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake, and
plucks

The mortal soul from out immortal hell,
Shall stand. Ay, surely; then it fails at
last

And perishes as I must; for O Thou,
Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,
Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,
Who fail to find thee, being as thou art
Without one pleasure and without one
pain,

Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine
Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus ²⁷⁰
I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not
How roughly men may woo thee so they
win —

Thus — thus — the soul flies out and dies in
the air.'

With that he drove the knife into his
side.

She heard him raging, heard him fall, ran
in,

Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon her-
self

As having fail'd in duty to him, shriek'd
That she but meant to win him back, fell
on him,

Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd. He answer'd,
' Care not thou !

Thy duty ? What is duty ? Fare thee
well !' ²⁸⁰

THE WINDOW; OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS

Four years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs, as 'Orpheus with his lute,' and I dressed up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet, whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

December, 1870.

A. TENNYSON.

THE WINDOW

ON THE HILL

THE lights and shadows fly !
Yonder it brightens and darkens down on
the plain.

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's eye !
O, is it the brook, or a pool, or her window-
pane,
When the winds are up in the morning ?

Clouds that are racing above,
And winds and lights and shadows that
cannot be still,
All running on one way to the home of
my love,
You are all running on, and I stand on the
slope of the hill,
And the winds are up in the morning !

Follow, follow the chase !
And my thoughts are as quick and as quick,
ever on, on, on.
O lights, are you flying over her sweet
little face ?
And my heart is there before you are come,
and gone,
When the winds are up in the morning !

Follow them down the slope !
And I follow them down to the window-
pane of my dear,
And it brightens and darkens and bright-
ens like my hope,
And it darkens and brightens and darkens
like my fear,
And the winds are up in the morning !

AT THE WINDOW

Vine, vine and eglantine,
Clasp her window, trail and twine !
Rose, rose and clematis,
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,

Kiss, kiss; and make her a bower
All of flowers, and drop me a flower,
Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,
Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine ?
Rose, rose and clematis, 30
Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,
Kiss, kiss — and out of her bower
All of flowers, a flower, a flower,
Dropt, a flower.

GONE

Gone !
Gone, till the end of the year,
Gone, and the light gone with her, and left
me in shadow here !
Gone — fitted away,
Taken the stars from the night and the
sun from the day !
Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a storm
in the air !
Flown to the east or the west, fitted I 40
know not where !
Down in the south is a flash and a groan:
she is there ! she is there !

WINTER

The frost is here,
And fuel is dear,
And woods are sear,
And fires burn clear,
And frost is here
And has bitten the heel of the going year.

Bite, frost, bite !
You roll up away from the light 50
The blue wood-louse and the plump dor-
mouse,
And the bees are still'd, and the flies are
kill'd,
And you bite far into the heart of the house,
But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite !
 The woods are all the searer,
 The fuel is all the dearer,
 The fires are all the clearer,
 My spring is all the nearer,
 You have bitten into the heart of the earth,
 But not into mine. 61

SPRING

Birds' love and birds' song
 Flying here and there,
 Birds' song and birds' love,
 And you with gold for hair !
 Birds' song and birds' love,
 Passing with the weather,
 Men's song and men's love,
 To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love, 70
 And women's love and men's !
 And you my wren with a crown of gold,
 You my queen of the wrens !
 You the queen of the wrens —
 We'll be birds of a feather,
 I'll be King of the Queen of the wrens,
 And all in a nest together.

THE LETTER

Where is another sweet as my sweet,
 Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy ?
 Fine little hands, fine little feet — 80
 Dewy blue eye.
 Shall I write to her ? shall I go ?
 Ask her to marry me by and by ?
 Somebody said that she'd say no ;
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay !

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face ?
 Ay or no, from shy of the shy ?
 Go, little letter, apace, apace,
 Fly ;
 Fly to the light in the valley below — 90
 Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye.
 Somebody said that she'd say no ;
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay !

NO ANSWER

The mist and the rain, the mist and the
 rain !
 Is it ay or no ? is it ay or no ?
 And never a glimpse of her window-pane !
 And I may die but the grass will grow,
 And the grass will grow when I am gone,
 And the wet west wind and the world will
 go on.

Ay is the song of the wedded spheres, 100
 No is trouble and cloud and storm,
 Ay is life for a hundred years,
 No will push me down to the worm,
 And when I am there and dead and gone,
 The wet west wind and the world will go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and the wet !
 Wet west wind, how you blow, you blow !
 And never a line from my lady yet !
 Is it ay or no ? is it ay or no ?
 Blow then, blow, and when I am gone, 110
 The wet west wind and the world may go on.

NO ANSWER

Winds are loud and you are dumb,
 Take my love, for love will come,
 Love will come but once a life.
 Winds are loud and winds will pass !
 Spring is here with leaf and grass ;
 Take my love and be my wife.
 After-loves of maids and men
 Are but dainties drest again.
 Love me now, you'll love me then ; 120
 Love can love but once a life.

THE ANSWER

Two little hands that meet,
 Claspt on her seal, my sweet !
 Must I take you and break you,
 Two little hands that meet ?
 I must take you, and break you,
 And loving hands must part —
 Take, take — break, break —
 Break — you may break my heart.
 Faint heart never won — 130
 Break, break, and all's done.

AY

Be merry, all birds, to-day,
 Be merry on earth as you never were
 merry before,
 Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far
 away,
 And merry for ever and ever, and one day
 more.

Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.
 Look, look, how he flits,
 The fire-crown'd king of the wrens, from
 out of the pine !
 Look how they tumble the blossom, the
 mad little tits ! 140
 'Cuck-oo ! Cuck-oo !' was ever a May
 so fine ?

Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

O merry the linnet and dove,
And swallow and sparrow and throstle
and have your desire !

O merry my heart, you have gotten the
wings of love,
And flit like the king of the wrens with
a crown of fire.

Why ?

For it's ay ay, ay ay.

WHEN

Sun comes, moon comes, 150

Time slips away.

Sun sets, moon sets,

Love, fix a day.

'A year hence, a year hence.'

'We shall both be gray.'

'A month hence, a month hence.'

'Far, far away.'

'A week hence, a week hence.'

'Ah, the long delay !'

'Wait a little, wait a little, 160

You shall fix a day.'

'To-morrow, love, to-morrow,

And that's an age away.'

Blaze upon her window, sun,
And honor all the day.

MARRIAGE MORNING

Light, so low upon earth,

You send a flash to the sun.

Here is the golden close of love,

All my wooing is done.

O, the woods and the meadows, 170

Woods where we hid from the wet,

Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,

Meadows in which we met !

Light, so low in the vale

You flash and lighten afar,

For this is the golden morning of love,

And you are his morning star.

Flash, I am coming, I come,

By meadow and stile and wood,

O, lighten into my eyes and my heart, 180

Into my heart and my blood !

Heart, are you great enough

For a love that never tires ?

O heart, are you great enough for love ?

I have heard of thorns and briars.

Over the thorns and briars,

Over the meadows and stiles,

Over the world to the end of it

Flash for a million miles.

THE LOVER'S TALE

The original Preface to 'The Lover's Tale' states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends, however, who, boylike, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light — accompanied with a reprint of the sequel — a work of my mature life — 'The Golden Supper' ?

May, 1879.

ARGUMENT

Julian, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavors to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II. and III.) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

I

HERE far away, seen from the topmost
cliff,
Filling with purple gloom the vacancies

Between the tufted hills, the sloping seas
Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way down
rare sails,
White as white clouds, floated from sky to
sky.

O pleasant breast of waters, quiet bay,
Like to a quiet mind in the loud world,
Where the chafed breakers of the outer
sea

Sank powerless, as anger falls aside
And withers on the breast of peaceful
love!

Thou didst receive the growth of pines
that fledged

The hills that watch'd thee, as Love watch-
eth Love,

In thine own essence, and delight thyself
To make it wholly thine on sunny days.

Keep thou thy name of 'Lover's Bay.'
See, sirs,

Even now the Goddess of the Past, that
takes

The heart, and sometimes touches but one
string

That quivers and is silent, and sometimes
Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd
chords

To some old melody, begins to play
That air which pleased her first. I feel thy
breath;

I come, great Mistress of the ear and
eye;

Thy breath is of the pine-wood, and tho'
years

Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy strait
Betwixt the native land of Love and me,
Breathe but a little on me, and the sail
Will draw me to the rising of the sun,
The lucid chambers of the morning star,
And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,
To pass my hand across my brows, and
muse
On those dear hills, that nevermore will
meet

The sight that throbs and aches beneath
my touch,

As tho' there heat a heart in either eye;
For when the outer lights are darken'd
thus,

The memory's vision hath a keener edge.
It grows upon me now — the semicircle
Of dark-blue waters and the narrow fringe
Of curving beach — its wreaths of drip-
ping green —

Its pale pink shells — the summer-house
aloft.

That open'd on the pines with doors of
glass,

A mountain nest — the pleasure-boat that
rock'd,
Light-green with its own shadow, keel to
keel,

Upon the dappled dimplings of the wave
That blanch'd upon its side.

O Love, O Hope!
They come, they crowd upon me all at
once —

Moved from the cloud of unforgotten
things,

That sometimes on the horizon of the mind
Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in
storm —

Flash upon flash they lighten thro' me —
days

Of dewy dawning and the amber eyes
When thou and I, Camilla, thou and I

Were borne about the bay or safely moor'd
Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where the
tide

Plash'd, sapping its worn ribs; and all
without

The slowly-riding rollers on the cliffs
Clash'd, calling to each other, and thro' the
arch

Down those loud waters, like a setting star,
Mixt with the gorgeous west the lighthouse
shone,

And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell
Would often loiter in her balmy blue,

To crown it with herself.

Here, too, my love
Waver'd at anchor with me, when day
hung

From his mid-dome in heaven's airy halls;
Gleams of the water-circles as they broke
Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about her
lips,

Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,
Leapt like a passing thought across her
eyes;

And mine with one that will not pass, till
earth

And heaven pass too, dwelt on my heaven,
a face

Most starry-fair, but kindled from within
As 't were with dawn. She was dark-
hair'd, dark-eyed —

O, such dark eyes! a single glance of
them

Will govern a whole life from birth to
death,

71

71

40

Careless of all things else, led on with
 light
 In trances and in visions. Look at them,
 You lose yourself in utter ignorance;
 You cannot find their depth; for they go
 back,
 And farther back, and still withdraw them-
 selves
 Quite into the deep soul, that evermore
 Fresh springing from her fountains in the
 brain, ⁸⁰
 Still pouring thro', floods with redundant
 life
 Her narrow portals.

Trust me, long ago
 I should have died, if it were possible
 To die in gazing on that perfectness
 Which I do bear within me. I had died,
 But from my farthest lapse, my latest ebb,
 Thine image, like a charm of light and
 strength
 Upon the waters, push'd me back again
 On these deserted sands of barren life.
 Tho' from the deep vault where the heart
 of Hope ⁹⁰
 Fell into dust, and crumbled in the dark —
 Forgetting how to render beautiful
 Her countenance with quick and healthful
 blood —
 Thou didst not sway me upward; could I
 perish
 While thou, a meteor of the sepulchre,
 Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's quiet
 urn
 For ever? He that saith it hath o'er-
 step
 The slippery footing of his narrow wit,
 And fallen away from judgment. Thou
 art light,
 To which my spirit leaneth all her flowers,
 And length of days, and immortality ¹⁰¹
 Of thought, and freshness ever self-re-
 new'd.
 For Time and Grief abode too long with
 Life,
 And, like all other friends i' the world, at
 last
 They grew weary of her fellowship.
 So Time and Grief did beckon unto Death,
 And Death drew nigh and beat the doors
 of Life;
 But thou didst sit alone in the inner house,
 A wakeful portress, and didst parle with
 Death, —

'This is a charmed dwelling which I
 hold;'
 So Death gave back, and would no further
 come.
 Yet is my life nor in the present time,
 Nor in the present place. To me alone,
 Push'd from his chair of regal heritage,
 The Present is the vassal of the Past:
 So that, in that I *have* lived, do I live,
 And cannot die, and am, in having been —
 A portion of the pleasant yesterday,
 Thrust forward on to-day and out of place;
 A body journeying onward, sick with toil,
 The weight as if of age upon my limbs, ¹²¹
 The grasp of hopeless grief about my
 heart,
 And all the senses weaken'd, save in that,
 Which long ago they had glean'd and gar-
 ner'd up
 Into the granaries of memory —
 The clear brow, bulwark of the precious
 brain,
 Chink'd as you see, and seam'd — and all
 the while
 The light soul twines and mingles with the
 growths
 Of vigorous early days, attracted, won, ¹²⁹
 Married, made one with, molten into all
 The beautiful in Past of act or place,
 And like the all-enduring camel, driven
 Far from the diamond fountain by the
 palms,
 Who toils across the middle moonlit nights,
 Or when the white heats of the blinding
 noons
 Beat from the concave sand; yet in him
 keeps
 A draught of that sweet fountain that he
 loves,
 To stay his feet from falling and his spirit
 From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,
 When I began to love. How should I tell
 you? ¹⁴⁰
 Or from the after-fulness of my heart,
 Flow back again unto my slender spring
 And first of love, tho' every turn and depth
 Between is clearer in my life than all
 Its present flow. Ye know not what ye
 ask.
 How should the broad and open flower
 tell
 What sort of bud it was, when, prest to-
 gether

In its green sheath, close-lapt in silken folds,

It seem'd to keep its sweetness to itself,
Yet was not the less sweet for that it seem'd? 150

For young Life knows not when young Life was born,

But takes it all for granted: neither Love, Warm in the heart, his cradle, can remember

Love in the womb, but resteth satisfied, Looking on her that brought him to the light;

Or as men know not when they fall asleep Into delicious dreams, our other life, So know I not when I began to love.

This is my sum of knowledge — that my love Grew with myself — say rather, was my growth, 160

My inward sap, the hold I have on earth, My outward circling air wherewith I breathe,

Which yet upholds my life, and evermore Is to me daily life and daily death.

For how should I have lived and not have loved?

Can ye take off the sweetness from the flower,

The color and the sweetness from the rose, And place them by themselves; or set apart

Their motions and their brightness from the stars, 169

And then point out the flower or the star? Or build a wall betwixt my life and love,

And tell me where I am? 'T is even thus: In that I live I love; because I love

I live. Whate'er is fountain to the one Is fountain to the other; and when'er

Our God unknits the riddle of the one, There is no shade or fold of mystery

Swathing the other.

Many, many years —

For they seem many and my most of life, And well I could have linger'd in that porch, 180

So inproportion'd to the dwelling-place, — In the May-dews of childhood, opposite

The flush and dawn of youth, we lived together,

Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father died,
And he was happy that he saw it not;

But I and the first daisy on his grave
From the same clay came into light at once.

As Love and I do number equal years,
So she, my love, is of an age with me. 190
How like each other was the birth of each!
On the same morning, almost the same hour,

Under the selfsame aspect of the stars —
O, falsehood of all star-craft! — we were born.

How like each other was the birth of each!
The sister of my mother — she that bore

Camilla close beneath her beating heart,
Which to the imprison'd spirit of the child,

With its true-touched pulses in the flow
And hourly visitation of the blood, 200

Sent notes of preparation manifold,
And mellow'd echoes of the outer world —

My mother's sister, mother of my love,
Who had a twofold claim upon my heart,

One twofold mightier than the other was,
In giving so much beauty to the world,

And so much wealth as God had charged her with —

Loathing to put it from herself for ever,
Left her own life with it; and dying thus,

Crown'd with her highest act the placid face 210

And breathless body of her good deeds past.

So were we born, so orphan'd. She was motherless,

And I without a father. So from each
Of those two pillars which from earth up-

held
Our childhood, one had fallen away, and all
The careful burthen of our tender years

Trembled upon the other. He that gave
Her life, to me delightedly fulfill'd

All loving kindnesses, all offices
Of watchful care and trembling tenderness.

He waked for both, he pray'd for both, he slept 221

Dreaming of both; nor was his love the less

Because it was divided, and shot forth
Boughs on each side, laden with wholesome

shade,
Wherein we nested sleeping or awake,
And sang aloud the matin-song of life.

She was my foster-sister. On one arm
The flaxen ringlets of our infancies

Wander'd, the while we rested; one soft lap
 Pillow'd us both; a common light of eyes
 Was on us as we lay; our baby lips, ²³¹
 Kissing one bosom, ever drew from thence
 The stream of life, one stream, one life,
 one blood,
 One sustenance, which, still as thought
 grew large,
 Still larger moulding all the house of
 thought,
 Made all our tastes and fancies like, per-
 haps —
 All — all but one; and strange to me, and
 sweet,
 Sweet thro' strange years to know that
 whatsoe'er
 Our general mother meant for me alone,
 Our mutual mother dealt to both of us. ²⁴⁰
 So what was earliest mine in earliest life,
 I shared with her in whom myself remains.

As was our childhood, so our infancy,
 They tell me, was a very miracle
 Of fellow-feeling and communion.
 They tell me that we would not be alone, —
 We cried when we were parted; when I
 wept,
 Her smile lit up the rainbow on my tears,
 Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow; that we
 loved
 The sound of one another's voices more ²⁵⁰
 Than the gray cuckoo loves his name, and
 learn'd
 To lisp in tune together; that we slept
 In the same cradle always, face to face,
 Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing
 lip,
 Folding each other, breathing on each other,
 Dreaming together — dreaming of each
 other,
 They should have added, — till the morning
 light
 Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy pane
 Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we woke
 To gaze upon each other. If this be true,
 At thought of which my whole soul lan-
 guishes ²⁶¹
 And faints, and hath no pulse, no breath
 — as tho'
 A man in some still garden should infuse
 Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,
 Till, drunk with its own wine, and overfull
 Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,
 It fall on its own thorns — if this be true —
 And that way my wish leads me evermore

Still to believe it, 't is so sweet a thought —
 Why in the utter stillness of the soul ²⁷⁰
 Doth question'd memory answer not, nor
 tell
 Of this our earliest, our closest-drawn,
 Most loveliest, earthly - heavenliest har-
 mony ?

O blossom'd portal of the lonely house,
 Green prelude, April promise, glad new-
 year
 Of being, which with earliest violets
 And lavish carol of clear-throated larks
 Fill'd all the March of life! — I will not
 speak of thee,
 These have not seen thee, these can never
 know thee,
 They cannot understand me. Pass we
 then ²⁸⁰
 A term of eighteen years. Ye would but
 laugh
 If I should tell you how I hoard in thought
 The faded rhymes and scraps of ancient
 crones,
 Gray relics of the nurseries of the world,
 Which are as gems set in my memory,
 Because she learnt them with me; or what
 use
 To know her father left us just before
 The daffodil was blown? or how we found
 The dead man cast upon the shore? All
 this
 Seems to the quiet daylight of your minds
 But cloud and smoke, and in the dark of
 mine ²⁹¹
 Is traced with flame. Move with me to the
 event.

There came a glorious morning, such a
 one
 As dawns but once a season. Mercury
 On such a morning would have flung him-
 self
 From cloud to cloud, and swum with bal-
 anced wings
 To some tall mountain. When I said to her,
 'A day for gods to stoop,' she answered,
 'Ay,
 And men to soar;' for as that other gazed,
 Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud, ³⁰⁰
 The prophet and the chariot and the steeds,
 Suck'd into oneness like a little star
 Were drunk into the inmost blue, we stood,
 When first we came from out the pines at
 noon,

With hands for eaves, uplooking and almost

Waiting to see some blessed shape in heaven,

So hated we were in brilliance. Never yet
Before or after have I known the spring
Pour with such sudden deluges of light
Into the middle summer; for that day ³¹⁰
Love, rising, shook his wings, and charged
the winds

With spiced May - sweets from bound to bound, and blew

Fresh fire into the sun, and from within
Burst thro' the heated huds, and sent his soul

Into the songs of birds, and touch'd far-off
His mountain-altars, his high hills, with flame

Milder and purer.

Thro' the rocks we wound;

The great pine shook with lonely sounds
of joy

That came on the sea-wind. As mountain
streams

Our bloods ran free; the sunshine seem'd
to brood ³²⁰

More warmly on the heart than on the brow.

We often paused, and, looking back, we saw
The clefts and openings in the mountains
fill'd

With the blue valley and the glistening
brooks,

And all the low dark groves, a land of love !
A land of promise, a land of memory,
A land of promise flowing with the milk
And honey of delicious memories !

And down to sea, and far as eye could ken,
Each way from verge to verge a Holy
Land, ³³⁰

Still growing holier as you near'd the bay,
For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd

The grassy platform on some hill, I stoop'd,
I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her brows
And mine made garlands of the selfsame
flower,

Which she took smiling, and with my work
thus

Crown'd her clear forehead. Once or twice
she told me —

For I remember all things — to let grow
The flowers that run poison in their veins.

She said, 'The evil flourish in the world.'
Then playfully she gave herself the lie —
'Nothing in nature is unbeautiful; ³⁴²
So, brother, pluck and spare not.' So I

wove
Even the dull-blooded poppy-stem, 'whose
flower,

Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sunrise,
Like to the wild youth of an evil prince,
Is without sweetness, but who crowns him-
self

Above the naked poisons of his heart
In his old age.' A graceful thought of
hers

Graven on my fancy ! And O, how like a
nymph, ³⁵⁰

A stately mountain nymph she look'd ! how
native

Unto the hills she trod on ! While I gazed
My coronal slowly disentwined itself

And fell between us both; tho' while I
gazed

My spirit leap'd as with those thrills of bliss
That strike across the soul in prayer, and
show us

That we are surely heard. Methought a
light

Burst from the garland I had woven, and
stood

A solid glory on her bright black hair;
A light methought broke from her dark,
dark eyes, ³⁶⁰

And shot itself into the singing winds;
A mystic light flash'd even from her white
robe

As from a glass in the sun, and fell about
My footsteps on the mountains.

Last we came

To what our people call 'The Hill of Woe.'
A bridge is there, that, look'd at from be-
neath,

Seems but a cobweb filament to link
The yawning of an earthquake - cloven
chasm.

And thence one night, when all the winds
were loud,

A woful man — for so the story went — ³⁷⁰
Had thrust his wife and child and dash'd
himself

Into the dizzy depth below. Below,
Fierce in the strength of far descent, a
stream

Flies with a shatter'd foam along the
chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely strown
with crags.
We mounted slowly; yet to both there
came

The joy of life in steepness overcome,
And victories of ascent, and looking down
On all that had look'd down on us; and joy
In breathing nearer heaven; and joy to me,
High over all the azure-circled earth, ³⁸¹
To breathe with her as if in heaven itself;
And more than joy that I to her became
Her guardian and her angel, raising her
Still higher, past all peril, until she saw
Beneath her feet the region far away,
Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky brows,
Arise in open prospect — heath and hill,
And hollow lined and wooded to the lips,
And steep-down walls of battlemented
rock ³⁹⁰

Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into spires,
And glory of broad waters interfused,
Whence rose as it were breath and steam
of gold,

And over all the great wood rioting
And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at intervals

With falling brook or blossom'd bush —
and last,

Framing the mighty landscape to the west,
A purple range of mountain-cones, between
Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding bursts
The incorporate blaze of sun and sea.

At length

Descending from the point, and standing
both ⁴⁰¹

There on the tremulous bridge, that from
beneath

Had seem'd a gossamer filament up in air,
We passed amid the splendor. All the
west

And even unto the middle south was ribb'd
And barr'd with bloom on bloom. The sun
below,

Held for a space 'twixt cloud and wave,
shower'd down

Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over
That various wilderness a tissue of light
Unparalle'd. On the other side, the
moon, ⁴¹⁰

Half-melted into thin blue air, stood still,
And pale and fibrous as a wither'd leaf,
Nor yet endured in presence of His eyes
To indue his lustre; most unloverlike,
Since in his absence full of light and joy,

And giving light to others. But this most,
Next to her presence whom I loved so well,
Spoke loudly even into my inmost heart ⁴¹⁸
As to my outward hearing. The loud
stream,

Forth issuing from his portals in the crag, —
A visible link unto the home of my heart, —
Ran amber toward the west, and nigh the
sea

Parting my own loved mountains was re-
ceived,

Shorn of its strength, into the sympathy
Of that small bay, which out to open main
Glow'd intermingling close beneath the sun.
Spirit of Love! that little hour was bound,
Shut in from Time, and dedicate to thee;
Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it, and
the earth

They fell on became hallow'd evermore. ⁴³⁰

We turn'd, our eyes met; hers were
bright, and mine

Were dim with floating tears, that shot the
sunset

In lightnings round me, and my name was
borne

Upon her breath. Henceforth my name
has been

A hallow'd memory like the names of old,
A centred, glory-circled memory,
And a peculiar treasure, brooking not
Exchange or currency; and in that hour

A hope flow'd round me, like a golden mist
Charm'd amid eddies of melodious airs, ⁴⁴⁰

A moment, ere the onward whirlwind
shatter it,

Waver'd and floated — which was less than
Hope,

Because it lack'd the power of perfect
Hope;

But which was more and higher than all
Hope,

Because all other Hope had lower aim;
Even that this name to which her gracious

lips

Did lend such gentle utterance, this one
name,

In some obscure hereafter, might in-
wreath —

How lovelier, nobler then! — her life, her
love,

With my life, love, soul, spirit, and heart
and strength. ⁴⁵⁰

'Brother,' she said, 'let this be call'd hence-
forth

The Hill of Hope; and I replied, 'O sister,
My will is one with thine; the Hill of
Hope.'
Nevertheless, we did not change the name.

I did not speak; I could not speak my
love.
Love lieth deep, Love dwells not in lip-
depths.

Love wraps his wings on either side the
heart,

Constraining it with kisses close and warm,
Absorbing all the incense of sweet thoughts
So that they pass not to the shrine of
sound. ⁴⁶⁰

Else had the life of that delighted hour
Drunk in the largeness of the utterance
Of Love; but how should earthly measure
mete

The heavenly - unmeasured or unlimited
Love,

Who scarce can tune his high majestic
sense

Unto the thunder - song that wheels the
spheres,

Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,
And flowing odor of the spacious air,
Scarce housed within the circle of this
earth,

Be cabin'd up in words and syllables, ⁴⁷⁰
Which pass with that which breathes them?
Sooner earth

Might go round heaven, and the strait
girth of Time

Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,
Than language grasp the infinite of Love.

O day which did enwomb that happy
hour,

Thou art blessed in the years, divinest day!
O Genius of that hour which dost uphold
Thy coronal of glory like a god,
Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen, ⁴⁷⁹
Who walk before thee, ever turning round
To gaze upon thee till their eyes are dim
With dwelling on the light and depth of
thine,

Thy name is ever worshipp'd among hours!
Had I died then, I had not seem'd to die,
For bliss stood round me like the light of
heaven, —

Had I died then, I had not known the
death;

Yea, had the Power from whose right hand
the light

Of Life issueth, and from whose left hand
floweth

The Shadow of Death, perennial effluences,
Whereof to all that draw the wholesome air,
Somewhile the one must overflow the
other — ⁴⁹¹

Then had he stemm'd my day with night,
and driven

My current to the fountain whence it
sprang, —

Even his own abiding excellence —
On me, methinks, that shock of gloom had
fallen

Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged
The other, like the sun I gazed upon,
Which seeming for the moment due to
death,

And dipping his head low beneath the
verge, ⁴⁹⁹

Yet bearing round about him his own day,
In confidence of unabated strength,
Steppeth from heaven to heaven, from light
to light,

And holdeth his undimmed forehead far
Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the downward hill;
We past from light to dark. On the other
side

Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain hall,
Which none have fathom'd. If you go
far in —

The country people rumor — you may hear
The moaning of the woman and the child,
Shut in the secret chambers of the rock. ⁵¹¹
I too have heard a sound — perchance of
streams

Running far on within its inmost halls,
The home of darkness; but the cavern-
mouth,

Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,
Gives birth to a brawling brook, that pass-
ing lightly

Adown a natural stair of tangled roots,
Is presently received in a sweet grave
Of eglantines, a place of burial

Far lovelier than its cradle; for unseen, ⁵²⁰
But taken with the sweetness of the place,
It makes a constant bubbling melody
That drowns the nearer echoes. Lower

down
Spreads out a little lake, that, flooding,
leaves

Low banks of yellow sand; and from the
woods

That belt it rise three dark, tall cy-
presses, —

Three cypresses, symbols of mortal woe,
That men plant over graves.

Hither we came,

And sitting down upon the golden moss,
Held converse sweet and low — low con-
verse sweet,

In which our voices bore least part. The
wind

Told a love-tale beside us, how he woo'd
The waters, and the waters answering
lisp'd

To kisses of the wind, that, sick with love,
Fainted at intervals, and grew again
To utterance of passion. Ye cannot shape
Fancy so fair as is this memory.

Methought all excellence that ever was
Had drawn herself from many thousand
years,

And all the separate Edens of this earth,
To centre in this place and time. I list-
en'd,

And her words stole with most prevailing
sweetness

Into my heart, as thronging fancies come
To boys and girls when summer days are
new,

And soul and heart and body are all at
ease.

What marvel my Camilla told me all ?
It was so happy an hour, so sweet a place,
And I was as the brother of her blood,
And by that name I moved upon her
breath;

Dear name, which had too much of near-
ness in it

And heralded the distance of this time !
At first her voice was very sweet and low,
As if she were afraid of utterance;

But in the onward current of her speech, —
As echoes of the hollow-banked brooks
Are fashion'd by the channel which they
keep, —

Her words did of their meaning borrow
sound,

Her cheek did catch the color of her words.
I heard and trembled, yet I could but
hear;

My heart paused — my raised eyelids would
not fall,

But still I kept my eyes upon the sky.
I seem'd the only part of Time stood still,
And saw the motion of all other things;

While her words, syllable by syllable,
Like water, drop by drop, upon my ear
Fell, and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not to
speak;

But she spake on, for I did name no wish.
What marvel my Camilla told me all
Her maiden dignities of Hope and Love —
'Perchance,' she said, 'return'd'? Even
then the stars

Did tremble in their stations as I gazed;
But she spake on, for I did name no wish,
No wish — no hope. Hope was not wholly
dead,

But breathing hard at the approach of
death, —

Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine
No longer in the dearest sense of mine —
For all the secret of her inmost heart,
And all the maiden empire of her mind,
Lay like a map before me, and I saw

There, where I hoped myself to reign as
king,

There, where that day I crown'd myself as
king,

There in my realm and even on my throne,
Another! Then it seem'd as tho' a link
Of some tight chain within my inmost
frame

Was riven in twain; that life I leeded not
Flow'd from me, and the darkness of the
grave,

The darkness of the grave and utter night,
Did swallow up my vision; at her feet,
Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,
Smit with exceeding sorrow unto death.

Then had the earth beneath me yawning
cloven

With such a sound as when an iceberg
splits

From cope to base — had Heaven from all
her doors,

With all her golden thresholds clashing,
roll'd

Her heaviest thunder — I had lain as dead,
Mute, blind, and motionless as then I lay;
Dead, for henceforth there was no life for
me !

Mute, for henceforth what use were words
to me ?

Blind, for the day was as the night to me !
The night to me was kinder than the day;

The night in pity took away my day,
Because my grief as yet was newly born
Of eyes too weak to look upon the light;

And thro' the hasty notice of the ear
 Frail Life was startled from the tender
 love
 Of him she brooded over. Would I had
 lain
 Until the plaited ivy-tress had wound
 Round my worn limbs, and the wild brier
 had driven
 Its knotted thorns thro' my unpaying
 brows,
 Leaning its roses on my faded eyes. 610
 The wind had blown above me, and the
 rain
 Had fallen upon me, and the gilded snake
 Had nestled in this bosom-throne of Love,
 But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me. All
 too soon

Life — like a wanton, too-officious friend,
 Who will not *hear* denial, vain and rude
 With proffer of unwish'd-for services —
 Entering all the avenues of sense
 Past thro' into his citadel, the brain, 620
 With hated warmth of apprehensiveness.

And first the chillness of the sprinkled
 brook
 Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd to
 hear

Its murmur, as the drowning seaman hears,
 Who with his head below the surface dropt
 Listens the muffled booming indistinct
 Of the confused floods, and dimly knows
 His head shall rise no more; and then came
 in

The white light of the weary moon above,
 Diffused and molten into flaky cloud. 630
 Was my sight drunk that it did shape to
 me

Him who should own that name? Were
 it not well

If so be that the echo of that name
 Ringing within the fancy had updrawn
 A fashion and a phantasm of the form
 It should attach to? Phantom! — had the
 ghastliest

That ever lusted for a body, sucking
 The foul steam of the grave to thicken by
 it,

There in the shuddering moonlight brought
 its face 639

And what it has for eyes as close to mine
 As he did — better that than his, than he
 The friend, the neighbor, Lionel, the be-
 loved,

The loved, the lover, the happy Lionel,
 The low-voiced, tender-spirited Lionel,
 All joy, to whom my agony was a joy.
 O, how her choice did leap forth from his
 eyes!
 O, how her love did clothe itself in smiles
 About his lips! and — not one moment's
 grace —
 Then when the effect weigh'd seas upon
 my head
 To come my way! to twit me with the
 cause! 650

Was not the land as free thro' all her
 ways
 To him as me? Was not his wont to
 walk

Between the going light and growing
 night?

Had I not learnt my loss before he came?
 Could that be more because he came my
 way?

Why should he not come my way if he
 would?

And yet to-night, to-night — when all my
 wealth

Flash'd from me in a moment and I fell
 Beggard for ever — why *should* he come
 my way

Robed in those robes of light I must not
 wear, 660

With that great crown of beams about his
 brows —

Come like an angel to a damned soul,
 To tell him of the bliss he had with God —
 Come like a careless and a greedy heir
 That scarce can wait the reading of the
 will

Before he takes possession? Was mine a
 mood

To be invaded rudely, and not rather
 A sacred, secret, unapproached woe,
 Unspeakable? I was shut up with Grief;
 She took the body of my past delight, 670
 Narded and swathed and balm'd it for her-
 self,

And laid it in a sepulchre of rock
 Never to rise again. I was led mute
 Into her temple like a sacrifice;
 I was the High Priest in her holiest place,
 Not to be loudly broken in upon.

O friend, thoughts deep and heavy as
 these well-nigh
 O'erbore the limits of my brain: but he

Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm up-
stay'd.
I thought it was an adder's fold, and once
I strove to disengage myself, but fail'd, 681
Being so feeble. She bent above me, too;
Wan was her cheek, for whatsoever of
blight
Lives in the dewy touch of pity had made
The red rose there a pale one — and her
eyes —
I saw the moonlight glitter on their tears —
And some few drops of that distressful rain
Fell on my face, and her long ringlets
moved,
Drooping and beaten by the breeze, and
brush'd
My fallen forehead in their to and fro, 690
For in the sudden anguish of her heart
Loosed from their simple thrall they had
flow'd abroad,
And floated on and parted round her neck,
Mantling her form halfway. She, when I
woke,
Something she ask'd, I know not what, and
ask'd,
Unanswer'd, since I spake not; for the
sound
Of that dear voice so musically low,
And now first heard with any sense of pain,
As it had taken life away before, 699
Choked all the syllables that strove to rise
From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too,
From his great hoard of happiness dis-
till'd
Some drops of solace; like a vain rich
man,
That, having always prosper'd in the world,
Folding his hands, deals comfortable words
To hearts wounded for ever; yet, in truth,
Fair speech was his and delicate of phrase,
Falling in whispers on the sense, address'd
More to the inward than the outward ear,
As rain of the midsommer midnight soft,
Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and the
green 711
Of the dead spring: but mine was wholly
dead,
No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit for me.
Yet who had done, or who had suffer'd
wrong?
And why was I to darken their pure love?
If, as I found, they two did love each
other,

Because my own was darken'd? Why
was I
To cross between their happy star and
them?
To stand a shadow by their shining doors,
And vex them with my darkness? Did I
love her? 720
Ye know that I did love her; to this pre-
sent
My full-orb'd love has waned not. Did I
love her,
And could I look upon her tearful eyes?
What had she done to weep? Why should
she weep?
O innocent of spirit — let my heart
Break rather — whom the gentlest airs of
heaven
Should kiss with an unwonted gentleness.
Her love did murder mine? What then?
She deem'd
I wore a brother's mind; she call'd me
brother.
She told me all her love; she shall not
weep. 730

The brightness of a burning thought,
awhile
In battle with the glooms of my dark will,
Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit up
There on the depth of an unfathom'd woe
Reflex of action. Starting up at once,
As from a dismal dream of my own death,
I, for I loved her, lost my love in Love;
I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she
loved,
And laid it in her own, and sent my cry
Thro' the blank night to Him who loving
made 740
The happy and the unhappy love, that He
Would hold the hand of blessing over
them,
Lionel, the happy, and her, and her, his
bride!
Let them so love that men and boys may
say,
'Lo! how they love each other!' till their
love
Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all
Known, when their faces are forgot in the
land —
One golden dream of love, from which may
death
Awake them with heaven's music in a life
More living to some happier happiness, 750
Swallowing its precedent in victory.

And as for me, Camilla, as for me, —
The dew of tears is an unwholesome dew,
They will but sicken the sick plant the
more.

Deem that I love thee but as brothers do,
So shalt thou love me still as sisters do;
Or if thou dream aught farther, dream but
how

I could have loved thee, had there been
none else
To love as lovers, loved again by thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I
spake, 760

When I beheld her weep so ruefully;
For sure my love should ne'er indue the
front

And mask of Hate, who lives on others'
moans.

Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter
draughts,

And batten on her poisons? Love forbid!
Love passeth not the threshold of cold
Hate,

And Hate is strange beneath the roof of
Love.

O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up these
tears

Shed for the love of Love; for tho' mine
image,

The subject of thy power, be cold in her,
Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the
source 771

Of these sad tears, and feeds their down-
ward flow.

So Love, arraign'd to judgment and to
death,

Received unto himself a part of blame,
Being guiltless, as an innocent prisoner,
Who, when the woful sentence hath been
past,

And all the clearness of his fame hath
gone

Beneath the shadow of the curse of man,
First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom
awaked,

And looking round upon his tearful friends,
Forthwith and in his agony conceives 781

A shameful sense as of a cleaving crime —
For whence without some guilt should such
grief be?

So died that hour, and fell into the
abysm
Of forms outworn, but not to me outworn,

Who never hail'd another — was there
one?

There might be one — one other, worth the
life

That made it sensible. So that hour died
Like odor rapt into the winged wind
Borne into alien lands and far away. 790

There be some hearts so airily built, that
they,

They — when their love is wreck'd — if
Love can wreck —

On that sharp ridge of utmost doom ride
highly

Above the perilous seas of Change and
Chance,

Nay, more, hold out the lights of cheerful-
ness;

As the tall ship, that many a dreary year
Knit to some dismal sandbank far at sea,
All thro' the livelong hours of utter dark,
Showers slanting light upon the dolorous
wave.

For me — what light, what gleam on those
black ways 800

Where Love could walk with banish'd Hope
no more?

It was ill-done to part you, sisters fair;
Love's arms were wreath'd about the neck

of Hope,

And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love drew in
her breath

In that close kiss, and drank her whisper'd
tales.

They said that Love would die when Hope
was gone,

And Lové mourn'd long, and sorrow'd after
Hope;

At last she sought out Memory, and they
trod

The same old paths where Love had walk'd
with Hope,

And Memory fed the soul of Love with
tears. 810

II

From that time forth I would not see her
more;

But many weary moons I lived alone —
Alone, and in the heart of the great forest.
Sometimes upon the hills beside the sea
All day I watch'd the floating isles of
shade,

And sometimes on the shore, upon the sands
 Insensibly I drew her name, until
 The meaning of the letters shot into
 My brain; anon the wanton billow wash'd
 Them over, till they faded like my love.
 The hollow caverns heard me — the black
 brooks ¹¹
 Of the mid-forest heard me — the soft
 winds,
 Laden with thistle-down and seeds of
 flowers,
 Paused in their course to hear me, for my
 voice
 Was all of thee; the merry linnet knew
 me,
 The squirrel knew me, and the dragou-fly
 Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.
 The rough brier tore my bleeding palms;
 the hemlock,
 Brow-high, did strike my forehead as I
 past; ¹⁹
 Yet trod I not the wild-flower in my path,
 Nor bruised the wild-bird's egg.

Was this the end ?

Why grew we then together in one plot ?
 Why fed we from one fountain ? drew one
 sun ?
 Why were our mothers branches of one
 stem ?
 Why were we one in all things, save in
 that
 Where to have been one had been the cope
 and crown
 Of all I hoped and fear'd ? — if that same
 nearness
 Were father to this distance, and that *one*
 Vauncourier to this *double* ? if Affection
 Living slew Love, and Sympathy hew'd
 out ³⁰
 The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy ?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the hill
 Where last we roam'd together, for the
 sound
 Of the loud stream was pleasant, and the
 wind
 Came wooingly with woodbine smells.
 Sometimes
 All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,
 Fixing my eyes on those three cypress-
 cones
 That spired above the wood; and with
 mad hand

Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-screen,
 I cast them in the noisy brook beneath, ⁴⁰
 And watch'd them till they vanish'd from
 my sight
 Beneath the bower of wreathed eglantines.
 And all the fragments of the living rock, —
 Huge blocks, which some old trembling of
 the world
 Had loosen'd from the mountain, till they
 fell
 Half-digging their own graves, — these in
 my agony
 Did I make bare of all the golden moss,
 Wherewith the dashing runnel in the spring
 Had liveried them all over. In my brain
 The spirit seem'd to flag from thought to
 thought, ⁵⁰
 As moonlight wandering thro' a mist; my
 blood
 Crept like marsh drains thro' all my lan-
 guid limbs;
 The motions of my heart seem'd far within
 me,
 Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its pulses;
 And yet it shook me, that my frame would
 shudder,
 As if 't were drawn asunder by the rack.
 But over the deep graves of Hope and
 Fear,
 And all the broken palaces of the past,
 Brooded one master-passion evermore,
 Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky ⁶⁰
 Above some fair metropolis, earth-
 shock'd, —
 Hung round with ragged rims and burning
 folds, —
 Embathing all with wild and woful hues,
 Great hills of ruins, and collapsed masses
 Of thunder-shaken columns indistinct,
 And fused together in the tyrannous
 light —
 Ruins, the ruin of all my life and me !

Sometimes I thought Camilla was no
 more;
 Some one had told me she was dead, and
 ask'd
 If I would see her burial. Then I seem'd
 To rise, and through the forest-shadow
 borne ⁷¹
 With more than mortal swiftmess, I ran
 down
 The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon
 The rear of a procession, curving round
 The silver-sheeted bay, in front of which

Six stately virgins, all in white, upbore
A broad earth-sweeping pall of whitest
lawn,

Wreathed round the bier with garlands. In
the distance,

From out the yellow woods upon the hill
Look'd forth the summit and the pinnacles
Of a gray steeple — thence at intervals 81
A low bell tolling. All the pageantry,
Save those six virgins which upheld the
bier,

Were stoled from head to foot in flowing
black;

One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd his
brow,

And he was loud in weeping and in praise
Of her we follow'd. A strong sympathy
Shook all my soul; I flung myself upon him
In tears and cries. I told him all my love,
How I had loved her from the first;
whereat 90

He shrank and howl'd, and from his brow
drew back

His hand to push me from him, and the
face,

The very face and form of Lionel
Flash'd thro' my eyes into my innermost
brain,

And at his feet I seem'd to faint and fall,
To fall and die away. I could not rise,
Albeit I strove to follow. They past on,
The lordly phantasms! in their floating
folds

They past and were no more; but I had
fallen 99

Prone by the dashing runnel on the grass.

Always the inaudible, invisible thought,
Artificer and subject, lord and slave,
Shaped by the audible and visible,
Moulded the audible and visible.

All crisped sounds of wave and leaf and
wind

Flatter'd the fancy of my fading brain;
The cloud-pavilion'd element, the wood,
The mountain, the three cypresses, the
cave,

Storm, sunset, glows and glories of the
moon

Below black firs, when silent-creeping
winds 110

Laid the long night in silver streaks and
bars,

Were wrought into the tissue of my dream.
The moanings in the forest, the loud brook,

Cries of the partridge like a rusty key
Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dorhawk-
whirr

Awoke me not, but were a part of sleep,
And voices in the distance calling to me
And in my vision bidding me dream on,
Like sounds without the twilight realm of
dreams,

Which wander round the bases of the hills,
And murmur at the low-dropt eaves of
sleep, 121

Half-entering the portals. Oftentimes
The vision had fair prelude, in the end
Opening on darkness, stately vestibules
To caves and shows of death — whether the
mind,

With some revenge — even to itself un-
known —

Made strange division of its suffering
With her, whom to have suffering view'd
had been

Extremest pain; or that the clear-eyed
Spirit,

Being blunted in the present, grew at
length 130

Prophetic and prescient of whate'er
The future had in store; or that which
most

Enchains belief, the sorrow of my spirit
Was of so wide a compass it took in
All I had loved, and my dull agony,
Ideally to her transferr'd, became
Anguish intolerable.

The day waned;

Alone I sat with her. About my brow
Her warm breath floated in the utterance
Of silver-chorded tones; her lips were
sunder'd 140

With smiles of tranquil bliss, which broke
in light

Like morning from her eyes — her eloquent
eyes —

As I have seen them many a hundred
times —

Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro' mine
down rain'd

Their spirit-searching splendors. As a
vision

Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd
In damp and dismal dungeons underground,
Confined on points of faith, when strength
is shock'd

With torment, and expectancy of worse
Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged walls,

All unawares before his half-shut eyes, 151
Comes in upon him in the dead of night,
And with the excess of sweetness and of
awe,
Makes the heart tremble, and the sight run
over

Upon his steely gyves; so those fair eyes
Shone on my darkness, forms which ever
stood

Within the magic cirque of memory,
Invisible but deathless, waiting still
The edict of the will to reassume
The semblance of those rare realities 160
Of which they were the mirrors. Now the
light

Which was their life burst through the
cloud of thought
Keen, irrepressible.

It was a room

Within the summer-house of which I spake,
Hung round with paintings of the sea, and
one

A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved prow
Clambering, the mast bent and the ravin
wind

In her sail roaring. From the outer day,
Betwixt the close-set ivies came a broad
And solid beam of isolated light, 170
Crowded with driving atomies, and fell
Slanting upon that picture, from prime
youth

Well-known, well-loved. She drew it long
ago

Forthgazing on the waste and open sea,
One morning when the upblown billow
ran

Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I had
pour'd

Into the shadowing pencil's naked forms
Color and life. It was a bond and seal
Of friendship, spoken of with tearful smiles;
A monument of childhood and of love; 180
The poesy of childhood, my lost love
Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it to-
gether

In mute and glad remembrance, and each
heart

Grew closer to the other, and the eye
Was riveted and charm-bound, gazing like
The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low-
couch'd —

A beauty which is death; when all at once
That painted vessel, as with inner life,
Began to heave upon that painted sea.

An earthquake, my loud heart-beats, made
the ground 190
Reel under us, and all at once, soul, life
And breath and motion, past and flow'd
away

To those unreal billows. Round and round
A whirlwind caught and bore us; mighty
gyres

Rapid and vast, of hissing spray wind-
driven

Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she
shriek'd;

My heart was cloven with pain; I wound
my arms

About her; we whirl'd giddily; the wind
Sung, but I clasp'd her without fear. Her
weight

Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim
eyes, 200

And parted lips which drank her breath,
down-hung

The jaws of Death. I, groaning, from me
flung

Her empty phantom; all the sway and
whirl

Of the storm dropt to windless calm, and I
Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and
ever.

III

I came one day and sat among the stones
Strewn in the entry of the moaning cave;
A morning air, sweet after rain, ran over
The rippling levels of the lake, and blew
Coolness and moisture and all smells of
bud

And foliage from the dark and dripping
woods

Upon my fever'd brows that shook and
throb'd

From temple unto temple. To what height
The day had grown I know not. Then
came on me

The hollow tolling of the bell, and all 20
The vision of the bier. As heretofore

I walk'd behind with one who veil'd his
brow.

Methought by slow degrees the sullen bell
Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on the
shore

Sloped into louder surf. Those that went
with me,

And those that held the bier before my
face.

Moved with one spirit round about the bay,
Trode swifter steps; and while I walk'd
with these

In marvel at that gradual change, I thought
Four bells instead of one began to ring, ²⁰
Four merry bells, four merry marriage-
bells,

In clanging cadence jangling peal on
peal —

A long loud clash of rapid marriage-bells.
Then those who led the van, and those in
rear,

Rush'd into dance, and like wild Baccha-
nals

Fled onward to the steeple in the woods.
I, too, was borne along and felt the blast
Beat on my heated eyelids. All at once
The front rank made a sudden halt; the
bells

Lapsed into frightful stillness; the surge
fell

From thunder into whispers; those six
maids ³⁰

With shrieks and ringing laughter on the
sand

Threw down the bier; the woods upon the
hill

Waved with a sudden gust that sweeping
down

Took the edges of the pall, and blew it far
Until it hung, a little silver cloud
Over the sounding seas. I turn'd; my
heart

Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the hand,
Waiting to see the settled countenance ³⁹

Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading flowers.
But she from out her death-like chrysalis,

She from her bier, as into fresher life,
My sister, and my cousin, and my love,
Leapt lightly clad in bridal white — her
hair

Studded with one rich Provence rose — a
light

Of smiling welcome round her lips — her
eyes

And cheeks as bright as when she climb'd
the hill.

One hand she reach'd to those that came
behind,

And while I mused nor yet endured to
take

So rich a prize, the man who stood with
me ⁵⁰

Stept gaily forward, throwing down his
robes,

And claspt her hand in his. Again the bells
Jangled and clang'd; again the stormy surf
Crash'd in the shingle; and the whirling
roul

Led by those two rush'd into dance, and
fled

Wind-footed to the steeple in the woods,
Till they were swallow'd in the leafy
bowers,

And I stood sole beside the vacant bier.

There, there, my latest vision — then the
event !

IV

THE GOLDEN SUPPER ¹

(Another speaks)

He flies the event; he leaves the event to
me.

Poor Julian — how he rush'd away; the
bells,

Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear and
heart —

But cast a parting glance at me, you saw,
As who should say 'Continue.' Well, he
had

One golden hour — of triumph shall I say ?
Solace at least — before he left his home.

Would you had seen him in that hour of
his !

He moved thro' all of it majestically —
Restrain'd himself quite to the close — but
now —

Whether they were his lady's marriage-
bells,

Or prophets of them in his fantasy,
I never ask'd; but Lionel and the girl

Were wedded, and our Julian came again
Back to his mother's house among the
pines.

But these, their gloom, the mountains and
the Bay,

The whole land weigh'd him down as Ætna
does

The Giant of Mythology; he would go,
Would leave the land for ever, and had
gone

¹ This poem is founded upon a story in Boe-
caccio. See Introduction, p. 281.

Surely, but for a whisper, 'Go not yet,'²⁰
Some warning — sent divinely — as it
seem'd

By that which follow'd — but of this I
deem

As of the visions that he told — the event
Glanced back upon them in his after life,
And partly made them — tho' he knew it
not.

And thus he stay'd and would not look
at her —

No, not for months; but, when the eleventh
moon

After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,
Heard yet once more the tolling bell, and
said,

'Would you could toll me out of life!' but
found —³⁰

All softly as his mother broke it to him —
A crueller reason than a crazy ear
For that low kuell tolling his lady dead —
Dead — and had lain three days without a
pulse;

All that look'd on her had pronounced her
dead.

And so they bore her — for in Julian's land
They never nail a dumb head up in elm —
Bore her free-faced to the free airs of
heaven,

And laid her in the vault of her own kin.

What did he then? not die — he is here
and hale —⁴⁰

Not plunge headforemost from the moun-
tain there,

And leave the name of Lover's Leap, not
he.

He knew the meaning of the whisper now,
Thought that he knew it. 'This, I stay'd
for this;

O Love, I have not seen you for so long!
Now, now, will I go down into the grave,
I will be all alone with all I love,
And kiss her on the lips. She is his no
more;

The dead returns to me, and I go down⁴⁹
To kiss the dead.'

The fancy stirr'd him so

He rose and went, and, entering the dim
vault

And making there a sudden light, beheld
All round about him that which all will
be.

The light was but a flash, and went again.
Then at the far end of the vault he saw
His lady with the moonlight on her face;
Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars
Of black and bands of silver, which the
moon

Struck from an open grating overhead
High in the wall, and all the rest of her⁶⁰
Drown'd in the gloom and horror of the
vault.

'It was my wish,' he said, 'to pass, to
sleep,

To rest, to be with her — till the great day
Peal'd on us with that music which rights
all,

And raised us hand in hand.' And kneel-
ing there

Down in the dreadful dust that once was
man,

'Dust,' as he said, 'that once was loving
hearts,

Hearts that had beat with such a love as
mine —

Not such as mine, no, nor for such as her, —
He softly put his arm about her neck⁷⁰

And kiss'd her more than once, till helpless
death

And silence made him bold — nay, but I
wrong him,

He revered his dear lady even in death;
But, placing his true hand upon her heart,

'O you warm heart,' he moan'd, 'not even
death

Can chill you all at once' — then, starting,
thought

His dreams had come again. 'Do I wake
or sleep?

Or am I made immortal, or my love
Mortal once more?' It beat — the heart

— it beat;⁷⁹

Faint — but it beat; at which his own began
To pulse with such a vehemence that it
drown'd

The feebler motion underneath his hand.
But when at last his doubts were satisfied

He raised her softly from the sepulchre,
And, wrapping her all over with the cloak

He came in, and now striding fast, and
now

Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore
Holding his golden burthen in his arms,

So bore her thro' the solitary land
Back to the mother's house where she was
born.

There the good mother's kindly minister-
ing,
With half a night's appliances, recall'd
Her fluttering life. She rais'd an eye that
ask'd
'Where?' till the things familiar to her
youth
Had made a silent answer; then she spoke
'Here! and how came I here?' and learn-
ing it —
They told her somewhat rashly, as I
think —
At once began to wander and to wail,
'Ay, but you know that you must give me
back.
Send! bid him come;' but Lionel was
away — ¹⁰⁰
Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none knew
where.
'He casts me out,' she wept, 'and goes' —
a wail
That, seeming something, yet was nothing,
horn
Not from believing mind but shatter'd
nerve,
Yet haunting Julian, as her own reproof
At some precipitance in her burial.
Then, when her own true spirit had return'd,
'O, yes, and you,' she said, 'and none but
you?
For you have given me life and love again,
And none but you yourself shall tell him
of it, ¹¹⁰
And you shall give me back when he re-
turns.'
'Stay then a little,' answer'd Julian, 'here,
And keep yourself, none knowing, to your-
self;
And I will do your will. I may not stay,
No, not an hour; but send me notice of
him
When he returns, and then will I return,
And I will make a solemn offering of you
To him you love.' And faintly she re-
plied,
'And I will do *your* will, and none shall
know.'

Not know? with such a secret to be
known. ¹²⁰
But all their house was old and loved them
both,
And all the house had known the loves of
both,
Had died almost to serve them any way,

And all the land was waste and solitary.
And then he rode away; but after this,
An hour or two, Camilla's travail came
Upon her, and that day a boy was born,
Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,
And pausing at a hostel in a marsh, ¹³⁰
There fever seized upon him. Myself was
then
Travelling that land, and meant to rest an
hour;
And sitting down to such a base repast,
It makes me angry yet to speak of it —
I heard a groaning overhead, and climb'd
The moulder'd stairs — for everything was
vile —
And in a loft, with none to wait on him,
Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,
Raving of dead men's dust and beating
hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land, ¹⁴⁰
A flat malarian world of reed and rush!
But there from fever and my care of him
Sprang up a friendship that may help us
yet.
For while we roam'd along the dreary
coast,
And waited for her message, piece by
piece
I learnt the drearier story of his life;
And, tho' he loved and honor'd Lionel,
Found that the sudden wail his lady made
Dwelt in his fancy. Did he know her
worth,
Her beauty even? should he not be
taught, ¹⁵⁰
Even by the price that others set upon it,
The value of that jewel he had to guard?

Suddenly came her notice and we past,
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind, the
soul;
That makes the sequel pure, tho' some of
us
Beginning at the sequel know no more.
Not such am I; and yet I say the bird
That will not hear my call, however
sweet,
But if my neighbor whistle answers him —
What matter? there are others in the
wood. ¹⁶¹

Yet when I saw her — and I thought him
 crazed,
 Tho' not with such a craziness as needs
 A cell and keeper — those dark eyes of
 hers —
 O, such dark eyes! and not her eyes
 alone,
 But all from these to where she touch'd on
 earth,
 For such a craziness as Julian's look'd
 No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came ¹⁶⁹
 To greet us, her young hero in her arms!
 'Kiss him,' she said. 'You gave me life
 again.

He, but for you, had never seen it once.
 His other father you! Kiss him, and
 then
 Forgive him, if his name be Julian too.'

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart! his
 own
 Sent such a flame into his face, I knew
 Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him there.

But he was all the more resolved to go,
 And sent at once to Lionel, praying him,
 By that great love they both had borne the
 dead, ¹⁸⁰
 To come and revel for one hour with him
 Before he left the land for evermore;
 And then to friends — they were not many
 — who lived

Scatteringly about that lonely land of his,
 And bade them to a banquet of farewells.

And Julian made a solemn feast; I
 never
 Sat at a costlier, for all round his hall
 From column on to column, as in a wood,
 Not such as here — an equatorial one,
 Great garlands swung and blossom'd; and
 beneath, ¹⁹⁰

Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of art,
 Chalice and salver, wines that, heaven
 knows when,
 Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten
 sun,

And kept it thro' a hundred years of
 gloom,
 Yet glowing in a heart of ruby — cups
 Where nymph and god ran ever round in
 gold —

Others of glass as costly — some with
 gems
 Movable and resettable at will,
 And trebling all the rest in value — Ah
 heavens!

Why need I tell you all? — suffice to say
 That whatsoever such a house as his, ²⁰¹
 And his was old, has in it rare or fair
 Was brought before the guest. And they,
 the guests,
 Wonder'd at some strange light in Julian's
 eyes —

I told you that he had his golden hour —
 And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd
 To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his
 And that resolved self-exile from a land
 He never would revisit, such a feast
 So rich, so strange, and stranger even than
 rich, ²⁴⁰
 But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the
 hall
 Two great funereal curtains, looping down,
 Parted a little ere they met the floor,
 About a picture of his lady, taken
 Some years before, and falling hid the
 frame.

And just above the parting was a lamp;
 So the sweet figure folded round with
 night
 Seem'd stepping out of darkness with a
 smile.

Well, then — our solemn feast — we ate
 and drank, ²²⁰
 And might — the wines being of such no-
 bleness —
 Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,
 And something weird and wild about it
 all.

What was it? for our lover seldom spoke,
 Scarce touch'd the meats, but ever and
 anon

A priceless goblet with a priceless wine
 Arising show'd he drank beyond his use;
 And when the feast was near an end, he
 said:

'There is a custom in the Orient,
 friends —
 I read of it in Persia — when a man ²³⁰
 Will honor those who feast with him, he
 brings

And shows them whatsoever he accounts
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.
This custom —'

Pausing here a moment, all
The guests broke in upon him with meeting
hands
And cries about the banquet — 'Beautiful!
Who could desire more beauty at a feast?'

The lover answer'd: 'There is more than
one
Here sitting who desires it. Laud me
not ²⁴⁰
Before my time, but hear me to the
close.
This custom steps yet further when the
guest
Is loved and honor'd to the uttermost.
For after he hath shown him gems or
gold,
He brings and sets before him in rich
guise
That which is thrice as beautiful as these,
The beauty that is dearest to his heart —
"O my heart's lord, would I could show
you," he says,
"Even my heart too." And I propose to-
night ²⁴⁹
To show you what is dearest to my heart,
And my heart too.

'But solve me first a doubt.
I knew a man, nor many years ago;
He had a faithful servant, one who loved
His master more than all on earth beside.
He falling sick, and seeming close on
death,
His master would not wait until he died,
But bade his menials bear him from the
door,
And leave him in the public way to die.
I knew another, not so long ago,
Who found the dying servant, took him
home, ²⁶⁰
And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved his
life.
I ask you now, should this first master
claim
His service, whom does it belong to? him
Who thrust him out, or him who saved his
life?'

This question, so flung down before the
guests,
And balanced either way by each, at
length
When some were doubtful how the law
would hold,
Was handed over by consent of all
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of
phrase. ²⁷⁰
And he, beginning languidly — his loss
Weigh'd on him yet — but warming as he
went,
Glanced at the point of law, to pass it by,
Affirming that as long as either lived,
By all the laws of love and gratefulness,
The service of the one so saved was due
All to the saver — adding, with a smile,
The first for many weeks — a semi-smile
As at a strong conclusion — 'body and
soul
And life and limbs, all his to work his
will.' ²⁸⁰

Then Julian made a secret sign to me
To bring Camilla down before them all.
And crossing her own picture as she came,
And looking as much lovelier as herself
Is lovelier than all others — on her head
A diamond circlet, and from under this
A veil, that seem'd no more than gilded
air,
Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern gauze
With seeds of gold — so, with that grace of
hers, ²⁸⁹
Slow-moving as a wave against the wind,
That flings a mist behind it in the sun —
And bearing high in arms the mighty
babe,
The younger Julian, who himself was
crown'd
With roses, none so rosy as himself —
And over all her babe and her the jewels
Of many generations of his house
Sparkled and flash'd, for he had deck'd
them out
As for a solemn sacrifice of love —
So she came in — I am long in telling it,
I never yet beheld a thing so strange, ³⁰⁰
Sad, sweet, and strange together — floated
in —
While all the guests in mute amazement
rose —

And slowly pacing to the middle hall,
 Before the board, there paused and stood,
 her breast
 Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her feet,
 Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.
 But him she carried, him nor lights nor
 feast
 Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men; who
 cared
 Only to use his own, and staring wide
 And hungering for the gilt and jewell'd
 world ³¹⁰
 About him, look'd, as he is like to prove,
 When Julian goes, the lord of all he saw.

'My guests,' said Julian, 'you are hon-
 or'd now
 Even to the uttermost; in her behold
 Of all my treasures the most beautiful,
 Of all things upon earth the dearest to
 me;'
 Then waving us a sign to seat ourselves,
 Led his dear lady to a chair of state.
 And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face
 Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again ³²⁰
 Thrice in a second, felt him tremble too,
 And heard him muttering, 'So like, so
 like;
 She never had a sister. I knew none.
 Some cousin of his and hers—O God, so
 like!'
 And then he suddenly ask'd her if she
 were.
 She shook, and cast her eyes down, and was
 dumb.
 And then some other question'd if she
 came
 From foreign lands, and still she did not
 speak.
 Another, if the boy were hers; but she ³²⁹
 To all their queries answer'd not a word,
 Which made the amazement more, till one
 of them
 Said, shuddering, 'Her spectre!' But his
 friend
 Replied, in half a whisper, 'Not at least
 The spectre that will speak if spoken to.
 Terrible pity, if one so beautiful
 Prove, as I almost dread to find her,
 dumb!'

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd
 all:
 'She is but dumb, because in her you
 see

That faithful servant whom we spoke
 about,
 Obedient to her second master now; ³⁴⁰
 Which will not last. I have here to-night
 a guest
 So bound to me by common love and
 loss—
 What! shall I bind him more? in his be-
 half,
 Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him
 That which of all things is the dearest to
 me,
 Not only showing? and he himself pro-
 nounced
 That my rich gift is wholly mine to give.

'Now all be dumb, and promise' all of
 you
 Not to break in on what I say by word
 Or whisper, while I show you all my
 heart.' ³⁵⁰
 And then began the story of his love
 As here to-day, but not so wordily—
 The passionate moment would not suffer
 that—
 Past thro' his visions to the burial; thence
 Down to this last strange hour in his own
 hall;
 And then rose up, and with him all his
 guests
 Once more as by enchantment; all hut
 he,
 Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell again,
 And sat as if in chains—to whom he
 said:

'Take; my free gift, my cousin, for your
 wife; ³⁶⁰
 And were it only for the giver's sake,
 And tho' she seem so like the one you
 lost,
 Yet cast her not away so suddenly,
 Lest there be none left here to bring her
 back.
 I leave this land for ever.' Here he ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one hand,
 And bearing on one arm the noble babe,
 He slowly brought them both to Lionel.
 And there the widower husband and dead
 wife
 Rush'd each at each with a cry that rather
 seem'd ³⁷⁰
 For some new death than for a life re-
 new'd;

Whereat the very babe began to wail.
At once they turn'd, and caught and
brought him in
To their charm'd circle, and, half killing
him
With kisses, round him closed and claspt
again.
But Lionel, when at last he freed himself
From wife and child, and lifted up a face
All over glowing with the sun of life,

And love, and boundless thanks — the sight
of this
So frighted our good friend that, turning
to me 380
And saying, 'It is over; let us go' —
There were our horses ready at the doors —
We bade them no farewell, but mounting
these
He past for ever from his native land;
And I with him, my Julian, back to mine.

IDYLLS OF THE KING

IN TWELVE BOOKS

'*Flos Regum Arthurus.*'—JOSEPH OF EXETER

THE COMING OF ARTHUR
GARETH AND LYNETTE
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT
GERAINT AND ENID
BALIN AND BALAN
MERLIN AND VIVIEN

LANCELOT AND ELAINE
THE HOLY GRAIL
PELLEAS AND ETTARRE
THE LAST TOURNAMENT
GUINEVERE
THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory—since he held
them dear,
Perchance as finding there unconsciously
Some image of himself—I dedicate,
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—
These Idylls.

And indeed he seems to me.
Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,
'Who revered his conscience as his
king;
Whose glory was, redressing human
wrong;
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd to
it;
Who loved one only and who clave to
her—'
Her—over all whose realms to their last
isle,
Commingled with the gloom of imminent
war,
The shadow of his loss drew like eclipse,
Darkening the world. We have lost him;
he is gone.
We know him now; all narrow jealousies
Are silent, and we see him as he moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,
wise,

With what sublime repression of himself,
And in what limits, and how tenderly;
Not swaying to this faction or to that; ²⁰
Not making his high place the lawless
perch
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground
For pleasure; but thro' all this tract of
years
Wearing the white flower of a blameless
life,
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which beats upon a
throne
And blackens every blot; for where is
he
Who dares foreshadow for an only son
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than
his?
Or how should England dreaming of *his*
sons ³⁰
Hope more for these than some inherit-
ance
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
Laborious for her people and her poor—
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler
day—
Far-sighted summoner of War and
Waste.
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace—

Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince in-
deed, ⁴⁰
Beyond all titles, and a household name,
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still
endure;

Break not, for thou art royal, but endure,
Remembering all the beauty of that star
Which shone so close beside thee that ye
made

One light together, but has past and leaves
The Crown a lonely splendor.

May all love,

His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow thee,
The love of all thy sons encompass thee, ⁵⁰
The love of all thy daughters cherish thee,
The love of all thy people comfort thee,
Till God's love set thee at his side again !

THE COMING OF ARTHUR

LEODOGRAN, the king of Cameliard,
Had one fair daughter, and none other
child;

And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came
Ruled in this isle and, ever waging war
Each upon other, wasted all the land;
And still from time to time the heathen
host

Swarm'd over-seas, and harried what was
left.

And so there grew great tracts of wilder-
ness, ¹⁰

Wherein the beast was ever more and
more,

But man was less and less, till Arthur came.
For first Aurelius lived and fought and
died,

And after him King Uther fought and died,
But either fail'd to make the kingdom
one.

And after these King Arthur for a space,
And thro' the puissance of his Table
Round,

Drew all their petty principdoms under him,
Their king and head, and made a realm and
reign'd.

And thus the laud of Cameliard was
waste, ²⁰
Thick with wet woods, and many a beast
therein,

And none or few to scare or chase the
beast;

So that wild dog and wolf and boar and
bear

Came night and day, and rooted in the
fields,

And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.

And ever and anon the wolf would steal

The children and devour, but now and then,

Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce
teat

To human sucklings; and the children,
housed

In her foul den, there at their meat would
growl, ³⁰

And mock their foster-mother on four feet,
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like
men,

Worse than the wolves. And King Leo-
dogran

Groan'd for the Roman legions here again

And Cæsar's eagle. Then his brother king,

Urien, assail'd him; last a heathen horde,

Reddening the sun with smoke and earth
with blood,

And on the spike that split the mother's
heart

Spitting the child, brake on him, till,
amazed, ³⁹

He knew not whither he should turn for aid.

But — for he heard of Arthur newly
crown'd,

Tho' not without an uproar made by those
Who cried, 'He is not Uther's son' — the

King

Sent to him, saying, 'Arise, and help us
thou !

For here between the man and beast we
die.'

And Arthur yet had done no deed of
arms,

But heard the call and came; and Guine-
vere

Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass;

But since he neither wore on helm or shield

The golden symbol of his kinglihood, ⁵⁰

But rode a simple knight among his knights,

And many of these in richer arms than he,

She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,

One among many, tho' his face was bare.
 But Arthur, looking downward as he past,
 Felt the light of her eyes into his life
 Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and
 pitch'd
 His tents beside the forest. Then he drave
 The heathen; after, slew the beast, and
 fell'd
 The forest, letting in the sun, and made 60
 Broad pathways for the hunter and the
 knight,
 And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
 A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts
 Of those great lords and barons of his realm
 Flash'd forth and into war; for most of
 these,
 Colleagu'ing with a score of petty kings,
 Made head against him, crying: 'Who is
 he
 That he should rule us? who hath proven
 him
 King Uther's son? for lo! we look at him,
 And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor
 voice, 70
 Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.
 This is the son of Gorlois, not the King;
 This is the son of Anton, not the King.'

And Arthur, passing thence to battle, felt
 Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,
 Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere,
 And thinking as he rode: 'Her father said
 That there between the man and beast they
 die.

Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts
 Up to my throne and side by side with me?
 What happiness to reign a lonely king, 81
 Vext — O ye stars that shudder over me,
 O earth that soundest hollow under me,
 Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be
 join'd

To her that is the fairest under heaven,
 I seem as nothing in the mighty world,
 And cannot will my will nor work my work
 Wholly, nor make myself in mine own
 realm

Victor and lord. But were I join'd with
 her,

Then might we live together as one life, 90
 And reigning with one will in everything
 Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
 And power on this dead world to make it
 live.'

Thereafter — as he speaks who tells the
 tale —
 When Arthur reach'd a field of battle
 bright
 With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the world
 Was all so clear about him that he saw
 The smallest rock far on the faintest hill,
 And even in high day the morning star. 99
 So when the King had set his banner broad,
 At once from either side, with trumpet-
 blast,
 And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto
 blood,
 The long-lanced battle let their horses run.
 And now the barons and the kings pre-
 vail'd,
 And now the King, as here and there that
 war
 Went swaying; but the Powers who walk
 the world
 Made lightnings and great thunders over
 him,
 And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by main
 might,
 And mightier of his hands with every blow,
 And leading all his knighthood threw the
 kings, 110
 Carados, Urien, Cradlemont of Wales,
 Clandins, and Clariance of Northumber-
 land,
 The King Brandagoras of Latangor,
 With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,
 And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a voice
 As dreadful as the shout of one who sees
 To one who sins, and deems himself alone
 And all the world asleep, they swerved and
 brake
 Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the
 brands
 That hack'd among the flyers, 'Ho! they
 yield!' 120
 So like a painted battle the war stood
 Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,
 And in the heart of Arthur joy was lord.
 He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he loved
 And honor'd most. 'Thou dost not doubt
 me King,
 So well thine arm hath wrought for me to-
 day.'
 'Sir and my liege,' he cried, 'the fire of
 God
 Descends upon thee in the battle-field.
 I know thee for my King!' Whereat the
 two,
 For each had warded either in the fight,

Sware on the field of death a deathless
love.
And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God in
man;
Let chance what will, I trust thee to the
death.'

Then quickly from the foughten field he
sent

Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new-made knights, to King Leodogran,
Saying, 'If I in aught have served thee
well,
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife.'

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in
heart

Debating — 'How should I that am a king,
However much he help me at my need, ¹⁴⁷
Give my one daughter saving to a king,
And a king's son?' — lifted his voice, and
call'd

A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom
He trusted all things, and of him required
His counsel: 'Knowest thou aught of Ar-
thur's birth?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and
said:

Sir King, there be but two old men that
know;

And each is twice as old as I; and one ¹⁴⁹
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served
King Uther thro' his magic art, and one
Is Merlin's master — so they call him —
Bleys,

Who taught him magic; but the scholar
ran

Before the master, and so far that Bleys
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and
wrote

All things and whatsoever Merlin did
In one great annal-book, where after-years
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth.'

To whom the King Leodogran replied:
'O friend, had I been holpen half as well
By this King Arthur as by thee to-day, ¹⁶¹
Then beast and man had had their share of
me;

But summon here before us yet once more
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

Then, when they came before him, the
king said:

'I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser
fowl,

And reason in the chase; but wherefore
now

Do these your lords stir up the heat of war,
Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye yourselves,
Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's
son?' ¹⁷¹

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd, 'Ay.'
Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,
spake —

For bold in heart and act and word was he,
Whenever slander breathed against the
King —

'Sir, there be many rumors on this head;
For there be those who hate him in their
hearts,

Call him baseborn, and since his ways are
sweet,

And theirs are bestial, hold him less than
man; ¹⁸⁰

And there be those who deem him more
than man,

And dream he dropt from heaven. But my
belief

In all this matter — so ye care to learn —
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's time
The prince and warrior Gorlois, he that
held

Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,
Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne;
And daughters had she borne him, — one
whereof,

Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent,
Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved ¹⁹⁰

To Arthur, — but a son she had not borne.
And Uther cast upon her eyes of love;

But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,
So loathed the bright dishonor of his love
That Gorlois and King Uther went to war,
And overthrown was Gorlois and slain.

Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged
Ygerne within Tintagil, where her men,

Seeing the mighty swarm about their walls,
Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in, ²⁰⁰

And there was none to call to but himself.
So, compass'd by the power of the king,
Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,
And with a shameful swiftness; afterward,
Not many moons, King Uther died him-
self,

Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule
After him, lest the realm should go to
wrack.

And that same night, the night of the new
year,

By reason of the bitterness and grief ²⁰⁹

That vext his mother, all before his time

Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born

Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate

To Merlin, to be holden far apart

Until his hour should come, because the
lords

Of that fierce day were as the lords of
this,

Wild beasts, and surely would have toru
the child

Piecemeal among them, had they known;
for each

But sought to rule for his own self and
hand,

And many hated Uther for the sake

Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took the
child, ²²⁰

And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight

And ancient friend of Uther; and his wife

Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him
with her own;

And no man knew. And ever since the
lords

Have foughten like wild beasts among
themselves,

So that the realm has gone to wrack; but
now,

This year, when Merlin — for his hour had
come —

Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the
hall,

Proclaiming, "Here is Uther's heir, your
king,"

A hundred voices cried: "Away with
him!" ²³⁰

No king of ours! a son of Gorlois he,

Or else the child of Anton, and no king,

Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro' his
craft,

And while the people clamor'd for a king,
Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the great
lords

Banded, and so brake out in open war.'

Then while the king debated with him-
self

If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,

Or born the son of Gorlois after death, ²³⁹

Or Uther's son and born before his time,

Or whether there were truth in anything
Said by these three, there came to Came-
liard,

With Gawain and young Modred, her two
sons,

Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Belli-
cent;

Whom as he could, not as he would, the
king

Made feast for, saying, as they sat at
meat:

'A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas.

Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor his
men

Report him! Yea, but ye — think ye this
king —

So many those that hate him, and so
strong, ²⁵⁰

So few his knights, however brave they
be —

Hath body enow to hold his foemen
down?'

'O King,' she cried, 'and I will tell
thee: few,

Few, but all brave, all of one mind with
him;

For I was near him when the savage yells
Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur sat

Crowned on the dais, and his warriors
cried,

"Be thou the king, and we will work thy
will

Who love thee." Then the King in low
deep tones,

And simple words of great authority, ²⁶⁰
Bound them by so strait vows to his own
self

That when they rose, knighted from kneel-
ing, some

Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,

Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one who
wakes

Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

'But when he spake, and cheer'd his
Table Round

With large, divine, and comfortable words,
Beyond my tongue to tell thee — I beheld

From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash
A momentary likeness of the King; ²⁷⁰

And ere it left their faces, thro' the cross
And those around it and the Crucified,

Down from the casement over Arthur,
smote

Flame-color, vert, and azure, in three rays,
One falling upon each of three fair queens
Who stood in silence near his throne, the
friends

Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright
Sweet faces, who will help him at his need.

‘And there I saw mage Merlin, whose
vast wit ²⁷⁹

And hundred winters are but as the hands
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

‘And near him stood the Lady of the
Lake,

Who knows a subtler magic than his
own —

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.
She gave the King his huge cross-hilted
sword,

Whereby to drive the heathen out. A mist
Of incense curl’d about her, and her face
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster gloom;
But there was heard among the holy hymns
A voice as of the waters, for she dwells ²⁹⁰
Down in a deep — calm, whatsoever storms
May shake the world — and when the sur-
face rolls,

Hath power to walk the waters like our
Lord.

‘There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the
sword

That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
And Arthur row’d across and took it —
rich

With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye — the blade so
bright ²⁹⁹

That men are blinded by it — on one side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this
world,

“Take me,” but turn the blade and ye
shall see,

And written in the speech ye speak your-
self,

“Cast me away!” And sad was Arthur’s
face

Taking it, but old Merlin counsell’d him,
“Take thou and strike! the time to cast
away

Is yet far-off.” So this great brand the
king

Took, and by this will beat his foemen
down.’

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but thought
To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask’d,
Fixing full eyes of question on her face, ³¹¹
‘The swallow and the swift are near akin,
But thou art closer to this noble prince,
Being his own dear sister;’ and she said,
‘Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am I;’
‘And therefore Arthur’s sister?’ ask’d the
king.

She answer’d, ‘These be secret things,’
and sign’d

To those two sons to pass, and let them be.
And Gawain went, and breaking into song
Sprang out, and follow’d by his flying hair
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw; ³²¹
But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,
And there half-heard — the same that after-
ward

Struck for the throne, and striking found
his doom.

And then the Queen made answer:
‘What know I?’

For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,
And dark in hair and eyes am I; and dark
Was Gorlois; yea, and dark was Uther
too,
Wellnigh to blackness; but this king is
fair

Beyond the race of Britons and of men. ³³⁰
Moreover, always in my mind I hear
A cry from out the dawning of my life,
A mother weeping, and I hear her say,
“O that ye had some brother, pretty one,
To guard thee on the rough ways of the
world.”’

‘Ay,’ said the king, ‘and hear ye such
a cry?’

But when did Arthur chance upon thee
first?’

‘O King!’ she cried, ‘and I will tell
thee true.

He found me first when yet a little maid.
Beaten I had been for a little fault ³⁴⁰
Whereof I was not guilty; and out I ran
And flung myself down on a bank of heath,
And hated this fair world and all therein,
And wept, and wish’d that I were dead;
and he —

I know not whether of himself he came,
Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can
walk

Unseen at pleasure — he was at my side,

And spake sweet words, and comforted my
heart,³⁴⁸
And dried my tears, being a child with me.
And many a time he came, and evermore
As I grew greater grew with me; and sad
At times he seem'd, and sad with him was I,
Stern too at times, and then I loved him
not,
But sweet again, and then I loved him well.
And now of late I see him less and less,
But those first days had golden hours for
me,
For then I surely thought he would be
king.

'But let me tell thee now another tale:
For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they
say,
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me, ³⁶⁰
To hear him speak before he left his life.
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the
mage;
And when I enter'd told me that himself
And Merlin ever served about the king,
Uther, before he died; and on the night
When Uther in Tintagil past away
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two
Left the still king, and passing forth to
breathe,
Then from the castle gateway by the chasm
Descending thro' the dismal night — a
night ³⁷⁰
In which the bounds of heaven and earth
were lost —
Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape
thereof
A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to
stern
Bright with a shining people on the decks,
And gone as soon as seen. And then the
two
Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great
sea fall,
Wave after wave, each mightier than the
last,
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the
deep ³⁷⁹
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame;
And down the wave and in the flame was
borne
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,
Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried,
"The King!

Here is an heir for Uther!" And the
fringe
Of that great breaker, sweeping up the
strand,
Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,
And all at once all round him rose in fire,
So that the child and he were clothed in
fire.
And presently thereafter follow'd calm, ³⁹⁰
Free sky and stars. "And this same child,"
he said,
"Is he who reigns; nor could I part in
peace
Till this were told." And saying this the
seer
Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of
death,
Not ever to be question'd any more
Save on the further side; but when I met
Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were
truth —
The shining dragon and the naked child
Descending in the glory of the seas —
He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd
me ⁴⁰⁰
In riddling triplets of old time, and said: —
"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the
sky!
A young man will be wiser by and by;
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.
"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the
lea!
And truth is this to me, and that to thee;
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.
"Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom
blows;
Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who
knows?
From the great deep to the great deep he
goes." ⁴¹⁰
'So Merlin riddling anger'd me; but
thou
Fear not to give this King thine only
child,
Guinevere; so great bards of him will sing
Hereafter, and dark sayings from of old
Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of
men,
And echo'd by old folk beside their fires
For comfort after their wage-work is done,
Speak of the King; and Merlin in our time
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn

Tho' men may wound him that he will not
die,⁴²⁰
But pass, again to come, and then or now
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,
Till these and all men hail him for their
king.'

She spake and King Leodogran rejoiced,
But musing 'Shall I answer yea or nay?'
Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept,
and saw,

Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,
Field after field, up to a height, the peak
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom king,
Now looming, and now lost; and on the
slope⁴³⁰

The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was
driven,

Fire glimpsed; and all the land from roof
and rick,

In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,
Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with
the haze

And made it thicker; while the phantom
king

Sent out at times a voice; and here or there
Stood one who pointed toward the voice,
the rest

Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No king of
ours,

No son of Uther, and no king of ours;'
Till with a wink his dream was changed,
the haze⁴⁴⁰

Descended, and the solid earth became
As nothing, but the King stood out in hea-
ven,

Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent
Ulfin, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
Back to the court of Arthur answering
yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom
he loved

And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride
forth

And bring the Queen, and watch'd him
from the gates;

And Lancelot past away among the flow-
ers —⁴⁴⁹

For then was latter April — and return'd
Among the flowers, in May, with Guine-
vere.

To whom arrived, by Dubric the high
saint,

Chief of the church in Britain, and before
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the
King

That morn was married, while in stainless
white,

The fair beginners of a nobler time,
And glorying in their vows and him, his
knights

Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.
Far shone the fields of May thro' open
door,

The sacred altar blossom'd white with
May,⁴⁶⁰

The sun of May descended on their King,
They gazed on all earth's beauty in their
Queen,

Roll'd incense, and there past along the
hymns

A voice as of the waters, while the two
Sware at the shrine of Christ a deathless
love.

And Arthur said, 'Behold, thy doom is
mine.

Let chance what will, I love thee to the
death!'

To whom the Queen replied with drooping
eyes,

'King and my lord, I love thee to the
death!'

And holy Dubric spread his hands and
spake:⁴⁷⁰

'Reign ye, and live and love, and make the
world

Other, and may thy Queen be one with
thee,

And all this Order of thy Table Round
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their King!'

So Dubric said; but when they left the
shrine

Great lords from Rome before the portal
stood,

In scornful stillness gazing as they past;
Then while they paced a city all on fire

With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets
blew,

And Arthur's knighthood sang before the
King: —⁴⁸⁰

'Blow trumpet, for the world is white with
May!

Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away!
Blow thro' the living world — "Let the King
reign!"

'Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's realm?
Flash brand and lance, fall battle-axe upon helm,
Fall battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the King reign!

'Strike for the King and live! his knights have heard
That God hath told the King a secret word.
Fall battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the King reign!

'Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the dust.
Blow trumpet! live the strength, and die the lust!⁴⁹⁰
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!

'Strike for the King and die! and if thou diest,
The King is king, and ever wills the highest.
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!

'Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!

'The King will follow Christ, and we the King,
In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.⁵⁰⁰

Fall battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!

So sang the knighthood, moving to their hall.
There at the banquet those great lords from Rome,
The slowly-fading mistress of the world,
Strode in and claim'd their tribute as of yore.
But Arthur spake: 'Behold, for these have sworn
To wage my wars, and worship me their King;
The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And we that fight for our fair father Christ,⁵⁰⁹
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and old
To drive the heathen from your Roman wall,
No tribute will we pay.' So those great lords
Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for a space
Were all one will, and thro' that strength the King
Drew in the petty principdoms under him,
Fought, and in twelve great battles overcame
The heathen hordes, and made a realm and reign'd.

THE ROUND TABLE

GARETH AND LYNETTE
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT
GERAINT AND ENID
BALIN AND BALAN
MERLIN AND VIVIEN

LANCELOT AND ELAINE
THE HOLY GRAIL
PELLEAS AND ETTARRE
THE LAST TOURNAMENT
GUINEVERE

GARETH AND LYNETTE

THE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring
Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted pine
Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd away.
'How he went down,' said Gareth, 'as a false knight
Or evil king before my lance, if lance

Were mine to use — O senseless cataract,
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy —
And yet thou art but swollen with cold
snows
And mine is living blood. Thou dost His
will,¹⁰
The Maker's, and not knowest, and I that
know,
Have strength and wit, in my good mother's
hall

Linger with vacillating obedience,
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and whistled
to —

Since the good mother holds me still a
child!

Good mother is bad mother unto me!
A worse were better; yet no worse would I.
Heaven yield her for it, but in me put force
To weary her ears with one continuous
prayer,

Until she let me fly discaged to sweep 20
In ever-highering eagle-circles up
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence
swoop

Down upon all things base, and dash them
dead,

A knight of Arthur, working out his will,
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain, when
he came

With Modred hither in the summer-time,
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proveu
knight.

Modred for want of worthier was the judge.
Then I so shook him in the saddle, he said,
"Thou hast half prevail'd against me," said
so — he — 30

Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was mute,
For he is always sullen — what care I?'

And Gareth went, and hovering round
her chair

Ask'd, 'Mother, tho' ye count me still the
child,

Sweet mother, do ye love the child?' She
laugh'd,

'Thou art but a wild-goose to question it.'
'Then, mother, au ye love the child,' he
said,

'Being a goose and rather tame than wild,
Hear the child's story.' 'Yea, my well-
beloved,

An't were but of the goose and golden
eggs.' 40

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling
eyes:

'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of
mine

Was finer gold than any goose can lay;
For this an eagle, a royal eagle, laid
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.
And there was ever haunting round the
palm

A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw

The splendor sparkling from aloft, and
thought,

"An I could climb and lay my hand upon
it, 50

Then were I wealthier than a leash of
kings."

But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb,
One that had loved him from his childhood
caught

And stay'd him, "Climb not lest thou break
thy neck,

I charge thee by my love," and so the boy,
Sweet mother, neither clomb nor brake his
neck,

But brake his very heart in pining for it,
And past away.'

To whom the mother said,
'True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself
and climb'd,

And handed down the golden treasure to
him.' 60

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling
eyes:

'Gold? said I gold? — ay then, why he, or
she,

Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world
Had ventured — had the thing I spake of
been

Mere gold — but this was all of that true
steel

Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,
And lightnings play'd about it in the storm,
And all the little fowl were flurried at it,
And there were cries and clashing in the
nest,

That sent him from his senses. Let me
go.' 70

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and
said:

'Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd out!
For ever since when traitor to the King
He fought against him in the barous' war,
And Arthur gave him back his territory,
His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies
there

A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburiable,
No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks,
nor knows. 80

And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,
Albeit neither loved with that full love

I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love.
 Stay therefore thou; red berries charm the
 bird,
 And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the
 wars,
 Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang
 Of wrench'd or broken limb — an often
 chance
 In those brain-stunning shocks, and tour-
 ney-falls,
 Frights to my heart. But stay; follow the
 deer ⁸⁹
 By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns;
 So make thy manhood mightier day by
 day.
 Sweet is the chase; and I will seek thee out
 Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace
 Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone
 year,
 Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
 I know not thee, myself, nor anything.
 Stay, my best son! ye are yet more boy
 than man.'

Then Gareth: 'An ye hold me yet for
 child,
 Hear yet once more the story of the child.
 For, mother, there was once a king, like
 ours. ¹⁰⁰
 The prince his heir, when tall and mar-
 riageable,
 Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the king
 Set two before him. One was fair, strong,
 arm'd —
 But to be won by force — and many men
 Desired her; one, good lack, no man de-
 sired.
 And these were the conditions of the king:
 That save he won the first by force, he
 needs
 Must wed that other, whom no man de-
 sired,
 A red-faced bride who knew herself so
 vile ¹⁰⁹
 That evermore she long'd to hide herself,
 Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye —
 Yea — some she cleaved to, but they died
 of her.
 And one — they call'd her Fame; and one
 — O mother,
 How can ye keep me tether'd to you? —
 Shame.
 Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.
 Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the
 King,

Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow
 the King —
 Else, wherefore born?'

To whom the mother said:
 'Sweet son, for there he many who deem
 him not,
 Or will not deem him, wholly proven
 king — ¹²⁰
 Albeit in mine own heart I knew him King
 When I was frequent with him in my youth,
 And heard him kingly speak, and doubted
 him
 No more than he, himself; but felt him
 mine,
 Of closest kin to me. Yet — wilt thou leave
 Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine
 all,
 Life, limbs, for one that is not proven king?
 Stay, till the cloud that settles round his
 birth
 Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son.'

And Gareth answer'd quickly: 'Not an
 hour, ¹³⁰
 So that ye yield me — I will walk thro'
 fire,
 Mother, to gain it — your full leave to go.
 Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd
 Rome
 From off the threshold of the realm, and
 crush'd
 The idolaters, and made the people free?
 Who should be king save him who makes
 us free?'

So when the Queen, who long had sought
 in vain
 To break him from the intent to which he
 grew,
 Found her son's will unwaveringly one,
 She answer'd craftily: 'Will ye walk thro'
 fire? ¹⁴⁰
 Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the
 smoke.
 Ay, go then, an ye must; only one proof,
 Before thou ask the King to make thee
 knight,
 Of thine obedience and thy love to me,
 Thy mother, — I demand.'

And Gareth cried:
 'A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.
 Nay — quick! the proof to prove me to the
 quick!'

But slowly spake the mother looking at
him:
'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's
hall,
And hire thyself to serve for meats and
drinks ¹⁵⁰
Among the scullions and the kitchen-
knaves,
And those that hand the dish across the
bar.
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any one.
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a
day.'

For so the Queen believed that when her
son
Beheld his only way to glory lead
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,
Her own true Gareth was too princely-
proud
To pass thereby; so should he rest with her,
Closed in her castle from the sound of
arms. ¹⁶⁰

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied:
'The thrall in person may be free in soul,
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,
And, since thou art my mother, must obey.
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;
For hence will I, disguised, and hire myself
To serve with scullions and with kitchen-
knaves;
Nor tell my name to any — no, not the
King.'

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's
eye
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he
turn'd, ¹⁷¹
Perplex his outward purpose, till an hour
When, waken'd by the wind which with
full voice
Swept hellowing thro' the darkness on to
dawn,
He rose, and out of slumber calling two
That still had tended on him from his
birth,
Before the wakeful mother heard him,
went.

The three were clad like tillers of the
soil.
Southward they set their faces. The birds
made

Melody on branch and melody in mid air.
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into
green, ¹⁸¹
And the live green had kindled into flow-
ers,
For it was past the time of Easter-day.

So, when their feet were planted on the
plain
That broaden'd toward the base of Came-
lot,
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn
Rolling her smoke about the royal mount,
That rose between the forest and the field.
At times the summit of the high city
flash'd;
At times the spires and turrets half-way
down ¹⁹⁰
Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the great
gate shone
Only, that open'd on the field below;
Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth were
amazed,
One crying, 'Let us go no further, lord;
Here is a city of enchanters, built
By fairy kings.' The second echo'd him,
'Lord, we have heard from our wise man
at home
To northward, that this king is not the
King,
But only changeling out of Fairyland, ²⁰⁰
Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery
And Merlin's glamour.' Then the first
again,
'Lord, there is no such city anywhere,
But all a vision.'

Gareth answer'd them
With laughter, swearing he had glamour
enow
In his own blood, his principedom, youth,
and hopes,
To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea;
So push'd them all unwilling toward the
gate.
And there was no gate like it under
heaven.
For barefoot on the keystone, which was
lined ²¹⁰
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
The Lady of the Lake stood; all her dress
Wept from her sides as water flowing
away;

But like the cross her great and goodly
 arms
 Stretch'd under all the cornice and up-
 held.
 And drops of water fell from either hand;
 And down from one a sword was hung,
 from one
 A censer, either worn with wind and storm;
 And o'er her breast floated the sacred
 fish;
 And in the space to left of her, and
 right, ²²⁰
 Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,
 New things and old co-twisted, as if Time
 Were nothing, so inveterately that men
 Were giddy gazing there; and over all
 High on the top were those three queens,
 the friends
 Of Arthur, who should help him at his
 need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a
 space
 Stared at the figures that at last it seem'd
 The dragon-boughts and elvish emblem-
 ings
 Began to move, seethe, twine, and curl.
 They call'd ²³⁰
 To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is alive.'

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his
 eyes
 So long that even to him they seem'd to
 move.
 Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.
 Back from the gate started the three, to
 whom
 From out thereunder came an ancient man,
 Long-bearded, saying, 'Who be ye, my
 sons?'

Then Gareth: 'We be tillers of the soil,
 Who leaving share in furrow come to
 see
 The glories of our King; but these, my
 men,— ²⁴⁰
 Your city moved so weirdly in the mist—
 Doubt if the King be king at all, or come
 From Fairyland; and whether this be built
 By magic, and by fairy kings and queens;
 Or whether there be any city at all,
 Or all a vision; and this music now
 Hath scared them both, but tell thou these
 the truth.'

Then that old Seer made answer, playing
 on him
 And saying: 'Son, I have seen the good
 ship sail
 Keel upward, and mast downward, in the
 heavens, ²⁵⁰
 And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air;
 And here is truth, but an it please thee
 not,
 Take thou the truth as thou hast told it me.
 For truly, as thou sayest, a fairy king
 And fairy queens have built the city, son;
 They came from out a sacred mountain-
 cleft
 Toward the sunrise, each with harp in
 hand,
 And built it to the music of their harps.
 And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son,
 For there is nothing in it as it seems ²⁶⁰
 Saving the King; tho' some there be that
 hold
 The King a shadow, and the city real.
 Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou
 pass
 Beneath this archway, then wilt thou be-
 come
 A thrall to his enchantments, for the King
 Will bind thee by such vows as is a shame
 A man should not be bound by, yet the
 which
 No man can keep; but, so thou dread to
 swear,
 Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide
 Without, among the cattle of the field. ²⁷⁰
 For an ye heard a music, like enow
 They are building still, seeing the city is
 built
 To music, therefore never built at all,
 And therefore built for ever.'

Gareth spake
 Anger'd: 'Old master, reverence thine own
 beard
 That looks as white as utter truth, and
 seems
 Wellnigh as long as thou art statured tall!
 Why mockest thou the stranger that hath
 been
 To thee fair-spoken?'

But the Seer replied:
 'Know ye not then the Riddling of the
 Bards: ²⁸⁰
 "Confusion, and illusion, and relation,

Elusion, and occasion, and evasion" ?
I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,
And all that see thee, for thou art not who
Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou
art.

And now thou goest up to mock the King,
Who cannot brook the shadow of any lie.'

Unmockingly the mocker ending here
Turn'd to the right, and past along the
plain;

Whom Gareth looking after said: 'My
men, 290

Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
Here on the threshold of our enterprise.
Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I.
Well, we will make amends.'

With all good cheer

He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd with his
twain

Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the work
Of ancient kings who did their days in
stone;

Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at Arthur's
court,

Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and every-
where, 300

At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening
peak

And pinnacle, and had made it spire to
heaven.

And ever and anon a knight would pass
Outward, or inward to the hall; his arms
Clash'd, and the sound was good to Gar-
eth's ear.

And out of bower and casement shyly
glanced

Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of
love;

And all about a healthful people stept
As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld 311
Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall
The splendor of the presence of the King
Throned, and delivering doom — and
look'd no more —

But felt his young heart hammering in his
ears,

And thought, 'For this half-shadow of a lie
The truthful King will doom me when I
speak.'

Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes 320
Of those tall knights that ranged about
the throne

Clear honor shining like the dewy star
Of dawn, and faith in their great King,
with pure

Affection, and the light of victory,
Aud glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the King:
'A boon, Sir King! Thy father, Uther,
reft

From my dead lord a field with violence;
For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold, 329
Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,
We yielded not; and then he reft us of it.
Perforce and left us neither gold nor field.'

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye? gold
or field?'

To whom the woman weeping, 'Nay, my
lord,
The field was pleasant in my husband's
eye.'

And Arthur: 'Have thy pleasant field
again,

And thrice the gold for Uther's use thereof,
According to the years. No boon is here,
But justice, so thy say be proven true.

Accursed, who from the wrongs his father
did 340

Would shape himself a right!'

And while she past,
Came yet another widow crying to him:

'A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy, Kiung,
am I.

With thine own hand thou slewest my dear
lord,

A knight of Uther in the barons' war,
When Lot and many another rose and
fought

Against thee, saying thou wert basely born.
I held with these, and loathe to ask thee
aught.

Yet lo! my husband's brother had my son
Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved him
dead, 350

And standeth seized of that inheritance
Which thou that slewest the sire hast left
the son.

So, tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,

Grant me some knight to do the battle for
me,
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my
son.'

Then strode a good knight forward, cry-
ing to him,
'A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman, I.
Give me to right her wrong, and slay the
man.'

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and
cried,
'A boon, Sir King! even that thou grant
her none, ³⁶⁰
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in full
hall —
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve and
gag.'

But Arthur: 'We sit King, to help the
wring'd
Thro' all our realm. The woman loves her
lord.
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and
hates!
The kings of old had doom'd thee to the
flames;
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee
dead,
And Uther slit thy tongue; but get thee
hence — ³⁶⁸
Lest that rough humor of the kings of old
Return upon me! Thou that art her kin,
Go likewise; lay him low and slay him not,
But bring him here, that I may judge the
right,
According to the justice of the King.
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King
Who lived and died for men, the man shall
die.'

Then came in hall the messenger of
Mark,
A name of evil savor in the land,
The Cornish king. In either hand he bore
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as
shines
A field of charlock in the sudden sun ³⁸⁰
Between two showers, a cloth of palest gold,
Which down he laid before the throne, and
knelt,
Delivering that his lord, the vassal king,
Was even upon his way to Camelot;
For having heard that Arthur of his grace

Had made his goodly cousin Tristram
knight,
And, for himself was of the greater state,
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord
Would yield him this large honor all the
more;
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of
gold, ³⁹⁰
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to
rend
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. 'The
goodly knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand
among these?'
For, midway down the side of that long
hall,
A stately pile, — whereof along the front,
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and some
blank,
There ran a treble range of stony shields, —
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the
hearth. ⁴⁰⁰
And under every shield a knight was
named.
For this was Arthur's custom in his hall:
When some good knight had done one
noble deed,
His arms were carven only; but if twain,
His arms were blazon'd also; but if none,
The shield was blank and bare, without a
sign
Saving the name beneath. And Gareth saw
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and
bright,
And Modred's blank as death; and Arthur
cried ⁴⁰⁹
To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

'More like are we to reave him of his
crown
Than make him knight because men call
him king.
The kings we found, ye know we stay'd
their hands
From war among themselves, but left them
kings;
Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,
Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them
we enroll'd
Among us, and they sit within our hall.
But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name of
king,

As Mark would sully the low state of churl;
 And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,
 Return, and meet, and hold him from our
 eyes, ⁴²¹
 Lest we should lap him up in cloth of
 lead,
 Silenced for ever — craven — a man of
 plots,
 Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside ambush-
 ings —
 No fault of thine; let Kay the seneschal
 Look to thy wants, and send thee satis-
 fied —
 Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand be
 seen !'

And many another suppliant crying came
 With noise of ravage wrought by beast and
 man, ⁴²⁹
 And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily
 Down on the shoulders of the twain, his
 men,
 Approach'd between them toward the King,
 and ask'd,
 'A boon, Sir King,' — his voice was all
 ashamed, —
 'For see ye not how weak and hunger-
 worn
 I seem — leaning on these ? grant me to
 serve
 For meat and drink among thy kitchen-
 knives
 A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my
 name.
 Hereafter I will fight.'

To him the King:
 'A goodly youth and worth a goodlier
 boon ! ⁴⁴⁰
 But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must
 Kay,
 The master of the meats and drinks, be
 thine.'

He rose and past; then Kay, a man of
 mien
 Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself
 Root-bitten by white lichen:

'Lo ye now !
 This fellow hath broken from some abbey,
 where,
 God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,

However that might chance ! but an he
 work,
 Like any pigeon will I cram his crop, ⁴⁴⁹
 And sleeker shall he shine than any hog.'

Then Lancelot standing near: 'Sir Senes-
 chal,
 Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray, and
 all the hounds;
 A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost not
 know.
 Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and
 fine,
 High nose, a nostril large and fine, and
 hands
 Large, fair, and fine ! — Some young lad's
 mystery —
 But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the
 boy
 Is noble-natured. Treat him with all grace,
 Lest he should come to shame thy judging
 of him.'

Then Kay: 'What murmurest thou of
 mystery ? ⁴⁶⁰
 Think ye this fellow will poison the King's
 dish ?
 Nay, for he spake too fool-like — mystery !
 Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd
 For horse and armor. Fair and fine, for-
 sooth !
 Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands ? but see thou
 to it
 That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some
 fine day
 Undo thee not — and leave my man to
 me.'

So Gareth all for glory underwent
 The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage,
 Ate with young lads his portion by the
 door, ⁴⁷⁰
 And couch'd at night with grimy kitchen-
 knives.
 And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,
 But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not,
 Would hustle and harry him, and labor
 him
 Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set
 To turn the broach, draw water, or hew
 wood,
 Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd him-
 self
 With all obedience to the King, and
 wrought

All kind of service with a noble ease
That graced the lowliest act in doing it. 480
And when the thralls had talk among
themselves,
And one would praise the love that linkt
the King
And Lancelot — how the King had saved
his life

In battle twice, and Lancelot once the
King's —

For Lancelot was first in the tournament,
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field —
Gareth was glad. Or if some other told
How once the wandering forester at dawn,
Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas, 489
On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,
'He passes to the Isle Avilion,
He passes and is heal'd and cannot die' —
Gareth was glad. But if their talk were
foul,

Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,
Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud
That first they mock'd, but, after, rever-
enced him.

Or Gareth, telling some prodigious tale
Of knights who sliced a red life-bubbling
way 499

Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal, would
come

Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind
Among dead leaves, and drive them all
apart.

Or when the thralls had sport among them-
selves,

So there were any trial of mastery,
He, by two yards in casting bar or stone,
Was counted best; and if there chanced a
joust, 509

So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go,
Would hurry thither, and when he saw the
knights

Clash like the coming and retiring wave,
And the spear spring, and good horse reel,
the boy

Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among the
thralls;

But in the weeks that follow'd, the good
Queen,

Repentant of the word she made him
swear,
And saddening in her childless castle, sent,
Between the in-crescent and de-crescent
moon,
Arms for her son, and loosed him from his
vow. 520

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of
Lot

With whom he used to play at tourney
once,

When both were children, and in lonely
hauts

Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,
And each at either dash from either end —
Shame never made girl redder than Gareth
joy.

He laugh'd, he sprang. 'Out of the smoke,
at once

I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee —
These news be mine, none other's — nay,
the King's —

Descend into the city; whereon he sought
The King alone, and found, and told him
all. 531

'I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in
a tilt

For pasture; yea, he said it; joust can I.
Make me thy knight — in secret! let my
name

Be hidden, and give me the first quest, I
spring

Like flame from ashes.'

Here the King's calm eye
Fell on, and check'd, and made him fnsh,
and bow

Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd him:
'Son, the good mother let me know thee
here,

And sent her wish that I would yield thee
thine. 540

Make thee my knight? my knights are
sworn to vows

Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
And uttermost obedience to the King.'

Then Gareth, lightly springing from his
knees:

'My King, for hardihood I can promise
thee.

For uttermost obedience make demand

Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,
No mellow master of the meats and drinks !
And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,
But love I shall, God willing.'

And the King:

' Make thee my knight in secret ? yea, but
he, ⁵⁵²
Our noblest brother, and our truest man,
And one with me in all, he needs must
know.'

' Let Lancelot know, my King, let Lancelot
know,
Thy noblest and thy truest !'

And the King:

' But wherefore would ye men should wonder
at you ?
Nay, rather for the sake of me, their King,
And the deed's sake my knighthood do the
deed, ⁵⁵⁹
Than to be noised of.'

Merrily Gareth ask'd:

' Have I not earn'd my cake in baking of it ?
Let be my name until I make my name !
My deeds will speak; it is but for a day.'
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm
Smiled the great King, and half-unwill-
ingly
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to him.
Then, after summoning Lancelot privily:
' I have given him the first quest; he is not
proven.
Look therefore, when he calls for this in
hall,
Thou get to horse and follow him far
away. ⁵⁷⁰
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see,
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor
slain.'

Then that same day there past into the
hall

A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender
nose

Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower.
She into hall past with her page and cried:

' O King, for thou hast driven the foe
without, ⁵⁷⁹
See to the foe within ! bridge, ford, beset

By bandits, every one that owns a tower
The lord for half a league. Why sit ye
there ?

Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were
king,

Till even the lonest hold were all as free
From cursed bloodshed as thine altar-cloth
From that best blood it is a sin to spill.'

' Comfort thyself,' said Arthur, ' I nor
mine

Rest; so my knighthood keep the vows
they swore,

The wastest moorland of our realm shall
be

Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall. ⁵⁹⁰
What is thy name ? thy need ?'

' My name ?' she said —

' Lynette, my name; noble; my need, a
knight

To combat for my sister, Lyonors,
A lady of high lineage, of great lauds,
And comely, yea, and comelier than my-
self.

She lives in Castle Perilous. A river
Runs in three loops about her living-place;
And o'er it are three passings, and three
knights

Defend the passings, brethren, and a fourth,
And of that four the mightiest, holds her
stay'd ⁶⁰⁰

In her own castle, and so besieges her
To break her will, and make her wed with
him;

And but delays his purport till thou send
To do the battle with him thy chief man
Sir Lancelot, whom he trusts to overthrow,
Then wed, with glory; but she will not
wed

Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.
Now therefore have I come for Lancelot.'

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth
ask'd: ⁶⁰⁹

' Damsel, ye know this Order lives to crush
All wrongers of the realm. But say, these
four,

Who be they ? What the fashion of the
men ?'

' They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,
The fashion of that old knight-errantry
Who ride abroad, and do but what they
will;

Courteous or bestial from the moment,
 such
 As have nor law nor king; and three of
 these
 Proud in their fantasy call themselves the
 Day,
 Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Evening-
 Star,
 Being strong fools; and never a whit more
 wise ⁶²⁰
 The fourth, who alway rideth arm'd in
 black,
 A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.
 He names himself the Night and oftener
 Death,
 And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,
 And hears a skeleton figured on his arms,
 To show that who may slay or scape the
 three,
 Slain by himself, shall enter endless night.
 And all these four be fools, but mighty
 men,
 And therefore am I come for Lancelot.'

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where he
 rose, ⁶³⁰
 A head with kindling eyes above the
 throng,
 'A boon, Sir King — this quest!' then —
 for he mark'd
 Kay near him groaning like a wounded
 bull —
 'Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-
 knave am I,
 And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks
 am I,
 And I can topple over a hundred such.
 Thy promise, King,' and Arthur glancing
 at him,
 Brought down a momentary brow. 'Rough,
 sudden,
 And pardonable, worthy to be knight — ⁶³⁹
 Go therefore,' and all hearers were amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame,
 pride, wrath
 Slew the may-white. She lifted either
 arm,
 'Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy chief
 knight,
 And thou hast given me but a kitchen-
 knave.'
 Then ere a man in hall could stay her,
 turn'd,

Fled down the lane of access to the King,
 Took horse, descended the slope street, and
 past
 The weird white gate, and paused without,
 beside
 The field of tourney, murmuring 'kitchen-
 knave!'

Now two great entries open'd from the
 hall, ⁶⁵⁰
 At one end one that gave upon a range
 Of level pavement where the King would
 pace
 At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood;
 And down from this a lordly stairway
 sloped
 Till lost in blowing trees and tops of
 towers;
 And out by this main doorway past the
 King.
 But one was counter to the hearth, and
 rose
 High that the highest-crested helm could
 ride
 Therethro' nor graze; and by this entry
 fled
 The damsel in her wrath, and on to this ⁶⁶⁰
 Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the door
 King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a
 town,
 A war-horse of the best, and near it stood
 The two that out of north had follow'd
 him.
 This bare a maiden shield, a casque; that
 held
 The horse, the spear; whereat Sir Gareth
 loosed
 A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to
 heel,
 A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,
 And from it, like a fuel-smother'd fire
 That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and
 flash'd as those ⁶⁷⁰
 Dull-coated things, that making slide apart
 Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there
 burns
 A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly.
 So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms.
 Then as he donn'd the helm, and took the
 shield
 And mounted horse and graspt a spear, of
 grain
 Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and
 tipt

With trenchant steel, around him slowly
 prest
 The people, while from out of kitchen
 came
 The thralls in throng, and seeing who had
 work'd ⁶⁸⁰
 Lustier than any, and whom they could but
 love,
 Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and
 cried,
 'God bless the King, and all his fellow-
 ship!'
 And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode
 Down the slope street, and past without the
 gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the cur
 Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his
 cause
 Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being
 named, ⁶⁸⁸
 His owner, but remembers all, and growls
 Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door
 Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used
 To harry and hustle.

'Bound upon a quest
 With horse and arms — the King hath past
 his time —
 My scullion knave! Thralls, to your work
 again,
 For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!
 Will there be dawn in West and eve in
 East?
 Begone! — my knave! — belike and like
 enow
 Some old head-blow not heeded in his
 youth
 So shook his wits they wander in his
 prime —
 Crazyed! How the villain lifted up his
 voice, ⁷⁰⁰
 Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-
 knave!
 Tut, he was tame and meek enow with me,
 Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing.
 Well — I will after my loud knave, and
 learn
 Whether he know me for his master yet.
 Out of the smoke he came, and so my
 lance
 Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the
 mire —
 Thence, if the King awaken from his craze,
 Into the smoke again.'

But Lancelot said:
 'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the
 King, ⁷¹⁰
 For that did never he whereon ye rail,
 But ever meekly served the King in thee?
 Abide; take counsel, for this lad is great
 And lusty, and knowing both of lance and
 sword.'
 'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye are over-
 fine
 To mar stout knaves with foolish courtes-
 ies;'
 Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode
 Down the slope city, and out beyond the
 gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet
 Mutter'd the damsel: 'Wherefore did the
 King ⁷²⁰
 Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt, at
 least
 He might have yielded to me one of those
 Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,
 Rather than — O sweet heaven! O, fie
 upon him! —
 His kitchen-knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth drew —
 And there were none but few goodlier
 than he —
 Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is
 mine.
 Lead, and I follow.' She thereat, as one
 That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the
 holt,
 And deems it carrion of some woodland
 thing, ⁷³⁰
 Or shrew or weasel, nipt her slender nose
 With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling,
 'Hence!
 Avoid, thou smellst all of kitchen-grease.
 And look who comes behind;' for there
 was Kay.
 'Knowest thou not me? thy master? I
 am Kay.
 We lack thee by the hearth.'

And Gareth to him,
 'Master no more! too well I know thee,
 ay —
 The most ungentle knight in Arthur's hall.'
 'Have at thee then,' said Kay; they shock'd,
 and Kay ⁷³⁹
 Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried again,
 'Lead, and I follow,' and fast away she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly
Behind her, and the heart of her good
horse
Was nigh to burst with violence of the
beat,
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken spoke:

'What doest thou, scullion, in my fellow-
ship?
Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the
more
Or love thee better, that by some device
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy master
— thou! — ⁷⁵⁰
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon! — to
me
Thou smell'st all of kitchen as before.'

'Damsel,' Sir Gareth answer'd gently,
'say *
Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,
Or die therefore.'

'Ay, wilt thou finish it?
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he
talks!
The listening rogue hath caught the man-
ner of it.
But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with,
knave,
And then by such a one that thou for all
The kitchen brewis that was ever supt ⁷⁶¹
Shalt not once dare to look him in the face.'

'I shall assay,' said Gareth with a smile
That madden'd her, and away she flash'd
again
Down the long avenues of a boundless
wood;
And Gareth following was again beknaved:

'Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the
only way
Where Arthur's men are set along the
wood;
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as
leaves. ⁷⁶⁹
If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but
yet,
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of
thine?
Fight, an thou canst; I have miss'd the only
way.'

So till the dusk that follow'd evensong
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;
Then after one long slope was mounted,
saw,
Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand
pines
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
To westward — in the deeps whereof a
mere,
Round as the red eye of an eagle-owl,
Under the half-dead sunset glared; and
shouts ⁷⁸⁰
Ascended, and there brake a servingman
Flying from out of the black wood, and
crying,
'They have bound my lord to cast him in
the mere.'
Then Gareth, 'Bound am I to right the
wrong'd,
But straitlier bound am I to hide with
thee.'
And when the damsel spake contemptu-
ously,
'Lead, and I follow,' Gareth cried again,
'Follow, I lead!' so down among the
pines
He plunged; and there, black-shadow'd
nigh the mere, ⁷⁸⁹
And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,
Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,
A stone about his neck to drown him in it.
Three with good blows he quieted, but
three
Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed the
stone
From off his neck, then in the mere beside
Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free
feet
Set him, a stalwart baron, Arthur's friend.

'Well that ye came, or else these caitiff
rogues
Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause
is theirs ⁸⁰⁰
To hate me, for my wont hath ever been
To catch my thief, and then like vermin
here
Drown him, and with a stone about his
neck;
And under this wan water many of them
Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,
And rise, and flickering in a grimly light
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have
saved a life

Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this
wood.
And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.
What guerdon will ye ?'

Gareth sharply spake:
'None ! for the deed's sake have I done the
deed, 811
In uttermost obedience to the King.
But wilt thou yield this damsel harbor-
age ?'

Whereat the baron saying, 'I well be-
lieve

You be of Arthur's Table,' a light laugh
Broke from Lynette: 'Ay, truly of a truth,
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-
knave ! —

But deem not I accept thee aught the more,
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit
Down on a rout of craven foresters. 820
A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.
Nay — for thou smell'st of the kitchen
still.

But an this lord will yield us harborage,
Well.'

So she spake. A league beyond the
wood,

All in a full-fair manor and a rich,
His towers, where that day a feast had
been

Held in high hall, and many a viand left,
And many a costly cate, received the three.
And there they placed a peacock in his
pride

Before the damsel, and the baron set 830
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

'Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.
Hear me — this morn I stood in Arthur's
hall,
And pray'd the King would grant me
Lancelot

To fight the brotherhood of Day and
Night —

The last a monster unsubduable
Of any save of him for whom I call'd —
Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-
knave,

"The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave
am I, 840
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks
am I."

Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,
"Go therefore," and so gives the quest to
him —

Him — here — a villain fitter to stick swine
Than ride abroad redressing women's
wrong,
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman.'

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the
lord

Now look'd at one and now at other, left
The damsel by the peacock in his pride,
And, seating Gareth at another board, 850
Sat down beside him, ate and then began:

'Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave,
or not,

Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,
And whether she be mad, or else the King,
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
I ask not; but thou strikest a strong stroke,
For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,
And savor of my life; and therefore now,
For here be mighty men to joust with,
weigh

Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel
hack 860

To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,
The savor of my life.'

And Gareth said,
'Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,
Despite of Day and Night and Death and
Hell.'

So when, next morn, the lord whose life
he saved

Had, some brief space, convey'd them on
their way

And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth
spake,

'Lead, and I follow.' Haughtily she re-
plied:

'I fly no more; I allow thee for an hour.
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore, me-
thinks 872

Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt
thou, fool ?

For hard by here is one will overthrow
And slay thee; then will I to court again,
And shame the King for only yielding me
My champion from the ashes of his hearth.'

To whom Sir Garcth answer'd courteously:
 'Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.
 Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find
 My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay
 Among the ashes and wedded the King's son.'

Then to the shore of one of those long loops
 Where thro' the serpent river coil'd, they came.

Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep;
 the stream

Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc
 Took at a leap; and on the further side
 Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold
 In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in hue,
 Save that the dome was purple, and above,
 Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering. 891
 And therefore the lawless warrior paced
 Unarm'd, and calling, 'Damsel, is this he,
 The champion thou hast brought from Arthur's hall,

For whom we let thee pass?' 'Nay, nay,'
 she said,

'Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter
 scorn

Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee
 here

His kitchen-knave; and look thou to thyself.

See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
 And slay thee unarm'd; he is not knight
 but knave.' 900

Then at his call, 'O daughters of the
 Dawn,

And servants of the Morning-Star, approach,

Arm me,' from out the silken curtain-folds
 Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair
 girls

In gilt and rosy raiment came. Their feet
 In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair

All over glanced with dewdrop or with
 gem

Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.
 These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave a
 shield 909

Blue also, and thereon the morning star.
 And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,

Who stood a moment, ere his horse was
 brought,

Glorying; and in the stream beneath him
 shone,
 Immingled with heaven's azure waveringly,
 The gay pavilion and the naked feet,
 His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watch'd him: 'Wherefore
 stare ye so?

Thou shakest in thy fear. There yet is
 time;

Flee down the valley before he get to horse.
 Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight
 but knave.' 920

Said Gareth: 'Damsel, whether knave or
 knight,

Far liefer had I fight a score of times
 Than hear thee so missay me and revile.

Fair words were best for him who fights
 for thee;

But truly foul are better, for they send
 That strength of anger thro' mine arms, I
 know

That I shall overthrow him.'

And he that bore
 The star, when mounted, cried from o'er
 the bridge:

'A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of
 me!

Such fight not I, but answer scorn with
 scorn. 930

For this were shame to do him further
 wrong

Than set him on his feet, and take his
 horse

And arms, and so return him to the King.
 Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly,
 knave.

Avoid; for it beseemeth not a knave
 To ride with such a lady.'

'Dog, thou liest!
 I spring from loftier lineage than thine
 own.'

He spake; and all at fiery speed the two
 Shock'd on the central bridge, and either

spear
 Bent but not brake, and either knight at
 once, 940

Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult
 Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,

Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,
 And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his
 brand

He drave his enemy backward down the
bridge,
The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken, kitch-
en-knave !'
'Till Gareth's shield was cloven; hut one
stroke
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the
ground.

Then cried the fallen, 'Take not my life;
I yield.'

And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of me
Good — I accord it easily as a grace.' ⁹⁵¹
She reddening, 'Insolent scullion ! I of
thee ?

I bound to thee for any favor ask'd !'
'Then shall he die.' And Gareth there
unlaced

His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,
'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay
One nobler than thyself.' 'Damsel, thy
charge

Is an abounding pleasure to me. Knight,
Thy life is thine at her command. Arise
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See thou
crave ⁹⁶¹

His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.
Myself when I return will plead for thee.
Thy shield is mine — farewell; and, dam-
sel, thou,
Lead, and I follow.'

And fast away she fled;

Then when he came upon her, spake:
'Methought,

Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on the
bridge,

The savor of thy kitchen came upon me
A little faintlier; but the wind hath
changed,

I scent it twenty-fold.' And then she sang,
'"O morning star" — not that tall felon
there ⁹⁷¹

Whom thou, by sorcery or unhappiness
Or some device, hast foully overthrown, —

"O morning star that smilest in the blue,
O star, my morning dream hath proven true,
Smile sweetly, thou ! my love hath smiled on
me."

'But thou begone, take counsel, and
away,
For hard by here is one that guards a
ford —

The second brother in their fool's para-
ble —
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.
Care not for shame; thou art not knight
but knave.' ⁹⁸¹

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laugh-
ingly:

'Parables ? Hear a parable of the knave.
When I was kitchen-knave among the
rest,

Fierce was the hearth, and one of my co-
mates

Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his
coat,

"Guard it," and there was none to meddle
with it.

And such a coat art thou, and thee the
King

Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,
To worry, and not to flee — and — knight
or knave — ⁹⁹⁰

The knave that doth thee service as full
knight

Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
Toward thy sister's freeing.'

'Ay, Sir Knave !

Ay, kuave, because thou strikest as a
knight,

Being but knave, I hate thee all the more.'

'Fair damsel, you should worship me the
more,

That, being hut knave, I throw thine ene-
mies.'

'Ay, ay,' she said, 'but thou shalt meet
thy match.'

So when they touch'd the second river-
loop, ⁹⁹⁹

Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noonday
Sun

Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower
That blows a globe of after arrowlets

Ten-thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the
fierce shield,

All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots
Before them when he turn'd from watch-
ing him.

He from beyond the roaring shallow roar'd,
'What doest thou, brother, in my marches
here ?'

And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,
 'Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's
 hall

Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his
 arms.'

'Ugh!' cried the Sun, and, vizoring up a
 red

And cipher face of rounded foolishness,
 Push'd horse across the foamings of the
 ford,

Whom Gareth met mid-stream; no room
 was there

For lance or tourney-skill. Four strokes
 they struck

With sword, and these were mighty; the
 new knight

Had fear he might be shamed; but as the
 Sun

Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the
 fifth,

The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream,
 the stream

Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the
 ford;

So drew him home; but he that fought no
 more,

As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,
 Yielded, and Gareth sent him to the King.

'Myself when I return will plead for thee.
 Lead, and I follow.' Quietly she led.

'Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed
 again?'

'Nay, not a point; nor art thou victor
 here.

There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;
 His horse thereon stumbled — ay, for I
 saw it.

"O sun" — not this strong fool whom
 thou, Sir Knave,

Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness —

"O sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,
 O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
 Shine sweetly; twice my love hath smiled on
 me."

'What knowest thou of love-song or of
 love?'

Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly
 born,

Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, per-
 chance, —

"O dewy flowers that open to the sun,
 O dewy flowers that close when day is
 done,
 Blow sweetly; twice my love hath smiled
 on me."

'What knowest thou of flowers, except,
 belike,

To garnish meats with? hath not our good
 King

Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom,
 A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye
 round

The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's
 head?

Flowers? nay, the boar hath rosemaries
 and bay.

"O birds that warble to the morning
 sky,

O birds that warble as the day goes by,
 Sing sweetly; twice my love hath smiled on
 me."

'What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis,
 merle,

Linnet? what dream ye when they utter
 forth

May-music growing with the growing light,
 Their sweet sun-worship? these be for the
 snare —

So runs thy fancy — these be for the spit,
 Larding and basting. See thou have not
 now

Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly.
 There stands the third fool of their alle-
 gory.'

For there beyond a bridge of treble
 bow,

All in a rose-red from the west, and all
 Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad
 Deep - dimpled current underneath, the
 knight

That named himself the Star of Evening
 stood.

And Gareth, 'Wherefore waits the mad-
 man there

Naked in open dayshine?' 'Nay,' she
 cried,

'Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins
 That fit him like his own; and so ye cleave
 His armor off him, these will turn the
 blade.'

Then the third brother shouted o'er the
bridge,
'O brother-star, why shine ye here so low?
Thy ward is higher up; but have ye slain
The damsel's champion?' and the damsel
cried:

'No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's
heaven
With all disaster unto thine and thee!
For both thy younger brethren have gone
down
Before this youth; and so wilt thou, Sir
Star.
Art thou not old?'

'Old, damsel, old and hard,
Old, with the might and breath of twenty
boys.'
Said Gareth, 'Old, and over-bold in brag!
But that same strength which threw the
Morning Star
Can throw the Evening.'

Then that other blew
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.
'Approach and arm me!' With slow
steps from out
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stain'd
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,
And arm'd him in old arms, and brought a
helm
With but a drying evergreen for crest,
And gave a shield whereon the star of
even
Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his emblem,
shone.

But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-bow,
They madly hurl'd together on the bridge;
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,
There met him drawn, and overthrew him
again,

But up like fire he started; and as oft
As Gareth brought him grovelling on his
knees,

So many a time he vaulted up again;
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great
heart,

Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,
Labor'd within him, for he seem'd as one
That all in later, sadder age begins
To war against ill uses of a life,
But these from all his life arise, and cry,
'Thou hast made us lords, and canst not
put us down!'

He half despairs; so Gareth seem'd to
strike

Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the while,
'Well done, knave-knight, well stricken, O
good knight-knave—

O knave, as noble as any of all the
knights—

Shame me not, shame me not. I have
prophesied—

Strike, thou art worthy of the Table
Round—

His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd
skin—

Strike—strike—the wind will never
change again.'

And Gareth hearing ever stronglier smote,
And hew'd great pieces of his armor off
him,

But lash'd in vain against the harden'd
skin,

And could not wholly bring him under,
more

Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge on
ridge,

The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and
springs

For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's brand
Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the
hilt.

'I have thee now;' but forth that other
sprang,

And, all unknighthlike, writhed his wiry
arms

Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,
Strangled, but straining even his utter-
most

Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the
bridge

Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,
'Lead, and I follow.'

But the damsel said:

'I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-
knaves.

"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy
plain,

O rainbow with three colors after rain,
Shine sweetly; thrice my love hath smiled on
me."

'Sir,—and, good faith, I fain had added
—Knight,

But that I heard thee call thyself a knave,—

Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,
Missaid thee. Noble I am, and thought the
King
Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy pardon,
friend,
For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,
And wholly hold thou art, and meek withal
As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,
Hast maz'd my wit. I marvel what thou
art.' 1147

'Damsel,' he said, 'you be not all to
blame,
Saying that you mistrusted our good King
Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking,
one
Not fit to cope your quest. You said your
say;
Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth !
I hold
He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor
meet
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets
His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat
At any gentle damsel's waywardness. 1150
Shamed ? care not ! thy foul sayings fought
for me;
And seeing now thy words are fair, me-
thinks
There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his
great self,
Hath force to quell me.'

Nigh upon that hour
When the lone hern forgets his melan-
choly,
Lets down his other leg, and stretching
dreams
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at
him,
And told him of a cavern hard at hand,
Where bread and baken meats and good
red wine 1160
Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors
Had sent her coming champion, waited
him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein
Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on
horse
Sculptured, and deekt in slowly-waning
hues.
'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was
here,

Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the
rock
The war of Time against the soul of man.
And you four fools have suck'd their alle-
gory
From these damp walls, and taken but the
form. 1170
Know ye not these ?' and Gareth lookt
and read —
In letters like to those the vexillary
Hath left erag-carven o'er the streaming
Gelt —
'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES,' — 'HES-
PERUS' —
'NOX' — 'MORS,' beneath five figures,
armed men,
Slab after slab, their faces forward all,
And running down the Soul, a shape that
fled
With broken wings, torn raiment, and loose
hair,
For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.
'Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,
Who comes behind ?'

For one — delay'd at first
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay 1182
To Camelot, then by what thereafter
chanced,
The damsel's headlong error thro' the
wood —
Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-
loops —
His blue shield-lions cover'd — softly drew
Behind the twain, and when he saw the star
Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him,
cried,
'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my
friend.'
And Gareth crying prick'd against the
cry; 1190
But when they closed — in a moment — at
one touch
Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the
world —
Went sliding down so easily, and fell,
That when he found the grass within his
hands
He laugh'd. The laughter jarr'd upon Ly-
nette.
Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and over-
thrown,
And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,
Why laugh ye ? that ye blew your boast in
vain ?'

'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son
Of old King Lot and good Queen Belli-
cent, 1200

And victor of the bridges and the ford,
And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by
whom

I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness —
Device and sorcery and unhappiness —
Out, sword; we are thrown!' And Lance-
lot answer'd: 'Prince,

O Gareth — thro' the mere unhappiness
Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole
As on the day when Arthur knighted him.'

Then Gareth: 'Thou — Lancelot! —
thine the hand 1210

That threw me? An some chance to mar
the boast

Thy brethren of thee make — which could
not chance —

Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,
Shamed had I been, and sad — O Lance-
lot — thou!'

Whereat the maiden, petulant: 'Lance-
lot,

Why came ye not, when call'd? and where-
fore now

Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my
knave,

Who being still rebuked would answer still
Courteous as any knight — but now, if
knight,

The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd and
trick'd, 1220

And only wondering wherefore play'd
upou;

And doubtful whether I and mine be
scorn'd.

Where should be truth if not in Arthur's
hall,

In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave,
prince and fool,

I hate thee and forever.'

And Lancelot said:
'Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight art
thou

To the King's best wish. O damsel, be
you wise,

To call him shamed who is but over-
thrown?

Thrown have I been, nor once, but many a
time. 1229

Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,
And overthrower from being overthrown.
With sword we have not striven, and thy
good horse

And thou are weary; yet not less I felt
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance of
thine.

Well hast thou done; for all the stream is
freed,

And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his
foes,

And when reviled hast answer'd graciously,
And makest merry when overthrown.

Prince, knight,
Hail, knight and prince, and of our Table
Round!'

And then when turning to Lynette he
told 1240

The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said:

'Ay, well — ay, well — for worse than be-
ing fool'd

Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and
drinks

And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.

Seek, till we find.' And when they sought
and found,

Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden
gazed:

'Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to
sleep hast thou. 1250

Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to him
As any mother? Ay, but such a one

As all day long hath rated at her child,
And vext his day, but blesses him asleep —

Good lord, how sweetly smells the honey-
suckle

In the hush'd night, as if the world were one
Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness!

O Lancelot, Lancelot,' — and she clapt her
hands —

'Full merry am I to find my goodly knave
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn
have I, 1260

Else yon black felon had not let me pass,
To bring thee back to do the battle with
him.

Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first;
Who doubts thee victor? so will my knight-
knave

Miss the full flower of this accomplish-
ment.'

Said Lancelot: 'Peradventure he you
name
May know my shield. Let Gareth, an he
will,
Change his for mine, and take my charger,
fresh,
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as well
As he that rides him.' 'Lancelot-like,' she
said, ¹²⁷⁰
'Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in all.'

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely clutch'd
the shield:
'Ramp, ye lance-splintering lions, on whom
all spears
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to roar!
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your
lord! —
Care not, good beasts, so well I care for
you.
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these
Streams virtue — fire — thro' one that will
not shame
Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.
Hence; let us go.'

Silent the silent field

They traversed. Arthur's Harp tho' sum-
mer-wan, ¹²⁸¹
In counter motion to the clouds, allured
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his liege.
A star shot: 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the foe
falls!'
An owl whoopt: 'Hark the victor pealing
there!'
Suddenly she that rode upon his left
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent him,
crying:
'Yield, yield him this again; 't is he must
fight:
I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday
Reviled thee, and hath wrought on Lance-
lot now ¹²⁹⁰
To lend thee horse and shield. Wonders ye
have done,
Miracles ye cannot. Here is glory enow
In having flung the three. I see thee
maim'd,
Mangled; I swear thou canst not fling the
fourth.'

'And wherefore, damsel? tell me all ye
know.
You cannot scare me; nor rough face, or
voice,

Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery
Appal me from the quest.'

'Nay, prince,' she cried,
'God wot, I never look'd upon the face,
Seeing he never rides abroad by day, ¹³⁰⁰
But watch'd him have I like a phantom
pass
Chilling the night; nor have I heard the
voice.
Always he made his mouthpiece of a page
Who came and went, and still reported
him
As closing in himself the strength of ten,
And when his anger tare him, massacring
Man, woman, lad, and girl — yea, the soft
babe!
Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant
flesh,
Monster! O prince, I went for Lancelot
first,
The quest is Lancelot's; give him back the
shield.' ¹³¹⁰

Said Gareth laughing, 'An he fight for
this,
Belike he wins it as the better man;
Thus — and not else!'

But Lancelot on him urged

All the devisings of their chivalry
When one might meet a mightier than him-
self;
How best to manage horse, lance, sword,
and shield,
And so fill up the gap where force might
fail
With skill and fineness. Instant were his
words.

Then Gareth: 'Here be rules. I know
but one —
To dash against mine enemy and to win. ¹³²⁰
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the joust,
And seen thy way.' 'Heaven help thee!'
sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud that
grew
To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they
rode
In converse till she made her palfrey
halt,
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd,
'There.'

And all the three were silent seeing, pitch'd
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak ¹³²⁹
Sunder the glooming crimson on the marge,
Black, with black banner, and a long black
horn

Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth graspt,
And so, before the two could hinder him,
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the
horn.

Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled; anon
Came lights and lights, and once again he
blew;

Whereon were hollow tramlings up and
down
And muffled voices heard, and shadows
past;

Till high above him, circled with her maids,
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood, ¹³⁴⁰
Beautiful among lights, and waving to
him

White hands and courtesy. But when the
prince

Three times had blown — after long hush
— at last —

The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
Thro' those black foldings, that which
housed therein.

High on a night-black horse, in night-black
arms,

With white breast-bone, and barren ribs of
Death,

And crown'd with fleshless laughter —
some ten steps —

In the half-light — thro' the dim dawn —
advanced

The monster, and then paused, and spake
no word. ¹³⁵⁰

But Gareth spake and all indignantly:
'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength
of ten,

Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God
hath given,

But must, to make the terror of thee more,
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries
Of that which Life hath done with, and the
elod,

Less dull than thou, will hide with man-
tling flowers

As if for pity?' But he spake no word;
Which set the horror higher. A maiden
swoon'd;

The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and
wept, ¹³⁶⁰

As doom'd to be the bride of Night and
Death;

Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his
helm;

And even Sir Lancelot thro' his warm
blood felt

Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were
aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely
neigh'd,

And Death's dark war-horse bounded for-
ward with him.

Then those that did not blink the terror
saw

That Death was cast to ground, and slowly
rose.

But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the
skull. ¹³⁶⁹

Half fell to right and half to left and
lay.

Then with a stronger buffet he clove the
helm

As throughly as the skull; and out from
this

Issued the bright face of a blooming boy
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying,
'Knight,

Slay me not; my three brethren bade me
do it,

To make a horror all about the house,
And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.

They never dream'd the passes would be
past.'

Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one
Not many a moon his younger, 'My fair
child, ¹³⁸⁰

What madness made thee challenge the
chief knight

Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they bade
me do it.

They hate the King and Lancelot, the
King's friend;

They hoped to slay him somewhere on the
stream,

They never dream'd the passes could be
past.'

Then sprang the happier day from under-
ground;

And Lady Lyonors and her house, with
dance

And revel and song, made merry over
Death,

As being after all their foolish fears ¹³⁸⁹

And horrors only proven a blooming boy.
So large mirth lived, and Gareth won the
quest.

And he that told the tale in older times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,
But he that told it later says Lynette.

THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's
court,

A tributary prince of Devon, one
Of that great Order of the Table Round,
Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,
And loved her as he loved the light of
heaven.

And as the light of heaven varies, now
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night
With moon and trembling stars, so loved
Geraint

To make her beauty vary day by day,
In crimsons and in purples and in gems. 10
And Enid, but to please her husband's eye,
Who first had found and loved her in a
state

Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him
In some fresh splendor; and the Queen
herself,

Grateful to Prince Geraint for service
done,

Loved her, and often with her own white
hands

Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,
Next after her own self, in all the court.
And Enid loved the Queen, and with true
heart

Adored her, as the stateliest and the best 20
And loveliest of all women upon earth.
And seeing them so tender and so close,
Long in their common love rejoiced Ge-
raint.

But when a rumor rose about the Queen,
Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,
Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet was
heard

The world's loud whisper breaking into
storm,

Not less Geraint believed it; and there
fell

A horror on him lest his gentle wife, 29
Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,
Had suffer'd or should suffer any taint
In nature. Wherefore, going to the King,

He made this pretext, that his principedom lay
Close on the borders of a territory
Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff
knights,

Assassins, and all flyers from the hand
Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law;
And therefore, till the King himself should
please

To cleanse this common sewer of all his
realm,

He craved a fair permission to depart, 40
And there defend his marches. And the
King

Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,
Allowing it, the prince and Enid rode,
And fifty knights rode with them, to the
shores

Of Severn, and they past to their own
land;

Where, thinking that, if ever yet was wife
True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,
He compass'd her with sweet observances
And worship, never leaving her, and grew
Forgetful of his promise to the King, 50
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,
Forgetful of his glory and his name,
Forgetful of his principedom and its cares.

And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.
And by and by the people, when they met
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him
As of a prince whose manhood was all
gone,

And molten down in mere uxoriousness. 60
And this she gather'd from the people's
eyes;

This too the women who attired her head,
To please her, dwelling on his boundless
love,

Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the more;
And day by day she thought to tell Geraint,
But could not out of bashful delicacy,
While he, that watch'd her sadden, was
the more

Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer
morn —

They sleeping each by either — the new
sun 70

Beat thro' the blindless casement of the
room,

And heated the strong warrior in his
dreams;

Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,
And bared the knotted column of his throat,
The massive square of his heroic breast,
And arms on which the standing muscle
sloped,

As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,
Running too vehemently to break upon it.
And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,
Admiring him, and thought within herself,
Was ever man so grandly made as he? 81
Then, like a shadow, past the people's talk
And accusation of uxoriousness
Across her mind, and, bowing over him,
Low to her own heart piteously she said:

'O noble breast and all-puissant arms,
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men
Reproach you, saying all your force is
gone?

I am the cause, because I dare not speak
And tell him what I think and what they
say. 90

And yet I hate that he should linger here;
I cannot love my lord and not his name.
Far liefer had I gird his harness on him,
And ride with him to battle and stand
by,

And watch his mightful hand striking
great blows

At catiffs and at wrongers of the world.
Far better were I laid in the dark earth,
Not hearing any more his noble voice,
Not to be folded more in these dear arms,
And darken'd from the high light in his
eyes, 100

Than that my lord thro' me should suffer
shame.

Am I so bold, and could I so stand by,
And see my dear lord wounded in the strife,
Or maybe pierced to death before mine
eyes,

And yet not dare to tell him what I think,
And how men slur him, saying all his force
Is melted into mere effeminacy?

O me, I fear that I am no true wife!

Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke,
And the strong passion in her made her
weep 110

True tears upon his broad and naked
breast,

And these awoke him, and by great mis-
chance

He heard but fragments of her later words,
And that she fear'd she was not a true wife.

And then he thought, 'In spite of all my
care,

For all my pains, poor man, for all my
pains,

She is not faithful to me, and I see her
Weeping for some gay knight in Arthur's
hall.'

Then, tho' he loved and revered her too
much

To dream she could be guilty of foul act,
Right thro' his manful breast darted the
pang 121

That makes a man, in the sweet face of her
Whom he loves most, lonely and miserable.
At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out of bed,
And shook his drowsy squire awake and
cried,

'My charger and her palfrey;' then to her,
'I will ride forth into the wilderness,
For, tho' it seems my spurs are yet to win,
I have not fallen so low as some would
wish.

And thou, put on thy worst and meanest
dress 130

And ride with me.' And Enid ask'd,
amazed,

'If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault.'
But he, 'I charge thee, ask not, but obey.'
Then she bethought her of a faded silk,
A faded mantle and a faded veil,
And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,
Wherein she kept them folded reverently
With sprigs of summer laid between the
folds,

She took them, and array'd herself therein,
Remembering when first he came on her
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her
in it, 141

And all her foolish fears about the dress,
And all his journey to her, as himself
Had told her, and their coming to the
court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before
Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.
There on a day, he sitting high in hall,
Before him came a forester of Dean,
Wet from the woods, with notice of a hart
Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,
First seen that day; these things he told the
King. 151

Then the good King gave order to let blow
His horns for hunting on the morrow morn,
And when the Queen petition'd for his leave
To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.

So with the morning all the court were
gone.

But Guinevere lay late into the morn,
Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of her
love

For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt,
But rose at last, a single maiden with her,
Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd the
wood; 161

There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd
Waiting to hear the hounds, but heard in-
stead

A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince Ge-
rain't,

Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress
Nor weapon save a golden-hilted brand,
Came quickly flashing thro' the shallow
ford

Behind them, and so gallop'd up the knoll.
A purple scarf, at either end whereof
There swung an apple of the purest gold,
Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd
up 171

To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly
In summer suit and silks of holiday.

Low bow'd the tributary prince, and she,
Sweetly and stately, and with all grace
Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd
him:

'Late, late, Sir Prince,' she said, 'later
than we!'

'Yea, noble Queen,' he answer'd, 'and so
late

That I but come like you to see the hunt,
Not join it.' 'Therefore wait with me,'
she said; 180

'For on this little knoll, if anywhere,
There is good chance that we shall hear the
hounds:

Here often they break covert at our feet.'

And while they listen'd for the distant
hunt,

And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,
King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth,
there rode

Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf;
Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and the
knight

Had vizor up, and show'd a youthful face,
Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.
And Guinevere, not mindful of his face 191
In the King's hall, desired his name, and
sent

Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf,

Who being vicious, old, and irritable,
And doubling all his master's vice of pride,
Made answer sharply that she should not
know.

'Then will I ask it of himself,' she said.

'Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,' cried
the dwarf;

'Thou art not worthy even to speak of
him;'

And when she put her horse toward the
knight, 200

Struck at her with his whip, and she re-
turn'd

Indignant to the Queen; whereat Geraint
Exclaiming, 'Surely I will learn the name,'
Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of
him,

Who answer'd as before; and when the
prince

Had put his horse in motion toward the
knight,

Struck at him with his whip, and cut his
cheek.

The prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,
Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive hand

Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him: 210
But he, from his exceeding manfulness

And pure nobility of temperament,
Wroth to be wroth at such a worm, re-
frain'd

From even a word, and so returning said:

'I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,
Done in your maiden's person to yourself,
And I will track this vermin to their earths;
For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt
To find, at some place I shall come at,
arms

On loan, or else for pledge; and, being
found, 220

Then will I fight him, and will break his
pride,

And on the third day will again be here,
So that I be not fallen in fight. Farewell.'

'Farewell, fair prince,' answer'd the
stately Queen.

'Be prosperous in this journey, as in all;
And may you light on all things that you
love,

And live to wed with her whom first you
love.

But ere you wed with any, bring your
bride,

And I, were she the daughter of a king,

Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the
 hedge, ²³⁰
 Will clothe her for her bridals like the
 sun.'

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that
 he heard

The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,
 A little vext at losing of the hunt,
 A little at the vile occasion, rode,
 By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy
 glade
 And valley, with fixt eye following the
 three.

At last they issued from the world of
 wood,

And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,
 And show'd themselves against the sky,
 and sank. ²⁴⁰

And thither came Geraint, and underneath
 Beheld the long street of a little town
 In a long valley, on one side whereof,
 White from the mason's hand, a fortress
 rose;

And on one side a castle in decay,
 Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry ra-
 vine.

And out of town and valley came a noise
 As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed
 Brawling, or like a clamor of the rooks
 At distance, ere they settle for the night.

And onward to the fortress rode the
 three, ²⁵¹

And enter'd, and were lost behind the
 walls.

'So,' thought Geraint, 'I have track'd him
 to his earth.'

And down the long street riding wearily,
 Found every hostel full, and everywhere
 Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot hiss
 And bustling whistle of the youth who
 scour'd

His master's armor; and of such a one
 He ask'd, 'What means the tumult in the
 town?'

Who told him, scouring still, 'The spar-
 row-hawk!' ²⁶⁰

Then riding close behind an ancient churl,
 Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,
 Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,
 Ask'd yet once more what meant the hub-
 bub here?

Who answer'd gruffly, 'Ugh! the sparrow-
 hawk!'

Then riding further past an armorer's,
 Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above
 his work,

Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,
 He put the selfsame query, but the man
 Not turning round, nor looking at him,
 said: ²⁷⁰

'Friend, he that labors for the sparrow-
 hawk

Has little time for idle questioners.'
 Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden spleen:
 'A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-
 hawk!

Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck
 him dead!

Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg
 The murmur of the world! What is it to
 me?

O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,
 Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks!
 Speak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-
 mad, ²⁸⁰

Where can I get me harborage for the
 night?

And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy?
 Speak!

Whereat the armorer turning all amazed
 And seeing one so gay in purple silks,
 Came forward with the helmet yet in hand
 And answer'd: 'Pardon me, O stranger
 knight;

We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,
 And there is scanty time for half the
 work.

Arms? truth! I know not; all are wanted
 here.

Harborage? truth, good truth, I know not,
 save, ²⁹⁰

It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge
 Yonder.' He spoke and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful
 yet,

Across the bridge that spann'd the dry ra-
 vine.

There musing sat the hoary-headed earl —
 His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,
 Once fit for feasts of ceremony — and said:
 'Whither, fair son?' to whom Geraint re-
 plied,

'O friend, I seek a harborage for the
 night.'

Then Yniol, 'Enter therefore and partake
 The slender entertainment of a house ³⁰¹
 Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd.'

'Thanks, venerable friend,' replied Geraint;
 'So that ye do not serve me sparrow-hawks
 For supper, I will enter, I will eat
 With all the passion of a twelve hours'
 fast.'
 Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed
 earl,
 And answer'd, 'Graver cause than yours is
 mine
 To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-
 hawk.
 But in, go in; for save yourself desire it, ³¹⁰
 We will not touch upon him even in jest.'

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,
 His charger trampling many a prickly
 star
 Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.
 He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.
 Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed
 with fern;
 And here had fallen a great part of a
 tower,
 Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the
 cliff,
 And like a crag was gay with wilding flow-
 ers;
 And high above a piece of turret stair, ³²⁰
 Worn by the feet that now were silent,
 wound
 Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems
 Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred
 arms,
 And suck'd the joining of the stones, and
 look'd
 A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,
 The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang
 Clear thro' the open casement of the hall,
 Singing; and as the sweet voice of a bird,
 Heard by the lander in a lonely isle, ³³⁰
 Moves him to think what kind of bird it
 is
 That sings so delicately clear, and make
 Conjecture of the plumage and the form,
 So the sweet voice of Enid moved Ger-
 raint,
 And made him like a man abroad at morn
 When first the liquid note beloved of men
 Comes flying over many a windy wave
 To Britain, and in April suddenly
 Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green
 and red, ³³⁹
 And he suspends his converse with a friend,

Or it may be the labor of his hands,
 To think or say, 'There is the nightin-
 gale.'
 So fared it with Geraint, who thought and
 said,
 'Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for
 me.'

It chanced the song that Enid sang was
 one
 Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang:

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel, and lower
 the proud;
 Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and
 cloud;
 Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or
 frown; ³⁵⁰
 With that wild wheel we go not up or down;
 Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

'Smile and we smile, the lords of many
 lands;
 Frown and we smile, the lords of our own
 hands;
 For man is man and master of his fate.

'Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring
 crowd;
 Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud;
 Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.'

'Hark, by the bird's song ye may learn
 the nest,'
 Said Yniol; 'enter quickly.' Entering
 then, ³⁶⁰

Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen stones,
 The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd hall,
 He found an ancient dame in dim bro-
 cade;

And near her, like a blossom vermeil-white
 That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,
 Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,
 Her daughter. In a moment thought Ger-
 raint,

'Here, by God's rood, is the one maid for
 me.'

But none spake word except the hoary
 earl:

'Enid, the good knight's horse stands in the
 court; ³⁷⁰

Take him to stall, and give him corn, and
 then

Go to the town and buy us flesh and wine;

And we will make us merry as we may.
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are
great.'

He spake; the prince, as Enid past him,
fain
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught
His purple scarf, and held, and said, 'For-
bear!
Rest! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O my
son,
Endres not that her guest should serve
himself.'³⁷⁹
And reverencing the custom of the house
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forebore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall,
And after went her way across the bridge,
And reach'd the town, and while the prince
and earl
Yet spoke together, came again with one,
A youth that, following with a costrel,
bore
The means of goodly welcome, flesh and
wine.
And Enid brought sweet cakes to make
them cheer,
And, in her veil enfolded, manchet bread.
And then, because their hall must also
serve³⁹⁰
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and spread
the board,
And stood behind, and waited on the three.
And, seeing her so sweet and serviceable,
Geraint had longing in him evermore
To stoop and kiss the tender little thumb
That crost the treucher as she laid it
down.
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,
For now the wine made summer in his
veins,
Let his eye rove in following, or rest
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,⁴⁰⁰
Now here, now there, about the dusky
hall;
Then suddenly address the hoary earl:

'Fair host and earl, I pray your cour-
tesy;
This sparrow-hawk, what is he? tell me of
him.
His name? but no, good faith, I will not
have it;
For if he be the knight whom late I saw
Ride into that new fortress by your town,

White from the mason's hand, then have I
sworn
From his own lips to have it—I am Ger-
raint
Of Devon -- for this morning when the
Queen⁴¹⁰
Sent her own maiden to demand the name,
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen thing,
Struck at her with his whip, and she re-
turn'd
Indignant to the Queen; and then I swore
That I would track this catiff to his hold,
And fight and break his pride, and have it
of him.
And all unarm'd I rode, and thought to
find
Arms in your town, where all the men are
mad;
They take the rustic murmur of their
bourg
For the great wave that echoes round the
world.⁴²⁰
They would not hear me speak; but if ye
know
Where I can light on arms, or if yourself
Should have them, tell me, seeing I have
sworn
That I will break his pride and learn his
name,
Avenging this great insult done the Queen.'

Then cried Earl Yniol: 'Art thou he in-
deed,
Geraint, a name far-sounded among men
For noble deeds? and truly I, when first
I saw you moving by me on the bridge,
Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by your
state⁴³⁰
And presence might have guess'd you one
of those
That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.
Nor speak I now from foolish flattery;
For this dear child hath often heard me
praise
Your feats of arms, and often when I
pansed
Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to hear;
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds
To noble hearts who see but acts of wrong.
O, never yet had woman such a pair⁴³⁹
Of suitors as this maiden; first Limours,
A creatnre wholly given to brawls and
wine,
Drunk even when he woo'd; and be he
dead

I know not, but he past to the wild land.
The second was your foe, the sparrow-hawk,

My curse, my nephew — I will not let his name

Slip from my lips if I can help it — he,
When I that knew him fierce and turbulent

Refused her to him, then his pride awoke;
And since the proud man often is the mean,

He sow'd a slander in the common ear, 449
Affirming that his father left him gold,
And in my charge, which was not reuder'd to him;

Bribed with large promises the men who served

About my person, the more easily
Because my means were somewhat broken into

Thro' open doors and hospitality;
Raised my own town against me in the night

Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my house;

From mine own earldom foully ousted me;
Built that new fort to overawe my friends,
For truly there are those who love me yet; 461
And keeps me in this ruinous castle here,
Where doubtless he would put me soon to death

But that his pride too much despises me.
And I myself sometimes despise myself;
For I have let men be and have their way,
Am much too gentle, have not used my power;

Nor know I whether I be very base
Or very manful, whether very wise
Or very foolish; only this I know, 470
That whatsoever evil happen to me,
I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,
But can endure it all most patiently.'

'Well said, true heart,' replied Geraint,
'but arms,
That if the sparrow-hawk, this nephew,
fight
In next day's tourney I may break his pride.'

And Yniol answer'd: 'Arms, indeed, but old
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Geraint,
Are mine, and therefore, at thine asking,
thine. 479

But in this tournament can no man tilt,
Except the lady he loves best be there.
Two forks are fixt into the meadow ground,
And over these is placed a silver wand,
And over that a golden sparrow-hawk,
The prize of beauty for the fairest there.
And this, what knight soever be in field
Lays claim to for the lady at his side,
And tilts with my good nephew thereupon,
Who being apt at arms and big of bone
Has ever won it for the lady with him, 490
And toppling over all antagonism
Has earn'd himself the name of sparrow-hawk.

But thou, that hast no lady, canst not fight.'

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright
replied,
Leaning a little toward him: 'Thy leave!
Let me lay lance in rest, O noble host,
For this dear child, because I never saw,
Tho' having seen all beauties of our time,
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so fair.
And if I fall her name will yet remain 500
Untarnish'd as before; but if I live,
So aid me heaven when at mine uttermost
As I will make her truly my true wife!'

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart
Dauced in his bosom, seeing better days.
And looking round he saw not Enid there —
Who hearing her own name had stolen
away —
But that old dame, to whom full tenderly
And fondling all her hand in his he said:
'Mother, a maiden is a tender thing, 510
And best by her that bore her understood.
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest
Tell her, and prove her heart toward the
prince.'

So spake the kindly-hearted earl, and she
With frequent smile and nod departing
found,
Half disarray'd as to her rest, the girl;
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek, and then
On either shining shoulder laid a hand,
And kept her off and gazed upon her face,
And told her all their converse in the
hall, 520

Proving her heart. But never light and shade

Coursed one another more on open ground
Beneath a troubled heaven than red and pale

Across the face of Enid hearing her;
While slowly falling as a scale that falls,
When weight is added only grain by grain,
Sank her sweet head upon her gentle breast;

Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it.
So moving without answer to her rest ⁵³⁰
She found no rest, and ever fail'd to draw
The quiet night into her blood, but lay
Contemplating her own unworthiness;
And when the pale and bloodless east began

To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised
Her mother too, and hand in hand they moved

Down to the meadow where the jousts were held,

And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and when Geraint

Beheld her first in field, awaiting him, ⁵⁴⁰
He felt, were she the prize of bodily force,
Himself beyond the rest pushing could move

The Chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms
Were on his princely person, but thro' these

Prince-like his bearing shone; and errant knights

And ladies came, and by and by the town
Flow'd in and settling circled all the lists.
And there they fixt the forks into the ground,

And over these they placed the silver wand,

And over that the golden sparrow-hawk. ⁵⁵⁰
Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet blown,
Spake to the lady with him and proclaim'd,
'Advance and take, the fairest of the fair,
What I these two years past have won for thee,

The prize of beauty.' Loudly spake the prince,

'Forbear; there is a worthier,' and the knight

With some surprise and thrice as much disdain

Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his face

Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at Yule,

So burnt he was with passion, crying out,
'Do battle for it then,' no more; and thrice ⁵⁶¹

They clash'd together, and thrice they brake their spears.

Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd at each

So often and with such blows that all the crowd

Wonder'd, and now and then from distant walls

There came a clapping as of phantom hands.

So twice they fought, and twice they breathed, and still

The dew of their great labor and the blood
Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd their force.

But either's force was match'd till Yniol's cry, ⁵⁷⁰

'Remember that great insult done the Queen,'

Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade aloft,

And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit the bone,

And fell'd him, and set foot upon his breast,

And said, 'Thy name?' To whom the fallen man

Made answer, groaning: 'Edyrn, son of Nudd!

Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.

My pride is broken; men have seen my fall.'

'Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd,' replied Geraint,

'These two things shalt thou do, or else thou diest. ⁵⁸⁰

First, thou thyself, with damsel and with dwarf,

Shalt ride to Arthur's court and, coming there,

Crave pardon for that insult done the Queen,

And shalt abide her judgment on it; next,
Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy kin.

These two things shalt thou do, or thou shalt die.'

And Edyrn answer'd, 'These things will I
do,
For I have never yet been overthrown,
And thou hast overthrown me, and my
pride 589
Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall !'
And rising up he rode to Arthur's court,
And there the Queen forgave him easily.
And, being young, he changed and came to
loathe
His crime of traitor, slowly drew himself
Bright from his old dark life, and fell at
last
In the great battle fighting for the King.

But when the third day from the hunt-
ing-morn
Made a low splendor in the world, and
wings
Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay
With her fair head in the dim-yellow
light, 600
Among the dancing shadows of the birds,
Woke and bethought her of her promise
given
No later than last eve to Prince Geraint —
So bent he seem'd on going the third day,
He would not leave her till her promise
given —
To ride with him this morning to the court,
And there be made known to the stately
Queen,
And there be wedded with all ceremony.
At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,
And thought it never yet had look'd so
mean. 610
For as a leaf in mid-November is
To what it was in mid-October, seem'd
The dress that now she look'd on to the
dress
She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint.
And still she look'd, and still the terror
grew
Of that strange bright and dreadful thing,
a court,
All staring at her in her faded silk;
And softly to her own sweet heart she
said:

'This noble prince who won our earldom
back,
So splendid in his acts and his attire, 620
Sweet heaven, how much I shall discredit
him !
Would he could tarry with us here awhile,

But being so beholden to the prince,
It were but little grace in any of us,
Bent as he seem'd on going this third day,
To seek a second favor at his hands.
Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,
Myself would work eye dim and finger
lame
Far liefer than so much discredit him.'

And Enid fell in longing for a dress 630
All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a
costly gift
Of her good mother, given her on the night
Before her birthday, three sad years ago,
That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd their
house
And scatter'd all they had to all the winds;
For while the mother show'd it, and the
two
Were turning and admiring it, the work
To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry
That Edyrn's men were on them, and they
fled
With little save the jewels they had on, 640
Which being sold and sold had bought
them bread.
And Edyrn's men had caught them in their
flight,
And placed them in this ruin; and she
wish'd
The prince had found her in her ancient
home;
Then let her fancy flit across the past,
And roam the goodly places that she knew;
And last bethought her how she used to
watch,
Near that old home, a pool of golden carp;
And one was patch'd and blurr'd and lustre-
less
Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool;
And half asleep she made comparison 651
Of that and these to her own faded self
And the gay court, and fell asleep again,
And dreamt herself was such a faded form
Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool.
But this was in the garden of a king,
And tho' she lay dark in the pool she knew
That all was bright; that all about were
birds
Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work;
That all the turf was rich in plots that
look'd 660
Each like a garnet or a turkis in it;
And lords and ladies of the high court
went

In silver tissue talking things of state;
And children of the King in cloth of gold
Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down the
walks.

And while she thought, 'They will not see
me,' came

A stately queen whose name was Guin-
evere,

And all the children in their cloth of gold
Ran to her, crying, 'If we have fish at all
Let them be gold; and charge the garden-
ers now' ⁶⁷⁰

To pick the faded creature from the pool,
And cast it on the mixen that it die.'

And therewithal one came and seized on
her,

And Enid started waking, with her heart
All overshadowed by the foolish dream,
And lo! it was her mother grasping her
To get her well awake; and in her hand
A suit of bright apparel, which she laid
Flat on the couch, and spoke exultingly:

'See here, my child, how fresh the colors
look, ⁶⁸⁰

How fast they hold, like colors of a shell
That keeps the wear and polish of the
wave.

Why not? It never yet was worn, I trow:
Look on it, child, and tell me if ye know
it.'

And Enid look'd, but, all confused at
first,
Could scarce divide it from her foolish
dream.

Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,
And answer'd, 'Yea, I know it; your good
gift,

So sadly lost on that unhappy night;
Your own good gift!' 'Yea, surely,'
said the dame, ⁶⁹⁰

'And gladly given again this happy morn.
For when the jousts were ended yesterday,
Went Yniol thro' the town, and every-
where

He found the sack and plunder of our
house

All scatter'd thro' the houses of the town,
And gave command that all which once was
ours

Should now be ours again; and yester-eve,
While ye were talking sweetly with your
prince,

Came one with this and laid it in my hand,

For love or fear, or seeking favor of us, ⁷⁰⁰
Because we have our earldom back again.

And yester-eve I would not tell you of it,
But kept it for a sweet surprise at morn.

Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise?

For I myself unwillingly have worn
My faded suit, as you, my child, have yours,
And, howsoever patient, Yniol his.

Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly house,
With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,
And page, and maid, and squire, and senes-
chal, ⁷¹⁰

And pastime both of hawk and hound, and
all

That appertains to noble maintenance.

Yea, and he brought me to a goodly house;
But since our fortune swerved from sun to
shade,

And all thro' that young traitor, cruel need
Constrain'd us, but a better time has come.
So clothe yourself in this, that better fits
Our mended fortunes and a prince's bride;

For tho' ye won the prize of fairest fair,
And tho' I heard him call you fairest fair,
Let never maiden think, however fair, ⁷²¹

She is not fairer in new clothes than old.
And should some great court-lady say, the
prince

Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the hedge,
And like a madman brought her to the
court,

Then were ye shamed, and, worse, might
shame the prince

To whom we are beholden; but I know,
When my dear child is set forth at her best,
That neither court nor country, tho' they
sought

Thro' all the provinces like those of old ⁷³⁰
That lighted on Queen Esther, has her
match.'

Here ceased the kindly mother out of
breath,

And Enid listen'd brightening as she lay;
Then, as the white and glittering star of
morn

Parts from a bank of snow, and by and by
Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose,
And left her maiden couch, and robed her-
self,

Help'd by the mother's careful hand and
eye,

Without a mirror, in the gorgeous gown;
Who, after, turn'd her daughter round, and
said

She never yet had seen her half so fair;
 And call'd her like that maiden in the tale,
 Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of
 flowers,

And sweeter than the bride of Cassivelaun,
 Flur, for whose love the Roman Cæsar first
 Invaded Britain: 'But we beat him back,
 As this great prince invaded us, and we,
 Not beat him back, but welcomed him with
 joy.

And I can scarcely ride with you to court,
 For old am I, and rough the ways and
 wild;

But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall dream
 I see my princess as I see her now,
 Clothed with my gift and gay among the
 gay.'

But while the women thus rejoiced, Ge-
 raint
 Woke where he slept in the high hall, and
 call'd

For Enid, and when Yniol made report
 Of that good mother making Enid gay
 In such apparel as might well bescem
 His princess, or indeed the stately Queen,
 He answer'd: 'Earl, entreat her by my
 love,

Albeit I give no reason but my wish,
 That she ride with me in her faded silk.'
 Yniol with that hard message went; it fell
 Like flaws in summer laying lusty corn;
 For Enid, all abash'd she knew not why,
 Dared not to glance at her good mother's
 face,

But silently, in all obedience,
 Her mother silent too, nor helping her,
 Laid from her limbs the costly-broider'd
 gift,

And robed them in her ancient suit again,
 And so descended. Never man rejoiced
 More than Geraint to greet her thus at-
 tired;

And glancing all at once as keenly at her
 As careful robins eye the delver's toil,
 Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall,
 But rested with her sweet face satisfied;
 Then seeing cloud upon the mother's brow,
 Her by both hands he caught, and sweetly
 said:

'O my new mother, be not wroth or
 grieved

At thy new son, for my petition to her. 780
 When late I left Caerleon, our great Queen,

In words whose echo lasts, they were so
 sweet,

Made promise that, whatever bride I
 brought,

Herself would clothe her like the sun in
 heaven.

Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd hall,
 Beholding one so bright in dark estate,
 I vow'd that, could I gain her, our fair
 Queen,

No hand but hers, should make your Enid
 burst

Sunlike from cloud — and likewise thought
 perhaps,

That service done so graciously would bind
 The two together; fain I would the two
 Should love each other. How can Enid find
 A nobler friend? Another thought was
 mine:

I came among you here so suddenly
 That tho' her gentle presence at the lists
 Might well have served for proof that I
 was loved,

I doubted whether daughter's tenderness,
 Or easy nature, might not let itself
 Be moulded by your wishes for her weal;
 Or whether some false sense in her own
 self

Of my contrasting brightness overbore
 Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall,
 And such a sense might make her long for
 court

And all its perilous glories; and I thought,
 That could I someway prove such force in
 her

Link'd with such love for me that at a
 word,

No reason given her, she could cast aside
 A splendor dear to women, new to her,
 And therefore dearer; or if not so new,
 Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power
 Of intermitted usage; then I felt
 That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and flows,
 Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I do
 rest,

A prophet certain of my prophecy,
 That never shadow of mistrust can cross
 Between us. Grant me pardon for my
 thoughts;

And for my strange petition I will make
 Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,
 When your fair child shall wear your costly
 gift

Beside your own warm hearth; with, on her
 knees,

Who knows? another gift of the high God,
Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to lisp
you thanks.'

He spoke; the mother smiled, but half
in tears,
Then brought a mantle down and wrapt her
in it,
And claspt and kiss'd her, and they rode
away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere had
climb'd
The giant tower, from whose high crest,
they say,
Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,
And white sails flying on the yellow sea;
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea ⁸³⁰
Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale of
Usk,
By the flat meadow, till she saw them
come;
And then descending met them at the gates,
Embraced her with all welcome as a friend,
And did her honor as the prince's bride,
And clothed her for her bridals like the
sun;
And all that week was old Caerleon gay,
For by the hands of Dubric, the high saint,
They twain were wedded with all ceremony.

And this was on the last year's Whitsun-
tide. ⁸⁴⁰
But Enid ever kept the faded silk,
Remembering how first he came on her
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her
in it,
And all her foolish fears about the dress,
And all his journey toward her, as himself
Had told her, and their coming to the
court.

And now this morning when he said to
her,
'Put on your worst and meanest dress,' she
found
And took it, and array'd herself therein.

GERAINT AND ENID

O PURBLIND race of miserable men,
How many among us at this very hour
Do forge a lifelong trouble for ourselves,
By taking true for false, or false for true;

Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this
world
Groping, how many, until we pass and
reach
That other where we see as we are seen!

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing
forth
That morning, when they both had got to
horse,
Perhaps because he loved her passionately,
And felt that tempest brooding round his
heart
Which, if he spoke at all, would break per-
force
Upon a head so dear in thunder, said:
'Not at my side. I charge thee ride before,
Ever a good way on before; and this
I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,
Whatever happens, not to speak to me,
No, not a word!' and Enid was aghast;
And forth they rode, but scarce three paces
on,

When crying out, 'Effeminate as I am, ²⁰
I will not fight my way with gilded arms,
All shall be iron;' he loosed a mighty
purse,
Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward the
squire.

So the last sight that Enid had of home
Was all the marble threshold flashing,
strown
With gold and scatter'd coinage, and the
squire
Chafing his shoulder. Then he cried again,
'To the wilds!' and Enid leading down the
tracks

Thro' which he bade her lead him on, they
past ²⁹
The marches, and by bandit-haunted holds,
Gray swamps and pools, waste places of
the hern,
And wildernesses, perilous paths, they rode.
Round was their pace at first, but slacken'd
soon.

A stranger meeting them had surely
thought,
They rode so slowly and they look'd so pale,
That each had suffer'd some exceeding
wrong.

For he was ever saying to himself,
'O, I that wasted time to tend upon her,
To compass her with sweet observances,
To dress her beautifully and keep her
true'—

And there he broke the sentence in his heart
 Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue
 May break it when his passion masters him.
 And she was ever praying the sweet heavens
 To save her dear lord whole from any wound.
 And ever in her mind she cast about
 For that unnoticed failing in herself
 Which made him look so cloudy and so cold;
 Till the great plover's human whistle amazed
 Her heart, and glancing round the waste she fear'd⁵⁰
 In every wavering brake an ambuscade;
 Then thought again, 'If there be such in me,
 I might amend it by the grace of Heaven,
 If he would only speak and tell me of it.'

But when the fourth part of the day was gone,
 Then Enid was aware of three tall knights
 On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a rock
 In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs all;
 And heard one crying to his fellow, 'Look,
 Here comes a laggard hanging down his head,⁶⁰
 Who seems no bolder than a beaten hound;
 Come, we will slay him and will have his horse
 And armor, and his damsel shall be ours.'

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart, and said:
 'I will go back a little to my lord,
 And I will tell him all their caitiff talk;
 For, be he wroth even to slaying me,
 Far liefer by his dear hand had I die
 Than that my lord should suffer loss or shame.'

Then she went back some paces of return,⁷⁰
 Met his full frown timidly firm, and said:
 'My lord, I saw three handits by the rock
 Waiting to fall on you, and heard them boast
 That they would slay you, and possess your horse
 And armor, and your damsel should be theirs.'

He made a wrathful answer: 'Did I wish
 Your warning or your silence? one command
 I laid upon you, not to speak to me,
 And thus ye keep it! Well then, look —
 for now,
 Whether ye wish me victory or defeat,⁸⁰
 Long for my life or hunger for my death,
 Yourself shall see my vigor is not lost.'

Then Enid waited pale and sorrowful,
 And down upon him bare the bandit three.
 And at the midmost charging, Prince Geraint
 Drove the long spear a cubit thro' his breast
 And out beyond; and then against his brace
 Of comrades, each of whom had broken on him
 A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,
 Swung from his brand a windy buffet out⁹⁰
 Once, twice, to right, to left, and stunn'd
 the twain
 Or slew them, and dismounting, like a man
 That skins the wild beast after slaying him,
 Stript from the three dead wolves of woman born
 The three gay suits of armor which they wore,
 And let the bodies lie, but bound the suits
 Of armor on their horses, each on each,
 And tied the bridle-reins of all the three
 Together, and said to her, 'Drive them on
 Before you;' and she drove them thro' the waste.¹⁰⁰

He follow'd nearer; ruth began to work
 Against his anger in him, while he watch'd
 The being he loved best in all the world,
 With difficulty in mild obedience
 Driving them on. He fain had spoken to her,
 And loosed in words of sudden fire the wrath
 And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him all within;
 But evermore it seem'd an easier thing
 At once without remorse to strike her dead
 Than to cry 'Halt,' and to her own bright face¹¹⁰
 Accuse her of the least immodesty:

And thus tongue-tied, it made him wroth
 the more
 That she *could* speak whom his own ear
 had heard
 Call herself false, and suffering thus he
 made
 Minutes an age; but in scarce longer time
 Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,
 Before he turn to fall seaward again,
 Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold
 In the first shallow shade of a deep wood,
 Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted oaks,
 Three other horsemen waiting, wholly
 arm'd,
 Whereof one seem'd far larger than her
 lord,
 And shook her pulses, crying, 'Look, a
 prize!
 Three horses and three goodly suits of
 arms,
 And all in charge of whom? a girl! set
 on.'
 'Nay,' said the second, 'yonder comes a
 knight.'
 The third, 'A craven; how he hangs his
 head!'
 The giant answer'd merrily, 'Yea, but
 one?
 Wait here, and when he passes fall upon
 him!'

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and said:
 'I will abide the coming of my lord,
 And I will tell him all their villainy.
 My lord is weary with the fight before,
 And they will fall upon him unawares.
 I needs must disobey him for his good;
 How should I dare obey him to his harm?
 Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill me
 for it,
 I save a life dearer to me than mine.'

And she abode his coming, and said to
 him
 With timid firmness, 'Have I leave to
 speak?'
 He said, 'Ye take it, speaking,' and she
 spoke:

'There lurk three villains yonder in the
 wood,
 And each of them is wholly arm'd, and one
 Is larger-limb'd than you are, and they say
 That they will fall upon you while ye
 pass.'

To which he flung a wrathful answer
 back:
 'And if there were an hundred in the
 wood,
 And every man were larger-limb'd than I,
 And all at once should sally out upon me,
 I swear it would not ruffle me so much
 As you that not obey me. Stand aside,
 And if I fall, cleave to the better man.'

And Enid stood aside to wait the event,
 Not dare to watch the combat, only breathe
 Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a
 breath.
 And he she dreaded most bare down upon
 him.
 Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd; but
 Geraint's,
 A little in the late encounter strain'd,
 Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corselet
 home,
 And then brake short, and down his enemy
 roll'd,
 And there lay still; as he that tells the
 tale

Saw once a great piece of a promontory,
 That had a sapling growing on it, slide
 From the long shore-cliff's windy walls to
 the beach,
 And there lie still, and yet the sapling
 grew;
 So lay the man transfixt. His craven pair
 Of comrades making slower at the prince,
 When now they saw their bulwark fallen,
 stood;
 On whom the victor, to confound them
 more,
 Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry; for as
 one,
 That listens near a torrent mountain-brook,
 All thro' the crash of the near cataract
 hears
 The drumming thunder of the hnger fall
 At distance, were the soldiers wout to hear
 His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,
 And foemen scared, like that false pair
 who turn'd
 Flying, but, overtaken, died the death
 Themselves had wrought on many an in-
 nocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting, pick'd the
 lance
 That pleased him best, and drew from
 those dead wolves

Their three gay suits of armor, each from
each,
And bound them on their horses, each on
each,
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three
Together, and said to her, 'Drive them on
Before you,' and she drove them thro' the
wood.

He follow'd nearer still. The pain she
had
To keep them in the wild ways of the
wood,
Two sets of three laden with jingling arms,
Together, served a little to disedge ¹⁸⁹
The sharpness of that pain about her heart;
And they themselves, like creatures gently
born
But into bad hands fallen, and now so
long
By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light
ears, and felt
Her low firm voice and tender government.

So thro' the green gloom of the wood
they past,
And issuing under open heavens beheld
A little town with towers, upon a rock,
And close beneath, a meadow gemlike
chased
In the brown wild, and mowers mowing
in it; ¹⁹⁹
And down a rocky pathway from the place
There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in his
hand
Bare victual for the mowers; and Geraint
Had ruth again on Enid looking pale.
Then, moving downward to the meadow
ground,
He, when the fair-hair'd youth came by
him, said,
'Friend, let her eat; the damsel is so faint.'
'Yea, willingly,' replied the youth; 'and
thou,
My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is coarse,
And only meet for mowers;' then set down
His basket, and dismounting on the sward
They let the horses graze, and ate them-
selves. ²¹¹
And Enid took a little delicately,
Less having stomach for it than desire
To close with her lord's pleasure, but Ge-
raint
Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,
And when he found all empty was amazed;

And 'Boy,' said he, 'I have eaten all, but
take
A horse and arms for guerdou; choose the
best.'
He, reddening in extremity of delight,
'My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold.' ²²⁰
'Ye will be all the wealthier,' cried the
prince.
'I take it as free gift, then,' said the boy,
'Not guerdon; for myself can easily,
While your good damsel rests, return and
fetch
Fresh victual for these mowers of our earl;
For these are his, and all the field is his,
And I myself am his; and I will tell him
How great a man thou art. He loves to
know
When men of mark are in his territory;
And he will have thee to his palace here, ²³⁰
And serve thee costlier than with mowers'
fare.'

Then said Geraint: 'I wish no better fare;
I never ate with aogrier appetite
Than when I left your mowers dinnerless.
And into no earl's palace will I go.
I know, God knows, too much of palaces!
And if he want me, let him come to me.
But hire us some fair chamber for the
night,
And stalling for the horses, and return
With victual for these men, and let us
know.' ²⁴⁰

'Yea, my kind lord,' said the glad youth,
and went,
Held his head high, and thought himself a
knight,
And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,
Leading the horse, and they were left alone.

But when the prince had brought his
errant eyes
Home from the rock; sideways he let them
glance
At Enid, where she droopt. His own false
doom,
That shadow of mistrust should never cross
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he
sigh'd;
Then with another humorous ruth remark'd
The lusty mowers laboring dinnerless, ²⁵¹
And watch'd the sun blaze on the turning
scythe,
And after nodded sleepily in the heat.

But she, remembering her old ruin'd hall,
 And all the windy clamor of the daws
 About her hollow turret, pluck'd the grass
 There growing longest by the meadow's
 edge,

And into many a listless annulet,
 Now over, now beneath her marriage ring,
 Wove and unwove it, till the boy return'd
 And told them of a chamber, and they
 went; 261

Where, after saying to her, 'If ye will,
 Call for the woman of the house,' to which
 She answer'd, 'Thanks, my lord;' the two
 remain'd

Apart by all the chamber's width, and mute
 As creatures voiceless thro' the fault of
 birth,

Or two wild men supporters of a shield,
 Painted, who stare at open space, nor
 glance

The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along the
 street, 270

And heel against the pavement echoing,
 burst

Their drowse; and either started while the
 door,

Push'd from without, drave backward to
 the wall,

And midst of a rout of roisterers,
 Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,
 Her suitor in old years before Geraint
 Enter'd, the wild lord of the place, Li-
 mours.

He moving up with pliant courtliness
 Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,
 In the mid-warmth of welcome and graspt
 hand, 280

Found Enid with the corner of his eye,
 And knew her sitting sad and solitary.
 Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly
 cheer

To feed the sudden guest, and sumptu-
 ously,

According to his fashion, bade the host
 Call in what men soever were his friends,
 And feast with these in honor of their
 earl;

'And care not for the cost; the cost is
 mine.'

And wine and food were brought, and
 Earl Limours
 Drank till he jested with all ease, and told

Free tales, and took the word and play'd
 upon it, 291

And made it of two colors; for his talk,
 When wine and free companions kindled
 him,

Was wont to glance and sparkle like a
 gem

Of fifty facets; thus he moved the prince
 To laughter and his comrades to applause.
 Then, when the prince was merry, ask'd
 Limours,

'Your leave, my lord, to cross the room,
 and speak

To your good damsel there who sits apart,
 And seems so lonely?' 'My free leave,'
 he said; 300

'Get her to speak; she doth not speak to
 me.'

Then rose Limours, and looking at his feet,
 Like him who tries the bridge he fears may
 fail,

Crost and came near, lifted adoring eyes,
 Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisper-
 ingly:

'Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,
 Enid, my early and my only love,
 Enid, the loss of whom hath turn'd me
 wild—

What chance is this? how is it I see you
 here?

Ye are in my power at last, are in my
 power. 310

Yet fear me not; I call mine own self wild,
 But keep a touch of sweet civility
 Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.
 I thought, but that your father came be-
 tween,

In former days you saw me favorably.
 And if it were so do not keep it back.

Make me a little happier; let me know it.
 Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost?

Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you
 are.

And, Enid, you and he, I see with joy, 320
 Ye sit apart, you do not speak to him,

You come with no attendance, page or
 maid,

To serve you—doth he love you as of
 old?

For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know
 Tho' men may bicker with the things they
 love,

They would not make them laughable in
 all eyes,

Not while they loved them; and your
wretched dress,

A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks
Your story, that this man loves you no
more.

Your beauty is no beauty to him now. ³³⁰
A common chance — right well I know it
— pall'd —

For I know men; nor will ye win him back,
For the man's love once gone never re-
turns.

But here is one who loves you as of old;
With more exceeding passion than of old.
Good, speak the word; my followers ring
him round.

He sits unarm'd; I hold a finger up;
They understand. Nay, I do not mean
blood;

Nor need ye look so scared at what I say.
My malice is no deeper than a moat, ³⁴⁰
No stronger than a wall. There is the
keep;

He shall not cross us more; speak but the
word.

Or speak it not; but then by Him that
made me

The one true lover whom you ever own'd,
I will make use of all the power I have.
O, pardon me! the madness of that hour
When first I parted from thee moves me
yet.'

At this the tender sound of his own voice
And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,
Made his eye moist; but Enid fear'd his
eyes, ³⁵⁰
Moist as they were, wine-heated from the
feast,
And answer'd with such craft as women
use,
Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance
That breaks upon them perilously, and
said:

'Earl, if you love me as in former years,
And do not practise on me, come with
morn,
And snatch me from him as by violence.
Leave me to-night; I am weary to the
death.'

Low at leave-taking, with his brandish'd
plume
Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-amorous
earl, ³⁶⁰

And the stout prince bade him a loud good-
night.

He moving homeward babbled to his men,
How Enid never loved a man but him,
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Geraint,
Debating his command of silence given,
And that she now perforce must violate it,
Held commune with herself, and while she
held

He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart
To wake him, but hung o'er him, wholly
pleas'd ³⁷⁰

To find him yet unwounded after fight,
And hear him breathing low and equally.
Anon she rose and, stepping lightly, heap'd
The pieces of his armor in one place,
All to be there against a sudden need;
Then dozed awhile herself, but, overtoil'd
By that day's grief and travel, evermore
Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn, and
then

Went slipping down horrible precipices,
And strongly striking out her limbs awake;
Then thought she heard the wild earl at
the door, ³⁸¹

With all his rout of random followers,
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, summoning
her;

Which was the red cock shouting to the
light,

As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy world
And glimmer'd on his armor in the room.
And once again she rose to look at it,
But touch'd it unawares; jangling, the
casque

Fell, and he started up and stared at her.
Then breaking his command of silence
given, ³⁹⁰

She told him all that Earl Limours had
said,

Except the passage that he loved her not;
Nor left untold the craft herself had used,
But ended with apology so sweet,
Low-spoken, and of so few words, and
seem'd

So justified by that necessity,
That tho' he thought, 'Was it for him she
wept

In Devon?' he but gave a wrathful groan,
Saying, 'Your sweet faces make good fel-
lows fools

And traitors. Call the host and bid him
bring ⁴⁰⁰

Charger and palfrey.' So she glided out
 Among the heavy breathings of the house,
 And like a household spirit at the walls
 Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and re-
 turn'd;
 Then tending her rough lord, tho' all un-
 ask'd,
 In silence, did him service as a squire;
 Till issuing arm'd he found the host and
 cried,
 'Thy reckoning, friend?' and ere he learnt
 it, 'Take
 Five horses and their armors;' and the
 host,
 Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze, ⁴¹⁰
 'My lord, I scarce have spent the worth of
 one!'
 'Ye will be all the wealthier,' said the
 prince,
 And then to Enid, 'Forward! and to-day
 I charge you, Enid, more especially,
 What thing soever ye may hear, or see,
 Or fancy — tho' I count it of small use
 To charge you — that ye speak not but
 obey.'

And Enid answer'd: 'Yea, my lord, I
 know
 Your wish and would obey; but, riding
 first,
 I hear the violent threats you do not hear,
 I see the danger which you cannot see. ⁴²¹
 Then not to give you warning, that seems
 hard,
 Almost beyond me; yet I would obey.'

'Yea so,' said he, 'do it; be not too wise,
 Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,
 Not all mismatched with a yawning clown,
 But one with arms to guard his head and
 yours,
 With eyes to find you out however far,
 And ears to hear you even in his dreams.'

With that he turn'd and look'd as keenly
 at her ⁴³⁰
 As careful robins eye the delver's toil;
 And that within her which a wanton fool
 Or hasty judger would have call'd her guilt
 Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.
 And Geraint look'd and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten
 broad,
 Led from the territory of false Limours

To the waste earldom of another earl,
 Doorn, whom his shaking vassals call'd the
 Bull,
 Went Enid with her sullen follower on. ⁴⁴⁰
 Once she look'd back, and when she saw
 him ride
 More near by many a rood than yester-
 morn,
 It wellnigh made her cheerful; till Geraint,
 Waving an angry hand as who should say,
 'Ye watch me,' sadden'd all her heart
 again.
 But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,
 The sound of many a heavily-galloping
 hoof
 Smote on her ear, and turning round she
 saw
 Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it.
 Then, not to disobey her lord's behest, ⁴⁵⁰
 And yet to give him warning, for he rode
 As if he heard not, moving back she held
 Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.
 At which the warrior in his obstinacy,
 Because she kept the letter of his word,
 Was in a manner pleased, and turning
 stood.
 And in the moment after, wild Limours,
 Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-
 cloud
 Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking
 storm, ⁴⁵⁹
 Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,
 And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,
 Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him,
 and bore
 Down by the length of lance and arm be-
 yond
 The crupper, and so left him stunn'd or
 dead,
 And overthrew the next that follow'd him,
 And blindly rush'd on all the rout behind.
 But at the flash and motion of the man
 They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a shoal
 Of darting fish, that on a summer morn
 Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot ⁴⁷⁰
 Come slipping o'er their shadows on the
 sand,
 But if a man who stands upon the brink
 But lift a shining hand against the sun,
 There is not left the twinkle of a fin
 Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower;
 So, scared but at the motion of the man,
 Fled all the boon companions of the earl,
 And left him lying in the public way;
 So vanish friendships only made in wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled Geraint,
 Who saw the chargers of the two that fell
 Start from their fallen lords and wildly fly,
 Mixt with the flyers. 'Horse and man,' he
 said,
 'All of one mind and all right-honest
 friends!
 Not a hoof left! and I methinks till now
 Was honest — paid with horses and with
 arms;
 I cannot steal or plunder, no, nor beg.
 And so what say ye, shall we strip him
 there,
 Your lover? has your palfrey heart enough
 To bear his armor? shall we fast or dine?
 No? — then do thou, being right honest,
 pray
 That we may meet the horsemen of Earl
 Doorm;
 I too would still be honest.' Thus he said;
 And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,
 And answering not one word, she led the
 way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful loss
 Falls in a far land and he knows it not,
 But coming back he learns it, and the loss
 So pains him that he sickens nigh to death;
 So fared it with Geraint, who, being
 priek'd
 In combat with the follower of Limours,
 Bled underneath his armor secretly,
 And so rode on, nor told his gentle wife
 What ail'd him, hardly knowing it him-
 self,
 Till his eye darken'd and his helmet
 wagg'd;
 And at a sudden swerving of the road,
 Tho' happily down on a bank of grass,
 The prince, without a word, from his horse
 fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,
 Suddenly came, and at his side all pale
 Dismounting loosed the fastenings of his
 arms,
 Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue eye
 Moisten, till she had lighted on his wound,
 And tearing off her veil of faded silk
 Had bared her forehead to the blistering
 sun,
 And swathed the hurt that drain'd her dear
 lord's life.
 Then, after all was done that hand could do,

She rested, and her desolation came
 Upon her, and she wept beside the way.

And many past, but none regarded her,
 For in that realm of lawless turbulence
 A woman weeping for her murder'd mate
 Was cared as much for as a summer
 shower.
 One took him for a victim of Earl Doorm,
 Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on him.
 Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,
 Rode on a mission to the bandit earl;
 Half whistling and half singing a coarse
 song,
 He drove the dust against her veiless
 eyes.
 Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm
 Before an ever-fancied arrow, made
 The long way smoke beneath him in his
 fear;
 At which her palfrey whinnying lifted heel,
 And scour'd into the coppices and was lost,
 While the great charger stood, grieved like
 a man.

But at the point of noon the huge Earl
 Doorm,
 Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet
 beard,
 Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,
 Came riding with a hundred lances up;
 But ere he came, like one that hails a
 ship,
 Cried out with a big voice, 'What, is he
 dead?'
 'No, no, not dead!' she answer'd in all
 haste.
 'Would some of your kind people take
 him up,
 And bear him hence out of this cruel sun?
 Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead.'

Then said Earl Doorm: 'Well, if he be
 not dead,
 Why wail ye for him thus? ye seem a
 child.
 And be he dead, I count you for a fool;
 Your wailing will not quicken him; dead
 or not,
 Ye mar a comely face with idiot tears.
 Yet, since the face is comely — some of you,
 Here, take him up, and bear him to our
 hall.
 An if he live, we will have him of our
 band;

And if he die, why earth has earth enough
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,
A noble one.'

He spake and past away,
But left two brawny spearmen, who ad-
vanced,

Each growling like a dog, when his good
bone

Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,
Gnawing and growling; so the ruffians
growl'd,

Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,
Their chance of booty from the morning's
raid,

Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier,
Such as they brought upon their forays out
For those that might be wounded; laid
him on it

All in the hollow of his shield, and took
And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm —
His gentle charger following him unled —
And cast him and the bier in which he
lay

Down on an oaken settle in the hall, 572
And then departed, hot in haste to join
Their luckier mates, but growling as be-
fore,

And cursing their lost time, and the dead
man,

And their own earl, and their own souls,
and her.

They might as well have blest her; she
was deaf

To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord
There in the naked hall, propping his
head,

And chafing his pale hands, and calling to
him,

Till at the last he waken'd from his swoon,
And found his own dear bride propping his
head,

And chafing his faint hands, and calling to
him;

And felt the warm tears falling on his face,
And said to his own heart, 'She weeps for
me;'

And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as
dead,

That he might prove her to the uttermost,
And say to his own heart, 'She weeps for
me.'

But in the falling afternoon return'd 590
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to the
hall.

His lusty spearmen follow'd him with
noise:

Each hurling down a heap of things that
rang

Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,
And doff'd his helm; and then there flut-
ter'd in,

Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,
A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,
And mingled with the spearmen; and Earl
Doorm

Struck with a knife's haft hard against the
board,

And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his
spears.

And men brought in whole hogs and quar-
ter beeves,

And all the hall was dim with steam of
flesh.

And none spake word, but all sat down at
once,

And ate with tumult in the naked hall,
Feeding like horses when you hear them
feed;

Till Enid shrank far back into herself,
To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.
But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he
would,

He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and found
A damsel drooping in a corner of it. 610

Then he remember'd her and how she
wept,

And out of her there came a power upon
him;

And rising on the sudden he said: 'Eat!
I never yet beheld a thing so pale.

God's curse, it makes me mad to see you
weep.

Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had your
good man,

For were I dead who is it would weep for
me?

Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath
Have I beheld a lily like yourself.

And so there lived some color in your
cheek,

There is not one among my gentlewomen
Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove.

But listen to me, and by me be ruled,
And I will do the thing I have not done,

For ye shall share my earldom with me,
girl,

And we will live like two birds in one nest,
And I will fetch you forage from all fields,
For I compel all creatures to my will.'

He spoke; the brawny spearman let his
cheek
Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and
turning stared; ⁶³⁰
While some, whose souls the old serpent
long had drawn
Down, as the worm draws in the wither'd
leaf
And makes it earth, hiss'd each at other's
ear
What shall not be recorded — women they,
Women, or what had been those gracious
things,
But now desired the humbling of their best,
Yea, would have help'd him to it; and all
at once
They hated her, who took no thought of
them,
But answer'd in low voice, her meek head
yet
Drooping, 'I pray you of your courtesy, ⁶⁴⁰
He being as he is, to let me be.'

She spake so low he hardly heard her
speak,
But like a mighty patron, satisfied
With what himself had done so graciously,
Assumed that she had thank'd him, add-
ing, 'Yea,
Eat and be glad, for I account you mine.'

She answer'd meekly, 'How should I be
glad
Henceforth in all the world at anything,
Until my lord arise and look upon me?'

Here the huge earl cried out upon her
talk, ⁶⁵⁰
As all but empty heart and weariness
And sickly nothing; suddenly seized on her,
And bare her by main violence to the
board,
And thrust the dish before her, crying,
'Eat.'

'No, no,' said Enid, vext, 'I will not eat
Till yonder man upon the bier arise,
And eat with me.' 'Drink, then,' he an-
swer'd. 'Here!' —
And fill'd a horn with wine and held it to
her, —

'Lo! I, myself, when flush'd with fight or
hot, ⁶⁵⁹
God's curse, with anger — often I myself,
Before I well have drunken, scarce can
eat;
Drink therefore, and the wine will change
your will.'

'Not so,' she cried, 'by Heaven, I will
not drink
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do it,
And drink with me; and if he rise no more,
I will not look at wine until I die.'

At this he turn'd all red and paced his
hall,
Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper lip,
And coming up close to her, said at last:
'Girl, for I see ye scorn my courtesies, ⁶⁷⁰
Take warning; yonder man is surely dead,
And I compel all creatures to my will.
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore wail
for one
Who put your beauty to this flout and
scorn
By dressing it in rags? Amazed am I,
Beholding how ye butt against my wish,
That I forbear you thus; cross me no
more.
At least put off to please me this poor
gown,
This silken rag, this beggar-woman's weed.
I love that beauty should go beautifully;
For see ye not my gentlewomen here, ⁶⁸¹
How gay, how suited to the house of one
Who loves that beauty should go beauti-
fully?
Rise therefore; robe yourself in this; obey.'

He spoke, and one among his gentle-
women
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign loom,
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue
Play'd into green, and thicker down the
front
With jewels than the sward with drops of
dew,
When all night long a cloud clings to the
hill, ⁶⁹⁰
And with the dawn ascending lets the day
Strike where it clung; so thickly shone the
gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be moved
Than hardest tyrants in their day of power,

With lifelong injuries burning unavenged,
And now their hour has come; and Enid
said:

'In this poor gown my dear lord found
me first,
And loved me serving in my father's hall;
In this poor gown I rode with him to
court,
And there the Queen array'd me like the
sun;
In this poor gown he bade me clothe my-
self,

When now we rode upon this fatal quest
Of honor, where no honor can be gain'd;
And this poor gown I will not cast aside
Until himself arise a living man,
And bid me cast it. I have griefs enough;
Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be.
I never loved, can never love but him.
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,
He being as he is, to let me be.'

710

Then strode the brute earl up and down
his hall,
And took his russet beard between his
teeth;
Last, coming up quite close, and in his
mood
Crying, 'I count it of no more avail,
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with
you;
Take my salute,' unknighly with flat hand,
However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,
And since she thought, 'He had not dared
to do it,
Except he surely knew my lord was dead,'
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,
Which sees the trapper coming thro' the
wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at his
sword, —
It lay beside him in the hollow shield, —
Made but a single bound, and with a sweep
of it
Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a
hall
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the floor.
So died Earl Doorm by him he counted
dead.
And all the men and women in the hall

730

Rose when they saw the dead man rise, and
fled
Yelling as from a spectre, and the two
Were left alone together, and he said:

'Enid, I have used you worse than that
dead man,
Done you more wrong; we both have un-
dergone
That trouble which has left me thrice your
own.
Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.
And here I lay this penance on myself,
Not, tho' mine own ears heard you yester-
morn —
You thought me sleeping, but I heard you
say,
I heard you say, that you were no true
wife,
I swear I will not ask your meaning in it.
I do helieve yourself against yourself,
And will henceforward rather die than
doubt.'

740

And Enid could not say one tender
word,
She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart.
She only pray'd him, 'Fly, they will return
And slay you; fly, your charger is without,
My palfrey lost.' 'Then, Enid, shall you
ride
Behind me.' 'Yea,' said Enid, 'let us go.'
And moving out they found the stately
horse,

749

Who now no more a vassal to the thief,
But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,
Neigh'd with all gladness as they came, and
stoop'd
With a low whinny toward the pair; and
she
Kiss'd the white star upon his noble front,
Glad also; then Geraint upon the horse
Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on his
foot
She set her own and climb'd; he turn'd his
face
And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast her
arms
About him, and at once they rode away.

760

And never yet, since high in Paradise
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,
Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind
Than lived thro' her who in that perilous
hour

Put hand to hand beneath her husband's
heart,
And felt him hers again. She did not weep,
But o'er her meek eyes came a happy
mist
Like that which kept the heart of Eden
green

Before the useful trouble of the rain. 770
Yet not so misty were her meek blue eyes
As not to see before them on the path,
Right in the gateway of the bandit hold,
A knight of Arthur's court, who laid his
lance

In rest and made as if to fall upon him.
Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of
blood,

She, with her mind all full of what had
chanced,
Shriek'd to the stranger, 'Slay not a dead
man!'

'The voice of Enid,' said the knight; but
she,

Beholding it was Edyrn, son of Nudd, 780
Was moved so much the more, and shriek'd
again,

'O cousin, slay not him who gave you life.'
And Edyrn moving frankly forward spake:
'My lord Geraint, I greet you with all
love;

I took you for a bandit knight of Doorm;
And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon
him,

Who love you, prince, with something of
the love

Wherewith we love the Heaven that chas-
tens us. 788

For once, when I was up so high in pride
That I was halfway down the slope to hell,
By overthrowing me you threw me higher.
Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table
Round,

And since I knew this earl when I myself
Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,
I come the mouthpiece of our King to
Doorm —

The King is close behind me — bidding
him

Disband himself, and scatter all his powers,
Submit, and hear the judgment of the
King.'

'He hears the judgment of the King of
kings,'
Cried the wan prince; 'and lo, the powers
of Doorm 800

Are scatter'd!' and he pointed to the field,
Where, huddled here and there on mound
and knoll,

Were men and women staring and aghast,
While some yet fled; and then he plainlier
told

How the huge earl lay slain within his
hall.

But when the knight besought him, 'Fol-
low me,

Prince, to the camp, and in the King's own
ear

Speak what has chanced; ye surely have
endured

Strange chances here alone;' that other
flush'd,

And hung his head, and halted in reply, 810
Fearing the mild face of the blameless
King,

And after madness acted question ask'd;
Till Edyrn crying, 'If ye will not go
To Arthur, then will Arthur come to you,'
'Enough,' he said, 'I follow,' and they
went.

But Enid in their going had two fears,
One from the handit scatter'd in the field,
And one from Edyrn. Every now and
then,

When Edyrn rein'd his charger at her
side,

She shrank a little. In a hollow land, 820
From which old fires have broken, men
may fear

Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving, said:

'Fair and dear cousin, you that most
had cause

To fear me, fear no longer, I am changed.
Yourself were first the blameless cause to
make

My nature's prideful sparkle in the blood
Break into furious flame; being repulsed
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and
wrought

Until I overturn'd him; then set up — 820
With one main purpose ever at my heart —

My haughty jousts, and took a paramour;
Did her mock-honor as the fairest fair,

And, toppling over all antagonism,
So wax'd in pride that I believed myself

Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh mad;
And, but for my main purpose in these

jousts,
I should have slain your father, seized
yourself.

I lived in hope that sometime you would
 come
 To these my lists with him whom best you
 loved,
 And there, poor cousin, with your meek
 blue eyes, ⁸⁴⁰
 The truest eyes that ever answer'd heaven,
 Behold me overturn and trample on him.
 Then, had you cried, or knelt, or pray'd to
 me,
 I should not less have kill'd him. And
 you came, —
 But once you came, — and with your own
 true eyes
 Beheld the man you loved — I speak as one
 Speaks of a service done him — overthrow
 My proud self, and my purpose three years
 old,
 And set his foot upon me, and give me life.
 There was I broken down, there was I
 saved; ⁸⁵⁰
 Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating the
 life
 He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.
 And all the penance the Queen laid upon
 me
 Was but to rest awhile within her court;
 Where first as sullen as a beast new-caged,
 And waiting to be treated like a wolf,
 Because I knew my deeds were known, I
 found,
 Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,
 Such fine reserve and noble reticence,
 Manners so kind, yet stately, such a grace
 Of tenderest courtesy, that I began ⁸⁶¹
 To glance behind me at my former life,
 And find that it had been the wolf's in-
 deed.
 And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high
 saint,
 Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,
 Subdued me somewhat to that gentleness
 Which, when it weds with manhood, makes
 a man.
 And you were often there about the Queen,
 But saw me not, or mark'd not if you saw;
 Nor did I care or dare to speak with you, ⁸⁷⁰
 But kept myself aloof till I was changed;
 And fear not, cousin, I am changed in-
 deed.'

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,
 Like simple noble natures, credulous
 Of what they long for, good in friend or
 foe,

There most in those who most have done
 them ill.
 And when they reach'd the camp the King
 himself
 Advanced to greet them, and beholding her
 Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a word,
 But went apart with Edyrn, whom he held
 In converse for a little, and return'd, ⁸⁸¹
 And, gravely smiling, lifted her from horse,
 And kiss'd her with all pureness, brother-
 like,
 And show'd an empty tent allotted her,
 And glancing for a minute, till he saw
 her
 Pass into it, turn'd to the prince, and said:

'Prince, when of late ye pray'd me for
 my leave
 To move to your own land and there defend
 Your marches, I was prick'd with some
 reproof, ⁸⁸⁹
 As one that let foul wrong stagnate and be,
 By having look'd too much thro' alien eyes,
 And wrought too long with delegated hands,
 Not used mine own; but now behold me
 come
 To cleanse this common sewer of all my
 realm,
 With Edyrn and with others. Have ye
 look'd
 At Edyrn? have ye seen how nobly
 changed?
 This work of his is great and wonderful.
 His very face with change of heart is
 changed.
 The world will not believe a man repents;
 And this wise world of ours is mainly right.
 Full seldom doth a man repent, or use ⁹⁰¹
 Both grace and will to pick the vicious
 quitch
 Of blood and custom wholly out of him,
 And make all clean, and plant himself
 afresh.
 Edyrn has done it, weeding all his heart
 As I will weed this land before I go.
 I, therefore, made him of our Table Round,
 Not rashly, but have proved him every way
 One of our noblest, our most valorous,
 Sanest and most obedient; and indeed ⁹¹⁰
 This work of Edyrn, wrought upon himself
 After a life of violence, seems to me
 A thousand-fold more great and wonderful
 Than if some knight of mine, risking his
 life,
 My subject with my subjects under him,

Should make an onslaught single on a
realm
Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by one,
And were himself nigh wounded to the
death.'

So spake the King; low bow'd the
prince, and felt 919
His work was neither great nor wonderful,
And past to Enid's tent; and thither came
The King's own leech to look into his hurt;
And Enid tended on him there; and there
Her constant motion round him, and the
breath
Of her sweet tendance hovering over him,
Fill'd all the genial courses of his blood
With deeper and with ever deeper love,
As the Southwest that blowing Bala lake
Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,
The blameless King went forth and cast his
eyes 931

On each of all whom Uther left in charge
Long since, to guard the justice of the
King.

He look'd and found them wanting; and as
now

Men weed the White Horse on the Berk-
shire hills,

To keep him bright and clean as hereto-
fore,

He rooted out the slothful officer
Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at
wrong,

And in their chairs set up a stronger race
With hearts and hands, and sent a thou-
sand men 940

To till the wastes, and moving everywhere
Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,
And broke the bandit holds and cleansed
the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole again, they
past

With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.
There the great Queen once more embraced
her friend,

And clothed her in apparel like the day.
And tho' Geraint could never take again
That comfort from their converse which he
took

Before the Queen's fair name was breathed
upon, 950

He rested well content that all was well.

Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,
And fifty knights rode with them to the
shores

Of Severn, and they past to their own land.
And there he kept the justice of the King
So vigorously yet mildly that all hearts
Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died;
And being ever foremost in the chase,
And victor at the tilt and tournament,
They call'd him the great prince and man
of men. 960

But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call
Enid the Fair, a grateful people named
Enid the Good; and in their halls arose
The cry of children, Enids and Geraints
Of times to be; nor did he doubt her more,
But rested in her fealty till he crown'd
A happy life with a fair death, and fell
Against the heathen of the Northern Sea
In battle, fighting for the blameless King.

BALIN AND BALAN

PELLAM the king, who held and lost with
Lot

In that first war, and had his realm restored
But render'd tributary, fail'd of late
To send his tribute; wherefore Arthur
call'd

His treasurer, one of many years, and
spake:

'Go thou with him and him and bring it to
us,

Lest we should set one truer on his throne.
Man's word is God in man.'

His baron said:
'We go, but harken: there be two strange
knights

Who sit near Camelot at a fountain side 10
A mile beneath the forest, challenging
And overthrowing every knight who comes.
Wilt thou I undertake them as we pass,
And send them to thee?'

Arthur laugh'd upon him:
'Old friend, too old to be so young, de-
part,

Delay not thou for aught, but let them sit,
Until they find a lustier than themselves.'

So these departed. Early, one fair dawn,
The light-wing'd spirit of his youth re-
turn'd

On Arthur's heart; he arm'd himself and
 went, ²⁰
 So coming to the fountain-side beheld
 Balin and Balan sitting statue-like,
 Brethren, to right and left the spring, that
 down,
 From underneath a plume of lady-fern,
 Sang, and the sand danced at the bottom
 of it.
 And on the right of Balin Baliu's horse
 Was fast beside an alder, on the left
 Of Balan Balan's near a poplar-tree.
 'Fair sirs,' said Arthur, 'wherefore sit ye
 here?'
 Balin and Balan answer'd: 'For the sake
 Of glory; we be mightier men than all ³¹
 In Arthur's court; that also have we
 proved,
 For whatsoever knight against us came
 Or I or he have easily overthrow'n.'
 'I too,' said Arthur, 'am of Arthur's hall,
 But rather proven in his Paynim wars
 Than famous jousts; but see, or proven or
 not,
 Whether me likewise ye can overthrow.'
 And Arthur lightly smote the brethren
 down, ³⁹
 And lightly so return'd, and no man knew.

Then Balin rose, and Balan, and beside
 The carolling water set themselves again,
 And spake no word until the shadow
 turn'd;

When from the fringe of coppice round
 them burst

A spangled pursuivant, and crying, 'Sirs,
 Rise, follow! ye be sent for by the King,'
 They follow'd; whom when Arthur seeing
 ask'd,

'Tell me your names; why sat ye by the
 well?'

Balin the stillness of a minute broke
 Saying, 'Au unmelodious name to thee, ⁵⁰
 Balin, "the Savage" — that addition
 thine —

My brother and my better, this man here,
 Balan. I smote upon the naked skull
 A thrall of thine in open hall; my hand
 Was gauntleted, half slew him, for I heard
 He had spoken evil of me; thy just wrath
 Sent me a three-years' exile from thine
 eyes.

I have not lived my life delightsomely;
 For I that did that violence to thy thrall,
 Had often wrought some fury on myself,

Saving for Balan. Those three kingless
 years ⁶¹

Have past — were wormwood-bitter to me.
 King,

Methough't that if we sat beside the well,
 And hurl'd to ground what knight soever
 spurr'd

Against us, thou would'st take me gladlier
 back,

And make, as ten times worthier to be
 thine

Than twenty Balins, Balan knight. I have
 said.

Not so — not all. A man of thine to-day
 Abash'd us both, and brake my boast. Thy
 will?'

Said Arthur: 'Thou hast ever spoken
 truth; ⁷⁰

Thy too fierce manhood would not let thee
 lie.

Rise, my true knight. As children learn,
 be thou

Wiser for falling! walk with me, and
 move

To music with thine Order and the King.
 Thy chair, a grief to all the brethren,
 stands

Vacant, but thou retake it, mine again!'

Thereafter, when Sir Balin enter'd hall,
 The lost one found was greeted as in
 heaven

With joy that blazed itself in woodland
 wealth ⁷⁹

Of leaf, and gayest garlandage of flowers,
 Along the walls and down the board; they
 sat,

And cup clash'd cup; they drank, and some
 one sang,

Sweet-voiced, a song of welcome, where-
 upon

Their common shout in chorus, mounting,
 made

Those banners of twelve battles overhead
 Stir as they stir'd of old, when Arthur's
 host

Proclaim'd him victor and the day was won.

Then Balan added to their Order lived
 A wealthier life than heretofore with these
 And Balin, till their embassy return'd. ⁹⁰

'Sir King,' they brought report, 'we
 hardly found,
 So bush'd about it is with gloom, the hall

Of him to whom ye sent us, Pellam, once
A Christless foe of thine as ever dash'd
Horse against horse; but seeing that thy
realm

Hath prosper'd in the name of Christ, the
King

Took, as in rival heat, to holy things,
And finds himself descended from the
Saint

Arimathæan Joseph, him who first
Brought the great faith to Britain over
seas. 100

He boasts his life as purer than thine
own;

Eats scarce enow to keep his pulse a-beat;
Hath push'd aside his faithful wife, nor
lets

Or dame or damsel enter at his gates
Lest he should be polluted. This gray
king

Show'd us a shrine wherein were wonders
— yea,

Rich arks with priceless bones of martyr-
dom,

Thorns of the crown and shivers of the
cross,

And therewithal, — for thus he told us, —
brought 109

By holy Joseph hither, that same spear
Wherewith the Roman pierced the side of
Christ.

He much amazed us; after, when we sought
The tribute, answer'd, "I have quite fore-
gone

All matters of this world. Garlon, mine
heir,

Of him demand it," which this Garlon
gave

With much ado, railing at thine and thee.

'But when we left, in those deep woods
we found

A knight of thine spear-stricken from be-
hind,

Dead, whom we buried; more than one of
us 119

Cried out on Garlon, but a woodman there
Reported of some demon in the woods
Was once a man, who, driven by evil
tongues

From all his fellows, lived alone, and came
To learn black magic, and to hate his
kind

With such a hate that when he died his
soul

Became a fiend, which, as the man in life
Was wounded by blind tongues he saw not
whence,

Strikes from behind. This woodman show'd
the cave

From which he sallies and wherein he
dwelt.

We saw the hoof-print of a horse, no
more.' 130

Then Arthur, 'Let who goes before me
see

He do not fall behind me. Foully slain
And villainously! who will hunt for me
This demon of the woods?' Said Balan,
'I!'

So claim'd the quest and rode away, but
first,

Embracing Balin: 'Good my brother, hear!
Let not thy moods prevail when I am gone

Who used to lay them! hold them out
fiends,

Who leap at thee to tear thee; shake them
aside,

Dreams ruling when wit sleeps! yea, but
to dream 140

That any of these would wrong thee wrongs
thyself.

Witness their flowery welcome. Bound are
they

To speak no evil. Truly, save for fears,
My fears for thee, so rich a fellowship
Would make me wholly blest; thou one of
them,

Be one indeed. Consider them, and all
Their bearing in their common bond of
love,

No more of hatred than in heaven itself,
No more of jealousy than in Paradise.'

So Balan warn'd, and went; Balin re-
main'd, 150

Who — for but three brief moons had
glanced away

From being knighted till he smote the
thrall,

And faded from the presence into years
Of exile — now would strictlier set him-
self

To learn what Arthur meant by courtesy,
Manhood, and knighthood; wherefore hov-
er'd round

Lancelot; but when he mark'd his high
sweet smile

In passing, and a transitory word

Make knight or churl or child or damsel
 seem
 From being smiled at happier in them-
 selves — 160

Sigh'd, as a boy, lame-born beneath a
 height
 That glooms his valley, sighs to see the
 peak
 Sun-flush'd or touch at night the northern
 star;
 For one from out his village lately climb'd
 And brought report of azure lands and
 fair,
 Far seen to left and right; and he himself
 Hath hardly scaled with help a hundred
 feet
 Up from the base. So Balin, marvelling
 oft
 How far beyond him Lancelot seem'd to
 move,
 Groan'd, and at times would mutter :
 'These be gifts, 170
 Born with the blood, not learnable, divine,
 Beyond *my* reach. Well had I foughten
 — well —
 In those fierce wars, struck hard — and
 had I crown'd
 With my slain self the heaps of whom I
 slew —
 So — better! — But this worship of the
 Queen,
 That honor too wherein she holds him —
 this,
 This was the sunshine that hath given the
 man
 A growth, a name that branches o'er the
 rest,
 And strength against all odds, and what
 the King
 So prizes — overprizes — gentleness. 180
 Her likewise would I worship an I might.
 I never can be close with her, as he
 That brought her hither. Shall I pray the
 King
 To let me bear some token of his Queen
 Whereon to gaze, remembering her — for-
 get
 My heats and violences? live afresh?
 What if the Queen disdain'd to grant it!
 nay,
 Being so stately-gentle, would she make
 My darkness blackness? and with how
 sweet grace 189
 She greeted my return! Bold will I be —
 Some godly cognizance of Guinevere,

In lieu of this rough beast upon my shield,
 Langued gules, and tooth'd with grinning
 savagery.'

And Arthur, when Sir Balin sought him,
 said,
 'What wilt thou bear?' Balin was bold,
 and ask'd
 To bear her own crown-royal upon shield,
 Whereat she smiled and turn'd her to the
 King,
 Who answer'd: 'Thou shalt put the crown
 to use.

The crown is but the shadow of the king,
 And this a shadow's shadow, let him have
 it, 200
 So this will help him of his violences!'
 'No shadow,' said Sir Balin, 'O my Queen,
 But light to me! no shadow, O my King,
 But golden earnest of a gentler life!'

So Balin bare the crown, and all the
 knights
 Approved him, and the Queen; and all the
 world
 Made music, and he felt his being move
 In music with his Order and the King.

The nightingale, full-toned in middle
 May,
 Hath ever and anon a note so thin 210
 It seems another voice in other groves;
 Thus, after some quick burst of sudden
 wrath,
 The music in him seem'd to change and
 grow
 Faint and far-off.

And once he saw the thrall
 His passion half had gauntleted to death,
 That causer of his banishment and shame,
 Smile at him, as he deem'd, presumptu-
 ously.

His arm half rose to strike again, but fell;
 The memory of that cognizance on shield
 Weighted it down, but in himself he
 moan'd: 220

'Too high this mount of Camelot for
 me;
 These high-set courtesies are not for me.
 Shall I not rather prove the worse for
 these?
 Fierier and stormier from restraining, break
 Into some madness even before the
 Queen?'

Thus, as a hearth lit in a mountain
home,
And glancing on the window, when the
gloom
Of twilight deepens round it, seems a
flame

That rages in the woodland far below,
So when his moods were darken'd, court
and king ²³⁰
And all the kindly warmth of Arthur's hall
Shadow'd an angry distance; yet he strove
To learn the graces of their Table, fought
Hard with himself, and seem'd at length in
peace.

Then chanced, one morning, that Sir
Balin sat
Close-hower'd in that garden nigh the hall.
A walk of roses ran from door to door,
A walk of lilies crost it to the bower;
And down that range of roses the great
Queen
Came with slow steps, the morning on her
face; ²⁴⁰

And all in shadow from the counter door
Sir Lancelot as to meet her, then at once,
As if he saw not, glanced aside, and paced
The long white walk of lilies toward the
bower.

Follow'd the Queen; Sir Balin heard her
'Prince,

Art thou so little loyal to thy Queen
As pass without good morrow to thy
Queen?'

To whom Sir Lancelot with his eyes on
earth,

'Fain would I still be loyal to the Queen.'
'Yea, so,' she said; 'but so to pass me
by — ²⁵⁰

So loyal scarce is loyal to thyself,
Whom all men rate the king of courtesy.
Let be; ye stand, fair lord, as in a dream.'

Then Lancelot with his hand among the
flowers:

'Yea — for a dream. Last night methought
I saw

That maiden Saint who stands with lily in
hand

In yonder shrine. All round her prest the
dark,

And all the light upon her silver face
Flow'd from the spiritual lily that she held.
Lo! these her emblems drew mine eyes —
away; ²⁶⁰

For see, how perfect-pure! As light a
flush
As hardly tints the blossom of the quince
Would mar their charm of stainless maiden-
hood.'

'Sweeter to me,' she said, 'this garden
rose

Deep-hued and many-folded! sweeter still
The wild-wood hyacinth and the bloom of
May!

Prince, we have ridden before among the
flowers

In those fair days — not all as cool as these,
Tho' season-earlier. Art thou sad? or
sick?

Our noble King will send thee his own
leech — ²⁷⁰
Sick? or for any matter anger'd at me?'

Then Lancelot lifted his large eyes; they
dwelt

Deep-tranced on hers, and could not fall.
Her hue

Changed at his gaze; so turning side by
side

They past, and Balin started from his
bower.

'Queen? subject? but I see not what I
see.

Damsel and lover? hear not what I hear.
My father hath begotten me in his wrath.
I suffer from the things before me, know,
Learn nothing; am not worthy to be
knight — ²⁸⁰

A churl, a clown!' and in him gloom on
gloom

Deepen'd; he sharply caught his lance and
shield,

Nor stay'd to crave permission of the King,
But mad for strange adventure, dash'd
away.

He took the selfsame track as Balan,
saw

The fountain where they sat together,
sigh'd,

'Was I not better there with him?' and
rode

The skyless woods, but under open blue
Came on the hoar-head woodman at a
bough

Wearily hewing. 'Churl, thine axe!' he
cried, ²⁹⁰

Descended, and disjointed it at a blow;
To whom the woodman utter'd wonder-
ingly,

'Lord, thou couldst lay the devil of these
woods

If arm of flesh could lay him!' Balin cried,
'Him, or the viler devil who plays his part;
To lay that devil would lay the devil in me.'
'Nay,' said the churl, 'our devil is a truth,
I saw the flash of him but yester-even.
And some *do* say that our Sir Garlon too
Hath learn'd black magic, and to ride un-
seen.

Look to the cave.' But Balin answer'd
him,

'Old fabler, these be fancies of the churl;
Look to thy woodcraft,' and so leaving him,
Now with slack rein and careless of him-
self,

Now with dug spur and raving at himself,
Now with droopt brow down the long glades
he rode;

So mark'd not on his right a cavern-chasm
Yawn over darkness, where, nor far within,
The whole day died, but, dying, gleam'd on
rocks

Roof-pendent, sharp; and others from the
floor,

Tusklike, arising, made that mouth of night
Whereout the demon issued up from hell.
He mark'd not this, but, blind and deaf to all
Save that chain'd rage which ever yelp't
within,

Past eastward from the falling sun. At
once

He felt the hollow-beaten mosses thud
And tremble, and then the shadow of a
spear,

Shot from behind him, ran along the
ground.

Sideways he started from the path, and
saw,

With pointed lance as if to pierce, a shape,
A light of armor by him flash, and pass
And vanish in the woods; and follow'd this,
But all so blind in rage that unawares
He burst his lance against a forest hough,
Dishorsed himself, and rose again, and fled
Far, till the castle of a king, the hall
Of Pellam, lichen-bearded, grayly draped
With streaming grass, appear'd, low-built
but strong;

The ruinous donjon as a knoll of moss,
The battlement overtopt with ivy-tods, 330
A home of bats, in every tower an owl.

Then spake the men of Pellam crying,
'Lord,

Why wear ye this crown - royal upon
shield?'

Said Balin, 'For the fairest and the best
Of ladies living gave me this to bear.'

So stall'd his horse, and strode across the
court,

But found the greetings both of knight and
king

Faint in the low dark hall of banquet.
Leaves

Laid their green faces flat against the
panes,

Sprays grated, and the canker'd boughs
without

Whined in the wood; for all was hush'd
within,

Till when at feast Sir Garlon likewise
ask'd,

'Why wear ye that crown-royal?' Balin
said,

'The Queen we worship, Lancelot, I, and
all,

As fairest, best, and purest, granted me
To bear it!' Such a sound — for Arthur's
knights

Were hated strangers in the hall — as
makes

The white swan-mother, sitting, when she
hears

A strange knee rustle thro' her secret
reeds,

Made Garlon, hissing; then he sourly
smiled:

'Fairest I grant her — I have seen; but
best,

Best, purest? *thou* from Arthur's hall, and
yet

So simple! hast thou eyes, or if, are these
So far besotted that they fail to see

This fair wife-worship cloaks a secret
shame?

Truly, ye men of Arthur be but babes.'

A goblet on the board by Balin, boss'd
With holy Joseph's legend, on his right
Stood, all of massiest bronze. One side had
sea

And ship and sail and angels blowing on
it;

And one was rough with wattling, and the
walls

Of that low church he built at Glastonbury.
This Balin graspt, but while in act to hurl,

Thro' memory of that token on the shield
 Relax'd his hold. 'I will be gentle,' he
 thought,
 'And passing gentle;' caught his hand
 away,
 Then fiercely to Sir Garlon: 'Eyes have I
 That saw to-day the shadow of a spear,
 Shot from behind me, run along the ground;
 Eyes too that long have watch'd how Lance-
 lot draws ³⁷⁰
 From homage to the best and purest,
 might,
 Name, manhood, and a grace, but scanty
 thine
 Who, sitting in thine own hall, canst en-
 dure
 To mouth so huge a foulness — to thy guest,
 Me, me of Arthur's Table. Felon talk!
 Let be! no more!'

But not the less by night
 The scorn of Garlon, poisoning all his rest,
 Stung him in dreams. At length, and dim
 thro' leaves
 Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated, and
 old boughs
 Whined in the wood. He rose, descended,
 met ³⁸⁰
 The scorner in the castle court, and fain,
 For hate and loathing, would have past
 him by;
 But when Sir Garlon utter'd mocking-wise,
 'What, wear ye still that same crown-
 scandalous?'
 His countenance blacken'd, and his fore-
 head veins
 Bloated and branch'd; and tearing out of
 sheath
 The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery, 'Ha!
 So thou be shadow, here I make thee
 ghost,'
 Hard upon helm smote him, and the blade
 flew
 Splintering in six, and clinkt upon the
 stones. ³⁹⁰
 Then Garlon, reeling slowly backward, fell,
 And Balin by the banneret of his helm
 Dragg'd him, and struck, but from the
 castle a cry
 Sounded across the court, and — men-at-
 arms,
 A score with pointed lances, making at
 him —
 He dash'd the pummel at the foremost
 face,

Beneath a low door dipt, and made his feet
 Wings thro' a glimmering gallery, till he
 mark'd
 The portal of King Pellam's chapel wide
 And inward to the wall; he stept behind;
 Thence in a moment heard them pass like
 wolves ⁴⁰¹
 Howling; but while he stared about the
 shrine,
 In which he scarce could spy the Christ
 for Saints,
 Beheld before a golden altar lie
 The longest lance his eyes had ever seen,
 Point-painted red; and seizing thereupon
 Push'd thro' an open casement down, lean'd
 on it,
 Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth;
 Then hand at ear, and harkening from
 what side
 The blindfold rummage buried in the walls
 Might echo, ran the counter path, and
 found ⁴¹¹
 His charger, mounted on him and away.
 An arrow whizz'd to the right, one to the
 left,
 One overhead; and Pellam's feeble cry,
 'Stay, stay him! he defileth heavenly
 things
 With earthly uses!' made him quickly
 dive
 Beneath the boughs, and race thro' many a
 mile
 Of dense and open, till his gnodly horse,
 Arising wearily at a fallen oak,
 Stumbled headlong, and cast him face to
 ground. ⁴²⁰
 Half-wroth he had not ended, but all
 glad,
 Knightlike, to find his charger yet un-
 lamed,
 Sir Balin drew the shield from off his neck,
 Stared at the priceless cognizance, and
 thought,
 'I have shamed thee so that now thou
 shamest me,
 Thee will I bear no more,' high on a branch
 Hung it, and turn'd aside into the woods,
 And there in gloom cast himself all along,
 Moaning, 'My violences, my violences!'

But now the wholesome music of the
 wood ⁴³⁰
 Was dumb'd by one from out the hall of
 Mark.

A damsel-errant, warbling, as she rode
The woodland alleys, Vivien, with her
squire.

'The fire of heaven has kill'd the harren
cold,
And kindled all the plain and all the wold.
The new leaf ever pushes off the old.
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

'Old priest, who mumble worship in your
quire —
Old monk and nun, ye scorn the world's desire,
Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the fire! 440
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

'The fire of heaven is on the dusty ways.
The wayside blossoms open to the blaze.
The whole wood-world is one full peal of
praise.
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

'The fire of heaven is lord of all things
good,
And starve not thou this fire within thy blood,
But follow Vivien thro' the fiery flood!
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell!'

Then turning to her squire, 'This fire of
heaven, 450
This old sun-worship, boy, will rise again,
And beat the Cross to earth, and break the
King
And all his Table.'

Then they reach'd a glade,
Where under one long lane of cloudless air
Before another wood, the royal crown
Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless elm
Drew the vague glance of Vivien and her
squire.

Amazed were these; 'Lo there,' she cried —
'a crown —
Borne by some high lord-prince of Arthur's
hall,

And there a horse! the rider? where is
he? 460
See, yonder lies one dead within the wood.
Not dead; he stirs! — but sleeping. I will
speak.

Hail, royal knight, we break on thy sweet
rest,
Not, doubtless, all unearn'd by noble deeds.
But bounden art thou, if from Arthur's
hall,
To help the weak. Behold, I fly from
shame,

A lustful king, who sought to win my love
Thro' evil ways. The knight with whom I
rode

Hath suffer'd misadventure, and my squire
Hath in him small defence; but thou, Sir
Prince,

Wilt surely guide me to the warrior King,
Arthur the blameless, pure as any maid,
To get me shelter for my maidenhood.

I charge thee by that crown upon thy
shield,
And by the great Queen's name, arise and
hence.

And Balin rose: 'Thither no more! nor
prince
Nor knight am I, but one that hath de-
famed

The cognizance she gave me. Here I dwell
Savage among the savage woods, here
die —

Die — let the wolves' black maws ensepul-
chre 480

Their brother beast, whose anger was his
lord!

O me, that such a name as Guinevere's,
Which our high Lancelot hath so lifted up,
And been thereby uplifted, should thro' me,
My violence, and my villainy, come to
shame!

Thereat she suddenly laugh'd and shrill,
anon
Sigh'd all as suddenly. Said Balin to her:
'Is this thy courtesy — to mock me, ha?
Hence, for I will not with thee.' Again
she sigh'd:

'Pardon, sweet lord! we maidens often
laugh 490
When sick at heart, when rather we should
weep.

I knew thee wrong'd. I brake upon thy
rest,

And now full loth am I to break thy dream,
But thou art man, and canst abide a truth,
Tho' bitter. Hither, boy — and mark me
well.

Dost thou remember at Caerleon once —
A year ago — nay, then I love thee not —
Ay, thou rememberest well — one summer
dawn —

By the great tower — Caerleon upon Usk —
Nay, truly we were hidden — this fair lord,
The flower of all their vestal knighthood,
knelt 501

In amorous homage — knelt — what else ?
 — O, ay,
 Knelt, and drew down from out his night-
 black hair
 And mumbled that white hand whose ring'd
 caress
 Had wander'd from her own King's golden
 head,
 And lost itself in darkness, till she cried —
 I thought the great tower would crash down
 on both —
 “ Rise, my sweet King, and kiss me on the
 lips,
 Thou art my King.” This lad, whose
 lightest word
 Is mere white truth in simple nakedness,
 Saw them embrace; he reddens, cannot
 speak, ⁵¹¹
 So bashful, he ! but all the maiden Saints,
 The deathless mother-maidenhood of hea-
 ven,
 Cry out upon her. Up then, ride with me !
 Talk not of shame ! thou canst not, an
 thou wouldst,
 Do these more shame than these have done
 themselves.'

She lied with ease; but horror-stricken
 he,
 Remembering that dark bower at Camelot,
 Breathed in a dismal whisper, 'It is truth.'

Sunnily she smiled: 'And even in this
 lone wood, ⁵²⁰
 Sweet lord, ye do right well to whisper this.
 Fools prate, and perish traitors. Woods
 have tongues,
 As walls have ears; but thou shalt go with
 me,
 And we will speak at first exceeding low.
 Meet is it the good King be not deceived.
 See now, I set thee high on vantage ground,
 From whence to watch the time, and eagle-
 like
 Stoop at thy will on Lancelot and the
 Queen.'

She ceased; his evil spirit upon him
 leapt,
 He ground his teeth together, sprang with
 a yell, ⁵³⁰
 Tore from the branch and cast on earth the
 shield,
 Drove his mail'd heel athwart the royal
 crown,

Stamp'd all into defacement, hurl'd it from
 him
 Among the forest weeds, and cursed the
 tale,
 The told-of, and the teller.

That weird yell,
 Unearthlier than all shriek of bird or beast,
 Thrill'd thro' the woods; and Balan lurk-
 ing there —
 His quest was unaccomplish'd — heard and
 thought
 'The scream of that wood-devil I came to
 quell !'
 Then nearing: 'Lo ! he hath slain some
 brother-knight, ⁵⁴⁰
 And tramples on the goodly shield to show
 His loathing of our Order and the Queen.
 My quest, meseems, is here. Or devil or
 man,
 Guard thou thine head.' Sir Balin spake
 not word,
 But snatch'd a sudden buckler from the
 squire,
 And vaulted on his horse, and so they
 crash'd
 In onset, and King Pellam's holy spear,
 Reputed to be red with sinless blood,
 Redden'd at once with sinful, for the point
 Across the maiden shield of Balan prick'd
 The hauberk to the flesh; and 'Balin's
 horse ⁵⁵¹
 Was wearied to the death, and, when they
 clash'd,
 Rolling back upon Balin, crush'd the man
 Inward, and either fell and swoon'd away.

Then to her squire mutter'd the damsel:
 'Fools !
 This fellow hath wrought some foulness
 with his Queen;
 Else never had he borne her crown, nor
 raved
 And thus foam'd over at a rival name.
 But thou, Sir Chick, that scarce hast
 broken shell,
 Art yet half-yolk, not even come to
 down — ⁵⁶⁰
 Who never sawest Caerleon upon Usk —
 And yet hast often pleaded for my love —
 See what I see, be thou where I have been,
 Or else, Sir Chick — dismount and loose
 their casques;
 I fain would know what manner of men
 they be.'

And when the squire had loosed them,
 'Goodly! — look!
 They might have cropt the myriad flower
 of May,
 And butt each other here, like brainless
 bulls,
 Dead for one heifer!'

Then the gentle squire:
 'I hold them happy, so they died for love;
 And, Vivien, tho' ye beat me like your
 dog,
 I too could die, as now I live, for thee.'

'Live on, Sir Boy,' she cried; 'I better
 prize
 The living dog than the dead lion. Away!
 I cannot brook to gaze upon the dead.'
 Then leapt her palfrey o'er the fallen
 oak,
 And bounding forward, 'Leave them to the
 wolves.'

But when their foreheads felt the cooling
 air,
 Balin first woke, and seeing that true face,
 Familiar up from cradle-time, so wan,
 Crawl'd slowly with low moans to where he
 lay,

And on his dying brother cast himself
 Dying; and he lifted faint eyes; he felt
 One near him; all at once they found the
 world,
 Staring wild-wide; then with a childlike
 wail,
 And drawing down the dim disastrous brow
 That o'er him hung, he kiss'd it, moan'd,
 and spake:

'O Balin, Balin, I that fain had died
 To save thy life, have brought thee to thy
 death.
 Why had ye not the shield I knew? and
 why
 Trampled ye thus on that which bare the
 crown?'

Then Balin told him brokenly and in
 gasps
 All that had chanced, and Balan moan'd
 again:

'Brother, I dwelt a day in Pellam's hall;
 This Garlon mock'd me, but I heeded not.
 And one said, "Eat in peace! a liar is he,

And hates thee for the tribute!" This
 good knight
 Told me that twice a wanton damsel came,
 And sought for Garlon at the castle-gates,
 Whom Pellam drove away with holy heat.
 I well believe this damsel, and the one
 Who stood beside thee even now, the same.
 "She dwells among the woods," he said,
 "and meets
 And dallies with him in the Mouth of
 Hell."
 Foul are their lives, foul are their lips;
 they lied.
 Pure as our own true mother is our Queen.'

'O brother,' answer'd Balin, 'woe is me!
 My madness all thy life has been thy doom,
 Thy curse, and darken'd all thy day; and
 now
 The night has come. I scarce can see thee
 now.
 Good night! for we shall never bid again
 Good morrow — Dark my doom was here,
 and dark
 It will be there. I see thee now no more.
 I would not mine again should darken
 thine;
 Good night, true brother.'

Balan answer'd low,
 'Good night, true brother, here! good mor-
 row there!
 We two were born together, and we die
 Together by one doom:' and while he spoke
 Closed his death-drowsing eyes, and slept
 the sleep
 With Balin, either lock'd in either's arm.

MERLIN AND VIVIEN

A STORM was coming, but the winds were
 still,
 And in the wild woods of Broceliande,
 Before an oak, so hollow, huge, and old
 It look'd a tower of ivied masonwork,
 At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

For he that always bare in bitter grudge
 The slights of Arthur and his Table, Marh
 The Cornish King, had heard a wandering
 voice,
 A minstrel of Caerleon by strong storm
 Blown into shelter at Tintagil, say
 That out of naked knight-like purity

Sir Lancelot worshipt no unmarried girl,
But the great Queen herself, fought in her
name,
Sware by her — vows like theirs that high
in heaven
Love most, but neither marry nor are given
In marriage, angels of our Lord's report.

He ceased, and then — for Vivien
sweetly said —

She sat beside the bauquet nearest Mark, —
'And is the fair example follow'd, sir,
In Arthur's household?' — answer'd inno-
cently: 20

'Ay, by some few — ay, truly — youths
that hold

It more beseeems the perfect virgin knight
To worship woman as true wife beyond
All hopes of gaining, than as maiden girl.
They place their pride in Lancelot and the
Queen.

So passionate for an utter purity
Beyond the limit of their bond are these,
For Arthur bound them not to singleness.
Brave hearts and clean! and yet — God
guide them! — young.'

Then Mark was half in heart to hurl his
cup 30
Straight at the speaker, but forbore. He
rose

To leave the hall, and, Vivien following him,
Turn'd to her: 'Here are snakes within the
grass;

And you methinks, O Vivien, save ye fear
The monkish manhood, and the mask of
pure
Worn by this court, can stir them till they
sting.'

And Vivien answer'd, smiling scornfully:
'Why fear? because that foster'd at *thy*
court

I savor of thy — virtues? fear them? no,
As love, if love be perfect, casts out
fear, 40

So hate, if hate be perfect, casts out fear.
My father died in battle against the King,
My mother on his corpse in open field;
She bore me there, for horn from death
was I

Among the dead and sown upon the wind —
And then on thee! and shown the truth
betimes,

That old true filth, and bottom of the well,
Where Truth is hidden. Gracious lessons
thine,

And maxims of the mud! "This Arthur
pure!

Great Nature thro' the flesh herself hath
made 50

Gives him the lie! There is no being pure,
My cherub; saith not Holy Writ the
same?" —

If I were Arthur, I would have thy blood.
Thy blessing, stainless King! I bring thee
back,

When I have ferreted out their burrow-
ings,

The hearts of all this Order in mine
hand —

Ay — so that fate and craft and folly
close,

Perchance, one curl of Arthur's golden
beard.

To me this narrow grizzled fork of thine
Is cleaner-fashion'd — Well, I loved thee
first; 60

That warps the wit.'

Loud laugh'd the graceless Mark.

But Vivien, into Camelot stealing, lodged
Low in the city, and on a festal day
When Guinevere was crossing the great
hall

Cast herself down, knelt to the Queen, and
wait'd.

'Why kneel ye there? What evil have
ye wrought?

Rise!' and the damsel hidden rise arose
And stood with folded hands and down-
ward eyes

Of glancing corner and all meekly said:
'None wrought, but suffer'd much, an or-
phan maid! 70

My father died in battle for thy King,
My mother on his corpse — in open field,
The sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyon-
nesse —

Poor wretch — no friend! — and now by
Mark the king,

For that small charm of feature mine, pur-
sued —

If any such be mine — I fly to thee.
Save, save me thou! Woman of women
— thine

The wreath of beauty, thine the crown of
power,

Be thine the balm of pity, O heaven's own
white
Earth - angel, stainless bride of stainless
King — ⁸⁰
Help, for he follows ! take me to thyself !
O yield me shelter for mine innocency
Among thy maidens !'

Here her slow sweet eyes
Fear-tremulous, but humbly hopeful, rose
Fixt on her hearer's, while the Queen who
stood
All glittering like May sunshine on May
leaves
In green and gold, and plumed with green
replied:
'Peace, child ! of over-praise and over-
blame
We choose the last. Our noble Arthur,
him
Ye scarce can overpraise, will hear and
know.' ⁹⁰
Nay — we believe all evil of thy Mark —
Well, we shall test thee farther; but this
hour
We ride a-hawking with Sir Lancelot.
He hath given us a fair falcon which he
train'd;
We go to prove it. Bide ye here the
while.'

She past; and Vivien murmur'd after,
'Go !
I bide the while.' Then thro' the portal-
arch
Peering askance, and muttering broken-
wise,
As one that labors with an evil dream,
Beheld the Queen and Lancelot get to
horse. ¹⁰⁰

'Is that the Lancelot ? goodly — ay, but
gaunt;
Courteous — amends for gauntness — takes
her hand —
That glance of theirs, but for the street,
had been
A clinging kiss — how hand lingers in
hand !
Let go at last ! — they ride away — to
hawk
For waterfowl. Royaller game is mine.
For such a supersensual sensual bond
As that gray cricket chirpt of at our
hearth —

Touch flax with flame — a glance will serve
— the liars !
Ah little rat that borest in the dyke ¹¹⁰
Thy hole by night to let the boundless deep
Down upon far-off cities while they dance —
Or dream — of thee they dream'd not —
nor of me
These — ay, but each of either; ride, and
dream
The mortal dream that never yet was
mine —
Ride, ride and dream until ye wake — to
me !
Then, narrow court and lubber King, fare-
well !
For Lancelot will be gracious to the rat,
And our wise Queen, if knowing that I
know,
Will hate, loathe, fear — but honor me the
more.' ¹²⁰

Yet while they rode together down the
plain,
Their talk was all of training, terms of art,
Diet and seeling, jesses, leash and lure.
'She is too noble,' he said, 'to check at
pies,
Nor will she rake: there is no baseness in
her.'
Here when the Queen demanded as by
chance,
'Know ye the stranger woman ?' 'Let her
be,'
Said Lancelot, and unhooded casting off
The goodly falcon free; she tower'd; her
bells,
Tone under tone, shrill'd; and they lifted
up ¹³⁰
Their eager faces, wondering at the
strength,
Boldness, and royal knighthood of the bird,
Who pounced her quarry and slew it.
Many a time
As once — of old — among the flowers —
they rode.

But Vivien half-forgotten of the Queen
Among her damsels broidering sat, heard,
watch'd,
And whisper'd. Thro' the peaceful court
she crept
And whisper'd; then, as Arthur in the
highest
Leaven'd the world, so Vivien in the low-
est,

Arriving at a time of golden rest, ¹⁴⁰
 And sowing one ill hint from ear to ear,
 While all the heathen lay at Arthur's
 feet,
 And no quest came, but all was joust and
 play,
 Leaven'd his hall. They heard and let her
 be.

Thereafter, as an enemy that has left
 Death in the living waters and withdrawn,
 The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's court.

She hated all the knights, and heard in
 thought
 Their lavish comment when her name was
 named. ¹⁴⁹

For once, when Arthur walking all alone,
 Vext at a rumor issued from herself
 Of some corruption crept among his
 knights,

Had met her, Vivien, being greeted fair,
 Would fain have wrought upon his cloudy
 mood

With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken
 voice,

And flutter'd adoration, and at last
 With dark sweet hints of some who prized
 him more

Than who should prize him most; at which
 the King

Had gazed upon her blankly and gone by.
 But one had watch'd, and had not held his
 peace; ¹⁶⁰

It made the laughter of an afternoon
 That Vivien should attempt the blameless
 King.

And after that, she set herself to gain
 Him, the most famous man of all those
 times,

Merlin, who knew the range of all their
 arts,

Had built the King his havens, ships, and
 halls,

Was also bard, and knew the starry hea-
 vens;

The people call'd him wizard; whom at
 first

She play'd about with slight and sprightly
 talk,

And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd
 points ¹⁷⁰

Of slander, glancing here and grazing there;
 And yielding to his kindlier moods, the
 scer

Would watch her at her petulance and
 play,
 Even when they seem'd unlovable, and
 laugh

As those that watch a kitten. Thus he
 grew

Tolerant of what he half disdain'd, and she,
 Perceiving that she was hut half disdain'd,
 Began to break her sports with graver fits,
 Turn red or pale, would often when they
 met

Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him ¹⁸⁰
 With such a fixt devotion that the old
 man,

Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at
 times

Would flatter his own wish in age for love,
 And half believe her true; for thus at
 times

He waver'd, but that other clung to him,
 Fixt in her will, and so the seasons went.

Then fell on Merlin a great melancholy;
 He walk'd with dreams and darkness, and
 he found

A doom that ever poised itself to fall,
 An ever-moaning battle in the mist, ¹⁹⁰
 World-war of dying flesh against the life,
 Death in all life and lying in all love,
 The meanest having power upon the high-
 est,

And the high purpose broken by the worm.

So leaving Arthur's court he gain'd the
 beach,

There found a little boat and stept into it;
 And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd her
 not.

She took the helm and he the sail; the
 boat

Drave with a sudden wind across the deeps,
 And, touching Breton sands, they disem-
 bark'd. ²⁰⁰

And then she follow'd Merlin all the way,
 Even to the wild woods of Broceliande.

For Merlin once had told her of a charm,
 The which if any wrought on any one

With woven paces and with waving arms,
 The man so wrought on ever seem'd to lie

Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower,
 From which was no escape for evermore;

And none could find that man for ever-
 more,

Nor could he see but him who wrought
 the charm ²¹⁰

Coming and going, and he lay as dead
And lost to life and use and name and
fame.

And Vivien ever sought to work the charm
Upon the great enchanter of the time,
As fancying that her glory would be great
According to his greatness whom she
quench'd.

There lay she all her length and kiss'd his
feet,

As if in deepest reverence and in love.
A twist of gold was round her hair; a robe
Of samite without price, that more ex-
prest ²²⁰

Than hid her, clung about her lissome
limbs,

In color like the satin-shining palm
On sallows in the windy gleams of March.

And while she kiss'd them, crying, 'Tram-
ple me,

Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro' the
world,

And I will pay you worship; tread me
down

And I will kiss you for it;' he was mute.
So dark a forethought roll'd about his
brain,

As on a dull day in an ocean cave
The blind wave feeling round his long sea-
hall ²³⁰

In silence; wherefore, when she lifted up
A face of sad appeal, and spake and said,
'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and again,
'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and once
more,

'Great Master, do ye love me?' he was
mute.

And lissome Vivien, holding by his heel,
Writhed toward him, slided up his knee
and sat,

Behind his ankle twined her hollow feet
Together, curved an arm about his neck,
Clung like a snake; and letting her left
hand ²⁴⁰

Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a leaf,
Made with her right a comb of pearl to
part

The lists of such a beard as youth gone out
Had left in ashes. Then he spoke and said,
Not looking at her, 'Who are wise in love
Love most, say least,' and Vivien answer'd
quick:

'I saw the little elf-god eyeless once
In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot;

But neither eyes nor tongue — O stupid
child!

Yet you are wise who say it; let me think
Silence is wisdom. I am silent then, ²⁵¹
And ask no kiss;' then adding all at once,
'And lo, I clothe myself with wisdom,'
drew

The vast and shaggy mantle of his beard
Across her neck and bosom to her knee,
And call'd herself a gilded summer fly
Caught in a great old tyrant spider's web,
Who meant to eat her up in that wild
wood

Without one word. So Vivien call'd her-
self,

But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star ²⁶⁰
Veil'd in gray vapor; till he sadly smiled:
'To what request for what strange boon,'
he said,

'Are these your pretty tricks and fooleries,
O Vivien, the preamble? yet my thanks,
For these have broken up my melancholy.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily:
'What, O my Master, have ye found your
voice?

I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks at
last!

But yesterday you never open'd lip, ²⁶⁹
Except indeed to drink. No cup had we;
In mine own lady palms I cull'd the spring
That gather'd trickling dropwise from the
cleft,

And made a pretty cup of both my hands
And offer'd you it kneeling. Then you
drank

And knew no more, nor gave me one poor
word;

O, no more thanks than might a goat have
given

With no more sign of reverence than a
beard.

And when we halted at that other well,
And I was faint to swooning, and you
lay

Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of those
Deep meadows we had traversed, did you
know ²⁸¹

That Vivien bathed your feet before her
own?

And yet no thanks; and all thro' this wild
wood

And all this morning when I fondled you.
Boon, ay, there was a boon, one not so
strange —

How had I wrong'd you? surely ye are
wise,
But such a silence is more wise than kind.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and
said:

'O, did ye never lie upon the shore,
And watch the curl'd white of the coming
wave

Glass'd in the slippery sand before it
breaks?

Even such a wave, but not so pleasurable,
Dark in the glass of some presageful mood,
Had I for three days seen, ready to fall.

And then I rose and fled from Arthur's
court

To break the mood. You follow'd me un-
ask'd;

And when I look'd, and saw you following
still,

My mind involved yourself the nearest
thing

In that mind-mist—for shall I tell you
truth?

You seem'd that wave about to break upon
me

And sweep me from my hold upon the
world,

My use and name and fame. Your pardon,
child.

Your pretty sports have brighten'd all
again.

And ask your boon, for boon I owe you
thrice,

Once for wrong done you by confusion,
next

For thanks it seems till now neglected, last
For these your dainty gambols; wherefore
ask,

And take this boon so strange and not so
strange.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mourn-
fully:

'O, not so strange as my long asking it, ³¹⁰
Not yet so strange as you yourself are
strange,

Nor half so strange as that dark mood of
yours.

I ever fear'd ye were not wholly mine;
And see, yourself have own'd ye did me
wrong.

The people call you prophet; let it be;
But not of those that can expound them-
selves.

Take Vivien for expounder; she will call
That three-days-long presageful gloom of
yours

No presage, but the same mistrustful mood
That makes you seem less noble than your-
self, ³²⁰

Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,
Now ask'd again; for see you not, dear
love,

That such a mood as that which lately
gloom'd

Your fancy when ye saw me following
you

Must make me fear still more you are not
mine,

Must make me yearn still more to prove
you mine,

And make me wish still more to learn this
charm

Of woven paces and of waving hands,
As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it me!

The charm so taught will charm us both to
rest. ³³⁰

For, grant me some slight power upon your
fate,

I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,
Should rest and let you rest, knowing you
mine.

And therefore be as great as ye are named,
Not muffled round with selfish reticence.

How hard you look and how denyingly!
O, if you think this wickedness in me,

That I should prove it on you unawares,
That makes me passing wrathful; then our
bond

Had best be loosed for ever; but think or
not, ³⁴⁰

By Heaven that hears, I tell you the clean
truth,

As clean as blood of babes, as white as
milk!

O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,
If these unwitty wandering wits of mine,
Even in the jumbled rubbish of a dream,
Have tript on such conjectural treachery—
May this hard earth cleave to the nadir
hell

Down, down, and close again and nip me
flat,

If I be such a traitress! Yield my boon,
Till which I scarce can yield you all I am;
And grant my re-reiterated wish, ³⁵¹

The great proof of your love; because I
think,

However wise, ye hardly know me yet.'

And Merlin loosed his hand from hers
and said:

'I never was less wise, however wise,
Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of trust,
Than when I told you first of such a charm.
Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,
Too much I trusted when I told you that,
And stirr'd this vice in you which ruin'd
man ³⁶⁰

Thro' woman the first hour; for howsoe'er
In children a great curiousness be well,
Who have to learn themselves and all the
world,

In you, that are no child, for still I find
Your face is practised when I spell the
lines,

I call it, — well, I will not call it vice;
But since you name yourself the summer
fly,

I well could wish a cobweb for the gnat
That settles beaten back, and beaten back
Settles, till one could yield for weariness. ³⁷⁰
But since I will not yield to give you power
Upon my life and use and name and fame,
Why will ye never ask some other boon?
Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too
much!'

And Vivien, like the tenderest-hearted
maid

That ever bided tryst at village stile,
Made answer, either eyelid wet with tears:
'Nay, Master, be not wrathful with your
maid;

Caress her, let her feel herself forgiven
Who feels no heart to ask another boon. ³⁸⁰
I think ye hardly know the tender rhyme
Of "trust me not at all or all in all."
I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it once,
And it shall answer for me. Listen to it.

"In love, if love be love, if love be ours,
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers:
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

"It is the little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all. ³⁹⁰

"The little rift within the lover's lute,
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

"It is not worth the keeping; let it go:
But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no.
And trust me not at all or all in all."

'O master, do ye love my tender rhyme?'

And Merlin look'd and half believed her
true,
So tender was her voice, so fair her face,
So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind her
tears ⁴⁰⁰
Like sunlight on the plain behind a shower;
And yet he answer'd half indignantly:

'Far other was the song that once I heard
By this huge oak, sung nearly where we
sit;

For here we met, some ten or twelve of us,
To chase a creature that was current then
In these wild woods, the hart with golden
horns.

It was the time when first the question
rose

About the founding of a Table Round,
That was to be, for love of God and men ⁴¹⁰
And noble deeds, the flower of all the
world;

And each incited each to noble deeds.
And while we waited, one, the youngest
of us,

We could not keep him silent, out he
flash'd,

And into such a song, such fire for fame,
Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down
To such a stern and iron-clashing close,
That when he stopt we long'd to hurl to-
gether,

And should have done it, but the beauteous
beast ⁴¹⁹

Scared by the noise upstart'd at our feet,
And like a silver shadow slipt away
Thro' the dim land. And all day long we
rode

Thro' the dim land against a rushing wind,
That glorious roundel echoing in our ears,
And chased the flashes of his golden horns
Until they vanish'd by the fairy well
That laughs at iron — as our warriors
did —

Where children cast their pins and nails,
and cry,

"Laugh, little well!" but touch it with a
sword,

It buzzes fiercely round the point; and
there ⁴³⁰

We lost him — such a noble song was that.
But, Vivien, when you sang me that sweet
rhyme,

I felt as tho' you knew this cursed charm,

Were proving it on me, and that I lay
And felt them slowly ebbing, name and
fame.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully:
'O, mine have ebb'd away for evermore,
And all thro' following you to this wild
wood,
Because I saw you sad, to comfort you.
Lo now, what hearts have men ! they never
mount 440
As high as woman in her selfless mood.
And touching fame, howe'er ye scorn my
song,
Take one verse more — the lady speaks it
— this:

"My name, once mine, now thine, is close-
lier mine,
For fame, could fame be mine, that fame were
thine,
And shame, could shame be thine, that shame
were mine.
So trust me not at all or all in all."

'Says she not well ? and there is more
— this rhyme
Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the Queen,
That burst in dancing and the pearls were
spilt; 450
Some lost, some stolen, some as relics
kept;
But nevermore the same two sister pearls
Ran down the silken thread to kiss each
other
On her white neck — so is it with this
rhyme.
It lives dispersedly in many hands,
And every minstrel sings it differently;
Yet is there one true liue, the pearl of
pearls:
"Man dreams of fame while woman wakes
to love."
Yea ! love, tho' love were of the grossest,
carves
A portion from the solid present, eats 460
And uses, careless of the rest; but fame,
The fame that follows death is nothing to
us;
And what is fame in life but half-disfame
And counterchanged with darkness ? ye
yourself
Know well that envy calls you devil's son,
And since ye seem the master of all art,
They fain would make you master of all
vice.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and
said:
'I once was looking for a magic weed,
And found a fair young squire who sat
alone, 470
Had carved himself a knightly shield of
wood,
And then was painting on it fancied arms,
Azure, an eagle rising or, the sun
In dexter chief; the scroll, "I follow
fame."
And speaking not, but leaning over him,
I took his brush and blotted out the bird,
And made a gardener putting in a graff,
With this for motto, "Rather use than
fame."
You should have seen him blush; but after-
wards
He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien, 480
For you, methinks you think you love me
well;
For me, I love you somewhat. Rest; and
Love
Should have some rest and pleasure in him-
self,
Not ever be too curious for a boon,
Too prurient for a proof against the grain
Of him ye say ye love. But Fame with
men,
Being but ampler means to serve mankind,
Should have small rest or pleasure in her-
self,
But work as vassal to the larger love 485
That dwarfs the petty love of one to one.
Use gave me fame at first, and fame again
Increasing gave me use. Lo, there my
boon !
What other ? for men sought to prove me
vile,
Because I fain had given them greater wits;
And then did envy call me devil's son.
The sick weak beast, seeking to help herself
By striking at her better, miss'd, and
brought
Her own claw back, and wounded her own
heart.
Sweet were the days when I was all un-
known, 499
But when my name was lifted up the storm
Brake on the mountain and I cared not
for it.
Right well know I that fame is half-dis-
fame,
Yet needs must work my work. That
other fame,

To one at least who hath not children
vague,
The cackle of the unborn about the grave,
I cared not for it. A single misty star,
Which is the second in a line of stars
That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,
I never gazed upon it but I dreamt
Of some vast charm concluded in that star
To make fate nothing. Wherefore, if I
fear,

Giving you power upon me thro' this charm, ⁵¹¹
That you might play me falsely, having
power,

However well ye think ye love me now —
As sons of kings loving in pupilage
Have turn'd to tyrants when they came to
power —

I rather dread the loss of use than fame;
If you — and not so much from wicked-
ness,

As some wild turn of anger, or a mood
Of overstrain'd affection, it may be, ⁵²⁰
To keep me all to your own self, — or else
A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy, —
Should try this charm on whom ye say ye
love.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in wrath:
'Have I not sworn? I am not trusted.
Good!

Well, hide it, hide it; I shall find it out,
And being found take heed of Vivien.
A woman and not trusted, doubtless I
Might feel some sudden turn of anger
born

Of your misfaith; and your fine epithet ⁵³⁰
Is accurate too, for this full love of mine
Without the full heart back may merit
well

Your term of overstrain'd. So used as I,
My daily wonder is, I love at all.
And as to woman's jealousy, O, why not?
O, to what end, except a jealous one,
And one to make me jealous if I love,
Was this fair charm invented by yourself?
I well believe that all about this world ⁵³⁹
Ye cage a buxom captive here and there,
Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower
From which is no escape for evermore.'

Then the great master merrily answer'd
her:

'Full many a love in loving youth was
mine;

I needed then no charm to keep them mine

But youth and love; and that full heart of
yours

Whereof ye prattle, may now assure you
mine;

So live uncharm'd. For those who wrought
it first,

The wrist is parted from the hand that
waved,

The feet unmortised from their ankle-
bones ⁵⁵⁰

Who paced it, ages back — but will ye hear
The legend as in guerdon for your rhyme?

'There lived a king in the most eastern
East,

Less old than I, yet older, for my blood
Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.

A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,
Whose bark had plunder'd twenty name-
less isles;

And passing one, at the high peep of dawn,
He saw two cities in a thousand boats

All fighting for a woman on the sea. ⁵⁶⁰
And pushing his black craft among them
all,

He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought her
off,

With loss of half his people arrow-slain;
A maid so smooth, so white, so wonderful,

They said a light came from her when she
moved.

And since the pirate would not yield her
up,

The king impaled him for his piracy,
Then made her queen. But those isle-nur-
tured eyes

Waged such unwilling tho' successful war
On all the youth, they sicken'd; councils

thinn'd, ⁵⁷⁰

And armies waned, for magnet-like she
drew

The rustiest iron of old fighters' hearts;
And beasts themselves would worship;
camels knelt

Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain
back

That carry kings in castles bow'd black
knees

Of homage, ringing with their serpent
hands,

To make her smile, her golden ankle-bells.
What wonder, being jealous, that he sent

His horns of proclamation out thro' all
The hundred under-kingdoms that he

sway'd ⁵⁸⁰

To find a wizard who might teach the
king
Some charm which, being wrought upon
the queen,
Might keep her all his own. To such a
one
He promised more than ever king has
given,
A league of mountain full of golden mines,
A province with a hundred miles of coast,
A palace and a princess, all for him;
But on all those who tried and fail'd the
king
Pronounced a dismal sentence, meaning by
it ⁵⁸⁹
To keep the list low and pretenders back,
Or, like a king, not to be trifled with —
Their heads should moulder on the city
gates.
And many tried and fail'd, because the
charm
Of nature in her overbore their own;
And many a wizard brow bleach'd on the
walls,
And many weeks a troop of carrion crows
Hung like a cloud above the gateway
towers.'

And Vivien breaking in upon him, said:
'I sit and gather honey; yet, methinks,
Thy tongue has tript a little; ask thy-
self. ⁶⁰⁰

The lady never made *unwilling* war
With those fine eyes; she had her pleasure
in it,
And made her good man jealous with good
cause.
And lived there neither dame nor damsel
then
Wroth at a lover's loss? were all as tame,
I mean, as noble, as their queen was fair?
Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,
Or pinch a murderous dust into her drink,
Or make her paler with a poison'd rose?
Well, those were not our days — but did
they find ⁶¹⁰
A wizard? Tell me, was he like to thee?'

She ceased, and made her lithe arm
round his neck
Tighten, and then drew hack, and let her
eyes
Speak for her, glowing on him, like a
bride's
On her new lord, her own, the first of men.

He answer'd laughing: 'Nay, not like to
me.
At last they found — his foragers for
charms —
A little glassy-headed hairless man,
Who lived alone in a great wild on grass,
Read but one book, and ever reading
grew ⁶²⁰
So grated down and fled away with thought,
So lean his eyes were monstrous; while the
skin
Clung but to crate and basket, ribs and
spine.
And since he kept his mind on one sole
aim,
Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor tasted
flesh,
Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the wall
That sunders ghosts and shadow-casting
men
Became a crystal, and he saw them thro'
it,
And heard their voices talk behind the
wall, ⁶²⁴
And learnt their elemental secrets, powers
And forces; often o'er the sun's bright eye
Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,
And lash'd it at the base with slanting
storm;
Or in the noon of mist and driving rain,
When the lake whiten'd and the pinewood
roar'd,
And the cairn'd mountain was a shadow,
sunn'd
The world to peace again. Here was the
man;
And so by force they dragg'd him to the
king.
And then he taught the king to charm the
queen
In such-wise that no man could see her
more, ⁶⁴⁰
Nor saw she save the king, who wrought
the charm,
Coming and going, and she lay as dead,
And lost all use of life. But when the
king
Made proffer of the league of golden mines,
The province with a hundred miles of coast,
The palace and the princess, that old
man
Went back to his old wild, and lived on
grass,
And vanish'd, and his book came down to
me.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily:
 'Ye have the book; the charm is written
 in it. ⁶⁵⁰

Good! take my counsel, let me know it at
 once;

For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,
 With each chest lock'd and padlock'd thir-
 ty-fold,

And whelm all this beneath as vast a
 mound

As after furious battle turfs the slain
 On some wild down above the windy deep,
 I yet should strike upon a sudden means
 To dig, pick, open, find and read the charm;
 Then, if I tried it, who should blame me
 then?'

And smiling as a master smiles at one ⁶⁶⁰
 That is not of his school, nor any school
 But that where blind and naked Igno-
 rance

Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,
 On all things all day long, he answer'd her:

'Thou read the book, my pretty Vivien!
 O, ay, it is but twenty pages long,
 But every page having an ample marge,
 And every marge enclosing in the midst
 A square of text that looks a little blot, ⁶⁶⁹
 The text no larger than the limbs of fleas;
 And every square of text an awful charm,
 Writ in a language that has long gone
 by,

So long that mountains have arisen since
 With cities on their flanks — thou read the
 book!

And every margin scribbled, crost, and
 cramm'd

With comment, densest condensation, hard
 To mind and eye; but the long sleepless
 nights

Of my long life have made it easy to me.
 And none can read the text, not even I;
 And none can read the comment but my-
 self; ⁶⁸⁰

And in the comment did I find the charm.
 O, the results are simple; a mere child

Might use it to the harm of any one,
 And never could undo it. Ask no more;
 For tho' you should not prove it upon me,
 But keep that oath ye sware, ye might,
 perchance,

Assay it on some one of the Table Round,
 And all because ye dream they babble of
 you.'

And Vivien, frowning in true anger, said:
 'What dare the full-fed liars say of me?
 They ride abroad redressing human
 wrongs! ⁶⁹¹

They sit with knife in meat and wine in
 horn.

They bound to holy vows of chastity!
 Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.

But you are man, you well can understand
 The shame that cannot be explain'd for
 shame.

Not one of all the drove should touch me
 — swine!'

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her
 words:

'You breathe but accusation vast and vague,
 Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If ye
 know, ⁷⁰⁰
 Set up the charge ye know, to stand or
 fall!'

And Vivien answer'd frowning wrath-
 fully:

'O, ay, what say ye to Sir Valence, him
 Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er his
 wife

And two fair babes, and went to distant
 lands,

Was one year gone, and on returning found
 Not two but three? there lay the reckling,
 one

But one hour old! What said the happy
 sire?

A seven-months' babe had been a truer
 gift.

Those twelve sweet moons confused his
 fatherhood.' ⁷¹⁰

Then answer'd Merlin: 'Nay, I know
 the tale.

Sir Valence wedded with an outland dame;
 Some cause had kept him sunder'd from
 his wife.

One child they had; it lived with her; she
 died.

His kinsman travelling on his own affair
 Was charged by Valence to bring home the
 child.

He brought, not found it therefore; take
 the truth.'

'O, ay,' said Vivien, 'over-true a tale!
 What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagra-
 more,

That ardent man? "To pluck the flower
in season,"⁷²⁰
So says the song, "I trow it is no treason."
O Master, shall we call him over-quick
To crop his own sweet rose before the
hour?'

And Merlin answer'd: 'Over-quick art
thou
To catch a loathly plume fallen from the
wing
Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole
prey
Is man's good name. He never wrong'd
his bride.

I know the tale. An angry gust of wind
Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-
room'd

And many-corridor'd complexities⁷³⁰
Of Arthur's palace. Then he found a door,
And darkling felt the sculptured ornament
That wreathen round it made it seem his
own,

And wearied out made for the couch and
slept,

A stainless man beside a stainless maid;
And either slept, nor knew of other there,
Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd chastely
down,

Blushing upon them blushing, and at once
He rose without a word and parted from
her.⁷⁴⁰

But when the thing was blazed about the
court,

The brute world howling forced them into
bonds,

And as it chanced they are happy, being
pure.'

'O, ay,' said Vivien, 'that were likely
too!

What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale
And of the horrid foulness that he wrought,
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of
Christ,

Or some black wether of Saint Satan's
fold?⁷⁴⁸

What, in the precincts of the chapel-yard,
Among the knightly brasses of the graves,
And by the cold Hic Jacets of the dead!'

And Merlin answer'd careless of her
charge:

'A sober man is Percivale and pure,

But once in life was fluster'd with new wine,
Then paced for coolness in the chapel-yard,
Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught
And meant to stamp him with her master's
mark.

And that he sinn'd is not believable;
For, look upon his face! — but if he sinn'd,
The sin that practice burns into the blood,
And not the one dark hour which brings
remorse,⁷⁶¹

Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be;
Or else were he, the holy king whose hymns
Are chanted in the minster, worse than all.
But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye
more?'

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in
wrath:

'O, ay; what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend,
Traitor or true? that commerce with the
Queen,

I ask you, is it clamor'd by the child,
Or whisper'd in the corner? do ye know
it?'⁷⁷⁰

To which he answer'd sadly: 'Yea, I
know it.

Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,
To fetch her, and she watch'd him from her
walls.

A rumor runs, she took him for the King,
So fixt her fancy on him; let them be.
But have ye no one word of loyal praise
For Arthur, blameless king and stainless
man?'

She answer'd with a low and chuckling
laugh:

'Man! is he man at all, who knows and
winks?

Sees what his fair bride is and does, and
winks?⁷⁸⁰

By which the good King means to blind
himself,

And blinds himself and all the Table
Round

To all the foulness that they work. Myself
Could call him — were it not for woman-
hood —

The pretty, popular name such manhood
earns,

Could call him the main cause of all their
crime,

Yea, were he not crown'd king, coward and
fool.'

Then Merlin to his own heart, loathing,
 said:
 'O true and tender! O my liege and
 King!
 O selfless man and stainless gentleman, ⁷⁹⁰
 Who wouldst against thine own eye-witness
 fain
 Have all men true and leal, all women
 pure!
 How, in the mouths of base interpreters,
 From over-finess not intelligible
 To things with every sense as false and
 foul
 As the poach'd filth that floods the middle
 street,
 Is thy white blamelessness accounted
 blame!'

But Vivien, deeming Merlin overborne
 By instance, recommenced, and let her
 tongue
 Rage like a fire among the noblest names,
 Polluting, and imputing her whole self, ⁸⁰¹
 Defaming and defacing, till she left
 Not even Lancelot brave nor Galahad
 clean.

Her words had issue other than she
 will'd.
 He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down, and
 made
 A snowy pent-house for his hollow eyes,
 And mutter'd in himself: 'Tell her the
 charm!
 So, if she had it, would she rail on me
 To snare the next, and if she have it not
 So will she rail. What did the wanton
 say? ⁸¹⁰
 "Not mount as high!" we scarce can sink
 as low;
 For men at most differ as heaven and earth,
 But women, worst and best, as heaven and
 hell.
 I know the Table Round, my friends of
 old;
 All brave, and many generous, and some
 chaste.
 She cloaks the scar of some repulse with
 lies.
 I well believe she tempted them and fail'd,
 Being so bitter; for fine plots may fail,
 Tho' harlots paint their talk as well as
 face
 With colors of the heart that are not
 theirs. ⁸²⁰

I will not let her know; nine tithes of
 times
 Face-flatterer and backbiter are the same.
 And they, sweet soul, that most impute a
 crime
 Are prone to it, and impnte themselves,
 Wanting the mental range, or low desire
 Not to feel lowest makes them level all;
 Yea, they would pare the mountain to the
 plain,
 To leave an equal baseness; and in this
 Are harlots like the crowd that if they find
 Some stain or blemish in a name of note,
 Not grieving that their greatest are so
 small, ⁸³¹
 Inflate themselves with some insane de-
 light,
 And judge all nature from her feet of
 clay,
 Without the will to lift their eyes, and see
 Her godlike head crown'd with spiritual fire,
 And touching other worlds. I am weary
 of her.'

He spoke in words part heard, in whis-
 pers part,
 Half-suffocated in the hoary fell
 And many-winter'd fleece of throat and
 chin.
 But Vivien, gathering somewhat of his
 mood, ⁸⁴⁰
 And hearing 'harlot' mutter'd twice or
 thrice,
 Leapt from her session on his lap, and
 stood
 Stiff as a viper frozen; loathsome sight,
 How from the rosy lips of life and love
 Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of
 death!
 White was her cheek; sharp breaths of
 anger puff'd
 Her fairy nostril out; her hand half-
 clenched
 Went faltering sideways downward to her
 belt,
 And feeling. Had she found a dagger
 there—
 For in a wink the false love turns to hate—
 She would have stabb'd him; but she found
 it not. ⁸⁵¹
 His eye was calm, and suddenly she took
 To bitter weeping like a beaten child,
 A long, long weeping, not consolable.
 Then her false voice made way, broken
 with sobs:

'O crueller than was ever told in tale
 Or sung in song! O vainly lavish'd love!
 O cruel, there was nothing wild or strange,
 Or seeming shameful — for what shame in
 love,
 So love be true, and not as yours is? —
 nothing ^{86o}
 Poor Vivien had not done to win his trust
 Who call'd her what he call'd her — all her
 crime,
 All — all — the wish to prove him wholly
 hers.'

She mused a little, and then clapt her
 hands
 Together with a wailing shriek, and said:
 'Stabh'd through the heart's affections to
 the heart!
 Seethed like the kid in its own mother's
 milk!
 Kill'd with a word worse than a life of
 blows!
 I thought that he was gentle, being great;
 O God, that I had loved a smaller man!
 I should have found in him a greater
 heart. ⁸⁷¹
 O, I, that flattering my true passion, saw
 The knights, the court, the King, dark in
 your light,
 Who loved to make men darker than they
 are,
 Because of that high pleasure which I had
 To seat you sole upon my pedestal
 Of worship — I am answer'd, and hence-
 forth
 The course of life that seem'd so flowery
 to me
 With you for guide and master, only you,
 Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken
 short, ^{88o}
 And ending in a ruin — nothing left
 But into some low cave to crawl, and
 there,
 If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,
 Kill'd with inutterable unkindness.'

She paused, she turn'd away, she hung
 her head,
 The snake of gold slid from her hair, the
 braid
 Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,
 And the dark wood grew darker toward
 the storm
 In silence, while his anger slowly died
 Within him, till he let his wisdom go ^{89o}

For ease of heart, and half believed her
 true;
 Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,
 'Come from the storm,' and having no
 reply,
 Gazed at the heaving shoulder and the
 face
 Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or shame;
 Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-touching
 terms,
 To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in vain.
 At last she let herself be conquer'd by him,
 And as the cageling newly flown returns,
 The seeming-injured simple-hearted thing
 Came to her old perch back, and settled
 there. ⁹⁰¹
 There while she sat, half-falling from his
 knees,
 Half-nestled at his heart, and since he saw
 The slow tear creep from her closed eyelid
 yet,
 About her, more in kindness than in love,
 The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.
 But she dislink'd herself at once and rose,
 Her arms upon her breast across, and
 stood,
 A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,
 Upright and flush'd before him; then she
 said: ⁹¹⁰

'There must be now no passages of love
 Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore;
 Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,
 What should be granted which your own
 gross heart
 Would reckon worth the taking? I will
 go.
 In truth, hut one thing now — better have
 died
 Thrice than have ask'd it once — could
 make me stay —
 That proof of trust — so often ask'd in
 vain!
 How justly, after that vile term of yours,
 I find with grief! I might believe you
 then, ⁹²⁰
 Who knows? once more. Lo! what was
 once to me
 Mere matter of the fancy, now hath grown
 The vast necessity of heart and life.
 Farewell; think gently of me, for I fear
 My fate or folly, passing gayer youth
 For one so old, must be to love thee still.
 But ere I leave thee let me swear once
 more

That if I schemed against thy peace in
 this,
 May yon just heaven, that darkens o'er me,
 send
 One flash that, missing all things else, may
 make
 My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie.' ⁹³⁰

Scarce had she ceased, when out of heaven
 a bolt —

For now the storm was close above them —
 struck,

Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining
 With darted spikes and splinters of the
 wood

The dark earth round. He raised his eyes
 and saw

The tree that shone white-listed thro' the
 gloom.

But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard her
 oath,

And dazzled by the livid-flickering fork,
 And deafen'd with the stammering cracks
 and claps ⁹⁴⁰

That follow'd, flying back and crying out,
 'O Merlin, tho' you do not love me, save,
 Yet save me!' clung to him and hugg'd
 him close;

And call'd him dear protector in her fright,
 Nor yet forgot her practice in her fright,
 But wrought upon his mood and hugg'd
 him close.

The pale blood of the wizard at her touch
 Took gayer colors, like an opal warm'd.

She blamed herself for telling hearsay
 tales;

She shook from fear, and for her fault she
 wept ⁹⁵⁰

Of petulancy; she call'd him lord and liege,
 Her seer, her bard, her silver star of
 eve,

Her God, her Merlin, the one passionate
 love

Of her whole life; and ever overhead
 Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten branch

Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain
 Above them; and in change of glare and
 gloom

Her eyes and neck glittering went and
 came;

Till now the storm, its burst of passion
 spent,

Moaning and calling out of other lands, ⁹⁶⁰

Had left the ravaged woodland yet once
 more

To peace; and what should not have been
 had been,
 For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,
 Had yielded, told her all the charm, and
 slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth the
 charm

Of woven paces and of waving hands,
 And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,
 And lost to life and use and name and
 fame.

Then crying, 'I have made his glory
 mine,'

And shrieking out, 'O fool!' the harlot
 leapt ⁹⁷⁰

Adown the forest, and the thicket closed
 Behind her, and the forest echo'd 'fool.'

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the lovable,
 Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
 High in her chamber up a tower to the
 east

Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
 Which first she placed where morning's
 earliest ray

Might strike it, and awake her with the
 gleam;

Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for
 it

A case of silk, and braided thereupon
 All the devices blazon'd on the shield

In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,
 A border fantasy of branch and flower, ¹¹

And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.
 Nor rested thus content, but day by day,

Leaving her household and good father,
 climb'd

That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her
 door,

Strip't off the case, and read the naked
 shield,

Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,
 Now made a pretty history to herself

Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
 And every scratch a lance had made upon

it, ²⁰

Conjecturing when and where: this cut is
 fresh,

That ten years back; this dealt him at
 Caerlyle,

That at Caerleon — this at Camelot —
 And ah, God's mercy, what a stroke was
 there!
 And here a thrust that might have kill'd,
 but God
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy
 down,
 And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good
 shield
 Of Lancelot, she that knew not even his
 name?
 He left it with her, when he rode to tilt ³⁰
 For the great diamond in the diamond
 jousts,
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that
 name
 Had named them, since a diamond was the
 prize.

For Arthur, long before they crown'd
 him king,
 Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,
 Had found a glen, gray boulder and black
 tarn.

A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
 Like its own mists to all the mountain
 side;

For here two brothers, one a king, had
 met

And fought together, but their names were
 lost; ⁴⁰

And each had slain his brother at a blow;
 And down they fell and made the glen
 abhor'd.

And there they lay till all their bones were
 bleach'd,

And lichen'd into color with the crags.

And he that once was king had on a crown
 Of diamonds, one in front and four aside.

And Arthur came, and laboring up the
 pass,

All in a misty moonshine, unawares
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and
 the skull

Brake from the nape, and from the skull
 the crown ⁵⁰

Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn.

And down the shingly scaur he plunged,
 and caught,

And set it on his head, and in his heart
 Heard murmurs, 'Lo, thou likewise shalt
 be king.'

Thereafter, when a king, he had the
 gems

Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them
 to his knights

Saying: 'These jewels, whereupon I
 chanced

Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the
 King's — ⁵⁹

For public use. Henceforward let there be,
 Once every year, a joust for one of these;
 For so by nine years' proof we needs must
 learn

Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall
 grow

In use of arms and manhood, till we drive
 The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the
 land

Hereafter, which God hinder!' Thus he
 spoke.

And eight years past, eight jousts had been,
 and still

Had Lancelot won the diamond of the
 year,

With purpose to present them to the Queen
 When all were won; but, meaning all at
 once ⁷⁰

To snare her royal fancy with a boon
 Worth half her realm, had never spoken
 word.

Now for the central diamond and the
 last

And largest, Arthur, holding then his court
 Hard on the river nigh the place which
 now

Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust
 At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
 Spake — for she had been sick — to Guine-
 vere:

'Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot
 move

To these fair jousts?' 'Yea, lord,' she
 said, 'ye know it.' ⁸⁰

'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd, 'the
 great deeds

Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
 A sight ye love to look on.' And the
 Queen

Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
 On Lancelot, where he stood beside the
 King.

He, thinking that he read her meaning
 there,

'Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more
 Than many diamonds,' yielded; and a heart

Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen —
 However much he yearn'd to make complete ⁹⁰
 The tale of diamonds for his destined
 boon —
 Urged him to speak against the truth, and
 say,
 'Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly
 whole,
 And lets me from the saddle;' and the
 King
 Glanced first at him, then her, and went his
 way.
 No sooner gone than suddenly she began:

'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much
 to blame!
 Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the
 knights
 Are half of them our enemies, and the
 crowd
 Will murmur, "Lo the shameless ones,
 who take ¹⁰⁰
 Their pastime now the trustful King is
 gone!"'

Then Lancelot, vexed at having lied in vain:
 'Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,
 My Queen, that summer when ye loved me
 first.

Then of the crowd ye took no more account
 Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
 When its own voice clings to each blade of
 grass,

And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
 Them surely can I silence with all ease.

But now my loyal worship is allow'd ¹¹⁰
 Of all men; many a hard, without offence,
 Has link'd our names together in his lay,
 Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
 The pearl of beauty; and our knights at
 feast

Have pledged us in this union, while the
 King

Would listen smiling. How then? is there
 more?

Has Arthur spoken aught? or would your-
 self,

Now weary of my service and devoir,
 Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?'

She broke into a little scornful laugh: ¹²⁰
 'Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless
 King,

That passionate perfection, my good lord —
 But who can gaze upon the sun in heaven?

He never spake word of reproach to me,
 He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
 He cares not for me. Only here to-day
 There gleamed a vague suspicion in his
 eyes;

Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with
 him — else

Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
 And swearing men to vows impossible, ¹³⁰
 To make them like himself; but, friend, to
 me

He is all fault who hath no fault at all.
 For who loves me must have a touch of
 earth;

The low sun makes the color. I am yours,
 Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the
 bond.

And therefore hear my words: go to the
 jousts;

The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our
 dream

When sweetest; and the vermin voices
 here

May buzz so loud — we scorn them, but
 they sting.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of
 knights: ¹⁴⁰

'And with what face, after my pretext
 made,

Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
 Before a king who honors his own word
 As if it were his God's?'

'Yea,' said the Queen,
 'A moral child without the craft to rule,

Else had he not lost me; but listen to me,
 If I must find you wit. We hear it said

That men go down before your spear at a
 touch,

But knowing you are Lancelot; your great
 name,

This conquers. Hide it therefore; go un-
 known. ¹⁵⁰

Win! by this kiss you will; and our true
 King

Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
 As all for glory; for to speak him true,

Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he
 seem,

No keener hunter after glory breathes.

He loves it in his knights more than him-
 self;

They prove to him his work. Win and re-
 turn.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be
known, 159

He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer
foot,

And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Rau to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the tow-
ers.

Thither he made, and blew the gateway
horn.

Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled
man,

Who let him into lodging and disarm'd. 170
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless
man;

And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir
Lavaine,

Moving to meet him in the castle court;
And close behind them stept the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter; mother of the house
There was not. Some light jest among
them rose

With laughter dying down as the great
knight

Approach'd them; then the Lord of Astolat:
'Whence comest thou, my guest, and by
what name 180

Livest between the lips? for by thy state
And presence I might guess thee chief of
those,

After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.
Him have I seen; the rest, his Table
Round,

Known as they are, to me they are un-
known.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of
knights:

'Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and
known,

What I by mere mischance have brought,
my shield.

But since I go to joust as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not;
Hereafter ye shall know me — and the
shield — 191

I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not
mine.'

Then said the Lord of Astolat: 'Here is
Torre's:

Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre,
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His ye can have.' Then added plain Sir
Torre,

'Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it.'
Here laugh'd the father saying: 'Fie, Sir
Churl,

Is that an answer for a noble knight? 200
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an
hour,

And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as before.'

'Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me
not

Before this noble knight,' said young La-
vaine,

'For nothing. Surely I but play'd on
Torre,

He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go;
A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden
dreamt 210

That some one put this diamond in her
hand,

And that it was too slippery to be held,
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
The castle-well, belike; and then I said
That if I went and if I fought and won
it —

But all was jest and joke among our-
selves —

Then must she keep it safelier. All was
jest.

But, father, give me leave, an if he will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight.
Win shall I not, but do my best to win; 220
Young as I am, yet would I do my best.'

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd Lance-
lot,

Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost my-
self,

Then were I glad of you as guide and
friend;

And you shall win this diamond, — as I
hear,

It is a fair large diamond, — if ye may,
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will.'

'A fair large diamond,' added plain Sir
Torre,

'Such be for queens, and not for simple maids,'²³⁰
 Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
 Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
 Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement
 Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
 Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:
 'If what is fair be but for what is fair,
 And only queens are to be counted so,
 Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid
 Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
 Not violating the bond of like to like.'²⁴⁰

He spoke and ceased; the lily maid Elaine,
 Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
 Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments.
 The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
 In battle with the love he bare his lord,
 Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.
 Another sinning on such heights with one,
 The flower of all the west and all the world,
 Had been the sleeker for it; but in him²⁴⁹
 His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
 And drove him into wastes and solitudes
 For agony, who was yet a living soul.
 Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
 That ever among ladies ate in hall,
 And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
 However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
 Seam'd with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek,
 And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
 And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,²⁶⁰
 Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
 Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
 Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
 But kindly man moving among his kind;
 Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
 And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.

And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
 And ever well and readily answer'd he;
 But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,
 Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,²⁷⁰
 Heard from the baron that, ten years before,
 The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
 'He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design
 Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd;
 But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
 From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
 By the great river in a boatman's hut.
 Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
 The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill.'

'O, there, great lord, doubtless,' Lavaine said, rapt²⁸⁰
 By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
 Toward greatness in its elder, 'you have fought.
 O, tell us — for we live apart — you know
 Of Arthur's glorious wars.' And Lancelot spoke
 And answer'd him at full, as having been
 With Arthur in the fight which all day long
 Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
 And in the four loud battles by the shore
 Of Douglas; that on Bassa; then the war
 That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts²⁹⁰
 Of Celidon the forest; and again
 By Castle Gurnion, where the glorious King
 Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
 Carved of one emerald centred in a sun
 Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;
 And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,
 When the strong neighings of the wild White Horse
 Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
 And up in Agned-Cathregion too,
 And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,³⁰⁰
 Where many a heathen fell; 'and on the mount

Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and him,
And break them; and I saw him, after,
stand

High on a heap of slain, from spur to
plume

Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
"They are broken, they are broken!" for
the King, 309

However mild he seems at home, nor cares
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts —
For if his own knight casts him down, he
laughs,

Saying his knights are better men than
he —

Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
Fills him. I never saw his like; there lives
No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,

Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
'Save your great self, fair lord;' and when
he fell 318

From talk of war to traits of pleasantry —
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind —
She still took note that when the living
smile

Died from his lips, across him came a
cloud

Of melancholy severe, from which again,
Whenever in her hovering to and fro
The lily maid had striven to make him
cheer,

There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness
Of manners and of nature; and she thought
That all was nature, all, perchance, for
her.

And all night long his face before her
lived,

As when a painter, poring on a face, 330
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and color of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest; so the face before her lived,
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her
sleep,

Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the
thought

She needs must bid farewell to sweet
Lavaïne.

First as in fear, step after step, she stole

Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating. 341
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the
court,

'This shield, my friend, where is it?' and
Lavaïne

Past inward, as she came from out the
tower.

There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd,
and smooth'd

The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she
drew

Nearer and stood. He look'd, and, more
amazed

Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
The maiden standing in the dewy light. 350
He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.

Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood
Rapt on his face as if it were a god's.

Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire
That he should wear her favor at the tilt.
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.

'Fair lord, whose name I know not —
noble it is,

I well believe, the noblest — will you wear
My favor at this tourney?' 'Nay,' said
he, 360

'Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
Favor of any lady in the lists.

Such is my wont, as those who know me
know.'

'Yea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in wearing
mine

Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
That those who know should know you.'

And he turn'd

Her counsel up and down within his mind,
And found it true, and answer'd: 'True,
my child.

Well, I will wear it; fetch it out to me.
What is it?' and she told him, 'A red
sleeve 370

Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it.
Then he bound

Her token on his helmet, with a smile
Saying, 'I never yet have done so much
For any maiden living,' and the blood
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with
delight;

But left her all the paler when Lavaïne
Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd
shield,

His brother's, which he gave to Lancelot,
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:

'Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
 In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to me,'³⁸⁰
 She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am your
 squire!'
 Whereat Lavaine said laughing: 'Lily
 maid,
 For fear our people call you lily maid
 In earnest, let me bring your color back;
 Once, twice, and thrice. Now get you hence
 to bed;'
 So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own
 hand,
 And thus they moved away. She staid a
 minute,
 Then made a sudden step to the gate, and
 there —
 Her bright hair blown about the serious
 face³⁹⁰
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss —
 Paused by the gateway, standing near the
 shield
 In silence, while she watch'd their arms
 far-off
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and took
 the shield,
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past
 away
 Far o'er the long backs of the hushless
 downs,
 To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a
 knight³⁹⁹
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and
 pray'd,
 And ever laboring had scoop'd himself
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall
 On massive columns, like a shore-cliff cave,
 And cells and chambers. All were fair
 and dry;
 The green light from the meadows under-
 neath
 Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
 And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
 And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
 And thither wending there that night they
 bode.⁴¹⁰

But when the next day broke from under-
 ground,
 And shot red fire and shadows thro' the
 cave,

They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode
 away.
 Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but hold my
 name
 Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the
 Lake,'
 Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
 Dearer to true young hearts than their own
 praise,
 But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it in-
 deed?'
 And after muttering, 'The great Lancelot,'
 At last he got his breath and answer'd:
 'One,⁴²⁰
 One have I seen — that other, our liege
 lord,
 The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of
 kings,
 Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
 He will be there — then were I stricken
 blind
 That minute, I might say that I had seen.'

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd
 the lists
 By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
 Run thro' the peopled gallery which half
 round
 Lay like a rainbow fallen upon the grass,
 Until they found the clear-faced King, who
 sat⁴³⁰
 Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
 Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
 And down his robe the dragon writhed in
 gold,
 And from the carven-work behind him
 crept
 Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
 Arms for his chair, while all the rest of
 them
 Thro' knots and loops and folds innumera-
 ble
 Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they
 found
 The new design wherein they lost them-
 selves,⁴³⁹
 Yet with all ease, so tender was the work;
 And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
 Blazed the last diamond of the nameless
 king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine
 and said:
 'Me you call great; mine is the firmer seat,
 The truer lance; but there is many a youth

Now crescent, who will come to all I am
 And overcome it; and in me there dwells
 No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
 Of greatness to know well I am not great.
 There is the man.' And Lavaine gaped
 upon him ⁴⁵⁰
 As on a thing miraculous, and anon
 The trumpets blew; and then did either
 side,
 They that assail'd, and they that held the
 lists,
 Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly
 move,
 Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
 Shock that a man far-off might well per-
 ceive,
 If any man that day were left afield,
 The hard earth shake, and a low thunder
 of arms.
 And Lancelot hode a little, till he saw
 Which were the weaker; then he hurl'd
 into it ⁴⁶⁰
 Against the stronger. Little need to speak
 Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke, earl,
 Count, baron — whom he smote, he over-
 threw.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and
 kin,
 Ranged with the Table Round that held
 the lists,
 Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger
 knight
 Should do and almost overdo the deeds
 Of Lancelot; and one said to the other,
 'Lo!
 What is he? I do not mean the force
 alone —
 The grace and versatility of the man! ⁴⁷⁰
 Is it not Lancelot?' 'When has Lancelot
 worn
 Favor of any lady in the lists?
 Not such his wont, as we that know him
 know.'
 'How then? who then?' a fury seized
 them all,
 A fiery family passion for the name
 Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.
 They couch'd their spears and prick'd their
 steeds, and thus,
 Their plumes driven backward by the wind
 they made
 In moving, all together down upon him
 Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North
 Sea, ⁴⁸⁰

Green-glimmering toward the summit,
 bears, with all
 Its stormy crests that smoke against the
 skies,
 Down on a bark, and overbears the bark
 And him that helms it; so they overbore
 Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
 Down-glancing lanced the charger, and a
 spear
 Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the
 head
 Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt and
 remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worship-
 fully.
 He bore a knight of old repute to the
 earth, ⁴⁹⁰
 And brought his horse to Lancelot where
 he lay.
 He up the side, sweating with agony,
 got,
 But thought to do while he might yet en-
 dure,
 And being lustily holpen by the rest,
 His party, — tho' it seem'd half-miracle
 To those he fought with, — drave his kith
 and kin,
 And all the Table Round that held the lists,
 Back to the barrier; then the trumpets
 blew
 Proclaiming his the prize who wore the
 sleeve
 Of scarlet and the pearls; and all the
 knights, ⁵⁰⁰
 His party, cried, 'Advance and take thy
 prize
 The diamond;' but he answer'd: 'Diamond
 me
 No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!
 Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
 Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me
 not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from
 the field
 With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
 There from his charger down he slid, and
 sat,
 Gasping to Sir Lavaine, 'Draw the lance-
 head.'
 'Ah, my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,' said La-
 vaine, ⁵¹⁰
 'I dread me, if I draw it, you will die.'
 But he, 'I die already with it; draw —

Draw, — and Lavaine drew, and Sir
 Lancelot gave
 A marvellous great shriek and ghastly
 groan,
 And half his blood hurst forth, and down
 he sank
 For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd
 away.
 Then came the hermit out and bare him
 in,
 There staunch'd his wound; and there, in
 daily doubt
 Whether to live or die, for many a week
 Hid from the wild world's rumor by the
 grove ⁵²⁰
 Of poplars with their noise of falling show-
 ers,
 And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the
 lists,
 His party, knights of utmost North and
 West,
 Lords of waste marshes, kings of desolate
 isles,
 Came round their great Pendragon, saying
 to him,
 'Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won
 the day,
 Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his
 prize
 Untaken, crying that his prize is death.'
 'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that such
 an one, ⁵³⁰
 So great a knight as we have seen to-day —
 He seem'd to me another Lancelot —
 Yea, twenty times I thought him Lance-
 lot —
 He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore
 rise,
 O Gawain, and ride forth and find the
 knight.
 Wounded and wearied, needs must he be
 near.
 I charge you that you get at once to horse.
 And, knights and kings, there breathes not
 one of you
 Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given;
 His prowess was too wondrous. We will
 do him ⁵⁴⁰
 No customary honor; since the knight
 Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,
 Ourselves will send it after. Rise and
 take
 This diamond, and deliver it, and return,

And bring us where he is, and how he fares,
 And cease not from your quest until ye
 find.'

So saying, from the carven flower above,
 To which it made a restless heart, he took
 And gave the diamond. Then from where
 he sat
 At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,
 With smiling face and frowning heart, a
 prince ⁵⁵¹
 In the mid might and flourish of his May,
 Gawain, surnamed the Courteous, fair and
 strong,
 And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint,
 And Gareth, a good knight, but there-
 withal
 Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot,
 Nor often loyal to his word, and now
 Wroth that the King's command to sally
 forth
 In quest of whom he knew not, made him
 leave
 The banquet and concourse of knights and
 kings. ⁵⁶⁰

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;
 While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
 Past, thinking, 'Is it Lancelot who hath
 come
 Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
 Of glory, and hath added wound to wound,
 And ridden away to die?' So fear'd the
 King,
 And, after two days' tarrance there, re-
 turn'd.
 Then when he saw the Queen, embracing
 ask'd,
 'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay, lord,'
 she said.
 'And where is Lancelot?' Then the Queen
 amazed, ⁵⁷⁰
 'Was he not with you? won he not your
 prize?'
 'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why, that like
 was he.'
 And when the King demanded how she
 knew,
 Said: 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted from
 us
 Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
 That men went down before his spear at a
 touch,
 But knowing he was Lancelot; his great
 name

Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide
his name
From all men, even the King, and to this
end
Had made the pretext of a hindering
wound,⁵⁸⁰
That he might joust unknown of all, and
learn
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd;
And added, "Our true Arthur, when he
learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory."

Then replied the King:
'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he hath trusted
thee.
Surely his King and most familiar friend
Might well have kept his secret. True,
indeed,⁵⁹⁰
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter; now
remains
But little cause for laughter. His own
kin —
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him,
this! —
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon
him;
So that he went sore wounded from the
field.
Yet good news too; for goodly hopes are
mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great
pearls,⁶⁰¹
Some gentle maiden's gift.'

'Yea, lord,' she said,
'Thy hopes are mine,' and saying that, she
choked,
And sharply turn'd about to hide her
face,
Past to her chamber, and there flung her-
self
Down on the great King's couch, and
writhed upon it,
And clench'd her fingers till they bit the
palm,
And shriek'd out 'Traitor!' to the unhear-
ing wall,

Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose
again,
And moved about her palace, proud and
pale.⁶¹⁰

Gawain the while thro' all the region
round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the
quest,
Touch'd at all points except the poplar
grove,
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat;
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the
maid
Glanced at, and cried, 'What news from
Camelot, lord?
What of the knight with the red sleeve?'
'He won.'
'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted from
the jousts
Hurt in the side;' whereat she caught her
breath.
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance
go.⁶²⁰
Thereon she smote her hand; wellnigh she
swoon'd.
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her,
came
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the
prince
Reported who he was, and on what quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not
find
The victor, but had ridden a random round
To seek him, and had wearied of the
search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat: 'Bide with
us,
And ride no more at random, noble prince!
Here was the knight, and here he left a
shield;⁶³⁰
This will he send or come for. Further-
more
Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,
Needs must we hear.' To this the courte-
ous prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
And staid; and cast his eyes on fair
Elaine;
Where could be found face daintier? then
her shape
From forehead down to foot, perfect —
again
From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd

'Well — if I hide, lo! this wild flower for me!' 640

And oft they met among the garden yews,
And there he set himself to play upon her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a
height

Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
Sighs, and low smiles, and golden elo-
quence

And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebell'd against it, saying to him: 'Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble King,

Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
Whence you might learn his name? Why
slight your King,' 650

And lose the quest he sent you on, and
prove

No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and
went

To all the winds?' 'Nay, by mine head,'
said he,

'I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;
But an ye will it let me see the shield.'

And when the shield was brought, and Ga-
wain saw

Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with
gold,

Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and
mock'd: 660

'Right was the King! our Lancelot! that
true mau!'

'And right was I,' she answer'd merrily,
'I,

Who dream'd my knight the greatest
knight of all.'

'And if I dream'd,' said Gawain, 'that you
love

This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye
know it!

Speak therefore; shall I waste myself in
vain?'

Full simple was her answer: 'What know
I?

My brethren have been all my fellowship;
And I, when often they have talk'd of
love,

Wish'd it had been my mother, for they
talk'd, 670

Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so my-
self —

I know not if I know what true love is,
But if I know, then, if I love not him,
I know there is none other I can love.'

'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'ye love
him well,

But would not, knew ye what all others
know,

And whom he loves.' 'So be it,' cried
Elaine,

And lifted her fair face and moved away;
But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay a little!
One golden minute's grace! he wore your
sleeve. 680

Would he break faith with one I may not
name?

Must our true man change like a leaf at
last?

Nay — like enow. Why then, far be it
from me

To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!
And, damsel, for I deem you know full
well

Where your great knight is hidden, let me
leave

My quest with you; the diamond also —
here!

For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
From your own hand; and whether he love
or not, 690

A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
A thousand times! — a thousand times
farewell!

Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
May meet at court hereafter! there, I
think,

So ye will learn the courtesies of the court,
We two shall know each other.'

Then he gave,
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he
gave,

The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he
went

A true-love ballad, lightly rode away. 700

Thence to the court he past; there told
the King

What the King knew, 'Sir Lancelot is the
knight.'

And added, 'Sire, my liege, so much I
learnt,

But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all round
The region; but I lighted on the maid

Whose sleeve he wore. She loves him;
and to her,

Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,

I gave the diamond. She will render it;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-
place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and
replied, 710

'Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in
awe,

For twenty strokes of the blood, without a
word,

Linger'd that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd
abroad

About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues
were loosed:

'The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.' 721
Some read the King's face, some the
Queen's, and all

Had marvel what the maid might be, but
most

Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old
dame

Came suddenly on the Queen with the
sharp news.

She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd
so low,

Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tran-
quillity.

So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder
flared; 730

Till even the knights at banquet twice or
thrice

Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who
sat

With lips severely placid, felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet un-
seen

Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats be-
came

As wormwood and she hated all who
pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat, 740
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept

The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and
said:

'Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and
now,

Sweet father, will you let me lose my
wits?'

'Nay,' said he, 'surely.' 'Wherefore, let
me hence,'

She answer'd, 'and find out our dear La-
vaine.'

'Ye will not lose your wits for dear La-
vaine. 750

Bide,' answer'd he: 'we needs must hear
anon

Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,' she said,
'And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond

to him,

Least I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud prince who left the quest to
me.

Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for the lack of gentle maiden's
aid. 760

The gentler-born the maiden, the more
bound,

My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know,
When these have worn their tokens. Let
me hence,

I pray you.' Then her father nodding
said:

'Ay, ay, the diamond. Wit ye well, my
child,

Right fain were I to learn this knight were
whole,

Being our greatest. Yea, and you must
give it—

And sure I think this fruit is hung too
high

For any mouth to gape for save a
queen's— 770

Nay, I mean nothing; so then, get you
gone,

Being so very wilful you must go.'

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,
And while she made her ready for her ride
Her father's latest word humm'd in her
ear,

'Being so very wilful you must go,'
 And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,
 'Being so very wilful you must die.'
 But she was happy enough and shook it
 off, ⁷⁷⁹
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;
 And in her heart she answer'd it and said,
 'What matter, so I help him back to life?'
 Then far away with good Sir Torre for
 guide
 Rode o'er the long hacks of the bushless
 downs
 To Camelot, and before the city-gates
 Came on her brother with a happy face
 Making a roan horse caper and curvet
 For pleasure all about a field of flowers;
 Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine,' she cried,
 'Lavaine,
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?' He
 amazed, ⁷⁹⁰
 'Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!
 How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot?'
 But when the maid had told him all her
 tale,
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his
 moods
 Left them, and under the strange-statued
 gate,
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd mysti-
 cally,
 Past up the still rich city to his kin,
 His own far blood, which dwelt at Came-
 lot;
 And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove
 Led to the caves. There first she saw the
 casque ⁸⁰⁰
 Of Lancelot on the wall; her scarlet sleeve,
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls
 away,
 Stream'd from it still; and in her heart she
 laugh'd,
 Because he had not loosed it from his
 helm,
 But meant once more perchance to tourney
 in it.
 And when they gain'd the cell wherein he
 slept,
 His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
 Lay naked on the wolf-skin, and a dream
 Of dragging down his enemy made them
 move.
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek, un-
 shorn, ⁸¹⁰
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,

Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
 The sound not wanted in a place so still
 Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd
 his eyes
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to him,
 saying,
 'Your prize the diamond sent you by the
 King.'
 His eyes glisten'd; she fancied, 'Is it for
 me?'
 And when the maid had told him all the
 tale
 Of king and prince, the diamond sent, the
 quest
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed, ⁸²¹
 And laid the diamond in his open hand.
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her
 face.
 At once she slipt like water to the floor.
 'Alas,' he said, 'your ride hath wearied
 you.
 Rest must you have.' 'No rest for me,'
 she said;
 'Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest.'
 What might she mean by that? his large
 black eyes,
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon
 her, ⁸³⁰
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
 In the heart's colors on her simple face;
 And Lancelot look'd and was perplex in
 mind,
 And being weak in body said no more,
 But did not love the color; woman's love,
 Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

 Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the
 fields,
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured
 gates
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin; ⁸⁴⁰
 There bode the night, but woke with dawn,
 and past
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
 Thence to the cave. So day by day she past
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
 Gliding, and every day she tended him,
 And likewise many a night; and Lancelot
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little
 hurt
 Whereof he should be quickly whole, at
 times

Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
Uncourteous, even he. But the meek maid
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him ⁸⁵¹
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
Milder than any mother to a sick child,
And never woman yet, since man's first
fall,

Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all
The simples and the science of that time,
Told him that her fine care had saved his
life.

And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
Would call her friend and sister, sweet
Elaine, ⁸⁶⁰

Would listen for her coming and regret
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
And loved her with all love except the
love

Of man and woman when they love their
best,
Closest and sweetest, and had died the
death

In any knightly fashion for her sake.
And peradventure had he seen her first
She might have made this and that other
world

Another world for the sick man; but now
The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,
His honor rooted in dishonor stood, ⁸⁷¹
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness
made

Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.
These, as but born of sickness, could not
live;

For when the blood ran lustier in him
again,

Full often the bright image of one face,
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.

Then if the maiden, while that ghostly
grace ⁸⁸⁰

Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd
not,

Or short and coldly, and she knew right
well

What the rough sickness meant, but what
this meant

She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her
sight,

And drove her ere her time across the
fields

Far into the rich city, where alone

She murmur'd, 'Vain, in vain! it cannot be.
He will not love me. How then? must I
die?'

Then as a little helpless innocent bird, ⁸⁸⁹
That has but one plain passage of few notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, 'Must I
die?'

And now to right she turn'd, and now to
left,

And found no ease in turning or in rest;
And 'Him or death,' she mutter'd, 'death
or him,'

Again and like a burthen, 'Him or death.'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was
whole,

To Astolat returning rode the three. ⁹⁰⁰
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet
self

In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her
best,

She came before Sir Lancelot, for she
thought,

'If I be loved, these are my festal robes,
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall.'
And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid
That she should ask some goodly gift of
him

For her own self or hers: 'and do not
shun

To speak the wish most near to your true
heart; ⁹⁰⁹

Such service have ye done me that I make
My will of yours, and prince and lord am I
In mine own land, and what I will I can.'

Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to
speak.

And Lancelot saw that she withheld her
wish,

And hode among them yet a little space
Till he should learn it; and one morn it
chanced

He found her in among the garden yews,
And said, 'Delay no longer, speak your
wish, ⁹¹⁹

Seeing I go to-day.' Then out she brake:
'Going? and we shall never see you more.

And I must die for want of one bold word.'

'Speak; that I live to hear,' he said, 'is
yours.'

Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:

'I have gone mad. I love you; let me die.'
'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, 'what is this?'

And innocently extending her white arms,
'Your love,' she said, 'your love — to be your wife.'

And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I chosen to wed,

I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine;
But now there never will be wife of mine.'
'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still, to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world.'

And Lancelot answer'd: 'Nay, the world,
the world,

All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
To blare its own interpretation — nay,
Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,

And your good father's kindness.' And she said,

'Not to be with you, not to see your face —
Alas for me then, my good days are done!'
'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten times nay!

This is not love, but love's first flash in youth,

Most common; yea, I know it of mine own self,

And you yourself will smile at your own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life

To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age.

And then will I, for true you are and sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
More specially should your good knight be poor,

Endow you with broad land and territory
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
So that would make you happy; further-
more,

Even to the death, as tho' ye were my blood,

In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke

She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-
pale

Stood grasping what was nearest, then re-
plied,

'Of all this will I nothing;' and so fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew

Their talk had pierced, her father: 'Ay, a flash,

I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,

'That were against me; what I can I will;'
And there that day remain'd, and toward

even
Sent for his shield. Full meekly rose the maid,

Strip'd off the case, and gave the naked shield;

Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,

Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd

Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.

And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound;

And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.

And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,

Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away. 980
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat.
His very shield was gone; only the case,
Her own poor work, her empty lahor, left.
But still she heard him, still his picture form'd

And grew between her and the pictured wall.

Then came her father, saying in low tones,
'Have comfort,' whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, 'Peace to thee,

Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd with all calm.

But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field

Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd; the ows

Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
Of evening and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And call'd her song 'The Song of Love
and Death,'
And sang it; sweetly could she make and
sing.

'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in
vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain.
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death
must be.
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

'Sweet love, that seems not made to fade
away;
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless
clay;
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.' 1011

High with the last line scaled her voice,
and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard,
and thought
With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom of
the house
That ever shrieks before a death,' and
call'd
The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of
dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let me
die!'

As when we dwell upon a word we
know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought,
'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her
eyes.

At last she said: 'Sweet brothers, yester-
night
I seem'd a curious little maid again,

As happy as when we dwelt among the
woods,
And when ye used to take me with the
flood

Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it; there ye fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because ye would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the King.
And yet ye would not; but this night I
dream'd

That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, "Now shall I have my
will;"
And there I woke, but still the wish re-
main'd.

So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the King.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock at me;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at
me,

And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at
me;
Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to
me,
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade me
one.

And there the King will know me and my
love,
And there the Queen herself will pity me,
And all the gentle court will welcome me,
And after my long voyage I shall rest!'

'Peace,' said her father, 'O my child, ye
seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go
So far, being sick? and wherefore would
ye look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us
all?'

Then the rough Torre began to heave
and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and say: 1060
'I never loved him; an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him
down.
Give me good fortune, I will strike him
dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the house.'

To whom the gentle sister made reply:
 'Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be
 wroth,
 Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
 Not to love me than it is mine to love
 Him of all men who seems to me the high-
 est.' 1070

'Highest?' the father answer'd, echoing
 'highest?'—
 He meant to break the passion in her —
 'nay,
 Daughter, I know not what you call the
 highest;
 But this I know, for all the people know it,
 He loves the Queen, and in an open shame,
 And she returns his love in open shame;
 If this be high, what is it to be low?'

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:
 'Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
 For anger. These are slanders; never yet
 Was noble man but made ignoble talk. 1081
 He makes no friend who never made a foe.
 But now it is my glory to have loved
 One peerless, without stain; so let me pass,
 My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,
 Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
 And greatest, tho' my love had no return.
 Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
 Thanks, but you work against your own
 desire,
 For if I could believe the things you say
 I should but die the sooner; wherefore
 cease, 1091
 Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
 Hither, and let me shrive me clean and
 die.'

So when the ghostly man had come and
 gone,
 She, with a face bright as for sin forgiven,
 Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
 A letter, word for word; and when he
 ask'd,
 'Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
 Then will I bear it gladly;' she replied,
 'For Lancelot and the Queen and all the
 world, 1100
 But I myself must bear it.' Then he wrote
 The letter she devised; which being writ
 And folded, 'O sweet father, tender and
 true,
 Deny me not,' she said — 'ye never yet
 Denied my fancies — this, however strange,

My latest. Lay the letter in my hand
 A little ere I die, and close the hand
 Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
 And when the heat has gone from out my
 heart, 1109
 Then take the little bed on which I died
 For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the
 Queen's
 For richness, and me also like the Queen
 In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
 And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
 To take me to the river, and a barge
 Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
 I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
 There surely I shall speak for mine own
 self,
 And none of you can speak for me so well.
 And therefore let our dumb old man alone
 Go with me; he can steer and row, and
 he 1121
 Will guide me to that palace, to the doors.'

She ceased. Her father promised; where-
 upon
 She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her
 death
 Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
 But ten slow mornings past, and on the
 eleventh
 Her father laid the letter in her hand,
 And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
 So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from un-
 derground, 1130
 Then, those two brethren slowly with bent
 brows
 Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
 Past like a shadow thro' the field, that
 shone
 Full-summer, to that stream whereon the
 barge,
 Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
 There sat the lifelong creature of the
 house,
 Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
 Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
 So those two brethren from the chariot
 took 1140
 And on the black decks laid her in her
 bed,
 Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
 The silken case with braided blazonings,
 And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to
 her,

'Sister, farewell forever,' and again,
 'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears.
 Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the
 dead,
 Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the
 flood —
 In her right hand the lily, in her left
 The letter — all her bright hair streaming
 down —
 And all the coverlid was cloth of gold ¹¹⁵⁰
 Drawn to her waist, and she herself in
 white
 All but her face, and that clear-featured
 face
 Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,
 But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace
 craved
 Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
 The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
 Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and
 blow,
 With deaths of others, and almost his own,
 The nine-years-fought-for diamonds; for
 he saw ¹¹⁶⁰
 One of her house, and sent him to the
 Queen
 Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
 With such and so unmoved a majesty
 She might have seem'd her statue, but that
 he,
 Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her
 feet
 For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
 The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,
 In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the
 walls,
 And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side, ¹¹⁷⁰
 Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the
 stream,
 They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd:
 'Queen,
 Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
 Take, what I had not won except for you,
 These jewels, and make me happy, making
 them
 An armet for the roundest arm on earth,
 Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
 Is tawnier than her cygnet's. These are
 words;
 Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
 In speaking, yet O, grant my worship of it

Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin
 in words ¹¹⁸¹
 Perchance, we both can pardon; but, my
 Queen,
 I hear of rumors flying thro' your court.
 Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
 Should have in it an absoluter trust
 To make up that defect: let rumors be.
 When did not rumors fly? these, as I
 trust
 That you trust me in your own nobleness,
 I may not well believe that you believe.'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away,
 the Queen ¹¹⁹⁰
 Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine
 Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them
 off,
 Till all the place whereon she stood was
 green;
 Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive
 hand
 Received at once and laid aside the gems
 There on a table near her, and replied:

'It may be I am quicker of belief
 Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
 Our bond is not the bond of man and
 wife.
 This good is in it, whatsoever of ill, ¹²⁰⁰
 It can be broken easier. I for you
 This many a year have done despite and
 wrong
 To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
 I did acknowledge nobler. What are
 these?
 Diamonds for me! they had been thrice
 their worth
 Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
 To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
 Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!
 For her! for your new fancy. Only this
 Grant me, I pray you; have your joys
 apart. ¹²¹⁰
 I doubt not that, however changed, you
 keep
 So much of what is graceful; and myself
 Would shun to break those bounds of cour-
 tesy
 In which as Arthur's Queen I move and
 rule,
 So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!
 A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.
 So pray you, add my diamonds to her
 pearls;

Deck her with these; tell her, she shines
me down:

An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck ¹²²⁰
O, as much fairer — as a faith once fair
Was richer than these diamonds — hers not
mine —

Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my
will —

She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing wide for
heat,
Flung them, and down they flash'd, and
smote the stream.

Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it
were,

Diamonds to meet them, and they past
away.

Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half dis-
dain ¹²³⁰

At love, life, all things, on the window
ledge,

Close underneath his eyes, and right across
Where these had fallen, slowly past the
barge

Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, hurst
away

To weep and wail in secret; and the barge,
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
There two stood arm'd, and kept the door;
to whom,

All up the marble stair, tier over tier, ¹²⁴⁰
Were added months that gaped, and eyes
that ask'd,

'What is it?' but that oarsman's haggard
face,

As hard and still as is the face that men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken
rocks

On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they
said:

'He is enchanted, cannot speak — and she,
Look how she sleeps — the Fairy Queen, so
fair!

Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh
and blood?

Or come to take the King to Fairyland?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
But that he passes into Fairyland.' ¹²⁵¹

While thus they babbled of the King, the
King

Came girt with knights. Then turn'd the
tongueless man

From the half-face to the full eye, and rose
And pointed to the damsel and the doors.

So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;
And reverently they bore her into hall.

Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd
at her, ¹²⁵⁹

And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
And last the Queen herself, and pitied her;
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it; this
was all:

'Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the
Lake,

I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.

I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my
death.

And therefore to our Lady Guinevere, ¹²⁷⁰
And to all other ladies, I make moan:

Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless.'

Thus he read;

And ever in the reading lords and dames
Wept, looking often from his face who read
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her
lips

Who had devised the letter moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them
all: ¹²⁸⁰

'My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden's
death

Right heavy am I; for good she was and
true,

But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.

Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.

I swear by truth and knighthood that I
gave

No cause, not willingly, for such a love.
To this I call my friends in testimony, ¹²⁹⁰
Her brethren, and her father, who himself

Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
 To break her passion, some discourtesy
 Against my nature; what I could, I did.
 I left her and I bade her no farewell;
 Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have
 died,
 I might have put my wits to some rough
 use,
 And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen —
 Sea was her wrath, yet working after
 storm:
 'Ye might at least have done her so much
 grace,
 Fair lord, as would have help'd her from
 her death.'
 He raised his head, their eyes met and hers
 fell,
 He adding: 'Queen, she would not be con-
 tent
 Save that I wedded her, which could not
 be.
 Then might she follow me thro' the world,
 she ask'd;
 It could not be. I told her that her love
 Was but the flash of youth, would darken
 down,
 To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
 Toward one more worthy of her — then
 would I,
 More specially were he she wedded poor,
 Estate them with large land and territory
 In mine own realm beyond the narrow
 seas,
 To keep them in all joyance. More than
 this
 I could not; this she would not, and she
 died.'

He pausing, Arthur answer'd: 'O my
 knight,
 It will be to thy worship, as my knight,
 And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
 To see that she be buried worshipfully.'

So toward that shrine which then in all
 the realm
 Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
 The marshall'd Order of their Table
 Round,
 And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
 The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
 Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
 And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.

And when the knights had laid her comely
 head
 Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
 Then Arthur spake among them: 'Let her
 tomb
 Be costly, and her image thereupon,
 And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
 Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
 And let the story of her dolorous voyage
 For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb
 In letters gold and azure!' which was
 wrought
 Thereafter; but when now the lords and
 dames
 And people, from the high door streaming,
 brake
 Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
 Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved
 apart,
 Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, 'Lance-
 lot,
 Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love.'
 He answer'd with his eyes upon the
 ground,
 'That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen,
 forgiven.'
 But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,
 Approach'd him, and with full affection
 said:

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I
 have
 Most joy and most affiance, for I know
 What thou hast been in battle by my side,
 And many a time have watch'd thee at the
 tilt
 Strike down the lusty and long practised
 knight
 And let the younger and unskill'd go by
 To win his honor and to make his name,
 And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man
 Made to be loved; but now I would to
 God,
 Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,
 Thou couldst have loved this maiden,
 shaped, it seems,
 By God for thee alone, and from her face,
 If one may judge the living by the dead,
 Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
 Who might have brought thee, now a lonely
 man
 Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons
 Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
 My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the
 Lake.'

Then answer'd Lancelot: 'Fair she was,
 my King,
 Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
 To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
 To doubt her pureness were to want a
 heart —
 Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
 Could bind him, but free love will not be
 bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were freest,' said
 the King. ¹³⁶⁹
 'Let love be free; free love is for the best.
 And, after heaven, on our dull side of
 death,
 What should be best, if not so pure a love
 Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee
 She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
 Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know.'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he
 went,
 And at the irunning of a little brook
 Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
 The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
 And saw the barge that brought her mov-
 ing down, ¹³⁸⁰
 Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
 Low in himself: 'Ah, simple heart and
 sweet,
 Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love
 Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for
 thy soul?
 Ay, that will I. Farewell too — now at
 last —
 Farewell, fair lily. "Jealousy in love?"
 Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous
 pride?
 Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
 May not your crescent fear for name and
 fame
 Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?
 Why did the King dwell on my name to
 me? ¹³⁹¹
 Mine own name shames me, seeming a re-
 proach,
 Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
 Caught from his mother's arms — the won-
 drous one
 Who passes thro' the vision of the night —
 She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns
 Heard on the winding waters, eve and
 morn
 She kiss'd me saying, "Thou art fair, my
 child,

As a king's son," and often in her arms
 She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
 Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er
 it be! ¹⁴⁰¹
 For what am I? what profits me my name
 Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and
 have it.
 Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;
 Now grown a part of me; but what use in
 it?
 To make men worse by making my sin
 known?
 Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?
 Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
 Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must
 break
 These bonds that so defame me. Not with-
 out ¹⁴¹⁰
 She wills it — would I, if she will'd it?
 nay,
 Who knows? but if I would not, then may
 God,
 I pray him, send a sudden angel down
 To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
 And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
 Among the tumbled fragments of the
 hills.'

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful
 pain,
 Not knowing he should die a holy man.

THE HOLY GRAIL

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of prowess
 done
 In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale
 Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd
 the Pure,
 Had past into the silent life of prayer,
 Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for the
 cowl
 The helmet in an abbey far away
 From Camelot, there, and not long after,
 died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,
 Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the
 rest,
 And honor'd him, and wrought into his
 heart ¹⁰
 A way by love that waken'd love within,
 To answer that which came; and as they
 sat

Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening
 half
 The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
 That puff'd the swaying branches into
 smoke
 Above them, ere the summer when he died,
 The monk Ambrosius question'd Percivale:

'O brother, I have seen this yew-tree
 smoke,
 Spring after spring, for half a hundred
 years;
 For never have I known the world with-
 out,
 Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale. But
 thee,
 When first thou camest — such a courtesy
 Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice — I
 knew
 For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall;
 For good ye are and bad, and like to
 coins,
 Some true, some light, but every one of you
 Stamp'd with the image of the King; and
 now
 Tell me, what drove thee from the Table
 Round,
 My brother? was it earthly passion crost?'

'Nay,' said the knight; 'for no such
 passion mine.
 But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail
 Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,
 And earthly heats that spring and sparkle
 out
 Among us in the jousts, while women
 watch
 Who wins, who falls, and waste the spirit-
 ual strength
 Within us, better offer'd up to heaven.'

To whom the monk: 'The Holy Grail!
 — I trust
 We are green in Heaven's eyes; but here
 too much
 We moulder — as to things without I
 mean —
 Yet one of your own knights, a guest of
 ours,
 Told us of this in our refectory,
 But spake with such a sadness and so low
 We heard not half of what he said. What
 is it?
 The phantom of a cup that comes and
 goes?'

'Nay, monk! what phantom?' answer'd
 Percivale.

'The cup, the cup itself, from which our
 Lord

Drank at the last sad supper with his own.
 This, from the blessed land of Aromat —
 After the day of darkness, when the dead
 Went wandering o'er Moriah — the good
 saint

50
 Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought
 To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
 Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our
 Lord.

And there awhile it bode; and if a man
 Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at
 once,

By faith, of all his ills. But then the
 times

Grew to such evil that the holy cup
 Was caught away to heaven, and disap-
 pear'd.'

To whom the monk: 'From our old
 books I know

That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury, 60
 And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,
 Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to
 build;

And there he built with wattles from the
 marsh

A little lonely church in days of yore,
 For so they say, these books of ours, but
 seem

Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.
 But who first saw the holy thing to-day?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a nun,
 And one no further off in blood from me
 Than sister; and if ever holy maid
 With knees of adoration wore the stone,
 A holy maid; tho' never maiden glow'd,
 But that was in her earlier maidenhood,
 With such a fervent flame of human love,
 Which, being rudely blunted, glanced and
 shot

Only to holy things; to prayer and praise
 She gave herself, to fast and alms. And
 yet,

Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,
 Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,
 And the strange sound of an adulterous
 race,

80
 Across the iron grating of her cell
 Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the
 more.

'And he to whom she told her sins, or
 what
 Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,
 A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,
 Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,
 A legend handed down thro' five or six,
 And each of these a hundred winters old,
 From our Lord's time. And when King
 Arthur made
 His Table Round, and all men's hearts be-
 came ⁹⁰
 Clean for a season, surely he had thought
 That now the Holy Grail would come
 again;
 But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it
 would come,
 And heal the world of all their wicked-
 ness!
 "O Father!" ask'd the maiden, "might it
 come
 To me by prayer and fasting?" "Nay,"
 said he,
 "I know not, for thy heart is pure as
 snow."
 And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun
 Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I
 thought
 She might have risen and floated when I
 saw her. ¹⁰⁰
 'For on a day she sent to speak with me.
 And when she came to speak, behold her
 eyes
 Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,
 Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,
 Beautiful in the light of holiness!
 And "O my brother Percivale," she said,
 "Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy
 Grail;
 For, waked at dead of night, I heard a
 sound
 As of a silver horn from o'er the hills ¹⁰⁹
 Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's
 use
 To hunt by moonlight.' And the slender
 sound
 As from a distance beyond distance grew
 Coming upon me — O never harp nor horn,
 Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch
 with hand,
 Was like that music as it came; and then
 Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver
 beam,
 And down the long beam stole the Holy
 Grail,

Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
 Till all the white walls of my cell were
 dyed
 With rosy colors leaping on the wall; ¹²⁰
 And then the music faded, and the Grail
 Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the
 walls
 The rosy quiverings died into the night.
 So now the Holy Thing is here again
 Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,
 And tell thy brother knights to fast and
 pray,
 That so perchance the vision may be seen
 By thee and those, and all the world be
 heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of
 this ¹²⁹
 To all men; and myself fasted and pray'd
 Always, and many among us many a week
 Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,
 Expectant of the wonder that would be.

'And one there was among us, ever
 moved
 Among us in white armor, Galahad.
 "God make thee good as thou art beauti-
 ful!"
 Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight,
 and none
 In so young youth was ever made a knight
 Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he
 heard

My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze; ¹⁴⁰
 His eyes became so like her own, they
 seem'd
 Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

'Sister or brother none had he; but some
 Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some
 said
 Begotten by enchantment — chattering
 they,
 Like birds of passage piping up and down,
 That gape for flies — we know not whence
 they come;
 For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd?

'But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore
 away
 Clean from her forehead all that wealth of
 hair ¹⁵⁰
 Which made a silken mat-work for her
 feet;
 And out of this she plaited broad and long

A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread

And crimson in the belt a strange device,
A crimson grail within a silver beam;
And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,

Saying: "My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,

O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,

I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.

Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,

And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king

Far in the spiritual city;" and as she spake
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind

On him, and he believed in her belief.

'Then came a year of miracle. O brother,

In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,

Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
And carven with strange figures; and in and out

The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
And Merlin call'd it "the Siege Perilous,"

Perilous for good and ill; "for there," he said,

"No man could sit but he should lose himself."

And once by misadventure Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,

Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
Cried, "If I lose myself, I save myself!"

'Then on a summer night it came to pass,

While the great banquet lay along the hall,

That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

'And all at once, as there we sat, we heard

A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast; and overhead
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.

And in the blast there smote along the hall
A beam of light seven times more clear
than day;

And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail

All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,
And none might see who bare it, and it past.

But every knight beheld his fellow's face
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
And staring each at other like dumb men
Stood, till I found a voice and sware a
vow.

'I sware a vow before them all, that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride

A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
Until I found and saw it, as the nun
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the
vow,

And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin,
sware,

And Lancelot sware, and many among the
knights,

And Gawain sware, and louder than the
rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, asking
him,

'What said the King? Did Arthur take
the vow?

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale, 'the
King,

Was not in hall; for early that same day,
Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit bold,
An outraged maiden sprang into the hall
Crying on help; for all her shining hair
Was smear'd with earth, and either milky
arm

Red-vent with hooks of bramble, and all
she wore

Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn
In tempest. So the King arose and went
To smoke the scandalous hive of those
wild bees

That made such honey in his realm. How-
beit

Some little of this marvel he too saw,
Returning o'er the plain that then began
To darken under Camelot; whence the
King

Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo, there! the
roofs

Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-smoke !²²⁰

Pray heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt ! ”

For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,
As having there so oft with all his knights
Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

‘ O brother, had you known our mighty hall,

Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago !
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing
brook,²³⁰

Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.

And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt

With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall ;
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,

And on the fourth are men with growing wings,

And over all one statue in the mould
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,
And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star.²⁴⁰

And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown

And both the wings are made of gold, and flame

At sunrise till the people in far fields,
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
Behold it, crying, “ We have still a king.”

‘ And, brother, had you known our hall within,

Broader and higher than any in all the lands !

Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,

And all the light that falls upon the board
Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our King.²⁵⁰

Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,

Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.
And also one to the west, and counter to it,
And blank ; and who shall blazon it ? when
and how ? —

O, there, perchance, when all our wars are done,

The brand Excalibur will be cast away !

‘ So to this hall full quickly rode the King,

In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish,
wraopt²⁶⁰

In uremoreful folds of rolling fire.
And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw

The golden dragon sparkling over all ;
And many of those who burut the hold,
their arms

Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with smoke and sear'd,

Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,
Full of the vision, prest ; and then the King
Spake to me, being nearest, “ Percivale,” —
Because the hall was all in tumult — some
Vowing, and some protesting, — “ what is
this ? ”²⁷⁰

‘ O brother, when I told him what had chanced,

My sister's vision and the rest, his face
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than once,
When some brave deed seem'd to be done
in vain,

Darken ; and “ Woe is me, my knights,”
he cried,

“ Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow.”

Bold was mine answer, “ Had thyself been here,

My King, thou wouldst have sworn.” “ Yea,
yea,” said he,

“ Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail ? ”

“ Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw
the light,²⁸⁰

But since I did not see the holy thing,
I sware a vow to follow it till I saw.”

‘ Then when he ask'd us, knight by knight, if any

Had seen it, all their answers were as one :
“ Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn
our vows.”

“ Lo, now,” said Arthur, “ have ye seen
a cloud ?

What go ye into the wilderness to see ? ”

'Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,
'But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail, 290
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry —
'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me !''

'Ah, Galahad, Galahad,' said the King,
"for such

As thou art is the vision, not for these.
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign —
Holier is none, my Percivale, than she —
A sign to main this Order which I made.
But ye that follow but the leader's bell," —
Brother, the King was hard upon his
knights, —

"Taliessin is our fullest throat of song, 300
And one hath sung and all the dumb will
sing.

Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne
Five knights at once, and every younger
knight,

Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,
Till overborne by one, he learns — and ye,
What are ye ? Galahads ? — no, nor Perci-
vales" —.

For thus it pleased the King to range me
close

After Sir Galahad; — "nay," said he, "but
men

With strength and will to right the wrong'd,
of power

To lay the sudden heads of violence flat, 310
Knights that in twelve great battles
splash'd and dyed

The strong White Horse in his own heathen
blood —

But one hath seen, and all the blind will
see.

Go, since your vows are sacred, being made.
Yet — for ye know the cries of all my
realm

Pass thro' this hall — how often, O my
knights,

Your places being vacant at my side,
This chance of noble deeds will come and
go

Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering
fires

Lost in the quagmire ! Many of you, yea
most, 320

Return no more. Ye think I show myself
Too dark a prophet. Come now, let us meet
The morrow morn once more in one full
field

Of gracious pastime, that once more the
King,
Before ye leave him for this quest, may
count
The yet-unbroken strength of all his
knights,
Rejoicing in that Order which he made."

'So when the sun broke next from under-
ground,
All the great Table of our Arthur closed
And clash'd in such a tourney and so full,
So many lances broken — never yet 331
Had Camelot seen the like since Arthur
came;

And I myself and Galahad, for a strength
Was in us from the vision, overthrew
So many knights that all the people cried,
And almost burst the barriers in their heat,
Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Perci-
vale !"

'But when the next day brake from un-
derground —

O brother, had you known our Camelot,
Built by old kings, age after age, so old
The King himself had fears that it would
fall, 341

So strange, and rich, and dim; for where
the roofs

Totter'd toward each other in the sky,
Met foreheads all along the street of those
Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and where
the long

Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the
necks

Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
Thicker than drops from thunder, showers
of flowers

Fell as we past; and men and boys astride
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan, 350
At all the corners, named us each by name,
Calling "God speed !" but in the ways be-
low

The knights and ladies wept, and rich and
poor

Wept, and the King himself could hardly
speak

For grief, and all in middle street the
Queen,

Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd
aloud,

"This madness has come on us for our sins."
So to the Gate of the Three Queens we
came,

Where Arthur's wars are render'd mystically,
And thence departed every one his way. 360

'And I was lifted up in heart, and thought
Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,
How my strong lance had beaten down the knights,
So many and famous names; and never yet
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth so green,
For all my blood danced in me, and I knew
That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of our King,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,
Came like a driving gloom across my mind. 370
Then every evil word I had spoken once,
And every evil thought I had thought of old,
And every evil deed I ever did,
Awoke and cried, "This quest is not for thee."
And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,
And I was thirsty even unto death;
And I, too, cried, "This quest is not for thee."

'And on I rode, and when I thought my thirst
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a brook, 380
With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white
Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave
And took both ear and eye; and o'er the brook
Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook
Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will rest here,"
I said, "I am not worthy of the quest;"
But even while I drank the brook, and ate
The goodly apples, all these things at once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone 389
And thirsting in a land of sand and thorns.

'And then behold a woman at a door
Spinning; and fair the house whereby she sat,

And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,
And all her bearing gracious; and she rose
Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,

"Rest here;" but when I touch'd her, lo!
she; too,
Fell into dust and nothing, and the house
Became no better than a broken shed,
And in it a dead babe; and also this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone. 400

'And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the world,
And where it smote the plowshare in the field
The plowman left his plowing and fell down
Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail
The milkmaid left her milking and fell down
Before it, and I knew not why, but thought
"The sun is rising," tho' the sun had risen.
Then was I ware of one that on me moved
In golden armor with a crown of gold 410
About a casque all jewels, and his horse
In golden armor jewelled everywhere;
And on the splendor came, flashing me blind,
And seem'd to me the lord of all the world,
Being so huge. But when I thought he meant
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,
Open'd his arms to embrace me as he came,
And up I went and touch'd him, and he, too,
Fell into dust, and I was left alone 419
And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

'And I rode on and found a mighty hill,
And on the top a city wall'd; the spires
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.
And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and these
Cried to me climbing, "Welcome, Percivale!
Thou mightiest and thou purest among men!"
And glad was I and clomb, but found at top
No man, nor any voice. And thence I past

Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
That man had once dwelt there; but there
I found 430

Only one man of an exceeding age.
"Where is that goodly company," said I,
"That so cried out upon me?" and he
had

Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasp'd,
"Whence and what art thou?" and even
as he spoke

Fell into dust and disappear'd, and I
Was left alone once more and cried in
grief,

"Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
And touch it, it will crumble into dust!"

'And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,
Low as the hill was high, and where the
vale 441
Was lowest found a chapel, and thereby
A holy hermit in a hermitage,
To whom I told my phantoms, and he
said:

"O son, thou hast not true humility,
The highest virtue, mother of them all;
For when the Lord of all things made
Himself

Naked of glory for His mortal change,
'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for all is
thine,'

And all her form shone forth with sudden
light 450

So that the angels were amazed, and she
Follow'd Him down, and like a flying star
Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the east.
But her thou hast not known; for what is
this

Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy
sins?

Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself
As Galahad." When the hermit made an
end,

In silver armor suddenly Galahad shone
Before us, and against the chapel door
Laid lance and enter'd, and we knelt in
prayer. 460

And there the hermit slaked my burning
thirst,

And at the sacrificing of the mass I saw
The holy elements alone; but he,
"Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw the
Grail,

The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine.
I saw the fiery face as of a child

That smote itself into the bread and went;
And hither am I come; and never yet
Hath what thy sister taught me first to
see,

This holy thing; fail'd from my side, nor
come 470

Cover'd, but moving with me night and
day,

Fainter by day, but always in the night
Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd
marsh

Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below
Blood-red. And in the strength of this I
rode,

Shattering all evil customs everywhere,
And past thro' Pagan realms, and made
them mine,

And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore
them down,

And broke thro' all, and in the strength of
this 480

Come victor. But my time is hard at
hand,

And hence I go, and one will crown me
king

Far in the spiritual city; and come thou,
too,

For thou shalt see the vision when I go."

'While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling
on mine,

Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew
One with him, to believe as he believed.

Then, when the day began to wane, we
went.

'There rose a hill that none but man
could climb,

Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-
courses — 490

Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it,
storm

Round us and death; for every moment
glanced

His silver arms and gloom'd, so quick and
thick

The lightnings here and there to left and
right

Struck, till the dry old trunks about us,
dead,

Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,
Sprang into fire. And at the base we found
On either hand, as far as eye could see,

A great black swamp and of an evil smell,

Part black, part whiten'd with the bones of
 men,⁵⁰⁰
 Not to be crost, save that some ancient
 king
 Had built a way, where, link'd with many
 a bridge,
 A thousand piers ran into the great Sea.
 And Galahad fled along them bridge by
 bridge,
 And every bridge as quickly as he crost
 Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I
 yearn'd
 To follow; and thrice above him all the
 heavens
 Open'd and blazed with thunder such as
 seem'd
 Shoutings of all the sons of God. And first
 At once I saw him far on the great Sea,
 In silver-shining armor starry-clear;⁵¹¹
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
 Clothed in white samite or a luminous
 cloud.
 And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,
 If boat it were — I saw not whence it
 came.
 And when the heavens open'd and blazed
 again
 Roaring, I saw him like a silver star —
 And had he set the sail, or had the boat
 Become a living creature clad with wings?
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
 Redder than any rose, a joy to me,⁵²¹
 For now I knew the veil had been with-
 drawn.
 Then in a moment when they blazed again
 Opening, I saw the least of little stars
 Down on the waste, and straight beyond
 the star
 I saw the spiritual city and all her spires
 And gateways in a glory like one pearl —
 No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints —
 Strike from the sea; and from the star
 there shot⁵²⁹
 A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there
 Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,
 Which never eyes on earth again shall
 see.
 Then fell the floods of heaven drowning
 the deep,
 And how my feet recrost the deathful
 ridge
 No memory in me lives; but that I touch'd
 The chapel-doors at dawn I know, and
 thence
 Taking my war-horse from the holy man,

Glad that no phantom vext me more, re-
 turn'd
 To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's
 wars.'

'O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius, — 'for in
 sooth⁵⁴⁰
 These ancient books — and they would win
 thee — teem,
 Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
 With miracles and marvels like to these,
 Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,
 Who read but on my breviary with ease,
 Till my head swims, and then go forth and
 pass

Down to the little thorp that lies so close,
 And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest
 To these old walls — and mingle with our
 folk;⁵⁴⁹

And knowing every honest face of theirs
 As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,
 And every homely secret in their hearts,
 Delight myself with gossip and old wives,
 And ills and aches, and teethings, lyings-
 in,

And mirthful sayings, children of the place,
 That have no meaning half a league away;
 Or lulling random squabbles when they
 rise,

Chafferings and chatterings at the market-
 cross,

Rejoice, small man, in this small world of
 mine,

Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs —
 O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,⁵⁶¹
 Came ye on none but phantoms in your
 quest,

No man, no woman?'

Then Sir Percivale:
 'All men, to one so bound by such a vow,
 And women were as phantoms. O, my
 brother,
 Why wilt thou shame me to confess to
 thee
 How far I falter'd from my quest and
 vow?'

For after I had lain so many nights,
 A bed-mate of the snail and eft and snake,
 In grass and burdock, I was changed to
 wan⁵⁷⁰

And meagre, and the vision had not come;
 And then I chanced upon a goodly town
 With one great dwelling in the middle of
 it.

Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd
By maidens each as fair as any flower;
But when they led me into hall, behold,
The princess of that castle was the one,
Brother, and that one only, who had ever
Made my heart leap; for when I moved of
old

A slender page about her father's hall, ⁵⁸⁰
And she a slender maiden, all my heart
Went after her with longing, yet we twain
Had never kiss'd a kiss or vow'd a vow.
And now I came upon her once again,
And one had wedded her, and he was dead,
And all his land and wealth and state were
hers.

And while I tarried, every day she set
A banquet richer than the day before
By me, for all her longing and her will
Was toward me as of old; till one fair
morn, ⁵⁹⁰

I walking to and fro beside a stream
That flash'd across her orchard underneath
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,
And calling me the greatest of all knights,
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first
time,

And gave herself and all her wealth to
me.

Then I remember'd Arthur's warning word,
That most of us would follow wandering
fires,

And the quest faded in my heart. Anon,
The heads of all her people drew to me,
With supplication both of knees and
tongue: ⁶⁰¹

"We have heard of thee; thou art our
greatest knight,

Our Lady says it, and we well believe.

Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land."
O me, my brother! but one night my vow
Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own
self,

And even the holy quest, and all but her;
Then after I was join'd with Galahad ⁶¹⁰
Cared not for her nor anything upon earth."

Then said the monk: 'Poor men, when
yule is cold,
Must be content to sit by little fires.
And this am I, so that ye care for me
Ever so little; yea, and blest be heaven
That brought thee here to this poor house
of ours

Where all the brethren are so hard, to
warm

My cold heart with a friend; but O the
pity

To find thine own first love once more — to
hold,

Hold her a wealthy bride within thine
arms, ⁶²⁰

Or all but hold, and then — cast her aside,
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed!
For we that want the warmth of double
life,

We that are plagued with dreams of some-
thing sweet

Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich, —
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-wise,

Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,
But live like an old badger in his earth,

With earth about him everywhere, despite
All fast and penance. Saw ye none be-
side, ⁶³⁰

None of your knights?'

'Yea, so,' said Percivale:

'One night my pathway swerving east, I
saw

The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors
All in the middle of the rising moon,
And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd him,
'and he me,

And each made joy of either. Then he
ask'd:

"Where is he? hast thou seen him —
Lancelot? — Once,"

Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across me
— mad,

And maddening what he rode; and when
I cried,

'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest ⁶⁴⁰
So holy?' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me
not!

I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,
For now there is a lion in the way!' ⁶⁵⁰
So vanish'd."

'Then Sir Bors had ridden on
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,

Because his former madness, once the talk
And scandal of our table, had return'd;

For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship him
That ill to him is ill to them, to Bors

Beyond the rest. He well had been content
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have
seen, ⁶⁵¹

The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,

Being so clouded with his grief and love,
 Small heart was his after the holy quest.
 If God would send the vision, well; if not,
 The quest and he were in the hands of
 Heaven.

‘ And then, with small adventure met,
 Sir Bors

Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,
 And found a people there among their
 crags,

Our race and blood, a remnant that were
 left ⁶⁶⁰

Paynim amid their circles, and the stones
 They pitch up straight to heaven; and their
 wise men

Were strong in that old magic which cau
 trace

The wandering of the stars, and scoff’d at
 him

And this high quest as at a simple thing,
 Told him he follow’d — almost Arthur’s
 words —

A mocking fire: “ what other fire than he
 Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom
 blows,

And the sea rolls, and all the world is
 warm’d ? ”

And when his answer chafed them, the
 rough crowd, ⁶⁷⁰

Hearing he had a difference with their
 priests,

Seized him, and bound and plunged him
 into a cell

Of great piled stones; and lying bounden
 there

In darkness thro’ innumerable hours
 He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep
 Over him till by miracle — what else ? —

Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and
 fell,

Such as no wind could move; and thro’ the
 gap

Glimmer’d the streaming seud. Then came
 a night

Still as the day was loud, and thro’ the
 gap ⁶⁸⁰

The seven clear stars of Arthur’s Table
 Round —

For, brother, so one night, because they roll
 Thro’ such a round in heaven, we named
 the stars,

Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King —
 And these, like bright eyes of familiar
 friends,

In on him shone: “ And then to me, to
 me,”

Said good Sir Bors, “ beyond all hopes of
 mine,

Who scarce had pray’d or ask’d it for my-
 self —

Across the seven clear stars — O grace to
 me ! —

In color like the fingers of a hand ⁶⁹⁰
 Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail

Glided and past, and close upon it peal’d
 A sharp quick thunder.” Afterwards, a
 maid,

Who kept our holy faith among her kin
 In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.’

To whom the monk: ‘ And I remember
 now

That pelican on the casque. Sir Bors it was
 Who spake so low and sadly at our board,

And mighty reverent at our grace was he;
 A square-set man and houest, and his eyes,

An outdoor sign of all the warmth within,
 Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath a
 cloud, ⁷⁰²

But heaven had meant it for a sunny one.
 Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else ? But when ye
 reach’d

The city, found ye all your knights re-
 turn’d,

Or was there sooth in Arthnr’s prophecy,
 Tell me, and what said each, and what the
 King ? ’

Then answer’d Percivale: ‘ And that
 can I, ⁷⁰⁸

Brother, and truly; since the living words
 Of so great men as Lancelot and our King

Pass not from door to door and out again,
 But sit within the house. O, when we
 reach’d

The city, our horses stumbling as they
 trode

On heaps of ruin, hornless nnicorns,
 Crack’d basilisks, and splinter’d cocka-
 trices,

And shatter’d talbots, which had left the
 stones

Raw that they fell from, brought us to the
 hall.

‘ And there sat Arthur on the dais-throne,
 And those that had gone out upon the
 quest,

Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them,

And those that had not, stood before the
King, 721
Who, when he saw me, rose and bade me
hail,

Saying: "A welfare in thine eyes reproves
Our fear of some disastrous chance for
thee

On hill or plain, at sea or flooding ford.
So fierce a gale made havoc here of late
Among the strange devices of our kings,
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of ours,
And from the statue Merlin moulded for
us

Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but now —
the quest, 730

This vision — hast thou seen the Holy Cup
That Joseph brought of old to Glaston-
bury?"

'So when I told him all thyself hast
heard,

Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve
To pass away into the quiet life,
He answer'd not, but, sharply turning,
ask'd

Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this quest for
thee?"

"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not for
such as I.

Therefore I communed with a saintly man,
Who made me sure the quest was not for
me; 740

For I was much a-wearied of the quest,
But found a silk pavilion in a field,
And merry maidens in it; and then this
gale

Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,
And blew my merry maidens all about
With all discomfort; yea, and but for this,
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant
to me."

'He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to whom
at first

He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,
push'd

Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught his
hand, 750

Held it, and there, half-hidden by him,
stood,

Until the King espied him, saying to him,
"Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and true
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail;"
and Bors,

"Ask me not, for I may not speak of it;
I saw it;" and the tears were in his eyes.

'Then there remain'd but Lancelot, for
the rest

Spake but of sundry perils in the storm.
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,

Our Arthur kept his best until the last; 760
"Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the King,

"my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this quest avail'd for
thee?"

"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lancelot,
with a groan;

"O King!" — and when he paused me-
thought I spied

A dying fire of madness in his eyes —
"O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,

Happier are those that welter in their sin,
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for
slime, 768

Slime of the ditch; but in me lived a sin
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
Round that one sin, until the wholesome
flower

And poisonous grew together, each as each,
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when thy
knights

Sware, I swear with them only in the hope
That could I touch or see the Holy Grail

They might be pluck'd asunder. Then I
spake

To one most holy saint, who wept and said
That, save they could be pluck'd asunder,
all

My quest were but in vain; to whom I
vow'd 780

That I would work according as he will'd.
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd and
strove

To tear the twain asunder in my heart,
My madness came upon me as of old,
And whipt me into waste fields far away.

There was I beaten down by little men,
Mean knights, to whom the moving of my
sword

And shadow of my spear had been enow
To scare them from me once; and then I
came

All in my folly to the naked shore, 790
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse
grasses grew;

But such a blast, my King, began to blow,

So loud a blast along the shore and sea,
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea
Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens
Were shaken with the motion and the sound.
And blakening in the sea-foam sway'd a

boat,

Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a chain;⁷⁹⁹
And in my madness to myself I said,
'I will embark and I will lose myself,
And in the great sea wash away my sin.'
I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.
Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,
And with me drove the moon and all the
stars;

And the wind fell, and on the seventh night
I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,
And felt the boat shock earth, and looking
up,

Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,
A castle like a rock upon a rock,⁸¹¹
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,
And steps that met the breaker! There
was none

Stood near it but a lion on each side
That kept the entry, and the moon was full.
Then from the boat I leapt, and up the
stairs,

There drew my sword. With sudden-
flaring manes
Those two great beasts rose upright like a
man,

Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between,
And, when I would have smitten them,
heard a voice,⁸²⁰
'Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the
beasts

Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with vio-
lence

The sword was dash'd from out my hand,
and fell.

And up into the sounding hall I past;
But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,
No bench nor table, painting on the wall
Or shield of knight, only the rounded moon
Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
But always in the quiet house I heard,
Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,⁸³⁰
A sweet voice singing in the topmost
tower

To the eastward. Up I climb'd a thousand
steps

With pain; as in a dream I seem'd to
climb

For ever; at the last I reach'd a door,
A light was in the crannies, and I heard,
'Glory and joy and honor to our Lord
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail!'
Then in my madness I essay'd the door;
It gave, and thro' a stormy glare, a heat
As from a seven-times-heated furnace, I,
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd
away —⁸⁴²

O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
All pall'd in crimson samite, and around
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and
eyes!

And but for all my madness and my sin,
And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw
That which I saw; but what I saw was
veil'd

And cover'd, and this quest was not for me."

'So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot
left⁸⁵⁰

The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain — nay,
Brother, I need not tell thee foolish
words, —

A reckless and irreverent knight was he,
Now bolden'd by the silence of his King, —
Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my liege,"
he said,

"Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?
When have I stinted stroke in foughten
field?"

But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,
Thy holy nun and thou have driven men
mad,

Yea, made our mightiest madder than our
least.⁸⁶⁰

But by mine eyes and by mine ears I
swear,

I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,
And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,
To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
Henceforward."

"Deafer," said the blameless King,
"Gawain, and blinder unto holy things,
Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,
Being too blind to have desire to see.

But if indeed there came a sign from
heaven,

Blessed are Bors, Lancelot, and Perci-
vale,⁸⁷⁰

For these have seen according to their
sight.

For every fiery prophet in old times,

And all the sacred madness of the bard,
When God made music thro' them, could
but speak
His music by the framework and the chord;
And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

“Nay — but thou errest, Lancelot;
never yet
Could all of true and noble in knight and
man
Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,
With such a closeness but apart there
grew,
Save that he were the swine thou spakest⁸⁸⁰
of,
Some root of knighthood and pure noble-
ness;
Whereto see thou, that it may bear its
flower.

“And spake I not too truly, O my
knights?
Was I too dark a prophet when I said
To those who went upon the Holy Quest,
That most of them would follow wander-
ing fires,
Lost in the quagmire? — lost to me and
gone,
And left me gazing at a barren board,
And a lean Order — scarce return'd a
tithe —⁸⁹⁰
And out of those to whom the vision came
My greatest hardly will helieve he saw.
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And, leaving human wrongs to right them-
selves,
Cares but to pass into the silent life.
And one hath had the vision face to face,
And now his chair desires him here in vain,
However they may crown him elsewhere.

“And some among you held that if the
King
Had seen the sight he would have sworn
the vow.⁹⁰⁰
Not easily, seeing that the King must
guard
That which he rules, and is but as the hind
To whom a space of land is given to plow,
Who may not wander from the allotted
field
Before his work be done, but, being done,
Let visions of the night or of the day
Come as they will; and many a time they
come,

Until this earth he walks on seems not
earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is not
light,
This air that smites his forehead is not
air⁹¹⁰
But vision — yea, his very hand and foot —
In moments when he feels he cannot die,
And knows himself no vision to himself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
Who rose again. Ye have seen what ye
have seen.”

‘So spake the King; I knew not all he
meant.’

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

KING ARTHUR made new knights to fill
the gap
Left by the Holy Quest; and as he sat
In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors
Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these a
youth,
Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the fields
Past, and the sunshine came along with
him.

‘Make me thy knight, because I know,
Sir King,
All that belongs to knighthood, and I love.’
Such was his cry; for having heard the
King
Had let proclaim a tournament — the
prize¹⁰
A golden circlet and a knightly sword,
Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won
The golden circlet, for himself the sword.
And there were those who knew him near
the King,
And promised for him; and Arthur made
him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of the
Isles —
But lately come to his inheritance,
And lord of many a barren isle was he —
Riding at noon, a day or twain before,
Across the forest call'd of Dean, to find²⁰
Caerleon and the King, had felt the sun
Beat like a strong knight on his helm and
reel'd
Almost to falling from his horse, but saw
Near him a mound of even-sloping side

Whereon a hundred stately beeches grew,
And here and there great hollies under
them;

But for a mile all round was open space
And fern and heath. And slowly Pelleas
drew

To that dim day, then, binding his good
horse

To a tree, cast himself down; and as he
lay 30

At random looking over the brown earth
Thro' that green-glooming twilight of the
grove,

It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern without
Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,
So that his eyes were dazzled looking at
it.

Then o'er it crost the dimness of a cloud
Floating, and once the shadow of a bird
Flying, and then a fawn; and his eyes
closed.

And since he loved all maidens, but no
maid

In special, half - awake he whisper'd:
'Where?' 40

O, where? I love thee, tho' I know thee
not.

For fair thou art and pure as Guinevere,
And I will make thee with my spear and
sword

As famous — O my Queen, my Guinevere,
For I will be thine Arthur when we meet.'

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of talk
And laughter at the limit of the wood,
And glancing thro' the hoary boles, he saw,
Strange as to some old prophet might have
seem'd

A vision hovering on a sea of fire, 50
Damsels in divers colors like the cloud
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them
On horses, and the horses richly trapt
Breast-high in that bright line of bracken
stood;

And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,
And one was pointing this way and one
that,

Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,
And loosed his horse, and led him to the
light.

There she that seem'd the chief among
them said:

'In happy time behold our pilot-star! 60

Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we ride,
Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the knights
There at Caerleon, but have lost our way.
To right? to left? straight forward? back
again?

Which? tell us quickly.'

Pelleas gazing thought,
'Is Guinevere herself so beautiful?'
For large her violet eyes look'd, and her
bloom

A rosy dawn kindled in stainless heavens,
And round her limbs, mature in woman-
hood;

And slender was her hand and small her
shape; 70

And but for those large eyes, the haunts of
scorn,

She might have seem'd a toy to trifle with,
And pass and care no more. But while he
gazed

The beauty of her flesh abash'd the boy,
As tho' it were the beauty of her soul;
For as the base man, judging of the good,
Puts his own baseness in him by default
Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend
All the young beauty of his own soul to

hers, 79
Believing her, and when she spake to him
Stammer'd, and could not make her a re-
ply.

For out of the waste islands had he come,
Where saving his own sisters he had
known

Scarce any but the women of his isles,
Rough wives, that laugh'd and scream'd
against the gulls,
Makers of nets, and living from the sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the lady
round

And look'd upon her people; and, as when
A stone is flung into some sleeping tarn
The circle widens till it lip the marge, 90
Spread the slow smile thro' all her com-
pany.

Three knights were thereamong, and they
too smiled,

Scorning him; for the lady was Ettarre,
And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said: 'O wild and of the
woods,
Knowest thou not the fashion of our
speech?

Or have the Heavens but given thee a fair
face,
Lacking a tongue ?'

'O damsel,' answer'd he,
'I woke from dreams, and coming out of
gloom
Was dazzled by the sudden light, and
crave
Pardon; but will ye to Caerleon ? I
Go likewise; shall I lead you to the King ?'

'Lead then,' she said; and thro' the
woods they went.

And while they rode, the meaning in his
eyes,

His tenderness of manner, and chaste awe,
His broken utterances and bashfulness,
Were all a burthen to her, and in her heart
She mutter'd, 'I have lighted on a fool,
Raw, yet so stale !' But since her mind
was bent

On hearing, after trumpet blown, her name
And title, 'Queen of Beauty,' in the lists
Cried — and beholding him so strong she
thought

That peradventure he will fight for me,
And win the circlet — therefore flatter'd
him,

Being so gracious that he wellnigh deem'd
His wish by hers was echo'd; and her
knights

And all her damsels too were gracious to
him,

For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd
Caerleon, ere they past to lodging, she,
Taking his hand, 'O the strong hand,' she
said,

'See ! look at mine ! but wilt thou fight for
me,

And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,
That I may love thee ?'

Then his helpless heart
Leapt, and he cried, 'Ay ! wilt thou if I
win ?'

'Ay, that will I,' she answer'd, and she
laugh'd,

And straitly nipt the hand, and flung it
from her;

Then glanced askew at those three knights
of hers,

Till all her ladies laugh'd along with her.

'O happy world,' thought Pelleas, 'all,
meseems,

Are happy; I the happiest of them all !'
Nor slept that night for pleasure in his
blood,

And green wood-ways, and eyes among the
leaves;

Then being on the morrow knighted, sware
To love one only. And as he came away,
The men who met him rounded on their
heels

And wonder'd after him, because his face
Shone like the countenance of a priest of
old

Against the flame about a sacrifice
Kindled by fire from heaven; so glad was he.

Then Arthur made vast hanquets, and
strange knights

From the four winds came in; and each
one sat,

Tho' served with choice from air, land,
stream, and sea,

Oft in mid-banquet measuring with his
eyes

His neighbor's make and might; and Pel-
leas look'd

Noble among the noble, for he dream'd
His lady loved him, and he knew himself
Loved of the King; and him his new-made
knight

Worshipt, whose lightest whisper moved
him more

Than all the ranged reasons of the world.

Then blush'd and brake the morning of
the jousts,

And this was call'd 'The Tournament of
Youth;'

For Arthur, loving his young knight, with-
held

His older and his mightier from the lists,
That Pelleas might obtain his lady's love,
According to her promise, and remain
Lord of the tourney. And Arthur had the

jousts

Down in the flat field by the shore of Usk
Holden; the gilded parapets were crown'd
With faces, and the great tower fill'd with
eyes

Up to the summit, and the trumpets blew.
There all day long Sir Pelleas kept the
field

With honor; so by that strong hand of his
The sword and golden circlet were achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved; the
 heat
 Of pride and glory fired her face, her eye
 Sparkled; she caught the circlet from his
 lance,
 And there before the people crown'd her-
 self.
 So for the last time she was gracious to
 him.

Then at Caerleon for a space — her look
 Bright for all others, cloudier on her
 knight —¹⁷⁰
 Linger'd Ettarre; and, seeing Pelleas droop,
 Said Guinevere, 'We marvel at thee much,
 O damsel, wearing this unsunny face
 To him who won thee glory!' And she
 said,
 'Had ye not held your Lancelot in your
 bower,
 My Queen, he had not won.' Whereat the
 Queen,
 As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,
 Glanced down upon her, turn'd and went
 her way.

But after, when her damsels, and her-
 self,
 And those three knights all set their faces
 home,¹⁸⁰
 Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw him
 cried:
 'Damsels — and yet I should be shamed to
 say it —
 I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him back
 Among yourselves. Would rather that we
 had
 Some rough old knight who knew the
 worldly way,
 Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride
 And jest with! Take him to you, keep
 him off,
 And pamper him with papmeat, if ye will,
 Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,
 Such as the wholesome mothers tell their
 boys.¹⁹⁰
 Nay, should ye try him with a merry one
 To find his mettle, good; and if he fly us,
 Small matter! let him.' This her damsels
 heard,
 And, mindful of her small and cruel hand,
 They, closing round him thro' the journey
 home,
 Acted her hest, and always from her side
 Restrain'd him with all manner of device,

So that he could not come to speech with
 her.
 And when she gain'd her castle, upsprang
 the bridge,
 Down rang the grate of iron thro' the
 groove,²⁰⁰
 And he was left alone in open field.

'These be the ways of ladies,' Pelleas
 thought,
 'To those who love them, trials of our
 faith.
 Yea, let her prove me to the uttermost,
 For loyal to the uttermost am I.'
 So made his moan, and, darkness falling,
 sought
 A priory not far off, there lodged, but rose
 With morning every day, and, moist or
 dry,
 Full-arm'd upon his charger all day long
 Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to
 him.²¹⁰

And this persistence turn'd her scorn to
 wrath.
 Then, calling her three knights, she charged
 them, 'Out!
 And drive him from the walls.' And out
 they came,
 But Pelleas overthrew them as they dash'd
 Against him one by one; and these return'd,
 But still he kept his watch beneath the
 wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate; and
 once,
 A week beyond, while walking on the walls
 With her three knights, she pointed down-
 ward, 'Look,
 He haunts me — I cannot breathe — be-
 sieges me!²²⁰
 Down! strike him! put my hate into your
 strokes,
 And drive him from my walls.' And down
 they went,
 And Pelleas overthrew them one by one;
 And from the tower above him cried Et-
 tarre,
 'Bind him, and bring him in.'
 He heard her voice;
 Then let the strong hand, which had over-
 thrown
 Her minion-knights, by those he overthrew
 Be bounden straight, and so they brought
 him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre, the
 sight ²²⁹
 Of her rich beauty made him at one glance
 More bondsman in his heart than in his
 bonds.
 Yet with good cheer he spake: 'Behold
 me, lady,
 A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will;
 And if thou keep me in thy donjon here,
 Content am I so that I see thy face
 But once a day; for I have sworn my vows,
 And thou hast given thy promise, and I
 know
 That all these pains are trials of my faith,
 And that thyself, when thou hast seen me
 strain'd
 And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length ²⁴⁰
 Yield me thy love and know me for thy
 knight.'

Then she began to rail so bitterly,
 With all her damsels, he was stricken
 mute,
 But, when she mock'd his vows and the
 great King,
 Lighted on words: 'For pity of thine own
 self,
 Peace, lady, peace; is he not thine and
 mine?'
 'Thou fool,' she said, 'I never heard his
 voice
 But long'd to break away. Unbind him
 now,
 And thrust him out of doors; for save he
 be
 Fool to the midmost marrow of his bones,
 He will return no more.' And those, her
 three, ²⁵¹
 Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him
 from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond, again
 She call'd them, saying: 'There he watches
 yet,
 There like a dog before his master's door!
 Kick'd, he returns; do ye not hate him,
 ye?
 Ye know yourselves; how can ye bide at
 peace,
 Affronted with his fulsome innocence?
 Are ye but creatures of the board and bed,
 No men to strike? Fall on him all at
 once, ²⁶⁰
 And if ye slay him I reckon not; if ye fail,
 Give ye the slave mine order to be bound,

Bind him as heretofore, and bring him
 in.
 It may be ye shall slay him in his bonds.'

She spake, and at her will they couch'd
 their spears,
 Three against one; and Gawain passing by,
 Bound upon solitary adventure, saw
 Low down beneath the shadow of those
 towers
 A villainy, three to one; and thro' his
 heart
 The fire of honor and all noble deeds ²⁷⁰
 Flash'd, and he call'd, 'I strike upon thy
 side —
 The caitiffs!' 'Nay,' said Pelleas, 'but
 forbear;
 He needs no aid who doth his lady's will.'

So Gawain, looking at the villainy done,
 Forbore, but in his heat and eagerness
 Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog, with-
 held
 A moment from the vermin that he sees
 Before him, shivers ere he springs and
 kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to
 three;
 And they rose up, and bound, and brought
 him in. ²⁸⁰
 Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,
 burn'd
 Full on her knights in many an evil name
 Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten
 hound:
 'Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit to
 touch,
 Far less to bind, your victor, and thrust
 him out,
 And let who will release him from his
 bonds.
 And if he comes again' — there she brake
 short;
 And Pelleas answer'd: 'Lady, for indeed
 I loved you and I deem'd you beautiful,
 I cannot brook to see your beauty marr'd
 Thro' evil spite; and if ye love me not, ²⁹¹
 I cannot bear to dream you so forsworn.
 I had liefer ye were worthy of my love
 Than to be loved again of you — fare-
 well.
 And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my
 love,
 Vex not yourself; ye will not see me more.'

While thus he spake, she gazed upon the
 man
 Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds, and
 thought:
 'Why have I push'd him from me? this
 man loves,
 If love there be; yet him I loved not.
 Why?
 I deem'd him fool? yea, so? or that in
 him
 A something — was it nobler than my-
 self? —
 Seem'd my reproach? He is not of my
 kind.
 He could not love me, did he know me
 well.
 Nay, let him go — and quickly.' And her
 knights
 Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden out
 of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed him
 from his bounds,
 And flung them o'er the walls; and after-
 ward,
 Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's rag,
 'Faith of my body,' he said, 'and art thou
 not —
 Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur
 made
 Knight of his table; yea, and he that won
 The circlet? wherefore hast thou so de-
 famed
 Thy brotherhood in me and all the rest
 As let these caitiffs on thee work their
 will?'

And Pelleas answer'd: 'O, their wills are
 hers
 For whom I won the circlet; and mine,
 hers,
 Thus to be bounden, so to see her face,
 Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mockery
 now,
 Other than when I found her in the woods;
 And tho' she hath me bounden but in spite,
 And all to flout me, when they bring me in,
 Let me be bounden, I shall see her face;
 Else must I die thro' mine unhappiness.'

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho' in
 scorn:
 'Why, let my lady bind me if she will,
 And let my lady beat me if she will;
 But an she send her delegate to thrall

These fighting hands of mine — Christ kill
 me then
 But I will slice him handless by the wrist,
 And let my lady sear the stump for him,
 Howl as he may! But hold me for your
 friend.
 Come, ye know nothing; here I pledge my
 troth,
 Yea, by the honor of the Table Round,
 I will be leal to thee and work thy work,
 And tame thy jailing princess to thine
 hand.
 Lend me thine horse and arms, and I will say
 That I have slain thee. She will let me in
 To hear the manner of thy fight and fall;
 Then, when I come within her counsels,
 then
 From prime to vespers will I chant thy
 praise
 As prouest knight and truest lover, more
 Than any have sung thee living, till she
 long
 To have thee back in lusty life again,
 Not to be bound, save by white bonds and
 warm,
 Dearer than freedom. Wherefore now thy
 horse
 And armor; let me go; be comforted.
 Give me three days to melt her fancy, and
 hope
 The third night hence will bring thee news
 of gold.'

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all his
 arms,
 Saving the goodly sword, his prize, and
 took
 Gawain's, and said, 'Betray me not, but
 help —
 Art thou not he whom men call light-of-
 love?'

'Ay,' said Gawain, 'for women be so
 light;'
 Then bounded forward to the castle walls,
 And raised a hугle hanging from his neck,
 And winded it, and that so musically
 That all the old echoes hidden in the wall
 Rang out like hollow woods at hunting-
 tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the tower;
 'Avaunt,' they cried, 'our lady loves thee
 not!'
 But Gawain lifting up his vizor said:

'Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's court,
And I have slain this Pelleas whom ye hate.
Behold his horse and armor. Open gates,
And I will make you merry.'

And down they ran,
Her damsels, crying to their lady, 'Lo!
Pelleas is dead—he told us—he that
hath
His horse and armor; will ye let him in?
He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of the
court,
Sir Gawain—there he waits below the
wall,
Blowing his bugle as who should say him
nay.'

And so, leave given, straight on thro'
open door
Rode Gawain, whom she greeted courte-
ously.
'Dead, is it so?' she ask'd. 'Ay, ay,'
said he,
'And oft in dying cried upon your name.'
'Pity on him,' she answer'd, 'a good
knight,
But never let me bide one hour at peace.'
'Ay,' thought Gawain, 'and you be fair
enow;
But I to your dead man have given my
troth,
That whom ye loathe, him will I make you
love.'

So those three days, aimless about the
land,
Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering
Waited, until the third night brought a
moon
With promise of large light on woods and
ways.

Hot was the night and silent; but a
sound
Of Gawain ever coming, and this lay—
Which Pelleas had heard sung before the
Queen,
And seen her sadden listening—vext his
heart,
And marr'd his rest—'A worm within the
rose.'

'A rose, but one, none other rose had I,
A rose, one rose, and this was wondrous fair,
One rose, a rose that gladden'd earth and sky,

One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all mine
air—
I cared not for the thorns; the thorns were
there.

'One rose, a rose to gather by and by,
One rose, a rose, to gather and to wear,
No rose but one—what other rose had I?
One rose, my rose; a rose that will not die,—
He dies who loves it,—if the worm be there.'

This tender rhyme, and evermore the
doubt,
'Why lingers Gawain with his golden
news?'
So shook him that he could not rest, but
rode
Ere midnight to her walls, and bound his
horse
Hard by the gates. Wide open were the
gates,
And no watch kept; and in thro' these he
past,
And heard but his own steps, and his own
heart
Beating, for nothing moved but his own self
And his own shadow. Then he crost the
court,
And spied not any light in hall or bower,
But saw the postern portal also wide,
Yawning; and up a slope of garden,
Of roses white and red, and brambles mixt
And overgrowing them, went on, and found,
Here too, all hush'd below the mellow
moon,
Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave
Came lightening downward, and so spilt
itself
Among the roses and was lost again.

Then was he ware of three pavilions
rear'd
Above the bushes, gilden-peakt. In one,
Red after revel, droned her lurdane
knights
Slumbering, and their three squires across
their feet;
In one, their malice on the placid lip
Frozen by sweet sleep, four of her damsels
lay;
And in the third, the circlet of the jousts
Bound on her brow, were Gawain and Et-
tarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro' the leaf
To find a nest and feels a snake, he drew;

Back, as a coward slinks from what he fears
 To cope with, or a traitor proven, or hound
 Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame ⁴³¹
 Creep with his shadow thro' the court again,
 Fingering at his sword-handle until he stood
 There on the castle-bridge once more, and thought,
 'I will go back, and slay them where they lie.'

And so went back, and seeing them yet in sleep
 Said, 'Ye, that so dishallow the holy sleep,
 Your sleep is death, and drew the sword,
 and thought,
 'What! slay a sleeping knight? the King
 hath bound ⁴³⁹
 And sworn me to this brotherhood;' again,
 'Alas that ever a knight should be so false!'
 Then turn'd, and so return'd, and groaning laid
 The naked sword athwart their naked throats,
 There left it, and them sleeping; and she lay,
 The circlet of the tourney round her brows,
 And the sword of the tourney across her throat.

And forth he past, and mounting on his horse
 Stared at her towers that, larger than themselves
 In their own darkness, throng'd into the moon;
 Then crush'd the saddle with his thighs, and clench'd ⁴⁵⁰
 His hands, and madden'd with himself and moan'd:

'Would they have risen against me in their blood
 At the last day? I might have answer'd them
 Even before high God. O towers so strong,
 Huge, solid, would that even while I gaze
 The crack of earthquake shivering to your base
 Split you, and hell burst up your harlot roofs
 Bellowing, and char'd you thro' and thro' within,

Black as the harlot's heart — hollow as a skull!
 Let the fierce east scream thro' your eye-let-
 holes, ⁴⁶⁰
 And whirl the dust of harlots round and round
 In dung and nettles! hiss, snake — I saw him there —
 Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell! Who yells
 Here in the still sweet summer night but I —
 I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd her fool?
 Fool, beast — he, she, or I? myself most fool;
 Beast too, as lacking human wit — disgraced,
 Dishonor'd all for trial of true love —
 Love? — we he all alike; only the King
 Hath made us fools and liars. O noble vows! ⁴⁷⁰
 O great and sane and simple race of brutes
 That own no lust because they have no law!
 For why should I have loved her to my shame?
 I loathe her, as I loved her to my shame.
 I never loved her, I but lusted for her —
 Away! —

He dash'd the rowel into his horse,
 And bounded forth and vanish'd thro' the night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch on her throat,
 Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd herself
 To Gawain: 'Liar, for thou hast not slain
 This Pelleas! here he stood, and might have slain ⁴⁸¹
 Me and thyself.' And he that tells the tale
 Says that her ever-veering fancy turn'd
 To Pelleas, as the one true knight on earth
 And only lover; and thro' her love her life
 Wasted and pined, desiring him in vain.

But he by wild and way, for half the night,
 And over hard and soft, striking the sod
 From out the soft, the spark from off the hard,
 Rode till the star above the wakening sun,
 Beside that tower where Percivale was cowl'd, ⁴⁹¹

Glanced from the rosy forehead of the
dawn.

For so the words were flash'd into his
heart

He knew not whence or wherefore: 'O
sweet star,

Pure on the virgin forehead of the dawn !'
And there he would have wept, but felt his
eyes

Harder and drier than a fountain bed
In summer. Thither came the village girls
And linger'd talking, and they come no
more

Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it from
the heights ⁵⁰⁰

Again with living waters in the change
Of seasons. Hard his eyes, harder his heart
Seem'd; but so weary were his limbs that
he,

Gasping, 'Of Arthur's hall am I, but here,
Here let me rest and die,' cast himself
down,

And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep; so
lay,

Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain fired
The hall of Merlin, and the morning star
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame, and
fell.

He woke, and being ware of some one
nigh, ⁵¹⁰

Sent hands upon him, as to tear him, crying,
'False ! and I held thee pure as Guine-
vere.'

But Percivale stood near him and replied,
'Am I but false as Guinevere is pure ?
Or art thou mazed with dreams ? or being
one

Of our free-spoken Table hast not heard
That Lancelot' — there he check'd himself
and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as with one
Who gets a wound in battle, and the sword
That made it plunges thro' the wound again,
And pricks it deeper; and he shrank and
wail'd, ⁵²¹

'Is the Queen false ?' and Percivale was
mute.

'Have any of our Round Table held their
vows ?'

And Percivale made answer not a word.
'Is the King true ?' 'The King !' said
Percivale.

'Why, then let men couple at once with
wolves.

What ! art thou mad ?'

But Pelleas, leaping up,
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his horse
And fled. Small pity upon his horse had he,
Or on himself, or any, and when he met ⁵³⁰
A cripple, one that held a hand for alms —
Hunch'd as he was, and like an old dwarf-
elm

That turns its back on the salt blast, the boy
Paused not, but overrode him, shouting,
'False,

And false with Gawain !' and so left him
bruised

And batter'd, and fled on, and hill and
wood

Went ever streaming by him till the gloom
That follows on the turning of the world
Darken'd the common path. He twitch'd
the reins,

And made his beast, that better knew it,
swerve ⁵⁴⁰

Now off it and now on; but when he saw
High up in heaven the hall that Merlin
built,

Blackening against the dead-green stripes
of even,

'Black nest of rats,' he groan'd, 'ye build
too high.'

Not long thereafter from the city gates
Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,
Warm with a gracious parting from the
Queen,

Peace at his heart, and gazing at a star
And marvelling what it was; on whom the
boy,

Across the silent seeded meadow-grass
Borne, clash'd; and Lancelot, saying,

'What name hast thou ⁵⁵¹
That ridest here so blindly and so hard ?'

'No name, no name,' he shouted, 'a scourge
am I

To lash the treasours of the Table Round.'

'Yea, but thy name ?' 'I have many
names,' he cried:

'I am wrath and shame and hate and evil
fame,

And like a poisonous wind I pass to blast
And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the
Queen.'

'First over me,' said Lancelot, 'shalt thou
pass.'

'Fight therefore,' yell'd the youth, and
 either knight ⁵⁶⁰
 Drew back a space, and when they closed,
 at once
 The weary steed of Pelleas floundering
 flung
 His rider, who call'd out from the dark
 field,
 'Thou art false as hell; slay me, I have no
 sword.'
 Then Lancelot, 'Yea, between thy lips —
 and sharp;
 But here will I disedge it by thy death.'
 'Slay then,' he shriek'd, 'my will is to be
 slain,'
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the
 fallen,
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then
 spake:
 'Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say thy
 say.' ⁵⁷⁰

And Lancelot slowly rode his war-horse
 back
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief while
 Caught his unbroken limbs from the dark
 field,
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced that
 both
 Brake into hall together, worn and pale.
 There with her knights and dames was
 Guinevere.
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas, him
 Who had not greeted her, but cast himself
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing. 'Have
 ye fought?' ⁵⁸⁰
 She ask'd of Lancelot. 'Ay, my Queen,'
 he said.
 'And thou hast overthrown him?' 'Ay,
 my Queen.'
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, 'O young
 knight,
 Hath the great heart of knighthood in thee
 fail'd
 So far thou canst not bide, unfrowardly,
 A fall from *him*?' Then, for he answer'd
 not,
 'Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the
 Queen,
 May help them, loose thy tongue, and let
 me know.'
 But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce
 She quail'd; and he, hissing 'I have no
 sword,' ⁵⁹⁰

Sprang from the door into the dark. The
 Queen
 Look'd hard upon her lover, he on her,
 And each foresaw the dolorous day to be;
 And all talk died, as in a grove all song
 Beneath the shadow of some bird of prey.
 Then a long silence came upon the hall,
 And Modred thought, 'The time is hard at
 hand.'

THE LAST TOURNAMENT

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in his
 mood
 Had made mock-knight of Arthur's Table
 Round,
 At Camelot, high above the yellowing
 woods,
 Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall.
 And toward him from the hall, with harp
 in hand,
 And from the crown thereof a carcanet
 Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize
 Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,
 Came Tristram, saying, 'Why skip ye so,
 Sir Fool?'

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding once
 Far down beneath a winding wall of rock ¹¹
 Heard a child wail. A stump of oak half-
 dead,
 From roots like some black coil of carven
 snakes,
 Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro' mid
 air
 Bearing an eagle's nest; and thro' the tree
 Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro' the
 wind
 Pierced ever a child's cry; and crag and tree
 Sealing, Sir Lancelot from the perilous
 nest,
 This ruby necklace thrice around her neck,
 And all unscarr'd from beak or talon,
 brought ²⁰
 A maiden babe, which Arthur pitying took,
 Then gave it to his Queen to rear. The
 Queen,
 But coldly acquiescing, in her white arms
 Received, and after loved it tenderly,
 And named it Nestling; so forgot herself
 A moment, and her cares; till that young
 life
 Being smitten in mid heaven with mortal
 cold

Past from her, and in time the carcanet
Vext her with plaintive memories of the
child.

So she, delivering it to Arthur, said, ³⁰
'Take thou the jewels of this dead inno-
cence,
And make them, an thou wilt, a tourney-
prize.'

To whom the King: 'Peace to thine eagle-
borne
Dead nestling, and this honor after death,
Following thy will! but, O my Queen, I
muse

Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or zone
Those diamonds that I rescued from the
tarn,
And Lancelot won, methought, for thee to
wear.'

'Would rather you had let them fall,'
she cried,
'Plunge and be lost — ill-fated as they
were, ⁴⁰

A bitterness to me! — ye look amazed,
Not knowing they were lost as soon as
given —
Slid from my hands when I was leaning
out

Above the river — that unhappy child
Past in her barge; but rosier luck will go
With these rich jewels, seeing that they
came

Not from the skeleton of a brother-slayer,
But the sweet body of a maiden babe.
Perchance — who knows? — the purest of
thy knights ⁴⁹
May win them for the purest of my maids.'

She ended, and the cry of a great jousts
With trumpet-blowings ran on all the ways
From Camelot in among the faded fields
To furthest towers; and everywhere the
knights
Arm'd for a day of glory before the King.

But on the hither side of that loud morn
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage ribb'd
From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals, his
nose
Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one hand
off,
And one with shatter'd fingers dangling
lame, ⁶⁰
A churl, to whom indignantly the King:

'My churl, for whom Christ died, what
evil beast
Hath drawn his claws athwart thy face?
or fiend?
Man was it who marr'd heaven's image in
thee thus?'

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of
splinter'd teeth,
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with blunt
stump
Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said the
maim'd churl:

'He took them and he drave them to his
tower —

Some hold he was a table-knight of thine —
A hundred goodly ones — the Red Knight,
he — ⁷⁰

Lord, I was tending swine, and the Red
Knight

Brake in upon me and drave them to his
tower;

And when I call'd upon thy name as one
That doest right by gentle and by churl,
Maim'd me and maul'd, and would out-
right have slain,

Save that he sware me to a message, say-
ing:

"Tell thou the King and all his liars that I
Have founded my Round Table in the
North,

And whatsoever his own knights have sworn
My knights have sworn the counter to it —
and say ⁸⁰

My tower is full of harlots, like his court,
But mine are worthier, seeing they profess
To be none other than themselves — and
say

My knights are all adulterers like his own,
But mine are truer, seeing they profess
To be none other; and say his hour is come,
The heathen are upon him, his long lance
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw."

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the senes-
chal:

'Take thou my churl, and tend him curi-
ously ⁹⁰
Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be
whole.

The heathen — but that ever-climbing wave,
Hurl'd back again so often in empty foam,
Hath lain for years at rest — and rene-
gades,

Thieves, bandits, leavings of confusion,
whom
The wholesome realm is purged of other-
where,
Friends, thro' your manhood and your
fealty, — now
Make their last head like Satan in the
North.
My younger knights, new-made, in whom
your flower
Waits to be solid fruit of golden deeds, ¹⁰⁰
Move with me toward their quelling, which
achieved,
The loneliest ways are safe from shore to
shore.
But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my place
Enchair'd to-morrow, arbitrate the field;
For wherefore shouldst thou care to mingle
with it,
Only to yield my Queen her own again?
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent; is it
well?'

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd: 'It is
well;
Yet better if the King abide, and leave ¹⁰⁹
The leading of his younger knights to me.
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is well.'

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot follow'd
him,
And while they stood without the doors,
the King
Turn'd to him saying: 'Is it then so well?
Or mine the blame that oft I seem as he
Of whom was written, "A sound is in his
ears"?'
The foot that loiters, bidden go, — the
glance
That only seems half-loyal to command, —
A manner somewhat fallen from rever-
ence —
Or have I dream'd the bearing of our
knights ¹²⁰
Tells of a manhood ever less and lower?
Or whence the fear lest this my realm, up-
rear'd,
By noble deeds at one with noble vows,
From flat confusion and brute violences,
Reel back into the beast, and be no more?'

He spoke, and taking all his younger
knights,
Down the slope city rode, and sharply
turn'd

North by the gate. In her high bower the
Queen,
Working a tapestry, lifted up her head,
Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not that
she sigh'd. ¹³⁰
Then ran across her memory the strange
rhyme
Of hygone Merlin, 'Where is he who
knows?
From the great deep to the great deep he
goes.'

But when the morning of a tournament,
By these in earnest those in mockery call'd
The Tournament of the Dead Innocence,
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lancelot,
Round whose sick head all night, like birds
of prey,
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd, arose,
And down a streetway hung with folds of
pure ¹⁴⁰
White samite, and by fountains running
wine,
Where children sat in white with cups of
gold,
Moved to the lists, and there, with slow sad
steps
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd chair.

He glanced and saw the stately galleries,
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of their
Queen
White-robed in honor of the stainless child,
And some with scatter'd jewels, like a bank
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of
fire.
He look'd but once, and veil'd his eyes
again. ¹⁵⁰

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a
dream
To ears but half-awaked, then one low roll
Of autumn thunder, and the jousts began;
And ever the wind blew, and yellowing leaf,
And gloom and gleam, and shower and
shorn plume
Went down it. Sighing weariedly, as one
Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,
When all the goodlier guests are past
away,
Sat their great umpire looking o'er the
lists.
He saw the laws that ruled the tournament
Broken, but spake not; once, a knight cast
down ¹⁶¹

Before his throne of arbitration cursed
The dead babe and the follies of the King;
And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,
And show'd him, like a vermin in its hole,
Modred, a narrow face. Anon he heard
The voice that billow'd round the barriers
roar

An ocean-sounding welcome to one knight,
But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest, ¹⁶⁹
And armor'd all in forest green, whereon
There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,
And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,
With ever-scattering berries, and on shield
A spear, a harp, a bangle — Tristram — late
From over-seas in Brittany return'd,
And marriage with a princess of that
realm,

Isolt the White — Sir Tristram of the
Woods —

Whom Lancelot knew, had held sometime
with pain

His own against him, and now yearn'd to
shake

The burthen off his heart in one full shock
With Tristram even to death. His strong
hands gript ¹⁸¹

And dinted the gilt dragons right and
left,

Until he groan'd for wrath — so many of
those

That ware their ladies' colors on the casque
Drew from before Sir Tristram to the
bounds,

And there with gibes and flickering mock-
eries

Stood, while he mutter'd, 'Craven crests!
O shame!

What faith have these in whom they sware
to love?

The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

So Tristram won, and Lancelot gave, the
gems, ¹⁹⁰

Not speaking other word than, 'Hast thou
won?'

Art thou the purest, brother? See, the
hand

Wherewith thou takest this is red!' to
whom

Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's lam-
guorous mood,

Made answer: 'Ay, but wherefore toss me
this

Like a dry bone cast to some hungry
hound?

Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy. Strength
of heart

And might of limb, but mainly use and
skill,

Are winners in this pastime of our King.

My hand — belike the lance hath dript
upon it — ²⁰⁰

No blood of mine, I trow; but O chief
knight,

Right arm of Arthur in the battle-field,

Great brother, thou nor I have made the
world;

Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine.'

And Tristram round the gallery made
his horse

Caracole; then bow'd his homage, bluntly
saying,

'Fair damsels, each to him who worships
each

Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, behold
This day my Queen of Beauty is not here.'

And most of these were mute, some an-
ger'd, one ²¹⁰

Murmuring, 'All courtesy is dead,' and
one,

'The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt and
mantle clung,

And pettish cries awoke, and the wan day
Went glooming down in wet and wear-
iness;

But under her black brows a swarthy one
Laugh'd shrilly, crying: 'Praise the patient
saints,

Our one white day of Innocence hath past,
Tho' somewhat draggled at the skirt. So
be it.

The snowdrop only, flowering thro' the
year, ²²⁰

Would make the world as blank as winter-
tide.

Come — let us gladden their sad eyes, our
Queen's

And Lancelot's, at this night's solemnity
With all the kindlier colors of the field.'

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the
feast

Variouly gay; for he that tells the tale
Likend them, saying, as when an hour of
cold

Falls on the mountain in midsummer
snows,

And all the purple slopes of mountain
flowers
Pass under white, till the warm hour re-
turns ²³⁰
With veer of wind and all are flowers
again,
So dame and damsel cast the simple white,
And glowing in all colors, the live grass,
Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup, poppy,
glanced
About the revels, and with mirth so loud
Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the
Queen,
And wroth at Tristram and the lawless
jousts,
Brake up their sports, then slowly to her
bower ²³⁸
Parted, and in her bosom pain was lord.

And little Dagonet on the morrow morn,
High over all the yellowing autumn-tide,
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall.
Then Tristram saying, 'Why skip ye so,
Sir Fool?'

Wheel'd round on either heel, Dagonet re-
plied,
'Belike for lack of wiser company;
Or being fool, and seeing too much wit
Makes the world rotten, why, belike I skip
To know myself the wisest knight of all.'
'Ay, fool,' said Tristram, 'but 't is eating
dry

To dance without a catch, a roundelay ²⁵⁰
To dance to.' Then he twangled on his
harp,
And while he twangled little Dagonet
stood

Quiet as any water-sodden log
Stay'd in the wandering warble of a brook,
But when the twangling ended, skipt again;
And being ask'd, 'Why skipt ye not, Sir
Fool?'

Made answer, 'I had liefer twenty years
Skip to the broken music of my brains
Than any broken music thou canst make.'
Then Tristram, waiting for the quip to
come, ²⁶⁰
'Good now, what music have I broken,
fool?'

And little Dagonet, skipping, 'Arthur, the
King's;
For when thou playest that air with Queen
Isolt,
Thou makest broken music with thy bride,
Her daintier namesake down in Brittany —

And so thou breakest Arthur's music too.'
'Save for that broken music in thy brains,
Sir Fool,' said Tristram, 'I would break
thy head.

Fool, I came late, the heathen wars were
o'er,
The life had flown, we sware but by the
shell — ²⁷⁰

I am but a fool to reason with a fool —
Come, thou art crabb'd and sour; but lean
me down,

Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses' ears,
And harken if my music be not true.

"Free love — free field — we love but while
we may.

The woods are hush'd, their music is no more;
The leaf is dead, the yearning past away.
New leaf, new life — the days of frost are
o'er;

New life, new love, to suit the newer day;
New loves are sweet as those that went be-
fore. ²⁸⁰

Free love — free field — we love but while we
may."

'Ye might have moved slow-measure to
my tune,
Not stood stock-still. I made it in the
woods,
And heard it ring as true as tested gold.'

But Dagonet with one foot poised in his
hand:

'Friend, did ye mark that fountain yester-
day,
Made to run wine? — but this had run
itself

All out like a long life to a sour end —
And them that round it sat with golden
cups ²⁸⁹

To hand the wine to whosoever came —
The twelve small damosels white as Inno-
cence,

In honor of poor Innocence the babe,
Who left the gems which Innocence the
Queen

Lent to the King, and Innocence the King
Gave for a prize — and one of those white
slips

Handed her cup and piped, the pretty
one,

"Drink, drink, Sir Fool," and thereupon I
drank,

Spat — pish — the cup was gold, the draught
was mud.'

And Tristram: 'Was it muddier than
thy gibes?
Is all the laughter gone dead out of
thee? — ³⁰⁰
Not marking how the knighthood mock
thee, fool —
"Fear God: honor the King — his one
true knight —
Sole follower of the vows" — for here be
they
Who knew thee swine enow before I came,
Smuttier than blasted grain. But when the
King
Had made thee fool, thy vanity so shot
up
It frightened all free fool from out thy
heart;
Which left thee less than fool, and less
than swine,
A naked aught — yet swine I hold thee
still,
For I have flung thee pearls and find thee
swine.' ³¹⁰

And little Dagonet mincing with his
feet:
'Knight, an ye fling those rubies round my
neck
In lieu of hers, I'll hold thou hast some
touch
Of music, since I care not for thy pearls.
Swine? I have wallow'd, I have wash'd —
the world
Is flesh and shadow — I have had my
day.
The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind
Hath foul'd me — an I wallow'd, then I
wash'd —
I have had my day and my philosophies —
And thank the Lord I am King Arthur's
fool. ³²⁰
Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses, rams,
and geese
Troop'd round a Paynim harper once, who
thrumm'd
On such a wire as musically as thou
Some such fine song — but never a king's
fool.'

And Tristram, 'Then were swine, goats,
asses, geese
The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim bard
Had such a mastery of his mystery
That he could harp his wife up out of
hell.'

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball of his
foot,
'And whither harp'st thou thine? down!
and thyself ³³⁰
Down! and two more; a helpful harper
thou,
That harpest downward! Dost thou know
the star
We call the Harp of Arthur up in heaven?'

And Tristram, 'Ay, Sir Fool, for when
our King
Was victor wellnigh day by day, the
knights,
Glorying in each new glory, set his name
High on all hills and in the signs of
heaven.'

And Dagonet answer'd: 'Ay, and when
the land
Was freed, and the Queen false, ye set
yourself
To babble about him, all to show your
wit — ³⁴⁰
And whether he were king by courtesy,
Or king by right — and so went harping
down
The black king's highway, got so far and
grew
So witty that ye play'd at ducks and
drakes
With Arthur's vows on the great lake of fire.
Tuwhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the
star?'

'Nay, fool,' said Tristram, 'not in open
day.'
And Dagonet: 'Nay, nor will; I see it and
hear.
It makes a silent music up in heaven,
And I and Arthur and the angels hear, ³⁵⁰
And then we skip.' 'Lo, fool,' he said,
'ye talk
Fool's treason; is the King thy brother
fool?'
Then little Dagonet clapt his hands and
shrill'd:
'Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of
fools!
Conceits himself as God that he can make
Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles, milk
From burning spurge, honey from hornet-
combs,
And men from beasts — Long live the king
of fools!'

And down the city Dagonet danced
away;
But thro' the slowly-mellowing avenues 360
And solitary passes of the wood
Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and the
west.
Before him fled the face of Queen Isolt
With ruby-circled neck, but evermore
Past, as a rustle or twitter in the wood
Made dull his inner, keen his outer eye
For all that walk'd, or crept, or perch'd, or
flew.
Anon the face, as, when a gust hath blown,
Unruffling waters re-collect the shape
Of one that in them sees himself, re-
turn'd; 370
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,
Or even a fallen feather, vanish'd again.

So on for all that day from lawn to lawn
Thro' many a league-long bower he rode.
At length
A lodge of intertwisted beechen-boughs,
Furze - cramm'd and bracken - roof'd, the
which himself
Built for a summer day with Queen Isolt
Against a shower, dark in the golden grove
Appearing, sent his fancy back to where
She lived a moon in that low lodge with
him; 380
Till Mark her lord had past, the Cornish
King,
With six or seven, when Tristram was
away,
And snatch'd her thence, yet, dreading
worse than shame
Her warrior Tristram, spake not any word,
But bode his hour, devising wretchedness.

And now that desert lodge to Tristram
lookt
So sweet that, halting, in he past and sank
Down on a drift of foliage random-blown;
But could not rest for musing how to
smooth 389
And sleek his marriage over to the queen.
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all
The tonguesters of the court she had not
heard.
But then what folly had sent him over-seas
After she left him lonely here? a name?
Was it the name of one in Brittany,
Isolt, the daughter of the king? 'Isolt
Of the White Hands' they call'd her: the
sweet name

Allured him first, and then the maid her-
self,
Who served him well with those white
hands of hers,
And loved him well, until himself had
thought 400
He loved her also, wedded easily,
But left her all as easily, and return'd.
The black-blue Irish hair and Irish eyes
Had drawn him home — what marvel?
then he laid
His brows upon the drifted leaf and
dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of Brittany
Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,
And show'd them both the ruby-chain, and
both
Began to struggle for it, till his queen
Graspt it so hard that all her hand was
red. 410
Then cried the Breton, 'Look, her hand is
red!
These be no rubies, this is frozen blood,
And melts within her hand — her hand is hot
With ill desires, but this I gave thee, look,
Is all as cool and white as any flower.'
Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and then
A whimpering of the spirit of the child,
Because the twain had spoil'd her carcanet.

He dream'd; but Arthur with a hundred
spears
Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed, 420
And many a glancing splash and sawlowsy
isle,
The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty marsh
Glared on a huge machicolated tower
That stood with open doors, whereout was
roll'd
A roar of riot, as from men secure
Amid their marshes, ruffians at their ease
Among their harlot-brides, an evil song.
'Lo there,' said one of Arthur's youth, for
there,
High on a grim dead tree before the tower,
A goodly brother of the Table Round 430
Swung by the neck; and on the boughs a
shield
Showing a shower of blood in a field noir,
And therebeside a horn, inflamed the
knights
At that dishonor done the gilded spur,
Till each would clash the shield and blow
the horn.

But Arthur waved them back. Alone he rode.

Then at the dry harsh roar of the great horn,

That sent the face of all the marsh aloft
An ever upward-rushing storm and cloud
Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight
heard, and all, ⁴⁴⁰

Even to tipmost lance and topmost helm,
In blood-red armor sallying, howl'd to the King:

'The teeth of Hell flay bare and gnash thee flat! —

Lo! art thou not that eunuch-hearted king
Who fain had clipt free manhood from the world —

The woman-worshipper? Yea, God's curse, and I!

Slain was the brother of my paramour
By a knight of thine, and I that heard her whine

And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,
Sware by the scorpion-worm that twists in hell ⁴⁵⁰

And stings itself to everlasting death,
To hang whatever knight of thine I fought
And tumbled. Art thou king? — Look to thy life!'

He ended. Arthur knew the voice; the face

Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the name
Went wandering somewhere darkling in his mind.

And Arthur deigu'd not use of word or sword,

But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd from horse

To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,
Down from the causeway heavily to the swamp ⁴⁶⁰

Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching wave,

Heard in dead night along that table-shore,
Drops flat, and after the great waters break
Whitening for half a league, and thin themselves,

Far over sands marbled with moon and cloud,

From less and less to nothing; thus he fell
Head-heavy. Then the knights, who watch'd him, roar'd

And shouted and leapt down upon the fallen,

There trampled out his face from being known,

And sank his head in mire, and slimed themselves; ⁴⁷⁰

Nor heard the King for their own cries, but sprang

Thro' open doors, and swording right and left

Men, women, on their sodden faces, hurl'd
The tables over and the wines, and slew.

Till all the rafters rang with woman-yells,
And all the pavement stream'd with massacre.

Then, echoing yell with yell, they fired the tower,

Which half that autumn night, like the live North,

Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and Alcor,
Made all above it, and a hundred meres

About it, as the water Moab saw ⁴⁸¹

Come round by the east, and ont beyond them flush'd

The long low dune and lazy-plunging sea.

So all the ways were safe from shore to shore,
But in the heart of Arthur pain was lord.

Then, out of Tristram waking, the red dream

Fled with a shout, and that low lodge return'd,

Mid-forest, and the wind among the boughs.
He whistled his good war-horse left to graze ⁴⁸⁹

Among the forest greens, vaulted upon him,
And rode beneath an ever-showering leaf,

Till one lone woman, weeping near a cross,
Stay'd him. 'Why weep ye?' 'Lord,'

she said, 'my man

Hath left me or is dead;' whereon he thought —

'What, if she hate me now? I would not this.

What, if she love me still? I would not that.

I know not what I would' — but said to her,
'Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate return,

He find thy favor changed and love thee not' —

Then pressing day by day thro' Lyonnesse
Last in a roky hollow, belling, heard ⁵⁰¹

The hounds of Mark, and felt the goodly hounds

Yelp at his heart, but, turning, past and
gain'd
Tintagil, half in sea and high on land,
A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,
A low sea-sunset glorying round her hair
And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the queen.
And when she heard the feet of Tristram
grind
The spiring stone that scaled about her
tower,
Flush'd, started, met him at the doors, and
there 510
Belted his body with her white embrace,
Crying aloud: 'Not Mark — not Mark, my
soul !

The footstep flutter'd me at first — not he !
Catlike thro' his own castle steals my Mark,
But warrior-wise thou stridest thro' his
halls
Who hates thee, as I him — even to the
death.

My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark
Quicken within me, and knew that thou
wert nigh.'

To whom Sir Tristram smiling, 'I am here;
Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine.'

And drawing somewhat backward she
replied: 521

'Can he be wrong'd who is not even his
own,

But save for dread of thee had beaten me,
Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me some-
how — Mark ?

What rights are his that dare not strike for
them ?

Not lift a hand — not, tho' he found me
thus !

But harken ! have ye met him ? hence he
went

To-day for three days' hunting — as he
said —

And so returns belike within an hour.

Mark's way, my soul ! — but eat not thou
with Mark, 530

Because he hates thee even more than fears,
Nor drink; and when thou passest any
wood

Close vizer, lest an arrow from the bush
Should leave me all alone with Mark and
hell.

My God, the measure of my hate for Mark
Is as the measure of my love for thee !'

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one by
love,
Drain'd of her force, again she sat, and
spake
To Tristram, as he knelt before her, say-
ing:

'O hunter, and O blower of the horn, 540
Harper, and thou hast been a rover too,
For, ere I mated with my shambling king,
Ye twain had fallen out about the bride
Of one — his name is out of me — the prize,
If prize she were — what marvel ? — she
could see —

Thine, friend; and ever since my craven
seeks

To wreck thee villainously — but, O Sir
Knight,

What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd to
last ?'

And Tristram, 'Last to my Queen Para-
mount, 549

Here now to my queen paramount of love
And loveliness — ay, lovelier than when
first

Her light feet fell on our rough Lyonesse,
Sailing from Ireland.'

Softly laugh'd Isolt:
'Flatter me not, for hath not our great
Queen

My dole of beauty trebled ?' and he said:
'Her beauty is her beauty, and thine thine,
And thine is more to me — soft, gracious,
kind —

Save when thy Mark is kindled on thy lips
Most gracious; but she, haughty, even to
him, 559

Lancelot; for I have seen him wan enow
To make one doubt if ever the great Queen
Have yielded him her love.'

To whom Isolt:
'Ah, then, false hunter and false harper,
thou

Who brakest thro' the scruple of my bond,
Calling me thy white hind, and saying to me
That Guinevere had sinn'd against the
highest,

And I — misyoked with such a want of
man —

That I could hardly sin against the lowest.'

He answer'd: 'O my soul, be comforted !
If this be sweet, to sin in leading-strings,

If here be comfort, and if ours be sin, ⁵⁷¹
 Crown'd warrant had we for the crowning
 sin
 That made us happy; but how ye greet me
 — fear
 And fault and doubt — no word of that
 fond tale —
 Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet mem-
 ories
 Of Tristram in that year he was away.'

And, saddening on the sudden, spake
 Isolt:
 'I had forgotten all in my strong joy
 To see thee — yearnings? — ay! for, hour
 by hour,
 Here in the never-ended afternoon, ⁵⁸⁰
 O, sweeter than all memories of thee,
 Deeper than any yearnings after thee
 Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-smiling
 seas,
 Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of Britain
 dash'd
 Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,
 Would that have chill'd her bride-kiss?
 Wedded her?
 Fought in her father's battles? wounded
 there?
 The King was all fulfill'd with grateful-
 ness,
 And she, my namesake of the hands, that
 heal'd
 Thy hurt and heart with unguent and ca-
 ress — ⁵⁹⁰
 Well — can I wish her any huger wrong
 Than having known thee? her too hast
 thou left
 To pine and waste in those sweet memories.
 O, were I not my Mark's, by whom all
 men
 Are noble, I should hate thee more than
 love.'

And Tristram, fondling her light hands,
 replied:
 'Grace, queen, for being loved; she loved
 me well.
 Did I love her? the name at least I loved.
 Isolt? — I fought his battles, for Isolt!
 The night was dark; the true star set.
 Isolt!
 Isolt!
 The name was ruler of the dark — Isolt?
 Care not for her! patient, and prayerful,
 meek,
 Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to God.'

And Isolt answer'd: 'Yea, and why not
 I?
 Mine is the larger need, who am not meek,
 Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell thee
 now.
 Here one black, mute midsummer night I
 sat,
 Lonely, but musing on thee, wondering
 where,
 Murmuring a light song I had heard thee
 sing,
 And once or twice I spake thy name aloud.
 Then flash'd a levin-brand; and near me
 stood, ⁶¹¹
 In fuming sulphur blue and green, a fiend —
 Mark's way to steal behind one in the
 dark —
 For there was Mark: "He has wedded
 her," he said,
 Not said, but hiss'd it; then this crown of
 towers
 So shook to such a roar of all the sky,
 That here in utter dark I swoon'd away,
 And woke again in utter dark, and cried,
 "I will flee hence and give myself to
 God" —
 And thou wert lying in thy new leman's
 arms.' ⁶²⁰

Then Tristram, ever dallying with her
 hand,
 'May God be with thee, sweet, when old
 and gray,
 And past desire!' a saying that anger'd
 her.
 "May God be with thee, sweet, when
 thou art old,
 And sweet no more to me!" I need Him
 now.
 For when had Lancelot utter'd aught so
 gross
 Even to the swineherd's malkin in the
 mast?
 The greater man the greater courtesy.
 Far other was the Tristram, Arthur's
 knight!
 But thou, thro' ever harrying thy wild
 beasts — ⁶³⁰
 Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a
 lance
 Becomes thee well — art grown wild beast
 thyself.
 How darest thou, if lover, push me even
 In fancy from thy side, and set me far
 In the gray distance, half a life away,

Her to be loved no more? Unsay it, nnswear!
 Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,
 Broken with Mark and hate and solitude,
 Thy marriage and mine own, that I should suck
 Lies like sweet wines. Lie to me; I believe.
 Will ye not lie? not swear, as there ye kneel,
 And solemnly as when ye sware to him,
 The man of men, our King — My God, the power
 Was once in vows when men believed the King!
 They lied not then who sware, and thro' their vows
 The King prevailing made his realm — I say,
 Swear to me thou wilt love me even when old,
 Gray-hair'd, and past desire, and in despair?

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up and down:
 'Vows! did you keep the vow you made to Mark
 More than I mine? Lied, say ye? Nay, but learnt,
 The vow that binds too strictly snaps itself —
 My knighthood taught me this — ay, being snapt —
 We run more counter to the soul thereof
 Than had we never sworn. I swear no more.
 I swore to the great King, and am forsworn.
 For once — even to the height — I honor'd him.
 "Man, is he man at all?" methought, when first
 I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and beheld
 That victor of the Pagan throned in hall —
 His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a brow
 Like hill-snow high in heaven, the steel-blue eyes,
 The golden beard that clothed his lips with light —
 Moreover, that weird legend of his birth,
 With Merlin's mystic babble about his end
 Amazed me; then, his foot was on a stool

Shaped as a dragon; he seem'd to me no man,
 But Michael trampling Satan; so I sware,
 Being amazed. But this went by — The vows!
 O, ay — the wholesome madness of an hour —
 They served their use, their time; for every knight
 Believed himself a greater than himself,
 And every follower eyed him as a God;
 Till he, being lifted up beyond himself,
 Did mightier deeds than otherwise he had done,
 And so the realm was made. But then their vows —
 First mainly thro' that sullyng of our Queen —
 Began to gall the knighthood, asking whence
 Had Arthur right to bind them to himself?
 Dropt down from heaven? wash'd up from ont the deep?
 They fail'd to trace him thro' the flesh and blood
 Of our old kings. Whence then? a doubtful lord
 To bind them by inviolable vows,
 Which flesh and blood perforce would violate;
 For feel this arm of mine — the tide within
 Red with free chase and heather-scented air,
 Pulsing full man. Can Arthur make me pure
 As any maiden child? lock up my tongue
 From uttering freely what I freely hear?
 Bind me to one? The wide world laughs at it.
 And worldling of the world am I, and know
 The parrmigan that whitens ere his hour
 Woos his own end; we are not angels here
 Nor shall be. Vows — I am woodman of the woods,
 And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale
 Mock them — my soul, we love but while we may;
 And therefore is my love so large for thee,
 Seeing it is not bounded save by love.'

Here ending, he moved toward her, and she said:
 'Good; an I turn'd away my love for thee

To some one thrice as courteous as thyself —
 For courtesy wins woman all as well
 As valor may, but he that closes both
 Is perfect, he is Lancelot — taller indeed,
 Rosier and comelier, thou — but say I loved
 This knightliest of all knights, and cast
 thee back
 Thine own small saw, “ We love but while
 we may,”
 Well then, what answer ?’

He that while she spake,
 Mindful of what he brought to adorn her
 with,
 The jewels, had let one finger lightly touch
 The warm white apple of her throat, re-
 plied,
 ‘ Press this a little closer, sweet, until —
 Come, I am hunger’d and half-anger’d —
 meat,
 Wine, wine — and I will love thee to the
 death,
 And out beyond into the dream to come.’

So then, when both were brought to full
 accord,
 She rose, and set before him all he will’d;
 And after these had comforted the blood
 With meats and wines, and satiated their
 hearts —
 Now talking of their woodland paradise,
 The deer, the dews, the fern, the founts,
 the lawns;
 Now mocking at the much ungainliness,
 And craven shifts, and long crane legs of
 Mark —
 Then Tristram laughing caught the barb
 and sang:

‘ Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that bend the
 brier!
 A star in heaven, a star within the mere!
 Ay, ay, O, ay — a star was my desire,
 And one was far apart and one was near.
 Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that bow the grass!
 And one was water and one star was fire,
 And one will ever shine and one will pass.
 Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that move the
 mere!’

Then in the light’s last glimmer Tris-
 tram show’d
 And swung the ruby carcanet. She cried,
 ‘ The collar of some Order, which our
 King

Hath newly founded, all for thee, my soul,
 For thee, to yield thee grace beyond thy
 peers.’

‘ Not so, my queen,’ he said, ‘ but the
 red fruit
 Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-heaven,
 And won by Tristram as a tourney-prize,
 And hither brought by Tristram for his
 last
 Love-offering and peace-offering unto thee.’

He spoke, he turn’d, then, flinging round
 her neck,
 Claspt it, and cried, ‘ Thine Order, O my
 queen!’
 But, while he bow’d to kiss the jewell’d
 throat,
 Out of the dark, just as the lips had
 touch’d,
 Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek —
 ‘ Mark’s way,’ said Mark, and clove him
 thro’ the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and while
 he climb’d,
 All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping
 gloom,
 The stairway to the hall, and look’d and
 saw
 The great Queen’s bower was dark, — about
 his feet
 A voice clung sobbing till he question’d
 it,
 ‘ What art thou?’ and the voice about his
 feet
 Sent up an answer, sobbing, ‘ I am thy
 fool,
 And I shall never make thee smile again.’

GUINEVERE

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court, and
 sat
 There in the holy house at Almesbury
 Weeping, none with her save a little maid,
 A novice. One low light betwixt them
 burn’d
 Blurr’d by the creeping mist, for all abroad,
 Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
 The white mist, like a face-cloth to the
 face,
 Clung to the dead earth, and the land was
 still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of
flight
Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast 10
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,
Ready to spring, waiting a chance. For this
He chill'd the popular praises of the King
With silent smiles of slow disparagement;
And tamper'd with the Lords of the White
Horse,
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left; and
sought
To make disruption in the Table Round
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds
Serving his traitorous end; and all his
aims
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot. 20

For thus it chanced one morn when all
the court,
Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd
the may,
Had been — their wont — a-maying and
return'd,
That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,
Climb'd to the high top of the garden-wall
To spy some secret scandal if he might,
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her
best
Enid and lissome Vivien, of her court
The wildest and the worst; and more than
this
He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by 30
Spied where he couch'd, and as the garden-
er's hand
Picks from the colewort a green cater-
pillar,
So from the high wall and the flowering
grove
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the
heel,
And cast him as a worm upon the way;
But when he knew the prince tho' marr'd
with dust,
He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,
Made such excuses as he might, and these
Full knightly without scorn. For in those
days
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in
scorn; 40
But, if a man were halt, or hunch'd, in
him
By those whom God had made full-limb'd
and tall,
Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,

And he was answer'd softly by the King
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot help
To raise the prince, who rising twice or
thrice
Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled,
and went;
But, ever after, the small violence done
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long
A little bitter pool about a stone 51
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
This matter to the Queen, at first she
laugh'd
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,
Then shudder'd, as the village wife who
cries,
'I shudder, some one steps across my
grave;'
Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for in-
deed
She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,
Would track her guilt until he found, and
hers
Would be for evermore a name of scorn. 60
Henceforward rarely could she front in
hall,
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent
eye.
Henceforward too, the Powers that tend
the soul,
To help it from the death that cannot die,
And save it even in extremes, began
To vex and plague her. Many a time for
hours,
Beside the placid breathings of the King,
In the dead night, grim faces came and
went
Before her, or a vague spiritual fear — 70
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking
doors,
Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,
That keeps the rust of murder on the
walls —
Held her awake; or if she slept she dream'd
An awful dream, for then she seem'd to
stand
On some vast plain before a setting sun,
And from the sun there swiftly made at
her
A ghastly something, and its shadow flew
Before it till it touch'd her, and she
turn'd —

When lo ! her own, that broadening from
 her feet,
 And blackening, swallow'd all the land,
 and in it
 Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.
 And all this trouble did not pass but grew,
 Till even the clear face of the guileless
 King,
 And trustful courtesies of household life,
 Became her bane ; and at the last she
 said:
 'O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own
 land,
 For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
 And if we meet again some evil chance
 Will make the smouldering scandal break
 and blaze
 Before the people and our lord the King.'⁸⁰
 And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,
 And still they met and met. Again she
 said,
 'O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee
 hence.'
 And then they were agreed upon a night —
 When the good King should not be there
 — to meet
 And part for ever. Vivien, lurking, heard.
 She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale they
 met
 And greeted. Hands in hands, and eye to
 eye,
 Low on the border of her couch they sat ¹⁰⁰
 Stammering and staring. It was their last
 hour,
 A madness of farewells. And Modred
 brought
 His creatures to the basement of the tower
 For testimony ; and crying with full voice,
 'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,'
 aroused
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong,
 and he fell
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare
 him off,
 And all was still. Then she, 'The end is
 come,
 And I am shamed for ever ;' and he said:
 'Mine be the shame, mine was the sin ;
 but rise,
 And fly to my strong castle over-seas.
 There will I hide thee till my life shall
 end,
 There hold thee with my life against the
 world.'

She answer'd: 'Lancelot, wilt thou hold me
 so ?
 Nay, friend, for we have taken our fare-
 wells.
 Would God that thou couldst hide me from
 myself !
 Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou
 Unwedded ; yet rise now, and let us fly,
 For I will draw me into sanctuary,
 And hide my doom.' So Lancelot got her
 horse,
 Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,
 And then they rode to the divided way,
 There kiss'd, and parted weeping ; for he
 past,
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,
 Back to his land ; but she to Almesbury
 Fled all night long by glimmering waste
 and weald,
 And heard the spirits of the waste and
 weald
 Moan as she fled, or thought she heard
 them moan.
 And in herself she moan'd, 'Too late, too
 late !'
 Till in the cold wind that foreruns the
 morn,
 A blot in heaven, the raven, flying high,
 Croak'd, and she thought, 'He spies a field
 of death ;
 For now the heathen of the Northern Sea,
 Lured by the crimes and frailties of the
 court,
 Begin to slay the folk and spoil the land.'

And when she came to Almesbury she
 spake
 There to the nuns, and said, 'Mine ene-
 mies
 Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,
 Receive and yield me sanctuary, nor ask
 Her name to whom ye yield it till her time
 To tell you ;' and her beauty, grace, and
 power
 Wrought as a charm upon them, and they
 spared
 To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode
 For many a week, unknown, among the
 nuns,
 Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name,
 nor sought,
 Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for shrift,
 But communed only with the little maid,

Who pleased her with a babbling heedless-
ness
Which often lured her from herself; but
now, 150
This night, a rumor wildly blown about
Came that Sir Modred had usurp'd the
realm
And leagued him with the heathen, while
the King
Was waging war on Lancelot. Then she
thought,
'With what a hate the people and the
King
Must hate me,' and bow'd down upon her
hands
Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd
No silence, brake it, uttering 'Late! so
late!
What hour, I wonder now?' and when she
drew
No answer, by and by began to hum 160
An air the nuns had taught her: 'Late, so
late!'
Which when she heard, the Queen look'd
up, and said,
'O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may
weep.'
Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.

'Late, late, so late! and dark the night and
chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light had we; for that we do repent,
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now. 171

'No light! so late! and dark and chill the
night!
O, let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'Have we not heard the bridegroom is so
sweet?
O, let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.'

So sang the novice, while full passion-
ately,
Her head upon her hands, remembering
Her thought when first she came, wept the
sad Queen. 180
Then said the little novice prattling to
her:

'O pray you, noble lady, weep no more;
But let my words — the words of one so
small,
Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,
And if I do not there is penance given —
Comfort your sorrows, for they do not
flow
From evil done; right sure am I of that,
Who see your tender grace and stateli-
ness.
But weigh your sorrows with our lord the
King's,
And weighing find them less; for gone is
he 190
To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot
there,
Round that strong castle where he holds
the Queen;
And Modred whom he left in charge of
all,
The traitor — Ah, sweet lady, the King's
grief
For his own self, and his own Queen, and
realm,
Must needs be thrice as great as any of
ours!
For me, I thank the saints, I am not great;
For if there ever come a grief to me
I cry my cry in silence, and have done;
None knows it, and my tears have brought
me good. 200
But even were the griefs of little ones
As great as those of great ones, yet this
grief
Is added to the griefs the great must bear,
That, howsoever much they may desire
Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud;
As even here they talk at Almesbury
About the good King and his wicked Queen,
And were I such a King with such a Queen,
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,
But were I such a King it could not be.' 210

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the
Queen,
'Will the child kill me with her innocent
talk?'

But openly she answer'd, 'Must not I,
If this false traitor have displaced his lord,
Grieve with the common grief of all the
realm?'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'this all is woman's
grief,
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life

Hath wrought confusion in the Table
Round
Which good King Arthur founded, years
ago,
With signs and miracles and wonders,
there ²²⁰
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen.'

Then thought the Queen within herself
again,
'Will the child kill me with her foolish
prate?'

But openly she spake and said to her,
'O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables
Round,

Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs
And simple miracles of thy nunnery?'

To whom the little novice garrulously:
'Yea, but I know; the land was full of
signs ²³⁰

And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.
So said my father, and himself was knight
Of the great Table—at the founding of
it,

And rode thereto from Lyonesse; and he
said

That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard
Strange music, and he paused, and turning
— there,

All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
And with a wild sea-light about his feet, ²⁴⁰
He saw them—headland after headland
flame

Far on into the rich heart of the west.
And in the light the white mermaiden
swam,

And strong man-breasted things stood from
the sea,

And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the
land,

To which the little elves of chasm and
cleft

Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.
So said my father—yea, and furthermore,
Next morning, while he past the dim-lit
woods ²⁴⁹

Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy.
Come dashing down on a tall wayside
flower,

That shook beneath them as the thistle
shakes

When three gray linnets wrangle for the
seed.

And still at evenings on before his horse
The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and
broke

Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and
broke

Flying, for all the land was full of life.
And when at last he came to Camelot,
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
Swung round the lighted lantern of the
hall; ²⁶⁰

And in the hall itself was such a feast
As never man had dream'd; for every
knight

Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served
By hands unseen; and even as he said
Down in the cellars merry bloated things
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the
butts

While the wine ran; so glad were spirits
and men

Before the coming of the sinful Queen.'

Then spake the Queen and somewhat
bitterly,

'Were they so glad? ill prophets were
they all, ²⁷⁰

Spirits and men. Could none of them fore-
see,

Not even thy wise father with his signs
And wonders, what has fallen upon the
realm?'

To whom the novice garrulously again:
'Yea, one, a bard, of whom my father
said,

Full many a noble war-song had he sung,
Even in the presence of an enemy's fleet,
Between the steep cliff and the coming
wave;

And many a mystic lay of life and death
Had chanted on the smoky mountain-
tops, ²⁸⁰

When round him bent the spirits of the
hills

With all their dewy hair blown back like
flame.

So said my father—and that night the
bard

Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the
King

As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd at
those

Who call'd him the false son of Gorlois.

For there was no man knew from whence
he came;
But after tempest, when the long wave
broke

All down the thundering shores of Bude
and Bos,

There came a day as still as heaven, and
then ²⁹⁰

They found a naked child upon the sands
Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea,
And that was Arthur, and they foster'd
him

Till he by miracle was approv'd King;
And that his grave should be a mystery
From all men, like his birth; and could he
find

A woman in her womanhood as great
As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,
The twain together well might change the
world.

But even in the middle of his song ³⁰⁰
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the
harp,

And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would
have fallen,

But that they stay'd him up; nor would he
tell

His vision; but what doubt that he fore-
saw

This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen ?'

Then thought the Queen, 'Lo ! they have
set her on,

Our simple-seeming abbess and her nuns,
To play upon me,' and bow'd her head nor
spake.

Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd
hands, ³⁰⁹

Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,
Said the good nuns would check her gad-
ding tongue

Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I seem
To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,
Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales
Which my good father told me, check me
too

Nor let me shame my father's memory,
one

Of noblest manners, tho' himself would
say

Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he died,
Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers
back, ³¹⁹

And left me; but of others who remain,
And of the two first-famed for courtesy —

And pray you check me if I ask amiss —
But pray you, which had noblest, while
you moved
Among them, Lancelot or our lord the
King ?'

Then the pale Queen look'd up and an-
swer'd her:

'Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,
Was gracious to all ladies, and the same
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forbore his own advantage, and the King
In open battle or the tilting-field ³³⁰
Forbore his own advantage, and these
two

Were the most nobly-manner'd men of
all;

For manners are not idle, but the fruit
Of loyal nature and of noble mind.'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'be manners such
fair fruit ?

Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-
fold

Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,
The most disloyal friend in all the world.'

To which a mournful answer made the
Queen:

'O, closed about by narrowing nunnery-
walls, ³⁴⁰

What knowest thou of the world and all its
lights

And shadows, all the wealth and all the
woe ?

If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,
Were for one hour less noble than himself,
Pray for him that he scape the doom of
fire,

And weep for her who drew him to his
doom.'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I pray for
both;

But I should all as soon believe that his,
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,
As I could think, sweet lady, yours would
be ³⁵⁰

Such as they are, were you the sinful
Queen.'

So she, like many another babler, hurt
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where
she would heal;

For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat

Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who
cried:

'Such as thou art be never maiden more
For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague
And play upon and harry me, petty spy
And traitress!' When that storm of an-
ger brake

From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,
White as her veil, and stood before the
Queen 361

As tremulously as foam upon the beach
Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,
And when the Queen had added, 'Get
thee hence!'

Fled frightened. Then that other left alone
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,
Saying in herself: 'The simple, fearful
child

Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful
guilt,

Simpler than any child, betrays itself.
But help me, Heaven, for surely I re-
pent! 370

For what is true repentance but in
thought —

Not even in inmost thought to think again
The sins that made the past so pleasant to
us?

And I have sworn never to see him more,
To see him more.'

And even in saying this,
Her memory from old habit of the mind
Went slipping back upon the golden days
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot
came,

Reputed the best knight and goodliest
man,

Ambassador, to yield her to his lord 380
Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead
Of his and her retinue moving, they,
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love
And sport and tilts and pleasure, — for
the time

Was may-time, and as yet no sin was
dream'd, —

Rode under groves that look'd a paradise
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth
That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro'
the earth,

And on from hill to hill, and every day
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale 390
The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised
For brief repast or afternoon repose
By couriers gone before; and on again,

Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship,
That crown'd the state pavilion of the
King,
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immersed in such a
trance,
And moving thro' the past unconsciously,
Came to that point where first she saw the
King 400

Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to
find

Her journey done, glanced at him, thought
him cold,

High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not
like him,

'Not like my Lancelot' — while she
brooded thus

And grew half-guilty in her thoughts
again,

There rode an armed warrior to the doors.
A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery
ran,

Then on a sudden a cry, 'The King!' She
sat

Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armed
feet

Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors
Rang coming, prone from off her seat she
fell, 411

And grovell'd with her face against the
floor.

There with her milk-white arms and shad-
ow hair

She made her face a darkness from the
King,

And in the darkness heard his armed feet
Pause by her; then came silence, then a
voice,

Monotonous and hollow like a ghost's
Denouncing judgment, but, tho' changed,
the King's:

'Liest thou here so low, the child of one
I honor'd, happy, dead before thy shame?
Well is it that no child is born of thee. 421
The children born of thee are sword and
fire,

Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,
The craft of kindred and the godless hosts
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern
Sea;

Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right
arm,

The mightiest of my knights, abode with me,
 Have everywhere about this land of Christ
 In twelve great battles ruining overthrown.
 And knowest thou now from whence I come
 — from him, ⁴³⁰
 From waging bitter war with him; and he,
 That did not shun to smite me in worse
 way,
 Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,
 He spared to lift his hand against the King
 Who made him knight. But many a knight
 was slain;
 And many more and all his kith and kin
 Clave to him, and abode in his own land.
 And many more when Modred raised revolt,
 Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave
 To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.
 And of this remnant will I leave a part, ⁴⁴¹
 True men who love me still, for whom I
 live,
 To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,
 Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.
 Fear not; thou shalt be guarded till my
 death.
 Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies
 Have err'd not, that I march to meet my
 doom.
 Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,
 That I the King should greatly care to
 live; ⁴⁴⁹
 For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.
 Bear with me for the last time while I
 show,
 Even for thy sake, the sin which thou hast
 sinn'd.
 For when the Roman left us, and their law
 Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways
 Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a
 deed
 Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong.
 But I was first of all the kings who drew
 The knighthood-errant of this realm and all
 The realms together under me, their Head,
 In that fair Order of my Table Round, ⁴⁶⁰
 A glorious company, the flower of men,
 To serve as model for the mighty world,
 And he the fair beginning of a time.
 I made them lay their hands in mine and
 swear
 To reverence the King, as if he were
 Their conscience, and their conscience as
 their King,
 To break the heathen and uphold the
 Christ,

To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
 To honor his own word as if his God's, ⁴⁷⁰
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
 To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
 And worship her by years of noble deeds,
 Until they won her; for indeed I knew
 Of no more subtle master under heaven
 Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
 Not only to keep down the base in man,
 But teach high thought, and amiable words
 And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
 And love of truth, and all that makes a
 man. ⁴⁸⁰

And all this throve before I wedded thee,
 Believing, "Lo, mine helpmate, one to feel
 My purpose and rejoicing in my joy!"
 Then came thy shameful sin with Lance-
 lot;

Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt;
 Then others, following these my mightiest
 knights,
 And drawing foul ensample from fair
 names,

Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite
 Of all my heart had destined did obtain,
 And all thro' thee! so that this life of
 mine ⁴⁹⁰

I guard as God's high gift from scathe and
 wrong,
 Not greatly care to lose; but rather think
 How sad it were for Arthur, should he
 live,

To sit once more withiu his lonely hall,
 And miss the wonted number of my knights,
 And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds
 As in the golden days before thy sin.
 For which of us who might be left could
 speak

Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at
 thee?

And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk
 Thy shadow still would glide from room to
 room, ⁵⁰¹

And I should evermore be vext with thee
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament,
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.
 For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love
 thy lord,

Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.
 I am not made of so slight elements.
 Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy
 shame.

I hold that man the worst of public foes
 Who either for his own or children's sake,

To save his blood from scandal, lets the
 wife 511
 Whom he knows false abide and rule the
 house:
 For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
 Her station, taken everywhere for pure,
 She like a new disease, unknown to men,
 Creeps, no precaution used, among the
 crowd,
 Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and
 saps
 The fealty of our friends, and stirs the
 pulse
 With devil's leaps, and poisons half the
 young.
 Worst of the worst were that man he that
 reigns! 520
 Better the King's waste hearth and aching
 heart
 Than thou reseated in thy place of light,
 The mockery of my people and their
 bane!

He paused, and in the pause she crept an
 inch
 Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
 Then waiting by the doors the war-horse
 neigh'd
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:

' Yet think not that I come to urge thy
 crimes; 529
 I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
 To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
 My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
 The wrath which forced my thoughts on
 that fierce law,
 The doom of treason and the flaming
 death, —
 When first I learnt thee hidden here, — is
 past.
 The pang — which, while I weigh'd thy
 heart with one
 Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,
 Made my tears burn — is also past — in
 part.
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I, 540
 Lo, I forgive thee, as Eternal God
 Forgives! do thou for thine own soul the
 rest.
 But how to take last leave of all I loved?
 O golden hair, with which I used to play
 Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,

And beauty such as never woman wore,
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with
 thee —
 I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,
 But Lancelot's; nay, they never were the
 King's.
 I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh,
 And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and mine
 own flesh, 551
 Here looking down on thine pollnted, cries,
 "I loathe thee;" yet not less, O Guinevere,
 For I was ever virgin save for thee,
 My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my
 life
 So far that my doom is, I love thee still.
 Let no man dream but that I love thee
 still.
 Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,
 And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
 Hereafter in that world where all are pure
 We two may meet before high God, and
 thou 561
 Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and
 know
 I am thine husband — not a smaller soul,
 Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
 I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I
 hence.
 Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet
 blow.
 They summon me their King to lead mine
 hosts
 Far down to that great battle in the west,
 Where I must strike against the man they
 call
 My sister's son — no kin of mine, who
 leagues 570
 With Lords of the White Horse, heathen,
 and knights,
 Traitors — and strike him dead, and meet
 myself
 Death, or I know not what mysterious
 doom.
 And thou remaining here wilt learn the
 event;
 But hither shall I never come again,
 Never lie by thy side, see thee no more —
 Farewell!

And while she grovell'd at his feet,
 She felt the King's breath wander o'er her
 neck,
 And in the darkness o'er her fallen head
 Perceived the waving of his hands that
 blest. 580

Then, listening till those armed steps
 were gone,
 Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish
 found
 The casement: 'peradventure,' so she
 thought,
 'If I might see his face, and not be seen.'
 And lo, he sat on horseback at the door!
 And near him the sad nuns with each a
 light
 Stood, and he gave them charge about the
 Queen,
 To guard and foster her for evermore.
 And while he spake to these his helm was
 lower'd,
 To which for crest the golden dragon
 clung ⁵⁹⁰
 Of Britain; so she did not see the face,
 Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,
 Wet with the mists and smitten by the
 lights,
 The Dragon of the great Pendragonship
 Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire.
 And even then he turn'd; and more and
 more
 The moony vapor rolling round the King,
 Who seem'd the phantom of a giant in it,
 Enwound him fold by fold, and made him
 gray
 And grayer, till himself became as mist ⁶⁰⁰
 Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and
 cried aloud,
 'O Arthur!' there her voice brake sud-
 denly,
 Then — as a stream that spouting from a
 cliff
 Fails in mid air, but gathering at the base
 Re - makes itself, and flashes down the
 vale —
 Went on in passionate utterance:

'Gone — my lord!
 Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain!
 And he forgave me, and I could not speak.
 Farewell? I should have answer'd his
 farewell. ⁶¹⁰
 His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the
 King,
 My own true lord! how dare I call him
 mine?
 The shadow of another cleaves to me,
 And makes me one pollution. He, the King,
 Call'd me polluted. Shall I kill myself?

What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,
 If soul be soul, nor can I kill my shame;
 No, nor by living can I live it down.
 The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to
 months,
 The months will add themselves and make
 the years, ⁶²⁰
 The years will roll into the centuries,
 And mine will ever be a name of scorn.
 I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.
 Let the world be; that is but of the
 world —
 What else? what hope? I think there was
 a hope,
 Except he mock'd me when he spake of
 hope;
 His hope he call'd it; but he never mocks,
 For mockery is the fume of little hearts.
 And blessed be the King, who hath for-
 given
 My wickedness to him, and left me hope ⁶³⁰
 That in mine own heart I can live down
 sin
 And be his mate hereafter in the heavens
 Before high God! Ah great and gentle
 lord,
 Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint
 Among his warring senses, to thy knights —
 To whom my false voluptuous pride, that
 took
 Full easily all impressions from below,
 Would not look up, or half-despised the
 height
 To which I would not or I could not
 climb —
 I thought I could not breathe in that fine
 air, ⁶⁴⁰
 That pure severity of perfect light —
 I yearn'd for warmth and color which I
 found
 In Lancelot — now I see thee what thou
 art,
 Thou art the highest and most human too,
 Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none
 Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?
 Now — ere he goes to the great battle?
 none!
 Myself must tell him in that purer life,
 But now it were too daring. Ah my God,
 What might I not have made of thy fair
 world, ⁶⁵⁰
 Had I but loved thy highest creature
 here?
 It was my duty to have loved the highest;
 It surely was my profit had I known;

It would have been my pleasure had I
seen.
We needs must love the highest when we
see it,
Not Lancelot, nor another.'

Here her hand
Grasp'd made her veil her eyes. She look'd
and saw
The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to
her,
'Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven?'
Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns 660
All round her, weeping; and her heart was
loosed
Within her, and she wept with these and
said:

'Ye know me then, that wicked one, who
broke
The vast design and purpose of the King.
O, shut me round with narrowing nunnery-
walls,
Meek maidens, from the voices crying,
"Shame!"
I must not scorn myself; he loves me still.
Let no one dream but that he loves me
still.
So let me, if you do not shudder at me,
Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you;
Wear black and white, and be a nun like
you, 671
Fast with your fasts, not feasting with
your feasts;
Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at
your joys,
But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;
Pray and be pray'd for; lie before your
shrines;
Do each low office of your holy house;
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute
dole
To poor sick people, richer in His eyes
Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I;
And treat their loathsome hurts and heal
mine own; 680
And so wear out in alms-deed and in
prayer
The sombre close of that voluptuous day
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the
King.'

She said. They took her to themselves;
and she
Still hoping, fearing 'Is it yet too late?'

Dwelt with them, till in time their abbess
died.
Then she, for her good deeds and her pure
life,
And for the power of ministration in her,
And likewise for the high rank she had
borne,
Was chosen abbess, there, an abbess, lived
For three brief years, and there, an abbess,
past 691
To where beyond these voices there is
peace.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the knights,
Told, when the man was no more than a
voice
In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other
minds.

For on their march to westward, Bedi-
vere,
Who slowly paced among the slumbering
host,
Heard in his tent the moanings of the
King:

'I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His
fields, 70
But in His ways with men I find Him not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and
die.

O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he would,
Till the High God behold it from beyond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful?
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense and
dim,
And have not power to see it as it is — 20
Perchance, because we see not to the
close; —
For I, being simple, thought to work His
will,
And have but stricken with the sword in
vain,
And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.

My God, thou hast forgotten me in my
 death!
 Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall
 not die.'

Then, ere that last weird battle in the
 west,
 There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain
 kill'd
 In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain
 blown

Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
 Went shrilling: 'Hollow, hollow all del-
 light!

Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass
 away.

Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.
 And I am blown along a wandering wind,
 And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight!
 And fainter onward, like wild birds that
 change

Their season in the night and wail their
 way

From cloud to cloud, down the long wind
 the dream

Shrill'd; but in going mingled with dim
 cries

Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
 As of some lonely city sack'd by night,
 When all is lost, and wife and child with
 wail

Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and
 call'd:

'Who spake? A dream. O, light upon
 the wind,

Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these
 dim cries

Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste
 and wild

Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?'

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and
 spake:

'O me, my King, let pass whatever will,
 Elves, and the harmless glamour of the
 field;

But in their stead thy name and glory
 cling

To all high places like a golden cloud
 For ever; but as yet thou shalt not pass.

Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
 Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;

And care not thou for dreams from him,
 but rise—

I hear the steps of Modred in the west,

And with him many of thy people, and
 knights

Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but
 grosser grown

Than heathen, spitting at their vows and
 thee.

Right well in heart they know thee for the
 King.

Arise, go forth and conquer as of old.'

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere
 'Far other is this battle in the west

Whereto we move than when we strove in
 youth,

And brake the petty kings, and fought with
 Rome,

Or thrust the heathen from the Roman
 wall,

And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom
 is mine

To war against my people and my knights.
 The king who fights his people fights him-
 self.

And they my knights, who loved me once,
 the stroke

That strikes them dead is as my death to
 me.

Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
 Thro' this blind haze which, ever since I
 saw

One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
 Hath folded in the passes of the world.'

Then rose the King and moved his host
 by night,

And ever push'd Sir Modred, leagued by
 league,

Back to the sunset bound of Lyonnesse—
 A land of old upheaven from the abyss

By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
 Where fragments of forgotten peoples
 dwelt,

And the long mountains ended in a coast
 Of ever-shifting sand, and far away

The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
 There the pursuer could pursue no more,

And he that fled no further fly the King;
 And there, that day when the great light
 of heaven

Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,
 On the waste sand by the waste sea they
 closed.

Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
 Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.

A death-white mist slept over sand and sea,

Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it,
 drew
 Down with his blood, till all his heart was
 cold
 With formless fear; and even on Arthur
 fell
 Confusion, since he saw not whom he
 fought.
 For friend and foe were shadows in the
 mist,
 And friend slew friend not knowing whom
 he slew;
 And some had visions out of golden youth,
 And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
 Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
 Was many a noble deed, many a base,
 And chance and craft and strength in single
 fights,
 And ever and anon with host to host
 Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard
 mail hewn,
 Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands,
 the crash
 Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and
 shrieks
 After the Christ, of those who falling down
 Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the
 mist;
 And shouts of heathen and the traitor
 knights,
 Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
 Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of the
 lungs
 In that close mist, and cryings for the
 light,
 Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one death-bed after wail
 Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death
 Or death-like swoon, thus over all that
 shore,
 Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
 A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous
 day
 Grew drearier toward twilight falling,
 came
 A bitter wiud, clear from the north, and
 blew
 The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
 Rose, and the pale King glanced across the
 field
 Of battle. But no man was moving there;
 Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
 Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave

Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
 Swaying the helpless hands, and up and
 down
 Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
 And shiver'd brands that once had fought
 with Rome,
 And rolling far along the gloomy shores
 The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
 And whiter than the mist that all day long
 Had held the field of battle was the King:

'Hearest thou this great voice that
 shakes the world,
 And wastes the narrow realm whereon we
 move,
 And beats upon the faces of the dead,
 My dead, as tho' they had not died for
 me?—
 O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fallen
 Confusion, till I know not what I am,
 Nor whence I am, nor whether I be king;
 Behold, I seem but king among the dead.'

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: 'My
 King!
 King everywhere! and so the dead have
 kings,
 There also will I worship thee as king.
 Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
 Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that
 brought
 The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
 Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of thine
 house.'

Then spake the King: 'My house hath
 been my doom.
 But call not thou this traitor of my house
 Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with
 me.
 My house are rather they who swear my
 vows,
 Yea, even while they brake them, own'd
 me king.
 And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,
 When all the purport of my throne hath
 fail'd,
 That quick or dead thou holdest me for
 king.
 King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
 And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
 Yet, ere I pass.' And uttering this the
 King

Made at the man. Then Modred smote his
 liege
 Hard on that helm which many a heathen
 sword
 Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
 Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
 Slew him, aud, all but slain himself, he
 fell. 169

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
 Among the mountains by the winter sea,
 Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
 Had fallen in Lyonesse about their lord,
 King Arthur; then, because his wound was
 deep,
 The hold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one 179
 Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
 'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
 Whereof this world holds record. Such a
 sleep
 They sleep — the men I loved. I think
 that we

Shall never more, at any future time,
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly
 deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the halls
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were. 189
 I perish by this people which I made, —
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come
 again

To rule once more — but let what will be
 be,

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
 That without help I cannot last till morn.
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
 Which was my pride; for thou remember-
 est how

In those old days, one summer noon, an
 arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-
 ful,

Holding the sword — and how I row'd
 across 200

And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told
 In aftertime, this also shall be known.
 But now delay uot; take Excalibur,

And fling him far into the middle mere;
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring
 me word.'

To him replied the hold Sir Bedivere:
 'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee
 thus,
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the
 helm —
 A little thing may harm a wounded man;
 Yet I thy best will all perform at full, 211
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee
 word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he
 stept,
 And in the moon athwart the place of
 tombs,
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient
 men,
 Old knights, and over them the sea-wind
 sang
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, step-
 ping down
 By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excali-
 bur, 220
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran
 forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the
 hilt;

For all the haft twinkled with diamond
 sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
 Of subtler jewellery. He gazed so long
 That both his eyes were dazzled as he
 stood,

This way and that dividing the swift mind,
 In act to throw; but at the last it seem'd
 Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd 230
 There in the many-knotted water-flags,
 That whistled stiff and dry about the
 marge.

So strode he back slow to the wounded
 King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-
 vere:
 'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I
 gave?
 What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
 heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
 'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
 And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
 'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
 Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
 Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
 For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
 Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
 This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
 As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
 I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me
 word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the
 mere,
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fixt in thought;
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
 How curiously and strangely chased, he
 smote
 His palms together, and he cried aloud:

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
 Should thus be lost for ever from the
 earth,
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many
 men.
 What good should follow this, if this were
 done?
 What harm, undone? Deep harm to dis-
 obey,
 Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
 Were it well to obey then, if a king de-
 mand
 An act unprofitable, against himself?
 The King is sick, and knows not what he
 does.
 What record or what relie of my lord
 Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
 And rumors of a doubt? But were this
 kept,
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty
 kings,
 Some one might show it at a joust of
 arms,
 Saying: "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
 Wrought by the lonely Maiden of the
 Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the
 deeps
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
 So might some old man speak in the after-
 time
 To all the people, winning reverence.
 But now much honor and much fame were
 lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own con-
 ceit,
 And hid Excalibur the second time,
 And so strode back slow to the wounded
 King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heav-
 ily:
 'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
 heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-
 vere:
 'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
 And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in
 wrath:
 'Ah miserable, and unkind, untrue,
 Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
 Authority forgets a dying king,
 Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
 That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou
 art,
 For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
 In whom should meet the offices of all,
 Thou wouldst betray me for the precious
 hilt;
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
 Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
 And the third time may prosper, get thee
 hence;
 But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
 I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and
 ran,
 And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
 plunged
 Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the
 sword,
 And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The
 great brand
 Made lightnings in the splendor of the
 moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd
 in an arch,
 Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
 Seen where the moving isles of winter
 shock
 By night, with noises of the Northern
 Sea. ³⁰⁹
 So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur;
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
 Three times, and drew him under in the
 mere.
 And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker
 breath:
 'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
 Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or
 seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
 'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the
 gems ³²⁰
 Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
 Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling
 him;
 But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
 Three times, and drew him under in the
 mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing
 hard: ³³⁰
 'My end draws nigh; 't is time that I were
 gone.
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my
 weight,
 And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall
 die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half
 rose,
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
 And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
 As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
 Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,

And would have spoken, but he found not
 words; ³⁴⁰
 Then took with care, and kneeling on one
 knee,
 O'er both his shoulders drew the languid
 hands,
 And rising bore him thro' the place of
 tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted
 hard,
 Like one that feels a nightmare on his
 bed
 When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the
 King,
 Muttering and murmuring at his ear,
 'Quick, quick!
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'
 But the other swiftly strode from ridge to
 ridge,
 Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he
 walk'd, ³⁵⁰
 Larger than human on the frozen hills.
 He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
 Before. His own thought drove him like
 a goad.
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
 And barren chasms, and all to left and
 right
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as
 he based
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
 Sharp - smitten with the dint of armed
 heels —
 And on a sudden, lo, the level lake, ³⁵⁹
 And the long glories of the winter moon!

Then saw they how there hove a dusky
 barge,
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
 Beneath them; and descending they were
 ware
 That all the decks were dense with stately
 forms,
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream —
 by these
 Three queens with crowns of gold — and
 from them rose
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
 And, as it were one voice, an agony
 Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
 All night in a waste land, where no one
 comes, ³⁷⁰
 Or hath come, since the making of the
 world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in
the barge.'
So to the barge they came. There those
three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King,
and wept.
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest laid his head upon her lap,
And loos'd the shatter'd casque, and chafed
his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining
loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood; for all his face
was white ³⁸⁰
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing
east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with
drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne — were parch'd
with dust,
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixt with the knightly growth that fringed
his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in
rest, ³⁹⁰
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I
go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my
eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble
chance,
And every chance brought out a noble
knight.
Such times have been not since the light
that led ⁴⁰⁰
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dis-
solved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the
years,
Among new men, strange faces, other
minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the
barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place to
new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the
world. ⁴¹⁰
Comfort thyself; what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have
done
May He within himself make pure! but
thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought
by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore,
let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and
day.
For what are men better than sheep or
goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of
prayer ⁴²⁰
Both for themselves and those who call
them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of
God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go —
For all my mind is clouded with a doubt —
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard
lawns ⁴³⁰
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer
sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous
wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and
sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-
breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the
flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedi-
vere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of
dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away. ⁴⁴⁰

But when that mean had past for ever-
more,
The stillness of the dead world's winter
dawn
Amazed him, and he groan'd, 'The King
is gone.'
And therewithal came on him the weird
rhyme,
'From the great deep to the great deep he
goes.'

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly
clomb

The last hard footstep of that iron crag,
Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet,
and cried:

'He passes to be king among the dead, 449
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again; but — if he come no
more —

O me, be yon dark queens in yon black boat,
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat
we gazed

On that high day, when, clothed with living
light,

They stood before his throne in silence,
friends

Of Arthur, who should help him at his
need?'

Then from the dawn it seem'd there
came, but faint

As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars. 461

Thereat once more he moved about, and
clomb

Even to the highest he could climb, and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the
King,

Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.

And the new sun rose bringing the new
year.

TO THE QUEEN

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,
And loyal to thy land, as this to thee —
Bear witness, that rememberable day,

When, pale as yet and fever-worn, the
Prince

Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering life
again

From halfway down the shadow of the
grave

Past with thee thro' thy people and their
love,

And London roll'd one tide of joy thro'
all

Her trebled millions, and loud leagues of
man

And welcome ! witness, too, the silent cry,
The prayer of many a race and creed, and
clime — 11

Thunderless lightnings striking under sea
From sunset and sunrise of all thy realm,

And that true North, whereof we lately
heard

A strain to shame us, 'Keep you to your-
selves;

So loyal is too costly ! friends — your love
Is but a burthen; loose the bond, and go.'

Is this the tone of empire ? here the faith
That made us rulers ? this, indeed, her
voice

And meaning whom the roar of Hougou-
mont 20

Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven ?
What shock has fool'd her since, that she
should speak

So feebly ? wealthier — wealthier — hour
by hour !

The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,
Some third-rate isle half-lost among her
seas ?

There rang her voice, when the full city
peal'd

Thee and thy Prince ! The loyal to their
crown

Are loyal to their own far sons, who love
Our ocean-empire with her boundless homes

For ever - broadening England, and her
throne 30

In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,
That knows not her own greatness; if she
knows

And dreads it we are fallen. — But thou,
my Queen,

Not for itself, but thro' thy living love
For one to whom I made it o'er his grave
Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with
Soul,

Ideal manhood closed in real man,

Rather than that gray king whose name, a
 ghost,
 Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from
 mountain peak,
 And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still; or
 him
 Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's,
 one
 Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time
 That hover'd between war and wantonness,
 And crownings and dethronements. Take
 withal
 Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that
 Heaven
 Will blow the tempest in the distance back
 From thine and ours; for some are scared,
 who mark,
 Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,
 Waverings of every vane with every wind,
 And wordy trucklings to the transient
 hour,
 And fierce or careless looseners of the
 faith,

And Softness breeding scorn of simple life,
 Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,
 Or Labor, with a groan and not a voice,
 Or Art with poisonous honey stolen from
 France,
 And that which knows, but careful for it-
 self,
 And that which knows not, ruling that
 which knows
 To its own harm. The goal of this great
 world
 Lies beyond sight; yet — if our slowly-
 grown
 And crown'd Republic's crowning common-
 sense,
 That saved her many times, not fail —
 their fears
 Are morning shadows huger than the
 shapes
 That cast them, not those gloomier which
 forego
 The darkness of that battle in the west
 Where all of high and holy dies away.

BALLADS

AND OTHER POEMS

TO ALFRED TENNYSON

MY GRANDSON

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is one
with mine,
Crazy with laughter and babble and earth's
new wine,
Now that the flower of a year and a half is
thine,
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of
mine,
Glorious poet who never hast written a
line,
Laugh, for the name at the head of my
verse is thine.
Mayst thou never be wrong'd by the name
that is mine!

THE FIRST QUARREL

(IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT)

I

'WAIT a little,' you say, 'you are sure it'll
all come right,'
But the boy was born i' trouble, an' looks
so wan an' so white;
Wait! an' once I ha' waited — I had n't
to wait for long.
Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry. — No,
no, you are doing me wrong!
Harry and I were married; the boy can
hold up his head,
The boy was born in wedlock, but after my
man was dead;
I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an' I
work an' I wait to the end.
I am all alone in the world, an' you are my
only friend.

II

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you the
tale o' my life.
When Harry an' I were children, he call'd
me his own little wife; 10

I was happy when I was with him, an' sorry
when he was away,
An' when we play'd together, I loved him
better than play;
He workt me the daisy chain — he made
me the cowslip ball,
He fought the boys that were rude, an' I
loved him better than all.
Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at
home in disgrace,
I never could quarrel with Harry — I had
but to look in his face.

III

There was a farmer in Dorset of Harry's
kin, that had need
Of a good stout lad at his farm; he sent,
an' the father agreed;
So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire
farm for years an' for years;
I walk'd with him down to the quay, poor
lad, an' we parted in tears. 20
The boat was beginning to move, we heard
them a-ringing the bell,
'I'll never love any but you, God bless you,
my own little Nell.'

IV

I was a child, an' he was a child, an' he
came to harm;
There was a girl, a hussy, that workt with
him up at the farm,
One had deceived her an' left her alone
with her sin an' her shame,
And so she was wicked with Harry; the
girl was the most to blame.

V

And years went over till I that was little
had grown so tall
The men would say of the maids, 'Our
Nelly's the flower of 'em all.'
I did n't take heed o' *them*, but I taught
myself all I could
To make a good wife for Harry, when
Harry came home for good. 30

VI

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as happy
 too,
 For I heard it abroad in the fields, 'I'll
 never love any but you;'
 'I'll never love any but you,' the morning
 song of the lark;
 'I'll never love any but you,' the nightin-
 gale's hymn in the dark.

VII

And Harry came home at last, but he
 look'd at me sidelong and shy,
 Vext me a bit, till he told me that so many
 years had gone by,
 I had grown so handsome and tall — that I
 might ha' forgot him somehow —
 For he thought — there were other lads —
 he was fear'd to look at me now.

VIII

Hard was the frost in the field, we were
 married o' Christmas day,
 Married among the red berries, an' all as
 merry as May —
 Those were the pleasant times, my house
 an' my man were my pride,
 We seem'd like ships i' the Channel a-sail-
 ing with wind an' tide.

IX

But work was scant in the Isle, tho' he tried
 the villages round,
 So Harry went over the Solent to see if
 work could be found;
 An' he wrote: 'I ha' six weeks' work, little
 wife, so far as I know;
 I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an' kiss
 you before I go.'

X

So I set to righting the house, for was n't
 he coming that day?
 An' I hit on an old deal-box that was
 push'd in a corner away,
 It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a letter
 along wi' the rest,
 I had better ha' put my naked hand in a
 hornets' nest. 50

XI

'Sweetheart,' — this was the letter — this
 was the letter I read —

'You promised to find me work near you,
 an' I wish I was dead —
 Did n't you kiss me an' promise? you
 'have n't done it, my lad,
 An' I almost died o' your going away, an' I
 wish that I had.'

XII

I too wish that I had — in the pleasant
 times that had past,
 Before I quarrell'd with Harry — *my quar-*
rel — the first an' the last.

XIII

For Harry came in, an' I flung him the
 letter that drove me wild,
 An' he told it me all at once, as simple as
 any child,
 'What can it matter, my lass, what I did
 wi' my single life?
 I ha' been as true to you as ever a man to
 his wife;
 An' *she* was n't one o' the worst.' 'Then,'
 I said, 'I'm none o' the best.'
 An' he smiled at me, 'Ain't you, my love?
 Come, come, little wife, let it rest!
 The man is n't like the woman, no need to
 make such a stir.'
 But he anger'd me all the more, an' I said,
 'You were keeping with her,
 When I was a-loving you all along an'
 the same as before.'
 An' he did n't speak for a while, an' he
 anger'd me more and more.
 Then he patted my hand in his gentle way,
 'Let bygones be!'
 'By-gones! you kept yours hush'd,' I said,
 'when you married me!
 By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' *she* — in
 her shame an' her sin —
 You'll have her to nurse my child, if I die
 o' my lying in!
 You'll make her its second mother! I
 hate her — an' I hate you!'
 Ah, Harry, my man, you had better ha'
 beaten me black an' blue
 Then ha' spoken as kind as you did, when
 I were so crazy wi' spite,
 'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it'll all
 come right.'

XIV

An' he took three turns in the rain, an' I
 watch'd him, an' when he came in

I felt that my heart was hard ; he was all
 wet thro' to the skin,
 An' I never said, ' off wi' the wet,' I never
 said, ' on wi' the dry,'
 So I knew my heart was hard, when he
 came to bid me good-bye.
 ' You said that you hated me, Ellen, but
 that is n't true, you know;
 I am going to leave you a bit — you 'll kiss
 me before I go ?' 80

XV

' Going ! you 're going to her — kiss her —
 if you will,' I said —
 I was near my time wi' the boy, I must ha'
 been light i' my head —
 ' I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd !' — I
 did n't know well what I meant,
 But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he
 turn'd *his* face an' he went.

XVI

And then he sent me a letter, ' I 've gotten
 my work to do;
 You would n't kiss me, my lass, an' I never
 loved any but you;
 I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry for
 what she wrote,
 I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go to-
 night by the boat.'

XVII

An' the wind began to rise, an' I thought
 of him out at sea,
 An' I felt I had been to blame; he was al-
 ways kind to me. 90
 ' Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all
 come right ' —
 An' the boat went down that night — the
 boat went down that night.

RIZPAH

17—

I

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind over
 land and sea —
 And Willy's voice in the wind, ' O mother,
 come out to me !'
 Why should he call me to-night, when he
 knows that I cannot go ?
 For the downs are as bright as day, and the
 full moon stares at the snow.

II

We should be seen, my dear; they would
 spy us out of the town.
 The loud black nights for us, and the storm
 rushing over the down,
 When I cannot see my own hand, but am
 led by the creak of the chain,
 And grovel and grope for my son till I find
 myself drenched with the rain.

III

Anything fallen again ? nay — what was
 there left to fall ?
 I have taken them home, I have number'd
 the bones, I have hidden them all. 10
 What am I saying ? and what are *you* ?
 do you come as a spy ?
 Falls ? what falls ? who knows ? As the
 tree falls so must it lie.

IV

Who let her in ? how long has she been ?
 you — what have you heard ?
 Why did you sit so quiet ? you never have
 spoken a word.
 O — to pray with me — yes — a lady —
 none of their spies —
 But the night has crept into my heart, and
 begun to darken my eyes.

V

Ah — you, that have lived so soft, what
 should *you* know of the night,
 The blast and the burning shame and the
 bitter frost and the fright ?
 I have done it, while you were asleep —
 you were only made for the day.
 I have gather'd my baby together — and
 now you may go your way. 20

VI

Nay — for it's kind of you, madam, to sit
 by an old dying wife.
 But say nothing hard of my boy, I have
 only an hour of life.
 I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he
 went out to die.
 ' They dared me to do it,' he said, and he
 never has told me a lie.
 I whipt him for robbing an orchard once
 when he was but a child —
 ' The farmer dared me to do it,' he said; he
 was always so wild —
 And idle — and could n't be idle — my
 Willy — he never could rest.

The King should have made him a soldier,
he would have been one of his best.

VII

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and
they never would let him be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the mail,
and he swore that he would; ³⁰
And he took no life, but he took one purse,
and when all was done
He flung it among his fellows — 'I'll none
of it,' said my son.

VIII

I came into court to the judge and the
lawyers. I told them my tale,
God's own truth — but they kill'd him, they
kill'd him for robbing the mail.
They hang'd him in chains for a show — we
had always borne a good name —
To be hang'd for a thief — and then put
away — is n't that enough shame?
Dust to dust — low down — let us hide!
but they set him so high
That all the ships of the world could stare
at him, passing by.
God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and
horrible fowls of the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer who
kill'd him and hang'd him there. ⁴⁰

IX

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid
him my last good-bye;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell. 'O
mother!' I heard him cry.
I could n't get back tho' I tried, he had
something further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The jailer
forced me away.

X

Then since I could n't but hear that cry of
my boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up: they fas-
ten'd me down on my bed.
'Mother, O mother!' — he call'd in the
dark to me year after year —
They beat me for that, they beat me —
you know that I could n't but hear;
And then at the last they found I had
grown so stupid and still
They let me abroad again — but the crea-
tures had worked their will. ⁵⁰

XI

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of
my bone was left —
I stole them all from the lawyers — and
you, will you call it a theft? —
My baby, the bones that had suck'd me,
the bones that had laughed and had
cried —
Theirs? O, no! they are mine — not theirs
— they had moved in my side.

XII

Do you think I was scared by the bones?
I kiss'd 'em, I buried 'em all —
I can't dig deep, I am old — in the night
by the churchyard wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trum-
pet of judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I laid
him in holy ground.

XIII

They would scratch him up — they would
hang him again on the cursed tree.
Sin? O, yes, we are sinners, I know — let
all that be, ⁶⁰
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's
goodwill toward men —
'Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord'
— let me hear it again;
'Full of compassion and mercy — long-suf-
fering.' Yes, O, yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder —
the Saviour lives but to bless.
He'll never put on the black cap except
for the worst of the worst,
And the first may be last — I have heard
it in church — and the last may be
first.
Suffering — O, long-suffering — yes, as the
Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the wind
and the shower and the snow.

XIV

Heard, have you? what? they have told
you he never repented his sin.
How do they know it? are *they* his mother?
are *you* of his kin? ⁷⁰
Heard! have you ever heard, when the
storm on the downs began,
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the
sea that 'ill moan like a man?

XV

Election, Election, and Reprobation — it's
all very well.
But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall
not find him in hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that the
Lord has look'd into my care,
And He means me I'm sure to be happy
with Willy, I know not where.

XVI

And if *he* be lost — but to save *my* soul,
that is all your desire —
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my
boy be gone to the fire?
I have been with God in the dark — go, go,
you may leave me alone —
You never have borne a child — you are
just as hard as a stone. 80

XVII

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that
you mean to be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for my
Willy's voice in the wind —
The snow and the sky so bright — he used
but to call in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the church
and not from the gibbet — for hark!
Nay — you can hear it yourself — it is
coming — shaking the walls —
Willy — the moon's in a cloud — Good-
night. I am going. He calls.

THE NORTHERN COBBLER

Founded on a fact which the poet heard in
early youth. The footnotes are his own.

I

WAÄIT till our Sally cooms in, fur thou
mun a' sights¹ to tell.
Eh, but I be maäin glad to seeä tha sa 'arty
an' well.

¹ The vowels *äi*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such words as *craïin'*, *daiin'*, *whai'*, *ai* (I), etc., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it hetter to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and to trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation.

'Cast awaäy on a disolut land wi' a vartical
soon¹!'
Strange fur to goä fur to think what saäilors
a' seëan an' a' doon;
'Summat to drink — sa 'ot?' I 'a nowt
but Adam's wine:
What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to the
'eät o' the line?

II

'What's i' tha bottle a-stanning theer?'
I'll tell tha. Gin.
But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun goä
fur it down to the inn.
Naäy — fur I be maäin-glad, but thaw tha
was iver sa dry,
Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle theer, an'
I'll tell tha why. 10

III

Meä an' thy sister was married, when wur
it? back-end o' June,
Ten year sin', and wa 'greed as well as a
fiddle i' tune.
I could fettle and clump owd booöts and
shoes wi' the best on 'em all,
As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to
Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.
We was busy as beeäs i' the bloom an' as
'appy as 'art could think,
An' then the baby wur burn, and then I
taäkes to the drink.

IV

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad, thaw I
be hafe shaämed on it now,
We could sing a good song at the Plow, we
could sing a good song at the Plow;
Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd an'
hurted my luck,²
An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soomtimes slaäpe
down i' the squad an' the muck: 20
An' once I fowt wi' the taäilor — not hafe
ot a man, my lad —
Fur he scrawm'd an' scrated my faäce like
a cat, an' it maäde 'er sa mad
That Sally she turn'd a tongue-banger,³ an'
raäted ma, 'Sottin' thy braäins
Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an' hawm-
in'⁴ about i' the laänes,
Soä shy-droonk that tha doesn not touch
thy 'at to the Squire;'

¹ The *oo* short, as in 'wood.' ² Hip.

³ Scold.

⁴ Lounging.

An' I looök'd cock-eyed at my noäse an' I
seeäd 'im a-gittin' o' fire;
But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hallus as
dronk as a king,
Foälks' coostom flitted awaäy like a kite
wi' a brokken string.

V

An' Sally she wesh'd foälks' cloäths to keep
the wolf fro' the door,
Eh, but the moor she riled me, she druv
me to drink the moor,³⁰
Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd,
wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur 'id,
An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde, and I
weär'd it o' liquor, I did.

VI

An' one night I cooms 'oäm like a bull
gotten loose at a faäir,
An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an' cryin'
and teärin' 'er aäir,
An' I tumbled athurt the craädle an'
sweär'd as I'd break ivry stick
O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied our
Sally a kick,
An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs, an' she
an' the babby beäl'd,¹
Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did nor a
mortal beäst o' the feäld.

VII

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I seeäd
that our Sally went laämed
Cos' o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur
dreädful ashaämed;⁴⁰
An' Sally wur sloomy² an' draggel-taäil'd
in an owd turn gown,
An' the babby's faäce wur'n't wesh'd, an'
the 'ole 'ouse hupside down.

VIII

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty an'
neät an' sweät,
Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower fro'
'eäd to feeät:
An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied 'er
by Thursby thurn;
Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of a
Sunday at murn,
Could n't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-mountin'
oop 'igher an' 'igher,

¹ Bellowed, cried out.

² Sluggish, out of spirits.

An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e shined
like a sparkle o' fire.
' Does n't tha see 'im ? ' she axes, ' fur I can
see 'im; ' an' I
Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as danced
in 'er pratty blue eye;⁵⁰
An' I says, ' I mun gie tha a kiss, ' an'
Sally says, ' Noä, thou moänt, '
But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother, an'
Sally says, ' doänt ! '

IX

An' when we coom'd into meeätin', at fust
she wur all in a tew,
But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn together like
birds on a beugh;
An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' hell-fire an' the
loov o' God fur men,
An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally gied me
a kiss ov 'ersen.

X

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick like
Saätan as fell
Down out o' heaven i' hell-fire — thaw
theer 's naw drinkin' i' hell;
Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep the wolf
fro' the door,
All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er as
well as afoor.⁶⁰

XI

Sa like a graät num-cumpus I blubber'd
awaäy o' the bed —
' Weänt niver do it naw moor; ' an' Sally
looökt up an' she said,
' I 'll upwad it ' tha weänt; thou 'rt like the
rest o' the men,
Thou 'll goä sniffin' about the tap till tha
does it ageän.
Theer 's thy hennemy, man, an' I knaws,
as knaws tha sa well,
That, if tha seeäs 'im an' smells 'im tha 'll
foller 'im slick into hell.'

XII

' Naäy, ' says I, ' fur I weänt goä sniffin'
about the tap.'
' Weänt tha ? ' she says, an' mysen I thowt
i' mysen ' mayhap.'
' Noä: ' an' I started awaäy like a shot, an'
down to the hinn,
An' I browt what tha seeäs stannin' theer,
yon big black bottle o' gin.⁷⁰

¹ I 'll uphold it.

XIII

'That caps owt,'¹ says Sally, an' saw she
begins to cry,
But I puts it inter 'er 'aunds an' I says to
'er, 'Sally,' says I,
'Stan' 'im theer i' the naäme o' the Lord
an' the power ov 'is graäcë,
Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll loök my hennemy
straäit i' the faäce,
Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let ma
looök at 'im then,
'E seeäms naw moor nor watter, an' 'e 's the
divil's oän sen.'

XIV

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, could n't do
naw work an' all,
Nasty an' snaggy an' shaäky, an' poonch'd
my 'and wi' the hawl,
But she wur a power o' coomfut, an' sat-
tled 'ersen o' my knee,
An' coäxd an' coodled me oop till ageän I
feel'd mysen free. 80

XV

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foälk stood
a-gawmin'² in,
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd instead
of a quart o' gin;
An' some on 'em said it wur watter — an'
I wur chousin' the wife,
Fur I could n't 'owd 'aunds off gin, wur it
nobbut to sääve my life;
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick ov 'is
airm, an' 'e shaws it to me,
'Feäl thou this! thou can't graw this upo'
watter!' says he.
An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just as
candles was lit,
'Thou moänt do it,' he says, 'tha mun
break 'im off bit by bit.'
'Thou 'rt but a Methody-man,' says Par-
son, and laäys down 'is 'at,
An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, 'but I re-
specks tha fur that;' 90
An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks down
fro' the 'All to see,
An' 'e spansk 'is 'and into miue, 'fur I re-
specks tha,' says 'e;
An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a wind
fro' far an' wide,

¹ That 's beyond everything.

² Staring vacantly.

And browt me the booöts to be cobbled fro'
hafe the coontryside.

XVI

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall stan' to
my dying daäy;
I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in anoother
kind of a waäy,
Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I keeäps
'im cleän an' bright,
Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts 'im, an'
puts 'im back i' the light.

XVII

Would n't a pint a' sarved as well as a
quart? Naw doubt;
But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi' an'
fowt it out. 100
Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I cared
to taäste,
But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt, fur I'd
feäl mysen cleän disgräcëd.

XVIII

An' once I said to the Missis, 'My lass,
when I cooms to die,
Smash the bottle to smithers, the divil 's
in 'im,' said I.
But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if Sally
be left aloän,
I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an' taäke 'im
afoor the Throän.

XIX

Coom thou 'eer — you laädy a-steppin'
along the streeät,
Does n't tha knaw 'er — sa pratty, an' feät,
an' neät, an' sweeät?
Look at the cloäths on 'er hack, thebbe
ammost spick-span-new,
An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a codlin
wesh'd i' the dew. 110

XX

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we be
a-goin to dine,
Baäcon an' taätes, an' a beslings-puddin'¹
an' Adam's wine;
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun goä fur
it down to the Hinn,
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood, noä,
not fur Sally's oän kin.

¹ A pudding made with the first milk of the
cow after calving.

THE REVENGE

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

According to Sir Walter Raleigh, who wrote a 'Report of the truth of the fight about the Iles of Açores this last Sommer,' the engagement began at 3 P. M. on the 31st of August, Old Style, or the 10th of September, New Style, in the year 1591. Gervase Markham, who commemorated the event in a poem entitled 'The Most Honorable Tragedie of Sir Richard Grinuile, Knight' (1595), gives the main facts in his 'Argument,' or introduction, as follows:—

'Sir Richard *Grinuile*, lying at anchor neere vnto *Flores*, one of the westerlie Ilands of the *Azores*, the last of August in the after noone, had intelligence by one Captayne *Midleton* of the aproch of the Spanish *Armada*, beeing in number fiftie three saile of great ships, and fiftene thousand men to man them. Sir *Richard*, staying to recouer his men which were vpon the Iland, and disdayning to fie from his Countries enemy, not beeing able to recouer the winde, was instantie inuironed with that hudge Nauie, betweene whom began a dreadful fight, continuing the space of fiftene howers, in which conflict, Sir *Richard* sunck the great *San Phillip of Spaine*, the *Ascention of Siuel*, the Admirall of the *Hulks*, and two other great *Armados*; about midnight Sir *Richard* received a wound through the bodie, and as he was dressing, was shot againe into the head, and his Surgian slaine. Sir *Richard* mayntained the fight, till he had not one corne of powder left, nor one whole pike, nor fortie lyuing men; which seeing, hee would haue sunke his owne ship, but that was gaine-stood by the Maister thereof, who contrarie to his will came to composition with the *Spanyards*, and so saued those which were left aliue. Sir *Richard* dyed aboard the Admyrall of *Spayne*, about the fourth day after the battaile, and was mightlie bewaild of all men.'

I

AT Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away:
'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!'
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: 'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,

And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?'

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain.'

III

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the baillast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumb-screw and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
'Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set.'
And Sir Richard said again: 'We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet.'

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we
 roar'd a hurrah, and so
 The little Revenge ran on sheer into the
 heart of the foe,
 With her hundred fighters on deck, and her
 ninety sick below;
 For half of their fleet to the right and half
 to the left were seen,
 And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long
 sea-lane between.

VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down
 from their decks and laugh'd,
 Thousands of their seamen made mock at
 the mad little craft
 Running on and on, till delay'd
 By their mountain-like San Philip that, of
 fifteen hundred tons, ⁴⁰
 And up-shadowing high above us with her
 yawning tiers of guns,
 Took the breath from our sails, and we
 stay'd.

VII

And while now the great San Philip hung
 above us like a cloud
 Whence the thunderbolt will fall
 Long and loud,
 Four galleons drew away
 From the Spanish fleet that day,
 And two upon the larboard and two upon
 the starboard lay,
 And the battle-thunder broke from them
 all.

VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she be-
 thought herself and went, ⁵⁰
 Having that within her womb that had left
 her ill content;
 And the rest they came aboard us, and they
 fought us hand to hand,
 For a dozen times they came with their
 pikes and musqueteers,
 And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a
 dog that shakes his ears
 When he leaps from the water to the land.

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came
 out far over the summer sea,
 But never a moment ceased the fight of the
 one and the fifty-three.

Ship after ship, the whole night long, their
 high-built galleons came,
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, with
 her battle-thunder and flame; ⁵⁹
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew
 back with her dead and her shame.
 For some were sunk and many were shat-
 ter'd, and so could fight us no more —
 God of battles, was ever a battle like this
 in the world before ?

X

For he said, 'Fight on ! fight on !'
 Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
 And it chanced that, when half of the short
 summer night was gone,
 With a grisly wound to be drest he had
 left the deck,
 But a bullet struck him that was dressing
 it suddenly dead,
 And himself he was wounded again in the
 side and the head,
 And he said, 'Fight on ! fight on !'

XI

And the night went down, and the sun
 smiled out far over the summer sea,
 And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay
 round us all in a ring; ⁷¹
 But they dared not touch us again, for they
 fear'd that we still could sting,
 So they watch'd what the end would
 be.
 And we had not fought them in vain,
 But in perilous plight were we,
 Seeing forty of our poor hundred were
 slain,
 And half of the rest of us maim'd for
 life
 In the crash of the caannonades and the
 desperate strife;
 And the sick men down in the hold were
 most of them stark and cold,
 And the pikes were all broken or bent, and
 the powder was all of it spent; ⁸⁰
 And the masts and the rigging were lying
 over the side;
 But Sir Richard cried in his English pride:
 'We have fought such a fight for a day
 and a night
 As may never be fought again !
 We have won great glory, my men !
 And a day less or more
 At sea or ashore,
 We die — does it matter when ?

Sink me the ship, Master Gunner — sink
her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the
hands of Spain!'

90

XII

And the gunner said, 'Ay, ay,' but the sea-
men made reply:
'We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we
yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike
another blow.'
And the lion there lay dying, and they
yielded to the foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flag-
ship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir
Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their
courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
'I have fought for Queen and Faith like
a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is
bound to do.
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Gren-
ville die!'
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been
so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of
Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and
his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for
aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honor down
into the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a
swarthier alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and
long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had
ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the
weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great
gale blew,

And a wave like the wave that is raised by
an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails
and their masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the
shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down
by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

THE SISTERS

THEY have left the doors ajar; and by
their clash,
And prelude on the keys, I know the
song,
Their favorite — which I call 'The Tables
Turn'd.'
Evelyn begins it, 'O diviner Air.'

EVELYN

O diviner Air,
Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust, the
glare,
Far from out the west in shadowing
showers,
Over all the meadow baked and bare,
Making fresh and fair
All the bowers and the flowers,
Fainting flowers, faded bowers,
Over all this weary world of ours,
Breathe, diviner Air!

A sweet voice that — you scarce could bet-
ter that!
Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

EDITH

O diviner light,
Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon with
night,
Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding
showers,
Far from out a sky for ever bright,
Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,
Over all the meadow's drowning flowers,
Over all this ruin'd world of ours,
Break, diviner light!

Marvellously like, their voices — and them-
selves!
Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the
other,

As one is somewhat graver than the other —

Edith than Evelyn. Your good uncle, whom

You count the father of your fortune, longs

For this alliance. Let me ask you then, Which voice most takes you? for I do not doubt,

Being a watchful parent, you are taken With one or other; tho' sometimes I fear You may be flickering, fluttering in a doubt

Between the two — which must not be — which might

Be death to one. They both are beautiful; Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says The common voice, if one may trust it, she?

No! but the paler and the graver, Edith. Woo her and gain her then; no wavering, boy!

The graver is perhaps the one for you Who jest and laugh so easily and so well. For love will go by contrast, as by likes.

No sisters ever prized each other more. Not so; their mother and her sister loved More passionately still.

But that my best And oldest friend, your uncle, wishes it, And that I know you worthy every way To be my son, I might, perchance, be loath

To part them, or part from them; and yet one

Should marry, or all the broad lands in your view

From this bay-window — which our house has held

Three hundred years — will pass collaterally.

My father with a child on either knee, A hand upon the head of either child, Smoothing their locks, as golden as his own

Were silver, 'get them wedded' would he say.

And once my prattling Edith ask'd him 'why?'

'Ay, why?' said he, 'for why should I go lame?'

Then told them of his wars, and of his wound.

For see — this wine — the grape from whence it flow'd

Was blackening on the slopes of Portugal, When that brave soldier, down the terrible ridge

Plunged in the last fierce charge at Waterloo,

And caught the laming bullet. He left me this,

Which yet retains a memory of its youth, As I of mine, and my first passion. Come! Here's to your happy union with my child!

Yet must you change your name — no fault of mine!

You say that you can do it as willingly As birds make ready for their bridal-time By change of feather; for all that, my boy, Some birds are sick and sullen when they moult.

An odd and worthy name! but mine that stirr'd

Among our civil wars and earlier too Among the Roses, the more venerable.

I care not for a name — no fault of mine. Once more — a happier marriage than my own!

You see yon Lombard poplar on the plain.

The highway running by it leaves a breadth Of sward to left and right, where, long ago,

One bright May morning in a world of song,

I lay at leisure, watching overhead The aerial poplar wave, an amber spire.

I dozed; I woke. An open landaulet Whirl'd by, which, after it had past me, show'd

Turning my way, the loveliest face on earth.

The face of one there sitting opposite, On whom I brought a strange unhappiness, That time I did not see.

Love at first sight May seem — with goodly rhyme and reason for it —

Possible — at first glimpse, and for a face Gone in a moment — strange. Yet once, when first

I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,

A moonless night with storm — one light-
ning-fork
Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I loiter'd
there
The full day after, yet in retrospect
That less than momentary thunder-sketch
Of lake and mountain conquers all the day.

The sun himself has limn'd the face for
me.
Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as well.
For look you here — the shadows are too
deep, ¹⁰¹
And like the critic's blurring comment
make
The veriest beauties of the work appear
The darkest faults; the sweet eyes frown,
the lips
Seem but a gash. My sole memorial
Of Edith — no, the other, — both indeed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro'
sense and soul
And by the poplar vanish'd — to be found
Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the tall
Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping
beechen boughs ¹¹⁰
Of our New Forest. I was there alone.
The phantom of the whirling landaulet
For ever past me by; when one quick peal
Of laughter drew me thro' the glimmering
glades
Down to the snowlike sparkle of a cloth
On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face again,
My Rosalind in this Arden — Edith — all
One bloom of youth, health, beauty, happi-
ness,
And moved to merriment at a passing jest.

There one of those about her knowing
me ¹²⁰
Call'd me to join them; so with these I
spent
What seem'd my crowning hour, my day
of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccessfully,
The worse for her, for me! Was I con-
tent?
Ay — no, not quite; for now and then I
thought
Laziness, vague love-longings, the bright
May,
Had made a heated haze to magnify
The charm of Edith — that a man's ideal

Is high in heaven, and lodged with Plato's
God,
Not findable here — content, and not con-
tent, ¹³⁰
In some such fashion as a man may be
That having had the portrait of his friend
Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and says,
'Good! very like! not altogether he.'

As yet I had not bound myself by words,
Only, believing I loved Edith, made
Edith love me. Then came the day when I,
Flattering myself that all my doubts were
fools
Born of the fool this Age that doubts of
all — ¹³⁹
Not I that day of Edith's love or mine —
Had braced my purpose to declare my-
self.

I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.
The golden gates would open at a word.
I spoke it — told her of my passion, seen
And lost and found again, had got so far,
Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell — I
heard
Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the
doors —

On a sudden after two Italian years
Had set the blossom of her health again,
The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd —
there, ¹⁵⁰

There was the face, and altogether she.
The mother fell about the daughter's
neck,

The sisters closed in one another's arms,
Their people throng'd about them from the
hall,

And in the thick of question and reply
I fled the house, driven by one angel face,
And all the Furies.

I was bound to her;
I could not free myself in honor — bound
Not by the sounded letter of the word, ¹⁵⁶
But counter-pressures of the yielded hand
That timorously and faintly echoed mine,
Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of her
eyes

Upon me when she thought I did not see —
Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but could
I wed her
Loving the other? do her that great
wrong?
Had I not dream'd I loved her yester-
morn?

Had I not known where Love, at first a fear,
Grew after marriage to full height and
form ?

Yet after marriage, that mock-sister
there —

Brother-in-law — the fiery nearness of it —
Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood — ¹⁷¹
What end but darkness could ensue from
this

For all the three ? So Love and Honor
jarr'd,

Tho' Love and Honor join'd to raise the full
High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up and
down

Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote:

' My mother bids me ask ' — I did not tell
you —

A widow with less guile than many a child.
God help the wrinkled children that are
Christ's

As well as the plump cheek — she wrought
us harm, ¹⁸⁰

Poor soul, not knowing ! — ' Are you ill ? ' —
— so ran

The letter — ' you have not been here of
late.

You will not find me here. At last I go
On that long-promised visit to the North.
I told your wayside story to my mother
And Evelyn. She remembers you. Fare-
well.

Pray come and see my mother. Almost
blind

With ever-growing cataract, yet she thinks
She sees you when she hears. Again fare-
well.'

Cold words from one I had hoped to
warm so far ¹⁹⁰

That I could stamp my image on her
heart !

' Pray come and see my mother, and fare-
well.'

Cold, but as welcome as free airs of heaven
After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish,
strange !

What dwarfs are men ! my strangled van-
ity

Utter'd a stifled cry — to have vex't myself
And all in vain for her — cold heart or
none —

No bride for me. Yet so my path was clear
To win the sister.

Whom I woo'd and won.

For Evelyn knew not of my former suit,
Because the simple mother work'd upon ²⁰¹
By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of it.
And Edith would be bridesmaid on the day.

But on that day, not being all at ease,
I from the altar glancing back upon her,
Before the first ' I will ' was utter'd, saw
The bridesmaid pale, statue-like, passion-
less —

' No harm, no harm ' — I turn'd again, and
placed

My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke no
word, ²¹⁰

She wept no tear, but round my Evelyn
clung

In utter silence for so long, I thought,
' What, will she never set her sister free ? '

We left her, happy each in each, and
then,

As tho' the happiness of each in each
Were not enough, must fain have torrents,
lakes,

Hills, the great things of Nature and the
fair,

To lift us as it were from commonplace,
And help us to our joy. Better have sent
Our Edith thro' the glories of the earth, ²²⁰
To change with her horizon, if true Love
Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would not
live

Save that I think this gross hard-seeming
world

Is our misshaping vision of the Powers
Behind the world, that make our griefs our
gains.

For on the dark night of our marriage-
day

The great tragedian, that had quench'd
herself

In that assumption of the bridesmaid —
she

That loved me — our true Edith — her
brain broke ²³⁰

With over-acting, till she rose and fled
Beneath a pitiless rush of autumn rain
To the deaf church — to be let in — to
pray

Before *that* altar — so I think; and there

They found her beating the hard Protes-
tant doors.
She died and she was buried ere we knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak. At
once
The bright quick smile of Evelyn, that had
sunn'd
The morning of our marriage, past away.
And on our home-return the daily want ²⁴⁰
Of Edith in the house, the garden, still
Haunted us like her ghost; and by and by,
Either from that necessity for talk
Which lives with blindness, or plain inno-
cence
Of nature, or desire that her lost child
Should earn from both the praise of hero-
ism,
The mother broke her promise to the dead,
And told the living daughter with what
love
Edith had welcomed my brief wooing of
her, ²⁴⁹
And all her sweet self-sacrifice and death.

Henceforth that mystic bond betwixt the
twins —
Did I not tell you they were twins? — pre-
vail'd
So far that no caress could win my wife
Back to that passionate answer of full
heart
I had from her at first. Not that her
love,
Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power of
love,
Had lessen'd, but the mother's garulous
vail
For ever woke the unhappy Past again,
Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to be my
bride,
Put forth cold hands between us, and I
fear'd ²⁶⁰
The very fountains of her life were chill'd;
So took her thence, and brought her here,
and here
She bore a child, whom reverently we
call'd
Edith; and in the second year was born
A second — this I named from her own
self,
Evelyn; then two weeks — no more — she
join'd,
In and beyond the grave, that one she
loved.

Now in this quiet of declining life,
Thro' dreams by night and trances of the
day, ²⁶⁹
The sisters glide about me hand in hand,
Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell
One from the other, no, nor care to tell
One from the other, only know they come,
They smile upon me, till, remembering all
The love they both have borne me, and the
love
I bore them both — divided as I am
From either by the stillness of the grave —
I know not which of these I love the best.

But you love Edith; and her own true
eyes ²⁷⁹
Are traitors to her; our quick Evelyn —
The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they talk,
And not without good reason, my good
son —
Is yet untouch'd. And I that hold them
both
Dearest of all things — well, I am not
sure —
But if there lie a preference either way,
And in the rich vocabulary of Love
'Most dearest' be a true superlative —
I think I likewise love your Edith most.

THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL¹

The footnotes are the poet's own.

I

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha, my lass, fur new
Squire coom'd last night.
Butter an' heggs — yis — yis. I'll goä w'
tha back; all right;
Butter I warrants be prime, an' I warrants
the heggs be as well,
Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya breaks
the shell.

II

Sit thysen down fur a bit; hev a glass o'
cowslip wine!
I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as thaw
they was gells o' mine,
Fur then we was all es one, the Squire an'
'is darters an' me,
Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I niver
not took to she.

¹ See note on pronunciation, p. 456.

But Nelly, the last of the cletch,¹ I liked
 'er the fust on 'em all,
 Fur hoffens we talkt o' my darter es died
 o' the fever at fall;
 An' I thowt 't wur the will o' the Lord,
 but Miss Annie she said it wur
 draäins,
 Fur she hed n't naw coomfut in 'er, an'
 arn'd naw thanks fur 'er paäins.
 Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord, my childer, I
 han't gotten none!
 Sa new Squire 's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is
 'and, an' owd Squire 's gone.

III

Fur 'staäte be i' taäil, my lass — tha dosn'
 knaw what that be?
 But I knaws the law, I does, for the lawyer
 ha tow'd it me.
 'When theer 's naw 'eäd to a 'Ouse by
 the fault o' that ere maäle —
 The gells they counts fur nowt, and the
 next un he taäkes the taäil.'

IV

What be the next un like? can tha tell
 ony harm on 'im, lass? —
 Naäy sit down — naw 'urry — sa cowl! —
 hev another glass!
 Straänge an' cowl fur the time! we may
 happen a fall o' snaw —
 Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm, but
 I likes to knaw.
 An' I oäps es 'e beänt booöklarn'd; but 'e
 dosn' not coom fro' the shere;
 We 'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an' we
 haätes booöklarnin' ere.

V

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an
 niver lookt arter the land —
 Whoäts or turmutts or taätes — 'e 'd hallus
 a booök i' 'is 'and,
 Hallus aloän wi' 'is booöks, thaw nigh upo'
 seventy year.
 An' booöks, what 's booöks? thou knaws
 thebbe neyther 'ere nor theer.

VI

An' the gells, they hed n't naw taäils, an'
 the lawyer be tow'd it me
 That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he
 could n't cut down a tree!

¹ A brood of chickens.

"Drat the trees," says I, to be sewer I
 haätes 'em, my lass,
 Fur we puts the muck o' the land, an' they
 sucks the muck fro' the grass.

VII

An' Squire wur hallus a-smiliu', an' gied
 to the tramps goin' by —
 An' all o' the wust i' the parish — wi' hof-
 fens a drop in 'is eye.
 An' ivry darter o' Squire 's hed her awn
 ridin-erse to 'ersen,
 An' they rampaged about wi' their grooms,
 an' wus 'untin' arter the men,
 An' hallus a-dallackt¹ an' dizen'd out, an'
 a-buyin' new cloäthes,
 While 'e sit like a greät glimmer-gowk²
 wi' 'is glasses athurt 'is noäse,
 An' 'is noäse sa grufted wi' snuff as it
 could n't be scroob'd awaäy,
 Fur 'atween 'is readin' an' writin' 'e snift
 up a box in a daäy,
 An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor arter
 the birds wi' 'is gun,
 An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e leäved
 it to Charlie 'is son,
 An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds, but
 Charlie 'e catch'd the pike,
 Fur 'e warn't not burn to the land, an' 'e
 did n't take kind to it like;
 But I eärs es 'e 'd gie fur a howry³ owd
 book thutty pound an' moor,
 An' 'e 'd wrote an' owd book, his awn sen,
 sa I knaw'd es 'e 'd coom to be poor;
 An' 'e gied — I be fear'd fur to tell tha 'ow
 munch — fur an owd scatted stoän,
 An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land an' 'e
 got a brown pot an' a boän,
 An' 'e bowt owd money, es would n't goä,
 wi' good gowd o' the Queen,
 An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt an'
 which was a shaäme to be seen;
 But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e niver
 not seed to owt,
 An' 'e niver knawd nowt but booöks, an'
 booöks, as thou knaws, beänt nowt.

VIII

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she lived
 she kep' 'em all clear,
 Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed none
 of 'er darters 'ere;

¹ Overdressed in gay colors.

² Owl.

³ Filthy.

But arter she died we was all es one, the
 childer an' me,
 An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an' offens we
 hed 'em to tea.
 Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses 'ud
 talk o' their Missis's waäys,
 An' the Missis talk'd o' the lasses. — I'll
 tell tha some o' these daäys.
 Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck oop,
 like 'er mother afoor —
 'Er an' 'er blessed darter — they niver
 derken'd my door. 60

IX

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till 'e'd
 gotten a fright at last,
 An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's let-
 ters they foller'd sa fast;
 But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son, an' 'e
 says to 'im, meek as a mouse,
 'Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or the
 gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,
 Fur I finds es I he that i' debt, es I 'oäps es
 thou 'll 'elp me a hit,
 An' if thou 'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil I
 may saäve mysen yit.'

X

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e
 sweärs, an' 'e says to 'im, 'Noä.
 I've gotten the 'staäte by the taäil an' be
 dang'd if I iver let goä!
 Coom! coom! feyther, 'e says, 'why
 should n't thy hooöks be sowd!
 I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe worth
 their weight i' 'gowd.' 70

XI

Heäps an' heäps o' booäks, I ha' seed 'em,
 belong'd to the Squire,
 But the lasses 'ed teärd out läèves i' the
 middle to kindle the fire;
 Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd nigh
 to nowt at the sääle,
 And Squire were at Charlie ageän to git
 'im to cut off 'is taäil.

XII

Ya would n't find Charlie's likes — 'e were
 that outdacious at 'oäm,
 Not thaw ya went fur to räake out hell wi'
 a small-tooth coämb —
 Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an' droonk
 wi' the farmer's sääle,
 Mad wi' the lasses an' all — an' 'e would n't
 cut off the taäil.

XIII

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck; and a
 thurn be a-grawin' theer,
 I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the maäy es
 I seed it to-year — 80
 Theerabouts Charlie joompt — and it gied
 me a scare 'tother night,
 Fur I thowt i' wur Charlie's ghoäst i' the
 derk, fur it looökt sa white.
 'Billy,' says 'e, 'hev a joomp!' — thaw the
 banks o' the beck be sa high,
 Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un, thaw
 niver a hair wur awry;
 But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an'
 Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,
 Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur 'e lost
 'is taäil i' the beck.

XIV

Sa 'is taäil wur lost an' 'is booöks wur gone
 an' 'is boy wur deäd,
 An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but 'e
 niver not lift oop 'is 'eäd.
 Hallus a soft un, Squire! an' 'e smiled, fur
 'e hed n't naw friend,
 Sa feyther an' son was buried together, an'
 this wur the hend. 90

XV

An' Parson as hesn't the call, nor the
 mooney, but hes the pride,
 'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp o' the
 tother side;
 But I beänt that sewer es the Lord, how-
 siver they praäy'd an' praäy'd,
 Lets them inter 'even eäsy es läèves their
 debts to be paäid.
 Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo' poor
 owd Squire i' the wood,
 An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur they
 weänt niver coom to naw good.

XVI

Fur Molly the long un she walkt awaäy wi'
 a hofficer lad,
 An' nawbody 'eärd on 'er sin', sa o' coorse
 she be gone to the bad!
 An' Lucy wur lääme o' one leg, sweet'arts
 she niver 'ed none —
 Straänge an' unheppen¹ Miss Lucy! we
 naämed her 'Dot an' 'gaw one!' 100

¹ Ungainly, awkward.

An' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics, wi'out
 ony harm i' the legs,
 An' the fever 'ed baaked Jinny's 'eäd as
 bald as one o' them heggs,
 An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as big i'
 the mouth as a cow,
 An' saw she mun hammergrate,¹ lass, or
 she weänt git a maäte onyhow!
 An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me afoor
 my awn foälks to my faäce,
 • A hignorant village wife es 'ud hev to be
 larn'd her awn plaäce,
 Hes fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes now
 be a-grawin' sa howd,
 I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beänt not
 fit to be towd!

XVII

Sa I did n't not taäke it kindly ov owd
 Miss Annie to saäy
 Es I should be talkin' ageän 'em, es soon
 es they went awaäy,¹¹⁰
 Fur laws! 'ow I cried when they went,
 an' our Nelly she gied me 'er 'and,
 Fur I'd ha done owt for the Squire an' 'is
 gells es belong'd to the land;
 Booöks, es I said afoor, thebbe neyther
 'ere nor theer!
 But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs fur
 huppuds o' twenty year.

XVIII

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd, sa I
 hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,
 An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an' they
 knaw'd what a hegg wur an' all;
 Hugger-mugger they lived, but they was n't
 that eäsy to pleäse,
 Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they
 laäid big heggs es tha seeäs;
 An' I niver puts saäme² i' my butter —
 they does it at Willis's farm;
 Taäste another drop o' the wine — tweänt
 do tha naw harm.¹²⁰

XIX

Sa new Squire 's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is
 'and, an' owd Squire 's gone;
 I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter my
 night-cap wur on;

¹ Emigrate.² Lard.

Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he
 coom'd last night sa laäte —
 Pluksh!!! the hens i' the peäs! why
 did n't tha hesp the gaäte?

IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

EMMIE

'It should be remembered that this is a
 little drama, in which the Hospital Nurse, not
 the Poet, is supposed to be speaking through-
 out' (Palgrave).

I

OUR doctor had call'd in another, I never
 had seen him before,
 But he sent a chill to my heart when I saw
 him come in at the door,
 Fresh from the surgery-schools of France
 and of other lands —
 Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest, big
 merciless hands!
 Wonderful cures he had done, O, yes, but
 they said too of him
 He was happier using the knife than in try-
 ing to save the limb,
 And that I can well believe, for he look'd
 so coarse and so red,
 I could think he was one of those who would
 break their jests on the dead,
 And mangle the living dog that had loved
 him and fawn'd at his knee —
 Drench'd with the hellish ooral — that
 ever such things should be!

II

Here was a boy — I am sure that some of
 our children would die
 But for the voice of love, and the smile,
 and the comforting eye —
 Here was a boy in the ward, every bone
 seem'd out of its place —
 Caught in a mill and crush'd — it was all
 but a hopeless case;
 And he handled him gently enough: but his
 voice and his face were not kind,
 And it was but a hopeless case, he had seen
 it and made up his mind,
 And he said to me roughly, 'The lad will
 need little more of your care.'

¹ A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands
 to scare trespassing fowl.

'All the more need,' I told him, 'to seek
the Lord Jesus in prayer;
They are all His children here, and I pray
for them all as my own.'
But he turn'd to me, 'Ay, good woman,
can prayer set a broken bone?'
Then he mutter'd half to himself, but I
know that I heard him say,
'All very well — but the good Lord Jesus
has had his day.'

III

Had? has it come? It has only dawn'd.
It will come by and by.
O, how could I serve in the wards if the
hope of the world were a lie?
How could I bear with the sights and the
loathsome smells of disease
But that He said, 'Ye do it to me, when ye
do it to these?'

IV

So he went. And we past to this ward
where the younger children are laid.
Here is the cot of our orphan, our darling,
our meek little maid;
Empty, you see, just now! We have lost
her who loved her so much —
Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sensitive
plant to the touch.
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often
moved me to tears,
Hers was the gratefullest heart I have
found in a child of her years —
Nay you remember our Emmie; you used
to send her the flowers.
How she would smile at 'em, play with 'em,
talk to 'em hours after hours!
They that can wander at will where the
works of the Lord are reveal'd
Little guess what joy can be got from a
cowslip out of the field;
Flowers to these 'spirits in prison' are all
they can know of the spring,
They freshen and sweeten the wards like
the waft of an angel's wing.
And she lay with a flower in one hand and
her thin hands crost on her breast —
Wan, but as pretty as heart can desire, and
we thought her at rest,
Quietly sleeping — so quiet, our doctor said,
'Poor little dear,
Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she 'll
never live thro' it, I fear.'

V

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as far
as the head of the stair,
Then I 'return'd to the ward; the child
did n't see I was there.

VI

Never since I was nurse had I been so
grieved and so vext!
Emmie had heard him. Softly she call'd
from her cot to the next,
'He says I shall never live thro' it; O An-
nie, what shall I do?'
Annie consider'd. 'If I,' said the wise
little Annie, 'was you,
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to help
me, for, Emmie, you see,
It's all in the picture there: "Little chil-
dren should come to me" —
Meaning the print that you gave us, I
find that it always can please
Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with
children about his knees.
'Yes, and I will,' said Emmie, 'but then if
I call to the Lord,
How should he know that it's me? such a
lot of beds in the ward!'
That was a puzzle for Annie. Again she
consider'd and said:
'Emmie, you put out your arms, and you
leave 'em outside on the bed —
The Lord has so *much* to see to! but, Em-
mie, you tell it him plain,
It's the little girl with her arms lying out
on the counterpane.'

VII

I had sat three nights by the child — I
could not watch her for four —
My brain had begun to reel — I felt I
could do it no more.
That was my sleeping-night, but I thought
that it never would pass.
There was a thunderclap once, and a clatter
of hail on the glass,
And there was a phantom cry that I heard
as I tost about,
The motherless bleat of a lamb in the
storm and the darkness without;
My sleep was broken besides with dreams
of the dreadful knife
And fears for our delicate Emmie who
scarce would escape with her life;

Then in the gray of the morning it seem'd
 she stood by me and smiled,
 And the doctor came at his hour, and we
 went to see to the child.

VIII

He had brought his ghastly tools; we be-
 lieved her asleep again —
 Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying out
 on the counterpane —
 Say that His day is done! Ah, why should
 we care what they say?
 The Lord of the children had heard her,
 and Emmie had past away.

DEDICATORY POEM TO THE PRINCESS ALICE

The Princess Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse-
 Darmstadt, died on the 14th of December,
 1878, aged thirty-five years.

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that
 which lived
 True life live on — and if the fatal kiss,
 Born of true life and love, divorce thee
 not
 From earthly love and life — if what we
 call
 The spirit flash not all at once from out
 This shadow into Substance — then per-
 haps
 The mellow'd murmur of the people's
 praise
 From thine own State, and all our breadth
 of realm,
 Where Love and Longing dress thy deeds
 in light,
 Ascends to thee; and this March morn that
 sees
 Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-bloom
 Break thro' the yews and cypress of thy
 grave,
 And thine Imperial mother smile again,
 May send one ray to thee! and who can
 tell —
 Thou — England's England-loving daugh-
 ter — thou
 Dying so English thou wouldst have her
 flag

Borne on thy coffin — where is he can
 swear
 But that some broken gleam from our poor
 earth
 May touch thee, while, remembering thee,
 I lay
 At thy pale feet this ballad of the deeds
 Of England, and her banner in the East?

THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW

The events recorded in the poem occurred
 during the Sepoy Rebellion in British India,
 in 1857. 'Sir Henry Lawrence took charge of
 Lucknow as Resident in March of that year.
 The spread of rebellion in June confined him
 to the defence of the city, where he died of
 wounds on July 4. Brigadier Inglis, in suc-
 cession, then defended Lucknow for twelve
 weeks until it was relieved on September 25
 by General Havelock, to whom Sir James Out-
 ram (who accompanied as volunteer) had gen-
 erously ceded the exploit' (Palgrave).

I

BANNER of England, not for a season, O
 banner of Britain, hast thou
 Floated in conquering battle or flapt to the
 battle-cry!
 Never with mightier glory than when we
 had rear'd thee on high
 Flying at top of the roofs in the ghastly
 siege of Lucknow —
 Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but ever
 we raised thee anew,
 And ever upon the topmost roof our banner
 of England blew.

II

Frail were the works that defended the
 hold that we held with our lives —
 Women and children among us, God help
 them, our children and wives!
 Hold it we might — and for fifteen days or
 for twenty at most.
 'Never surrender, I charge you, but every
 man die at his post!'
 Voice of the dead whom we loved, our
 Lawrence the best of the brave;
 Cold were his brows when we kiss'd him —
 we laid him that night in his grave.

'Every man die at his post!' and there
 hail'd on our houses and halls
 Death from their rifle-bullets, and death
 from their cannon-balls,
 Death in our innermost chamber, and death
 at our slight barricade,
 Death while we stood with the musket, and
 death while we stoop to the spade,
 Death to the dying, and wounds to the
 wounded, for often there fell,
 Striking the hospital wall, crashing thro'
 it, their shot and their shell,
 Death—for their spies were among us,
 their marksmen were told of our
 best,

So that the brute bullet broke thro' the
 brain that could think for the rest; ²⁰
 Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and
 bullets would rain at our feet—
 Fire from ten thousand at once of the rebels
 that girdled us round—
 Death at the glimpse of a finger from over
 the breadth of a street,
 Death from the heights of the mosque and
 the palace, and death in the ground!
 Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine! down,
 down! and creep thro' the hole!
 Keep the revolver in hand! you can hear
 him—the murderous mole!
 Quiet, ah! quiet—wait till the point of the
 pickaxe be thro'!
 Click with the pick, coming nearer and
 nearer again than before—
 Now let it speak, and you fire, and the
 dark pioneer is no more;
 And ever upon the topmost roof our banner
 of England blew! ³⁰

III

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many
 times, and it chanced on a day
 Soon as the blast of that underground
 thunder-clap echo'd away,
 Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur like
 so many fiends in their hell—
 Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on volley,
 and yell upon yell—
 Fiercely on all the defences our myriad
 enemy fell.
 What have they done? where is it? Out
 yonder. Guard the Redan!
 Storm at the Water-gate! storm at the
 Bailey-gate! storm, and it ran
 Surging and swaying all round us, as ocean
 on every side

Plunges and heaves at a bank that is daily
 drown'd by the tide—
 So many thousands that, if they be bold
 enough, who shall escape? ⁴⁰
 Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall
 know we are soldiers and men!
 Ready! take aim at their leaders—their
 masses are gapp'd with our grape—
 Backward they reel like the wave, like the
 wave flinging forward again,
 Flying and foil'd at the last by the handful
 they could not subdue;
 And ever upon the topmost roof our banner
 of England blew.

IV

Handful of men as we were, we were Eng-
 lish in heart and in limb,
 Strong with the strength of the race to
 command, to obey, to endure,
 Each of us fought as if hope for the garri-
 son hung but on him;
 Still—could we watch at all points? we
 were every day fewer and fewer.
 There was a whisper among us, but only a
 whisper that past: ⁵⁰
 'Children and wives—if the tigers leap
 into the fold unawares—
 Every man die at his post—and the foe
 may outlive us at last—
 Better to fall by the hands that they love,
 than to fall into theirs!'
 Roar upon roar in a moment two mines by
 the enemy sprung
 Clove into perilous chasms our walls and
 our poor palisades.
 Rifleman, true is your heart, but be sure
 that your hand be as true!
 Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed
 are your flank fusillades—
 Twice do we hurl them to earth from the
 ladders to which they had clung,
 Twice from the ditch where they shelter
 we drive them with hand-grenades;
 And ever upon the topmost roof our banner
 of England blew. ⁶⁰

V

Then on another wild morning another wild
 earthquake out-tore
 Clean from our lines of defence ten or
 twelve good paces or more.
 Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden there
 from the light of the sun—

One has leapt up on the breach, crying out:
 'Follow me, follow me!' —
 Mark him — he falls! then another, and
him too, and down goes he.
 Had they been bold enough then, who can
 tell but the traitors bad won?
 Boardings and rafters and door — an em-
 brace! make way for the gun!
 Now double-charge it with grape! It is
 charged and we fire, and they
 run.
 Praise to our Indian brothers, and let the
 dark face have his due!
 Thanks to the kindly dark faces who
 fought with us, faithful and few, ⁷⁰
 Fought with the bravest among us, and
 drove them, and smote them, and
 slew,
 That ever upon the topmost roof our ban-
 ner in India blew.

VI

Men will forget what we suffer and not
 what we do. We can fight!
 But to be soldier all day, and be sentinel
 all thro' the night —
 Ever the mine and assault, our sallies, their
 lying alarms,
 Bugles and drums in the darkness, and
 shoutings and soundings to arms,
 Ever the labor of fifty that had to be done
 by five,
 Ever the marvel among us that one should
 be left alive,
 Ever the day with its traitorous death from
 the loopholes around,
 Ever the night with its coffinless corpse to
 be laid in the ground, ⁸⁰
 Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge
 of cataract skies,
 Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite
 torment of flies,
 Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing
 over an English field,
 Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that
would not be heal'd,
 Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-
 pitiless knife, —
 Torture and trouble in vain, — for it never
 could save us a life.
 Valor of delicate women who tended the
 hospital bed,
 Horror of women in travail among the
 dying and dead,

Grief for our perishing children, and never
 a moment for grief,
 Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes
 of relief, ⁹⁰
 Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd
 for all that we knew —
 Then day and night, day and night, coming
 down on the still-shatter'd walls
 Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands
 of cannon-balls —
 But ever upon the topmost roof our banner
 of England blew.

VII

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true what
 was told by the scout,
 Outram and Havelock breaking their way
 through the fell mutineers?
 Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing
 again in our ears!
 All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubi-
 lant shout,
 Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer
 with conquering cheers,
 Sick from the hospital echo them, women
 and children come out, ¹⁰⁰
 Blessing the wholesome white faces of
 Havelock's good inslayers,
 Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the High-
 lander wet with their tears!
 Dance to the pibroch! — saved! we are
 saved! — is it you? is it you?
 Saved by the valor of Havelock, saved by
 the blessing of heaven!
 'Hold it for fifteen days!' we have held it
 for eighty-seven!
 And ever aloft on the palace roof the old
 banner of England blew.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD
COBHAM

(IN WALES)

Sir John Oldcastle, known in his time as 'the good Lord Cobham,' was an ardent Wicliffite. In the reign of Henry V., he was accused of heresy and imprisoned in the Tower, but succeeded in escaping and hid himself in Wales. A reward of a thousand marks was offered for his capture. Four years later he was taken, and, being reckoned a traitor as well as a heretic, was

hung up alive in chains, and burned to death
by a fire kindled under the gallows.

My friend should meet me somewhere
hereabout
To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one, I
trow —
I read no more the prisoner's mute wail
Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless
stone;
I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or
none,
For I am emptier than a friar's brains;
But God is with me in this wilderness,
These wet black passes and foam-churning
chasms —
And God's free air, and hope of better
things. 10

I would I knew their speech; not now to
glean,
Not now — I hope to do it — some scat-
ter'd ears,
Some ears for Christ in this wild field of
Wales —
But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue
that wagg'd
They said with such heretical arrogance
Against the proud archbishop Arundel —
So much God's cause was fluent in it — is
here
But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;
'Bara!' — what use? The shepherd, when
I speak,
Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard 20
'Dim Saesneg,' passes, wroth at things of
old —
No fault of mine. Had he God's word in
Welsh
He might be kindlier; happily come the
day!

Not least art thou, thou little Bethlehem
In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born;
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,
Least, for in thee the word was born again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living word,
Who whilome spakest to the South in Greek
About the soft Mediterranean shores, 30
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,
As good need was — thou hast come to talk
our isle.

Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,
Must learn to use the tongues of all the
world.

Yet art thou thine own witness that thou
bringest
Not peace, a sword, a fire.

What did he say,

My frighted Wiclif - preacher whom I
crost
In flying hither? that one night a crowd
Through'd the waste field about the city
gates;
The king was on them suddenly with a
host. 40
Why there? they came to hear their
preacher. Then
Some cried on Cobham, on the good Lord
Cobham;
Ay, for they love me! but the king — nor
voice
Nor finger raised against him — took and
hang'd,
Took, hang'd and burnt — how many —
thirty-nine —
Call'd it rebellion — hang'd, poor friends,
as rebels
And burn'd alive as heretics! for your
priest
Labels — to take the king along with
him —
All heresy, treason; but to call men trai-
tors
May make men traitors.

Rose of Lancaster,

Red in thy birth, redder with household
war, 51
Now reddest with the blood of holy men,
Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster —
If somewhere in the North, as Rumor
sang
Fluttering the hawks of this crown-lusting
line —
By firth and loch thy silver sister grow,¹
That were my rose, there my allegiance
due.
Self-starved, they say — nay, murder'd,
doubtless dead.
So to this king I cleaved. My friend was
he,
Once my fast friend; I would have given
my life 60
To help his own from scathe, a thousand
lives

¹ Richard II.

To save his soul. He might have come to
learn
Our Wiclif's learning; but the worldly
priests,
Who fear the king's hard common-sense
should find
What rotten piles uphold their mason-
work,
Urge him to foreign war. O, had he
will'd
I might have stricken a lusty stroke for
him,
But he would not; far liever led my friend
Back to the pure and universal church,
But he would not — whether that heirless
flaw ⁷⁰
In his throne's title make him feel so frail,
He leans on Antichrist; or that his mind,
So quick, so capable in soldiership,
In matters of the faith, alas the while!
More worth than all the kingdoms of this
world,
Runs in the rut, a coward to the priest.

Burnt — good Sir Roger Acton, my dear
friend!
Burnt too, my faithful preacher, Bever-
ley!
Lord, give thou power to thy two wit-
nesses,
Lest the false faith make merry over
them! ⁸⁰
Two — nay, but thirty-nine have risen and
stand,
Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,
Before thy light, and cry continually —
Cry — against whom?

Him, who should bear the sword
Of Justice — what! the kingly, kindly
boy;
Who took the world so easily heretofore,
My boon companion, tavern-fellow — him
Who jibed and japed — in many a merry
tale
That shook our sides — at pardoners, sum-
moners,
Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries ⁹⁰
And nunneries, when the wild hour and the
wine
Had set the wits aflame.

Harry of Monmouth,
Or Amurath of the East?

Better to sink
Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and fling
Thy royalty back into the riotous fits

Of wine and harlotry — thy shame, and
mine,
Thy comrade — than to persecute the
Lord,
And play the Saul that never will be Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred
Arundel
Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the
flame, ¹⁰⁰
The mitre — sanction'd harlot draws his
clerks
Into the suburb — their hard celibacy,
Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness, molten
Into adulterous living, or such crimes
As holy Paul — a shame to speak of
them —

Among the heathen — Sanctuary granted
To bandit, thief, assassin — yea, to him
Who hacks his mother's throat — denied to
him
Who finds the Saviour in his mother
tongue.
The Gospel, the priest's pearl, flung down
to swine — ¹¹⁰
The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who will
come,
God willing, to outlearn the filthy friar.
Ah, rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel,
meant
To course and range thro' all the world,
should be
Tether'd to these dead pillars of the
Church —
Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,
Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack heart,
and life
Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how long,
O Lord, how long!

My friend should meet me here.
Here is the copse, the fountain and — a
cross! ¹²⁰
To thee, dead wood, I bow not head nor
knees.
Rather to thee, green boscaige, work of
God,
Black holly, and white-flower'd wayfaring-
tree!
Rather to thee, thou living water, drawn
By this good Wiclif mountain down from
heaven,
And speaking clearly in thy native tongue —
No Latin — He that thirsteth, come and
drink!

Eh ! how I anger'd Arundel asking me
 To worship Holy Cross ! I spread mine
 arms,
 God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and
 blood
 And holier. That was heresy. — My good
 friend ¹³⁰
 By this time should be with me. — 'Im-
 ages ?'
 'Bury them as God's truer images
 Are daily buried.' 'Heresy. — Penance ?'
 'Fast,
 Hair-shirt and scourge — nay, let a man
 repent,
 Do penance in his heart, God hears him.'
 'Heresy —
 Not shriven, not saved ?' 'What profits
 an ill priest
 Between me and my God ? I would not
 spurn
 Good counsel of good friends, but shrive
 myself —
 No, not to an Apostle.' 'Heresy.' — ¹⁴⁰
 My friend is long in coming. — 'Pilgrim-
 ages ?'
 'Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-dances,
 vice.
 The poor man's money gone to fat the
 friar.
 Who reads of begging saints in Scripture ?'
 — 'Heresy' —
 Hath he been here — not found me — gone
 again ?
 Have I mislearnt our place of meeting ? —
 'Bread —
 Bread left after the blessing ?' how they
 stared,
 That was their main test-question — glared
 at me !
 'He veil'd Himself in flesh, and now He
 veils
 His flesh in bread, body and bread to-
 gether.' ¹⁵⁰
 Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd
 wolves,
 'No bread, no bread. God's body !' Arch-
 bishop, bishop,
 Priors, canons, friars, bell-ringers, parish-
 clerks —
 'No bread, no bread !' — 'Authority of
 the Church,
 Power of the keys !' — Then I, God help
 me, I
 So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two whole
 days —

I lost myself and fell from evenness,
 And rail'd at all the Popes that, ever since
 Sylvester shed the venom of world-wealth
 Into the church, had only proven them-
 selves ¹⁶⁰
 Poisoners, murderers. Well — God pardon
 all —
 Me, them, and all the world — yea, that
 proud priest,
 That mock-meek mouth of utter Antichrist,
 That traitor to King Richard and the
 truth,
 Who rose and doom'd me to the fire.
 Amen !
 Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of life
 Be by me in my death.
 Those three ! the fourth
 Was like the Son of God ! Not burnt
 were they.
 On them the smell of burning had not
 past.
 That was a miracle to convert the king. ¹⁷⁰
 These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel
 What miracle could turn ? He here again,
 He thwarting their traditions of Himself,
 He would be found a heretic to Himself,
 And doom'd to burn alive.
 So, caught, I burn.
 Burn ? heathen men have borne as much
 as this,
 For freedom, or the sake of those they
 loved,
 Or some less cause, some cause far less
 than mine ;
 For every other cause is less than mine.
 The moth will singe her wings, and singed
 return, ¹⁸⁰
 Her love of light quenching her fear of
 pain —
 How now, my soul, we do not heed the
 fire ?
 Faint-hearted ? tut ! — faint-stomach'd !
 faint as I am,
 God willing, I will burn for Him.
 Who comes ?
 A thousand marks are set upon my head.
 Friend ? — foe perhaps — a tussle for it
 then !
 Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well dis-
 guised,
 I knew thee not. Hast thou brought bread
 with thee ?
 I have not broken bread for fifty hours.
 None ? I am damn'd already by the
 priest ¹⁹⁰

For holding there was bread where bread
 was none —
 No bread. My friends await me yonder ?
 Yes.
 Lead on then. *Up* the mountain ? Is it
 far ?
 Not far. Climb first and reach me down
 thy hand.
 I am not like to die for lack of bread,
 For I must live to testify by fire.¹

COLUMBUS

CHAINS, my good lord ! In your raised
 brows I read
 Some wonder at our chamber ornaments.
 We brought this iron from our isles of
 gold.

Does the King know you deign to visit
 him
 Whom once he rose from off his throne to
 greet
 Before his people, like his brother king ?
 I saw your face that morning in the
 crowd.

At Barcelona — tho' you were not then
 So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd herself
 To meet me, roar'd my name; the King,
 the Queen,¹⁰
 Bade me be seated, speak, and tell them
 all
 The story of my voyage, and while I spoke
 The crowd's roar fell as at the 'Peace, be
 still !'
 And when I ceased to speak, the King, the
 Queen,
 Sank from their thrones, and melted into
 tears,
 And knelt, and lifted hand and heart and
 voice
 In praise to God who led me thro' the
 waste.
 And then the great 'Landamus' rose to
 heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean !
 chains
 For him who gave a new heaven, a new
 earth,²⁰

¹ He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

As holy John had prophesied of me,
 Gave glory and more empire to the kings
 Of Spain than all their battles ! chains for
 him
 Who push'd his prows into the setting sun,
 And made West East, and sail'd the
 Dragon's Month,
 And came upon the Mountain of the World,
 And saw the rivers roll from Paradise !

Chains ! we are Admirals of the Ocean,
 we,
 We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand
 Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic
 Queen —³⁰
 Of the Ocean — of the Indies — Admirals
 we —
 Our title, which we never mean to yield,
 Our guerdon not alone for what we did,
 But our amends for all we might have
 done —
 The vast occasion of our stronger life —
 Eighteen long years of waste, seven in
 your Spain,
 Lost, showing courts and kings a truth the
 babe
 Will suck in with his milk hereafter —
 earth
 A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca ? No.
 We fronted there the learning of all Spain,
 All their cosmogonies, their astronomies.⁴¹
 Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the golden
 guess
 Is morning-star to the full round of truth.
 No guess-work ! I was certain of my
 goal ;
 Some thought it heresy, but that would not
 hold.
 King David call'd the heavens a hide, a
 tent
 Spread over earth, and so this earth was flat.
 Some cited old Lactantius; could it be
 That trees grew downward, rain fell up-
 ward, men
 Walk'd like the fly on ceilings ? and be-
 sides,⁵⁰
 The great Augustine wrote that none could
 breathe
 Within the zone of heat; so might there be
 Two Adams, two mankinds, and that was
 clean
 Against God's word. Thus was I beaten
 back,

And chiefly to my sorrow by the Church,
 And thought to turn my face from Spain,
 appeal
 Once more to France or England; but our
 Queen
 Recall'd me, for at last their Highnesses
 Were half-assured this earth might be a
 sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity, 60
 All glory to the mother of our Lord,
 And Holy Church, from whom I never
 swerved

Not even by one hair's-breadth of heresy,
 I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet — not all — last night a dream
 — I sail'd

On my first voyage, harass'd by the frights
 Of my first crew, their curses and their
 groans.

The great flame-banner borne by Teneriffe,
 The compass, like an old friend false at
 last

In our most need, appall'd them, and the
 wind 70

Still westward, and the weedy seas — at
 length

The land-bird, and the branch with berries
 on it,

The carved staff — and last the light, the
 light

On Guanahani! but I changed the name;
 San Salvador I call'd it; and the light
 Grew as I gazed, and brought out a broad
 sky

Of dawning over — not those alien palms,
 The marvel of that fair new nature — not
 That Indian isle, but our most ancient East,
 Moriah with Jerusalem; and I saw 80
 The glory of the Lord flash up, and beat
 Thro' all the homely town from jasper,
 sapphire,

Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius,
 Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,
 Jacynth, and amethyst — and those twelve
 gates,

Pearl — and I woke, and thought — death
 — I shall die —

I am written in the Lamb's own Book of
 Life

To walk within the glory of the Lord
 Sunless and moonless, utter light — but no!
 The Lord had sent this bright, strange
 dream to me 90

To mind me of the secret vow I made
 When Spain was waging war against the
 Moor —

I strove myself with Spain against the
 Moor.

There came two voices from the Sepulchre,
 Two friars crying that, if Spain should oust
 The Moslem from her limit, he, the fierce
 Soldan of Egypt, would break down and
 raze

The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon I
 vow'd

That, if our princes harken'd to my prayer,
 Whatever wealth I brought from that new
 world 100

Should, in this old, be consecrate to lead
 A new crusade against the Saracen,
 And free the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Gold? I had brought your princes gold
 enough

If left alone! Being but a Genovese,
 I am handled worse than had I been a
 Moor,

And breach'd the belting wall of Cambalu,
 And given the Great Khan's palaces to the
 Moor,

Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Prester
 John, 109

And cast it to the Moor. But had I brought
 From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir all
 The gold that Solomon's navies carried
 home,

Would that have gilded me? Blue blood
 of Spain,

Tho' quartering your own royal arms of
 Spain,

I have not; blue blood and black blood of
 Spain,

The noble and the convict of Castile,
 Howl'd me from Hispaniola. For you know
 The flies at home, that ever swarm about
 And cloud the highest heads, and murmur
 down

Truth in the distance — these outbuzz'd
 me so 120

That even our prudent King, our righteous
 Queen —

I pray'd them being so calumniated
 They would commission one of weight and
 worth

To judge between my slander'd self and
 me —

Fonseca my main enemy at their court,
 They sent me out his tool, Bovadilla, one

As ignorant and impolitic as a beast —
Blockish irreverence, brainless greed — who
sack'd

My dwelling, seized upon my papers, loosed
My captives, feed the rebels of the crown,
Sold the crown-farms for all but nothing,
gave 131

All but free leave for all to work the mines,
Drove me and my good brothers home in
chains,

And gathering ruthless gold — a single
piece

Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castillanos —
so

They tell me — weigh'd him down into the
abysm —

The hurricane of the latitude on him fell,
The seas of our discovering over-roll
Him and his gold; the frailer caravel,
With what was mine, came happily to the
shore. 140

There was a glimmering of God's hand.

And God

Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O my
lord,

I swear to you I heard His voice between
The thunders in the black Veragua nights,
'O soul of little faith, slow to believe!
Have I not been about thee from thy birth?
Given thee the keys of the great Ocean-
sea?

Set thee in light till time shall be no more?
Is it I who have deceived thee or the
world?

Endure! thou hast done so well for men,
that men 150

Cry out against thee. Was it otherwise
With mine own Son?'

And more than once in days
Of doubt and cloud and storm, when
drowning hope

Sank all but out of sight, I heard His
voice,

'Be not cast down. I lead thee by the
hand,

Fear not.' And I shall hear His voice
again —

I know that He has led me all my life,
I am not yet too old to work His will —
His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,
I lying here bedridden and alone, 160

Cast off, put by, scouted by court and
king —

The first discoverer starves — his followers,
all

Flower into fortune — our world's way —
and I,

Without a roof that I can call mine own,
With scarce a coin to buy a meal withal,
And seeing what a door for scoundrel scum

I open'd to the West, thro' which the lust,
Villainy, violence, avarice, of your Spain

Pour'd in on all those happy naked isles —
Their kindly native princes slain or slaved,

Their wives and children Spanish concu-
bines, 171

Their innocent hospitalities quench'd in
blood,

Some dead of hunger, some beneath the
scourge,

Some over-labor'd, some by their own
hands, —

Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature, kill
Their babies at the breast for hate of
Spain —

Ah God, the harmless people whom we
found

In Hispaniola's island-Paradise!

Who took us for the very gods from hea-
ven,

And we have sent them very fiends from
hell; 180

And I myself, myself not blameless, I
Could sometimes wish I had never led the
way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic
Queen

Smiles on me, saying, 'Be thou com-
forted!

This creedless people will be brought to
Christ

And own the holy governance of Rome.'

But who could dream that we, who bore
the Cross

Thither, were excommunicated there,
For curbing crimes that scandalized the
Cross,

By him, the Catalonian Minorite, 190
Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who believe

These hard memorials of our truth to Spain
Clung closer to us for a longer term

Than any friend of ours at Court? and yet
Pardon — too harsh, unjust. I am rack'd
with pains.

You see that I have hung them by my
bed,
And I will have them buried in my grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are God's
Own voice to justify the dead — perchance
Spain, once the most chivalric race on earth,
Spain, then the mightiest, wealthiest realm
on earth, 201

So made by me, may seek to unbury me,
To lay me in some shrine of this old Spain,
Or in that vaster Spain I leave to Spain.

Then some one standing by my grave will
say,

'Behold the bones of Christopher Co-
lön' —

'Ay, but the chains, what do *they* mean —
the chains?' —

I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain
Who then will have to answer, 'These
same chains

Bound these same bones back thro' the At-
lantic sea, 210

Which he unchain'd for all the world to
come.'

O Queen of Heaven who seest the souls
in hell

And purgatory, I suffer all as much
As they do — for the moment. Stay, my
son

Is here anon; my son will speak for me
Ablier than I can in these spasms that
grind

Bone against bone. You will not. One
last word.

You move about the Court; I pray you
tell

King Ferdinand who plays with me, that
one

Whose life has been no play with him and
his 220

Hidalgos — shipwrecks, famines, fevers,
fights,

Mutinies, treacheries — wink'd at, and con-
doned —

That I am loyal to him till the death,
And ready — tho' our Holy Catholic Queen,
Who fain had pledged her jewels on my
first voyage,

Whose hope was mine to spread the Catho-
lic faith,

Who wept with me when I return'd in
chains,

Who sits beside the blessed Virgin now,
To whom I send my prayer by night and
day —

She is gone — but you will tell the King,
that I, 230

Rack'd as I am with gout, and wrench'd
with pains

Gain'd in the service of His Highness, yet
Am ready to sail forth on one last voyage,
And readier, if the King would hear, to
lead

One last crusade against the Saracen,
And save the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted; you
have dared

Somewhat perhaps in coming? my poor
thanks!

I am but an alien and a Genovese.

THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND.
A. D. 700)

I

I WAS the chief of the race — he had
stricken my father dead —

But I gather'd my fellows together, I swore
I would strike off his head.

Each of them look'd like a king, and was
noble in birth as in worth,

And each of them boasted he sprang from
the oldest race upon earth.

Each was as brave in the fight as the brav-
est hero of song,

And each of them liefer had died than
have done one another a wrong.

He lived on an isle in the ocean — we sail'd
on a Friday morn —

He that had slain my father the day before
I was born.

II

And we came to the isle in the ocean, and
there on the shore was he.

But a sudden blast blew us out and away
thro' a boundless sea. 10

III

And we came to the Silent Isle that we
never had touch'd at before,

Where a silent ocean always broke on a
 silent shore,
 And the brooks glitter'd on in the light
 without sound, and the long water-
 falls
 Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the base
 of the mountain walls,
 And the poplar and cypress unshaken by
 storm flourish'd up beyond sight,
 And the pine shot aloft from the crag to an
 unbelievable height,
 And high in the heaven above it there
 flicker'd a songless lark,
 And the cock could n't crow, and the bull
 could n't low, and the dog could n't
 bark.
 And round it we went, and thro' it, but
 never a murmur, a breath —
 It was all of it fair as life, it was all of it
 quiet as death, 20
 And we hated the beautiful isle, for when-
 ever we strove to speak
 Our voices were thinner and fainter than
 any flittermouse-shriek;
 And the men that were mighty of tongue
 and could raise such a battle-cry
 That a hundred who heard it would rush
 on a thousand lances and die —
 O, they to be dumb'd by the charm! — so
 fluster'd with anger were they
 They almost fell on each other; but after
 we sail'd away.

IV

And we came to the Isle of Shouting; we
 landed, a score of wild birds
 Cried from the topmost summit with hu-
 man voices and words.
 Once in an hour they cried, and whenever
 their voices peal'd
 The steer fell down at the plow and the
 harvest died from the field, 30
 And the men dropt dead in the valleys and
 half of the cattle went lame,
 And the roof sank in on the hearth, and the
 dwelling broke into flame;
 And the shouting of these wild birds ran
 into the hearts of my crew,
 Till they shouted along with the shouting
 and seized one another and slew.
 But I drew them the one from the other;
 I saw that we could not stay,

And we left the dead to the birds, and we
 sail'd with our wounded away.

V

And we came to the Isle of Flowers; their
 breath met us out on the seas,
 For the Spring and the middle Summer sat
 each on the lap of the breeze;
 And the red passion-flower to the cliffs, and
 the dark-blue clematis, clung,
 And starr'd with a myriad blossom the
 long convolvulus hung; 40
 And the topmost spire of the mountain was
 lilies in lieu of snow,
 And the lilies like glaciers winded down,
 running out below
 Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy, the
 blaze of gorse, and the blush
 Of millions of roses that sprang without
 leaf or a thorn from the bush;
 And the whole isle-side flashing down from
 the peak without ever a tree
 Swept like a torrent of gems from the sky
 to the blue of the sea.
 And we roll'd upon capes of crocus and
 vaunted our kith and our kin,
 And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and
 chanted the triumph of Finn,
 Till each like a golden image was pollen'd
 from head to feet
 And each was as dry as a cricket, with
 thirst in the middle-day heat. 50
 Blossom and blossom, and promise of blos-
 som, but never a fruit!
 And we hated the Flowering Isle, as we
 hated the isle that was mute,
 And we tore up the flowers by the mil-
 lion and flung them in right and
 bay,
 And we left but a naked rock, and in anger
 we sail'd away.

VI

And we came to the Isle of Fruits; all
 round from the cliffs and the capes,
 Purple or amber, dangled a hundred
 fathom of grapes,
 And the warm melon lay like a little sun
 on the tawny sand,
 And the fig ran up from the beach and
 rioted over the land,

And the mountain arose like a jewell'd
 throne thro' the fragrant air,
 Glowing with all-color'd plums and with
 golden masses of pear, 60
 And the crimson and scarlet of berries that
 flamed upon bine and vine,
 But in every berry and fruit was the poison-
 ous pleasure of wine;
 And the peak of the mountain was apples,
 the hugest that ever were seen,
 And they prest, as they grew, on each
 other, with hardly a leaflet be-
 tween,
 And all of them redder than rosiest health
 or than utterest shame,
 And setting, when Even descended, the
 very sunset aflame.
 And we stay'd three days, and we gorged
 and we madden'd, till every one
 drew
 His sword on his fellow to slay him, and
 ever they struck and they slew;
 And myself, I had eaten but sparingly, and
 fought till I sunder'd the fray,
 Then I bade them remember my father's
 death, and we sail'd away. 70

VII

And we came to the Isle of Fire; we were
 lured by the light from afar,
 For the peak sent up one league of fire to
 the Northern Star;
 Lured by the glare and the blare, but
 scarcely could stand upright,
 For the whole isle shudder'd and shook like
 a man in a mortal affright.
 We were giddy besides with the fruits we
 had gorged, and so crazed that at
 last
 There were some leap'd into the fire; and
 away we sail'd, and we past
 Over that undersea isle, where the water is
 clearer than air.
 Down we look'd — what a garden! O bliss,
 what a Paradise there!
 Towers of a happier time, low down in a
 rainbow deep 79
 Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal sleep!
 And three of the gentlest and best of my
 people, whate'er I could say,
 Plunged head-down in the sea, and the
 Paradise trembled away.

VIII

And we came to the Bonnteous Isle, where
 the heavens lean low on the land,
 And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd
 o'er us a sun-bright hand,
 Then it open'd and dropt at the side of
 each man, as he rose from his rest,
 Bread enough for his need till the laborless
 day dipt under the west;
 And we wander'd about it and thro' it. O,
 never was time so good!
 And we sang of the triumphs of Finn, and
 the boast of our ancient blood,
 And we gazed at the wandering wave as we
 sat by the gurgle of springs,
 And we chanted the songs of the Bards and
 the glories of fairy kings. 90
 But at length we began to be weary, to
 sigh, and to stretch and yawn,
 Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and the
 sun-bright hand of the dawn,
 For there was not an enemy near, but the
 whole green isle was our own,
 And we took to playing at ball, and we took
 to throwing the stone,
 And we took to playing at battle, but that
 was a perilous play,
 For the passion of battle was in us, we slew
 and we sail'd away.

IX

And we came to the Isle of Witches and
 heard their musical cry —
 'Come to us, O, come, come!' in the
 stormy red of a sky
 Dashing the fires and the shadows of dawn
 on the beautiful shapes,
 For a wild witch naked as heaven stood on
 each of the loftiest capes, 100
 And a hundred ranged on the rock like
 white sea-birds in a row,
 And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced on
 the wrecks in the sand below,
 And a hundred splash'd from the ledges,
 and bosom'd the burst of the spray;
 But I knew we should fall on each other,
 and hastily sail'd away.

X

And we came in an evil time to the Isle of
 the Double Towers,

One was of smooth-cut stone, one carved
 all over with flowers,
 But an earthquake always moved in the
 hollows under the dells,
 And they shock'd on each other and butted
 each other with clashing of bells,
 And the daws flew out of the towers and
 jangled and wrangled in vain,
 And the clash and boom of the bells rang
 into the heart and the brain, ¹¹⁰
 Till the passion of battle was on us, and all
 took sides with the towers,
 There were some for the clean-cut stone,
 there were more for the carven
 flowers,
 And the wrathful thunder of God peal'd
 over us all the day,
 For the one half slew the other, and after
 we sail'd away.

XI

And we came to the Isle of a Saint who
 had sail'd with Saint Brendan of
 yore,
 He had lived ever since on the isle and his
 winters were fifteen score,
 And his voice was low as from other worlds,
 and his eyes were sweet,
 And his white hair sank to his heels, and
 his white beard fell to his feet,
 And he spake to me: 'O Maeldune, let be
 this purpose of thine!
 Remember the words of the Lord when he
 told us, "Vengeance is mine!" ¹²⁰
 His fathers have slain thy fathers in war or
 in single strife,
 Thy fathers have slain his fathers, each
 taken a life for a life,
 Thy father had slain his father, how long
 shall the murder last?
 Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer the
 Past to be Past.'
 And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard, and
 we pray'd as we heard him pray,
 And the holy man he assoil'd us, and sadly
 we sail'd away.

XII

And we came to the isle we were blown
 from, and there on the shore was he,
 The man that had slain my father. I saw
 him and let him be.

O, weary was I of the travel, the trouble,
 the strife, and the sin,
 When I landed again with a title of my
 men, on the Isle of Finn! ¹³⁰

DE PROFUNDIS:

THE TWO GREETINGS

I

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
 Where all that was to be, in all that was,
 Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the vast
 Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddying
 light—

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
 Thro' all this changing world of changeless
 law,

And every phase of ever-heightening life,
 And nine long months of antenatal gloom,
 With this last moon, this crescent—her
 dark orb

Touch'd with earth's light—thou comest,
 darling boy;

Our own; a babe in lineament and limb
 Perfect, and prophet of the perfect man;
 Whose face and form are hers and mine in
 one,

Indissolubly married like our love.
 Live, and be happy in thyself, and serve
 This mortal race thy kin so well that men
 May bless thee as we bless thee, O young
 life

Breaking with laughter from the dark; and
 may

The fated channel where thy motion lives
 Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy
 course

Along the years of haste and random youth
 Unshatter'd; then full-current thro' full
 man;

And last in kindly curves, with gentlest fall,
 By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,
 To that last deep where we and thou are
 still.

II

I

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
 From that great deep, before our world he-
 gins,

Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he will —

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
From that true world within the world we see,

Whereof our world is but the bounding shore —

Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,
With this ninth moon, that sends the hidden sun

Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling boy.

II

For in the world which is not ours They said,

'Let us make man,' and that which should be man,

From that one light no man can look upon,
Drew to this shore lit by the suns and moons

And all the shadows. O dear Spirit, half-lost

In thine own shadow and this fleshly sign
That thou art thou — who wailest being born

And banish'd into mystery, and the pain
Of this divisible-indivisible world

Among the numerable-innumerable
Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite space

In finite-infinite Time — our mortal veil
And shatter'd phantom of that infinite One,

Who made thee unconceivably Thyself
Out of His whole World-self and all in all —

Live thou! and of the grain and husk, the grape

And ivy-berry, choose; and still depart
From death to death thro' life and life, and find

Nearer and ever nearer Him, who wrought
Not matter, nor the finite-infinite,

But this main-miracle, that thou art thou,
With power on thine own act and on the world.

THE HUMAN CRY

I

HALLOWED be Thy name — Halleluia! —
Infinite Ideality!

Immeasurable Reality!

Infinite Personality!

Hallowed be Thy name — Halleluia!

II

We feel we are nothing — for all is Thou
and in Thee;

We feel we are something — *that* also has
come from Thee;

We know we are nothing — but Thou wilt
help us to be.

Hallowed be Thy name — Halleluia!

SONNETS

PREFATORY SONNET

TO 'THE NINETEENTH CENTURY'

THOSE that of late had fled to far and fast

To touch all shores, now leaving to the skill

Of others their old craft seaworthy still,
Have charter'd this; where, mindful of the past,

Our true co-mates regather round the mast;

Of diverse tongue, but with a common will

Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil
And crocus, to put forth and braye the blast.

For some, descending from the sacred peak

Of hoar high-templed Faith, have leagued again

Their lot with ours to rove the world about;

And some are wilder comrades, sworn to seek

If any golden harbor be for men

In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of Doubt.

TO THE REV. W. H. BROOKFIELD

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that knew
you best,

Old Brooks, who loved so well to mouth
my rhymes,

How oft we two have heard Saint Mary's
chimes!

How oft the Cantab supper, host and
 guest,
 Would echo helpless laughter to your jest !
 How oft with him we paced that walk of
 limes,
 Him, the lost light of those dawn-golden
 times,
 Who loved you well ! Now both are gone
 to rest.
 You man of humorous-melancholy mark,
 Dead of some inward agony — is it so ?
 Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past away !
 I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark.
 Σκιᾶς ὄνυξ — dream of a shadow, go —
 God bless you ! I shall join you in a day.

MONTENEGRO

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle
 sails,
 They kept their faith, their freedom, on the
 height,
 Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day and
 night
 Against the Turk ; whose inroad nowhere
 scales
 Their headlong passes, but his footstep
 fails,
 And red with blood the Crescent reels
 from fight
 Before their dauntless hundreds, in prone
 flight
 By thousands down the crags and thro' the
 vales.
 O smallest among peoples ! rough rock-
 throne
 Of Freedom ! warriors beating back the
 swarm
 Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,
 Great Tsernogora ! never since thine own
 Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the
 storm
 Has breathed a race of mightier mountain-
 eers.

TO VICTOR HUGO

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,
 Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and
 fears,

French of the French, and Lord of human
 tears ;
 Child-lover ; Bard whose fame-lit laurels
 glance
 Darkening the wreaths of all that would
 advance,
 Beyond our strait, their claim to be thy
 peers ;
 Weird Titan by thy winter weight of
 years
 As yet unbroken, stormy voice of France !
 Who dost not love our England — so they
 say ;
 I know not — England, France, all man to
 be
 Will make one people ere man's race be
 run :
 And I, desiring that diviner day,
 Yield thee full thanks for thy full cour-
 tesy
 To younger England in the boy my son.

TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

A translation from the Anglo-Saxon, first
 printed with the following prefatory note : —
 ' Constantinus, King of the Scots, after hav-
 ing sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied him-
 self with the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf,
 and invading England, was defeated by Ath-
 elstan and his brother Edmund with great
 slaughter at Brunanburh in the year 937.'

I

¹ ATHELSTAN King,
 Lord among Earls,
 Bracelet-bestower and
 Baron of Barons,
 He with his brother,
 Edmund Atheling,
 Gaining a lifelong
 Glory in battle,
 Slew with the sword-edge
 There by Brunanburh,
 Brake the shield-wall,

¹ I have more or less availed myself of my
 son's prose translation of this poem in the
 ' Contemporary Review ' (November, 1876).

Hew'd the linden-wood,¹
Hack'd the battle-shield,
Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

II

Theirs was a greatness
Got from their grandsires —
Theirs that so often in
Strife with their enemies
Struck for their hoards and their hearths
and their homes.

III

Bow'd the spoiler,
Bent the Scotsman,
Fell the ship-crews
Doom'd to the death.
All the field with blood of the fighters
Flow'd, from when first the great
Sun-star of morning-tide,
Lamp of the Lord God
Lord everlasting,
Glode over earth till the glorious creature
Sank to his setting.

IV

There lay many a man
Marr'd by the javelin,
Men of the Northland
Shot over shield.
There was the Scotsman
Weary of war.

V

We the West-Saxons,
Long as the daylight
Lasted, in companies
Troubled the track of the host that we
hated;
Grimly with swords that were sharp from
the grindstone,
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before us.

VI

Mighty the Mercian,
Hard was his hand-play,
Sparing not any of
Those that with Anlaf,

¹ Shields of lindenwood.

Warriors over the
Weltering waters
Borne in the bark's-bosom,
Drew to this island —
Doom'd to the death.

VII

Five young kings put asleep by the sword-
stroke,
Seven strong earls of the army of Anlaf
Fell on the war-field, numberless numbers,
Shipmen and Scotsmen.

VIII

Then the Norse leader —
Dire was his need of it,
Few were his following —
Fled to his war-ship;
Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king in
it,
Saving his life on the fallow flood.

IX

Also the crafty one,
Constantinus,
Crept to his North again,
Hoar-headed hero!

X

Slender warrant had
He to be proud of
The welcome of war-knives —
He that was reft of his
Folk and his friends that had
Fallen in conflict,
Leaving his son too
Lost in the carnage,
Mangled to morsels,
A youngster in war!

XI

Slender reason had
He to be glad of
The clash of the war-glaive —
Traitor and trickster
And spurner of treaties —
He nor had Anlaf
With armies so broken
A reason for bragging

That they had the better
 In perils of battle
 On places of slaughter —
 The struggle of standards,
 The rush of the javelins,
 The crash of the charges,¹
 The wielding of weapons —
 The play that they play'd with
 The children of Edward.

XII

Then with their nail'd prows
 Parted the Norsemen, a
 Blood-redden'd relic of
 Javelins over

The jarring breaker, the deep-sea billow,
 Shaping their way toward Dyflen² again,
 Shamed in their souls.

XIII

Also the brethren,
 King and Atheling,
 Each in his glory,

Went to his own in his own West-Saxon-
 land,
 Glad of the war.

XIV

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,
 Many a livid one, many a sallow-skin —
 Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear it,
 and
 Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to rend it,
 and
 Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to gorge
 it, and
 That gray beast, the wolf of the weald.

XV

Never had huger
 Slaughter of heroes
 Slain by the sword-edge —
 Such as old writers
 Have writ of in histories —
 Hapt in this isle, since
 Up from the East hither
 Saxon and Angle from

¹ Lit. 'the gathering of men.'

² Dublin.

Over the broad billow
 Broke into Britain with
 Haughty war-workers who
 Harried the Welshman, when
 Earls that were lured by the
 Hunger of glory gat
 Hold of the land.

ACHILLES OVER THE TRENCH

[ILIAD, XVIII. 202]

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.
 Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus; and
 round
 The warrior's puissant shoulders Pallas
 flung
 Her fringed ægis, and around his head
 The glorious goddess wreath'd a golden
 cloud,
 And from it lighted an all-shining flame.
 As when a smoke from a city goes to
 heaven
 Far off from out an island girt by foes,
 All day the men contend in grievous war
 From their own city, but with set of sun
 Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the
 glare
 Flies streaming, if perchance the neighbors
 round
 May see, and sail to help them in the
 war;
 So from his head the splendor went to hea-
 ven.
 From wall to dyke he stept, he stood, nor
 join'd
 The Achæans — honoring his wise mother's
 word —
 There standing, shouted, and Pallas far
 away
 Call'd; and a boundless panic shook the
 foe.
 For like the clear voice when a trumpet
 shrills,
 Blown by the fierce beleaguers of a town,
 So rang the clear voice of Æakidês;
 And when the brazen cry of Æakidês
 Was heard among the Trojans, all their
 hearts
 Were troubled, and the full-maned horses
 whirl'd

The chariots backward, knowing griefs at hand;
 And sheer-astounded were the charioteers
 To see the dread, unweariable fire
 That always o'er the great Peleion's head
 Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess made
 it burn.
 Thrice from the dyke he sent his mighty
 shout,
 Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans and
 allies;
 And there and then twelve of their noblest
 died
 Among their spears and chariots.

TO PRINCESS FREDERICA ON
 HER MARRIAGE

O YOU that were eyes and light to the
 King till he past away
 From the darkness of life —
 He saw not his daughter — he blest her:
 the blind King sees you to-day,
 He blesses the wife.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

ON THE CENOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER
 ABBEY

Not here! the white North has thy bones;
 and thou,
 Heroic sailor-soul,
 Art passing on thine happier voyage now
 Toward no earthly pole.

TO DANTE

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE FLOREN-
 TINES)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred years,
 and grown
 In power, and ever growest, since thine own
 Fair Florence honoring thy nativity,
 Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,
 Hath sought the tribute of a verse from me,
 I, wearing but the garland of a day,
 Cast at thy feet one flower that fades away.

TIRESIAS
AND OTHER POEMS
DEDICATION

TO MY GOOD FRIEND
ROBERT BROWNING
WHOSE GENIUS AND GENIALITY
WILL BEST APPRECIATE WHAT MAY BE BEST
AND MAKE MOST ALLOWANCE FOR WHAT MAY BE WORST
THIS VOLUME
IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

TO E. FITZGERALD

This introduction to the poem that follows was apparently written on or about March 31, 1883, when Fitzgerald was seventy-five years of age. He was rather more than a year older than Tennyson, and died June 14, 1883, before the volume containing the poem was published.

OLD FITZ, who from your suburb
grange,
Where once I tarried for a while,
Glance at the wheeling orb of change,
And greet it with a kindly smile;
Whom yet I see as there you sit
Beneath your sheltering garden-tree,
And watch your doves about you flit,
And plant on shoulder, hand, and
knee,
Or on your head their rosy feet,
As if they knew your diet spares
Whatever moved in that full sheet
Let down to Peter at his prayers;
Who live on milk and meal and grass;
And once for ten long weeks I tried
Your table of Pythagoras,
And seem'd at first 'a thing enskied,'
As Shakespeare has it, airy-light
To float above the ways of men,
Then fell from that half-spiritual height
Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again

One night when earth was winter-black,
And all the heavens flash'd in frost;
And on me, half-asleep, came back
That wholesome heat the blood had
lost,
And set me climbing icy capes
And glaciers, over which there roll'd
To meet me long-arm'd vines with
grapes
Of Eshcol hugeness; for the cold
Without, and warmth within me,
wrought
To mould the dream; but none can
say
That Lenten fare makes Lenten
thought
Who reads your golden Eastern
lay,
Than which I know no version done
In English more divinely well;
A planet equal to the sun
Which cast it, that large infidel
Your Omar; and your Omar drew
Full-handed plaudits from our best
In modern letters, and from two,
Old friends outvaluing all the rest,
Two voices heard on earth no more;
But we old friends are still alive,
And I am nearing seventy-four,
While you have touch'd at seventy-
five,
And so I send a birthday line
Of greeting; and my son, who dipt

In some forgotten book of mine
 With sallow scraps of manuscript,
 And dating many a year ago,
 Has hit on this, which you will take,
 My Fitz, and welcome, as I know,
 Less for its own than for the sake
 Of one recalling gracious times,
 When, in our younger London days,
 You found some merit in my rhymes,
 And I more pleasure in your praise.

TIRESIAS

I WISH I were as in the years of old,
 While yet the blessed daylight made it-
 self
 Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight, and
 woke
 These eyes, now dull, but then so keen to
 seek
 The meanings ambush'd under all they
 saw,
 The flight of birds, the flame of sacrifice,
 What omens may foreshadow fate to man
 And woman, and the secret of the Gods.
 My son, the Gods, despite of human
 prayer,
 Are slower to forgive than human kings. ¹⁰
 The great God Arês burns in anger still
 Against the guiltless heirs of him from
 Tyre,
 Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art, who
 found
 Beside the springs of Dircê, smote, and
 still'd
 Thro' all its folds the multitudinous beast,
 The dragon, which our trembling fathers
 call'd
 The God's own son.
 A tale, that told to me,
 When but thine age, by age as winter-
 white
 As mine is now, amazed, but made me
 yearn
 For larger glimpses of that more than
 man ²⁰
 Which rolls the heavens, and lifts and lays
 the deep,
 Yet loves and hates with mortal hates and
 loves,

And moves unseen among the ways of
 men.
 Then, in my wanderings all the lands
 that lie
 Subjected to the Heliconian ridge
 Have heard this footstep fall, altho' my
 wont
 Was more to scale the highest of the
 heights
 With some strange hope to see the nearer
 God.
 One naked peak — the sister of the
 Sun
 Would climb from out the dark, and linger
 there ³⁰
 To silver all the valleys with her shafts —
 There once, but long ago, five-fold thy
 term
 Of years, I lay; the winds were dead for
 heat;
 The noonday crag made the hand burn;
 and sick
 For shadow — not one bush was near — I
 rose,
 Following a torrent till its myriad falls
 Found silence in the hollows underneath.
 There in a secret olive-glade I saw
 Pallas Athene climbing from the bath ³⁹
 In anger; yet one glittering foot disturb'd
 The lucid well; one snowy knee was
 prest
 Against the margin flowers; a dreadful
 light
 Came from her golden hair, her golden
 helm
 And all her golden armor on the grass,
 And from her virgin breast, and virgin
 eyes
 Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew
 dark
 For ever, and I heard a voice that said,
 'Henceforth be blind, for thou hast seen
 too much,
 And speak the truth that no man may be-
 lieve.'
 Son, in the hidden world of sight that
 lives ⁵⁰
 Behind this darkness, I behold her still,
 Beyond all work of those who carve the
 stone,
 Beyond all dreams of Godlike womanhood,
 Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a
 glance,

And as it were, perforce, upon me flash'd
The power of prophesying — but to me
No power — so chain'd and coupled with
the curse

Of blindness and their unbelief who heard
And heard not, when I spake of famine,
plague,

Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire, flood,
thunderbolt, 60

And angers of the Gods for evil done
And expiation lack'd — no power on Fate
Theirs, or mine own! for when the crowd
would roar

For blood, for war, whose issue was their
doom,

To cast wise words among the multitude
Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in hours
Of civil outbreak, when I knew the twain
Would each waste each, and bring on both
the yoke

Of stronger states, was mine the voice to
curb

The madness of our cities and their
kings. 70

Who ever turn'd upon his heel to hear
My warning that the tyranny of one
Was prelude to the tyranny of all?
My counsel that the tyranny of all
Led backward to the tyranny of one?

This power hath work'd no good to aught
that lives,

And these blind hands were useless in their
wars.

O, therefore, that the unfulfill'd desire,
The grief for ever born from griefs to be,
The boundless yearning of the prophet's
heart — 80

Could that stand forth, and like a statue,
rear'd

To some great citizen, win all praise from
all

Who past it, saying, 'That was he!'

In vain!
Virtue must shape itself in deed, and those
Whom weakness or necessity have cramp'd
Within themselves, immersing, each, his
urn

In his own well, draws solace as he may.

Menœceus, thou hast eyes, and I can
hear

Too plainly what full tides of onset sap
Our seven high gates, and what a weight
of war 90

Rides on those ringing axles! jingle of
bits,

Shouts, arrows, tramp of the horn-footed
horse

That grind the glebe to powder! Stony
showers

Of that ear-stunning hail of Arês crash
Along the sounding walls. Above, below,
Shock after shock, the song-built towers
and gates

Reel, bruised and butted with the shudder-
ing

War-thunder of iron rams; and from within
The city comes a murmur void of joy,
Lest she be taken captive — maidens,
wives, 100

And mothers with their babblers of the
dawn,

And oldest age in shadow from the night,
Falling about their shrines before their
Gods,

And wailing, 'Save us.'

And they wail to thee!
These eyeless eyes, that cannot see thine
own,

See this, that only in thy virtue lies
The saving of our Thebes; for, yester-
night,

To me, the great God Arês, whose one
bliss

Is war and human sacrifice — himself
Blood-red from battle, spear and helmet
tip 110

With stormy light as on a mast at sea,
Stood out before a darkness, crying,
'Thebes,

Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for I
loathe

The seed of Cadmus — yet if one of these
By his own hand — if one of these —'

My son,
No sound is breathed so potent to coerce,
And to conciliate, as their names who
dare

For that sweet mother land which gave
them birth

Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their names,
Graven on memorial columns, are a song 120
Heard in the future; few, but more than
wall

And rampart, their examples reach a hand
Far thro' all years, and everywhere they
meet

And kindle generous purpose, and the
strength

To mould it into action pure as theirs.

Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's best
end

Be to end well! and thou refusing this,
Unvenerable will thy memory be
While men shall move the lips; but if thou
dare —

Thou, one of these, the race of Cadmus —
then 130

No stone is fitted in yon marble girth
Whose echo shall not tongue thy glorious
doom,

Nor in this pavement but shall ring thy
name

To every hoof that clangs it, and the
springs

Of Dirce laving yonder battle-plain,
Heard from the roofs by night, will mur-
mur thee

To thine own Thebes, while Thebes thro'
thee shall stand

Firm-based with all her Gods.

The Dragon's cave

Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing
vines —

Where once he dwelt and whence he roll'd
himself 140

At dead of night — thou knowest, and that
smooth rock

Before it, altar-fashion'd, where of late
The woman-breasted Sphinx, with wings
drawn back,

Folded her lion paws, and look'd to
Thebes.

There blanch the bones of whom she slew,
and these

Mixt with her own, because the fierce beast
found

A wiser than herself, and dash'd herself
Dead in her rage; but thou art wise
enough,

Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt the
curse

Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the
truth 150

Believe I speak it, let thine own hand
strike

Thy youthful pulses into rest and quench
The red God's anger, fearing not to plunge
Thy torch of life in darkness, rather —
thou

Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the stars
Send no such light upon the ways of men
As one great deed.

Thither, my son, and there

Thou, that hast never known the embrace
of love, 158

Offer thy maiden life.

This useless hand!

I felt one warm tear fall upon it. Gone!
He will achieve his greatness.

But for me,

I would that I were gather'd to my rest,
And mingled with the famous kings of
old,

On whom about their ocean-islets flash
The faces of the Gods — the wise man's
word,

Here trampled by the populace underfoot,
There crown'd with worship — and these
eyes will find

The men I knew, and watch the chariot
whirl

About the goal again, and hunters race 169
The shadowy lion, and the warrior-kings,
In height and prowess more than human,
strive

Again for glory, while the golden lyre
Is ever sounding in heroic ears
Heroic hymns, and every way the vales
Wind, clouded with the grateful incense-
fume

Of those who mix all odor to the Gods
On one far height in one far-shining fire.

—

'One height and one far-shining fire!
And while I fancied that my friend
For this brief idyll would require 180

A less diffuse and opulent end,
And would defend his judgment well,
If I should deem it over nice —

The tolling of his funeral bell
Broke on my Pagan Paradise,
And mixt the dream of classic times,

And all the phantoms of the dream,
With present grief, and made the rhymes,
That miss'd his living welcome, seem

Like would-be guests an hour too late, 190
Who down the highway moving on
With easy laughter find the gate

Is bolted, and the master gone.
Gone into darkness, that full light
Of friendship! past, in sleep, away

By night, into the deeper night !
 The deeper night ? A clearer day
 Than our poor twilight dawn on earth —
 If night, what barren toil to be !
 What life, so maim'd by night, were
 worth 200
 Our living out ? Not mine to me
 Remembering all the golden hours
 Now silent, and so many dead,
 And him the last; and laying flowers,
 This wreath, above his honor'd head,
 And praying that, when I from hence
 Shall fade with him into the unknown,
 My close of earth's experience
 May prove as peaceful as his own.

THE WRECK

I

HIDE me, mother ! my fathers belong'd to
 the church of old,
 I am driven by storm and sin and death to
 the ancient fold,
 I cling to the Catholic Cross once more, to
 the Faith that saves.
 My brain is full of the crash of wrecks,
 and the roar of waves,
 My life itself is a wreck, I have sullied a
 noble name,
 I am flung from the rushing tide of the
 world as a waif of shame,
 I am roused by the wail of a child, and
 awake to a livid light,
 And a ghastlier face than ever has haunted
 a grave by night.
 I would hide from the storm without, I
 would flee from the storm within,
 I would make my life one prayer for a soul
 that died in his sin, 10
 I was the tempter, mother, and mine was
 the deeper fall;
 I will sit at your feet, I will hide my face,
 I will tell you all.

II

He that they gave me to, mother, a heed-
 less and innocent bride —
 I never have wrong'd his heart, I have only
 wounded his pride —

Spain in his blood and the Jew — dark-vis-
 aged, stately and tall —
 A princelier-looking man never stept thro'
 a prince's hall.
 And who, when his anger was kindled,
 would venture to give him the
 nay ?
 And a man men fear is a man to be loved
 by the women, they say.
 And I could have loved him too, if the
 blossom can dote on the blight,
 Or the young green leaf rejoice in the frost
 that sears it at night; 20
 He would open the books that I prized, and
 toss them away with a yawn,
 Repell'd by the magnet of Art to the which
 my nature was drawn,
 The word of the Poet by whom the deeps
 of the world are stirr'd,
 The music that robs it in language be-
 neath and beyond the word !
 My Shelley would fall from my hands when
 he cast a contemptuous glance
 From where he was poring over his Tables
 of Trade and Finance;
 My hands, when I heard him coming, would
 drop from the chords or the keys,
 But ever I fail'd to please him, however I
 strove to please —
 All day long far-off in the cloud of the city,
 and there
 Lost, head and heart, in the chances of
 dividend, consol, and share — 30
 And at home if I sought for a kindly ca-
 ress, being woman and weak,
 His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of snow
 on the cheek.
 And so, when I bore him a girl, when I
 held it aloft in my joy,
 He look'd at it coldly, and said to me,
 'Pity it is n't a boy.'
 The one thing given me, to love and to live
 for, glanced at in scorn !
 The child that I felt I could die for — as
 if she were basely born !
 I had lived a wild-flower life, I was planted
 now in a tomb;
 The daisy will shut to the shadow, I closed
 my heart to the gloom;
 I threw myself all abroad — I would play
 my part with the young 39
 By the low foot-lights of the world — and
 I caught the wreath that was flung.

III

Mother, I have not — however their tongues
 may have babbled of me —
 Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all but
 a dwarf was he,
 And all but a hunchback too; and I look'd
 at him, first, askance,
 With pity — not he the knight for an am-
 orous girl's romance!
 Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd in the
 light of a dowerless smile,
 Having lands at home and abroad in a rich
 West-Indian isle;
 But I came on him once at a ball, the heart
 of a listening crowd —
 Why, what a brow was there! he was
 seated — speaking aloud
 To women, the flower of the time, and men
 at the helm of state —
 Flowing with easy greatness and touching
 on all things great, ⁵⁰
 Science, philosophy, song — till I felt my-
 self ready to weep
 For I knew not what, when I heard that
 voice, — as mellow and deep
 As a psalm by a mighty master and peal'd
 from an organ, — roll
 Rising and falling — for, mother, the voice
 was the voice of the soul;
 And the sun of the soul made day in the
 dark of his wonderful eyes.
 Here was the hand that would help me,
 would heal me — the heart that was
 wise!
 And he, poor man, when he learnt that I
 hated the ring I wore,
 He helpt me with death, and he heal'd me
 with sorrow for evermore.

IV

For I broke the bond. That day my nurse
 had brought me the child.
 The small sweet face was flush'd, but it
 coo'd to the mother and smiled. ⁶⁰
 'Anything ailing,' I ask'd her, 'with baby?'
 She shook her head,
 And the motherless mother kiss'd it, and
 turn'd in her haste and fled.

V

Low warm winds had gently breathed us
 away from the land —
 Ten long sweet summer days upon deck,
 sitting hand in hand —

When he clothed a naked mind with the
 wisdom and wealth of his own,
 And I bow'd myself down as a slave to his
 intellectual throne,
 When he coin'd into English gold some
 treasure of classical song,
 When he flouted a statesman's error, or
 flamed at a public wrong,
 When he rose as it were on the wings of an
 eagle beyond me, and past
 Over the range and the change of the
 world from the first to the last, ⁷⁰
 When he spoke of his tropical home in the
 canes by the purple tide,
 And the high star-crowns of his palms on
 the deep-wooded mountain-side,
 And cliffs all robed in lianas that dropt to
 the brink of his bay,
 And trees like the towers of a minster, the
 sons of a winterless day.
 'Paradise there!' so he said, but I seem'd
 in Paradise then
 With the first great love I had felt for the
 first and greatest of men;
 Ten long days of summer and sin — if it
 must be so —
 But days of a larger light than I ever again
 shall know —
 Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro' life to
 my latest breath;
 'No frost there,' so he said, 'as in truest
 love no death.' ⁸⁰

VI

Mother, one morning a bird with a warble
 plaintively sweet
 Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell flut-
 tering down at my feet;
 I took it, he made it a cage, we fondled it,
 Stephen and I,
 But it died, and I thought of the child for
 a moment, I scarce know why.

VII

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as
 many will say,
 My sin to my desolate little one found me
 at sea on a day,
 When her orphan wail came borne in the
 shriek of a growing wind,
 And a voice rang out in the thunders of
 ocean and heaven, 'Thou hast sinn'd.'
 And down in the cabin were we, for the
 towering crest of the tides

Plunged on the vessel and swept in a cata-
 ract off from her sides,⁹⁰
 And ever the great storm grew with a howl
 and a hoot of the blast
 In the rigging, voices of hell — then came
 the crash of the mast.
 'The wages of sin is death,' and there I
 began to weep,
 'I am the Jonah, the crew should cast me
 into the deep,
 For, ah, God! what a heart was mine to
 forsake her even for you!'
 'Never the heart among women,' he said,
 'more tender and true.'
 'The heart! not a mother's heart, when I
 left my darling alone.'
 'Comfort yourself, for the heart of the
 father will care for his own.'
 'The heart of the father will spurn her,' I
 cried, 'for the sin of the wife,
 The cloud of the mother's shame will enfold
 her and darken her life.'¹⁰⁰
 Then his pale face twitch'd. 'O Stephen,
 I love you, I love you, and yet' —
 As I lean'd away from his arms — 'would
 God, we had never met!'
 And he spoke not — only the storm; till
 after a little, I yearn'd
 For his voice again, and he call'd to me,
 'Kiss me!' and there — as I
 turn'd —
 'The heart, the heart!' I kiss'd him, I
 clung to the sinking form,
 And the storm went roaring above us, and
 he — was out of the storm.

VIII

And then, then, mother, the ship stagger'd
 under a thunderous shock,
 That shook us asunder, as if she had struck
 and crash'd on a rock;
 For a huge sea smote every soul from the
 decks of the Falcon but one;
 All of them, all but the man that was
 lash'd to the helm had gone;¹¹⁰
 And I fell — and the storm and the days
 went by, but I knew no more —
 Lost myself — lay like the dead by the
 dead on the cabin floor,
 Dead to the death beside me, and lost to
 the loss that was mine,
 With a dim dream, now and then, of a
 hand giving bread and wine,

Till I woke from the trance, and the ship
 stood still, and the skies were blue,
 But the face I had known, O mother, was
 not the face that I knew.

IX

The strange misfeaturing mask that I saw
 so amazed me that I
 Stumbled on deck, half mad. I would fling
 myself over and die!
 But one — he was waving a flag — the one
 man left on the wreck —
 'Woman,' — he graspt at my arm, — 'stay
 there!' — I crouch'd upon deck —
 'We are sinking, and yet there's hope:
 look yonder,' he cried, 'a sail!'¹²¹
 In a tone so rough that I broke into pas-
 sionate tears, and the wail
 Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a boat was
 nearing us — then
 All on a sudden I thought, I shall look on
 the child again.

X

They lower'd me down the side, and there
 in the boat I lay
 With sad eyes fixt on the lost sea-home, as
 we glided away,
 And I sigh'd as the low dark hull dipt
 under the smiling main,
 'Had I stay'd with *him*, I had now — with
him — been out of my pain.'

XI

They took us aboard. The crew were gentle,
 the captain kind,
 But *I* was the lonely slave of an often-
 wandering mind;¹³⁰
 For whenever a rougher gust might tumble
 a stormier wave,
 'O Stephen,' I moan'd, 'I am coming to
 thee in thine ocean-grave.'
 And again, when a balmier breeze curl'd
 over a peacefuller sea,
 I found myself moaning again, 'O child, I
 am coming to thee.'

XII

The broad white brow of the isle — that
 bay with the color'd sand —
 Rich was the rose of sunset there, as we
 drew to the land;
 All so quiet the ripple would hardly blanch
 into spray

At the feet of the cliff; and I pray'd —
 'My child,'— for I still could pray,—
 'May her life be as blissfully calm, be
 never gloom'd by the curse 139
 Of a sin, not hers!'

Was it well with the child?

I wrote to the nurse
 Who had borne my flower on her hireling
 heart; and an answer came
 Not from the nurse — nor yet to the wife
 — to her maiden name!
 I shook as I open'd the letter — I knew
 that hand too well —
 And from it a scrap, clipt out of the
 'deaths' in a paper, fell.
 'Ten long sweet summer days' of fever,
 and want of care!
 And gone — that day of the storm — O
 mother, she came to me there!

DESPAIR

'A man and his wife having lost faith in a
 God, and hope of a life to come, and being
 utterly miserable in this, resolve to end them-
 selves by drowning. The woman is drowned,
 but the man rescued by a minister of the sect
 he had abandoned.'

I

Is it you, that preach'd in the chapel there
 looking over the sand?
 Follow'd us too that night, and dogg'd us,
 and drew me to land?

II

What did I feel that night? You are
 curious. How should I tell?
 Does it matter so much what I felt? You
 rescued me — yet — was it well
 That you came unwish'd for, uncall'd, be-
 tween me and the deep and my
 doom,
 Three days since, three more dark days of
 the Godless gloom
 Of a life without sun, without health, with-
 out hope, without any delight
 In anything here upon earth? but, ah,
 God! that night, that night
 When the rolling eyes of the lighthouse
 there on the fatal neck 9

Of land running out into rock — they had
 saved many hundreds from wreck —
 Glared on our way toward death, I remem-
 ber I thought, as we past,
 Does it matter how many they saved? we
 are all of us wreck'd at last —
 'Do you fear?' and there came thro' the
 roar of the breaker a whisper, a
 breath,
 'Fear? am I not with you? I am frightened
 at life, not death.'

III

And the suns of the limitless universe
 sparkled and shone in the sky,
 Flashing with fires as of God, but we knew
 that their light was a lie —
 Bright as with deathless hope — but, how-
 ever they sparkled and shone,
 The dark little worlds running round them
 were worlds of woe like our own —
 No soul in the heaven above, no soul on
 the earth below,
 A fiery scroll written over with lamentation
 and woe. 20

IV

See, we were nursed in the drear nightfold
 of your fatalist creed,
 And we turn'd to the growing dawn, we had
 hoped for a dawn indeed,
 When the light of a sun that was coming
 would scatter the ghosts of the past,
 And the cramping creeds that had mad-
 den'd the peoples would vanish at
 last,
 And we broke away from the Christ, our
 human brother and friend,
 For He spoke, or it seem'd that He spoke,
 of a hell without help, without end.

V

Hoped for a dawn, and it came, but the
 promise had faded away;
 We had past from a cheerless night to the
 glare of a drearier day;
 He is only a cloud and a smoke who was
 once a pillar of fire,
 The guess of a worm in the dust and the
 shadow of its desire — 30
 Of a worm as it writhes in a world of the
 weak trodden down by the strong,
 Of a dying worm in a world, all massacre,
 murder, and wrong.

VI

O, we poor orphans of nothing — alone on
that lonely shore —
Born of the brainless Nature who knew not
that which she bore !
Trusting no longer that earthly flower
would be heavenly fruit —
Come from the brute, poor souls — no souls
— and to die with the brute —

VII

Nay, but I am not claiming your pity; I
know you of old —
Small pity for those that have ranged
from the narrow warmth of your
fold,
Where you bawl'd the dark side of your
faith and a God of eternal rage,
Till you flung us back on ourselves, and the
human heart, and the Age. 40

VIII

But pity — the Pagan held it a vice — was
in her and in me,
Helpless, taking the place of the pitying
God that should be !
Pity for all that aches in the grasp of an
idiot power,
And pity for our own selves on an earth
that bore not a flower;
Pity for all that suffers on land or in air or
the deep,
And pity for our own selves till we long'd
for eternal sleep.

IX

'Lightly step over the sands! the waters
— you hear them call !
Life with its anguish, and horrors, and
errors — away with it all !'
And she laid her hand in my own — she
was always loyal and sweet —
Till the points of the foam in the dusk
came playing about our feet. 50
There was a strong sea-current would sweep
us out to the main.
'Ah, God !' tho' I felt as I spoke I was
taking the name in vain —
'Ah, God !' and we turn'd to each other,
we kiss'd, we embraced, she and I,
Knowing the love we were used to believe
everlasting would die.
We had read their know-nothing books, and
we lean'd to the darker side —

Ah, God, should we find Him, perhaps, per-
haps, if we died, if we died;
We never had found Him on earth, this
earth is a fatherless hell —
'Dear love, for ever and ever, for ever
and ever farewell !'
Never a cry so desolate, not since the world
began,
Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the com-
ing of man ! 60

X

But the blind wave cast me ashore, and
you saved me, a valueless life.
Not a grain of gratitude mine ! You have
parted the man from the wife.
I am left alone on the land, she is all alone
in the sea;
If a curse meant aught, I would curse you
for not having let me be.

XI

Visions of youth — for my brain was drunk
with the water, it seems;
I had past into perfect quiet at length out
of pleasant dreams,
And the transient trouble of drowning —
what was it when match'd with the
pains
Of the hellish heat of a wretched life rush-
ing back thro' the veins ?

XII

Why should I live ? one son had forged on
his father and fled,
And if I believed in a God, I would thank
Him, the other is dead, 70
And there was a baby-girl, that had never
look'd on the light;
Happiest she of us all, for she past from
the night to the night.

XIII

But the crime, if a crime, of her eldest-
born, her glory, her boast,
Struck hard at the tender heart of the
mother, and broke it almost;
Tho', glory and shame dying out for ever in
endless time,
Does it matter so much whether crown'd
for a virtue, or hang'd for a crime ?

XIV

And ruin'd by *him*, by *him*, I stood there,
naked, amazed

In a world of arrogant opulence, fear'd myself turning crazed,
 And I would not be mock'd in a mad-house ! and she, the delicate wife,
 With a grief that could only be cured, if cured, by the surgeon's knife, — 80

XV

Why should we bear with an hour of torture, a moment of pain,
 If every man die for ever, if all his griefs are in vain,
 And the homeless planet at length will be wheel'd thro' the silence of space,
 Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing race,
 When the worm shall have writhed its last, and its last brother-worm will have fled
 From the dead fossil skull that is left in the rocks of an earth that is dead ?

XVI

Have I crazed myself over their horrible infidel writings ? O, yes,
 For these are the new dark ages, you see, of the popular press,
 When the bat comes out of his cave, and the owls are whooping at noon,
 And Doubt is the lord of this dunghill and crows to the sun and the moon, 90
 Till the sun and the moon of our science are both of them turn'd into blood,
 And Hope will have broken her heart, running after a shadow of good ;
 For their knowing and know-nothing books are scatter'd from hand to hand —
 We have knelt in your know-all chapel too, looking over the sand.

XVII

What ! I should call on that Infinite Love that has served us so well ?
 Infinite cruelty rather that made everlasting hell,
 Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us, and does what he will with his own ;
 Better our dead brute mother who never has heard us groan !

XVIII

Hell ? if the souls of men were immortal, as men have been told, 99

The lecher would cleave to his lusts, and the miser would yearn for his gold,
 And so there were hell for ever ! but were there a God, as you say,
 His love would have power over hell till it utterly vanish'd away.

XIX

Ah, yet — I have had some glimmer, at times, in my gloomiest woe,
 Of a God behind all — after all — the great God, for aught that I know ;
 But the God of love and of hell together — they cannot be thought,
 If there be such a God, may the Great God curse him and bring him to nought !

XX

Blasphemy ! whose is the fault ? is it mine ? for why would you save
 A madman to vex you with wretched words, who is best in his grave ?
 Blasphemy ! ay, why not, being damn'd beyond hope of grace ?
 O, would I were yonder with her, and away from your faith and your face ! 110
 Blasphemy ! true ! I have scared you pale with my scandalous talk,
 But the blasphemy to my mind lies all in the way that you walk.

XXI

Hence ! she is gone ! can I stay ? can I breathe divorced from the past ?
 You needs must have good lynx-eyes if I do not escape you at last.
 Our orthodox coroner doubtless will find it a felo-de-se,
 And the stake and the cross-road, fool, if you will, does it matter to me ?

THE ANCIENT SAGE

A THOUSAND summers ere the time of Christ,
 From out his ancient city came a Seer
 Whom one that loved and honor'd him, and yet
 Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but worn

From wasteful living, follow'd — in his hand
 A scroll of verse — till that old man before
 A cavern whence an affluent fountain
 pour'd
 From darkness into daylight, turn'd and spoke:

'This wealth of waters might but seem to draw
 From yon dark cave, but, son, the source is higher,
 Yon summit half - a - league in air — and higher
 The cloud that hides it — higher still the heavens
 Whereby the cloud was moulded, and whereout
 The cloud descended. Force is from the heights.
 I am wearied of our city, son, and go
 To spend my one last year among the hills.
 What hast thou there? Some death-song for the Ghouls
 To make their banquet relish? let me read.

"How far thro' all the bloom and brake
 That nightingale is heard!
 What power but the hird's could make
 This music in the bird?
 How summer-bright are yonder ekies,
 And earth as fair in hue!
 And yet what sign of aught that lies
 Behind the green and blue?
 But man to-day is fancy's fool
 As man hath ever been.
 The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule
 Were never heard or seen."

If thou wouldst hear the Nameless, and wilt dive
 Into the temple-cave of thine own self,
 There, brooding by the central altar, thou
 Mayst haply learn the Nameless hath a voice,
 By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise,
 As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst not know;
 For Knowledge is the swallow on the lake
 That sees and stirs the surface-shadow there
 But never yet hath dipt into the abyss,
 The abyss of all abysses, beneath, within
 The blue of sky and sea, the green of earth,
 And in the million-millionth of a grain
 Which cleft and cleft again for evermore,
 And ever vanishing, never vanishes,

To me, my son, more mystic than myself,
 Or even than the Nameless is to me.

'And when thou sendest thy free soul thro' heaven,
 Nor understandest bound nor boundlessness,
 Thou seest the Nameless of the hundred names.

'And if the Nameless should withdraw from all
 Thy frailty counts most real, all thy world
 Might vanish like thy shadow in the dark.

"And since — from when this earth began —
 The Nameless never came
 Among us, never spake with man,
 And never named the Name" —

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son,
 Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in,
 Thou canst not prove that thou art body alone,
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit alone,
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in one.
 Thou canst not prove thou art immortal,
 no,
 Nor yet that thou art mortal — nay, my son,
 Thou canst not prove that I, who speak with thee,
 Am not thyself in converse with thyself,
 For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
 Nor yet disproven. Wherefore thou be wise,
 Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
 And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith!
 She reels not in the storm of warring words,
 She brightens at the clash of "Yes" and "No,"
 She sees the best that glimmers thro' the worst,
 She feels the sun is hid but for a night,
 She spies the summer thro' the winter bud,
 She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,
 She hears the lark within the songless egg,
 She finds the fountain where they would
 "Mirage!"

“ What Power? aught akin to Mind,
The mind in me and you?
Or power as of the Gods gone blind 80
Who see not what they do? ”

But some in yonder city hold, my son,
That none but gods could build this house
of ours,
So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond
All work of man, yet, like all work of man,
A beauty with defect — till That which
knows,
And is not known, but felt thro' what we
feel

Within ourselves is highest, shall descend
On this half-deed, and shape it at the last
According to the Highest in the High-
est. 90

“ What Power but the Years that make
And break the vase of clay,
And stir the sleeping earth, and wake
The bloom that fades away?
What rulers but the Days and Hours
That cancel weal with woe,
And wind the front of youth with flowers,
And cap our age with snow? ”

The days and hours are ever glancing by,
And seem to flicker past thro' sun and
shade, 100
Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or
Pain,

But with the Nameless is nor day nor hour;
Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from
thought to thought,
Break into “ Thens ” and “ Whens ” the
Eternal Now —

This double seeming of the single world! —
My words are like the babblings in a
dream
Of nightmare, when the babblings break
the dream.

But thou be wise in this dream-world of
ours,
Nor take thy dial for thy deity,
But make the passing shadow serve thy
will. 110

“ The years that made the stripling wise
Undo their work again,
And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,
The last and least of men;
Who clings to earth, and once would dare
Hell-heat or Arctic cold,
And now one breath of cooler air
Would loose him from his hold.

His winter chills him to the root,
He withers marrow and mind; 120
The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit
Is jutting thro' the rind;
The tiger spasms tear his chest,
The palsy wags his head;
The wife, the sons, who love him best
Would fain that he were dead;
The griefs by which he once was wrung
Were never worth the while ” —

Who knows? or whether this earth-narrow
life 129
Be yet but yolk, and forming in the shell?

“ The shaft of scorn that once had stung
But wakes a dotard smile.”

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

“ The statesman's brain that sway'd the past
Is feebler than his knees;
The passive sailor wrecks at last
In ever-silent seas;
The warrior hath forgot his arms,
The learned all his lore;
The changing market frets or charms 140
The merchant's hope no more:
The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,
And now is lost in cloud;
The plowman passes, bent with pain,
To mix with what he plow'd;
The poet whom his age would quote
As heir of endless fame —
He knows not even the book he wrote,
Not even his own name.
For man has overlived his day, 150
And, darkening in the light,
Scarce feels the senses break away
To mix with ancient Night.”

The shell must break before the bird can
fly.

“ The years that when my youth began
Had set the lily and rose
By all my ways where'er they ran,
Have ended mortal foes;
My rose of love for ever gone,
My lily of truth and trust — 160
They made her lily and rose in one,
And changed her into dust.
O rose-tree planted in my grief,
And growing on her tomb,
Her dust is greening in your leaf,
Her blood is in your bloom.
O slender lily waving there,
And laughing back the light,
In vain you tell me ‘ Earth is fair’
When all is dark as night.” 170

My son, the world is dark with griefs and
 graves,
 So dark that men cry out against the hea-
 vens.
 Who knows but that the darkness is in
 man?
 The doors of Night may be the gates of
 Light;
 For wert thou born or blind or deaf, and
 then
 Suddenly heal'd, how wouldst thou glory
 in all
 The splendors and the voices of the world !
 And we, the poor earth's dying race, and
 yet
 No phantoms, watching from a phantom
 shore 179
 Await the last and largest sense to make
 The phantom walls of this illusion fade,
 And show us that the world is wholly fair.

“But vain the tears for darken'd years
 As laughter over wine,
 And vain the laughter as the tears,
 O brother, mine or thine,
 For all that laugh, and all that weep
 And all that breathe are one
 Slight ripple on the boundless deep
 That moves, and all is gone.” 190

But that one ripple on the boundless deep
 Feels that the deep is boundless, and it-
 self
 For ever changing form, but evermore
 One with the boundless motion of the deep.

“Yet wine and laughter, friends ! and set
 The lamps alight, and call
 For golden music, and forget
 The darkness of the pall.”

If utter darkness closed the day, my
 son —
 But earth's dark forehead flings athwart
 the heavens 200
 Her shadow crown'd with stars — and yon-
 der — out
 To northward — some that never set, but
 pass
 From sight and night to lose themselves in
 day.
 I hate the black negation of the bier,
 And wish the dead, as happier than our-
 selves
 And higher, having climb'd one step be-
 yond

Our village miseries, might be borne in
 white
 To burial or to burning, hymn'd from
 hence
 With songs in praise of death, and crown'd
 with flowers !

“O worms and maggots of to-day 210
 Without their hope of wings !”

But louder than thy rhyme the silent Word
 Of that world-prophet in the heart of man.

“Tho' some have gleams, or so they say,
 Of more than mortal things.”

To-day ? but what of yesterday ? for oft
 On me, when boy, there came what then I
 call'd,

Who knew no books and no philosophies,
 In my boy-phrases, “The Passion of the
 Past.”

The first gray streak of earliest summer-
 dawn, 220

The last long strife of waning crimson
 gloom,

As if the late and early were but one —
 A height, a broken grange, a grove, a
 flower

Had murmurs, “Lost and gone, and lost
 and gone !”

A breath, a whisper — some divine fare-
 well —

Desolate sweetness — far and far away —
 What had he loved, what had he lost, the
 boy ?

I know not, and I speak of what has been.

‘And more, my son ! for more than once
 when I

Sat all alone, revolving in myself 230
 The word that is the symbol of myself,
 The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
 And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
 Melts into heaven. I touch'd my limbs,
 the limbs

Were strange, not mine — and yet no shade
 of doubt,

But utter clearness, and thro' loss of self
 The gain of such large life as match'd with
 ours

Were sun to spark — unshadowable in
 words,

Themselves but shadows of a shadow-
 world.

“And idle gleams will come and go, 240
 But still the clouds remain ;”

The clouds themselves are children of the
Suu.

“ And Night and Shadow rule below
When only Day should reign.”

And Day and Night are children of the
Sun,

And idle gleams to thee are light to me.
Some say, the Light was father of the
Night,

And some, the Night was father of the
Light,

No night, no day! — I touch thy world
again —

No ill, no good! such counter-terms, my
son,

Are border-races, holding each its own
By endless war. But night enough is there

In yon dark city. Get thee back; and since
The key to that weird casket, which for
thee

But holds a skull, is neither thine nor mine,
But in the hand of what is more than man,
Or in man's hand when man is more than
man,

Let be thy wail, and help thy fellow-men,
And make thy gold thy vassal, not thy
king,

And fling free alms into the beggar's bowl,
And send the day into the darken'd heart;
Nor list for guerdon in the voice of men,
A dying echo from a falling wall;

Nor care — for Hunger hath the evil eye —
To vex the noon with fiery gems, or fold
Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous
looms;

Nor roll thy viands on a luscious tongue,
Nor drown thyself with flies in honeyed
wine;

Nor thou be rageful, like a handled bee,
And lose thy life by usage of thy sting; ²⁷⁰
Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for harm,
Nor make a snail's horn shrink for wanton-
ness.

And more — think well! Do-well will fol-
low thought,

And in the fatal sequence of this world
An evil thought may soil thy children's
blood;

But curb the beast would cast thee in the
mire,

And leave the hot swamp of voluptuous-
ness,

A cloud between the Nameless and thyself,

And lay thine uphill shoulder to the
wheel,

And climb the Mount of Blessing, whence,
if thou ²⁸⁰

Look higher, then — perchance — thou may-
est — beyond

A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,
And past the range of Night and Shadow

— see
The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal
day

Strike on the Mount of Vision!
So, farewell!

THE FLIGHT

I

ARE you sleeping? have you forgotten?
do not sleep, my sister dear!

How can you sleep? the morning brings
the day I hate and fear;

The cock has crow'd already once, he crows
before his time;

Awake! the creeping glimmer steals, the
hills are white with rime.

II

Ah, clasp me in your arms, sister, ah, fold
me to your breast!

Ah, let me weep my fill once more, and cry
myself to rest!

To rest? to rest and wake no more were
better rest for me,

Than to waken every morning to that face
I loathe to see.

III

I envied your sweet slumber, all night so
calm you lay;

The night was calm, the morn is calm, and
like another day;

But I could wish yon moaning sea would
rise and burst the shore,

And such a whirlwind blow these woods as
never blew before.

IV

For, one by one, the stars went down across
the gleaming pane,

And project after project rose, and all of
them were vain;

The blackthorn-blossom fades and falls and
leaves the bitter sloe,
The hope I catch at vanishes, and youth is
turn'd to woe.

V

Come, speak a little comfort ! all night I
pray'd with tears,
And yet no comfort came to me, and now
the morn appears,
When he will tear me from your side, who
bought me for his slave;
This father pays his debt with me, and
weds me to my grave. 20

VI

What father, this or mine, was he, who, on
that summer day
When I had fallen from off the crag we
clamber'd up in play,
Found, fear'd me dead, and groan'd, and
took and kiss'd me, and again
He kiss'd me; and I loved him then; he
was my father then.

VII

No father now, the tyrant vassal of a ty-
rant vice !
The goddess Jephtha vows his child . . .
to one cast of the dice.
These ancient woods, this Hall at last will
go — perhaps have gone,
Except his own meek daughter yield her
life, heart, soul to one —

VIII

To one who knows I scorn him. O, the
formal mocking bow,
The cruel smile, the courtly phrase that
masks his malice now — 30
But often in the sidelong eyes a gleam of all
things ill —
It is not Love but Hate that weds a bride
against her will;

IX

Hate, that would pluck from this true
breast the locket that I wear,
The precious crystal into which I braided
Edwin's hair !
The love that keeps this heart alive beats
on it night and day —
One golden curl, his golden gift, before he
past away.

X

He left us weeping in the woods; his boat
was on the sand;
How slowly down the rocks he went, how
loth to quit the land !
And all my life was darken'd, as I saw the
white sail run,
And darken, up that lane of light into the
setting sun. 40

XI

How often have we watch'd the sun fade
from us thro' the West,
And follow Edwin to those isles, those
Islands of the Blest !
Is *he* not there ? would I were there, the
friend, the bride, the wife,
With him, where summer never dies, with
Love, the sun of life !

XII

O, would I were in Edwin's arms — once
more — to feel his breath
Upon my cheek — on Edwin's ship, with
Edwin, even in death,
Tho' all about the shuddering wreck the
death-white sea should rave,
Or if lip were laid to lip on the pillows of
the wave !

XIII

Shall I take *him* ? I kneel with *him* ? I
swear and swear forsworn
To love him most whom most I loathe, to
honor whom I scorn ? 50
The Fiend would yell, the grave would
yawn, my mother's ghost would
rise —
To lie, to lie — in God's own house — the
blackest of all lies !

XIV

Why — rather than that hand in mine, tho'
every pulse would freeze,
I'd sooner fold an icy corpse dead of some
foul disease.
Wed him ? I will not wed him, let them
spurn me from the doors,
And I will wander till I die about the bar-
ren moors.

XV

The dear, mad bride who stabb'd her bride-
groom on her bridal night —

If mad, then I am mad, but sane if she
were in the right.

My father's madness makes me mad — but
words are only words !

I am not mad, not yet, not quite — There !
listen how the birds 60

XVI

Begin to warble yonder in the budding
orchard trees !

The lark has past from earth to heaven
upon the morning breeze !

How gladly, were I one of those, how early
would I wake !

And yet the sorrow that I bear is sorrow
for *his* sake.

XVII

They love their mates, to whom they sing;
or else their songs, that meet

The morning with such music, would never
be so sweet !

And tho' these fathers will not hear, the
blessed Heavens are just,

And Love is fire, and burns the feet would
trample it to dust.

XVIII

A door was open'd in the house — who ?
who ? my father sleeps !

A stealthy foot upon the stair ! he — some
one — this way creeps ! 70

If he ? yes, he — lurks, listens, fears his
victim may have fled —

He ! where is some sharp-pointed thing ?
he comes, and finds me dead.

XIX

Not he, not yet ! and time to act — but how
my temples burn !

And idle fancies flutter me, I know not
where to turn ;

Speak to me, sister, counsel me ; this mar-
riage must not be.

You only know the love that makes the
world a world to me !

XX

Our gentle mother, had *she* lived — but we
were left alone.

That other left us to ourselves, he cared
not for his own ;

So all the summer long we roam'd in these
wild woods of ours,

My Edwin loved to call us then ' his two
wild woodland flowers.' 80

XXI

Wild flowers blowing side by side in God's
free light and air,

Wild flowers of the secret woods, when
Edwin found us there,

Wild woods in which we roved with him,
and heard his passionate vow,

Wild woods in which we rove no more, if
we be parted now !

XXII

You will not leave me thus in grief to wan-
der forth forlorn ;

We never changed a bitter word, not once
since we were born ;

Our dying mother join'd our hands ; she
knew this father well ;

She bade us love, like souls in heaven, and
now I fly from hell,

XXIII

And you with me ; and we shall light upon
some lonely shore,

Some lodge within the waste sea-dunes, and
hear the waters roar, 90

And see the ships from out the West go
dipping thro' the foam,

And sunshine on that sail at last which
brings our Edwin home.

XXIV

But look, the morning grows apace, and
lights the old church-tower,

And lights the clock ! the hand points five
— O, me ! — it strikes the hour —

I bide no more, I meet my fate, whatever
ills betide !

Arise, my own true sister, come forth ! the
world is wide.

XXV

And yet my heart is ill at ease, my eyes are
dim with dew,

I seem to see a new-dug grave up yonder
by the yew !

If we should never more return, but wan-
der hand in hand

With breaking hearts, without a friend,
and in a distant land ! 100

XXVI

O sweet, they tell me that the world is
hard, and harsh of mind,

But can it be so hard, so harsh, as those
that should be kind ?

That matters not. Let come what will; at
last the end is sure,
And every heart that loves with truth is
equal to endure.

TO-MORROW

I

HER, that yer Honor was spakin' to ?
Whin, yer Honor ? last year —
Standin' here be the bridge, when last yer
Honor was here ?
An' yer Honor ye gev her the top of the
mornin', 'To-morra,' says she.
What did they call her, yer Honor ? They
call'd her Molly Magee.
An' yer Honor's the thrue ould blood that
always manes to be kind,
But there 's rason in all things, yer Honor,
for Molly was out of her mind.

II

Shure, an' meself remembers wan night
comin' down be the strhame,
An' it seems to me now like a bit of yisther-
day in a dhrame —
Here where yer Honor seen her — there
was hut a slip of a moon,
But I hard thim — Molly Magee wid her
bachelor, Danny O'Roon —¹⁰
'You 've been takin' a dhrop o' the crathur,'
an' Danny says, 'Troth, an' I been
Dhrinkin' yer health wid Shamus O'Shea
at Katty's shebeen;'¹
But I must be lavin' ye soon.' 'Ochone,
are ye goin' away ?'
'Goin' to out the Sassenach whate,' he says,
'over the say' —
'An' whin will ye meet me agin ?' an' I
hard him, 'Molly ashore,
I'll meet you agin to-morra,' says he, 'be
the chapel-door.'
'An' whin are ye goin' to lave me ?' 'O'
Monday mornin',' says he;
'An' shure thin ye 'll meet me to-morra ?'
'To-morra, to-morra, machree !'
'Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honor, that
had no likin' for Dan,

¹ Grog-shop.

Call'd from her cabin an' tould her to
come away from the man,
An' Molly Magee kem flyin' across me, as
light as a lark,
An' Dan stood there for a minute, an' thin
wint into the dark.
But wirrah ! the storm that night — the
tundher, an' rain that fell,
An' the strhames ruinin' down at the back
o' the glin 'ud 'a dhrownded hell.

III

But airth was at pace nixt mornin', an'
hiven in its glory smorned,
As the Holy Mother o' Glory that smiles
at her sleepin' child —
Ethen — she stept an the chapel-green, an'
she turn'd herself roun'
Wid a diamond dhrop in her eye, for Danny
was not to be foun',
An' many 's the time that I watch'd her at
mass lettin' down the tear,
For the divil a Danny was there, yer
Honor, for forty year.³⁰

IV

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the rose
an' the white o' the may,
An' yer hair as hlack as the night, an' yer
eyes as bright as the day !
Achora, yer laste little wishper was sweet
as the lilt of a bird !
Acushla, ye set me heart batin' to music
wid ivery word !
An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre in
sich an illigant han',
An' the fall of yer foot in the dance was as
light as snow an the lan',
An' the sun kem out of a cloud whiniver
ye walkt in the shreet,
An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda, an' laid
himself undher yer feet,
An' I loved ye meself wid a heart an' a
half, me darlin', and he
'Ud 'a shot his own sowl dead for a kiss of
ye, Molly Magee.⁴⁰

V

But shure we wor bettther frinds whin I
crack'd his skull for her sake,
An' he ped me back wid the best he could
give at ould Donovan's wake —
For the boys wor about her agin whin Dan
did n't come to the fore,

An' Shamus along wid the rest, but she put
thim all to the door.
An', afther, I thried her meself av the bird
'nd come to me call,
But Molly, begorrah, 'ud lishen to naither
at all, at all.

VI

An' her nabors an' frinds 'ud consowl an'
condowl wid her, airly an' late,
'Your Danny,' they says, 'niver crasst over
say to the Sassenach whate;
He's gone to the States, aroon, an' he's
married another wife,
An' ye 'll niver set eyes an the face of the
thraithur agin in life !⁵⁰
An' to dhrame of a married man, death
alive, is a mortal sin.'
But Molly says, 'I'd his hand-promise, an'
shure he 'll meet me agin.'

VII

An' afther her paärints had inter'd glory,
an' both in wan day,
She began to spake to herself, the crathur,
an' whishper, an' say,
'To-morra, to-morra !' an' Father Mo-
lowny he tuk her in han',
'Molly, yon 're manin' ;' he says, 'me dear,
av I undherstan',
That ye 'll meet your paärints agin an' yer
Danny O'Roon afore God
Wid his blessed Marthyrs an' Saints ;' an'
she gev him a frindly nod,
'To-morra, to-morra,' she says, an' she
did n't intind to desave,
But her wits wor dead, an' her hair was as
white as the snow an a grave. ⁶⁰

VIII

Arrah now, here last month they wor dig-
gin' the bog, an' they foun'
Dhrownded in black bog-wather a corp
lyin' undher groun'.

IX

Yer Honor's own agint, he says to me
wanst, at Katty's shebeen,
'The devil take all the black lan', for a
blessin' 'nd come wid the green !'
An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut his
bit o' turf for the fire ?
But och ! bad scan to the bogs whin they
swallies the man intire !

An' sorra the bog that's in hiven wid all
the light an' the glow,
An' there's hate enough, shure, widout
thim in the devil's kitchen below.

X

Thim ould blind nagers in Agypt, I hard
his Riverence say,
Could keep their haithen kings in the flesh
for the Jidgmt day,⁷⁰
An', faix, be the piper o' Moses, they kep'
the cat an' the dog,
But it 'nd 'a been aisier work av they lived
be an Irish bog.

XI

How-an-iver they laid this body they foun'
an the grass,
Be the chapel-door, an' the people 'ud see
it that wint in to mass —
But a frish generation had riz, an' most of
the ould was few,
An' I did n't know him meself, an' nōne of
the parish knew.

XII

But Molly kem limpin' up wid her stick, —
she was lamed iv a knee, —
Thin a slip of a gossoon call'd, 'Div ye
know him, Molly Magee ?'
An' she stood up strait as the queen of the
world — she lifted her head —
'Ho said he would meet me to-morra !'
an' dhropt down dead an the dead. ⁸⁰

XIII

Och, Molly, we thought, machree, ye would
start back agin into life,
Whin we laid yez, aich be aich, at yer wake
like husban' an' wife.
Sorra the dhry eye thin but was wet for the
frinds that was gone !
Sorra the silent throat but we hard it
cryin', 'Ochone !'
An' Shamus O'Shea that has now ten
childer, hansome an' tall,
Him an' his childer wor keenin' as if he
had lost thim all.

XIV

Thin his Riverence buried thim both in
wan grave be the dead boor-tree,¹
The young man Danny O'Roon wid his ould
woman, Molly Magee.

¹ Elder-tree.

XV

May all the flowers o' Jeroosilim blossom
 an' spring from the grass,
 Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other — as ye
 did — over yer Crass !
 An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid his
 soog to the sun an' the moon,
 An' tell thim in hiven about Molly Magee
 an' her Danny O'Roon,
 Till Holy Saint Pether gets up wid his kays
 an' opens the gate !
 An' shure, be the Crass, that's betther nor
 cuttin' the Sassenach whate,
 To be there wid the Blessed Mother an'
 Saints an' Marthys galore,
 An' singin' yer 'Aves' au', 'Pathers' for
 iver an' ivermore.

XVI

An' now that I tould yer Honor whatever
 I hard an' seen,
 Yer Honor 'ill give me a thrifle to dhrink
 yer health in potheen.

THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS

I

MILK for my sweet-arts, Bess ! fur it mun
 be the time about now
 When Molly cooms in fro' the far-end close
 wi' her paäils fro' the cow.
 Eh ! tha be new to the plaäce — thou 'rt
 gaäpin' — does n't tha see
 I calls 'em arter the fellers es once was
 sweet upo' me ?

II

Naäy, to be sewer, it be past 'er time.
 What maäkes 'er sa laäte ?
 Goä to the laäne at the back, an' looök thruf
 Maddison's gaäte !

III

Sweet-arts ! Molly belike may 'a lighted
 to-night upo' one.
 Sweet-arts ! thanks to the Lerd that I niver
 not listen'd to noän !
 So I sits i' my oän armelair wi' my oän
 kettle theree o' the hob,
 An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the sec-
 ond, an' Steevie an' Rob. 10

IV

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my knee. Thou sees
 that i' spite o' the men
 I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two
 'oonderd a-year to mysen;
 Yis ! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es ony
 lass i' the Shere;
 An' thou be es pretty a tabby, but Robby
 I seed thruf ya there.

V

Feyther 'nd saäy I wur ugly es sin, an' I
 beänt not vaäin,
 But I niver wur downright lugly, thaw
 soom 'ud 'a thowt ma plaäin,
 An' I was n't sa plaäin i' pink ribbons — ye
 said I wur pretty i' pinks,
 An' I liked to 'ear it I did, hut I beänt
 sich a fool as ye thinks;
 Ye was stroäkin' ma down wi' the 'air, as I
 be a-stroäkin' o' you,
 But whiniver I looök'd i' the glass I wur
 sewer that it could n't be true; 20
 Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye know'd it
 wur pleasant to 'ear,
 Thaw it warn't not me es wur pretty, but
 my two 'oonderd a-year.

VI

D' ya mind the murnin' when we was
 a-walkin' together, an' stood
 By the claäy'd-cop pond, that the foälk be
 sa scared at, i' Gigglesby wood,
 Wheer the poor wench drownid hersen,
 black Sal, es 'ed been disgraäced ?
 An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur
 a-creeäpin' about my waäist;
 An' me es wur allus afear'd of a man's git-
 tiu' ower fond,
 I sidled awaäy an' awaäy till I plumpt foot
 rust i' the pond;
 And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa well, as
 I did that daäy,
 Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha hoickt
 my feet wi' a flop fro' the claäy. 30
 Ay, stick oop thy back, an' set oop thy
 taäil, tha may gie ma a kiss,
 Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoäm an'
 wur niver sa nigh saäyin' Yis.
 But wa boäth was i' sich a clat we was
 shaämed to cross Gigglesby Greeän,
 Fur a cat may looök at a king, thou knaws,
 but the cat mun be cleän.

Sa we boäth on us kep' out o' sight o' the
winders o' Gigglesby Hinn —
Naäy, but the claws o' tha! quiet! they
pricks cleän thruf to the skin —
An' wa boäth slinkt 'oäm by the brokken
shed i' the laäne at the back,
Wheer the poodle runn'd at tha once, an'
thou runn'd oop o' the thack;
An' tha squeedg'd my 'and i' the shed, fur
there we was forced to 'ide,
Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin', and
one o' the Tommies beside. 40

VII

There now, what art 'a mewin' at, Stee-
vie? for owt I can tell —
Robby wur fust, to be sewer, or I mowt 'a
liked tha as well.

VIII

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the while I
wur chaängin' my gown,
An' I thowt, shall I chaänge my staäte?
but, O Lord, upo' coomin' down —
My bran-new carpet es fresh es a midder
o' flowers i' Maäy —
Why 'ed n't tha wiped thy shoes? it wur
clatted all ower wi' claäy.
An' I could 'a cried ammost, fur I seed that
it could n't be,
An', Robby, I gied tha a raätin' that sat-
tled thy coortin' o' me.
An' Molly an' me was agreed, as we was
a-cleänin' the floor,
That a man be a durty thing an' a trouble
an' plague wi' indoor. 50
But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck to tha
moor na the rest,
But I could n't 'a lived wi' a man, an' I
knavs it be all fur the best.

IX

Naäy — let ma stroäk tha down till I
maäkes tha es smooth es silk,
But if I 'ed married tha, Robby, thou'd
not 'a been worth thy milk,
Thou'd niver 'a cotech'd ony mice but 'a
left me the work to do,
And 'a taäen to the bottle beside, so es all
that I 'ears be true;
But I loovs tha to maäke thysen 'appy, an'
soä purr awaäy, my dear,
Thou 'ed wellnigh purr'd ma awaäy fro' my
oän two 'oonderd a-year.

X

Sweärin' ageän, you Toms, as ye used to do
twelve year sin'!
Ye niver eärd Steevie sweär 'cep' it wur at
a dog coomin' in, 60
An' boäth o' ye mun be fools to be hallus
a-shawin' your claws,
Fur I niver cared nothink for neither — an'
one o' ye deäd, ye knaws!
Coom, give hoäver then, weänt ye? I war-
rant ye soom fine daäy —
There, lig down — I shall hev to gie one
or tother awaäy.
Can't ye taäke pattern by Steevie? ye
shan't hev a drop fro' the paäil.
Steevie be right good manners bang thruf
to the tip o' the taäil.

XI

Robby, git down wi' tha, wilt tha? let
Steevie coom oop o' my knee.
Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh been
the Steevie fur me!
Robby wur fust, to be sewer, 'e wur burn
an' bred i' the 'ouse,
But thou be es 'ansom a tabby es iver patted
a mouse. 70

XII

An' I beänt not vaäin, but I knaws I 'ed'
led tha a quieter life
Nor her wi' the hepitaph yonder! 'A
faäithful an' loovin' wife!'
An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an' thy
windmill oop o' the croft,
Tha thowt tha would marry ma, did tha?
but that wur a bit ower soft,
Thaw thou was es soäber es daäy, wi' a
niced red faäce, an' es cleän
Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a bran-
new 'eäd o' the Queen,
An' thy farmin' es cleän es thysen, fur,
Steevie, tha kep' it sa neät
That I niver not spied sa much es a poppy
along wi' the wheät,
An' the wool of a thistle a-flyin' an' seeädin'
tha haäted to see;
'T wur es bad es a battle-twig¹ 'ere i' my
oän blue chaumber to me. 80
Ay, roob thy whiskers ageän ma, fur I
could 'a taäen to tha well,
But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a bouncin'
boy an' a geäll.

¹ Earwig.

XIII

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es I be
 mysen o' my cats,
 But I niver not wish'd fur childer, I hev n't
 naw likin' fur brats;
 Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop, an'
 they goäs fur a walk,
 Or sits wi' their 'ands afoor 'em, an' does n't
 not 'inder the talk!
 But their hottles o' pap, an' their mucky
 bibs, an' the clats an' the clouts,
 An' their mashin' their toys to pieäces an'
 maäkin' ma deäf wi' their shouts,
 An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if they
 was set upo' springs,
 An' a haxin' ma hawkard questions, an'
 saäyin' ondecend things,⁹⁰
 An' a-callin' ma 'hugly' mayhap to my
 faäce, or a-teärin' my gown —
 Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them
 Tommies — Steevie, git down.

XIV

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies, you. I
 tell'd ya, na moor o' that!
 Tom, lig theree o' the cushion, an' tother
 Tom 'ere o' the mat.

XV

Theree! I ha' master'd *them!* Hed I mar-
 ried the Tommies — O Lord,
 To loove an' ohaay the Tommies! I could n't
 'a stuck by my word.
 To be horder'd about, an' waäked, when
 Molly'd put out the light,
 By a man coomin' in wi' a hiccup at ony
 hour o' the night!
 An' the taäble staäin'd wi' 'is ääle, an' the
 mud o' 'is boots o' the stairs,
 An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse, an' the
 mark o' 'is 'eäd o' the chairs!¹⁰⁰
 An' noän o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a let
 me 'a hed my oän waäy,
 Sa I likes 'em best wi' taäils when they
 'ev n't a word to saäy.

XVI

An' I sits i' my oän little parlor, an' sarved
 by my oän little lass,

Wi' my oän little garden outside, an' my
 oän bed o' sparrow-grass,
 An' my oän door-poorch wi' the woodbine
 an' jessmine a-dressin' it greeän,
 An' my oän fine Jackman i' purple a
 roäbin' the 'ouse like a queeän.

XVII

An' the little gells bobs to ma hoffens es I
 be abroad i' the laänes,
 When I goäs fur to coomfut the poor es be
 down wi' their haäches an' their
 pääins:
 An' a haäf-pot o' jam, or a mossel o' meät
 when it beänt too dear,
 They maäkes ma a graäter lady nor 'er i'
 the mansion theer,¹¹⁰
 Hes 'es hallus to hax of a man how much
 to spare or to spend;
 An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if soä
 pleäse God, to the hend.

XVIII

Mew! mew! — Bess wi' the milk! what
 ha maäde our Molly sa laäte?
 It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an' theree
 — it be strikin' height —
 'Cushie wur craäzed fur 'er cauf,' well —
 I 'eärd 'er a-maäkin' 'er moän,
 An' I thowt to mysen, 'thank God that I
 hev n't naw cauf o' my oän.'

Theree!

• Set it down!

Now, Robby!

You Tommies shall waäit to-night
 Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their lap —
 an' it sarves ye right.

PROLOGUE

TO GENERAL HAMLEY

OUR birches yellowing and from each
 The light leaf falling fast,
 While squirrels from our fiery beech
 Were bearing off the mast,
 You came, and look'd and loved the view
 Long-known and loved by me,

Green Sussex fading into blue
 With one gray glimpse of sea;
 And, gazing from this height alone,
 We spoke of what had been
 Most marvellous in the wars your own
 Crimean eyes had seen;
 And now — like old-world inns that take
 Some warrior for a sign
 That therewithin a guest may make
 True cheer with honest wine —
 Because you heard the lines I read
 Nor utter'd word of blame,
 I dare without your leave to head
 These rhymings with your name,
 Who know you but as one of those
 I fain would meet again,
 Yet know you, as your England knows
 That you and all your men
 Were soldiers to her heart's desire,
 When, in the vanish'd year,
 You saw the league-long rampart-fire
 Flare from Tel-el-Kebir
 Thro' darkness, and the foe was driven,
 And Wolseley overthrew
 Arâbi, and the stars in heaven
 Paled, and the glory grew.

THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA

OCTOBER 25, 1854

I

THE charge of the gallant three hundred,
 the Heavy Brigade!
 Down the hill, down the hill, thousands of
 Russians,
 Thousands of horsemen, drew to the valley
 — and stay'd;
 For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred
 were riding by
 When the points of the Russian lances
 arose in the sky;
 And he call'd, 'Left wheel into line!' and
 they wheel'd and obey'd.
 Then he look'd at the host that had halted
 he knew not why,
 And he turn'd half round, and he bade his
 trumpeter sound
 To the charge, and he rode on ahead, as he
 waved his blade
 To the gallant three hundred whose glory
 will never die —

'Follow,' and up the hill, up the hill, up
 the hill,
 Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

II

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge, and
 the might of the fight!
 Thousands of horsemen had gather'd there
 on the height,
 With a wing push'd out to the left and a
 wing to the right,
 And who shall escape if they close? but he
 dash'd up alone
 Thro' the great gray slope of men,
 Sway'd his sabre, and held his own
 Like an Englishman there and then.
 All in a moment follow'd with force
 Three that were next in their fiery course,
 Wedged themselves in between horse and
 horse,
 Fought for their lives in the narrow gap
 they had made —
 Four amid thousands! and up the hill, up
 the hill,
 Gallopt the gallant three hundred, the
 Heavy Brigade.

III

Fell like a cannon-shot,
 Burst like a thunderbolt,
 Crash'd like a hurricane,
 Broke thro' the mass from below,
 Drove thro' the midst of the foe,
 Plunged up and down, to and fro,
 Rode flashing blow upon blow,
 Brave Inniskillens and Greys
 Whirling their sahres in circles of light!
 And some of us, all in amaze,
 Who were held for a while from the fight,
 And were only standing at gaze,
 When the dark-muffled Russian crowd
 Folded its wings from the left and the
 right,
 And roll'd them around like a cloud, —
 O, mad for the charge and the battle were
 we,
 When our own good redcoats sank from
 sight,
 Like drops of blood in a dark-gray sea,
 And we turn'd to each other, whispering,
 all dismay'd,
 'Lost are the gallant three hundred of
 Scarlett's Brigade!'

IV

'Lost one and all' were the words
 Mutter'd in our dismay;
 But they rode like victors and lords
 Thro' the forest of lances and swords
 In the heart of the Russian hordes,
 They rode, or they stood at bay —
 Struck with the sword-hand and slew,
 Down with the bridle-hand drew
 The foe from the saddle and threw
 Underfoot there in the fray —
 Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock
 In the wave of a stormy day;
 Till suddenly shock upon shock
 Stagger'd the mass from without,
 Drove it in wild disarray,
 For our men gallopt up with a cheer and
 a shout,
 And the foeman surged, and waver'd, and
 reel'd
 Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, out of
 the field,
 And over the brow and away.

V

Glory to each and to all, and the charge
 that they made !
 Glory to all the three hundred, and all the
 Brigade !

NOTE. — The 'three hundred' of the 'Heavy
 Brigade' who made this famous charge were
 the Scots Greys and the 2d squadron of Innis-
 killens; the remainder of the 'Heavy Bri-
 gade' subsequently dashing up to their sup-
 port.

The 'three' were Scarlett's aide-de-camp,
 Elliot, and the trumpeter, and Shegog the
 orderly, who had been close behind him.

EPILOGUE

IRENE.

Not this way will you set your name
 A star among the stars.

POET.

What way ?

IRENE.

You praise when you should blame
 The barbarism of wars.
 A juster epoch has begun.

POET.

Yet tho' this cheek be gray,
 And that bright hair the modern sun,
 Those eyes the blue to-day,
 You wrong me, passionate little friend.
 I would that wars should cease,
 I would the globe from end to end
 Might sow and reap in peace,
 And some new Spirit o'erbear the old,
 Or Trade re-frain the Powers
 From war with kindly links of gold,
 Or Love with wreaths of flowers.
 Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all
 My friends and brother souls,
 With all the peoples, great and small,
 That wheel between the poles.
 But since our mortal shadow, Ill,
 To waste this earth began —
 Perchance from some abuse of Will
 In worlds before the man
 Involving ours — he needs must fight
 To make true peace his own,
 He needs must combat might with might,
 Or Might would rule alone;
 And who loves war for war's own sake
 Is fool, or crazed, or worse;
 But let the patriot-soldier take
 His meed of fame in verse;
 Nay — tho' that realm were in the wrong
 For which her warriors bleed,
 It still were right to crown with song
 The warrior's noble deed —
 A crown the Singer hopes may last,
 For so the deed endures;
 But Song will vanish in the Vast;
 And that large phrase of yours
 'A star among the stars,' my dear,
 Is girlish talk at best;
 For dare we dally with the sphere
 As he did half in jest,
 Old Horace ? 'I will strike,' said he,
 'The stars with head sublime,'
 But scarce could see, as now we see,
 The man in space and time,
 So drew perchance a happier lot
 Than ours, who rhyme to-day.
 The fires that arch this dusky dot —
 Yon myriad-world'd way —
 The vast sun-clusters' gather'd blaze,
 World-isles in lonely skies,
 Whole heavens within themselves, amaze
 Our brief humanities.
 And so does Earth; for Homer's fame,
 Tho' carved in harder stone —

The falling drop will make his name
As mortal as my own.

IRENE.

No!

POET.

Let it live then — ay, till when?
Earth passes, all is lost
In what they prophesy, our wise men,
Sun-flame or sunless frost,
And deed and song alike are swept
Away, and all in vain
As far as man can see, except
The man himself remain;
And tho', in this lean age forlorn,
Too many a voice may cry
That man can have no after-morn,
Not yet of those am I.
The man remains, and whatsoe'er
He wrought of good or brave
Will mould him thro' the cycle-year
That dawns behind the grave.

And here the Singer for his art
Not all in vain may plead
'The song that nerves a nation's heart
Is in itself a deed.'

TO VIRGIL

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE
MANTUANS FOR THE NINETEENTH
CENTENARY OF VIRGIL'S DEATH

I

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest
Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising,
wars, and filial faith, and Dido's
pyre;

II

Landscape-lover, lord of language
more than he that sang the 'Works
and Days,'
All the chosen coin of fancy
flashing out from many a golden
phrase;

III

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
tilth and vineyard, hive and horse
and herd;
All the charm of all the Muses
often flowering in a lonely word;

IV

Poet of the happy Tityrus
piping underneath his beechen bow-
ers;
Poet of the poet-satyr
whom the laughing shepherd bound
with flowers;

V

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying
in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow,
unlaborious earth and oarless sea;

VI

Thou that seest Universal
Nature moved by Universal Mind;
Thou majestic in thy sadness
at the doubtful doom of human
kind;

VII

Light among the vanish'd ages;
star that gildest yet this phantom
shore;
Golden branch amid the shadows,
kings and realms that pass to rise no
more;

VIII

Now thy Forum roars no longer,
fallen every purple Cæsar's dome —
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm
sound forever of Imperial Rome —

IX

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,
and the Rome of freemen holds her
place,
I, from out the Northern Island
sunder'd once from all the human
race,

X

I salute thee, Mantovano,
I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure
ever moulded by the lips of man.

THE DEAD PROPHET

182-

I

DEAD!

And the Muses cried with a stormy
cry,
'Send them no more, for evermore.
Let the people die.'

II

Dead!

'Is it *he* then brought so low?'
And a careless people flock'd from the
fields
With a purse to pay for the show.

III

Dead, who had served his time,
Was one of the people's kings,
Had labor'd in lifting them out of slime,
And showing them, souls have wings!

IV

Dumb on the winter heath he lay.
His friends had stript him bare,
And roll'd his nakedness every way
That all the crowd might stare.

V

A storm-worn signpost not to be read,
And a tree with a moulder'd nest
On its barkless bones, stood stark by the
dead;
And behind him, low in the West,

VI

With shifting ladders of shadow and light,
And blurr'd in color and form,
The sun hung over the gates of night,
And glared at a coming storm.

VII

Then glided a vulturous beldam forth,
That on dumb death had thriven;
They call'd her 'Reverence' here upon
earth,
And 'The Curse of the Prophet' in
heaven.

VIII

She knelt — 'We worship him' — all but
wept —
'So great, so noble, was he!'
She clear'd her sight, she arose, she swept
The dust of earth from her knee.

IX

'Great! for he spoke and the people heard,
And his eloquence caught like a flame
From zone to zone of the world, till his
word
Had won him a noble name.

X

'Noble! he sung, and the sweet sound
ran
Thro' palace and cottage door,
For he touch'd on the whole sad plauet of
man,
The kings and the rich and the poor;

XI

'And he sung not alone of an old sun set,
But a sun coming up in his youth!
Great and noble — O, yes — but yet —
For man is a lover of truth,

XII

'And bound to follow, wherever she go
Stark-naked, and up or down,
Thro' her high hill-passes of stainless
snow,
Or the foulest sewer of the town —

XIII

'Noble and great — O, ay — but then,
Tho' a prophet should have his due,
Was he noblier-fashion'd than other men?
Shall we see to it, I and you?

XIV

'For since he would sit on a prophet's
seat,
As a lord of the human soul,
We needs must scan him from head to
feet,
Were it but for a wart or a mole?'

XV

His wife and his child stood by him in
tears,
But she — she push'd them aside.

'Tho' a name may last for a thousand
years,
Yet a truth is a truth,' she cried.

XVI

And she that had haunted his pathway
still,
Had often truckled and cower'd
When he rose in his wrath, and had yielded
her will
To the master, as overpower'd,

XVII

She tumbled his helpless corpse about.
'Small blemish upon the skin!
But I think we know what is fair with-
out
Is often as foul within.'

XVIII

She crunch'd, she tore him part from
part,
And out of his body she drew
The red 'blood-eagle'¹ of liver and heart;
She held them up to the view;

XIX

She gabbled, as she groped in the dead,
And all the people were pleased;
'See, what a little heart,' she said,
'And the liver is half-diseased!'

XX

She tore the prophet after death,
And the people paid her well.
Lightnings flicker'd along the heath;
One shriek'd, 'The fires of hell!'

EARLY SPRING

I

ONCE more the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And dômes the red-plow'd hills
With loving blue;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The throstles too.

¹ Old Viking term for lungs, liver, etc., when torn by the conqueror out of the body of the conquered.

II

Opens a door in heaven;
From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain-walls
Young angels pass.

III

Before them fleets the shower,
And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods;
The stars are from their hands
Flung thro' the woods,

IV

The woods with living airs
How softly fann'd,
Light airs from where the deep,
All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
Heard by the land.

V

O, follow, leaping blood,
The season's lure!
O heart, look down and up
Serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup,
Like snowdrops, pure!

VI

Past, Future glimpse and fade
Thro' some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, how frail,
In sound and smell!

VII

Till at thy chuckled note,
Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
And, lightly stirr'd,
Ring little bells of change
From word to word.

VIII

For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold, and fills
The flower with dew;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The poets too.

PREFATORY POEM TO MY
BROTHER'S SONNETS

MIDNIGHT, JUNE 30, 1879

I

MIDNIGHT — in no midsummer tune
The breakers lash the shores;
The cuckoo of a joyless June
Is calling out of doors.

And thou hast vanish'd from thine own
To that which looks like rest,
True brother, only to be known
By those who love thee best.

II

Midnight — and joyless June gone by,
And from the deluged park
The cuckoo of a worse July
Is calling thro' the dark;

But thou art silent underground,
And o'er thee streams the rain,
True poet, surely to be found
When Truth is found again.

III

And, now to these unsummer'd skies
The summer bird is still,
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries
From out a phantom hill;

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun
Of sixty years away,
The light of days when life begun,
The days that seem to-day,

When all my griefs were shared with
thee,
As all my hopes were thine —
As all thou wert was one with me,
May all thou art be mine !

'FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE'

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sir-
mione row !
So they row'd, and there we landed — 'O
venusta Sirmio !'
There to me thro' all the groves of olive in
the summer glow,

There beneath the Roman ruin where the
purple flowers grow,
Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the Poet's
hopeless woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hun-
dred years ago,
'Frater Ave atque Vale' — as we wander'd
tô and fro
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda
Lake below
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-sil-
very Sirmio !

HELEN'S TOWER

[Written at the request of my friend, Lord
Dufferin.]

HELEN'S TOWER, here I stand,
Dominant over sea and land.
Son's love built me, and I hold
Mother's love in letter'd gold.
Love is in and out of time,
I am mortal stone and lime.
Would my granite girth were strong
As either love, to last as long !
I should wear my crown entire
To and thro' the Doomsday fire,
And be found of angel eyes
In earth's recurring Paradise.

EPITAPH ON LORD STRATFORD
DE REDCLIFFE

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

THOU third great Canning, stand among
our best
And noblest, now thy long day's work
hath ceased,
Here silent in our Minster of the West
Who wert the voice of England in the
East.

EPITAPH ON GENERAL GORDON

IN THE GORDON BOYS' NATIONAL MEMO-
RIAL HOME NEAR WOKING

WARRIOR of God, man's friend, and ty-
rant's foe,
Now somewhere dead far in the waste
Soudan,

Thou livest in all hearts, for all men know
This earth has never borne a nobler
man.

EPITAPH ON CAXTON

IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER

Piat Lux (his motto)

THY prayer was 'Light — more Light —
while Time shall last!'

Thou sawest a glory growing on the
night,
But not the shadows which that light would
cast,

Till shadows vanish in the Light of
Light.

TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL

O PATRIOT Statesman, be thou wise to
know

The limits of resistance, and the bounds
Determining concession; still be bold
Not only to slight praise but suffer scorn;
And be thy heart a fortress to maintain
The day against the moment, and the year
Against the day; thy voice, a music heard
Thro' all the yells and counter-yells of
feud

And faction, and thy will, a power to make
This ever-changing world of circumstance,
In changing, chime with never-changing
Law.

HANDS ALL ROUND

FIRST pledge our Queen this solemn night,
Then drink to England, every guest;

That man's the best Cosmopolite
Who loves his native country best.

May freedom's oak for ever live
With stronger life from day to day;

That man's the true Conservative
Who lops the moulder'd branch away.

Hands all round!

God the traitor's hope confound!
To this great cause of Freedom drink, my
friends,

And the great name of England, round
and round.

To all the loyal hearts who long
To keep our English Empire whole!

To all our noble sons, the strong
New England of the Southern Pole!

To England under Indian skies,
To those dark millions of her realm!

To Canada whom we love and prize,
Whatever statesman hold the helm.

Hands all round!

God the traitor's hope confound!

To this great name of England drink, my
friends,

And all her glorious empire, round and
round.

To all our statesmen so they be
True leaders of the land's desire!

To both our Houses, may they see
Beyond the borough and the shire!

We sail'd wherever ship could sail,
We founded many a mighty state;

Pray God our greatness may not fail
Thro' craven fears of being great!

Hands all round!

God the traitor's hope confound!

To this great cause of Freedom drink, my
friends,

And the great name of England, round
and round.

FREEDOM

I

O THOU so fair in summers gone,
While yet thy fresh and virgin soul
Inform'd the pillar'd Parthenon,
The glittering Capitol;

II

So fair in southern sunshine bathed,
But scarce of such majestic mien
As here with forehead vapor-swathed
In meadows ever green;

III

For thou — when Athens reign'd and
Rome,

Thy glorious eyes were dimm'd with pain
To mark in many a freeman's home
The slave, the scourge, the chain;

IV

O follower of the Vision, still
In motion to the distant gleam,

Howe'er blind force and brainless will
May jar thy golden dream

v

Of Knowledge fusing class with class,
Of civic Hate no more to be,
Of Love to leaven all the mass,
Till every soul be free;

vi

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not mar
By changes all too fierce and fast
This order of her Human Star,
This heritage of the past;

vii

O scorner of the party cry
That wanders from the public good,
Thou — when the nations rear on high
Their idol smear'd with blood,

viii

And when they roll their idol down —
Of saner worship sanely proud;
Thou loather of the lawless crown
As of the lawless crowd;

ix

How long thine ever-growing mind
Hath still'd the blast and strown the
wave,
Tho' some of late would raise a wind
To, sing thee to thy grave,

x

Men loud against all forms of power —
Unfurnish'd brows, tempestuous tongues,
Expecting all things in an hour —
Brass mouths and iron lungs!

POETS AND THEIR BIBLIOGRAPHIES

OLD poets foster'd under friendlier skies,
Old Virgil who would write ten lines,
they say,
At dawn, and lavish all the golden day
To make them wealthier in his readers'
eyes;
And you, old popular Horace, you the wise

Adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd lay,
And you, that wear a wreath of sweeter
bay,

Catullus, whose dead songster never dies;
If, glancing downward on the kindly
sphere

That once had roll'd you round and
round the sun,

You see your Art still shrined in human
shelves,

You should be jubilant that you flourish'd
here

Before the Love of Letters, overdone,
Had swamp'd the sacred poets with them-
selves.

TO H. R. H. PRINCESS BEATRICE

Two Suns of Love make day of human life,
Which else with all its pains, and griefs,
and deaths,

Were utter darkness — one, the Sun of
dawn

That brightens thro' the Mother's tender
eyes,

And warms the child's awakening world —
and one

The later-rising Sun of spousal Love,
Which from her household orbit draws the
child

To move in other spheres. The Mother
weeps

At that white funeral of the single life,
Her maiden daughter's marriage; and her
tears

Are half of pleasure, half of pain — the
child

Is happy — even in leaving *her!* but thou,
True daughter, whose all-faithful, filial eyes
Have seen the loneliness of earthly thrones,
Wilt neither quit the widow'd Crown, nor
let

This later light of Love have risen in vain,
But moving thro' the Mother's home, be-
tween

The two that love thee, lead a summer
life,

Sway'd by each Love, and swaying to each
Love,

Like some conjectured planet in mid heaven
Between two suns, and drawing down from
both

The light and genial warmth of double
day.

LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER, ETC.

This was the title of the volume published late in 1886, containing the 'Locksley Hall,' 'The Fleet,' 'Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition,' and 'The Promise of May.' The book had the following dedication:

TO MY WIFE
I DEDICATE
THIS DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE
AND
THE POEMS WHICH FOLLOW

LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

LATE, my grandson! half the morning
have I paced these sandy tracts,
Watch'd again the hollow ridges roaring
into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood while I
heard the curlews call,
I myself so close on death, and death itself
in Locksley Hall.

So — your happy suit was blasted — she
the faultless, the divine;
And you liken — boyish babble — this boy-
love of yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless of a
foolish past;
Babble, babble; our old England may go
down in babble at last.

'Curse him!' curse your fellow-victim?
call him dotard in your rage?
Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well
might fool a dotard's age. 10

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier? yet per-
haps she was not wise;
I remember how you kiss'd the miniature
with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting — Amy's
arms about my neck —
Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the
ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she that
clasp'd my neck had flown;
I was left within the shadow sitting on the
wreck alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment, will you
sicken for her sake?
You, not you! your modern amonist is of
easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy was a
timid child;
But your Judith — but your worldling —
she had never driven me wild. 20

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer
than the golden ring,
She that finds a winter sunset fairer than a
morn of spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on his
briefer lease of life,
While she vows 'till death shall part us,'
she the would-be-widow wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings — fa-
ther, mother — be content,
Even the homely farm can teach us there
is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking now
into the ground,
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with his
feet upon the hound.

Cross'd! for once he sail'd the sea to crush
the Moslem in his pride;

Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead the
cause in which he died. 30

Yet how often I and Amy in the moulder-
ing aisle have stood,
Gazing for one pensive moment on that
founder of our blood.

There again I stood to-day, and where of
old we knelt in prayer,
Close beneath the casement crimson with
the shield of Locksley — there,

All in white Italian marble, looking still as
if she smiled,
Lies my Amy dead in childbirth, dead the
mother, dead the child.

Dead — and sixty years ago, and dead her
aged husband now —
I, this old white-headed dreamer, stoopt
and kiss'd her marble brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies, furies,
curses, passionate tears,
Gone like fires and floods and earthquakes
of the planet's dawning years. 40

Fires that shook me once, but now to silent
ashes fallen away.
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the
gleam of dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute be-
low the chancel stones,
All his virtues — I forgive them — black in
white above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in
fight against the foe,
Some thro' age and slow diseases, gone as
all on earth will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my life in
golden sequence ran,
She with all the charm of woman, she with
all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith,
yet so lowly-sweet,
Woman to her inmost heart, and woman to
her tender feet, 50

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ail-
ing body and mind,

She that link'd again the broken chain that
bound me to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while I
wander'd down the coast,
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the
slighter ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard
early lost at sea;
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and
mine art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying
to be left alone,
Pining for the stronger heart that once had
beat beside her own.

Truth, for truth is truth, he worshipt, being
true as he was brave;
Good, for good is good, he follow'd, yet he
look'd beyond the grave, 60

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren
Death as lord of all,
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing cur-
tain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who saw the
death, but kept the deck,
Saving women and their babes, and sinking
with the sinking wreck,

Gone for ever! Ever? no — for since our
dying race began,
Ever, ever, and for ever was the leading
light of man.

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd the
slave, and slew the wife
Felt within themselves the sacred passion
of the second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting
grounds beyond the night;
Even the black Australian dying hopes he
shall return, a white. 70

Truth for truth, and good for good! The
good, the true, the pure, the just —
Take the charm 'For ever' from them, and
they crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of 'Forward, Forward,' lost
within a growing gloom;

- Lost, or only heard in silence from the
silence of a tomb.
- Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs
over time and space,
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage into
commonest commonplace!
- 'Forward' rang the voices then, and of the
many mine was one.
Let us hush this cry of 'Forward' till ten
thousand years have gone.
- Far among the vanish'd races, old Assyrian
kings would flay
Captives whom they caught in battle —
iron-hearted victors they. 80
- Ages after, while in Asia, he that led the
wild Moguls,
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty
thousand human skulls;
- Then, and here in Edward's time, an age
of noblest English names,
Christian conquerors took and flung the
conquer'd Christian into flames.
- Love your enemy, bless your haters, said
the Greatest of the great;
Christian love among the Churches look'd
the twin of heathen hate.
- From the golden alms of Blessing man had
coin'd himself a curse:
Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which was
crueller? which was worse?
- France had shown a light to all men,
preach'd a Gospel, all men's good;
Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd and
slaked the light with blood. 90
- Hope was ever on her mountain, watching
till the day begun —
Crown'd with sunlight — over darkness —
from the still unrisen sun.
- Have we grown at last beyond the passions
of the primal clan?
'Kill your enemy, for you hate him,' still,
'your enemy' was a man.
- Have we sunk below them? peasants maim
the helpless horse, and drive
- Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn the
kindlier brutes alive.
- Brutes, the brutes are not your wrongers
— burnt at midnight, found at morn,
Twisted hard in mortal agony with their
offspring, born-unborn,
- Clinging to the silent mother! Are we
devils? are we men?
Sweet Saint Francis of Assisi, would that
he were here again, 100
- He that in his Catholic wholeness used to
call the very flowers
Sisters, brothers — and the beasts — whose
pains are hardly less than ours!
- Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can
tell how all will end?
Read the wide world's annals, you, and take
their wisdom for your friend.
- Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal
daughter of the Past,
Shape your heart to front the hour, but
dream not that the hour will last.
- Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave you
courage to be wise —
When was age so cramm'd with menace?
madness? written, spoken lies?
- Envy wears the mask of Love, and, laugh-
ing sober fact to scorn,
Cries to weakest as to strongest, 'Ye are
equals, equal-born.' 110
- Equal-born? O, yes, if yonder hill be
level with the flat.
Charm us, orator, till the lion look no larger
than the cat,
- Till the cat thro' that mirage of overheated
language loom
Larger than the lion, — Demos end in
working its own doom.
- Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall we
fight her? shall we yield?
Pause! before you sound the trumpet, hear
the voices from the field.
- Those three hundred millions under one
Imperial sceptre now,

Shall we hold them? shall we loose them?
take the suffrage of the plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow
Truth if only you and you,
Rivals of realm-ruining party, when you
speak were wholly true. 120

Plowmen, shepherds, have I found; and
more than once, and still could find,
Sons of God, and kings of men in utter no-
bleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the
practised hustings-liar;
So the higher wields the lower, while the
lower is the higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born
by right divine;
Here and there my lord is lower than his
oxen or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once
again the sickening game;
Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying
while they shout her name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom known
to Europe, known to all;
Step by step we rose to greatness, — thro'
the tonguesters we may fall. 130

You that woo the Voices — tell them 'old
experience is a fool,'
Teach your flatter'd kings that only those
who cannot read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set
no meek ones in their place;
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your
offal at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling
with the yelling street,
Set the feet above the brain and swear the
brain is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the
faith, without the hope,
Break the State, the Church, the Throne,
and roll their ruins down the slope.

Authors — essayist, atheist, novelist, real-
ist, rhymester, play your part,

Paint the mortal shame of nature with the
living hues of art. 140

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your
own foul passions bare;
Down with Reticence, down with Reverence
— forward — naked — let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the
drainage of your sewer;
Send the drain into the fountain, lest the
stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the
troughs of Zolaism, —
Forward, forward; ay, and backward, down-
ward too into the abysm!

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower
the rising race of men;
Have we risen from out the beast, then
back into the beast again?

Only 'dust to dust' for me that sicken at
your lawless din,
Dust in wholesome old-world dust before
the newer world begin. 150

Heated am I? you — you wonder — well,
it scarce becomes mine age —
Patience! let the dying actor mouth his
last upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the do-
tard fall asleep?
Noises of a current narrowing, not the
music of a deep?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think gray
thoughts, for I am gray;
After all the stormy changes shall we find
a changeless May?

After madness, after massacre, Jacobinism
and Jacquerie,
Some diviner force to guide us thro' the
days I shall not see?

When the schemes and all the systems,
kingdoms and republics fall,
Something kindlier, higher, holier — all for
each and each for all? 160

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by
Justice, Love, and Truth;

All the millions one at length with all the
visions of my youth ?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no man
halt, or deaf, or blind;
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body,
larger mind ?

Earth at last a warless world, a single race,
a single tongue —
I have seen her far away — for is not Earth
as yet so young ? —

Every tiger madness muzzled, every ser-
pent passion kill'd,
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing
desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to either
pole she smiles,
Universal ocean softly washing all her
warless isles. 170

Warless ? when her tens are thousands, and
her thousands millions, then —
All her harvest all too narrow — who can
fancy warless men ?

Warless ? war will die out late then. Will
it ever ? late or soon ?
Can it, till this outworn earth be dead as
you dead world the moon ?

Dead the new astronomy calls her. — On
this day and at this hour,
In this gap between the sandhills, whence
you see the Locksley tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting — Amy —
sixty years ago —
She and I — the moon was falling greenish
thro' a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and even
where you see her now —
Here we stood and claspt each other, swore
the seeming-deathless vow. — 180

Dead, but how her living glory lights the
hall, the dune, the grass !
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and the
sun himself will pass.

Venus near her ! smiling downward at this
earthlier earth of ours,

Closer on the sun, perhaps a world of never
fading flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the Bringer
home of all good things —
All good things may move in Hesper, per-
fect peoples, perfect kings.

Hesper — Venus — were we native to that
splendor or in Mars,
We should see the globe we groan in, fair-
est of their evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage, craft
and madness, lust and spite,
Roaring London, raving Paris, in that point
of peaceful light ? 190

Might we not in glancing heavenward on a
star so silver-fair,
Yearn, and clasp the hands and murmur,
' Would to God that we were there ' ?

Forward, backward, backward, forward,
in the immeasurable sea,
Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than can
be known to you or me.

All the suns — are these but symbols of in-
numerable man,
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the
planner or the plan ?

Is there evil but on earth ? or pain in every
peopled sphere ?
Well, be grateful for the sounding watch-
word ' Evolution ' here,

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal
good,
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in
the mud. 200

What are men that He should heed us ?
cried the king of sacred song;
Insects of an hour, that hourly work their
brother insect wrong,

While the silent heavens roll, and suns
along their fiery way,
All their planets whirling round them, flash
a million miles a day.

Many an æon moulded earth before her
highest, man, was born,

Many an æon too may pass while earth is
manless and forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded — pools
of salt, and plots of land —
Shallow skiu of green and azure — chains
of mountain, grains of sand !

Only That which made us meant us to be
mightier by and by,
Set the sphere of all the boundless heavens
within the human eye, 210

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless,
thro' the human soul;
Boundless inward in the atom, boundless
outward in the Whole.

.

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson, here
the lion-guarded gate.
Not to-night in Locksley Hall — to-morrow
— you, you come so late.

Wreck'd — your train — or all but
wreck'd ? a shatter'd wheel ? a vic-
ious boy !
Good, this forward, you that preach it, is it
well to wish you joy ?

Is it well that while we range with Science,
glorying in the Time,
City children soak and blacken soul and
sense in city slime ?

There among the glooming alleys Progress
halts on palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the
thousand on the street. 220

There the master scrimps his haggard
sempstress of her daily bread,
There a single sordid attic holds the living
and the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever creeps
across the rotted floor,
And the crowded couch of incest in the
warrens of the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your 'Forward,'
yours are hope and youth, but I —

Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to
follow with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and pass-
ing now into the night;
Yet I would the rising race were half as
eager for the light.

Light the fading gleam of even ? light the
glimmer of the dawn ?
Aged eyes may take the growing glimmer
for the gleam withdrawn. 230

Far away beyond her myriad coming
changes earth will be
Something other than the wildest modern
guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if
she gain her earthly-best,
Would she find her human offspring this
ideal man at rest ?

Forward then, but still remember how the
course of Time will swerve,
Crook and turn upon itself in many a back-
ward streaming curve.

Not the Hall to-night, my grandson ! Death
and Silence hold their own.
Leave the master in the first dark hour of
his last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound and
honest, rustic Squire,
Kindly landlord, boon companion — youth-
ful jealousy is a liar. 240

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust the
madness from your brain.
Let the trampled serpent show you that you
have not lived in vain.

Youthful ! youth and age are scholars yet
but in the lower school,
Nor is he the wisest man who never proved
himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village — Art
and Grace are less and less:
Science grows and Beauty dwindles — roofs
of slated hideousness !

There is one old hostel left us where they
swing the Locksley shield,
Till the peasant cow shall butt the 'lion
passant' from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History, poor
old Poetry, passing hence,
In the common deluge drowning old political
common-sense ! 250

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices
that have fled !
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my steps
are on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as the
phantom disappears,
Forward far and far from here is all the
hope of eighty years.

In this hostel — I remember — I repent it
o'er his grave —
Like a clown — by chance he met me — I
refused the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer man-
tles all the mouldering bricks —
I was then in early boyhood, Edith but a
child of six —

While I shelter'd in this archway from a
day of driving showers —
Peep the winsome face of Edith like a
flower among the flowers. 260

Here to-night ! the Hall to-morrow, when
they toll the chapel bell !
Shall I hear in one dark room a wailing,
'I have loved thee well' ?

Then a peal that shakes the portal — one
has come to claim his bride,
Her that shrank, and put me from her,
shriek'd, and started from my side —

Silent echoes ! You, my Leonard, use and
not abuse your day,
Move among your people, know them, fol-
low him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help his
homelier brother men,

Served the poor, and built the cottage,
raised the school, and drain'd the
fen.

Hears he now the voice that wrong'd him ?
who shall swear it cannot be ?
Earth would never touch her worst, were
one in fifty such as he. 270

Ere she gain her heavenly-best, a God must
mingle with the game.
Nay, there may be those about us whom we
neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of
Good, the Powers of Ill,
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in the
fountains of the will.

Follow you the star that lights a desert
pathway, yours or mine.
Forward, till you see the Highest Human
Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right — for man
can half-control his doom —
Till you find the deathless Angel seated in
the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and
mingle with the past.
I that loathed have come to love him.
Love will conquer at the last. 280

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I and
you will bear the pall ;
Then I leave thee lord and master, latest
lord of Locksley Hall.

THE FLEET¹

I

You, you, if you shall fail to understand
What England is, and what her all-in-all,
On you will come the curse of all the land,
Should this old England fall
Which Nelson left so great.

¹ The speaker said that 'he should like to be assured that other outlying portions of the Empire, the Crown colonies, and important coaling stations were being as promptly and as

II

His isle, the mightiest Ocean-power on
earth,
Our own fair isle, the lord of every
sea —
Her fuller franchise — what would that be
worth —
Her ancient fame of Free —
Were she . . . a fallen state ?

III

Her dauntless army scatter'd, and so small,
Her island - myriads fed from alien
lands —
The fleet of England is her all-in-all;
Her fleet is in your hands,
And in her fleet her fate.

thoroughly fortified as the various capitals of the self-governing colonies. He was credibly informed this was not so. It was impossible, also, not to feel some degree of anxiety about the efficacy of present provision to defend and protect, by means of swift well-armed cruisers, the immense mercantile fleet of the Empire. A third source of anxiety, so far as the colonies were concerned, was the apparently insufficient provision for the rapid manufacture of armaments and their prompt despatch when ordered to their colonial destination. Hence the necessity for manufacturing appliances equal to the requirements, not of Great Britain alone, but of the whole Empire. But the keystone of the whole was the necessity for an overwhelmingly powerful fleet and efficient defence for all necessary coaling stations. This was as essential for the colonies as for Great Britain. It was the one condition for the continuance of the Empire. All that Continental Powers did with respect to armies England should effect with her navy. It was essentially a defensive force, and could be moved rapidly from point to point, but it should be equal to all that was expected from it. It was to strengthen the fleet that colonists would first readily tax themselves, because they realized how essential a powerful fleet was to the safety, not only of that extensive commerce sailing in every sea, but ultimately to the security of the distant portions of the Empire. Who could estimate the loss involved in even a brief period of disaster to the Imperial Navy? Any amount of money timely expended in preparation would be quite insignificant when compared with the possible calamity he had referred to.' — *Extract from Sir Graham Berry's Speech at the Colonial Institute, 9th November, 1886.*

IV

You, you, that have the ordering of her
fleet,
If you should only compass her disgrace,
When all men starve, the wild mob's mil-
lion feet
Will kick you from your place,
But then too late, too late.

OPENING OF THE INDIAN AND COLONIAL EXHIBITION BY THE QUEEN

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE
PRINCE OF WALES

I

WELCOME, welcome with one voice !
In your welfare we rejoice,
Sons and brothers that have sent,
From isle and cape and continent,
Produce of your field and flood,
Mount and mine, and primal wood;
Works of subtle brain and hand,
And splendors of the morning land,
Gifts from every British zone;
Britons, hold your own !

II

May we find, as ages run,
The mother featured in the son;
And may yours for ever be
That old strength and constancy
Which has made your fathers great
In our ancient island State,
And wherever her flag fly,
Glorying between sea and sky,
Makes the might of Britain known;
Britons, hold your own !

III

Britain fought her sons of yore —
Britain fail'd; and never more,
Careless of our growing kin,
Shall we sin our fathers' sin,
Men that in a narrower day —
Unprophetic rulers they —
Drove from out the mother's nest
That young eagle of the West
To forage for herself alone;
Britons, hold your own !

IV

Sharers of our glorious past,
 Brothers, must we part at last?
 Shall we not thro' good and ill
 Cleave to one another still?
 Britain's myriad voices call,
 'Sons, be welded each and all
 Into one imperial whole,
 One with Britain, heart and soul!
 One life, one flag, one fleet, one throne!'
 Britons, hold your own!

TO W. C. MACREADY

1851

FAREWELL, Macready, since to-night we
 part;
 Full-handed thunders often have con-
 fessed

Thy power, well-used to move the public
 breast.
 We thank thee with our voice, and from
 the heart.
 Farewell, Macready, since this night we
 part,
 Go, take thine honors home; rank with
 the best,
 Garrick and statelier Kemble, and the
 rest
 Who made a nation purer through their
 art.
 Thine is it that our drama did not die,
 Nor flicker down to brainless pantomime,
 And those gilt gauds men-children swarm
 to see.
 Farewell, Macready, moral, grave, sub-
 lime;
 Our Shakespeare's bland and universal eye
 Dwells pleased, through twice a hundred
 years, on thee.

DEMETER

AND OTHER POEMS

TO THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA

I

At times our Britain cannot rest,
At times her steps are swift and rash;
She moving, at her girdle clash
The golden keys of East and West.

II

Not swift or rash, when late she lent
The sceptres of her West, her East,
To one that ruling has increased
Her greatness and her self-content.

III

Your rule has made the people love
Their ruler. Your viceregal days
Have added fulness to the phrase
Of 'Gauntlet in the velvet glove.'

IV

But since your name will grow with time,
Not all, as honoring your fair fame
Of Statesman, have I made the name
A golden portal to my rhyme;

V

But more, that you and yours may know
From me and mine, how dear a debt
We owed you, and are owing yet
To you and yours, and still would owe.

VI

For he — your India was his Fate,
And drew him over sea to you —
He fain had ranged her thro' and thro',
To serve her myriads and the State, —

VII

A soul that, watch'd from earliest youth,
And on thro' many a brightening year,
Had never swerved for craft or fear,
By one side-path, from simple truth;

VIII

Who might have chased and claspt Renown
And caught her chaplet here — and there
In haunts of jangle-poison'd air
The flame of life went wavering down;

IX

But ere he left your fatal shore,
And lay on that funereal boat,
Dying, 'Unspeakable,' he wrote,
'Their kindness,' and he wrote no more.

X

And sacred is the latest word;
And now the Was, the Might-have-been,
And those lone rites I have not seen,
And one drear sound I have not heard,

XI

Are dreams that scarce will let me be,
Not there to bid my boy farewell,
When That within the coffin fell,
Fell — and flash'd into the Red Sea,

XII

Beneath a hard Arabian moon
And alien stars. To question why
The sons before the fathers die,
Not mine ! and I may meet him soon;

XIII

But while my life's late eve endures,
Nor settles into hueless gray,
My memories of his briefer day
Will mix with love for you and yours.

ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN
VICTORIA

I

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd and
faded,
Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,
Since our Queen assumed the globe, the
sceptre.

II

She beloved for a kindliness
Rare in fable or history,
Queen, and Empress of India,
Crown'd so long with a diadem
Never worn by a worthier,
Now with prosperous auguries
Comes at last to the bounteous
Crowning year of her Jubilee.

III

Nothing of the lawless, of the despot,
Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglorious,
All is gracious, gentle, great and queenly.

IV

You then joyfully, all of you,
Set the mountain aflame to-night,
Shoot your stars to the firmament,
Deck your houses, illuminate
All your towns for a festival,
And in each let a multitude
Loyal, each, to the heart of it,
One full voice of allegiance,
Hail the fair Ceremonial
Of this year of her Jubilee.

V

Queen, as true to womanhood as Queen-
hood,
Glorying in the glories of her people,
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the low-
est!

VI

You, that wanton in affluence,
Spare not now to be bountiful,
Call your poor to regale with you,
All the lowly, the destitute,

Make their neighborhood healthfuller,
Give your gold to the hospital,
Let the weary be comforted,
Let the needy be banqueted,
Let the maim'd in his heart rejoice
At this glad Ceremonial,
And this year of her Jubilee.

VII

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,
Gray with distance Edward's fifty sum-
mers,
Even her Grandsire's fifty half forgotten.

VIII

You, the Patriot Architect,
You that shape for eternity,
Raise a stately memorial,
Make it regally gorgeous,
Some Imperial Institute,
Rich in symbol, in ornament,
Which may speak to the centuries,
All the centuries after us,
Of this great Ceremonial,
And this year of her Jubilee.

IX

Fifty years of ever-broadening Commerce!
Fifty years of ever-brightening Science!
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire!

X

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,
You, the Lord-territorial,
You, the Lord-manufacturer,
You, the hardy, laborious,
Patient children of Albion,
You, Canadian, Indian,
Australasian, African,
All your hearts be in harmony,
All your voices in unison,
Singing, 'Hail to the glorious
Golden year of her Jubilee!'

XI

Are there thunders moaning in the dis-
tance?
Are there spectres moving in the dark-
ness?
Trust the Hand of Light will lead her
people,
Till the thunders pass, the spectres van-
ish,
And the Light is Victor, and the darkness
Dawns into the Jubilee of the Ages.

TO PROFESSOR JEBB

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

The footnotes are the poet's own.

FAIR things are slow to fade away,
 Bear witness you, that yesterday¹
 From out the Ghost of Pindar in you
 Roll'd an Olympian; and they say²

That here the torpid mummy wheat
 Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet
 As that which gilds the glebe of Eng-
 land,
 Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.

So may this legend for a while,
 If greeted by your classic smile,
 Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,
 Blossom again on a colder isle.

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

(IN ENNA)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that
 flies
 All night across the darkness, and at
 dawn
 Falls on the threshold of her native land,
 And can no more, thou camest, O my
 child,
 Led upward by the God of ghosts and
 dreams,
 Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and dumb
 With passing thro' at once from state to
 state,
 Until I brought thee hither, that the day,
 When here thy hands let fall the gather'd
 flower,
 Might break thro' clouded memories once
 again¹⁰
 On thy lost self. A sudden nightingale
 Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of song
 And welcome; and a gleam as of the
 moon,

¹ In Bologna.² They say, for the fact is doubtful.

When first she peers along the tremulous
 deep,
 Fleed wavering o'er thy face, and chased
 away
 That shadow of a likeness to the king
 Of shadows, thy dark mate. Persephone!
 Queen of the dead no more — my child!
 Thine eyes
 Again were human-godlike, and the Sun
 Burst from a swimming fleece of winter
 gray,
 And robed thee in his day from head to
 feet —
 'Mother!' and I was folded in thine arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpassion'd eyes
 Awed even me at first, thy mother —
 eyes
 That oft had seen the serpent-wanded
 power
 Draw downward into Hades with his drift
 Of flickering spectres, lighted from below
 By the red race of fiery Phlegethon;
 But when before have Gods or men be-
 held
 The Life that had descended re-arise,³⁰
 And lighted from above him by the Sun?
 So mighty was the mother's childless cry,
 A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth, and
 Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand again,
 The field of Enna, now once more ablaze
 With flowers that brighten as thy footstep
 falls,
 All flowers — but for one black blur of
 earth
 Left by that closing chasm, thro' which
 the car
 Of dark Aidoneus rising rapt thee hence.
 And here, my child, tho' folded in thine
 arms,⁴⁰
 I feel the deathless heart of motherhood
 Within me shudder, lest the naked glebe
 Should yawn once more into the gulf, and
 thence
 The shrilly whinnings of the team of
 Hell,
 Ascending, pierce the glad and songful
 air,
 And all at once their arch'd necks, mid-
 night-maned,
 Jet upward thro' the midday blossom. No!
 For, see, thy foot has touch'd it; all the
 space

Of blank earth - baldness clothes itself
afresh,
And breaks into the crocus-purple hour 50
That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,
I envied human wives, and nested birds,
Yea, the cubb'd lioness; went in search of
thee

Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and gave
Thy breast to ailing infants in the night,
And set the mother waking in amaze
To find her sick one whole; and forth again
Among the wail of midnight winds, and
cried,

'Where is my loved one? Wherefore do
ye wail?'

And out from all the night an answer
shrill'd, 60

'We know not, and we know not why we
wail.'

I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the seas,
And ask'd the waves that moan about the
world,

'Where? do ye make your moaning for
my child?'

And round from all the world the voices
came,

'We know not, and we know not why we
moan.'

'Where?' and I stared from every eagle-
peak,

I thridded the black heart of all the woods,
I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in the
storms 69

Of autumn swept across the city, and heard
The murmur of their temples chanting
me,

Me, me, the desolate mother! 'Where?'
—and turn'd,

And fled by many a waste, forlorn of
man,

And grieved for man thro' all my grief for
thee, —

The jungle rooted in his shatter'd hearth,
The serpent coil'd about his broken shaft,
The scorpion crawling over naked skulls; —
I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane
Spring from his fallen God, but trace of
thee

I saw not; and far on, and, following
out 80

A league of labyrinthine darkness, came
On three gray heads beneath a gleaming
rift.

'Where?' and I heard one voice from all
the three,

'We know not, for we spin the lives of men,
And not of Gods, and know not why we
spin!

There is a Fate beyond us.' Nothing knew

Last as the likeness of a dying man,
Without his knowledge, from him flits to
warn

A far-off friendship that he comes no more,
So he, the God of dreams, who heard my
cry, 90

Drew from thyself the likeness of thyself,
Without thy knowledge, and thy shadow
past

Before me, crying, 'The Bright one in the
highest

Is brother of the Dark one in the lowest,
And Bright and Dark have sworn that I,
the child

Of thee, the great Earth-Mother, thee, the
Power

That lifts her buried life from gloom to
bloom,

Should be for ever and for evermore
The Bride of Darkness.'

So the Shadow wail'd.
Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the Gods of
heaven. 100

I would not mingle with their feasts; to me
Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on the
lips,

Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.
The man, that only lives and loves an hour,
Seem'd nobler than their hard eternities.

My quick tears kill'd the flower, my rav-
ings hush'd

The bird, and lost in utter grief I fail'd
To send my life thro' olive-yard and vine
And golden-grain, my gift to helpless man.

Rain-rotten died the wheat, the barley-
spears 110

Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, and the
Sun,

Pale at my grief, drew down before his
time

Sickening, and Ætna kept her winter snow.

Then He, the brother of this Darkness,
He

Who still is highest, glancing from his
height

On earth a fruitless fallow, when he miss'd

The wonted steam of sacrifice, the praise
And prayer of men, decreed that thou
shouldst dwell

For nine white moons of each whole year
with me,

Three dark ones in the shadow with thy
king. 120

Once more the reaper in the gleam of
dawn

Will see me by the landmark far away,
Blessing his field, or seated in the dusk
Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,
Rejoicing in the harvest and the grange.

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-content
With them who still are highest. Those
gray heads,

What meant they by their 'Fate beyond
the Fates'

But younger kindlier Gods to bear us down,
As we bore down the Gods before us?
Gods, 130

To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt, to
stay,

Not spread the plague, the famine; Gods
indeed,

To send the noon into the night and break
The sunless halls of Hades into Heaven?
Till thy dark lord accept and love the Sun,
And all the Shadow die into the Light,
When thou shalt dwell the whole bright
year with me,

And souls of men, who grew beyond their
race,

And made themselves as Gods against the
fear

Of Death and Hell; and thou that hast
from men, 140

As Queen of Death, that worship which is
Fear,

Henceforth, as having risen from out the
dead,

Shalt ever send thy life along with mine
From buried grain thro' springing blade,
and bless

Their garner'd autumn also, reap with me,
Earth-mother, in the harvest hymns of
Earth

The worship which is Love, and see no more
The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly-glimmer-
ing lawns

Of that Elysium, all the hateful fires
Of torment, and the shadowy warrior glide
Along the silent field of Asphodel. 151

OWD ROÄⁱ

The footnotes are the poet's.

NAÄY, noä mander² o' use to be callin' 'im
Roä, Roä, Roä,

Fur the dog 's stoän-deäf, an' 'e 's blind, 'e
can naither stan' nor goä.

But I meäns fur to maäke 'is owd aäge as
'appy as iver I can,

Fur I owäs owd Roäver moor nor I iver
owäd mottal man.

Thou 's rode of 'is back when a babby,
afoor thou was gotten too owd,

Fur 'e 'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e was
allus as good as gowd.

Eh, but 'e 'd fight wi' a will when 'e fowt;
'e could howd³ 'is oän,

An' Roä was the dog as knaw'd when an'
where to bury his boäne.

An' 'e kep his heäd hoop like a king, an'
'e 'd niver not down wi' 'is taäil, 9

Fur 'e 'd niver done nowt to be shaämed
on, when we was i' Howlaby Daäle.

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e lived,
that, Dick, when 'e cooms to be
deäd,

I thinks as I 'd like fur to hev soom soort
of a sarvice reäd.

Fur 'e 's moor good sense na the Parlia-
ment man 'at stans fur us 'ere,

An' I 'd voät fur 'im, my oän sen, if 'e
could but stan' for the Shere.

'Faäithful an' True' — them words be i'
Scriptur — an' Faäithful an' True

Ull be fun'⁴ upo' four short legs ten times
fur one upo' two.

An' maäybe they 'll walk upo' two, but I
knaws they runs upo' four,⁵ —

Bedtime, Dicky! but waäit till tha 'eärs it
be strikin' the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roä when we
lived i' Howlaby Daäle,

¹ Old Rover.

³ Hold.

⁵ ou as in 'house.'

² Manner.

⁴ Found.

Ten year sin'—Naäy—naäy! tha mun
nobbut hev' one glass of aäle. 20

Straänge an' owd-farran'd¹ the 'ouse, an'
belt² long afor my daäy,
Wi' haäfe o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd³ an'
twined-like a band o' haäy.

The fellers as maäkes them picturs, 'ud
coom at the fall o' the year,
An' sattle their ends upo' stools to pictur
the door-poorch theree,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heäds stannin'
theree o' the brokken stick;⁴
An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin'⁵ as
graw'd hall ower the brick;

An' there i' the 'ouse one night— but it 's
down, an' all on it now
Goän into maugles an' touups,⁶ an' raäved
slick thruf by the plow—

There, when the 'ouse wur a house, one
night I wur sittin' aloän,
Wi' Roäver athurt my feeät, an' sleeäpin'
still as a stoän, 30

Of a Christmas Eäve, an' as cowl as this,
an' the midders⁷ as white,
An' the fences all on 'em holster'd oop wi'
the windle⁸ that night;

An' the cat wur a -sleeäpin' alongside
Roäver, but I wur awaäke,
An' smoäkin' an' thinkin' o' things— Doänt
maäke thysen sick wi' the caäke.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their
songs an' 'ed 'ed their beer,
An' 'ed goän their waäys; ther was nobbut
three, an' noän ou 'em theree.

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the Ghoäst
an' duss n't not sleeäp i' the 'ouse,
But, Dicky, the Ghoäst moästlins⁹ was
nobbut a rat or a mouse.

¹ 'Owd-farran'd,' old-fashioned.

² Built.

³ 'Twizzen'd,' twisted.

⁴ On a staff *ragulé*.

⁵ Mangolds and turnips.

⁶ Meadows.

⁷ Drifted snow.

⁸ 'Moästlins,' for the most part, generally.

An' I loökt out wunst¹ at the night, an'
the daäle was all of a thaw,
Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like a
long black snaäke i' the snaw, 40

An' I heärd greät heäps o' the snaw slush-
in' down fro' the bank to the beck,
An' then as I stood i' the doorwaäy, I
feeäld it drip o' my neck.

Saw I turn'd in ageän, an' I thowt o' the
good owd times 'at was goan,
An' the munney they maäde by the war,
an' the times 'at was coomin' on;

Fur I thowt if the Staäte was a-gawin' to
let in furriuers' wheat,
Howiver was British farmers to stan' ageän
o' their feeät?

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an' to
paäy my men?
An' all along o' the feller² as turn'd 'is
back of hissen.

Thou slep i' the chamber above us, we
could n't ha' 'eärd tha call,
Sa moother 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha down,
an' thy craädle an' all; 50

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep wi' tha
then 'ed gotten wer leäve,
Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by cause
o' the Christmas Eäve;

But I cleän forgot tha, my lad, when
moother 'ed gotten to bed,
An' I slep i' my chair hup-on-end, an' the
Freeä Traäde runn'd i' my 'ead,

Till I dreäm'd 'at Squire walkt in, an' I
says to him, 'Squire, ya 're laäte,'
Then I seed 'at 'is faäce wur as red as the
Yule-block theree i' the graäte.

An' 'e says, 'Can ya paäy me the rent to-
night?' an' I says to 'im, 'Noä,'
An' 'e cotch'd howd hard o' my hairm,³
'Then hout to-night tha shall goä.'

'Tha 'll niver,' says I, 'be a-turnin' ma
hout upo' Christmas Eäve?'
Then I waäked an' I fun it was Roäver
a-tuggin' an' teärin' my sleäve. 60

¹ Once.

² Peel.

³ Arm.

An' I thowt as 'e 'd goän cleän-wud,¹ fur I
noäwaäys knaw'd 'is intent;

An' I says, 'Git awaäy, ya beast,' an' I
fetcht 'im a kick, an' 'e went.

Then 'e tumbled up stairs, fur I 'eärd 'im,
as if 'e 'd 'a brokken 'is neck,

Au' I 'd cleär forgot, little Dicky, thy
chaumber door would n't sneek;²

An' I slep i' my chair ageän wi' my hairm
hingin' down to the floor,

An' I thowt it was Roäver a-tuggin' an'
teärin' me wuss nor afoor,

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im ageän, but I
kick'd thy moother istead.

'What arta snorin' theere fur? the house
is afire,' she said.

Thy moother 'ed beän a-naggin' about the
gell o' the farm,

She offens 'ud spy summut wrong when
there warn't not a mossel o' harm; 70

An' she did n't not solidly meän I wur
gawin' that waäy to the bad,

Fur the gell³ was as howry a trollope as
iver traäpes'd i' the squad.

But moother was free of 'er tongue, as I
offens 'ev tell'd 'er mysen,

Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she was
nobbut a-rilin' ma then.

An' I says, 'I 'd be good to tha, Bess, if
tha'd onywaäys let ma be good,'

But she skelpt ma hääfe ower i' the chair,
an' screeäd like a howl gone wud⁴ —

'Ya mun run fur the lether.⁵ Git oop, if
ya 're onywaäys good for owt.'

And I says, 'If I beänt nuäwaäys — not
nowadaäys — good fur nowt —

¹ Mad.

² Latch.

³ 'The girl was as dirty a slut as ever trudged
in the mud,' but there is a sense of slattern-
finess in 'traäpes'd' which is not expressed in
trudged.'

⁴ 'She half overturned me and shrieked like
an owl gone mad.'

⁵ Ladder.

'Yit I beänt sich a nowt¹ of all nowts as
'ull hallus do as 'e's bid.'

'But the stairs is afire,' she said; then I
seed 'er a-cryin', I did. 80

An' she beäld, 'Ya mun sääve little Diok,
an' be sharp about it an' all,'

Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an' sets
'im ageän the wall,

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder hin,
when I gits to the top,

But the heät druv hout i' my heyeyes till I
feäld mysen ready to drop.

Thy moother was howdin' the lether, an'
tellin' me not to be skeärd,

An' I was n't afeärd, or I thinks leästwaäys
as I was n't afeärd;

But I could n't see fur the smoäke wheers
thou was a-liggin', my lad,

An' Roäver was theere i' the chaumber
a-yowlin' an' yaupin' like mad;

An' thou was a-beälin' likewise, an'
a-squeälin', as if tha was bit,

An' it was n't a bite but a burn, fur the
merk 's² o' thy shou'der yit; 90

Then I call'd out, 'Roä, Roä, Roä,' thaw I
did n't hääfe think as 'e 'd 'ear,

But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my bairn i' 'is
mouth to the winder theere!

He coom'd like a hangel o' marcy as soon
as 'e 'eärd 'is nääme,

Or like tother hangel i' Scriptur 'at sum-
mun seed i' the flääme,

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son, an' 'e
promised a son to she,

An' Roä was as good as the hangel i'
säävin' a son fur me.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says, 'I mun
gaw up ageän fur Roä.'

'Gaw up ageän fur the varmint?' I tell'd
'er, 'Yeäs, I mun goä.'

An' I claumb'd up ageän to the winder, an'
clemm'd³ owd Roä by the 'eäd,

¹ A thoroughly insignificant or worthless
person. ² Mark. ³ Clutched.

An' 'is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an' I
taäked 'im at fust fur deäð; 100

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein', au'
seeäm'd as blind as a poop,
An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin'.¹ I
could n't wakken 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to the
barn, fur the barn would n't burn
Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother waäy, an'
the wind was n't like to turn.

An' I kep a-callin' o' Roä till 'e waggled 'is
taäl fur a bit,
But the cocks kep a-crawin' an' crawin' all
night, an' I 'ears 'em yit;

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round, and
thou was a-squeälin' thysen,
An' moother was naggin' an' groäuin' an'
moänin' an' naggin' ageän;

An' I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks²
rummle down when the roof gev
waäy,

Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin' an'
roarin' like judgment daäy. 110

Warm enew theree sewer-ly, but the barn
was as cowl as owt,
An' we cuddled and huddled togither, au'
happt³ wersens oop as we mowt.

An' I browt Roä round, but moother 'ed
beän sa soäk'd wi' the thaw
'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowl that night,
poor soul, i' the straw.

Haäfe o' the parish runn'd oop when the
rig-tree⁴ was tummlin' in —
Too laäte — but it's all ower now — hall
hower — an' ten year siu';

Too laäte, tha mun git tha to bed, but I'll
coom an' I'll squench the light,
Fur we moänt 'ev naw moor fires — and soä,
little Dick, good-night.

VASTNESS

I

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe sighs
after many a vanish'd face,
Many a planet by many a sun may roll
with the dust of a vanish'd race.

II

Raving politics, never at rest — as this poor
earth's pale history runs, —
What is it all but a trouble of ants in the
gleam of a million million of suns ?

III

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side,
truthless violence mouru'd by the
wise,
Thousands of voices drowning his own in a
popular torrent of lies upon lies;

IV

Stately purposes, valor in battle, glorious
annals of army and fleet,
Death for the right cause, death for the
wrong cause, trumpets of victory,
groans of defeat;

V

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk,
and Charity setting the martyr
aflake;
Thraldom who walks with the banner of
Freedom, and recks not to ruin a
realm in her name.

VI

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the
gloom of doubts that darken the
schools;
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her hand,
follow'd up by her vassal legion of
fools;

VII

Trade flying over a thousand seas with her
spice and her vintage, her silk and
her corn;
Desolate offing, sailorless harbors, famish-
ing populace, wharves forlorn;

¹ 'Bubbling,' a young unfledged bird.

² Beams.

³ Wrapt ourselves.

⁴ The beam that runs along the roof of the
house just beneath the ridge.

VIII

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise;
gloom of the evening, Life at a
close;

Pleasure who flaunts on her wide downway
with her flying robe and her poison'd
rose;

IX

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse of
Pleasure, a worm which writhes all
day, and at night

Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper,
and stings him back to the curse of
the light;

X

Wealth with his wines and his wedded har-
lots; honest Poverty, bare to the
bone;

Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty; Flattery
gilding the rift in a throne;

XI

Fame blowing out from her golden trump-
pet a jubilant challenge to Time and
to Fate;

Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on
all the laurell'd graves of the great;

XII

Love for the maiden, crown'd with mar-
riage, no regrets for aught that has
been,

Household happiness, gracious children,
debtless competence, golden mean;

XIII

National hatreds of whole generations, and
pigmy spites of the village spire;

Vows that will last to the last death-ruckle,
and vows that are snapt in a mo-
ment of fire;

XIV

He that has lived for the lust of the min-
ute, and died in the doing it, flesh
without mind;

He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross, till
Self died out in the love of his kind;

XV

Spring and Summer and Autumn and Win-
ter, and all these old revolutions of
earth;

All new-old revolutions of Empire —
change of the tide — what is all of
it worth?

XVI

What the philosophies, all the sciences,
poesy, varying voices of prayer,
All that is noblest, all that is basest, all
that is filthy with all that is fair?

XVII

What is it all, if we all of us end but in
being our own corpse - coffins at
last?

Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence,
drown'd in the deeps of a meaning-
less Past?

XVIII

What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom,
or a moment's anger of bees in their
hive? —

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and love
him for ever: the dead are not dead
but alive.

THE RING

Dedicated to the Hon. J. Russell Lowell

MIRIAM AND HER FATHER

MIRIAM (*singing*).

MELLOW moon of heaven,
Bright in blue,
Moon of married hearts,
Hear me, you!

Twelve times in the year
Bring me bliss,
Globing honey moons
Bright as this.

Moon, you fade at times
From the night.
Young again you grow
Out of sight.

Silver crestent-curve,
Coming soon,

Globe again, and make
Honey moon.

Shall not *my* love last,
Moon, with you,
For ten thousand years
Old and new ?

20

FATHER.

And who was he with such love-drunken
eyes

They made a thousand honey moons of one ?

MIRIAM.

The prophet of his own, my Hubert — his
The words, and mine the setting. ' Air and
words,'

Said Hubert, when I sang the song, ' are
bride

And bridegroom.' Does it please you ?

FATHER.

Because I hear your mother's voice in
yours.

She —, why, you shiver tho' the wind is
west

With all the warmth of summer.

MIRIAM.

Well, I felt

On a sudden I know not what, a breath
that past

With all the cold of winter.

30

FATHER (*muttering to himself*).

Even so.

The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that once was
Man,

But cannot wholly free itself from Man,
Are calling to each other thro' a dawn
Stranger than earth has ever seen; the veil
Is rending, and the Voices of the day
Are heard across the Voices of the dark.
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell, for

man,

But thro' the Will of One who knows and
rules —

And utter knowledge is but utter love —
Æonian Evolution, swift or slow, 41
Thro' all the spheres — an ever opening
height,

An ever lessening earth — and she per-
haps,

My Miriam, breaks her latest earthly link
With me to-day.

MIRIAM.

You speak so low; what is it ?
Your ' Miriam breaks ' — is making a new
link
Breaking an old one ?

FATHER.

No, for we, my child,
Have been till now each other's all-in-all.

MIRIAM.

And you the lifelong guardian of the child.

FATHER.

I, and one other whom you have not
known.

50

MIRIAM.

And who ? what other ?

FATHER.

Whither are you bound ?
For Naples which we only left in May ?

MIRIAM.

No, father, Spain, but Hubert brings me
home

With April and the swallow. Wish me joy !

FATHER.

What need to wish when Hubert weds in
you

The heart of love, and you the soul of
truth

In Hubert ?

MIRIAM.

Tho' you used to call me once
The lonely maiden princess of the wood,
Who meant to sleep her hundred summers
out

59

Before a kiss should wake her.

FATHER.

Ay, but now
Your fairy prince has found you, take this
ring.

MIRIAM.

' Io t' amo ' — and these diamonds — beau-
tiful !

' From Walter,' and for me from you then ?

FATHER.

Well,
One way for Miriam.

MIRIAM.

Miriam am I not ?

FATHER.

This ring bequeath'd you by your mother,
child,

Was to be given you — such her dying
wish —

Given on the morning when you came of
age

Or on the day you married. Both the
days

Now close in one. The ring is doubly
yours. ⁶⁹

Why do you look so gravely at the tower ?

MIRIAM.

I never saw it yet so all ablaze
With creepers crimsoning to the pinnacles,

As if perpetual sunset linger'd there,
And all ablaze too in the lake below !

And how the birds that circle round the
tower

Are cheeping to each other of their flight
To summer lands !

FATHER.

And that has made you grave ?

Fly — care not. Birds and brides must
leave the nest.

Child, I am happier in your happiness ⁷⁹
Than in mine own.

MIRIAM.

It is not that !

FATHER.

What else ?

MIRIAM.

That chamber in the tower.

FATHER.

What chamber, child ?

Your nurse is here ?

MIRIAM.

My mother's nurse and mine.

She comes to dress me in my bridal veil.

FATHER.

What did she say ?

MIRIAM.

She said that you and I

Had been abroad for my poor health so
long
She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I ask'd
About my mother, and she said, ' Thy hair
Is golden like thy mother's, not so fine.'

FATHER.

What then ? what more ?

MIRIAM.

She said — perhaps indeed
She wander'd, having wander'd now so far
Beyond the common date of death — that
you, ⁹¹

When I was smaller than the statuette
Of my dear mother on your bracket
here —

You took me to that chamber in the tower,
The topmost — a chest there, by which you
knelt —

And there were books and dresses — left
to me,

A ring too, which you kiss'd, and I, she
said,

I babbled, ' Mother, mother ' — as I used
To prattle to her picture — stretch'd my
hands

As if I saw her; then a woman came ¹⁰⁰
And caught me from my nurse. I hear her
yet —

A sound of anger like a distant storm.

FATHER.

Garrulous old crone !

MIRIAM.

Poor nurse !

FATHER.

I bade her keep,
Like a seal'd book, all mention of the ring,
For I myself would tell you all to-day.

MIRIAM.

' She too might speak to-day,' she mumbled.
Still,

I scarce have learnt the title of your book,
But you will turn the pages.

FATHER.

Ay, to-day !
I brought you to that chamber on your
third
September birthday with your nurse, and
felt

An icy breath play on me, while I stoopt
To take and kiss the ring.

MIRIAM.

'Io t' amo'?

This very ring,

FATHER.

Yes, for some wild hope was mine
That, in the misery of my married life,
Miriam your mother might appear to me.
She came to you, not me. The storm you
hear
Far-off is Muriel — your stepmother's voice.

MIRIAM.

Vext, that you thought my mother came to
me?

Or at my crying, 'Mother'? or to find
My mother's diamonds hidden from her
there,

Like worldly beauties in the cell, not shown
To dazzle all that see them?

FATHER.

Wait a while.

Your mother and stepmother — Miriam
Erne

And Muriel Erne — the two were cousins
— lived

With Muriel's mother on the down, that
sees

A thousand squares of corn and meadow,
far

As the gray deep, a landscape which your
eyes

Have many a time ranged over when a
babe.

MIRIAM.

I climb'd the hill with Hubert, yesterday,
And from the thousand squares, one silent
voice

Came on the wind, and seem'd to say,
'Again.'

We saw far off an old forsaken house,
Then home, and past the ruin'd mill.

FATHER.

And there

I found these cousins often by the brook,
For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel threw the
fly;

The girls of equal age, but one was fair,
And one was dark, and both were beautiful.
No voice for either spoke within my heart

Then, for the surface eye, that only dotes
On outward beauty, glancing from the one
To the other, knew not that which pleased
it most,

The raven ringlet or the gold; but both
Were dowerless, and myself, I used to
walk

This terrace — morbid, melancholy; mine
And yet not mine the hall, the farm, the
field;

For all that ample woodland whisper'd,
'Debt,'

The brook that feeds this lakelet mur-
mur'd, 'Debt,'

And in yon arching avenue of old elms,
Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the sober rook
And carrion crow cry, 'Mortgage.'

MIRIAM.

Father's fault

Visited on the children!

FATHER.

Ay, but then

A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to
Rome —

He left me wealth — and while I jour-
ney'd hence,

And saw the world fly by me like a dream,
And while I communed with my truest self,
I woke to all of truest in myself,

Till, in the gleam of those midsummer
dawns,

The form of Muriel faded, and the face
Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew;

And past and future mixt in heaven and
made

The rosy twilight of a perfect day.

MIRIAM.

So glad? no tear for him who left you
wealth,

Your kinsman?

FATHER.

I had seen the man but once;
He loved my name, not me; and then I
pass'd

Home, and thro' Venice, where a jeweller,
So far gone down, or so far up in life,
That he was nearing his own hundred, sold
This ring to me, then laugh'd, 'The ring is
weird.'

And weird and worn and wizard-like was
he.

'Why weird?' I ask'd him; and he said,
 'The souls ¹⁷⁰
 Of two repentant lovers guard the ring;
 Then with a ribald twinkle in his bleak
 eyes —
 'And if you give the ring to any maid,
 They still remember what it cost them
 here,
 And bind the maid to love you by the ring;
 And if the ring were stolen from the maid,
 The theft were death or madness to the
 thief,
 So sacred those ghost lovers hold the gift.'
 And then he told their legend:

'Long ago

Two lovers parted by a scurrilous tale ¹⁸⁰
 Had quarrell'd, till the man repenting sent
 This ring, "Io t' amo," to his best beloved,
 And sent it on her birthday. She in wrath
 Return'd it on her birthday, and that day
 His death-day, when, half-frenzied by the
 ring,
 He wildly fought a rival suitor, him
 The causer of that scandal, fought and fell;
 And she that came to part them all too late,
 And found a corpse and silence, drew the
 ring
 From his dead finger, wore it till her death,
 Shrined him within the temple of her
 heart, ¹⁹¹
 Made every moment of her after life
 A virgin victim to his memory,
 And dying rose, and rear'd her arms, and
 cried,
 "I see him, Io t' amo, Io t' amo."

MIRIAM.

Legend or true? so tender should be true!
 Did he believe it? did you ask him?

FATHER.

Ay!

But that half skeleton, like a barren ghost
 From out the fleshless world of spirits,
 laugh'd —
 A hollow laughter!

MIRIAM.

Vile, so near the ghost
 Himself, to laugh at love in death! But
 you? ²⁰¹

FATHER.

Well, as the bygone lover thro' this ring
 Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I

Would call thro' this 'Io t' amo' to the
 heart
 Of Miriam; then I bade the man engrave
 'From Walter' on the ring, and sent it —
 wrote
 Name, surname, all as clear as noon, but
 he —
 Some younger hand must have engraven
 the ring —
 His fingers were so stiffen'd by the frost
 Of seven and ninety winters, that he
 scrawl'd ²¹⁰
 A 'Miriam' that might seem a 'Muriel';
 And Muriel claim'd and open'd what I
 meant
 For Miriam, took the ring, and flaunted it
 Before that other whom I loved and love.

A mountain stay'd me here, a minster
 there,
 A galleried palace, or a battle-field,
 Where stood the sheaf of Peace: but —
 coming home —
 And on your mother's birthday — all but
 yours —
 A week betwixt — and when the tower as
 now
 Was all ablaze with crimson to the roof, ²²⁰
 And all ablaze too plunging in the lake
 Head-foremost — who were those that
 stood between
 The tower and that rich phantom of the
 tower?
 Muriel and Miriam, each in white, and
 like
 May - blossoms in mid-autumn — was it
 they?
 A light shot upward on them from the lake.
 What sparkled there? whose hand was
 that? they stood
 So close together. I am not keen of sight,
 But coming nearer — Muriel had the
 ring —
 'O Miriam! have you given your ring to
 her? ²³⁰
 O Miriam!' Miriam reddened, Muriel
 clenched
 The hand that wore it, till I cried again:
 'O Miriam, if you love me take the ring!'
 She glanced at me, at Muriel, and was
 mute.
 'Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be.'
 Then — Muriel standing ever statue-like —
 She turn'd, and in her soft imperial way
 And saying gently, 'Muriel, by your leave,'

Unclosed the hand and from it drew the
ring,
And gave it me, who pass'd it down her
own,
'To t' amo, all is well then.' Muriel fled.²⁴⁰

MIRIAM.

Poor Muriel !

FATHER.

Ay, poor Muriel, when you hear
What follows ! Miriam loved me from the
first,
Not thro' the ring; but on her marriage-
morn
This birthday, death-day, and betrothal
ring,
Laid on her table overnight, was gone;
And after hours of search and doubt and
threats,
And hubbub, Muriel enter'd with it,
'See ! —
Found in a chink of that old moulder'd
floor !'²⁴⁹
My Miriam nodded with a pitying smile,
As who should say that 'those who lose
can find.'

Then I and she were married for a year,
One year without a storm, or even a cloud;
And you, my Miriam, horn within the
year;
And she, my Miriam, dead within the
year.

I sat beside her dying, and she gaspt:
'The books, the miniature, the lace are
hers,
My ring too when she comes of age, or
when
She marries; you — you loved me, kept
your word.
You love me still, "Io t' amo." — Muriel
— no —'²⁶⁰
She cannot love; she loves her own hard
self,
Her firm will, her fix'd purpose. Promise
me,
Miriam, not Muriel — she shall have the
ring.'
And there the light of other life, which
lives
Beyond our burial and our buried eyes,
Gleam'd for a moment in her own on earth.
I swore the vow, then with my latest kiss
Upon them, closed her eyes, which would
not close,

But kept their watch upon the ring and
you.²⁶⁹
Your birthday was her death-day.

MIRIAM.

O poor mother !
And you, poor desolate father, and poor
me,
The little senseless, worthless, wordless
babe,
Saved when your life was wreck'd !

FATHER

Desolate ? yes !
Desolate as that sailor whom the storm
Had parted from his comrade in the boat,
And dash'd half dead on barren sands,
was I.
Nay, you were my one solace; only — you
Were always ailing. Muriel's mother,
sent,
And sure am I, by Muriel, one day came
And saw you, shook her head, and patted
yours,²⁸⁰
And smiled, and making with a kindly
pinch
Each poor pale cheek a momentary rose —
'That should be fix'd,' she said; your pretty
bud,
So blighted here, would flower into full
health
Among our heath and bracken. Let her
come !
And we will feed her with our mountain
air,
And send her home to you rejoicing.'
No —
We could not part. And once, when you,
my girl,
Rode on my shoulder home — the tiny fist
Had grasp'd a daisy from your mother's
grasp —²⁹⁰
By the lych-gate was Muriel. 'Ay,' she
said,
'Among the tombs in this damp vale of
yours !
You scorn my mother's warning, but the
child
Is paler than before. We often walk
In open sun, and see beneath our feet
The mist of autumn gather from your lake,
And shroud the tower; and once we only
saw
Your gilded vane, a light above the
mist' —

Our old bright bird that still is veering
 there ²⁹⁹
 Above his four gold letters — 'and the light,'
 She said, 'was like that light' — and there
 she paused,
 And long; till I, believing that the girl's
 Lean fancy, groping for it, could not find
 One likeness, laugh'd a little and found her
 two —
 'A warrior's crest above the cloud of
 war' —
 'A fiery phoenix rising from the smoke,
 The pyre he burnt in.' — 'Nay,' she said,
 'the light
 That glimmers on the marsh and on the
 grave.'
 And spoke no more, but turn'd and past
 away.
 Miriam, I am not surely one of those ³¹⁰
 Caught by the flower that closes on the
 fly,
 But after ten slow weeks her fix'd intent,
 In aiming at an all but hopeless mark
 To strike it, struck. I took, I left you
 there;
 I came, I went, was happier day by day;
 For Muriel nursed you with a mother's
 care;
 Till on that clear and heather-scented
 height
 The rounder cheek had brighten'd into
 bloom.
 She always came to meet me carrying you,
 And all her talk was of the babe she
 loved; ³²⁰
 So, following her old pastime of the brook,
 She threw the fly for me; but oftener left
 That angling to the mother. 'Muriel's
 health
 Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam,
 Strange!
 She used to shun the wailing babe, and
 dotes
 On this of yours.' But when the matron
 saw
 That hinted love was only wasted bait,
 Not risen to, she was bolder. 'Ever since
 You sent the fatal ring' — I told her 'sent
 To Miriam,' 'Doubtless — ay, but ever
 since ³³⁰
 In all the world my dear one sees but
 you —
 In your sweet babe she finds but you — she
 makes
 Her heart a mirror that reflects but you.'

And then the tear fell, the voice broke
 Her heart!
 I gazed into the mirror, as a man
 Who sees his face in water, and a stone,
 That glances from the bottom of the pool,
 Strike upward thro' the shadow; yet at
 last,
 Gratitude — loneliness — desire to keep
 So skilled a nurse about you always —
 nay! ³⁴⁰
 Some half remorseful kind of pity too —
 Well! well, you know I married Muriel
 Erne.
 'I take thee Muriel for my wedded
 wife' —
 I had forgotten it was your birthday,
 child —
 When all at once with some electric thrill
 A cold air pass'd between us, and the
 hands
 Fell from each other, and were join'd
 again.
 No second cloudless honeymoon was
 mine.
 For by and by she sicken'd of the farce,
 She dropt the gracious mask of mother-
 hood, ³⁵⁰
 She came no more to meet me, carrying
 you,
 Nor ever cared to set you on her knee,
 Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,
 Nor ever cheer'd you with a kindly smile,
 Nor ever ceased to clamor for the ring;
 Why had I sent the ring at first to her?
 Why had I made her love me thro' the
 ring,
 And then had changed? so fickle are men
 — the best!
 Not she — but now my love was hers
 again,
 The ring by right, she said, was hers
 again. ³⁶⁰
 At times too shrilling in her angrier moods,
 'That weak and watery nature love you?
 No!
 "Io t' amo, Io t' amo!"' flung herself
 Against my heart, but often while her lips
 Were warm upon my cheek, an icy breath,
 As from the grating of a sepulchre,
 Past over both. I told her of my vow,
 No pliable idiot I to break my vow;
 But still she made her outcry for the ring;
 For one monotonous fancy madden'd her,
 Till I myself was madden'd with her
 cry, ³⁷¹

And even that 'Io t' amo,' those three
sweet

Italian words, became a weariness.

My people too were scared with eerie
sounds,

A footstep, a low throbbing in the walls,
A noise of falling weights that never fell,
Weird whispers, bells that rang without a
hand,

Door-handles turn'd when none was at the
door,

And bolted doors that open'd of themselves;
And one betwixt the dark and light had seen
Her, bending by the cradle of her babe. 381

MIRIAM.

And I remember once that being waked
By noises in the house — and no one
near —

I cried for nurse, and felt a gentle hand
Fall on my forehead, and a sudden face
Look'd in upon me like a gleam and pass'd,
And I was quieted, and slept again.
Or is it some half memory of a dream ?

FATHER.

Your fifth September birthday.

MIRIAM.

And the face,
The hand, — my mother.

FATHER.

Miriam, on that day
Two lovers parted by no scurrilous tale —
Mere want of gold — and still for twenty
years

Bound by the golden cord of their first
love —

Had ask'd us to their marriage, and to share
Their marriage - banquet. Muriel, paler
then

Than ever you were in your cradle, moan'd,
'I am fitter for my bed, or for my grave,
I cannot go, go you.' And then she rose,
She clung to me with such a hard embrace,
So lingeringly long, that half-amazed 400
I parted from her, and I went alone.

And when the bridegroom murmur'd,
'With this ring,'

I felt for what I could not find, the key,
The guardian of her relics, of *her* ring.
I kept it as a sacred amulet
About me, — gone ! and gone in that em-
brace !

Then, hurrying home, I found her not in
house

Or garden — up the tower — an icy air
Fled by me. — There, the chest was open
— all 409

The sacred relics tost about the floor —
Among them Muriel lying on her face —
I raised her, call'd her, 'Muriel, Muriel,
wake !'

The fatal ring lay near her; the glazed
eye

Glared at me as in horror. Dead ! I took
And chafed the freezing hand. A red
mark ran

All round one finger pointed straight, the
rest

Were crumpled inwards. Dead ! — and
maybe stung

With some remorse, had stolen, worn the
ring —

Then torn it from her finger, or as if — 419
For never had I seen her show remorse —
As if —

MIRIAM.

— those two ghost lovers —

FATHER.

Lovers yet —

MIRIAM.

Yes, yes !

FATHER.

— but dead so long, gone up so far,
That now their ever-rising life has dwarf'd
Or lost the moment of their past on earth,
As we forget our wail at being born —
As if —

MIRIAM.

— a dearer ghost had —

FATHER.

— wrench'd it away.

MIRIAM.

Had floated in with sad reproachful eyes,
Till from her own hand she had torn the
ring 428

In fright, and fallen dead. And I myself
Am half afraid to wear it.

FATHER.

Well, no more !

No bridal music this ! but fear not you !
You have the ring she guarded; that poor
link

With earth is broken, and has left her
free,
Except that, still drawn downward for an
hour,
Her spirit hovering by the church, where
she
Was married too, may linger, till she sees
Her maiden coming like a queen, who
leaves
Some colder province in the North to gain
Her capital city, where the loyal bells
Clash welcome — linger, till her own, the
babe ⁴⁴⁰
She lean'd to from her spiritual sphere,
Her lonely maiden princess, crowned with
flowers,
Has enter'd on the larger woman-world
Of wives and mothers.
But the bridal veil —
Your nurse is waiting. Kiss me, child, and
go.

FORLORN

I

'HE is fled — I wish him dead —
He that wrought my ruin —
O, the flattery and the craft
Which were my undoing —
In the night, in the night,
When the storms are blowing.

II

'Who was witness of the crime?
Who shall now reveal it?
He is fled, or he is dead,
Marriage will conceal it —
In the night, in the night,
While the gloom is growing.'

III

Catherine, Catherine, in the night,
What is this you're dreaming?
There is laughter down in hell
At your simple scheming —
In the night, in the night,
When the ghosts are fleeting.

IV

You to place a hand in his
Like an honest woman's,
You that lie with wasted lungs
Waiting for your summons —

In the night, O, the night!
O, the deathwatch beating!

V

There will come a witness soon
Hard to be confuted,
All the world will hear a voice
Scream you are polluted —
In the night! O, the night,
When the owls are wailing!

VI

Shame and marriage, shame and marriage,
Fright and foul dissembling,
Bantering bridesman, reddening priest,
Tower and altar trembling —
In the night, O, the night,
When the mind is failing!

VII

Mother, dare you kill your child?
How your hand is shaking!
Daughter of the seed of Cain,
What is this you're taking? —
In the night, O, the night,
While the house is sleeping.

VIII

Dreadful! has it come to this,
O unhappy creature?
You that would not tread on a worm
For your gentle nature —
In the night, O, the night,
O, the night of weeping!

IX

Murder would not veil your sin,
Marriage will not hide it,
Earth and Hell will brand your name,
Wretch, you must abide it —
In the night, O, the night,
Long before the dawning.

X

Up, get up, and tell him all,
Tell him you were lying!
Do not die with a lie in your mouth,
You that know you're dying —
In the night, O, the night,
While the grave is yawning.

XI

No — you will not die before,
Tho' you'll ne'er be stronger;

You will live till *that* is born,
Then a little longer —
In the night, O, the night,
While the Fiend is prowling.

XII

Death and marriage, death and marriage !
Funeral hearses rolling !
Black with bridal favors mixt !
Bridal bells with tolling ! —
In the night, O, the night,
When the wolves are howling.

XIII

Up, get up, the time is short,
Tell him now or never !
Tell him all before you die,
Lest you die for ever —
In the night, O, the night,
Where there 's no forgetting.

XIV

Up she got, and wrote him all,
All her tale of sadness,
Blister'd every word with tears,
And eased her heart of madness —
In the night, and nigh the dawn,
And while the moon was setting.

HAPPY

THE LEPER'S BRIDE

I

WHY wail you, pretty plover ? and what is
it that you fear ?
Is he sick, your mate, like mine ? have
you lost him, is he fled ?
And there — the heron rises from his watch
beside the mere,
And flies above the leper's hut, where
lives the living-dead.

II

Come back, nor let me know it ! would he
live and die alone ?
And has he not forgiven me yet, his over-
jealous bride,

Who am, and was, and will be his, his own
and only own,
To share his living death with him, die
with him side by side ?

III

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary moor,
Where noble Ulric dwells forloru, and
wears the leper's weed ?
The door is open. He ! is he standing at
the door,
My soldier of the Cross ? it is he, and
he indeed !

IV

My roses — will he take them *now* — mine,
his — from off the tree
We planted both together, happy in our
marriage morn ?
O God, I could blaspheme, for he fought
Thy fight for Thee,
And Thou hast made him leper to com-
pass him with scorn —

V

Hast spared the flesh of thousands, the
coward and the base,
And set a crueller mark than Cain's on
him, the good and brave !
He sees me, waves me from him. I will
front him face to face.
You need not wave me from you. I
would leap into your grave.

VI

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of the
conquering sword,
The roses that you cast aside — once
more I bring you these.
No nearer ? do you scorn me when you tell
me, O my lord ;
You would not mar the beauty of your
bride with your disease.

VII

You say your body is so foul — then here
I stand apart,
Who yearn to lay my loving head upon
your leprous breast.
The leper plague may scale my skin, but
never taint my heart ;
Your body is not foul to me, and body is
foul at best.

VIII

I loved you first when young and fair, but
 now I love you most;
 The fairest flesh at last is filth on which
 the worm will feast;
 This poor rib-grated dungeon of the holy
 human ghost,
 This house with all its hateful needs no
 cleaner than the beast,

IX

This coarse diseaseful creature which in
 Eden was divine,
 This Satan-haunted ruin, this little city
 of sewers,
 This wall of solid flesh that comes between
 your soul and mine,
 Will vanish and give place to the beauty
 that endures,

X

The beauty that endures on the Spiritual
 height,
 When we shall stand transfigured, like
 Christ on Hermon hill,
 And moving each to music, soul in soul and
 light in light,
 Shall flash thro' one another in a moment
 as we will.

XI

Foul ! foul ! the word was yours not mine,
 I worship that right hand
 Which fell'd the foes before you as the
 woodman fells the wood,
 And sway'd the sword that lighten'd back
 the sun of Holy Land,
 And clove the Moslem crescent moon,
 and changed it into blood.

XII

And once I worshipt all too well this crea-
 ture of decay,
 For age will chink the face, and death
 will freeze the supplest limbs —
 Yet you in your mid manhood — O, the
 grief when yesterday
 They bore the Cross before you to the
 chant of funeral hymns !

XIII

'Libera me, Domine !' you sang the Psalm,
 and when
 The priest pronounced you dead, and
 flung the mould upon your feet, 50

A beauty came upon your face, not that of
 living men,
 But seen upon the silent brow when life
 has ceased to beat.

XIV

'Libera nos, Domine' — you knew not one
 was there
 Who saw you kneel beside your bier, and
 weeping scarce could see;
 May I come a little nearer, I that heard,
 and changed the prayer
 And sang the married 'nos' for the soli-
 tary 'me' ?

xv

My beauty marred by you ? by you ! so be
 it. All is well
 If I lose it and myself in the higher
 beauty, yours.
 My beauty lured that falcon from his eyry
 on the fell,
 Who never caught one gleam of the
 beauty which endures — 60

XVI

The Count who sought to snap the bond
 that link'd us life to life,
 Who whisper'd me, 'Your Ulric loves'
 — a little nearer still —
 He hiss'd, 'Let us revenge ourselves, your
 Ulric woos my wife' —
 A lie by which he thought he could sub-
 due me to his will.

XVII

I knew that you were near me when I let
 him kiss my brow;
 Did he touch me on the lips ? I was
 jealous, anger'd, vain,
 And I meant to make you jealous. Are
 you jealous of me now ?
 Your pardon, O my love, if I ever gave
 you pain !

XVIII

You never once accused me, but I wept
 alone, and sigh'd
 In the winter of the present for the sum-
 mer of the past;
 That icy winter silence — how it froze you
 from your bride,
 Tho' I made one barren effort to break it
 at the last ! 70

XIX

I brought you, you remember, these roses,
 when I knew
 You were parting for the war, and you
 took them tho' you frown'd;
 You frown'd and yet you kiss'd them. All
 at once the trumpet blew,
 And you spurr'd your fiery horse, and
 you hurl'd them to the ground.

XX

You parted for the Holy War without a
 word to me,
 And clear myself unask'd — not I. My
 nature was too proud.
 And him I saw but once again, and far
 away was he,
 When I was praying in a storm — the
 crash was long and loud — 80

XXI

That God would ever slant His bolt from
 falling on your head —
 Then I lifted up my eyes, he was coming
 down the fell —
 I clapt my hands. The sudden fire from
 heaven had dash'd him dead,
 And sent him charr'd and blasted to the
 deathless fire of hell.

XXII

See, I sinn'd but for a moment. I repented
 and repent,
 And trust myself forgiven by the God to
 whom I kneel.
 A little nearer? Yes. I shall hardly be
 content
 Till I be leper like yourself, my love,
 from head to heel.

XXIII

O foolish dreams, that you, that I, would
 slight our marriage oath!
 I held you at that moment even dearer
 than before; 90
 Now God has made you leper in His loving
 care for both,
 That we might cling together, never
 doubt each other more.

XXIV

The priest, who join'd you to the dead, has
 join'd our hands of old;
 If man and wife be but one flesh, let
 mine be leprous too,

As dead from all the human race as if be-
 neath the mould;
 If you be dead, then I am dead, who
 only live for you.

XXV

Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be fol-
 low'd by the Moon?
 The leech forsake the dying bed for ter-
 ror of his life?
 The shadow leave the Substance in the
 brooding light of noon?
 Or if I had been the leper would you
 have left the wife? 100

XXVI

Not take them? Still you wave me off —
 poor roses — must I go —
 I have worn them year by year — from
 the bush we both had set —
 What? fling them to you? — well — that
 were hardly gracious. No!
 Your plague but passes by the touch. A
 little nearer yet!

XXVII

There, there! he buried you, the priest;
 the priest is not to blame,
 He joins us once again, to his either
 office true.
 I thank him. I am happy, happy. Kiss
 me. In the name
 Of the everlasting God, I will live and die
 with you!

[Dean Milman has remarked that the protection and care afforded by the Church to this blighted race of lepers was among the most beautiful of its offices during the Middle Ages. The leprosy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was supposed to be a legacy of the Crusades, but was in all probability the offspring of meagre and unwholesome diet, miserable lodging and clothing, physical and moral degradation. The services of the Church in the seclusion of these unhappy sufferers were most affecting. The stern duty of looking to the public welfare is tempered with exquisite compassion for the victims of this loathsome disease. The ritual for the sequestration of the leprous differed little from the burial service. After the leper had been sprinkled with holy water, the priest conducted him into the church, the leper singing the psalm 'Libera me, Domine,' and the crucifix and bearer going before. In the church a black cloth was stretched over two trestles in front of the altar,

and the leper leaning at its side devoutly heard mass. The priest, taking up a little earth in his cloak, threw it on one of the leper's feet, and put him out of the church, if it did not rain too heavily; took him to his hut in the midst of the fields, and then uttered the prohibitions: 'I forbid you entering the church . . . or entering the company of others. I forbid you quitting your home without your leper's dress.' He concluded: 'Take this dress, and wear it in token of humility; take these gloves, take this clapper, as a sign that you are forbidden to speak to any one. You are not to be indignant at being thus separated from others, and as to your little wants, good people will provide for you, and God will not desert you.' Then in this old ritual follow these sad words: 'When it shall come to pass that the leper shall pass out of this world, he shall be buried in his hut, and not in the churchyard.' At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow their husbands who had been leprous, or remain in the world and marry again. The Church decided that the marriage-tie was indissoluble, and so bestowed on these unhappy beings this immense source of consolation. With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives. Readers of Sir J. Stephen's 'Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography' will recollect the description of the founder of the Franciscan order, how, controlling his involuntary disgust, Saint Francis of Assisi washed the feet and dressed the sores of the lepers, once at least reverently applying his lips to their wounds. — BOURCHIER-JAMES.]

This ceremony of *quasi*-burial varied considerably at different times and in different places. In some cases a grave was dug, and the leper's face was often covered during the service.

TO ULYSSES¹

I

ULYSSES, much-experienced man,
 Whose eyes have known this globe of
 ours,
 Her tribes of men, and trees, and flowers,
 From Corrientes to Japan,

¹ 'Ulysses,' the title of a number of essays by W. G. Palgrave. He died at Montevideo before seeing my poem.

II

To you that bask below the Line,
 I soaking here in winter wet —
 The century's three strong eights have met
 To drag me down to seventy-nine

III

In summer if I reach my day —
 To you, yet young, who breathe the
 halm
 Of summer-winters by the palm
 And orange grove of Paraguay,

IV

I, tolerant of the colder time,
 Who love the winter woods, to trace
 On paler heavens the branching grace
 Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

V

And see my cedar green, and there
 My giant ilex keeping leaf
 When frost is keen and days are brief —
 Or marvel how in English air

VI

My yucca, which no winter quells,
 Altho' the months have scarce begun,
 Has push'd toward our faintest sun
 A spike of half-accomplish'd bells —

VII

Or watch the waving pine which here
 The warrior of Caprera set,¹
 A name that earth will not forget
 Till earth has roll'd her latest year —

VIII

I, once half-crazed for larger light
 On broader zones beyond the foam,

¹ Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, 'I wish I had your trees.'

But chaining fancy now at home
Among the quarried downs of Wight,

IX

Not less would yield full thanks to you
For your rich gift, your tale of lands
I know not,¹ your Arabian sands;
Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bamboo,

X

The wealth of tropic bower and brake;
Your Oriental Eden-isles,²
Where man, nor only Nature smiles;
Your wonder of the boiling lake;³

XI

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,⁴
Phra-bat⁵ the step; your Pontic coast;
Crag-cloister;⁶ Anatolian Ghost;⁷
Hong-Kong,⁸ Karnac,⁹ and all the rest;

XII

Thro' which I follow'd line by line
Your leading hand, and came, my friend,
To prize your various book, and send
A gift of slenderer value, mine.

TO MARY BOYLE

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I

'SPRING-FLOWERS' ! While you still delay
to take
Your leave of town,
Our elm-tree's ruddy-hearted blossom-flake
Is fluttering down.

¹ The tale of Nejd.

² The Philippines.

³ In Dominica.

⁴ The Shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth.

⁵ The footstep of the Lord on another rock.

⁶ The monastery of Sumelas.

⁷ Anatolian spectre stories.

⁸ The three cities.

⁹ Travels in Egypt.

II

Be truer to your promise. There ! I heard
Our cuckoo call.
Be needle to the magnet of your word,
Nor wait, till all

III

Our vernal bloom from every vale and
plain
And garden pass,
And all the gold from each laburnum chain
Drop to the grass.

IV

Is memory with your Marian gone to rest,
Dead with the dead ?
For ere she left us, when we met, you prest
My hand, and said

V

'I come with your spring-flowers.' You
came not, friend;
My birds would sing,
You heard not. Take then this spring-
flower I send,
This song of spring,

VI

Found yesterday — forgotten mine own
rhyme
By mine old self,
As I shall be forgotten by old Time,
Laid on the shelf —

VII

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the whiten-
ing sloe
And kingcup blaze,
And more than half a hundred years ago,
In rick-fire days,

VIII

When Dives loathed the times, and paced
his land
In fear of worse,
And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant hand
Fill with *his* purse.

IX

For lowly minds were madden'd to the
height
By tongueter tricks,
And once — I well remember that red night
When thirty ricks,

X

All flaming, made an English homestead
hell —

These hands of mine
Have helpt to pass a bucket from the well
Along the line,

XI

When this bare dome had not begun to
gleam

Thro' youthful curls,
And you were then a lover's fairy dream,
His girl of girls;

XII

And you, that now are lonely, and with
Grief

Sit face to face,
Might find a flickering glimmer of relief
In change of place.

XIII

What use to brood? This life of mingled
pains

And joys to me,
Despite of every Faith and Creed, remains
The Mystery.

XIV

Let golden youth bewail the friend, the
wife,

For ever gone.
He dreams of that long walk thro' desert
life
Without the one.

XV

The silver year should cease to mourn and
sigh —

Not long to wait —
So close are we, dear Mary, you and I
To that dim gate.

XVI

Take, read! and be the faults your Poet
makes

Or many or few,
He rests content, if his young music wakes
A wish in you

XVII

To change our dark Queen-city, all her
realm

Of sound and smoke,

For his clear heaven, and these few lanes
of elm
And whispering oak.

THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

I

THE ground-flame of the crocus breaks the
mould,

Fair Spring slides hither o'er the South-
ern sea,

Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop
cold

That trembles not to kisses of the bee.
Come, Spring, for now from all the drip-
ping eaves

The spear of ice has wept itself away,
And hour by hour unfolding woodbine
leaves

O'er his uncertain shadow droops the
day.

She comes! The loosen'd rivulets run;
The frost-bead melts upon her golden
hair;

Her mantle, slowly greening in the Sun,
Now wraps her close, now arching leaves
her bare

To breaths of halmier air;

II

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to welcome
her,

About her dance the tits, and shriek the
jays,

Before her skims the jubilant woodpecker,
The linnet's bosom blushes at her gaze,
While round her brows a woodland culver
flits,

Watching her large light eyes and gra-
cious looks,

And in her open palm a halcyon sits
Patient — the secret splendor of the
brooks.

Come, Spring! She comes on waste and
wood,

On farm and field; but enter also here,
Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my blood,
And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,
Lodge with me all the year!

III

Once more a downy drift against the brakes,
Self-darken'd in the sky, descending
slow!

But gladly see I thro' the wavering flakes
Yon blanching apricot like snow in snow.
These will thine eyes not brook in forest-
paths,
On their perpetual pine, nor round the
beech;

They fuse themselves to little spicy baths,
Solved in the tender blushes of the
peach;

They lose themselves and die
On that new life that gems the hawthorn
line;

Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them by,
And out once more in varnish'd glory
shine

Thy stars of celandine.

IV

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven
lours,

But in the tearful splendor of her smiles
I see the slowly-thickening chestnut towers
Fill out the spaces by the barren tiles.

Now past her feet the swallow circling
flies,

A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet her
hand;

Her light makes rainbows in my closing
eyes,

I hear a charm of song thro' all the land.
Come, Spring! She comes, and Earth is
glad

To roll her North below thy deepening
dome,

But ere thy maiden birk be wholly clad,
And these low bushes dip their twigs in
foam,

Make all true hearths thy home.

V

Across my garden! and the thicket stirs,
The fountain pulses high in sunnier jets,
The blackcap warbles, and the turtle purrs,
The starling claps his tiny castanets.

Still round her forehead wheels the wood-
land-dove,

And scatters on her throat the sparks of
dew,

The kingcup fills her footprint, and above
Broaden the glowing isles of vernal blue.

Hail, ample presence of a Queen,
Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,
Whose mantle, every shade of glaucing
green,
Flies back in fragrant breezes to display
A tunic white as May!

VI

She whispers, 'From the South I bring
you balm,

For on a tropic mountain was I born,
While some dark dweller by the coco-palm
Watch'd my far meadow zoned with airy
morn;

From under rose a muffled moan of floods;
I sat beneath a solitude of snow;

There no one came, the turf was fresh, the
woods

Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their vales
below.

I saw beyond their silent tops
The steaming marshes of the scarlet
cranes,

The slant seas leaning on the mangrove
copse,

And summer basking in the sultry plains
About a land of canes.

VII

'Then from my vapor-girdle soaring forth
I scaled the buoyant highway of the
birds,

And drank the dews and drizzle of the
North,

That I might mix with men, and hear
their words

On pathway'd plains; for — while my hand
exults

Within the bloodless heart of lowly flow-
ers

To work old laws of Love to fresh results,
Thro' manifold effect of simple pow-
ers —

I too would teach the man
Beyond the darker hour to see the
bright,

That his fresh life may close as it began,
The still-fulfilling promise of a light
Narrowing the bounds of night.'

VIII

So wed thee with my soul, that I may
mark

The coming year's great good and varied
ills,

And new developments, whatever spark
 Be struck from out the clash of warring
 wills;
 Or whether, since our nature cannot rest,
 The smoke of war's volcano burst again
 From hoary deeps that belt the changeful
 West,
 Old Empires, dwellings of the kings of
 men;
 Or should those fail that hold the helm,
 While the long day of knowledge grows
 and warms,
 And in the heart of this most ancient realm
 A hateful voice be utter'd, and alarms
 Sounding 'To arms! to arms!'

IX

A simpler, saner lesson might he learn
 Who reads thy gradual process, Holy
 Spring.
 Thy leaves possess the season in their turn,
 And in their time thy warblers rise on
 wing.
 How surely glidest thou from March to
 May,
 And changest, breathing it, the sullen
 wind,
 Thy scope of operation, day by day,
 Larger and fuller, like the human mind!
 Thy warmths from bud to bud
 Accomplish that blind model in the seed,
 And men have hopes, which race the rest-
 less blood,
 That after many changes may succeed
 Life which is Life indeed.

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

I

O YOUNG Mariner,
 You from the haven
 Under the sea-cliff,
 You that are watching
 The gray Magician
 With eyes of wonder,
 I am Merlin,
 And I am dying,
 * I am Merlin
 Who follow the Gleam.

II

Mighty the Wizard
 Who found me at sunrise
 Sleeping, and woke me
 And learn'd me Magic!
 Great the Master,
 And sweet the Magic,
 When over the valley,
 In early summers,
 Over the mountain,
 On human faces,
 And all around me,
 Moving to melody,
 Floated the Gleam.

III

Once at the croak of a Raven who crost it
 A barbarous people,
 Blind to the magic
 And deaf to the melody,
 Snarl'd at and cursed me.
 A demon vext me,
 The light retreated,
 The landskip darken'd,
 The melody deaden'd,
 The Master whisper'd,
 'Follow the Gleam.'

IV

Then to the melody,
 Over a wilderness
 Gliding, and glancing at
 Elf of the woodland,
 Gnome of the cavern,
 Griffin and Giant,
 And dancing of Fairies
 In desolate hollows,
 And wraiths of the mountain,
 And rolling of dragons
 By warble of water,
 Or cataract music
 Of falling torrents,
 Flitted the Gleam.

V

Down from the mountain
 And over the level,
 And streaming and shining on
 Silent river,

Silvery willow,
Pasture and plowland,
Innocent maidens,
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,
Reaper and gleaner,
And rough-ruddy faces
Of lowly labor,
Slided the Gleam —

VI

Then, with a melody
Stronger and statelier,
Led me at length
To the city and palace
Of Arthur the King;
Touch'd at the golden
Cross of the churches,
Flash'd on the tournament,
Flicker'd and bicker'd
From helmet to helmet,
And last on the forehead
Of Arthur the blameless
Rested the Gleam.

VII

Clouds and darkness
Closed upon Camelot;
Arthur had vanish'd
I knew not whither,
The king who loved me,
And cannot die;
For out of the darkness
Silent and slowly
The Gleam, that had waned to a wintry
glimmer
On icy fallow
And faded forest,
Drew to the valley
Named of the shadow,
And slowly brightening
Out of the glimmer,
And slowly moving again to a melody
Yearningly tender,
Fell on the shadow,
No longer a shadow,
But clothed with the Gleam.

VIII

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,

Wed to the melody,
Sang thro' the world;
And slower and fainter,
Old and weary,
But eager to follow,
I saw, whenever
In passing it glanced upon
Hamlet or city,
That under the Crosses
The dead man's garden,
The mortal hillock,
Would break into blossom;
And so to the land's
Last limit I came —
And can no longer,
But die rejoicing,
For thro' the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers the Gleam.

IX

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions
Launch your vessel
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow the Gleam.

ROMNEY'S REMORSE

[I read Hayley's Life of Romney the other day — Romney wanted but education and reading to make him a very fine painter: but his ideal was not high nor fixed. How touching is the close of his life! He married at nineteen, and because Sir Joshua and others had said that 'marriage spoilt an artist' almost immediately left his wife in the North and

scarce saw her till the end of his life; when old, nearly mad, and quite desolate, he went back to her and she received him and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures! even as a matter of Art, I am sure. — EDWARD FITZGERALD, 'Letters and Literary Remains,' vol. i.]

'BEAT, little heart — I give you this and this.'

Who are you? What! the Lady Hamilton?

Good, I am never weary painting you.
To sit once more? Cassandra, Hebe, Joan,
Or spinning at your wheel beside the
vine —

Bacchante, what you will; and if I fail
To conjure and concentrate into form
And color all you are, the fault is less
In me than Art. What artist ever yet
Could make pure light live on the canvas?
Art!

Why should I so disrelish that short word?
Where am I? snow on all the hills! so
hot,

So fever'd! never colt would more delight
To roll himself in meadow grass than I
To wallow in that winter of the hills.

Nurse, were you hired? or came of your
own will

To wait on one so broken, so forlorn?
Have I not met you somewhere long ago?
I am all but sure I have — in Kendal
church —

O, yes! I hired you for a season there,
And then we parted; but you look so kind
That you will not deny my sultry throat
One draught of icy water. There — you
spill

The drops upon my forehead. Your hand
shakes.

I am ashamed. I am a trouble to you,
Could kneel for your forgiveness. Are
they tears?

For me — they do me too much grace —
for me?

O Mary, Mary!

Vexing you with words!

Words only, born of fever, or the fumes
Of that dark opiate dose you gave me, —
words,

Wild babble. I have stumbled back again
Into the common day, the sounder self.
God stay me there, if only for your sake,
The truest, kindest, noblest-hearted wife
That ever wore a Christian marriage-ring.

My curse upon the Master's apothegm,
That wife and children drag an artist
down!

This seem'd my lodestar in the heaven of
Art,

And lured me from the household fire on
earth.

To you my days have been a lifelong lie,
Grafted on half a truth; and tho' you say,
'Take comfort you have won the painter's
fame,'

The best in me that sees the worst in me,
And groans to see it, finds no comfort
there.

What fame? I am not Raphael, Titian,
— no,

Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry.
Wrong there! The painter's fame? but
mine, that grew

Blown into glittering by the popular breath,
May float awhile beneath the sun, may roll
The rainbow hues of heaven about it —

There!
The color'd bubble bursts above the abyss
Of Darkness, utter Lethe.

Is it so?

Her sad eyes plead for my own fame with
me

To make it dearer.

Look, the sun has risen
To flame along another dreary day.

Your hand. How bright you keep your
marriage-ring!

Raise me. I thank you.

Has your opiate then
Bred this black mood? or am I conscions,
more

Than other Masters, of the chasm between
Work and Ideal? Or does the gloom of
age

And suffering cloud the height I stand
upon

Even from myself? stand? stood — no
more.

And yet

The world would lose, if such a wife as you
Should vanish unrecorded. Might I crave
One favor? I am bankrupt of all claim

On your obedience, and my strongest wish
Falls flat before your least unwillingness.

Still, would you — if it please you — sit to
me?

I dream'd last night of that clear summer noon,
 When seated on a rock, and foot to foot
 With your own shadow in the placid lake,
 You claspt our infant daughter, heart to heart.
 I had been among the hills, and brought you down
 A length of staghorn-moss, and this you twined
 About her cap. I see the picture yet,
 Mother and child. A sound from far away,
 No louder than a bee among the flowers,
 A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep.
 You still'd it for the moment with a song
 Which often echo'd in me, while I stood
 Before the great Madonna-masterpieces
 Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome.

Mary, my crayons ! if I can, I will.
 You should have been — I might have made you once,
 Had I but known you as I know you now —
 The true Alcestis of the time. Your song —
 Sit, listen ! I remember it, a proof
 That I — even I — at times remember'd you.

'Beat upon mine, little heart ! beat, beat !
 Beat upon mine ! you are mine, my sweet !
 All mine from your pretty blue eyes to your feet,
 My sweet.'

Less profile ! turn to me — three-quarter face.

'Sleep, little blossom, my honey, my bliss !
 For I give you this, and I give you this !
 And I blind your pretty blue eyes with a kiss !
 Sleep !'

Too early blinded by the kiss of death —
 'Father and Mother will watch you grow' —
 You watch'd, not I ; she did not grow, she died.

'Father and Mother will watch you grow,
 And gather the roses whenever they blow,
 And find the white heather wherever you go,
 My sweet.'

Ah, my white heather only blooms in heaven
 With Milton's amaranth. There, there,
 there ! a child
 Had shamed me at it — Down, you idle tools,

Stamp'd into dust — tremulous, all awry,
 Blurr'd like a landskip in a ruffled pool, —
 Not one stroke firm. This Art, that harlot-like

Seduced me from you, leaves me harlot-like,

Who love her still, and whimper, impotent
 To win her back before I die — and then —
 Then, in the loud world's bastard judgment-day,

One truth will damn me with the mindless mob,

Who feel no touch of my temptation, more
 Than all the myriad lies that blacken round
 The corpse of every man that gains a name ;
 'This model husband, this fine artist !'

Fool,
 What matters ? Six foot deep of burial mould

Will dull their comments ! Ay, but when the shout

Of His descending peals from heaven, and throbs

Thro' earth and all her graves, if *He* should ask,

'Why left you wife and children ? for my sake,

According to my word ?' and I replied,
 'Nay, Lord, for *Art*, why, that would sound so mean

That all the dead, who wait the doom of hell

For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,
 Wife-murders, — nay, the ruthless Mussulman

Who flings his bowstrung harem in the sea,

Would turn, and glare at me, and point and jeer,

And gibber at the worm who, living, made
 The wife of wives a widow-bride, and lost
 Salvation for a sketch.

I am wild again !
 The coals of fire you heap upon my head
 Have crazed me. Some one knocking there
 without ?

No ! Will my Indian brother come ? to find

Me or my coffin ? Should I know the man ?

This worn-out Reason dying in her house
 May leave the windows blinded, and if so,
 Bid him farewell for me, and tell him —

Hope !
 I hear a death-bed angel whisper, 'Hope.'

'The miserable have no medicine —
But only hope !' He said it — in the play.
His crime was of the senses; of the mind
Mine — worse, cold, calculated.

Tell my son —
O, let me lean my head upon your breast.
'Beat, little heart' on this fool brain of
mine.

I once had friends — and many — none
like you.

I love you more than when we married.
Hope !

O, yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,
Human forgiveness touches heaven, and
thence —

For you forgive me, you are sure of that —
Reflected, sends a light on the forgiven.

PARNASSUS

Exegi monumentum . . .

Quod non . . .

Possit diruere . . .

Annorum series et fuga temporum. . . . innumerabilis

HORACE.

I

WHAT be those crown'd forms high over
the sacred fountain ?

Bards, that the mighty Muses have raised
to the heights of the mountain,

And over the flight of the Ages ! O God-
desses, help me up thither !

Lightning may shrivel the laurel of Cæsar,
but mine would not wither.

Steep is the mountain, but you, you will
help me to overcome it,

And stand with my head in the zenith, and
roll my voice from the summit,

Sounding for ever and ever thro' Earth
and her listening nations,

And mixt with the great sphere-music of
stars and of constellations.

II

What be those two shapes high over the
sacred fountain,

Taller than all the Muses, and huger than
all the mountain ?

On those two known peaks they stand ever
spreading and heightening;

Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted by
more than lightning !

Look, in their deep double shadow the
crown'd ones all disappearing !

Sing like a bird and be happy, nor hope for
a deathless hearing !

'Sounding for ever and ever ?' pass on !
the sight confuses —

These are Astronomy and Geology, terrible
Muses !

III

If the lips were touch'd with fire from off
a pure Pierian altar,

Tho' their music here be mortal need the
singer greatly care ?

Other songs for other worlds ! the fire
within him would not falter;

Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer here is
Homer there.

BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

THE Lord let the house of a brute to the
soul of a man,

And the man said, 'Am I your debtor ?'
And the Lord — 'Not yet; but make it as

clean as you can,
And then I will let you a better.'

I

If my body come from brutes, my soul un-
certain or a fable,

Why not bask amid the senses while the
sun of morning shines,

I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds,
and in my stable,

Youth and health, and birth and wealth,
and choice of women and of wines ?

II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old
Age, save breaking my bones on the
rack ?

Would I had past in the morning that
looks so bright from afar !

OLD AGE

Done for thee ? starved the wild beast that
was linkt with thee eighty years
back.

Less weight now for the ladder-of-heaven
that hangs on a star.

I

If my body come from brutes, tho' somewhat finer than their own,
I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall the royal voice be mute?
No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag me from the throne,
Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and rule thy province of the brute.

II

I have climb'd to the snows of Age, and I gaze at a field in the Past,
Where I sank with the body at times in the sloughs of a low desire,
But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the Man is quiet at last,
As he stands on the heights of his life with a glimpse of a height that is higher.

FAR — FAR — AWAY

(FOR MUSIC)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the fields he knew
As where earth's green stole into heaven's own hue,
Far — far — away?

What sound was dearest in his native dells?
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells
Far — far — away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain or joy,
Thro' those three words would haunt him when a boy,
Far — far — away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a breath
From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death
Far — far — away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of birth,
The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,
Far — far — away?

What charm in words, a charm no words could give?
O dying words, can Music make you live
Far — far — away?

POLITICS

WE move, the wheel must always move,
Nor always on the plain,
And if we move to such a goal
As Wisdom hopes to gain,
Then you that drive, and know your craft,
Will firmly hold the rein,
Nor lend an ear to random cries,
Or you may drive in vain;
For some cry 'Quick' and some cry 'Slow,'
But, while the hills remain,
Up hill 'Too-slow' will need the whip,
Down hill 'Too-quick' the chain.

BEAUTIFUL CITY

BEAUTIFUL city, the centre and crater of European confusion,
O you with your passionate shriek for the rights of an equal humanity,
How often your Re-volution has proven but E-volution
Roll'd again back on itself in the tides of a civic insanity!

THE ROSES ON THE TERRACE

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,
When I was in my June, you in your May,
Two words, 'My Rose,' set all your face aglow,
And now that I am white and you are gray,
That blush of fifty years ago, my dear,
Blooms in the past, but close to me to-day,
As this red rose, which on our terrace here
Glows in the blue of fifty miles away.

THE PLAY

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd with woe
You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.
And yet be patient. Our Playwright may show
In some fifth act what this wild Drama means.

ON ONE WHO AFFECTED AN
EFFEMINATE MANNER

WHILE man and woman still are incom-
plete,
I prize that soul where man and woman
meet,
Which types all Nature's male and female
plan,
But, friend, man-woman is not woman-
man.

TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN THE
ENGLISH

You make our faults too gross, and thence
maintain
Our darker future. May your fears be
vain !
At times the small black fly upon the pane
May seem the black ox of the distant plain.

THE SNOWDROP

MANY, many welcomes,
February fair-maid,
Ever as of old time,
Solitary firstling,
Coming in the cold time,
Prophet of the gay time,
Prophet of the May time,
Prophet of the roses,
Many, many welcomes,
February fair-maid !

THE THROSTLE

'SUMMER is coming, summer is coming.
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love
again !'
Yes, my wild little Poet.
Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it as gladly.

'New, new, new, new !' Is it then so new
That you should carol so madly ?

'Love again, song again, nest again, young
again,'
Never a prophet so crazy !
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,
See, there is hardly a daisy.

'Here again, here, here, here, happy year !'
O warble unhidden, unbidden !
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,
And all the winters are hidden.

THE OAK

LIVE thy Life,
Young and old,
Like yon oak,
Bright in spring,
Living gold ;

Summer-rich
Then ; and then
Autumn-changed,
Soberer-hued
Gold again.

All his leaves
Fallen at length,
Look, he stands,
Trunk and bough,
Naked strength.

IN MEMORIAM

W. G. WARD

FAREWELL, whose like on earth I shall not
find,
Whose Faith and Work were bells of
full accord,
My friend, the most unworldly of mankind,
Most generous of all Ultramontanes,
Ward,
How subtle at tierce and quart of mind
with mind,
How loyal in the following of thy Lord !

QUEEN MARY

A DRAMA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

QUEEN MARY.

PHILIP, *King of Naples and Sicily, afterwards King of Spain.*

THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

REGINALD POLE, *Cardinal and Papal Legate.*

SIMON RENARD, *Spanish Ambassador.*

LE SIEUR DE NOAILLES, *French Ambassador.*

THOMAS CRANMER, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*

SIR NICHOLAS HEATH, *Archbishop of York; Lord Chancellor after Gardiner.*

EDWARD COURTENAY, *Earl of Devon.*

LOED WILLIAM HOWARD, *afterwards Lord Howard, and Lord High Admiral.*

LORD WILLIAMS OF TRAMR.

LORD PAGET.

LORD PETRE.

STEPHEN GARDINER, *Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor.*

EDMUND BONNER, *Bishop of London.*

THOMAS THIRLEY, *Bishop of Ely.*

SIR THOMAS WYATT } *Insurrectionary Leaders.*

SIR THOMAS STAFFORD }

SIR RALPH BAGENHALL.

SIR ROBERT SOETHWELL.

SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

SIR WILLIAM CROIL.

SIR THOMAS WHITE, *Lord Mayor of London.*

THE DUKE OF ALVA } *attending on Philip.*

THE COMTE DE FERIA }

PETER MARTYR.

FATHER COLE.

FATHER BOURNE.

VILLA GARCIA.

SOTO.

CAPTAIN BRETT } *Adherents of Wyatt.*

ANTHONY KNYVETT }

PETERS, *Gentleman of Lord Howard.*

ROGGE, *Servant to Noailles.*

WILLIAM, *Servant to Wyatt.*

STEWARD OF HOUSEHOLD to the Princess Elizabeth.

OLD NOKES and NOKES.

MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, *Mother of Courtenay.*

LADY CLARENCE

LADY MAGDALEN DACRES } *Ladies in Waiting to the Queen.*

ALICE

MAID OF HONOR to the Princess Elizabeth.

JOAN } *two Country Wives.*

TIB

Lords and other Attendants, Members of the Privy Council, Members of Parliament, two Gentlemen, Aldermen, Citizens, Peasants, Ushers, Messengers, Guards, Pages, Gospellers, Marshalmen, etc.

QUEEN MARY

QUEEN MARY

ACT I

SCENE I.—ALD GATE RICHLY DECORATED

CROWD. MARSHALMEN

Marshalman. Stand back, keep a clear lane! When will her Majesty pass, say'st thou? why now, even now; wherefore draw back your heads and your horns before I break them, and make what noise you will with your tongues, so it be not treason. Long live Queen Mary, the lawful and legitimate daughter of Harry the Eighth! Shout, knaves!

Citizens. Long live Queen Mary! 10

First Citizen. That's a hard word, legitimate; what does it mean?

Second Citizen. It means a bastard.

Third Citizen. Nay, it means true-born.

First Citizen. Why, did n't the Parliament make her a bastard?

Second Citizen. No; it was the Lady Elizabeth.

Third Citizen. That was after, man; that was after. 20

First Citizen. Then which is the bastard?

Second Citizen. Troth, they be both bastards by Act of Parliament and Council.

Third Citizen. Ay, the Parliament can make every true-born man of us a bastard. Old Nokes, can't it make thee a bastard? thou shouldst know, for thou art as white as three Christmases.

Old Nokes (dreamily). Who's a-passing? King Edward or King Richard? 31

Third Citizen. No, old Nokes.

Old Nokes. It's Harry!

Third Citizen. It's Queen Mary.

Old Nokes. The blessed Mary's a-passing!
[Falls on his knees.]

Nokes. Let father alone, my masters! he's past your questioning.

Third Citizen. Answer thou for him, then! thou'rt no such cockerel thyself, for thou was born i' the tail end of old Harry the Seventh. 42

Nokes. Eh! that was afore bastard-making began. I was born true man at five in the forenoon, i' the tail of old Harry, and so they can't make me a bastard.

Third Citizen. But if Parliament can make the Queen a bastard, why, it follows all the more that they can make thee one, who art fray'd i' the knees, and out at elbow, and bald o' the back, and bursten at the toes, and down at heels. 52

Nokes. I was born of a true man and a ring'd wife, and I can't argue upon it; but I and my old woman 'ud burn upon it, that would we.

Marshalman. What are you cackling of bastardy under the Queen's own nose? I'll have you flogg'd and burnt too, by the rood I will. 60

First Citizen. He swears by the rood. Whew!

Second Citizen. Hark! the trumpets.

[The Procession passes, Mary and Elizabeth riding side by side, and disappears under the gate.]

Citizens. Long live Queen Mary! down with all traitors! God save her Grace; and death to Northumberland! [Exeunt.]

Manent TWO GENTLEMEN.

First Gentleman. By God's light a noble creature, right royal!

Second Gentleman. She looks comelier than ordinary to-day; but to my mind the Lady Elizabeth is the more noble and royal.

First Gentleman. I mean the Lady Elizabeth. Did you hear (I have a daughter in her service who reported it) that she met the Queen at Wanstead with five hundred horse, and the Queen (tho' some say they be much divided) took her hand, call'd her sweet sister, and kiss'd not her alone, but all the ladies of her following. 72

Second Gentleman. Ay, that was in her hour of joy. There will be plenty to sunder and unsister them again; this Gardiner for one, who is to be made Lord Chancellor, and will pounce like a wild beast out of his cage to worry Cranmer.

First Gentleman. And, furthermore, my daughter said that when there rose a talk of the late rebellious, she spoke even of Northumberland pitifully, and of the good Lady Jane as a poor innocent child who had but obeyed her father; and, furthermore, she said that no one in her time should be burnt for heresy. 94

Second Gentleman. Well, sir, I look for happy times.

First Gentleman. There is but one thing against them. I know not if you know.

Second Gentleman. I suppose you touch upon the rumor that Charles, the master of the world, has offer'd her his son Philip, the Pope and the devil. I trust it is but a rumor. 103

First Gentleman. She is going now to the Tower to loose the prisoners there, and among them Courtenay, to be made Earl of Devon, of royal blood, of splendid feature, whom the council and all her people wish her to marry. May it be so, for we are many of us Catholics, but few Papists, and the Hot Gospellers will go mad upon it. 112

Second Gentleman. Was she not betroth'd in her babyhood to the Great Emperor himself?

First Gentleman. Ay, but he's too old.

Second Gentleman. And again to her cousin Reginald Pole, now Cardinal; but I hear that he too is full of aches and broken before his day. 120

First Gentleman. Oh, the Pope could dispense with his cardinalate, and his ach-

age, and his breakage, if that were all. Will you not follow the procession?

Second Gentleman. No; I have seen enough for this day.

First Gentleman. Well, I shall follow; if I can get near enough I shall judge with my own eyes whether her Grace incline to this splendid scion of Plantagenet.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

A ROOM IN LAMBETH PALACE

Cranmer. To Strasburg, Antwerp, Frankfurt, Zurich, Worms, Geneva, Basle — our bishops from their sees

Or fled, they say, or flying — Poinet, Barlow,

Bale, Scory, Coverdale; besides the deans Of Christchurch, Durham, Exeter, and Wells —

Ailmer and Bullingham, and hundreds more;

So they report. I shall be left alone.

No; Hooper, Ridley, Latimer, will not fly.

Enter PETER MARTYR.

Peter Martyr. Fly, Cranmer! were there nothing else, your name Stands first of those who sign'd the letters patent 10

That gave her royal crown to Lady Jane.

Cranmer. Stand first it may, but it was written last.

Those that are now her privy council sign'd

Before me; nay, the judges had pronounced That our young Edward might bequeath the crown

Of England, putting by his father's will.

Yet I stood out, till Edward sent for me.

The wan boy-king, with his fast-fading eyes

Fixt hard on mine, his frail transparent hand,

Damp with the sweat of death, and griping mine, 20

Whisper'd me, if I loved him, not to yield His Church of England to the Papal wolf And Mary; then I could no more — I sign'd.

Nay, for bare shame of inconsistency,

She cannot pass her traitor council by,
To make me headless.

Peter Martyr. That might be forgiven.
I tell you, fly, my lord. You do not own
The bodily presence in the Eucharist,
Their wafer and perpetual sacrifice: 29
Your creed will be your death.

Cranmer. Step after step,
Thro' many voices crying right and left,
Have I climb'd back into the primal
church,
And stand within the porch, and Christ
with me.

My flight were such a scandal to the faith,
The downfall of so many simple souls,
I dare not leave my post.

Peter Martyr. But you divorced
Queen Catharine and her father; hence, her
hate

Will burn till you are burn'd.

Cranmer. I cannot help it.
The Canonists and Schoolmen were with me.
'Thou shalt not wed thy brother's wife.' —

'T is written, 40
'They shall be childless.' True, Mary
was born,

But France would not accept her for a
bride

As being born from incest; and this
wrought

Upon the King; and child by child, you
know,

Were momentary sparkles, out as quick
Almost as kindled; and he brought his
doubts

And fears to me. Peter, I'll swear for
him

He *did* believe the bond incestuous.

But wherefore am I trenching on the time
That should already have seen your steps a
mile 50

From me and Lambeth? God be with
you! Go.

Peter Martyr. Ah, but how fierce a letter
you wrote against

Their superstition when they slander'd you
For setting up a mass at Canterbury
To please the Queen!

Cranmer. It was a wheedling monk
Set up the mass.

Peter Martyr. I know it, my good lord.
But you so bubbled over with hot terms
Of Satan, liars, blasphemy, Antichrist,
She never will forgive you. Fly, my lord,
fly!

Cranmer. I wrote it, and God grant me
power to burn! 60

Peter Martyr. They have given me a
safe conduct; for all that
I dare not stay. I fear, I fear, I see you,
Dear friend, for the last time; farewell,
and fly.

Cranmer. Fly and farewell, and let me
die the death.

[*Exit Peter Martyr.*]

Enter OLD SERVANT.

O, kind and gentle master, the Queen's
Officers

Are here in force to take you to the Tower.

Cranmer. Ay, gentle friend, admit them.
I will go.

I thank my God it is too late to fly.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III

ST. PAUL'S CROSS

FATHER BOURNE *in the pulpit.* A crowd.

MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, COURTENAY.

The SIEUR DE NOAILLES and his man

ROGER *in front of the stage.* Hubbub.

Noailles. Hast thou let fall those papers
in the palace?

Roger. Ay, sir.

Noailles. 'There will be no peace for
Mary till Elizabeth lose her head.'

Roger. Ay, sir.

Noailles. And the other, 'Long live
Elizabeth the Queen!'

Roger. Ay, sir; she needs must tread
upon them.

Noailles. Well.

These beastly swine make such a grunting
here,

I cannot catch what Father Bourne is say-
ing.

Roger. Quiet a moment, my masters;
hear what the shaveling has to say for him-
self. 11

Crowd. Hush — hear!

Bourne. — and so this unhappy land,
long divided in itself, and sever'd from the
faith, will return into the one true fold,
seeing that our gracious Virgin Queen
hath —

Crowd. No pope! no pope!

Roger (to those about him, mimicking Bourne). — hath sent for the holy legate of the holy father the Pope, Cardinal Pole, to give us all that holy absolution which — 22

First Citizen. Old Bourne to the life!

Second Citizen. Holy absolution! holy Inquisition!

Third Citizen. Down with the Papist!

[Hubbub.

Bourne. — and now that your good bishop, Bouner, who hath lain so long under bonds for the faith —

[Hubbub.

Noailles. Friend Roger, steal thou in among the crowd,

And get the swine to shout 'Elizabeth.' 30
Yon gray old Gospeller, sour as midwinter,

Begin with him.

Roger (goes). By the mass, old friend, we'll have no pope here while the Lady Elizabeth lives.

Gospeller. Art thou of the true faith, fellow, that swearest by the mass?

Roger. Ay, that am I, new converted, but the old leaven sticks to my tongue yet.

First Citizen. He says right; by the mass, we'll have no mass here. 41

Voices of the Crowd. Peace! hear him; let his own words damn the Papist. From thine own mouth I judge thee — tear him down!

Bourne. — and since our gracious Queen, let me call her our second Virgin Mary, hath begun to re-edify the true temple — 49

First Citizen. Virgin Mary! we'll have no virgins here — we'll have the Lady Elizabeth!

[Swords are drawn, a knife is hurled and sticks in the pulpit. The mob throng to the pulpit stairs.

Marchioness of Exeter. Son Courtenay, wilt thou see the holy father Murdered before thy face? up, son, and save him!

They love thee, and thou canst not come to harm.

Courtenay (in the pulpit). Shame, shame, my masters! are you English-born, And set yourselves by hundreds against one?

Crowd. A Courtenay! a Courtenay!

[A train of Spanish servants crosses at the back of the stage.

Noailles. These birds of passage come before their time.

Stave off the crowd upon the Spaniard there. 60

Roger. My masters, yonder's fatter game for you

Than this old gaping gurgyle; look you there —

The Prince of Spain coming to wed our Queen!

After him, boys! and pelt him from the city.

[They seize stones and follow the Spaniards. Exeunt on the other side Marchioness of Exeter and Attendants.

Noailles (to Roger). Stand from me. If Elizabeth lose her head —

That makes for France.

And if her people, anger'd thereupon, Arise against her and dethrone the Queen — That makes for France.

And if I breed confusion any way — 70
That makes for France.

Good-day, my Lord of Devon; A bold heart yours to beard that raging mob!

Courtenay. My mother said, Go up; and up I went.

I knew they would not do me any wrong, For I am mighty popular with them, Noailles.

Noailles. You look'd a king.

Courtenay. Why not? I am king's blood.

Noailles. And in the whirl of change may come to be one.

Courtenay. Ah!

Noailles. But does your gracious Queen entreat you kinglike?

Courtenay. 'Fore God, I think she entertains me like a child. 80

Noailles. You've but a dull life in this maiden court,

I fear, my lord?

Courtenay. A life of nods and yawns.

Noailles. So you would honor my poor house to-night,

We might enliven you. Divers honest fellows,

The Duke of Suffolk lately freed from prison,

Sir Peter Carew and Sir Thomas Wyatt, Sir Thomas Stafford, and some more — we play.

Courtenay. At what?

Noailles. The game of chess.

Courtenay. The game of chess !
I can play well, and I shall beat you there.
Noailles. Ay, but we play with Henry,
King of France, 90
And certain of his court.

His Highness makes his moves across the
Channel,

We answer him with ours, and there are
messengers

That go between us.

Courtenay. Why, such a game, sir, were
whole years a-playing.

Noailles. Nay; not so long I trust.
That all depends

Upon the skill and swiftness of the play-
ers.

Courtenay. The King is skilful at it ?

Noailles. Very, my Lord.

Courtenay. And the stakes high ?

Noailles. But not beyond your means.

Courtenay. Well, I 'm the first of play-
ers. I shall win. 100

Noailles. With our advice and in our
company,

And so you well attend to the King's
moves,

I think you may.

Courtenay. When do you meet ?

Noailles. To-night.

Courtenay (aside). I will be there; the
fellow 's at his tricks —

Deep — I shall fathom him. (*Aloud.*)

Good morning, *Noailles.*

[*Exit Courtenay.*]

Noailles. Good-day, my Lord. Strange
game of chess ! a king

That with her own pawns plays against a
queen,

Whose play is all to find herself a king.

Ay; but this fine blue-blooded *Courtenay*
seems

Too princely for a pawn. Call him a
knight, 110

That, with an ass's, not a horse's head,
Skips every way, from levity or from
fear.

Well, we shall use him somehow, so that
Gardiner

And *Simon Renard* spy not out our game
Too early. *Roger*, thinkest thou that any

Suspected thee to be my man ?

Roger. Not one, sir.

Noailles. No ! the disguise was perfect.
Let 's away. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

ELIZABETH. Enter COURTENAY.

Courtenay. So yet am I,
Unless my friends and mirrors lie to me,
A goodlier-looking fellow than this Philip.
Pah !

The Queen is ill advised. Shall I turn
traitor ?

They 've almost talked me into it; yet the
word

Affrights me somewhat; to be such a one
As *Harry Bolingbroke* hath a lure in it.

Good now, my Lady Queen, tho' by your
age

And by your looks you are not worth the
having, 10

Yet by your crown you are.

[*Seeing Elizabeth.*]

The Princess there ?

If I tried her, and la — she 's amorous.

Have we not heard of her in *Edward's*
time,

Her freaks and frolics with the late Lord
Admiral ?

I do believe she 'd yield. I should be still
A party in the State; and then, who

knows —

Elizabeth. What are you musing on, my
Lord of Devon ?

Courtenay. Has not the Queen —

Elizabeth. Done what, Sir ?

Courtenay. — made you follow
The Lady *Suffolk* and the Lady *Lennox* ? —

you,

The heir presumptive.

Elizabeth. Why do you ask ? you know
it. 20

Courtenay. You needs must bear it
hardly.

Elizabeth. No, indeed !

I am utterly submissive to the Queen.

Courtenay. Well, I was musing upon
that; the Queen

Is both my foe and yours; we should be
friends.

Elizabeth. My Lord, the hatred of an-
other to us

Is no true bond of friendship.

Courtenay. Might it not
Be the rough preface of some closer bond ?

Elizabeth. My lord, you late were loosed
from out the Tower,
Where, like a butterfly in a chrysalis,
You spent your life; that broken, out you
flutter
Thro' the new world, go zigzag, now would
settle
Upon this flower, now that. But all things
here
At court are known; you have solicited
The Queen, and been rejected.

Courtenay. Flower, she!
Half faded! but you, cousin, are fresh and
sweet

As the first flower no bee has ever tried.
Elizabeth. Are you the bee to try me?
why, but now

I called you butterfly.
Courtenay. You did me wrong,
I love not to be called a butterfly.

Why do you call me butterfly?
Elizabeth. Why do you go so gay then?
Courtenay. Velvet and gold.
This dress was made me as the Earl of
Devon

To take my seat in; looks it not right
royal?
Elizabeth. So royal that the Queen for-
hade you wearing it.

Courtenay. I wear it then to spite her.
Elizabeth. My lord, my lord;
I see you in the Tower again. Her Ma-
jesty
Hears you affect the Prince — prelates
kneel to you. —

Courtenay. I am the noblest blood in
Europe, Madam,
A Courtenay of Devon, and her cousin.

Elizabeth. She hears you make your
boast that after all
She means to wed you. Folly, my good
lord.

Courtenay. How folly? a great party in
the state
Wills me to wed her.

Elizabeth. Failing her, my lord,
Doth not as great a party in the State
Will you to wed me?

Courtenay. Even so, fair lady.
Elizabeth. You know to flatter ladies.
Courtenay. Nay, I meant

True matters of the heart.
Elizabeth. My heart, my lord,
Is no great party in the State as yet.

Courtenay. Great, said you? nay, you
shall be great. I love you,
Lay my life in your hands. Can you be
close?

Elizabeth. Can you, my lord?
Courtenay. Close as a miser's casket.

Listen:
The King of France, Noailles the Amba-
sador,
The Duke of Suffolk and Sir Peter Carew,
Sir Thomas Wyatt, I myself, some others,
Have sworn this Spanish marriage shall
not be.

If Mary will not hear us — well — con-
jecture —

Were I in Devon with my wedded bride,
The people there so worship me — your
ear;

You shall be Queen.
Elizabeth. You speak too low, my lord;
I cannot hear you.

Courtenay. I'll repeat it.
Elizabeth. No!
Stand further off, or you may lose your
head.

Courtenay. I have a head to lose for
your sweet sake.
Elizabeth. Have you, my lord? Best
keep it for your own.

Nay, pout not, cousin.
Not many friends are mine, except indeed
Among the many. I believe you mine;
And so you may continue mine, farewell,
And that at once.

Enter MARY, behind.

Mary. Whispering — leagued together
To bar me from my Philip.

Courtenay. Pray — consider —
Elizabeth (seeing the Queen). Well,
that's a noble horse of yours, my
lord.

I trust that he will carry you well to-day,
And heal your headache.

Courtenay. You are wild; what head-
ache?

Heartache, perchance; not headache.
Elizabeth (aside to Courtenay). Are you
blind?

[*Courtenay sees the Queen and exit.*
Exit Mary.

Enter LORD WILLIAM HOWARD.

Howard. Was that my Lord of Devon?
do not you

Be seen in corners with my Lord of Devon.
He hath fallen out of favor with the Queen.
She fears the lords may side with you and
him

Against her marriage; therefore is he dan-
gerous. 89

And if this Prince of fluff and feather come
To woo you, niece, he is dangerous every-
way.

Elizabeth. Not very dangerous that way,
my good uncle.

Howard. But your own state is full of
danger here.

The disaffected, heretics, reformers,
Look to you as the one to crown their ends.
Mix not yourself with any plot I pray you;
Nay, if by chance you hear of any such,
Speak not thereof — no, not to your best
friend,

Lest you should be confounded with it.
Still —

Perinde ac cadaver — as the priest says,
You know your Latin — quiet as a dead
body. 101

What was my Lord of Devon telling you?

Elizabeth. Whether he told me anything
or not,

I follow your good counsel, gracious uncle.
Quiet as a dead body.

Howard. You do right well.
I do not care to know; but this I charge
you,

Tell Courtenay nothing. The Lord Chan-
cellor —

I count it as a kind of virtue in him,
He hath not many — as a mastiff dog
May love a puppy cur for no more reason
Than that the twain have been tied up to-
gether, 111

Thus Gardiner — for the two were fellow-
prisoners

So many years in yon accursed Tower —
Hath taken to this Courtenay. Look to it,
niece,

He hath no fence when Gardiner ques-
tions him;

All oozes out; yet him — because they
know him

The last White Rose, the last Plantagenet —
Nay, there is Cardinal Pole, too — the peo-
ple

Claim as their natural leader — ay, some
say

That you shall marry him, make him king
belike. 120

Elizabeth. Do they say so, good uncle?

Howard. Ay, good niece!

You should be plain and open with me,
niece:

You should not play upon me.

Elizabeth. No, good uncle.

Enter GARDINER.

Gardiner. The Queen would see your
Grace upon the moment.

Elizabeth. Why, my lord bishop?

Gardiner. I think she means to counsel
your withdrawing

To Ashridge, or some other country house.

Elizabeth. Why, my lord bishop?

Gardiner. I do but bring the message,
know no more.

Your Grace will hear her reasons from her-
self. 130

Elizabeth. 'Tis mine own wish fulfill'd
before the word

Was spoken, for in truth I had meant to
crave

Permission of her Highness to retire
To Ashridge, and pursue my studies there.

Gardiner. Madam, to have the wish be-
fore the word

Is man's good fairy — and the Queen is
yours.

I left her with rich jewels in her hand,
Whereof 't is like enough she means to
make

A farewell present to your Grace.

Elizabeth. My lord,

I have the jewel of a loyal heart.

Gardiner. I doubt it not, madam, most
loyal. [Bows low and exit.]

Howard. See,

This comes of parleying with my Lord of
Devon. 142

Well, well, you must obey; and I myself
Believe it will be better for your welfare.
Your time will come.

Elizabeth. I think my time will come.
Uncle,

I am of sovereign nature, that I know,
Not to be quell'd; and I have felt within
me

Stirrings of some great doom when God's
just hour

Peals — but this fierce old Gardiner — his
big baldness, 150

That irritable forelock which he rubs,
His buzzard beak and deep-incavern'd eyes
Half fright me.

Howard. You've a bold heart; keep it so.

He cannot touch you save that you turn traitor;

And so take heed I pray you — you are one

Who love that men should smile upon you, niece.

They'd smile you into treason — some of them.

Elizabeth. I spy the rock beneath the smiling sea.

But if this Philip, the proud Catholic prince,

And this bald priest, and she that hates me, seek ¹⁶⁰

In that lone house to practise on my life, By poison, fire, shot, stab —

Howard. They will not, niece. Mine is the fleet and all the power at sea —

Or will be in a moment. If they dared To harm you, I would blow this Philip and all

Your trouble to the dog-star and the devil.

Elizabeth. To the Pleiads, uncle; they have lost a sister.

Howard. But why say that? what have you done to lose her?

Come, come, I will go with you to the Queen. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V

A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY with PHILIP'S miniature. ALICE.

Mary (*kissing the miniature*). Most goodly, kinglike, and an emperor's son, —

A king to be, — is he not noble, girl?

Alice. Goodly enough, your Grace, and yet, methinks,

I have seen goodlier.

Mary. Ay; some waxen doll Thy baby eyes have rested on, belike;

All red and white, the fashion of our laud. But my good mother came — God rest her

soul! — Of Spain, and I am Spanish in myself, And in my likings.

Alice. By your Grace's leave, Your royal mother came of Spain, but took

To the English red and white. Your royal father — 11

For so they say — was all pure lily and rose In his youth, and like a lady.

Mary. O just God! Sweet mother, you had time and cause

enough To sicken of his lilies and his roses.

Cast off, betray'd, defamed, divorced, forlorn!

And then the King — that traitor past forgiveness,

The false archbishop fawning on him, married

The mother of Elizabeth — a heretic Even as *she* is; but God hath sent me here

To take such order with all heretics ²¹ That it shall be, before I die, as tho'

My father and my brother had not lived. What wast thou saying of this Lady Jane,

Now in the Tower?

Alice. Why madam, she was passing Some chapel down in Essex, and with her

Lady Anne Wharton, and the Lady Anne Bow'd to the pyx; but Lady Jane stood up

Stiff as the very backbone of heresy. And wherefore bow ye not, says Lady

Anne, ³⁰ To him within there who made heaven and earth?

I cannot, and I dare not, tell your Grace What Lady Jane replied.

Mary. But I will have it. *Alice.* She said — pray pardon me, and

pity her — She hath hearken'd evil counsel — ah! she said

The baker made him. *Mary.* Monstrous! blasphemous!

She ought to burn. Hence, thou [*Exit Alice.*

No — being traitor Her head will fall. Shall it? she is but a

child. We do not kill the child for doing that

His father whipt him into doing — a head So full of grace and beauty! would that

mine ⁴⁰ Were half as gracious! O, my lord to be,

My love, for thy sake only! I am eleven years older than he is.

But will he care for that? No, by the holy Virgin, being noble,

But love me only. Then the bastard sprout, My sister, is far fairer than myself.

Will he be drawn to her?

No, being of the true faith with myself.
 Paget is for him — for to wed with Spain ⁵⁰
 Would treble England — Gardiner is
 against him;
 The Council, people, Parliament against
 him;
 But I will have him! My hard father
 hated me;
 My brother rather hated me than loved;
 My sister cowers and hates me. Holy
 Virgin,
 Plead with thy blessed Son; grant me my
 prayer.
 Give me my Philip; and we two will lead
 The living waters of the Faith again
 Back thro' their widow'd channel here, and
 watch
 The parch'd banks rolling incense, as of
 old, ⁶⁰
 To heaven, and kindled with the palms of
 Christ!

Enter USHER.

Who waits, sir?

Usher. Madam, the Lord Chancellor.

Mary. Bid him come in. (*Enter GARDINER.*) Good morning, my good lord. [*Exit Usher.*]

Gardiner. That every morning of your
 Majesty
 May be most good, is every morning's
 prayer
 Of your most loyal subject, Stephen Gardiner.

Mary. Come you to tell me this, my lord?

Gardiner. And more.
 Your people have begun to learn your
 worth.
 Your pious wish to pay King Edward's
 debts,
 Your lavish household curb'd, and the re-
 mission ⁷⁰
 Of half that subsidy levied on the peo-
 ple,
 Make all tongues praise and all hearts beat
 for you.
 I'd have you yet more loved. The realm
 is poor,
 The exchequer at neap-tide; we might
 withdraw
 Part of our garrison at Calais.
Mary. Calais!
 Our one point on the main, the gate of
 France!

I am Queen of England; take mine eyes,
 mine heart,
 But do not lose me Calais.

Gardiner. Do not fear it.
 Of that hereafter. I say your Grace is
 loved.

That I may keep you thus, who am your
 friend ⁸⁰
 And ever faithful counsellor, might I
 speak?

Mary. I can forespeak your speaking.
 Would I marry

Prince Philip, if all England hate him?
 That is

Your question, and I front it with another:
 Is it England, or a party? Now, your
 answer.

Gardiner. My answer is, I wear beneath
 my dress
 A shirt of mail; my house hath been as-
 sailed,

And when I walk abroad the populace,
 With fingers pointed like so many daggers,
 Stab me in fancy, hissing Spain and Philip;
 And when I sleep a hundred men-at-arms
 Guard my poor dreams for England. Men
 would murder me, ⁹²
 Because they think me favorer of this
 marriage.

Mary. And that were hard upon you,
 my Lord Chancellor.

Gardiner. But our young Earl of De-
 vou —

Mary. Earl of Devon?

I freed him from the Tower, placed him
 at Court;

I made him Earl of Devon, and — the
 fool —

He wrecks his health and wealth on cour-
 tesans,
 And rolls himself in carrion like a dog.

Gardiner. More like a school-boy that
 hath broken bounds ¹⁰⁰
 Sickenning himself with sweets.

Mary. I will not hear of him.
 Good, then, they will revolt; but I am
 Tudor,

And shall control them.

Gardiner. I will help you, madam,
 Even to the utmost. All the church is
 grateful.

You have ousted the mock priest, re-pul-
 pited

The shepherd of Saint Peter, raised the
 rood again,

And brought us back the mass. I am all thanks
To God and to your Grace; yet I know well,
Your people, and I go with them so far,
Will brook nor Pope nor Spaniard here to play

The tyrant, or in commonwealth or church.
Mary (showing the picture). Is this the face of one who plays the tyrant?
Peruse it; is it not goodly, ay, and gentle?
Gardiner. Madam, methinks a cold face and a haughty.

And when your Highness talks of Courtenay —
Ay, true — a goodly one. I would his life
Were half as goodly (*aside*).

Mary. What is that you mutter?
Gardiner. O, madam, take it bluntly;
marry Philip,
And be stepmother of a score of sons!
The prince is known in Spain, in Flanders,
ha!

For Philip —
Mary. You offend us; you may leave us.

You see thro' warping glasses.
Gardiner. If your Majesty —
Mary. I have sworn upon the body and blood of Christ

I'll none but Philip.
Gardiner. Hath your Grace so sworn?
Mary. Ay, Simon Renard knows it.
Gardiner. News to me!

It then remains for your poor Gardiner,
So you still care to trust him somewhat less

Than Simon Renard, to compose the event
In some such form as least may harm your Grace.

Mary. I'll have the scandal sounded to the mud.

I know it a scandal.
Gardiner. All my hope is now
It may be found a scandal.

Mary. You offend us.
Gardiner (aside). These princes are like children, must be physick'd,
The bitter in the sweet. I have lost mine office,

It may be, thro' mine honesty, like a fool.
[*Exit.*]

Enter USHER.

Mary. Who waits?

Usher. The ambassador from France,
your Grace.

Mary (sits down). Bid him come in.
Good morning, Sir de Noailles.

[*Exit Usher.*]
Noailles (entering). A happy morning to your Majesty.

Mary. And I should some time have a happy morning;

I have had none yet. What says the King your master?

Noailles. Madam, my master hears with much alarm

That you may marry Philip, Prince of Spain —

Foreseeing, with what'er unwillingness,
That if this Philip be the titular King
Of England, and at war with him, your Grace

And kingdom will be suck'd into the war,
Ay, tho' you long for peace; wherefore, my master,

If but to prove your Majesty's goodwill,
Would fain have some fresh treaty drawn
between you.

Mary. Why some fresh treaty? wherefore should I do it?

Sir, if we marry, we shall still maintain
All former treaties with his Majesty.

Our royal word for that! and your good master,

Pray God he do not be the first to break them,

Must be content with that; and so, farewell.

Noailles (going, returns). I would your answer had been other, madam,
For I foresee dark days.

Mary. And so do I, sir;
Your master works against me in the dark.
I do believe he help Northumberland
Against me.

Noailles. Nay, pure phantasy, your Grace.

Why should he move against you?
Mary. Will you hear why?

Mary of Scotland. — for I have not own'd
My sister, and I will not, — after me
Is heir of England; and my royal father,
To make the crown of Scotland one with
ours,

Had mark'd her for my brother Edward's
bride;

Ay, but your king stole her a babe from
Scotland

In order to betroth her to your Dauphin.
 See then:
 Mary of Scotland, married to your Dauphin,
 Would make our England, France; ¹⁷¹
 Mary of England, joining hands with
 Spain,
 Would be too strong for France.
 Yea, were there issue born to her, Spain
 and we,
 One crown, might rule the world. There
 lies your fear.
 That is your drift. You play at hide and
 seek.
 Show me your faces!
Noailles. Madam, I am amazed.
 French, I must needs wish all good things
 for France.
 That must be pardon'd me; hut I protest
 Your Grace's policy hath a farther flight
 Than mine into the future. We but seek
 Some settled ground for peace to stand
 upon. ¹⁸²
Mary. Well, we will leave all this, sir,
 to our council.
 Have you seen Philip ever?
Noailles. Only once.
Mary. Is this like Philip?
Noailles. Ay, hut nobler-looking.
Mary. Hath he the large ability of the
 Emperor?
Noailles. No, surely.
Mary. I can make allowance for thee,
 Thou speakest of the enemy of thy king.
Noailles. Make no allowance for the
 naked truth. ¹⁸⁹
 He is every way a lesser man than Charles;
 Stone-hard, ice-cold — no dash of daring in
 him.
Mary. If cold, his life is pure.
Noailles. Why (*smiling*), no, indeed.
Mary. Say'st thou?
Noailles. A very wanton life indeed
 (*smiling*).
Mary. Your audience is concluded, sir.
 (*Exit Noailles.*) You cannot
 Learn a man's nature from his natural foe.
Enter USHER.
 Who waits?
Usher. The ambassador of Spain, your
 Grace. [*Exit.*]
Enter SIMON RENARD.
Mary (*rising to meet him*). Thou art
 ever welcome, Simon Renard. Hast
 thou

Brought me the letter which thine Em-
 peror promised
 Long since, a formal offer of the hand ¹⁹⁹
 Of Philip?
Renard. Nay, your Grace, it hath not
 reach'd me.
 I know not wherefore — some mischance
 of flood,
 And broken bridge, or spavin'd horse, or
 wave
 And wind at their old battle; he must have
 written.
Mary. But Philip never writes me one
 poor word,
 Which in his absence had been all my
 wealth.
 Strange in a wooer!
Renard. Yet I know the Prince,
 So your king - parliament suffer him to
 land,
 Yearns to set foot upon your island shore.
Mary. God change the pebble which his
 kingly foot ²⁰⁹
 First presses into some more costly stone
 Than ever blinded eye! I'll have one
 mark it
 And bring it me. I'll have it burnish'd
 firelike;
 I'll set it round with gold, with pearl, with
 diamond.
 Let the great angel of the Church come
 with him,
 Stand on the deck and spread his wings
 for sail!
 God lay the waves and strow the storms at
 sea,
 And here at land among the people! O
 Renard,
 I am much beset, I am almost in despair.
 Paget is ours. Gardiner perchance is ours;
 But for our heretic Parliament —
Renard. O madam,
 You fly your thoughts like kites. My mas-
 ter, Charles, ²²¹
 Bade you go softly with your heretics here,
 Until your throne had ceased to tremble.
 Then
 Spit them like larks for aught I care.
 Besides,
 When Henry broke the carcase of your
 church
 To pieces, there were many wolves among
 you
 Who dragg'd the scatter'd limbs into their
 den.

The Pope would have you make them render these;
 So would your cousin, Cardinal Pole — ill counsel!
 These let them keep at present; stir not yet
 This matter of the Church lands. At his coming
 Your star will rise.
Mary. My star! a baleful one.
 I see but the black night, and hear the wolf.
 What star?
Renard. Your star will be your princely son,
 Heir of this England and the Netherlands!
 And if your wolf the while should howl for more,
 We'll dust him from a bag of Spanish gold.
 I do believe — I have dusted some already —
 That, soon or late, your Parliament is ours.
Mary. Why do they talk so foully of your Prince,
Renard?
Renard. The lot of princes. To sit high is to be lied about.
Mary. They call him cold, Haughty, ay, worse.
Renard. Why, doubtless, Philip shows Some of the bearing of your blue blood — still
 All within measure — nay, it well becomes him.
Mary. Hath he the large ability of his father?
Renard. Nay, some believe that he will go beyond him.
Mary. Is this like him?
Renard. Ay, somewhat; but your Philip is the most princelike prince beneath the sun.
 This is a daub to Philip.
Mary. Of a pure life?
Renard. As an angel among angels.
 Yea, by Heaven,
 The text — Your Highness knows it, 'Who-soever
 Looketh after a woman,' would not graze
 The Prince of Spain. You are happy in him there,
 Chaste as your Grace!
Mary. I am happy in him there.

Renard. And would be altogether happy, madam,
 So that your sister were but look'd to closer.
 You have sent her from the court, but then she goes,
 I warrant, not to hear the nightingales,
 But hatch you some new treason in the woods.
Mary. We have our spies abroad to catch her tripping,
 And then, if caught, to the Tower.
Renard. The Tower! the block!
 The word has turn'd your Highness pale; the thing
 Was no such scarecrow in your father's time.
 I have heard, the tongue yet quiver'd with the jest
 When the head leapt — so common! I do think,
 To save your crown, that it must come to this.
Mary. No, Renard; it must never come to this.
Renard. Not yet; but your old traitors of the Tower —
 Why, when you put Northumberland to death,
 The sentence having passed upon them all,
 Spared you the Duke of Suffolk, Guildford Dudley,
 Even that young girl who dared to wear your crown?
Mary. Dared? nay, not so; the child obey'd her father.
 Spite of her tears her father forced it on her.
Renard. Good madam, when the Roman wish'd to reign,
 He slew not him alone who wore the purple,
 But his assessor in the throne, perchance
 A child more innocent than Lady Jane.
Mary. I am English Queen, not Roman Emperor.
Renard. Yet too much mercy is a want of mercy,
 And wastes more life. Stamp out the fire, or this
 Will smoulder and re-flame, and burn the throne
 Where you should sit with Philip. He will not come
 Till she be gone.
Mary. Indeed, if that were true —

For Philip comes, one hand in mine, and one
Steadying the tremulous pillars of the
Church —

But no, no, no! Farewell. I am some-
what faint

With our long talk. Tho' Queen, I am not
Queen

Of mine own heart, which every now and
then

Beats me half dead. Yet stay, this golden
chain —

My father on a birthday gave it me,
And I have broken with my father — take
And wear it as memorial of a morning
Which found me full of foolish doubts, and
leaves me

As hopeful.

Renard (aside). Whew — the folly of
all follies

Is to be lovesick for a shadow. (*Aloud.*)
Madam,

This chains me to your service, not with
gold,

But dearest links of love. Farewell, and
trust me,

Philip is yours. [*Exit.*]
Mary. Mine — but not yet all mine.

Enter USHER.

Usher. Your Council is in session, please
your Majesty.

Mary. Sir, let them sit. I must have
time to breathe.

No, say I come. (*Exit Usher.*) I won by
boldness once.

The Emperor counsell'd me to fly to Flan-
ders.

I would not; but a hundred miles I rode,
Sent out my letters, call'd my friends to-
gether,

Struck home and won.

And when the Council would not crown
me — thought

To bind me first by oaths I could not keep,
And keep with Christ and conscience — was
it boldness

Or weakness that won there? when I, their
Queen,

Cast myself down upon my knees before
them,

And those hard men brake into woman-
tears,

Even Gardiner, all amazed, and in that pas-
sion

Gave me my Crown.

Enter ALICE.

Girl, hast thou ever heard
Slanders against Prince Philip in our
Court?

Alice. What slanders? I, your Grace?
no, never.

Mary. Nothing?

Alice. Never, your Grace.

Mary. See that you neither hear them
nor repeat!

Alice (aside). Good Lord! but I have
heard a thousand such —
Ay, and repeated them as often — mum!
Why comes that old fox-Fleming back
again?

Enter RENARD.

Renard. Madam, I scarce had left your
Grace's presence
Before I chanced upon the messenger
Who brings that letter which we waited
for —

The formal offer of Prince Philip's hand.
It craves an instant answer, Ay or No.

Mary. An instant Ay or No! the Coun-
cil sits.

Give it me quick.

Alice (stepping before her). Your High-
ness is all trembling.

Mary. Make way.

[*Exit into the Council Chamber.*]

Alice. O Master Renard, Master Re-
nard,
If you have falsely painted your fine Prince,
Praised where you should have blamed
him, I pray God

No woman ever love you, Master Renard!
It breaks my heart to hear her moan at
night

As tho' the nightmare never left her bed.

Renard. My pretty maiden, tell me, did
you ever

Sigh for a beard?

Alice. That's not a pretty question.

Renard. Not prettily put? I mean, my
pretty maiden,

A pretty man for such a pretty maiden.

Alice. My Lord of Devon is a pretty
man.

I hate him. Well, but if I have, what
then?

Renard. Then, pretty maiden, you
should know that whether

A wind be warm or cold, it serves to fan
A kindled fire.

Alice. According to the song.

His friends would praise him, I believed 'em,
His foes would blame him, and I scorn'd 'em,
His friends — as angels I received 'em,
His foes — the devil had suborn'd 'em.

Renard. Peace, pretty maiden.

I hear them stirring in the Council Chamber.

Lord Paget's 'Ay' is sure — who else?
and yet,

They are all too much at odds to close at
once

In one full-throated No! Her Highness
comes.

Enter MARY.

Alice. How deathly pale! — a chair,
your Highness.

[*Bringing one to the Queen.*

Madam,

Renard.

The Council?

Mary. Ay! My Philip is all mine.

[*Sinks into chair, half fainting.*

ACT II

SCENE I. — ALINGTON CASTLE

Sir Thomas Wyatt. I do not hear from
Carew or the Duke

Of Suffolk, and till then I should not move.
The Duke hath gone to Leicester; Carew
stirs

In Devon; that fine porcelain Courtenay,
Save that he fears he might be crack'd in
using —

I have known a semi-madman in my time
So fancy-ridden — should be in Devon too.

Enter WILLIAM.

News abroad, William?

William. None so new, Sir Thomas, and
none so old, Sir Thomas. No new news
that Philip comes to wed Mary, no old news
that all men hate it. Old Sir Thomas
would have hated it. The bells are ring-
ing at Maidstone. Does n't your worship
hear?

Wyatt. Ay, for the Saints are come to
reign again.

Most like it is a Saint's-day. There's no
call

As yet for me; so in this pause, before

The mine be fired, it were a pious work
To string my father's sonnets, left about 20
Like loosely-scatter'd jewels, in fair order,
And head them with a lamer rhyme of
mine,

To graze his memory.

William. Ay, why not, Sir Thomas?
He was a fine courtier, he; Queen Anne
loved him. All the women loved him. I
loved him, I was in Spain with him. I
could n't eat in Spain, I could n't sleep in
Spain. I hate Spain, Sir Thomas.

Wyatt. But thou couldst drink in Spain
if I remember.

William. Sir Thomas, we may grant
the wine. Old Sir Thomas always granted
the wine.

Wyatt. Hand me the casket with my
father's sonnets.

William. Ay — sonnets — a fine cour-
tier of the old Court, old Sir Thomas.

[*Exit.*

Wyatt. Courtier of many courts, he
loved the more

His own gray towers, plain life, and let-
ter'd peace,

To read and rhyme in solitary fields,
The lark above, the nightingale below, 40

And answer them in song. The sire be-
gets

Not half his likeness in the son. I fail
Where he was fullest. Yet — to write it
down. [*He writes.*

Re-enter WILLIAM.

William. There is news, there is news,
and no call for sonnet-sorting now, nor for
sonnet-making either, but ten thousand
men on Penenden Heath all calling after
your worship, and your worship's name
heard into Maidstone market, and your
worship the first man in Kent and Chris-
tendom, for the Queen's down, and the
world's up, and your worship a-top of it.

Wyatt. Inverted Æsop — mountain out
of mouse.

Say for ten thousand ten — and pot-house
knaves,
Brain-dizzied with a draught of morning
ale.

Enter ANTONY KNYVETT.

William. Here's Antony Knyvett.
Knyvett. Look you, Master Wyatt,
Tear up that woman's work there.

Wyatt. No; not these,
Dumb children of my father, that will
speak

When I and thou and all rebellions lie
Dead bodies without voice. Song flies,
you know, 60

For ages.

Knyvett. Tut, your sonnet 's a flying
ant,

Wing'd for a moment.

Wyatt. Well, for mine own work,
[*Tearing the paper.*]

It lies there in six pieces at your feet;

For all that, I can carry it in my head.

Knyvett. If you can carry your head
upon your shoulders.

Wyatt. I fear you come to carry it off
my shoulders,

And sonnet-making 's safer.

Knyvett. Why, good lord,

Write you as many sonnets at your feet.

Ay, but not now; what, have you eyes, ears,
brains?

This Philip and the black-faced swarms of
Spain, 70

The hardest, cruellest people in the world,

Come locusting upon us, eat us up,

Confiscate lands, goods, money — *Wyatt,*
Wyatt,

Wake, or the stout old island will be-
come

A rotten limb of Spain. They roar for
you

On Penenden Heath, a thousand of them
— more —

All arm'd, waiting a leader; there 's no
glory

Like his who saves his country. And you
sit

Sing-singing here; but, if I 'm any judge,

By God, you are as poor a poet, *Wyatt,* 80
As a good soldier.

Wyatt. You as poor a critic

As an honest friend; you stroke me on one
cheek,

Buffet the other. Come, you bluster, An-
tony!

You know I know all this. I must not
move

Until I hear from Carew and the Duke.

I fear the mine is fired before the time.

Knyvett (showing a paper). But here 's
some Hebrew. Faith, I half forgot it.

Look — can you make it English? A
strange youth

Suddenly thrust it on me, whisper'd, ' *Wy-*
att,'

And whisking round a corner, show'd his
back 90

Before I read his face.

Wyatt. Ha! Courtenay's cipher.

[*Reads.*]

'Sir Peter Carew fled to France; it is
thought the Duke will be taken. I am
with you still; but, for appearance sake,
stay with the Queen. Gardiner knows, but
the Council are all at odds, and the Queen
hath no force for resistance. Move, if you
move, at once.'

Is Peter Carew fled? Is the Duke taken?

Down scabbard, and out sword! and let
Rebellion 100

Roar till throne rock, and crown fall! No,
not that;

But we will teach Queen Mary how to
reign.

Who are those that shout below there?

Knyvett. Why, some fifty
That follow'd me from Penenden Heath in
hope

To hear you speak.

Wyatt. Open the window, *Knyvett;*
The mine is fired, and I will speak to them.

Men of Kent, England of England, you
that have kept your old customs upright,
while all the rest of England bowed theirs
to the Norman, the cause that hath brought
us together is not the cause of a county or
a shire, but of this England, in whose crown
our Kent is the fairest jewel. Philip shall
not wed Mary; and ye have called me to be
your leader. I know Spain. I have been
there with my father; I have seen them
in their own land, have marked the haugh-
tiness of their nobles, the cruelty of their
priests. If this man marry our Queen,
however the Council and the Commons
may fence round his power with restriction,
he will be King, King of England, my
masters; and the Queen, and the laws, and
the people, his slaves. What? shall we
have Spain on the throne and in the par-
liament; Spain in the pulpit and on the
law-bench; Spain in all the great offices of
state; Spain in our ships, in our forts, in
our houses, in our beds? 129

Crowd. No! no! no Spain!

William. No Spain in our beds — that

were worse than all. I have been there with old Sir Thomas, and the beds I know. I hate Spain.

A Peasant. But, Sir Thomas, must we levy war against the Queen's Grace?

Wyatt. No, my friend; war for the Queen's Grace — to save her from herself and Philip — war against Spain. And think not we shall be alone — thousands will flock to us. The Council, the Court itself, is on our side. The Lord Chancellor himself is on our side. The King of France is with us; the King of Denmark is with us; the world is with us — war against Spain! And if we move not now, yet it will be known that we have moved; and if Philip come to be King, O my God! The rope, the rack, the thumbscrew, the stake, the fire. If we move not now, Spain moves, bribes our nobles with her gold, and creeps, creeps snake-like about our legs till we cannot move at all; and ye know, my masters, that wherever Spain hath ruled she hath wither'd all beneath her. Look at the New World — a paradise made hell; the red man, that good helpless creature, starved, maim'd, flogg'd, flay'd, burn'd, boil'd, buried alive, worried by dogs; and here, nearer home, the Netherlands, Sicily, Naples, Lombardy. I say no more — only this, their lot is yours. Forward to London with me! forward to London! If ye love your liberties or your skins, forward to London!

Crowd. Forward to London! A Wyatt! a Wyatt!

Wyatt. But first to Rochester, to take the guns

From out the vessels lying in the river.
Then on.

A Peasant. Ay, but I fear we be too few, Sir Thomas.

Wyatt. Not many yet. The world as is not half-waked; but every parish tower

Shall clang and clash alarm as we pass,
And pour along the land, and, swollen and fed

With indraughts and side-currents, in full force

Roll upon London.

Crowd. A Wyatt! a Wyatt! Forward!

Knyvett. Wyatt, shall we proclaim Elizabeth?

Wyatt. I'll think upon it, Knyvett.

Knyvett. Or Lady Jane?

Wyatt. No, poor soul, no.

Ah, gray old castle of Alington, green field

Beside the brimming Medway, it may chance

That I shall never look upon you more.

Knyvett. Come, now, you're sonnetting again.

Wyatt. Not I.

I'll have my head set higher in the State;
Or — if the Lord God will it — on the stake.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

GUILDHALL

SIR THOMAS WHITE (*The Lord Mayor*),
LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, SIR RALPH
BAGENHALL, ALDERMEN and CITIZENS.

White. I trust the Queen comes hither with her guards.

Howard. Ay, all in arms.

[*Several of the citizens move hastily out of the hall.*]

Why do they hurry out there?

White. My lord, cut out the rotten from your apple,

Your apple eats the better. Let them go. They go like those old Pharisees in John
Convicted by their conscience, arrant cowards,

Or tamperers with that treason out of Kent.

When will her Grace be here?

Howard. In some few minutes.

She will address your guilds and companies.

I have striven in vain to raise a man for her.

But help her in this exigency, make Your city loyal, and be the mightiest man This day in England.

White. I am Thomas White. Few things have fail'd to which I set my will.

I do my most and best.

Howard. You know that after The Captain Brett, who went with your train bands

To fight with Wyatt, had gone over to him

With all his men, the Queen in that distress

Sent Cornwallis and Hastings to the traitor,
Feigning to treat with him about her marriage — 20

Know too what Wyatt said.

White. He'd sooner be,
While this same marriage question was
being argued,
Trusted than trust — the scoundrel — and
demanded

Possession of her person and the Tower.

Howard. And four of her poor Council
too, my Lord,
As hostages.

White. I know it. What do and say
Your Council at this hour?

Howard. I will trust you.
We fling ourselves on you, my lord. The
Council,

The Parliament as well, are troubled wa-
ters;

And yet like waters of the fen they know
not 30

Which way to flow. All hands on her ad-
dress,

And upon you, Lord Mayor.

White. How look'd the city
When now you past it? Quiet?

Howard. Like our Council,
Your city is divided. As we past,
Some hail'd, some hiss'd us. There were
citizens

Stood each before his shut-up booth, and
look'd

As grim and grave as from a funeral.

And here a knot of ruffians all in rags,

With execrating execrable eyes,
Glared at the citizen. Here was a young
mother, 40

Her face on flame, her red hair all blown
back,

She shrilling 'Wyatt,' while the boy she
held

Mimick'd and piped her 'Wyatt,' as red as
she

In hair and cheek; and almost elbowing her,
So close they stood, another, mute as death,
And white as her own milk; her babe in
arms

Had felt the faltering of his mother's heart,
And look'd as bloodless. Here a pious
Catholic,

Mumbling and mixing up in his scared
prayers

Heaven and earth's Maries; over his
bow'd shoulder 50

Scowl'd that world-hated and world-hating
beast;

A haggard Anabaptist. Many such groups.
The names of Wyatt, Elizabeth, Courtenay,
Nay, the Queen's right to reign — 'fore
God, the rogues! —

Were freely buzz'd among them. So I say
Your city is divided, and I fear
One scruple, this or that way, of success
Would turn it thither. Wherefore now the
Queen,

In this low pulse and palsy of the state,
Bade me to tell you that she counts on
you 60

And on myself as her two hands; on you,
In your own city, as her right, my lord,
For you are loyal.

White. Am I Thomas White?
One word before she comes. Elizabeth —
Her name is much abused among these
traitors.

Where is she? She is loved by all of us.
I scarce have heart to mingle in this matter,
If she should be mishandled.

Howard. No, she shall not.
The Queen had written her word to come
to court: 69

Methought I smelt out Renard in the letter,
And fearing for her, sent a secret missive,
Which told her to be sick. Happily or not,
It found her sick indeed.

White. God send her well!
Here comes her Royal Grace.

Enter GUARDS, MARY, and GARDINER.
SIR THOMAS WHITE leads her to a raised
seat on the dais.

White. I, the Lord Mayor, and these
our companies
And guilds of London, gathered here, be-
seech
Your Highness to accept our lowliest
thanks

For your most princely presence; and we
pray

That we, your true and loyal citizens,
From your own royal lips, at once may
know 80

The wherefore of this coming, and so learn
Your royal will, and do it. — I, Lord
Mayor

Of London, and our guilds and companies.

Mary. In mine own person am I come
to you,

To tell you what indeed ye see and know,

How traitorously these rebels out of Kent
Have made strong head against ourselves
and you.

They would not have me wed the Prince of
Spain;

That was their pretext — so they spake at
first —

But we sent divers of our Council to them,
And by their answers to the question ask'd,
It doth appear this marriage is the least
Of all their quarrel.

They have betrayed the treason of their
hearts,

Seek to possess our person, hold our Tower,
Place and displace our councillors, and use
Both us and them according as they will.

Now what I am ye know right well — your
Queen;

To whom, when I was wedded to the realm
And the realm's laws — the spousal ring
whereof,

Not ever to be laid aside, I wear
Upon this finger — ye did promise full
Allegiance and obedience to the death.

Ye know my father was the rightful heir
Of England, and his right came down to me,
Corroborate by your acts of Parliament.

And as ye were most loving unto him,
So doubtless will ye show yourselves to
me.

Wherefore, ye will not brook that any one
Should seize our person, occupy our state,
More specially a traitor so presumptuous
As this same Wyatt, who hath tamper'd
with

A public ignorance, and, under color
Of such a cause as hath no color, seeks
To bend the laws to his own will, and yield
Full scope to persons rascal and forlorn,
To make free spoil and havoc of your
goods.

Now, as your Prince, I say,
I, that was never mother, cannot tell
How mothers love their children; yet, me-
thinks,

A prince as naturally may love his people
As these their children; and be sure your
Queen

So loves you, and so loving, needs must
deem

This love by you return'd as heartily;
And thro' this common knot and bond of
love,

Doubt not they will be speedily over-
thrown.

As to this marriage, ye shall understand
We made thereto no treaty of ourselves,
And set no foot theretoward unadvised
Of all our Privy Council; furthermore,
This marriage had the assent of those to
whom

The King, my father, did commit his trust;
Who not alone esteem'd it honorable,
But for the wealth and glory of our realm,
And all our loving subjects, most expedi-
ent.

As to myself,
I am not so set on wedlock as to choose
But where I list, nor yet so amorous
That I must needs be husbanded; I thank
God,

I have lived a virgin, and I noway doubt
But that, with God's grace, I can live so
still.

Yet if it might please God that I should
leave

Some fruit of mine own body after me,
To be your king, ye would rejoice thereat,
And it would be your comfort, as I trust;
And truly, if I either thought or knew
This marriage should bring loss or danger
to you,

My subjects, or impair in any way
This royal state of England, I would never
Consent thereto, nor marry while I live.

Moreover, if this marriage should not
seem,

Before our own High Court of Parliament,
To be of rich advantage to our realm,
We will refrain, and not alone from this,
Likewise from any other, out of which
Looms the least chance of peril to our
realm.

Wherefore be bold, and with your lawful
Prince

Stand fast against our enemies and yours,
And fear them not. I fear them not. My
lord,

I leave Lord William Howard in your city,
To guard and keep you whole and safe
from all

The spoil and sackage aim'd at by these
rebels,

Who mouth and foam against the Prince of
Spain.

Voices. Long live Queen Mary!

Down with Wyatt!

The Queen!

White. Three voices from our guilds
and companies!

You are shy and proud like Englishmen,
 my masters,
 And will not trust your voices. Under-
 stand,
 Your lawful Prince hath come to cast her-
 self
 On loyal hearts and bosoms, hoped to
 fall
 Into the wide-spread arms of fealty, ¹⁷⁰
 And finds you statues. Speak at once —
 and all !
 For whom ?
 Our Sovereign Lady by King Harry's
 will,
 The Queen of England — or the Kentish
 Squire ?
 I know you loyal. Speak ! in the name
 of God !
 The Queen of England or the rabble of
 Kent ?
 The reeking dungfork master of the mace !
 Your havings wasted by the seythe and
 spade —
 Your rights and charters hobuail'd into
 slush —
 Your houses fired — your gutters bubbling
 blood — ¹⁸⁰
Acclamation. No ! No ! The Queen !
 the Queen !

White. Your Highness hears
 This burst and bass of loyal harmony,
 And how we each and all of us abhor
 The venomous, bestial, devilish revolt
 Of Thomas Wyatt. Hear us now make
 oath
 To raise your Highness thirty thousand
 men,
 And arm and strike as with one hand, and
 brush
 This Wyatt from our shoulders, like a
 flea ¹⁸⁸
 That might have leapt upon us unawares.
 Swear with me, noble fellow-citizens, all,
 With all your trades, and guilds, and com-
 panies.

Citizens. We swear !

Mary. We thank your lordship and your
 loyal city.

[*Exit Mary, attended.*]

White. I trust this day, thro' God, I have
 saved the crown.

First Alderman. Ay, so my Lord of Pem-
 broke in command
 Of all her force be safe; but there are
 doubts.

Second Alderman. I hear that Gardiner,
 coming with the Queen,
 And meeting Pembroke, bent to his saddle-
 bow,
 As if to win the man by flattering him.
 Is he so safe to fight upon her side ? ²⁰⁰
First Alderman. If not, there's no man
 safe.

White. Yes, Thomas White.
 I am safe enough; no man need flatter me.

Second Alderman. Nay, no man need; but
 did you mark our Queen ?

The color freely play'd into her face,
 And the half sight which makes her look so
 stern

Seem'd thro' that dim dilated world of
 hers

To read our faces; I have never seen her
 So queenly or so goodly.

White. Courage, sir,
 That makes or man or woman look their
 goodliest.

Die like the torn fox dumb, but never
 whine ²¹⁰

Like that poor heart, Northumberland, at
 the block.

Bagenhall. The man had childreu, and he
 whined for those.

Methinks most men are but poor-hearted,
 else

Should we so dote on courage, were it com-
 moner ?

The Queen stands up, and speaks for her
 own self;

And all men cry, She is queenly, she is
 goodly.

Yet she's no goodlier; tho' my Lord Mayor
 here,

By his own rule, he hath been so bold to-
 day,

Should look more goodly than the rest of
 us.

White. Goodly ? I feel most goodly,
 heart and hand, ²²⁰

And strong to throw ten Wyatts and all
 Kent.

Ha ! ha ! sir; but you jest; I love it. A
 jest

In time of danger shows the pulses even.
 Be merry ! yet, Sir Ralph, you look but
 sad.

I dare avouch you'd stand up for your-
 self,

Tho' all the world should bay like winter
 wolves.

Bagenhall. Who knows? the man is proven by the hour.

White. The man should make the hour, not this the man;

And Thomas White will prove this Thomas Wyatt,

And he will prove an Iden to this Cade,

And he will play the Walworth to this Wat.

Come, sirs, we prate; hence all — gather your men —

Myself must bustle. Wyatt comes to Southwark;

I'll have the drawbridge hewn into the Thames,

And see the citizens arm'd. Good day; good day. [*Exit White.*]

Bagenhall. One of much outdoor bluster.

Howard. For all that, Most honest, brave, and skilful; and his wealth

A fountain of perennial alms — his fault So thoroughly to believe in his own self.

Bagenhall. Yet thoroughly to believe in one's own self,

So one's own self be thorough, were to do Great things, my lord.

Howard. It may be.

Bagenhall. I have heard One of your Council fleer and jeer at him.

Howard. The nursery-cocker'd child will jeer at aught

That may seem strange beyond his nursery. The statesman that shall jeer and fleer at men,

Makes enemies for himself and for his king; And if he jeer, not seeing the true man

Behind his folly, he is thrice the fool; And if he see the man and still will jeer,

He is child and fool, and traitor to the State.

Who is he? let me shun him.

Bagenhall. Nay, my lord, He is damn'd enough already.

Howard. I must set The guard at Ludgate. Fare you well, Sir

Ralph.

Bagenhall. 'Who knows?' I am for England. But who knows,

That knows the Queen, the Spaniard, and the Pope,

Whether I be for Wyatt, or the Queen? [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III

LONDON BRIDGE

Enter SIR THOMAS WYATT and BRETT.

Wyatt. Brett, when the Duke of Norfolk moved against us Thou criestst 'A Wyatt!' and flying to our side

Left his all bare, for which I love thee, Brett.

Have for thine asking aught that I can give,

For thro' thine help we are come to London Bridge;

But how to cross it balks me. I fear we cannot.

Brett. Nay, hardly, save by boat, swimming, or wings.

Wyatt. Last night I climb'd into the gate-house, Brett,

And scared the gray old porter and his wife.

And then I crept along the gloom and saw They had hewn the drawbridge down into the river.

It roll'd as black as death; and that same tide

Which, coming with our coming, seem'd to smile

And sparkle like our fortune as thou saidest,

Ran sunless down, and moan'd against the piers.

But o'er the chasm I saw Lord William Howard

By torchlight, and his guard; four guns gaped at me,

Black, silent mouths. Had Howard spied me there

And made them speak, as well he might have done,

Their voice had left me none to tell you this.

What shall we do?

Brett. On somehow. To go back Were to lose all.

Wyatt. On over London Bridge We cannot; stay we cannot; there is ordinance

On the White Tower and on the Devil's Tower,

And pointed full at Southwark. We must
round

By Kingston Bridge.

Brett. Ten miles about.

Wyatt. Even so.

But I have notice from our partisans
Within the city that they will stand by
us

If Ludgate can be reach'd by dawn to-
morrow. 29

Enter one of WYATT's men.

Man. Sir Thomas, I've found this paper;
pray your worship read it; I know not
my letters; the old priests taught me no-
thing.

Wyatt (reads). 'Whosoever will apprehend
the traitor Thomas Wyatt shall have
a hundred pounds for reward.'

Man. Is that it? That's a big lot of
money.

Wyatt. Ay, ay, my friend; not read it?
't is not written

Half plain enough. Give me a piece of
paper!

[*Writes 'THOMAS WYATT' large.*
There, any man can read that.

[*Sticks it in his cap.*

Brett. But that's foolhardy.

Wyatt. No! boldness, which will give
my followers boldness. 41

Enter MAN with a prisoner.

Man. We found him, your worship,
a-plundering o' Bishop Winchester's house;
he says he's a poor gentleman.

Wyatt. Gentleman! a thief! Go hang
him. Shall we make

Those that we come to serve our sharpest
foes?

Brett. Sir Thomas—

Wyatt. Hang him, I say.

Brett. Wyatt, but now you promised me
a boon.

Wyatt. Ay, and I warrant this fine fel-
low's life. 50

Brett. Even so; he was my neighbor
once in Kent.

He's poor enough, has drunk and gambled
out

All that he had, and gentleman he was.
We have been glad together; let him live.

Wyatt. He has gambled for his life and
lost, he hangs.

No, no, my word's my word. Take thy
poor gentleman!

Gamble thyself at once out of my sight,
Or I will dig thee with my dagger. Away!
Womeu and children! 59

Enter a CROWD of WOMEN and CHILDREN.

First Woman. O Sir Thomas, Sir Thomas,
pray you go away, Sir Thomas, or you'll
make the White Tower a black 'un for us
this blessed day. He'll be the death on
us; and you'll set the Devil's Tower a-spit-
ting, and he'll smash all our bits o' things
worse than Philip o' Spain.

Second Woman. Don't ye now go to
think that we be for Philip o' Spain. 68

Third Woman. No, we know that ye be
come to kill the Queen, and we'll pray
for you all on our bended knees. But o'
God's muercy don't ye kill the Queen here,
Sir Thomas; look ye, here's little Dickon,
and little Robin, and little Jenny—though
she's but a side-cousin—and all on our
knees, we pray you to kill the Queen fur-
ther off, Sir Thomas.

Wyatt. My friends, I have not come to
kill the Queen

Or here or there; I come to save you all,
And I'll go further off. 80

Crowd. Thanks, Sir Thomas, we be be-
holden to you, and we'll pray for you on
our bended knees till our lives' end.

Wyatt. Be happy, I am your friend.
To Kingstou, forward! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV

ROOM IN THE GATE-HOUSE OF WEST-
MINSTER PALACE

MARY, ALICE, GARDINER, RENARD,
LADIES.

Gardiner. Their cry is, Philip never shall
be king.

Mary. Lord Pembroke in command of
all our force
Will front their cry and shatter them into
dust.

Alice. Was not Lord Pembroke with
Northumberland?

O madam, if this Pembroke should be
false!

Mary. No, girl; most brave and loyal,
brave and loyal.
His breaking with Northumberland broke
Northumberland.
At the park gate he hovers with our
guards.
These Kentish plowmen cannot break the
guards.

Enter MESSENGER.

Messenger. Wyatt, your Grace, hath broken thro' the guards 10
And gone to Ludgate.

Gardiner. Madam, I much fear
That all is lost; but we can save your
Grace.

The river still is free. I do beseech you,
There yet is time, take boat and pass to
Windsor.

Mary. I pass to Windsor and I lose my
crown.

Gardiner. Pass, then, I pray your High-
ness, to the Tower.

Mary. I shall but be their prisoner in
the Tower.

Cries without. The traitor! treason!
Pembroke!

Ladies. Treason! treason!

Mary. Peace. 19
False to Northumberland, is he false to me?
Bear witness, Renard, that I live and die
The true and faithful bride of Philip — A
sound

Of feet and voices thickening hither —
blows —

Hark, there is battle at the palace gates,
And I will out upon the gallery.

Ladies. No, no, your Grace; see there
the arrows flying.

Mary. I am Harry's daughter, Tudor,
and not Fear.

[*Goes out on the gallery.*]

The guards are all driven in, skulk into
corners

Like rabbits to their holes. A gracious
guard

Truly; shame on them! they have shut the
gates! 30

Enter SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

Southwell. The porter, please your Grace,
hath shut the gates

On friend and foe. Your gentlemen-at-
arms,

If this be not your Grace's order, cry

To have the gates set wide again, and they
With their good battle-axes will do you
right

Against all traitors.

Mary. They are the flower of England;
set the gates wide.

[*Exit Southwell.*]

Enter COURTENAY.

Courtenay. All lost, all lost, all yielded!

A barge, a barge!

The Queen must to the Tower.

Mary. Whence come you, sir?

Courtenay. From Charing Cross; the
rebels broke us there, 40

And I sped hither with what haste I might
To save my royal cousin.

Mary. Where is Pembroke?

Courtenay. I left him somewhere in the
thick of it.

Mary. Left him and fled; and thou that
wouldst be King,

And hast nor heart nor honor! I myself
Will down into the battle and there bide
The upshot of my quarrel, or die with those
That are no cowards and no Courtenays.

Courtenay. I do not love your Grace
should call me coward.

Enter another MESSENGER.

Messenger. Over, your Grace, all crush'd;
the brave Lord William 50

Thrust him from Ludgate, and the traitor
flying

To Temple Bar, there by Sir Maurice
Berkeley

Was taken prisoner.

Mary. To the Tower with him!

Messenger. 'T is said he told Sir Maurice
there was one

Cognizant of this, and party thereunto,

My Lord of Devon.

Mary. To the Tower with him!

Courtenay. O la, the Tower, the Tower,
always the Tower,

I shall grow into it — I shall be the Tower.

Mary. Your lordship may not have so
long to wait. 59

Remove him!

Courtenay. La, to whistle out my life,
And carve my coat upon the walls again!

[*Exit Courtenay, guarded.*]

Messenger. Also this Wyatt did confess
the Princess

Cognizant thereof, and party thereunto.

Mary. What? whom — whom did you say?

Messenger. Elizabeth,
Your royal sister.

Mary. To the Tower with her!
My foes are at my feet, and I am Queen.
[*Gardiner and her Ladies kneel to her.*
Gardiner (rising). There let them lie,
your footstool! (*Aside.*) Can I strike
Elizabeth? — not now and save the life
Of Devon. If I save him, he and his
Are bound to me — may strike hereafter.
(*Aloud.*) Madam, ⁷⁰
What Wyatt said, or what they said he
said,
Cries of the moment and the street —
Mary. He said it.
Gardiner. Your courts of justice will determine that.
Renard (advancing). I trust by this
your Highness will allow
Some spice of wisdom in my telling you,
When last we talk'd, that Philip would not
come
Till Guildford Dudley and the Duke of
Suffolk
And Lady Jane had left us.
Mary. They shall die.
Renard. And your so loving sister?
Mary. She shall die.
My foes are at my feet, and Philip King. ⁸⁰
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III

SCENE I. — THE CONDUIT IN GRACE-
CHURCH

*Painted with the Nine Worthies, among them
King Henry VIII. holding a book, on it
inscribed 'Verbum Dei.'*

*Enter SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and SIR
THOMAS STAFFORD.*

Bagenhall. A hundred here and hundreds hang'd in Kent.
The tigress had unsheath'd her nails at last,
And Renard and the Chancellor sharpen'd them.
In every London street a gibbet stood.
They are down to-day. Here by this house
was one;
The traitor husband dangled at the door,

And when the traitor wife came out for bread
To still the petty treason therewithin,
Her cap would brush his heels.
Stafford. It is Sir Ralph,
And muttering to himself as heretofore. ¹⁰
Sir, see you aught up yonder?
Bagenhall. I miss something.
The tree that only bears dead fruit is gone.
Stafford. What tree, sir?
Bagenhall. Well, the tree in Virgil, sir,
That bears not its own apples.
Stafford. What! the gallows?
Bagenhall. Sir, this dead fruit was ripening
overmuch,
And had to be removed lest living Spain
Should sicken at dead England.
Stafford. Not so dead
But that a shock may rouse her.
Bagenhall. I believe
Sir Thomas Stafford?
Stafford. I am ill disguised.
Bagenhall. Well, are you not in peril
here?
Stafford. I think so. ²⁰
I came to feel the pulse of England,
whether
It beats hard at this marriage. Did you
see it?
Bagenhall. Stafford, I am a sad man
and a serious.
Far liefer had I in my country hall
Been reading some old book, with mine old
hound
Couch'd at my hearth, and mine old flask
of wine
Beside me, than have seen it; yet I saw it.
Stafford. Good, was it splendid?
Bagenhall. Ay, if dukes, and earls,
And counts, and sixty Spanish cavaliers,
Some six or seven bishops, diamonds,
pearls, ³⁰
That royal commonplace too, cloth of gold,
Could make it so.
Stafford. And what was Mary's dress?
Bagenhall. Good faith, I was too sorry
for the woman
To mark the dress. She wore red shoes!
Stafford. Red shoes!
Bagenhall. Scarlet, as if her feet were
wash'd in blood,
As if she had waded in it.
Stafford. Were your eyes
So hashful that you look'd no higher?
Bagenhall. A diamond,

And Philip's gift, as proof of Philip's love,
Who hath not any for any,—tho' a true
one,

Blazed false upon her heart.

Stafford. But this proud Prince —
Bagenhall. Nay, he is King, you know,
the King of Naples.

The father ceded Naples that the son,
Being a King, might wed a Queen — O, he
Flamed in brocade — white satin his trunk-
hose,

Inwrought with silver, — on his neck a col-
lar,

Gold, thick with diamonds; hanging down
from this

The Golden Fleece — and round his knee,
misplaced,

Our English Garter, studded with great
emeralds,

Rubies, I know not what. Have you had
enough

Of all this gear ?

Stafford. Ay, since you hate the telling
it.

How look'd the Queen ?

Bagenhall. No fairer for her jewels.
And I could see that as the new-made
couple

Came from the Minster, moving side by
side

Beneath one canopy, ever and anon
She cast on him a vassal smile of love,
Which Philip with a glance of some dis-
taste,

Or so methought, return'd. I may be
wrong, sir.

This marriage will not hold.

Stafford. I think with you.
The King of France will help to break it.

Bagenhall. France !
We once had half of France, and hurl'd
our battles

Into the heart of Spain; but England now
Is but a ball chnck'd between France and
Spain,

His in whose hand she drops. Harry of
Bolingbroke

Had holpen Richard's tottering throne to
stand,

Could Harry have foreseen that all our
nobles

Would perish on the civil slaughter-field,
And leave the people naked to the Crown,
And the Crown naked to the people; the
Crown

Female, too ! Sir, no woman's regimen
Can save us. We are fallen, and, as I
think,

Never to rise again.

Stafford. You are too black-blooded.
I'd make a move myself to hinder that;
I know some lusty fellows there in France.

Bagenhall. You would but make us
weaker, Thomas Stafford.

Wyatt was a good soldier, yet he fail'd,
And strengthen'd Philip.

Stafford. Did not his last breath
Clear Courtenay and the Princess from the
charge

Of being his co-rebels ?

Bagenhall. Ay, but then
What such a one as Wyatt says is nothing;
We have no men among us. The new
lords

Are quieted with their sop of Abbey-lands,
And even before the Queen's face Gardi-
ner buys them

With Philip's gold. All greed, no faith,
no courage !

Why, even the haughty prince, Northum-
berland,

The leader of our Reformation, knelt
And blubber'd like a lad, and on the scaf-
fold

Recanted, and resold himself to Rome.

Stafford. I swear you do your country
wrong, Sir Ralph.

I know a set of exiles over there,
Dare-devils, that would eat fire and spit it
out

At Philip's beard; they pillage Spain al-
ready.

The French King winks at it. An hour
will come

When they will sweep her from the seas.
No men ?

Did not Lord Suffolk die like a true man ?
Is not Lord William Howard a true man ?
Yea, you yourself, altho' you are black-
blooded;

And I, by God, believe myself a man.

Ay, even in the church there is a man —
Cranmer.

Fly would he not, when all men bade him
fly.

And what a letter he wrote against the
Pope !

There's a brave man, if any.

Bagenhall. Ay; if it hold.

Crowd (coming on). God save their Graces!

Stafford. Bagenhall, I see
The Tudor green and white. (*Trumpets.*)
They are coming now.
And here's a crowd as thick as herring-shoals.

Bagenhall. Be limpets to this pillar, or we are torn

Down the strong wave of brawlers.

Crowd. God save their Graces!

Procession of Trumpeters, Javelinmen, etc.; then Spanish and Flemish Nobles intermingled.

Stafford. Worth seeing, Bagenhall!
These black dog-Dons

Garb themselves bravely. Who's the long-face there, 110

Looks very Spain of very Spain?

Bagenhall. The Duke

Of Alva, an iron soldier.

Stafford. And the Dutchman,

Now laughing at some jest?

Bagenhall. William of Orange,

William the Silent.

Stafford. Why do they call him so?

Bagenhall. He keeps, they say, some secret that may cost

Philip his life.

Stafford. But then he looks so merry.

Bagenhall. I cannot tell you why they call him so.

[*The King and Queen pass, attended by Peers of the Realm, Officers of State, etc. Cannon shot off.*]

Crowd. Philip and Mary, Philip and Mary!

Long live the King and Queen, Philip and Mary!

Stafford. They smile as if content with one another. 120

Bagenhall. A smile abroad is oft a scowl at home.

[*King and Queen pass on. Procession.*]

First Citizen. I thought this Philip had been one of those black devils of Spain, but he hath a yellow beard.

Second Citizen. Not red like Iscariot's.

First Citizen. Like a carrot's, as thou say'st, and English carrot's better than Spanish licorice; but I thought he was a beast.

Third Citizen. Certain I had heard that

every Spaniard carries a tail like a devil under his trunk-hose. 132

Tailor. Ay, but see what trunk-hoses! Lord! they be fine; I never stitch'd none such. They make amends for the tails.

Fourth Citizen. Tut! every Spanish priest will tell you that all English heretics have tails.

Fifth Citizen. Death and the devil — if he find I have one — 140

Fourth Citizen. Lo! thou hast call'd them up! here they come — a pale horse for Death, and Gardiner for the devil.

Enter GARDINER (turning back from the procession).

Gardiner. Knave, wilt thou wear thy cap before the Queen?

Man. My lord, I stand so squeezed among the crowd

I cannot lift my hands unto my head.

Gardiner. Knock off his cap there, some of you about him!

See there be others that can use their hands.

Thou art one of Wyatt's men?

Man. No, my lord, no.

Gardiner. Thy name, thou knave?

Man. I am nobody, my lord.

Gardiner (shouting). God's passion! knave, thy name?

Man. I have ears to hear.

Gardiner. Ay, rascal, if I leave thee ears to hear. 152

Find out his name and bring it me (*to Attendant*).

Attendant. Ay, my lord.

Gardiner. Knave, thou shalt lose thine ears and find thy tongue,

And shalt be thankful if I leave thee that.

[*Coming before the Conduit.*]
The conduit painted — the Nine Worthies — ay!

But then what's here? King Harry with a scroll.

Ha — Verbum Dei — verbum — Word of God!

God's passion! do you know the knave that painted it?

Attendant. I do, my lord.

Gardiner. Tell him to paint it out, And put some fresh device in lieu of it —

A pair of gloves, a pair of gloves, sir; ha?

There is no heresy there. 162

Attendant. I will, my lord;
The man shall paint a pair of gloves. I am
sure —

Knowing the man — he wrought it igno-
rantly,
And not from any malice.

Gardiner. Word of God
In English! over this the brainless loons
That cannot spell Esaias from Saint Paul,
Make themselves drunk and mad, fly out
and flare
Into rebellions. I'll have their Bibles
burnt. ¹⁷⁰

The Bible is the priest's. Ay! fellow,
what!
Stand staring at me! shout, you gaping
rogue!

Man. I have, my lord, shouted till I
am hoarse.

Gardiner. What hast thou shouted,
knave?

Man. Long live Queen Mary!

Gardiner. Knave, there be two. There
be both King and Queen,

Philip and Mary. Shout!

Man. Nay, but, my lord,
The Queen comes first, Mary and Philip.

Gardiner. Shout, then,
Mary and Philip!

Man. Mary and Philip!

Gardiner. Now,
Thou hast shouted for thy pleasure, shout
for mine! ¹⁷⁹

Philip and Mary!

Man. Must it be so, my lord?

Gardiner. Ay, knave.

Man. Philip and Mary.

Gardiner. I distrust thee.

Thine is a half voice and a lean assent.
What is thy name?

Man. Sanders.

Gardiner. What else?

Man. Zerubbahel.

Gardiner. Where dost thou live?

Man. In Cornhill.

Gardiner. Where, knave, where?

Man. Sign of the Talbot.

Gardiner. Come to me to-morrow. —
Rascal! — this land is like a hill of fire,
One crater opens when another shuts.

But so I get the laws against the here-
tic,

Spite of Lord Paget and Lord William
Howard,

And others of our Parliament, revived, 190

I will show fire on my side — stake and
fire —

Sharp work and short. The knaves are
easily cow'd.

Follow their Majesties.

[*Exit. The crowd following.*

Bagenhall. As proud as Becket.

Stafford. You would not have him mur-
der'd as Becket was?

Bagenhall. No — murder fathers mur-
der; but I say

There is no man — there was one woman
with us —

It was a sin to love her married, dead

I cannot choose but love her.

Stafford. Lady Jane?

Crowd (going off). God save their
Graces!

Stafford. Did you see her die?

Bagenhall. No, no; her innocent blood
had blinded me. ²⁰⁰

You call me too black-blooded — true
enough,

Her dark, dead blood is in my heart with
mine.

If ever I cry out against the Pope

Her dark, dead blood that ever moves with
mine

Will stir the living tongue and make the
cry.

Stafford. Yet doubtless you can tell me
how she died?

Bagenhall. Seventeen — and knew eight
languages — in music

Peerless — her needle perfect, and her
learning

Beyond the churchmen; yet so meek, so
modest,

So wife-like humhle to the trivial boy ²¹⁰
Mismatch'd with her for policy! I have
heard

She would not take a last farewell of him;
She fear'd it might unman him for his end.

She could not be unmann'd — no, nor out-
woman'd —

Seventeen — a rose of grace!

Girl never breathed to rival such a rose;

Rose never blew that equal'd such a bud.

Stafford. Pray you go on.

Bagenhall. She came upon the scaffold,
And said she was condemn'd to die for
treason; ²¹⁹

She had but follow'd the device of those
Her nearest kin; she thought they knew
the laws.

But for herself, she knew but little law,
And nothing of the titles to the crown;
She had no desire for that, and wrung her
hands,
And trusted God would save her thro' the
blood
Of Jesus Christ alone.

Stafford. Pray you go on.

Bagenhall. Then knelt and said the
Miserere Mei —

But all in English, mark you; rose again,
And, when the headsman pray'd to be for-
given,

Said, 'You will give me my true crown at
last,

But do it quickly;' then all wept but she,
Who changed not color when she saw the
block,

But ask'd him, childlike, 'Will you take it
off

Before I lay me down?' 'No, madam,'
he said,

Gasping; and when her innocent eyes were
bound,

She, with her poor blind hands feeling —
'Where is it?

Where is it?' — You must fancy that
which follow'd,

If you have heart to do it!

Crowd (in the distance). God save their
Graces!

Stafford. Their Graces, our disgraces!
God confound them!

Why, she's grown bloodier! when I last
was here,

This was against her conscience — would
be murder!

Bagenhall. The 'Thou shalt do no mur-
der,' which God's haud

Wrote on her conscience, Mary rubb'd out
pale —

She could not make it white — and over
that,

Traced in the blackest text of hell —
'Thou shalt!'

And sign'd it — Mary!

Stafford. Philip and the Pope
Must have sign'd too. I hear this legate's
coming

To bring us absolution from the Pope.

The Lords and Commons will bow down
before him —

You are of the house? what will you do,
Sir Ralph?

Bagenhall. And why should I be bolder
than the rest,
Or honestier than all?

Stafford. But, sir, if I —

And over-sea they say this State of yours
Hath no more mortise than a tower of
cards;

And that a puff would do it — then if I
And others made that move I touched
upon,

Back'd by the power of France, and land-
ing here,

Came with a sudden splendor, shout, and
show,

And dazzled men and deafen'd by some
bright

Loud venture, and the people so unquiet —
And I the race of murder'd Bucking-
ham —

Not for myself, but for the kingdom —
Sir,

I trust that you would fight along with us.

Bagenhall. No; you would fling your
lives into the gulf.

Stafford. But if this Philip, as he's like
to do,

Left Mary a wife-widow here alone,

Set up a viceroy, sent his myriads hither
To seize upon the forts and fleet, and make
us

A Spanish province; would you not fight
then?

Bagenhall. I think I should fight then.

Stafford. I am sure of it.
Hist! there's the face coming on here of
one

Who knows me. I must leave you. Fare
you well,

You'll hear of me again.

Bagenhall. Upon the scaffold.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

ROOM IN WHITEHALL PALACE

MARY. *Enter* PHILIP and CARDINAL
POLE.

Pole. Ave Maria, gratia plena, bene-
dicta tu in mulieribus!

Mary. Loyal and royal cousin, humblest
thanks.

Had you a pleasant voyage up the river?

Pole. We had your royal barge, and that same chair,
Or rather throne of purple, on the deck.
Our silver cross sparkled before the prow,
The ripples twinkled at their diamond-dance,
The boats that follow'd were as glowing-gay
As regal gardens, and your flocks of swans
As fair and white as angels; and your shores
Wore in mine eyes the green of Paradise.¹⁰
My foreign friends, who dream'd us blanketed
In ever-closing fog, were much amazed
To find as fair a sun as might have flash'd
Upon their lake of Garda fire the Thames;
Our voyage by sea was all but miracle;
And here the river flowing from the sea,
Not toward it — for they thought not of our tides —
Seem'd as a happy miracle to make glide —
In quiet — home your banish'd country-man.²⁰
Mary. We heard that you were sick in Flanders, cousin.
Pole. A dizziness.
Mary. And how came you round again?
Pole. The scarlet thread of Rahab saved her life;
And mine, a little letting of the blood.
Mary. Well? now?
Pole. Ay, cousin, as the heathen giant
Had but to touch the ground, his force return'd —
Thus, after twenty years of banishment,
Feeling my native land beneath my foot,
I said thereto: 'Ah, native land of mine,
Thou art much beholden to this foot of mine,³⁰
That hastes with full commission from the Pope
To absolve thee from thy guilt of heresy.
Thou hast disgraced me and attainted me,
And mark'd me even as Cain, and I return
As Peter, but to bless thee; make me well.'
Methinks the good land heard me, for to-day
My heart beats twenty, when I see you, cousin.
Ah, gentle cousin, since your Herod's death,
How oft hath Peter knock'd at Mary's gate!
And Mary would have risen and let him in,⁴⁰

But, Mary, there were those within the house
Who would not have it.
Mary. True, good cousin Pole;
And there were also those without the house
Who would not have it.
Pole. I believe so, cousin.
State-policy and church-policy are conjoint,
But Janus-faces looking diverse ways.
I fear the Emperor much misvalued me.
But all is well; 't was even the will of God,
Who, waiting till the time had ripen'd,
now
Makes me His mouth of holy greeting.
'Hail,⁵⁰
Daughter of God, and saver of the faith.
Sit benedictus fructus ventris tui!'
Mary. Ah, heaven!
Pole. Unwell, your Grace?
Mary. No, cousin, happy —
Happy to see you; never yet so happy
Since I was crown'd.
Pole. Sweet cousin, you forget
That long low minster where you gave
your hand
To this great Catholic King.
Philip. Well said, Lord Legate.
Mary. Nay, not well said; I thought of
you, my liege,
Even as I spoke.
Philip. Ay, madam; my Lord Paget
Waits to present our Council to the leg-
gate.⁶⁰
Sit down here, all; madam, between us
you.
Pole. Lo, now you are enclosed with
boards of cedar,
Our little sister of the Song of Songs!
You are doubly fenced and shielded sitting
here
Between the two most high-set thrones on
earth,
The Emperor's highness happily symbol'd
by
The King your husband, the Pope's holi-
ness
By mine own self.
Mary. True, cousin, I am happy.
When will you that we summon both our
houses
To take this absolution from your lips,⁷⁰
And be re-gather'd to the Papal fold?
Pole. In Britain's calendar the brightest
day

Beheld our rough forefathers break their
 gods,
 And clasp the faith in Christ; but after
 that
 Might not Saint Andrew's be her happiest
 day ?

Mary. Then these shall meet upon Saint
 Andrew's Day.

Enter PAGET, who presents the Council.
Dumb show.

Pole. I am an old man wearied with my
 journey,
 Even with my joy. Permit me to with-
 draw.

To Lambeth ?

Philip. Ay, Lambeth has ousted Cran-
 mer.

It was not meet the heretic swine should
 live 80

In Lambeth.

Mary. There or anywhere, or at all.
Philip. We have had it swept and gar-
 nish'd after him.

Pole. Not for the seven devils to enter
 in ?

Philip. No, for we trust they parted in
 the swine.

Pole. True, and I am the Angel of the
 Pope.

Farewell, your Graces.

Philip. Nay, not here — to me;
 I will go with you to the waterside.

Pole. Not by me Charon to the counter
 side ?

Philip. No, my Lord Legate, the Lord
 Chancellor goes.

Pole. And unto no dead world, but
 Lambeth Palace, 90

Henceforth a centre of the living faith.

[*Exeunt Philip, Pole, Paget, etc.*

Manet MARY.

Mary. He hath awaked! he hath
 awaked!

He stirs within the darkness!
 O Philip, husband! now thy love to mine
 Will cling more close, and those bleak
 manners thaw,
 That make me shamed and tongue-tied in
 my love.

The second Prince of Peace —
 The great unborn defender of the Faith,
 Who will avenge me of mine enemies —
 He comes, and my star rises. 100

The stormy Wyatts and Northumberlands,
 The proud ambitious of Elizabeth,
 And all her fieriest partisans — are pale
 Before my star!

The light of this new learning wanes and
 dies;

The ghosts of Luther and Zuinglius fade
 Into the deathless hell which is their doom
 Before my star!

His sceptre shall go forth from Ind to Ind!
 His sword shall hew the heretic peoples
 down! 110

His faith shall clothe the world that will be
 his,

Like universal air and sunshine! Open,
 Ye everlasting gates! The King is here! —
 My star, my son!

Enter PHILIP, DUKE OF ALVA, etc.

O, Philip, come with me!

Good news have I to tell you, news to
 make

Both of us happy — ay, the kingdom too.

Nay, come with me — one moment!

Philip (to Alva). More than that;
 There was one here of late — William the
 Silent

They call him — he is free enough in talk,
 But tells me nothing. You will be, we
 trust, 120

Sometime the viceroy of those provinces —
 He must deserve his surname better.

Alva. Ay, sir;

Iuherit the Great Silence.

Philip. True; the provinces
 Are hard to rule and must be hardly ruled;
 Most fruitful, yet, indeed, an empty rind,
 All hollow'd out with stinging heresies;
 And for their heresies, Alva, they will
 fight;

You must break them or they break you.

Alva (proudly). The first.

Philip. Good!

Well, Madam, this new happiness of
 mine ? [*Exeunt.*

Enter THREE PAGES.

First Page. News, mates! a miracle, a
 miracle! news! 131

The bells must ring; Te Deums must be
 sung;

The Queen hath felt the motion of her
 babe!

Second Page. Ay; but see here!

First Page. See what?

Second Page. This paper, Dickon. I found it fluttering at the palace gates: —
‘The Queen of England is delivered of a dead dog!’

Third Page. These are the things that madden her. Fie upon it!

First Page. Ay; but I hear she hath a dropsy, lad,
Or a high-dropsy, as the doctors call it.

Third Page. Fie on her dropsy, so she have a dropsy! ¹⁴⁰

I know that she was ever sweet to me.

First Page. For thou and thine are Roman to the core.

Third Page. So thou and thine must be. Take heed!

First Page. Not I;

And whether this flash of news be false or true,

So the wine run, and there be revelry,
Content am I. Let all the steeples clash,
Till the sun dance, as upon Easter Day.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III

GREAT HALL IN WHITEHALL

At the far end a dais. On this three chairs, two under one canopy for MARY and PHILIP, another on the right of these for POLE. Under the dais on POLE's side, ranged along the wall, sit all the Spiritual Peers, and along the wall opposite all the Temporal. The Commons on cross benches in front, a line of approach to the dais between them. In the foreground, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and other MEMBERS of the COMMONS.

First Member. Saint Andrew's Day; sit close, sit close, we are friends.

Is reconciled the word? the Pope again?
It must be thus; and yet, cocksbody! how strange

That Gardiner, once so one with all of us
Against this foreign marriage, should have yielded

So utterly! — strange! but stranger still that he,

So fierce against the headship of the Pope,
Should play the second actor in this pageant

That brings him in; such a chameleon he!

Second Member. This Gardiner turn'd his coat in Henry's time; ¹⁰

The serpent that hath slough'd will slough again.

Third Member. Tut, then we all are serpents.

Second Member. Speak for yourself.

Third Member. Ay, and for Gardiner! being English citizen,

How should he bear a bridegroom out of Spain?

The Queen would have him! being English churchman,

How should he bear the headship of the Pope?

The Queen would have it! Statesmen that are wise

Shape a necessity, as a sculptor clay,
To their own model.

Second Member. Statesmen that are wise Take truth herself for model. What say you? [*To Sir Ralph Bagenhall.*]

Bagenhall. We talk and talk.

First Member. Ay, and what use to talk? Philip's no sudden alien — the Queen's husband, ²²

He's here, and King, or will be — yet, cocksbody!

So hated here! I watch'd a hive of late;

My seven-years' friend was with me, my young boy;

Out crept a wasp, with half the swarm behind.

‘Philip!’ says he. I had to cuff the rogue For infant treason.

Third Member. But they say that bees, If any creeping life invade their hive
Too gross to be thrust out, will build him round, ³⁰

And bind him in from harming of their combs.

And Philip by these articles is bound From stirring hand or foot to wrong the realm.

Second Member. By bands of beeswax, like your creeping thing;
But your wise bees had stung him first to death.

Third Member. Hush, hush!
You wrong the Chancellor. The clauses added

To that same treaty which the Emperor sent us

Were mainly Gardiner's: that no foreigner Hold office in the household, fleet, forts, army; ⁴⁰

That if the Queen should die without a child,
The bond between the kingdoms be dissolved;

That Philip should not mix us any way
With his French wars —
Second Member. Ay, ay, but what security,

Good sir, for this, if Philip —
Third Member. Peace — the Queen,
Philip, and Pole. [*All rise, and stand.*]

Enter MARY, PHILIP, and POLE.

[*Gardiner conducts them to the three chairs of state. Philip sits on the Queen's left, Pole on her right.*]

Gardiner. Our short-lived sun, before his winter plunge,
Laughs at the last red leaf, and Andrew's Day.

Mary. Should not this day be held in after years 49
More solemn than of old ?

Philip. Madam, my wish
Echoes your Majesty's.
Pole. It shall be so.

Gardiner. Mine echoes both your Graces';
(*aside*) but the Pope —
Can we not have the Catholic Church as well

Without as with the Italian ? if we cannot,
Why, then the Pope.

My lords of the upper house,
And ye, my masters, of the lower house,
Do ye stand fast by that which ye resolved ?

Voices. We do.
Gardiner. And be you all one mind to supplicate

The legate here for pardon, and acknowledge 60

The primacy of the Pope ?
Voices. We are all one mind.

Gardiner. Then must I play the vassal to this Pole. [*Aside.*]

[*He draws a paper from under his robes and presents it to the King and Queen, who look through it and return it to him; then ascends a tribune, and reads.*]

We, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal,
And Commons here in Parliament assembled,

Presenting the whole body of this realm
Of England, and dominions of the same,

Do make most humble suit unto your Majesties,

In our own name and that of all the State,
That by your gracious means and intercession

Our supplication be exhibited 70
To the Lord Cardinal Pole, sent here as legate

From our most Holy Father Julius, Pope,
And from the Apostolic See of Rome;
And do declare our penitence and grief
For our long schism and disobedience,
Either in making laws and ordinances
Against the Holy Father's primacy,
Or else by doing or by speaking aught
Which might impugn or prejudice the same;

By this our supplication promising, 80
As well for our own selves as all the realm,

That now we be and ever shall be quick,
Under and with your Majesties' authorities,
To do to the utmost all that in us lies

Towards the abrogation and repeal
Of all such laws and ordinances made;
Whereon we humbly pray your Majesties,

As persons undefiled with our offence,
So to set forth this humble suit of ours
That we the rather by your intercession 90

May from the Apostolic See obtain,
Thro' this most reverend father, absolution,

And full release from danger of all censures

Of Holy Church that we be fallen into,
So that we may, as children penitent,
Be once again received into the bosom

And unity of Universal Church;
And that this noble realm thro' after years
May in this unity and obedience

Unto the holy see and reigning Pope 100
Serve God and both your Majesties.

Voices. Amen. [*All sit.*]

[*He again presents the petition to the King and Queen, who hand it reverentially to Pole.*]

Pole (sitting). This is the loveliest day
that ever smiled

On England. All her breath should, incense-like,

Rise to the heavens in grateful praise of Him

Who now recalls her to His ancient fold.
Lo! once again God to this realm hath given

A token of His more especial grace;
 For as this people were the first of all
 The islands call'd into the dawning church
 Out of the dead, deep night of heathen-
 dom, 110
 So now are these the first whom God hath
 given
 Grace to repent and sorrow for their
 schism;
 And if your penitence be not mockery,
 O, how the blessed angels who rejoice
 Over one saved do triumph at this hour
 In the re-born salvation of a land
 So noble !

[A pause.
 For ourselves we do protest
 That our commission is to heal, not harm;
 We come not to condemn, but reconcile;
 We come not to compel, but call again; 120
 We come not to destroy, but edify;
 Nor yet to question things already done;
 These are forgiven — matters of the past —
 And range with jetsam and with offal
 thrown
 Into the blind sea of forgetfulness.

[A pause.
 Ye have reversed the attainder laid on
 us
 By him who sack'd the house of God; and
 we,
 Amplier than any field on our poor earth
 Can render thanks in fruit for being sown,
 Do here and now repay you sixty-fold, 130
 A hundred, yea, a thousand thousand-fold,
 With heaven for earth.

[Rising and stretching forth his hands.
 All kneel but Sir Ralph Bagenhall,
 who rises and remains standing.

The Lord who hath redeem'd us
 With His own blood, and wash'd us from
 our sins,
 To purchase for Himself a stainless bride;
 He, whom the Father hath appointed Head
 Of all His church, He by His mercy ab-
 solve you. [A pause.
 And we by that authority Apostolic
 Given unto us, his legate, by the Pope,
 Our Lord and Holy Father, Julius, 139
 God's Vicar and Viceregent upon earth,
 Do here absolve you and deliver you
 And every one of you, and all the realm
 And its dominions from all heresy,
 All schism, and from all and every cen-
 sure,
 Judgment, and pain accruing thereupon;

And also we restore you to the hosom
 And unity of Universal Church.
[Turning to Gardiner.
 Our letters of commission will declare this
 plainlier.

[Queen heard sobbing. Cries of Amen!
 Amen! Some of the Members em-
 brace one another. All but Sir Ralph
 Bagenhall pass out into the neighbor-
 ing chapel, whence is heard the Te
 Deum.

Bagenhall. We strove against the papacy
 from the first,
 In William's time, in our first Edward's
 time, 150
 And in my master Henry's time; but now,
 The unity of Universal Church,
 Mary would have it; and this Gardiner
 follows.
 The unity of Universal Hell,
 Philip would have it; and this Gardiner
 follows!

A Parliament of imitative apes!
 Sheep at the gap which Gardiner takes,
 who not
 Believes the Pope, nor any of them he-
 lieve — 158
 These spaniel-Spaniard English of the time,
 Who rub their fawning noses in the dust,
 For that is Philip's gold-dust, and adore
 This Vicar of their Vicar. Would I had
 been
 Born Spaniard! I, had held my head up
 then.

I am ashamed that I am Bagenhall,
 English.

Enter OFFICER.

Officer. Sir Ralph Bagenhall!
 Bagenhall. What of that?
 Officer. You were the one sole man in
 either house
 Who stood upright when both the houses
 fell.
 Bagenhall. The houses fell!
 Officer. I mean the houses knelt
 Before the legate.
 Bagenhall. Do not scrimp your phrase,
 But stretch it wider; say when England
 fell. 170
 Officer. I say you were the one sole man
 who stood.
 Bagenhall. I am the one sole man in
 either house,
 Perchance in England, loves her like a son.

Officer. Well, you one man, because you stood upright,
Her Grace the Queen commands you to the Tower.

Bagenhall. As traitor, or as heretic, or for what?

Officer. If any man in any way would be The one man, he shall be so to his cost.

Bagenhall. What! will she have my head?

Officer. A round fine likelier.
Your pardon. [*Calling to Attendant.*

By the river to the Tower.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV

WHITEHALL. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, GARDINER, POLE, PAGET, BONNER,
etc.

Mary. The King and I, my lords, now that all traitors

Against our royal state have lost the heads
Wherewith they plotted in their treasonous malice,

Have talk'd together, and are well agreed
That those old statutes touching Lollardism

To bring the heretic to the stake, should be

No longer a dead letter, but re-quickened.

One of the Council. Why, what hath fluster'd Gardiner? how he rubs

His forelock!

Paget. I have changed a word with him
In coming, and may change a word again.

Gardiner. Madam, your Highness is our sun, the King

And you together our two suns in one; 11
And so the beams of both may shine upon us,

The faith that seem'd to droop will feel your light,

Lift head, and flourish; yet not light alone,
There must be heat — there must be heat enough

To scorch and wither heresy to the root.
For what saith Christ? 'Compel them to come in.'

And what saith Paul? 'I would they were cut off

That trouble you.' Let the dead letter live!

20

Trace it in fire, that all the louts to whom
Their A B C is darkness, clowns and grooms
May read it! so you quash rebellion too,
For heretic and traitor are all one;

Two vipers of one breed — an amphibæna,

Each end a sting. Let the dead letter burn!

Paget. Yet there be some disloyal Catholics,

And many heretics loyal; heretic throats
Cried no God-bless-her to the Lady Jane,

But shouted in Queen Mary. So there be 30
Some traitor-heretic, there is axe and cord.

To take the lives of others that are loyal,
And by the churchman's pitiless doom of fire,

Were but a thankless policy in this crown,
Ay, and against itself; for there are many.

Mary. If we could burn out heresy, my Lord Paget,

We reckon not tho' we lost this crown of England —

Ay! tho' it were ten Englands!

Gardiner. Right, your Grace.
Paget, you are all for this poor life of ours,
And care but little for the life to be. 40

Paget. I have some time, for curiosity, my lord,

Watch'd children playing at their life to be,
And cruel at it, killing helpless flies;

Such is our time — all times for aught I know.

Gardiner. We kill the heretics that sting the soul —

They, with right reason, flies that prick the flesh.

Paget. They had not reach'd right reason, little children!

They kill'd but for their pleasure and the power

They felt in killing.

Gardiner. A spice of Satan, ha!
Why, good! what then? granted! — we are fallen creatures;

Look to your Bible, Paget! we are fallen. 50

Paget. I am but of the laity, my lord bishop,

And may not read your Bible, yet I found
One day a wholesome scripture, 'Little children,

Love one another.'

Gardiner. Did you find a scripture,
'I come not to bring peace but a sword'?

The sword

Is in her Grace's hand to smite with.

Paget,

You stand up here to fight for heresy,
You are more than guess'd at as a heretic,
And on the steep-up track of the true
faith 60

Your lapses are far seen.

Paget. The faultless Gardiner!

Mary. You brawl beyond the question;
speak, lord legate!

Pole. Indeed, I cannot follow with your
Grace;

Rather would say — the shepherd doth not
kill

The sheep that wander from his flock, but
sends

His careful dog to bring them to the fold.

Look to the Netherlands, wherein have
been

Such holocausts of heresy! to what end?

For yet the faith is not established there.

Gardiner. The end 's not come.

Pole. No — nor this way will come,

Seeing there lie two ways to every end, 71

A better and a worse — the worse is here

To persecute, because to persecute

Makes a faith hated, and is furthermore

No perfect witness of a perfect faith

In him who persecutes. When men are
tost

On tides of strange opinion, and not sure

Of their own selves, they are wroth with
their own selves,

And thence with others; then, who lights
the faggot?

Not the full faith, no, but the lurking
doubt. 80

Old Rome, that first made martyrs in the
Church,

Trembled for her own gods, for these were
trembling —

But when did our Rome tremble?

Paget. Did she not

In Henry's time and Edward's?

Pole. What, my lord!

The Church on Peter's rock? never! I
have seen

A pine in Italy that cast its shadow

Athwart a cataract; firm stood the pine —
The cataract shook the shadow. To my
mind,

The cataract typed the headlong plunge
and fall

Of heresy to the pit; the pine was Rome. 90

You see, my lords,

It was the shadow of the Church that
trembled;

Your church was but the shadow of a
church,

Wanting the Papal mitre.

Gardiner (muttering). Here be tropes.

Pole. And tropes are good to clothe a
naked truth,

And make it look more seemly.

Gardiner. Tropes again!

Pole. You are hard to please. Then
without tropes, my lord,

An overmuch severeness, I repeat,

When faith is wavering makes the waverer
pass 99

Into more settled hatred of the doctrines

Of those who rule, which hatred by and by
Involves the ruler — thus there springs to
light

That Centaur of a monstrous Common-
weal,

The traitor-heretic; — then tho' some may
quail,

Yet others are that dare the stake and fire,
And their strong torment bravely borne

begets

An admiration and an indignation,

And hot desire to imitate; so the plague

Of schism spreads. Were there but three
or four

Of these misleaders, yet I would not say

Burn! and we cannot burn whole towns;
they are many, 111

As my Lord Paget says.

Gardiner. Yet, my Lord Cardinal —

Pole. I am your legate; please you let
me finish.

Methinks that under our Queen's regimen

We might go softlier than with crimson
rowel

And streaming lash. When Herod-Henry
first

Began to batter at your English Church,

This was the cause, and hence the judg-
ment on her.

She seethed with such adulteries, and the
lives

Of many among your churchmen were so
foul 120

That heaven wept and earth blush'd. I
would advise

That we should thoroughly cleanse the
Church within

Before these bitter statutes be re-quicken'd.

So after that when she once more is seen

White as the light, the spotless bride of Christ,

Like Christ himself on Tabor, possibly
The Lutheran may be won to her again;
Till when, my lords, I counsel tolerance.

Gardiner. What, if a mad dog bit your hand, my lord, ¹²⁹

Would you not chop the bitten finger off,
Lest your whole body should madden with the poison?

I would not, were I Queen, tolerate the heretic,

No, not an hour. The ruler of a land
Is bounden by his power and place to see
His people be not poison'd. Tolerate them!
Why? do they tolerate you? Nay, many
of them

Would burn — have burnt each other; call
they not

The one true faith a loathsome idol-worship?

Beware, lord legate, of a heavier crime
Than heresy is itself; beware, I say, ¹⁴⁰
Lest men accuse you of indifference

To all faiths, all religion; for you know
Right well that you yourself have been
supposed

Tainted with Lutheranism in Italy.

Pole (angered). But you, my lord, beyond all supposition,

In clear and open day were congruent
With that vile Cranmer in the accursed lie
Of good Queen Catharine's divorce — the
spring

Of all those evils that have flow'd upon
us;

For you yourself have truckled to the
tyrant, ¹⁵⁰

And done your best to bastardize our
Queen,

For which God's righteous judgment fell
upon you

In your five years of imprisonment, my
lord,

Under young Edward. Who so bolster'd
up

The gross King's headship of the Church,
or more

Denied the Holy Father?

Gardiner. Ha! what! eh?

But you, my lord, a polish'd gentleman,
A bookman, flying from the heat and tussle,
You lived among your vines and oranges,
In your soft Italy yonder! You were sent
for, ¹⁶⁰

You were appeal'd to, but you still pre-
ferr'd

Your learned leisure. As for what I did,
I suffer'd and repented. You, lord le-
gate

And cardinal-deacon, have not now to learn
That even Saint Peter in his time of fear
Denied his Master, ay, and thrice, my lord
Pole. But not for five-and-twenty years,
my lord.

Gardiner. Ha! good! it seems then I
was summon'd hither

But to be mock'd and baited. Speak,
friend Bonner,

And tell this learned legate he lacks zeal.
The Church's evil is not as the King's, ¹⁷¹
Cannot he heal'd by stroking. The mad
bite

Must have the cautery — tell him — and
at once.

What wouldst thou do hadst thou his
power, thou

That layest so long in heretic bonds with
me?

Wouldst thou not burn and blast them root
and branch?

Bonner. Ay, after you, my lord.

Gardiner. Nay, God's passion, before
me! speak!

Bonner. I am on fire until I see them
flame.

Gardiner. Ay, the psalm-singing weav-
ers, cobblers, scum — ¹⁸⁰

But this most noble prince Plantagenet,
Our good Queen's cousin — dallying over-
seas

Even when his brother's, nay, his noble
mother's,

Head fell —

Pole. Peace, madman!

Thou stirrest up a grief thou canst not
fathom.

Thou Christian bishop, thou Lord Chancel-
lor

Of England! no more rein upon thine
anger

Than any child! Thou mak'st me much
ashamed

That I was for a moment wroth at thee.

Mary. I come for counsel and ye give
me feuds, ¹⁹⁰

Like dogs that, set to watch their master's
gate,

Fall, when the thief is even within the
walls,

To worrying one another. My Lord Chancellor,
 You have an old trick of offending us;
 And but that you are art and part with us
 In purging heresy, well we might, for this
 Your violence and much roughness to the
 legate,
 Have shut you from our counsels. Cousin
 Pole,
 You are fresh from brighter lands. Retire
 with me.
 His Highness and myself — so you allow
 us —²⁰⁰
 Will let you learn in peace and privacy
 What power this cooler sun of England
 hath
 In breeding godless vermin. And pray
 Heaven
 That you may see according to our sight!
 Come, cousin.

[*Exeunt Queen and Pole, etc.*]

Gardiner. Pole has the Plantagenet face,
 But not the force made them our mightiest
 kings.

Fine eyes — but melancholy, irresolute —
 A fine beard, Bonner, a very full fine beard.
 But a weak mouth, an indeterminate —
 ha ?²⁰⁹

Bonner. Well, a weak mouth, perchance.

Gardiner. And not like thine
 To gorge a heretic whole, roasted or raw.

Bonner. I'd do my best, my Lord; but
 yet the legate

Is here as Pope and Master of the Church,
 And if he go not with you —

Gardiner. Tut, Master Bishop,
 Our bashful legate, saw'st not how he
 flush'd ?

Touch him upon his old heretical talk,
 He'll burn a diocese to prove his ortho-
 doxy.

And let him call me truckler. In those
 times,

Thou knowest we had to dodge, or duck,
 or die;²¹⁹

I kept my head for use of Holy Church;
 And see you, we shall have to dodge again,
 And let the Pope trample our rights, and
 plunge

His foreign fist into our island Church
 To plump the leaner pouch of Italy.

For a time, for a time.

Why ? that these statutes may be put in
 force,

And that his fan may thoroughly purge his
 floor.

Bonner. So then you hold the Pope —

Gardiner. I hold the Pope !

What do I hold him ? what do I hold the
 Pope ?

Come, come, the morsel stuck — this Car-
 dinal's fault —²³⁰

I have gulped it down. I am wholly for the
 Pope,

Utterly and altogether for the Pope,
 The Eternal Peter of the changeless chair,
 Crown'd slave of slaves, and mitred king
 of kings,

God upon earth ! what more ? what would
 you have ?

Hence, let's be gone.

Enter USHER.

Usher. Well that you be not gone,
 My lord. The Queen, most wroth at first
 with you,

Is now content to grant you full forgive-
 ness,

So that you crave full pardon of the le-
 gate.²³⁹

I am sent to fetch you.

Gardiner. Doth Pole yield, sir, ha ?
 Did you hear 'em ? were you by ?

Usher. I cannot tell you,
 His bearing is so courtly-delicate;

And yet methinks he falters; their two
 Graces

Do so dear-cousin and royal-cousin him,
 So press on him the duty which as legate

He owes himself, and with such royal
 smiles —

Gardiner. Smiles that burn men. Bon-
 ner, it will be carried.

He falters, ha ? 'fore God, we change and
 change;

Men now are bow'd and old, the doctors
 tell you,

At three-score years; then if we change at
 all²⁵⁰

We needs must do it quickly; it is an age
 Of brief life, and brief purpose, and brief
 patience,

As I have shown to-day. I am sorry for it
 If Pole be like to turn. Our old friend

Cranmer,
 Your more especial love, hath turn'd so
 often

He knows not where he stands, which, if
 this pass,

We two shall have to teach him; let 'em
look to it,
Cranmer and Hooper, Ridley and Latimer,
Rogers and Ferrar, for their time is come,
Their hour is hard at hand, their 'dies
Irae,'²⁶⁰
Their 'dies Illa,' which will test their sect.
I feel it but a duty — you will find in it
Pleasure as well as duty, worthy Bonner, —
To test their sect. Sir, I attend the Queen
To crave most humble pardon — of her
most
Royal, Infallible, Papal Legate-cousin.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V

WOODSTOCK

ELIZABETH, LADY IN WAITING.

Elizabeth. So they have sent poor Cour-
tenay over-sea.

Lady. And banish'd us to Woodstock,
and the fields.

The colors of our Queen are green and
white;

These fields are only green, they make me
gape.

Elizabeth. There's white-thorn, girl.

Lady. Ay, for an hour in May.

But court is always May, buds out in
masques,

Breaks into feather'd merriments, and
flowers

In silken pageants. Why do they keep us
here?

Why still suspect your Grace?

Elizabeth. Hard upon both.

[*Writes on the window with a diamond.*]

Much suspected, of me¹⁰
Nothing proven can be.

Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner.

Lady. What hath your Highness writ-
ten?

Elizabeth. A true rhyme.

Lady. Cut with a diamond; so to last
like truth.

Elizabeth. Ay, if truth last.

Lady. But truth, they say, will out;
So it must last. It is not like a word,
That comes and goes in uttering.

Elizabeth. Truth, a word!

The very Truth and very Word are one.
But truth of story, which I glanced at, girl,
Is like a word that comes from olden
days,

And passes thro' the peoples; every tongue²⁰
Alters it passing, till it spells and speaks
Quite other than at first.

Lady. I do not follow.

Elizabeth. How many names, in the long
sweep of time

That so foreshortens greatness, may but
hang

On the chance mention of some fool that
once

Brake bread with us, perhaps; and my
poor chronicle

Is but of glass. Sir Henry Bedingfield

May split it for a spite.

Lady. God grant it last,
And witness to your Grace's innocence,³⁰
Till doomsday melt it!

Elizabeth. Or a second fire,
Like that which lately crackled underfoot

And in this very chamber, fuse the glass,
And char us back again into the dust

We spring from. Never peacock against
rain

Scream'd as you did for water.

Lady. And I got it.
I woke Sir Henry — and he's true to
you —

I read his honest horror in his eyes.

Elizabeth. Or true to you?

Lady. Sir Henry Bedingfield!

I will have no man true to me, your Grace,
But one that pares his nails; to me? the
clown!

Elizabeth. Out, girl! you wrong a noble
gentleman.

Lady. For, like his cloak, his manners
want the nap

And gloss of court; but of this fire he says,
Nay swears, it was no wicked wilfulness,
Only a natural chance.

Elizabeth. A chance — perchance
One of those wicked wilfuls that men make,
Nor shame to call it nature. Nay, I know

They hunt my blood. Save for my daily
range

Among the pleasant fields of Holy Writ⁵⁰
I might despair. But there hath some one
come;

The house is all in movement. Hence, and
see.

[*Exit Lady.*]

MILKMAID (*singing without*).

Shame upon you, Robin,
Shame upon you now!
Kiss me would you? with my hands
Milking the cow?
Daisies grow again,
Kinecups blow again,
And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow.

Robin came behind me, 60
Kiss'd me well, I vow.
Cuff him could I? with my hands
Milking the cow?
Swallows fly again,
Cnekoos cry again,
And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow.

Come, Robin, Robin,
Come and kiss me now;
Help it can I? with my hands
Milking the cow? 70
Ringdoves coo again,
All things woo again.
Come behind and kiss me milking the cow!

Elizabeth. Right honest and red-cheek'd;
Robin was violent,
And she was crafty — a sweet violence,
And a sweet craft. I would I were a milk-
maid,
To sing, love, marry, churn, brew, bake,
and die,
Then have my simple headstone by the
church,
And all things lived and ended honestly.
I could not if I would. I am Harry's
daughter. 80
Gardiner would have my head. They are
not sweet,
The violence and the craft that do divide
The world of nature; what is weak must
lie.
The lion needs but roar to guard his young;
The lapwing lies, says 'here' when they
are there.
Threaten the child, 'I'll scourge you if
you did it;'
What weapon hath the child, save his soft
tongue,
To say 'I did not'? and my rod's the
block.
I never lay my head upon the pillow
But that I think, 'Wilt thou lie there to-
morrow?' 90
How oft the falling axe, that never fell,

Hath shock'd me back into the daylight
truth
That it may fall to-day! Those damp,
black, dead
Nights in the Tower; dead — with the fear
of death
Too dead even for a death-watch! Toll of
a bell,
Stroke of a clock, the scurrying of a rat
Afrighted me, and then delighted me,
For there was life — And there was life in
death —
The little murder'd princes, in a pale light,
Rose hand in hand, and whisper'd, 'Come
away!' 100
The civil wars are gone for evermore;
Thou last of all the Tudors, come away!
With us is peace!' The last? It was a
dream;
I must not dream, not wink, but watch.
She has gone,
Maid Marian to her Robin — by and by
Both happy! a fox may file a hen by
night,
And make a morning ontery in the yard;
But there's no Renard here to 'catch her
tripping.'
Catch me who can; yet, sometime I have
wish'd
That I were caught, and kill'd away at
once 110
Out of the flutter. The gray rogue, Gar-
diner,
Went on his knees, and pray'd me to con-
fess
In Wyatt's business, and to cast myself
Upon the good Queen's mercy; ay, when,
my lord?
God save the Queen! My jailor —

Enter SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

Bedingfield. One, whose bolts,
That jail you from free life, bar you from
death.
There haunt some Papist ruffians hereabout
Would murder you.
Elizabeth. I thank you heartily, sir,
But I am royal, tho' your prisoner,
And God hath blest or cursed me with a
nose — 120
Your hoots are from the horses.
Bedingfield. Ay, my lady.
When next there comes a missive from the
Queen
It shall be all my study for one hour

To rose and lavender my horsiness,
Before I dare to glance upon your Grace.

Elizabeth. A missive from the Queen!
last time she wrote,
I had like to have lost my life. It takes
my breath —

O God, sir, do you look upon your boots,
Are you so small a man? Help me! what
think you, 129
Is it life or death?

Bedingfield. I thought not on my boots;
The devil take all boots were ever made
Since man went barefoot! See, I lay it
here,

For I will come no nearer to your Grace;
[*Laying down the letter.*]

And, whether it brings you bitter news or
sweet,
And God hath given your Grace a nose or
not,

I'll help you, if I may
Elizabeth. Your pardon, then;

It is the heat and narrowness of the cage
That makes the captive testy; with free
wing

The world were all one Araby. Leave me
now, 139

Will you, companion to myself, sir?
Bedingfield. Will I?

With most exceeding willingness, I will;
You know I never come till I be call'd.

[*Exit.*]
Elizabeth. It lies there folded; is there
venom in it?

A snake — and if I touch it, it may sting.
Come, come, the worst!

Best wisdom is to know the worst at once.
[*Reads.*]

'It is the King's wish that you should
wed Prince Philibert of Savoy. You are
to come to Court on the instant; and think
of this in your coming.' 150
'MARY THE QUEEN.'

Think! I have many thoughts;
I think there may be bird-lime here for me;
I think they fain would have me from the
realm;

I think the Queen may never bear a child;
I think that I may be some time the Queen,
Then, Queen indeed; no foreign prince or
priest

Should fill my throne, myself upon the
steps.

I think I will not marry any one,

Specially not this landless Philibert 160
Of Savoy; but, if Philip menace me,
I think that I will play with Philibert, —
As once the Holy Father did with mine,
Before my father married my good mo-
ther, —

For fear of Spain.

Enter LADY.

Lady. O Lord! your Grace, your Grace,
I feel so happy. It seems that we shall fly
These bald, blank fields, and dance into
the sun

That shines on princes.

Elizabeth. Yet, a moment since,
I wish'd myself the milkmaid singing here,
To kiss and cuff among the birds and
flowers — 170

A right rough life and healthful.

Lady. But the wench
Hath her own troubles; she is weeping now;
For the wrong Robin took her at her word.
Then the cow kick'd, and all her milk was
spilt.

Your Highness such a milkmaid?

Elizabeth. I had kept
My Robins and my cows in sweeter order
Had I been such.

Lady (stily). And had your Grace a
Robin?

Elizabeth. Come, come, you are chill
here; you want the sun
That shines at court; make ready for the
journey.

Pray God, we 'scape the sunstroke! Ready
at once. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

LORD PETRE and LORD WILLIAM HOW-
ARD.

Petre. You cannot see the Queen. Re-
nard denied her
Even now to me.

Howard. Their Flemish go-between
And all-in-all. I came to thank her Majesty
For freeing my friend Bagenhall from the
Tower;

A grace to me! Mercy, that herb-of-
grace,
Flowers now but seldom.

Petre. Only now, perhaps,

Because the Queen hath been three days in
tears

For Philip's going — like the wild hedge-
rose

Of a soft winter, possible, not probable, 9
However you have proven it.

Howard. I must see her.

Enter RENARD.

Renard. My lords, you cannot see her
Majesty.

Howard. Why, then the King! for I
would have him bring it

Home to the leisure wisdom of his Queen,
Before he go, that since these statutes past,
Gardiner out-Gardiniers Gardiner in his
heat,

Bonner cannot out-Bonner his own self —
Beast! — but they play with fire as chil-
dren do,

And burn the house. I know that these
are breeding

A fierce resolve and fixt heart-hate in men
Against the King, the Queen, the Holy

Father, 20

The faith itself. Can I not see him?

Renard. Not now.

And in all this, my lord, her Majesty
Is flint of flint; you may strike fire from
her,

Not hope to melt her. I will give your
message.

[Exeunt Petre and Howard.]

Enter PHILIP (musing).

Philip. She will not have Prince Phil-
bert of Savoy,

I talk'd with her in vain — says she will
live

And die true maid — a goodly creature too.
Would she had been the Queen! yet she
must have him.

She troubles England; that she breathes in
England

Is life and lungs to every rebel birth 30
That passes out of embryo.

Simon Renard! —

This Howard, whom they fear, what was he
saying?

Renard. What your imperial father said,
my liege,

To deal with heresy gentlier. Gardiner
burns,

And Bonner burns; and it would seem this
people

Care more for our brief life in their wet
land

Than yours in happier Spain. I told my
lord

He should not vex her Highness; she would
say

These are the means God works with, that
His church 39

May flourish.

Philip. Ay, sir, but in statesmanship
To strike too soon is oft to miss the blow.

Thou knowest I bade my chaplain, Castro,
preach

Against these burnings.

Renard. And the Emperor
Approved you, and, when last he wrote,
declared

His comfort in your Grace that you were
bland

And affable to men of all estates,
In hope to charm them from their hate of
Spain.

Philip. In hope to crush all heresy uoder
Spain.

But, Renard, I am sicker staying here 49
Than any sea could make me passing hence,

Tho' I be ever deadly sick at sea;
So sick am I with biding for this child.

Is it the fashion in this clime for women
To go twelve months in hearing of a child?

The nurses yawn'd, the cradle gaped, they
led

Processions, chanted litanies, clash'd their
bells,

Shot off their lying cannon, and her priests
Have preach'd, the fools, of this fair prince
to come,

Till, by Saint James, I find myself the
fool.

Why do you lift your eyebrow at me thus?
Renard. I never saw your Highness
moved till now. 61

Philip. So weary am I of this wet land
of theirs,

And every soul of man that breathes
therein.

Renard. My liege, we must not drop the
mask before

The masquerade is over —

Philip. Have I dropt it?
I have but shown a loathing face to you,
Who knew it from the first.

Enter MARY.

Mary (aside). With Renard. Still

Parleying with Renard, all the day with
Renard, 68

And scarce a greeting all the day for me —
And goes to-morrow. [Exit Mary.]

Philip (to Renard, who advances to him).
Well, sir, is there more?

Renard (who has perceived the Queen).
May Simon Renard speak a single
word?

Philip. Ay.

Renard. And be forgiven for it?

Philip. Simon Renard

Knows me too well to speak a single word
That could not be forgiven.

Renard. Well, my liege,
Your Grace hath a most chaste and loving
wife.

Philip. Why not? The Queen of Philip
should be chaste.

Renard. Ay, but, my lord, you know
what Virgil sings,

Woman is various and most mutable.

Philip. She play the harlot! never.

Renard. No, sire, no,
Not dream'd of by the rabidest gospeller. So
There was a paper thrown into the pal-
ace,

'The King hath wearied of his barren
bride.'

She came upon it, read it, and then rent it,
With all the rage of one who hates a truth
He cannot but allow. Sire, I would have
you —

What should I say, I cannot pick my
words —

Be somewhat less — majestic to your
Queen.

Philip. Am I to change my manners,
Simon Renard,

Because these islanders are brutal beasts?
Or would you have me turn a sonneteer, 90
And warble those brief-sighted eyes of
hers?

Renard. Brief-sighted tho' they be, I
have seen them, sire,

When you perchance were trifling royally
With some fair dame of court, suddenly fill
With such fierce fire — had it been fire in-
deed

It would have burnt both speakers.

Philip. Ay, and then?

Renard. Sire, might it not be policy in
some matter

Of small importance now and then to cede
A point to her demand?

Philip. Well, I am going.

Renard. For should her love when you
are gone, my liege, 100
Witness these papers, there will not be
wanting

Those that will urge her injury — should
her love —

And I have known such women more than
one —

Veer to the counterpoint, and jealousy
Hath in it an alchemic force to fuse
Almost into one metal love and hate, —
And she impress her wrongs upon her
Council,

And these again upon her Parliament —
We are not loved here, and would be then
perhaps

Not so well holpen in our wars with
France, 110

As else we might be — here she comes.

Enter MARY.

Mary. O Philip!
Nay, must you go indeed?

Philip. Madam, I must.

Mary. The parting of a husband and a
wife

Is like the cleaving of a heart; one half
Will flutter here, one there.

Philip. You say true, Madam.

Mary. The Holy Virgin will not have
me yet

Lose the sweet hope that I may bear a
prince.

If such a prince were born, and you not
here!

Philip. I should be here if such a prince
were born.

Mary. But must you go?

Philip. Madam, you know my father,
Retiring into cloistral solitude 121
To yield the remnant of his years to
heaven,

Will shift the yoke and weight of all the
world

From off his neck to mine. We meet at
Brussels.

But since mine absence will not be for long,
Your Majesty shall go to Dover with me,
And wait my coming back.

Mary. To Dover? no,
I am too feeble. I will go to Greenwich,
So you will have me with you; and there
watch

All that is gracious in the breath of heaven

Draw with your sails from our poor land
and pass ¹³¹

And leave me, Philip, with my prayers for
you.

Philip. And doubtless I shall profit by
your prayers.

Mary. Methinks that would you tarry
one day more —

The news was sudden — I could mould my-
self

To bear your going better; will you do
it?

Philip. Madam, a day may sink or save
a realm.

Mary. A day may save a heart from
breaking too.

Philip. Well, Simon Renard, shall we
stop a day?

Renard. Your Grace's business will not
suffer, sire, ¹⁴⁰

For one day more, so far as I can tell.

Philip. Then one day more to please her
Majesty.

Mary. The sunshine sweeps across my
life again.

O, if I knew you felt this parting, Philip,
As I do!

Philip. By Saint James I do protest,
Upon the faith and honor of a Spaniard,
I am vastly grieved to leave your Majesty.
Simon, is supper ready?

Renard. Ay, my liege,
I saw the covers laying.

Philip. Let us have it.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I. — A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, CARDINAL POLE.

Mary. What have you there?

Pole. So please your Majesty,
A long petition from the foreign exiles

To spare the life of Cranmer. Bishop
Thirlby,

And my Lord Paget and Lord William
Howard,

Crave, in the same cause, hearing of your
Grace.

Hath he not written himself — infatua-
ted —

To sue you for his life?

Mary. His life? O, no;

Not sued for that — he knows it were in
vain.

But so much of the anti-papal leaven
Works in him yet, he hath pray'd me not
to sully ¹⁰

Mine own prerogative, and degrade the
realm

By seeking justice at a stranger's hand
Against my natural subject. King and
Queen,

To whom he owes his loyalty after God,
Shall these accuse him to a foreign prince?
Death would not grieve him more. I can-
not be

True to this realm of England and the Pope
Together, says the heretic.

Pole. And there errs;
As he hath ever err'd thro' vanity.

A secular kingdom is but as the body ²⁰
Lacking a soul; and in itself a beast.

The Holy Father in a secular kingdom
Is as the soul descending out of heaven
Into a body generate.

Mary. Write to him, then.

Pole. I will.

Mary. And sharply, Pole.

Pole. Here come the Cranmerites!

Enter THIRLBY, LORD PAGET, LORD WIL-
LIAM HOWARD.

Howard. Health to your Grace! Good
morrow, my Lord Cardinal;

We make our humble prayer unto your
Grace

That Cranmer may withdraw to foreign
parts,

Or into private life within the realm.

In several bills and declarations, madam, ³⁰
He hath recanted all his heresies.

Paget. Ay, ay; if Bonner have not ferged
the bills. [*Aside.*]

Mary. Did not More die, and Fisher?
he must burn.

Howard. He hath recanted, Madam.

Mary. The better for him.
He burns in purgatory, not in hell.

Howard. Ay, ay, your Grace; but it was
never seen

That any one recanting thus at full,
As Cranmer hath, came to the fire on
earth.

Mary. It will be seen now, then.

Thirlby. O madam, madam!
I thus implore you, low upon my knees, ⁴⁰
To reach the hand of mercy to my friend.

I have err'd with him; with him I have recanted.

What human reason is there why my friend

Should meet with lesser mercy than myself?
Mary. My Lord of Ely, this. After a riot

We hang the leaders, let their following go. Cranmer is head and father of these heresies,

New learning as they call it; yea, may God Forget me at most need when I forget Her foul divorce — my sainted mother —
 No! — 50

Howard. Ay, ay, but mighty doctors doubted there.

The Pope himself waver'd; and more than one

Row'd in that galley — Gardiner to wit, Whom truly I deny not to have been Your faithful friend and trusty councillor. Hath not your Highness ever read his book,

His tractate upon True Ohedience, Writ by himself and Bonner?

Mary. I will take Such order with all bad, heretical books That none shall hold them in his house and live, 60

Henceforward. No, my lord.
Howard. Then never read it. The truth is here. Your father was a mau Of such colossal kinghood, yet so courteous, Except when wroth, you scarce could meet his eye

And hold your own; and were he wroth indeed,

You held it less, or not at all. I say, Your father had a will that beat men down; Your father had a brain that beat men down —

Pole. Not me, my lord.

Howard. No, for you were not here; You sit upon this fallen Cranmer's throne; And it would more become you, my Lord Legate, 71

To join a voice, so potent with her Highness,

To ours in plea for Cranmer than to stand On naked self-assertion.

Mary. All your voices Are waves on flint. The heretic must burn.

Howard. Yet once he saved your Majesty's own life;

Stood out against the King in your behalf, At his own peril.

Mary. I know not if he did; And if he did I care not, my Lord Howard. My life is not so happy, no such boon, &c That I should spare to take a heretic priest's,

Who saved it or not saved. Why do you vex me?

Paget. Yet to save Cranmer were to serve the Church,

Your Majesty's I mean; he is effaced, Self-blotted out; so wounded in his honor, He can hut creep down into some dark hole Like a hurt beast, and hide himself and die; But if you burn him, — well, your Highness knows

The saying, 'Martyr's blood — seed of the Church.'

Mary. Of the true Church; but his is none, nor will be. 90

You are too politic for me, my Lord Paget. And if he have to live so loath'd a life, It were more merciful to burn him now.

Thirby. O, yet relent! O, madam, if you knew him

As I do, ever gentle, and so gracious, With all his learning —

Mary. Yet a heretic still. His learning makes his burning the more just.

Thirby. So worshipt of all those that came across him;

The stranger at his hearth, and all his house —

Mary. His children and his concubine, belike. 100

Thirby. To do him any wrong was to beget

A kindness from him, for his heart was rich, Of such fine mould that if you sow'd there —

in
 The seed of Hate, it blossom'd Charity.

Pole. 'After his kind it costs him nothing,' there's

An old world English adage to the point. These are but natural graces, my good

bishop, Which in the Catholic garden are as flowers,

But on the heretic dunghill only weeds.

Howard. Such weeds make dunghills gracious. 110

Mary. Enough, my lords.

It is God's will, the Holy Father's will,

And Philip's will, and mine, that he should burn.

He is pronounced anathema.

Howard. Farewell, madam,
God grant you ampler mercy at your call
Than you have shown to Cranmer.

[*Exeunt* Lords.

Pole. After this,
Your Grace will hardly care to overlook
This same petition of the foreign exiles
For Cranmer's life.

Mary. Make out the writ to-night.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

OXFORD. CRANMER IN PRISON

Cranmer. Last night, I dream'd the fag-
gots were alight,
And that myself was fasten'd to the stake,
And found it all a visionary flame,
Cool as the light in old decaying wood;
And then King Harry look'd from out a
cloud,
And bade me have good courage; and I
heard
An angel cry, 'There is more joy in Hea-
ven,'—
And after that, the trumpet of the dead.

[*Trumpets without.*

Why, there are trumpets blowing now;
what is it?

Enter FATHER COLE.

Cole. Cranmer, I come to question you
again.¹⁰
Have you remain'd in the true Catholic
faith

I left you in?

Cranmer. In the true Catholic faith,
By Heaven's grace, I am more and more
confirm'd.

Why are the trumpets blowing, Father
Cole?

Cole. Cranmer, it is decided by the
Council
That you to-day should read your recanta-
tion

Before the people in Saint Mary's Church.
And there be many heretics in the town,
Who loathe you for your late return to
Rome,
And might assail you passing through the
street,²⁰

And tear you piecemeal; so you have a
guard.

Cranmer. Or seek to rescue me. I thank
the Council.

Cole. Do you lack any money?

Cranmer. Nay, why should I?

The prison fare is good enough for me.

Cole. Ay, but to give the poor.

Cranmer. Hand it me, then!

I thank you.

Cole. For a little space, farewell;

Until I see you in Saint Mary's Church.

[*Exit* Cole.

Cranmer. It is against all precedent to
burn

One who recants; they mean to pardon
me.

To give the poor — they give the poor who
die.³⁰

Well, burn me or not burn me I am fixt;

It is but a communion, not a mass,

A holy supper, not a sacrifice;

No man can make his Maker — Villa Gar-
cia.

Enter VILLA GARCIA.

Villa Garcia. Pray you write out this
paper for me, Cranmer.

Cranmer. Have I not writ enough to
satisfy you?

Villa Garcia. It is the last.

Cranmer. Give it me, then.

[*He writes.*

Villa Garcia. Now sign.

Cranmer. I have sign'd enough, and I
will sign no more.

Villa Garcia. It is no more than what
you have sign'd already,³⁹

The public form thereof.

Cranmer. It may be so;

I sign it with my presence, if I read it.

Villa Garcia. But this is idle of you.

Well, sir, well,

You are to beg the people to pray for you;

Exhort them to a pure and virtuous life;

Declare the Queen's right to the throne;
confess

Your faith before all bearers; and retract

That Eucharistic doctrine in your book.

Will you not sign it now?

Cranmer. No, Villa Garcia,

I sign no more. Will they have mercy on
me?

Villa Garcia. Have you good hopes of
mercy! So, farewell. [*Exit.*

Cranmer. Good hopes, not theirs, have I
that I am fixt, 51
Fixt beyond fall; however, in strange hours,
After the long brain-dazing colloquies,
And thousand-times recurring argument
Of those two friars ever in my prison,
When left alone in my despondency,
Without a friend, a book, my faith would
seem

Dead or half-drown'd, or else swam heavily
Against the huge corruptions of the Church,
Monsters of mistradition, old enough 60
To scare me into dreaming. 'What am I,
Cranmer, against whole ages?' was it so,
Or am I slandering my most inward friend,
To veil the fault of my most outward foe —
The soft and tremulous coward in the flesh?
O higher, holier, earlier, purer church,
I have found thee and not leave thee any
more.

It is but a communion, not a mass —
No sacrifice, but a life-giving feast! 69
(*Writes.*) So, so; this will I say — thus
will I pray. [*Puts up the paper.*]

Enter BONNER.

Bonner. Good day, old friend; what, you
look somewhat worn;

And yet it is a day to test your health
Even at the best. I scarce have spoken
with you

Since when? — your degradation. At your
trial

Never stood up a bolder man than you;
You would not cap the Pope's commis-
sioner —

Your learning, and your stontness, and
your heresy,

Dumbfounded half of us. So, after that,
We had to dis-archbishop and unlord, 79
And make you simple *Cranmer* once again.
The common barber clipt your hair, and I
Scraped from your finger-points the holy
oil;

And worse than all, you had to kneel to
me;

Which was not pleasant for you, Master
Cranmer.

Now you, that would not recognize the
Pope,

And you, that would not own the Real
Presence,

Have found a real presence in the stake,
Which frights you back into the ancient
faith;

And so you have recanted to the Pope.
How are the mighty fallen, Master *Cran-
mer*! 90

Cranmer. You have been more fierce
against the Pope than I;

But why fling back the stone he strikes *me*
with? [*Aside.*]

O *Bonner*, if I ever did you kindness —
Power hath been given you to try faith by
fire —

Pray you, remembering how yourself have
changed,

Be somewhat pitiful, after I have gone,
To the poor flock — to women and to chil-
dren —

That when I was archbishop held with *me*.

Bonner. Ay — gentle as they call you —
live or die!

Pitiful to this pitiful heresy? 100

I must obey the Queen and Council, man.
Win thro' this day with honor to yourself,
And I'll say something for you — so —
good-bye. [*Exit.*]

Cranmer. This hard coarse man of old
hath crouch'd to *me*

Till I myself was half ashamed for him.

Enter THIRLBY.

Weep not, good *Thirlby*.

Thirlby. O, my lord, my lord!
My heart is no such block as *Bonner's* is:

Who would not weep?

Cranmer. Why do you so my-lord *me*,
Who am disgraced?

Thirlby. On earth; but saved in heaven
By your recanting.

Cranmer. Will they burn *me*, *Thirlby*?

Thirlby. Alas, they will! these burnings
will not help 111

The purpose of the faith; but my poor
voice

Against them is a whisper to the roar
Of a spring-tide.

Cranmer. And they will surely burn *me*?

Thirlby. Ay; and besides will have you
in the church

Repeat your recantation in the ears
Of all men, to the saving of their souls,
Before your execution. May God help
you

Thro' that hard hour!

Cranmer. And may God bless you,
Thirlby! 119

Well, they shall hear my recantation there.
[*Exit Thirlby.*]

Disgraced, dishonor'd! — not by them, indeed,
 By mine own self — by mine own hand!
 O thin-skinn'd hand and jutting veins,
 't was you
 That sign'd the burning of poor Joan of Kent;
 But then she was a witch. You have written much,
 But you were never raised to plead for Frith,
 Whose dogmas I have reach'd. He was deliver'd
 To the secular arm to burn; and there was Lambert;
 Who can foresee himself? truly these burnings,
 As Thirby says, are profitless to the burners,
 And help the other side. You shall burn too,
 Burn first when I am burnt.
 Fire — inch by inch to die in agony! Lati-mer
 Had a brief end — not Ridley. Hooper burn'd
 Three-quarters of an hour. Will my fag-gots
 Be wet as his were? It is a day of rain.
 I will not muse upon it.
 My fancy takes the burner's part, and makes
 The fire seem even crueller than it is.
 No, I not doubt that God will give me strength,
 Albeit I have denied Him.

Enter SOTO and VILLA GARCIA.

Villa Garcia. We are ready
 To take you to Saint Mary's, Master Cranmer.
Cranmer. And I. Lead on; ye loose me from my bonds. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

COLE *in the Pulpit*, LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME *presiding*. LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, LORD PAGET, and others. CRANMER *enters between SOTO and VILLA GARCIA, and the whole Choir strike up, 'Nunc Dimittis.'* CRANMER *is set upon a Scaffold before the people.*

Cole. Behold him —

[*A pause: people in the foreground.*]

People. O, unhappy sight!

First Protestant. See how the tears run down his fatherly face.

Second Protestant. James, didst thou ever see a carrion crow

Stand watching a sick beast before he dies?

First Protestant. Him perch'd up there? I wish some thunderbolt

Would make this Cole a cinder, pulpit and all.

Cole. Behold him, brethren; he hath cause to weep! —

So have we all. Weep with him if ye will, Yet —

It is expedient for one man to die,

Yea, for the people, lest the people die.

Yet wherefore should he die that hath return'd

To the one Catholic Universal Church,

Repentant of his errors?

Protestant Murmurs. Ay, tell us that.

Cole. Those of the wrong side will despise the man,

Deeming him one that thro' the fear of death

Gave up his cause, except he seal his faith

In sight of all with flaming martyrdom.

Cranmer. Ay.

Cole. Ye hear him, and albeit there may seem

According to the canons pardon due

To him that so repents, yet are there causes

Wherefore our Queen and Council at this time

Adjudge him to the death. He hath been a traitor,

A shaker and confounder of the realm;

And when the King's divorce was sued at Rome,

He here, this heretic metropolitan,

As if he had been the Holy Father, sat

And judg'd it. Did I call him heretic? so

A huge heresiarch? never was it known

That any man so writing, preaching so,

So poisoning the Church, so long continuing,

Hath found his pardon; therefore he must die,

For warning and example.

Other reasons

There be for this man's ending, which our Queen

And Council at this present deem it not
Expedient to be known.

Protestant Murmurs. I warrant you.

Cole. Take therefore, all, example by
this man,

For if our Holy Queen not pardon him, 40
Much less shall others in like cause escape,
That all of you, the highest as the lowest,
May learn there is no power against the
Lord.

There stands a man, once of so high de-
gree,

Chief prelate of our Church, archbishop, first
In Council, second person in the realm,
Friend for so long time of a mighty King;
And now ye see downfallen and debased
From councillor to caitiff — fallen so low,
The leprous flutterings of the byway, scum
And offal of the city, would not change 51
Estates with him; in brief, so miserable
There is no hope of better left for him,
No place for worse.

Yet, Cranmer, be thou glad.

This is the work of God. He is glorified
In thy conversion; lo! thou art reclaim'd;
He brings thee home; nor fear but that to-
day

Thou shalt receive the penitent thief's
award,

And be with Christ the Lord in Paradise.
Remember how God made the fierce fire
seem 60

To those three children like a pleasant dew.
Remember, too,
The triumph of Saint Andrew on his cross,
The patience of Saint Lawrence in the fire.
Thus, if thou call on God and all the Saints
God will beat down the fury of the flame,
Or give thee saintly strength to undergo.

And for thy soul shall masses here be sung
By every priest in Oxford. Pray for him.

Cranmer. Ay, one and all, dear brothers,
pray for me; 70

Pray with one breath, one heart, one soul
for me.

Cole. And now, lest any one among you
doubt

The man's conversion and remorse of heart,
Yourselves shall hear him speak. Speak,
Master Cranmer,

Fulfil your promise made me, and proclaim
Your true undoubted faith, that all may
hear.

Cranmer. And that I will. O God, Fa-
ther of Heaven!

O Son of God, Redeemer of the world!
O Holy Ghost, proceeding from them both!
Three persons and one God, have mercy on
me, 80

Most miserable sinner, wretched man!
I have offended against heaven and earth
More grievously than any tongue can tell.
Then whither should I flee for any help?
I am ashamed to lift my eyes to heaven,
And I can find no refuge upon earth.
Shall I despair then? — God forbid! O
God,

For Thou art merciful, refusing none
That come to Thee for succor, unto Thee,
Therefore, I come; humble myself to Thee;
Saying, O Lord God, although my sins be
great, 91

For Thy great mercy have mercy! O God
the Son,

Not for slight faults alone, when Thou be-
camest

Man in the flesh, was the great mystery
wrought;

O God the Father, not for little sins
Didst Thou yield up Thy Son to human
death!

But for the greatest sin that can be sinn'd,
Yea, even such as mine, incalculable,
Unpardonable, — sin against the light,
The truth of God, which I had proven and
known. 100

Thy mercy must be greater than all sin.
Forgive me, Father, for no merit of mine,
But that Thy name by man be glorified,
And Thy most blessed Son's, who died for
man.

Good people, every man at time of death
Would fain set forth some saying that may
live

After his death and better humankind;
For death gives life's last word a power to
live,

And, like the stone-cut epitaph, remain
After the vanish'd voice, and speak to men.
God grant me grace to glorify my God!

And first I say it is a grievous case, 112
Many so dote upon this bubble world,
Whose colors in a moment break and fly,
They care for nothing else. What saith
Saint John?

'Love of this world is hatred against God.'
Again, I pray you all that, next to God,
You do unmurmuringly and willingly
Obey your King and Queen, and not for
dread

Of these alone, but from the fear of Him
Whose ministers they be to govern you. ¹²¹
Thirdly, I pray you all to live together
Like brethren; yet what hatred Christian
men

Bear to each other, seeming not as brethren,
But mortal foes ! But do you good to all
As much as in you lieth. Hurt no man
more

Than you would harm your loving natural
brother

Of the same roof, same breast. If any do,
Albeit he think himself at home with God,
Of this be sure, he is whole worlds away.

Protestant Murmurs. What sort of bro-
thers then be those that lust ¹³¹
To burn each other ?

Williams. Peace among you, there !
Cranmer. Fourthly, to those that ow e-
ceeding wealth,

Remember that sore saying spoken once
By Him that was the truth, 'How hard it
is

For the rich man to enter into heaven !'
Let all rich men remember that hard word.
I have not time for more; if ever, now
Let them flow forth in charity, seeing now
The poor so many, and all food so dear.
Long have I lain in prison, yet have heard
Of all their wretchedness. Give to the
poor, ¹⁴²

Ye give to God. He is with us in the poor.
And now, and forasmuch as I have come
To the last end of life, and thereupon
Hangs all my past, and all my life to be,
Either to live with Christ in heaven with
joy,

Or to be still in pain with devils in hell;
And, seeing in a moment I shall find

[*Pointing upwards.*
Heaven or else hell ready to swallow me,

[*Pointing downwards.*
I shall declare to you my very faith ¹⁵¹
Without all color.

Cole. Hear him, my good brethren.
Cranmer. I do believe in God, Father of
all;

In every article of the Catholic faith,
And every syllable taught us by our Lord,
His prophets, and apostles, in the Testa-
ments,

Both Old and New.

Cole. Be plainer, Master Cranmer.
Cranmer. And now I come to the great
cause that weighs

Upon my conscience more than anything
Or said or done in all my life by me; ¹⁶⁰
For there be writings I have set abroad
Against the truth I knew within my heart,
Written for fear of death, to save my life,
If that might be; the papers by my hand
Sign'd since my degradation — by this
hand [*Holding out his right hand.*
Written and sign'd — I here renounce them
all;
And, since my hand offended, having writ-
ten
Against my heart, my hand shall first be
burnt,
So I may come to the fire. [*Dead silence.*

PROTESTANT MURMURS.

First Protestant. I knew it would be so.

Second Protestant. Our prayers are heard!

Third Protestant. God bless him !

CATHOLIC MURMURS.

Out upon him ! out upon him !
Liar ! dissembler ! traitor ! to the fire ! ¹⁷²

Williams (raising his voice). You know
that you recanted all you said
Touching the sacrament in that same book
You wrote against my Lord of Winches-
ter;

Dissemble not; play the plain Christian
man.

Cranmer. Alas, my lord,
I have been a man loved plainness all my
life;

I *did* dissemble, but the hour has come
For utter truth and plainness; wherefore, I
say, ¹⁸⁰

I hold by all I wrote within that book.
Moreover,

As for the Pope, I count him Antichrist,
With all his devil's doctrines, and refuse,
Reject him, and abhor him. I have said.

[*Cries on all sides, 'Pull him down !
Away with him !'*

Cole. Ay, stop the heretic's mouth !
Hale him away !

Williams. Harm him not, harm him not !
have him to the fire !

[*Cranmer goes out between Two Friars,
smiling ; hands are reached to him
from the crowd. Lord William How-
ard and Lord Paget are left alone in
the church.*

Paget. The nave and aisles all empty as
a fool's jest !

No, here 's Lord William Howard. What,
my lord,

You have not gone to see the burning? ¹⁹⁰

Howard. Fie!

To stand at ease, and stare as at a show,
And watch a good man burn. Never again.
I saw the deaths of Latimer and Ridley.
Moreover, tho' a Catholic, I would not,
For the pure honor of our common nature,
Hear what I might — another recantation
Of Cranmer at the stake.

Paget. You 'd not hear that.
He pass'd out smiling, and he walk'd up-
right;

His eye was like a soldier's, whom the gen-
eral ²⁰⁰

He looks to and he leans on as his God,
Hath rated for some backwardness and
bidden him

Charge one against a thousand, and the
man

Hurls his soil'd life against the pikes and
dies.

Howard. Yet that he might not after all
those papers

Of recantation yield again, who knows?

Paget. Papers of recantation! Think
you then

That Cranmer read all papers that he
sign'd?

Or sign'd all those they tell us that he
sign'd?

Nay, I trow not; and you shall see, my
Lord, ²¹⁰

That howsoever hero-like the man
Dies in the fire, this Bonner or another
Will in some lying fashion misreport
His ending to the glory of their church.
And you saw Latimer and Ridley die?
Latimer was eighty, was he not? his best
Of life was over then.

Howard. His eighty years
Look'd somewhat crooked on him in his
frieze;

But after they had stript him to his shroud,
He stood upright, a lad of twenty-one, ²²⁰
And gather'd with his hands the starting
flame,

And wash'd his hands and all his face
therein,

Until the powder suddenly blew him dead.
Ridley was longer burning; but he died
As manfully and boldly, and, 'fore God,
I know them heretics, but right English
ones.

If ever, as heaven grant, we clash with
Spain,

Our Ridley-soldiers and our Latimer-sail-
ors

Will teach her something.

Paget. Your mild legate Pole
Will tell you that the devil helpt them
thro' it. ²³⁰

[*A murmur of the Crowd in the distance.*
Hark, how those Roman wolf-dogs howl
and bay him!

Howard. Might it not be the other side
rejoicing

In his brave end?

Paget. They are too crush'd, too broken,
They can but weep in silence.

Howard. Ay, ay, *Paget,*
They have brought it in large measure on
themselves.

Have I not heard them mock the blessed
Host

In songs so lewd the beast might roar his
claim

To being in God's image, more than they?
Have I not seen the gamekeeper, the

groom,
Gardener, and huntsman, in the parson's
place, ²⁴⁰

The parson from his own spire swung out
dead,

And Ignorance crying in the streets, and
all men

Regarding her? I say they have drawn
the fir

On their own heads; yet, *Paget,* I do hold
The Catholic, if he have the greater right,
Hath been the crueller.

Paget. Action and reaction,
The miserable see-saw of our child-world,
Make us despise it at odd hours, my lord.
Heaven help that this reaction not react
Yet fiercelier under Queen Elizabeth ²⁵⁰
So that she come to rule us.

Howard. The world 's mad.

Paget. My Lord, the world is like a
drunken man,

Who cannot move straight to his end, but
reels

Now to the right, then as far to the left,
Push'd by the crowd beside — and under-
foot

An earthquake; for since Henry for a
doubt —

Which a young lust had clapt upon the
back,

Crying, 'Forward!' — set our old church
rocking, men
Have hardly known what to believe, or
whether

They should believe in anything; the cur-
rents 260

So shift and change, they see not how they
are borne,

Nor whither. I conclude the King a beast;
Verily a lion if you will — the world

A most obedient beast and fool — myself

Half beast and fool as appertaining to it;

Altho' your lordship hath as little of each
Cleaving to your original Adam-clay

As may be consonant with mortality.

Howard. We talk and Cranmer suffers.
The kindest man I ever knew; see, see,
I speak of him in the past. Unhappy
land! 271

Hard-natured Queen, half-Spanish in her-
self,

And grafted on the hard-grain'd stock of
Spain —

Her life, since Philip left her, and she lost
Her fierce desire of bearing him a child,

Hath, like a brief and bitter winter's day,
Gone narrowing down and darkening to a

close.

There will be more conspiracies, I fear.

Paget. Ay, ay, beware of France.

Howard. O *Paget*, *Paget*!

I have seen heretics of the poorer sort, 280

Expectant of the rack from day to day,
To whom the fire were welcome, lying

chain'd

In breathless dungeons over steaming sew-
ers,

Fed with rank bread that crawl'd upon the
tongue,

And putrid water, every drop a worm,

Until they died of rotted limbs; and then

Cast on the dunghill naked, and become

Hideously alive again from head to heel,

Made even the carrion-nosing mongrel
vomit 289

With hate and horror.

Paget. Nay, you sicken *me*
To hear you.

Howard. Fancy-sick; these things are
done,

Done right against the promise of this
Queen

Twice given.

Paget. No faith with heretics, my lord!
Hist! there be two old gossips — gossellers,

I take it; stand behind the pillar here;
I warrant you they talk about the burning.

Enter TWO OLD WOMEN. *JOAN*, and
after her *TIB*.

Joan. Why, it be *Tib*!

Tib. I cum behind tha, gall, and could
n't make tha hear. Eh, the wind and the
wet! What a day, what a day! nigh upo'
judgment daay loike. Pwoaps be pretty
things, *Joan*, but they wunt set i' the
Lord's cheer o' that daay. 303

Joan. I must set down myself, *Tib*; it
be a var waay vor my owld legs up vro'
Islip. Eh, my rheumatizy be that bad
howiver be I to win to the burnin'?

Tib. I should saay 't wur ower by now.
I'd ha' been here avore, but *Dumble* wur
blow'd wi' the wind, and *Dumble*'s the best
milcher in *Islip*. 311

Joan. Our *Daisy*'s as good 'z her.

Tib. Noa, *Joan*.

Joan. Our *Daisy*'s butter 's as good 'z
hern.

Tib. Noa, *Joan*.

Joan. Our *Daisy*'s cheeses be better.

Tib. Noa, *Joan*.

Joan. Eh, then ha' thy waay wi' me,
Tib; ez thou hast wi' thy owld man. 320

Tib. Ay, *Joan*, and my owld man wur
up and awaay betimes wi' dree hard eggs
for a good pleace at the burnin'; and barrin'
the wet, *Hodge* 'nd ha' been a-harrowin' o'
white peaseun i' the outfield — and barrin'
the wind, *Dumble* wur blow'd wi' the wind,
so 'z we was forced to stick her, but we
fetched her round at last. Thank the Lord
therevore. *Dumble*'s the best milcher in
Islip. 330

Joan. Thou's thy way wi' man and
beast, *Tib*. I wonder at tha, it beats me!
Eh, but I do know ez *Pwoaps* and *vires* be
bad things; tell 'ee now, I heerd summat
as summun towld summun o' owld *Bishop*
Gardiner's end; there wur an owld lord
a-cum to dine wi' un, and a wur so owld a
could n't bide vor his dinner, but a had to
hide howsomiver, vor 'I wunt dine,' says
my Lord *Bishop*, says he, 'not till I hears
ez *Latimer* and *Ridley* be a-vire;' and so
they bided on and on till vour o' the clock,
till his man cum in post vro' here, and tells
un ez the vire has tuk holt. 'Now,' says
the *Bishop*, says he, 'we'll gwo to dinner;'
and the owld lord fell to 's meat wi' a will,

God bless un! but Gardiner wur struck down like by the hand o' God avore a could taste a mossel, and a set un all a-vire, so 'z the tongue on un cum a-lolluping out o' 'is mouth as black as a rat. Thank the Lord therefore!

352

Paget. The fools!

Tib. Ay, Joan; and Queen Mary gwoes on a-burnin' and a-burnin', to get her baaby born; but all her burnin's 'ill never burn out the hypocrisy that makes the water in her. There's nought but the vire of God's hell ez can burn out that.

Joan. Thank the Lord therefore!

360

Paget. The fools!

Tib. A-burnin', and a-burnin', and a-makin' o' volk madder and madder; but tek thou my word vor 't, Joan, — and I bean't wrong not twice i' ten year — the burnin' o' the owld archbishop 'll burn the Pwoap out o' this 'ere land vor iver and iver.

Howard. Out of the church, you brace of cursed crones,

Or I will have you duck'd! (*Women hurry out.*) Said I not right?

For how should reverend prelate or throned prince

370

Brook for an hour such brute malignity? Ah, what an acrid wine has Luther brew'd!

Paget. Pooh, pooh, my lord! poor gar-rulous country-wives.

Buy you their cheeses, and they'll side with you;

You cannot judge the liquor from the lees.

Howard. I think that in some sort we may. But see,

Enter PETERS.

Peters, my gentleman, an honest Catholic,

Who follow'd with the crowd to Cranmer's fire.

378

One that would neither misreport nor lie, Not to gain paradise; no, nor if the Pope Charged him to do it — he is white as death. Peters, how pale you look! you bring the smoke

Of Cranmer's burning with you.

Peters. Twice or thrice The smoke of Cranmer's burning wrapt me round.

Howard. Peters, you know me Catholic, but English.

Did he die bravely? Tell me that, or leave

All else untold.

Peters. My lord, he died most bravely.

Howard. Then tell me all.

Paget. Ay, Master Peters, tell us.

Peters. You saw him how he past among the crowd;

389

And ever as he walk'd the Spanish friars Still plied him with entreaty and reproach; But Cranmer, as the helmsman at the helm Steers, ever looking to the happy haven Where he shall rest at night, moved to his death;

And I could see that many silent hands Came from the crowd and met his own; and thus,

When we had come where Ridley burnt with Latimer,

He, with a cheerful smile, as one whose mind

Is all made up, in haste put off the rags They had mock'd his misery with, and all in white,

400

His long white beard, which he had never shaven

Since Henry's death, down-sweeping to the chain

Wherewith they bound him to the stake, he stood

More like an ancient father of the Church Than heretic of these times; and still the friars

Plied him, but Cranmer only shook his head, Or auswer'd them in smiling negatives;

Whereat Lord Williams gave a sudden cry: —

'Make short! make short!' and so they lit the wood.

Then Cranmer lifted his left hand to heaven,

410

And thrust his right into the bitter flame; And crying, in his deep voice, more than once,

'This hath offended — this unworthy hand!'

So held it till it all was burn'd, before The flame had reach'd his body; I stood near —

Mark'd him — he never uttered moan of pain.

He never stirr'd or writhed, but, like a statue,

Unmoving in the greatness of the flame,

Gave up the ghost; and so past martyr-like —

Martyr I may not call him — past — but whither ?

Paget. To purgatory, man, to purgatory. ⁴²⁰

Peters. Nay, but, my lord, he denied purgatory.

Paget. Why then to heaven, and God ha' mercy on him !

Howard. Paget, despise his fearful heresies,

I loved the man, and needs must moan for him;

O Cranmer !

Paget. But your moan is useless now.

Come out, my lord, it is a world of fools. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT V

SCENE I. — LONDON. HALL IN THE PALACE

QUEEN, SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

Heath. Madam,

I do assure you that it must be look'd to.

Calais is but ill-garrison'd, in Guisnes
Are scarce two hundred men, and the
French fleet

Rule in the narrow seas. It must be look'd to,

If war should fall between yourself and France;

Or you will lose your Calais.

Mary. It shall be look'd to;

I wish you a good morning, good Sir Nicholas.

Here is the King. *[Exit Heath.]*

Enter PHILIP.

Philip. Sir Nicholas tells you true,
And you must look to Calais when I go. ¹⁰

Mary. Go ? must you go, indeed — again — so soon ?

Why, nature's licensed vagabond, the swallow,

That might live always in the sun's warm heart,

Stays longer here in our poor North than you —

Knows where he nested — ever comes again.

Philip. And, Madam, so shall I.

Mary. O, will you ? will you ?

I am faint with fear that you will come no more.

Philip. Ay, ay; but many voices call me hence.

Mary. Voices — I hear unhappy rumors — nay, ¹⁹

I say not, I believe. What voices call you

Dearer than mine that should be dearest to you ?

Alas, my lord ! what voices and how many ?

Philip. The voices of Castile and Aragon,

Granada, Naples, Sicily, and Milan, —
The voices of Franche-Comté, and the

Netherlands,
The voices of Peru and Mexico,

Tunis, and Oran, and the Philippines,
And all the fair spice-islands of the East.

Mary (admiringly). You are the mightiest monarch upon earth,

I but a little Queen; and so, indeed, ³⁰
Need you the more.

Philip. A little Queen ! but when I came to wed your majesty, Lord How-

ard,
Sending an insolent shot that dash'd the seas

Upon us, made us lower our kingly flag
To yours of England.

Mary. Howard is all English !

There is no king, not were he ten times king,

Ten times our husband, but must lower his flag

To that of England in the seas of England.

Philip. Is that your answer ?

Mary. Being Queen of England,
I have none other.

Philip. So.

Mary. But wherefore not Helm the huge vessel of your State, my liege, ⁴¹

Here by the side of her who loves you most ?

Philip. No, madam, no ! a candle in the sun

Is all but smoke — a star beside the moon
Is all but lost; your people will not crown me —

Your people are as cheerless as your clime.
Hate me and mine; witness the brawls, the

gibbets.

Here swings a Spaniard — there an Englishman;
The peoples are unlike as their complexion;
Yet will I be your swallow and return —
But now I cannot bide.

Mary. Not to help me ?

They hate me also for my love to you, ⁵²
My Philip; and these judgments on the land —

Harvestless autumns, horrible agues, plague —

Philip. The blood and sweat of heretics at the stake

Is God's best dew upon the barren field.
Burn more !

Mary. I will, I will; and you will stay ?

Philip. Have I not said ? Madam, I came to sue

Your Council and yourself to declare war.
Mary. Sir, there are many English in your ranks ⁶⁰

To help your battle.

Philip. So far, good. I say I came to sue your Council and yourself

To declare war against the King of France.
Mary. Not to see me ?

Philip. Ay, madam, to see you.
Unalterably and pesteringly fond !

[*Aside.*

But soon or late you must have war with France;

King Henry warms your traitors at his hearth.

Carew is there, and Thomas Stafford there.
Courtenay, belike —

Mary. A fool and featherhead !

Philip. Ay, but they use his name. In brief, this Henry ⁷⁰

Stirs up your land against you to the intent

That you may lose your English heritage.
And then, your Scottish namesake marrying

The Dauphin, he would weld France, England, Scotland,

Into one sword to hack at Spain and me.

Mary. And yet the Pope is now col-leagued with France;

You make your wars upon him down in Italy —

Philip. Can that be well ?

Philip. Content you, madam; You must abide my judgment, and my father's,

Who deems it a most just and holy war. ⁸⁰
The Pope would cast the Spaniard out of Naples;

He calls us worse than Jews, Moors, Saracens.

The Pope has pushed his horns beyond his mitre —

Beyond his province. Now, Duke Alva will but touch him on the horns,

And he withdraws; and of his holy head —
For Alva is true son of the true Church —

No hair is harm'd. Will you not help me here ?

Mary. Alas ! the Council will not hear of war.

They say your wars are not the wars of England. ⁹⁰

They will not lay more taxes on a land
So hunger-nipt and wretched; and you know

The crown is poor. We have given the church-lands back.

The nobles would not; nay, they clapt their hands

Upon their swords when ask'd; and therefore God

Is hard upon the people. What's to be done ?

Sir, I will move them in your cause again,
And we will raise us loans and subsidies

Among the merchants; and Sir Thomas Gresham

Will aid us. There is Antwerp and the Jews. ¹⁰⁰

Philip. Madam, my thanks.

Mary. And you will stay your going ?

Philip. And further to discourage and lay lame

The plots of France, altho' you love her not,

You must proclaim Elizabeth your heir.
She stands between you and the Queen of Scots.

Mary. The Queen of Scots at least is Catholic.

Philip. Ay, madam, Catholic; but I will not have

The King of France the King of England too.

Mary. But she's a heretic, and, when I am gone, ¹⁰⁹

Brings the new learning back.

Philip. It must be done.
You must proclaim Elizabeth your heir.

Mary. Then it is done; but you will stay your going

Somewhat beyond your settled purpose?

Philip. No!

Mary. What, not one day?

Philip. You beat upon the rock.

Mary. And I am broken there.

Philip. Is this a place

To wait in, madam? what! a public hall? Go in, I pray you.

Mary. Do not seem so changed. Say go; but only say it lovingly.

Philip. You do mistake. I am not one to change. 119

I never loved you more.

Mary. Sire, I obey you.

Come quickly.

Philip. Ay. [Exit Mary.]

Enter COUNT DE FERIA.

Feria (aside). The Queen in tears!

Philip. Feria!

Hast thou not mark'd — come closer to mine ear —

How doubly aged this Queen of ours hath grown

Since she lost hope of bearing us a child?

Feria. Sire, if your Grace hath mark'd it, so have I.

Philip. Hast thou not likewise mark'd Elizabeth,

How fair and royal — like a queen, indeed?

Feria. Allow me the same answer as before —

That if your Grace hath mark'd her, so have I.

Philip. Good, now; methinks my Queen is like enough 130

To leave me by and by.

Feria. To leave you, sire?

Philip. I mean not like to live. Elizabeth —

To Philibert of Savoy, as you know, We meant to wed her; but I am not sure She will not serve me better — so my Queen

Would leave me — as — my wife.

Feria. Sire, even so.

Philip. She will not have Prince Philibert of Savoy.

Feria. No, sire.

Philip. I have to pray you, some odd time,

To sound the Princess carelessly on this; Not as from me, but as your phantasy; 140 And tell me how she takes it.

Feria. Sire, I will.

Philip. I am not certain but that Philibert

Shall be the man; and I shall urge his suit

Upon the Queen, because I am not certain. You understand, Feria.

Feria. Sire, I do.

Philip. And if you be not secret in this matter,

You understand me there, too?

Feria. Sire, I do.

Philip. You must be sweet and supple, like a Frenchman.

She is none of those who loathe the honey-comb.

[Exit Feria.]

Enter RENARD.

Renard. My liege, I bring you goodly tidings.

Philip. Well?

Renard. There will be war with France, at last, my liege; 151

Sir Thomas Stafford, a bull-headed ass, Sailing from France, with thirty Englishmen,

Hath taken Scarboro' Castle, north of York; Proclaims himself protector, and affirms

The Queen has forfeited her right to reign By marriage with an alien — other things

As idle; a weak Wyatt! Little doubt This buzz will soon be silenced; but the

Council —

I have talk'd with some already — are for war. 160

This is the fifth conspiracy hatch'd in France;

They show their teeth upon it; and your Grace,

So you will take advice of mine, should stay

Yet for a while, to shape and guide the event.

Philip. Good! Renard, I will stay then.

Renard. Also, sire, Might I not say — to please your wife, the

Queen?

Philip. Ay, Renard, if you care to put it so.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II

A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, *sitting: a rose in her hand.* LADY CLARENCE. ALICE *in the background.*

Mary. Look! I have play'd with this poor rose so long
I have broken off the head.

Lady Clarence. Your Grace hath been More merciful to many a rebel head That should have fallen, and may rise again.

Mary. There were not many hang'd for Wyatt's rising.

Lady Clarence. Nay, not two hundred.

Mary. I could weep for them And her, and mine own self and all the world.

Lady Clarence. For her? for whom, your Grace?

Enter USHER.

Usher. The Cardinal.

Enter CARDINAL POLE (MARY rises).

Mary. Reginald Pole, what news hath plagued thy heart?
What makes thy favor like the bloodless head
Fallen on the block, and held up by the hair?

Philip? —

Pole. No, Philip is as warm in life As ever.

Mary. Ay, and then as cold as ever.
Is Calais taken?

Pole. Cousin, there hath chanced A sharper harm to England and to Rome Than Calais taken. Julius the Third Was ever just, and mild, and father-like; But this new Pope Caraffa, Paul the Fourth,

Not only reft me of that legateship
Which Julius gave me, and the legateship Annex'd to Canterbury — nay, but worse — And yet I must obey the Holy Father, And so must you, good cousin; — worse than all,

A passing bell toll'd in a dying ear — He hath cited me to Rome, for heresy, Before his Inquisition.

Mary. I knew it, cousin.

But held from you all papers sent by Rome,
That you might rest among us, till the Pope,

To compass which I wrote myself to Rome, Reversed his doom, and that you might not seem

To disobey his Holiness.

Pole. He hates Philip; He is all Italian, and he hates the Spaniard;

He cannot dream that I advised the war; He strikes thro' me at Philip and yourself. Nay, but I know it of old, he hates me too;

So brands me in the stare of Christendom A heretic!

Now, even now, when bow'd before my time,

The house half-ruin'd ere the lease be out; When I should guide the Church in peace at home,

After my twenty years of banishment, And all my lifelong labor to uphold The primacy — a heretic! Long ago, When I was ruler in the patrimony, I was too lenient to the Lutheran, And I and learned friends among ourselves Would freely canvass certain Lutheranisms.

What then, he knew I was no Lutheran. A heretic!

He drew this shaft against me to the head,

When it was thought I might be chosen Pope,

But then withdrew it. In full consistory, When I was made archbishop, he approved me.

And how should he have sent me legate hither, Deeming me heretic? and what heresy since?

But he was evermore mine enemy, And hates the Spaniard — fiery-choleric, A drinker of black, strong, volcanic wines, That ever make him fierier. I, a heretic? Your Highness knows that in pursuing heresy

I have gone beyond your late Lord Chancellor, —

He cried 'Enough! enough!' before his death, —

Gone beyond him and mine own natural man —

It was God's cause — so far they call me
now

The scourge and butcher of their English
church.

Mary. Have courage, your reward is
heaven itself.

Pole. They groan amen; they swarm
into the fire

Like flies — for what? no dogma. They
know nothing;

They burn for nothing.

Mary. You have done your best.

Pole. Have done my best, and as a faith-
ful son, 70

That all day long hath wrought his father's
work,

When back he comes at evening hath the
door

Shut on him by the father whom he loved,
His early follies cast into his teeth,

And the poor son turn'd out into the street
To sleep, to die — I shall die of it, cousin.

Mary. I pray you be not so disconso-
late;

I still will do mine utmost with the Pope.

Poor cousin!

Have not I been the fast friend of your
life 80

Since mine began, and it was thought we
two

Might make one flesh, and cleave unto each
other

As man and wife?

Pole. Ah, cousin, I remember

How I would dandle you upon my knee

At lisping-age. I watch'd you dancing
once

With your huge father; he look'd the
Great Harry,

You but his cockboat; prettily you did it,
And innocently. No — we were not made

One flesh in happiness, no happiness here;
But now we are made one flesh in mis-
ery; 90

Our bridesmaids are not lovely — Disap-
pointment,

Ingratitude, Injustice, Evil-tongue,

Labor-in-vain.

Mary. Surely, not all in vain.

Peace, cousin, peace! I am sad at heart
myself.

Pole. Our altar is a mound of dead men's
clay,

Dug from the grave that yawns for us be-
yond;

And there is one Death stands behind the
groom,

And there is one Death stands behind the
bride —

Mary. Have you been looking at the
'Dance of Death'?

Pole. No; but these libellous papers
which I found 100

Strewn in your palace. Look you here —
the Pope

Pointing at me with 'Pole, the heretic,
Thou hast burnt others, do thou burn thy-
self,

Or I will burn thee;' and this other;
see! —

'We pray continually for the death
Of our accursed Queen and Cardinal Pole.'

This last — I dare not read it her. [*Aside.*
Mary. Away!

Why do you bring me these?
I thought you knew me better. I never

read,
I tear them; they come back upon my
dreams. 110

The hands that write them should be burnt
clean off

As Cranmer's, and the fiends that utter
them

Tongue-torn with pincers, lash'd to death,
or lie

Famishing in black cells, while famish'd
rats

Eat them alive. Why do they bring me
these?

Do you mean to drive me mad?

Pole. I had forgotten

How these poor libels trouble you. Your
pardon,

Sweet cousin, and farewell! 'O bubble
world,

Whose colors in a moment break and fly!'

Why, who said that? I know not — true
enough! 120

[*Puts up the papers, all but the last,
which falls. Exit Pole.*

Alice. If Cranmer's spirit were a mock-
ing one,

And heard these two, there might be sport
for him. [*Aside.*

Mary. Clarence, they hate me; even
while I speak

There lurks a silent dagger, listening
In some dark closet, some long gallery,
drawn,

And panting for my blood as I go by.

Lady Clarence. Nay, madam, there be loyal papers too,
And I have often found them.

Mary. Find me one!

Lady Clarence. Ay, madam; but Sir Nicholas Heath, the Chancellor,

Would see your Highness.

Mary. Wherefore should I see him?

Lady Clarence. Well, Madam, he may bring you news from Philip. 131

Mary. So, Clarence.

Lady Clarence. Let me first put up your hair;

It tumbles all abroad.

Mary. And the gray dawn Of an old age that never will be mine Is all the clearer seen. No, no; what matters?

Forlorn I am, and let me look forlorn.

Enter SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

Heath. I bring your Majesty such grievous news

I grieve to bring it. Madam, Calais is taken.

Mary. What traitor spoke? Here, let my cousin Pole

Seize him and burn him for a Lutheran. 140

Heath. Her Highness is unwell. I will retire.

Lady Clarence. Madam, your Chancellor, Sir Nicholas Heath.

Mary. Sir Nicholas! I am stunn'd — Nicholas Heath?

Methodought some traitor smote me on the head.

What said you, my good lord, that our brave English

Had sallied out from Calais and driven back

The Frenchmen from their trenches?

Heath. Alas! no.

That gateway to the mainland over which Our flag hath floated for two hundred years Is France again.

Mary. So; but it is not lost — Not yet. Send out; let England as of old Rise lionlike, strike hard and deep into 152 The prey they are rending from her — ay, and rend

The renders too. Send out, send out, and make

Musters in all the counties; gather all From sixteen years to sixty; collect the fleet;

Let every craft that carries sail and gun Steer toward Calais. Guisnes is not taken yet?

Heath. Guisnes is not taken yet.

Mary. There yet is hope.

Heath. Ah, madam, but your people are so cold; 160

I do much fear that England will not care. Methinks there is no manhood left among us.

Mary. Send out; I am too weak to stir abroad.

Tell my mind to the Council — to the Parliament;

Proclaim it to the winds. Thou art cold thyself

To babble of their coldness. O, would I were

My father for an hour! Away now — quick!

[*Exit Heath.* I hoped I had served God with all my might!

It seems I have not. Ah! much heresy Shelter'd in Calais. Saints, I have rebuilt 170

Your shrines, set up your broken images; Be comfortable to me. Suffer not That my brief reign in England be defamed

Thro' all her angry chronicles hereafter By loss of Calais. Grant me Calais. Philip, We have made war upon the Holy Father All for your sake. What good could come of that?

Lady Clarence. No, Madam, not against the Holy Father;

You did but help King Philip's war with France,

Your troops were never down in Italy. 180

Mary. I am a byword. Heretic and rebel Point at me and make merry. Philip gone! And Calais gone! Time that I were gone too!

Lady Clarence. Nay, if the fetid gutter had a voice

And cried I was not clean, what should I care?

Or you, for heretic cries? And I believe, Spite of your melancholy Sir Nicholas,

Your England is as loyal as myself.

Mary (*seeing the paper dropt by Pole*). There! there! another paper! Said you not

Many of these were loyal? Shall I try 190 If this be one of such?

Lady Clarence. Let it be, let it be.
God pardon me! I have never yet found
one. [*Aside.*]

Mary (reads). 'Your people hate you as
your husband hates you.'

Clarence, Clarence, what have I done?
what sin

Beyond all grace, all pardon? Mother of
God,

Thou knowest never woman meant so well,
And fared so ill in this disastrous world.

My people hate me and desire my death.

Lady Clarence. No, madam, no.

Mary. My husband hates me, and de-
sires my death. 200

Lady Clarence. No, madam; these are
libels.

Mary. I hate myself, and I desire my
death.

Lady Clarence. Long live your Majesty!
Shall Alice sing you

One of her pleasant songs? Alice, my
child,

Bring us your lute (*Alice goes*). They say
the gloom of Saul

Was lighten'd by young David's harp.

Mary. Too young!
And never knew a Philip.

Re-enter ALICE.

Give me the lute.

He hates me!

(*She sings.*)

Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing!
Beauty passes like a breath, and love is lost in
loathing. 210

Low, my lute; speak low, my lute, but say the
world is nothing —

Low, lute, low!

Love will hover round the flowers when they
first awaken;

Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be over-
taken.

Low, my lute! O, low, my lute! we fade and
are forsaken —

Low, dear lute, low!

Take it away! not low enough for me!

Alice. Your Grace hath a low voice.

Mary. How dare you say it?

Even for that he hates me. A low voice

Lost in a wilderness where none can hear!

A voice of shipwreck on a shoreless sea!

A low voice from the dust and from the
grave! 222

(*Sitting on the ground*). There, am I low
enough now?

Alice. Good Lord! how grim and ghastly
looks her Grace,

With both her knees drawn upward to her
chin.

There was an old-world tomb beside my
father's,

And this was open'd, and the dead were
found

Sitting, and in this fashion; she looks a
corpse.

Enter LADY MAGDALEN DACRES.

Lady Magdalen. Madam, the Count de
Feria waits without,

In hopes to see your Highness.

Lady Clarence (pointing to Mary). Wait
he must — 230

Her trance again. She neither sees nor
hears,

And may not speak for hours.

Lady Magdalen. Unhappiest
Of queens and wives and women!

*Alice (in the foreground with Lady Mag-
dalen).* And all along

Of Philip.

Lady Magdalen. Not so loud! Our
Clarence there

Sees ever such an aureole round the Queen,
It gilds the greatest wronger of her peace,

Who stands the nearest to her.

Alice. Ay, this Philip;
I used to love the Queen with all my

heart —

God help me, but methinks I love her
less

For such a dotage upon such a man. 240

I would I were as tall and strong as you.

Lady Magdalen. I seem half-shamed at
times to be so tall.

Alice. You are the stateliest deer in all
the herd —

Beyond his aim — but I am small and
scandalous,

And love to hear bad tales of Philip.

Lady Magdalen. Why?

I never heard him utter worse of you

Than that you were low-statured.

Alice. Does he think

Low stature is low nature, or all women's

Low as his own?

Lady Magdalen. There you strike in the
nail.

This coarseness is a want of phantasy. 250

It is the low man thinks the woman low;
Sin is too dull to see beyond himself.

Alice. Ah, Magdalen, sin is bold as well
as dull.

How dared he ?

Lady Magdalen. Stupid soldiers oft are
bold.

Poor lads, they see not what the general
sees,

A risk of utter ruin. I am *not*

Beyond his aim, or was not.

Alice. Who ? Not you ?

Tell, tell me; save my credit with myself.

Lady Magdalen. I never breathed it to
a bird in the eaves,

Would not for all the stars and maiden
moon ²⁶⁰

Our drooping Queen should know ! In
Hampton Court

My window look'd upon the corridor;

And I was robing; — this poor throat of
mine

Barer than I should wish a man to see it, —
When he we speak of drove the window
back,

And, like a thief, push'd in his royal hand ;
But by God's providence a good stout staff
Lay near me, and you know me strong of
arm.

I do believe I lamed his Majesty's

For a day or two, tho', give the devil his due,
I never found he bore me any spite. ²⁷¹

Alice. I would she could have wedded
that poor youth,

My Lord of Devon, — light enough, God
knows,

And mixt with Wyatt's rising, — and the
boy

Not out of him — but neither cold, coarse,
cruel,

And more than all — no Spaniard.

Lady Clarence. Not so loud.

Lord Devon, girls ! what are you whisper-
ing here ?

Alice. Probing an old state-secret —
how it chanced

That this young earl was sent on foreign
travel,

Not lost his head.

Lady Clarence. There was no proof
against him. ²⁸⁰

Alice. Nay, madam; did not Gardiner in-
tercept

A letter which the Count de Noailles wrote
To that dead traitor Wyatt, with full proof

Of Courtenay's treason ? What became
of that ?

Lady Clarence. Some say that Gardiner,
out of love for him,

Burnt it, and some relate that it was lost
When Wyatt sack'd the Chancellor's
house in Southwark.

Let dead things rest.

Alice. Ay, and with him who died
Alone in Italy.

Lady Clarence. Much changed, I hear,
Had put off levity and put graveness on.

The foreign courts report him in his man-
ner ²⁹¹

Noble as his young person and old shield.

It might be so — but all is over now;
He caught a chill in the lagoons of Venice,
And died in Padua.

Mary (looking up suddenly). Died in the
true faith ?

Lady Clarence. Ay, madam, happily.

Mary. Happier he than I.

Lady Magdalen. It seems her Highness
hath awaken'd. Think you

That I might dare to tell her that the
count —

Mary. I will see no man hence for ever-
more,

Saving my confessor and my cousin Pole.

Lady Magdalen. It is the Count de Fe-
ria, my dear lady. ³⁰¹

Mary. What count ?

Lady Magdalen. The Count de Feria,
from his Majesty

King Philip.

Mary. Philip ! quick ! loop up my hair !
Throw cushions on that seat, and made it
thronelike.

Arrange my dress — the gorgeous Indian
shawl

That Philip brought me in our happy
days ! —

That covers all. So — am I somewhat
queenlike,

Bride of the mightiest sovereign upon
earth ?

Lady Clarence. Ay, so your Grace would
bide a moment yet. ³¹⁰

Mary. No, no, he brings a letter. I
may die

Before I read it. Let me see him at once.

Enter COUNT DE FERIA (*kneels*).

Feria. I trust your Grace is well.
(*Aside.*) How her hand burns !

Mary. I am not well, but it will better me,
Sir Count, to read the letter which you
bring.

Feria. Madam, I bring no letter.

Mary. How! no letter?

Feria. His Highness is so vex'd with
strange affairs —

Mary. That his own wife is no affair of
his.

Feria. Nay, madam, nay! he sends his
veriest love, 319

And says he will come quickly.

Mary. Doth he, indeed?

Yon, sir, do you remember what you said

When last you came to England?

Feria. Madam, I brought
My King's congratulations; it was hoped
Your Highness was once more in happy
state

To give him an heir male.

Mary. Sir, you said more;
You said he would come quickly. I had
horses

On all the road from Dover, day and
night;

On all the road from Harwich, night and
day;

But the child came not, and the husband
came not;

And yet he will come quickly. — Thou hast
learnt 330

Thy lesson, and I mine. There is no need
For Philip so to shame himself again.

Return,

And tell him that I know he comes no
more.

Tell him at last I know his love is dead,

And that I am in state to bring forth
death —

Thou art commission'd to Elizabeth,

And not to me!

Feria. Mere compliments and wishes.
But shall I take some message from your
Grace?

Mary. Tell her to come and close my
dying eyes, 340
And wear my crown, and dance upon my
grave.

Feria. Then I may say your Grace will
see your sister?

Your Grace is too low-spirited. Air and
sunshine.

I would we had you, madam, in our warm
Spain.

You droop in your dim London.

Mary. Have him away!
I sicken of his readiness.

Lady Clarence. My Lord Count,
Her Highness is too ill for colloquy.

Feria (*kneels and kisses her hand*). I wish
her Highness better. (*Aside.*) How
her hand burns! [*Exeunt*]

SCENE III

A HOUSE NEAR LONDON

ELIZABETH, STEWARD OF THE HOUSE-
HOLD, ATTENDANTS.

Elizabeth. There's half an angel wrong'd
in your account;

Methinks I am all angel, that I bear it
Without more ruffling. Cast it o'er again.

Steward. I were whole devil if I wrong'd
yon, madam. [*Exit Steward.*]

Attendant. The Count de Feria, from
the King of Spain.

Elizabeth. Ah! — let him enter. Nay,
you need not go: [*To her Ladies.*]

Remain within the chamber, but apart.

We'll have no private conference. Wel-
come to England!

Enter FERIA.

Feria. Fair island star!

Elizabeth. I shine! What else, Sir
Count?

Feria: As far as France, and into Philip's
heart. 10

My King would know if you be fairly
served,

And lodged, and treated.

Elizabeth. You see the lodging, sir.
I am well-served, and am in everything

Most loyal and most grateful to the Queen.

Feria. You should be grateful to my
master, too.

He spoke of this; and unto him you owe
That Mary hath acknowledged you her
heir.

Elizabeth. No, not to her nor him; but
to the people,

Who know my right, and love me, as I love
The people! whom God aid!

Feria. You will be Queen,
And, were I Philip —

Elizabeth. Wherefore pause you — what?

Feria. Nay, but I speak from mine own
self, not him. 22

Your royal sister cannot last; your hand

Will be much coveted ! What a delicate one !

Our Spanish ladies have none such — and there,

Were you in Spain, this fine fair gossamer gold —

Like sun-gilt breathings on a frosty dawn — That hovers round your shoulder —

Elizabeth. Is it so fine ?
Troth, some have said so.

Feria. — would be deemed a miracle.

Elizabeth. Your Philip hath gold hair and golden heard; ³⁰

There must be ladies many with hair like mine.

Feria. Some few of Gothic blood have golden hair,

But none like yours.

Elizabeth. I am happy you approve it.

Feria. But as to Philip and your Grace, — consider, —

If such a one as you should match with Spain,

What hinders but that Spain and England join'd

Should make the mightiest empire earth has known.

Spain would be England on her seas, and England

Mistress of the Indies.

Elizabeth. It may chance that England Will be the Mistress of the Indies yet, ⁴⁰

Without the help of Spain.

Feria. Impossible; Except you put Spain down.

Wide of the mark even for a madman's dream.

Elizabeth. Perhaps; but we have seamen. Count de Feria,

I take it that the King hath spoken to you; But is Don Carlos such a goodly match ?

Feria. Don Carlos, Madam, is but twelve years old.

Elizabeth. Ay, tell the King that I will muse upon it;

He is my good friend, and I would keep him so;

But — he would have me Catholic of Rome, ⁵⁰

And that I scarce can be; and, sir, till now My sister's marriage, and my father's marriages,

Make me full fain to live and die a maid. But I am much beholden to your King.

Have you aught else to tell me ?

Feria. Nothing, madam, Save that methought I gather'd from the Queen

That she would see your Grace before she — died.

Elizabeth. God's death ! and wherefore spake you not before ?

We dally with our lazy moments here, And hers are number'd. Horses there, without ! ⁶⁰

I am much beholden to the King, your master.

Why did you keep me prating ? Horses, there ! [*Exit Elizabeth, etc.*]

Feria. So from a clear sky falls the thunderbolt !

Don Carlos ? Madam, if you marry Philip, Then I and he will snaffle your 'God's death,'

And break your paces in, and make you tame.

God's death, forsooth — you do not know King Philip ! [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV

LONDON. BEFORE THE PALACE

A light burning within. Voices of the night passing.

First. Is not yon light in the Queen's chamber ?

Second. Ay,

They say she's dying.

First. So is Cardinal Pole.

May the great angels join their wings, and make

Down for their heads to heaven !

Second. Amen. Come on. [*Exeunt.*]

TWO OTHERS.

First. There's the Queen's light. I hear she cannot live.

Second. God curse her and her legate ! Gardiner burns

Already; but to pay them full in kind, The hottest hold in all the devil's den

Were but a sort of winter. Sir, in Guernsey,

I watch'd a woman burn; and in her agony The mother came upon her — a child was born — ¹¹

And, sir, they hurl'd it back into the fire, That, being but baptized in fire, the babe

Might be in fire for ever. Ah, good neighbor,
There should be something fierier than fire
To yield them their deserts.

First. Amen to all
Your wish, and further!

A Third Voice. Deserts! Amen to what?
Whose deserts? Yours? You have a gold ring on your finger, and soft raiment about your body; and is not the woman up yonder sleeping after all she has done, in peace and quietness, on a soft bed, in a closed room, with light, fire, physic, tendance; and I have seen the true men of Christ lying famine-dead by scores, and under no ceiling but the cloud that wept on them, not for them.

First. Friend, tho' so late, it is not safe to preach.

You had best go home. What are you? ³⁰

Third. What am I? One who cries continually with sweat and tears to the Lord God that it would please Him out of His infinite love to break down all kingship and queenship, all priesthood and prelacy; to cancel and abolish all bonds of human allegiance, all the magistracy, all the nobles, and all the wealthy; and to send us again, according to His promise, the one King, the Christ, and all things in common, as in the day of the first church, when Christ Jesus was King. ⁴²

First. If ever I heard a madman, — let's away!

Why, you long-winded — Sir, you go beyond me.

I pride myself on being moderate.

Good night! Go home! Besides, you curse so loud,

The watch will hear you. Get you home at once. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

A Gallery on one side. The moonlight streaming through a range of windows on the wall opposite. MARY, LADY CLARENCE, LADY MAGDALEN DACRES, ALICE. QUEEN pacing the Gallery. A writing-table in front. QUEEN comes to the table and writes and goes again, pacing the Gallery.

Lady Clarence. Mine eyes are dim: what hath she written? read.

Alice. 'I am dying, Philip; come to me.'

Lady Magdalen. There — up and down, poor lady, up and down.

Alice. And how her shadow crosses one by one

The moonlight casements pattern'd on the wall,

Following her like her sorrow! She turns again.

[*Queen sits and writes, and goes again.*]

Lady Clarence. What hath she written now?

Alice. Nothing; but 'come, come, come,' and all awry,

And blotted by her tears. This cannot last. [*Queen returns.*]

Mary. I whistle to the bird has broken cage, ¹⁰

And all in vain. [*Sitting down.*]

Calais gone — Guisnes gone, too — and Philip gone!

Lady Clarence. Dear madam, Philip is but at the wars;

I cannot doubt but that he comes again;

And he is with you in a measure still.

I never look'd upon so fair a likeness

As your great King in armor there; his hand

Upon his helmet.

[*Pointing to the portrait of Philip on the wall.*]

Mary. Doth he not look noble?

I had heard of him in battle over seas,

And I would have my warrior all in arms.

He said it was not courtly to stand helmeted ²¹

Before the Queen. He had his gracious moment,

Altho' you'll not believe me. How he smiles

As if he loved me yet!

Lady Clarence. And so he does.

Mary. He never loved me — nay, he could not love me.

It was his father's policy against France.

I am eleven years older than he,

Poor boy! [*Weeps.*]

Alice. That was a lusty boy of twenty-seven; [*Aside.*]

Poor enough in God's grace!

Mary. And all in vain!

The Queen of Scots is married to the Dauphin, ²¹

And Charles, the lord of this low world, is gone;

And all his wars and wisdoms past away;
And in a moment I shall follow him.

Lady Clarence. Nay, dearest lady, see your good physician.

Mary. Drugs — but he knows they cannot help me — says

That rest is all — tells me I must not think —

That I must rest — I shall rest by and by.

Catch the wild cat, cage him, and when he springs

And maims himself against the bars, say 'rest.'

Why, you must kill him if you would have him rest —

Dead or alive, you cannot make him happy.

Lady Clarence. Your Majesty has lived so pure a life,

And done such mighty things by Holy Church,

I trust that God will make you happy yet.

Mary. What is the strange thing happiness? Sit down here.

Tell me thine happiest hour.

Lady Clarence. I will, if that May make your Grace forget yourself a little.

There runs a shallow brook across our field
For twenty miles, where the black crow flies five,

And doth so bound and babble all the way
As if itself were happy. It was May-time,

And I was walking with the man I loved.
I loved him, but I thought I was not loved.

And both were silent, letting the wild brook

Speak for us — till he stoop'd and gather'd one

From out a bed of thick forget-me-nots,
Look'd hard and sweet at me, and gave it me.

I took it, tho' I did not know I took it,
And put it in my bosom, and all at once
I felt his arms about me, and his lips —

Mary. O God! I have been too slack, too slack;

There are Hot Gospellers even among our guards —

Nobles we dared not touch. We have but burnt

The heretic priest, workmen, and women and children.

Wet, famine, ague, fever, storm, wreck, wrath, —

We have so play'd the coward; but by God's grace,

We 'll follow Philip's leading, and set up
The Holy Office here — garner the wheat,
And burn the tares with unquenchable fire!

Burn! —

Fie, what a savor! tell the cooks to close
The doors of all the offices below.

Latimer!

Sir, we are private with our women here —
Ever a rough, blunt, and uncourtly fellow —

Thou light a torch that never will go out!
'T is out — mine flames. Women, the Holy

Father
Has ta'en the legateship from our cousin

Pole —
Was that well done? and poor Pole pines

of it,

As I do, to the death. I am but a woman,
I have no power. — Ah, weak and meek

old man,
Sevenfold dishonor'd even in the sight

Of thine own sectaries — No, no. No pardon!

Why, that was false; there is the right hand still

Beckons me hence.
Sir, you were burnt for heresy, not for

treason,
Remember that! 't was I and Bonner did it,

And Pole; we are three to one — Have you found mercy there,

Grant it me here — and see, he smiles and goes,

Gentle as in life.
Alice. Madam, who goes? King Philip?

Mary. No, Philip comes and goes, but never goes.

Women, when I am dead,
Open my heart, and there you will find

written
Two names, Philip and Calais; open his, —

So that he have one, —
You will find Philip only, policy, policy, —

Ay, worse than that — not one hour true to me!

Foul maggots crawling in a fester'd vice!
Adulterous to the very heart of hell!

Hast thou a knife?
Alice. Ay, madam, but o' God's mercy —

Mary. Fool, think'st thou I would peril mine own soul

By slaughter of the body? I could not,
girl,

Not this way — callous with a constant
stripe,

Unwoundable. The knife!
Alice. Take heed, take heed!

The blade is keen as death.

Mary. This Philip shall not
Stare in upon me in my haggardness;
Old, miserable, diseased,
Incapable of children. Come thou down.

[*Cuts out the picture and throws it down.*
Lie there. (*Wails.*) O God, I have kill'd
my Philip!

Alice. No, 110
Madam, you have but cut the canvas out;
We can replace it.

Mary. All is well then; rest —
I will to rest; he said I must have rest.

[*Cries of 'Elizabeth' in the street.*
A cry! What's that? Elizabeth? revolt?
A new Northumberland, another Wyatt?
I'll fight it on the threshold of the grave.

Lady Clarence. Madam, your royal sister
comes to see you.

Mary. I will not see her.
Who knows if Boleyn's daughter be my
sister?

I will see none except the priest. Your
arm. [*To Lady Clarence.*

O Saint of Aragon, with that sweet worn
smile 121

Among thy patient wrinkles — help me
hence. [*Exeunt.*

*The PRIEST passes. Enter ELIZABETH and
SIR WILLIAM CECIL.*

Elizabeth. Good counsel yours. — No
one in waiting? still,
As if the chamberlain were Death him-
self!

The room she sleeps in — is not this the
way?

No, that way there are voices. Am I too
late?

Cecil . . . God guide me lest I lose the
way! [*Exit Elizabeth.*

Cecil. Many points weather'd, many
perilous ones,

At last a harbor opens; but therein
Sunk rocks — they need fine steering —
much it is 130

To be nor mad nor bigot — have a mind —
Nor let priests' talk, or dream of worlds to
be,

Miscolor things about her — sudden touches
For him, or him — sunk rocks; no passion-
ate faith —

But — if let be — balance and compromise;
Brave, wary, sane to the heart of her — a
Tudor

School'd by the shadow of death — a Bo-
leyn, too,

Glancing across the Tudor — not so well.

Enter ALICE.

How is the good Queen now?

Alice. Away from Philip.
Back in her childhood — prattling to her
mother 140

Of her betrothal to the Emperor Charles,
And childlike-jealous of him again — and
once

She thank'd her father sweetly for his book
Against that godless German. Ah, those
days

Were happy. It was never merry world
In England since the Bible came among us.

Cecil. And who says that?

Alice. It is a saying among the Catho-
lics.

Cecil. It never will be merry world in
England

Till all men have their Bible, rich and
poor. 150

Alice. The Queen is dying, or you dare
not say it.

Enter ELIZABETH.

Elizabeth. The Queen is dead.

Cecil. Then here she stands! my hom-
age.

Elizabeth. She knew me, and acknow-
ledged me her heir,

Pray'd me to pay her debts, and keep the
Faith;

Then claspt the cross, and pass'd away in
peace.

I left her lying still and beautiful,
More beautiful than in life. Why would
you vex yourself,

Poor sister? Sir, I swear I have no heart
To be your Queen. To reign is restless
fence,

Tierce, quart, and trickery. Peace is with
the dead. 160

Her life was winter, for her spring was
nupt;

And she loved much: pray God she be for-
given!

Cecil. Peace with the dead, who never
were at peace !
Yet she loved one so much — I needs must
say —
That never English monarch dying left
England so little.
Elizabeth. But with Cecil's aid
And others, if our person be secured
From traitor stabs — we will make Eng-
land great.

*Enter PAGET, and other LORDS OF THE
COUNCIL, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, etc.*
Lords. God save Elizabeth, the Queen of
England !
Bagenhall. God save the Crown ! the
Papacy is no more. ¹⁷⁰
Paget (aside). Are we so sure of that ?
Acclamation. God save the Queen !

HAROLD

A DRAMA

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON,

Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

MY DEAR LORD LYTTON, — After old-world records — such as the Bayeux tapes-
try and the Roman de Rou, — Edward Freeman's History of the Norman Conquest,
and your father's Historical Romance treating of the same times, have been mainly
helpful to me in writing this Drama. Your father dedicated his 'Harold' to my
father's brother ; allow me to dedicate my 'Harold' to yourself.

A. TENNYSON.

SHOW-DAY AT BATTLE ABBEY, 1876

A GARDEN here — May breath and bloom of spring —
The cuckoo yonder from an English elm
Crying, 'With my false egg I overwhelm
The native nest;' and fancy hears the ring
Of harness, and that deathful arrow sing,
And Saxon battle-axe clang on Norman helm.
Here rose the dragon-banner of our realm;
Here fought, here fell, our Norman-slander'd king.
O Garden blossoming out of English blood !
O strange hate-healer Time ! We stroll and stare
Where might made right eight hundred years ago;
Might, right ? ay, good, so all things make for good —
But he and he, if soul be soul, are where
Each stands full face with all he did below.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KING EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.
STIGAND, *created Archbishop of Canterbury by the Antipope Benedict.*
ALDRED, *Archbishop of York.*
THE NORMAN BISHOP OF LONDON.
HAROLD, *Earl of Wessex, afterwards King of England*
TOSTIG, *Earl of Northumbria*
GURTH, *Earl of East Anglia*
LEOFWIN, *Earl of Kent and Essex*
WULFROTH

} *Sons of Godwin.*

COUNT WILLIAM OF NORMANDY.

WILLIAM RUFUS.

WILLIAM MALET, a Norman Noble.¹

EDWIN, Earl of Mercia

MORCAR, Earl of Northumbria after Tasting } Sons of Alfgar of Mercia.

GAMEL, a Northumbrian Thane.

GUY, Count of Ponthieu.

ROLF, a Ponthieu Fisherman.

HUGH MARGOT, a Norman Monk.

OSGOD and AETHELRIC, Canons from Waltham.

THE QUEEN, Edward the Confessor's Wife, Daughter of Godwin.

ALDWYTH, Daughter of Alfgar and widow of Griffyth, King of Wales.

EOITH, Ward of King Edward.

Courtiers, Earls and Thanes, Men-at-Arms, Canons of Waltham, Fishermen, etc.

HAROLD

ACT I

SCENE I.—LONDON. THE KING'S PALACE

(A comet seen through the open window.)

ALDWYTH, GAMEL, COURTIERS talking together.

First Courtier. Lo! there once more —
this is the seventh night!
Yon grimly - glaring, treble - brandish'd
scourge
Of England!

Second Courtier. Horrible!

First Courtier. Look you, there's a star
That dances in it as mad with agony!

Third Courtier. Ay, like a spirit in hell
who skips and flies
To right and left, and cannot scape the
flame.

Second Courtier. Steam'd upward from
the undescendible
Abysm.

First Courtier. Or floated downward from
the throne
Of God Almighty.

Aldwyth. Gamel, son of Orm,

What thinkest thou this means?

Gamel. War, my dear lady!

Aldwyth. Doth this affright thee?

Gamel. Mightily, my dear lady!

Aldwyth. Stand by me then, and look
upon my face,
Not on the comet. ¹²

Enter MORCAR.

Brother! why so pale?

Morcar. It glares in heaven, it flares
upon the Thames,

The people are as thick as bees below,
They hum like bees, — they cannot speak
— for awe;

Look to the skies, then to the river, strike
Their hearts, and hold their babies up to it.
I think that they would Molochize them too,
To have the heavens clear.

Aldwyth. They fright not me.

Enter LEOFWIN, after him GURTH.

Ask thou Lord Leofwin what he thinks of
this!

Morcar. Lord Leofwin, dost thou believe
that these

Three rods of blood-red fire up yonder
mean

The doom of England and the wrath of
Heaven?

Bishop of London (passing). Did ye not
cast with bestial violence

Our holy Norman bishops down from all
Their thrones in England? I alone re-
main.

Why should not Heaven be wroth?

Leafwin. With us, or thee?

Bishop of London. Did ye not outlaw
your archbishop Robert,
Robert of Jumièges — well-nigh murder
him too?

Is there no reason for the wrath of Heaven?

Leafwin. Why, then the wrath of Hea-
ven hath three tails,

The devil only one.
[Exit Bishop of London.

Enter ARCHBISHOP STIGAND.

Ask our archbishop.
Stigand should know the purposes of Hea-
ven.

Stigand. Not I. I cannot read the face
of heaven;

¹ . . . quidam partim Normannus et Anglus
Comptar Herald. (*Guy of Amiens*, 587.)

Perhaps our vines will grow the better for it.

Leofwin (laughing). He can but read the King's face on his coins.

Stigand. Ay, ay, young lord, there the King's face is power.

Gurth. O father, mock not at a public fear,

But tell us, is this pendent hell in heaven
A harm to England ?

Stigand. Ask it of King Edward !
And he may tell thee *I* am a harm to Eng-
land. ⁴²

Old uncanonical Stigand — ask of *me*
Who had my pallium from an Antipope !
Not he the man — for in our windy world
What's up is faith, what's down is heresy.
Our friends, the Normans, help to shake
his chair.

I have a Norman fever on me, son,
And cannot answer sanely. — What it
means ?

Ask our broad earl.

[*Pointing to Harold, who enters.*

Harold (seeing Gamel). Hail, Gamel, son
of Orm !

Albeit no rolling stone, my good friend
Gamel, ⁵¹

Thou hast rounded since we met. Thy life
at home

Is easier than mine here. Look ! am I not
Work-wan, flesh-fallen ?

Gamel. Art thou sick, good earl ?

Harold. Sick as an autumn swallow for
a voyage,

Sick for an idle week of hawk and hound
Beyond the seas — a change ! When cam-
est thou hither ?

Gamel. To-day, good earl.

Harold. Is the North quiet, Gamel ?

Gamel. Nay, there be murmurs, for thy
brother breaks us

With over-taxing — quiet, ay, as yet — ⁶⁰
Nothing as yet.

Harold. Stand by him, mine old friend,
Thou art a great voice in Northumberland !
Advise him ; speak him sweetly, he will
hear thee.

He is passionate but honest. Stand thou
by him !

More talk of this to-morrow, if yon weird
sign

Not blast us in our dreams. — Well, father
Stigand —

[*To Stigand, who advances to him.*

Stigand (pointing to the comet). War
there, my son ? is that the doom of
England ?

Harold. Why not the doom of all the
world as well ?

For all the world sees it as well as England.
These meteors came and went before our
day. ⁷⁰

Not harming any ; it threatens us no more
Than French or Norman. War ? the worst
that follows

Things that seem jerk'd out of the com-
mon rut

Of Nature is the hot religious fool,
Who, seeing war in heaven, for heaven's
credit

Makes it on earth — but look, where Ed-
ward draws

A faint foot hither, leaning upon Tostig.
He hath learnt to love our Tostig much of
late.

Leofwin. And *he* hath learnt, despite the
tiger in him,

To sleek and supple himself to the King's
hand. ⁸⁰

Gurth. I trust the kingly touch that
cures the evil

May serve to charm the tiger out of him.

Leofwin. He hath as much of cat as
tiger in him.

Our Tostig loves the hand and not the man.

Harold. Nay ! Better die than lie !

Enter KING, QUEEN, and TOSTIG.

Edward. In heaven signs !
Signs upon earth ! signs everywhere ! your
priests

Gross, worldly, simoniacal, unlearn'd !
They scarce can read their Psalter ; and
your churches

Uncouth, unhandsome, while in Norman-
land ⁸⁹

God speaks thro' abler voices, as He dwells
In stately shrines. I say not this, as
being

Half Norman-blooded, nor, as some have
held,

Because I love the Norman better — no,
But dreading God's revenge upon this
realm

For narrowness and coldness ; and I say it
For the last time perchance, before I go
To find the sweet refreshment of the
Saints.

I have lived a life of utter purity ;

I have builded the great church of Holy Peter;

I have wrought miracles — to God the glory! —

And miracles will in my name be wrought Hereafter. — I have fought the fight and go —

I see the flashing of the gates of pearl — And it is well with me, tho' some of you Have scorn'd me — ay — but after I am gone

Woe, woe to England! I have had a vision;

The Seven Sleepers in the cave at Ephesus Have turn'd from right to left.

Harold. My most dear master, What matters? let them turn from left to right

And sleep again.

Tostig. Too hardy with thy King! A life of prayer and fasting well may see Deeper into the mysteries of heaven ¹¹² Than thou, good brother.

Aldwyth (aside). Sees he into thine, That thou wouldst have his promise for the crown?

Edward. Tostig says true; my son, thou art too hard,

Not stagger'd by this ominous earth and heaven;

But heaven and earth are threads of the same loom,

Play into one another, and weave the web That may confound thee yet.

Harold. Nay, I trust not, For I have served thee long and honestly.

Edward. I know it, son; I am not thankless; thou ¹²¹

Hast broken all my foes, lighten'd for me The weight of this poor crown, and left me time

And peace for prayer to gain a better one. Twelve years of service! England loves thee for it.

Thou art the man to rule her!

Aldwyth (aside). So, not Tostig!

Harold. And after those twelve years a boon, my King,

Respite, a holiday, — thyself wast wont To love the chase, — thy leave to set my feet

On board, and hunt and hawk beyond the seas!

Edward. What, with this flaming horror overhead? ¹³¹

Harold. Well, when it passes then.

Edward. Ay, if it pass. Go not to Normandy — go not to Normandy.

Harold. And wherefore not, my King, to Normandy?

Is not my brother Wulfnoth hostage there For my dead father's loyalty to thee?

I pray thee, let me hence and bring him home.

Edward. Not thee, my son; some other messenger.

Harold. And why not me, my lord, to Normandy? ¹³⁹

Is not the Norman Count thy friend and mine?

Edward. I pray thee, do not go to Normandy.

Harold. Because my father drove the Normans out Of England? — That was many a summer gone —

Forgotten and forgiven by them and thee.

Edward. Harold, I will not yield thee leave to go.

Harold. Why, then to Flanders. I will hawk and hunt

In Flanders.

Edward. Be there not fair woods and fields

In England? Wilful, wilful! Go — the Saints

Pilot and prosper all thy wandering out ¹⁴⁹ And homeward! — Tostig, I am faint again. —

Son Harold, I will in and pray for thee.

[*Exit, leaning on Tostig, and followed by Stigand, Morcar, and Courtiers.*]

Harold. What lies upon the mind of our good King,

That he should harp this way on Normandy?

Queen. Brother, the King is wiser than he seems;

And Tostig knows it; Tostig loves the King.

Harold. And love should know; and — be the King so wise, —

Then Tostig too were wiser than he seems. I love the man, but not his phantasies.

Re-enter TOSTIG.

Well, brother, When didst thou hear from thy Northumbria?

Tostig. When did I hear aught but this
'When' from thee? ¹⁶⁰
Leave me alone, brother, with my North-
umbria;
She is my mistress, let me look to her!
The King hath made me earl; make me not
fool!
Nor make the King a fool, who made me
earl!
Harold. No, *Tostig*—lest I make my-
self a fool
Who made the King who made thee make
thee earl.
Tostig. Why chafe me then? Thou
knowest I soon go wild.
Gurth. Come, come! as yet thou art not
gone so wild
But thou canst hear the best and wisest of
us.
Harold. So says old *Gurth*, not I; yet
hear! thine earldom, ¹⁷⁰
Tostig, hath been a kingdom. Their old
crown
Is yet a force among them, a sun set
But leaving light enough for *Alfgar*'s
house
To strike thee down by—nay, this ghastly
glare
May heat their fancies.
Tostig. My most worthy brother,
Thou art the quietest man in all the
world—
Ay, ay, and wise in peace and great in
war—
Pray God the people choose thee for their
king!
But all the powers of the house of *God-
win*
Are not enframed in thee.
Harold. Thank the Saints, no!
But thou hast drain'd them shallow by thy
tolls, ¹⁸¹
And thou art ever here about the King.
Thine absence well may seem a want of
care.
Cling to their love; for, now the sons of
Godwin
Sit topmost in the field of England, envy,
Like the rough bear beneath the tree, good
brother,
Waits till the man let go.
Tostig. Good counsel truly!
I heard from my Northumbria yesterday.
Harold. How goes it then with thy
Northumbria? Well?

Tostig. And wouldst thou that it went
ought else than well? ¹⁹⁰
Harold. I would it went as well as with
mine earldom,
Leofwin's and *Gurth*'s.
Tostig. Ye govern milder men.
Gurth. We have made them milder by
just government.
Tostig. Ay, ever give yourselves your
own good word.
Leofwin. An honest gift, by all the
Saints, if giver
And taker be but honest! but they bribe
Each other, and so often, an honest world
Will not believe them.
Harold. I may tell thee, *Tostig*,
I heard from thy Northumberland to-day.
Tostig. From spies of thine to spy my
nakedness ²⁰⁰
In my poor North.
Harold. There is a movement there,
A blind one—nothing yet.
Tostig. Crush it at once
With all the power I have!—I must—I
will!—
Crush it half-born! Fool still? or wisdom
there,
My wise head-shaking *Harold*?
Harold. Make not thou
The nothing something. Wisdom when in
power
And wisest should not frown as Power, but
smile
As kindness, watching all, till the true *must*
Shall make her strike as Power: but when
to strike— ²⁰⁹
O *Tostig*, O dear brother—if they prance,
Rcin in, not lash them, lest they rear and
run
And break both neck and axle.
Tostig. Good again!
Good counsel tho' scarce needed. Pour
not water
In the full vessel running out at top
To swamp the house.
Leofwin. Nor thou be a wild thing
Out of the waste, to turn and bite the hand
Would help thee from the trap.
Tostig. Thou playest in tune.
Leofwin. To the deaf adder thee, that
will not dance
However wisely charm'd.
Tostig. No more, no more!
Gurth. I likewise cry 'no more.' Un-
wholesome talk ²²⁰

For Godwin's house ! Leofwin, thou hast a tongue !

Tostig, thou look'st as thou wouldst spring upon him.

Saint Olaf, not while I am by ! Come, come,

Join hands, let brethren dwell in unity ;
Let kith and kin stand close as our shield-wall,

Who breaks us then ? I say, thou hast a tongue,

And Tostig is not stout enough to hear it.
Vex him not, Leofwin.

Tostig. No, I am not vext, —
Altho' ye seek to vex me, one and all.

I have to make report of my good earl-
dom

To the good King who gave it — not to
you —

Not any of you. — I am not vext at all.

Harold. The King ? the King is ever at
his prayers ;

In all that handles matter of the state
I am the King.

Tostig. That shalt thou never be
if I can thwart thee.

Harold. Brother, brother !

Tostig. Away !
[*Exit* Tostig.]

Queen. Spite of this grisly star ye three
must gall

Poor Tostig.

Leofwin. Tostig, sister, galls himself ;
He cannot smell a rose but pricks his nose
Against the thorn, and rails against the
rose.

Queen. I am the only rose of all the
stock

That never thorn'd him ; Edward loves
him, so

Ye hate him. Harold always hated him.

Why — how they fought when boys — and,
Holy Mary !

How Harold used to beat him !

Harold. Why, boys will fight.
Leofwin would often fight me, and I beat

him.
Even old Gurth would fight. I had much

ado
To hold mine own against old Gurth. Old

Gurth,
We fought like great States for grave
cause ; but Tostig —

On a sudden — at a something — for a no-
thing —

The boy would fist me hard, and when we
fought

I conquer'd, and he loved me none the less,
Till thou wouldst get him all apart, and
tell him

That where he was but worsted he was
wrong'd.

Ah ! thou hast taught the King to spoil
him too ;

Now the spoilt child sways both. Take
heed, take heed ;

Thou art the Queen ; ye are boy and girl
no more.

Side not with Tostig in any violence,
Lest thou be sideways guilty of the vio-
lence.

Queen. Come, fall not foul on me. I
leave thee, brother.

Harold. Nay, my good sister —
[*Exeunt* Queen, Harold, Gurth, and
Leofwin.]

Aldwyth. Gamel, son of Orm,
What thinkest thou this means ?

Gamel. [Pointing to the comet.]
War, my dear lady,

War, waste, plague, famine, all malignities.

Aldwyth. It means the fall of Tostig
from his earldom.

Gamel. That were too small a matter
for a comet !

Aldwyth. It means the lifting of the
house of Alfgar.

Gamel. Too small ! a comet would not
show for that !

Aldwyth. Not small for thee, if thou
canst compass it.

Gamel. Thy love ?

Aldwyth. As much as I can give thee,
man ;

This Tostig is, or like to be, a tyrant. 270
Stir up thy people ; oust him !

Gamel. And thy love ?
Aldwyth. As much as thou canst bear.

Gamel. I can bear all,
And not be giddy.

Aldwyth. No more now ; to-morrow.

SCENE II

IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S HOUSE
NEAR LONDON. SUNSET

Edith. Mad for thy mate, passionate
nightingale ! —

I love thee for it — ay, but stay a moment ;

He can but stay a moment; he is going.
I fain would hear him coming! — near
me — near,
Somewhere — to draw him nearer with a
charm
Like thine to thine!

(Singing.)

Love is come with a song and a smile,
Welcome Love with a smile and a song.
Love can stay but a little while.
Why cannot he stay? They call him away.
Ye do him wrong, ye do him wrong; 11
Love will stay for a whole life long.

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. The nightingales in Havering-
atte-Bower
Sang out their loves so loud that Edward's
prayers
Were deafen'd and he pray'd them dumb,
and thus
I dumb thee too, my wingless nightingale!

[Kissing her.

Edith. Thou art my music! Would
their wings were mine
To follow thee to Flanders! Must thou
go?

Harold. Not must, but will. It is but
for one moon.

Edith. Leaving so many foes in Ed-
ward's hall 20
To league against thy weal. The Lady
Aldwyth
Was here to-day, and when she touch'd on
thee

She stammer'd in her hate; I am sure she
hates thee,
Pants for thy blood.

Harold. Well, I have given her cause —
I fear no woman.

Edith. Hate not one who felt
Some pity for thy hater! I am sure
Her morning wanted sunlight, she so
praised
The convent and lone life — within the
pale —

Beyond the passion. Nay — she held with
Edward,
At least methought she held with holy Ed-
ward, 30
That marriage was half sin.

Harold. A lesson worth
Finger and thumb — thus (snaps his fin-
gers).

And my answer to it —

See here — an interwoven H and E!
Take thou this ring; I will demand his
ward
From Edward when I come again. Ay,
would she?

She to shut up my blossom in the dark!
Thou art my nun, thy cloister in mine
arms.

Edith (taking the ring). Yea, but Earl
Tostig —

Harold. That's a truer fear!
For if the North take fire, I should be back;
I shall be, soon enough.

Edith. Ay, but last night
An evil dream that ever came and went —

Harold. A gnat that vex't thy pillow!
Had I been by, 42
I would have spoil'd his horn. My girl,
what was it?

Edith. O that thou wert not going!
For so methought it was our marriage-
morn,

And while we stood together, a dead man
Rose from behind the altar, tore away
My marriage ring, and rent my bridal
veil;

And then I turn'd, and saw the church all
fill'd

With dead men upright from their graves,
and all 50

The dead men made at thee to murder
thee,

But thou didst back thyself against a pillar,
And strike among them with thy battle-
axe —

There, what a dream!

Harold. Well, well — a dream — no
more!

Edith. Did not Heaven speak to men in
dreams of old?

Harold. Ay — well — of old. I tell thee
what, my child;

Thou hast misread this merry dream of
thine,

Taken the rifted pillars of the wood
For smooth stone columns of the sanctuary,
The shadows of a hundred fat dead deer 60
For dead men's ghosts. True, that the
battle-axe

Was out of place; it should have been the
bow. —

Come, thou shalt dream no more such
dreams; I swear it,

By mine own eyes — and these two sap-
phires — these

Twin rubies, that are amulets against all
The kisses of all kind of womankind
In Flanders, till the sea shall roll me
back

To tumble at thy feet.

Edith. That would but shame me,
Rather than make me vain. The sea may
roll

Sand, shingle, shore-weed, not the living
rock 70

Which guards the land.

Harold. Except it be a soft one,
And under-eaten to the fall. Mine amu-
let —

This last — upon thine eyelids, to shut in
A happier dream. Sleep, sleep, and thou
shalt see

My greyhounds fleeting like a beam of
light,

And hear my peregrine and her bells in
heaven;

And other bells on earth, which yet are
heaven's;

Guess what they be.

Edith. He cannot guess who knows.
Farewell, my king.

Harold. Not yet, but then — my queen.
[*Exeunt.*]

Enter ALDWYTH from the thicket.

Aldwyth. The kiss that charms thine eye-
lids into sleep 80

Will hold mine waking. Hate him? I
could love him

More, tenfold, than this fearful child can
do;

Griffyth I hated; why not hate the foe
Of England? Griffyth, when I saw him
flee,

Chased deer-like up his mountains, all the
blood

That should have only pulsed for Griffyth
beat

For his pursuer. I love him, or think I
love him.

If he were King of England, I his queen,
I might be sure of it. Nay, I do love
him. —

She must be cloister'd somehow, lest the
king 90

Should yield his ward to Harold's will.
What harm?

She hath but blood enough to live, not
love. —

When Harold goes and Tostig, shall I play

The craftier Tostig with him? fawn upon
him?

Chime in with all? 'O thou more saint
than king!'

And that were true enough. 'O blessed
relics!'

'O Holy Peter!' If he found me thus;
Harold might hate me; he is broad and
honest,

Breathing an easy gladness — not like Ald-
wyth —

For which I strangely love him. Should
not England 100

Love Aldwyth, if she stay the feuds that
part

The sons of Godwin from the sons of Alf-
gar

By such a marrying? Courage, noble Ald-
wyth!

Let all thy people bless thee!

Our wild Tostig,
Edward hath made him earl; he would be
king.

The dog that snapt the shadow dropt the
bone.

I trust he may do well, this Gamel, whom
I play upon, that he may play the note

Whereat the dog shall howl and run, and
Harold

Hear the King's music, all alone with him,
Pronounced his heir of England. 111

I see the goal and half the way to it. —
Peace-lover is our Harold for the sake

Of England's wholeness — so — to shake
the North

With earthquake and disruption — some
division —

Then fling mine own fair person in the gap
A sacrifice to Harold, a peace-offering,

A scapegoat marriage — all the sins of
both

The houses on mine head — then a fair
life 119

And bless the Queen of England!

Morcar (coming from the thicket). Art
thou assured

By this, that Harold loves but Edith?

Aldwyth. Morcar!
Why creep'st thou like a timorous beast of
prey

Out of the bush by night?

Morcar. I follow'd thee.
Aldwyth. Follow my lead, and I will
make thee earl.

Morcar. What lead then?

Aldwyth. Thou shalt flash it secretly
Among the good Northumbrian folk,
that I —

That Harold loves me — yea, and presently
That I and Harold are betroth'd — and
last —

Perchance that Harold wrongs me ; tho' I
would not 129

That it should come to that.

Morcar. I will both flash
And thunder for thee.

Aldwyth. I said 'secretly ;'
It is the flash that murders, the poor thun-
der

Never harm'd head.

Morcar. But thunder may bring down
That which the flash hath stricken.

Aldwyth. Down with Tostig !
That first of all. — And when doth Harold
go ?

Morcar. To-morrow — first to Bosham,
then to Flanders.

Aldwyth. Not to come back till Tostig
shall have shown

And redden'd with his people's blood the
teeth

That shall be broken by us — yea, and thou
Chair'd in his place. Good - night, and
dream thyself 140

Their chosen earl. [*Exit Aldwyth.*]

Morcar. Earl first, and after that
Who knows I may not dream myself their
king ?

ACT II

SCENE I. — SEASHORE. PONTHEIU.
NIGHT

HAROLD and his MEN, wrecked.

Harold. Friends, in that last inhospitable
plunge
Our boat hath burst her ribs ; but ours are
whole ;

I have but bark'd my hands.

Attendant. I dug mine into
My old fast friend the shore, and clinging
thus

Felt the remorseless outdraught of the deep
Haul like a great strong fellow at my legs,
And then I rose and ran. The blast that
came

So suddenly hath fallen as suddenly —

Put thou the comet and this blast to-
gether —

Harold. Put thou thyself and mother-
wit together. 10

Be not a fool !

*Enter FISHERMEN with torches, HAROLD
going up to one of them, ROLF.*

Wicked sea-will-o'-the-wisp !
Wolf of the shore ! dog, with thy lying
lights

Thou hast betray'd us on these rocks of
thine !

Rolf. Ay, but thou liest as loud as the
black herring-pond behind thee. We be
fishermen ; I came to see after my nets.

Harold. To drag us into them. Fish-
men ? devils !

Who, while ye fish for men with your false
fires,

Let the great devil fish for your own souls.

Rolf. Nay then, we be liker the blessed
Apostles ; they were fishers of men, Father
Jean says. 22

Harold. I had liefer that the fish had
swallowed me,

Like Jonah, than have known there were
such devils.

What's to be done ?

[*To his Men — goes apart with them.*]

Fisherman. Rolf, what fish did swallow
Jonah ?

Rolf. A whale !

Fisherman. Then a whale to a whelk we
have swallowed the King of England. I
saw him over there. Look thee, Rolf, when
I was down in the fever, she was down with
the hunger, and thou didst stand by her and
give her thy crabs, and set her up again,
till now, by the patient Saints, she's as
crabb'd as ever.

Rolf. And I'll give her my crabs again,
when thou art down again. 38

Fisherman. I thank thee, Rolf. Run
thou to Count Guy ; he is hard at hand.
Tell him what hath crept into our creel, and
he will fee thee as freely as he will wrench
this outlander's ransom out of him — and
why not ? for what right had he to get
himself wrecked on another man's land ?

Rolf. Thou art the human-heartedest,
Christian - charitiest of all crab - catchers.
Share and share alike ! [*Exit.*]

Harold (to' Fisherman). Fellow, dost
thou catch crabs ? 49

Fisherman. As few as I may in a wind,
and less than I would in a calm. Ay!

Harold. I have a mind that thou shalt
catch no more.

Fisherman. How?

Harold. I have a mind to brain thee with
mine axe.

Fisherman. Ay, do, do, and our great
count-crab will make his nippers meet in
thine heart; he'll sweat it out of thee, he'll
sweat it out of thee! Look, he's here!
He'll speak for himself. Hold thine own,
if thou canst! 60

Enter GUY, COUNT OF PONTIEU.

Harold. Guy, Count of Ponthieu?

Guy. Harold, Earl of Wessex!

Harold. Thy villains with their lying
lights have wreck'd us!

Guy. Art thou not Earl of Wessex?

Harold. In mine earldom
A man may hang gold bracelets on a bush,
And leave them for a year, and coming
back
Find them again.

Guy. Thou art a mighty man
In thine own earldom!

Harold. Were such murderous liars
In Wessex—if I caught them, they should
hang
Cliff-gibbeted for sea-marks, our sea-mew
Winging their only wail!

Guy. Ay, but my men
Hold that the shipwreckt are accursed of
God;— 71
What hinders me to hold with mine own
men?

Harold. The Christian manhood of the
man who reigns!

Guy. Ay, rave thy worst, but in our
oubliettes
Thou shalt or rot or ransom.—Hale him
hence! [*To one of his Attendants.*
Fly thou to William; tell him we have
Harold.

SCENE II

BAYEUX. PALACE

COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM MALET.

William. We hold our Saxon woodcock
in the springe,
But he begins to flutter. As I think

He was thine host in England when I
went
To visit Edward.

Malet. Yea, and there, my lord,
To make allowance for their rougher fash-
ious,

I found him all a noble host should be.

William. Thou art his friend. Thou
know'st my claim on England
Thro' Edward's promise. We have him in
the toils;

And it were well if thou shouldst let him
feel

How dense a fold of danger nets him
round, 10

So that he bristle himself against my will.

Malet. What would I do, my lord, if I
were you?

William. What wouldst thou do?

Malet. My lord, he is thy guest.

William. Nay, by the splendor of God,
no guest of mine.

He came not to see me, had past me by
To hunt and hawk elsewhere, save for the
fate

Which hunted *him* when that un-Saxon
blast,

And bolts of thunder moulded in high
heaven

To serve the Norman purpose, drave and
crack'd

His boat on Ponthieu beach; where our
friend Guy 20

Had wrung his ransom from him by the
rack,

But that I stept between and purchased
him,

Translating his captivity from Guy
To mine own hearth at Bayeux, where he
sits

My ransom'd prisoner.

Malet. Well, if not with gold,
With golden deeds and iron strokes that
brought

Thy war with Brittany to a goodlier close
Than else had been, he paid his ransom
back.

William. So that henceforth they are
not like to league

With Harold against me.

Malet. A marvel, how
He from the liquid sands of Coesnon 31
Haled thy shore-swallow'd, armor'd Nor-
mans up

To fight for thee again!

William. Perchance against
Their savor, save thou save him from him-
self.

Malet. But I should let him home again,
my lord.

William. Simple ! let fly the bird within
the hand,

To catch the bird again within the bush !
No.

Smooth thou my way, before he clash with
me; 39

I want his voice in England for the crown,
I want thy voice with him to bring him
round;

And being brave he must be subtly cow'd,
And being truthful wrought upon to swear
Vows that he dare not break. England
our own

Thro' Harold's help, he shall be my dear
friend

As well as thine, and thou thyself shalt
have

Large lordship there of lands and territory.

Malet. I knew thy purpose; he and
Wulfnoth never

Have met, except in public; shall they
meet

In private ? I have often talk'd with
Wulfnoth, 50

And stuff'd the boy with fears, that these
may act

On Harold when they meet.

William. Then let them meet !

Malet. I can but love this noble, honest
Harold.

William. Love him ! why not ? thine is
a loving office,

I have commission'd thee to save the man.
Help the good ship, showing the sunken
rock,

Or he is wreckt for ever.

Enter WILLIAM RUFUS.

William Rufus. Father.

William. Well, boy.

William Rufus. They have taken away
the toy thou gavest me,

The Norman knight.

William. Why, boy ?

William Rufus. Because I broke

The horse's leg — it was mine own to
break; 60

I like to have my toys, and break them too.

William. Well, thou shalt have another
Norman knight.

William Rufus. And may I break his
legs ?

William. Yea, — get thee gone !

William Rufus. I'll tell them I have
had my way with thee. [*Exit.*

Malet. I never knew thee check thy will
for aught

Save for the prattling of thy little ones.

William. Who shall be kings of Eng-
land. I am heir

Of England by the promise of her king.

Malet. But there the great Assembly
choose their king, 69

The choice of England is the voice of
England.

William. I will be King of England by
the laws,

The choice, and voice of England.

Malet. Can that be ?

William. The voice of any people is the
sword

That guards them, or the sword that beats
them down.

Here comes the would-be what I will
be — kinglike . . .

Tho' scarce at ease; for, save our meshes
break,

More kinglike he than like to prove a king.

*Enter HAROLD, musing, with his eyes on the
ground.*

He sees me not — and yet he dreams of me.
Earl, wilt thou fly my falcons this fair day ?

They are of the best, strong-wing'd against
the wind. 80

*Harold (looking up suddenly, having caught
but the last word).* Which way does
it blow ?

William. Blowing for England, ha ?
Not yet. Thou hast not learnt thy quarters
here.

The winds so cross and jostle among these
towers.

Harold. Count of the Normans, thou hast
ransom'd us,

Maintain'd, and entertain'd us royally !

William. And thou for us hast fought as
loyally,

Which binds us friendship-fast for ever !

Harold. Good !

But lest we turn the scale of courtesy
By too much pressure on it, I would fain,

Since thou hast promised Wulfnoth home
with us, 90

Be home again with Wulfnoth.

William. Stay — as yet
Thou hast but seen how Norman hands can
strike,
But walk'd our Norman field, scarce touch'd
or tasted
The splendors of our court.

Harold. I am in no mood;
I should be as the shadow of a cloud
Crossing your light.

William. Nay, rest a week or two,
And we will fill thee full of Norman sun,
And send thee back among thine island
mists
With laughter.

Harold. Count, I thank thee, but had
rather
Breathe the free wind from off our Saxon
downs,
Tho' charged with all the wet of all the
west.

William. Why if thou wilt, so let it be
— thou shalt.

That were a graceless hospitality
To chain the free guest to the banquet-
board;

To-morrow we will ride with thee to Har-
fleur,

And see thee shipt, and pray in thy behalf
For happier homeward winds than that
which crack'd

Thy bark at Ponthieu, — yet to us, in faith,
A happy one — whereby we came to know
Thy valor and thy value, noble earl.

Ay, and perchance a happy one for thee,
Provided — I will go with thee to-mor-
row —

Nay — but there be conditions, easy ones,
So thou, fair friend, will take them easily.

Enter PAGE.

Page. My lord, there is a post from over
seas

With news for thee. *[Exit Page.]*

William. Come, Malet, let us hear!

[Exeunt Count William and Malet.]
Harold. Conditions? What conditions?
pay him back

His ransom? 'easy' — that were easy —
nay —

No money-lover he! What said the king?
'I pray you do not go to Normandy.'

And fate hath blown me hither, hound me
too

With bitter obligation to the Count —

Have I not fought it out? What did he
mean?

There lodged a gleaming grimness in his
eyes,

Gave his shorn smile the lie. The walls
oppress me,

And you huge keep that hinders half the
heaven.

Free air! free field!

*[Moves to go out. A Man-at-arms fol-
lows him.]*

Harold (to the Man-at-arms). I need thee
not. Why dost thou follow me?

Man-at-arms. I have the Count's com-
mands to follow thee.

Harold. What then? Am I in danger
in this court?

Man-at-arms. I cannot tell. I have the
Count's commands.

Harold. Stand out of earshot then, and
keep me still

In eyeshot.

Man-at-arms. Yea, lord Harold.

Harold. *[Withdraws.]*
And arm'd men

Ever keep watch beside my chamber door,
And if I walk within the lonely wood,

There is an arm'd man ever glides behind!

Enter MALET.

Why am I follow'd, haunted, harass'd,
watch'd?

See yonder!

[Pointing to the Man-at-arms.]

Malet. 'T is the good Count's care for
thee!

The Normans love thee not, nor thou the
Normans,

Or — so they deem.

Harold. But wherefore is the wind,
Which way soever the vane-arrow swing,

Not ever fair for England? Why, but
now

He said — thou heard'st him — that I must
not hence

Save on conditions.

Malet. So in truth he said.

Harold. Malet, thy mother was an Eng-
lishwoman;

There somewhere beats an English pulse
in thee!

Malet. Well — for my mother's sake I
love your England,

But for my father I love Normandy.

Harold. Speak for thy mother's sake,
and tell me true.

Malet. Then for my mother's sake, and
England's sake

That suffers in the daily want of thee, 15
Obey the Count's conditions, my good
friend.

Harold. How, Malet, if they be not
honorable!

Malet. Seem to obey them.

Harold. Better die than lie!

Malet. Choose therefore whether thou
wilt have thy conscience

White as a maiden's hand, or whether Eng-
land

Be shatter'd into fragments.

Harold. News from England?

Malet. Morcar and Edwin have stirr'd
up the thanes

Against thy brother Tostig's governance;
And all the North of Humber is one storm.

Harold. I should be there, Malet, I
should be there! 161

Malet. And Tostig in his own hall on
suspicion

Hath massacred the thane that was his
guest,

Gamel, the son of Orm; and there be more
As villainously slain.

Harold. The wolf! the beast!
Ill news for guests, ha, Malet! More?
What more?

What do they say? did Edward know of
this?

Malet. They say his wife was knowing
and abetting.

Harold. They say his wife! — To marry
and have no husband

Makes the wife fool. My God, I should be
there! 170

I'll hack my way to the sea.

Malet. Thou canst not, Harold;
Our duke is all between thee and the
sea,

Our duke is all about thee like a God;
All passes block'd. Obey him, speak him
fair,

For he is only debonair to those
That follow where he leads, but stark as
death

To those that cross him. — Look thou,
here is Wulfnoth!

I leave thee to thy talk with him alone;
How wan, poor lad! how sick and sad for
home!

[*Exit* Malet.]

Harold (*muttering*). Go not to Nor-
mandy — go not to Normandy! 180

Enter WULFNOTH.

Poor brother! still a hostage!

Wulfnoth. Yea, and I
Shall see the dewy kiss of dawn no more
Make blush the maiden-white of our tall
cliffs,

Nor mark the sea-bird rouse himself and
hover

Above the windy ripple, and fill the sky
With free sea-laughter — never — save in-
deed

Thou canst make yield this iron-mooded
duke

To let me go.

Harold. Why, brother, so he will;
But on conditions. Canst thou guess at
them?

Wulfnoth. Draw nearer, — I was in the
corridor, 190

I saw him coming with his brother Odo
The Bayeux bishop, and I hid myself.

Harold. They did thee wrong who made
thee hostage; thou
Wast ever fearful.

Wulfnoth. And he spoke — I heard him —
'This Harold is not of the royal blood,
Can have no right to the crown;' and Odo
said,

'Thine is the right, for thine the might;
he is here,
And yonder is thy keep.'

Harold. No, Wulfnoth, no!
Wulfnoth. And William laugh'd and
swore that might was right,

Far as he knew in this poor world of
ours — 200

'Marry, the Saints must go along with us,
And, brother, we will find a way,' said
he —

Yea, yea, he would be King of England.

Harold. Never!
Wulfnoth. Yea, but thou must not this
way answer him.

Harold. Is it not better still to speak the
truth?

Wulfnoth. Not here, or thou wilt never
hence nor I;

For in the racing toward this golden goal
He turns not right or left, but tramples
flat

Whate'er thwarts him; hast thou never
heard

His savagery at Alençon, — the town
Hung out raw hides along their walls, and
cried,

‘Work for the tanner.’

Harold. That had anger’d me
Had I been William.

Wulfnoth. Nay, but he had prisoners,
He tore their eyes out, sliced their hands
away,
And flung them streaming o’er the battle-
ments

Upon the heads of those who walk’d
within —

O, speak him fair, Harold, for thine own
sake !

Harold. Your Welshman says, ‘The
Truth against the World,’
Much more the truth against myself.

Wulfnoth. Thyself ?
But for my sake, O brother ! O, for my
sake !

Harold. Poor Wulfnoth ! do they not en-
treat thee well ?

Wulfnoth. I see the blackness of my dun-
geon loom
Across their lamps of revel, and beyond
The merriest murmurs of their banquet
clank

The shackles that will bind me to the wall.
Harold. Too fearful still.

Wulfnoth. O, no, no — speak him fair !
Call it to temporize, and not to lie ;
Harold, I do not counsel thee to lie.
The man that hath to foil a murderous
aim

May, surely, play with words.

Harold. Words are the man.
Not even for thy sake, brother, would I lie.

Wulfnoth. Then for thine Edith ?

Harold. There thou prick’st me deep.

Wulfnoth. And for our Mother Eng-
land ?

Harold. Deeper still.

Wulfnoth. And deeper still the deep-
down oubliette,
Down thirty feet below the smiling day —
In blackness — dogs’ food thrown upon thy
head.

And over thee the suns arise and set,
And the lark sings, the sweet stars come
and go,

And men are at their markets, in their
fields,

And woo their loves and have forgotten
thee ;

And thou art upright in thy living grave,
Where there is barely room to shift thy
side,

And all thine England hath forgotten thee ;
And he our lazy-pious Norman King,
With all his Normans round him once
again,

Counts his old beads, and hath forgotten
thee.

Harold. Thou art of my blood, and so me-
thinks, my boy,

Thy fears infect me beyond reason. Peace !
Wulfnoth. And then our fiery Tostig,

while thy hands
Are palsied here, if his Northumbrians
rise

And hurl him from them, — I have heard
the Normans

Count upon this confusion — may he not
make

A league with William, so to bring him
back ?

Harold. That lies within the shadow of
the chance.

Wulfnoth. And like a river in flood thro’
a burst dam

Descends the ruthless Norman — our good
King

Kneels mumbling some old bone — our
helpless folk

Are wash’d away, wailing, in their own
blood —

Harold. Wailing ! not warring ? Boy,
thou hast forgotten

That thou art English.

Wulfnoth. Then our modest women —
I know the Norman license — thine own
Edith —

Harold. No more ! I will not hear thee
— William comes.

Wulfnoth. I dare not well be seen in
talk with thee.

Make thou not mention that I spake with
thee.

[*Moves away to the back of the stage.*]

Enter WILLIAM, MALET, and OFFICER.

Officer. We have the man that rail’d
against thy birth.

William. Tear out his tongue.

Officer. He shall not rail again.
He said that he should see confusion fall
On thee and on thine house.

William. Tear out his eyes,
And plunge him into prison.

Officer. It shall be done.
 [Exit Officer.]

William. Look not amazed, fair earl!
 Better leave undone ²⁷⁰
 Than do by halves — tongueless and eye-
 less, prison'd —

Harold. Better methinks have slain the
 man at once!

William. We have respect for man's im-
 mortal soul,
 We seldom take man's life, except in
 war;
 It frights the traitor more to maim and
 blind.

Harold. In mine own land I should have
 scorn'd the man,
 Or lash'd his rascal back, and let him go.

William. And let him go? To slander
 thee again!

Yet in thine own land in thy father's day
 They blinded my young kinsman, Alfred
 — ay, ²⁸⁰

Some said it was thy father's deed.

Harold. They lied.

William. But thou and he — whom at
 thy word, for thou
 Art known a speaker of the truth, I free
 From this foul charge —

Harold. Nay, nay, he freed himself
 By oath and compurgation from the charge.
 The King, the lords, the people clear'd him
 of it.

William. But thou and he drove our
 good Normans out
 From England, and this rankles in us yet.
 Archbishop Robert hardly escaped with
 life.

Harold. Archbishop Robert! Robert the
 Archbishop! ²⁹⁰

Robert of Jumièges, he that —

Malet. Quiet! quiet!

Harold. Count! if there sat within the
 Norman chair
 A ruler all for England — one who fill'd
 All offices, all bishoprics with English —
 We could not move from Dover to the
 Humber
 Saving thro' Norman bishoprics — I say
 Ye would applaud that Norman who should
 drive
 The stranger to the fiends!

William. Why, that is reason!
 Warrior thou art, and mighty wise withal!
 Ay, ay, hut many among our Norman
 lords ³⁰⁰

Hate thee for this, and press upon me —
 saying
 God and the sea have given thee to our
 hands —

To plunge thee into lifelong prison here; —
 Yet I hold out against them, as I may,
 Yea — would hold out, yea, tho' they should
 revolt —

For thou hast done the battle in my cause.
 I am thy fastest friend in Normandy.

Harold. I am doubly bound to thee — if
 this be so.

William. And I would bind thee more,
 and would myself ³⁰⁹

Be bounden to thee more.

Harold. Then let me hence
 With Wulfnoth to King Edward.

William. So we will.

We hear he hath not long to live.

Harold. It may be.

William. Why then, the heir of England,
 who is he?

Harold. The Atheling is nearest to the
 throne.

William. But sickly, slight, half-witted
 and a child,
 Will England have him king?

Harold. It may be, no.

William. And hath King Edward not
 pronounced his heir?

Harold. Not that I know.

William. When he was here in Nor-
 mandy,
 He loved us and we him, because we found
 him ³¹⁹

A Norman of the Normans.

Harold. So did we.

William. A gentle, gracious, pure and
 saintly man!

And grateful to the hand that shielded
 him,

He promised that if ever he were king
 In England, he would give his kingly voice
 To me as his successor. Knowest thou
 this?

Harold. I learn it now.

William. Thou knowest I am his cousin,
 And that my wife descends from Alfred?

Harold. Ay.

William. Who hath a better claim then
 to the crown?

So that ye will not crown the Atheling?

Harold. None that I know — if that but
 hung upon ³³⁰
 King Edward's will.

William. Wilt thou uphold my claim ?
Malet (aside to Harold). Be careful of
 thine answer, my good friend.
Wulfnoth (aside to Harold). O Harold,
 for my sake and for thine own !
Harold. Ay . . . if the King have not
 revoked his promise.
William. But hath he done it then ?
Harold. Not that I know.
William. Good, good, and thou wilt help
 me to the crown ?
Harold. Ay — if the Witan will consent
 to this.
William. Thou art the mightiest voice in
 England, man,
 Thy voice will lead the Witan — shall I
 have it ?
Wulfnoth (aside to Harold). O Harold,
 if thou love thine Edith, ay. 340
Harold. Ay, if —
Malet (aside to Harold). Thine 'ifs' will
 sear thine eyes out — ay.
William. I ask thee, wilt thou help me
 to the crown ?
 And I will make thee my great earl of
 earls,
 Foremost in England and in Normandy;
 Thou shalt be verily king — all but the
 name —
 For I shall most sojourn in Normandy;
 And thou be my vice-king in England.
 Speak.
Wulfnoth (aside to Harold). Ay, brother
 — for the sake of England — ay.
Harold. My lord —
Malet (aside to Harold). Take heed now.
Harold. Ay.
William. I am content,
 For thou art truthful, and thy word thy
 bond. 350
 To-morrow will we ride with thee to Har-
 fleur. [*Exit William.*]
Malet. Harold, I am thy friend, one life
 with thee,
 And even as I should bless thee saving
 mine,
 I thank thee now for having saved thyself.
 [*Exit Malet.*]
Harold. For having lost myself to save
 myself,
 Said 'ay' when I meant 'no,' lied like a lad
 That dreads the pendent scourge, said 'ay'
 for 'no' !
 Ay ! No ! — he hath not bound me by an
 oath —

Is 'ay' an oath ? is 'ay' strong as an
 oath ?
 Or is it the same sin to break my word 360
 As break mine oath ? He call'd my word
 my bond !
 He is a liar who knows I am a liar,
 And makes believe that he believes my
 word —
 The crime be on his head — not bounden
 — no.

[*Suddenly doors are flung open, discover-
 ing in an inner hall Count William
 in his state robes, seated upon his
 throne, between two Bishops, Odo of
 Bayeux being one; in the centre of the
 hall an ark covered with cloth of gold,
 and on either side of it the Norman
 Barons.*]

Enter a JAILOR before WILLIAM'S throne.

William (to Jailor). Knave, hast thou let
 thy prisoner scape ?

Jailor. Sir Count,
 He had but one foot, he must have hopt
 away,
 Yea, some familiar spirit must have help'd
 him.

William. Woe, knave, to thy familiar
 and to thee !

Give me thy keys. [*They fall clashing.*]
 Nay, let them lie. Stand there and wait
 my will. [*The Jailor stands aside.*]

William (to Harold). Hast thou such
 trustless jailors in thy North ? 371

Harold. We have few prisoners in mine
 earldom there,
 So less chance for false keepers.

William. We have heard
 Of thy just, mild, and equal governance;
 Honor to thee ! thou art perfect in all
 honor !

Thy naked word thy bond ! confirm it now
 Before our gather'd Norman baronage,
 For they will not believe thee — as I be-
 lieve.

[*Descends from his throne and stands by
 the ark.*]

Let all men here bear witness of our bond !
 [*Beckons to Harold, who advances.*]

Enter MALET behind him.

Lay thou thy hand upon this golden pall !
 Behold the jewel of Saint Pancratius 381
 Woven into the gold. Swear thou on this !

Harold. What should I swear? Why should I swear on this?

William (savagely). Swear thou to help me to the crown of England.

Malet (whispering Harold). My friend, thou hast gone too far to palter now.

Wulfnoth (whispering Harold). Swear thou to-day, to-morrow is thine own.

Harold. I swear to help thee to the crown of England —

According as King Edward promises.

William. Thou must swear absolutely, noble earl.

Malet (whispering). Delay is death to thee, ruin to England. ³⁹⁰

Wulfnoth (whispering). Swear, dearest brother, I beseech thee, swear!

Harold (putting his hand on the jewel). I swear to help thee to the crown of England.

William. Thanks, truthful earl; I did not doubt thy word,

But that my barons might believe thy word,

And that the Holy Saints of Normandy

When thou art home in England, with thine own,

Might strengthen thee in keeping of thy word,

I made thee swear. Show him by whom he hath sworn.

[*The two Bishops advance, and raise the cloth of gold. The bodies and bones of Saints are seen lying in the ark.*

The holy bones of all the canonized ³⁹⁹

From all the holiest shrines in Normandy!

Harold. Horrible!

[*They let the cloth fall again.*

William. Ay, for thou hast sworn an oath

Which, if not kept, would make the hard earth rive

To the very devil's horns, the bright sky cleave

To the very feet of God, and send her hosts

Of injured Saints to scatter sparks of plague

Thro' all your cities, blast your infants, dash

The torch of war among your standing corn,

Dabble your hearths with your own blood.

— Enough!

Thou wilt not break it! I, the count — the king —

Thy friend — am grateful for thine honest oath, ⁴¹⁰

Not coming fiercely like a conqueror now,

But softly as a bridegroom to his own.

For I shall rule according to your laws,

And make your ever-jarring earldoms move

To music and in order — Angle, Jute, Dane, Saxon, Norman, help to build a throne

Out-towering hers of France. — The wind is fair

For England now. — To-night we will be merry.

To-morrow will I ride with thee to Harfleur.

[*Exeunt William and all the Norman Barons, etc.*

Harold. To-night we will be merry — and to-morrow — ⁴²⁰

Juggler and bastard — bastard — he hates that most —

William the tanner's bastard! Would he heard me!

O God, that I were in some wide, waste field

With nothing but my battle-axe and him

To spatter his brains! Why, let earth rive, gulf in

These cursed Normans — yea, and mine own self!

Cleave heaven, and send thy Saints that I may say

Even to their faces, 'If ye side with William

Ye are not noble!' How their pointed fingers

Glared at me! Am I Harold, Harold, son ⁴³⁰

Of our great Godwin? Lo! I touch mine arms,

My limbs — they are not mine — they are a liar's —

I mean to be a liar — I am not bound —

Stigand shall give me absolution for it —

Did the chest move? did it move? I am utter craven!

O Wulfnoth, Wulfnoth, brother, thou hast betray'd me!

Wulfnoth. Forgive me, brother, I will live here and die.

Enter PAGE.

Page. My lord! the duke awaits thee at the banquet.

Harold. Where they eat dead men's flesh, and drink their blood.

Page. My lord — 440

Harold. I know your Norman cookery is so spiced,
it masks all this.

Page. My lord ! thou art white as death.

Harold. With looking on the dead. Am I so white ?

Thy duke will seem the darker. Hence, I follow. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III

SCENE I. — THE KING'S PALACE.
LONDON

KING EDWARD, dying on a couch, and by him standing the QUEEN, HAROLD, ARCHBISHOP STIGAND, GURTH, LEOFWIN, ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, ALDWYTH, and EDITH.

Stigand. Sleeping or dying there ? If this be death,

Then our great Council wait to crown thee king —

Come hither, I have a power ; [*To Harold.*]

They call me near, for I am close to thee
And England — I, old shrivell'd Stigand, I,
Dry as an old wood-fungus on a dead tree,

I have a power !

See here this little key about my neck !
There lies a treasure buried down in Ely.

If e'er the Norman grow too hard for thee,
Ask me for this at thy most need, son

Harold, 11

At thy most need — not sooner.

Harold. So I will.

Stigand. Red gold — a hundred purses
— yea, and more !

If thou canst make a wholesome use of these

To chink against the Norman, I do believe
My old crook'd spine would bud out two young wings

To fly to heaven straight with.

Harold. Thank thee, father !

Thou art English, Edward too is English now,

He hath clean repented of his Normanism.

Stigand. Ay, as the libertine repents who cannot 20

Make done undone, when thro' his dying sense

Shrills, 'Lost thro' thee !' They have built their castles here ;

Our priories are Norman ; the Norman adder

Hath bitten us ; we are poison'd ; our dear England

Is demi-Norman. He ! — [*Pointing to King Edward, sleeping.*]

Harold. I would I were
As holy and as passionless as he !

That I might rest as calmly ! Look at him —

The rosy face, and long down-silvering beard,

The brows unwrinkled as a summer mere. —

Stigand. A summer mere with sudden wreckful gusts 30

From a side-gorge. Passionless ? How he flamed

When Tostig's anger'd earldom flung him, nay,

He fain had calcined all Northumbria
To one black ash, but that thy patriot passion,

Siding with our great Council against Tostig,

Out-passion'd his ! Holy ? ay, ay, forsooth,
A conscience for his own soul, not his realm ;

A twilight conscience lighted thro' a chink ;
Thine by the sun ; nay, by some sun to be,

When all the world hath learnt to speak the truth, 40

And lying were self-murder by that State
Which was the exception.

Harold. That sun may God speed !

Stigand. Come, Harold, shake the clond off !

Harold. Can I, father ?
Our Tostig parted cursing me and Eng-

land ;
Our sister hates us for his banishment ;

He hath gone to kindle Norway against England,

And Wulfnoth is alone in Normandy.
For when I rode with William down to

Harfleur,
'Wulfnoth is sick,' he said ; 'he cannot fol-

low ;'
Then with that friendly-fiendly smile of

his, 50

' We have learnt to love him, let him a little longer
Remain a hostage for the loyalty
Of Godwin's house.' As far as touches
Wulfnoth
I that so prized plain word and naked truth
Have sinn'd against it — all in vain.
Leofwin. Good brother,
By all the truths that ever priest hath
preach'd,
Of all the lies that ever men have lied,
This is the pardonablest.
Harold. Maybe so !
I think it so, I think I am a fool
To think it can be otherwise than so. 60
Stigand. Tut, tut, I have absolved thee.
Dost thou scorn me,
Because I had my Canterbury pallium
From one whom they dispoped ?
Harold. No, Stigand, no !
Stigand. Is naked truth actable in true
life ?
I have heard a saying of thy father God-
win,
That, were a man of state nakedly true,
Men would but take him for the craftier
liar.
Leofwin. Be men less delicate than the
devil himself ?
I thought that naked Truth would shame
the devil,
The devil is so modest.
Gurth. He never said it !
Leofwin. Be thou not stupid-honest, brother
Gurth ! 71
Harold. Better to be a liar's dog, and
hold
My master honest, than believe that lying
And ruling men are fatal twins that cannot
Move one without the other. Edward
wakes ! —
Dazed — he hath seen a vision.
Edward. The green tree !
Then a great Angel past along the highest
Crying, 'The doom of England !' and at
once
He stood beside me, in his grasp a sword
Of lightnings, wherewithal he cleft the
tree 80
From off the bearing trunk, and hurl'd it
from him
Three fields away, and then he dash'd and
drench'd,
He dyed, he soak'd the trunk with human
blood,

And brought the sunder'd tree again, and
set it
Straight on the trunk, that, thus baptized
in blood,
Grew ever high and higher, beyond my
seeing,
And shot out sidelong boughs across the
deep
That dropt themselves, and rooted in far
isles
Beyond my seeing; and the great Angel
rose 89
And past again along the highest, crying,
'The doom of England !' — Tostig, raise
my head !

[Falls back senseless.

Harold (raising him). Let Harold serve
for Tostig !

Queen. Harold served
Tostig so ill, he cannot serve for Tostig !
Ay, raise his head, for thou hast laid it
low !

The sickness of our saintly King, for whom
My prayers go up as fast as my tears
fall,

I well believe, hath mainly drawn itself
From lack of Tostig — thou hast banish'd
him.

Harold. Nay — but the Council, and the
King himself.

Queen. Thou hatest him, hatest him !

Harold (coldly). Ay — Stigand, unriddle
This vision, canst thou ?

Stigand. Dotage !

Edward (starting up). It is finish'd.

I have built the Lord a house — the Lord
hath dwelt 102
In darkness. I have built the Lord a
house —

Palms, flowers, pomegranates, golden cher-
ubim

With twenty-cubit wings from wall to
wall —

I have built the Lord a house — sing,
Asaph ! clash

The cymbal, Heman ! blow the trumpet,
priest !

Fall, cloud, and fill the house — lo ! my
two pillars,

Jachin and Boaz ! —

[Seeing Harold and Gurth.

Harold, Gurth, — where am I ?
Where is the charter of our Westminster ?

Stigand. It lies beside thee, king, upon
thy bed. 111

Edward. Sign, sign at once — take, sign it, Stigand, Aldred !
Sign it, my good son Harold, Gurth, and Leofwin !
Sign it, my queen !

All. We have sign'd it.
Edward. It is finish'd !

The kingliest abbey in all Christian lands,
The lordliest, loftiest minster ever built
To Holy Peter in our English isle !
Let me be buried there, and all our kings,
And all our just and wise and holy men
That shall be born hereafter. It is finish'd !

Hast thou had absolution for thine oath ?
[To Harold.]

Harold. Stigand hath given me absolution for it.

Edward. Stigand is not canonical enough
To save thee from the wrath of Norman Saints.

Stigand. Normau enough ! Be there no Saints of England
To help us from their brethren yonder ?

Edward. Prelate,
The Saints are one, but those of Normau-land
Are mightier than our own. — Ask it of Aldred.
[To Harold.]

Aldred. It shall be granted him, my king; for he
Who vows a vow to strangle his own mother
Is guiltier keeping this than breaking it.

Edward. O friends, I shall not overlive the day !

Stigand. Why, then the throne is empty.
Who inherits ?
For tho' we be not bound by the king's voice

In making of a king, yet the king's voice
Is much toward his making. Who inherits ?

Edgar the Atheling ?
Edward. No, no, but Harold.
I love him; he hath served me; none but he

Can rule all England. Yet the curse is on him
For swearing falsely by those blessed bones;

He did not mean to keep his vow.

Harold. Not mean
To make our England Norman.

Edward. There spake Godwin,

Who hated all the Normans; but their Saints

Have heard thee, Harold.

Edith. O, my lord, my King !
He knew not whom he sware by.

Edward. Yea, I know
He knew not, but those heavenly ears have heard,

Their curse is on him; wilt thou bring another,

Edith, upon his head ?

Edith. No, no, not I !

Edward. Why, then thou must not wed him.

Harold. Wherefore, wherefore ?

Edward. O son, when thou didst tell me of thine oath,

I sorrow'd for my random promise given
To yon fox-lion. I did not dream then
I should be king. — My son, the Saints are virgins;

They love the white rose of virginity,
The cold, white lily blowing in her cell.
I have been myself a virgin; and I sware
To consecrate my virgin here to Heaven —
The silent, cloister'd, solitary life,
A life of lifelong prayer against the curse
That lies on thee and England.

Harold. No, no, no !

Edward. Treble denial of the tongue of flesh,

Like Peter's when he fell, and thou wilt have

To wail for it like Peter. O my son !
Are all oaths to be broken then, all promises

Made in our agony for help from Heaven ?
Son, there is one who loves thee; and a wife,

What matters who, so she be serviceable
In all obedience, as mine own hath been ?
God bless thee, wedded daughter !

[Laying his hand on the Queen's head.]

Queen. Bless thou too

That brother whom I love beyond the rest,

My banish'd Tostig.

Edward. All the sweet Saints bless him !
Spare and forbear him, Harold, if he comes !

And let him pass unscathed; he loves me,
Harold !

Be kindly to the Normans left among us,
Who follow'd me for love ! and dear son,
swear

When thou art king, to see my solemn vow
Accomplish'd.

Harold. Nay, dear lord, for I have sworn
Not to swear falsely twice.

Edward. Thou wilt not swear ?

Harold. I cannot.

Edward. Then on thee remains the curse,
Harold, if thou embrace her; and on thee,
Edith, if thou abide it, —

[*The King swoons; Edith falls and
kneels by the couch.*]

Stigand. He hath swoon'd.
Death ? — no, as yet a breath.

Harold. Look up ! look up !
Edith !

Aldred. Confuse her not; she hath begun
Her lifelong prayer for thee.

Aldwyth. O noble Harold,
I would thou couldst have sworn.

Harold. For thine own pleasure ?

Aldwyth. No, but to please our dying
King, and those

Who make thy good their own — all Eng-
land, earl.

Aldred. I would thou couldst have
sworn. Our holy King
Hath given his virgin lamb to Holy Church
To save thee from the curse.

Harold. Alas ! poor man,
His promise brought it on me.

Aldred. O good son !
That knowledge made him all the care-
fuller ¹⁹²
To find a means whereby the curse might
glance

From thee and England.

Harold. Father, we so loved —

Aldred. The more the love, the mightier
is the prayer;

The more the love, the more acceptable
The sacrifice of both your loves to Heaven.
No sacrifice to Heaven, no help from Hea-
ven;

That runs thro' all the faiths of all the
world.

And sacrifice there must be, for the King
Is holy, and hath talk'd with God, and
seen ²⁰¹

A shadowing horror; there are signs in
heaven —

Harold. Your comet came and went.

Aldred. And signs on earth !

Knowest thou Senlac hill ?

Harold. I know all Sussex;
A good entrenchment for a perilous hour !

Aldred. Pray God that come not sud-
denly ! There is one
Who passing by that hill three nights
ago —

He shook so that he scarce could out with
it —

Heard, heard —

Harold. The wind in his hair ?

Aldred. A ghostly horn
Blowing continually, and faint battle-
hymns, ²¹⁰

And cries, and clashes, and the groans of
men;

And dreadful shadows strove upon the hill,
And dreadful lights crept up from out the
marsh —

Corpse - candles gliding over nameless
graves —

Harold. At Senlac ?

Aldred. Senlac.

Edward (waking). Senlac ! Sanguelac,
The Lake of Blood !

Stigand. This lightning before death
Plays on the word, — and Normanizes too !

Harold. Hush, father, hush !

Edward. Thou uncanonical fool,
Wilt thou play with the thunder ? North
and South

Thunder together, showers of blood are
blown ²²⁰

Before a never-ending blast, and hiss
Against the blaze they cannot quench — a

lake,
A sea of blood — we are drown'd in blood

— for God
Has fill'd the quiver, and Death has drawn

the bow —
Sanguelac ! Sanguelac ! the arrow ! the

arrow ! [*Dies.*]

Stigand. It is the arrow of death in his
own heart —

And our great Council wait to crown thee
King.

SCENE II

IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S HOUSE
NEAR LONDON

Edith. Crown'd, crown'd and lost,
crown'd King — and lost to me !

(*Singing.*)

Two young lovers in winter weather,
None to guide them,

Walk'd at night on the misty heather;
Night, as black as a raven's feather;
Both were lost and found together,
None beside them.

That is the burthen of it — lost and found
Together in the cruel river Swale
A hundred years ago; and there 's another,

Lost, lost, the light of day,

To which the lover answers lovingly:

'I am beside thee.'

Lost, lost, we have lost the way.

'Love, I will guide thee.'

Whither, O whither? into the river,
Where we two may be lost together,
And lost for ever? 'O, never! O, never!
Tho' we be lost and be found together.'

Some think they loved within the pale for-
bidden

By Holy Church; but who shall say? the
truth

Was lost in that fierce North, where they
were lost,

Where all good things are lost, where Tos-
tig lost

The good hearts of his people. It is Har-
old!

Enter HAROLD.

Harold the King!

Harold. Call me not King, but Harold.

Edith. Nay, thou art King!

Harold. Thine, thine, or King or churl!

My girl, thou hast been weeping; turn not
thou

Thy face away, but rather let me be
King of the moment to thee, and command
That kiss my due when subject, which will
make

My kingship kinglier to me than to reign
King of the world without it.

Edith. Ask me not,
Lest I should yield it, and the second curse
Descend upon thine head, and thou be only
King of the moment over England.

Harold. Edith,
Tho' somewhat less a king to my true self
Than ere they crown'd me one, for I have
lost

Somewhat of upright stature thro' mine
oath,

Yet thee I would not lose, and sell not thou
Our living passion for a dead man's dream;
Stigand believed he knew not what he
spake.

O God! I cannot help it, but at times
They seem to me too narrow, all the faiths
Of this grown world of ours, whose baby
eye

Saw them sufficient. Fool and wise, I fear
This curse, and scorn it. But a little
light! —

And on it falls the shadow of the priest;
Heaven yield us more! for better, Woden,
all

Our cancell'd warrior-gods, our grim Wal-
halla,

Eternal war, than that the Saints at peace,
The Holiest of our Holiest One, should be
This William's fellow-tricksters; — better
die

Than credit this, for death is death, or else
Lifts us beyond the lie. Kiss me — thou
art not

A holy sister yet, my girl, to fear
There might be more than brother in my
kiss,

And more than sister in thine own.

Edith. I dare not.

Harold. Scared by the church — 'Love
for a whole life long.'

When was that sung?

Edith. Here to the nightingales.

Harold. Their anthems of no church, how
sweet they are!

Nor kingly priest, nor priestly king to cross
Their billings ere they nest.

Edith. They are but of spring,
They fly the winter change — not so with
us —

No wings to come and go.

Harold. But wing'd souls flying
Beyond all change and in the eternal dis-
tance

To settle on the Truth.

Edith. They are not so true,
They change their mates.

Harold. Do they? I did not know it.

Edith. They say thou art to wed the
Lady Aldwyth.

Harold. They say, they say!

Edith. If this be politic,
And well for thee and England — and for
her —

Care not for me who love thee.

Gurth (calling). Harold, Harold!

Harold. The voice of Gurth! (*Enter
Gurth.*) Good even, my good bro-
ther!

Gurth. Good even, gentle Edith.

Edith. Good even, Gurth.
Gurth. Ill news hath come! Our hap-
 less brother, Tostig —
 He, and the giant King of Norway, Harold
 Hardrada — Scotland, Ireland, Iceland,
 Orkney,
 Are landed north of Humber, and in a
 field
 So packt with carnage that the dykes and
 brooks
 Were bridged and damm'd with dead, have
 overthrown 79

Morcar and Edwin.
Harold. Well then, we must fight.
 How blows the wind?

Gurth. Against Saint Valery
 And William.

Harold. Well then, we will to the North.

Gurth. Ay, but worse news: this Wil-
 liam sent to Rome,
 Swearing thou swarest falsely by his Saints.
 The Pope and that Archdeacon Hildebrand,
 His master, heard him, and have sent him
 back

A holy gonfanon, and a blessed hair
 Of Peter, and all France, all Burgundy,
 Poitou, all Christendom is raised against
 thee.

He hath cursed thee, and all those who
 fight for thee, 90
 And given thy realm of England to the
 bastard.

Harold. Ha! ha!

Edith. O, laugh not! — Strange and
 ghastly in the gloom
 And shadowing of this double thunder-
 cloud

That lours on England — laughter!

Harold. No, not strange!
 This was old human laughter in old Rome
 Before a Pope was born, when that which
 reign'd

Call'd itself God. — A kindly rendering
 Of 'Render unto Cæsar.' — The Good Shep-
 herd! 99

Take this, and render that.

Gurth. They have taken York.

Harold. The Lord was God and came as
 man — the Pope
 Is man and comes as God. — York taken?

Gurth. Yea,
 Tostig hath taken York!

Harold. To York then. Edith,
 Hadst thou been braver, I had better
 braved

All — but I love thee and thou me — and
 that

Remains beyond all chances and all
 churches,

And that thou knowest.

Edith. Ay, but take back thy ring.
 It burns my hand — a curse to thee and me.
 I dare not wear it.

[*Proffers Harold the ring, which he takes.*

Harold. But I dare. God with thee!
 [*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*

Edith. The King hath cursed him, if he
 marry me; 110
 The Pope hath cursed him, marry me or no!
 God help me! I know nothing — can but
 pray

For Harold — pray, pray, pray — no help
 but prayer,

A breath that fleets beyond this iron world,
 And touches Him that made it.

ACT IV

SCENE 1. — IN NORTHUMBRIA

ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, MORCAR, EDWIN,
 and FORCES. *Enter HAROLD, the stand-
 ard of the golden Dragon of Wessex pre-
 ceding him.*

Harold. What! are thy people sullen
 from defeat?

Our Wessex dragon flies beyond the Hum-
 ber,

No voice to greet it.

Edwin. Let not our great King
 Believe us sullen — only shamed to the
 quick

Before the King — as having been so bruised
 By Harold, King of Norway; but our help
 Is Harold, King of England. Pardon us,
 thou!

Our silence is our reverence for the King!

Harold. Earl of the Mercians! if the
 truth be gall,

Cram me not thou with honey, when our
 good hive 120

Needs every sting to save it.

Voices. Aldwyth! Aldwyth!

Harold. Why cry thy people on thy sis-
 ter's name?

Morcar. She hath won upon our people
 thro' her beauty
 And pleasantness among them.

Voices. Aldwyth, Aldwyth !
Harold. They shout as they would have her for a queen.
Morcar. She hath follow'd with our host, and suffer'd all.
Harold. What would ye, men ?
Voice. Our old Northumbrian crown, And kings of our own choosing.
Harold. Your old crown Were little help without our Saxon earles Against Hardrada.
Voice. Little ! we are Danes, Who conquer'd what we walk on, our own field.
Harold. They have been plotting here !
Voice. He calls us little !
Harold. The kingdoms of this world began with little,
 A hill, a fort, a city — that reach'd a hand Down to the field beneath it, 'Be thou mine,'
 Then to the next, 'Thou also !' If the field
 Cried out, 'I am mine own,' another hill, Or fort, or city, took it, and the first Fell, and the next became an empire.
Voice. Yet
 Thou art but a West Saxon; we are Danes !
Harold. My mother is a Dane, and I am English;
 There is a pleasant fable in old books, Ye take a stick, and break it; bind a score
 All in one faggot, snap it over knee, Ye cannot.
Voice. Hear King Harold ! he says true !
Harold. Would ye be Norsemen ?
Voices. No !
Harold. Or Norman ?
Voices. No !
Harold. Snap not the faggot-band then.
Voice. That is true !
Voice. Ay, but thou art not kingly, only grandson
 To Wulfnoth, a poor cowherd.
Harold. This old Wulfnoth Would take me on his knees and tell me tales
 Of Alfred and of Athelstan the Great Who drove you Danes; and yet he held that Dane,
 Jute, Angle, Saxon, were or should be all One England; for this cowherd, like my father,

Who shook the Norman scoundrels off the throne,
 Had in him kingly thoughts — a king of men,
 Not made but born, like the great King of all,
 A light among the oxen.
Voice. That is true !
Voice. Ay, and I love him now, for mine own father
 Was great, and ebbled.
Voice. Thou art Tostig's brother, Who wastes the land.
Harold. This brother comes to save Your land from waste; I saved it once before,
 For when your people banish'd Tostig hence,
 And Edward would have sent a host against you,
 Then I, who loved my brother, bade the King,
 Who doted on him, sanction your decree Of Tostig's banishment, and choice of Morcar,
 To help the realm from scattering.
Voice. King ! thy brother, If one may dare to speak the truth, was wrong'd.
 Wild was he, born so; but the plots against him
 Had madden'd tamer men.
Morcar. Thou art one of those Who brake into Lord Tostig's treasure-house
 And slew two hundred of his following, And uow, when Tostig hath come back with power,
 Are frighted back to Tostig.
Old Thane. Ugh ! Plots and feuds ! This is my ninetieth birthday. Can ye not Be brethren ? Godwin still at feud with Alfgar,
 And Alfgar hates King Harold. Plots and feuds !
 This is my ninetieth birthday !
Harold. Old man, Harold Hates nothing; not his fault, if our two houses
 Be less than brothers.
Voices. Aldwyth, Harold, Aldwyth !
Harold. Again ! Morcar ! Edwin ! What do they mean ?
Edwin. So the good King would deign to lend an ear

Not overscornful, we might chance — per-
chance —

To guess their meaning.

Morcar. Thine own meaning, Harold,
To make all England one, to close all
feuds,

Mixing our bloods, that thence a king may
rise

Half-Godwin and half-Alfgar, one to rule
All England beyond question, beyond quar-
rel.

Harold. Who sow'd this fancy here
among the people ? 80

Morcar. Who knows what sows itself
among the people ?

A goodly flower at times.

Harold. The Queen of Wales ?
Why, *Morcar*, it is all but duty in her
To hate me; I have heard she hates me.

Morcar. No !
For I can swear to that, but cannot swear
That these will follow thee against the
Norsemen,

If thou deny them this.

Harold. *Morcar* and *Edwin*,
When will ye cease to plot against my
house ?

Edwin. The King can scarcely dream
that we, who know 89

His prowess in the mountains of the West,
Should care to plot against him in the
North.

Morcar. Who dares arraign us, King, of
such a plot ?

Harold. Ye heard one witness even now.
Morcar. The craven !

There is a faction risen again for *Tostig*,
Since *Tostig* came with Norway — fright,
not love.

Harold. *Morcar* and *Edwin*, will ye, if I
yield,

Follow against the Norseman ?

Morcar. Surely, surely !

Harold. *Morcar* and *Edwin*, will ye upon
oath

Help us against the Norman ?

Morcar. With good will;

Yea, take the sacrament upon it, King. 100

Harold. Where is thy sister ?

Morcar. Somewhere hard at hand.
Call and she comes.

[*One goes out, then enter Aldwyth.*

Harold. I doubt not but thou knowest
Why thou art summon'd.

Aldwyth. Why ? — I stay with these,

Lest thy fierce *Tostig* spy me out alone,
And slay me all alive.

Harold. Canst thou love one
Who did discrown thine husband, unqueen
thee ?

Didst thou not love thine husband ?

Aldwyth. O ! my lord,
The nimble, wild, red, wiry, savage king —
That was, my lord, a match of policy.

Harold. Was it ?
I knew him brave; he loved his land; he
fain 110

Had made her great; his finger on her
harp —

I heard him more than once — had in it
Wales,

Her floods, her woods, her hills. Had I
been his,

I had been all Welsh.

Aldwyth. O, ay ! — all Welsh — and yet
I saw thee drive him up his hills — and
women

Cling to the conquer'd, if they love, the
more;

If not, they cannot hate the conqueror.

We never — O good *Morcar*, speak for us,
His conqueror conquer'd *Aldwyth*.

Harold. Goodly news !

Morcar. Doubt it not thou ! Since *Grif-
fyth's* head was sent 120

To *Edward*, she hath said it.

Harold. I had rather
She would have loved her husband. *Ald-
wyth*, *Aldwyth*,

Canst thou love me, thou knowing where I
love ?

Aldwyth. I can, my lord, for mine own
sake, for thine,

For England, for thy poor white dove, who
flutters

Between thee and the porch, but then would
find

Her nest within the cloister and be still.

Harold. Canst thou love one who cannot
love again ?

Aldwyth. Full hope have I that love will
answer love.

Harold. Then in the name of the great
God, so be it ! 130

Come, *Aldred*, join our hands before the
hosts,

That all may see.

[*Aldred joins the hands of Harold and
Aldwyth, and blesses them.*

Voices. Harold, Harold and *Aldwyth* !

Harold. Set forth our golden Dragon, let
him flap
The wings that beat down Wales !
Advance our Standard of the Warrior,
Dark among gems and gold; and thou,
brave banner,
Blaze like a night of fatal stars on those
Who read their doom and die.
Where lie the Norsemen? on the Der-
went? ay,
At Stamford-Bridge.
Morcar, collect thy men; Edwin, my
friend —
Thou lingerest. — *Gurth,* —
Last night King Edward came to me in
dreams —
The rosy face and long down-silvering
beard —
He told me I should conquer. —
I am no woman to put faith in dreams.

(*To his army.*)

Last night King Edward came to me in
dreams,
And told me we should conquer.
Voices. Forward! Forward!
Harold and Holy Cross!
Aldwyth. The day is won!

SCENE II

A PLAIN. BEFORE THE BATTLE OF
STAMFORD-BRIDGE

HAROLD and his GUARD.

Harold. Who is it comes this way?
Tostig? (*Enter TOSTIG with a small
force.*) O brother,
What art thou doing here?
Tostig. I am foraging
For Norway's army.
Harold. I could take and slay thee.
Thou art in arms against us.
Tostig. Take and slay me,
For Edward loved me.
Harold. Edward bade me spare thee.
Tostig. I hate King Edward, for he join'd
with thee
To drive me outlaw'd. Take and slay me,
I say,
Or I shall count thee fool.
Harold. Take thee, or free thee,
Free thee or slay thee, Norway will have
war;

No man would strike with Tostig, save for
Norway.
Thou art nothing in thine England, save
for Norway,
Who loves not thee, but war. What dost
thou here,
Trampling thy mother's bosom into blood?
Tostig. She hath wear'd me from it with
such bitterness.
I come for mine own earldom, my North-
umbria;
Thou hast given it to the enemy of our
house.

Harold. Northumbria threw thee off, she
will not have thee.
Thou hast misused her; and, O crowning
crime!
Hast murder'd thine own guest, the son of
Orm,
Gamel, at thine own hearth.

Tostig. The slow, fat fool!
He draw'd and prated so, I smote him
suddenly;
I knew not what I did. He held with
Morcar. —

I hate myself for all things that I do.
Harold. And *Morcar* holds with us.
Come back with him.
Know what thou dost; and we may find for
thee,

So thou be chasten'd by thy banishment,
Some easier earldom.

Tostig. What for Norway then?
He looks for land among us, he and his.

Harold. Seven feet of English land, or
something more,
Seeing he is a giant.

Tostig. That is noble!
That sounds of Godwin.

Harold. Come thou back, and be
Once more a son of Godwin.

Tostig (*turns away*). O brother, brother,
O *Harold* —

Harold (*laying his hand on Tostig's shoul-
der*). Nay then, come thou back to
us!

Tostig (*after a pause turning to him*).
Never shall any man say that I, that
Tostig
Conjured the mightier *Harold* from his
North

To do the battle for me here in England,
Then left him for the meaner! thee! —
Thou hast no passion for the house of
Godwin —

Thou hast but cared to make thyself a
king —
Thou hast sold me for a cry. — 40
Thou gavest thy voice against me in the
Council —
I hate thee, and despise thee, and defy thee.
Farewell for ever. [Exit.]
Harold. On to Stamford-Bridge !

SCENE III

AFTER THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD-
BRIDGE. BANQUET

HAROLD and ALDWYTH. GURTH, LEOF-
WIN, MORCAR, EDWIN, and other EARLS
and THANES.

Voices. Hail ! Harold ! Aldwyth ! hail,
bridegroom and bride !

Aldwyth (talking with Harold). Answer
them thou !

Is this our marriage-banquet ? Would the
wines

Of wedding had been dash'd into the cups
Of victory, and our marriage and thy glory
Been drunk together ! these poor hands
but sew,

Spin, broider — would that they were man's
to have held

The battle-axe by thee !

Harold. There was a moment
When, being forced aloof from all my
guard,
And striking at Hardrada and his mad-
men, 10

I had wish'd for any weapon.

Aldwyth. Why art thou sad ?

Harold. I have lost the boy who play'd
at ball with me,

With whom I fought another fight than
this

Of Stamford-Bridge.

Aldwyth. Ay ! ay ! thy victories
Over our own poor Wales, when at thy
side

He conquer'd with thee.

Harold. No — the childish fist
That cannot strike again.

Aldwyth. Thou art too kindly.
Why didst thou let so many Norsemen
hence ?

Thy fierce forekings had clenched their
pirate hides

To the bleak church doors, like kites upon
a barn. 20

Harold. Is there so great a need to tell
thee why ?

Aldwyth. Yea, am I not thy wife ?

Voices. Hail, Harold, Aldwyth !

Bridegroom and bride !

Aldwyth. Answer them ! [To Harold.]

Harold (to all). Earls and thanes !

Full thanks for your fair greeting of my
bride !

Earls, thanes, and all our countrymen ! the
day,

Our day beside the Derwent, will not shine
Less than a star among the goldenest hours
Of Alfred, or of Edward his great son,
Or Athelstan, or English Ironside

Who fought with Knut, or Knut who com-
ing Dane 30

Died English. Every man about his King
Fought like a king ; the King like his own
man,

No better ; one for all, and all for one,
One soul ! and therefore have we shatter'd
back

The hugest wave from Norseland ever yet
Surged on us, and our battle-axes broken —
The Raven's wing, and dumb'd his carrion
croak

From the gray sea for ever. Many are
gone —

Drink to the dead who died for us, the living
Who fought and would have died, but hap-
pier lived, 40

If happier be to live ; they both have life
In the large mouth of England, till her
voice

Die with the world. Hail — hail !

Morcar. May all invaders perish like
Hardrada !

All traitors fail like Tostig !

[All drink but Harold.]

Aldwyth. Thy cup's full !

Harold. I saw the hand of Tostig cover it.
Our dear, dead traitor-brother, Tostig,
him

Reverently we buried. Friends, had I been
here,

Without too large self-landing I must hold
The sequel had been other than his league
With Norway, and this battle. Peace be
with him ! 51

He was not of the worst. If there be
those

At banquet in this hall, and hearing me —

For there be those, I fear, who prick'd the lion
 To make him spring, that sight of Danish blood
 Might serve an end not English — peace with them
 Likewise, if *they* can be at peace with what God gave us to divide us from the wolf!
Alwyth (*aside to Harold*). Make not our Morcar sullen; it is not wise.
Harold. Hail to the living who fought, the dead who fell! 60
Voices. Hail, hail!
First Thane. How ran that answer which King Harold gave
 To his dead namesake, when he ask'd for England?
Leofwin. 'Seven feet of English earth, or something more,
 Seeing he is a giant!'
First Thane. Then for the bastard Six feet and nothing more!
Leofwin. Ay, but belike Thou hast not learnt his measure.
First Thane. By Saint Edmund I over-measure him. Sound sleep to the man
 Here by dead Norway without dream or dawn!
Second Thane. What, is he bragging still that he will come, 70
 To thrust our Harold's throne from under him?
 My nurse would tell me of a molehill crying
 To a mountain, 'Stand aside and room for me!'
First Thane. Let him come! let him come! Here 's to him, sink or swim! [*Drinks*.]
Second Thane. God sink him!
First Thane. Cannot hands which had the strength
 To shove that stranded iceberg off our shores,
 And send the shatter'd North again to sea,
 Senttle his cockle-shell? What's Brunanburg
 To Stamford-Bridge? a war-crash, and so hard,
 So loud, that, by Saint Dunstan, old Saint Thor — 80
 By God, we thought him dead — but our old Thor

Heard his own thunder again, and woke and came
 Among us again, and mark'd the sons of those
 Who made this Britain England, break the North —

Mark'd how the war-axe swang,
 Heard how the war-horn sang,
 Mark'd how the spear-head sprang,
 Heard how the shield-wall rang,
 Iron on iron clang,
 Anvil on hammer bang — 90

Second Thane. Hammer on anvil, hammer on anvil. Old dog,
 Thou art drunk, old dog!

First Thane. Too drunk to fight with thee!

Second Thane. Fight thou with thine own double, not with me,
 Keep that for Norman William!

First Thane. Down with William!

Third Thane. The washerwoman's brat!

Fourth Thane. The tanner's bastard!

Fifth Thane. The Falaise hyblow!

Enter a THANE, from Pevensey, spattered with mud.

Harold. Ay, but what late guest,
 As haggard as a fast of forty days,
 And caked and plaster'd with a hundred
 mires,

Hath stumbled on our cups?

Thane from Pevensey. My lord the King!

William the Norman, for the wind had changed — 100

Harold. I felt it in the middle of that fierce fight

At Stamford-Bridge. William hath landed, ha?

Thane from Pevensey. Landed at Pevensey — I an from Pevensey —

Hath wasted all the land at Pevensey —

Hath harried mine own cattle — God confound him!

I have ridden night and day from Pevensey —

A thousand ships — a hundred thousand men —

Thousands of horses, like as many lions
 Neighing and roaring as they leapt to land —

Harold. How oft in coming hast thou broken bread? 110

Thane from Pevensey. Some thrice, or so.
Harold. Bring not thy hollowness
 On our full feast. Famine is fear, were it
 but
 Of being starved. Sit down, sit down, and
 eat,
 And, when again red-blooded, speak again.
 (*Aside.*) The men that guarded England
 to the South
 Were scatter'd to the harvest. — No power
 mine
 To hold their force together. — Many are
 fallen
 At Stamford-Bridge — the people stupid-
 sure
 Sleep like their swine — in South and
 North at once
 I could not be.
 (*Aloud.*) Gurth, Leofwin, Morcar, Edwin!
 (*Pointing to the revellers.*) The curse of
 England! these are drown'd in was-
 sail,¹²¹
 And cannot see the world but thro' their
 wines!
 Leave them! and thee too, Aldwyth, must
 I leave —
 Harsh is the news! hard is our honey-
 moon!
 Thy pardon. (*Turning round to his atten-
 dants.*) Break the banquet up — Ye
 four!
 And thou, my carrier-pigeon of black news,
 Cram thy crop full, but come when thou
 art call'd. [*Exit Harold.*]

ACT V

SCENE I. — A TENT ON A MOUND,
 FROM WHICH CAN BE SEEN THE
 FIELD OF SENLAC.

HAROLD, *sitting*; by him standing HUGH
 MARGOT the Monk, GURTH, LEOFWIN.

Harold. Refer my cause, my crown to
 Rome! — The wolf
 Mudded the brook and predetermined all.
 Monk,
 Thou hast said thy say, and had my con-
 stant 'No'
 For all but instant battle. I hear no more.
Margot. Hear me again — for the last
 time. Arise,
 Scatter thy people home, descend the hill,

Lay hands of full allegiance in thy Lord's
 And crave his mercy, for the Holy Father
 Hath given this realm of England to the
 Norman.¹⁶

Harold. Then for the last time, monk, I
 ask again

When had the Lateran and the Holy
 Father

To do with England's choice of her own
 king?

Margot. Earl, the first Christian Cæsar
 drew to the East

To leave the Pope dominion in the West.
 He gave him all the kingdoms of the
 West.

Harold. So! — did he? — Earl — I have
 a mind to play

The William with thine eyesight and thy
 tongue.

Earl — ay — thou art but a messenger of
 William.

I am weary — go; make me not wroth
 with thee!²⁰

Margot. Mock-king, I am the messenger
 of God,

His Nerman Daniel! Mene, Mene, Tekel!
 Is thy wrath hell, that I should spare to
 cry,

You Heaven is wroth with thee? Hear me
 again!

Our Saints have moved the Church that
 moves the world,

And all the Heavens and very God; they
 heard —

They know King Edward's promise and
 thine — thine.

Harold. Should they not know free Eng-
 land crowns herself?

Not know that he nor I had power to pro-
 mise?

Not know that Edward cancell'd his own
 promise?³⁰

And for my part therein — Back to that
 juggler,³⁰ [*Rising.*]

Tell him the Saints are nobler than he
 dreams,

Tell him that God is nobler than the Saints,
 And tell him we stand arm'd on Senlac
 Hill,

And bide the doom of God.

Margot. Hear it thro' me.
 The realm for which thou art forsworn is

cursed,
 The babe enwomb'd and at the breast is
 cursed,

The corpse thou whelmeſt with thine earth
is curſed,

The ſoul who fighteth on thy ſide is curſed,
The ſeed thou ſoweſt in thy field is curſed,
The ſteer wherewith thou ploweſt thy field
is curſed,

The fowl that fleeth o'er thy field is curſed,
And thou, uſurper, liar —

Harold. Out, beaſt monk !

[*Lifting his hand to ſtrike him.* Gurth
ſtops the blow.

I ever hated monks.

Margot. I am but a voice

Among you; murder, martyr me if ye will —

Harold. Thanks, Gurth ! The ſimple,
ſilent, ſelfleſſ man

Is worth a world of tongueſters. (*To
Margot.*) Get thee gone !

He means the thing he ſays. See him out
ſafe !

Leofwin. He hath blown himſelf as red
as fire with curſes.

An honeſt fool ! Follow me, honeſt fool,
But if thou blurt thy curſe among our folk,
I know not — I may give that egg-bald
head

The tap that ſilences.

Harold. See him out ſafe.

[*Exeunt Leofwin and Margot.*

Gurth. Thou haſt loſt thine even temper,
brother Harold !

Harold. Gurth, when I paſt by Waltham,
my foundation

For men who ſerve the neighbor, not them-
ſelves,

I caſt me down prone, praying; and, when
I roſe,

They told me that the Holy Rood had
lean'd

And bow'd above me; whether that which
held it

Had weaken'd, and the Rood itſelf were
bound

To that neceſſity which binds us down;
Whether it bow'd at all but in their fancy;
Or if it bow'd, whether it ſynboll'd ruin
Or glory, who ſhall tell? but they were
ſad,

And ſome what ſadden'd me.

Gurth. Yet if a fear,

Or ſhadow of a fear, leſt the ſtrange Saints
By whom thou ſwareſt ſhould have power
to balk

Thy puiſſance in this fight with him who
made

And heard thee ſwear — brother — I have
not ſworn —

If the King fall, may not the kingdom
fall ?

But if I fall, I fall, and thou art King;

And if I win, I win, and thou art King;

Draw thou to London, there make ſtrength
to breaſt

Whatever chance, but leave this day to me.

Leofwin (entering). And waſte the land
about thee as thou goeſt,

And be thy hand as winter on the field,
To leave the foe no forage.

Harold. Noble Gurth !

Beſt ſon of Godwin ! If I fall, I fall —

The doom of God ! How ſhould the peo-
ple fight

When the King flies ? And, Leofwin, art
thou mad ?

How ſhould the King of England waſte the
fields

Of England, his own people ? — No glance
yet

Of the Northumbrian helmet on the heath ?

Leofwin. No, but a ſhoal of wives upon
the heath,

And ſome one ſaw thy willy-nilly nun

Vying a tress againſt our golden fern.

Harold. Vying a tear with our cold dews,
a ſigh

With theſe low-moaning heavens. Let her
be fetch'd.

We have parted from our wife without re-
proach,

Tho' we have pierc'd thro' all her prac-
tices;

And that is well.

Leofwin. I ſaw her even now;

She hath not left us.

Harold. Nought of Morcar then ?

Gurth. Nor ſeen, nor heard; thine, Wil-
liam's, or his own

As wind blows, or tide flows. Belike he
watches

If this war-ſtorm in one of its rough rolls

Waſh up that old crown of Northumber-
land.

Harold. I married her for Morcar — a
ſin againſt

The truth of love. Evil for good, it ſeems,
Is oft as childleſſ of the good as evil

For evil.

Leofwin. Good for good hath borne at
times

A baſtard falſe as William.

Harold. Ay, if Wisdom
Pair'd not with Good. But I am some-
what worn,
A snatch of sleep were like the peace of
God.

Gurth, Leofwin, go once more about the
hill —

What did the dead man call it — Sanguelac,
The lake of blood ?

Leofwin. A lake that dips in William
As well as Harold.

Harold. Like enough. I have seen
The trenches dug, the palisades uprear'd
And wattled thick with ash and willow-
wands,

Yea, wrought at them myself. Go round
once more; 110

See all be sound and whole. No Norman
horse

Can shatter England, standing shield by
shield;

Tell that again to all.

Gurth. I will, good brother.

Harold. Our guardsman hath but toil'd
his hand and foot,

I hand, foot, heart and head. Some wine !
(*One pours wine into a goblet which he
hands to Harold.*) Too much !

What ? we must use our battle-axe to-
day.

Our guardsmen have slept well, since we
came in ?

Leofwin. Ay, slept and snored. Your
second-sighted man

That scared the dying conscience of the
king

Misheard their snores for groans. They
are up again 120

And chanting that old song of Brunanburg
Where England conquer'd.

Harold. That is well. The Norman,
What is he doing ?

Leofwin. Praying for Normandy;
Our scouts have heard the tinkle of their
bells.

Harold. And our old songs are prayers
for England too !

But by all Saints —

Leofwin. Barring the Norman !

Harold. Nay,

Were the great trumpet blowing dooms-
day dawn,

I needs must rest. Call when the Norman
moves — [*Exeunt all but Harold.*]

No horse — thousands of horses — our
shield wall — 120

Wall — break it not — break not —
break — [*Sleeps*]

Vision of Edward. Son Harold, I thy
king, who came before

To tell thee thou shouldst win at Stamford-
Bridge,

Come yet once more, from where I am at
peace,

Because I loved thee in my mortal day,
To tell thee thou shalt die on Senlac Hill —
Sanguelac !

Vision of Wulfnoth. O brother, from my
ghastly oubliette

I send my voice across the narrow seas —
No more, no more, dear brother, never-
more —

Sanguelac ! 140

Vision of Tostig. O brother, most un-
brotherlike to me,

Thou gavest thy voice against me in my
life,

I give my voice against thee from the
grave —

Sanguelac !

Vision of Norman Saints. O hapless Har-
old ! King but for an hour !

Thou swarest falsely by our blessed bones,
We give our voice against thee out of hea-
ven !

Sanguelac ! Sanguelac ! The arrow ! the
arrow !

Harold (starting up, battle-axe in hand).

Away !
My battle-axe against your voices. Peace !

The King's last word — 'the arrow !' I
shall die — 150

I die for England then, who lived for Eng-
land —

What nobler ? men must die.

I cannot fall into a falser world —

I have done no man wrong. Tostig, poor
brother,

Art thou so anger'd ?

Fain had I kept thine earldom in thy
hands

Save for thy wild and violent will that
wrench'd

All hearts of freemen from thee. I could
do

No other than this way advise the king
Against the race of Godwin. Is it possi-
ble

That mortal men should bear their earthly
heats ¹⁶¹
Into yon bloodless world, and threaten us
thence
Unschool'd of Death? Thus then thou art
revenge'd —

I left our England naked to the South
To meet thee in the North. The Norse-
man's raid

Hath helpt the Norman, and the race of
Godwin

Hath ruin'd Godwin. No — our waking
thoughts

Suffer a stormless shipwreck in the pools
Of sullen slumber, and arise again
Disjointed; only dreams — where mine
own self ¹⁷⁰

Takes part against myself! Why? for a
spark

Of self-disdain born in me when I swear
Falsely to him, the falser Norman, over
His gilded ark of mummy-saints, by whom
I knew not that I swear, — not for my-
self —

For England — yet not wholly —

Enter EDITH.

Edith, Edith,

Get thou into thy cloister as the King
Will'd it; be safe, the perjury-mongering
Count

Hath made too good an use of Holy
Church

To break her close! There the great God
of truth ¹⁸⁰

Fill all thine hours with peace! — A lying
devil

Hath haunted me — mine oath — my wife
— I fain

Had made my marriage not a lie; I could
not.

Thou art my bride! and thou in after
years

Praying perchance for this poor soul of
mine

In cold, white cells beneath an icy moon —
This memory to thee! — and this to Eng-
land,

My legacy of war against the Pope
From child to child, from Pope to Pope,
from age to age, ¹⁸⁹

Till the sea wash her level with her shores,
Or till the Pope be Christ's.

Enter ALDWYTH.

Aldwyth (to Edith). Away from him!

Edith. I will. — I have not spoken to the
king.

One word; and one I must. Farewell!
[Going.]

Harold. Not yet.
Stay.

Edith. To what use?

Harold. The King commands thee, wo-
man!

(To ALDWYTH.)

Have thy two brethren sent their forces in?

Aldwyth. Nay, I fear not.

Harold. Then there's no force in thee!
Thou didst possess thyself of Edward's
ear

To part me from the woman that I loved!
Thou didst arouse the fierce Northumbri-
ans!

Thou hast been false to England and to
me! — ²⁰⁰

As — in some sort — I have been false to
thee.

Leave me. No more — Pardon on both
sides — Go!

Aldwyth. Alas, my lord, I loved thee.

Harold (bitterly). With a love
Passing thy love for Griffyth! wherefore
now

Obeys my first and last commandment.
Go!

Aldwyth. O Harold! husband! Shall we
meet again?

Harold. After the battle — after the
battle. Go.

Aldwyth. I go. *(Aside.)* That I could
stab her standing there!

[Exit Aldwyth.]

Edith. Alas, my lord, she loved thee.

Harold. Never! never!

Edith. I saw it in her eyes!

Harold. I see it in thine.

And not on thee — nor England — fall
God's doom! ²¹¹

Edith. On thee? on me! And thou art
England! Alfred

Was England. Ethelred was nothing.
England

Is but her king, and thou art Harold!

Harold. Edith,

The sign in heaven — the sudden blast at
sea —

My fatal oath — the dead Saints — the
dark dreams —

The Pope's anathema — the Holy Rood

That bow'd to me at Waltham — Edith, if I, the last English King of England —

Edith. No,
First of a line that coming from the people,

And chosen by the people —
Harold. And fighting for

And dying for the people —
Edith. Living! living!

Harold. Yea so, good cheer! thou art
Harold, I am Edith! 223

Look not thus wan!
Edith. What matters how I look?

Have we not broken Wales and Norse-land? slain,

Whose life was all one battle, incarnate war,

Their giant-king, a mightier man-in-arms Than William.

Harold. Ay, my girl, no tricks in him — No bastard he! when all was lost, he yell'd,

And bit his shield, and dash'd it on the ground, 230

And swaying his two-handed sword about him,

Two deaths at every swing, ran in upon us

And died so, and I loved him as I hate
This liar who made me liar. If Hate can

kill,

And Loathing wield a Saxon battle-axe —
Edith. Waste not thy might before the

battle!
Harold. No,

And thou must hence. Stigand will see thee safe,

And so — Farewell.

[*He is going, but turns back.*
The ring thou darest not wear,

I have had it fashion'd, see, to meet my hand.

[*Harold shows the ring which is on his finger.*
Farewell! 240

[*He is going, but turns back again.*
I am dead as Death this day to aught of

earth's
Save William's death or mine.

Edith. Thy death! — to-day!
Is it not thy birthday?

Harold. Ay, that happy day!
A birthday welcome! happy days and many!

One — this! [*They embrace.*
Look, I will bear thy blessing into the battle

And front the doom of God.
Norman Cries (heard in the distance). Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Enter GURTH.

Gurth. The Norman moves!

Harold. Harold and Holy Cross!
[*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*

Enter STIGAND.

Stigand. Our Church in arms — the lamb the lion — not

Spear into pruning-hook — the counter way — 250

Cowl, helm; and crozier, battle-axe. Abbot Alfwig,

Leofric, and all the monks of Peterboro' Strike for the king; but I, old wretch, old

Stigand,
With hands too limp to brandish iron — and yet

I have a power — would Harold ask me for it —

I have a power.

Edith. What power, holy father?
Stigand. Power now from Harold to

command thee hence
And see thee safe from Senlac.

Edith. I remain!
Stigand. Yea, so will I, daughter, until

I find

Which way the battle balance. I can see it 260

From where we stand; and, live or die, I would

I were among them!

CANONS from Waltham (*singing without*).

Salva patriam,
Sancte Pater,
Salva, Fili,
Salva, Spiritus,
Salva patriam,
Sancta Mater.¹

Edith. Are those the blessed angels quiring, father?

Stigand. No, daughter, but the canons out of Waltham, 270

¹ The *a* throughout these Latin hymns should be sounded hroad, as in 'father.'

The king's foundation, that have follow'd him.

Edith. O God of battles, make their wall of shields

Firm as thy cliffs, strengthen their palisades!

What is that whirring sound?

Stigand. The Norman arrow!

Edith. Look out upon the battle — is he safe?

Stigand. The King of England stands between his banners.

He glitters on the crowning of the hill.

God save King Harold!

Edith. — chosen by his people
And fighting for his people!

Stigand. There is one
Come as Goliath came of yore — he flings
His brand in air and catches it again, ²⁸¹
He is chanting some old war-song.

Edith. And no David
To meet him?

Stigand. Ay, there springs a Saxon on him,
Falls — and another falls.

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. Lo! our good Gurth hath smitten him to the death.

Edith. So perish all the enemies of Harold!

CANONS (*singing*).

Hostis in Angliam
Ruit prædator;
Illorum, Domine,
Scutum scindatur! ²⁹⁰
Hostis per Angliæ
Plagas bacchatur;
Casa crematur,
Pastor fugatur,
Grex trucidatur —

Stigand. Illos trucidat, Domine.

Edith. Ay, good father.

CANONS (*singing*).

Illorum scelera
Pœna sequatur!

English Cries. Harold and Holy Cross!
Out! out!

Stigand. Our javelins
Answer their arrows. All the Norman
foot ³⁰⁰
Are storming up the hill. The range of
knights
Sit, each a statue on his horse, and wait.

English Cries. Harold and God Almighty!

Norman Cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

CANONS (*singing*).

Eques cum pedite
Præpediatur!
Illorum in lacrymas
Cruor fundatur!
Pereant, pereant,
Anglia precatur.

Stigand. Look, daughter, look.

Edith. Nay, father, look for me!

Stigand. Our axes lighten with a single
flash ³¹¹

About the summit of the hill, and heads
And arms are sliver'd off and splinter'd
by

Their lightning — and they fly — the Norman flies.

Edith. Stigand, O father, have we won the day?

Stigand. No, daughter, no — they fall behind the horse —

Their horse are thronging to the barricades;

I see the gonfanon of Holy Peter
Floating above their helmets — ha! he is
down!

Edith. He down! Who down?

* *Stigand.* The Norman Count is down.

Edith. So perish all the enemies of England! ³²¹

Stigand. No, no, he hath risen again — he bares his face —

Shouts something — he points onward — all their horse

Swallow the hill locust-like, swarming up.

Edith. O God of battles, make his battle-axe keen

As thine own sharp-dividing justice, heavy
As thine own bolts that fall on crimeful
heads

Charged with the weight of heaven where-
from they fall!

CANONS (*singing*).

Jacta tonitrua,
Deus bellator!
Surgas e tenebris,
Sis vindicator!
Fulmina, fulmina,
Deus vastator!
330

Edith. O God of battles, they are three
to one,
Make thou one man as three to roll them
down!

CANONS (*singing*).

Equus cum equite
Dejiciatur!
Acies, acies
Prona sternatur!
Illorum lanceas
Frangere, Creator!

340

Stigand. Yea, yea, for low their lances
suap and shiver
Against the shifting blaze of Harold's axe!
War-woodman of old Woden, how he fells
The mortal copse of faces! There! And
there!

The horse and horseman cannot meet the
shield,

The blow that brains the horseman cleaves
the horse,

The horse and horseman roll along the
hill,

They fly once more, they fly, the Norman
flies!

350

Equus cum equite
Præcipitatur.

Edith. O God, the God of truth hath
heard my cry!
Follow them, follow them, drive them to
the sea!

Illorum scelera
Pœna sequatur!

Stigand. Truth! no; a lie; a trick, a
Norman trick!

They turn on the pursuer, horse against
foot,

They murder all that follow.

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. Hot-headed fools — to burst
the wall of shields!

360

They have broken the commandment of the
king!

Edith. His oath was broken — O holy
Norman Saints,

Ye that are now of heaven, and see be-
yond

Your Norman shrines, pardon it, pardon
it,

That he forswore himself for all he loved,
Me, me and all! Look out upon the bat-
tle!

Stigand. They thunder again upon the
barricades.

My sight is eagle, but the strife so thick —
This is the hottest of it; hold, ash! hold,
willow!

360

English Cries. Out, out!

Norman Cries. Ha Ron!

Stigand. Ha! Gurth had leapt upon him
And slain him; he hath fallen.

Edith. And I am heard.
Glory to God in the Highest! fallen, fallen!

Stigand. No, no, his horse — he mounts
another — wields

His war-cluh, dashes it on Gurth, and
Gurth,

Our noble Gurth, is down!

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. And Leofwin is down!

Edith. Have mercy on us!

O Thou that knowest, let not my strong
prayer

Be weaken'd in thy sight, because I love
The husband of another!

Norman Cries. Ha Ron! Ha Rou!

Edith. I do not hear our English war-
cry.

Stigand. No.

Edith. Look out upon the battle — is he
safe?

381

Stigand. He stands between the banners
with the dead

So piled about him he can hardly move.

Edith (*takes up the war-cry*). Out! out!

Norman Cries. Ha Rou!

Edith (*cries out*). Harold and Holy
Cross!

Norman Cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Edith. What is that whirring sound?

Stigand. The Norman sends his arrows
up to heaven,

They fall on those within the palisade!

Edith. Look out upon the hill — is Har-
old there?

Stigand. Sanguelac — Sanguelac — the
arrow — the arrow! — away!

SCENE II

FIELD OF THE DEAD. NIGHT

ALDWYTH and EDITH.

Aldwyth. O Edith, art thou here? O

Harold, Harold —

Our Harold — we shall never see him more.

Edith. For there was more than sister
in my kiss,
And so the Saints were wroth. I cannot
love them,
For they are Norman Saints — and yet I
should —

They are so much holier than their harlot's
son

With whom they play'd their game against
the King!

Aldwyth. The King is slain, the kingdom
overthrown!

Edith. No matter!

Aldwyth. How no matter, Harold
slain? —

I cannot find his body. O, help me
thou!

O Edith, if I ever wronged against thee,
Forgive me thou, and help me here!

Edith. No matter!

Aldwyth. Not help me, nor forgive me?

Edith. So thou saidest.

Aldwyth. I say it now, forgive me!

Edith. Cross me not!

I am seeking one who wedded me in se-
cret.

Whisper! God's angels only know it.
Ha!

What art thou doing here among the
dead?

They are stripping the dead bodies naked
yonder,

And thou art come to rob them of their
rings!

Aldwyth. O Edith, Edith, I have lost
both crown

and husband.

Edith. So have I.

Aldwyth. I tell thee, girl,

I am seeking my dead Harold.

Edith. And I mine!

The Holy Father strangled him with a
hair

Of Peter, and his brother Tostig helpt;

The wicked sister clapt her hands and
laugh'd;

Then all the dead fell on him.

Aldwyth. Edith, Edith —

Edith. What was he like, this husband?
like to thee?

Call not for help from me. I knew him
not.

He lies not here; not close beside the
standard.

Here fell the truest, manliest hearts of
England.

Go further hence and find him.

Aldwyth. She is crazed!

Edith. That doth not matter either.

Lower the light.

He must be here.

*Enter two CANONS, OSGOD and ATHELRIC,
with torches. They turn over the dead
bodies and examine them as they pass.*

Osgod. I think that this is Thurkill.

Athelric. More likely Godric.

Osgod. I am sure this body

is Alfwig, the king's uncle.

Athelric. So it is!

No, no, — brave Gurth, one gash from brow
to knee!

Osgod. And here is Leofwin.

Edith. And here is he!

Aldwyth. Harold? O, no — nay, if it
were — my God,

They have so maim'd and murder'd all his
face

There is no man can swear to him!

Edith. But one woman!

Look you, we never mean to part again. I
have found him, I am happy.

Was there not some one ask'd me for for-
giveness?

I yield it freely, being the true wife

Of this dead King, who never bore re-
venge.

*Enter COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM
MALET.*

William. Who be these women? And
what body is this?

Edith. Harold, thy better!

William. Ay, and what art thou?

Edith. His wife!

Malet. Not true, my girl, here is the
Queen!

[*Pointing out Aldwyth.*
William (to Aldwyth). Wast thou his
Queen?

Aldwyth. I was the Queen of Wales.

William. Why, then of England. Madam,
fear us not.

(*To Malet.*) Knowest thou this other?
Malet. When I visited England,
Some held she was his wife in secret —
some —

Well — some believed she was his para-
mour.

Edith. Norman, thou liest! liars all of
you,
Your Saints and all! I am his wife! and
she —

For look, our marriage ring!
[*She draws it off the finger of Harold.*
I lost it somehow —

I lost it, playing with it when I was wild.
That bred the doubt! but I am wiser
now —

I am too wise — Will none among you all
Bear me true witness — only for this
once — 60

That I have found it here again?
[*She puts it on.*
And thou,
Thy wife am I for ever and evermore.

[*Falls on the body and dies.*
William. Death! — and enough of death
for this one day,
The day of Saint Calixtus, and the day,
My day when I was born.

Malet. And this dead King's,
Who, king or not, hath kinglike fought and
fallen,
His birthday, too. It seems but yester-
even

I held it with him in his English halls,
His day, with all his roof-tree ringing
'Harold,'

Before he fell into the snare of Guy; 70
When all men counted Harold would be
King,
And Harold was most happy.

William. Thou art half English.
Take them away!

Malet, I vow to build a church to God
Here on the hill of battle; let our high
altar

Stand where their standard fell — where
these two lie.

Take them away, I do not love to see
them.

Pluck the dead woman off the dead man,
Malet!

Malet. Faster than ivy! Must I hack
her arms off? 79

How shall I part them?

William. Leave them. Let them be!
Bury him and his paramour together.
He that was false in oath to me, it seems

Was false to his own wife. We will not
give him

A Christian burial; yet he was a warrior,
And wise, yea truthful, till that blighted
vow

Which God avenged to-day.
Wrap them together in a purple cloak,
And lay them both upon the waste sea-
shore

At Hastings, there to guard the land for
which

He did forswear himself — a warrior — ay,
And but that Holy Peter fought for us, 91
And that the false Northumbrian held
aloof,

And save for that chance arrow which the
Saints
Sharpen'd and sent against him — who can
tell? —

Three horses had I slain beneath me;
twice

I thought that all was lost. Since I knew
battle,
And that was from my boyhood, never
yet —

No, by the splendor of God — have I
fought men

Like Harold and his brethren, and his
guard

Of English. Every man about his king 100
Fell where he stood. They loved him;
and, pray God

My Normans may but move as true with
me

To the door of death! Of one self-stock
at first,

Make them again one people — Norman,
English,

And English, Norman; we should have a
hand

To grasp the world with, and a foot to
stamp it —

Flat. Praise the Saints! It is over. No
more blood!

I am King of England, so they thwart me
not,

And I will rule according to their laws.

(*To Aldwyth.*) Madam, we will entreat
thee with all honor. 110

Aldwyth. My punishment is more than I
can bear.

BECKET

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR,

THE RIGHT HONORABLE EARL OF SELBORNE.

MY DEAR SELBORNE, — To you, the honored Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor; — which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre, has nevertheless — for so you have assured me — won your approbation.

Ever yours,

TENNYSON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HENRY II. (*son of the Earl of Anjou*).
THOMAS BECKET, *Chancellor of England, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury*.
GILBERT FOLIOT, *Bishop of London*.
ROGER, *Archbishop of York*.
Bishop of Hereford.
HILARY, *Bishop of Chichester*.
JOCELYN, *Bishop of Salisbury*.
JOHN OF SALISBURY } *friends of Becket*.
HERBERT OF BOSHAM }
WALTER MAP, *reputed author of 'Gobias,' Latin poems against the priesthood*.
KING LOUIS OF FRANCE.
GEOFFREY, *son of Rosamund and Henry*.
GRIM, *a monk of Cambridge*.
SIR REGINALD FITZURSE }
SIR RICHARD DE BRITO } *the four knights of the king's household, enemies of Becket*.
SIR WILLIAM DE TRACY }
SIR HUOH DE MORVILLE }
DE BROO OF SALTWOOD CASTLE.
LORD LEICESTER.
PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA.
TWO KNIGHT TEMPLARS.
JOHN OF OXFORD (*called the Swearer*).
ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE, *Queen of England (divorced from Louis of France)*.
ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD.
MARGERY.

Knights, Monks, Beggars, etc.

BECKET

PROLOGUE

A CASTLE IN NORMANDY. INTERIOR
OF THE HALL. ROOFS OF A CITY
SEEN THRO' WINDOWS

HENRY and BECKET at chess.

Henry. So then our good Archbishop
Theobald

Lies dying.

Becket. I am grieved to know as much
Henry. But we must have a mightier
man than he

For his successor.

Becket. Have you thought of one?
Henry. A cleric lately poison'd his own
mother,
And being brought before the courts of the
Church,
They but degraded him. I hope they
whipt him.
I would have hang'd him.
Becket. It is your move.
Henry. Well — there. [*Moves*.
The Church in the pell-mell of Stephen's
time
Hath climh'd the throne and almost clutch'd
the crown;
But by the royal customs of our realm
The Church should hold her baronies of me,

Like other lords amenable to law.
I'll have them written down and made the law.

Becket. My liege, I move my bishop.

Henry. And if I live,
No man without my leave shall excommunicate

My tenants or my household.

Becket. Look to your king.

Henry. No man without my leave shall cross the seas
To set the Pope against me — I pray your pardon. 19

Becket. Well — will you move ?

Henry. There. [*Moves.*

Becket. Check — you move so wildly.

Henry. There then ! [*Moves.*

Becket. Why — there then, for you see my bishop
Hath brought your king to a standstill.
You are beaten.

Henry (kicks over the board). Why, there then — down go bishop and king together.

I loathe being beaten; had I fixt my fancy
Upon the game I should have beaten thee,

But that was vagabond.

Becket. Where, my liege ? With Phryne,
Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or another ?

Henry. My Rosamund is no Lais, Thomas

Becket;
And yet she plagues me too — no fault in her —

But that I fear the Queen would have her life. 30

Becket. Put her away, put her away, my liege !

Put her away into a nunnery !
Safe enough there from her to whom thou art bound

By Holy Church. And wherefore should she seek

The life of Rosamund de Clifford more
Than that of other paramours of thine ?

Henry. How dost thou know I am not wedded to her ?

Becket. How should I know ?

Henry. That is my secret, Thomas.

Becket. State secrets should be patent to the statesman

Who serves and loves his king, and whom the king 40

Loves not as statesman, but true lover and friend.

Henry. Come, come, thou art but deacon,
not yet bishop,

No, nor archbishop, nor my confessor yet.
I would to God thou wert, for I should find

An easy father confessor in thee.

Becket. Saint Denis, that thou shouldst not. I should beat

Thy kingship as my bishop hath beaten it.

Henry. Hell take thy bishop then, and my kingship too !

Come, come, I love thee and I know thee,
I know thee,

A doter on white pheasant-flesh at feasts, 50

A sauce-deviser for thy days of fish,

A dish-designer, and most amorous

Of good old red sound liberal Gascon wine.

Will not thy body rebel, man, if thou flatter it ?

Becket. That palate is insane which cannot tell

A good dish from a bad, new wine from old.

Henry. Well, who loves wine loves woman.

Becket. So I do.
Men are God's trees, and women are God's

flowers;

And when the Gascon wine mounts to my head,

The trees are all the statelier, and the flowers 60

Are all the fairer.

Henry. And thy thoughts, thy faucies ?

Becket. Good dogs, my liege, well train'd,
and easily call'd

Off from the game.

Henry. Save for some once or twice,
When they ran down the game and worried it.

Becket. No, my liege, no ! — not once — in God's name, no !

Henry. Nay, then, I take thee at thy word — believe thee

The veriest Galahad of old Arthur's hall.
And so this Rosamund, my true heart-wife,

Not Eleanor — she whom I love indeed
As a woman should be loved — Why dost

thou smile 70
So dolorously ?

Becket. My good liege, if a man
Wastes himself among women, how should

he love
A woman as a woman should be loved ?

Henry. How shouldst thou know that never hast loved one ?
Come, I would give her to thy care in England

When I am out in Normandy or Anjou.

Becket. My lord, I am your subject, not your —

Henry. Pander.

God's eyes ! I know all that — not my purveyor

Of pleasures, but to save a life — her life ;
Ay, and the soul of Eleanor from hell-fire.

I have built a secret bower in England,
Thomas, 81

A nest in a bush.

Becket. And where, my liege ?

Henry (whispers). Thine ear.

Becket. That 's lone enough.

Henry (laying paper on table). This chart here mark'd ' *Her Bower* ;

Take, keep it, friend. See, first, a circling wood,

A hundred pathways running everyway,
And then a brook, a bridge ; and after that

This labyrinthine brickwork maze in maze,
And then another wood, and in the midst

A garden and my Rosamund. Look, this line —

The rest you see is color'd green — but this 90

Draws thro' the chart to her.

Becket. This blood-red line ?

Henry. Ay ! blood, perchance, except thou see to her.

Becket. And where is she ? There in her English nest ?

Henry. Would God she were ! — no, here within the city.

We take her from her secret bower in Anjou

And pass her to her secret bower in England.

She is ignorant of all but that I love her.

Becket. My liege, I pray thee let me hence ; a widow

And orphan child, whom one of thy wild barons —

Henry. Ay, ay, but swear to see to her in England. 100

Becket. Well, well, I swear, but not to please myself.

Henry. Whatever come between us ?

Becket. What should come

Between us, Henry ?

Henry. Nay — I know not, Thomas.

Becket. What need then ? Well — whatever come between us. [*Going.*]

Henry. A moment ! thou didst help me to my throne

In Theobald's time, and after by thy wisdom

Hast kept it firm from shaking ; but now I, For my realm's sake, myself must be the wizard

To raise that tempest which will set it trembling

Only to base it deeper. I, true son 110
Of Holy Church — no croucher to the Gregories

That tread the kings their children underheel —

Must curb her ; and the Holy Father, while This Barbarossa butts him from his chair,

Will need my help — be facile to my hands. Now is my time. Yet — lest there should

be flashes

And fulminations from the side of Rome,
An interdict on England — I will have

My young son Henry crown'd the King of England,

That so the Papal bolt may pass by England, 120

As seeming his, not mine, and fall abroad.

I'll have it done — and now.

Becket. Surely too young

Even for this shadow of a crown ; and tho'

I love him heartily, I can spy already A strain of hard and headstrong in him.

Say,

The Queen should play his kingship against thine !

Henry. I will not think so, Thomas.

Who shall crown him ?

Canterbury is dying.

Becket. The next Canterbury.

Henry. And who shall he be, my friend Thomas ? Who ? 129

Becket. Name him ; the Holy Father will confirm him.

Henry (lays his hand on Becket's shoulder). Here !

Becket. Mock me not. I am not even a monk.

Thy jest — no more. Why — look — is this a sleeve

For an archbishop ?

Henry. But the arm within Is Becket's, who hath beaten down my foes.

Becket. A soldier's, not a spiritual arm.

Henry. I lack a spiritual soldier,
Thomas —

A man of this world and the next to boot.

Becket. There's Gilbert Foliot.

Henry. He! too thin, too thin.
Thou art the man to fill out the Church
robe;

Your Foliot fasts and fawns too much for
me. 140

Becket. Roger of York.

Henry. Roger is Roger of York;
King, Church, and State to him but foils
wherein

To set that precious jewel, Roger of York.
No.

Becket. Henry of Winchester?

Henry. Him who crown'd Stephen —
King Stephen's brother! No; too royal for
me.

And I'll have no more Anselms.

Becket. Sire, the business
Of thy whole kingdom waits me; let me go.

Henry. Answer me first.

Becket. Then for thy barren jest
Take thou mine answer in bare common-
place —

Nolo episcopari.

Henry. Ay, but *Nolo*
Archiepiscopari, my good friend, 151
Is quite another matter.

Becket. A more awful one.
Make me archbishop! Why, my liege, I
know

Some three or four poor priests a thousand
times

Fitter for this grand function. *Me* arch-
bishop!

God's favor and king's favor might so clash
That thou and I — That were a jest in-
deed!

Henry. Thou angerest me, man; I do
not jest.

*Enter ELEANOR and SIR REGINALD
FITZURSE.*

ELEANOR (singing).

Over! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done — 160

Henry (to Becket, who is going). Thou
shalt not go. I have not ended with
thee.

Eleanor (seeing chart on table). This
chart with the red line! her bower! whose
bower?

Henry. The chart is not mine, but
Becket's; take it, Thomas.

Eleanor. Becket! O, — ay — and these
chessmen on the floor — the king's crown
broken! Becket hath beaten thee again —
and thou hast kicked down the board. I
know thee of old. 171

Henry. True enough, my mind was set
upon other matters.

Eleanor. What matters? State mat-
ters? love matters?

Henry. My love for thee, and thine for
me.

ELEANOR.

Over! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done;

Over and gone with the roses, 180
And over and gone with the sun.

Here; but our sun in Aquitaine lasts
longer. I would I were in Aquitaine again
— your North chills me.

Over! the sweet summer closes,
And never a flower at the close;
Over and gone with the roses,
And winter again and the snows.

That was not the way I ended it first —
but unsymmetrically, preposterously, illogi-
cally, out of passion, without art — like a
song of the people. Will you have it? The
last Parthian shaft of a forlorn Cupid at
the King's left breast, and all left-handed-
ness and under-handedness.

And never a flower at the close;
Over and gone with the roses,
Not over and gone with the rose. 198

True, one rose will outblossom the rest,
one rose in a bower. I speak after my
fancies, for I am a Troubadour, you know,
and won the violet at Toulouse; but my
voice is harsh here, not in tune, a night-
ingale out of season; for marriage, rose or
no rose, has killed the golden violet.

Becket. Madam, you do ill to scorn
wedded love. 207

Eleanor. So I do. Louis of France
loved me, and I dreamed that I loved
Louis of France: and I loved Henry of
England, and Henry of England dreamed
that he loved me; but the marriage-gar-
land withers even with the putting on, the
bright link rusts with the breath of the
first after-marriage kiss, the harvest moon
is the ripening of the harvest, and the

honey-moon is the gall of Love; he dies of his honey-moon. I could pity this poor world myself that it is no better ordered.

Henry. Dead is he, my Queen? What, altogether? Let me swear nay to that by this cross on thy neck. God's eyes! what a lovely cross! what jewels!

Eleanor. Doth it please you? Take it and wear it on that hard heart of yours — there.

Henry (puts it on). On this left breast before so hard a heart,

To hide the scar left by thy Parthian dart.

Eleanor. Has my simple song set you jingling? Nay, if I took and translated that hard heart into our Provençal facilities, I could so play about it with the rhyme —

Henry. That the heart were lost in the rhyme, and the matter in the metre. May we not pray you, madam, to spare us the hardness of your facility?

Eleanor. The wells of Castaly are not wasted upon the desert. We did but jest.

Henry. There's no jest on the brows of Herbert there. What is it, Herbert?

Enter HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Herbert. My liege, the good archbishop is no more.

Henry. Peace to his soul!

Herbert. I left him with peace on his face, — that sweet other-world smile, which will be reflected in the spiritual body among the angels. But he longed much to see your Grace and the Chancellor ere he past, and his last words were a commendation of Thomas Becket to your Grace as his successor in the archbishopric.

Henry. Ha, Becket! thou rememberest our talk!

Becket. My heart is full of tears — I have no answer.

Henry. Well, well, old men must die, or the world would grow mouldy, would only breed the past again. Come to me to-morrow. Thou hast but to hold out thy hand. Meanwhile the revenues are mine. A-hawking, a-hawking! If I sit, I grow fat.

[Leaps over the table, and exit.]

Becket. He did prefer me to the chancellorship,

Believing I should ever aid the Church — But have I done it? He commends me now From out his grave to this archbishopric.

Herbert. A dead man's dying wish should be of weight.

Becket. His should. Come with me. Let me learn at full

The manner of his death, and all he said.

[Exeunt Herbert and Becket.]

Eleanor. Fitzurse, that chart with the red line — thou sawest it — her bower.

Fitzurse. Rosamund's?

Eleanor. Ay — there lies the secret of her whereabouts, and the King gave it to his Chancellor.

Fitzurse. To this son of a London merchant — how your Grace must hate him!

Eleanor. Hate him? as brave a soldier as Henry and a goodlier man: but thou — dost thou love this Chancellor, that thou hast sworn a voluntary allegiance to him?

Fitzurse. Not for my love toward him, but because he had the love of the King. How should a baron love a beggar on horseback, with the retinue of three kings behind him, out-royalling royalty? Besides, he help the King to break down our castles, for the which I hate him.

Eleanor. For the which I honor him. Statesman, not Churchman, he. A great aud sound policy that; I could embrace him for it: you could not see the King for the kinglings.

Fitzurse. Ay, but he speaks to a noble as tho' he were a churl, and to a churl as if he were a noble.

Eleanor. Pride of the plebeian!

Fitzurse. And this plebeian like to be Archbishop!

Eleanor. True, and I have an inherited loathing of these black sheep of the Papacy. Archbishop? I can see further into a man than our hot-headed Henry, and if there ever come feud between Church and Crown, and I do not then charm this secret out of our loyal Thomas, I am not Eleanor.

Fitzurse. Last night I followed a woman in the city here. Her face was veiled, but the back methought was Rosamund — his paramour, thy rival. I can feel for thee.

Eleanor. Thou feel for me! — paramour — rival! King Louis had no paramours, and I loved him none the more. Henry had many, and I loved him none the less — now neither more nor less — not at all; the cup's empty. I would she were but his

paramour, for men tire of their fancies; but I fear this one fancy hath taken root, and borne blossom too, and she, whom the King loves indeed, is a power in the State. Rival!—ay, and when the King passes, there may come a crash and embroilment as in Stephen's time; and her children—canst thou not—that secret matter which would heat the King against thee (*whispers him and he starts*). Nay, that is safe with me as with thyself; but canst thou not—thou art drowned in debt—thou shalt have our love, our silence, and our gold—canst thou not—if thou light upon her—free me from her?

Fitzurse. Well, Madam, I have loved her in my time. 330

Eleanor. No, my bear, thou hast not. My Courts of Love would have held thee guiltless of love—the fine attractions and repulses, the delicacies, the subtleties.

Fitzurse. Madam, I loved according to the main purpose and intent of nature.

Eleanor. I warrant thee! thou wouldst hug thy Cupid till his ribs cracked—enough of this. Follow me this Rosamund day and night, whithersoever she goes; track her, if thou canst, even into the King's lodging, that I may (*clenches her fist*)—may at least have my cry against him and her,—and thou in thy way shouldst be jealous of the King, for thou in thy way didst once, what shall I call it, affect her thine own self. 349

Fitzurse. Ay, but the young colt winced and whinnied and flung up her heels; and then the King came honeying about her, and this Becket, her father's friend, like enough staved us from her.

Eleanor. Us!

Fitzurse. Yea, by the Blessed Virgin! There were more than I buzzing round the blossom—De Tracy—even that flint De Brito.

Eleanor. Carry her off among you; run in upon her and devour her, one and all of you; make her as hateful to herself and to the King as she is to me. 363

Fitzurse. I and all would be glad to wreak our spite on the rose-faced minion of the King, and bring her to the level of the dust, so that the King—

Eleanor. Let her eat it like the serpent, and be driven out of her paradise.

ACT I

SCENE I.—BECKET'S HOUSE IN LONDON

Chamber barely furnished. BECKET *unrobing.* HERBERT OF BOSHAM and SERVANT.

Servant. Shall I not help your lordship to your rest?

Becket. Friend, am I so much better than thyself
That thou shouldst help me? Thou art wearied out
With this day's work; get thee to thine own bed.

Leave me with Herbert, friend.

[*Exit Servant.*
Help me off, Herbert, with this—and this.

Herbert. Was not the people's blessing as we passed

Heart-comfort and a balsam to thy blood?

Becket. The people know their Church a tower of strength,

A bulwark against Throne and Baronage.
Too heavy for me, this; off with it, Herbert!

Herbert. Is it so much heavier than thy Chancellor's robe?

Becket. No; but the Chancellor's and the Archbishop's

Together more than mortal man can bear.

Herbert. Not heavier than thine armor at Tonlouse?

Becket. O Herbert, Herbert, in my chancellorship

I more than once have gone against the Church.

Herbert. To please the King?

Becket. Ay, and the King of kings,
Or justice; for it seem'd to me but just
The Church should pay her scutage like the lords. 20

But hast thou heard this cry of Gilbert Foliot

That I am not the man to be your primate,

For Henry could not work a miracle—
Make an archbishop of a soldier?

Herbert. Ay,

For Gilbert Foliot held himself the man.

Becket. Am I the man? My mother, ere she bore me,

Dream'd that twelve stars fell glittering
out of heaven

Into her bosom.

Herbert. Ay, the fire, the light,
The spirit of the twelve Apostles enter'd
Into thy making.

Becket. And when I was a child,
The Virgin, in a vision of my sleep, ³¹
Gave me the golden keys of Paradise.

Dream,
Or prophecy, that ?

Herbert. Well, dream and prophecy both.

Becket. And when I was of Theobald's
household, once —
The good old man would sometimes have
his jest —

He took his mitre off, and set it on me,
And said, 'My young archbishop — thou
wouldst make

A stately archbishop !' Jest or prophecy
there ?

Herbert. Both, Thomas, both.

Becket. Am I the man ? That rang
Within my head last night, and when I
slept ⁴⁰

Methought I stood in Canterbury Minster,
And spake to the Lord God, and said, 'O
Lord,

I have been a lover of wines, and delicate
meats,

And secular splendors, and a favorer
Of players, and a courtier, and a feeder
Of dogs and hawks, and apes, and lions,
and lynxes.

Am I the man ?' And the Lord answer'd
me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more the
man.'

And then I asked again, 'O Lord my God,
Henry the King hath been my friend, my
brother, ⁵⁰

And mine uplifter in this world, and chosen
me

For this thy great archbishopric, believing
That I should go against the Church with
him,

And I shall go against him with the
Church,

And I have said no word of this to him.

Am I the man ?' And the Lord answer'd
me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more the
man.'

And thereupon, methought, He drew to-
ward me,

And smote me down upon the minster
floor. ⁵⁹

I fell.

Herbert. God make not thee, but thy
foes, fall !

Becket. I fell. Why fall ? Why did He
smite me ? What ?

Shall I fall off — to please the King once
more ?

Not fight — tho' somehow traitor to the
King —

My truest and mine utmost for the Church ?

Herbert. Thou canst not fall that way.
Let traitor be ;

For how have fought thine utmost for the
Church,

Save from the throne of thine archbishop-
ric ?

And how been made archbishop hadst thou
told him,

'I mean to fight mine utmost for the
Church, ⁶⁹

Against the King ?'

Becket. But dost thou think the King
Forced mine election ?

Herbert. I do think the King
Was potent in the election, and why not ?

Why should not Heaven have so inspired
the King ?

Be comforted. Thou art the man — be
thou

A mightier Anselm.

Becket. I do believe thee, then. I am
the man.

And yet I seem appall'd — on such a sudden
At such an eagle-height I stand and see

The rift that runs between me and the
King.

I served our Theobald well when I was
with him ; ⁸⁰

I served King Henry well as Chancellor ;
I am his no more, and I must serve the
Church.

This Canterbury is only less than Rome,
And all my doubts I fling from me like
dust,

Winnow and scatter all scruples to the
wind,

And all the puissance of the warrior,
And all the wisdom of the Chancellor,

And all the heap'd experiences of life,
I cast upon the side of Canterbury —

Our holy mother Canterbury, who sits ⁹⁰
With tatter'd robes. Laics and barons,
thro'

The random gifts of careless kings, have
 graspt
 Her livings, her advowsons, granges, farms,
 And goodly acres — we will make her
 whole;
 Not one rood lost. And for these Royal
 customs,
 These ancient Royal customs — they are
 Royal,
 Not of the Church — and let them be
 anathema.
 And all that speak for them anathema.

Herbert. Thomas, thou art moved too
 much.

Becket. O Herbert, here
 I gash myself asunder from the King, 100
 Tho' leaving each, a wound; mine own, a
 grief
 To show the scar for ever — his, a hate
 Not ever to be heal'd.

*Enter ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD, flying from
 SIR REGINALD FITZURSE.* Drops her
 veil.

Becket. Rosamund de Clifford!
Rosamund. Save me, father, hide me —
 they follow me — and I must not be known.
Becket. Pass in with Herbert there.

[*Exeunt Rosamund and Herbert by
 side door.*]

Enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. The archbishop!

Becket. Ay! what wouldst thou, Regi-
 nald?

Fitzurse. Why — why, my lord, I fol-
 low'd — follow'd one —

Becket. And then what follows? Let
 me follow thee.

Fitzurse. It much imports me I should
 know her name. 110

Becket. What her?

Fitzurse. The woman that I follow'd
 hither.

Becket. Perhaps it may import her all as
 much

Not to be known.

Fitzurse. And what care I for that?
 Come, come, my lord archbishop; I saw
 that door

Close even now upon the woman.

Becket. Well?

Fitzurse (making for the door). Nay, let
 me pass, my lord, for I must know.

Becket. Back, man!

Fitzurse. Then tell me who and what
 she is.

Becket. Art thou so sure thou followedst
 anything?

Go home, and sleep thy wine off, for thine
 eyes

Glare stupid-wild with wine.

Fitzurse (making to the door). I must and
 will.

I care not for thy new archbishopric. 121

Becket. Back, man, I tell thee! What!
 Shall I forget my new archbishopric
 And smite thee with my crozier on the
 skull?

'Fore God, I am a mightier man than thou.

Fitzurse. It well befits thy new archbish-
 opric

To take the vagabond woman of the street
 Into thine arms!

Becket. O drunken ribaldry!

Out, beast! out, bear!

Fitzurse. I shall remember this.

Becket. Do, and begone!

[*Exit Fitzurse.*]

[*Going to the door, sees De Tracy.*]

Tracy, what dost thou here?

De Tracy. My lord, I follow'd Reginald
 Fitzurse. 131

Becket. Follow him out!

De Tracy. I shall remember this
 Discourtesy. [*Exit.*]

Becket. Do. These be those baron-
 brutes

That havock'd all the land in Stephen's day.
 Rosamund de Clifford!

Re-enter ROSAMUND and HERBERT.

Rosamund. Here am I.

Becket. Why here?

We gave thee to the charge of John of
 Salisbury,

To pass thee to thy secret bower to-mor-
 row.

Wast thou not told to keep thyself from
 sight?

Rosamund. Poor bird of passage! so I
 was; but, father,

They say that you are wise in winged
 things, 140

And know the ways of Nature. Bar the
 bird

From following the fled summer — a chink
 — he's out,

Gone! And there stole into the city a
 breath

Full of the meadows, and it minded me
Of the sweet woods of Clifford, and the
walks
Where I could move at pleasure, and I
thought
'Lo ! I must out or die.'

Becket. Or out *and die.*
And what hast thou to do with this Fitz-
urse ?

Rosamund. Nothing. He sued my hand.
I shook at him.

He found me once alone. Nay — nay — I
cannot

Tell you. My father drove him and his
friends,

De Tracy and De Brito, from our castle.

I was but fourteen and an April then.

I heard him swear revenge.

Becket. Why will you court it
By self-exposure ? flutter out at night ?
Make it so hard to save a moth from the
fire ?

Rosamund. I have saved many of 'em.

You catch 'em, so,
Softly, and fling them out to the free air.
They burn themselves *within-door.*

Becket. Our good John
Must speed you to your bower at once.

The child

Is there already.

Rosamund. Yes — the child — the
child —

O, rare, a whole long day of open field !

Becket. Ay, but you go disguised.

Rosamund. O, rare again !

We 'll baffle them, I warrant. What shall
it be ?

I 'll go as a nun.

Becket. No.

Rosamund. What, not good enough
Even to play at nun ?

Becket. Dan John with a nun,
That Map and these new railers at the
Church

May plaster his clean name with scurri-
lous rhymes !

No !

Go like a monk, cowling and clouding up
That fatal star, thy beauty, from the squint
Of lust and glare of malice. Good-night !
good-night !

Rosamund. Father, I am so tender to all
hardness !

Nay, father, first thy blessing.

Becket. Wedded ?

Rosamund. Father !

Becket. Well, well ! I ask no more.

Heaven bless thee ! hence !

Rosamund. O holy father, when thou
seest him next,

Commend me to thy friend.

Becket. What friend ?

Rosamund. The King.

Becket. Herbert, take out a score of
armed men

To guard this bird of passage to her cage ;
And watch Fitzurse, and if he follow thee,
Make him thy prisouer. I am Chancellor
yet.

[*Exeunt Herbert and Rosamund.*

Poor soul ! poor soul !

My friend, the King ! — O thou Great Seal
of England,

Given me by my dear friend, the King of
England —

We long have wrought together, thou and
I —

Now must I send thee as a common friend
To tell the King, my friend, I am against
him.

We are friends no more ; he will say that,
not I.

The worldly bond between us is dissolved,
Not yet the love. Can I be under him

As Chancellor ? as Archbishop over him ?

Go therefore like a friend slighted by one
That hath climb'd up to nobler company.

Not slighted — all but moan'd for. Thou
must go.

I have not dishonor'd thee — I trust I have
not —

Not mangled justice. May the hand that
next

Inherits thee be but as true to thee

As mine hath been ! O, my dear friend,
the King !

O brother ! — I may come to martyrdom.

I am martyr in myself already. — Herbert !

Herbert (re-entering). My lord, the town
is quiet, and the moon

Divides the whole long street with light
and shade.

No footfall — no Fitzurse. We have seen
her home.

Becket. The hog hath tumbled himself
into some corner,

Some ditch, to snore away his drunkenness
Into the sober headache, — Nature's moral

Against excess. Let the Great Seal be sent
Back to the King to-morrow.

Herbert. Must that be ?
The King may rend the bearer limb from limb.

Think on it again.

Becket. Against the moral excess
No physical ache, but failure it may be ²¹¹
Of all we aim'd at. John of Salisbury
Hath often laid a cold hand on my heats,
And Herbert hath rebuked me even now.
I will be wise and wary, not the soldier
As Foliot swears it. — John, and out of
breath !

Enter JOHN OF SALISBURY.

John of Salisbury. Thomas, thou wast not
happy taking charge

Of this wild Rosamund to please the King,
Nor am I happy having charge of her —
The included Danaë has escaped again

Her tower and her Acrisius — where to
seek ? ²²¹

I have been about the city.

Becket. Thou wilt find her
Back in her lodging. Go with her — at
once —

To-night — my men will guard you to the
gates.

Be sweet to her, she has many enemies.
Send the Great Seal by daybreak. Both,
good-night !

SCENE II

STREET IN NORTHAMPTON LEADING TO
THE CASTLE

ELEANOR'S RETAINERS and BECKET'S RE-
TAINERS fighting. *Enter ELEANOR and
BECKET from opposite streets.*

Eleanor. Peace, fools !

Becket. Peace, friends ! what idle brawl
is this ?

Retainer of Becket. They said — her
Grace's people — thou wast found —
Liars ! I shame to quote 'em — caught, my
lord,

With a wanton in thy lodging — Hell re-
quite 'em !

Retainer of Eleanor. My liege, the Lord
Fitzurse reported this

In passing to the Castle even now.

Retainer of Becket. And then they mock'd
us and we fell upon 'em,

For we would live and die for thee, my
lord,

However kings and queens may frown on
thee. ⁹

Becket to his Retainers. Go, go — no more
of this !

Eleanor to her Retainers. Away ! —
(*Exeunt Retainers.*) Fitzurse —

Becket. Nay, let him be.

Eleanor. No, no, my lord archbishop,
'T is known you are midwiuter to all wo-
men,

But often in your chancellorship you served
The follies of the King.

Becket. No, not these follies !

Eleanor. My lord, Fitzurse beheld her in
your lodging.

Becket. Whom ?

Eleanor. Well — you know — the min-
iour, Rosamund.

Becket. He had good eyes !

Eleanor. Then hidden in the street
He watch'd her pass with John of Salis-
bury,

And heard her cry, ' Where is this bower
of mine ? ' ¹⁹

Becket. Good ears too !

Eleanor. You are going to the Castle,
Will you subscribe the customs ?

Becket. I leave that,
Knowing how much you reverence Holy
Church,

My liege, to your conjecture.

Eleanor. I and mine —

And many a baron holds along with me —
Are not so much at fend with Holy Church
But we might take your side against the
customs —

So that you grant me one slight favor.

Becket. What ?

Eleanor. A sight of that same chart
which Henry gave you

With the red line — ' her bower.' ⁹

Becket. And to what end ?

Eleanor. That Church must scorn her-
self whose fearful priest ³⁰

Sits winking at the license of a king,
Altho' we grant when kings are dangerous
The Church must play into the hands of
kings ;

Look ! I would move this wanton from his
sight

And take the Church's danger on myself.

Becket. For which she should be duly
grateful.

Eleanor. True !
 Tho' she that binds the bond, herself should
 see
 That kings are faithful to their marriage
 vow.
Becket. Ay, madam, and queens also.
Eleanor. And queens also !
 What is your drift ?
Becket. My drift is to the Castle,
 Where I shall meet the barons and my
 King. [*Exit.*]

DE BROC, DE TRACY, DE BRITO, DE
 MORVILLE (*passing*).

Eleanor. To the Castle ?
De Broc. Ay !
Eleanor. Stir up the King, the lords !
 Set all on fire against him !
De Brito. Ay, good madam !
 [*Exeunt.*]
Eleanor. Fool ! I will make thee hate-
 ful to thy King.
 Churl ! I will have thee frightened into
 France,
 And I shall live to trample on thy grave.

SCENE III

THE HALL IN NORTHAMPTON CASTLE

*On one side of the stage the doors of an inner
 Council-chamber, half-open. At the bottom,
 the great doors of the Hall. ROGER
 ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, FOLIOT BISHOP
 OF LONDON, HILARY OF CHICHESTER,
 BISHOP OF HEREFORD, RICHARD DE
 HASTINGS (Grand Prior of Templars),
 PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA (the Pope's Al-
 moner), and others. DE BROC, FITZURSE,
 DE BRITO, DE MORVILLE, DE TRACY,
 and other BARONS assembled — a table be-
 fore them. JOHN OF OXFORD, President
 of the Council.*

Enter BECKET and HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Becket. Where is the King ?
Roger of York. Gone hawking on the
 Nene,
 His heart so gall'd with thine ingratitude,
 He will not see thy face till thou hast
 sign'd
 These ancient laws and customs of the
 realm.
 Thy sending back the Great Seal madden'd
 him;

He all but pluck'd the bearer's eyes away.
 Take heed lest he destroy thee utterly.

Becket. Then shalt thou step into my
 place and sign.

Roger of York. Didst thou not promise
 Henry to obey

These ancient laws and customs of the
 realm ?

Becket. Saving the honor of my order —
 ay.

Customs, traditions, — clouds that come
 and go;

The customs of the Church are Peter's rock.

Roger of York. Saving thine order ! But
 King Henry sware

That, saving his King's kingship, he would
 grant thee

The crown itself. Saving thine order,
 Thomas,

Is black and white at once, and comes to
 nought.

O bolster'd up with stubbornness and pride,
 Wilt thou destroy the Church in fighting
 for it,

And bring us all to shame ?

Becket. Roger of York,
 When I and thou were youths in Theo-
 bald's house,

Twice did thy malice and thy calumnies
 Exile me from the face of Theobald.

Now I am Canterbury, and thou art York.

Roger of York. And is not York the peer
 of Canterbury ?

Did not Great Gregory bid Saint Austin here
 Found two archbishopries, London and
 York ?

Becket. What came of that ? The first
 archbishop fled,

And York lay barren for a hundred years.

Why, by this rule, Foliot may claim the
 pall

For London too.

Foliot. And with good reason too,
 For London had a temple and a priest
 When Canterbury hardly bore a name.

Becket. The pagan temple of a pagan
 Rome !

The heathen priesthood of a heathen creed !
 Thou goest beyond thyself in petulancy !

Who made thee London ? Who, but Can-
 terbury ?

John of Oxford. Peace, peace, my lords !
 these customs are no longer

As Canterbury calls them, wandering
 clouds,

But by the King's command are written
down,⁴⁰
And by the King's command I, John of
Oxford,

The President of this Council, read them.

Becket. Read!

John of Oxford (reads). 'All causes of
adwosons and presentations, whether be-
tween laymen or clerics, shall be tried in
the King's court.'

Becket. But that I cannot sign; for that
would drag

The cleric before the civil judgment-seat,
And on a matter wholly spiritual.⁴⁹

John of Oxford. 'If any cleric be ac-
cused of felony, the Church shall not
protect him; but he shall answer to the
summons of the King's court to be tried
therein.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign.

Is not the Church the visible Lord on
earth?

Shall hands that do create the Lord be
bound

Behind the back like laymen-criminals?
The Lord be judged again by Pilate?

No!

John of Oxford. 'When a bishopric
falls vacant, the King, till another be ap-
pointed, shall receive the revenues thereof.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign. Is the
King's treasury

A fit place for the moneys of the Church,
That be the patrimony of the poor?

John of Oxford. 'And when the vacancy
is to be filled up, the King shall summon
the chapter of that church to court, and the
election shall be made in the Chapel Royal,
with the consent of our lord the King, and
by the advice of his Government.'⁷¹

Becket. And that I cannot sign; for that
would make

Our island-Church a schism from Christen-
dom,

And weight down all free choice beneath
the throne.

Foliot. And was thine own election so
canonical,

Good father?

Becket. If it were not, Gilbert Foliot,
I mean to cross the sea to France, and lay
My crozier in the Holy Father's hands,
And bid him re-create me, Gilbert Foliot.

Foliot. Nay; by another of these customs
thou

80

Will not be suffer'd so to cross the seas
Without the license of our lord the King.
Becket. That, too, I cannot sign.

DE BROC, DE BRITO, DE TRACY, FITZ-
URSE, DE MORVILLE, start up — a clash
of swords.

Sign and obey!

Becket. My lords, is this a combat or a
council?

Are ye my masters, or my lord the King?
Ye make this clashing for no love o' the
customs

Or constitutions, or whate'er ye call them,
But that there be among you those that
hold

Lands reft from Canterbury.

De Broc. And mean to keep them,

In spite of thee!

Lords (shouting). Sign, and obey the
crown!⁹⁰

Becket. The crown? Shall I do less for
Canterbury

Than Henry for the crown? King Ste-
phen gave

Many of the crown lands to those that helpt
him;

So did Matilda, the King's mother. Mark,
When Henry came into his own again,

Then he took back not only Stephen's gifts,
But his own mother's, lest the crown should
be

Shorn of ancestral splendor. This did
Henry.

Shall I do less for mine own Canterbury?
And thou, De Broc, that holdest Saltwood

Castle —¹⁰⁰

De Broc. And mean to hold it, or —

Becket. To have my life.

De Broc. The King is quick to anger; if
thou anger him,

We wait but the King's word to strike thee
dead.

Becket. Strike, and I die the death of
martyrdom;

Strike, and ye set these customs by my
death

Ringing their own death-knell thro' all the
realm.

Herbert. And I can tell you, lords, ye are
all as like

To lodge a fear in Thomas Becket's heart
As find a hare's form in a lion's cave.

John of Oxford. Ay, sheathe your swords,
ye will displease the King.¹¹⁰

De Broc. Why, down then thou ! but an he come to Saltwood,
By God's death, thou shalt stick him like a calf !
Hilary. O my good lord, I do entreat thee — sign.
Save the King's honor here before his barons.
He hath sworn that thou shouldst sign, and now but shuns
The semblance of defeat; I have heard him say
He means no more; so if thou sign, my lord,
That were but as the shadow of an assent.
Becket. 'T would seem too like the substance, if I sign'd.
Philip de Eleemosyna. My lord, thine ear ! I have the ear of the Pope.
As thou hast honor for the Pope our master,
Have pity on him, sorely prest upon
By the fierce Emperor and his Antipope.
Thou knowest he was forced to fly to France;
He pray'd me to pray thee to pacify thy King; for if thou go against thy King,
Then must he likewise go against thy King,
And then thy King might join the Antipope,
And that would shake the Papacy as it stands.
Besides, thy King swore to our cardinals
He meant no harm nor damage to the Church.
Smoother thou his pride — thy signing is but form;
Nay, and should harm come of it, it is the Pope
Will be to blame — not thou. Over and over
He told me thou shouldst pacify the King,
Lest there be battle between Heaven and Earth,
And Earth should get the better — for the time.
Cannot the Pope absolve thee if thou sign ?
Becket. Have I the orders of the Holy Father ?
Philip de Eleemosyna. Orders, my lord — why, no; for what am I ?
The secret whisper of the Holy Father.
Thou, that has been a statesman, couldst thou always
Blurt thy free mind to the air ?

Becket. If Rome be feeble, then should I be firm.
Philip. Take it not that way — balk not the Pope's will.
When he hath shaken off the Emperor,
He heads the Church against the King with thee.
Richard de Hastings (kneeling). Becket, I am the oldest of the Templars;
I knew thy father; he would be mine age.
Had he lived now; think of me as thy father !
Behold thy father kneeling to thee, Becket.
Submit; I promise thee on my salvation
That thou wilt hear no more o' the customs.
Becket. What !
Hath Henry told thee ? hast thou talk'd with him ?
Another Templar (kneeling). Father, I am the youngest of the Templars,
Look on me as I were thy bodily son,
For, like a son, I lift my hands to thee.
Philip. Wilt thou hold out for ever,
Thomas Becket ?
Dost thou not hear ?
Becket (signs). Why — there then — there — I sign,
And swear to obey the customs.
Foliot. Is it thy will,
My lord archbishop, that we too should sign ?
Becket. O, ay, by that canonical obedience
Thou still hast owed thy father, Gilbert Foliot.
Foliot. Loyally and with good faith, my lord archbishop ?
Becket. O, ay, with all that loyalty and good faith
Thou still hast shown thy primate, Gilbert Foliot.
[*Becket draws apart with Herbert.*
Herbert, Herbert, have I betray'd the Church ?
I'll have the paper back — blot out my name.
Herbert. Too late, my lord: you see they are signing there.
Becket. False to myself — it is the will of God
To break me, prove me nothing of myself !
This almoner hath tasted Henry's gold.
The cardinals have finger'd Henry's gold.

And Rome is venal even to rottenness.
 I see it, I see it.
 I am no soldier, as he said — at least
 No leader. Herbert, till I hear from the
 Pope
 I will suspend myself from all my func-
 tions.
 If fast and prayer, the lacerating scourge —
Foliot (from the table). My lord arch-
 bishop, thou hast yet to seal. ¹⁸⁰
Becket. First, Foliot, let me see what I
 have sign'd. [*Goes to the table.*
 What, this! and this! — what! new and
 old together!
 Seal? If a seraph shouted from the sun,
 And bade me seal against the rights of the
 Church,
 I would anathematize him. I will not seal.
 [*Exit with Herbert.*

Enter KING HENRY.

Henry. Where's Thomas? hath he
 signed? show me the papers!
 Sign'd and not seal'd! How's that?
John of Oxford. He would not seal.
 And when he sign'd, his face was stormy-
 red —
 Shame, wrath, I know not what. He sat
 down there
 And dropt it in his hands, and then a pale-
 ness, ¹⁹⁰
 Like the wan twilight after sunset, crept
 Up even to the tonsure, and he groan'd,
 'False to myself! It is the will of God!'
Henry. God's will be what it will, the
 man shall seal,
 Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's
 son —
 Nay, if I cannot break him as the prelate,
 I'll crush him as the subject. Send for
 him back. [*Sits on his throne.*
 Barons and bishops of our realm of Eng-
 land,
 After the nineteen winters of King Ste-
 phen —
 A reign which was no reign, when none
 could sit ²⁰⁰
 By his own hearth in peace; when murder
 common
 As nature's death, like Egypt's plague, had
 fill'd
 All things with blood; when every door-
 way blush'd,
 Dash'd red with that unhallow'd pass-
 over;

When every baron ground his blade in
 blood;
 The household dough was kneaded up with
 blood;
 The mill-wheel turn'd in blood; the whole-
 some plow
 Lay rusting in the furrow's yellow weeds,
 Till famine dwarf'd the race — I came, your
 King!
 Nor dwell alone, like a soft lord of the
 East, ²¹⁰
 In mine own hall, and sucking thro' fools'
 ears
 The flatteries of corruption — went abroad
 Thro' all my counties, spied my people's
 ways;
 Yea, heard the churl against the baron —
 yea,
 And did him justice; sat in mine own
 courts
 Judging my judges, that had found a King
 Who rang'd confusions, made the twilight
 day,
 And struck a shape from out the vague,
 and law
 From madness. And the event — our fal-
 lows till'd, ²¹⁹
 Much corn, re-peopled towns, a realm again.
 So far my course, albeit not glassy-smooth,
 Had prosper'd in the main, but suddenly
 Jarr'd on this rock. A cleric violated
 The daughter of his host, and murder'd
 him.
 Bishops — York, London, Chichester, West-
 minster —
 Ye haled this tonsured devil into your
 courts;
 But since your canon will not let you take
 Life for a life, ye but degraded him
 Where I had hang'd him. What doth hard
 murder care ²²⁹
 For degradation? and that made me muse,
 Being bounden by my coronation oath
 To do men justice. Look to it, your own
 selves!
 Say that a cleric murder'd an archbishop,
 What could ye do? Degrade, imprison
 him —
 Not death for death.
John of Oxford. But I, my liege, could
 swear,
 To death for death.
Henry. And, looking thro' my reign,
 I found a hundred ghastly murders done
 By men, the scum and offal of the Church;

Then, glancing thro' the story of this realm,
I came on certain wholesome usages, ²⁴⁰
Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's day,
Good royal customs—had them written
fair

For John of Oxford here to read to you.
John of Oxford. And I can easily swear
to these as being

The King's will and God's will and justice;
yet

I could but read a part to-day, because —
Fitzurse. Because my lord of Canter-
bury —

De Tracy. Ay,
This lord of Canterbury —

De Brito. As is his wont
Too much of late whene'er your royal
rights ²⁴⁹

Are mooted in our councils —
Fitzurse. — made an uproar.

Henry. And Becket had my bosom on all
this;

If ever man by bonds of gratefulness —
I raised him from the puddle of the gut-
ter,

I made him porcelain from the clay of the
city —

Thought that I knew him, err'd thro' love
of him,

Hoped, were he chosen archbishop, Church
and Crown,

Two sisters gliding in an equal dance,
Two rivers gently flowing side by side —

But no!
The bird that moults sings the same song
again, ²⁶⁰

The snake that sloughs comes out a snake
again.

Snake — ay, but he that lookt a fangless
one

Issues a venomous adder.
For he, when having dofft the Chancellor's
robe —

Flung the Great Seal of England in my
face —

Claim'd some of our crown lands for Can-
terbury —

My comrade, boon companion, my co-revel-
ler,

The master of his master, the King's
king. —

God's eyes! I had meant to make him all
but king.

Chancellor-Archbishop, he might well have
sway'd ²⁷⁰

All England under Henry, the young King,
When I was hence. What did the traitor
say?

False to himself, but ten-fold false to
me!

The will of God — why, then it is my
will —

Is he coming?

Messenger (entering). With a crowd of
worshippers,

And holds his cross before him thro' the
crowd,

As one that puts himself in sanctuary.
Henry. His cross!

Roger of York. His cross! I'll front
him, cross to cross.

[*Exit Roger of York.*
Henry. His cross! it is the traitor that
imputes

Treachery to his King! ²⁸⁰
It is not safe for me to look upon him.

Away — with me!
[*Goes in with his Barons to the Council-
Chamber, the door of which is left open.*

*Enter BECKET, holding his cross of silver be-
fore him. The BISHOPS come round him.*

Hereford. The King will not abide thee
with thy cross.

Permit me, my good lord, to hear it for
thee,

Being thy chaplain.

Becket. No; it must protect me.
Herbert. As once he bore the standard of
the Angles,

So now he bears the standard of the an-
gels.

Foliot. I am the dean of the province;
let me bear it.

Make not thy King a traitorous murderer.

Becket. Did not your barons draw their
swords against me? ²⁹⁰

*Enter ROGER OF YORK, with his cross, ad-
vancing to BECKET.*

Becket. Wherefore dost thou presume to
bear thy cross,

Against the solemn ordinance from Rome,
Out of thy province?

Roger of York. Why dost thou presume,
Arm'd with thy cross, to come before the
King?

If Canterbury bring his cross to court,
Let York bear his to mate with Canter-
bury.

Foliot (seizing hold of Becket's cross),
Nay, nay, my lord, thou must not
brave the King.

Nay, let me have it. I will have it!

Becket. Away!

[*Flinging him off.*]

Foliot. He fasts, they say, this mitred
Hercules!

He fast! is that an arm of fast? My
lord,

Hadst thou not sign'd, I had gone along
with thee;

But thou the shepherd hast betray'd the
sheep,

And thou art perjured, and thou wilt not
seal.

As Chancellor thou wast against the Church,
Now as archbishop goest against the King;
For, like a fool, thou know'st no middle
way.

Ay, ay! but art thou stronger than the
King?

Becket. Strong — not in mine own self,
but Heaven; true

To either function, holding it; and thou
Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify thy flesh,
Not spirit — thou remainest Gilbert Foliot,
A worldly follower of the worldly strong.
I, bearing this great ensign, make it clear
Under what prince I fight.

Foliot. My lord of York,
Let us go in to the Council, where our
bishops

And our great lords will sit in judgment on
him.

Becket. Sons sit in judgment on their
father! — then

The spire of Holy Church may prick the
graves —

Her crypt among the stars. Sign? seal?
I promised

The King to obey these customs, not yet
written,

Saving mine order; true, too, that when
written

I sign'd them — being a fool, as Foliot
call'd me.

I hold not by my signing. Get ye hence,
Tell what I say to the King.

[*Exeunt Hereford, Foliot, and other
Bishops.*]

Roger of York. The Church will hate
thee.

[*Exit.*]

Becket. Serve my best friend and make
him my worst foe;

Fight for the Church, and set the Church
against me!

Herbert. To be honest is to set all knaves
against thee.

Ah, Thomas, excommunicate them all!

Hereford (re-entering). I cannot brook
the turmoil thou hast raised.

I would, my lord Thomas of Canterbury,
Thou wert plain Thomas and not Canter-
bury,

Or that thou wouldst deliver Canterbury
To our King's hands again, and be at
peace.

Hilary (re-entering). For hath not thine
ambition set the Church

This day between the hammer and the an-
vil —

Faalty to the King, obedience to thyself?

Herbert. What say the bishops?

Hilary. Some have pleaded for him,
But the King rages — most are with the
King;

And some are reeds, that, one time sway to
the current,

And to the wind another. But we hold
Thou art forsworn; and no forsworn arch-
bishop

Shall helm the Church. We therefore place
ourselves

Under the shield and safeguard of the
Pope,

And cite thee to appear before the Pope,
And answer thine accusers. — Art thou
deaf?

Becket. I hear yon. [Clash of arms.]

Hilary. Dost thou hear those others?

Becket. Ay!

Roger of York (re-entering). The King's
'God's eyes!' come now so thick
and fast

We fear that he may reave thee of thine
own.

Come on, come on! it is not fit for us
To see the proud archbishop mutilated.

Say that he blind thee and tear out thy
tongue.

Becket. So be it. He begins at top with
me;

They crucified Saint Peter downward.

Roger of York. Nay,

But for their sake who stagger betwixt
thine

Appeal and Henry's anger, yield.

Becket. Hence, Satan!

[*Exit Roger of York.*]

Fitzurse (re-entering). My lord, the King demands three hundred marks,
Due from his castles of Berkhamstead and Eye

When thou thereof wast warden.

Becket. Tell the King I spent thrice that in fortifying his castles.

De Tracy (re-entering). My lord, the King demands seven hundred marks, Lent at the siege of Toulouse by the King.

Becket. I led seven hundred knights and fought his wars.

De Brito (re-entering). My lord, the King demands five hundred marks, Advanced thee at his instance by the Jews, For which the King was bound security.

Becket. I thought it was a gift; I thought it was a gift.

Enter LORD LEICESTER (followed by BARONS and BISHOPS).

Leicester. My lord, I come unwillingly. The King

Demands a strict account of all those revenues

From all the vacant sees and abbacies, Which came into thy hands when Chancellor.

Becket. How much might that amount to, my lord Leicester?

Leicester. Some thirty — forty thousand silver marks.

Becket. Are these your customs? O my good lord Leicester, The King and I were brothers. All I had

I lavish'd for the glory of the King; I shone from him, for him, his glory, his Reflection. Now the glory of the Church Hath swallow'd up the glory of the King; I am his no more, but hers. Grant me one day

To ponder these demands.

Leicester. Hear first thy sentence! The King and all his lords —

Becket. Son, first hear me!

Leicester. Nay, nay, canst thou, that holdest thine estates

In fee and barony of the King, decline The judgment of the King?

Becket. The King! I hold Nothing in fee and barony of the King.

Whatever the Church owns — she holds it in

Free and perpetual alms, unsubject to One earthly sceptre.

Leicester. Nay, but hear thy judgment. The King and all his barons —

Becket. Judgment! Barons! Who but the bridegroom dares to judge the bride,

Or he the bridegroom may appoint? Not he

That is not of the house, but from the street

Stain'd with the mire thereof.

I had been so true To Henry and mine office that the King Would throne me in the great archbishopric;

And I, that knew mine own infirmity, For the King's pleasure rather than God's cause

Took it upon me — err'd thro' love of him. Now therefore God from me withdraws Himself,

And the King too.

What! forty thousand marks! Why, thou, the King, the Pope, the Saints, the world,

Know that when made archbishop I was freed,

Before the Prince and chief justiciary, From every bond and debt and obligation Incurr'd as Chancellor.

Hear me, son. As gold Outvalues dross, light darkness, Abel Cain, The soul the body, and the Church the Throne,

I charge thee, upon pain of mine anathema,

That thou obey, not me, but God in me, Rather than Henry. I refuse to stand By the King's censure, make my cry to the Pope,

By whom I will be judged; refer myself, The King, these customs, all the Church, to him,

And under his authority — I depart.

[*Going.*
[*Leicester looks at him doubtingly.*
Am I a prisoner?

Leicester. By Saint Lazarus, no! I am confounded by thee. Go in peace.

De Broc. In peace now — but after. Take that for earnest.

[*Flings a bone at him from the rushes.*
De Brito, Fitzurse, De Tracy, and Others (flinging wisps of rushes). Ay, go in peace,

caitiff, caitiff! And that too, perjured prelate — and that, turncoat shaveling! There, there, there! traitor, traitor, traitor!

Becket. Mannerless wolves!

[Turning and facing them.

Herbert. Enough, my lord, enough!

Becket. Barons of England and of Normandy,

When what ye shake at doth but seem to fly,

True test of coward, ye follow with a yell.

But I that threw the mightiest knight of France,

Sir Engelram de Trie, —

Herbert. Enough, my lord.

Becket. More than enough. I play the fool again.

Enter HERALD.

Herald. The King commands you, upon pain of death,

That none should wrong or injure your archbishop.

Foliot. Deal gently with the young man Absalom.

[Great doors of the Hall at the back open, and discover a crowd. They shout:

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

SCENE IV

REFECTORY OF THE MONASTERY AT NORTHAMPTON

A Banquet on the Tables.

Enter BECKET. BECKET'S RETAINERS.

First Retainer. Do thou speak first.

Second Retainer. Nay, thou! Nay, thou! Hast not thou drawn the short straw?

First Retainer. My lord archbishop, wilt thou permit us —

Becket. To speak without stammering and like a free man? Ay.

First Retainer. My lord, permit us then to leave thy service.

Becket. When?

First Retainer. Now.

Becket. To-night?

First Retainer. To-night, my lord.

Becket. And why?

First Retainer. My lord, we leave thee not without tears.

Becket. Tears? Why not stay with me then?

First Retainer. My lord, we cannot yield thee an answer altogether to thy satisfaction.

Becket. I warrant you, or your own either. Shall I find you one? The King hath frowned upon me.

First Retainer. That is not altogether our answer, my lord.

Becket. No; yet all but all. Go, go! Ye have eaten of my dish and drunken of my cup for a dozen years.

First Retainer. And so we have. We mean thee no wrong. Wilt thou not say, 'God bless you,' ere we go?

Becket. God bless you all! God reddens your pale blood! But mine is human-red; and when ye shall hear it is poured out upon earth, and see it mounting to heaven, my 'God bless you,' that seems sweet to you now, will blast and blind you like a curse.

First Retainer. We hope not, my lord. Our humblest thanks for your blessing. Farewell!

[Exeunt Retainers.

Becket. Farewell, friends! farewell, swallows! I wrong the bird; she leaves only the nest she built, they leave the builder. Why? Am I to be murdered to-night?

[Knocking at the door.

Attendant. Here is a missive left at the gate by one from the castle.

Becket. Cornwall's hand or Leicester's; they write marvellously alike.

[Reading.

'Fly at once to France, to King Louis of France; there be those about our King who would have thy blood.'

Was not my lord of Leicester bidden to our supper?

Attendant. Ay, my lord, and divers other earls and barons. But the hour is past, and our brother, Master Cook, he makes moan that all be a-getting cold.

Becket. And I make my moan along with him. Cold after warm, winter after summer, and the golden leaves, these earls and barons, that clung to me, frosted off me by the first cold frown of the King. Cold, but look how the table steams, like a heathen altar; nay, like the altar at Jerusalem.

Shall God's good gifts be wasted? None of them here! Call in the poor from the streets, and let them feast. 69

Herbert. That is the parable of our blessed Lord.

Becket. And why should not the parable of our blessed Lord be acted again? Call in the poor! The Church is ever at variance with the kings, and ever at one with the poor. I marked a group of lazars in the marketplace — half-rag, half-sore — beggars, poor rogues (Heaven bless 'em!) who never saw nor dreamed of such a banquet. I will amaze them. Call them in, I say. They shall henceforward be my earls and barons — our lords and masters in Christ Jesus. [Exit Herbert.]

If the King hold his purpose, I am myself a beggar. Forty thousand marks! forty thousand devils — and these craven bishops! 87

A Poor Man (entering) with his dog. My lord archbishop, may I come in with my poor friend, my dog? The King's verdurer caught him a-hunting in the forest, and cut off his paws. The dog followed his calling, my lord. I ha' carried him ever so many miles in my arms, and he licks my face and moans and cries out against the King.

Becket. Better thy dog than thee. The King's courts would use thee worse than thy dog — they are too bloody. Were the Church king, it would be otherwise. Poor beast! poor beast! set him down. I will bind up his wounds with my napkin. Give him a bone, give him a bone! Who misuses a dog would misuse a child — they cannot speak for themselves. Past help! his paws are past help. God help him!

Enter the BEGGARS (and seat themselves at the Tables). BECKET and HERBERT wait upon them.

First Beggar. Swine, sheep, ox — here's a French snapper! When thieves fall out, honest men —

Second Beggar. Is the archbishop a thief who gives thee thy supper? 110

First Beggar. Well, then, how does it go? When honest men fall out, thieves — no, it can't be that.

Second Beggar. Who stole the widow's one sitting hen o' Sunday, when she was at mass?

First Beggar. Come, come! thou hadst

thy share on her. Sitting hen! Our Lord Becket's our great sitting-hen cock, and we should n't ha' been sitting here if the barons and bishops had n't been a-sitting on the archbishop. 122

Becket. Ay, the princes sat in judgment against me, and the Lord hath prepared your table — *Sederunt principes, ederunt pauperes.*

A Voice. Becket, beware of the knife!

Becket. Who spoke?

Third Beggar. Nobody, my lord. What's that, my lord? 130

Becket. Venison.

Third Beggar. Venison?

Becket. Buck — deer, as you call it.

Third Beggar. King's meat! By the Lord, won't we pray for your lordship!

Becket. And, my children, your prayers will do more for me in the day of peril than dawns darkly and drearily over the house of God — yea, and in the day of judgment also, than the swords of the craven sycophants would have done had they remained true to me whose bread they have partaken. I must leave you to your banquet. Feed, feast, and be merry. Herbert, for the sake of the Church itself, if not for my own, I must fly to France tonight. Come with me.

[Exit with Herbert.]

Third Beggar. Here — all of you — my lord's health! (*they drink*). Well — if that is n't goodly wine — 150

First Beggar. Then there is n't a goodly wench to serve him with it; they were fighting for her to-day in the street.

Third Beggar. Peace!

FIRST BEGGAR.

The black sheep baaed to the miller's ewe-lamb,

'The miller's away for to-night.'

'Black sheep,' quoth she, 'too black a sin for me.'

And what said the black sheep, my masters?

'We can make a black sin white.'

Third Beggar. Peace! 160

FIRST BEGGAR.

'Ewe-lamb, ewe-lamb, I am here by the dam.'
But the miller came home that night,

And so dusted his back with the meal in his sack,

That he made the black sheep white.

Third Beggar. Be we not of the family? be we not a-supping with the head of the family? be we not in my lord's own refractory? Out from among us; thou art our black sheep. 169

Enter the four KNIGHTS.

Fitzurse. Sheep, said he? And sheep without the shepherd, too. Where is my lord archbishop? Thou the lustiest and lousiest of this Cain's brotherhood, answer.

Third Beggar. With Cain's answer, my lord. Am I his keeper? Thou shouldst call him Cain, not me.

Fitzurse. So I do, for he would murder his brother the State.

Third Beggar (rising and advancing). No, my lord; but because the Lord hath set his mark upon him that no man should murder him. 182

Fitzurse. Where is he? where is he?

Third Beggar. With Cain belike, in the land of Nod, or in the land of France for aught I know.

Fitzurse. France! Ha! De Morville, Tracy, Brito—fled is he? Cross swords, all of you! swear to follow him! Remember the Queen!

[*The four Knights cross their swords.*]

De Brito. They mock us; he is here.

[*All the Beggars rise and advance upon them.*]

Fitzurse. Come, you filthy knaves, let us pass. 193

Third Beggar. Nay, my lord, let us pass. We be a-going home after our supper in all humbleness, my lord; for the archbishop loves humbleness, my lord, and though we be fifty to four, we dare n't fight you with our crutches, my lord. There now, if thou hast not laid hands upon me! and my fellows know that I am all one scale like a fish. I pray God I have n't given thee my leprosy, my lord. 203

[*Fitzurse shrinks from him, and another presses upon De Brito.*]

De Brito. Away, dog!

Fourth Beggar. And I was bit by a mad dog o' Friday, an' I be half dog already by this token, that tho' I can drink wine I cannot bide water, my lord; and I want to

bite, I want to bite, and they do say the very breath catches. 210

De Brito. Insolent clown! Shall I smite him with the edge of the sword?

De Morville. No, nor with the flat of it either. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep are scattered. Smite the sheep, and the shepherd will excommunicate thee.

De Brito. Yet my fingers itch to beat him into nothing.

Fifth Beggar. So do mine, my lord. I was born with it, and sulphur won't bring it out o' me. But for all that the archbishop washed my feet o' Tuesday. He likes it, my lord. 223

Sixth Beggar. And see here, my lord, this rag fro' the grangrene i' my leg. It's humbling—it smells o' human natur'. Wilt thou smell it, my lord? for the archbishop likes the smell on it, my lord; for I be his lord and master i' Christ, my lord.

De Morville. Faugh! we shall all be poisoned. Let us go. 231

[*They draw back, Beggars following.*]

Seventh Beggar. My lord, I ha' three sisters a-dying at home o' the sweating sickness. They be dead while I be a-supping.

Eighth Beggar. And I ha' nine darters i' the spital that be dead ten times o'er i' one day w' the putrid fever; and I bring the taint on it along w' me, for the archbishop likes it, my lord. 240

[*Pressing upon the Knights till they disappear thro' the door.*]

Third Beggar. Crutches, and itches, and leprosy, and ulcers, and gangrenes, and running sores, praise ye the Lord, for to-night ye have saved our archbishop!

First Beggar. I'll go back again. I hain't half done yet.

Herbert of Bosham (entering). My friends, the archbishop bids you good-night. He hath retired to rest, and being in great jeopardy of his life, he hath made his bed between the altars, from whence he sends me to bid you this night pray for him who hath fed you in the wilderness. 253

Third Beggar. So we will—so we will, I warrant thee. Becket shall be king, and the Holy Father shall be king, and the world shall live by the King's venison and the bread o' the Lord, and there shall be no more poor for ever. Hurrah! Vive le Roy! That's the English of it.

ACT II

SCENE I. — ROSAMUND'S BOWER

A Garden of Flowers. In the midst a bank of wild-flowers with a bench before it.

Voices heard singing among the trees.

DUET.

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?
2. No; but the voice of the deep as it hollows the cliffs of the land.
1. Is there a voice coming up with the voice of the deep from the strand,
One coming up with a song in the flush of the glimmering red?
2. Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.
1. Love that can shape or can shatter a life till the life shall have fled?
2. Nay, let us welcome him, Love that can lift up a life from the dead.
1. Keep him away from the lone little isle.
Let us be, let us be.
2. Nay, let him make it his own, let him reign in it — he, it is he,
Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea. 10

Enter HENRY and ROSAMUND.

Rosamund. Be friends with him again — I do beseech thee.

Henry. With Becket? I have but one hour with thee —

Sceptre and crozier clashing, and the mitre
Grappling the crown — and when I flee
from this

For a gasp of freer air, a breathing-while
To rest upon thy bosom and forget him —
Why thou, my bird, thou pipest 'Becket,
Becket? —

Yea, thou my golden dream of Love's own
bower,
Must be the nightmare breaking on my
peace 19

With 'Becket.'

Rosamund. O my life's life, not to smile
Is all but death to me. My sun, no cloud!
Let there not be one frown in this one
hour.

Out of the many thine, let this be mine!
Look rather thou all-royal as when first
I met thee.

Henry. Where was that?
Rosamund. Forgetting that
Forgets me too.

Henry. Nay, I remember it well.
There on the moors.

Rosamund. And in a narrow path.
A plover flew before thee. Then I saw
Thy high black steed among the flaming
furze,

Like sudden night in the main glare of day.
And from that height something was said
to me, 31

I knew not what.

Henry. I ask'd the way.

Rosamund. I think so.

So I lost mine.

Henry. Thou wast too shamed to answer.

Rosamund. Too scared — so young!

Henry. The rosebud of my rose! —
Well, well, no more of *him* — I have sent
his folk,

His kin, all his belongings, over-seas;
Age, orphans, and babe-breasting mothers
— all

By hundreds to him — there to beg, starve,
die —

So that the fool King Louis feed them
not. 39

The man shall feel that I can strike him
yet.

Rosamund. Babes, orphans, mothers! is
that royal, sire?

Henry. And I have been as royal with
the Church.

He shelter'd in the Abbey of Pontigny,
There wore his time studying the canon
law

To work it against me. But since he
cursed

My friends at Veselay, I have let them
know

That if they keep him longer as their guest,
I scatter all their cowls to all the hells.

Rosamund. And is that altogether royal?

Henry. Traitress!

Rosamund. A faithful traitress to thy
royal fame. 50

Henry. Fame! what care I for fame?

Spite, ignorance, envy,
Yea, honesty too, paint her what way they
will,

Fame of to-day is infamy to-morrow;
Infamy of to-day is fame to-morrow;
And round and round again. What mat-
ters? Royal —

I mean to leave the royalty of my crown
Unlessen'd to mine heirs.

Rosamund. Still — thy fame too;
I say that should be royal.

Henry. And I say,
I care not for thy saying.

Rosamund. And I say, 59
I care not for thy saying. A greater King
Than thou art, Love, who cares not for the
word,

Makes 'care not' — care. There have I
spoken true?

Henry. Care dwell with me for ever
when I cease

To care for thee as ever!

Rosamund. No need! no need! . . .
There is a bench. Come, wilt thou sit? —
My bank

Of wild-flowers [*he sits*]. At thy feet!
[*She sits at his feet.*

Henry. I bade them clear
A royal pleasance for thee, in the wood,
Not leave these country-folk at court.

Rosamund. I brought them
In from the wood, and set them here. I
love them

More than the garden flowers, that seem
at most 70

Sweet guests, or foreign cousins, not half
speaking

The language of the land. I love them too,
Yes. But, my liege, I am sure, of all the
roses —

Shame fall on those who gave it a dog's
name! —

This wild one (*picking a briar-rose*) — nay,
I shall not prick myself —

Is sweetest. Do but smell!
Henry. Thou rose of the world!

Thou rose of all the roses! [*Muttering.*]
I am not worthy of her — this beast-body
That God has plunged my soul in — I, that
taking

The Fiend's advantage of a throne, so long
Have wander'd among women, — a foul
stream 81

Thro' fever-breeding levels, — at her side,
Among these happy dales, run clearer, drop
The mud I carried, like you brook, and glass
The faithful face of heaven —

[*Looking at her, and unconsciously aloud,*
— thine! thine!

Rosamund. I know it.
Henry (*muttering*). Not hers. We have
but one bond, her hate of Becket.

Rosamund (*half hearing*). Nay! nay!
what art thou muttering? I hate
Becket?

Henry (*muttering*). A sane and natural
loathing for a soul
Purer, and truer and nobler than herself;
And mine a bitterer illegitimate hate, 90
A bastard hate born of a former love.

Rosamund. My fault to name him! O,
let the hand of one
To whom thy voice is all her music stay it
But for a breath!

[*Puts her hand before his lips.*
Speak only of thy love.

Why, there — like some loud beggar at
thy gate —

The happy boldness of this hand hath won
it

Love's alms, thy kiss (*looking at her hand*)
— Sacred! I'll kiss it too.

[*Kissing it.*

There! wherefore dost thou so peruse it?
Nay,

There may be crosses in my line of life.

Henry. Not half her hand — no hand to
mate with her, 100

If it should come to that.

Rosamund. With her? with whom?

Henry. Life on the hand is naked gipsy-
stuff;

Life on the face, the brows — clear inno-
cence!

Vein'd marble — not a furrow yet — and
hers [*Muttering.*

Crost and recrost, a venomous spider's
web —

Rosamund (*springing up*). Out of the
cloud, my Sun — out of the eclipse
Narrowing my golden hour!

Henry. O Rosamund,
I would be true — would tell thee all —
and something

I had to say — I love thee none the less —
Which will so vex thee.

Rosamund. Something against me?

Henry. No, no, against myself.

Rosamund. I will not hear it.
Come, come, mine hour! I bargain for
mine hour. 112

I'll call thee little Geoffrey.

Henry. Call him!
Rosamund. Geoffrey!

Enter GEOFFREY.

Henry. How the boy grows!

Rosamund. Ay, and his brows are thine;
The mouth is only Clifford, my dear father.
Geoffrey. My liege, what hast thou
brought me ?

Henry. Vena! imp!
What say'st thou to the Chancellorship of
England ?

Geoffrey. O, yes, my liege.

Henry. 'O, yes, my liege!' He speaks
As if it were a cake of gingerbread. ¹¹⁹
Dost thou know, my boy, what it is to be
Chancellor of England ?

Geoffrey. Something good, or thou
woudst not give it me.

Henry. It is, my boy, to side with the
King when Chancellor, and then to be
made archbishop and go against the King
who made him, and turn the world upside
down.

Geoffrey. I won't have it then. Nay,
but give it me, and I promise thee not to
turn the world upside down. ¹³¹

Henry (*giving him a ball*). Here is a ball,
my boy, thy world, to turn any way and play
with as thou wilt — which is more than I
can do with mine. Go try it, play.

[*Exit* Geoffrey.]

A pretty lusty boy.

Rosamund. So like to thee;
Like to be liker.

Henry. Not in my chin, I hope!
That threatens double.

Rosamund. Thou art manlike perfect.

Henry. Ay, ay, no doubt; and were I
hump't behind,
Thou 'dst say as much — the goodly way of
women ¹⁴⁰

Who love, for which I love them. May
God grant

No ill befall on him or thee when I
Am gone!

Rosamund. Is he thy enemy ?

Henry. He ? who ? ay !

Rosamund. Thine enemy knows the se-
cret of my bower.

Henry. And I could tear him asunder
with wild horses

Before he would betray it. Nay — no
fear!

More like is he to excommunicate me.

Rosamund. And I would creep, crawl
over knife-edge flint
Barefoot, a hundred leagues, to stay his
hand. ¹⁴⁹

Before he flash'd the bolt.

Henry. And when he flash'd it
Shrink from me, like a daughter of the
Church.

Rosamund. Ay, but he will not.

Henry. Ay ! but if he did ?

Rosamund. O, then ! O, then ! I almost
fear to say
That my poor heretic heart would excom-
municate

His excommunication, clinging to thee
Closer than ever.

Henry (*raising Rosamund and kissing
her*). My brave-hearted Rose !
Hath he ever been to see thee ?

Rosamund. Here ? not he.
And it is so lonely here — no confessor.

Henry. Thou shalt confess all thy sweet
sins to me.

Rosamund. Besides, we came away in
such a heat, ¹⁶⁰
I brought not even my crucifix.

Henry. Take this.
[*Giving her the Crucifix which Eleanor
gave him.*]

Rosamund. O, beautiful ! May I have
it as mine, till mine
Be mine again ?

Henry (*throwing it round her neck*).
Thine — as I am — till death !

Rosamund. Death ? no ! I'll have it with
me in my shroud,
And wake with it, and show it to all the
Saints.

Henry. Nay — I, must go; but when
thou layest thy lip
To this, remembering One who died for
thee,

Remember also one who lives for thee
Out there in France; for I must hence to
brave

The Pope, King Louis, and this turbulent
priest. ¹⁷⁰

Rosamund (*kneeling*). O, by thy love for
me, all mine for thee,
Fling not thy soul into the flames of hell !
I kneel to thee — be friends with him
again.

Henry. Look, look ! if little Geoffrey
have not tost
His ball into the brook ! makes after it
too

To find it. Why, the child will drown
himself.

Rosamund. Geoffrey ! Geoffrey !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

MONTMIRAIL

'The Meeting of the Kings.' JOHN OF OXFORD and HENRY. *Crowd in the distance.*

John of Oxford. You have not crown'd young Henry yet, my liege?

Henry. Crown'd! by God's eyes, we will not have him crown'd.

I spoke of late to the boy, he answer'd me, As if he wore the crown already — No, We will not have him crown'd.

'Tis true what Becket told me, that the mother

Would make him play his kingship against mine.

John of Oxford. Not have him crown'd?

Henry. Not now — not yet! and Becket —

Becket should crown him were he crown'd at all;

But, since we would be lord of our own manor,

This Canterbury, like a wounded deer, Has fled our presence and our feeding-grounds.

John of Oxford. Cannot a smooth tongue lick him whole again

To serve your will?

Henry. He hates my will, not me.

John of Oxford. There's York, my liege.

Henry. But England scarce would hold Young Henry king, if only crown'd by York,

And that would stilt up York to twice himself.

There is a movement yonder in the crowd — See if our pious — what shall I call him, John? —

Husband-in-law, our smooth-shorn suzerain,

Be yet within the field.

John of Oxford. I will. [*Exit.*]

Henry. Ay! Ay!

Mince and go back! his politic Holiness Hath all but climb'd the Roman perch again,

And we shall hear him presently with clapt wing

Crow over Barbarossa — at last tongue-free

To blast my realms with excommunication And interdict. I must patch up a peace — A peace in this long-tugged-at, threadbare-worn

Quarrel of Crown and Church — to rend again.

Hia Holiness cannot steer straight thro' shoals,

Nor I. The citizen's heir hath conquer'd me For the moment. So we make our peace with him.

Enter LOUIS.

Brother of France, what shall be done with Becket?

Louis. The holy Thomas! Brother, you have traffick'd

Between the Emperor and the Pope, between

The Pope and Antipope — a perilous game For men to play with God.

Henry. Ay, ay, good brother, They call you the Monk-King.

Louis. Who calls me? she That was my wife, now yours? You have her Duchy,

The point you aim'd at, and pray God she prove

True wife to you. You have had the better of us

In secular matters.

Henry. Come, confess, good brother, You did your best or worst to keep her Duchy.

Only the golden Leopard printed in it Such hold-fast claws that you perforce again

Shrank into France. Tut, tut! did we convene

This conference but to babble of our wives? They are plagues enough in-door.

Louis. We fought in the East, And felt the sun of Antioch scald our mail, And push'd our lances into Saracen hearts.

We never hounded on the State at home To spoil the Church.

Henry. How should you see this rightly?

Louis. Well, well, no more! I am proud of my 'Monk-King,'

Whoever named me; and, brother, Holy Church

May rock, but will not wreck, nor our arch-bishop

Stagger on the slope decks for any rough sea

Blown by the breath of kings. We do forgive you
For aught you wrought against us.

[Henry holds up his hand.

Nay, I pray you,
Do not defend yourself. You will do much
To rake out all old dying heats if you, 60
At my requesting, will but look into
The wrongs you did him, and restore his
kin,

Reseat him on his throne of Canterbury,
Be, both, the friends you were.

Henry. The friends we were!
Co-mates we were, and had our sport together.

Co-kings we were, and made the laws together.

The world had never seen the like before.
You are too cold to know the fashion of it.

Well, well, we will be gentle with him,
gracious — 69
Most gracious.

Enter BECKET, after him, JOHN OF OXFORD, ROGER OF YORK, GILBERT FOLIOT, DE BROC, FITZURSE, etc.

Only that the rift he made
May close between us, here I am wholly
king,

The word should come from him.

Becket (kneeling). Then, my dear liege,
I here deliver all this controversy
Into your royal hands.

Henry. Ah, Thomas, Thomas,
Thou art thyself again, Thomas again.

Becket (rising). Saving God's honor!

Henry. Out upon thee, man!
Saving the devil's honor, his yes and no.
Knights, bishops, earls, this London spawn
— by Mahound,

I had sooner have been born a Mussul-
man —

Less clashing with their priests — 80
I am half-way down the slope — will no
man stay me?

I dash myself to pieces — I stay myself —
Puff — it is gone. You, Master Becket,
you

That owe to me your power over me —

Nay, nay —

Brother of France, you have taken, cher-
ish'd him

Who thief-like fled from his own church
by night,

No man pursuing. I would have had him
back.

Take heed he do not turn and rend you too:
For whatsoever may displease him — that
Is clean against God's honor — a shift, a
trick 91

Whereby to challenge, face me out of all
My regal rights. Yet, yet — that none may
dream

I go against God's honor — ay, or himself
In any reason, choose

A hundred of the wisest heads from Eng-
land,

A hundred, too, from Normandy and An-
jou;

Let these decide on what was customary
In olden days, and all the Church of France

Decide on their decision, I am content. 100
More, what the mightiest and the holiest

Of all his predecessors may have done
Even to the least and meanest of my own,
Let him do the same to me — I am con-
tent.

Louis. Ay, ay! the King humbles him-
self enough.

Becket (aside). Words! he will wriggle
out of them like an eel

When the time serves. (Aloud.) My
lieges and my lords,
The thanks of Holy Church are due to
those

That went before us for their work, which
we 109

Inheriting reap an easier harvest. Yet —

Louis. My lord, will you be greater than
the Saints,

More than Saint Peter? whom — what is it
you doubt?

Behold your peace at hand.

Becket. I say that those
Who went before us did not wholly clear

The deadly growths of earth, which hell's
own heat

So dwelt on that they rose and darken'd
heaven.

Yet they did much. Would God they had
torn up all

By the hard root, which shoots again; our
trial

Had so been less; but, seeing they were
men

Defective or excessive, must we follow 120
All that they overdid or underdid?

Nay, if they were defective as Saint Peter
Denying Christ, who yet defied the tyrant,

We hold by his defiance, not his defect.
O good son Louis, do not counsel me,
No, to suppress God's honor for the sake
Of any king that breathes. No, God forbid!

Henry. No! God forbid! and turn me
Mussulman!

No God but one, and Mahound is his prophet.

But for your Christian, look you, you shall have

None other God but me — me, Thomas, ¹³⁰
Of Gilbert Becket, Loudon merchant. Out!
I hear no more. [*Exit.*]

Louis. Our brother's anger puts him,
Poor man, beside himself — not wise. My lord,

We have claspt your cause, believing that
our brother

Had wrong'd you; but this day he prof-
fer'd peace.

You will have war; and tho' we grant the
Church

King over this world's kings, yet, my good
lord,

We that are kings are something in this
world,

And so we pray you, draw yourself from
under

The wings of France. We shelter you no
more. [*Exit.*]

John of Oxford. I am glad that France
hath scouted him at last.

I told the Pope what manner of man he
was. [*Exit.*]

Roger of York. Yea, since he flouts the
will of either realm,

Let either cast him away like a dead dog!
[*Exit.*]

Foliot. Yea, let a stranger spoil his her-
itage,

And let another take his bishopric! [*Exit.*]

De Broc. Our castle, my lord, belongs
to Canterbury.

I pray you come and take it. [*Exit.*]

Fitzurse. When you will. [*Exit.*]

Becket. Cursed be John of Oxford,
Roger of York, ¹⁵⁰

And Gilbert Foliot! cursed those De Brocs
That hold our Saltwood Castle from our
see!

Cursed Fitzurse, and all the rest of them
That sow this hate between my lord and
me!

Voices from the Crowd. Blessed be the
lord archbishop, who hath withstood two
kings to their faces for the honor of God.

Becket. Out of the mouths of babes and
sucklings, praise!

I thank you, sons; when kings but hold by
crowns,

The crowd that hungers for a crown in
heaven ¹⁶⁰

Is my true king.

Herbert. Thy true King bade thee be
A fisher of men; thou hast them in thy
net.

Becket. I am too like the King here; both
of us

Too headlong for our office. Better have
been

A fisherman at Bosham, my good Herbert,
Thy birthplace — the sea-creek — the petty

rill

That falls into it — the green field — the
gray church —

The simple lobster-basket, and the mesh —
The more or less of daily labor done —

The pretty gaping bills in the home-nest ¹⁷⁰
Piping for bread — the daily want sup-
plied —

The daily pleasure to supply it.

Herbert. Ah, Thomas,
You had not borne it, no, not for a day.

Becket. Well, maybe, no.

Herbert. But bear with Walter Map,
For here he comes to comment on the time.

Enter WALTER MAP.

Walter Map. Pity, my lord, that you
have quenched the warmth of France to-
ward you, tho' His Holiness, after much
smouldering and smoking, be kindled again
upon your quarter. ¹⁸⁰

Becket. Ay, if he do not end in smoke
again.

Walter Map. My lord, the fire, when
first kindled, said to the smoke, 'Go up,
my son, straight to heaven.' And the
smoke said, 'I go;' but anon the North-
east took and turned him Southwest, then
the Southwest turned him Northeast, and
so of the other winds; but it was in him to
go up straight if the time had been quieter.
Your lordship affects the unwavering per-
pendicular; but His Holiness, pushed one
way by the Empire and another by Eng-
land, if he move at all — Heaven stay him!
— is fain to diagonalize.

Herbert. Diagonalize ! thou art a word-monger.

Our Thomas never will diagonalize.
Thou art a jester and a verse-maker.

Diagonalize ! 198

Walter Map. Is the world any the worse for my verses if the Latin rhymes be rolled out from a full mouth ? or any harm done to the people if my jest be in defence of the Truth ?

Becket. Ay, if the jest be so done that the people

Delight to wallow in the grossness of it,
Till Truth herself be shamed of her defender.

Non defensoribus istis, Walter Map !

Walter Map. Is that my case ? so if the city be sick, and I cannot call the keennel sweet, your lordship would suspend me from verse-writing, as you suspended yourself after sub-writing to the customs. 212

Becket. I pray God pardon mine infirmity !

Walter Map. Nay, my lord, take heart ; for tho' you suspended yourself, the Pope let you down again ; and tho' you suspend Foliot or another, the Pope will not leave them in suspense, for the Pope himself is always in suspense, like Mahound's coffin hung between heaven and earth — always in suspense, like the scales, till the weight of Germany or the gold of England brings one of them down to the dust — always in suspense, like the tail of the horologe — to and fro — tick-tack — we make the time, we keep the time, ay, and we serve the time ; for I have heard say that if you boxed the Pope's ears with a purse, you might stagger him, but he would pocket the purse. No saying of mine — Jocelyn of Salisbury. But the King hath bought half the College of Red-hats. He warned to you to-day, and you have chilled him again. Yet you both love God. Agree with him quickly again, even for the sake of the Church. My one grain of good counsel which you will not swallow. I hate a split between old friendships as I hate the dirty gap in the face of a Cistercian monk, that will swallow anything. Farewell. [Exit.

Becket. Map scoffs at Rome. I all but hold with Map. 242
Save for myself no Rome were left in England,

All had been his. Why should this Rome, this Rome,
Still choose Barabbas rather than the Christ,

Absolve the left-hand thief and damn the right ?

Take fees of tyranny, wink at sacrilege,
Which even Peter had not dared ? condemn

The blameless exile ? —

Herbert. Thee, thou holy Thomas !
I would that thou hadst been the Holy Father. 250

Becket. I would have done my most to keep Rome holy,
I would have made Rome know she still is Rome —

Who stands aghast at her eternal self
And shakes at mortal kings — her vacillation,

Avarice, craft — O God, how many an innocent

Has left his bones upon the way to Rome
Unwept, uncared for ! Yea — on mine own self

The King had had no power except for Rome.

'T is not the King who is guilty of mine exile,

But Rome, Rome, Rome !

Herbert. My lord, I see this Louis
Returning, ah ! to drive thee from his realm. 261

Becket. He said as much before. Thou art no prophet,
Nor yet a prophet's son.

Herbert. Whatever he say,
Deny not thou God's honor for a king
The King looks troubled.

Re-enter KING LOUIS.

Louis. My dear lord archbishop,
I learn but now that those poor Poitevins

That in thy cause were stirr'd against King Henry

Have been, despite his kingly promise given

To our own self of pardon, evilly used
And put to pain. I have lost all trust in him. 270

The Church alone bath eyes — and now I see

That I was blind — suffer the phrase — surrendering

God's honor to the pleasure of a man.
 Forgive me and absolve me, holy father.

[*Kneels.*]

Becket. Son, I absolve thee in the name
 of God.

Louis (rising). Return to Sens, where we
 will care for you.

The wine and wealth of all our France are
 yours;

Rest in our realm, and be at peace with all.

[*Exeunt.*]

Voices from the Crowd. Long live the
 good King Louis! God bless the great
 archbishop! 281

Re-enter HENRY and JOHN OF OXFORD.

*Henry (looking after King Louis and
 Becket).* Ay, there they go — both
 backs are turn'd to me —

Why, then I strike into my former path
 For England, crown young Henry there,
 and make

Our waning Eleanor all but love me!

John,

Thou hast served me heretofore with Rome
 — and well.

They call thee John the Swearer.

John of Oxford. For this reason,
 That, being ever duteous to the King,
 I evermore have sworn upon his side, 289
 And ever mean to do it.

Henry (claps him on the shoulder). Hon-
 est John!

To Rome again! the storm begins again.
 Spare not thy tongue! be lavish with our
 coins,

Threaten our junction with the Emperor —
 flatter

And fright the Pope — bribe all the cardi-
 nals — leave

Lateran and Vatican in one dust of gold —
 Swear and unswear, state and misstate thy
 best!

I go to have young Henry crown'd by York.

ACT III

SCENE I. — THE BOWER

HENRY and ROSAMUND.

Henry. All that you say is just. I can-
 not answer it
 Till better times, when I shall put away —

Rosamund. What will you put away?

Henry. That which you ask me
 Till better times. Let it content you now
 There is no woman that I love so well.

Rosamund. No woman but should be
 content with that —

Henry. And one fair child to fondle!

Rosamund. O, yes, the child
 We waited for so long — Heaven's gift at
 last —

And how you doted on him then! To-day
 I almost fear'd your kiss was colder —
 yes — 10

But then the child is such a child! What
 chance

That he should ever spread into the man
 Here in our silence? I have done my best.
 I am not learn'd.

Henry. I am the King, his father,
 And I will look to it. Is our secret ours?
 Have you had any alarm? no stranger?

Rosamund. No.
 The warden of the bower hath given himself
 Of late to wine. I sometimes think he
 sleeps

When he should watch; and yet what fear?
 the people

Believe the wood enchanted. No one
 comes, 20

Nor foe nor friend; his fond excess of wine
 Springs from the loneliness of my poor
 bower,

Which weighs even on me.

Henry. Yet these tree-towers,
 Their long bird-echoing minster-aisles, —
 the voice

Of the perpetual brook, these golden slopes
 Of Solomon-shaming flowers — that was
 your saying,

All pleased you so at first.

Rosamund. Not now so much.
 My Anjou bower was scarce as beautiful.
 But you were oftener there. I have none
 but you.

The brook's voice is not yours, and no
 flower, not 30

The sun himself, should he be changed to
 one,

Could shine away the darkness of that gap
 Left by the lack of love.

Henry. The lack of love!

Rosamund. Of one we love. Nay, I
 would not be bold,

Yet hoped ere this you might —

[*Looks earnestly at him.*]

Henry. Anything further?
Rosamund. Only my best bower-maiden
 died of late,
 And that old priest whom John of Salis-
 bury trusted
 Hath sent another.
Henry. Secret?
Rosamund. I but ask'd her
 One question, and she prim'd her mouth
 and put
 Her hands together — thus — and said, God
 help her, 40
 That she was sworn to silence.

Henry. What did you ask her?
Rosamund. Some daily something-no-
 thing.
Henry. Secret, then?
Rosamund. I do not love her. Must you
 go, my liege,
 So suddenly?

Henry. I came to England suddenly,
 And on a great occasion sure to wake
 As great a wrath in Becket —

Rosamund. Always Becket!
 He always comes between us.

Henry. And to meet it
 I needs must leave as suddenly. It is
 raining,
 Put on your hood and see me to the bounds.
 [Exeunt.]

MARGERY (*singing behind scene*).

Babble in bower 50
 Under the rose!
 Bee must n't buzz,
 Whoop — but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,
 Nobody near!
 Grasshopper, grasshopper,
 Whoop — you can hear.

Kiss in the bower,
 Tit on the tree!
 Bird must n't tell, 60
 Whoop — he can see.

Enter MARGERY.

I ha' been but a week here and I ha' seen
 what I ha' seen, for to be sure it's no more
 than a week since our old Father Philip
 that has confessed our mother for twenty
 years, and she was hard put to it, and to
 speak truth, nigh at the end of our last
 crust, and that mouldy, and she cried out
 on him to put me forth in the world and to

make me a woman of the world, and to win
 my own bread, whereupon he asked our
 mother if I could keep a quiet tongue i' my
 head, and not speak till I was spoke to,
 and I answered for myself that I never
 spoke more than was needed, and he told
 me he would advance me to the service of a
 great lady, and took me ever so far away,
 and gave me a great pat o' the cheek for a
 pretty wench, and said it was a pity to blind-
 fold such eyes as mine, and such to be sure
 they be, but he blinded 'em for all that,
 and so brought me no-hows as I may say,
 and the more shame to him after his pro-
 mise, into a garden and not into the world,
 and bade me whatever I saw not to speak
 one word, an' it 'ud be well for me in the
 end, for there were great ones who would
 look after me, and to be sure I ha' seen
 great ones to-day — and then not to speak
 one word, for that's the rule o' the garden,
 tho' to be sure if I had been Eve i' the
 garden I should n't ha' minded the apple,
 for what's an apple, you know, save to a
 child, and I'm no child, but more a woman
 o' the world than my lady here, and I ha'
 seen what I ha' seen — tho' to be sure if I
 had n't minded it we should all on us ha'
 had to go, bless the Saints, wi' bare backs,
 but the backs 'ud ha' countenanced one
 another, and belike it 'ud ha' been always
 summer, and anyhow I am as well-shaped
 as my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha'
 seen, and what's the good of my talking to
 myself, for here comes my lady (*enter Ros-
 amund*), and, my lady, tho' I should n't
 speak one word, I wish you joy o' the
 King's brother.

Rosamund. What is it you mean? 108

Margery. I mean your goodman, your
 husband, my lady, for I saw your ladyship
 a-parting wi' him even now i' the coppice,
 when I was a-getting o' bluebells for your
 ladyship's nose to smell on — and I ha'
 seen the King once at Oxford, and he's as
 like the King as fingernail to fingernail,
 and I thought at first it was the King, only
 you know the King's married, for King
 Louis —

Rosamund. Married!

Margery. Years and years, my lady, for
 her husband, King Louis — 121

Rosamund. Hush!

Margery. And I thought if it were the
 King's brother he had a better bride than

the King, for the people do say that his is bad beyond all reckoning, and —

Rosamund. The people lie. 127

Margery. Very like, my lady, but most on 'em know an honest woman and a lady when they see her, and besides they say she makes songs, and that's against her, for I never knew an honest woman that could make songs, tho' to be sure our mother 'ill sing me old songs by the hour, but then, God help her, she had 'em from her mother, and her mother from her mother back and back for ever so long, but none on 'em ever made songs, and they were all honest.

Rosamund. Go, you shall tell me of her some other time. 141

Margery. There's none so much to tell on her, my lady, only she kept the seventh commandment better than some I know on, or I could n't look your ladyship i' the face, and she brew'd the best ale in all Glo'ster, that is to say in her time when she had the 'Crown.'

Rosamund. The crown! who?

Margery. Mother. 150

Rosamund. I mean her whom you call — fancy — my husband's brother's wife.

Margery. O, Queen Eleanor. Yes, my lady; and tho' I be sworn not to speak a word, I can tell you all about her, if —

Rosamund. No word now. I am faint and sleepy. Leave me. Nay — go. What! will you anger me? [Exit Margery.]

He charged me not to question any of those About me. Have I? no! she question'd me. 160

Did she not slander him? Should she stay here?

May she not tempt me, being at my side, To question her? Nay, can I send her hence

Without his kingly leave? I am in the dark.

I have lived, poor bird, from cage to cage, and known

Nothing but him — happy to know no more,

So that he loved me — and he loves me — yes,

And bound me by his love to secrecy Till his own time.

Eleanor, Eleanor, have I Not heard ill things of her in France? O, she's 170

The Queen of France. I see it — some confusion,

Some strange mistake. I did not hear aright,

Myself confused with parting from the King.

MARGERY (behind scene).

Bee must n't buzz,
Whoop — but he knows.

Rosamund. Yet her — what her? he hinted of some her —

When he was here before —
Something that would displease me. Hath he stray'd

From love's clear path into the common bush,

And, being scratch'd, returns to his true rose, 180

Who hath not thorn enough to prick him for it,

Even with a word?

MARGERY (behind scene).

Bird must n't tell,
Whoop — he can see.

Rosamund. I would not hear him. Nay — there's more — he frown'd

'No mate for her, if it should come to that' —

To that — to what?

MARGERY (behind scene).

Whoop — but he knows,
Whoop — but he knows.

Rosamund. O God! some dreadful truth is breaking on me — 190

Some dreadful thing is coming on me.

Enter GEOFFREY.

Geoffrey!

Geoffrey. What are you crying for, when the sun shines?

Rosamund. Hath not thy father left us to ourselves?

Geoffrey. Ay, but he's taken the rain with him. I hear Margery: I'll go play with her. [Exit Geoffrey.]

ROSAMUND.

Rainbow, stay,
Gleam upon gloom,
Bright as my dream,
Rainbow, stay!

But it passes away,
Gloom upon gleam,
Dark as my doom —
O rainbow, stay!

SCENE II

OUTSIDE THE WOODS NEAR ROSA-
MUND'S BOWER

ELEANOR. FITZURSE.

Eleanor. Up from the salt lips of the
land we two
Have track'd the King to this dark inland
wood;
And somewhere hereabouts he vanish'd.
Here
His turtle builds; his exit is our adit.
Watch! he will out again, and presently,
Seeing he must to Westminster and crown
Young Henry there to-morrow.

Fitzurse. We have watch'd
So long in vain, he hath pass'd out again,
And on the other side.

[*A great horn winded.*
Hark! Madam!

Eleanor. Ay,
How ghostly sounds that horn in the black
wood! [*A countryman flying.*
Whither away, man? what are you flying
from?

Countryman. The witch! the witch! she
sits naked by a great heap of gold in the
middle of the wood, and when the horn
sounds she comes out as a wolf. Get you
hence! a man passed in there to-day. I
holla'd to him, but he did n't hear me; he'll
never out again, the witch has got him.
I dare n't stay — I dare n't stay!

Eleanor. Kind of the witch to give thee
warning, tho'. [*Man flies.*
Is not this wood-witch of the rustic's fear
Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd the
King?

[*Horn sounded. Another flying.*
Fitzurse. Again! stay, fool, and tell me
why thou fliest.

Countryman. Fly thou too. The King
keeps his forest head of game here, and
when that horn sounds a score of wolf-dogs
are let loose that will tear thee piecemeal.
Linger not till the third horn. Fly!

[*Exit.*

Eleanor. This is the likelier tale. We
have hit the place.
Now let the King's fine game look to itself.
[*Horn.*

Fitzurse. Again! —
And far on in the dark heart of the wood
I hear the yelping of the hounds of hell.

Eleanor. I have my dagger here to still
their throats.

Fitzurse. Nay, madam, not to-night — the
night is falling.

What can be done to-night?

Eleanor. Well — well — away.

SCENE III

TRAITOR'S MEADOW AT FRÉTEVAL.
PAVILIONS AND TENTS OF THE ENG-
LISH AND FRENCH BARONAGE

BECKET and HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Becket. See here!

Herbert. What's here?

Becket. A notice from the priest
To whom our John of Salisbury commit-
ted

The secret of the bower, that our wolf-
Queen

Is prowling round the fold. I should be
back

In England even for this.

Herbert. These are by-things
In the great cause.

Becket. The by-things of the Lord
Are the wrong'd innocences that will cry
From all the hidden by-ways of the world
In the great day against the wronger. I
know

Thy meaning. Perish she, I, all, before
The Church should suffer wrong!

Herbert. Do you see, my lord,
There is the King talking with Walter
Map?

Becket. He hath the Pope's last letters,
and they threaten

The immediate thunder-blast of interdict;
Yet he can scarce be touching upon those,
Or scarce would smile that fashion.

Herbert. Winter sunshine!
Beware of opening out thy bosom to it,
Lest thou, myself, and all thy flock should
catch

An after ague-fit of trembling. Look!

He bows, he bares his head, he is coming
hither. 20
Still with a smile.

Enter KING HENRY and WALTER MAP.

Henry. We have had so many hours to-
gether, Thomas,
So many happy hours alone together,
That I would speak with you once more
alone.

Becket. My liege, your will and happi-
ness are mine.

[*Exeunt King and Becket.*

Herbert. The same smile still.

Walter Map. Do you see that great
black cloud that hath come over the sun
and cast us all into shadow?

Herbert. And feel it too. 30

Walter Map. And see you yon side-beam
that is forced from under it, and sets the
church-tower over there all a-hell-fire as it
were?

Herbert. Ay.

Walter Map. It is this black, bell-silen-
cing, anti-marrying, burial-hindering inter-
dict that hath squeezed out this side-smile
upon Canterbury, whereof may come con-
flagration. Were I Thomas, I would n't
trust it. Sudden change is a house on sand;
and tho' I count Henry honest enough, yet
when fear creeps in at the front, honesty
steals out at the back, and the King at last
is fairly scared by this cloud — this inter-
dict. I have been more for the King than
the Church in this matter — yea, even for
the sake of the Church; for, truly, as the case
stood, you had safer have slain an arch-
bishop than a she-goat. But our recoverer
and upholder of customs hath in this crown-
ing of young Henry by York and London
so violated the immemorial usage of the
Church, that, like the grave-digger's child
I have heard of, trying to ring the bell, he
hath half-hanged himself in the rope of the
Church, or rather pulled all the Church
with the Holy Father astride of it down
upon his own head.

Herbert. Were you there? 60

Walter Map. In the church rope? — no.
I was at the crowning, for I have pleasure
in the pleasure of crowds, and to read the
faces of men at a great show.

Herbert. And how did Roger of York
comport himself?

Walter Map. As magnificently and ar-

chiepiscopally as our Thomas would have
done: only there was a dare-devil in his
eye — I should say a dare-Becket. He
thought less of two kings than of one
Roger, the king of the occasion. Foliot is
the holier man, perhaps the better. Once
or twice there ran a twitch across his face,
as who should say 'what's to follow?' but
Salisbury was a calf cowed by Mother
Church, and every now and then glancing
about him like a thief at night when he
hears a door open in the house and thinks
'the master.' 80

Herbert. And the father-king?

Walter Map. The father's eye was so
tender it would have called a goose off the
green, and once he strove to hide his face,
like the Greek king when his daughter was
sacrificed, but he thought better of it. It
was but the sacrifice of a kingdom to his
son, a smaller matter; but as to the young
crowning himself, he looked so malapert
in the eyes, that had I fathered him I had
given him more of the rod than the sceptre.
Then followed the thunder of the captains
and the shouting, and so we came on to
the banquet, from whence there puffed out
such an incense of unctuousness into the nos-
trils of our Gods of Church and State, that
Lucullus or Apicius might have sniffed it
in their Hades of heathenism, so that the
smell of their own roast had not come
across it — 100

Herbert. Map, tho' you make your butt
too big, you overshoot it.

Walter Map. For as to the fish, they
de-miracled the miraculous draught, and
might have sunk a navy —

Herbert. There again, Goliasing and Go-
liathizing!

Walter Map. And as for the flesh at
table, a whole Peter's sheet, with all man-
ner of game, and four-footed things, and
fowls — 111

Herbert. And all manner of creeping
things too?

Walter Map. Well, there were abbots —
but they did not bring their women; and so
we were dull enough at first, but in the end
we flourished out into a merriment; for the
old King would act servitor and hand a dish
to his son; whereupon my Lord of York —
his fine-cut face bowing and beaming with
all that courtesy which hath less loyalty in
it than the backward scrape of the clown's

heel — ‘great honor,’ says he, ‘from the King’s self to the King’s son.’ Did you hear the young King’s quip? 125

Herbert. No, what was it?

Walter Map. Glancing at the days when his father was only Earl of Anjou, he answered, ‘Should not an earl’s son wait on a king’s son?’ And when the cold corners of the King’s mouth began to thaw, there was a great motion of laughter among us, part real, part childlike, to be freed from the dulness — part royal, for King and kingling both laughed, and so we could not but laugh, as by a royal necessity — part childlike again — when we felt we had laughed too long and could not stay ourselves — many midriff-shaken even to tears, as springs gush out after earthquakes — but from those, as I said before, there may come a conflagration — tho’, to keep the figure moist and make it hold water, I should say rather, the lacrymation of a lamentation; but look if Thomas have not flung himself at the King’s feet. They have made it up again — for the moment.

Herbert. Thanks to the blessed Magdalen, whose day it is!

Re-enter HENRY and BECKET. (During their conference the BARONS and BISHOPS of FRANCE and ENGLAND come in at back of stage.)

Becket. Ay, King! for in thy kingdom, as thou knowest, 150
The spouse of the Great King, thy King, hath fallen —

The daughter of Zion lies beside the way —
The priests of Baal tread her underfoot —
The golden ornaments are stolen from her —

Henry. Have I not promised to restore her, Thomas,
And send thee back again to Canterbury?

Becket. Send back again those exiles of my kin
Who wander famine-wasted thro’ the world.

Henry. Have I not promised, man, to send them back?

Becket. Yet one thing more. Thou hast broken thro’ the pales 160
Of privilege, crowning thy young son by York,

London, and Salisbury — not Canterbury.

Henry. York crown’d the Conqueror — not Canterbury.

Becket. There was no Canterbury in William’s time.

Henry. But Hereford, you know, crown’d the first Henry.

Becket. But Anselm crown’d this Henry o’er again.

Henry. And thou shalt crown my Henry o’er again.

Becket. And is it then with thy goodwill that I

Proceed against thine evil councillors,
And hurl the dread ban of the Church on those 170

Who made the second mitre play the first,
And acted me?

Henry. Well, well, then — have thy way!
It may be they were evil councillors.

What more, my lord archbishop? What more, Thomas?

I make thee full amends. Say all thy say,
But blaze not out before the Frenchmen here.

Becket. More? Nothing, so thy promise be thy deed.

Henry (holding out his hand). Give me thy hand. My Lords of France and England,

My friend of Canterbury and myself
Are now once more at perfect amity. 180
Unkingly should I be, and most unknighly,
Not striving still, however much in vain,
To rival him in Christian charity.

Herbert. All praise to Heaven, and sweet Saint Magdalen!

Henry. And so farewell until we meet in England.

Becket. I fear, my liege, we may not meet in England.

Henry. How, do you make me a traitor?

Becket. No, indeed!
That be far from thee.

Henry. Come, stay with us, then,
Before you part for England.

Becket. I am bound
For that one hour to stay with good King Louis, 190

Who helpt me when none else.

Herbert. He said thy life
Was not one hour’s worth in England save
King Henry gave thee first the kiss of peace.

Henry. He said so? Louis, did he?
look you, Herbert,
When I was in mine anger with King Louis,

I swear I would not give the kiss of peace,
Not on French ground, nor any ground but
English,

Where his cathedral stands. Mine old
friend, Thomas,

I would there were that perfect trust be-
tween us,

That health of heart, once ours, ere Pope
or King

Had come between us! Even now — who
knows? —

I might deliver all things to thy hand —
If — but I say no more — farewell, my lord.

Becket. Farewell, my liege!

[*Exit Henry, then the Barons and
Bishops.*

Walter Map. There again! when the
full fruit of the royal promise might have
dropt into thy mouth hadst thou but opened
it to thank him.

Becket. He fenced his royal promise with
an *if*.

Walter Map. And is the King's *if* too
high a stile for your lordship to overstep
and come at all things in the next field?

Becket. Ay, if this *if* be like the devil's
'*if*

Thou wilt fall down and worship me.'

Herbert. O, Thomas,
I could fall down and worship thee, my
Thomas,

For thou hast trodden this wine-press alone.

Becket. Nay, of the people there are
many with me.

Walter Map. I am not altogether with
you, my lord, tho' I am none of those that
would raise a storm between you, lest ye
should draw together like two ships in a
calm. You wrong the King: he meant
what he said to-day. Who shall vouch for
his to-morrows? One word further. Doth
not the *fewness* of anything make the ful-
ness of it in estimation? Is not virtue
prized mainly for its rarity and great base-
ness loathed as an exception: for were all,
my lord, as noble as yourself, who would
look up to you? and were all as base as —
who shall I say? — Fitznurse and his fol-
lowing — who would look down upon them?
My lord, you have put so many of the
King's household out of communion, that
they begin to smile at it.

Becket. At their peril, at their peril —

Walter Map. For tho' the drop may hol-
low out the dead stone, doth not the living

skin thicken against perpetual whippings?
'This is the second grain of good counsel I
ever proffered thee, and so cannot suffer by
the rule of frequency. Have I sown it in
salt? I trust not, for before God I pro-
mise you the King hath many more wolves
than he can tame in his woods of England,
and if it suit their purpose to howl for the
King, and you still move against him, you
may have no less than to die for it; but
God and his free wind grant your lordship
a happy home-return and the King's kiss
of peace in Kent. Farewell! I must fol-
low the King. [*Exit.*

Herbert. Ay, and I warrant the customs.

Did the King

Speak of the customs?

Becket. No! — To die for it —
I live to die for it, I die to live for it.

The State will die, the Church can never
die.

The King's not like to die for that which
dies;

But I must die for that which never dies.

It will be so — my visions in the Lord —
It must be so, my friend! the wolves of

England

Must murder her one shepherd, that the
sheep

May feed in peace. False figure, Map
would say.

Earth's falses are heaven's truths. And
when my voice

Is martyr'd mute, and this man disappears,
That perfect trust may come again be-
tween us,

And there, there, there, not here I shall
rejoice

To find my stray sheep back within the
fold.

The crowd are scattering, let us move
away!

And thence to England. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

SCENE I.—THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE BOWER

Geoffrey (coming out of the wood). Light
again! light again! Margery? no, that's
a finer thing there. How it glitters!

Eleanor (entering). Come to me, little
one. How earnest thou liether?

Geoffrey. On my legs.
Eleanor. And mighty pretty legs too.
 Thou art the prettiest child I ever saw.
 Wilt thou love me ?

Geoffrey. No; I only love mother. 10

Eleanor. Ay; and who is thy mother ?

Geoffrey. They call her — But she lives secret, you see.

Eleanor. Why ?

Geoffrey. Don't know why.

Eleanor. Ay, but some one comes to see her now and then. Who is he ?

Geoffrey. Can't tell.

Eleanor. What does she call him ?

Geoffrey. My liege. 20

Eleanor. Pretty one, how camest thou ?

Geoffrey. There was a bit of yellow silk here and there, and it looked pretty like a glowworm, and I thought if I followed it I should find the fairies.

Eleanor. I am the fairy, pretty one, a good fairy to thy mother. Take me to her.

Geoffrey. There are good fairies and bad fairies, and sometimes she cries, and can't sleep sound o' nights because of the bad fairies. 32

Eleanor. She shall cry no more; she shall sleep sound enough if thou wilt take me to her. I am her good fairy.

Geoffrey. But you don't look like a good fairy. Mother does. You are not pretty, like mother.

Eleanor. We can't all of us be as pretty as thou art — (*aside*) little bastard ! Come, here is a golden chain I will give thee if thou wilt lead me to thy mother. 42

Geoffrey. No — no gold. Mother says gold spoils all. Love is the only gold.

Eleanor. I love thy mother, my pretty boy. Show me where thou camest out of the wood.

Geoffrey. By this tree; but I don't know if I can find the way back again.

Eleanor. Where 's the warder ?

Geoffrey. Very bad. Somebody struck him. 52

Eleanor. Ay ? who was that ?

Geoffrey. Can't tell. But I heard say he had had a stroke, or you 'd have heard his horn before now. Come along, then; we shall see the silk here and there, and I want my supper. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

ROSAMUND'S BOWER

Rosamund. The boy so late; pray God, he be not lost !

I sent this Margery, and she comes not back;

I sent another, and she comes not back.

I go myself — so many alleys, crossings,

Paths, avenues — nay, if I lost him, now

The folds have fallen from the mystery

And left all naked, I were lost indeed.

Enter GEOFFREY and ELEANOR.

Geoffrey, the pain thou hast put me to !

[*Seeing Eleanor.*

Ha, you !

How came you hither ?

Eleanor. Your own child brought me hither ! 9

Geoffrey. You said you could n't trust Margery, and I watched her and followed her into the woods, and I lost her and went out and on till I found the light and the lady, and she says she can make you sleep o' nights.

Rosamund. How dared you ? Know you not this bower is secret,

Of and belonging to the King of England, More sacred than his forests for the chase ?

Nay, nay, Heaven help you; get you hence in haste 19

Lest worse befall you.

Eleanor. Child, I am mine own self Of and belonging to the King. The King Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and belongings,

Almost as many as your true Mussulman — Belongings, paramours, whom it pleases him

To call his wives; but so it chances, child, That I am his main paramour, his sultana.

But since the fondest pair of doves will jar, Even in a cage of gold, we had words of

late,

And thereupon he call'd my children bastards.

Do you believe that you are married to him ? 30

Rosamund. I should believe it.

Eleanor. You must not believe it, Because I have a wholesome medicine here

Puts that belief asleep. Your answer, beauty!

Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosamund. Geoffrey, my boy, I saw the ball you lost in the fork of the great willow over the brook. Go. See that you do not fall in. Go. ³⁸

Geoffrey. And leave you alone with the good fairy. She calls you beauty, but I don't like her looks. Well, you bid me go, and I'll have my ball anyhow. Shall I find you asleep when I come back?

Rosamund. Go. [*Exit Geoffrey.*]

Eleanor. He is easily found again. Do you believe it?

I pray you then to take my sleeping-draught;

But if you should not care to take it—see!

What! have I scared the red rose from your face

Into your heart? But this will find it there, ⁴⁹

And dig it from the root for ever.

Rosamund. Help! help!

Eleanor. They say that walls have ears; but these, it seems,

Have none! and I have none—to pity thee.

Rosamund. I do beseech you—my child is so young,

So backward too; I cannot leave him yet. I am not so happy I could not die myself,

But the child is so young. You have children—his;

And mine is the King's child; so, if you love him—

Nay, if you love him, there is great wrong done

Somehow; but if you do not—there are those ⁵⁹

Who say you do not love him—let me go With my young boy, and I will hide my face,

Blacken and gipsyfy it; none shall know me;

The King shall never hear of me again, But I will beg my bread along the world

With my young boy, and God will be our guide.

I never meant you harm in any way. See, I can say no more.

Eleanor. Will you not say you are not married to him?

Rosamund. Ay, madam, I can say it, if you will. ⁶⁹

Eleanor. Then is thy pretty boy a bastard?

Rosamund. No.

Eleanor. And thou thyself a proven wanton?

Rosamund. No.

I am none such. I never loved but one. I have heard of such that range from love to love,

Like the wild beast—if you can call it love.

I have heard of such—yea, even among those

Who sit on thrones— I never saw any such,

Never knew any such, and howsoever You do misname me, match'd with any

such,

I am snow to mud.

Eleanor. The more the pity then That thy true home—the heavens—cry out for thee ⁸⁰

Who art too pure for earth.

Enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. Give her to me.

Eleanor. The Judas-lover of our passion-play

Hath track'd us hither.

Fitzurse. Well, why not? I follow'd You and the child: he babbled all the way.

Give her to me to make my honey-moon.

Eleanor. Ay, as the bears love honey. Could you keep her

Indungeon'd from one whisper of the wind, Dark even from a side glance of the moon,

And oublietted in the centre—No! I follow out my hate and thy revenge. ⁹⁰

Fitzurse. You bade me take revenge another way—

To bring her to the dust.—Come with me, love,

And I will love thee.—Madam, let her live.

I have a far-off burrow where the King Would miss her and for ever.

Eleanor. How sayst thou, sweetheart? Wilt thou go with him? he will marry thee.

Rosamund. Give me the poison; set me free of him!

[*Eleanor offers the vial.*]
No, no! I will not have it.

Eleanor. Then this other,
The wiser choice, because my sleeping-
draught
May bloat thy beauty out of shape, and
make 100
Thy body loathsome even to thy child;
While this but leaves thee with a broken
heart,
A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless, over
which
If pretty Geoffrey do not break his own,
It must be broken for him.

Rosamund. O, I see now
Your purpose is to fright me—a trunba-
dour,
You play with words. You had never used
so many,
Not if you meant it, I am sure. The
child—
No—mercy! No! (*Kneels.*)

Eleanor. Play!—that bosom never
Heaved under the King's hand with such
true passion 110
As at this loveless knife that stirs the riot,
Which it will quench in blood! Slave, if
he love thee,

Thy life is worth the wrestle for it. Arise,
And dash thyself against me that I may
slay thee!
The worm! shall I let her go? But ha!
what's here?

By very God, the cross I gave the King!
His village darling in some lewd caress
Has wheedled it off the King's neck to her
own.

By thy leave, beauty. Ay, the same! I
warrant

Thou hast sworn on this my cross a hun-
dred times 120
Never to leave him—and that merits
death,

False oath on holy cross—for thou must
leave him

To-day, but not quite yet. My good Fitz-
urse,

The running down the chase is kindlier
sport

Even than the death. Who knows but
that thy lover

May plead so pitifully, that I may spare
thee?

Come hither, man; stand there. (*To Ros-
amund.*) Take thy one chance;

Catch at the last straw. Kneel to thy
lord Fitzurse;

Crouch even because thou hatest him; fawn
upon him

For thy life and thy son's.

Rosamund (rising). I am a Clifford,
My son a Clifford and Plantagenet. 131

I am to die then, tho' there stand beside
thee

One who might grapple with thy dagger,
if he

Had aught of man, or thou of woman; or I
Would bow to such a baseness as would
make me

Most worthy of it. Both of us will die,
And I will fly with my sweet boy to heaven,
And shriek to all the saints among the
stars:

'Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of Eng-
land!

Murder'd by that adulteress Eleanor, 140
Whose doings are a horror to the east,
A hissing in the west!' Have we not

heard
Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle—nay,
Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own husband's
father—

Nay, even the accursed heathen Salad-
deen—

Strike!

I challenge thee to meet me before God.
Answer me there.

Eleanor (raising the dagger). This in thy
bosom, fool,
And after in thy bastard's!

*Enter BECKET from behind. Catches hold
of her arm.*

Becket. Murderess!
[*The dagger falls; they stare at one
another. After a pause.*]

Eleanor. My lord, we know you proud
of your fine hand, 150

But having now admired it long enough,
We find that it is mightier than it seems—
At least mine own is frailer; you are lam-
ing it.

Becket. And lamed and maim'd to dis-
location, better

Than raised to take a life which Henry bade
me

Guard from the stroke that dooms thee
after death

To wail in deathless flame.

Eleanor. Nor you nor I
Have now to learn, my lord, that our good
Henry 158

Says many a thing in sudden heats which he
Gainsays by next sunrising — often ready
To tear himself for having said as much.

My lord, Fitzurse —

Becket. He too! what dost thou here?
Dares the bear slouch into the lion's den?
One downward plunge of his paw would
rend away

Eyesight and manhood, life itself, from
thee.

Go, lest I blast thee with anathema,
And make thee a world's horror.

Fitzurse. My lord, I shall
Remember this.

Becket. I do remember thee;
Lest I remember thee to the lion, go. ¹⁶⁹

[*Exit Fitzurse.*
Take up your dagger; put it in the sheath.

Eleanor. Might not your courtesy stoop
to hand it me?

But crowns must bow when mitres sit so
high.

Well — well — too costly to be left or lost.
[*Picks up the dagger.*

I had it from an Arab soldan, who,
When I was there in Antioch, marvell'd at
Our unfamiliar beauties of the west;
But wonder'd more at my much constancy
To the monk-king, Louis, our former bur-
then,

From whom, as being too kin, you know,
my lord, ¹⁷⁹

God's grace and Holy Church deliver'd us.
I think, time given, I could have talk'd
him out of

His ten wives into one. Look at the hilt.
What excellent workmanship! In our
poor west

We cannot do it so well.

Becket. We can do worse.
Madam, I saw your dagger at her throat;
I heard your savage cry.

Eleanor. Well acted, was it?
A comedy meant to seem a tragedy —

A feint, a farce. My honest lord, you are
known

Thro' all the courts of Christendom as one
That mars a cause with over violence. ¹⁹⁰
You have wrong'd Fitzurse. I speak not
of myself.

We thought to scare this minion of the
King

Back from her churchless commerce with
the King

To the fond arms of her first love, Fitzurse,

Who swore to marry her. You have spoilt
the farce.

My savage cry? Why, she — she — when
I strove

To work against her license for her good,
Bark'd out at me such monstrous charges
that

The King himself, for love of his own sons,
If hearing, would have spur'd her; where-
upon ²⁰⁰

I menaced her with this, as when we
threaten

A yelper with a stick. Nay, I deny not
That I was somewhat anger'd. Do you
hear me?

Believe or no, I care not. You have lost
The ear of the King. I have it. — My lord
paramount,

Our great High-priest, will not your Holi-
ness

Vouchsafe a gracious answer to your
Queen?

Becket. Rosamund hath not answer'd
you one word;

Madam, I will not answer you one word.
Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee.

Leave it, daughter; ²¹⁰

Come thou with me to Godstow nunnery,
And live what may be left thee of a life
Saved as by miracle alone with Him
Who gave it.

Re-enter GEOFFREY.

Geoffrey. Mother, you told me a great fib;
it was n't in the willow.

Becket. Follow us, my son, and we will
find it for thee --

Or something manlier.

[*Exeunt Becket, Rosamund, and Geof-
frey.*

Eleanor. The world hath trick'd her —
that 's the King; if so,

There was the farce, the feint — not mine.
And yet ²¹⁹

I am all but sure my dagger was a feint
Till the worm turn'd — not life shot up in
blood,

But death drawn in; — (*looking at the vial*)
this was no feint, then? no.

But can I swear to that, had she but given
Plain answer to plain query? nay, methinks

Had she but bowed herself to meet the
wave

Of humiliation, worshipt whom she loathed,

I should have let her be, scorn'd her too
 much
 To harm her. Henry — Becket tells him
 this —
 To take my life might lose him Aquitaine.
 Too politic for that. Imprison me? ²³⁰
 No, for it came to nothing — only a feint.
 Did she not tell me I was playing on her?
 I'll swear to mine own self it was a feint.
 Why should I swear, Eleanor, who am, or
 was,
 A sovereign power? The King plucks out
 their eyes
 Who anger him, and shall not I, the Queen,
 Tear out her heart — kill, kill with knife
 or venom
 One of his slanderous harlots? 'None of
 such?'
 I love her none the more. Tut, the chance
 gone,
 She lives — but not for him; one point is
 gain'd. ²⁴⁰
 O, I that thro' the Pope divorced King
 Louis,
 Scorning his monkery, — I that wedded
 Henry,
 Honoring his manhood — will he not mock
 at me,
 The jealous fool balk'd of her will — with
 him?
 But he and he must never meet again.
 Reginald Fitzurse!

Re-enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. Here, Madam, at your pleasure.

Eleanor. My pleasure is to have a man about me.

Why did you sink away so like a cur?

Fitzurse. Madam, I am as much man as the King.

Madam, I fear Church-censures like your King. ²⁵⁰

Eleanor. He grovels to the Church when he's black-blooded,

But kinglike fought the proud archbishop,
 — kinglike

Defied the Pope, and, like his kingly sires,
 The Normans, striving still to break or bind

The spiritual giant with our island laws
 And customs, made me for the moment
 proud

Even of that stale Church-bond which
 link'd me with him

To bear him kingly sons. I am not so sure
 But that I love him still. Thou as much
 man!

No more of that; we will to France and be
 Beforehand with the King, and hrew from
 out ²⁶¹

This Godstow-Becket intermeddling such
 A strong hate-philtre as may madden him
 — madden

Against his priest beyond all hellebore.

ACT V

SCENE I. — CASTLE IN NORMANDY. KING'S CHAMBER

HENRY, ROGER OF YORK, FOLIOT, JOCELYN OF SALISBURY.

Roger of York. Nay, nay, my liege,
 He rides abroad with armed followers,
 Hath broken all his promises to thyself,
 Cursed and anathematized us right and
 left,

Stirr'd up a party there against your son —
Henry. Roger of York, you always hated
 him,

Even when you both were boys at Theobald's.

Roger of York. I always hated boundless arrogance.

In mine own cause I strove against him
 there, ⁹

And in thy cause I strive against him now.
Henry. I cannot think he moves against
 my son,

Knowing right well with what a tenderness
 He loved my son.

Roger of York. Before you made him
 king.

But Becket ever moves against a king.
 The Church is all — the crime to be a
 king.

We trust your Royal Grace, lord of more
 land

Than any crown in Europe, will not yield
 To lay your neck beneath your citizen's
 heel.

Henry. Not to a Gregory of my throning!
 No.

Foliot. My royal liege, in aiming at your
 love, ²⁰

It may be sometimes I have overshot
 My duties to our Holy Mother Church,

Tho' all the world allows I fall no inch
Behind this Becket, rather go beyond
In scourgings, macerations, mortifyings,
Fasts, disciplines that clear the spiritual
eye,

And break the soul from earth. Let all
that be.

I boast not; but you know thro' all this
quarrel

I still have cleaved to the crown, in hope
the crown

Would cleave to me that but obey'd the
crown,

Crowning your son; for which our loyal
service,

And since we likewise swore to obey the
customs,

York and myself, and our good Salisbury
here,

Are push'd from out communion of the
Church.

Jocelyn of Salisbury. Becket hath trod-
den on us like worms, my liege,

Trodden one half dead; one half, but half-
alive,

Cries to the King.

Henry (aside). Take care o' thyself, O
King!

Jocelyn of Salisbury. Being so crush'd
and so humiliated

We scarcely dare to bless the food we
eat

Because of Becket.

Henry. What would ye have me do?
Roger of York. Summon your barons;

take their counsel; yet

I know — could swear — as long as Becket
breathes,

Your Grace will never have one quiet hour.

Henry. What? — Ay — but pray you do
not work upon me.

I see your drift — it may be so — and yet
You know me easily anger'd. Will you
hence?

He shall absolve you — you shall have re-
dress.

I have a dizzying headache. Let me rest.
I'll call you by and by.

[*Exeunt Roger of York, Foliot, and
Jocelyn of Salisbury.*

Would he were dead! I have lost all love
for him.

If God would take him in some sudden
way —

Would he were dead!

[*Lies down.*

Page (entering). My liege, the Queen of
England.

Henry. God's eyes! [*Starting up.*

Enter ELEANOR.

Eleanor. Of England? Say of Aquit-
taine.

I am no Queen of England. I had dream'd
I was the bride of England, and a queen.

Henry. And, — while you dream'd you
were the bride of England, —

Stirring her baby-king against me? ha!

Eleanor. The brideless Becket is thy
king and mine;

I will go live and die in Aquitaine.

Henry. Except I clap thee into prison
here,

Lest thou shouldst play the wanton there
again.

Ha, you of Aquitaine! O you of Aquit-
taine!

You were but Aquitaine to Louis — no
wife;

You are only Aquitaine to me — no wife.

Eleanor. And why, my lord, should I be
wife to one

That only wedded me for Aquitaine?
Yet this no-wife — her six and thirty sail
Of Provence blew you to your English
throne;

And this no-wife has borne you four brave
sons,

And one of them at least is like to prove
Bigger in our small world than thou art.

Henry. Ay —
Richard, if he be mine — I hope him mine.

But thou art like enough to make him
thine.

Eleanor. Becket is like enough to make
all his.

Henry. Methought I had recover'd of
the Becket,

That all was planed and bevell'd smooth
again,

Save from some hateful cantrip of thine
own.

Eleanor. I will go live and die in Aquit-
taine.

I dream'd I was the consort of a king,
Not one whose back his priest has broken.

Henry. What!
Is the end come? You, will you crown
my foe

My victor in mid-battle? I will be
Sole master of my house. The end is mine.

What game, what juggle, what devilry are you playing?

Why do you thrust this Becket on me again?

Eleanor. Why? for I *am* true wife, and have my fears

Lest Becket thrust you even from your throne.

Do you know this cross, my liege?

Henry (turning his head). Away! Not I.

Eleanor. Not even the central diamond, worth, I think,

Half of the Antioch whence I had it.

Henry. That?

Eleanor. I gave it you, and you your paramour;

She sends it back, as being dead to earth, So dead henceforth to you.

Henry. Dead! you have murder'd her, Found out her secret bower and murder'd her.

Eleanor. Your Becket knew the secret of your bower.

Henry (calling out). Ho there! thy rest of life is hopeless prison.

Eleanor. And what would my own Aquitaine say to that?

First, free thy captive from *her* hopeless prison.

Henry. O devil, can I free her from the grave?

Eleanor. You are too tragic; both of us are players

In such a comedy as our court of Provence Had laugh'd at. That's a delicate Latin lay

Of Walter Map: the lady holds the cleric Lovelier than any soldier, his poor tounsure

A crown of Empire. Will you have it again?

(Offering the cross. *He dashes it down.*)

Saint Cupid, that is too irreverent.

Then mine once more. (Puts it on.)

Your cleric hath your lady.

Nay, what uncomely faces, could he see you!

Foam at the mouth because King Thomas, lord

Not only of your vassals but amours,

Thro' chastest honor of the Decalogue

Hath used the full authority of his Church To put her into Godstow nunnery.

Henry. To put her into Godstow nunnery!

He dared not — liar! yet, yet I remember —

I do remember.

He had me put her into a nunnery —

Into Godstow, into Hellstow, Devilstow!

The Church! the Church!

God's eyes! I would the Church were down in hell!

Eleanor. Aha!

Enter the four KNIGHTS.

Fitzurse. What made the King cry out so furiously?

Eleanor. Our Becket, who will not absolve the bishops.

I think ye four have cause to love this Becket.

Fitzurse. I hate him for his insolence to all,

De Tracy. And I for all his insolence to thee.

De Brito. I hate him for I hate him is my reason,

And yet I hate him for a hypocrite.

De Morville. I do not love him, for he did his best

To break the barons, and now braves the King.

Eleanor. Strike, then, at once, the King would have him — See!

Re-enter HENRY.

Henry. No man to love me, honor me, obey me!

Sluggards and fools!

The slave that eat my bread has kick'd his King!

The dog I cramm'd with dainties worried me!

The fellow that on a lame jade came to court,

A ragged cloak for saddle — he, he, he,

To shake my throne, to push into my chamber —

My bed, where even the slave is private — he —

I'll have her out again, he shall absolve

The bishops — they but did my will — not you —

Sluggards and fools, why do you stand and stare?

You are no King's men — you — you — you are Becket's men.

Down with King Henry! up with the Archbishop!

Will no man free me from this pestilent priest?
[*Exit.*]

[*The Knights draw their swords.*]

Eleanor. Are ye King's men? I am King's woman, I.

The Knights. King's men! King's men!

SCENE II

A ROOM IN CANTERBURY MONASTERY

BECKET and JOHN OF SALISBURY.

Becket. York said so?

John of Salisbury. Yes: a man may take good counsel

Even from his foe.

Becket. York will say anything. What is he saying now? gone to the King And taken our anathema with him. York! Can the King de-anathematize this York?

John of Salisbury. Thomas, I would thou hadst return'd to England

Like some wise prince of this world from his wars,

With more of olive-branch and amnesty For foes at home — thou hast raised the world against thee.

Becket. Why, John, my kingdom is not of this world. ¹⁰

John of Salisbury. If it were more of this world it might be

More of the next. A policy of wise pardon Wins here as well as there. To bless thine enemies —

Becket. Ay, mine, not Heaven's.

John of Salisbury. And may there not be something

Of this world's leaven in thee too, when crying

On Holy Church to thunder out her rights And thine own wrong so pitilessly? Ah,

Thomas,

The lightnings that we think are only Heaven's

Flash sometimes out of earth against the heavens. ¹⁹

The soldier, when he lets his whole self go Lost in the common good, the common

wrong,

Strikes truest even for his own self. I crave

Thy pardon — I have still thy leave to speak.

Thou hast waged God's war against the King; and yet

We are self-uncertain creatures, and we may,

Yea, even when we know not, mix our spites

And private hates with our defence of Heaven.

Enter EDWARD GRIM.

Becket. Thou art but yesterday from Cambridge, Grim;

What say ye there of Becket?

Grim. I believe him

The bravest in our roll of primates down ³⁰ From Austin — there are some — for there are men

Of canker'd judgment everywhere —

Becket. Who hold With York, with York against me.

Grim. Well, my lord,

A stranger monk desires access to you.

Becket. York against Canterbury, York against God!

I am open to him. [*Exit Grim.*]

Enter ROSAMUND as a Monk.

Rosamund. Can I speak with you Alone, my father?

Becket. Come you to confess?

Rosamund. Not now.

Becket. Then speak; this is my other self,

Who, like my conscience, never lets me be.

Rosamund (throwing back the cowl). I know him, our good John of Salisbury. ⁴⁰

Becket. Breaking already from thy novitiate

To plunge into this bitter world again — These wells of Marah! I am grieved, my daughter.

I thought that I had made a peace for thee.

Rosamund. Small peace was mine in my novitiate, father.

Thro' all closed doors a dreadful whisper crept

That thou wouldst excommunicate the King.

I could not eat, sleep, pray. I had with me The monk's disguise thou gavest me for my bower; ⁴⁹

I think our abbess knew it and allow'd it.

I fled, and found thy name a charm to get me

Food, roof, and rest. I met a robber once;
I told him I was bound to see the arch-
bishop:

'Pass on,' he said, and in thy name I pass'd
From house to house. In one a son stone-
blind

Sat by his mother's hearth. He had gone too
far

Into the King's own woods; and the poor
mother,

Soon as she learnt I was a friend of thine,
Cried out against the cruelty of the King.

I said it was the King's courts, not the
King,

But she would not believe me, and she
wish'd

The Church were king; she had seen the
archbishop once,

So mild, so kind. The people love thee,
father.

Becket. Alas! when I was Chancellor to
the King,

I fear I was as cruel as the King.

Rosamund. Cruel? O, no — it is the
law, not he;

The customs of the realm.

Becket. The customs! customs!

Rosamund. My lord, you have not ex-
communicated him? 68

O, if you have, absolve him!

Becket. Daughter, daughter,
Deal not with things you know not.

Rosamund. I know him.
Then you have done it, and I call you
cruel.

John of Salisbury. No, daughter, you
mistake our good archbishop;

For once in France the King had been so
harsh,

He thought to excommunicate him —
Thomas,

You could not — old affection master'd
you,

You falter'd into tears.

Rosamund. God bless him for it!

Becket. Nay, make me not a woman,
John of Salisbury,

Nor make me traitor to my holy office. 78
Did not a man's voice ring along the aisle,
'The King is sick and almost unto death.'

How could I excommunicate him then?

Rosamund. And wilt thou excommuni-
cate him now?

Becket. Daughter, my time is short, I
shall not do it.

And were it longer — well — I should not
do it.

Rosamund. Thanks in this life, and in
the life to come!

Becket. Get thee back to thy nunnery
with all haste;

Let this be thy last trespass. But one
question —

How fares thy pretty boy, the little Geof-
frey?

No fever, cough, croup, sickness?

Rosamund. No, but saved
From all that by our solitude. The
plagues 90

That smite the city spare the solitudes.

Becket. God save him from all sickness
of the soul!

Thee too, thy solitude among thy nuns,
May that save thee! Doth he remember
me?

Rosamund. I warrant him.

Becket. He is marvellously like thee.

Rosamund. Likier the King.

Becket. No, daughter.

Rosamund. Ay, but wait
Till his nose rises; he will be very king.

Becket. Even so; but think not of the
King. Farewell!

Rosamund. My lord, the city is full of
armed men. 99

Becket. Even so. Farewell!

Rosamund. I will but pass to vespers,
And breathe one prayer for my liege-lord
the King,

His child and mine own soul, and so return.

Becket. Pray for me too; much need of
prayer have I.

[*Rosamund kneels and goes.*

Dan John, how much we lose, we celibates,
Lacking the love of woman and of child!

John of Salisbury. More gain than loss;
for of your wives you shall

Find one a slut whose fairest linen seems
Foul as her dust-cloth, if she used it — one

So charged with tongue that every thread
of thought 109

Is broken ere it joins — a shrew to boot,

Whose evil song far on into the night

Thrills to the topmost tile — no hope but
death;

One slow, fat, white, a burthen of the
hearth;

And one that being thwarted ever swoons
And weeps herself into the place of power;

And one an *uxor pauperis* *Ibyci*.

So rare the household honey-making bee,
Man's help ! but we, we have the Blessed
Virgin

For worship, and our Mother Church for
bride;

And all the souls we saved and father'd
here 120

Will greet us as our babes in Paradise.

What noise was that ? she told us of arm'd
men

Here in the city. Will you not withdraw ?

Becket. I once was out with Henry in
the days

When Henry loved me, and we came upon
A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so still
I reach'd my hand and touch'd; she did not
stir;

The snow had frozen round her, and she sat
Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold eggs.

Look ! how this love, this mother, runs
thro' all 130

The world God made — even the beast —
the bird !

John of Salisbury. Ay, still a lover of the
beast and bird ?

But these arm'd men — will you not hide
yourself ?

Perchance the fierce De Brocs from Salt-
wood Castle,

To assail our Holy Mother lest she brood
Too long o'er this hard egg, the world, and
send

Her whole heart's heat into it, till it break
into young angels. Pray you, hide your-
self.

Becket. There was a little fair-hair'd
Norman maid 139

Lived in my mother's house; if Rosamund is
The world's rose, as her name imports her
— she

Was the world's lily.

John of Salisbury. Ay, and what of her ?

Becket. She died of leprosy.

John of Salisbury. I know not why

You call these old things back again, my
lord.

Becket. The drowning man, they say,
remembers all

The chances of his life, just ere he dies.

John of Salisbury. Ay — but these arm'd
men — will you drown yourself ?

He loses half the meed of martyrdom 148

Who will be martyr when he might escape.

Becket. What day of the week ? Tues-
day ?

John of Salisbury. Tuesday, my lord.
Becket. On a Tuesday was I born, and
on a Tuesday

Baptized; and on a Tuesday did I fly
Forth from Northampton; on a Tuesday
pass'd

From England into bitter banishment;

On a Tuesday at Pontigny came to me

The ghostly warning of my martyrdom;

On a Tuesday from mine exile I return'd,

And on a Tuesday —

TRACY enters, then FITZURSE, DE BRITO,
and DE MORVILLE. MONKS following.

— on a Tuesday — Tracy !

(A long silence, broken by Fitzurse say-
ing, contemptuously,)

God help thee !

John of Salisbury (aside). How the good
archbishop reddens !

He never yet could brook the note of
scorn. 160

Fitzurse. My lord, we bring a message
from the King

Beyond the water; will you have it alone,
Or with these listeners near you ?

Becket. As you will.

Fitzurse. Nay, as you will.

Becket. Nay, as you will.

John of Salisbury. Why, then

Better perhaps to speak with their apart.
Let us withdraw.

[All go out except the four Knights and
Becket.]

Fitzurse. We are all alone with him.

Shall I not smite him with his own cross-
staff ?

De Morville. No, look ! the door is open:
let him be.

Fitzurse. The King condemns your ex-
communicating —

Becket. This is no secret, but a public
matter. 170

In here again !

JOHN OF SALISBURY and MONKS return.

Now, sirs, the King's commands !

Fitzurse. The King beyond the water,
thro' our voices,

Commands you to be dutiful and leal

To your young King on this side of the
water,

Not scorn him for the foibles of his youth.

What ! you would make his coronation
void

By cursing those who crown'd him. Out upon you!

Becket. Reginald, all men know I loved the prince.

His father gave him to my care, and I became his second father. He had his faults,

For which I would have laid mine own life down

To help him from them, since indeed I loved him,

And love him next after my lord his father.

Rather than dim the splendor of his crown I fain would treble and quadruple it

With revenues, realms, and golden provinces

So that were done in equity.

Fitzurse. You have broken Your bond of peace, your treaty with the King —

Wakening such brawls and loud disturbances

In England, that he calls you over-sea ¹⁹⁰ To answer for it in his Norman courts.

Becket. Prate not of bonds, for never, O, never again

Shall the waste voice of the bond-breaking sea

Divide me from the mother church of England,

My Canterbury. Loud disturbances! O, ay — the bells rang out even to deafening,

Organ and pipe, and dulcimer, chants and hymns

In all the churches, trumpets in the halls, Sobs, laughter, cries; they spread their raiment down

Before me — would have made my pathway flowers,

Save that it was midwinter in the street, ²⁰⁰ But full midsummer in those honest hearts.

Fitzurse. The King commands you to absolve the bishops

Whom you have excommunicated.

Becket. I? Not I, the Pope. Ask *him* for absolution.

Fitzurse. But you advised the Pope. *Becket.* And so I did.

They have but to submit.

The Four Knights. The King commands you.

We are all King's men. *Becket.* King's men at least should know

That their own King closed with me last July

That I should pass the censures of the Church ²¹⁰

On those that crown'd young Henry in this realm,

And trampled on the rights of Canterbury.

Fitzurse. What! dare you charge the King with treachery?

He sanction thee to excommunicate The prelates whom he chose to crown his son!

Becket. I spake no word of treachery, Reginald.

But for the truth of this I make appeal To all the archbishops, bishops, prelates, barons,

Monks, knights, five hundred, that were there and heard.

Nay, you yourself were there; you heard yourself. ²²⁰

Fitzurse. I was not there. *Becket.* I saw you there.

Fitzurse. I was not. *Becket.* You were. I never forget anything.

Fitzurse. He makes the King a traitor, me a liar.

How long shall we forbear him?

John of Salisbury (drawing Becket aside). O my good lord,

Speak with them privately on this hereafter.

You see they have been revelling, and I fear

Are braced and brazen'd up with Christmas wines

For any murderous brawl.

Becket. And yet they prate Of mine, my brawls, when those that name themselves

Of the King's part have broken down our barns, ²³⁰

Wasted our diocese, outraged our tenants, Lifted our produce, driven our clerics out —

Why they, your friends, those ruffians, the De Broes,

They stood on Dover beach to murder me, They slew my stags in mine own manor here,

Mutilated, poor brute, my sumpter-mule, Plunder'd the vessel full of Gascon wine,

The old King's present, carried off the casks,

Kill'd half the crew, dungeon'd the other
half 239

In Pevensey Castle —

De Morville. Why not rather then,
If this be so, complain to your young King,
Not punish of your own authority ?

Becket. Mine enemies barr'd all access to
the boy.

They knew he loved me.

Hugh, Hugh, how proudly you exalt your
head !

Nay, when they seek to overturn our
rights,

I ask no leave of king, or mortal man,
To set them straight again. Alone I do it.
Give to the King the things that are the
King's, 249

And those of God to God.

Fitzurse. Threats ! threats ! ye hear him.
What ! will he excommunicate all the
world ?

[*The Knights come round Becket.*

De Tracy. He shall not.

De Brito. Well, as yet — I should be
grateful —

He hath not excommunicated me.

Becket. Because thou wast born excom-
municate.

I never spied in thee one gleam of grace.

De Brito. Your Christian's Christian
charity !

Becket. By Saint Denis —

De Brito. Ay, by Saint Denis, now will
he flame out,

And lose his head as old Saint Denis did.

Becket. Ye think to scare me from my
loyalty

To God and to the Holy Father. No ! 260
Tho' all the swords in England flash'd
above me

Ready to fall at Henry's word or yours —
Tho' all the loud-lung'd trumpets upon
earth

Blared from the heights of all the throues
of her kings,

Blowing the world against me, I would
stand

Clothed with the full authority of Rome,
Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,
First of the foremost of their files who die
For God, to people heaven in the great
day

When God makes up his jewels. Once I
fled — 270

Never again, and you — I marvel at you —

Ye know what is between us. Ye have
sworn

Yourselves my men when I was Chancel-
lor —

My vassals — and yet threaten your arch-
bishop

In his own house.

Knights. Nothing can be between us
That goes against our fealty to the King.

Fitzurse. And in his name we charge you
that ye keep

This traitor from escaping.

Becket. Rest you easy,
For I am easy to keep. I shall not fly. 279
Here, here, here will you find me.

De Morville. Know you not
You have spoken to the peril of your life ?
Becket. As I shall speak again.

Fitzurse, De Tracy, and De Brito. To
arms !

[*They rush out, De Morville lingers.*

Becket. De Morville,
I had thought so well of you; and even
now

You seem the least assassin of the four.

O, do not damn yourself for company !

Is it too late for me to save your soul ?

I pray you for one moment stay and speak.

De Morville. Becket, it is too late.

[*Exit.*

Becket. Is it too late ?
Too late on earth may be too soon in
hell. 289

Knights (in the distance). Close the great
gate — ho, there — upon the town !

Becket's Retainers. Shut the hall-doors !

[*A pause.*

Becket. You hear them, brother John ?
Why do you stand so silent, brother John ?

John of Salisbury. For I was musing on
an ancient saw,

Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re ;

Is strength less strong when hand-in-hand
with grace ?

Gratior in pulchro corpore virtus. Thomas,
Why should you heat yourself for such as
these ?

Becket. Methought I answer'd moder-
ately enough.

John of Salisbury. As one that blows the
coal to cool the fire.

My lord, I marvel why you never lean 300
On any man's advising but your own.

Becket. Is it so, Dan John ? well, what
should I have done ?

John of Salisbury. You should have taken counsel with your friends
Before these bandits brake into your presence.

They seek — you make — occasion for your death.

Becket. My counsel is already taken, John.

I am prepared to die.

John of Salisbury. We are sinners all, The best of all not all-prepared to die.

Becket. God's will be done!

John of Salisbury. Ay, well. God's will be done!

Grim (re-entering). My lord, the knights are arming in the garden 310

Beneath the sycamore.

Becket. Good! let them arm.

Grim. And one of the De Brocs is with them, Robert,

The apostate monk that was with Randulf here.

He knows the twists and turnings of the place.

Becket. No fear!

Grim. No fear, my lord.

[*Crashes on the hall-doors.* The Monks flee.

Becket (rising). Our dovecote flown!

I cannot tell why monks should all be cowards.

John of Salisbury. Take refuge in your own cathedral, Thomas.

Becket. Do they not fight the Great Fiend day by day?

Valor and holy life should go together. 319
Why should all monks be cowards?

John of Salisbury. Are they so?

I say, take refuge in your own cathedral.

Becket. Ay, but I told them I would wait them here.

Grim. May they not say you dared not show yourself

In your old place? and vespers are beginning.

[*Bell rings for vespers till end of scene.*

You should attend the office, give them heart.

They fear you slain; they dread they know not what.

Becket. Ay, monks, not men.

Grim. I am a monk, my lord.

Perhaps, my lord, you wrong us. 328
Some would stand by you to the death.

Becket. Your pardon.

John of Salisbury. He said, 'Attend the office.'

Becket. Attend the office?

Why then — the Cross! — who bears my Cross before me?

Methought they would have brain'd me with it, John. [Grim takes it.

Grim. I! Would that I could bear thy cross indeed!

Becket. The mitre!

John of Salisbury. Will you wear it? — there! [Becket puts on the mitre.

Becket. The pall!

I go to meet my King! [Puts on the pall.

Grim. To meet the King? [Crashes on the doors as they go out.

John of Salisbury. Why do you move with such a stateliness?

Can you not hear them yonder like a storm, Battering the doors, and breaking thro' the walls?

Becket. Why do the heathen rage? My two good friends,

What matters murder'd here, or murder'd there? 340

And yet my dream foretold my martyrdom In mine own church. It is God's will. Go on.

Nay, drag me not. We must not seem to fly.

SCENE III

NORTH TRANSEPT OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

On the right hand a flight of steps leading to the Choir, another flight on the left, leading to the North Aisle. Winter afternoon slowly darkening. Low thunder now and then of an approaching storm. MONKS heard chanting the service. ROSAMUND kneeling.

Rosamund. O blessed saint, O glorious Benedict, —

These arm'd men in the city, these fierce faces —

Thy holy follower founded Canterbury — Save that dear head which now is Canterbury,

Save him, he saved my life, he saved my child,

Save him, his blood would darken Henry's name;

Save him till all as saintly as thyself
He miss the searching flame of purgatory,
And pass at once perfect to Paradise. 9

[*Noise of steps and voices in the cloisters.*
Hark! Is it they? Coming! He is not
here—

Not yet, thank heaven. O, save him!
[*Goes up steps leading to choir.*

Becket (*entering, forced along by John of
Salisbury and Grim*). No, I tell you!
I cannot bear a hand upon my person;

Why do you force me thus against my will?
Grim. My lord, we force you from your
enemies.

Becket. As you would force a king from
being crown'd.

John of Salisbury. We must not force
the crown of martyrdom.

[*Service stops. Monks come down from
the stairs that lead to the choir.*

Monks. Here is the great archbishop!
He lives! he lives!

Die with him, and be glorified together.

Becket. Together?—get you back! go
on with the office. 19

Monks. Come, then, with us to vespers.
Becket. How can I come

When you so block the entry? Back, I
say!

Go on with the office. Shall not Heaven
be served

Tho' earth's last earthquake clash'd the
minster-bells,

And the great deeps were broken up again,
And hiss'd against the sun?

[*Noise in the cloisters.*

Monks. The murderers, hark!
Let us hide! let us hide!

Becket. What do these people fear?

Monks. Those arm'd men in the cloister.

Becket. Be not such cravens!

I will go out and meet them.

Grim and Others. Shut the doors!

We will not have him slain before our
face. 29

[*They close the doors of the transept.*
Knocking.

Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst the
doors! [Knocking.

Becket. Why, these are our own monks
who follow'd us!

And will you bolt them out, and have them
slain?

Undo the doors; the church is not a cas-
tle.

Knock, and it shall be open'd. Are you
deaf?

What, have I lost authority among you?
Stand by, make way!

[*Opens the doors. Enter Monks from
cloister.*

Come in, my friends, come in!
Nay, faster, faster!

Monks. O, my lord archbishop,
A score of knights all arm'd with swords
and axes—

To the choir, to the choir!

[*Monks divide, part flying by the stairs
on the right, part by those on the left.*
The rush of these last bears Becket
along with them some way up the steps,
where he is left standing alone.

Becket. Shall I too pass to the choir,
And die upon the patriarchal throne 40
Of all my predecessors?

John of Salisbury. No, to the crypt!
Twenty steps down. Stumble not in the
darkness,

Lest they should seize thee.

Grim. To the crypt? no—no,
To the chapel of Saint Blaise beneath the
roof!

John of Salisbury (*pointing upward and
downward*). That way or this! Save
thyself either way.

Becket. O, no, not either way, nor any
way

Save by that way which leads thro' night
to light.

Not twenty steps, but one.

And fear not I should stumble in the dark-
ness,

Not tho' it be their hour, the power of dark-
ness, 50

But my hour too, the power of light in
darkness!

I am not in the darkness but the light,
Seen by the Church in heaven, the Church
on earth—

The power of life in death to make her
free!

Enter the four KNIGHTS. JOHN OF SALIS-
BURY flies to the altar of Saint Benedict.

Fitzurse. Here, here, King's men!

[*Catches hold of the last flying Monk.*

Where is the traitor Becket?

Monk. I am not he! I am not he, my
lord.

I am not he indeed!

Fitzurse. Hence to the fiend !
 [Pushes him away.]
 Where is this treble traitor to the King ?
De Tracy. Where is the archbishop,
 Thomas Becket ?

Becket. Here. ⁵⁹
 No traitor to the King, hut Priest of God,
 Primate of England.
 [Descending into the transept.]
 I am he ye seek.

What would ye have of me ?
Fitzurse. Your life.
De Tracy. Your life.
De Morville. Save that you will absolve
 the bishops.

Becket. Never, —
 Except they make submission to the
 Church.
 You had my answer to that cry before.
De Morville. Why, then you are a dead
 man; flee !

Becket. I will not.
 I am readier to be slain than thou to slay.
 Hugh, I know well thou hast but half a
 heart
 To bathe this sacred pavement with my
 blood.

God pardon thee and these, but God's full
 curse ⁷⁰
 Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm
 One of my flock !

Fitzurse. Was not the great gate shut ?
 They are thronging in to vespers — half
 the town.

We shall be overwhelm'd. Seize him and
 carry him !

Come with us — nay — thou art our pris-
 oner — come !

De Morville. Ay, make him prisoner, do
 not harm the man.

[*Fitzurse lays hold of the Archbishop's
 pall.*]

Becket. Touch me not !

De Brito. How the good priest gods him-
 self !

He is not yet ascended to the Father.

Fitzurse. I will not only touch, but drag
 thee hence.

Becket. Thou art my man, thou art my
 vassal. Away ! ⁸⁰

[*Fings him off till he reels, almost to
 falling.*]

De Tracy (lays hold of the pall). Come ;
 as he said, thou art our prisoner.

Becket. Down !
 [Throws him headlong.]

Fitzurse (advances with drawn sword). I
 told thee that I should remember
 thee !

Becket. Profligate pander !

Fitzurse. Do you hear that ? strike,
 strike.

[*Strikes off the Archbishop's mitre, and
 wounds him in the forehead.*]

Becket (covers his eyes with his hand). I
 do commend my cause to God, the
 Virgin,

Saint Denis of France and Saint Alphege
 of England,
 And all the tutelars Saints of Canterbury.

[*Grim wraps his arms about the Arch-
 bishop.*]

Spare this defence, dear brother.

[*Tracy has arisen, and approaches, hesi-
 tatingly, with his sword raised.*]

Fitzurse. Strike him, Tracy !
*Rosamund (rushing down steps from the
 choir).* No, no, no, no !

Fitzurse. This wanton here. *De Mor-
 ville,*

Hold her away.

De Morville. I hold her.

*Rosamund (held back by De Morville,
 and stretching out her arms).*

Mercy, mercy,

As you would hope for mercy !

Fitzurse. Strike, I say !

Grim. O God, O noble knights, O sacri-
 lege ! ⁹¹

Strike our archbishop in his own cathed-
 ral !

The Pope, the King, will curse you — the
 whole world

Abhor you ; ye will die the death of dogs !

Nay, nay, good Tracy. [Lifts his arm.]

Fitzurse. Answer not, but strike.

De Tracy. There is my answer then.

[*Sword falls on Grim's arm, and glances
 from it, wounding Becket.*]

Grim. Mine arm is sever'd.

I can no more — fight out the good fight —
 die

Conqueror.

[*Staggers into the chapel of Saint Benedict.*]

Becket (falling on his knees). At the
 right hand of Power —

Power and great glory — for thy Church,
 O Lord —

Into thy hands, O Lord — into thy hands! — [Sinks prone.

De Brito. This last to rid thee of a world of brawls! (Kills him.)

The traitor's dead, and will arise no more.

Fitzurse. Nay, have we still'd him?

What! the great archbishop!

Does he breathe? No?

De Tracy. No, Reginald, he is dead.

[Storm bursts.]

De Morville. Will the earth gape and swallow us?

De Brito. The deed's done — Away!

[De Brito, De Tracy, Fitzurse, rush out, crying 'King's men!' De Morville follows slowly. Flashes of lightning thro' the Cathedral. Rosamund seen kneeling by the body of Becket.

THE FALCON

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE COUNT FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI.
FILIPPO, the Count's foster-brother.
THE LADY GIOVANNA.
ELISABETTA, the Count's nurse.

THE FALCON

SCENE. — AN ITALIAN COTTAGE, CASTLE AND MOUNTAINS SEEN THROUGH WINDOW

ELISABETTA discovered seated on stool in window, darning. The Count with Falcon on his hand comes down through the door at back. A withered wreath on the wall.

Elisabetta. So, my lord, the Lady Giovanna, who hath been away so long, came back last night with her son to the castle.

Count. Hear that, my bird! Art thou not jealous of her?

My princess of the cloud, my plumed purveyor,

My far-eyed queen of the winds — thou that canst soar

Beyond the morning lark, and, howsoe'er Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop down upon him

¹ A tremendous thunderstorm actually broke over the Cathedral as the murderers were leaving it.

Eagle-like, lightning-like — strike, make his feathers

Glance in mid heaven. [Crosses to chair.

I would thou hadst a mate!

Thy breed will die with thee, and mine with me;

I am as lone and loveless as thyself.

[Sits in chair.

Giovanna here! Ay, ruffle thyself — be jealous!

Thou shouldst be jealous of her. Tho' I bred thee

The full-train'd marvel of all falconry, And love thee and thou me, yet if Giovanna Be here again — No, no! Buss me, my bird!

The stately widow has no heart for me.

Thou art the last friend left me upon earth —

No, no again to that! [Rises and turns.

My good old nurse,

I had forgotten thou wast sitting there. ²¹ Elisabetta. Ay, and forgotten thy foster-brother too.

Count. Bird-babble for my falcon! Let it pass.

What art thou doing there?

Elisabetta. Darning, your lordship. We cannot flaunt it in new feathers now. Nay, if we will buy diamond necklaces To please our lady, we must darn, my lord. This old thing here (*points to necklace round her neck*), they are but blue beads — my Piero,

God rest his honest soul, he bought 'em for me,

Ay, but he knew I meant to marry him. ³⁰ How couldst thou do it, my son? How couldst thou do it?

Count. She saw it at a dance, upon a neck

Less lovely than her own, and long'd for it.

Elisabetta. She told thee as much?

Count. No, no — a friend of hers.

Elisabetta. Shame on her that she took it at thy hands, She rich enough to have bought it for herself!

Count. She would have robb'd me then of a great pleasure.

Elisabetta. But hath she yet return'd thy love?

Count. Not yet!

Elisabetta. She should return thy necklace then.

Count. Ay, if

She knew the giver; but I bound the seller To silence, and I left it privily ⁴¹ At Florence, in her palace.

Elisabetta. And sold thine own To buy it for her. She not know? She knows

There 's none such other —

Count. Madman anywhere. Speak freely, tho' to call a madman mad Will hardly help to make him sane again.

Enter FILIPPO.

Filippo. Ah, the women, the women! Ah, Monna Giovanna, you here again! you that have the face of an angel and the heart of a — that's too positive! You that have a score of lovers and have not a heart for any of them — that's positive-negative: you that have *not* the head of a toad, and not a heart like the jewel in it — that's too negative; you that have a cheek like a peach and a heart like the stone in it — that's positive again — that's better!

Elisabetta. Sh — sh — Filippo! ⁵⁸

Filippo (turns half round). Here has our master been a-glorifying and a-velveting

and a-silking himself, and a-peacocking and a-spreading to catch her eye for a dozen year, till he has n't an eye left in his own tail to flourish among the peahens, and all along o' you, Monna Giovanna, all along o' you!

Elisabetta. Sh — sh — Filippo! Can't you hear that you are saying behind his back what you see you are saying afore his face? ⁷⁰

Count. Let him — he never spares me to my face!

Filippo. No, my lord, I never spare your lordship to your lordship's face, nor behind your lordship's hack, nor to right, nor to left, nor to round about and hack to your lordship's face again, for I 'm honest, your lordship.

Count. Come, come, Filippo, what is there in the larder? ⁸⁰

[*Elisabetta crosses to fireplace and puts on wood.*

Filippo. Shelves and hooks, shelves and hooks, and when I see the shelves I am like to hang myself on the hooks.

Count. No bread?

Filippo. Half a breakfast for a rat!

Count. Milk?

Filippo. Three laps for a cat!

Count. Cheese?

Filippo. A supper for twelve mites.

Count. Eggs? ⁹⁰

Filippo. One, but addled.

Count. No bird?

Filippo. Half a tit and a hern's bill.

Count. Let be thy jokes and thy jerks, man! Anything or nothing?

Filippo. Well, my lord, if all-but-nothing be anything, and one plate of dried prunes be all-but-nothing, then there is anything in your lordship's larder at your lordship's service, if your lordship care to call for it. ¹⁰¹

Count. Good mother, happy was the prodigal son,

For he return'd to the rich father; I But add my poverty to thine. And all Thro' following of my fancy. Pray thee make

Thy slender meal out of those scraps and shreds

Filippo spoke of. As for him and me, There sprouts a salad in the garden still. (*To the Falcon.*) Why didst thou miss thy quarry yester-even?

To-day, my beauty, thou must dash us
down 110

Our dinner from the skies. Away, Filippo!
[Exit, followed by Filippo.]

Elisabetta. I knew it would come to this. She has begged him. I always knew it would come to this! (*Goes up to table as if to resume darning, and looks out of window.*) Why, as I live, there is Monna Giovanna coming down the hill from the castle. Stops and stares at our cottage. Ay, ay! stare at it: it's all you have left us. Shame on you! *She beautiful!* sleek as a miller's mouse! Meal enough, meat enough, well fed; but beautiful—bah! Nay, see, why she turns down the path through our little vineyard, and I sneezed three times this morning. Coming to visit my lord, for the first time in her life too! Why, bless the saints! I'll be bound to confess her love to him at last. I forgive her, I forgive her! I knew it would come to this—I always knew it must come to this! (*Goes up to door during latter part of speech, and opens it.*) Come in, madonna, come in. (*Retires to front of table and curtsies as the LADY GIOVANNA enters, then moves chair towards the hearth.*) Nay, let me place this chair for your ladyship.

[*Lady Giovanna moves slowly down stage, then crosses to chair, looking about her, bows as she sees the Madonna over fireplace, then sits in chair.*]

Lady Giovanna. Can I speak with the Count? 138

Elisabetta. Ay, my lady, but won't you speak with the old woman first, and tell her all about it and make her happy? for I've been on my knees every day for these half-dozen years in hope that the saints would send us this blessed morning; and he always took you so kindly, he always took the world so kindly. When he was a little one, and I put the bitters on my breast to wean him, he made a wry mouth at it, but he took it so kindly, and your ladyship has given him bitters enough in this world, and he never made a wry mouth at you, he always took you so kindly—which is more than I did, my lady, more than I did—and he so handsome—and bless your sweet face, you look as beautiful this morning as the very Madonna her own self—and better late than never—but come when they will—then or now—it's

all for the best, come when they will—they are made by the blessed saints—these marriages. [*Raises her hands.*]

Lady Giovanna. Marriages? I shall never marry again! 162

Elisabetta (rises and turns). Shame on her then!

Lady Giovanna. Where is the Count?

Elisabetta. Just gone

To fly his falcon.

Lady Giovanna. Call him back and say I come to breakfast with him.

Elisabetta. Holy mother!

To breakfast! O sweet saints! one plate of prunes!

Well, madam, I will give your message to him. [*Exit.*]

Lady Giovanna. His falcon, and I come to ask for his falcon,

The pleasure of his eyes—boast of his hand—

Pride of his heart—the solace of his hours— 170

His one companion here—nay, I have heard

That, thro' his late magnificence of living
And this last costly gift to mine own self,
[*Shows diamond necklace.*]

He hath become so beggar'd that his falcon

Even wins his dinner for him in the field.

That must be talk, not truth, but, truth or talk,

How can I ask for his falcon?

[*Rises and moves as she speaks.*]

O my sick boy!

My daily fading Florio, it is thou

Hath set me this hard task, for when I say,
What can I do—what can I get for thee?

He answers, 'Get the Count to give me his falcon, 181

And that will make me well.' Yet if I ask,

He loves me, and he knows I know he loves me!

Will he not pray me to return his love—

To marry him?—(*pause*)—I can never marry him.

His grandsire struck my grandsire in a brawl

At Florence, and my grandsire stabb'd him there.

The feud between our houses is the bar
I cannot cross; I dare not brave my brother,

Break with my kin. My brother hates him,
 scorns 190
 The noblest-natured man alive, and I —
 Who have that reverence for him that I
 scarce
 Dare beg him to receive his diamonds
 back —
 How can I, dare I, ask him for his falcon ?
[Puts diamonds in her casket.]

Re-enter COUNT and FILIPPO. COUNT
 turns to FILIPPO.

Count. Do what I said; I cannot do it
 myself.

Filippo. Why then, my lord, we are pau-
 per'd out and out.

Count. Do what I said !
[Advances and bows low.]

Welcome to this poor cottage, my dear
 lady.

Lady Giovanna. And welcome turns a
 cottage to a palace. 199

Count. 'T is long since we have met !
 Lady Giovanna. To make amends

I come this day to break my fast with you.
 Count. I am much honor'd — yes —
[Turns to Filippo.]

Do what I told thee. Must I do it my-
 self ?

Filippo. I will, I will. *(Sighs.)* Poor
 fellow ! *[Exit.]*

Count. Lady, you bring your light into
 my cottage

Who never deign'd to shine into my palace.
 My palace wanting you was but a cottage;
 My cottage, while you grace it, is a palace.

Lady Giovanna. In cottage or in palace,
 being still

Beyond your fortunes, you are still the
 king 210

Of courtesy and liberality.
 Count. I trust I still maintain my cour-
 tesy ;

My liberality perforce is dead
 Thro' lack of means of giving.

Lady Giovanna. Yet I come
 To ask a gift. *[Moves toward him a little.]*

Count. It will be hard, I fear,
 To find one shock upon the field when all
 The harvest has been carried.

Lady Giovanna. But my boy —
(Aside.) No, no ! not yet — I cannot !

Count. Ay, how is he,
 That bright inheritor of your eyes — your
 boy ?

Lady Giovanna. Alas, my Lord Federigo,
 he hath fallen 220

Into a sickness, and it troubles me.
 Count. Sick ! is it so ? why, when he
 came last year

To see me hawking, he was well enough ;
 And then I taught him all our hawking-
 phrases.

Lady Giovanna. O yes, and once you let
 him fly your falcon.

Count. How charm'd he was ! what won-
 der ? — A gallant boy,
 A noble bird, each perfect of the breed.

Lady Giovanna *(sinks in chair)*. What
 do you rate her at ?

Count. My bird ? a hundred
 Gold pieces once were offer'd by the Duke.
 I had no heart to part with her for money.

Lady Giovanna. No, not for money.
[Count turns away and sighs.]

Wherefore do you sigh ?

Count. I have lost a friend of late.
 Lady Giovanna. I could sigh with you

For fear of losing more than friend, a
 son ;

And if he leave me — all the rest of life —
 That wither'd wreath were of more worth
 to me. *[Looking at wreath on wall.]*

Count. That wither'd wreath is of more
 worth to me

Than all the blossom, all the leaf of this
 New-wakening year.

[Goes and takes down wreath.]

Lady Giovanna. And yet I never saw
 The land so rich in blossom as this year.

Count *(holding wreath toward her)*. Was
 not the year when this was gather'd
 richer ? 240

Lady Giovanna. How long ago was
 that ?

Count. Alas, ten summers !
 A lady that was beautiful as day

Sat by me at a rustic festival
 With other beauties on a mountain meadow,
 And she was the most beautiful of all ;

Then but fifteen, and still as beautiful.
 The mountain flowers grew thickly round
 about.

I made a wreath with some of these ; I
 ask'd

A ribbon from her hair to bind it with ;
 I whisper'd, Let me crown you Queen of
 Beauty, 250

And softly placed the chaplet on her head.
 A color, which has color'd all my life,

Flush'd in her face; then I was call'd
away;

And presently all rose, and so departed.

Ah! she had thrown my chaplet on the
grass,

And there I found it.

[*Lets his hands fall, holding wreath dependingly.*]

Lady Giovanna (after pause). How long
since do you say?

Count. That was the very year before
you married.

Lady Giovanna. When I was married
you were at the wars.

Count. Had she not thrown my chaplet
on the grass,

It may be I had never seen the wars. 260

[*Replaces wreath whence he had taken it.*]

Lady Giovanna. Ah, but, my lord, there
ran a rumor then

That you were kill'd in battle. I can tell
you

True tears that year were shed for you in
Florence.

Count. It might have been as well for
me. Unhappily

I was but wounded by the enemy there

And then imprison'd.

Lady Giovanna. Happily, however,
I see you quite recover'd of your wound.

Count. No, no, not quite, madonna, not
yet, not yet. 268

Re-enter FILIPPO.

Filippo. My lord, a word with you.

Count. Pray, pardon me!

[*Lady Giovanna crosses, and passes behind chair and takes down wreath; then goes to chair by table.*]

Count (to *Filippo*). What is it, *Filippo*?

Filippo. Spoons, your lordship.

Count. Spoons!

Filippo. Yes, my lord, for was n't my
lady born with a golden spoon in her lady-
ship's mouth, and we have it never so much
as a silver one for the golden lips of her
ladyship.

Count. Have we not half a score of sil-
ver spoons?

Filippo. Half o' one, my lord!

Count. How half of one?

Filippo. I trod upon him even now, my
lord, in my hurry, and broke him. 280

Count. And the other nine?

Filippo. Sold! but shall I not mount
with your lordship's leave to her ladyship's
castle, in your lordship's and her lady-
ship's name, and confer with her lady-
ship's seneschal, and so descend again with
some of her ladyship's own appurtenances?

Count. Why — no, man. Only see your
cloth be clean. [*Exit Filippo.*]

Lady Giovanna. Ay, ay, this faded rib-
bon was the mode

In Florence ten years back. What's here?
a scroll 290

Pinned to the wreath.

My lord, you have said so much
Of this poor wreath that I was bold enough
To take it down, if but to guess what flow-
ers

Had made it; and I find a written scroll
That seems to run in rhymings. Might I
read?

Count. Ay, if you will.

Lady Giovanna. It should be if you can.
(*Reads.*) 'Dead mountain.' Nay, for who
could trace a hand

So wild and staggering?

Count. This was penn'd, madonna,
Close to the grating on a winter morn

In the perpetual twilight of a prison, 300
When he that made it, having his right
hand

Lamed in the battle, wrote it with his left.

Lady Giovanna. O heavens! the very
letters seem to shake

With cold, with pain perhaps, poor pris-
oner! Well,

Tell me the words — or better — for I see
There goes a musical score along with
them,

Repeat them to their music.

Count. You can touch
No chord in me that would not answer you
In music.

Lady Giovanna. That is musically said.

[*Count takes guitar. Lady Giovanna sits listening with wreath in her hand, and quietly removes scroll and places it on table at the end of the song.*]

Count (*sings, playing guitar*). 'Dead
mountain flowers, dead mountain-
meadow flowers, 310

Dearer than when you made your mountain
gay,

Sweeter than any violet of to-day,
Richer than all the wide world-wealth of
May,

To me, tho' all your bloom has died away,
You bloom again, dead mountain-meadow
flowers.'

Enter ELISABETTA with cloth.

Elisabetta. A word with you, my lord!
Count (singing). 'O mountain flowers!'

Elisabetta (louder). A word, my lord!

Count (sings). 'Dead flowers!'

Elisabetta (louder). A word, my lord!

Count. I pray you pardon me again!

[*Lady Giovanna looking at wreath.*

Count (to Elisabetta). What is it?

Elisabetta. My lord, we have but one
piece of earthen-ware to serve the salad in
to my lady, and that cracked!

Count. Why then, that flower'd bowl my
ancestor

Fetch'd from the farthest east — we never
use it

For fear of breakage — but this day has
brought

A great occasion. You can take it, nurse!

Elisabetta. I did take it, my lord, but
what with my lady's coming that had so
furred me, and what with the fear of
breaking it, I did break it, my lord; it is
broken!

Count. My one thing left of value in the
world!

No matter! see your cloth be white as
snow!

Elisabetta (pointing thro' window).
White? I warrant thee, my son, as the
snow yonder on the very tip-top o' the
mountain.

Count. And yet, to speak white truth,
my good old mother,
I have seen it like the snow on the mo-
raine.

Elisabetta. How can your lordship say
so? There, my lord! [*Lays cloth.*

O my dear son, be not unkind to me. ³²⁹
And one word more. [*Going — returns.*

Count (touching guitar). Good! let it be
but one.

Elisabetta. Hath she return'd thy love?

Count. Not yet!

Elisabetta. And will she?

Count (looking at Lady Giovanna). I
scarce believe it!

Elisabetta. Shame upon her then!

Count (sings). 'Dead mountain flow-
ers' — [*Exit.*

Ah well, my nurse has broken
The thread of my dead flowers, as she has
broken

My china bowl. My memory is as dead.
[*Goes and replaces guitar.*

Strange that the words at home with me
so long

Should fly like bosom friends when needed
most.

So by your leave, if you would hear the
rest,

The writing.

*Lady Giovanna (holding wreath toward
him).* There! my lord, you are a
poet, ³⁴⁹

And can you not imagine that the wreath,
Set, as you say, so lightly on her head,
Fell with her motion as she rose, and she,
A girl, a child, then but fifteen, however
Flutter'd or flatter'd by your notice of her,
Was yet too bashful to return for it?

Count. Was it so indeed? was it so?
was it so?

[*Leans forward to take wreath, and
touches Lady Giovanna's hand, which
she withdraws hastily; he places
wreath on corner of chair.*

Lady Giovanna (with dignity). I did not
say, my lord, that it was so;

I said you might imagine it was so. ³⁵⁸

*Enter FILIPPO with bowl of salad, which he
places on table.*

Filippo. Here's a fine salad for my lady,
for tho' we have been a soldier, and ridden
by his lordship's side, and seen the red of
the battle-field, yet are we now drill-ser-
geant to his lordship's lettuces, and profess
to be great in green things and in garden-
stuff.

Lady Giovanna. I thank thee, good Fi-
lippo. [*Exit Filippo.*

*Enter ELISABETTA with bird on a dish which
she places on table.*

Elisabetta (close to table). Here's a fine
fowl for my lady; I had scant time to do
him in. I hope he be not underdone, for
we be undone in the doing of him. ³⁷⁰

Lady Giovanna. I thank you, my good
nurse.

Filippo (re-entering with plate of prunes).
And here are fine fruits for my lady —
prunes, my lady, from the tree that my lord
himself planted here in the blossom of his

boyhood — and so I, Filippo, being, with your ladyship's pardon, and as your ladyship knows, his lordship's own foster-brother, would commend them to your ladyship's most peculiar appreciation. ³⁸⁰
[Puts plate on table.]

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Lady Giovanna (Count leads her to table).

Will you not eat with me, my lord?

Count. I cannot;

Not a morsel, not one morsel. I have broken

My fast already. I will pledge you.

Wine!

Filippo, wine!

[Sits near table; Filippo brings flask, fills the Count's goblet, then Lady Giovanna's; Elisabetta stands at the back of Lady Giovanna's chair.]

Count. It is but thin and cold,

Not like the vintage blowing round your castle.

We lie too deep down in the shadow here.

Your ladyship lives higher in the sun.

[They pledge each other and drink.]

Lady Giovanna. If I might send you down a flask or two ³⁸⁹

Of that same vintage? There is iron in it.

It has been much commended as a medicine.

I give it my sick son, and if you be Not quite recover'd of your wound, the

wine

Might help you. None has ever told me yet

The story of your battle and your wound.

Filippo (coming forward). I can tell you, my lady, I can tell you.

Elisabetta. Filippo! will you take the word out of your master's own mouth?

Filippo. Was it there to take? Put it there, my lord. ⁴⁰¹

Count. Giovanna, my dear lady, in this same battle

We had been beaten — they were ten to one.

The trumpets of the fight had echo'd down,

I and Filippo here had done our best, And, having passed unwounded from the

field,

Were seated sadly at a fountain side, Our horses grazing by us, when a troop,

Laden with booty and with a flag of ours Ta'en in the fight —

Filippo. Ay, but we fought for it back, And kill'd —

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Count. A troop of horse — ⁴¹⁴
Filippo. Five hundred!

Count. Say fifty!

Filippo. And we kill'd 'em by the score!

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Filippo. Well, well, well! I bite my tongue.

Count. We may have left their fifty less by five. ⁴¹⁴

However, staying not to count how many, But anger'd at their flaunting of our flag, We mounted, and we dash'd into the heart of 'em.

I wore the lady's chaplet round my neck;

It served me for a blessed rosary.

I am sure that more than one brave fellow owed ⁴²⁰

His death to the charm in it.

Elisabetta. Hear that, my lady!

Count. I cannot tell how long we strove before

Our horses fell beneath us; down we went Crush'd, hack'd at, trampled underfoot.

The night,

As some cold-manner'd friend may strangely do us

The truest service, had a touch of frost

That help'd to check the flowing of the blood.

My last sight ere I swoon'd was one sweet face

Crown'd with the wreath. *That seem'd to come and go.* ⁴²⁹

They left us there for dead!

Elisabetta. Hear that, my lady!

Filippo. Ay, and I left two fingers there for dead. See, my lady! (*Showing his hand.*)

Lady Giovanna. I see, Filippo!

Filippo. And I have small hope of the gentleman gout in my great toe.

Lady Giovanna. And why, Filippo?

[Smiling absently.]

Filippo. I left him there for dead too.

Elisabetta. She smiles at him — how hard the woman is!

My lady, if your ladyship were not ⁴⁴⁰
 Too proud to look upon the garland, you

Would find it stain'd —

Count (rising). Silence, Elisabetta!

Elisabetta. Stain'd with the blood of the
best heart that ever
Beat for one woman.

[*Points to wreath on chair.*

Lady Giovanna (*rising slowly*). I can eat
no more!

Count. You have but trifled with our
homely salad,
But dallied with a single lettuce-leaf;
Not eaten anything.

Lady Giovanna. Nay, nay, I cannot.
You know, my lord, I told you I was
troubled.

My one child Florio lying still so sick,
I bound myself, and by a solemn vow, ⁴⁵⁰
That I would touch no flesh till he were
well

Here, or else well in heaven, where all is
well.

[*Elisabetta clears table of bird and
salad: Filippo snatches up the plate
of prunes and holds them to Lady
Giovanna.*

Filippo. But the prunes, my lady, from
the tree that his lordship —

Lady Giovanna. Not now, Filippo. My
lord Federigo,

Can I not speak with you once more alone?

Count. You hear, Filippo? My good fel-
low, go.

Filippo. But the prunes that your lord-
ship —

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Count. Ay, prune our company of thine
own, and go!

Elisabetta. Filippo! ⁴⁶⁰

Filippo (*turning*). Well, well! the wo-
men! [*Exit.*

Count. And thou too leave us, my dear
nurse, alone.

Elisabetta (*folding up cloth and going*).
And me too! Ay, the dear nurse will leave
you alone; but, for all that, she that has
eaten the yolk is scarce like to swallow the
shell.

[*Turns and curtsies stiffly to Lady
Giovanna, then exit. Lady Giovanna
takes out diamond necklace from cas-
ket.*

Lady Giovanna. I have anger'd your
good nurse; these old-world servants
Are all but flesh and blood with those they
serve. ⁴⁷⁰

My lord, I have a present to return you,
And afterwards a boon to crave of you.

Count. No, my most honor'd and long-
worshipt lady,

Poor Federigo degli Alberighi
Takes nothing in return from you except
Return of his affection — can deny
Nothing to you that you require of him.

Lady Giovanna. Then I require you to
take back your diamonds —

[*Offering necklace.*

I doubt not they are yours. No other heart
Of such magnificence in courtesy ⁴⁸⁰
Beats — out of heaven. They seem'd too
rich a prize

To trust with any messenger. I came
In person to return them.

[*Count draws back.*

If the phrase

'Return' displease you, we will say — ex-
change them.

For your — for your —

Count (*takes a step toward her and then
back*). For mine — and what of
mine?

Lady Giovanna. Well, shall we say this
wreath and your sweet rhymes?

Count. But have you ever worn my dia-
monds?

Lady Giovanna. No!

For that would seem accepting of your love.
I cannot brave my brother — but be sure
That I shall never marry again, my lord!

Count. Sure?

Lady Giovanna. Yes!

Count. Is this your brother's order?

Lady Giovanna. No!

For he would marry me to the richest
man ⁴⁹²

In Florence; but I think you know the say-
ing —

'Better a man without riches, than riches
without a man.'

Count. A noble saying — and acted on
would yield

A nobler breed of men and women. Lady,
I find you a shrewd bargainer. The wreath
That once you wore outvalues twenty-fold
The diamonds that you never deign'd to
wear.

But lay them there for a moment!

[*Points to table. Lady Giovanna places
necklace on table.*

And be you
Gracious enough to let me know the boon
By granting which, if aught be mine to
grant, ⁵⁰²

I should be made more happy than I hoped
Ever to be again.

Lady Giovanna. Then keep your breath,
But you will find me a shrewd bargainer
still.

I cannot keep your diamonds, for the gift
I ask for, to *my* mind and at this present
Outvalues all the jewels upon earth.

Count. It should be love that thus out-
values all.

You speak like love, and yet you love me
not. 510

I have nothing in this world but love for
you.

Lady Giovanna. Love? it is love, love
for my dying boy,

Moves me to ask it of you.

Count. What? my time?

Is it my time? Well, I can give my time
To him that is a part of you, your son.

Shall I return to the castle with you?
Shall I

Sit by him, read to him, tell him my tales,
Sing him my songs? You know that I can
touch

The glittern to some purpose.

Lady Giovanna. No, not that!

I thank you heartily for that — and you,
I doubt not from your nobleness of na-
ture, 521

Will pardon me for asking what I ask.

Count. Giovanna, dear Giovanna, I that
once

The wildest of the random youth of Flor-
ence

Before I saw you — all my nobleness
Of nature, as you deign to call it, draws
From you, and from my constancy to you.
No more, but speak.

Lady Giovanna. I will. You know sick
people;

More specially sick children, have strange
fancies,

Strange longings; and to thwart them in
their mood 530

May work them grievous harm at times,
may even

Hasten their end. I would you had a son!
It might be easier then for you to make

Allowance for a mother — her — who
comes

To rob you of your one delight on earth.
How often has my sick boy yearn'd for
this!

I have put him off as often; but to-day

I dared not — so much weaker, so much
worse

For last day's journey. I was weeping for
him;

He gave me his hand: 'I should be well
again 540

If the good Count would give me —'

Count. Give me —

Lady Giovanna. 'His falcon.'

Count (starts back). My falcon!

Lady Giovanna. Yes, your falcon, Fed-
erigo!

Count. Alas, I cannot!

Lady Giovanna. Cannot? Even so!

I fear'd as much. O this unhappy world!
How shall I break it to him? how shall I
tell him?

The boy may die; more blessed were the
rags

Of some pale beggar-woman seeking alms
For her sick son, if he were like to live,
Than all my childless wealth, if mine must
die.

I was to blame — the love you said you
bore me — 550

My lord, we thank you for your entertain-
ment,

[*With a stately curtsey.*

And so return — Heaven help him! — to
our son. [*Turns.*

Count (rushes forward). Stay, stay, I
am most unlucky, most unhappy!

You never had look'd in on me before,
And when you came and dipt your sover-
eign head

Thro' these low doors, you ask'd to eat with
me.

I had but emptiness to set before you,
No, not a draught of milk, no, not an egg,
Nothing but my brave bird, my noble fal-
con, 559

My comrade of the house, and of the field.
She had to die for it — she died for you.

Perhaps I thought with those of old, the
nobler

The victim was, the more acceptable
Might be the sacrifice. I fear you scarce

Will thank me for your entertainment now.

Lady Giovanna (returning). I bear with
him no longer.

Count. No, madonna!
And he will have to bear with it as he
may.

Lady Giovanna. I break with him for
ever!

Count. Yes, Giovanna,
But he will keep his love to you for ever !
Lady Giovanna. You ? you ? not you !
My brother ! my hard brother ! 570
O Federigo, Federigo, I love you !
Spite of ten thousand brothers, Federigo !
[*Falls at his feet.*]
Count (impetuously). Why, then the dy-
ing of my noble bird
Hath served me better than her living —
then [*Takes diamonds from table.*]
These diamonds are both yours and mine —
have won
Their value again — beyond all markets —
there,
I lay them for the first time round your
neck.
[*Lays necklace round her neck.*]
And then this chaplet — No more feuds,
but peace,
Peace and conciliation ! I will make 579

Your brother love me. See, I tear away
The leaves were darken'd by the battle —
[*Pulls leaves off and throws them down.*]
— crown you
Again with the same crown my Queen of
Beauty.
[*Places wreath on her head.*]
Rise — I could almost think that the dead
garland
Will break once more into the living blos-
som.
Nay, nay, I pray you rise.
[*Raises her with both hands.*]
We two together
Will help to heal your son — your son and
mine —
We shall do it — we shall do it !
[*Embraces her.*]
The purpose of my being is accomplish'd,
And I am happy !
Lady Giovanna. And I too, Federigo.

THE CUP

A TRAGEDY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

GALATIANS	{	SYNORIX, an ex-Tetrarch.	PHÈBE.
		SINNATUS, a Tetrarch.	CAMMA, wife of Sinnatus, afterwards
		Attendant. Boy.	Priestess in the Temple of Artemis. Maid.
ROMANS	{	ANTONIUS, a Roman General.	Nobleman.
		PUBLIUS.	Messenger.

THE CUP

ACT I

SCENE I. — DISTANT VIEW OF A CITY
OF GALATIA

As the curtain rises, Priestesses are heard singing in the Temple. Boy discovered on a pathway among Rocks, picking grapes. A party of Roman Soldiers, guarding a prisoner in chains, come down the pathway and exeunt.

Enter SYNORIX (looking round). Singing ceases.

Synorix. Pine, beech and plane, oak, wal-
nut, apricot,
Vine, cypress, poplar, myrtle, bowering-
in
The city where she dwells. She past me
here
Three years ago when I was flying from
My tetrarchy to Rome. I almost touch'd
her —
A maiden slowly moving on to music

Among her maidens to this temple — O
Gods!

She is my fate — else wherefore has my
fate

Brought me again to her own city? —
married

Since — married Sinnatus, the tetrarch
here — ¹⁰

But if he be conspirator, Rome will chain
Or slay him. I may trust to gain her
then

When I shall have my tetrarchy restored
By Rome, our mistress, grateful that I
show'd her

The weakness and the dissonance of our
clans,

And how to crush them easily. Wretched
race!

And once I wish'd to scourge them to the
bones.

But in this narrow breathing-time of life
Is vengeance for its own sake worth the
while,

If once our ends are gain'd? and now this
cup — ²⁰

I never felt such passion for a woman.

[Brings out a cup and scroll from under
his cloak.

What have I written to her?

[Reading the scroll.

'To the admired Camma, wife of Sinna-
tus the Tetrarch, one who years ago, him-
self an adorer of our great goddess Arte-
mis, beheld you afar off worshipping in her
temple, and loved you for it, sends you this
cup rescued from the burning of one of her
shrines in a city thro' which he past with
the Roman army: it is the cup we use in
our marriages. Receive it from one who
cannot at present write himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN
THE ROMAN LEGION.'

[Turns and looks up to Boy.

Boy, dost thou know the house of Sinna-
tus?

Boy. These grapes are for the house of
Sinnatus —

Close to the temple.

Synorix. Yonder?

Boy. Yes.

Synorix (aside). That I

With all my range of women should yet
shun

To meet her face to face at once! My
boy, [Boy comes down rocks to him.

Take thou this letter and this cup to
Camma, ⁴⁰

The wife of Sinnatus.

Boy. Going or gone to-day

To hunt with Sinnatus.

Synorix. That matters not.

Take thou this cup and leave it at her
doors.

[Gives the cup and scroll to the Boy.

Boy. I will, my lord.

[Takes his basket of grapes and exit.

Enter ANTONIUS.

Antonius (meeting the Boy as he goes out).

Why, whither runs the boy?

Is that the cup you rescued from the
fire?

Synorix. I send it to the wife of Sinna-
tus,

One half besotted in religious rites.

You come here with your soldiers to en-
force

The long-withholden tribute; you suspect
This Sinnatus of playing patriotism, ⁵⁰

Which in your sense is treason. You have
yet

No proof against him. Now this pious
cup

Is passport to their house, and open arms
To him who gave it; and once there I war-
rant

I worm thro' all their windings.

Antonius. If you prosper,

Our Senate, wearied of their tetrarchies,
Their quarrels with themselves, their spites

at Rome,

Is like enough to cancel them, and throne
One king above them all, who shall be
true

To the Roman; and from what I heard in
Rome, ⁶⁰

This tributary crown may fall to you.

Synorix. The king, the crown! their
talk in Rome? is it so?

[Antonius nods.

Well — I shall serve Galatia taking it,
And save her from herself, and be to Rome
More faithful than a Roman.

[Turns and sees Camma coming.

Stand aside,

Stand aside; here she comes!

[Watching Camma as she enters with
her Maid.

Camma (to Maid). Where is he, girl?

Maid. You know the waterfall

That in the summer keeps the mountain
side,

But after rain o'erleaps a jutting rock 69
And shoots three hundred feet.

Camma. The stag is there ?

Maid. Seen in the thicket at the bottom
there

But yester-even.

Camma. Good then, we will climb
The mountain opposite and watch the chase.

[*They descend the rocks and exeunt.*]

Synorix (*watching her*). (*Aside.*) The bust
of Juno, and the brows and eyes

Of Venus; face and form unmatchable !

Antonius. Why do you look at her so
lingeringly ?

Synorix. To see if years have changed
her.

Antonius (*sarcastically*). Love her, do
you ?

Synorix. I envied Sinnatus when he mar-
ried her.

Antonius. She knows it ? Ha !

Synorix. She — no, nor even my face.

Antonius. Nor Sinnatus either ?

Synorix. No, nor Sinnatus.

Antonius. Hot-blooded ! I have heard
them say in Rome, 81

That your own people cast you from their
bounds

For some unprincely violence to a woman,
As Rome did Tarquin.

Synorix. Well, if this were so
I here return like Tarquin — for a crown.

Antonius. And may be foild like Tar-
quin, if you follow

Not the dry light of Rome's straight-going
policy,

But the fool-fire of love or lust, which well
May make you lose yourself, may even
drown you

In the good regard of Rome.

Synorix. Tut — fear me not;
I ever had my victories among women. 91

I am most true to Rome.

Antonius (*aside*). I hate the man !
What filthy tools our Senate works with !

Still

I must obey them. (*Aloud.*) Fare you
well. [*Going.*]

Synorix. Farewell !

Antonius (*stopping*). A moment ! If you
track this Sinnatus

In any treason, I give you here an order
[*Produces a paper.*]

To seize upon him. Let me sign it. (*Signs
it.*) There —

'Antonius, leader of the Roman Legion.'

[*Hands the paper to Synorix. Goes up
pathway and exit.*]

Synorix. Woman again ! — but I am
wiser now.

No rushing on the game — the net, — the
net. 100

[*Shouts of 'Sinnatus! Sinnatus!' Then
horn.*]

[*Looking off stage.*] He comes, a rough,
bluff, simple-looking fellow.

If we may judge the kernel by the husk,

Not one to keep a woman's fealty when
Assailed by Craft and Love. I'll join with
him;

I may reap something from him — come
upon her

Again, perhaps, to-day — her. Who are
with him ?

I see no face that knows me. Shall I risk it ?
I am a Roman now, they dare not touch me.
I will.

Enter SINNATUS, HUNTSMEN and hounds.

Fair sir, a happy day to you !

You reckon but little of the Roman here, 110
While you can take your pastime in the
woods.

Sinnatus. Ay, ay, why not ? What
would you with me, man ?

Synorix. I am a lifelong lover of the
chase,

And tho' a stranger fain would be allow'd
To join the hunt.

Sinnatus. Your name ?

Synorix. Strato, my name.

Sinnatus. No Roman name ?

Synorix. A Greek, my lord; you know
That we Galatians are both Greek and
Gaul.

[*Shouts and horns in the distance.*]

Sinnatus. Hillo, the stag ! (*To Synorix.*)

What, you are all unfurnish'd ?

Give him a bow and arrows — follow —
follow.

[*Exit, followed by Huntsmen.*]

Synorix. Slowly but surely — till I see
my way. 120

It is the one step in the dark beyond
Our expectation, that amazes us.

[*Distant shouts and horns.*]

Hillo ! Hillo !

[*Exit Synorix. Shouts and horns*]

SCENE II

A ROOM IN THE TETRARCH'S HOUSE

Frescoed figures on the walls. Evening. Moonlight outside. A couch with cushions on it. A small table with a flagon of wine, cups, plate of grapes, etc., also the cup of Scene I. A chair with drapery on it.

CAMMA enters, and opens curtains of window.

Camma. No Sinnatus yet — and there the rising moon.

[Takes up a cithern and sits on couch. Plays and sings.

Moon on the field and the foam,
Moon on the waste and the wold,
Moon bring him home, bring him home,
Safe from the dark and the cold,
Home, sweet moon, bring him home,
Home with the flock to the fold —
Safe from the wolf —

(Listening.) Is he coming? I thought I heard

A footstep. No, not yet. They say that Rome

Sprang from a wolf. I fear my dear lord mixt

With some conspiracy against the wolf.
This mountain shepherd never dream'd of Rome. [Sings.

Safe from the wolf to the fold —

And that great break of precipice that runs Thro' all the wood, where twenty years ago Huntsman and hound and deer were all neck-broken!

Nay, here he comes.

Enter SINNATUS followed by SYNORIX.

Sinnatus (angrily). I tell thee, my good fellow,

My arrow struck the stag.

Synorix. But was it so? Nay, you were further off; besides the wind

Went with my arrow.

Sinnatus. I am sure I struck him.

Synorix. And I am just as sure, my lord, I struck him.

(Aside.) And I may strike your game when you are gone.

Camma. Come, come, we will not quarrel about the stag.

I have had a weary day in watching you. Yours must have been a wearier. Sit and eat,

And take a hunter's vengeance on the meats.

Sinnatus. No, no — we have eaten — we are heated. Wine!

Camma. Who is our guest?

Sinnatus. Strato he calls himself.

[Camma offers wine to Synorix, while Sinnatus helps himself.

Sinnatus. I pledge you, Strato.

[Drinks.

Synorix. And I you, my lord.

[Drinks.

Sinnatus (seeing the cup sent to Camma). What's here?

Camma. A strange gift sent to me to-day.

A sacred cup saved from a blazing shrine³² Of our great Goddess, in some city where Antonius past. I had believed that Rome Made war upon the peoples, not the Gods.

Synorix. Most like the city rose against Antonius,

Whereon he fired it, and the sacred shrine By chance was burnt along with it.

Sinnatus. Had you then No message with the cup?

Camma. Why, yes, see here.

[Gives him the scroll.

Sinnatus (reads). To the admired Camma, — beheld you afar off — loved you — sends you this cup — the cup we use in our marriages — cannot at present write himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN THE ROMAN LEGION.'

Serving by force! Were there no boughs to hang on,

Rivers to drown in? Serve by force? No force

Could make me serve by force.

Synorix. How then, my lord?

The Roman is encampt without your city — The force of Rome a thousand-fold our own.

Must all Galatia hang or drown herself? And you a prince and tetrarch in this province —

Sinnatus. Province!

Synorix. Well, well, they call it so in Rome.

Sinnatus (*angrily*). Province!

Synorix. A noble anger! but Antonius
To-morrow will demand your tribute —
you,

Can you make war? Have you alliances?
Bithynia, Pontus, Paphlagonia?

We have had our leagues of old with East-
ern kings.

There is my hand — if such a league there
be. 60

What will you do?

Sinnatus. Not set myself abroad
And run my mind out to a random guest
Who join'd me in the hunt. You saw my
hounds

True to the scent; and we have two-legg'd
dogs

Among us who can smell a true occasion,
And when to bark and how.

Synorix. My good Lord *Sinnatus*,
I once was at the hunting of a lion.

Roused by the clamor of the chase he woke,
Came to the front of the wood — his mon-
arch mane

Bristled about his quick ears — he stood
there 70

Staring upon the hunter. A score of dogs
Gnaw'd at his ankles; at the last he felt
The trouble of his feet, put forth one paw,
Slew four, and knew it not, and so re-
main'd

Staring upon the hunter. And this Rome
Will crush you if you wrestle with her;
then,

Save for some slight report in her own
Senate,

Searce know what she has done.

(*Aside*.) Would I could move him,
Provoke him any way! (*Aloud*.) The
Lady *Camma*,

Wise I am sure as she is beautiful, 80
Will close with me that to submit at once

Is better than a wholly hopeless war,
Our gallant citizens murder'd all in vain,
Son, husband, brother gash'd to death in
vain,

And the small state more cruelly trampled
on

Than had she never moved.

Camma. Sir, I had once
A boy who died a babe; but were he liv-
ing

And grown to man and *Sinnatus* will'd it, I
Would set him in the front rank of the
fight

With scarce a pang. (*Rises*.) Sir, if a
state submit 90

At once, she may be blotted out at once
And swallow'd in the conqueror's chronicle.
Whereas in wars of freedom and defence
The glory and grief of battle won or lost
Solders a race together — yea — tho' they
fall,

The names of those who fought and fell
are like

A bank'd-up fire that flashes out again
From century to century, and at last
May lead them on to victory — I hope
so — 99

Like phantoms of the Gods.

Sinnatus. Well spoken, wife.

Synorix (*bowing*). Madam, so well I
yield.

Sinnatus. I should not wonder
If *Synorix*, who has dwelt three years in
Rome

And wrought his worst against his native
land,

Returns with this Antonius.

Synorix. What is *Synorix*?

Sinnatus. Galatian, and not know? This
Synorix

Was tetrarch here, and tyrant also — did
Dishonor to our wives.

Synorix. Perhaps you judge him
With feeble charity; being as you tell me
Tetrarch, there might be willing wives
enough

To feel dishonor honor.

Camma. Do not say so.

I know of no such wives in all Galatia. 111
There may be courtesans for aught I know
Whose life is one dishonor.

Enter ATTENDANT.

Attendant (*aside*). My lord, the men!

Sinnatus (*aside*). Our anti-Roman fac-
tion?

Attendant (*aside*). Ay, my lord.

Synorix (*overhearing*). (*Aside*.) I have
enough — their anti-Roman faction.

Sinnatus (*aloud*). Some friends of mine
would speak with me without.

You, *Strato*, make good cheer till I return.
[*Exit*.

Synorix. I have much to say, no time to
say it in.

First, lady, know myself am that Galatian
Who sent the cup.

Camma. I thank you from my heart.

Synorix. Then that I serve with Rome
to serve Galatia. 121

That is my secret; keep it, or you sell
me

To torment and to death. [*Coming closer.*

For your ear only —

I love you — for your love to the great
Goddess.

The Romans sent me here a spy upon you,
To draw you and your husband to your
doom.

I'd sooner die than do it.

[*Takes out paper given him by Antonius.*

This paper sign'd

Antonius — will you take it, read it?
there!

Camma (*reads*). 'You are to seize on
Sinnatus, — if —'

Synorix (*snatches paper*). No more.

What follows is for no wife's eyes. O

Camma, 130

Rome has a glimpse of this conspiracy;

Rome never yet hath spar'd conspirator.

Horrible! flaying, scourging, crucifying —

Camma. I am tender enough. Why do

you practise on me?

Synorix. Why should I practise on you?

How you wrong me!

I am sure of being every way malign'd.

And if you should betray me to your hus-
band —

Camma. Will you betray him by this
order?

Synorix. See,

I tear it all to pieces, never dream'd

Of acting on it. [*Tears the paper.*

Camma. I owe you thanks for ever.

Synorix. Hath Sinnatus never told you
of this plot? 141

Camma. What plot?

Synorix. A child's sand-castle on the
beach

For the next wave, — all seen, — all calcu-
lated,

All known by Rome. No chance for Sin-
natus.

Camma. Why said you not as much to
my brave Sinnatus?

Synorix. Brave — ay — too brave, too
over-confident,

Too like to ruin himself, and you, and me!
Who else, with this black thunderbolt of
Rome

Above him, would have chased the stag
to-day 149

In the full face of all the Roman camp?

A miracle that they let him home again,

Not caught, maim'd, blinded him.

[*Camma shudders.*

(*Aside.*) I have made her tremble.

(*Aloud.*) I know they mean to torture
him to death.

I dare not tell him how I came to know it;

I durst not trust him with — my serving
Rome

To serve Galatia; you heard him on the
letter.

Not say as much? I all but said as much.

I am sure I told him that his plot was
folly.

I say it to you — you are wiser — Rome
knows all,

But you know not the savagery of Rome.

Camma. O! — have you power with

Rome? use it for him! 161

Synorix. Alas! I have no such power
with Rome. All that

Lies with Antonius.

[*As if struck by a sudden thought.*

Comes over to her.

He will pass to-morrow

In the gray dawn before the Temple doors.

You have beauty, — O, great beauty, —

and Antonius,

So gracious toward women, never yet

Flung back a woman's prayer. Plead to
him,

I am sure you will prevail.

Camma. Still — I should tell

My husband.

Synorix. Will he let you plead for him

To a Roman?

Camma. I fear not.

Synorix. Then do not tell him.

Or tell him, if you will, when you return,

When you have charm'd our general into
mercy, 172

And all is safe again. O dearest lady,

[*Murmurs of 'Synorix! Synorix!'*
heard outside.

Think, — torture, — death, — and come.

Camma. I will, I will.

And I will not betray you.

Synorix (*aside, as Sinnatus enters*).

Stand apart.

Enter SINNATUS and ATTENDANT.

Sinnatus. Thou art that Synorix! One
whom thou hast wrong'd

Without there knew thee with Antonius.
They howl for thee, to rend thee head from limb.

Synorix. I am much malign'd. I thought to serve Galatia.

Sinnatus. Serve thyself first, villain!
They shall not harm 180

My guest within my house. There! (*points to door*) there! this door

Opens upon the forest! Out, begone!

Henceforth I am thy mortal enemy.

Synorix. However, I thank thee (*draws his sword*); thou hast saved my life.

[*Exit.*

Sinnatus (*to Attendant*). Return and tell them Synorix is not here.

[*Exit Attendant.*

What did that villain Synorix say to you?

Camma. Is he — that — Synorix?

Sinnatus. Wherefore should you doubt it?

One of the men there knew him.

Camma. Only one, And he perhaps mistaken in the face.

Sinnatus. Come, come, could he deny it?

What did he say? 190

Camma. What should he say?

Sinnatus. What should he say, my wife!

He should say this, that being tetrarch once

His own true people cast him from their doors

Like a base coin.

Camma. Not kindly to them?

Sinnatus. Kindly?

O, the most kindly prince in all the world!
Would clap his honest citizens on the back,

Bandy their own rude jests with them, be curious

About the welfare of their babes, their wives,

O, ay — their wives — their wives! What should he say?

He should say nothing to my wife if I 200
Were by to throttle him! He steep'd himself

In all the lust of Rome. How should you guess

What manner of beast it is?

Camma. Yet he seem'd kindly, And said he loathed the cruelties that Rome

Wrought on her vassals.

Sinnatus. Did he, honest man?

Camma. And you, that seldom brook the stranger here,
Have let him hunt the stag with you to-day.

Sinnatus. I warrant you now, he said he struck the stag.

Camma. Why, no, he never touch'd upon the stag.

Sinnatus. Why, so I said, my arrow. Well, to sleep. 210

[*Goes to close door.*

Camma. Nay, close not yet the door upon a night

That looks half day.

Sinnatus. True; and my friends may spy him

And slay him as he runs.

Camma. He is gone already.

O, look, — yon grove upon the mountain, — white

In the sweet moon as with a lovelier snow!
But what a blotch of blackness underneath!

Sinnatus, you remember — yea, you must, That there three years ago — the vast vine-bowers

Ran to the summit of the trees, and dropt Their streamers earthward, which a breeze of May 220

Took ever and anon, and open'd out

The purple zone of hill and heaven. There You told your love; and like the swaying vines —

Yea, — with our eyes, — our hearts, our prophet hopes

Let in the happy distance, and that all But cloudless heaven which we have found together

In our three married years! You kiss'd me there

For the first time. *Sinnatus,* kiss me now.

Sinnatus. First kiss. (*Kisses her.*) There, then. You talk almost as if it 229

Might be the last.

Camma. Will you not eat a little?

Sinnatus. No, no, we found a goatherd's hut, and shared

His fruits and milk. Liar! You will believe

Now that he never struck the stag — a brave one

Which you shall see to-morrow.

Camma. I rise to-morrow

In the gray dawn, and take this holy cup To lodge it in the shrine of Artemis.

Sinnatus. Good!

Camma. If I be not back in half an hour,
Come after me.

Sinnatus. What! is there danger?

Camma. Nay,
None that I know; 't is but a step from here

239

To the Temple.

Sinnatus. All my brain is full of sleep.
Wake me before you go, I'll after you—

After me now! [*Closes door and exit.*]

Camma (*drawing curtains*). Your shadow.

Synorix—

His face was not malignant, and he said
That men malign'd him. Shall I go?
Shall I go?

Death, torture—

'He never yet flung back a woman's
prayer'—

I go, but I will have my dagger with me.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III

SAME AS SCENE I. DAWN

Music and Singing in the Temple.

Enter SYNORIX watchfully, after him PUBLIUS and SOLDIERS.

Synorix. Publius!

Publius. Here!

Synorix. Do you remember what
I told you?

Publius. When you cry, 'Rome, Rome,'
to seize

On whomsoever may be talking with you,
Or man, or woman, as traitors unto Rome.

Synorix. Right. Back again. How many
of you are there?

Publius. Some half a score.

[*Exeunt Soldiers and Publius.*]

Synorix. I have my guard about me.
I need not fear the crowd that hunted me
Across the woods, last night. I hardly
gain'd

The camp at midnight. Will she come to
me

Now that she knows me *Synorix*? Not if
Sinnatus

10

Has told her all the truth about me.
Well,

I cannot help the mould that I was cast in.

I fling all that upon my fate, my star.

I know that I am genial, I would be
Happy, and make all others happy, so
They did not thwart me. Nay, she will
not come.

Yet if she be a true and loving wife
She may, perchance, to save this husband.

Ay!

See, see, my white bird stepping toward the
snare.

Why, now I count it all but miracle,
That this brave heart of mine should shake
me so,

As helplessly as some unbearded boy's
When first he meets his maiden in a bower.

Enter CAMMA (*with cup*).

The lark first takes the sunlight on his
wing,

But you, twin sister of the morning star,
Forelead the sun.

Camma. Where is Antonius?

Synorix. Not here as yet. You are too
early for him.

[*She crosses towards Temple.*]

Synorix. Nay, whither go you now?

Camma. To lodge this cup
Within the holy shrine of Artemis,

29

And so return.

Synorix. To find Antonius here.

[*She goes into the Temple, he looks after her.*]

The loveliest life that ever drew the light
From heaven to brood upon her, and enrich
Earth with her shadow! I trust she will
return.

These Romans dare not violate the Temple.
No, I must lure my game into the camp.

A woman I could live and die for. What!
Die for a woman, what new faith is this?

I am not mad, not sick, not old enough
To dote on one alone. Yes, mad for her,

Camma the stately, *Camma* the great-
hearted,

40

So mad, I fear some strange and evil
chance

Coming upon me, for, by the Gods I seem
Strange to myself!

Re-enter CAMMA.

Camma. Where is Antonius?

Synorix. Where? As I said before, you
are still too early.

Camma. Too early to be here alone with
thee;

For whether men malign thy name, or no,
It bears an evil savor among women.

Where is Antonius? (*Loud.*)

Synorix. Madam, as you know
The camp is half a league without the
city;

If you will walk with me we needs must
meet

Antonius coming, or at least shall find him
There in the camp.

Camma. No, not one step with thee.
Where is Antonius? (*Louder.*)

Synorix (advancing towards her). Then
for your own sake,
Lady, I say it with all gentleness,
And for the sake of Sinnatus your hus-
band,

I must compel you.

Camma (drawing her dagger). Stay! —
too near is death.

Synorix (disarming her). Is it not easy to
disarm a woman?

*Enter SINNATUS (seizes him from behind by
the throat).*

Synorix (throttled and scarce audible).
Rome! Rome!

Sinnatus. Adulterous dog!

*Synorix (stabbing him with Camma's dag-
ger).* What! will you have it?

[*Camma utters a cry and runs to Sinna-
tus.*

Sinnatus (falls backward). I have it in
my heart — to the Temple — fly —

For my sake — or they seize on thee. Re-
member!

Away — farewell! [*Dies.*

*Camma (runs up the steps into the Temple,
looking back).* Farewell!

Synorix (seeing her escape). The women
of the Temple drag her in.

Publius! Publius! No,
Antonius would not suffer me to break
into the sanctuary. She hath escaped.

[*Looking down at Sinnatus.*
'Adulterous dog!' that red-faced rage at
me!

Then with one quick short stab — eternal
peace.

So end all passions. Then what use in pas-
sions?

To warm the cold bonds of our dying life
And, lest we freeze in mortal apathy,

Employ us, heat us, quicken us, help us,
keep us

From seeing all too near that urn, those
ashes

Which all must be. Well used, they serve
us well.

I heard a saying in Egypt, that ambition
Is like the sea wave, which the more you
drink

The more you thirst — yea — drink too
much, as men

Have done on rafts of wreck — it drives
you mad.

I will be no such wreck, am no such game-
ster

As, having won the stake, would dare the
chance

Of double, or losing all. The Roman Sen-
ate,

For I have always play'd into their hands,
Means me the crown. And Camma for
my bride —

The people love her — if I win her love,
They too will cleave to me, as one with
her.

There then I rest, Rome's tributary king.
[*Looking down on Sinnatus.*

Why did I strike him? — having proof
enough

Against the man, I surely should have left
That stroke to Rome. He saved my life
too. Did he?

It seem'd so. I have play'd the sudden
fool.

And that sets her against me — for the
moment.

Camma — well, well, I never found the
woman

I could not force or wheedle to my will.
She will be glad at last to wear my crown.

And I will make Galatia prosperous too,
And we will chirp among our vines, and
smile

At hygone things till that (*pointing to Sin-
natus*) eternal peace.

Rome! Rome!

Enter PUBLIUS and SOLDIERS.

Twice I cried Rome. Why came ye not
before?

Publius. Why come we now? Whom
shall we seize upon?

*Synorix (pointing to the body of Sinna-
tus).* The body of that dead traitor
Sinnatus.

Bear him away.

Music and Singing in Temple.

ACT II

SCENE. — INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE
OF ARTEMIS

Small gold gates on platform in front of the veil before the colossal statue of the Goddess, and in the centre of the Temple a tripod altar, on which is a lighted lamp. Lamps (lighted) suspended between the pillars. Tripods, vases, garlands of flowers, etc., about stage. Altar at back close to Goddess, with two cups. Solemn music. Priestesses decorating the Temple.

(The Chorus of PRIESTESSES sing as they enter.)

Artemis, Artemis, hear us, O Mother, hear us,
and bless us!

Artemis, thou that art life to the wind, to the
wave, to the glebe, to the fire!

Hear thy people who praise thee! O, help us
from all that oppress us!

Hear thy priestesses hymn thy glory! O, yield
them all their desire!

Priestess. Phœbe, that man from Synorix,
who has been

So oft to see the priestess, waits once more
before the Temple.

Phœbe. We will let her know.

[Signs to one of the Priestesses, who goes
out.]

Since Camma fled from Synorix to our
Temple,

And for her beauty, stateliness, and power,
Was chosen priestess here, have you not
mark'd

Her eyes were ever on the marble floor? ¹⁰

To-day they are fixt and bright — they
look straight out.

Hath she made up her mind to marry him?

Priestess. To marry him who stabb'd
her Sinnatus!

You will not easily make me credit that.

Phœbe. Ask her.

*Enter CAMMA as Priestess (in front of the
curtains).*

Priestess. You will not marry Synorix?

Camma. My girl, I am the bride of
Death, and only

Marry the dead.

Priestess. Not Synorix then?

Camma.

My girl,
At times this oracle of great Artemis

Has no more power than other oracles ²⁰
To speak directly.

Phœbe. Will you speak to him,
The messenger from Synorix who waits
Before the Temple?

Camma. Why not? Let him enter.
[Comes forward on to step by tripod.]

Enter a MESSENGER.

Messenger (kneels). Greeting and health
from Synorix! More than once
You have refused his hand. When last I
saw you,

You all but yielded. He entreats you now
For your last answer. When he struck at
Sinnatus —

As I have many a time declared to you —
He knew not at the moment who had
fasten'd

About his throat — he begs you to forget it
As scarce his act — a random stroke. All
else ³¹

Was love for you; he prays you to believe
him.

Camma. I pray him to believe — that I
believe him.

Messenger. Why, that is well. You mean
to marry him?

Camma. I mean to marry him — if that
be well.

Messenger. This very day the Romans
crown him king
For all his faithful services to Rome.

He wills you then this day to marry him,
And so be throned together in the sight ³⁹
Of all the people, that the world may know
You twain are reconciled, and no more fends
Disturb our peaceful vassalage to Rome.

Camma. To-day? Too sudden. I will
brood upon it.

When do they crown him?

Messenger. Even now.

Camma. And where?

Messenger. Here by your temple.

Camma. Come once more to me
Before the crowning, — I will answer you.

[Exit Messenger.]

Phœbe. Great Artemis! O Camma, can
it be well,

Or good, or wise, that you should clasp a
hand

Red with the sacred blood of Sinnatus?

Camma. Good! mine own dagger driven
by Synorix found ⁵⁰

All good in the true heart of Sinnatus,

And quench'd it there for ever. Wise !
Life yields to Death, and Wisdom bows to
Fate,

Is wisest doing so. Did not this man
Speak well ? We cannot fight imperial
Rome,

But he and I are both Galatian-born ;
And tributary sovereigns, he and I
Might teach this Rome — from knowledge
of our people —

Where to lay on her tribute — heavily here
And lightly there. Might I not live for
that, 60

And drown all poor self-passion in the sense
Of public good ?

Phæbe. I am sure you will not marry him.

Camma. Are you so sure ? I pray you
wait and see.

[*Shouts from the distance*] 'Synorix !
Synorix !'

Camma. Synorix, Synorix ! So they cried
Sinnatus

Not so long since — they sicken me. The
One

Who shifts his policy suffers something,
must

Accuse himself, excuse himself ; the Many
Will feel no shame to give themselves the lie.

Phæbe. Most like it was the Roman soldier
shouted.

Camma. Their shield-borne patriot of
the morning star 70

Hang'd at midday, their traitor of the dawn
The clamor'd darling of their afternoon !

And that same head they would have play'd
at ball with

And kick'd it featureless — they now would
crown ! [*Flourish of trumpets.*]

*Enter a Galatian NOBLEMAN with crown on
a cushion.*

Noble (kneels). Greeting and health from
Synorix. He sends you

This diadem of the first Galatian Queen,
That you may feed your fancy on the glory
of it,

And join your life this day with his, and
wear it

Beside him on his throne. He waits your
answer.

Camma. Tell him there is one shadow
among the shadows, 80

One ghost of all the ghosts — as yet so new,
So strange among them — such an alien
there,

So much of husband in it still — that if
The shout of Synorix and Camma sitting
Upon one throne, should reach it, it would
rise —

HE ! — HE, with that red star between the
ribs,

And my knife there — and blast the king
and me,

And blanch the crowd with horror. I dare
not, sir !

Throne him — and then the marriage — ay,
and tell him

That I accept the diadem of Galatia — 98
[*All are amazed.*]

Yea, that ye saw me crown myself withal.
[*Puts on the crown.*]

I wait him his crown'd queen.

Noble. So will I tell him. [*Exit.*]

MUSIC. Two Priestesses go up the steps before
the shrine, draw the curtains on either
side (discovering the Goddess), then open
the gates and remain on steps, one on either
side, and kneel. A priestess goes off and
returns with a veil of marriage, then assists
PHÆBE to veil CAMMA. At the same time
Priestesses enter and stand on either side of
the Temple. CAMMA and all the Priestesses
kneel, raise their hands to the Goddess,
and bow down.

[*Shouts, 'Synorix ! Synorix !'* All rise.

Camma. Fling wide the doors, and let
the new-made children

Of our imperial mother see the show.

[*Sunlight pours through the doors.*]

I have no heart to do it. (*To Phæbe.*)
Look for me !

[*Crouches. Phæbe looks out.*]

[*Shouts, 'Synorix ! Synorix !'*]

Phæbe. He climbs the throne. Hot
blood, ambition, pride

So bloat and redden his face — O, would it
were

His third last apoplexy ! O, bestial !

O, how unlike our goodly Sinnatus ! 100
Camma (on the ground). You wrong him

surely ; far as the face goes

A goodlier-looking man than Sinnatus.

Phæbe (aside). How dare she say it ? I
could hate her for it

But that she is distracted.

[*A flourish of trumpets.*]

Camma. Is he crown'd ?

Phæbe. Ay, there they crown him.

[*Crowd without shout, 'Synorix ! Synorix !'*]

A Priestess brings a box of spices to Camma, who throws them on the altar-flame.

Camma. Rouse the dead altar-flame,
fling in the spices,

Nard, cinnamon, amomum, benzoin.
Let all the air reel into a mist of odor,
As in the midmost heart of Paradise. ¹⁰⁹

Lay down the Lydian carpets for the King.
The King should pace on purple to his
bride,

And music there to greet my lord the King.

[Music.]
(To Phœbe.) Dost thou remember when I
wedded Sinnatus?

Ay, thou wast there — whether from maiden
fears

Or reverential love for him I loved,
Or some strange second-sight, the mar-
riage-cup

Wherefrom we make libation to the God-
dess

So shook within my hand that the red wine
Ran down the marble and lookt like blood,
like blood.

Phæbe. I do remember your first-mar-
riage fears. ¹²⁰

Camma. I have no fears at this my sec-
ond marriage.

See here — I stretch my hand out — hold
it there.

How steady it is!

Phæbe. Steady enough to stab him!

Camma. O, hush! O, peace! This vio-
lence ill becomes

The silence of our Temple. Gentleness,
Low words best chime with this solemnity.

Enter a procession of Priestesses and Chil-
dren bearing garlands and golden goblets,
and strewing flowers.

Enter SYNORIX (as King, with gold laurel-
wreath crown and purple robes), followed
by ANTONIUS, PUBLIUS, Noblemen,
Guards, and the Populace.

Camma. Hail, King!

Synorix. Hail, Queen!

The wheel of Fate has roll'd me to the top.
I would that happiness were gold, that I
Might cast my largess of it to the crowd!
I would that every man made feast to-day,
Beneath the shadow of our pines and
planes! ¹³²

For all my truer life begins to-day.

The past is like a travell'd land now sunk

Below the horizon — like a barren shore
That grew salt weeds, but now all drown'd
in love

And glittering at full tide — the bounteous
bays

And havens filling with a blissful sea.

Nor speak I now too mightily, being King

And happy! happiest, lady, in my power

To make you happy.

Camma. Yes, sir.

Synorix. Our Antonius,
Our faithful friend of Rome, tho' Rome
may set ¹⁴²

A free foot where she will, yet of his cour-
tesy

Entreats he may be present at our mar-
riage.

Camma. Let him come — a legion with
him, if he will.

(To Antonius.) Welcome, my lord An-
tonius, to our Temple.

(To Synorix.) You on this side the al-
tar. (To Antonius.) You on that.

Call first upon the Goddess, Synorix.

[All face the Goddess. Priestesses,
Children, Populace, and Guards kneel
— the others remain standing.]

Synorix. O thou that dost inspire the
germ with life,

The child, a thread within the house of
birth, ¹⁵⁰

And give him limbs, then air, and send him
forth

The glory of his father — thou whose breath
Is balmy wind to robe our hills with grass,

And kindle all our vales with myrtle-blos-
som,

And roll the golden oceans of our grain,
And sway the long grape-bunches of our
vines,

And fill all hearts with fatness and the lust
Of plenty — make me happy in my mar-
riage!

Chorus (chanting). Artemis, Artemis,
hear him, Ionian Artemis!

Camma. O thou that slayest the babe
within the womb ¹⁶⁰

Or in the being born, or after slayest him
As boy or man, great Goddess, whose storm-
voice

Unsockets the strong oak, and rears his root
Beyond his head, and strows our fruits, and
lays

Our golden grain, and runs to sea and
makes it

Foam over all the fleeted wealth of kings
And peoples, hear!

Whose arrow is the plague — whose quick
flash splits

The mid-sea mast, and rifts the tower to
the rock,

And hurls the victor's column down with
him 170

That crowns it, hear!

Who canstest the safe earth to shudder and
gape,

And gulf and flatten in her closing chasm
Domed cities, hear!

Whose lava-torrents blast and blacken a
province

To a cinder, hear!

Whose winter-cataracts find a realm and
leave it

A waste of rock and ruin, hear! I call
thee

To make my marriage prosper to my wish!

Chorus. Artemis, Artemis, hear her,
Ephesian Artemis! 180

Camma. Artemis, Artemis, hear me,
Galatian Artemis!

I call on our own Goddess in our own Tem-
ple.

Chorus. Artemis, Artemis, hear her,
Galatian Artemis!

[*Thunder. All rise.*

Synorix (aside). Thunder! Ay, ay, the
storm was drawing hither

Across the hills when I was being crown'd.
I wonder if I look as pale as she?

Camma. Art thou — still bent — on
marrying?

Synorix. Surely — yet
These are strange words to speak to Ar-
temis.

Camma. Words are not always what
they seem, my King.

I will be faithful to thee till thou die. 190

Synorix. I thank thee, Camma, — I
thank thee.

Camma (turning to Antonius). Antonius,
Much graced are we that our Queen Rome
in you

Deigns to look in upon our barbarisms.

*Turns, goes up steps to altar before the
Goddess. Takes a cup from off the
altar. Holds it towards Antonius.
Antonius goes up to the foot of the
steps opposite to Synorix.*

You see this cup, my lord. [*Gives it to him.*
Antonius. Most curious!

The many-breasted mother Artemis
Emboss'd upon it.

Camma. It is old, I know not
How many hundred years. Give it me
again.

It is the cup belonging our own Temple.

[*Puts it back on altar, and takes up the
cup of Act I. Showing it to Antonius.*

Here is another sacred to the Goddess,
The gift of Synorix; and the Goddess, being
For this most grateful, wills, thro' me her
priestess, 201

In honor of his gift and of our marriage,
That Synorix should drink from his own
cup.

Synorix. I thank thee, Camma, — I thank
thee.

Camma. For — my lord —

It is our ancient custom in Galatia
That ere two souls be knit for life and death,
They two should drink together from one
cup,

In symbol of their married unity,
Making libation to the Goddess. Bring me
The costly wines we use in marriages. 210

[*They bring in a large jar of wine.
Camma pours wine into cup.*

(*To Synorix.*) See here, I fill it. (*To
Antonius.*) Will you drink, my
lord?

Antonius. I? Why should I? I am
not to be married.

Camma. But that might bring a Roman
blessing on us.

Antonius (refusing cup). Thy pardon,
priestess!

Camma. Thou art in the right.
This blessing is for Synorix and for me.
See, first I make libation to the Goddess,

[*Makes libation.*

And now I drink.

[*Drinks and fills the cup again.*

Thy turn, Galatian King.
Drink and drink deep — our marriage will
be fruitful.

Drink and drink deep, and thou wilt make
me happy.

[*Synorix goes up to her. She hands him
the cup. He drinks.*

Synorix. There, Camma! I have al-
most drain'd the cup — 220

A few drops left.

Camma. Libation to the Goddess.
[*He throws the remaining drops on the
altar and gives Camma the cup.*

Camma (placing the cup on the altar).

Why, then the Goddess hears.

[Comes down and forward to tripod.
Antonius follows.

Antonius,

Where wast thou on that morning when I came

To plead to thee for Sinnatus's life,
Beside this temple half a year ago?

Antonius. I never heard of this request of thine.

Synorix (coming forward hastily to foot of tripod steps). I sought him, and I could not find him. Pray you,

Go on with the marriage rites.

Camma. *Antonius* —

'*Camma*!' Who spake?

Antonius. Not I.

Phæbe. Nor any here.

Camma. I am all but sure that some one spake. *Antonius*,

If you had found him plotting against Rome,

Would you have tortured Sinnatus to death?

Antonius. No thought was mine of torture or of death,

But had I found him plotting, I had counsel'd him

To rest from vain resistance. Rome is fated

To rule the world. Then, if he had not listen'd,

I might have sent him prisoner to Rome.

Synorix. Why do you palter with the ceremony?

Go on with the marriage rites.

Camma. They are finish'd.

Synorix. How!

Camma. Thou hast drunk deep enough to make me happy.

Dost thou not feel the love I bear to thee
Glow thro' thy veins?

Synorix. The love I bear to thee
Glow thro' my veins since first I look'd on thee.

But wherefore slur the perfect ceremony?
The sovereign of Galatia weds his Queen.
Let all be done to the fullest in the sight
Of all the Gods.

Nay, rather than so clip
The flowery robe of Hymen, we would add
Some golden fringe of gorgeousness beyond

Old use, to make the day memorial, when

Synorix, first King, *Camma*, first Queen of the Realm,

Drew here the richest lot from Fate, to live
And die together.

This pain — what is it? — again?
I had a touch of this last year — in — Rome.

Yes, yes. (*To Antonius*.) Your arm — a moment — it will pass.

I reel beneath the weight of utter joy —
This all too happy day, crown — queen at once.

O all ye Gods — Jupiter! — Jupiter!
[*Falls backward*.]

Camma. Dost thou cry out upon the Gods of Rome?

Thou art Galatian-horn. Our Artemis too
Has vanquish'd their Diana.

Synorix (on the ground). I am poison'd.
She — close the Temple door. Let her not fly.

Camma (leaning on tripod). Have I not drunk of the same cup with thee?

Synorix. Ay, by the Gods of Rome and all the world,

She too — she too — the bride! the Queen!
and I —

Monstrous! I that loved her.

Camma. I loved him.

Synorix. O murderous mad-woman! I pray you lift me

And make me walk awhile. I have heard these poisons

May be walk'd down.

[*Antonius* and *Publius* raise him up.

My feet are tons of lead,
They will break in the earth — I am sinking — hold me —

Let me alone.

[*They leave him; he sinks down on ground*.]

Too late — thought myself wise —
A woman's dupe! *Antonius*, tell the Senate
I have been most true to Rome — would have been true

To her — if — [*Falls as if dead*.]

Camma (coming and leaning over him).
So falls the throne of an hour.

Synorix (half rising). Throne? is it thou? the Fates are throned, not we —

Not guilty of ourselves — thy doom and mine —

Thou — coming my way too — *Camma* — good-night. [Dies.]

Camma (*upheld by weeping Priestesses*).
 Thy way? poor worm, crawl down
 thine own black hole
 To the lowest hell. Antonius, is *he* there?
 I meant thee to have follow'd — better
 thus. 280

Nay, if my people must be thralls of Rome,
 He is gentle, tho' a Roman.
 [*Sinks back into the arms of the Priestesses.*]

Antonius. Thou art one
 With thine own people, and though a Roman I
 Forgive thee, *Camma*.
Camma (*raising herself*). 'CAMMA!' —
 why, there again
 I am most sure that some one call'd. O
 women,
 Ye will have Roman masters. I am
 glad
 I shall not see it. Did not some old Greek
 Say death was the chief good? He had
 my fate for it,

Poison'd. (*Sinks back again.*) Have I the
 crown on? I will go
 To meet him, crown'd! crown'd victor of
 my will — 290
 On my last voyage — but the wind has
 fail'd —
 Growing dark too — but light enough to
 row.
 Row to the Blessed Isles! the Blessed
 Isles! —
Sinnatus!
 Why comes he not to meet me? It is the
 crown
 Offends him — and my hands are too
 sleepy
 To lift it off (*Phoebe takes the crown off*).
 Who touched me then? I thank
 you. [*Rises, with outspread arms.*]
 There — league on league of ever-shining
 shore
 Beneath an ever-rising sun — I see him —
 'Camma, Camma!' *Sinnatus, Sinnatus!*
[Dies.]

THE PROMISE OF MAY

'A surface man of theories, true to none.'

This play was produced at the Globe Theatre in London in November, 1882; and, though generally condemned by the critics, it had a run of five weeks. This was partially due to an incident of a somewhat sensational character which occurred at one of the earlier representations. At the beginning of the opening scene the Marquis of Queensberry rose from his seat in the stalls, and loudly protested against what he regarded as Tennyson's attack upon freethinkers in the character of Edgar. After some delay the performance was allowed to proceed, but at its close the Marquis rose again, declaring himself a freethinker, and denouncing the play as a travesty of the sect. The next day he explained in a morning paper that his indignation had been particularly excited by Edgar's comments on marriage. He added: —

'I am a secularist and a freethinker, and, though I repudiate it, a so-called atheist, and, as President of the British Secular Union, I protest against Mr. Tennyson's abominable caricature of an individual whom [*sic*], I presume, he would have us believe represents some body of people which, thanks for the good of humanity, most certainly does not exist among freethinkers.'

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FARMER DOBSON.	
MR. PHILIP EDGAR (<i>afterwards MR. HAROLD</i>).	
FARMER STEER (<i>DORA and EVA's Father</i>).	
MR. WILSON (<i>a Schoolmaster</i>).	
HIGGINS	} <i>Farm Laborers.</i>
JAMES	
DAN SMITH	
JACKSON	
ALLEN	
DORA STEER.	
EVA STEER.	
SALLY ALLEN	} <i>Farm Servants.</i>
MILLY	
Farm Servants, Laborers, etc.	

THE PROMISE OF MAY

ACT I

SCENE. — BEFORE FARMHOUSE

Farming Men and Women. Farming Men carrying forms, etc., Women carrying baskets of knives and forks, etc.

First Farming Man. Be thou a-gawin' to the long barn?

Second Farming Man. Ay, to be sewer! Be thou?

First Farming Man. Why, o' coorse, fur it be the owd man's birthdaäy. He be heightly this very daäy, and 'e telled all on us to be i' the long barn by one o'clock, fur he 'll gie us a big dinner, and haäfe th' parish 'll be theer, an' Miss Dora, an' Miss Eva, an' all!

Second Farming Man. Miss Dora be coomed back, then?

First Farming Man. Ay, haäfe an hour ago. She be in theer now. (*Pointing to house.*) Owd Steer wur afeärd she would n't be back i' time to keep his birthdaäy, and he wur in a tew about it all the murnin'; and he sent me wi' the gig to Littlechester to fetch 'er; and 'er an' the owd man they fell a kissin' o' one another like two sweet-arts i' the porch as soon as he clapt eyes of 'er.

Second Farming Man. Foälks says he likes Miss Eva the best.

First Farming Man. Naäy, I knaws nowt o' what foälks says, an' I caäres nowt neither. Foälks does n't hallus knaw thes-sens; but sewer I be, they be two o' the purtiest gels ye can see of a summer murnin'.

Second Farming Man. Beänt Miss Eva gone off a bit of 'er good looks o' laäte?

First Farming Man. Noä, not a bit.

Second Farming Man. Why, coöm awaäy, then, to the long barn. [*Exeunt.*]

DORA looks out of window. Enter DOBSON.

DORA (*singing*).

The town lay still in the low sunlight,
The hen cluckt late by the white farm gate,
The maid to her dairy came in from the cow,
The stock-dove coo'd at the fall of night,
The blossom had open'd on every bough;

O, joy for the promise of May, of May,
O, joy for the promise of May!

(*Nodding at Dobson.*) I'm coming down, Mr. Dobson. I have n't seen Eva yet. Is she anywhere in the garden?

Dobson. Noä, Miss. I ha'n't seed 'er neither.

DORA (*enters singing*).

But a red fire woke in the heart of the town,
And a fox from the glen ran away with the hen,

And a cat to the cream, and a rat to the cheese;

And the stock-dove coo'd, till a kite dropt down,

And a salt wind burnt the blossoming trees;
O, grief for the promise of May, of May,
O, grief for the promise of May!

I don't know why I sing that song; I don't love it.

Dobson. Blessings on your pretty voice, Miss Dora! Wheer did they larn ye that?

Dora. In Cumberland, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. An' how did ye leave the owd uncle i' Coomberland?

Dora. Getting better, Mr. Dobson. But he 'll never be the same man again.

Dobson. An' how d' ye find the owd man 'ere?

Dora. As well as ever. I came back to keep his birthday.

Dobson. Well, I be coomed to keep his birthdaäy an' all. The owd man be heightly to-daäy, beänt he?

Dora. Yes, Mr. Dobson. And the day's bright like a friend, but the wind east like an enemy. Help me to move this bench for him into the sun. (*They move bench.*) No, not that way — here, under the apple-tree. Thank you. Look how full of rosy blossom it is. [*Pointing to apple-tree.*]

Dobson. Theer be redder blossoms nor them, Miss Dora.

Dora. Where do they blow, Mr. Dobson?

Dobson. Under your eyes, Miss Dora.

Dora. Do they?

Dobson. And your eyes be as blue as —
Dora. What, Mr. Dobson? A butcher's frock?

Dobson. Noä, Miss Dora; as blue as —

Dora. Bluebell, harebell, speedwell, blue-bottle, succory, forget-me-not?

Dobson. Noä, Miss Dora; as blue as —
Dora. The sky? or the sea on a blue day?

Dobson. Naäy then. I meän'd they be as blue as violets.

Dora. Are they?

Dobson. Theer ye goäs ageän, Miss, niver believing owt I says to ye — hallus a-fobbing ma off, tho' ye knaws I love ye. I warrants ye'll think moor o' this young Squire Edgar as ha' coomed among us — the Lord knaws how — ye'll think more on 'is little finger than hall my hand at the haltar.

Dora. Perhaps, Master Dobson. I can't tell, for I have never seen him. But my sister wrote that he was mighty pleasant, and had no pride in him. 109

Dobson. He'll be arter you now, Miss Dora.

Dora. Will he? How can I tell?

Dobson. He's been arter Miss Eva, haän't he?

Dora. Not that I know.

Dobson. Did n't I spy 'em a-sitting i' the woodbine harbor together?

Dora. What of that? Eva told me that he was taking her likeness. He's an artist. 120

Dobson. What's a hartist? I doänt believe he's iver a 'eart under his waist-coat. And I tells ye what, Miss Dora: he's no respect for the Queen, or the parson, or the justice o' peace, or owt. I ha' heard 'im a-gawin' on 'ud make your 'air — God bless it! — stan' on end. And wuss nor that. When theer wur a meeting o' farmers at Littlechester t' other daäy, and they was all a-crying out at the bad times, he cooms up, and he calls out among our oän men, 'The land belongs to the people!' 132

Dora. And what did you say to that?

Dobson. Well, I says, s'pose my pig's the land, and you says it belongs to the parish, and theer be a thousand i' the parish, taäkin' in the women and childer; and s'pose I kills my pig, and gi'es it among 'em, why there wud n't be a dinner for nawbody, and I should ha' lost the pig. 140

Dora. And what did he say to that?

Dobson. Nowt — what could he saäy? But I taäkes 'im fur a bad lot and a burn fool, and I haät'es the very sight on him.

Dora (looking at Dobson). Master Dobson, you are a comely man to look at.

Dobson. I thank you for that, Miss Dora, onyhow.

Dora. Ay, but you turn right ngly when you're in an ill temper; and I promise you that if you forget yourself in your behavior to this gentleman, my father's friend, I will never change word with you again. 154

Enter FARMING MAN from barn.

Farming Man. Miss, the farming men 'ull hev their dinner i' the long barn, and the master 'ud be straänge an' pleased if you'd step in fust; and see that all be right and reg'lar fur 'em afoor he coöm.

[Exit.]

Dora. I go. Master Dobson, did you hear what I said? 161

Dobson. Yeäs, yeäs! I'll not meddle wi' 'im if he doänt meddle wi' mcä. (*Exit Dora.*) 'Coomly,' says she. I niver thowt o' mysen i' that waäy; but if she'd taäke to ma i' that waäy, or ony waäy, I'd slaäve out my life fur 'er. 'Coomly to look at,' says she — but she said it spiteful-like. To look at — yeäs, 'coomly;' and she may n't be so fur out theer. But if that be nowt to she, then it be nowt to me. (*Looking off stage.*) Schoolmaster! Why if Steer han't haxed schoolmaster to dinner, thaw 'e knaws I was hallus ageän heving schoolmaster i' the parish! fur him as be handy wi' a boök beänt but haäfe a hand at a pitchfork.

Enter WILSON.

Well, Wilson. I seed that one cow o' thine i' the pinfold ageän as I wur a-coom-in' 'ere. 180

Wilson. Very likely, Mr. Dobson. She will break fence. I can't keep her in order.

Dobson. An' if tha can't keep thy one cow i' horder, how can tha keep all thy scholards i' horder? But let that goä by. What dost a know o' this Mr. Hedgar as be a-lodgin' wi' ye? I coom'd upon 'im t' other daäy lookin' at the coountry, then a-scrattin upon a bit o' paäper, then a-lookin' ageän; and I taäked 'im fur some sort of a land-surveyor — but a beänt. 192

Wilson. He's a Somersetshire man, and a very civil-spoken gentleman.

Dobson. Gentleman! What be he a-doing here ten mile an' moor fro' a raäil? We

laäys out o' the waäy fur gentlefoalk alto-
gither — leästwaäys they niver cooms 'ere
but fur the trout i' our beck, fur they be
knew'd as far as Littlechester. But 'e
doänt fish neither. 201

Wilson. Well, it's no sin in a gentleman
not to fish.

Dobson. Noä, but I haätes 'im.

Wilson. Better step out of his road,
then, for he 's walking to us, and with a
book in his hand.

Dobson. An' I haätes booöks an' all, fur
they puts foalk off the owd waäys.

*Enter EDGAR, reading — not seeing DOBSON
and WILSON.*

Edgar. This author, with his charm of
simple style 210

And close dialectic, all but proving man
An automatic series of sensations,
Has often numb'd me into apathy
Against the unpleasant jolts of this rough
road

That breaks off short into the abysses —
made me

A quietist taking all things easily.

Dobson (aside). There mun be summut
wring theer, Wilson, fur I doänt under-
stan' it.

Wilson (aside). Nor I either, Mr. Dob-
son. 221

Dobson (scornfully). An' thou doänt un-
derstan' it neither — and thou schoolmaster
an' all!

Edgar. What can a man, then, live for
but sensations,

Pleasant ones? men of old would undergo
Unpleasant for the sake of pleasant ones
Hereafter, like the Moslem beauties wait-
ing

To clasp their lovers by the golden gates.
For me, whose cheerless Houris after death
Are Night and Silence, pleasant ones —
the while — 231

If possible, here! to crop the flower and
pass.

Dobson. Well, I never 'eärd the likes o'
that afoor.

Wilson (aside). But I have, Mr. Dob-
son. It's the old Scripture text, 'Let us
eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' I'm
sorry for it, for, tho' he never comes to
church, I thought better of him.

Edgar. 'What are we,' says the blind
old man in Lear? 240

'As flies to the gods; they kill us for their
sport.'

Dobson (aside). Then the owd man i'
Lear should be shaämed of hissen, but noän
o' the parishes goäs by that naäme 'ere-
abouts.

Edgar. The gods! but they, the shad-
ows of ourselves,
Have past for ever. It is Nature kills,
And not for her sport either. She knows
nothing.

Man only knows, the worse for him! for
why 249

Cannot he take his pastime like the flies?
And if my pleasure breed another's pain,
Well — is not that the course of Nature
too,

From the dim dawn of being — her main
law

Whereby she grows in beauty — that her
flies

Must massacre each other? this poor Na-
ture!

Dobson. Natur! Natur! Well, it be i'
my natur to knock 'im o' the 'eärd now; but
I weänt.

Edgar. A quietist taking all things eas-
ily — why —

Have I been dipping into this again 260
To steel myself against the leaving her?

[Closes book, seeing Wilson.

Good day!

Wilson. Good day, sir.

[Dobson looks hard at Edgar.

Edgar (to Dobson). Have I the pleasure,
friend, of knowing you?

Dobson. Dobson.

Edgar. Good day, then, Dobson. [Exit.

Dobson. 'Good daäy then, Dobson!'
Civil-spoken i'deed! Why, Wilson, tha
'eärd 'im thysen — the feller could n't find
a Mister in his mouth fur me, as farms five
hoonderd haätere. 271

Wilson. You never find one for me, Mr.
Dobson.

Dobson. Noä, fur thou be nobbut school-
master; but I taäkes 'im for a Lunnun
swindler, and a burn fool.

Wilson. He can hardly be both, and he
pays me regular every Saturday.

Dobson. Yeäs; but I haätes 'im.

Enter STEER, FARM MEN and WOMEN.

Steer (goes and sits under apple-tree). Hev'
ony o' ye seen Eva? 280

Dobson. Noä, Mr. Steer.

Steer. Well, I reckons they 'll hev' a fine cider-crop to-year if the blossom 'owds. Good murnin', neighbors, and the säame to you, my men. I taäkes it kindly of all o' you that you be coomed — what 's the newspäaper word, Wilson? — celebrate — to celebrate my birthdaäy i' this fashion. Niver man 'ed better friends, and I will säay niver master 'ed better men; fur thaw I may ha' fallen out wi' ye sometimes, the fault, mebbe, wur as much mine as yours; and, thaw I says it mysen, niver men 'ed a better master — and I knaws what men be, and what masters be, fur I wur nobbnt a laäborer, and now I be a landlord — burn a plowman, and now, as far as moncy goäs, I be a gentleman, thaw I beänt naw scholar, fur I 'ednt naw time to maäke mysen a scholar while I wur maäkin' mysen a gentleman, but I ha' taäen good care to turn out boäth my darters right down fine laädies.

Dobson. An' soä they be.

First Farming Man. Soä they be! soä they be!

Second Farming Man. The Lord bless boäth on 'em!

Third Farming Man. An' the säame to you, master! 310

Fourth Farming Man. And long life to boäth on 'em! An' the säame to you, Master Steer, likewise!

Steer. Thank ye!

Enter EVA.

Wheer 'asta been?

Eva (timidly). Many happy returns of the day, father.

Steer. They can't be many, my dear, but I 'oäpes they 'll be 'appy.

Dobson. Why, tha looks haäle anew to last to a hoonderd. 321

Steer. An' why should n't I last to a hoonderd? Haäle! why should n't I be haäle? fur thaw I be heighty this very daäy, I niver 'es sa much as one pin's prick of paäin; an' I can taäke my glass along wi' the youngest, fur I niver touched a drop of owt till my oän wedding-daäy, an' then I wur turned huppads o' sixty. Why should n't I be haäle? I ha' plowed the ten-aäcre — it be mine now — afoor ony o' ye wur burn — ye all knaws the ten-aäcre — I mun ha' plowed it moor nor a hoon-

derd times; hallus hup at sunrise, and I 'd drive the plow straäit as a line right i' the faäce o' the sun, then back ageän, a-follering my oän shadder — then hup ageän i' the faäce o' the sun. Eh! how the sun 'ud shine, and the larks 'ud sing i' them daäys, and the smell o' the mou'd an' all. Eh! if I could ha' gone on wi' the plowin' nobbnt the smell o' the mou'd 'ud ha' maäde ma live as long as Jerusalem.

Eva. Methuselah, father.

Steer. Ay, lass, but when thou be as owd as me thou 'll put one word fur another as I does.

Dobson. But, Steer, thaw thou be haäle anew I seed tha a-limpin' up just now wi' the roomatics i' the knee. 350

Steer. Roomatics! Noä; I laämc't my knee last night running arter a thief. Beänt there house-breakers down i' Littlechester, Dobson — doänt ye hear of ony?

Dobson. Ay, that there be. Immanuel Goldsmith's was broke into o' Monday night, and ower a hoonderd pounds worth o' rings stolen.

Steer. So I thowt, and I heard the winder — that 's the winder at the end o' the passage, that goäs by thy chaumber. (*Turning to Eva.*) Why, lass, what maäkes tha sa red? Did 'e git into thy chanmber?

Eva. Father!

Steer. Well, I runned arter thief i' the dark, and fell ageän coalscuttle and my kneeä gev waäy or I 'd ha' cotched 'im, but afoor I coomed up he got thruff the winder ageän. 370

Eva. Got thro' the window again?

Steer. Ay, but he left the mark of 'is foot i' the flower-bed; now theer be noän o' my men, thinks I to mysen, 'nd ha' done it 'cep' it were Dan Smith, fur I cotched 'im once a-stealin' coäls, an' I sent fur 'im, an' I measured his foot wi' the mark i' the bed, but it would n't fit — seeäms to me the mark wur maäde by a Lunnun boot. (*Looks at Eva.*) Why, now, what maäkes tha sa white? 381

Eva. Fright, father!

Steer. Maäke thysen eäsy. I 'll hev the winder naäiled up, and put Towser under it.

Eva (clasping her hands). No, no, father! Towser 'll tear him all to pieces.

Steer. Let him keep awaäy, then; but

coom, coom! let's be gawin. They ha' broached a barrel of aäle i' the long barn, and the fiddler be theer, and the lads and lassies 'ull hev a dance. 392

Eva (aside). Dance! small heart have I to dance. I should seem to be dancing upon a grave.

Steer. Wheer be Mr. Edgar? about the premises?

Dobson. Hallus about the premises!

Steer. So much the better, so much the better. I likes 'im, and Eva likes 'im. Eva can do owt wi' 'im; look for 'im, Eva, and bring 'im to the barn. He 'ant naw pride in 'im, and we'll git 'im to speechify for us arter dinner.

Eva. Yes, father! [Exit.]

Steer. Coom along then, all the rest o' ye! Church-warden be a coomin', thaw me and 'im we niver 'grees about the tithe; and parson mebbe, thaw he niver mended that gap i' the glebe fence as I telled 'im; and blacksmith, thaw he niver shoes a herse to my likings; and baäker, thaw I sticks to hoäm-maäde — but all on 'em welcome, all ou 'em welcome; and I've hed the long barn cleared out of all the machines, and the sacks, and the taäters, and the mangles, and theer'll be room anew for all o' ye. Foller me. 418

All. Yeäs, yeäs! Three cheers for Mr. Steer. [All exeunt except Dobson into barn.]

Enter EDGAR.

Dobson (who is going, turns). Squire! — f so he you be a squire.

Edgar. Dobbins, I think.

Dobson. Dobbins, you thinks; and I thinks ye weärs a Lunnun boot.

Edgar. Well?

Dobson. And I thinks I'd like to taäke the measure o' your foot.

Edgar. Ay, if you'd like to measure your own length upon the grass. 430

Dobson. Coom, coom, that's a good un. Why, I could throw four o' ye; but I promised one of the Misses I would n't meddle wi' ye, and I weänt. [Exit into barn.]

Edgar. Jealous of me with Eva! Is it so?

Well, tho' I grudge the pretty jewel, that I Have worn, to such a clod, yet that might be

The best way out of it, if the child could keep

Her counsel. I am sure I wish her happy. But I must free myself from this entanglement. 440

I have all my life before me — so has she —

Give her a month or two, and her affections

Will flower toward the light in some new face.

Still I am half-afraid to meet her now.

She will urge marriage on me. I hate tears.

Marriage is but an old tradition. I hate Traditions, ever since my narrow father, After my frolic with his tenant's girl, Made younger elder son, violated the whole Tradition of our land, and left his heir, 450 Born, happily, with some sense of art, to live

By brush and pencil. By and by, when Thought

Comes down among the crowd, and man perceives that

The lost gleam of an after-life but leaves him

A beast of prey in the dark, why then the crowd

May wreak my wrongs upon my wrongers. Marriage!

That fine, fat, hook-nosed uncle of mine, old Harold,

Who leaves me all his land at Littlechester,

He, too, would oust me from his will, if I Made such a marriage. And marriage in

itself — 460

The storm is hard at hand will sweep away Thrones, churches, ranks, traditions, customs, marriage

One of the feeblest! Then the man, the woman,

Following their best affinities, will each Bid their old bond farewell with smiles,

not tears;

Good wishes, not reproaches; with no fear Of the world's gossiping clamor, and no need

Of veiling their desires.

Conventionalism,

Who shrieks by day at what she does by night,

Would call this vice; but one time's vice may be 470

The virtue of another; and Vice and Virtue

Are but two masks of self; and what here-
after
Shall mark out Vice from Virtue in the
gulf
Of never-dawning darkness ?

Enter EVA.

My sweet Eva,
Where have you lain in ambush all the
morning ?
They say your sister, Dora, has return'd,
And that should make you happy, if you
love her !
But you look troubled.

Eva. O, I love her so,
I was afraid of her, and I hid myself. ⁴⁷⁹
We never kept a secret from each other;
She would have seen at once into my
trouble,
And ask'd me what I could not answer. O,
Philip,
Father heard you last night. Our savage
mastiff,
That all but kill'd the beggar, will be
placed
Beneath the window, Philip.

Edgar. Savage, is he ?
What matters ? Come, give me your hand
and kiss me

This beautiful May-morning.

Eva. The most beautiful
May we have had for many years !

Edgar. And here
Is the most beautiful morning of this May.
Nay, you must smile upon me ! There —
you make ⁴⁹⁰

The May and morning still more beautiful,
You, the most beautiful blossom of the
May.

Eva. Dear Philip, all the world is beau-
tiful

If we were happy, and could chime in with
it.

Edgar. True; for the senses, love, are
for the world;

That for the senses.

Eva. Yes.
Edgar. And when the man,
The child of evolution, flings aside
His swaddling-bands, the morals of the
tribe,

He, following his own instincts as his God,
Will enter on the larger golden age, ⁵⁰⁰
No pleasure then taboo'd; for when the
tide

Of full democracy has overwhelm'd
This Old World, from that flood will rise
the New,

Like the Love-goddess, with no bridal veil,
Ring, trinket of the Church, but naked Na-
ture

In all her loveliness.

Eva. What are you saying ?
Edgar. That, if we did not strain to
make ourselves

Better and higher than Nature, we might
be

As happy as the bees there at their honey
In these sweet blossoms.

Eva. Yes; how sweet they smell !
Edgar. There ! let me break some off
for you. [*Breaking branch off.*]

Eva. My thanks.
But, look, how wasteful of the blossom you
are ! ⁵¹²

One, two, three, four, five, six — you have
robb'd poor father

Of ten good apples. O, I forgot to tell you
He wishes you to dine along with us,
And speak for him after — you that are so
clever !

Edgar. I grieve I cannot; but, indeed —
Eva. What is it ?

Edgar. Well, business. I must leave
you, love, to-day.

Eva. Leave me, to-day ! And when will
you return ?

Edgar. I cannot tell precisely; but —
Eva. But what ?

Edgar. I trust, my dear, we shall be
always friends. ⁵²¹

Eva. After all that has gone between us
— friends !

What, only friends ? [*Drops branch.*]

Edgar. All that has gone between us
Should surely make us friends.

Eva. But keep us lovers.

Edgar. Child, do you love me now ?

Eva. Yes, now and ever.

Edgar. Then you should wish us both to
love for ever.

But, if you will bind love to one for ever,
Altho' at first he take his bonds for flowers,
As years go on, he feels them press upon
him,

Begins to flutter in them, and at last ⁵³⁰
Breaks thro' them, and so flies away for
ever;

While, had you left him free use of his
wings,

Who knows that he had ever dream'd of flying ?

Eva. But all that sounds so wicked and so strange;

'Till death us part' — those are the only words,

The true ones — nay, and those not true enough,

For they that love do not believe that death

Will part them. Why do you jest with me, and try

To fright me ? Tho' you are a gentleman,

I but a farmer's daughter — 539

Edgar. Tut ! you talk Old feudalism. When the great Democracy

Makes a new world —

Eva. And if you be not jesting, Neither the old world, nor the new, nor father,

Sister, nor you, shall ever see me more.

Edgar (moved). Then — (*aside*) Shall I say it ? — (*aloud*) fly with me to-day.

Eva. No ! Philip, Philip, if you do not marry me,

I shall go mad for utter shame and die.

Edgar. Then, if we needs must be conventional,

When shall your parish-parson bawl our banns 549

Before your gaping clowns ?

Eva. Not in our church — I think I scarce could hold my head up there.

Is there no other way ?

Edgar. Yes, if you cared To fee an over-opulent superstition,

Then they would grant you what they call a license

To marry. Do you wish it ?

Eva. Do I wish it ?

Edgar. In London.

Eva. You will write to me ?

Edgar. I will.

Eva. And I will fly to you thro' the night, the storm —

Yes, tho' the fire should run along the ground,

As once it did in Egypt. O, you see, 559

I was just out of school, I had no mother —

My sister far away — and you, a gentleman,

Told me to trust you — yes, in every-thing —

That was the only true love; and I trusted —

O, yes, indeed, I would have died for you.

How could you — O, how could you ? — nay, how could I ?

But now you will set all right again, and I Shall not be made the laughter of the vil-
lage,

And poor old father not die miserable.

DORA (singing in the distance).

O, joy for the promise of May, of May,
O, joy for the promise of May ! 570

Edgar. Speak not so loudly; that must be your sister.

You never told her, then, of what has past Between us.

Eva. Never !

Edgar. Do not till I bid you.

Eva. No, Philip, no. [*Turns away.*]

Edgar (moved). How gracefully there she stands

Weeping — the little Niobe ! What ! we prize

The statue or the picture all the more When we have made them ours ! Is she less lovable,

Less lovely, being wholly mine ? To stay —

Follow my art among these quiet fields, Live with these honest folk —

and play the fool ! No ! she that gave herself to me so easily Will yield herself as easily to another. 582

Eva. Did you speak, Philip ?

Edgar. Nothing more, farewell. [*They embrace.*]

DORA (coming nearer).

O, grief for the promise of May, of May,
O, grief for the promise of May !

Edgar (still embracing her). Keep up your heart until we meet again.

Eva. If that should break before we meet again ?

Edgar. Break ! nay, but call for Philip when you will,

And he returns.

Eva. Heaven hears you, Philip Edgar !

Edgar (moved). And he would hear you even from the grave. 590

Heaven curse him if he come not at your call ! [*Exit.*]

Enter DORA.

Dora. Well, Eva!

Eva. O, Dora, Dora, how long you have been away from home! O, how often I have wished for you! It seemed to me that we were parted for ever.

Dora. For ever, you foolish child! What's come over you? We parted like the brook yonder about the alder island, to come together again in a moment and to go on together again, till one of us be married. But where is this Mr. Edgar whom you praised so in your first letters? You have n't even mentioned him in your last?

Eva. He has gone to London.

Dora. Ay, child; and you look thin and pale. Is it for his absence? Have you fancied yourself in love with him? That's all nonsense, you know, such a baby as you are. But you shall tell me all about it. ⁶¹⁰

Eva. Not now — presently. Yes, I have been in trouble, but I am happy — I think, quite happy now.

Dora (*taking Eva's hand*). Come, then, and make them happy in the long barn, for father is in his glory, and there is a piece of beef like a house-side, and a plum-pudding as big as the round hay-stack. But see, they are coming out for the dance already. Well, my child, let us join them.

Enter all from barn, laughing. EVA sits reluctantly under apple-tree. STEER enters, smoking, sits by EVA.

Dance.

ACT II

Five years have elapsed between Acts I. and II.

SCENE. — A MEADOW. ON ONE SIDE A PATHWAY GOING OVER A RUSTIC BRIDGE. AT BACK THE FARMHOUSE AMONG TREES. IN THE DISTANCE A CHURCH SPIRE

DOBSON and DORA.

Dobson. So the owd uncle i' Coomberland be deäd, Miss Dora, beänt he?

Dora. Yes, Mr. Dobson, I've been attending on his death-bed and his burial.

Dobson. It be five year sin' ye went afoor to him, and it seems to me nobbut t'other day. Hes n't he left ye nowt?

Dora. No, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. But he were mighty fond o' ye, warn't he?

Dora. Fonder of poor Eva — like everybody else. ¹²

Dobson (*handing Dora basket of roses*). Not like me, Miss Dora; and I ha' browt these roses to ye — I forgits what they calls 'em, but I hallus gi'ed soom on 'em to Miss Eva at this time o' year. Will ya taäke 'em? fur Miss Eva, she set the bush by my dairy winder afoor she went to school at Littlechester — so I allus browt soom on 'em to her; and now she he gone, will ye taäke 'em, Miss Dora?

Dora. I thank you. They tell me that yesterday you mentioned her name too suddenly before my father. See that you do not do so again!

Dobson. Noä; I knaws a deäl better now. I see how the owd man wur vext. ²⁸

Dora. I take them, then, for Eva's sake.

[*Takes basket, places some in her dress.*]

Dobson. Eva's saäke. Yeäs. Poor gell, poor gell! I can't abea'r to think on 'er now, fur I 'd ha' done owt fur 'er mysen; an' ony o' Steer's men, an' ony o' my men 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, an' all the parish 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, fur we was all on us proud on 'er, an' them theer be soom of her oän roses, an' she wur as sweet as ony on 'em — the Lord bless 'er — 'er oän sen; an' weänt ye taäke 'em now, Miss Dora, fur 'er saäke an' fur my saäke an' all? ⁴⁰

Dora. Do you want them back again?

Dobson. Noä, noä! Keep 'em. But I hed a word to saäy to ye.

Dora. Why, Farmer, you should be in the hay-field looking after your men; you could n't have more splendid weather.

Dobson. I be a going theer; but I thowt I'd bring tha them roses fust. The weather's well anew, but the glass be a bit shaäky. S'iver we've led moäst on it. ⁵⁰

Dora. Ay! but you must not be too sudden with it either, as you were last year, when you put it in green, and your stack caught fire.

Dobson. I were insured, Miss, an' I lost nowt by it. But I weänt be too sudden wi' it; and I feel sewer, Miss Dora, that I ha' been noän too sudden wi' you, fur I ha' sarved fer ye well nigh as long as the man sarved for 'is sweet'art i' Scriptur'. Weänt ye gi'e me a kind answer at last? ⁶¹

Dora. I have no thought of marriage, my friend. We have been in such grief these five years, not only on my sister's account, but the ill success of the farm, and the debts, and my father's breaking down, and his blindness. How could I think of leaving him?

Dobson. Eh, but I be well to do; and if ye would nobbut hev me, I would taake the owd blind man to my oån fireside. You should hev him allus wi' ye. 72

Dora. You are generous, but it cannot be. I cannot love you; nay, I think I never can be brought to love any man. It seems to me that I hate men, ever since my sister left us. O, see here. (*Pulls out a letter.*) I wear it next my heart. Poor sister, I had it five years ago. 'Dearest Dora, — I have lost myself, and am lost for ever to you and my poor father. I thought Mr. Edgar the best of men, and he has proved himself the worst. Seek not for me, or you may find me at the bottom of the river. — EVA.'

Dobson. Be that my fault?

Dora. No; but how should I, with this grief still at my heart, take to the milking of your cows, the fattening of your calves, the making of your butter, and the managing of your poultry? 91

Dobson. Naäy, but I hev an owd woman as 'ud see to all that; and you should sit i' your oån parlor quite like a laädy, ye should!

Dora. It cannot be.

Dobson. And plaäy the pianner, if ye liked, all daäy long, like a laädy, ye should an' all.

Dora. It cannot be. 100

Dobson. And I would loove tha moor nor ony gentleman 'ud loove tha.

Dora. No, no; it cannot be.

Dobson. And p'raps ye hears 'at I soom-times taakes a drop too much; but that be all along o' you, Miss, because ye weänt hev me; but, if ye would, I could put all that o' one side eäsy anew.

Dora. Cannot you understand plain words, Mr. Dobson? I tell you, it cannot be. 111

Dobson. Eh, lass! Thy feyther eddicated his darters to marry gentlefoälk, and see what 's coomed on it.

Dora. That is enough, Farmer Dobson. You have shown me that, though fortune

had born you into the estate of a gentleman, you would still have been Farmer Dobson. You had better attend to your hay-field. Good afternoon. [*Exit.*]

Dobson. 'Farmer Dobson!' Well, I be Farmer Dobson; but I thinks Farmer Dobson's dog 'ud ha' know'd better nor to cast her sister's misfortin inter 'er teeth arter she'd been a-reädin' me the letter wi' 'er voice a-shaäkin', and the drop in 'er eye. Theer she goäs! Shall I foller 'er and ax 'er to maäke it up? Noä, not yet. Let 'er cool upon it; I likes 'er all the better fur taäkin' me down, like a laädy, as she be. Farmer Dobson! I be Farmer Dobson, sewer anew; but if iver I cooms upo' Gentleman Hedgar ageän, and doänt laäy my cartwhip athurt 'is shou'ders, why then I beänt Farmer Dobson, but summun else — blaäme't if I beänt!

Enter HAYMAKERS with a load of hay.

The last on it, eh?

First Haymaker. Yeäs.

Dobson. Hoäm wi' it, then.

[*Exit surlily.*]

First Haymaker. Well, it be the last loäd hoäm. 141

Second Haymaker. Yeäs, an' owd Dobson should be glad on it. What maäkes 'im allus sa glum?

Sally Allen. Glum! he be wuss nor glum. He coom'd up to me yisterdaäy i' the haäy-field, when meä and my sweet'art was a-workin' along o' one side wi' one another, and he sent 'im awaäy to t' other end o' the field; and when I axed 'im why, he telled me 'at sweet'arts niver worked well together; and I telled 'im 'at sweet'arts allus worked best together; and then he called me a rude naäme, and I can't abide 'im.

James. Why, lass, doänt tha know he be sweet upo' Dora Steer, and she weänt sa much as look at 'im? And wheniver 'e sees two sweet'arts together like thou and me, Sally, he be fit to bust hissen wi' spites and jalonsies. 161

Sally. Let 'im bust hissen, then, for owt I cares.

First Haymaker. Well, bnt, as I said afoor, it be the last loäd hoäm; do thou and thy sweet'art sing us hoäm to supper — 'The Last Loäd Hoäm.'

All. Ay! 'The Last Loäd Hoäm.'

SONG.

What did ye do, and what did ye saäy,
 Wi' the wild white rose, an' the woodbine sa
 gaäy, ¹⁷⁰
 An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa
 blue —

What did ye saäy, and what did ye do,
 When ye thowt there were nawbody watchin'
 o' you,

And yon an' your Sally was forkin' the haäy,
 At the end of the daäy,
 For the last löad hoäm ?

What did we do, and what did we saäy,
 Wi' the briar sa green, an' the willer sa graäy,
 An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa
 blue —

Do ye think I be gawin' to tell it to you, ¹⁸⁰
 What we mowt saäy, and what we mowt do,
 When me an' my Sally was forkin' the haäy,
 At the end of the daäy,
 For the last löad hoäm ?

But what did ye saäy, and what did ye do,
 Wi' the butterflies out, and the swallers at
 plaäy,
 An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa
 blue ?

Why, coom then, owd feller, I'll tell it to you ;
 For me an' my Sally we sweär'd to be true,
 To be trne to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
 Till the end of the daäy, ¹⁹¹
 And the last löad hoäm.

All. Well sung !

James. Fanny be the naäme i' the song,
 but I swopt it fur *she*. [*Pointing to Sally.*]
Sally. Let ma aloän afoor foälk, wilt
 tha ?

First Haymaker. Ye shall sing that ageän
 to-night, fur owd Dobson 'll gi'e us a bit o'
 supper. ²⁰⁰

Sally. I weänt goä to owd Dobson; he
 wur rude to me i' tha haäy-field, and he 'll
 be rude to me ageän to-night. Owd Steer's
 gotten all his grass down and wants a hand,
 and I'll goä to him.

First Haymaker. Owd Steer gi'es nubbut
 cowl tea to 'is men, and owd Dobson gi'es
 beer.

Sally. But I'd like owd Steer's cowl
 tea better nor Dobson's beer. Good-bye.

[*Going.*]

James. Gi'e us a buss fast, lass. ²¹¹

Sally. I tell'd tha to let ma aloän !

James. Why, was n't thou and me a-bus-
 sin' o' one another t' other side o' the haäy-

cock, when owd Dobson coom'd upo' us ?
 I can't let tha aloän if I would, Sally.

[*Offering to kiss her.*]
Sally. Git along wi' ye, do ! [*Exit.*]
 [*All laugh; exeunt singing.*]

To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
 Till the end o' the daäy,
 An' the last löad hoäm. ²²⁰

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. Not Harold ! 'Philip Edgar,
 Philip Edgar !'

Her phantom call'd me by the name she
 loved.

I told her I should hear her from the
 grave.

Ay ! yonder is her casement. I remember
 Her bright face beaming starlike down
 upon me

Thro' that rich cloud of blossom. Since I
 left her

Here weeping, I have ranged the world,
 and sat

Thro' every sensual course of that full
 feast

That leaves but emptiness.

SONG.

To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy
 To the end o' the daäy, ²³¹
 An' the last löad hoäm.

Harold. Poor Eva ! O my God, if man
 be only

A willy-nilly current of sensations —
 Reaction needs must follow revel — yet —
 Why feel remorse, he, knowing that he
 must have

Moved in the iron grooves of Destiny ?

Remorse then is a part of Destiny,
 Nature a liar, making us feel guilty
 Of her own faults.

My grandfather — of him
 They say, that women —

O, this mortal house,
 Which we are born into, is haunted by ²⁴²
 The ghosts of the dead passions of dead
 men;

And these take flesh again with our own
 flesh,

And bring us to confusion.

He was only
 A poor philosopher who call'd the mind
 Of children a blank page, a *tabula rasa*.

There, there, is written in invisible inks
 'Lust, Prodigality, Covetousness, Craft,
 Cowardice, Murder'—and the heat and
 fire ²⁵⁰
 Of life will bring them out, and black
 enough,
 So the child grow to manhood. Better
 death
 With our first wail than life —

SONG (*further off*).

Till the end o' the daäy,
 An' the last löad hoäm,
 Löad hoäm.

This bridge again! (*Steps on the bridge.*)

How often have I stood

With Eva here! The brook among its
 flowers!

Forget-me-not, meadow-sweet, willow-herb.
 I had some smattering of science then, ²⁶⁰
 Taught her the learned names, anatom-
 ized

The flowers for her — and now I only
 wish

This pool were deep enough, that I might
 plunge

And lose myself for ever.

Enter DAN SMITH (singing).

Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!
 Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä
 Thruf slush an' squad
 When röäds was bäd,

But hallus 'ud stop at the Vine-an'-the-Hop,
 Fur hoäth on 'em knawed as well as mysen
 That beer be as good fur 'erses as men. ²⁷¹

Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!
 Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä.

The beer 's gotten oop into my 'eäd.
 S'iver I mun git along back to the farm,
 fur she tell'd ma to taäke the cart to Little-
 chester.

Enter DORA.

Dora. Half an hour late! why are you
 loitering here? Away with you at once.

[*Exit Dan Smith.*]

(*Seeing Harold on bridge.*)

Some madman, is it,
 Gesticulating there upon the bridge? ²⁸¹
 I am half afraid to pass.

Harold. Sometimes I wonder,
 When man has surely learnt at last that
 all

His old-world faith, the blossom of his
 youth,
 Has faded, falling fruitless — whether then
 All of us, all at once, may not be seized
 With some fierce passion, not so much for
 Death

As against Life! all, all, into the dark —
 No more! — and science now could drug
 and balm us

Back into nescience with as little pain ²⁹⁰
 As it is to fall asleep.

This beggarly life,
 This poor, flat, hedged-in field — no dis-
 tance — this

Hollow Pandora-box,
 With all the pleasures flown, not even Hope
 Left at the bottom!

Superstitious fool,
 What brought me here? To see her grave?
 her ghost?

Her ghost is everyward about me here.

Dora (coming forward). Allow me, sir,
 to pass you.

Harold. Eva!

Dora. Eva!

Harold. What are you? Where do you
 come from?

Dora. From the farm

Here, close at hand.

Harold. Are you — you are — that *Dora*,
 The sister. I have heard of you. The
 likeness ³⁰¹

Is very striking.

Dora. You knew *Eva*, then?

Harold. Yes — I was thinking of her
 when — O, yes,

Many years back, and never since have met
 Her equal for pure innocence of nature,
 And loveliness of feature.

Dora. No, nor I.

Harold. Except, indeed, I have found it
 once again

In your own self.

Dora. You flatter me. Dear *Eva*
 Was always thought the prettier.

Harold. And her charm
 Of voice is also yours; and I was brooding
 Upon a great unhappiness when you spoke.

Dora. Indeed, you seem'd in trouble,
 sir.

Harold. And you
 Seem my good angel who may help me
 from it. ³¹³

Dora (aside). How worn he looks, poor
 man! who is it, I wonder.

How can I help him? (*Aloud.*) Might I ask your name?

Harold. Harold.

Dora. I never heard her mention you.

Harold. I met her first at a farm in Cumberland —

Her uncle's.

Dora. She was there six years ago.

Harold. And if she never mention'd me, perhaps

The painful circumstances which I heard — I will not vex you by repeating them — ³²¹

Only last week at Littlechester, drove me From out her memory. She has disappear'd,

They told me, from the farm — and darker news.

Dora. She has disappear'd, poor darling, from the world —

Left but one dreadful line to say, that we Should find her in the river; and we dragg'd

The Littlechester river all in vain, Have sorrow'd for her all these years in vain.

And my poor father, utterly broken down By losing her — she was his favorite child — ³³¹

Has let his farm, all his affairs, I fear, But for the slender help that I can give, Fall into ruin. Ah! that villain, Edgar, If he should ever show his face among us, Our men and boys would hoot him, stone him, hunt him

With pitchforks off the farm, for all of them

Loved her, and she was worthy of all love.

Harold. They say, we should forgive our enemies.

Dora. Ay, if the wretch were dead I might forgive him; ³⁴⁰

We know not whether he be dead or living.

Harold. What Edgar?

Dora. Philip Edgar of Toft Hall In Somerset. Perhaps you know him?

Harold. Slightly.

(*Aside.*) Ay, for how slightly have I known myself!

Dora. This Edgar, then, is living?

Harold. Living? well — One Philip Edgar of Toft Hall in Somerset

Is lately dead.

Dora. Dead! — is there more than one?

Harold. Nay — now — not one, (*aside*) for I am Philip Harold.

Dora. That one, is he then — dead!

Harold (*aside*). My father's death, Let her believe it mine; this, for the moment, ³⁵⁰

Will leave me a free field.

Dora. Dead! and this world Is brighter for his absence, as that other Is darker for his presence.

Harold. Is not this To speak too pitilessly of the dead?

Dora. My five-years' anger cannot die at once,

Not all at once with death and him. I trust I shall forgive him — by and by — not now. O sir, you seem to have a heart; if you Had seen us that wild morning when we found

Her bed unslept in, storm and shower lashing ³⁶⁰

Her casement, her poor spaniel wailing for her,

That desolate letter, blotted with her tears, Which told us we should never see her more —

Our old nurse crying as if for her own child,

My father stricken with his first paralysis, And then with blindness — had you been one of us

And seen all this, then you would know it is not

So easy to forgive — even the dead.

Harold. But sure am I that of your gentleness

You will forgive him. She you mourn for seem'd ³⁷⁰

A miracle of gentleness — would not blur A moth's wing by the touching; would not crush

The fly that drew her blood; and, were she living,

Would not — if penitent — have denied him *her*

Forgiveness. And perhaps the man himself,

When hearing of that piteous death, has suffer'd

More than we know. But wherefore waste your heart

In looking on a chill and changeless past? Iron will fuse, and marble melt; the past Remains the past. But you are young, and — pardon me — ³⁸⁰

As lovely as your sister. Who can tell
What golden hours, with what full hands,
may be

Waiting you in the distance? Might I
call

Upon your father — I have seen the
world —

And cheer his blindness with a traveller's
tales?

Dora. Call if you will, and when you
will. I cannot

Well answer for my father; but if you
Can tell me anything of our sweet Eva
When in her brighter girlhood, I at least
Will bid you welcome, and will listen to
you. 390

Now I must go.

Harold. But give me first your hand;
I do not dare, like an old friend, to shake it.
I kiss it as a prelude to that privilege
When you shall know me better.

Dora (aside). How beautiful
His manners are, and how unlike the far-
mer's!

You are staying here?

Harold. Yes, at the wayside inn
Close by that alder-island in your brook,
'The Angler's Home.'

Dora. Are you one?

Harold. No, but I
Take some delight in sketching, and the
country 399

Has many charms, altho' the inhabitants
Seem semi-barbarous.

Dora. I am glad it pleases you;
Yet I, born here, not only love the country,
But its inhabitants too; and you, I doubt
not,

Would take to them as kindly, if you
cared

To live some time among them.

Harold. If I did,
Then one at least of its inhabitants
Might have more charm for me than all the
country.

Dora. That one, then, should be grateful
for your preference.

Harold. I cannot tell, tho' standing in
her presence. 409

(*Aside.*) She colors!

Dora. Sir!

Harold. Be not afraid of me,
For these are no conventional flourishes.
I do most earnestly assure you that
Your likeness — [*Shouts and cries without.*

Dora. What was that? my poor blind
father —

Enter FARMING MAN.

Farming Man. Miss Dora, Dan Smith's
cart hes runned ower a laädy i' the holler
laäne, and they ha' ta'en the body up inter
your chaumber, and they be all a-callin'
for ye.

Dora. The body! — Heavens! I come!

Harold. But you are trembling.

Allow me to go with you to the farm. 420

[*Exeunt.*

Enter DOBSON.

Dobson. What feller wur it as 'a' been
a-talkin' fur haäfe an hour wi' my Dora?
(*Looking after him.*) Seeäms I ommost
knaws the back on 'im — drest like a gen-
tleman, too. Damn all gentlemen, says
I! I should ha' thowt they'd hed anew
o' gentlefoalk, as I telled 'er to-daäy when
she fell foul upo' me.

Minds ma o' summun. I could sweär to
that; but that be all one, fur I haätes 'im
afoor I knaws what 'e be. Theer! he
turns round. Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset!
Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset! — Noä —
yeäs — thaw the feller 'a gone and maäde
such a litter of his faäce.

Eh lad, if it be thou, I'll Philip tha!
a-plaäyin' the saäme gaäme wi' my Dora —
I'll Soomerset tha! 438

I'd like to drag 'im thruff the heree-
pond, and she to be a-lookin' at it. I'd
like to leather 'im black and blue, and she
to be a-laughin' at it. I'd like to fell 'im
as deäd as a bullock! (*Clenching his fist.*)

But what 'ud she saäy to that? She
telled me once not to meddle wi' 'im, and
now she be fallen out wi' ma, and I can't
coom at 'er.

It mun be *him*. Noä! Fur she 'd niver
'a' been talkin' haäfe an hour wi' the divil
'at killed her oän sister, or ahe beänt Dora
Steer. 451

Yeäs! Fur she niver knawed 'is faäce
when 'e wur 'ere afoor; but I'll maäke 'er
kna w! I'll maäke 'er knaw!

Enter HAROLD.

Naäy, but I mun git out on 'is waäy now,
or I shall be the death on 'im. [*Exit.*

Harold. How the clown glared at me!
that Dobbins, is it,

With whom I used to jar? but can he
trace me
Thro' five years' absence, and my change of
name,
The tan of Southern summers and the
beard? 460
I may as well avoid him.

Ladylike!

Lilylike in her stateliness and sweetness!
How came she by it? — a daughter of the
fields,

This Dora!

She gave her hand, unask'd, at the farm-
gate;

I almost think she half return'd the pres-
sure

Of mine. What, I that held the orange
blossom

Dark as the yew? but may not those, who
march

Before their age, turn back at times, and
make

Courtesy to custom? and now the stronger
motive, 470

Misnamed free-will — the crowd would call
it conscience —

Moves me — to what? I am dreaming;
for the past

Look'd thro' the present, Eva's eyes thro'
hers —

A spell upon me! Surely I loved Eva
More than I knew! or is it but the past
That brightens in retiring? O, last night
Tired, pacing my new lands at Littleches-
ter,

I dozed upon the bridge, and the black
river

Flow'd thro' my dreams — if dreams they
were. She rose

From the foul flood and pointed toward the
farm, 480

And her cry rang to me across the years,
'I call you, Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!

Come, you will set all right again, and
father

Will not die miserable.' I could make his
age

A comfort to him — so be more at peace
With mine own self. Some of my former
friends

Would find my logic faulty; let them.
Color

Flows thro' my life again, and I have
lighted

On a new pleasure. Anyhow we must 489

Move in the line of least resistance when
The stronger motive rules.

But she hates Edgar.

May not this Dobbins, or some other, spy
Edgar in Harold? Well then, I must
make her

Love Harold first, and then she will for-
give

Edgar for Harold's sake. She said herself
She would forgive him, by and by, not
now —

For her own sake *then*, if not for mine —
not now —

But by and by. 498

Enter DOBSON behind.

Dobson. By and by — eh, lad, dosta know
this paäper? Ye dropt it upo' the road.
'Philip Edgar, Esq.' Ay, you be a pretty
squire. I ha' fun' ye out, I hev. Eh, lad,
dosta know what tha meäns wi' by and
by? Fur if ye be goin' to sarve our Dora
as ye sarved our Eva — then, by and by, if
she weänt listen to me when I be a-tryin'
to saäve 'er — if she weänt — look to thy-
sen, for, by the Lord, I'd think na moor o'
mäakin' an end o' tha nor a carrion crow —
noä — thaw they hanged ma at 'Size fur it.

Harold. Dobbins, I think! 511

Dobson. I beänt Dobbins.

Harold. Nor am I Edgar, my good fel-
low.

Dobson. Tha lies! What basta been
saäyin' to my Dora?

Harold. I have been telling her of the
death of one Philip Edgar of Toft Hall,
Somerset.

Dobson. Tha lies! 520

Harold (*pulling out a newspaper.*) Well,
my man, it seems that you can read. Look
there — under the deaths.

Dobson. 'O' the 17th, Philip Edgar, o'
Toft Hall, Soomeset.' How coom thou
to be sa like 'im, then?

Harold. Naturally enough; for I am
closely related to the dead man's family.

Dobson. An' 'ow coom thou by the letter
to 'im? 530

Harold. Naturally again; for, as I used
to transact all his business for him, I had
to look over his letters. Now then, see
these (*takes out letters*). Half a score of
them, all directed to me — Harold.

Dobson. 'Aroid! 'Aroid! 'Aroid, so they
be.

Harold. My name is Harold! Good day, Dobbins! [Exit.]

Dobson. 'Arold! The feller's cleän daäzed, an' maäzed, an' maäted, an' muddled ma. Deäd! It mun be true, fur it wur i' print as black as owt. Naäy, but 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Why, that wur the very twang on 'im. Eh, lad, but whether thou be Hedgar, or Hedgar's business man, thou hes n't naw business 'ere wi' my Dora, as I knaws on, an' whether thou calls thysen Hedgar or Harold, if thou stick to she I'll stick to thee — stick to tha like a weasel to a rabbit, I will. Ay! and I'd like to shoot tha like a rabbit an' all. 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Dang tha!

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ACT III

SCENE. — A ROOM IN STEER'S HOUSE.
DOOR LEADING INTO BEDROOM AT THE BACK.

Dora (ringing a handbell). Milly!

Enter MILLY.

Milly. The little 'ymn? Yeäs, Miss; but I wur so ta'en up wi' leädin' the owd man about all the blessed murnin' 'at I ha' nobbut larned mysen haäfe on it.

O man, forgive thy mortal foe,
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;
For all the souls on earth that live
To be forgiven must forgive.
Forgive him seventy times and seven;
For all the blessed souls in heaven
Are both forgivers and forgiven. 10

But I'll git the book ageän, and larn mysen the rest, and saäy it to ye afoor dark; ye ringed fur that, Miss, did n't ye?

Dora. No, Milly; but if the farming-men be come for their wages, to send them up to me.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss. [Exit.]

Dora (sitting at desk counting money). Enough at any rate for the present. (Enter Farming Men.) Good afternoon, my friends. I am sorry Mr. Steer still continues too unwell to attend to you, but the schoolmaster looked to the paying you your wages when I was away, did n't he?

Men. Yeäs; and thanks to ye.

Dora. Some of our workmen have left

us, but he sent me an alphabetical list of those that remain, so, Allen, I may as well begin with you.

Allen (with his hand to his ear). Halfahtical! Taäke one o' the young uns fust, Miss, fur I be a bit deaf, and I wur hallus scaäred by a big word; leästwaäys, I should be wi' a lawyer.

Dora. I spoke of your names, Allen, as they are arranged here (shows book) — according to their first letters.

Allen. Letters! Yeäs, I sees now. Them be what they larns the childer' at school, but I were burn afoor schoolin'-time.

Dora. But, Allen, tho' you can't read, you could whitewash that cottage of yours where your grandson had the fever.

Allen. I'll hev it done o' Monday.

Dora. Else if the fever spread, the parish will have to thank you for it.

Allen. Meä? wut, it be the Lord's doin', noän o' mine; d'ye think I'd gi'e 'em the fever? But I thanks ye all the saäme, Miss. (Takes money.)

Dora (calling out names). Higgins, Jackson, Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth! (All take money.) Did you find that you worked at all the worse upon the cold tea than you would have done upon the beer?

Higgins. Noä, Miss; we worked naw wuss upo' the cowl tea; but we'd ha' worked better upo' the beer.

Dora. Come, come, you worked well enough, and I am much obliged to all of you. There's for you, and you, and you. Count the money and see if it's all right.

Men. All right, Miss; and thank ye kindly.

[Exit Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth.]

Dora. Dan Smith, my father and I forgave you stealing our coals.

[Dan Smith advances to Dora.]

Dan Smith (bellowing). Whoy, O lor, Miss! that wur sa long back, and the walls sa thin, and the winders brokken, and the weather sa cowl, and my missus a-gittin' ower 'er lyin'-in.

Dora. Did n't I say that we had forgiven you? But, Dan Smith, they tell me that you — and you have six children — spent all your last Saturday's wages at the ale-house; that you were stupid drunk all Sunday, and so ill in consequence all Monday

that you did not come into the hay-field. Why should I pay you your full wages?

Dan Smith. I be ready to taäke the pledge.

Dora. And as ready to break it again. Besides, it was you that were driving the cart — and I fear you were tipsy then, too — when you lamed the lady in the hollow lane.

Dan Smith (bellowing). O lor, Miss! noä, noä, noä! Ye sees the holler laäne be hallus sa dark i' the arternoon, and wheere the big esh-tree cuts athurt it, it gi'es a turn like, and 'ow should I see to laäme the laädy, and meä coomin' along pretty sharp an' all?

Dora. Well, there are your wages; the next time you waste them at a pot-house you get no more from me. (*Exit Dan Smith.*) Sally Allen, you worked for Mr. Dobson, did n't you?

Sally (advancing). Yeäs, Miss; but he wur so rough wi' ma, I could n't abide 'im.

Dora. Why should he be rough with you? You are as good as a man in the hay-field. What's become of your brother?

Sally. 'Listed for a soädger, Miss, i' the Queen's Real Hard Tillery.

Dora. And your sweetheart — when are you and he to be married?

Sally. At Michaelmas, Miss, please God.

Dora. You are an honest pair. I will come to your wedding.

Sally. An' I thanks ye fur that, Miss, moor nor fur the waäge.

(*Going — returns.*) 'A cotched ma about the waäist, Miss, when 'e wur 'ere afoor, an' axed ma to be 'is little sweet'art, an' soä I know'd 'im when I seed 'im ageän an' I telled feyther on 'im.

Dora. What is all this, Allen?

Allen. Why, Miss Dora, meä and my maätes, us three, we wants to hev three words wi' ye.

Higgins. That be 'im, and meä, Miss.

Jackson. An' meä, Miss.

Allen. An' we weänt mention naw naämes, we 'd as lief talk o' the divil afoor ye as 'im, fur they says the master goäs cleän off his 'eäd when he 'eärs the naäme ou 'im; but us three, arter Sally 'd telled us on 'im, we fun' 'im out a-walkin' i' West Field wi' a white 'at, nine o'clock, upo' Tuesday murnin', and all on us, wi' your leave, we wants to leather 'im.

Dora. Who?

Allen. Him as did the mischief here, five year' sin'.

Dora. Mr. Edgar?

Allen. Theer, Miss! You ha' naämed 'im — not me.

Dora. He 's dead, man — dead; gone to his account — dead and buried.

Allen. I beänt sa sewer o' that, fur Sally know'd 'im. Now then?

Dora. Yes; it was in the Somersetshire papers.

Allen. Then you mun be his brother, an' we 'll leather 'im.

Dora. I never heard that he had a brother.

Some foolish mistake of Sally's; but what! would you beat a man for his brother's fault? That were a wild justice indeed. Let bygones be bygones. Go home! Good-night! (*All exeunt.*) I have once more paid them all. The work of the farm will go on still, but for how long? We are almost at the bottom of the well: little more to be drawn from it — and what then? Encumbered as we are, who would lend us anything?

We shall have to sell all the land, which father, for a whole life, has been getting together, again, and that, I am sure, would be the death of him. What am I to do? Farmer Dobson, were I to marry him, has promised to keep our heads above water; and the man has doubtless a good heart, and a true and lasting love for me; yet — though I can be sorry for him — as the good Sally says, 'I can't abide him' — almost brutal, and matched with my

Harold is like a hedge thistle by a garden rose. But then, he, too — will he ever be of one faith with his wife? which is my dream of a true marriage. Can I fancy him kneeling with me, and uttering the same prayer; standing up side by side with me, and singing the same hymn? I fear not. Have I done wisely, then, in accepting him? But may not a girl's love-dream have too much romance in it to be realized all at once, or altogether, or anywhere but in heaven? And yet I had once a vision of a pure and perfect marriage, where the man and the woman, only differing as the stronger and the weaker, should walk hand in hand together down this valley of tears, as they call it so truly, to the grave at the bottom, and lie down there together in the darkness which would seem but for a mo-

ment, to be wakened again together by the light of the resurrection, and no more partings for ever and for ever. (*Walks up and down. She sings.*)

O happy lark, that warblest high
 Above thy lowly nest,
 O brook, that hrawlest merrily by
 Thro' fields that once were hlest,
 O tower spiring to the sky,
 O graves in daisies drest,
 O Love and Life, how weary am I, 200
 And how I long for rest!

There, there, I am a fool! Tears! I have sometimes been moved to tears by a chapter of fine writing in a novel; but what have I to do with tears now? All depends on me — father, this poor girl, the farm, everything; and they both love me — I am all in all to both; and he loves me too, I am quite sure of that. Courage, courage! and all will go well. (*Goes to bedroom door; opens it.*) How dark your room is! Let me bring you in here where there is still full daylight. (*Brings Eva forward.*) Why, you look better.

Eva. And I feel so much better that I trust I may be able by and by to help you in the business of the farm; but I must not be known yet. Has any one found me out, Dora? 219

Dora. O, no; you kept your veil too close for that when they carried you in; since then, no one has seen you but myself.

Eva. Yes — this Milly.

Dora. Poor blind father's little guide, Milly, who came to us three years after you were gone, how should she know you? But now that you have been brought to us as it were from the grave, dearest Eva, and have been here so long, will you not speak with father to-day? 230

Eva. Do you think that I may? No, not yet. I am not equal to it yet.

Dora. Why? Do you still suffer from your fall in the hollow lane?

Eva. Bruised; but no bones broken.

Dora. I have always told father that the huge old ash-tree there would cause an accident some day; but he would never cut it down, because one of the Steers had plauted it there in former times. 240

Eva. If it had killed one of the Steers there the other day, it might have been better for her, for him, and for you.

Dora. Come, come, keep a good heart!

Better for me! That's good. How better for me?

Eva. You tell me you have a lover. Will he not fly from you if he learn the story of my shame and that I am still living? 250

Dora. No; I am sure that when we are married he will be willing that you and father should live with us; for, indeed, he tells me that he met you once in the old times, and was much taken with you, my dear.

Eva. Taken with me; who was he? Have you told him I am here?

Dora. No; do you wish it?

Eva. See, Dora; you yourself are ashamed of me (*weeps*), and I do not wonder at it. 262

Dora. But I should wonder at myself if it were so. Have we not been all in all to one another from the time when we first peeped into the bird's nest, waded in the brook, ran after the butterflies, and prattled to each other that we would marry fine gentlemen, and played at being fine ladies?

Eva. That last was my father's fault, poor man. And this lover of yours — this Mr. Harold — is a gentleman? 272

Dora. That he is, from head to foot. I do believe I lost my heart to him the very first time we met, and I love him so much —

Eva. Poor, Dora!

Dora. That I dare not tell him how much I love him.

Eva. Better not. Has he offered you marriage, this gentleman? 281

Dora. Could I love him else?

Eva. And are you quite sure that after marriage this gentleman will not be shamed of his poor farmer's daughter among the ladies in his drawing-room?

Dora. Shamed of me in a drawing-room! Wasn't Miss Vavasour, our schoolmistress at Littlechester, a lady born? Were not our fellow-pupils all ladies? Wasn't dear mother herself at least by one side a lady? Can't I speak like a lady; pen a letter like a lady; talk a little French like a lady; play a little like a lady? Can't a girl when she loves her husband, and he her, make herself anything he wishes her to be? Shamed of me in a drawing-room, indeed! See here! 'I hope your lordship is quite recovered of your gout?'

(*Curtseys.*) 'Will your ladyship ride to cover to-day? (*Curtseys.*) I can recommend our Voltigeur.' 'I am sorry that we could not attend your grace's party on the 10th!' (*Curtseys.*) There, I am glad my nonsense has made you smile!

Eva. I have heard that 'your lordship,' and 'your ladyship,' and 'your grace' are all growing old-fashioned! 308

Dora. But the love of sister for sister can never be old-fashioned. I have been unwilling to trouble you with questions, but you seem somewhat better to-day. We found a letter in your bedroom torn into bits. I could n't make it out. What was it?

Eva. From him! from him! He said we had been most happy together, and he trusted that some time we should meet again, for he had not forgotten his promise to come when I called him. But that was a mockery, you know, for he gave me no address, and there was no word of marriage; and, O Dora, he signed himself 'Yours gratefully' — fancy, Dora, 'gratefully'! 'Yours gratefully'!

Dora. Infamous wretch! (*Aside.*) Shall I tell her he is dead? No; she is still too feeble.

Eva. Hark! Dora, some one is coming. I cannot and I will not see anybody. 330

Dora. It is only Milly.

Enter MILLY, with basket of roses.

Well, Milly, why do you come in so roughly? The sick lady here might have been asleep.

Milly. Please, Miss, Mr. Dobson told me to saäy he's browt some of Miss Eva's roses for the sick laädy to smell on.

Dora. Take them, dear. Say that the sick lady thanks him! Is he here?

Milly. Yeäs, Miss; and he wants to speak to ye partic'lar. 341

Dora. Tell him I cannot leave the sick lady just yet.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss; but he says he wants to tell ye summut very partic'lar.

Dora. Not to-day. What are you staying for?

Milly. Why, Miss, I be afeard I shall set him a-sweäring like onythink.

Dora. And what harm will that do you, so that you do not copy his bad manners? Go, child. (*Exit Milly.*) But, Eva, why

did you write 'Seek me at the bottom of the river'? 354

Eva. Why? because I meant it! — that dreadful night! that lonely walk to Littlechester, the rain beating in my face all the way, dead midnight when I came upon the bridge; the river, black, slimy, swirling under me in the lamplight, by the rotten wharfs — but I was so mad that I mounted upon the parapet — 362

Dora. You make me shudder!

Eva. To fling myself over, when I heard a voice, 'Girl, what are you doing there?' It was a Sister of Mercy, come from the death-bed of a pauper, who had died in his misery blessing God, and the Sister took me to her house, and bit by bit — for she promised secrecy — I told her all. 370

Dora. And what then?

Eva. She would have persuaded me to come back here, but I could n't. Then she got me a place as nursery governess, and when the children grew too old for me, and I asked her once more to help me, once more she said, 'Go home;' but I had n't the heart or face to do it. And then — what would father say? — I sank so low that I went into service — the drudge of a lodging-house — and when the mistress died, and I appealed to the Sister again, her answer — I think I have it about me — yes, there it is! 383

Dora (reads). 'My dear Child, — I can do no more for you. I have done wrong in keeping your secret; your father must be now in extreme old age. Go back to him and ask his forgiveness before he dies. — SISTER AGATHA.' Sister Agatha is right. Don't you long for father's forgiveness?

Eva. I would almost die to have it!

Dora. And he may die before he gives it; may drop off any day, any hour. You must see him at once. (*Rings bell. Enter Milly.*) Milly, my dear, how did you leave Mr. Steer?

Milly. He's been a-moänin' and a-groän-in' in 'is sleep, but I thinks he be wakkenin' oop. 399

Dora. Tell him that I and the lady here wish to see him. You see she is lamed, and cannot go down to him.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss, I will. [*Exit Milly.*]

Dora. I ought to prepare you. You must not expect to find our father as he was five years ago. He is much altered; but I trust that your return — for you

know, my dear, you were always his favorite — will give him, as they say, a new lease of life.

Eva (clinging to Dora). O, Dora, Dora! ⁴¹⁰

Enter STEER led by MILLY.

Steer. Hes the cow cawwed?

Dora. No, father.

Steer. Be the colt deäd?

Dora. No, father.

Steer. He wur sa bellows'd out wi' the wind this murnin', 'at I tell'd 'em to gallop 'im. Be he deäd?

Dora. Not that I know.

Steer. What hasta sent fur me, then, fur? ⁴²¹

Dora (taking Steer's arm). Well, father, I have a surprise for you.

Steer. I ha' niver been surprised but once i' my life, and I went blind upon it.

Dora. Eva has come home.

Steer. Hoäm? fro' the bottom o' the river?

Dora. No, father, that was a mistake. She's here again. ⁴³⁰

Steer. The Steers was all gentlefoälks i' the owd times, an' I worked early an' laäte to maäke 'em all gentlefoälks ageän. The land belonged to the Steers i' the owd times, an' it belongs to the Steers ageän: I howt it back ageän; but I could n't buy my darter back ageän when she lost hersen, could I? I eddicated boäth on 'em to marry gentlemen, an' one on 'em went an' lost hersen i' the river. ⁴⁴⁰

Dora. No, father, she's here.

Steer. Here! she moänt coom here. What would her mother saäy? If it be her ghoäst, we mun abide it. We can't keep a ghoäst out.

Eva (falling at his feet). O, forgive me! forgive me!

Steer. Who said that? Taäke me awaäy, little gell. It be one o' my bad daäys. ⁴⁴⁹

[*Exit Steer led by Milly.*]

Dora (smoothing Eva's forehead). Be not so cast down, my sweet Eva. You heard him say it was one of his bad days. He will be sure to know you to-morrow.

Eva. It is almost the last of my bad days, I think. I am very faint. I must lie down. Give me your arm. Lead me back again.

[*Dora takes Eva into inner room.*]

Enter MILLY.

Milly. Miss Dora! Miss Dora!

Dora (returning and leaving the bedroom door ajar). Quiet! Quiet! What is it?

Milly. Mr. 'Arold, Miss. ⁴⁶⁰

Dora. Below?

Milly. Yeäs, Miss. He be saäyin' a word to the owd man, but he 'll coom up if ye lets 'im.

Dora. Tell him, then, that I 'm waiting for him.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss.

[*Exit. Dora sits pensively and waits.*]

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. You are pale, my Dora! but the ruddiest cheek

That ever charm'd the plowman of your wolds ⁴⁶⁹

Might wish its rose a lily, could it look But half as lovely. I was speaking with Your father, asking his consent — you wish'd me —

That we should marry. He would answer nothing,

I could make nothing of him; but, my flower,

You look so weary and so worn! What is it Has put you out of heart?

Dora. It puts me in heart Again to see you; but indeed the state Of my poor father puts me out of heart. Is yours yet living?

Harold. No — I told you.

Dora. When?

Harold. Confusion! — Ah well, well! the state we all ⁴⁸⁰

Must come to in our spring-and-winter world

If we live long enough! and poor Steer looks

The very type of Age in a picture, bow'd To the earth he came from, to the grave he goes to, Beneath the burthen of years.

Dora. More like the picture Of Christian in my 'Pilgrim's Progress' here,

Bow'd to the dust beneath the burthen of sin.

Harold. Sin! What sin?

Dora. Not his own.

Harold. That nursery-tale Still read, then?

Dora. Yes; our carters and our shepherds
Still find a comfort there.

Harold. Carters and shepherds!

Dora. Scorn! I hate scorn. A soul
with no religion — ⁴⁹¹
My mother used to say that such a one
Was without rudder, anchor, compass —
might be

Blown every way with every gust and
wreck

On any rock; and tho' you are good and
gentle,

Yet if thro' any want —

Harold. Of this religion?
Child, read a little history, you will find
The common brotherhood of man has been
Wroug'd by the cruelties of his religions
More than could ever have happen'd thro'
the want ⁵⁰⁰

Of any or all of them.

Dora. But, O dear friend,
If thro' the want of any — I mean the true
one —

And pardon me for saying it — you should
ever

Be tempted into doing what might seem
Not altogether worthy of you, I think
That I should break my heart, for you
have taught me

To love you.

Harold. What is this? some one been
stirring

Against me? he, your rustic amorist,
The polish'd Damon of your pastoral here,
This Dobson of your idyll?

Dora. No, sir, no!
Did you not tell me he was crazed with
jealousy, ⁵¹¹
Had threaten'd even your life, and would
say anything?

Did I not promise not to listen to him,
Nor even to see the man?

Harold. Good; then what is it
That makes you talk so dolefully?

Dora. I told you —
My father. Well, indeed, a friend just
now,

One that has been much wrong'd, whose
griefs are mine,

Was warning me that if a gentleman
Should wed a farmer's daughter, he would
be

Sooner or later shamed of her among ⁵²⁰
The ladies, born his equals.

Harold. More fool he!
What, I that have been call'd a Socialist,
A Communist, a Nihilist — what you
will! —

Dora. What are all these?

Harold. Utopian idiotcies.
They did not last three Junes. Such ram-
pant weeds
Strangle each other, die, and make the
soil

For Cæsars, Cromwells, and Napoleons
To root their power in. I have freed my-
self

From all such dreams, and some will say
because

I have inherited my uncle. Let them. ⁵³⁰
But — shamed of you, my empress! I
should prize

The pearl of beauty, even if I found it
Dark with the soot of slums.

Dora. But I can tell you,
We Steers are of old blood, tho' we be
fallen.

See there our shield. (*Pointing to arms on
mantelpiece.*)

For I have heard the Steers
Had land in Saxon times; and your own
name

Of Harold sounds so English and so old
I am sure you must be proud of it.

Harold. Not I!
As yet I scarcely feel it mine. I took it
For some three thousand acres. I have
land now ⁵⁴⁰

And wealth, and lay both at your feet.

Dora. And what was
Your name before?

Harold. Come, come, my girl, enough
Of this strange talk. I love you, and you
me.

True, I have held opinions, hold some still,
Which you would scarce approve of; for
all that,

I am a man not prone to jealousies,
Caprices, humors, moods, but very ready
To make allowances, and mighty slow
To feel offences. Nay, I do believe ⁵⁴⁹
I could forgive — well, almost anything —
And that more freely than your formal
priest,

Because I know more fully than he can
What poor earthworms are all and each of
us,

Here crawling in this boundless Nature.

Dora,

If marriage ever brought a woman happiness

I doubt not I can make you happy.

Dora. You make me Happy already.

Harold. And I never said As much before to any woman living.

Dora. No?
Harold. No! by this true kiss, you are the first

I ever have loved truly.
[*They kiss each other.*

Eva (with a wild cry). Philip Edgar!
Harold. The phantom cry! You — did you hear a cry?

Dora. She must be crying out 'Edgar' in her sleep.

Harold. Who must be crying out 'Edgar' in her sleep?

Dora. Your pardon for a minute. She must be waked.

Harold. Who must be waked?
Dora. I am not deaf; you fright me.

What ails you?
Harold. Speak.

Dora. You know her, Eva!
Harold. Eva!

[*Eva opens the door and stands in the entry.*

She!
Eva. Make her happy, then, and I forgive you.

Dora. Happy! What? Edgar? Is it so? Can it be?

They told me so. Yes, yes! I see it all now.

O, she has fainted! Sister, Eva, sister! He is yours again — he will love you again;

I give him back to you again. Look up! One word, or do but smile! Sweet, do you hear me?

[*Puts her hand on Eva's heart.*

There, there — the heart, O God! — the poor young heart

Broken at last — all still — and nothing left

To live for.
Harold. Living — dead — She said 'all still.

Nothing to live for.'
She — she knows me — now —

(*A pause.*)
She knew me from the first, she juggled with me,

She hid this sister, told me she was dead —

I have wasted pity on her — not dead now —

No! acting, playing on me, both of them. 580
They drag the river for her! no, not they!

Playing on me — not dead now — a swoon — a scene —

Yet — how she made her wail as for the dead!

Enter MILLY.

Milly. Please, Mister 'Arold.
Harold (roughly). Well?

Milly. The owd man's coom'd ageän to 'issen, an' wants

To hev a word wi' ye about the marriage.
Harold. The what?

Milly. The marriage.
Harold. The marriage?

Milly. Yeäs, the marriage.
Granny says marriages be maäde i' 'eaven.

Harold. She lies! They are made in hell. Child, can't you see?

Tell them to fly for a doctor. 590
Milly. O, law — yeäs, Sir.

I'll run fur 'im mysen. [*Exit.*
Harold. All silent there,

Yes, deathlike! Dead? I dare not look. If dead,

Were it best to steal away, to spare myself, And her too, pain, pain, pain?

My curse on all This world of mud, on all its idiot gleams

Of pleasure, all the foul fatalities That blast our natural passions into pains!

Enter DOBSON.

Dobson. You, Master Hedgar, Harold, or whativer

They calls ye, for I warrants that ye goäis By haäfe a scoor o' uaämes — out o' the chamber!

[*Dragging him past the body.*
Harold. Not that way, man! Curse on your brutal strength!

I cannot pass that way.

Dobson. Out o' the chamber!
I'll mash tha into nowt.

Harold. The mere wild-beast!
Dobson. Out o' the chamber, dang tha!

Harold. Lout, churl, clown!
[*While they are shouting and struggling*

Dora rises and comes between them.
Dora (to Dobson). Peace, let him be; it is the chamber of Death!

Sir, you are tenfold more a gentleman,

A hundred times more worth a woman's
love,
Than this, this — but I waste no words
upon him: 609

His wickedness is like my wretchedness —
Beyond all language.

(To Harold.) You — you see her there!
Only fifteen when first you came on her,
And then the sweetest flower of all the
wolds,

So lovely in the promise of her May,
So winsome in her grace and gaiety,
So loved by all the village people here,
So happy in herself and in her home —

Dobson (agitated). Theer, theer! ha'
done. I can't abear to see her.

Dora. A child, and all as trustful as a
child! [Exit.

Five years of shame and suffering broke
the heart 620

That only beat for you; and he, the father,
Thro' that dishonor which you brought
upon us,
Has lost his health, his eyesight, even his
mind.

Harold (covering his face). Enough!

Dora. It seem'd so; only there was left
A second daughter, and to her you came
Veiling one sin to act another.

Harold. No!

You wrong me there! hear, hear me! I
wish'd, if you — [Pauses.

Dora. If I —

Harold. Could love me, could be brought
to love me

As I loved you —

Dora. What then?
Harold. I wish'd, I hoped

To make, to make —

Dora. What did you hope to make?

Harold. 'T were best to make an end of
my lost life. 631

O Dora, Dora!

Dora. What did you hope to make?

Harold. Make, make! I cannot find
the word — forgive it —

Amends.

Dora. For what? to whom?

Harold. To him, to you!
[Falling at her feet.

Dora. To him! to me!

No, not with all your wealth,
Your land, your life! Out in the fiercest
storm

That ever made earth tremble — he, nor
I —

The shelter of *your* roof — not for one mo-
ment —

Nothing from *you*!

Sunk in the deepest pit of pauperism, 640
Push'd from all doors as if we bore the
plague,

Smitten with fever in the open field,
Laid famine-stricken at the gates of
Death —

Nothing from you!

But she there — her last word
Forgave — and I forgive you. If you
ever

Forgive yourself, you are even lower and
baser

Than even I can well believe you. Go!
[He lies at her feet. Curtain falls.

CROSSING THE BAR

This poem first appeared in the 'Demeter'
volume of 1889, but is placed here in accord-
ance with Lord Tennyson's request that it
might be put at the end of all editions of his
poems.

SUNSET and evening star,

And one clear call for me!

And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,

When that which drew from out the bound-
less deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!

And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and
Place

The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

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