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POEMS

BY

WILLIAM BIRDSLY BENTON



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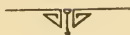
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Prince Robert.



— 1 —

Tis night; and on huge towring hills,
No sound is heard save of the rills,
And of the sweet toned nightingale
That sings amid the bloomy dale;
While, rising o'er the summits gray,
The moon sends down her silver ray.

— 2 —

But who is she, yon venturous maid
Seeming in royal garb arrayed,
And wandering 'mong those steeps alone,
Were not one guiding path is shown?
Before her lie wild scenes of dread,
That strong men, even, might fear to tread,
Tho' armed, and clad from crown to heel
With best wrought garb of triple steel;
For there, behold, in days of yore
A mighty troop their pennants bore
At early dawn of summer's day,
Intent on fierce, victorious fray;
Who, ere the sun's all radiant power
Had dried the dew on leaf and flower,
Found all their vaunt was but a breath,
All their reward but a sudden death,
And still their bones lie bleaching there,
And often on the mountain air,
Wierd, ghostly voices forth are sent
From hollow skull and huge rock rent;
Wilst, mingled with the crumbling dust,
Swords, shields, and spears and helmets rust.

Onward she moves in eager quest,
And not a fear disturbs her breast;
She nears at length the horrid view,
With firmest step, nor changed her hue;
She passes oft' mid cragg and boss,
And rocks begirt with heavy moss
She scans with well erected head
Each sad condition of the dead,
Tho' on a quickly rising gale
Are borne innumerable shriek and wail.

Thus a true prophetess, whose name
Had not yet been revealed to fame,
Took up her varied way and long,
Thro' lands renowned by minstrel song;
There circling days had often seen
Flags wide unfurled of diverse sheen;
The bravest blood run swiftly gushing,
Adown the steep in torrents rushing;
But now no more on rock or wave
Fell the fierce gleam of battle glaive,
Nor the shrill sound of bugle-horn
Proclaimed the near approach of morn;
All, all forsaken, wild and lone,
Like a vast world none deigned to own;
Yet oft her eye could well behold
Where people dwelt in time of old;
Glebes strongly walled that once did share
Some owner's fond, laborious care;
And soon as thick as morning dew,
Moss roses and carnations grew,
And here 'neath stately bowers were set
Fresh blooming groups of mignonette,
Mingled with callirhoe and phlox,
While vines trailed thick 'oer shub and rocks;
There grandly stood in fairy dell
Deep purple fringe and golden bell;
And down where crystal fountains gushed,
Hibiscus and althea blushed;
Then for awhile strown thick around,
Xeranthemums possess the ground,
Save that some room they frequent spare
To shrub or vine of beauty rare;
At length as in a fairy court

The fairy lily seemed to sport;
'Mid purple sprays white clusters hung;
To shelving steeps the trotem clung;
Along a fair translucent stream,
The lotus lent a sparkling gleam,
As from its cups of silver hue,
'Mid sportive breezes dripped the dew.

— 5 —

Now as the morn with golden ray
Began to gladden, bloom and spray,
Then all at once the changing scene
Displayed a dense, luxuriant green;
There o'er thick ferns and woodbines blent,
Embow'ring oak strong branches sent
In whose half-dark, majestic shade
The blithesome squirrel fondly played;
Here clustering ivys grandly crept
O'er shrubs 'mid which the owlet slept;
And soon where mosses fringed the bank
Of the cool stream, the rock doe drank.
'Mid such beneath the early day,
The fair adventuress kept her way,
T'ill through the spacious grove, and then
Took instant to a mountain glen
Where from huge cliffs or darkest brow
The mantling moss hung thickly down;
And whatsoever sound was heard,
If some soft breeze a leaflet stirred,
If whirl or splash of waters clear,
Or tinkling, fell upon the ear,
If startled owlet thence withdrew,
And o'er the craggy summit flew,
Or if a thrush from leafy spray
Was pleased to pour his wonted lay,
It served more strongly to impress
Upon the soul the mournfulness
For which that deep, majestic space,
Seemed fashioned for a dwelling place.
And now as she still onward drew
The glen fast wider, fairer grew;
To numerous vines rocks give support,
And seem the seats of fairy court;
Wistaria, as with bridal yoke,
Unites the daphne and the oak;
Down varied steep and narrow dell,

Peered honeysuckle, rose and bell;
 Sweet hyacinths, with gran'lest cheer
 Seemed to disport both far and near,
 'Neath varied shade, o'er velvet knoll,
 Or gentle bank to fondly stroll,
 Or on a fountain's clear expanse
 In mazy rings as fondly dance.
 At length amid a valley wide
 Fair youths and dames her form espied,
 Yet they could not, tho' all intent,
 Descern the course in which she went,
 For as some bird of sparkling plume
 Is seen amid the forest gloom,
 Then speeds so quick the keenest sight
 In vain essays to trace its flight,
 Thus instant did she disappear
 The very moment she drew near.

—6—

Now when above the forests green,
 The blazing sun was fully seen,
 Prince Robert and his faithful band
 Rode forth amid that mountain land,
 Where had been wrought great deeds of fame;
 And soon unto his mind it came
 How once in days of battle strife
 A mystic maiden saved his life;
 But little surely did he ken
 He ere should meet with her again;
 Yet as to left he duly filed,
 Where all the ground lay strangely wild,
 She stood at distance in advance,
 And well he knew her at a glance;
 Slacking his speed, and all intent,
 He deeply pondered what event
 Or danger now might be at hand;
 Or if near to that rugged strand
 She did abide, and here had drawn
 With sportive step to greet the dawn;
 And as beneath a branching oak,
 He halted, she thus plainly spoke:
 "O worthy prince, here rest thy steed,
 And give thy soul's most earnest heed
 Unto my words, lest sudden death
 'Mid yon wild wood stop thy bold breath:
 A friend—ah! no;—a traitor there
 Belays thy path like secret snare;

Disguised he waits the huge rocks near;
His clutchant hand holds heavy spear;
But trust thou well thy brand to wield,
For Heaven himself shall be thy shield;
I see thy brand flash o'er the tide;
I see it pierce the traitor's side;
I see the traitor wildly reel,
His grim eye scan the bloody steel;
He bleeds—he falls;—a groan—a breath;—
His chill frame quivers;—sinks in death.”
So spoke the fair mysterious maid,
Nor for a moment she delayed;
But instant as a bird of dawn
Springs upward from the dewey lawn,
And speeds on its arial way
To bloomy bowers or woodlands gay,
She turned and fled; nor long deferred
The prince his plan, but onward spurred;
And having won a bloomy mead,
Dismounts and leaving there his steed,
Takes to the wood, and soon his blade
Is 'gainst the traitor's elbow laid;
The traitor's lips emit a groan;
His huge spear falls like heavy stone;
He turns, and with intense affright,
Ventures these words unto the Knight:
“Alas! what hath of late prevailed
That thus by thee I am assailed?
At early morn I hither came
In wild pursuit of forest game.”
The Knight replied: “Thy word might well
Serve minstrel theme; hence plainly tell
What noble fairy's skillful hand
Wrought that disguise so truly grand;
But trust thou not to longer claim
Unknown thy purpose, rank and name.”
The traitor heard; and deeply pressed
By words so stern his guilt confessed;
Then sorely pled; but lo, the knight
Thus sternly added to the plight:
“Forsooth; in wolves 'tis very kind
To beg where such great need they find;
To grow repentant and to own
Their faults with such religious tone;
But wert thou now safe on thy plain,
And I amid this wild-wood slain,
Then how exultant were thy boast;

How gaily hadst thou drank thy toast;
 For here thou didst my path belay
 To take my life; here ends thy play."'
 He spoke, and thro' the traitor's form
 Now trembling like a leaf in storm,
 Impelled as with Achilian hand
 The strongly tempered, heavy brand
 Which, while withdrawn, the blood of guilt
 Did follow to the very hilt;
 But cleansed within the crystal stream
 It reassumed its wonted gleam,
 And, dried with mosses from the heath,
 Soon found again its stately sheath.
 Then straightway on the rugged strand,
 The prince rejoined his faithful band;
 And soon a newly wakened breeze
 Came down from 'mong the mountain trees,
 And spread around a rich perfume
 And gently shook each bud and bloom;
 Dense loaded hung the spreading beech,
 With mellow clusters glowed the peach;
 The orange richly did unfold
 Its bridal white and gleaming gold;
 Jasmin and stock, as if intent
 On social joy, where richly blent;
 The moon-flower gleamed like mountain snows,
 Serenely smiled the stately rose;
 All diffident yet all replete,
 The chervanthus found retreat
 By crystal rill or mossy stone,
 And seemed well pleased to dwell alone;
 While brachycomes strove to screen
 Themselves 'mong umbrage dense and green,
 Yet did thereby more plainly show
 Their purple blush and crimson glow;
 And soon beside a stately bower,
 Abrus, well termed the prophet flower,
 Looked gladly forth as if to say,
 "I vouch you, Sirs. a pleasant day."

Now journeying on they soon attain
 Where once a noted chief was slain;
 He rudely clad in fur of deer,
 And armed with hunter's heavy spear,
 Went boldly forth; but as in view
 Close by a mount he onward drew,

'Gainst his strong arm there came a stroke,
 Even as the lightening 'gainst an oak;
 His huge spear falls; he turns around,
 And on the fast uprising ground,
 And wielding as with tiger strength,
 A flaming sword of mighty length,
 Stood a young knight of giant size.
 To whom he thus: "Whence this surprise
 So sudden and so rash misplayed
 Upon a friend? I to this shade,
 From the bright fields of bloomy Ayr,
 With venturous step have tracked a bear."
 To which the Knight: "Thy speech is graced
 With sweet romance; but bad misplaced;
 Spies, ere they seek well guarded ground,
 Should change to shape of cur or hound."
 He spoke; and straight for speedy flight,
 The chieftain turned; but quick as light
 Shoots thro' thin mist, down came the brand,
 And laid him dead upon the straud.

—8—

Now soon there stood beside the way,
 A cavern huge and darkly gray,
 One well might deem the stately home
 Of princely fairy, sylph or gnome;
 And oft historic minstrels told
 Here long did dwell in days of old,
 A giant Queen most truly fair;
 While on her long, brisk, tawny hair
 Which heavy hung in shaggy maze,
 The lion might with envy gaze.

—9—

Now soon the stream, as if intent
 Upon its choice, to northward bent,
 Where bright genista did unfold
 Its proud display of flamy gold;
 Then all at once both far and near,
 Ismenes and pyrenthrums rear
 Their stately heads, and densely show
 A whiteness pure as mountain snow;
 At length a melancholy lawn
 Around their view was widely drawn;
 O'er darksome shrubs the willow bowed;
 The cypress seemed a weeping cloud;
 Low branching pine stood dark and whist;

Pale poplar grew a trembling mist;
And here the prince remembered well
The tale a minstrel used to tell,
How once with anger raging high,
A Queen condemned a wretch to die:
For he amid relentless strife,
Had turned a traitor to her life;
And while his heart with fear did quake,
She thus her royal vengeance spake;
"Thy flesh and bones shall here be put
To nourish the witch-hazel's root;
Here oft the greedy fox may tread,
The lurking panthers lay his head;
Such now the honors thou canst claim
As fittest triune to thy fame."
She spake; and, while he shook with fear,
Plunged thro' his heart the blazing spear.

—10—

Now soon upon the verdant strand,
A minstrel sat with harp in hand;
To whom the prince: "Dear child of song,
Whence art thou come? For surely long
These varied lands from east to west,
Have been unsought and unpossessed."
With deep attent the minstrel eyed
The noble prince, and thus replied:
"Not distant from this pensive shade,
An empire, Sir, is newly laid;
Its people are as truly mild
As loveliest flow'ret of the wild;
Their Queen is all unknown to fame,
And Helen is her royal name."
This heard, the prince renewed his way,
And ere had closed the glowing day,
Appeared in fairest garb arrayed,
That noble Queen—the mystic maid.

Princess Catharina.

A Poem in Four Cantos.

Introduction.

—1—

The wise—the just;—What would they deem
The grandest for heroic theme?
He is, indeed, exceeding bold,
Who dare attempt the panther's hold,
And shrewd is he who wins the day
With no advantage for his play;
Yet such the world will little note;—
Ye—pass him by as if a goat;
But see the despot strong and dread,
With laurels heped upon his head,
Tho' to his foe he may compare
As doth a tiger to a hare.

—2—

“Look round our world;” survey mankind
Compare their wars, then clearly find
—For so thou canst—on what sad story,
Rests all the pride of martial glory;
When trumpets herald armies forth
From east and west and south and north,
All for the purpose to sustain
Proud, boasting powers in quest of gain,
What difference surely if the work
Be of the Christian or the Turk?
Ask Truth what hope or wisdom lies
In bloody conquest;—Truth replies:
“The panther in his lordly way,
Would to the speedy greyhound say:
“You help me catch that noble hare.,
And I will call you. Grand Esquire”
Or rather thus: “Cain's ruling passion
Become the world's most haughty fashion!”
O therefore from such evil play,
Goddess, now turn the epic lay;
And bid the nations clearly see
What they are not, but sure should be.

Canto One

—1—

T'was early morn; and far and near
Innumerable birds sung loud and clear;
The rose bestowed its rich perfume,
The apple trees were all abloom,
And many a fountain, brook and rill
Did warble sweet 'mong vale and hill.

—2—

And soon as o'er the grassy leas,
Came speeding forth the western breeze,
Near by a dense and waving wood,
The princess Cathrina stood,
But on her stately form she bore
No princely sign, no royal store
You would have deemed her then and there,
A simple huntress rude and fair,
Or some sweet belle that roved the plain,
And fairest youth might wish to gain;
Yet lo her dress so purely shone
'Twould rival even Luciothe's own,
And she had fought as fierce and bold
As Pallas 'ere in days of old.

—3—

Intent she hears the music swell
From every grove and every dell,
And fondly looks on every flower
And fount and stream and viny bower;
The queenly rose, the mignoette,
The jasmijn, the violet,
Bloomed close around, while 'long each shore,
The ground appeared so covered o'er,
'Twere far too great a task to name
The numerous kinds of blush and flame
At length unto her eye appears
A rustic maiden bathed in tears;
Rustic, yet seeming truly fair,
As tho' an angel sure were there;
Or Venus robed in sylvan guise,
Lone weeping for some vanished prize;
The princess fain would give relief,
And thus she sought the cause of grief:
'Fair, rustic maid, why dost thou mourn?
Have friends been from thy bosom torn

By fate of unrelenting war
And sent to battle fields afar?
Or that deep slumber do they take,
From which, alas, they cannot wake?
Or those in whom thou didst confide
Have they proved changeful as the tide?"
The maiden thus: 'Mid battle plain
My father wears a clanking chain;
'To prison by the victor sent,
Whose heart most sure cannot relent
More than yon rocks of sable hue
Can in one instance change to dew.'"
With deep intent the princess eyed
The mournful form and thus replied;
"Thou saddest, loveliest, sweetest rose;
No longer droop beneath thy woes
But trust thou well that 'ere the sun
His downward journey has begun,
Thou sure shalt hear thy fathers tone,
And in his hand repose thine own;
So let my words bestow thee cheer,
And from thine eyes dispell each tear,
Even as the morning dries away
The dew drops from the bloomy spray.'"
She spoke and fled and as she flew
Her feet scarce seemed to touch the dew
She whistled, and her saddled steed
Came bounding from the daisied mead
She quickly mounted and from sight
Sped like a form of fairy light.
And all the while the rustic maid
With anxious heart amid the shade
Did feel her hope so truly dear
Oppressed with sad and gloomy fear.
But all at once she hears a sound
Is it some beasts accustomed bound?
No beast is nigh nor rustling breeze
Is on the brook nor 'mong the trees;
It comes again and doth repeat
The truth is told she springs to greet
The one for whom her heart did yearn.
And lo, her joy none 'ere can learn,
Save only those whose hearts shall know
The self same fate succeed to woe.

Canto 2.

—1—

LOUDLY amid his leafy tower,
The owlet hailed the midnight hour,
Where granite rocks of darkest gray
Rose high above the dashing spray,
And its deep shade the cypress lent,
And o'er the stream the willow bent;
While, gleaming clear, a single flower,
Well fit to grace a royal bower,
Did serve as by some magic thrill,
To make the scene more mournful still.

—2—

But suddenly o'er all the ground
There comes and goes the only sound
Of waters dashing 'long the beach,
For now hath ceased the owlet's creech;
But hark—alas!—'tis but a gale,
Rushing adown the narrow dale;—
Ah, no indeed! 'imd grove and field
Gleam sword and plume and spear and shield;
On giant steeds of snowy white,
As if for fierce and instant fight,
Come boldly forth a numerous band:
But who is she who doth command?
A fairer form was never seen;
Her royal garb bespeaks her Queen;
Onward they march toward the west;
Now halt, dismount, and take to rest.

—3—

At length upon a mountain lawn
Came dancing forth the twinkling dawn,
And soon full plainly did appear
Round many a palace far and near,
Each fairest, most enchanting flower,
In bed and knot and arching bower.
And when among the varied sprays
The birds awoke their mantin lays,
It seemed as if both leaf and bloom
Poured forth rich music and perfume.

But lo, along yon distant meads,
Another band;—a Princess leads;—
Ah can it be that battle strife
Must here ensue with loss of life?
Ah must these lovely plains be strown
With buildings burnt or overthrown?
In battle line each arm⁷ forms;
Dread as the fiercest thunder storms;
Now under truce the leaders met
Beside a winding rivulet;
Each wore a plume of diamond glow,
And purely white as mountain snow;
But their amazement who can tell?
For lo, they knew each other well;
And thus the one who came by night:
Say, art thou prone to love the right?
And dost thou 'ere with utmost zest,
The right pursue, the wrong detest?
Yea, thou art she who 'mid the wild
Didst greatly bless a maiden child;
And now that child to woman grown,
I surely am, and by thee known;
My nation now asserts her cause,
And would High Heaven refuse applause?
Vast armies 'neath thy King's command
Did rob us of our richest land.''
Intent and calm the Princess eyed
The noble Queen and thus replied:
"But we of late have judged full strong,
Thy nation sure has suffered wrong;
Each deed in former war pursued,
Our later councils have reviewed;
The lands we took we now restore;
And of our own add plenty more,
That all, with most ecstatic glow
May sanction what we do bestow;
There is, 'tis true, no earthly power
That can revive the withered flower,
Or in its former state present
The forest by the tempest rent;
But genial sun and rain and dew
Will quickly cloth each scene anew,
And bid again the breezes play,
M'ong fragrant bloom and leafy spray.'"

These words, while Cathrina spake,
Did sweetly hope and joy awake;
And as in some fair lawn and gay,
While sweetly shines the dawning ray,
Each leaf and bud and stalk and bloom
Seems joyed to give its neighbor room,
Thus every look did well express
The kindly wish to help and bless.

Canto 3.

—1—

Now while the armies shared the day
In social talk or social play,
The Queen and Princess hand in hand
Went forth to view the lovely land;
And 'long the course they wished to tread
A pathway sweetly, kindly led;
Here ivy and Cobea vine
Fondly embraced the oak and pine;
There of't by fountain or beneath
Magnolia shade or violet heath,
The rose and lily side by side
Showed fairest look of queenly pride;
Here 'mid thick shrub and circling green
Fair floral beds were plainly seen;
Of every shape from oval bar
To storied round and triple star;
There rocks upstood of giant height,
Begemmed with many a flowret bright,
Whose dainty roots in crevice found
Sufficient room and kindly ground;
And thus the Princess to the Queen:
"My worthy friend; I truly ween
Thou wouldst that I to thee unfold
The tale a harping minstrel told,
How first this wide, romantic ground
Was by a venturous maiden found;
She one fair day too far had strolled,
And night o'ertook her 'mid the wold;
And soon beneath a bower she crept
Near where a full grown panther slept;
But carefully from thence withdrew,
Then instant long a pathway flew,
And quickly came where uncontrolled,
Deep thundering waters tossed and rolled;
Then all at once with step so fleet

As scarce appeared the trrf to meet,
She sped like morning's early beam,
Bounded across the raging stream;
Then to the right her way she takes
Thro' mingled blooms and clustered brakes;
While from thick pine or scant beech
Darts oft and shrill the owlets screech;
And leaving these she soon is led
To Mount Garlardia's shaggy head
Whence looking downward she surveyed
Full many a villa, field and shade;
Then, moving onward, she descends
To where the crystal Rubus bends,
Whose winding shore she closely keeps
T'ill where 'neath densely shaded steeps,
And thro' rock crevices profound,
Its waters shoot with thunder sound,
She turns again, and for an hour,
Save prickly shrubs without a flower,
No verdure sees; but all is rough
With stony ridge and vale and bluff;
At length she came where near a hill
A fairy sat beside a rill,
Who, when she saw the lovely maid,
Arose and thus distinctly said:
"Adventurous one; in vision clear
I did behold thy coming here;
And straightway with a princess' care,
For thy repose a bed prepare
Within you deep, sequestered bower
Where thou canst rest till morning hour;
Then while beneath the rosy beam
The sparkling dews begin to gleam,
We forth will sally 'long a vale
Where blithesome as a breeze or gale,
Thy steps can speed until again
Thou dost behold thy native plain."
Such words the kindly fairy spoke,
Then by the hand the maiden took,
And 'long a path with violets spread,
She quickly to her dwelling led;
Of woven rush each wall was made,
The floor with woven bark o'er laid;
While the deep roof was varied sheaf
Of broom and husk and fern and leaf;
With fairest gifts had summer crowned

The well arranged, encircling ground;
'Neath fragrant bloom, and leafy spray
A streamlet sang its merry lay;
"Here," said the fairy, "mayest thou rest,
Nor fear that aught will thee molest;
For sure no beast, however bold,
'Ere ventures near a fairy's hold;
And even the tempest, 'ere one spray
Has felt its anger, turns away.

(To be continued in the next edition.)

Meditations of Napoleon II.



AFTER THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

—1—

Have I lost all?—Am I undone?—
Is such the end my sword has won?—
Did Pallas from Columbia's strand
Thrust forth the lion with her hand,
Then, thundering, bid his courage speed
To work such dread, destructive deed?—
Most sure some power was all alert
My every motive to avert,
And plunge me straight into the net
So strongly formed and shrewdly set.

—2—

I deeply mourned; I eager tried
To change the course and sway the tide;
But death still came from near and far,
As winged by every tree and star;
What then of deeds of former days?
What then of stern ambition's blaze?
Far better if my proudest thought
And brightest wish had only sought
A home where' long some wooded dale,
No pathway save the wild deer's trail,
Had served my wandering steps to guide
By crystal brook or river wide;
Each hope now fled, each glory lost,
Ah! where and whither am I tossed?
O could I like the eagle spring,
And soon on bold, untiring wing,
Then soon mine ear would list to rills
That warble 'mong Columbia's hills;
But ah! I need not hope to greet
Chance for escape for safe retreat;
The lion guards the heaving main
Alas friends, alas!, are friends in vain.

Perchance I soon must bid adieu
To all the scenes I gladly knew;
Leave with sad tears you royal shore,
Hear the wild waves around me roar;
But ne're again shall breeze or gale
For me distend one friendly sail;
Exile, and on some distant spot,
May henceforth be my destined lot;
O that some god; would me enshroud
Within such dark, protecting cloud
As Neptune 'mid the battle threw
When Æneas from¹ Achillies flew;
Alas! Alas! while yet to view,
Fair as the summer's fairest hue,
As o'er sweet fields and crystal springs,
Fortune extends her golden wings,
How few discern whereto they tread,
By folly or ambition led;
Even the most gay, when times grew foul,
Have envied well the desert owl;
And many fled from royal hall
To lonliest haunt and rudest wall;
Yes, on this swiftly rolling star,
Full many souls there surely are,
Of every sweetest hope bereft;
Or if perchance there be one left,
'Tis even as a lonely flower
Beneath a tempest—shaken bower;
And as, when o'er the spacious heaven
Fast deepening clouds are quickly driven,
An opening space admit a beam
On wood or lake or winding stream,
Then closes soon, and deeper still
The darkness falls o'er vale and hill,
So peace hath for a little while,
Seemed fast returning with a smile,
So all at once as snatched from sight,
By fiercest terror and affright.
Behold me now; as well as a fly
Might boast of wealth and power as I;
As well the fawn might sternly dare
The tiger from his restful lair,
As I again my brand to wield
On hostile march or battle field.

Yes, I would greet with fervent zest
The vast, lone forests of the west,
And wish by all the world forgot
My name as now it's happiest lot;
Bear me, ye winds, O bear me o'er
The briny waves to some free shore
There flowers and winding brooks are seen
Shaded by covert dense and green,
And numerous birds, a sportive throng,
Pour forth their carols wild and strong;
Ambition's proud, relentless boast,
Even in the days it glories most,
Is often like yon slender stem
Which scarce retains vernal gem;
The panther in the mountain glen
Less dargerous far than factious men;
And much, indeed I have to fear
While yet my footsteps linger here;
For those who highly me esteemed
While yet my sword with victory beamed,
May henceforth be my deadliest foes;
Blest had I found 'mid Alpine snows,
My latest day—My last repose.

Lines of Book II.

VIRGIL'S ÆNEID, PUT INTO ENGLISH BLANK
VERSE.

—1—

Arms, and the man who, from Ilium's sacred shore
Thrust forth by fate, first came to Italy,
I sing. He long on land and on the deep
Endured great perils, being persecuted
By Juno, bride of Jupiter, who strove
To destroy him. But having gained at length
The destined port, he fought victorious war,
And reared his famous town from whence began
The awful glories of majestic Rome,
And flow'ry Alba's early parentage.

—2—

Say first, O muse, what various causes led
The Queen of heaven to wage relentless war
Against so wise, so brave, so just a man;
Can such fierce wrath in heavenly bosoms dwell?
Carthage, a famous city, proudly stood
Fronting the spacious sea and Tiber mouth;
A city loved and prized by Juno more
Than any other land; yea, even more
Than Argos on Samos. 'Twas there she kept
Her chariot and weapons. But it was told
A band should yet arrive from distant Troy,
And lay its structures to the very ground;
This with the hate enkindled by the war
Round Ilium's walls, and Paris' doomful act
And heavenly honors done to Ganymed,
Formed the strong impulse of that mighty rage
Which sought so long to overwhelm the few
Who happily had escaped the warring Greeks.
Lo what there was from whence at length appeared
The mightiest empire of the peopled world.

—3—

Now when the Trojan fleet was on its way
'Mid balmy breezes 'long the bloomy shores
Of Sicily, thus Juno spoke: Must I
Now leave the work I have so well begun,
And see those hated crews usurp my land?
May Pallas for the fault of only one,
Rend with the fiery thunderbolts of Jove
The Argive fleet and sink beneath the waves,

And I, the Queen of Gods—but ah!” She spoke,
 And to Æolia fled; Æolia where resides
 The King of storms, to whom she thus: “Æolus,
 Hear and attend my words; for lo, even now
 A Trojan band are on the billowy deep
 With merry song, and feeling sure to win
 My favorite realm. Sink them ’mid darkest storms,
 Or to some distant, friendless region sweep,
 From whence they ne’er can gain or hope escape;
 And for thy wife I will to thee bestow
 The fairest nymph of all my household train.”
 To which Æolus thus:” ‘Tis thine, O Queen,
 To give command; mine, gladly to obey;
 For thro’ thy kindness I received my power.”
 So said, he with his spear struck a huge rock,
 And straightway blackest clouds rolled swiftly up
 O’er all the heaven; and soon in rushed the North
 With fiercest driving cold and snow and ice,
 The South with heaviest thunders, rain and hail.

Lines of Book III.

VIRGIL’S ÆNEID PUT INTO ENGLISH BLANK
 VERSE.

— 1 —

All now were silent and intent to hear,
 As thus Æneas his long speech began:
 “Sad is the task, O Queen, which thou dost now
 Request me to perform; for to relate
 Doth sure renew the woe; and I must tell
 Full many things which not Ulysses’ self
 Could tell or even list without a tear;
 Ye since thour dost so greatly wish to learn
 The fates that fell on Troy, I will begin.

— 2 —

“Full near ten years the dreadful war had raged,
 And equal still it seemed; and one fair morn
 No Greeks could be discerned; but on the plain
 A huge and stately steed well formed of wood,
 Stood in plain view. And some most strongly urged
 To have it took at once within the gates;
 Others objected, deeming it might be
 The cunning of Ulysses; and one struck
 With heavy spear it’s portly side, and lo
 A sound went forth which should have told to all
 What dwelt within.

Shortness of Earthly Enjoyments

ILLUSTRATED.

—1—

Zephyrus on a stately hill,
Met sweet Aurora near a rill,
And soon along the playful tide
They fondly danced close side by side.

—2—

From varied groves thick fell the dew,
As on they gaily, nimbly flew,
And wild-wood birds the leaves among
Awoke at once and gladly sung.

—3—

Bees from their homes soon sallied out
To gather honey all about,
And much of pleasure did display
O'er promise of a happy day.

—4—

Zephyrus and his partner glanced
O'er all the scene as still they danced,
And soon 'mong banks of violet
The goddess Flora with them met.

—5—

And soon beside an orange shade
Ceres bestowed her kindly aid,
And he that saw the sprightly four,
Might deem no pleasure could be more.

—6—

Onward they danced from bower to bower
And soon was past the happy hour;
Then darkning clouds and icy gales
Soon swept o'er all the hills and vales.

—7—

Thus princely hopes do come and go,
Thus earthly grandeurs change to woe,
And childish glee and youthful bloom
Are daily lost in solemn gloom.

Hints from the Georgics of Virgil.

—1—

Soon as the leafy spring perfumes the gales,
And glowing suns have softened all the vales,
And 'mid the denseness of the forest hills,
Loosed from cold winter's chains the varied rills,
And hyacinths unto the morn unfold
Their every hue from purest white to gold,
Then should the skillful culturist ply his toil
To till and plant the duly chosen soil;
Then the strown seed will quickly, freshley start
Like life blood coursing from a healthy heart;
Each plant will seem to join the kind employ,
And rise in growth as tho' it shared the joy;
The beamy days their kindly warmth renew,
The gentle night distill the balmy dew;
The frequent clouds their timely rains bestow,
And give fresh vigor to the roots below;
With joy the culturist view each growth displayed,
And own his every labor well repaid.

—2—

But tho' luxuriant growth still be supplied,
Yet proper tillage should not be denied;
For every plant will still respond with speed,
As though full mindful of each grateful deed;
A crusty soil excludes the warmth and air,
Makes growth less vigorous and each hue less fair;
Some plants, 'tis true, far less attent demand,
Far less of labor from the culturing hand;
A few, even from the time the seed is strown,
Will seem replete with Nature's care alone;
Save only that which all alike do need,
A just protection from each friendless weed.

Meditations of Napoleon II.



DURING HIS ABODE ON THE ISLAND OF ST.
HELENA.

—1—

O France, land of my home; why am I thus
Cut off forever from thy sacred shores?
Pride filled my veins, and glory, to behold
Thy name upgrowing in it's strength and might,
'Till sad defeat it so ignobly met,
Even in the hour that promised to my mind,
The brightest victory thou hadst ever won.

—2—

And lo, how am I now? Ah! pent on this lone strand,
Weak, reft and desolate as even a bird.
That far has strayed into some dense grown wild
Where night-fall and the turbulence of storm
Surround it's flight; and thus perchance, my mind,
Wide severed from ambition's lofty aims,
And every bloom of joy,—must long abide
'Neath gloomy thrall of bitter discontent.
The pride of wealth is hurled by acts of war,
Like thistle down by tempest; men rear heir towns
States, Kingdoms, Empires, Capitols and Thrones;
Spiders their webs, and mice their nests; and all
Seem equal in the eye of Fate

—3—

O mystic morning of my varied life;
Where came those brilliant hopes that bloomed be-
side
Thy path like violets? Ah! were they given
To lure my inborn zeal to this dire end?
O grander were it far to have but lived
Content and peaceful in some rural vale
Where bright carnations thrive, and cool, fresh
springs
Fall tinkling down from steep, majestic rocks
'Mid huge, dense forests. Life, fare-thee well!
Here must I stay, not live, here muse, weep, pine and
die.

A crown I would not value now except
What real good thereby I might enact;
'Tis kingly to prevent oppressive laws,
'Tis kingly to promote each real good;
Perversion walks with rosy garlands graced,
And seeks, full smiling, to delude the wise;
And he that knoweth her and shuns her paths,
Displays thereby a kingly attribute;
I was a blind man leading blind men forth;
And lastly they and I went boldly down
Into a deep, infuriated gulf;
And even there, till overthrown, did boast
We stood on vantage ground. Would I had been
Wise as Confucious; for what worth were it now
Had I been strong as Achillies, and had slain
A thousand Hectors? T'was said that I was
Most shrewd to plan. What seems the fabric now?
A spider's web to catch a lion's foot.

'Tis just that I am here. What right had I
To conquer nations and to bid them bow
Unto my will? Conquest is surely not
Of wisdom's school; it only apes the fox
That for his own support is nightly doomed
To run his neck within the very noose
Of risk. What if myself and all my host
Had been dense walled by flames, 'mid Moscow's
towers,
Or swept by storms while journeying darkly thro'
The cold, fierce grandeurs of the wintry' Alps.

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