ACANTHIA

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POEMS ORIGINAL AND EDITED

WITH TRANSLATIONS FROM THE "ZOHRAB AND RUSTEM" OF FIRDUSI AND OTHER ORIENTAL SOURCES, AND NOTES ILLUSTRATIVE, CRITICAL, AND EXCURSIVE

BY

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ERRATUM

On page 205, lines 7 and 8 from bottom, *for* "discovers, *read* "deserves."

MATTHEW'S GRAVE

PREFACE

ERRATA

Page 5, lines 1, 2, *for* "*Homer le rapide*," *read* "*Homère le rapide.*"

Page 102, line 27, *for* "festal," *read* "fatal."

thinks better of the poem than even Mr. Paul does, for he speaks of it and the poem of "Rugby Chapel" as two fine but rhymeless dirges. "In 'Rugby Chapel' the intensity of feeling is sufficient to carry off the lack of lyrical accomplishment." This is a strange proposition for a critic to start, that intensity of feeling should be allowed to give a passport to poetic imbecility. On that principle even Mrs. Nickleby might write good poetry.

It is always an ungrateful and unpleasing task to attack the reputation of any author, either dead or alive, but this unpleasantness is in Mr. Arnold's case attenuated by its being a homage to justice and duty, for assuredly there never was a writer to whom the *lex talionis* could be so properly applied; and as regards Heine there is a tenfold justification for its application. "As he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him" (Lev. xxiv. 20). Mr. Arnold exulted in his prose that the great German poet had died and "left a *blemish'd* fame," and in this vein he set demons of his own manufacture and importation howling over the dead poet's grave. But priggism, sanctimonious affectation, and envious detraction formed no inconsiderable elements in Matthew's critical judgments, for it may be doubted whether any English

PREFACE

We have analysed below in Note 1 at a much greater length than it deserves one of the silliest of human productions in the way of poetry, Mr. Arnold's "Buried Life." Here we deal in parody with an elegy of his on the great German poet Heine, called "Heine's Grave," which is perhaps the most barbarous and untruthful dirge ever uttered over a great poet's grave, and is really a disgrace to English literature. Mr. Arnold's eulogists are naturally of a different opinion. Mr. Herbert Paul thinks "'Heine's Grave' is a painfully morbid poem on a supremely dismal subject," it is true but he adds, after quoting at full length the *famous* description of the genius of Britain as a Titanic she-stoker, "If the thing is to be done at all, this is how it should be done." To term the life of one of Germany's three greatest poets "a supremely dismal subject" merely because it was mainly a tale of long suffering and injustice is worthy of some Miss Mawworm doubled by a Lydia Languish. Professor Saintsbury, another eulogist of the great Mat, evidently thinks better of the poem than even Mr. Paul does, for he speaks of it and the poem of "Rugby Chapel" as two fine but rhymeless dirges. "In 'Rugby Chapel' the intensity of feeling is sufficient to carry off the lack of lyrical accomplishment." This is a strange proposition for a critic to start, that intensity of feeling should be allowed to give a passport to poetic imbecility. On that principle even Mrs. Nickleby might write good poetry.

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writer of note ever expressed himself with such malignity, envy, and jealousy about his contemporaries. For our knowledge of this, besides some private experience and his public utterances, we are indebted much to his correspondence, which, however, it must be remembered, has received a double editing before being given to the public, first doubtless by his family, and secondly by Mr. G. W. E. Russell, the editor; therefore it is probable far worse evidence of this meanness of spirit than that which Mr. Russell has thought fit to give to the public remains behind.

There is a yet graver reason for showing him no leniency, namely, that his reputation and example, his falsity of tone and feeling, his arrogance and affectation of superfine taste and morality, have had, for now about half a century, a most pernicious effect upon English literature, and through that on English taste and the national mind.

Our subsequent analysis of the silly pseudo-philosophical poems, "The Buried Life" and "The Future," the parody of "Heine's Grave," and the exhibition of his plagiarism in his dwarf epic of "Sohrab and Rustum," ought to be sufficient to enable a discerning reader to dispose of Matthew's claim to the title of poet; and the analyses of his most pretentious elegiacs, "The Scholar Gipsy," "Thyrsis," "Westminster Abbey," which we have made elsewhere, would much strengthen his conclusions.

It is difficult to determine which of these three productions has the most ridiculous *leit motiv*, whether it is the elegy of the Oxford scholar Poor, to whom Mr. Arnold promises the *apotheosis* of becoming a great Tyrian trader if he will continue to loaf about Oxfordshire as a ghostly vagabond and pilfering gipsy impostor, and by sitting occasionally in ghostly form outside alehouses with a lapful of flowers; or whether it is the elegy of "Thyrsis," who plays a rustic flute in one line, Mr. Arnold's favourite poetical instrument, and then "tires his throat" two lines later with a pipe, and for whose premature decease Mr. Arnold consoles himself by going on a wild-goose *quest* (one of Mr. Arnold's many well-thrummed words) after some "Fyfield tree," which plays hide and seek with him, while he makes on his way a *hortus siccus* of "loosestrife and fritillaries," and then extracts final consolation by the finding of "*the tree, the tree*," because the finding of the tree gives somehow or other assurance that the ghost of the vagabond gipsy scholar Poor is still carrying on his ghostly gipsy maraudings; or whether it be the elegy of the respectable Dean Stanley, who has missed becoming "a child of light," such as the vagabond gipsy scholar really was, because he received a "check" in his babyhood through not having been sufficiently roasted by the mighty mother Demeter, as happened ever so many thousand years ago to a charmed Eleusinian baby, who, it appears, was a prototype of the late venerable Dean in his babyhood.

We will just further note that his criticisms of poets are to our mind as untruthful and meaningless as his poetry. What a wonderful discovery is that, that the most distinguishing quality of Homer

is rapidity! and that the *τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμονος* Homer is—*Homer le rapide*, like a French express train. Goethe becomes with him a moral *physician* of an *iron age*. Burns is a beast ("Corr.," vol. ii. p. 184). His criticism of Byron might have been written by a pert and finical boarding-school miss. For a student who has not read Byron it would be a calamity to begin the study of him with Matthew for a guide, and to others who have read him and can appreciate his sublimity, nobility, heroic grandeur, and splendid humour, Mr. Arnold's essay can only inspire contempt and compassion for his total lack of capacity to feel with or grasp his subject. Here is an essay which in good-sized type occupies about twenty pages, and it attempts in that limited space to give a full account of so grand a subject as Byron. Out of these twenty pages Mr. Arnold employs about three or four in picking out some of Byron's weakest lines to show that, according to him, Byron could write as "*detestably*" as, according to himself, Shakespeare also could, for Mr. Arnold gave himself the trouble of picking out some obscure line of Shakespeare in order to ticket it "*detestable*." What magnificent criticism! It is as though Mr. Arnold had discovered a stone with some tiny flaw in it in the structure of the Cologne Cathedral or of the Pantheon. A considerable portion of this brief essay on Byron is devoted to his airing his silly definition of poetry as "the criticism of life." Then could it be imagined that any writer in treating of Byron would fill even twenty pages without any mention of "Childe Harold," "Manfred," or "Don Juan," or of Delphi, Rome, or Venice, or of his devotion and sacrifice to the cause of freedom in Italy or Greece, and of his heroic and pathetic death at Missolonghi under the lancets of bungling surgical sangrados? The fact is that it may truly be said of Matthew, as he falsely and impertinently said of Heine, "that he had very little of the hero in him"; and not only that, he had very little sympathy with heroism at all. As for his saying that there was very "little of the hero in Heine," that is highly indicative of the spirit of detraction which animated him against the German poet. There is no proof whatever nor any sign that Heine ever wanted courage; some courage is required even in fighting a duel, and Heine had his duel, in which his lip was grazed by a bullet, and although it was a reprehensible affair, there was certainly no want of courage displayed by Heine, and the whole tenor of his life gives presumption that this taunt was baseless and malicious.

To return to Byron, he seems to praise him for not taking such subjects as Shelley did—Queen Mab, the Witch of Atlas, &c.—but what subjects does he set forth as Byron's chief subjects? Not Childe Harold, Don Juan, Spain, Greece, Rome, Waterloo, but George the Third, Lord Castlereagh, the Duke of Wellington, and Southey! Then Byron was a barbarian. He was not *ἐυφύης* like Raphael and the euphuistic Mr. Arnold, and was as vulgar as Macaulay and the *Times;* in fact, most poets and writers seemed vulgar to the high-sniffing Matthew; and to find vulgarity in Byron he wandered childishly right out of the limits of poetry altogether, and fished it

up in his correspondence, because Byron in intimate letters to his friends made use of antiquated expressions, as was the way of the time, such as *oons*, *redde*, &c. His conceit perhaps reaches its most ridiculous climax when he undertakes to inform the reader *of what Goethe, who was a great admirer of Byron, would have said about Byron had he been so knowing as Mr. Arnold.* This recalls his pretence of knowing what Jesus *ought* to have said, and how St. Paul *ought* to have been converted. No saying of this *phraseur* and *mystificateur* has been more hackneyed about than that impertinent one of Mr. Arnold's about Byron *making a pageant of a broken heart.* We say impertinent, for it is even more impertinent than his sneer at Heine's courage. Byron has written full twenty times as much good poetry as Mr. Arnold has written bad poetry, and Mr. Arnold parades "his own panting heart," "vainly throbbing heart" and "unquiet heart" about fifty times oftener than Byron mentions his own internal organs in his whole work. Where is the "pageant of the bleeding heart" in "Beppo," "Don Juan," or the "Vision of Judgment"? The great sacrifice of life and fortune which the hero-poet made in the cause of Greece he made with as little pageantry as possible.

As to Arnold's prose criticism of Heine in the same volume as that of Byron, we will only say here that his essay on Heine is as pusillanimous and inane as his essay on Byron. Just as Arnold leaves out of consideration, in his criticism of Byron, Byron's very chief performances, so in his treatment of Heine he leaves untouched and unread the "Buch der Lieder" and the chief gems of the production of Heine's muse. He confines his attention chiefly to the "Romancero," and it is significant of him, as we learn from his correspondence, that when he was offered the loan of Heine's chief works by a friend, the late Sir M. E. Grant Duff, to prepare himself for a professional lecture on Heine, he declined the offer. "*Son siège était déjà fait.*" After maligning and belittling Heine in his essay as he did in his poetry, he gets rid of him with a kind of "*Ouf!*" "*He died and left a blemished fame!*" But since in his malignant verse he says he did nothing but "laugh and die," how did he get even a "blemished fame" by merely grinning at Germany and mankind as through a horse-collar all his life? Then Mr. Arnold thinks it not sufficient to have given him a "blemished fame," he sets a crowd of demons of his own imagination howling over his grave. Truly Arnold's treatment of Heine both in poetry and prose is a blemish on his own reputation. "As he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him."

The "blemished fame" of Heine was attested by this, that the most beautiful, high-souled, and spirited sovereign lady in Europe, herself destined to fall by the hand of the assassin, made him her favourite bard, her *lieblings* poet, and rendered to his memory the highest honour which she could bestow by having his statue finely executed in Parian marble and placed in her splendid villa, the Achilleion of Corfu, by the side of the dying Achilles. His "blemished fame" is also attested to in a yet grander way by the fact that wherever

the German language is spoken or sung, whether in the green valleys of the Tyrol or Styria or in the drawing-rooms of Munich, Berlin, Stuttgart, or Vienna, there is not a maid or woman of loving and gentle nature whose heart does not cherish with affection the memory of the unhappy bard who has embellished existence for them with new chords of sympathy, tenderness, and delight.

MATTHEW'S GRAVE

A RETALIATION

"Neque enim lex æquior ulla
Quam necis artifices arte perire suâ."
OVID, *De A. A.*, lib. i. 656.

NOTE.—All words and lines italicised or in capitals are either Matthew's own or those of some one of his admirers

MATTHEW PRIG! Matthew Prig! *'tis here,*
'Tis here, no mistaking 'tis here.
That white *tombstone! The name*
Carved there, scarce more, and *the smooth*
Swarded alleys, the *limes*
Touched into yellow by *HOT*
Summers, but under them still
Shadow and verdure and COOL.
Trim, trim Laleham, *the faint*
Murmur of London *afar,*
Very exceedingly far.
Nothing loath surely wert thou,
With thy panting heart ever beating[1]
Such rub-a-dub times in thy bosom—
With thy *restless blood* constantly running
More wild than a *feverish* donkey's—
Hither, O Matthew! to come,
Hither to come and to sleep
Under the wings of Renown:
Hither, far, far from the roar
Of large vulgar Cockney 'buses,
And hansom cabs all mud bespattered.

[1] Note 1.

Oft in the dining-rooms *HOT*
Of noble Hebraic plutocracy,
Of free-thinking bishops and dons,
Of third-rate statesmen and sprigs,
True sprigs of Oxonian culture,
Button-holed with finest of flowers
Of finest Oxonian culture,
In thy studded immaculate shirt-front,
With thy white tie, and mid parting
Of thy ambrosial hair,
In spite of the patchouli perfume
Of thy handkerchief's very fine cambric,
Didst thou, Matthew, long to come hither;
For the patchouli of thy fine cambric
Gave thee prescience of the sweet odours
Of the scented soft-cooing ocean,[1]
Divested of Homer's rude φλοίσβος,
Of the infinite sea softer cooing than
The sucking doves or callow nightingales
Of the valiant weaver, Nick Bottom.
For in the soft-cooing ocean,
Scented by angels with patchouli,
Which was thy favourite odour,
Thou, Evangelist Matthew the Second,
In rapt vision apocalyptic
Hadst discovered the city of God
Floating somewhere in infinite vagueness,
And on the impossible verge
Of the patchoulied infinite ocean
Hadst beheld the *ripa ulterior*
Of Virgil's Stygian river.
And then, like the poor unburied
Eidola of pagan ages,
With never an obol put under
Their tongues to pay greedy Charon,
Who stretched out their arms with vain longings
For the Stygian *ripa ulterior*,
Even in sipping champagne,
Rudesheimer or Mouton Rothschild,
With studded immaculate shirt-front,
Even in drawing-rooms *HOT*
Of plutocrat Hebrews or others,
With chandeliers blazing *HOT*
O'er the Christ-like clear mid parting
Of thy ambrosial locks;

[1] Note 2.

Mid blazing and brilliant crowds,
Bestarred and bejewelled of men,
Famous—of women the queens
Of dazzling converse ; from fumes
Of praise, HOT heady fumes to the poor brain
That mount, that madden—how oft
Didst thou, saintly Matthew, stretch
Within thy soul evangelic,
Imploring yearning arms outward
Indreams for the Stygian bank—
O the very impossible border
Of the patchoulied soft-cooing ocean,
While the flying invisible border,
The Stygian *ripa ulterior,*
Kept on receding before thee
Like a mirage of the desert.
Surely somewhere or other
Thou hadst found the City Celestial[1]
Of thy great God Fluidity,
The stream which maketh for Righteousness.
Yet surely to hunt for this City
In the scented soft-cooing Infinite
For thy poor soul would be puzzle worse
Than that which an unlettered peasant
Would find in seeking a needle
Hid in an Infinite haystack.
But hark ! through the valley resounds
A twittering tittering and giggling
Of mocking spirits in laughter,
Shaking every leaf of the grove
Of the trim, trim churchyard of Laleham,
And all leaves in Middlesex shrubberies,
Marring benignant repose here
In this amiable home of the dead.
Wicked young females ! *I know ye,*
Although I am not so knowing
As was the all-knowing Matthew,
Who was ever so knowing in knowing.
Ye are the Clärchens and Gretchens,
Philinas and vestals of Goethe's
Lubricous "*Wahlverwandtschaften.*"
What do ye here disturbing,
In this amiable home of the dead,
The calm benignant repose
Of the hater of all lubricity,

[1] Note 3.

Ye creatures of *aselgeia ?*
Said they, "We are sent here by Goethe,
The poet Germanic who made us,
To *poke fun* at Mat who's here buried,
As he *pokèd fun* in his lifetime
To Miss Gew Fussell's contentment—
Fun, delicious, seraphic, celestial,
Such as no commercial bagman
Or boarding-school miss ever *pokèd*
At the sad girl Wragg the infanticide,
At crazy Smith's corpse the self-murdered,
At the vulgar Atlantic cable,
At Coles' distressing truss factory,
At Lords Lumpington of Charley Lever,
At Bottles and other *Philister,*
And that victim poor of Mat's waggery,
The *timorous portly jeweller,*
To whom Mat said so politely
'He had no need of existence'—
A joke prigged from Monsieur de Talleyrand.
Now Papa Goethe we overheard saying
That Mat as wit, poet, and critic
Led the life of a kleptomaniac,
And was as wit, poet, and critic,
Little more than a pert prigging jackdaw
Who stuck himself over with feathers
Of peacocks and strutted so finely
That he imposed upon Lansdowne,
The lordly master of Bowood.
And Lansdowne a great British Peer was
(And what cannot a great British Peer do ?),
And Lansdowne *mot d'ordre* to the *Times* gave
That at once without more delaying
Mat should be made an immortal.
And the *Times* gave the cue to book tasters,
And book tasters agreed one and all that
Mat should be an immortal, although
His squeaky voice often sang nonsense
Out of tune with barbarous rhymings,
For the ears of unmusical Matthew
Were to music as deaf as an adder.
Now lately in our grove Elysian,
When Goethe and Schiller and Heine
Were talking in loving communion,
Heine chaffingly said to our father,
'Pray tell me where in your writings,

Poems or Eckerman sayings,
Have you said that I was a love poet
Who had no love in his nature,[1]
Thus making my love songs mock-turtle—
Love songs which are sung by young maidens
In hundreds of Styrian valleys,
On the high green Tyrolese *Almen*—
Equally too in drawing-rooms *HOT*
Of Munich, Berlin, and Vienna?
For Matthew the prig, he who sets up
To be your *Ipsissimus alter*
Ego, or something much better,
On your Excellency's authority
Has most irretrievably damned me
By giving my poor body over
To the howlings of his own demons,
Who the critics say are immortal—
As immortal as the Great Matthew
Himself at Lord Lansdowne's injunctions.'
Goethe answered, 'Confound the fellow!
He went on prating and printing,
And taking my name in vain,
To father his dandified notions.
The words which you quote are spurious
Inventions of foolish hypocrisy,
Mere silly falsifications
They are, and the Puritan sets up
To be such an ass about women,
Talking rot about *aselgeia*,
That I must disown all complicity
With his Pharisaical priggeries.
I fancy, *mein lieber*, that thou
Hast read my Roman elegies,
Where I speak out plainly and say
That I fashioned my best hexameters
By beating their rhythm with my fingers
On the bare spines of Roman damsels
In the witching Italian midnights.
And notions like his I have said too,
As plain as a man could write it,
Are as hateful to me as *Wanzen*.
Oh! the hypocrite, too, treats me falsely
In rating my poems as physic.[2]
And not only this, but he makes me
Speak at times a *kauderwälsch* jargon

[1] Note 4. [2] Note 5.

In his bungling knowledge of German,[1]
And to you, *mein lieber*, most basely
He has returned evil for good,
For he prigged from you much and disfigured
Your wittiest, finest of sayings,
Especially that one distinguishing
Hebrew spirit from spirit Hellenic,
And thy banter about the *Philister*
In *Sonntagsröchlein* and others.
And then, as thou say'st, round thy gravestone,
In what he calls '*trim Montmartre,*
That amiable home of the dead,'
He has set his own goblins a-howling
Which he had brought there in his pocket,
Little thinking, the zany pedantic,
That thy grave was no grave of thy spirit,
Any more than that one at Salem
On which he makes Syrian stars,
Prigged from another poet also,
In one of his *famous* passages,[2]
With Röntgen rays down peering
Through dome upon dome of stonework
On the body of Jesus in heaven—
Unless there were no Resurrection.
And star rays went vagabondising
Like the spear of his hero Sohrab.
Little thought he that thou wouldst be here
With me and Schiller and all
The great bards, ancient and modern.
But he lies buried at Laleham—
At Laleham, also another
Most amiable home of the dead;
And there he will lie till the trump
Of Eternity shall ring *resurgat*
(If indeed there is any *resurgam*)
To him and to all common mortals,
To be judged for good and for evil.
When that day of judgment appeareth,
I think it ought to go hard with him
To have made such bad verses as these :
"*What then so harsh and malign,*
Heine! distils from thy life,
Poisons the peace of thy grave?"
And then he distils from thy sweet songs,
As pure and as lovely as dewdrops,

[1] Note 6. [2] Note 7.

Such pitiful rubbish as this :
"HOLLOW AND DULL ARE THE GREAT,
AND ARTISTS ENVIOUS AND THE MOB
PROFANE."[1]
And this he puts in italics,
For this was a trick of his quackery
To endeavour to lift up to poetry
The false and the foolish and flat,
By putting the same in italics,
As a sort of hydraulic lifting
For making prose nonsense poetic.
And then he goes on further :
"We know all this!" we know !
(He was always so knowing in knowing)
"Cam'st thou from heaven, O child
Of light—but this to declare?"
Then again he says, falsely and sillily,
Because we both toured in the Harz
That I—Goethe—after my touring
Was destin'd to work and to live ;
But thou, alas ! *lieber Heine,*
Wast destined from thy youth onwards
Only to laugh and to die.[2]
So in thirty years of thy lifetime,
Notwithstanding thy bevies of love songs,
Notwithstanding thy thirty volumes,
Notwithstanding thy eight years of torture
On thy sorrowful *Matras-grube,*
Thou didst nothing but *"laugh and die."*
Per Bacco! the man who could write
Such heartless lying cacophony
Deserves to have his ears scarified
By screechings of daws and mad parrots
Forever, throughout all eternity.
Yet he calls thee *"a child of light"*
Sent from heaven, as he called the Dean Stanley,
As he called the sham Gipsy Scholar
Who was neither scholar nor gipsy,
Not being a Rommany Chal,
Even loved by a Rommany Chy.
That must have been but a *"poking of fun"*
Of Mat's peculiar poking,
Delicious, seraphic, celestial,
Such as Miss Gew Fussell loves dearly,
For Dean Stanley missed his mission

[1] Note 8. [2] Note 9

Because he had missed in his babehood
Being properly roasted by Ceres
Like an old Eleusinian babe.
While the vagabond Oxford sizar,
Named apparently Dominus *POOR*,[1]
Who was neither scholar nor gipsy,
Although he was told that his ghost
If it kept prowling on and on ever
And practising Rommany virtues,
Such as robbing of hen-roosts and bilking
The keepers of Oxford ale-houses,
Droking the grys of the gorgios,
Cly faking and drabbing the bawlor,
Dukkeripenning and hikkeripenning,
And perfecting himself ever more fully
In Rommany patter and filchings,
Would become a great Tyrian merchant
As rich as a Rothschild or Baring,
If he did not get "bitchady pawdel."
Yet this surely was only a poking
Of fun at the ghost of a vagrant.
Fun delicious, seraphic, celestial,
Such as loveth Miss Gewlia Fussell.
I fancy the prig sleeps not soundly
In the trim-kept churchyard of Laleham.
So go you, my lively children,
Clärchen, Philina, and Mignon,
Ye Roman *ragazze*, and others,
Whom I have known in flesh or created—
And ye may be counted by hundreds—
Go, wake him up with your giggling.
And when Matthew rises before you,
Lay him down and tickle him finely,
Poking fun seraphic, delicious,
Such as loveth the good maid Fussell,
Till he dies a second time over.'
So we came ; now listen a moment."
Then the gay wicked Goethean damsels
Began to giggle and titter
O'er the grave of evangelic Matthew
And sung wicked Goethean songs
In which the good Matthew found physic—
" Es war einmal ein König
Der hatte einen grossen Floh "—
And then that other, still horrider—

[1] Note 10.

"*Wass machst du mir,*
Vor Liebchens Thür"—
A song not a whit more moral
Than that shocking one of Ophelia's,
From which, indeed, it is taken.
The lively girls hardly had finished
A second stave of this *Liedchen*
When there burst on the ear a roar of
Fierce mocking laughter which drownèd
The Goethean damsels' small voices.
Bitter spirits! I know ye, although
I am not so knowing as Matthew,
Who knew a great deal more than
Der liebe Gott he himself knows,
And Jesus and Paul in the bargain.
Ye are the very own children,
The very own children of Matthew,
The same which Matthew had let loose—
To poison the peace of the grave
In the amiable home of the dead—
Of the German bard Heinrich Heine,
For curses and chickens and demons
Have a punctual way of returning
Back to the brains they were born in.
And they cried, "We come, Papa Matthew,
To take up our lodgings with you,
For those horrid Paris policemen
Have chased us out of Montmartre—
Exceedingly *trim Montmartre,*
That amiable home of the dead.
They said that our howlings gave trouble
To the rest of the quiet grave-dwellers
In *amiable trim Montmartre,*
Violating municipal bye-laws."
They would have gone on, but a thundering
Big torrent of horrible oaths
Broke on us, which did not only
Shake every leaf of the grove
Of the *trim, trim* churchyard of Laleham,
But of all groves in Surrey and Middlesex.
They shook the dome of St. Paul's
Like an aspen leaf, and the towers
Of Westminster Abbey 'gan dancing.
All this hulla-bulloo
Came from the mighty she-Titan,
The famous immortal she-Titan,

The grandest of Matthew's creations.
She was swart-visaged, sooty, and greasy,
Blear-eyed, too, in sockets vermilion,
With the dazed look of a deaf creature,
Grown deaf in the roaring of engines.
She was naked from the waist upward,
And that was ten feet of her person;
Her black chest for hairs was a rival
To the στήθεα λαχνήεντα which
Homer has given to Vulcan;
Her black mammoth-like udders were capped
With red, like lumps of red beet-root;
In her right hand she held a Thor hammer,
With which she beat, cursing and swearing,
On the grave of her own papa, Matthew.
"Get up, lazy bones," cried she, "and find me
A place; for you've made me a monster,
Worse than the Frankenstein monster,
And like him I'll keep haunting ever
A wanton officious creator.
And since your fine critics have said that,
Being immortal like you, Papa Matthew,
I should replace the old maid Britannia
Who rules Britain's waves now so badly,
With shield, trident, and British lion,
So I went to the white cliff of Shakespeare,
Where sat the old maid Britannia,
With shield, trident, and British lion,
Ruling the waves of the Channel,
Whales, sharks, porpoises, all cutting capers
On the face of the salt sea before her.
Then I said to her, 'Get up, old lady,
For Matthew, my papa, has sent me
To rule the waves for Great Britain
Which you now are ruling so badly.'
But the vixen she showed her long white teeth,
Such as Cham and Gavarni has given her,
And she broke my head with her trident,
And the old British lion he got up
And sniffed at my ankles, and bit me—
Look here! see! how badly it's bleeding."
Then the smutty she-stoker she lifted
Her smutty and ragged skirt upwards,
And one of her hideous hairy calves
Had really bleeding impressions
From the teeth of the British lion.

And she cried, "Whilleleu! O murder!
Papa Matthew! why did you make me,
And why did you make me immortal?"
So yelled she, and beat with her hammer
A devil's tattoo on the tombstone,
The white marble tombstone of Matthew—
This titanic soot-faced she-stoker
Set again *all the trees of the grove*
Dancing in this *amiable home*
Of the dead, and the dome of St. Paul's too,
While the tow'r of Westminster Abbey
Cut quite other capers than those which
Theban stones once cut to the harping
Of the Zeus-born harper Amphion.
To this din of the smut-faced she-Titan
Came a lot of queer creatures, all howling:
A merman with fish-tail came hopping
On crutches, pushed on by his fish-tail.
A tribe of small children came with him.
One human leg only these children
Possessed, for the other was fish-tail,
So their gait was one of the queerest;
For their mother had been a two-leggèd
Abducted young Christian woman,
But had lately made an elopement,
Running off with a fish-selling pedlar,
Being tired of a fish-tailed husband,
Who indeed was a long-winded fellow,
And had nothing better to offer her
But a nuptial couch of damp sea-weed,
With raw fish diet varied with cockles.
Next the vagabond Oxford sizar,
Who was neither scholar nor gipsy,
Came with unkempt locks and a red nose,
Got by boozing while bilking ale-houses.
In his broad-brimmed hat he came wearing
A big bunch of wild *Fritillaries*
(Which Mat makes rhyme with distilleries,
Unless he meant tributāries).
And the moon-struck Obermann came too,
With his book on his bosom and a flower,
A ghost of an Alpine flower,
In his hand, which he frequently sniffed at.
And a crowd of half-drunk Roman nobles,[1]
With "haggard eyes," borrowed from Gray,

[1] Note 11.

And in the top-boots of Jack Mitton,
And the spoony sick King of Bokhara,
Who stoned his man "*very softly*";
And Balder, whom Miss Gew Fussell
Obligingly tells us was Celtic;
That bore and that brute Arminius,
That spurious Thunder-ten-tronckher;
The stupid and brawling New Agers,
The sleepwalking Mycerinus,
And a crowd of other queer creatures,
And they all bawled out, "Papa Matthew!
Why didst thou not leave us in peace
In our amiable homes of the dead?
O why must you make us immortal?"
Then they raised such an ear-smashing howling,
With beatings of hammer and crutches
And grave-diggers' spades which were lying
About as if there for their uses,
That the horrible Charivari
Outdid that which men of China
Make in eclipses to frighten
The dragon who swallows the moon,
Or that which once Roman mobs made
In their Lupercalia and Floralia,
When wicked Canidian devilries
Made darken the sun, moon, and stars.
I fled from the horrible clangour
And came to the bank of the Thames,
And there I knelt down devoutly
And prayed to Mat's great *World-Spirit*,
The delegated Fluidity
Of the chief central Fluidity,
Which beyond the Milky Way
Maketh we hope for righteousness.
"*O Spirit of the World,*[1]
Beholding the absurdity of man,
His very absurd absurdity;
Spirit who utterest in each
New coming son of mankind,
Negro, Esquimaux, and Objibbeway,
Such of thy thoughts as thou wiltst,
Whose frown is a rain never ceasing
Of kangaroos, apes, cats, and dogs;
But who once or twice in a century
Beholding the absurdity of man,

[1] Note 12.

His very absurd absurdity,
Which thou, great spirit, had taught him,
Doth let a smile vague and sardonic
For one short moment wander o'er thy lip (*sic*)—
A smile which just *sparkles* and vanishes.
But this *sparkling*, vanishing smile
Is in truth a smile far solider
Than the grin of the Cheshire Cat
In the delightful Wonderland
Of the delightful Alice.
For the first smile in the last century
Was the wicked wretch Heinrich Heine,
Who died with a '*blemished fame*'
And a body howled over by demons
With howlings unceasing, eternal,
In the gospel according to Matthew.
But the second smile, that made amends for it,
For that was the great good Matthew,
The hater of *aselgeia*,
Who found moral physic in Goethe,
And was born crying '*Sursum corda*.'
'On on to the City Divine
Of the great good God Fluidity
Beyond the impassable border
And the Stygian "*ripa ulterior*"
Of *the scented and murmuring Infinite Sea*.'
These words and more have been sworn to
By a half-witted *E. R.* reviewer,
Who heard him so cry in his cradle.
Great Spirit, forgive this digression.
Great Spirit!
We pray thee for this, that if ever
Thou shouldst smile again in the future,
To smile us a poet who should not
Be a fine flower of Oxford culture";
For it seems the great *officina*
Virorum obscurorum doth render
Her sons most vulgarly cocky—
Even Oxford second-class class men,
Like the great Professor Saintsbury,
An incense-burner to Matthew,
Hugs his soul with cocky conviction
That the smile which lightly smiles at
The cockiness of a fine flower
Of exquisite Oxford culture
Is but an "*agonised grin*"

Produced by convulsions of envy,
Exhausting the biliary system
And griping the whole man's interior
With pangs less endurable than those
Which rove poor Keats' snake Lamia.
And they all quote Mat's famous saying [1]
The famousest of his fine sayings
(For fine flowers of Oxford culture
That goes at once without saying):
Better to be a doorkeeper
Of Oxonian hall or college;
Better to eat tainted mutton
And get sick o'er poisonous vintages,
Guiltless of any admixture
From grapes Spanish, French, or Italian,
At Oxonian infinite "winings";
To play cricket, racket, or football,
Or blister your hands in an eight oar,
As a "flannelled fool" of Dom Kipling's,
And after wine fuddlings with "Bacca"
To reel in her gardens by moonlight—
When there's any moonlight at all,
And when they're not soppy and foggy,
Which is once or twice in a May term,
Than to be Bacon, Newton, or Herschel;
An Adams, or even a Kelvyn;
A Bentley, a Porson, or Elmsley;
A Spenser, Chaucer, or Milton;
A Dryden, Crashaw, or Gray;
A Byron, Wordsworth, or Coleridge,
Or a Macaulay or Tennyson,
Or even a Walpole or Pitt,
Of unscientific Cambridge
Or scientific Tübingen;
Or of Krähwinkel, Bockham, or Schüppenstedt.
The expulsions of Locke and of Shelley,
And the sneer of "voluminous" Gibbon,
Swell the bulk of her annals of glory.
And in spite of what wrote Macaulay,[2]
The last groans of Protestant Bishops
Whom Oxford honoured by burning
Were more edifying by far
Than all the cumbersome learning
Which Cambridge pedantic had taught them.
And there's no hole or square corner

[1] Note 13. [2] Note 14.

Relegated to basest of uses
In Oxford towers post-mediæval,
However black, scaly, or mouldy,
Which has not far sweeter odour
And a diviner enchantment
Than orange, citron or tuberose blossoms
In the commonplace *Concha d'Oro*,
Than the stale spicy groves of Sabæa,
Or Taprobane's cinnamon gardens.
Even the puns post-prandial,
Such as Tom Hood or Douglas Jerrold
Let fall in their least happy moments,
Even the gentlest of jokes,
Such as loveth a genteel dulness,
Sound from lips of Oxonian dons
Most sublimely Aristophanic.
There's one about "flooring the port"
And then the "porter," which has
For a matter of twenty years
Set all the common rooms roaring.
Its success is as sure and regular
As the joke of "Old Grouse in the gun-room,"
At which Mr. Hardcastle's Diggory
Laughed freely while serving at table
For a matter of twenty year also.
The joke recalls the great ages
Of prejudice and port-wine
Celebrated by Pope and Gibbon.
And even German editions
Of classics, Greek, Latin, and Sanscrit,
When printed by Germans at Oxford
On finer and better paper
Become more impeccably classic
Than "*scientific Tübingen*,"
With her Galileos and Keplers,
Laplaces, Boerhaves, and Voltas
Could ever have possibly made them.
"*O Spirit of the World,*
Smiling just for a moment
At man's absurd *absurdities*,
Which were of thine own creation,
We pray thee smile us again
A new poet, but not one at Oxford.
They have no need there of poets
Since the place itself is a poem,
And its black towers post-mediæval

Day and night sing songs of enchantment
Finer far than a Mendelssohn ever
Made without words ; for these ditties
Have no sense or music whatever
As sung by unmusical Matthew.
And thy smile-begotten new poet,
Let him not, O gracious Spirit,
Be a cribber as the prig Mat was
From Oriental translations
By Atkinson, Mohl, or Von Shack
Of the grand epic poem *Shah Nameh*
Of the Persian Homer Firdusi,
Then give out a "Zohrab and Rustem,"
Pretending that he had concocted
The whole thing out of his noddle
From three lines of prose of prose Malcolm's ;
For such deceptive proceedings
Make a poetaster in realms
Of Literature to be classed with
Deuceaces and Barry Lindons,
Or with him who said cheerfully that he
From his country's shores had departed
All for the good of his country,
The patriot pickpocket Barrington."

THE ENGLISH GOETHE PLUS VOLTAIRE

(With apologies to Dryden and Milton)

"In his double character of poet and critic, Matthew Arnold may be called our English Goethe."—"Matthew Arnold," by Herbert W Paul, London, 1902, p. 4. "Friendship's Garland" is "by far the most amusing book he ever wrote, and, indeed, for anything better of its kind we must go to Voltaire."—Same, p. 120.

FRANCIA Voltarium, jactat Germania Goetham,
Arnoldum Paulus jactat utrique parem.

THREE authors in three separate ages born,
France, Germany, and England did adorn.
Voltaire in wit and humour ruled a king,
Goethe in physic,[1] Mat in everything.
Since Paul and Nature could no further go,
They fused a Matthew from the other two.

[1] "Physician of an iron age."—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

LIONEL: A LEGACY

PREFACE

THE following poem was a legacy to the author from a deceased gentleman, Charles Cyriac Skinner, whose acquaintance he made on board the *Ernest Simon*, one of the boats of the French *Messageries Maritimes*, on a return voyage from the Far East in 1885. Mr. Cyriac Skinner, who was proud of his descent from the friend of Milton of that name, came on board at Saigon—the chief port of French Cochin China—on the mainland of which colony he had been engaged in tea planting, after an enforced retirement from the Consular Service at the age of seventy ; but long before his joining us at Saigon he had lost a much-loved wife, the Emily of the poem, who lies buried at Saigon. When he came on board, kindred tastes speedily made friends of us, and as he had something of the garrulity of age, he imparted to me much of his past life, and told me he was proceeding to England to arrange for the publication of poems and other papers. Some of these he allowed me to read. On approaching Aden he had a return of malaria fever, caught years ago in a tropical climate while in the Government service. This fever weakened him so much that he died of the intense heat of the Red Sea, and he had the usual solemnities of a sea funeral, myself reading the funeral service over his coffin, which was placed on a gun-carriage and covered with the Union Jack, and then launched from under it into the sea. Previously to his decease he committed this poem and some other papers to my care for purposes of publication. I had found Mr. Skinner a very interesting person, but of very decided opinions, as will appear from the following poem. He had a great deal in him of the *sæva indignatio* of Swift at what he considered the vices and follies of mankind. He spoke, too, with much scorn of his own treatment in his official career. He was no mean linguist, and after having distinguished himself by doing much literary work of a high order —some of it, too, entirely unremunerative and written in a spirit of self-sacrifice—he was by way of national recognition offered a quasi-menial post which a respectable butler would have refused, so poor were its emoluments, and he found all the good things of the service were the perquisites of the favourites of a

privileged class, whom he styles in the following poem the Brahmins. After wasting the best part of his life in obscure and subordinate posts, he was fain ultimately, with a view to a pension, to accept a post in a tropical climate when he was verging on the seventies. The insalubrity of the climate was nearly fatal to him, and it affected his health permanently; indeed, it killed off his successor in six months. The physical pain with which life is associated in such a climate is truthfully set forth in some verses of this poem. Mr. Skinner also complained of the injustice of the newly invented rule of enforced retirement at seventy, by which he was ousted from the service without compensation. This rule, he said, did not exist when he regretfully accepted his first poor Government employment, and its enforcement was a violation of the conditions under which he first engaged in the Government service, and the rule itself, he said, was a mere contrivance of "jobbery," invented to make vacancies and to increase the abuses of corrupt patronage and make unwilling pensioners and idlers an additional unprofitable burden to the British taxpayer. And it was indeed invented by a Minister who, whatever his other qualifications may have been, was one of the greatest jobbers who ever had patronage at his disposal. "Snobbery and jobbery," Mr. Skinner said, were the chief and secret governing forces in England and underlay all British public and private life, but he thought John Bull regarded such things with amused and indifferent complacency, and was rather proud of them than otherwise. I was therefore prepared to find these and other satirical observations expressed in a trenchant form in the following satire.

I was inclined at first, when I heard him talk so much of Lionel, to think that Lionel was a kind of Mrs. Harris, invented for the embodiment of his peculiar opinions. On arrival in England, however, and on inquiry of those somewhat older than myself, I found that a prototype of Lionel did really exist, and that his remarkable genius had really been crushed by an untoward fate and by the malevolent conspiracy of his contemporaries much in the same way as set forth in the satire. Whatever truth, however, there may be in the main story of the poem, the chief personages and incidents of it have been so transformed that Mr. Skinner protested, and I protest in the name of the deceased, against any attempt to identify them with real people and real facts. These are typical inventions evolved from observations of life, and it is enough if the story had a possibility of existence.

Mr. Skinner in his friendly prepossessions has naturally idealised the qualities and virtues of his friend, as Turner did those of Girtin. "If Girtin had lived," said Turner, "I must have starved, for there was not room for two of us."

My poor friend Mr. Skinner's handwriting was none of the clearest, and it was impossible for me to make out some passages of the poem, so I have been obliged here and there to put in some verses of my own as connecting-links, and intelligent readers will

no doubt recognise the inferior patches. Mr. Skinner, it will be seen, was a great reader and admirer of Pope, and has inlaid his composition with various lines of that great poet and satirist. As he has not acknowledged all the lines which he has so used, he expressed his willingness that if any line seemed to rise above the level of its compeers, it should by the critic be attributed to Pope.

PROEM

WHO has not loved beneath a July sun,
Beside the headlong waves which leap and run
Along the pebbled shallows of a brook,
To lie at length within a grassy nook,
Pavilion'd by a sea-green canopy,
And hear the wanton breeze come loiteringly,
Ringing such chimes of leafy kisses down,
That the grave bulrush shakes his sombre crown
And water-lilies tremulously shiver
And faint away into the flowing river ;
To hear the sharp clink of the hillside bells,
The music of the nibbling flock, which swells
Aye in the fancy, when in thought we skim
The breezy downs to watch the dabchick swim
Silent and low within its emerald bay,
To hear the throstle flute its mellow lay,
Which drowns the flitting linnet's tinier strain
And throbs its honeyed rapture to the brain.
Then are we least alone, when all the earth
Is flushed with boon midsummer's wineful mirth,
When pleasant thoughts swarm on the brain like bees
Within the fresh-smeared hive, when every breeze
In cadence soft of divine symphony
Bears a warm greeting for all things that be.
Who has not then seen hamadryads sit
Beneath the shade of close-boughed oaks and knit
(Their dark hair rippling o'er their busy hands)
Anemones and bluebells into bands
And crowns to grace the revels of old Pan ?
Who has not seen a brown-faced oread scan
Beneath a spreading beech, with laughing eyes,
A fox-eared satyr wide-mouthed with surprise,
Or a white nymph sly-peeping from the sedge
To see an idle faun on the other edge
Splash one foot in the water as he stands
Grasping a branch above him with both hands ?

Ah ! from the time the sun comes o'er the hill,
While yet the dew upon the grass is dull—
When the brown lark first rises from his nest,
Brushing some diamonds with his speckled breast
From off the lank green blades which droop around
His lowly cot clean delvèd in the ground ;
Ah ! from the time he strains his feathered throat
To send the flying stars some farewell note—
Give me from aery morn to careless stray
Till tears of twilight mourn the dying day,
Along our southern down sleek-breasted swells,
Where golden gorse and broom and thymy dells,
Or plots of purple heath all ankle-deep,
Do sometimes spot the hillside's grassy sweep,
And I will wander on and on content
Until I reach some turfy battlement,
Heaped by the earth which Roman legions spread,
Who might have look'd on Cæsar's laurelled head.
Down on the rampart green I'll sit and look
Where the fair valley opens like a book,
O'er copse and hedgerow, spires embower'd in green,
To where a belt of sea blue rounds the scene ;
There, though the chimney of the nearest cot
Sends its grey smoke up miles from that lone spot,
We'll find no lack of sights or company :
The cawing rooks shall flag across the sky ;
We'll watch the kite, attorney of winged things,
Wheel o'er the furze brake where the linnet sings ;
But most the small brown and pink butterflies,
The speckled ladybirds, and gauze-winged flies,
Green-coated beetles, and fat humblebees,
Spring-shanked grasshoppers which leap the leas,
And all the insect tribe that flout the breeze
We will greet well, nor yet to cheer forget
The emmets moiling in one ceaseless fret.
There will I lie supine and shade my sight
From mid-day sunbeams, and sweet forms of light
Shall toss plumes gaily to the summer gales—
The world of poets and their faëry tales ;
The cream-white steed of Guenevere the Fair,
With housings red, shall paw along the air,
And Bradamante her enchanted lance
Shall bear, while sweeping auburn tresses dance
Adown her gorget, and her plume of snow
Hangs from the gold casque at her saddle bow.
And I shall feel Armida's wondrous eyes,

As in her car the magic beauty lies ;
Una and Una's lion, Pastorel,
Sweet Amoret and fairest Florimel—
All gentle Spenser's pale maids shall go by
With eyes down dropt in maiden chastity ;
And then a crowd of knights shall spur along,
Each looking for his damsel in the throng ;
And lest the lank-jawed, melancholy Don
Shall try to spur his bony charger on,
Burning to do some deed of courage high,
While Sancho following drains the wineskin dry—
Oh, noble Quixote ! I will kneel to thee,
Thou lost last star of Spanish chivalry.
In days like these, with fancy's wings unfurled,
We feel the freshness of an earlier world ;
Yes, solitude, from towns far, far apart,
Is full of peace divine—the wounded heart
Drinks in its scars a cool and healing balm,
The waving seas of passion sink to calm ;
And for the maddening hurry and turmoil
Which din the ears and make the vex'd brain boil,
Sweet murmurs such as those which pink-lipped shells,
Or melodies soft rung by blue harebells,
Unto the ear of fancy, when May's breeze
Sets all green herbs a-trembling on the leas,
Or busy hum of bees or patt'ring shower,
Or gurgling stream or rustling of green bow'r,
Or scent of violet or hawthorn spray,
The city fever of the soul allay.
Here must I pause ; I have no time to tell,
Of each low whisper in some coppice-dell,
Where the white fairies skim the moonlit glade
And silence sighs with rapture in the shade ;
I have no time to dwell on rocky shore,
The torrent's inspiration, and the roar
Of hurtling cataracts, or of snowy peak,
Where the chamois' blue hoof-prints only break
The virgin white expanse. Blissful and good
Are these, thy dear delights, O Solitude !
But I must leave them here, if I would tell
The sad tale of the poet Lionel,
How he passed lonely through the murky gloom
Of city torments to a foreign tomb.

Ah ! solitude in cities is a pain,
An ever-hungry worm within the brain,

Where lone lŏve yearning burns with vain desire,
And finds a hell in its imprisoned fire.
Oh! thou whom fate has smitten with distress
And humbled down to undue wretchedness—
Poor, and so friendless, without child or wife,
Alone amid the town's tumultuous strife,
Hie thee away unto an island rock,
Which bears some wintry ocean's surging shock;
Ask thou the storm for mercy, to the wind
Plead thou for help and comfort, thou shalt find
It sooner than a hand from out the press
Of city crowds to cheer thy loneliness.
The lord of millions has no thought to give,
E'en wert thou Plato's self to help thee live—
Some undegrading kindness to bestow,
To help thee as a man and mitigate one woe;
And he who sets his life on noble end
Is lucky if he finds a single friend.
Man mostly hates in virtue, as in pelf,
The man who strives for more than he himself,
Yet truly there's no state should call for ruth
Like poverty and genius shared by youth;
Genius, of puny wits and fools the mock,
Until discountable in proper stock,
Which writhes in bondage till it sees the light,
And soars at length beyond the dullard's sight.
Alas! these bitter truths soon learnt full well
The fair young Lionel—the poet Lionel;
Nor less he knew them when the frosty rime
Of grief had flecked his locks in place of time.
Ah! when I think on Lionel, I feel
A sweet Elysium o'er my senses steal;
His very memory, like some holy dew
Does with a fresh and radiant life renew
Those dear enthusiasms which strongly bloom
In life's spring season, ere the hot simoom
Breathed on youth's fancies from greed's hateful lips
The poet-soul within the man eclipse.
No cloister'd nun a purer soul possessed
Than Lionel—Love in his gentle breast,
With Truth and Mercy found a saintly cell,
And trembled from his tongue with rapturous spell.
His eagle spirit, beautiful and free,
Could face the light which blinking owls would flee:
Poet and saint his twofold star did gleam
With best rays twinèd of th' eternal beam—

Oh world! oh age! had he been loved by thee,
He had not been the man he seemed to be.
But now he's dead each prosperous knave can say
He had fared better had he lived to-day.
"Merit at last must win, sir; look at me—
I've had my trials, but I've won, you see."
But Lionel soon found that virtue must,
To avoid starvation, lick the sordid dust,
Crawl down with reptile natures in the slime,
And seek some fellowship with thriving crime—
The rich alone can purity affect,
A poor man's merit ever is suspect;
For starving worth each dull dog has a jest,
And virtue's loathsome in a threadbare vest:
A threadbare vest proclaims by simple rule
A luckless knave or else a virtuous fool.
A poor man's virtue is a dangerous thing;
A banker's balance robs it of its sting.
By death alone the poor man's worth's begotten—
That is innocuous when his body's rotten.
Some Mayfair genius then his life will write,
And show it to the world in proper light;
And they who spurned the man shall make his name
An easy passport to a dullard's fame.

CANTO I

YOUTH

THIS poem halted here, for fate and wrong
For years froze up its chrysalis of song ;
But still, in spite of heavy eves and morns,
The memory of Lionel adorns
The humble mansion of a grief-worn mind,
Like to a graceful palm-branch which men bind
In Southern climes across their balconies,
As symbol of the faith that in them lies.
Oh ! Lionel—I feel indeed full well,
As Horace hints, how hard it is to tell
A tale of vulgar spite and vulgar greed
O'er nobleness victorious. Yet indeed
I would not leave thy tragedy untold.
More pitiful to find in legends old
Sure it were harder, when in candid wise
Demons on saints made war without disguise ;
But now the pow'rs of Hell, with craftier guile,
Torture the saintly with a saintlier smile.
Our modern Turpins take not to the road,
But plan their robberies in the house of God.
Thieves and directors, counsel-in-the-law,
Can strip you honestly of your last straw ;
Now racks and thumbscrews are quite out of fashion,
But if for torturing you have a passion,
Sweet lady, let your mother viperine
Shoot vipers from her venomed tongue and eyne,
And fill with them your husband's bed or chair,
And when he writhes with fiercest pangs, go swear
False oaths, and say the man is raging quite,
Drunken or mad—and for your restless spite,
Hire venal advocates to make wrong right.

Then some grave justice in a horsehair wig
Will help you roast your husband like a pig
On coals of fire, which will, although symbolical,
Burn fierce as Solomon's own parabolical.[1]

The home of Lionel, when his natal hour
Brought him to light, was in a moated tow'r
On a red cliff, which tinged in storms the sea
In Southern Devon—scarce in Italy
Would you find such a wealth of rosemary,
Myrtle and arbutus and o'erclustering bays
Thronging the combe-path, which in devious maze
Ran to the shingled beach. The ocean wave
Was the child's playmate—not a rock or cave
The boy, an only child, left unexplored
Neath the paternal cliff—up each red fiord
He paddled in the sands with infant feet.
But later, when in his precocious heat
Of soul the boy read Homer, and had seen
Achilles on front page with falchion keen
Fighting the flood of Simoïs, the child,
To the maid's terror, when the sea was wild,
Defied the roaring waves armed cap-à-pie
With his toy sword and shield, and bade them flee.
What would the man be who defied in fight,
E'en as child, the ocean's anger white?
When I recall that child's dear memory,
Unbidden tears still gushing blind the eye.
I was his elder by years two or three,
And that is much for children—neighbours, we
Were oft together, and I was to him
An elder brother, and in copses dim,
In violeted cirque and fern-clad dell,
We were lone visitants—little Lionel!
Dear Lionel! how angel good and sweet
Thou wert, delicious elf!—with tiny feet
He trod so daintily the cowslipped sward,
As though he feared his little weight too hard
Would be for the poor cowslips; where bluebells
Clustered he leant his ear, all ocean's shells
Outshining in pink clearness—then said, "Ah!
I hear thy fairies' peals, Titania!"
His eyes of beryl blue beaming the while
Beneath his curved jet lashes—a soft smile
Playing on lips whose pure incarnadine

[1] Prov. xxv. 22.

Outshone the newest buds of eglantine.
Star-browed and golden haired, this infant thing
Tripp'd robed in radiance like a fairy king.
Then he would take my hand, and on his lip
Lay flowery light his little finger-tip,
And say, "Hush ! hush ! come quietly, and I
Will show you where the fairies sleeping lie."
Then he would draw me to where hawthorn bowers
O'erarched bright pimpernels and cuckoo flowers,
And he would creeping lead, and then would cry,
"See, in that foxgloved spinney, there they lie ;
Queen Mab with all her tiny courtier elves
All in the foxglove bells now rest themselves.
Wait till the night here, then you'll surely see
Each flutter out like butterfly or bee
When the moon rises, fairy games to keep.
Only that wicked Puck—he will not sleep ;
He's wide awake for mischief night and day.
See ! he is running up that ashbole grey."
For me 'twas a woodpecker, but for Li
It was the naughty Puck, and ever nigh
Was Puck about him—all his small mischances
Were due to wilful Puck's wild whims and fancies :
E'en if a doorbolt he felt hard to slide,
'Twas Puck who held it on the other side.
And then the child a little empire had
In his own fancy, void of creature bad,
No eft or toad and not a single snake
Was to be found there ; never sea or lake
Was ruffled there but by a scented breeze ;
Flowers never faded, golden-fruited trees
Let down their boughs to meet the gatherer's hand.
News had he from his happy Lio's land
Three times a day, all brought by swallow post,
That all the wishes which our infant host
Had bid us make we there fulfilled should find,
With all good things for which he had a mind.
Oh ! vanity of tears and idle moans !
Whole litanies of midnight sobs and groans,
Were weak to wail th' immeasurable wrong
By which misnamed Humanity's base throng
Made Leo's life a torture to its close,
Increasing aye its brutalising woes.
E'en in the prime of its white innocence
That infant soul, with sweet magnificence,
Without one flaw of evil or of guile

Would make of life one blest enchanted isle,
Free unto all men. Oh! the weary years
Of disenchantment—hopes betrayed and fears
Mid scoff of prosperous knaves and the disdain
Of all the virtuous wealthy and their train—
Until at Macao, as I shall tell,
I saw the last of our dear Lionel,
Where the poor man, a broken lone outcast,
Before the bust of Camoens breathed his last.

If all man's life were swallowed down by earth,
One would wish Lionel had had no birth;
The next good wish to frame for him would be
That he had died when full of childish glee.
Marie de Sévigné, with all life's charms,
Nigh wished she'd perished in her nurse's arms,
And had she done so a bereaved mankind
Had lost the commerce of a lovely mind.
But as for Lionel, though in prose and rhyme
He'd touched the noblest spirits of our time—
I know not if his words will share his fate
And fall the victim too of crime and hate—
Yet had he died as child his happy end
Had been to have the whole world for a friend;
For e'en the darkest villain felt some ruth
Who saw the glory of his infant youth.
Yet soon as Lionel had left behind
His childish elvish ways, his marvellous mind
Showed signs in earnest of its inborn might;
'Twas then that first inhuman human spite
Began to twist his words and acts awry
And to behold him with a jaundiced eye.
Poor Lionel ne'er look'd on any other
But with the warm heart of a loving brother;
He had no thought, e'en in his later years,
Of being any better than his peers;
But still clowns thought he had—that was enough
To bring upon him many a brute's rebuff,
Much trampling of dull churls on tender toes,
Kicks in the dark, and secret bludgeon blows.
For Lionel, as soon as he could pen
A thought on paper, seemed a citizen
Enfranchised straightway of the whole wide world
Of man's intelligence—knowledge unfurl'd
Its veil of mysteries, so that learning seemed
Remembrance with him, and his tutor deem'd

That he had little more the boy to teach
Ere he had reached his teens. No foreign speech
Was any bar to him in his rapt yearning
After the good and beautiful—with burning
Hope unquenchable he ransack'd soon
The realms of Art and Science, nor did shun
The page of Newton and Laplace; yet he
Felt his soul eagle-winged in poetry.
In the first year of school-life, aged eleven,
He was poetic medallist—subject given
Was "Byron," and the girlish teenless bard
Not only glorified Childe Harold, but he dared
In verse Spenserian gently to engage
A rival protest 'gainst man's vassalage,
Which the grand Harold gave unto the ocean,
Lauding man's conquests o'er its brute commotion
In the long duel which his heart doth wage
Against its monstrous might from age to age.
Man was the victor, making ocean's might
Slave to his civil uses day and night.
Yea, I was present when with thrilling voice
The wondrous boy recited to the choice
Local elect who gathered on speech days
Within the old school hall. All felt amaze
To see his slender shape sideling along
Through forms of strapping youths to face the throng
Of the spectators and to read aloud
His glowing stanzas to that august crowd.
Just as he took his place his eye caught mine,
And he began to laugh—so strangely fine,
His urchin glory felt; yet to the utmost line
The boy, absorbed, read thrillingly and well;
But when he raised his eyes he prostrate fell
As though struck down by lightning. What was it
Which whirled the boy down in this sudden fit?
Yet that which struck him with a senseless swoon,
Although some blamed the heat of that hot noon,
Was a fair vision—fairer creature I
Have scarcely seen. A northern Queen Vashti
Was Emily, daughter of the great Sir Phil,
Of that school town. She dwelt on Castlehill,
In a real castle, with huge red round towers
Half hid by ivied walls and garden bowers.
Most of us big boys felt a kind of swirl
When in her walks we met that queenly girl
And her young governess; but Lionel—

Her beauty dazed him like a magic spell ;
For him she walked a vivid incarnation
Of goddess-splendour past imagination.
She came in soft below him as he stood
Upon the platform and in high-nerved mood
Read out his ringing lines : by sire attended,
She had sat down before him ; when he ended,
He raised his eyes, and then in gilded chair
He saw two glorious eyes 'neath auburn hair,
A smile from ruby lips divinely sweet,
And two gloved hands their fine applauses beat.
This was the cause, and not the summer glow,
Which sent the poor child prostrate—this I know.
Poor child ! so nerved, what could he find but life
Intolerable in this world's bestial strife ?
I, even I, who felt myself half clown [1]
By Lionel's dear side, I shared the frown
Of the brute world on darling Lionel.
And that for these high lines. It thus befel :
I was a happy home-gone undergrad,
Fresh from small college triumphs—Oh so glad !
There was a picnic in a lovely glen
Of lovely Devon, and we numbered ten,
Encamped on a green cirque by Tamar's tide,
Myrtles and laurels clustering on each side.
I felt quite jaunty in my boating hat
With Lady Margaret ribbon bound so pat.
I sat to face our gracious festal queen,
Our Vashti—Emily. Then she cried between
Sips of champagne with strawberries and cream,
Which closed our gipsy meal by that blue stream :
" I summon thee, Sir Scholar, fair and wise,
Give us some verses of your college prize."
" I will not," said I, " give you my poor verse,
But will, if you permit, again rehearse
Those lines of Lionel whose mere recital
Gave him that fit, you know, which seemed so vital."
I said this with a glance at Emily,
And she shot back the glance half roguishly,
And I recited that grand passage through,
And Emily applauded, and she threw
A rose she took from out her breast's fair burden
To me and said, " Sir, take that for thy guerdon;
Those verses pleased me more thus heard again."
Then Emily arose and led our train

[1] Note 15.

Along the grassy bank. I gave my arm,
Which she took bending with a willowy charm,
When just then down that precious rose, alas!
Fell from its coign of honour to the grass.
I turned to raise it, when, there close behind,
A man red-eyed, red faced as boorish hind,
With a huge mouth above a waste of chin,
Trampled my rose with a malicious grin
Beneath his horrid feet, muttering, "These swells,
These college lady-killers, come our belles
To carry off before our very faces
With their damned poetry and dandy graces."
Alas! poor Lionel, of life's bliss his span
Was shut within his teens; then first began—
His twentieth birthday past—disaster grim,
Like some mad slav'ring hound, to mangle him.
Up to the time when the first callow down
Came on his lip, it seemed that time would crown
The wondrous promise of his glorious youth.
No realm of Fancy, Science, Beauty, Truth,
He had left unexplored—Iambics Attic,
Sapphic, Alcaics, Doric idiomatic,
Prose Ciceronian, grand hexameters,
Varied with smart Ovidian pentameters,
All these as easy as in English speech
He could indite; in Greek and Latin each,
He could declaim; Plato, Plotinus, Kant,
Descartes and Hegel, with no zeal less scant
He read with Homer, Pindar, Sophocles;
He drank all Virgil's vintage to the lees,
With Corneille, Dante, Goethe, Calderon,
All poets old and new, both foreign and our own;
The science of the stars, the theories
Of heat and light and ether, all with ease
He mastered, with the wondrous transformation
Of force to matter—almost divination
They might be called, his studies of geology,
Of social science, ethics, and psychology.
More base were life, were there not some, forsooth,
Contagious generosity in youth.
Our college thus felt pride in Lionel,
E'en as a freshman—for he had a spell
Which even tutors charm'd and third-year men.
He had no trace of "sap" about him when
With lithe and springy form he took his seat
Within our eight-oar, or with rapid feet

Sprang in the racket court the ball to meet,
And drove it back with such a godlike air
He look'd a young Apollo to a hair;
But then his light beside the turret stair
Was burning late while others sleeping were.
And so it came that in his second-year
Our much-beloved Lio, in a spurt
Before a race, had a grave inward hurt:
He burst a vessel somewhere in the breast;
His face turned deathly pale, one hand his chest
Pressed, and his lips foamed blood, and on his oar
He fell half fainting and was put on shore.
Ah me! I do remember well those sad, sad nights,
Sad nights and days, for us poor college wights;
The catching sympathy of genial youth
Yet, yet had power to move our souls to ruth.
Still by the turret stairs in nightly glow
Shone Lionel's windows now—but not, I trow,
For study now; dark shadows to and fro
Flitted across them, white-capped nurses hieing
To soothe the sleepless Li's delirious crying;
For he had raging fever. One dread night
I most remember—at his windows' light
Watched half the college: a leech of great name
From town had come, fetched down by telegram,
And there was consultation; we were there,
A silence-stricken crowd, waiting to hear
The great man's diagnosis. Muttering low,
Square, black-capped college dons were pacing slow
Upon the quadrangle's soft, sacred sward;
We, Lionel's friends, were clustering on the hard
And gravelled lamp-lit path; bedmakers, gyps,
At a respectful distance, with mute lips,
Stood in the gas-light—was it life or death?
Then came a nurse down, and with bated breath
Told us that the great oracle had said
By help of ice, wet sheets, and a shorn head,
Our Lionel yet might live. Oh! I wept then,
And now the tear is falling on my pen.
Whom the gods love die young[1]—how fine,
Yet sad and true, is that iambic line;
Had Lionel died then, his funeral bell
Precluding that of marriage, he'd died well,
Wept and beloved and idolised by some,
And scaped the horrors of his life to come.

[1] Note 16.

For all his after-life was but one strain
And ceaseless combat against death and pain,
To keep life going in a world where he
Had never willed to share its savage lottery.
Oh ! the sad meeting of the son and sire
When he went home from college—Oh ! the dire
Immensity and impotence of grief,
And sobs and groans suppressed ; in that sad brief
Embracing neither would prolong the smart
Of love and bliss ineffable. Apart,
With join'd hands, silent smiles, in tearful mist
They gazed upon each other—then they kissed :
His boy, his boy ! bright-haired and falcon-eyed
He had left home in all the radiant pride
Of youth and genius but two months agone ;
Where was he ? Where was he, that noble son ?
A spectre woebegone, with blank shorn head,
Looking like Lazarus just raised from the dead.
Gone ! gone ! all hopeless now, his double first,
The splendid hopes which sire and son had nursed
Of honours academic ; but the worst
Was the expulsion of the weak sick boy
As pariah from his peers in youth and joy,
Not as a breaker of his college rules,
But by the tyranny of fate—e'en fools
Had dread of rustication, and now he
Pin'd for his comrades more than his degree ;
He pin'd and pin'd in bookless solitude ;
For in the tension of his feverish mood
All study was impossible : the leech
Had every book removed quite out of reach,
And Lio pass'd for months long nights alone,
Writhing in fever sweats, teeth clench'd with stifled
moan.
At length as any child his touch grew weak,
And the physician said, " 'Tis time to seek
For life in Southern climes—for here to live
Another winter we no hope can give."

CANTO II

WANDERJÄHRE

THEN came two years of painful journeying,
Of faint hopes with despairs alternating;
For Lionel's mother with a trained man-nurse
Carried away what seemed the breathing corse
Of what was Lionel from his native shore
And from his sire—for never, never more
His fond sire and the dear home of his birth
Saw he again : they were to him henceforth
But memories, when that dark December day
Of British fog beheld him borne away,
Like a dumb bale of goods, at painful cost
To Southern lands by steamboat, rail, and post;
For then the age of rails was just begun,
And there were none from Bourges to Avignon.
They brought the lad to Nice : arriving there,
As he was chaired up o'er the hotel stair
A Briton muttered with remonstrant grin,
"We want no corpses in this blessed inn."
And yet the flickering feebly-glimmering ray
Of life within him would not die—ah! nay,
It flickered gently stronger in his bosom
Until the light perfume of orange-blossom
From the surrounding groves suffused his brain,
And the soft fragrance sooth'd his fevered vein.
"To be or not to be," as long as that
The question was with him, refusal flat
Gave Lio in a gentlemanly way
To take a part in the disgusting fray
Which vital forces with their microbe foes
Waged in his blood; he murmured, "I suppose
Heav'n knows what's best. I would not stir a hair
This way or that, or waste a single prayer

This way or that—that way most like were best
Which would consign me to eternal rest.
The powers I felt to be a source of good,
Kind Nature lent me in a mocking mood;
She gave and she may take this useless breath,
My life can now be but a living death."
And when the turn came and his bitter doom
Seem'd to deny him yet the welcome tomb,
His manhood rose within him and his will
Defiant rose against the powers of ill—
Since he must fight for life he would fight well,
And stamp like Michael on this inner hell.
But a long fight it was—two long, long years
Passed ere the sick youth ranked beside his peers.
But these two years were years of frenzied heat
For Europe—in each capital and street
The revolutionary war drum beat
The summons behind barricades to fight
Against inhuman wrong for human right.
It was the stormy time of forty-eight,
Which shook the keystone of each foreign State:
Kossuth, Mazzini, Garibaldi, Thiers,
Lamartine, Hugo—such names filled the ears
Of Lionel as he roam'd from land to land
In search of health; for soon as he could stand
With strength revived, though weak, in Popeless Rome
Maternal care had left him for her home.
So fate would have it, when with tedious length
Our Lionel began with feeble strength
Reggere in piedi, as in Tuscan talk
They speak of those who just can feebly walk.
He was in Rome alone: the Pope was fled
To Gaeta—triumvirs in his stead,
Mazzini, Saffi, Armellini were
Rome's rulers now, and their prime minister
Was Garibaldi. Lionel had been
Bred in the Tory faith superb, serene,
Yet now the Tory youth without book-ballast
Was thrown by chance to mingle with the tallest
Of patriotic scoundrels (Johnson *vide*).
Of rights of men and freedom now this creed he
Began to quaff; his Toryism stiff
Was blown to nowhere by the first smart whiff
Of patriotic powder—strange that he
Who had wept o'er the εἰκων βασιλίκη
And burned to avenge the martyred Saint King Charles

Should now the victim be of foreign carles—
Gino Capponi, Giusti, and Mazzini
The lonely boy beguiled, as later he
Grew more perverted in the social throng
Which he met in Parisian *salons*,
The Belgioioso, d'Agoult, Guiccioli,
And many more whom he was wont to see—
Sainte-Beuve and Taine, Quinet, Ernest Renan,
Lamartine, Villemain, Cousin, Jules Simon.
Later in London much he loved to learn
Of exiled men and help them in return.
And much he prized the worth he came to know
In brave small Louis Blanc, the prophet of Rousseau.
But back to Rome. I think what gave a clench
To Lionel's most pitiable wrench
From the stiff *Credo* of the haughty *Times*
Was when he saw a brother fam'd for rhymes,
The hope and pride of *Giovane Italia*,
Near Naples, in the isle of Nisida.
A *cicerone* had our Lio led
To see a curious sight—a felon's bed
Which held a hundred felons; it was made
Of one huge foul straw-circle and displayed
Within a crumbling tower's dark noisome pit,
And from a jutting rock one looked on it.
The hundred felons at the evening hour
Were marshalled to their couch. "That's fifty-four
And fifty-five," the guide said, croning low;
"I know them both—Carlo Poerio
Is number fifty-four, and fifty-five,
Chained to him, is of villains now alive
I think about the worst. But Bomba[1] said:
'Let Pippo and the poet have one bed—
Our Lord he died between His felons two,
For this young rhymester only one will do.'"
A *Times* great leader-writer[2] in his glory
Was then at Naples; when he heard this story
He calmly said, "'Neath kings the most paternal
Wrongs individual happen; but infernal
Blockheads or knaves I take these men to be,
Who'd make by prose and rhyme Italians free.
I hold with Nelson—singers, dancers, fiddlers,
They may be good for, but for Jeremy Diddlers,

[1] Bomba was a contemporary nickname of the King of Naples.
[2] Note 17.

Brigands, and mutual cut-throats, not a city
In Europe rivals this. I'd have no pity—
As madman or as felon I would treat
Him who would turn wild beasts into the street;
Their own dirt they must eat as we have done,
Melting Celts, Saxons, Normans, into one."
Well, Naples left, his parent journeying home,
Young Lionel was left alone in Rome.
'Twas May—the Coliseum and the baths
Of Caracalla had their bosky paths
And bowers, where Shelley lov'd to sit and write,
Spangled with blossoms, yellow, red, and white—
Bright as the Roman Spring, and brightly waves
Th'Italian tricolor from countless staves
In Rome republican. Lio sees it roll
Across the blue sky from the Capitol,
E'en from St. Peter's and the Vatican
It beams in triple radiance spick and span.
It is the eve of old Rome's natal day,
And Lionel with hundreds takes the way
Unto the Hill Capitoline, ablaze
With fires, green, red, and blue. With earnest gaze
The Stoic Emperor Mark Antonine
Sits on his steed, new gilded in the shine
Of countless torches. And he seems to smile
When he, the famed and hunted grand exile,
The new Rienzi—he, Mazzini—bares
His head upon the Capitolian stairs,
And raises crashing cheers from countless throats
When he proclaims, in trumpet-ringing notes,
That in this night from three millenniums whirled,
Old Rome is born anew into the world.
A few days past, when hark! the cannon's roar
From brazen throats is thundering before
The ramparts 'neath the long Gianicolo.
They are the French troops led by Oudinot—
The French Republic, by strange casuistry
And crooked politics, was cajoled to be
The self-made champion of the triple crown,
The newborn sister State to batter down.
And Lionel went to see with his own eyes
The smoke of cannon and of rifles rise
Beyond that villa grand Pamphili Doria—
His weakness shrinking back from war's deeds gory—a
Repulsion strong he felt to raise in strife
His pale, faint hands to take a strong man's life.

And yet he yearns somehow to help his friends,
And so he joins an ambulance and tends
The sick and wounded in the hospital
Set up within the walls palatial
Of that proud Doria villa. He was wont
At times to carry cordials to the front—
His fair and gentle face was known to all
The Roman fighters. When he heard them call,
Nostro bel Inglese, vieni quà, he ran
And held to thirsty lips the sutler-can.
One day when it was said the General
Had fasted long, he offered with prompt zeal
To carry out to him his mid-day meal;
To bear it to the chief the youth must fain,
Right under hostile fire, pass down a lane
Between two walls with Rome's sun blazing hot;
He passed adown untouched by pinging shot
And entered in a vineyard. Garibaldi
Was standing there beneath an olive tree
In his grand port of lion majesty,
With sword unsheathed among the thick-leaved vines.
Fluttering along the canes' supporting lines,
The great chief saw the youth advance to him,
And raise his right hand to his red cap's rim
In soldierly salute so calm and steady,
While in his left his canteen he held ready.
He smiled and sheathed his sword; his lion mien
Softened, his grand eyes glowed with light serene.
On the boy's shoulders both hands did he place,
Then clasped the youngster in a warm embrace.
"*Bene*," he said unto the happy fellow,
"*Bravo, mio caro, tanto buon che bello. . . .*"
Rome fell, as we all know; it could not be,
This grand Republic. Lionel must flee
To Florence, and from thence he traversed slow
The Appenines and then white Stelvio,
Seeking Vienna. In the Lombard plain
The soil still reeked with blood of patriots slain;
The glorious tricolor in dust and gore
Sank in Novara's field; on foreign shore
The patriot king, Charles Albert, pined outlawed;
Radetsky ruled in Milan; and red-jawed
From the fell sack of Brescia raged Hainau,
Hyæna-Hainau, making gory slough
With patriot blood—delighting in the shriek
Of women 'neath the lash, his joy the reek

Of burning homes—held in each Alpine city
His blood assizes, shooting without pity.
This monster was in Sondrio; Croats swarmed
Within the town, and Lionel unharmed
Passed 'neath the murderer's eye, as he fared slow
Along the Valteline to the Stelvio.
O! had he known, that hirsute savage dread,
When Lionel was dragged from out his bed
By the dark Croats, and then brought to him
As a suspicious traveller, that the slim
And gentle English youth the *bel Inglese*
Of Garibaldi was, that ruffian crazy
Had surely made him pass a bad *quart d'heure;*
But Lionel answered with such look demure
To his rough questionings that he 'scaped somehow.
But 'twas a narrow thing, for down below,
E'en as he parleyed with the man of blood
In the town hall, white-coated Croats stood
Ready to use their ready ammunition
In shooting peasants just caught on suspicion,
Like Lionel himself. Howe'er his skin
He saved that time; and yet a bullet in
His body, then with Hanau for blood-letter,
Than later Christian grace had served him better.
He reached Vienna—from whose streets ablution
Had barely washed the blood of revolution;
Vienna past, the traveller northwards still
His course directed, resolute of will,
To fight the fight out in his feverish blood.
He had resolved to seek for life's best good,
Health, mid Silesia's sombre pine-clad mountains,
Then fam'd afar—for mid their healthful fountains
Priesnitz was born, the founder of hydropathy—
A sovereign cure for every human malady,
Except old age and death, and even these
Sufficient water doses might appease.
His *kurhaus* was hight Gräfenberg; it stood
High up and skirted by a dark pine wood,
Looking across a valley dark and sad
Upon the Giant Mountains—they, too, clad
With black pine forests. His arrival there
A kind Scotch *kurgast,* with a sombre air,
Greeted right pleasantly: he said, "I'm glad,
Good sir, to shake your hand; you *do* look bad.
Worse looking here I've seen but one or two.
I would advise you without more ado

To shake hands with grim Death and so begin
With lighter heart your cure—if you should win
You'll do so with less care to worry you,
And if you don't, I will be here to bury you."
At this dry Scotch *wut* Lionel could not choose
But smile, although he shivered in his shoes
In this bleak land, transferred from Italy,
That revel of the earth and summer glee.
And he began his water cure straightway,
Which was a water drenching every day,
Inside and outside, copiously as air.
The water torture of Brinvilliers
Was for the inside only, here was both.
And when white winter came, ah ! then, in sooth,
'Twas hard for one bare-skinned to feel a hero
In a *luft-bad* at twenty below zero.
Yet six months' mountain life 'mid ice and snow,
With energetic struggling, braced him so
That his pale skin began with life to glow,
When through his heart came sudden from the dark
A fatal bolt, which wellnigh quenched the spark
Of life reviving in him—*one* post brought
A letter from his father, all full fraught
With fond paternal love and notes of joy
At the good news sent home by his dear boy.
And then the *next*—the *next*, oh ! horrible,
Told him that he was fatherless. He fell
Down on the bare fir planks of his lone cell,
For cell it was. How long his death-like swoon
Lasted he knew not—the white, frosty moon
Looked on him through the casement and passed on,
Leaving him stretched in darkness, all alone.

CANTO III

KATE O'NEIL

That blow for Lionel was of deadlier strength
Than his friends knew of then. Yet he at length
Rose up, clench'd teeth, and battling might and main,
Gain'd almost pristine strength of nerve and vein.
He came to England, and, as we have said,
Came home to no home, with his father dead,
His mother overwhelmed with tribulation—
For sudden death and some sad speculation
Had made confusion of his sire's affairs,
And left but a poor pittance to his heirs.
And Lionel, who'd fought with desperate striving
Merely to keep a place among the living,
Found his real strife for life was just begun : he
Found health was only health, it was not money.
I, now arrived at this part of my story
Of Lionel's long martyrdom, felt sorry
That I had e'er begun ; my love was such
I felt I should be maudling far too much,
And so I wrote to Bryan, a Q.C.,
A college chum of Lionel and me,
To help me in this matter. Bryan, he
Was passing his vacation at *Saas Fee*.
Had it been term-time I'd not dared essay
To trouble that great lord of the big brief
To give me in my weakness such relief.
And soon to me the following answer made he,
Just like the man we styled the rough and ready,
Who with his swift retorts and off-hand airs
Had made Vice-Chancellors tremble in their chairs.
"About our friend," he wrote, "I shall be glad
To give what help I can. That luckless lad
I loved well, as you know, whate'er might be

The heaps of points on which we couldn't agree.
He was a spoon—of genius, if you will ;
But spooniness of all kinds, good or ill,
Is my aversion. See the world to-day—
No spooniness of any kind can pay.
Now Lionel aye was fooling with the ideal,
Treating with disrespect the sovreign real.
You well remember in our college crew,
When I was number four and he was two,
How Lionel burst a vein within his breast,
And straight was put on shore, and we, the rest,
With only seven oars bumped Trinity.
I hardly hoped the boy again to see,
So bad the news we heard from time to time
Of his health-seeking in a Southern clime.
At last, indeed, we heard that he was dead,
When of a sudden—two years having fled—
He turned up in Wroth's chambers in Pump Court,
Where we old Cantabs used to make resort
After Hall dinner—for a lot of us
Had entered for the Woolsack. Without fuss
We sucked our pipes, with water'd gin and whisky,
The day's law-grubbing done, cursing the frisky
Post-prandial college winings of much cost—
Bad port, stale fruits, cold coffee, '*chovy* toast ;
With sham Cabanas at one pound the fifty,
For undergrads are trained to be unthrifty.[1]
Though Lionel had writ to Wroth before,
We felt a turn when he pass'd through the door ;
He look'd so pale and thin, dressed in deep black,
With his gaunt cheeks and bright eyes, for, alack !
One feels somehow at first a little flurried
In meeting one you thought was dead and buried.
And yet we greeted well with hearty talk
This rival climber for Law's long bean-stalk.
We knew of his frustrated expectations—
His father's death 'mid treacherous speculations,
And how an uncle and some well-to-do
Relations in their wills had snubbed him too,
Treating his poor health as a kind of vice ;
And then the college tutors were not nice,
Nor were the worthy benchers of his Inn—
They, too, considered sickness as a sin.
Bigwigs of Inn and college he must pay
For lectures given while he was away ;

[1] Note 18.

For dinners, too, uneaten. Minor ills
Came in the form of out-of-college bills.
For rules of colleges and Inns are sure
Made for men strong and rich, not sick and poor:
And England is the country of fair play,
But for the right to have it you must pay—
And you must play the game in her own way.
That's fair for all, and only needy ninnies
Would wince at paying down a hundred guineas
To Mouldy Mortmain,[1] the conveyancer,
Another hundred to a Drawcansir,
A special pleader, and a hundred more
To some smart counsel just to pass his door,
Sit in his chamber, just to see his practice—
For mention none in bond, or deed, or act is
Set down of any duty they may owe you,
And when your year is up they may not know you.
'Tween Lionel and Mouldy thus a cheque
For sovreigns one nought five—saved from the wreck
Of his small fortune—formed the only nexus:
Such trifles sure were never made to vex us.
So Mouldy thought, as with a foxy grin he
'Impeticosed' poor Lionel's 'gratillity.'[2]
I told him how 'twould be; he'd not believe,
But from the pundit he'd some good receive.
The good he got was walking to and fro,
Wearing his heels out, and his heartstrings too,
Of Mouldy's chambers in the passages;
Seeing piles of papers marked with monstrous fees
Go by, which Mouldy guarded like a Turk,
And let his famish'd pupils pine for work.
At last the parchment-heart felt some compassion
For Lionel's unreasonable passion
For doing work, gave him a lease to draw up,
Hoping perhaps his ardour thus to chaw up.
Recitals this lease had from time Queen Bess,
Which took three weeks to copy, nothing less.
And Lionel having passed this trial through,
The old knave Mouldy gave him more to do.
Thus with much patience, reading hard, and guineas
Paid for sham coaching, he contrived to win his
Knowledge of what Law is; and yet the goose, he
Troubled his soul with what it ought to be.
I took him down about this scores of times,
'What ought to be,' I told him, put in rhymes

[1] Note 19. [2] Shakespeare, "Twelfth Night," Act ii., Sc. 3.

For children's playhours. 'Whate'er is, that is.
If you would get law practice keep to this.
"Whatever is, is right" your Pope has said,
Others have thought "Whatever is, is wrong";
Others that "is" exists alone in print,
A seeming of "to be," of what perhaps isn't.
Nothing exists, they say, except in thought,
And that "is" can't be said of what is nought—
Such talk is only fit for Bedlamites,
Or for your friends some out of Bedlam wights.
I hold that Byron's view's the only true one—
That what is, is—he says it in "Don Juan."
You see, I know my poetry well enough
For all Bar-purposes, the rest is stuff.
So, my dear friend, Law *is*, and it is Law:
It is not justice—we don't care a straw
For justice. Justice is a mere idea,
And lives among the stars with Miss Astrea.
But Law's a fact—never in court do we a
Mention parade of justice; but your notions
Have been corrupted by immoral potions
Of bad French logic, rights of men, and so on;
But if you mean with Law's career to go on,
You must get rid of this. Now to begin:
Mouldy's a rogue with you; it was a sin
To take your hundred guineas and withhold
All chance of learning from him for your gold.
And thus you say that had you stayed in France,
As you now wish you had, you'd had fair chance
Of thriving at the Bar for francs five hundred,
While of five hundred guineas here you're plundered.
All these, my friend, are mere French *avocasseries*,
And sure to lead you into great *tracasseries*.
I ask again, now show me bond or letter
In which your Mouldies by some legal fetter
Had bound themselves for your poor pounds of gold
To owe you anything. They spread their mesh
For pupils, truly. Yet 'tis understood
That they consider that the pupil's good
Is well attained if he to future suitors
Can boast of payments to such stunning tutors.
And then your taunts against our sleek-fed Benchers,
About their charges—ranking us with Frenchers.
Surely that's mean! Is not our Bar a body,
The glory of our country? while mere shoddy
Are their French rivals—dirty francs! gadzooks!

Why, junior counsel's plain horsehair perukes
Cost guineas eight! a Q.C.'s double those—
What a Lord Chancellor's costs, God only knows.
I do believe the toques of all the Bar,
Judges included, cost much less by far
In France—through half a century defiling
Than does that glorious marvel of head tiling.
Wigs are deep symbols, and their prices too,
Symbolic likewise. What a glorious glow
They raise in British hearts, for Britons know
That the whole world has not a caste to show
The equal of our Bar—the wig and guinea
Make all the difference 'tween the shabby, skinny,
Mean practisers of every foreign Bar
And the proud creatures which our pleaders are.
The wig it beats a fairy wishing-cap
In wonder-working. Vilest of clap-trap
It transmutes into wisdom, and black roguery
Done with a wig on is white honesty.
Does not Macaulay say that with a wig
And bands about his neck, some shallow prig
Has power divine to make all sins vermilion
Whiter than snow; that not for half a billion
An honest man would do what any ninny
Will do with wig and bands on, briefed one guinea?
O glorious horsehair! how it awes the asses,
Of which among mankind the greater mass is.
'Twas said of Thurlow that no mortal ever
Was so preposterously wise and clever
As he looked with his wondrous lappets on—
And we are sucking Thurlows every one,
And look in court, when sitting cheeks by jowls,
Patient as silly sheep yet wise as owls.
All this, my friend, enhances much the glory
Of this great England and her ancient story,
In which, too, share our humblest citizens,
Who sleep by thousands in their roofless dens,
Under Thames bridges, and in each damp park.
What priceless consolation in the dark,
In the dank night air, to each chilly bed,
It would bring, did they know, that proud, well-fed,
Well-dressed, well-groomed, bravoes of litigation,
Are waiting aye for due consideration
To sell them law, except in Long Vacation.
And O! those glorious Longs, when as we please
We can spend three months in delightful ease,

Or place our British feet upon the snow
Of Mount Elburz or e'en of Chimborazo.
My friend, I fear you have no soul for grandeur.
You know the parable of Alexander—
What made the difference 'tween him and a thief?
The same holds with the great lords of the brief,
And with attorneys too—to steal in shillings
Is crime contemptible, but oh! what thrillings
Of glorious sympathy it gives to all
When some smart rascal makes a lucky haul
Of other people's millions in bright gold,
Which leaves perhaps ten thousand hearthstones cold.
So you, my friend, if e'er your lawyers skin ye,
Be proud 'tisn't with a franc but with a guinea.
To call "refreshers" robbery is slander—
Pay up and help to make an Alexander.
Then our attorneys, a grand race they are,
These hungry Cerberuses of the Bar;
To have a counsel you must *solōrs* tip,
So of the client's wool they get first clip.
Of Themis' courts they are the fee'd doorkeepers,
Even when useless as th' Ephesian sleepers.
And then their honesty, how vast and solid!
For once a month some solōr, like a *bolide*
Flashing across the sky, is lost in space,
While of trust moneys he leaves not a trace.
And yet the credit of the whole profession,
Shoots fresh with hydra-heads at each transgression.
And then their bills! their bills, their wondrous bills—
They beat in grandeur Europe's highest hills—
One writ in folio blue and red-lined fair,
When spread full out would cover Leicester Square.
I really think the Pyramid of Cheops
Does not excel the height which a strong flea hops
More than a solōr's bill excels in height
And depth and breadth all bills which mortal wight
Has e'er invented since the old Stone Age.
If I were asked to give proof clear and sage
Of our Law's grandeur, goodness, and its skill,
I should produce a smart attorney's bill.'

"My lectures, it was clear, did little good
To Lionel, although in smiling mood
He listened meekly: for attorneys savage
He made in student days by his wild ravage
Mid sacred legal saws. He said 'twas funny
That legal right was no right without money;

And then Essays he wrote in Law reviews,
Which made him shunned as a *brebis galeuse*
By all the craft; their title was 'Law[1] *gratis*.'
He said the first great need of any State is
Defence of life and property; that with ease
The State might organise a new police
Trained to protect men's rights and properties
From Law abuses and chicaneries,
And so abolish all their lovely fees.
When after this attorneys met the lad,
They said 'Here's "Gratis Law," d'ye think he's mad?'
And then his view of Law was Hudibrastic—
Law, like religion, should pass through the drastic
Test of first principles without fear or wobbling;
Law, like creeds Protestant, even needed cobbling.
Of all judge-quibblers who made English Law,
He scoffed at Eldon most—for he could draw
Lines, said he, 'tween north-west and north-north-west
Upon a hair, and then declare the best
Side was north-west; but on mature reflection,
The side of north-north-west had his election.
'Ackroyd and Smithson,' Eldon's famous case,
He would by a just statute fain efface.
But all the lawyers howled, both Whig and Tory,
At this assault on Eldon's saintly glory.
Yet through a friend, a Liberal M.P.,
He got a rule of Law upset, which we,
Even we lawyers, deem'd injustice hard
For widows and for orphans: he prepared
The Bill, and wrote the member's learned speeches;
So put, the man seemed Law itself in breeches,
And Bethel filled with puzzled admiration—
So the Bill passed both Houses with laudation.
And thus the stripling got a wrong removed
Which countless judges had passed unreproved.
Of widows thus and orphans many a hundred
To him owed ease and plenty while he hungered.
Yet philanthropic legal innovations,
However good, will never bring you rations.
More briefs than one, I think, ne'er did attend him,
And that I got a solōr friend to send him.
It was a consent brief—he made a pother
About accepting fee, so got no other.
In fact 'twas clear his study of and outlay

[1] Note 20.

On Law would not be worth a pinch of pipeclay.
I was no little troubled, for I knew
That he had read more Law than any two
Of us. When one fine afternoon I heard
News that in no small wise my pulses stirred:
I heard that Lionel in the *Edinburgh*
Had come out with an article, so thorough,
So brilliant, and so full of taste and learning,
That it had conquered all the most discerning—
Guizot and Villemain, Milman, Stephen, Brougham,
And many more for whom there's here no room:
It even made Macaulay growl, quite jealous,
'The trick he's got from me, like other fellows.'
And then soon after came a book of rhyme
Which touched at least the first wits of our time—
Disraeli, Monckton Milnes, Gladstone and Bright.
I said, 'Poor boy, again has fate's fell spite
Robb'd him of time and substance'; for what needs
Had he to grovel in Law books and deeds,
When with one stroke of wing he could upraise
Himself to regions where we hardly gaze?
I pitied much the lad. I said, of course,
'Your Pegasus scores badly as cart-horse.'
I thought of all the days and nights of yearning
Which Lionel had spent in useless learning—
Pure loss, pure loss to him and to his nation;
Of his best powers a useless abnegation.
I felt just then a little spooney on him,
But later almost loathed him for a whim
Of his false delicacy which he let play,
So that he threw his life's best chance away.
For of the chances all which life had proffered him,
My wife and I the very best had offered him;
And I feel angry, vext at heart, that ever
We brought him and our Kate O'Neil together.
She was an heiress, and an only child,
Blithe-hearted—you would say a little wild,
And only made for frolic and delight;
But in her eyes a deep, soft, earnest light
Would after each gay sally come, each feature
Had then the calm of some sweet saintly creature;
And you would say the placid lustrous faces
Of Palma *giovane* had no holier graces
Of pale gold hair and profile classic Grecian.
A poetess she was, too, and musician.
Such a musician, too!—by her slight finger

The deep-toned crash, the dulcet sounds which linger,
Came call'd by turns from our piano-strings,
Which 'neath her touch seem'd charmed to living things.
She'd play at sight whole operas from the score ;
In Liszt's *Saint Paul* you'd hear the tempest roar
In such a fashion as none e'er before
Had roused save Liszt himself. When Liszt heard this,
He sent to say, old as he was, a bliss
Life would deny him should he have to miss
Her reading of his theme. Quick at the word
She went to Munich, and when Liszt had heard
Her reading, got her then at Court to play,
And in her triumph'd the white-haired Abbé.
Then music of her own she could compose,
Cantatas, operas, oratorios.
'Tis true that some of these were just begun,
Yet of her operas she had finished one—
The *Dejaneira*, which at the Grand Opera,
Under a feigned name, to be quite proper, a
Succès d'estime had gained, and that was plenty
Of glory for a young girl just past twenty.
She had been reared in France, in old Versailles,
In an old palace of the Duc de Noailles ;
Her father an old Irish gentleman,
A Saxon-hater and a travelled man,
Loved armour, *bric-à-brac*, and curios ;
He had a library in countless rows,
In many rooms, with busts, intaglios,
With pictures old, with lances, swords, and maces,
And armèd forms of steel between the cases.
Her mother as a poetess was known,
Died young, and left this bright-haired child alone
With her old sire. It was an eery sight
To see this young girl, like a vision bright,
Or like a sunbeam, flit from room to room
And lighten up their quaint and learned gloom
Of pictures old and arms and ancient books.
Her father let her flutter like an elf
O'er all his loved book-world, while he himself,
A gifted linguist, taught her not a few
Of ancient tongues and modern : no professor
Was left unsought in every art to dress her
For which she had a fancy ; then they travelled much :
Were Kate no marvel then, it should be marvelled much.
All this I knew—my wife was a Shaughnessy
And a Repealer's daughter ; then my Bessy

Had had her schooling at Versailles, and there
Her father and Kate's father made a pair
Of jovial Irish rebels, and perfection
Their daughters thought their sisterly affection.
So when Kate's father died and she was left
An orphan lone, of parents both bereft,
Her mourning o'er, 'twas plann'd that she should come
And find with us a temporary home.
All this was natural; so she came, and never
A guest more bright had any, or so clever.
So Kate met Lionel. At their first meeting
She gave him such a frank and friendly greeting,
Her sapphire eyes had such a radiant jet,
As though some long-lost brother she had met;
And then she said, 'I'm sure that you I know,
Far more than you do me. You would say so
If you my copy of your book could view,
With all its pencil scorings, red and blue.'
In after days it was a pleasant sight
To mark the tell-tale blushes of delight
Suffuse her cheek, like to the roscate glow
Of sunrise playing on pure Alpine snow,
When Lionel came to see us, since her gladness
She had no thought to hide, nor yet her sadness
Whene'er his visitings became more rare.
Such an affinity between the pair
There was, that worldly gossip soon discovers
They were a pair of old affianced lovers.
They rode and walked together in the Row,
They read together, and at the piano
They passed swift hours, while Kate would play and sing
His rhymes to music of her improvising.
And then they danced at balls, for with grace airy
Kate danced like any artist or wing'd fairy;
And Lionel said, 'Why, when we dance together
She's light as any roseleaf or a feather—
It seems like dancing with an air-born elf,
Who knows your mind before you know it yourself.'
And at the Spanish Embassy a *fête*
Show'd her as queen of dance whom few could mate;
Spain's envoy, the famed Duque de Rivas,
Gave a grand fancy ball in Portland Place;
And Kate, who by her Munich Court-ovation
Had got her quite a general reputation
'Mong Embassies, received an invitation,
And we too, as her hosts. Lionel likewise,

As one of London's small celebrities.
So for the twain our Kate the costume chooses
Of *Majo* and of *Maja Andaluzes.*
And so for them before the festal night was
Much trying of *boleros* and *cachucas;*
But I have put Kate's dancing into verse,
For in spare hours I've writ my prose and worse.

At the Embassy *Majos* that night were abounding,
Spanish dames likewise with guitars shrill resounding;
But many who'd seen *Zingalis* at Grenada—
Who had seen on the stage, too, the fam'd Tortujada—
Declared they'd ne'er seen so splendid a *Maja,*
With a fair *Majo,* too, to show off and to back her.
As that night they beheld in our Irish Kitty.
And though I am neither a poet nor witty
Sufficiently here to set down in due writing
How she danced in her glory whole circles delighting;
And though I have said that I have an aversion
To spooniness, yet had I knowledge of Persian,
I would take tulip cheeks and fine curved rosebud bosoms,
With smiles mixed of jasmine and pomegranate blossoms,
And eyes, too, outshining the sapphire's blue gem,
And try to construct Kate O'Neil out of them.
And then I should fail; for be it said between us,
She would have befooled e'en the Medici Venus—
For she looked *à la Byron* more ripe and more real
Than any dry hard-cut and stony ideal;
From her crown of gold hair e'en down to the toe
Of her white *zapatilla's piedecito,*
No thread of *chaqueta* and no pleat of *faldilla*
But seem'd to have come straight away from Sevilla.
When with high instepp'd foot so brief and so *seco,*
She stalk'd as gazelles stalk, high on some *picacho*
Of Mulahaçen; and when she 'gan flicking,
Her castanets ebon with their magic clicking,
And rais'd her rose-white arms with curved wavy motion,
And her pink black-lac'd *faldas* set in bright commotion,
She seem'd truly like an air-born *mariposa,*
Bright wing'd and diaprèd—*Oh! Oh! que deosa,*
An *Andaluz* cried, *Ay! Ay! que pié,*
Qui chiquetito e con que poé.

* * * * *

And when the climax came with sudden glee
She snatched the black silk *gorro* suddenly
Of her young *Majo*—placed it on her hair
And then stood statue-still with such an air
Of gay defiance in face, arms, and feet,
That e'en beholders, who till then were mute,
Raised such a shout of instant jubilation,
As shocked cab horses at the nearest station.

To envy Kate her triumph none had need:
It was her last; for ne'er, it was decreed,
Would this embodied joy of rays prismatic
Excite again emotions so ecstatic.
The London season o'er and Law term ended,
We, as our wont was, to the Alps then wended,
And Kate went with us; we asked Lionel
To join us, but he said, 'Impossible,
He'd so much work to do'—I half suspected
He wanted—but no matter, he rejected
My kind proposal; with a sort of huff—
'O thanks! 'tisn't that; I've really got enough.'
Well, we went off as usual to Saas Fee,
Where I had built myself a new *chalet;*
But Kate's delicious cheek, instead of brightening
In the brisk Alpine breezes, took to whitening;
And though sometimes she joined a glacier party,
'Twas with a listless air quite far from hearty.
Well! in October all us three came back
From Alpine greenswards to the sooty black
Grim streets of London and their solid fog,
And Lionel came, but with a blank hang-dog
And stupid pale face. Yet they brightened both
At meeting, and though both seem'd nothing loth
To meet again, and though they sang and played,
Each of the other seem'd quite half afraid;
Till one day Kate said, 'Now, sir, for diversion,
Suppose your highness would but teach me Persian.'
And Lionel accepted. This device
Of Kate's we thought would surely thaw the ice
Of a too bashful suitor; but begad,
The very contrary ensued: a sad
November day it was, and they sat both
By the coal fire. Kate that day was a sloth
At learning Persian verbs, and made a *moue,*
And, shrugging in her shawl her shoulders two,
Said, 'No more verbs for me; I feel so chill,
Then take my hand and warm it—your goodwill
Were better shown thus than in Persian verbs.'
He takes her hand to kiss it, nought disturbs
The calmness of his visage as he says,
'Now, if you please, what root I pray, tell me,
Have verbs in *tan* preceded by a *che?*'
She cast at him a glance, then rose up straight,
And he rose too; with firm but swaying gait,
She gently opening, gently shut the door,

And they two never met on this earth more.
Two letters passed between them after that ;
He wrote excuses, but she answered flat
She thought he must be mad, and if not mad,
Something still worse. We thought it sad
That this bright idyll should be cut short thus—
But both were proud. At first it seemed to us
That Lionel in the great world had some lure
Of hopes chimerical ; yet on thought mature
We did absolve him of so base a part.
Well, in a year Kate gave a shatter'd heart
Unto Sir Bilkem Blight, a public man,
And rich withal, but of the hideous clan
Of journalistic sweaters—a proud 'boss,'
With hide as tough as a rhinoceros.
She beat her heart out on his horny side :
After twelve months of wedded life she died ;
And then her corpse went in a luggage van
To undergo cremation at Milan.
She willed this on her death-bed when extended—
And thus this radiant creature's life was ended."

CANTO IV

CHARYBDIS

" Now as for Lionel, you can better far
Set forth how he fared later in life's war.
We saw but little of him after the
Affair 'tween Kate and him—it could not be
Well otherwise, for absolution free
We could not give him, yet we knew we knew
Not all the facts which made him seem untrue
And heartless to the girl we loved so well.
Still we heard much apart of distant Lionel.
He went to Paris and passed there three years
Amid French *salons* with the brilliant peers
Of the French author-world ; his versatile
And genial ways at Paris and Versailles
Found kind reception. He was *très repandu*
In the *beau monde*, my wife from friends who knew
Heard oft ; and then he came to London back,
When the great world to greet him was not slack.
My wife then read his name in Court Gazettes,
Which showed he moved among the high-life sets
Of smart society—at the Duke of B's,
At Marquis A's and at the Earl of C's,
At the F.O. and at the Embassies,
And at the Premier's wife's much throng'd assemblies ;
E'en at the Speaker's and the big M.P.'s
His name among the lists of the invited
At dinners, balls, receptions, oft was cited.
And yet I prophesied but little profit
Could come to him of this, for I talked of it
To Aylward, a chief writer, who was, too,
In every big and flourishing review,
Who of the great world long had had the run,
Capp'd jokes with Melbourne and with Palmerston,

And was with stories cramm'd as eggs with meat,
So that to hear him was no common treat.
And Aylward said, "I have been intimate
All my life long, as Swift was, with the great,
And like him too, I can say, I am sure
That were I starving stretch'd before death's door,
To save me they'd not hold a finger out.
I have my wherewithal to live with, but I doubt
About your friend. He writes, I own, full well
In poetry and in prose, but 'tis impossible
To live by writing such fine things as his.
I have giv'n over long ago, I wis,
To ask for anything for self or friend.
No doubt there are places, places without end
One might well say, which our friend Lionel
Might to the State's advantage fill full well.
As poet, critic, essayist he stands
Well in the front rank of these British Islands,
And then as law reformer he has done
A work which is a public benefaction.
In truth he'd fill a place as well as any
Where he might work as poet. But there are many
To fill a place who feel an equal willing,
With friends enough at court to win the filling.
'Tis friends at court which give a man capacity;
Sans such, place-hunting is inept rapacity.
By friends at court I do not mean so much
Our courtiers titular, though indeed of such
With friends' friends, relatives, and hangers-on
There are enough—for these a summer sun
Not only shines like Greenland's day and night,
But all the year round with unceasing light.
By friends at court I mean a set Brahmanic
Which secret pow'r has, like the freemasonic.
A Brahmin may be born and make another
Just by a nod, without more fuss or pother.
Some self-made Brahmins get within the focus
By gab, street-walking, beer, or hocus-pocus.
That Brahmins should proceed from stills likewise
Is perhaps good—they profit the excise.
And then we are a nation famed for drinking
(See Hamlet), and they keep that fame from sinking.
Brahmins and Comets are alike in this,
That both have tails—and the tail Brahmin is
Quite capable of infinite extensions
For covering vacant places, stars, and pensions.

This tail includes sons, brothers, nephews, cousins,[1]
Cousins to the *n*th degree, and these by dozens.
These make an inner tail; then come the pimps,
Panders and flunkeys and election crimps,
And their tails too—the ready tools of jobbery,
And all the clinging, cringing things of toadyism and
snobbery.
The State, my friend, has not sufficient teats
To suckle duly all Brahmanic pets.
We work no miracles now, and loaves and fishes
Cannot be multiplied in crates or dishes.
D'ye think that some Brahmanic coz well fed
Should lack his punk and hunter to give bread
And means of rhyming to some underbred
And starveling poet? Such things cannot be,
'Twould sap the very base of smart society.
By Jove! I think that if I wanted place,
Butler of some by-blow of ducal race
I'd rather be than any needy poet,
Although he rhymed like Keats and prosed like Jowett.
And now to confess, although I made some mention
To you just now of my confirm'd intention
To ask for place for no man, self included,
Although men say I am a frightful cynic
Grafted upon a dry stock misogynic,
I felt a sort of youthful resurrection
Warm up my heart's core in me at the lection
Of Lionel's chief poem (you should read it).
The Fall of Islam—and I think I've said it
Before to you—is really a grand theme,
And nobly treated. Hardly did I deem
It possible in my time for me to find
Such noble thought heroically combined—
Graces of Keats and Shelley, Byron's strength,
I found in that great poem through its length.
Livelier the blood in my old pulses ran
As I read page by page; said I, "This man
Has got soul, heart, taste and imagination,"
And really I felt tingling indignation
That this chivalrous youth, whose thoughts were pearls,
Should welter undertrod by brutes and churls.
I penn'd a letter then of some dimensions
To the Home Secretary, who has the pensions
Of the list civil in his gift. I state
The case of Lionel; do not overrate

[1] Note 21.

The many tributes which illustrious men
Had paid unto the products of his pen
In verse and prose. I set forth, too, that he
Had saved from the accursed grip of poverty
Widows and orphans. Impossible, I say,
That such a genius could have fair play
Unless he were a little helped, like Tennyson
In better days. Browning had not carried on
A poet's life, I wrote, without the benison
Of a rich, helpful wife. I sent the letter
By post straightway. I think that I had better
Have asked some mercy of the Ailsa Crag:
For such response as I got any wag
An answer could have written just as pat.
The smug Bamfour, he thanked me, saying that
No one admired the genius of my friend
More than himself; sure was he in the end
Such high-class work must find its own reward.
But for himself, he grieved he must discard
All hope. The civil list's full pension sum
Was given for this year and the next to come.
Next week appeared a list of pension'd duffers,
Each one and all not fit for candle-snuffers
For our young friend—to make the case more funny
And rouse for once a little acrimony,
Within a week appeared a nomination
Which roused in me no little cachinnation.
The wag, the Secretary who had the inditing
Of Bamfour's letter in his schoolboy writing,
Himself was named straight off, without ado,
Commissioner of Inland Revenue.
Twelve hundred goodly pounds a year, paid quarterly,
Got this young man who wrote so glibly tartarly;
But he'd a friend at court, for his good granny
Was a Bedchamber woman—Lady Fanny.
Sir Feeble Plausible, a courtly prig,
A third-rate statesman and an unctuous Whig,
Wrote to the *Times* a note, a censure-stopper—
No use of patronage was e'er more proper.
By some queer chance of Fortune's push-pin, sir,
The bland Sir Feeble dined next week at Windsor.
All this I did unknown to our young friend,
And then I tried another way to bend
His fate's hard lips to smile—this 'tween ourselves.
His books lay on his publisher's long shelves,
Stacked close as rows of slates, unsaleable.

Suppose we try these paper weights to sell,
I inly said, and spite of the awful bore,
Went to Count Pompomore, the editor
Of the Review in which young Lionel
Had written papers which had made to sell
Thousands of extra copies, at a wage
No higher than a carter's, if the page
Were paid by hours of labour not by lines,
For small-beer prices don't suit high-class'd wines,
And Condé's cook a hundred hams could pottle
Within the compass of a one-ounce bottle.
"Oh! Mr. Aylward, glad I am to see you,"
The great man said; "d'ye bring me something new?"
"Not for myself I come—I come to plead
For Mr. Lionel, who stands in need
Just now of finding a good helping finger.
You know his prose, how good, how fine a singer
He is in poetry. Milman, Brougham, Bright, and more,
And first-class men of whom I'd name a score
Have said that your Review from its beginning
Ne'er had contributor so fit for winning
Back to high-tide mark its old popularity."
At this the Count show'd signs of some hilarity.
"Well, as I said, he wants a helping hand;
He cannot live, as you will understand,
By making for you *patés de foie gras*
At a great cost and selling at *prix bas*.
And he has written books in prose and verse
Which will not sell, while infinitely worse
Things make the fortunes of their sorry writers,
All through the puffery of their inditers
Of praise among the critical book-tasters,
Who form a precious ring of genius-wasters.
Now, there's a ring got up, a *conspiration*
De silence,[1] which would by co-operation
Snuff out in him the spiritual particle.
Now let us break it. I will write an article
Setting his good points forth in a fair way,
If not for love, for justice—say not nay."
The face the good man made when I said this
Would a comedian's fortune make, I wis.
I sat before him quite with wonder wist;
So before Bumble once stood Oliver Twist
Asking for more. He roll'd goose eyes, he grasped
His paperknife in his fat hand and gasped,

[1] Note 22.

"Never, sir, never!" here he grasped anew
His paperknife, "as head of this Review
Have I heard such a wild, preposterous
Proposal. Why, sir, *he's not one of us.*
We take his papers, which to give he's willing
And would be willing were our pay a shilling
And not a pound a page. A mere outsider
Is your friend still to us—a casual spider,
Who spins such webs for us as we require.
And I must laugh at his insane desire
That this Review should furnish him with wings
To take his flight among celestial things.
Why, he'd be something more than *one of us,*
If we supplied him with a Pegasus.
Some day perhaps he may make *one of us,*
And then, if of himself he makes no fuss,
After some term of thirty years' probation,
As Browning had, we might take cogitation
To give his name some mention in our pages.
I don't deny the young man for his wages
Writes well enough, or else he'd not be working.
But there's another point which there's no shirking,
For Fig and Jig, two strong men of our crew,
Have just been here to talk of him like you,
But wearing they quite other pair of sleeves,
And these are real ones, not mere make-believes.
They said they form'd a sort of deputation
To state that if I made the least laudation
Of your friend in a page of my Review,
They and their friends and all their friends' friends too
For me no line of 'copy' would write more
And do their best to offer a shut door
To me and my Review in noble dwellings,
In country houses, and stop book-club sellings.
I could not run such risk, my friend; beside,
What's fame worth?—*vox et nihil,* merely pride.
Stet mole suâ, if his work is good,
And if 'tis good surely no Review could
Better it for him. *Mole stet suâ,*
That is my maxim; I've no more to say."
"You help'd to give to Prig his false renown"—
"Sir, he's a special pet of Lord Lansdowne."
"The first book you reviewed of Laurence Botham"—
"Of course, he's cousin to the Duke of Gotham.
I pass my summer furlough every year
At his place in the Highlands." "Then Smallbeer,

His book is surely no great thing." "Good sir,
I met him with the Earl of Doncaster,
Which surely show'd that he was *one of us.*
I've no more time the matter to discuss."
Another journal, less aristocratic,
I sought it out, a weekly democratic,
The *Erechtheum* of Sir Bilkem Blight,
For which I knew that many a day and night
Our Lionel had writ for half the pay
He got on quarterlies. The "boss" away,
For him an affable and smart young man,
His leading critic, heard me, smiled, and then began
With an engaging frankness to unfold
The guiding tenets which the critics hold:
"My dear sir, you must know that not a few
Of us have books to sell, so have our friends too,
And by statistics you may know the figure
Which the good public spends on books, no bigger
Can we presume to make it. So our editor
And we have no love for a fresh competitor
In the division of the public money.
We won't, like bees, be fool'd of gratis honey.
We have a ring and keep it screw'd up tight—
That's the first rule of selves and Bilkem Blight.
And then a muddle-headed public can
Hold in its poor brain only a small clan
Of favourite authors at a time together.
Now as for poetry, I much doubt whether
Four at a time could get lodged in its noddle—
Even of three it often makes a muddle.
At all events, we're not inclined to try.
We always thought your friend a dangerous fellow,
Who'd set at nought our rules and maxims mellow.
He'd bound up o'er our heads, though an outsider,
Through paper hoops just like a circus rider.
The work he has in print, sir, I would liken it
To wine laid down—if good, then time will ripen it."
I came away convinced of what I knew
Before, in our day there's a critic crew
Noxious as any who with spurious taste
Have ages gone of decadence debas'd.
The last glib candid youth, if he lacked wit
And taste, at least he was no hypocrite.
But for most critics cant and vain pretence
Outdo their ignorance and want of sense.
A ring of Pope's Westphalian grunting hogs,

A ring of squalling cats and whining dogs,
Of gibbering apes with silly mocks and moes,
Of loveless eunuchs of seraglios,
Of humpbacked dwarfs, squeak-voiced, incapable—
Such similes are weak as a cracked bell
To designate these bravoes of the pen.
And some, 'tis said—but let names unnamed be—
Will give their *imprimatur* for a fee,
And yet they all are honourable men
Among themselves, most honourable men—
That's the most sickening part of the whole story.
The members of the "ring" with mutual glory
Bedaub each other, and a ready ticket
Of immortality each has, to stick it
On any favourite of the ring whose fancies
May be uncouth as negro banjo dances.
Praise B from A and C from B inherits,
And Prig from all when they discuss his merits,
As thus—C writes, "With admirable precision
A has defined Prig's literary position.
He is most admirable in admiration
And does not err too much in adulation.
Yet B has some fresh points in Prig's perfection
Well pointed out in his superb prolection.
Yet some points A and B have missed, which I
More finely analysing will supply."
Than the two first prime admirables C
Must therefore a more admirable be.
Some flabby Aristarchus without soul
Or grasp to judge a poem as a whole,[1]
In vain conceit declares some foolish line
To be immortal, peerlessly divine.
And in a single monosyllable "hush,"
Back'd with an "Ah!" will find a glorious gush
Of genius exquisite—as if Gammer Gurton
Hadn't sung the same to every baby's curtain.
He'll find in some vain shallow Oxford prig
More charm than rustics in a learned pig.
In words five-syllabled crammed in a saw
This critic quack will find a "matchless" awe.
Surpassing quite an ancient dame, he has
Solace at least in *two* Mesopotamias,
And nourishes "unconquerable hope"
That chasing "shades inviolable" in trope,
Film bubbles of imaginary soap,

[1] Note 23.

Matthew's sham gipsy pilfering Oxford sizar,
In Rom'ny patter ever growing wiser,
Shall Hoares and Rothschilds top by being made a
Gorgeous immortal ghostly Tyrian trader.
But then this wonder-working critic can
In maudlin sickening namby-pamby scan
A "new departure" where tame loitering verse
Makes sickening ennui still more yawn and curse.
As for the critic's objects of laudation,
The "ring's" pet idols, and their admiration
For one another, for such lathery soap
One must seek Horace in the verse of Pope,
For they dispose of all poetic merit:
He's Milton's genius, he has Homer's spirit.
Call Hobson Shakespeare and he'll swear the Nine,
Dear Jobson! never matched one squib of thine;
My dear, dear Byron, if that will not do,
Let me be Shelley, and be John Keats you;
Or I'm content, allow me Wordsworth's strains,
And you shall rise up Goethe for your pains.
Attorneys of the ring the critics are,
These guard the ring, attorneys keep the bar;
And though attorneys can't always be trusted,
I think with critics I am more disgusted,
For though attorneys are a race of Tartars,
The critics scarify more helpless martyrs.
Thus, see you, I have broken quite in vain
My vow to never seek in aught to gain
The ears of gods who have the fates of men
At their disposal—I'll not try again.
But yet they tell me there's a big M.P.
Urging his claims upon Lord Granny G.
At the F.O.; I would not give a groat
For any chances there—for he is thought
To have writ some stinging verses in the *Breeze*
Portraying Granny eating on his knees
Incessant humblepie to Bismarck while
The German grabs some colony or isle
Before his nose; while Granny smiles intent
Upon his humblepie with bland content.
That rhymester, too, made fun of the F.O.
As public office most inept and slow.
He said Lord Gammond was a prophet good[1]
In European things if understood
To mean the opposite of his predictions;

[1] Note 24.

For if he foretold peace, war's worst afflictions
Were sure to visit Europe in a fortnight.
Then his big poem shows an awful spite
Against our friend the Turk, who's Granny's pet,
Has been for many years, and is so yet.
Yet this might not much harm if some rich Jew
Would back him in the way they're used to do.
Rich Jews have some dark ways of circumvention
For nobbling sly a peerage, post, or pension.
The Jew can tip—of course, by nod or wink—
And with the tip can make you swim or sink.
At the F.O. they put a private spurt on,
Promote you or recall you, like Dick Burton,[1]
And swindling companies with Jew directors
Can at the F.O. always find protectors.
Now I must leave the lad to rise or fall,
My wish for him is great, my hope is small.'
Thus Aylward, who as honorary Q.C.
Dined oft in Hall in term time, and by me
Was wont to sit and in my ear to prattle.
I liked to hear him talk; his tittle-tattle
Was well approved at many a high-life table,
And yet I think that no one deem'd him able
To show so good a heart with face so wan.
Well, peace be to his ashes, for he's gone.
I got me then, at Aylward's commendation,
The Fall of Islam to read i' the vacation,
At Swiss Saas Fee—on finishing I said,
'It is a pity he can't go to bed
And sleep a sound sleep, just like Rip Van Winkle,
For some two hundred years; then in a twinkle
Wake up and find himself a poet famous,
With statues in French cities raised to shame us.'
Soon after this I heard that he was bad
With such brain-fever as you know he had
At Cambridge—doctors said he must not write
Nor read; his nerves were frittered quite
With constant strain. Pascal's deep abyss
Seem'd yawning at his side with fiery hiss
For Lionel as he wrote—while at the door
Watched the wolf hunger, waiting to devour.
All night and day he'd throw off sheet by sheet
Beneath his restless pen with feverish heat,
Writing for life; now leeches prescribed travel
And full repose—but 'twas hard to unravel

[1] Note 25.

The problem how to follow such monition,
For only by incessant brain attrition
He had procured a meagre bare subsistence,
With naught put by to carry on existence.
Yet he had one good friend, the great M.P.,
Who not being o' the caste of Granny G.
Had been pooh-poohed ; but now he bullied so
The shifty pagod of the grand F.O.
That in a fit of spite he said, 'A Queen's
Messengership is vacant—if he weens
He can have that ; to carry bags by trains
Or cabs that poor young man won't want much brains.'
His whim it pleased as *mouton enragé*
To think that travelling by night or day,
Carrying big dull despatches in a bag,
Would act upon him as sufficient gag.
A Juvenal and a Dante fused together
In such conditions could not show much feather.
Some two years after I was at Saas Fee,
Where I received my *Times* sent every day,
And in the marriage column my wife read
That Sophy Jibb with Lionel had wed—
Sophy, a niece of the great Lord Gilfiller,
The late ennobled wealthy gin-distiller.
I seized the paper, tore it with a shout,
'What an infer—beg pardon—silly lout !
Why, the girl's not a cent of ready cash !
And as for expectations, they're mere trash.'
But that's the least—her mother well I know—
For Mrs. Vipereau has laid husbands low
Almost as many as the Wife of Bath.
We called her 'the tough stager' and she hath
Trotted her daughter well all over Europe,
And never found a man whom she could lure up
To the dread point of marrying the pair.
Then of an heiress Sophy takes the air
Because she has some swaggering rich relations
Who'll say she's married much beneath their stations.
Better he'd died in his soul's pride with beggary
Than as a strange fowl roost in such a piggery.
O Kate ! O Kate ! O miserable wight,
He missed a star and takes a tallow light.
We would not see him in his married life,
I prophesied, and truly—it was rife
With misery and ruin. He had better far
Some buxom goddess of a London bar,

Or e'en a Princess Royal, ta'en for mate,
For either would have learn'd to irradiate
His life with woman's sympathy and trust.
But hate inflexible and mean mistrust
Of boors enriched for noble poverty,
The envy base of proud vulgarity,
These were the harpies whose spite sure and slow
Waited to make his bride his bitterest foe.
The memory of Kate, too, like a pall,
Came 'tween us as we met—to meet at all,
We ceased for years, when suddenly, late one night,
He burst upon me sitting by gaslight
Before my fire, perusing a big brief:
As the door closed he stood convulsed in grief
Quite motionless—a spectre pale and thin—
With smothered sobs; his body from within
Writhed outwardly. He covered up his face
With one hand; then he stagger'd with slow pace
Up to my table, dropt his hand thereon,
And leant upon it; then to my eyes gave one
Beseeching wistful look—in husky tone
Then gave a speech, which was a jerky moan:
'Bryan,' he said, ''tis five years since we met.
You can't forgive me; but you know not yet,
You know not all the torture of my life;
I could not, could not—now I've had for wife,
No wife—a fiend, a perjured smooth-faced devil,
Who with her mother, a worse hag of evil,
Backed by their brutal kin in each intrigue,
And vilest lawyers, with mine own in league,
Have bound me in a net with lying wiles.
I care not for myself—but oh! the smiles,
The lost smiles of my infant boys—bereft
Of them to live, knowing the poisonous eft
Of evil will spawn in their brain and heart,
Amid vile foes brought up from me apart.
I come for counsel—you, the strong man, aid
The weak man. Oh! so weak'—here he made
Blows on his breast, and then I said, 'Come, come,
Don't stand and beat your breast there like a drum,
As you are doing—I know well your case,
Better perhaps than you. You've made a base
Discreditable marriage; this is worse—
This compromise you've made with crime. A curse
Seems to attend you. Nerve, my good friend, nerve,
And proneness to do right without reserve

To your own heart, has brought you to this plight.
Had you but told Kate all, she with delight
Had dar'd perdition for you and been proud,
But of false shame you made a twofold shroud.
And then you wed a vain and silly doll,
Spiteful, untruthful, without heart or soul,
Brought up in vulgar affluence, though herself
She had not got a single doit of pelf
Beyond that which her mother, the old stager,
Might choose to give, and that not safe, I wager.
Why, she was glad to wear the cast-off dresses
Of aunts and cousins, and to share the messes
Of Cockney cousins bragging of bag foxes,
Of rat hunts, dove-tourneys, and shooting boxes.
Her pal of all the tribe was Cousin Ju,
Who was her all in all ere she knew you,
A bull-necked, ill-bred, and presumptuous cad,
A fast attorney long gone to the bad.
A swindler yet unmasked, he spends at least
As much a day as 'd make a city feast;
A town house and a country house has he,
Just like a sprig of old nobility,
Where guests he entertaineth by the score.
Yachts has he, carriages, and hunters four;
He goes as well-known bettor to all races,
In four-in-hands with which he goes all paces,
Gambles at Monte Carlo with loose dames,
An opera-box, of course—he leaves no games
Untried to show the Junipers that he
Can spend his coin like them as grand and free.
When your good wife at first her home deserted,
I guessed that she was by this man perverted;
While you were groaning o'er your shipwreck'd ark
I saw her riding, laughing, in the Park,
With Cousin Ju—I knew, besides, she led
A life with him of glee unlimited;
She shared his drag's box seat and Richmond dinner
While your fool's heart was yearning back to win her.
Now I perceive he has some private plan
To get his Sophy from you if he can.
He's at the back of all these foul proceedings,
Directing in that loathsome court the pleadings—
That loathsome court where perjury, false delation,
And crime work daily real assassination—
That loathsome court in which each pleader thrives
On orphans' tears and souls and murdered lives.

When you were dragged by villainous petition
Into that court, you should have steeled volition
Up to the standfast point. The least concession
Must turn against you. By your own confession,
In playing on your spoony nerveless heart
Your enemies and counsel with vile art
Have made you make a pact with sin and crime.
They're rich, you're poor, and they must win in time
Under this compromise, whate'er you do,
They'll break it as they please, and then can you
Afford to pass your life in litigation
About your children ?—so they're past salvation.
Their moral being you have signed away.
That's more than blood. Yet you've a card to play.
With money you can quash that compromise
By pleading elsewhere—and it were surely wise
With one great effort this base coil of wrong
To break than wear it on you your life long.
I will conduct your case and win it, if you can
Produce one thousand pounds. Now, don't start, man;
Go ask your friends to give you, not to lend,
Five hundred pounds—the rest, as an old friend,
I will find for you. Now, good-night; excuse,
For I have all these papers to peruse.'
I never saw the poor lad after this,
So I suppose that those fine friends of his
Could not be reckoned on for one small gift—
Not one to save him would a finger lift;
So Aylward was not wrong, nor yet Dean Swift."

CANTO V

JULIE

"NATURE explained, no prodigies remain,
Comets are regular, and Browning plain."
With lines of Pope the author here has diddled,
For under Queen Anne Browning had not riddled.
But noble Schiller has writ something too,
Which is still more profound and just as true.
"Until Philosophy reigns sovreign queen
Must love and hunger move the world's machine." [1]
Our Bryan did not know the underside
Of Lionel's existence—in his pride
He hid the worst—the Spartan lad of old,
Smiled with the wild fox gnawing 'neath the fold
Of his Greek tunic. Vultures Promethean
Were tearing the bard's vitals while the pæan
He sang of love and Christ, and man and nature,
With a calm, noble fervour in each feature.
With Kate O'Neil that strange scene when he had
Long hunger-pains had driven him well-nigh mad.
None would have thought, who in some "salon" great,
Had seen him eating strawberries off gold-plate,
And talking small talk with a smiling air
To some fine lady, that upon the stair,
When he slipped downwards, that his fainting trance
Came from dire lack of daily sustenance.
I was the only one who knew—in truth
We two were such close brothers in our youth
We had no secrets—with me he would jest,
And say 'twas siege time with him when he prest

[1] "So lange nicht den Bau der Welt
Philosophie zusammenhält
Bewegt sich das Getriebe
Durch Hunger und durch Liebe."

His slackened waistband through the buckle tighter.
No poet ever had a diet lighter.
In Paris, where, a *boulevardier* gay,
He loved *flaner*, I din'd with him one day
At a *restaurateur's*—with air mysterious,
The *patron* said to me in a tone serious,
"*Votre ami* really is too small an eater;
I fear his health will suffer. Will you say
I'd rather he'd not settle day by day,
But when he will? It really is not good
For a young man to take so little food."
I really wish I knew that good man's name;
I would have given him what little fame
I could, as did brave Thackeray in past years
To a kind wielder of the clipping shears—
One M. Aretz, 8, Rue Richelieu,
Who with excuse his *p'tite note* withdrew
When his young client's needful case he knew,
And his *billet de mille* would fain advance:
I think such men are only found in France.
"In British love the needy have no part—
Brown damns the poor and hates them in his heart.
The grim Sir Bilkem holds it as a rule
That every man in want is knave or fool.
'God cannot love,' says Jones, with tearless eyes,
'The wretch he starves and piously denies,'
But the good Bishop, with a meeker air,
Admits and leaves him Providence's care."
(Names chang'd) in seventeen hundred thirty-two,
Thus Pope wrote, and to-day 'tis still more true.
Some British readers will learn with disgust
That my dear friend sometimes upon a crust,
Alone would dine for days, with milk and water.
Twice nearly did want bring him to self-slaughter.
Once was when great Sir Bilkem had ejected
The clever Editor who had perfected
As lucrative affair his "*Erechtheum*,"
For which he daily should have sung *Te Deum*.
Not only was the Editor abolished,
But his contributors he too demolished;
Forthwith the big "boss" sent back twenty papers
O'er which my friend had wasted midnight tapers,
All in a lump, although they were to order—
All in a lump, in most admired disorder—
Writing, "Since I have taken the direction
Of my Review, I have to make selection

Of the unprinted matter, and I find
Your articles not suited to my mind;
Therefore by post herewith I now restore
Your papers, and don't wish for any more."
This meant for Lio a loss of pounds full fifty,
Of fifty pounds hard earned on life so thrifty,
And now he was reduc'd to his last pittance,
'Twas comical, by Jove! his next remittance
For other articles would not be due
For a full month at least, how could he live?
He felt already like an empty sieve.
He lived two weeks, then news came that th' ill-fated
Poor Lady Blight, his Kitty, was cremated
At Milan. Then he made some purchases,
Went home and shut his door. Now I small ease
Had felt about him since I knew the end
Of the poor Lady Blight, and since to attend
He failed our *cercle*, I sought with rapid feet
Rue d'Amsterdam and *numero cinquante-huit*
Au quatrième. I think he chose the street
Because the poet Heine once had lived there.
I asked the *concierge* for him. With a stare
He said he had not seen him all the day,
But that he was *chez lui*, he'd dare say.
I mounted swift the stair and rang the bell,
I beat the door, but no—no Lionel.
I to the *concierge* went, who lov'd him well,
As he was oft beloved of humble folk;
He said, "He must be in. I with him spoke
When he came home last ev'ning, and since then
He has not pass'd the *porte cochère* again."
He came upstairs, we tried with bell and knock,
But no reply; I felt a sick'ning shock.
The *concierge* said, "*Mon Dieu!* he look'd so pale
Last night. Look you—I get up on the rail
Unto that window." There a pane he broke.
Thence in his face a gush of acrid smoke
Came volleying forth; he op'd the window quick,
Then back unto the door; with dext'rous kick
He burst the yielding lock—with holden breath
Rush'd, open'd all the windows. Was it death
We saw there in the form upon the bed,
With an arm trailing to the floor, his head
A little turned towards the wall as though
He'd turn'd it weary of a world of woe?
Ah! no, it was not death; but why the intense,

The agonising moments of suspense,
My tears, my mutter'd prayer and sobb'd beseechings,
Down on my knees my incoherent preachings
Recall? My soul, my all I would have spent
To give my Lionel breath, peace, content.
We did succeed so far as breathing went.
Did we do him a service?—this I doubt,
For in two years the play was played again,
But a *grande dame* of Paris saved him then.
And *how* she told me with no fuss at all,
As though she'd done a thing most natural.
"You know your friend was much liked in our set,
And that Julie was thought its chief *coquette.*
With such a flash in lip and cheek and eye
As has this diamond ring; *svelte* as a dragon fly,
Bright as its wings, and then, as for a heart,
She had enough to play the brilliant part
Of a ball-beauty, and a little more
Perhaps. I really think—well, well—I'm sure
That she liked our friend Monsieur Lionel
More than I thought she could. *notre petite belle.*
J'aime bien ce garçon, il danse à ravir,
She frankly said, *sa voix est douce à dire.*
De jolie choses dont on peut bien rire.
They danced at balls together, in the *Bois*
They rode together in the *joli mois*
De Maries, and I lent them groom and horses.
I like young happy faces, that my force is,
I had them oft to dine, and to the opera
We went a score of times; no more proper a
Chaperon ever was. I dropt them down
Each at their different dwellings in the town.
Bazaars we went to, concerts, *expositions,*
Private theatricals and *repetitions,*
The *salon,* too; for the whole *joli mois*
De Marie, happy were they two, *je crois,*
When that mad Julie brought things to a crisis
At a cotillon I watched, sipping ices.
There was a silly figure—gilded bellows
Were made for shooting *bonbons* on young fellows.
The *belle* sat in the middle on a chair,
The dancers filed before her pair by pair,
And whom she touched down on his knees must go
Before her while she blew a sugared snow
Of pearly *bonbons* on his face and hair.
When Julie had the chair, of course the minx

Touches our friend, who down before her sinks,
And she blew in his eyes with such a zeal
As filled his eyes with tears and made him reel.
Then Julie instant with her light *batiste*
Patted his eyes so gently, stooped and kissed
Her victim on the forehead like a child,
Looking so sweet and penitently mild.
There was a clapping in the gallery,
But Julie's mother look'd cross as could be;
She shot at me a glance to pierce me through.
I felt some shame. *Mon Dieu! que voulez vous?*
I fear *notre ami* passed a night of worry,
For Julie came next morning in a flurry,
Bringing a sheaf of poems and a letter,
Which I suppose he had contrived to get her
Young *femme de chambre* to take, the usual way.
We look through all the poems; *ma foi!* they
Were a most sweet collection. Than Petrarca
I thought he had contrived to hit the mark a
Great deal better, for of Julie's person
No point had missed its sonnet; to her ears one
He had addressed which we thought quite delicious.
He sent the fairies all to the Mauritius,
To Borneo and all the tropic isles,
To search the shores for sea shells, the defiles
Of Hindoo Kosh for gems, the Orient air
For rosy sunbeams which should be as fair
And sweetly perfect as the lucid whorls
Which were half-hid by Julie's naughty curls.
Unto a man, *ma foi*, who could write such
Sweet things about my ears I'd pardon much.
And then the letter was a perfect thing,
Full of such tender, sweet, soft despairing.
And Julie said to me, '*Ma chère duchesse,*
Que puis-je moi? pauvre chéri, I confess
I am so sorry for him, and I too,'
And here she half began to go *boo-boo*
Upon my neck, but I said, '*Baliverne!*
We must at once stop this, for I discern
I have been somewhat foolish to encourage
You in that young man's heart to make such ravage.
I saw you liked each other, and delightful
It was to see you cooing like two doves at nightfall,
Like Rose and Colin in a *bonne idylle.*
Je suis grande dame mais doublée de bonne fille.
Perhaps in time to come you will be glad

To know of pure love you some taste have had.
For as for marriage, this poor boy has naught,
And you have not enough. Well, now! be taught,
And let us bring the matter to a close.
'Twere dangerous to go further. Goodness knows
What may arrive if you should tease him longer.
An older head than you I have, and stronger.
Now sit you down and write the boy a letter—
The shorter it may be of course the better.
Now don't say yes or no, but gently touch
The chord of tenderness, but not too much,
He then will understand you can't say more.'
Well, Julie sat her down and puzzled o'er
My *bureau* for a minute; then she wrote
Clear and distinct upon my card a note
Which showed she was a perfect diplomate
In heart affairs. Myself a note like that
I couldn't have writ straight off so sweetly clear,
And 'tween the lines you could discern a tear.
The note was sent. I wrote a *billet* too,
To join with it. 'The Princess Otranto
Dines here to-night, dine here you too as well,
And after we will go see "Guillaume Tell."'
No answer had I, so I went next morn
To seek his *taudis* in that street forlorn
In the Rue d'Amsterdam, where 'twas I knew.
I spoke the *concierge*, but he said, '*Monsieur*
Had said for none he was to be *chez lui*,'
So in his hand I slipped a golden louis.
The *honnête homme*, forthwith intelligent,
Bustling upstairs before me straightway went,
And with a bright new key op'd monsieur's door.
I made my heels go tic-tac on the floor.
And to his bedroom crossed the *salon* o'er.
Loudly I called, '*Monsieur Lionel, c'est moi,*
La Duchesse de Belcœur, un joli froid
Vous m'avez jeté—laissant sans faire signe
Ma note gentille—vous êtes un monstre insigne.
C'est vilain cela—une vilaine, vilaine action;
Je viens vous en demander satisfaction.'
I looked within, he was stretched on his bed,
Half-dressed, *et, par ma foi,* I thought half-dead,
With Julie's letter lying at his head.
I slipp'd inside and on his couch sat down,
And slapp'd his cheek, and then said with a frown,
'*Méchant jeune homme! vous m'avez fait une peur!*

A moi, qui ne songeais qu'à vous faire bonheur.
Sure Julie's letter was not very cruel.
Elle est bonne fille comme moi. Now don't undo all
The pleasant time you've had *filant ensemble*
L'amour parfait. Ce serait bête me semble
To finish like a foolish tragic play.
Now, wake up, *monsieur*, have you naught to say?'
And then he sat up and began to stammer
Excuses forth, then of Julie to clamour—
Not *Orphée aux enfers* made such a fluster—
While tears began within his eyes to cluster.
'*Pleurez*,' I said, '*mon ami, mais pas trop*';
Then on my neck I let him go *boo-boo*.
And then I said, '*Assez comme ça, bonne fille*
Est Julie! une meilleure entre mille
Ne pourriez trouver guère—mais pour se tuer,
Aveuglement contre le destin de ruer
Pour une jeune fille ne serait qu'une bêtise.
Écoutez-moi, permettez que je vous le dise;
Je vous trouve en cela pas de tout raisonnable
C'est vous qui êtes en faute: c'est vous qui êtes blamable.
Devant un conseil de famille si vous voulez passer,
Julie est à vous—vous ne voulez pas? Eh bien,
Ni à elle ni à moi vous n'avez à reprocher, rien.
Voici maintenant je dis, nous allons changer de l'air,
Nous partirons de suite pour mon château Beaurepaire.
Nous trouverons moyen là de mettre le cœur au frais.
J'ai amené Baptiste pour bâcler vos effets.
Sortons de suite ensemble. Mais dont levez-vous.'
I went into his *salon* crying, '*Quittons ce trou!*
Habillez-vous de suite. Ici je vous attends.'
I paced his *salon* then *en large en long*
Dompteuse de bêtes feroces with air put on.
His *petites choses de toilette* one by one
I called and helped to set out on the table:
'*Voilà ceçi—voilà ça—c'est bon!*'—we're able
Now to go out; 'Baptiste will do the rest,
And we will breakfast at the *Gare de l'ouest*,
Before we start for Château Beaurepaire,
For all the *Pentecôte* we will spend there.'
A *femme de cinquante ans* could not suffice
The broken heart of our young friend to splice
And make it whole again. Forces united
Must do the business, so I quick invited
A crowd of people down to fill the house,
All wits and poets, play actresses and actors,

To be the love-sick swain's good benefactors.
My dear friend too, the Princess Otranto,
Came down to help me and to make things go.
But those I most relied on were the actresses—
The choicest were they of our stage enchantresses.
Agar and Augustine were of the *Français,*
Rose of the *Comique,* and the *Variétés*
Sent sparkling Fifine. Now these graces four
Arrived together. When I'd shown them o'er
The Château to their rooms, to mine I led
My guests, and there were casually outspread
My finest jewels glittering in their cases,
And sundry *bibelots* and fine point laces,
And all our feminine *niaiseries.*
Of course they were enchanted. I said, 'See
That *belle rivière* of diamonds, the possession
It shall of her be who a love confession
From my young *Anglais* here, in any fashion,
Can get to cure him of a hopeless passion.
Augustine, Rose, and Fifine said the idea
Was *ravissante* and worthy a Medea.
'Twas a new kind, they said, of *tipplechase.*
And Fifine said, '*Chère Duchesse,* I embrace
Your offer with delight, for that *rivière*
I'd try to win love of a polar bear.'
Only the Agar smiled disdainfully,
As if she scorned to treat of love so gainfully.
Know you the Agar? *Mon Dieu,* such a *belle,*
For noble looks she beats the great Rachel;
For had she been a Greek—I'm sure you know
The best they've left—*Diane Chasseresse* or Juno
Would have gain'd points had Phidias only seen her.
Severe and grand and noble, such demeanour
Of full-born goddess and tragedian queen.
Such brows, and then such eyes, dark, deep, serene.
While they to work went each in her own way,
I said to my *gardechasse,* '*Monsieur l'Anglais*
Is fond of shooting—look you go each day
And ask him if he'll shoot, woodcock and quail
Are now in season—and we have *chevreuil.*
Let him shoot what he likes—as for *chasse close,*
You can pay all fines with a foot of nose.' [1]
I said, too, to the captain of my yacht,
'Get you *Sylphide* (my yacht) in order brought,
For *Monsieur l'Anglais* and these Paris *belles*

[1] *Pied de nez.*

To have a sail whenever they think well.'
Now if *monsieur* to shoot or sail was willing,
Would you believe it? in fit costume killing
Rose, Fifine, and Gustine charmed all beholders,
With ankles gaiter'd, neat *fusils* on shoulders,
Or in the trim costume of cabin-*mousse*,
With collars square and knife and keys *en trousse*,
With jaunty hats back sloping, new and natty,
Which made each young man's heart go pitty-patty.
There was much laughing, as you well may think:
When *l'Anglais* missed a shot, quick as a wink
A lovely *chasseresse* shot after *l'Anglais*,
Vous allez voir comme que vous mouche le nez;
And on shipboard they said, offering *liqueur*,
'*Prenez mon remède contre le mal de cœur.*'
But classic Agar scorn'd their light frivolity,
And would not rival with them in their jollity.
She had for help in this a pleasant fellow,
One of my guests, a poet ripe and mellow—
Emile Deschamps, you know his verses fine,
A friend of Victor Hugo's and of mine.
He had translated things of our *Anglais*,
And he proposed that Agar should essay,
With her transcendent gift for recitation,
To give our English guest some small ovation.
These two prepared a programme, and between
Some gems of Hugo, Musset, Lamartine,
Our *bel Anglais* had some tit-bits inserted.
We had a *soirée*, and th' Agar exerted
Herself with such a Pythoness grand air
On our friend's verses that himself co-heir
He felt with these great spirits; but the Agar
Could out of tinfoil make a diamond star.
But nevertheless we thought it wondrous fine,
And we applauded, charming! sweet! divine!
Now after this Rose, Gustine, and Fifine,
Ceasing to rival with the tragic queen,
Gave up the *tipplechase* for the *rivière*,
But their *revanche* took cruelly elsewhere.
But Agar, that proud minx, would make no claim,
So I retain my *rivière* all the same.
Yet ne'ertheless I think that Agar might
Have claimed it, for the youth seemed restored quite
From his heart malady, and later on
There was much talk of a *liaison*
Between the Agar and her *bel Anglais*.

We thought it strange unless that he should stay
In Paris when that wild atrocity,
The sanguinary *Commune*, ruled the city.
But Agar, Mænad-like, had a wild craze,
And in the Tuilleries the Marseillaise
To crowds of savage *communards* was declaiming,
Their seething spirits with fresh fire inflaming,
And like a priestess by the *Commune* crew
Was worshipped. Then it happ'd by some strange spell
Of wild suspicion, Monsieur Lionel
Was by the madmen seized of the *Commune*
And placed in front of a close-formed platoon
Ready for shooting, when a woman fair
Came forwards, wearing on dishevelled hair
The Phrygian cap of freedom, and before
The levelled rifles rushed, and her way tore
To the doom'd man, his form erect to clasp;
An arm about his neck with nervous grasp
She threw, the other high she raised, defiant,
And on her popularity reliant,
Bore him away without or let or help,
As would a lioness her tawny whelp."

CANTO VI

SCYLLA

"Incidit in Scyllam qui vult vitare Charybdam."

Did Agar love and was she loved again
One would not know—to both a bitter pain
Such love had been—for Lionel, when freed
From the fierce *Commune's* fiery jaws, had need
Of all his wits to 'scape a still worse fate
From vulturous Mammon's maw insatiate.
Swindling directors and a bogus mine
Engulphed the little fortune which vulpine
Chicanery had left him, and what's more,
His mine had brought him debt instead of ore.
Like some poor luckless peasant who has saved
His life from his own burning cot, and braved
A fiery death to rescue wife and child,
And finds himself a pauper on the wild,
Life gained—but life's good gone, toil's anodyne;
So Lionel, just saved from the *Commune*,
Unaided had to strive in solitude,
Like a tired swimmer in an ice-crammed flood,
To extricate his being from fresh broil
Of villainy with never-ending toil.
Since Paris then, *the* Paris, was no more
The gleesome Paris he'd known heretofore,
But scarred and with maim'd visage from the storm
Of sieges which had marred her splendid form,
He left it with sick heart, having to go
To face in London a new life of woe.
For two long years his heart's blood to the core
Was drained to pay of villains the vile score.
Night was as day and day was oft as night,
While waited at the door the printer's wight.

Ream upon ream beneath his feverish hand
Passed as unceasing as the falling sand
Falls in the hourglass. When his bitter toil
At length befreed him from the serpent coil
Which strangled all his life, but at the cost
Of nerves exhausted and a mind half-lost—
Perchance he'd not outlived this long ordeal
Had he not found a fount of strength i' th' real
Ennobling friendship of a noble dame.
For with his soul's wings singed by love's hot flame,
He felt a softening and a healing balm
In the sublime good thoughts and spirit calm
Of that grand-manner'd lady, who of all
The great world understood the dreadful thrall
Of a fine soul—what bitter, bitter gall
Made finest raptures into mockery fall.
For Lionel had not broken with old ties,
But still mixed with grand folk in ghostly wise.
Grand Lady Walter! lady grand and good,
Full oft the poet in his darkest mood
Felt like a ray of hope in his drear cell
Thy gilt-green missive enter to expel
The incubus of wrong which him opprest,
And offer him choice converse with the zest
Of a fine *menu* in *partie carrée.*
Thus choicest friends she entertained each day,
And she had princes, queens upon her list
Of friends; ambassadors, who never missed
To make her visits next unto the royal;
The proudest statesmen did her homage loyal.
She could discourse in Latin, quote in Greek
From Plato, and indeed had nought to seek
In German, French, Italian, and had seen
All Courts in Europe. With a noble mien
She'd talk of Byron, Wellington, and Moore,
As though they'd only just pass'd from her door.
Of Talleyrand's *bon mots* she'd hoarded many,
Of Cambacérès' too, as well as any,
She could appreciate the *haute cuisine.*
No finer relic was there left, I ween,
Of that grand epoch which our fathers knew
Of Trafalgar, "Childe Harold," Waterloo.
She was as pious too as she was clever,
Though a gay vein of humour fail'd her never.
She lov'd Don Quixote like a very cousin,
And had of him editions quite a dozen.

This noble lady and her little court,
To which the noblest aye would fain resort,
Transfused poor Lionel with such genial grace
As made him quite forget the world was base,
And for a while effaced the misery
Of his hard life's unceasing drudgery.
There lacked not others, too, great souls but few,
To cheer his spirit fine with homage due.
The chief of these was he whose noble tongue
Champion'd all right and heaped scorn on all wrong,
The valiant-hearted orator, the prime
Of great men eloquent who graced his time.
Apostle strong of peace with lion heart,
He, truth incarnate, loath'd th' intriguer's art.
For souls of orators are indeed close kin
To those of poets, and the origin
Of poetry and eloquence are inspirations
From the deep founts of love. Such emanations
Fumed 'neath the tripod in the Delphic cell,
And made the Pythoness an oracle.
As Bryan has told us in Canto Three,
At last the exhausted nervous energy
'Neath the incessant slavery of the pen
Made Lionel's brain as useless as a wen.
And then it seemed there was a last resource
For keeping up in him the vital force,
By poet, publicist, and legislator,
Becoming letter-bag perambulator:
No post being vacant then of F.O. scavenger,
They made of him a travelling Queen's messenger.
That fate alone was a sufficient ill,
Alas! it helped him to a worse one still.
If heretofore my pen has faintly limned
The villain forces which defaced and dimmed
Poor Lionel's life, how can it hope to win
Strength to portray worse toils of crime and sin
In which his life was tangled to the last.
The parricide by Roman law was cast
Into the Tiber's eddying yellow tide
Sown up securely in a bull's raw hide,
With asp, ape, cat, and dog sewn up with him
To keep him company in his last swim.
I think that Lionel, had he been asked,
Would have preferred in such wise to be casked
Rather than live the life reserved for him
By a false wedding troth and Mendelssohn's fine hymn.

How came such mischance wholly horrible
To engulph the heart and soul of Lionel?
'Twas thus. He came one winter to sojourn,
As foreign travelling bagman in his turn,
Some weeks at Munich, waiting for the batches
Of his grand Excellency's sublime despatches.
Matter political having none to churn up,
They kept him waiting for something to turn up.
If pleasant vices may become our whips,
Our pastimes too may burn our finger-tips,
May lead us to perdition. Lionel
At Munich found a doom so foul and fell
As made past griefs seem trifles. He had met
At Paris in the literary set
L'Abbé Franz Liszt, the great piano smiter,
Of European fame, and the inditer
Of much grand music in the classic form.
One piece we know, "St. Paul in the Storm,"
The radiant Kate O'Neil had played for him
Before the Court here, and no memory dim
Had Kitty left behind her. L'Abbé Liszt
Was a Court favourite, and took interest
In Kitty's friend—presented him at Court,
Which moved our Embassy to a fine snort.
The tall and white-haired Abbé, in Court wile,
Said to his Majesty with a bland smile,
"The young man knows his Dante and laudations
Makes of your Majesty's last emendations."
For the King was an honest Dante lover,
And he had published—royal arms on cover—
A grand edition of the Florentine.
The Crown Prince, too, he was a fencer fine,
And in his *salle d'armes* passed some hours most days;
So unto him the wily Abbé says,
"My Prince, my friend at fencing has a knack,
And holds his ground with Pons and Marignac.
At Paris he has had *dix ans de salle*,
To touch him takes a good professional.
He is a passed *maître d'armes* too, really, truly,
And made his proofs before a jury duly."
The Abbé, half in earnest and in sport,
Was prodigal of praises at the Court
Of the accomplished Lionel. He knew
He had been Kitty's friend; and Kitty too,
Poor girl, had left here such a bright tradition,
Of which he profited to his perdition.

And this perhaps was a fit retribution
For not pursuing with due resolution
A worthy passion whose remembrance should
Have kept the asp's black poison from his blood.
For *petites entrées* closed to the profane
And the Court favour proved his deadliest bane.
For every morn he three or four *reprises*
Fenc'd with the Crown Prince, and, his host to please,
Was not too rapid in his *quarte* and *tierce*.
With the Princesses then he would rehearse
Folk-songs in French, Italian, German, Spanish,
And sometimes try a stave in Norse and Danish.
And then his Majesty the King in Dante
Would fain display acumen *penetrante*.
And as for banquets, balls, and fêtes theatrical,
He had enough to cure the most icterical.
So Lionel was deemed a happy wight,
A perfect marvel of *Hoffähigkeit*.
Yet this fame caused his ruin and his fall
Into a pit of fire and hissing gall.
It came in this wise. One black afternoon
The snow abroad in white flakes jostling down,
In the Pinacothek he refuge took.
From side to side he cast a fleeting look,
Then fixed himself before "The Angel's Fall,"
The masterpiece of Rubens (Peter Paul),
And which for drawing, colour, and design,
The great Sir Joshua placed in Art's first line.
The splendour of that vast host lightning riven,
In hideous ruin and combustion driven,
Absorbed him, when a lady broke his trance,
A younger by her side, with smiling glance.
"Oh! Mr. Lionel, is that really you?
We met, you know, in London. Mrs. Pugh
Wrote to me lately of your being here.
How glad I am to see you! Sophy, dear—
My daughter, Mr. Lionel. How absurd
Not to have met before! But we thought thus,
Such a Court favourite would not care for us."
Then Lionel had in a faint blush and smile
His life's curse brought before him. Oh! the guile
Of those false smiling lips he came to rue.
They seemed as innocent as morning dew,
Yet they could smile and smile and smile again,
With venom gathering in heart, tongue, and vein.
For this was Sophy Jibb, his future bride,

With Mrs. Clarence Vipereau by her side—
Our dear Mama. The pair had toured about
In Central Europe, seasons in and out,
At Brussels, Dresden, and Vienna dwelt,
But yet of suitor-fish no bite had felt
For the fair Sophy's hand. To Munich now
They came to try their fortune, but somehow
The fish were slow to rise. Just now intent
Were they a prize to gain for which they'd spent
Much eager thought. This was an invitation
For the grand Court Ball honouring the occasion
Of the Crown Prince's birthday. They had striven
At th' Embassy, but there small hope was given.
Well, Lionel, he turned up in the nick,
And the smart "stager" seized Time's forelock quick,
And with complaints about slow embassies,
And a soft smile and gleam from Sophy's eyes,
Gently disclosed their present small ambition.
For their desire then Lionel gained fruition,
An invitation to the great Court Ball—
The card he left them at a morning call.
That Mrs. Vipereau and Miss Sophy Jibb
Were prodigal of thanks and speeches glib.
That they had found Elysium at the ball
Was natural—and they liked best of all
Their triumph o'er the absent Smiths and Browns,
From whom they had endured some social frowns.
Their invitation card henceforth was hitched
Into their mirror frame where'er they pitched
Their nomad tent, and, vastly to their praise,
They grateful felt to Lio for ten days.
Yet at the ball there was a slight mischance,
For Lio found that Sophy could not dance.
With a round "bucking back" she tore away
As if alone—the sympathetic sway
Of Kitty and of Julie on his arm
He recalled ruefully. Surely an alarm
This should of peril have been. But her bold air,
Her wax-faced smoothness and smile debonair,
Made pass her dancing: on the skating rink,
Where by the lamp-lit firs and red-flamed link
The *beau monde* loved at night to congregate,
She made a better show. By doom of fate
They came to meeting twice or thrice a day,
By chance or by design one could not say.
Doubtless that he was poor they little thought,

In such high circles seeing him so sought;
And Sophy now was well past twenty-five,
And middle age might speedily arrive.
And so museums, walks, teas, luncheons, dinners,
Made in three weeks a pair of engaged sinners—
For foolish sinners were this ill-matched pair.
But whose the fault? for Lionel was fair.
His love was not ideal, yet alway
He felt enough of it to lull and stay
His ceaseless yearning for affection's balm.
His heart had found, it seem'd, a harbour calm
For passion, an oasis of repose
From hot, volcanic, devastating throes.
Not thus did Lionel argue in cold blood,
But he felt dimly that he knew he could
Give in return more love than such a girl
Was capable of feeling; for a pearl
Of unambitious love has been life's boon
And charm to many whose calm honeymoon
Death only ended. In such love annealed
Lived Heinrich Heine and his good Mathilde.
For Mathilde, kindly natured, simply good,
Loved man within the poet. She'd ne'er trod
On heights Olympian, and must dimly guess
In Henri's rhymes the deep weird tenderness.
Yet 'twas a fateful sign and meant no good
That Lionel ne'er felt his poet mood
In this new love, and in his warmest glows
He got no farther than poetic prose.
For Kitty or for Julie he'd indite
A dozen sonnets in a single night,
But Sophy Jibb ne'er had of him a sonnet,
Except a funny one on a new bonnet,
And that indeed she hardly understood.
But Lionel said, "Perchance, 'tis all for good,
For love based on a steady prose foundation
Will outwear love based on imagination."
In this he argued wrong, as we shall see,
For like and unlike never can agree.
But as for Sophy, she had great aversion
Coiffer Sainte Catherine, and without aspersion
It may be said she had not much success
In the *beau monde*, for her smooth comeliness
Naught of magnetic had or noble kind
To draw bright wits or capture the refined.
But then she had her one eternal smile,

With which she could all simple hearts beguile.
This smile was as a mask, concealing quite
A nature of sly treachery and spite,
A leaden soul, a conscience dull and crass,
A brain of feathers and a front of brass,
But not concealing always the gold spray
Which saved two dusky pearls from premature decay.
If any ever touch'd her heart, 'twas Cousin Ju,
A bull-necked braggart, an attorney too,
Fitted by insolence and lack of shame
To be the prince of swindlers he became.
They had been playmates from their earliest youth,
With fondness more than brotherly, forsooth.
They had grown up together; their bad parts
Found an affinity for lack of hearts.
But while the father lived of Cousin Ju
There was no chance of marriage 'tween the two.
And then the great Ju, spite of much miscarriage,
Had the *toupet* to aim at noble marriage,
For in his *rôle* of family attorney
To titled houses he would sometimes journey,
And then weak folk would sometimes have to rue hard,
His meals with them instead of with the steward.
All this, of course, to Lio was unknown,
And he robed her in virtues all his own.
A mirage in his desert life uprose
To clothe her festal form with roseate glows.
He yearned for goodness in drear solitude,
And thought it was so easy to be good.
Then came for Lionel a dread ordeal
Before he gave up all his life and weal
To Sophy's mercy. He till now knew naught
Of Sophy's kinship to that magnate haught,
That mighty potentate, the Lord Gilfiller,
The lately fresh ennobled gin distiller.
So he must needs go and presented be
To all the *sippschaft* of the new grandee.
Later I've heard him speak with horror, ready
To tear his hair and stamp with gesture heady
When he recalled that dreadful presentation.
And yet he thought, poor soul, this abnegation
Of his own self before that clownish herd
Would count for good for Sophy. But he err'd;
For her rich kin she had an adoration
With all the meekness of a poor relation.
The magnate dwelt in Essex, and his place

Was once the cradle of an ancient race.
Historic houses often, like the peerage,
Deck grandees glorious of this gin- and beer-age.
"Shades that to Bacon would retreat afford
Become the portion of a booby lord,
And Henley, once proud Buckingham's delight,
Slides to a scrivener or a city knight,"
And the old halls of Scroops and Mortimers
Become the sties of Cockney Junipers.
Some Gothic windows of an age historic
There still remained, but columns, bastard Doric,
And many a false Palladian pilaster,
A portico which smelt of laths and plaster,
Awed most beholders—but perhaps a factory
Had to an artist seem'd more satisfactory.
As Lionel neared the stuccoed portico
Of Lord Gilfiller's place he saw a show
Of men in red coats and of ladies fair,
Headed by Lady G. in her grey hair,
Riding on horses, chestnut, black, and grey,
Towards the house, for it was hunting day.
Cela va sans dire, this new ennobled race
Tried every ruse their newness to efface,
And just to hide want of ancestral glories,
All to a man were rank and rabid Tories.
Then there's a method now by which new rich
Are ever confident themselves to hitch
Unto the social ladder's topmost round,
And take of county families the ground,
And that is sport, and so they go sport mad,
And take to riding like a butcher's cad;
And like to butcher's cads, be it confess'd,
Look'd the young Junipers howe'er smart dress'd.
Since beer and spirits have been so ennobled,
Bag foxes have their price in Leadenhall doubled.
A bag fox chased by horses, men, and hounds,
Gives raptures to these ledgers out of bounds.
Heroes by day, they'll talk of him all night,
And ruminate the glories of his flight.
Who says the star of Chivalry doth fade?
Three times a week they'd a tame fox crusade.
Nor the fox only, but the pigeon too,
In a dove-tourney proves their courage true.
Then there are rat hunts, dog fights on the sly,
Bear-baiting we may come to by and by.
The Lady Gilfiller had been prolific,

And grandmama and all the race vivific,
And added largely to the population;
The Junipers no tribe were, but a nation,
And noble sportsmen all—both men and women.
The girls play'd cricket, hunted; at their hymen,
From the hall door on horseback they must ride,
Borne on the saddle like a Calmuck bride.
That evening at the family long table,
Of the day's hunt, of horses, hounds, and stable,
There was an endless clatter of the tongue,
And Lionel thought, that horsey crowd among,
On Francis Osbaldistone at Cub Hall
Dining alone 'mid boorish kinsmen tall,
As great Sir Walter gives him in "Rob Roy"—
Only he'd no Die Vernon his annoy
To charm away. The "Orson cousins" too
Were much, he thought, the preferable crew,
For they were sportsmen born, these mere pretenders,
Mere Cockney counter boys and liquor vendors.
Their dinner talk was one unceasing clang
Of stable jargon and of shoppy slang,
Of spavins, balls, and staggers, and of glanders—
What was the latest cure for the sollanders?
Can you, sir, worm a hound? or give a mash?
For saddle galls what is the surest wash?
They'd then discuss the Derby and St. Leger,
And quote the odds—and who the safest hedger.
Of rat hunts, duck hunts, Hurlingham, the slain
They'd count o'er scores of times, then count again.
And Lady G., the white-hair'd hunting woman,
She told a tale which had success uncommon—
How Catty, of her daughters six the chief,
Had in a ditch that morn near come to grief.
Her horse had floundered then, but she stuck fast,
When Major Snooks, who by her side rode past,
"Well saved, Miss Catty!" shouted. Loud cheers greeted
This moving story and it was repeated.
What made poor Lio feel more strange and lone
Was the abundance of pet names. Each one
Of the great family had two or three,
And some were very silly—for the memory
This multiplied their strength most puzzlingly.
Then there were outside cousins of adoption,
Increased by every Juniper at option,

And these had pet names too—the whole world wide
Seem'd full of Junipers from side to side.
And Lionel by his casual fallibility
About their names roused scornful risibility;
And then no being e'er so perfect was
As every Juniper and outside coz.
The great wit of this world was Uncle Cat,
Spinner of jokes and puns so stale and flat
A German cowboy would turn sick at them;
But for the Junipers each joke as a gem
Past, and the last good thing of Uncle Cat
Formed a chief item in their fireside chat.
He had one eye half-shut and one askew,
As pert and spry as eye of cockatoo.
He proved his talent great for repartee
On Lionel—the wretched fellow, he
Among these horsy clappers sitting mum,
Essay'd to break his silence drear and glum.
His neighbour he addressed thus: "Madam, you
Riding I saw to-day in habit blue
Upon a lovely bay. I'm much behind
In hunting matters, but you brought to mind
A lady whom I saw a year ago
(O flattery vain!), the Princess Belgiojoso,
At a Campagna fox hunt outside Rome."
"Who may that woman be when she's at home?"
Cried Uncle Cat. Then came a laugh and clap,
"How neatly he's put down that writing chap!
Trust Uncle Cat." Then cried out Cousin Ju,
"Who talks of Rome? I'm going soon to hop
To the old place, and there three days I'll stop
And see the show, as I've got business there."
He turn'd to Lionel. "Sure the whole affair
I can do in three days." Then Lionel,
"Three days are very short to do it well."
"Well, what's the good?" then rejoined Cousin Ju,
"It won't make any smarter me or you."
The writing fellow and the writing chap
They thought a hawker was of some clap-trap.
The ladies gone, one ask'd him o'er the wine,
"They tell me, sir, you're in the writing line.
Did writing ever bring you any money?
It did sometimes? Well, now, that's very funny!
That is a sort of line I never thought on
When to look out for business I begun.

How do you set about it? You don't want
Much capital to start with nor much plant?"
"Oh! scarcely any. Paper you must buy,
And ink and pens—a moderate supply.
You will then set them out upon a table,
The size don't matter if it's pretty stable.
You sit down to it then and try to think,
And if thoughts come you put them down in ink.
And if they don't you have to scratch your head
And look up to the ceiling overhead.
To catch your thought there are more ways gymnastic,
Sometimes, like flies, you'll catch them with gum mastic."
That dreadful evening had its termination,
"Good-night" was said, and at the separation
The pair shook hands—his was as cold as ice,
But Sophy whisper'd softly, "Ain't they nice?"
Such were the family meetings. Now my Lord
Would make a mightier show, and at his board
The whole hunt entertain and give a ball
Whose grandeur sure must Lionel enthral.
That was a wondrous show. A London band
Came down from town—scarce any space to stand
Was even in corridors mid the mighty crush
Of centaurs all red-coated and the frush
Of silks and satins; hardly for the dancers
Could room be made in the quadrilles and lancers.
There was a supper sent straight down from Gunter's,
Served up on gorgeous plate to feed the hunters
And all their wives and daughters—finest gin
Of Lord Gilfiller's own, was served up in
Decanters fine of red Bohemian glass
To show the Junipers had a front of brass
For those who scorned the family quintessence;
And in the supper-room the homely presence
Of the first founder of this noble race
Looks from his portrait with a wooden face,
Adown the table glitt'ring with epergnes,
Flower-vases, gilded dishes, plates and urns.
With four gin-stills, some casks, and a mash-tun
This man began life, and with them had won
A place among our gorgeous British Peers
For the great chieftain of the Junipers;
And having got his peerage, the 'cute lord
Show'd his sagacity, for on his board,
Although the family cordial he allowed,
To show the world he was in no wise proud,

Yet, since he found his liquor sell more slow,
Sold off his stock and goodwill to a Co.—
A joint stock, limited; but yearly slower
That body vendeth liquor—yearly lower
Fall the shareholders' profits—but they glory,
For their Co. wears the name of a lord Tory;
And each true Briton feels a pleasure dear
When kicked or plundered by a British peer;
Within his shade he loves in dirt to grovel,
Unlike Diogenes in his tub-hovel;
He would not care for Heaven, so preachers say,
Unless he had a lord to lead the way.
"Let arts and learning, laws and commerce die,
But God preserve our aristocracy."
A wistful skylark in a cage immewed
With crows and kites, and owls and their gross brood,
Would not perhaps be happy altogether,
E'en if they did not eat him bone and feather.
Yet Lionel got through this awful trial,
Although the hands mov'd slowly in the dial;
With tolerant disdain they said, "Mayhap
There is not much harm in the writing chap;
He's awful slow, and not the least bit spunky,
Perhaps he's sly, or at the least a flunkey."
The flunkey theory was upheld by most,
For really such a man, who, like a ghost,
Sat at the table with a face so glum
And had no more wit than the deaf and dumb,
Could never else have smuggled himself high
Among the big-wigs of Society.
So nothing came to check the fatal flow
Of that dark stream, implacable and slow,
Which bore him to a gulf of misery
To which all troubles passed seem'd mirth and glee.
Yet were there times ere the black, fatal day
Of marriage came, he might have burst away;
For there were vulgar frictions, long delays,
So that his friends said often with amaze
'Twas plain that the tough stager and Miss Jibb
Treated the engagement with the coolness glib
Of a *pis aller*. And our Cousin Ju
Was getting daily much more well-to-do;
In the hunting field and with the four-in-hand
He went a pace which none could understand,
And many keen men said, "His six-and-eightpences
We're sure don't cover that young man's expenses."

But Lionel, he seem'd quite hypnotised
By this ignoble love, all numb'd and galvanised,
As though some old hag's charm or poison bane
Had paralysed the life in nerve and vein ;
And then the plighted word which he had given,
He could not break it—he must trust to Heav'n.
And so the fatal day it came and went :
Why linger o'er that horrible event ?
Some men may angels to their bosom clasp,
But Lionel was wedded to an asp—
A poisonous bosom viper, void of ruth,
Whose smile was deadly venomous as her tooth.
" Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins once expressed :
A woman's face, a reptile all the rest."

CANTO VII

INFERNO

WHY, asked of Attic poets the most tragic,
Why has the Muse been gifted with such magic
To give more rapture to delightful things
And raise the pulse of joy at feasts of kings,
But has no power to mitigate one woe
Or gild the ills which lay men roofless low ?[1]
Well did the master of the sceptic sneer
Ask what fine elegy e'er dried one tear !
And so I'd fain my pen in mute despair
Abandon here—for what art, laying bare
The diabolic wiles which to the end
Tortured the life of my beloved friend,
Could make these rhymes attractive ? since salt tears
And midnight agonies, prolonged through years,
The unseen pangs in nerve and brain immured,
The sickening anguish without hope endured
In solitude, all these have less attraction
For the grand Muse than has a murderous action ?
The assassin's dagger and its stealthy smite,
Slow poisoning by arsenic or aconite,
Their victims easier Pity's eyes can wet
Than the sad strugglers in law's wicked net,
On whom spite, perjury, fraud and subornation
Work wrongs more fiendish than assassination ;
And caitiff pleaders' and attorneys' bills
Can't for the Muse be made poetic ills.
Marriage, that "fatal and perfidious bark
Built in eclipse and rigged with curses dark,"
Which wrecked the life of Lio—bark accursed,
As the foul bark of Lycidas—went first,
Like her, in treacherous calm, on level brine,
With baffling winds, and what seemed blessings trine.

[1] Euripides, "Medea," 190 : *σκαιοὺς δὲ λεγών κόυδέν τι σοφοὺς.*

Three beauteous boys came in successive years,
Fated, alas! to bring less joy than years—
Not by their fault, poor darlings! His tears ran
For murdered infancy by godless man.
For than our Lionel no parent more
Had felt the father in his bosom's core,
Had of paternal love a deeper sense,
And of the infant soul's pure innocence:
"Children," he said, "in their bright smiles renew
The Golden Age—a promised land we view
In their dear, starry, pure, mysterious eyes—
A promised land more fair than at sunrise
Moses beheld from Pisgah looking o'er
The land of palm-trees from Dan unto Zoar.
Their blameless hearts, unsmirched by evil's leaven,
Are just as pure as those of saints in heaven;
Of such the kingdom is of God above,
So said our Lord, who did all children love.
No man, however great or worldly wise,
Shall find a place in His fair Paradise
Who cannot worship with heart-whole delight
These angels fresh come from the Infinite;
Of all the scenes portrayed in Holy Writ
In which our Saviour moved, none is more fit
Man's pride to tame than what passed in a room
Of that blest dwelling in Capernaum,
When He, the Lamb of God, took His calm seat
Among the twelve Apostles, who, with heat,
Had been contending who should be most great
When from earth's trammels raised to heavenly state,
And in His holy hands the Holy One
Took on His knee a child, and to Saint John,
Saint Peter, and the rest, in accents mild,
Said, 'Who can humble be as this small child
Shall have the highest place in heavenly seats,
But whosoe'er My little ones maltreats,
'Twere better for him should a millstone be
Bound to his neck and he cast in the sea;
And whoso shall their little lives deform,
His lot's fire quenchless, and the eternal worm.'"
I saw dear Lionel with his eldest boys
Full often ere with dust and hideous noise
His rafters fell, by cruel hands pulled low
For apes to gibber at with mock and mow,
And triumph o'er its once blest nooks laid bare
To the rough night wind and the day's fierce glare.

Four years the eldest had, the younger three—
The third poor innocent, a babe was he—
When that foul tempest drove them from their home,
Orphan'd and homeless for all years to come.
For lovelier boys than were the elder two
You might search far and wide, might even go
And the Madonna seek of San Sisto,
At Dresden, and its cherubs bright and fair ;
Or you might visit Parma, and repair
Unto the *camera* of San Paolo
And see the *putti* of Correggio,
And search those wondrous urchins through and through
Yet hardly would you find there any two
More beautiful than these two boys ; I ween,
They were e'en fairer than the boy I'd seen
Their father in years past. The one was fair,
The other brown-locked—both with gallant air,
Both with fine lily brows and violet flashes
From large eyes beaming clear 'neath curv'd black lashes ;
Both coral-lipped—fine nosed with dimpled chin ;
Their cheeks had peach and jasmine bloom for skin,
And either's form would serve a sculptor's need
To make an eagle-borne child Ganymede.
So winning looked they that a dame or miss
Who met them would stop, stoop, and take a kiss,
Craving permission—and when they abroad
Went, 'twas a progress royal on the road :
At all the halting places which were made
These little princes had due homage paid ;
Hotel guests in a body made ovation,
And for their birthdays made illumination,
And *Vivat Bebe* one night made display
In flaming letters on the Wallensee.
To witness the reciprocal delight
Of Lio and his boys was a sweet sight ;
They seem'd, poor things ! to have forebodings dim
That the vile world would tear them soon from him ;
See, from my aged eyes the tears fall thick
When I recall the divination quick
These children had of Papa's every motion,
Of their e'er watchful love and his devotion.
They knew 'twas his, the footstep on the stair,
And 'gainst the nursery window the bright pair
Would flatten noses and in silence wait
For him to come home by the garden gate,
Then beat a wild tattoo with hands and feet

And seek the door his happy face to greet;
As far as eye could reach on the parade
They would his form distinguish, and they made
Signals with little arms and screamed with glee,
And ran with toddling haste to catch his knee;
And when he journeying went, their arms they threw
About his neck and sobbed, "Adieu! adieu!
Dear Papa; come back soon as e'er you're able";
When he returned they got upon the table
And leaped upon his neck, and on his breast
Lay still as though they'd there for ever rest.
But Sophy was not overjoyed to see
Such prodigal affection 'tween the three;
She said 'twas overdone and that her right
To conjugal affection suffered blight
Through the parental—that no longer she
Found in the man the love which used to be.
I do not think she cared a wisp of tow,
But 'twas a sign what wind began to blow.
Four years their marriage had the strain withstood
Of diverse humours and contrasting mood;
Her lack of intellectual sympathy
By patient love he tried to remedy,
Yet Lio felt at times quite more than queasy
When he received such books as "Dates Made Easy,"
Or one of Mrs. Markham's "History Primers,"
And "Ready Reckoners" and "Ready Rhymers"
As festal presents—or some queer named tracts
To show the virtue of converting blacks.
He put such on his bookshelves with best thanks,
Tho' out of place they seemed in those choice ranks.
And there were things which Lio much more stung,
Coming from Sophy's treacherous, blabbing tongue.
There was no secrecy between the pair,
For Sophy took delight in laying bare
Their inner life unto the gaze of all—
For bedroom secrets e'en she had no pall—
And with malicious tales she loved to fill
The ears of those who wished her husband ill.
Even when on loving terms they seem'd to be
She'd sit before her husband smilingly
And pages write abusive and untrue
About poor Lio unto Cousin Ju.
Yet ne'ertheless, without the constant bane
Of evil counsel from those demons twain,
The fiendish mother and our Cousin Ju,

Backed up by others of the *sippschaft* crew
And the vile trickeries of lawyers base,
The good of Lionel from their hiding-place
Had charmed the slumbering vipers of the heart
As Indian pipers draw snakes with weird art.
But he'd no chance, poor fellow, from the first:
The vixenish "tough stager," with her thirst
For tyranny, had taken full possession
Of all their married life; with hateful pression
She forced her daughter so, she had no will
But the maternal for aught good or ill.
Nothing without her could be done or said,
There was no refuge from her but in bed.
And at her ways if Lio show'd vexation,
Her first word was, "We'll have a separation."
'Twas curious that the separation mania
With Ju's magnificence grew like a *ταινία*.
The life of Cousin Ju was now a wonder—
He swam in riches like a gorgeous flounder;
He beat in show and sport each Juniper,
And with his pomp his power to domineer
Increased—of these two women his control
Was now the guiding star and very soul;
They thought it fun when he with jeering chatter
Styl'd Lionel "as mad as any hatter."
All know the adage old, "*Nemo repente*
Turpissimus fuit." It would take twenty
Full pages on a moderate computation
To show how great the daily provocation
Which Sophy exercised towards her victim
With her hag mother, more and more to afflict him.
Things reached a stage at last when she outdid
The tricks of common women reared amid
Dark scenes of vice and squalor; while the home
Of Lionel a cage of wild beasts had become,
A cave of venomed snakes, a hellish ring
In which, except his boys, there was no friendly thing.
The servants all were bribed; to their pert scorn
And vulgar insolence there was no bourn:
When outraged he would say, "Bad girl, go pack
And leave my house!" his wife behind his back
Would grin like some low trollop and would say,
"I want you here—I'm your mistress, stay—
Stay, don't mind him." Sometimes the nursery door
Was locked against him; while the poor boys sore
Greeted for him, the nurse cried, "What d'ye want?

You can't come in, my mistress says you shan't!"
No creature was unbribed or unperverted
Allow'd within the house. When he asserted
Mildly his wish in this or that, they screeched
And rang the bell: "Let Dr. A. be fetched,
Our lives are not safe, he's so violent:"
And Dr. A. came, pulses felt, and went,
After prescription of *niaiseries*,
Smiling at prospect of a goodly fee.
A canting half-bred parson, poor as Job,
With Easter offering and a cast-off robe
For wife or child in view, he, too, the throng
Of Lio's persecutors was among.
Then *Mesdames* had a day, and visitors
Assembled once a week as grand inquisitors
In Lio's drawing-room, to hear the long
And written diary of crimes and wrong
Which Sophy and her mother kept against him:
They lived in deadly fear of life and limb
Daily, they said, and proved it was no dream,
Since at the windows they had had to scream.
'Twas true they'd screamed, but when poor Lionel,
Protesting, said that 'twas impossible
That he in anger could a woman strike,
Then Sophy said, "To murder me you'd like,
But you're too great a coward to do so."
Then struck him, saying, "Hit me, coward, do!"
When to make peace her hand he gently drew—
"Hands off," she said, "I won't be pawed by you."
Following Ju's lead, they tried to prove him mad;
They said his poor brain some disease had had,
And Dr. A. was hid behind a screen
While they endeavoured to get up a scene.
But Dr. A. said, "No! I cannot say
That he's mad now—he may be so some day."
The plea of madness failing, then they tried
To make him out a drunkard, and replied
To Lio when such charge he'd disavow,
"You horrid fellow! why, you're quite drunk now."
To all demurs against false accusation
Sophy replied, "Let's have a separation;
You'd best give in, for don't you see, you zany,
I and Mama are for you far too many."
When Lionel told me, as his dearest friend,
His household troubles, I foresaw no end
Or issue to them: a heart so depraved,

A soul by vilest passion so enslaved,
Could know no pity or remorse, and when
With barefac'd impudence once and then again
She'd left her home on lying false pretence
Of life endanger'd by his violence,
And legal hounds began at him to clutch,
I had a dream not unreal overmuch.
I dreamed one night, as into sleep I fell,
Kept watchful long by thoughts of Lionel,
That I beheld a temple huge of stone,
Such as at Chilminar or Babylon
Were built for worshippers of idols huge,
With monstrous columns painted blue and rouge,
Lighted by naphtha cressets in long rows
Which lit the scene with lurid lustrous glows,
With aisles of winged bulls and monsters dread.
A vast gilt idol with a wolfish head
Was at one end ; before it, at its feet,
A fiery furnace burned at a white heat.
This idol's name was Mammon, and the priests
Stood in a row before him—heads of beasts
They, too, had : heads of wolves, bears, apes, and pigs,
And they and Mammon all wore lawyers' wigs,
While their hands held huge sacrificial knives
Ready to hack the victim who, in gyves,
Lay bound before them, and I looked and found
That this was Lionel ; then I looked around
And saw the crowd of worshippers who stood
Expectant, thirsting for the victim's blood :
The vixen mother and the perjured wife
Were 'mid the foremost—each, too, had a knife.
They were supported by a legion proud
Of Junipers ; and then amid the crowd
The weasel face appeared of Uncle Cat
And other aunts and uncles, cousin this and that,
With Cousin Ju to lead—the white-hair'd hunting-
Woman, the Lady G., with pleasure grunting,
With other women, too, and every one
Armed with a knife to take part in the fun
Of hacking, slicing into Lio's carcase
Before he was thrown in the fiery furnace.
Among the priests of Baal it was the fashion,
When they would win their cruel god's compassion,
To gash themselves with lancets and with knives
Until blood spurts rush'd out like bees from hives ;
But these good Mammon worshippers were fain

To gash their victim and so save their pain.
Then came of cymbals, gongs, and horns a din,
A signal for the service to begin;
They all rush'd forward then, with knives held high,
Eager upon the victim them to ply;
His body they began to cut and gash,
When with a loud, earth-shaking thunder crash
The temple was cast down and seemed to fade,
And its crowds faded, too; an angel maid
Whose face I knew, with bright wings wide displayed,
Came swiftly from above, and kissed the brow
Of mutilated Lio. White as snow
Became his bleeding wounds; his earthly presence
Was all transfigured to angelic essence,
And the pair rose with mutual fond embraces
And vanish'd up above in heavenly spaces.
I looked to where those worshippers had been,
And saw a crowd of creeping beasts obscene—
Hyenas, jackals, vipers, skunks, and rats—
Eating each other like Kilkenny cats;
Soon naught but quiv'ring tails were left to view:
These turned to snakes, who ate each other too.
There is not really much exaggeration
In this strange freak of my imagination,
For not a few to anguish of the mind
Would prefer tortures of the fleshly kind,
And to that court, Love's slaughter-house and worse,
Prefer the rack and then the wooden-horse.
No nation ever did so strange a thing
As make a special court for divorcing
Except *la blonde Angleterre la pudibonde.*
It does remind me of the edition found
Comic by Byron of the poet Martial,
In which an editor to virtue partial
Placed all the naughty verse in an appendix
And so supplied youth with a precious index.
This slummy court has spawned its pleading sharpers,
The most ignoble of all legal carpers.
They need know nothing e'en of English law
But just to chatter like a rascal daw.
They live by bringing homes to desolation
And of man's holiest ties by desecration,
By goading faltering love to quenchless hate,
And cursing children with an orphan's fate.
As Dante saw o'er Hell's gate writ: "*Lasciate*
Ogni speranza voi che (*qui*) *entrate,*"

So hope abandon all—man, wife, and child—
When once a summons in that court is filed.
Far holier is the trade of paid match-makers
Than that of this black gang of marriage-breakers ;
The fiend of Discord is their only saint,
And purest love for them is a complaint
And must be warded off like an infection
Since all their profit lies in love's ejection.
By perjury, treachery, slander, calumny,
Delation, bribery, and villainy
They profit and they live—for they are sure
That love and virtue, were they angel-pure,
Could never add one stiver to their purse ;
At all affection's impulses they curse
Inwardly, and no conciliation
They'll help, except in view of litigation ;
And if they talk of compromise, be sure
They have no case, but try to make secure
A prospect long of ruinous legal actions
Begotten of their treacherous transactions.
One Slinkerman, the giant pleader there,
Who'd but a pigmy be in courts elsewhere,
Has yet by perjured help and cunning fetch
Broken more marriages than has necks Jack Ketch—
Jack Ketch, indeed, may be an honest man,
But that's impossible for Slinkerman ;
A general pleader at the common law
For truth and love might sometimes feel some awe,
But the small men must always be base trickers,
In hate and spite and lies the callous traffickers.
Poor Lio, being dragged to that vile court,
Perforce to lawyers must himself resort.
Then came long years of ruinous litigation,
Of which the Muse cannot essay narration ;
Suffice to say that he felt to the marrow
What must a toad's life be beneath the harrow,
What must a butterfly's sensations be
From a foul spider struggling to be free,
And what a wounded deer must feel in dying
Among a pack of wolves around him lying.
Velut unda supervenit unda thick,
Process on process kept on following quick ;
He had not time one action to avert,
When quick another covered him with dirt.
Two high-fee'd counsel should have him defended,
But 'twas his enemies that they befriended.

One counsel was a rogue, Sir Judas Fell,
The other was a fool, but rogue as well;
'Twas Simon Doodle, who with smooth, round face,
Of comprehension never show'd a trace.
When he was laughed at for some fatuous speech,
"Why do you laugh?" he blandly would beseech;
Bench, bar, and jury in convulsions hurled,
He'd stand "unshook amid a bursting world."
His chief was cleverer, but all rogues among
More shameless none—with jest upon his tongue
Or quoting Shakespeare, he in treachery
Would get you to some noxious pact agree,
And when you found him out with indignation
The virtuous bully play to admiration.
This pair of worthies was not Lio's choice—
In choice of counsel clients have no voice;
By the queer rules of English legal practice,
Attorneys name your counsel, and the fact is
That from the first, when the poor man was made
To take these counsellors, he was betrayed.
There was no hope, for blunder came on blunder—
Blunders neglectful, blunders made for plunder,
Blunders contrived to multiply proceedings
And to increase the client's money-bleedings.
They said his foes were wicked thus to indite him,
Then tied him hand and foot for them to smite him;
They cozened him to accept a stipulation
Which would, they said, bring reconciliation—
To compromise 'twas better to agree
Than in an action tried triumphant be.
Lio their logic could not understand,
But they besieged him with such sophisms bland,
And he felt so exhausted and alone,
At last he yielded with reluctant groan.
As soon as he had signed, then no illusion
Was possible about the base collusion.
His counsel leer'd who had so easy tricked him,
His foes grinned at him for a vanquish'd victim;
He found he'd swindled been with speeches civil
To signing life and children to the devil!
His foes, no doubt from sheer benevolence,
Agreed to pay his lawyers their expense.
What other money passed in a subway
Of course it is impossible to say;
And this agreement feigned for love and ruth
Was full of venom as a cobra's tooth.

For two years long he clamoured for a trial
In open court—but ever with denial
His claim was met ; and Sophy shirked the shame
Of villainy and perjury expos'd. His claim
For lack of money could not be pursued ;
His law defenders with provisions good
Unto the stake had corded Lio tight,
A helpless victim for his foes to smite.

CANTO VIII

TISIPHONE

Law torments followed then for two long years,
With faint and dismal hopes and ghastly fears ;
'Twas not enough, the constant law citations,
The dreary, stupid, costly consultations.
The fetid court, the hateful chamber sitting,
The wiles of ruthless spite unintermitting,
The vile informers and the filthy spy
Dogging his footsteps with precaution sly—
Suborners went to girls to offer money
To get a perjured wife false testimony ;
But they, more honest, spurning vile temptation
Denounced her villainy with indignation.
Most men such cruel torments had driven mad,
But still, perhaps, his pangs were not so bad
As in that hell to which they turned his home.
And yet, though bad enough, worse was to come.
These two dark years of legal persecution,
Of justice and of right the prostitution,
Poor Lio had been able to endure
By the dear solace ever sweet and sure
Which he found 'neath his desecrated roof
In his two boys. Their mother kept aloof
And would not visit them—with false excuse
Professing fear of Lionel. Most diffuse
In affidavits in the legal strife
Was she, aye swearing that she feared for life—
For her sweet life—when Lionel was near.
And yet, 'tis strange, whene'er he did appear
In court or otherwhere her sight within,
Her fair lips would distend into a grin ;
Beside a lawyer's clerk or serving maid
She'd grin to show how much she was afraid.

Her guile-full smile turned to a grin, along
Her false teeth flickering like a viper's tongue;
Yet her maternal fame it seemed to smirch
That she should leave her children in the lurch.
And then his heart she knew she could most pain
By rending from it those dear children twain.
So of the Junipers, the mighty clan,
She called to council; the moustached half man,
The white-haired hunting female, Lady G.,
They chose, of course, their president to be.
The time of bag fox hunting being closed,
The Lady G. was mightily disposed
To lend a hand to kidnap Lio's boys.
So it was settled with much mirth and noise
That since the boys at a French watering place,
Dieppe, were moved to be in safer case
They should the yacht employ of Uncle Cat,
And Cousin Ju and Cousins Hal and Pat,
And a half-dozen Catchpolls duly hired—
And these by gain and those by spite inspired—
United as a valiant pirate crew
Should o'er to Dieppe cròss and watch perdue
To kidnap Lio's children. With much glee
They all agreed 'twould be a jolly spree.
And such it was. The infants' little hands
Were building their small castles in the sands,
With but a nurse to guard them. Then a boat
Which had been waiting near the shore afloat,
Let loose a dozen ravagers and more,
Who mounted swiftly up the sandy shore
The tiny boys to seize. In this brave hunt
The white-haired Dian was well to the front
With Sophy—with them cousins, Catchpolls, go
Sniggering and muttering "Tally, tally ho!"
Ellen, the brave, smart nurse, of her boys proud,
Was on the alert, forewarn'd—she saw the crowd
Come up the beach, and felt it was a raid.
The boys she catches up and screams for aid
To fisher folk who there their nets repair,
And masons who rebuild a sea-wall there.
There were, too, bathers loitering on the beach
Who loved poor Lionel. At the nurse's screech
All flocked about the children, and a fight
Ensued upon the sands. The nurse clasp'd tight
The eldest boy, and a tall fisherman
Held fast the second, with arms strong and tan.

The valiant nurse was to her knees beat down,
Clasping the child. The boy, with a frown,
Fought with his little fists, saying, "Go away,
You wicked people!" Then in this base fray
Poor Ellen was knocked prostrate with her dress
Shredded and rent—her arms, to loose their stress
They seized; a bather, one of Lio's friends,
Join'd in to clasp the child—but a Catchpoll rends
The boy away half crushed in deathlike stound,
With bleeding visage and a heart's worse wound—
"And whoso shall their little lives deform,
Their lot is quenchless fire and the undying worm."
The younger child that fisherman held fast;
His comrades, too, around him were amassed,
And kept those coward kidnappers at bay,
They dar'd not that child's capture to essay.
And the poor infant saw his brother rapt
With tearful eyes and felt his heartstrings snapt.
That was a night for Lio! Ellen burst
With garments rent and her fair locks dispersed
Into his study. Stammering, with pale face,
And with poor Kew close wrapp'd in her embrace,
"Oh, Master Arthur, sir!" she sobbed and stayed,
Then 'gainst the lintel her white cheek she laid.
"They've taken him!" sobbed little Kew. "Pa, go
And bring poor Arty back, for wicked men
Have taken Arty—bring him back again."
That night there was a storm. The lightnings flew,
The thunder crashed and woke poor little Kew.
On his eyelashes tears like dewdrops lay,
And these first words the child was heard to say—
"Poor Arty, Papa, bring him back again.
He's in the 'torm alone with wicked men."
There yet was a worse torture to go through—
That was the abandonment of little Kew.
Worse was it, for alone fierce hunger smart
Forced him to lacerate his own sad heart.
For this poor victim of our lawless law
Processes came like tooth on tooth of saw,
Grinding the marrow. Fatally at last
The moment came: his means were ebbing fast;
His foes designed to strip him to the skin
While fast they held him in the legal gin.
And they succeeded, for 'twas their design
To force him his appointment to resign.
And this he did. The constant drain of law

Forced him from travelling duties to withdraw.
And then the strain, the intolerable strain,
Of his old poverty returned again.
He could not bear that his sweet darling Kew
Should share the squalid life which must ensue,
Should from his brothers live a life apart.
It must be, oh ! how great so e'er the smart.
Scarce Ugolino in his hunger tower
Passed through, I think, more horrible an hour
Than that which passed my dear friend Lionel
With the bright fair-faced child he loved so well
Perched on his knee, with arms about his neck.
He, pondering on his life's now utter wreck,
Half conscious of his infant's pretty prate,
Sat gazing on the dimly burning grate
In their dark lodging on a second floor
In a back London street, black, dank, and poor.
Another week and no subsistence sure
The lonely father might for him procure.
It must be—oh ! it must be—then to-morrow,
Oh ! let it be. In agony and sorrow
He clasped his child—and then in sufferance meek
The tears of both were mingled on the cheek.
" I will not leave you, darling papsy dear,
For wicked people, but bring Arty here."
" I can't bring Arty, darling. You must go
And find dear Arty." On this scene of woe
We'll draw the curtain here. The morrow broke
On that mean room befoul'd with sordid smoke
And London fog, and then the child and sire
Took their last meal together. The coal fire
Burned pitifully dull within the grate,
And scarce more red than Lio's eyes, who sate
Scarce gulping down small morsels with cramped throat—
With eyes like tearless stones, albeit so red.
" Papa, you don't cry now," the infant said.
" My boy, we must be men, and not to-day
That we have cried let wicked people say."
The child obeyed ; his sorrow down he thrust
As he thrust down their last sad mutual crust.
The child was brave, as brave as brave could be :
He would not cry for wicked men to see—
He would not cry for dearest papsy's sake.
And then the two their last walk sadly take,
And Lio took him to the lawyer's den.

He gave him up—Good God! good God!—and then
He rush'd away as though he'd murdered him.
I have no power in other words to limn
The horrors of that cruel scene of anguish.
I am sure, too, that some Miss Lydia Languish,
If such besides my readers two or three
Should by some sad mischance these few lines see,
Will find this scene most dull and unromantic.
And so it is. But e'en the wide Atlantic
If it were all salt tears would fail to express
The grief I felt for Lionel's distress.
You know the Horatian line, *Si vis me flere*
Dolendum primum ipsi tibi. But I'm weary
With life-long weeping for poor Lionel,
And, reader kind, be sure I wish thee well,
And would not have thee shed for thee or thine
One hundredth part of all the wasteful brine
Which I have shed for Lionel. And he
Thought this the climax of his misery,
When to his child's last smile he made his moan
τὶ προσγέλας μὲ τὸν πανύστατον γέλων.
And surely nor Medea nor the Kings—
King Charles and Louis Seize—in last partings,
Nor Rachel in her lonely lamentings,
Nor Niobe, who, slain upon the sod,
Saw fourteen children by an angry god,
Felt victims more of fate, or gods, or men
Than did my Lionel in that lawyer's den.
The woes of Enoch Arden have been told
By the fine singer with the lips of gold.
But Enoch Arden in his desert isle
Had peace around him and not torturers vile:
Bereft of wife and children, all his woes
Came not from man and woman as fell foes;
They were the act of God; he'd none to blame,
When stripped of wife and children he became.
Lighter are heaven-sent ills, however strong,
Than those of human villainy and wrong.
In that base compromise what right was given
To Lio o'er his children he was driven
To enforce by law. He had the right in full
To visit his dear boys. They tried to annul
This right by insults, and the boys they'd beat
If, when he visited the children sweet,
They'd weep about his neck and sobbing pray—
"Take us away, Papa, take us away!"

At last the precious mother and her daughter
Did a smart thing which gave their kin much laughter.
They both absconded, vanished into space,
And Lio of his children lost all trace.
Meanwhile he had the fatal wolf once more—
The wolf of hunger—watching at his door.
He must his life begin again anew
And seek to write for journal and review.
'Twas sickening work—the gaps which he had left,
Ceasing to write, by younger pens and deft
Were quickly filled. The great Count Pompomore
Headed *My Grandmother's Review* no more;
A dapper *petit maître* was in his place,
A real high sniffer of the Brahmin race.
At least the Count had been a well-worked hack;
In letters this man was a titled quack,
Now Whig, now Tory, a persistent trimmer,
And of the cream of life a dainty skimmer
Without of generosity a glimmer.
What was it to him that Lio in years gone
Had given unto his journal a new dawn—
Had helped to keep a crazy craft from sinking,
And spent the best years of his life in swinking
To give new life to its marasmal pages?
He'd got his crew made up—if all the sages
And brilliant writers of his journal's prime,
Whose words still echo in the present time,
Came in a body to him, he would say
As he to Lio said, "You've had your day,
And I regret that no consideration
Your wish can have for fresh collaboration."
So the old cab-horse kept up by the shaft
Three-monthly's getting more unfit for draft.
The Civil List some friends well meaning tried:
Another Bamfour to their suit replied
In terms as specious as the first Bamfour.
He wrote, "Your friend already on the score
Of Literature was on consideration
Rewarded by a past administration
With an official post. No pension could
As the place he resigned be half so good."
The truthful logic here was rendered clear,
When Prig with some good thousand pounds a year
Of public money and a rhymester comic,
Whose poetry was chiefly gastronomic,
And he Prig's rival in official pay,

Got both fat pensions on the self-same day,
And Lio's sorry pay, though nonexistent,
Was treated just as though 'twas still persistent.
Yet spite of like rebuffs and much refusal
Of "copy," mostly e'en without perusal,
So that of unused work he'd quite a heap,
Himself in life he just contrived to keep.
Essays historic, social, travelling scenes
He wrote, and poems for the magazines.
Two volumes, too, upon the Moors of Spain,
Great part of which in manuscript had lain,
He brought out now ; but still the critic ring
Saw no ground their old ways for altering
And still kept silence. So the sale was not
Sufficient to his purse to add one groat.

Heav'n knows how long this life he might have led,
When there came down a blow which smashed it dead.
As he was grinding in this hopeless mill,
His kind attorneys sent him in their bill.
A bill !—'twas four bills—each a monstrous wonder—
Bills in four different actions. Staggering under
Their precious weight the lawyer's porter laid
Them down on Lio's table. Since they weighed
Full half a stone, the table gave a squeak
As the man dropped them with obeisance meek.
They were such bills as Bryan said attested
The greatness of our law by fools detested.
They were in folios thick, lined red and blue—
The writing was magnificent to view.
The charge "Refreshers" made a mighty tottle,
Drink for the crowd, perhaps, from cask or bottle.
The item "Sitting's fee"—what 'tis, God knows—
From the first page unto the very close
Made a tremendous figure. The dimension
Of the four bills together in extension
Would make a carpet for Westminster Hall ;
A dozen such amassed, a pedestal
Would for the statue of an idol big
Of knavery make, capped with a horsehair wig.
Proportional to size, of course, the figure :
Beyond the thousand ran their total bigger.
The bills were convoyed by a note polite,
Conveying compliments of Skunk and Skite,
And saying that at last their small account
They sent therewith—long for its slight amount
They'd waited before troubling Mr. L.,

But now an urgent need did them impel
To ask him for a speedy settlement,
And hoped he would not take it as ill meant,
But should the account not settled quickly be
They must proceed at once in bankruptcy.
I spare, my dear friend, here the exposition
Of how he looked when I from him audition
Had of this ghastly blow; suffice to say
I took upon myself to lead the way
In freeing him from fangs of "Skunk and Skite."
I went to Bryan, and we each our mite
Agreed to give and mutual friends invite
To do the same. We bullied Skunk and Skite
With threats of taxing; in their own despite
They to one half reduced their bloated sum.
Lio himself, by selling every thrum,
A small annuity, insurance, books,
And every scrap raked in by hooks and crooks,
Help'd us to make up the whole sum required.
Then came a fresh hitch. Skunk and Skite desired
That Lionel should sign a paper stating
That they had never aught done derogating
Unto his interest in each legal action,
And that he'd had the greatest satisfaction
With Skunk and Skite in every law transaction.
The barefaced insolence of these sharks and bullies
His cup of bitterness, which now quite full is,
Sets overflowing. Ne'er, thought I, we should
Make Lio swallow down this turpitude.
'Twas by his foes such tribute should be passed,
They'd played into their hands from first to last.
But we told Lio that a lie outpressed
By some bad villain's pistol at your breast
Is not a lie implying moral blame
And he could disavow it without shame.
Reader, a thief to be a saint you'd vote
If he required it with knife at your throat.
My poor dear friend was now so stupefied,
So crushed with sorrow and heart-broken pride,
That I bethought me of a change of scene:
England had a true *Rabenmutter* been
For Lionel, and so I called to mind
His life in Paris and the commerce kind
He'd in that city had so gent and fair.
So I went off to Paris and sought there
The Duchesse de Belcœur, and when I spoke

To her of Lio, her face brightened was
As though a sunbeam over it did pass.
"*Ce cher jeune homme.* How glad I am, how glad
To have some news of him! What talk we've had,
Julie and I, and all the world, about him.
Why to leave Paris had he such a whim?
You know that Julie wed a rich Marquis,
But now's a widow with a child of three.
Now tell me, Monsieur Lionel, he, too,
Has married happily? Now tell me, do.
Do tell me all about him." Swift and brief
I tell the *infanda* of his awful grief.
As I recount th' intolerable woes,
At intervals the great good Duchess throws
Upwards her eyes, clasps hands, and blows her nose.
"*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! ce jeune homme si charmant*
Vous êtes des monstres là bas. Mais c'est navrant.
Mon Dieu, Mon Dieu, tell him to come to me
Incessamment, and I and my Julie,
La belle Marquise, will surely find a way
To ease his ugly griefs. *Attendez, j'écrirai.*"
At her *bureau* the *Duchesse* then took place
To write a short note full of charm and grace.
Lio received it, packed up, and in less
Than three days was a guest of the *Duchesse.*
The *Duchesse* and Julie, now *belle Marquise,*
Were quite adorable in pains to ease
Poor Lio's anguish; more of the *beau monde*
With kindly looks and gracious speech abound
To give him comfort. The good *Duchesse* made
Him her librarian, saying, "I've delayed
Too long to arrange books, papers, muniments,
I'm much, too, in arrears with correspondents."
His literary friends, too, were full fain
To have him now among them back again.
Renan and Taine, Deschamps, Edmond About,
Barthelemy St. Hilaire, *la belle* Madame d'Agout,
And many more. They in the French Reviews
De Paris, des deux Mondes, for his prose muse
Prepared the *porte ouverte,* and he wrote things
Which gave him cause for fine felicitings
In *boudoirs* and in *salons.* Almost gay
Along the sparkling Boulevards he'd stray
And murmur, "Paris, thou delicious city,
That I e'er left thee I myself I pity.
An hour spent on thy Boulevard's sunny side

Is worth ten thousand spent in black Cheapside,
Or e'en in Regent's Circus for that matter,
Pall Mall, Belgravia, or dank Bayswater."
He too for country *châteaux* a whole string
Of invitations had for visiting.
And then, again, the Château Beaurepaire
He visited, and the great *petit Thiers*—
He who had been the founder President
Of the third French Republic—one day leant
There on his arm and said, "Let's take a stroll."
The park they passed through to a seated knoll
Bower'd by acacia and magnolia trees,
Which lent a fragrant odour to the breeze.
Thiers said, "The Duchess has spoke much of you,
De Circourt also, who is your friend, too.
My love and reverence for de Circourt's such
The praise of no man weighs with me as much.
And he speaks of you with such warm affection
You should be proud of such a predilection.
And of your writings some I've much admired—
They have fine taste, by a fine soul inspired.
I'll serve you if I can with all my heart
And your name to our Ministers impart.
But I could serve you better could you see
Your way to change your nationality."
Lio here started back, for long ago,
In younger days, he'd thought of doing so.
"For Eastern tongues I know you have vocation,
So in the East we'd give you a Legation—
Well," he continued, "*la belle France* has ever
To men such as yourself of high endeavour
Been ever generous—though not her own sons.
And I take credit I befriended once
A famous German poet, Henri Heine,
And in our Pension List place to obtain
Contrived for him, when not a *heller* would
A stingy German give to buy him food.
Now could you French become, I feel quite sure
In some department I could soon procure
Some honourable post which you could fill
With honour to yourself and our good will."
Well, Lio could not quite, I know not why,
Resolve to change his nationality.
Perhaps he thought 'twould raise some further bars
Between him and his boys. The dreadful scars
Of wounds of separation with fierce glow

Burned in his soul. The Duchess she felt too
He thought her post librarian was invented
To mask a noble charity; not contented
Could he rest thus. So she and Julie sought
Among their friends, of trouble sparing nought,
To find some office in which Lionel could
Gain a fair livelihood with conscience good.
Yet when one evening in the bright spring weather
Lio and Julie played at chess together
With the good Duchess vaguely looking on,
"*Voyons*," she said, "*voyons;* you two, have done.
Listen to me: I've found a simple plan
Which may suit us as well as this young man.
My dear young friend, why don't you get divorce?
Divorçons, that's the proper word, of course;
And when you're free, if Julie will not marry you,
I will myself, and then no care shall worry you."
But Lio explained by British law a wife,
Your would-be murderess, yet's your wife for life.
At last some friends discovered that a factory
Of silk at Lyons had a satisfactory
Offer to make for post of silk inspection
In China, for their winter months' collection.
He then would only travel half the year,
The rest he'd pass among his friends so dear
In Paris and in France. The pay was good,
So Lio took the place with promptitude.
The Duchess, though at first she made objection
To such employ commercial, on reflection
That they some worthier post might soon obtain
In France, if even with some lesser gain,
Consented, and Lio, hoping this vocation
Might give him means to raise the separation
From his dear boys, went forth with heart renewed
Upon his mission. And the change of mood
Of his elastic mind to nobler tone
Show'd that his soul had repossessed its throne
In the soft air of gracious sympathy.
And golden visions rose in him anew
Of poems finished and yet more in view.
His fair friends gave him words of loving speech
At parting, and he kissed the hands of each;
A faint blush fluttered Julie's cheek along
When the good Duchess added, "*Divorçons*."

CANTO IX

CLOTHO

So Lionel with fresh ardour in his breast
Went journeying outwards to the farthest East—
To China and Japan. It was ordained
That when the tropic regions had regained
Their torrid heats he should return each year
To France, and so spend every summer there ;
But in his too great zeal the luckless man
Had overstaid the spring, and he began
To sicken with a fever at Amoy.
Thence passed he to Macao—his employ
Enjoining him to visit that place last.
So thence he wrote to me, who by the grace
Of our F. O. did simmering in the place
Of Consul H.B.M. for Saigon thrive,
With the thermometer at ninety-five.
'Twas in the fates of Lionel and me
That he my Lycidas was born to be ;
For we were nurtured "on the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill,"
Together we had "built the lofty rhyme,"
Together we had suffered in our prime,
Together we had squirmed beneath the heel
Of the proud favourites of Fortune's wheel,
And now together in the furthest East,
In pestilential climes where man and beast
Sicken alike within the torrid heats
And blood like lava in the pulses beats—
Where young men pine and perish in a day
And the fell typhoid claims its hourly prey—
Where the scarified skin from living flesh is stripped
As Saint Bartholomew mid heathens ripped
Was in Armenia by the priestly knife,

Only the sun in stripping leaves you your poor life.
The fire Saint Lawrence felt on his gridiron
Burned scarcely more than that which does man there
environ.
A mind more vast and with a higher tone
Had Lionel than mine, I gladly own,
And so he suffered more. I in my ways—
With midnight vigils and laborious days
Though I had published things thought of high note,
Worse fared than dullards who like schoolboys wrote—
In semi-menial duties had to swink
And serve rough unwashed men oft mad with drink.
Then see the favoured dolts, pimps, and scapegraces
Lifted before me into pleasant places.
All this like Lionel I had borne for years,
But not like him had I to bear the jeers
Of a bad wife before my humble hearth.
My wife had been as one of angel birth,
And shared with sweet content and sympathy
A troubled life from sorrow seldom free.
For I with that fair Emily had wed
Whose beauty had turned Lio's boyish head;
Marriage with her was one long benison—
Griselda and Alcestis all in one.
Far above rubies was her price—go con
Verse ten of Proverbs, chapter thirty-one.
My wife that wife was like, and all her days
Good and not evil wrought she without phrase;
No spiteful word was ever from her wrung,
The law of kindness governed aye her tongue.
So when the news arrived from Lionel
That at Macao he at a hotel
Had sickened on his journey, Emily said
That we would go and visit his sick-bed;
And so we went a four days' sail by sea
Unto Macao, and arrived there we
Found our dear friend was lying in his inn
Extended on his bed, pale, weak, and thin;
He through a fierce typhoid's malignant rage
Had struggled to a convalescent stage,
And he seemed saved, when a relapse had thrown
Him back again to fight with death alone,
Untended, in that city of decay,
Except by strange attendants of Cathay.
He was delirious quite when we appeared,
And with a frantic laugh himself upreared.

"Bravo!" he cried; "well done! and my brave boys,
Where are they? Have you brought them? Make no noise.
Hush! hush! I hear their footsteps there without;
Oh! God be thanked—I never had a doubt
But they would come to see their father dying.
And yet I will not die. Don't sigh, no crying!
Now hear a secret: o'er the Chinese wall
I've got a palace for them—with gilt hall,
Rooms built of precious stones and beds of pearl,
And pages too, each like a lovely girl,
And in the cap of each a peacock's feather;
Stables which fifty horse will hold together.
'Twas built for Kubla Khan, and there are bow'rs
Of golden-fruited trees, parterres of flowers,
And hunting grounds; and Julie says she'll come
And help to give the boys a happier home,
And be their mother; and my good *Duchesse*
She will come, too, and there in happiness,
Afar from wicked people, I will write
Such splendid poems." Here, exhausted quite,
He fell back on his pillow and was still.
Little availed him now the doctor's skill:
The only hope that science had to give
Was that his strength might possibly outlive
The wild delirious stage. About his boys
He rambled constantly, and of the joys
They'd in the palace find of Kubla Khan,
With Julie and the Duchess; his speech ran,
Too, much on Camoens—he in happier days
Of the great bard of "Las Lusiadas"
Had much translated, and had been to gaze
Upon his laurelled bust, reared in a grot
In hanging gardens on a lofty spot
Above Macao, 'mid such gorgeous greenery
Of flowers and foliage 'tis a joy to see.
In thought he conversed with the heroic bard,
Victim like he of cruel men and hard,
Who a long torrid exile there had passed,
Creating for his country realms to outlast
The conquest of the Lusitanian sword,
Yet dying in the clutch of greed abhorred,
Crying to callous ears which did not heed him,
"*Ingrata patria, tu nec ossa quidem.*"
"Luis," said Lio, "'s been to me once more,
And I must go to him," and at the door

We stopp'd him when he'd just stepped from his bed,
And guessed where his wild thoughts would him have led.
As two nights later we by moonlight strayed
To see *fantan* by Chinese gamblers played,
And we returned beneath the gardens high
Where is the grot of Camoens, a wild cry
Came startling from above. Then said my wife,
"That is poor Lionel, I'd wage my life."
We hastened up above, our friend we found
Kneeling alone, a shawl around him wound,
Before the bust of Camoens, resting his cheek
Against the pedestal; sudden a shrill shriek
He cast into the air with outstretched arms,
And then fell sideways. Safe from the world's harms
Was the poor martyr now, for he was dead.
In that same garden fair his grave was made,
And near his loved bard's bust we had him laid.
"Poeta infelix" was carved on the stone
Which covered him, with these lines of his own:
"Here lieth one whose name in sand was traced,
By envy, crime, and cruelty effaced."
Sophy I'd leave and Cousin Ju alone,
Had not fate here poetic justice shown.
At last disclosure came for Cousin Ju
As an adulterer and a swindler too;
At Monte Carlo 'tis shown how he thrives,
Playing with others' money and their wives.
Of stolen capital he'd made a bank;
He'd kept false books, and with assurance rank,
Taking his clients' money for investment,
Made false inscriptions and their money spent
In gambling, sport, wine, women, in such gay,
In such superb, magnificent display,
As no attorney-rogue e'er made before—
A bad half million was this rascal's score—
And when his frauds were shown, straightway absconded,
As all his fellows do; but her unbounded
Love for the villain Sophy still preserved,
Although he'd stripped her, as she well deserved,
Her and her mother, of whate'er disposable
They had of money for some project plausible,
Which was to dower them with endless wealth.
But this was almost comic—when by stealth
He'd slip into their hands some goodly sum
For persecuting Lionel, saying, "Mum!
Don't say I gave you this," 'twas their own money;

Nursing these bees to sting with their own honey.
Now Mrs. Vipereau died, perhaps her shame
And anger at the villain might have claim
Her death to hasten. But for Cousin Meg
(His pet name this for Sophy), not a peg
Lower he stood in her infatuation.
She wrote to him in secret, and migration
Oft made abroad to seek his hiding places
And give him money still for his good graces.
At Monte Carlo, where he often went,
Disguised in a big wig, on gambling bent,
His fortunes to retrieve, she, folly struck,
Would play oft by his side with varying luck.
One day he telegraphed: "I've found the trick,
Bring money and receipts, we'll square, come quick!"
She started off and took whate'er she could—
Crisp bank-notes and some good *rouleaus* of gold.
He waited for her at La Condamine,
At the hotel where they before had been.
Meg had become by this a portly person,
With waist for three, but offering less diversion;
Yet she had younger grown since last they met,
Of white and dazzling teeth by a new set.
He was quite jubilant in his joy at meeting,
And smacked her a loud kiss by way of greeting.
"Great Scott, Meg!" shouted he, "you are a brick!"
They spent three days on trying the new trick:
They played each morning, afternoon, and night;
The first two days they had some winnings light,
But the third day they had a glorious run—
The oldest players ne'er saw such an one;
The piles and piles of bank-notes came so quick,
They seemed the special favourites of Old Nick.
That night some sheaves of notes they bore away,
How many *billets de mille* 'twas hard to say,
And he said, "Meg, now let us wise folk be,
Stop play, and go to-morrow for a spree
To Genoa, before to the old shop
You toddle back." She, nothing loth to stop
Another day or two with Cousin Ju,
Agreed, and next morn off they went, these two;
And Ju said, "Meggy, let's go omnibus,
So a compartment sole we'll get for us,
And that we can't get travelling by express."
That morning he was boisterous to excess:
For Genoa as they left; he called her "duck"

And "good old gal," and then "their blessed luck,"
He said, was "awful jolly"; never rested he
In chattering—named the stations, on the sea
Pointed at ships and boats, but tunnels most
Seem'd to delight him: such a jolly host
Of tunnels were there on that blessed line!
'The biggest we shall come to about nine
After Finalmarina—we shall be
There in a half hour; now, old gal, let's see
Your blooming fine receipts; we'll settle up;
There's many a slip, you know, 'twixt lip and cup—
Give the receipts and we will share the swag."
She took the receipts careful from her bag,
He took the notes out from his breast coat-pocket.
"Now count them," said he; the train like a rocket
With a shrill whistle in the tunnel shot.
He started up, his right hand grasped her throat
With pressure like a vice, and with his left
A phial with a rapid move and deft
He placed beneath the struggling woman's nose;
There was a faint tart smell—she ceased her throes,
And in an instant a soft lifeless weight
Lay the poor creature in the corner seat;
If she was stout, the bull-necked coz was strong,
And he alone was in the car not long
Before he reached mid-tunnel, with pleased look
Notes and receipts packed in his pocket book;
The train dashed through into the open air—
Horror of horrors! what is that down there?
It was his Cousin Meg's new *ratelier*,
Her dazzling new false teeth, which grinning lay
Upon the floor. He was about to throw
The whole thing out of window, but said, "Oh,
I should have been a duffer!" That same night
He came back to the tunnel, groped his way
With lantern dark to where the body lay,
And placed by it what might have told a tale,
And pushed poor Meggy further on the rail.
Before the corpse was found three days had passed;
A form so mangled and corrupting fast
Defied all recognition, but within
One pocket was a programme gilt and thin
Of Monte Carlo fêtes, and then they say,
"Sure 'tis a suicidal *décavée*."
Yet her *ratelier* they marvelled at,
That it was whole with visage crushed so flat.

The Cousin Meg died thus: she had defamed
And killed a husband only, only maimed
Her own young children's lives; but Cousin Ju
Broadcast o'er all his net of ruin threw,
And the good families whom he had plundered,
They might be counted much above a hundred.
And he thrives still, still Monte Carlo haunts,
And of his trick's success sometimes he vaunts;
His former friends wouldn't know him, for a pair
Of dark green spectacles he wears, and has red hair.

LE BAL DE L'OPÉRA

CARNIVAL, 1868

THE talk of the *salon* was stately and slow :
The baron had placed all his ready *bons mots ;*
Monsieur M. on *fauteuil* most gracefully leant,
Soft-wadded as he in his neat self-content ;
Monsieur N. had narrated some *menus propos,*
Which I read, while I dined, in that night's *Figaro ;*
Monsieur O., the great traveller, 'd well told his tale,
Whose point in that *salon* was ne'er known to fail ;
Monsieur P., the great critic, had spoken ; and all
Were of one mind on all things on earth, great and small.
The ladies, *décolletées,* with smile superfine,
Had given unto all an attention benign.
A white-haired old gentleman smilingly sat,
Perusing the silk folds inside his crush-hat ;
His eyebrows were arched in a curve to the tips,
And a blank supercilious smile lit his lips ;
While a pundit of science proved clear that no age
Like our own had been prosperous, learned, and sage ;
And he said : " Meditations upon Christianity
By Guizot has saved God from His inanity ;
For Religion and Science must now work together,
Since that Poetry, got to the end of its tether,
Was a thing of past time." Monsieur M. said, " In truth,
I'm not at all sorry ; for since my first youth
I ceased to read verse with an atom of pleasure ;
Though surely to twist human thought into measure
Might have been of some use in a barbarous season,
When men would hear rhyme who would never hear reason
Rhyme, like the dull beatings of tomtoms, no doubt
Did for rude men a service we can do without ;
And genius poetic has now no vocation
In the general rising of civilisation.
What poem," he ended, " can equal astronomy,
Or the doctrine of Value in Bastiat's Economy ?

The ladies sat smiling and fanning the breast
In wise acquiescence. One said, "Well expressed
Are your thoughts, Monsieur M., but allow me a plea
For the novel." The hostess said, "Will you take tea?"
Then they all looked so gravely that you would suppose
They had just planned a murder. Two gentlemen rose;
And one o'er the mantelpiece gracefully bent,
And, languidly playing with some ornament,
Discussed something small confidentially low;
The other his head nodded heedful and slow;
The rest of the guests, two and two, three and three,
Continued sporadic their small *causerie*.
Said my neighbour to me, with a smile most seductive,
"I am going, though talk so fine and instructive
One hears nowhere else. I am passing your way—
You inhabit the Faubourg still—St. Honoré?
I shall feel quite a pleasure in setting you down
At your door, if you will. For myself, I must own
I am going to look at the ball of the Opera—
Tis the last of the carnival season. So proper a
Man as yourself may be quite disinclined
To go with me and soil the impressions refined
Of so much wit and reason." Said I, "I'll with thee;
The devil's own company just now for me
Would be change not unpleasant. *Ainsi allons en route.*"
"*Mon ami,*" said he then, finely smiling, "*sans doute,*
You'll recall the old proverb; Mephistopheles
They say 's not unlike me. At once, if you please."
As he said this his eye had a demonic flash,
As he puckered his eyelids with down-drooping lash;
As we passed down the stairs, too, I thought that his groom
Had the look of an imp, when he rushed for the brougham.
The rain was fast falling, and through the murk air
Flashed blue in the gaslight; the *porte cochère*
Was opened to let us both out from the *cour*,
And the horse-hoofs struck fire in the *Rue Pompadour*.
The horses struck out with such vehement force
That I soon lost the count of the streets in our course;
Then a weird sense came o'er me; and turning to look
At my friend, *mille tonnerres!* he sat in his nook
Quite calm and composed, but all clothed tight in red,
With a cock's plume and small crimson cap on his head.
His gaunt form was ribbed and lean as a bow,
Just like Monsieur Faure, in the *Faust* by Gounod.
His nose had in profile the hooked vulture line,
Just such as we see in Herr Retzsch's design;

And his eyes had a wild glow of demonic light,
Like the bandit's steel gleaming by torch-fire at night ;
Yet he sat quite composed as in wild speed we dash,
And the gas-lamps fast by us all rocket-like flash,
As with flames from their nostrils, like cannon breath thrown,
Our steeds bear us onward through regions unknown ;
For immense Babylonian spaces spread round,
Like some city of Eblis far, far underground,
Of dark Pandemonium the metropolis,
Where damned spirits dwell, ever exiled from bliss.
And we pass a wide stream, where, like coals from the mines,
The back wave gleamed livid through infinite lines
Of blue stars in curves, hung like dew on the thread
Which the spider has bridged o'er the tombs of the dead.
There in ghostly magnificence palaces rose,
Till lost in the darkness where never light glows.
All among them we dash till we reach the main street,
When a shadowless glare on the shrinking eyes beat,
From ten thousand fierce jets of white naphtha-like glow,
Making day for the crowded hosts rolling below ;
And we roll on with them to an avenue made
By pyramidal fires, to a long colonnade ;
And we entered with them in a peristyle vast,
Where were screeching and whooping, and yells fierce and fast.
'Mid a demon crowd hurtling we mounted the stair,
Under vaults all ablaze with that white savage glare,
And were borne to a dome which might roof o'er a town,
Whence spheroidal sun-clusters of fierce light hung down.
And a burst of mad music, stupendous, intense,
Came on eyes and ears crashing, and shivered all sense.
For aloft at the far end a huge fiend erected
A huge fiddle-bow in the air, and directed
Rows of dark prick-eared demons, raised high o'er the floor,
Who from instruments brazen and stringed sent a roar
Which shook the hot air like a volcanic blast
From the crater of Etna in red fury cast,
And made the brain feel as the tortured brain feels
In the dervish when fainting and downwards he reels.
As we entered they paused, and a hiss fierce and loud—
Such a hiss as the tempest makes with the ship's shroud—
Arose from a myriad throats, " Bis-s-s ! the *galop !*"
Father Satan uplifted his long fiddle-bow,
And the twenty trombones strained their throats as before
And the big drum's bass thunders, the kettledrum's roar,
The clash of brass cymbals, the fife's treble shriek,

And a thousand strained chords sawed to notes sharp and bleak,
Roused such fury infernal as stirred each hair-root,
Made the skin creep and shiver, and spine-marrow shoot ;
While the fiendish wild creatures in hot fury whirled,
Fast as flame-flakes from wheels pyrotechnic out hurled,
Like to herds of wild horses, like wolves mad for food,
Like a dizzy round maëlstrom of fierce flesh and blood,
Hot as liquid ore seething in blind furnace heat,
Thick as grapes which spurt red o'er the vintager's feet.
In a Tophet of motion they breathlessly sweep,
In a frenzy bewildered, which never would sleep,
And the spume of their fury reeks up through the air,
As from hell-broth of Hecate which witches prepare.
And then the tune varied, each whirled in his place
With yelling and laughter, with joke and grimace,
As though limbs were jointless, and no spines in backs ;
And bodies were twisted and tortured like wax ;
And legs, heads and arms would at all angles fling,
As though dislocated, and jerked by a string.
And as each horrid antic another surpassed,
Fresh roars, yells, and laughter from throat to throat passed ;
And that wide mob of fiends was of nations a Babel,
Mixed with monsters of all times, earth, sea, air, and fable.
There were Highlanders, Cossacks, and Turks, and Kirghees,
Ojibbeways ring-nosed, tattooed Caribbees,
Fins, Esquimaux, nude charcoal-skinned Somalies,
Bushmen, Kafirs, and Copts, and chief Abyssinian,
And devils of all kinds with all lengths of pinion.
Postilions of France, *majos* Andalusian,
Sailors British and French, and pirates Ægean ;
There were bandits Italian, and robbers Albanian,
Dalecarlian Swedes, and boors Lithuanian.
Tritons, satyrs, and witches, and warlocks and ghouls,
Strange monsters strange-crested, with frogs, bats and owls,
White corpse-faced gaunt figures white dressed in grave-clothes,
Knights in helmets whose plumes up a dozen feet rose ;
With all mockeries gross of all costumes chivalrous,
Golden-horned, red-haired imps, ogres tusked like the walrus.
Yet that mad motley mass showed, the eye to refresh,
The dazzling, soft, creamy, and delicate flesh
Of the bosom and shoulders of tender girl-creatures
(Though the satin mask mostly concealed all their features),
'Tired in all the fine arts which the feminine mind
Has with fairy-like instinct and fancy designed,

When in scenes operatic the curtain withdraws,
And the girl-troop waits, waving in light silk and gauze ;
Such dresses are seen, drawn from each age and place,
And to lines of fair beauty add eloquent grace.
There were *odalisques* soft and *manolas* Spanish ;
Venetian girls, Roman and Swiss, Swede and Danish ;
The ballet-girl buoyed in folds lighter than snow,
And the page with plume-cap in the pink silk *maillot.*
Then in the crowd's restless and turbulent change
One marked sights and gestures most horrid and strange ;
For a fiend with a trident seized one by the hair,
Tore his head off, and speared it aloft in the air ;
And as the trunk, headless, groped blindly about,
"Guillotine!" roared the crowd with hilarious shout.
And looking around, there were signs on each side
Of deaths violent, gashes and wounds gaping wide.
Some had red ghastly grooves round their necks clean cut out,
And wherever they passed, "Guillotine!" was the shout ;
Some with tongues hanging out wore a necklace of cord,
And wherever they passed "Gallow's-bird!" was the word.
Some branded with V's were both jeered at and hissed,
As they danced with big fetters on anklets and wrist.
Then in those who awoke there such horrible mirth
I knew the condemned of the law's voice on earth.
Some saw I against Nature's law who had died
Making sport for the crowd of their own suicide :
Men with throats slit bore knives with rusted blood-stains,
Re-enacting self-murder ; one shattered his brains
With pistol he carried ; and some with grimace
Drank poison from goblets and fell on the face,
Making mock of death's writhings in sport for the rest ;
And some wore a dagger struck right through the breast.
There assassins and victims now arm-in-arm dangled—
The guillotined youth and the mistress he strangled.
One carried a stone round his neck, which he tied
Ere he leapt in the Seine ; and some, all crimson-eyed
And bloated and blotched, had the hollow-cheeked mien
Of the victims of absinthe's pale venomous green.
And fair girls by odours revealed their dark doom,
Breathing sick poison-acids and faint charcoal fume.
But by one form of all was immense laughter bred :
In a wink of the lids he would flatten his head,
And his eyes, nose, and mouth into blood-pulp would creep,
As he cried out in triumph, "Hurrah for the leap
From the Column Vendôme! for there's no swifter road

To come down below to this pleasant abode."
From that hall in faint sickness I turned and I found
Vast corridors, flocking with crowds all around :
White-necktied black gentlemen slowly paraded,
And ladies in dominoes long masqueraded—
Their eyes from the loops of their masks darted quickly,
From the hoods of their silk robes the bright hair streamed thickly ;
And only by hair, mouth, and chin could be guessed
Of the graces they had—some had little at best—
Yet some seemed most fair by the lines of the face,
And the supple form's pliant and palpable grace.
And groups you might see which would put you in mind
Of satyrs and nymphs, and the group well designed
By John of Bologna, where, grasping the waist,
Brute force has his arms round a soft form enlaced.
But here a blue domino, with hair o'erdrawn
On her shoulder like crystallised beams of the dawn,
Kept ever coquetting with face and with eye,
Or roguishly showing pearl teeth passing by,
Till she said, " Sir, you look very grave, you must know ;
And are you amused here ? I fear but so-so.
Very hot, is it not ? and one gets knocked about—
Come and see me some fine day, I seldom am out ;
Close by, in the Quartier Breda, I live ;
Here's my card—if you lose it I'll never forgive."
As I looked at the card, then, I felt with surprise
A hand on my shoulder—" Come, open your eyes,
Mon chèr ; now we're come to the Rue Lepelletier.
For a carriage companion you're charmingly gay."
I said, " My dear friend, I'm indebted to you ;
But I've seen the thing once, and I think that will do ;
Besides, I've been dreaming it over again ;
So I'll find my way home, for it's now ceased to rain."
So homeward I went, and I met on my way
Two white-hooded Sisters of Charity ; they
Their day's work of mercy had that morn begun,
And the sight gave relief ; for I felt just like one
Who has reached an oasis and spring-water drunk,
Just safe from the desert where armies have sunk.

TRANSLATIONS—ORIENTAL

Ali, the Emir of the Faithful (may Allah be merciful to his face !) said : "Polite learning is an ornament to wealth, it is a treasure to poverty, it is a help to virtue, it is an ally in society, it is society in solitude, it is a refuge for a broken heart, it gives new life to a failing spirit, it extends the vision of shortsightedness, and assists in the search for truth."

"Hæc studia," says Cicero pro Archia Poetâ, "adolescentiam agunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solatium præbent, delectant domi, nec impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur rusticantur."

"With knowledge man riseth to the heights of goodness and to a noble position, associateth with sovereigns in this world, and attaineth to the perfection of happiness in the next."—*The Sayings of Muhammad.*

LIFE OF FIRDUSI

FIRDUSI was the poetical name of the author of the *Shah Nameh*, or Book of Kings, and the poem of *Zuleika and Yussef*. Firdusi in Persian means "paradisical," and such was the court title conferred on the poet by his avaricious patron, Mahmoud the Gaznavide, the famous conqueror of India, and so called from his capital, Gazna.

The real name of Firdusi was Abu'l Kasim Mansour, and he was born in the year 940 A.D. at Schadad, near Tus, in the province of Khorasan, and died 1020; consequently he was eighty years of age at his death.

He has been called the Homer of the East, and a fine poet and Oriental scholar, Sir William Jones, thought not altogether undeservedly. "There is," he wrote, "certainly a very extraordinary resemblance between the works of these extraordinary men." For in Sir William Jones's days Homer was still considered to have been a man and not a myth. But, however useful such comparisons may be as generalisations, they have little individual and critical worth.

Poets are not to be classed according to their dimensions; admitting that any two singers are real poets, one would no more wish the one to be of the same greatness and quality as the other than one would wish a rose to be a violet or a violet to be a rose.

Whether the author or joint authors of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" would have put mythic and early historic Greece into 60,000 couplets better or worse than Firdusi has done in treating the similar epochs in the history of Persia is a problem impossible to solve and of which the solution would not be of the slightest value. In any case Firdusi has written the grandest and most popular poem of the East, which is as popular in Persia and as intelligible to the Persian at the present time as Homer was in early Greece and as it was a thousand years ago, and the beauties of which require no scholars or translators to enable a modern Persian to enjoy.

This *Shah Nameh* of Firdusi is Persia's grandest Epic Poem, and the episode of Zohrab and Rustem has always been considered as one of the finest of its many fine and grand passages.

The Graf von Schack, who has translated a fourth part of the *Shah Nameh* into German with admirable truth and spirit, has well likened the *Shah Nameh* to a magnificent primeval temple, such as

extinct races built at Nineveh or Persepolis, where the columns, terraces, halls, vestibules, and shrines, with their decorations of winged bulls and sphinxes and statues of gods, kings, heroes, and demons, are all on a colossal scale.

Firdusi, it must be remembered, although as readable now as any modern Persian poet, finished his grand work before the days when Canute the Dane was King of England and when the inhabitants of these islands were farther behind the inhabitants of Persia in civilisation than any London citizen can imagine complacently that the people of Bokhara or Samarcand are now behind him.

Of Firdusi's life little is known beyond a few main facts. He had the chance of picking up a good deal of knowledge, at Tus, the present Meshed, which was then a considerable city, with good schools and colleges and frequented by men of Eastern culture. Firdusi had a good education in Arabic as well as Persian at Tus, and had a small property there which he inherited from his father. From a boy he took interest in the early chronicles of his country, and began in early years to put them into verse, and he remained working away in comparative obscurity at Tus till he reached the mature age of fifty-eight, when, his verses having got into circulation, his fame reached the ear of the great Sultan Mahmoud of Gazna, and he invited him to his court.

There was a great passion at that time in the East among kings, ministers, and leaders of armies for poetry; warriors shouted out verses from favourite poets on the battlefield, as Taillefer shouted out verses of the *Chanson de Roland* in advance of the Norman ranks at the battle of Hastings.

Sultans and conquerors vied with each other in entertaining schools of poets at their courts; but a good poet at a Sultan's court had not altogether an enviable time of it. He was sometimes lavishly rewarded, it is true, but a jealous watch was kept over all his movements to prevent his secession to the court of some rival potentate, and if he displeased his royal master he had a chance of being trampled to death by elephants, as was the case of Firdusi himself.

Mahmoud the Gaznavide was fabulously rich. In the course of his twelve victorious expeditions into India, by the wholesale plunder of the holy cities of Delhi, Sumnaut, and others, he had collected immense quantities of gold and silver and diamonds and rubies, which he kept heaped up and stored in vast and countless treasure-rooms at Gazna. But he was very avaricious, and Gibbon records that shortly before his death, having designed to bestow some of his vast wealth while he was yet alive among his family and followers, he had his treasure-chambers opened, and after traversing gallery after gallery and passing in review his stupendous wealth in gold and precious stones, he could not make up his mind to part with any of it, and gave orders with a sigh that the doors of his treasure-houses should be well locked up behind him.

The excellence of Firdusi's versification of early Persian history

was recognised by the great but miserly Sultan. He gave him instructions to finish the *Shah Namch*, and he placed all his manuscripts of early Persian history at his disposition, had fresh collections made of records and of historic and prehistoric relics for the use of the poet, and gave him apartments connected with his own, so that when Firdusi had finished any portion of his work he could pass to his entertainer's apartment and read it to him. The Sultan promised him a thousand *tomans* for every thousand couplets of the *Shah Namch*, and, as Heine reports in his romance of Firdusi, of which we have given a translation elsewhere, Firdusi naturally expected that these *tomans* should be of gold and not of silver.

As a *toman* of gold is about 10s. and Firdusi wrote 60,000 couplets, the sum due to him on completion of his poem would be about £30,000. Firdusi was ill advised to allow so large a sum to accumulate to his credit with an avaricious Sultan, but his desire for money was of no selfish character ; he was not in want of the money, fortunately, for himself, but for the construction of a canal for his native town of Tus, so he preferred to wait for the completion of his poem before receiving payment.

It is said that the Sultan Mahmoud at first ordered the whole sum to be paid him in an elephant's load of gold, but that envious hangers-on at the Sultan's court and his Vizier himself contrived to prejudice the Sultan's mind against Firdusi and to work on his avaricious feelings and make him repent of his generosity, so that an order for payment in silver was substituted for the order of payment in gold—by which Firdusi's £30,000 would be reduced to £800.

A somewhat similar story is told of Coreggio and also of Anibale Carracci and the payment due to the latter for the frescoes which he painted in the Farnese palace for the Cardinal Farnese.

How Firdusi received this substitution of silver for gold *tomans* may be read in Heine's poem, in which the story is told with that undercurrent of irony which was peculiar to him. When the Sultan heard of the contemptuous way in which Firdusi had received his gift, it is said he was so angered that he gave orders for the poet to be trampled to death by elephants—of which he had thirteen hundred.

Firdusi contrived to obtain an interview with the Sultan, in which he succeeded in assuaging his ferocity ; but it was not likely that he would remain contentedly at Gazna after such treatment, so he determined to fly secretly, but before doing so wrote a scathing satire on the Sultan and left it in the hands of a friend, with instructions to set it in circulation twenty days after his departure. This satire is still in existence, and probably no sovereign has ever had so withering a blast of fiery scorn let loose upon him. Firdusi, who was now seventy years of age, managed to escape the Sultan's wrath by living in disguise, first with one Sultan and then with another, and during that period wrote his poem of *Zuleika and Yussuf*, which also still exists.

At last, hearing that the Sultan was more kindly disposed towards

him, he returned to Tus. It is said that his death was caused by emotion at hearing a girl singing some verses of his satire against the Sultan Mahmoud, which recalled his misfortunes too vividly to his mind, and that the veritable sum of the 60,000 *tomans* did arrive at Tus, as described by Heine, while his body was being carried to the grave. Legend says, too, that Firdusi's only daughter, whom he loved tenderly, was allowed to receive the Sultan's gift, and that she employed the golden *tomans* as Firdusi had designed—in the improvement of the canal of irrigation which served his native town.

The *Shah Namch* is written in rhymed couplets and in a metre derived from the Arabic, the *Bahri Mutakarib*, and is of the class of compositions called the *Masnawi* or *Muzdawai*.

Any attempt at translating Firdusi should therefore be made in rhyme, and in a metre which should be capable of adaptation both to the familiar and sublime.

Mr. James Atkinson, a medical officer of the Bengal Establishment, a member of the Asiatic Society, made a very meritorious attempt to translate *Zohrab and Rustem* at the beginning of the last century; he chose the decasyllabic Popian couplet for his service, but I do not think that metre is well adapted to the purpose, and still less the decasyllabled blank verse of Mr. Arnold. I have chosen a line of fourteen syllables, but I think that perhaps a line of eleven syllables might be used with better effect. Among the many disadvantages under which the translator labours in turning Persian verse into English is the comparative paucity of English rhymes. Now the Persian is not only richer in rhymes, but the same rhymes may be used according to the rules of Persian prosody any number of times. The German language has much the advantage over the English in that respect, as it has also in the capability which the language possesses for the manufacture of compound words. Take the word *pillan*, for example—"elephant-bodied," from *pil*, an elephant, and *tan*, a body—an epithet as constantly given to Rustem as the *πόδος ὠκύς* to Achilles in Homer.

It would be impossible to introduce "elephant-bodied" or "elephant-formed" into English verse, but von Schack comes out with something approaching the original in "*Elefantengleicher*." Mr. Arnold, in his really absurd lectures on the translation of Homer, which he used as a medium for carping at a much greater scholar than himself, showed as little insight into the real difficulty of translation as he did into the nature of poetry when he termed it absurdly the "criticism of life." But what could be expected from a man who found that Homer's chief quality was not, as Longinus and other obscure critics had found before him, sublimity, or truth, or any other great quality, but *rapidity—Homère le rapide*—Homer the *τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος*—Homer who keeps the hero of the "Odyssey" zigzagging for as many years about a little tract of sea which the modern traveller traverses through and through in as many hours! *Homère le rapide!* (*le rapide* is French for an express train)—and observe when Arnold takes to translating Homer himself he pro-

duces translations which might be bettered by most fifth-form boys at Shrewsbury or Rugby.

The first difficulty in translation is that there is hardly a single word in one language which has precisely the same power and signification as the corresponding word in another language; and when to this difficulty is added another—viz., that the choicest idiomatic forms and expressions of every language are absolutely untranslatable, and that poetry in every language contains the greatest amount of idiomatic forms and expressions—it will be seen at once how, if a perfect translation is not even possible in prose, it will be infinitely more impossible in poetry. Even in prose Herodotus, Thucydides, Demosthenes, Tacitus, and Cicero have never been perfectly translated into any modern language, and never will be, and the more idiomatic a writer is, like Thucydides and Tacitus, the more imperfect the translation will be. As to difference of powers and meanings of words, take the word *esprit*, about which a recent Edinburgh Reviewer, in his utterly idiotic laudation of Mr. Arnold, has said a quantity of silly things. We have no English word to properly represent *esprit;* wit and *esprit* are by no means the same thing when used of mental quality, and *esprit* can be used when "wit" could not, in such expressions as *les esprits, le Saint Esprit, l'Esprit de l'Epoque;* and as for idiomatic expressions, there are hundreds of charming idiomatic expressions in the French language in common speech with *nuances* which make it, as Charles V. said, the most delightful social language in the world, and which are quite untranslatable. Even in one's own language there is a delicacy of *nuance* between one expression and another, when both are used for the same object, which is only felt by minds of peculiar sensitiveness.

Mr. James Atkinson in his meritorious translation has deprived his verse of much of the local colour and flavour of his author by his straining, in the fashion of his time, after elegance. Thus he has feared to introduce the "wild ass" into his verse, although the "wild ass" is of frequent occurrence in the verse of Firdusi. In the opening scene of the episode of Zohrab and Rustem, wild asses are the object of Rustem's chase. Mr. Atkinson changes the "asses" into "deer," but the "wild ass" was not at all a ridiculous creature in the Persian annals.

One of the greatest of their monarchs was styled *Bahram Gor* from his passion for the chase of this animal, and he did not find the "wild ass" at the end a creature he could "afford to despise," as a reviewer would say, for he was killed by one, and a "wild ass" of supernatural dimensions laid waste a whole Persian province.

Mr. Atkinson has also been fearful of naming the crocodile, which often, too, occurs in the verse of Firdusi; he calls him "the monster of the Nile." I have not been so squeamish and have braved ridicule.

"And now, Mr. Speaker, who will laugh at Sugar?"

ZOHRAB AND RUSTEM

INTRODUCTION

Rustem came of a feudal family, who under the *Kai* or Emperor of Iran (Persia) were mediatised sovereign princes of Zabulistan. Zabulistan appears to have been Beloochistan. The princes of Zabulistan were feudally subject to the *Kai* in much the same way as the Electors of Brandenburgh and Bavaria owed fealty to the German Emperor in the days of the Holy Roman Empire. At the beginning of the legendary part of Firdusi's great poem, the *Shah Nameh*, the Iranian or Persian Empire appears to have comprised the greater part of Asia outside the limits of the Byzantine Empire, styled *Roum*. The empire of the Kai seems to have comprised even China, for Chinese princes served in the armies of the Kai. But Feridun, the founder of the Sassanide dynasty, when he felt his end approaching, divided his empire among his three sons, in the same fashion as the Carlovingian Empire was divided at the death of Charlemagne, and this division gave cause to the endless wars which occupy the first part of the *Shah Nameh*. Finally the empire was divided into Iran, the country of the Persians or Iranians, and Turan, the country of the Turks. The river Oxus formed the boundary between the two empires. The feeling of enmity, which was inherited from two hostile brothers, sons of Feridun, was heightened by the fact that the Iranians were, in the ancient fire religion of Asia, the worshippers or favourites of *Ormuzd*, the God of Light, while the Turks and their Sultans were worshippers and favourites of *Ahriman*, the Spirit of Darkness. During the greater part of the legendary half of the *Shah Nameh* Ahriman with his evil inspirations incites *Afrasiab*, the faithless and cruel tyrant and Soldan of the Turks, to conceive evil designs against the Iranians, and to effect them either by open war or by sowing seeds of discord among the Iranian chiefs and in the family of the Iranian Kai. Rustem, under the several reigns of the Kais Kobad, Kavos and Khosru, was the great champion of the Iranians and of their monarch, and finally effected the overthrow and death of Afrasiab under Kai Khosru.

The chiefs of Zabulistan had for ancestor Neriman, also a great and fabulous hero, and from him was descended Zam, the great destroyer of the *Divs*, or Demons, agents of Ahriman.

Zal was the son of Zam, and Rustem was the son of Zal by his wife Rudabeh.

All these heroes and princes of Zabulistan had lives of patriarchal length. Zal was two hundred years old when Rustem had his tragical fight with his son Zohrab, and, as he outlived Rustem, must have been upwards of three hundred years old before he disappears from the *Shah Nameh*.

As Rustem was the son of Zal and Rudabeh and Zal is described as still young when he had his romantic love affair with Rudabeh, Rustem must have been upwards of one hundred years of age at the time of his fatal encounter with Zohrab—but a search for prosaic accuracy in the chronology of the *Shah Nameh* is out of place, and in spite of the improbabilities and even impossibilities of the wonderful incidents of the *Shah Nameh*, the great genius of Firdusi has enabled him to endow all his fabulous heroes and their loves with individuality, vitality, and pathetic interest. And this writer is obliged to confess that when he translated the last speech of the dying Zohrab he shed tears as copiously as Sterne's foolish fat scullion.

In fact, all the heroes and women of the *Shah Nameh* have as characteristic a personality as the Priams, Helens, Agamemnons, Ulyssus and Nestors of the "Iliad," and moreover, in all heroic poems known of the hand-to-hand fighting epochs, whether they be the "Iliad," the "Niebelungen," the Norse "Heimskringla" or the *Chanson de Roland* and the Carlovingian cycle, the morals, manners and characters of the protagonists have great similarity.

Rustem was, as we have said, the son of Zal and Rudabeh. The love-making of Zal and Rudabeh forms one of the most interesting passages of the long poem. Zal and the lovely Rudabeh are prehistoric prototypes of Romeo and Juliet: they are the children of hostile races, and Zal comes beneath the turret window of Rudabeh in her castle to have a stolen interview at night. As Zal has no rope ladder like Romeo, Rudabeh lets fall her long tresses down to the ground and invites Zal to climb up by them into her castle. Zal, however, will not put the tresses of his beloved to such a strain, but throws up his lasso, with which all Firdusi's heroes are provided, to catch hold with its nooze of some angular projection of the battlements, and climbs up by the rope of the lasso. After much opposition on both sides by the Montecchi and Capuletti of those regions, the nuptials of Zal and Rudabeh take place, and Rustem is their first-born. Everything about the birth of Rustem was wonderful. Four months after the marriage of Zal and Rudabeh he emperilled the life of his mother by his struggles to come to light—she became senseless, and the female slaves about her tore their hair.

But the princes of Zabulistan had a family friend and patroness in the gigantic fabulous bird or griffin the *Zimurgh*, who lived in the heights of Mount Alburs or Hindo Koosh, and whom they always consulted in times of difficulty. This Zimurgh had been the foster mother of Zal. For Zal having been born with white hair,

Zam concluded he was the son of a Div, or evil spirit, and had him as a babe exposed in the mountains. The Zimurgh took pity on the exposed child and carried him off to her own nest, where she fed him and nursed him together with the little Zimurghs. Zam was ordered by divine oracle to take Zal to his home again, as Zal was really his own child, and when Zal and the Zimurgh parted company, the affectionate griffin gave him one of her feathers, and told him if ever he was in difficulties he was to burn the feather and she would come to his assistance. So Zal, finding Rudabeh in this perilous condition, burnt the feather and the Zimurgh appeared. She gave Zal a balsam which was to render Rudabeh insensible to pain, and when she had taken it Zal, with his dagger, was to cut open the side of Rudabeh and draw forth the child. Zal followed the Zimurgh's advice and performed the operation successfully, and Rudabeh appears not only to have been no worse, but was undoubtedly much relieved. The child, when born in this extraordinary fashion, required the milk of ten nurses to feed him. Hercules in his cradle strangled serpents—Rustem never appears to have had a cradle at all, but he killed a raging elephant on emerging from babyhood. When he became of age to ride, it seemed impossible to find a war-horse strong enough to mount him. He broke the back of steed after steed which was brought to him with the simple pressure of his hand; at last the marvel of steeds, *Reksh*, was found, who stood the trial of Rustem's tremendous fist, and Rustem, to the infinite delight of his father Zal, was becomingly mounted. Rustem on the back of Reksh was invincible. Reksh, indeed, must have been quite as supernatural a creature as Rustem himself, for he bore Rustem in all his fighting and hunting adventures for more than two hundred years, and Rustem never appears to have mounted any other steed; and in Rustem's last fatal adventure, in which he was betrayed by a false brother into a deep pit planted at the bottom with upright lances, Reksh was as lively and intelligent as ever, and by his sagacity endeavoured to save his master from the fatal pit, whose peril he had divined; but his master was doomed at last to perish thus, as a penalty for having killed Iskendiar, another quasi-invulnerable and invincible hero of the *Shah Nameh*. Rustem mounted on Reksh had as many weapons about his person as a modern Albanian wears pistols and daggers in his belt. He had a complete armoury about his body. His horse first is *barbed* and covered with mail, then he himself has a vesture of chain-mail with a helmet of Room (of Byzantine work); he has for cloak not the "*horseman's cloak*" which Mr. Matthew Arnold made his heroes wear, and which is suggestive of a cheap and ready-made ulster, but a huge tiger's skin, said also to have magic properties. He has his sword of "Hind" or India (Indian swords or *tulwars* preserve their renown up to this day), a dagger also of "Hind," his spear, his bow and arrows, his terrible iron mace with a bull's head and bull's horns (Mr. Arnold, instead of this iron mace, gives his hero an amorphous bludgeon made of half an oak burnt in the fire); he has also his terrible lasso, coiled up like a

hundred-folded serpent round the peak of his saddle, and which he can throw to incredible distances.

But the hero has another means of offence of which he seems to avail himself generally by preference, and that is wrestling ; trusting to his gigantic strength—*κύδει γαίων* (for he was so strong that when he walked the very rocks sank like wax beneath his feet and became soft as mud and clay)—he preferred to come to close quarters with his enemies in something like the Cornwall hug : the fighting with Zohrab finished in each of the three days during which it lasted with a wrestle. Then it is not sufficient that the flash of his Indian sword makes the sun shake, that the glance of his spear sets the stars quivering : he has a battle-cry which makes both earth and sea tremble, and sends the clouds flying asunder and strikes fear into the heart of the lion, whose roar is insignificant in comparison.

Really it was never a fair fight between these wonderful primæval heroes and their opponents ; surely poor Hector did not fight against Achilles, invulnerable except in the heel, on equal terms, and from early youth our sympathies were always with Hector. Rustem is a host in himself and fears not any number of enemies, be they men, sorcerors, or demons. As for the sorcerors and magicians, being always pious, he recommends himself to *Ibsak*, his god, when he has to deal with them, and his piety disconcerts the wiles of the colleagues of the evil power. Like Zam and Zal, he is always loyal to the great Kai, even when, as in the case of Kai Kavos, he found him to be mean, spiteful, and malevolent, and he does not even resent the refusal of Kai Kavos to give him of his magic balsam to save the life of Zohrab ; at the same time he is scornful at wrongs suffered and as independent in his presence as Charles *le Téméraire* himself would have been in the presence of Louis XI. Before we see him in his lamentable contest with Zohrab he had rendered many signal services to the monarchy. He had brought Kai Kobad, the father of Kai Kavos, back from captivity and given him his throne ; he had defeated Afrasiab for the first time ; he had come victorious out of seven desperate conflicts with demons and magicians, in an expedition undertaken to deliver the Kai Kavos from captivity in Masenderan ; he had conquered single-handed the white demon, the two great Divs, Aulad and Sifed ; and lately, with his brother Pehlevans, he had gone on a hunting party right in the centre of Afrasiab's dominions, the story of which reminds one of the ballad of Chevy Chase, and in which he was attacked again by the restless Afrasiab, but who was again ignominiously put to flight. This hunting frolic pleased him so well that the opening of the story of Rustem and Zohrab represents him as rising from his bed in the early morning and going off on a hunting expedition all by himself.

For his heroic services to the Kais of Iran Rustem had been appointed captain-general of the Kais's armies, with the title Jahan Pehlevan, champion of the world. He was allowed to wear a *taj*, or crown of gold, a *kummerbund* or girdle of gold, and give audience on a throne of gold, all of which were royal attributes.

THE TALE OF RUSTEM AND ZOHRAB

CAPUT I

Rustem goes hunting alone and loses Reksh.

In the Mobebs'[1] ancient writings this story may be read :
Rustem, well named *Tchemten*, one morning left his bed ;
His soul lay heavy on him, he fain would seek the chase,
So his girdle well he tightened and he filled his arrow case ;
And on the back of Reksh, his famed and elephantine steed,
He swung himself full deftly and spurred him to full speed.
To the Marches straight of Turan he galloped with fixed face—
Like a lion his prey hunting, so look'd he in the chase.
He had long pass'd Turan's borders and was nearing Sevestàn,
When a plain throng'd with wild asses the hero came to scan.
To his cheek the blood came mantling in a bright and rosy red,
He spake a word, and Reksh like a swift arrow sped—
Then with his bow and arrows, and with his long lasso,
He quickly lays a mighty heap of these wild runners low.
Then with reed-grass, thorns and bushes, and branches thick of trees
He makes him up a bonfire which flames high in the breeze ;
And when the embers glow'd he takes a sapling for a spit,
And a wild ass like a chicken he trusses well with it ;
And when it was well roasted, with such a zest he ate,
Of flesh and bone and marrow the leavings were not great.
Then he went unto the brook and drank there long and deep,
Then down on the green herbage he laid himself to sleep.

Let not the reader smile at Rustem's skill in cooking, nor at his capacity for eating a whole wild ass so roasted, for the Princess of Semengan will place Rustem's reputation in this way among the heroic virtues which made her fall in love with him ; and do not

[1] Mobeb = Zoroastrian priest.

Homer's heroes prepare their banquets with their own hands, and have an especial relish for the σπλάγχνα, or inside morsels? While Rustem was banqueting on the roasted wild ass, Reksh was left to graze on the forest glades beside the stream, and when Rustem, after the fatigue of the day and his consumption of a whole wild ass, went to sleep, a band of Turkish robbers came along, and seeing a magnificent horse grazing there alone, determined to appropriate him. Reksh, although on another occasion when Rustem had gone to sleep by his side he had killed a lion unaided with his hoofs in order not to disturb his master in his sleep, found he could not defend himself against the Turkish robbers. It is true he bit the head of one Turk off his shoulders and smashed another two with his hoofs, so that three Turks lay stretched on the turf before him; but the Turks got his neck into the noose of their terrible lasso and he must fain go with them.

CAPUT II

Rustem goes to Semengan on foot and is feasted by the Sultan of Semengan.

Rustem awoke to find his good steed Reksh had vanished—he sees the tracks of his courser's feet and that they lead to the near town of Semengan, but, like one of the knights of European chivalry, he is ashamed to go on foot; nevertheless, it must be so; therefore with mace and bow and quiver and his huge tiger skin about his shoulders he goes along as well as he can. As Rustem nears the town he is met by people who recognise the hero, and they rush to tell of his arrival to the King of Semengan and the citizens.

Semengan is not Turkish—it seems, in fact, to be a kind of outlying principality of Iran. The inhabitants, with the King at their head, go out in a ceremonious procession—the usual Oriental *Istiqbal*—to meet the Iranian hero.

In answer to a courteous speech of the King or Sultan, Rustem complains of the theft of Reksh. The King exhorts him to be patient—Reksh shall be found. Meanwhile he invites Rustem to his castle, where the King entertains him with a gorgeous banquet, enlivened with song and lute and the glances of black-eyed maidens. After the banquet Rustem is accompanied by torchlight to his sleeping apartment, where a scented couch had been prepared for him.

CAPUT III

Tehmeenah, the daughter of the King of Semengan, visits Rustem at night.

Tehemten had been sleeping far deep into the night,
And the morning star was glittering in the east with silver light,

When a flash in Rustem's chamber gleam'd from the opening door—
'Twas a lovely young slave maiden who an amber cresset bore.
She went softly to the pillow where the mighty hero slept ;
Behind her yet a fairer form with dainty footfall stept :
The moon she robbed of beauty and took splendour from the sun,
The perfumes of a thousand flow'rs were less sweet than her one ;
Her cheek sham'd rose and lily, like a cypress tall she rose,
Her eyebrows were bows bended and her ringlets were lassos ;
Her lips were tender rubies concealing white starlight,
For her mouth in her emotion she kept severely tight ;
Tehemten woke astounded, and first began to bless
The great Lord of Creation, and then said, "O Princess,
Or whatsoe'er thou art, thy name, I pray thee, own,
And tell me why thou here by night dost seek me thus alone!"
"My name Tehmeenah is," the lady then began,
"I the Sultan's only daughter am, and live in Semengàn ;
'Tis my pride and eke my sorrow which bring me thus to thee,
For I deem my race so great and so lofty my degree
That I can wed no noble here of those who would wed me ;
My face unveiled as now no man has ever seen,
And heard by any man's ear my voice has never been ;
From a child thy very name has been to me romance,
From far and wide the tales have come to me of thy vaillance ;
How from a boy and upwards thy sole arm's matchless might
Has lion quell'd and crocodile, and demon, fiend, and sprite ;
How in Turan thou hast braved alone the rage of foes malign,
And with thy sole sword kept secure the long long frontier line ;
How the eagles blink and quiver at the sight of thy bright blade,
And the thick clouds fly apart, of thy war-cry as afraid.
Oft have I sighed when I have heard mere mention of thy name,
Oft then my teeth have bit my lips until the red blood came.
Since thee unto this town the good *Izad* (God) has brought,
As a bride now take me to thee, or else my life is naught—

Naught but a life of pining and hopeless lone salt tears;
Bethink thee teo what torture, shame, reason and my fears,
While struggling with my love, have wrought e'er I could make
My maiden pride come here and risk all for thy sake;
Know, too, I Reksh have found—to say more is not meet,
But me, Reksh and Semengan I place now at thy feet!"

The hero was much touched by these words and by the beauty of Tehmeenah, and especially also by the news that Reksh was to be restored to him, so he sent next morning for a Mobed, or Zarathustrian priest, who, Firdusi takes care to say, was "full of virtue," to ask the Shah of Semengan for his daughter in marriage. The Shah was overjoyed at the proposal—rose up cypress-high, Firdusi says—and the marriage took place according to the *lex loci*, or law of the country.

The population too shared in the hour's joy, crying, "Long live thou, Rustem! May this young moon be a blessing to thee—may the heads of thy enemies fall ever before thee."

So the marriage was consummated, but the honeymoon lasted only one night—Rustem must back to Zabulistan, on urgent private affairs probably; so in spite of the tears of Tehmeenah he started in the morning, leaving, however, a pledge of his love, an amulet—an armlet (see Note 26) with a graven onyx seal on it—which he took from his own arm and gave to Tehmeenah, saying, "Keep it carefully; if you have a daughter, let her wear it in her hair—it will be as a good star to her; but if you have a son, bind it on his arm, as I have worn it, and he shall be strong as Zam, the son of Neriman, and as brave as Kereeman—among heroes he shall be a sun; the eagles will fall before his sword, the lion shall flee from his grasp, the elephants shall tremble before him, and this seal shall be a charm to gain him the love and admiration of the world."

CAPUT IV

Birth of Zohrab.

Fortes creantur fortibus—in due time Zohrab was born, and notice thereof was sent to his father in Zabulistan, who acknowledged the news by a letter and presents. Why Rustem never was able to visit Tehmeenah during her long fourteen years of grass-widowhood does not appear. At his birth Zohrab was as big as a child of one year, and at three years of age he was already able to handle weapons of war; at five he had the courage of a lion; at ten no man could stand up against him; at fourteen, which was the age at which he began his career, his arms were as big as the thighs of a dromedary. He wrung from his mother the secret of his birth, but she advised him to keep it quiet, as Afrasiab, the cruel tyrant of Turan, having been badly beaten by Rustem, would

surely revenge himself on Rustem's son. Zohrab, however, would not follow her advice—he is at once inflamed with the ambition of rivalling the deeds of his father and even of placing him on the throne of Iran; he will raise an army, march into Iran, dethrone the wretched Kai Kavos, and put his father in his place.

CAPUT V

Zohrab is provided with a war-steed, which he subjects to much the same trial as Rustem did Reksh.

CAPUT VI

The crafty Afrasiab hears of the preparations of Zohrab, and determines, for Machiavellian views of his own, to assist the youth in his invasion of Iran. He despatches troops to join him under Haman and Barman, two Turkish nobles, explaining to them *sotto voce* at the same time that all this was done with the secret hope that, as Rustem and Zohrab are unknown to each other, they may engage in mortal combat, and that thus he may be rid of one if not two dangerous individuals.

CAPUT VII

Zohrab has raised his army by the help of his grandfather, the Sultan of Semengan, and is ready to start. The kettledrum sounds, Zohrab takes leave of Tehmeenah in tears; she fastens the amulet on his arm and retails to him the signs by which he may know his father, and enjoins him, when he meets Rustem, to show this token. Zend Ruzum too, her brother, who has been the guardian and instructor of Zohrab from his childhood, is charged to make father and son known to each other.

CAPUT VIII

Zohrab comes to the White Castle (Duz Sapheid), which is a Castle Dangerous on the frontier between Iran and Turan.

Zohrab begins the invasion by attacking the White Castle—a barrier fort which some geographers have endeavoured to locate in a pass of the Caucasus. The White Castle is defended by an Iranian chief of renown, *Hujeer*, supported by an elderly warrior, Guzd'um, who has a beautiful Amazonian daughter, Gurdaferide, bearing a striking resemblance to the Amazonian heroines of Tasso and Ariosto.

Zohrab's maiden feat of arms is with the warrior Hujeer, the governor of the White Castle—whom he defeats and overthrows in single combat beneath the walls of the castle, and then takes him prisoner. The beautiful Amazon Gurdaferide is indignant at the defeat and capture of Hujeer and descends to the outside of

the castle to fight with Zohrab, the young Turk. This fight of the youthful Zohrab with the Amazon is marvellously like the fight of Tancredi with Clorinda in the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, as the scholarly Mr. James Atkinson has noticed in his translation of this part of Firdusi's poem. We append his poetical translation of Firdusi's verses describing the combat, that the reader may see how this passage was translated by a graceful English scholar of Persian one hundred years ago (p. 182).

Zohrab overcomes Gurdaferide, and her helmet falling off discloses her wondrous beauty—the youthful Zohrab becomes at once a victim to her charms. Gurdaferide takes advantage, like a deceitful minx, promises to surrender the castle to him if he will let her go free, and both ride towards the castle—Zohrab behind. Gurdaferide enters into the castle and then has the gate shut in Zohrab's face, and derides him from the battlements.

CAPUT IX. AND X

The capture of the White Castle.

Guzd'um writes an account of this portentous invasion headed by the invincible young Turk to Kai Kavos, and tells him of the captivity of Hujeer. The defenders of the White Castle, however, desert it in the night, and Zohrab with his Turks enters it and takes possession. The young warrior's eyes search everywhere for Gurdaferide, but that perfidious young Amazon has decamped with the rest, and poor Zohrab, although still in his teens, has a deep love-wound in his heart—his first and his last.

CAPUT XI

Kai Kavos calls Rustem to his assistance to repress the invasion of Zohrab.

Ten cantos of Firdusi's episode are thus taken to get Zohrab into the White Castle. Three more are required to get the Kai Kavos and his host, with Rustem, before this Castle Dangerous, in sight of whose walls the fatal combat between father and son was to be fought.

Guzd'um had, as we have seen, written a letter to Kai Kavos informing him of the capture of Hujeer and of the alarming strength of the Turkish invasion, and of the portentous appearance of the valiant young Turkish chief whose prowess none could withstand. The Kai calls his nobles to council ; they were the famous chiefs, Giv, Toos, Guderz, son of Kezwad (who has eighty sons), Gargiv, Ferhad and Bahram. He reads them the letter of Guzd'um—all advise him to send for the help of Rustem, who is, as usual, in the capital of his province of Zabulistan.

So the Kai Kavos writes a letter to Rustem, praises his prowess with Oriental magniloquence, especially as he wants his help.

"Thy mace," he says, "can make the sun weep, and thy spear set fire to *Safid*" (the planet Venus). Kavos commands Rustem to repair at once to his assistance—he is not to delay an instant ; if he has a rose in his hand he is not to lose time in smelling it, but is to throw it down and come to his assistance straight away. When the letter was written, the Kai sealed it and gave it to the valiant Giv—one of the eighty sons of the Nestor Gudurz, who was known to ride as swift as the wind.

Giv was to ride without drawing bridle to Zabulistan and not to linger there ; but if he arrived at nightfall he might stay till the morning. Giv did go swift as the wind—"he stayed not for stock, he stayed not for stone," he stayed not by day or by night —not even for bread and water.

When the watchman of Rustem's castle announces the appearance of a royal messenger, Rustem and his helmeted nobles go forth to meet his brother Pehlevan—do the *Istiqbal*, in fact. Giv hands to Rustem the letter of the Shah, tells the story of the Turkish invasion, and of the wondrous feats of valour of the young Turkish chief. Rustem is surprised at the account of the prowess of the young Turk—how could the Turks produce such a hero? If it had been his son of the race of Zam he would not have been surprised, but it could not possibly be he—his son was yet a child, knowing nothing of war or warfare ; he had sent him a present of jewels, and his messenger had given them to his mother and brought news that the boy was growing in strength and only just beginning to change milk for wine.

Rustem invites his brother Pehlevan into his castle. Giv urges their instant departure—"the emperor so wills it." But Rustem replies that there is no need of any hurry ; death is the end of all things—let us enjoy ourselves until the morning, and leave Kavos and his troubles to themselves. "We'll have a banquet and wet our dry lips all the live-long night." As for that young Turk, "even were he Zam, the tamer of demons, or Neriman, the founder of our race, his heart will sink within him when he beholds the banner of the Tehemten."

So Giv and Rustem pass the night in banqueting, with much laughter and pleasant songs from the lips of black-eyed damsels. They liked it so well that the cooks had orders to prepare another good feast for the morrow, and then yet another, so that the two heroes passed a good three days in feasting and revelry to their mutual satisfaction, and apparently without a headache, and certainly without a thought of the Kai Kavos, who was waiting all the time with an eye "dim with fear," as Giv said.

On the third day Giv thinks that they have had enough of feasting. "Kai Kavos is a hasty fellow : who knows how he may take this delay? His eye was 'dim with fear' when I left. He will be cursing us, and before long play some spiteful trick upon us.'

Rustem says, "Never fear ; no man alive dares lift up a hand against us." Nevertheless, he orders Reksh to be saddled and the trumpets to be sounded. He commands his nobles to array

themselves in helm and mail and to set forth on the march with their followers and his whole army. He appoints his brother Sewareh to be lieutenant-general.

CAPUT XII

The Kai Kavos is enraged against Rustem.

Kai Kavos falls into a terrible passion about the delay of Rustem and Giv in obeying his commands. When Rustem arrives at court his anger is in the furious stage. At their first meeting the Kai orders Toos to take Rustem from his presence and to lead him forthwith to the punishment of the *dar*—that is, the gallows or the stake. Toos, not with the purpose of executing the Kai's commands, but in order to leave the Kai time to cool by the removal of Rustem, lays a friendly hand upon him. Rustem knocks him down with one blow. The quarrel here has a striking resemblance to the quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon in the first book of the "Iliad." It takes up ten closely printed pages of double columns in the Persian text. Both Rustem and the Kai, of course, make long speeches. Rustem reproaches Kai Kavos with his ingratitude. The Kai owes his throne itself and his deliverance from imprisonment by the white demon in Mazandaran to Rustem—"As for me, what care I for thrones or Kais? My throne is the saddle of Reksh and my helmet is my crown, and the whole world is my subject. I might have been Kai myself if I had had a mind to it. The Iranian nobles offered me the throne long ago, but I refused it and gave it to the exiled Kai Kobad. If I had taken it, where would you have been?" Then turning to the Iranian nobles: "You go and tackle the young Turkish champion yourselves; I'll do no more fighting for this man. I'm off for Zabul as though I had the wings of a vulture." Then he went out and mounted Reksh and gave him the spur, "*with a body bursting with scorn.*"

The Iranian nobles are all in a state of consternation; they beseech their aged Nestor Gudurz, the father of Giv and seventy-nine other children, to soothe the Kai. The good Gudurz is not only remarkable for the number of children he had fathered, but he had been one of Persia's greatest generals. He had conquered Judæa and taken Jerusalem and carried on war successfully against Afrasiab.

Gudurz goes accordingly, and with the authority of his years and services lectures the Shah. He tells the Shah an undeniable truth: "Kings ought to have judgment and education; no advantage can come from impetuosity and rage." The Kai begins to think he has been foolish and begs Gudurz to go after Rustem and bring him back. Gudurz obeys and overtakes the angry Pehlevan, but finds it a much more difficult business to soothe Rustem's injured spirit than to convince the Kai that he had been foolish.

"What on earth is Kavos to me?" he says; "he is to me but a *handful of dirt.*" Gudurz touches then on the chord that if the

Kai has been hasty and inconsiderate, yet the people of Iran, who will be the chief sufferers through Rustem's anger, have done nothing to offend him.

Under the sage treatment of Nestor Gudurz, Rustem is brought back again to the royal presence. The Kai tells him that as soon as Rustem had left his presence he had repented—"*dust fell into my mouth.*" Rustem makes a generous speech; he is ready to serve the Kai to the utmost, and this reconciliation is celebrated by a glorious banquet, during which the nobles scattered pearls on the steps of the Kai's throne, the most delicious viands and drinks were served up, the sounds of harp and lute and the songs of a hundred Peri-cheeked girls delighted the feasters, who revelled quite deep into the night. Indeed, Firdusi says they all got quite drunk—*Kama mast budan*—which perhaps accounts for the scattering of pearls on the steps of the Kai's throne. But no! it is an old Eastern custom preserved to this day. Did not Indian princesses shower pearls over the head of our beloved Princess of Wales as she passed beneath palace windows in far Hindustan?

CAPUT XIII

Kai Kavos and Rustem and their armies arrive at the White Castle.

On the morning after the banquet, when the sun appeared from behind the curtain of night, Kavos and Rustem and their host set forth. The kettledrums were bound to the backs of the elephants, they sounded to the accompaniment of countless clarions, and a hundred thousand brazen-plated warriors mounted their horses. The stream of horses and elephants and armed men covered many miles, and Mr. James Atkinson has translated the description of their march from Firdusi as follows:

"The hosts assembling crown the mountain brow,
And following thousands shade the vales below,
In steely armour numberous legions bend
And troops of horse the threatening lines extend.
Beneath the tread of heroes fierce and strong,
By war's tumultuous glory borne along;
The firm earth shook; the dust, in eddies driven,
Whirled high in air, obscured the face of heaven;
The spangled slippers glittered o'er the fields,
And lightnings dashed from gold encircled shields.
Thou wouldst have said the clouds had burst in showers
Of sparkling amber o'er the martial pow'rs.
Thus close embodied, they pursue their way
And reach the Barrier fort in terrible array."

CAPUT XIV

Rustem kills Zend Ruzum, the uncle of Zohrab.

Zend Ruzum was the brother of Tehmeenah, consequently the uncle of Zohrab and the brother-in-law of Rustem. Here is another of the many improbabilities of the story. Rustem and Zend Ruzum must have known each other, unless we suppose Zend Ruzum was absent from Semengan at the time of the marriage of Rustem and his sister. Zend Ruzum, as has been said, was the beloved uncle of Zohrab, and had had care of his education from his earliest childhood, and had been sent by Tehmeenah with Zohrab for the especial purpose of making father and son known to such other. The death of Zend Ruzum at the hands of Rustem removed the best chance which father and son had of recognising each other.

The killing of Zohrab's uncle by Rustem happened thus. On arrival before the White Castle, the *Duz Sapheid* (now in possession of Zohrab and the Turks), at nightfall, Rustem gained permission from the Kai to do as Diomed and Ulysses in the ninth book of the Iliad and as English Alfred did in the Danish camp, that is, go as a spy among the enemy in the White Castle, and see with his own eyes the famous young Turkish warrior. Accordingly he disguises himself in Turkish garments, enters unobserved into the fortress and finds his way to the lofty hall of the *Kasr* or Governor's palace, where Zohrab is feasting with Zend Ruzum by his side and with Haman and Bahram and other Turkish nobles at the table, while before him fifty young slave girls with golden belts and anklets are singing his praises. Zend Ruzum beholds the lofty stranger lurking in a corner and rises from table to go and ask who he is, when Rustem with that powerful fist which could break the back of a horse smites him on the head and so kills him, and then escapes, an incident which calls to mind a somewhat similar scene in the Norse story of Burnt Njal.

Zohrab, after a time, observing that his uncle does not return to his seat, has search made: the corpse is found; Zohrab breaks up the banquet in anger and vows vengeance on the whole Persian host for the following day.

Rustem returns to the Persian camp and to the Kai, and tells him that the young Turk is as tall as a cypress and limbed like a giant—"you could think Zam had come to life again."

CAPUT XV

Zohrab takes his prisoner to the battlements of the White Castle that he may find out Rustem's tent, but Hujeer deceives him.

This again is another scene in the poem which has a wonderful similarity to one in the "Iliad"—that in which Helen from the walls of Troy points out the various chiefs of the Grecian besiegers.

Zohrab rises in the morning after the slaying by Rustem of

his uncle Zend Ruzum hot with desire of avenging his death, but he first takes Hujeer, the former Governor of the White Castle, to the ramparts and inquires, one after another, to which chief each of the tents pitched below with their fluttering ensigns belongs. His object is to find out which is the tent of Rustem. Had Zend Ruzum been alive he would have known well which was Rustem's tent, but Hujeer, imagining that the young Turk only wants to know Rustem's tent for purposes of revenge, stubbornly and patriotically denies that Rustem is in the field at all.

"See that tent there! of glittering gold cloth, tricked off with skins of panthers, with a hundred elephants about it and a sun of gold waving in the banner! Whose tent is that?" "That is the Kai's." "And that tent there? the black one, surrounded by cavalry and foot, and by countless tents, elephants and horses and baggage packs, and with an elephant for ensign on the banner? Whose tent is that?" "That is the tent of the son of Ruder." "And whose is that tent there with the lion on the banner?" "That is the tent of Gudurz." "Now that green tent there with a crowd of warriors walking up and down before it. Above a throne there floats the banner of Kavos, also another banner with a lion and a dragon on it. On the throne sits a Pehlevan of heroic form, taller by a head than any about him; his steed stands by his side and leans his head on his master's shoulder from time to time. There is no steed like that in the whole of Iran's camp. Whose tent is that?"

Zohrab has an inward sense that this must be the tent of his father, and indeed he might have known so for certain, since no other prince in the host had a right to a throne and to use the Kai's banner. Had Zend Ruzum been alive he would of course have known. However, Hujeer says this is the tent of a warrior from China, whose name he does not know. Zohrab describes other tents and asks the names of the chiefs of each one, and then comes back again to the green tent with the throne and with the lion and the dragon on the banner; but Hujeer, in spite of threats, persists in his deceit, and says still it is the tent of the unknown Chinese prince. The hapless Zohrab in one of his dying speeches declares these false replies of Hujeer's to be the cause of his tragic end, but magnanimously begs that he may not be punished for his duplicity.

This was all the more generous on the part of Zohrab, since Hujeer, getting tired of his being so close questioned as to Rustem, lost his temper and indulged in an insolent speech to the effect that it would be all the worse for Zohrab if he should happen to meet with Rustem, for which speech Zohrab only revenges himself by knocking him down with a hand as heavy as his father's.

CAPUT XVI

First meeting of Rustem and Zohrab.

Leaving Hujeer to recover from his knockdown blow, Zohrab hastens to arm himself and to prepare for taking the revenge he

had sworn to have for the slaying of Zend Ruzum on the whole Iranian army ; attacks the Kai's encampment, and fights and slays his way right up to the Kai's tent, and inveighs against him in insulting fashion ; challenges him, and swears he will take revenge for the death of his uncle by hanging the cowardly Kai on a gallows, and as a preliminary tears half the tent of the Kai down about his ears. The Kai in mortal terror slinks into the other half and shrieks out for his nobles to defend him, and sends Giv and Toos, who has recovered from *his* knockdown blow, to fetch Rustem in hot haste. The rest of the tale shall be told mostly in verse.

When the Kai his order gave, Toos straight sought Rustem's tent
And told him by what perils the Kai Kavos was shent ;
Said Rustem, " Many a Shariah ere now has invited me,
Sometimes unto a goodly fight, sometimes to revelry,
But Kai Kavos my company craves never but just when
He's over eyes in trouble, and I must help him then " ;
Ne'ertheless he gave his order about Reksh to bring him straight
That his good knights should be ready and his orders should await,
But Rustem in his tent stayed while his Pehlevans there were
Right busy in preparing his good armour and war-gear ;
Giv helped him on with mailcoat, Bahram to fit his greaves ;
Bahram buckled his vambraces and Gimgin restless heaves
His sword and spear and helmet, crying, " Quick ! O be ye quick !"
And others cried " Haste ! haste ! for Kavos is fear-sick."
Then Rustem says, the while his sides with laughter shake,
" If that young man were Ahriman he couldn't more panic make" ;
Around his waist the Pehlevan then clasps his royal zone,
While o'er his shoulders in huge folds his tiger skin was thrown.
But ere he went Sewareh of his tent he guardian made,
His brother whom he loved so dear, and unto him he said :
" Here of my tent and all within I pray keep watch and ward
Till I return, and all our men hold thou in constant guard."
Then off he rode until he came to where he Zohrab found—
He look'd so like his grandsire Zam, that Rustem felt astound ;
He cried to him, " Now stay thy hand, let us together go,
And we will try between us two which is the worthier foe."

And Zohrab cried, "Right glad I am that I have found a man
Who is not like the crowd of slaves who just now from me ran."
And then the pair like brethren went close riding side by side
Unto a place between the two where battle should be tried.
There was a spot one *farsang* off, some craggy rocks beside,
And Zohrab cried, "This place is good, we two will here abide
And fight our battle here alone, nor ask for other aid.
And yet, bethink thee, age has thee for me no fair match made!"
Then the Tehemten look'd and saw the youth was wondrous fair,
So glorious in breast and arm and yet so debonair.
Then the Pehlevan spake out, "O tender hero-child,
The earth is cold and hard, heaven's air is soft and mild;
I'm old, and my life mostly have I spent on battlefield,
And of thousands rang'd against me ever vain was sword and shield.
Many demons have I fought with, never one but I made flee;
Their backs I've seen in flying, never one the back of me.
Should you hap to vanquish me by force or cunning wile,
Then go defy unarmèd the stone-backed crocodile.
What span of heav'n above and what mountain does not know
What hosts of Turan's mightiest with my sword I have laid low;
What countless stars have witnessed how in many a bloody fight
To be the wide world's champion I have prov'd my single right!
Yet pity for thee, youngling, now has come into my heart,
Thy youthful soul I fain would not from thy fair body part.
Leave thou the Turks of Ahriman, that cruel godless race;
In Iran 'mong the highest thou shalt find becoming place."
Then answer made to Rustem Zohrab with heart deep stirr'd,
"O warrior brave, I ask thee but to speak a little word.
Now tell me what thy name is, declare thy pedigree:
Most surely thou art Rustem, none other canst thou be!"
The Tehemten answer'd swiftly, "No Rustem sure I am,
For Rustem is a Pehlevan, son of Zal the son of Zam,[1]
And they are sovreign princes with throne and crown and zone;
I am but a poor soldier with my saddle for my throne."

[1] Note 27.

CAPUT XVII

The first fight of Rustem and Zohrab.

When the warrior boy heard this his fair brow grew quite dark
And in his fond heart faded of his hope the only spark,
So he drew his bridle firmly and his place for fight he took,
In his mind still pondering deeply on the words his mother spoke.
Son and father then stood fronting, and with short spears they began
Charging, wheeling, hustling, thrusting, horse to horse and man to man,
But the spears broke into splinters—then each one to the left
Wheeled his charger and their swords of Hind they both seized by the heft.
Cut, thrust and blow flash'd lightning and raised a clamour dread,
It might a Resurrection day have seemed unto the dead ;
When their swords were smit to pieces each took his bull-horned mace
And not a blow went home unfailing to displace
Some fragments of the chain-mail which covers steed and men,
And through the gaps they made you saw blood spurting then—
Blood from the lips was oozing ; their mouths were filled with dust ;
Their tongues were hot and dry—at last perforce they must
Rest side by side, both panting, both dripping blood and sweat ;
Their horses too beneath them heav'd flanks all foamy wet ;
The warriors then their panting steeds in silence drew apart
The father full of wonder, the son with beating heart.
O World ! O World ! indeed mysterious is thy course !
From good to bad thou leadest life and then from bad to worse—
Was then all love of father and love of son here mute ?
That love which every fish feels, wild ass and creature brute ;
For there met son and father, and neither of them felt
A son's blood or a father's blood was being by them spilt.
Then Rustem inward mused " This youngster marvels me,
Ne'er in a raging crocodile such fury did I see ;

When I fought the fiend Sapheid, that was a joke to this,
My heart within my bosom was not stirred as now, I wis."
When the warriors twain had rested and their panting coursers too,
They came again together the grim combat to renew.
They took their bows and fitted the arrow to the string,
And made the air between them with whizzing shafts to sing,
But on hauberk, helm, and corselet the steel points smite in vain—
They harmless fell as forest leaves or as light summer rain ;
Then they rushed at one another and each one grasp'd the belt
Of the other with strong fingers clutching round the strong stitched welt.
Tehemten single-handed could a mighty rock uptear,
So the saddle of young Zohrab he thought quick to make bare ;
But in vain he strained his muscles in all their wondrous might,
The young man in his saddle sat unmoved and stiff upright.
Then Rustem's force was slacken'd with the wonder which he felt,
His hand he let fall loosely from the god-like youngster's belt.
Then again the lions breathless stood reposing from the fray,
And each of fighting seem'd to think he'd had enough that day ;
Yet Zohrab e'er they parted turn'd round his horse's head,
And rode again at Rustem and struck a blow so dread
With his big bull-horned mace upon the shoulder scale
Of Rustem that it made that prodigious man turn pale.
The pain made on the saddle the hero twist and start,
But he ground his teeth and stifled down the cry as well as smart ;
Then Zohrab spake out laughing, " O warrior old and good,
You were wise to leave all fighting now to us of younger blood."

The two combatants parted on the scene of their conflict, but each of them went to recompense himself for a fruitless day of fighting by slaughtering a few hundred nameless warriors, Rustem among the Turks, Zohrab among the Persians, after the usual style of *Quidquid delirant reges*. Zohrab, however, makes such ruthless havoc among the Persians that Rustem comes to the rescue and commands him to leave off slaughtering Persians, and challenges him again to have the fight out between them on the morrow morning, so that on each occasion the challenge comes from Rustem and not from Zohrab.

CAPUT XVIII

Zohrab and Rustem pass the night between the first and second days' fighting in their different camps and in different fashion.

The two combatants on retiring to their respective camps spend the night each of them differently: Zohrab, like a gay and high-spirited youth, passes it in banqueting after the usual fashion of Firdusian heroes, during which he discourses with his friends about the fight of the day and the prowess of the old Iranian warrior. Rustem spends the night more seriously. He on his return describes the fight to Kai Kavos and descants at length on the skill and strength of the marvellous boy with whom he has been in conflict; he is not too confident about the result of the fight for the next day, for he gives instructions to his brother Sewareh as to what he should do if he should fall, and how he is to comfort his aged father and mother—he spoke of Zohrab, says Firdusi, full half the night and the other half he passed in sleep.

CAPUT XIX

The second day's fight—wrestling of Rustem and Zohrab. Zohrab overthrows Rustem and is about to despatch him, when Rustem saves his life by a deceitful speech.

Zohrab, after his night's feasting, arose in pleasant mood; although his heart was ready for the fight, his head was still full of the feast when he came upon the ground. He approached Rustem with a smile on his lips and addressed him with offers of love and peace. He asks how his enemy has spent the night, he proposes to throw away the sword of hate, his heart yearns towards Rustem—"let others do the fighting; we will drink wine together and make a league of peace and friendship." Rustem, mindful perhaps of the blow of last evening, receives roughly Zohrab's friendly offers; he has girt himself up for fighting, he says, and not for exchanging frivolous speeches. Zohrab says, "Then there is no help for it, and since you give yourself into my hands, fate will decide between us." Then they prepare to fight—

Then from their steeds descending upon the sward they tread,
Each body in chain armour and helmeted each head.
Then first their steeds they fastened to the jutting jags of rock,
Then grimly 'gan each other in their sinewy arms to lock.
Like two lions they two wrestled all through the livelong day,
While from their bodies blood and sweat kept dropping down alway;
To and fro like to an elephant wine-maddened Zohrab swayed,

Springing sometimes like a leopard, till the mighty Rustem made
A grasp with his strong arms round Zohrab's tight waistband :
You might have thought that such a grasp no mortal could withstand ;
But Zohrab broke lose from him and with shouts would split a rock
Rushed at Rustem and assail'd him with such earthquaking shock,
And seized and lifted wholly his vast body in the air,
Then hurled him down full length, and ere he was aware,
Had his knee on Rustem's chest as prostrate there he lay,
With dust clogged in his nostrils and his visage smirched with clay—
His dagger from its sheath he had already in his right.
To sever head from shoulders, when in his sorry plight,
Cried Rustem out, "O Lord of the arrow and the bow,
Lord of the mace and sword, flinger of the long lasso—
Hold, hold thy hand—strike not—'twill bring base shame on thee
To break the sacred laws which knights observe in chivalry.
A coward thing 'tis ever held in a first overthrow
Upon a vanquished foeman to strike the fatal blow ;
But should the foe uprisen a second time be thrown,
Then can he use his victor right and sever his neck-bone."
This was deceit in Rustem, to invent chivalric laws
To save his life while writhing beneath the dragon's claws.
Then Zohrab with his noble heart, as any palace great,
Let his foeman rise uninjured the morrow's strife to await.

Zohrab, aware that he has acted with foolish generosity, goes and relieves his soul, not by slaughtering Persians this time, but by killing a few wild beasts in the chase. On his return he meets his friend and counsellor, Human, to whom he narrates the combat of the day and its issue. Human chides Zohrab and reminds him of the well-known Arab proverb, "Never despise your enemy, even though he be weak."

Rustem, after having saved his life by a mean device, does another mean trick. He manages to get in a fresh supply of strength for the morrow's combat, and it will be observed that when he has by his additional supply of strength got Zohrab under him, he does not observe at all his invented rule of chivalry. His renewed supply of strength he got in this wise. After having been worsted in this second day's combat, he goes and bathes his head and limbs in the river and then prays to Izad (his god) to give him back that overplus of strength which he had parted with in his youth as an inconvenience. His strength, as we have mentioned,

was so great in his youth that when he walked on rocks his feet sank into them as if they were mere clay, and he had prayed to be delivered of so inconvenient a superabundance and his prayers were granted. He prays in his extremity to have his pristine strength restored to him, and his prayers are again answered.

On the morrow, then, both the combatants return to the fighting ground, and, after exchanging some words, begin the third day's conflict.

CAPUT XX

Zohrab is slain by Rustem.

Now again unto the rocks their good destriers they bind,
Around their heads were hovering cruel fates and fortune blind.
Again they take to wrestling, and they rush and swiftly grasp
Each the girdle of the other in their fingers' iron clasp—
But for the warrior boy you would say that now a cramp
Struck by demons in his sinews made his strong hold to unclamp,
While Rustem, the great Pehlevan, like a raging tiger hot,
With one hand gripp'd his son's belt while the other grasped his throat
And with his strength new given made such a nervous thrust
That with broken back the youngling he let fall upon the dust.
Then he knelt down quick upon him, with one knee upon his chest,
Not knowing, wretched victor! whose the form was that he pressed,
Then with sword unsheathed he swiftly thrusts its point into his breast.
The boy in anguish writhes and he heaves a gentle sigh,
And he speaks out, feeling inly that his mortal end is nigh :
" Mine hour is come, Iranian ; I chose it thus to be.
My key of life I gave to thee last eve and let you free.
I blame myself, not thee—Heav'n as a passing flower
Upraised me and my rise and fall are but things of an hour ;
The glory of my youthful years is food for mocking mirth,
My pride and all its splendour are now merged in the earth ;
'Twas longing for my father which brought me to this fate.
My mother spoke so much of him that I, with hope elate,
Left her and home to seek him—but oh, alas ! 'tis hard
My father's face not to have seen e'er dying on this sward.
But thou, relentless victor, pity some I feel for thee,

For wert thou some fish-monster swift flashing through
the sea,
Shouldst thou fly unto the demons and with them in dark-
ness dwell,
Shouldst thou take night for a garment and hide in deepest
cell,
Shouldst thou seek in flight to rival up above the highest
star,
Shouldst thou bring the sun down here to earth to be thy
fiery car,
Yet sure as fate my father's sword will work revenge on thee
When he hears it was thy hand which wrought this cruel end
to me;
For surely of the noble men of Iran some friend will
Of Rustem, tell to Rustem how thou his son didst kill."
He finish'd—Rustem heard, his soul within grew dark,
The world without grew darker—he stood up stiff and stark
A moment—then with blood in heart and life and soul
congealed
He fell down in a lifeless, senseless mass upon the field.
As his senses came back dimly he was again aware
Of the dying youth before him, and he shriek'd in his
despair:
"Speak! say, can you of Rustem produce some token-sign,[1]
For Rustem is my name, name hateful and malign.
May that name from the lists of Iran's braves be swept,
For soon will my life be by Zal my sire bewept."
He howled aloud with frenzy—his eyes with blood-tears flow,
He tears his hair all madly, and madly beats his brow.
When Zohrab heard his father the dreadful truth avow,
His inner soul was darkened as he spake out soft and low:
"Art thou, then, Rustem truly? and thine was then the brand
Which in my heart was driven, by an unrelenting hand;
My heart it yearn'd towards thee and I sought thy hand to
take
In friendship; but no spark of love could I in thee awake!
Undo my corselet, loose the band which fastens my surcoat
And on my arm you'll find a clasp and of it take good note.
It holds an onyx seal—my mother placed it there
When the kettledrums gave signal that I to war must fare;
With bitter tears she said: 'This to your father show,
It was his token and by it his own son he will know.'
But ah! too late! too late this token you will see,
The father has his own son slain by Ahriman's decree."
His *kaftan* Rustem opened and he saw the fatal seal,

[1] Note 27.

He tore his vest and as one drunk began around to reel,
Then cried he, "O thou slaughter'd son by this accursed man,
A nobler son than thou ne'er had a warrior in Iran."
He groaned like a struck lion ; his head with earth he smears ;
His hair he rends out and his cheeks are stained with blood and tears.
Then Zohrab spake, "Cease weeping, no tears that your een twain
Can shed my fate will alter or a minute longer gain.
Would you from your own bosom your own heart vainly tear,
How could it profit either ? Now to war with fate forbear."
Then Zohrab heard the steps of those whom Kai Kavos had sent
To learn the fate of Rustem, and how the combat went.
Then said he, " My end comes ! Now, father, lend thine ear,
When I am gone what may befall my Turkish friends I fear.
Now, for the love you bear me, seek Kai Kavos, I pray,
And make him straight from Turan his army lead away.
It was all for love of me, and trusting in my star,
That these brave men have followed me and made on Iran war.
I led them on with golden hopes of joy in Iran's land,
With not a thought that I should fall beneath my father's hand ;
Let all my followers go, I pray, to their own homes in peace,
So shall I die more peacefully—dear father, promise this !
How could it be I did not know the signs my mother gave ?
Dear father, but one little word had saved me from the grave.
But 'tis no use repining—for in the stars 'twas writ
That Zohrab by his father's hand should perish—I submit.
My life was just the lightning flash, and like a breeze I die :
Dear father, there in Paradise we shall meet by and by."

CAPUT XX–XXIII

This last speech of Zohrab's brings us to the middle of Caput xx; then follow in the *Shah Nameh* four more cantos to complete the episode of Zohrab and Rustem.

Rustem, at the conclusion of his son's request to him, swings himself on to the back of Reksh and returns to his camp. His object is to get Nestor-Gudurz to ask the Kai Kavos for some drops of a magic balsam which the Kai possesses, and which will heal the wounds of Zohrab if he can obtain it. Gudurz does ask for it, but the Kai is as cunning as Afrasiab, and refuses. " He is," he says, "afraid enough of Rustem ; how much more reason would he have to be afraid of him if he had such a son as Zohrab to back him up." Rustem never sees Zohrab alive again. Zohrab dies before Rustem returns back from the camp. Rustem has the body of Zohrab

carried in solemn and magnificent state to his home in Zabul, where, after days of lamentation, in which he is joined by his white-haired father Zal and by his mother Rudabeh and his attendant nobles, he has his unfortunate son buried in a coffin of sandal-wood, scented with musk, and has built as a mausoleum for it a monument in horseshoe form bedecked with gold and precious stones. He mourns deeply for some time, but at length takes up his old way of life.

Not so with Tehmeenah, the mother of Zohrab. She remained inconsolable to the end, which was not far off. She has only sent to her, as memorials of her beloved son, his armour and his weapons, his diadem and throne and his war-horse. She lavishes on these as much passionate grief and lamentations of pathetic power as she could have given to the dead body of her son. At first sight of them she sinks to the earth in a torrent of tears, then rises, kisses his coat and mail, his sword, his spear, and his bow and his mighty mace, wets them with her tears. She takes his golden bridle in one hand and his shield in another, and beats the shield against her forehead. Then she has the war-steed brought to her. She presses the head of his steed against her bosom and kisses his forehead, wets his mane with her tears, and lays her cheek with a cry of grief against one of his hoofs. And then, after Oriental custom, in order that the noble beast may not be profaned by being the servant of a less noble master than Zohrab, she drew the sword of Zohrab from its sheath and cut off part of the noble animal's sweeping tail. All these demonstrations are accompanied by lamentations in Firdusi's verse of immense pathetic power.

She then gives all her money and jewelry and finely caparisoned steeds of her own to the poor, she shuts up her palace and has the portals painted black; the throne of Zohrab within it fell into ruin—the splendid halls and galleries of her castle became filled with dust. She wept day and night, and only outlived her son one year. Her holy sorrow took her by the hand and led her to Zohrab in his heavenly mansion.

The combat of Zohrab with Gurdaferide as translated by Mr. James Atkinson.

When Gurdaferide, a peerless warrior-dame,
Heard of the conflict and the hero's shame,
Her foaming palfrey speedful she bestrode ;
Her vermil cheek with deeper crimson glowed.
The burnished mail her tender limbs embraced,
Beneath her helm her clustering locks were placed ;
Poised in her hand an iron javelin gleamed,
And o'er the ground it sparkling lustre streamed ;
Now with a thundering clang she fierce descends,
And 'midst the foe her course impetuous bends.
Fearless of soul, demands with haughty tone,
The bravest chief, for warlike valour known,
To try the chance of fight. In shining arms,
Again Zohrab the glow of battle warms ;
With scornful smiles, "Another deer!" he cries,
"Speeds to my victor-toils, another prize!"
The damsel saw his noose insidious spread,
And soon her arrows whizzed around his head ;
Furious he burned, and high his buckler held,
To ward the storm, by growing force impell'd ;
While still her darts with hissing fury flew.
Now o'er her back the slacken'd bow resounds ;
She grasps her lance, her goaded courser bounds,
Driven on the youth with persevering might—
Unconquer'd courage still prolongs the fight.
The stripling chief avoids the threaten'd blow,
Reins in his steed, then rushes on the foe ;
With outstretch'd arm he bending backwards hung,
And gathering strength, the pointed javelin flung ;
Firm through her girdle-belt the weapon went,
And glancing down the polish'd armour rent.
Soon like a ball, hurled with superior force,
She tumbled headlong from her foaming horse ;
Yet unsubdued, she cut the spear in two,
And from her side the quivering fragment drew.
Then gain'd her seat, and headlong urged her steed ;
But strong and fleet, Zohrab arrests her speed ;
Strikes off her helm, and sees—a woman's face,
Radiant with blushes and commanding grace ;
Her shivered mail, her swelling bosom bare,
Her sparkling eyes, and wild dishevelled hair,
Proclaim her sex, increase her dazzling charms,
And fill the conqueror's breast with love's alarms.

"If Persian damsels thus in arms engage,
Who shall repel their warriors' fiercer rage?"
Stopp'd in his wrath, yet ere his reason flies,
The ready toils secure his lovely prize.
"Seek not to fly, thou heavenly maid!" he cried,
"Such beauty seldom swells the victor's pride."
Raising her full black orbs serenely bright,
In all her charms she blazed before his sight;
Expert in wiles, each syren-art she knew,
And thence exposed her blooming face to view.

ALLAH'S REPROOF OF ABRAHAM FOR INTOLERANCE

From Sadi's "Gulistan."

ALLAH'S friend pitched his tent by a desert way,
And entertained wayfarers every day,
But now seven days of a week had well past
And never a stranger had shared his repast.
On the eighth day, at dawn, the patriarch rose,
And outside the tent-door with longing he throws
His glance o'er the desert on every side.
At length slowly wending the prophet espied
An old man whose back like a willow was bent,
With hair and beard white by time's frost besprent.
Allah's friend then *Marhubah* in courtesy spoke,
And said in the way of hospitable folk,
"O light of mine eyes, turn in here and halt,
And bless me by tasting of my bread and salt."
The old man assented; he knew the good heart
Of his entertainer (may peace be his part!).
The friends of the patriarch came then to greet
The weary old pilgrim and gave him a seat.
By clapping of hands as they sat on the ground,
The meat-tray was brought, the guests ranged around—
Bismi Allah devoutly from all lips was heard,
Save from the grey pilgrim—from him not a word.
Then said father Abraham, "Thou, my good friend,
In spite of thine age hast thy manners to mend.
For I ne'er saw an old man sit down to a feast
And leave the Creator of all things unblessed."
The old man replied, "All my words and my prayers
I must make in the form which my fire-priest declares."
The prophet turned pale, for this man he then knew
To be of the Guebers, sect blackest of hue.

As soon of this horror the saint was aware,
He drove the old miscreant forth to the air—
For with unbelievers of presence impure,
To sit down at table he could not endure.
Then Gabriel the Angel appeared in the tent,
And said to the prophet, "Me Allah has sent
To give thee reproof for thy hardness of heart.
It is not from Him thou hast learned such a part.
Allah says, 'For one hundred years and yet more,
I have life and bread given to this Gueber poor.
Thee, friend, I've not raised up to goodly estate
To take in one moment this poor man in hate.
Why, though he be Gueber and to the fire kneel,
Shouldst thou in thy bosom no charity feel?'
Go thou! bring the vagrant back here as thy guest,
And asking forgiveness, him give of thy best.
A kindly 'Salam' from me, too, convey,
And say he can make me his friend any day!"

HAFIZ

I

BITTER is the world, without
  Sugar-candy in it ;
Yet I know two lips which make
  All sweet in a minute.

II

Know that all chains of sufferance torn
    Away have I ;
Abandon'd quite to recklessness
    Myself have I.

Know that my soul from priestly thrall
    Unbound have I ;
And yet for pillow purest peace
    Of soul have I.

What matter if from Caba-stone
    Eyes turned have I ;
If Caba-stone in her dear eyes'
    Pansies have I.

When the soft hyacinths of her hair
    Fondled have I ;
Say, friend, of any rosary
    What need have I ?

Know that for Eden's apples small
    Longing have I ;
When on my darling's apple-chin
    My teeth have I.

Farewell ! quick to the wine-shop now
    To run have I ;
Nice scruples as to chapel-time
    There, there, have I !

III

Oh, Hafiz, thou darling, thou dear paroquet,
Oh never from love's own bright gold djinnistàn
May honey be lacking to sweeten thy beak,
Or comfits, or kisses, or dainty marchpane.

Alas! for poor mortals—the head goes likewise
When the turban sword-smitten goes down to the ground,
When that from your carcase rolls scimitar-shorn
'Tis the same if you are or are not Tamerlane.

His life's darling object in farthest East land,
Once sought Alexander—but missed all his aim;
We, we get ours exactly in this fatherland
When at the old vintner's the wine-stoup we drain.

Go, revel and steep thyself deep in the joy,
In the perfume and night of thy young love's soft hair;
Never leave ask of Reason—vain pompous old bird,
On your knees to that peacock you nothing will gain.

Ha! you think that we poets are flighty and light,
A jovial and noisy and joy-seeking tribe,
While their verses are fattened upon their heart's blood,
Thence the pelican-brood all their nurture obtain.

'Tis thus that the magic of Hafiz's song,
Makes sober men stagger and drunken men dance;
And 'tis thus the Sultana of earth—Poesie,
Has made his songs banners to wave o'er her fane.

DAUMER.

IV

Let the bridegroom be the spirit,
Let bride language be;
Give Hafiz his proper merit,
And the wedding see.

GOETHE.

PSALM CXXXVII.

LORN exiles we sat
By Babylon's stream,
Of our lov'd days in Zion
To talk and to dream.

We wept—while our harps
We disconsolate hung
On the willows around us,
All mute and unstrung.

Then our captors came to us,
And with mocking jeers,
Making scorn of our sorrows
And jests of our tears,

For melodies asked us,
By anguish oppressed,
And said to us, jibing,
"Come, lighten your breast.

"Chant a psalm to Yehovah,[1]
The Mighty and Strong,
Or of Zion the holy
Now sing us a song."

O! how should we sing
Of Yehovah the Lord,
Or of Zion the holy,
In this land abhorred?

Yerushalem[2]—Oh
Thee, if I forget,
Yerushalem—Oh!
May my hand palsied get.

[1] The name of God is spelt various ways in Hebrew, but never *Jehovah*.
[2] Yerushalem, the abode of peace. Ἱερουσαλήμ, Ἱερυσόλυμα.

Yerushalem—Oh !
When I think not on thee,
May my tongue withered up
In my gums and lips be.

Yerushalem—Oh !
May I be turned to earth
If I love not thy sadness
'Fore all heathen mirth !

Remember, Yehovah,
Of Edom the scum,
Who said, " Down with her, down !
Her bad end has come."

O daughters of Babel,
O mincing of gait,
With your dark ogling eyes
And your proud heads elate ;

Who make the air tinkle
With anklets of gold,
Who with jewelled crescents
Your rich locks enfold :

Down, down, shall the Lord
Bring your pride to the dust,
And on your curs'd beauty
Be hot irons thrust !

Shorn shall your fine tresses
Be from brow to nape,
Stead of silks your fair bodies
With *saq* ye shall drape.

O blessed be he who
On you brings such scorn
As ye've brought on me,
From Yerushalem torn.

O blessed shall he be
Who'll take by the locks
Your infants and dash their
Young skulls on the rocks.

SOME QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM[1]

THOU mad'st me of earth, water and air,
Could I help it !
Silk or cotton I must as thou wouldst daily wear,
Could I help it !
In my brain all my doings for good and for ill,
You have fully beforehand writ me down there—
Could I help it !

Alas ! for the heart which lovingly warm,
Could not be ;
Which cheered and tormented by love's yearning charm,
Could not be ;
The day when love passing shall leave thee all cold,
A worse day than that for thy soul's deadly harm,
Could not be.

For goodly people I would ransom be,
To them right willingly I'd bend the knee,
But wouldst thou have a good foretaste of hell,
Of vulgar men and base seek the society.

My soul and body are at war, that's plain !
What can I do ?
My deeds mostly give me but shame and pain,
What can I do ?
And should the Lord have mercy for my sins,
The shame I must ever still bear in my brain.
What can I do ?

Ye heavens, your wheel gives best things to the vile—
Baths, mills, canals, with gardens by the mile ;
While noble fellows pawn their rings for bread,
For you a groat to pay were scarce worth while.

[1] Note 28.

Ye bunglers in a world which is
Naught, naught,
Built on a bubble of which mortal sees
Naught, naught;
Your lives are sorry dots between two naughts,
And after their nonentities,
Naught, naught!

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE CORAN

THE PRINCIPAL PRAYER OF THE MOSLEMS, SÛRÂT I

In the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate—

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, the merciful, the compassionate, the King of the day of judgment. We implore thy help. Guide us in the straight way—in the way of those to whom thou hast been gracious, and not in the way of those who have incurred thy anger, nor in the way of those who have gone astray.

The three last Sûrâts of the Coran—cxii., cxiii., cxiv.—are also used as prayers.

Sûrât cxii. is called *El halas*, the deliverance, and is the usual profession of faith in Islam.

In the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate—

Say: "He is Allah, the One,
Allah the Everlasting,
He begets not and is not begotten
(*That is, he has no child, and is the child of none*);
Like unto him there is none."

The following prayers are warders off of evil:—

SÛRÂT CXIII

In the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate—

Say: "I take refuge with thee, Allah of the dawn! From the evil which he hath created; from the evil of night in its coming; and from the evil of blowers on magic knots (*sorceresses, who in tying knots utter maleficent magic words*), from the evil of the envious when he envies (*that is, from the evil eye*)."

SÛRÂT CXIV

In the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate—
Say: "I take refuge in the Lord of men, the King of men, the Allah of men; from the evil of the whisperer—Satan—who whispers evil into the hearts of men; and from demons (the ginns) and from men."

The praying against the assaults of the tempter at the fall of night finds a parallel in a lesson of the Catholic service for *complines:* "Fratres, sobrii estote et vigilate: quia adversarius vester diabolus tamquam leo rugiens circuit, quærens quem devoret." Nightfall seems to be the hour at which the assaults of evil spirits are generally to be feared.

In the above chapters we have not attempted translation into the rhymed prose which forms for an Arab one of the chief charms of the Coran. The following *Sûrât* will give some notion of this. This Sûrât is one of the most moving for a Moslem of all the Coran; it recalls the trials of the prophet when he was a poor orphan boy; it is a kind of Moslem *Magnificat.* At the conclusion of its recital in the mosque all the congregation cry "*Allah akbar*"—"God is great."

SÛRÂT XCIII (given at Mecca)

In the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate—
I swear by the splendour of light,
And by the silence of night,
That the Lord shall never forsake thee, nor in his hatred take thee.
Truly for thee shall be winning, better than all beginning.
Soon shall the Lord console thee, grief no longer control thee, and fear no longer cajole thee.
Thou wert an orphan-boy, yet the Lord found home for thy head,
When thy feet went astray, were they not to the right path led?
Did he not find thee poor, yet riches around thee spread?
Then on the orphan-boy let thy proud feet never tread,
And never turn away the beggar who seeks for bread,
But of the Lord's bounty ever let praise be sung and said."

But the verses considered among the grandest in the Coran are those of the *Ayatu 'l Kursiy,* "the verses of the throne," which are sometimes inscribed in letters of gold in the domes of the mosques.

Allah—there is no God besides him—the soul of life; the unchangeable; neither slumber nor sleep ever approaches him. All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth is his. He knows the past of men and their future; but without his will they cannot be partakers in his knowledge. His throne covers the heavens and the earth; in sustaining both of them he never droops; and he is the Most High, the magnificent.

[1] Coran, Sûrât ii., verse 256.

THE CALIPH AND HIS ARAB BRIDE

And when Maisúnu, the daughter of Magdalin, became the bride of the Caliph Muawiyatin (may God be pleased with him !), she was taken from her desert to Damascus, and she had much home-sickness for her tribe, and pined for the land of her birth, where she first lay her head, and one day Muawiyatin heard her singing, and he listened to her and found she was chanting verses of her own, which ran thus :—

A TENT surely fluttering in breezes lightly
Than any big palace is dearer to me ;
To sit on the sand my crust of bread munching,
Than all your fine banquets is dearer to me ;
And the breeze as it whistles in our sandy hollows,
Than any drum-rumblings is dearer to me ;
And a camel-hair smock, which is cool to the eye,
Than all silks and satins is dearer to me ;
And the dog which barks watchful at strangers approaching
Than a town-bred tomcat is far dearer to me ;
And a young camel trotting while I ride the mother,
Than a mule with fine trappings is dearer to me ;
And a good, young, brave cousin of my dear old uncle
Than an obstinate calf is much dearer to me.

The singer ended, and when Muawiyatin had heard the verses, he said : " The daughter of Magdalin could not finish without making me an obstinate calf."

MOSES AS LAMPBEARER

A CURIOUS fancy seized on Moses' soul,
To know if God the Lord slept like a man ;
So Allah sent an angel from on high,
Who to the Holy Prophet this wise spake—
"Take, Moses, in thy hands two burning lamps,
Then take thy stand and hold thyself upright,
With both arms stretched full length, and keep them so ;
And watch then the whole night through and through."
Then Moses took the lamps and placed himself
And held them fast on high a long, long time.
But at the last such weariness came on him,
That the lamps fell to earth from out his hands.
"Thus," cried the angel ; "thus, O simple man,
Thus would the sun and moon and starry host ;
Thus would the joined fabric of the world
In waste and ruin fall did Allah sleep ! "

THE PIOUS WOLF

THE only lambling of a quite poor man
A wolf seized once and would it straight devour,
But the good Prophet made him stand aloof,
And made the ravenous beast feel pitiful.
He said to him : " Thy hunger stay awhile ;
Steal from the poor no more—the rich have herds
Of many thousand heads ; go feed on them."
The wolf obedient was, and so at death
Was raised, like many a pious beast, to Paradise.

NOTES

MATTHEW'S GRAVE

NOTE I.

"*With thy panting heart ever beating;*
With thy restless blood ever running."

The "panting heart," "the o'er-laboured heart," "the vainly throbbing heart," "the restless blood" of Mr. Arnold were constituents of his person to which he was never wearied in calling attention.

One of the titles to glory of the great *phraseur* is the invention of the foolish untruthful jibe at Byron as the getter-up of "the pageant of a bleeding heart," and leading it all about Europe "to the Ætolian shore," but Mr. Arnold himself was shameless and unwearied in exposing to the public his own "panting heart" hanging on his sleeve, or some other part of him—you can hardly hit upon a page of his lyrics or elegiacs without finding hearts and breasts there in a more or less distressing condition.

The most modest and moderate, and therefore the least objectionable of Mr. Arnold's eulogists, Mr. Warren, President of Magdalen College, and present Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, puts as heading to an article on Mr. Arnold in the *Quarterly Review* (January, 1905), this verse of his :—

"Ah! two desires toss about
The poet's restless blood;
One drives him to the world without,
And one to solitude."

We suppose Mr. Warren thinks this very fine, since he heads his eulogy with it; but really Dr. Watts and Martin Tupper have written much better things than this—better in point of versification, and freer from egotistical conceit.

The stanza begins with Mr. Arnold's favourite expletive, *Ah!* When Mr. Arnold varies his frequent italics with an "*Ah!*" or a "*But, ah!*" or an "*Alas,*" we always look for something more silly or commonplace than is usual with him to follow. When on one occasion a fine lady, trying to put Talleyrand down at dinner-table, said : "*M. de Talleyraud, pourquoi avez vous dit Oh?*" Talleyrand replied : "*Madame la Comtesse, je n'ai pas dit Oh! j'ai dit Ah!*" and certainly there is a difference between "Oh" and "Ah." They are of different genders. Mr. Arnold prefers the more feminine interjection, Ah! and plies it *usque ad nauseam*. Opening his volume at random, we fall on a piece called "Self-Deception," in which there are four "*ah's*" and one "*alas*" in four verses of four lines—which is certainly an overdose of "*ah's,*" and generally Mr. Arnold's poetry offers a surfeit

of "*ah's*," "*but, ah's*," and "*alases*"—he-works, however, other pet words very hard, such as "*Yea*," "*Yes, Yes*," and the word "*hush*" he seems to think monstrous fine, and so do his critics, who seem, in spite of Byron's "hush of midnight," and the prehistoric "hush-a-bye, baby," and a thousand other hushes, to think he has a patent, exclusive right to it. "Unplumbed" both he and his critics also think quite sufficient to make a *matchless* line, and such five-syllabled words as "unconquerable" and "inviolable" seem to possess for Professor Saintsbury as great a magic as "That blessed word, Mesopotamia." "Lucidity" is also a much-abused word in Mr. Arnold's vocabulary. Then, can desires play pitch and toss with the blood—even with Mr. Arnold's blood? A poet should be careful in using words which have unpleasant associations, and when we hear of blood being tossed, we recall to mind the only time when we saw blood being pitched about, and that was in the *abattoirs* at Paris by municipal butchers with wooden scoops and in bloodstained *sabots*. Then "restless blood"—there was really nothing exemplary or remarkable in Mr. Arnold possessing "restless blood." Even a donkey has "restless blood," unless it be a dead donkey, but Mr. Arnold evidently thought he had a distressing monopoly of "restless blood," as he had of a "panting heart" and other kinds of agitated hearts; and then "the world without,"—how can any creature, from a man to a mollusc, exist apart from a "world without," unless he, she, or it fills the whole universe; and the taste for occasional solitude, is this peculiar to the poetical possessor of "restless blood" and a "panting heart"? Even Mr. Toots had a desire occasionally to withdraw from the society of the Game Chicken and other illustrious friends, and Caligula, when he wished all mankind had but one neck, must have had a still fiercer longing for solitude than Mr. Arnold. Did Mr. Arnold invent *O Solitudo, Beatitudo! Nunquam nimus solus quam cum solus?* and a good many other fine things which have been said about solitude?

The poem in which Mr. Arnold works his "panting heart" the hardest is that "matchless" one, "The Buried Life," a poem, says one of his eulogists, Mr. Herbert Paul, "so perfect, so finished, and so *self-contained* that it would be spoiled by quotation"; it is, therefore, according to Mr. Paul, a priceless gem, perfect in its whole, and perfect in every atom. In this peerless poem the great Matthew has a baker's dozen—thirteen, no less—of hearts and breasts, panting or otherwise, in two or three pages. It has, however, the merit of only having a limited supply of "ah's" and "alases," only two of each interjection appearing in this "matchless" gem.

Analysing "The Buried Life," we find the mysteries of Mr. Arnold's heart and breast and his ignorance as to the *unde* and *quo* of his existence receive solutions which would not have satisfied in any way the doubts of Heine's *Narr*, who in the lines called "Questionings" among Heine's North Sea Poems, puts precisely the same queries to himself as Mr. Arnold does in "The Buried Life," and is left waiting for an answer, and might wait for all eternity as for anything Mr. Arnold could tell him.

Mr. Arnold's interesting heart in this poem beats any Chinese puzzle which was ever invented. In his breast there is, strange to say, a heart, but stranger still, in his heart there is a river, the river of his life, and stranger still, this river is locked up in some recipient which has bolts—*i.e.*, a strong-box or a lock-up house of some kind—and when the bolt is "shot back" through the magnetic influence of the hand or eye of a young lady medium, the river is let loose and goes gambolling about through pleasant fields and meadows, and illuminated by a sun

the centre evidently of a solar system within Mr. Arnold's capacious breast.

The *leit motiv* of this perfect poem (*judice* Mr. Paul) runs thus—Mr. Arnold has a "pleasant war of mocking words" with some young lady, perhaps the same whom he wishes in another poem to visit him by night and kiss his "fevered brow," and do his hair's middle parting for him, and to say to him—*My love, why sufferest thou?* or perhaps it was that one with whom he exchanged wet kisses, which, fearing to forget before they were dry, he desired to make a note of them on *the tablets of memory;* or it may be that other young lady whom he taunts with having been kissed by others before he himself had that felicity. However, whether it was one of these young ladies or another altogether, Mr. Arnold, in the midst of "the pleasant war of mocking words" finds, as very often happens with him, *a nameless sadness* come over him, such as came over Shakespeare's wanton young gentleman of France and the youthful Mr. Toots—for "*We know, we know*" (*sic*). (Mr. Arnold is always, as we have remarked in verse, so knowing in knowing, and so proud of it, too—for he calls attention almost as often to his knowingness as he does to his "panting" "o'er-laboured heart.") Well, "*we know that we can smile,*" a profoundly philosophical remark, since smiling and laughter, according to some philosophers, form a chief distinction between man and the inferior animals, and we *know*—

"*Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,*"

but none of us so *seraphically* as, *selon* Mr. G. W. E. Russell, Mr. Arnold does in his angelic *pokings of fun.* None the less, Mr. Arnold feels

"*A something in his breast,*"

to which the young lady's "light words bring no rest," and her "gay smiles no anodyne."

"*Give me thine hand and hush awhile,*
And turn those limpid eyes on mine,
And let me read thy inmost soul."

Well, Mr. Arnold and the young lady no doubt sing mentally "hush-a-bye, baby" for a while together, and look into each other's eyes—but nothing comes of it—alas! the young lady will not be thought-read by Mr Arnold.

"*Alas!* is even love too weak
To unlock the heart and let it speak;
Are even lovers powerless to REVEAL
To one another what they feel?
I KNEW the mass of men concealed
Their thoughts for fear that, if REVEALED,
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, and with blame reproved."

The profound sense of which last lines appears to be that if Jones, Brown, and Robinson, in their *revealings, reveal* too private *revealings* to other Robinsons, Joneses, or Browns, without being asked for such *revealings,* they will either be laughed at for bores or considered impertinent for such *revealings.*

Then we come again to Mr. Arnold's great discovery in the matter of hearts—men live and move ever, even out of Carnival Time—

> "*Tricked in disguises*, alien to the rest
> Of men, and alien to themselves—and yet
> *The same* HEART *beats in every* BREAST.
> But we, my love, doth a like spirit *benumb*
> Our *hearts*, our voices? must we, too, be dumb?"

A "benumbed voice" recalls the frozen tones of the trumpet of Baron Munchausen's postilion, which began to play a tune when the trumpet was hung up to thaw in a warm room—and if the *same heart* beats in every breast, it beats a very different tune in different breasts, however ubiquitous it may be. But does the same heart beat in the breast of a Byron or Bellini as in that of a Bill Sykes or a Fra Diavolo? This is about the silliest and most unmeaning line, perhaps, which was ever written.

But the mystery of one heart being a mystery to another and being also a mystery to itself is, to Mr. Arnold, as captivating a topic as the head of Charles I. was to poor Cousin Dick in "David Copperfield."

We find it embodied in the love verses of Mr. Arnold addressed to the philanthropic polyandrous young lady in Switzerland with the *bocca bacciata* before alluded to, and to whom he said:—

> "To the lips, AH, of others
> These lips have been pressed,
> And others ere I was
> Were strained to thy breast."

As to how many others preceded Matthew in these osculatory and straining proceedings we are left in the dark. However, he goes on:—

> "Far, far from each other
> Our spirits have grown,
> And what *heart* knows another—
> AH! who knows his own?"

These lines, by Arnoldian critics, have been thought exquisite. The following are not so exquisite, perhaps, but they may be found more amusing:—

> "Far, far from each other
> Our noses have grown,
> And what nose knows another—
> AH! who knows his own?"

One might have thought Mr. Arnold might at least have kept this monotonous quandary out of a bad imitation of a Greek play; but, no, this head of Charles I. is too much for him—he cannot get on without it, for we find it in "Merope," where a bevy of Messenian young women were puzzling over the problem of the unknown, *unplumbed heart*, in bodily concert, three thousand years ago. Mr. Arnold, as we have said, is very fond of the word "unplumbed"—there is a deal of virtue in this word; it always raises a cheer and an encore among his critics, even when he gives this epithet to the sea, which is not "unplumbed" anywhere. Well, the

Messenian damsels sing of the heart as an ocean, a Mount Everest, and a North Pole all in one :—

> "But more than all *unplumbed*,
> *Unscaled*, *untrodden*, is the *heart* of man.
> YEA, and not only have we not explored
> That wide and various world, the *heart* of others,
> But even our own *heart*, that narrow world
> Bounded in our *breast*, we hardly know."

Yet, although Mr. Arnold says "the same *heart* beats in every *breast*," he evidently thinks his own heart is of exceptional quality, and is for ever making his own little pageant out of it. In the same series "Switzerland," from which the above queer love verses were taken, he excuses his young lady friend for being a trifle too liberal in her favours and for pressing the lips of others and straining others to her breast :—

> "*I blame thee not, this heart I know*
> *To be long loved was never framed,*
> *For* SOMETHING *in its depths doth glow,*
> *Too strange, too restless, too untamed.*"

This is really the sort of verse which a Byronic Mr. Toots might be expected to produce. It would be interesting to know in what sort of a frame Mr. Arnold's heart was framed, with a strong-box and a solar system inside it ; and then the mysterious *something*, too strange, too restless, too untamed, which glows in its depths was no doubt the river of life. Mr. Arnold evidently all his life long suffered from a heart disease of a "somethingness," whose diagnosis he never could get at.

But to return to Mr. Paul's perfection of a poem, "The Buried Life," Mr. Arnold goes on :—

> "AH ! well for us if ever we,
> Even for a moment, can get free
> *Our heart*, and have our lips *unchained*,
> For that which *seals* them hath been *deep ordained*."

Here we have to "*unchain sealed lips*," but the lips, perhaps, have *both* chains and seals on them, which must have been most uncomfortable appurtenances to go through life with—dancing in fetters would be far easier than talking and kissing with "chained" and "sealed" lips.

Nevertheless it "hath been so deep ordained," and now we get an explanation of why this "hath been deep ordained." Man, or Mr Arnold, has a river in his *heart*, and his heart is locked up by a *bolt* in some receptacle, and "fate," which here takes the place of Mr. Arnold's god Fluidity, foreseeing what a "*frivolous baby*" man would be, has been kinder to him, "the frivolous baby man," than the "frivolous baby man" discovers, for, foreseeing that the "frivolous baby" would change himself into a liquid of some kind and "*pour himself in every strife*," and "*well-nigh change his own identity*," "*his genuine self*," his very *ego* in fact, and make himself into two if not three gentlemen at once, like Mrs. Malaprop's Cerberus, in which case he would not be able to recognise himself, like the Irishman who, his face having been blackened in his sleep by practical jokers, declared on getting up, when he looked in his glass, that "by Jasus

they had called the wrong man." Fate, Mr. Arnold informs us, "forced him," nevertheless—

> "to obey,
> Even in his own despite, his being's law,"

whatever that may be, and fate effected this when it—

> "Bade, through the *deep recesses of our breast*,
> The unregarded river of our life
> Pursue with undiscernible flow its way."

But it appears that in the most unsuitable moments—

> "Often in the world's most crowded streets,

in the Strand or Cheapside—

> "And often in the din of strife,"

at Waterloo or Trafalgar—"the frivolous baby man" has—

> "an unspeakable desire
> After the knowledge of our buried life,
> A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
> In thinking out our true original *course* (*sic*),
> A longing to inquire
> *Into the mystery of this heart which beats*
> *So wild, so deep in us.*"

To solve the *unde et quo* question of Heine's Narr in fact.

If the "*frivolous baby man*" were seized with this sudden desire of introspection, this passionate longing of the *ego* to contemplate the interior of its own navel, in the middle of a crossing in Cheapside in business hours, or in the rush of a storming party at such a siege as Badajoz —his own doubts would quickly be settled one way or another, only his fellow-men would not profit much by the solution, for dead men tell no tales.

Nevertheless, allowing "the frivolous baby man" to delve with Mr. Arnold into his *ego* for a while, he never, according to the same authority, delves deep enough :—

> "But deep enough, ALAS! one never mines,
> And we have been on *many thousand lines.*

Query—railway lines ?

> "But hardly ever have we for one little hour
> Been on our own line (of rail), have we been ourselves,
> Hardly had skill to utter one of all
> The countless feelings that course through our breast."

And now comes the grand discovery of our poet, philosopher, and guide, the discovery of the mighty Amazon of life flowing through the deep recesses of his chest :—

"Only—but this is rare—
When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
When jaded with the rush and glare
Of the interminable hours,
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear.
When our world-deafened ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caressed,
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our *breast*,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again,
The eye sinks inward and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean we say, and what we would we know.
A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmurs, and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze,
And thus arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth for ever chase
That flying and elusive shadow, rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face,
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast,
And then *he thinks* he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes."

Therefore, although Mr. Arnold's initiatory complaint was that the lady's tongue in her war of mocking words, her gay smiles, and her limpid eyes, and their playing at hush-a-bye baby together, did not help him a bit to read her inmost soul, nevertheless her mesmeric influence enabled him to think that he had for a moment read his own inmost soul and seen his own river of life and internal solar system in the fashion already mentioned, and then, like Alice in Wonderland, he says what he means and he means what he says, and he gets enlightened on the most abstruse subjects without trouble or study. It was doubtless in one of those clairvoyant moments that the poet, critic, sage, and theologian, in one of his atheological essays, was enabled to give an account of St. Paul's conversion before his conversion on the road to Damascus—an account entirely developed from Mr. Arnold's internal consciousness, and which doubtless would have enabled St. Paul to have added another chapter to the First Epistle to the Corinthians had he but known of it in time.

How superior to this long, impotent and pretentious rigmarole is the ode of the poetaster Trissotin, "*Sur la Princess Uranie et sa fièvre*," in Molière's immortal "*Femmes Savantes*"! It is less silly, very much shorter, and immensely more amusing. Mr. Arnold has attempted to write here as elsewhere a philosophical poem without the slightest tincture of philosophy, natural or acquired. It cannot be said to be the silliest poem that was ever written, *parceque il y a de degrès en tout*, as the judge at Rouen informed Alexandre Dumas père, and something sillier might possibly be found, but it may fairly be said that it is the silliest poem which ever imposed on booktasters and critics with enough learned lumber in their heads to know better, and made them accept it as anything else but laboriously and pretentiously versified priggism, namby-pambyism, and mystification. And it may also be said that any one who has accepted this and other famous passages of the divine Mat as sublime and *matchless* ought to be put completely out of court, and deprived of all influence in any verdict as to what constitutes poetry and what does not.

And we would lay a similar ban of critical interdiction on the approvers of Mr. Arnold's "seraphic pokings of fun," and on those who have found in him the greatest wit and humourist since Voltaire. Such criticism really goes to the verge of imbecility.

It was amusing to see that Mr. G. W. E. Russell, who is so enchanted with Matthew's *seraphic pokings of fun*, found in a late publication a similarity between the genius of Sidney Smith and Pascal!

NOTE 2.

"*Of the scented, soft-cooing ocean.*"

The following lines refer to the most famous, perhaps, of Mr. Arnold's famous passages—the one terminating with the description of the river of Time in a poem called "The Future." The river of Time—which is as original a conception of Mr. Arnold's as his "hushes" and his "ahs"—is quite another stream than the river of Life, although both, perhaps, are affluents of the Divine Stream, which is somehow "outside ourselves," all three fluidities being possibly finally merged in the "scented and murmuring infinite sea," with the Stygian river of his critics outside it. However that may be, the river of Life flowed, it will be remembered, in an underground current in dark recesses in Mr. Arnold's capacious heart. Now man, according to this highly philosophical poem "The Future," is born asleep in a ship on the river of Time in an incipient stage somewhere in "cloud-cuckoo land," with the incipient river of Life in his heart. What crew navigated "the ship" we are not told—perhaps it was a motor-boat, but even then it required a steerer until "the frivolous baby man" could awake to take the helm, or else it ran risk of being smashed at every instant. When the sleeping babe is woke up in his ship is not clear, but he may wake up—

> "Where the *snowy mountain* pass,
> *Echoing the screams of eagles.*
> Hems in its gorges the bed
> Of the new-born clear-flowing stream."

The surroundings of the ship and baby man are evidently alpine. Now, we have seen some of the great rivers of Europe and America at their sources emerging from glaciers "and snowy passes," but we never saw a clear-flowing stream anywhere—glacier water is generally as turbid as it well can be—but we doubt whether Mr. Arnold ever saw a great river at its source: "*sa grandeur le retenait aux rivages inférieurs.*" Mr. Arnold's description of his river in its early mountainous gorge, for one who has seen glacier torrents boiling and tossing and foaming and cascading among multitudinous rocks, is tame enough, it is true; but it is necessary, in order to make Mr. Arnold's description of his river hang together, that his baby man should enjoy some peace and calm; yet whatever calm Mr. Arnold gave him when launched in his sleep on the river of Time, is broken by the "screamings of eagles," for the baby man awakes to the screamings of birds of prey.

Well, let Mr. Arnold have his "calm mountainous shore" for his precious ship and its baby sailor: the river carries ship and baby off, and it comes to a plain, and he says sweetly and harmoniously, with "cunning orderly

words," in one of "those sweetest of cadences" which enchant the conceited and silly *Edinburgh Reviewer* of July, 1904 :—

> " This tract which the river of Time
> *Now flows through with us is the plain* (*sic*) ;
> *Gone is the calm of its earlier shore.*
> Bordered by cities and *hoarse*
> With a thousand cries is its stream ;
> And we on its breast, our minds
> Are confused as the cries we hear,
> *Changing and shot as the sights which we see.*"

Really, a "hoarse river" is a wonderful conception. Is it hoarse with a cold caught in the mountains, or is it hoarse after hollaing out a thousand cries ? And then what are "minds changing and shot" ? A "shot mind" is more difficult to conceive than a "hoarse river" ; or, happy thought !— did the poet wish to suggest a similitude between "changing minds" and remnants of "shot silk" ?

But the famousest of famous passages is reserved as a conclusion to this grand lyric :

> " Haply, the river of Time
> As it grows, as the towns on its marge
> Fling their wavering lights
> On a wider, statelier stream,
> May acquire, *if not the calm*
> *Of its early mountainous shore,*
> Yet a solemn peace of its own ;
> And the width of the waters, *the hush*
> Of the grey expanse where he floats,
> *Freshening its current and spotted with foam,*
> As it draws to the ocean, may strike
> Peace to the soul of man on its breast,
> As the pale waste widens around him,
> As the banks fade dimmer away,
> As the stars come out and the night wind
> Brings up the stream
> *Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.*"

The whole of which rigmarole amounts to a hope that man may pass away from this life in peace and resignation—a hope not unknown to the disciples of Socrates and Buddha and Confucius ; while the Christian has added thereto the hope of a joyful resurrection, of which here not a word. But the pert and silly encomiast of Arnold in the *Edinburgh Review* of July, 1904, ends his farrago of conceit and absurdity by portraying the Evangelic Matthew as passing his life in crying, like a new Peter the Hermit, "*On ! on ! to the City of God !*"—*i.e.*, the City of the Stream of Righteousness, situated somewhere in or beyond "the scented and murmuring infinite sea," and he precedes the quotation of the above lines by the following sentence :—

"And all who have read his correspondence must confess that he himself in secret silence stretched forth his wistful hands towards the sacred banks 'of the further shore,' as he sang in cadences among his loveliest"—viz., the above lines.

This sentence surpasses, as it was difficult to do, the great Mat in silliness, incongruity and untruthfulness. In the first place we, who have

read his very poor correspondence as a matter of duty pretty carefully, must deny that we are obliged to confess anything of the kind. Matthew seems, in his letters, to enjoy the pleasant life which was prepared for him with great gusto, and to have been very far from desiring to quit this world at all. He is always *pieno di se*, full of himself; always cackling about some fresh article or other, like a hen who has laid a new egg; always recording triumphantly what the Joneses and Browns and Robinsons of the day were saying of this article or that and what a fine fellow he is—without a thought of the "further shore." And what is there in the above quoted lines about the further shore at all—the Stygian shore of Virgil or any other? His precious river of Life is about to lose itself in "the murmur and scents" of the infinite sea, and even Matthew Arnold did not go to the absurdity of giving to an infinite sea a Virgilian Stygian shore which he could only arrive at by traversing infinity.

But the lines themselves have, even without the absurdity of a "*ripa ulterior*," "a Stygian shore," being foisted into them, an utterly false ring, as has every one of the vaunted famous passages of this veritable poet-aster; they will not, poetically or metaphorically, hold water. Leaving alone the absurdity of the river acquiring the calmness of a mountain torrent cascading amid the screamings of birds of prey, how can a width of waters and Mr. Arnold's favourite "hush" "strike," and strike peace into the soul of man as with a sledge-hammer?—"strike me dead, in fact," if they could. The *Edinburgh Reviewer* leaves out of his quotation of the above lines two which he—even he—perhaps thought too absurd; they are the second and third of the following:—

> "And the width of the waters, the HUSH
> *Of the grey expanse where he floats,*
> *Freshening its current and spotted with foam,*
> As it draws to the ocean, may strike."

According to the strict grammar of these lines, man as he floats (in his sleep) on the *grey expanse* which later is turned into a "*pale waste*," freshens the current of the said grey expanse, and is himself spotted with foam—how the man, or the soul of man, can freshen the current, or how he gets spotted with foam in the calm of "the pale waste," passes comprehension, unless the soul of man in a motor-boat freshens the current by the rotation of his own turbine and gets spotted with foam by the commotion caused in the infinite ocean by his own speed. However, admitting that Matthew did not mean this, he must have meant that "the width of the waters and the *hush*" were

> "Freshening the current and spotted with foam."

Yet, even so, how could a width of waters and even Mr. Arnold's "hush" freshen a current, and could the very best "hush" of Mr. Arnold's manufacture get "spotted with foam"—a "hush spotted with foam" must be really something as extraordinary as "greased lightning." Leaving all these things, which, as Lord Dundreary would say, no fellow can understand, the whole incongruous amalgam is rendered sublime in the eye of Arnoldians by the beauty of the last line—

> "Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea,"

—which, it appears, almost outdoes that other "matchless" lugubrious line—

> "The unplumbed salt estranging sea."

It is a question with Mr. Arnold's eulogists which is the finest of these two lines, but all agree that both are "matchless"—although one matches the other.

Mr. H. Paul says of the "unplumbed" line: "It can hardly be surpassed for curious felicity in the English language," which is not surprising in a critic who finds "The Buried Life" to be "a perfect poem." Now "estranging" is certainly not a finer word than the "*dissociabilis*" of Horace, of which it is a translation—"*oceanus dissociabilis.*" And mark, too, the difference between a true poet and a false one: the *dissociabilis* of Horace is perfectly in keeping with the main idea of the poem. The ocean he had in his poetic vision was the ocean before it had been crossed by the Dædalian sail; but it is pusillanimous and even disgraceful in an Englishman to talk of the highway of commerce and of navies as an *estranging* sea. There is nothing, too, especially wonderful in calling the sea "salt," which any baby might do after tasting it; and as for "unplumbed," in Mr. Arnold's "Merope" not only is the human heart "unplumbed" but it is "unscaled," like the Himalayas, and "untrodden," like the North Pole; but "unplumbed" is more true metaphorically of the heart than it is physically of the sea, for no voyage of discovery as yet has found any ocean depths "unplumbable"; so if Mr. Arnold's admirers claim for him the credit of a new epithet for the sea, it is not a true one. As for the "murmurs and scents" of the infinite sea—"murmurs and scents" are more applicable to a manufactory of perfumery than to the infinite sea of Eternity.

How restoring, after dealing with Matt's pusillanimous platitudes, to call to mind any line of Campbell's, and especially these—

> "Her march is on the mountain wave,
> Her home is on the deep."

NOTE 3.

"*Of thy great god Fluidity.*"

God, according to Mr. Arnold, is "a Stream of tendency *not ourselves* which makes for righteousness." Matthew was very fond of aqueous similitudes. The symbolism of Life as a river and of Time as a river are old as human thought, although Mat seems to claim them as private property of his own. The Deity has been typified as a Source or Fountain often enough; but I do not know that he has been typified as a sourceless Stream, with Mr. Arnold's limitation that lives of men are rivers outside this fluidity—even the pagan Horace had a more spiritual conception of the human soul as a *divinæ particula auræ.*

NOTE 4.

'*Who had no love in his nature.*'

This is the passage of Mr. Arnold alluded to:—

> "But was it then? I think
> Surely it was that bard
> Unnamed who, Goethe said,
> *Had every other gift but wanted love,*
> *Love without which the tongue*
> Even of angels sounds amiss."

There is this excuse for Arnold, that Eckerman, having recorded words to this effect as having been spoken by Goethe of Platen during Platen's lifetime, Platen's name was left a blank in the page of Eckerman. After Platen's death his name was inserted. However, Arnold adopts the saying as being rightly said of Heine, which induces one to think that Arnold had never read Heine's best poetry at all.

NOTE 5.

"*And he treats my poems as physic.*"

Arnold all his life long seems to have been under the impression that he discovered Goethe as Columbus discovered America and Adams and Leverrier discovered the planet Neptune. But Walter Scott had translated "Goetz von Berlichingen," Carlyle had translated "Wilhelm Meister," Hayward had translated "Faust," long before the great Matthew began to patronise him. It was reserved for Matthew to say the silliest things in verse which have ever been uttered about the great German poet.

"For he pursued a lonely road,
His eyes on Nature's plan,
Neither made man too much a god
Nor God too much a man."

Where and when did Goethe, following in Bossuet's track, write his "*Connaissance de Dieu et de soi-meme*"? Goethe's conceptions of the Deity, as was natural, varied very much at different times. In the prologue to "Faust" the Deity does not, as in the opera of Rossini, *Moisè in Egitto*, sing a solo behind the scenes, but He speaks very like a man, much to the satisfaction of Mephistopheles.

"*Es ist gar hübsch von einem grossen Herren*
So menschlich mit dem Teufel selbst zu sprechen."

"For such a mighty *Herr* 'tis very civil
To speak so human with the very Devil."

But it is very difficult to find anything human at all in the series of poems *Gott und Welt*, the first lines of whose "*Proœmium*" are :—

"*In namen dessen der Sich selbst erschuf*
Von Ewigkeit in schaffenden Beruf."

"In His name who His own creation made,
Creation being His pre-eternal trade," &c.

He seems to be putting himself in the skin of Prometheus when he exclaims, "*Ich kenne nicht ärmeres unter der Sonne als euch Götter*"—"I know of nothing more pitiful under the sun than you, ye Gods." And he quotes in his *Wahrheit und Dichtung* with amusement and seeming approval the *dictum* of a captious Professor of his youth: "Even in God I spy faults" ("*Auch im Gott entdecke ich Fehler*").

What Matthew meant by the above lines about Goethe's views of God and man he probably did not himself know. It was one of his usual bits of

"bunkum." Then what does he mean by the preceding lines, Goethe "pursuing a lonely road, his eyes on Nature's plan"? "Lonely road"! Goethe was no Wordsworth, and as little of a recluse as any poet who ever lived. Was he not a Court favourite, a Cabinet Minister, and director of a theatre? had he not scores of friends and correspondents? and was he not one of the most accessible of men? Did his friendship with Schiller count for nothing? The noble Schiller seems for Mr. Arnold to have had no existence. He never mentions him. *Eyes on Nature's plan*—this, too, is mere baseless nonsense. That Goethe studied with effect botany and osteology is true. He was very proud, too, of his unscientific efforts to discredit Newton in optics, but as Matthew was entirely ignorant in all matters of science, he could know little of Goethe's merits in this respect, and the idea of Goethe travelling along a *lonely road* with Nature's plan in his hand for a breviary is mere foolish, untruthful Arnoldian mystification.

Then it is not true that, as stated in the next stanza, Goethe passed "his tender youthful prime" "in a tranquil world." He has narrated in *Wahrheit und Dichtung* at some length the story of the occupation of Frankfort by the French during the Seven Years' War, just at the period of "his tender youthful prime"; and how a French officer was quartered in his father's house, and how his father, a worshipper of the glory of the great Frederick, narrowly escaped being shot for abusing the said French officer and the French nation. That was not such a very tranquil time.

But we have something still more ridiculous about Goethe in a poem called "Memorial Verses":—

> "Physician of an iron age,
> Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
> He took the suffering human race,
> He read each wound, each weakness clear,
> And struck his finger on the place,
> And said, 'Thou ailest here and here.'"

If Goethe could have read these lines he would never have had the slightest idea they were a tribute to himself, and would have disclaimed such tribute with a smile of contempt. He occupied himself as little with the nosology of his species as was possible, and if he did once make a soul-sickness of his time the subject of a novel in the "Sorrows of Werther," he never repeated the experiment, and instead of being a physician or healer in his book, he was believed to have increased the malady and to have brought about a continental suicidal epidemic. He would have laughed at hearing himself styled a "physician," and especially one of "an iron age." And why iron age, if it was so full of wounds and weaknesses? since, too, railways were not then in existence, and the age of fighters in armour was long gone by. And then, although with Mr. Arnold the age was "an iron age," a few lines below he calls it, with equal truth, the age of Europe's dying hour, of fitful dreams and feverish power; and Goethe "saw the end of it everywhere."

In fact, the whole of Matthew's famous passages in verse about Goethe read like the maudlin attempts of a man who knew nothing about Goethe to say something superfine. As for the above quoted lines, there never was a man who in Olympian serenity occupied himself less with the ills of humanity than Goethe. The great questions which moved mankind in his day were as much ignored by him as though they had never been mooted. One of the most characteristic scenes in Eckerman's *Conversations*

is that in which the Goethean Boswell reports the complete indifference with which his idol received the news of the Revolution of 1830, which set hearts thrilling and bloods aflame all over Europe—Heine's among the number. The news of this French Revolution was utterly insignificant compared with the news that Cuvier had taken up Goethe's views about animal morphology, and expounded them in a *séance* at the French *Institut*.

NOTE 6.

"*In his bungling knowledge of German.*"

Mr. Matthew Arnold had so elementary a knowledge of German that when he visited Berlin late in life—after all his affected utterances about Goethe and Heine—he was constrained to take a professor to enable him to understand the spoken language and to make himself understood (see "Correspondence"). "*Alles grandioses bildet*," he quotes for Goethe's "*Alles grosses bildet*" (said of Byron). There is no such German word as "*grandioses*."

NOTE 7.

This passage is :—

"Now he is dead! Far hence he lies,
In the lone Syrian town,
And on his grave with shining eyes
The Syrian stars look down."

NOTE 8.

We are obliged to put capitals here to represent the author's italics. As we have stated elsewhere, when the great Mat thought himself extremely poetic he put his verse in italics. Here is another specimen of his italicised verse:—

"*Unduped of fancy, henceforth man*
Must labour! must resign
His all too human creeds and scan
Simply the way divine!"

If this verse were published in a collection of some Moody and Sankey it would not be thought worth notice even by journalistic critics, but being Matthew Arnold's it is, of course, admirable ; but what does it mean? What is Mr. Arnold's "way divine"—the worship of his god Fluidity—and where is he to "scan" the way to worship him? In Mr. Arnold's rationalistic, sophistical, dull pamphlets we suppose, "God and the Bible," &c. "God and the Bible," we see, has lately been taken under the patronage of a rationalistic society, who publish it as a book suitable for their propaganda. Towards the end of this dreary poem we have more italics—he is advised by the shade of Obermann thus :—

"What still of strength is left, employ
Thereto and to help attain
One common wave of thought and joy,
Lifting mankind again."

From which italicised lines we conclude that at some unknown period of the world's history, before the Flood or during it probably, there was a common wave of thought and joy on which mankind swam joyously, and the one far-off event towards which Mr. Arnold's efforts were to be directed was to restore this "wave of thought and joy," in which humanity might have another swim. Perhaps the Obermannic shade was counselling Matthew to endeavour to bring about a new Noachian Deluge, so that all mankind might swim again in one boat on a common wave of Mr. Arnold's divine Fluidity.

NOTE 9.

"*Only to laugh and to die.*"

Of the tricks of charlatanism with which the poem "Heine's Grave" abounds, this is perhaps the worst. Because Goethe and Heine, the latter fifty years after the former, made tours to the Harz Mountains, Mr. Arnold seizes this coincidence as a ground for lugging in a queer comparison and contrast of their subsequent lives—of course to Heine's disadvantage: Heine did nothing for thirty-six subsequent years after this time but laugh and die as compared with the sublime Goethe, who worked and lived for a longer period.

> "Goethe, too, had been there;
> In the long past winter he came
> To the frozen Harz with his soul,
> Passionate, eager, his youth
> All in ferment; but he
> Destined to work and to live
> Left it; but thou, ALAS!
> Only to laugh and to die."

These lines appear to have been introduced to show that Matthew knew that Goethe had made a visit in winter to the Harz—a visit which Goethe has celebrated in his poem the "*Harzreise im Winter.*" We doubt if Matthew ever read this poem, but if he did so we are quite sure he could not understand it.

Nearly forty years after the publication of this poem, Goethe, stimulated and gratified by the success with which a patient *rector* of a German *Gymnasium* had partially unravelled its mysteries, undertook himself to do what he rarely condescended to do—write a supplementary commentary to explain his own work. This he did in 1820, when he was seventy-one years of age, and Heine's Harzreise took place in 1824. Goethe's journey to the Harz was in 1777.

The occasion of Goethe's journey was as follows: A young man, a student named Plessing, son of the Superintendent of the district of Wermgerode, a town of some eight thousand inhabitants in the lower Harz, and three or four hours from the Brocken, being brain-sick with the hypochondriacal malady which Goethe had helped to spread by his "Sorrows of Werther," had written two letters to Goethe for counsel in his desperation, but received no reply. Goethe took the occasion of a wild boar hunt in which he had accompanied the Grand Duke of Weimar, and which led him near to the Harz, to go off alone on horseback for a two or three days' journey to see the young man in person, and, with his usual love of mystification, under a feigned name and in the guise of a landscape

painter. He was then close upon thirty years of age, already known as the author of "Goetz von Berlichingen," "Werther," and various ballads—the "Fischer," the "Erlkönig," "Prometheus," &c.—he was already privy councillor to the Grand Duke of Weimar, the lover of the Frau von Stein, and director of the Weimar Theatre; he was then a fully developed and settled man, approaching middle age. It is pretty certain that he undertook this solitary journey to the Harz amid the snows and rains of December in a very nervous mood; he was anxious, no doubt, not to have another suicide laid to his charge as the author of Werther, for it was said that the novel "The Sorrows of Werther" had caused, through suicides, more deaths than a pestilence, and a young lady drowned herself in the river close to his own door at Weimar with this lethal volume in her pocket. It is absurd to suppose or describe Goethe, then a mature young man bordering on thirty and middle age, as "a youth all in ferment," or "passionate, eager" on his snowy solitary journey on a painful mission to endeavour to save from suicide a brain-sick youth for whom, as he says in his poem, "the balsam of life was turned into poison," and who "drank misanthropy from the full goblet of love." Goethe's poem, when its cryptic allusions are unriddled, is about as sound, as coldly philosophical, as it well could be, and was an index of the feelings of the now wellnigh middle-aged man and courtier. Heine, on the contrary, was but just turned twenty when he visited the Harz; he was leaving Goettingen on foot as lighthearted as a boy let loose from school and out for a holiday, full of the exuberant spirits which found vent in the poems of his own *Harzreise*—the lovely Princess Ilse, the Shepherd King—and his Mountain Idylls; he had little foreboding then of the many years of sorrow which lay before him. But the incongruity of the comparison between Goethe and Heine as visitors to the Harz, as thus shown, is nothing compared with the utter falsity and silliness of the concluding lines as here noted in verse in "Matthew's Grave"—such a flimsy bit of untruthful claptrap as these lines exhibit is quite sufficient to brand a man eternally in literature as an insincere impostor.

Note 10.

"*Named apparently Dominus POOR.*'

> "The story of the Oxford Scholar *Poor*,
> Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
> Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,"

went off and joined a band of pilfering gipsies, has been analysed by us in a prose essay. Glanville, from whom Matthew got the story, says nothing about the Scholar *Poor* being of "pregnant parts" or "of quick inventive brain," or of the "knocking at preferment's door." These are Matthew's innovations, like the absurd armour and weapons he gives to Rustem and Sohrab. Matthew's representation of the Scholar Poor is on the same level with his conception of Byron, Goethe, the Roman noble, the brooding East with its deep disdain, &c., and equally truthful. Why in the world an "Oxford Scholar Poor," by taking to a life of vagabondage and petty and other larcenies, and by gammoning his former fellow-students with lying stories of the mysterious wisdom of the gipsies, should have an "immortal lot" and become a ghostly Tyrian trader for all eternity, is an incongruity and absurdity which never seems to have struck one of Mr. Arnold's critics for about half a century.

There are two lines in this poem which seem quite to carry Professor Saintsbury away when they come into his head. He quotes them three times in his monograph of Matthew. They are to him—as a great many other lines with modern critics—"matchless." Other favourite terms in vogue are—"possess a haunting charm," "lines which once read for ever haunt the memory," even have "the charm of hauntingness"; "lines one cannot afford to forget," &c. The two "matchless" lines which haunt the Professor are:

> "Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
> Still clutching at the inviolable shade."

Now, in the immense wealth of English poetry, or indeed in any poetry, it is a most pretentious assumption to style any verse which a critic may take a fancy to "matchless." Even in Shakespeare, Spenser, or Milton it would be the mere exaggeration of conceit, but in a new poetaster like Mr. Arnold, were he a hundred times better poet than he is, it is still more ridiculous and offensive. Then what is there in these two lines but a mere *rifacimento* and amplification of a vernacular saying ridiculously applied? The main thought is borrowed from the popular expressions "Hoping against hope" and "Grasping at a shadow." Does the addition of two five-syllabled words turn the common sayings into lines "matchless" among our great poets? Then what is the "unconquerable hope"?—the hope that the ghost of a renegade Oxford sizar may, by living a life of rascality and vagabondage and sitting, as we have said, with a lapful of ghostly flowers at the doors of alehouses, become a big Tyrian merchant. And the "inviolable shade" is, we suppose, the ghost of a chance which, by continually "moving on" as Mr. Arnold urges him, in policeman fashion, to do, the ghost of the pseudo-gipsy outlaw may have of becoming the rival of a Rothschild or a Baring.

Here our Aristarchus has been carried off his legs by two five-syllabled words; but he is equally rapturous, in criticising another silly poem, "*The Bacchanalia*," over two less than five-syllabled lines, one commencing with Mr. Arnold's favourite "AH!" and another finishing with his favourite "HUSH"—

> "AH! so the quiet was,
> So was the HUSH."

"Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other," as Cassio would say. Our great Aristarchus finds in this AH! and this HUSH, "*an exquisite revulsion of undertone*." Really the force of folly could no further go.

NOTE II.

> "*And a crowd of half-drunk Roman nobles,*
> *With haggard eyes, borrowed from Gray,*
> *And in the top-boots of Jack Milton.*"

This, of course, refers to another of the famous passages—the description of the Roman world in "Obermann once more":—

> "Stout was its arms, each thew and bone
> Seem'd puissant and alive;
> *But ah!* its heart, its heart was stone,
> And so it could not thrive.
> . . . . . .

In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
The Roman noble lay ;
He drove abroad, in furious guise,
Along the Appian Way.

He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
And crown'd his hair with flowers ;
No easier nor yet quicker passed
The impracticable hours."

We have, too, analysed this poem at length elsewhere. We will only hint here this description of the Roman Empire and the Roman noble is as false and untrue as the picture of Goethe as a physician, of Heine a poet without love and doing nothing but laugh and die, and of Byron doing nothing all his life but make a pageant of a broken-heart, &c. ; and the deep disdain of the East for thundering Roman legions who did not thunder, &c. As to the heart of the Roman Empire being, *but ah !* of stone, no doubt it had not the eternally "panting heart" and "old unquiet heart" of Mr. Arnold, which would have been an impediment much in the way of conquering and governing the world and giving it the *Pax Romana.* Then how can you see thews and bones ? for they must be able to be seen if they had an outward seeming. Then the Roman noble did not drive "with haggard eyes in furious guise" along the Appian Way ; he never drove on the Appian Way at all—he would as soon have thought of driving, "*with haggard eyes in furious guise,*" along the Appian Way as a Newmarket trainer would think of galloping his fillies when in training along Cheapside. Furious driving on Roman highways, too, was forbidden by law (Ulpian). Mr. Arnold, as we have said in verse, is giving Jack Mitton with his top-boots a Roman dress. The Roman noble governed the whole habitable world for several centuries, and he did not do this by boosing with his head crowned with flowers or taking impossible drives in his racing chariot along the Appian Way, which was the road for commerce, and travellers, and marching legions (*see* Milton's magnificent description of the Appian Way). The Roman Empire, in spite of the stone heart which Mr. Arnold gives it and his opinion that "*it did not thrive,*" had a pretty long life of it ; and in the opinion of Gibbon and a few other minor historians bestowed on mankind during the reign of the Antonines more happiness than it has known at any other epoch. *BUT AH ! its heart was stone* to Mr. Arnold. How many times in their lives did the Plinies, or Tacitus, or the Antonines or Marcus Aurelius, who were all Roman nobles, "drink fierce and fast" with their "hair crowned with flowers," or drive with "haggard eyes in furious guise" along the Roman Fleet Street or Strand ? Such misrepresentations of history, the product of mere ignorant vanity and conceit, can do nothing but harm.

NOTE 12.

"*O Spirit of the World.*"

Mr. Arnold does not make it clear what this Spirit of the World is which he finally invokes in "*Heine's Grave,*" with a pharisaical prayer that he may not be such a sinner as that publican was. Mr. Arnold, however,

before addressing the Spirit of the World, gives a few lines of explanatory introduction, which are too characteristic to be omitted—

> "The Spirit of the World,
> Beholding the absurdity of men,
> *Their vaunts, their feats—let a sardonic smile*
> For one short moment wander o'er his lips.
> THAT SMILE WAS HEINE; for its earthly hour
> The strange guest sparkled, now 'tis passed away.
>
> *That was Heine!* and we
> Myriads who live, who have lived,
> *What are we all but a mood,*
> *A single mood,* of the life
> Of the Spirit in whom we exist,
> *Who alone is all things in one.*"

NOTE 13.

"*And they all quote Mat's famous saying.*"

Here is the *famous* passage about Oxford :—

"Beautiful city, so venerable, so lovely, so serene, and yet steeped in sentiment as she lies spreading her gardens to the moonlight and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Ages, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us—to the ideal—to perfection—to beauty in a word, which is only truth seen from another side—nearer perhaps than all the science of Tübingen."

These are "cunningly ordered words," as the up-to-date critics say, there is no doubt of it—the question is, are they true? Oxford is a very beautiful city, no doubt—so is Venice; indeed, some may think immeasurably more grand and beautiful. Florence is a lovely city, too; so is Palermo, so is Genoa, so is Damascus, so is Constantinople. Cambridge, too, has her Backs, and why should Oxford lead men to the ideal more than any of these cities? And has she done so? Mr. Arnold is one of Oxford's show men—and he seems to us a pernicious failure. For one celebrated Oxford man Cambridge can show twenty. If Oxford has been continually calling her students to the ideal, to perfection, the mass of her sons have been deaf as slow-worms to her calling. The statement is either not true or the University has for centuries had most refractory masses of intellectual material to deal with. Is the ideal the true goal of all Oxford men? and if so, what is that ideal? The ideal—Heaven save us!—of all becoming Matthew Arnolds! Is beauty truth seen from any side? and are her towers mediæval and not post-mediæval? This amalgam of "cunningly ordered" pretty words ends in a bathos and a misnomer. It is a poor conclusion to say that the University on which he has been lavishing some exaggerated encomiums is more attractive than a small German University—dubbed scientific when it produced no greater men of science than Strauss and Baur, and the school of Scripture critics who are not scientific at all in the true sense of the term. We doubt whether the florid Robins, the once eminent auctioneer, if he had been about to put Oxford under his hammer, would not have produced a better and more

truthful eulogy. Professor Saintsbury, however, in his monograph on Matthew, p. 84, hugs his soul, as stated in the text, with the conviction that this famous and magnificent *Epiphonema* (we can name our tools!) turns generations after generations of Oxford's enemies sick with an "agonised grin." How distressing that all humanity cannot be put through the Oxford mill and turned into Matthew Arnolds! Fancy a world of Matthew Arnolds! What a paradise! The Professor is no doubt a most excellent citizen, but if anything was ever proved with mathematical precision in literature it has been proved by Mr. E. K. Chambers in the *Times* literary supplement of March 1 of this year that the Professor's edition of the Caroline Poets demonstrates him to be impervious to claims of rhyme and reason which Macaulay's schoolboy could not overlook.

Note 14.

"And in spite of what wrote Macaulay."

This is the passage of Macaulay alluded to—it is in the essay on Lord Bacon:—

"The two great national seats of learning had even acquired the characters which they still maintain. For intellectual activity, and in readiness to admit improvements, the superiority was then, as it has ever been, on the side of the less ancient and splendid institution. Cambridge had the honour of educating those Protestant Bishops whom Oxford had the honour of burning."

REJOUISSANCES

(Mantissæ)

I

MATTHEW'S FIRST STEP TOWARDS IMMORTALITY

The first notice which I had of the existence of this *phraseur* and *mystagogic* prig was from a review in the *Times* of one of his first volumes of poetry. It must have been about the year 1858, and I think the volume was called "Empedocles on Etna, and other Poems."

This review about a man unknown, or known only as the son of Dr. Arnold, the respectable Headmaster of Rugby, excited universal astonishment until the mystery was explained—for the *Times* of that day very rarely condescended to take notice of literature at all, and here was a review of a young man unknown to literature, and now presented to the world as a new poet. The *Times* was known among the continental journals of those days as the *Journal de la Cité*, and it confined its attention almost exclusively to politics and matters of commerce. A quite comical example of its superb disdain for literature and literary men was offered at the death of George Finlay, the great historian of the Eastern Empire. George Finlay, who had been a fighting Phil-Hellene, lived at Athens, where I had the pleasure of visiting him at his residence under the shadow of the Acropolis, and we had many a walk on the hill of the Pnix, and excursions to the summit of Pentelicus and the promontory of Samium. Finlay occupied some of the leisure hours which his studies left him in writing letters to the *Times*

about the political events of the East. When he died, a few years after this time, the *Times* put in an obituary notice of him in its columns in three lines, in which there was no mention of Finlay's historical work, but regretting "the death of our esteemed correspondent in Athens," the glory of having been a *Times* correspondent completely obfuscating the lesser merit of being a great historian.

The mystery, however, of the notice of Matthew's jejune volume of verse in the City journal was soon cleared up to us—it was a review made to order. John Delane, then the editor, whom I also had the pleasure of knowing, and for whom I wrote too, at times, was a pretty constant visitor at Lansdowne House and at Bowood, as the great editor was also at a good many other of the big houses of the day, and Lord Lansdowne was an amiable and liberal-minded nobleman, always ready, according to his lights, to give a helping hand to beginners in art and literature, and Matthew Arnold was his private secretary. Lord Lansdowne, finding that his private secretary had published some unsuccessful volumes of verse, most generously took the trouble of doing what few, if any, of such great *seigneurs* would have done : he walked down to Delane's chambers in the Temple to ask for a review of his secretary's recent volume. To ask, for so great a nobleman, was to command, and a review appeared, written, I think, by poor Sam Phillips, who subsequently died in a lunatic asylum, and the review, as Mat said himself, sent the little volume flying over all the railway bookstalls in the country.

I happened to know at that time two Oxford first-class men—Mat was a second-class—contemporaries of Mat at the University, and they treated Mat's presentation to the world as a fine poet as a good joke, and laughed heartily at the airs he began soon to give himself as Modern Aristarchus, superfine *Welt verbesserer*, and apostle of a new gospel of "Sweetness and Light," and at his constant parading about in plumes borrowed from Goethe and Heine among the Germans, and Renan, Sainte-Beuve, Scherer, and others, among the French.

I and my Oxford friends were aware, indeed, that Mat was making frantic efforts to attain popularity, but neither we nor anyone I met with either in society or in the literary or artistic circles in which I mingled ever took Matthew Arnold *au sérieux*. In the interesting volumes lately published, "Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle," Matthew's name never appears once, and in the literary circles in which I moved myself, his name and his writings were as little mentioned among us as were those of Spurgeon, and with the exception of a chance glance at a volume containing "The Gipsy Scholar"—which was quite sufficient to show me its character—and a casual perusal of a page or two of his critical writing in magazines, I had never read a whole poem or a whole essay of Matthew until about ten years ago.

I knew only so much of him that he was from time to time engaged in polemical discussions with Freeman, Froude, James Stephen, and Goldwin Smith, and he seemed to me generally to get the worst of it. I knew also that Mr. Goldwin Smith had called him "a jaunty gentleman on good terms with himself and the world," a description which seemed, and does seem now to me, to fit him admirably. Later, I knew that this superfine second-class flower of Oxford culture was launching on the world a quantity of pseudo-pietistic pamphlets, under what seemed to me to be quack and repulsive titles—"Literature and Dogma," "God and the Bible," "St. Paul and Protestantism"—and I wondered what sort of people they could be who would take this "jaunty" gentleman as their spiritual atheological adviser.

I may say that I had exceptional advantages for knowing what were the minds which had influence among the most distinguished intellects in polite and literary circles in those days. I frequented for years in London the *salon* of the illustrious lady whose portrait Mr. Skinner, in "Lionel," has attempted to draw under the name of Lady Walter, and among whose wide circle of friends I was no unfrequent guest, and in Paris I was an intimate friend of M. de Circourt, whom Matthew Arnold also slightly knew. M. de Circourt was a man of wonderful learning in many languages and of marvellous memory, and esteemed at most of the Courts of Europe for his noble character and the purity of his mind and taste. He lived at Bougival, while I resided at Versailles, and I used to walk with him at one time in the forest of St. Germain and in the gardens and woods of Versailles almost daily. I was well acquainted with most of M. de Circourt's wide circle of friends—with Villemain, Cousin, Renan, Sainte-Beuve, Thiers, Guizot—and I frequented every literary Parisian *salon* of those times, but I never, either in Paris or London, met Matthew Arnold, or even heard his name mentioned, nor do I suppose that many of my friends had ever read one line of him. After exchanging in 1873, perforce, my literary life for an appointment in the public service, the offer of which, on receipt, I first tore up and stamped underfoot with indignation, my residence from that time forward was almost constantly abroad; consequently I lost touch with what was passing in the literary and social world of London and Paris, and it was only after my enforced retirement in 1896, by a new and unjust regulation, that on the appearance of Mr. Arnold's volumes of correspondence, edited by Mr. G. W. E. Russell, I first read at Rome anything of Mr. Arnold's in the form of a book. I had sent for these volumes because I was aware that Mr. Arnold had acquired a certain popularity, as evidenced by the sale of his books, during my absence from England, and I was curious to know with how many friends of mine he was acquainted, and on what terms he stood with them. The volumes gave me little interesting reading, although they satisfied somewhat my curiosity—poorer letters from a professed literary man it would be hard to find. He is always full of himself and his wonderful poetry and articles from beginning to end. He beats Tennyson in this, and Browning in that; he says therefore he is bound to have his day; he is ever bragging about what this man said of an article, and what good that man has got by him—"I have done Morley much good, and he knows it," he coolly writes. After this a flood of eulogistic books and essays was let loose on the literary market, and I determined at last to get Mr. Arnold's works in poetry and prose and really read them and see for myself what they were like; so I procured them, and I must say that never in my life have I made such a useless and regrettable expenditure of good money on useless literary lumber. His so-called poetry and his critical essays I have read so far as to be able conscientiously to pass judgment upon them to the best of my power, but of his atheological lumber, "God and the Bible" and "Saint Paul and Protestantism," I have only read so much as to assure myself of their absolute worthlessness. Never before has the Gospel of Unbelief been preached with such an impertinent and jaunty assumption of superior sanctity. After having read sufficient of his volumes to enable me to make the protest which I do in these pages in prose and verse against the pernicious effect which foolish laudations of this poetaster and false critic have wrought in English literature for half a century, I have relegated his volumes to the darkest corners of my bookshelves, from whence I hope they will never emerge; for it would be an act of perfidy to lend them to a friend and an act of unchristian vindictiveness to give them to an enemy.

II

EXTRACT FROM UNPUBLISHED ESSAYS ON "MATTHEW ARNOLD AND HIS EULOGISTS"

Of the twenty heads of protest which may be raised against the admittance of Mr. Arnold to a permanent seat among the immortals of the English poetical Walhalla, there is not one which is not more or less material. Some one or two of these, if proved, should form a sufficient and absolute bar to his chances, but we submit with confidence that all are proven.

To sum up, the evangelical Matthew No. 2 was as ignorant of history as he was of science, philosophy, and art—he had no ear for music, for melody in rhythm or rhyme, or for music in any form at all; no originality of conception or of thought, or even of metaphor; no capacity for passion or noble emotion or lofty enthusiasm; no sense of the sublime to keep him from ridiculous bathos (witness his likening his hero Sohrab to an hotel slavey). We doubt whether he had any but an affected love of Nature. His vaunted flower-pieces, compared with those of real poets, are a mere *hortus siccus*, and although he had frequently been in Switzerland he had, so far as appears by his letters, no love of Nature, and no desire to see her in her grandest aspects sufficient to make him do a single Alpine ascension. His dreary rigmarole on the moonstruck Obermann begins with these wretched lines:—

"In front, the awful Alpine tract
Crawls up its rocky stair."

Fancy an Alpine tract climbing up a stair! It should be, "The rocky stair climbs up the awful Alpine tract," and that would be poor enough. But the awful Alpine tract is the Gemmi Pass, which is kept as smooth as a garden walk, and a young lady *débutante* in the Alps would have laughed in Mr. Arnold's face had he spoken to her of the Gemmi as "*an awful mountain tract*" and voted him a muff.

In the other still more dreary Obermannic production he begins euphoniously:

"Glion! ah! twenty years it cuts."

It would be hard indeed to find anywhere a line as bad as this. First we have Mr. Arnold ah-ing it again. Then what cuts? The twenty years, in despite of grammar and sense. How can years cut? Old Time with his scythe may be said to cut—but how can he cut meaning from a name with his scythe any more than he could shave an egg with that implement. Then to go on with Mr. Arnold's poverty-stricken intelligence. He had none but a vulgar sense of the humorous and none of the pathetic, and no sense above all for truth, or he would have been above writing so many sophistical catchwords, and during the greater part of the time in which he was writing verse he could not distinguish prose from poetry. For the greater part of his poetry, if written out as prose, would only appear to be prose of a very poor kind. In fact, *sa poésie est seulement de la poésie pour ceux que n'en ont pas.* He was a man, as the Italians say, *pieno di se*, chock full of affectation, priggishness, and conceit. But his worst and most detestable fault was his unceasing and ignoble spirit of envy and detraction towards his most distinguished contemporaries. Mr. Russell has no doubt wisely suppressed, in editing his correspondence, much if not the

greater part of the proof of this. But there is enough left in his letters to show that he was universally jealous and envious of all his contemporaries except the two or three who he thought would be useful to him, and with whom he was in correspondence. Tennyson had not much intellectual power; Macaulay was as vulgar as the *Times*—his "Lays of Ancient Rome" were mere "pinchbeck." Thackeray, with his splendid gifts of humour and irony, was no great writer. He despised the overflowing humour and boundless humanity of Dickens. He was inclined to be angry at the ephemeral popularity of poor Alexander Smith. Mr. Morley, as the then editor of a popular journal, he allowed to have some merit. But then that was partly due to himself. He writes, "I have done him much good, and he knows it," as he imagined he had done to every one with whom he came in contact. Virtue, he imagined, was continually oozing out of him, like the courage from Bob Acres's fingers.

Among his other ungenerous qualities must be noted especially his ingratitude. He had prigged much from Heine. He repaid his memory by bringing demons to howl over his grave. He had prigged still more from French authors, and, indeed, made his fortune upon them. He repaid them by saying there could be no hope for France after her defeat by Germany until the whole of that generation, who had received him so kindly, were swept away.

But perhaps the most repulsive of all his defects of character and conduct was his canting affectation of a sceptical religiosity, and the patronising airs which he gave himself about Christianity were, as Mr. Gladstone said, more revolting and offensive than the open hostility of a declared atheist. Of his dreary books—"Literature and Dogma," "God and the Bible," "St. Paul and Protestantism," and the like—one knows not which of the qualities which mark them is the more repulsive: their conceit, or their shallowness, or their intrusive affectation of a pert, affected religiosity.

"Non ragioniam di lor—ma guarda e passa."

Here we deal more with Arnold as poetical pretender. There can be little doubt that it is largely owing to the spurious character of Mr. Arnold's verse, and the unscrupulous and shameless way in which it has been foisted upon the market, that the present slump of poetry has taken place in the bookselling business, and that the directors of circulating libraries find volumes of poetry a useless encumbrance on their bookshelves.

Mr. Squiers's pupils, after being dosed with brimstone and treacle in the early morning, found they had little appetite later for breakfast. Similarly it is absolutely impossible for any man, woman, or child who has been dosed with Arnoldian platitudes and adulterations to have any real taste for poetry at all. The desire of the public for poetry has diminished proportionately to the growth of Arnoldian puffery in the press, which has reached such a pitch that a newspaper long devoted to his cult went some time back into spasms of admiration at a list of books—and a very ordinary list, too, for a literary man—which Mr. Arnold in a newly published diary had put down for reading, *but did not read*. So in Jerusalem native *ciceroni* used to expect travellers to be affected with reverence when shown the stones of which our Lord predicated that, if His disciples held their peace, they would cry out (Luke xix. 40), and yet which never did cry out. Truly, the fetish worship of this conceited *phraseur* and *mystificateur* could not go further than this.

III

Matthew's Catchwords

Among the many catchwords invented by the great *mystificateur* and which the newspaper critics usually introduce with the flourish of trumpets, "*as Matthew Arnold has finely said*," we will expose the inanity of only a couple here.

In a review of the Essays of Mr. Augustine Birrell in the "*Times* Literary Supplement" of December 8, 1905, the writer says:—

"Lucidity alone, as Matthew Arnold *has finely told us*, is akin to character and to high and severe work."

This phrase truly has a fine severe "high falutin" sound at its first hearing, but is there any meaning to it, and if so, is that meaning true? The answer is, there is little meaning at all in it, and of what meaning there is, the greater part is false and the rest is mere platitude. To begin, "lucidity" and "akin" are also two of the words which Mr. Arnold works hard, as though they too were a sort of private property, which nobody had discovered before him. But what does "*lucidity*" mean? It has the meaning pellucid or transparent, as crystal or pure water; of an outside splendour, such as the stars have—*lucida sidera*. But it is the first meaning which must be taken to give Mr. Arnold's phrase any sense. Applied to speech, lucidity (cf. Horace's *lucidus ordo*) must be the same thing as perspicuity or clearness of expression. Akin—a person or thing may be akin to any other person or thing in any degree of nearness or remoteness. If we are all descended from Adam we are all akin, and modern science teaches us we are all akin to the remotest fragments of the universe. Then as to *character*, this is an ambiguous word. But among its various meanings we take that of reputation or moral nature, and that may be either bad or good. There are good characters and bad characters. Now let us translate the phrase and see what it means.

"Perspicuity or clearness of expression has an indefinite relation to good or bad moral nature and to lofty and hard labour." What is the meaning of this? Suppose we take character to mean a pure or noble nature. Does Mr. Arnold and his clique mean that clearness of expression is a sign of a noble nature? Voltaire, Napoleon I., Chesterfield, Sheridan, Cobbett, Junius, were all remarkable for their clearness of expression. That each of these men had some nobility of nature it would be unfair to deny, but to say that nobility of nature was the chief characteristic of every one of them would be to assert what is glaringly untrue. Therefore in their case "lucidity" did not imply any typical nobility of nature, or character.

Then the French claim for their nation the especial gift of *lucidity* or clearness of expression—*ce qui n'est pas clair n'est pas Français*—but we doubt whether even a single Frenchman would ever claim exceptional nobility for his nation on that ground alone, and least of all would Mr. Arnold himself do so; for although in the making up of his intellectual baggage he prigged and borrowed from distinguished French writers without shame or acknowledgment, yet, when their misfortunes came, he thought the whole generation who had been so hospitable to him ought to be swept away, and he declared his detestation of the whole race as worshippers of his abominable *aselgeia*.

On the other hand, writers and thinkers of great originality and merit, and of purity of morals, who had involved expression and no lucidity or perspicuity, might be counted by the dozen. One may disagree with Bentham as Carlyle did, but no one can deny to Bentham a spirit of independence, high-mindedness, and nobility, and he exercised much influence on thought and opinion at the beginning of the last century. But Bentham had so tortuous and involved a style that Sydney Smith wrote that that eminent philosopher, before being presented to the readers of the *Edinburgh Review*, had need to be washed and dressed and put into clean linen. And then as to Carlyle: the style of Carlyle in the "Latter Day Pamphlets," and in most of his writings, is certainly the reverse of lucid, and yet no fair-minded man would declare on account of their turbid style that either Bentham or Carlyle was an ignoble character. In fact, the phrase as applied to character is utterly false and misleading.

Then as to perspicuity having an indefinite relationship to hard labour or otherwise, this is only partly true, and what there is left in it of truth is but a platitude and a truism.

Perspicuity or lucidity is a matter of style, and certainly thought comes before style. And then is not the benefit of the *limæ labor* taught ever to schoolboys? But even here the charlatan phrase has no truth in it. To some men this writing perspicuously is a natural gift; by some men it is acquired. We imagine it would have been impossible for a Voltaire or a Napoleon to write anything which was not clear. But Pascal attained his brevity and perspicuity by much labour, so that he apologised for one of his letters being long because he had not had time to shorten it. Junius evidently imitated Pascal, and both are most remarkable examples of clearness of expression. Can any writers be imagined more different in character than Pascal and Junius? In fine, Mr. Arnold's fine saying rings utterly false when rung on the counter of truth. It is, to make use again of a favourite term with the critics, a mere canting concoction of "cunningly ordered words," of no use or value whatever except for charlatan literary purposes, and, like all false and sophistical phrases, can do nothing but harm.

Another equally misleading and valueless use of the word "lucidity" is in the oft quoted phrase "*sad lucidity of soul.*" "Clear minded men" are not especially given to sadness, but the reverse.

There is another foolish bit of word-juggling—of "cunningly ordered words"—of Mr. Arnold's which his admirers are very fond of, and which we will just notice, and that is, "He saw life steadily and saw it whole." Of the hundreds of reviewers who have quoted this phrase, is there one who could attach any meaning to it? A man's eyesight must be as sharp as that of Rossetti's famous Blessed Damoiselle—who saw Time like a fierce pulse shaking all the worlds—if he could see life.

Then if he did see life, what life did he see steadily? Was it the life of the universe? the life of the world? the life of animated nature? the life of plants? the life of all humanity? the life of Europe? the life of his nation? or his own little life? As for the first series of lives, only God Almighty could possibly comprehend them in his glance and see them steadily and see them whole. And as for the lives of human people other than ourselves, and the life of our single selves, if he means the life of people other than ourselves, what kind of a life is meant?—the life of a new-born babe or the life of a centenarian? the life of a Hottentot or Esquimaux, or the life of a citizen of London or New York, or any other of the millions of lives of actual humanity? And as for seeing his own life steadily and seeing it whole, or the lives of any of his surroundings, was it not Mr. Arnold's continual plaint, repeated *usque ad nauseam*, again and

again in dozens of pages, and especially in "The Buried Life," that he never could get a sight of the river of life in his own "old unquiet breast," nor in the "unquiet breast" of anybody else? and yet these "cunningly ordered words" of charlatanism, like those about "lucidity," have been preached as a new evangel to thousands upon thousands of ingenuous readers, and imposed upon them as the salutary utterances of a sage and a prophet.

LIONEL . A LEGAGY

Note 15.

"I, even I," &c.

With the following inserted lines I have a melancholy pleasure in associating the memory of my old friend, that wonderful *improvisatore* in prose, George Augustus Sala. The anecdote here put into verse is drawn from actual experience. During a Cambridge vacation I assisted at a picnic on the banks of the lovely river Tamar in Devonshire. And there were present also a lady and a spiteful and envious gentleman—but it was not a rose, but a spotless white cambric pocket-handkerchief which I happened to let fall while walking with this lady, and the spiteful gentleman put his foot upon it with a grin, and spoke and behaved much as here described. In a chatty *tête-à-tête* with George Augustus somehow this anecdote came into my head and I told it to him. Sala gave a pleased chuckle, but I did not think it made much impression. But I met him not long after in the Strand, and he stopped me, saying, "That story of yours about the fellow and the pocket handkerchief is one of the best things I ever heard—I can see the fellow doing it. Let me make use of it, will you?" I do not know whether George Augustus ever did make use of it, but I could never recall the incident afterwards without thinking of Sala.

Note 16.

"Whom the gods love die young," &c.

One of the concisest epitaphs it has been my fortune to meet with is in the public cemetery of Malaga. It is engraved on a marble tablet on the wall of the cemetery close to the gate :

"La deuda que los mortales
Contraheron al nacer
Pagò dejando de ser
Piedro Alcantara Corrales.

It must surely have been composed by the deceased who rests below, for no one would have ventured to compose such an epitaph for another. It would not be possible to put this into English verse, but in prose it runs thus : "The debt which mortals incur in being born, Piedro Alcantara Corrales has paid by ceasing to be."

Note 17.

"A 'Times' great leader-writer in his glory."

This speech, or at least one of precisely the same substance, was really spoken not by a *Times* correspondent, but by the crack *Times* leader-writer of his day, then taking his holiday at Naples. He was very fond of giving advice to Italians—in English, of course, for he knew not a word of Italian—"to eat their own dirt," and his argument about melting down their enemies, the Austrians, as the English had melted down Normans, Danes, &c., he thought irresistible. I introduced him to Romano, a noted Neapolitan patriot of that day, and left him in conversation with him. He came up to me later with a triumphant look. He said, "I think I've settled your friend, but he looked very uncomfortable.' I said, "What did you tell him?" "I told him, of course, the same things I have said to you, and added I thought he had just the government which suited him." I replied, "Since the poor man has spent a good deal of his life in prison for politics, it is natural he should not think he had precisely the government which suited him, and would not like being told so."—C. C. S.

Note 18.

"For undergrads are trained to be unthrifty."

I observe from a recent sermon of the Bishop of London delivered at Oxford that the foolish and culpable custom of giving "winings" and "wine parties" is still as rife at Oxford, and probably at Cambridge, as it was in my undergraduate days, and apparently with greater excess, since the Bishop spoke of drunkenness as a common occurrence, which it certainly was not in my day. I say the custom is culpable because the great majority of young men cannot afford to give these expensive and absurd wine parties, and mostly go in debt for them. In my day it was considered mean not to have dessert from the chief fruiterer of the town, and he charged *five shillings* per head for dessert. The bad wine which was drunk and the cigars, coffee, and "anchovy toast" had to be paid for in addition, so that the cost must have been ten shillings per head at least for dessert alone. The college authorities did nothing to check this absurd practice. A similar absurdity does not exist at any other University in the world, and it ought to have been put down long ago, for the wine was generally poisonous stuff—one case I knew in which a youth nearly died of it—consequently, the practice is as bad for the health as for the pocket. Thackeray, in his "Book of Snobs," gives the following description of a wine party:

"One looks back to what was called a 'wine party' with a sort of wonder. Thirty lads round a table covered with bad sweetmeats, drinking bad wines, telling bad stories, singing bad songs over and over again. Milk punch—smoking—ghastly headache—frightful spectacle of dessert table next morning, and smell of tobacco, with gyp administering soda-water.'

I wish, too, I could say a useful word about the absurd and ruinous expensiveness of education in England both at the schools and Universities. The education as really given is in general quite a farce, and a young man who goes through a public school and takes an ordinary degree at Cambridge or Oxford has about the worst preparatory training which he could possibly have for the business of life. And to have this as a boy at school he or his parents must pay from £200 to £300 a year, and at college gener-

ally from £300 to any amount. The whole system of education in our country is a shameful anomaly, and would be tolerated nowhere else but in England. A much better education is to be had abroad for one-third of the cost of an English one, and even less. It is really one of the worst abuses in the country, and nobody thinks of reforming it. For what is everybody's business is nobody's business, according to the old and true saying.

NOTE 19.

"*Mouldy Mortmain, the conveyancer.*"

The individual had a real existence. The name Mouldy Mortmain is taken from the once well-known clever novel of Warren, "Ten Thousand a Year." He wrote a very illegible hand. Warren said that Mouldy Mortmain had three different handwritings—one which only he and his clerk could understand, one which only he himself could understand, and one in which he wrote his most difficult opinions and which neither he himself nor his clerk nor anybody else could understand.

Mr. Mouldy Mortmain had usually about thirteen pupils, each of whom paid him one hundred guineas a year. He contrived very soon to disgust the majority by giving them nothing to do. They ceased to attend the chambers, and the greater part of his pupils he did not even know by sight.

As English law and the administration of it is about the worst and the most costly and worst administered among civilised nations, so the fashion of education offered to students at the Bar is also about the worst and foolishly costly also. Nowhere in Europe will one find so insane a practice as students paying one hundred guineas a year for the mere admission into a lawyer's chambers to see his practice. The fashion of our legal education is equally bad and extravagant as that of our school and university education. University and law authorities, too, have, with their tremendous Long and other vacations, to shut up both colleges and courts for nearly half the year. Notwithstanding the costliness of English education and of English law, both the teachers of youth and the administrators of law to the public are on the strike for nearly six months of each year.

NOTE 20.

"*Law Gratis.*"

This idea of Lionel's about making law gratis is a perfectly feasible one and ought to be adopted in every well-regulated State. A citizen has as much right to the protection of his property as the protection of his person. The great majority of cases brought before the tribunals and which form the subject of numerous legal proceedings might be decided by the common sense of any two or three intelligent gentlemen without any legal training at all, and probably generally with much greater equity than they would get by decisions of law courts. As for cases of a more difficult kind, there is no reason why gentlemen having money and leisure should not do as the Roman patricians did—get instruction in law and deliver opinions on legal questions gratis (*Cincia lex*). It would be a noble way of employing their leisure and of acquiring the consideration due to good and useful citizens.

Private courts of arbitration of merchants and proprietors might easily be formed, whose decision every good and orderly citizen would hold

himself bound to accept; in fact, it was on these principles that the *prætorian edicts* (*edicta tralaticia*) and our own courts of equity were originally formed. I have heard that this system has already been commenced by some of the merchants of London.—C. C. S.

By this means the British ruinous courts of injustice would in a few years be reduced to the deserted condition of the Halls of Ossian.

Here are a few testimonies of lawyers themselves to the shameful character of English law. Lord Bramwell some years ago in a public speech said a man must either be a lunatic or a millionaire to think of applying to English law for justice. Sir George Jessel, Master of the Rolls, said in a case, "This is English law, but it is not justice." I myself heard Vice-Chancellor Page Wood say, in another case, he was bound by precedent to make an unjust decision. And a Commissioner in Bankruptcy was reported in the papers as saying that he made it a rule in life to submit to any injustice rather than apply to law for a remedy.

NOTE 21.

"*Cousins to the nth degree.*"

I remember when one of our best diplomatists, Sir James Hudson, was pulled neck and crop out of his place as ambassador at the Court of Turin to make way for an incapable Elliot, that an "Old Diplomatist" wrote to the *Times* that when a Grey or an Elliot was out of place, every official who had any post worth having felt like one of the infantry in the squares of Waterloo with the Cuirassiers walking around them searching for an entry. Later a friend of mine who was virtually, though not nominally, for nearly fifty years Deputy-Speaker in the House of Commons, whose works on Parliamentary procedure are to be found in the library of every representative assembly in the world, and who was worn with years of anxious nights passed in the public service, and who was universally respected, looked forward to being moved into a post in which he could have enjoyed infinitely more leisure in his advanced age. The appointment happened to be in the gift of a Minister, one of the greatest jobbers ever known, and to whom the country is indebted for the "age limit" in the Diplomatic and Consular Services. He treated the distinguished services of my friend with callous disdain, and appointed a totally unknown young man who was a remote connection. This glaring and insolent neglect I believe hastened the end of my friend, not before, however, he was raised to the peerage by a succeeding Prime Minister as a salve to his wounded feelings.

The absurdity and trickery of the invention of the "age limit" was exemplified in the case of Lord Augustus Loftus. By the new rule the Minister was obliged to remove him from St. Petersburg, where he was then ambassador; but a compensatory post had to be found for a Brahmin. So the effete diplomatist turned out from one Government Service as past work was foisted into another. The condemned functionary, dismissed as a worn-out diplomatist, was made the Governor of a young and magnificent colony—New South Wales.—C. C. S.

As for the abuses of patronage in minor posts, abuse under Tory, and to a lesser degree under Whig, domination was the rule and not the exception. The instances of this would be countless if one undertook to look for them. I know of two cases of connections of the electioneering agents of the Minister above referred to being pitchforked into two of the best appointments in the Consular Service. One, without knowing one word of

Italian, was gifted with the most coveted consular appointment in Italy, being transferred there from a police office. The other was a native of a small foreign State but a relative of an electioneering agent by marriage, and had been turned out of the Consular Service in his own country. He, however, also finally had to be dismissed from the British service. Another youth, with no claims whatever, but said to have espoused a lady favourite of influential officials, was imparadised into a diplomatic appointment of £700 a year in the most favoured region of the earth. The son of a butler of a before-mentioned Minister was made a high dignitary of the English Church. It was not enough for the legitimate offspring of peers to be provided for at the cost of the British public, but their illegitimate progeny must be provided for also in high diplomatic and other posts.

NOTE 22.

"*Conspiration de silence.*"

"*Peut-être nous avons changé tout cela.*" I can only speak of journalistic reviewing as I knew it in the time of Mr. Aylward. Authors, of course, who make a profession of writing could not exist unless their books sold, and a publisher of perhaps the biggest firm in London assured me, not only that reviews were essential to the sale of books, but that, however good a review of a book might be, it would be no use whatever towards selling it if it appeared six or even three months after its appearance in the market. He informed me, too, of what I knew before, that there was a regular "ring" in the book-tasting world, the members of which, when a new book appeared of an author favoured by the "ring," by a sort of tacit conspiracy, rivalled with one another in pitching simultaneously into the columns of the press laudatory notices of the new publication. And authors themselves were not sometimes backward in soliciting reviews—"Tell Stokes," writes Rossetti in one of his published letters, "I am coming out next week, and he must back me up." The result was, you might read a score of notices of a favoured author written within a week after the appearance of his new publication.

The circulating libraries, which have been a fatal invention for good literature and which are the chief purchasers of books nowadays, decide upon the number of copies they will order when the first notices of a book appear in the press, and however encomiastic may be belated notices of a book, circulating libraries will not, as a rule, increase their orders by a single copy, although exceptional demands may of course induce them to do so. Naturally this secret and tacit conspiracy did not limit its action to puffing the works of the favoured of the "ring"—they also applied it ruthlessly and shamelessly to keep down fresh candidates for public favour, and the best way to do this was to observe against a striving author a *conspiration de silence*, for it is far more murderous treatment of an author not to notice him at all than it is to abuse him.

Of stock phrases or "common forms" which the book-tasters make use of in their pufferies, an amusing collection might be made. A favoured poet has "cunningly ordered words," "lines tingling with life." There are "lines one cannot afford to neglect," lines which "once read for ever haunt the memory." "Haunt" is a word worked *ad nauseam*. We have lines with a "haunting charm"; one critic claims for a poet whose verses are a tangle of Gordian knots the "charm of hauntingness." Now the value of the haunting charm depends on the quality of the brain which is haunted. Cousin Dick's brain in "David Copperfield" was haunted by

the head of Charles I., and the brain of an idiot might be haunted by "high diddle-diddle." "Lines which the world will not willingly let die," lines "matchless," "lines immortal," &c.—*tout cela est vieux jeu maintenant.* A critic in the *Spectator* some time ago got hold of the "lyrical cry" from Matthew Arnold, who got it from Sainte-Beuve, and he worked it to death. He was for ever hunting in his reviews of verse after the "lyrical cry"—"here you have the real lyrical cry," "this is not the real lyrical cry," &c. We imagine it was the same critic who went into maudlin tears over a poem "The Native Born," in which there was the Cockney rhyme of "*dawn*" with "*born*," and in which there were such lines as this—

"*Here's a health to our five-mealed full-fed men.*"

Why should he have gone into tears over a "five-mealed full-fed man"?

We have spoken elsewhere of an article in the *Edinburgh Review* of July, 1904, on Matthew Arnold. This reviewer played hocus-pocus or thimble-rig with the words "ideas" and "idealism" from beginning to end of the article, fiddling with the words about fifty times over in an ignorant way, varying his game with silly twaddle about German *geist* and French *esprit*, and unable to determine the exact proportion of these qualities in Matthew's "pure and noble" nature. It is to be hoped that this article touches the very nadir point of soulless conceit and Arnoldian cant, for there is an article on a contemporary poet in the same *Review* for October, 1906, which is a long way better—but that is not saying much, for the writer gives the measure of himself when he cites with approval the carnal and even incestuous conception of Love as being at the same time the

"Mother and mistress of pleasure,"

to serve the needs of a rabid rage for senseless alliteration, such as we find again in "winter, the season of snows and *sins*," and in countless other lines. He is evidently overawed by frothy amplification—like the yokel at a fair wondering at the endless yards of paper tape which the itinerant conjurer produces from his interior. Flames and fire and fury, sham swords and sham blunderbuses, and all the froth and foam and frenzy said to accompany an idiot's tale and meaning nothing, have evidently a great charm for him.

When the critic has exhausted his eulogistic phraseology he, like Matthew Arnold, resorts to italics. What amphigouristic nonsense have we not seen so italicised? In Rossetti's silly poem "The Blessed Damozel," which shared the butterfly's fate when broken on the critical wheel of Lombroso, we find the Blessed Damozel leaning from the battlements looking out for her beloved, like Sister Anne for her brother in the castle of Blue Beard, and seeing—

"*Time like a fierce pulse*
Shaking all the worlds."

Very sharp and comprehensive eyesight this young lady must have had, first to have seen Time at all and then to see Time shaking the whole of our solar system, and the innumerable solar systems beyond it—Sirius, Neptune, and Uranus, and the innumerable orbs of the galaxy of the Milky Way all dancing in tune to the fierce pulse of Time. She had no need of a telescope, for she beat all the whole legion of astronomers from

Galileo and Copernicus down to Herschel and Lord Kelvin without one So the reviewers almost universally put into italics the record of this supernatural and superscientific feat of the Blessed Damozel.

A similar honour was paid to the following lines of another yet living poet—taken from a lyric giving a philosophical and poetic account of the creation of man drawn from the depths of his own unaided internal consciousness—

"And the high Gods took in hand
Fire and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
From under the feet of the years."

But the beginning of this lyric so universally belauded and italicised runs thus—

"Before the beginning of years,
There came to the making of man
Time with a gift of tears,
Grief with a glass that ran."

It was an original conception, no doubt, which gave to Time Grief's tears, and to Grief Time's hour-glass at the outset of the ode, but when the "high Gods" take in hand the manufacture of our unfortunate progenitor, who being made before the beginning of years could have found no vegetable or animal substance at his disposal for nutrition, and even solar gases could not then have been existent unless made contemporaneously —well, when the high Gods take him in hand Time seems to have recovered his theatrical property—his hour-glass—for the years, his daughters possibly, stand on measures of sliding sand—slipped out of the hour-glass possibly; but then how in the name of all possibilities could sand, and above all "sliding sand," have accumulated under the feet of the years *before their own beginning?* It really required the annihilation of time and space to make the conception a happy one—even with the aid of *italics.*

Of the poet of the "tangles of Gordian knots," we have seen italicised a description of the waves of the sea as "icy flakes of flame." This is a *chaudfroid* with a vengeance; it recalls the skill of the Chinese cooks who can make a *friture* of lumps of ice.

Perhaps the most amusing specimen of the use of italics was the following. An unfortunate poet had written—

"See the pale martyr in his sheet of fire,"

which is not a bad line, but it came from the printer's hands thus—

"See the pale martyr with his shirt on fire."

One critic descried in this a bit of startling realism, and put the line into italics. The unfortunate poet, however, was driven to the verge of suicide.

The errors of the printer, however, have not always been to the disadvantage of the poet; witness the line of Malherbe—

"Rose elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses."

Malherbe had written "*Rosette,*" the name of the young girl whose death he was lamenting, but he saw the value of the printer's mistake, and so has left an immortal line.

I cannot conclude this excursive and disjointed gossip about bad criticism better than by quoting Sainte-Beuve's summary of the qualities and circumstances necessary for the formation of taste in a good critic.

During a visit to him on one occasion, I remarked that a good critic was quite as great or a greater rarity than a good poet, and I quoted the line of Pope—

"That ten judge wrong for one who writes amiss,"

and added that one should never forget the precept of Vauvenargues, "*Il faut avoir de l'âme pour avoir du goût*," to which Sainte-Beuve added immediately, as quick as light, "*et aussi du loisir.*"

Some years after this I came upon a passage in an article of M. Scherer's "*La Bibliothèque de Sainte-Beuve*," in which he quotes some sentences about the formation of taste written by Sainte-Beuve in the margin of the *Télémaque* of Fénelon. They were written to refute some unfavourable comments made by himself in early youth. The sentences referred to are these :—

"La jeunesse est trop ardente pour avoir du goût. Pour avoir du goût, il ne suffit pas d'avoir en soi la faculté de goûter les belles et douces chose de l'esprit, *il faut aussi du loisir*, une âme libre et vacante—redevenue comme innocente, non levrée aux passions, non affairée, non bourrelée d'âpres soucis et d'inquiétudes positives—une âme désintéressée et même exempt du feu trop ardent de la composition, non en proie à sa propre verve insolente : il faut du repos, de l'oubli, du silence, de l'espace autour de soi. Que de conditions, même quand en a eu soi la faculté de les goûter, pour jouir des chose délicates."

Compare the almost celestial serenity of this summary of the requisites necessary for the formation of good taste with the styles which our critics' laudations set forth as models for new poets, and which comprise by turns a *tohu bohu* or void chaos of soulless affectations and obscurities, tangled masses of verbosities in which you cannot see the wood for the trees, nor the trees for the parasites with which they are strangled, in defiance of the lines of Pope :—

"Words are like leaves, and where they most abound
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found"—

alliteration run mad—incongruous metaphors and similes which devour each other in the very act of delivery—a style as limpid as the City *cloaca* of Swift—a style, as we have said, turgid with swords and blood and fire and flame and fury—bathos triumphant over sublimity—the pruriency, orgasms and ravings of libidinous impotency displacing the purer conceptions of love and affection—worship of earth and the earthy as being older and greater and better than God and the heavenly—the cult, therefore, of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and of the superhuman superman borrowed from the mad atheist and antinomian Nietzsche—a violation of all the dictates of simplicity and nature, and an entire disdain of the old-fashioned true and good and beautiful—the noble and sublime.

These remarks would not be complete without some notice of the responsibilities of the editors of literary journals—as for the editors and proprietors of journals mainly political, they have now reached an Olympian height not foreseen by Lord Shelburne when he ranked them among the three P's—public men, pressmen, and prostitutes—and, like brewers and distillers, reach the crowning glories of the peer's coronet without troubling their heads about literature at all. The literary editor,

who ought to be, and generally is, their intellectual superior, can never hope, in our time at least, to attain to such glories as this. He can gain no votes for parties, and in the eyes of politicians ranks below the lowest of electioneering agents. The literary editor must content himself with doing his duty, and if he is a learned man, as he ought to be, should bear in mind one of the Hadith or sayings of Mahomet, "Know ye the worst of men is a bad learned man, and a good learned man is the best."

The literary public is, of course, immeasurably smaller than the political public, but between literary journals and their public there is a tacit understanding that the editor shall be well equipped for his duty, and that he shall perform his duties honestly, that he should employ conscientious and able men as reviewers, and that he should recommend through, them to his readers the best literature that comes under his notice. About new candidates in the domain of Literature he is as much bound to distribute just decisions as any judge sitting in a court of justice. If he fails in his duties his crime against society is still greater than that of an incompetent, unjust, or corrupt judge, because it is of larger and more far-reaching extent when it results in the corruption of taste and morals of those who trust to his guidance.

Towards the public, an editor who joins in a conspiracy for the promotion of the interests of inferior authors, to the detriment of new and meritorious candidates for public favour, is guilty of a worse crime than a common swindler or utterer of false coin, while as respects the author himself his criminality is still worse, for towards him he plays the part of an assassin and a swindler combined, and transforming slightly the words of Mahomet, we may say, "The worst of men is a bad learned or sham learned man in the form of an unjust literary editor." *Noblesse oblige.*

Note 23.

"*Some flabby Aristarchus,*" *&c.*

> "The Critic Eye, that microscope of Wit,
> Sees hairs and pores, examines bit by bit:
> How parts relate to parts, or they to whole,
> The body's harmony, the beaming soul,
> Are things which Kuster, Burman, Wasse shall see,
> When Man's whole frame is obvious to a Flea."
>
> POPE'S *Dunciad*, Book IV., l. 233–8.

Note 24.

Taken from life. The permanent Chief of the Foreign Office in 1870, on Lord Granville's accession to office, complimented him at an official reception "on his taking office at a time when the peace of Europe was never so firmly assured." War between France and Prussia, a war which changed the face of Europe, was declared a few days afterwards.

On a visit once to a foreign Embassy I found that the whole establishment, from the Chief and First Secretary downwards, were utterly unaware that the whole country had been agitated for months about the assassination of a notable person at the instigation of a member of Parliament. The whole Embassy might have been living in one of the happy South Sea Islands for anything they knew about the country they were in. As for the Office in our capital—which might be termed the D. O., or Dandy Office, of which Lord Gammond was the permanent head—their

daily proceedings were summed up by Grenville Murray, who had worked there, much as follows:

A despatch on arriving is taken out of an envelope by a clerk at £100 a year; it is then docketed by a clerk at £200 a year; a clerk of £300 or £400 a year then makes a *précis* of it; a clerk of £500 or £600 then drafts a reply; a clerk of £800 or £1,000 a year considers the reply. So it goes gradually upwards till it reaches the final approval of the Chief, after which it comes down again in similar order and is finally put into an envelope by the clerk at £100 a year. The gentlemen at this Office do not come to it till about one o'clock in the day, when, after gossip, cigarettes, luncheon, gossip, cigarettes, and possibly champagne cup, they may begin work about 3 p.m.—if there is any to do, which is not always, and hardly ever enough to prevent the fortunate young men from taking rides and saunters and enjoying carriage gossip in the Park. A tribe of Helots in the form of second-class clerks have been invented since my time to relieve these gentlemen of much of their distressing labours.

Note 25.

Dick Burton—later Sir Richard Burton—was recalled from Damascus and his consular office occupied by another without notice. He went on his usual summer trip to the Lebanon, and on his return found another man in his place. His offence was that he had endeavoured to protect the Christians of Damascus somewhat against the Jew money-lenders, and complaints were made against him by their co-religionists in England.

Another consul was rapped on the knuckles for giving a true history in his report of past mining speculations in his district—speculations which had been notorious failures. This offended the directors of a bogus company which had swallowed up thousands of pounds of English capital and never paid one penny to the shareholders.

TRANSLATIONS—ORIENTAL

NOTE 26.

"Armlet."

In Persian *Mohru*. Among the various silly improvements which the great Matthew has introduced in his purloined version of Firdusi, such as Zohrab's "horseman's cloak," "the big roasted bludgeon," "the sugared mulberries," the "puny girl," &c., is the substitution of the Chinese tattoo "delicately pricked" on Zohrab's arm for the Oriental armlet. The armlet was an especially Oriental ornament (*see* Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*), "an ornament universal in the East, especially among women—used by princes as one of the insignia of royalty and by distinguished persons in general. The word in our version is rendered by 'bracelet on the arm'; it *appears that the signet sometimes consisted of a jewel on the armlet.*" These ornaments were worn by the most ancient princes. They are frequent in the sculptures of Persepolis and Nineveh and were worn by the kings of Persia. In the Leyden Museum is an Egyptian armlet bearing the name of the third Thotmes. Finally, they are still worn among the most splendid regalia of modern Oriental sovereigns, and it is even said that those of the Shah of Persia are worth a million sterling. And for this essentially Oriental and regal armlet Matthew substitutes a pseudo-Chinese tattoo—

> "A sign in faint vermilion points
> Pricked—
> So delicately pricked the sign appeared
> On Zohrab's arm the sign of Rustem's seal."

This invention of Matthew's is on a par with that of the "puny girl" (*see* Note 27). But the *Mohru* is more properly an armlet or spell against misfortune, says Mr. Atkinson; and the *Mohru* of Rustem was celebrated for its wonderful virtues. The *Mohri Sooleman*, or Solomon's seal, was a talisman of extraordinary power; it could make objects invisible, and Josephus relates that he saw a Jew, Eleazar, draw the devil out of an old woman's nostrils by the application of Solomon's seal to her nose in the presence of the Emperor Vespasian.

NOTE 27.

"Speak! say can you of Rustem produce some token-sign?"

It has been pointed out as one of the various improbabilities with which Firdusi's episode of "Zohrab and Rustem" abounds that Rustem had no reason for denying his identity when questioned by Zohrab, and that this

denial was one of the chief causes of the tragedy. Mr. Arnold therefore thought that by adopting an unfounded suggestion from Sir John Malcolm he could improve here upon his stolen goods, and introduces two pages of explanatory twaddle and dialogue to the effect that Rustem had been wrongly informed as to the sex of the child born to him by Tehmeenah, Tehmeenah having herself sent to tell Rustem that her child was "*a puny girl*," but Mr. Arnold's brilliant improvement on Firdusi only introduces one improbability the more, for it was in the highest degree improbable that Tehmeenah, who was so proud of having been even for a single day the wife of Rustem, and so proud, too, of having a son of Rustem born to her, should outrage common Oriental notions by proclaiming herself the mother "*of a puny girl*" when she had such a magnificent baby-boy to boast of.

Mr. Arnold, too, departs entirely from Firdusi in his description of the fighting between Rustem and Zohrab. Allowing Mr. Arnold to be as omniscient as he thought himself to be, and that he really was, as one of his admirers claimed for him, the nearest approach to Goethe and Voltaire rolled into one which the world has seen, it is likely that Firdusi, who lived in the tenth century and was a Persian, should have known how early Persian heroes fought better than Mr. Arnold, who lived in the nineteenth century and was an English inspector of schools. But Mr Arnold's conceit led him to think he knew better than Firdusi, so he makes his heroes fight in a comico-Homeric fashion.

The taunt of Rustem to Zohrab about "his light skipping tricks and his girl's wiles" like a "*curled minion-dancer*" is taken from the "Iliad." Only Mr. Arnold takes thirteen lines to say what the Homeric bard says in two Æneas ("Iliad," xvi. verse 617) says to Meriones—

Μηριόνη, τάχα κέν σε καὶ ὀρχηστῆν περ ἐόντα
ἔγκος ἐμὸν κατέπαυσε διαμπερὲς εἴ σ' ἔβαλόν περ

It is characteristic of Mr. Arnold, who knew nothing whatever about the use of arms nor "the division of a battle knew more than a spinster," should think he could better Firdusi in his fighting—at the same time that he was "conveying" his whole story and adopting his finest passages and spoiling them without acknowledgment—for this latter he did only to spoil them, such as—

"The air of heaven is soft,
And warm and pleasant, and the grave is cold—
. . . . .
And like the lightning to the field
I came, and like the wind I go away."

In Firdusi it is as I have given it—

"My life was just the lightning-flash and like a breeze I go."

Firdusi's heroes, too, lunge with their spears; they do not throw them, as Mr. Arnold makes them do in Homeric fashion.

Mr. Arnold's heroes, too, outdo all imaginable circus-fighting, and even the admirable fancy fighting of the sailor boys of the theatre manager, Mr. Vincent Crummles, in "Nicholas Nickleby." The great Mat's warriors *clash their shields together* in true circus fashion for nothing else apparently but to make a row; then Zohrab holds his shield "*stiff out*" for the other to drive at and make a clatter; then the spears themselves have the strangest preternatural vagaries of volition and action: the spear which Rustem in comico-Homeric fashion threw "*down 'rom the shoulder, down it came*,"

aiming apparently at Zohrab's toes, rises all at once nearly at right angles to its line of motion—straight up like a hawk "*hung hovering in the air*" over an unfortunate "partridge"; after it has hovered long enough it falls "*like a plummet into the sand*," which it knocks about as though it were a bombshell. Truly the behaviour of this trajectory cannot be accounted for by the simple laws of motion and gravitation; but the swords—not the Hindi swords of Firdusi, but Arnoldian swords—these, too, must have been formed of some marvellous substance, for in breaking they do not break into two, three, or even a hundred fragments—they burst into "*a thousand shivers*" like a rocket, or rather like a girandola of rockets. Then for a heavy weapon Mr. Arnold gives to Rustem, in preference to Firdusi's bull-horned iron mace, which one would have thought was sufficiently murderous, the "*unlopped trunk*" of a stupendous tree. This must have been a most extraordinary and traitorous implement for offence and defence—first, most extraordinary, for if the trunk had all its branches on, as an "*unlopped trunk*" should have, it must have been a most unmanageable weapon; next, traitorous, for in Rustem's aiming a tremendous but futile blow at Zohrab with the "*unlopped trunk*," the "unlopped trunk" straightway dragged him down on his knees, and then Zohrab, as generous as one of Mr. Vincent Crummles's fighting sailor lads, takes no advantage of his opponent and lets him get up again, although he had him at his mercy—

"*Dizzy and on his knees and choked with sand.*"

But really the fighting of Mr. Vincent Crummles's sailor lads is a long way superior; we should like to give the whole of it, but we cannot refrain from quoting the termination—

"Then the clapping recommenced and a variety of fancy chops were administered on both sides, such as chops dealt with the left hand and under the leg, and over the right shoulder and over the left; and when the short sailor made a vigorous cut at the tall sailor's legs, which would have shaved them clean off if it had taken effect, the tall sailor jumped over the short sailor's sword, wherefore, to balance the matter and make it all fair, the tall sailor administered the same cut and the short sailor jumped over *his* sword. After this there was a great deal of dodging about and hitching up of the inexpressibles in the absence of braces, and then the short sailor made a violent demonstration and closed with the tall sailor, who, after a few unavailing struggles, went down and expired in great torture as the short sailor put his foot upon his breast and bored a hole in him through and through.

"'That'll be a double encore if you take care, boys,' said Mr. Crummles."

If the reader, after the show-fighting of Mr. Matthew Arnold and Mr. Vincent Crummles, would like to read a good real bit of hammer-and-tongs fighting, we would recommend him to the duel of Roland and Oliver in the *Légende des Siècles* of Victor Hugo, which ended in the marriage of Roland with *la belle Aude*, the sister of Oliver. A more scientific combat is that between Arthur Philipson and Rudolph Donnerhugel in good Sir Walter's "Anne of Geierstein" or the fight of Fitzjames with the Highlanders in the "Lady of the Lake." Sir Walter knew how to manage his weapons—on paper, at all events.

One of the most amusing passages in Mr. Arnold's "Zohrab and Rustem" is perhaps that where Rustem, after dealing the deathblow to his son, wishes he were drowning or drowned in the Oxus, and adds—

"O that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!

That these lines of the great Mat are quite original the reader need not be told; there is nothing like them in Firdusi—"honour to whom honour is due."

And Rustem here really is in the great Mat's version a rival to the dying warrior of Robert Montgomery immortalised by Macaulay, who "lay on his bleeding breast" and stared "ghastly and grimly on the skies." Even if life were not extinct, as it ought to be, in Rustem, and he were lying comfortably on his back at the bottom of the Oxus with his eyes open, his eyes would need the help of an abundant supply of X-rays or to be such piercers as the "pair o' patent double-million magnifyin' gas-microscopes of hextra-power" of Mr. Sam Weller to distinguish grains of yellow silt rolling and tumbling in a turbid river; his eyesight would need to be as keen as the eyesight of Rossetti's Blessed Damozel elsewhere alluded to.

A still more comic line in the poem is perhaps that which is contained in the address of Zohrab (imitated from Virgil) to his father's horse, Reksh—this also is pure Matthew-Arnoldian. There is no prigging here; there is no such speech of the dying Zohrab to Reksh in Firdusi—"honour to whom honour," &c.

> "Is this then Reksh? how oft in infant days
> My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,
> *My terrible father's terrible horse*, and said," &c.

My terrible father's terrible horse! This is just such an expression as a boarding-school miss, in poking fun satirically about papa and his horse to a fellow-schoolgirl in a good-humoured way, might make use of; here the great Mat beats Robert Montgomery immeasurably. Robert Montgomery had a certain grand tone, even in his nonsense, and such lines shoved into a stolen poem have been foisted on the English public as good poetry for about half a century! Truly this Robert Montgomery has had a long innings.

But how came the divine Mat to find out this episode in Firdusi? For he was not a Persian scholar any more than he was a Celtic scholar, although he wrote on Celtic poetry by borrowed lights—the all-knowing. He came by it as the great *mystificateur* came by a good many other fine things which he appropriated—through Sainte-Beuve and the *Causeries du Lundi*. M. Julius Mohl was the husband of Madame Mohl, an English lady whose *salon* in Paris, as the successor of that of her friend, Madame Recamier, was one of the intellectual centres in Paris. M. Mohl, who was born at Stuttgart, but naturalised in Paris, was an Oriental scholar and a member of the *Institut*. M. Mohl, with the aid of the French Government, published a translation of Firdusi into French in several volumes. Sainte-Beuve noticed this translation in the *Causeries du Lundi*, and in his notice pointed out the beauties of this episode of Zohrab and Rustem, and culled from it passages which Mr. Arnold has not failed to transfer to his own pages. Here was the origin of Mr. Arnold's acquaintance with Firdusi, but the wily hint in his note to his "shoddy" epic pretended to account for its origin in another way—he simply says, to throw readers off the scent:

"The story of Zohrab and Rustem is told in Sir John Malcolm's 'History of Persia' as follows"; then he gives Sir John Malcolm's version, which consists of a few lines, and these not quite correct—for it was from these that Matthew got the notion of the "puny girl," of whom there is no mention in Firdusi. But of Mohl, Sainte-Beuve, and Firdusi not a word in his note! *Suppressio veri suggestio falsi.* Mr. Arnold, with no foresight

that Persian studies would take the development which they have in England, by the suppression of his real sources would suggest to the reader that he had concocted this hash of one of the finest episodes of a really great epic poet who lived a thousand years before him out of a few prose lines of a respectable history.

What Mr. Arnold could really do in the way of epic poetry when he had not a Firdusi to prig from he has shown in his unreadable and dull production, "Balder Dead." Balder, Mr. G. W. E. Russell, his pupil and admirer, in a note to his eulogistic monograph, "*obligingly tells us was Celtic.*"

NOTE 28.

A great deal too much fuss, rather late in the day, has been made in England about Omar Khayyam, or the quatrains passing under his name, and especially about the translator who has fused three hundred quatrains, more or less genuine, into ninety-nine and endeavoured to make order out of disorder, and of the *disjecta membra* of Omar and his imitators a statue of himself.

We first became acquainted with Omar Khayyam in Bodenstedt's translation in 1882, when a copy of his book was given us by that amiable poet himself, with whom we passed many pleasant hours at his residence at Wiesbaden and in walks in the neighbourhood, and we have ever retained our predilection for his translation as a graceful and truthful representation of the Omar Khayyamic cycle, with no attempt to transmute him into what he imagined to be something finer; it is worthy of the author of "Mirza Schaffy."

Omar Khayyam has been called by Carlyle in his boisterous way "an old Mahommedan blackguard," which is as extravagant as a good many of Carlyle's sayings are; nevertheless, as little edification and consolation is to be found in the "Rubayat" as is to be found in the philosophy of Schopenhauer or Hartmann. The greater portion of his quatrains exalt the pleasure of wine-drinking and the felicities of intoxication, which for those to whom indulgence in alcohol is forbidden by a stricter law than that of Mahomet—viz., that of sanitary prudence—must form very wearisome, and even repulsive, reading. How much of the praise of wine-bibbing or how much of the pessimistic philosophy contained in these three hundred quatrains was serious it is impossible to say; possibly the greater part of them are mere *boutades*, written in different humours in different times by different hands. Some of them, like those on Predestination, are are evidently intended as *reductiones ad absurdum* of prevalent doctrines, inspired by the whim of the moment. It is curious how these ancient Persians of the eleventh century write as if they were familiar with the philosophies of Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Hartmann, and Nietzsche; some of the Gnomic Quatrains might have been written by Goethe. The translation of Fitzgerald gives no idea of their humour, which sometimes is almost Heinesque.

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