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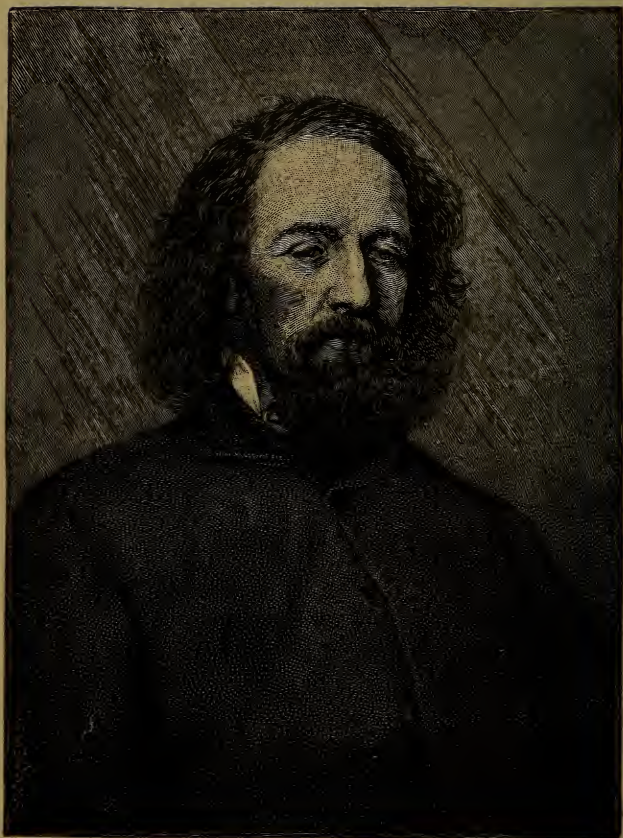












ALFRED TENNYSON.  
After the painting by G. F. Watts, R. A.



English Class. — Star Series

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TENNYSON'S

THE PRINCESS: A MEDLEY

EDITED FOR SCHOOL USE

BY

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. TENNYSON

THE earliest picture of Tennyson that appeals to the memory is given in Mrs. Ritchie's reminiscences. "The wind . . . came sweeping through the garden of this old Lincolnshire rectory, and, as the wind blew, a sturdy child of five years old, with shining locks, stood opening his arms upon the blast and letting himself be blown along, and, as he travelled on, he made his first line of poetry and said, 'I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind,' and he tossed his arms, and the gust whirled on, sweeping into the great abyss of winds."

In the rectory of the pastoral hamlet of Somersby, "nestling embosomed in trees in a land of quiet villages, large fields, gray hillsides, and noble, tall-towered churches," Tennyson was born on August 6, 1809, the famous birth-year of Mrs. Browning, Holmes, Poe, and Darwin. He was the fourth of twelve children. A neighbor has described them as "running about from one place to another, . . . they all wrote verses, they never had any pocket-money, they took long walks at night-time, and they were decidedly exclusive." Tennyson later remembered how they played at being "champions and warriors, defending a field or stone-heap; or again they would set up opposing camps with a king in the midst of each." He liked, too, to recall the rambling little rectory, the Gothic, vaulted dining room, whose stained-glass windows cast "butterfly souls" on the walls; the pleasant little drawing-room lined with book shelves and furnished in yellow; the lawn outside, over-shadowed by larch and sycamore and

wych-elms, which inspired his early song of autumn, "A spirit haunts the year's last hours." Beyond the garden path, bordered by roses, lilies, hollyhocks, and sunflowers, the field sloped to a brook up which he followed, one April day in his fifteenth year, to a wooded hollow, where he carved on a rock the terrible news, "Byron is dead," "a day when the whole world seemed to be darkened for me."

A part of Tennyson's early education was received in the grammar school of the neighboring town of Louth, where he studied chiefly the classics. This was supplemented by much reading in his father's library, by close observation of nature, — forming a habit which lasted through his life, — and by ceaseless verse-writing from the time when, aged eight, he covered his slate with Thomsonian blank verse in praise of flowers, to later boyhood, when he translated long passages of Homer's *Iliad* into Popeian couplets and wrote a six-thousand-line epic in the manner of Scott.

Tennyson's college days have a peculiar interest to readers of *The Princess*. In his nineteenth year he entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Here he was soon associated with a remarkable group of young men, most of whom rose to distinction in Church or State in later life. Chief among them was Arthur Hallam, "The man I held as half-divine," with whom Tennyson formed the deep friendship which inspired *In Memoriam*. A friend describes the poet's appearance at that time as "six feet high, broad chested, strong limbed, his face Shakespearian, with deep eyelids, his forehead ample, crowned with dark wavy hair, his head finely poised, his hand the admiration of sculptors. . . . What struck one most about him was the union of strength with refinement." Another, on first seeing him, said, "That man must be a poet." This opinion he fulfilled, while still at Cambridge, by taking the university prize for poetry, and by publishing a volume of poems.

His college life was ended in 1831, by the death of his

father. Two years later Arthur Hallam died. Tennyson had retired to Somersby to take charge of the family and devote himself to poetry. Shortly before Hallam's death (1832) he published his second volume. After this came a decade of silence and quiet growth, whose truest biography perhaps is *In Memoriam*. The fruits of this time of meditation and experience were the two volumes published in 1842 which contained many of his now best-known shorter poems, such as *Locksley Hall* and "*Break, break.*" A significant description of him at this time is given in a letter from Carlyle to Emerson. "Alfred is one of the few to whom your own soul can say, 'Brother!' a man solitary and sad . . . carrying a bit of Chaos about him, in short, which he is manufacturing into Cosmos. One of the finest looking men in the world. A great shock of rough, dusky hair; bright, laughing, hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive, yet most delicate; of sallow brown complexion, almost Indian looking, clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy, smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical, metallic, fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous. I do not meet in these late decades such company over a pipe! We shall see what he will grow to."

On its publication in 1847, *The Princess* was received with adverse criticism and tokens of disappointment from the reading public. Tennyson's position as a poet was by this time too important to permit any production of his to pass unnoticed, yet the methods of his art were still considered somewhat questionable. *The Princess* gave new food for this discussion, especially in the matters of metrical innovations and unusual vocabulary; and it also aroused a new controversy over qualities in which he had not offended before, the structural unity of the poem and his comprehension of his theme. One, not entirely unfavorable, review (*North British Review*, May, 1848) gives the reader "a

notion of the utter want of interest, unity, and purpose in this production, considered merely as a narrative poem; and of its miserable weakness and want of integrity if regarded, as some regard it, as a satire upon learned women."

The causes for this hostile reception were several, and some of them are still potent in present-day judgment of the poem. In the first place, Tennyson's position in the world of letters at that time had given rise to a general expectation of a very different kind of work. While it was still early in his career, yet it was not too early for a sustained masterpiece, something of dignified tone, lofty theme, and chastened style. Through all of the criticism evoked by his preceding volumes, even the most severe, there had been a note of recognition of his promise. His first little book, published in collaboration with his brother in their boyhood (*Poems by Two Brothers*, 1827), had, of course, passed practically unnoticed; his *Poems, chiefly Lyrical*, published during his college course (1830), was noticed in several leading magazines, the *Westminster* going so far as to say "Mr. Tennyson . . . is a poet." His next volume, *Poems* (1832-3) was subjected to an onslaught in the *Quarterly* (No. XCVII.), but, as Spedding wrote later, "The reception though far from triumphant was not inauspicious. . . . The admiration and the ridicule served alike to bring them into notice. . . . His genius was manifestly shaping a peculiar course for itself and finding out its proper business." The volume of 1842, *Poems*, was, however, warmly received; the general verdict was that he had gained in power and simplicity, and had treated English themes in a manner nearer the standard of English poetry. Little poetry had appeared in the decade of his silence, and the public was ripe for a new poet. Several poems of this volume had themes from the legend of King Arthur, a story which poets from Milton onward had con-



sidered the material for a great national epic. Hence, when a little later it was rumored that Tennyson was at work on a long poem, a master work, the easy inference was that he was writing a great English epic with King Arthur as its hero. This disappointment died out with the publication in later years of the *Idylls of the King*.

A second cause was the inaptitude of the theme of *The Princess*. It was a subject too fanciful for dignified treatment, or else too weighty for poetry, according to the views of different readers. The education of women had not reached a point where it could be discussed with humor. The chief depreciation of the poem in this matter centred around the character of the Princess Ida, who was neither heroic enough for one class of readers nor feminine enough for another. The mock-heroic treatment offended all varieties of readers.

A third cause was that neither critics nor readers were susceptible to the peculiarly rich artistic beauty of the poem. *The Princess* has been called "a splendid failure." But, whatever their opinion in regard to its failure, its first readers were unable to perceive its splendor.

The first to champion the poem was Professor James Hadley of Yale, in 1849, who defended the structural art underlying the medley of "every clime and age," and also pointed out the exquisite metrical effects and the charm of language. Other critics, notably Charles Kingsley, Aubrey de Vere and F. W. Robertson, helped swell the rising current of praise and elucidation. The third edition (1850) contributed not a little to this later view by its inclusion of the lyrics. But perhaps more than by anything else it was popularized by the publication of *In Memoriam* in 1850, which reestablished, and this time steadfastly, Tennyson's place among English poets, and in the hearts of English-speaking people.

The remainder of Tennyson's long life was chiefly one of

two unaccented followed by one accented syllable, takes the place of the first iambic foot in —

“ *We are twice* as quick. And here she shook aside.”

Of the second in —

“ By *glimmering lanes* and walls of canvas led.”

Of the third in —

“ Your faces there *in the crowd* — to-morrow morn.”

Of the fourth in —

“ Of thunder-shower, she floated *to us* and said.”

Of the fifth in —

“ Better have died and spilt our bones *in the flood.*”

The *dactyl*, an accented syllable followed by two unaccented, thus being a kind of prolonged trochee, as the anapæst is a prolonged iambus, takes the place of the first iambic foot in —

“ *Muttering* dissolved ; then with a smile that look'd.”

Of the third in —

“ Whispers of war, *entering* the sudden light.”

Of the first and second (with an extra syllable),—

“ *Myriads of rivulets* hurrying thro' the lawn.”

It should be noticed that the use of the anapæsts and dactyls gives a rippling movement which can be used for certain musical effects corresponding to the thought of the line.

The second alteration, that of shifting the cæsural pause, is used chiefly for structural breaks within the paragraph, thus adding rhetorical force to the metrical emphasis of certain words or phrases. The farther the pause is removed from its natural position after the third foot, the greater is the emphasis thrown on the syllables immediately

preceding or following it. If it occurs in the middle of a foot, the emphasis on the accented word of that foot is greater than when it comes between feet. An example of its occurrence in the fifth foot, thus throwing eloquent emphasis on the ironic monosyllable, is, —

“ And every spoken tongue should lord you — *Sir*,  
Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us.”

Of its occurrence just after the first syllable, —

“ *Peace!* there are those to avenge us and they come.”

“ And all the plain, brand, mace, and shaft and shield —  
*Shocked*, like an iron-clanging anvil banged.”

It may be noted that there are verses in which the cæsural pause is scarcely perceptible; these are usually in passages of simple description. Shiftings of the cæsural pause occur most frequently in passages of speech, especially of eloquent or dramatic speech, and in passages of description of quick and irregular action, as of a battle. Verses occur also, but not frequently, in which there are two cæsural pauses, a minor and a major. For example: —

“ If not — myself were like enough, O girls.”

Another infrequent device is the addition of an unaccented syllable after the last foot, giving what is known as the feminine or weak ending.

An example is, —

“ As strangely as it came, and on my *spirits*,  
Settled a gentle cloud of *melancholy*.”

II. *Lyrics*. The eleven lyrics of *The Princess* are greatly varied in metrical structure. The definition of the lyric requires that it should be musical in sound, and emotional in thought. The former requirement usually is fulfilled by a

freer use of the different metrical feet than is usual in blank verse; by variation in verse length, and by use of rime, which groups the verses in stanzas. Other devices, such as alliteration, tone-color, and feminine endings, are used more frequently than in blank verse. It is chiefly by use of these latter devices in place of the more usual, mentioned before, that Tennyson makes the *blank verse lyric*, "Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height" (Canto VII.), truly lyrical in form as it is undoubtedly lyrical in emotion; the last three lines are wonderfully musical, but the seventh and eighth —

" And come, for Love is of the valley, come  
For Love is of the valley, come thou down,"

have more of the singing quality peculiarly appropriate to emotional expression. Other unrimed lyrics occur in *The Princess*; but by sentence structure and refrains these are broken into stanzas. An excellent example is, "Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white" (Canto III.); where each stanza is distinguished by the initial word "now," and the closing word "me," this latter giving an effect of rime; each stanza is also distinct as an independent sentence, yet they are purposely similar in thought and in grammatical structure. A very different theme is managed in the same way in the song of triumph, "Our enemies have fall'n" (Canto II.). Here the blank verse falls into stanzas because of the initial phrase of each sentence. The same method is used in the exquisite "Tears, idle tears" (Canto IV.), where in place of an initial phrase we have the refrain phrase at the end of each stanza, "the days that are no more." Aside from this the deep emotion is given lyrical expression by the tone-color and the measured syllables. The fifth of the unrimed lyrics, "Oh, swallow, swallow, flying, flying south" (Canto IV.), effects a stanzaic structure

chiefly by sentences; and also by the use of parallelism, a device familiar in the Psalms. An example is, —

“ And brief the sun of summer in the north,  
And brief the moon of beauty in the south.”

Another kind of lyric in which Tennyson is peculiarly successful is that which contains a suggestion of a story and is couched in very simple meter. These may be termed *ballad-lyrics*. The best example is “Home they brought her warrior dead.” The meter is that used in many old ballads, iambic, four-accented (tetrameter), xa xa xa xa. Nearly always, however, the first syllable is omitted (catalectic verse). These verses are grouped in stanzas of four, bound together by alternate rimes, as “dead, cry, said, die,” (a b a b). In this lyric and in the next, the expression of emotion is not put in the mouth of the speaker but is described as that of a third person. The meter in the next, “Thy voice is heard through rolling drums” (Canto IV.), is the same except that it is not catalectic. The third ballad-lyric, “As thro’ the land at eve we went,” differs from the preceding two in having a more complicated system of rimes and a refrain at the close of each stanza, as well as in being directly expressed. It also substitutes three-accented verses several times for the prevailing four-accented. The rime scheme expressed in alphabetical symbols is: a b c b, d b e b, f b g g b.

The three remaining lyrics have more of the singing quality than the preceding, and may perhaps be designated as *song-lyrics*. The simplest of these in metrical scheme is “Ask me no more” (Canto VI.). The meter is regularly five-accented; the rime scheme, a b b a; its distinguishing feature is the refrain, “Ask me no more,” at the beginning and end of each stanza. The skilful manner in which it is woven into the thought of the poem, adding a new touch each time, should be studied. And especially noticeable is

the monosyllabic quality, there being only eight polysyllabic words in the lyric. A more elaborate metrical structure belongs to "The splendor falls on castle walls." The basis is the ballad meter, iambic of four accents, and stanzas of four verses alternately rimed. To each stanza is added a two-verse refrain of six-accented verses. The structure is further complicated by the introduction of *mid-verse rime* in the first and third verses of each stanza, e.g., "The splendor *falls* on castle *walls*. The refrain verses contain a great deal of repetition of words; they also have peculiarly interesting, irregular pauses, imitative of the sound of a bugle and its echoes. The last lyric, the lullaby, "Sweet and low" (Canto III.), has almost every technical device of the lyric. The general movement is iambic, but the verses are catalectic; very often a pause is substituted for an unaccented syllable, as in "*Low, low, breathe and blow,*" where there are four accents and only five syllables; if an "and" is supplied before each accented syllable, the value of the pause is obvious. Anapæstic feet are supplied in several verses, as, "*Father will come to his babe in the nest.*" The verses are alternately of four and three accents, except the refrain which has five. The swing of rhythm is kept by the vowel length and rhetorical importance of the accented syllables. The lullaby effect is gained by the frequency of pauses in place of unaccented syllables; this gives the full time to pronounce the accented syllable and let it die away. It is helped, too, by the very frequent repetition of words, because a repeated word is received by the mind half unconsciously, the sound of it being familiar. The singing quality and the lullaby quality are further heightened by the rime-scheme which repeats the rime sound so many times in each stanza; it is ab ab aa bc. The lyric has also great richness of alliteration and tone-color, a subject which will be treated under the next section.

III. *Tone-color.* The poet has at his command, in addi-

tion to the varied resources of the purely metrical art, which deals chiefly with accent and measure, the more subtle material of the sounds of words or of letters. All such delicate effects may for the present be roughly, but inadequately, classified under the general term of *tone-color*. To a sensitive ear, every speech sound has an expressive quality aside from its intellectual significance, a quality which may be used to supplement the thought expressed in the word. Tennyson was peculiarly gifted in this respect; it would be easy to go largely into the subject with illustrations from his work, but it is possible here to touch upon only a few scattered points of the matter.

In the first place, *alliteration* (or initial rime) may be considered under this head, for, although it once had the function of rime — that of tying verses together — yet it now is used chiefly for tone-effect. An example of the effectiveness of the slight hiss of the *s* sound is in —

“ Like silver hammers falling  
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir  
Of fountains spouted up and showering down.”

The liquid quality of *l* and the muted *b* give a low, sleepy tone to —

“ Low, low, breathe and blow.”

An oddly expressive effect is given in —

“ Modulate me, soul of mincing mimicry.”

A less obvious device mingles alliteration, or *initial* rime, proper with the employment of words in which this alliterative letter (*rime-sound*) occurs, but not as the initial, a form of alliteration sometimes called *lurking*. For example: —

“ The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees.”

Often the alliteration, initial and lurking, plays upon two or more sounds, as in —

“ Now *slides* the *silent* meteor on, and *leaves*. ”

“ Of *solemn* psalms and *silver* litanies. ”

Another form of tone-color, one to which the term is more exactly applicable, deals with the sounds of vowels instead of consonants. Tennyson is especially felicitous in the use of open “ round ” *o* sounds, to give an effect of rich melody, as in —

“ While the great organ almost burst his pipes  
Groaning for power, and rolling thro’ the court.  
A long melodious thunder. ”

And in —

“ Over the rolling waters go. ”

Another effect of *o*, that of suggesting roundness, is in —

“ Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere. ”

An example of light, short vowel sounds in connection with light consonants is —

“ Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts  
Of gentle satire, kin to charity. ”

An effective use of short *u* comes in —

“ I heard the puffed pursuer, at mine ear  
Bubbled the nightingale. ”

The use of tone-color to give beautiful effects, as in the preceding examples, is most frequent in the lyrics and in lyrical passages of the blank verse: there are other passages where it is used to give harshness and ugliness fitting the subject; this is most often attained by consonants as in —

“ Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names  
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,  
Amygdaloid and trachyte. ”

“ Thereat the Lady stretch’d a vulture throat  
And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile. ”



## III. CRITICAL COMMENTS

“We have remarked five distinct excellencies of his own manner. First, his luxuriance of imagination, and, at the same time, his control over it. Secondly, his power of embodying himself in ideal characters, or, rather, moods of character, with such extreme accuracy of adjustment that the circumstances of the narration seem to have a natural correspondence with the predominant feeling, and, as it were, to be evolved from it by assimilative force. Thirdly, his vivid, picturesque delineation of objects and the peculiar skill with which he holds all of them *fused*, to borrow a metaphor from science, in a medium of strong emotion. Fourthly, the variety of his lyrical measures and exquisite modulation of harmonious words and cadences to the swell and fall of the feelings expressed. Fifthly, the elevated habits of thought, implied in these compositions, and imparting a mellow soberness of tone, more impressive to our minds than if the author had drawn up a set of opinions in verse and sought to instruct the understanding, rather than to communicate the love of beauty to the heart.” — A. H. HALLAM.

“After all that may be said about the absurdity and incoherence of the story, it certainly produces the impression of reality in a degree which, when the nature of the incidents is considered, must be thought truly wonderful. So vividly and clearly does the poet delineate the creatures of his fancy that we cannot help viewing them as actual existences. We find ourselves sympathizing with the Prince, and wishing him success in his arduous suit. We feel the rush of breathless expectation in the hot mêlée of the tourney. We wait anxiously the turn of fate beside the sick-bed of the wounded lover. We give him our heartiest congratulations on his eventual recovery and success. It is

only when we set ourselves to criticising that we are struck with the improbability of that which moved us, and become ashamed of our former feelings. In no former production has the author succeeded in giving so much the air of reality to the objects of his imagination; nor has he shown in any one so much delicacy and distinctness in the delineation of character." — JAMES HADLEY.

"The poem of *The Princess*, as a work of art, is the most complete and satisfying of all Tennyson's works. It possesses a play of fancy, of humor, of pathos, and of passion which give it variety; while the feeling of unity is unbroken throughout. It is full of passages of the rarest beauty and most exquisite workmanship. The songs it contains are unsurpassed in English literature. The diction is drawn from the treasure-house of old English poetry, — from Chaucer, from Shakespeare, and the poets of the Elizabethan age. The versification is remarkable for its variety; while the rhythm, in stateliness and expression, is modelled upon Milton. There are passages which, in power over language to match sound with sense, are not excelled by anything in *Paradise Lost* for strength, or in Milton's minor poems for sweetness. The poem abounds also in evidences of the prophetic insight which has already been referred to as the mark of a true poet. In the year 1847, long before Darwin had commenced the present great revolution in scientific thought, evolutionary theories were propounded by the poet in the imaginary halls of his female university. Huxley himself could not have sketched more vividly than the Lady Psyche the progressive development of the world from the primal cosmic vapor. The Princess, with the accuracy taught only recently by the spectroscope, calls the sun 'a nebulous star.' When she gets her mind off the brooch, she becomes really profound in her analysis of our notions of creation as stages of successive acts. Our minds, she teaches, are so constituted that we must *of necessity*

apprehend everything in the form and aspect of successive time; but, in the Almighty fiat, 'Let there be light,' the whole of the complex potentialities of the universe were in fact hidden." — S. E. DAWSON.

"The affections cannot be repressed; without love, life is unfinished. Apart from this underlying motive, which rises to the surface only with the end of the poem, *The Princess* is little but a dreamy story to read in a garden on a summer afternoon, full of music, and fuller still of rich and suggestive imagery. The insertion of the songs, delicate and beautiful in themselves, serves only to accentuate the artificiality of the whole work. Tennyson's detractors are ready to accuse him of over-refinement; of an eye too prone to color, and an ear too sensitive to melody, losing in their rapture the sights and sounds of the real, eternal truth. If such accusation were to be urged, it could perhaps, be best urged from an analysis of *The Princess*. For here Tennyson is in his dreamiest and his least virile mood; here he indulges his senses to the waste of his thought. There is a time for everything; and *The Princess* is not without its special charm. It is not Tennyson's highest work, neither is it his lowest; it merely requires a sympathetic temperament in the reader to appear satisfying. It needs a temperament of momentary laziness, apt to languor and inclined to a light satire, which shall not busy itself to wound too deeply. With this mind, we shall find *The Princess* a storehouse of good things, a midsummer day's dream with a spell and fantasy that hold us to the end." — ARTHUR WAUGH.

"*The Princess* enshrines the woman's question as it appeared nearly fifty years ago; and, considering all that has been done since then, it is a prophetic utterance. He has touched with grace and clearness a number of the phases of opinion which now prevail, and which then had only begun to prevail, embodying each phase in one of his characters.

The woman's question owes a great deal to *The Princess*."  
— STOPFORD A. BROOKE.

"*The Princess* is undoubtedly Tennyson's greatest effort, if not exactly in comedy, in a vein verging towards the comic—a side on which he was not so well equipped for offence or for defence as on the other. But it is a masterpiece. Exquisite as its author's verse always is, it was never more exquisite than here, whether in blank verse or in the (superadded) lyrics; while none of his deliberately arranged plays contains characters half so good as those of the *Princess* herself, of *Lady Blanche* and *Lady Psyche*, of *Cyril*, of the two kings, and even of one or two others, and that, glanced at, enabled him to carry off whatever was fantastical in the conception with almost unparalleled felicity. It may or may not be agreed that the question of the equality of the sexes is one of the distinguishing questions of this century; and some of those who would give it that position may or may not maintain, if they think it worth while, that it is treated here too lightly, while their opponents may wish that it had been treated more lightly still. But this very difference will point the unbiassed critic to the same conclusion, that Tennyson has hit the golden mean; while that, whatever he has hit or missed in subject, the verse of his essay is golden, no one who is competent will doubt. Such lyrics as 'The splendor falls,' and 'Tears, idle tears,' such blank verse as that of the closing passage, would raise to the topmost heights of poetry whatever subject it was spent upon." — GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

I wish to acknowledge my grateful obligation to Mr. Fullerton L. Waldo, of the Pomfret School, Pomfret Centre, Connecticut, and to Mr. Alexander Wheeler, of the Bridgeport High School, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, for practical suggestions; and to Dr. Eleanor P. Hammond, of the University of Chicago, for assistance in matters of scholarship.

MARY BOWEN.

WELLESLEY COLLEGE, 1900.

# 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  
5 The neighbouring borough with their Institute  
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.

10 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,  
15 Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;  
And on the tables every clime and age  
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,  
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans  
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,  
20 Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,  
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 armour hung.

- 25 And "this," he said, "was Hugh's at Agincourt;  
 And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:  
 A good 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,  
 30 Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings  
 Who laid about them at their wills and died;  
 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.
- 35 "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 —  
 40 Her stature more than mortal in the burst  
 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,  
 45 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;  
 50 And, I all rapt in this, "Come out," he said,  
 "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;  
 55 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,  
60 And drew, from butts of water on the slope,  
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  
65 A man with knobs and wires and vials fired  
A cannon. Echo answer'd in her sleep  
From hollow fields: and here were telescopes  
For azure views; and there a group of girls  
In circle waited, whom the electric shock  
70 Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter: round the lake  
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied,  
And shook the lilies: perch'd about the knolls,  
A dozen angry models jetted steam:  
A petty railway ran: a fire balloon  
75 Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves,  
And dropt a fairy parachute, and past:  
And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph  
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro  
Between the mimic stations; so that sport  
80 Went hand in hand with science; otherwhere  
Pure sport: a herd of boys with clamour bowl'd  
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  
85 And shadow, while the twangling violin  
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead  
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;  
90 And long we gazed, but satiated at length  
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-elaspt,  
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  
 95 The sward was trim as any garden lawn :  
 And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,  
 And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends  
 From neighbour seats : and there was Ralph himself,  
 A broken statue propt against the wall,  
 100 As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,  
 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  
 105 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,  
 110 And all things great ; but we, unworthier, told  
 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,  
 115 But honeying at the whisper of a lord ;  
 And one the master, as a rogue in grain  
 Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw  
 The feudal warrior lady-clad ; which brought  
 120 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 ner  
 That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,  
 And much I praised her nobleness, and " Where,"  
 125 Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay  
 Beside him) " lives there such a woman now ? "







“And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.”

Quick answer'd Lilia "There are thousands now  
 Such women, but convention beats them down:  
 It is but bringing up; no more than that:  
 130 You men have done it: how I hate you all!  
 Ah, were I something great! I wish I were  
 Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,  
 That love to keep us children! Oh, I wish  
 That I were some great princess! I would build  
 135 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  
 140 If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt  
 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  
 145 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-sandal'd foot:  
 150 "That's your light way; but I would make it death  
 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:  
 155 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  
 160 At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics ;  
 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,  
 165 The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,  
 Part banter, part affection.

“True,” she said,

“We doubt not that. Oh, 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  
 170 Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,  
 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 !” he said.  
 175 “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,  
 180 So molder'd in a sinecure as he :  
 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 —  
 185 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  
 190 As here at Christmas.”

She remember'd that :

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

195 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,  
 200 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.  
 "Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?"  
 205 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,  
 210 And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth  
 An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,  
 Hid in the ruins; till the maiden Aunt  
 (A little sense of wrong had touch'd her face  
 With colour) turn'd to me with, "As you will;  
 215 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  
 220 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,  
225 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 —  
230 This *were* a medley! we should have him back  
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  
235 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.

## CANTO 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.

5 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  
10 Should come to fight with shadows and to fall.  
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 :  
15 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,  
20 And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd "catalepsy."  
My mother pitying made a thousand prayers, —  
My mother was as mild as any saint,  
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,  
So gracious was her tact and tenderness.  
25 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  
 30 For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,  
 While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd  
 To one, a neighbouring Princess: she to me  
 Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf  
 At eight years old; and still from time to time  
 35 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.

40 But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,  
 My father sent ambassadors with furs  
 And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back  
 A present, a great labour of the loom;  
 And therewithal an answer vague as wind:  
 45 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.

50 That morning in the presence room I stood  
 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,  
 55 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,  
 60 Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent  
 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  
 65 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,  
 70 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,  
 75 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."  
 80 And Cyril whisper'd : "Take me with you, too."  
 Then, laughing, "what, if these weird seizures 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 ;  
 85 I grate on rusty hinges here : " but, "No !" .  
 Roar'd the rough king, "you shall not ; we ourself  
 Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead  
 In iron gauntlets : break the council up."

But when the council broke, I rose and past  
 90 Thro' the wild woods that hung about the town ;  
 Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out ;

Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed  
 In the green gleam of dewy-tassel'd trees :  
 What were those fancies ? wherefore break her troth ?

95 Proud look'd the lips : but, while I meditated,  
 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."

100 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 clamour at our backs  
 105 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,  
 110 And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,  
 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  
 115 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,  
 120 Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,  
 " All honour. We remember love ourselves  
 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.

- 125 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
- 130 The woman were an equal to the man.  
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,
- 135 Was all in all: they had but been, she thought,  
As children; they must lose the child, assume  
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
- 140 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 masterpieces:
- 145 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
- 150 For maidens, on the spur she fled; and more  
We know not, — only this: they see no men,  
Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins  
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon her  
As on a kind of paragon; and I
- 155 (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

160 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)  
 165 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,  
 170 Close at the boundary of the liberties ;  
 There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host  
 To council, plied him with his richest wines,  
 And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared  
 175 As blank as death in marble ; then exclaim'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 ?  
 180 The king would bear him out ;" and at the last —  
 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 ;  
 185 She look'd as grand as doomsday and as grave :  
 And he, he reverenced 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  
 190 Was till'd by women ; all the swine were sows,  
 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,  
 195 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  
 200 We rustled : him we gave a costly bribe  
 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  
 205 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,  
 210 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  
 Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling  
 On silver anvils, and the splash and stir  
 215 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,  
 220 By two sphere lamps, blazon'd like Heaven and Earth  
 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.

225 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,  
230 "And Lady Psyche." "Which was prettiest,  
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:

235 "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,  
240 And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes:  
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, glaz'd with muffled moonlight, swell  
245 On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.





“Oh, there above the little grave,  
We kiss'd again with tears.”



As thro' the land at eve we went,  
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,  
We fell out, my wife and I,  
Oh, we fell out, I know not why,  
And kiss'd again with tears.  
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 lay the child  
We lost in other years,  
There above the little grave,  
Oh, there above the little grave,  
We kiss'd again with tears!

## CANTO 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,  
5 And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,  
She, curtseying 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  
10 Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths  
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 ;  
15 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,  
20 All beauty compass'd in a female form,  
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  
25 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 redound  
 Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,  
 30 The first-fruits of the stranger : aftertime,  
 And that full voice which circles round the grave,  
 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,”  
 35 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  
 40 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,  
 45 We dream not of him : when we set our hand  
 To this great work, we purposed with ourself  
 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,  
 50 Some future time, if so indeed you will,  
 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  
 55 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,  
 60 We enter’d on the boards : and “ Now,” she cried,  
 “ Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall !

Our statues! — not of those that men desire,  
 Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,  
 Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she  
 65 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  
 70 That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows  
 Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose  
 Convention, since to look on noble forms  
 Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism  
 That which is higher. Oh, lift your natures up:  
 75 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  
 80 Than not be noble. Leave us: you may go:  
 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

85 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 bosoms on the thatch,  
 A patient range of pupils; she herself  
 90 Erect behind a desk of satinwood,  
 A quick brunette, well-molded, 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,  
 95 Her maiden babe, a double April old,

Aglaia 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,"  
 100 Said Cyril. "Oh, hush, hush!" and she began.

"This world was once a fluid haze of light,  
 Till toward the center set the starry tides,  
 And eddied into suns that, wheeling, cast  
 The planets: then the monster, then the man;  
 105 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;  
 110 Glanced at the legendary Amazon  
 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  
 115 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 Mahomet  
 With much contempt, and came to chivalry:  
 120 When some respect, however slight, was paid  
 To woman, superstition all awry:  
 However then commenced the dawn: a beam  
 Had slanted forward, falling in a land  
 Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,  
 125 Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared  
 To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,  
 Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert  
 None lordlier than themselves but that which made

Woman and man. She had founded; they must build.  
 130 Here might they learn whatever men were taught:  
 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  
 135 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  
 140 Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth  
 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  
 145 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,  
 150 And bow'd her state to them, that they might grow  
 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,  
 155 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  
 160 Of science, and the secrets of the mind:  
 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."

165 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  
170 Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried,  
"My brother!" "Well, my sister." "Oh," said she,  
"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!  
175 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  
180 The softer Adams of your Academe,  
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  
185 Binds me to speak, and oh that iron will,  
That ax-like 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,  
190 And cut this epitaph above my bones, —  
*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:

195 "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.”  
 200 “O Sir, O Prince! I have no country; none;  
 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,  
 205 Who am not mine, say, live: the thunderbolt  
 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,  
 210 To scare the fowl from fruit: if more there be,  
 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  
 215 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,  
 220 “The fifth in line from that old Florian,  
 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,  
 225 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,



230 Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,  
 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

235 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 for ever which I seem,  
 240 Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,  
 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  
 245 Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient 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."

250 "Are you that Psyche," Florian ask'd, "to whom,  
 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  
 255 Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.  
 That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.  
 Oh, by the bright head of my little niece,  
 You were that Psyche, and what are you now?"

"You are that Psyche," Cyril said again,  
 260 "The mother of the sweetest little maid,  
 That ever crow'd for kisses."

"Out upon it!"

She answer'd, "peace! and why should I not play

The Spartan Mother with emotion, be  
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind ?  
 265 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  
 270 Of half this world, be swerved from right to save  
 A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.  
 Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.  
 Oh hard, when love and duty clash! I fear  
 My conscience will not count me fleckless; yet—  
 275 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."

280 What could we else, we promised each; and she,  
 Like some wild creature newly caged, commenced  
 A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused  
 By Florian; holding out her lily arms,  
 Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said:  
 285 "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.  
 290 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  
 From out a common vein of memory  
 Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,  
 295 And far allusion, till the gracious dews

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  
 300 The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,  
 Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
 A rosy blonde, and in a college gown  
 That clad her like an April daffodilly  
 (Her mother's color), with her lips apart,  
 305 And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes  
 As bottom agates seem 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!  
 310 You heard us?" And Melissa, "Oh, 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."  
 315 "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  
 320 This whole foundation ruin, and I lose  
 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  
 325 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

330 Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls  
 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,  
 335 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  
 340 Your promise : all, I trust, may yet be well."

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,  
 And held her round the knees against his waist,  
 And blew the swell'd cheek of a trumpeter,  
 While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the child  
 345 Push'd her flat hand against his face and laugh'd ;  
 And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd

For half the day thro' stately theaters  
 Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard  
 The grave Professor. On the lecture slate  
 350 The circle rounded under female hands  
 With flawless demonstration : follow'd then  
 A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
 With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted out  
 By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
 355 And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long  
 That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time  
 Sparkle for ever : then we dipt in all  
 That treats of whatsoever is, the state,  
 The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
 360 The morals, something of the frame, the rock,  
 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,  
 365 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 ?"  
 370 " Ungracious !" answer'd Florian ; " have you learnt  
 No more from Psyche's lecture, you that talk'd  
 The trash that made me sick, and almost sad ?"  
 " Oh, trash," he said, " but with a kernel in it.  
 Should I not call her wise, who made me wise ?  
 375 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  
 380 Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,  
 Whence follows many a vacant pang ; but oh !  
 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 ;  
 385 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  
 390 Flatter myself that always everywhere  
 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 ?  
 395 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! Oh, to hear  
 400 The Doctors! Oh, to watch the thirsty plants  
 Imbibing! Once or twice I thought to roar,  
 To break my chain, to shake my mane: but thou  
 Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry!  
 Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat;  
 405 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  
 410 Will wonder why they came: but hark, the bell  
 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  
 415 In colours gayer than the morning mist,  
 The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.  
 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,  
 420 The second-sight of some Astræan age,  
 Sat compass'd with professors! they, the while,  
 Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro:  
 A clamour thicken'd, mixt with inmost terms  
 Of art and science: Lady Blanche alone  
 425 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  
 Concluded, and we sought the gardens: there  
 430 One walk'd reciting by herself, and one  
 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  
435 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  
440 Was passing: what was learning unto them?  
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  
445 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,  
450 While the great organ almost burst his pipes,  
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  
455 A blessing on her labours 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.





“Rest, rest, on mother’s breast,  
Father will come to thee soon.”



### CANTO 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

5 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,

10 Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes  
The circled Iris of a night of tears;

“And fly,” she cried, “oh, 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;

15 Yet mine in part. Oh, 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;

20 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:

25 *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 oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek  
 30 Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye  
 To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd :  
 ' O marvelously modest maiden, you !  
 Men ! girls, like men ! why, if they had been men,  
 You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus  
 35 For wholesale comment.' Pardon, I am ashamed  
 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 indeed —  
 40 And with that woman closeted for hours !'  
 Then came these dreadful words out one by one,  
 ' Why — these — *are* — men ' : I shudder'd : ' and you know it.'  
 ' Oh, ask me nothing,' I said : ' And she knows too,  
 And she conceals it.' So my mother clutch'd  
 45 The truth at once, but with no word from me ;  
 And now thus early risen she goes to inform  
 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."

50 " What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush ? "  
 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  
 55 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  
 60 He scarce would prosper. " Tell us," Florian ask'd,

“How grew this feud betwixt the right and left.”

“Oh, long ago,” she said, “betwixt these two  
Division smolders hidden; ’tis my mother,  
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind

65 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,

70 And from the Queen’s decease she brought her up.

But when your sister came, she won the heart  
Of Ida: they were still together, grew  
(For so they said themselves) inosculated;  
Consonant chords that shiver to one note;

75 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

80 As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

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 now she blush’d again

85 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

90 An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.

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,

95 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 —  
 100 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  
 105 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  
 110 Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd.  
 Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump  
 A league of street in summer solstice down,  
 Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.  
 I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found her there  
 115 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-meek I pray'd  
 Concealment: she demanded who we were,  
 120 And why we came? I fabled nothing fair,  
 But, your example pilot, told her all.  
 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.  
 125 I urged 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,  
 130 'So puddled as it is with favouritism.'  
 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 ;  
 135 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,  
 140 I recommenced ; 'Decide not ere you pause.  
 I find you here but in the second place,  
 Some say the third — the authentic foundress you.  
 I offer boldly : we will seat you highest :  
 Wink at our advent : help my prince to gain  
 145 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 broadening time  
 For ever.' Well, she balanced this a little,  
 150 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.

155 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.

160 Agreed to this, the day fled on thro' all  
 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  
 165 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,  
 170 Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,  
 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;  
 175 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  
 180 The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her, and to me she said:  
 "O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not  
 Too harsh to your companion yestermorn;  
 Unwillingly we spake." "No — not to her,"  
 185 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 ambassadors  
 From him to me? we give you, being strange,  
 A license: speak, and let the topic die."

190 I stammer'd that I knew him — could have wish'd —  
 "Our king expects — was there no precontract?  
 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



195 To follow: surely, if your Highness keep  
 Your purport, you will shock him ev'n 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  
 200 Which men delight in, martial exercise?  
 To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,  
 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:  
 205 We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,  
 Being other — since we learnt our meaning here,  
 To lift the woman's fall'n divinity  
 Upon an even pedestal with man."

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile,  
 210 "And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,  
 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."

215 "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;  
 220 Ere half be done, perchance your life may fail;  
 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  
 225 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,

- 230 “ Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild!  
 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  
 235 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.  
 240 Children — that men may pluck them from our hearts,  
 Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves —  
 Oh, — children — there is nothing upon earth  
 More miserable than she that has a son,  
 And sees him err: nor would we work for fame;  
 245 Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,  
 Who learns the one *πov στω* 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  
 250 By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,  
 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! ”

- 255 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 ;  
 260 We are used to that : for women, up till this  
 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.  
 265 If we could give them surer, quicker proof —  
 Oh, 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  
 270 Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,  
 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  
 275 A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,  
 And danced the colour, 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  
 280 That will be.” “Dare we dream of that,” I ask'd,  
 “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  
 285 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  
 290 One anatomic.” “Nay, we thought of that,”  
 She answer'd, “but it pleased us not : in truth  
 We shudder but to dream our maids should ape

Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,  
 And cram him with the fragments of the grave,  
 295 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 hangs  
 300 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
 Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,  
 For many weary moons before we came,  
 This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself  
 Would tend upon you. To your question now,  
 305 Which touches on the workman and his work.  
 Let there be light and there was light: 'tis 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,  
 310 As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,  
 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 mold  
 315 The woman to the fuller day." She spake,  
 With kindled eyes: we rode a league beyond,  
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came  
 On flowery levels underneath the crag,  
 Full of all beauty. "Oh, how sweet," I said  
 320 (For I was half-oblivious of my mask),  
 "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,  
 325 Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw  
 The soft white vapour streak the crownèd 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  
330 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
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,  
335 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,  
340 Many a light foot shone like a jewel set  
In the dark crag : and then we turn’d, we wound  
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names  
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,  
345 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun  
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all  
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

The splendour 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 !

Oh hark, oh hear ! how thin and clear,  
And thinner, clearer, farther going !  
Oh sweet and far from cliff and scar  
The horns of Elfland 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 !



“Blow, bugle, blow; set the wild echoes flying.”





## CANTO 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,  
5 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,  
10 And blissful palpitations in the blood,  
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  
15 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,  
20 Of those beside her, smote her harp, and sang.

“ 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,  
25 And thinking of the days that are no more.

30           “ 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.

35           “ 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.

40           “ 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 ! ”

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  
 45 About the molder'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,  
 55 Becomes a cloud : for all things serve their time  
       Toward that great year of equal mights and rights,  
       Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end  
       Found golden : let the past be past ; let be  
       Their cancel'd Babels : tho' the rough kex break  
 60 The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-blown goat

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 poising eagle, burns  
 65 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.”

70 Then I remember’d one myself had made,  
 What time I watch’d the swallow winging south  
 From mine own land, part made long since, and part  
 Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far  
 As I could ape their treble, did I sing : —

75 “ 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 !

80 “ Oh 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.

“ O Swallow, Swallow ! if I could follow, and light  
 Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,  
 And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

85 “ Oh, 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 ?

90 “ Oh tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown :  
 Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,  
 But in the North long since my nest is made.

95

“ Oh 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,  
100 Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,  
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  
105 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! Oh, for such, my friend,  
We hold them slight: they mind us of the time  
110 When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men,  
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.  
115 Poor soul! I had a maid of honour 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  
120 Used to great ends: ourself have often tried  
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.  
125 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  
 130 Whole in ourselves and owed to none! Enough!  
 But now to leaven play with profit, you,  
 Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,  
 That gives the manners of your countrywomen?"

She spoke, and turn'd her sumptuous head with eyes  
 135 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  
 140 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences  
 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;  
 145 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 clamour'd "Flee-the death"; "To horse,"  
 Said Ida; "home! to horse!" and fled, as flies

150 A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk  
 When some one batters at the dovecote doors,  
 Disorderly the women. Alone I stood  
 With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,  
 In the pavilion: there like parting hopes  
 155 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  
 160 In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom:

There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'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  
 165 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  
 170 Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught,  
 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":  
 175 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)  
 180 Across the woods, and less from Indian craft  
 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  
 185 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,  
 190 Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,  
 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

195 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, oh hist!" he said,  
 200 "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.  
 205 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  
 210 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,  
 215 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;  
 220 She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face;  
 And I slept 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  
 225 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 purpl'd, still the clown,  
 To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame  
 230 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.  
 235 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 tamarisk near  
 240 Two proctors leapt upon us, crying, " Names " :  
 He, standing still, was clutch'd ; but I began  
 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 :  
 245 Before me shower'd the rose in flakes ; behind  
 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,  
 250 That claspt 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  
 255 Burn like the mystic fire on a masthead,  
 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 plow, stronger than men,  
 260 Huge women blowzed with health, and wind, and rain,



And labour. 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  
 265 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,  
 270 Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs,  
 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 :  
 275 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 —  
 280 I saw it and grieved — to slacken and to cool ;  
 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,  
 285 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,  
 290 When time should serve ; and thus a noble scheme  
 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  
295 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 ?  
300 But still her lists were swell'd, and mine were lean ;  
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 :  
305 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  
310 From Lady Psyche ' : you had gone to her,  
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 honest heat  
315 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.  
320 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,  
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,  
Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise : now, I thought,  
325 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,  
 330 I grant in her some sense of shame, she flies;  
 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:

335 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."

340 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 ourself."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,  
 345 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  
 350 A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer  
 Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,  
 A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,  
 Appealing to the bolts of Heaven; and while  
 We gazed upon her came a little stir  
 355 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  
 360 Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head  
 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,  
 365 As of some fire against a stormy cloud  
 When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick  
 Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens ;  
 For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,  
 Beaten with some great passion at her heart,  
 370 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  
 375 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  
 380 We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,  
 We, conscious of what temper you are built,  
 Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell  
 Into his father's hands, who has this night,  
 You lying close upon his territory,  
 385 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 :  
 390 Cleave to your contract : tho' indeed we hear  
 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

395 That we this night should pluck your palace 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.

" Oh, not to pry and peer on your reserve,  
 400 But led by golden wishes and a hope,  
 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,  
 405 Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'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  
 410 From all high places, lived in all fair lights,  
 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 wildswan in among the stars  
 415 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 *Cassiopœia*, or the enthroned  
*Persephonè* in *Hades*, now at length,  
 420 Those winters of abeyance all worn 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 center : let me say but this,  
 425 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  
 430 My boyish dream involved and dazzled down  
 And master'd, while that after-beauty 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,  
 435 I cannot cease to follow you, as they say  
 The seal does music; who desire you more  
 Than growing boys their manhood; dying lips,  
 With many thousand matters left to do,  
 The breath of life; oh, more than poor men wealth,  
 440 Than sick men health — yours, yours, not mine — but half  
 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,  
 445 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  
 450 Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce  
 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  
 455 A hubbub in the court of half the maids  
 Gather'd together: from the illumined hall  
 Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er a press  
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,  
 And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,  
 460 And gold and golden heads; they to and fro

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,  
 465 And some they cared not; till a clamour grew  
 As of a new-world Babel, a 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  
 470 Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so  
 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  
 475 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?  
 480 Peace! there are those to avenge us, and they come:  
 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,  
 485 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  
 490 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,  
 495 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,  
 500 For ever slaves at home and fools abroad."

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  
 505 Of thunder shower, she floated to us and said:

"You have done well and like a gentleman,  
 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.  
 510 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,  
 515 You would-be quenchers of the light to be,  
 Barbarians, grosser than your native bears —  
 Oh would I had his scepter for one hour!  
 You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd  
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us —  
 520 *I wed with thee! I bound by precontract*  
 Your bride, your bondslave! 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:  
 525 *I trample on your offers and on you:*  
 Begone: we will not look upon you more.



Here, push them out at gates.”

In wrath she spake.

Then those eight mighty daughters of the plow  
Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd

530 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.

535 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 ;  
540 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,  
545 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

550 To whom the touch of all mischance but came

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-possess'd,  
She struck such warbling fury thro' the words ;  
And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd  
The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime —  
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 colours : 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.  
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 favour, and assumed the Prince.



“A moment, while the trumpets blow,  
He sees his brood about thy knee.”





For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with briers,  
 More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,  
 And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to heel.  
 30 Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm  
 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.  
 35 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 splendours and the golden scale  
 40 Of harness, issued in the sun, that now  
 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  
 45 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  
 Into your father's hand, and, there she lies,  
 50 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 accouterments,  
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,  
 Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,  
 55 And pushed by rude hands from its pedestal,  
 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 womanhood,  
 Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

60 Then Florian knelt, and "Come" he whisper'd to her,  
 "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 comforted:  
 Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,  
 65 When fall'n in darker ways." And likewise 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,  
 70 And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth  
 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?  
 75 Oh, 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,  
 80 My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!  
 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,  
 85 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.  
 90 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,  
 95 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,  
 100 And satisfy my soul with kissing her :  
 Ah ! what might that man not deserve of me  
 Who gave me back my child ? ” “ Be comforted,”  
 Said Cyril, “ you shall have it : ” but again  
 She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so  
 105 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 rumour of Prince Arac hard at hand.  
 We left her by the woman, and without  
 110 Found the gray kings at parle : and, “ Look you,” cried  
 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 ;  
 115 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,  
 120 O king,” I said, “ lest from the abuse of war,  
 The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,  
 The smoldering homestead, and the household flower  
 Torn from the lintel — all the common wrong —  
 A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her  
 125 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,  
 130 By gentleness than war. I want her love.  
 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,  
 135 Not ever would she love; but, 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,  
 140 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,  
 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 spake

My father, "Tut, you know them not, the girls.  
 145 Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think  
 That idiot légend 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;  
 150 They love us for it, and we ride them down.  
 Wheedling and siding with them! Out! 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  
 155 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,

160 Worth winning ; but this firebrand — gentleness  
 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,

165 “ Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier ? 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  
 170 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death,  
 No, not the soldier's : yet I hold her, king,  
 True woman : but you clash them all in one,  
 They have as many differences as we.  
 The violet varies from the lily as far  
 175 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  
 180 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,  
 185 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,  
 190 Not like the piebald miscellany, man,  
 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,



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  
 230 Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
 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  
 235 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 clamour: for among them rose a cry  
 As if to greet the king; they made a halt;  
 240 The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the drum  
 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  
 245 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  
 250 Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,  
 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.  
 255 And I that prated peace, when first I heard  
 War-music, felt the blind wildbeast 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 wandering hand,

260 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 labour'd down within his ample lungs,  
 The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself  
 265 Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words.

“ Our land invaded, 's death ! and he himself  
 Your captive, yet my father wills not war :  
 And, 's death ! myself, what care I, war or no ?  
 But then this question of your troth remains :  
 270 And there's a downright honest meaning in her ;  
 She flies too high, she flies too high ! and yet  
 She ask'd but space and fairplay for her scheme ;  
 She prest and prest it on me — I myself,  
 What know I of these things ? but, life and soul !  
 275 I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs ;  
 I say she flies too high, 's death ! 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,  
 280 And, right or wrong, I care not : this is all,  
 I stand upon her side : she made me swear it —  
 'S death — and with solemn rites by candle-light —  
 Swear by St. something — I forget her name —  
 Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men ;  
 285 *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, 's death ! against my father's will.”

I lagg'd in answer, loth to render up  
 290 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!"  
 295 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,  
 300 "Decide it here: why not? we are three to three."

Then spake the third, "But three to three? no more?  
 No more, and in our noble sister's cause?  
 More, more, for honour: every captain waits  
 Hungry for honour, angry for his king.  
 305 More, more, some fifty on a side, that each  
 May breathe himself, and quick! by overthrow  
 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  
 310 Foam of men's deeds — this honour, if ye will.  
 It needs must be for honour if at all:  
 Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,  
 And if we win, we fail: she would not keep  
 Her compact." "'S death! but we will send to her,"  
 315 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 vainlier than a hen  
 To her false daughters in the pool; for none  
 320 Regarded; neither seem'd there more to say:  
 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  
 325 With her own people's life: three times he went:

The first, he blew and blew, but none appear'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 plow  
 330 Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught his hair,  
 And so belabour'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  
 335 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  
 340 The torrents, dash'd to the vale : and yet her will  
 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 ;  
 345 Himself would till 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 demur :  
 And many a bold knight started up in heat,  
 350 And sware to combat for my claim till death.

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,  
 355 And great bronze valves, emboss'd with Tomyris  
 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,  
 360 With message and defiance, went and came ;  
 Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,  
 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,  
 365 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  
 370 Where smolder their dead despots ; and of those, —  
 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  
 375 That equal baseness lived in sleeker times  
 With smoother men : the old leaven leaven'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.  
 380 Far off from men I built a fold for them :  
 I stored it full of rich memorial :  
 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  
 385 Brake on us at our books, 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 ! —  
 390 I tamed my leopards : shall I not tame these ?  
 Or you ? or I ? for since you think me touch'd  
 In honour — what, I would not aught of false —



Is not our cause pure? And whereas I know  
 Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood  
 395 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 whatso'er you do,  
 Fight, and fight well; strike, and strike home. O  
 dear

400 Brothers! the woman's Angel guards you, you  
 The sole men to be mingled with our cause,  
 The sole men we shall prize in the aftertime,  
 Your very armour hallow'd, and your statues  
 Rear'd, sung to, when, this gadfly brush'd aside,  
 405 We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
 And mold 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,  
 410 And, ever following those two crownèd twins,  
 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.

415 "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  
 420 Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
 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  
 425 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 thunderstorms,  
430 And breed up warriors! See now, tho' yourself  
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,  
435 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:

440 Man to command, and woman to obey;  
All else confusion. Look you! the gray mare  
Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills  
From tile to scullery, and her small goodman  
Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of Hell  
445 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 bantling scald at home, and brawl  
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the street.

450 They say she's comely; there's the fairer chance:  
*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,  
455 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":  
 460 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,  
 And how the strange betrothment was to end:  
 Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's curse —

465 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,

470 '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,  
 We enter'd in and waited, fifty there

Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared

475 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

480 In conflict with the crash of shivering points,  
 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.

485 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,

490 The large blows rain'd, as here and everywhere

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  
 495 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,  
 500 Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,  
 With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,  
 A single band of gold about her hair,  
 Like a Saint's glory up in heaven: but she  
 No saint — inexorable — no tenderness —  
 505 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-molded man,  
 510 His visage all agrin as at a wake,  
 Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering back  
 With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came  
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,  
 515 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 everything  
 Gave way before him: only Florian, he  
 520 That loved me closer than his own right eye,  
 Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down:  
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,  
 With Psyche's colour round his helmet, tough,  
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;  
 525 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote

And threw him: last I spurr'd; 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,  
530 I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth  
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 stept,  
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."



“ ‘Sweet my child, I live for thee.’ ”





## CANTO 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  
5 So often that I speak of 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,  
10 The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran  
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque  
And grovel'd on my body, and after him  
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood  
15 With Psyche's babe in arm : there on the roofs  
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

“ Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : the seed,  
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk  
20 Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

“ Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they came ;  
The leaves were wet with women's tears : they heard  
A noise of songs they would not understand :  
25 They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,  
And would have strown it, and are fall'n themselves.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they came,  
 The woodmen with their axes : lo the tree !  
 But we will make it fagots for the hearth,  
 30 And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
 And boats and bridges for the use of men.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they struck ;  
 With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew  
 There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :  
 35 The glittering ax was broken in their arms,  
 Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

"Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow  
 A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
 Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power : and roll'd  
 40 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 sanctuary  
 Is violate, our laws broken : fear we not  
 45 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,  
 50 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  
 55 The brethren of our blood and cause, that there  
 Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender ministries  
 Of female hands and hospitality."

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,  
 Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led  
 60 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 enamour'd air sighing, and on their curls  
 From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,  
 65 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  
 70 That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,  
 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 ;  
 75 Knelt on one knee, — the child on one, — and prest  
 Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,  
 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  
 80 With female hands and hospitality.”

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,  
 85 Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,  
 Cold ev'n 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  
 90 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past  
 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,

95 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:  
 100 Till understanding all the foolish work  
 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  
 105 A feeling finger on my brows, and presently  
 "O Sire," she said, "he lives: he is not dead:  
 Oh, 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,  
 110 To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make  
 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,  
 115 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-fall'n meteor on the grass,  
 120 Uncared for, spied its mother and began  
 A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance  
 Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms  
 And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal  
 Brook'd not, but clamouring out "Mine — mine — not yours,  
 125 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,  
 130 Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,  
 And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half  
 The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst  
 The laces toward her babe ; but she nor cared  
 Nor knew it, clamouring on, till Ida heard,  
 135 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  
 140 Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd  
 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  
 145 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  
 150 And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,  
 We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your will.  
 What would you more ? give her the child ! remain  
 Orb'd in your isolation : he is dead,  
 Or all as dead : henceforth we let you be :  
 155 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,  
 160 And tread you out for ever : but howsoe'er  
 Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms  
 To hold your own, deny not hers to her,

Give her the child! Oh if, I say, you keep  
 One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved  
 165 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  
 170 The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill,  
 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  
 175 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,  
 180 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  
 185 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 —  
 190 "All good go with thee! take it, Sir," and so  
 Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailèd 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,  
 195 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  
200 For ever : find some other : as for me  
I scarce am fit for your great plans : yet speak to me,  
Say one soft word and let me part forgiven.”

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.  
Then Arac. “ Ida —’s death ! you blame the man ;  
205 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 :  
'S death ! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see it.”

210 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 ?  
215 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  
220 Be near her still ' and I — I sought for one —  
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,  
225 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,  
 230 And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,  
 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,  
 235 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,  
 240 And right ascension, Heaven knows what; and now  
 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?  
 245 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 wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her force  
 250 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,  
 255 Lifting his grim head from my wounds. "O you,  
 Woman, whom we thought woman even now,  
 And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,  
 Because he might have wish'd it — but we see  
 The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,  
 260 And think that you might mix his draught with death



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 dimn'd her broke  
265 A genial warmth and light once more, and shone  
Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.

" Come hither,  
O Psyche ! " she cried out ; " embrace me, come,  
Quick while I melt ; make reconcilment sure  
With one that cannot keep her mind an hour :  
270 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,  
275 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,  
280 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 :  
285 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  
290 The soft and milky rabble of womankind,  
Poor weakling ev'n 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 —  
295 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,  
300 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  
305 Your Highness: but your Highness breaks with ease  
The law your Highness did not make: 'twas I.  
I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,  
And block'd them out; but these men came to woo  
Your Highness — verily I think to win.”

310 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,  
315 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  
320 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

325 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  
 330 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  
 335 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 center stood  
 340 The common men with rolling eyes ; amazed  
 They glared upon the women, and aghast  
 The women stared at these, all silent, save  
 When armour clash'd or jingled, while the day,  
 Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot  
 345 A flying splendour 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,  
 350 And shuddering fled from room to room, and died  
 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  
 355 To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due  
 To languid limbs and sickness ; left me in it ;  
 And others everywhere they laid ; and all

That afternoon a sound arose of hoof  
And chariot, many a maiden passing home  
360 Till happier times ; but some were left of those  
Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,  
From those two hosts that lay beside the walls,  
Walk'd at their will, and everything was changed.





“Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:  
I strove against the stream and all in vair.”

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.

## CANTO 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 :  
5 A kindlier influence reign'd ; and everywhere  
Low voices with the ministering hand  
Hung round the sick : the maidens came, they talk'd,  
They sang, they read : till she not fair began  
To gather light, and she that was became  
10 Her former beauty treble ; and to and fro  
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,  
15 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,  
20 And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze  
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud  
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,  
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,  
And suck the blinding splendour from the sand,  
25 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.

30 And twilight dawn'd; and morn by morn the lark  
 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,  
 35 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.

40 But Psyche tended Florian: with her oft,  
 Melissa came; for Blanche had gone, but left  
 Her child among us, willing she should keep  
 Court-favour: here and there the small bright head,  
 A light of healing, glanced about the couch,  
 45 Or thro' the parted silks the tender face  
 Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man  
 With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves  
 To wile the length from languorous hours, and draw  
 The sting from pain; nor seem'd it strange that soon  
 50 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,  
 55 And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'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 ;  
 60 Not tho' he built upon the babe restored ;  
 Nor 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  
 65 A moment, and she heard, at which her face  
 A little flush'd, and she passed on ; but each  
 Assumed from thence a half-consent involved  
 In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred halls  
 70 Held carnival at will, and flying struck  
 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 ;  
 75 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  
 80 " You are not Ida " ; clasp it once again,  
 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,  
 85 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  
 90 On flying Time from all their silver tongues —  
 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,  
 95 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,  
 100 Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears  
 By some cold morning glacier; frail at first  
 And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
 But such as gather'd colour day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death  
 105 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  
 110 The forum, and half-crush'd among the rest  
 A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other side  
 Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,  
 A train of dames: by ax and eagle sat,  
 With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,  
 115 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 more  
 120 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

125 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 whisperingly :

130 " If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,  
 I would but ask you to fulfill 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.  
 135 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 ;  
 140 She stoop'd ; and out of languor leapt a cry ;  
 Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death ;  
 And I believed that in the living world  
 My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips ;  
 Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose  
 145 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 mold that other, when she came  
 From barren deeps to conquer all with love ;  
 150 And down the streaming crystal dropt ; and she  
 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,  
 155 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 :  
 160 There to herself, all in low tones, she read.

“ Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white ;  
 Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk ;  
 Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font :  
 The fire-fly wakens : waken thou with me.

165 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.

170 Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
 A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
 And slips into the bosom of the lake :  
 So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
 Into my bosom and be lost in me.”

175 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 splendour of the hills ?  
 180 But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease  
 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  
 185 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,  
 190 Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,

Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,  
 That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls  
 To roll the torrent out of dusky doors :  
 But follow ; let the torrent dance thee down  
 195 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 :  
 200 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 ;  
 205 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 perfect face ;  
 210 The bosom with long sighs labour'd ; and meek  
 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 ;  
 215 That all her labour 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.  
 220 She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her  
 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 :  
 225 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,  
 230 Till the Sun drop, dead, from the signs.”

Her voice

Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,  
 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  
 235 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  
 240 Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws ;  
 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 :  
 245 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,  
 250 How shall men grow ? but work no more alone !  
 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 —  
 255 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't man,

- 260 But diverse : could we make her as the man,  
 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 ;
- 265 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,
- 270 Like perfect music unto noble words ;  
 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,
- 275 Distinct in individualities,  
 But like each other ev'n as those who love.  
 Then comes the statelier Eden back to men :  
 Then reigns the world's great bridals, chaste and calm :  
 Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
- 280 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 watchword rest  
 Of equal ; seeing either sex alone  
 Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
- 285 Nor equal, nor unequal : each fulfills  
 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,
- 290 Life.”

And again sighing she spoke : “ A dream  
 That once was mine ! what woman taught you this ? ”







“ . . . . . Happy he  
With such a mother ! ”

"Alone," I said, "from earlier than I know,  
 Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,  
 I loved the woman: he, that doth not, lives  
 295 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,  
 300 Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,  
 No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
 In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
 Interpreter between the Gods and men,  
 Who look'd all native to her place, and yet  
 305 On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere  
 Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce  
 Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,  
 And girdled her with music. Happy he  
 With such a mother! faith in womankind  
 310 Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high  
 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:  
 315 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,  
 320 Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw  
 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,  
 Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro' thee,

325 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,  
330 Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,  
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  
335 Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come  
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels  
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me,  
I waste my heart in signs : let be. My bride,  
My wife, my life. Oh, we will walk this world,  
340 Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
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 ;  
345 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,  
5 " 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 ?  
10 The men required that I should give throughout  
That 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,  
15 Or in their silent influence as they sat,  
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,  
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close —  
They hated banter, wish'd for something real,  
A gallant fight, a noble princess — why  
20 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 :  
25 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  
30 In our dispute: the sequel of the tale  
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,  
35 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'd  
40 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  
45 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,  
50 The Tory member's elder son, "and there!  
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,  
And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,  
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —  
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,  
55 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,

- 60 The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,  
 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 ;
- 65 Revolts, republics, revolutions, most  
 No graver than a schoolboy's 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
- 70 As some of theirs — God bless the narrow seas !  
 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 :

75 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."

- 80 In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails,  
 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,
- 85 A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,  
 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,
- 90 A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none ;  
 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 pithy, such as closed  
 95 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  
 100 Beyond the bourn of sunset ; oh, 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,  
 105 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  
 110 Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd,  
 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,  
 115 Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,  
 Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph  
 From those rich silks, and home well-pleased we went.



# NOTES

## PROLOGUE

- 1 Tennyson "was present on July 6, 1842, at a festival of the Maidstone Mechanics' Institute held in our Park, of which he has introduced a lively description in the beginning of *The Princess*." — EDMUND LUSHINGTON.  
"In 1841 and 1842 I paid two visits in the month of August to Park House near Maidstone. I found there . . . a bright, charming, and happy group of his [Edmund Lushington] brothers and sisters. I remember watching him [Tennyson] as he sat on a garden seat on the grass, in a brown suit, looking somewhat grave and silent." — DEAN STANLEY, in *Memoirs of Lord Tennyson*.
- 5 **Borough**: a town, whether corporate or not, entitled to representation in Parliament.
- 11 In the seventeenth century the influence of the Renaissance brought into England the fashion of Italian Renaissance domestic architecture, which embodied many Greek features, and caused it to supersede the Gothic architecture of English country seats.
- 14 After the suppression of monasteries by Henry VIII. many monastic estates became the homes of private families, but usually new residences were built and the stately buildings of the monks were allowed to fall into ruins in the grounds.
- 15 **Ammonites**: curved or spiral fossil shells; named from *cornu Ammonis*, the curling ram's horn of the Egyptian god Ammon.
- 17 **Celts**: prehistoric weapons of stone or bronze.  
**Calumets**: Indian tobacco pipes with reed stems.
- 18 **Claymore**: the heavy two-handed sword of the Scotch Highlanders.
- 20 A set of ivory balls carved one within another in delicate and elaborate design by the Chinese carvers of ivory.
- 21 **Crease**: a Malayan dagger or short sword having a waved blade.

- 25 **Agincourt**: a battle in which the English under Henry V. overcame the French, 1415.
- 26 **Ascalon**: a city in Palestine where Richard Cœur de Lion conquered the Saracens, 1192.
- 31 Slashed to right and left vigorously.
- 64 Will-o'-the-wisp.
- 86 "My soger laddie is over the sea,  
And he will bring gold and silver to me."  
— *A Scotch Song*.
- 87 **Ambrosial**: fragrant, like the food of the gods.
- 89 **Smacking of the time**: expressive of the nineteenth century's great work in developing and popularizing science.
- 92 The upward springing curves and points of Gothic architecture subtly suggest the lines of aspiring flames.
- 110–117 In the English universities, the college buildings are guarded by high stone walls and wrought-iron gates, surrounded by spikes; the windows of the first-floor rooms are heavily barred. The proctors are university officials who look after the good order of the students. They employ subproctors as police, whom the students name "bulldogs." The tutors are the college instructors, the master, the college president.
- 161 In English universities, the student must be in residence a certain number of weeks in each term, else the term's work cannot be counted toward the degree.
- 176–177 Remained at the university during the vacation to study mathematics.
- 184 Drank your healths.

## CANTO I

5–18 Tennyson wrote in 1874, at a time when he was interested in the Metaphysical Society: "I have never had any revelations through anæsthetics, but a kind of waking trance (this for lack of a better name) I have frequently had quite up from my boyhood when I have been all alone. This has often come to me through repeating my own name to myself silently, till, all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the

individuality itself seemed to resolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words, when death was an almost laughable impossibility. The loss of personality (if it were so) seeming no extinction, but the only true life. I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said the state is utterly beyond words?"

19 **Galen**: a famous Greek physician (A.D. 130–200).

23 Regarded as almost a saint.

30–34 Marriages at very early ages, especially when between royal personages contracted for state reasons, were common in the Middle Ages. Often the bridegroom was represented by a proxy, in which case part of the ceremony required that the proxy should appear with "his leg stript naked to the knee."

65 **Cooked his spleen**: nursed his wrath. See *Iliad*, IV., 513.

93 "Hung with catkins as in the hazel-wood. It was springtime."

— HALLAM TENNYSON.

96–99 Compare —

"A wind arose among the pines, it shook  
The clinging music from their boughs, and then  
Low, sweet, faint sounds like the farewell of ghosts,  
Were heard: 'Oh follow, follow, follow me!'"

— SHELLEY, *Prometheus Unbound*, II., i, 156–159.

109 **Tilth**: Tilled ground.

**Grange**: An outlying farmhouse with its cluster of farm buildings.

110 **Blowing bosks**: "Uncultivated thickets blooming with wild flowers."

111 **Mother-city**: metropolis.

116 **Without a star**: with none of the decorations of the orders of nobility.

120 **Signet gem**: a seal ring, probably the royal seal and so a token of authority.

134 An interesting parallel, which was possibly the suggestion of the whole poem, is found in Johnson's *Rasselas*. "The princess thought that, of all sublunary things, knowledge was best: she desired, first, to learn all sciences, and then

proposed to found a college of learned women, in which she would preside, that, by conversing with the old and educating the young, she might divide her time between the acquisition and communication of wisdom, and raise up for the next age models of prudence and patterns of piety."

- 170 **Liberties**: "An English legal term for the adjacent privileged territory, here used of the outskirts of the estate, within which the exclusive rights granted to the Princess were exercised." — WOODBERRY.
- 171 **Hostel**: a hostelry or tavern.
- 174 **Sibilation**: a hissing sound.
- 187 **To post**: wayside taverns where the mail coaches stopped had a system of exchange of horses taken for the stage from one "post-house" to another.
- 188 **Boys**: postilions, servants who accompanied the post horses.
- 193 **Presented**: represented.
- 201 **Guerdon**: reward.
- 217 "As Tennyson was walking at night in a friend's garden, he heard a nightingale singing with such a frenzy of passion that it was unconscious of everything else, and not frightened though he came and stood quite close beside it; he could see its eye flashing, and feel the air bubble in his ear through the vibrations."  
— MRS. ANNE THACKERAY RITCHIE.
- 219 **Pallas**: the Greek goddess of knowledge.
- 220 One lamp was decorated with a map of the constellations, the other with a map of the terrestrial globe.
- 239 See Plato's *Symposium* as translated by Jowett (II., 32):  
"And am I not right in asserting that there are two goddesses? The elder one having no mother, who is called the heavenly Aphrodite — she is the daughter of Uranus; the younger, who is the daughter of Zeus and Dione — her we call common; and the Love who is her fellow-worker may and must also have the name of common, as the other love is called heavenly."
- 244 "There was a period in my life, when, as an artist, Turner for instance, takes rough sketches of landskip, etc., in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so

I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words, or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in Nature. I never put these down, and many and many a line has gone away on the north wind, but some remain, *e.g.*

“ ‘ A full sea glaz’d with muffled moonlight.’

“ SUGGESTION

“ The sea one night at Torquay, when Torquay was the most lovely sea-village in England, tho’ now a smoky town. The sky was covered with thin vapor, and the moon behind it.” — *Tennyson Memoirs*.

CANTO II

**Song.** It was not until the third edition of *The Princess* that the songs were added, but from a letter that Tennyson wrote to Mr. S. E. Dawson (1882) it is clear that they were a part of the original plan for the poem. “ I may tell you that the songs were not an afterthought. Before the first edition came out I deliberated with myself whether I should put songs in between the separate divisions of the poem; again, I thought, the poem will explain itself; but the public did not see that the child, as you say, was the heroine of the piece, and at last I conquered my laziness and inserted them. You would be still more certain that the child was the true heroine if, instead of the first song as it now stands,

“ ‘ As thro’ the land at eve we went,’

I had printed the first song which I wrote, *The Losing of the Child*. The child is sitting on the bank of a river, and playing with the flowers; a flood comes down; a dam has been broken through; the child is borne down by the flood; the whole village distracted; after a time the flood has subsided; the child is thrown safe and sound again upon the bank, and all the women are in raptures. I quite forget the words of the ballad, but I think I may have it somewhere.”

In the *Tennyson Memoirs* a part of the ballad is given as follows:—

“The child was sitting on the bank  
 Upon a stormy day,  
 He loved the river’s roaring sound;  
 The river rose and burst his bound,  
 Flooded fifty leagues around,  
 Took the child from off the ground,  
 And bore the child away.  
 O the child so meek and wise,  
 Who made *us* wise and mild.”

Charles Kingsley interprets most concisely, perhaps, the meaning of the songs in their setting:—

“At the end of the first canto, fresh from the description of the female college, with its professoresses, and hostleresses, . . . we turn the page, and —

“ ‘As thro’ the land at eve we went.’

“Between the next two cantos intervenes the well-known cradle-song, perhaps the best of all; and at the next interval is the equally well-known bugle-song, the idea of which is that of twin-labor and twin-fame in a pair of lovers. In the next the memory of wife and child inspirits the soldier on the field; in the next, the sight of the fallen hero’s child opens the sluices of his widow’s tears, and in the last . . . the poet has succeeded . . . in superadding a new form of emotion to a canto in which he seemed to have exhausted every resource of pathos which his subject allowed.” — *Frazer’s Magazine*, September, 1850.

- 10–11 **Boss’d with lengths of classic frieze**: in classical buildings, the part above the beam which rests on the pillars and is below the edge of the roof is called the frieze, and is usually decorated with carved figures.
- 13 There were nine Muses, each of whom presided over some one province of art, science, or poetry: Clio, history; Melpomene, tragedy; Thalia, comedy; Euterpe, -lyric poetry; Terpsichore, choral song and dance; Erato, amorous poetry; Calliope, epic; Urania, astronomy; Polyhymnia, lofty hymns. The Graces were three personifica-

tions of beauty, named Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia, and attendant upon Aphrodite, Queen of Love.

60 **Entered on the boards**: the English University technical phrase for registering as students.

61 It is the custom in English colleges to adorn the great dining hall, which is also used for lectures, with portraits of famous alumni, partly, no doubt, to stir the pride and ambition of the undergraduates. The Princess substitutes for the same purpose statues of eminent women of antiquity.

63 **Odalisques**: female slaves in an Oriental harem.

64 **She**: "The second king of Rome, Numa, was a Sabine of the city of Cures. He was believed to have received the laws, both civil and religious, from the nymph Egeria."  
— DAWSON.

65 **She**: the famous legendary queen of Assyria, Semiramis, who is said to have lived about 2182 B.C. and to have built Babylon.

67 **Artemisia**: the wife of King Mausolus of Caria, said to have fought in the battle of Salamis, 480 B.C., assisting Xerxes.

68 **Rhodope**: another form of Rhodopis, an Egyptian woman of much fame for her beauty, to whom the building of the pyramid is wrongly attributed.

69 **Clelia**: a Roman maiden who escaped from Porsena, to whom she had been given as hostage, by swimming the Tiber on horseback.

**Cornelia**: a daughter of the Scipio Africanus who conquered Hannibal, and the mother of the Gracchi. She was considered the ideal of Roman motherhood.

69-70 **Palmyrene that fought Aurelian**: the queen of Palmyra, Zenobia, was conquered by the Roman emperor Aurelian and brought to Rome to adorn his triumph.

71 **Agrippina**: a noble Roman matron, wife of Germanicus, whom she accompanied on his campaigns into Germany.

97-98 "The Phrygian king, Midas, told his wife the secret of the changing of his ears to those of an ass. She, unable to hold the secret, told it to the waters of a marsh, and the growing sedges whispered it to the world." — CHALMERS.

101-103 This is a brief statement of the nebular hypothesis, first

- advocated by Laplace, a French scientist, early in the nineteenth century.
- 105 **Woaded** : painted with woad, a dark blue coloring matter used by the ancient Britons.
- 106 **Prime** : primitive state.
- 110 **Amazon** : a warlike nation, composed almost entirely of women, supposed to exist in Asia.
- 112 **Lycian custom** : "They have one custom peculiar to themselves . . . for they take their name from their mothers, not from their fathers." — Herodotus, I., 173.
- 113 **Lar and Lucumo** : titles of honor borne by princes and priests in ancient Etruria. From certain Etruscan pictures of women seated at banquets with men, it is supposed that such was the national custom.
- 117 **Fulmined** : thundered.
- Laws Salique** : laws which forbid the passing of inheritance through female line.
- 118 **Mahomet** : "Does she allude to a report once popular that Mahomet denied that women have souls, or that, according to the Mohammedan doctrine, hell was chiefly peopled with women?" — HALLAM TENNYSON.
- 144 **Verulam** : Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam.
- 146 **Elizabeth** : Queen Elizabeth of England.
- 147 **Joan** : Joan of Arc.
- 148 **Sappho** : a Greek poetess.
- 180 **Academe** : another form of academy, but used perhaps to suggest Plato's famous school.
- 181 **Sirens** : the sea-nymphs of classical legends, who by their singing lured sailors to wreck their vessels on the rocks.
- 188 **Weasel on a grange** : referring to a custom, not uncommon in our country, of nailing on a barn door the skin of any small, depredating animal, as a warning to others of its kind.
- 209 **Garth** : garden.
- 224 **Bestrode** : stood above to defend.
- 263 In ancient Sparta all natural affections were subordinated to the public welfare.
- 264 **Brutus** : a Roman consul in the early days of the Roman republic (about 509 B.C.) who condemned to death his own sons proven traitors to the republic.



- 319 **Danaïd**: the Danaïdes, daughters of Danaus, king of Argos, in punishment for their murder of their husbands were condemned to Hades, there to pour perpetually water into vessels full of holes.
- 323 **Aspasia**: a Greek woman, friend of Pericles and his group, famous for her intellectual endowments.
- 325 **Sheba**: A reference to the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon to test his wisdom.
- 353-355 It may be noted that odes, elegies, and epics are the especial forms of classical poetry.
- 388 **Malison**: Malediction, curse.
- 420 **Astræan age**: "According to the old myth, Astræa was the last of the deities to leave the earth in the Iron Age, and it was believed that she would be the first to come back at the return of the Golden Age." — ROLFE.
- 448 In several of the English colleges it is the custom for students to exchange their habitual black gowns for white surplices to wear during the services in the college chapel.

## CANTO III

- 11 **Iris**: the 'rainbow'; hence the dark rings resulting from a vigil of tears.
- 34 **Rubric**: in old prayer-books the liturgical directions were written or printed in red (Latin *ruber*) that they might be more obvious. So Melissa's rosy blushes proclaim her thoughts.
- 55 **Ganymedes**: a Trojan youth, famous for his beauty, who was carried to Olympus to be the cupbearer of Zeus.
- 56 **Vulcan**: the god of fire and forging, who was cast from heaven to earth.
- 61 **Right and left**: the two factions or parties in some European legislative bodies are so termed.
- 73 **Inosculated**: "Blend together into one. The word is generally used in special derivative application to the care of veins and other vessels that have been made to run into one another, but here there is no doubt a closer reference to the etymology of the word, which is derived from the

Latin oscular, 'to kiss,' and thus signifies primarily unity through affection." — WALLACE.

- 96 **Her, and her:** Lady Psyche and Melissa, or, perhaps, any other women of the college.
- 97 **Hebes:** Hebe was the goddess of youth, daughter of Zeus and Herè, and cupbearer of the gods.
- 99 **Samian Herè:** Herè, wife of Zeus and favorite goddess of the city of Samos.
- 100 **Memnon:** the name given to a colossal statue near Thebes, in Egypt, which, when touched by the rays of the rising sun, is said to give forth a sound of music.
- 104 **Empurpled champaign:** the open, level country, rosy in the morning light, or else, as Hallam Tennyson explains, "blue in the distance."
- 111 **Prime:** primeval.
- 115 **At point to move:** about to act upon her discovery by revealing it to the Princess.
- 126 **Limed:** caught as a bird is caught with bird-lime, a sticky substance smeared on tree branches to catch them when they light.
- 154 **The dip of certain strata to the North:** to measure the inclination of certain beds of rock in relation to the horizon.
- 159 **Platans:** plane trees.
- 212 **Vashti:** "On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded . . . to bring Vashti, the queen, before the king . . . to shew the people and the princes her beauty, for she was fair to look upon. But the queen, Vashti, refused to come at the king's commandment." — *Esther* i. 10-12.
- 215 **Breathes full East:** referring to the dry, unpleasant east wind prevalent in England.
- 218 **Gray:** ancient.
- 246 **Που στο:** "The Princess is quoting the celebrated saying of Archimedes to King Hiero. That philosopher was a master of all the arts of applied mechanics, and, dwelling on the enormous mechanical powers of the lever, he exclaimed, 'Give me *where I may stand* (pou sto), and I will move the world.'" — DAWSON.
- 261 **Taboo:** "The word was brought home by Captain Cook's

expedition. The South Sea Islands were under the domination of a priesthood, which reserved to its own use anything which any of the members of its class might fancy, by marking it and calling it *taboo*, or devoted to religious purposes." — DAWSON.

262 **Gynæceum**: "The part of a Greek house reserved for women."  
— COOK.

269–270 "The two forms mentioned here were probably suggested by two legends of ancient Rome: (1) In the Latin war (340 B. C.), Publius Decius Mus, one of the Roman generals, sacrificed himself on the spears of the enemy in order to secure the victory to his army, it having been revealed to him in a vision from Heaven that one army was doomed, and the general of the other. (A somewhat similar act of devotion is recorded of Arnold von Winkelried, in the battle of Sempach, 1388, during the Swiss struggle for independence against the Austrians; this hero, seeing that the Austrian line of spears was impregnable, gathered into his breast as many as he could, and falling upon them created a gap into which his comrades poured.) (2) A chasm having appeared in the market-place of Rome, and the priests having declared that this would not close up until there had been cast into it the chief element of Rome's greatness, a young noble named Marcus Curtius, thinking that this condition would be best fulfilled by the sacrifice of one of her sons, leapt into it on horseback and in full armor (362 B. C.)." — WALLACE.

285 **Diotima**: A woman referred to in Plato's *Symposium* as the instructor of Socrates.

288 **Schools**: courses of study.

334 **Elysian lawns**: "The 'Elysian lawns' are the lawns of Elysium, and have nothing to do with Troy — or, perhaps, they rather refer to the Islands of the Blest." — TENNYSON, in a letter to W. J. Rolfe.

331 **Corinna's triumph**: A Greek poetess, who, in the public games at Thebes, defeated Pindar the famous writer of odes, in a contest of poetical skill.

344–345 Names of various kinds of rocks, selected here for their "stony" sounds.

## CANTO IV

**Song.** It is fairly certain that this song was inspired by a visit to the Lake of Killarney. Mrs. Anne Thackeray Ritchie gives this reminiscence of Tennyson's about the echo at Killarney: "He said to the boatman, 'When I was last here I heard eight echoes, and now I hear only one.' To which the man, who had heard people quoting the *Bugle Song*, replied, 'Why, you must be the gentleman that brought all the many to the place.'"

5 **Coppice-feathered:** lightly fringed with foliage.

21-40 "He told me that *Tears, Idle Tears* was written as an expression of such longings. 'It is, in a way, like St. Paul's groanings which cannot be uttered. It was written at Tintern, when the woods were all yellowing with autumn seen through the ruined windows. It is what I have always felt even from a boy, and what as a boy I called the "passion of the past." And it is so always with me now: it is the distance that charms me in the landscape, the picture, and the past, and not the immediate to-day in which I move.'" — KNOWLES, *Nineteenth Century*, XXXIII., 170.

"The idea of this lyric had been resting in the poet's mind since 1831. Then, at the age of twenty-two, he published in *The Gem* the following poem, omitted from the recent editions of his works:—

"O sad *No more!* O sweet No more!  
 O strange No more!  
 By the mossed brook-bank on a stone  
 I smelt a wildwood flower alone;  
 There was a ringing in my ears,  
 And both my eyes gushed out with tears;  
 Surely all pleasant things had gone before  
 Low-buried fathom deep beneath with thee;  
*No more!*"

— DAWSON.

59 **Cancel'd Babels:** "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. . . . Therefore is the name of it Babel because the Lord did there confound the language of all

the earth; and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." — *Genesis xi. 1-9.*

**Kex:** hemlock.

- 69 **Death's-head:** "At their convivial banquets among the wealthy classes [of Egyptians], when they have finished supper, a man carries round in a coffin the image of a dead body carved in wood, . . . and showing this to each of the company, he says, 'Look upon this, then drink and enjoy yourself; for when dead you will be like this.'" — *HERODOTUS, I., 78.*
- 100-102 **Ithacensian suitors:** "The reference is to the *Odyssey*, XX., 347. The suitors at the court of Penelope feel the occult influence of the unseen goddess, Pallas, causing their thoughts to wander. They fail to recognize Ulysses in his disguise, and their laughter is constrained and unnatural, they know not why. The *laugh with alien lips*, which is the nearest possible translation of the Greek idiomatic expression, 'They laughed with other men's jaws.'" — *DAWSON.*
- 104 **Bulbul, Gulistan:** Persian words for nightingale and rose garden.
- 110 **Bricks in Egypt:** When we served in bondage before our exodus to our own domain. A reference to the labors of the Israelites while in bondage in Egypt.
- 117 **Canzonets:** little songs.
- 121 **Valkyrian hymns:** "Such as were sung by the Valkyrs, or Valkyrias, the 'choosers of the slain,' or fatal sisters of Odin in the Northern mythology. They were represented as awful and beautiful maidens, who, mounted on swift horses and bearing drawn swords, presided over the field of battle, selecting those destined for death, and conducting them to Valhalla, where they ministered at the feasts of heroes." — *ROLFE.*
- 126 **Mock-Hymen:** According to Greek myths, Hymen was the god of marriage.
- 139 **Tavern-catch:** a drinking song. Compare Shakespeare's *Tempest*, II., 2, where Stephano enters with a bottle in his hand, singing: —

"The master, the swabber, the boatswain and  
The gunner and his mate,  
Loved Mall, Meg, and Marian, and Margery,  
But none of us cared for Kate."

- 180 **Indian craft**: woodcraft, in which North American Indians excel.
- 183 **Caryatids**: sculptured female figures sometimes used in place of columns in Greek architecture.
- 184 **Valves**: doors or gates, from the Latin name.
- 185-187 The hunter Acteon, because he saw Diana and her nymphs bathing, was transformed into a stag.
- 194 **The Bear**: "The northern constellation of Ursa Major. It is composed of seven stars near and about the North star."  
— CHALMERS.
- 207 **Judith**: a Jewish maiden, who made her way into the camp of the besiegers of her native city, and gaining admission to the tent of the leader, Holofernes, cut off his head as he lay in a drunken sleep; thence escaping, she bore back the head as a trophy to her city, and sent her countrymen to fall upon the enemy while they were yet panic-stricken at the loss of their general. The story is told in the apocryphal *Book of Judith*.
- 242 **Thrid**: thread.  
**Musky-circled Mazes**: "Garden walks with fragrant borders."  
— WALLACE.
- 243 **Boles**: tree trunks.
- 250 **Mnemosyne**: goddess of memory.
- 255 **Mystic fire**: a globular electric light, sometimes seen on a spar of a ship in storm. Sometimes called "St. Elmo's fire," and sometimes "corposant."
- 261 **Druid rock**: groups of huge upright stones, such as the group at Stonehenge, which are supposed to be relics of Druid religious rites.
- 263 **Mews**: sea mews, or sea gulls.
- 275 **Castalies**: Castalia, a fountain on Mount Parnassus, was sacred to the Muses, and was supposed to give poetical inspiration to all who drank of it.
- 292 **Jonah's gourd**: "And the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah that it might be a shadow over his head. . . . But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered." — *Jonah* iv. 6-7.
- 313 **Nursery**: a nursery garden where young trees are grown.

- 314 **Touchwood**: soft, combustible material used as tinder.
- 347 **To hatch the cuckoo**: the cuckoo does not build a nest for herself, but deposits her eggs in the nests of other birds, who hatch them and rear the young birds.
- 352 **Niobēan daughter**: Niobe, wife of King Amphion of Thebes, had twelve beautiful daughters, who were slain out of jealousy by Apollo and Diana, who also turned Niobe to stone.
- 366-367 About 1830, farm laborers in England, to avenge grievances against their employers, began to burn hayricks. Tennyson refers to this in a poem *To Mary Boyle*.
- “And once — I well remember that red night  
When thirty ricks,  
All flaming, made an English homestead Hell.”
- 415 **Glowworm**: phosphorescent.
- 418 **Cassiopēia**: a mythical queen of Ethiopia, whose name is given to a northern constellation.
- 419 **Persephonè**: the queen of Pluto, who carried her off from the earth to reign with him in Hades.
- 422 **Frequence**: throng.
- 427 **Dwarfs of presage**: disappointing, when seen, the expectation.
- 436 It is stated as a fact by naturalists that the seal does do so.
- 484 **Protomartyr**: first martyr, a name given to St. Stephen.
- 495 **Turnspits**: cooks' assistants set to turn and baste the meat in roasting.
- 552 **Norway sun**: On midsummer day, June 22, in the Arctic circle, the sun remains above the horizon at night. The extreme northern part of Norway is the usual place from which travellers witness this phenomenon.

## INTERLUDE

**Song.** Another version of this song is given by Dawson: —

“Lady, let the rolling drums  
Beat to battle where thy warrior stands;  
Now thy face across his fancy comes,  
And gives the battle to his hands.

“Lady, let the trumpets blow,  
Clasp thy little babes about thy knee;  
Now their warrior father meets the foe,  
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.”

## CANTO V

- 2 **Stationary voice**: the voice of a sentinel.
- 4 **The second two**: the first were Cyril and Psyche.
- 13 **Innumeros**: innumerable.
- 14 **Gilded squire**: a squire was a youth in training for knight-hood, and usually richly dressed.
- 25 **Mawkin**: a maidservant performing the most menial duties.
- 26 **Sludge**: mire.
- 37 **Transient**: changing.
- 38 **Woman-slough**: woman garments; as a snake casts off its slough, or dead skin.
- 40 **Harness**: armor.
- 110 **Parle**: in parley.
- 121 **Year**: harvest.
- 125 **Lightens**: flashes.
- 132 **Shards**: fragments of brittle substances, as of earthen vessels.  
**Catapults**: engines for bombardment.
- 142 **Mammoth**: a large elephant of prehistoric times, recently found embedded in ice in Siberia.
- 146 **Idiot legend**: that of the old sorcerer, I., 5.
- 157 **Dashed with death**: spattered with blood.
- 162 **Cherry net**: in England nets are sometimes placed over fruit trees to protect them from birds.
- 170 **Gagelike**: as a knight flung down his glove, or gage, as a token of defiance.
- 179 **Satyr**: in Greek mythology, a woodland deity, half human, half goat, hence very coarse and brutish.
- 190 **Piebald**: spotted with different colors.
- 195 **Mooted**: disputed; put in question.
- 213 **Bussed**: kissed.
- 222 **Foursquare**: like the great square keep of mediæval castles, the strongest part of the fortifications.
- 227 **A thousand rings**: the growth of each year makes a new ring in the trunk, hence these were a thousand years old.
- 246 **Thews**: muscles and sinews.
- 250 **Giant's zone**: the belt of the constellation Orion.



252-254 "Every bright star when close to the horizon shows these colors, and so much the more distinctly as the star is the brighter. Sirius, which surpasses the brightest stars of the northern hemisphere full four times in lustre, shows these changes of color so conspicuously that they were regarded as specially characteristic of this star, insomuch that Homer speaks of Sirius (not by name, but as the 'Star of Autumn') shining most beautifully 'when laved of ocean's wave,' that is, when close to the horizon."

— PROCTOR, *Myths and Marvels of Astronomy*.

254 **Morions**: helmets.

266 **'S death**: God's death, an old oath.

283-285 **St. something**. St. Catherine of Alexandria, a Christian saint half mythical, said to have lived in the fourth century and to have been the daughter of Costus, the half-brother of Constantine, by Sabinella, queen of Egypt, whom she succeeded on the throne of that country. Her chief feat was the conversion to Christianity, by her ability in scholarly logic, of fifty learned men whom the Emperor Maxentius sent to convert her to paganism.

319 **False daughters**: the ducklings she has hatched.

337-340 "I have been out for a walk with A. T. to a sort of island between two waterfalls, with pines on it, of which he retained a recollection from his visit of thirty-one years ago, and which, moreover, furnished a simile to *The Princess*. He is very fond of this place, evidently."  
— ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, from the Valley of Caunterets, September 7, 1861.

355 **Tomyris**: Queen of the Massagetæ, who defeated and slew Cyrus (529 B.C.) Before the battle she had threatened him with his fill of blood, so when his head was brought to her she offered it a vessel of blood, bidding it drink.

367 "Allusion is made . . . to Russian customs in the seventeenth century. One was that the bride, on her wedding day, should present her husband, in token of submission, with a whip made by her own hands. Another was that on arriving at the nuptial chamber the bridegroom ordered the bride to pull off his boots. In one was a whip, in the

- other a trinket. If she pulled off the one with the whip first, the groom gave her a slight blow." — DAWSON.
- 369-374 These lines allude to the Hindoo customs of burning widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands, and of casting female children into the Ganges lest they shall fail to be married at the proper age.
- 381 **Memorial**: commemorative works of art.
- 382 **Institutes**: laws and regulations.
- 408 **Yoked with children's**: women and children have been classed together as dependents, requiring protection.
- 412 **Orbs**: encircled between the poles.
- 417 **Egypt-plague**: Referring to the various plagues sent upon Egypt because of the cruelty of Pharaoh toward the Israelites. (Exodus viii.-x.).
- 441-442 **The gray mare**: an allusion to the proverb, "The gray mare is the better horse," applied to a wife who rules her husband.
- 443 **Tile**: roof.  
**Scullery**: a room where kitchen utensils are cleaned.
- 448 **Bantling**: infant.
- 478 **Bare on**: bore forward.
- 491 **Mellay**: mêlée, a confused combat.
- 500 **Miriam and Jael**: Miriam was a Hebrew prophetess who sang to cymbals a song of triumph over Pharaoh by the Red Sea (Exodus xv.). Jael was a Jewess who slew Sisera by driving a nail through his temple (Judges iv.).
- 503 **Saint's glory**: an aureole or ring of light about the head of a holy person, as represented in pictures.

## INTERLUDE

**Song.** Another version of this was printed in a volume in 1865, as follows:—

“Home they brought him slain with spears,  
They brought him home at even-fall;  
All alone she sits and hears  
Echoes in his empty hall,  
Sounding on the morrow.

“The sun peeped in from open field,  
The boy began to leap and prance,  
Rode upon his father's lance,  
Beat upon his father's shield,  
'Oh hush, my joy, my sorrow!'"

## CANTO VI

- 16 **Dame of Lapidoth**: "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, judged Israel at that time" (Judges iv. 4). For the eloquent song of triumph which Deborah sang over the fallen Sisera, see Judges v.
- 25 **The red cross**: trees were so marked as a sign to the woodmen to cut them down.
- 47 **Blanched**: made a white day, a holiday.
- 49 **Spring**: the flowers and leafage of springtime.
- 65 **Isles of light**: "They are 'isles of light,' spots of sunshine coming through the leaves, and seeming to slide from one to another as the procession of girls moves under shade."  
— TENNYSON to S. E. Dawson, 1882.
- 70 **Fretwork**: antlers.
- 118 **Brede**: embroidery.
- 158 **Nemesis**: in Greek mythology, the goddess of retributive justice.
- 166 **Port**: opening.
- 186 **Dead prime**: in the silence just before the dawn.
- 224 **Lot's wife**: she was turned into a pillar of salt, as a punishment for her disobedience (Genesis xix.).
- 239–240 Terms used in higher mathematics and astronomy.
- 283 **Adit**: entrance.
- 289 **Mob me up**: Make me one of the mob of.
- 319 **Pharos**: a famous lighthouse of antiquity, which stood on the island of Pharos, near Alexandria.
- 321 In the first and second editions were inserted after this line the following: —
- "Go help the half-brained dwarf, Society,  
To find low motives unto noble deeds,  
To fix all doubt upon the darker side."
- 338 **Supporters**: a term in heraldry for the figures that stand on either side of a coat of arms.
- 347 **Pallas**: the goddess of knowledge.
- 348 **Diana**: the goddess of chastity.
- 352 **Ordinance**: orders.

## CANTO VII

- 12 **Native unto**: born to do.
- 18 **Leaguer**: beleaguering army.
- 19 **Void was her use**: her usual occupation was gone.
- 20-26 Tennyson says that this simile was suggested to him by  
"a coming storm, seen from the top of Snowdon."
- 25 **Tarn**: a small, dark mountain lake.
- 31 **Gyres**: circles.
- 33-35 The shadows of night disappeared with daylight, until the only darkness remaining was that of the deep shade cast by the bowery woods, whose extent was more visible in daytime; likewise the sky seemed to grow loftier with day, and to come closer at nightfall, as the stars came out one by one.
- 45 **Silks**: silken curtains of the bed.
- 71 **Showers of random sweet**: in carnivals it is the custom for the merry-makers to pelt each other with flowers and sweetmeats.
- 88 **Dead**: dead of night.
- 109 **Oppian law**: "This was a sumptuary law, passed during the time of the direst distress of Rome, when Hannibal was almost at the gates (215 B.C.). It enacted that no woman should wear a gay colored dress, or have more than half an ounce of gold ornaments, and that none should approach within a mile of any city or town in a car drawn by horses. The war being concluded, and the emergency over, the women demanded the repeal of the law. They gained one consul, but Cato, the other, resisted. The women rose, thronged the streets and forum, and harassed the magistrates until the law was repealed (195 B.C.)." — DAWSON.
- 112 **The tax**: "A heavy tax imposed on Roman matrons by the second triumvirate (44 B.C.). No man was found bold enough to oppose it; but Hortensia, daughter of Hortensius, the celebrated orator, spoke so eloquently against it that her oration was preserved to receive the praise of Quintilian. She was successful." — DAWSON.
- 113 **Ax and eagle**: the signs of civil and military power.

- 115 **Wolf's milk**: a reference to the legend that Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were saved from death and suckled by a wolf.
- 148 **That other**: Aphrodite, rising from the sea, whence she was born, to meet the Graces, who clothed her with every charm. "An exquisite rapid picture of Aphrodite floating along the wave to her home at Paphos." — BAYARD TAYLOR.
- 167 **Danaë to the stars**: open to their influence. Danaë was the mother of Perseus, and had been imprisoned in a brazen tower, where Zeus appeared to her, and wooed her in a shower of gold.
- 189 **Silver horns**: the sharp pinnacles of snow-covered Alpine peaks.
- 191–193 The glaciers are split by deep crevasses down which the melting snow finds way and discharges itself at the glacier's foot.
- 198 **Water-smoke**: slender waterfalls which, coming, from a great height, separate into fine spray as they fall, and so appear more like smoke than water.
- 201 **Pillars of the hearth**: smoke from the cottages.
- 230 **The signs**: the twelve signs of the Zodiac, through which lies the sun's apparent path in the heaven of stars.
- 245 **Lethe**: the river of oblivion in Hades, used here to denote the unknown prenatal world.
- 255 **Burgeon**: blossom.
- 272 **Full-summ'd**: Fully developed.
- 308 **Music**: an allusion to the old belief that the stars in their motions made music; the music of the spheres.
- 331 **Blind half-world**: the half of the world yet in darkness awaiting the day.

## CONCLUSION

- 27 **Diagonal**: Resulting from the two opposing forces.
- 49–71 "This passage did not appear till the third edition (published in 1850). We, no doubt, owe its insertion to the Revolution of 1848, when Louis Philippe, king of the French, was forced to abdicate, and a republic was established in the place of the monarchy. It may be added

that on December 2, 1851, Charles Louis Napoleon, President of the Republic, seized the supreme power by an act of unconstitutional violence, and was next year proclaimed Emperor of the French. This position he retained till 1870, when the empire was abolished and a republic reëstablished. The hysterical wildness and lack of reverence and restraint that characterize the politics of 'Celtic Demos' are extremely abhorrent to Walter Vivian, who may in this respect be said to represent the more sane and sober temper of the English people." — WALLACE.

49 **Garden**: England.

50 **There**: France.

51 **Narrow sea**: Dover Strait.

66 **Barring out**: schoolboys barring the door against the master.

78 **Go-cart**: a framework moving on casters, designed to aid a child in learning to walk.

87 **Pine**: pineapples.

90 **Quarter-sessions**: A minor court held quarterly.

97 **Rookery**: the rooks, flying in a long line.

111-115 The supreme powers, abiding in the unknowable infinite that seems mere darkness to human eyes, draw into themselves the twilight of half knowledge in which human minds, seeking truth, sometimes wander; and leave only the stars, like faith, to witness the vastness and certainty of the world beyond knowledge, the heaven of heavens.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS  
READING THE POEM

PROLOGUE

1. What is the setting of the Prologue?
2. How many examples can you find of "every clime and age jumbled together"? What is their connection with the story?
3. Name and describe the characters of the Prologue.
4. Study the three women characters of the Prologue as introductory to the Princess Ida and her two friends.
5. How does the discussion lead to the theme of the poem?
6. What is the symbolism of the silk-draped statue?

CANTO I

1. Study the character of the hero in relation to his father and mother; compare him with Florian and Cyril.
2. What conception of the Princess do you gain from the Prince; from her father; from the innkeeper?
3. Where does the action begin? What is its immediate motive?
4. What effect on the poem has the Prince's tendency to "weird seizures"?
5. What is the interpretation of the symbol of the entrance-arch; of the inn-sign; of the Prince's seal?
6. How does King Gama's account of the Princess's undertaking color your expectation?

CANTO II

1. Charles Kingsley says the songs "serve to call back the reader's mind, at every pause in the tale of the Princess's folly, to that very healthy ideal of womanhood which she has spurned." How is that true of this opening song?

2. What effect has the description of the college buildings on your attitude toward the Princess's undertaking?
3. Do the speeches and description of the Princess enlarge or alter your conception of her?
4. Why is the chief exposition of the theory of the college given by Lady Psyche?
5. What traits of Lady Psyche's character are revealed by the motives which bind her to silence?
6. How does the passage, lines 428-455, contrast with the Princess's ideal?

## CANTO III

1. Has the opening song any relation to the preceding section of the poem?
2. How does the discord between Lady Psyche and Lady Blanche affect the story?
3. How does Melissa's character bring out Cyril's; Florian's; the Prince's?
4. What motives persuade Lady Blanche to silence? Compare with Lady Psyche's motives.
5. How do the Princess's words in lines 185-258 compare with those in Canto II., 34-52?
6. Can you find any hints of what the outcome will be?

## CANTO IV

1. Can you interpret this opening song in accordance with Kingsley's dictum (see II., 1)?
2. How does the song, *Tears, Idle Tears*, differ from the preceding songs? How does it compare with *O Swallow, Swallow*? (Note lines 67-69.) How does each affect the Princess?
3. For what purpose is the incident of the rescue of the Princess introduced?
4. What phase of the Prince's enterprise is brought out in lines 180-194 and 239-251? How does it contrast with connecting passages?
5. What effect on the dignity of the poem has the Prince's speech, lines 399-448?
6. Does the Princess's speech, lines 504-527, exalt her?



CANTO V

1. What consolations do Florian and the Prince offer Psyche? What is the true cause of her grief?
2. Which is the nearer right in his conception of women, — the Prince's father or King Gama? How far does the Prince's view coincide with theirs? How far does Arac's?
3. What motives draw the Prince into the fight?
4. What admissions of weakness does the Princess Ida make in her letter?
5. How far does line 451 express Tennyson's attitude toward the Princess Ida?
6. Why does the sorcerer's curse affect the Prince at this crisis, lines 457-531?

CANTO VI

1. Show how the story of the introductory song, though containing the same elements of vanquished warrior, lady, and child, is yet unlike the story of the Princess.
2. What contrasting phases of character are shown in the Princess's song of triumph and in her following action?
3. Trace the motives that lead her to turn the college to a hospital. What changes her action toward Psyche?
4. Interpret the symbolism in lines 328-351.
5. Which have the more influence on the Princess in this part, — the men or the women?
6. How does the passage, lines 57-74, heighten the action?

CANTO VII

1. Has the introductory song more or less direct connection with the following canto than had the other songs?
2. How does the surrounding action denoted in lines 40-75 affect the action of the two principal characters?
3. What is the contrast of the passage, lines 104-117, to the preceding and following passages?
4. Compare the methods by which the Prince succeeds with those his father would have had him use.

5. Why did the Princess read both poems? Would not one have been sufficient? Which one?
6. Does the Prince's speech, lines 239-345, give Tennyson's solution of the problem?

#### CONCLUSION

1. Does the author here justify his use of mingled true and mock epic?
2. Why does Lilia turn to her aunt for knowledge?
3. Has the passage about England and France anything to do with the theme of the poem?
4. Why was the description of Sir Walter Vivian delayed till the end of the poem?
5. Does the reverie in which the hearers returned to the abbey imply that they considered the problem still unsettled?
6. Show how Lilia's last action is symbolic of the end of the story.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS  
STUDYING THE POEM

PROLOGUE

1. Line 12. Why are the flowers lovelier than their names?
2. Describe a chronicle.
3. Retell in simple prose the story quoted from the chronicle, lines 35-48.
4. Explain lines 93, 117, 199, 218.
5. What is the allusion in lines 204 and 231?
6. Line 229. Why would Sir Ralph have burnt them all? Connect this line with line 6, Canto I.

CANTO I

1. Explain the connection of lines 3 and 4.
2. Is the simile, lines 57-59, true and appropriate?
3. Explain lines 106-107, 175.
4. Line 124. Why does the King make this allusion?
5. Describe masques and pageants, line 195.
6. Rewrite, in simple English, lines 197-200.

CANTO II

1. Explain lines 2-4, 93-95, 403-410.
2. Why has the Princess the leopards?
3. Does the simile in lines 87-88 denote admiration or scorn? Connect it with line 91, and with 150-152, Canto IV.
4. Show how lines 155-165 are a conclusion for the preceding speech.
5. Criticise the similes in lines 168-170, 305-307, 355-357.
6. Lines 415-416. What colors? What flowers would they recall? Compare lines 3, 303, 354, and 448.

## CANTO III

1. Lines 1-2. Comment on the beauty and truth of this description. Find and compare all other descriptions of morning in the poem.

2. Explain the phrases "classical angel," line 54; "clang an eagle," line 90; "the green malignant light of coming storm," line 116; "hushed amaze," line 122; "furry forks," line 158.

3. How do the Princess's statements in lines 234-244 fit in with her action towards Aglaia?

4. Lines 272-278. Describe the same scene in the simplest manner.

5. What is the Princess talking of in lines 290-304? How does it fit into her later action?

6. Show the contrast of poetry and science in lines 338-347.

## CANTO IV

1. Compare line 1 with lines 345-347 of III., and show what the contrast signifies.

2. Would the thought of lines 48-49 apply to the Princess Ida? See lines 12-17 and similar passages.

3. Explain lines 59-63, 105-107, 305-308, 414-416.

4. Line 133. Does the Princess forget for the moment that they are women to her?

5. Lines 261-263, and 458. Criticise the simile.

6. Describe from memory the scene in the college after the return from the expedition, naming and grouping the characters as if describing a picture.

## CANTO V

1. What has the Interlude to do with the effect of the story at this point?

2. Line 2. Explain.

3. Lines 129-130. Does the outcome prove this?

4. Line 142. Find all other allusions in the poem to prehistoric animals.

5. Explain "disprincled from head to heel," line 29; "piebald miscellany," line 190; "brainless war," line 290; "bronze valves," line 355; "this gadfly," line 404; "the fiery grain," line 411.

6. Write out an epitome of the King's speech, lines 428-456. Describe from memory the tournament.

CANTO VI

1. Lines 100-101. To what does this refer?
2. Why does Cyril intercede for Psyche?
3. Which one of the five figures applied to the Princess Ida, lines 69-73, 174, 253-254, 264-266, 311-313, is the most expressive of her appearance at the moment? Of her emotion?
4. Explain lines 343-348.
5. How many examples can you find in the whole poem to illustrate lines 205-206?
6. What rhetorical figure is used in lines 329-331?

CANTO VII

1. Does the figure used in lines 31-32 add dignity to the conception of the Prince?
2. Compare the figures in lines 53-55, 100-103, 171-172.
3. Explain lines 245-249. Compare the passage 239-280 with lines 155-165, Canto II.
4. Find a line in the second lyric ("Come down, O maid") which explains lines 14-29.
5. Is there any connection between lines 316-317 and lines 327-329?
6. Comment on lines 335-337, and 341-342.

CONCLUSION

1. Lines 13-14. Has there been an earlier reference to this?
2. Line 30. What is the sequel of the tale?
3. Lines 65-70. What application has this to the story of the Princess?
4. Rewrite lines 80-90, expanding as much as will make it clearer to you.
5. Describe, as if from a painting, the scene in lines 40-48.
6. Line 118. Why "well pleased"?

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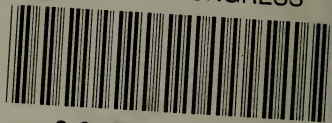


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